

## "DER NORDWESTEN" AND BILINGUAL SCHOOLS.

"Der Nordwesten" the local Roblin German organ, complains that it is at a disadvantage in discussions with The Free Press, since The Free Press readers are unable to read "Der Nordwesten." This is a peculiar argument, for, if it be admitted, it means that The Free Press should never criticize anything "Der Nordwesten" says.

It is noteworthy that in the present instance "Der Nordwesten" has no reply to make to The Free Press exposure of its part in the racial-religious attempt to elect Mr. Alekno to the Winnipeg School Board, in place of Mr. McKerchar. The point which The Free Press believed it its duty to bring before the citizens of Winnipeg, and of the Province generally, was that "Der Nordwesten," owned and controlled by Hon. Robert Rogers and his friends, advised its readers to support a straight attack upon the public school system of this city.

"Der Nordwesten," in a passage which The Free Press quoted, asked the German municipal electors of Winnipeg to vote for Mr. Alekno. At the same time Catholic papers published in this city were urging their readers to vote for the same candidate, declaring that his election would incline the School Board to give ear to the demands for the establishment of what would be, in effect, separate schools.

In its current issue, "Der Nordwesten" says: "If the Government grants them (the German population) bilingual schools . . . it cannot be taken amiss if they make use of this practice whenever opportunity offers." This is a fair and reasonable statement, and it represents a factor in the situation to which The Free Press has done full justice. Not only in connection with Mr. Alekno's candidature, but throughout its educational campaign, The Free Press has pointed out that the Roblin Government has encouraged the non-English-speaking population in every possible way to ask for and demand special privileges in the matter of schools.

The responsibility for the existence of a wide-open bilingual clause in the present Public Schools Act certainly does not rest upon the German population of this Province. And if the English-speaking politicians of Manitoba fail to limit the statutory right to bilingual schools, in towns and cities, to the restricted area in which advantage has already been taken of it, the responsibility rests primarily upon them. If the public school system is in the future, as in the past, to be prostituted to the exigencies of hard-pressed politicians, then it is only a matter of time when not only Winnipeg, but Brandon and Portage la Prairie will have separate schools, and that means, in almost every case, racial schools.

But having said so much, The Free Press, to be quite fair, must say more. "Der Nordwesten" did not speak for all the German citizens of Winnipeg in its advocacy of Mr. Alekno's candidature and in its consequent championing of the cause of separate, racial schools. There are many Germans in Winnipeg, and many Ruthenians and Poles, and members of other nationalities, who believe as strongly as The Free Press does in the public school system.

The Free Press believes it its duty to strengthen and encourage those amongst our non-English-speaking citizens who are assisting in the task of building up Canadian citizenship and Canadian nationality. The Icelandic, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish citizens of Winnipeg have never agitated for bilingual schools in our cities and towns, or anywhere else as far as that goes. Neither do our Hebrew citizens demand separate or racial schools. And when bilingual privileges are under discussion, it is very material and very fair to remember this.

By the above, The Free Press is not to be understood as being opposed, in any circumstances, to bilingual teaching in Manitoba. In rural settlements, where the population is homogeneous and non-English-speaking, it may be an advantage to make the introduction to Canadian ideals and thought processes gradual rather than rapid. But even in these schools it must be a sine qua non that the English language shall be taught honestly and

sources at their disposal than have their rural compatriots. If they desire bilingual instruction for their children they are in a position to supply it themselves. Several nationalities in Winnipeg have done this for years, notably the Icelanders, Swedes and Norwegians.

Any advantages derivable from bilingual teaching in the cities and towns would be far outweighed by the disorganization and destruction of the public school system which it would necessarily entail.