

On the Borderland of Truth and Falsehood

"THE INTERPRETER" which in this instance is a small tract issued or permitted to issue monthly by the Board of Trustees of the Foreign Language Information Service in New York, is like most interpreters, sometimes reliable, sometimes fairly reliable and sometimes wholly unreliable.

As we find it, it isn't so much what is said as how it is said by this Interpreter that counts. The Service may be all right by way of helping the newer immigrants, we don't know, but it isn't all right the way the publication of this bureau in reference "interprets" the thoughts and expressions of the parties in question (the immigrant and Uncle Sam), and continually goes out of its way to sneer and jeer at all Americanization work, giving copiously of its limited space to anybody who is willing and interested in taking a whack at Americanization.

For the edification of the Americans who do not read foreign language newspapers or periodicals let us explain that these interpreters always translate the best they find in those papers. In this way they help to put a quietus on American public opinion against the pernicious expressions in contributions and editorials in the foreign language press. Through circulars in the American language and through the Interpreter, the monthly tract in reference, the interpreters of this bureau are carrying on a very finished form of propaganda against Americanization work, appealing to public sympathy for "the down-trodden and helpless aliens" with a view to creating a sentiment favoring a hands-off policy respecting the immigrant people who by inference are held to be fully able to care for themselves, if let alone. The work of the interpreters in this bureau has been instrumental in boosting the "stock" of the foreign language press, allaying public sentiment and obtaining a very much better rating for such publications in political and commercial channels, as time goes on. And to the foreign language press they hold out the assurance that the public sentiment is turning and that due to the bureau's "intelligent" efforts, resentment is dying out and the old friendly and patronizing attitude is gradually coming back. Caustic remarks against

Americanization, always showing it up in an unfavorable light, runs rampant through the channels of the bureau and in turn is stressed with ill concealed joy in the foreign language press. A few foreign language newspapers are wise enough not to enlarge upon the bureau's informations, which are regularly sent to them, mostly in foreign language form. Evidently they are afraid that the bureau interpreters might work too fast and by some mistake undo the work that has been done.

A fair sample of the kind of expressions anent immigrant assimilation and Americanization in which the learned interpreters of this bureau are interested may be had from the following paragraphs, in smaller print, which the interpreters have purloined from a New York Times' interview with Willa S. Cather, the novelist. By way of introduction and whole-hearted support of the caustic remarks by this writer, who is clearly outside of her element and beyond the depths of her intelligence on the subject, the interpreters' "Interpreter" indulges in the following prefacing:

Willa S. Cather, novelist, has a word to say about immigrant contributions to American life. It is not the conventional word, but it recalls some virtues which prevailed in the United States a generation ago and ought to be copied by the over-zealous advocates of stereotyped citizenship.

OUCH! There you got it, you foolish citizens of America who are heart and soul interested and

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