

Ruthenian Catholic Organ

Asserts Language Rights

Astounding Argument Put Forward to Create Permanent Non-English Speaking Settlements in Manitoba—Propounds Mischievous Theory That Both English and French Languages Should Be Taught in All State-Aided Bilingual Schools.

Below the Free Press publishes a highly-important contribution to the question of bilingual schools in Manitoba. In the use of capitals the Free Press has followed the original. The letter from "Teacher" and the editorial "reply" to "Teacher's" letter appeared in the Canadian Ruthenian of Jan. 10, 1915. The Canadian Ruthenian is a weekly Catholic organ, printed in the Ruthenian language, and published by the West Canada Publishing Co., Ltd., Winnipeg. This company, organized a few years ago by Archbishop Langevine, publishes some half dozen Catholic weeklies in as many languages.

Between the lines of the Canadian Ruthenian's "reply" to "Teacher's" letter can be traced the inspiration of the Palace, St. Boniface. It is essentially—an admission that the French hierarchy intends, as far as in it lies, to organize not merely the French Catholics, but the Catholics of every other non-English-speaking nationality in the Province, as a unit for the purpose of keeping the present universal bilingual clause on the Statute Book, and inferentially for the purpose of prosecuting the agitation for separate racial schools. Herewith is the article in full.

To the Editor of the Canadian Ruthenian.
Dear Sir—

English-speaking people assert and write in their press that the teaching of the mother tongue among the foreign population of Canada is a PRIVILEGE. Ruthenian publications, however, contend that the foreign population has a RIGHT to teach its own tongue. I agree with this. If it is A PRIVILEGE then the government can take it from us whenever it sees fit to do so. If it is a RIGHT then I would like to have more detailed information as to what entitles us to such a right. For I am unable to answer all the objections of our enemies, which meet me on every side, to the effect that we

have not a right to teach our mother tongue.

(Signed) **TEACHER,**
Shoal Lake.

REPLY.

This teacher from Shoal Lake deals with a very important and fundamental question. It is necessary for us to consider it and explain the position to the whole Ruthenian population. This teacher, of course, refers to schools where the ratepayers are, if not in a majority, at least in considerable number.

(1) According to natural law the teaching of Ruthenian in such schools is not a **PRIVILEGE**, but a **RIGHT**, and in the full meaning of the word. Why? We will supply two reasons to uphold our contention.

(a) It is an established principle in school matters that the school above all is another home, and that the education of children in schools is to be as far as possible the kind which the parent desires. Children belong to their parents more than to the school district or to the government. Who would dare to say that Ruthenian children in their home have no right to learn their mother tongue and speak their own language? If we are right in this why then should the children not have the same right in the school?

(b) Would it not be the greatest injustice if the Ruthenian ratepayers were to be asked to maintain schools in which they were not permitted to teach Ruthenian? Is the Ruthenian language less dear and pleasant to Ruthenians than English to English-speaking people? Why should not Ruthenians be allowed to provide out of their own funds for the teaching in their own schools of their mother tongue, so dear to them? No, a hundred times no! Nowhere in the world is the teaching of the mother tongue to school children a **PRIVILEGE** as far as ratepayers are concerned, but a **RIGHT**.

Explains Conservative Majority.

(2) What says the civil law? Does the state here in Canada consider the teaching of our language in our schools a privilege or a right? It is true there are found people who will say and write that it is a privilege and not a right. But these persons are usually notorious for their jingoism, and they belong mostly to organizations which have always been very antagonistic to foreigners and particularly to Catholics. The worst people of this class are the Orangemen. It is true they are not very numerous, but they shout very loudly to make people believe they are. Their influence is neither great nor extensive.

During the last election in Manitoba the Orangemen agitated very strongly against the Conservatives because they thought the latter were giving the foreigners too much liberty. The government allowed the foreigners, so the Orangemen said, to use their mother tongue in their own schools! Before the election and during the Orangemen's agitation, they wrote all kinds of articles in the English-speaking press. Some of these articles were so abusive to us that it was surprising that editors printed them. Despite all this the people of Manitoba elected a Conservative majority. Why? Because educated and intelligent people understood very well that the Orangemen's agitation was not founded upon right but upon jingoism! If it had not been for the Orangemen who knows what would have become of the Conservative party? . . .

Teachers Knowing No English.

The civil law in Canada as regards the Ruthenian language is as follows. In

many provinces the right of Ruthenians to teach their mother tongue in school is conceded. True, it is not a statute law, but a law de facto. For instance in Montreal or Quebec the school board hires male and female Gallician teachers who know very little of any language other than Polish or Ruthenian. What does this mean? It means that in all likelihood the civil law there permits the Ruthenians to teach their mother tongue in the schools.

In Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta the governments have established teachers' training schools for Ruthenians. The department of Education in Manitoba has even published an elementary Ruthenian reader. Would they have done this in this province if the civil law had prohibited the teaching of Ruthenian in the schools? **THESE FACTS HAVE GREAT IMPORTANCE.** As long as the civil law does not state plainly that Ruthenians are not allowed to teach their language in the schools it ought to be taught, as demanded by natural law.

The Ruthenians assist in maintaining their schools. Therefore they have a right to teach their own language in them. We speak here only of the Ruthenian language because the question was asked concerning it. We do not wish to mislead anyone, however, or to lay ourselves open to foundationless attack. We therefore admit that the government has a right to demand that in schools which it assists there shall also be taught the official languages of Canada, English and French.

"Absolutely Demand."

This is called for in the common interest and welfare of our people. Thus, as far as the question of teaching languages in our schools goes, we must unceasingly declare to our enemies and our friends that the Ruthenians are prepared to learn English and French, so far as this is necessary, because these two languages are the official languages of Canada. But we have to add **THAT THE RUTHENIANS ABSOLUTELY DEMAND THE TEACHING OF THEIR MOTHER TONGUE IN THEIR SCHOOLS.**

In electing members to public bodies, in electing school trustees, or in making agreements with teachers this must be our programme. We may rest assured that we shall have the support of all true patriotic Ruthenians, of all educated English-speaking people, of the whole French community, and undoubtedly of the whole of our religious organizations. We have simply to demand our just rights with vigor and persistence to acquire better prospects for ourselves in our new motherland.