

[ca. Oct. 1890 - Jan. 1891]

I have, I believe, as friendly a feeling towards our German-American population as any man in this country; and if I did not believe that the Bennett Law would assist in the advancement of their youth I would certainly oppose its continuance upon our statute books. I want the little German boy and girl, the little Norwegian, the little Bohemian and the little Pole, the children of all foreign born parents, to have the same chance in life as my children. Without a knowledge of the English language they can not have this chance. This is a very plain proposition, with which I know you will agree. I plead for these children of foreign born parents for the reason that I ~~know~~ personally know many who were born in this country who are handicapped by ignorance of the language of the country. Should not something be done to give these bright young people an opportunity to rise according to the ability God has given them? Advancement in life for them is out of the question without a knowledge of the language of the country.

I am glad to know that you believe as I do in this matter; and I am surprised to know that we have men among us who look upon it as a crime to make an effort to confer upon these children the opportunity to learn to speak the language of the country in which their lot is cast.

I am confident that when the Lutheran people come to look at the Bennett Law in its right light, and study its provisions, they will fail to see in it any menace to their rights or tenets. It seeks to interfere with ~~no~~ religion. It simply requires that for a certain number of weeks in each year, children must attend some school where a certain amount of English instruction is given. It does not seek to abolish the parochial school or interfere with the teaching of German.