

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editorial:

Dear Sir—I believe the time has come when we should eliminate the teaching of German in our grade schools, high schools, parochial schools, or any other institution of learning, other than perhaps our colleges and universities. Particularly, I believe that at this time, before the beginning of our second semester in our public schools, steps should be taken to eliminate that course of study from the curriculum.

Personally I can see no reason for continuing the study, while on the other hand, a multitude of reasons spring up showing that it must be eliminated, and we here in Billings can take a big step forward by refusing to teach the German language in our schools.

At the beginning of this war we thought we were fighting a few high-browed men in Germany who could make a hundred million people do their bidding, no matter what the task. Past events have demonstrated to us without the slightest doubt that we were wrong in our guess and now we are face to face with a proposition that we are fighting not the rulers of Germany and the other countries allied with her, but that we are fighting a mighty race of people—a people who believe in wars, the might is right and that people shall live, not by the grace of God, but by the favor of man.

We are now convinced that we are fighting a foe who knows no rules of war, who thinks that morale can be swept aside through terror and that the hands of boys can be stricken from their arms and that the bodies of women can be mutilated so they cannot perform the sacred function of motherhood—that Red Cross hospitals—hospitals marked with the same color that fell from the cross which gave us the liberty and freedom we are now fighting for—can be wantonly destroyed. Not even here convinced us that we are fighting the German people, people having their own language, their own culture and their own ideals. We are told there is a Prussian government and a German people, and if there is, and if the German people are in favor of the Prussian government, then it is up to us to subdue them both; and that, in our judgment, is the very thing that we must do. The German people backed by a Prussian government is our foe, and knowing those facts why should we ask our boys and girls to learn the language of such a people? To teach the language now is to foster respect for them and to indicate that they are necessary to our existence. Now, at this time, we must begin to inform them that there is no room for their language here, in that they cannot use our great public school system as a medium through which their false ideals may gain root.

Fight now is the time to teach them that henceforth they must begin to think in terms of the United States. This war may not win out the German race as a nation, but the war will never be won until we convinced them where they will be no longer a menace to the rest of the world.

Let the German race if mean now, those that are fighting us and let those that are behind us, for the latter are no longer Germans, they are

SEATTLE, Dec. 19.—Colonel H. E. Saville, in command of the military police at Camp Lewis, eastonment, and Major Strong, of Brigadier General J. A. Frost's staff, had a conference here today with Chief of Police J. F. Warren. Afterwards the officers and chief Warren met with a number of citizens at the offices of W. A. Peters, vice chairman of the state council of defense.

The conference was held to be called with the movement to secure the revocation of the order closing Seattle to soldiers because of conditions here. Chief Warren is endeavoring to have the quarantine lifted before Christmas.

Americans know that their language is no longer tolerated and that from now on the English language must be the language of our country. And when we have done that we have done a lot towards ending the war.

And not only would I eliminate the German language from our public schools, but I would compel all foreigners, no matter from what countries they came, to learn and speak the English language, and that as quickly as possible we should see that no other language is used, and particularly would I forbid the use of the German language at any public gathering. This will save a hardship at first on the German churches, but if they will learn our language, and this they can readily do, their troubles will be over, and no good American will object to being compelled to learn and speak it.

I repeat that to permit the use of the German language is to encourage the war, and I believe that it is a real menace and will cause the destruction of a lot of property and the loss of thousands of lives that could be saved if we make this start immediately.

The study of past conditions demonstrates that the free and unrestricted use of the German language in this country in the past helped in no small way to bring on this great conflict, and the absolute elimination of that language from now on will shorten this war, and in addition to that it will unify us and make us one nation, having one ideal, one culture and one language. We must be all American. Our country cannot exist today, half alien and half American any more than it could exist half slave and half free 50 years ago. We are either for this country, heart and soul, else we are for Germany, and if we believe the German language is necessary to our complete development, we believe in the German race, and if we believe in the German race we believe in "Prussian tyrant," together with all the darkest spots in history. Their language is no better than their race, and it is any more necessary.

Because of this world war we can say there are no parents now—and, even countries. There is only a war where right is fighting wrong and where the angels of light are scrawled against the demon of darkness.

Shall we encourage our boys and girls to believe that the German language can possibly benefit us, isn't it time that we put the stamp of disapproval upon it, it is my humble belief that it is absolutely wrong to encourage them and God speed the day when we will have no more of their language, their culture or their ideals.

Very truly yours,
O. KING GRIMSTAD.

Letter To Editor: "English Speaking Only" says Grimstad

Clipped By:



seabix1
Fri, Aug 21, 2020