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**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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MENNONITE RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS

WESTERN CANADA 1870-1925

by Adolf Ens

Dissertation presented to the
Department of Religious Studies
University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The Mennonites are descendants of the pacifist wing of the Anabaptist segment of the 16th century Reformation. The first ones to come to Canada were of Swiss descent and settled in what is now Ontario, arriving from Pennsylvania during the latter part of the 18th century. The Mennonites of western Canada, who form the subject of this study, are largely of Dutch-Flemish descent and came to Manitoba during the 1870s from Russia.

The doctrine of separation of church and state which the Anabaptists had developed in a context of persecution under unfriendly governments had served the Mennonites well during their two and a half centuries of relative toleration in Prussia. However, in the Mennonite commonwealth in Russia beginning 1789, total responsibility for local self-government was thrust upon them. At the same time, a special agreement with the Russian government guaranteed the Mennonites complete freedom from military and civil service.

The way for the immigration of some seven thousand Mennonites from Russia to Canada in the 1870s was prepared by an agreement in 1873 with the Canadian government which assured them exemption from military service and from the swearing of oaths, and control of their religious life and their own schools. Block settlement in villages in Manitoba allowed them to function

in the strong communal style which their theology demanded, in contrast to the more individual approach which the frontier context and the homestead system fostered in the Canadian west generally.

Within the first decade in Canada, differences appeared within the Mennonite group in their response to provincial government initiatives in the areas of municipal government and public schools. The municipal system of local government was accepted fairly readily by the majority since it was very similar in practice to the pattern they had used in Russia. But it was rejected in principle by the Reinlaender (or Old Colony) group since the statutory power of the municipal officials was considered a violation of the brotherhood principle. A compromise allowed the Russian-Mennonite system to function alongside of the Canadian municipal system.

In assuring the Mennonites of control over their own schools, the Canadian government gave what the provincial governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan later on took. Under Manitoba's pre-1890 system of government supported confessional schools, a varying number of Mennonite communities accepted public schools. This increased steadily after the Laurier-Greenway Compromise, had provided for bilingual instruction in the public schools in Manitoba, and with the arrival of Mennonite settlers from Prussia, Russia and the U.S.A. in Saskatchewan. Some groups, including the Reinlaender, continued to resist the public school system in principle.

The national fervour of World War I led to the abolition of instruction in languages other than English, followed by increasingly stringent measures by both Manitoba and Saskatchewan to get their entire school population served by public schools. Under the pressure of fines and imprisonment the majority of Mennonite groups accepted the public schools, adapting them wherever possible to make them serve the goals of preserving Mennonite religious and cultural distinctives. Some groups, including the Reinlaender and some of the Sommerfelder (Chortitzer, Bergthaler), refused to yield control of education to the government, and emigrated to Mexico or Paraguay during the 1920s in order to maintain their separation from the state.

The patriotic mood of the war also led to considerable pressure on the federal government to withdraw its promise of exemption from military service. Ottawa refused to do so, although after the passing of the Military Service Act of 1917 (conscription) it became difficult, particularly in some parts of Saskatchewan, to ensure that local military officials respected Mennonite exemption in practice. Ottawa did yield to public pressure in disfranchising the Mennonites through the War Time Elections Act, in suspending the circulation and publication of all of their German language church periodicals, and in barring the immigration of Mennonites by order-in-council.

The emigration of almost eight thousand Mennonites to Latin America and the arrival of some twenty thousand others as

refugees from the U.S.S.R. during the 1920s, significantly altered the composition of Canadian Mennonitism, greatly increasing the pace of accommodation and acculturation to Canadian ways..

CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Mennonites: a Brief Historical Sketch

Canadian Mennonites trace their origins back to the sixteenth century Reformation in western Europe. They constitute one of the groups¹ that claim historical descent from the Anabaptists, or from that stream of the Reformation characterized by Williams as "radical," by Bainton and Fast as the "left wing," and by Klaassen as "neither Catholic nor Protestant."²

The Anabaptists emerged in Zurich about 1523 out of the circle of Reformers whose centre was Huldreich Zwingli. The rebaptism of several of the leaders of this circle, including Conrad Grebel and Felix Mantz, in January 1525,

¹The Hutterites and perhaps some Baptists share the Mennonite 16th century origins; the Church of the Brethren (Tunkers) claim Pietist and Anabaptist ancestry. See Cornelius Dyck, ed., An Introduction to Mennonite History (Scottsdale: Pa.: Herald Press, 1967), for a concise survey of the worldwide Mennonite church.

²George Hunston Williams, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962) is the most comprehensive account in English of the Anabaptist movement in the 16th century.

Roland H. Bainton, "The left wing of the Reformation," Journal of Religion 21 (April 1941): 124-34; Heinold Fast, Der linke Fluegel der Reformation. Glaubenszeugnisse der Taeufer, Spiritualisten, Schwaermer, und Antitrinitarier (Bremen: Scheunemann, 1962).

Walter Klaassen, Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant (Waterloo: Conrad Press, 1973).

was done in defiance of state law and against the wishes of Zwingli's Reformed church. It marked the beginning of a 'free church' as a body of Christians distinct from either the Catholic state church or the Reformed Volkskirche.³

Within a few years of the appearance of the Grebel-Mantz circle of Anabaptists in Switzerland, similar movements surfaced in Moravia to the east and in the Low Countries to the northwest. The former came under the strong communitarian impulse of Jakob Huter from 1533 to 1535 and has retained both the name (Hutterite) and the communal form of life to the present time. The latter had to struggle hard to establish an identity distinct from its revolutionary wing which established for a while (1534-35) the violent kingdom of Muenster. Initial leadership of the peaceful wing of Dutch Anabaptism was given by Obbe Philips and his brother Dirk. But they were soon overshadowed by Menno Simons, a former priest, who was ordained as an Anabaptist leader in 1537 and grew in stature and influence until his death twenty-four years later.⁴ Like Huter in Moravia, Menno gave both organizational principle

³Fritz Blanke, Brothers in Christ. The history of the oldest Anabaptist congregation in Zollikon, near Zurich, Switzerland, trans. Joseph Nordenhaug (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1961), p. 15.

⁴His collected writings have gone through numerous editions in Dutch, German and English and continue to enjoy a wide circulation. The best English edition is The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, c. 1496-1561, ed. John Christian Wenger, trans. Leonard Verduin (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1956).

and his name to the movement.⁵

Descendants of all three of these groups of Anabaptists have found their way to Canada. The Hutterites, under the pressure of repeated persecution and suppression, moved eastward from Moravia to Hungary and Transylvania during the Thirty Years' War, and then still further to southern Russia via Wallachia about 1770. A century later they joined the Mennonites in a mass migration to North America, settling in Dakota in 1874. During the Spanish-American War a group of them settled for a few years (1898-1905) in southern Manitoba, but returned again to the U.S.A. Near the end of World War I a large number of them once more immigrated to Canada, settling in the three prairie provinces.⁶

The intense persecution to which Anabaptists in Switzerland were subjected from the outset forced them to seek refuge elsewhere. Many went eastward to Moravia. Others went north into Alsace, where the city of Strassburg provided a haven of toleration for a while. After the Thirty Years' War many settled in the Palatinate. Near the end of the seventeenth century the first of the descendants of the Swiss

⁵ In the Netherlands, descendants of the sixteenth century Anabaptists have continued to use the name Doopsgezinde for their church. Elsewhere they, as well as the descendants of the Swiss Brethren, have almost universally accepted the name Mennonite.

⁶ John A. Hostetler, Hutterite Society (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1974), and Victor Peters, All Things Common. The Hutterian Way of Life (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965); both begin with a concise historical survey of the movement. The latter then focuses on Hutterites in Canada.

Brethren crossed the Atlantic to settle in William Penn's colony in America. At intervals throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this migration to America continued, some of it directly from Switzerland, some of it from the Palatinate, Alsace, Bavaria, and Hesse. After the American Revolution, a movement north from Pennsylvania into Upper Canada began in 1786. A century later westward migration from Ontario led to the formation of a number of communities of Swiss Mennonites in the Northwest Territories, beginning at High River (Alberta) in 1891.⁷

A measure of toleration came much earlier for the Mennonites in the Netherlands (1581) than it did for the Swiss, but prior to that time many had settled in the Vistula delta area of Poland, Prussia, and the Free City of Danzig. During two and a half centuries of life here, many patterns of congregational and community organization developed that were later transplanted, with some adaptations, to Canada.⁸ In 1788 the first group of descendants of these Dutch Mennonites became part of a large eastward migration of Germanic people and settled in the southern Ukraine. After a further century of adaptation in surroundings quite different from their

⁷ Frank H. Epp, Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920. The History of a Separate People (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), especially chaps. 2 and 13, gives an account of their coming to Upper Canada and the beginnings of western settlement.

⁸ E. K. Francis, "Mennonite institutions in early Manitoba: a study of their origins," Mennonite Quarterly Review 22 (July 1948): 144-55.

Prussian ones, a group of almost seven thousand immigrated into the new Dominion of Canada and settled in the still newer province of Manitoba during the years 1874-1880. Westward expansion into the Northwest Territories began a decade later.

The present study focuses on this third group. However, since descendants of the Hutterites and the Swiss Brethren had also found their way to western Canada before the end of the time period under consideration, reference to their experience will be included.

2. Anabaptist-Mennonite Concept of the State

Among the points which separated the proto-Anabaptists from Zwingli at the second Zurich disputation in October 1523 was a difference in their understanding of the limits of the authority of civic government. When Zwingli held that the City Council should decide on how to proceed with the needed reformation of the mass, the Grebel circle began to part company with the Reformer on the grounds that the Word and the Spirit of God should decide such matters, not the state. A little more than a year later this position had ripened to the point where a number of them were willing to risk their lives in being rebaptized in direct contravention of the law.

It is clear from the outset of the movement, however, that the Anabaptists were not anarchists or revolutionaries. The oldest extant confession of faith of the Swiss Brethren,

which came into circulation in early 1527, includes an article dealing with the relationship of believers (or a believers' church) to the state. It begins with the significant affirmation that the office of government is ordained by God.⁹ Based strongly on Romans 13, Anabaptists held that the state was instituted by God in response to human sin in order to punish the evil and protect the good.¹⁰ Christians therefore owe obedience to the secular authority as long as its claims do not violate the prior obedience owed to God (Acts 4:19).¹¹ In no case would rebellion be acceptable.¹²

The primary reason for the necessity of government was to maintain order among the ungodly. The office of magistrate, the Anabaptists held, in contrast to the Reformers, could be satisfactorily filled by a non-Christian civil ruler. But

⁹Article 6 of the Schleithem Brotherly Union. The complete text with an introduction and extensive notes is found in John H. Yoder, ed. and trans., The Legacy of Michael Sattler, Classics of the Radical Reformation, 1 (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1973), pp. 27-54.

¹⁰Hans Hillerbrand, "The Anabaptist view of the state," MQR 32 (April 1958): 84-85.

¹¹Robert Kreider, "The Anabaptists and the State," in Guy F. Hershberger, ed., The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1957), p. 189. Hillerbrand, pp. 92-93, summarizes in five points the basis for Anabaptist willingness to obey governmental authority.

¹²Ibid., pp. 86-87. Conrad Grebel et al., "Letters to Thomas Muentzer by Conrad Grebel and friends," in George Hunston Williams and Angel M. Mergal, ed., Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers. Documents Illustrative of the Radical Reformation, Library of Christian Classics, vol. 25 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), pp. 83-84, had already in 1524 warned Muentzer against attacking the princes. Menno Simons, Complete Writings, p. 671, preached against the abominations of the Muenster revolt from the outset of his Anabaptist career.

since the 'sword' (meaning the "judicial and police powers of the state"¹³) was an ordering of God outside "the perfection of Christ," the Schleithem articles held that a true Christian should not serve as magistrate. It was not appropriate for a follower of Christ to "pass sentence in disputes and strife about worldly matters." (Matthew 20:25-27).¹⁴ Nor was it proper that the Christian "should use the sword against the wicked for the protection and defense of the good, or for the sake of love."¹⁵

In the Anabaptist view there was a radical distinction between the church of Christ and the world. Those in the kingdom of Christ were concerned solely with the earnest desire to follow Christ and had no responsibility for maintaining law and order in the 'world' (1 Corinthians 5:12).¹⁶ Conversely, the Anabaptists were convinced that the state had no rights or responsibilities in the affairs of the church. They were therefore opposed in principle to a state church and

¹³Yoder, p. 52, n. 74.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 40; Hillerbrand, pp. 94-96.

¹⁵Yoder, p. 39.

¹⁶The most extensive development of the doctrine of two worlds in the implicit theology of Anabaptism is that of Robert Friedmann, The Theology of Anabaptism (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1973), and "The doctrine of two worlds," in Hershberger, pp. 105-18.

Balthasar Hubmeier, an early associate of Grebel, argued for a much more 'responsible' role for the Anabaptist community in Moravia at the Nicolsburg disputation in 1527. However, his congregation did not survive his martyr death in 1528. Williams, The Radical Reformation, pp. 224-29.

advocated a concept of religious liberty that would allow even Turks and Jews to be left alone to live according to their faith in the Christian nations of Europe.¹⁷

The refusal of Anabaptists to swear the civil oath (Matthew 5:33-37), participate in warfare, or initiate litigation, brought them into conflict with state authorities at various times in their history.¹⁸ In time these characteristics came to be identified as Mennonite distinctives and were a point of special consideration in looking for new countries in which to settle.

3. Mennonite Church-State Relations in Prussia and Russia

Dutch Anabaptist-Mennonite refugees fleeing Spanish Catholic persecution during the middle half of the sixteenth century settled in the region of the Vistula delta and along the Baltic coast to the east. Here they found varying degrees of tolerance and freedom under four different political jurisdictions: the Catholic king of Poland, the Lutheran duke of the Koenigsberg-Tilsit area (later the king of Prussia), and the free cities of Danzig and Elbing. Since the rulers in most cases were absolutist, and no constitutional guarantees of religious liberty existed, Mennonites received numerous charters of privileges during the two centuries preceding the

¹⁷ Kreider, p. 191; Hillerbrand, pp. 89-91.

¹⁸ Kreider, pp. 192-93; Hillerbrand, pp. 103-7; Harold S. Bender, "Church and state in Mennonite history," MQR 13 (April 1939): 88.

union of the entire area under the king of Prussia. These charters, when they were effective, modified or counteracted discriminatory laws or government orders. Among the Mennonites they established a pattern of seeking their guarantee of religious toleration not in an impersonal constitution but rather in a special Privilegium from the reigning monarch.

During the reign of Frederick the Great (1740-86) the entire region was unified under Prussian rule. Frederick was willing to promise complete religious toleration but growing European militarism made him reluctant to include military exemption. The special charter of 1780 compromised by allowing Mennonites exemption from military service in return for an annual sum of money in support of a military academy. This uneasy settlement, weakened by a series of economic restrictions in the succeeding years, made the invitation from Czarina Catherine II to settle in southern Russia look very attractive to many Mennonites. During the next fifty years, about half of the Mennonite population of the delta area migrated to the steppes of the Ukraine.¹⁹

Catherine's invitation to Germans and other western Europeans to come to settle in the newly acquired Russian territory north of the Black Sea was first published in two

¹⁹ For a brief summary of this era of Mennonite history, see John Horsch, Mennonites in Europe, 2d rev. ed. (Scottsdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1950), chap. 27; C. Henry Smith, The Story of the Mennonites, 3d ed., rev. and enl. by Cornelius Krahn (Newton, Ks.: Mennonite Publication Office, 1950), pp. 263-94; William I. Schreiber, The Fate of the Prussian Mennonites (Goettingen Research Committee, 1955).

manifestos in December 1762 and July 1763. But in 1786 a special representative visited the Prussian Mennonite communities and sparked their interest in seeking a more favourable place to live. The two delegates dispatched to investigate settlement possibilities that same year were instructed not only to explore the land but also to negotiate a charter of privileges with the Russian government. A 20-point Privilegium, worked out by Catherine's representative and the Mennonite delegates, was delivered by the Russian Chargé d'affaires in Danzig on 3 March 1788.²⁰ The first point granted complete freedom of religious practice according to Mennonite church order and usage. The seventh accepted the Mennonite simple affirmation in place of an oath of allegiance and the eighth guaranteed exemption from all military service for all time for the Mennonite immigrants and their descendants.

When Catherine was succeeded on the throne by Czar Paul I in 1796, Bishop (Aeltester) David Epp and Minister (Kirchenlehrer) Gerhard Willms spent two years in St. Petersburg to

²⁰ The entire text is reproduced by D. H. Epp, Die Chortitzer Mennoniten. Versuch einer Darstellung des Entwicklungsganges derselben (Odessa: A. Schultz, 1889), pp. 24-32. An English summary is found in David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia. A sketch of its founding and endurance, 1789-1919," MQR 47 (October 1973): 283-86. According to J. J. Hildebrand, Hildebrand's Zeittafel. Chronologische Zeittafel 1500. Daten historischer Ereignisse und Geschehnisse aus der Zeit der Geschichte der Mennoniten Westeuropas, Russlands und Amerikas (Winnipeg: By the author, 1945), p. 147, the original document in Russian was dated 22 April 1787.

negotiate a renewal of the Mennonite charter.²¹

Like other foreign colonists in Russia, the Mennonites were to enjoy forever complete autonomy in the administration of their internal affairs according to the July Manifesto of 1763.²² During their two centuries of residence in the Polish, Danzig, and Prussian territories they had never achieved full citizenship status. Now they were suddenly required to administer their own affairs on the village as well as on the district level with very uneven guidance from the Curator and Director of Foreign Colonists to whom they were directly answerable.²³ This Director was appointed by the central agency of the Russian government which was in charge of the administration of the foreign colonies. Under Catherine II this Office of Guardianship of Foreigners was modified several times without great success. Under her successors it evolved by 1818 into the Guardianship Committee of the Foreign Colonists in Southern Russia, known among the Mennonites by its German title of Fuersorge Komitee and located since 1828 in Odessa. Until its dissolution in 1871, just a few years prior to the first Mennonite emigration to North America, this com-

²¹D. H. Epp, pp. 97-101. This September 1800 charter reaffirms all relevant items of the original Privilegium and expands the clause on military exemption.

²²David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite colonies in New Russia. A study of their settlement and economic development from 1789-1914," (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1933), pp. 42-43.

²³Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth," MQR 47 (October 1973): 300, 296; *ibid.*, 48 (January 1974): 11.

mittee remained the channel for the internally autonomous colonies to relate to the Russian government.

The system of local administration, as spelled out in an Instruction of May 1801, made each village a separate unit of government. A community assembly, composed of one representative from each farm, elected a Schultze (mayor) and two Beisitzer (assistants) who together formed an executive committee to administer the village. In addition to electing village and district officials, the community assembly had wide ranging powers which included levying taxes, hiring teachers and fire-overseers, selecting preachers and herdsmen, assigning individual farmers their strips of land, and determining the crop rotation. Its decisions on purely local issues were final.

The executive committee, especially the Schultze, had an even broader range of local power. Not only was he responsible for maintaining peace and order, collecting taxes, and maintaining roads and bridges, but he also had far-reaching authority over agriculture, commerce and industry, justice, fire safety, and the morals and church attendance of villagers. No decision of the committee or of the Schultze was binding, however, without ratification of the community assembly.

A number of village communities together formed a district (volost). A district assembly, composed of one or more representatives from each of the villages, had powers comparable to a village assembly and could make decisions binding upon all of the member villages. The village Schultze

or one of the Beisitzer was always one of the village representatives. A chairman of the district assembly, or Oberschultze, and several assistants, were elected by the voters of the villages. Together they formed the district office (Gebietsamt) and with the help of hired clerical staff administered the affairs of the whole district or colony. The Oberschultze represented the colony before the governmental agencies, particularly the Fuersorge Komitee. He was also responsible for maintaining peace and order in the colony and administering justice. In imposing sentences (fines, incarceration, public labour, corporal punishment) on offenders, however, consent of the Schultze of the village to which the guilty person belonged was necessary.²⁴

This is basically the system of government which the Mennonites in Russia used until the emigration of the 1870s. Some of its background is found in the Prussian experience.²⁵ It was transplanted to Canada by the Mennonite groups settling in Manitoba in the 1870s and continued there until it was replaced by institutions imposed by the Canadian or Manitoban government.

The Anabaptist concern for a rather clear separation of church and state thus underwent considerable modification

²⁴Rempel, *ibid.*, pp. 10-15 gives a concise summary of the system of local government. A more extensive treatment is found in his "The Mennonite colonies in New Russia," pp. 113-22.

²⁵Francis, "Mennonite institutions in early Manitoba," pp. 149-51.

in its application by the Mennonites in Russia. A definite differentiation remained between the Mennonite community and the Russian state government, but local government was now completely in Mennonite hands so that church and mini-state were coterminus. All offices in this local government were held by members of the Mennonite church, although in some villages a Russian was hired to serve as constable.²⁶

Migration from Prussia to Russia continued at intervals until the 1860s. To the first group of some 228 families, who settled 1789 at Chortitza, were added several immigrants during 1793-95. A second colony was begun at the Molotschna River, some ninety miles from Chortitza, by new immigrants arriving in 1804 and the years following. Two further colonies were established by direct migration from Prussia. As the original two colonies at Chortitza and Molotschna grew, all locally available lands were taken up and internal migration within Russia began. The first of the so-called daughter colonies was Bergthal, founded by settlers from Chortitza in 1836; another was Fuerstenland, begun on rented lands in 1864.

²⁶ Bender's contention, "Church and state in Mennonite history," p. 98, that "actually the government approached a form of theocracy," is not accurate. The church had no power in civil affairs and no direct influence. Officials of the two organizations did not overlap. And church control of the school system implies theocracy only if it is assumed that education is clearly the responsibility of the state.

On this point see also Henry J. Gerbrandt, Adventure in Faith. The background in Europe and the development in Canada of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba (Altona, Man.: D. W. Friesen, 1970), p. 28, and C. A. Dawson, Group Settlement. Ethnic communities in western Canada, W. A. Mackintosh and W. L. G. Joerg, ed., Canadian Frontiers of Settlement (Toronto: Macmillan, 1936), 7: 95, 99.

4. Canadian Mennonites: a Survey of the Literature

The centennial of the arrival of Mennonites in western Canada, celebrated in 1974, gave rise to a wide range of historical research projects. The most ambitious of these has so far produced the first volume of Mennonites in Canada by Frank H. Epp.²⁷ This volume covers the years 1786 to 1920 from the approach of an historian who takes special interest in the religious and ecclesiastical aspects of the Mennonite experience in Canada. Thoroughly researched and well written, this work is the most comprehensive treatment of the subject available. Six chapters in the second half of the book deal with themes on which the present dissertation focuses.

An equally thorough study is that of Notre Dame sociologist E. K. Francis, In Search of Utopia.²⁸ As its subtitle indicates, it concentrates almost exclusively on Mennonites in Manitoba. Although working as a sociologist, Francis covers the economic, religious, and political aspects of Mennonite life with insight and sensitivity. This volume, together with several articles that grew out of his research, are the more helpful because of the perspective of an outsider which Francis brings to the subject.

²⁷ See above n. 7. A second volume is in process.

²⁸ E. K. Francis, In Search of Utopia. The Mennonites in Manitoba (Altona: D. W. Friesen, 1955).

The four-volume Mennonite Encyclopedia²⁹ has numerous articles on Mennonites in Canada, including several longer ones of a general nature. These are of very uneven quality, with those by Cornelius Krahn deserving special mention for their high quality.

On the subject of the emigration from Russia and the early settlement years, Ernst Correll and George Leibbrandt have each published a number of articles.³⁰ Correll concentrates on publishing source materials relating to the immigration, largely from government archives, which were relatively inaccessible at that time. Leibbrandt's articles are part of a larger study of German peoples in Canada. C. A. Dawson's Group Settlement³¹ is a study of various ethnic communities in Western Canada, including that of the Mennonites. It is helpful in setting the Mennonite experience into a larger context, but it is too general a survey to be of much help in

29

Harold S. Bender and C. Henry Smith, ed., The Mennonite Encyclopedia. A comprehensive reference work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite Movement, 4 vols. (Hillsboro, Ks.: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House; Newton, Ks.: Mennonite Publication Office; Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1955-59).

30 Ernst Correll, "Mennonite immigration into Manitoba: Sources and Documents, 1872, 1873," MQR 11 (July 1937): 196-227; "The Mennonite Loan in the Canadian Parliament, 1875," ibid., 20 (October 1946): 255-75; "Mennonite immigration into Manitoba: Documents and Sources, 1873-1874," ibid., 22 (January 1948): 41-57; "Sources on the Mennonite immigration from Russia in the 1870's," ibid., 24 (October 1950): 329-52; George Leibbrandt, "The emigration of the German Mennonites from Russia to the United States and Canada, 1873-1880," ibid., 6 (October 1932): 205-26; 7 (January 1933): 5-41.

31 Part II, pp. 93-171, deals with the Mennonites.

making the internal distinctions held necessary for the present study.

Two unpublished geography theses provide useful background material on the pioneering settlement process. John Warkentin's doctoral dissertation is a very careful and comprehensive account of the beginning of the two Manitoba reserves while Richard Friesen's M.A. thesis does the same thing, though less comprehensively, for the two major settlements in Saskatchewan.³² J. F. Galbraith's pamphlet on The Mennonites in Manitoba³³ is a very valuable eyewitness account by a perceptive newspaper man with an historical bent. His account of the introduction of municipal government on the West Reserve is particularly helpful.

A considerable number of theses have been written on the subject of Mennonite education in Canada.³⁴ The oldest of

³² John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite settlements of southern Manitoba" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1962); Richard John Friesen, "Old Colony Mennonite settlements in Saskatchewan: A study in settlement change" (M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1975).

³³ J. F. Galbraith, The Mennonites in Manitoba 1875-1900. A review of their coming, their progress, and their present prosperity (Morden, Man.: Chronicle Press, 1900).

³⁴ Andrew Willows, "A history of Mennonites, particularly in Manitoba" (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1924); I. I. Friesen, "The Mennonites of western Canada with special reference to education" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1934); John Jacob Bergen, "A historical study of education in the Municipality of Rhineland" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1959); Peter George Klassen, "A history of Mennonite education in Manitoba" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1956); John George Doerksen, "A history of education of the Mennonite Brethren of Canada" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1963).

these, by former (1910-16) inspector of Mennonite schools Andrew Willows (Weidenhammer), is a combination of historical research and reporting on the author's firsthand experience. I. I. Friesen deals with education among the Mennonites in Western Canada but focuses primarily on the Manitoba situation. Although his father was one of the leading men in the school struggle in Saskatchewan, Friesen's account is reasonably objective. Bergen's M.Ed. thesis narrows its scope to the largely Mennonite municipality of Rhineland in Manitoba and thereby gains the advantage of being able to go into much more detail. While it is carefully done, its style lacks the freshness of his earlier excellent term paper, "The Manitoba Mennonites and their schools from 1873 to 1924."³⁵ The theses of Klassen on Mennonite education in Manitoba and Doerksen on Mennonite Brethren education are less directly helpful to the present study. Among published materials, Schaefer's biography of the leading pioneer educator among the Manitoba Mennonites, H. H. Ewert, and Epp's history of the leading educational institution among Saskatchewan Mennonites, Rosthern Junior College, are the most significant.³⁶

On the emigration to Latin America, Walter Quiring's

³⁵ M.Ed. term paper, University of Manitoba, 1950.

³⁶ Paul J. Schaefer, Heinrich H. Ewert, Lehrer, Erzieher, und Prediger der Mennoniten. Zuege aus seinem Leben und Wirken (Gretna, Man.: Manitoba Jugendorganisation der Mennoniten-Konferenz von Canada, 1945); Frank H. Epp, Education with a Plus. The story of Rosthern Junior College (Waterloo: Conrad Press, 1975).

accounts of the Paraguayan settlements are the most comprehensive and detailed, but his strong German nationalism during the 1930s caused him to view the emigrating Mennonites as German Kulturkaempfer, thus obscuring other more important motives for leaving Canada.³⁷ Fretz, in his study of both the Mexican and Paraguayan Mennonite communities,³⁸ is less interested in an historical account of their development than he is in a sociological description of their current state. Sawatzky describes Mennonite colonization in Mexico as a geographer with strong interest in economics, while Schmiedehaus, a German diplomat in Mexico, includes only a brief introduction of their Canadian background in his description of the Mennonite colonies.³⁹ Abraham Friesen makes the emigrations from Canada after World War I the focus of his study of "Emigration in Mennonite history," but he apparently did not have access to many of the essential sources.⁴⁰ J. H. Doerksen's Geschichte

³⁷ Walter Quiring, Deutsche erschliessen den Chaco (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1936); Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat. Die deutsche Einwanderung in den paraguayischen Chaco (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1938).

³⁸ J. Winfield Fretz, Mennonite colonization in Mexico. An introduction (Akron, Pa.: Mennonite Central Committee, 1945); Pilgrims in Paraguay. The story of Mennonite colonization in South America (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1953).

³⁹ Harry Leonard Sawatzky, They sought a country. Mennonite Colonization in Mexico (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Walter Schmiedehaus, Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott. Der Wanderweg eines christlichen Siedlervolkes (Cuauhtemoc, Mexico: G. J. Rempel, 1948).

⁴⁰ Abraham Friesen, "Emigration in Mennonite history with special reference to the conservative Mennonite emigration from Canada to Mexico and South America after World War I" (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1960).

und Wichtige Dokumente der Mennoniten⁴¹ includes Russia and Canada in its scope but much of it deals with the emigrations to Mexico and Paraguay, which were in process when he wrote in 1923. The booklet is full of technical errors but is valuable in the documents it has preserved and in the sense of immediacy which it projects.

Among the many denominational and congregational histories which have been published, the following deserve mention because of their more comprehensive scope and, in some cases, more scholarly treatment. Gerbrandt (Manitoba Bergthaler), Reimer (Manitoba Kleine Gemeinde) and Toews (Mennonite Brethren) all write from the perspective of committed leaders of the group they describe.⁴² Hiebert as a theologian, and Redekop as a sociologist, are both Mennonite scholars, but neither is a member of the group he describes.⁴³ Leo Driedger focuses on the Reinlaender Mennonites in the Hague, Saskatchewan area in

⁴¹J. H. Doerksen, Geschichte und Wichtige Dokumente der Mennoniten von Russland; Canada, Paraguay und Mexico (n.p., 1923).

⁴²Gerbrandt, Adventure in Faith; P. J. B. Reimer, ed., The Sesquicentennial Jubilee: Evangelical Mennonite Conference 1812-1962 (Steinbach, Man.: Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 1962); John A. Toews, A history of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Pilgrims and Pioneers, A. J. Klassen, ed. (Fresno: M. B. Board of Christian Literature, 1975).

⁴³Clarence Hiebert, The Holdemann People. The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, 1859-1969 (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973); Calvin Wall Redekop, The Old Colony Mennonites. Dilemmas of ethnic minority life with a Foreword by Everett C. Hughes (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969).

contrast to Redekop's more general approach.⁴⁴

Most of the local histories of primarily Mennonite communities tend to be very limited in their frame of reference. Two exceptions that deserve mention are Warkentin's study of Steinbach and its surrounding area (the Manitoba East Reserve) and Peter Zacharias' Reinland, which sheds much light on West Reserve history.⁴⁵ Among the collections of essays, some scholarly, many others primarily reminiscences, the following contain helpful portions: Call to Faithfulness is a collection of essays by faculty members of Canadian Mennonite Bible College and other leaders of its supporting constituency. Gedenkfeier and Manitoba Mennonite Memories are collections that resulted from seventy-fifth and hundredth anniversary celebrations of the arrival of Mennonites in Western Canada.⁴⁶

George G. Thielman's doctoral dissertation "The Canadian

⁴⁴ Leo Driedger, "A sect in modern society. A case study of the Old Colony Mennonites of Saskatchewan" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1955).

⁴⁵ Abe Warkentin, Reflections on our heritage: a history of Steinbach and the Rural Municipality of Hanover from 1874 (Steinbach, Man.: Derksen Printers, 1971); Peter D. Zacharias, Reinland, an experience in Community (Reinland, Man.: Reinland Centennial Committee, 1976).

⁴⁶ Henry Poettcker and Rudy A. Regehr, ed., Call to Faithfulness. Essays in Canadian Mennonite Studies (Winnipeg: Canadian Mennonite Bible College, 1972); Gedenkfeier der Mennonitischen Einwanderung in Manitoba, Canada (Steinbach, Man.: Festkomitee der Mennonitischen Ostreserve, 1949); Julius B. Toews and Lawrence Klippenstein, ed., Manitoba Mennonite Memories (Altona, Man.: Manitoba Mennonite Centennial Committee, 1974).

Mennonites. A study of an ethnic group in relation to the state and community with emphasis on factors contributing to success or failure of its adjustment to Canadian ways of living," comes closest to the present study in its theme.⁴⁷ However, by not setting itself any time limits, nor concentrating on any particular region of Canada, it becomes a very diffuse study. Although it was written for the Department of Political Science, it has made minimal use of documentary materials in the various public archives, or of other primary sources except oral interviews. Thielman's chapter 2 on migration, chapter 8 on World War I and chapter 9 on education cover areas also dealt with in the present dissertation. The sense of dissatisfaction with the broad and sometimes vague generalizations necessitated by Thielman's approach, led to the decision to limit the present study in scope both chronologically (1872-1926) and geographically (Western Canada, primarily Manitoba and Saskatchewan).

5. Sources and Method

The present study relies very heavily on primary sources, most of them found in public archives. Many of the studies referred to above were helpful in locating such primary source material.

The Public Archives of Canada (PAC) in Ottawa was the basic source for information relating to the immigration from

⁴⁷ Ph.D. dissertation; Western Reserve University, 1955.

Russia (Record Group 17 - Department of Agriculture; RG 76 - Immigration Branch; RG 7 - Governor General's files), the early years of settlement in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (RG 15 - Department of the Interior), and events relating to World War I (RG 24 - Department of Defence; RG 6 - Chief Press Censor; and Manuscript Group 26 H - Prime Minister R. L. Borden files). The numerous orders-in-council relating to Mennonites in Western Canada are found in the Privy Council files (RG 2).

The Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB) holdings at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon were essential in reconstructing the complicated interactions between the Mennonites and the provincial government, especially in the area of education. There is scant reference to these sources in the studies referred to above. The most helpful collections were in the papers of T. W. Scott (M 1), Premier of Saskatchewan (1905-16) and Minister of Education (1912-16); J. A. Calder (M 2), Inspector of Schools for the Northwest Territories (1894-1900), Deputy Commissioner of Schools for the N.W.T. (1901-05), Minister of Education of Saskatchewan (1905-12) and later federal Minister of Immigration; W. M. Martin (M 4), Premier and Minister of Education (1916-21); S. J. Latta (M 5), Minister of Education (1921-29); and W. R. Motherwell (M 12), Minister of Agriculture (1905-18).

In the Public Archives of Manitoba (PAM) the Mennonite settlement registers provided detailed information about the earliest years of the Manitoba West Reserve communities. This microfilm (M 216) is a copy of materials taken to Mexico

by the Reinlaender church in the 1920s. The Department of Education files (RG 19) contain some information about the prolonged school struggle between some of the Mennonite groups and the provincial government. But since the records of neither Education Minister Thornton nor Official Trustee Greenway are available, the information about the struggle had to be pieced together from widely scattered information. The Valentine Winkler papers (MG 14 B45) provided information about a wide range of Mennonite contacts with the provincial government since Winkler was MLA for the constituency of Rhineland since 1892 and a member of the Norris cabinet during the crucial War years. The Executive Council files (RG 2) contain the numerous orders-in-council that continued to define specific aspects of the government's relationship to the Mennonite community.

The early records of both Douglas and Rhineland municipalities, found in the office of the present Rural Municipality of Rhineland, were very helpful in clarifying some of the points of tension in the establishment of municipal government on the Mennonite West Reserve.

In the archives of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMCA) the records of the Conference itself since its founding in 1903, as well as those of the Bergthaler Church since 1893, were helpful in discovering attitudes of the 'progressive' groups. The village and school records of a number of Manitoba Mennonite communities provided data on municipal and educational developments. The H. H. Ewert

collection shed some light on the Mennonite school struggle and the Benjamin Ewert collection on events relating to World War I. A considerable collection of materials on microfilm, obtained from the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College, Newton, Kansas, the National Archives and Records Service in Washington, D.C., and other places, helped to fill in some gaps left by Canadian sources.

In addition to archival materials, government publications have been extensively used. Among newspapers and periodicals, Mennonite Quarterly Review, the Manitoba Free Press, Regina Leader, Swift Current Sun, Der Mitarbeiter, and Die Mennonitische Rundschau have been most helpful.

In organizing the material gleaned from these sources the basic approach has been historical. In looking at the relations between Mennonites and the various levels of Canadian government, the focus has been on the former rather than on the latter. The Mennonites are looked at primarily as a religious, rather than an ethnic group, with a peculiar view of the state. In studying their interaction with governments, particular attention is given to the effect of such interaction on their own principles.

Throughout the study careful attention has been given to the various sub-groups within the Mennonite community, to determine whether they differ in their response to the same situation and how these differences manifest themselves. A guiding question throughout has been: How does a strong

separation of church and state theology, developed and nurtured in largely totalitarian contexts, adjust or react in the context of a participatory democracy?

CHAPTER I

SETTLEMENT IN CANADA

In 1870 Czar Alexander II responded to western European nationalism by inaugurating a program to assimilate his German and other foreign subjects more thoroughly into the Russian nation. Special exemptions granted to these colonists a century earlier by Catherine II, including the 'eternal' Mennonite Privilegium of 1787, came to an end. Military exemption was replaced by conscription and universal military training. The Russian language was to replace German as the official language of instruction in the schools. The Fuer-sorge Komitee in Odessa was abolished, placing Mennonites and other foreign colonists under the direct administration of municipal and provincial authorities. Realizing that such far-reaching changes might be unacceptable to some of the foreign elements in Russia, Alexander allowed a ten-year transition period during which emigration would be permitted.

This abrupt change in government policy came as a shock to the Mennonites. Delegations were sent to St. Petersburg, at first to gain assurance that the Privilegium of Catherine and Paul would be honored. When that proved impossible, a compromise was sought on the issue of military service. The promise of noncombatant alternative service persuaded about

two-thirds of the fifty thousand Mennonites to remain in Russia. Over seventeen thousand however, emigrated to North America during the decade of transition.

1. Negotiating a Privilegium

Early in 1872 the Canadian government was informed that some Mennonites wished to emigrate from Russia. Cornelius Jansen, Prussian consul in the Black Sea port of Berdjansk and a Mennonite himself, had been interested in settlement in America for some time. The British consul in Berdjansk, James Zohrab, was aware of Canada's interest in agricultural immigrants. Through this connection two Mennonite delegations made formal inquiry through Zohrab of settlement possibilities and conditions in Canada. They were particularly interested in the matter of military exemption.¹

In spite of the rather cumbersome communications network (in which the British consul in Berdjansk reported to the Foreign Office in London which passed the information on to the Colonial Office, which in turn relayed the information to

¹ Leibbrandt, pp. 201-2, reproduces the petition of Leonard Sudermann to J. Zohrab, 3 January 1872. Correll, "Sources and documents, 1872, 1873," pp. 210-11, has the Sudermann petition as well as that of P. Lohrenz, dated 13 January 1872. Jakob Warkentin Goerzen, Low German in Canada. A study of "Plautditsch" as spoken by Mennonite Immigrants from Russia (Edmonton: By the author, 1970), pp. 34-36, also has both documents, as well as others relating to the immigration.

For a general treatment of the emigration and the negotiations involved, see Epp, Mennonites in Canada, chaps. 8-9; Gerbrandt, chaps. 4, 6; and Francis, In Search of Utopia, chaps. 2-3.

the Canadian Governor General) Ottawa had its formal response ready by 26 April 1872. An order-in-council of that date responded to three points in the Mennonite request. First, the Minister of Militia and Defence pointed out that by statute

any person bearing a Certificate from the Society of Menonists shall be exempt from Military Service when balloted in time of peace or war, upon such conditions and such regulations as the Governor-in-Council may, from time to time prescribe.²

Secondly, the Minister of Agriculture informed the Mennonites of the provisions of the Dominion Lands Act under which persons over the age of twenty-one years could apply for a free homestead grant of 160 acres. The Department of Agriculture also provided copies of several of its immigration publications. Thirdly, the enquirers were informed that it was not the policy of the Dominion government to grant aid to any settlers in Canada.

By July of 1872 the Mennonites in Russia had an oppor-

²P.C. #827B, 26 April 1872. PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 108. The entire order-in-council is reproduced in app. 1.

Mennonite exemption from military service was already on the Canadian statute books as a result of the efforts of Quakers and Swiss Mennonites during the colonial era. It was incorporated into the Militia Act passed by the first parliament of Upper Canada in 1793, retained in the amended militia law of the united Canadas in 1841, and again in the Militia and Defence Act of the new Dominion of Canada in 1868. The latter is referred to in the order-in-council mentioned above.

For a more detailed account of this background, see J. A. Toews, Alternative Service in Canada during World War II (Winnipeg: Publishing Committee of the Canadian Conference of the M.B. Church, 1959), pp. 14-16; and Epp, Mennonites in Canada, chap. 4.

tunity to discuss immigration to Canada personally with a special agent of the Canadian government, William Hespeler. A recent German immigrant from Waterloo, Ontario, he had the special assignment of recruiting or assisting German speaking immigrants from eastern Europe. He arrived at the British consulate in Berdjansk on July 25 and immediately made contact with Mennonites of the Molotschna colony through the connections established earlier by Consul Zohrab.³ A representative from Bergthal colony, secretary (Gebietsamtschreiber) Jacob Friesen, also came to see Hespeler during his visit to the Molotschna area.⁴

One point on which the Mennonites sought additional clarification and reassurance was that of military exemption. The order-in-council of April seemed to make exemption subject to "such conditions and such regulations as the Governor-in-Council may, from time to time prescribe." Hespeler assured them that the law provided for absolute exemption from military duty in time of peace or war and that the Governor-in-Council could prescribe no conditions or regulations ~~under~~ which they could be compelled to serve.⁵ The Canadian govern-

³William Hespeler, Strassburg, to J. H. Pope, Minister of Agriculture, 28 August 1872, PAC, RG 17; reproduced in Correll, "Sources and documents, 1872, 1873," pp. 226-27.

⁴Klaas Peters, Die Bergthaler Mennoniten und deren Auswanderung aus Russland und Einwanderung in Manitoba (Hillsboro, Ks.: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, n.d. [1922]), p. 9.

⁵Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 187, based on Hespeler's 28 August 1872 report to the Department of Agriculture.

ment, which had been informed of this concern by consuls Jansen and Zohrab in letters of June and July, provided the same assurance in a further order-in-council.⁶ It gave "the German Mennonites in Russia the fullest assurances of absolute immunity from military service if they settle in Canada." The Governor General in Council, the report went on to say, "cannot prescribe any conditions or regulations under which, under any circumstances, the persons referred to . . . can be compelled to render any military service."

Hespeler's energetic wooing of Mennonite immigrants had meanwhile attracted the unfavorable attention of the Russian authorities. In order to escape apprehension, he quietly slipped out of the country in early August but continued to correspond with the Mennonite leaders from Germany. In early November he arranged for a number of representatives from the Molotschna and Bergthal colonies to meet with him in Odessa. At this meeting he invited an official delegation to come to Canada at government expense in order to explore settlement possibilities. Representing Bergthal colony at this meeting were Oberschulze Jacob Peters and minister Heinrich Wiebe.⁷

In Canada, meanwhile, the government stepped up its

⁶P.C. #1043D, 25 September 1872, PAC, RG 2, 1. Its text is reproduced in app. 2.

⁷Klaas Peters, p. 10.

efforts to ensure that it would obtain at least some of the Mennonite immigrants. Jacob Y. Shantz, a businessman of Swiss Mennonite background living in Kitchener, Ontario, was sent to inspect Manitoba with the hope that his report would be a suitable inducement to the Mennonites of Russia. His Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba, based on his western trip in the fall of 1872, was translated into German and distributed widely among Russian Mennonites.⁸ What particularly appealed to the Russian Mennonites, who were used to living in large colonies in Russia, were the large grants of land en bloc to which Shantz drew attention.

More concretely, the Canadian government followed up its promise of free land by setting aside a block of seven townships to be "reserved for the exclusive use, by settlement, of Germans in Russia, Mennonites and others."⁹ Except for a slight modification introduced a couple of months later this reserved block became the Mennonite East Reserve as shown

⁸ J. Y. Shantz, Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba, together with an abstract of the Dominion Lands Act, and an extract from the Government pamphlet on Manitoba (Ottawa: Department of Agriculture, 1873). Excerpts of the Narrative have recently been published in Correll, "Documents and Sources, 1873-1874," pp. 44-47; and Toews and Klippenstein, pp. 57-59.

⁹ P.C. #226, 3 March 1873, PAC, RG 2, 1. This was done at the request of John Lowe, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, to J. C. Aikens, Secretary of State, 19 February 1873, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 246, #27630.

on map 1.¹⁰

This aggressive wooing of the Mennonites by the Canadian government, and especially the illegal activities of its agent William Hespeler, alarmed the British diplomatic staff in Russia. Lord Loftus, the ambassador in St. Petersburg, drew the attention of the Foreign Minister to the fact "that the penalties imposed by Russian law on immigrants, and on those who further immigration, without the previous consent of the Imperial Government are very severe."¹¹ That warning came in April, before Hespeler had appeared on the scene. After his two visits with the Mennonites in Berdjansk and Odessa in July and November, British concern mounted. In early December the Foreign Office advised the Colonial Office:

Lord Augustus Loftus appears to think that the Canadian government have been going rather too far in their endeavour to induce these Mennonites to immigrate to Canada if they leave Russia, and he seems to think that Mr. Hespeler (the Canadian Emigration Agent) is likely to get himself into trouble and Her Majesty's government also if he again returns to Bessarabia with the object of inducing these people to leave.¹²

The Colonial Secretary, Lord Kimberley, followed this up with a coded telegram to the Canadian government: "To avoid compli-

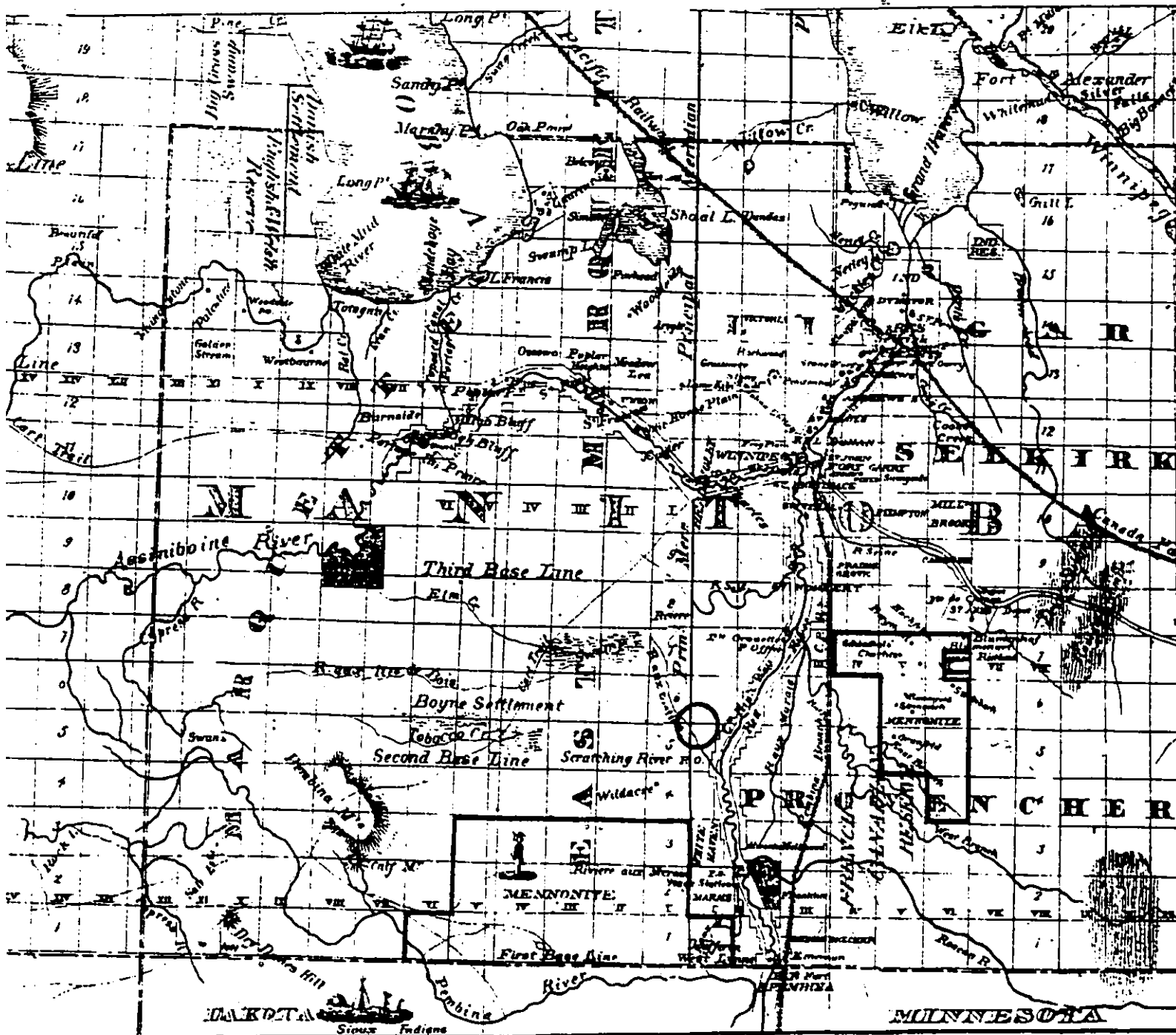
¹⁰An order-in-council of 23 May 1873, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1, withdrew a small portion of one township from the reserve because eleven Canadian families had already settled there.

¹¹Dispatch #60, Lord Loftus to Earl Granville, 3 April 1872, *ibid.*, RG 2, 5, vol. 14, #883B.

¹²Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 2 December 1872, *ibid.*, CO 42, vol. 712, Canada #12062, microfilm B-523.

MAP 1

THE ORIGINAL MENNONITE SETTLEMENTS IN MANITOBA



SOURCE: A. G. E. Westmacott Del., Map of the Province of Manitoba and Part of the District of Kewatin and North-West Territory (Toronto: Alexander Craig Steam Lith., 1876).

Scale: 17½ miles to the inch.

cations with Russia Canadian Government should take no further steps with respect to Mennonite emigration till informed that matter can be safely proceeded with."¹³ From this point on all correspondence between the Canadian and British government on this subject was marked "secret."

The Canadian government acted promptly on Lord Kimberley's telegram and immediately recalled Hespeler to Canada.¹⁴ He did return, but his work had been done. In February 1873 Consul Zohrab reported to the Foreign Office that two public meetings had been held in the neighbourhood of Berdjansk for the purpose of selecting delegates to visit the U.S.A. and Canada. Representatives of ten Mennonite colonies had attended these meetings.¹⁵ The Bergthal colony elected its Oberschulze Jacob Peters and one of its ministers, Heinrich Wiebe, brother of the bishop, Gerhard Wiebe. In all, twelve delegates were selected to visit North America representing the Mennonites and Hutterites of Russia, Volhynia in Poland, and Prussia.

The Canadian authorities attempted to provide every

¹³Telegram, Lord Kimberley to Lord Dufferin, 7 December 1872, *ibid.* The received cable in cypher form is in RG 7, G 13, vol. 5.

¹⁴J. H. Pope, report to the Privy Council, 9 July 1873, *ibid.*, CO 42, vol. 718, pp. 351-62, microfilm B-527. The letter recalling Hespeler was dated 10 December 1872.

¹⁵Consular dispatch #13, J. Zohrab to Earl Granville, 10 February 1873, *ibid.*, RG 2, vol. 19, #174-C.

assistance possible to the delegates.¹⁶ The Canadian immigration agent in Hamburg facilitated their travel through Germany and England. In Ottawa, the Minister of Agriculture was alerted of their arrival. In Kitchener-Waterloo Jacob Y. Shantz arranged for them to meet with Ontario Mennonites and then accompanied the delegates to Winnipeg. Here Hespeler arranged for them to meet the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba as well as Premier A. J. Clark and most of his cabinet.

Two land inspection tours were undertaken. The first under the leadership of J. Norquay, Minister of Agriculture, and William Hespeler, immigration agent, left Winnipeg on 18 June 1873 to inspect the eight townships reserved east of the Red River. Half of the delegate group had seen enough of mosquitoes, half-breeds, and unimpressive terrain on that trip and returned to the U.S.A. The remaining six delegates, including Wiebe and Peters of Bergthal colony, as well as David Klassen and Cornelius Toews of the Kleine Gemeinde undertook a second trip west of Winnipeg, north of the Assiniboine River on June 23. Despite their involvement in a Dominion Day brawl at White Horse Plain, the delegates from Bergthal and the Kleine Gemeinde were sufficiently impressed

¹⁶Correll, "Documents and sources, 1873-1874," pp. 47-48, reproduces half a dozen telegrams and several letters sent by John Lowe to Hespeler, Shantz, and various immigration officials in connection with the arrival of the delegates.

with Canada not to join the other delegates in further exploring settlement possibilities in the U.S.A.

These four now returned to Ottawa and on July 23 sent a letter to J. H. Pope, Minister of Agriculture, informing him of their choice of the province of Manitoba and in particular of the eight townships reserved for them. They indicated their intention to begin the migration in the spring of 1874 and expressed the hope that another location might be available to them should the soil of the present reserve prove unsuitable.¹⁷

John Lowe, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, responded to their letter a few days later, outlining in fifteen points the advantages and immunities offered to the Mennonites by the Canadian government.¹⁸ For the most part this letter was merely a summary of Canadian immigration law and Dominion Lands Act provisions. However, the first point reiterated exemption from military service for Mennonites,

¹⁷ Gerbrandt, chap. 5, describes the entire delegate trip in considerable detail and reproduces the 23 July 1873 letter in its English translation. William Schroeder, The Bergthal Colony (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1974), pp. 40-41 has mapped the two Manitoba trips of the delegates, and pp. 81-84 provided an outline of their itinerary.

¹⁸ John Lowe to David Klassen et al., 26 July 1873, PAC, RG 15, vol. 1507, pp. 167-69. Gerbrandt, pp. 57-59; Francis, In Search of Utopia, pp. 44-45; and Schroeder, pp. 85-87, reproduce this letter in full. The German translation is found in Gedenkfeier der mennonitischen Einwanderung, pp. 123-24.

The date of this letter is given variously as 23, 25, or 26 July.

the second confirmed the reserve of eight townships provided for by an earlier order-in-council, and the fifth responded affirmatively to the delegates' request that Mennonites be allowed to exchange these eight townships for any other eight unoccupied townships should the original ones prove unsatisfactory. Finally, points ten and eleven affirmed full religious freedom for the Mennonites, including the privilege of educating their children and affirming instead of making affidavits. For the four delegates from Bergthal and the Kleine Gemeinde, to whom the letter was addressed, this document now became the new Privilegium.

Following legal refinements, Lowe's letter was submitted to the cabinet over the signature of J. H. Pope, Minister of Agriculture, on 28 July 1873 and the Privy Council approved it on August 13.¹⁹

On the diplomatic front meanwhile, the British Foreign Office continued to be concerned about Canadian activity in Russia, particularly that of the energetic special emigration agent. Lord Tenterden warned that "such a line of conduct on Mr. Hespeler's part, while permission to emigrate has not been granted to the Mennonites, is liable to create inconvenient discussions between Her Majesty's Government and the Govern-

¹⁹P.C. #957, 13 August 1873, PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 83. For a discussion of the most significant change, and its effects on the Mennonites, see below, pp. 240-47.

ment of Russia."²⁰ British concern mounted when Ambassador Loftus in St. Petersburg was requested by Prince Gratchakow to warn Consul Zohrab in Berdjansk "against being mixed up in any way in these attempts to induce the German Mennonite colonists to leave Russia."²¹

In Zohrab's response to this warning, he revealed that Hespeler had obtained possession of some of the official correspondence between Ottawa and London on this subject, and had passed some of it on to the Mennonite leaders. On discovering this the Colonial Secretary rather strongly rebuked Lord Dufferin and the Canadian government and requested a full explanation of this matter together with a list of documents given to Mr. Hespeler. Lord Kimberley drew attention to his telegram of 7 December in which he had instructed the Canadian government that it should take no further steps in the matter of the Mennonite immigration, and then added: "Your Lordship cannot fail to perceive the very serious embarrassment which may be caused by these proceedings."²²

Ottawa's "full explanation" was prepared by Agriculture

²⁰ Lord Tenterden, Foreign Office, to Under Secretary, Colonial Office, 13 December 1872, *ibid.*, RG 2, 5, vol. 17, #13-C.

²¹ Consular dispatch #15, A. Loftus to Earl of Granville, 16 April 1873; included in secret dispatch, Lord Kimberley to Lord Dufferin, 1 May 1873, *ibid.*, vol. 20, #256-C.

²² Secret dispatch, Lord Kimberley to Lord Dufferin, 11 June 1873, *ibid.*, #313-C.

Minister Pope.²³ In his covering letter, Lord Dufferin pointed out to the Colonial Secretary that "in the present instance the communications made to Mr. Hespeler do not seem to have possessed any inconvenient significance," but that he had nevertheless warned his ministers about the impropriety of transmitting official documents to anyone without the consent of the Governor General.²⁴

For the British Foreign Office the matter was taken care of with this explanation. For the Mennonites, however, the consequences of this exchange did not become apparent until almost fifty years later. Nine days after Lord Dufferin had approved their Privilegium, in the form of order-in-council #957, he sent a telegram to Mr. Pope in which he withdrew his approval of that particular Privy Council minute and asked that it "be cancelled until he can send further directions." A notation reading "Suspend order accordingly and do not act on or enter it" was made on the front of the original copy of this order-in-council on August 22, and Mr. Pope's copy, the only one in circulation besides that of the Governor General, was withdrawn. Until March of 1916, the official Mennonite Pri-
vilegium was thus not only a secret document, but also one

²³J. H. Pope, report to the Privy Council, 9 July 1873, *ibid.*, CO 42, vol. 718, pp. 351-62, microfilm B-527.

²⁴Secret dispatch, Lord Dufferin, Charlottetown, to Earl of Kimberley, 21 July 1873, *ibid.*, pp. 349-51.

which had been entirely removed from circulation.²⁵

As far as the Mennonites were concerned, the negotiations with the government had gone well. They felt reassured on every point of concern by the letter which they had received from John Lowe on July 26. As far as they were concerned, this letter was their new Privilegium. It was obviously on the basis of it that the delegates from Bergthal and the Kleine Gemeinde recommended that their people migrate to Canada, rather than to the United States.

The Bergthal delegates seem to have had their mind made up in favour of Canada even before exploring the land in Manitoba. They had travelled as far south as Texas in the U.S.A. but did not like the country. Even more important to Heinrich Wiebe was the question of nonresistance. Hutterite delegate Paul Tschetter noted the following conversation with Wiebe in his diary entry under St. Paul, 25 May:

²⁵This information is written on the top and left hand margins of the original copy of P.C. #957, 13 August 1873. On 3 March 1916 the Deputy Minister of Agriculture received a copy.

In a letter of 1 October 1873 to Sir John A. Macdonald, Lord Dufferin writes from Quebec that he took this action in response to a dispatch from Lord Kimberley instructing him not to sanction further proceedings in respect to the Mennonite emigration. *Ibid.*, MG 26 A, vol. 79, pp. 30931-32. This is confirmed by a Department of Agriculture memorandum of 3 August 1877 found in the John Lowe papers, MG 29, B 13, vol. 9, and in John Lowe, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, to A. M. Burgess, Secretary, Department of the Interior, 28 September 1882, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129(2A).

We talked about nonresistance and how he liked the country here. He said the country did not appeal much to him and that after all the question of military service is the most important. He thought that it would not be possible to secure total exemption from military service in the United States, but that the English government would be more liberal and grant a charter guaranteeing exemption from military service which was better than what this country could offer. . . . He said that one should not only consider the land question but also not forget the matter of freedom, for that is the reason why we came to this country and are making this long journey.²⁶

Bergthal bishop, Gerhard Wiebe, in reporting the return of the delegates from America, mentions only that they brought with them two written guarantees of freedom from military service. Quality, quantity, and price of land was obviously of secondary importance to him also. The Bergthal community chose Canada, wrote Wiebe, "because it stood under the protection of the Queen of England, and we believed that we would be able to retain our freedom from military service longer there, and also that we would be able to have church and school under our own administration."²⁷

This confidence in Canada was undoubtedly based primarily on the fact that the delegates had received a written Privilegium from the federal government, something they had been unable to procure from Washington. But Wiebe's reference to the Queen of England also suggests that they were prepared to

²⁶ J. M. Hofer, ed. and transl., "The diary of Paul Tschetter, 1873," MQR 5 (July 1931): 199.

²⁷ Gerhard Wiebe, Ursachen und Geschichte der Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus Russland nach Amerika (Winnipeg: Nordwesten, 1900; reprint ed., Cuauhtemoc, Mex.: n.p., 1962), p. 40.

place more trust in a monarchical than a republican form of government.²⁸ In Russia, Mennonites had preferably negotiated directly with the Czar and had always tended to place their faith in the highest authority.²⁹ A Bergthal descendant, writing fifty years later in Canada, strongly reflects this attitude. For the beleaguered Mennonites in Russia in 1870, rescue came sooner than expected, he wrote in 1923.

A turn for the better began in 1872. Queen Victoria of England was looking for immigrants for the lands which England had freed for settlement in Canada. It was through her that the way for the Mennonites from Russia to Canada was opened, and just as Empress Catherine of Russia had once appeared as the saviour of the Mennonites; so the Queen of England now appeared in almost the same way.³⁰

The emphasis which the Bergthal and Kleine Gemeinde delegates placed on a Privilegium is seen even more strongly when their choice is compared with that of the Molotschna delegates who recommended settlement in the U.S.A. When bishops Jacob Buller and Leonhard Sudermann were elected to make the inspection trip to North America, they received written instructions to consider the following points as absolutely essential in their negotiations with the government: legal assurance of complete religious freedom, including specifically full exemption from every kind of military service;

²⁸ C. Henry Smith, The Coming of the Russian Mennonites. An Episode in the Settling of the Last Frontier, 1874-1884 (Berne, Ind.: Mennonite Book Concern, 1927), p. 104.

²⁹ Gerbrandt, p. 44.

³⁰ J. H. Doerksen, p. 40.

sufficient land of good quality either free or at low prices and easy terms; and assurance of the kind of closed settlement, use of the German language, and local self government which they had enjoyed in Russia.³¹ In spite of the fact that the two most important of these demands, the first and the third, were not met by the United States government, both Buller and Sudermann recommended Kansas as the place of settlement to their people.³² They did so, knowing that the Canadian government was prepared to meet these demands if they would settle in Canada. Juhnke suggests that the persuasive salesmanship of American railroad representatives made the difference.³³

³¹Leonhard Sudermann, Eine Deputationsreise von Russland nach Amerika vor vierundzwanzig Jahren (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonitische Verlagshandlung, 1897), pp. 9-10; idem., From Russia to America. In Search of Freedom, trans. Elmer F. Suderman (Steinbach, Man.: Derksen Printers, 1974), p. 3.

Leibbrandt, p. 6, and James C. Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms. The political acculturation of the Kansas Mennonites (Newton, Ks.: Faith and Life Press, 1975), p. 15, see "closed settlements" intended by the third request, although the original expression "abgeschlossene Gemeindeverfassung" could be understood in the more restricted sense of "separate community constitution" as Suderman translates it.

³²Leibbrandt, pp. 9-10. See also the 5 September 1873 response of Hamilton Fish (for President Grant) to the petition of the Hutterite delegates, in Hofer, p. 217.

³³Juhnke, pp. 15-16.

2. Group Migration

On their arrival back in Russia the delegates of the Bergthal colony and of the Kleine Gemeinde recommended Canada to their people as the place to settle. The first immigrants from both of these communities arrived in Quebec in July of 1874. The next year, the peak of the immigration, these two groups were joined by large numbers from the Fuerstenland and Chortitza colonies. Although the latter settlements had not sent any delegates to North America, and did not emigrate as entire colonies, many of them accepted the report of the Bergthal delegates as their basis for emigrating.³⁴ Fuerstenland, like Bergthal a daughter colony of Chortitza, was led by Bishop Johann Wiebe, a cousin of Bergthal bishop, Gerhard Wiebe.

Almost seven thousand Mennonites from these four groups in Russia arrived at Quebec during the years 1874 to 1880 and went on to settle in Manitoba. The annual totals are given in table 1 below.

³⁴ Johann Wiebe, Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada, 1875 (Cuauhtemoc, Mex.: Campo 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ Press, 1972), p. 27, reports that about 150 families from Fuerstenland were planning to emigrate. Peter Friesen, "Eine Begebenheit aus Russland und Kanada Manitoba," *ibid.*, pp. 65-66, indicates the dependence of the Fuerstenland people on the Bergthal delegates. Mennonite Encyclopedia, s.v. "Manitoba," by Cornelius Krahn, reports Wiebe as stating that 1009 persons were ready to leave Fuerstenland for Canada.

TABLE 1

MENNONITE IMMIGRANT ARRIVALS AT QUEBEC 1874-80

Year	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	Total
Number	1533	3261	1352	184	323	208	69	6930

SOURCE: Adolf Ens and Rita Penner, "Quebec Passenger Lists of the Russian Mennonite Immigration, 1873-1880," MQR 48 (October 1974): 530.

The Government of Canada provided passenger warrants from Hamburg to Fort Garry for thirty dollars per person over the age of eight years and half price for children. A special immigration agent was appointed for Hamburg and directed "to bestow particular attention to the embarkation of the Mennonites who may sail from Hamburg for Canada."³⁵ Along with him, immigration agents all along the line reported regularly on the flow of Mennonites, from the Agent General in London, England, to the agents in Quebec and Montreal, the travelling agent between Quebec and Toronto, the agents at Toronto and Winnipeg, and the special agent at West Lynn on the Manitoba-U.S.A. border.³⁶ In addition to these, Jacob Y. Shantz,

³⁵ John Lowe, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, to Jacob E. Klotz, Preston, Ontario, 11 February 1874, PAQ, RG 17, vol. 1509, p. 56.

³⁶ Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, vol. 8, 1875, no. 40, "Report of the Minister of Agriculture," app. 2, Quebec Agent, p. 16; app. 4, Toronto Agent, p. 25; app. 5, Montreal Agent, p. 31; app. 12, Winnipeg Agent, p. 53; app. 13, West Lynn Agent, p. 55; app. 18, Agent General, London,

working for both the Canadian government and the Russian Mennonite Aid Committee, organized by him among Ontario Swiss Mennonites, was a tremendous help in keeping the flow of immigrants moving smoothly and in helping the new arrivals through the first few weeks on location in Manitoba.

a) The Reserves

When the province of Manitoba was founded in 1870, its crown lands remained under the jurisdiction of the federal government. As a result, the Mennonite immigrants on their arrival in Manitoba passed from the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture, which handled immigration matters, to the Department of the Interior, which was in charge of crown lands. This latter Department was therefore responsible for administering clauses four and five of the Privilegium which promised that additional or alternative townships would be reserved for Mennonite settlement should the original eight prove insufficient or unsuitable.

The approximately thirteen hundred Mennonites who arrived in Manitoba in 1874 took up 386 homesteads in the eight townships reserved east of the Red River and founded

p. 78; app. 41, Dominion Travelling Agent, p. 153.

Similar reports are found in subsequent annual reports of the Minister of Agriculture.

two villages on the Scratching River west of the Red.³⁷

In reporting this to the Surveyor General, Winnipeg Immigration Agent William Hespeler expressed the hope that an additional reserve would soon be granted, for he considered that only about two-thirds of the eight townships were fit for settlement. The investigation subsequently ordered by the Minister of the Interior showed Hespeler's estimate to be generous. Three of the eight townships were described as "principally marsh lands", and three others as "bad," "very inferior," and "totally unfit for farming purposes." The Surveyor General estimated that not more than fifty additional families could obtain reasonably good homesteads on the reserve.³⁸

³⁷William Hespeler, Winnipeg, to J. S. Dennis, Surveyor General, 4 March 1875, PAC, RG 15, vol. 230, #1047.

Thirty families of the Kleine Gemeinde arrivals in Manitoba in 1874 chose to homestead on the Scratching (now Morris) River instead of on the reserve. Jacob Y. Shantz, "Mennonites to Manitoba. This Book Contains the Names and Number of Families and Souls that Moved to Manitoba," MS, 1874-1880, p. 8. Shantz's note, p. 33, that some of the 1874 immigrants remained with Ontario Mennonites for the winter, accounts for the difference between the 1533 arrivals at Quebec and the 1300 settling in Manitoba.

³⁸D. Laird, Minister of the Interior, to L. Letellier, Minister of Agriculture, 3 April 1875, PAC, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129.

The Department was aware at the time when the eight townships were selected to form the reserve, that some drainage would be required. William Hespeler to Donald Codd, Dominion Lands Agent, Winnipeg, 20 September 1879, *ibid.* Fifteen years after its creation, slightly over 31 sections of it were turned over to the Province of Manitoba under the Swamp Lands Act by order-in-council P.C. #1272, 7 June 1888, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1, vol. 394.

The Chortitza and Fuerstenland settlers who arrived the following year expressed a preference for the "treeless plain between the River and Pembina Mountain." The Dominion Lands agent in Winnipeg therefore recommended creating a second reserve, consisting of the first three townships immediately north of the U.S. border stretching from range one east to range five west of the principal meridian. He assured Ottawa that "no objection will be raised by Canadian settlers as tracts unfit [for] settlement by them being destitute of timber."³⁹

Following some bargaining between the Mennonites and officials of the Department of the Interior, the government agreed to a second reserve of seventeen townships as indicated on map 1.⁴⁰

Although some of these townships were still in process of being surveyed, eighteen villages were laid out already in the summer of 1875 by the incoming settlers.⁴¹

b) The Mennonite Loan

Most of the Mennonites who participated in the immigra-

³⁹Telegram, Donald Codd to J. S. Dennis, Surveyor General, 23 July 1875, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129.

⁴⁰Dennis cabled ministerial approval of the final boundaries (twps. 1-1E, 1 to 3 in ranges 1 to 5W, and 1-6W) to Codd on 30 July 1875. *Ibid.* Formal reservation by order-in-council did not occur until almost a year later. P.C. #397, 25 April 1876, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1, vol. 142.

⁴¹John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements," p. 64.

tion of the 1870s were relatively poor. The six villages of Fuerstenland colony were all on rented land. Bergthal's acreage had been purchased in 1836, but by 1874 the number of landless families in the colony comprised two-thirds of the total.⁴² The landless situation in the two mother colonies, Chortitza and Molotschna, was severe enough that, in spite of extensive emigration to North America, four daughter colonies involving twenty-two villages were founded in Russia during this decade.⁴³ Many of the families immigrating were already so poor in Russia that they required financial assistance for their passage to Canada.⁴⁴ The limited amount of capital which they brought with them to Canada, estimated at \$125 per person⁴⁵, was insufficient in many cases to provide basic food and shelter for the first winter

⁴² Gerhard Wiebe, p. 41. Schroeder, p. 34, indicates the steady growth of Bergthal's landless problem.

⁴³ Mennonite Encyclopedia, s.v. "Russia," by Cornelius Krahn.

⁴⁴ J. E. Klotz, Canadian Immigration Agent in Hamburg, reported 145 Mennonite indigent families in 1875 and 71 in 1876. Some were supported by their wealthier brethren; most were extended assistance for their ocean passage on instructions from Shantz. Klotz paid \$15,256 for this purpose in 1875 and \$4,451.49 in 1876. Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1876, IX.8, app. 21, p. 86; *ibid.*, 1877, X.8, app. 28, p. 89.

⁴⁵ Gedenkfeier, p. 150, and Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 201, give a fairly detailed breakdown of the amounts of capital brought in as recorded by the Russian Mennonite Aid Committee of Ontario. The table in app. 3 shows a somewhat higher total on the basis of annual amounts reported by government immigration sources. The \$125 per capita figure is based on this higher total.

and obtain the necessary implements and seed for spring farm work.

Aware of this poverty, the delegates from Bergthal met with representatives of the Swiss Mennonites in Ontario a second time on their way home in 1873, to approach them about a loan for the new settlers.⁴⁶ The Russian Mennonite Aid Committee, which Shantz served as secretary-treasurer, became the channel for Ontario Mennonite aid to the immigrants. Money loaned to the Manitoba Mennonite settlers through this Committee came to about \$50,000.⁴⁷

During the winter of 1874 it became obvious both to the Ontario Mennonites and to the leaders of the immigration that the direct resources of the Ontario Mennonites would be insufficient to meet the need. Accordingly, a deputation of the leading Mennonites from Ontario went to Ottawa in 1875 to request from the government an advance of a hundred thousand dollars to assist the immigration. This loan was to be repaid in ten annual installments with the deputation becoming personally responsible for the repayment. The Liberal government of Alexander Mackenzie introduced a bill for this purpose to the House of Commons, which was approved on 7 April 1875

⁴⁶Klaas Peters, p. 15.

⁴⁷Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 58.

after considerable debate.⁴⁸ Funds from this loan were made available as needed and handled by Jacob Y. Shantz, representing the Mennonite committee of Ontario.⁴⁹ Some of this money was used for the purchase of farm equipment, but much of it was required to save the new settlers from starvation during the early years when grasshoppers and drought destroyed the harvest.⁵⁰

Between 25 March 1875 and 7 November 1877 a total of \$96,400 was loaned.⁵¹ During the first four years simple interest was to be charged at six percent per annum, and during the remaining six years compound interest at the same rate. The new settlers were unable to meet that payment schedule. In fact, by mid-year of 1883 only three payments had been made, amounting to \$20,653.30 of the \$76,844.34 due by then. Since Ontario Mennonites had posted bonds against this loan, the Treasury Board decided briefly during June of 1883 to have the Justice Department collect the monies due from the

⁴⁸Correll, "The Mennonite loan," pp. 257-72, has reproduced the entire Commons debates (February 15, 19, and 26) regarding the Mennonite loan. The statute, 38 Vic. chap. 3 (1875) was given royal assent on April 8. Ibid., pp. 272-73.

⁴⁹The first installment of \$50,000 was "placed at the credit of" Shantz by P.C. #445, 5 May 1875, PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 123.

⁵⁰Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 58. Zacharias, p. 67, gives a sample of how one village community spent its portion of the loan. See also Peter Wiens, secretary of the Reinland Mennonite Colony, to J. Y. Shantz, 4 February 1877, in Correll, "Sources on the Mennonite immigration," pp. 349-50.

⁵¹P.C. #2317, 15 November 1883, PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 267.

bondsmen. The Minister of Agriculture however interceded and obtained an agreement from the cabinet not to press for immediate payment.⁵²

By 29 February 1888 the Mennonites had repaid a total of \$115,805.38 but by this time the interest had mounted so that the balance owing was still \$51,480.76.⁵³ Later that year the Mennonite committee of Ontario reported that they had "entirely exhausted the collections which it is possible for them to make from the settlers in Manitoba from the absolute inability of the remaining debtors to make any more payments." The committee therefore requested from the government "a commutation of the rate of interest of six percent compounded, to four percent simple interest on the amount of capital advanced." That would leave a balance of \$12,950.22 which the committee proposed to pay in final liquidation of the debt. The government adopted that course of action.⁵⁴

The matter was not quite taken care of yet. Since the original terms of the loan had been set by an Act of Parliament, the Justice Department pointed out that it would require an action by Parliament to change those terms now.⁵⁵ Assent

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³"Mennonite loan," *ibid.*, MG 29, B-13, vol. 9.

⁵⁴P.C. #1147, 4 June 1888, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1, vol. 394.

⁵⁵P.C. #572, 18 March 1889, *ibid.*, vol. 415.

was duly given to the required Act on 2 May 1889⁵⁶ clearing the way for cabinet to authorize returning the bonds to the Mennonite committee of Ontario.⁵⁷

Because the government was experiencing difficulties in collecting any monies at all on similar loans made to other groups of immigrants,⁵⁸ the Minister of the Interior was rather effusive in reporting the successful termination of the Mennonite loan in 1892.

The history of any country does not afford, I undertake to say, a case in which an obligation to the government on the part of any society, company or individual has been fulfilled with greater faithfulness than this ⁵⁹

The inaccuracy in the Minister's further remark may be due to the fact that immigration matters were transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior that year, so that both he and his staff were unfamiliar with the history of the Mennonite loan. His report continued:

It is pleasant to be able to add that, as far as I know, neither from the persons to whom the advance was made nor from the Waterloo Society, who became accountable for its repayment, has there ever been any suggestion, far less any formal demand (as has been too frequently the case in regard to other loans made by the government), for a relaxation of the terms of refund, either as regards principal or interest, nor has there been any attempt

⁵⁶The text is reproduced in Correll, "The Mennonite loan," pp. 274-75.

⁵⁷P.C. #1149, 22 May 1889, PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 420.

⁵⁸Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 57.

⁵⁹Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1893, no. 13, "Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the year 1892," p. xxxii.

either on the part of the settlers themselves or of their bondsmen to escape liability in even one individual case.

Largely as a result of this statement, "a veritable legend grew around the event and the faithful mode of repayment by its beneficiaries."⁶⁰ But the Mennonite settlers of Manitoba were not aware of this legend nor did they feel that they were doing anything heroic. Gerhard Wiebe, bishop of the Bergthal church, treated the entire loan as payable to the Ontario Mennonites, and was very aware of and thankful for substantial reductions made by the Ontario brethren.⁶¹ His counterpart on the West Reserve, Bishop Johann Wiebe, urged his congregation to greater diligence in repaying their debt.

To strive with all one's will power to repay natural debts is an essential aspect of the Christian and God-pleasing way. Even more so with respect to our government debt, because she has taken us Mennonites into her land and

⁶⁰ Correll, "The Mennonite loan," p. 255. Mennonitische Blaetter, published in Danzig and widely read by Mennonites in Russia, reported the story on 16 May 1893, p. 74, "Die Kanadische Regierung und die Mennonitische Anleihe." Klaas Peters, p. 45, popularized the Minister's remarks in his booklet prepared on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the immigration. Others have picked it up from him. See e.g. Gerhard Lohrenz, "Die Mennoniten kommen nach Manitoba," Der Bote, 16 July 1974, p. 2; I. I. Friesen, pp. 55-56; Smith, The Coming of the Russian Mennonites, pp. 189-90. Even Leibbrandt, pp. 35-36, who had access to the sources, falls victim to this "legend."

⁶¹ Gerhard Wiebe, pp. 67-68. See also the open letter of thanks by his brother Heinrich to the Ontario Mennonites, 5 March 1894, Herold der Wahrheit, 1 April 1894, reproduced by Correll, "Sources on the Mennonite immigration," pp. 350-52.

given us protection and freedom of religion.⁶²

He too was humbled and deeply grateful for the assistance given by the Ontario brethren.

From the side of the Manitoba Mennonites, relations with both the government and Shantz's committee in Ontario had been so satisfactory in this matter that they were willing to try it again. When the first group migration to the Northwest Territories began in 1895, it was once more Jacob Shantz who was requested to ask the Canadian government for a loan to assist this resettlement. But by 1895 government policy on such loans had changed and the request was politely refused.⁶³

c) Non-Mennonite Intruders

One of the very strong attractions offered to the Mennonite immigrants was the possibility of forming closed communities by means of reserves created for them by the government. They discovered very quickly however, that an order-in-council in the cabinet secretary's files did not protect them from receiving uninvited neighbours.

On the East Reserve this did not become a problem. The Clear Springs settlement, located on the northeast edge of

⁶² Johann Wiebe to Reinlaender Gemeinde, 1881, OMCA, XXII-K.3, vol. 1099, #28. Wiebe repeats his admonition in January, 1882, *ibid.*, #29. An excerpt of his letter of thanks to the Ontario Mennonites is reproduced by Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 226.

⁶³ J. Y. Shantz, Berlin, Ontario, to Department of the Interior, 9 April 1895; J. R. Hall, Secretary, Department of the Interior, to Shantz, 22 April 1895; PAC, RG 15, vol. 233, #3129(4).

the original reserve, was officially removed from it long before the Mennonites arrived in Canada.⁶⁴ The few French métis who may have had some prior claim to lands in the East Reserve⁶⁵ did not press such claims or actually take up residence on them.⁶⁶ The poor quality of the land and the rapidity with which available homesteads were taken deterred non-Mennonites from attempting to move in once the migration had started.

This was not the case on the West Reserve. The open prairie stretching from the Red River to the Pembina escarpment, which Canadian settlers had regarded as "unfit for settlement" until recently, suddenly became "one of the most valuable tracts of land in possession of the Dominion."⁶⁷ Matters were complicated by the fact that many Mennonite settlers had located here before the boundaries of the reserve were officially established.

Several Canadian families from Ontario, located in the wooded area in the northwest corner of the reserve, had

⁶⁴ By order-in-council of 23 May 1873, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

⁶⁵ John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite settlements," p. 50, indicates that no métis had settled within the borders of the reserve.

⁶⁶ Charles Sauvé, St. Vital, to W. Laurier, 16 January 1896, PAC, MG 26 G, vol. 35, pp. 11441-46, microfilm C-746, claims that about 1872 some thirteen persons had "taken possession" of certain lots in twps. 6 and 7 of range 5E of the reserve.

⁶⁷ Lindsay Russell, Surveyor General, to J. S. Dennis,

quickly petitioned Ottawa to remove townships two and three in range five west from the Mennonite Reserve. They had come here with a view to settling the entire area "of the said townships with British subjects from Canada." The creation of the Mennonite Reserve, they argued, now deprived them of "the possibility of a Canadian neighbourhood."⁶⁸ Other immigrants from Ontario, who had squatted in the same area, complained directly to the Prime Minister.⁶⁹

The complaint of the Canadian settlers was that they were too few in number to start their own schools and churches and now had no hope of others of their countrymen joining them, and that their holdings had depreciated in value since being placed in the reserve. The Mennonites on the other hand, complained that the squatters and legal non-Mennonite settlers in the western portion of the reserve illegally restrained them from cutting timber in those townships. They also claimed that the English speaking settlers threatened to tear down any village which the Mennonites might attempt to found in that area. The Dominion Lands Surveyor, reporting these complaints in November 1877, recommended ejecting the squatters and

Deputy Minister, Department of the Interior, 11 February 1881, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129.

⁶⁸ Petition to the Department of the Interior, 17 August 1876, *ibid.*, vol. 235, #6411.

⁶⁹ Abilard Parker to Sir John A. Macdonald; John Johnston to Macdonald, both 26 December 1877; *ibid.*, MG 26 A, vol. 347, pp. 159626-27, microfilm C-1712.

offering compensation to legitimate non-Mennonite settlers to induce them to move.⁷⁰

An official investigation ordered by the Minister of the Interior revealed that the central concern of the Mennonites was that they continue to have access to the woodlands of the western townships for timber and fuel.⁷¹ Since the Mennonites felt very strongly about this, the government was anxious to effect a speedy solution lest the continuing immigration from Russia receive a serious setback because of this problem. Following discussions with the Minister of the Interior and John Lowe of the Department of Agriculture the Surveyor General recommended that squatters be ejected from the reserve and that a three-man team of government representatives, including William Hespeler, negotiate with the Mennonites to surrender their claim to townships two and three in range five west, or at least to those parts occupied by legitimate English settlers, in return for one or two townships adjoining the Mennonite Reserve in range seven and eight west.⁷²

⁷⁰ William Pearce to Donald Codd, Dominion Lands Agent, Winnipeg, 14 November 1877, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129.

⁷¹ Pearce to Codd, 22 November 1877; Codd to J. S. Dennis, Surveyor General, Ottawa, 29 November 1877; *ibid.*

⁷² J. S. Dennis to the Minister of the Interior, 14 December 1877, *ibid.* William Pearce, Dominion Lands Surveyor, and Donald Codd, Dominion Lands Agent, representing the Department of the Interior, and William Hespeler, representing the Immigration Department, were all located in Winnipeg.

This commission met most of the English speaking settlers involved in the dispute and then had a meeting with "all the reeves of the various villages" in the Mennonite Reserve. Its report in early 1878 resulted in instructions to the Dominion Land Agent at Emerson, George F. Newcomb, to implement its recommendations.⁷³ This involved ejecting squatters and cancelling a number of legitimate claims for failing to meet the requirements of the Homestead Act.⁷⁴ It also involved redrawing the western boundary of the Reserve in townships two and three of range five west in such a way as to exclude the remaining legitimate non-Mennonite settlers from the reserve. The new boundary, which Newcomb called the "Meno-Canuck boundary," is indicated on map 2.⁷⁵ In return for the portions of townships two and three in range five west which the Mennonites had surrendered, amounting to just over one township, they accepted the first township in ranges seven and eight west.⁷⁶

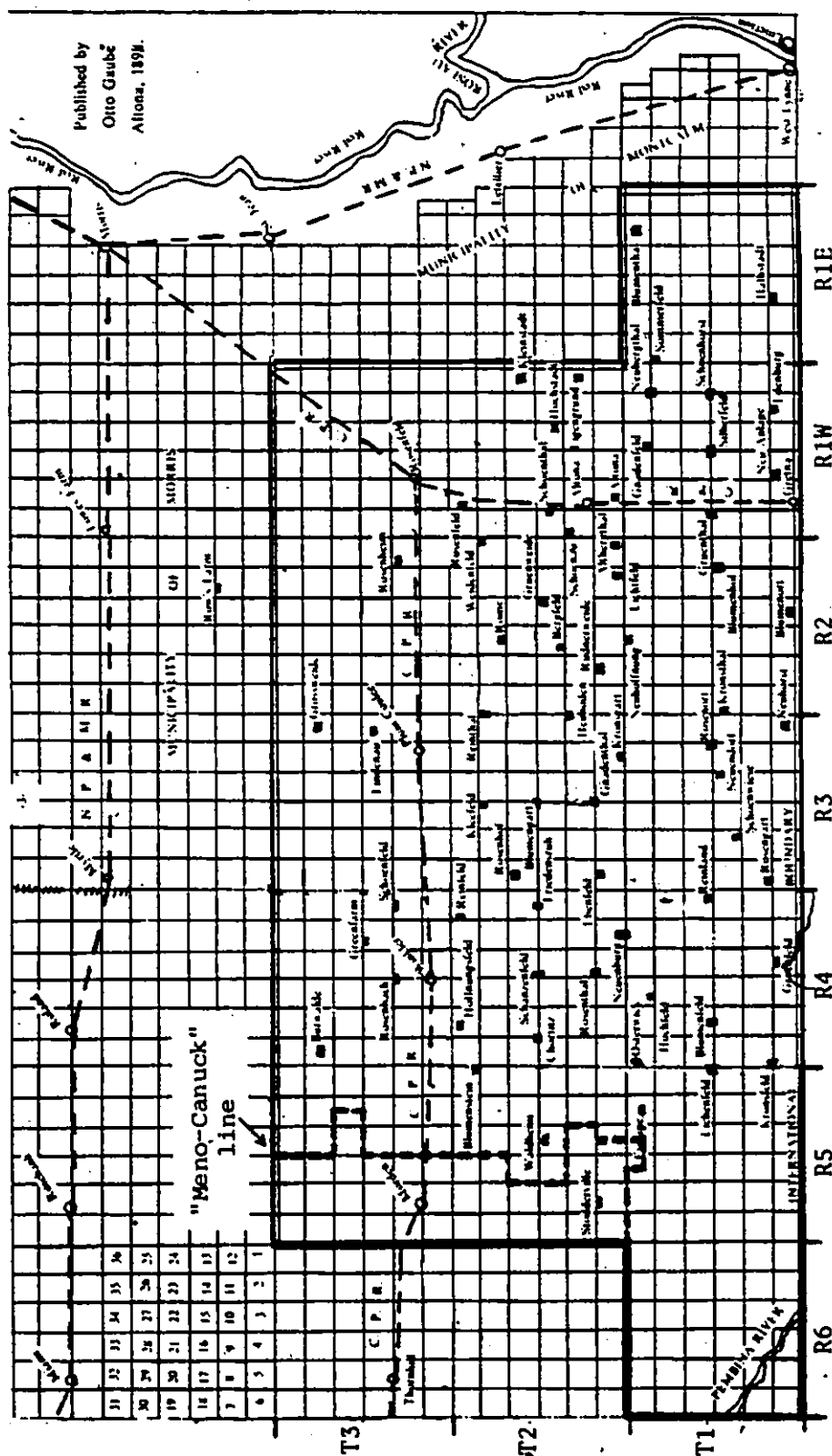
⁷³ William Hespeler and William Pearce to the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of the Interior, 15 January 1878, *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Codd to the Surveyor General, 1 March 1878, *ibid.*

⁷⁵ George F. Newcomb to Codd, 30 April 1878, *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Codd to Surveyor General, 1 May 1878, *ibid.* The change was effected by Departmental order rather than by order-in-council. On 31 May 1880 Lindsay Russell, Surveyor General, recommended to J. S. Dennis, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to withdraw them officially. This recommendation was approved by the Minister, J. A. Macdonald.

Since the Mennonites entered twp. 1-6W only in a marginal



SOURCE: Map by Otto Gaube. "Meno-Canuck Boundary" based on George F. Newcomb to Donald Codd, 30 April 1878, PAC, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129.

Unfortunately, the problem was not solved by this redrawing of boundaries. Non-Mennonite squatters continued to come into the western end of the reserve every year until the problem was further compounded by rumours that Ottawa was going to throw open the Mennonite reserves to general settlement.⁷⁷ Finally, in 1880, the Mennonite leaders protested formally to the Prime Minister that the Nelsonville Land Office was not enforcing the "Meno-Canuck line" which they had always respected. Some of their young men were again before the magistrate, they complained, for cutting a load or two of dead firewood on their own timber lands.⁷⁸ It is difficult to determine whether the Dominion Lands Agent was unwilling or unable to enforce the provisions of the reserve. In any case when William Hespeler reported an open clash between Mennonites and squatters in June of 1881, and urged the Surveyor General to settle the Mennonite Reserve question,

way, the two new ones in 1-7W and 1-8W never really 'belonged' to the reserve. See Baldwin Berg, comp., Our 1-6 Heritage. A History of the School Districts of Deer Creek -- Lindal -- Elk Creek -- Diamond (Morden, Man.: One-Six History Book Committee, 1976) for the limited Mennonite involvement in this area.

⁷⁷Telegrams, Codd to Surveyor General, 10 June 1878 and 25 June 1879; letter, 19 May 1880; PAC, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129.

⁷⁸Isaak Mueller, General Manager, Reinland Mennonite Association, and Johann Wiebe, Bishop, Neuhorst, to Head of Government, 21 July 1880, *ibid.* The letter was written by W. P. Leslie, Justice of the Peace, H. M. Customs, Spencerefeldt, who on several occasions assisted the West Reserve leadership in this way.

another special investigation was ordered.⁷⁹ The lengthy report filed by R. Rauscher in October of that year included a two-page list of non-Mennonite squatters on lands for which Mennonites held entries, and another two-page list of non-Mennonite settlers who had not obtained entries to the lands they occupied. These squatters, Rauscher wrote, "form an unbroken Phalanx of Guardians against their Menonite [sic] neighbours, who they violently drive back when coming to fetch fuel or building timber, near the territory of which they (the Squatters) took forcible possession."⁸⁰ He recommended that the wooded portions of these townships be set aside as "Wood and Timber lots" under government inspection.

Nothing seems to have come of that suggestion, but Rauscher's lists drew attention to the magnitude of the squatter problem and to the loose administration of the Dominion Lands Office at Nelson. By the following summer the Commissioner of Dominion Lands in Winnipeg was pressing for further thorough investigation and calling the attention of the Minister of the Interior to "the growing confusion in the Reserve."⁸¹ Much of that confusion, as it turned out, was in the Department's own administration. The books of the Winnipeg

⁷⁹ William Hespeler, Winnipeg, to Lindsay Russell, Surveyor General, 16 June 1881, *ibid.*, #3129 (2A).

⁸⁰ R. Rauscher, Dominion Lands Surveyor, to L. Russell, Surveyor General, 22 October 1881, *ibid.*

⁸¹ A. Walsh to Surveyor General, 29 July 1882; Walsh to Deputy Minister of the Interior, 17 August 1882; *ibid.*, #3129 (2).

office were found to have over 450 homestead and preemption entries more than those in Ottawa.⁸² A great difference was also found to exist between the departmental records in Ottawa and the entries in the books of the Nelson office.⁸³ The latter were found to be particularly unreliable.⁸⁴

In view of that kind of inept administration by the Dominion Lands Office in Nelson, and the "misunderstanding and blundering of local officials" which Hespeler and Pearce had noted in their report of 1878, it is not surprising that the problem of non-Mennonite intruders was eventually solved, not by decisive government action, but rather by arable lands being taken up by settlers and woodlots cleared of their useful timbers.

d) Homestead Rights

The Mennonite Privilegium had outlined the provisions of the Dominion Lands Act by which settlers could obtain their homesteads. The second clause provided that "any person who is the head of a family or has attained the age of twenty-one years, shall be entitled to be entered for one quarter section

⁸²G. W. Newcomb, Winnipeg, to Deputy Minister of the Interior, 3 November 1882, *ibid.*, #3129(1-2 & 2a).

⁸³J. R. Hall, Secretary, Department of the Interior, to A. Walsh, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg, 16 May 1884, *ibid.*

⁸⁴Agent of Dominion Lands to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 11 February 1893, *ibid.*

or a less quantity of unappropriated Dominion lands, for the purpose of securing a homestead right in respect thereof." The seventh provided that "the Mennonite settler, will receive a patent for a free grant after three years residence, in accordance with the terms of the Dominion Lands Act." And the ninth indicated "that from the moment of occupation the settlers acquire a homestead right in the land."⁸⁵

The East Reserve, which had been created before the Russian Mennonites came to Canada, was surveyed and ready for occupancy when the first settlers arrived. Already in 1874, the first year of the immigration, 386 made entries and exercised their "homestead right."⁸⁶ A sample receipt for the ten dollar application fee for a homestead right is found in appendix 4.⁸⁷

Matters were slightly less well organized for the settlers who in 1875 and later took up land west of the Red River. The boundaries of the reserve there were not set until spring of 1876. What was more serious was the fact that the survey plans of those townships along the U.S. boundary were not completed until the spring of 1877.⁸⁸ In the meantime, the arri-

⁸⁵ P.C. #957, 13 August 1873.

⁸⁶ See above, p. 47.

⁸⁷ Homestead Entry Receipt made out to Johann Dyck, 11 October 1875, PAC, RG 15, vol. 233, #3129(3).

⁸⁸ Donald Codd, Dominion Lands Agent, Winnipeg, to J. S. Dennis, Surveyor General; letter, 8 March 1877, and telegram, 14 March 1877, *ibid.*, vol. 236, #7665.

ving Mennonite settlers had laid out entire villages, erected houses and other buildings, and had begun to break the land, all the while having the status of mere squatters. Many of them had spent their entire capital resources in making these improvements and did not have the available ten dollars cash to pay the homestead entry fee. In this difficulty William Hespeler, now an immigration agent in Winnipeg, appealed to the Department of the Interior to allow the over 450 settlers waiting to make their homestead entries to do so without the immediate payment of the application fee.⁸⁹ The Department agreed to honour this request, partly to help "a most industrious and valuable class of settlers," partly to avoid the serious inconvenience which was sure to arise if the settlers remained as squatters much longer, and because the situation was in fact caused by the delay in the survey.⁹⁰ The Surveyor General even added that "there will be no necessity for the steps suggested of securing the fees by mortgage as the undersigned has no doubt that they will adhere to the agreement to pay the same in two annual installments." In any case, the Department was protected since the issue of

⁸⁹ William Hespeler to Codd, 25 April 1877, *ibid.* Zacharias, p. 152, shows that in Reinland, a village founded 1875 in twp. 1-4W, the earliest homestead entries were made on 30 May 1877.

⁹⁰ Codd to Dennis, 14 May 1877, PAC, RG 15, vol. 236, #7665.

the patent could be delayed until the debt had been paid.⁹¹

A second example of government accommodation to Mennonite wishes occurred a few years later. Obervorsteher Isaak Mueller in the summer of 1880 requested permission from the Minister of the Interior for West Reserve Mennonites to affirm land applications before the local Justice of the Peace, rather than having to go eighty miles to Winnipeg to do so.⁹² The Department responded by transferring the West Reserve land business to the office at Nelsonville, a town just outside the northwest corner of the reserve. The inefficient and somewhat ineffective service given by this office has been noted earlier. Mueller, who showed himself to be a very capable administrator in his own right, already observed this after a few months. He therefore took it upon himself to advise the Minister of the Interior, no less a person than Prime Minister John A. Macdonald himself, how this office should be run. He had obviously learned fairly quickly that if you signed your letter "your obedient servant," you could get away with quite a bit.⁹³

A third problem encountered by the West Reserve Menno-

⁹¹ Dennis to the Minister of the Interior, 28 May 1877, *ibid.*

⁹² Telegram, Mueller to Minister of the Interior, 30 August 1880, *ibid.*, vol. 232, #3129.

⁹³ Mueller to Minister of the Interior, 8 October 1880, *ibid.*

nites in seeking to exercise their homestead rights proved more difficult to solve. On 9 July 1879 the Department of the Interior published the conditions and terms under which odd numbered sections of land lying within 110 miles on either side of the Canadian Pacific Railway could be purchased effective August 1.⁹⁴ Two weeks later the Dominion Land Agent in Winnipeg, Donald Codd, was authorized to begin selling lands. He in turn authorized the agent in Emerson to sell odd numbered sections in the West Reserve to bona fide Mennonites.⁹⁵ When this was discovered in Ottawa six months later, the Minister ordered an immediate halt of such sales.⁹⁶ In the interval however, over eight thousand acres had been sold, which sales Codd now proceeded to cancel.⁹⁷ At this Hespeler complained to the Surveyor General that lands which had been purchased by Mennonites through him "their agent"

⁹⁴J. S. Dennis, Deputy Minister of the Interior, and Lindsay Russell, Surveyor General, "Verordnung betreffend der Dominion Laender fuer den Zweck der Canadian Pacific Eisenbahn," *ibid.*, vol. 233, #3129(3).

⁹⁵Telegram, Codd, Winnipeg, to Russell, 25 February 1880, *ibid.*

⁹⁶Telegram, Russell to Codd, 18 February 1880, *ibid.*

⁹⁷Telegrams, Codd to Russell, 28 February and 8 March 1880, *ibid.* R. Rauscher's report of 22 October 1881 to Russell listed 54 Mennonites who had obtained entries on Railroad lands and from whom second payment was now being refused. *Ibid.*, vol. 232, #3129(2A). Assuming each entry to be for a quarter section, this amounts to 8,640 acres.

were being cancelled by Codd.⁹⁸ Isaak Mueller, administrator of the West Reserve, wanted to know why Mennonites were now "forbidden to either purchase or homestead odd numbered sections."⁹⁹

Since the village settlement pattern, which the Mennonites were instituting in the Russian pattern on both reserves, required a block of contiguous land, access to odd numbered sections was essential. Both Codd and Hespeler pointed this out to the Surveyor General, arguing that withholding the odd numbered sections was unjust to the Mennonites.¹⁰⁰ Russell considered their plea "groundless" since any qualifying Mennonite was free to homestead on either even or odd sections "by order LR," and informed the Winnipeg office accordingly.¹⁰¹

This ruling by the Department solved the problem for most of the individuals affected. In the Nelsonville office however, confusion over whether Mennonites could get homestead entries in the reserve on both odd and even numbered sections, or on even only, continued for another two and a

⁹⁸ Telegrams, William Hespeler to Russell, 20 and 21 February 1880, *ibid.*, vol. 233, #3129(3).

⁹⁹ Telegram, Codd to Russell, 15 February 1880, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Codd to Russell, 14 March 1880; Hespeler to Russell, 11 March 1880; *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Pencilled note, 23 March, on Codd's 14 March 1880 letter. This was communicated to Codd in a letter from Russell, 27 March 1880, *ibid.*

half years.¹⁰²

This first phase of the railroad lands problem was compounded by a change in the Homestead Act in 1879 which limited the size of a homestead to eighty acres instead of the usual one hundred sixty. The original figure was soon restored, but in the meantime it affected a considerable number of Mennonite homesteaders. These were now permitted to apply for an additional eighty acres for which they would qualify after having met residence requirements for three years on the original homestead.¹⁰³ By February 1881 fifty-four West Reserve Mennonites had filed such application.¹⁰⁴ Dominion Lands Inspector, William Pearce, reported in September 1882 that the problems related to the eighty acre homesteads were not yet all solved. By that time the Department was ready for another round of administrative difficulties with the railroad lands.¹⁰⁵

Some time during 1882 all of the odd numbered sections south of the Canadian Pacific Railway line were withdrawn from

¹⁰² J. B. McLaren, Solicitor for the Mennonites, Nelsonville, to Surveyor General, 12 July 1882, *ibid.*, vol. 232, #3129(2A).

¹⁰³ Lindsay Russell to W. P. Leslie, who had inquired for Isaak Mueller, 8 January 1881, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Rauscher report to Russell, 22 October 1881, *ibid.*, J. B. McLaren, Nelson, to Surveyor General, 28 August 1882, *ibid.*, #3129(1-2 & 2A).

¹⁰⁵ William Pearce, Winnipeg, to Lindsay Russell, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 1 September 1882, *ibid.*

sale.¹⁰⁶ Later that year and early in 1883, two orders-in-council were passed describing the lands granted to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in Manitoba.¹⁰⁷ The second of these granted to the Company all of the odd numbered sections south of the main line of the CPR from the Red River to the original western boundary of the province.¹⁰⁸ The CPR immediately advertised these lands for sale. When the Deputy Minister of the Interior noticed that Mennonite West Reserve lands were included in this advertisement, he objected. Since the Mennonite Reserve had been created before "any right of the Company had accrued," the CPR could not sell reserve lands without an enabling order-in-council.¹⁰⁹

A year later the new Deputy Minister, A. M. Burgess, gave the CPR clearance to sell odd numbered sections in the Mennonite Reserve, but noted that an order-in-council would be required to do so.¹¹⁰ The Railway Secretary responded that in his reading of the January 1883 order-in-council the grant "was clearly understood to cover the Mennonite lands

¹⁰⁶ A. Russell for Surveyor General, to A. G. Mason, Stodderville, 18 July 1882, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ 3 November 1882 and 25 January 1883.

¹⁰⁸ P.C. #110, 25 January 1883, PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 245.

¹⁰⁹ Lindsay Russell, Deputy Minister of the Interior to C. Drinkwater, Secretary, CPR, Montreal, 8 November 1882, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 303, #67992.

¹¹⁰ Burgess to Drinkwater, 5 December 1883, *ibid.*

except insofar as individual claims existed against particular sections."¹¹¹ The Minister of the Interior however, "did not admit the right of the Company to any of the lands in the said Reserve."¹¹² The CPR was not satisfied with the ministerial word and wanted to be informed "on what ground or principle" the odd numbered lots in the Mennonite Reserve were excluded from the CPR grant.¹¹³

Meanwhile, some lands had in fact been sold under the tentative permission granted in late 1883. The Department now agreed to the issuing of patents for the lands thus sold, without however, yielding its stance on the question of the proprietorship of the odd sections.¹¹⁴

A further complication was introduced in spring of 1885 by an order-in-council according to which the exclusive privilege to Mennonites in both reserves was to cease on 1 October.¹¹⁵ The question whether the odd numbered sections would now revert to the CPR, since they were no longer reserved, was re-

¹¹¹ Drinkwater to Burgess, 29 February 1884, *ibid.*

¹¹² Burgess to Drinkwater, 2 June 1884, *ibid.*

¹¹³ Drinkwater to Burgess, 27 August 1884, *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ J. R. Hall, Secretary, Department of the Interior, to Drinkwater, 16 September 1885, *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ P.C. #937, 6 May 1885, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

ferred to the Justice Department for an opinion.¹¹⁶ Its Deputy Minister ruled early in 1886 in favour of the CPR.¹¹⁷ The Interior Department asked him to reconsider his opinion, contending that the orders-in-council of 1882 and 1883 only gave the CPR those odd numbered sections vested in the Crown at that time.¹¹⁸ The matter was then juggled back and forth between the two Departments without a clear decision until the Minister of the Interior on 9 December 1889 submitted the entire problem once more to the Privy Council. But the cabinet apparently was also not inclined to make a decision on the matter, for on 9 May 1890 the clerk of the Privy Council noted that the matter was referred once more to the Minister of Justice. Finally, in midsummer of 1893, four deputy ministers of Justice later, the definitive ruling came: Only those lands at the disposal of the government at the time of the grant were in fact granted to the CPR by the 1883 order-in-council.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ J. R. Hall, Acting Deputy Minister of the Interior, to G. W. Burbidge, Deputy Minister of Justice, 24 September 1885, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 303, #67992.

¹¹⁷ Burbidge to Hall, 28 January 1886, *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to Burbidge, 31 August 1887, *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ E. L. Newcombe, Deputy Minister of Justice, to Burgess, 18 July 1893, *ibid.* A copy of this ruling was sent to the CPR Secretary Drinkwater on 19 February 1897! The Deputy Ministers of Justice involved were Burbidge, A. Power, Robert Sedgewick, and Newcombe.

The Interior Department had obviously been anticipating this decision for some time, since already in 1888 earlier sales of odd numbered sections in the Mennonite Reserve were being cancelled,¹²⁰ and by spring of 1889 all Mennonite sales had been cancelled except three which were still under negotiation.¹²¹

For the Mennonites the problem was that without access to the odd numbered sections no new villages could be founded. During the period of indecision from 1883 to 1888 these lands were at times completely out of circulation, at other times sold by both the government and the CPR, resulting in double entries and cancelled sales.¹²² This uncertainty, and the delay in obtaining refunds for cancelled sales,¹²³ led some of the younger landless generation to explore settlement

¹²⁰ Wm. Rempel, Clerk, Municipality of Rhineland, to Thomas Greenway, Premier of Manitoba, 26 November 1888, PAM, MG 13, E 1, p. 1276.

¹²¹ Secretary, Department of the Interior, to C. Drinkwater, Secretary, CPR, April 1889, PAC, RG 15, vol. 303, #67992.

¹²² W. D. Scott to Thomas Greenway, 10 December 1888, PAM, MG 13, E 1, p. 1558. J. R. Hall, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, to Drinkwater, 24 September 1888, PAC, RG 15, vol. 303, #67992.

¹²³ Corbet Locke to H. H. Smith, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg, 22 January 1889, *ibid.*, vol. 571, #179925(2). Locke, acting as attorney for the Mennonites, argued in a 13 May 1889 letter to Smith that "a great wrong" was being done to those Mennonites who had purchased CPR lands with borrowed money and were now without land but paying interest because of the delay in the refunds.

possibilities in Oregon.¹²⁴ For the Deputy Minister the choice in that situation was clear: "If it be a question between giving the land to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company as a part of their land grant, and allowing the Mennonites to go out of the country, I don't think we should hesitate as to the course to pursue."¹²⁵ The government's solution to this CPR land problem apparently was successful, for only a few families actually migrated to Oregon.¹²⁶

None of these problems affected the Mennonites in the East Reserve. Their problems stemmed rather from abundant rainfall and poor drainage. Beginning with the late 1870s, a number of settlers here found that they could no longer farm their original homesteads and decided to join the Fuers-tenland and Chortitza Mennonites on the West Reserve. But

¹²⁴H. H. Smith to A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 19 June 1888, passing on information he had received from Premier Greenway, *ibid.*, vol. 570, #179925(1). George Young, Dominion Lands Agent, Manitou, reported on 21 June 1888 to H. H. Smith that "a deputation has been sent from the neighbourhood of Gretna, to Oregon, Washington Territory and British Columbia to select a suitable location for 500 Mennonites," giving as a reason the numerous applications for odd numbered sections that were being refused. *Ibid.* Henry C. Jacobsen, Dominion Government Intelligence Officer, Winnipeg, reported 7 September 1889 to Smith on his assignment to see the twelve to fourteen West Reserve families reportedly wanting to leave for California. *Ibid.*, vol. 571, #179925(2).

¹²⁵Burgess to Smith, 25 June 1888, *ibid.*, vol. 570, #179925(1).

¹²⁶News items in Die Mennonitische Rundschau, 6 February and 12 March 1890, indicate a group of ex-Manitoba Mennonites in Oregon large enough to have their own school with twenty-one pupils enrolled.

taking up a second homestead was not legal under the Dominion Lands Act until a revision of 1883.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, the Department of the Interior permitted such settlers to abandon their original homestead formally (see appendix 4) and thereby become eligible to homestead once more on the West Reserve.

e) Hamlet Privilege

When the first 228 families from Prussia founded the Mennonite settlement in Russia in 1789, they did so "in accordance with the land law of March 1764, which provided that the allotments be assigned in one contiguous plot, with the recipient to live on his separate 'farm'."¹²⁸ This practice was soon abandoned however, and the old Hollaenderdorf was adapted to the Russian steppes. During the century of Mennonite experience in Russia, this semi-communal village system of land holding became thoroughly established.

The Mennonite immigrants of the 1870s therefore, like the Métis with their French Canadian river lot system, did not fit into the newly adopted Canadian land holding system with its sectional survey and individual homesteads. While their 1873 Privilegium from the Canadian government did not speak directly to this question, they assumed that the setting aside

¹²⁷ Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 70.

¹²⁸ D. G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia," p. 297.

of reserves for them implied the right to regulate land holding patterns internally. On both Manitoba reserves therefore, settlement from the outset took place in villages. The Dominion Lands Act however, required settlers to reside on their homesteads for three years before being eligible to obtain a patent to their quarter section.

An amendment to the Act in 1876 granted Mennonites (along with Icelanders settling west of Lake Winnipeg) the privilege of fulfilling homestead residence requirements while living in villages.¹²⁹ The amended version provided

that, in the case of settlements being formed of immigrants in communities, (such for instance as those of Mennonites or Icelanders,) the Minister of the Interior may vary or waive, in his discretion, the foregoing requirements as to residence and cultivation on each separate quarter-section entered as a homestead.¹³⁰

Since this provision of the Act applied only at the Minister's discretion, it came to be known as the "Hamlet

¹²⁹ John Warkentin, "Manitoba Settlement Patterns," Papers of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, series III, no. 16, 1961, p. 73.

¹³⁰ Canada, Statutes, 1876, p. 75, 39 Vic., ch. 19, sec. 9, amending sub-sec. 11 of sec. 33 of the 1874 Act.

This was further amended to specify a minimum community size and to limit the area of the Minister's discretion to the residence requirement only: "In case of a number of homestead settlers, embracing not less than twenty families, with a view to greater convenience in the establishment of schools and churches, and to the attainment of social advantages of like character, ask to be allowed to settle together in a hamlet or village, the Minister of the Interior may, in his discretion, vary or dispense with the foregoing requirements as to residence, but not as to the cultivation of each separate quarter-section entered as a homestead." Ibid., 1883, pp. 288-89, 46 Vic., ch. 17, sec. 32.

Privilege," somewhat distinct from the Homestead Right which every incoming settler obtained.

In spite of this amendment to the Act however, the Department continued to use the regular "Application for Homestead Patent" forms on the Mennonite reserves. The second affirmation on this application read:

I obtained entry in Dominion Lands Office at on the day of 187.. , and have been actually residing on my homestead and cultivating the same continuously since the day of 187.. , and I am still residing upon and cultivating the said lands.¹³¹

In November of 1882 the West Reserve Obervorsteher asked the Department to prepare forms "that will meet the case of my people who are settled in villages."¹³² A revised "Application for Homestead Patent" was accordingly issued by the Department. The new form, No. 11, prepared in accordance with section 4 of the Dominion Lands Act, 1883, replaced the old residence clause with the following:

That I made my Homestead Entry in the Dominion Lands Office at and perfected the same by commencing to actually reside in the village of to which said Homestead is appurtenant and cultivate my portion of the land belonging to the said village on the day of 188...

The Dominion Lands Office in Winnipeg only began using these

¹³¹ PAC, RG 15, vol. 246, #27630(1).

¹³² Isaak Mueller, Spencerfeld, to Lindsay Russell, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 28 November 1882, *ibid.*, vol. 232, #3129(1-2 & 2a).

forms in early 1885.¹³³ But the privilege itself was enjoyed by the Mennonites from the outset of their settlement and no difficulties with the government were ever encountered on this point.

There was however, a measure of embarrassment within the Department when the time came to abolish this privilege. For the West Reserve it was ended in May 1885, although residence in villages already established was still accepted beyond that date.¹³⁴ When the Department was preparing to terminate this privilege for the East Reserve also, a search of the files was ordered to discover its origin. An unidentified departmental aide reported: "I can find nothing in the early files where the Minister of the Interior distinctly states that Mennonites might settle in hamlets, though the permission is implied all through."¹³⁵ In his opinion the permission to settle in hamlets was part of the agreement with the Mennonite delegates made in 1873, and the 1876 amendment of the Dominion Lands Act was made in accordance with that agreement. An attempt to have the Department of Agriculture, which negotiated the 1873 agreement, clarify this point,

¹³³P. B. Douglas, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior, to A. H. Whitcher, Dominion Lands Agent, Winnipeg, 2 April 1885, *ibid.*

¹³⁴P.C. #937, 6 May 1885, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

¹³⁵Unsigned memo, Department of the Interior, 23 March 1889, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 246, #27630(2).

was unsuccessful.¹³⁶ In spite of the absence of "any record of the Minister having exercised the discretion vested in him by sub-clause 11 of clause 34 of the Dominion Lands Act, 1879," the Deputy Minister did not have any doubt "that it was intended to have been exercised, and the indications are that it was exercised, patents having always issued to Mennonite homesteaders without regard to the condition of residence on the land."¹³⁷ Having established that the hamlet privilege existed in fact, if not on paper, the Minister of the Interior was now free to ask cabinet to abolish it.¹³⁸

f) Naturalization and Land Patents

The final goal of exercising homestead rights was of course, for the homesteader to acquire title to the land on which he had settled. In the preceding two sections the extensive interaction between the Mennonites and the government in Ottawa in connection with making homestead entries and fulfilling the residence requirements has been documented.

¹³⁶ A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to John Lowe, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, 1 April 1889, *ibid.*

¹³⁷ Burgess to H. H. Smith, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg, 3 August 1889, *ibid.* The wording of the relevant clause of the 1879 Act is still identical with that of the 1876 amendment.

¹³⁸ P.C. #1938, 14 August 1889, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1. Zacharias pp. 70-74, 334, n. 4, describes this aspect of early Mennonite settlement in some detail on the basis of the above research.

A third requirement for obtaining title to the land was that the claimant must be a subject of Her Majesty by birth or naturalization.¹³⁹ An immigrant wishing to become naturalized was required to take the oath of allegiance.¹⁴⁰ For the Mennonites this presented a two-fold difficulty. First, they had religious scruples about swearing an oath. Secondly, they were concerned that "should they become subjects of Her Majesty they would be called upon to take up arms in her defense. This their religion does not allow them to do." They therefore asked for reassurance in the matter of military exemption.¹⁴¹ The Surveyor General checked this question with the Deputy Minister of Justice and received the opinion that Mennonites could take the oath of allegiance and become naturalized citizens without becoming subject to military service according to the 1868 Militia Law.¹⁴² An order-in-council was then passed in August 1877 assuring the Mennonites that taking the oath of allegiance "will not be construed as interfering with the immunity from military service secured to them".

¹³⁹ Dominion Lands Act, sec. 33, quoted in P.C. #786/1877, PAC, RG 2, 1.

¹⁴⁰ Alien Law, 31 Vic., ch. 66, quoted *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ A. Belch, Dominion Lands Agent, Winnipeg, to J. S. Dennis, Surveyor General, Ottawa, 14 July 1877, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 237, #8974.

¹⁴² Dennis to the Minister of the Interior, 26 July 1877, *ibid.*

by the order-in-council of 25 September 1872.¹⁴³

In spite of this official reassurance, not all Mennonites were convinced. Some saw implications in the taking out of citizenship far beyond the mere fulfilling of homestead requirements. It would indicate their desire to become part of the people of the province instead of remaining a separate Gemeinschaft. By becoming citizens they would become subject to jury duty, to the provincial school law, and to taxation by a municipal government without regard to the Mennonite village organization.¹⁴⁴ These warnings were not taken very seriously however, and by 1880 many of the Bergthal people were becoming naturalized and applying for their homestead patents.¹⁴⁵

Among the Chortitza and Fuerstenland settlers the majority only took this step beginning in late 1882.¹⁴⁶ Some

¹⁴³ P.C. #786, 27 August 1877, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Anonymous contributor, Winnipeg, 29 November 1877, Herold der Wahrheit, January 1878, p. 9. The American editor suggested that the Mennonites take their time to find out the duties and obligations of British subjects; if the advantages were significant and if the Mennonite nonresistant status was not jeopardized, then they could take out citizenship.

¹⁴⁵ William Hespeler, Winnipeg, to A. N. Whitcher, Dominion Lands Agent, Winnipeg, 14 October 1880, PAC, RG 15, vol. 246, #27630(1).

¹⁴⁶ James R. Bonny, Justice of the Peace, Nelson, to the Minister of the Interior, 24 November 1882, *ibid.*, vol. 232, #3129(1 - 2 & 2a); telegram, Isaak Mueller to Lindsay Russell, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 12 January 1883, *ibid.*, vol. 246, #27630(1). The village of Reinland, usually a bellwether for the Fuerstenland-Chortitza group, submitted applications for homestead patents from eleven of its residents

of the individuals out of this group preferred not to make the necessary affirmations for obtaining certificates of naturalization, "considering same to be against their religious belief" and attempted to purchase their homestead land instead.¹⁴⁷ Although the number of Mennonites choosing this option was very small, it was assumed in later years by Ottawa that "Mennonites do not as a rule take steps to become naturalized, such action being contrary to one of the tenets of their faith."¹⁴⁸

With the procedures for naturalization cleared, many Mennonites became in quick order citizens of Canada and owners of their land. In the summer of 1881 a new obstacle arose which delayed the granting of homestead patents for quite a number of them; particularly on the West Reserve. Payments on the 1875 government loan, secured by the Mennonite Aid Committee of Ontario, were running far behind

on 22 March 1883, and certificates of naturalization on 20 April 1883. Ibid., vol. 275, #50322.

¹⁴⁷Bonny to the Minister of the Interior, 13 June 1883, writing on behalf of Gerhard and Henry Elias, *ibid.*, vol. 232, #3129(1 - 2 & 2a).

¹⁴⁸Lord Byng, Governor General, to Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for Colonies, London, 22 February 1922; O. D. Skelton, for the Secretary of State for External Affairs, to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, London, 26 February 1929; *ibid.*, RG 7, G 21, #37523.

Among the Chortitza-Fuerstenland people the oath of citizenship remained an item of contention for a long time. When Peter A. Elias questioned it in the Mitarbeiter, March 1908, p. 46, the editor, p. 47, pointed out that some had refused to take out citizenship even at the risk of not obtaining title to their homestead.

schedule. In June of 1881 the Treasury Board suggested that therefore no homestead patents be issued to the Manitoba Mennonites for the time being.¹⁴⁹ William Hespeler protested this suggestion, arguing that the loan was guaranteed by the Ontario Mennonites and not by mortgages against Manitoba Mennonite lands.¹⁵⁰ John Lowe supported Hespeler's understanding of this point and claimed that "the Mennonite loan has no relation to anything of this kind."¹⁵¹

Legally this position was quite correct and on the basis of it most East Reserve Mennonites and many Bergthal settlers on the West Reserve obtained their patents irrespective of any indebtedness to the government. The Chortitza-Fuerstenland leaders however, in their desire to make sure that their people would repay the loan, tried to make repayment condition for obtaining homestead patent. Since Ober-vorsteher Isaak Mueller loosely represented the entire West Reserve, these efforts also affected the Bergthal people settled on the eastern part of the Reserve. They now made representation to the Minister of the Interior complaining

¹⁴⁹ Secretary, Treasury Board, to the Minister of the Interior, 20 June 1881, PAC, RG 15, vol. 246, #27630(1).

¹⁵⁰ Hespeler to Lindsay Russell, Surveyor General, 22 July 1881, *ibid.*

¹⁵¹ John Lowe to Russell, 4 January 1882, *ibid.*

that Mueller was holding up their patents.¹⁵²

The problem, as Mueller saw it, was that once Mennonites had patents to their homesteads, it would be a simple matter for them to make loans against their land and that this possibility would be exploited by undesirable outside elements. In Nelsonville there existed "a ring of sharpers" just waiting to set upon his people. To prevent that from happening, Mueller requested that the former Emerson land agent, George Newcomb, remain in Ottawa during the winter and that all patent applications be sent directly to the Ottawa Office. This request, he said, was supported by "nearly the entire number of my people and all of those that wish to pay their just debts to the government."¹⁵³

In late 1882 the Ontario Mennonite committee requested the Department of the Interior to withhold the granting of homestead patents to Mennonites in Hamilton and Manchester Counties in Manitoba. The committee wanted the debt of the Manitoba Mennonites to be a first charge on their lands.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵²E. F. Burnham, Barrister, Emerson, writing on behalf of some 80 Mennonites, to the Minister of the Interior, 7 June 1882; J. B. McLaren, (Solicitor of Nelson), Kingston, to Minister of the Interior, 13 November 1882; *ibid.*, vol. 232, #3129 (2A).

¹⁵³Isaak Mueller to the Minister of the Interior, 28 November 1882, *ibid.*, #3129 (1 - 2 & 2a).

¹⁵⁴H. W. C. Meyer, Wingham, Ontario, to Lindsay Russell, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 5 December 1882, *ibid.* The West Reserve was included in these two counties, but not the eastern one.

In Manitoba meanwhile, Mueller prepared a list of the 190 persons who had not yet repaid their loan in full and gave the location of the homestead of each of them. A statement accompanying this list indicated that it was agreed that the Mennonite loan "should be a first lien or charge upon the respective homesteads and preemptions" of the debtors.¹⁵⁵ Jacob Shantz sent the list and the agreement on to the Department of the Interior.¹⁵⁶ At the urging of several persons, including the president of a Toronto loan company, the government passed an order-in-council to hold up patents on the 190 applications on the list until proof of repayment in full of the loan was furnished.¹⁵⁷ The way was thus cleared for patents to be issued to all the other applicants from the Chortitza-Fuerstenland portion of the West Reserve. This stimulated those still indebted to repay their loan quickly and the Department of the Interior arranged with Shantz that a receipt given by Mueller in Manitoba would clear the way for the issuing of a homestead patent.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Agreement signed at Reinland by Isaak Mueller, General Manager, and Peter Wiens, Secretary and Treasurer, of the Reinland [West] Reserve, 16 December 1882, *ibid.*, vol. 246, #27630.

¹⁵⁶ George Newcomb to Lindsay Russell, 11 January 1883, *ibid.*, #27630(1).

¹⁵⁷ P.C. #251, 6 February 1883, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Department of the Interior to J. Y. Shantz, 25 April 1883; Shantz to Minister of the Interior, 28 April 1883; *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 246, #27630.

The Ontario Committee then negotiated a similar agreement with the Bergthal settlers on the eastern portion of the West Reserve and on the East Reserve. A second list of 146 debtors was submitted to the Department in May of 1883.¹⁵⁹ Because of some irregularities in the list however, an order-in-council dealing with these was not passed until the end of the year.¹⁶⁰

Once it became known that the Mennonites could readily obtain title to their homestead as soon as their debt to the Ontario Committee was paid, some loan companies paid these debts to the Ontario Mennonite Committee in order to be able to make individual loans to the Manitoba Mennonites against their land title.¹⁶¹ By 1892 the final payment of the Mennonite loan was made and thereby the final obstacle to Manitoba Mennonites' receiving their patents removed.¹⁶²

g) Termination of the Reserve

Unlike the Indian Reserves which the federal government was creating in the Northwest at the time of the Mennonite

¹⁵⁹F. W. Meyer and Bernhard Klippenstein, 13 April 1883, received by the Department of the Interior, 21 May 1883, *ibid.*, #27630(1).

¹⁶⁰P.C. #2426, 13 December 1883, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

¹⁶¹J. Y. Shantz to the Minister of the Interior, 1 September 1885, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 281, #54018.

¹⁶²J. Y. Shantz, Secretary of the Waterloo Society [Ontario Aid Committee], to the Secretary, Department of the Interior, 26 April 1892, *ibid.*, vol. 246, #27630(2).

immigration, the two reserves created for the Mennonites were not intended to be permanent ones. Rather, they were to serve merely as a device by which to restrict homesteading and purchasing of land in the designated area exclusively to Mennonites for a limited period of time. However, neither of the two orders-in-council creating the reserves specified a time limit. So once more the government was forced to try to determine after the fact what had been intended when the reserves were created. According to John Lowe, at whose initiative the East Reserve was set aside in 1873, the implied termination date was 1882, the year mentioned in clause 14 of the Privilegium.¹⁶³ The Mennonites in Manitoba, like most of Ottawa's officialdom, had not caught the implication.

Actually, the first suggestion that the reserves be terminated came much earlier than 1882. Already in 1879 the Dominion Lands Agent in Winnipeg recommended this to the Surveyor General.¹⁶⁴ By then the Mennonite immigration had dropped off sharply and the West Reserve was still far from

¹⁶³ John Lowe, Department of Agriculture, to Lindsay Russell, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 25 September 1882; Lowe to A. M. Burgess, Secretary, Department of the Interior, 28 September 1882; *ibid.*, vol. 232, #3129(2A).

In his 26 July 1873 letter to the Manitoba delegates from Russia, as well as in the order-in-council of 13 August 1873, clause 14 assured potential Mennonite immigrants that the price of passenger warrants from Hamburg to Fort Garry would not rise above \$40 per adult up to the year 1882.

¹⁶⁴ Donald Codd to Lindsay Russell, 26 September 1879, *ibid.*, #3129.

full. According to the Agent's understanding, completely settling the area was condition for holding it as a reserve. In passing this suggestion on to the Deputy Minister, the Surveyor General added his opinion that "it would be a great injustice to go on retaining for the children of these foreigners land that we refuse our own people to enter and cultivate at once; and that is precisely what continuing the reservation means."¹⁶⁵

At this point the Minister of Agriculture requested William Hespeler "to ascertain from the leaders of the Mennonites if they have any reasons to assign against throwing open the reservation . . . for general settlement."¹⁶⁶ The Department of the Interior meanwhile, continued to receive petitions from persons and groups as diverse as the provincial treasurer of Manitoba, the Municipality of Dufferin South, and a group of Ontario settlers, to open all or part of the West Reserve.¹⁶⁷ An enterprising member of Parliament from Ontario, Hugo Kranz, asked for the whole remaining unoccupied lands in the West

¹⁶⁵ Russell to J. S. Dennis, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 4 October 1879, *ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ H. B. Small, Acting Secretary, Department of Agriculture, to Dennis, 25 November 1879, *ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ J. Norquay, Provincial Treasurer's Office, Manitoba, to Dennis, 13 July 1880; Robert McKay, Warden, and six councillors, Alexandria, petition, 3 May 1880 to remove twp. 1 in ranges 5 and 6W; petition by 19 Ontario settlers to Privy Council, 21 July 1880, to open twp. 1, range 5.W; *ibid.*

Reserve to "be set aside for settlement by myself." He planned to bring in German, Swedish, Norwegian, or Scotch settlers and fill all the lands in three years.¹⁶⁸ By 1881 the Minister yielded to the "great pressure . . . brought to bear upon him by persons desirous of securing the unoccupied portion of those lands," and obtained approval from the cabinet to have unoccupied West Reserve lands sold at a public auction in June in Winnipeg.¹⁶⁹

This action by the government produced different reactions among the various interested parties. "A rush of squatters comprising all classes including many persons from across borders" took up lands on the reserve, reported the Land Agent at Emerson, "with the view of having prior claim if said Reserve be thrown open as rumoured."¹⁷⁰ Hugo Kranz now offered to buy all the available lands for his planned German settlement.¹⁷¹ A great number of prospective settlers and land speculators wrote to the Departments of Interior and Agriculture asking advance concessions, sales, and other

¹⁶⁸ Hugo Kranz, Ottawa, to Sir John A. Macdonald, Minister of the Interior, 27 January 1881, *ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ P.C. #381, 24 March 1881, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

¹⁷⁰ Telegram, J. E. Têtu, Dominion Lands Agent, Emerson, to John Lowe, 16 June 1880, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129.

¹⁷¹ Kranz to the Minister of the Interior, 18 March 1881, *ibid.*; Kranz to John A. Macdonald, 30 March 1881, *ibid.*, MG 26 A, vol. 374, pp. 174501-3; Kranz to J. S. Dennis, 14 April 1881, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129 (2A).

favours.¹⁷²

Two of the persons more directly involved in carrying out the order-in-council raised tough administrative questions. Isaak Mueller, administrator of the West Reserve Mennonite community, wanted to know how the proposed sale would affect the many claims in process of those who had received eighty acre homesteads or those who had made entry for homestead or preemption on lands formerly identified as railroad lands.¹⁷³ Donald Codd of the Winnipeg Land Office was aware of this problem and pointed out to the Surveyor General that a thorough check had first to be done on lands being offered for sale.¹⁷⁴ Faced with these practical reminders, the Department found it "impossible to have the necessary arrangements made for selling those lands" in June, and asked cabinet to postpone the date of the sale to September, at the same time raising the upset price from two to three dollars per acre.¹⁷⁵

The Deputy Minister now published a three-page list of lands in the Mennonite Reserve to be sold by public

¹⁷²Ibid., #3129(1 - 2 & 2a).

¹⁷³W. P. Leslie, Spencerfeld, to Surveyor General, 21 March 1881, *ibid.*, #3129. The problems connected with 80-acre homesteads and the 1879 railway land sales have been discussed in 2.d. above.

¹⁷⁴Donald Codd, Acting Inspector of Dominion Lands Agencies, to Surveyor General, 30 March 1881, *ibid.*, #3129(2A).

¹⁷⁵P.C. #1123, 29 July 1881, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

auction.¹⁷⁶

That list was quickly discovered to be "not reliable at all, for it comprises as vacant the very sites of large villages."¹⁷⁷ A few days later four members of Parliament, including those representing the areas affected by the sale, cabled the Minister of the Interior: "utmost fear and anxiety caused by advertised sale of lands . . . not to delay the sale of these lands here will have the most disastrous effect."¹⁷⁸ But the governmental decision making apparatus was already in motion and the following day cabinet fixed September 19 as the date for the sale.¹⁷⁹

The protests were not in vain however. Three days later all the lands in the Mennonite Reserve within fifteen miles of the international boundary were withdrawn from the

¹⁷⁶ Lindsay Russell, Acting Deputy Minister of the Interior, 13 August 1881, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129(2).

¹⁷⁷ R. Rauscher, Dominion Lands Surveyor, to Russell, 1 September 1881, *ibid.*, #3129(2A). Rauscher indicated that the village sites of Halbstadt, Edenburg, Neuanlage, Blumenort, Neuhorst, Schoenwiese, Rosengart, and Gruenfeld were being offered for public auction! Heinrich Wiebe, Emerson, cabled Russell on 14 September 1881 to ask whether such occupied lands would be sold. *Ibid.*, #3129(1 - 2 & 2a).

¹⁷⁸ Telegram, J. Schultz, T. Scott, J. Ryan, and J. Royal, Winnipeg, to Hon. D. L. McPherson, 6 September 1881, *ibid.*, #3129(2). The announced sale was to include lands in some of the Red River parishes as well as the Mennonite Reserve, and much of the "fear and anxiety" was among settlers in the former.

¹⁷⁹ P.C. #1270, 7 September 1881, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

sale.¹⁸⁰ That restricted the proposed sale to the largely unoccupied three mile wide strip along the northern edge of the reserve. The greatly reduced sale, postponed once more, finally took place on 19 October 1881.¹⁸¹ In spite of administrative precautions and postponements, some occupied lands were still inadvertently sold at the auction.¹⁸² More serious than this inconvenience for the Mennonites was the fact that for over a year before the sale and almost a year after it the reserve was plagued by an unusual number of squatters coming in, and Mennonite settlers hampered by the fact that both of the Dominion Lands Offices were reluctant to make any new entries on the reserve.¹⁸³

On the East Reserve the question of termination first came up when the leadership in late 1883 requested permission for younger members of the community to take up homesteads abandoned earlier by Bergthal immigrants transferring to the

¹⁸⁰ A. Campbell, Acting Minister of the Interior, to Lindsay Russell, Acting Deputy Minister, 10 September 1881, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129(2).

¹⁸¹ Telegram, Russell to A. H. Whitcher, Dominion Lands Agent, Winnipeg, 15 September 1881, *ibid.*

¹⁸² Whitcher to Surveyor General, 17 November 1881, *ibid.*, #3129(2A); G. Newcomb, Nelson, to Deputy Minister of the Interior, 10 November 1881, *ibid.*, #3129(1 - 2 & 2a).

¹⁸³ Correspondence files #3129(2) and #3129(2A) indicate that undesirable aftereffects of the sale continued in the Lands Office until September 1882.

West Reserve.¹⁸⁴ The Secretary of the Department of the Interior saw this as an occasion for deciding the entire Mennonite reserves question and initiated discussions on this matter with the Department of Agriculture.¹⁸⁵ This led to a cabinet decision opening even numbered sections for homesteading and odd ones for sale to Mennonites exclusively up to 1 July 1885. After that date odd numbered sections would be opened for sale to the public.¹⁸⁶ A Mennonite delegation to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands in Winnipeg, claiming the right of making homestead entries on odd as well as even numbered sections, and William Hespeler's complaint about the "blind injustice" of the Department, succeeded only in postponing the date for opening the reserve from July 1 to October 1.¹⁸⁷

The order-in-council making this change of date went a step further than the previous one had. After October 1 even numbered sections on the East Reserve were to be opened to the public for homesteading and odd numbered sections for sale, and both even and odd numbered sections on the West

¹⁸⁴ Peter Toews, Vorsteher, and David Stoesz, Bishop, to Sir John A. Macdonald, December 1883, *ibid.*, vol. 246, #27630.

¹⁸⁵ J. R. Hall to G. Newcomb, 7 February 1884, *ibid.*, #27630(1). The discussions took place in August.

¹⁸⁶ P.C. #2309, 17 January 1885, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

¹⁸⁷ A. Walsh to Minister of the Interior, 27 February 1885; William Hespeler to Walsh, 19 February 1885; *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 246, #27630(1).

Reserve were to be offered for public sale after that date.¹⁸⁸ In the summer of 1886 the Commissioner of Dominion Lands in Winnipeg recommended that the odd numbered sections in both Mennonite reserves be opened for homestead entry instead of for sale.¹⁸⁹ The Minister ignored the advice and recommended instead that on termination of the reserve, now set for 1 January 1887, even numbered sections on the West Reserve should be opened to the public for homesteading. He then rescinded the previous order-in-council of 6 May 1885, without making alternative provisions for the East Reserve.¹⁹⁰

In early 1887 the East Reserve leadership, unaware that the 1885 order-in-council throwing open their reserve had been rescinded, petitioned the Minister of the Interior to retain their reserve and if possible to open also the odd sections for settlement.¹⁹¹ The Minister, apparently equally unaware of the consequences of the 1886 order-in-council, replied that he had considered the petition but would adhere to the decision already made.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸The change of date was made by P.C. #937, 6 May 1885, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

¹⁸⁹H. H. Smith to A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 23 June 1886, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 246, #27630(2).

¹⁹⁰P.C. #1848, 28 October 1886, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

¹⁹¹Bishop David Stoesz, et al., Bergthal, to the Minister of the Interior, 12 February 1887, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 246, #27630(2).

¹⁹²P..B. Douglas, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior, to Stoesz, 28 March 1887, *ibid.*

When the Department discovered in 1888 that for a year and a half it had had no guidelines for dealing with lands in the East Reserve and with odd numbered sections in the West Reserve, it submitted a new proposal to the Privy Council. Both reserves were now to be treated in the same way, with even numbered sections open for homesteading and odd numbered sections for sale, to Mennonites only up to 1 June 1889.¹⁹³ Without giving any reasons, this deadline was twice extended by one year in annual orders-in-council.¹⁹⁴ By 1891 nearly all the available land in the reserves had been taken up and the Minister recommended that "in the public interest" they be continued indefinitely.¹⁹⁵ Apparently this was done at the insistence of the Department of Agriculture which considered that "good faith to the Mennonites requires that we shall continue these reservations indefinitely until the lands have all been taken up by Mennonites."¹⁹⁶ But each time the opening up of the reserve was postponed, there was disappointment among the many outsiders

¹⁹³ P.C. #1696, 11 July 1888, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

¹⁹⁴ P.C. #1317, 15 June 1889; and P.C. #1421, 11 June 1890; *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ P.C. #1047, 18 May 1891, *ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to H. H. Smith, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg, 13 May 1891, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 570, #179925(1).

who had hoped to obtain lands on them.¹⁹⁷

This concept, that "the Department is bound to keep such reservation intact unless by consent of the Mennonites themselves," became the standard response during the next number of years to all who urged opening up the reserves.¹⁹⁸

By 1895 however, reports were reaching Ottawa that Mennonites themselves were selling land on the reserve to outsiders, and even William Hespeler began to suggest that the time had come to throw open the reserves.¹⁹⁹ As reports of such sales increased during 1896, more and more officials of the Department began to share Hespeler's view, and the decision was reached to throw open the reserves after six months. This decision was promptly protested by the Reeve and Treasurer of Hanover Municipality.²⁰⁰ The Mennonite bishops, who had been consulted on this question in October, 1896, also expressed the hope that the reserves might con-

¹⁹⁷ E. F. Stephenson, Dominion Lands Agent, Winnipeg, to H. H. Smith, 28 April 1891, *ibid.*, vol. 571, #179925(2); Mennonitische Rundschau, 2 July 1890, p. 1.

¹⁹⁸ L. Pereira, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior, to J. H. Smith, Morden, 8 May 1894; A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister, to J. R. Hall, Secretary, Department of the Interior, 28 November 1895; PAC, RG 15, vol. 570, #179925(1).

¹⁹⁹ T. R. Burpé, Secretary, Dominion Lands Commission, Winnipeg, to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 17 October 1895, *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Burpé to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 20 January 1897, *ibid.* Hanover Municipality was coterminous with the East Reserve.

tinue unchanged.²⁰¹ For one final time the government agreed to postpone the date.²⁰²

But the reserves had really outlived their usefulness. A map of vacant lands in May 1898 showed only a few openings on the western fringe of the West Reserve and a larger number of sections in the swampiest two townships of the East Reserve. The West Reserve was finally terminated on 1 August 1898 and the East Reserve on 30 November of the same year.²⁰³ By that time the Manitoba Mennonites had already obtained a new reserve between the forks of the Saskatchewan River in the Northwest Territories.

3. Mennonites and the "High" Government: a Summary

Three fairly distinct Mennonite groups had arrived in Canada during the 1870s. A summary of their approximate numbers, including location and leadership, is given in table 2.

²⁰¹Johann Funk, Bishop, Altona, representing the Bergthal portion of the West Reserve, to H. H. Smith, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, 18 January 1897; Peter Toews, Reeve, and David Stoesz, Bishop, representing the East Reserve, to Smith, 18 February 1897; Johann Wiebe, Bishop, Reinland, representing the Chortitza-Fuerstenland portion of the West Reserve, to the Hon. Government in Ottawa, 24 February 1897; *ibid.*

The two Bergthal bishops admitted sales by their members to outsiders, apologized for them, but confessed that they could not stop them.

²⁰²Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, to Bishop Johann Wiebe, 5 March 1897, *ibid.*

²⁰³P.C. #1266, 27 June 1898, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

TABLE 2

MENNONITE IMMIGRANT GROUPS, MANITOBA, 1874-80

<u>Group and Vorsteher</u>	Bishop	Location	No. of Immigrants ^a
<u>Kleine Gemeinde</u>	Peter Toews ^b Jakob Kroeker ^c	East Reserve Scratching River	ca 690.
Bergthal Jacob Peters	Gerhard Wiebe David Stoesz Johann Funk	East Reserve West Reserve	ca 3000
Chortitza- Fuerstenland Isaak Mueller	Johann Wiebe	West Reserve	ca 3240

NOTES:

^aAdolf Ens and Rita Penner, "Quebec Passenger Lists of the Russian Mennonite Immigration, 1874-1880," MQR 48 (October 1974): 531.

^bJoined the Holdemann group 1881.

^cElected 1883 to succeed Toews who had joined the Holdemann group. P. J. B. Reimer, ed., The Sesquicentennial Jubilee. Evangelical Mennonite Conference 1812-1962 (Steinbach, Man.: Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 1962), p. 24.

The Kleine Gemeinde, numbering about 690 immigrants, settled in five villages (Blumenhof, Blumenort, Gruenfeld, Rosenfeld and Steinbach) on the East Reserve and two (Rosenhof and Rosenort) on Scratching River. This geographic separation was compounded by an ecclesiastical split in the early 1880s under the influence of the Ohio evangelist, John Holdemann, giving rise to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴Reimer, pp. 22-23.

Both groups were politically conservative and used their minority status on the East Reserve to allow the more numerous Bergthal people to handle all civil administrative matters, including relations with the government.

The Bergthal colony and congregation came to Canada as an entire community of about three thousand, bringing with them civil leadership in Vorsteher Jacob Peters and a church leader in Bishop Gerhard Wiebe. This group initially settled on the East Reserve but beginning in 1876 also on the western part of the West Reserve. To serve this scattered church adequately, David Stoesz was elected as assistant bishop in 1879.²⁰⁵ By the early 1880s the two parts of the church were developing into fairly distinct groups, leading to the ordination of Johann Funk as bishop for the West Reserve Bergthal people by Stoesz in 1882.²⁰⁶ The western portion retained the name Bergthaler, while the East Reserve church under Bishop Stoesz was known as the Chortitzer, after the village of Bishop Wiebe.

²⁰⁵ Ordained 4 April 1879. Herold der Wahrheit, 1 May 1888.

²⁰⁶ Stoesz, who lived in Bergthal, East Reserve, functioned as leader of the entire Bergthal church after Wiebe's "retirement" in 1881. He ordained Funk, of (Alt) Bergthal, West Reserve, on 11 April 1882. Herold der Wahrheit, 1 May 1888; David Stoesz, Diary, entry of 25 April 1882; Quiring, Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat, p. 26. Gerbrandt, p. 84, and Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 294, claim that Funk was ordained by Wiebe in 1887.

The immigrants from the Chortitz and Fuerstenland colonies, numbering about 3240, became one ecclesiastical and civil community on the western portion of the West Reserve. Numerically the largest group, it was also for a while the strongest and the most influential under the capable leadership of Obervorsteher Isaak Mueller and Bishop Johann Wiebe, who had already served in these capacities in Fuerstenland. In Canada the combined group took the name Reinlaender church.

During the immigrant generation very little difference can be discerned among these three (or five) groups in their attitude toward the government of Canada. First, it was for them "die hohe Regierung in Ottawa." They preferred to deal with the Prime Minister rather than the Minister of Agriculture or Interior; with the Minister of the Interior rather than his Deputy; with the Department in Ottawa rather than the Commissioner's Office in Winnipeg. That tendency was stronger in the Reinlaender leadership than in that of the Chortitzer, Bergthaler or Kleine Gemeinde.

Secondly, their relationship to the government in Ottawa focused on their agreement, the Privilegium. They expected the government to honour it and were prepared themselves to be bound by it. It defined their relationship to the state. In internal matters within the reserve they assumed a free hand.

Thirdly, the Mennonite administration on both reserves

preferred to deal with the government through intermediaries. William Hespeler and J. Y. Shantz were much more than translators for immigrants who had not yet mastered the English language. They were quasi-governmental figures who helped to form a buffer between church and state. Later on a Justice of the Peace, W. P. Leslie, an attorney, J. B. McLaren, and a lumber merchant, Enoch Winkler, moved into this role.

Fourthly, the Mennonites tended to see the government as Landesmutter. They implicitly assumed governmental benevolence, whether it be in extending a loan, providing protection against squatters, or granting hamlet privilege.

The government of Canada for its part, showed itself genuinely accommodating during this period. It was repeatedly willing to go far beyond the letter of the agreement. The solicitousness with which the delegates and the immigrants were treated was also experienced by the settlers during the first two decades. The Mennonites in turn retained their basic respect for the government in spite of numerous examples of administrative difficulties, and lack of efficient service or good cooperation from local officials.

CHAPTER II

ADJUSTING TO MANITOBA, 1876-90

The preceding chapter has dealt exclusively with Mennonite relations with the government in Ottawa. The issues dealt with all related to or grew out of the agreement concluded in 1873. The initiative both for that agreement and for the subsequent negotiations came from the side of the Mennonites. By contrast, relations with the provincial government of Manitoba which took place during the same time period were initiated by Winnipeg and were not positively connected to the Privilegium. As a result, they created tensions in some parts of the constituency.

To the extent that geography and pioneer conditions permitted, the Mennonites reproduced as nearly as possible the communal conditions which they had learned to appreciate in Russia.¹ The two reserves on either side of the Red River formed natural communities. As soon as a village had been laid out, its family heads proceeded to elect a Dorfschulze (village mayor), Brandschulze (to enforce fire safety regulations and act as appraiser for the mutual fire insurance), and Hirtenschulze (to regulate matters relating to

¹Francis, "Mennonite institutions in early Manitoba," pp. 145-48.

the common pasture of the village). The Dorfschulzen of the various villages together formed a council for the whole reserve (Gebietsamt) and elected an Oberschulze (reeve) for the whole community.²

The churches continued with the leadership already elected in Russia. Each of the three groups (Bergthal, Kleine Gemeinde, and Fuerstenland-Chortitza) had its own Aeltester (bishop) and a number of additional ministers. Under the direction of this Lehrdienst functioned the Waisenamt (orphan's office), for the administration of inheritances and the care of widows and orphans, and the village schools. Thus, all of the basic needs of the community were taken care of from the outset by an organization brought along from Russia. Through it roads, bridges, and dams were constructed as needed. Taxes and statute labour were assessed in order to accomplish these public works. Schpols were opened in the first year of settlement. Basic welfare was provided for the victims of accident by fire or death.

²J. B. McLaren, "The North-west: the Mennonites," in George Monro Grant, ed., Picturesque Canada: the Country As It Was and Is, 2 vols., (Toronto: Belden Bros., 1882), 1: 324; Abe Warkentin, p. 57. Peter Elias, unpublished Memoirs [1913], 2:11, suggests that the two Beisitzer, traditionally elected to assist the Schulze in Russia, functioned in Manitoba as Brandschulze and Hirtenaufseher. CMCA, XX-71, vol. 1078.

Zacharias, p. 58, draws attention to the fact that the term Obervorsteher was preferred to Oberschulze by some of the Manitoba groups because it was less suggestive of worldly authority.

All of this was done, however, completely on the basis of internal authority. The Oberschulze and his council had no legal means of enforcing their decisions. All of this was also done by means of internal resources only. The loans from the federal government and from the Ontario Mennonites had to be repaid and were not applied to any of these projects. The Mennonite communities were therefore vulnerable on these two points: external authority and external resources.

1. Public Schools: External Resources

"We had only been in America a few years," wrote Bishop Gerhard Wiebe of the Bergthal group, "when we were offered money for the support of our schools. This made us very suspicious because we feared that through it we might lose our school freedom which the government had guaranteed us."³

Manitoba's "public" schools were at this point for the most part denominational schools. Established on local initiative and administered by local trustees, they were eligible for government support by placing themselves under the broad superintendence of either the Protestant or the Catholic

³ Gerhard Wiebe, p. 66. Bergen, "The Manitoba Mennonites and their schools," pp. 44-54, gives a good summary of this period of Mennonite education in Manitoba.

section of the Provincial Board of Education.⁴ During 1877 Mennonites in the East Reserve were encouraged, probably by William Hespeler, to apply for such support. Accordingly they asked the Superintendent of Education for Protestant schools for information as to the steps to be taken for receiving their share of the legislative grant. After some correspondence between the Board and the Mennonites through the mediation of Hespeler, the Protestant section of the Board in October 1878 appointed a special committee to work towards organizing school districts on the Mennonite Reserve.⁵

The committee immediately addressed a letter to the Mennonite leaders offering government support for their schools. They were invited to organize these schools in their various villages into school districts according to their own discretion. They were assured of the continued use of their own teachers, of a curriculum fully in charge of their own congregations, and of the right to offer instruction in their own language or as they wished. The government

⁴W. L. Morton, Manitoba, A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2d ed., 1967, reprint with additions, 1970), pp. 185-87.

⁵Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, English School Reports, 1872-83, "Report of the Superintendent of Protestant Schools in the Province of Manitoba, 1877," p. 6; Journals, 1879, "Report of the Superintendent of Education for Protestant Schools for the year 1878," app., p. 18. Gerhard Wiebe, p. 66, and Joh. C. Reimer, "Unsere Schulen," in Gedenkfeier der Mennonitischen Einwanderung, p. 79, indicate the mediating role of Hespeler.

The latter, quoting from the notebook of pioneer Steinbach teacher G. G. Kornelsen, gives the date as 1879.

support of eighty to one hundred dollars per year would not in any way affect their rights and freedoms. The Mennonites were then invited to send delegates to a meeting on November 6 in William Hespeler's office.⁶

By November 18 the Superintendent had received letters from the two East Reserve Mennonite bishops (Gerhard Wiebe of the Chortitzer and Peter Toews of the Kleine Gemeinde) asking the Board to erect thirty-six Mennonite villages into as many school districts. The government showed "its interest in this movement by appointing Mr. Hespeler a member of the Board of Education."⁷ By mid-December of 1878 the two Kleine Gemeinde villages⁸ in Scratching River and thirty-five East Reserve villages had participated in the annual census of school children conducted by the Protestant section of the Board, reporting a total of 750 children between the ages of six and fourteen.⁸ Thirty-three of these villages, and three which had not participated in the census, were duly erected

⁶W. Cyprian Pinkham, Superintendent, James Robertson, and Stuart Mulvey, Winnipeg, to the Mennonite churches, 17 November 1878. The German version of the letter is reproduced as received in Gedenkfeier, pp. 78-79; an English translation in P. J. B. Reimer, pp. 160-61.

⁷"Report of the Superintendent . . . 1878," pp. 18-19. A compilation by Debra Fast of the Mennonite portions of these annual reports for the years 1877-1926 is located in CMCA.

⁸"Report . . . 1878," p. 50.

into public school districts in 1879.⁹

Financial support from the Board was not entirely without strings, however. The Superintendent of Protestant schools held an examination for Mennonite teachers in early 1879 and issued a one-year license to thirty-one teachers.¹⁰ The Protestant Board and the Superintendent obviously regarded this examination as a very natural, matter-of-fact occurrence. For the Mennonites however, it raised new apprehensions. William Hespeler, who was on the Board of examiners for 1879, suggested that the Mennonite leaders should divide their teachers into three classes. This corresponded to the Board's current system of issuing first, second, and third class certificates. When Gerhard Wiebe asked why they should divide their teachers into three classes, Hespeler replied: "Surely you do not think that the government will pay its money to those who are herdsmen in summer and school teachers in winter,"

⁹ Ibid., pp. 63-64. Kornelsen's list in Gedenkfeier, p. 79, and Reimer, p. 161, is incomplete. Bergen's suggestion, "Education in the Municipality of Rhineland," pp. 43-44, that six of these could be West Reserve villages is quite improbable since the Board was negotiating only with the East Reserve bishops.

¹⁰ "Report . . . 1878," pp. 20-21, lists the 31 teachers examined and the entire Board of Examiners for 1879. Kornelsen's notes indicate that the examination was held at Chortitz on 10 March 1879 with Hespeler, now German consul in Winnipeg, and teachers Abraham Isaak, Schoenau, and Jacob Friesen, Tannau, as examiners. Gedenkfeier, p. 83; Reimer, p. 163; Paul J. Schaefer, Woher? Wohin? Mennoniten! vol. 3, Die Mennoniten in Canada, 4 vols. (Altona, Man.: Mennonite Agricultural Advisory Committee, 1946), p. 68.

do you?"¹¹ Wiebe, always easily offended, was prepared to break off negotiations on the spot. Hespeler however, diplomatically assured the Mennonites that the Board would overlook their shortcomings until they were able to do better. A considerable number of Bergthal villages then agreed to become public school districts, but the implied threat of Hespeler's words had made the Bergthal leaders profoundly suspicious.

For the first half of 1879 thirty-five Mennonite school districts actually functioned. During the second half of the year three of these were reported closed and ten others gave no report.¹² During 1880 the number of Mennonite school districts was reduced to twenty-two with a peak enrollment of 401. The Superintendent thought this came "from various causes, the chief of which was, I believe, the breaking up of the Rat River Reserve."¹³ Gerhard Wiebe saw the reason elsewhere:

It did not take long until we realized where matters

¹¹ Gerhard Wiebe, p. 66.

¹² Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Journals, 1880, "Condensed report of the Superintendent of Education for Protestant Schools for the year ending January 31st, 1880," app., pp. 76-77, 79. During 1879 the 35 Mennonite schools constituted over one-third of the 99 schools operating in Manitoba under the Protestant section of the Board, although their enrollment of 632 made up only 17.5% of the 3614 total. Ibid., p. 70.

¹³ Ibid., 1881, "Tenth annual report of the Superintendent of Education for Protestant Schools for the year ending 1880," app., p. 148.

were leading and we speedily withdrew and accepted no more funds. Oh how we wished that the Kleine Gemeinde had acted in the same way. . . but they said that as soon as they would see any danger, they would also refuse the money.¹⁴

The Protestant section of the Board of Education tried to be as accommodating to the Mennonites as possible. The Board of Examiners before which the Mennonite teacher candidates had to appear in 1879 included William Hespeler as well as two Mennonite laymen, Jacob Friesen and Abraham Isaak. The next year a committee consisting of Hespeler and the two Mennonite bishops, Peter Toews and Gerhard Wiebe, was appointed to examine the Mennonite teachers.¹⁵ The number of Bergthal schools declined from twenty-nine to sixteen in that year, although all six Kleine Gemeinde schools remained in operation. For 1881 the Superintendent reported only six Mennonite teachers examined and licensed for one year.¹⁶ Four of them were now district school teachers for the third consecutive year. The Superintendent's report for the year ending 31 January 1882 indicated only seven Mennonite district schools left in operation, six of them from the Kleine

¹⁴ Gerhard Wiebe, p. 66; cf p. 77; "Ach, wenn die kleine Gemeinde noch unsern Aeltesten die Hand reichte, aber nein . . . sie gehen voraus, d.h. mit den Schulen."

¹⁵ "Condensed report . . . 1880," p. 72. Twenty-two Mennonite teachers were given one-year certificates.

¹⁶ "Tenth annual report," p. 150.

Gemeinde.¹⁷ The Bergthal group (Chortitzer) had almost totally withdrawn.

The Protestant Board also sought to accommodate the Mennonites by providing them with a German speaking inspector, William Hespeler, who served during the years 1879 through 1881.¹⁸ During the third year of his inspectorship, the actual visiting of schools was done by Jacob Friesen, who also wrote the Inspector's Report to the Superintendent and signed it for Hespeler.¹⁹

After the low point of seven district schools in 1881, the total increased to nine the following year under Inspector Jacob Friesen, and to thirteen in 1883.²⁰ For the first time a few district schools were opened on the West Reserve, including one in Reinland, the center of the Chortitza-Fuerstenland group. Although this school had an enrollment of twenty-three, it operated against the wishes of the church leadership and in competition with the local church-operated school.²¹ The other West Reserve districts were all in Berg-

¹⁷"Report of the Superintendent of Education for Protestant Schools for the year ending 31st January 1882," pp. 23-24.

Subsequent reports will be cited in short form only. Until 1888 the school reporting year ended January 31.

¹⁸"Condensed report . . . 1880," p. 74.

¹⁹"Report . . . 1882," pp. 23-24.

²⁰"Report . . . 1883," p. 68; "Report . . . 1884," p. 41.

²¹Elias, 2:12; Zacharias, p. 248; Peter Friesen in Johann Wiebe, pp. 70-71.

thal villages. The Reinlaender church was still unalterably opposed to government involvement in education and excommunicated parents who sent their children to the district school.²²

In December of 1884 the former teacher of the Reinland district school was appointed Inspector of Mennonite schools by the Protestant section of the Board.²³ Wilhelm Rempel was one of the best educated and most capable teachers in the Mennonite community. Since January of 1884 he had been serving as secretary of the newly created Municipality of Rhineland.²⁴ During the first year of his inspectorship the number of district schools increased to twenty-two, including ten on the West Reserve.²⁵ In spite of this increase, Rempel was basically pessimistic in his prognosis. Some communities he saw as "being under the impression as if the advancing of the school would lead the Mennonites into inconvenience and conscientious troubles."²⁶ In other communities he found indifference or "even opposition" as to several of the subjects to be taught, and it seems to me as if we will have to wait

²² Elias, 2:12-13.

²³ Mennonitische Rundschau, 11 April 1888, p. 1.

²⁴ Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, 1884-91, p. 1, 8 January 1884.

²⁵ "Report . . . 1886," pp. 85-86. For a brief biographical sketch of Rempel, see Zacharias, pp. 248-252.

²⁶ "Report . . . 1886," p. 86.

for years to come till our wrongly informed people surmount that aversion prevailing amongst them regarding the better education of our rising generation."²⁷

It was this fear of the dangers of a broader education, rather than objection in principle to involvement with the government in education, that kept the Bergthal communities from converting to public school districts more rapidly at this time. Most of the Kleine Gemeinde villages already had district schools, while the Reinlaender church still remained closed to the idea in principle.

A new factor was introduced with the conversion to municipal government of both reserves in January of 1884. According to the 1881 Public Schools Act of Manitoba, it was "the duty of the council of municipalities to establish and alter when necessary the school districts within their bounds."²⁸ Instructions on how to proceed in forming school districts were received by the Rhineland Municipality from the Superintendent of Education in Winnipeg in December of 1884.²⁹ The council acted promptly on these instructions and early in 1885 introduced a by-law effecting a division of the municipality.

²⁷"Report . . . 1887," pp. 53-54.

²⁸Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Statutes, 1880, p. 54, sec. 12 of 44 Vic., ch. 4, "An Act to establish a system of Public Schools in the Province of Manitoba."

²⁹Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, p. 39, 9 December 1884.

into twenty-two school districts "provided however that the formation of the same be petitioned for by the ratepayers."³⁰

While this action greatly simplified the process of converting church-operated schools to district schools, the response from the community was a mixed one. For example, in response to a petition from Schanzenfeld the municipal council passed a by-law in spring of 1885 creating a district school.³¹ When only four ratepayers appeared at the first meeting and one of the three elected trustees refused to function, the council sought the advice of the Winnipeg education office on the matter.³² In contrast to the four ratepayers supporting the district school, thirteen others signed a petition to the reeve of the municipality absolutely rejecting the district school.³³ In view of that kind of community opposition, Superintendent J. B. Sommerset stated that it was "not his desire at all to force school districts upon the people" and advised leaving Schanzenfeld alone. The municipal council accepted his advice.³⁴ Schanzenfeld, like Rein-

³⁰ Idem, By-laws, 1884-90, pp. 58-62, #20, 30 January 1885.

³¹ Idem, Minutes, pp. 60, 74; 3 March 1885; By-laws, p. 72.

³² Idem, Minutes, p. 86, 19 November 1885.

³³ David Peters, et al., "Schanzenfelder Gemeinde Spruch," n.d., in Gemeinde Buch der Kolonie Reinland, no. 11, p. 264, PAM, MG 8, A 18-7, microfilm M-216, Mennonite Settlement Registers.

³⁴ Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, p. 92, 1 December 1885.

land, was a community of the Chortitz-Fuerstenland group. Several other villages of this community attempted to form district schools in the next several years.³⁵

Rempel's inspectorship came to an end in January 1888 when the Superintendent initiated a new system by which all inspectors were to hold full time year round appointments.³⁶ His replacement, W. Thiem-White, while Normal School trained and knowledgeable in the German language, met with even more resistance than Rempel had found. A special committee appointed by the Board of Education found conditions in the Mennonite district schools so inadequate that it wondered whether the annual legislative grants of \$150 should continue to be paid to such schools.³⁷ The Board therefore resolved to apply the conditions for receiving grants more rigorously to Mennonite schools. At the same time it also terminated the services of Thiem-White in June of 1889. A successor was not appointed until after the new Manitoba School Act of 1890 had been passed. When H. H. Ewert took office on 1 September 1891, he found only eight Mennonite district schools in

³⁵ Ibid., p. 60, 3 March 1885 (Kleefeld and Kronsgart); p. 146, 10 November 1886 (Schoenfeld); p. 172, 1 April 1887 (Blumstein). Douglas Municipality, Minutes, 1884-88, p. 47, 6 May 1884 (Blumenort and Kronstal).

³⁶ Mennonitische Rundschau, 11 April 1888, p. 1.

³⁷ Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, 1889, no. 18, "Report of the Superintendent for Protestant Schools for the period of 11 months from February 1 - December 31, 1888," pp. 32-33.

operation.³⁸ With Ewert's coming a new era began.

2. Municipal Government: External Authority³⁹

The advantages, for a pioneering community, of group migration and block settlement were augmented by a basic continuity of civil administration in the transition from Russia to Manitoba. For the Bergthal colony, which decided as an entire group to emigrate, the transition was effected without a break. Jacob Peters, who had functioned as Oberschulze in Russia, became the first Kolonie-Verwalter (colony administrator) on the East Reserve.⁴⁰ The Kleine Gemeinde, which formed a small minority of only five villages in the East Reserve, passively accepted the administrative leadership of the much larger Bergthal group.⁴¹

On the West Reserve, Isaak Mueller of Neuhorst, who

³⁸Ibid., 1892, no. 24, "Report of the Department of Education, Manitoba, for the year ending December 31, 1891," p. 143.

³⁹For brief treatments of this subject see Francis, In Search of Utopia, pp. 90-96; Galbraith, pp. 13-21; H. H. Hamm, Sixty Years of Progress, 1884-1944, Diamond Jubilee (Altona, Man.: The Rural Municipality of Rhineland), 1944. The present account differs significantly from these by incorporating evidence from new sources.

⁴⁰P. Braun, "Kolonie-Verwaltung," in Gedenkfeier, p. 121. It is interesting to note that his son Jacob became the second reeve of Hanover Municipality (coterminous with the East Reserve), his grandson, Jacob B. Peters, the sixth reeve, and a great-grandson, Jacob H. Peters, the ninth reeve.

Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 84, wrongly identifies the Oberschulze as Franz Peters.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 87.

had been Oberschulze of the colony in Fuerstenland, continued to function as Obervorsteher over the group of villages founded in Manitoba by immigrants from both Fuerstenland and Chortitza.⁴² Because the latter could not be expected automatically to have allegiance to Mueller, an election to confirm him in his position was held by the combined group on arrival in Manitoba.⁴³ His jurisdiction over the Bergthal villages founded in the eastern portion of the West Reserve was not as clearly established however.⁴⁴ But no clear evidence of a second Gebietsamt on the West Reserve has so far come to light, and the Oberschulze of the East Reserve did not

⁴² Ibid., p. 84. Directives from Mueller to village Schulzen beginning 1876 are found in Reinland Village papers, CMCA, XXII-K.2, vol. 1091, and Rosenort Village papers, ibid., XXII-K.3, vol. 1099.

⁴³ Johann Wiebe, pp. 34-35, points out that, since not nearly all of the West Reserve settlers came from his Fuerstenland Gemeinde, he had called for election of both Aeltester and Vorsteher (a term he prefers to Oberschulze) immediately on arrival at the immigrant sheds at West Lynn in 1875. Mueller, CMCA, XXII-K.3, #27, 2 December 1878, (i.e. three years after the West Lynn meeting, the term for which the Oberschulze was usually elected in Russia) called for a new election for a Obervorsteher. See also Zacharias, p. 58. Francis' assertion, In Search of Utopia, p. 84, that Mueller continued in office without election in 1875, is thus most likely in error.

⁴⁴ The Reinlaender Church records, PAM, MG 8, A 18-7, contain assessment data for West Reserve Bergthal villages, but the Mueller directives, CMCA, XXII-K.2, vol. 1091, and XXII-K.3, vol. 1099, seem to have gone mostly to Chortitza-Fuerstenland villages. The detailed instructions Mueller gave regarding construction of the Post Road from Emerson to Mountain City, for example, were not directed to any village east of Blumenort, the boundary of Bergthal territory. Ibid., #27, 17 March 1878.

attempt to exercise any jurisdiction over the West Reserve Bergthal communities.⁴⁵

This system of local administration completely independent of the provincial government continued until 1880 in both reserves. The Municipal Act of 1873 permitted communities to establish municipalities on the "petition of at least two-thirds of the male free holders or householders, being respectively of the full age of twenty-one years, and resident in any township or parish in which locality there shall be not less than thirty male residents as aforesaid."⁴⁶

In 1880, however, the provincial government took the initiative in drawing boundaries for suggested municipalities. Under this legislation, Hespeler Municipality was established with boundaries coterminous with the East Reserve.⁴⁷ A year later the reserve was divided into two municipalities, as shown on map 3, Hespeler comprising the more densely settled grassland area in the north (township 7, ranges 4 to 6), and

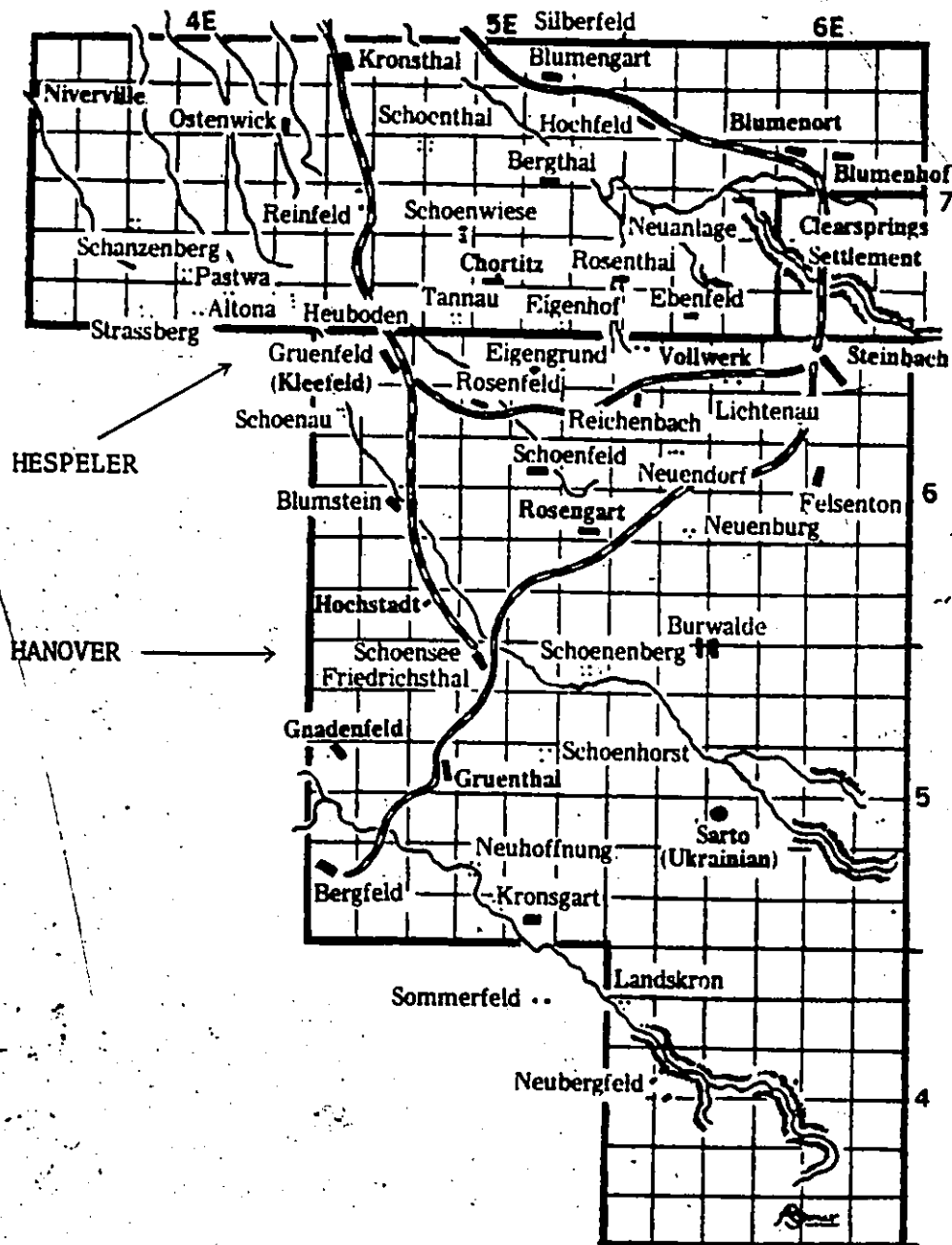
⁴⁵ But Gerbrandt's statement, p. 71, that "those moving from the East Reserve were considered severed from the Chortitzer Church after 1878," is too strong, since there is ample evidence of Bishop Stoesz's ministry on the West Reserve well into the 1880s.

⁴⁶ Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Statutes, 1873, sec. 2 of 36 Vic., ch. 24, "An Act respecting Municipalities," assented to 8 March 1873.

⁴⁷ John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite settlements," p. 81.

MAP 3

MENNONITE EAST RESERVE WITH HANOVER AND HESPELER MUNICIPALITIES



SOURCE: John C. Reimer in Abe Warkentin, *Reflections on Our Heritage* (Steinbach: Derksen Printers, 1971), p. 28.

Hanover the remaining five townships of less densely populated woodland area.⁴⁸ In 1890 the two portions were again reunited under the name Hanover.⁴⁹ The arbitrary division which existed during this decade was ignored by the East Reserve population which functioned throughout this time with only one council for the whole area.⁵⁰

In spite of this explicit legislation, it is difficult to determine precisely when the transition from Gebietsamt to municipality took place. Practical changes in administration took place so gradually that the villages were hardly affected by them. And there appears to have been no opposition in principle to the introduction of municipal government. Indeed, some of the leaders appear to have viewed its coming positively as an aid in the task of local self government, particularly that of tax collecting.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 82; Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Statutes, 1880, secs. 176 and 177 of 44 Vic., ch. 3, "An Act respecting Municipalities," assented to 4 March 1881.

⁴⁹ John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite settlements," p. 84.

⁵⁰ Warkentin, *ibid.*, p. 82, mentions that "for statistical purposes the boundaries were always respected." Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 92.

⁵¹ A. Warkentin, p. 58: "The change-over to municipal government went smoothly and little actually changed except that the Oberschulze now had real authority and did not have to depend on the assistance of the church."

John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite settlements," p. 81: "The change in administration was made without difficulty in the East Reserve. It is impossible to say whether this is because the situation of the Reserve in the forgotten corner of Manitoba made it appear to be safe from outside influence,

The first municipal elections were held on 27 December 1882, although Reeve Gerhard Kliever and his council were apparently not confirmed in office until January 1884.⁵² As in the earlier Gebietsamt, Kleine Gemeinde members abstained from voting, so that the new administration was made up of Bergthal people.⁵³

In contrast to this smooth transition in the East Reserve, the coming of municipal government became an explosive issue on the West Reserve. The Reinlaender church,

or because the leaders thought that municipal government would in any case make no infringements on the Mennonite way of life."

P. Braun in Gedenkfeier, pp. 121-22, suggests that difficulties encountered by the villages in raising local school taxes led to a search for methods of local government more suited to the Canadian situation. Thus arose the new municipality.

Francis, In Search of Utopia, pp. 91-92: "It seems that the step was well prepared by Hespeler who was able to point out that compliance with the wishes of Legislature and Government would make the Mennonites eligible for Provincial subsidies and public works. The Mennonites themselves recognized that the functioning of self-government in the colony, particularly tax collection, would be facilitated if their own officers enjoyed official status instead of having to rely exclusively on their personal authority and that of the church."

It is likely that Bishop Gerhard Wiebe's forced retirement from active leadership in 1881 (Quiring, Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat, p. 26) considerably weakened potential Chortitzer church opposition to this involvement with the government.

⁵² A. Warkentin, p. 58; Francis, In Search of Utopia, pp. 91-92.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 92. Reimer, p. 26, reports the official position of the Kleine Gemeinde in 1899 as follows: "No member can accept any government position or take any part in a government election." That had been its basic position already before coming to Canada.

which included most of the Chortitza-Fuerstenland² settlers, opposed its introduction in principle. The increasing number of Bergthal people on the eastern portion of the West Reserve, as well as dissidents of the Chortitza-Fuerstenland group, welcomed it as a way of countering the power of the Reinlaender Gebietsamt and its Obervorsteher, "Kaiser" Isaak Mueller.⁵⁴

As on the East Reserve, the municipality first appeared on the West Reserve via the provincial legislation which determined the municipal boundaries of 1880. Under this Act, the municipality of Rhineland consisted of the entire Mennonite portion of the West Reserve, with the western boundary running approximately along the "Meno-Canuck" line.⁵⁵ The press reported strong Mennonite opposition to this imposition of external authority, with some threatening to emigrate if municipal government would actually be forced on them.⁵⁶ It

⁵⁴ McLaren in Grant, 1:324, seems to think that "Kaiser" was the title of the office of Obervorsteher. Zacharias, p. 62, correctly points out that it was Mueller's nickname, resulting from a somewhat imperious manner in giving directives and from his wide-ranging powers.

⁵⁵ See map no. 2. Township 1-6W and the western 4 miles of townships 1 to 3 in range 5W were thereby in the anomalous situation of being simultaneously part of the Mennonite Reserve and of the new non-Mennonite Municipality of South Dufferin. This prompted the Council of the latter to inquire of Ottawa whether it had the authority to tax the Mennonite lands. Robert McKay, Warden, Municipality of South Dufferin, to Minister of the Interior, 25 July 1880, PAC, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129.

⁵⁶ MFP, 16 April 1880, p. 1.

was quickly discovered however, that this opposition existed only on the West Reserve; East Reserve Mennonites were ready to accept the change.⁵⁷ The Free Press even claimed that the people in the West Reserve too, were willing to accept municipal government, but that "Kaiser". Isaak Mueller was resisting it. To persuade Mueller and his people to accept it, Premier Norquay, assisted by William Hespeler, visited the reserve and suggested that the Mennonites appoint candidates for the various positions on the municipal council which the government would then confirm. This solution was accepted.⁵⁸ Accordingly, the government acted in May 1880 to appoint Mueller Warden of the Municipality of Rineland [sic] and six others as councillors.⁵⁹ These were duly sworn into office by the government representative, Mr. Lester.⁶⁰

Mueller now proceeded to collect vital statistics (births, deaths, and marriages) in accordance with the form prescribed by the government, and announced the deadline by

⁵⁷ Ibid., 17 April 1880, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 29 April 1880, p. 2; 1 May 1880, p. 4; Mennonitische Rundschau, 22 February 1888, p. 1; Elias, 2:11.

⁵⁹ Manitoba Gazette, vol. 9, no. 7, 8 May 1880, p. 65. Appointed as councillors were Peter Friesen and Bernhard Rempel, Halbstadt; David Giesbrecht, Neuhorst; Johann Loewen, Rosengart; Gerhard Neufeld, Hochfeld; and Bernhard Hildebrand, Rosenthal.

⁶⁰ Elias, 2:11, explodes that this was "Plat gegen die Evangelische Lehr"!

which he needed to report these to Winnipeg. Similarly, at the request of the government, he instructed each village to prepare a map indicating all the lands belonging to it.⁶¹ In 1883 the Gebietsamt-Municipality gave a summary report to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture in Winnipeg indicating the state of the colony lands, population, livestock, and fixed and movable property.⁶² From 1880 to 1883 Mueller thus seems to have functioned in the dual capacity of Ober-
vorsteher of the Reinlaender Gebietsamt and Warden of the Municipality of Rhineland.⁶³

But his authority did not go unchallenged. The twenty-five Bergthal villages on the eastern portion of the West Reserve in 1882 elected their own Obervorstand.⁶⁴ In the

⁶¹ Directives of 11 December and 16 August 1882, CMCA, XXII-K.3, vol. 1099, #29.

⁶² Reinland Gemeinde Buch, no. 12, p. 109, PAM, MG 8, A 18-7. The following year the reporting of vital statistics was done by the Municipality, not the Gebietsamt. See communication from Acton Burrows, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Winnipeg, in Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, p. 33, 6 November 1884.

John H. Warkentin's claim, "The Mennonite settlements," p. 83, that no municipal organization was forthcoming from the West Reserve Mennonites in 1881 and 1882, does not seem justified in the light of this activity by Mueller's council.

⁶³ Both the boundaries (see map 4) of the municipality and the spelling of its name were changed by the legislation of 1881, which gave both Rhineland and Montcalm jurisdiction over twps. 1 to 3 in ranges 1 and 2W. Manitoba Legislative Assembly, Statutes, 1880, secs. 162 and 181 of 44 Vic., ch. 3; assented to 4 March 1881.

⁶⁴ H. Hiebert, Gnadenfeld (West Lynn), Mennonitische Rundschau, 15 August 1882, p. 1. Hiebert mentions that they had also newly elected Johann Funk as Aeltester (bishop).

western half of the reserve meanwhile, an excommunicated Reinlaender, Jacob Giesbrecht, in 1882 opposed Mueller for the position of reeve and attempted to use the courts to confirm himself in that position.⁶⁵ Mueller's authority was thus threatened in both portions of the reserve.

In 1883 the provincial government once more altered municipal boundaries, (see map 4) dividing the West Reserve into two main portions. The western (Reinlaender) part retained the name Rhineland, while the eastern (Bergthaler) portion was created into the new municipality of Douglas. The eastern extremity of the Reserve remained in Montcalm and the western one in South Dufferin.⁶⁶ Under this legisla-

⁶⁵Elias, 1:11-12, 2:11-14, is confusing in the actual dates cited. But the sequence of municipal administrations he describes has Mueller serve two years, then Giesbrecht two, Mott one, and then Giesbrecht again. Since Mott served as reeve in 1884, Giesbrecht's first challenge of Mueller's authority is dated 1882. Elias claims that Giesbrecht and his supporters were successful in forming the Municipal Council during 1882-83, although he admits that Giesbrecht lost his suit against the Reinlaender bishop Johann Wiebe in Morden.

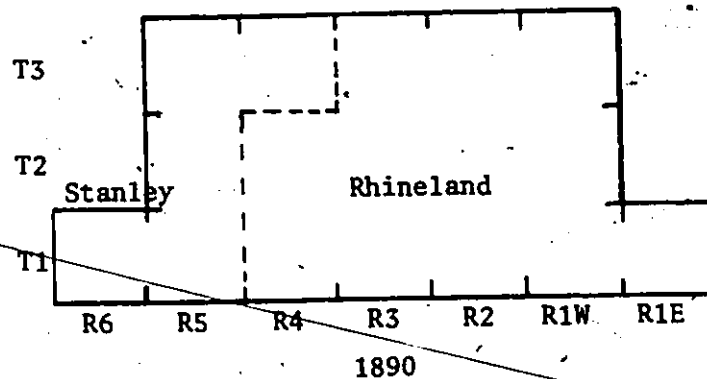
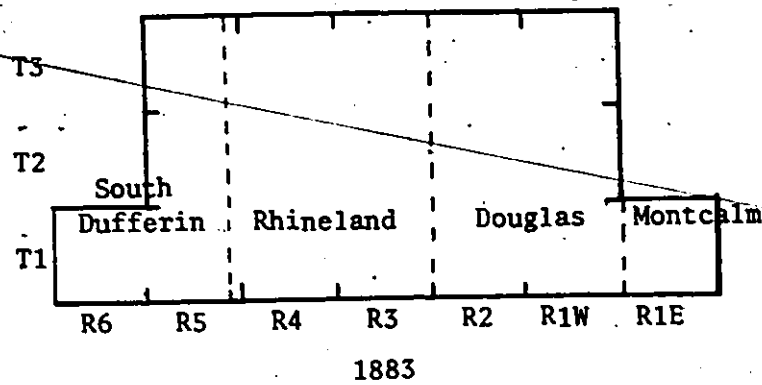
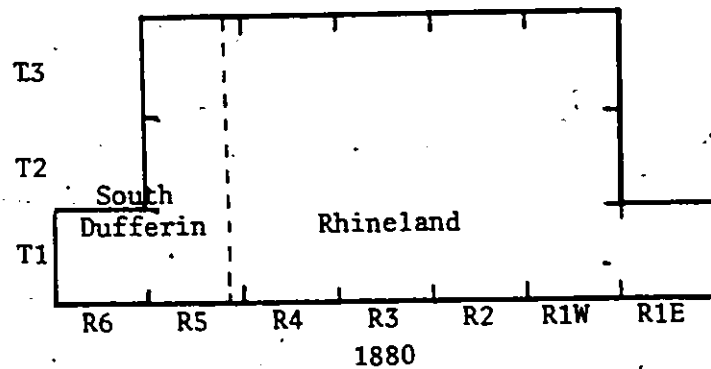
In any case, Mueller was clearly in charge of affairs during those years. The Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, p. 13, 15 March 1884, identify him as "warden of this Municipality for several years past."

⁶⁶Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Statutes, 1883, secs. 21 and 30 of Part 1, 46 & 47 Vic., ch. 1; assented to 7 July 1883.

Galbraith's suggestion, pp. 14-15, that the government effected this division in such a way as deliberately to include some English speaking people "accustomed to municipal institutions" in each of the two new municipalities, is not convincing. Warkentin, "The Mennonite settlements," p. 85, accepts it, but sees it as a device to hasten Mennonite assimilation. Had that been the intention, it is very difficult to understand why the western boundary was not moved

MAP 4

MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY CHANGES ON THE WEST RESERVE



SOURCE: Based on John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960), p. 84.

tion the government now appointed electoral officers to hold elections in both municipalities.

In Douglas no opposition was encountered. Otto Schulz was elected reeve and his Mennonite council moved at its second meeting to petition the legislature for permission to conduct its meetings in the German language.

The same meeting also instructed municipal clerk Franz Kliever to allay the fears of the constituency that taxes would now sharply increase because of the salaries of municipal officials.⁶⁷ Thirdly, this meeting appointed a committee to negotiate with Montcalm Municipality to move township 1-1E, which was part of the Mennonite Reserve, into Douglas. The introduction of legal municipal government thus raised basically practical concerns for the Bergthaler people of the West Reserve: language of operation, costs, and bound-

so as to include all of range 5 in Rhineland.

More acceptable is the suggestion in Mennonitische Rundschau, 22 February 1888, p. 1, that the area of the old Reinland Municipality was too extensive for one municipal council.

According to C. Ewart, "The Municipal history of Manitoba," University of Toronto Studies: History and Economics 2 (April 1904): 136, the legislators of the 1883 Act were preoccupied with "following very closely the Act then in force in Ontario." They likely gave scant attention to details of internal Mennonite politics. If these were considered, then the division of the reserve into two municipal jurisdictions probably reflects recognition by Winnipeg of the new Bergthaler Obervorstand in the eastern portion.

⁶⁷ Douglas Municipality, Minutes, p. 17, 2 February 1884.

That Kliever could do this via the Mennonitische Rundschau, 27 February 1884, p. 1, shows how widely this Elkhart, Indiana, paper was read in Manitoba.

daries. Reservations about cooperation with the provincial government were not raised. In fact, Kliever indicated that they, as well as the government, had come to realize that the methods used in Russia were no longer appropriate.⁶⁸

In Rhineland, C. F. Collins, County Court Clerk of Nelson, served as returning officer for the elections in December 1883. Reeve Jarvis Mott, a Baptist from Ontario and one of the few Anglo-Saxons in the municipality, and all six Mennonite councillors were elected by acclamation. At the first meeting of Council, Collins administered the oath of office to Mott but the "declaration of office" to the five Mennonite Councillors present.⁶⁹

The struggle between Reinlaender dissidents and their Bergthaler allies against Mueller's Reinlaender regime during the past two years had now formally succeeded, thanks to the authority of the provincial government. The Reinlaender

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, pp. 1, 3, 39; 8 and 26 January and 1 November 1884.

Mott lived on the only half section (W $\frac{1}{2}$ of 23-3-5W) of land in the municipality that was not part of the reserve. He was among those non-Mennonite settlers who had procured their land within the original boundaries of the reserve in a legitimate manner and hence was on good terms with the Mennonites. Wm. Pearce, Dominion Land Surveyor, Winnipeg, to Donald Codd, PAC, RG 15, vol. 232, #3129.

The five councillors present were: Jacob Giesbrecht, Reinland; David Reddekopp, Schanzenfeld; Heinrich Reimer, Schoendorf; Jacob Nickel, Burwalde; and Bernard Hilbrandt. The sixth, Johann Dyck, Osterwick, had not appeared.

The list given by Galbraith, p. 17, is not complete nor entirely accurate.

church countered this move by forbidding its membership to do any business with the municipality.⁷⁰ Councillor Johann Dyck of Osterwick, a Reinlaender church member, was thus prevented from taking his seat on the municipal council. The Municipal Act of 1883 provided however, that "any mayor, reeve or councillor refusing to act, after having been duly elected, shall thereby incur a penalty of forty dollars . . . and any mayor, reeve or councillor wilfully neglecting to attend and subscribe to the oath of office as prescribed in this Act shall be evidence of his refusal to act."⁷¹ In April the municipal council of Rhineland invoked this clause against Dyck and instructed its solicitor, J. B. MacLaren, to proceed to collect the penalty.⁷² It also declared Dyck's seat vacant and passed a by-law for the election of his replacement.⁷³ Whether the municipality succeeded in collecting the forty dollar fine from Dyck or the Reinlaender church remains unclear.⁷⁴ He could hardly be said to have been "duly elected".

⁷⁰ Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 94; Gerbrandt, pp. 74-75.

⁷¹ Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Statutes, 1883, sec. 156 of part 1, 46 & 47 Vic., ch. 1; assented to 7 July 1883.

⁷² Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, pp. 15-17; 15 and 29 April 1884.

⁷³ Idem, By-Laws, #6, 15 April 1884.
Peter Zacharias was elected "by nomination" to fill the vacant seat on April 26. Minutes, p. 17, 29 April 1884.

⁷⁴ Galbraith, p. 17.

in view of the procedures used in December 1883.

A communication received in January from the deputy of the Provincial Secretary assured the newly elected municipal council of official government recognition, adding that Mr. Mueller had no power to form a council for 1884.⁷⁵ Having achieved formal power, the council now proceeded to transfer actual power to itself from the Reinlaender Gebietsamt. It requested the Provincial Secretary to write to Mueller informing him that his council was no longer recognized and requesting him to furnish to the proper department a statement of taxes levied and monies paid out during the past four years. It then proceeded to set up a joint committee with the new Municipality of Douglas to apportion the assets and liabilities of the "former Municipality of Rhineland between this Municipality and the Municipality of Douglas."⁷⁶

Mueller had meanwhile gone to Winnipeg in February to determine what the rights of his Gebietsamt were and had discovered that he was "justified in retaining in possession any assets or books whatever" until a proper apportionment and

⁷⁵ Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, p. 3, 26 January 1884.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 9, 1 March 1884. The corresponding action of Douglas Municipality created "a committee to ask from the old struckout municipality of Rhineland a reckoning-up of accounts so that this part of the former municipality of Rhineland may get its share from the funds now in the hands of that municipality." Douglas Municipality, Minutes, pp. 5-7, 8 January 1884.

distribution had been made under the provisions of the Municipal Act.⁷⁷ He therefore chose not to give any account to the new councils, although he met with Bergthaler representative Bernhard Klippenstein regarding the dividing up of some road equipment.⁷⁸

The new municipal councils found it difficult to begin their work without access to the assessment records of previous years, and filed a complaint with the Provincial Secretary.⁷⁹ Representatives from Winnipeg then came down to the Douglas municipal office in Neuanlage and summoned a meeting with officials of the Reinlaender Gebietsamt. Inspection of the records showed that the Gebietsamt books were definitely not legal municipal property, so Mueller was allowed to retain possession of them.⁸⁰ With that kind of resistance from Mueller, the new Rhineland Municipality did not find out until November what its financial situation was.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, p. 13, 17; 15 and 29 April 1884.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 25, 7 June 1884. Klippenstein was not a member of the Douglas Municipal Council. He may have been Vorsteher of the West Reserve Bergthaler Gebietsamt referred to above, p. 124, since he was Mueller's counterpart in the 1883 negotiations regarding the Mennonite loan. See above, p. 87, n. 159.

⁷⁹ Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, pp. 28-29, 5 July 1884.

⁸⁰ Friesen in Johann Wiebe, pp. 72-73.

⁸¹ Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, p. 35, 1 November 1884. McEwan, Dunsford & Co., Nelson, informed them that their municipality was debt free and had a cash balance of \$20.

During the first year the Rhineland Municipal Council met in the home of councillor David Reddekopp in Schanzenfeld. In 1885 Jacob Giesbrecht of Reinland served as reeve, and since the appointed secretary-treasurer, Wilhelm Rempel, also lived in Reinland, the municipal office was now shifted into the same village that also served as headquarters of the Reinlaender Gebietsamt.⁸²

The council now conducted a series of farmers' meetings to determine which body should have possession of the administrative office building in Reinland. By a majority of 162 to 69 these farmers' meetings voted to allow the municipality possession of the building. Isaak Mueller was so informed through an intermediary.⁸³ He in turn promptly informed all of the Dorfschulzen of this development, pointing out that the vote of Reinlaender church members, a large majority of the ratepayers in the municipality, opposed this move. Since the building was currently being used as a district school, Mueller proposed that it be sold by public auction in order to avoid further strife.⁸⁴ Finding its intentions blocked in this way, the council presented the matter to the Provincial

⁸²Ibid., p. 48, 13 January 1885. Subsequent meetings of council were held in Reinland.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 63-65, 3 March 1885.

⁸⁴Directive of 7 March 1885, CMCA, XXII-K.3, vol. 1099, #30.

Secretary, D. H. Wilson, for his opinion and advice.⁸⁵

Wilson's response is no longer available, but it apparently supported the verdict of the farmers' meetings. In any case, the municipal council took matters into its own hands, physically removed all of the Gebietsamt materials from the building, and occupied it. In that manner another stage in the transition from Gebietsamt to municipality was effected.⁸⁶

The Gebietsamt lost its office building, but not its office. Two weeks after the municipal council held its first meeting in 1884, Isaak Mueller sent to all of the village Schulzen the proposed new regulations governing statutory labour, exemptions for Dorfvorsteher, Brandaeltester, etc. The instruction was signed by Mueller as Bezirksvorsteher.⁸⁷ Having the consent of the community, Mueller could successfully request statutory labour from his constituency. The municipal council on the other hand, derived its authority from the provincial government and in Rhineland functioned without the consent of the majority of its ratepayers. It accordingly petitioned the Legislative Assembly to amend the 1884 Municipal

⁸⁵ Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, pp. 80-82, 2 June 1885.

⁸⁶ Friesen, in Johann Wiebe, p. 72, maintains that the council threatened to shoot anyone who would dare to buy the building at the auction proposed by Mueller.

⁸⁷ Directive of 22 January 1884, CMCA, XXII-K.3, vol. 1099, #30.

Mueller and his successors continued to function as head of the Reinlaender Gebietsamt until the church emigrated to Mexico in the 1920s.

Act "so as to give the Municipal Councils the right to impose statute labour according to local want."⁸⁸

Realizing that its effectiveness in giving local administration would be limited as long as the majority of the constituency failed to participate in choosing the municipal council, it tried very hard to get Reinlaender church members to participate in municipal elections. The church leadership was opposed to this and was fairly successful in keeping solidarity among its members on this point.⁸⁹ In the 1885 elections for example, it is estimated that barely a tenth of the eligible voters in Rhineland Municipality cast their ballots.⁹⁰ This meant that candidates for office could be selected from less than one-tenth the eligible men, since the Reinlaender church permitted neither voting nor holding of office in the municipality. However, almost every year a member of the Reinlaender church was in fact elected to council and then either had to resign from that office or be excommunicated from his church.⁹¹ The church was not left in peace on

⁸⁸ Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, p. 60, 3 March 1885.

⁸⁹ Willows, p. 87; Dawson, p. 148.

⁹⁰ Johann Froese, Mennonitische Rundschau, 3 February 1886, p. 1.

⁹¹ The case of Johann Dyck in 1884 has been discussed above, p. 129.

The Dorfs-gemeinde of the village of Blumengart protected itself against this eventuality in 1885 by sending a petition to the municipal office indicating that its members would not participate in the elections nor accept any office. Rhineland

this point until Bishop Johann Wiebe appeared before the court in Morden and apparently convinced the judge on Biblical grounds that his church could not be forced to participate in elections.⁹²

A pattern of peaceful coexistence between Gebietsamt and municipality gradually developed and with it an acceptable modus vivendi.⁹³ Exactly when this was achieved is difficult to pinpoint but by the end of 1887, Franz Froese, successor to Isaak Mueller as Obervorsteher of the Gebietsamt, required

Municipality (old), Minutes, pp. 91-92, 1 December 1885.

In 1886 again only five councillors took office at the January meeting of the Rhineland Council. The sixth elected member, Abram Neufeld, on April 6 announced to council before the meeting began that he would be unable to take office because of "Koerperschwaechen." Ibid., p. 105, 6 April 1886. In his case a letter of resignation was requested by council before it passed a by-law to declare the seat vacant and to hold a new election. Ibid., pp. 106, 116; 6 and 24 April 1886; By-Laws, p. 96, #32, 24 April 1886.

In 1887, elected councillor Wilhelm Reddekopp "pretends to be unable to serve" and was similarly asked for a "legal resignation" if he wanted to be released from the position. Minutes, p. 164, 1 February 1887. Reddekopp then got Dr. Fraser to certify that he was unable to serve "for reasons of health." Ibid., p. 187, 1 March 1887.

In 1888, the sixth councillor, Peter Peters, was appointed under sec. 206, of the Municipal Act 1886. Ibid., p. 200, 17 January 1888. Friesen, in Johann Wiebe, pp. 73-74, indicates that some Reinlaender church members who were thus elected to municipal council, chose to serve their term of office and thereby "von der Gemeinde sind losgekommen."

⁹²Friesen, *ibid.*, p. 74; Elias, 1:12. The Reinlaender Church maintained this position until its emigration to Mexico in the 1920s. Bishop Johann Friesen, in a letter of 4 January 1917 to Prime Minister Borden, wrote: "We are not allowed to elect governmental offices or to serve in them according to Jesus' own words Mark 10:42f." PAC, MG 26 H, 1(c), vol. 214, p. 121078.

⁹³Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 95.

of his tenant prompt-fulfillment of municipal tax and road requirements.⁹⁴ That the municipal council on its side was not anti-clerical is indicated by an 1885 by-law exempting Mennonite clergymen in the municipality from statute labour and land taxes "because they get no pay for their clerical and frequently troublesome services."⁹⁵

3. Mennonite Solidarity Broken: Unequally Yoked

The most serious consequence of accepting the external resources available through public schools and the external authority available through municipal government was that the original solidarity of the Mennonite immigrants had been broken. Just as Bergthal Bishop Gerhard Wiebe lamented the fact that the Kleine Gemeinde did not stand with his church in opposing district schools, so Reinlaender Bishop Johann Wiebe regretted the absence of Bergthaler support in opposing municipal government. It is true that Gerhard Wiebe was almost as strongly opposed to the latter development as his cousin Johann was, but discovery of a moral lapse on his part rendered

⁹⁴"Gemeindespruch," between Franz Fröese, Reinland, owner, and Johann Penner, Chortitz, renter, 17 December 1887, in Reinland Gemeinde Buch, no. 11, after p. 264, PAM, MG 8, A 18-7.

⁹⁵Rhineland Municipality (old), By-laws, p. 56, #19, 30 January 1885. Douglas Municipality had already taken similar action the year before. By-laws, 1:11, #8, 6 May 1884.

him ineffectual in the crucial early 1880s.⁹⁶ His assistants, David Stoesz and Johann Funk, were not seen as allies by the Reinlaender Bishop in this respect.⁹⁷ (

The basic reason for their opposition to municipal government and district schools was that to accept them would violate their understanding of the separation of church and state, or of gospel and law, and their concept of not being "unequally yoked together with unbelievers."⁹⁸ For Bishop Johann Wiebe and his Fuerstenland congregation a major reason for leaving Russia had been precisely this one. The church there no longer practiced discipline according to Matthew chapter 18, but dealt with nearly all cases according to

⁹⁶ Gerhard Wiebe, pp. 77-78, indicates his strong opposition to worldly office and recourse to the ballot box, but admits that he has no power to stop this trend in his church. His moral lapse, apparently the seduction of a maid, is nowhere mentioned explicitly, but its consequences are discussed at some length on pp. 68-70, 89. Johann Wiebe, pp. 75-78, wrote him a pointed letter about this sin and advised him concretely how to be restored to his former effective leadership.

⁹⁷ Elias, 1:9-10, 33-34, indicates that problems between the two groups became serious about 1880 because the Bergthaler accepted into membership excommunicated Reinlaender. Stoesz and Johann Wiebe were unable to resolve their differences on this point.

Funk's Bergthaler church, at least in later years, was opposed to having its members serve as Justice of the Peace, which was one of the official functions of a municipal reeve. Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, 11 March 1895, CMCA, XII, vol. 716.

⁹⁸ Elias, 1:11, quotes this passage from 2 Cor. 6:14, as well as Eph. 5:11. Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 75, calls it an "ever-recurring theme." See e.g. Gerhard Wiebe, pp. 74, 76, 79-80; Johann Wiebe, pp. 40-41.

secular law and with secular authority. Adulterers were still disciplined according to God's word but for most offences a person, elected by the congregation but affirmed in office by the government, applied the secular law which included corporal punishment.⁹⁹ This whole system the two bishops Wiebe had decided to abandon by reintroducing in Canada a clear separation of church and state. According to the Municipal Act however, the reeve of a municipality functioned *ex officio* as Justice of the Peace.¹⁰⁰ For the church to cooperate with the municipality then, meant a return to the Russian system which they had rejected in principle.

Experience showed that these concerns were justified. Several disputes or conflicts were brought before the municipal council of Rhineland as early as 1885, and in at least one case the parties involved were simply given a deadline to settle their dispute or else it would be taken to the municipal solicitor in Nelson.¹⁰¹ To the church leadership it did not seem right that disputes between members of their church should be settled by outside authorities. Even more serious was the way in which those were dealt with who were in arrears in their

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 31-34.

¹⁰⁰Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Statutes, 1883, sec. 210 of part 1, 46 & 47 Vic., ch. 1; assented to 7 July 1883.

¹⁰¹Rhineland Municipality (old), Minutes, pp. 69, 88-90; 2 April and 19 November 1885.

financial obligations. Already in its second year of operation the council of Rhineland Municipality decided to turn over to the Secretary of the Eastern Judicial District the accounts of all those who had not paid their municipal taxes for 1884 in order that the Court would "collect the taxes by selling the lands" ¹⁰² Such a thing would not happen if the office were handled in accordance with apostolic teaching, wrote one observer. Instead, a careful investigation would reveal whether or not the person was capable of paying these back taxes. If he were found incapable, then voluntary contributions would be gathered in the church to pay such debts for the delinquent. ¹⁰³

Others felt that to participate in elections or in governmental service would present a danger which "on the day of war they would rue." Accepting governmental positions and restructuring their internal administration according to the laws of the land would so blur the distinction between them and other nations that the government would no longer be able to recognize that they were Mennonites. ¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 62-64, 3 March 1885.

¹⁰³ Jacob Kroeker, Reinland, Mennonitische Rundschau, 22 February, 1888, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁴ Johann Froese, ibid., 3 February 1886, p. 1. An anonymous response to this argument urged Mennonites to participate in municipal elections, maintaining that a God-fearing municipal officer could do much good if blessed by God. Ibid., 24 February 1886.

Less ~~directly~~, the introduction of municipal government, insofar as it would replace the Gebietsamt, threatened the continuing existence of the village landholding system and much of the communal social organization that went with it.¹⁰⁵ Fear of the unforeseen consequences of "the infiltration of practices and directives coming from a government beyond the jurisdiction of the elders and the discipline of the congregation" also undoubtedly provided part of the motivation for opposing the municipality.¹⁰⁶

The division between the Reinlaender church and those who participated in municipal government and the public schools was thus a matter of principle. Since the latter were accepted into the Bergthaler church, Reinlaender members were for several years forbidden to have any contact with the Bergthal people.¹⁰⁷ By 1888 hopes for a reconciliation seemed very slim.¹⁰⁸

By 1890 the large Bergthal group was itself disintegrating under the pressure of these outside influences. The portion on the East Reserve developed its own identity as the Chortitzer church. On the West Reserve a larger portion of

¹⁰⁵ Redekop, p. 9.

¹⁰⁶ Mennonite Encyclopedia, s.v. "Manitoba," by Cornelius Krahn.

¹⁰⁷ Elias, 2:14, 1:11; Gerbrandt, p. 74.

¹⁰⁸ Mennonitische Rundschau, 22 February 1888, p. 1.

Bergthal people became dissatisfied with the leadership of Bishop Johann Funk and gradually developed a separate identity which came to be known as the Sommerfelder church.

In spite of their resistance to district schools and municipal administration, Mennonite church leaders continued to maintain complete confidence in the "high government." They blamed unfaithful elements within the Mennonite constituency itself for erosions of their freedom. Gerhard Wiebe wrote: "As far as the government is concerned we still have our full liberty, for it remains faithful to the agreement with our deputies, but we ourselves are trampling this freedom with our feet."¹⁰⁹ Johann Wiebe's assessment of the federal government was even more positive: "And if the high government had not been so gracious to us, they [our opponents in the Mennonite Reserve] would have already forced us to join with them in taking on secular power. But thanks to God and to the government we are still able to live out our faith according to God's word in our schools and churches."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Gerhard Wiebe, p. 76.

¹¹⁰ Johann Wiebe, p. 41. Johann Friesen, who succeeded Wiebe's son as bishop of the Reinlaender church in 1913, wrote in much the same vein years later in Mexico: "Ist die Obrigkeit in Kanada Schuld daran gewesen, dass wir unter dem weltlichen Gesetz, unter den Schulzwang kommen mussten, oder sind wir selbst Schuld daran . . . ?" Ibid., p. 53.

CHAPTER III²

WESTWARD EXPANSION, 1890-1910

For some years before the two Manitoba reserves were thrown open to general settlement, most of the good homestead land available in them had already been taken up. The withdrawal of ministerial permission to fulfill homestead requirements under the "hamlet privilege" clause in the second half of the 1880s meant that no new villages could be begun by homesteaders.¹ For the Reinlaender church, which insisted on the semi-communal village life, this meant that its new homesteaders would have no place to go as soon as the existing villages were filled. For the more individualistically oriented Mennonites, who generally placed more emphasis on economic progress, the increasing scarcity of land on the Manitoba reserves meant going farther afield if they wanted choice homesteads.

There was some migration to the United States in the early years of the settlement. One group of about twenty-eight Bergthal families relocated to the Mountain Lake, Minne-

¹"Hamlet privilege" ended on the West Reserve in 1885 and the East Reserve in 1889. See above pp. 79-80.

sota area in the 1870s,² while another settled in Oregon in the late 1880s.³

The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, and the subsequent construction of spur lines running north and south of it, greatly improved settlement possibilities in the Northwest Territories of Canada. Individual Mennonite families or small groups began to homestead between the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan River in 1891 and in the Bow River Valley east of Calgary a year later.⁴ The small group of Reinlaender Mennonites who settled at Gleichen (Alberta) about 1890 returned to Manitoba a few years later.⁵ Swiss Mennonites from Ontario founded communities at Didsbury and High River during the 1890s but further migration from Manitoba to this area did not resume until 1901 when a group of Bergthal

²Schroeder, p. 59.

³See above, p. 75.

⁴Richard J. Friesen, ch. 4. Epp, Mennonites in Canada, ch. 13, gives a summary of settlement history in both Saskatchewan and Alberta.

⁵Elias, Memoirs, 2:19; F. D. Guenther, Meine innern und aeusseren Erlebnisse in Mexico und Canada (Inwood, Man.: By the author, 1957), p. 12. Led by Rev. Gerhard Petkau of the Reinlaender Church, the group had apparently agreed before leaving Manitoba to join another group settling at Rosthern (Saskatchewan) or else have the latter group join them at Gleichen. When the Rosthern settlers refused to come to Petkau in Alberta, a part of his group returned to Manitoba with him, while three families relocated at Rosthern. See also John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite settlements," p. 201; Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 306.

people settled at Didsbury.⁶

The area south of Duck Lake (Saskatchewan) however, quickly caught on among Manitoba Mennonites as a most suitable area for relocation. Both Reinlaender and Bergthaler-Sommerfelder Mennonites were involved in the movement, and beginning in 1891 Mennonite immigrants arriving directly from Russia or Prussia began to give Saskatchewan as their destination.⁷ Interest in this area was also reported among Russian Mennonites living in Nebraska and Kansas.⁸ From these various sources the Rosthern area had achieved a Mennonite population of about four hundred by 1894.⁹

Up to this point the Mennonite migration was basically a movement of individual families or small, informal groups. They took up homesteads in the normal Canadian pattern although

⁶ Ibid., pp. 306-311.

⁷ The Reinlaender group that moved west with Petkau and settled at Rosthern in 1892 joined the congregation of new immigrants founded under the leadership of Bishop Peter Regier of the Rosenort congregation of Prussia. Elias, *Memoirs*, 2:20. A Bergthal church was begun in the Rosthern area about 1893. Quiring, *Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat*, p. 28; John D. Rempel, *History of the Hague Mennonite Church, 1900-1975* (Rosthern: Valley Printers, 1975), p. 1.

Canada, Parliament, *Sessional Papers*, 1892, and following report Mennonite immigrant arrivals indicating Saskatchewan as their destination. Klaas Peters, Eduard Wiebe, *Mennonitische Rundschau*, 3 February 1892; Gerhard Wiebe, *ibid.*, 10 February 1892; and Jakob Kroeker, *ibid.*, 3 May 1893, report on the progress of the settlements. See also Francis, *In Search of Utopia*, pp. 146-47.

⁸ Canada, Parliament, *Sessional Papers*, 1894, No. 13, "Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the year 1893," app. 1, p. 9.

⁹ Richard J. Friesen, p. 78.

the presence of church leaders helped the process of community formation. In 1895 however, an organized group movement was to begin, following very much the pattern established twenty years earlier in the Manitoba settlements. In order to highlight this similarity, the outline used in the following summary will follow that used in chapter 1.

1. The Reserves

In Russia the original Mennonite colonies had taken care of their surplus population by the periodic establishment of "daughter colonies." The Reinlaender Mennonite church of Manitoba now applied this principle to the Canadian setting by turning to the government in Ottawa for a tract of land large enough to establish a series of new villages. Since the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were not established until 1905, all of the crown lands in the Northwest Territories were still under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior in Ottawa. Whereas the leadership in locating suitable land and negotiating with the government had been taken by the Kleine Gemeinde and Bergthal groups in the 1870s, it was the Reinlaender church which now took the initiative. Two reserves were eventually set aside by order-in-council for the Mennonites, the Hague Reserve near Rosthern in 1895 and the Swift Current Reserve, southeast of Swift Current in 1904.

Early in 1894 J. B. McLaren, a solicitor from Morden who had served the Mennonites on frequent occasions, indicated to the

Department of the Interior that the West Reserve Mennonites were interested in securing another reserve further west.¹⁰ The two widely separated townships about which he inquired were not yet surveyed and would not likely receive railroad service for a considerable time to come.¹¹ Since the Mennonites had no special preference for these townships their attention now shifted to the Prince Albert area.¹²

During the fall of 1894 two separate requests for a reserve in the Rosthern area were made by Mennonite representatives. One came from scattered Bergthal settlers already living in the area for whom Klaas Peters of Gretna, Manitoba, was to act as agent.¹³ There is no indication that Peters followed up this inquiry. The second came in a meeting of Bishop Johann Wiebe and Obervorsteher Franz Froese of the Reinlaender Mennonites with the Minister of the Interior in Winnipeg.¹⁴ By now they knew exactly what they wanted, and

¹⁰ J. B. McLaren to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 21 February 1894, PAC, RG 15, vol. 652, #480126. Richard J. Friesen's account of this reserve is based largely on materials found in RG 15, #270476.

¹¹ A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister, to T. Mayne Daly, Minister of the Interior, 13 March 1894, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 652, #480126. The townships inquired about were 7-27W2d and 33-20W2d. See map 5.

¹² McLaren to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 18 April 1894, *ibid.*

¹³ H. E. Ross, Prince Albert, to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 10 October 1894, *ibid.*

¹⁴ Daly to Burgess, 3 November 1894, *ibid.*, reports on his meeting with Wiebe, Froese, and McLaren.

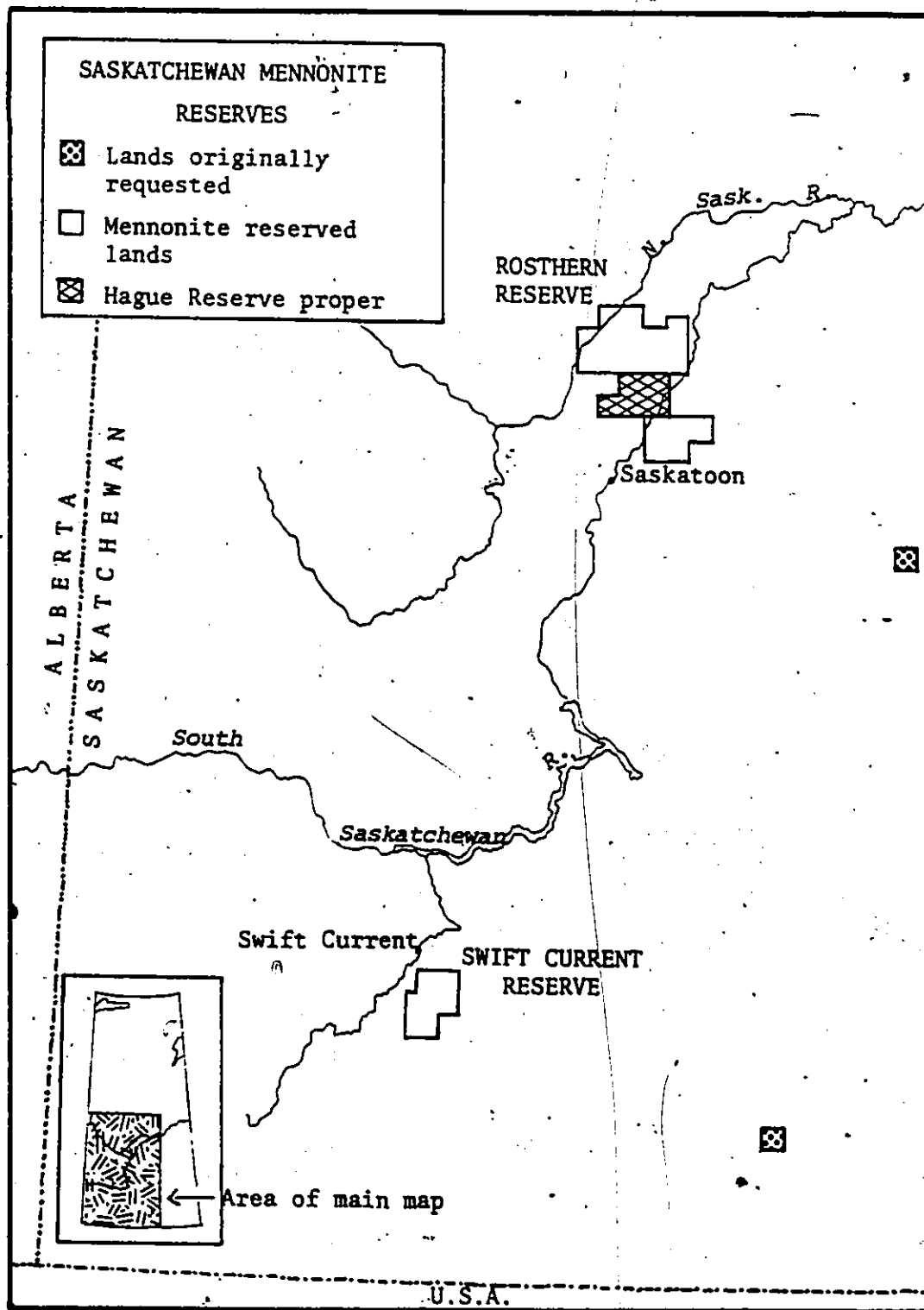
McLaren, who was also present at the meeting, handled the necessary negotiations until a reserve of four townships, shown on map 5, was created by order-in-council early in 1895. The government order recognized "that the principle of establishing reservations of land for settlement by Mennonites" had been in effect since 1873, and that the new reserve was required to accommodate both the natural increase which had taken place in the Manitoba settlements and the influx of new immigrants from the United States and Europe.¹⁵

Because orders-in-council now had to be gazetted four times before they went into force, news of the Hague Reserve did not reach the Manitoba Mennonites until late February. Some of the families who were ready to move had meanwhile begun to agitate for a settlement in North Dakota because of this delay.¹⁶ As soon as the official word of the reserve was received, plans for a spring migration were made. A special Canadian Pacific Railway train of eighteen cars carrying thirteen families of settlers and their effects was scheduled to leave the Manitoba settlement in early May for Hague, Saskat-

¹⁵ P.C. #188, 23 January 1895, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1. The townships requested were 40 in ranges 3, 4, and 5, and 41 in range 4 west of the 3d meridian. Since no land had so far been taken up in any of these four townships, the Minister recommended the formal creation of the reserve to cabinet on 24 December 1894.

¹⁶ McLaren to Daly, 20 February 1895, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 652, #480126.

MAP 5



SOURCE: Based on Richard J. Friesen, "Old Colony Settlements in Saskatchewan," (M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1975), p. 69.

chewan.¹⁷ The first village established in the new colony was appropriately named Neuanlage.¹⁸

Early in 1898 the Mennonites began negotiations to exchange township 40 range five for 41 range three.¹⁹ The Deputy Minister checked out local feelings about this proposed change before responding. The one negative response was apparently ignored.²⁰ By April it was apparent that a large contingent of Mennonite families was planning to move to the reserve from Manitoba so that Obervorsteher Froese now requested that township 41 in range 3 simply be added to the reserve without dropping township 40-5.²¹ This was promptly done by the Department although the formal order-in-council was not passed until June.²² These five townships as shown on map 6,

¹⁷ Mennonitische Rundschau, 1 May 1895, p. 1.

¹⁸ Driedger, p. 24.

¹⁹ McLaren to the Minister of the Interior, 27 January 1898, PAC, RG 15, vol. 652, #480126. The change would make the reserve more compact, and the new township had better water.

²⁰ Jas. D. Smart, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to T. O. Davis, M.P., 10 February 1898, *ibid.*

Chas. Fisher, Duck Lake, to Davis, 26 February 1898, disapproved of this kind of favoritism.

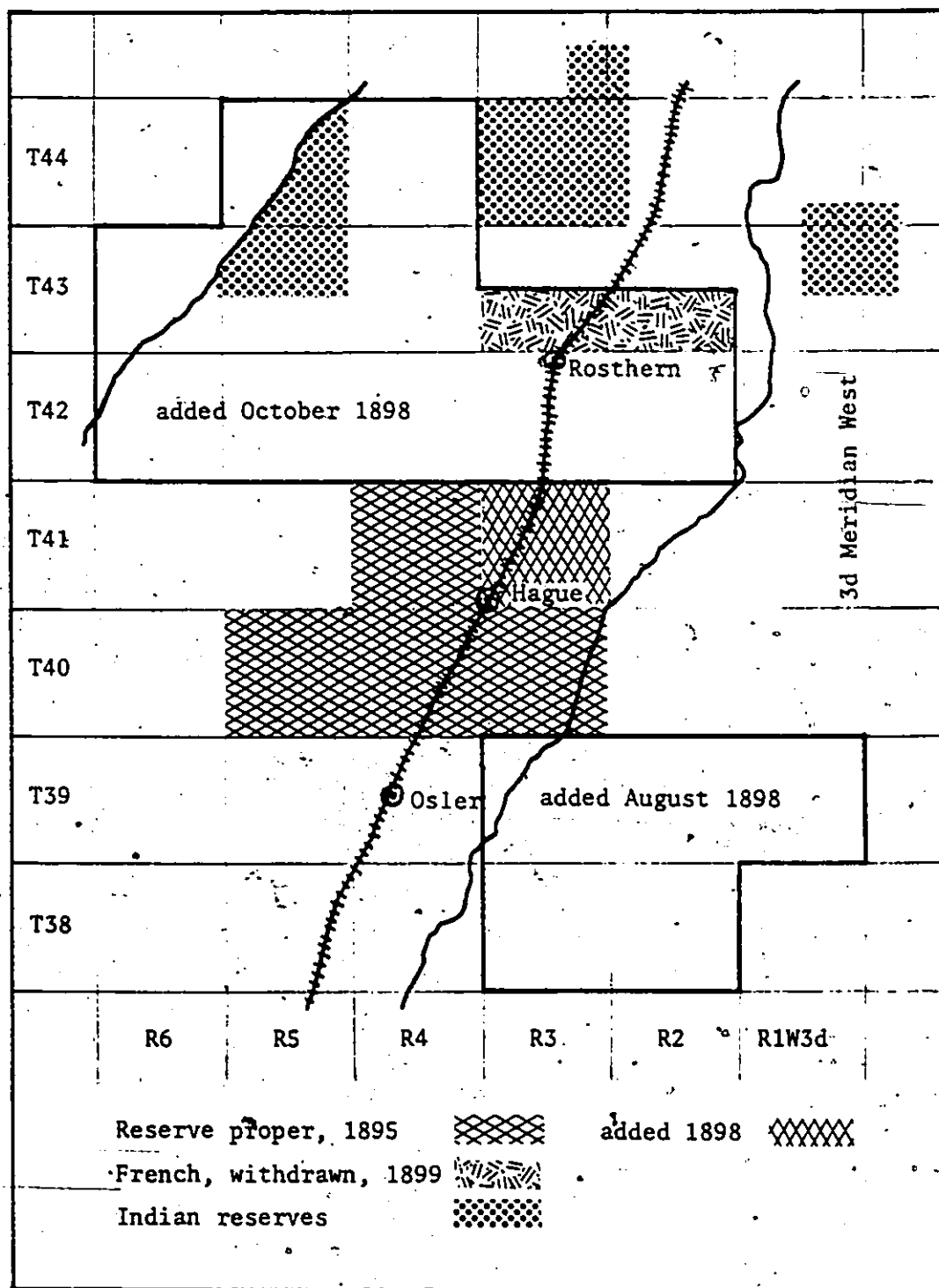
More serious opposition to the reserve was expressed the following year, 3 April 1899, by Franz Schröder and eleven other German Lutheran settlers of the Rosthern area. They complained to the Minister that their settlement was too small to support church and school and their coreligionists from Manitoba and North Dakota were now prevented from joining them.

²¹ McLaren to Minister of the Interior, 7 April 1898, *ibid.*

²² The addition was effected by Departmental order, Smart to Goodeve, 28 April 1898, *ibid.*, and confirmed by P.C. #1627, 24 June 1898, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

MAP 6

HAGUE RESERVE AND ADDITIONS



SOURCE: Based on map attached to P.C. #188, 23 January 1895, PAC, RG 15, vol. 652, #480126.

may be considered as the Hague Reserve proper.

An additional five townships, adjoining the southeast edge of the reserve, were set aside for exclusive homestead entry by Mennonites for a period of four years in August of 1898.²³ Later in the same year settlers in the Rosthern area made a second request for a reserve, this time in the name of Peter Abrams. This involved an area of eleven townships adjacent to the northern edge of the Hague reserve to be set aside "for a German Mennonite settlement for five years."²⁴ Both of these additions are shown on map 6.

The request was received favourably both by officials of the Department of the Interior and by the local member of Parliament, although the proposed five year term was considered too long.²⁵ The reservation was accordingly effected for one year by Departmental order even though about three-fourths of the available homestead lands had already been taken up by the

²³Twp. 39 in ranges 1, 2 and 3W3d, and twp. 38 in ranges 2 and 3W3d. Richard J. Friesen, p. 75, based on SAB file #917620. The reservation was effective until 1 November 1902 by order of the Commissioner of Dominion Lands, 19 August 1898. It is not known by whom this extension was requested.

²⁴Peter Abrams, Rosthern, to T. O. Davis, M.P., 13 September 1898, PAC, RG 15, vol. 652, #480126.

²⁵Davis to Minister of the Interior, 19 September 1898; Smart to Goodeve, 27 September 1898, *ibid*.

Mennonites.²⁶ Correspondence regarding the administration of this reserved area during its one year lifetime indicates that on the part of the Mennonites it was poorly conceived and haphazardly administered.²⁷

A decade after Reinlaender Bishop Johann Wiebe and Obervorsteher Franz Froese had initiated negotiations for the Hague Reserve with Minister of the Interior Daly, McLaren and Froese again met with the Interior Minister, now the Honourable Clifford Sifton, to request another reserve, this time in the Swift Current area.²⁸ Sifton's goodwill toward the Mennonites and his confidence in them are shown in the promptness with which he acted on this request and in his

²⁶ Goodeve to Smart, 29 September 1898. Smart to Davis, 18 April 1899, *ibid.*, indicates that the reservation was effective for the year ending 1 October 1899 and involved twps. 42, 43A, and 43 in ranges 2-6W3d, and twp. 44 in ranges 4 and 5W3d. C. Sifton, Minister of the Interior, memo to cabinet, 14 February 1900, *ibid.*, indicates that the Departmental order was dated 14 October 1898.

²⁷ Reference has already been made to the fact that less than one quarter of the homestead sections were still available when the request for the reserve was made. Abrams, 19 April 1899, admitted to the Deputy Minister that the two half townships, 43A-3 and 43A-2W3d, mostly occupied by French settlers, had been requested through misunderstanding and could be removed. Further difficulties were encountered when Abrams, without consulting Bishop Regier, authorized (5 May 1899) the Dominion Lands agent at Prince Albert to grant homestead entries on the reserve to three non-Mennonite Anglo-Saxons. When the agent acted on this after it had been confirmed (16 May 1899) by the Assistant Secretary of the Department, Regier and Abrams, 20 May 1899, protested to the Minister of the Interior. *Ibid.*

²⁸ A. M. McLeod (of McLaren, McLeod, & Black), Morden, to Sifton, 6 July 1904, *ibid.*, RG 15, B-1(a), vol. 292, #917620(1).

comment to his Deputy: "These lands are not at present suitable for farming and the Department would not encourage any settlers to locate there, but the Mennonites are quite capable of knowing whether they can succeed or not."²⁹ The text of the order-in-council publicly affirmed this confidence. It set aside six townships, shown on map 5, to be reserved for a period of three years for the exclusive use of the Reinland Mennonite Association of Manitoba.³⁰

2. Government Loan

Although the hundred thousand dollar loan advanced by the Canadian government to the immigrant settlers in Manitoba in 1875 had only recently been repaid, a new one of twenty thousand dollars was requested to assist settlers on the newly created Hague Reserve in 1895.³¹ Government policy had changed meanwhile, and the request was politely turned down in view of "the present condition of revenue," although it was noted that "the Minister appreciates most highly the scrupu-

²⁹Sifton to Smart, 14 July 1904, *ibid.* The tract of land requested, he added, was "regarded as useless by most settlers."

Sifton, 15 July 1904, actually recommended to cabinet an area larger than McLeod had requested. The request was for twps. 13 and 14 in range 12W3d, 12 and 13 in range 13W3d, and the eastern half of 12-14W3d; Sifton added 14-13W3d, E½ of 13-14W3d. See map 5.

³⁰P.C. #1605, 13 August 1904, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

³¹J. Y. Shantz to Department of the Interior, 9 April 1895, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 233, #3129(4). Richard J. Friesen, p. 72, apparently was unaware of this request.

lous good faith with which the Mennonites and their friends observed all the conditions on which the previous advance was made."³²

Many of the migrants were poorer people however, and needed financial assistance to relocate to Saskatchewan.

The Reinlaender Mennonites therefore took the advice of the Minister and advanced loans to their needy brethren against the security of a first mortgage on the homestead land as provided for by the Dominion Lands Act.³³ Since the church had earlier excommunicated members for signing a mortgage with a bank or land company, some of its critics now protested this reversal whereby the church itself demanded a mortgage from its own members as security.³⁴ That the protest was unsuccessful is an indication of the increasing Mennonite openness to accept suggestions from the government. It also shows how the tendency toward greater individualism, strengthened by an instrument like the homestead system, was beginning to undermine the communal commitment of the church.

³²J. R. Hall, Secretary, Department of the Interior, to Shantz, 22 April 1895, PAC, RG 15, vol. 233, #3129(4).

³³T. M. Daly, Minister, to A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister 3 November 1894, *ibid.*, vol. 652, #480126.

The firm of solicitors, McLaren, McLeod and Black of Morden had special forms printed to record these mortgages.

³⁴Elias, 2:24-26.

3. Non-Mennonite Intruders.

The vigorous immigration policy adopted by the Liberal government under Clifford Sifton after the election of 1896, and the creation of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905, increased the flow of settlers to the northwest in the years immediately after the creation of the two Mennonite reserves.

The Reinlaender experience with outsiders living on the western edge of their Manitoba reserve made them additionally cautious in checking for homestead entries on lands they intended to reserve in Saskatchewan. Problems on the Hague Reserve therefore did not arise until the fall of 1898 when an energetic General Colonization Agent of the government located some Galician settlers on it.³⁵ The fact that there were in effect two Mennonite reserves side by side was confusing to the government agents. Mennonites on the northern section, who homesteaded more or less individually, apparently consented fairly readily to outsiders taking up land in their reserved area. But for the Reinlaender group who settled in villages and held their land semi-communally, any outsider seriously disrupted their settlement pattern. This group therefore protested the Galician intrusion through their solicitor,

³⁵ Secretary, Department of the Interior, to Dominion Lands Agent, Prince Albert, 29 September 1898, PAC, RG 15, vol. 652, #480126.

their Obervorsteher, and directly by petitions.³⁶

For the government it was a delicate situation. On the one hand, "there was a very great trouble experienced in retaining those Galicians in the district, and any appearance of breach of faith with them might lead to undesirable results."³⁷ On the other hand, an agreement had been made with the Mennonites and "after the Department has set apart certain lands for a colony it is certainly not pleasant to be obliged to tell the people that these lands have been withdrawn."³⁸ Both the Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior and the Superintendent of Immigration remained in touch with their agents who attempted to effect a reconciliation. In at least one protracted and difficult case the Northwest Mounted Police eventually became involved.³⁹ The

³⁶ McLaren, McLeod & Black, Morden, to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 12 April and 9 May 1899; Franz Froese, Reinland, to Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, 26 August 1899; petition, B. J. Friesen and 28 others, Rosthern, to Department of the Interior, 14 August 1899, *ibid.*

³⁷ Dominion Lands Agent, Prince Albert, to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 6 October 1898, *ibid.*

³⁸ J. A. Smart, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to C. W. Speers, General Colonization Agent, 7 April 1899, *ibid.*

³⁹ Abram Penner, Hague, complained 23 September 1899 to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture that his entry to the net of 24-41-3W3d had been cancelled in favour of a Galician. Both Penner and Sikora proved to be stubborn customers and the feud escalated to the point where the NWMP were called in because Sikora had resorted to armed defence of his farm. Speers, Regina, to Frank Pedley, Superintendent of Immigration, 25 April 1901, *ibid.* Penner finally abandoned his claim on 11 June 1901.

tone of official Reinlaender protest indicates less confidence in the federal government's administration than was evident in the parallel situation in Manitoba two decades earlier.

These experiences on the Saskatchewan stimulated the Reinlaender Mennonite leadership to take additional precautions in arranging the Swift Current Reserve. They not only made sure that the lands chosen were unoccupied and unclaimed, but "deliberately selected lands which had been in the market for nearly a generation, and [on] which . . . Department did not feel warranted in encouraging new settlers to locate."⁴⁰ The terms of the Reserve, as spelled out by the order-in-council, provided "that no one, unless aided by the [Reinland Mennonite] Association, or otherwise approved by the Department of the Interior, is to be allowed to make homestead entry within the tract mentioned."⁴¹

In spite of these precautions, eighteen homestead entries involving nine sections of reserve land were made by non-Mennonites in June and July, 1904, while negotiations for

⁴⁰ McLaren et al. to Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, 26 March 1906, *ibid.*, B-1(a), vol. 292, #917620.

⁴¹ P.C. #1605, 13 August 1904, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.

the reserve were in process.⁴² To ensure that this would not continue to happen, the attorney for the Mennonites instructed the Dominion Lands Agent in Regina henceforth to issue entries only to persons having a certificate from Franz Froese, Obervorsteher of the Reinland Mennonite Association.⁴³ In that way the Association in Manitoba could keep track of available lands on the reserve and make it possible for intending settlers to select their lands before leaving Manitoba. By 1906 administrative watchfulness in the Regina office had begun to slip and eight non-Mennonites were permitted to make entries on the reserve.⁴⁴ As a result, seven Mennonite families who had made their land selection in Manitoba and then gone west with all their effects found themselves "stranded on the prairie" because their homestead choices had been given to outsiders.⁴⁵

A strongly worded intervention by attorney McLeod on behalf of the Mennonites in the summer of 1906 seems to have

⁴²P. G. Keyes, Secretary, Department of the Interior, to A. M. McLeod, Morden, 20 September 1904, *ibid.*, RG 15, B-1(a), vol. 292, #917620.

⁴³McLeod to Dominion Lands Agent, Regina, 12 September 1904, *ibid.*

⁴⁴Dominion Lands Agent, Regina, to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 27 February 1906, *ibid.*

⁴⁵McLeod to Oliver, 26 March 1906. As had been the case with the Galicians on the Hague Reserve, so here also the homestead entries of non-Mennonites which had occurred through administrative oversight were allowed to stand. W. W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to N. O. Coté, Chief Clerk, Land Patents Branch, 6 April 1906, *ibid.*

been effective. Complaining of "the most harassing treatment from the officials in the Department," he asked the Minister "to take the trouble to personally make the underlings in the Department give these people reasonable treatment in regard to the Reserve."⁴⁶ While Department officials could not find "any cause for making such a charge," the Ottawa files give no evidence of further problems.⁴⁷

4. Homestead Rights

Both of the Saskatchewan reserves were created after railroad construction had penetrated the area. Varying portions of the odd numbered sections of crown land had therefore been granted to railroad companies. These could obviously not be included in any reserve now created by the government. On the Manitoba reserves by contrast, homestead entries had been permitted on all even and odd numbered sections, except those assigned to the Hudson Bay Company or set apart as school lands.

On the Hague Reserve, homesteading was possible only on even numbered sections. The Reinlaender style of village settlement required however, that all lands of a given block belong to members of the community. The Mennonite leadership

⁴⁶ McLeod to Oliver, 4 July 1906, *ibid.*

⁴⁷ N. O. Côté to J. W. Greenway, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, 30 July 1906, *ibid.*

therefore asked assistance from the Minister of the Interior to arrange with the Canadian Pacific Railway "to reserve these lands for sale to the Mennonites for a term of say of at least five years, at a maximum price of say \$2.50 per acre."⁴⁸ The Minister pointed out that the odd numbered sections of the reserve formed part of the Qu'Appelle, Long Lake and Saskatchewan grant, not the Canadian Pacific and suggested that the Mennonites contact the firm of Osler, Hammond and Nanton who were agents for this Company.⁴⁹ A satisfactory arrangement was then apparently made in respect to the odd numbered sections, enabling the Mennonites to lay out some fifteen villages and a total of about thirty agglomerated settlements during the course of the next decade.⁵⁰

The order-in-council creating the Swift Current Reserve in 1904 allowed settlers to homestead the even numbered sections as well as those odd numbered ones at the disposal of the government. Since the Canadian Pacific Railway grant included the odd sections of only one and a half townships of the reserve, it did not create any significant difficulty for arriving settlers.

On a different matter the government once more showed

⁴⁸ J. B. McLaren to T. M. Daly, 2 April 1895, *ibid.*, vol. 652, #480126.

⁴⁹ Daly to McLaren, 2 May 1895, *ibid.*

⁵⁰ Richard J. Friesen, pp. 73, 79, 81, 103-4, 145; Driedger, pp. 24-25.

itself to be accommodating. To facilitate the migration the Manitoba leadership requested permission to make homestead entries for Swift Current Reserve lands in the Winnipeg Land office rather than on arrival in Regina. While this request was not granted, permission was given to appoint and authorize a person in Regina to make such entries for specific homesteads, rather than require each homesteader to make entry in person.⁵¹ This greatly facilitated the migration.

5. Hamlet Privilege

As was the case in Manitoba in the 1870s with the immigrant generation, the second generation of Mennonites homesteading in the Northwest Territories required ministerial permission to perform homestead duties under the "hamlet privilege" clause of the Dominion Lands Act if they were to settle in villages.

The order-in-council setting aside a reserve for the Mennonites in the Saskatchewan Valley in 1895 took this need into account and included a provision "to give the intending settlers an assurance that they will be enabled to carry out the principles of their social system, and to settle together in hamlets (for which provision is made by section 37 of the

⁵¹A. M. McLeod to Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, 3 January 1905; P. G. Keyes, Secretary, Department of the Interior, to McLeod, 6 April 1905, PAC, RG 15, B-1(a), vol. 292, #917620(1).

Dominion Lands Act) by obtaining entries for contiguous lands."⁵²

In 1899, when the first applications for patents were being processed, they were refused "on the ground that by section 37 of the Dominion Lands Act the Minister has not power to dispense with the requirements as to cultivation of each separate homestead."⁵³ The Mennonite leaders appealed to the Minister, pointing out that they had been promised hamlet privileges when the settlement was begun.⁵⁴ At his recommendation cabinet then passed an order-in-council which revived the hamlet privilege for the Hague Reserve even though it had been abolished by an order-in-council in 1889.⁵⁵ Once again Ottawa had clearly demonstrated its willingness to accommodate the Mennonites wherever possible.

The order-in-council creating the Swift Current Reserve did not mention anything about hamlet privilege for the homesteaders. The Reinlaender leaders wanted to be sure that this

⁵²P.C. #188, 23 January 1895, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1. This provision is repeated in P.C. #1627, 24 June 1898, which enlarged the original reserve.

⁵³J. B. McLaren, Winnipeg, to Clifford Sifton, 24 November 1899, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 652, #480126.

⁵⁴A. M. McLeod and Franz Froese to J. A. Smart, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 6 February 1900, *ibid.*

⁵⁵P.C. #441, 6 March 1900, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1.
P.C. #1938, 14 August 1889 actually specifically abolished hamlet privilege for the Manitoba East Reserve, although the text reads: "the time has now arrived when it is desirable that this privilege should be abolished altogether."

method of settlement would again be available to their people and petitioned the Minister of the Interior accordingly. First, they argued, the very rapid development of the reserves in Manitoba and at Hague was due in large part to settlers being "permitted to perform their homestead duties under the hamlet system." Secondly, owing to the semi-arid nature of the district in which the new reserve was located, difficulty was anticipated in procuring a satisfactory supply of water for domestic and farm purposes. A number of settlers living close together in a hamlet could share costs and effort in facilitating a water supply for common use. Thirdly, they pointed to the "greater convenience in the establishment of schools and churches and to the attainment of social advantages" if residence in hamlets were permitted.⁵⁶

Ottawa was very sympathetic to the petition, but Interior Department officials pointed out that clause 37 of the Dominion Lands Act now required that an application must be signed by at least twenty homestead families before a "hamlet" could be recognized as such.⁵⁷ Since the Mennonite migration from Manitoba did not progress very quickly, none of the eight hamlets in process of formation on the reserve had the required

⁵⁶ Johann Wiebe, Bishop, and Franz Froese, Agent, Reinland Mennonite Association, to Minister of the Interior, 12 December 1904, *ibid.*, RG 15, B-1(a), vol. 292, #917620(1).

⁵⁷ W. W. Cory, Deputy Minister, to Minister of the Interior, 10 April 1905; P. G. Keyes, Secretary, Department of the Interior, to J. B. McLaren, 6 April 1905, *ibid.*

twenty families by the end of 1906.⁵⁸ Officials of the Department had meanwhile urged that the settlers go into residence on their respective homesteads.⁵⁹ Instead of urging their people to do this, the Reinlaender leaders appealed once more for hamlet privilege, this time to the Prime Minister himself.⁶⁰ By now almost two years had elapsed since the first homestead entries on the reserve had been made, but legally 'residence' on the homesteads had not yet begun. In these circumstances the Minister decided to protect the settlers' homestead entries "whether they are performing their duties under the hamlet clause or not."⁶¹

Early in 1907 the Department abolished the hamlet privilege clause, but the Minister consented to extend it for the Swift Current Reserve since the settlement there had been begun before the change in regulations.⁶² Four villages acqui-

⁵⁸ McLaren to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 4 December 1906, *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Keyes to J. W. Greenway, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, 13 September 1906; Keyes to McLaren, 20 September 1906, *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Bishop Peter Wiebe, Reinland, to Head of the Government of Canada, 15 November 1906, *ibid.*, MG 26 G, vol. 435, p. 116199.

⁶¹ McLaren to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 4 December 1906; W. W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to N. O. Coté, 6 December 1906, *ibid.*, RG 15, B-1(a), vol. 293, #917620(2).

⁶² A. M. McLeod to Hon. Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, 2 February 1907; P. G. Keyes to McLeod, 20 April 1907, *ibid.*

red the necessary twenty homesteaders during the course of 1907 and registered their status with the Department.⁶³ By 1909 no new villages were begun with a view to performing homestead duties on the hamlet system. However, several villages were formed with the homesteaders purchasing adjacent forty acre lots on which they erected their buildings and thus performed their homestead duties "by residence on farmlands owned by them in the vicinity" of their actual homestead quarter section.⁶⁴

6. Naturalization and Land Patents

Mennonite immigrants arriving directly from Europe or the United States and homesteading in the Rosthern area had to be naturalized before they could obtain title to their homestead land. No difficulties appear to have been encountered in this process.

Mennonites from Manitoba who relocated to the Northwest Territories were either Canadian born or previously naturalized in Manitoba. Nevertheless, at one point in 1908 the

⁶³They were Schoenfeld (Bernhard Ens to Department of the Interior, 19 February 1907); Chortitz, Blumenhof, and Blumenort (McLeod to Keyes, 10 July 1907, *ibid.*). Richard J. Friesen, pp. 168-70 reproduces the Schoenfeld petitions of 19 February and 31 May 1907.

⁶⁴McLeod to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 9 June 1909, reports five such 'hamlets'. PAC, RG 15, B-1(a), vol. 293, #917620(2).

Dominion Lands Agent in Swift Current required all Mennonite homesteaders to produce certificates of naturalization in order to get patents. Some of them, not having such a certificate, went "to the expense of applying to be naturalized a second time as they, quite different from the English-speaking homesteaders, rely absolutely on what the Agent of Dominion Lands or any other official of the Department tells them."⁶⁵ This incident is indicative of the readiness of even Reinlaender Mennonites to cooperate with the federal government on land and reserve matters.

7. Termination of the Reserves

The order-in-council which created the Hague Reserve in 1895 did not specify the length of time during which Mennonites were to have exclusive right to homestead in it. Neither did the order-in-council of June 1898 which added a fifth township to the original reserve. The five townships which were annexed to the reserve by order of the Commissioner of Dominion Lands in August 1898 were to be reserved until November 1902.⁶⁶ It may be assumed that this termination date applied to all ten townships reserved thus far.

The eleven townships set aside for exclusive Mennonite

⁶⁵ McLaren to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 15 August 1908, *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Richard J. Friesen, p. 75.

entry at the request of Rosthern settlers in October 1898 were reserved for only one year.

These time limits seem to have been adequate for the purpose intended by the requesting Mennonites.

The order-in-council creating the Swift Current Reserve stipulated that it should continue for a period of three years. When the termination date of 13 August 1907 arrived however, Ottawa apparently took the initiative in instructing its Moose Jaw office not to take any action regarding the reserve until further instructed.⁶⁷ Periodic checks were made by the Department regarding the amount of available homestead land remaining in the reserve.⁶⁸ Since no formal action was taken to extend its original life, the reserve legally terminated 13 August 1907. Almost two years later the informal extension given to its life by Departmental officials was made official.⁶⁹ Actual termination of the reserve did not take place until 1 September 1909 when the Interior Department served public notice that all available

⁶⁷Telegram, F. Dixon, Acting Commissioner of Dominion Lands, to Agent of Dominion Lands, Moose Jaw, 13 August 1907, PAC, RG 15, B-1(a), vol. 292, #917620(1).

⁶⁸Land Patents Branch, to N. O. Coté, 27 May 1908, reported 78 quarters sections remaining. P. G. Keyes, in a public notice of 31 July 1909, listed ca. 60 quarters. Ibid., vol. 293, #917620(2).

⁶⁹P.C. #729, 8 April 1909, ibid., RG 2, 1, vol. 1103.

lands were open to homesteading by the general public.⁷⁰

8. Immigration from Russia and U.S.A.

While the Canadian Government was pleased at the way in which Mennonite migration from the Manitoba communities was opening up settlement in Saskatchewan, the main thrust of its Immigration Department was to bring in new settlers from abroad. In this effort it found willing cooperation among Canadian Mennonites.

In spring of 1896 Klaas Peters of Gretna, Manitoba, together with two of his friends, made a trip back to Russia to visit relatives. On their way they met with Department of the Interior officials in Ottawa and agreed to "promote to the best of their ability the immigration of their fellow countrymen. They will give the greatest prominence to the absolute good faith with which they have been treated by the government of Canada."⁷¹ Canadian immigration officials responded by assisting the travellers enroute and even raised the question of appointing a government agent in Russia.⁷²

⁷⁰P. G. Keyes, Secretary, Department of the Interior, public notice, 31 July 1909, *ibid.*, RG 15, B-1(a), vol. 293, #917620(2).

⁷¹L. Pereira, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior, to T. R. Burpé, Secretary, Dominion Lands Board, Winnipeg, 16 March 1896, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 570, #179925(1).

⁷²J. G. Colmer, Secretary, Office of the High Commissioner, London, to A. M. Burgess, 17 April 1896, *ibid.*, RG 76, vol. 50, #2183-1.

A year later Gerhard Ens of Rosthern picked up this idea and indicated that he would like a position as immigration agent for bringing Russian Mennonites to Saskatchewan.⁷³ Neither he nor Peters was actually appointed to the position, but Ens continued to stimulate and support such immigration in various ways during the next several decades. In 1902, for example, he attempted to arrange financial support among Saskatchewan Mennonites for the immigration of their needy coreligionists from the Fuerstenland Colony in Russia.⁷⁴

While Ens did not succeed in being appointed immigration agent to Russia, the Canadian Government put him to work among Mennonites in the United States.⁷⁵ As a result of his work during the first four months of 1898, mostly in the Kansas area, Ens was able to report twenty-two parties of U.S. Mennonites who had taken up land in Canada bringing with them over seventy thousand dollars in capital.⁷⁶ After another four months'

⁷³ Ens to T. O. Davis, M.P., 22 March 1897, *ibid.*, vol. 150, #35848.

⁷⁴ Ens to Obed Smith, Commissioner of Immigration, Winnipeg, 7 January 1902, *ibid.*, vol. 50, #2183-1.

⁷⁵ He was first appointed at the suggestion of Immigration Agent J. S. Crawford, Kansas City, and the recommendation of Davis, to Hon. Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, 6 December 1897, *ibid.*, vol. 150, #35848. The notice of appointment, Lyndwode Pereira, Asst. Secretary, Department of the Interior, to Ens, is dated 16 December 1897.

⁷⁶ Ens, Rosthern, to the Department of the Interior, 12 June 1898, *ibid.* A delegation of Hutterites from South Dakota also came at his suggestion.

special assignment the following year, Ens received a permanent appointment as land guide and interpreter in the Immigration Department.⁷⁷

Other immigration agents were subsequently appointed for special assignment among U.S. Mennonites. The result of their work was the founding of some twenty-four new communities in Alberta and Saskatchewan by immigrants from the United States between 1894 and 1914.⁷⁸ As in the case of Mennonite immigrants arriving from Russia during this time, the Americans also came in through regular immigration channels which did not involve any special negotiations with the government.

A significant difference was fairly quickly apparent between those Mennonites coming to the Northwest as individuals and homesteading as normal Canadians and those coming as part of a group migration and settling on reserves. The latter continued very strongly to practice their separatist ways as defined by the Privilegium and enforced by Bishop and Obervorsteher. The former were much more quick to adopt Canadian ways. When Alberta and Saskatchewan became provinces in 1905, Cornelius Hiebert, a Bergthal Mennonite living in the Didsbury, Alberta, area was elected to the legislature as a Conservative by the Rosebud constituency. In the first general election in

⁷⁷Telegram, F. Pedley, Superintendent of Immigration, to W. F. McCreary, Commissioner of Immigration, Winnipeg, 5 May 1899, *ibid*.

⁷⁸Epp, Mennonites in Canada, pp. 310, 317.

Saskatchewan, Gerhard Ens was elected to represent Rosthern as a Liberal.⁷⁹ Hiebert was still a Mennonite, apparently in good standing, although Ens had already become a member of the Swedenborgian Church.

⁷⁹Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1908, pp. 440, 445, 453.

CHAPTER IV

THE RIFT WIDENS: THE EDUCATION ISSUE IN MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN, 1890-1920

One of the most important provisions of the Privilegium assured the Mennonites their religious and educational freedom. Clause #10 of John Lowe's 1873 letter read:

The fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles is by law afforded to the Mennonites without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever, and the same privilege extends to the education of their children in schools.¹

Mennonites understood this not as a promise of public financial support for confessional schools but merely as a guarantee of their right to operate their own schools at their own expense. The educational crisis for them therefore came not in 1890, when Manitoba's "Public Schools Act" restricted public support to "entirely non-sectarian" public schools,^{1a} but rather in 1916, when compulsory attendance legislation was used to drive Mennonite private schools out of existence.

¹Lowe to David Klassen et al., 26 July 1873, PAC, RG 15, vol. 1507, pp. 167-69.

^{1a}Manitoba, Statutes, 1890, 53 Vic., ch. 38, sec. 8, 108(3).

1. Manitoba Education Legislation to 1916

The confessional school system in existence in the Red River colony prior to its annexation by Canada was guaranteed continuing existence by the Manitoba Act of 1870.²

Under the Manitoba School Act of 1871, denominational schools could be established on local initiative and administered by local trustees under the superintendence of the Protestant or Catholic sections of a provincial Board of Education.

While independent of the provincial government, the Board received grants from it which the two sections divided among their schools. All Manitoba schools were thus in principle confessional schools.

Anglicans, Catholics, Mennonites, and Lutherans, all to a greater or less degree, brought to Manitoba the European union of church and school born of the fierce religious struggles of the Reformation when control of the education of the young was necessary for denominational survival.³

²Section 22 of the Manitoba Act, in wording that closely parallels sec. 93 of the B.N.A. Act, provides that the provincial legislature may "exclusively make Laws in relation to Education, subject and according to the following provisions:--

(1) Nothing in any such Law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to Denominational Schools which any class of persons have by Law or practice in the Province at the Union."

This proviso differs from the corresponding subsection of the B.N.A. Act only by the addition of the words "or practice." Quoted in Lovell Clark, ed., The Manitoba School Question: Majority Rule or Minority Rights (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1968), p. 102.

³Morton, p. 187.

Ontario settlers, coming into the province in large numbers during the 1870s and 1880s, brought with them a quite different tradition characterized by an "atmosphere of secular and utilitarian democracy, not that of traditional religious custom."⁴ Already in 1876 their influence led to an attempt to make Manitoba's elementary education more uniform and more English.⁵ With the redistribution of electoral districts in 1888, the basis was laid for the political domination of the English, Protestant majority in the province. Under the influence of an anti-Catholic, anti-French movement, originating in Ontario,⁶ the Manitoba government was persuaded in 1890 to abolish its system of denominational schools. The Manitoba School Act of 1890 provided for a system of non-denominational schools to be administered by local boards of trustees and a Department of Education with a Minister responsible to the legislature. There was no provision for separate schools.⁷

The vigorous opposition to this new School Act by Manitoba Catholics, which made the local controversy into a national issue and eventually contributed to the defeat of the federal Conservative government in 1896, involved the

⁴Ibid.

⁵Hildebrand, p. 254, claims that their 8-point reform plan did not succeed at the time because of the government's preoccupation with abolishing the Legislative Council.

⁶The "Equal Rights Association" led by Dalton McCarthy.

⁷Morton, pp. 241-50.

Mennonites only marginally. A large majority of them had not been receiving government support even under the old system and they were quite content to remain fully in charge of and responsible for their schools. Among those who supported the move toward establishing public schools, an Education Society had been formed the year before to operate a teacher training institute in Gretna, located in the southeastern portion of the West Reserve. The resignation of its principal and only teacher, former inspector Wilhelm Rempel, forced the school to close again in 1890. The new Department of Education now came to the assistance of the Society by helping it to recruit a new principal from among the Mennonites of Kansas and to support its work financially by appointing him inspector of Mennonite schools.⁸ Archbishop Taché was thus justified in his complaint that while the government was dismissing all the Catholic inspectors, it was creating a new inspectorship for the Mennonites.⁹ Anglophone Catholics

⁸ Dr. George Bryce offered his services to the government to help the Society find a new principal in Kansas. Hon. Joseph Martin to Premier Thomas Greenway, 17 August 1890, PAM, MG 13, E1, p. 3204. Bryce had apparently been contacted for this purpose by Julius Siemens of Gretna who knew Ewert and was also acquainted with Bryce. Schaefer, Ewert, pp. 46-47. See also above, pp. 115-16.

⁹ A. A. Taché, "Are the Public Schools of Manitoba the Continuation of the Protestant Schools of the same Province?", pamphlet, 20 April 1893, quoted in Clark, p. 71. Since two Mennonites had served previously as inspectors of Mennonite schools, Ewert's position was not a completely new creation, even though his immediate predecessor had been W. Thiem-White.

tested the constitutionality of the 1890 School Act in the courts, contending that Ottawa had guaranteed their school rights in the Manitoba Act of 1870. While this was in process, other efforts to solve the problem were undertaken. In 1893 there was some hope that the Manitoba legislature would take action "towards placing the French on a par with the Germans (Menonites) [sic] in the matter of a normal school."¹⁰

A major issue in the conflict was that of language, though the Act of 1890 did not specify a language of instruction. Arguing before the federal cabinet of Prime Minister Mackenzie Bowell in 1895, Dalton McCarthy argued the case for the Manitoba government:

There were 15,000 Mennonites, speaking their own tongue, demanding a separate system of schools, and as far as I can see, with just as much right to have the public money appropriated to their schools as the French. . . . The desire of the provincial legislature was to do away with illiteracy among the people, to make the people Manitobans and Canadians, not French or Mennonites, not Poles or Polish Jews.¹¹

When the courts upheld the Manitoba government, and the federal Conservatives did not remain in power long enough to pass remedial legislation, the Manitoba school question was solved by a compromise worked out between Premier Greenway

¹⁰ John Schultz, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba to Prime Minister John Thompson, 28 December 1893, quoted in Margaret Scott MacGregor, Some Letters from Archbishop Taché on the Manitoba School Question (Toronto: By the author, 1967), p. 47.

¹¹ Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1895, no. 20; quoted in Clark, p. 148.

and the new Liberal government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The key language issue was dealt with in such a way that rural schools in which ten or more pupils spoke a language other than English were permitted to be taught in that language and English upon a bilingual system. "The language clause was framed in general terms by the provincial authorities in order to make it apply to the German Mennonites as well as to the French Catholics."¹² This revised legislation of 1897 was acceptable to those Mennonites interested in the public school movement since it allowed them the continued use of German in their schools. Those Mennonites who had in principle stayed with the private schools were allowed to continue them unmolested.

2. Higher Education: Alliance of Church and State

Wilhelm Rempel, inspector of Mennonite schools from 1884 to 1888, soon discovered that the level of teacher preparation in the Mennonite communities was far from adequate. In the fall of 1885 he met with other progressive Mennonite educators and the leadership of the West Reserve Bergthal church to discuss ways and means of improving education generally and instruction in English particularly in the

¹² Oscar Douglas Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, ed., with an Introduction by David M. L. Farr, Carleton Library #22, 2 vols. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), 2:8.

Mennonite schools.¹³ No decision was reached but by the fall of 1888 an appointed committee was at work to draw up a constitution for a Mennonite teacher training school. Bishop Johann Funk of the West Reserve Bergthaler church supported this move but soon found that the majority of his membership did not. Nevertheless, a School Society was organized in February 1889. It proceeded to erect a three-storey school building in Gretna and to hire William Rempel as teacher to begin instruction in September.¹⁴

When Rempel resigned after one year of teaching, the school was forced to close. The Society then negotiated an agreement with the Manitoba government under which the next teacher of the school would also be appointed inspector of Mennonite schools for the Department of Education. This would reduce costs to the Society while avoiding outright government support of their school.¹⁵ Thus it was that Dr. George Bryce, a member of the Advisory Board of the Department of Education, went to Kansas in 1890 to recruit H. H. Ewert for this two-fold task. Ewert's meeting with the Education Minister, Clifford Sifton, convinced him of the government's goodwill toward the Mennonites and of its broad

¹³ Gerbrandt, p. 254.

¹⁴ Schaefer, Ewert, p. 45; Gerbrandt, p. 255.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 256; Schaefer, Ewert, p. 47.

tolerance toward the use of the German language.¹⁶ Thus, he began his joint appointment as teacher for the Mennonite School Society and inspector for the Department of Education in September of 1891. Connected with the latter appointment was the task of organizing public school districts in the Mennonite communities. For the next twelve years Ewert functioned in this dual capacity.

From the side of the Society this alliance with the state apparently presented no difficulty. Its intentions and that of the government were so similar that a harmonious working relationship was anticipated.¹⁷ But the larger Mennonite community felt quite differently. Bishop Funk, who supported the Society, now found his leadership restricted to a very small minority of the West Reserve Bergthaler church. The majority, who opposed the Society and its educational goals, remained with the East Reserve bishop, David Stoesz, who in 1893 supervised the election of a second West Reserve bishop, Abraham Doerksen. Since Doerksen resided in the village of Sommerfeld, this new church body came to be known as the Sommerfelder church.¹⁸ The large Reinlaender church on the West Reserve under the leadership of Bishop Johann Wiebe continued to remain aloof both from the new normal school and

¹⁶ Schaefer, Ewert, p. 49; Gerbrandt, p. 257.

¹⁷ Schaefer, Ewert, p. 47.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 56; Gerbrandt, p. 90.

from the public system as such. This was also the case in the East Reserve Chortitzer church under the leadership of Bishop Stoesz.¹⁹

Ewert remained principal of the school in Gretna until his death in 1934. During these years he made it into a major source of teachers for the many elementary schools in Mennonite districts in southern Manitoba and later on in Saskatchewan. These teachers helped many communities to make the transition from private to district school.²⁰

Opposition to Ewert's work came not only from those church groups which opposed district schools in principle, but also from within the supporting constituency of the Society. Some of his opponents supported the Conservative party in the election of 1903 in return for Ewert's dismissal from his post as inspector.²¹ This brought to the surface a growing dispute

¹⁹ Gerhard Wiebe, p. 76, lamented the fact that only these three bishops (Stoesz, Doerksen and Johann Wiebe) and their ministers opposed the Gretna teacher training institute and the district schools for which it was preparing teachers. "Diese Schulen und ihre Gruender stammen nicht von Bethlehem, wo die drei Koenige bei der Krippe knieten und beteten, das Kindlein Jesu an, sondern sie stammen von Babylon, d.h. sie schaffen Verwirrung." He was particularly upset "dass die Hauptschule in dem Staedchen Sittsamkeit von der Regierung bestaetigt wird." Ibid., p. 82.

²⁰ See e.g. Mitarbeiter, January 1907, pp. 28-29, for a list of 34 schools in Manitoba and 4 in Saskatchewan served by graduates of the Gretna school.

²¹ Schaefer, Ewert, p. 59; Gerbrandt, p. 259; Manitoba Free Press, (hereafter MFP), 6 February 1913, p. 3: "The Roblin government dismissed Ewert, hoping to curry favour politically with the large unprogressive majority among the Mennonites" who disliked Ewert's promoting of the public schools.

within the Society, and the need for a new building in Gretna provided the opportunity for this division to take concrete forms. Between 1905 and 1908 a series of actions were taken which resulted in the Society moving its school to Altona, where it retained the name Mennonite Educational Institute. A new society continued the school in Gretna under a new name, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, with Ewert as principal.²²

The small part of the Mennonite constituency interested in supporting higher education had already had difficulty maintaining one school in Gretna, especially since 1903 when its principal no longer received the inspector's salary. When the Altona school opened in the fall of 1908 there were two such schools to support. In those circumstances John Hiebert, business manager of the Altona school, in November of 1909 accepted a Manitoba government appointment as "organizer" of public schools among Mennonites. Since this was an official function of the Mennonite school inspector, J. M. Friesen, Hiebert's appointment was seen as a purely political one. His salary of hundred dollars a month went entirely for the upkeep of the Altona institute.²³ The following year J. I. Baergen of Plum Coulee, a member of the Gretna association,

²²Gerbrandt, pp. 259-74, gives a comprehensive summary of this unfortunate division.

²³MFP, 8 February 1913, p. 3; Gerbrandt, p. 268.

received Hiebert's appointment and salary, this money going into the treasury of the Gretna institute. While both arrangements lasted only a year, they represented a kind of politicized government support with which no Mennonite group could be at ease.

3. School Developments: 1890-1916

When Ewert took over as inspector of Mennonite schools in 1891 there were eight Mennonite district schools, including the six Kleine Gemeinde schools on the East Reserve and at Scratching River. During the twelve years of his inspectorate, he was involved in the "extremely delicate task . . . of persuading a people for the most part strongly averse from the idea of public schools to the establishment of such schools."²⁴ In this task there was steady progress, as indicated in table 3 which shows a total of forty-one district schools at the end of Ewert's term.²⁵ The fact that the Manitoba School Act permitted religious instruction for one-half hour each day was a great help. By 1902 the Bergthaler church, which Ewert had joined, together with the Mennonite Brethren and the Sommerfelder church had developed a curriculum for religious instruction in the public schools. The

²⁴MFP, 6 February 1913, p. 3.

²⁵Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, 1903, no. 2, "Report of the Department of Education for the year ending December 31, 1902," p. 598.

TABLE 3
 NUMBER OF MENNONITE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
 1891-1902

Year	Number	Year	Number
1891	8	1897	30
1892	11	1898	32
1893	19	1899	34
1894	21	1900	35*
1895	24	1901	39
1896	27	1902	41

SOURCE: Compiled from H. H. Ewert's annual reports in Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, 1892-1903, "Report of the Department of Education."

*Two new districts were added during 1900, but one former school reverted to private status.

churches also appointed their own inspectors to see that this religious instruction was carried out properly.²⁶

Ewert's dismissal as inspector in 1903 was a blow to the Mennonite School Society and to supporters of the public schools.²⁷ His immediate successors in the inspectorship,

²⁶ Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, 1893-1926, pp. 61, 76; 4 August 1902, 10 September 1904; CMCA, XII, vol. 716. Idem, Brotherhood, Minutes, 1901-34, 4 December 1902, *ibid.*, vol. 715.

²⁷ Schaefer, Ewert, p. 65.

The Bergthaler church leaders decided to make a joint representation with Mennonite Brethren representatives to the provincial government about Ewert's firing. Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, p. 69, 14 September 1903, CMCA, XII, vol 716.

Henry Graff (1904-1905) and J. M. Friesen (1906-1909) were not nearly as successful in this cause.²⁸

A particularly disturbing event during the inspectorate of the latter was the announcement made in Winnipeg in September 1906 that all Manitoba public schools were to fly the Union Jack. Speaking at a meeting of young Conservatives, Premier Roblin said: "I think the man who comes from a foreign country in order to benefit his circumstances, and who objects to perpetuating the glories of our flag and declines to have his children infused with British patriotism, is a man that is undesirable."²⁹ The flag-flying policy was to go into effect on 1 January 1907, but this date had to be postponed to 24 May due to the difficulty of securing flagpoles for all the schools.³⁰

H. H. Ewert, who in addition to being principal of the Gretna school also served as editor of a Mennonite church paper, Der Mitarbeiter, responded to Roblin's announcement in the November 1906 issue. He feared that the daily flying of the flag would awaken a militaristic spirit in the young

²⁸ See their annual reports in "Report of the Department of Education" for 1904-1909. Friesen's first report, Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, 1907, no. 6, p. 390, is wrongly ascribed to A. M. Friesen. The list of inspectors of Mennonite schools in Gedenkfeier, p. 85, perpetuates the error.

²⁹ Canadian Annual Review, 1906, p. 448.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 449.

people and thus create a conflict with the Mennonite confession of nonresistance. He asked other ministers and teachers to give their views regarding this issue.³¹ Bishop Peter Toews of the Holdemann church shared Ewert's concern, but feared that noncompliance could be understood as a violation of the law. He therefore expressed his preference for private schools.³²

The East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde church held a brotherhood meeting about this issue in December of 1906. It wondered whether it was possible for a person to claim allegiance to the flag of Christ and at the same time also to the flag of this world. Would flying the national flag over the church school not represent being "unequally yoked with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:15)? The Kleine Gemeinde people feared that it would not remain with the flag; that would only be the first step in a gradual loss of nonresistance. The church therefore decided that if the government would strictly enforce the law, they would be inclined to withdraw while that way still remained open for them.³³

A Saskatchewan Mennonite leader advocated a mediating

³¹Mitarbeiter, November 1906, pp. 12-13. Inspector J. M. Friesen expressed almost the same concerns in his 1907 report. Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, 1908, no. 8, pp. 498-99.

³²Aelt. Peter Toews, Kleefeld, Mitarbeiter, December 1906, pp. 17-18.

³³Aelt. Peter R. Dueck, Steinbach, *ibid.*, p. 18.

position. He had seen the flag at public schools in Kansas for years and felt that it did not present a real threat to the Mennonite conscience, provided the inner loyalty to the flag of Christ was strong.³⁴ Editor Ewert however, continued to call for a clear position. The flag for him was the proud symbol of military honour. True Christians should show their love for the fatherland by prayers and intercessions for the king and all others in high positions according to 1 Timothy 2:1-2.³⁵

The Bergthaler leaders decided in a meeting in late December 1906, that they could not in good conscience obey this law. They communicated this decision to Premier Roblin, drawing attention to the Privilegium they had received from Ottawa in 1873, and asking to be exempted from the flag policy.³⁶ The government responded by assuring the Mennonites that it did not intend to force anything on them which was against their conscience and Privilegium.³⁷ That merely meant that they were free to relinquish the government subsidy if they chose not to fly the flag.

In late 1907 the issue was still unresolved. The Berg-

³⁴ Johann Gerbrandt, Nordstern Church, Humboldt, Saskatchewan, *ibid.*, February 1907, pp. 36-37.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³⁶ Jacob Hoepfner, *ibid.*, January 1907, pp. 29-30. The letter to Premier Roblin was dated 22 December 1906.

³⁷ Johann M. Friesen, secretary, Bergthaler Prediger-konferenz, *ibid.*, March 1907.

thaler church had resolved to organize a delegation to go to Winnipeg. Bishop Toews had provided Premier Roblin with a copy of the Mennonite Privilegium at the latter's request. And editor Ewert had continued his campaign with articles like: "After the flags come guns."³⁸ A delegation representing the Bergthaler, Kleine Gemeinde and Holdeman churches had an audience with government ministers on 30 December and presented their petition.³⁹ The government's response came in a speech in the Legislature by Education Minister Coldwell and reached the Mennonites through press reports. The flag law applied to them just as it did for any other citizens and must be obeyed by all schools receiving government grants.⁴⁰

Eleven district schools, including all the Kleine Gemeinde ones, reverted to private status over the compulsory flag-flying issue in 1907.⁴¹ The Bergthaler found some comfort in the government's explanation that in the British tra-

³⁸ Bergthaler Church, Brotherhood, Minutes, 11-13 November 1907, CMCA, XII, vol. 715. Mitarbeiter, November 1907, pp. 9-10; December 1907, pp. 20, 23.

³⁹ Ibid., January 1908, pp. 25-27..

⁴⁰ Ibid., February 1908, pp. 36-37.

⁴¹ I. I. Friesen, pp. 107-8; Gedenkfeier, p. 89; MFP, 26 November 1910, p. 44. They included: Rosenort #60, Rosenhof #61 (RM of Morris); Blumenort #62, Gruenfeld #63, Blumenhof #64, Steinbach #65, Hochstadt #66, Greenland, Neuanlage (RM of Hanover); and Houston #214, Neu Kronsthal #1137 (RM of Rhineland).

dition the flag was not primarily a military symbol.⁴² Those Mennonite groups which had been slow to accept public schools thus far, now became even more reluctant. "They feared that this was just the thin end of the wedge which might . . . result ultimately in the abrogation of the privilege they had received when they came to Manitoba, viz. exemption from military service."⁴³ The Manitoba Free Press, in reviewing this incident a few years later, remarked that with "the substitution of a grain of wisdom for the pigheadedness, blusteringly manifested in that connection, these schools might have been saved to the national system."⁴⁴

When A. A. Weidenhammer took over as inspector in January of 1910, the number of Mennonite district schools was thirty-seven compared to forty-one at the time of Ewert's dismissal seven years earlier. While Weidenhammer was not a Mennonite, he spoke German fluently and was at least as acceptable to the conservative Mennonite groups as Ewert had been. During the first three years of his inspectorate the number of Mennonite

⁴²Not like "Ich bin ein Preusse, kennt ihr meine Farben?" or "Die Wacht am Rhein," wrote editor Ewert, Mitarbeiter, February 1908, p. 37.

⁴³Willows, p. 95. I. I. Friesen, p. 107, uses almost the same words, but adds that the Mennonites who thought this way "misunderstood the purpose of this Act."

⁴⁴MFP, 26 November 1910, p. 44.

district schools increased from thirty-seven to sixty-three.⁴⁵ By 1915 enrollment in Manitoba's German bilingual schools totalled over 2,800. This included nearly 2,600 Mennonite children compared with just over 1,100 of them in district schools at the end of 1908. There were however, still at least a thousand children in the Mennonite private schools who were getting little or no English teaching.⁴⁶ This included all of the Reinlaender schools on the West Reserve and all or most of the Chortitzer schools on the East Reserve.

During the 1890s, when he was still Inspector of Mennonite schools, Ewert organized local teacher conferences.⁴⁷ These monthly meetings of the teachers of district schools served as opportunities for in-service training. In 1900 a larger organization, "the German-English Teachers' Association of Southern Manitoba," was founded.⁴⁸ Teachers of both district and private schools were invited to its meetings, which were usually addressed by invited representatives of the

⁴⁵ Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, 1914, no. 2, "Report of the Department of Education for the year ending June 30, 1913," p. 176.

⁴⁶ MPP, 21 January 1916, p. 1; Willows, p. 96. Bergen, "A historical study of education," p. 97, lists the 28 district schools in Rhineland Municipality, 1884-1926, giving the date of founding of each.

⁴⁷ Schaefer, Ewert, p. 80.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 82. In later years reports of its annual meetings were carried in the Mitarbeiter.

Department of Education. While this Association primarily served the function of professional improvement of teachers, it included among its objectives "the discussion of the laws governing the educational affairs of the Province and to recommend desirable legislation."⁴⁹

In 1913 Ewert took the initiative in organizing a Mennonite Schulkommission in which the Bergthaler, Sommerfelder, and Mennonite Brethren churches of the West Reserve participated.⁵⁰ While its main purpose was that of encouraging the instruction of German and religion in all of the Mennonite district and private schools, it was also given the special task of negotiating with the government authorities whenever Mennonite school freedom was threatened. Early in 1914 the Commission sent a delegation to Winnipeg to present a brief to Premier Roblin asking the government to recognize it as the official spokesman for the Mennonite communities.⁵¹

A school attendance Act, passed by the Manitoba Government in early 1914 raised some concern for Ewert and the

⁴⁹ Constitution of "The German-English Teachers Association of Southern Manitoba," Object, 2, d., CMCA, XX-1, vol. 544, #47.

⁵⁰ Schaefer, Ewert, p. 85; Mennonite Encyclopedia, s.v. "Manitoba School Commission," by Cornelius Krahn. A 9-point list of duties of the Commission is found in CMCA, XX-1, vol. 544, #47.

⁵¹ Mitarbeiter, March 1914, pp. 43-45 reports on the delegation of 18 February and publishes the brief in German translation.

Mennonites.⁵² But Inspector Weidenhammer, who had by this time won the confidence of a good number of Mennonites, placed himself squarely behind any efforts the government would undertake towards compulsion.⁵³ By late 1915 it was becoming increasingly clear that the Manitoba Government would not only enforce compulsory school attendance but would make even more drastic changes in its school legislation.

The pattern of Mennonite school development in Saskatchewan was similar to that in Manitoba except that everything took place ten or fifteen years later. Mennonite immigrants coming to the Rosthern area either directly from Europe or from the American Mennonite settlements during the 1890s for the most part had no reservations about accepting public schools. Bergthal Mennonites arriving from Manitoba were somewhat less ready to do so but found it difficult to organize and support private schools since they did not develop block settlements. The Reinlaender Mennonites, who obtained a Reserve in the Hague area in 1894, erected only private schools and did not permit their members to send their children to district schools. This was also the case on the Reinlaender Reserve founded south of Swift Current in 1905.⁵⁴ Those Mennonites who had accepted

⁵² Ibid., May 1914, pp. 62-63.

⁵³ A. Weidenhammer to Valentine Winkler, MLA, 17 May 1915, PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 2: Should the new Minister of Education "deem it advisable to enact a Compulsory Education law, my support is his through thick and thin."

⁵⁴ Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 350.

the public schools founded a German-English academy at Rosthern in 1905 to train bilingual teachers. Graduates of this academy would also be capable of teaching the religious curriculum in their district schools. The principal and driving force behind the academy was David Toews, a Russian Mennonite who had emigrated to Kansas in 1884 and had come north to Canada in 1893. Toews had studied under H. H. Ewert in Kansas and had taught for four years in Mennonite district schools in Manitoba under Ewert's inspectorship.⁵⁵

By the early 1900s tension was developing, especially in the railroad towns such as Hague and Rosthern, over the school issue. Reinlaender church members who sent their children to district schools were excommunicated. The accompanying shunning or avoidance had severe social and sometimes economic effects. By the summer of 1908 the Saskatchewan government had received a sufficient number of complaints about this situation to begin to look for a remedy. In August Premier Scott instructed his attorney general:

The time has come for the government to act in the matter of the pressure placed by a certain section of the Mennonite church upon certain of their adherents whose only offence is their willingness to obey the laws of the province, particularly in relation to education. I beg that you will look into the law on the matter as early as possible and let me know what action is possible for us to take.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 351; Epp, Education with a Plus, pp. 13-14.

⁵⁶ T. W. Scott to W. F. A. Turgeon, 20 August 1908, SAB, M 1, IV-18d, p. 34536.

By September, following discussions with Rosthern MLA Gerhard Ens and some of the excommunicated Reinlaender Mennonite spokesmen, the Premier was ready with two concrete suggestions:

- (1) to inform the Mennonite heads that unless they leave free those of their people who wish to use the public school we will compel the formation of public school districts wherever there are enough children of school age and will force the payment of taxes; (2) to inform them also that we will deprive them of the legal right to solemnize marriages.⁵⁷

This action, it was believed, would convince the Mennonite heads to restore the rights of the church to excommunicated members.

When this threat did not produce any immediate results, the government decided to investigate the situation more thoroughly. A Commission of Inquiry headed by Frank Ford, Deputy Attorney General, and D. P. McColl, Deputy Commissioner of Education held hearings at the school house at Warman on 28 and 29 December 1908 producing some ninety pages of evidence, much of it from excommunicated members of the Reinlaender church. In early January the Commission interviewed a deputation consisting of spokesmen for the church itself.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Scott to Education Minister J. A. Calder, 2 September 1908, *ibid.*, p. 34537.

⁵⁸ The 100 pages of evidence of the Ford-McColl Commission of Inquiry are in SAB, RC M 28 and also in M 5, 6(1). The Reinlaender deputation which met with the Commission on 4 January 1909 consisted of John P. Wall, Hague, Rev. John Wall, Hague, and Mr. Overseer Klassen.

The threat posed by these new government initiatives led the Reinlaender church to hold brotherhood meetings, both in Saskatchewan and in Manitoba, to determine its further course of action. One of the excommunicated members, hardware merchant I. P. Friesen of Rosthern, reported these church meetings to Premier Scott and Education Minister Calder. The church had decided to be more strict in enforcing its rules among their members, he said, adding that the economic boycott even in Rosthern was getting to be quite strong. "Unless the Government takes prompt action, there are only two ways open to me either to leave the Country or join the Church again, and keep my Children from attending decent Schools."⁵⁹

The government had concluded however, that district schools established by force in the Reinlaender districts would not achieve their purpose. The 1908 Commission report had convinced them that "even if it were possible to establish public schools among these people they would not send their children as their religious beliefs prohibit them from doing so."⁶⁰ The bishops and other leaders of this group of Mennonites claimed the support of the 1873 Privilegium for their schools. A "strong discussion on the matter" be-

⁵⁹ I. P. Friesen to Hon. Walter Scott, 20 January 1909, *ibid.*, M 1, IV-18d, p. 34543; Friesen to J. A. Calder, Minister of Education, 20 January 1909, M 2, 18, p. 2892.

⁶⁰ J. A. Calder to Mr. Barrett, 3 October 1910, *ibid.*, 17, p. 2801.

tween the Mennonite bishop of Hague and a representative from the Department of Education in 1910 resulted in some fifteen private Mennonite schools continuing to operate as before.⁶¹

On the Swift Current Reserve to the south only two public school districts had been organized by 1915. In Dunelm, which included only three square miles of reserve land, the decision to organize passed by a majority of only one. The school district of Wymark, with the railroad town of that name as its centre, was organized a little later. It could obtain a majority for organizing only by eliminating the southeast section on which the village of Schoenfeld was located.⁶²

By the fall of 1915 Mennonite parents who failed to send their children to an available public school were beginning to be fined.⁶³ In spite of repeated fines, the Mennonites had no intention of sending their children to public schools, claiming exemption under the 1873 Privilegium. Premier Scott was coming to the conclusion that in order to remedy the prob-

⁶¹H. V. Meyer, "Report re Organization work in Mennonite Districts, in German Parochial Schools and in Hungarian and Roumanian Settlements," *ibid.*, M 12, II-77, pp. 11444-50; also in M 4, I-50, pp. 17329-35.

⁶²*Ibid.*, M 12, II-77, p. 11445. See map 10, p. 231.

⁶³W. B. Bashford, MLA, Rosthern, to W. Scott, Premier and Minister of Education, 13 September 1915, *ibid.*, M 1, IV-18d, pp. 34645-46. Ratepayers of Hochfeld were sending their children to the private school instead of to the Heidelberg public school to which they belonged.

lem of education in the Mennonite communities there would

have to be a revolutionary change made in the school law and a different law enacted from any up to date existing in any of the provinces of Canada. Under existing law the Mennonite private schools cannot be suppressed.

. . . . The root of this trouble lies in the Mennonite church. Jail may prove to be the only necessary remedy -- not for the delinquent parents but for the heads of the church who coerce parents.⁶⁴

In the Mennonite communities outside of the two Reserves meanwhile, both the Mennonite leaders and the government felt that they were making progress. Bishop Toews had a successful interview with Attorney General Turgeon regarding the use of German in the Mennonite district schools.⁶⁵ Inspector Meyer reported substantial improvements in the Mennonite districts west and south of Rosthern and in the Waldeck, Rush Lake, and Herbert areas near Swift Current.⁶⁶

Thus, in spite of some inevitable tensions, Mennonite relations with the two provincial governments on the matter of education were generally positive as the prolonged war in Europe began to weaken Canadian toleration for the non-British elements in its midst.

⁶⁴Scott to J. W. Brady, 8 September 1915, *ibid.*, p. 34643.

⁶⁵David Toews, report in Mitarbeiter, February 1914, pp. 36-37.

⁶⁶H. V. Meyer, "Report," SAB, M 12, II-77, p. 11445.

4. The "National Schools": 1916

When the Conservative government of Sir Rodmund Roblin was replaced by the Liberals under T. C. Norris in Manitoba in August 1915, some changes in policy were expected. In Saskatchewan the Liberals remained in power but W. M. Martin succeeded Walter Scott as premier in 1916. In spite of these changes, both of the new administrations had reason to hope that their progress in introducing district schools in Mennonite areas would continue. However, the Great War interfered with those hopes.

This "peaceful penetration" of the sect by the "world" might have continued indefinitely had a crisis not been precipitated by Canadian educational authorities, particularly in the province of Manitoba. The Great War brought a violent reaction against all things German, and military organizations and the press brought pressure to bear on the provincial government to suppress the teaching of the German language.⁶⁷

In Manitoba the Bergthaler and Sommerfelder leaders were prepared to deal with the new Liberal government. Valentine Winkler, whom they had helped to elect to the Manitoba legislature, was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Immigration in the new cabinet. Before the end of 1915 members of the Schulkommission were in conversation with him about

⁶⁷ Dawson, pp. 103-4. C. B. Sissons, "The Mennonites of Western Canada," The New Outlook, 7 March 1928, makes a similar observation: "When the war spirit got hold of the West, and to poor equipment were added the dual sins of pacifism and German speech, the patience of public and officials could no longer stand the strain. Recourse was had to compulsion." Quoted in Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 180, n. 19.

pending changes in the Manitoba School Act.⁶⁸ The Commission's responsibilities included: "9. to attempt to exert an influence on political parties and candidates for election, so that they would not support educational legislation unfavourable to us."⁶⁹

In keeping with this clause, members of the Commission met with Winkler at Rosenfeld on 7 January 1916 and presented him with an eleven-point petition, which read in part:

1. The majority of the Mennonites have so far put their confidence in the Liberal party and have uninterruptedly sent a Liberal representative to the legislature. They would not like to be betrayed by the Liberal party.
2. If they were betrayed, they would feel so offended that they would cease to support the Liberal government.
3. The Liberal party has no mandate from the people to abolish bilingual schools. They said in their platform only that they would see to the efficient teaching of the English language.⁷⁰

In order to make the bilingual school law more readily enforceable, the delegation recommended that a majority of the ratepayers of a district be required to request instruction in a language other than English, rather than the present law in which ten non-English children in a district were sufficient grounds for demanding bilingual education. The

⁶⁸Willows, pp. 96-97. V. Winkler to John D. Klassen, Secretary, Mennonite School Commission, Rosenfeld, 30 December 1915, PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 3.

⁶⁹CMCA, XX-1, vol. 544, #47.

⁷⁰Ibid. The report of this meeting in the Mitarbeiter, January 1916, pp. 2-4, gives the 11-point petition in German translation.

brief ended by requesting that the School Commission be informed if and when a change in the present education law was contemplated. It would then want to send a delegation to Winnipeg to speak for Mennonite interest.

Winkler suggested that if the bilingual clause of the present school Act were changed, it should require a seventy-five percent vote of the ratepayers before bilingual instruction be granted. The Commission however, felt that in some of the railway towns it would not be able to command three-fourths of the vote and so urged that a simple majority be decisive. It also pressed for the opportunity of presenting a brief to the government "before the bill to be put before the House has received shape or form."⁷¹ Winkler arranged for a meeting with members of the Norris government for February 15.⁷² The Commission appointed as its members in the delegation H. J. Friesen and J. D. Klassen of the Sommerfelder church, B. Loewen and Benjamin Ewert of the Bergthaler church and J. M. Elias of the Mennonite Brethren. At Winkler's request H. H. Ewert was also included. When the East Reserve Mennonites heard of these plans they sent representatives to join it in Winnipeg. The Chortitzer and the Kleine Gemeinde churches were represented by their bishops, Johann

⁷¹ Benjamin Ewert to Hon. V. Winkler, 10 January 1916, PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 3.

⁷² Winkler to John D. Klassen, Secretary, Mennonite School Commission, 7 February 1916, *ibid.*, box 4.

K. Dyck and Peter R. Dyck. The smaller Holdeman and Bruder-thaler churches were represented by the ministers Jacob T. Wiebe and Peter Schmidt. The total delegation, numbering some twenty to twenty-five people, met with Premier Norris, Education Minister Thornton, Provincial Treasurer Ed. Brown, and Agriculture and Immigration Minister Winkler.⁷³

Briefs on behalf of the Mennonite delegation were presented by the two Ewert brothers. H. H. Ewert began with a general defence of bilingual instruction but moved quickly to the particular concerns of the delegation. Mennonite parents felt a profound responsibility to God for the education of their children, he argued, and would never admit the right of the state to make substantial demands in this area. He then cited clause 10 of the Mennonite Privilegium.

Although there was some question about the competence of the Dominion government to give this promise, Ewert argued that the government in Ottawa had clearly considered itself authorized to do so.

We would not want to believe for a moment that it was trying to be deceptive. It would be a grave disappointment to the Mennonites if the provincial government would now choose to ignore this promise and consider it "a mere scrap of paper."

With respect to the German language, Ewert argued that it had become ~~very~~ intimately connected with religion among the

⁷³ Mitarbeiter, March 1916, pp. 1-4; Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 356.

Mennonites and was now considered a necessary means to maintain the faith. He ended by pleading for patience on the part of the government, pointing to the two teacher training institutes operated by the Mennonites at their own expense as a hopeful sign.⁷⁴

Benjamin Ewert began by pointing out that the majority of schools among the Mennonite people were still private schools. The groups maintaining these felt that they could discharge their Christian obligation to their children only by maintaining complete control over education. Should they no longer be left "unmolested and unrestricted" in this, as had been promised by the Dominion government, they would emigrate. He noted that attendance at private schools was still permitted under the school attendance Act recently passed, and expressed the hope that further changes in the Manitoba School Act would leave the private schools' open.⁷⁵

The government members assured them that their private schools would remain unmolested, but gave no assurance on the bilingual public schools.⁷⁶ There were other signs that the latter would be abolished. The Manitoba Free Press and other

⁷⁴The text of Ewert's brief is given in German in Mitarbeiter, March 1916, pp. 4-6; April 1916, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁵B. Ewert's brief in English and German is found in CMCA, XX-I, vol. 544, #47. See also Mitarbeiter, April 1916, pp. 2-3.

⁷⁶Ibid., March 1916, p. 3.

leading newspapers were campaigning for this.⁷⁷ Many organizations passed resolutions asking for it and sent delegations to the government. Most members of the Legislative Assembly were in favour of abolishing the bilingual schools.⁷⁸ The bill to repeal the bilingual clause of 1897 (section 258) was passed on 29 February 1916 and came into force 21 August.⁷⁹

The Reinlaender and Chortitzer churches had opposed district schools so steadfastly that not a single one had appeared in their midst thus far.⁸⁰ These groups therefore remained initially unaffected by the legislation of 1916. Since the delegation in February had been assured that the government would leave the private schools unmolested, and apparently on the specific advice of the Minister of Agriculture and Immigration, the other groups now made plans to change their district schools into private ones.⁸¹ A meeting

⁷⁷Morton, p. 351. MFP editorials of 22, 24 and 25 January 1916 were especially blunt in demanding abolition of the bilingual clause. "It does not err on the side of tolerance nor on the side of persecution. It only errs on the side of impracticableness and utter absurdity." 22 January, p. 15. "There are no rights, legal, vested, or constitutional, beyond those created by the province itself by its legislation of 1897. The province gave these rights and if it sees fit, can take them away." 24 January, p. 7.

⁷⁸H. H. Ewert, editorial, Mitarbeiter, February 1916; pp. 4-5.

⁷⁹Canadian Annual Review, 1916, pp. 673-74, 676. Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Statutes, 1916, 6 Geo. V, ch. 88, assented to 10 March 1916. A revised school attendance act, *ibid.*, ch. 97, received assent on the same date.

⁸⁰Mitarbeiter, May 1916, p. 1.

⁸¹Willows, pp. 96-97.

of Sommerfelder and Bergthaler leaders unanimously agreed in May of 1916 to recommend to their congregations that all district schools be changed to private status.⁸² The reasons for this move, in addition to the elimination of German as language of instruction, were decreasing Mennonite influence in district schools, the removal of the normal school course from Gretna to Morden and finally to Manitou, and the replacement of the Mennonite inspector by a non-Mennonite German-speaking one who was now to be replaced by an English one.

The Sommerfelder Bruderschaft (membership ca. 2500) in late May decided almost unanimously to convert all of the district schools in their area into private ones. The Mennonite Brethren were inclined toward private schools, but first wanted to see the curriculum and make plans for financing such a venture.⁸³

The 500-member Bergthaler church at a brotherhood meeting in early June agreed to the recommendation of its leaders, and voted to organize private schools where possible. To finance these schools it agreed to approach the municipal

⁸²The meeting was called at the initiative of the Sommerfelder bishop, Abraham Doerksen. Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, p. 147, 25 April 1916, CMCA, XII, vol. 176. For reports on the proceedings of the 11 May 1916 meeting in Bergfeld, see Mitarbeiter, May 1916, pp. 1-3.

⁸³Mitarbeiter, June 1916, p. 3.

council to see whether school funds could be collected via taxation. It also agreed to use the interest on deposits in the Waisenamt for this purpose.⁸⁴ A second meeting of the leadership of the Bergthaler, Sommerfelder, and Mennonite Brethren churches of the West Reserve appointed a committee to work out a curriculum for the private schools and asked Bishop Abraham Doerksen to report their move to the Manitoba government.⁸⁵

Ewert defended this reversion to private schools in an editorial in the Mitarbeiter. It should not be seen as a rejection of the English language, nor as an act of disloyalty. English was to be given ample consideration in these private schools and the entire program of education was to be such as to satisfy the government. This action was also not to be seen as a protest to embarrass the government. The churches had modestly and openly stated their case before the government, indicating that instruction in the mother tongue, or more properly "church language," was essential. When this had not succeeded the Mennonites had not resorted to a press campaign or to political pressure but had simply proceeded to organize their own schools in such a way as they owed it to

⁸⁴ Bergthaler Church, Brotherhood, Minutes, 5 June 1916, CMCA, XII, vol. 715.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 26 June 1916. Mitarbeiter, July 1916, p. 3. MLA Valentine Winkler had already been informed of this move on 6 June 1916 by the Mennonite Brethren representative, P. H. Neufeld. PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 4.

God and their conscience.⁸⁶

The first concrete sign of trouble for the private schools in Manitoba appeared in the inspector's report for the year ending 30 June 1916. Inspector Weidenhammer, who had recently anglicized his name to Willows, included a general survey of the Mennonite private schools in his annual report to the Department of Education. Of the Chortitzer and Reinlaender private schools he wrote: "Not a word of English is taught in them and very little of anything else." His evaluation of the Sommerfelder and Kleine Gemeinde private schools was not quite as negative, but even the best of these "were still a year or two behind the public schools."⁸⁷ But the government did not initiate any action against private schools as yet. In fact, by August ten West Reserve districts were ready, or almost so, to open the new school year as private schools.⁸⁸ And by October the new curriculum for private schools was coming off the press.⁸⁹ Those bilingual Mennonite district schools which had not reverted back to private status in the fall of 1916 continued to teach German

⁸⁶ Ewert, Mitarbeiter, July 1916, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁷ Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, 1917, no. 2, "Report of the Department of Education for the year ending June 30, 1916," p. 369. In his M.A. thesis, p. 90, written 8 years later, Willows is much less critical.

⁸⁸ Mitarbeiter, August 1916, pp. 6-7. They were: Edenthal, Halbstadt, Blumenthal, Reichenbach, Rosenheim, Kronsweide, Gruenfarm, Edward, Rosefarm, and Steinreich.

⁸⁹ Ibid., October 1916, p. 6.

even though the teaching of a second language in elementary district schools was not permitted under the new law.⁹⁰

In Saskatchewan, agitation for stronger government control over education was spearheaded by the Reverend Dr. Edmund H. Oliver. As principal of the Presbyterian Theological College in Saskatoon and vice-president of the Saskatchewan Public Education League, he wielded considerable influence. His 1915 address on The Country School in non-English speaking communities in Saskatchewan was printed in pamphlet form and given wide circulation. Arguing that it was the primary function of the public school to make the child into "an intelligent and patriotic citizen," and "not to make Mennonites, nor Protestants, nor Catholics, but Canadian citizens,"⁹¹ Oliver decried the fact that many Saskatchewan children, including some eight hundred in thirty-four Mennonite private schools in the Hague and Swift Current reserves, were not receiving such education. Within the Department of Education calmer heads prevailed for the moment. Responding directly to Oliver's campaign, the Deputy Minister of Education in early 1916 urged: "Just at this time when it is easy for any agitator to rouse the prejudices and the passions of people on racial matters it behooves our better men to require

⁹⁰ Ibid., September 1916, p. 4.

⁹¹ Edmund H. Oliver, The Country School in non-English speaking communities in Saskatchewan (Regina: Saskatchewan Public Education League, 1915), pp. 3, 9.

from others calmness, deliberation and foresight."⁹² The Minister of Education, Premier Scott, equally decisively dissociated the government from the Oliver report.⁹³

While there was no strong movement among Saskatchewan Mennonites to change their district schools back to private status, at least one such attempt was made in the Hague area.⁹⁴ By late 1916 the inspector of the Swift Current area, being unable to make any headway in introducing district schools on the Mennonite reserve, began to advocate "a more drastic compulsory system of education."⁹⁵

In both provinces thus, patience was beginning to wear thin in government circles, making a more direct clash with the least cooperative Mennonites inevitable.

5. The "Zwangsschulen": 1918

The Manitoba school legislation of 1916 was not primarily

⁹² Deputy Minister of Education, to A. P. McNab, Minister of Public Works, -29 March 1916, SAB, M 12, II-36, p. 5375. He added: "Those who shout on Saskatchewan platforms about Canadian citizenship being endangered because 800 children in Saskatchewan are being educated in Mennonite schools are hysterical fools." P. 5376.

⁹³ W. Scott, Minister of Education, to H. B. Wiebe, Herbert, 18 February 1916, *ibid.*, M 1, IV-18, p. 34676.

⁹⁴ Reinfeld S.D. passed a resolution to convert its school to private status, but the government did not agree. *Mitarbeiter*, October 1916, p. 6.

⁹⁵ W. S. Cram, Inspector of Schools, to Deputy Minister of Education, 15 December 1916, SAB, M 4, I-54, p. 18835.

directed against bilingual schools in Mennonite school districts. For some time after its enactment therefore, the Norris government "considered the Mennonite schools a rather minor problem."⁹⁶

This external calm brought about a certain amount of laxity within the Mennonite educational system. On the one hand, the church leadership complained that the movement toward more adequate supervision of religious instruction in the Mennonite district schools was slipping. Although the situation had changed somewhat with a number of district schools reverting to private status, nevertheless a number of Mennonite communities were still served by the public school system. In some of the latter schools, religious instruction had ceased leading to what H. H. Ewert called a "Rueckgang ins Heidentum."⁹⁷ On the other hand, the civic leaders deplored the irregular attendance of some children in the district schools in the Mennonite area and petitioned the provincial government to appoint an attendance officer.⁹⁸

By the summer of 1918 this easy relationship between

⁹⁶ Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 183; MFP, 11 May 1920, p. 15.

⁹⁷ Editorial, Mitarbeiter, January 1918, p. 4.

⁹⁸ J. D. Dyck and J. Giesbrecht, Councillors, and J. A. Klassen, Reeve, R.M., of Rhineland; Peter Bueckert, Mayor, Town of Winkler; John Schwartz and J. E. Schwartz, Altona; petition to Hon. Valentine Winkler, 24 February 1918, PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 5. The Municipality solved that problem by appointing its Reeve as School Attendance Officer. Winkler to R. S. Thornton, 13 March 1918, *ibid.*

the Mennonites and the government changed sharply. Education Minister Thornton blamed the Mennonites.

The situation became acute in 1918. Early in that year a campaign was inaugurated to destroy our public school system in the rural districts. Meetings were held, urging the ratepayers to give up the government grants and run the schools as private schools.⁹⁹

To oppose this movement the Department appointed a "special agent" in the person of John Franklin Greenway to serve as official trustee of districts attempting to revert to private school status.¹⁰⁰

The first sign of Mennonite passive resistance to the public school system came from a couple of districts on the western fringe of the Mennonite reserve which in spring of 1918 failed to submit the annual census of school age children. The Minister of Education was thereupon authorized by order-in-council to take this census as provided in section 309 of

⁹⁹Dr. R. S. Thornton, Address to the Legislature of Manitoba, January 30th, 1920 (Winnipeg: Legislation Assembly of Manitoba, n.d.) p. 12, PAM, MG 14, B 36, #45.

MFP, 25 September 1918, p. 11, confirmed this view: "It appears that the leaders of the Mennonite body seizing an opportunity favourable to the assertion and extension of their authority, started a movement . . . to run their schools as private schools when the time came to reopen after the summer vacation."

¹⁰⁰Greenway was appointed Supervisor of School Attendance for the province by order-in-council #25779, 17 March 1916, and served as Assistant Deputy Minister of Education since 1 September 1917. Order-in-council #28546, 30 October 1917, PAM, RG 2, A 1.

the Public Schools Act.¹⁰¹ During the summer of 1918 ten school districts of the Mennonite West Reserve indicated that they planned to operate as private schools in September. In each case Greenway was appointed official trustee and the school continued to operate as a public school.¹⁰² As can be seen from table 4, most of these districts had been erected during or prior to the inspectorate of H. H. Ewert.

¹⁰¹ Order-in-council #29601, 4 June 1918, *ibid.* The districts were Glencross #71 and Wakeham #773, both originally English districts which had since been taken over by Mennonites, and Heabert #1282.

¹⁰² The wording of order-in-council #29748, 5 July 1918, *ibid.*, is as follows: "The Honourable the Minister of Education submits to Council a report setting forth

WHEREAS the trustees of the S.D. of Edenburg Number 330, have notified the Department of Education that the rate-payers of the said District at a special meeting held on the 15th day of June, A.D. 1918, decided by a unanimous vote to have their school henceforth operated as a private school,

AND WHEREAS the trustees of the said district have intimated to the Department that they have resigned as trustees,

AND WHEREAS it is desirable that the public school in the said district be continued in operation under the provisions of the Public Schools Act,

On the Recommendation of the Hon. the Minister, Committee advise

THAT John Franklin Greenway be appointed Official Trustee of the said S.D. of Edenburg #330, as provided in section 269 of the Public Schools Act, this appointment to date from the date passing of the Order-in-Council."

The other orders-in-council listed in table 4 have similar wording.

TABLE 4

MENNONITE DISTRICT SCHOOLS KEPT IN OPERATION

BY ORDER-IN-COUNCIL, MANITOBA, 1918

District and	No.	Year Founded	J. F. Greenway appointed O.T. Date	# of O-in-C
Edenburg	330	1883	5 Jul 1918	29748
Neu Hoffnung	1310	1904	5 Jul 1918	29749
Wakeham	773	1893	16 Jul 1918	29800
Kleinstadt	781	1893	19 Jul 1918	29825
Glencross	71	1878	23 Jul 1918	29841
Steinfeld	1128	1901	30 Jul 1918*	29870
Amsterdam	885	1896	6 Aug 1918	29911
Steinreich	820	1894	6 Aug 1918	29912
Eichenhoff	1591	1911	20 Aug 1918	29970
Edenthal	756	1893	23 Aug 1918	29992

SOURCE: Compiled from PAM, RG 2, A 1.

*The motion for Steinfeld on July 30 was submitted by Acting Minister of Education, J. W. Armstrong. A second minute (#29916) with only slightly different wording, was passed 8 August 1918.

Several of these school districts were in communities of the Bergthaler church. Confronted with this decisive government action, the leadership decided not to do anything further in the matter.¹⁰³ The ratepayers of Wakeham School

¹⁰³Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, 2:171, 5 August 1918, CMCA, XII, vol. 716.

District however, adopted a policy of organized resistance and boycotted the public school when it was kept open in September by the Department of Education through its official trustee.¹⁰⁴ Charges were promptly laid under the school attendance Act and a court session in Morden on 27 September imposed fines on eleven of the offending parents.¹⁰⁵ The defendants based their non-cooperation on the 1873 agreement with the federal government. Deputy Attorney General J. Allen, who conducted the case for the Department, convinced the two magistrates that no officer of the federal government could, in school matters, bind the province, which enjoys full control of education according to the provisions of the British North America Act.

Having successfully reversed the trend toward private schools in the Mennonite communities, the Minister of Education next took action to revive those public schools which had been managed as private schools for varying periods of time. This was accomplished in the case of nineteen districts by appointing Greenway as official trustee by separate orders-in-council during the 1918-1919 school year. Included in this action, as is indicated in table 5, were several schools that had reverted to private status in 1907 in connection with the government's flag-flying policy.

¹⁰⁴ MFP, 25 September 1918, p. 11.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 28 September 1918, p. 2.

TABLE 5

DISCONTINUED MENNONITE DISTRICT SCHOOLS REOPENED

BY ORDER-IN-COUNCIL, MANITOBA, 1918-20

District and	No.	Year Founded	J. F. Greenway appointed O.T. Date	# of O-in-C
Grossweide	786	1893	4 Oct 1918	30174
Neu Bergthal	1594	1911	4 Oct 1918	30175
Alt Bergthal	1296	1904	4 Oct 1918	30176
Kronsweide	1030		18 Oct 1918	30225
Rosefarm	1577	1911	18 Oct 1918	30226
Blumenort	62 ^a	1878	17 Jan 1919	30727
Gruenfeld	63 ^a	1878	17 Jan 1919	30728
Blumenhoff	64 ^a	1878	17 Jan 1919	30729
Neu Kronsthal	1147 ^a	1901	28 Jan 1919	30776
Houston	214 ^a		28 Jan 1919	30777
Schanzenfeld	420		28 Jan 1919	30778
Halbstadt	886	1896	28 Jan 1919	30779
Weidenfeld	988	1898	28 Jan 1919	30780
Reichenbach	1198	1902	28 Jan 1919	30781
Barkfield	1951	1919 ^b	5 Mar 1919	31000
Silberfeld	1590	1911	25 Mar 1919	31139
Gruenthal	1592	1911	25 Mar 1919	31140
Gnadenfeld	1593	1911	25 Mar 1919	31141
Rudnerweide	1752	1914	25 Mar 1919	31142
Hoffnungsort	821	1893 ^c	19 May 1920	34000

SOURCE: . Compiled from PAM, RG 2, 1 A.

NOTES:

^a reverted to private status 1907 in protest of the compulsory flag-flying policy. Houston had operated as a public school 1913-16, reverting to private status a second time when the bilingual clause was abolished. MFP, 17 July 1919, p. 1.

^b Barkfield was a new district.

^c operated as a public school to 30 June 1900.

A total of twenty-nine Mennonite communities had thus been preserved or regained for the public school system.

While that task was still in process, Dr. Thornton was already looking ahead. In his report to the Manitoba Legislature in early 1919 he said:

There will still remain to be dealt with the areas where only private schools have so far existed and we are asking in the Public School act amendments for authority to create public school areas, so that we can proceed to put the public school within reach.¹⁰⁶

Such legislation, if passed, would affect particularly the Reinlaender church communities on the West Reserve and the Chortitzer communities on the East Reserve, both of which had steadfastly resisted the public school movement thus far. The former, with the assistance of the Morden law firm McLeod, Black and Company prepared a ten-page "Memorandum re Mennonite Schools" addressed "To the Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba."¹⁰⁷ This document was prepared for submission to the legislature when Thornton's proposed amendment to the School Act was being considered. The plan failed because the Mennonites did not receive notice

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 12 February 1919, p. 13.

¹⁰⁷ PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 6. The document is dated February 1919. It is reproduced in German in Schmiedehaus, pp. 61-68, and in English translation in Redekop, pp. 245-250.

when to attend.¹⁰⁸

Armed with this new legislation, the Department of Education proceeded to create eleven new public school districts in the Mennonite East Reserve. It did so on the grounds that "no provision has been made for the proper education of the children resident on these lands in accordance with the provisions of 'The Public School Act'."¹⁰⁹ Map 7 shows that these new school districts were located mainly in those portions of Hanover Municipality occupied by the Chortitzer church people.

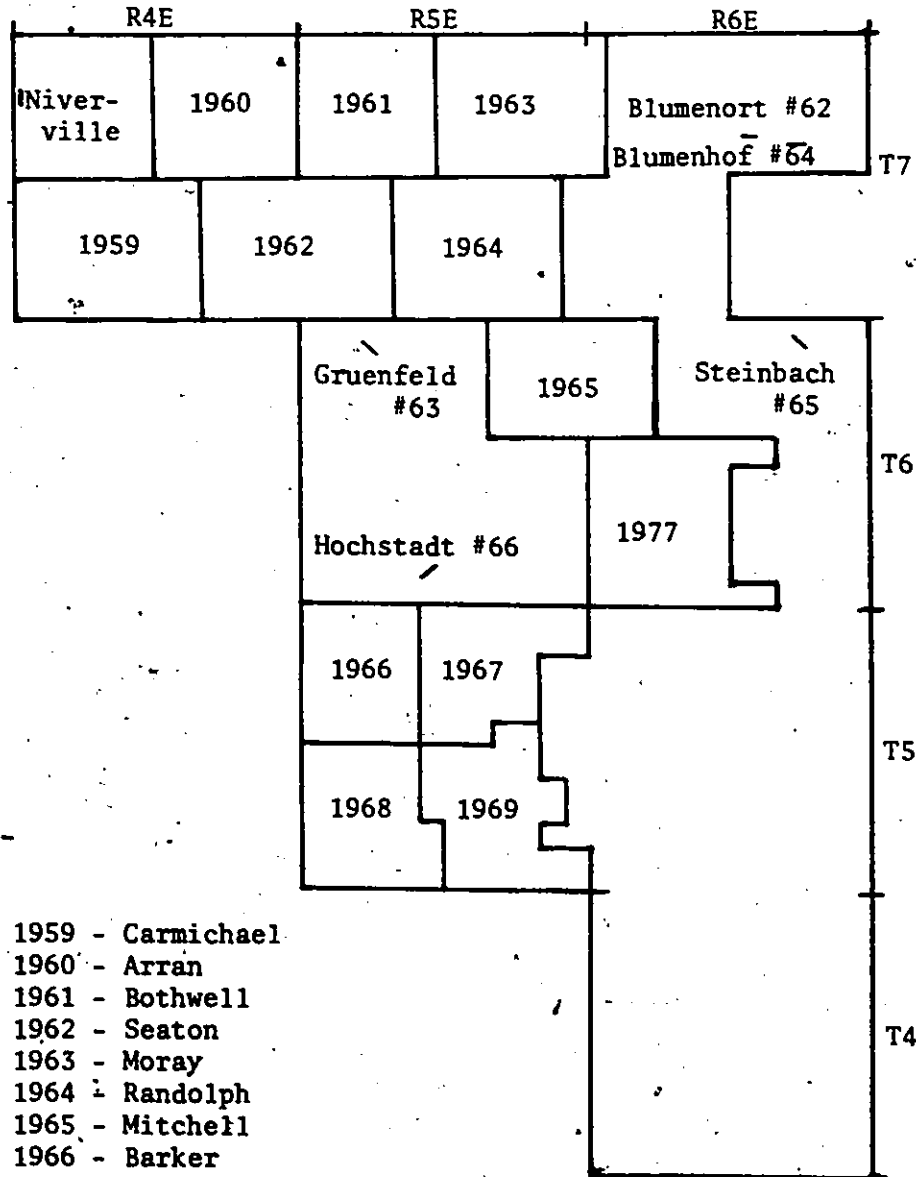
That the Department was not very diplomatic in its approach can be seen in the names assigned to these new school districts. As table 6 shows, existing communities were entirely overlooked and a set of unmistakably English names imposed. The community of Grunthal for example, regarded the name of its school district, Aldershot, as "a slur on Mennonite pacifism," and never operated a school

¹⁰⁸ MFP, 18 May 1920, p. 15. An unidentified insider reported the incident to the Reinlaender leader, Joh. P. Wall, Hague, Saskatchewan, 12 March 1919, MLA, microfilm C-5482, #58. (Copy in CMCA) Arrangements had been made with V. Winkler "that we should be advised when the Bill . . . went before the Law Amendments Committee." But Winkler spent a day at the Brandon fair and "they had put the thing through when he was away. . . . I do not know what my Liberal friends are coming to when they play this kind of game."

¹⁰⁹ Order-in-council #31208, 8 April 1919, PAM, RG 2, A.1.

MAP 7

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE EAST RESERVE



1959 - Carmichael
 1960 - Arran
 1961 - Bothwell
 1962 - Seaton
 1963 - Moray
 1964 - Randolph
 1965 - Mitchell
 1966 - Barker
 1967 - Aldershot
 1968 - Woolwich
 1969 - Spencer
 1977 - Bristol

SOURCE: Based on orders-in-council of 8 April and 10 June 1919, PAM, RG 19, B 1, box 5.

TABLE 6

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS CREATED IN HANOVER MUNICIPALITY

8 APRIL 1919 WITH J. F. GREENWAY AS OFFICIAL TRUSTEE

Order-in-Council No.	District and No.	
31208	Spencer	1969
31209	Woolwich	1968
31210	Aldershot	1967
31211	Barker	1966
31212	Mitchell	1965
31213	Randolph	1964
31214	Moray ^a	1963
31215	Seaton	1962
31216	Bothwell	1961
31217	Arran	1960
31218	Carmichael	1959
31575 ^b	Bristol	1977

SOURCE: Compiled from PAM, RG 2, A 1, box 83.

NOTES:

^aThe April 8 order had neglected to name Greenway as Official Trustee. When the omission was discovered a second order-in-council (#31350) was passed 29 April 1919.

^bpassed 10 June 1919.

under that name.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰C. G. Unruh, "The history of Goodwill S.D. #1967," p. 18, *ibid.*, MG 9, D 41. The Grunthal private school continued to function until the spring of 1921. In January of that year a public school opened under the name of "Goodwill."

In some of the West Reserve communities Mennonite resistance to the compulsory schools began to increase. The Reichenbach community near Rosenfeld unanimously decided in the spring of 1919 to continue its private school.¹¹¹ Since Greenway had been appointed official trustee of that district in January, he informed the ratepayers of the community that "in this case there is nothing left for me to do but . . . take immediate steps to erect a new school in Reichenbach school district."¹¹² The private school board then appealed to their MLA, Valentine Winkler, for help.¹¹³ As Minister of Agriculture, Winkler was naturally committed to cabinet solidarity and could not oppose Education Minister Thornton.

The Weidenfeld community also decided to continue operating its private school when Greenway was appointed official trustee. When the Department sent them three different public school teachers during the course of one month, each of whom took over their private school building for a while, they protested "as strongly as we can against this continuous and unwarranted interference with our rights and liberties by your Department."¹¹⁴ At the same time they also

¹¹¹Erdman Nikkel et al. to J. F. Greenway, 1 April 1919, *ibid.*, MG 14, B 45, box 6.

¹¹²Greenway to Johann D. Klassen, 21 June 1919, *ibid.*

¹¹³Klassen to Winkler, 18 and 23 June 1919, *ibid.*

¹¹⁴J. A. Braun et al. to Hon. R. S. Thornton, Minister of Education, 2 May 1919, *ibid.*

protested the prosecutions of various Mennonite parents for not sending their children to the public schools. In the newly reopened district schools of Neu Kronsthal and Grossweide, Mennonite parents were also withholding their children.¹¹⁵ This kind of passive resistance escalated the confrontation between Mennonites and the government, provoking the latter to enforcing its school law by court action.

Meanwhile, the Department of Education continued its policy of extending public school services by order-in-council. In November of 1919 two of the newly created public school districts in Hanover municipality entered into an agreement with the Department, agreeing to acquire a school site, erect a school building, employ a qualified teacher "satisfactory to the inspector and the Department," and erect a teacher's residence. The agreement was signed by J. F. Greenway, Official Trustee, for each of the school districts, and R. S. Thornton, Minister of Education, for the Government.¹¹⁶ As table 7 shows, Greenway entered into

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ The "Memorandum of Agreement," 13 November 1919, between S.D. of Randolph, #1964, and the Department of Education provided for a loan of \$3000 repayable in twenty annual installments at 6% interest and was confirmed by order-in-council #32565 on 14 November 1919, *ibid.*, RG 2, A 1, box 83. Since the sole trustee of Randolph was the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, the language of the Memorandum is a bit ironical when it says: "WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT is anxious to cooperate with the trustees of the said DISTRICT"

An identical agreement was made with the school district of Arran #1960.

TABLE 7

LOANS MADE ON BEHALF OF MANITOBA MENNONITE DISTRICTS

BY OFFICIAL TRUSTEE J. F. GREENWAY

District	No.	Amount	Date	No. of O-in-C
Gruenfeld	63	\$ 800	14 Nov 1919	32561
Randolph	1964	3000	14 Nov 1919	32565
Arran	1960	3000	14 Nov 1919	32566
Barkfield	1951	1000	14 Nov 1919	32567
Moray	1963	3000	19 Apr 1920	33768
Carmichael	1959	3000	19 Apr 1920	33770
Spencer	1969	3000	19 Apr 1920	33773
Mitchell	1965	3000	19 Apr 1920	33775
Blumenort	62	3000	2 Jul 1920	34231
Schanzenfeld	420	2000	2 Jul 1920	34232
Arran	1960	1000	16 Jul 1920	34454
Moray	1963	2500	22 Oct 1920	35186
Hoffnungsort	821	5000	22 Oct 1920	35187
Carmichael	1959	1000	21 Dec 1920	35664
Exeter	1994	5000	30 Apr 1921	36423
Wells	1998	5000	30 Apr 1921	36424
Meath	1992	5000	30 Apr 1921	36425
Snowdon	1995	5000	30 Apr 1921	36426
Schanzenfeld	420	1000	26 Jul 1921	37121
Birkenhead	1996	5000	26 Jul 1921	37122
Gruenthal	1592	5000	23 Aug 1921	37340

SOURCE: Compiled from PAM, RG 2, A 1.

NOTE: Details of Greenway's appointment as O.T. of these districts are given in tables 5, 6 and 8.

similar agreements on behalf of a large number of the Mennonite districts in his charge.

In February of 1920 the last area of resistance to public schools was dealt with. Ten new school districts were created in the Reinlaender church area in the municipalities of Rhineland and Stanley. As the names listed in table 8 indicate, the Government once more ignored local feelings in imposing unmistakably English names on the new districts. Even more serious was the fact, indicated on map 8, that most of these new districts included three or four existing private schools, each serving its village community. Both of these circumstances made it difficult for Reinlaender Mennonites to find the public schools acceptable.

Events in Saskatchewan closely paralleled those in Manitoba. Under pressure from an intolerant public and some powerful organizations, the government enacted new school attendance legislation.¹¹⁷ However, the only groups offering resistance to these new school laws were the Reinlaender church communities on the two reserves. As in Manitoba, individual Mennonites from the so-called "progressive" groups

¹¹⁷The Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association 2 March 1916 passed a resolution which regretted the large number of private schools in the province, "devised with the intent to defraud the child of a Canadian education," and urged the application of compulsory education or compulsory inspection by the Department of Education.

Opposition leader W. B. Willoughby 8 November 1916 urged that English should be "the sole language of instruction in schools." Canadian Annual Review, 1916, p. 727.

TABLE 8

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS CREATED IN RHINELAND AND STANLEY
MUNICIPALITIES WITH J. F. GREENWAY AS OFFICIAL TRUSTEE
21 FEBRUARY 1920

Order-in-Council No.	District and No.
33336	Thames 1991
33337	Wells 1998
33338	Mersey 1997
33339	Birkenhead 1996
33340	Snowdon 1995
33341	Exeter 1994
33342	Grimsby 1993
33343	Meath 1992
33344	Clyde 1990
36038	Barker 2058

SOURCE: Compiled from PAM, RG 2, A 1, box 84.

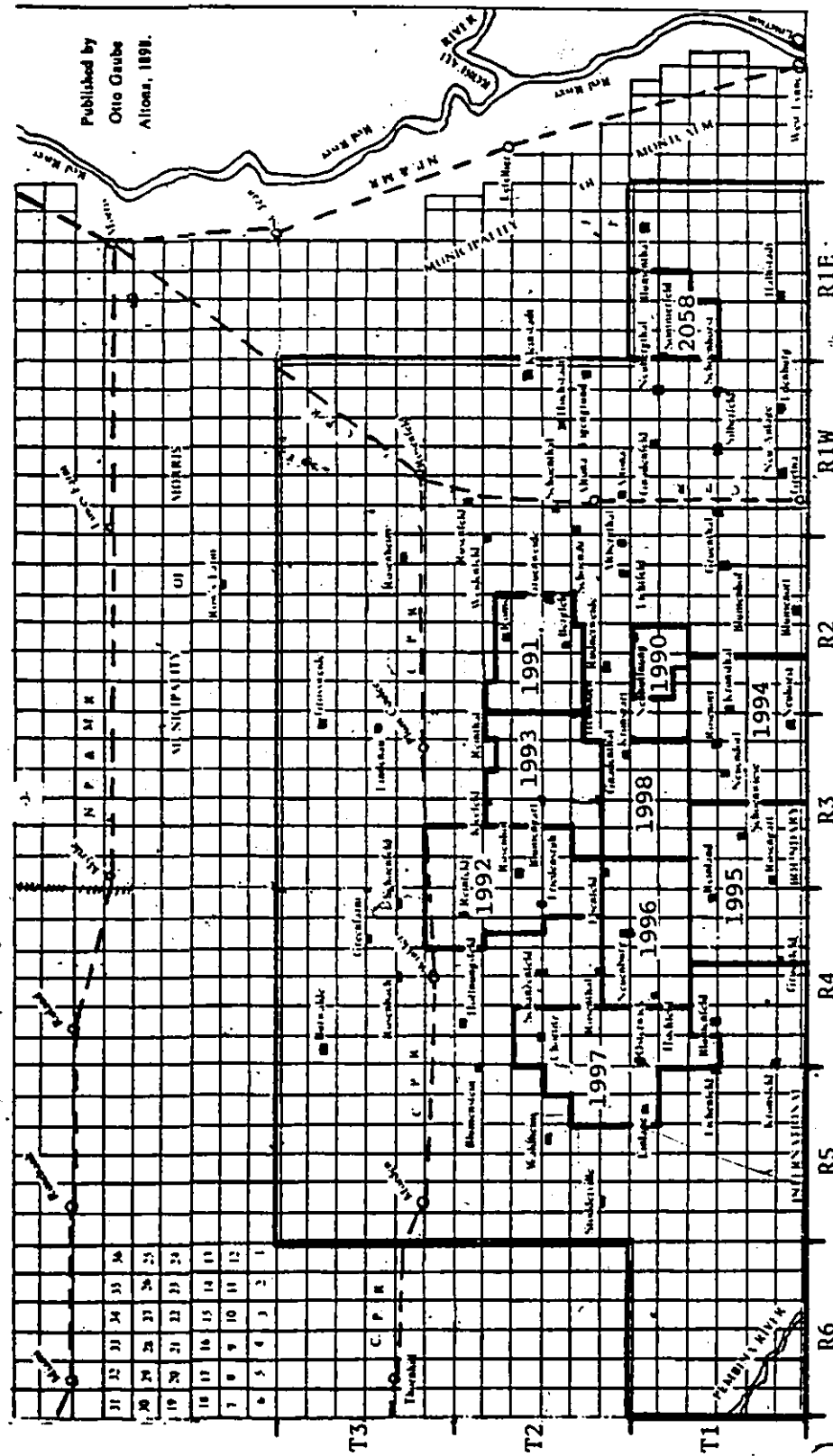
NOTES: The northern part of Meath was separated by order-in-council #37117 on 26 July 1921 and formed into Calder S.D. #2075.

Barker was created 11 February 1921. Since the name had already been used for S.D. #1966 (see table 6), S.D. #2058 was eventually called Sommerfeld.

were quite willing to assist the government in extending public schools into the resisting areas.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸H. V. Meyer, Supervisor of School Districts among Germans, Hungarians and Roumanians, to R. F. Blacklock, Acting Deputy Minister of Education, 17 March 1917, SAB, M 4, I-50,

MAP 5. WEST RESERVE REINLAENDER PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS



SOURCE: Based on orders-in-council of 21 February 1920 and 11 February 1921; PAM, RG 2, A 1, box 84.

When Saskatchewan's new School Attendance Act went into force in May of 1917, it initially affected only those Reinlaender Mennonites whose villages happened to be part of existing public school districts. They promptly offered passive resistance to the annual spring census of school age children.¹¹⁹

Premier W. M. Martin, who also served as Minister of Education, visited the Reinlaender private schools in the Hague area in the summer of 1917 and had an extended interview with Bishop Jacob Wiens. By spring of 1918 the Department of Education had come "to the conclusion that it was high time that some improvement should take place."¹²⁰ In order to retain their private schools, the communities would be required to employ qualified teachers recognized by the Department, use the authorized textbooks, and provide instruction in English.

Instead of responding to Premier Martin that they intended "to act along these lines," as he had hoped, the Hague

p. 17324. Meyer passed on a suggestion from Neville barrister Henry Vogt that a committee of 'higher' Mennonites be used by the Department to bring the new School Act into effect in the Reinlaender areas.

¹¹⁹Edwin S. Bartel, principal, Osler S.D. #1238 on 15 June 1917 reported to the Department of Education that the Reinlaender Mennonites in the village of Neuhorst refused cooperation on the basis of their 1873 agreement with Ottawa. Ibid., I-54, p. 18849.

¹²⁰W. M. Martin to Rev. Jacob Wiens, Hague, 23 April 1918, PAC, MG 26, H 1(c), vol. 214, p. 121123.

church instead sent a delegation to Ottawa to complain about the "invasion on the part of the Government of the Province of Saskatchewan, of rights guaranteed [them] by the Dominion in respect of certain religious and educational privileges."¹²¹ The delegation based its claim on clause 10 of John Lowe's 23 July 1873 letter to the Mennonite delegates, which read:

The fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles is by law afforded to the Mennonites, without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever, and the same privilege extends to the education of their children in schools.

Interior Minister Arthur Meighen, responding to the Hague delegation on behalf of the Federal Government, upheld the view of Premier Martin "that the exercise of the privilege guaranteed your community in clause 10, . . . is not inconsistent with the fullest provision . . . of the essential elements of education for all children in your community."¹²²

The first plank of the Liberal party platform adopted at its convention in Moose Jaw in March of 1917 dealt with education, and was concerned especially that every child obtain a thorough knowledge of the English language.¹²³ As a result, Dr. Harold W. Foght, a specialist in rural school

¹²¹ Arthur Meighen, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, to Rev. J. P. Wall, Hague, 14 May 1918, *ibid.*, p. 121124.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 121125.

¹²³ Editorial, Regina Morning Leader, (hereafter RML), 2 September 1918, p. 4.

practice with the U.S. Bureau of Education, was employed to make a survey of education in Saskatchewan. His sensitive analysis of the basis of Reinlaender Mennonite opposition to public schools contributed significantly to the moderation and care with which the Department of Education initially proceeded in enforcing its school laws.¹²⁴ But it did not lessen the Government's determination to enforce its laws.

Other groups joined the Liberal Party in calling on the government not to relax its efforts to bring English schools to all parts of the Province. The Saskatchewan Rural Municipalities Association in March, 1918, deplored the fact that large tracts of land were not assessed for school purposes and almost unanimously passed a resolution urging "the government to bring these lands into school districts and to enforce the teaching of English in all schools."¹²⁵ A mass meeting at Swift Current similarly resolved that "the children of these people must be educated up to our standards of British and Canadian citizenship, so that they may, in the future, voluntarily relinquish their claims to an unjust

¹²⁴The Foght report is found in SAB, M 4, I-62. The Reinlaender Mennonites feared that the introduction of English would bring with it Hochmut (pride) and the gradual disintegration of the community spirit.

¹²⁵RML, 8 March 1918, p. 2. Some delegates cautioned the meeting not to ask the government to abrogate any treaty under which Mennonites had entered Canada. National obligations "must be held sacred and not treated as a scrap of paper."

exemption."¹²⁶

Under this kind of pressure, the government decided at first "to pursue a policy in the Mennonite settlements of building public schools wherever there is reason to believe that the Mennonites, or some of them, will send their children to such institutions when built."¹²⁷ By spring it had practically decided to erect four public schools in the Swift Current area and from one to three in the Hague district. In the latter area, Lily School District had to be placed under an Official Trustee, A. J. Sparley.¹²⁸ To prepare the Mennonite leadership for these proposed new developments, Education Minister Martin wrote all the Mennonite clergy to inform them of the administration of the School Attendance Act.

Leaders of the Mennonite community of the Swift Current district objected to the government's plan to establish public school districts in their area, but to no avail.¹²⁹ During the summer of 1918 the Department of Education took steps to create five new public school districts in the Mennonite area, two in the communities around Hague and three in the Swift Current district. As indicated in table 9, the

¹²⁶Canadian Annual Review, 1918, p. 427.

¹²⁷Memo, [Premier Martin], to Mr. Blacklock, 21 March 1918, SAB M 4, I-54, p. 18851.

¹²⁸RML, 15 May 1918, p. 14.

¹²⁹Swift Current Sun, (hereafter SCSun) 17 September 1918, p. 5.

TABLE 9

SASKATCHEWAN MENNONITE SCHOOL DISTRICTS CREATED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 1918-19

No.	Name	Erected	O.T. or Board	Appointed
<u>Hague Area</u>				
4076	Scarpe	2 Jul 18	C. Holz Board elected	2 Jul 18 22 Jan 23
4084	Passchendaele	5 Aug 18	B. Klassen C. Holz Board elected	5 Aug 18 25 Sep 18 16 Oct 22
4117	Venice	9 Dec 18	J. J. Friesen C. Holz	7 Mar 19 1 Jul 19
4115	Pembroke	9 Dec 18	J. J. Friesen A. H. Klassen	7 Mar 19 15 Aug 22
4116	Renfrew	9 Dec 18	J. J. Friesen A. H. Klassen	7 Mar 19 15 Aug 22
4156	La Bassee	27 Mar 19	---	---
4157	Embury	27 Mar 19	---	---
4158	Steele	27 Mar 19	---	---
<u>Swift Current Area</u>				
4087	Flora	12 Aug 18	W. S. Cram	12 Aug 18
4088	Amphion	12 Aug 18	W. S. Cram Board elected	12 Aug 18 4 Feb 22
4089	Clemenceau	12 Aug 18	W. S. Cram	12 Aug 18
4150	Flowerville	27 Mar 19	W. S. Cram	19 Mar 19
4151	Balfour	27 Mar 19	---	---
4152	Maharg	27 Mar 19	---	---
4153	Falkland	27 Mar 19	no O.T. Board elected	---
4154	Iris	27 Mar 19	W. S. Cram	17 Aug 23
4155	Versailles	27 Mar 19	W. S. Cram	19 May 20 17 May 20

SOURCE: Report dated 7 September 1923, SAB, M 5, 6.

official trustee in one of these was a Mennonite. But as in Manitoba, the names assigned to these new districts ignored the local communities. Some of them in fact, appeared to be clearly inspired by persons or places made famous by the Great War.

The press reported favourably on this decisive action by the government.¹³⁰ The Reinlaender at Hague appealed once more to Ottawa "to restore our ancient rights."¹³¹ But the Saskatchewan government had made up its mind and proceeded with its policy of implementing a national school system. Three additional public school districts were created in the Hague area in December of 1918 and the remaining unorganized territories in both the Swift Current and Hague Reserves were divided into public school districts in March of 1919. Table 9 summarizes these actions and maps 9 and 10 locate the new districts.

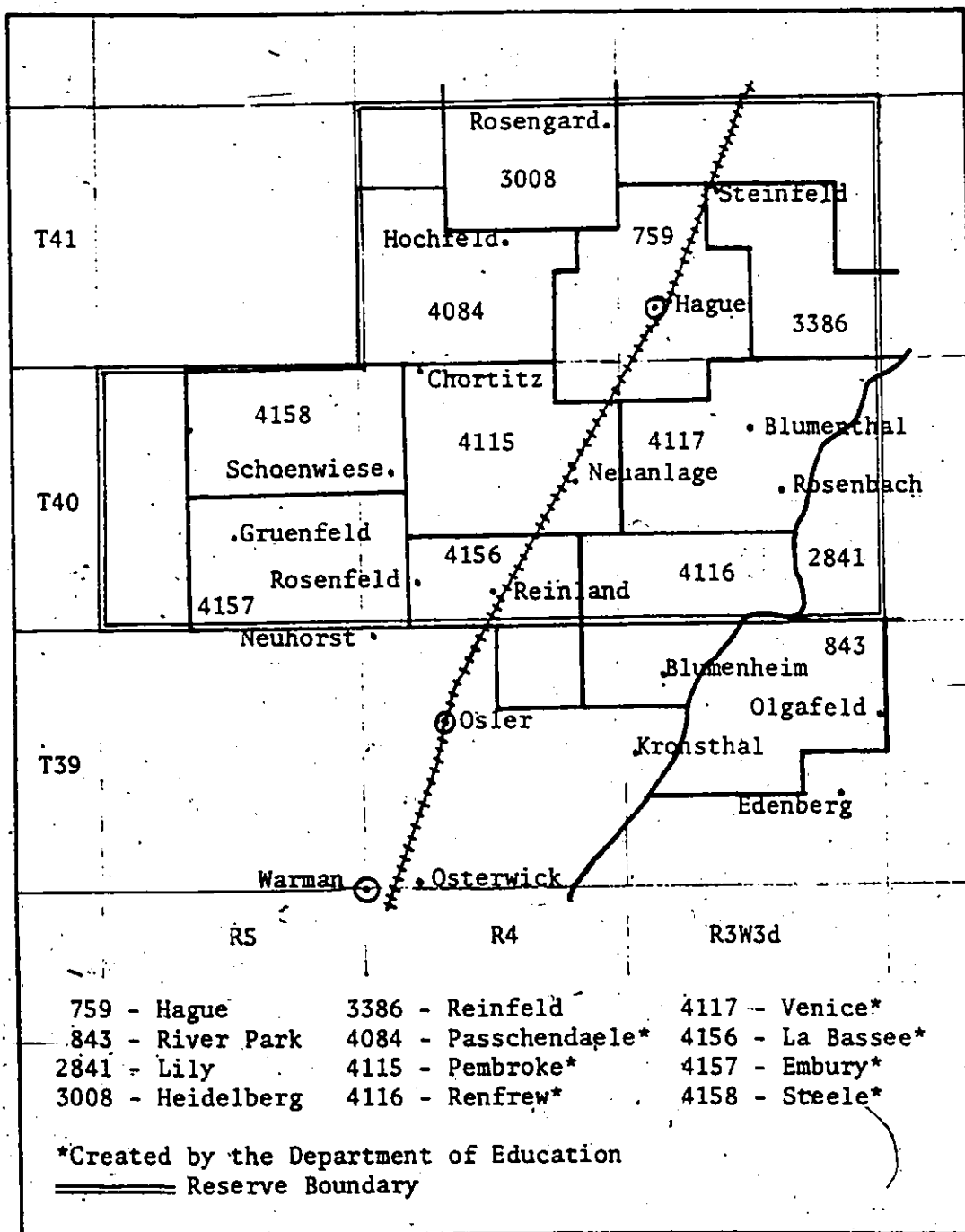
Meanwhile, the government had further modified its education legislation in such a way as to make English the

¹³⁰ The RML, 31 August 1918, p. 17, ran its headline "Department of Education deals drastically with the Mennonites" across the entire front page of its second news section. The SCSun, 16 August 1918, p. 1, was more subdued but gave the event front page coverage.

¹³¹ Rev. J. P. Wall, to Hon. Arthur Meighen, 7 September 1918, PAC, MG 26 H, 1(c), vol. 214, p. 121126. Wall wrote on behalf of the Reinlaender groups of both the Hague and Swift Current areas.

MAP 9

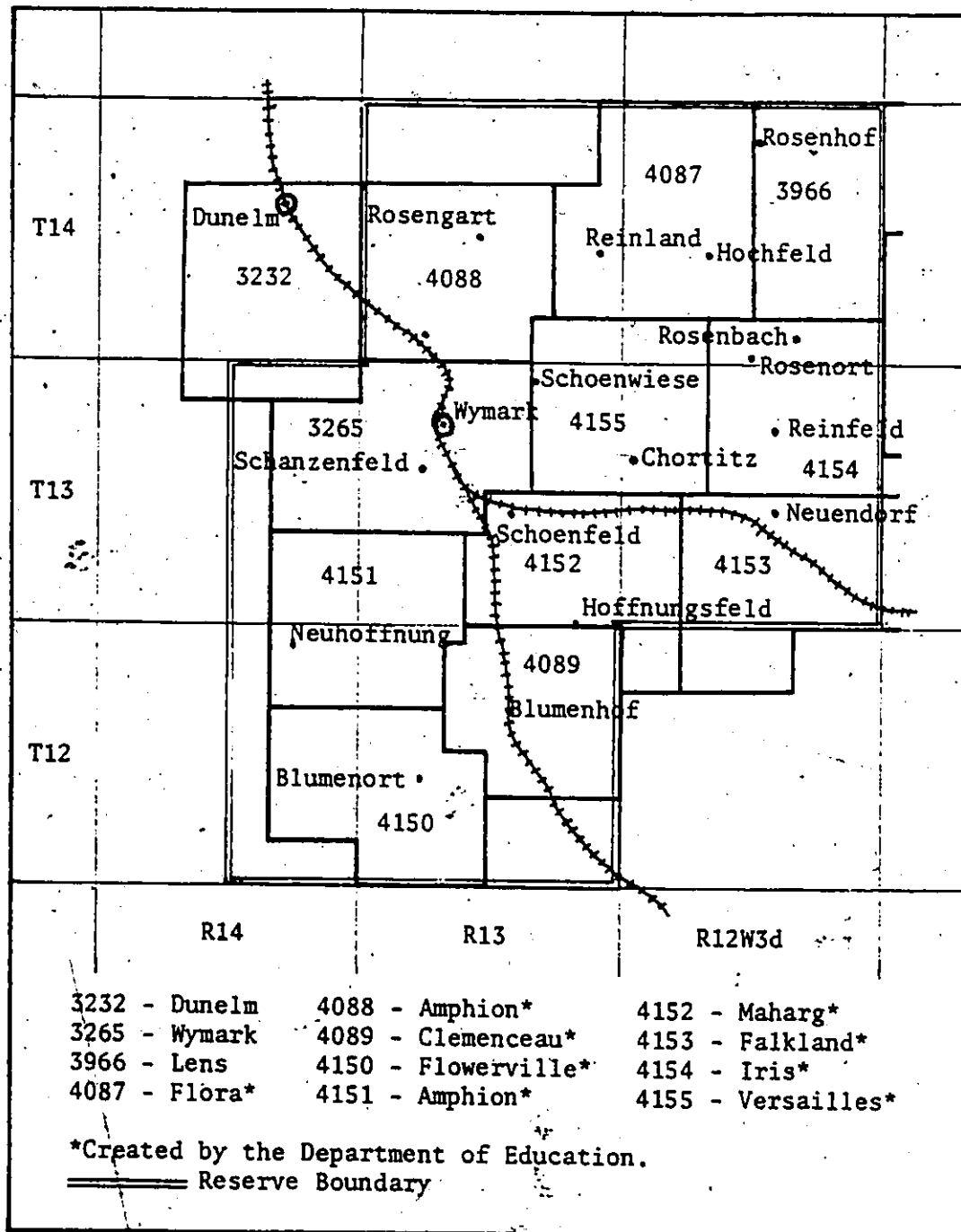
HAGUE RESERVE SHOWING REINLAENDER SCHOOL DISTRICTS



SOURCE: SAB, M 4, I-54, pp. 18847. Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 309.

MAP 10

SWIFT CURRENT RESERVE SHOWING REINLAENDER SCHOOL DISTRICTS



SOURCE: SAB, M 4, I-54, p. 18999. Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 314.

sole language of instruction in all schools.¹³² The government rationalized this move by pointing out that in the last year of the old law, which permitted the teaching of a language other than English for one hour a day, only 118 of the 4,157 public schools in the province took advantage of this provision.¹³³ The elimination of the use of languages other than English obviously did not make it easier for the resisting Mennonite communities to adopt the public schools.

There were other problems in making the newly created school districts operative. One of the Mennonite official trustees, J. J. Friese, ran into difficulties over the high cost of buildings and equipment.¹³⁴ The idea of appointing two small commissions to act as official trustees in the Hague and Swift Current areas was explored.¹³⁵ The suggestion was well received and a committee consisting of Municipal Councillor John Bell, Inspector W. S. Cram, and Major Roy

¹³² C. B. Sissons, Church and State in Canadian Education, an Historical Study (Toronto: Ryerson, 1959), p. 293. Saskatchewan, Statutes, 1918-19, ch. 48, sec. 14. French could be used in Grade I as the language of instruction where necessary.

Agriculture Minister W. R. Motherwell so absolutely disapproved of this legislation that he resigned from the cabinet before it was passed. Motherwell to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 13 December 1918, SAB, M 12, II-36, p. 5382.

¹³³ W. M. Martin to Mrs. G. H. Smith, Education Secretary, I.O.D.E., 28 April 1919, *ibid.*, M 4, I-62.

¹³⁴ Deputy Minister of Education to Premier Martin, 20 March 1919, *ibid.*, I-54, p. 18867.

¹³⁵ Martin to D. J. Sykes, MLA for Swift Current, 22 April 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18875.

Graham, President of the Great War Veterans in Swift Current, was almost appointed to serve as joint official trustees for the nine Mennonite school districts in the area.¹³⁶ In the end the idea was dropped because the government did not have the power to appoint such a committee.¹³⁷ That left Inspector Cram as the sole official trustee of the Mennonite districts in the Swift Current area. Education Minister Martin wondered whether that was appropriate.

Of course there is the question of whether an inspector should be an official trustee or not. Generally speaking I think that he should not be but the Mennonite problem is one so different from other problems that we have had to face that in this case we might very well depart from precedent.¹³⁸

Cram responded quite sensitively to the Mennonite communities as official trustee, thereby raising new questions for the Department. Faced with making the decision of where to place the school buildings in the new districts he suggested declaring school districts as village districts. "Schools should be placed where the children are, not necessarily at the centre of the districts," he argued.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Sykes to Martin, 3 May 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18876; W. S. Cram, Inspector of Schools, to Martin, 9 May 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18878. Sykes suggested that the GWV president might not be acceptable to the pacifist Mennonite communities.

¹³⁷ Martin to Cram, 16 May 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18881.

¹³⁸ Martin to Cram, 18 August 1919, *ibid.*, 18892.

¹³⁹ Cram to Martin, 27 March 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18869.

As part of their campaign of resistance against the public schools, Mennonites in the new districts refused to sell land for the erection of school buildings. The official trustee therefore had to resort to expropriation of school sites.¹⁴⁰ This lack of cooperation on the part of the local people naturally raised costs, and Cram was anxious not to add unduly to the tax burden.¹⁴¹

Cram was able to open three new public schools in the Swift Current area during the summer and the fall of 1919. In Amphion the school opened on July 14 with six children attending even though the teacher, Miss Moon, was purely English speaking. The returned serviceman who was appointed teacher in Flora had no pupils, although he spoke German as well as English.¹⁴² Clemenceau school at Blumenhof opened on October 14 but also had no pupils.¹⁴³ The six children

¹⁴⁰ Report of W. S. Cram, Inspector and Official Trustee, 14 August 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18889. Expropriation procedures were required in both Amphion S.D. #4088 and Clemenceau S.D. #4089.

¹⁴¹ Cram to Premier Martin, 10 February 1920, *ibid.*, p. 18924.

¹⁴² Cram, Report, 14 August 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18889. RML, 9 September 1919, p. 8; 25 September 1919, p. 9.

¹⁴³ Lou Emmons, teacher, to Deputy Minister of Education, 4 November 1919, SAB, M 4, I-54, p. 18900.

Cram's choice of two girls and a returned soldier as the first three teachers to impose on the Reinlaender community reflects a lack of sensitivity or of sensibleness. That a recent veteran would hardly be acceptable to a pacifist community was obvious. But Cram must also have known that teachers in Reinlaender communities were not "slips of girls,

attending at Amphion were all from the Bergthal group.¹⁴⁴

Premier Martin had visited Bishop Abram Wiebe of the Reinlaender church at Swift Current during the summer of 1919 to try to enlist his cooperation.¹⁴⁵ When the Reinlaender steadfastly refused even to give the names of their children, the government felt itself forced to turn to police action and the use of the courts to enforce its laws.¹⁴⁶ By then the government was also aware of the existence of a Reinlaender delegation from Swift Current, Hague, and Manitoba appointed "to discover, if advisable, ways and means towards a new home elsewhere."¹⁴⁷

6. Compulsory Attendance: Boycott and Court Enforcement

With both Manitoba and Saskatchewan possessing compulsory attendance legislation, it was only a matter of time before this would be applied against Mennonite offenders. Sommerfelder parents in both provinces lived in some communi-

but men of character and mature judgement." C. B. Sissons, Bilingual Schools in Canada (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1917), p. 132.

¹⁴⁴ Cram to Martin, 24 November 1919, SAB, M 4, I-54, p. 18908.

¹⁴⁵ RML, 13 June 1919, p. 16.

¹⁴⁶ Martin to Deputy Minister of Education Ball, 8 September 1919, SAB, M 4, I-54, p. 18898; Martin to Attorney General W. F. A. Turgeon, 9 September 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18899.

¹⁴⁷ Cram to Martin, 14 July 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18909.

ties together with Mennonites who had accepted the public schools. Their children, who were attending private schools, could now be held to be in violation of the law if those private schools did not meet the government's standards.

Already in April 1918 prosecutions under the Act began in Saskatchewan, with fourteen (probably Sommerfelder) Mennonites charged at Aberdeen. By mid-May some fifty prosecutions had been registered in Saskatchewan.¹⁴⁸ In July several (probably Reinlaender) families, who were part of the non-Mennonite school district of Dunelm on the edge of the Swift Current Reserve, were fined for sending their children to their own private school instead of the public school.¹⁴⁹ Before appearing in court they had sent a delegation to Regina asking for a postponement in the enforcing of the Act at least until the next spring. In September 1918 eleven Mennonite families in the formerly non-Mennonite school district of Wakeham, Manitoba, were fined for not sending their children to the public school maintained in operation by the government's official trustee.¹⁵⁰

In November the Reinlaender Mennonites of the Swift

¹⁴⁸ RML, 15 May 1918, p. 14. Reference has already been made to a few series of fines in the Hague area in the fall of 1915. See p. 195. A. Friesen, p. 58, errs in claiming that the first court action against Mennonites in regard to compulsory school attendance was in September, 1918.

¹⁴⁹ SCSun, 30 July 1918, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ MFP, 28 September 1918, p. 2. See above pp. 211-12.

Current Reserve responded to the government's imposition of public school districts on their communities by refusing to pay fines under the School Attendance Act. Eleven men convicted under the Act on 30 November and fined one dollar and costs in each case, refused to pay and were sent to Regina to serve ten days in jail. The press interpreted this as a defiance of the government.¹⁵¹ The Swift Current Sun called for more severe legislation, including a provision by which the prosecution could "put the church heads in the coop as well as the other fellows."¹⁵² The government however, moved in the other direction and decided in early 1919 that no more jail sentences would be imposed on those who incurred penalties under the School Attendance Act. Instead of being allowed to "pose as martyrs for their religion," Mennonite offenders would have their goods and chattels seized to pay the fine. The Sun now considered this a wise move on the part of the government.¹⁵³

All Mennonite groups resisting government schools based their action on clause 10 of the 1873 agreement with Ottawa. The Reverend J. P. Wall of Hague took this position before a Justice of the Peace in the spring of 1918.¹⁵⁴ A

¹⁵¹RML, 2 December 1918, p. 9; SCSun, 3 December 1918, 13 December 1918, p. 1. Guenther, p. 14, mentions that his father was one of those jailed.

¹⁵²Editorial, 6 December 1918, p. 4.

¹⁵³Editorial, 4 February 1919, p. 2..

¹⁵⁴RML, 15 May 1918, p. 14.

petition to Ottawa from the Mennonites around Swift Current in May of the same year also quoted this clause.¹⁵⁵ Magistrates Noble of Winnipeg and Milne of Morden had in the Wakeham case ruled that plea irrelevant since the provinces enjoy full control of education by the provisions of the British North America Act.¹⁵⁶ Justice of the Peace, J. E. Hemenway, in a trial at Swift Current in November of 1918, "pointed out that he had nothing to do with the Treaty of 1873 as he was dealing with the Saskatchewan School Attendance Act alone." But he advised the Mennonites that they had the right of appeal from his decision.¹⁵⁷ By May of 1919 it was reported that the Swift Current Mennonites were planning to carry such an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.¹⁵⁸

It was the Sommerfelder of Manitoba however, who launched the appeal.¹⁵⁹ In July of 1919 the Manitoba Department

¹⁵⁵ Petition, Rev. Abram J. Peters et al., Dunelm, Saskatchewan, enclosed in W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, to W. W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 4 May 1918, PAC, RG 76, vol. 173, #58764-2.

The Manitoba Chortitzer also appealed to this clause. Wm. Jennings O'Neill to Hon. R. S. Thornton, 14 July 1919; quoted in J. H. Doerksen, p. 91.

¹⁵⁶ MFP, 28 September 1918, p. 2; see above pp. 211-12.

¹⁵⁷ SCSun, 3 December 1918.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 2 May 1919, p. 1; RML, 3 May 1919, p. 39.

¹⁵⁹ A. Friesen, p. 59, mistakenly claims that the appeal was made by the Old Colony, or Reinlaender, group, probably because he thought Houston S.D. was located near Morden, rather than its actual location in township 1-1E in the Sommerfeld-Bergthal area. I. I. Friesen, p. 125, is also under the impression that it was the Old Colony Mennonites who launched

of Education laid nine charges against Mennonite parents of the Houston School District for violation of the School Attendance Act.¹⁶⁰ Since this was to be made into a test case, the government was represented by H. J. Symington, K. C., and Archie Campbell, with the defense being conducted by A. E. Hoskin and J. T. Haig. Magistrate C. C. Milne of Morden presided at the law courts in Winnipeg.¹⁶¹ The defense argued that

by the Immigration Act of 1869, by the Act establishing the Department of Agriculture in 1868, and by the Act of British North America, immigration was placed under the control of the Federal Department of Agriculture. It was the duty of the Minister of Agriculture, in the Dominion Government, to carry out the order-in-council in respect to the Mennonites.¹⁶²

The prosecution objected to the order-in-council on the grounds that there was no statutory power for the federal government to agree to its terms. In any case, the rights conferred on the Mennonites by the order-in-council were not in any way infringed on by the School Attendance Act, since the matter of language was not mentioned at all and since the

this appeal. Their conviction against initiating litigation, or even of defending themselves through the judicial process, would hardly have permitted such action.

¹⁶⁰ MFP, 11 July 1919, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 17 July 1919, p. 1. Charges were read to the accused before magistrate Milne in Altona on 16 July and trial proceeded with at Winnipeg when the accused pleaded not guilty.

¹⁶² Ibid., 18 July 1919, p. 1.

Attendance Act did not interfere in any way with the teaching of religion.

The cases of two of the nine defendants, immigrant John Hildebrand and Manitoba-born Dietrich Doerksen were chosen for appeal by the Mennonites.¹⁶³ Their case was argued before the Manitoba Court of Appeals on August 5, and dismissed by a unanimous decision of the four Justices hearing the evidence.¹⁶⁴ In its decision the Court addressed itself to three key questions: (a) Did the government of Manitoba have the power to pass its School Attendance Act of 1916? (b) If so, was this Act binding upon the accused, John Hildebrandt, a Mennonite who had come to this country from Russia about 1874? (c) Did the Manitoba government have the power to legislate as to schools, school attendance, or education in so far as the Mennonites coming from Russia were concerned? The answer to all three questions was affirmative.¹⁶⁵

The Mennonites had in their possession only the 26 July 1873-letter from John Lowe, and always quoted it as

¹⁶³ Ibid., 29 July 1919, p. 5.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 6 August 1919, p. 7. In fact, the court made its decision without even hearing counsel for the Province.

¹⁶⁵ The entire text of the court's decision is found in The Manitoba Reports (Calgary: Law Society of Manitoba, 1921), 30: 149-54; also in Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, "Report of the Department of Education for the year ending June 30, 1919," pp. 149-54. MFP, 24 September 1919, p. 9; SCSun, 5 December 1919, p. 2; and I. I. Friesen, pp. 122-25, quote extensive portions. A. Friesen, pp. 59-62, has a lengthy summary.

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their Privilegium. Clause 10 read:

The fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles is by law afforded to the Mennonites, without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever; and the same privilege extends to the education of their children in schools.

Counsel for the province of Manitoba in turn quoted from the corresponding order-in-council of 13 August 1873, in which clause 10 read:

that the Mennonites will have the fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles, and educating their children in schools, as provided by law, without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever.

Mr. Justice Cameron in his written judgement drew attention to the difference between these two readings, particularly to the phrase "as provided by law," not found in Mr. Lowe's letter. He then interpreted the clause as follows:

What it means is that the Mennonites are to have the unhampered and unrestricted privilege of educating their children in the schools provided by the laws of the country in which they proposed to settle. In my judgement this undertaking is in no wise interfered with by the compulsory provisions of the Act in question, and we are left to conjecture what the real motive may be that underlies the opposition to that beneficial legislation.

The court held that "Mr. Lowe's letter must be taken as merged" in the August 13 order-in-council. The difference in wording between the two was largely irrelevant, because section 22 of the Manitoba Act (33 Vic. Ch. 3, confirmed by the Imperial Act, 34 and 35 Vic. Ch. 28) provided that "in and for the province the said legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education."

Nothing can be plainer. The Dominion Parliament itself could and can pass no legislation affecting education in this province save in the circumstances indicated in sub-sections 2 and 3 of Section 22, which have absolutely no application here; and if that cannot be done by a Statute of Canada, how is it possible that it could be accomplished by an order of the Governor-General-in-Council, or by the letter of an official of the department of the Dominion Government?

The discovery that there were two versions of the Privilegium, which in the key tenth clause might contain significantly different wording, has led to a kind of "conspiracy theory" among later interpreters. Hildebrand sees the government's action of 1873 as substituting the 13 August order-in-council for a document of the same status which it had given the Mennonite delegates on 26 July, and then keeping the Mennonites unaware of the official one until the court process of August 1919.¹⁶⁶ Francis considers clause 10 of Lowe's letter "a definite misrepresentation" in that the Department of Agriculture "deliberately or unconsciously failed to mention the fact that under the provisions of the British North America Act jurisdiction over schools was reserved to the individual provinces." The "legal inaccuracies" of Lowe's letter, Francis continues, had been "quickly discovered" and altered in the Minister's July 28 submission to the Privy Council. The August 13 order-in-council was marked "secret" and

¹⁶⁶Hildebrand, pp. 242-43, 338.

thus remained unknown to the public for forty-five years, so that the Mennonites were made to believe that Lowe's wording was the official one. This devious procedure was the direct cause of the serious conflicts which later on arose with the Manitoba school question.¹⁶⁷

Bergen also considers the difference in the phrasing of clause 10 between the Lowe letter and the order-in-council significant, and goes to some length to ascertain that the Mennonites had indeed not been informed of the change.¹⁶⁸

Friesen holds that the latter part of the tenth clause of Lowe's letter was invalid to begin with, and contends that the addition of the four words, "as provided by law," voided the whole article of its previous meaning. He also stresses the fact that the order-in-council was kept secret and that the Mennonites had no knowledge of the difference between it and the letter handed to them by John Lowe.¹⁶⁹

Gerbrandt implies that only the wording of privilege #10 was kept secret from the Mennonites. He then makes matters worse by assuming that Lowe had at hand the official wording of the later order-in-council when he wrote his letter on July 26, and that he was therefore aware of the phrase "as provided by law" in the order-in-council. He then adds:

¹⁶⁷ Francis, In Search of Utopia, pp. 47-49.

¹⁶⁸ Bergen, "The Manitoba Mennonites," pp. 75, 135-36.

¹⁶⁹ A. Friesen, pp. 27, 59.

Apparently Lowe purposely slipped over this important point and the Mennonites did not know until many years later that they only received the privilege of educating their children in schools, as provided by law The "privileges," in fact, gave the Mennonites no special protection. All other immigrants also had the right to have their children educated in schools as provided by law, the law of the province in which they would be residing.¹⁷⁰

Epp indicates that it was actually outside of federal jurisdiction to give the Mennonites the right to educate their own children. The inclusion of this clause

in the federal offer led to very serious misunderstandings in years to come. Three days after the Privilegium had been handed over, John Pope, Minister of Agriculture, eliminated the education provision from the official document, having recognized its legal discrepancies. The document was placed before the cabinet for approval without advising the Mennonites of the change.¹⁷¹

There is very little foundation to this "conspiracy theory." The reasons for marking the August 13 order-in-council "secret" had nothing whatever to do with the change in wording of clause 10. It was done in direct response to British diplomatic fear about the consequences of premature Canadian governmental negotiation with the Russian Mennonites.¹⁷² Once the 1873 order-in-council had been brought back into circulation by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture on 3 March 1916, the government certainly made

¹⁷⁰ Gerbrandt, pp. 59, 83.

¹⁷¹ Epp, Mennonites in Canada, pp. 192-93.

¹⁷² See above pp. 33-35, 38-41.

no effort to keep it from the Mennonites.¹⁷³ Before the end of the month, John P. Wall, chief government contact person of the Saskatchewan Reinlaender, was provided with the full text of clause 10 of the order-in-council, and his attention was drawn to the words "as provided by law" and to their possible significance.¹⁷⁴

When the Military Service Act of 1917 was before Parliament, the 1873 order-in-council became the basis of Mennonite exemption and was accordingly tabled in the House of Commons by Arthur Meighen.¹⁷⁵ This made it so much of a public document that by 1918 individual Mennonites in Nebraska¹⁷⁶ and Kansas,¹⁷⁷ as well as at least four branches of the Mennonite church in Saskatchewan¹⁷⁸ were aware of it

¹⁷³A notation on the original Privy Council minute, P.C. #957, 13 August 1873, indicates the date on which the first copy was made after it had been withdrawn from circulation on 22 August 1873; PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 283.

¹⁷⁴G. E. McCraney, House of Commons, to J. P. Wall, 29 March 1916, MLA, microfilm #58, C-5482. See also Arthur Meighen to Wall, 7 November 1916, PAC, MG 26 H, 1(c), vol. 214, p. 121065.

¹⁷⁵Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Debates, 1917, 4: 3368-69.

¹⁷⁶W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, 24 October 1917, sent a copy to J. C. Koehn, Canadian Government Agent, Omaha, Nebraska, Koehn was wooing U.S. Mennonites to migrate to Canada. PAC, RG 76, vol. 173, #58764-1.

¹⁷⁷G. W. Giesbrecht, Montezuma, Kansas, 11 March 1918, requested a copy of the order-in-council from R. B. Bennett, Director General of National Service. Ibid.

¹⁷⁸The General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, and the Defenceless Mennonites attached

or even had possession of copies of it. There was thus no conspiracy to keep the order-in-council secret from the Mennonites.

It is equally unlikely that John Lowe, or the Department of Agriculture, was deliberately trying to deceive the Mennonites on the point of educational freedom. It is much more likely that both were trying to offer to the Mennonites "an authoritative interpretation of the existing laws of the Dominion."¹⁷⁹ In 1873 in Manitoba the law provided for confessional schools to operate "without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever." Indeed, the debates in Parliament and the arguments in the courts from 1890 to 1896 revealed that many, especially among the Ottawa Conservatives who had drafted the Manitoba Act in 1870 and had negotiated with the Mennonites three years later, thought that such educational freedom was incorporated into the very constitution of Manitoba.¹⁸⁰

A final attempt was made by the Manitoba Mennonites to resolve the school issue through the courts. The August 1919 decision of the Manitoba Court of Appeal was taken to the

a printed copy of the order-in-council to their 4 November 1918 petition to the Governor General in Council. Ibid., RG 2, 3, vol. 199, P.C. #2897/1918.

¹⁷⁹ Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 48.

¹⁸⁰ Even Canada's Supreme Court thought so on 28 October 1891, ruling unanimously in the Barrett case that the Manitoba government's law abolishing this freedom was ultra vires. Clarke, p. 105.

Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Almost a year later, in July 1920, that body announced its decision.¹⁸¹ By refusing to grant leave to appeal against the judgement of the Manitoba Court, it gave full legal sanction to the Manitoba legislation of 1916. It also determined that Mennonites were subject to the School Attendance Act in spite of clause 10 of their Privilegium.

Although the Manitoba Department of Education was now legally armed to force Mennonite acceptance of its schools, it apparently acted with restraint. Dawson refers to "an epidemic of fining" in Manitoba during 1920 and 1921, and mentions that a half dozen Mennonite preachers were jailed for a time at Winnipeg.¹⁸² Former Inspectors Ewert and Willows also speak of fines and imprisonment being imposed,

¹⁸¹ Winnipeg Evening Tribune, 30 July 1920, p. 1. MFP, 3 August 1920, p. 11; Canadian Annual Review, 1920, p. 740. George W. Weir, The Separate School Question in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson, 1934), p. 107; Gedenkfeier, p. 89; and E. K. Francis, "The Mennonite school problem in Manitoba, 1874-1919," MQR 27 (July 1953): 232; In Search of Utopia, p. 185, n. 30, give the date as 30 July 1930.

Canadian Annual Review, 1919, p. 548, and Abraham Friesen, p. 61, mention that the case was taken to the Canadian Supreme Court before it went to the Privy Council, but do not report its verdict.

¹⁸² Dawson, p. 105. A. Friesen, p. 90, talks of "wholesale prosecutions" against Mennonites in the Rhineland district. Isaak M. Dyck, Auswanderung der Reinlaender Mennoniten Gemeinde von Canada und Mexico with a Foreward by Heinrich Dyck (Cuauhtemoc, Mexico: Imprenta Colonial, 1970), p. 46, and David Harder, Schule und Gemeinschaft. Erinnerungen des Dorfschullehrers (Gretna, Man.: mimeographed by Jacob Rempel, 1969), p. 6, seem to know of only Rev. Peter Friesen, Schanzenfeld, among the Reinlaender ministers to have been jailed.

but not in a wholesale way.¹⁸³ There are scattered reports of prosecutions in the press, but they do not suggest "an unbending policy of coercion."¹⁸⁴

Even without extensive court enforcement, the Department was making some progress toward its goal. Near the end of 1919 Greenway was able to resign as Official Trustee from three school districts in the Bergthal-Sommerfeld area of the West Reserve, to be replaced by local trustees.¹⁸⁵ In other districts the tension continued with both public school and private school teachers attempting to occupy the same building or with two schools dividing community loyalties.¹⁸⁶ They also divided the parents' income, who now paid taxes for the district school, levies for the private school, and fines for non-attendance at the former.

In the Reinlaender communities on the West Reserve the boycott of the new public school districts was maintained

¹⁸³ H. H. Ewert, Mitarbeiter, April 1920, pp. 26-27, 29-30; Willows, p. 97.

¹⁸⁴ The expression is attributed to Official Trustee J. F. Greenway by the Christian Science Monitor, 12 October 1920, in connection with its report of five Mennonites being fined \$20 and costs each under the Manitoba School Attendance Act. Fines imposed on Mennonite offenders are also reported for the Hamburg district, MFP, 25 March 1920, p. 1, and the Spencer and Goodwill districts, *ibid.*, 22 June 1925, p. 5.

¹⁸⁵ Amsterdam, Edenburg and Kleinstadt. See table 4, p. 211, and table 20, p. 363.

¹⁸⁶ Mitarbeiter, April 1920, p. 29, reports such difficulties in the West Reserve communities of Gnadenfeld, Silberfeld, and Gruenthal.

with tenacity. As in the Swift Current communities, Mennonites refused to sell land or building materials to Greenway, forcing the Department to expropriate land and to bring in building supplies from Winnipeg.¹⁸⁷ In view of this opposition, and of the announced emigration of the Reinlaender Mennonites which would probably result in the break-up of the existing villages if carried out, the Department decided in 1920 to defer the location of school sites in these new districts.¹⁸⁸ Two years later Inspector Finn was able to report six of these new districts in operation, although two of them had zero enrollment.¹⁸⁹ In the spring of 1922 the Reinlaender emigration to Mexico began, making it possible for many of their members to maintain the boycott of the public schools to the end of their stay in Canada.

The Chortitzer church on the East Reserve also resisted the Zwangsschulen. In the summer of 1919, after public school districts had been created in its communities by order-in-council, a delegation visited the Minister of Education to

¹⁸⁷ MFP, 3 February 1920, p. 11; Dawson, p. 105.

¹⁸⁸ Manitoba, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, Department of Education, "Report for 1919-1920," p. 69.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 1921-22, p. 71. The districts in operation, with enrollment figures added, were: Grimsby (28), Calder (15), Birkenhead (13), Exeter (4), Snowdon (0), Mersey (0). Actually, Snowdon, which was open for 17 days in December 1921, had one pupil. In the spring of 1922 it was open 78 days with nine pupils (including two non-Mennonites) producing a total of 66½ pupil days. Zacharias, p. 259.

explain their situation and to ask to be able to retain their own schools.¹⁹⁰ Since Dr. Thornton gave them no satisfactory reply, they made arrangements for another audience with the government at which Agriculture Minister Winkler, who spoke German, would also be present. This second delegation, which also included representatives from the Kleine Gemeinde, met with Premier Norris and five of his Ministers, including Winkler and Education Minister Thornton, in October.¹⁹¹ In response to their request to retain their own schools, Thornton assured them that the 1916 school legislation applied to all Manitoba residents. It was indeed possible to continue private schools, but only if these met the Department's standards, including use of the English language. Since the Menmonites had not met these conditions, the School Attendance Act had to be applied by the government.

In a further petition in early 1920 the Chortitzer announced that they were now prepared to accept the Department's standards and to introduce instruction in English in their schools. They were anxious, however, to make this transition with their own teachers and hence asked the cooperation of the Department

¹⁹⁰ J. H. Doerksen, pp. 91-95, reproduces in German translation the letter of William Jennings O'Neill presented to Education Minister Thornton on 14 July 1919 in the presence of Bishop J. K. Dueck, Joh. Braun, and H. Doerksen.

¹⁹¹ The petition in English of Johann K. Dueck, Jacob R. Dueck, Heinrich Doerksen, and H. R. Reimer, Niverville, to the Honorable Ministers of the Provincial Government, 21 October 1919, is found *ibid.*, pp. 95-96..

during the interval when some of these teachers would not yet fully meet government qualifications.¹⁹² Thornton had by now had a measure of success in his own program of converting the area into functioning public school districts, and was unwilling to wait for the upgrading of the Chortitzer private schools.¹⁹³

With this seeming impasse in their attempts to work out an acceptable form of cooperation with the Department of Education, the Chortitzer and Sommerfelder began to give serious consideration to the possibility of emigrating. A large joint meeting in September 1920 decided to make one more approach to the government. A brief, signed by the bishops and ministers of both churches, was presented to the Norris government in October. After reiterating the

¹⁹² This 6-point petition of 13 January 1920 is reproduced in German without date or signatures, *ibid.*, pp. 102-104.

Quiring, *Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat*, p. 34, claims that this statement was made by Pred. H. Derksen, Schoental, in the name of the Chortitzer Church but without its authorization. He also, p. 31, dates the first delegation 14 June and the second 8 October 1919.

I. I. Friesen, appendix 17, reproduces a longer version of the petition in English, signed by Johann K. Driver [Dueck?] and nine others, including Heinrich Doerksen and probably 5 other ministers.

¹⁹³ R. S. Thornton, Minister of Education, to T. J. Murray, 17 February 1920, reproduced in German by J. H. Doerksen, pp. 104-6.

In Francis' estimation, "The Mennonite school problem," p. 233, "it was no more a question of educational standards which prompted the authorities to destroy [the parochial schools] once and for all, and to replace them with English public schools. It was part of a consistent national policy aimed at the assimilation of ethnics to safeguard national unity and cultural uniformity."

earlier pleas to be allowed their own schools, the statement announced that emigration was the only alternative.¹⁹⁴ Thus, for the Chortitzer also, continuing boycott of the public schools was strengthened by the hope of leaving. But since their emigration was delayed until 1926, the resistance of many had been worn down before the actual move could take place.

The Saskatchewan government acted much more decisively. When the Reinlaender Mennonites of the Swift Current Reserve boycotted the newly opened public schools in their communities in summer of 1919, Premier Martin instructed the Provincial Police to issue a summons against every family in the districts involved.¹⁹⁵ Within a month seventeen offending parents had been fined, eight in Flora S.D. and nine in Amphion.¹⁹⁶ The eight Flora ratepayers sentenced refused to pay the fine, so distress warrants were issued to cover the amount of the fine and costs. Three horses, a hog, and five cured hams were seized by the police and sold at a public

¹⁹⁴ J. H. Doerksen, pp. 107-9, reproduces in German this "Petition to the Provincial Government of Manitoba, submitted by the Sommerfelder Church, Altona district, and the Chortitzer Church, Niverville District," dated 14 October 1921 with 21 signatories. His chronology of closely related events, pp. 110-11, suggests that the date should be 1920. But I. I. Friesen, who has the petition in English with 20 signatories, appendix 18, also gives the date as 1921. So does Sawatzky, p. 26, n. 83.

¹⁹⁵ RML, 25 September 1919, p. 9.

¹⁹⁶ SCSun, 3 and 24 October 1919, p. 1; RML, 4 October 1919, p. 20. W. S. Cram, Inspector, to Premier Martin, 24 November 1919, SAB, M 4, I-54, p. 18908.

auction in Wymark on November 6. The total proceeds of \$129.50 were not enough to pay the assessed costs.¹⁹⁷ A second auction at Swift Current brought better prices for the five cows, two heifers, and two horses seized by the police.¹⁹⁸

At least twenty-eight more men were fined in three separate court actions during the balance of 1919. Some paid their fines, while others refused to do so. Most of them refused to promise to send their children to the public school.¹⁹⁹ The idea of appealing any of these court sentences by Saskatchewan Mennonites was dropped when the Manitoba Court of Appeals handed down its ruling in August of 1919. Inspector Cram drove the point home to the Swift Current Mennonite parents in January 1920:

There is no doubt that if the School Attendance Act of the Province of Manitoba is binding on the Mennonites of that province, the School Attendance Act of the Province of Saskatchewan is binding on the Mennonites in this province.²⁰⁰

The Reinlaender Mennonites of the Swift Current area were

¹⁹⁷ SCSun, 7 November 1919, p. 1.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 21 November 1919, p. 1.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 21 November 1919, p. 1 (11 more fined); 19 December, p. 1 (11 fined in Blumenhof); 30 December (6 more fined).

²⁰⁰ W. S. Cram to Mennonite parents, 9 January 1920, quoted in I. I. Friesen, p. 136.

so incensed at the government over its handling of the education matter, that they refused to accept any seed grain or other relief from municipal officials.²⁰¹ Inspector Cram on the other hand, felt that the problem had been handled well by the police. "The first steps represent the problem in its most awkward stages," he remarked philosophically.²⁰² Others were not as detached. W. W. Cooper of Swift Current warned Premier Martin that "there are a number of the families being reduced to destitution through the fines being imposed upon them."²⁰³

Cooper proposed, on behalf of a Mennonite delegation from the Swift Current community, that the School Attendance Act not be enforced for two years to give families intending to emigrate an opportunity to get away. The Mennonite land-seeking delegation was on its way home from Brazil.²⁰⁴ Premier Martin, however, had determined on a firm course of action and would not agree to exempting the Mennonites from the school law "because it would have a most detrimental

²⁰¹SCSun, 11 November 1919, p. 1.

²⁰²Cram to Premier Martin, 18 November 1919, SAB, M 4, I-54, p. 18904.

²⁰³Cooper to Martin, 22 November 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18941.

²⁰⁴This request had already been expressed to Inspector Cram in July, shortly after the delegation to South America had left. Cram to Minister of Education, 14 August 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18890.

effect on certain other people that we have in the province."²⁰⁵

Another approach toward alleviating the Mennonite problem was suggested by Inspector Cram. It consisted of either some form of license system for private institutions or some clauses in the School Act itself having reference to private institutions and the directors of such institutions.²⁰⁶ That option had already been considered and rejected by Premier Martin. He questioned very much "whether any law with respect to private schools would simplify our difficulties among the Old Colony people."²⁰⁷

The government therefore decided to continue its policy of relentless prosecution of offenders against the School Attendance Act. A summary of the action for 1920 and 1921 is

²⁰⁵ Martin to Cooper, 24 November 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18913. The government was backed in this tough position by groups such as the Great War Veterans Association, whose Swift Current branch on October 8 passed a resolution supporting compulsory attendance enforcement because "we are convinced that the only method by which these groups and sects can be Canadianized is by inculcation in the schools through the English language the elementary principles of freedom and democracy we enjoy." *RML*, 15 October 1919, p. 16.

Martin also had the support for this course of action of his own Director of Education among New Canadians, J. T. M. Anderson, M.A., LL.B., D.Paed., who, after a very satisfactory meeting with 23 Mennonites in River Park School reported: "I cannot but feel that these Mennonites are after all human like ourselves and will respond to firm but just and fair treatment." He then went on to recommend keeping up the enforcement of the School Attendance Act. Anderson to W. M. Martin, 14 June 1919, SAB, M 4, I-56, p. 19115.

²⁰⁶ Cram to W. M. Martin, 18 November 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18904.

²⁰⁷ Martin to Cram, 21 November 1919, *ibid.*, p. 18906.

given in table 10. It includes the much publicized case at Hague in March 1921 where sixty Mennonites were assessed fines amounting to a thousand dollars and one was sentenced to thirty days in Prince Albert jail.²⁰⁸

For the Reinlaender Mennonites, who as a church and on principle opposed the public schools, this continuous prosecution presented a dilemma.

If we send our children to public schools, we violate God's commands in not holding to that which we promised our God and Saviour at holy baptism. If we do not send them, we offend against your laws. Does Mr. Martin want us to transgress against God's commands in order to keep his? . . . Oh how difficult it is to be a true Mennonite. . . . And we came here precisely because of the freedom which the government promised us in full.²⁰⁹

The letter went on to quote Romans 13:1 and added: "We want to be subject to the authorities. But you must also allow us our rights ("das Unseré lassen"). If you force us to violate our teaching, who will then bear the punishment?"

²⁰⁸ Dawson, p. 106; Steinbach Post, 31 March 1921; I. I. Friesen, p. 138.

If court costs are added to the fines, the total paid in 1920-21 is an estimated \$26,000. This amount may be compared with the \$65,000 Greenway raised 1919-21 for capital expenditures in Manitoba. (See table 7.) That means that the Saskatchewan school resistors paid in fines over two years approximately 40% of what the Manitoba resistors would repay in loans over the next 20 years. Greenway's capital outlay included the erection of school and teacherage for 12 new districts.

²⁰⁹ Johann F. Peters, Neuanlage, to Premier Martin, 13 April 1920, SAB, M 4, I-54, p. 18941; translation mine; an "official" translation by N. Goldsmith is found in *ibid.*, p. 18943.

Guenther, p. 14, describes the dilemma in very similar terms.

TABLE 10
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROSECUTIONS IN MENNONITE DISTRICTS
SASKATCHEWAN 1920-21

	1920	1921
Number of schools	25	20
Number of cases	1131	1804
Number fined	874	1472
Amount of fines	\$7,834	\$13,150
Number dismissed	76	133
Number pending	43	70
To jail	6	6
Number cancelled	5	-

SOURCE: A. H. Ball to S. J. Latta, Minister of Education, 6 December 1921, SAB, M 5, 6(2).

NOTE: Latta to R. S. Thornton, Minister of Education, Manitoba, 6 March 1922, indicates 2018 cases referred to the police in 1921 and adds \$4,823.80 in court costs to \$13,084 collected in fines.

The heart of this dilemma was focussed more sharply by barrister H. Vogt who had already earlier interceded for the Swift Current Reinlaender. For them "the school is the church" and "if the school is changed the church is changed." Their objection is not to the English language but "they cannot accept the system the government attempts to force upon them, particularly so when the objective of the system is . . . to change the church principles even so

far as the military question is concerned."²¹⁰ Vogt then proposed that the government give the Reinlaender Mennonites their own school system provided they would undertake to give the children a knowledge of the English language up to the required standard.

Premier Martin felt that a reasonable agreement could be made "with the people themselves" but did not think that the leaders would allow it. Vogt, who had a branch office in Wymark, pursued his idea with the church leaders and found that they were prepared to teach English as long as they could train their own teachers, run their own system (the government system being too militaristic and "not good enough to raise Christians"), and keep up their own language. He recommended that the government pursue this idea and bring in H. H. Ewert from Manitoba to help implement the new arrangement. The Premier however, was convinced that the Mennonites would not agree to use the authorized textbooks and so the idea died.²¹¹

Some Mennonites who had accepted the public school system continued to have their problems with it. The required physical exercises seemed quite militaristic in their orientation and some parents wanted their children exempted from

²¹⁰H. Vogt, Neville, to Premier Martin, 29 May 1920, SAB, M 4, I-54, p. 18955.

²¹¹Martin to Vogt, 7 June 1920, *ibid.*, p. 18956; Vogt to Martin, 30 June 1920, *ibid.*, p. 18957; Martin to Vogt, 3 July 1920, *ibid.*, p. 18959.

them.²¹² In spite of some good reasons for granting this request, Premier Martin dismissed it with the argument:

Physical drill is surely a good thing for children. It has nothing whatever to do with military training and it appears to me to be impossible to change the course of work in our schools in every case where some individual happens to object to it. If we were to pursue this policy the Province over, it would be very difficult to have any systematic course of instruction at all.²¹³

Since the government policy had obviously become quite inflexible, the Reinlaender Mennonites pursued their plans to emigrate. By March of 1920 they were negotiating the sale of their lands with a Saskatoon firm which in turn put pressure on the government to suspend enforcement of the School Attendance Act for at least sixty days to allow the Mennonites to leave the country. Throughout the spring of 1920 the government stood firm in its refusal "to suspend the operation of an Act of the Legislature in this way."²¹⁴

In May the Reinlaender Mennonites of the Hague area agreed to give exclusive authority to J. P. Murphy and his Saskatoon Company to sell their lands, comprising about 80,000 acres, on the condition that the provincial government

²¹² Lt.-Col. J. McAughey, O.B.E., of Locke & McAughey, Barristers, Saskatoon, to Martin, 21 August 1920, on behalf of P. M. Friesen, *ibid.*, p. 18964.

²¹³ Martin to McAughey, 16 September 1920, *ibid.*, p. 18970.

²¹⁴ Premier W. M. Martin to J. P. Murphy, Saskatoon, 17 May 1920, *ibid.*, p. 18950. Pressure had been put on the government in a steady stream of correspondence by Murphy and his partner, C. H. Johnson, since mid-March.

would discontinue prosecutions under the School Attendance Act for the balance of 1920.²¹⁵

About the same time the Swift Current Reinlaender signed an agreement with barrister A. McWilliams of Swift Current to sell their land, comprising 106,000 acres. McWilliams now joined Murphy in seeking to persuade Premier Martin to suspend enforcement of the Attendance Act.²¹⁶ But it was not until January of 1921 that the government showed any willingness to reconsider its position on this point.²¹⁷ In September, the Premier finally agreed that, in view of the Mennonites' agreement to sell and the purchasers' request to have them operate the farms in 1922, it would be "in the best interests of the Province" to enact a special measure exempting the townships in question from the operation of the School Attendance Act.²¹⁸

When the Hague Reinlaender sold their land to the Union Liberty Company of Winnipeg on October 10, Education Minister Latta instructed his staff to draft "an Act to exempt the Old

²¹⁵ Jacob Wiens and 8 others, Hague, to J. P. Murphy and W. J. Jauhlfs, Saskatoon, 8 May 1920, *ibid.*, p. 18949.

²¹⁶ W. S. Cram to Martin, 10 May 1921, *ibid.*, p. 18987.

²¹⁷ Martin to Murphy, 4 January 1921, *ibid.*, p. 18918. He quickly pointed out however, "that we can give no assurance that the School Attendance Act will not be enforced." Martin to Murphy, 7 January 1921, *ibid.*, p. 18922.

²¹⁸ Memo, Premier Martin to S. J. Latta, Minister of Education, 23 September 1921, *ibid.*, M 5, 6(2). "In the best interests of the Province" presumably meant to prevent the lands "from being overrun with noxious weeds," as Martin had written to Murphy on January 4.

Colony Mennonites from the School Attendance Act."²¹⁹

In fact, Deputy Minister Ball had already early in October advised the inspector of the Hague area to suspend any further investigations or prosecutions against Mennonites in his inspectorate.²²⁰

The threatened emigration of large numbers of Mennonites brought a warning to the government from a Saskatoon businessman. A. J. E. Sumner felt that the country, and particularly the West, could not afford the loss of many of "the best farmers Canada possesses." He asked the government to have patience--"twenty-five years in the history of a nation are nothing"--and urged an "earnest impartial non-political concentration of purpose" to solve the impasse.²²¹ Not satisfied with the Premier's curt response that no reasonable compromise was possible, Sumner pressed his point:

I believe the reason that negotiations have failed is primarily due to lack of sympathy and failure to appreciate the deadly earnestness of these people by your colleagues and officials. There has been no change of attitude upon the part of the Mennonites, they are still endeavouring to carry out the tenets of their faith and creed, in identically the same way as when they were invited to the Dominion

²¹⁹ Memo, Latta to Mr. Shannon, 21 October 1921, *ibid.*
A copy of the draft, dated 25 October 1921, is found with the memo.

²²⁰ S. H. Braund, Chief Attendance Officer, to Inspector E. L. J. Sparkman, 4 October 1921, *ibid.*

²²¹ A. J. E. Sumner of R. M. Buchanan Co. Ltd., Saskatoon, to Premier Martin, 29 November 1921, *ibid.*, M 4, I-54, p. 18991.

and which privilege they were told they could always enjoy.²²²

Martin remained unmoved by this plea, and since pressure on the government to resume prosecutions under the Attendance Act mounted, its truce with the Hague Mennonites proved to be a short one.²²³

Prosecutions in the Swift Current area continued uninterrupted. As table 11 shows, in 1922 this resulted in an average of slightly over four convictions per pupil enrolled. The pressure of that kind of prosecution through the courts moved the leaders of the Swift Current Reinlaender to request once more that enforcement of the Attendance Act be suspended until they could leave the country.²²⁴ But it did not happen. The decrease in prosecutions for 1923 indicated in table 11 resulted rather from the fact that the first groups of Reinlaender left the Swift Current area for Mexico in March of 1922. An estimated 1,200, well over one-third of the Reinlaender group of the Swift Current Reserve, left the country

²²² Sumner to Martin, 9 December 1921, *ibid.*, p. 18994.

²²³ A. H. Ball, Deputy Minister, to S. J. Latta, 6 December 1921, *ibid.*, M 5, 6(2). Latta on 6 March 1922 assured R. S. Thornton that the Act was again being strictly enforced.

²²⁴ Bishop Abraham Wiebe and 6 ministers to Hon. Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Saskatchewan, 7 January 1922, *ibid.*, M 5, 6.

TABLE 11

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROSECUTIONS IN FIVE MENNONITE DISTRICTS
SWIFT CURRENT AREA 1922-23

S.D.#	District	1922			1923		
		Enrol.	Pros.	Conv.	Enrol.	Pros.	Conv.
4087	Flora	26	87	75	12-18	22	22
4088	Amphion	26	45	16	22-24	6	4
4089	Clemenceau	17	197	167	21	122	117
4155	Versailles	20	59	51	29-33	12	6
4154	Iris	38	257	219	31	40	35
	Totals	127	645	528		202	184

SOURCE: Compiled for Education Minister S.J. Latta, SAB, M 5, 6(3).

over the next several years.²²⁵ The rest eventually accepted the public schools.²²⁶

In the Hague area the resumption of law enforcement in 1922 shows that the Reinlaender resistance to public schools here had not decreased. Table 12 compares the number of cases investigated or prosecuted during October 1921, when enforcement of the Attendance Act had been temporarily sus-

²²⁵ I. I. Friesen, p. 140, estimates 1,500; but see table 19.

²²⁶ Inspector Cram reported 24 September 1926 to Latta that attendance in Versailles and Clemenceau districts was still poor, approx. 38% and 28% respectively. SAB, M 5, 6(4).

TABLE 12

MENNONITE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CASES SENT TO PROVINCIAL POLICE:
HAGUE AREA, OCTOBER 1921 AND 1922

S.D.#	District	Number of cases	
		October 1921	October 1922
759	Hague	--	3
843	River Park	2	2
2841	Lily	--	4
3008	Heidelberg	1	4
3386	Reinfeld	--	6
4084	Passchendaele	10	59
4115	Pembroke	--	46
4116	Renfrew	1	21
4117	Venice	6	47
	Totals	20	192

SOURCE: "Mennonite cases sent to Provincial Police for investigation and prosecution if necessary during the month of October 1921 and 1922." SAB, M 5, 6.

pended, with the corresponding month in 1922.

The Hague group was not yet ready to emigrate in 1922. As a result, prosecutions here continued quite intensely for several years more. Table 13, which summarizes prosecutions for 1923 to 1925, shows that resistance was especially strong in the four school districts arbitrarily created by the Department.

TABLE 13

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROSECUTIONS IN SIX MENNONITE DISTRICTS

HAGUE AREA 1923-25

S.D.#	District	Number of convictions
759	Hague	38
3386	Reinfeld	34
4084	Passchendaele	278
4115	Pembroke	618
4116	Renfrew	165
4117	Venice	269
	Total	1402

SOURCE: A. H. Ball, Deputy Minister, to S. J. Latta, Minister of Education, SAB, M 5, 6(4).

In early 1923 the Reinlaender of the Hague area appealed once more for a suspension of the Attendance Act, at least for a few years in which they could settle their affairs and emigrate. "Would you not be inclined to show your sympathy as well as the Russian government did, who granted [our forefathers] sufficient time in which they were free to carry out their move?" asked J. P. Wall.²²⁷ Education Minister

²²⁷Joh. P. Wall, Hague, to Minister of Education, 12 February 1923, *ibid.*, M 5, 6. His remark refers to the ten years during which the Russian government allowed Mennonites to emigrate when military exemption and control of their schools were cancelled in 1870.

Latta was moved to sympathy for them, but was "powerless to do anything outside of that which the law says."²²⁸

Deputy Minister Ball was also moved. In the summer of 1923 he observed that it was now six years since the School Attendance Act had come into force "and there has been no appreciable headway in the direction of getting into our schools the children of the Old Colony Mennonites." In his opinion the government "would be amply justified in attempting a compromise with the Mennonite leaders." He therefore suggested that the government allow traditional Mennonite instruction to take place in the afternoons with English school in the morning, on the understanding that their teachers would gradually be upgraded in their qualifications. "Considerations of humanity almost compel an attempt at compromise."²²⁹ But there was no compromise. Like their brethren in the Swift Current region, the Hague Reinlaender solved the school problem partly by emigrating to Mexico,²³⁰ partly by giving in to the government system. Some of those who remained continued to pay school fines regularly until into the 1930s.²³¹

²²⁸ Latta to Wall, 19 February 1923, *ibid.*

²²⁹ A. H. Ball to Latta, 21 August 1923, *ibid.*, M 5, 6(2).

²³⁰ The Durango settlement was founded by Hague Reinlaender in 1924 and numbered 946 by 1925. See table 19.

²³¹ Dawson, p. 166, reports this in the chapter on "Canadian Mennonite Communities Today."

Table 14 summarizes prosecutions of Saskatchewan Mennonites under the Attendance Act to 1925.

TABLE 14
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROSECUTIONS OF SASKATCHEWAN MENNONITES
SUMMARY: 1918-25

Year	No. of Prosecutions	SOURCE
1918	61	Press reports (incomplete)
1919	56	Press reports (incomplete)
1920	1131	table 10
1921	1804	table 10
1922	645	table 11 (Swift Current only)
1922	192	table 12 (Hague, Oct. only)
1923	202	table 11 (Swift Current only)
1923-25	1402	table 13 (Hague area only)
Total	5493	

NOTE: These figures are incomplete for the years 1918 and 1919, where the press search did not attempt to be exhaustive and where only those prosecutions, in which the actual number of defendants was reported, were tabulated. The 1922 figure for Hague covers only one month, and there are no figures for Swift Current for 1924-25.

In view of this record in Saskatchewan it is difficult to accept Dawson's claim that there

the conflict was not so severe, since the Saskatchewan Old Colonists were not so completely sectarian in outlook as their Manitoba brethren. The Saskatchewan government, realizing the nature of the group with which it had

to deal and the probable results of drastic action, was inclined to avoid a direct clash.²³²

Even less appropriate is Weir's evaluation of the actions of the man who served as Premier 1916-22 and Minister of Education 1916-21:

Hon. W. M. Martin . . . refused to resort to strong-arm methods of coercion, but with commendable foresight and almost inexhaustible patience adopted a policy of tolerance and enlightened firmness which finally won over all but the hopelessly obdurate old-colony reactionaries.²³³

The above evidence instead supports the conclusion, tentatively stated by Ewert in 1920 and by Friesen in 1934, that the clash in Saskatchewan was much more severe than it was in Manitoba.²³⁴

The reasons for this difference are not clear. On the one hand, Saskatchewan's "Mennonite problem" was much smaller than Manitoba's. In the fall of 1918 there were approximately thirty private and sixty public schools in the

²³²Dawson, p. 106.

²³³Weir, p. 108. A sample of Martin's tolerance is reflected in a speech he gave at Swift Current, 3 October 1919: "It is folly to talk of having [the Mennonites] deported in large bodies. They have been here a long time and while they are deluded in thinking that they have special privileges in Saskatchewan over other citizens, at the same time we have to use reasonable toleration in our treatment of them." Quoted in Canadian Annual Review, 1919, p. 552.

²³⁴Mitarbeiter, March 1920, p. 27; I. I. Friesen, p. 140. However, "Strafgelder und Gefaengnis" were severe enough in Manitoba to remind the Reinlaender leaders of the people in Israel in the iron furnace of Egypt, 1 Kings 8:51. I. M. Dyck, p. 70.

Mennonite areas in Saskatchewan compared to some eighty private and thirty public schools among the Mennonites in Manitoba.²³⁵ On the other hand, the Manitoba Mennonites provided a more complete spectrum in their attitude to the public schools. The Reinlaender and Chortitzer, with a combined membership of just under 3,000, maintained private schools exclusively. The Sommerfelder and Kleine Gemeinde groups, with a combined membership of just over 3,000, opposed public schools in principle but a good number of their communities accepted them in practice. The remaining four groups, with a total membership of slightly over 1,200, offered little or no resistance to the public schools. In Saskatchewan this latter group had almost 2,500 members and was even more favourably inclined to the public schools than its Manitoba counterpart. The Sommerfelder group, numbering fewer than 1,000 members, was scattered and so offered even less resistance to the public schools than the Manitoba Sommerfelder did. That left only the two Reinlaender groups, with a combined membership of slightly over 2,000, who adamantly resisted the public schools in Saskatchewan.²³⁶ Table

²³⁵ H. H. Ewert to S. F. Coffman, Vineland, 12 November 1918, CMCA, XX-5, vol. 554. Ewert was as familiar with the Manitoba scene as anyone, and his figures for Saskatchewan are confirmed by the Minister of Education, W. M. Martin to Mrs. G. H. Smith, 28 April 1919, SAB, M 4, I-62, p. 21691.

²³⁶ This analysis follows in part that given by Ewert to Coffman, 12 November 1918, CMCA, XX-5, vol. 554; Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 176; David Toews at the Ford-McColl Commission hearings, 1908; Epp, Education with a Plus, p. 37.

15 gives a summary of the various Mennonite groups in Manitoba and Saskatchewan together with membership statistics for 1917.

TABLE 15
MENNONITE GROUPS IN MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN 1917

Denomination	Area	Origin &	Date	Pop.	Members
Reinlaender	Man. W.R.	Russia	1875	4496	1893
	Sask. Hague	Manitoba	1895	3068	1135
	S.C.	Manitoba	1905	2344	880
Chortitzer	Man. E.R.	Russia	1874	2320	955
Sommerfelder (Bergthaler) ^a	Man. W.R.	Bergthaler	1890	6452	2692
	Sask. Herbert Rosthern	split			
		Manitoba	1900	1353 ^b	483 ^b
		Manitoba	1902	1332 ^b	475 ^b
Kleine Gemeinde	Man. E.R.	Russia	1874	837	307
	Morris	Russia	1874	342	141
Canadian Conference					
Bergthaler	Man. W.R.	Russia	1874	1311 ^b	660
Rosenorter	Sask. Rosthern	Russia	1891	1510 ^b	688
		Manitoba			
		Prussia			
Nordstern Other	Sask. Drake	USA	1906	286	155
	Sask. Rosthern Lost River			961	519
Holdeman	Man. E.R.	Kl.G. split	1881	491	182
	Morris			87	44
Bruderthaler	Man. E.R.	Kl.G. split	1897	199	87
	Sask. Rosthern	USA	1912		
Mennonite Brethren	Man. W.R. &	Manitoba	1893		274
	Winnipeg	revivals			
	Sask. Rosthern	USA	1901		774
	Herbert	Russia	1905		505
		USA			

TABLE 15-Continued

Denomination	Area	Origin &	Date	Pop. Members
Krimmer M.B.	Sask. Rosthern	USA	1899	
M.B. in Christ	Sask. Alsack	Alberta	1910	
Old Mennonite	Sask. Guernsey	Ontario USA	1905	

SOURCE: Statistics compiled by B. Ewert, Mitarbeiter, February 1918, p. 8, and similar annual reports. Epp, Menno-nites in Canada, pp. 317, 323.

^a Saskatchewan Bergthaler were similar to Manitoba Sommer-felder.

^b extrapolated from data available for 1914-16, 1918.

7. The Petitions: Articulating the Issues

During the decade of the school struggle, 1916-26, interaction between the Mennonites and the two provincial governments was almost continuous and took a variety of forms. The Mennonite position in these encounters was articulated most clearly in the several briefs or petitions which were formally addressed either to the government or to the legislature. Although all of these have been previously referred to, they are listed in chronological order in table 16.

An analysis of the content of these official church statements shows that they have a number of points in common while they differ significantly on others. Since all of the Manitoba Mennonite groups are represented in these briefs, a brief summary of these points will help to see the spectrum

of their positions in relation to the governments on the issue of education.

TABLE 16
MENNONITE SCHOOL PETITIONS TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF MANITOBA
AND SASKATCHEWAN 1916-22

Group	Date	Presented to
Man. Bergthaler-Sommerfelder	7 Jan 1916.	Hon. V. Winkler
All Man. groups except Reinlaender	15 Feb 1916	Man. Government
Manitoba Reinlaender	Feb 1919	Man. Legislature
Chortitzer-Kleine Gemeinde	21 Oct 1919	Man. Government
Chortitzer	13 Jan 1920	Man. Government
Chortitzer-Sommerfelder	14 Oct 1921	Man. Government
Swift Current Reinlaender	7 Jan 1922	Sask. Government

First, all base their claim to educational "rights" on the Privilegium, the 1873 agreement between the Mennonite delegates and the Dominion Government. All groups expect the government to keep its promise, or to honour its side of the agreement. The decision of the courts, that the provincial Departments of Education were not bound by clause 10 of the 1873 order-in-council, did not alter this basic position of the Mennonites.

Secondly, the briefs all agree that "as a matter of conscience [the Mennonites] cannot delegate to others the all

important responsibility of educating their children."²³⁷

The educational legislation of the provinces on the other hand, assumed, as a Free Press editorial put it: "The children are the children of the state of which they are destined to be citizens; and it is the duty of the state to see that they are properly educated." By that was meant "seeing that children are suitably educated to discharge the duties of citizenship."²³⁸ In the context of World War I, this so clearly meant military participation that it was relatively easy for the Mennonites to reject this claim of the state.²³⁹

In the third place, all groups insisted that the right to teach religion in their schools was essential. Indeed, one of the reasons why the state was incapable of providing the child with a rounded education was the fact that it could not teach religion since it has none itself.²⁴⁰ One brief emphasized the need to teach "both religious and secular truth as a part

²³⁷ Chortitzer church to Government of Manitoba, 13 January 1920, in I. I. Friesen, app. 17. See also H. H. Ewert brief of 15 February 1916, above p. 200.

²³⁸ MFP, 18 May 1920, p. 15.

²³⁹ H. H. Ewert, "Gehoert das Kind dem Staate?" Mitarbeiter, November 1920, pp. 81-82. Harder, p. 3, wrote: "In the government schools the children are taught that it is their proper duty to defend their country with the natural sword in time of war." See also below, n. 245.

²⁴⁰ Ewert, "Gehoert das Kind dem Staate?"

of one whole,"²⁴¹ while another stated that without religious instruction in the schools the Mennonite church could not survive.²⁴²

Instruction in the German mother tongue was considered essential only in the two briefs presented in 1916. Naturally, all Mennonite groups at this time were opposed to the elimination of German from the curriculum, since it was almost without exception still the sole language of the church. But the assertion that the Reinlaender placed greater emphasis on the importance of German than the others is not substantiated in the briefs.²⁴³ Only the brief of February 1916, which did not represent the Reinlaender Mennonites, indicated that Mennonites would rather emigrate than lose the right of instruction

²⁴¹Manitoba Reinlaender, February 1919, MFP, 18 May 1920, p. 15.

²⁴²Chortitzer-Sommerfelder, 14 October 1921, in J. H. Doerksen, p. 108.

²⁴³Dawson, p. 104, is correct in his observation that "the more liberal groups, which had come to use English increasingly, could conceive of a separation between the German language and the Mennonite religion," but not in his implication that the more "conservative" saw the two as inseparable. Thielman, p. 310, is similarly correct in pointing out that the Reinlaender were most consistent in their "rejection of the English language in their private schools," but not, as he claims, because "they saw in English the biggest threat to their cultural integrity."

Quiring, Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat, pp. 32, 39, and even Ewert, Mitarbeiter, October 1921, p. 80, place considerably more emphasis on the German language as the basis of Chortitzer-Sommerfelder opposition to the Manitoba schools than these groups themselves did.

in the mother language in their schools.²⁴⁴ The Manitoba Reinlaender brief of 1919 does not mention language at all, while the 1922 Swift Current petition explicitly says that the group is preparing to emigrate "not for the sake of language but for the sake of our religious grounds."²⁴⁵

While all of the briefs emphasized the central role of the church and parents in the education of their children, only the Chortitzer and Reinlaender stressed that this meant retaining full control over their own schools. The Bergthaler leadership took formal action in 1919 not to participate in a representation to the government planned by the Sommerfelder-Chortitzer at that time.²⁴⁶ They, along with the Mennonite Brethren and Kleine Gemeinde, had already

²⁴⁴ Johann D. Klassen report in Mitarbeiter, March 1916, p. 3.

²⁴⁵ Abraham Wiebe et al. to Saskatchewan MLAs, 7 January 1922, SAB, M 5, 6. Reinlaender leaders realized that "language and religion are so interwoven" that it is difficult to separate them (J. P. Wall, Hague, to Hon. Arthur Meighen, 7 September 1918, PAC, MG 26 H, 1(c), vol. 214), just as Ewert did (Mitarbeiter, March 1916, p. 6). But Reinlaender opposition to the public schools did not focus on language, as Bishop Johann Friesen of the Manitoba group pointed out. "Es handelt sich bei uns nicht um die Sprache, sondern wir koennten es unmoeglich zugeben, unsere Kinder unter der Flagge, und unter der Ausuebung des Militaerismus zu rechte Buerger dieser Welt ausueben oder bilden zu lassen." I. M. Dyck, p. 45.

²⁴⁶ Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, 2:179, 26 May 1919, CMCA, XII, vol. 716. The leadership also decided a year later not to become involved with plans to emigrate. Ibid., p. 195, 30 December 1920.

basically accepted the government-controlled public schools.²⁴⁷

In the nature of their appeal there is a significant difference among the briefs. The Manitoba Reinlaender statement follows a clear theology of the state.

We immigrated to this country wholly on account of having received the privileges given us by the government. And believing then as we do now that the word of the government is inviolate because the government is ordained of God, we started our own schools right from the beginning.²⁴⁸

In contrast to this Biblical basis for placing faith in the promises of the government, the Bergthaler brief of January 1916 begins with a clearly political appeal.

The majority of the Mennonites have so far put their confidence in the Liberal Party and have uninterruptedly sent a Liberal representative to the legislature. They would not like to be betrayed by the

²⁴⁷ When the government reopened discontinued Mennonite district schools in 1918-19, only three Kleine Gemeinde ones (Blumenort, Blumenhof, Gruenfeld - see table 5) were still operating as private schools. Gedenkfeier, p. 89. During 1921-22 all three returned to local board control (table 20); i.e. the communities voluntarily conducted public schools.

²⁴⁸ MFP, 18 May 1920, p. 15.

Liberal Party. If they were betrayed, they would feel so offended that they would cease to support the Liberal government.²⁴⁹

The latter group remained in Canada, winning limited rights to continue instruction in German and religion in the public schools while seeking to maintain as much control over them as possible. The former group, insisting on full control over its schools, decided to emigrate rather than surrender this basic point.

²⁴⁹ CMCA, XX-1, vol. 544, file #47. This brief, as can be seen from the several preliminary drafts, was clearly the work of Benjamin Ewert. The non-voting Reinlaender, of course, could not make such a 'threat'.

CHAPTER V

THE WAR ISSUES

While there was a considerable range of response on the part of the various Mennonite groups to the provincial governments with respect to public school education and the introduction of municipal government, their response to the issues arising out of World War I was much more united. Their strong commitment to pacifism made all of them resist active participation in the war effort. However, in their approach to individual issues such as the national registrations, or contributing to the Red Cross or Victory Bond drives, differences between the groups again emerged.

1. Military Exemption Provisions

Clause 1 of the 1873 Privilegium provided

that an entire exemption from military service, as is provided by law and order-in-council, will be granted to the denomination of Christians called Mennonites.

The law referred to was the Militia Act of 1868 which provided that

any person bearing a certificate from the Society of Quakers, Mennonists or Tunkers, . . . who, from the doctrines of his religion, is averse to bearing arms and refuses personal service shall be exempt from such service when balloted in time of peace, or war, upon such conditions and under such regulations, as the

Governor-in-Council may from time to time prescribe.¹

The order-in-council referred to was that of 25 September 1872, passed in order to assure the Mennonites intending to emigrate from Russia

that the Governor General in Council cannot prescribe any conditions or regulations under which, under any circumstances, the persons referred to in the above quoted section can be compelled to render any military service.²

Those Mennonites who in the 1870s had gone from Russia to the United States instead of to Canada, had been unable to obtain similar assurances of military exemption from the American government. As a result, the Spanish-American War created anxiety among the U.S. Mennonites and led them to explore emigration to Canada.³ This provided an occasion to clarify once more the status of Canadian Mennonites with respect to military exemption.⁴

At approximately the same time, Doukhobors from Russia and Hutterites from the United States were also negotiating entry into Canada as pacifist immigrants. Both groups were assured that they would "be exempted, unconditionally, from

¹ 31 Vic., ch. 40, sec. 17.

² P.C. #1043D, 25 September 1872, PAC, RG 2, 1.

³ Hugo Carotens, Winnipeg, to Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, 6 June 1898, *ibid.*, RG 15, vol. 571, #179925 (2).

⁴ J. A. Smart, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to Hon. David Mills, Minister of Justice, 15 June 1898, *ibid.*

service in the militia, upon production in each case of a certificate of membership from the proper authorities of their community." These events helped to assure the Canadian Mennonites that Ottawa was still aware of and was reaffirming their own exemption.

The issue of Mennonite participation with the voluntary Canadian forces in the Boer War does not seem to have arisen. Nor is there any evidence that Mennonites in western Canada took any action at the time of the 1911 naval debate, although some of the Swiss Mennonites from Ontario did so.⁶

2. The Early Years of the War

News of the outbreak of war in Europe evoked an immediate editorial response from the Mitarbeiter, deploring the fact that civilized nations would resort to bloodshed.⁷ Before the end of the year the Bergthaler Church in Manitoba, probably at the initiative of Swiss Mennonites from America, began voluntarily to raise funds for the war victims in Europe

⁵P.C. #2747, 6 December 1898; P.C. #1676, 12 August 1899; *ibid.*, RG 2, 1. Copies of both orders are found in RG 76, vol. 173, #58764(1). The Statute that provides the basis of exemption was now found in the Militia Act, Revised Statutes of Canada, ch. 41, sec. 21, sub-sec. 3.

⁶L. J. Burkholder to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 20 February 1911, PAC, MG 26 G, vol. 667, p. 181870, microfilm #c-900.

⁷H. H. Ewert, editorial, Mitarbeiter, August 1914, p. 84.

and Asia.⁸

By 1915 some of the private schools of the Kleine Gemeinde were contributing to the Red Cross.⁹

At its meeting in the summer of 1916 the Conference of Mennonites of Manitoba and Saskatchewan passed a resolution thanking the Dominion government for its considerate treatment of the Mennonites with respect to military service. The promise given at the time of the immigration from Russia had been scrupulously kept, not only in the government's not conscripting Mennonites, but also in its not trying to persuade them to volunteer.¹⁰ All the same, the first signs of problems were beginning to appear. That same summer, the Bergthaler Church in Manitoba served notice that any of its members who volunteered for active service in the military thereby automatically excommunicated themselves.¹¹ And in the fall of that year, some anxiety was caused by the much publicized refusal of entry into Canada of Bishop E. L. Frey

⁸ Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, 30 December 1914, CMCA, XII, vol. 716.

⁹ Valentine Winkler, Minister of Agriculture and Immigration, Winnipeg, to D. D. Driedger, Blumenhof private school, 16 November 1915, PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 3. Driedger to Winkler, 1 December 1916, sent a further contribution. Ibid., box 5.

¹⁰ Mitarbeiter, October 1916, pp. 4-5, reproduces the 15 July 1916 letter of thanks, together with Prime Minister Borden's response.

¹¹ Bergthaler Church, Brotherhood, Minutes, 5 June 1916, CMCA, XII, vol. 715.

of Ohio and his party of ten people. Entry was refused under the War Measures Act because Frey admitted that he did not encourage recruiting but rather discouraged it.¹²

For the federal government also, questions were raised about its "willingness to exempt from service on religious grounds the Mennonites, Doukhobors, and Quakers, while refusing to recognize the French Canadian sentiment against military service except in the defence of Canada."¹³

3. The National Service Registration, 1917

In December of 1916 the government announced that under the authority of the War Measures Act 1914, the first week of the New Year was to be observed as "national service week" for the taking of an inventory of the manpower of Canada. Cards were provided for this purpose through the Post Office authorities, to be completed by all males between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five. Although only one of the twenty-four questions asked on the cards referred to the war, its inclusion, and the fact that the inventory was done under

¹²O. G. Adams, Windsor Immigration Inspector, to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, Ottawa, 14 November 1916, PAC, RG 76, vol. 173, #58764-1. The Toronto Daily Star, 25 November 1916; the Globe, 17 November; the London Advertiser, 16 November; and the Windsor Recorder, 16 November, also reported the incident. See Epp, Mennonites in Canada, pp. 368-69 for a longer account of this incident.

¹³Mason Wade, The French Canadians, 1760-1967, rev. ed., 2 vols. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), 2:738, referring to Henri Bourassa's position in the 1916 conscription debate.

the authority of the War Measures Act, led to immediate and deep apprehensions among the Mennonites.¹⁴ Was this going to be the beginning of conscription? Fearing this to be the case, many Mennonites decided initially not to fill in the cards.

Outright disobedience, however, was not a natural Mennonite reaction to a national law. Meetings were consequently held in the various areas to elect delegates to go to Ottawa to investigate the matter. The delegation of Klaas Peters for the Herbert area of Saskatchewan, David Toews for the Rosthern area, Heinrich Doerksen for the Manitoba East Reserve, Abraham Doerksen for the West Reserve Sommerfelder, and Benjamin Ewert for the Bergthaler, represented all Mennonite groups except the Reinlaender and showed the largest measure of Mennonite solidarity since their coming to Canada.¹⁵

This five-man delegation met with R. B. Bennett, Director General, National Service, and other government represen-

¹⁴B. Ewert in Mitarbeiter, January 1917, p. 1; P. M. Friesen, Rush Lake, Saskatchewan, to R. L. Borden, 22 December 1916, PAC, MG 26 H, 1(c), vol. 214, pp. 121076-77. J. C. Koehn, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, to W. J. White, 2 January 1917, *ibid.*, RG 76, vol. 173, #58764-1.

Question 23 of the inventory card reads: "Would you be willing to change your present work for other necessary work at the same pay during the war?" A copy of the registration card is given in app. 5.

A complete packet of the material sent by R. B. Bennett, Director General, National Service, to MLAs is found in PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 5, dated 9 December 1916.

¹⁵Mitarbeiter, January 1917, p. 2.

tatives on 8 January 1917 and presented its petition. The delegates were assured that agriculture was a national service essential to the military, and that their status was being fully respected by the government. Canada would not regard the Privilegium as "a scrap of paper" as Germany had done with its neutrality pact with Belgium. Bennett emphasized however, that the cards must be completed, and suggested that the word "Mennonite" be written across the face of each card by members of that denomination. The delegation was also assured that it was possible for Mennonites who had enlisted "under misapprehension or otherwise" to be released if they applied for a discharge to their battalion commander.¹⁶ With these assurances from the government, the Mennonite groups represented in the delegation were relieved and cooperated with the national registration.¹⁷

The Reinlaender Mennonites had not participated in this delegation. Instead, at a brotherhood meeting attended

¹⁶ B. Ewert's official report of the delegation's negotiations, a German translation of the petition and of R. B. Bennett's written summary of 8 January 1917 to Abraham Doerksen et al., are reproduced in Mitarbeiter, January 1917, pp. 1-4, 4-6, and 6-7; in B. Ewert, comp., Wichtige Dokumente betreffs der Wehrfreiheit der Mennoniten in Canada (Gretna, Man.: By the author, 1917), and in J. H. Doerksen, pp. 76-88. See CMCA, XX-1, vol. 544, #46, and I. I. Friesen, app. 20 and 21 for these documents in English. For a later recollection of this event by a Reinlaender leader see I. M. Dyck, pp. 33-34.

¹⁷ E. R. Chapman, Director of National Service, M. D. #10, Winnipeg, to Valentine Winkler, 7 March 1917, PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 5.

by some 450 of its members, the church decided against filling in the national service cards.¹⁸ Bishop Johann Friesen of the Manitoba Reinlaender communicated this decision to Prime Minister Borden early in the New Year, reminding him of their Privilegium and of the assurance which the government had given the three Reinlaender bishops on this point in November of 1916. Against that background, wrote Friesen, "we are therefore confident that you . . . will justify us if we return these cards by return mail."¹⁹ The solution was not quite that simple however, for the Reinlaender leaders were then called to Winnipeg by the Manitoba district director of National Service. Here they were urged to provide the government with a list of all males from sixteen to sixty-five years of age in their church, since they resisted filling out the cards. When the leaders felt unable to comply with even this request, that was accepted by the government representative.²⁰ The Manitoba Director of National Service continued as late as March to attempt to get Reinlaender to cooperate "in order to make the inventory

¹⁸ Report by Cpl. C. T. Hildyard, Rosthern Detachment of the R.N.W.M.P., 5 April 1917, PAC, MG-26 H, 1(c), vol. 214, p. 121098. The meeting was held in Reinland, Manitoba.

¹⁹ Johann J. S. Friesen, Neuenburg, to Sir Robert Borden and Hon. Arthur Meighen, 4 January 1917, *ibid.*, p. 121078.

²⁰ Aelt. Abraham Doerksen, Sommerfeld, to Benjamin Ewert, Gretna, 7 April 1917, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #3. The R.N.W.M.P. report had indicated their willingness to furnish a list of male members.

of manpower complete" but was not successful.²¹

When the Manitoba Sommerfelder discovered that their Reinlaender coreligionists had not filled in the cards, they complained that their leaders had not obtained exemption from the government for them also. This led Bishop Abraham Doerksen to urge a joint Sommerfelder-Bergthaler delegation to go to Winnipeg to attempt to "discover whether our high government has a different law for the Old Colony church than it does for our churches."²²

In Saskatchewan, some young men apparently decided to spend the winter months in California lest the January registration have more serious implications.²³

The delegates who had gone to Ottawa in January now suggested to their constituency that a special collection be held in all of their churches for widows, orphans and cripples caused by the war. This money was to be sent to the government as an expression of thanks for its considerate treatment of the Mennonites in regard to military exemption.²⁴ The

²¹E. R. Chapman to V. Winkler, 7 March 1917; Winkler to J. W. Rempel, Gretna, 8 March 1917, PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 5.

²²Doerksen to Ewert, 7 April 1917; Ewert to Doerksen, 18 April, agreed with the suggestion, but apparently nothing came of it. CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #3.

This sequence of events seems more likely than that suggested by Epp, Mennonites in Canada, pp. 369-70.

²³Mitarbeiter, January 1917, p. 7.

²⁴B. Ewert, "Aufforderung zum Dankopfer," *ibid.*, February 1917, p. 2.

organizers of this fund drive made it clear that their purpose was not to support the war but rather to provide some relief for war victims. It was also observed that such an action might help to obtain the goodwill of their Canadian neighbours who would be less likely to press for Mennonite enlistment if they saw evidence of voluntary sacrifices.²⁵ While the hoped for \$25,000 was not raised, an initial contribution of \$5,777.17 was forwarded to R. B. Bennett, Director General of National Service, in April.²⁶ The Canadian government, after consultation with the Mennonite leaders, turned the contribution over to the Canadian Patriotic Fund for disbursement in keeping with the donors' request.²⁷ The Reinlaender churches of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, which had not participated in the delegation to Ottawa, sent in their contributions separately.²⁸ These

²⁵ Ibid., March 1917, pp. 7-8.

²⁶ Abraham Doerksen, Heinrich Doerksen, David Toews, Klaas Peters, and Benjamin Ewert, to R. B. Bennett, 17 April 1917, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #3. A German translation is found in *ibid.*, #7, and is reproduced in *Mitarbeiter*, May 1917, pp. 7-8. A detailed breakdown of the sources of most of these contributions is given in *Beilage* to the *Mitarbeiter* of May 1917.

²⁷ R. B. Bennett to Abraham Doerksen, 28 May, 11 June and 23 June 1917, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #3. *Mitarbeiter*, June 1917, pp. 2-3.

²⁸ Benjamin Ewert to Klaas Peters, Waldeck, 23 April 1917, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, reports a contribution of \$2,044.75 from Manitoba and \$1383 from Hague. The latter amount, however, had already been sent by Bishop Jacob Wiens on 17 January to Hon. Arthur Meighen. It was also sent as an expression of

groups also participated in local relief efforts during the war,²⁹

4. Implementing Mennonite Exemption:
Military Service Act, 1917

By April of 1917 voluntary enlistments in the Canadian forces no longer matched casualties at the front. Prime Minister Borden returned from the latest Imperial War Conference convinced that Canada must introduce conscription. The Military Service Act, giving the government the necessary powers, became law on 29 August 1917.

The Act provided seven categories of persons who were excepted from its provisions. Included in the seventh exception were "those persons exempted from military service by

thanks, but for Meighen's sympathetic response to a November 1916 delegation of the three Reinlaender bishops who had petitioned the federal government to provide their church with some protection against lawsuits by excommunicated members. Arthur Meighen to R. L. Borden, 29 January 1917; Meighen to Jacob Wiens, 29 January, PAC, MG 26 H, 1(c), vol. 214, pp. 129091-95.

Jacob Heinrichs, Laird, had sued the Hague Reinlaender Church for business losses resulting from his excommunication. The Church decided at the last moment not to contest the suit, as a matter of principle, and was assessed \$1,000 and costs amounting to \$3,212. A special collection was held in order to raise this amount, and it is likely that the \$1,383 forwarded to Ottawa in January was the surplus of this collection after fine and costs had been paid. Mitarbeiter, October 1916, p. 5; November 1916, p. 3; April 1917, p. 8.

Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 370, gives a quite misleading interpretation of Bishop Wiens' letter and contribution, although it is true that Meighen turned the contribution over to the Patriotic Fund, just as Bennett did with contributions from the other Mennonite groups at this time.

²⁹I. M. Dyck, p. 45.

the order-in-council of 13th August 1873 and the order-in-council of 6th December 1898."³⁰ In the opinion of Solicitor General Arthur Meighen, all the descendants of those originally exempted, who had remained part of their community, were excepted from the Military Service Act.³¹

The government was therefore clear that conscription did not apply to western Canadian Mennonites who had come from Russia and to their descendants.³² Accordingly, when the first recruits were called up under the new conscription law, the Military Service Branch Registrars in both Manitoba and Saskatchewan were clear in their instructions that Mennonites were excepted from the terms of the law.³³ They there-

³⁰The orders-in-council referred to are the Mennonite Privilegium and the order providing for military exemption for Doukhobors.

³¹Meighen to E. B. Robertson, Assistant Superintendent of Immigration, 8 August 1917; W. W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, 20 October 1917; PAC, RG 76, vol. 173, #58764-1. See also Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Debates, 1917, 4:3368-69.

³²Epp, Mennonites in Canada, pp. 372-86 passim, indicates that the status of Swiss Mennonites in Ontario was much less clear, even though they had been in Canada much longer.

³³E. R. Chapman, Registrar, Military Service Branch, Winnipeg, to D. W. Friesen, Postmaster, Altona, 18 October 1917; A. Haining, Registrar, Saskatchewan, to Rev. P. J. Epp, Neville, [October 1917], quoted in John Vogt, Neville, to Benjamin Ewert, 2 November 1917, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #3. To an inquiry from Langham, Haining replied that he was not too clear about the status of Mennonites under the Act and so advised them to register and file for exemption. Quoted in GC, MB, KMB, and Defenceless Mennonite petition to the Governor General of Canada in Council, 4 November 1918, p. 12. P.C. #2897/1918, PAC, RG 2, 3, vol. 199.

fore did not need to "fill in and sign the Reports for Service or Claims for Exemption." The much smaller Mennonite community in Alberta received the impression from the papers and from official announcements that they were required to register under the Military Service Act. The absence of regular official communication among the leaders in the three provinces prevented the Alberta Mennonites from discovering that their brethren in Manitoba and Saskatchewan were not registering. Accordingly, they arranged a day when all their young men were registered. Now some of them were being called before the military tribunal and were having difficulty obtaining exemption.³⁴

In Manitoba and Saskatchewan difficulties in the administration of the Act also soon appeared. In part this was caused by a misleading announcement in the Mitarbeiter of October 1917.³⁵ It advised all single males from twenty to thirty-four years of age, explicitly including Mennonites, to apply for exemption either by completing a "Claim for Exemption" form available at the Post Office or by appearing personally before a military tribunal. That meant that they were seeking exemption under the Military Service Act instead.

³⁴ Abram W. Klassen, Swalwell, Alberta, to Benjamin Ewert, 25 October 1917, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #3; Rev. Peter Berg, Swalwell, Mitarbeiter, February 1918, p. 4.

³⁵ "Was haben Glieder wehrloser Gemeinschaften zu tun, um sich bei der bevorstehenden Aushebung Befreiung vom Militaerdienst zu sichern?"

of exception from its terms, as the two provincial registrars had advised.

In part the problem lay with some of the local tribunals appointed under the Military Service Act who were not aware that Mennonites were excepted from it.³⁶ In the large block settlements in Manitoba and in those Saskatchewan communities where the Mennonite leadership became personally acquainted with members of the local tribunal, this did not present a problem.³⁷ But persons living outside of the Mennonite communities in Saskatchewan were frequently inducted.³⁸

An underlying cause of these difficulties was the lack of clarity in government circles as to who was a Mennonite. The delegation of January 1917 had raised the question of the status of unbaptized Mennonite youth at the ministerial level and had been assured that children of Mennonite parents were considered Mennonite by the government. A year later the public press reported that the government was intending to restrict military exemption among Mennonites to baptized

³⁶ Unsigned letter to Prime Minister R. L. Borden, 17 November 1917, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #3.

³⁷ Benjamin Ewert, Gretna, to David Toews, Rosthern, 25 March 1918; Klaas Peters, Waldeck, to B. Ewert, 23 January 1918, *ibid.*, #4.

³⁸ David Toews to B. Ewert, 21 March 1918, *ibid.* Ben P. Jantz, Drake, Mitarbeiter, February 1918, p. 4; March 1918, p. 7. The Herbert and Drake communities, and some areas north of Saskatoon were having considerable difficulties.

members only.³⁹ That was indeed the interpretation now held in the upper eschalons of the civil service in Ottawa. The Deputy Minister of the Interior, for example, wrote:

I would say that any young man of military age who has not yet joined the church should not be exempt. To my mind the whole thing hinges on whether the man is a member of the church or not.⁴⁰

With the legal induction age at eighteen, and many Mennonite young men not baptized until twenty or twenty-one, this presented a serious problem for the Mennonite church.

When the Saskatchewan military district office decided to appoint a special police commissioner to organize the entire province and round up all draft age males who could not show exemption, the Saskatchewan Mennonite ministers unanimously agreed that another delegation to Ottawa should be sent as soon as possible.⁴¹ Their invitation to Manitoba Mennonites to add representatives to the delegation was discussed by twenty-eight ministers on April 3. Since the problem in Manitoba was not a serious one at this point, they did not see sufficient reason to join the delegation.⁴²

³⁹ B. Ewert to Klaas Peters, 28 January 1918, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4, referring to a report in the Winnipeg Tribune of 26 January 1918. Mitarbeiter, editorial, February 1918, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁰ W. W. Cory to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, 11 March 1918; Scott to Rev. Thomas A. Simpson, Waldeck, 18 June 1918; PAC, RG 76, vol. 173, #58764-1.

⁴¹ David Toews to B. Ewert, 21 and 26 March 1918, reports on the 25 March meeting. CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

⁴² Ewert to Rev. Heinrich Doerksen, Niverville, 10 April 1918; Ewert to David Toews, Rosthern, 30 March 1918; *ibid.* The

The three-man Saskatchewan delegation met with Colonel H. A. C. Machin, Director, Military Service Branch, and Judge Duff, the top official dealing with exemptions, in Ottawa on 12 April 1918. Their brief suggested that every Mennonite of military age be required to have a certificate signed by an ordained minister stating that he is a Mennonite and exempt from all military service. This certificate was to be countersigned by a Mennonite person recognized by the government, one such person to be designated for each of the main Mennonite areas. The military Registrars would be provided with the names of these designated persons so that they could instruct their entire staff to recognize the certificates.⁴³ The delegation received verbal assurance that the 1873 order-in-council applied also to unbaptized Mennonite youth, but the official written response reported that the whole question of Mennonite exemption had been assigned for study to a special commissioner.⁴⁴

The suggestion that every draft age Mennonite carry a

28 ministers represented the Sommerfelder (14), Bergthaler (9), Mennonite Brethren (1), Kleine Gemeinde (2), and Holdeman (2) churches.

⁴³David Toews, Rosthern, Klaas Peters, Waldeck, and H. M. Klassen, Herbert, to Col. Machin, Ottawa, 12 April 1918, *ibid.* Mitarbeiter, April 1918, pp. 5-6, "Unsere ungetauften Juenglinge und der Militaerdienst" has a report on the Ottawa meeting, a German translation of the brief, and a sample form of the proposed certificate.

⁴⁴David Toews to B. Ewert, 1 May 1918, reporting content of his letter from Col. Machin; CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

military exemption certificate was implemented however.⁴⁵

David Toews did not accept Registrar Haining's suggestion that he be the official person to countersign all Saskatchewan certificates, but he was elected by a large meeting of representatives at Waldheim to do so for the Rosthern and Drake areas.⁴⁶ He immediately ordered five thousand certificates to be printed. The hoped for uniformity of Mennonite identification was not achieved through these certificates however, as the samples in appendix 6 indicate. The government published its own form near the end of June 1918.

In Alberta, the results of the Saskatchewan delegation to Ottawa were positive. When Registrar Carson in Calgary, was informed, he cancelled all orders to Mennonites to report.⁴⁷ In Saskatchewan the problems persisted. By mid-May there still was no written decision from Ottawa regarding the exemption of unbaptized Mennonite youth. In the absence of a clear directive from the government, it was suggested that the matter be tested in the courts.⁴⁸ This Bishop Toews

⁴⁵ Machin to the Provost Marshal for Canada, 1 July 1918, asks him to instruct police to honour these certificates. PAC, RG 24, vol. 115, HQ 7168-1.

⁴⁶ Toews to B. Ewert, 22 and 25 April 1918, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

⁴⁷ J. M. Carson, Registrar, Province of Alberta, Calgary, to David Toews, 3 May 1918, Exhibit "J", P.C. #2897/1918; Toews to B. Ewert, 1 and 14 May 1918, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

⁴⁸ Toews to B. Ewert, 14 May 1918, *ibid.* "Advocaten-futter!" ejaculated Toews in exasperation.

wanted to avoid if at all possible. Could a judge decide this dangerous, precedent-setting case neutrally in these turbulent times, he wondered?⁴⁹ The presence in Saskatchewan of some Swiss Mennonites, who did not come under the terms of the 1873 order-in-council, complicated matters and made it difficult to deal with lower level officials. Obtaining the release of one inducted Mennonite youth created such tensions in the community that he was advised to go to Manitoba for the duration of the War.⁵⁰

In Manitoba, where things had been relatively quiet, the Military Board in Winnipeg decided in June of 1918 to have the matter of unbaptized Mennonite youth clarified. Abraham Dyck, Lowe Farm, was inducted and taken to the barracks as a test case. Leaders of the Manitoba Mennonite churches were then called to Winnipeg to testify before the Board about the church status of unbaptized Mennonite children. Five ministers, including the Sommerfelder and Bergthaler bishops, presented a fifteen-point Brief to the Board on June 10.⁵¹ The brief explained that on birth a Mennonite

⁴⁹Toews to B. Ewert, 19 May 1918, *ibid.*

⁵⁰Toews to B. Ewert, 11 June 1918, *ibid.*

⁵¹Undated brief signed by Abraham Doerksen, Bishop of Sommerfeld Mennonite Church, Jacob Hoeppe, Bishop of Bergthal Congregation, and Johann Warkentin, Leading Minister of Mennonite Brethren Church; PAC, RG 24, vol. 115, HQ 7168-1. *Mitarbeiter*, June 1918, pp. 3-5, "Bemuehungen zur Sicherung der Wehrfreiheit fuer unsere ungetauften Juenglinge," includes a German translation of the 15-point brief. A copy of the document is found in CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4. The delegation

child is not only registered with the state but, also, entered into the church register and belongs to the Gemeinschaft from that day on. On reaching sufficient maturity, usually at age twenty-one, the child is baptized and received into full membership. Those not requesting baptism nevertheless attend worship, support the church, and have their marriage, place of abode, and death recorded in the church register. The difference between these and the baptized members is that the latter are admitted to communion and have a vote in church decisions. "In summary, our Gemeinschaft considers its children and young people its own as much as the baptized members."

A few days later there was a broad sigh of relief when word came from Winnipeg that the explanation given was acceptable and would serve as basis for future action by the military boards. The inducted Abraham Dyck was forthwith released.⁵²

In Saskatchewan, however, the situation remained intolerable. Registrar Haining had in mid-May admitted to

consisted of Doerksen, Hoepfner, and Warkentin, who signed the brief, and W. J. Bestvater and H. H. Ewert.

An 11-point statement, "Unbaptized Members of the Church," submitted by four Saskatchewan Mennonite groups to the authorities in their province repeats points 5-11 and 13-15 of the Manitoba brief. See Exhibit "B" of P.C. #2897/1918.

⁵²B. Ewert to D. Toews, 14 June 1918, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542. Mitarbeiter, June 1918, pp. 5-6, "Die Frage wegen der Wehrfreiheit der ungetauften Juenglinge entschieden."

Bishop Toews that his earlier advice that Mennonites register and claim exemption had been wrong. In the future, if a conscript could be shown by an ordained minister to be a member of a Mennonite church, he would be considered as "outside the Act." If he could not be shown to be a member of a Mennonite church, "he will have to obey the order to report for duty when it is sent, or apply to the courts for a decision as to his status."⁵³ After thorough consideration the Mennonite leaders decided not to follow that course because they did not want to arouse undesirable publicity or embarrass the authorities, but mostly because

our faith rested and continues to rest in the successors in office of those with whom our fathers entered into a solemn contract. It is unthinkable to us that they, should violate this contract and we are quite sure that it only requires a thorough presentation of our case to cause them to so act that we may again have that peace for which we long so much.⁵⁴

The result of this decision was an endless series of conferences with the military authorities in Regina, accusations of fraud in connection with the issuing of certificates of church membership, and demands for all kinds of documentary proof regarding the ordination of ministers, bishops, and presiding elders, church and conference records, and

⁵³ A. L. Haining to David Toews, 16 May 1918, quoted in P.C. #2897/1918, p. 17.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 19.

confessions of faith.⁵⁵ To meet these demands, Bishop Toews prepared an affidavit listing fifty-eight "properly qualified and duly ordained ministers of the denomination of Christians called Mennonites" in fourteen districts of Saskatchewan.⁵⁶ At a conference in the Military District No. 12 office in Regina between Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Cross, Registrar Haining, and a Mennonite delegation, held on June 28, the military authorities agreed that they would not attempt "to distinguish between Mennonites born and brought up as such, and unbaptized on the one hand and baptized on the other hand."⁵⁷ A further delegation to Regina on July 11 "brought along numerous voluminous church records from various sections of the province, declarations from bishops showing induction of ministers, minutes of meetings of congregations and several translations of articles of faith and other material."⁵⁸ In view of the conclusions reached at that conference the delegation thought that all its troubles were now over and that all the Mennonite youths

⁵⁵ When the Chief Inspector of the Military Police requested a Mennonite Calendar for 1918, the government bureaucracy finally caught up with itself, since both the Bundesbote and Familienkalender had already been banned by the Chief Press Censor. D. Toews to B. Ewert, 8 October 1918; Ewert to Toews, 12 October 1918; CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

⁵⁶ David Toews, Regina, 4 June 1918; a copy is attached as Exhibit "E" to P.C. #2897/1918.

⁵⁷ J. E. Doerr of Doerr and Guggisberg, Solicitors, to David Toews, 28 June 1918; Exhibit "H" of P.C. #2897/1918.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

who had already reported for duty would be discharged and the order to report to the others cancelled.⁵⁹

It did not happen. The military police at Regina less than a month before Armistice still had not received a clear ruling whether, in the case of Mennonites, "bona fide membership" meant only "baptized communicant members," or whether the broader Mennonite interpretation held.⁶⁰ So Mennonite difficulties in Saskatchewan persisted.

Finally, four branches of the church in Saskatchewan, whose membership included approximately two-thirds of the Mennonite population of that province, compiled a twenty-seven page brief with fourteen exhibits documenting the sequence of events outlined above. It was addressed to the Governor-General of Canada in Council and dated one week before the Armistice. By the time it was received in Ottawa conscription had ceased and the document ended up among the Privy Council "dormants."⁶¹

It must be admitted that the government was under con-

⁵⁹ J. E. Doerr to Lieut. McKenzie, Headquarters Staff, Regina, 11 July 1918, Exhibit "I", *ibid.*

⁶⁰ J. H. Reid, Chief Inspector, Civil Section, Canadian Military Police Corps, Regina, to Provost Marshall, Ottawa, 15 October 1918, PAC, RG 24, vol. 115, HQ 7168-1.

⁶¹ Western Canadian branch of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America, Mennonite Brethren, Crimean Mennonite Brethren, and Defenceless Mennonites, to the Governor General of Canada in Council, 4 November 1918, received in Ottawa 19 November 1918, P.C. #2897/1918, *ibid.*, RG 2, 3, vol. 199.

siderable criticism for its policy of allowing Mennonite exemption. The Great War Veterans' Association, the Loyal Orange Lodge, and the Sons of England criticized the undue power conferred upon the Mennonite clergy by the government. In giving them authority to determine who was entitled to military exemption under "the Mennonite Treaty of 1873," the government was "constituting a Mennonite priest a one man tribunal."⁶² Methodist ministers also "played a leading part in alerting the Saskatchewan government to the 'Mennonite menace' and suggested that the policy of exempting Mennonites be reviewed."⁶³ But Ottawa had determined that "the rights granted to the Mennonites under the orders-in-council must be respected, for we could not afford to convert what was really a treaty into a 'scrap of paper'."⁶⁴

⁶²R. M. Stewart, Acting Secretary-Treasurer, Great War Veterans' Association of Canada, Ottawa, to Prime Minister R. L. Borden, 21 October 1918, *ibid.*, MG 26 H, 1(c), vol. 214, p. 121177; G.W.V.A., Loyal Orange Lodge, and Sons of England, Regina, to J. A. Calder, Minister of Colonization and Immigration, 15 October 1918, SAB, M 12, II-77, p. 11436; Great War Next of Kin Association, Lethbridge, to P. M. Robert Borden, 22 September 1918, PAC, RG 24, vol. 115, HQ 7168-1. See also reports in *RML* on meetings of the G.W.V.A. (24 September 1918, p. 9) and Orange Lodge (7 October 1918, p. 9).

⁶³J. M. Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I," *Canadian Historical Review* 49 (September 1968): 222.

See also "The Church, the War and Patriotism," report prepared by the Army and Navy Board of the Methodist Church and adopted by the General Conference at Hamilton in 1918; copy in PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 6. It contains 9 recommendations dealing specifically with the Mennonite situation in the prairie provinces.

⁶⁴R. B. Bennett to R. L. Borden, 22 January 1917, PAC, MG 26 H, 1(c), vol. 214.

The federal government therefore stood firm on western Canadian Mennonite exemption from military service even though it was apparently unable to prevent its Saskatchewan officials from making that exemption very difficult to obtain in practice.

The trial and conviction of ex-Mennonite Klaas Peters, now a Swedenborgian minister, for illegally issuing military exemption certificates might well have damaged the Mennonite cause in Saskatchewan further had it occurred any earlier. Peters had already left the Mennonite church in Manitoba where he was ordained a minister of the New Jerusalem church (Swedenborgian) in 1902. In spite of this, he was representative for the Waldeck area Mennonites in both of the wartime delegations to Ottawa. Bishop Toews and the Rosthern area Mennonites were uneasy about this and warned their southern brethren to sever their connections with him.⁶⁵ When Peters began issuing Mennonite identity cards for purposes of military exemption,⁶⁶ the police soon laid

⁶⁵ D. Toews to B. Ewert, 29 March, 18 April 1918, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

⁶⁶ H. M. Klassen, Herbert, had been chosen to countersign identification cards for the southern Saskatchewan Mennonites. B. Ewert to P. H. Neufeld, Vanderhoof, B.C., 4 June 1918, *ibid.*; "Synopsis of Evidence to be expected of H. M. Klassen" at the trial of Klaas Peters, PAC, RG 24, vol. 115, HQ 7168.

When some difficulty arose in regard to Klassen's countersigning Peters' certificates, the latter went to Ottawa again to arrange with the Deputy Minister of Justice that a certain certificate bearing only the signature of an ordained minister be acceptable. J. H. Reid, Chief Inspector,

charges and he was brought to trial three days after the Armistice, found guilty and fined \$200 plus costs.⁶⁷

5. U.S. Mennonite Immigrants and
the Military Service Act

When the United States entered the war in 1917 it soon became obvious that Mennonites there had considerably more difficulty in obtaining exemption from military service than their Canadian brothers did. In February of 1918 there were a hundred and thirty Mennonite conscientious objectors in Camp Funston, Kansas.⁶⁸ Both the Mennonites and Hutterites were beginning to emigrate to Canada to escape induction, and it was expected that this would become a large movement if they would be assured of exemption from military service here.⁶⁹

When the Canadian government's agent in Omaha, Nebraska, inquired about the status of U.S. Mennonite immigrants under

Civil Section, Canadian Military Police Corps, Regina, to The Provost Marshall, Ottawa, 15 October 1918, *ibid.*

⁶⁷*RML*, 9 November 1918, p. 17; 15 November, p. 15; 29 November, p. 11; *SCSun*, 15 and 29 November 1918. For extensive documentation of this court case see PAC, RG 24, vol. 115, HQ 7168-1.

⁶⁸*Mitarbeiter*, February 1918, p. 7; see also April 1917, p. 3; October 1917, p. 6; November 1917, p. 2.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, editorial, April 1918, p. 4. Hutterite purchase of a 122,000-acre ranch in Alberta was reported.

For an extensive account of this movement from the perspective of the American emigrants, see Allan Teichroew, "World War I and the Mennonite migration to Canada to avoid the draft," *MQR* 45 (July 1971): 219-49.

the Military Service Act in September of 1917, he was assured on the advice of the Minister of the Interior "that the provisions of the Military Service Act do not apply to these people, -- that they are exempt."⁷⁰ In the late months of 1917 the Canadian government still considered Mennonites "a desirable class of agriculturalists" and encouraged its U.S. agents to facilitate their immigration into Canada.⁷¹ This attitude also applied to Hutterites and continued well into 1918.⁷² When in August of 1918 a Member of Parliament from British Columbia suggested to immigration officials that local feeling was beginning to turn against the influx of Mennonites from America,⁷³ Ottawa's official position began to be less enthusiastic.

⁷⁰ J. C. Koehn, Canadian Government Agent, Omaha, to W. J. White, Inspector of U.S. Agencies, 28 September 1917; W. W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, 20 October 1917; PAC, RG 76, vol. 173, #58764-1; cf. Adjutant-General, Canadian Militia, to John P. Thiessen, Jansen, Nebraska, 2 October 1917, *ibid.*, RG 24, vol. 115, HQ 7168-1.

⁷¹ M. J. Johnstone, Canadian Government Agent, Watertown, S.D., to W. J. White, 23 October 1917; White to Johnstone, 6 November 1917, *ibid.*, RG 76, vol. 173, #58764-1.

⁷² J. B. W., Commissioner of Immigration, Winnipeg, to W. D. Scott, 30 January 1918, regarding Hutterites: "these people are very desirable." *Ibid.* Cf. Valentine Winkler, Manitoba Minister of Agriculture and Immigration, to Arthur Meighen, Minister of the Interior, 31 January 1918. In April Inspector White was still encouraging Agent Koehn in Mountain Lake, Minn., to try to "get as many of them [Mennonites] to move to Canada as possible."

⁷³ F. J. Fulton, M.P., Kamloops, to W. D. Scott, 20 August 1918, *ibid.*, #58764-2.

My own opinion is that we ought to handle the movement with considerable care. I doubt if we should offer any great encouragement, but, at the same time, if these people are interested in Western Canada . . . we should not put any special hindrance in their way.

Throughout this time U.S. Mennonites were assured that anyone who could produce a certificate from a recognized bishop of the church showing that he was a bona fide member would be regarded as exempt from the provisions of the Military Service Act.⁷⁵ By September, Immigration Minister Calder maintained that Mennonite immigrants from the U.S. were American citizens subject to the U.S. draft even in Canada.⁷⁶ A few days later Registrar Haining confirmed that U.S. immigrant Mennonites were not excepted from the Military Service Act, but, like Ontario Mennonites, could seek exemption from combatant service only.⁷⁷ This interpretation was confirmed in October by an order-in-council passed at the recommendation of the Minister of Justice which provided that only those Mennonites who had come directly to Canada

⁷⁴ Scott to W. W. Cory, 27 August 1918, *ibid.* Writing to Canadian Government agent J. C. Koehn in Omaha on 31 August 1918, Scott indicated the reasons "for deciding on a somewhat neutral policy with regard to strongly encouraging a heavy movement of Mennonites to Canada at this time." *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ W. D. Scott to Mennonite Emigration Committee in Kansas, 13 June 1918, quoted in Canadian Annual Review, 1918, p. 427.

⁷⁶ RML, 20 September 1918, p. 9; 24 September, p. 9.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 25 September 1918, p. 9; 26 September, p. 1.

under the provisions of the Privilegium, and their descendants, who had continued without interruption to be members of the denomination and had resided permanently in Canada, were exempted from military service within the seventh exception to the Military Service Act of 1917.⁷⁸

6. The 1918 National Registration

While the Mennonites were still struggling to clarify their status under the Military Service Act of 1917, a new threat appeared in the form of "The Canada Registration Board" created by order-in-council in February 1918.⁷⁹ The Bergthaler church promptly instructed Benjamin Ewert, its member of the 1917 Ottawa delegation, to attempt to discover whether Mennonites had to participate in the proposed new registration.⁸⁰ Ewert turned to Bishop Toews in Saskatchewan for information and counsel, and the two of them became the

⁷⁸P.C. #2622, 25 October 1918, PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 1518. Epp's claim, Mennonites in Canada, p. 382, that after June 1918 "all Mennonites in Western Canada were excepted from the Act upon simple proof of identity" is thus not supported by the facts. Mennonites from the U.S.A. clearly did not come into this category, and even those in Saskatchewan, who had come to Canada directly under the 1873 agreement, had difficulty in practice gaining exemption right to the end of the War.

⁷⁹P.C. #404, 23 February 1918, PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 1485.

⁸⁰Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, 2:165, 7 March 1918, CMCA, XII, vol. 716.

focal points of further consultation among the Mennonites.⁸¹

In response to early inquiries, Mennonites were assured that the registration had "no military significance whatever."⁸² The chairman of the Registration Board, Senator Robertson, in his official communication to the provincial premiers stated:

We expect it will prove a valuable aid to the military and naval authorities in securing men for Canada's first line of defense, which for the present is overseas.⁸³

Mennonite leaders were aware of this significance of the registration despite reassurances to the contrary.

The national registration of all persons age sixteen to sixty-five was to take place on June 22. The Bruderthaler of the Manitoba East Reserve were apparently the first Mennonite group to agree to register.⁸⁴ In early June a number of bishops and ministers met with Senator Robertson in Winnipeg to discuss the implications for Mennonites if they participated in the registration. Senator Robertson assured

⁸¹B. Ewert, Gretna, to D. Toews, Rosthern, 15 May 1918; H. M. Klassen, Herbert, Saskatchewan, to B. Ewert, 5 June 1918; P. H. Neufeld, Vanderhoof, B.C., to B. Ewert, 29 May 1918, *ibid.*, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

⁸²V. Winkler, Minister of Agriculture, Winnipeg, to Rev. Peter Goertz, Inman, Kansas, 13 May 1918, PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 5. Peter B. Schmidt, Steinbach, to B. Ewert, 29 May 1918, reports an almost identical response from Registrar Philip Locke, Winnipeg, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

⁸³G. D. Robertson, Chairman, Canada Registration Board, Ottawa, to Premier W. M. Martin, Regina, 18 May 1918, SAB, M 4, I-101, p. 30088.

⁸⁴Peter B. Schmidt, Steinbach, to B. Ewert, 29 May 1918, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

them that the government intended to honour fully its promise to the Mennonites regarding exemption from military service, but at the same time emphatically warned that everyone without exception had to register.⁸⁵ As protection against military recruiters, it was suggested that question 4 for females and question 9 for males be answered with the word "Mennonite."⁸⁶

Three days after the Winnipeg meeting with Senator Robertson, leaders of the Bergthaler church met in Altona to discuss their response. Although some brethren had serious misgivings regarding the registration, suggesting that this might be the beginning of the fulfillment of Revelation 13, the meeting decided not to hinder anyone who wanted to register and agreed to have persons available at every place of registration to help their members complete their forms.⁸⁷ In Saskatchewan also Revelation 13:16-17

⁸⁵ Mitarbeiter, June 1918, pp. 6-7. Present at the June 8 meeting were bishops Jacob Hoepfner and Peter Schmidt, and ministers H. Doerksen, H. H. Ewert, Johann Warkentin, and Heinrich Reimer.

⁸⁶ Question 9 of the "Card for Males" reads: "If registered under the Military Service Act, what is your serial number?" Question 4 of the "Card for Females" asks for the person's nationality. Copies of the cards are given in app. 7.

Instructions prepared by the Reinlaender Obervorsteher in Manitoba for the registration give the same advice, but also suggest that males answer with "Mennonite" questions 3b and 4d. JWR, "Fragen fuer die Registrierung am 22sten Juni 1918, fuer Maennliche Personen," CMCA, XXII-K.3, vol. 1099.

⁸⁷ Mitarbeiter, June 1918, p. 7; B. Ewert to D. Toews, 14 June 1918, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

was being widely applied to the registration, but a meeting at Hepburn on June 20 reluctantly decided to go along with the registration.⁸⁸

The Manitoba Reinlaender leaders had already gone to Winnipeg to meet with the chief registrar for Manitoba, Philip Locke, in May. The latter's decision to have Mennonites handle the registration themselves under his direction was welcomed for its accommodating spirit.⁸⁹ But it was not an easy matter for Mennonites to accept appointment as deputy registrar when they were not yet convinced that their people should even register.⁹⁰

The Manitoba Reinlaender had their brotherhood meeting to decide this issue on June 13 with representatives of the two Saskatchewan Reinlaender groups also present.⁹¹ Registrar Locke was invited to attend the meeting, but when he arrived at the announced time it was already over. Together with the Morden attorney, Alex McLeod, who had frequently served the Reinlaender Mennonites, and W. J. Rowe, Registrar for the electoral division of Lisgar, Locke visited the Mennonite leaders who were still assembled in Reinland. Since the

⁸⁸Toews to B. Ewert, 11 June 1918, *ibid.*

⁸⁹*Mitarbeiter*, May 1918, pp. 6-7.

⁹⁰Peter S. Buhr, Haskett, to B. Ewert, 30 May 1918, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

⁹¹B. Ewert to D. Toews, 14 June 1918, *ibid.* See also p. 4 of account of P. C. Locke, submitted by Judge J. E. Adamson and attached to memo of L. E. Westman to A. MacNamarra, 27 March 1944, PAC, RG 27, 601.3-6, vol. 4.

brotherhood meeting had decided not to register, Locke was faced with a dilemma. Threats of imprisonment and fines did not accomplish anything. In the end his appeal to the example of the willingness of Joseph and Mary to participate in the Roman registration as recorded in the gospel of Luke, chapter 2, persuaded the Mennonite leaders to reconsider.⁹² A second brotherhood meeting on the following Sunday then decided unanimously to participate in the registration.⁹³ Thus, in the end all Mennonite groups in Western Canada co-operated in the 1918 manpower registration.

7. Financial Involvement: Red Cross and Victory Loans

Reference has already been made to Mennonite contributions to the Red Cross as early as 1915, and to the special collection for the Patriotic Fund in early 1917. These orga-

⁹² Ibid., p. 8; Ewert to D. Toews, 15 June 1918, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4.

⁹³ I. M. Dyck, pp. 30-32. Some details of Dyck's version of this highly interesting incident are clearly wrong, understandably so since he wrote some fifty years after the event, largely from memory. But his claim that a second brotherhood meeting was called to reverse the decision of June 13 is much more plausible than Locke's more dramatic version in which the leaders made the decision on the spot.

Gerhard Rempel, "Erinnerungen," undated MS, Blumenort, Chihuahua, Mexico, copy in CMCA, XX-60, vol. 1028, pp. 1-3, includes another variation of this incident, according to which the Swift Current Obervorsteher Rempel tried to persuade the Bruderschaft with Luke 2 even before Locke used it with the leaders.

See also Epp, Mennonites in Canada, pp. 383-84.

nizations continued to receive financial support throughout the war years from all Mennonite groups. The Bergthaler Church of Manitoba made this into a carefully planned annual affair, urging its members to contribute sacrificially, and even developing an informal property tax by 1918.⁹⁴ In the Reinlaender Church such contributions caused some uneasiness in spite of official assurances that the funds were entirely used for the relief of war victims. As far as the more sensitive consciences were concerned, all these contributions helped to strengthen the total war effort.⁹⁵ It is estimated that overall Mennonite contributions to these relief organizations amounted to about \$50,000 by the end of 1917, with close to \$100,000 more during 1918.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Bergthaler Church, Brotherhood, Minutes, 15 November 1917, 9 October 1918, CMCA, XII, vol. 715; *idem*, Ministerial, Minutes, 2:163, 172, 174; 6 November 1917, 5 August and 13 September 1918, *ibid.*, vol. 716. *Mitarbeiter*, November 1917, p. 6.

⁹⁵ I. M. Dyck, pp. 29-30; cf. pp. 45, 55. Redekop, pp. 13-14, erroneously claims that the Old Colony Mennonites did not support the Red Cross at all. The *Mitarbeiter*, November 1917, p. 6, e.g. reported Reinlaender contributions of \$2,044.75 for the Patriotic Fund in March and \$2,335.50 more recently for the Red Cross.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, January 1918, p. 4. The editor compared the \$50,000 Mennonite total with the reported \$53,000 contribution of Manitoba Jews to the Patriotic Fund and wondered whether Mennonites had done enough.

William J. O'Neill to R. S. Thornton, Manitoba Minister of Education, 14 July 1919, quoted in J. H. Doerksen, pp. 91-95.

The Victory loan question was much more vexatious. The purchase of Victory bonds, while representing a loan rather than a gift, clearly represented financial support for the war effort. Saskatchewan Mennonite leaders, meeting to discuss this issue shortly after a new Victory loan was floated in late 1917, had little difficulty in agreeing that their churches could not participate.⁹⁷ To the Manitoba Bergthaler leaders the issue was not that clear. They considered it their duty to support the government financially when such support was requested. But in keeping with their pacifist stance they would ask the government not to use their funds for military purposes but only for the purchase of foodstuffs.⁹⁸ Accordingly, they recommended to their brotherhood meeting that participation in the Victory loan be a matter of individual decision.⁹⁹

Most of the Mennonite churches apparently followed the lead of the Saskatchewan rather than the Bergthaler brethren. In lieu of participation in the Victory bond drive, they held special collections for the Red Cross and in one case

⁹⁷ P. J. Friesen, secretary, report on 1 November 1917 meeting at Waldheim of Mennonite ministers, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #3. D. Toews, Rosthern to B. Ewert, 17 November 1917, reported that the Drake community had agreed with the Waldheim decision. See also Mitarbeiter, November 1917, p. 6.

⁹⁸ Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, 2:163, #4.A, 6 November 1917, CMCA, XII, vol. 716.

⁹⁹ Idem, Brotherhood, Minutes, 15 November 1917, *ibid.*, vol. 715; Mitarbeiter, November 1917, p. 6.

offered the government a five-year interest-free loan for relief purposes.¹⁰⁰

Refusal to participate in the Victory bond drive was not a popular move in wartime Canada. When Jacob Friesen, editor and publisher of the Steinbach Post, refused to accept a paid advertisement for the Victory loan, a chain reaction of responses was triggered. The President of the Canadian Press Association complained to Lt.-Col. E. J. Chambers, the Chief Press Censor in Ottawa,

that a newspaper published by a man with a name like that and devoted to the purposes specified, ["a German-Mennonite family paper devoted to the interests of the German speaking public of this country"] and which will not accept, even at proper rates, advertising for a Canadian war loan, should not be permitted to publish in this country.¹⁰¹

Although the Censor had "never had any complaints made against this publication since the commencement of the war," he nevertheless requested that Friesen explain "at length" just why had taken this action.¹⁰²

Friesen apologized for his inability to cooperate in this respect and then explained that "the one and only reason

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., January 1918, p. 5. The northern Saskatchewan churches raised \$16,000 for the Red Cross; the Manitoba Sommerfelder contributed over \$4,000, the Reinlaender over \$3,000, and the Manitoba East Reserve churches offered a \$12,800 interest-free loan in addition to their gift.

¹⁰¹ J. H. Woods, Chairman, Victory War Loan Press Publicity Committee, to Chambers, Chief Press Censor for Canada, 1 November 1917, PAC, RG 6, E-1, vol. 21, #119-S-2.

¹⁰² Chambers to Woods, 2 November 1917; Chambers to Jacob S. Friesen, Steinbach, 2 November 1917, *ibid.*

why we did not publish said advertisement is because our faith forbids us to partake of anything which aids to harm or kill any human being whatever, direct or indirect."¹⁰³

Not satisfied with this explanation, Chambers submitted the matter to the Deputy Minister of Justice.¹⁰⁴ At the same time, he advised the Deputy Postmaster General,

that as this paper, published . . . "in the interest of the German-speaking public of this country", shows itself absolutely indifferent to the public interests, that the Post Office Department as a public service may not feel itself under any obligation to assist the publishers in the circulation of their publication.¹⁰⁵

The Post Office Department made it clear that since the Post "complied with all the conditions necessary" for the granting of statutory postal privileges, only the Secretary of State could take any action against it.¹⁰⁶ The Deputy Minister of Justice had meanwhile forwarded the matter to the Finance Department which found Friesen's explanation reasonable and advised against the government's taking any action as long as objection to publishing the Victory loan advertisement was not widespread.¹⁰⁷

The Censor still felt that Friesen's refusal to run

¹⁰³ Friesen to Chambers, 7 November 1917, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Chambers to E. L. Newcombe, 12 November 1917, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Chambers to R. M. Coulter, 12 November 1917, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Coulter to Chambers, 14 November 1917, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Newcombe to Chambers, 14 November 1917; T. C. Boville, Deputy Minister of Finance, to Chambers, 15 November 1917, *ibid.*

the advertisement was "certainly an unfriendly attitude to assume by one who enjoys special privileges from the government."¹⁰⁸ But when the next issue of the Post included a front page editorial explaining the loan and advising its readers "that the possession of one or more of the Victory bonds might rightly be considered as a test of true patriotism," Chambers was somewhat mollified.¹⁰⁹ The President of the Canadian Press Association, who had initiated the investigation, found Friesen's excuse "probably just a plain, ordinary falsehood induced by fear," and was skeptical of the "religious principles to which he seems suddenly so attached." While he appreciated the government's motives for tolerance, he objected to the "unnecessary leniency toward alien enemies in our midst" and thought that "an example should be made of some of these people."¹¹⁰ The government, however, wanted as little of the "mailed fist" approach in censorship as possible.¹¹¹

A year later the government took strong initiative in

¹⁰⁸ Chambers to Coulter, 15 November 1917, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Chambers to Woods, 15 November 1917. To the Deputy Minister of Finance the Censor admitted: "I am unable to say whether the publication of this editorial was the result of our correspondence or was prompted by some spontaneous impulse which it is impossible for the ordinary mortal to fathom." Chambers to Boville, 16 November 1917, *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Woods to Chambers, 15 November 1917, *ibid.*

¹¹¹ Chambers to Woods, 16 November 1917, *ibid.*

attempting to resolve Mennonite objection to the Victory bonds. Finance Minister White met with church leaders in Winnipeg and Regina to announce an unusual concession. In order to meet their conscientious objections to participation in the Victory bond drive, the government promised to devote "an amount equivalent to the total subscriptions of your people to the loan, for relief purposes, namely convalescent homes and hospitals."¹¹² This arrangement apparently was quite acceptable to most of the Mennonite groups.¹¹³ Within a year Manitoba Mennonites had purchased an estimated \$600,000 - 700,000 worth of Victory bonds.¹¹⁴

¹¹²The Manitoba Mennonites, Rev. H. Doerksen, Chortitzer Church, and Rev. H. J. Friesen, Sommerfelder Church, met with the Minister in Winnipeg on 8 October 1918. Bishop J. Wiens and Rev. J. P. Wall, Hague Reinlaender Church, Bishop David Toews and Rev. J. Gerbrandt, Rosenorter Church, and J. H. Friesen, Mennonite Brethren Church, met with the Minister in Saskatchewan a week later.

The letter, T. White, Finance Minister, to the Bishops of the Mennonite Church, 8 October 1918, is found in German translation in J. H. Doerksen, p. 90; in English (W. T. White, Minister of Finance, to the Bishops in the Mennonite churches in Saskatchewan) it is found in RML, 16 October 1918, p. 2.

¹¹³The Manitoba Bergthaler approved participation in the bond drive at their brotherhood meeting on 9 October 1918. CMCA, XII, vol. 715.

The Mitarbeiter, May 1918, pp. 5-6, had already prepared the way for this decision by reporting a similar arrangement made by the Mennonite Church in the USA.

H. H. Ewert to S. F. Coffman, Vineland, Ontario, 21 October 1918, reported that western Canadian Mennonites generally had accepted White's proposal. CMCA, XX-5, vol. 554. The RML, 16 October 1918, p. 2, reported that White's letter was "perfectly satisfactory to the representatives of the Mennonites."

¹¹⁴William J. O'Neill to R. S. Thornton, 14 July 1919, reproduced in J. H. Doerksen, p. 91.

8. Press Censorship

Early in 1917 the government strengthened and consolidated its censorship powers which had been in existence since the beginning of the War.¹¹⁵ The first Mennonite publication to feel the effect of these new powers was Der Christliche Bundesbote, official organ of the General Conference Mennonite Church of North America, published in Berne, Indiana. A recommendation that distribution in Canada of the Bundesbote be prohibited, was quickly implemented by the Secretary of State.¹¹⁶ For Canadian members of the General Conference possession of their official church paper now became an offence punishable by a \$5,000 fine and/or imprisonment.¹¹⁷ When Canadian Mennonite leaders inquired how they might advise their editor to make the Bundesbote acceptable for distribution in Canada, the irony of the Censor's response must have struck them:

¹¹⁵ P.C. #46, 17 January 1917, "Consolidated Orders respecting Censorship," PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 1430. Four orders-in-council of 1914 and four of 1915 were replaced by the new one.

¹¹⁶ Col. E. J. Chambers, Chief Press Censor, to Secretary of State, 1 February 1917; Acting Under-Secretary of State to Chambers, 22 February 1917, *ibid.*, RG 6, E-1, vol. 13, 116-C-5.

¹¹⁷ Chambers to B. C. Johnson, Arizona, 23 February 1917, *ibid.*

It is contrary to the principles of British freedom and liberty and British respect for international obligations, to endeavour to dictate a policy to publications which are printed in countries which are not under the jurisdiction of the British flag.¹¹⁸

In spite of a staff censor's report that the contents of the Bundesbote were "quite inoffensive," its publishers were unable to have Canadian postal privileges restored through U.S. diplomatic intervention.¹¹⁹ Since at least part of the offensiveness of the Bundesbote was the fact that it was printed in German, its publishers solved the problem by sending Canadian subscribers the denomination's English language paper, The Mennonite. This successfully passed the criteria of the censor despite the presence of an article regarding the Mennonite position on bearing arms.¹²⁰

The other German language periodical published in the U.S.A. with a wide readership in western Canada was Die Mennonitische Rundschau. In August 1918 it was still sur-

¹¹⁸ Chambers to Rev. Peter Goertz, Carnduff, Saskatchewan, 16 March 1917, replying to Goertz's inquiry of 12 March 1917; cf. Chambers to Bishop David Toews, Rosthern, 3 August 1917, *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Censor "EB" examined the 12 and 17 April 1917 issues of the Christlicher Bundesbote. The request to restore postal privileges was made through J. F. Foster, U.S. Consul General to Thos. Mulvey, Under-Secretary of State, 22 July 1917. The Chief Press Censor replied to Foster, 24 July 1917, that "under no consideration whatever" would he think of advising that the ban be lifted. *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ R. M. Coulter, Deputy Postmaster General, to Chambers, 19 March 1917; Chambers to Herbert Vanderhoof, Chicago, 20 March 1917, *ibid.*

viving the periodic scrutiny of the Canadian Press Censor.¹²¹

Of the two German language papers published by Mennonites in western Canada, the Steinbach Post had already come to the attention of the Chief Press Censor by its refusal to publish Victory loan advertising. In the summer of 1918 its publishers were again severely criticized by Lt. Col. Chambers for printing, in pamphlet form, resolutions passed by the Holdeman Conference (Church of God in Christ Mennonite) held at Lonetree, Kansas.

I have secured through the United States authorities copies of this pamphlet, and regret to find that it contains a great deal of most objectionable matter, matter which is in distinct contravention of the Canadian censorship orders-in-council inasmuch as it encourages opposition to practically all the war measures of the government.¹²²

Jacob Friesen, publisher of the Post, apologized for having accepted this printing job and assured Chambers that the pamphlet was not intended "to do any harm to our beloved government or country; it was simply meant to serve as a memorandum" for members of the pacifist denomination involved and was not intended to be in the possession of any person

¹²¹J. P. D. van Veen on 16 August 1918 reported to the Censor Bureau that the Rundschau was devoted exclusively to religious subjects. It was published weekly by Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa. Ibid., vol. 15, #116-M-6.

¹²²Chambers to The Publishers, "Steinbach Post," 7 June 1918, ibid., vol. 21, #119-S-2.

not belonging to that denomination.¹²³

In response to Chambers' request, Friesen had identified Rev. Jacob T. Wiebe as the person who had placed the printing order. Wiebe also now received a stiff warning not to repeat this offense or anything like it. The Censor added

that while the laws of this country concede certain well defined rights to those who conscientiously object to military service, they provide clear and distinct punishment for those who would appeal to those who are not conscientious objectors to become so at this particular crisis of the country's affairs.¹²⁴

In September 1918 the government introduced new measures to control literature in enemy alien language.¹²⁵ Der Mitarbeiter, official organ of the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada, was forced to suspend publication,¹²⁶ even though the staff censor described it as "a paper devoted to religious and missionary subjects . . . perfectly harmless."¹²⁷

¹²³ Jacob S. Friesen to Chambers, 12 June 1918, *ibid.*

¹²⁴ Chambers to Jacob T. Wiebe, Greenland, Manitoba, 17 June 1918, *ibid.*

¹²⁵ P.C. #2381, 25 September 1918, PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 1515.

¹²⁶ B. Ewert, Gretna, to David Toews, Rosthern, 12 October 1918, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4. H. H. Ewert, editor, to Secretary of State, 30 June 1919, PAC, RG 6, E-1, vol. 138, #370-G-A-25.

B. Ewert could not resist pointing out the irony of this form of suppression: "Es wird auch in unserm schoenen Canada immer dunkler. Wir kaempfen ja auch fuer Freiheit und gegen Unterdrueckung."

¹²⁷ J. P. D. van Veen to J. Leslie, Press Censor of Canada, 10 October 1918, *ibid.*, vol. 21, #119-S-2.

The Steinbach Post however, still circulated its October 2 issue even though the new law had taken effect October 1. It was promptly reported to the Chief Press Censor by the Royal Northwest Mounted Police to whose attention it had been drawn by one of the force's special operatives.¹²⁸ The latter found it offensive because "the whole edition does not contain even one reference to the War, neither editorially nor in its news which in itself is proof of its pro-Germanism."¹²⁹

The Post was then forced to publish in English even though it was "one of the least objectionable enemy language publications circulated in Canada."¹³⁰ Since two-thirds of its readers did not understand English adequately, publisher Friesen applied for permission to use German again as soon as the war was over.¹³¹ In recommending against the granting of this permission, the Chief Press Censor referred back to the Victory loan advertisement and the Holdeman pamphlet incidents, while making no mention of the harmless nature of

¹²⁸J. A. McGibbon, Asst. Commissioner Royal North-West Mounted Police, Regina, to Chief Press Censor, Ottawa, 9 October 1919, *ibid.*

¹²⁹"No. 50," Regina, report to [RNWMP], 6 October 1918, *ibid.*

¹³⁰Chambers to RNWMP, Regina, 12 October 1918, *ibid.*, cf. J. P. D. van Veen to Leslie, 10 October 1918, describing the Post as "a Mennonite family paper for young and old . . . perfectly harmless."

¹³¹Jacob S. Friesen to Department of the Secretary of State, 18 November 1918, *ibid.*

the paper itself. He would consider it a gain for this country if the Post should cease publication entirely.¹³²

Both popular feeling against and government restriction of periodicals in "enemy alien language" continued to increase after the conclusion of the war. A new cabinet order in April 1919 seemed however, to offer new hope.¹³³ Both the Steinbach Post and the Mitarbeiter attempted, unsuccessfully, to be reinstated under this order. The former offered to "arrange our little paper to be literary, scientific and religious only,"¹³⁴ but found out that it could not even legally print auction sale handbills in German!¹³⁵

The editor of the Mitarbeiter felt that his paper was "purely a religious paper and never deals with economic or political matters" and would therefore qualify for permission to publish again in German.¹³⁶ However, when he found out that the government's understanding of a purely religious publication meant that "all features of a newspaper must be eliminated, such as trade advertising and news of all kinds, even news of church meetings or denominational meetings," he

¹³² Chambers to Secretary of State, 22 November 1918, *ibid.*

¹³³ P.C. #703, 2 April 1919, *ibid.*, RG 2, 1, vol. 1538.

¹³⁴ Friesen to Department of Secretary of State, 2 May 1919, *ibid.*, RG-6, E-1, vol. 138, #370-GA-14.

¹³⁵ Chambers to Friesen, 20 May 1919, *ibid.*

¹³⁶ H. H. Ewert to Secretary of State, 30 June 1919, *ibid.*, #370-G-A-25.

reluctantly concluded "to desist from publication of this paper until the conditions in the country will warrant you to remove this restriction."¹³⁷

The entry of German language materials from abroad was also severely curtailed by the new measures. The Menno-nitische Rundschau, which had earlier passed censorship standards, was now excluded.¹³⁸ Non-periodic literature, both books and pamphlets, began to be affected. Rudolf Wolkan's scholarly Die Hutterer: Oesterreichische Wiedertaeufer und Kommunisten in Amerika was admitted, but not before the Chief Censor had checked with the Superintendent of Immigration his "idea" that the Hutterites are subject to some outlawry."¹³⁹ The Mennonite Publishing Company of Elkhart, Indiana, received a license to fill Canadian orders

¹³⁷ Chambers to Ewert, 10 July 1919; Ewert to Chambers, 17 July 1919, *ibid.*

¹³⁸ "Censorship Notice," Canada Gazette, 26 June 1919, p. 30; quoted in Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 393.

The Amish Herold der Wahrheit, ed. S. D. Guengerich, Wellman, Ohio, unsuccessfully attempted to regain permission to circulate among its 270 Canadian (Ontario) subscribers. Guengerich to Chambers, 7 and 13 May 1919; Chambers to Guengerich, 13 and 19 May 1919, PAC, RG 6, E-1, vol. 138, #370-GA-17.

¹³⁹ Chambers to W. D. Scott, 7 October 1919; Scott pointed out to Chambers, 16 October 1919, that a recent order-in-council prohibited Hutterite immigration, but did not relate in any way to literature. *Ibid.*, vol. 146, #371-H-2.

for its Gesangbuch¹⁴⁰ but not for a booklet entitled "Christianity and War: A Sermon setting forth the sufferings of Christians," written by a minister of the Old Mennonite Church and first published in 1863.¹⁴¹ A circular letter and order form for Bibles, hymnbooks, catechism, and other similar literature, was seized by the Postal Censorship Office and retained on instruction from the Chief Press Censor who felt that such action "will indicate to foreign language publishers in the U.S. that we are doing something in the way of enforcing the new Order-in-Council."¹⁴²

By early 1920 things were getting back to normal and Mennonite publications in German cautiously began to make their reappearance.¹⁴³

The school struggle in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, described in the previous chapter, took place against this background of anti-German feeling and governmental action.

¹⁴⁰ John F. Funk, President, Mennonite Publishing Company, Elkhart, Indiana, to Chambers, 10 and 15 May 1919; Chambers to Funk, 17 May 1919, *ibid.*, #371-M-1.

¹⁴¹ Chambers to Funk, 4 June 1919, *ibid.*

¹⁴² Chambers to R. M. Coulter, Deputy Postmaster General, 5 May 1919, *ibid.*

The Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, Hillsboro, Kansas, apparently was only marginally affected by the censorship laws. Chambers to M. B. Publishing House, 8 May 1919, *ibid.*, # 371-M-3.

¹⁴³ The Mitarbeiter resumed publication in January 1920 and editorially noted its enforced vacation.

CHAPTER VI

EMIGRATION AND ACCOMMODATION

The nationalist mood of Canadian governments and society in the immediate postwar years was such that enormous pressures to conform were brought to bear on minority groups. Some Mennonites chose to emigrate rather than compromise their principles to accommodate themselves to these pressures.

1. The Postwar Mennonite Situation

The series of crises experienced by the Mennonite communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan since the beginning of the war has already been described in the preceding chapters. In education this began with the loss of German language rights in the public schools with the abolition of the bilingual provisions in 1916. This was intensified when the option of maintaining their own private schools was removed in 1918 and the compulsory attendance legislation was increasingly used to force the attendance at government controlled public schools by all Mennonite children. By 1920 education under the flag was the only legal option open to them.

The direct effects of the war were less threatening.

The extent and the manner of financial participation raised some delicate questions of conscience. Contributing to the relief of war sufferers through the Red Cross seemed generally acceptable while subscription to the victory loans was for the most part rejected. In neither case was there direct governmental pressure to participate. On the other hand, Ottawa's insistence that Mennonites take part in the national registrations of 1917 and 1918 created considerable consternation. Neither of them however, led to any significant increase in Mennonite enlistment. But they were reminders that the exemption promised the Mennonites in their Privilegium was exemption from active military service only.

The exclusion of Mennonites from participating in federal elections by the Dominion Elections Act 1916, and the War-Time Elections Act 1917, does not seem to have aroused any apprehension or resentment among them.¹ Several Mennonite groups refused in principle to participate in any elections. Several of the others had already decided during the summer of 1917 against voting in the conscription plebiscite proposed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, or in a federal

¹ Francis, In Search of Utopia, pp. 189-90; Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 388.

election in which conscription would be an issue.²

While the Mennonites were not very immediately affected by the voting legislation, they felt keenly the effects of the official press censor. By the end of 1919 all of their official church periodicals had suspended publication, and difficulties were encountered in the free circulation of liturgical and church educational material.

Public agitation against German speaking peoples and pacifists led to one further disturbing development. By late summer of 1918 local opposition was beginning to develop toward Mennonite immigrants from the U.S.A.³ This intensified during the last few months of the war and led to official protests to the Borden government about its immigration policy. Leading these protests were the Great War Veterans' Associations, who considered it "a gross breach of faith to returned men" for the government to sell land to Menno-

² Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, 2:159-60; #8, 11 June 1917; #4, 27 August 1917, CMCA, XII, vol. 716. The Manitoba Bergthaler ministers were apparently unaware of Mennonite disfranchisement under the War Time Elections Act, since they decided on 6 November 1917 that their members should not vote in the coming federal election. Ibid., p. 163, #5.

Mitarbeiter, July 1917, p. 4, reports that Sommerfelder and Kleine Gemeinde ministers of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, meeting in Chortitz near the end of June agreed to advise their members not to vote in the proposed plebiscite, since that might jeopardize their exemption from military service.

³ Reference to this development has already been made in ch. 5.

nites when it was needed for returning soldiers.⁴ Joining this protest were politicians⁵ and church groups.⁶ Under that kind of pressure Immigration Minister J. A. Calder was publicly saying by mid-October that "a law should be enacted to the effect that no man should be allowed to come to this country unless he is prepared to carry his full share of the military burden."⁷ Even before Ottawa took any official action, Premier Oliver of British Columbia implemented a policy of "no crown lands for pacifists" in his province.⁸

⁴F. W. Law, Secretary-Treasurer, The Great War Veterans' Association, Winnipeg, to Prime Minister Robert L. Borden, 18 September 1918, PAC, MG 26 H, (1c), vol. 214, p. 121122. Similar protests to the Prime Minister came from the Dominion headquarters of the G.W.V.A. in Ottawa, Acting Secretary-Treasurer R. M. Stewart, 18 September 1918, *ibid.*, p. 121131, and Mrs. Elizabeth Longworth, President, Great War Next-of-Kin Association, Lethbridge, 22 September 1918, *ibid.*, p. 121140.

⁵Alberta MLA, W. A. Rae, on 7 October 1918 wrote Prime Minister Borden to protest Mennonite immigrants coming into the Grande Prairie area. For returning soldiers to "find they have in many cases only Mennonites for neighbors is so base a treachery to Canadians that very undesirable results are inevitable." *Ibid.*, p. 121165.

⁶The Executive of the Board of Home Missions and Social Service of the Presbyterian Church in Canada on 18 September 1918 took action to oppose block settlement in Canada of foreigners, school instruction in German, and the admission of pacifists as immigrants. *Ibid.*, p. 121162. Reference to similar action by the Methodist Church has already been made above, ch. 5, n. 63.

⁷Canadian Annual Review, 1918, p. 428, reporting on Calder's remarks in Regina on 15 October 1918.

⁸Vancouver Daily Province, 7 November 1918; press clipping in PAC, RG 76, vol. 173, #58764-2.

The federal government waited until the following spring before it acted, and then it did so not by new legislation but by order-in-council. Using the authority of section 38 of the Immigration Act, it decided that

whereas the Minister of Immigration and Colonization reports that, owing to conditions prevailing as the result of the War, a widespread feeling exists throughout the Dominion, and more particularly in Western Canada, that steps should be taken to prevent the entry to Canada of all persons who may be regarded as undesirable because, owing to their peculiar customs, habits, modes of living and methods of holding property, they are not likely to become readily assimilated or to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time;

and whereas the Minister further reports that numerous representations have been received by the Department of Immigration and Colonization indicating that persons commonly known as Doukhobors, Hutterites and Mennonites are of the class and character described and consequently that it is desirable to prohibit the entry to Canada of such;

therefore . . . on and after the second day of May, 1919, and until further ordered, the entry to Canada of immigrants of the Doukhobor, Hutterite and Mennonite class shall be and the same is hereby prohibited.⁹

While this action did not affect Mennonites already in Canada, it added to their growing sense of uneasiness about their future status in the country. For those already inclined

⁹P.C. #923, 1 May 1919, PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 1541. An almost identical order-in-council, P.C. #1204, was passed on 9 June 1919, *ibid.*, vol. 1546. Before taking this action the Canadian government checked, via the British Ambassador in Washington, whether the U.S.A. would object if it would "for the time being debar entry into Canada" of Mennonites and Hutterites. Reading to Hon. William Phillips, Department of State, 16 April 1919, NARS, RG 85, 54623/130.

The American Secretary of State was provided with a copy of P.C. #923 by the U.S. Consul in Ottawa on 7 May 1919.

toward emigration, this provided reinforcement. For those who had decided to stay, it meant political lobbying to get the order-in-council repealed.

2. The Emigration Option

a) Reinlaender

The first warning that Mennonites might well choose to leave the country on the issue of control of their own schools came as early as 1910.¹⁰ The first concrete action came from a conference of Reinlaender Mennonites at Hague who announced in the fall of 1918 that if the School Attendance Act were enforced in their schools they would arrange immediate migration to the Argentine.¹¹ When they began to raise funds to send an exploratory delegation to South America, they were subjected to investigation by the military police.¹²

By the summer of 1919 the decision to emigrate had been made by all three Reinlaender groups, and a joint delegation of six was sent to South America to look for suitable

¹⁰ MFP, 26 November 1910, p. 44.

¹¹ RML, 1 October 1918, p. 9; MFP, 3 October 1918, p. 9. On 22 December 1916, P. M. Friesen of Rush Lake, Saskatchewan, had warned Prime Minister Borden that the 1917 national registration had caused some leading Mennonites to suggest emigration. PAC, MG 26 H, (1c), vol. 214.

¹² RML, 18 November 1918, p. 11.

land and to negotiate a Privilegium.¹³ The delegates, listed in table 17, returned from their long trip in November without any success. Neither Argentina nor Brazil was prepared to offer suitable concessions.¹⁴

Equally discouraging was the delegation's report from Ottawa, where they had stopped on their way to South America to attempt once more to have the federal government guarantee their school privileges. Ottawa, of course, could not do this for constitutional reasons. But the Reinlaender leadership, at least in retrospect, blamed the war which had ruined everything.¹⁵

With South America apparently closed, the Reinlaender now explored possibilities in the southern states of the U.S.A. Land offers were received from Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. Negotiations were undertaken with officials of the state of Mississippi to which a Reinlaender delegation

¹³Harder, p. 3; I. M. Dyck, pp. 53-66; Schmiedehaus, pp. 71-73; Sawatzky, pp. 31-32; RML, 29 August 1919, p. 2.

The self-appointed delegation of Klaas Peters, Wymark, Johann Hamm and Johann Heinrichs, both of Rosthern, had negotiated with the governments of Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina in early 1919, but with no success. Quiring, Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat, p. 39; RML, 18 February 1919, p. 20.

¹⁴A diary of the trip kept by Johann P. Wall, 4 August-24 November 1919, is found in MLA, microfilm C-5482, #58; copy in CMCA, XIX-A, microfilm #66. Harder, p. 4, indicates that Paraguay had offered a glimmer of hope.

¹⁵I. M. Dyck, p. 56.

TABLE 17

REINLAENDER LAND-SEEKING DELEGATIONS 1919-21

Date	Destination	Groups Represented	Members*
4 Aug- 24 Nov 1919	Brazil Argentina	Manitoba Hague Swift Current	Klaas Heide Cornelius Rempel Rev. Johann Wall Rev. Johann P. Wall Rev. Julius Wiebe David Rempel
15-29 Jan 1920	Mississippi	Swift Current Manitoba Hague	Rev. Julius Wiebe Bish. Abraham Wiebe Franz F. Froese Peter P. Harms Jacob E. Friesen
12-29 Apr 1920	Mississippi	Manitoba Hague	Bish. Johann Friesen Cornelius Rempel Johann W. Rempel Rev. Johann P. Wall Benjamin Goertzen Rev. Franz Peters
14-25 May 1920	Mississippi		
19 Aug 1920	Quebec	Manitoba Swift Current	Bish. Johann Friesen Bish. Abraham Wiebe Jacob Friesen David Rempel
8 Sep- 9 Oct 1920	Mexico	Hague	Rev. Johann P. Wall Benjamin Goertzen Klassen
9 Oct- Dec 1920	Paraguay	Hague	Wiens Abram Klassen Jakob Friesen Franz Dyck
11 Nov-end Dec 1920	Mexico	Hague Swift Current	
24 Jan- 12 Mar 1921	Mexico	Hague Swift Current Manitoba	Rev. Johann Loepky Benjamin Goertzen David Rempel Rev. Julius Loewen Klaas Heide Cornelius Rempel

TABLE 17-Continued

Date	Destination	Groups Represented	Members*
5 Apr- 9 May 1921	Mexico	Hague Manitoba Swift Current	Rev. Johann P. Wall Klaas Heide
July 1921	Mexico	Swift Current Manitoba	Rev. Julius Wiebe David Rempel Abram Giesbrecht Peters Baumann Klassen
12 Aug- 10 Sep. 1921	Mexico	Manitoba Swift Current	

SOURCE: Compiled from I. M. Dyck, pp. 53, 75; Harder, pp. 3-6; Quiring, Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat, pp. 37-38, 54; Sawatzky, pp. 31, 43. Gerhard Rempel, p. 6; Schmiedehaus, p. 83; Johan M. Loeppky, Ein Reisebericht von Kanada nach Mexiko im Jahre 1921 (n.p., n.d.); MFP, 8 May 1920, p. 11; 20 and 21 August 1920; Mennonite Encyclopedia, s.v. "Old Colony Mennonites," by Cornelius Krahn.

*In a number of cases the lists given are incomplete.

was sent in January of 1920. The delegates, listed in table 17, presented a six-point petition to the governor asking for exemption from military service, the right to affirm instead of taking an oath, religious freedom, complete responsibility for and control of their schools (including the right to use German), freedom to administer their Waisenamt, and control over the disposition of all colony lands by their

Society.¹⁶

A week after their return Governor Russell confirmed in writing what he had told the delegation. State laws would guarantee the Mennonites "the fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles without any molestation or restriction, and the same privilege will be extended to the education of their children in their own schools of their own language."¹⁷ He also assured them of the privilege of giving the oath by affirmation instead of swearing and the liberty to administer their own benevolent society according to their system.

On the basis of this encouraging offer, a second delegation left for Mississippi in April of 1920. In addition to exploring concrete settlement possibilities, it also called on U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer to discuss exemption from military service. Palmer could only point to existing legislation which provided that proven conscientious objectors "shall be exempted from military service in a

¹⁶ Representatives of the Reinland Mennonite Church (Old Church) near Reinland, Manitoba, and Hague and Wymark, Saskatchewan, to the Governor and the U.S. Attorney of the State of Mississippi, U.S.A., or to whom it may concern, 12 April 1920; MLA, C-5482, #58.

For extensive discussion of this emigration attempt, see Abraham Friesen, esp. pp. 74-75, 82-86, 102-3. Shorter summaries are found in Sawatzky, pp. 33-34, Schmiedehaus, pp. 70-71, and Harder pp. 4-5.

¹⁷ Governor Lee M. Russell, Jackson, Miss., to Julius Wiebe et al., 6 February 1920, NARS, RG 85, 54623/130.

combatant capacity."¹⁸ While this was considerably less than the Mennonites were currently enjoying in Canada, it was sufficient for the Reinlaneder church to decide formally on May 4 to emigrate to Mississippi.¹⁹

A third delegation in May 1920 negotiated the purchase of 125,000 acres of land. On their return the Bruderschaft decided on June 1 to ratify the deal and instructed each prospective purchaser to provide a two dollar per acre down payment.²⁰ A fourth delegation authorized to close the deal was mysteriously refused entry into the U.S.A. The Reinlaender leadership accepted this as an act of God, preventing them from moving into an unhappy situation, and turned their attention elsewhere.²¹

Governor Russell of Mississippi however, was not prepared to give up the project that readily and asked the Immigration Department in Washington to investigate fully why U.S. authorities at Winnipeg had stopped the movement of

¹⁸Portions of Palmer's letter of 26 April 1920 to Bishop Johann Friesen et al. are quoted in MFP, 8 May 1920, p. 11.

¹⁹Harder, p. 5; MFP, 6 May 1920, p. 1.

²⁰Harder, p. 5.

²¹Ibid. I. M. Dyck, p. 68, quoted Isaiah 28:29 - "This also comes from the Lord of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom." Sawatzky, p. 34, indicates that the land purchase negotiations had proceeded to the point where litigation was narrowly avoided when they fell through.

Mennonites to Mississippi.²² The Commissioner-General of Immigration in Washington responded that "this Bureau has no advice that immigration authorities at Winnipeg have stopped movement of Mennonites to Mississippi, or any other state."²³ In response to a more general subsequent inquiry from Neche, North Dakota, as to why the Mennonites from Manitoba and Saskatchewan had not been allowed into the country, Washington replied: "As to the numbers in the particular class of people to whom you refer, the Bureau knows of no particular reason why they should not be allowed to enter."²⁴ The proposed migration to Mississippi therefore appears to have been halted, not by policy decision, but by the arbitrary action of the Immigration official who turned back the land buying delegation.²⁵

²²Telegram, Russell to Chief of Immigration Department, Washington, 1 July 1920, NARS, RG 85, 54623/130.

²³Telegram to Russell, 3 July 1920, *ibid*.

²⁴Assistant Commissioner-General of Immigration to N. L. DeMars, Farmers State Bank, Neche, N.D., 27 August 1920, responding to DeMars' 17 August inquiry. *Ibid*.

²⁵It is clear that the U.S. authorities were not prepared to arrange for a group immigration. "Whether they will or will not be admitted is a question which, under the immigration law, can not be determined in advance of their physical application at one of our ports. When they do so apply, their cases will be given careful consideration in the light of all the circumstances which may be known as to them at that time." Assistant Commissioner-General to Rock Island Railway, 26 July 1920, *ibid*.

H. M. Kratz, a Mennonite attorney from Philadelphia, inquiring on behalf of the General Conference Mennonite Church's Executive Committee, received this rather self-evident response, 9 December 1920, from W. J. Peters, Special Immigrant

The correspondence generated by this case sheds some interesting light on Canadian official attitudes to the Mennonites.

It appears from the information which the Bureau has on file concerning the Mennonites, as a class, that they are "persona non grata" in Canada. This by reason of their peculiarities, religiously, politically and otherwise.²⁶

Strong objections have been made to the attitude of this sect by provincial and municipal authorities in Canada by reason of the fact that they absolutely refuse to comply with civil laws with reference to sending their children to school or to meeting the requirements of the vital statistics with reference to births or deaths.

. . . . During the War these people were the most radical of conscientious objectors The writer in conversation with civil officers has been told repeatedly that the continued presence in Canada of this sect was detrimental to the interests of the country and that every pressure would be brought to bear to influence them to leave Canada.²⁷

Inspector: "So far as the Bureau is aware, there is no particular reason why Mennonites should not be admitted if they satisfactorily meet the requirements of the immigration law."

A decision of sorts was reached by the Bureau when, in response to pressure from Senators from the southern states and a specific case submitted by Inspector Carr of Winnipeg, the Secretary of the Department of Labor ruled that "Mennonites as such are not inadmissible." Asst. Comm.-Gen. telegram, 3 January 1921, *ibid*.

The U.S. Bureau of Immigration apparently considered Doukhobors to be a branch of the Mennonites. The former were held to be extremely fanatical and were classified as "philosophical anarchists." *Idem.*, to T. W. Conway, 15 August 1921, *ibid*. When a Winnipeg official of the Bureau used this expression of Manitoba Mennonites, the Editor of the Mitarbeiter could not suppress his astonishment. January 1921, p. 4.

²⁶ Commissioner-General, Bureau of Immigration, to W. E. Price, General Immigration Agent, Southern Railway Development Service, Washington, D.C., 12 April 1920, NARS, RG 85, 54623/130.

²⁷ Inspector J. Zurbrick, Vancouver, to Commissioner of Immigration, Seattle, Washington, 10 May 1920, *ibid*.

As late as the summer of 1921, the Commissioner-General of the U.S. Bureau of Immigration indicated that he was aware that Canada was "exerting more or less pressure with the view to effecting their [Mennonites'] departure."²⁸ The Bureau was faced at the same time with strong protest from within the U.S.A. against admitting Mennonite immigrants. Much of this came from the American Legion, but other groups were also represented.²⁹ That the Bureau did not seek a ban on Mennonite immigrants was due to the fact that these were being vigorously sought as settlers by various agencies in Alabama, Colorado, South Carolina, Arkansas, Florida, and Georgia.³⁰

²⁸ Letter to T. W. Conway, Chicago, 15 August 1921, *ibid.*

²⁹ NARS, RG 85, 54623/130, has on file protests against Mennonite "undesirables" from the American Legion, Mississippi Division, to U.S. Secretary of State, 23 December 1920; National Legion Committee to Secretary of State, 29 December 1920; Tennessee Division to Senator J. K. Shields and others, 30 December 1920; resolutions from Legion Conventions held 17 August 1920, 11 June 1921, 3 October 1921. Protests also came from such diverse groups as the Prentiss Club, Natchez, Miss., to Commissioner-General, U.S. Immigration, 29 June 1920; and the Punxsutawney, Pa., Lodge #669, International Association of Machinists, (AF of L), 28 March 1921.

³⁰ At the invitation of W. L. Henderson, Industrial and Immigration Agent, Southern Railway System, Mobile, Ala., Governor Thomas E. Kilby of Alabama on 17 February 1920, assured Mennonites of the privilege of making an affirmation instead of taking the oath, of operating their own benevolent societies, and of using any language desired in their private schools.

Charles Hootman, Sedalia, Mo., 13 July 1920, assured the U.S. Immigration Bureau that he had the full cooperation of Governor Shoup of Colorado to settle 4000 Mennonites on 200,000 acres of land in the southern part of that state.

Hagwood Realty Co., New Bern, N.C., 21 July 1920, in-

When the attempts to emigrate to South America and to the southern States both failed, the Reinlaender Mennonites explored alternatives within Canada. Their final attempt to gain educational freedom in Manitoba by settling in some more remote part of the province, possibly in "the Hudson Bay district," need not be taken too seriously.³¹ More serious were explorations undertaken in the Abitibi region and with the government of Quebec. A seven-man delegation (see table 17) representing the Reinlaender Mennonites of Manitoba and Swift Current on 19 August 1920 met with Premier L. A. Taschereau, Colonization Minister J. E. Perreault, and J. N. Miller, Secretary of the Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Instruction, to state their case.³² The

formed the Department of Labor in Washington that it wanted some of the 10,000 Mennonite immigrants for the cotton and tobacco belt in the northeastern part of the state.

T. W. Conway, Chicago, 2 August 1921, wanted assurance from the Commissioner-General of Immigration that Mennonite immigrants would be admitted to the country, so that he could settle them on a large tract of land in Florida.

Rev. F. G. Hartman, Washington, Ga., 20 September 1923, wrote the Secretary, Department of Labor, that he would like some Mennonites as settlers for the "boll weevil sections" of Georgia. Ibid.

R. D. McMullen, Ola National Farm Loan Association, Ola, Ark., 17 May 1920, wrote to the Mayor of Regina, Sask., for addresses of Mennonite leaders to persuade them to settle in Arkansas. SAB, M 4, I-54, p. 18952.

³¹ MFP, 13 May 1920, p. 2; Canadian Annual Review, 1920, p. 249.

³² MFP, 20 August 1920, p. 1.
For a brief summary of the Quebec story see I. M. Dyck, p. 67; Abraham Friesen, pp. 87-88; Harder, p. 5.

five points of their requested Privilegium were as follows:

1. To grant and assure (or have ratified by the Dominion Government) an entire exemption from any military forces as defenceless Christians called Mennonites;
2. The privilege of affirming with the simple "Yes" or "No" instead of making oath in or out of courts;
3. The fullest privilege of exercising our religious principles and rules of our church without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever;
4. The privilege of our own private school buildings and maintaining them at our own expense, and to educate our children in the same, according to our creed in our customary German language without any restrictions;
5. To administer and invest the estates and inherited property of our people, especially that of widows and orphans, in our own trust system, called the "Waisenamt," according to our own rules and religion without any restrictions.³³

It will be noted that the main points in this list of requests are identical to those in the 1873 Privilegium.

The education clause is made more specific and includes explicit mention of the German language, just as it did in the Mississippi petition. The clause on the Waisenamt did not appear in the 1873 Privilegium but was included in the Mississippi petition.

The Mennonites had realized by now that there was a division of powers between the federal and provincial governments. Accordingly, the two bishops left the next day for Ottawa to gain reassurance on the question of military exemption and to obtain federal government approval of the proposed

³³ Bishop Johann Friesen et al., Reinlaender Mennonite Church, to Government of Quebec, 13 August 1920, quoted in MFP, 21 August 1920, p: 2.

move to Quebec. The five lay delegates meanwhile left for the Abitibi district to explore settlement possibilities.

The initial response of the Quebec press to the proposed Mennonite migration was quite favourable. Le Matin considered the Mennonite requests "not incompatible with the normal administration of the law," while La Patrie found "nothing in their demands, which conflicts with our laws."³⁴ The Reinlaender church was encouraged and sent several subsequent delegations to Quebec. But in the end, the migration did not materialize, partly because the land was unsuitable for agriculture, partly because the requested governmental guarantees were not forthcoming.³⁵

While the Manitoba and Swift Current Reinlaender were exploring possibilities in Quebec, the Hague group had dispatched a delegation to Mexico, and another one to Paraguay to follow up the slim hope brought back by the first delegation to South America.³⁶ When the first group returned

³⁴ Quoted in MFP, 21 August 1920, p. 2.

³⁵ Harder, p. 5; I. M. Dyck, p. 67. Dyck's reference is probably to Ottawa rather than to Quebec City. Mitarbeiter, July 1920, p. 52 and February 1921, p. 14, reported favourably on school freedoms in Quebec.

³⁶ The person who first drew Mexico to the attention of the Reinlaender Mennonites was the Mexican Consul in Buenos Aires whom Johann P. Wall met quite incidentally while the first Reinlaender delegation was waiting on the pier to return to Canada. Fretz, Mennonite Colonization in Mexico, p. 10; Cornelius Krahn, "Johann P. Wall, 1875-1961," Mennonite Life 16 (October 1961): 186; G. Rempel, pp. 6-7. This distinction is also claimed for John F. D. Wiebe, a Krimmer Mennonite Brethren who owned a real estate business in Herbert,

with a positive report, the Manitoba and Swift Current groups abandoned the Quebec negotiations and agreed on 1 November 1920 to pursue investigations in Mexico with the Hague group.³⁷ Because the Manitoba delegates did not get their passports in time, the second Mexico delegation represented only the Hague and Swift Current groups of Saskatchewan.³⁸ Its encouraging report in December 1920 led to the sending of a third delegation, this time representing all three Reinlaender groups. The delegates met with President Alvaro Obregón and Agriculture Minister A. I. Villareal to negotiate their terms of entry. Eight days later, on 25 February 1921, their desired Privilegium was signed by the President. Its five points follow the outline of the Reinlaender petition

Saskatchewan, by Sawatzky, p. 36; and for D. Salas Lopez by I. M. Dyck, p. 73.

An account of the second delegation to South America is given by Quiring, Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat, pp. 37-38, and "The Canadian Mennonite immigration into the Paraguayan Chaco, 1926-27," MQR 8 (January 1934): 33-34; J. Winfield Fretz, Pilgrims in Paraguay, pp. 12-13; and H. Hack, Die Kolonisation der Mennoniten im Paraguayschen Chaco (Amsterdam: Koenigliches Tropeninstitut, n.d.), pp. 45-46.

³⁷ The Mexico explorations are described by Harder, pp. 6-10; I. M. Dyck, pp. 72-87; Sawatzky, pp. 36-40; and Schmiedehaus, pp. 73-87. The latter includes portions of the diary kept by delegate David Rempel.

³⁸ While the second Reinlaender delegation was in Mexico from 11 November to the end of December 1920 (Harder, p. 6), delegates Friesen and Warkentin of the Russian Mennonites were also exploring settlement possibilities there. Mitarbeiter, December 1920, p. 93.

submitted to the governments of Mississippi and Quebec.³⁹

With the necessary governmental guarantees in hand, the Reinlaender leaders now proceeded to locate suitable land for a settlement. The Manitoba and Swift Current groups in September 1921 purchased adjacent tracts of 155,000 and 74,125 acres respectively, in the state of Chihuahua.⁴⁰ The first chartered trainload of Mennonites from Manitoba left Plum Coulee on 1 March 1922; the first departure from Swift Current came about a week later. Between 1922 and 1925 some 3,200 Reinlaender from Manitoba and about 1,200 from Swift Current area emigrated to the Chihuahua settlement. The Hague group purchased approximately 35,000 acres of land in the state of Durango where they founded a settlement in 1924 with about 950 immigrants coming during the first two years.⁴¹

Both of the Saskatchewan groups experienced some final

³⁹The Privilegium of 25 February is reproduced in German by Schmiedehaus, pp. 81-82; in English by Redekop, p. 251, Sawatzky, pp. 39-40, and the MFP, 17 September 1921, p. 4. The latter omits the crucial fourth point. It also reproduces the 8 July 1921 reply of Vincente Guerrero of the government of the State of Durango to the Mennonite petition of 30 June 1921.

⁴⁰Schmiedehaus, pp. 83-84.

⁴¹Mennonite Encyclopedia, s.v. "Durango Mennonite Settlement," by Cornelius Krahn.

A clash between delegates Klaas Helde of Manitoba and Johann P. Wall of Hague resulted in the two groups purchasing land tracts five hundred miles apart. Guenther, p. 15; Sawatzky, p. 43.

irritation from the federal or provincial government in the disposal of their lands prior to emigration. The Swift Current group, who in June 1921 sold 107,000 acres to a syndicate of Florida capitalists for almost five million dollars, in the end forfeited 10,200 acres in lieu of a judgment of \$221,000 and court costs to their agent as commission, when the deal fell through.⁴² The long, drawn-out court proceedings (through the Judicial Court of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, and the Supreme Court of Canada, all of which gave judgment to the Mennonites) were distasteful to the Reinlaender leaders, who in principle preferred not to settle disputes in worldly courts. Even more upsetting was the final ruling (by the Privy Council in London, reversing the Canadian courts' decision), which appeared to them unjust.⁴³ Some saw this misfortune as part of a government design to get them to leave Canada.⁴⁴

The sale of 80,000 acres by the Hague group in 1920⁴⁵

⁴²Canadian Annual Review, 1921, pp. 797-98; MFP, 5 October 1921, p. 4; 6 October, p. 4; 7 October, p. 9; 10 October, p. 4; Sawatzky, pp. 41-42. The complicated legal proceedings of this case have not yet been adequately reconstructed.

⁴³Sawatzky, p. 42, n. 32, suggests that "the fact that British financial interests were involved makes the Privy Council's reversal of the Canadian Supreme Court's ruling appear all the more as a 'managed' miscarriage of justice."

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 42, n. 34.

⁴⁵See above, pp. 259-60.

also fell through, delaying the immigration. By 1923, when the Swift Current and Manitoba migration was well under way, the Hague group had difficulty in selling its lands. Poor crops the last few years may have been part of the reason, but the church leadership was convinced that its prospects were seriously undermined by an inspection and valuation of their holdings, ordered, as they understood it, by the Dominion government. The report of this inspection turned out to be quite negative, and it was now "being used to keep prospective purchasers from buying our lands."⁴⁶ This is one of the reasons why emigration from the Hague Reinlaender colony was so small.

b) Sommerfelder .

The final petition of the Sommerfelder and Chortitzer churches to the Manitoba government in October of 1920 had stated explicitly that "if the limitations and the pressure to which Mennonites are currently subjected will continue, then we will be forced to look for a new homeland in which we and our children can live according to our faith."⁴⁷ When this petition remained unanswered, a decision to emigrate was

⁴⁶ Johann P. Wall, Hague, to Minister of Education, Regina, 12 February 1923, SAB, M 5, 6.

⁴⁷ J. H. Doerksen, p. 108, Petition of 14 October 1920, clause 2. Doerksen gives the date as 1921.

made on December 1.⁴⁸

Bruderschaft had apparently already decided in September to send a delegation to Paraguay.⁴⁹ But this was now delayed until the Hague Reinlaender delegation would return.⁵⁰ Representatives were now selected by the East Reserve Chor-titzer, the West Reserve Sommerfelder, and the Saskatchewan Bergthaler. By the time this group of six people, listed in table 18, was ready to leave, the second Reinlaender delegation had returned from Mexico with increasingly favourable reports. Accordingly, the delegates left in February 1921 with instructions to visit Mexico also on their return trip from Paraguay.⁵¹

Following the lead of the Hague delegation to Paraguay, this second group contacted General Samuel McRoberts, a New York financier who had connections with large landowners and

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 110.

⁴⁹ Martin W. Friesen, comp. and ed., Kanadische Mennoniten bezwingen eine Wildnis. 50 Jahre Kolonie Menno, Chaco, Paraguay, 1927-77 (Loma Plata, Par.: Verwaltung der Kolonie Menno, 1977), p. 16.

⁵⁰ J. H. Doerksen, p. 110. This delegation had left for Paraguay on 9 October and returned just before Christmas, 1920.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 111; Martin W. Friesen, p. 16. One of the reasons for the delay was the fact that one of the Manitoba delegates, Bernhard Toews of Weidenfeld, had neglected to take out Canadian citizenship papers, and hence took a longer time to obtain a passport. Quiring, Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat, p. 41.

TABLE 18

SOMMERFELDER-CHORTITZER-BERGTHALER LAND-SEEKING DELEGATIONS

Date	Destination	Groups Represented	Members
Feb 1919	Brazil Argentina Uruguay	self-appointed	Klaas Peters Joh. Hamm Joh. Heinrichs
11 Feb- 2 Sep 1921	Paraguay Mexico	Chortitzer Sommerfelder Bergthaler Advisor	Jacob Doerksen Bernhard Toews Isaak Funk Rev. Jacob Neufeld Rev. Johann Friesen Johann Priess (Altona)
Feb 1921	Mexico	Saskatchewan Bergthaler (?)	Rev. Heinrich A. Neufeld Johann C. Schellenberg Peter Epp Peter H. Goertzen Cornelius F. Andreas Heinrich H. Reimer Benjamin E. Redekopp
Oct-Nov 1921	Mexico	Sommerfelder Chortitzer	Dietrich Doerksen Abram Hiebert A. Doerksen
Early summer 1922	Mexico	Sommerfelder	Julius Harder Franz Voth D. Doerksen

SOURCE: Compiled from Quiring, Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat, pp. 39, 41; M. W. Friesen, pp. 16-17; J. H. Doerksen, p. 120; Sawatzky, p. 51; RML, 18 February 1919, p. 20; Mitarbeiter, February 1921, p. 12.

high government officials in Paraguay.⁵² In Buenos Aires they were met by Fred Engen, a Norwegian pacifist and Chaco

⁵²The following summary is based on Fretz, Pilgrims in Paraguay; Quiring, Deutsche erschliessen den Chaco and Russlanddeutsche suchen eine Heimat; and Martin W. Friesen.

expert employed by McRoberts. Engen introduced the delegates to the Argentinian Casado brothers, who owned about five million hectares of land in the Chaco, and then accompanied them to Asuncion. Here he introduced them to Senator Eusebio Ayala, who arranged an audience with President Manuel Gondra for them. They submitted their petition for a Privilegium to him on 4 April 1921 and in a fifty-minute interview were able to reach agreement on all points.⁵³ Before the end of July the Paraguayan Senate and Congress had passed the necessary legislation to guarantee these privileges.⁵⁴ This did not take place without some heated debates among both legislators and general public, especially over the granting of military exemption.⁵⁵

At the end of April, when weather and scenery in the Chaco are at their best, Engen took the delegation on a four-week tour of the prospective settlement area in the Casado

⁵³ Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, p. 42.

⁵⁴ See appendix 8. An English version of this Privilegium of 26 July 1921 is found in Fretz, Pilgrims in Paraguay, pp. 229-231; German ones in J. H. Doerksen, pp. 111-14, and Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, pp. 51-52.

⁵⁵ F. W. Paris, British Chargé d'Affaires, Asuncion, to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London, 28 July 1921; included in Winston S. Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Governor General of Canada, 15 September, 1921, PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 653, #37523. See also M. W. Friesen, pp. 98-100.

Fretz, Pilgrims in Paraguay, p. 15, advances some reasons why the generous terms of the Privilegium were not opposed by the Catholic Church.

holdings. The delegates were sufficiently impressed to commend the land as "well adapted for agriculture, stock-raising, fruit growing and the raising of vegetables. We believe that grain such as wheat, etc., can be grown at certain times of the year."⁵⁶

When the delegation arrived back in New York on July 24, the two Saskatchewan delegates returned home while the Manitoba representatives continued on to Mexico.⁵⁷ After looking at the various lands here for about a month under the guidance of ~~Altor~~ Johann Wiebe of Herbert, Saskatchewan, the delegation finally left for home near the end of August, having been on the road almost seven months.⁵⁸ Their report on Mexico was very discouraging.⁵⁹ An important reason for recommending against settling there was the fact that the Reinlaender Privilegium was only signed by the President and

⁵⁶ From the written report of the delegates to the churches in Canada, quoted in Quiring, "The Canadian Mennonite immigration," p. 35.

⁵⁷ Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, p. 50.

An unidentified man from Chicago had meanwhile appeared in Manitoba and attempted to persuade Bishop Abraham Doerksen, to call off the Mexican part of the delegates' trip. J. H. Doerksen, p. 120. Other anonymous parties used a forged telegram and unsigned letters to warn against settling in Paraguay because of its political instability. Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, p. 57.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 54-55.

⁵⁹ This delegation seems to have decided against Mexico even before it left Paraguay. On June 3 Priess had cabled from Asuncion that "Mexico and other places become very unattractive in comparison with the advantages here." Ibid., pp. 49-50; cf. J. H. Doerksen, p. 115.

the Minister of Agriculture, and not ratified by Congress and Senate like the one given by Paraguay.⁶⁰ However, the enthusiasm of the Reinlaender groups for Mexico, supported by the reports of individual Sommerfelder who had investigated Mexico on their own and had actually purchased land there,⁶¹ created a division in the Manitoba groups, with some deciding for Paraguay and others wanting to pursue the Mexico option.⁶²

A new delegation of three persons, listed in table 18, was elected to return to Mexico in the fall of 1921. The delegation took with it a ten-point request for privileges, dated at Sommerfeld, 5 October 1921, and signed by Bishop Abraham Doerksen and fourteen ministers, addressed to the government, the congress and the President of Mexico.⁶³ The petition naturally requested exemption from military service and the swearing of oaths, the right to complete control of their own church and school, including the use of German in them, and the right to administer their own inheritance laws and fire insurance. In addition to these basic privileges, it asked for the following: (6) permission to bring into

⁶⁰Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, p. 57.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 54-55; J. H. Doerksen, p. 120; Sawatzky, p. 52.

⁶²J. H. Doerksen, p. 115.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 121-25. The delegation's letter of introduction, signed by Bishop A. Doerksen, was dated 10 October 1921.

the country all members of their community, including the sick and crippled; (7) protection of property and life; (8) a ten-year period of duty-free entry of agricultural implements and seeds; (9) freedom to leave the country; and (10) incorporation of all of the above requests into the constitution of the country.

President Obregón on 30 October 1921 responded positively to all requests except the sixth and eighth ones.⁶⁴ In their meeting with the President on November 4, he assured them that all of their requests were met except the eighth one on which the government was prepared to grant a two-year duty free period. The delegates asked specifically whether the Privilegium would have the full force of law without having been passed on by Congress, and whether all of the state governments would recognize it. They were emphatically reassured by Obregón on both points.⁶⁵

With the necessary Privilegium in hand, the Manitoba West Reserve Sommerfelder were now prepared to join the Reinlaender groups in their migration to Mexico. A third delega-

⁶⁴This Privilegium, translated from J. H. Doerksen, pp. 125-26, is included as appendix 9.

⁶⁵According to the report of Johann F. Wiebe, in J. H. Doerksen, pp. 126-29. The delegates' persistence on the point of legality of the Privilegium may have been inspired in part by a MFP report of 17 September 1921, p. 4, in which it published the Reinlaender Privilegium and then pointed out the various points at which the Mexican constitution appeared to be "in direct contradiction to the promises made by President Obregón."

tion went to Mexico in the summer of 1922 and purchased 12,000 acres of land at Santa Clara, Chihuahua, just north of the Manitoba and Swift Current Reinlaender lands.⁶⁶ The actual migration did not begin until October and involved a total of about 600 during the next few years, mostly West Reserve Sommerfelder.⁶⁷

The leaders of the movement to Paraguay meanwhile attempted to bridge geographical barriers and create one congregation out of the intending immigrants from the East Reserve Chortitzer, the West Reserve Sommerfelder, and the Saskatchewan Bergthaler churches.⁶⁸ While this proved unsuccessful for the moment, even though all three groups had come from the Bergthal congregation in Russia less than fifty years ago, it was possible for them to organize in late 1922 a common Fuersorgekomitee to organize and lead the emigration.⁶⁹

On the Manitoba East Reserve negotiations had been taking place with McRoberts of New York since the fall of 1921, and an agreement regarding the sale of Manitoba lands and the purchase of a block of the Paraguayan Chaco had been

⁶⁶ Sawatzky, pp. 51, 71.

⁶⁷ Sawatzky, p. 58; John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite settlements," p. 228.

⁶⁸ Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, p. 61.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 62. The committee consisted of Martin C. Friesen and Abram A. Braun of the Chortitzer; Heinrich Unruh and Abram J. Friesen for the Sommerfelder; and Peter Peters and Peter J. Dyck of the Saskatchewan Bergthaler.

negotiated.⁷⁰ But the economic recession, which depressed Canadian land prices in the early 1920s, caused McRoberts to withdraw his offer for the time being, thus delaying the emigration. By the time he reopened contact with the Mennonites in late 1924, Chortitzer resistance to the School Attendance Act had largely been broken and the enthusiasm for emigration had strongly diminished.⁷¹ The matter was further complicated by Bolivia's announcement in 1923 of its claim to that part of the Chaco granted by the Paraguayan government for Mennonite colonies.⁷²

When the economic situation improved in 1925, McRoberts organized the Intercontinental Company in Winnipeg to buy and resell the land of the immigrants, and the Corporacion Paraguaya in Asuncion to buy land from Casado and sell it to immigrants. Finally, in June of 1926 the Fuersorge-komitee

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 58. A German translation of the form of the sale-purchase agreement is given by J. H. Doerksen, pp. 115-20.

⁷¹ Quiring's estimates, Russlanddeutsche, pp. 58-59, that in 1920 about 95% of all the Mennonite farmers favored the emigration compared to a mere 25% by 1925, are exaggerated whether he is referring only to Chortitzer as the context suggests, or to all Manitoba and Saskatchewan Mennonites. The Chortitzer correspondent to the Mitarbeiter reported March 1926, p. 10, that half of his church, some 200 families, expected to emigrate. By November, p. 5, his estimate was down to 160 families.

⁷² E E & M P of Bolivia, Legacion de Bolivia, Washington, D.C., to the Governor of Canada, 26 May 1923, PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 653, #37523. Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, p. 59, reports a letter of 9 June 1924 from the Bolivian ambassador directly to the East Reserve Mennonites.

was able to complete the transaction by which the Mennonites sold 44,000 acres of Canadian lands for \$903,000 and in return bought 138,000 acres of Paraguayan Chaco for \$690,000.⁷³ The actual emigration began in late November and involved fewer than 2,000 persons in all, the majority of them Chortitzer from the Manitoba East Reserve.⁷⁴ A more detailed breakdown of their origin is given in table 19.

Just before their departure, the emigrants addressed a letter to the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa expressing their thanks to the governments of Canada and Britain for the half century of peace and goodwill which they had experienced as the first Mennonite settlers on the prairies. They expressed a special appreciation for the free homestead they had received on their arrival and for the large loan in the early pioneer years. The letter indicated clearly that they were leaving because of their conviction that no Christian church could survive without having the word of God taught in its schools. They hoped that their leaving would stimulate both government and society to a greater vigilance in the face of encroaching atheism and a greater tolerance toward Christian schools. In looking back to Canada with warm love they promised to continue to pray for the government, "inclu-

⁷³ Ibid., p. 63.

⁷⁴ M. W. Friesen, pp. 17-18.

TABLE 19

MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN MENNONITE EMIGRANTS TO LATIN AMERICA 1922-1930

Group	Origin	Dates	Approx. Number	% of total group	Destination
1 Reinlaender	Swift Current	1922-26	1200	37	Chihuahua, Mexico
2 Reinlaender	Manitoba W.R.	1922-26	3200	64	Chihuahua, Mexico
3 Reinlaender	Hague	1924-25	950	24	Durango, Mexico
4 Sommerfelder	Manitoba W.R. Herbert, Sask.	1922-25	600	8	Chihuahua, Mexico
5 Chortitzer	Manitoba E.R.	1926-30	1201	41	Chaco, Paraguay
6 Sommerfelder	Manitoba W.R.	1926-30	357	5	Chaco, Paraguay
7 Bergthaler	Rosthern, Sask.	1926-27	227	75	Chaco, Paraguay
Total to Latin America			7735		
Total Reinlaender (1,2,3)			5350		
Total to Mexico (1,2,3,4)			5950		
Total Bergthal groups (4,5,6,7)			2385		
Total to Paraguay (5,6,7)			1785		

NOTES: Since the summaries given by I. I. Friesen, pp. 141-42; John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite settlements," p. 228; Francis, In Search of Utopia, p. 192; and other scattered data are not in agreement, each of the above figures is explained in a separate note.

¹The actual 1926 population of the Swift Current colony in Mexico was 1258. Sawatzky, p. 64. The increase in Mexico during the immigration period (excess of births over deaths) would be at least 58. This leaves 1200 immigrants, or 37% of the 1923 population of 3250.

²The actual 1926 population figure for the Manitoba colony in Mexico was 3340. Johann P. Wall, statistical compilation in MLA microfilm C-4582, #58. Of the 1798 population at the end of 1922, 23 were the result of excess of births over deaths during the year. I. M. Dyck, pp. 180-81. At that rate of growth the actual number of immigrants included in the 3340 total will not have been much over 3200, which represents 64% of the ca. 5000 total population in 1923.

³The actual population of the Hague colony in Mexico was 946 in 1925. Johann P. Wall, statistical compilation. This means that only ca. 24% of the total population of 3932 emigrated.

⁴John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite settlements," p. 228. I. I. Friesen, p. 141, estimates 1000. Warkentin's figure of 600 represents 8.4% of the 1925 year end total of 7124 Sommerfelder. Mitarbeiter, February 1926, p. 5.

^{5,6,7}Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, p. 72, and M. W. Friesen, pp. 17-18, give precise numbers for all three groups. Quiring's total for Chortitzer (1181) produces the 1765 total for Paraguay, which he also uses in Deutsche erschliessen den Chaco, p. 11. The error probably originated from his tabulation in "The Canadian Mennonite immigrations," p. 37, in which the number reported as departing 16 October 1927 is 337 instead of 357 as given in subsequent accounts.

⁵The total Chortitzer population at the end of 1926 was 2930. Mitarbeiter, February 1927, p. 9. The 1201 in Paraguay represent 41% of that total.

⁶The 357 represent only 5% of the 7124 Sommerfelder total at year end of 1925.

⁷Mitarbeiter, February 1927, p. 8, reports that 75% of the Rosthern Berghaler church accompanied Bishop Aron Zacharias to Paraguay.

ding those who have not hesitated to attack and to violate the to us sacred promise of 1873, in the matter of the school question."⁷⁵

The official lack of concern of the Canadian government for the Mennonite emigrants is in sharp contrast to this attitude. In response to the British Colonial Secretary's request for information regarding Canadian Mennonite plans to settle in Paraguay, the Governor-General pointed out that the vast majority of Mennonites were contented in Canada and that the few who had left or were thinking of seeking other homes had publicly stated "that they are not leaving Canada through

⁷⁵The letter is given in German in Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, pp. 65-66.

any lack of appreciation of the farming opportunities in this country."⁷⁶ In response to a similar request for information about the settlement plans of Mennonites in Mexico, Lord Byng admitted that "the Canadian government has no definite information as to the settlement of these people in the Republic of Mexico."⁷⁷ When the British Vice-consul in Chihuahua inquired about the national status of Canadian Mennonites on arrival in Mexico, the government speculated that most of them would probably "possess Russian or German nationality or American citizenship, very few being British subjects, so that the question of the loss of their right to British protection is one which in the majority of cases would not arise."⁷⁸ The British Chargé d'Affaires in Mexico City at

⁷⁶ Lord Byng of Vimy, Ottawa, to Winston S. Churchill, Secretary of State for Colonies, 5 January 1922, PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 653, #37523.

⁷⁷ Byng to Churchill, 11 January 1922, *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Byng to Churchill, 22 February 1922, *ibid.* The government based this guess on the assumption "that Mennonites do not as a rule take steps to become naturalized." F. C. Blair, Secretary, Department of Immigration and Colonization, Ottawa, e.g., on 14 May 1920 informed J. H. Clark, U.S. Commissioner of Immigration, Montreal, that Mennonite "peculiarities are of such a nature as to bring them into conflict with some of the obligations usually understood to be inseparable from citizenship. I do not suppose that any Mennonite ever acquires citizenship otherwise than by birth. I have never heard of any of our Western Mennonites becoming naturalized." NARS, RG 85, 54623/130.

As has been pointed out above in ch. I, 2(f), the majority of the immigrants of the 1870s were naturalized.

the time of the Mennonite migration to Mexico was informed that "the Canadian government felt no regret at their departure" and "that protection should be afforded them only in extreme circumstances with the object of saving life if threatened."⁷⁹ It is true that on request the Canadian government used British diplomatic connections in Argentina and Paraguay to ascertain that there was a clear title to the Casado lands being purchased by the Mennonites in the Chaco.⁸⁰ But neither the accuracy of its information about the Mennonite immigrants, nor its attitude toward them had improved in the intervening years. The External Affairs Department still held in 1927 that the emigrants to Paraguay would

probably be American, Russian or German citizens. Any born in Canada who have not subsequently renounced British nationality, would be regarded by our law as entitled to the full rights of British subjects. In the protection of those born in British territory outside Canada, or naturalized in the Dominion, who have abandoned or lost their Canadian domicile under the provisions of the Immigration Act, the Canadian government has no interest, though applications from such persons to return to the Dominion to assume residence would be received and considered.⁸¹

⁷⁹H. A. C. Cummin, Asuncion, to Sir Malcolm Robertson, Buenos Aires, 14 April 1926, PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 653, #37523.

⁸⁰Telegram, Lord Byng, to H. B. M. Chargé d'Affaires, Buenos Aires, 14 April 1926, *ibid*.

⁸¹Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Governor General's Secretary, 29 April 1927. The Deputy Governor General on 29 April 1927 sent that information unchanged to V. A. L. Mallet, H. M. Chargé d'Affaires in Buenos Aires. *Ibid*.

3: The Accommodation Option

The emigration of almost eight thousand Mennonites to Latin America during the 1920s left Canada with two major groups of the 1870s immigration from Russia. The largest group consisted of those Mennonite denominations which had fairly readily accepted the public schools and had at no point seriously considered leaving the country. A smaller group consisted of those portions of the Reinlaender, Sommerfelder, and Chortitzer, who had been unable or unwilling to join the emigration. To these must be added a substantial number of colonies of communally oriented Hutterites who had come to Canada from the U.S. during 1917-18, having come to America from Russia during the 1870s. Coming to join them as refugees from the communist regime in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics during the 1920s were approximately twenty thousand additional Mennonites.⁸² The latter had experienced fifty years of fairly rapid accommodation in Russia after 1870, so that their coming added new dimensions to the relationship of Canadian Mennonites to their governments.

The Reinlaender, Sommerfelder, and Chortitzer who remained in Manitoba and Saskatchewan were generally left with-

⁸²For an account of their coming see Frank H. Epp, Mennonite Exodus. The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites since the Communist Revolution (Altona, Man.: Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council, 1962), and John B. Toews, Lost Fatherland, The Story of the Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921-27 (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1967).

out leaders and only gradually reestablished a sense of corporate identity. All three Reinlaender bishops and almost all of the ministers emigrated to Mexico without installing any successors to serve their non-emigrating members.⁸³ In the Sommerfelder and Chortitzer groups the departure of key leaders was less disruptive of community and church life.⁸⁴ While the emigration was still in process

⁸³ Bishop Johann Friesen of the Manitoba Reinlaender made it clear that only those emigrating to Mexico would remain members of the church. I. M. Dyck, p. 85. As a result the approximately 36% which remained in Canada were in limbo or joined other Mennonite churches until their own was reorganized as the Old Colony Mennonite Church under Jacob F. Froese in 1936. Froese was ordained as the new bishop by an Old Colony bishop from Saskatchewan. Gerbrandt, p. 76.

Bishop Jacob Wiens of the Hague Reinlaender went to Mexico in 1925, but continued to serve both Hague and Durango until 1929. Then he considered the section remaining in Canada (about 76% of the total) as not taking the matter of emigration seriously enough and refused to serve them further. Johann Loepky, a member of the 1921 delegation to Mexico who had not joined the emigration, was then ordained as the new bishop by the Bergthaler bishop Cornelius Hamm. Guenther, p. 16.

Bishop Abraham Wiebe of the Swift Current Reinlaender, together with two other "outstanding church leaders" had gone to Mexico by early 1925. W. S. Cram to A. H. Ball, Deputy Minister of Education, 13 January 1925, SAB, M 5, 6(3). By mid-1926 apparently the rest of the ministers had left also, leaving the remaining 63% of the church largely leaderless. J. E. Friesen to S. J. Latta, 1 June 1926, *ibid.*, 6(4).

⁸⁴ The Chortitzer bishop Johann K. Dueck died in 1923. His successor, Martin C. Friesen, led some 41% of the group to Paraguay in 1927. Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, p. 61. Since only two active ministers planned to remain in Canada, the church elected three more in December 1926. Mitarbeiter, November 1926, p. 5; February 1927, p. 8.

The Sommerfelder bishop Abraham Doerksen of the Manitoba West Reserve preached his last Canadian sermon in Altona on 3 December 1923 and then left for Mexico with a small portion of his church. Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, p. 56. A new

many were undecided. Should they follow their church leaders to Mexico or Paraguay, or remain in Canada and look for new leadership? Since the decision to emigrate had been a corporate one in most cases, those remaining behind had, by doing so, taken a stance of greater individualism. That new individualism made it virtually impossible for these groups to act unitedly again until the crisis of World War II.

The emigration to Latin America broke any organized resistance to the public schools. The editor of the Mitarbeiter reflected the position of those remaining in Canada when he wrote that the issues of private or district schools, of German or English as the medium of instruction, and of teacher qualifications were no longer debatable. The government had decided.⁸⁵ One might deplore the resulting separation of church and school and hope for a reversal, but in practice the basic fact of governmental control had been accepted.⁸⁶ Consequently, the church leaders now operated with an effort at political realism within this new situation.

Already in late 1922 the non-emigrating leaders of the Chortitzer and Sommerfelder churches invited representatives of the Kleine Gemeinde, Holdemann, Bergthaler, and Mennonite

bishop, H. J. Friesen, was already functioning in November, 1922, so that the disruption in this church was minimal. Mitarbeiter, December 1922, p. 92.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., April 1926, p. 7; October 1926, pp. 1-2.

Brethren groups to a strategy session. A committee representing these six groups was created to negotiate once more with the Manitoba government.⁸⁷ The committee decided to negotiate on three basic points. First, it would seek permission to teach German in the schools in accordance with clause 10 of the Privilegium, at the same time promising the government that Mennonite children would master the English language as thoroughly as children in the province generally did. Secondly, it agreed to support other efforts in the province to reduce the length of the school year. Thirdly, it would urgently request the government to return the administration of public schools in Mennonite districts into the hands of local school boards.⁸⁸ It should be noted that only the first of these represents a request for a special privilege and even it does so on the basis of a promise to cooperate with the system. In the second it is making common cause with other groups in the province, and in the third it is asking for its schools to be made fully a part of the public system!

⁸⁷ Ibid., December 1922, p. 92. The committee appointed by the 9 November meeting in Altona consisted of: Johann Rempel - Chortitzer; Wilhelm Berg, Johann D. Klassen and Abram Sawatzky - Sommerfelder; Johann D. Goossen and H. H. Ewert - Bergthaler; H. R. Reimer and Johann K. Friesen - Kleine Gemeinde; Johann P. Toews - Holdeman; P. G. Neufeld - Mennonite Brethren.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 92-93; decisions of the committee at its 27 November meeting in Winnipeg.

In planning its further strategy, the committee decided to look for maximum support from influential persons in conducting its lobby. Feelers extended to leading business and financial people in Winnipeg as well as to many lawyers and doctors were so encouraging that the committee sought the formal support of the Chamber of Commerce.⁸⁹ A delegation from the committee met with Premier Bracken in March of 1923 but received no hope for German instruction and only the promise of a limited, experimental return of Mennonite schools to local administration. As table 20 shows, the Kleine Gemeinde districts and most of the Bergthaler ones had already regained local control prior to 1923, but progress in the Sommerfelder, Reinlaender and Chortitzer areas was as slow as the government had promised. In the spring of 1930, as table 21 shows, a dozen Mennonite schools were still under official trustee administration. The committee was disappointed both in its results and in the failure of any support from "influential persons" to materialize.⁹⁰

Following their rebuff by the new government, the non-emigrating groups looked for ways of teaching religion and German in the context of the new public school system. In doing so, they were quite aware that this was their alternative

⁸⁹ Ibid., February 1923, pp. 11-12.

⁹⁰ Ibid., April 1923, p. 28.

TABLE 20

RETURN TO LOCAL CONTROL OF MANITOBA MENNONITE DISTRICT SCHOOLS

District	No.	J.F. Greenway as O.T. appointed	resigned	O-in-C accepting resignation
Amsterdam	885	6 Aug 18	25 Nov 19	32666
Edenburg	330	5 Jul 18	29 Dec 19	32945
Kleinstadt	781	19 Jul 18	30 Dec 19	32966
Reichenbach	1198	28 Jan 19	14 Jun 21	36827
Glencross	71	23 Jul 18	20 Oct 21	37722
Blumenort	62	17 Jan 19	16 Dec 21	38145
Blumenhof	64	17 Jan 19	23 Jan 22	39556*
Rosefarm	1577	18 Oct 18	17 Mar 22	38538
Grossweide	786	4 Oct 18	18 Apr 22	38649
New Kronsthal	1137	28 Jan 19	10 May 22	39556*
Silberfeld	1590	25 Mar 19	31 May 22	38827
Gruenfeld	63	17 Jan 19	12 Oct 22	39330
Edenthal	756	23 Aug 18	17 Nov 22	39556*
Neu Hoffnung	1310	5 Jul 18	18 Jun 23	40465
Grimsby	1993	21 Feb 20	18 Jun 23	40465
Halbstadt	886	28 Jan 19	18 Jun 23	40465
Neu Bergthal	1594	4 Oct 18	13 Nov 23	41155
Houston	214	28 Jan 19	4 Jan 24	41365
Clyde	1990	21 Feb 20	1 Mar 24	41584
Weidenfeld	988	28 Jan 19	1 Mar 24	41584
Bothwell	1961	8 Apr 19	1 Mar 24	41584
Hoffnungsort	821	19 May 20	12 May 24	41849
Sommerfeld	2058	11 Feb 21	30 Sep 24	42416
Gnadenfeld	1593	25 Mar 19	28 Nov 24	42611
Alt Bergthal	1296	4 Oct 18	10 Dec 24	42644
Steinreich	820	6 Aug 18	12 Dec 24	42658
Steinreich	820	6 Aug 18	31 Jan 25	42831
Kronsweide	1030	18 Oct 18	28 Feb 25	42958
Steinfeld	1128	30 Jul 18	14 Mar 25	43013

TABLE 20-Continued

District	No.	J.F. Greenway as O.T.		O-in-C accepting resignation
		appointed	resigned	
Rudnerweide	1752	25 Mar 19	22 Apr 25	43146
Eigenhoff	1591	20 Aug 18	22 Dec 25	44085
Moray	1963	8 Apr 19	15 Apr 26	44505
Wakeham	773	16 Jul 18	21 Apr 26	44544
Thames	1991	21 Feb 20	17 Jun 26	44835
Meath	1992	21 Feb 20	2 Sep 26	45159
Calder**	2075	21 Feb 20	23 Oct 26	45353
Carmichael	1959	8 Apr 19	30 Nov 26	45499
Exeter	1994	21 Feb 20	11 Feb 27	152-27
Greenland	893	3 Jul 26	24 Sep 27	1141-27
Wells	1998	21 Feb 20	31 Dec 27	1501-27
Kronsgart	2151	15 Sep 26	14 Feb 28	156-28
Birkenhead	1996	21 Feb 20	11 May 29	606-29
Schanzenfeld	420	28 Jan 19	11 May 29	607-29
Mersey	1997	21 Feb 20	30 May 29	739-29

*date of order-in-council was 5 December 1922.

**Calder was created out of Meath on 26 July and 16 August 1921.

SOURCE: Compiled from PAM, RG 19, B 1, box 5.

to emigrating.⁹¹ Where a Mennonite local school board was in charge, it was frequently possible to teach these subjects during the one half hour immediately preceding the official school day and in the half hour immediately after its official close. Other communities conducted a

⁹¹Mitarbeiter, July 1923, pp. 52-53.

TABLE 21

MANITOBA MENNONITE SCHOOLS UNDER OFFICIAL TRUSTEE
ADMINISTRATION AS OF 6 MAY 1930

District	Number	O.T. Appointed
Arran	1960	8 Apr 1919
Barkfield	1951	5 Mar 1918
Ekfrid ^a	2061	6 May 1921
Goodwill ^b	1967	8 Apr 1919
Gruenthal	1592	25 Mar 1919
Heabert	1282	
Mitchell	1965	8 Apr 1919
Newfield ^c	1580	14 Jun 1928
Randolph	1964	8 Apr 1919
Rosengard	2168	15 Sep 1927
Shakespeare	2069	31 May 1926
Spencer	1969	8 Apr 1919

SOURCE: Order-in-council #582-30, 6 May 1930, PAM, RG 19, B 1, box 5. The order appointed Albert Tomlinson as Official Trustee, replacing the recently deceased J. F. Greenway.

^aEkfrid became a Hutterite Brüderhof when the Reinlaender Mennonites moved to Mexico.

^bAldershot

^cNeufeld

Saturday school for this purpose.⁹² In both cases, the dis-

⁹²Ibid., January 1926, p. 4; March 1926, pp. 9-10.

strict school building and the Mennonite district school teacher were normally used for this purpose.

To make the public school system reasonably acceptable, it was therefore necessary to have local control of the school and to have a supply of well-trained Mennonite teachers. The joint school committee appointed in 1922 continued to work at obtaining local control. By 1926, when many of the public school resisters had left for Mexico and been replaced by new immigrants from Russia, the committee applied to the provincial government for permission for these new Mennonite immigrants to vote and hold office in local school boards.⁹³

For a continuing supply of well-trained Mennonite teachers, the churches depended very heavily on the three Mennonite teacher training institutions in Altona, Gretna, and Rosthern. It is not accidental that two of the leading men of the non-emigrating Mennonites, H. H. Ewert and David Toews, were also principals of two of these teacher training institutes.⁹⁴ It was to teachers prepared in these Mennonite schools that the Mennonite churches looked for instruc-

⁹³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁹⁴ Ewert served the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, Manitoba, as principal until his death in 1934; Toews was principal of Rosthern German-English Academy until 1917 and then served for many years as chairman of its board.

tion in religion and German in their public schools and for help in maintaining Mennonite distinctives.⁹⁵ The vital role of these schools in the survival of the Mennonite church in the new circumstances may be seen in the fact that the Sommerfelder, who had parted company with the Bergthaler in 1890 as an expression of their rejection of higher education, now became very strong supporters of the Mennonite Educational Institute of Altona.⁹⁶ In spite of the tremendous help which teachers from these schools gave to Mennonite Society, church leaders still noted with regret that the local teachers' conventions had accommodated themselves to the new circumstances by becoming totally English.⁹⁷

Some of the non-emigrating groups were quite concerned to maintain a relative geographic isolation in Canada. In both of the major Mennonite communities in Manitoba there was concern about the possibility of non-Mennonite settlers moving in when the Reinlaender and Chortitzer attempted to

⁹⁵ Mitarbeiter, October 1925, pp. 75-76; November 1925, p. 81; August 1921, p. 65.

⁹⁶ The Mitarbeiter, October 1925, p. 80, announced that the Sommerfelder had actually taken over the school.

Gerbrandt's reconstruction of MEI events of 1925-26 on the basis of its minutes does not clearly corroborate the reported Sommerfelder takeover, but it is unable to explain why all board members by the summer of 1926 were from the Sommerfelder church. Gerbrandt, p. 270.

⁹⁷ Mitarbeiter, November 1925, p. 87.

sell their lands en bloc.⁹⁸ They were relieved when efforts to sell these lands to incoming Mennonites from the U.S.S.R proved successful, thereby maintaining the virtually closed settlements on the former East and West Reserves.

The Sommerfelder church of Manitoba made one more concerted effort to relocate its entire community of some eight thousand people to a new block settlement in northern Alberta. For this purpose they petitioned the Minister of Agriculture in 1927 to grant them a reserve of some ten to twenty townships of land in the vicinity of Fort Vermillion together with the right to operate parochial or separate schools.⁹⁹ This attempt, as well as a similar one by the Reinlaender Mennonites, was unsuccessful because Ottawa had abandoned the practice of granting reserves to facilitate the block settlement

⁹⁸ A. P. Elias, Winkler, quoted in F. C. Blair, Secretary, Department of Immigration and Colonization, to J. M. Roberts, Secretary, Department of the Interior, 8 November 1923, PAC, RG 15, vol. 571, #179925. Elias wanted the government to allow only Mennonites to buy lands in the "reserve."

In the former East Reserve, there was considerable consternation in 1925 when an Italian Countess Garibaldi was negotiating to purchase the entire block being sold by McRoberts for the Mennonites leaving for Paraguay. Quiring, Russlanddeutsche, p. 60; Mitarbeiter, March 1926, p. 10.

⁹⁹ Sommerfelder Gemeinde per H. J. Friesen, Bishop, and Johann D. Klassen, Secretary, to W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture, 28 January 1927; Klassen to Motherwell, 9 April 1927; H. J. Friesen et al. to Motherwell, 2 June 1927; Klassen to Motherwell, 16 August 1927, PAC, RG 15, vol. 233, #3129(5).

of particular groups.¹⁰⁰

On the issue of exemption from military service, H. H. Ewert raised the question of Mennonite responsibility to their country now that the war was over.¹⁰¹ Reflecting on the fact that the Canadian government had no provisions for noncombatant service nor a system of sending conscientious objectors to farm work, he wondered whether the Mennonites should create a standing organization to make contact with the government regarding possible service of non-resistors during a war.

The Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada formed a committee to contact other Mennonite groups to discuss together with them the question of whether to offer the government some kind of alternative service during wartime. Responses from the Church of God in Christ Mennonite, the Mennonite Brethren, and the Old Mennonites (Swiss) were mildly favourable, but the matter does not seem to have gone beyond the discussion stage.¹⁰² In the Manitoba Bergthaler church the matter was raised in a meeting of the ministers as well as in

¹⁰⁰ Department of the Interior, to P. M. Friesen, Enderby, B.C., 15 March 1928, *ibid.* Friesen had applied for a reserve for Reinlaender Mennonites in the Peace River district.

¹⁰¹ *Mitarbeiter*, April 1920, p. 31, "Welche Aufgaben haben wir jetzt nach dem Kriege unserm Lande gegenueber?"

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, October 1920, pp. 78-80.

the larger brotherhood meeting, but apparently without reaching any conclusion.¹⁰³

The political realism with which some of the Mennonite groups now approached the school and alternative service issue grew out of a few decades of increasing political awareness and involvement. At the first annual sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada in 1903, Bergthaler bishop Jacob Hoeppner presented a paper on the question of whether it was contrary to Scripture and conscience for Mennonites to hold public office or vote.¹⁰⁴ While Hoeppner was unable to find much Scriptural evidence against this, he nevertheless thought it best for Mennonites to abstain from public participation, except at the municipal level. Discussion from the floor revealed a considerable range of opinion.

The firing of H. H. Ewert from his school inspectorate as a result of political manoeuvring in the Manitoba provincial election that same year, gave a new dimension to Mennonite political awareness.¹⁰⁵ In the 1904 federal election

¹⁰³ Bergthaler Church, Ministerial, Minutes, 2:204, #9, 21 June 1921; CMCA, XII, vol. 726; Brotherhood, Minutes, #9, 22 June 1921, *ibid.*, vol. 175.

¹⁰⁴ Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada, Minutes, 1903-1913, 21 July 1903, *ibid.*, II-A, vol. 525.

¹⁰⁵ MFP, 26 November 1910, p. 44; 6 February 1913, p. 3. The Roblin government fired Ewert, "hoping to curry favor politically with the large unprogressive majority among the

several prominent Mennonites of the Altona area were actively campaigning for the Conservative party.¹⁰⁶ The election of Cornelius Hiebert (Conservative) to the Alberta legislature and ex-Mennonite Gerhard Ens (Liberal) to the Saskatchewan legislature in the 1905 elections has already been referred to. Ewert's reappointment as inspector in May 1908, and his dismissal "for purely political purposes" three months later, alienated many Mennonite supporters of the Conservative party.¹⁰⁷ When the Roblin Conservatives were finally swept out of power in Manitoba by the Norris Liberals in the 1915 election, Valentine Winkler carried every poll except Altona in the largely Mennonite riding of Rhineland.¹⁰⁸ Several prominent Mennonites applauded this result, some of them even expressing pride in the part played

Mennonites" who disliked him because of his work in promoting public schools.

¹⁰⁶ Gerbrandt, p. 315, lists Klaas Peters, Peter Friesen, F. F. Siemens, and John M. Wall among them.

Peters had already become a Swedenborgian minister in 1902, and so should not properly be considered a Mennonite even though he continued to regard himself as one.

Germania, a fiercely partisan Conservative German weekly, reported on Mennonite involvement in the election campaign in its issues of 20 October 1904, p. 5; 27 October, pp. 1, 5, 7, 8; and 3 November, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ MFP, 7 and 8 February 1913, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ V. Winkler to H. H. Hamm, 11 August 1915, PAM, MG 14, B 45, box 2.

by their people in the "cleanup of the province."¹⁰⁹

As a result of this gradually increasing political involvement, a Mennonite delegation in 1916 could say to its representative in the provincial legislature in Manitoba:

The majority of the Mennonites have so far put their confidence in the Liberal party and have uninterruptedly sent a Liberal representative to the legislature.¹¹⁰

Their keen sense of disappointment at the action of the Norris government on the school issue, together with the larger events of World War I, brought this rapid Mennonite accommodation on the political front to a temporary halt.¹¹¹

The coming of twenty thousand new Mennonites from Russia and the two decades of world peace provided the environment for the tempo of accommodation to pick up again in the 1920s.

¹⁰⁹ H. H. Hamm, Secretary-Treasurer, R.M. of Rhineland, to V. Winkler, 7 August 1915; H. H. Ewert, MCI, Gretna, to Winkler, 17 May 1915. Even the former Conservative campaigner, F. F. Siemens, 13 May 1915 expressed his satisfaction to V. Winkler at the "downfall of the Roblin-Rogers & Co. organization." Winkler expressed some surprise at Siemens' feelings, but assured him in good Methodist manner that it was "never too late for a sinner to return." Ibid.

It should also be noted that in the 1909 Alberta elections, Cornelius Hiebert left the Conservatives and ran as Independent, only to be badly defeated in the Didsbury riding by ex-Mennonite J. E. Stauffer, running as Liberal. Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1912, p. 534.

¹¹⁰ Mennonite School Commission brief to Hon. Valentine Winkler, 7 January 1916, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 544, #47.

¹¹¹ Gerbrandt, p. 317. But not for long. By 1931 the Bergthaler Ministerial gave almost unanimous support to one of its members (Dr. C. W. Wiebe) in his proposal to run for the Liberals in the provincial election. Minutes, 3:74, #6, 6 February 1931, CMCA, XII, vol. 716.

And the fact that it was the federal Liberal government of William Lyon McKenzie King which repealed the offending order-in-council barring Mennonite immigration, when the previous Conservative government had refused to do so,¹¹² ensured that western Mennonites would again be Liberal for at least another generation.

¹¹²Mitarbeiter, October 1921, p. 80; March 1922, p. 20; June 1922, p. 44.

P.C. #1204, the order barring Mennonite immigrants, was rescinded by P.C. #1181, 2 June 1922, PAC, RG 2, 1; vol. 1676. A recommendation by the Minister of Immigration and Colonization to have this done on 26 May 1922 was not acted on by cabinet. P.C. #1130/22, RG 2, 3, vol. 210.

CONCLUSION

About one-third of the Mennonites of Russia emigrated to North America during the 1870s. For the most part they were the ones who found the threatened loss of 'separate' status (full control of their schools and total exemption from military service) in Russia unacceptable. The two-thirds which remained accepted the compromise of teaching Russian in their schools and performing alternative service to military duty.

About one-third of the immigrants from Russia came to Canada. For the most part they distinguished themselves from their coreligionists who settled in the United States by the importance which they attached to a Privilegium which would once more define for them a separate status in their new home. This two-fold selection process meant that the three groups which came to Canada initially held very similar positions on the question of the relationship of a believers church to the state.

The understanding of separation from the state which they brought with them from Russia involved formal recognition of their group as a separate community within Canadian society. The Privilegium which they negotiated with the federal government indicated that this included at least

full freedom of religion, total exemption from military service and the swearing of oaths, and the right to their own schools. Implied in the granting of reserves for the creation of closed communities, but not explicitly stated, was the right to local self-government.

All three Russian Mennonite immigrant groups to Canada thus recognized that negotiations with the national government in Ottawa were necessary and unavoidable. It was fully acceptable not only to negotiate a Privilegium, i.e. to define their separate status, but also to continue the ongoing administrative relations necessary to have that separate status recognized by local officials in practice. The government in Ottawa, more naturally than the provincial governments, was seen as the authority ordained of God (Romans 13) to which Christians are to submit. Throughout the fifty-year span covered by the present study, Mennonite relations with the government in Ottawa were characterized by mutual respect, trust and cordiality. At no point does there appear a hesitation on the part of the churches to send a delegation to Ottawa to meet with the Prime Minister or other cabinet officials when some issue seemed impossible to be resolved by mail.

Significant differences emerged among the three initial Mennonite groups in the way in which they sought to resolve the two areas of relations with the government which were not explicitly defined by the Privilegium (municipal govern-

ment), or ambiguously defined (public schools). In both cases Mennonites had to deal with provincial governments rather than with Ottawa. In both cases the initiative came from the governments rather than from the Mennonite churches. And in both cases the issue was not one of defining their separate status, but rather one of developing an on-going relationship that implied increasing involvement with each other.

Since the province of Manitoba was still in its infancy when the Mennonites first arrived, self-government on their reserves was initially totally independent of the provincial government. Administratively it was not difficult to adapt their system of a Gebietsamt with Oberschulze and village Schulzen to the new municipal system with its council, reeve, and councillors. On the Manitoba East Reserve this happened in fact, with an apparently smooth transition. The minority Kleine Gemeinde, which did not participate in local government at all, was indifferent whether the majority Bergthal group handled local administrative matters as Chortitzer Gebietsamt or as Hanover Municipal Council, and so offered no resistance to the change. The majority Bergthal group was divided between East and West Reserves and suffered from a church leadership crisis just as the new municipal government was introduced. It too offered no significant practical resistance, and no resistance in principle.

The West Reserve Reinlaender, however, saw this as much more than a changing of titles. Since they lived in closed communities by choice, local government was necessarily in the hands of their own members. These could not be allowed to hold offices which functioned under an outside authority without threatening their concept of brotherhood. A municipal council received its authority from an act of the provincial government, not from the church or the consent of the villagers. In addition, the municipal system could function with, indeed was designed for, a landholding system without villages and the communal commitments involved in the village form of life. The municipality thus meant not merely a new form of local government; it could spell the end of the old way of life. The Reinlaender threat of emigration at this point did not develop into reality because the government allowed the old Gebietsamt and all of its local village commitments to function alongside of the new municipal councils until the emigration took place in the 1920s for other reasons.

The local government issue had thus revealed a difference in principle between the Reinlaender and the other Mennonite groups by 1885. The former refused to be "unequally yoked" with state authorities in the ordering of their own communities.

The Mennonites discovered only gradually that their Privilegium had not unambiguously defined their separate

status in the area of education. Until 1890, Manitoba's publicly supported schools functioned with such a large measure of autonomy that the Kleine Gemeinde and its splinter groups (Holdeman and Bruderthaler) had no objection in principle to accepting such support. Even after the confessional public schools were abolished in 1890, the school Act seemed generous enough for these groups and the West Reserve Mennonite Brethren and Bergthaler to move increasingly toward the public school system. Having basically accepted the idea of working together with the government in the area of education, these groups took a pragmatic approach and were ready on any specific issue to withdraw from the system. The compulsory flag-flying law and the abolition of the bilingual clause in Manitoba were such issues which caused the withdrawal of a number of schools from public support.

The Reinlaender and Chortitzer viewed the matter of schools from a different perspective. In their reading of the Privilegium they had been given the right to their own schools without any interference from the government whatsoever. They accepted the fact that this also meant taking full responsibility for the cost of such schools. To them this was important because education was clearly the responsibility of the church and the parents. It was far too important to be given to the state. Until about 1916, this position was acceptable to the governments of Saskatchewan

and Manitoba, and these two groups maintained their own private schools alongside of the public school system that functioned all around them, and even in some of their immediate communities. When the right to autonomous administration of their own private schools was denied them, they refused to yield.

The Bergthaler and their allies, who had taken a pragmatic position, also did not like the changes in the school system that were introduced during the first World War. But in their pragmatism they used the accepted means of the Canadian democratic process, the ballot box and the political lobby, to attempt to change the school system in such a way as to make it tolerable for them. The Reinlaender and Chortitzer in their opposition in principle to state controlled education for their children had only three options open. First, they appealed to Ottawa to have their Privilegium upheld. When that was unsuccessful, they deliberately chose faithfulness to their religious convictions over obedience to the provincial law. When even that drastic language did not persuade the provincial governments to modify their positions, both Reinlaender and Chortitzer resorted to a repetition of the cycle with another emigration.

The public school issue thus confirmed the division among the Mennonites which the local government issue had first suggested. Only in this case the Chortitzer group was prepared to act according to its convictions and sided with

the Reinlaender in maintaining a separatist position.

On a third crucial question, exemption from military service, the Privilegium had clearly defined Mennonite status and the federal government faithfully kept its promise. It was therefore only indirectly a contributing factor to the decision of some groups to emigrate.¹ This is in sharp contrast with the situation of the Russian Mennonites in the United States, where "the abrasive encounter of Mennonite nonresistance with American nationalism" not only produced a significant emigration already during the war years, but also strongly influenced the process of Mennonite accommodation to the dominant society.²

Since the groups emigrating from Canada took care to negotiate a new Privilegium with the national governments of the countries to which they planned to move, it is clear that their faith in government as ordained of God had not been basically shaken by the unfaithfulness of Canada and Russia as they had experienced it. Another aspect of their theology was helpful to them in maintaining this faith. They were convinced that the true church had always been persecuted in this world, but that God in his faithfulness

¹The two issues which created most tension between Ottawa and the Mennonites during the war (obtaining exemption from the Military Service Act of 1917 and coping with press censorship) affected the emigrating Reinlaender and Chortitzer least.

²Juhnke, p. 153.

would never fail to provide a new place of refuge in which his church could once more live out its faith for a while.

The governments of Canada and the two provinces most directly involved in these interactions with the Mennonites responded in quite diverse ways. Ottawa had the advantage over the other two in that it was an active partner in the initial negotiations which produced the Privilegium. This advantage was enhanced by the fact that it had control over crown lands in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories and thus became both the donor of the land for Mennonite settlements and the primary outside influence in the early shaping of their communities. In advancing the loan during the financial crisis of the 1870s, in extending the life of the reserves long beyond their initially intended duration, and in supporting an active recruitment program to gain new Mennonite immigrants, the federal government laid the basis for a very positive relationship. This, and its firm determination to honour its commitment in the matter of exemption from military service, helped that relationship to survive the inevitable tensions between a nation at war and its pacifist communities.

The provinces lacked these initial advantages. Their governments had virtually no interaction with Mennonites until their communities were well established. In the matter of extending provincially regulated local self-

government to these communities, the Manitoba government moved with patience and flexibility. It did not insist on eliminating the old Gebietsamt system when it introduced municipal councils, but allowed the two to function side by side. By doing so it avoided what could well have been a confrontation leading to the emigration of a sizable portion of the Mennonite community.

In the matter of education, both provinces initially showed this same kind of flexibility. Church controlled and funded private schools were allowed to function alongside of government supported and regulated public schools at first. But the twin pressures of an intense Protestantism and a narrow nationalism that Canada experienced from 1890 to 1920 found less resistance in Winnipeg and Regina than they did in Ottawa. The first manifested itself as anti-Catholicism, but in school matters showed as little tolerance for the non-Protestant Mennonite system as it did for the non-Protestant Catholic one. The second argued in effect "that unless English was made the sole language of all schools in the West, a Canadian 'nation' could never emerge from the polyglot western population,"³ and opposed German Mennonite schools with the same intensity as it did French Catholic ones.

When the patriotic fervour of the first World War

³ Ramsay Cook, Canada and the French Canadian Question, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1966), quoted in Clark, p. 226.

intensified these pressures, the governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan capitulated. The inflexible methods used in both cases to impose national schools on the Mennonite communities produced the kind of confrontation which confirmed the worst fears of the public school resisters. Manitoba had already seen in the reaction to its 1906 flag legislation how deep Mennonite objection to imposed nationalism was. But that lesson did not prevent the government in 1919 from taking every measure necessary to bring the entire Mennonite population under the jurisdiction of the school attendance Act. Its constructing of one-room school buildings to serve the combined population of three Mennonite villages (where a minimum of three classrooms was required) in school districts created by order-in-council and operated single handedly by an official of the Department of Education, can hardly be given a charitable interpretation.

In Saskatchewan the government had been well informed of Mennonite convictions in the area of education by the reports of several special studies beginning with a commission of inquiry in 1908. But the insights of those studies were not applied in its post-war school policy. The resulting clash with a sizable portion of the Mennonite community was much more severe than previous studies have shown.

The emigration to Mexico and Paraguay together with the new immigration from the U.S.S.R. in the 1920s so altered the nature of the western Canadian Mennonite community that

the specific issues of the 1918-21 clash in Manitoba and Saskatchewan were never resolved in a definitive way.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

ORDER-IN-COUNCIL OF 26 APRIL 1872

P.C. #827B.. Certified copy of a Report of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the 26th April, 1872.

The Committee of Council have had under consideration a Despatch No. 51 of the 7th of March, 1872 from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies transmitting Copy of a Letter from the Foreign Office with a Despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Berdiansk enclosing Letters from German Menonites established in Russia enquiring whether if they emigrate to Canada they would be allowed certain privileges there as to exemption from Military Service.

This Despatch having been referred to the Hon. the Minister of Militia and Defence, that Officer reports that the body of Religionists known as Menonites, is by Statute put on the same footing as Quakers and he calls attention to the 17th Section of the "Act respecting the Militia and Defence of the Dominion of Canada" by which it is enacted that "any person bearing a Certificate from the Society of Menonists shall be exempt from Military Service when balloted in time of peace or war, upon such conditions and such regulations as the Governor-in-Council may, from time to time prescribe."

The said Despatch and enclosures having been also referred to the Hon. the Minister of Agriculture for report with respect to the other matters therein alluded to the Minister recommends that the applicants be informed that a free grant of 160 acres of best land in the possession of the Dominion in the Province of Manitoba, or in other parts of the North West Territory during the years 1872 and 1873 will be made to any person among them, or to as many persons as may apply over the age of 21 years, upon the condition of settlement, and further that, in the other Provinces of the Dominion either free grants of land may be obtained or purchases made on easy terms and at merely nominal prices. The settlers may obtain contiguous lots of land, so as to enable them to form their own communities.

That as related to their enquiry touching a possible application for aid he respectfully recommends that they be informed, it is not the policy of the Dominion Government to grant aid to any settlers in Canada.

That as relates to the information with which they ask to be furnished he recommends that a supply of the several publications of the Provinces and of the Department of Agriculture, containing information for intending Emigrants, be sent to them - and further that in view of the proposed large movement of population, that they should be invited to send to Canada one or two persons from among themselves in whose statements they would have confidence, in order to see the Country in general and the localities in particular, in which they could obtain lands for settlement, and the terms on which they could obtain them, the Department of Agriculture paying the expenses of such persons while engaged on such Mission.

The Committee submit the above reports and the recommendations they contain for Your Excellency's approval and recommend that a Copy of this Minute be transmitted by Your Excellency to the Earl of Kimberley.

Clerk of the Privy Council.

SOURCE: PAC, RG 2, 1, vol. 108.

APPENDIX 2

ORDER-IN-COUNCIL OF 25 SEPTEMBER 1872

P.C. #1043D. Certified Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honorable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council on the 25th September, 1872.

The Committee of Council have had under consideration a despatch from the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated August 23rd ultimo, covering a letter from Mr. Zahrabs, Her Majesty's Consul at Berdiansk, dated July 26th last, and a letter from Mr. Cornelius Janzen, of Berdiansk, dated June last, addressed to Your Excellency.

The Hon. the Minister of Agriculture, to whom the above despatch and enclosures were referred, reports that it is expedient to give the German Mennonites in Russia the fullest assurances of absolute immunity from military service if they settle in Canada.

That a sub-section, of section 17, of the Act 31 Victoria, chapter 40, is as follows:

"Any person bearing a certificate from the Society of Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers, or any inhabitant of Canada, of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military duty, but who, from the doctrines of his religion, is averse to bearing arms and refuses personal military service shall be exempt from such service when balloted in time of peace, or war, upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Governor in Council may, from time to time, prescribe."

That under this section all the persons above mentioned, and the Mennonites are expressly included, are absolutely free and exempted by the law of Canada, from military duty or service, either in time of peace or war.

That the Governor General in Council cannot prescribe any condition or regulations under which, under any circumstances, the persons referred to in the above quoted section can be compelled to render any military service.

That the intention of the Act in conferring upon the Governor General in Council the power of making conditions and regulations was to enable the Government to provide, if necessary, for the registration of the exempted persons in such manner as to prevent persons belonging to any other denominations than those specified in the section of the Act above quoted from avoiding military duty under false pretences.

That the Constitution does not confer upon the Governor General in Council any power to over-ride or set aside, under any circumstances, the plain meaning of statute law and he recommends that this explanation be conveyed to the Mennonists in Russia.

The Committee concur in the foregoing report, and advise that a copy of this Minute be transmitted by Your Excellency to the Earl of Kimberley.

(Signed) John J. McGee, Clerk, Privy Council.

SOURCE: PAC, RG 2, 1.

APPENDIX 3

CAPITAL BROUGHT INTO CANADA BY RUSSIAN MENNONITE

IMMIGRANTS, 1874-80

Year	No. of immigrants	Capital brought in according to	
		P. Wismer	Immigration Dept.
1874	1533	\$143,000	\$200,000 ^a
1875	3261	242,000	324,000 ^b
1876	1352	119,000	170,000 ^c
1877	184	19,000	25,600 ^d
1878	324	-----	79,500 ^e
1879	208	60,000	-----
1880	69	7,000	-----
Totals	6931	\$590,000	\$866,100 ^f

SOURCE: The Wismer amounts are calculated from more detailed data given by Frank H. Epp, Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), p. 201.

The Immigration Department figures are taken from the Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture, in Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, as follows:

^a1875, vol. VIII, no. 40, app. 5, p. 31.

^b1876, vol. IX, no. 8, app. 1, p. 7; app. 21, p. 86.

^c1877, vol. X, no. 8, p. xvi; app. 28, p. 89.

^d1878, vol. XI, no. 9, app. 43, p. 166. The 40,000 rubles exchanged at the previous year's exchange rate would yield \$25,600.

^e1879, vol. XII, no. 9, p. xxiv; app. 40, p. 163; 124,000 rubles calculated at the 1876 exchange rate.

^fSince the Immigration Department did not report any figures for 1879 and 1880, the amounts given by Wismer for these years have been included in the total.

APPENDIX 4

SAMPLE HOMESTEAD ENTRY RECEIPT

22682

This Receipt will not be Valid unless Countersigned by the Officer in Charge of the District within which the Land is Situated.

HOMESTEAD ENTRY RECEIPT.

DOMINION LANDS.

OFFICE OF DOMINION LANDS.



Received from

Wm. P. O'Connell 11-1875
John. D. Schenck

the sum of ten Dollars, being the Fee required by the "Act Respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion" to be paid on filing an Application to be entered for a Homestead Right, which he has now done for the S. E.

Quarter of Section 33
 Township 5 Range 5 E

COUNTERSIGNED.

[Signature]
Abraham

Emale Codd
 AGENT DOMINION LANDS.

John. D. Schenck

APPENDIX 5

NATIONAL SERVICE REGISTRATION CARD, 1917

THIS CARD MUST BE FILLED IN AND PROMPTLY RETURNED BY ALL MALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 16 AND 65 INCLUSIVE.

NATIONAL SERVICE.

CANADA.

1. What is your full name? 2. How old are you? years.

3. Where do you live? Province.....

4. Name of city, town, }
village or Post Office }

Street..... Number.....

10. How much time have you lost }
in last 12 months from sickness? }

11. Have you full use of your arms?.....

12. Of your legs?..... 13. Of your sight?.....

14. Of your hearing?.....

5. In what country }
were you born? }6. In what country was }
your father born? }7. In what country was }
your mother born? }

8. Were you born a British subject?.....

9. If not, are you naturalized?.....

15. Which are you—married, }
single or a widower? }16. How many persons besides }
yourself do you support? }

17. What are you working at for a living?.....

18. Whom do you work for?.....

19. Have you a trade or profession?..... 20. If so, what?.....

21. Are you working now?..... 22. If not, why?.....

23. Would you be willing to change your present work for other necessary work at the same pay during the war?.....

24. Are you willing, if your railway fare is paid, to leave where you now live, and go to some other place in Canada to do such work?.....

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING IN THIS CARD ARE ON THE OTHER SIDE. IT ASKS 24 QUESTIONS. COUNT YOUR ANSWERS.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING IN CARD.

Reverse side of above.

1. This card is to be filled in by all males between the ages of 16 and 65 inclusive.

2. Write plainly.

3. Answer correctly every question. Each is important.

4. This card must be filled in and mailed to the Director General of National Service, Ottawa, in accompanying official envelope, within 10 days of its receipt by you. No postage is required.

5. If you lose your card or envelope any Postmaster will supply another on request.

6. DO NOT FOLD THIS CARD.

SOURCE: CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #9

APPENDIX 6

MENNONITE IDENTIFICATION CERTIFICATES, WORLD WAR I

MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1917

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I, ... of in the
 Province of being a duly ordained and authorized minister
 of the denomination of Christians called Mennonites, do hereby certify that
 of in the
 Province of who is of the age of years, is a
 Mennonite and a member of the denomination of Christians aforesaid and that he
 is a descendant of one of those Mennonites who came to Canada from Russia sub-
 sequent to the order of the Governor-General in Council of 13th August, 1873,
 pursuant to the arrangement thereby sanctioned.

Dated at Ordained Minister
 day of 1918. in the Province aforesaid, this

Signature of Bearer

Police will be instructed to recognize certificates duly executed in above form
 as PRIMA FACIE, entitling the bearer named therein to immunity.

Ottawa, 24 June, '18.

(Sgd) E. L. NEWCOMBE,

Deputy Minister of Justice.

This is Exhibit "C" referred to in the attached Memorial of the Mennonites of the Province of Saskatchewan dated Nov. 4th, 1918.

CERTIFICATE

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Doerr & Burgisberg
 per J. J. Doerr

This is to certify that
 whose signature appears below, is a Mennonite and a son of Mennonite parents.
 He is exempted from military service by Order in Council of 1873,
 exempting Mennonites from all forms of military service.

Countersigned _____ Signed _____
 President of Mennonite Conference An ordained Mennonite Minister.

Dated at _____ this _____ day of _____ 1918.

Signature of bearer _____

SOURCE: Top: CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542, #4. Bottom:
 Exhibit "C" of P.C. #2897/1918, PAC, RG 2, 3, vol. 199.

Mennonite Community of Eastern Manitoba.
STEINBACH DISTRICT.

To whom it may concern:-

THIS IS TO CERTIFY, that

Johann F Giesbrecht
of *Steinbach* P.O. Manitoba, is a member of

the defenceless Mennonite Community.

That his usual place of wor-

ship is the church of

Klingensmiede in the village of

Steinbach

That he was born on the *24* day of

April

A.D. *1886* and that his forefathers

immigrated into Canada under the privileges so nobly granted the Mennonites
by the Order in Council under date of August the 15th, A.D. 1873, by which
entire freedom from all military service was granted the said Mennonites.

Signed

Peter R Duesch

ordained Minister

Johann F. Giesbrecht

Signature of holder

Dated at

Steinbach

this

2

day of

June

A. D. *1918*

Certificate.

To whom it may concern.

This is to certify that the bearer of this note
Heinrich F. Froese, whose signature appears below, is a
member of the German and Lutheran churches in Manitoba.
He is exempted from Military Service by the German
Cabinet of 1873 exempting members from all forms of military service
signature of bearer:

Heinrich F. Froese.

Dated at *Neuenburg*
this *25* day of *May*
1918

Signed *Johann Friedrich*
Reisep.

SOURCE: Original in possession of Frank Froese, Cartwright, Manitoba.

C E R T I F I C A T E

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that
 whose signature appears below does in good faith belong
 to the organized religious denomination of MENNONITES,
 which existed and was well recognized in Canada on the
 5th day of July, 1917, and that he is by the tenets and
 articles of our faith, in effect on said date, prohibited
 from undertaking any Military Service.

DATED at _____ this _____ day of _____ 191..

Signed _____
 Bishop of _____ Mennonite
 Church at _____

Signature of bearer

SOURCE: Benjamin Ewert Papers, CMCA, XX-1, vol. 542,
 #4.

APPENDIX 7. CANADA REGISTRATION BOARD CARDS, 1918

DATE OF REGISTRATION		CANADA REGISTRATION BOARD		SERIES NUMBER	
MONTH	DAY	YEAR	TO BE FILLED IN BY DEPUTY REGISTRAR		
		1918			

CARD FOR FEMALES

1. Name in full (surname last)?

2. Address (permanent)?

3. Address (temporary)?

4. Nationality? can you speak English? French?

5. British subject? by birth? naturalization? marriage?

6. Are you single? married? widow? divorced?

7. How many children or wards under 16? Will these children be recorded by another registrant?

8. Do your health and home ties permit you, if required, to give full-time paid work? (Registrants answering "NO" here, need not answer any of the following questions: if answering "YES" or, if in doubt, should fill up rest of card. All must sign affirmation.)

9. Do your circumstances permit you to live away from home?

10. What is your present main occupation?

(a) If in business as employer, state number of employees.

(b) If an employee, state name, business and address of employer.

(c) If full-time voluntary worker, state name of Society served.

11. State particulars of each, if you have

(a) Trade or profession?

(b) Degree, diploma or certificate?

(c) Special training?

12. State length of experience, if any in:-

(a) General farming ... Years

(b) Truck farming ...

(c) Fruit farming ...

(d) Poultry farming ...

(e) Dairy farming ...

13. Can you

(a) Drive a tractor? ...

(b) Drive a motor car? ...

(c) Drive a horse? ...

(d) Harness a horse? ...

(e) Do plain cooking? ...

14. Indicate here any qualification or practical experience which you possess, not already recorded.

15. Considering your health, training and experience, and the national needs, in what capacity do you think you could serve best?

16. Do your circumstances permit you to give regular full-time services without remuneration?

I affirm that I have verified the above answers and that they are true.

Signature of Registrant.

SOURCE: W. M. Martin Papers, SAB, M 4, I-101, p. 30094.

DATE OF REGISTRATION

MONTH	DAY	YEAR
		1918

CANADA REGISTRATION BOARD

CARD FOR MALES

SERIES NUMBER

TO BE FILLED IN BY DEPUTY REGISTRAR

1. Name in full (surname last)?

Address (permanent)?

STREET AND NUMBER RURAL DELIVERY OR POST OFFICE TOWN OR CITY PROVINCE

2. Age? Date of birth?

Country of birth?

By Naturalization?

4. British subject?

By birth?

If naturalized, which year? What place?

6. Single (S), Married (M), Widower (W), or divorced (D)?

8. Physical disabilities, if any?

10. (a) Present occupation (if any)?

(b) What is your regular occupation?

(c) What other work can you do well?

11. If an employee, state employer's name?

Address?

Nature of business?

12. Do your circumstances permit you to serve in the present national crisis, by changing your present occupation to some other for which you are qualified, if the conditions offered be satisfactory? (a) Where you can return home daily? (b) Away from home?

13. (a) Were you brought up on a farm?

Until what age?

(b) Have you worked on farm?

(c) Are you retired farmer?

(d) Can you handle horses?

Drive tractors?

Use farm machinery?

(e) Are you willing to do farm work?

Where?

During what periods?

I affirm that I have verified the above answers and that they are true.

Signature of Registrar.

SOURCE: W. M. Martin Papers, SAB, M 4, I-101, p. 30092.

APPENDIX 8

EXCERPTS OF THE PARAGUAYAN MENNONITE PRIVILEGIUM

Translation of Law granting to the Mennonites exemption from compulsory military service.

Art. 1. The members of the community named Mennonite that arrive in the country as components of a colonization enterprise, and their descendents, shall enjoy the following rights and privileges:-

- 1) To practice their religion and their cult with entire freedom, without restriction, and consequently to make affirmations before justice by simple Yes or No instead of taking the oath, and be exempt from compulsory military service in time of peace and in time of war in combatant or non-combatant forces;
- 2) Found, administer and maintain schools and educational establishments, and teach and learn their religion and their language, which is the German, without any restriction.
- 3) Administer residuary property and effects and especially the property and effects belonging to widows and orphans, by means of the special system of trust-guardianship known as "Waisenamt", and in accordance with the peculiar rules of the community, without any restriction;
- 4) Administer the mutual fire insurance that is established in the colonies.

Art. 2. The sale of alcoholic and intoxicating beverages is prohibited within the limits of a zone that extends for five kilometres from the properties belonging to the mennonite colonies unless the competent authorities of those colonies request from the Government, and the Government grants the admission of such sale.

.....

Art. 4. No immigration Law, or other, existing or that may be promulgated, can prevent the entry into the country of mennonite immigrants for reasons of age, mental or physical disability.

Art. 5. The franchise referred to in paragraph 3) of Article 1 should be understood as not affecting the rights of persons capable of managing their own property and effects. Dealing with incapables, the Judges, once they have proved the fact of their belonging to the mennonite

communities, shall designate as executors or curators the respective trust institutions. Such executorship, or curatorship, shall be governed by the rules of those trust institutions.

Art. 7. The privileges and franchises accorded by this Law shall be extended to individuals of the same mennonite community that may reach the country separately, provided that, through the competent authorities of the community, they prove that they are mennonites and form part of the colonization undertaking referred to in Article 6.

Art. 8. Let it be communicated to the Executive.

Asuncion, July 22nd, 1921.

(Sd.) Felix Paiva (Sd.-Enrique Bordenave
President of Senate. President of Chief of Deputies.
ASUNCION, July 26, 1921.

To be held as Law, complied with, published, and given to the Official Registry.

(SD.) GONDRA; Jose P. Guggiari;
Ramon Lara Castro;
Eligio Ayala; Rogelio Ibarra; A. Chirife.

SOURCE: F. W. Paris, British Chargé d'Affaires, Asuncion, despatch no. 16 to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 28 July 1921; included in Winston S. Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, despatch no. 501 to Governor General of Canada, 15 September 1921, PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 653, #37523.

APPENDIX 9

SOMMERFELDER MEXICAN PRIVILEGIUM

To Bishop Abraham Doerksen
Representative of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church of
Canada

In reply to your submission of the 5th of this month, in which you express your wish to settle in our country as agriculturalists, I have the honour to answer as follows the questions contained in the above mentioned submission:

In no case will you be obliged to render military service.

In no case will you be obliged to render an oath.

You have the most far-reaching right to exercise your religious principles and the prescriptions of your church without any molestation or restriction.

You are fully authorized to found your own schools with your own teachers, and to teach and practice your religion in the German language without being hindered in any way by the government.

In regard to the administration of your estates and the founding of a Mennonite mutual fire insurance, our laws are so liberal that you can regulate your estates in the way and manner you consider right. This government will raise no objection if the members of your sect introduce among themselves economic regulations which they voluntarily adopt.

You will receive the protection of the law at all times for your property and life wherever such protection is necessary.

You have full freedom to emigrate from this republic whenever you deem it right to do so.

It is the emphatic wish of this government to support the settlement of order-loving, moral and industrious elements, which includes the Mennonites, and it will be pleased if you will find the foregoing answers satisfactory, since the privileges mentioned are guaranteed by our laws.

and you as well as your descendants shall positively and forever enjoy them.

Sufragio Efectivo No Reelección

Mexico, 30 October 1921

The Constitutional President of
the United States of Mexico

(sgd) A. Obregón

Minister of Agriculture and
Economic Affairs

(sgd) A. J. Villarreal

SOURCE: J. H. Doerksen, Geschichte und Wichtige
Dokumente der Mennoniten von Russland, Canada, Paraguay
und Mexico (n.p., 1923), pp. 125-26. Translation mine.

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2, 1 Orders-in-council
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6, E1 Chief Press Censor, 1915-20
7 Governor General's Office
15 Department of the Interior,
Dominion Lands Branch
17 Department of Agriculture
24 Department of National Defence
27 Department of Labour
76 Immigration Branch

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26 A Sir John A. Macdonald Papers
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26 H Sir Robert Borden Papers
29 B 13 John Lowe Collection

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