

*Catholics of Canada
United In Support
of Bishop Budka*

Show Arrest For Sedition Was

Abortive Attempt of Enemy To Discredit Him

With regard to the arrest of Bishop Budka and Father Bosky for alleged sedition, and their subsequent acquittal, a committee of prominent Winnipeg Catholics today issued the following statement to the press:

"This charge was laid during my absence and contrary to my intention and instructions. The words for which Father Bosky is charged were not spoken by the bishop. No warrant or summons was to have been issued; the information was simply to have been used in being sent to the department asking whether or not any action should be taken. I have spoken to my client and he instructs me to withdraw the charge against His Grace Bishop Budka. I ask that the charge be formally withdrawn."

So spoke Mr. Hargreaves, counsel for the prosecution, when the charge of sedition made against Bishop Budka came before the magistrate at Hafford, Sask., for investigation last Monday, according to a copy of a court reporter's notes which have just come to hand.

The magistrate then addressing Bishop Budka said, "As a citizen of this country I am glad the charge of sedition against you has been withdrawn. It gives me great pleasure. I extend to you the sympathy of the court."

It developed that the charge had been laid not because of anything which Bishop Budka had said; no utterances of his were at any time complained of; his sole offense even in the eyes of John Worobetz was that he had been in the church when Father Bosky was preaching a sermon in the course of which it was claimed by Worobetz, that statements of a seditious nature were made.

Worobetz had been prosecuted by the bishop and was subsequently fined for creating a disturbance in a place of public worship; he had on two occasions disturbed meetings during the course of a mission being held by the bishop and by Father Bosky, who is a Belgian priest, in the parish church at Hafford. On one occasion it was during an instruction to the children and on the other, while Father Bosky was preaching a sermon on hell. The preacher was dealing with the sins which, according to the scripture, would merit the punishment of hell and among others he mentioned the sin of corrupting the morals of children. His words were, "If anyone sells or buys or corrupts the souls of the children in the schools, whether a public school, institute or academy, he will go to hell because our Lord said, "(quoting Matthew 18-6)."

Worobetz immediately interrupted, calling out "This is not true." The distorted version given by Worobetz subsequently was "Any parent who sends his children to a public school, academy or institute, will go to hell. That this book (referring to the Bible) was written by the hand of God and contains seven commandments of God."

To retaliate because of the prosecution instituted against him, Worobetz laid informations charging both Father Bosky and Bishop Budka with sedition, the alleged seditious utterances consisting of the statement above mentioned. The charge against Father Bosky was investigated by the magistrate, July 15, and after hearing the evidence submitted and after listening to arguments by lawyers for both prosecution and the defense, the magistrate said, in part, "I have no reason whatever to believe that Father Bosky was guilty of sedition. I have thought the matter over with absolute care. I therefore dismiss the charge against Father Bosky."

There is no doubt in the minds of Bishop Budka and his people that the prosecution was inspired by the movement which is now seeking to establish what is termed a Ruthenian national church, in opposition to the Ruthenian Greek Catholic church, of which Bishop Budka is the head in Canada. Worobetz, who is a supporter of the movement, was only a tool; he was assisted in his prosecution of Bishop Budka by some of the active leaders in this movement; one of these leaders was pelted with eggs by the women of a parish whom he had endeavored to persuade into the new movement; others of the leaders had followed Bishop Budka with a detective during the latter part of June hoping to catch him in something which might form even a shadow of foundation for a prosecution.

It would undoubtedly have served very well the purposes of these men if they could have brought discredit upon the bishop, particularly if they could have succeeded in causing him to be imprisoned while their secret conference was in session at Saskatoon Thursday and Friday.

If the prosecution of the bishop has had no other result, it has at least aroused the Catholic people of Western Canada irrespective of nationality; from all quarters there have come to the bishop during the past few days, messages of sympathy and promises of support. It is undoubtedly a fact that the agencies which have for their purpose the undermining of the influence of Bishop Budka among his people, are many and varied. The bishop's influence among his people and their confidence in and regard for him, are too strong to suit these agencies of opposition. Many and devious are the ways which have been resorted to in the past to thwart his efforts. However, thanks to this latest persecution, the enemies of the bishop will hereafter have to reckon with an undivided support which is and will continue to be accorded to Bishop Budka by the Catholic people generally of Canada.