

# The Menace of Anti-Canadian Nationalism

A general feeling of disquietude over the conditions prevailing in those districts of the Province in which the non-English sections of the electorate chiefly reside had much to do with the heavy vote for the Liberal candidates in the older parts of Manitoba. If all the facts had been known, the feeling of disquietude would have been deeper, and the Liberal vote heavier. The situation is full of peril to the national future, not of Manitoba alone, but of all Canada. Fortunately the vote in Manitoba on July 10 shows that the people at large are awakening to a sense of the danger.

The ideal of a homogeneous English-speaking Canada is not easily realizable. In certain respects Canada will remain a bilingual country. The insistence of the French upon their language and their institutions is natural and understandable. Canada is their country just as much as it is the country of the English-speaking Canadians. It was their country, indeed, first; and the fact of conquest is no so important as many think. So far as the French are concerned, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that they occupy a special position, and are entitled to exceptional consideration. That they should cherish their sense of nationality is inevitable. The majority in this Province have a right, however, to insist upon a system of national schools and the efficient teaching of English in the common schools attended by French children; and they have already exercised the power to make English the only official language in Manitoba. This is about as far as it is desirable to go in the direction of furthering the ideal of homogeneity by legislative enactment.

There is, however, real danger that Canada may become, not a bilingual but a multi-lingual country, inhabited by different peoples, speaking different tongues, and cherishing divergent national ideals. The most notable development of this national spirit has been among the Ruthenians; it is also at work among the Poles; and attempts are even being made to arouse this feeling among the Germans, although there is little probability that any measure of success will attend these efforts.

The movement among the Slavs is, however, serious, and the English-speaking people of the three Western Provinces ought to awaken to the imminence of the danger. The nationalist-clerical movement among the Ruthenians aims at nothing less than the establishment in Western Canada of a distinct Ruthenian nationality, which, with its language, institutions, customs and ideals shall persist for ever as a nation within a nation. They have imported into this propaganda the language, the ideas, the catch-cries and the appeals to racial prejudices which do duty in Europe, where the Ruthenians seek to keep alive their racial characteristics against the restrictive policy of their masters. In Europe they dream of the re-establishment of the ancient, mythical Ukraine in which the oppressed Ukrainians of Galicia, Poland and Southern Russia will again be united under a common government.

These aspirations are legitimate—in Europe. The Ruthenian—or Ukrainian, to give him his more accurate title—is there upon his native heath. In the country which his forefathers have held since the dawn of time he is justified in clinging to his racial characteristics, and dreaming his dreams of a national revival. But these things have nothing to do with Western Canada in the Twentieth Century.

Canada, in giving a home to the immigrant and opening before him opportunities not available in his own country, has the right to impose conditions of citizenship. The first and most imperative condition is that he shall give this country his first allegiance. This is an obligation which rests upon every new settler who comes to Canada—no matter from what country he comes. Englishman, Scotchman, German, American, Ruthenian, Russian—it matters not; unless he is prepared to be a Canadian first, to decide every question that may arise by the test, "What is best for Canada?" he is in this country under false pretences. He should pack his trunk and go back home where he belongs. He is not wanted here. Canada does not ask the new-comer to forget his old home. He can retain his sentimental associations with the land of his birth, and transmit them to his children; but in matters of practical statecraft his duty is to the country which is his home.

The movement for building up a separate Ukrainian nationality in Western Canada has already reached dangerous proportions. In addition to its native strength, it has been encouraged and subsidized by two powerful agencies—the Roblin Government and the Roman Catholic hierarchy, under the direction of Archbishop Langevin. The Roblin Government's idea has been to get votes. If he could betray the whole future of these Provinces, as English-speaking communities, for ten years more of autocratic rule, Sir Rodmond Roblin would make the bargain without a qualm. "After me, the deluge!"

Archbishop Langevin's encouragement of the Ruthenian national movement is in keeping with his well-defined religio-political programme. His idea is to create conditions in the Western Provinces which will enable him to bring the various Governments to their knees and compel them to yield him concessions upon demand. A compact Ruthenian organization, animated by race feeling, and subject, in large measure, to clerical control, would be a weapon which he could use with advantage in bludgeoning reluctant Governments.

The Manitoba Liberal party in the late Provincial election encountered the full hostility of this Roblin-Langevin-nationalist-Ruthenian combination. The Liberal policy conceded fully the right of the Ruthenians to bilingual schools under the provisions of the school law of 1897. But this did not mitigate in the least the ferocity of the attack made upon them. If they had been advocating the total elimination of the teaching of the Ruthenian language, they could not have been more savagely attacked. It was, therefore, evident that there were other features of the Liberal educational policy which were highly objectionable to the directors of this nationalist-clerical propaganda. Nor was it difficult to locate the offending provisions. The Liberal policy called for an increase in the number of schools, sufficient to supply school accommodation for the whole population of school age; for compulsory education, to compel the attendance of children of school age; and for the adequate teaching of English to the children in every school.

This was the programme which had to be blocked if the conspiracy was to be successful. To give the children a thorough education in English was to put an effective extinguisher upon this wild dream of transplanting to this new land the age-long feuds of Central Europe. To give the Ruthenian children an English education would be to make them Canadians who, while retaining a sentimental attachment to the land and language of their fathers, would give their first devotion to the land of their birth. Hence they must strive to retain the existing school system, by which a mere pretence is made of teaching English. As things are, there are not schools enough; the schools are taught by teachers incapable of teaching English except as a text-book subject; the schools are inspected by Ruthenian inspectors whose chief concern is certainly not to see that English is properly taught. Under these conditions children are growing up ignorant of English, unable to mix in the life of the community. They thus become easy victims of the nationalist and clerical agitators.

The elections of July 10 constituted a victory of very slender proportions indeed for the Roblin-Langevin-Ruthenian reaction. If Sir Rodmond, despite a popular majority against him, has a bare majority in the Legislature, he owes it to his concessions and promises to the influences in this Province which are fighting the teaching of English to the non-English chil-

dren. He has at present a majority of four in the Legislature. His following includes five French Catholics, every one of them elected by a racial and creed crusade. In at least eleven constituencies—Gilbert Plains, Danphin, St. Rose, Beautiful Plains, Lakeside, Rockwood, Elmwood, Emerson, Dufresne, Manitou and Brandon—a Liberal majority in the English votes was set off by heavy majorities for Roblin candidates in non-English polls. There is thus no doubt where Sir Rodmond got his majority, such as it is. The vote against Roblin by the English-speaking electors was overwhelming.

What of the future? The fight against the reactionaries must, of course, go forward without cessation and with renewed vigor. We owe this not only to ourselves and to the future of the country, but to the French and Ruthenian minorities which stood out against clerical intimidation and racial appeals, and showed themselves able to take a broad national view of their obligations as voters. It would be a great mistake to assume that there was a solid French and Ruthenian vote against the Liberals. The Liberals polled everywhere a respectable minority of these voters, and in places even secured a majority. These electors knew, despite the lies told them and the frantic appeals made to them, that the Liberal programme did not involve any proscription of their language nor any restriction of their just rights. By their votes they showed a willingness to co-operate with the other elements of the electorate to advance the common good of the Province. Their courage and public spirit, coupled with the determination of the English-speaking electors as revealed by the voting on July 10, give ground to hope that the reactionary policies of educational inefficiency and national propaganda, have been checked and are facing early and complete defeat.