

THE CHALLENGE.

It is a duty incumbent upon all who care for the welfare of education in this Province at heart to study earnestly and carefully the remarkable editorial reproduced on this page from a recent issue of the Canadian Ruthenian, one of the non-English-speaking Catholic weeklies published in this city. The editorial has the merit of being concise, clear and, above all, frank. From first to last the editorial breathes the spirit with which the Catholic hierarchy in Manitoba is animated. In every line it betrays the intention to exploit all the non-English-speaking nationalities of the Province in the attempt to create here separate racial schools.

Firstly, it will be profitable to consider what the claim of the Ruthenian Catholics, put forward with such boldness and confidence, to a right by "natural law" to Ruthenian teaching in schools where Ruthenian children are present in considerable numbers implies. In the fiscal year 1913-1914 there entered Canada, according to official returns, immigrants representing some thirty specified non-English-speaking nationalities, not to mention those comprised under the heading, "Other Nationalities."

According to the Canadian Ruthenian, every one of these thirty or more non-English-speaking nationalities, including Armenians, Chinese, Hindus, Japanese, Roumanians, Servians, Syrians, Turkish, etc., has a right by "natural law" to have its children taught their mother tongue in any public school which they attend.

Such a natural right, of course, does not exist. Merely to state the implication of the Canadian Ruthenian's claim is to refute it. If the majority in a State or Province is not to decide questions of education, but is to accept interpretations of "natural law" by organs published in the interests of special privilege, the result can be none other than anarchy and chaos.

In regard to a civil right to the teaching of the Ruthenian language in schools where Ruthenian children form a considerable number of the whole, the Canadian Ruthenian is, or might have been, on much better ground. But with true ultramontane dissimulation it endeavors to establish a civil right to Ruthenian teaching for the whole of Canada, refusing to face the fact that Manitoba is, in this respect, an exception to other Provinces.

Not a single word is said by the Canadian Ruthenian, it will be noticed, with regard to the famous bilingual clause in the Manitoba Public Schools Act. Under this clause the Ruthenians and every other nationality in the world have at least a present civil right to the teaching of their mother tongue in any public school where ten of their nationality are enrolled. Evidently the Canadian Ruthenian considers this clause a dangerous menace to the rights it so vehemently asserts.

The truth is that only in the Province of Manitoba, out of the nine Provinces forming the Dominion of Canada, have the Ruthenians or any non-English-speaking nationality, other than the French-Canadians, the shadow of a statute right to bilingual teaching. The Canadian Ruthenian evidently does not desire to face that position, and therefore tries to establish a broad Canadian right to bilingual schools.

It is of some importance to us in Manitoba to note, en passant, that the Canadian Ruthenian alleges that the School Boards of Montreal and Quebec engage teachers who know "very little of any language other than Polish or Ruthenian." If this is the case, the reference must certainly be to the Catholic School Boards of the cities named. Be this as it may, the statement of the Canadian Ruthenian is an eloquent confirmation of the free Press criticism of the Slav bilingual schools of Manitoba. The Canadian Ruthenian, the organ of the Ruthenian Catholics of Manitoba, sees no objection to the employment in the Slav bilingual schools of teachers who can speak "very little" English. The fine hand of the St. Boniface hierarchy is to be seen all through the remarkable editorial of the Canadian Ruthenian. Who else would think it worth while to point out that where the State steps in and assists

the schools of a Ruthenian district it has the right to demand that "there shall also be taught the official languages of Canada, English and French." Again, there is much significance in the remark of the Canadian Ruthenian that the Ruthenian political propaganda for "our just rights" will have the support "of the whole French community."

If this utterance of the Canadian Ruthenian serves to arouse those of our citizens who believe in the development of a common Canadian nationhood and in the fostering of a common Canadian citizenship, to the danger of intrigues and agitations which are going on at this hour in Manitoba, it will have done good rather than harm. The alternative ideals before the people of Manitoba are now at least well defined and clear. The avowed object of the Canadian Ruthenian, of the whole press organized by Archbishop Langevin, and the deliberate policy of the Roblin Government by the importation of men like Karmanski, and by similar political effulgences, is to perpetuate in Manitoba a Canadian Ukraine, a Canadian Poland, and any other Nationalist sphere of influence which the nationality in question feels itself politically strong enough to demand from Premier Roblin and his colleagues.

The other ideal is the genuinely educational ideal. This consists in regarding and using bilingual teaching, in settlements where one nationality predominates, as an educational means of introducing non-English-speaking children to Canadian ideals and Canadian customs. It is at least a moot point whether the non-English-speaking child is better introduced to new ideals and customs through the medium of its mother tongue or not. In these circumstances, it seems to be the more liberal policy to give the child the benefit of the doubt and use its mother tongue, where this is feasible as in the solid settlements, in the teaching of English.

There must be no mistake or misunderstanding, however, as to the end sought. The end sought is the introduction of the non-English-speaking child to Canadian nationality and Canadian citizenship, in the interest of the child and of the whole community. And, further, there must be no misunderstanding that in all this the honest and adequate teaching of the English language is a first consideration and a *sine qua non*. Finally, it may be stated, as the Free Press has stated on innumerable occasions, that in the consideration of this bilingual question the French-Canadians occupy a position different from that of any other non-English-speaking nationality.