

GERMAN LANGUAGE

IN THE SCHOOLS.

At the last regular meeting of the school board the question of teaching modern languages by the direct method was discussed briefly. At that meeting it was brought out that German is not being taught in the High School, and the members of the board of education expressed the opinion that it was not likely to be.

However, the question is of such general interest at this time, especially in view of the widespread agitation in the United States to discontinue the teaching of German in the schools of that country, that the following discussion of the German language by the Winnipeg Free Press is worth repeating:

The view of the people on this continent who are advocating a general boycott of the study of German in the colleges and universities is not shared by the educationalists in Great Britain who are thinking of the conditions which the educational system of the country must be prepared to meet when the war is over. About a year ago the British Prime Minister appointed a commission to enquire into the study of modern languages in the educational institutions of the country. The report of this body, recently submitted, calls for no reduction of the measure of attention given to German. The general effect of the report is that the amount of time devoted to the study of modern languages should be greatly increased. The need of greater facilities for the study of foreign languages by the officers of the army and navy is strongly emphasized. The adoption of higher language qualification for the general consular service is advised, together with the freer use of the services of women trained in foreign languages. Another recommendation is that new professorships and lectureships be established for instruction in the language, literature, history and economic system of "the five principal European countries, and that "the allowance for French be half "as much again as for each of the four remaining languages."

The calculated disloyalty of German settlers who, in many places, seek through the public school system to perpetuate an alien allegiance, explains and justifies the agitation in the United States against the use or study of German in the public schools. There, as in this country, it is essential that every child should know English and in order that the attainment of this end may be assured the use of foreign languages may well be eliminated from the schools, and their study in elementary grades forbidden. To propose a general boycott of German in colleges and universities, however, is a vastly different matter. Merely on the ground of expediency, a knowledge of the German language among the allied nations will be, after the war, not less but more necessary than before. This war will be followed by the most desperate trade war the world has witnessed and among the most desperate of the participants in that struggle will be the German-speaking peoples. It may not be possible for us to entertain a feeling of friendliness for them, but we will have to do business in competition with them, and to some degree with them. To neglect the study of German would be to leave a valuable weapon to rust in the armory. The Germans before the war knew the value of a knowledge of English. They used it to advantage when competing with the Anglo-Saxon for trade and have found it not without value in war. Anyone should see that if we are to compete with them successfully we must know what they are thinking and doing. The man who is most jealous of German success should be, therefore, most zealous to safeguard the facilities for the study of German by those of our people who must be their competitors in the coming struggle. Sentimental folk who regard the use of German by Anglo-Saxon lips as a form of pollution, may be able to reconcile themselves to the nation by recalling the fact that we have been obliged in self-defence to use poisoned gas.