

POLAND POSTPONES ITS STRIKE FOR LIBERTY

The Present Time is Not Opportune for Any Uprising, It is Said.

The report which recently gained currency here that Poland would probably take advantage of the political disturbances of the present war to make a bid for political freedom is, emphatically denied, by a prominent Polish gentleman now in the city.

At the time of the partition of Poland after the defeat and abdication of King Stanislaus, the last reigning monarch, the country was divided into three parts, one-third becoming part of the German Empire, another being annexed to Austria and the third being retained by Russia. This was in 1794. Since that time this state of division has remained practically unaltered. The effect of the separate existence of the three parts of the country has been to destroy to a large extent the sentimental, as well as the political unity of Poland. The one time unanimity of the Polish people and their patriotic spirit and desire for independence has been vitiated by the influences of education and intermingling exerted by Russia, Austria and Germany.

In Russia the Polish people are kept under careful surveillance even yet and like the great majority of the Russian people have been denied the privilege of education and freedom of speech and thought. The reading of socialist papers or books, as well as too frank expression of political views are strictly prohibited and transgressors in these regards are visited with swift and severe punishment, imprisonment or exile to the mines of Siberia.

In German Poland the privileges of education which are denied to their Russian brethren are forced upon the people, so strictly that in the country districts, especially where the advantages of education are not fully realized the laws demanding attendance at schools is looked upon as unjust and an instrument of tyranny. Austrian Poles are not subject to such strict laws, but the poverty of the people and of the section of the country occupied by them is a hindrance to advance.

HABITS OF LIVING.

Under the three separate systems of government and habits of living there have grown up differences in aims and opinions among the three sections of the Polish people and the chance of organizing them to resist three great nations and of uniting them amicably under one government is regarded as almost hopeless.

Another great objection to a strike for freedom at the present crisis lies in the fact that for some time at least German, Austrian and Russian Poland will form one of the great battle grounds of Europe. The huge armies of Russia from the north and from Austria and Germany from the south and west will concentrate there and no opportunity for organization or mobilization is likely to offer itself. In accordance with the military systems of the three warring nations, also, compulsory drill and service in the army in war time is in vogue and the greater part of the younger men at least and many of the older ones as well have been already drafted to serve on one side or the other.

The number of Poles in Canada is not large. In Ottawa there are but four or five, in Toronto there are about two thousand, while in Montreal and in the west there are considerably more. In event of a revolt in Poland there is little chance of many of these taking part. The difficulty of reaching Poland during such a restriction in transportation as now prevails, and through countries at war and hostile, as well as the advantageous labor conditions in Canada militate against their return to Poland.