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MASTERS OF ARTS (HISTORY)

Canadian Immigration Agents and Swiss
Immigration (1870-1930)

by

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Table of Contents

	Page no.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
INTRODUCTION: SWISS EMIGRATION TO CANADA, 1870-1930	
Early Swiss immigration.....	1
Limits of thesis.....	3
Swiss emigration laws.....	6
CHAPTER I: CANADIAN EMIGRATION ACTIVITIES IN SWITZERLAND, 1870-1883	
Motives for emigration.....	11
Special agents	
Edouard Barnard.....	15
J. A. N. Provencher.....	20
J. Kormann and Swiss delegation of Rafsaerts..	24
Mme Elise von Koerber.....	28
Jenkin's report, 1875.....	33
Dyke's investigation, 1881.....	43
Hauswirth delegation.....	45
Reasons for failure.....	47
CHAPTER II: EARLY SETTLEMENT SCHEMES IN WESTERN CANADA, 1872-1889	
Jops plan.....	50
Whitewood settlement.....	58
Rudolph Meyer.....	65
Reasons for failure.....	90

CHAPTER III: CANADIAN AGENTS AND THE NORTH ATLANTIC TRADING COMPANY, 1891-1909.....	92
Agents	
Pierre Foursin.....	94
Auguste Bodard.....	97
Paul Wiallard.....	98
Charles de Gallier de Roeder.....	102
North Atlantic Trading Company.....	103
Assessment, 1891-1909.....	108
CHAPTER IV: WORLD WAR I AND STATE-AIDED EMIGRATION FROM SWITZERLAND, 1914-1930.....	109
World War I.....	110
Post-war years.....	114
State-aided emigration.....	117
Fritz Beck.....	119
E. Stigeler.....	121
Swiss Colonization Board.....	125
Swiss Colonization Association.....	127
The Canadian Pacific Railway.....	131
Walther Fischer and the Invermere settlement....	132
The Canadian National Railway.....	135
The Ammeter immigration.....	137
Assessment, 1914-1930.....	146
CHAPTER V: THE SWISS GUIDES, A ROMANTIC EXPERIMENT IN COLONIZATION.....	148
Background.....	148
Early mountaineering expeditions in Canada	
Visit by Peter Sarbach.....	151

Arrival of first Swiss guides under contract to the C. P. R.....	153
Visit by Edward Whymper.....	153
Edelweiss village.....	156
Reasons for failure of Edelweiss village.....	166
CONCLUSION	
Special agents.....	169
Booking companies.....	171
Swiss Emigration Bureau.....	173
Joos and Meyer-Hauswirth settlement projects.....	174
Invermere project.....	176
Village of Edelweiss.....	176
Appendix 1	
Carl Stettler and the town of Stettler, Alberta....	178
Dom Benoit and Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.....	179
Bibliography.....	182

Introduction: Swiss Emigration to Canada, 1870-1930.

I

The history of Swiss immigration into Canada dates back to the mid-1600s and encompasses many facets of life and occupations. The prime mover behind the emigration of Catholic Swiss to New France was religious persecution by the dominant Protestant party in Switzerland. Pierre de Miville and his two brothers were possibly the first Swiss to settle in New France; emigrants from the Canton of Fribourg, they settled on a seigneurie not far from Montréal in 1642. Jean Talon, Intendant of New France, later reserved a large district near present day Drummondville which he proposed to call "Les Cantons des Fribourgeois" in honour of Pierre and his brothers. The Mivilles, however, chose to remain on their seigneurie.¹ Other Swiss could be found well placed in the administrative offices of the Regime,² on the farms, and actively engaged in the fur trade.

Protestant Swiss were brought to the British colony of Nova Scotia in 1751 and constituted possibly the first organized immigration of Swiss into what is now Canada. That year, on May 20, twenty Swiss embarked from Rotterdam aboard the ship 'Le Gale'. Most were ordinary workers, but included

in their group were a surgeon, two tailors, two millers and a clockmaker.³

Swiss mercenaries first came to Isle Royale (Cape Breton) in 1721 as members of the De Karrer Regiment of the French service. The regiment, maintained at about 100 men, remained at the fortress of Louisbourg until the British takeover in 1745. It is interesting to note that a British force participating in the siege of Louisbourg, the Second Massachusetts Regiment commanded by Colonel Samuel Waldo, probably also had Swiss Germans enlisted under the command of a Swiss commissioned captain in that regiment, Sébastien Zouberbhuler.⁴ Sketchy evidence also suggests that Swiss mercenaries may have participated in the Seven Years' War.

The War of 1812-1814 occasioned the arrival of yet another mercenary group, this time forcibly impressed into service by the British armies. The De Watteville and De Meurons

¹Claude Bonnault, "Les Suisses en Canada," Bulletin de Recherches Historiques, LXI, 2 (1955), pp. 51-70.

²D. Girouard, "Les 'Suisses' du Canada," Bulletin de Recherches Historiques, VIII, 3 (1902), pp. 72-77.

³Public Archives of Canada (hereafter cited as PAC), MG 11, A 42, Colonial Office Records, Nova Scotia, Governor E. Cornwallis, 1751, p. 71.

⁴Personal Correspondence with Christopher Moore, Staff Historian, Fortress of Louisbourg, November 28, 1974.

Regiments composed primarily of Swiss soldiers, but encompassing as well German and Polish mercenaries, participated in several decisive battles. At the conclusion of the war, the regiments were disbanded and 'encouraged' to remain in British North America. The majority of the De Meurons soldiers and a few from the De Watteville moved to the Red River settlement with Lord Selkirk in 1816. The bulk of the De Watteville Regiment, however, settled along the Rideau Canal particularly in Lanark County of Upper Canada. Others settled near Drummondville and elsewhere in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada.

Swiss immigration into the Canadas before Confederation was restricted and undertaken largely by private or missionary efforts. Those that came settled principally around Montreal and Quebec City, or other urban centres. There were no organized immigration efforts on the Western Prairie between 1826 and 1870.

II

This thesis has chosen to ignore the years prior to 1870 and instead concentrate on the period 1870-1930. The date, 1870, was chosen because prior to that year the new Dominion had not demonstrated any serious efforts to organize immigration in Europe and particularly in Switzerland. The year 1930 was selected as a closing date because firstly the

depression which followed demarcated a distinctive period in which the atmosphere was quite different for Swiss emigrants in Canada, and secondly the problems of emigration in Switzerland entered a new phase under the influence of right-wing regimes, in neighbouring Italy and Germany. Finally, the amount of documentation available in Canada is severely limited making a post-1930 study based on Canadian sources unfeasible.

In an attempt to make the subject more precise and give it the kind of focus required by a thesis, several limitations have been imposed on this study. Firstly, the thesis considers only Swiss immigrants which arrived directly from Switzerland, and not those who were at one time resident in the United States. Secondly, although there is some mention of Swiss settlement in Ontario, the study is primarily one of Swiss immigration into Western Canada. Thirdly, largely because of insufficient archival sources available in Canada, two Swiss settlements in Western Canada--Notre Dame de Lourdes (Manitoba) and Stettler (Alberta)--are not discussed. Furthermore, the immigration of Swiss-Italians is not included in this research because, prior to 1930, they are not an identifiable group in Western Canada. Lastly, this research does not pretend to be a 'human' socio-cultural history in the sense of describing

the experiences of Swiss settlers in Western Canada; rather, it is an introduction to the themes, policies, schemes and government efforts in the promotion of Swiss immigration into the country.

The chapters follow more or less a chronological order. Chapter One and Two treat the years 1870 to 1890, outlining the efforts of the "special" agents sent by the Canadian Government into Switzerland to stimulate immigration. The second chapter deals exclusively with two settlement enterprises which were advanced during those years, the first by Dr. Wilhelm Joos, a well known philanthropist and politician, and the second by Dr. Rudolph Meyer and Jacob Hauswirth. The former never left the planning room while the latter developed into a first-rate tale of intrigue and deception. Both projects serve to illustrate that the Swiss Government considered bloc settlement as the only means by which settlement on the vast prairie could be successfully achieved.

Chapter Three highlights the years 1890 to 1914 when little work was undertaken in Switzerland. Although a few independent agents were sent overseas, the period was dominated by the North Atlantic Trading Company, a loosely joined conglomerate of booking agents and representatives of the more prominent steamship lines which operated from 1899 to 1906.

Chapter Four discusses the impact of the First World War on the Swiss-German population in Canada, the growth of the Federal Emigration Bureau in Switzerland and its relationship with the development of state-aided emigration.

C. P. R. and C. N. R. immigration efforts are also discussed in this chapter.

The last chapter discusses the arrival of the Swiss mountain guides hired by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Special attention is centered on the Swiss village of Edelweiss, located a few miles from Golden, British Columbia.

III

The overriding theme which permeates the years 1870-1930 is the role that Swiss emigration laws played in the success and failure of Swiss immigration into Western Canada. Such laws in Switzerland were made necessary by the continued abuses practiced by unscrupulous booking agents and steamship companies. Propaganda in many instances, for example, was purposely falsified to attract settlers to a remote area of settlement. Often, the long and arduous journey aboard ill-equipped steamers and closet-like cabins proved more deadly than the dangers an immigrant might face in his new homeland. Economic necessity was the chief reason that, in the end, these laws were relaxed or discarded.

Prospective Swiss emigrants had to furnish proper papers in order to be permitted to leave the country. Wrote W. T. R. Preston, the Commissioner of Emigration in London, England:

Every Swiss citizen possesses a certificate of origin. This certificate bears the owner's age and name, the name of his or her parents, and the name of his or her commune of origin. Should any country require a certificate of character of each immigrant on arrival, the Swiss Emigration Office would instruct emigration agents to ask each emigrant to furnish a certificate of good conduct, which certificates are issued by communal authorities in rural districts, and in towns by the police, but they are only issued to citizens of good moral character.⁵

A large amount of discretion rested with the local mayor. In a similar fashion, the mayor could influence the emigrants' destination. It was not without reason, then, that emigration agents such as Madame Von Koerber referred repeatedly to the importance of that office.

Two emigration laws concern this thesis. The first was introduced in 1879 and promulgated into law in 1880. The second came into force in 1888. The laws acted primarily to discourage foreign and non-established emigration houses from

⁵PAC, RG 76, Volume 50, file 1980, Part 1 (1892-1906), "Extract from Report dated 8th July, 1905, from W. T. R. Preston, Commissioner of Emigration, London, England, to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, Ottawa."

operating in Switzerland, severely curbed the distribution of propaganda within the country, and with equal efficacy made it more difficult for Swiss citizens to emigrate.

The 1879 law, consisting of some twenty-two articles, tried to impose some controls on the activities carried out by the various agents in the Republic. Firstly, the whole business of emigration was placed firmly in the hands of the Department of the Interior which would be the final arbiter. Licences would be issued by that Department and no unauthorized business or its representatives would be permitted to operate in any capacity within the Swiss Confederation. Furthermore, to qualify for a licence an applicant was required to prove that he enjoyed a sound reputation, could efficiently and securely transfer emigrants to their point of destination, and moreover, that applicant had to maintain a permanent office in Switzerland. In addition, the agency had to post a 50,000 franc security bond and agree to "insure the lives of all adult passengers for not less than 500 francs to 2,000 francs per head for the journey."⁶ The penalty for foreigners acting without a proper permit was immediate expulsion from the Confederation.

⁶PAC, RG 17, Volume 152, file 15900, Dore to Minister of Agriculture, March 2, 1879.

The second law enacted July 10, 1888 differed only in the increased severity of its provisions. Once more a bond was required, this time of 40,000 francs plus 3,000 francs for each sub-agent appointed. Those agents selling tickets would have to deposit 80,000 francs. Furthermore,

It is forbidden Agents to send forward.

1. persons who on account of advanced age, sickness or infirmity are unfit for work, unless it is proved that their support is sufficiently assured in the place to which they are destined;...

3. persons who having paid the cost of the journey would arrive at the place to which they are destined, destitute of all means;

4. persons whom the laws of the country to which they are destined will not admit of their being received as immigrants;

5. persons who are not furnished with papers stating their origin and their nationality;...⁷

Other provisions made it mandatory to provide suitable food and accomodation during the entire journey as well as a suitable escort to insure the safe arrival of the passengers. Penalties for offenders remained the same.

Further limitations on emigration activities were put into force by way of an amendment to the above act in February, 1889. Firstly, reacting to the increase of state-aided immigration schemes, the Swiss Government made it illegal to

⁷PAC, RG 76, Volume 50, file 1980, part 2 (1907).

advance the whole or any part of the passage money and to contract an agreement on these terms with an emigrant. In the preamble to the amendment the text reads:

It is absolutely without doubt that if foreigners make advances of this kind to Swiss emigrants it is only in the interest of enterprises... Otherwise one cannot see from what motive foreigners will advance money to emigrants. Thus one is easily convinced that Agents or Societies which stimulate emigration by means of this nature have much less thought for the happiness of the persons wishing to emigrate than for their own interests.⁸

A second amendment made it illegal to carry on propaganda concerning any colonization "enterprise" which did not receive the approval of the Swiss Government. In the 1920s, much of this legislation was abandoned. Overcrowded cities, high unemployment, and an unstable economy made emigration more attractive to the Swiss Government and state-aided emigration became a practical alternative.

This is the background of the movement of Swiss nationals into Western Canada between 1870 and 1930.

⁸ Ibid.

Chapter I: Canadian Immigration Activities in Switzerland,
1870-1883.

Prior to Confederation, immigration into the Canadas from Switzerland, had been a singular and very often private undertaking. With the advent of Confederation and the subsequent demonstration of a desire to attract to Canada immigrants from Europe, immigration became not only a provincial but, also, more importantly, a federal concern. The government of the new Dominion was a novice in matters of European emigration and had yet to mature sufficiently to combat effectively the more experienced agents of South America and the United States. This chapter explores the early activities of the Dominion agents in Switzerland up to 1883, and examines the problems and bureaucratic tangles which confronted them both in Canada and in Switzerland.

I

Swiss Society at the time was shaken by the "tremors of religious persecution" and the "horrors of industrialization".
By the early 1870's

... the evil results of economic 'laissez-faire' were attracting attention. Working hours in factories were excessively long and conditions were unhealthy; female and child labour were abused. To avoid factory acts, whole industries were transferred from one canton to another. Some cantons were reluctant to abandon the policy of complete industrial freedom and in them the abuses went unchecked.¹

The revision of the Swiss Constitution in 1874, helped to correct many industrial abuses, and accomplished with equal fervour the legitimization of a growing campaign to halt the spread of Catholicism. The latter provoked what Gilliard terms "petty persecutions". The new laws backed by the domineering influence of the Protestant Cantons blocked, for example, any attempts to re-activate former, or establish new, Catholic convents within the Republic.² Canadian agents in Switzerland and elsewhere shared the feeling that a wave of Catholic emigration from the small alpine country would surely follow. Paul Decazes commented in

¹ Charles A. Gilliard, A History of Switzerland, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1955, p. 100.

² Ibid., p. 102. See for example Article 52 of the Swiss Constitution and for further reference on this article and the Church and State relationship in Switzerland as interpreted by the Swiss Constitution, see Christopher Hughes, The Federal Constitution of Switzerland, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1954, pp. 61-68.

his official report to the Minister of Agriculture: "I was led to hope last spring [1874], that in consequence of the constitutional changes in Switzerland, sanctioned by the vote of 19th April last, a certain number of malcontents of that country would be disposed to emigrate, in order to escape what they consider an act of religious persecution."³ A year earlier, J. Kormann, newly appointed agent for Germany and Alsace Lorraine, and indirectly for Switzerland, observed that the "persecution of the R. C. Episcopate & clergy in some of the cantons in Switzerland will no doubt cause a large emigration from among the R. C. population of the cantons."⁴

Furthermore, murmurs of industrial discontent not only in Switzerland but also in surrounding countries filtered through to Government agents in London, England, and from there to Canadian observers in Ottawa. Gustave Bossange, newly appointed Dominion emigration agent in Paris, for example, appeared optimistic about immigration prospects. He reported:

³Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1875, No. 40, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report of M. P. Decazes, Special Immigration Agent in France, Paris, December 6th, 1874. Decazes was appointed agent in 1872.

⁴PAC, RG 17, Volume 89, file 8691, J. Kormann to the Minister of Agriculture, June 25, 1873.

... the war of 1870-71, the Commune, the suffering which prevailed all over France, paralyzing industry, stopping all building, and arresting trades of every kind, seemed to me to have created for many, the desire to emigrate, to go to a distance, and there to re-achieve a lost position, to toil without stint, not allowing their spirits to be cast down at being obliged to re-commence at the bottom round of the ladder, although they previously had been in a regrettable if not a prominent position.⁵

In nearby Alsace Lorraine, on the other hand, Mr. Richard Berns, the Strasbourg agent of the Montreal Ocean Steamship Company,⁶ considered his situation to be more precarious. Bossange informed Ottawa that,

... Mr. [sic] Berns comprit la difficulté de sa position, la délicatesse de la situation et pensa y faire face en intitulant son agence "Maison Suisse" et en mettant à sa tête deux hommes très intelligents d'une grande expérience dont l'un de la Suisse Allemande. Cela ne suffisait pas; il eu fallu pouvoir s'appeler "Maison Alsacienne" et encore mieux, avoir pour soi l'Ancienneté.⁷

These and similar reports motivated the Canadian government to make a new and more complete review of the European situation.

⁵Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1873, No. 26, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report of G. Bossange, Paris, December 31, 1872, p. 120.

⁶The Montreal Ocean Steamship Company operated as part of the Allan Line. Berns became in 1872, an unpaid agent of the Department of Agriculture.

⁷PAC, RG 17, Volume 79, file 7653, Gustave Bossange to the Minister of Agriculture, January 15, 1873.

II

For this purpose "special" agents were appointed whose primary purpose was to disseminate information about the Dominion as well as to report and make recommendations to Ottawa with a view to increasing emigration from the Continent. In Switzerland a number of special Canadian government agents entered the small republic full of optimism and naïveté; they departed, without exception, frustrated and disappointed.

Edward Barnard Jr., who in the spring of 1871 had travelled to Europe as emigration agent of the Province of Quebec, "for the purpose of fostering and directing towards this Province the emigration of a healthy, moral, industrious and law-abiding population well fitted to develop [sic] the resources of our Country", became the first of these special Dominion federal agents to visit, though only briefly, Switzerland.⁸ The federal Department of Agriculture, in "view of existing circumstances" and his "special fitness for duty", was anxious to employ Barnard for a limited period of six to eight months.⁹ Although his terms of reference limited his

⁸ PAC, RG 17, Volume 67, file 6439, Report of Edward Barnard Jr., Special Immigration Agent in Europe. See also, Quebec, Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, 1871, No. 4, Department of Agriculture and Public Works, Report of Mr. Edward Barnard Jr. Emigration Agent on the Continent of Europe, Quebec, October 30, 1871, p. 299.

⁹ PAC, RG 17, Volume 63, file 6127, Order in Council, December 27, 1871.

field of activity to France, Belgium, Alsace Lorraine, "and the contiguous German States" it did not prevent him from travelling freely throughout the Swiss cantons.¹⁰

Barnard left Canada on January 15th, 1872 in the company of the abbé Verbist, emigration agent of the province of Quebec;¹¹ he arrived shortly thereafter in Liverpool and proceeded from there, by way of London, to the Continent.¹² As instructed, he visited the various Continental Agencies, particularly those of Gustave Bossange in Paris, Richard Berns in Strasbourg and Mr. Simays in Antwerp.¹³ By June 1872 his voyage had come to an end, and his report was submitted to the Federal Department of Agriculture.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ L'abbé Verbist, a Belgian priest and missionary became an agent of the Province of Quebec in the hope of forming a Belgian colony in that province. For further reference see n. 8; Canada Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1873, No. 26, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report of Gustave Bossange, Paris, December 31, 1872, p. 124.

¹² Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1873, No. 26, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report of Emigration Agent at Antwerp, Belgium, Antwerp, 16th January, 1873, p. 168.

¹³ See n. 8. His report as it appears in the Sessional Papers, differs somewhat from his original report. In all cases, the original was consulted. Continental agencies were established in major European cities such as Paris (France) and Antwerp (Belgium) to co-ordinate Canadian immigration efforts and serve as headquarters for numerous sub-agents working in the field; in addition, it acted as a general clearing house for the distribution of Canadian immigration propaganda. Between 1870 and 1930, the Paris Agency and to a lesser extent the Antwerp Agency, was largely responsible for Canadian immigration efforts in Switzerland. The Paris Agency in particular recruited several sub-agents (independent of "special" agents) to work within the Republic.

Barnard's submission outlined, as similar accounts would later testify, the inherent weaknesses in Canadian immigration efforts in Europe. Although the report made little direct reference to Switzerland, it emphasized once more the need to reorganize Canadian approaches and change Canadian attitudes. Such a reorganization, Barnard insisted, depended on the amelioration of certain conditions which forestalled any immediate efforts to direct a significant flow of European emigrants towards Canada. Firstly, people in Europe were still largely ignorant about Canada and the possibilities there for emigrants. On the contrary, "the United States are considered by the majority, the most attractive country in the world." American land agents, armed with colourful literature and equipped with "sufficient" funds, could induce immigrants to settle in even the most remote states of the Union. In Europe, however, pamphlets and propaganda leaflets advertising Canada were scarce. If the trend were to be reversed, he suggested, competitive printed materials, complete with attractive illustrations, should be circulated in the chief European languages.¹⁴

Secondly, to effect an efficient dissemination of this material, Barnard recommended that the Federal government place in its service the agents now working for the Allan Steamship Line.

¹⁴See n. 8.

With headquarters in Liverpool, the Allan Steamship Line could boast a large network of employees, composed mainly of native businessmen, strategically stationed in the major towns and villages of Great Britain and Continental Europe. In addition, several of the more important representatives superintended their own sub-agents.¹⁵ Should the latter be supplied with pamphlets and other printed matter they would be quite willing to distribute these in their respective regions.¹⁶

Thirdly, Barnard saw the need for a Central Bureau or General Agent to supervise, direct and co-ordinate emigration efforts.

Now that so many special agents are sent from the country to Europe, both by your government and by those of the different provinces forming the Confederation, it appears to me indispensable that a person of more than ordinary ability--one of strict honour and entire devotedness to our country as a whole /sic/ shall represent the government of Canada in some central part of Europe from which he could easily communicate with your department and with the different governments of Europe when necessary and especially direct and superintend the efforts of our special agents both federal and local, so that the best result be obtained and nothing be done, which depreciating one province to bolster up another might tend to discredit our country.¹⁷

¹⁵Gustave Bossange, for example, claimed to have in 1873, sixty sub-agents under his control. Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1874, No. 9, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report of Gustave Bossange, Paris, December 31, 1873, p. 71.

¹⁶See n. 8.

¹⁷Ibid.

Concluding his report, Edward Barnard Jr. observed that in lands where wages and working conditions tended to be severely depreciated, workers often could not afford the passage fares to Canada. He felt, however, that this problem could be easily circumvented as "it appears to me evident that, if we want to bring over large numbers of the labouring class, we must necessarily make contracts for a given time and advance the passage money."¹⁸ After having submitted his report, Barnard resigned his post.

Barnard's recommendations helped to promote reforms which would become an integral part of Government "policy". Allan Line agents, such as Gustave Bossange and Richard Berns, were selected as unpaid Government agents on the Continent; William Dixon, formerly the Canadian immigration agent at Liverpool, found himself removed to London in 1872 as Chief Immigration Agent, with vague instructions to coordinate immigration efforts; and the Government entered upon a vigorous campaign of distributing freely on the Continent eye-catching pamphlets and circulars.

¹⁸ Ibid. This idea of bringing out settlers on a short term contract was not void of economic implications; Barnard wrote in his report: "From what I have seen I entertain no doubt that many thousands of honest, industrious, frugal, able bodied workmen could be secured by contract, for a year or more, at wages much lower than that now paid in most parts of Canada, that these men would be happy to fulfill their engagements and would repay faithfully, out of their wages, what advance, would be made to bring them out. It is certain that wages on the continent are fully one half lower than in Great Britain and the labourers as industrious, less exacting and much more economical."

To carry this campaign into Switzerland, the federal Government placed its trust in J. A. N. Provencher, nephew of Bishop Provencher of St. Boniface. Provencher's appointment of June 1, 1872, came only days after the resignation of Barnard. Like his predecessor, Provencher found himself restricted to working in France, Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine and the "contiguous German States". He arrived in Europe in the early days of June and by August he was in Switzerland. He reported to his superior:

Quoique la Suisse ne soit pas mentionnée dans les instructions que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'adresser à mon départ du Canada, ayant appris qu'un grand mouvement d'émigration se préparait de ce pays vers les Etats Unis, j'ai cru devoir m'enquérir des moyens à prendre pour que le Canada eut sa part de ces intelligents et courageux travailleurs.¹⁹

By visiting Switzerland, Provencher hoped to gain insights into the possibilities open to the Canadian government to induce Swiss emigrants to settle in the Dominion. To this end, he held conferences with several Swiss government officials, among them Dr. Wilhelm Joos, "Nationalrath" who would be the first to embark on an ill-fated scheme to settle Swiss emigrants in Western Canada.²⁰

¹⁹PAC, RG 17, Volume 71, file 6834, J. A. N. Provencher to John Lowe, August 28, 1872, p. 1.

²⁰See chapter two.

He found in Switzerland a very intricate and complex emigration procedure controlled mainly by the competitive American and Argentinian Governments. Politicians such as Dr. Joos hoped to alleviate internal economic and political pressures by making available sound channels of emigration. Experience had taught them how important it was to ensure the safety and welfare of their departing countrymen.²¹ In that light, they insisted that any arrangements with foreign governments had to provide for group settlement with as many guarantees and as few compliances as possible. Despite these seemingly exaggerated demands, American and South American land companies were all too willing to come to terms.

Quelques états de l'Amérique du Sud et quelques compagnies de chemin de fer des Etats Unis ont déjà offert aux Communes suisses de concessions gratuites de cinquante à cent mille acres, sans aucune conditions, et dans le seul but de faire disparaître les craintes qu'entretiennent toujours les émigrants sur le sort qui les attend dans leur nouvelle patrie.²²

²¹During the early 1800s, Swiss emigrants had suffered extreme hardships at the hands of unscrupulous Brazilian land speculators. Such an incident did not die easily in the eyes of the public. Well into the 1860s, every effort was taken to prevent emigration to that country. See for example the Red River Settlement Papers, Selkirk Papers, PAC, MG 19, E 1, Volume 17, p. 6814, Rodolphe de Mey to Andrew Colville, Berne, April 18, 1820.

²²See n. 19.

Quite to the contrary, the "temper" of Canadian politics would not accept such conditions.²³

Provencher realized that Canada would have to change its views and approach if he hoped to make any headway in the Swiss Republic. While the competing countries propagated their appeals through agents and land company representatives, Canada was represented by a handful of relatively unknown Allan Line agents; and this, in a country where only the old and popular firms were tolerated, and in a business, which at best had a less than admirable reputation.²⁴

To further complicate the issue, Swiss emigrants were now beginning to make greater use of the port of Le Havre, in France, which for fifteen years the Swiss authorities had warned had a "very bad reputation by shippers on the Continent."²⁵

²³ Dyke mentioned in an official report to the Department of Agriculture that the government was less willing to grant huge land reserves. The Joos scheme fell victim to this changing temperament. See n. 20.

²⁴ Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1873, No. 26, Department of Agriculture, J. A. N. Provencher's Report of Proceedings in Europe, Paris, December 31, 1872, p. 140.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 131.

Many Swiss had used the facilities at Antwerp in Belgium, which operated direct lines to New York. Ironically, the Allan Line had no ships sailing ~~directly from~~ Le Havre to Quebec, thereby making whatever efforts they did exert through their Swiss representatives virtually fruitless.²⁶ Provencher concluded that Canada had to revise its approach. Consequently, he recommended lower shipping rates to compete with American lines and in addition a direct shipping service linking either Antwerp or Le Havre with the port of Quebec.²⁷

In the autumn of 1872 Provencher was reappointed for another short term in Europe with instructions to concentrate his efforts chiefly in Switzerland where he continued to negotiate with Dr. Joos.²⁸ Early in 1873, he resigned his office and accepted another position as Indian Agent for the North West Territories.²⁹ His overall success in terms of the number of immigrants brought to Canada, was small. Of the few immigrants who did come, most went to Quebec, and a very few to Ontario; not one settled in Western Canada. Nevertheless, Provencher had managed to approach important and influential Swiss politicians and had stirred some interest in the Dominion of Canada,

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 130-141.

²⁸ PAC, RG 17, Letterbook 1505, p. 153, Lowe to Provencher, September 18, 1872.

²⁹ PAC, RG 17, Volume 81, file 7846, John Lowe to William Dixon, February 26, 1873.

His efforts were continued by J. Kormann and Madame Elise Von Koerber. Kormann was appointed immigration agent on December 14th, 1872, and like his predecessor was to operate only within France, Belgium, Alsace Lorraine, and the German kingdoms.³⁰ In spite of these instructions, he extended his activities into Switzerland, Austria and the northern portions of Italy. His first visit to Switzerland in May, 1873 did not prove successful. He claimed that the lateness of the season prevented him from travelling into the rural areas.³¹

Ré-appointed in October, 1873, Kormann left once more for Europe and this time he embarked on a more vigorous campaign throughout Switzerland. On this occasion his travels were not totally in vain. By June, 1874 he could report that a Tyrolese and Swiss deputation would be arriving in Canada within a few months, "for the purpose of selecting a tract of land for a number of families who intend coming [this spring]."³²

³⁰PAC, RG 17, Letterbook, 1505, p. 253, Lowe to Kormann, December 14, 1872.

³¹PAC, RG 17, Volume 89, file 8691, Kormann to the Minister of Agriculture, June 25, 1873.

³²PAC, RG 17, Volume 111, file 10884, Kormann to John Lowe, June 7, 1874.

The Department of Agriculture attached some importance to this first official Swiss delegation to Canada because Kormann received new instructions to remain in Canada and attend "to the particular period of the arrival of the Tyrolese and Swiss deputation."³³

The Swiss delegation, composed of the Reverend F. A. Rafsaerts and three Tyrolese laymen, arrived in mid-August, 1874 equipped with complimentary passes from the Grand Trunk and Intercolonial Railways. They visited New Brunswick, the Eastern Townships of Quebec and the Muskoka district of Ontario. No attempt was made to go farther west.³⁴

The delegation's report to the Swiss government, although initially prepared in October, 1874, was not formally submitted until the following February. In it they expressed their satisfaction with the country, particularly the townships of Ristigouche and Bonaventure in Quebec. Significantly, the report betrayed the first signs of the dissension and jealousies.

³³PAC, RG 17, Letterbook 1509, p. 214, Lowe to Kormann, June 11, 1874.

³⁴PAC, RG 17, Volume 120, file 11763, Kormann to Lowe, September 17, 1874.

which were characteristic of competing immigration and booking agents in Switzerland. The report, whether or not inspired by Kormann³⁵, castigated Madame Elise Von Koerber and her association with the firm of Andreas Zwilchenbart, passenger booking agents in Basle.

... the project of founding a Swiss settlement in Canada is beginning to fall into disrepute in consequence of the unwarrantable practices of Madme /sic/ Körber. The manner in which this lady, in connection with the firm of Zwilchenbart of Basel, is canvassing for Canada is, to say the least, very imprudent and calculated to attract the attention of our authorities. Already various voices have been raised in the public papers, condemning the Nipissing project, and above all expressing a surprise that the Government of Canada would have laid the interest of the country into the hands of a woman.³⁶

The alternative, which they hoped would be accepted, was to engage the services of Messrs. Rommel & Co. also of Basle, a firm which unlike the Zwilchenbarts, they claimed had earned the respect of both the authorities and the public.³⁷

³⁵Kormann and Koerber held a mutual dislike for each other, as their correspondence with John Lowe, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture testifies. See for example, PAC, RG 17, Volume 108, file 10573, Kormann to Lowe, May 2, 1874; Volume 106, file 10374, Koerber to Lowe, April 7, 1874.

³⁶PAC, RG 17, Volume 127, file 13333, Z. Rupperts and J. Geiger to the Minister of Agriculture, October 19, 1874.

³⁷Ibid. It is interesting to note that they did not put much faith in Kormann either because they chose to send the report "in case Mr. Kormann should not have bestowed the necessary attention on the matter, or omitted to hand you a faithful translation of the report."

Little materialized from the deputation's visit to Canada apart from vague promises to settle some of their countrymen in the eastern townships of Quebec. Kormann returned to Europe in the spring of 1875, and submitted his final report to the Department of Agriculture in May. Once more, only a handful of Swiss emigrants set sail for Canada. This seeming failure he blamed on several factors; inflated ocean fares; no direct sailing route to Quebec; and the absence of what he termed "Houses of Reference" where immigration efforts for a given area could be centralized. He preferred such "Houses" because "the activity of your Special Agent has certainly born good fruit but we should avoid overdoing it." He added that "A reappearance of Special Agents would now give them the character of Recruiting Agents;..."³⁸ He did not fail to warn of a new drive,--"a thing almost universal in the Continent"--, towards more aggressive emigration laws and censorship of the more unscrupulous booking agents which would circumscribe the effectiveness of any foreign immigration agents.

³⁸PAC, RG 17, Volume 128, file 13435, Kormann to the Minister of Agriculture, May 4, 1875.

Elise Von Koerber,³⁹ the second agent named in 1872, first journeyed to Europe in the interest of Canadian immigration in the early months of the year of her appointment. This she undertook on her own initiative, receiving no financial or material encouragement either from a provincial government or from the federal government. The motive behind her visit was to find out if there was any significant emigration from Switzerland and if there were, if it could be directed towards Canada. At the same time, Mme Von Koerber commenced her work designed to improve conditions surrounding female immigration. Her letters to the Department of Agriculture were read, but no immediate aid was offered.⁴⁰ Finally, in

³⁹Madame Von Koerber expended most of her "energies and enthusiasms" in Ontario. The settlement which she wanted, and in the end did establish, was to be located in the Parry Sound district, bordering on the shores of the Magnetawan River. The village of Magnetawan, and the establishment of a Swiss nucleus there occupied most of Mme Von Koerber's energies in the early years. The remainder she spent on the promotion of female immigration to Canada, and the improvement of services and protection offered to female immigrants once they arrived in the country. Despite this active interest in Ontario, Mme Von Koerber not only introduced to Canada the powerful Zwilchenbart agency but also encouraged proceedings which eventually made way for the first Swiss delegate to the Canadian Northwest. It is in this light that her work is of interest to this thesis.

⁴⁰PAC, RG 17, Volume 222 (no file number), Von Koerber to the Ministry of the Interior of the Grand-Duchy of Baden, Karlsruhe, Lausanne, December 20, 1877. Translation.

October 1872, she received a contract to translate into German a pamphlet issued by the Minister of Agriculture, and to distribute the same throughout Germany and Switzerland.⁴¹ In addition, she was to receive a commission for each adult immigrant she could encourage to come to Canada.

She repeatedly requested formal accreditation to the foreign governments because she realized that only on an official basis would governmental authorities in Switzerland and Germany attempt to deal with representatives from foreign countries. Since proper protocol demanded that letters of accreditation be issued upon governmental request by the Governor General, Mme Von Koerber appealed separately to both the Governor General and the Minister of Agriculture. The reply in 1873, as it was to be in ensuing years, was that it "was not thought by the Minister advisable to have an application made to His Excellency /then Lord Dufferin/ for a letter to accredit her."⁴²

⁴¹PAC, RG 17, Letterbook 1505, p. 187, Lowe to Dixon, October 18, 1872, Letterbook 1505, p. 189, Lowe to Von Koerber, October 18, 1872.

⁴²PAC, RG 17, Letterbook 1507, p. 27, Lowe to Fletcher, March 13, 1873.

In June 1873, Mme Von Koerber came back to Canada accompanied by a few Swiss families and some girls.⁴³ It was then that she consulted with the Hon. A. McKellar, the Minister of Agriculture for the Province of Ontario, and with his assistance she selected a tract of land, just south of Lake Nipissing, to be reserved for her Swiss settlement. She hastily returned to Europe to advertise her scheme and recruit settlers. By the fall of 1873 she had encouraged a few Swiss to return with her to Canada in order to see the upper Muskoka region for themselves and to report back to their countrymen in Switzerland.

Her "casual behaviour", her haphazard and informal approach to her work, and her "bad" habit of bypassing bureaucratic formalities, earned her the displeasure of several government officials. Mr. Crooks, the Secretary-Treasurer of the province of Ontario, for example, questioned her right to represent herself as an official agent of the provincial government. The dispute arose after the receipt by Crooks of a letter from Messrs. Rommel, newly appointed

⁴³The girls who accompanied Mme Von Koerber in 1873 were brought out as "informers" to test the weaknesses of the immigrant reception homes in Canada, a tactic which she used with amazing success on more than one occasion. Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1875, No. 40, Department of Agriculture, Report of Madame Von Koerber, Special Immigration Agent in Switzerland, Freiburg, December 31, 1874, p. 142.

Dominion agents in Basle, complaining of the interference of Madame Von Koerber with their work in Switzerland. At the root of the problem lay the rivalry between the firm of Messrs. Rommel & Co., working with Gustave Bossange and J. Kormann, and the firm of Messrs. Zwilchenbart, with whom Mme Von Koerber was associated. Crooks, for his part, preferred and encouraged the relationship with Kormann and the Messrs. Rommel but repudiated Madame Von Koerber: "... as to the latter person" he wrote, "I have always refused to give her the slightest encouragement and she has no authority to represent in any way this Government."⁴⁴

Mme Von Koerber and the firm of Messrs. Zwilchenbart protested, on the other hand, that they had themselves directed to Canada in the space of two years close to 300 Swiss and Tyrolese immigrants.⁴⁵ The Canadian Agent General in London elaborated their claims.

⁴⁴PAC, RG 17, Volume 126, file 13278, Crooks to Lowe, January 27, 1875.

⁴⁵PAC, RG 17, Volume 131, file 13709, Zwilchenbart to Lowe, March 23, 1875.

She /Koerber/ states that she has worked up the Swiss and Tyrolese districts at a considerable sacrifice and that she has been largely aided by Messrs. Zwilchenbart who are by far the most considerable agents of the kind in that part of the country.... Madame Von Koerber says that these gentlemen have been at no small expense and pains to get up a Canadian Business and she seems to think, . . . that they will feel hurt at the unlooked for appointment of rivals in the trade as agents for the Dominion.⁴⁶

In an attempt to settle the dispute, Edward Jenkins, Canada's first Agent General in London, wrote to the Department of Agriculture suggesting that both organizations be employed in order to profit from "the healthy rivalry which will be promoted."⁴⁷

Although the firm Messrs. Zwilchenbart was recognized as a Dominion immigration agency enjoying the usual commission of two dollars per adult immigrant, its activities were of very uneven quality.⁴⁸ It occasionally preferred the more lucrative rewards offered by the better established American land companies to Canadian commitments.

⁴⁶ PAC, RG 17, Volume 129, file 13555, Jenkins to the Minister of Agriculture, March 19, 1875.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ See n. 45. PAC, RG 17, Letterbook 1511, pp. 170-171, Lowe to Zwilchenbart, April 13, 1875.

The problems with Mme Von Koerber, the jealousies between the two booking agents, the slow progress of European emigration and the reportedly growing interest of Dr. Joos in colonisation precipitated a visit to the continent by the Agent General in London, Edward Jenkins, in the summer of 1875. Jenkins' report, presented in October 1875, served to clarify the factors which were frustrating Canadian immigration efforts in Switzerland.

In Basle he met with Mr. J. Imobersteg of the Zwilchenbart agency who gave his impressions of Canada and the prospects of Swiss emigration:⁴⁹

Mr. Im Obersteg /sic/ thinks that a considerable emigration could be obtained from Switzerland of agriculturists, both labourers and farmers first, by cheapening the rates... by direct steamers and Continental food;⁵⁰ by improving and increasing the propaganda in the press... fourthly by better organisation and better treatment⁵¹ in Canada.

⁴⁹PAC, RG 76, Volume 107, file 18179, Report of Edward Jenkins to the Minister of Agriculture, October 1875, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁰Jenkins found out from an unnamed Strasbourg agent, that the delayed journey to Quebec, via Liverpool was very much disliked: "... one cause of which I was not aware but which he says has an effect upon the minds, especially of Swiss and Italian emigrants - viz: they not only dislike the Liverpool journey, but the English nourriture /sic/ that is to say, food and general treatment on board. ... this is an objection constantly raised by persons receiving letters from friends who have gone by the Liverpool route, and that it produces an effect upon their ultimate movements." Ibid., p. 6.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Imobersteg was "politely" critical of the efforts of the rival Rommel & Co. as Dominion agents, and accused them of dubious tactics, such as "the disgraceful squit about Madame Von Koerber, illustrated with caricatures and associating her name with designs of a nefarious character on young women."⁵² Such jealousy between the two firms, Jenkins concluded was "clearly irreconcilable" and to continue to employ both as immigration agencies was "injurious to Canada and productive of increased expenses."⁵³ In his judgement, the Zwilchenbart agency was superior to Messrs. Rommel & Co.

The following day, September 16th, Edward Jenkins held a meeting with Mr. Philipp Rommel⁵⁴ and Mr. Bollinger of the firm Rommel & Co. whose attitude towards the Zwilchenbarts according to Jenkins, was quite hostile: "They declared that there could be no amicable entente [sic] between them and Zwilchenbart as emigration agents; for they could not allow themselves, as a house of standing to take orders (être écoliers) from anyone - including myself [Jenkins]."⁵⁵

⁵² Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 8.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 9. It is interesting to note here that Philipp Rommel worked at one time for the firm of Zwilchenbart.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

On a more constructive note, they re-emphasized the need for a direct route to Canada and added that they would prefer to see Swiss emigrants settle collectively "in certain townships or localities."⁵⁶ Jenkins' overall impression was unflattering: "I should report that I consider that they are sharp enough men of business, well apt in the details of the subject, but I should say not as concerned about a high character of business as about its success."⁵⁷

Jenkins recommended to the Department of Agriculture that Mme Von Koerber be replaced as immigration agent in Switzerland by Paul Decazes, currently sub-agent to Gustave Bossange,⁵⁸ and that the firm of Zwilchenbart be utilized to create a center of immigration activity for all of continental Europe. Mme Von Koerber could, of course, remain useful in Germany where with her many influential friends she was busily engaged with the much publicized "Frauenverein".⁵⁹ "In Switzer-

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

⁵⁹ The "Frauenverein"--Ladies' Society--played a large role in controlling female emigration from Germany, and benefited immensely from the protection it received from the Crown Princess.

land", he added, "Madame Von Koerber's service might be retained with advantage, but there would not be sufficient to occupy the whole of her time."⁶⁰ Jenkins did not become involved in the implementation of his recommendations because he resigned his position as Agent General early in 1876.

Elise Von Koerber, aware of Jenkins' criticism, took the offensive by writing a sarcastic appraisal of the Agent General's fact-finding mission "during a six week flying tour across the Continent." She added in her letter to Ottawa officials, "I am amazed to see how he appropriates my views, my opinions & information I gathered most carefully, without giving any credit whatever for it, though he had promised he would."⁶¹ She wasted no time in denouncing her proposed francophone replacement and insisted that an "agent in Switzerland must absolutely know German well, since it is the German & not the French cantons which furnish the emigrants to Canada."⁶² The Department of Agriculture, at least its Secretary, John Lowe, must have felt some sympathy for her work because she was re-appointed for another year.⁶³

⁶⁰ See n. 49.

⁶¹ PAC, RG 17, Volume 152, file 15900, Koerber to F. J. Dore, March 2, 1876.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ PAC, RG 17, Volume 157, file 16324, Dore to Lowe, April 28, 1876.

The spring and summer of 1876 found Mme Von Koerber busily organizing the emigration of women from both Germany and Switzerland.⁶⁴ On April 25, 1876, another party of emigrants destined for Nipissing arrived in Toronto, and it was subsequently directed to Gravenhurst.⁶⁵ The following June, Mme Von Koerber asked to return to Canada to work for the protection of female immigrants and to continue discussions on the proposed Joos settlement project. She returned accompanied by a few Swiss ladies from the Swiss Ladies Association and several young boys from Switzerland, in the autumn.

On December 11, 1876, Mme Von Koerber made a formal proposal to the Minister of Agriculture to extend official invitations to a Swiss delegation consisting of Colonel Von Steiger, Dr. Jaas, and Mr. Jaeggi-Gyger,⁶⁶ to visit Canada "and make arrangements for the settlement of people."⁶⁷

⁶⁴PAC, RG 17, Volume 154, file 16016, Koerber to Dore, March 16, 1876.

⁶⁵PAC, RG 17, Volume 156, file 16226, Donaldson to Lowe, April 28, 1876.

⁶⁶In 1876, Mr. Jaeggi-Gyger, published the following pamphlet, describing in a favourable fashion, the activities of Madame Von Koerber: Die schweizerisch-canadische Auswanderungsfrage, Bern: Jent & Reinert, 1876.

⁶⁷PAC, RG 17, Volume 174, file 18096, Koerber to the Minister of Agriculture, December 11, 1876.

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Although this delegation never came, the invitation resulted eventually in an official Swiss government delegation visiting and reporting on Western Canada. In the meantime, another group of eight men under the care of Mr. Munk Jr., left Neuchatel on February 23, 1877 and settled on the Magnetawan.⁶⁸

Mme Von Koerber approached officials in the Swiss government in an effort to elicit their opinions as to the proper method Canadian authorities should employ in seeking immigrants from Switzerland. Her report set out clearly the fact that the Swiss government was in no way prepared to encourage any immigration recruitment much less to offer any assistance to Canadian agents. She reported:

Ainsi que je prévois avec raison, les propositions que j'ai sous les yeux, les terres à réserver pour la colonisation Suisse devraient être visitées et étudiées par les Experts & le Conseil Fédéral ne seraient en mesure de prendre une décision définitive qu'après avoir entendu l'opinion et pris connaissance des rapports des dits Experts.

En revanche le Conseil Fédéral ne saurait en aucune façon se laisser dicter le choix des personnes auxquelles serait conféré cette mission, mais il devrait se réserver pleine et entière liberté de désigner les Experts jouissant de sa propre confiance. Il paraît également bien naturel que les frais de cette mission soient à la charge du Gouvernement Canadien dans le cas au moins où les négociations resteraient sans résultats.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ PAC, RG 17, Volume 181, file 18715, Koerber to Lowe, January 10, 1877; Volume 180, file 18656, Koerber to Lowe, January 27, 1877.

⁶⁹ PAC, RG 17, Volume 182, file 18805, Koerber to Lowe, February 19, 1877.

There was little the Canadian government could accomplish beyond the slow trickle already directed to Ontario. Mme Von Koerber's appeal to Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie in no way altered the situation, and Secretary Lowe confided that "the insistence of the Swiss Govt [sic] that the Canadian Govt should pay the passage of the emigrants" ended the matter for the moment.⁷⁰

Hopes were revived in August 1877, however, when Mme Von Koerber received instructions to send to Canada two delegates; Dr. Otto Hahn as the representative from the Kingdom of Wurtemberg, and a Swiss delegate to be selected by the Government of Switzerland. The two gentlemen, who were to visit not only the Free Grants districts of Ontario, but also the Province of Manitoba, were to be granted a sum of \$1500, to be divided equally between them.⁷¹ The negotiations that ensued precipitated the Canadian government into the tangled web of Swiss partisan politics, a field which Madame Von Koerber knew only too well but which she had failed to impress sufficiently on her superiors in Ottawa. To understand how this first attempt by Canada to obtain a Swiss delegate to Manitoba failed, one must examine carefully the background politics that shrouded the issue.

⁷⁰PAC, RG 17, Volume 1666, English and Continental Agents, Letters, pp. 89-90, Lowe to Koerber, March 22, 1877.

⁷¹PAC, RG 17, Letterbook 1518, pp. 255-56, Lowe to Koerber, August 10, 1877.

From the Swiss government's point of view, it was essential that more than one delegate be sent from Europe so that the initial report could be corroborated by a second witness, and following this principle, two delegates were invited.⁷² Equally important to the kind of reception the Canadian invitation received was the shifting Presidency of the Swiss Confederation. Elise Von Koerber, speaking three years later to the Committee of the Federal House of Commons, explained the significance of this factor:

In the first place, the Canadian Government would not send an invitation before they were sure the Swiss Government would accept it. I had to go and see whether the Swiss Government would accept it. Then the invitation was sent; but it came later than it should have come, because it makes a great deal of difference who is at the head of the Swiss Government. At the time the proposition was made Dr. Weltie was President. He took a special interest in emigration, and was very favorable to Canada--and that is a great point, for the majority of the people in Switzerland are favorable to the United States. He was favorable to Canada, and had he been President when the invitation arrived he would have accepted at once. But when it arrived President Fleer was in office. A year passed, and Mr. Schenk became President. His sympathies are entirely with the United States, and he took no steps in regard to the matter.⁷³

⁷²Canada, Parliament, Journals (House of Commons), 1880, Appendix No. 3, Testimony of Madame de Koerber, April 19, 1880, p. 21.

⁷³Ibid., p. 20.

Furthermore, the invitation had to respect the strictest diplomatic usage. The invitation as presented by Mme Von Koerber was not accepted by the Swiss government: "... the President of the Confederation says [it] is not presented in due official form, owing to my not being formally accredited to his Government."⁷⁴ It should have proceeded directly from the Canadian government, or from the British Minister in Berne, to the Swiss government.⁷⁵ In the last days of February, 1878, Lowe took a "Ministerial decision" and forwarded an official Departmental letter of invitation to the Swiss government.⁷⁶ As Von Koerber had indicated, however, this was an unacceptable approach. The final blow to the plan came when the Governor-General declined to issue the required invitation. Ottawa refused to pursue the matter further. Therefore, in June 1878, Dr. Otto Hahn of Wurtemberg left for Canada alone, while Dr. Guillaume, the designated Swiss delegate could "not disengage himself at the same time,..."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ PAC, RG 17, Volume 207, file 21336, Koerber to Lowe, November 8, 1877.

⁷⁵ Ibid.; PAC, RG 17, Volume 207, file 21334, Koerber to Annand, November 15, 1877.

⁷⁶ PAC, RG 17, Volume 1666, English and Continental Agents, Letters, p. 168, Lowe to Koerber, February 27, 1878.

⁷⁷ PAC, RG 17, Volume 278, file 28762, Koerber to the Minister of Agriculture, April 24, 1880.

After this setback, Mme Von Koerber suffered failure upon failure in her colonization plans. Most of her time was spent counteracting the attacks levelled against her both from disenchanted Swiss immigrants in Ontario, and from the firm of Zwilchenbart which had by 1878 taken a greater interest in the United States than in Canada. Following upon the defeat of the Mackenzie Liberal Government in 1878 Mme Von Koerber was dismissed probably as part of the expenditure cutbacks promised by the incoming Macdonald Conservative administration.⁷⁸ Bitter and discouraged, Mme Von Koerber spent her last years promoting controlled female immigration. She died in 1884, destitute, in a London, England hotel room.⁷⁹

The last of the "special" agents to act in Switzerland as a representative of the Canadian government, Mme Von Koerber understood better than any other agent the intricacies of Swiss politics and the workings of the Republic's bureaucracy. Cantonal, communal and federal emigration laws presented a labyrinth of complications through which only initiates could advance. Her success, however, was circumscribed by the

⁷⁸ Koerber's relationship with Pope in 1872 had not been encouraging. Pope did not approve of women in public office, and his return to power spelled doom for any future effort Koerber had planned. See for example, PAC, RG 17, Volume 1665, p. 88, John Lowe to William Dixon, August 28, 1873; p. 137, Lowe to John Ennis, May 23, 1874.

⁷⁹ PAC, RG 17, Volume 400, file 43182, telegram, Colmer to Tupper, April 8, 1884.

federal government's failure to commit themselves to a Swiss immigration policy and place the full weight of their agencies behind her. Without this total commitment, the Canadian government could not hope to combat effectively the massive American and Argentinian propaganda network.

VI.

Another approach had to be undertaken by the Canadian government. With this purpose in mind, John Dyke, Dominion Government Agent in Liverpool, and the agent in charge of the European Continent, visited the Swiss Republic in 1881. It was his intention, although this was not directly provided for in his instructions, to send a Swiss delegate to Canada.⁸⁰ Canada's reputation in Switzerland had been tarnished further by a press report in December 1879, that "the Canadian Government placed at the disposal of the Swiss Federal Council \$1,500 to defray the expenses of any experts whom they might recommend to report on the suitability of Canada for Swiss immigrants,"⁸¹ and the subsequent revelation that only \$750 had been allotted. A deputation of three men from the "Grutle Verein" prepared to visit Western Canada, but after learning of the error proceeded instead to West Virginia.⁸²

⁸⁰ PAC, RG 17, Volume 318, file 32791, Dyke to Lowe, July 19, 1881.

⁸¹ See n. 72.

⁸² Ibid.; see n. 77.

John Dyke's first report indicated that there was a segment of the Assembly represented by Dr. Joos who encouraged emigration from Switzerland.⁸³ "In consequence of this, instructions were sent to the various [Swiss] consuls abroad, to report upon the advantages offered by the different countries in which they are stationed."⁸⁴ There was no Swiss Consul in Western Canada, and Dyke searched in earnest to find a Swiss delegate capable of giving a favourable account of Western Canada. He believed he had found such a man in the person of a Mr. Kindler, but the latter proved unable to make the journey.⁸⁵

Before the Dominion Agent could find a replacement for Kindler, new Swiss emigration laws enacted in 1879⁸⁶ further complicated his efforts. To meet the new stringent emigration requirements Dyke suggested that Canada place its immigration activities completely in the hands of the firm of Zwilchenbart which, although currently promoting emigration to Kentucky, would encounter "if reasonable inducements were offered... not the slightest difficulty in forming a colony of Swiss people in the North West during the ensuing Spring." This method

⁸³ PAC, RG 17, Volume 322, file 33241, Dyke to the Minister of Agriculture, August 22, 1881.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ See introduction.

he considered far superior to the appointment of Canadian agents who would, in any case, "come into conflict with these rich and powerful old-established agencies."⁸⁷

Probably through the efforts of the Zwilchenbart Agency, Dyke met the delegate he had been looking for; Mr. Jacob Hauswirth, "a well known practical farmer" and 'Justice of the Peace' from the town of Saanen, in the Canton of Berne.⁸⁸ Mme Von Koerber was quick to denounce Hauswirth's appointment when it was announced. She wrote in desperation to Lowe, who reported to the Agent in Liverpool:

This man was one of her most bitter enemies when she was promoting Swiss immigration and did everything to hinder immigration to Canada, in fact to such an extent was this carried on, that at one time, she met him in public face to face with a number of people and called upon him for proof to sustain the assertions he had made.⁸⁹

Her statements, however, were not considered as being relevant to the turn of events.

⁸⁷ See n. 83.

⁸⁸ PAC, RG 17, Volume 322, file 33276, Dyke to the Minister of Agriculture, August 18, 1881.

⁸⁹ PAC, RG 17, Volume 1667, English and Continental Agents, Letters, pp. 96-93, Lowe to Dyke, September 28, 1881.

Hauswirth, leaving at the end of August or a week later than the German delegates that were to accompany him, arrived at Quebec, in mid-September 1881 and proceeded to Western Canada.⁹⁰ The Manitoba Daily Free Press took note of his arrival in Winnipeg.

Mr. J. E. Hauswirth, farmer, Saanen, Canton Berne, Switzerland, arrived here on Saturday evening from the old country on a mission precisely similar to that of the gentlemen above named;⁹¹ and he starts this morning on a trip through the same sections of country as were visited by them.⁹²

He went no further west than the Turtle Mountain and Souris districts, before returning home.⁹³

His report, on the whole, was flattering to Western Canada and favourable to the possibility of Swiss settlement. He did, however, criticize the lack of controls exercised on railway rates, which he envisaged as a serious hindrance to settlement.⁹⁴ Lowe assured him that the C.P.R. had no selfish intentions, and shared with the government in its concern for the well-being of the immigrant.

⁹⁰ PAC, RG 17, Volume 1667, English and Continental Agents, Letters, p. 77, Lowe to John Dyke, September 15, 1881.

⁹¹ The other (German) delegates were: Dr. Edward Wiederhiem, Ludwig Shreiver, Julius Eberhard, and Ludwig Glock.

⁹² Manitoba Daily Free Press, Wednesday, September 21, 1881, p. 1.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ PAC, RG 17, Volume 1667, English and Continental Agents, Letters, pp. 141-142, Lowe to Dyke, November 15, 1881.

Contact with Hauswirth faded, until the spring of 1883, when John Dyke once more travelled to the continent. Hauswirth made a verbal proposal to the Canadian agent "to organise a party of some two hundred Swiss farmers, to proceed to Manitoba with him during the summer." Behind the plan lay the general assumption that once a core of Swiss settlers had successfully established itself in the Canadian West, it would be relatively easy to encourage other emigrants to follow.⁹⁵ Dyke discussed other possibilities as well for settlement in the North West Territories. Conscious of the need for caution, and the danger of over-optimism, he requested that a definite colonization plan be submitted in writing. Thus were sown the seeds of the Whitewood Settlement Scheme.

The effort to encourage emigration from Switzerland to Western Canada prior to 1883 was discouraging. Canadian immigration officials were unable to make serious headway in Switzerland, and in many ways, resigned themselves to a future "policy" of minimum involvement in that republic. Several factors contributed to this relatively unsuccessful venture. Firstly, the federal government remained non-committal in its approach towards an immigration "policy" for Switzerland, and directed what little energy was expended to the pursuit of hapless schemes and misguided aspirations. Secondly, if

⁹⁵PAC, RG 17, Volume 362, file 38885, Dyke to the Minister of Agriculture, February 22, 1883.

Dominion officials were often apathetic so were the enterprisers, agents and special "observers" in Europe who preferred to occupy themselves with petty squabbles and personal gains. Lastly, encouragement was not forthcoming from the Swiss authorities. The Swiss government, wary of emigration agents and alarmed by the disreputable "tales" that followed them, persistently abstained from any kind of "official" encouragement and effectively circumscribed even the most conscientious efforts.

Canadian officials salvaged from their experience a better understanding of the intricacies of the Swiss government and the chicanery that characterized European emigration. In this respect, Madame Von Koerber proved to be the "voice in the wilderness". As she had consistently maintained, only through closer dealings with a sympathetic Swiss government and only with sufficient and solid financial backing at home could the Canadian government hope to achieve success in encouraging emigration from the Swiss Republic.

Chapter II: Early Settlement Schemes in Western Canada, 1872-1889.

Between 1872 and 1889, two Swiss settlement projects were attempted in the North West Territories. The first was proposed by Dr. Wilhelm Joos, and involved a projected land reserve of 100,000 acres in Manitoba. The second, a more promising one, was presented by Dr. Rudolph Meyer and Jacob Hauswirth. Again a large tract of land was demanded, but this time the requirements focused on more practical issues. Neither of the settlement schemes flourished, but they served to illustrate the current of thought present among Swiss politicians and emigration agents during those years: viz: that bloc settlement offered the most viable formula for the settlement of Swiss emigrants abroad.

This pattern had been successfully implemented in the United States,¹ and was considered even more essential to success in Western Canada where the vast unpopulated expanses of the Canadian Prairies made self-subsistence essential.

¹See for example, Leo Shelbert, "On Becoming an Emigrant: A Structural View of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Swiss Data," offprint from Perspectives in American History, Volume VII, the President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1974.

The fear of being left in isolation and separated from the more populous centres in Ontario and Quebec, was compounded by exaggerated rumours of barbarous hordes of Indians and Métis tormenting the prostrate immigrants as well as by horrid tales of ravenous grasshoppers devouring the precious summer crop. Negative images of the Canadian West, especially during the North West uprising of 1885, heightened the attractiveness of the immigration propaganda of the American and Argentinian land companies and effectively forestalled any major efforts to transplant Swiss immigrants in the North West Territories.

I

Dr. Joos; Swiss Colonization Plan

Dr. Joos, a renowned medical doctor, philanthropist, and long-time member of the Swiss "Nationalrath",² first came to the attention of Canadian immigration officials in the summer of 1872. Since the early 1850s³ he had interested himself in emigration, primarily as a means of alleviating the many social ills which weighed on the rapidly growing Swiss working class. Many families had left the hardship of rural life and had converged on the cities in search of work. By the early 1870s

²Dictionnaire Biographique Suisse, Volume IV, P. 289.

³Ibid. In 1858, Joos published a pamphlet entitled: "Schweizerische Auswanderungs- und Kolonisationsangelegenheiten."

the plight of the industrial worker in Switzerland demanded immediate attention. For Joos, emigration provided the solution. Consequently, he considered first resettling a number of his countrymen in Tennessee.⁴

In the summer of 1872, Richard Berns, the Strasbourg agent for the Allan Brothers Steamship Company had been advised by his sub-agent in Switzerland, Mr. Elminger, that such a movement in favour of Tennessee was in the making. At the same time, J. A. N. Provencher, "Special Immigration Agent" for the Dominion of Canada, was making his tour through Europe. Berns immediately sent Provencher and Elminger to see Joos, and to inquire as to the possibilities of re-directing his proposed colonists towards Western Canada.

In reporting their meeting in Switzerland to the Allan Headquarters in Liverpool, Richard Berns outlined the terms Joos had unsuccessfully sought from the state of Tennessee:

The amount he asked for is about 100,000 acres, but he wants to have them without any condition whatever and he promised the governor /of Tennessee/, if they should come to terms, he could send out a number of 30000 people in a period of ten years, as he had the signatures of about 100 communities, that their emigrating folks would go wherever he advised them to go to.⁵

⁴PAC, RG 17, Volume 69, file 6669. Allan Brothers Steamship Company to William Dixon, August 3, 1872. Also see Dr. Wilhelm Joos, Ueber Schutzausficht, Organisation und Leitung der Schweizerischen Auswanderung, Schaffhausen: Im Selbstverlag des Berfassens, 1863. For a general survey of the 1850-1860 period see Histoire de la Confédération (Chapter 4, n. 1), particularly pp. 433-470.

⁵Ibid.

The grant, Joos had told Provencher, would have to allow for an initial period of inspection with an option to withdraw if the land were not found suitable.

This information was conveyed through the Chief Emigration Agent in London, William Dixon, to Ottawa where the Department of Agriculture, pursued the matter further. Through an Order-in-Council, Dr. Wilhelm Joos was formally invited to visit Canada in order to select land either in Manitoba or the North West Territories. This land would then be divided into reserves of from five to ten thousand acres each, and granted free "upon condition of occupation."⁶ This first offer elicited no immediate action on Joos' part. Later, Joos communicated to Provencher in Paris that he had received several admirable offers, and hoped that the Canadian government would respond with a similar unconditional offer "so that it deprives every reason for refusal". Provencher doubted the accuracy of Joos' statements and urged that the Canadian government abandon the proposal altogether.⁷

The settlement scheme lay dormant until Madame Von Koerber arrived in Europe. In a letter addressed to the

⁶PAC, RG 17, Letterbook 1505, p. 152, Lowe to Dixon, September 18, 1872.

⁷PAC, MG 29, E 18, Volume I, Provencher to Lowe, November 18, 1872.

Department, she enclosed a copy of an "Ideales Bild eine Schweizerischen Acherbrau-Kolonie nach längstens Zehnzahringen bestehen. System Joos,"⁸ which laid out the proposed plan for the colony. Below the diagram were listed eight major principles which would govern the organization of the settlement and form the basis of its administration.⁹ The colony itself would be run by an "Aktiengesellschaften" or union. Each settler would be entitled to a carefully partitioned forty-acre plot.¹⁰ The plan was an "ideal" one, more utopian in spirit than practical and suited to the conditions of the North West. Mme Von Koerber, aware of its shortcomings but not of Canadian constitutional practice, wrote to the Earl of Dufferin urging the Canadian government to help transform it into a more practical project.¹¹ For the moment, however, the Department of Agriculture preferred to say nothing on the subject.¹²

⁸PAC, RG 17, Volume 79, file 7672, Dixon to Lowe, January 18, 1873.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹PAC, RG 17, Volume 81, file 7823, Koerber to Dufferin, March 8, 1873.

¹²PAC, RG 17, Volume 1665, English and Continental Agents, Letters pp. 153-154, Lowe to Koerber, September 19, 1874.

On July 5, 1875 Dr. Joos addressed himself to Edward Jenkins in London, explaining once more the desire to settle his compatriots abroad. Unlike his previous proposal, this new scheme greatly reduced his personal role in the negotiations, and concentrated attention more on the formal correspondence to take place between the Canadian and Swiss governments. To succeed in this project, he emphasized the importance of gaining the confidence of the Swiss public.

A mon avis ce serait de la bonne économie politique si le Gouvernement du Canada tâchait de gagner l'opinion publique de la Suisse, en offrant une certaine fraction de ces vastes terres en don gratuit [sic] soit au peuple Suisse par l'entremise du Conseil Fédéral, soit à un nombre restreint de Communes Suisses.¹³

In effect, Elise Von Koerber had convinced him to restructure his program completely.¹⁴

In September 1875, Jenkins visited the continent and scheduled a meeting with Dr. Joos to examine further his settlement plans. On September 17th, Joos presented Jenkins with a detailed version of his revised proposal.¹⁵ The following points capture its essence:

¹³PAC, RG 17, Volume 140, file 14672, Jenkins to Lowe, August 18, 1875.

¹⁴PAC, RG 17, Volume 152, file 15900, Dore to the Minister of Agriculture, March 2, 1876.

¹⁵Report of Edward Jenkins to the Minister of Agriculture, October, 1875. See Chapt. 1, n. 49.

1. Traiter l'affaire de G ouvernement à G ouvernement..
2. Offrir à la confédération Suisse une cession de terres de 300,000 acres sans conditions aucunes.
3. Lui laisser douze mois pour réfléchir avant qu'elle doive se décider.
4. Engager le Conseil Fédéral Suisse de se faire donner un rapport sur l'offre par des experts nommés par lui et envoyés au Canada.
5. Promettre au Conseil Fédéral Suisse de prendre sur soi les frais occasionnés par cette expertise.
6. Libérer la Confédération Suisse des impôts fonciers, quant aux terrains qui resteraient, en sa propriété, pendant les dix premières années.
7. Permettre à la Confédération de céder le tout ou partie de la cession à un ou plusieurs Cantons Suisses avec la même libération quant aux impôts.¹⁶

Jenkins felt that the scheme suffered from several drawbacks. Firstly, he pointed out that opposition might be voiced to the demand that the land tract should remain untaxed for ten years. Joos, defending his terms of settlement, argued that he did not feel that if the land remained unsettled for some time, it should be subject to taxation. Jenkins took issue with the demand that the land be held in reserve for an extended period, while conceding a generous time limit during which the Swiss government could effectuate its scheme. Jenkins doubted that a large tract of land could be granted to the Swiss government which it would in turn sell to its prospective settlers. "Then he [Joos] says, if such offers are made by the government of the emigrants it will be able to sell at reasonable rates, the very same land which, offered by the immigrating government free, the people would not even look at. [sic]"¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid. Exhibit "B".

¹⁷ Ibid.

Furthermore, there was no assurance that the Swiss government would accept to participate in such a scheme.

On the latter subject, Madame Von Koerber wrote to the Department of Agriculture on March 2, 1876, remarking that Dr. Joos alone could not guarantee that the offer would be accepted.

The president /Weltie/ thinks that an offer from Canada will be accepted but it will be left to an independent committee to undertake the organization; that committee may comprise Dr. Joos /sic/ but it must neither be formed nor controlled by Dr. Joos; he passes for unpractical & is an opponent of the Government;...¹⁸

Again, the Canadian government remained silent, and the matter continued "under consideration".¹⁹

News of Jenkins' conference with Dr. Joos and of the continuing discussions in federal quarters filtered through to Manitoba and the editors of the Manitoba Daily Free Press. In an editorial published on Saturday, July 22, 1876, the Free Press seized the opportunity to denounce the proposal as another attempt to usurp Manitoba lands and to prevent the free development of its towns.

¹⁸See n. 14.

¹⁹PAC, RG 17, Volume 160, file 16629, Koerber to Letellier, June 4, 1876.

Flattering as doubtless is the statement that this is the only portion of the Dominion which affords scope for the realization of a gigantic immigration scheme, we must not allow our local vanity to obscure our judgment, or neglect to scrutinize very closely any proposed system which aims at extending the practice of locking up the land, which has already been found so great a drawback. So far as this Province is concerned there can be no room for any further colonization reserves, unless the area of Manitoba is increased by enlargement of her boundaries; and we protest against any such reserves being granted in future without the concurrence of the Provincial Government. In the vast region of the North West Territories there is land enough and to spare; and while a colony may be planted anywhere without suffering under the desolation of isolation, it is not for the individual Canadian family to be forced beyond the limits of civilization and opportunities of social intercourse, through reservation of land being made in the interest of foreign emigrants in immediate proximity to the centres of population.²⁰

Although the editor sympathized with the desire of the Swiss to settle in an ethnic bloc and remain in close communication with surrounding settlements, he believed that "it would be far better to adopt a system which, ... would so intersperse settlements of English-speaking colonists as would tend to produce homogeneity of nationality in the near future."²¹ Whether this editorial influenced public opinion or merely

²⁰ Manitoba Daily Free Press, Saturday, July 22, 1876, p. 2.

²¹ Ibid.

reflected it, the fact remains that the federal government soon moved away from any further negotiations. By the end of 1876, the scheme was for all intents and purposes dead.²²

II

The Whitewood Settlement Project

When Sir Charles Tupper replaced Sir Alexander Galt as High Commissioner for Canada in London, England, in May 1883, he undertook an extensive tour of the European continent to familiarize himself with the different agencies and agents representing the Dominion. In Basle, he met first with Dr. Otto Hahn, agent at Rheutigen, and later with Jacob Hauswirth, magistrate of Saanen and the first Swiss delegate to the Canadian North West.²³ At about the same time, Tupper made the acquaintance of Dr. Rudolph Hermann Meyer,

²²Joos did not abandon his interests in emigration. In 1881, accompanied by another "Nationalrath" Mr. Vögelin, he introduced the following motion to the Federal Council: "En présence de l'augmentation annuelle de l'émigration de citoyens suisses, le conseil fédéral est invité à présenter promptement un rapport et des propositions à l'assemblée fédérale, après examen de la question de savoir comment on pourrait empêcher l'émigration sans but déterminée, et diriger convenablement les efforts des 'familles', surtout émigrant vers une nouvelle patrie." PAC, RG 17, Volume 322, file 33241, Dyke to Lowe, August 22, 1881.

²³E. M. Saunders, ed., The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Tupper, Bart, K. C. M. G., Toronto, London: Cassel and Company, Ltd., 1916, pp. 10-16.

a well known political economist and author of numerous books and articles dealing with agricultural, political and economic questions. Dr. Meyer had visited Canada in 1882 after a tour of the United States where he gathered information in preparation for his book, sachen der Amerikanischen Concurrenz.²⁴ Tupper encouraged him to return to visit Canada to meet with officials in the Department of Agriculture.²⁵

Tupper's meeting with Hauswirth focused on more concrete issues. Hauswirth told Tupper that in the two years that had elapsed since his return from Canada he had directed several Swiss emigrants to Manitoba who sent favourable reports urging continued support of Swiss emigration. "He is of opinion" wrote Tupper, "that if a number of townships should be set apart for Swiss colonists and that the Government should for the first party of settlers provide free passes from New York to their destination in the North West, a large number of emigrants may be obtained."²⁶ These emigrants, numbering about four or five hundred, Hauswirth added, should be sent exclusively through the firm of Zwilchenbart.²⁷

²⁴PAC, RG 76, Volume 106, file 18028, Tupper to the Minister of Agriculture, August 14, 1883, p. 8. There are two copies of Tupper's report in this file, the original and an edited version. In all cases, the original was consulted.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. 10.

²⁷Ibid., p. 11.

Certain factors, however, had to be clarified. Foremost among those he mentioned was the steamship line by which these emigrants would sail. The Swiss were said to dislike the White Cross Line which used a longer and slower route and which had a poor safety record. Several of its ships had been lost on the high seas, the most recent incident being the S. S. Ludwig which went down with some emigrants from Southern Germany aboard. The Swiss preferred, he pointed out, the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique which enjoyed a reputation for superior service and employed Swiss cooks and stewards. The disadvantage was, however, that this company had no direct route to Quebec, but its ship docked instead at the port of New York.²⁸

Tupper, impressed by the project's constructive approach, asked that it be submitted in writing. In addition, he urged in his report to Pope, the Minister of Agriculture, that the proposal receive "if practicable", favourable consideration.²⁹ Hardly a month had passed before Hauswirth formally handed Tupper a detailed draft of his proposed scheme.

According to the plan, Hauswirth would select land--a total of five or six townships--somewhere west of Brandon, and

²⁸Ibid., pp. 12-13.

²⁹Ibid., p. 14.

bring with him an initial party of from five hundred to a thousand Swiss or other European settlers. The government, for its part, to help ensure a satisfactory response from the emigrants, would furnish free transportation from Castle Gardens in New York to their destination in Manitoba, as well as furnish the needed basic materials--flour, farm implements, etc.--on a loan basis. The selection and transport of the emigrants would be assigned to an agency appointed by the federal government, and only those who came in this manner would be eligible for federal assistance. As for himself, Hauswirth asked that his family be conveyed free of charge, and that he receive a special commission on the emigrants he recruited.³⁰

On Tupper's request, John Dyke, the government agent in Liverpool, studied the proposal for weaknesses from a Canadian viewpoint. Firstly, he expressed concern over the 'kind' of emigrant Hauswirth would forward.

³⁰PAC, RG 17, Volume 383, file 41207, Tupper to Pope, September 13, 1883.

You are aware that Switzerland is in many districts greatly overpopulated and the cost of maintaining the poor is very heavy. Many of the Communes are willing to advance the whole or a portion of the ocean fare in order to get rid of their paupers, and to so great an extent is this being done that the United States authorities have had to return many such emigrants from New York. Should any arrangements be made with Mr. Hausworth [sic] it should be pointed out that such paupers will not be received in the colony or paid for. The Communes would no doubt try to take advantage of arrangements made with Mr. Hauswirth to ship paupers and criminals.³¹

In addition, Dyke questioned the sagacity of entrusting the entire scheme to one man. As has been seen, Hauswirth was working in conjunction with the firm of Zwilchenbart, headed at the time by J. Imobersteg.³² John Dyke had investigated allegations that the Swiss National Society of Montreal had publicly denounced Swiss emigration to Canada: he uncovered evidence that Imobersteg was interested in the Swiss colony at Bernstadt, Kentucky.³³ Hauswirth's project then, would bind Canada to the Zwilchenbart firm while the latter would be free to carry on its other projects, even those harmful to Canadian interests, unimpeded. Furthermore,

³¹ Ibid.

³² See Chapt. 1, pp. 15-16. In later years there appears the firm of John Imobersteg & Cie.

³³ See n. 30. See also, PAC, RG 17, Volume 413, file 45058, Daley to Lowe, August 18, 1884; Volume 421, file 46024, Daley to Lowe, November 18, 1884.

by supporting one firm above another, the Dominion might incite jealousies between agents.³⁴ In concluding his report, Dyke recommended that Hauswirth be encouraged in his efforts and "if possible in connection with Messrs. Zwilchenbart of Basel who could be paid special commissions in a secret manner on the parties located in Manitoba."³⁵

In early September, F. J. Dore of the Office of the High Commissioner in London, went to Switzerland to meet with Mr. Hauswirth and the Swiss Minister of Agriculture. Dore's purpose was to assess Hauswirth's reliability and the project's soundness. Dore felt sufficiently satisfied to report:

Mr. Hauswirth, who is a Justice of the Peace for his district, a position of some importance in Switzerland is evidently a farmer of prominence in the neighbourhood of Saanen, and I think his assistance and influence will be very valuable to us in our emigration movements in Switzerland generally.³⁶

³⁴ Other agents equally interested in forwarding immigrants to Manitoba, were Messrs. Schneebeli & Co., agents for the Compagnie Transatlantique, and Mr. Goldsmith, agent for the Cunard Line. In connection with their work see, PAC, RG 17, Volume 365, file 39242, Dyke to Lowe, March 31, 1883; Volume 367, file 39443, Colmer to the Minister of Agriculture, April 12, 1883; Letterbook 1538, p. 230, Small to Dyke, April 14, 1883; p. 241, Small to Grahame, April 14, 1883; Volume 366, file 39396, Maass to the Minister of Agriculture, April 22, 1883.

³⁵ See n. 30.

³⁶ PAC, RG 17, Volume 417, file 45444, Chipman to Lowe, September 13, 1884.

Hauswirth proposed another exploratory trip to Canada at the expense of the Department of Agriculture, estimated at about one thousand dollars.³⁷ Dore was convinced but not the Department officials who objected that the season was already too advanced and that the sum demanded by Hauswirth was "higher than he [the Minister of Agriculture] has authorised in other cases of delegates visiting Canada".³⁸

Hauswirth appealed once more to the High Commissioner, noting that the settlement scheme had received wide publicity in the Swiss papers emphasizing that strenuous efforts were not being made by competitive American land companies to discredit the scheme entirely, and providing a list of two hundred families which were said to be ready to sail with him. He agreed to proceed alone to Manitoba, and Pope agreed to pay his passage fare if he would come by the Quebec route.³⁹ Tupper wrote encouragingly to Ottawa in anticipation of a favourable assessment by officials from the Department of Agriculture.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ PAC, RG 17, Letterbook 1548, p. 49, Lowe to Tupper, October 23, 1884.

³⁹ PAC, RG 17, Letterbook 1548, p. 207, Lowe to Tupper, December 31, 1884.

⁴⁰ PAC, RG 17, Volume 425, file 46430, Tupper to Pope, December 4, 1884.

During this time, Dr. Meyer had not been idle. The Department, in recognition of the valuable service his trip to the North West might render to Canada offered him a free pass from Liverpool to Ottawa. A meeting had been arranged between Hauswirth and Meyer most likely at the request of the Minister of Agriculture.⁴¹ Meyer showed an interest in Hauswirth's emigration scheme, and arranged for a future meeting with him in December 1884.⁴² That rendezvous produced desirable results, as the 24 December issue of Paris Canada noted: "Le docteur Rudolph Meyer, ... a vivement apprécié notre pays et les avantages qu'offre le Nord-Ouest, nous a entretenu, ces jours derniers d'un projet d'émigration venant de Suisse, dont il va saisir sir Charles Tupper et le gouvernement canadien."⁴³

On December 20, 1884, Meyer and Hauswirth submitted their joint plan to Sir Charles Tupper. The success of the plan itself rested on two major factors: firstly, the reservation of a sizeable tract of land where the Swiss would be able to settle as a bloc; secondly, a loan of \$100,000 which would permit the colony to establish itself and provide, among other things, a school and a cheese and butter factory.⁴⁴

⁴¹ PAC, RG 17, Volume 428, file 46750, Meyer to Pope, November 19, 1884.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Paris Canada, Wednesday, December 24, 1884, p. 2.

⁴⁴ PAC, RG 17, Volume 428, file 46707, Tupper to Pope, January 1, 1885.

The reserved land was to remain free from "state" taxation for ten years, and a fixed freight rate was to be maintained for twenty years. Additionally, Meyer and Hauswirth would each receive two acres of land for every settler brought out during the first ten years.⁴⁵ Unlike Hauswirth's previous plan, this project placed a greater emphasis on agricultural pursuits. It called for common pasture land, mechanization and a corporate administration. The cheese and butter industry would provide the major occupation, and would be operated as a joint-stock company. The more cattle and financial investment a farmer contributed, the more shares he would possess, and hence, the more control he could exercise. It was understood, of course, that Hauswirth and Meyer would be the chief administrators of both the company and the colony during its initial three years of operation.⁴⁶ In short, the colony would be transformed into what resembled a self-help Swiss Commune, with Hauswirth and Meyer as its self-appointed "Burgermeisters."

Sir Charles Tupper strongly recommended the plan because of his admiration for Dr. Meyer and Jacob Hauswirth, both of whom were independently wealthy and enjoyed a good reputation in Switzerland. Pope, on the other hand, was less optimistic. The \$100,000 loan was out of the question, and as for the rest it "might be arranged."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

To clarify and examine more thoroughly the avenues through which the project could be successfully undertaken, Tupper and Dore went to Paris to meet Meyer, Hauswirth, Messrs. Zwilchenbart and the directors of the Compagnie Transatlantique of Le Havre. Tupper's report was a flattering re-appraisal of the entire proposal, coupled with reassurances that the whole affair rested in the hands of two sober and industrious men. Opposition had been voiced to the \$100,000 loan but Tupper argued that the sum was quite small and had as collateral the large number of settlers ready to leave upon notice. Both Meyer and Hauswirth guaranteed that the settlers would be coming out with capital assets equal to the amount of the loan extended to them.⁴⁸ As for the large tract of land to be reserved, he explained that it would not be held for speculation but to accomodate approximately 1800 emigrants the first year, with upwards of 8000 the following year.⁴⁹

I feel you will agree with me that the steady influx of Swiss settlers of the aforesaid quality into the North West, would be an unmixed blessing to that part of Canada. Both in respect of country and climate they would seem specially adapted for our North West while their training occupation at home has been, exactly in connection with those branches of agriculture viz: stock raising, dairy and mixed farming, which we particularly desire to encourage in those parts.⁵⁰

⁴⁸PAC, RG 17, Volume 431, file 47041, Tupper to Pope, February 5, 1885.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

Tupper must have reassured Meyer and Hauswirth that the Canadian government would accept his recommendations because preparations were made to recruit immigrants for the colony.⁵¹ A circular distributed by Zwilchenbart and published by various Swiss newspapers in March 1885 repeated publicly the chief points of the scheme. Interestingly, it pointed out that the land had to be situated near the Canadian Pacific Railway, but at the same time it should be in the vicinity of a navigable river: "so the settler is not dependent upon the arbitrariness of a mighty R. R. Company for his exports & imports."⁵² All passengers would be required to book their trip with the Zwilchenbart agency. The circular concluded:

To Heads of families, young robust men & women, labourers & especially agriculturists who have some means, I can recommend the formation of a Swiss Col'y [sic] in Man.,... Lofties, Book brooders, Drunkards, Hypochondriacs, sleepy heads & such who fear blisters on the hands, shall remain at home; hence may each examine himself, if he feels within him the required strength & perseverance & only then let him decide.⁵³

⁵¹PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Hauswirth to Meyer, February 10, 1885.

⁵²PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Hauswirth to Meyer, March 1885. Translation from the German.

⁵³Ibid.

III

With a letter of introduction from Tupper to Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, Meyer and Hauswirth prepared to leave for Canada. Meyer chose to sail from Liverpool on April 2 aboard the Allan steamer "Peruvian", while Hauswirth, in the company of Mr. Karlen (a veterinarian and Hauswirth's personal assistant), chose the Le Havre-New York route sailing with the Compagnie Transatlantique on the 4th of April.

Meyer and Hauswirth met with the Ministers of the Interior and Agriculture on April 22, 1885, to discuss the exact terms of the required Order-in-Council.⁵⁴ The Canadian officials required a direct investment of 3000 dollars by both Meyer and Hauswirth for general improvements and the guarantee that within two years a cheese factory would be in production.⁵⁵ No mention was made of the \$100,000 loan. With this verbal agreement, Hauswirth left Canada to rejoin his family in Chicago.

On May 7, 1885, Meyer received from John Lowe, the secretary of the Department of Agriculture, a letter specifying that the three thousand dollar investment be applied strictly to the construction of buildings and the buying of machinery.

⁵⁴ PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Lowe to Burgess, April 22, 1885.

⁵⁵ PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Memorandum to the Privy Council, from D. L. Macpherson, Minister of the Interior, May 8, 1885.

✓

Lowe rejected Meyer's suggestion that part of the sum be employed to purchase livestock. He did not wish to provide the Swiss promoters with an opportunity to sell both the land and cattle once the patent had been obtained.⁵⁶ Meyer responded angrily with two nearly identical letters to the Deputy Minister of the Interior, A. M. Burgess, and to the Minister of the Interior, Sir David Macpherson. He protested that it would be foolish to spend three thousand dollars on buildings and machinery before he knew exactly when and how many settlers would be coming and how the Indian troubles in the North West would affect his colonization project. On the suggestion that he might be engaging in speculation he responded tartly:

... I am now a month almost in Canada, I spent money alone, not counted my time and annoyance [sic], about ~~1800D~~ [dollars] and up to this day I got not one Dollar from the Canadian Government, except one free pass from Liverpool to Ottawa and I declare myself willing to invest the amount of money, Mr. Lowe asks me for, say 3000D, on one section, worth, even at the government price of 2 1/2 D per acre only 1600D.--under those conditions I think I ought not to be supposed to drive away my livestock! I beg, dear Sir, you would ask Sir John Macdonald the letter of introduction he got for me by Excellency the Governor General - and then I hope you will put as much faith in my work, that I may not be suspected, to buy for 3000D cattle, drive it on my section, get the title and sell cattle and section. You may ask,

⁵⁶PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Meyer to Macpherson, May 7, 1885.

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that I have had my stock at least one half year on the section - to that condition I will agree, but to build for 3000D unnecessary buildings that I cannot do.⁵⁷

More realistically, he asked that the terms of the anticipated Order-in-Council be extended until 1888.

A draft of the Order-in-Council was presented to the Privy Council on May 8th and the final version was promulgated three days later.⁵⁸ It embodied the major sources of complaint raised by Meyer, but extended the term of the agreement only to November 30th, 1887. An added provision allowed for a bonus of two acres for every colonist Meyer and Hauswirth placed in the colony.

Hauswirth, Meyer and Karlen met Land Commissioner H. H. Smith in Winnipeg, and from there proceeded to inspect the lands with Land Inspector W. J. O. Bourchier. En route they met Thomas Bennett, the agent for the Department of Agriculture at Brandon and accompanied him to inspect available lands lying both to the north and to the south of the city. From there they went westward with their guide to examine land south of Whitewood and north of Moose Mountain bordering on the Pipestone Creek; the latter location met with the unanimous satisfaction of the deputation.⁵⁹

⁵⁷PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Meyer to Burgess, May 7, 1885.

⁵⁸PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Lowe to Burgess, May 11, 1885.

⁵⁹PAC, RG 17, Volume 442, file 48268, Bennett to Pope, June 2, 1885.

Barely had they returned to Winnipeg, that a dispute arose between Hauswirth and Meyer on the one hand, and Commissioner Smith on the other hand, over the interpretation to be placed on the Order-in-Council of May 11.

Their understanding of the order being, that upon their individual settlement, they would receive each one section of 640 acres in consideration of their united interests, in the formation of a Swiss Colony in the North West, but as the Indian troubles which have arisen here might prevent their accomplishing their object, successfully, they expected to receive their patents, wither [sic] they had placed the requisite number of settlers on land or not.⁶⁰

Smith was firm in his assertion that the patents would be awarded only if the required number of colonists were settled and so certified by a land inspector. Hauswirth left in anger for St. Paul, while Meyer remained in the North West to take up an ordinary pre-emption.⁶¹

Meyer doubted that Hauswirth would resume his role in the colonization project, consequently, he asked that an amendment be made to the original Order-in-Council giving him separate and full "consequent privileges" commensurate with the scheme. He made it known that, if need be he would proceed alone with the proposed construction of the cheese factory.⁶² Smith was, much to the satisfaction of Meyer,

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Smith to Burgess, June 1, 1885.

given the authority by the Department of the Interior, to prepare a revised draft.⁶³

Hauswirth, now in Chicago, urged Meyer to reconsider the project and not to invest money in it.

... as in this year there can be no thought of any more executing our project, ... I would like to again give you the well ment [sic] advice, not to sacrifice here this year any money to Whitewood, as the local conditions there till next year may shape themselves there in Manitoba and the North West, so, that both of us perhaps later on will thank God, not to have followed in the first instance our feelings, ... we Swiss have the proverb: "Rather a bad journey than a bad purchase; therefore examine everything in day time and settle affairs, after you have slept three times."⁶⁴

Meanwhile, the Department of the Interior, upon hearing of the misunderstanding, tried to rectify the situation. They wired Smith in Winnipeg that the patents rested not on the number of settlers placed on the land, but rather on the opening and operation of a cheese and dairy factory; Bennett, they assumed, had been misinformed.⁶⁵ Smith confirmed their suspicion of the interpretation placed upon the settlement clause, reported that Meyer was now satisfied with the proposed new Order-in-Council, and added that, in his opinion, Hauswirth had been lured back to the United States by the

⁶³PAC, R 15, Volume 340, file 88134, telegram, Smith to Burgess, June 3, 1885; telegram, Burgess to Smith, June 3, 1885.

⁶⁴PAC, R 17, Volume 2396, Hauswirth to Meyer, June 5, 1885.

⁶⁵PAC, R 15, Volume 340, file 88134, telegram, Burgess to Smith, June 8, 1885.

American land companies.⁶⁶ John Smith, the Department of Agriculture agent in Hamilton, Ontario, was instructed to proceed immediately to New York to see whether the two hundred immigrants--divided into two parties, one of fifty and the other of one hundred and fifty--had arrived at Castle Gardens, and whether some perhaps had been diverted to one of the American States.⁶⁷

Smith's report of June 10 indicated that no trace could be found of either party at Castle Gardens. On the other hand, he discovered some disturbing facts about the Zwilchenbart firm and Swiss emigration operations.

In my investigations I discovered that the French Line Agency for Switzerland is altogether controlled by Zwilchenbart resident there and his agency in New York is represented by J. Ottenheimer who is also the General Manager of the Sinsolu Land Company of Kentucky which is owned and controlled by Zwilchenbart and his associates, and I am informed that it has been made sufficiently interesting to some of the New York Central agents so as to secure their cooperation.⁶⁸

⁶⁶PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, telegram, Smith to Burgess, June 9, 1885; RG 17, Volume 443, file 48344, telegram, Smith to Burgess, June 9, 1885.

⁶⁷PAC, RG 17, Volume 443; file 48330, John Smith to Lowe, June 10, 1885. There appears to be some confusion as to whether or not the party of fifty did in fact land at Castle Gardens. Although Smith's report would indicate that it did not, there is other evidence which indicates the opposite. Witness this telegram: "Informed party fifty Swiss immigrants under bonus arrangement ticketed Manitoba by Transatlantique Company diverted en route [sic]. Can this be stopped." RG 17, Letterbook 1550, p. 105, Lowe to J. N. Abbott, May 27, 1885.

⁶⁸Ibid.

Although the Zwilchenbart firm seemed virtually uncontrollable, Smith did obtain a promise from the Superintendent of Castle Gardens, Mr. Jackson, and from Mr. De Bebian, the New York agent for the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique, that Swiss immigrants destined for the Canadian North West would be forwarded promptly to their destination.⁶⁹

On the same day as Smith's report was submitted, Meyer wrote to Lowe denying that he had prior knowledge of Zwilchenbart's interests in Kentucky. Assuming that Hauswirth knew of their scheme but had not told him about it, Meyer secretly engaged a man⁷⁰ in France to make inquiries. That investigator informed Meyer that although no emigrants had left with Hauswirth on April 4th, approximately a month earlier, fifty Swiss had left "déclarant qu'ils allaient pour l'affaire Meyer Hauswirth". On the 25th of April, Meyer received another letter from this same investigator stating that in May, "150 émigrants environ déclarés par Imobersteg, pour l'affaire Hauswirth partiront le mois prochain, pour le Manitoba - Je n'ai plus besoin je pense de vous recommander une certaine méfiance vis à vis de M. H. - qui certainement a fait cause commune avec I".⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ The identity of this man is not known.

⁷¹ PAC, RG 17, Volume 443, file 48383 1/2, Grahame to Lowe, June 10, 1885. Enclosing letters from Meyer.

Meyer had reason to doubt Hauswirth's commitment to the Canadian colony, nevertheless, he wrote cautiously, "I would not even now state positively that he has broken faith."⁷²

Meyer, on the contrary, believed that Hauswirth had lost faith in the Canadian government's commitment to the Swiss colonization project because Löwe had changed the terms in his letter of May 7th, then Commissioner Smith had placed a totally different interpretation on the Order-in-Council. These changes could be interpreted as placing Meyer and Hauswirth completely at the mercy of the land inspector's report which would be submitted after three years. If the report were unfavourable, three years effort and investment would have been lost.

Owing to these continual changes, and differences of interpretation, and opinions, my colleague Mr. Hauswirth, lost, I presume all confidence, and left Winnipeg, as stated to me, to hold conferences with Swiss Settlers in the vicinity of St. Paul and Chicago.⁷³ His last remark to me, however, was, if his countrymen would come with him to this country, he would return, if not he would go to Switzerland, remaining there during the winter, reserving his decision as to whether he would come to this country next spring or not.⁷⁴

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Meyer later received a postcard from Hauswirth telling him that the Swiss in the vicinity would not be coming to Canada.

⁷⁴ See n. 71.

Meyer insisted that with or without Hauswirth's assistance, he would proceed with the project as intended. He conceded that if Hauswirth returned to Canada he should be required to make direct investments in the colony and to fulfill his homestead obligations. If Hauswirth abandoned the project, Meyer wished to lay claim to the entire reserve of land. He noted that the North West uprising had been publicized with disastrous results for recruiting in Switzerland. Moreover, his own personal experiences in the United States confirmed that it would be difficult for prospective emigrants to Canada to resist the appeals of over-zealous American land agents.⁷⁵ Passengers coming to Western Canada, he concluded, should be encouraged to board only those steamers which had a direct route to Quebec.⁷⁶

Meyer's disturbing letter prompted another investigation, but this time by John W. Romaine, Immigration Agent of the Erie and Western Railway. Romaine had agreed to cooperate with the Canadian government and to forward any Swiss immigrants ticketed to Winnipeg through to their destination. After examining the books at Castle Gardens

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

for evidence of the arrival of the expected party of Swiss settlers, Romaine found no evidence of such a group. He did, however, confirm that a group of 150 Swiss was scheduled to sail from Europe on June 1st and he promised "that every effort possible will be made to prevent the diversion of Manitoba business."⁷⁷

As the whole dispute between Hauswirth; Meyer and Smith seemed to have arisen after the meeting with Bennett, a further enquiry was launched to determine where Bennett had obtained his misleading information.⁷⁸ Smith denied leaving the impression that the whole issue of patents rested on the number of settlers placed on the land. Instead, he shared Meyer's view that Hauswirth had only used the dispute as an excuse to leave the country, and that he had in reality been drawn away by the American agents. Hauswirth, Smith continued, never really intended to settle in the North West Territories. His trip to the Territories, he added, came only as a result of Meyer's insistence and even so Hauswirth had left the bulk of his luggage in the United States.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ PAC, RG 17, Volume 444, file 48442, Romaine to Lowe, June 11, 1885.

⁷⁸ PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Burgess to Smith, June 16, 1885.

⁷⁹ PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Smith to Burgess, June 16, 1885.

To add to the confusion, a conflict was developing between the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior.⁸⁰ The exploratory expedition to the West had been under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, but Bennett was in the employ of the Department of Agriculture, which insisted that agrarian immigration was within its jurisdiction. Now the Departments bickered about who was responsible for the project's disintegration.

Meyer and Hauswirth began a personal duel. On June 18, 1885, Meyer wrote to Hauswirth and to John Lowe. To Hauswirth, he wrote bluntly urging him to come at once to the North West and fulfill the agreement he had entered into in London.⁸¹ He did not in this first letter direct any accusations; these he reserved for the letter to Lowe.

I fear, Mr. Hauswirth has employed the time of June 1st to June 4th at St. Paul, to go to the lands of the Western Lands Compagnie [sic] of Minnesota and then went to Chicago to make arrangements with the Director, of it, Dr. Frederiksen. His intention MAY now be, to go to Switzerland, to persuade the WEALTHY Emigrants to go to Minnesota or to Kentucky, where his friend Imobersteg... is interested,...

⁸⁰ See for example, PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Lowe to Burgess, June 18, 1885; Bennett to Lowe, June 25, 1885; Hall to Lowe, September 5, 1885.

⁸¹ PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Meyer to Hauswirth, June 18, 1885.

⁸² PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Meyer to Lowe, June 18, 1885.

Hauswirth, he added, should be coerced into returning to take up his homestead and to invest the sum that he had agreed to earlier.⁸³ Meyer sent a second letter to the Department of Agriculture in June 1885, accusing Hauswirth of using Canadian travel funds to return to Switzerland where he joined with the Zwilchenbart agency and a certain Jules Monod in spreading rumours about Indian risings and barbarities in the Canadian North West.⁸⁴ At the same time, they promoted emigration to the United States.

Hauswirth replied promptly to Meyer saying that he had no intentions of abandoning the scheme, but "present political troubles" inclined him "to prepare everything still better for next year, and to choose still more carefully the necessary persons in Europe and in Switzerland." He requested the Department of Agriculture to forward him the one hundred pounds promised him by Sir Charles Tupper in London, to pay for his return trip to Europe.⁸⁶

⁸³ Ibid. PAC, RG 17, Volume 444, file 48475, Grahame to Lowe, June 20, 1885. Hauswirth had moved all his belongings to Chicago.

⁸⁴ PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Meyer to Lowe, June 24, 1885. In the middle of March, 1888, Meyer received a menacing note from a certain Jules Monod. It is most probable, but not certain, that this person and the Jules Monod mentioned above, are one. See PAC, RG 17, Volume 608, file 68800, Meyer to Lowe, March 22, 1888.

⁸⁵ PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Hauswirth to Meyer, June 22, 1885.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

In early July, the Department of Agriculture invited Hauswirth, now back in Chicago, to honour his agreement relative to the North West Territories colony. Hauswirth, in turn accused Meyer of dabbling in private speculation, and of consciously wanting to bring to the North West a party of immigrants who were totally unprepared to face the coming winter. To such a foolhardy plan, he wrote, "I shall never lend my hand."⁸⁷ In his reply to the Department of Agriculture he argued that immediate colonization was impractical because of the Riel uprising. The uprising now made the planting of essential seed crops impossible, and spiralling inflation had sent prices far above their normal level. The success of the project depended upon a favourable reaction from the first group of settlers. Therefore "one must go to work only with the greatest sagacity, if one does not want to empty the babe with the bath;..."⁸⁸ He concluded with the thinly veiled threats that if his wishes were not met in full he would be forced to take his complaints to the Swiss "Bundesrath", and "to make use of the North American Offers which are at my disposal for Swiss and German settlements."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Hauswirth to Meyer, July 7, 1885.

⁸⁸ PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Hauswirth to Lowe, July 7, 1885.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

The threat that Hauswirth would now definitely turn against Canada caused Meyer some concern: "he will of course now do everything to blackmail Canada..."⁹⁰, he wrote Lowe. Meyer asked that Canadian government agents in New York monitor Swiss emigration to North America and also Hauswirth's movements. He suggested that they should subscribe to the "Schweizer Handels Courier", printed in Basel, as that was the paper in which Hauswirth published his articles.

Letters from a friend in Paris⁹¹ about the publicity given to the Riel uprising added to Meyer's concerns.

La révolte des Métis a eu également un certain retentissement en Suisse et bien qu'on la sache calmée aujourd'hui l'enthousiasme s'est forcément refroidi. Ces agents d'émigration ne comptent plus guère sur cette année pour l'émigration Canadienne.⁹²

But the greatest blow of all came with Hauswirth's strident and acrimonious missive:

Everlasting curse for your deceit & treason against me: bloody [sic] revenge will be sure, this is arranged & will be further arranged; neither White-wood, Manitoba, Paris, Florenz, Venice & Rome will save you from it. Be you sure of that.⁹³

⁹⁰ PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Meyer to Lowe, July 17, 1885.

⁹¹ Ardant, a friend and co-author of the book, La Question Agraire, Etude sur l'Histoire Politique de la Petite Propriété, Paris: Morot Frères et Chuit, Editeurs, 1887.

⁹² PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Meyer to Lowe, July 17, 1885 (?).

⁹³ PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Hauswirth to Meyer, September 2, 1885 (?).

Not long after this threatening note was received by Meyer, John Dyke noticed an article written by Hauswirth in the Amerikanische Schweizer Zeitung, lambasting the colonization project as a "huge swindle". Dyke visited Basel to inform himself further on the matter,⁹⁴ and concluded that Hauswirth's statements would not have much influence because he had lost credibility after being turned out of his magistrate's position. He felt assured that his "bad bad word can certainly do us no harm."⁹⁵

IV

Now that Hauswirth had shown his true colours, Meyer was anxious to proceed with the colonization plans. However, Meyer could not obtain the patents to the land, because a large part of the reserve belonged to the Canadian Pacific Railway and not to the government. J. H. McTavish, the C.P.R. Land Commissioner at Winnipeg, agreed to hold the land in reserve but preferred not to surrender it until the arrival of the Swiss settlers.⁹⁶ Meyer wanted the C.P.R. to exchange this land for government lands elsewhere, an arrangement which

⁹⁴ PAC, RG 17, Volume 455, file 49667, Dyke to Lowe, September 11, 1885.

⁹⁵ PAC, RG 17, Volume 463, file 50558, Dyke to Lowe, October 15, 1885.

⁹⁶ PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, McTavish to Meyer, July 15, 1885.

the government was reluctant to pursue.⁹⁷ Moreover, plans for the erection of the cheese factory were already under way,⁹⁸ and financial support for this scheme would likely collapse if Meyer did not obtain the required patents immediately.⁹⁹

The legal tangle was not easy to unravel. First of all, on September 10th, 1885, Meyer obtained a new Order-in-Council by the terms of which he became "entitled to all consequent privileges whether Mr. Hauswirth fulfill his part of the arrangement or not."¹⁰⁰ Secondly, the Department of the Interior investigated the possibility of reserving a different tract of land for Meyer's colonists.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Meyer to Lowe, July 28, 1885.

⁹⁸Ibid. On July 24, Meyer held his first meeting in the town of Whitewood, to discuss the establishment of his cheese and butter factory.

⁹⁹PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Meyer to Lowe, July 27, 1885.

¹⁰⁰PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Memorandum to the Privy Council by Thomas White, Minister of the Interior, September 5, 1885.

¹⁰¹PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Hall to Smith, September 5, 1885; Smith to Hall, September 14, 1885.

Meyer meanwhile, spent his time complaining to the Department of Agriculture about the harassment he suffered at the hands of "wild" bands of "roaming Indians" stealing cattle and intimidating the farmers. He asked for police protection, and after a special investigation conducted by Thomas Bennett, he was given the kind of preferential treatment which aroused some jealousy in some quarters.¹⁰² The Regina Leader for example, commented,

Dr. Meyers [sic] of the German colony south of Whitewood, is a favored individual. Two mounted policemen visit his farm three times a week, which suits the doctor admirably, by these opportunities he gets his mail, express parcels, way freight and transient visitors landed at his door at a very cheap rate. Give the doctor the "whip hand" and he knows how to profit by it! Any unfortunate Indian who happens to pass the doctor's homestead is escorted five miles further on by a mounted policeman so the doctor says....¹⁰³

In early January 1886, Meyer returned to Switzerland in an effort to gather financial support for his settlement in Western Canada. The trip was unsuccessful, partly because he held no patents on his land.¹⁰⁴ Once more he turned to Sir Charles Tupper for assistance.

¹⁰² PAC, RG 17, Volume 465, file 50881, Bennett to Lowe, December 1, 1885; Volume 2396, Meyer to Lowe, November 25, 1885; RG 18, Volume 1051 (B1), White to Fortescue, October 28, 1886.

¹⁰³ Regina Leader, December 21, 1886, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ PAC, RG 17, Volume 2396, Meyer to Lowe, January 9, 1886; RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Meyer to the Department of the Interior, January 26, 1886; RG 17, Volume 473, file 51814, Colmer to the Minister of Agriculture, February 16, 1886.

I saw Dr Meyer in Paris a few days ago. As you may be aware, he is paying a visit to the Continent this winter in order to promote, as far as possible, the interests of the North-West, and I have no doubt he has been doing some useful work, although so far his success has not been so great as we should have liked.... I promised to write to you to ask you to expedite as much as may be practicable the granting of the title of the land which has been given to him, and I shall be glad if you will give the matter your favorable consideration.¹⁰⁵

By the end of February, Meyer appeared totally frustrated because Hauswirth, who was now back in Saanen, was fervently agitating against emigration to the North West Territories. "I got many letters from Switzerland the last 2 months," Meyer wrote, "but no definitive engagement is possible, when a man stays in that country, who works against me."¹⁰⁶ From Canada he received letters indicating that settlers in the Whitewood area were contemplating leaving the North West Territories in search of greater prosperity in the United States.¹⁰⁷ Discouraged and disheartened, he vowed upon his return to Canada to cease all colonisation work until he had received his patents. Accompanying him on his trip back to Canada, were Count Roffignac and a French gardener; from now on, his efforts would focus exclusively on agriculture.

¹⁰⁵ PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Tupper to Carling, March 3, 1886.

¹⁰⁶ PAC, RG 17, Volume 476, file 52181, Tupper to Carling, March 20, 1886.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

When Meyer had asked that a land inspector be sent out to verify his claim that he had indeed contributed sufficient improvements to warrant a patent, the Department of the Interior sent out Inspector Bouchier to make an official examination.¹⁰⁸ The report, submitted December 31st, 1885, valued the material improvements at \$3145.00 and the livestock at \$760.00, a sum considerably less than the \$6000.00 Meyer claimed to have invested.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the Department of the Interior was prepared to recommend favourably if the Department of Agriculture concurred.

When Pope became gravely ill during the early months of 1886, he was succeeded in the office of Minister of Agriculture by John Carling who ordered a review of the matter. It was not until March 27th, that the Department of Agriculture officially made its views clear to the Minister of the Interior. Lowe's memo defended the Swiss project and maintained that Meyer had in fact complied with all the stipulations spelled out in the Order-in-Council of May eleventh.

¹⁰⁸ PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, telegram, Burgess to Smith, December 8, 1885.

¹⁰⁹ PAC, RG 17, Volume 466; file 50978, Hall to Lowe, December 31, 1885. Lowe believed that Meyer might well have spent six thousand dollars, as the disturbances in the Territories boosted prices to abnormal levels. "... it is easy to see that in the peculiar circumstances of last year after the disturbances he may have paid the highest prices for everything." PAC, RG 15, Volume 340, file 88134, Lowe to White, March 27, 1886.

... I would very strongly recommend as a question of immigration and especially having in view the valuable service rendered by Dr. Meyer to the Department of Agriculture in important publications previous to the colonisation scheme under question, and the actual work of propagandism done in connection with his arrangement--proof of the adhesion to the scheme of one hundred and seventy-five Swiss families having been furnished to the Department--that the condition of the Order-in-Council of May 11th, ... should be held to have been substantially complied with, although the cheese factory is not actually erected, but nearly twice the amount specified as necessary to be expended having been actually spent.¹¹⁰

In effect, on May 26, 1886 a new Order-in-Council was promulgated assigning Meyer the patents to two sections which the Canadian Railway eventually surrendered. A further delay was occasioned when the patents were mailed to Whitehead, Manitoba, instead of Whitewood, Assiniboia! By then Meyer's project had collapsed and the original immigrants had gone to the United States in response to the efforts of Hauswirth and Imobersteg.

Acknowledging that his scheme had failed, Meyer turned to more lucrative personal pursuits in agriculture. His farm, known as "La Rolandrie", became a regular attraction to visitors from the East who were conducted on official tours of Western Canada, courtesy of the C.P.R. One such reporter, Howard Trueman, a writer for the St. John Daily Sun, and the Sackville Post, wrote of his visit to the Meyer farm.

¹¹⁰Lowe to White, March 27, 1886, p. 11. See n. 109.

A number of our party drove out yesterday about twenty miles from Broadview to visit a German, one Dr. Myers, /sic/ who has located right on the prairie, and is spending a thousand dollars a month in buildings and in breaking and preparing his land. He is fitting up everything about him in grand style, had four or five acres in garden, and is putting up a cheese factory. Good butter and cheese are made here, but I am told that owing to the lack of the right kind of appliances for butter and cheese making, the good article is exceptional.¹¹²

Meyer's project survived two more years on the Prairies.

On April 29, 1889 he wrote to Lowe: "You may have mentioned, that I have given up my farm of 4500 acres to a joint stock Co.... I hope to get in one or 2 weeks a manager and will then leave with my family for Europe, where I intend to stay 1 1/2 to 2 years."¹¹³ Although he planned to return to Canada he never did because he died in Europe that same year.

'La Rolandrie' passed into the hands of Count Roffignac and then to other owners. On April 12, 1894, the following article appeared in the Whitewood Herald:

¹¹² Provincial Archives of Manitoba (hereinafter cited as PAM), MG 1, B 29, Letter written to the St. John Daily Sun and the Sackville Post, by reporter Howard Trueman, in September and October, 1887; Letter from Broadview, N. W. T., September 30, 1887, p. 3.

¹¹³ PAC, RG 17, A 1, Volume 1679, file Me-Mi, Meyer to Lowe, April 29, 1889.

After a career of some nine years, the Rolandrie Farming Company has ceased operations, and on Wednesday the 4th inst., the live and dead stock on the extensive place in the Pipestone valley was sold under the hammer, by Mr. Charles Street, C.. The Rolandrie farming company commenced in 1885 with Dr. Meyer as manager; and has at times attracted considerable attention in the Territories. Dr. Meyer was succeeded by Comte de Raffignac [sic] who was a shrewd and enterprising man, but he failed to make the affairs of the company a pecuniary success.... Comte Roffignac¹¹⁴ was succeeded two years ago by Mons. Fernand Carnoy, who has held the management up to the present. As far as is known at present the buildings and extensive lands of the company will lie idle, unless a customer can be found for them. The company have sunk a large sum in the enterprise, which has been quite an assistance to the district, and we are sorry their operations have not been attended with better success.¹¹⁵

The Joos and Meyer-Hauswirth settlement schemes both failed largely because neither enjoyed the confidence of the Swiss government. Other drawbacks helped to bring about their demise. Joos had little grasp of the realities of life in the North West Territories and failed to consider essentials necessary for the survival of a community, such as industry, marketing and finance. His ineptitude in this field was recognized by his government colleagues and this soon filtered through to Canadian officials who preferred to remain non-committal on the project.

¹¹⁴After leaving the farm, Count Roffignac headed south to the United States.

¹¹⁵The Whitewood Herald, April 12, 1894, p. 8, (courtesy, PM).

The Meyer-Hauswirth project fared little better but offered more promising results. The team of Meyer and Hauswirth appeared well suited to the task, but in the end helped aggravate an already deteriorating situation. Meyer, on the other hand, was an intellectual, a dreamer and a petit bourgeois¹¹⁶ land owner with little experience in immigration matters, yet he recognized the importance of industry as a stabilizing element in an infant community. Hence, he insisted on a cheese and butter factory with guaranteed market access. Hauswirth on the other hand, was an enterpriser and opportunist with vast experience in the emigration business. The harmony, however, faltered because of a series of misunderstandings and back-room manoeuvring which left each party mistrusting the other. The question of land patents, the meddling by Imobersteg, and the lack of communication among Canadian bureaucrats stalled the project in its planning stage and prevented any realization of a Swiss community in the Canadian North West.

¹¹⁶ For an example of his 'ideas' see PAC, RG 17, Volume 469, file 51363, Tupper to Carling, January 16, 1886; Volume 544, file 60742, Meyer to Tupper, August 1, 1887. Other correspondence with the Governor General as well as some of Meyer's publications is equally revealing.

CHAPTER III: Canadian Agents and the North Atlantic Trading Company, 1891-1909.

Since the 1870s efforts to induce Swiss immigration into Western Canada had largely been in vain. It was clear that the campaign of "special agents" of the Canadian government had been a miserable failure, and that a new assessment of the situation was required. This chapter examines this renewed approach, whereby the task of recruiting Swiss immigrants was placed almost entirely in the hands of booking agents, and at a later date, in the hands of the North Atlantic Trading Company. The "special agents" had faced too many obstacles--some self-inflicted, some imposed. Their reputation on the continent was often less than reputable and, more often than not, their own personal competitiveness undermined their credibility. To add to their problems, they were often confronted with a hostile reception from the indigenous agents who jealously guarded their own enterprises.

Furthermore, the Swiss Federal Council had started to expedite abuses by means of a series of stringently enforced emigration laws. The first of these laws was drafted in 1879 to be replaced by even more forceful legislation in 1888. The

latter remained in force well into the 1920s. By the turn of the century, the Swiss government had established its own Federal Emigration Bureau to supervise booking agents and the general process of emigration. All emigration societies, agencies, colonization projects and emigration propaganda came under the supervision of the Bureau.¹

Canadian officials now analyzed the reasons for the failure of the early Swiss colonization projects and reviewed the situation in Switzerland. Barnard, Kormann, Koerber and Dyke remarked that more money had to be spent if success were to be enjoyed. Short-term contracts should be abandoned and less faith should be placed in pretty pictures or enticing brochures. Norman Macdonald points out that: "Agents had no interest in circulating pamphlets in which their own names did not appear, and from which they could expect little or no profit."² Consequently, the government undertook a total remodelling of its approach. More money was made available and booking agents were presented with more attractive offers to present to intending emigrants. The practice of sending agents to the continent was not entirely discontinued, but the real hope of success now lay in a contractual relationship

¹It is not known when the Bureau was originally formed.

²Norman Macdonald, Canada: Immigration and Colonization, 1841-1903, Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1966, p. 32.

with the North Atlantic Trading Company, an umbrella organization of all the major passenger service agencies on the European continent. Sir Charles Tupper vigorously supported this policy, although some government officials disagreed with him. Despite these strenuous efforts emigration from Switzerland to Western Canada increased only slightly, the yearly outflow still constituted less than that from any other European country.³ When the First World War erupted, Swiss immigration slowed to a trickle and new problems, such as Swiss-Germans being listed as undesirable immigrants, emerged. Only after the First World War did a more optimistic tone prevail.

Canadian Agents

Between 1890 and 1914 only a handful of agents were sent to Switzerland by the Canadian government. Their visits were irregular and usually restricted to the French-speaking cantons. Even there, they were effectively circumscribed in their freedom of movement by instructions from Ottawa to avoid conflict or interference with the booking agents.

In the late 1880s and early 1890s, Pierre Foursin, the private secretary of Hector Fabre, the Canadian Commissioner

³See for example, PAC, RG 76, Volume 50, file 1980, Part 1, Preston to Scott, Extract from a Report dated July 8, 1905.

in Paris, undertook on the instructions of the Minister of Agriculture, a series of trips to the Swiss canton of Fribourg which was reported to be a fruitful area for emigration.⁴

One religious order, for example, the Chanoines Réguliers de l'Immaculée Conception had joined their counterparts in the French Jura and had left their homeland under the guidance of Dom Paul Benoît for Manitoba, where they founded the parishes of Saint-Claude and Notre-Dame de Lourdes. Foursin accomplished little on this trip and even his claim to have sent a few families to the settlements of Lourdes and Saint-Claude was challenged by Dom Benoît who observed that "he did not visit the colonists and was not visited by them. Not knowing any of them any more than he was known of them."⁵ Later he did influence a few Swiss to join the French and Belgian emigrants at the settlement of Montmartre founded in 1893.⁶

In 1896 Foursin proposed the opening of a Canadian agency in Basle.⁷ He discounted the premise that the controls

⁴PAC, RG 15, Volume 668, file 294480, Foursin to Carling, July 30, 1891.

⁵PAC, RG 15, Volume 668, file 294480, Benoît to Bennett, July 28, 1891.

⁶PAC, RG 15, Volume 668, file 294480, Daly to Fabre, January 24, 1893; Gouzée to McConnell, May 1, 1903.

⁷PAC, RG 76, Volume 101, file 14202, memorandum, House of Commons, n. d.; RG 25, A-7, Volume 499, file, Preston's Reports, 1900-1901, Strathcona to Sifton, March 23, 1896.

imposed by the Swiss Federal Council impeded all successful efforts to encourage emigration and on this point he won the support of several members of Parliament and of the Solicitor General. The latter reported:

... After comparing the emigration laws of Belgium, France and Switzerland, I have come to the conclusion that in the latter country the laws and regulations are far less difficult to comply with...

... there exists no legal impediment to the work of immigration in Switzerland. The regulations are less strict than in Belgium and in France....

The Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton placed his confidence strictly with the booking companies rather than in agents such as Foursin who would attract the attention of the foreign authorities and so create "serious difficulty".⁹

With regard to the matter of the appointment of Mr. Foursin as Immigration Agent at Basle, Switzerland, ... I am of the opinion that it would be a most serious mistake if the Government made any appointment of an Agent in that country. I was under the impression that we could do some special work there and while in Europe last year I visited the capital of Switzerland and consulted with Mr. Dreyfus, Chief Administrator of the Government of Switzerland, on emigration matters, with the object of coming to some arrangement regarding work. After a very long discussion during which I used every argument I could think of to induce their Government to allow us to give their people some idea as to the conditions prevailing in Canada the Commissioner was most emphatic in his statement that no such thing could be permitted.¹⁰

⁸ PAC, RG 76, Volume 101, file 14202, memorandum, the Solicitor General, n. d.

⁹ PAC, RG 76, Volume 101, file 14202, memorandum, Mr. Cory, March 21, 1905.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Barred from any further activity in Switzerland, Foursin was forced to abandon his efforts in that country.

Another immigration agent who worked in Switzerland was Auguste Bodard,¹¹ appointed as Canadian government agent for France, Belgium and Switzerland in 1892. Switzerland, however, occupied only a small part of his time. Nevertheless, he was responsible for several Swiss families going to the parishes of Lourdes and Saint-Claude.¹² On his trip to Europe in 1892 he limited his visits to the French-speaking cantons of Switzerland because his orders were to refrain from interfering with the booking agents who were most active in the German-speaking cantons.

His appointment, strongly opposed by John Lowe the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, and supported by A. M. Burgess, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, was important in bringing into focus two opposing views on immigration activity. Lowe wrote:

¹¹PAC, RG 76, Volume 1, file 1, part 1, memorandum, Mr. A. Bodard, n. d.; article in the Montreal Daily Witness, n. d. Bodard was at one time the editor of a Conservative newspaper in Windsor Ontario, Le Courier that went bankrupt. Later he became an active secretary of the French Colonization Society in Montreal. In 1889, he visited as an emigration agent, France, Belgium and Switzerland.

¹²See n. 5.

I have the highest opinion of Mr. Bodard, and I think that the work he has done as Secretary for the French Colonization Society has been invaluable. While such is, however the case, there is the very greatest objection to the sending of Agents from this country either to the United Kingdom or to the Continent of Europe. It is a policy which has been entirely discontinued by this Department on the very strong recommendation of Sir Charles Tupper and our own Agents of the greatest experience in the United Kingdom.

My opinion, therefore is against sending Mr. Bodard to France and Belgium as an Immigration Agent.¹³

D. McNicholl of the Canadian Pacific Railway and J. Ennis of the Allan Line shared Lowe's concern. Neither savoured the interference of an agent in the immigration business.

"All printed matter intended for distribution by the Agents" Ennis had written Bodard, "should be consigned in bulk to the Steamship Co's sic, each one receiving a proportion according to the magnitude of its business."¹⁴ Burgess assured both Ennis and McNicholl that Bodard would be made aware of the delicate situation in which he was operating.

A third agent involved in Switzerland was Paul Wiallard who concerned himself principally with France and Belgium during the time the North Atlantic Trading Company was at its zenith. In the fall of 1903, Wiallard made an inspection tour of Manitoba

¹³PAC, RG 76, Volume 1, file 1, Lowe to Burgess, April 28, 1892.

¹⁴PAC, RG 76, Volume 1, file 1, part 1, Ennis to Bodard, December 8, 1892.

and the North West Territories visiting particularly the French-speaking settlements including "one of the most important of all towns I think, Notre Dame de Lourdes, where I gathered a lot of precious material."¹⁵ On his return to Europe Wiallard visited Luxembourg and Switzerland, "...where I had to meet several prospective emigrants related to actual French-speaking settlers of these countries, whom I've met while visiting our North West."¹⁶ In Switzerland Wiallard also contacted two independent Steamship agencies which he interested in the passenger business to Canada and to which he promised a bonus from the Canadian government should a regular service prove feasible. In addition, he promised to forward to their agencies, pamphlets on Canada. Innocently enough, he wrote W. T. R. Preston, the Inspector of European Agencies: "Naturally, I understand that neither of these two people can expect to be our exclusive agent as this general agency has been given to the North Atlantic Trading Company, which fact I hope does not prevent us to work among people where nothing very special has been done so far."¹⁷

¹⁵PAC, RG 76, Volume 295, file 271343, part 1, Wiallard to Smart, November 6, 1903.

¹⁶PAC, RG 76, Volume 295, file 271343, part 1, Wiallard to Preston, December 24, 1903.

¹⁷Ibid.

The reaction from Preston came swiftly. It could only be hostile because he viewed the North Atlantic Trading Company as the backbone of the emigration movement to Canada. He cautioned Wiallard, whom he believed to have acted in good faith although also in ignorance:

As I told you in my letter a day or two ago, in so far as Luxembourg, Germany and Switzerland are concerned, they are under control of the Continental Company, and, in the first place they resent very strongly the interference of outside influences on account of the danger of upsetting the relations existing in connection with arrangements made, and in view of the possible misunderstanding which might then occur with the booking agents as to the responsibility of carrying on the propaganda in question.¹⁸

There is evidence, however, that Wiallard had definite plans to develop a steady and reliable recruitment in Switzerland.

First indications of Wiallard's plans came from D. Treau de Coeli,¹⁹ the government representative in Belgium who also had interests in Switzerland and Luxembourg. He was upset because Wiallard threatened to "invade" his territory.

I am quite disposed to confine myself to Belgium and Holland, where things are booming now, but, as I wrote you once before Mr. W's Wiallard arrival, I would not like to be commanded by a new comer who would reap the benefit of my work.²⁰

¹⁸PAC, RG 76, Volume 295, file 271343, part 1, Wiallard to Preston, December 24, 1903.

¹⁹In 1903, De Coeli had sent several Swiss emigrants to Canada, PAC, RG 76, Volume 295, file 271343, part 1, De Coeli to Preston, January 1, 1904.

²⁰Ibid.

Wiallard's defence was that, as he was travelling in the north of France it was his responsibility to visit Luxembourg and Switzerland "where chances for a successful campaign are, at least, as good in the Luxembourg duchy itself."²¹ To the charge that he had invaded Mr. de Coeli's territory, he replied that "there is no part in Luxembourg which could be claimed as being Belgian more than some parts of it could be called French." ²² Preston quickly reminded him of the limitation of his mission and the penalties to be incurred if he exceeded his jurisdiction:

I have yours of the 4th, and note your reference to what you regard as your right to travel beyond France in the discharge of the duties which you naturally think have been placed upon you in connection with your position in Paris. I am very sorry that I am forced to join the issue with you on this subject. I think it not unlikely that my knowledge of the situation on the Continent, and of the details in connection with the Continental work, outside of France and Belgium, being under my especial charge in so far as the Continental Syndicate are responsible to me, justifies the conclusion that it is inadvisable that any part of their work should be interfered with by any Government Agent who is not specifically deputed by the Department to take part in propaganda. Under these circumstances I am sorry to have to say that in so far as the expense in connection with your office are concerned, I will be compelled in future to strike out from your account any travelling expenses incurred beyond the borders of France.²³

²¹ PAC, RG 76, Volume 295, file 271343, part 1, Wiallard to Preston, January 4, 1904.

²² Ibid.

²³ PAC, RG 76, Volume 295, file 271343, part 1, Preston to Wiallard, January 6, 1904.

As soon as the contract with the North Atlantic Trading Company had been terminated in 1906, Wiallard appealed to the Honourable Frank Oliver, the Minister of the Interior, and within a few years he resumed recruiting in Switzerland.²⁴

After the collapse of the North Atlantic Trading Company, Switzerland was assigned once again to the Paris Agency and on July 8th, 1908, Charles de Gallier de Roeder became the fourth agent of the Canadian Government.²⁵ Charles de Gallier, a native of Switzerland who had settled at Invermay (Saskatchewan), went to Versoix to encourage the emigration of his countrymen.²⁶ After meetings in London and Paris, at the latter with his predecessor, Wiallard, he decided to approach the Swiss government. His mission was reported in the Manitoba Free Press as follows:

The country has, ... an emigration bureau of its own, for the purpose of dealing with the six thousand people who emigrate every year. Mr. De Gallier de Roeder represented to the authorities that this bureau is defective in not being able to give to the people who come to Western Canada the information, which they require and for want of which they go to the wrong districts and at wrong times of the year. Having convinced the officials of the desirability of giving reliable information, he received authorization to act through the emigration bureau, and intending emigrants were referred to him for advice.

²⁴ See for example, PAC, RG 76, Volume 295, file 271343, part B, Wiallard to Oliver, November 3, 1906; Wiallard to Walker, November 28, 1906; Wiallard's report in RG 76, Volume 296, part 3.

²⁵ PAC, RG 76, Volume 528, file 803101, Scott to de Gallier, July 8, 1908.

²⁶ PAC, RG 76, Volume 528, file 803101, article, Manitoba Free Press, March 3, 1909.

²⁷ Ibid.

De Gallier's greatest contribution was making Canadian officials aware of the important role of the Federal Bureau of Emigration in Berne. Although his contract with the government ended in November, 1908, de Gallier carried his work through until the following February. In late February, 1909, he left with a first party of twenty-five Swiss farmers, and according to Free Press reports another party of twenty-five settlers was expected to follow in April.²⁸ His contract was never renewed, and he proved to be the last agent sent by the Canadian government in Switzerland.

The North Atlantic Trading Company

In 1899, W. T. R. Preston who had just been appointed by Ottawa as Inspector of European agencies on the Continent held conferences in Hamburg with various booking agents who had banded together to form the North Atlantic Trading Company.²⁹ He reported as follows on these meetings:

Well my instructions from Mr. Sifton were very clear that I should leave no stone unturned with a view of solving the difficulties connected with emigration which had been in an unsatisfactory state for so many years on the continent. I was, therefore, rather disposed to stay in Hamburg and discuss matters with them booking agents and see if things could not be put on a satisfactory basis so that we

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ In this connection see, Canada, Parliament, Journals (House of Commons), Appendix No. 2, Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization, 1906; Journals (House of Commons), Appendix No. 3, Select Committee on Public Accounts, 1906.

might get some work done. I do not know whether the suggestion came from myself. However, it came out in conversation one evening in the course of a dinner, as to the advisability of providing for a syndicate on the continent to carry on an emigration propaganda throughout the continent of Europe, so that there might be a pooling of the bonus and a division of the government bonus among them.³⁰

All these booking agents joined together to form a steamship "combine" which included all the major shipping lines on the European continent. Writing some twenty years later, W. T. R. Preston said of the Conference:

The basis of the agreement between the various steamship companies interested in the emigration traffic to the United States and Canada was a division of the spheres of influence in which the various steamship companies should cooperate. It was finally agreed that the British, American, and Canadian interests should be confined to Great Britain, Ireland and Scandinavia, and that the continental interests should operate in France, Belgium, Holland, Austria and various other countries in the European continent. Subsequently, it was a simple matter to agree upon and carry out a gradual increase in the rates for emigrants to the United States and Canada.³¹

³⁰ Canada, Parliament, Journals (House of Commons), Appendix No. 2, Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization, 1906, p. 323.

³¹ Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1925, No. 4, Department of Trade and Commerce, Report of W. T. R. Preston, Ottawa, December 31, 1924.

In the course of the agreement, which lasted from 1900 until November 1906, three separate contracts were entered into. The North Atlantic Trading Company (N. A. T. C.), with its headquarters in Amsterdam, for example, was given sole jurisdiction in Switzerland and a bonus was paid for each Swiss emigrant sent to Canada.³² No questions were asked as to how the immigrants were obtained and Preston had agreed that the names of the agents would never be made public without their written authorization. The secrecy and mystery that surrounded the establishment and the functioning of the Company was justified by Preston in a cryptic--"the less publicity we give this subject in Canada the better."³³

The North Atlantic Trading Company became active in the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland in 1900. The French-speaking cantons were left in the jurisdiction of the Paris agency, a division which later caused friction. As the names of the agents operating for the Company were not released, it is impossible to say where the agents were located or to which steamship line they were affiliated. It is,

³² At no time was the company bound to produce proof that the immigrants they sent over did in fact settle on the land. Equally, there was no special effort taken to that effect by the Department of the Interior. See n. 30.

³³ PAC, RG 76, Volume 61, file 2614, part 3, Preston to Pedley, November 30, 1899.

however, reasonable to assume that the Zwilchenbart agency, the largest in Switzerland, was probably involved. W. T. R. Preston testified at the House of Commons inquiry into the Company's activities in 1906 that in countries such as Switzerland with restrictive emigration laws, emigration propaganda was mailed from outside the country and discreet advertisements in local newspapers directed interested persons where to write for information regarding Canada.³⁴

Conflicts of interest arose in 1904 when the North Atlantic Trading Company demanded full control over all immigration recruitment in the Swiss Cantons, but the Canadian government preferred to have the French cantons handled through its Paris agency. In 1904, a new agreement was reached by which the government removed Switzerland completely from the Company's jurisdiction. James A. Smart, Deputy Minister of the Interior, wrote to the North Atlantic Trading Company in Amsterdam:

One change that you will observe is that with regard to Switzerland, which is excluded from your contract. Switzerland has not been very fruitful, so far as returns are concerned, for the Company or for the Government, and it is thought that it might be possible to carry on a work through out French Agency as the great bulk of the people who leave Switzerland speak the French language and are to all intents and purposes Frenchmen. Of course, I quite appreciate that the laws of Switzerland are quite strict as in many other countries regarding an emigration propaganda, so that it is quite probable that we will have little chance of doing very effective work there.³⁵

³⁴See n. 30, p. 335, 349.

³⁵PAC, RG 76, Volume 224, file 113228, Part 7, Smart to N. A. T. C., July 26, 1904.

Gluck, the manager of the N. A. T. C. protested that "we have just as much interest as your Department can have in being successful to get Swiss emigration" and added a warning that "to run the risk to have Switzerland worked from France would be incurring possibilities too serious to consider."³⁶ The Canadian government finally gave in to the Company's urgings, and all of Switzerland was unofficially placed under the Company's jurisdiction. "In the meantime" concluded the Department of the Interior, "the question of Switzerland being out of the contract need not be discussed."³⁷

There was reason to believe that the Company would now adopt a more aggressive policy of recruitment in Switzerland. Smart wrote to W. D. Scott, the Superintendent of Immigration, in April, 1905,

The North Atlantic Trading Company is now arranging for the establishment of two large agencies in Switzerland; these, together with Zwilchenbart, will put forth exclusive efforts to encourage the emigration of agriculturists to Canada. I find that all the other booking establishment in Switzerland are working for the United States: a large supply of literature will be provided for these agencies, and, although their work must be done in a very careful manner, it is altogether unlikely that much better results will be had from this desirable field.³⁸

³⁶ PAC, RG 76, Volume 224, file 113228, part 7, Gluck to Smart, August 19, 1904.

³⁷ PAC, RG 76, Volume 224, file 113228, part 7, Secretary, Department of the Interior, to the N. A. T. C., December 16, 1904.

³⁸ PAC, RG 76, Volume 224, file 113228, part 8, Smart to Scott, April 27, 1905.

However, little was accomplished before the N. A. T. C. contract was terminated on November 30, 1906.³⁹

It is impossible to determine the actual number of Swiss emigrants that were directed to Canada by the various agents and the N. A. T. C. but it is clear that their success was not overwhelming. Several factors were responsible for this situation. Firstly, the individual agents were severely limited in their activities and received only mild incentives to carry their work into the Swiss Republic. Even then, the Agents focused their attention solely in the French-speaking cantons. In this manner, two-thirds of the country was left to the booking agents which for the most part competed among themselves. Secondly, even after the formation of the N. A. T. C., the booking agencies still encountered serious competition from the United States. Lastly, the Swiss government formed its own emigration bureau with a vast range of powers. In effect, it became a policing agency for the emigration laws that had been passed earlier. As had been the case in earlier decades, without the support of the Swiss government, and of its newly formed Emigration Bureau, successful recruitment for Canada was bound to be an elusive goal.

³⁹PAC, RG 76, Volume 225, file 113228, part 11, Oliver to Strathcona, April 14, 1906; Volume 365, file 477735, N. A. T. C. to Oliver, November 12, 1906; Volume 225, file 113228, part 11, Blair to Edwards, October 24, 1921.

Chapter IV: World War I and State Aided Emigration from
Switzerland, 1914-1930.

The period 1914-1930 was highlighted by the turbulent war years of 1914-1918. World War I sharply reduced Swiss immigration into Canada and created a variety of problems for Swiss Germans already residing in Canada. Canadian officials were aware that two-thirds of Switzerland was German-speaking and though politically the Swiss government upheld a policy of complete neutrality, the Swiss made no such declaration.

Il y eut des prises de parti pour ou contre les pays en guerre. Elles correspondaient tout naturellement aux régions linguistiques, bien que ce phénomène n'eut pas été uniforme. Elles se manifestèrent dans les journaux, influencèrent l'opinion publique et cette dernière réagit de façon incontrôlable, car ces prises de position provenaient de sources introuvables, dirigées par des personnes inconnues à l'origine.¹

In Canada the Swiss-German press seemed particularly threatening. The effect of this propaganda did not become evident immediately, but when it did it was unrelenting.

¹Dr. Arthur Mojonner, Dr. Eugène Mojonner, Dr. Eugène-Th. Rimli, ed., Histoire de la Confédération, Zurich: Editions Stauffacher, 1973, 3rd edition, p. 495.

Though there is no evidence to show that Swiss-Germans were interned, they remained under constant surveillance for the better part of the war, and were considered for several years afterwards as "unfavourable" immigrants. This chapter examines this crucial period and in equal detail looks at the post-war era characterized by the beginnings of state-aided emigration.

I

Swiss immigration did not cease abruptly at the declaration of war in 1914. When it did cease, it was not the result of any government policy to hinder it, but quite simply of the inability of most Swiss citizens to leave their country. Nevertheless, the Canadian government continued to avail itself of the services of Messrs. Rommel & Co.,² the House of Zwilchenbart,³ the Canadian Pacific Railway⁴ and the various steamship companies during the war years. Though few Swiss could leave the country, applications were still being

²See for example, PAC, RG 76, Volume 434, file 652754, part 2, Currie to Scott, July 28, 1914; Scott to Currie, September 22, 1914; Currie to Scott, October 7, 1914.

³PAC, RG 25, G-1, Volume 1239, file 177, Tyler to Bart, December 14, 1916.

⁴PAC, RG 76, Volume 61, file 2614, part 7, Smith to Scott, November 25, 1914.

received and accepted.⁵ Throughout 1915 there was no hint of hostility towards Swiss-Germans; in fact, the Immigration Department explicitly continued to encourage the emigration of Swiss citizens including Germans naturalized in Switzerland.⁶

It was not until 1916 that the Canadian government started to investigate the activity of the Swiss press and its influence on Swiss-Germans residing in Canada. On January 8, 1916, a pro-German article appeared in the Vancouver Province entitled, "Conditions in Germany". The article was reported to have been printed in a Swiss newspaper and from there transferred verbally to the Province. It gave a laudatory account of the strength of German forces and denied rumours that Emperor Wilhelm was preparing to make overtures for peace.⁷ The Chief Press Censor Ernest J. Chambers reacted unfavourably to the publication.

⁵ See for example the cases of Constant Desmeules and Edmond Marti, PAC, R 7, G 21, File 14071, file 2584, Bonar Law to Devonshire; file 2661, Arthur to Bonar Law, enclosing letter of Joseph Pope to the Governor General's secretary, n. d.; file 2907, Bonar Law to Devonshire, enclosing letter of British Minister at Berne to Sir Edward Grey, November 6, 1915; file 2938, Walker to Governor General's secretary, enclosing memorandum, Scott to Cory, November 13, 1915.

⁶ PAC, R 76, Volume 61, file 2614, part 7, Smith to Scott, April 6, 1915.

⁷ PAC, R 6, E 1, Volume 94, file 253, Reid to Chambers, January 11, 1916. The article was provided by a Swiss named Henbert. R 6 E 1, Volume 94, file 253-I, Liversay to Chambers, January 31, 1916.

As you know, public opinion in Switzerland is very evenly divided, one-half of the population being strongly pro-Teutonic, the other pro-French and pro-Ally. It has been abundantly revealed that the Teutonic Secret Agents have turned Switzerland into a veritable hot bed of pro-German propaganda and have squandered money right and left to try and present pro-German views in the Swiss press. Some of the most absurd German 'plants' of the war have originally appeared in Swiss papers and any matter bearing a German flavour is regarded with grave suspicion.⁸

The Press Censor for the West, Mr. J. Fred B. Liversay, contacted the Vancouver Province and secured assurances that such "rubbish"⁹ would not again be published.

The matter raised enough concern to find its way into a ~~confidential~~ circular which was distributed to all Canadian editors.

5. There is reason to suspect that the recent notable increase in the circulation of certain Swiss publications in the United States press indicate that all the Swiss papers in question are of the pro-Teutonic type. As a number of the published extracts have received publication in some Canadian papers,¹⁰ particularly in Western Canada, it is deemed advisable to caution editors that while there is a powerful element in Switzerland inclined to sympathize with the entente allies, there is a section of that country in which there is a pronounced pro-Teutonic bias,

⁸PAC, RG 6, E 1, Volume 94, file 253-I, Chambers to Liversay, January 17, 1916.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Other papers involved were the Victoria Colonist, and the Vancouver World. Liversay to Chambers, January 31, 1916, see n. 7; PAC, RG 6, E 1, Volume 94, file 253-I, Chambers to Reid, January 17, 1916.

and this is being taken advantage of by the enemy to establish in the Republic a bureau which is actively engaged in enemy propaganda intended to influence public opinion throughout the world.

Extracts from Swiss papers should consequently be read in Canada with reserve, and republished only if they are unquestionably safe and reliable.¹¹

There still existed a concern, however, that pro-German propaganda might be imported to Canada directly from Switzerland. Liversay suggested that as an added precautionary measure all Swiss mail should be opened and carefully examined.¹² Others went even further. The British Minister at Berne suggested that "any Swiss who have entered Canada since December 1st last should be specifically searched and examined and if he has passed through Holland and not through an entente country in order to take ship to America should be stopped for three months at least."¹³ The Canadian government, however, was not prepared to hold Swiss immigrants in detention for three months. It did admit, however, that all Swiss immigrants were being carefully examined before they proceeded to Canada, and kept under supervision for some time, after they had entered the country.¹⁴

¹¹PAC, RG 6, E 1, Volume 94, file 253, Circular, C.P.R. No. 18, Confidential Circular for Canadian Editors, February 7, 1916.

¹²PAC, RG 6, E 1, Volume 94, file 253-I, Liversay to Chambers, March 18, 1916.

¹³PAC, RG 7, 3 21, File 14071, file 414, Milner to Devonshire, February 20, 1917.

¹⁴PAC, RG 7, 3 21, File 14071, file 570, Pope to Governor General's secretary, February 20, 1917.

II

When World War I ended, Swiss emigration did not resume without difficulties. Albert Stocker, of the Zwiichenbart firm, writing to the British Vice-Consulate in Basel at the end of November 1918, elaborated on the situation:

... during the war it had been nearly impossible for a Swiss to go over to Canada, as, if we remember well, disposition of the British Government was demanding, from the passenger to produce a Canadian affidavit countersigned by the authorities which had to state that the immigrant had already secured an engagement in Canada. It is clear that our Swiss people, especially the paysans [sic] never could produce such a document, as they are emigrating in general at good venture, and therefore the many demands we had for information about emigration to the Dominion, had to be put outside.¹⁵

Should these obstacles not be removed, emigration might be directed towards Brazil and Argentina.¹⁶

In responding to the concerns expressed by Stocker, the Superintendent of Immigration blamed the problem on a misunderstanding of the regulations, and he denied that Swiss immigrants had to have guaranteed employment before being allowed into the country. He did specify that only agricultural workers should be encouraged to emigrate.¹⁷ As for the type of Swiss who should be encouraged, he added:

¹⁵ PAC, RG 25, G-1, Volume 1239, file 177, Stocker to British Vice-Consulate in Basel, November 27, 1918.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ PAC, RG 25, G-1, Volume 1239, file 177, Scott to Blair, February 7, 1919.

The Swiss people are pretty well divided into two classes so far as the origin is concerned. The French cantons may naturally be expected to strongly sympathize with the Allied cause, while it would not surprise one if the German cantons rather favour the cause of the enemy. Persons coming from the latter might not find the feeling in Canada at all to their liking and they might discover themselves entirely out of sympathy with conditions here.¹⁸

It was true that Swiss citizens travelling through foreign territory had to have their passports viséd by that country. Hence, to come to Canada they might be required to have their passports viséd by the French, American and British authorities. It was even alleged that the procedure was more exacting for those returning to Canada than initial immigrants.¹⁹ Such problems were slowly eliminated, and immigration became easier and more routine.

Canada was not very active in Switzerland during these early post-war years. Swiss-German immigration was still being discouraged, and work in the French-speaking cantons was limited. "We have some little difficulty in this republic," J. Obed Smith, the Superintendent of Emigration to Canada wrote, "some of

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See, PAC, RG 25, G-1, Volume 1243, file 544, Blair to Pope, May 13, 1919; Pope to Governor General's secretary, May 21, 1919; RG 7, G 21, File 14071, file 11682, Devonshire to Milner, May 16, 1919; RG 25, G-1, Volume 1243, file 544, Devonshire to Milner, May 28 (?), 1919; RG 7, G 21, File 14071, file 12135, Milner to Devonshire, July 21, 1919.

the cantons being almost entirely German,... but the other cantons divided between pure Swiss²⁰ and French people have received sympathetic consideration...."²¹

A case was made for opening a Canadian Agency in Basle which would act as an information bureau and serve as a control centre to 'inspect' the immigrants before they made the long journey across the Atlantic.²² For the time being, however, this remained a point of discussion.²³ By the end of 1920, J. Obed Smith still reported that "we have no authorised Agent in any centre in that Republic".²⁴ Encouragement was

²⁰It is not clear what is meant by "pure Swiss". It is possible that what is intended is to differentiate between Swiss who are French-speaking, and French who have become naturalized in Switzerland.

²¹PAC, R 76, Volume 611, file 902168, part 2, Smith to Blair, April 20, 1920.

²²Basle was not only an important center for Swiss immigration agents, but it was also a check point for central and eastern European emigrants travelling to Canada. In this connection, see PAC, R 76, Volume 611, file 902168, part 2, Smith to Blair, July 14, 1920; MG 27 III B3, Volume 1, file F, Stewart to Larkin, January, 1923.

²³Smith to Blair, July 14, 1920, *ibid*; PAC, R 76, Volume 611, file 902168, part 3, no name, n. d., simply indicated, p. 3.

²⁴PAC, R 7, Volume 611, file 902168, part 2, Smith to Creelman, November 26, 1920. Emigration from the French-speaking cantons was controlled through the Paris office.

not totally lacking. The Swiss remained in the "preferred class" category, the financial qualifications were lifted,²⁵ and after 1921 the bias against Swiss-German immigration was dissipated. Gradually emigration work resumed in the German-speaking cantons,

The following year, major changes started to take place in Switzerland. J. M. Öhr, the recently appointed president of the Swiss Federal Emigration Bureau, pursued his interest in emigration matters.²⁶ In particular he turned his attention to state-aided emigration. H. M. Mitton, a Canadian government immigration official in Antwerp, Belgium, informed F. C. Blair, the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Colonization, of this new attitude.

The feeling in Europe is entirely turning round and the sooner we get to business and open some office in Europe, the sooner we shall be in a position to take advantage of some of the large sums of money that are undoubtedly going to be paid out by some of the European Governments for the settlement of their surplus population in some foreign country. The countries which have now made a definite move are: Great Britain, Holland and Switzerland.²⁷

²⁵ See, PAC, RG 76, Volume 611, file 902168, part 2, Blair to Smith, May 21, 1920; Smith to Blair, June 10, 1920; Blair to McClure, June 22, 1920; Blair to Cory, March 1, 1921.

²⁶ Before being appointed president, M Öhr had been the Bureau's secretary-treasurer.

²⁷ PAC, RG 76, Volume 611, file 902168, part 3, Mitton to Blair, August 26, 1922.

Canadian authorities in Immigration and Colonization became very interested in this new development. Mitton's talks with MÖhr revealed that the Swiss government was anxious to come to some arrangement with the Canadian government and that the Federal Bureau was prepared to carry on Canadian propaganda through its office.²⁸ This appeared to be only a matter of procedure, and Canadian officials felt optimistic. Delegates from Switzerland were once again invited to visit Canada,²⁹ and the Canadian government once more considered opening an Agency in Switzerland. Emigrants, Mitton maintained, "prefer to know on this side [Europe] whether they will be admitted or not."³⁰ The issue remained unresolved.³¹

²⁸ PAC, RG 76, Volume 611, file 902168, part 3, Mitton to Blair, September 12, 1922; Blair to Mitton, September 25, 1922. Swiss law prevented immigration propaganda to be carried on in that country by foreigners.

²⁹ PAC, RG 76, Volume 21, file 348, part 3, Edwards to Stewart, October 11, 1922.

³⁰ PAC, RG 76, Volume 611, file 902168, part 3, Mitton to Blair, December 9, 1922.

³¹ PAC, RG 76, Volume 611, file 902168, part 3, Blair to Williams, January 29, 1923.

In April 1923, Fritz Beck, a sales engineer³² accompanied an advance party of forty-six Swiss gentlemen to Toronto, whence six were to remain in Ontario and forty were to proceed to Winnipeg.³³ This small party constituted the first sizeable group of Swiss immigrants to enter Canada after the war and the first to have received financial assistance from the Swiss government. According to Beck, who was at that time acting as an official for the Swiss government, these Swiss immigrants were given a cool reception into the country. "From my observations and experiences in Canada with the first party of Swiss agricultural immigrants," he told a Globe reporter, "I would say that the system of reception and distribution adopted by the Canadian immigration authorities is absolutely unworkable, and impractical."³⁴

³²The 'Swiss Settlement Society' was founded in Montreal on October 10, 1924 and had as its principle aims, "the successful establishment of Swiss immigrants in Canada as settlers in settlements congenial to them,..." The founders were: Fritz Beck, Charles Bieler, Professor of Theology, Charles Price-Green, Commissioner, Department of Colonization, Canadian National Railways, the Honourable Charles Albert Duclos, Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Montreal, Herman Moret, medical doctor, and Eugène Lafleur, lawyer. See PAC, RG 68, Volume 608, pp. 484-486; Canada Gazette, Saturday, November 8, 1924, p. 1403; and the Quebec Chronicle and Quebec Gazette, November 8, 1924, p. 1.

³³PAC, RG 76, Volume 139, file 33175, part 1, memorandum, Little to Featherstonem, April 6, 1923.

³⁴The Globe, Thursday, April 5, 1923, p. 1.

At the heart of the problem was the treatment given to a group of ten Swiss, at least two of whom were Swiss-Germans.³⁵ Canadian officials, in an abrupt and forceful manner inquired about their patriotic feelings during World War I, as the Toronto Globe reported:

Two of the newcomers, Victor Fasknacht and Eugene Berleon told the Globe that at Halifax they had been subjected to a severe grilling as to their past military service in Switzerland. The men were unable to account for the questioning. "We are absolutely anti-militarists in the sense that we have no military ambitions, nor are we over anxious to serve in any army," they said.

Asked if they perchance had taken part in any pacific demonstrations during the war, or had belonged to any Pan-German Bund in Switzerland, the men said that they were farmers, and had nothing to do with politics at any time in their lives.³⁶

Immigration officials in Ottawa, unable to explain the incident, ordered an investigation.³⁷

Meanwhile, in October, a party of Swiss editors studying immigration came to Canada at the invitation of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Travelling along the transcontinental line, they visited the country from coast to coast, focusing their attention on the agricultural prospects. The Gazette noted,

³⁵ Ibid. From the line of questioning, it seems probable that all ten men interrogated were Swiss-Germans.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Although Blair had notified Mr. Barnstead, the agent in Halifax about the party's arrival, there was some confusion as apparently, nothing was done to see that their arrival went smoothly. Little to Feathersone, April 6, 1923, see n. 33.

There is no doubt about the visitors having been favourably impressed for not only has the vastness and the variety of the country's resources been an eye-opener to them, but the experience of Swiss settlers who have thoroughly tried out Canada have evidently been of an encouraging character.³⁸

To capitalize on any renewed interest in emigration to Canada, the government needed a representative in Switzerland. In the latter part of 1925, an enterprising man named E. Stigeler,³⁹ offered his services to the Canadian government. Stigeler, however, was not unknown to the Department of Immigration. Earlier in the year he had been associated with another Canadian agent accused by that department of having committed fraud. At issue was the sum of \$2500, gathered as deposit money for twenty-five emigrants from Central Europe which both Stigeler and Vezina insisted had been properly deposited with government agents. An investigation uncovered evidence to the contrary.

You will recall Mr. Vezina's statement that one of his business associates, Steiglèr, of Zagreb [sic] deposited \$100 for each of 25 emigrants, thus making the \$2500. He said emphatically here that it would be impossible to produce his receipt for any part of this money, because he never received it.

³⁸ The Gazette, Tuesday, October 9, 1923, p. 2.

³⁹ Before working for the White-Star Line in Basle and in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, Stigeler had been an employee of John Imobersteg and Company, also of Basle. See, PAC, RG 76, Volume 267, file 224970, Stigeler to Blair, December 3, 1925.

We have now on file correspondence showing that Vezina received \$1800 from Caboud of Paris, on an order of the Zagreeb Office.... We have also on file a copy of a receipt dated the 2nd September, signed by Robert Vezina acknowledging receipt from Desbois and Cabout (A. Caboud, successor) for \$1200 and the receipt shows that the \$1200 covered 12 applications of persons going to Canada and that these applications had arisen in Zagreeb. I gather from the correspondence that both Vezina and Steigler were playing at the same game.... The correspondence I think shows pretty conclusively that the money fell into the hands of Vezina and Steigler but what proportion each got is not known.⁴⁰

Moreover, by November 1925, Stigeler had become associated with the Great West Life Assurance Company in Winnipeg,⁴¹ which had recently acquired fifty quarter sections of land in the Gladstone district and which was anxious to obtain suitable settlers from the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland to occupy it. Their initial plan was to settle families with a minimum capital of \$500, this money to be deposited with the Company and held in trust. The Company requested the assistance of the federal government and sent Stigeler to Ottawa to meet with government officials.⁴²

⁴⁰PAC, RG 76, Volume 267, file 224970, memorandum, Black to Egan, July 10, 1925.

⁴¹PAC, RG 76, Volume 267, file 244970, McQuaker to Egan, November 24, 1925.

⁴²PAC, RG 76, Volume 267, file 224970, Gelley to Jolliffe, November 27, 1925.

On December 2, 1925, Stigeler met with the assistant Deputy Minister, Black. It soon became evident that Stigeler was out of touch with the realities of farming in Western Canada when he asserted that a colonist could expect to receive from his first year's harvest a net income of \$3370! "I think the above statement" wrote Blair, "is a pretty fair indication of Mr. Stigeler's ability to paint the picture as it is. What a rush to Western Canada we would see if this program could be worked out by the average settler."⁴³ The government was willing to assist the Great West Life Assurance Company but not to negotiate with Stigeler. Indeed, on January 11, 1926, Blair notified Stigeler that the "proper course for the Great West Life Assurance Company is to list their land with the Canada Colonization Association in Winnipeg, as there is a possibility of colonists being secured that way."⁴⁴

In the meantime, Stigeler had not been idle. He had made contact with Mr. George Mills, M. L. A. for Edmonton, who was interested in settling fifty German-speaking families on land northwest of Edmonton.⁴⁵ When Mills wrote to the Minister

⁴³PAC, RG 76, Volume 267, file 224970, Blair to Dennis, December 29, 1925.

⁴⁴PAC, RG 76, Volume 267, file 224970, Blair to Stigeler, January 11, 1926.

⁴⁵PAC, RG 76, Volume 267, file 224970, Black to Mills, January 16, 1926; Jolliffe to Gelley, n. d.

of Immigration notifying him of his intentions, the reply from Ottawa discouraged him from employing Stigeler.

To begin with," Blair pointed out, "Stigeler has little or no standing with the Department. Last year he was associated with a man who was successful in putting across a crooked deal with a bunch of Central Europeans.... Stigeler is a type of man who talks big, but whose performance is likely to be restricted.⁴⁶

Nevertheless the Department would permit Stigeler, as an agent of the White-Star Dominion, to cooperate in bringing the families to Canada.⁴⁷ Mills agreed that Stigeler should receive no commission and requested permits for twenty-five Swiss-German families. If these were successfully settled, he would then proceed to attract twenty-five additional families.⁴⁸ The Department delivered the permits as requested to Mr. W. J. Black of the Canadian National Railways in Montréal, and assurances were given that the emigrants would be sent by way of the White-Star Dominion Line;⁴⁹ the first twenty-five Swiss-German families prepared to leave for the district on the first of April, 1926.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Ibid., January 16, 1926.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ PAC, RG 76, Volume 267, file 224970, Mills to Blair, January 18, 1926; Blue to Stewart, January 18, 1926.

⁴⁹ PAC, RG 76, Volume 267, file 224970, Mills to Blair, telegram, January 25, 1926.

⁵⁰ PAC, RG 76, Volume 267, file 224970, Mills to Stewart, February 15, 1926.

That same year in Saskatoon, on September 28 and 29, there was held a convention of the 'Local Colonization Boards' which had been organized to provide a more effective medium of communication for immigration services. According to Mr. McKay the C.P.R. Divisional Superintendent at Saskatoon, it evolved out of a "necessity for establishing the intimate contact between the people of Western Canada and the people of other lands, and for the purpose of enabling the residents of the various districts in Western Canada to intimate their preference in immigrants."⁵¹ In addition, the Boards were responsible for the welcoming and eventual settlement of the new arrivals. The convention had been called specifically to assess the current policies and to plan future programs.⁵² Before it drew to a close, the convention established a Central Board which was to meet quarterly in Saskatoon. This body would serve as a clearing house and link for the various local colonization societies. It was decided to publish a monthly

⁵¹ Saskatoon Phoenix, Thursday, September 30, 1926, p. 3.

⁵² PAC, RG 76, Volume 288, file 262212, Komor to Williams, n. d.

newspaper "to give particular attention to colonization work and to act as a further bond between the local boards."⁵³

The first issue of The Canadian Colonizer appeared in November 1926.⁵⁴

Among the local associations which affiliated with the Central Board was the Swiss Colonization Board. This Board was formed in Saskatoon less than a month after the Colonization Board Convention. Its administrative officers included Anton Bischofberger as its president, E. Conti as vice-president, Walther Fischer as secretary, and Carl Niderost Sr.⁵⁵ as colonization agent.⁵⁶ Members of the executive committee included Andreas Beusch of Saskatoon, S. Stadelmann of Englefield, and the Reverend J. Nicolet of Battleford.⁵⁷ The board, which was to be recognized as a semi-official body by the Swiss government had as its aims:

⁵³ See n. 51.

⁵⁴ H. F. Komor became honorary president of the Central Board and associate editor of the Canadian Colonizer. Previously he had worked as a special agent for the C.P.R. in Saskatoon and had himself been involved in questionable activities. See further correspondence, PAC, R 76, Volume 288, file 262212. There appears to have been only one issue of the Canadian Colonizer. The fate of the paper is not known.

⁵⁵ Carl Niderost jr., a prominent Saskatoon lawyer became president of the Central Board and later became mayor of Saskatoon. Personal correspondence, February 14, 1976.

⁵⁶ Saskatoon Phoenix, Wednesday, October 20, 1926, p. 3; PAC, R 76, Volume 288, file 262212, The Canadian Colonizer, Volume 1, No. 1 (November, 1926), p. 3.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

1. The establishment of Swiss farmers on Saskatchewan farms.
2. Supplying the farmers throughout the province with Swiss farm hands.
3. Instituting a propaganda campaign favorable to Canada through the medium of the press of Switzerland.⁵⁸

Pierre Cattin, Swiss Vice-Consul and Administrator in Winnipeg, saw in the organization a vehicle to ease the transition from the homeland to the adopted country, and to lessen the tensions that naturally developed.⁵⁹

III

The Swiss Colonization Association

Canadian immigration officials wondered at the seriousness of state-aided emigration movements from Switzerland, and were puzzled by an organization known only as the "Swiss Colonization Association". From April to August, 1923,⁶⁰ a group of about 19 men sponsored by the Swiss Colonization Association, some accompanied by their families emigrated to Canada.⁶¹ From Winnipeg, the majority fanned out throughout

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid. It is not known whether the Board succeeded or not.

⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that in 1923, Switzerland had just recently begun its state-aided programs.

⁶¹ This figure may be in error. It is based on the number of cases documented and investigated as recorded in the various immigration files.

the Prairies and British Columbia. Investigations between January 1926 and October 1928 into the background of these emigrants resulted in most cases, in their deportation.

A few examples will serve to illustrate the problem. The first and eventually the least notorious case to be investigated was that of Johann Spiess who had arrived in Canada with his family on July 15, 1923. Spiess later settled in St. Boniface instead of engaging in agricultural pursuits, soon fell deeply into debt and became a public charge on the municipality. A deportation order was issued, but A. Jolliffe, the Commissioner of Immigration insisted that he be given a chance to find employment, support his family and repay his debts.⁶²

Another case was that of Herman Rudolf Meier, who had arrived in Canada on May 7, 1923. In 1925, he had become a patient at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton, suffering from tuberculosis. After his release, he found only temporary employment at various places and finally became a public charge. On these grounds he was ordered deported but at his pre-deportation hearing held at Vancouver on November 22, 1926, he shed some light on the organisation that had paid his fare.

⁶²PAC, RG 76, Volume 625, file 951737, memorandum, Jolliffe, April 1, 1926; Jolliffe to Gelley, January 4, 1926.

Q. Did you pay your own passage to Canada?

A. No.

Q. Who payed your fare to Canada?

A. The City of Zurich paid all the boy's fares to come over here because we could not get work at home.

Q. Were there others came ou [sic] at the same time as you did?

A. Yes about sixty.⁶³

Q. That was the Swiss Colonization society?⁶⁴

A. Yes, it is no more now, they broke down.⁶⁴

Investigations of other cases indicated that many of the immigrants brought out by the association had criminal records in Switzerland. In several cases they had continued their life of crime in Canada.⁶⁵ A case in point was that of Jakob Lienhard,⁶⁶ who was convicted of theft in Calgary where he worked as a watchmaker.⁶⁷ Investigation of his criminal

⁶³It is not clear here whether the sixty persons mentioned included family members.

⁶⁴PAC, RG 76, Volume 675, file 951737, memorandum, Jolliffe, April 21, 1927.

⁶⁵In this connection, see PAC, RG 76, Volume 625, file 951737, Jolliffe to Consul General of Switzerland, April 25, 1927; Jolliffe to Consul General of Switzerland, October 17, 1927; Volume 293, file 267931, part 6, Jolliffe to Gelley, December 3, 1927.

⁶⁶PAC, RG 76, Volume 293, file 267931, part 5, Jolliffe to Consul General of Switzerland, July 13, 1927. Jakob Lienhard also went by the names of Jack or John Lienhard.

⁶⁷PAC, RG 76, Volume 625, file 951737, memorandum, Jolliffe, July 6, 1927.

record in Switzerland revealed convictions on twelve criminal charges including theft and fraud.⁶⁸ He had in fact emigrated to Canada one day after his release from a Swiss prison.⁶⁹ This Swiss Colonization Association it appeared trafficked in undesirable Swiss emigrants.

Further inquiries indicated that in the majority of cases the emigrant had come either from the city of Zurich, or had been imprisoned in that city. In one instance, a prison warden had provided funds to an inmate so that he might seek a better future in Canada;⁷⁰ in another case, a Swiss Immigration Aid Society⁷¹ was responsible for paying the fare;⁷² in

⁶⁸Jolliffe to Consul General of Switzerland, July 13, 1927, see n. 66.

⁶⁹Ibid. According to his file, Lienhard was eligible for release on July 23, 1923. On July 24, 1923 he received his passport!

⁷⁰PAC, RG 76, Volume 625, file 951737, memorandum, August 5, 1927.

⁷¹No definite information has been uncovered about this Society. It is probable, however, that it too operated from the city of Zurich.

⁷²PAC, RG 76, Volume 625, file 951737, memorandum, Jolliffe, April 12, 1927.

still other cases, the money was reputed to have come directly from the Swiss federal government.⁷³ In any event, the investigation confirmed that Canada was considered in some quarters to be a suitable dumping ground for undesirables and criminals.⁷⁴

IV

The Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railways

On a completely different level were the colonization efforts of the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Pacific Railways. Both these railway companies had an extensive network of agencies throughout Switzerland which enabled them to bring several hundred Swiss settlers to Western Canada.⁷⁵ Between 1923 and 1930, the C.P.R. and C.N.R. sponsored several projects designed to attract settlers to the Western Provinces; among them were the "1000 Continental Family Scheme" and the "200 Continental Family Scheme".

⁷³ PAC, R 76, Volume 625, file 951737, Jolliffe to Consul General of Switzerland, May 16, 1927.

⁷⁴ PAC, R 76, Volume 292, file 167931, part 2, Jolliffe to Kokatt, August 20, 1926. It is fair to say from the documentation available that in many cases the overwhelming factor which decided the desirability or undesirability of a given immigrant was his or her photograph. At times an immigrant just did not "appear" desirable.

⁷⁵ See for example the Annual Reports of the Canadian National Railway, PAC, R 30, D 39.

Although it is clear that Switzerland was one of the target countries,⁷⁶ it cannot be ascertained how many Swiss immigrants came to Canada as a result of these promotional efforts.

One project which did not succeed as well as had been hoped was the settlement of Swiss families at Invermere, British Columbia. At the centre of the project was the federal colonization representative at Invermere, Mr. Walther Fischer, who had communicated to Möhr in February 1928, his desire to form a Swiss colony in the Lake Windermere district.⁷⁷ Möhr seemed anxious to cooperate with him, but cautioned against engaging in independent propaganda in Switzerland:

... I would ask you very urgently to refer any persons to whom you may write, to the Federal Emigration Office, so that it may be clear at once that we are working together... I would advise that you make no propaganda at all in Switzerland, so that I might not be forced to proceed against you.⁷⁸

Möhr also recommended that the settlement should be founded by Swiss already settled in Canada and familiar with local conditions. When the settlement proved successful it would demonstrate "what Swiss settlers are able to achieve with the aid and under the protection of the C.P.R."⁷⁹

⁷⁶PAC, RG 76, Volume 253, file 193745, part.1, Dennis to Egan, February 20, 1925; Egan to Dennis, n. d.

⁷⁷Glenbow-Alberta Institute (hereafter cited as GAI), C. P. R. Colonization Papers, Box 87, file 724, Fischer to Möhr, March 22, 1928, (translation).

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

Earlier in the summer of 1927, Möhr had visited Western Canada at the invitation of both Railways and had engaged in negotiations with the Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruit Lands Company, Limited, an enterprise chaired by Colonel I. S. Dennis, the Chief Commissioner of Colonization and Immigration for the C.P.R. which owned land in the Invermere district.⁸⁰ As a result of these discussions the Company decided to make its lands available to Swiss immigrants.⁸¹ Walther Fischer was to manage the colony which would be governed by the Columbia Valley Colonization Board.⁸²

In the May 2, 1928 issue of Der Norwesten an article appeared outlining the advantages offered by the Invermere colony. Referring specifically to a pamphlet written by Fischer which had just been published about the Lake Windermere district, the article emphasized the "homey" nature of the region.

⁸⁰ Personal correspondence, February 13, 1976.

⁸¹ PAC, R3 30, D 39, Volume 5635, file 5200-1, Freer to McGowan, May 8, 1928.

⁸² GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 87, file 724, memorandum, Colley to Van Scoy, February 19, 1929. Although Möhr visited Canada in the summer of 1927, it was not until February 1928 that Fischer submitted an official proposal.

Was könnte sich also ein Schweizer besseres wünschen, als sich in dieser der alten Heimat gleichenden, Gegend mit ihrer, man möchte fast sagen schweizerischen Landwirthschaft niederzulassen und fern vor der Heimat doch in der Heimat zu sein? Wie wäre es, wenn man sagen könnte, ich gehe in die canadische Schweiz in die Ferien, wenn auch in weiter Ferne ein heimätlicher Jodel oder eines der Felner heimätlichen Lieder vom Vergesbang erkönen und am 1. August von hoher Warte das Wahrzeichen der Freiheit und Zusammengehörigkeit berunterleuchten würde?⁸³

Fischer's scheme met with the full approval of the C.P.R. which began bringing Swiss families to the Invermere colony.⁸⁴ It was felt that a few articles in Swiss newspapers might draw increased attention to the settlement, therefore James Colley, the Assistant Superintendent of Colonization for the C.P.R. asked Fischer to prepare an article himself and to solicit articles from Swiss settlers in British Columbia.⁸⁵ Fischer had his brother Fritz, who was the chief editor of the Schweizerische Milchzeitung, prepare suitable publicity.⁸⁶

⁸³ Der Norwesten, May 2, 1928, p. 5. (What could a Swiss want more than this area so similar to the old homeland with the same farming conditions as over there, and although far away from home, at the same time be at home? How would it be if one could say, I am going to spend my holidays in the Canadian Switzerland, when from the mountain top a familiar song greets us while on the first of August, from one of the high peaks the flaming sign of freedom greets us and reminds us of the fact that we all belong together.) Free translation.

⁸⁴ GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 87, file 724, telegram, Colley to Fischer, February 28, 1928; telegram, Colley to Fischer, March 21, 1928. There is no record of any answer to either telegram.

⁸⁵ GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 87, file 724, Colley to Fischer, February 4, 1929. Colley feared that because of Fischer's interests with the C.P.R., an article he might publish would be considered by Möhr as direct propaganda.

⁸⁶ GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 87, file 724, Fischer to Colley, February 14, 1929.

Despite Fischer's efforts to promote his colony, few Swiss settled at Invermere. This may have been because the area was poorly irrigated and therefore relatively unproductive,⁸⁷ and because Swiss settlers rarely had the necessary capital to invest in extensive irrigation systems.⁸⁸ The fate of the Colonization Board is not known. The Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruit Lands Company remained in existence until 1972⁸⁹ but what portion of its land was in fact settled by Swiss immigrants remains a mystery. Fischer left the employ of the Department of the Interior in 1929.

While the Canadian Pacific Railway was busy pursuing Swiss immigration schemes, the Canadian National Railway was equally engaged. Already several hundred Swiss had settled along its lines, and although most of the settlers appear to have come on an individual basis, some settlement plans on a grander scale had been advanced. In August 1928, Mr. M. Hammerschlag, a Swiss gentleman who had come to Manitoba in April of the same year, presented himself to the C.N.R. as

⁸⁷This view was shared by Möhr. BAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 87, file 724, memorandum, Colley to Van Scoy, May 18, 1929.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹The Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruit Lands Company, Limited went out of business in 1972. Personal correspondence February 13, 1976.

a spokesman for one hundred and twenty Swiss families anxious to settle in Canada. In gaining the necessary experience needed to report to them his findings, he had worked on several farms in Manitoba both at Warren and Fischer Branch.⁹⁰ Now he planned to visit the three other western provinces. Hammerschlag left for his western tour at the beginning of October stopping at the various C.N.R. offices along the way.⁹¹ Apparently, he became interested in the Okanagan Valley, and he wired to arrange a meeting with a Mr. Kirkwood associated with the C.N.R. Colonization office at Edmonton.⁹² The meeting which was to have taken place on November 5th, at Jasper never materialized, and from the evidence it seems that Hammerschlag simply disappeared from sight.⁹³

Another proposal was referred to the Winnipeg Office in the fall of 1929 by the C.N.R. agent at San Francisco, Mr. Gilkerson. There, a certain Mr. Leuenberger, the President of

⁹⁰PAC, R 30, D 39, Volume 5635, file 5200-1, memorandum, J. S. McGowan, August 10, 1928.

⁹¹PAC, R 30, D 39, Volume 5635, file 5200-1, Travelling schedule for Hammerschlag.

⁹²PAC, R 30, D 39, Volume 5635, file 5200-1, telegram, McGowan to McGuire, October 29, 1928; Volume 5649, file 9040-6, McGuire to Freer and McGowan, November 15, 1928.

⁹³Ibid., November 15, 1928.

a Swiss newspaper published in that city, had shown an interest in encouraging Swiss immigration into British Columbia. Gilkerson tried unsuccessfully to arrange a meeting between Leuenberger and either W. J. Black, the Director of the C.N.R. Department of Colonization or J. S. McGowan of the Winnipeg office.⁹⁴ Freer, the Superintendent of Land Settlement in Winnipeg, did, however, send to Leuenberger a brief resume of the advantages offered in Central British Columbia, and recommended a possible site for the establishment of a Swiss colony.⁹⁵ No other schemes were advanced.⁹⁶

V

The Ammeter Immigration

In April 1928, Fred Ammeter, a Swiss who had recently emigrated from Russia to France, arrived in Winnipeg to inspect lands in Western Canada with a view to settling his relatives

⁹⁴PAC, R 30, D 39, Volume 5635, file 5200-1, McNicholl to McGowan, August 27, 1929; Black to McGowan, September 9, 1929.

⁹⁵PAC, R 30, D 39, Volume 5635, file 5200-1, Freer to McNicholl, October 12, 1929.

⁹⁶Two agents appear to have been sent to Switzerland by the Canadian National Railway--H. Roetzinger of Carmel, Saskatchewan and Konrad Kretz of St. Catherine's, Ontario. In connection with these two see, PAC, R 30, D 39, Volume 5648, file 9040-5, Periodical Report, July 16, to July 31, Winnipeg, August 1, 1929, p. 2; Volume 5635, file 5200-1, memorandum Uhrh to Wardrop, September 11, 1930; McGowan to Black, September 13, 1920; McGowan to Kretz, September 17, 1930.

and friends currently living in the Caucasus. Ammeter purported to represent approximately 120 Swiss farmers and dairymen who were disillusioned with conditions in their homeland. "Due to the Bolshevist movement in Russia" G. H. Parker, the C.P.R. Inspector at Winnipeg noted, "he Fred Ammeter⁷ has suffered severe losses and he and his relatives and friends have decided to emigrate to some other country...." Ammeter had been directed to investigate opportunities for settlement in Alberta and British Columbia before returning to Europe.⁹⁷

Ammeter was accompanied by P. H. Thielman and W. R. Dick, land inspectors in Alberta. They visited the Swiss settlement of Stettler,⁹⁸ where they interviewed two established Swiss settlers and gained information concerning average crop yields and weather conditions. At Lacombe they visited the Dominion Experimental Station. Ammeter had operated several cheese factories in the Caucasus along with 700 or 800 Zimmenthaler cattle. He believed that Alberta was suitable for the raising of Zimmenthalers and he expected to establish a cheese factory on a similar scale.⁹⁹

⁹⁷GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, Parker to Dick, April 18, 1928; Parker to Dick, April 20, 1928. Fred Ammeter was a personal friend of Peter Veregin Jr. of Brilliant, British Columbia.

⁹⁸The town of Stettler was founded by Carl Stettler in 1905.

⁹⁹GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, memorandum, Thielman to Dick, May 14, 1928.

On or about October 31, Jacob Tinner, a son-in-law of Fred Ammeter, arrived in Winnipeg accompanied by his wife. By November the couple were in Calgary¹⁰⁰ and they were immediately placed by an agent¹⁰¹ with a Mr. C. A. Phillips of Carseland.¹⁰² Ammeter who was now in France, would be kept informed of their progress and so also of the prospects for intending immigrants.

Tinner was not satisfied that he would be able to purchase his own dairy farm; furthermore he deplored the lack of opportunity to learn English.¹⁰³ T. O. F. Herzer, the manager of the Canada Colonization Association in Winnipeg, with whom Tinner was in constant correspondence, tried to dissuade him from leaving his employ. But Tinner was dissatisfied and in an interview with Thielman he discussed his situation as well as the proposed emigration of his countrymen, already in the process of selling their possessions in Russia.¹⁰⁴ Various plans for the bloc settlement of the group

¹⁰⁰ GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, telegram, Parker to Herzer, October 31, 1928; telegram, Herzer to Parker, November 5, 1928.

¹⁰¹ The agent was a Mr. Riordon. GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, memorandum, Parker to Herzer, November 20, 1928.

¹⁰² Ibid. Phillips owned two and a half sections of land and promised to pay Tinner forty dollars per month with board.

¹⁰³ GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, Tinner to Herzer, December 23, 1928 (translation).

¹⁰⁴ Memorandum, Parker to Herzer, November 20, 1928, see n. 101.

consisting of ten brothers and their respective families were discussed¹⁰⁵ including the Vancouver area and unimproved brushlands belonging to the C.P.R. in the northern Prairies. Thielman assured him in this connection that "the Canadian Colonization Association was making at present a survey for vacant farm houses."¹⁰⁶

Tinner now actively pursued the interests of his relatives in Europe. In March 1929, he visited Kamloops and Vancouver and reported to his father-in-law,

Ich war also letzte Woche, 7. Maerz in B.C..... Das Land, das Zukaufen waere liegt dem Flusse entlant, es scheint gutes Land zu sein es muss aber bewaessert werden, die Bewaesserungslagen sind sehr gut ausgebaut und ist gennend Wasser vorhanden. Der untere Teil des Landes is gepachtet von Chinese welche Tomaten, Melonen, Gurken, Kartoffeln, Mais, etc. pflanzen, andere grosse Parzellen sind mit Apfelbaeumen, bepflanz, wie mir Mister Parker mittel soll es hier gewoehnlich zehn Tage frueher reif sein als in Okanagan Tal.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵This group represented ten married brothers with a few married children. GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, memorandum, Thielman to Parker, January 31, 1929.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, Tinner to Fred Ammeter, March 11, 1929. (Last week, the 7th of March I was in B.C.... The land which would be for sale lies along the river. It appears to be good land but has to be irrigated. The irrigation works are of a proper construction, and there is sufficient water. The lower part of the land is leased to Chinese who plant tomatoes, melons, cucumbers, potatoes, corn etc. On other big parcels are apple trees. As Mr. Parker tells me, apples ripen here ten days earlier than in the Okanagan valley.) Free translation.

Another relative, Alfred Ammeter, who had recently moved to Deloraine (Manitoba) communicated with Tinner and he soon joined the latter at Calgary in anticipation of forming a bloc family settlement.¹⁰⁸

Meanwhile the Ammeter clan in Soviet Russia, which had suffered severe financial setbacks during the Bolshevik revolution, found itself faced once again with financial ruin. After having rebuilt their industries, the Ammeters found that when it came time to sell their possessions in preparation for their voyage to Canada, the Soviet government confiscated their lands as well as the profits of their cheese factory. They were permitted to sell their equipment and livestock but their passage fare from Tiflis to Winnipeg reduced their net capital to about \$2200.¹⁰⁹ On July 26th they docked at Quebec, and by July 28th they had arrived in Winnipeg.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, Alfred Ammeter to Tinner, March 22, 1929. Mohr had hoped to settle the Ammeter party in the Invermere district but as has been seen, the irrigation problems were virtually insurmountable for settlers with little capital. Memorandum, Colley to Van Scoy, May 18, 1929, see n. 67.

¹⁰⁹ On their way to Canada, the party stopped briefly at Hamburg where they were assured by the Swiss Consul that the travel expenses from Tiflis to Hamburg would be reimbursed by the Swiss government should they be able to find suitable accommodation in Canada.

¹¹⁰ GAI, BN C2123, file 2479, memorandum, July 29, 1929.

The problems of finding a suitable location for the families now were magnified. Firstly, the financial situation was gloomy. Not being able to obtain a loan, the possibility that the Ammeter party would now be forced to divide and settle independently loomed greater. Herzer stated quite emphatically that at the present time, there was no farm available in the Province of Alberta which could suitably accommodate the entire party. Should however, the money which had been promised by the Swiss government be forthcoming,¹¹¹ Herzer felt confident that each family, so enriched by a thousand dollars, would be able to find suitable accommodation for a certain period of time. As for the moment, negotiations with the Swiss Consulate on the matter, and the search for a suitable farm would continue.¹¹²

Very much involved with the Ammeter party was the Swiss Consulate in Montreal, and in a more direct role the Vice-Consulate in Winnipeg. The Consul General in Montreal asked that in order to suitably inspect areas of possible settlement, a committee to be composed of the heads of three of the families,

¹¹¹See n. 109.

¹¹²See n. 110.

should proceed to British Columbia,¹¹³ and Alberta.¹¹⁴ Now a search for land began in earnest. On August 9th, Dick left Calgary to inspect the Laird farm near Edmonton.¹¹⁵ A few days later, Parker arrived at Pincher Creek, Alberta to appraise a more interesting prospect, the Pelletier farm.¹¹⁶ On August 10, five men from the Ammeter party left Winnipeg, two were bound for Brooks and the three remaining destined for Calgary. The next day, Dick wired to have ten more men sent to Calgary where employment could be found for them;¹¹⁷ they

¹¹³The farms inspected by the committee aside from the Pelletier farm were: the P. Burns farm located approximately five miles from Calgary; the Creston farm owned by the British Columbia government; C.P.R. brush land north of Pigeon Lake, Alberta; the Bennett farm approximately fourteen miles from Millett, Alberta; the Laird farm, located seventeen miles southeast of Camrose, Alberta. GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, memorandum, Thielman, August 17, 1929.

¹¹⁴GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, telegram, to Dick, August 7, 1929.

¹¹⁵GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, telegram, Dick to Buchanan, August 9, 1929.

¹¹⁶GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, telegram, Dick to Buchanan, August 9, 1929.

¹¹⁷GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, telegram, Dick to Duncan, August 10, 1929; telegram, Dick to Duncan, August 11, 1929.

left Winnipeg on August 13th and by August 16th, Dick reported that all fifteen had found employment near Pincher Creek.¹¹⁸

Attention now focused on the Pelletier farm. Accompanied by Mr. Dick and Thielman, the Ammeter party closely inspected the farm and was favourably impressed by its findings. The land, mostly under cultivation, was well situated and had under Pelletier's guidance prospered well. Dick promptly entered into negotiations with the owner and after some bargaining, the price per acre was lowered to \$43.00 which included all the equipment on the farm.¹¹⁹ Final decisions still had to be made by the committee, and it returned the following Monday to Winnipeg. The strength and breadth of the arguments presented is not known but the resultant action taken proved to be against settling in Alberta. As Dick wrote later,

... when the Ameter [sic] group returned to Manitoba they all recommended a certain farm at Starbuck, Manitoba and this was put to the Swiss Consulate General at Montreal who approved of their choice and the group have now purchased and are in possession of this property at Starbuck.

¹¹⁸ GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, telegram, Duncan to Dick, August 13, 1929; telegram, Dick to Duncan, August 16, 1929. It is interesting to note that arrangements were being made to send the female members of the party to Calgary where places in a domestic capacity had been found for them. The Swiss Consul in Winnipeg, however, refused to let them go until some permanent settlement had been found. See Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, telegram, Dick to Duncan, August 9, 1929; Herzer to Duncan, August 13, 1929.

¹¹⁹ GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, memorandum, August 19, 1929.

I understand that the PeFliter ^[sic] farm, was second choice, but as the Manitoba land was priced at only \$25.00 per acre the deal was made there.¹²⁰

Not all of the Ammeter families had come directly to Canada. A second group consisting of 29 people--four families-- now had shown an interest in leaving Switzerland and joining their relatives in Starbuck. Opposition to their settlement in Manitoba had been raised by the Manitoba government¹²¹ and though negotiations between the C.P.R., the Swiss Consulate in Montreal and the Manitoba government had been under way for some time no settlement had been arrived at.¹²² As a result the C.P.R. approached the provincial government of British Columbia in an effort to find suitable accommodations. The provincial government responded favourably to the request. No objection to the settlement of the Swiss families was given "provided reasonable assurance is given that the families will be placed on land and will follow agriculture, thereby not adding to the unemployment situation."¹²³ As the exact

¹²⁰ GAI, C.P.R. Colonization Papers, Box 120, file 1136, "A" file, Dick to Tinner, September 12, 1929.

¹²¹ Because of the high unemployment in the province, the Manitoba government was hesitant to allow the remaining four families to settle in the province.

¹²² GAI, BN C21E, file 2479, memorandum, Duncan to McConnell, October 21, 1920.

¹²³ GAI, BN C21E, file 2479, Van Scoy to Greminger, September 29, 1930.

location of the areas available for settlement was not clear, the Swiss Consul recommended that the families remain in Switzerland until the spring of 1931.¹²⁴ The suggestion suited the purposes of the C.P.R. and they immediately asked the inspector for the Canada Colonization Association in Vancouver, R. B. McConnell to submit various proposals for the consideration of the Swiss party.¹²⁵ In this frame, an attractive land deal was being negotiated with Mr. Blake Wilson of the Blakeburn Ranch near Coquitlam,¹²⁶ but for reasons not specified, the Ammeter party announced that it had chosen to remain in Switzerland, and not to emigrate in the spring.¹²⁷

The war years can be seen as having had a direct influence in the emergence of state-aided emigration. Economically, Switzerland suffered greatly during the war, and this was manifested in the post-war period. Where as in the

¹²⁴ Ibid!

¹²⁵ See for example, GAI, BN C2123, file 2479, memorandum, McConnell to Duncan, October 27, 1930, memorandum Duncan to McConnell, November 17, 1930.

¹²⁶ GAI, BN C2123, file 2479, memorandum, McConnell to Dennis, December 30, 1930.

¹²⁷ GAI, BN C2123, file 2479, memorandum, Duncan to McConnell, January 21, 1931.

past the Swiss government refused to commit itself to immigration projects in Canada and abroad, and censored to a large extent all foreign immigration propaganda, it became clear in the 1920s that a new policy had been adopted. A recession in the economy, and a greater flow of workers from the countryside into the cities necessitated a different approach towards emigration.

Much of the credit for shaping this new formula belongs to J. Möhr, the president of the powerful Emigration Bureau. His interest in emigration matters no doubt had a significant impact on the sizeable increase of Swiss emigration to Canada. Canada benefited from this state-aided emigration but as has been seen, in some cases, Swiss authorities were more concerned about relieving the unemployment situation than about the quality of emigrants they encouraged abroad.

Chapter V: The Swiss Guides, a romantic experiment in
colonization.

In 1899 the first Swiss alpine guides commissioned by the Canadian Pacific Railway to lead climbing parties in the Canadian Rockies arrived in Canada. For many years the spectacular Rockies had remained inaccessible to all but the few hardy enough to conquer its rugged slopes. The railway, however, which penetrated this natural barrier brought a new impetus into the region and by the late 1880s and early 1890s new hotels and dining halls were built along the route. While towns such as Revelstoke, Donald, and Field benefited from the boom, the mountainous regions had been left largely ignored and unexplored. Although Canadians lacked the expertise to tackle the rocky cliffs there were adventurous foreign climbers who could be attracted to the region. The mountainous topography had enormous potential and it was in this light that the C.P.R. managers designed a plan to 'import' qualified Swiss guides to lead climbing parties and to explore a new frontier.

Between 1899 and 1912, more than twenty guides were employed for varying periods of time in the Canadian "Alps".

Field,¹ Glacier² and Laggan³ were the most common starting points and each station had its resident guides, packers and outfitters. The popularity of the Swiss guides grew steadily and it was not long before the C.P.R. managers embarked upon a more ambitious project--the village of Edelweiss. This final chapter briefly examines the arrival of the early Swiss guides, the 'creation' of the Swiss village and the reasons that led to its inevitable failure.

¹ Along the tracks at various intervals, dining halls were built by the C.P.R. to accommodate passengers. Dining cars on westbound trains were detached at Calgary because the steep climbs and angled grades beyond that point made them an expendable luxury. One such stop was Field, where the Mount Stephen House was built. This station, which originally housed only a restaurant but later expanded to include hotel accommodation, was closed permanently in 1917 or 1918.

² Glacier was another stop along the line. The Glacier House Chalet first opened in January, 1887 and closed its doors in 1916. That year, the Connaught Tunnel was completed re-directing the main line away from the hotel. Writes Chris Schiesser in the Golden Valley View-Point, "Anyone camping in the beautiful campground at Glacier need only walk a few hundred yards past the Alpine Club Hut to the site of a once flourishing C.P.R. Hotel. Amid the shrubs and trees may be found a crumbling concrete basement and a few supporting pillars that are all that remain of one of the most picturesque hostelries in the west." (Oct. 1966)

³ Laggan, the Lake Louise Station, is the only one to have survived with the erection of the modern C.P.R. hotel. The first structure was destroyed by fire, and a second one was built before it too was replaced by the Chateau. Professor Fay notes:

"It is interesting to compare the Chalet of 1895 with the grandiose Chateau of the present day; still more to have watched its development. In its initial stage the little structure--a single storey with a hip roof--contained in all only eight rooms including the principal one, whose plate glass windows looked out on Mt. Victoria, not as yet named, and the changeful lake. It served as office, dining room, drawing room and even bar,..." "Old Times in the Canadian Alps," Canadian Alpine Journal, (1921-1922), p. 95.

I

Alpinism emerged in the nineteenth century as one of the more prestigious sports. National alpine clubs could be found in various parts of the world and local mountaineer's clubs and associations numbered in the hundreds. In the mid-nineteenth century alpinism enjoyed its Golden Age. Many of the more treacherous and elusive peaks of Europe and South America, such as Ecuador's Chimborazo and the Swiss Matterhorn, fell to the weather-beaten climber and his trusty pick-axe. By the 1880s few peaks in Europe remained unscaled and alpinism gradually slipped into its Silver Age. New frontiers within reach were becoming scarce and the opening up of the Canadian Rockies brought new life to the sport.

Private parties sponsored by national and local alpine clubs in Britain, the United States and to a lesser extent, Switzerland, were among the first to explore the various peaks in the Selkirk range. Sponsorship was essential for any major expedition because few individuals could afford the tremendous expense of travel, guides and equipment. Virtually all of these early expeditions in the Canadian Rockies were guideless and climbers such as Professor Charles E. Fay, founder of the Boston-based Appalachian Club, and Professor Norman Collie of the British Alpine Club could only marvel at the absence of serious accidents during such hazardous excursions.

In the summer of 1897, a climbing party headed by Professor Fay arrived in Canada. Fay had first come to Canada in 1894 and repeated his visits in 1895 and 1896. Accompanying him were Norman Collie and H. B. Dixon, members of the British Alpine Club, and A. Michael, H. C. Parker, the Rev. C. L. Noyes and J. R. Vanderlip all from the United States. Also in attendance was the Swiss guide, Pëter Sarbach of St. Niklaus. Sarbach, now well into his fifties, had climbed with Collie in Switzerland and joined him now on this special expedition. His trip to Canada signalled the first visit to the Rockies by a professional Swiss guide.⁴

This expedition had a special purpose for Professor Fay. A year earlier, Fay and three other climbers attempted to scale the icy face of Mount Lefroy. Phillip Abbot, an American member of the party and an experienced climber led the attack. After making their way through the "Death Trap"--a deep gully made infamous by frequent rock falls--and on to the pass leading to Lefroy,⁵ they soon confronted a difficult rock face with a 'chimney' that appeared to lead to the top.

⁴Accounts of this initial visit by Pëter Sarbach are numerous. A vivid recording of events is given by Professor Fay in Munsey's Magazine in an article entitled "Alpine Climbing in America" Vol. 24, 6 (March, 1901), pp. 809-822. Tufts University Collection. Another important source is William G. Taylor, The Snows of Yesteryear, J. Norman Collie, Mountaineer, Toronto: Holt Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1973, pp. 86-96.

⁵The pass was named "Abbot's Pass" in honour of the deceased climber.

Confident of their success the four unroped and Abbot ascended alone. Shortly afterwards he fell past his fellow climbers to his death nine hundred feet below.⁶ Stung by the vengeance of the mountain, Fay was determined to return with the strongest party he could muster.

After a few preliminary scrambles the outfit assembled at the base of Mount Lefroy. The date chosen was August 3, the anniversary of Abbot's death. Once more they proceeded through the "Death Trap" and onto the pass which led to the familiar rock face.

Their route to the summit of Lefroy followed that of the previous year. The steep slope was divided into three sections by two bands of rotten limestone ledges. Fortunately the snow was in good condition; firm enough to kick steps in, but not so hard as to require cutting. The real difficulty and danger lay above the second band of rocks where they were soon confronted by the cliff which Abbot had tried to scale. This they soon avoided by kicking a ladder of snow steps up a gully between the rock and the utterly exposed ice face on which the snow no longer lay. A snow arête led upwards from the top of the cliff to the summit cornice, and at 11 a.m. they reached the highest point of Mount Lefroy.⁷

Two days later the party celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee with an initial climb of Mount Victoria.⁸

⁶Again there are numerous accounts of this tragedy but see, for instance, a detailed account of the climb in, Rev. James Outram, In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905, and The Snows of Yesteryear, see n. 4.

⁷The Snows of Yesteryear, p. 91, n. 4.

⁸Ibid.

II

Peter Sarbach's visit to Canada had been the result of a private expedition entertained by prominent climbers of the day. In 1899 the Canadian Pacific Railway, anxious to promote climbing in the area, entered into contract with two professional Swiss guides to spend the summer months in Canada and lead climbing expeditions in the Selkirks. The first two guides to come under the C.P.R. arrangement were Edward Feuz Sr. and Christian Häsler Sr., both of Interlaken. Initially, both Feuz and Häsler were stationed at Glacier House, located at the foot of the majestic Illecilwaet Glacier; the following year, however, Häsler, was transferred to Field, a small town nesting at the foot of Mount Stephen.

Tourism was not the only purpose for which guides were employed. In 1901, the C.P.R. engaged Edward Whymper, the first man to reach the summit of the Matterhorn, to come to Canada and explore the Yoho Valley, located north of Field. Whymper brought with him two of the finest guides in Europe --Christian Klucker and Joseph Pollinger--as well as two less known but equally capable guides--Joseph Bossonney and Christian Kaufmann.⁹ Norman Collie, who had made previous plans to visit

⁹Christian Kaufmann was the only one of the four that returned to Canada as an Alpine guide. See, Major F. V. Longstaff, "The Story of the Swiss Guides in Canada," Canadian Alpine Journal, Vol. 28 (1943), pp. 190-191.

the Lofoten Islands in Norway that year, denounced the expedition as nothing short of professional commercialism.

He wrote to C. S. Thomson:

I doubt whether you have heard that the great Whymper is about to attack the Rockies during 1901-2-3. He has got the two finest Swiss guides, Klucker and Pollinger, and two others and will go to Banff and then polish off all the peaks. I am dreadfully sorry for it will all be done for advertisement. Why the devil he couldn't leave them alone I don't know. He will simply go and gobble up the whole lot.

As a hunting ground for amateurs the country was big enough and to spare, but when a professional team lets itself loose--well all I can say is 'damn' the man! I certainly can't get over there next summer but if I could I would try my level best to spoil some of his game for him.

Why I am so mad about it is that it is not done for sport at all or because Whymper has any real liking for the hills. From the beginning it is dollars and I only wish the Appalachian Club, who pioneered all the climbing there would go there in force next summer.¹⁰

Collie had little cause to worry. Whymper was already at an advanced age when he arrived in Canada and could not participate in any major climbs.¹¹ Instead he delegated this privilege to the Rev. James Outram of the British Alpine Club. To the dismay of the guides, Whymper occupied his time and theirs in hiking trips, cutting trails, and exploratory work of a minor nature. The guides resented being obliged to carry out work usually left to the packers and porters and this

¹⁰ The Snows of Yesteryear, p. 117, see n. 4.

¹¹ Whymper was sixty-one years old when he first came to Canada in 1901.

resulted in many personal clashes between the senior guide, Christian Klucker, and the eccentric Whymper.¹² No formal report was filed by Whymper that year nor during the following two years. He returned to Canada as an honorary guest of the newly founded Canadian Alpine Club¹³ in 1909 and died two years later at Chamonix.¹⁴

After 1901 several guides came to Canada for varying lengths of time. The Feuz brothers, Ernest and Edward Jr. came out regularly while others such as Moritz Inderbinnen came out for a few seasons only. The popularity and brilliance of the guides has been well documented in the annals of the

¹² There are many interesting accounts of the conflict in personality that existed between Whymper and Klucker. These are carefully, if somewhat biasedly, recorded in Whymper's diary. His entry of June 16, 1901, notes for example:

"When walking home to the Hotel Banff, apparently all on good terms with each other, Klucker suddenly burst out in a violent harangue, which was illogical and at times incoherent; from which it appeared that he and the others considered themselves very much agrieved [sic] at various things. He used the word "chicanerie" several times. After we had our dinners, I invited them into the depot to state their grievances in a calmer manner. It appeared that it was a very great grievance to be taken out fishing. They were "guides" not porters, and had not agreed to do that description of work [sic]." Whymper Diaries, Copy in the Archives of the Canadian Rockies.

¹³ The Canadian Alpine Club was founded in 1907 by Sir Sandford Fleming.

¹⁴ Arnold Lunn, A Century of Mountaineering, 1857-1957, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957, p. 61.

Canadian Alpine Club and need not be retold here. Suffice it to say that in large part it was their popular appeal that encouraged the C.P.R. to further expand the project and embark on the construction of the Swiss village of Edelweiss.

III

Bringing the Swiss guides each year from Switzerland and returning them at the end of the climbing season became a costly undertaking for the C.P.R. As early as 1909, R. A. W. Kerr, the C.P.R. Passenger Manager proposed to Colonel Dennis the Company's President, that the construction of a Swiss village might well be an aesthetic as well as a beneficial project to consider providing both a tourist attraction and a central location for the Swiss guides.

For the past three or four years I [Kerr] have been working on an idea for establishing a colony, or Swiss village, at some point in the mountains - say not farther west than Revelstoke, or in the Columbia Valley on the main line, if a suitable location could be obtained, and I have been in correspondence with Mr. Archer Baker on this subject and he thinks that with proper inducements, we could get a colony of guides to come over, and can find a proper location, my idea being somewhere on the slope of a hill, with a southern aspect, in close sight of the main line, to construct a sufficient number of Alpine cottages built after the plan of the little Swiss cottages in the Alps, with a sufficient amount of ground around each cottage where they could grow vegetables, flowers, and keep chickens, goats, etc.,--in other words, live just as they live in Switzerland.

Such a village would form a good advertisement and would do away with the expenses of bringing these guides out annually and returning them to their homes.¹⁵

¹⁵Glenbow-Alberta Institute, BN C 2123 F2342, Kerr to Dennis, October 18, 1909.

He was certain that winter employment could be found without too much trouble, and concluded "that a suitable name for the village would be 'Edelweiss'".¹⁶

The suggestion excited the interest of the C.P.R. managers and a search for a convenient location was ordered. The site selected would have to meet certain specifications. Apart from being situated on the main line of the C.P.R., the area would also have to have a sufficiently long growing season to permit vegetable gardening and be appropriately located so as to provide employment for the guides during the long off-season. B. G. Hamilton of the Calgary office, who had been sent to inspect possible locations for the village, recommended that Golden be selected as the site for its construction.¹⁷ The town of Golden was suitably located within reasonable distance from Field and Laggan and afforded easy access to the Columbia ice field and its surrounding peaks. Furthermore, the "property to the north of the station [Golden] has a southern slope, and any village established there could be easily seen from the train, which generally pass through there in daylight."¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ GAI, BN V 2123 F2342, Hamilton to Dennis, December 17, 1909; Dennis to Hamilton; December 18, 1909; Hamilton to Dennis, December 21, 1909..

¹⁸ Hamilton to Dennis, December 17, 1909, see n. 17.

On January 27, 1910, Hamilton visited Golden and consulted with the town barrister, Mr. A. N. Pinkman. Pinkman proposed several lots which were for sale, but drew particular attention to a quarter-section owned by a Mr. Sammers. "His land lies to the north of the right-of-way and immediately adjoins the Western mile-board, being the southwest quarter of Section 24, Township 27 Range 22, West of the Fourth Meridian."¹⁹ The land could be properly irrigated and more than half of the acreage formed a gentle slope which could easily be seen from the station.

About 60 acres of the entire area lies comparatively flat, and the other 100 acres is made up by a hill side with a southern aspect that it would be possible to cultivate. The greater portion of the flat has been under cultivation for some time and seems to have a good growing capacity.... What is known as the Hospital Creek crosses the Southern end of the whole quarter, and by proper damming I think there could be sufficient water in it to supply all that is required for irrigation purposes.²⁰

The extent of the negotiations, and the amount paid for the quarter-section is not documented but it is known that the C.P.R. was successful in its bid to buy the Sammer's property.²¹

¹⁹ 3 AI, BN C 2123 F2342, Hamilton to Dennis, January 29, 1910.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The price asked for by Mr. Sammers was \$4,500 but Hamilton valued the land at only \$3,500. Ibid.

The initial plan of the village consisted of half a dozen six-room chalets picturesquely situated at the crest of the hill.²² At the base of the property, the C.P.R. planned to build ready-made farms which would then be sold to eligible buyers.²³ Actual construction of the chalets, based on drawings prepared by James Hart of Calgary, commenced in 1911.²⁴ Although no photographs of the village have been obtained, written accounts bring into question the quality and appearance of the chalets.²⁵ Francis Caulfeild for example, wrote to Sir Thomas Shaughnessy Honorary Chairman of the C.P.R.,

I venture to make a few comments on the Swiss village at Golden, one of the spirited enterprises of the Canadian Pacific Railway which does not seem so happily designed as most of the others. In the first place the houses differ totally from the Swiss chalet, being completely unlike in size pitch and construction, to say nothing of its being painted red: ~~but~~ the feature which must, I think, jar most on lovers of Switzerland is that the houses are set in rows at even distances and all facing the same way [sic], which I fancy to the liberty-loving Switzer

²²GAI, BN C 212 F2345, Smith to Hargadon, December 9, 1924.

²³Ibid.

²⁴GAI, BN C 12E F2345, Hargadon to Smith, December 5, 1924.

²⁵A sketch of the proposed village was made by Charles Sheldon for the Illustrated London News (Supplement, February 18, 1911). Writes B. S. Smith, "This drawing, ... was of course an imaginary picture as the buildings had not been erected, but the artist had been furnished with a copy of the plans and looked over the site and the drawing gives a fair idea of the general appearance of the village, although in reality the buildings are not so close together as shown nor does each stand out on the summit of an isolate piece of rock to the extent suggested in this picture." Smith to Hargadon, December 9, 1924, see n. 22.

must be inendurable.... It would not be a great matter to rebuild a dozen cottages which are looked on as typical specimens of the Company's work and do not do it credit.²⁶

F. W. Grandall, an inspector with the Calgary office commented:

* The houses are none too warm, as the open stair ways cause the heat to go above, and some of them have curtains hung in the opening to prevent this. The fire places afford but little heat, and Edouard (Feuz) has closed his, made an opening in the chimney and installed a stove.²⁷

The village was scheduled to be completed by the spring of 1912 but when the guides arrived construction had not yet been terminated.²⁸ Twelve guides came to Canada with their families that year with the intent of finding new homes in the Swiss village.²⁹ Documentation, however, is sketchy and conflicting on the question of how many guides actually took up accommodations in the village.³⁰ Available sources confirm that four guides--Edward Jr. and Ernest Feuz, Christian Häslar and Rudolph Aemmer--each occupied a chalet with their families.

²⁶ GAI, BN C 212 F2344, Caulfield to Shaughnessy, August 27, 1913.

²⁷ GAI, BN C 212 F2344, Grandall to Hart, November 29, 1912.

²⁸ "The Story of the Swiss Guides in Canada," p. 190, see n. 9; George Stephens, "Memories of a Guide," Canadian Alpine Journal, Vol. 46, p. 104.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Certain sources such as Longstaff's account claims in one instance that the twelve guides moved into the Village with their families. In another section of the same article, however, he acknowledges the existence of only six chalets. The existence of only six chalets is also supported by primary sources. There is, however, no evidence that the chalet housed more than one family at any one time.

Edward Feuz Sr. refused to move to Edelweiss and opted instead to return to Switzerland where he provided an important liaison in the selection of future guides.³¹ The youngest Feuz brother, Walter, presumably moved in with one of his brothers, but did not take up guiding until 1921.³²

The following year, one of the remaining two chalets was claimed by Christian Yorimann.³³ Originally, this cottage was occupied by Walter Schaufelberger, recently engaged by the C.P.R. as an alpine guide. Schaufelberger, however, met with the united opposition of the other guides because he refused to consider Edelweiss his permanent home. Edward Feuz Jr., the senior guide, wrote to James Hart of the Calgary office:

A few weeks ago, Mr. Reed sent up a Guide from Montreal to Glacier House. I was called up to Glacier, to speak to him. That man won't agree to get married and settle down here. He intends to stay here only for the summer and go back to Switzerland in the fall. So we are all against him. I had a letter from Glacier, that he went without mentioning a word... up on Sir Donald. He was not on duty when they called for him. A proper guide does not do such a foolish thing. His name is Schaufelberger.

³¹ It was, for example, Edward Feuz Sr. who recommended Christian Yorimann as a replacement for Schaufelberger.

³² "The Story of the Swiss Guides in Canada," p. 191, see n. 9.

³³ GAI, BN C 2125, F2344, Grandall to Hart, July 9, 1913.

Kindly take up that matter with Mr. Reed and discharge him.

We engaged Christ. Jorimann, and he is going to settle down here with us. So we will be five guides, and that will be sufficient for this season.³⁴

Hart sympathized with the delicate harmony the guides were trying to preserve and approved of the replacement.³⁵

IV

To accommodate the new circumstances, a different contract was prepared for the guides. According to the new agreement, each guide was committed to a five year term during which he agreed to reside in the village. After the first year of residence, he was required to pay rent at the rate of ten dollars a month and an additional reduction of ten dollars a month to repay the C.P.R. for livestock which had been provided. In return, the Company would provide free transportation from Switzerland for the guide and his family to the Swiss village, a suitable dwelling and one acre of farmland. Furthermore, the Company assured each immigrant employment as a guide during the tourist season and, more

³⁴ GAI, BN C 212; F2344, Feuz to Hart, July 7, 1913.

³⁵ GAI, BN C 212; F2344, Hart to Reed, July 11, 1913. Schaufelberger worked during the summers of 1913 and 1914 with the Canadian Alpine Club; in 1913 at the Cathedral Mt. Camp, and in 1914 at the Club House at Banff and later at the Upper Yoho Camp. In 1915, he was killed while participating in a Bernina ski-tour.

importantly, "the Company undertakes to provide the Guide with employment from the First day of October to the Thirtieth day of April, at the wages then current and usual to the work at which he is employed."³⁶ Nowhere in the contract was there a guarantee, however, that the work would be in or around the village of Edelweiss.

Problems related to this omission in the contract began to surface in the winter of 1912. After the climbing season had ended in late September, the guides were kept busy with caretaking duties as well as repairing irrigation ditches and a firewall around the Swiss village. When winter approached, they were offered snow-shovelling jobs at Banff and Glacier.³⁷ The prospect of being sent away from home to work during the winter did not meet with a joyous reception. Edward Feuz Jr., the senior guide, echoed the general feeling when he wrote to Hart: "The Guides won't agree, to go away for the winter;... They are away all summer... We have not brought out the families, to leave them allone [sic] all the year round; in this case we could have left them in Switzerland."³⁸

³⁶ GAI, BN C 212 F2342, Walker to Hart, August 22, 1911, including a copy of the revised contract.

³⁷ Grandall to Hart, November 29, 1912, see n. 26.

³⁸ GAI, BN C 212 F2344, Feuz to Hart, December 3, 1912.

Hart, however, could offer little consolation. Work in nearby Golden, he claimed, was not available and unless the guides agreed to go elsewhere, they would be without steady employment.³⁹

Dissatisfied with Hart's "excuses", the guides countered with a proposal to construct ice caves in the spring and during the winter to build huts in a "knock-down, ready to carry" fashion to be erected later along the many trails leading away from the various resort hotels.⁴⁰ Hart considered the proposal for pre-fabricated shelters a sound one, and although it was much discussed there is no evidence that anything concrete resulted.⁴¹

The problem of unemployment quickly developed into one of financial survival.

In Summer we are engaged for four months. Our wages are \$120 per month. We have to pay Rent \$120. for the Chalet. It is an impossibility to keep a family on such little money all the year round. The Living is very high here in Golden.

We signed the agreement for five years, and for all this time we are strictly in the Company's hands.

³⁹GAI, BN C 212 F2344, Hart to Dennis, December 5, 1912.

⁴⁰GAI, BN C 212 F2344, Feuz to Hart, December 17, 1912; Hart to Ussher, February 25, 1913.

⁴¹GAI, BN C 212 F2344, Hart to Reed, March 31, 1913.

The contract says, that the Company is supposed to give us work from the first of Oct. till the 30th of April; but the Company does not follow this Paragraph.

The C.P.R. has lots of work in the Colony but engages other men and intends then to send us away for the winter. We are all ready away all summer; we do not want to go for winter again!⁴²

C.P.R. officials agreed to cancel rent payment and debts owed to the Company but they could offer little encouragement or prospect of alternative employment.⁴³

Further complications to the detriment of the villagers developed within the C.P.R. Company. Originally, so it seemed, the village was placed under the care of the C.P.R. Department of Natural Resources. However, by 1913, P. L. Naismith, the Department's manager, informed Hayter Reed, manager of the Hotel Department, that such was not the case. "The question" he wrote, "is one which properly comes within the jurisdiction of either your department or the passenger department and the handling of these guides should not in any way be dealt with by our department."⁴⁴ Reed, on the other hand, was even less willing than Naismith to accept responsibility for the Swiss colony and added that the "only department which could do so, I fancy, would be the Operating Department."⁴⁵ Caught in this

⁴² GAI, BN C 2123 F2344, Feuz to Dennis, November 25, 1913.

⁴³ GAI, BN C 2123 F2345, Reed to Dennis, January 22, 1914.

⁴⁴ GAI, BN C 2123 F2345, Naismith to Reed, December 15, 1913.

⁴⁵ GAI, BN C 2123 F2345, Reed to Naismith, December 22, 1913.

bureaucratic shuffling, the Swiss guides were once more frustrated in their attempt to achieve a satisfactory agreement and they quickly became disillusioned about their future in Edelweiss. The fate of the village was sealed; its gradual disintegration became inevitable. Edward Feuz⁴⁶ and Christian Jorimann⁴⁷ were among the first to leave. It is interesting, nevertheless, to note that by the 1930s a few Swiss guides continued to occupy some of the chalets at Edelweiss:

In 1933 when the writer spent several days under Christian's roof, of the six houses on the steep hillside only four were occupied. The top left-hand house was occupied by Rudolph Aemmer⁷ while the top right-hand one was occupied by Walter Feuz.... The lower left-hand house was Ernest's the centre one was Christian's, and the other two on the right were empty. The inscription on the doors was 'Lebe Wohl', meaning 'farewell',...⁴⁸

Edelweiss failed as a group settlement because it was designed primarily as a tourist attraction but it lacked the planning and resources necessary to make it a viable project in that competitive domain. Secondly, the resorts of the Canadian Rockies were not developed as in Switzerland where the guides occupied their winter hours leading ski-tours in

⁴⁶ Edward Feuz Jr. moved to Golden in 1915.

⁴⁷ After the Field Station closed in 1917 or 1918, Jorimann claimed a homestead in Moberly.

⁴⁸ "The Story of the Swiss Guides in Canada," p. 190, see n. 9.

and around the various resorts. Consequently, winter employment had to be found elsewhere than in Edelweiss for the guides. When no satisfactory employment could be offered, the guides could only conclude that the project had failed. In a 'Preliminary survey re Mountain Guides' prepared in the 1950s for the National Parks Branch, the report acknowledged the failure of the Edelweiss experiment.

The experiment commenced by the C.P.R. in 1912 in bringing out from Switzerland twelve experienced mountain guides with their families to settle at Edelweiss near Golden can now be considered unsuccessful. The climbing season in Canada is short, and the demand for mountain guides has been insufficient to provide adequate income for the support of these guides and their families. To help meet this problem, the C.P.R. has hired these guides in winter to shovel snow off the roofs of some of their hotel installations and to perform other caretaking duties. The lack of economic security over the years is the chief reason why none of the sons of these guides have followed up this profession.⁴⁹

The failure of this romantic experiment did little to brighten the picture of Canada as an attractive land of adoption for prospective Swiss emigrants.

⁴⁹Public Archives of Canada, RG 84, Volume 293, file U3-19, Preliminary Survey re Mountain Guides.

Conclusion:

Historically and politically, Switzerland has remained rather isolated from the European community particularly after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. This, however, did not shield the Republic from the economic trends that swept through the Continent. Periods of recession, the rise and accompanying ills of industrialism, the growth of the cities, the poverty on the farms and the subsequent disruption of agrarian life respected no man-made boundaries and had, in fact, a resounding impact on the Swiss way of life. In addition, religious turbulence was part and parcel of Swiss history and an almost incessant confrontation endured between the Catholic and Protestant parties. Taken together, these factors played a significant role in determining the patterns of Swiss emigration to Canada between 1870 and 1930. We see, for example, reports from Canadian agents and agencies in Switzerland in the early 1870s, 1890s and again in the 1920s describing a climate of religious and industrial unrest.

Secondly, Switzerland was not accorded much importance nor was it assigned a very significant attention in evolving Canadian immigration 'policy'. Although the Republic was considered a 'preferential' country from which to select

immigrants, officials in Canada anticipated little success in this field. Switzerland was a small country with a relatively small population which did not enjoy a reputation for large emigration movements. Furthermore, Swiss emigrants had previously demonstrated a tendency to prefer the more affable climates of South America and the southern United States. In such an atmosphere the Canadian government was not prepared to make a substantial investment to attract Swiss settlers.

Finally, until the Canadian Pacific Railway was built west of Winnipeg, the North West Territories were almost inaccessible to a large number of settlers. It was not until the 1890s that serious efforts were considered by Swiss emigrants to settle in Western Canada.

I

Canadian immigration efforts in Switzerland were directed by a succession of "special" agents commissioned by the Dominion. Why did their efforts not meet with better results? These agents were subject to external "forces" which they could only partly control. Firstly, the agents that entered Switzerland considered that country only one of several areas which they should "explore". Barnard and Provencher, for example, visited France, Belgium, Alsace

Lorraine and Germany in addition to Switzerland, while Elise Von Koerber concentrated her efforts with equal vigour on the southern kingdoms of Germany. Under such circumstances, it became impossible for an agent to "cultivate" an emigration business in a country so small and yet so complex as Switzerland. Even Madame Von Koerber who, by 1880, had developed a considerable "rapport" in Switzerland frequently confessed that her interests in Germany were of primary importance.¹

Furthermore, the agents entered Switzerland at an inopportune time. It is clearly reflected in the documentation that emigration agents from abroad enjoyed a poor reputation and, indeed, the entire emigration business was viewed with a varying degree of suspicion. This encouraged the Swiss government to impose stringent restrictions on all emigration agents and agencies. Although those controls were not enacted until 1880, the atmosphere was from the outset such that only established businesses could manoeuvre successfully in government circles.

Lastly, Canadian agents had to confront a well organized competition from American land agents who successfully

¹See for example, Public Archives of Canada, R 17, Volume 222 (no file number).

characterized Western Canada as a land of ice and snow for eight months of the year and teeming with black flies, voracious grasshoppers and tomahawk-swinging bandits for the balance. These American land companies had been operating in Switzerland at least since the 1840s and were well acquainted with the ways to success. Money was not lacking and huge land and railway agencies in the United States supplied an abundance of attractive literature and slide shows. On the other hand, the bland pamphlets that the commissioned Canadian agents had to offer promised little.

The labours of the Canadian agents, however, managed to bear some results. Important Swiss politicians were made aware of the more realistic Canadian conditions and sufficient propaganda managed to filter through the media to encourage the Joos settlement scheme and the arrival of Jacob Hauswirth as the first Swiss delegate to Western Canada.

This 'policy' of employing "special" agents in Switzerland ended in the early 1880s when Sir Charles Tupper became High Commissioner in London, England. In their place, booking agents became the chief means of recruiting emigrants. Two "Houses" took the spotlight in Switzerland—Messrs. Zwilchenbart and Messrs. Rommel. It is presumed, but not incontrovertably proven, that both these firms were associated in some manner with the North Atlantic Trading Company which

operated in Europe from 1899 to 1906. Both played a significant part in the development of Swiss emigration "schemes" and "ventures" to Canada but both were fickle in their commitment to Canadian interests. Although the Zwilchenbart firm maintained a good business relationship with Madame Von Koerber in the early 1870s, for example, by 1880 the arrangement had soured considerably. The same can be said of the situation that existed between Kornmann and the House of Rommel. This was the greatest weakness and the greatest strength of the booking firms. The number of emigrants they were able to process was directly related to their profits and Canada simply did not represent a sizeable lucrative market.

These booking companies, however, offered one advantage that the "special" agents could not: they were well established and could maintain permanent offices in the prominent cities of Switzerland such as Basle, Zurich, Berne and Lausanne. This had a special significance in Switzerland where emigration laws were strictly enforced, where foreigners were often considered untrustworthy and where important government contacts (a basic ingredient in successful emigration work in the Republic) were only obtained after negotiation, over a long period of time.

Economic circumstances in Switzerland after World War I encouraged the Swiss government to reconsider its position on

emigration matters. The Federal Emigration Bureau, which had been formed at the turn of the century as a branch of the Department of the Interior, became a key actor in the initial stages of state-aided emigration. It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of this Office in relation to the flow of emigrants towards Western Canada. Early agents in Switzerland, particularly Von Koerber, continually stressed the necessity of having official Swiss government approval for settlement "schemes" in order to assure a measurable degree of success. Previously, this "approval" had been notably elusive and the Swiss government maintained a non-committal approach seriously hindering all Canadian efforts in Switzerland. The presence of the Bureau now greatly increased the prospects for successful recruiting as evidenced by the marked progress made by Charles de Gallier, Beck and Ammeter.

The Bureau, however, appeared unable or unwilling to control internal forces which were dedicated to sending less desirable emigrants to Canada--the destitute, the insane, and the criminal elements. Colonization associations concerned with this category of emigrants, operated throughout the Swiss Republic and at times received support from charities, police organizations and even, though more discreetly, government

authorities at both the communal and federal levels. The Swiss Colonization Association was a manifestation of such state-aided emigration.

II

The bloc settlement of Swiss immigrants in Western Canada had been the principal intention of Joos, Meyer, Hauswirth and Fischer. The theory behind bloc settlement was convincing enough. Such a settlement provided not only security and mutual aid through numbers but in addition, it generated self-confidence and a desire to "make-it" in the adopted country. Once this core had been established, it was hoped that through word of mouth and personal correspondence exchanged with relatives in the homeland, the community would gradually expand. In theory, the Swiss government accepted this concept but in practice, did very little to encourage the formation of such a settlement in Western Canada.

The fact that the Swiss government did not support the Joos or Meyer-Hauswirth projects was only one factor which prevented their successful culmination. The proposal as presented by Dr. Joos was in itself more destructive. Its ridiculously unrealistic approach was highlighted by his 'master' plan too neatly divided into 40 acre and 1000 acre plots. Joos' colleagues in Switzerland recognized the

project's weaknesses and wasted little effort supporting it. The Meyer-Hauswirth project was more complex and appeared to be more solidly founded. The interference of several factors, particularly that of an ambitious agency, however, successfully ambushed the project. The coincidental outbreak of the Métis uprising in the Northwest did little to assist Meyer and Hauswirth in their efforts. It is interesting to note that Meyer was quite willing to take advantage of even that event. The Manitoba Daily Free Press reported that he "is making arrangement for forming a Swiss company for the Northwest."²

Although the Joos and Meyer settlements never did materialize, their schemes reflected some of the concerns of the emigrating Swiss population. Settlement in the prairies of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, for example, was considered too hazardous a task for the individual Swiss emigrant. Bloc settlement was much more appealing if only to provide a sense of security and solidarity or to abate the emigrants' fears and premonitions about the Canadian Northwest. Secondly, it appears there existed a basic distrust of railways, and government bureaucracy complemented by an instinctive

² Manitoba Daily Free Press, Tuesday, May 12, 1885.

fear of having to depend on any one faculty for survival. This is accentuated in the Meyer project where a self-sustaining industry, a guaranteed access to market by rail and water as well as guaranteed freight rates on a long-term engagement were at the hub of the entire proposal.

The Invermere project initiated by Walter Fischer enjoyed terms which would have been the envy of both Joos and Meyer. The project, for example received official approval from the Swiss Emigration Bureau and in this manner used the Bureau's offices for recruiting emigrants. In Canada, Fischer had the support of the C.P.R. and received a considerable land grant from the Columbia Irrigated Fruit Lands Company. The settlement did not succeed primarily because irrigation work necessary to render the land arable was too expensive an investment for the Swiss immigrants.

The village of Edelweiss constructed by the C.P.R. to house the Swiss guides was, from the outset, purely a romantic adventure not destined to succeed. Poorly constructed and poorly situated at the crest of steep tiresome inclines, the chalets posed more of a burden than an asset and it was not long before the principal guides chose the village of Golden as their permanent home. Irregular winter employment reflected against a backdrop of spiralling inflation and expenses precipitated the decline.

Notre Dame de Lourdes and Stettler were not the only areas of Swiss settlement in Western Canada. Hospital records, for instance, indicate that Swiss immigrants settled throughout the four provinces from small towns such as Fannystelle (Manitoba) to the urban metropolises of Calgary and Vancouver. More often than not the decision to locate in a certain region was based on linguistic considerations. In this fashion, German-speaking Swiss preferred to settle in an area where there was a concentration of German-speaking families and the same rule applied to French-speaking Swiss.³ Assimilation into the "Canadian mold" became very rapid and this makes it especially difficult to identify the Swiss as a distinct ethnic group in Western Canada.

It is equally difficult to distinguish the 'type' of immigrant that came to Canada. There is some evidence which suggests that most were of the agricultural class or were familiar with related industries such as cheese making. Others had worked in the more traditional occupations such as watchmaking. During periods of recession the immigrants tended to come from the cities and reflected a less "desirable" class. Communal and cantonal authorities, in some cases, were the driving force behind these emigration movements.⁴

³Official government pamphlets distributed in Europe encouraged this integration. See for example, Canada: Le Guide du Colon Francais, Belge et Suisse, Ottawa: 1896.

⁴To see an example of the magnitude of cantonal involvement in emigration matters, see Leo Shelbert, "On Becoming an Emigrant: A Structural View of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Swiss Data," Perspectives in American History, Vol. VII (1973), pp. 484-486.

Appendix

Not all settlement projects were unsuccessful. The settlements of Stettler (Alberta) and Notre Dame de Lourdes (Manitoba) provide a pleasant contrast. In 1903, Carl Stettler "a pioneer and a rebel", founded the Swiss colony of Blumenau located two and half miles east of the present day Stettler.¹ Before establishing himself at Blumenau, Carl Stettler had received assurances from the C.P.R. that they would be building a line through his village.

Unfortunately for Carl Stettler, his colony was located about two miles east of the spot where the arbitrary eight-mile-between-town limits fell. Starting from Lacombe on the rail right-of-way, townsites were spotted at each eight mile post and the present town of Stettler was founded in 1905 among sloughs of lakes and willow groves at the foot of the prairie bench...²

Carl Stettler moved the Blumenau post office to the new site and not long thereafter built the National Hotel. In 1909 he left Stettler and settled in nearby Castor.³ Although a few Swiss emigrated with him in 1903, most of the settlers that came to the Swiss settlement came from Wisconsin and the state of Washington.⁴

¹ Glenbow-Alberta Institute, D971238, W 959, Recollections of Stettler, 1905-1919 by Wm. F. Wuest, March 1963, p. 1.

² Ibid., p. 2. The author of the document makes reference to the town of Mayville which he states was the intended name for the town presently known as Stettler.

³ Some sources indicate that Carl Stettler left his town in 1908 instead of 1909.

⁴ Recollections of Stettler, 1905-1919, see n. 3.

The little town lies on the edge of Alberta's park country, just off the bald prairie yet hardly within the zone of abundant natural tree growth. It was, when it started out, a typical prairie town, flat and cheerless and uninviting. There was a wide, dusty main street, with a huddle of frame buildings, and a few streets branching off where the residents made some attempts to beautify their immediate surroundings.⁵

The parish of Notre Dame de Lourdes was established in 1891 by Dom Paul Benoît, a priest from the French Jura who had joined the Chanoines Réguliers de l'Immaculée Conception (CRIC) founded by Dom Gréa. The actual location of the parish had been chosen by Mgr Taché as part of a carefully engineered plan to consolidate the position of the Catholic population in the face of a growing non-Catholic immigration into the province of Manitoba during the 1870s and early 1880s. Benoît had long admired Canada for its beauty and especially for its religious freedom. He considered the country a good home for Catholics and dreamed of one day establishing a parish there. He wrote,

Voici un problème qui se pose pour ma population de la campagne dans le Jura et dans plusieurs cantons voisins de la Suisse, spécialement le catholique canton de Fribourg. Il y a une grande émigration des habitants de la campagne vers les villes: de là les plus funestes effets pour les âmes et pour les corps.... Il me semble depuis longtemps qu'il faudrait diriger l'excédant de notre population vers

⁵The Calgary Daily Herald, Monday, June 24, 1929, p. 5.

le Canada, car nos montagnards sont accoutumés au froid, ils habitent un pays stérile auprès duquel le Canada sera une terre promise. Notre Jura et notre Suisse française, pourraient aussi établir un grand nombre de villages en Canada, mais le point difficile, tout à fait pratique et dont l'exécution me semble très utile est de diriger les premiers colons vers le Canada.⁶

Encouraged by Taché, Dom Benoît visited Canada in the summer of 1890 to examine possible areas for the establishment of a parish. By August he had reached a decision. "J'ai assez vu pour m'arrêter à un parti: je choisis Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes si votre Grandeur [Mgr Taché] l'approuve."⁷ Benoît returned to France and prepared for the journey ahead. All arrangements were finalized by the end of March and on April 16, 1891, Dom Benoît accompanied by three companions⁸ and forty immigrants left for Manitoba.

By the middle of August, 1891, the parish had taken on a permanent nature and Mgr Taché gave the town official recognition.

⁶ Archives de l'Archevêché de Saint-Boniface, Extrait d'une lettre de M. l'abbé Benoît de St. Claude, Jura France, n. d., copy on microfilm in the Deschâtelets Archives.

⁷ Père Champagne, CRIC, Le Manitoba à vol d'oiseau, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Man., Causeries à CKSB sur les paroisses du Man., 2e causerie: Origines, p. 3, courtesy of the author.

⁸ His companions were Agnece Patel, priest, Placide Barthaut, vice-deacon, and Félix Bugnon, lay brother. Donatien Frémont, Les Français dans l'Ouest Canadien, Winnipeg: Canadian Publishers, 1959.

Mgr Taché jugea que le temps était venu de donner à l'œuvre un caractère permanent et le 15 août 1891, en la fête de l'assomption de la Sainte Vierge, il signa le décret qui érigeait la "Paroisse Catholique de Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes" et qui nommait Dom Paul Benoît curé de la dite paroisse. Ce décret, d'après une loi du Manitoba du 22 juillet 1874, donnait en même temps à la paroisse son statut légal⁹

New arrivals continued to come to Notre Dame de Lourdes on a yearly basis between 1891 and 1895. By 1894, there were 78 Swiss settled in the parish.¹⁰

⁹ Père Champagne, CRIC, Le Manitoba à vol d'oiseau, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Man., Causeries à CKSB sur les paroisses du Man., 3e causerie: Fondation et premiers développements, pp. 1-2, courtesy of the author.

¹⁰ Les Français dans l'Ouest Canadien, see n. 10, p. 47.

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