

PRESBYTERIAN AID TO RUTHENIANS

Official Statement by Home
Mission Executive

DECLINE TO WITHDRAW.

Call Roman Catholic Claim an
Arrogant One.

Revs. Drs. Carmichael and McLaren
Present Statement, Telling How the
Presbyterian Missions to the Ruthenians Began—Made by Necessitous Condition of Ignorant and Neglected People.

The following statement relative to the religious controversy over the Ruthenians in western Canada was handed to The Globe last night by Rev. J. A. Carmichael, D.D., Superintendent, and Rev. E. D. McLaren, D.D., Secretary of the Presbyterian Home Mission Society. The statement followed a meeting of the Home Mission Executive:—

How the Work Began

The work of the Presbyterian Church amongst the Ruthenians of the Northwest was undertaken some years ago at the request of the Ruthenians themselves, who represented that practically no provision was being made for their religious needs either by the Roman Catholic or by the Greek Church. Investigation showed that they were not only being neglected spiritually, but also that little, if anything, was being done for their physical well-being or their intellectual improvement. In this destitution is to be found the explanation of the efforts put forth on their behalf by the Presbyterian Church. Those efforts at the outset took the form of the establishment of schools, the sending in of a medical missionary, and the training in Manitoba College of some of their better educated and more intelligent young men as teachers and colporteurs. These young men, along with some others, were afterwards ordained to the priesthood by a bishop of the Orthodox Greek Church.

Presbyterian Leaders Approached

Within a year they approached some of the professors of Manitoba College and other leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, stating that they found themselves out of harmony with the doctrines and polity of the Greek Church, and asking advice as to their future course. They were advised to organize a Greek Church in Canada, not subject to the authority of any foreign ecclesiastic, and so constituted as to set forth the clearer light and fuller knowledge into which they and many of their people had already been brought. The essentially Protestant character of their views may be gathered from the following facts: (1) They organized their Church on democratic instead of hierarchical lines, putting the power of ordination in the hands of the Consistory (a Church court composed of clergymen and lay representatives) and not in the hands of a higher ecclesiastical order; (2) they adopted as the catechism of their Church—modifying only two of the questions—a catechism prepared by Dr. J. Oswald Dykes for the use of the Nonconformist Churches of England.

Regarding The Ranok.

It was not long after the new Church was organized before a third appeal came from the Ruthenians to the Presbyterian Church. This appeal was for financial aid in manning their fields and in publishing a paper, which they considered necessary to the success of the new movement. While granting this monetary assistance to The Ranok, the Home Mission Committee have publicly stated that "they are in no way responsible for its contents." Regarding the extract from The Ranok forwarded to the Home Mission Executive by the Rev. Dr. Burke (a portion of which appeared in Tuesday morning's Globe), it seems sufficient to say that, according to Dr. Burke's own statement, the article was not an editorial, but a communication, that even in the most carefully-managed journals letters are sometimes published that should have been rejected, and that the document submitted to the Executive will be forwarded to the committee in Winnipeg that has charge of the Ruthenian work, for verification and such comment as they may deem advisable.

Have Educated Students.

In addition to giving the new Church financial aid in the publishing of its

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paper and in the supplying of its mission fields, the Home Mission Committee have for five years provided for and maintained in Manitoba College a class of selected Ruthenian students from which the ministers of the Independent Greek Church and teachers for the Ruthenian settlers may be supplied. Last session there were no less than thirty of these students in attendance at Manitoba College.

For the last five years the ministers of the Independent Greek Church have attended Manitoba College, and the larger views and more liberal spirit of the members of that Church are mainly due to the lectures delivered by Principal Patrick on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Is it this growing spirit of liberality on the part of the Ruthenians, this increasing dissatisfaction with ancient ceremonials and lifeless forms, that accounts for the indignation of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastics at Presbyterian money being paid for the support of men who still use in some localities part of the liturgy of the Greek Church?

Maintaining Three Hospitals.

Besides assisting in the training of young Ruthenians, and in supplying the Ruthenian settlers with ministers who know something of what evangelical Christianity means, the Home Mission Committee have four medical missionaries ministering to the needs of these people, and the Women's Home Missionary Society have equipped and are maintaining three hospitals and two nursing homes in Ruthenian colonies.

In contrast with this splendid record of work for the physical, intellectual and religious improvement of these foreigners, consider the neglect of its duty by the Roman Catholic Church, implied in the statement of the Rev. Dr. Roche that "in the three Provinces they found 135,000 Ruthenian Catholics ministered to by some seven priests."

An "Arrogant Demand."

Let it be remembered, too, that, according to the statement made a few years ago by an official of the Immigration Department, one-half of the Ruthenians in the Northwest are connected with the Orthodox Greek Church, and that in its arrogant demand that the Protestant Churches should cease their efforts on behalf of these foreigners and leave them all to be ministered to by the Roman Catholic Church, that Church is exhibiting the very spirit of proselytizing zeal with which it has unjustly charged the Presbyterian Home Mission Committee.

Will Not Relax Efforts.

One can hardly conceive of a more urgent appeal to the human sympathies, patriotic fervor and religious instinct of any body of Christians than that made by the necessitous condition of the ignorant and neglected Ruthenians in the early days of their settlement in Canada. Whenever such an appeal is made to the Presbyterian Church it does not propose to ask the consent of any individual or any organization before undertaking the work to which, in the Providence of God, it believes itself to be called.

And when its work in any field of Christian activity is so abundantly fruitful as this work amongst the Ruthenians has been, it does not propose to relax its efforts because of the criticisms of The Catholic Register.