

EDITORIAL

THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE A VEHICLE TO CITIZENSHIP AND SUCCESS

THE ARGUMENTS in favor of the man who never learned to read or write the American language, who came to America from a foreign country years ago and acquired citizenship rights, in the "good old days" when American citizenship was thought to be a cheap thing, not considered of much value, may have some merit, but when these arguments are advanced in favor of younger people who have come to America during the last decade or two, the point is out of order and the one who advances it would hardly himself measure up to the standard required.

The American language is not difficult to master. Quite to the contrary. Two to three months of application will give a good working knowledge from which proficiency may be attained with little or no assistance.

Reading the current literature of the country, in the language of the country, is absolutely necessary to secure an intelligent grasp of affairs. To argue otherwise is absurd.

The free evening schools, with classes for non-American speaking people of adult ages, are calling for the younger and older men and women of foreign birth. Capable teachers, paid at public expense, are instructing these classes with painstaking thoroughness.

For those who are unable to attend the evening classes, day classes, along similar lines, are open to meet their requirements.

The alien resident should stop spending all the idle hours over the foreign language papers and books, in the foreign language societies and lodges, or in pleasure seeking.

So long as the foreign language is permitted to be the vehicle of expression, the American resident alien will never be able to enter the sphere of American thought.

Expressions, now and then, may be heard from the older group of foreign born citizens to the effect that they wish that they, upon their arrival in this country, had been placed squarely up against the proposition of being forced to learn to read and write the American language. With their advanced years, they now feel too old to undertake the task, although some have begun going to school, in spite of their years, being convinced that it is the right thing to do.

AMERICANIZING THE INDUSTRIES

LARGE industrial concerns in America have gradually come to realize that their best protection against unrest and the red tinted radicalism lies in taking an interest in their employees of foreign birth.

They are trying to solve the problem in various ways, but the night school plan adopted by some, seems to give promise of definite results.

Among the subjects discussed in these industrial night schools are various ways of earning a liveli-

hood. The laws and regulations governing business, letter writing, politeness, the importance of neatness of dress and person are things taught as well as the American language, federal, state and city government, and the practical utility of all the various departments of American civic affairs.

This is practical work in the making of American citizens and should be undertaken in a measure in every industry employing a foreign born element. It is important that the foreigner arrives at an early understanding of the governmental differences between the United States and the country from which he came, and that here he is expected to acquire the qualifications of self-government. A kindly, helpful and thoughtful interest taken in the aliens, no matter from what country they may come, instead of an attitude of antagonism, will go a long way toward making them desirable citizens, whereas the opposite attitude tends to force exclusion, ignorance of our liberal institutions and a spirit of viciousness and antagonism to law and authority, exemplified in what we have come to call "red" or I. W. W.-ism.

NO ONE SHOULD CAST AN AMERICAN BALLOT WHO DOES NOT SPEAK OUR LANGUAGE

THERE are in America several millions of un-naturalized aliens, their number is being augmented greatly every year by a constant flow of immigration.

These millions are gradually complying with the residence requirements of five years and are becoming eligible for admission to citizenship.

Under the old order of things in America, it was common to grant citizenship to anyone taking the trouble to ask for it, even if the applicant had to bring an interpreter to make his wishes understood. Due to these lax methods, American has a large contingent of Aliens, holding American citizenship certificates, who are snugly beyond any present approach to Americanization, yet, are unable to read and write the American language, and though entirely lacking the close familiarity with American institutions, necessary to intelligence in citizenship, exercise the sacred prerogative of a citizen, deciding American issues as citizen electors, whenever the American sanctuary, the American balloting booth, is thrown open to all sovereign American citizens.

This condition should be remedied. In justice to those who are meeting the requirements now called for before citizenship is granted, who attend evening schools and citizenship classes, previous to their examination in open court, laws should be enacted calling for a standard of literacy, reading and writing of the American language, without which no one should be permitted to register as a qualified American voter.

Such a law would in no way otherwise effect the citizenship status of the holder of a certificate of citizenship. A man too indifferent to the interests of America and his own standard of equality in citizenship, to take the trouble of learning to read intelligently the American language, and to some extent write it, can lay no valid claim to the sacred right of casting an American ballot.

Such a law would automatically aid the process of Americanization, make the preparatory instructions in citizenship and the subsequent examination of applicants less difficult, by reason of the fact that the aliens would see the urgent necessity of previously attending the free evening schools, or day classes,