

ADDRESS

ON THE

RUTHENIAN QUESTION

TO

THEIR LORDSHIPS

THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS

OF CANADA

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The Canadian episcopate decided at the time of its first general council held at Québec in the autumn of 1909, to apply during ten years part of each year's diocesan collections to Ruthenian Catholic works in Western Canada. This generous offer was made with a Christian simplicity and modesty which prevented the Ruthenian bishops of Europe taking earlier cognizance of it. It was only at the Eucharistic Congress of Montréal that I learnt of this decision.

Allow me to present to Your Lordships, in my own name and that of my colleagues, our sincerest thanks. For if the Ruthenians of Canada, or, to define from the first moment their patriotic duties and sentiments, the Ruthenian Canadians, are now under your spiritual care, they have once been under ours, and they are still our fellow-countrymen, and for that reason we think it our right and even our duty to speak in their name, in order to express to you their gratitude.

For my part I have a still more personal duty to thank all their Lordships whose guest I have had the honour to be during my voyage to Canada.

Invited by their Lordships the Bishops of the West, to come into their dioceses to preach the word of the Gospel to the Ruthenians and study the situation, I have undertaken a voyage of more than two months, and, having obtained from them the mission to preach and the jurisdiction to hear confessions, I have tried in answer to their wishes to do all the good that I was able to do in the midst of the Ruthenian population. The very brotherly welcome with which my illustrious Brethren in the Episcopate received me, and above all the fine examples of truly apostolic spirit which they presented, oblige me to have for them, for their clergy and for their dioceses a very lively sense of gratitude and a most special attachment.

Again in answer to their wishes I have tried to study the Ruthenian question in Canada from every possible point of view. To do it the more conscientiously, I have tried to follow the paths traced by the missionaries so that I might take account of all the difficulties which a Ruthenian mission might encounter. Thus I have had at heart to go everywhere that the missionaries go, and to accompany them, so as to make observations, reckoning all the probabilities and the difficulties, striving to gain the most

exact information with regard to the dispositions, prejudices and opinions of Catholics and even of their opponents, so as with a full knowledge of the case to reckon for the future the probability of triumphs or failures.

Asked to give my opinion on this question by several of the illustrious Bishops, I think it my duty to present this short account of my studies to all the illustrious Prelates who, having Ruthenians in their dioceses, might be interested in reading my address. For that reason I take the liberty of sending it to Your Lordship, humbly requesting an hour's attention.

To be quite sincere and to fully express all my ideas, I swear before God who will judge our consciences that I have taken the most minute care to admit in my appreciation of the facts no prejudice, whether of nationality or of rite. In estimating the value of each piece of information I have had in view only the good of souls and the great Catholic cause which is common to us all, and in this God will be my witness.

I. The number of Ruthenians in Canada.

It is difficult to state precisely this matter with perfect accuracy. The official statistics of ten years ago are not now to the purpose, unless from the point of view of their past actuality. The figures of the Immigration Office give us but a poor idea. One figure alone will be enough to show this. From the year 1901 up to the month of July 1910 only 3107 persons declared themselves Ruthenians at the frontier. All the other Ruthenians are concealed under names which indicate the country and not the nationality.

67,926 have called themselves Galicians; 18,694 Austrians; 11,694 Bucovinians; 9848 Hungarians. Whilst for the most part the immigrants indicate their nationality by its own proper name, the Ruthenians prefer to hide their nationality, thinking thereby to have a better chance, to gain better salaries, and get hold of better land. I have seen fathers entering the names of their children at school in English and not in Ruthenian, thinking thereby to secure for their children a better treatment. Under all these Galician and Austrian names one can find Ruthenians, but the difficulty is to know the number.

Counting the 18,178 Austrian subjects who had passed the frontier before 1901, the total number of Austrians come to Canada up to July 1910 would reach the figure of 133,178.

Leaving out Bohemians, Croats, Dalmatians, Slovenians and Styrians who all together amount to but a small number (2613 persons during ten years) there would remain about 130,565 immigrants. One would have to deduct from this number all the Poles who at the Canadian frontier have declared themselves Galicians, and add to it the natural increase in the population.

If then the Protestant press estimates the number of Ruthenians at 120 or 150 thousand (*Free Press*, June 5th, 1908) and if the Ecclesiastical statistics of the three great dioceses of the North-West give 75,000 as the approxi-