

## THREATENING OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM

As promised in a previous article the Free Press herewith furnishes full and complete proof that the candidature of P. J. Alekno for school trustee in Ward 5, in the recent municipal elections, was promoted by racial and religious factions. The candidature of T. D. Ferley for alderman in Ward 4, and of J. G. Kimmel for alderman in Ward 6 were also promoted by the same factions and for the same ends.

It was hoped by the election of Mr. Alekno directly to advance the cause of separate schools in the city of Winnipeg, while the election of Mr. Ferley and Mr. Kimmel were to lend support to the nationalist propaganda of the Ruthenian, Polish and German population. It is known that Catholic priests attended at least one of the organization meetings of the Alekno-Ferley-Kimmel ticket, but this need not be insisted upon, as extracts from the Catholic press of the city leave no doubt whatever as to the nature of the campaign waged for these three candidates.

The following extract, for instance, from the *Gazeta Katolicka*, the Polish Catholic weekly, owned by the Catholic Church and administered under the direction of the Church authorities, leaves nothing to be desired in the way of clearness:

"We note with pleasure the fact that P. J. Alekno, a well known business man in North Winnipeg, has been brought forward by the committee as a candidate for school trustee. The school question is a most vital one for Catholics. The efforts to get the school Board to take over our parochial schools and maintain them by our own means as public schools will continue.

What we demand are schools in which our children shall be taught by Catholic men and women teachers. At the same time we demand that we shall not be obliged to pay taxes for the upkeep of Crown schools and at the same time for the upkeep of undenominational schools, from which our children derive no benefit.

Things will not be different until the Catholics have more numerous representation upon the School Board. Such representation would have an influence on the votes of the Board and would incline it towards decisions in our favor.

For a number of years Ward 5 was represented on the School Board by Dr. McMunn and J. A. McKerchar, both avowed opponents of the Catholic school system. Last year, as is known, Dr. McMunn was defeated and now it is Mr. McKerchar's turn. Mr. McKerchar is again at the front in this contest and is seeking re-election.

"The selection this year for us is very easy and we should not hesitate for whom to cast our vote. On one side there is running for the post of school trustee Mr. McKerchar, an English-speaking candidate and a Free Mason, and on the other P. J. Alekno, our candidate. To-morrow when we go to the polling booths let us all cast our votes for Mr. Alekno. Let us remember that every vote counts and that in voting for 'our' candidate we are voting for 'our' cause."

So the *Gazeta Katolicka*, the weekly organ of the Polish Catholics of Winnipeg, whose religious centre is the Holy Ghost church and school, "West Canada," the weekly organ of the German Catholics of Winnipeg, whose religious home is the St. Joseph's church and school, was equally clear in its direction to its readers. It said:

"Again we take this opportunity of drawing attention to the forthcoming municipal elections. The candidate in Ward 5 is Mr. Alekno, who seeks election as school trustee. We cannot emphasize too much that it is the duty of every elector in Ward 5 to vote for this German candidate, who pledges himself that he will help and protect the 'foreigners'.

Therefore, vote for Mr. Alekno for school trustee for Ward 5. Be united. Your unity will make you strong and will bring you your long-looked-for recognition. Only one of your own countrymen can understand your needs and do justice to them.

"In Ward 5 Mr. Alekno is seeking election as school trustee. Here again we recommend that this candidate be supported."

Another weekly supporting the Alekno-Ferley-Kimmel ticket was *The Ukrainian Voice*, printed in Ruthenian. This is the organ of the Ruthenian and Ukrainian nationalities. Said the *Ukrainian Voice*:

"To-day we should recognize neither parties nor sects. To-day we should all be conscientious members of the Ukrainian nationality, recognizing our rights and knowing our duties as citizens in Canada. To-day we should all vote as one man in Ward 5 and elect as alderman a Ukrainian, who, in the council chamber will defend our national cause and advance the municipal interests of our compatriots. . . .

Now is your opportunity, Ukrainians, citizens of Winnipeg. Now you have a chance of proving your political wisdom by electing your own compatriot as alderman in Ward 5. Ukrainians outnumber the other nationalities and it will certainly be a disgrace if our candidate is defeated.

"Let us remember that it is not Mr. Ferley who is a candidate, but the whole Ukrainian people of Canada. Our candidates on Dec. 11 must show to the whole civilized world that the Ukrainian people of Winnipeg are a virile nationality, which does not neglect to assert the rights of its members by electing to the city council a Ukrainian.

"Ferley. At the same time we recommend our readers to vote in Ward 5 for Mr. Alekno as school trustee, and in Ward 6 for J. G. Kimmel as alderman."

"Der Nordwesten," the *Robin German* weekly in this city and province,

came out strongly for the ticket,

Alekno-Ferley-Kimmel. It said:

"The civic campaign for 1915 is in full swing. In our last issue we gave a list of the candidates. Elsewhere we have a good word to say for the German candidate in Ward 6, Mr. J. G. Kimmel. We would like to reiterate that Mr. Kimmel is assured of the valuable support of the Poles and Ruthenians in Ward 6. One good turn deserves another. We, therefore, ask the German electors in Ward 6 to vote for Messrs. Ferley and Alekno, for alderman and school trustee respectively."

Elsewhere in the same issue of "Der Nordwesten" appears the following:

"It goes without saying that in any election our support is at the command of a German candidate. This should be a matter of course not only with ourselves, but with every German; in the present instance with every German elector in Ward 6.

"We were all the more justified in this assumption as it was a question of a candidate who is in general favor with the Germans, German-Austrians, German-Hungarians, and German-Russians of our city, because on the one hand of his honorable record, and on the other hand because the Germans, in the present circumstances—irrespective of where they come from—should more than ever stand together."

In the same issue of "Der Nordwesten" there is a violent racial attack upon the Hebrew candidate for alderman in Ward 6.

For the moment only one more piece of evidence as to the nature of the campaign waged on behalf of the ticket Alekno-Ferley-Kimmel will be offered. In the Gazeta Katolicka, the Polish Catholic weekly, appeared the following:

"To the Citizens, Electors of Wards 5 and 6.—The time has arrived when we electors, Poles, Ruthenians and Germans, have carefully to consider the destinies of our city and through it of our own future. The taxes have been doubled. There is no work for us. We are everywhere looked upon as rubbish. We cut no figure. We are charged considerable taxes, but we have no means to feed ourselves or our families.

"Out of our money all kinds of improvements are being made in the southern part of the city. They have loaded upon us all kinds of inspectors and officials of little use, who not only take our hard-earned money, but abuse our people. It cannot go on any longer. We ought to change things and must change them. We can remedy things if all who have a vote will cast their votes for the candidates selected by the joint popular committee. These candidates will work for the good of the portion of the city where we live.

"These candidates are: Ward 5, for alderman, T. D. Ferley; for school trustee, P. J. Alekno; Ward 6, for alderman, J. G. Kimmel. These candidates are put up by the people. They are popular candidates. . . . Let us remember that if we elect the men brought forward by the joint committee we shall do honor to our part of the city and we shall get better treatment.

"Let us discharge our civic and 'national' duty by voting for these men. Let us not forget that our opponents will endeavor to handicap us. Let no quarrel take place. Let us resist manfully. Do not listen to any promises on the part of the opposing candidates or their agents. To action, compatriots, let us show what we can achieve. Winnipeg, Nov. 28, 1914."

The appeal bears the signatures of forty-two electors, German, Ruthenian and Polish. In the list are included the names of the editor of "Der Nordwesten"; P. Gigejczuk, organizer of Ruthenian schools for the provincial government, and Theodore Stefanik, the chief worker of the Roblin Government amongst the Ruthenians. It would not be unreasonable to characterize this pernicious movement as being entered upon with the sanction of the Government as part of its attack upon our national school system.

The facts thus set forth ought to be sufficient to thoroughly awaken the people to the increasing danger to our school system involved in this racial religious crusade in favor of separate bi-lingual schools, not only in the foreign settlements, but here in Winnipeg as well.

The bi-lingual provision of the Public Schools Act, so far as it relates to cities and towns, should be repealed without delay.