Provenance

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3. Emigration to Latin America

These children will live to condemn us for not giving them the same opportunity for development as Canadian citizens as is afforded to our own children. . . . It is the duty of the state to see that this is done — J.T.M. ANDERSON.[1]

First of all, we desire and request complete freedom of religion, so that we may perform our churchly practices in accordance with our faith and teach our children religion and the German language — JOHANN P. WALL.[2]

FOR SOME Mennonites the defence of their fundamental institutions, rather than a reaffirmation of fundamental doctrines or basic lifestyles, had the highest priority. Thus, some of the Dutch Mennonites in Western Canada were stubbornly resisting an enforced conformity to the public school system,[3] while the Swiss Mennonites in Ontario were promoting Christian nonconformity with reference to the culture in general.[4] The battle to preserve the private elementary school dated back at least to 1890, but in the 1920s it was at its critical point, and the Mennonites were losing. The nationalistic passions of the Great War had subsided, but they had not been replaced by greater tolerance of nonconformist minorities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Some Mennonites could not surrender educational control over their children, and thus by 1922 they were packing their bags and once more migrating, this time to new lands of promise in Latin America.

Only a minority of Dutch Mennonites took this drastic measure, though the concern to preserve schools controlled by the church

rather than the state was shared as well by most of those who stayed. Those not migrating early in the 1920s were also troubled, but they chose to respond in different ways to the unwanted encroachment of public pressures on their way of life. Some decided in the 1920s to stay in Canada, but later in the 1920s, or late in the 1940s, or even as late as the 1960s, followed their brethren to the isolated agricultural and cultural frontiers of the Spanish-speaking world as every new generation faced the survival question anew. And some simply sought the desired isolation within Canada.

The majority tried to make the best of the necessary compromise with governments, some unwillingly and some rather willingly. Those who reluctantly accepted the system did not do so without criticism. The 1921 session at Herbert of the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada sent a message to the Manitoba and Saskatchewan governments deploring "the spirit of materialism and militarism" in the schools and requesting that such educational influence be curbed.[5] For itself, the conference recommended greater support for its own schools, active in the preparation of teachers strong in the faith, who could supplement the public school curriculum with instruction in Religion and German.

For the willing, the public school system was not without its advantages. For them, making the best of the situation meant using the public schools also for their special Mennonite educational goals. This could be done without too much difficulty, because many of the public school districts were in fact Mennonite school districts by virtue of the exclusive or predominating Mennonite population. Such school districts could elect Mennonite trustees, who could hire Mennonite teachers who were sympathetic to Mennonite values and who were ready, willing, and able to support a curriculum generally sympathetic to Mennonite values and supplemented by general instruction in the German language and Bible stories during the final hour of the week. This special instruction was possible because of the so-called Laurier-Greenway compromise of 1897 under which the Manitoba government's decision to withdraw tax support for private schools remained in force, but by which this limited bilingual and religious instruction was permitted in the public schools.

Indeed, the Mennonite Collegiate Institute at Gretna, the rival Mennonite Educational Institute at Altona, and the German-English Academy at Rosthern had been founded precisely for the purpose of

preparing teachers for such tasks.[6] This approach of selective accommodation, rather than determined isolation to the point of emigration, became one of the Mennonite survival strategies in educational and other contexts. Escaping the system was one way. Joining and "exploiting" or changing, or attempting to change, the system was another way.

Private vs. *Public Schools*

In practice the two options were not that distinct, especially in Manitoba, where changing provincial conditions had resulted in changing Mennonite responses in the Mennonite school districts, now numbering more than 100.[7] Throughout the years, there had been a shifting of the schools from private to public status and vice versa. Following the settlement of the immigrants in the 1870s, all or most of their schools had been registered under the Protestant board, giving them a denominational and public status. As the Mennonites had become fully aware of the implications of this registration and of their acceptance of public funds, they insisted, for the most part, on private status for their schools, which they could always get by forfeiting government grants.

After the passage of the Manitoba Public Schools Act in 1890, which abolished tax-supported denominational schools, the government established public district schools wherever they were acceptable. With the help of H.H. Ewert, who at one and the same time was the principal of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute and government inspector, meaning also promoter, of public schools, the number of Mennonite districts accepting public status had gone up from 8 to 42 by 1903, when Ewert lost his position as inspector[8] and the province lost one of its most passionate promoters of education among his own people. In Ewert's words:

> The school has to be if our people are to be saved from destruction.[9]

Ewert's dismissal by the Conservative government, the Gretna school's subsequent loss of normal school status, and the compulsory flying of the Union Jack demanded by the provincial government in 1907 had the effect of undoing Ewert's success. Even Ewert, for

whom the flag was a military symbol going back to his native Prussia,[10] now had second thoughts about the public school option, and numerous Mennonite districts reverted back to private status again. Under A.A. Weidenhammer, the German-speaking inspector, who later anglicized his name to Willows, the trend was once again reversed.

During the Great War provincial governments in Western Canada sought to use the schools to inculcate patriotic sentiments and to foster Canadian nationalism. The use of languages other than English for instruction was very severely restricted, the qualifications required to teach school were raised and more vigorously enforced, and patriotic exercises in the schools—flag-raisings, pictures of the reigning monarch in all classrooms, the singing of the national anthem and other patriotic songs, and the reading of patriotic literature—were made mandatory in all public schools. This was followed by legislation making attendance at accredited schools compulsory for all children.[11] In 1916, when Manitoba passed its compulsory school attendance legislation, over 60 schools in districts with exclusive or majority Mennonite population were public, this being an all-time high.

The wartime legislation, however, caused many Mennonites who had gone along with the public system to reconsider their position. The loss of bilingual instruction, the emphasis on Canadianization, and the popular designation of public schools as national schools were all causes for concern. At the end of the war, only 30 schools in Mennonite districts in Manitoba remained public.[12]

Most adamant and consistent in their opposition to Manitoba public schools were the Reinlaender in the West Reserve area and the Chortitzer in the East Reserve area. The other groups—the Bergthaler, Bruderthaler, Brueder, Holdemaner, Kleine Gemeinde people, and Sommerfelder—vacillated to varying degrees, but in the end, and under considerable pressure from the authorities, they acquiesced and accepted the public school rather than remain disobedient or emigrate. There were exceptions, of course. A goodly number of Sommerfelder on the West Reserve felt like their cousins, the Chortitzer, on the East Reserve.[13] Indeed, when the crunch came, the Sommerfelder bishop followed the examples of the Reinlaender and Chortitzer bishops and led his followers, a minority, out of the country.

In Saskatchewan, about 90 school districts could be called Mennonite districts. Two-thirds of them had been in the public column since the founding of the province in 1905 and one-third in the private column. The latter were in the Reinlaender communities of the former reserve areas, Hague-Osler and Swift Current. It was the Reinlaender who were most consistent—from the provincial point of view, recalcitrant—in their opposition to public schools. While the Sommerfelder and Saskatchewan Bergthaler (not to be confused in their identity and position with the Manitoba Bergthaler) were sympathetic with the Reinlaender position, they were not sufficiently strong in conviction, concentration, and leadership to follow the Reinlaender route. That is, they did not refuse to co-operate with the public school system, though minorities in their groups eventually chose to emigrate. Fully accepting the public option were the Rosenorter, the founders of the German-English Academy at Rosthern, other conference congregations, as well as the Brueder, Bruderthaler, Krimmer, and Old Mennonites who had settled in the province.

As already stated, Reinlaender and Chortitzer, representing a total population of about 12,000,[14] remained steadfast in their resistance. To allow their children to be educated by the state was for them too great a compromise. Indeed, they would not have chosen to leave Russia and settle in Manitoba in the 1870s if the Canadian government had not guaranteed to the Mennonites in advance that they could conduct their own private schools. To their great dismay, they later discovered that the British North America Act had granted the educational jurisdiction not to the Dominion but to the provinces and that consequently there could be no special privileges which the provinces did not see fit to grant.[15] As will later be seen, appeals to the authorities, including the highest courts in Manitoba, Canada, and London, were of no avail to the Mennonites. Their claim to complete freedom in matters of education, like the earlier claim of Catholics to public support of denominational schools, was not recognized.[16]

It is important to remember that the Mennonites were not the only ethnic or religious minority group with concerns about provincial education policies. In all fairness to them and to the governments they confronted, the general nature of the question must not be overlooked. The German-speaking Mennonites were part of a general social, hence educational, problem confronting the provincial authorities. In the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first

decades of the twentieth century, hundreds of thousands of non-anglo immigrants had entered the country and been sent on to settle in Western Canada, often in colonies representing particular religions, cultures, and languages. The 1921 census revealed that 41 per cent of the people in the prairie provinces either had been born in a place other than Canada or the British Isles or possessed at least one parent who had.[17] Many immigrant groups clung to their traditional ways, and cultivated a strong sense of ethnicity. Among the Ukrainians, for example, 90 per cent still identified Ukrainian as their mother tongue.[18]

Not surprisingly, the authorities were concerned. How could they build a cohesive society out of so many ethnic islands? Notions of Canada as a social mosaic were already being expressed,[19] but even if multiculturalism had been an official Canadian policy, it is doubtful whether any governing authority would have accepted the status quo as normative. From the perspective of the general social order, Canadianization made sense, even before the Great War brought the assimilationist pressures of anglo-conformity to a peak.[20]

The best vehicle for the necessary Canadianization was perceived to be the public school,[21] though other institutions such as the press and the churches also had a role to play. Even social gospel advocates like J.S. Woodsworth, in general more tolerant of minorities than most, looked to the public school "to break down the walls" which separated the cultures from each other. He greatly deplored the existing bilingual school system in Manitoba and praised the great work "that has been accomplished . . . by our National Schools."[22] In Saskatchewan, the educational leader who later became premier, J.T.M. Anderson, articulated best this educational philosophy:

> The children in the public schools of to-day will be the fathers and mothers of the next generation, and it is essential that the former be given an insight into our Canadian life and ideals, so that they in turn may impart these to their offspring. . . . Unless we gird ourselves to this task with energy and determination, imbued with a spirit of tolerance, the future of our Canadian citizenship will fail to reach that high level of intelligence which has ever characterized Anglo-Saxon civilization throughout the world.[23]

As we have seen, these sentiments translated themselves into public policy and into provincial laws governing the public schools.

The schools were spoken of as the melting pot for "the fusion of [the] races," the "blast furnaces" which were "developing the new Canadian."[24] As a consequence, the school curricula had little place for a study of ethnic groups, for appreciating cultural diversity, and for advancing pluralism as a positive concept. Children were taught to shed their ethnicity as if it were a mere "outer skin one could unzip and leave behind like a cocoon." No child could escape learning what was "proper."[25] And what was proper was the English language, English styles, English values, and English institutions, even English music. Such songs as "Rule Britannia," "In Days of Yore," and "God Save the King" were sung every morning after Bible reading and the Lord's Prayer. In the words of one ethnic child, later recorded:

> For the ethnic child of my father's and my generation, school could be, and often was, a painful place. Everything valued by one's parents, everything that made up one's after-school life, was feared, misunderstood, occasionally ridiculed, and always subtly undermined. Everything associated with the most significant landmarks of human existence, everything that was most sacred, most poignant, most satisfying—all of that was somehow second- or third-rate.[26]

Mennonites objecting to the public school did so for similar reasons. Sacred to them were such things as their religion and culture in general, the agricultural way of life, the German language, and pacifism in particular. As they saw it, the public school pointed to Anglo-Canadianism rather than German Mennonitism, to urbanization rather than the rural life, to militarism rather than pacifism, to ostentation rather than the simple lifestyle they and their ancestors in the faith had always advocated. The public school also pointed in the direction of other unwanted "worldly" influences and, what was worst of all, social integration and ultimate assimilation. From that perspective they had no choice but to resist the public school.[27] Their "great dissatisfaction" did not go unnoticed by public officials and was reported, among others, by the Royal North West Mounted Police.[28]

The passing of the School Attendance Act and an amendment to the Public Schools Act in Manitoba, followed by similar legislation in Saskatchewan and Alberta, signified a dramatic shift in events for the

Mennonites, at least in the former two provinces. A confrontation between the province of Alberta and its Mennonites did not materialize, mainly because of settlement patterns and attitudes.[29] Mennonites, like most other minority groups, were scattered much more thinly throughout the province. There were no reserves or other concentrated settlements. Besides, there were no Chortitzer, Sommerfelder, or Reinlaender in Alberta to resist the public school. And that in turn could be due to the fact that Alberta's settlement and education policies had been quite clear from the beginning.[30]

In Manitoba, bilingual schools were abolished and were replaced by government-supervised district schools offering instruction in English only and demanding the compulsory attendance of all school-age children, unless it could be demonstrated that satisfactory education was being provided in private schools. The changes were certainly not aimed primarily at the Mennonites, who constituted but one minority among many. However, the plight confronting them was worsened by other developments that coincided with the school legislation. Specifically, the Great War and the emergence of a violent reaction against everything German created a climate extremely antagonistic towards the sectarian pacifists. The entrance into the country from the U.S.A. of hundreds of Hutterites and Mennonites, the return of the veterans, and labour unrest all contributed to a social and political climate already unfavourable.[31] The Reinlaender and others ignored the new legislation and continued to operate their private schools as before, making no changes or improvements. Education Minister Thornton noted the resistance:

> A campaign was inaugurated to destroy our public school system in the rural districts. Meetings were held urging the ratepayers to give up the government grants and run the schools as private schools.[32]

The Crushing of Mennonite Resistance

Two years lapsed before the Manitoba government launched a campaign to crush such Mennonite resistance. Legislation was passed establishing provincial school districts in unresponsive areas. An official trustee for those districts claiming, or attempting to claim, private status was appointed. In 1919, twelve new districts

were imposed in the Chortitzer districts of the East Reserve area.[33] Next to experience first-hand the iron grasp of the government were the Reinlaender. By February 1920, ten new school districts were carved into the heart of the stronghold of Mennonite resistance in the West Reserve area.[34]

Mennonite reaction to the government policy was one of shock and dismay. The *Privilegium* (charter of privileges or promises), in which they had placed so much confidence, and the federal government, which had granted it, had failed them. The issues were now clear. Either one conformed to the approved official program or one elected to continue a struggle against a much stronger opponent. The Reinlaender and Chortitzer, supported by some Sommerfelder, grimly determined to counter the government's assault upon the private schools with their own tactic of passive resistance. Parents refused to submit the names of their children during the annual school census. They boycotted the district schools. They steadfastly declined to assist the authorities, so that in some instances the latter were obliged to resort to expropriating school sites when resident landowners refused to sell land for that purpose. When government patience finally wore thin, fines were levied against those parents who deliberately violated the School Attendance Act.

An equally determined offensive marked Saskatchewan's clash with its Reinlaender dissenters.[35] Actually, it was Saskatchewan that led the way in forcibly creating provincial school districts in resisting Mennonite localities. In 1918, three such districts had been established in the Swift Current reserve, and five in the Hague-Osler area.[36] Parents were fined for not sending their children to district schools when these became available. The Reinlaender were deeply distraught over what they believed to be an infringement of their legal rights and served notice that they would continue to defy governmental demands. In reply, the province turned 56 Reinlaender cases over to the courts and charged the defendants with violation of the law.

Subsequent years witnessed a virtual epidemic of prosecutions as the province bore relentlessly ahead with its program of educational reform and conformity. Little official compassion was shown for the beleaguered Reinlaender, despite the call from some sectors of the public that a greater effort should be made to appreciate the religious

TABLE 10[38]

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROSECUTIONS
OF SASKATCHEWAN MENNONITES: 1920–1925

YEAR	NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS
1920	1,131
1921	1,804
1922	837
1923–25	1,604

tenets and convictions motivating the protesters.[37] The government, however, was in no mood to temper its prosecution policy and in 1921 alone, 1,804 court judgments were delivered against the Reinlaender (Table 10), forcing them to pay a total of $13,150 in fines. Included in these prosecutions was the Hague trial in March 1921, when 60 Mennonites were fined and one individual was sentenced to 30 days in the Prince Albert jail.[39]

The legal basis for such action in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba was the inadequacy of the private school system and, in the light of that, the Mennonite refusal to co-operate with the public system. Measured by provincial educational standards, though not necessarily by provincially supported public schools, the private schools were probably inferior. On the one hand, some school inspectors claimed that many teachers, recruited from among the village farm folk, could not teach English even if they wanted to. Knowledge of the alternative High German language was also inadequate. Most teachers had no professional qualifications whatsoever. On the other hand, other inspectors who regularly visited the private schools, as well as public schools, had more favourable reports.

In Saskatchewan, the tone for much of the criticism was set by E.H. Oliver of St. Andrews College, University of Saskatchewan, whose reports were later discovered to be based on hearsay.[40] Clearly, some schools were inadequate, poorly equipped and furnished, with backless seats, poor lighting and heating, inadequate blackboards, and a paucity of maps, charts, and pictures. And the curriculum was frequently quite limited, with the primary emphasis on prayers,

singing, Bible stories, and reading in the mornings and arithmetic and writing for three hours in the afternoons.[41] As Harold W. Foght, an American specialist appointed to survey education in Saskatchewan, wrote about the Reinlaender and their schools:

> In this atmosphere the Mennonite children spend six or more months each year—the boys from 6 to 14 years and the girls from 6 to 12, grinding through this limited school fare: German Fibel (primer), Catechism, New Testament and Old Testament. . . . Much time is devoted to prayer and hymn singing, and some to ciphering and writing. The Mennonite child has little conception of the geography of the land in which he lives. His only history is that of the Mennonite church. As for the ideals, the aspirations and the future of the Canadian people, they are largely meaningless to him; for while he lives in Canada he is not of Canada.[42]

The Mennonites may be "*morally* entitled to private schools" was the reluctant admission of J.T.M. Anderson, the Saskatchewan inspector of schools, "*but*," he added in exasperation, "*not to inefficient private schools in which no English is taught*" (emphasis original).[43] But Anderson, like Foght and Oliver, was prejudiced to begin with and depended on second-hand accounts to make his judgements.[44]

Though fault could be found with the Mennonite private schools, it did not necessarily follow that all was well in the public schools. The unwieldiness of bilingual instruction and the inadequate knowledge of English acquired by students in French, Ukrainian, and Polish districts in particular,[45] the poor quality of teaching, and the lack of standardization within the public schools in Manitoba and Saskatchewan had led to the important changes in school legislation in the respective provinces. But even after this the public schools, particularly in rural communities, left much to be desired. In his exhaustive survey of the Saskatchewan government, Foght criticized everything from the low level of teacher training to the narrow curriculum to the neglect of hygiene to the dearth of proper teaching aids.[46] Clearly, the public schools were also in need of much improvement.

Some public schools in Mennonite districts, on the other hand, were of superior quality. The elementary schools had been brought

"up to the highest standard," said H.H. Ewert, in accordance with the principle that "whatever is undertaken must be done thoroughly."[47] Scarcely a school was without a teacher's residence, thus encouraging married teachers to remain in the profession. Most teachers were bilingual or even trilingual and trained also in religious values, thus ensuring that "the Mennonite children get a broader education." The objective was

> not only to educate worthy members of their church . . . [but also to] equip them for a conscientious discharge of the duties of citizenship.[48]

The private Mennonite schools were not that broad in their objectives and in their curriculum, but neither were they as narrow and inferior as the critics often suggested. From the perspective of the Reinlaender and Chortitzer, the judgements of inadequacy rendered on their schools were much too harsh, mainly because their own philosophy of education was poorly understood. These groups viewed the schools as supplemental institutions to, rather than as substitutes for, the learning in the home. In their opinion, the children learned most of what they needed to know for the chosen way of life from their mothers and fathers, in the kitchen, in the garden, in the barn, and in the fields. And that part of the education was thorough and effective. The schools were there to provide only what was needed in addition, namely an essential amount of reading, writing, arithmetic, Bible stories, and language. Physical education and other extras of the public school were not only unnecessary but harmful, inasmuch as school marches were akin to the military drill and school sports programs drew the children away from their homes and communities. And whatever professional qualifications the teachers lacked were made up for by the qualities of character and the genuine love for children so characteristic of their communities.[49]

The position of the Reinlaender and Chortitzer was either not heard or not understood. The governments pressed ahead and the people suffered the consequences. Repeated fines pushed many of them to the brink of economic ruin. When the Reinlaender refused to pay the fines, the authorities sometimes seized their personal chattels or livestock and auctioned them off.[50] It was against the background

of tremendous financial strain that Reinlaender Johann F. Peters found himself compelled to address Saskatchewan Premier Martin:

> If we send our children to public schools, we violate God's commands in not holding to that which we promised our God and Saviour at holy baptism. If we do not send them, we offend against your laws. Does Mr. Martin want us to transgress against God's commands in order to keep his? . . . Oh how difficult it is to be a true Mennonite. . . . And we came here precisely because of the freedom which the government promised us in full.[51]

The Mennonite *Privilegium* letter of 1873, written by John Lowe, furnished the base from which all Mennonites who resisted public schools argued the legality of their cause. Little did they know, for it had not been explicitly explained to them, that not Lowe's letter but the revisions of it made legal in an Order-in-Council constituted the federal guarantees. The Order was in harmony with the B.N.A. Act, the *Privilegium* letter was not. The respective readings of the pertinent section of the Order-in-Council and the Lowe letter were as follows:

> That the Mennonites will have the fullest privileges of exercising their religious principles, and educating their children in schools, *as provided by law* [emphasis added], without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever.[52]

> The fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles *is by law afforded* [emphasis added] the Mennonites, without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever, and the same privilege extends to the education of their children in schools.[53]

The result of the two versions was much confusion. In each instance that representations were made to the government, the Mennonites were informed that their argument was invalid since the province, rather than the Dominion, had been granted jurisdiction over educational affairs by the B.N.A. Act. In an unusual undertaking, and certainly not something which the Reinlaender or Chortitzer themselves would have attempted, lawyers for the Mennonites finally tested the legitimacy of their position by appealing a court decision that favoured the Crown.

The legal proceedings were initiated by the Manitoba Sommerfelder, with the encouragement of lawyers, in July 1919, just after a provincial court had ruled that nine parents of the Houston School District had violated the School Attendance Act. The cases of John Hildebrand and Dietrich Doerksen, two of the defendants, were presented to the Manitoba Court of Appeal.[54] At this hearing, the prosecution argued that, by virtue of the B.N.A. Act's delineation of powers, the provinces possessed autonomy with respect to educational matters. It also dismissed as an insufficient claim the original letter from John Lowe to the Mennonites, contending that the document had been found to be legally in error.

The judge presiding over the case ruled in the government's favour. He noted that a corrected version of the Lowe "guarantee" had been included in the 1873 Order-in-Council, clearing the way for the immigration of 7,000 Mennonites from Russia. He explained that the Mennonites were entitled to "the unhampered and unrestricted privilege of educating their children in the schools provided by the laws of the country in which they proposed to settle."[55] It did not, in his opinion, permit them to retain an independent school system outside the reach of provincial law as was implied in the Lowe letter.

The Sommerfelder made one final attempt to obtain legal sanction for their claim by taking their case to the Supreme Court of Canada. The Court in turn referred it to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. In July 1920 the Privy Council ruled against the Mennonites.[56]

Meanwhile, efforts other than legal action and passive resistance were made in an attempt to deflect the governments from their commitment to educational integration. At least seven petitions were directed to the provincial authorities by different groups at different times (Table 11). The first two of these were submitted to the Manitoba officials during the war. It is noteworthy that they were the only briefs specifically mentioning the question of language.[58] Later on, the public reaction against all things German made appeals on that basis counterproductive.

The five petitions addressed to the provincial governments beginning in 1919, four in Manitoba and one in Saskatchewan, differed in tone and some detail but essentially agreed with one another on the main points. All of the documents referred to the agreement reached

TABLE 11[57]

MENNONITE SCHOOL PETITIONS TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN, 1916–22

GROUP	DATE	PRESENTED TO
Manitoba: Bergthaler-Sommerfelder	7 Jan. 1916	Hon. V. Winkler
All Manitoba groups except Reinlaender	15 Feb. 1916	Manitoba Gov't
Manitoba: Reinlaender	Feb. 1919	Manitoba Legislature
Chortitzer-Kleine Gemeinde	21 Oct. 1919	Manitoba Gov't
Chortitzer	13 Jan. 1920	Manitoba Gov't
Chortitzer-Sommerfelder	14 Oct. 1921	Manitoba Gov't
Swift Current Reinlaender	7 Jan. 1922	Sask. Gov't

between the Dominion and the Mennonites in 1873, and all indicated that the Mennonites expected the country to honour its original promise. Similarly, the petitions emphasized the importance of providing the children with sound instruction in schools supervised by the Mennonites, rather than by the province. The Chortitzer Church petition was representative of the concerns of all the resisting Mennonites when it testified:

> As a matter of conscience, your petitioners cannot delegate to others the all-important responsibility of educating their children, convinced as they are that instruction in other schools would result in weakening and even loss of faith, and would be generally detrimental to the moral and spiritual welfare of the children.[59]

Despite a clear offer by the Chortitzer in January 1920 to improve their private schools, the Manitoba government remained unmoved.[60] In setting a patriotic standard for accredited schools, it had, in effect, made all Mennonite private schools, no matter how strong pedagogically, unacceptable.

An appeal 15 months later to the Manitoba Legislature on the basis of "British tolerance and British fair play" likewise fell on deaf ears.[61] Where, asked the representatives of the Chortitzer and

Sommerfelder communities, could "British men with a British mind" be found to champion tolerance and to end the persecution which was being inflicted on "a quiet and peace-loving people who want to do good without expecting returns." And the British Empire "is not likely to go to pieces" if permission was granted to teach the mother tongue a few hours a day.

By now, every possible alternative had been exhausted by the Mennonites and their only recourse was to obey the law or carry through on their announced threats to emigrate. Migration sentiments had already been voiced among the Reinlaender at Hague. Similar pronouncements issued out of the Chortitzer and Sommerfelder camps. The Bergthalers of Manitoba, however, indicated that they would not participate in any emigration venture. They, along with the Kleine Gemeinde (with some exceptions in the Morris area), Brueder Gemeinde, and the Bruderthalers, demonstrated that they were basically prepared to accept the public schools and make the most of opportunities within the system.

The Search for a New Country

The decision by the resisting Mennonites to leave their prosperous farms and villages, which had quite literally transformed the wild prairie regions into productive agricultural centres, was an agonizing one. The risks involved were exceptionally high, for in exchange for a secure existence in Canada they were about to accept a future fraught with uncertainty. It was, however, a venture they were prepared to make for the sake of their way of life. They had done it before in leaving Prussia after 1789 and Russia after 1873, and they could do it again.

The uncompromising course of action which the conservative Mennonites agreed to pursue set them apart from other ethnic groups in Canada. To be sure, the large and vocal Francophone and Ukrainian communities protested the school legislation vigorously through newspaper editorials, petitions, and special visits with government officials. Yet eventually these groups resigned themselves to the system and sought other ways of preserving their language, the former by sending their children to some of the Catholic private schools, the latter by establishing bursas or boarding houses for students attending public institutions.[62]

TABLE 12[65]

REINLAENDER LAND-SEEKING DELEGATIONS, 1919–21

DATE	DESTINATION	GROUPS REPRESENTED
4 Aug.–24 Nov. 1919	Brazil, Argentina	Manitoba, Hague, Swift Current
15 Jan.–29 Jan. 1920	Mississippi	Manitoba, Hague, Swift Current
12 Apr.–29 Apr. 1920	Mississippi	Manitoba, Hague
14 May–25 May 1920	Mississippi	
19 Aug. 1920	Quebec	Manitoba, Swift Current
8 Sept.–9 Oct. 1920	Mexico	Hague
9 Oct.–Dec. 1920	Paraguay	Hague
11 Nov.–31 Dec. 1920	Mexico	Hague, Swift Current
24 Jan.–12 Mar. 1921	Mexico	Manitoba, Hague, Swift Current
5 Apr.–9 May 1921	Mexico	Manitoba, Hague, Swift Current
July 1921	Mexico	Manitoba, Swift Current
12 Aug.–10 Sept. 1921	Mexico	Manitoba, Swift Current

Some groups, such as the Icelanders in Manitoba, had used English as the main language of instruction in their schools since their arrival in the 1870s[63] and were therefore not very concerned about compulsory attendance at English schools. A number of Polish immigrants returned to their homeland after the war, but their disillusionment with Canada was influenced more by the general wartime hostility directed towards them than by the school legislation in particular.[64] Moreover, only a few Poles left Canada. Thus, in their decision to emigrate to avoid English public schools, the conservative Mennonite groups were unique.

The Reinlaender led the way in the search for a land willing to absorb a large group of agricultural pacifists requiring complete freedom of religion, language, and education (Table 12). The first possibility suggested was Argentina.[66] Undoubtedly, the inaccessibility and isolation of that country appealed to the Reinlaender, as did perhaps the knowledge that large groups of Germans were already living there and that Canadian Mennonite foreign missionaries were preparing to enter that country.[67]

A fund-raising drive was launched to subsidize a proposed exploratory expedition. By August 4, 1919, a six-man delegation representing the Reinlaender in both provinces was set to depart. The men returned on November 24, without Johann J. Wall from Hague,

who had died in September and been buried en route in Brazil.[68] The written confirmation of his passing and the details of his suffering during a week-long illness reached his distraught family two months after his burial at Curitiba.[69] Equally sorrowful and disappointing was the news delivered in person soon after by the returning delegates that Argentina had rejected the request for special privileges.[70]

By this time American land speculators had heard of the imminent Mennonite migration and besieged the Reinlaender with offers of land in Alabama, Florida, and Louisiana. The Reinlaender, however, opted to pursue settlement possibilities in Mississippi. In mid-January 1920, the five-man party, again representing all the Reinlaender groups, left for a study tour of Mississippi. The delegates were granted an interview with Governor Russell, at which time they presented the terms under which they would consent to locate in the southern state. The Reinlaender demands conformed almost exactly to the privileges awarded them by Canada in 1873. Russell himself appeared genuinely interested at the prospect of obtaining a sizeable body of proven farmers. He subsequently assured the Reinlaender in writing that, in the event of a move to Mississippi, they would be accorded complete freedom with respect to religion, education, and language. In addition, the Mennonites would be allowed to affirm rather than swear, and they would be permitted to administer their own benevolent societies.[71] This was indeed heartening news.

Consequently, a second delegation was dispatched in April 1920 to inquire into the question of military exemptions. A meeting was arranged with U.S. Attorney-General A. Mitchell Palmer, who informed the Reinlaender that the federal statutes contained no provision for absolute exemption from military service. However, there was provision for exemption in a noncombatant capacity.[72] This was less than the Reinlaender had expected, but it was still sufficient to cause them to decide formally on emigration to Mississippi.[73]

A third deputation departed on May 14 to negotiate the purchase of 125,000 acres of land. On its return, the entire Reinlaender constituency was canvassed to assess the total amount of land required. Each prospective buyer was obligated to advance a $2-per-acre down payment, the cumulative sum of which was deposited in a Winkler bank.[74] In June, a fourth delegation prepared to journey south with instructions to consummate the proposed deal. Then troubles began anew. Without explanation the delegates were denied admission into the United States. The Reinlaender interpreted this

mysterious turn of events as divine intervention and scrapped all their Mississippi-related plans.[75]

The mystery arises from the fact that no satisfactory explanation of the denial was forthcoming. United States immigration officials in Winnipeg had refused entry to the Mennonites, but the Bureau of Immigration in Washington claimed no knowledge of that action. What the Commissioner-General could not deny was that a very considerable resistance, initiated by groups like the American Legion, had been building up against the proposed immigration.[76] Thus, though others, particularly real estate agents and certain governmental leaders, eagerly encouraged the Mennonite immigrants, the Mississippi scheme was abandoned. Similar efforts in states like Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, and South Carolina likewise did not materialize.[77]

Twice within a year, Reinlaender emigration schemes had collapsed. The people were becoming restless. The leaders were acutely aware of the debilitating effect these failures were having on morale, and they therefore redoubled their efforts to find a solution. In desperation, they directed yet another plea to the Manitoba government wondering whether there was

> any place in Manitoba, where none other can live, in which we could found a colony, apart from the world, where we could bring up our children, unhindered by common laws, in the true faith of our forefathers?[78]

There was no such place, the government replied, quite probably thinking not of the availability of isolated land, of which there was plenty, especially in the inter-lake area, but of the nonavailability of a tolerant government. But scarcely had the Reinlaender again been rebuffed by Manitoba than they received news that Quebec desired colonists to develop its Abitibi and Gaspé regions. Initial conversations with Quebec officials led the Mennonites to believe they would be granted the sought-after privileges, including the right to private schools.[79] Therefore, on August 19, 1920, a delegation representing the Manitoba and Swift Current colonies conferred with Premier Taschereau. Members of the delegation outlined their demands to the premier, who, at least to them, appeared favourably disposed.[80] However, subsequent negotiations proved their optimism to be premature.[81] Yet another migration attempt had foundered.

Every setback added to the discontent circulating within the Reinlaender constituency. Parents continued to defy the school attendance orders, but it was doubtful whether their resolve could long persist in face of the heavy fines imposed upon them. The leaders argued, with some justification, that the prosecutions should be suspended in light of the expressed Reinlaender intention to leave the country. They petitioned the provincial authorities, in September 1920, for a two-year moratorium on the enforcement of the school attendance law so that they could concentrate on putting their affairs in order.[82] Their plea went unheeded.

The flagging spirits were suddenly rejuvenated by the return from Mexico of a delegation sponsored by the Hague colony. While others had been busy in Quebec, Hague had assembled one deputation to investigate Mexico and another to pursue opportunities in Paraguay. The first group returned with a positive report, prompting the Manitoba and Swift Current districts to abandon the Quebec scheme and redirect their energies to Mexico.[83]

A second expedition was immediately organized. Passport irregularities scuttled the planned participation of the Manitoba Reinlaender, leaving the Saskatchewan delegates alone responsible for assessing the situation in Mexico. They were so encouraging that a third delegation, this time fully representative of all the Reinlaender, left for Mexico on January 24.[84] A short scouting trip through select areas of the country was followed by a conference with President Obregon on February 20, 1921.[85] Eight days later, the elusive *Privilegium*, addressed to the representatives of the Reinlaender Church, was approved and signed by the President and his Minister of Agriculture.

Included among the guarantees were: complete exemption from military service, the unrestricted right to religious principles, and the authority to conduct schools "without the government in any manner obstructing you."[86] For Mexico, the admission of these "industrious farmers" bore the prospect of upgrading agriculture and stimulating "the present sluggish demand for implements, tools, and agricultural machinery and supplies in general."[87] The Reinlaender had achieved their goal, and their only reservation with respect to the *Privilegium* arose from the fact that the guarantees did not, at least not yet, have the force of congressional law.

The returning delegates were very realistic about material hardships in the prospective new homeland. At least Cornelius Rempel,

the senior delegate, in addressing the Reinlaender brotherhood meeting was very modest in his promotion of the new homeland. The Mexicans, he said, had a very limited and simple way of making a living, and Mennonites too would not duplicate the wealth and surplus achieved in a rich and blessed Canada. To illustrate, he cited the situations of a typical Mexican household:

> If a farmer there has a wooden plow and two oxen, in order to plant a few acres of corn and beans, he is satisfied and he can feed his family. . . . If the woman mashes corn patties in the morning—often there are no table or chairs—and then adds beans and pepper sauce as a spread, then the meal is ready.[88]

Poverty, however, was not an insurmountable problem, said Rempel, given the fact that freedom for school and church was assured and that the diet was sufficient to maintain the health of old and young people alike. And, while social conditions were not the best either, the situation would not be different than formerly in Russia, where every village had a night watchman to guard against break-ins and theft.[89]

It was clear that a very difficult choice confronted the Reinlaender. On the one hand was their Canadian homeland with its well-developed villages and promise of continuous material prosperity but with the lack of educational autonomy and cultural isolation. On the other hand was Mexico, the new land of promise once again guaranteeing special privilege, full educational and cultural autonomy, but not a congenial social environment or a very prosperous agriculture.

Emigration to Mexico

Leadership was needed to help the community to decide, and that leadership came from the bishops, whose position in the congregations gave them unusual influence. In theory they were humble servants of the Lord and of the people, and in almost every sense they were also that in practice. They served without remuneration and with a great sense of responsibility. They took their calling and their ordination very seriously and expected their families to do the same. Their burdens were, or were perceived to be, enormous. Bishop Johann Friesen's life, for instance, was full of "manifold tribulations, [with] almost unbearable daily tasks" as described by his

successor, whose own difficulties were equal to "a brook of tears." To his children Friesen wrote about his burdened life:

> you have known no other father than one in the form of a poor servant, always under pressure and much affliction with rarely a friendly face.[90]

From them he expected that they would always be obedient, that they would abstain from all worldliness, and that they would not burden his office with careless living. Of himself he expected the impossible, but that precisely was his dilemma, his internal punishment, for he found in himself none of the virtues which Paul required. As it was written:

> A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, or covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. . . .[91]

In other words, the spirit, language, and outward form of the bishop was one of humility in the extreme — for pride was the greatest sin — but an exemplary life of humble service combined with longevity of tenure somehow translated itself into enormous power, which commanded the obedience of the followers. The "vital statistics" of some bishops were most impressive (see Table 13), but they could not be made known in the bishop's lifetime lest the heavenly reward be lost. However, every bishop kept careful record, and that record was an essential part of a bishop's obituary.

In any event, at this crucial time it was the bishops, especially Johann Friesen in Manitoba, who challenged the people to accept anew the tribulations required of all people of God who wanted to be faithful to their baptismal vows. Suffering, it was said, was necessary for the testing and refinement of the church — "as gold is proven in the fire"[93] — for the glory of God, as evidence of the church's loyalty, and as a witness to the world.

The entire Scriptures, as understood by the Reinlaender, confirmed the truth that people desiring to live a godly life had to expect persecution. The Old Testament prophets predicted tribulation and

TABLE 13[92]

SERVICE RECORD OF FOUR REINLAENDER BISHOPS

NAME	Johann Wiebe	Johann Friesen	Jacob Wiens	Isaak M. Dyck
DATES	1837–1906	1869–1935	1855–1932	1889–1969
PLACE OF SERVICE	Russia Manitoba	Manitoba Mexico	Manitoba Saskatchewan Mexico	Manitoba Mexico
YEARS AS MINISTER*	5	10	12	21
YEARS AS BISHOP	35	23	32	36
SERMONS†	1,544	1,816	1,577	3,000
BAPTISMS‡	2,228	1,713	1,396	4,988
WEDDINGS	294	229	184	300
FUNERALS	660	582	370	1,175

* Reference here is to ministerial years prior to ordination as bishop.
† Not including those given at baptisms, funerals, and weddings.
‡ Reference is to number of persons baptized, not number of events, as in weddings and funerals.

the New Testament illustrated it. The Book of Hebrews, especially, was a chronicle of martyrdom and of witnesses, who by their testimony and by their death conquered kingdoms. A survey of church history likewise made clear that the "true children of God and followers of Jesus have been born to suffer, to endure, and to be persecuted."[94] The same was true of "the beautiful *Maertyrerbuch*" (*Martyr's Mirror*) which was "read far too little in our dark and godless times and unknown in many of our homes and families."[95]

Thus, the appeal to the Scriptures and their teachings was augmented with an appeal to the faith, life, and death of the ancestors, whose example deserved emulation. Their faith, which they "sealed with their blood," should be "our faith." The commandments of God, which were the rules for life of the forefathers, should be the contemporary guideline as well.

> There is only one difference between them and us, namely that they persevered in the heavy persecutions and through the hor-

> rors of martyrdom. We, however, have not sacrificed our blood in our battle against sin.[96]

The history of the immediate past was appealed to as a further source of strength. The departure from Russia, the "beloved homeland and fatherland" of their fathers, bishops, and ministers, was an act of faith, love, and hope. They were warned by those who stayed behind that deprivation and starvation awaited them in North America. But God cared for them "as a loving father cares for his children" and not a single person died of hunger. On the contrary, the people soon became well-to-do and it was those who stayed behind who within a short time were facing starvation.[97] The decision to leave Russia had been a very difficult one for Bishop Johann Wiebe. The fields of beautiful high grass and rich, waving wheat fields had been a great temptation, but the voice from above had been clear:

> If the church is to be kept faithful to the pure teaching of the gospel, she will have to live once again among heathen people.[98]

In this case, faithfulness required emigration to Mexico, because the prospects in Canada were not good. The government wanted to use the public schools to make "hundred per cent Canadians" out of everybody, including the Mennonites, and "the foundation of these schools was the motto: one king, one God, one navy, one flag, one all-British empire."[99] But it was not only the compulsion in school matters, but the problem of worldliness in general. Conformity was everywhere evident, especially with respect to automobiles and an indescribable emphasis on pretty clothes.[100] If the church was to escape absorption into the world, it had to escape that world. The church was in turmoil because those who had become unfaithful ("*die Abgefallenen*") did their best to frustrate the emigration movement.

It was, therefore, necessary to ascertain "who was remaining loyal to the confession given at baptism and joining the church in the emigration to Mexico."[101] Announcement was made that all those willing should indicate their intention and register anew with the bishop; otherwise it would be concluded that membership in the Reinlaender church had been forfeited in favour of some other church. Quite understandably, this made it very difficult for those who decided not to emigrate. They were obliged to leave their church

and were condemned as being disloyal to their baptismal vows. While some none the less refused to reregister, others found it easier to indicate a willingness to emigrate but then not take any further action, or, having emigrated, to return. As it was written in Mexico many years later:

> How many of those who registered, whose names to this very day are in the church book as emigrants, . . . changed their minds, moved back, and are now sitting in the lap of the world.[102]

The way was now cleared for the final stages of the long-discussed migration. During September 1921, the Manitoba and Swift Current colonies each purchased tracts of land, adjacent to each other, in Chihuahua, consisting of 155,000 acres and 74,125 acres, respectively.[103] The purchase price was $8.25 per acre.[104]

Severe problems and considerable friction accompanied the liquidation of Reinlaender holdings in Canada. Prior to the completion of the Mexican land scheme, a financial nightmare arose in connection with the attempted sale of 107,000 acres near Swift Current for five million dollars.[105] The deal with Florida entrepreneurs had miscarried, largely because the American promoters were unable to sustain their end of the bargain. However, Canadian lawyers demanded remuneration from the Reinlaender for their role in attracting a serious buyer and arranging a purchase. The case was submitted to the courts, whereupon the Mennonites were required to forfeit 10,200 acres of land in lieu of a settlement of $222,000 and court costs.

The entire protracted affair was extremely embarrassing for the Reinlaender, who viewed the final resolution as yet further evidence of persecution against them. Their bitterness becomes more understandable in light of the fact that the Court of King's Bench, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, and the Supreme Court of Canada all supported the Mennonites. The Privy Council in London reversed their judgments. There were other such disappointments. The Mennonites were also taken advantage of in Mexico. The land purchased at more than eight dollars per acre was said to be worth but thirty centavos or fifteen cents per acre.[106]

Additional problems arose for the Reinlaender. Depressed land prices caused by the first post-war recession eroded morale and

deterred the more undecided members from joining the migration. As well, heated debates were held over whether all the Reinlaender land should be disposed of in one communal block, or whether the sale of farms should be left to private initiative. Despite pronounced resistance to their proposal, the leaders pressed ahead with their plan to effect a single sale. Only when it became apparent that such a transaction could not be completed were the Reinlaender permitted to dispose of their property in an individual manner.[107]

On March 1, 1922, the first chartered trainload of Reinlaender emigrants left Plum Coulee en route to Mexico. A second train followed the next day, and an eyewitness chronicled the emotional departure:

> Thursday, March 2, 1922, was a beautiful clear day. . . . Before departure time hundreds of people gathered around the station and hundreds of farewells were said. The locomotive was shunting railroad cars, . . . and animated conversations and quiet weeping were punctuated by the loud grumblings of coupled boxcars. Finally all twenty-seven freight cars and three passenger cars had been connected in proper order. . . . At 12:20 a.m. all were ready, the signal was given, and slowly the train pulled out of the little town of Haskett. . . .[108]

Of all the Reinlaender, those from Manitoba showed by far the most enthusiasm for the emigration. Between the peak years 1922 and 1926, 3,200 villagers from the province (about 64 per cent of the total Manitoba Reinlaender group) participated in the move.[109] Trains carrying the first groups of Reinlaender from the Swift Current area left about a week after the initial Manitoba departure. About 1,200 (one-third) of that district's Reinlaender eventually made their way to Mexico.[110]

The story at Hague unfolded apart from the others. This colony had indignantly withdrawn its participation in a united group migration after a financial dispute had flared up during the Mexico negotiations.[111] The Hague Reinlaender subsequently purchased 35,000 acres in the state of Durango, where the first settlement was established in 1924. Deflated land prices delayed the early departure of the Hague public school resisters and generally diminished the colony's support for migration. Altogether, 950 persons, representing one-fourth of the colony's population, decided to move to Mexico.[112]

TABLE 14[113]

CHORTITZER-SOMMERFELDER-BERGTHALER(S)
LAND-SEEKING DELEGATIONS

DATE	DESTINATION	GROUPS REPRESENTED
Feb. 1919	Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay	Self-appointed
11 Feb. – 2 Sept. 1921	Mexico, Paraguay	Chortitzer, Sommerfelder, Saskatchewan Bergthaler
Feb. 1921	Mexico	Saskatchewan Bergthaler
Oct. – Nov. 1921	Mexico	Sommerfelder, Chortitzer
Early Summer, 1922	Mexico	Sommerfelder

Emigration to Paraguay

Concurrent, but separate from the Reinlaender, the Chortitzer of Manitoba, the Sommerfelder of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the Bergthaler (Saskatchewan) groups conducted their own search for another home (Table 14). A self-appointed delegation of three visited several South American countries in 1919, but the mission boasted little success. Still, a connection had been made with Paraguayan officials who hinted that their government might be receptive to acquiring a group of farmers such as the Mennonites. Back home, the respective groups agreed to pursue the slim lead.

An official Chortitzer-Sommerfelder-Bergthaler(S) delegation, selected in September 1920, was instructed to locate and assess potential settlement sites in Paraguay and interview the authorities regarding the necessary privileges.[114] Irregularities in citizenship papers delayed the party until February 11, 1921. By this time, the second Reinlaender delegation had returned from Mexico, and consequently it was decided by the Sommerfelder to investigate both countries.

The Paraguay delegation was gone more than six months, and during this time it enlisted the aid of Samuel McRoberts, a New York financier, who had access to powerful officials in the Paraguayan government, including President Manuel Gondra. Gondra eagerly wished to stimulate economic and agricultural growth within his country. He also desired to assert Paraguay's hegemony over the vast territory of land known as the Gran Chaco lying west of the

Paraguay River. Populating the area with foreign nationals, Gondra surmised, was one method by which this might be accomplished.[115]

An interview between the president and the Mennonite delegates was arranged for April 4, 1921, by McRoberts. Discussions focused on the all-important consideration of special concessions, and both parties arrived at a common agreement. Before the end of July, a document outlining special status for the Mennonites was ratified by the Senate and Congress of Paraguay.[116] The *Privilegium* resembled the charter obtained by the Reinlaender from Mexico, with one major difference. The official written assurances from Paraguay carried with them the strength not only of presidential decree but also of congressional law.

Meanwhile, the delegation had set out on a four-week tour of the Chaco. Seasonally, the weather was at its best, but even so, the "green hell" must have vividly impressed and challenged the sensibilities of the visitors. The regional climate was semi-tropical, itself a feature that would require enormous physical adjustments by the Mennonites. Patches of open grasslands, possessing few fresh-water wells, alternated with scrubby woodland. Various Indian tribes called the area their home and, until the arrival of the Mennonites, appeared to be the only people capable of carving a living out of this primitive wilderness. On balance, it did not appear to be a region that would easily lend itself to European-type settlement. Yet the report which the delegates prepared for the churches back home spoke quite optimistically:

> We are of the opinion that the land in general is well adapted for agriculture, stock-raising, fruit growing, and the raising of vegetables. We believe that grain, such as wheat, etc. can be grown at certain times of the year. . . . We believe that this land, blessed with its various advantages and its mild climate, would be well adapted to colonization if the necessary railway connection with the port on the river is established . . .[117]

En route home, the Manitoba delegates stopped in Mexico, where they were promised similar concessions to those awarded earlier to the Reinlaender. Their interest in Mexico was minimal, however, mainly because a *Privilegium*, given by the president only, lacked the guarantee of permanence. They looked for a *Privilegium* grounded in the statutes or entrenched in the constitution.

A West Reserve Sommerfelder group, headed by Bishop Abra-

TABLE 15[119]

MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN MENNONITE IMMIGRANTS TO LATIN AMERICA, 1922–30

GROUP	ORIGIN	DATES	APPROX. NUMBER	DESTINATION
		A. MEXICO		
Reinlaender	Swift Current	1922–26	1,200	Chihuahua
Reinlaender	Manitoba (W.R.)	1922–26	3,200	Chihuahua
Reinlaender	Hague	1924–25	950	Durango
Sommerfelder	Manitoba (W.R.) Herbert, Sask.	1922–25	600	Chihuahua
Total to Mexico			5,950	
		B. PARAGUAY		
Chortitzer	Manitoba (E.R.)	1926–30	1,201	Chaco
Sommerfelder	Manitoba (W.R.)	1926–30	357	Chaco
Bergthaler	Rosthern, Sask.	1926–27	227	Chaco
Total to Paraguay			1,785	
Total to Latin America			7,735	

ham Doerksen, had in the meantime, however, become persuaded that Mexico was a more attractive homeland than Paraguay. Accordingly, a three-man delegation journeyed to Mexico in October 1921, carrying with it a ten-point request for special privileges. The ensuing negotiations were favourable and in the early summer of 1922, 12,000 acres of land were purchased in Chihuahua just to the north of the Manitoba and Swift Current settlements.[118] Sommerfelder migration to the site began later that year in October and involved 600 people over the next few years. Thus 5,950 Canadian Mennonites made Mexico their home (Table 15). In the fall of 1922 the Kleine Gemeinde, representing "about 300 Canadian and 150 American families," took an option on 150,000 acres of Santa Clara ranch land, but the immigration of this group did not materialize in the 1920s.[120]

The prospect of settling in Mexico elicited little excitement among the majority of Chortitzer and Sommerfelder considering emigration. Some regarded the social and political climate of the country as too unstable to accommodate nonresistant settlers. Many harboured suspicions as to the legality of the Mexican *Privilegium*, which bore the signatures of only the president and one of his ministers. Others simply wished to enter a territory where they could remain "unmolested." Thus it came about that the Chortitzer, accompanied by some Sommerfelder and Saskatchewan Bergthaler, removed themselves, beginning in 1926, to the most inaccessible refuge they could find—the Chaco of Paraguay.

McRoberts continued to assist them in their transfer to Paraguay. Under his direction, two companies were formed to facilitate the liquidation of assets in Canada and to secure land for the settlers in the Chaco.[121] The Corporación Paraguaya supervised the events in South America, while the Intercontinental Company co-ordinated the disposal of the Canadian properties. Enormous sums of money changed hands during the course of the proceedings, not always to the advantage of the Mennonites. In the sale of the Chaco lands, for instance, the Corporación Paraguaya netted a clear profit of $486,576.54.[122]

During the latter half of the decade, 1926–30, 1,785 Chortitzer, Sommerfelder, and Saskatchewan Bergthaler Mennonites left Canada for Paraguay.[123] This total fell considerably short of the number predicted by the leaders and organizers at the outset of the operation. The border war between Paraguay and Bolivia, the extreme hardships of settlement, and the deaths of many children, as well as depressed land prices, caused many to rethink their position and to become reconciled to the public school. An attempt had been made to organize the three emigrating groups into a single congregation, a not unlikely prospect since they did have common roots in the Bergthaler group of Russia, but the most that could be achieved at this time was a representative administrative committee to lead the emigration. At their destination in the Menno Colony of the Chaco, a single congregation of Sommerfelder and Chortitzer, led by the Chortitzer bishop, Martin Friesen, gradually came into being. The Bergthaler(S), though part of the same colony, formed their own group.

The consequences of the Canadian exodus were felt immediately (Table 16) among those staying behind in Canada. The departure of

TABLE 16[124]

SUMMARY OF LATIN AMERICAN SETTLEMENTS

LOCATION	DATE OF FOUNDING	CANADIAN SOURCE	CONGREGATION	BISHOP
		A. MEXICO		
Chihuahua	Mar. 1922	Manitoba (W.R.)	Reinlaender	Isaak M. Dyck
Chihuahua	Mar. 1922	Swift Current	Reinlaender	Abraham Wiebe
Durango	1924	Hague-Osler	Reinlaender	Jacob Wiens
Chihuahua	Nov. 1922	Manitoba (W.R.)	Sommerfelder	Abraham Doerksen
		B. PARAGUAY		
Chaco	Nov. 1926	Manitoba (E.R.)	Chortitzer	Martin C. Friesen
		Manitoba (W.R.)	Sommerfelder	
		Saskatchewan	Bergthaler	Aron Zacharias

Reinlaender, Chortitzer, Sommerfelder, and Bergthaler(S) stunned the reserves in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and permanently altered the socio-religious complexion of these areas. Those least given to compromise had left. Those ready for some accommodation to society and the educational system remained. Although large numbers of Reinlaender had stayed behind, congregations by that name ceased to exist, because the leadership had left, taking the all-important church registers with them. In due course, the people remaining in the Hague-Osler and West Reserve areas reorganized under a different name, but in the Swift Current area the remnant drifted towards the Sommerfelder or into the camps of other Mennonite groups who viewed them as a home mission field.

Several Reinlaender villages ceased to exist as a result of the migration, and the open field system, which had fallen into disuse among all but the Reinlaender, also disappeared. Blumengart, Eichenfeld, and Kronstal in the West Reserve lost all their residents. Other centres, such as Reinland, Rosengart, and Blumenort, never fully recovered from their population losses.[125] In some villages, fears were expressed that the vacant Reinlaender farms would be occupied by non-Mennonites. It was no secret that the outgoing Reinlaender favoured the sale of their land to people other than

Mennonites.[126] One A.P. Elias of Winkler voiced the concerns of many when he anxiously informed the government that:

> Some of them [Reinlaender] are moving to Mexico and are selling their land to any kind of people and we who like to stay here want to keep it as it was given to us. We want only Mennonites here. Please let us know what to do in this matter.[127]

No serious attempt was made by government officials to dissuade the Mennonites from leaving the country, probably on the assumption that the exodus would not happen.[128] In the end, it was expected, the Reinlaender would adjust to the new situation and accept the public schools. As one writer observed: "The gasoline filling station has already crept into the *darpen* or villages, which a few years ago were 'diehard' old Mennonite centers."[129] When the exodus did occur, it was assumed that the emigrants would return. Premier Martin of Saskatchewan likely typified the indifferent official opinion when he remarked:

> I am fairly sure personally that it will only be a short time until people who have gone to Mexico will be coming back and telling the Saskatchewan people the truth about conditions there. If this occurs, I have no fears that any considerable number of Saskatchewan people will go to Mexico.[130]

The Premier was both right and wrong. He was right in assuming that not everybody would go. He was wrong in miscalculating how deeply those who chose to leave felt about the issues and what price they were ready to pay for their convictions. Those leaving felt that they had been betrayed by governments, while they had kept their end of the bargain which had brought them to Canada in the first place. They had agreed to be the pioneer agriculturalists which Canada desperately needed at the time. They and their children and children's children had not turned their back on the land and drifted to the cities as so many other immigrants had done.[131] They had become an economic asset rather than a liability, and they wondered why the governments did not recognize this and allow them the essential cultural latitude. The answer was clear. The needs and priorities had changed. Cultural assimilation of new immigrant groups had become more important than their agricultural pioneer-

ing. The Mennonites had lost their former power to bargain for special privileges.

The departing Mennonites, for their part, did not overlook writing a letter to Ottawa to thank the governments of Canada and Britain for every consideration they had received in nearly fifty years of sojourn in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. They were grateful for original land grants, for loans, and for the general goodwill extended to them, and they wanted it to be understood that they were leaving because they felt a church could not survive if the word of God was absent from the schools. They also hoped that their departure would lead to greater tolerance in the future.[132]

The emigrating Mennonites lacked sympathy not only among certain political leaders, but also with public opinion and the press generally, though with exceptions. Journalist Gerald M. Brown of the *Saskatoon Phoenix* was convinced that it would be "difficult indeed to replace the sturdy, honest, and hard-working farmers who are leaving their Canadian homes in disgust and disappointment."[133] The distant-from-the-scene Victoria papers, however, reflected very much the wartime sentiment that Mennonites were undesirable citizens. The *Victoria Daily Times* was ready to see "200,000 Mennonites" leave the country without any "pang of regret" because

> Canada will be much better off in the long run without that type of citizenry whose tenets constitute the taking of all it can get without giving anything in return.[134]

The *Manitoba Free Press*, which through the years had sought to interpret fairly the Mennonites to the public,[135] especially with reference to their schools, could not side with them in the early 1920s. The legality, or rather the illegality, of their claims to educational autonomy had been determined by the Manitoba Court of Appeal and by the Supreme Court of Canada. The Mennonites were therefore without a claim which the state could recognize as legitimate. In the words of the editorial writers:

> The Old Coloniers are therefore reduced to establishing their case for particular treatment by an appeal based upon an assumption that it is a fundamental natural right of any sect, group, or nationality to set up a state within the state and arro-

> gate to itself one of the state's prime functions, that of seeing that children are suitably educated to discharge the duties of citizenship. This is a point upon which the democratic state cannot compromise.[136]

In Paraguay, as in Mexico, new chapters in the history of Mennonite pioneering were now being written. Whether the sacrifices required by the new frontier would be rewarded with the survival of those values for which the undertaking had been made in the first place remained to be seen. Meanwhile, the places left vacant in Canada, and the new countries being opened up, became a place of potential refuge for émigrés of the Russian Revolution. Soon it became clear that those departing Canada might be contributing to the survival not only of themselves but also of those in Russia in need of a new homeland, in Canada perhaps but quite possibly also in Latin America. It so happened that, throughout the decade, Mennonites from Russia would be knocking on doors in both North and South America.

In Paraguay there was a double welcome. Not only did the new colony in the Chaco open wide its primitive homes to destitute people with no other place to go, but the Paraguayan president himself made them feel completely welcome and completely free. President José P. Guggiari regarded the Mennonite "enterprise with great sympathy" and gave assurances that laws and national authorities would protect Mennonite properties and give "maximum guaranty for your persons, possessions, and work." Concerning the Mennonite value system, he said:

> The first Mennonites who arrived in this Republic were preceded by the just fame of honorable traditions. I hope that the colonists will show themselves worthy of such traditions, maintaining in all their purity their customs, their religion, and their culture.[137]

In Mexico the reverse was true. After two years of residence in the country the Mennonites had not endeared themselves to the authorities and the people. As a consequence, Mennonites in the U.S.A. negotiating for the admission of at least 50,000 from Russia were told to forget about their plans. On December 26, 1924, the

president of Mexico admitted to the Governor of the State of Chihuahua that the state and its people had never really welcomed the Mennonites and that their "clannish spirit" and unwillingness "to become Mexican citizens" had been a disappointment:

> It was thought at first that they would be an educational asset to the nation, as there is no doubt they are good farmers and up-to-date in their methods, but they give no employment to and avoid intercourse with Mexicans, and choose for colonization purposes lands far from centers of population, thus maintaining a state of almost complete isolation and comparative independence of the federal and state governments, which is resented. In short, it is presumed that the same qualities which make the Mennonites unpopular in Canada and the United States are responsible for the objection to colonization by them in Mexico.[138]

Thus, the removal to Latin America of thousands of Mennonites was a mixed blessing from the beginning, accompanied by hope and promise but also fraught with economic, cultural, and national dangers, only some of which had been anticipated. But for the time being the dangers were greatest, not in the Americas but in faraway Russia, where tens of thousands were anxious to escape the new Soviet regime.

FOOTNOTES

1 J.T.M. Anderson, *The Education of the New Canadian* (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1918), p. 78. Anderson's specific point was that either the private schools among these people should be raised to a proper standard or public schools should be established.

2 "Eingabe der Delegaten von Saskatchewan an die mexikanische Regierung," *Der Mitarbeiter* 14 (February 1921):12. Johann P. Wall was the leader of the delegation.

3 A good deal has been written on the Mennonite School Question. The following are particularly noteworthy: John Jacob Bergen, "The Manitoba Mennonites and their Schools from 1873–1924" (M.Ed. term paper, University of Manitoba, 1950); John Jacob Bergen, "A Historical Study of Education in the Municipality of Rhineland" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1959); Adolf Ens, "Mennonite Relations with Governments: Western Canada, 1870–1925"

(Ph.D. dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1979), pp. 172–277; Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786–1920: The History of a Separate People* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), pp. 333–62; E.K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia* (Altona: D.W. Friesen & Sons, 1955), pp. 161–86; E.K. Francis, "The Mennonite School Problem in Manitoba, 1874–1919," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 27 (July 1953): 204–37; Abraham Friesen, "Emigration in Mennonite History with Special Reference to the Conservative Mennonite Emigration from Canada to Mexico and South America after World War I" (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1960); I.I. Friesen, "The Mennonites of Western Canada with Special Reference to Education" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1934); Cornelius J. Jaenen, "The Manitoba School Question: An Ethnic Interpretation," in M.L. Kovacs (ed.), *Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education* (Regina, 1978), pp. 317–31; William Janzen, "The Limits of Liberty in Canada: The Experience of the Mennonites, Hutterites, and Doukhobors" (Ph.D. dissertation, Carleton University, 1981), pp. 197–267; W.L. Morton, "Manitoba Schools and Canadian Nationality, 1890–1923," in David C. Jones, et al., *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West* (Calgary, Alta.: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1979), pp. 3–13; "The West: The Schools and the Clash of Culture, 1880–1920," in F. Henry Johnson, *A Brief History of Canadian Education* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Company of Canada, 1968), pp. 93–102; Andrew Willows, "A History of Mennonites, Particularly in Manitoba" (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1924).

4 The Swiss were not preoccupied totally with their own affairs. In 1920 the Old Mennonite Conference of Ontario felt "it expedient to use our influence on behalf of the misunderstandings between a certain branch of the Russian Mennonite church and the government, to adjust the difficulties. . . ." *Calendar of Appointments*, 1920–21, p. [15].

5 J.G. Rempel, p. 144.

6 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada 1786–1920*, pp. 333–58.

7 See *ibid.*, p. 340, and Adolf Ens, pp. 268–69. Figures are approximate for later years, due to the fact that some Mennonite districts were only partially Mennonite, making inclusion or exclusion a relative matter.

8 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada 1786–1920*, pp. 342–43.

9 Quoted in *Die Mennoniten Gemeinden in der Gretna-Altona Umgebung in Manitoba* (n.p., 1963), p. 9.

10 Adolf Ens, pp. 184–85.

11 Where there were not properly accredited schools, non-public or otherwise, the Manitoba and Saskatchewan governments were empowered to establish schools, if necessary over the objections of the

local populace. In Alberta, public schools had to be established through local initiatives, thus making isolated settlements in the Peace River district attractive, as long as no locally initiated public schools were established. Children living in districts where there were no public schools were exempt from the compulsory school attendance act.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 269.

13 For a detailed explication of the positions of the various groups at different times, see *ibid.*

14 "Statistik der Mennoniten-Gemeinden," *Der Mitarbeiter* 12 (February 1918):8.

15 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada 1786–1920*, pp. 192–93.

16 See Lovell Clark, ed., *The Manitoba School Question: Majority Rule or Minority Rights?* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1968), pp. 98–181.

17 The percentage is obtained from information supplied by Tables 36 and 45 in *Census of Canada, 1921* (Ottawa, King's Printer, 1925), 2:241, 257.

18 Ninety-seven per cent claimed a Slavic language as mother tongue. Percentages obtained from information supplied by Table 81 in *ibid.*, pp. 588–93.

19 George S. Tomkins, "Canadian Education and Cultural Diversity: Historical and Contemporary Implications," in *Multiculturalism and Education: A Report on the Proceedings of the Western Regional Conference, 1978*, p. 58. See also John Murray Gibbon, *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Northern Nation* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1938), and *idem*, "European Seeds in the Canadian Garden," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 17 (1923), 3rd series, section 2, pp. 119–29.

20 George S. Tomkins, p. 58.

21 John Herd Thompson, *The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914–18* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978), pp. 87–88; Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1979), p. 8.

22 J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates* (Toronto: The Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1909), p. 281.

23 J.T.M. Anderson, pp. 238–40.

24 George Chipman, quoted in Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 211.

25 Sonia Cipywynk, "Multiculturalism and the Child in Western Canada: Then and Now," in *Multiculturalism and Education*, p. 33.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

27 Isaak M. Dyck, *Die Auswanderung der Reinlaender Mennoniten Gemeinde von Canada nach Mexiko* (Cuauhtemoc, Mexiko: Imprenta Colonial, 1971), pp. 43–44.

28 PAC, RG. 18, Vol. 585, File 682, "Secret and Confidential" report to the Commissioner, RNWMP, Regina from Superintendent, Commanding Manitoba District, Winnipeg, December 10, 1919.

29 See Marilyn Barber, "Canadianization Through the Schools of the Prairie Provinces Before World War I: The Attitudes and Aims of the English-speaking Majority," in *Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education*, ed. Martin L. Kovacs (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1978), pp. 228–90.

30 W.A. Mackintosh and W.L.G. Joerg, gen. eds., *Canadian Frontiers of Settlement* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1934–1936), Vol. 8: *Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces: The Social Side of the Settlement Process*, by C.A. Dawson and Eva R. Younge, pp. 170–72; Howard Palmer, "Response to Foreign Immigration: Nativism and Ethnic Tolerance in Alberta, 1880–1920" (M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1971), p. 151; Joanne Levy, "In Search of Isolation: The Holdeman Mennonites of Linden, Alberta and Their School," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* XI:I (1979):115–30.

31 An editorial in the 3 August 1920 edition of the *Manitoba Free Press* summarized the public opinion that had been building for some time: "This is a land of freedom. . . . But we do not want a perverted sense of that principle to lead to isolated sections and divisions of the population. We want to be one people with a sense of national unity and with each section of the country interested in the progress and welfare of the rest of the country." In Swift Current a mass meeting convened in 1918 articulated its sentiments much more bluntly. The meeting resolved that "the children of these people [Mennonites] must be educated up to our standards of British and Canadian citizenship, so that they may, in the future, voluntarily relinquish their claims to an unjust exemption." *Canadian Annual Review*, 1918, p. 427.

32 PAM, MG 14, B 36, #45, Dr. R.S. Thornton, *Address to the Legislature of Manitoba, January 30th, 1920* (Winnipeg: Legislation Assembly of Manitoba, n.d.), p. 12.

33 Adolf Ens, p. 217.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 222.

35 I.I. Friesen, p. 140, contended that the action taken against the Saskatchewan Mennonites more closely resembled "persecution than it did prosecution."

36 Adolf Ens, pp. 227–29.

37 A.J. Sumner of Saskatoon criticized the government for its handling of the Mennonites. He contended that "the reason that negotiations failed was primarily due to lack of sympathy and failure to appreciate the deadly earnestness of these people by your colleagues and officials. There has been no change of attitude upon the part of the Mennonites, they are still endeavouring to carry out the tenets of

their faith and creed, in identically the same way as when they were invited to the Dominion, which privileges they were told they could always enjoy." SAB, W. M. Martin Papers, A.J. Sumner to Premier Martin, 9 December 1921.

38 In 1920, a total of 1,131 prosecutions against the Mennonites netted the courts $7,834 in fines. SAB, S.J. Latta Papers, SAB, M5, 6(2).

39 I.I. Friesen, p. 138.

40 Kurt Tischler, *The German Canadians in Saskatchewan with Particular Reference to the Language Problem, 1900-1930* (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1977), p. 95.

41 Harold J. Foght, *A Survey of Education in the Province of Saskatchewan* (Regina: King's Printer, 1918), p. 147; Anderson, p. 75; Bergen, "Manitoba Mennonites and Their Schools," pp. 44-45.

42 Foght, p. 174. Robert England, *The Central European Immigrant in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1929), p. 52, had a similar analysis.

43 J.T.M. Anderson, p. 223.

44 Interview with T.D. Regehr, 25 July 1981.

45 C.B. Sissons, *Bi-lingual Schools in Canada* (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1917), p. 145.

46 See Harold Foght.

47 CGC, XV-31.2, "1910-H.H. Ewert," H.H. Ewert, "The Mennonites," an address given under the auspices of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, 18 April 1932, pp. 11-12.

48 *Ibid.*

49 CGC, XV-31.2, "1920-Mexico," David Harder, "Von Kanada nach Mexico," n.d.

50 Adolf Ens, p. 237.

51 SAB, W.M. Martin Papers, Johann F. Peters to Premier Martin, 13 April 1920.

52 PAC, RG. 2, *Order-in-Council* I, 957, 13 August 1873.

53 PAC, RG. 76, Vol. 173, 58764, John M. Lowe to David Klassen et al., 23 July 1873.

54 A full account of the case is documented in "Rex vs. Hildebrand, August 12, 1919," *Western Weekly Reports* (Calgary: Burroughs & Company, 1919), pp. 286-90. See also Adolf Ens, pp. 239-47, and Abraham Friesen, pp. 59-62.

55 Quoted in Adolf Ens, p. 241.

56 Adolf Ens, p. 247.

57 Table prepared by Adolf Ens, p. 272. The respective petitions may be found in *Der Mitarbeiter* 10 (January 1916):2-3; *Der Mitarbeiter* 10 (March 1916):4-6 and (April 1916):1-2; CMCA, XIX-A, Microfilm 66; J.H. Doerksen, *Geschichte und Wichtige Dokumente der Mennoniten von Russland, Canada, Paraguay und Mexico* (n.p., 1923), pp. 95-96; I.I. Friesen, appendix 17; Doerksen, pp. 107-9; SAB, M5,6.

58 Adolf Ens, p. 274.

59 Quoted in I.I. Friesen, p. 126.

60 The Chortitzer petition submitted in January radiated a truly conciliatory spirit, but it is doubtful whether there was readiness to accept the flag and patriotic exercises. It read in part: "Your Petitioners are convinced that the aims of the Government can be accomplished . . . by retaining teachers of the Mennonite faith, but requiring these teachers to qualify for Normal School certificates, and by bringing into effect high standards of education and more efficient instruction in English. In short, it is proposed to bring these private schools up to public school standards in every respect within the shortest possible time." Quoted in *ibid.*

61 "Memorandum to the Members of the Manitoba Legislature from the Sommerfeld Community, Altona, Man., Chortitz Community, Niverville, Man.," March 1921.

62 See J. Skwarok, *The Ukrainian Settlers in Canada and Their Schools* (Edmonton: n.p., 1958), and Michael H. Marunchuk, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A History* (Winnipeg and Ottawa: Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences, 1970).

63 Roy H. Ruth, *Educational Echoes: A History of Education of the Icelandic-Canadians in Manitoba* (Winnipeg: n.p., 1964), p. 21.

64 Howard Palmer, *Land of the Second Chance: A History of Ethnic Groups in Southern Alberta* (Lethbridge: Lethbridge Herald, 1972), p. 66.

65 Table prepared by Adolf Ens, pp. 331–32.

66 Abraham Friesen, p. 71; Harry Leonard Sawatzky, *They Sought a Country: Mennonite Colonization in Mexico* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1971), p. 27.

67 See J.W. Shank et al., *The Gospel under the Southern Cross* (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1943). Within a few years the first Canadian Mennonite foreign missionaries would leave for Argentina. Orland Gingerich, *The Amish of Canada* (Waterloo, Ont.: Conrad Press, 1972), pp. 100–1.

68 PAC, RG. 18, vol. 585, File 682. Report from Saskatoon Detachment, Royal North West Mounted Police, Re: Rev. John P. Wall of Hochfeld and Rev. Johann J. Wall of Neuanlage, October 5, 1919. See also "Rev. J.J. Wall Died Recently in Argentine," *Saskatoon Daily Star*, 4 October 1919.

69 The full text of the letter, graphically describing his illness, suffering, death, and burial, is contained in Isaak M. Dyck, *Die Auswanderung der Reinlaender Mennoniten Gemeinde von Canada nach Mexiko* (Cuauhtemoc, Mexiko: Imprenta Colonial, 1971), pp. 59–66.

70 Abraham Friesen, pp. 70–71; Harry Leonard Sawatzky, p. 32.

71 NARS, RG. 85, File 54623/130, Governor Lee M. Russell to Julius Wiebe et al., 6 February 1920. For more detail on the

Mississippi affair, see Ens, pp. 330–37, and Abraham Friesen, pp. 74–75, 82–86, 102–3.

72 Adolf Ens, pp. 333–34. Abraham Friesen, pp. 75–76, 78, suggests that Palmer first informed the delegates that their people would be granted total military exemption, only later indicating that such a guarantee would not be forthcoming.

73 Isaak Dyck, p. 68; Adolf Ens, p. 333; Abraham Friesen, pp. 76–78.

74 Isaak Dyck, p. 68; Adolf Ens, p. 334; Harry Leonard Sawatzky, p. 34.

75 David Harder, himself a participant in the events, remarked of the border episode: "We could not find out why the border was closed to us; we were compelled to accept it as guidance from God who wanted to spare us unforeseen hardships. Very likely the offer of freedom was the hoax of a land speculator." Quoted in Cornelius Krahn, "Old Colony Mennonites," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 4:40.

76 See Adolf Ens, pp. 335–36, and NARS, RG. 85, File 54623/130.

77 Protests against Mennonite "undesirables" are on file in NARS, RG. 85, File 54623/130.

78 Harry Leonard Sawatzky, p. 35; Abraham Friesen, p. 78.

79 CGC, XV-31.2, "1920–Quebec," J.C.E. Lavoie, Public Works, Chief Architect's Office, to Jacob Friesen, Swift Current, 29 May 1920, assured the latter that the Reinlaender would "enjoy perfect freedom from speech and faith" in Quebec. Further, Lavoie testified that Quebec's school laws gave "all the powers regarding education to the parents." See also "Mennonite Delegates See Quebec Premier," *Manitoba Free Press*, 20 August 1920, p. 1; "Mennonites Submit Demands to Quebec," *Manitoba Free Press*, 21 August 1920, p. 2.

80 "Mennonites Received by Taschereau," *Regina Leader*, 20 August 1920, p. 1.

81 Isaak Dyck, p. 67; Harry Leonard Sawatzky, p. 35; Walter Schmiedehaus, *Ein Feste Burg ist Unser Gott: Der Wanderweg eines Christlichen Siedlervolkes* (Cuauhtemoc, Mexico: G.J. Rempel, 1948), p. 71.

82 Harry Leonard Sawatzky, p. 37; Abraham Friesen, p. 89.

83 Harry Leonard Sawatzky, p. 36–37; Adolf Ens, p. 341.

84 For a first-hand account of this delegation's experiences, see Johan M. Loeppky, *Ein Reisebericht von Canada nach Mexiko im Jahre 1921* (n.p., n.d.).

85 "Eingabe der Delegaten von Saskatchewan an die mexikanische Regierung," *Der Mitarbeiter* 14 (February 1921):12.

86 A complete reproduction of the privileges is given in Abraham Friesen, pp. 97–98; Sawatzky, pp. 39–40; Schmiedehaus, pp. 81–82; and Calvin Wall Redekop, *The Old Colony Mennonites: Dilemmas of Ethnic Minority Life* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), p. 251.

87 NARS, RG. 59, State Decimal File, Mexico, 1910–1929, 812.5541–812.5561M52.
88 Isaak M. Dyck, *Die Auswanderung der Reinlaender Mennoniten Gemeinde von Canada nach Mexiko* (Cuauhtemoc, Mexiko: Imprenta Colonial, 1971), p. 79.
89 *Ibid.*, p. 80.
90 *Ibid.*, p. 169.
91 1 Timothy 3:2–4, KJV.
92 Isaak Dyck, pp. 173–76.
93 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
94 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
95 *Ibid.*
96 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
97 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
98 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
99 *Ibid.*, p. 43.
100 *Ibid.*, p. 51.
101 *Ibid.*, p. 85.
102 *Ibid.*
103 Adolf Ens, p. 342.
104 Walter Schmiedehaus, p. 83. It was obvious the Reinlaender overpaid dearly for their Mexican properties. For their agriculturally superior Canadian holdings, many were receiving only $4/acre more than what they were paying for the relatively unproductive land.
105 Accounts of the Swift Current land fiasco are found in Harry Leonard Sawatzky, pp. 41–42; Abraham Friesen, p. 103; and Adolf Ens, pp. 342–43.
106 As reported by the Embassy of the U.S.A. in Mexico. NARS, RG.59, State Decimal File, Mexico, 1910–1929, 812.5541–812.5561M52, George T. Summerlin to Secretary of State, 4 October 1923. One hundred centavos equal one peso. In 1925 the Mexican peso equalled approximately fifty cents. Franz Pick and René Sédillot, *All the Monies of the World* (New York: Pick Publishing, 1971), p. 397.
107 Harry Leonard Sawatzky, pp. 46–48.
108 Jacob Peters, quoted in Peter D. Zacharias, *Reinland: An Experience in Community* (Altona, Man.: Reinland Centennial Committee, 1976), p. 201.
109 Conflicting figures have been cited with reference to the migration to Latin America. The numbers quoted in the present work rely on the statistical index compiled by Adolf Ens, p. 354.
110 *Ibid.*
111 For details, see Harry Leonard Sawatzky, pp. 43–44.
112 Adolf Ens, p. 354.
113 *Ibid.*, p. 346.

114 Paraguay was wooing immigrants. Not only Mennonites but Chinese, Japanese, Germans, and Russians were prospective colonists. NARS, Secretary of State Decimal File, 1910-1929, Box 8470, 834.51/132-834.543017.

115 See PAC, RG. 25, G.I., Vol. 1472, File 416-26c, Department of External Affairs, "Settlement of Canadian Mennonites in the Chaco," August 1932.

116 A copy of the document is reproduced in Abraham Friesen, pp. 117-19, and Walter Quiring, *Russlanddeutsche Suchen eine Heimat* (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1938), pp. 51-52.

117 Quoted in Walter Quiring, "The Canadian Mennonite Immigration into the Paraguayan Chaco, 1926-27," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 8 (January 1934):35.

118 Harry Leonard Sawatzky, p. 51; Adolf Ens, p. 351.

119 Adolf Ens, p. 354.

120 NARS, RG.59, State Decimal File, Mexico, 1910-1929, 812.5541-812.5561M52, John W. Dye, "Mennonites take an option on 150,000 acres of ranch land in Chihuahua, Mexico," 20 September 1922.

121 Some writers, such as J. Winfield Fretz, *Pilgrims in Paraguay* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1953), p. 13, have attributed philanthropic motives to McRoberts's efforts to aid the Mennonites. Canadian officials, and the Mennonites themselves, were cognizant of baser impulses underlying McRoberts's work. This was indicated in a missive addressed to F. C. Blair, Dept. of Immigration and Colonization, from Bruce Walker, Director, Publicity and Information Bureau, on 17 January 1922. "Mr. McRoberts . . . has appeared amongst the Mennonites in this neighbourhood and explains as his reason (so I am told by the Mennonite Bishop) for interesting himself in their lands, that his wife and daughter have become greatly impressed with the Mennonite view of Scripture and . . . urged him to help the persecuted Mennonites in Manitoba. . . . The Bishop of course informs me that he was unaware of any persecutions . . . has an impression that the financial transaction is not entirely without interest to their kind patron." PAC, DCI. File 58764, Vol. 8.

122 CGC, XV-31.2, "1920-Paraguay," "The Canadian Mennonite Emigrations: The Paraguayan Experience" (n.a., n.d.).

123 Various contradictory figures have been quoted in regard to the number of Mennonites entering Paraguay. Some of these include: a) "Report of Conditions of Mennonites in Paraguay," *Gospel Herald* 22 (16 May 1929):147 reports 1,743 souls left Canada for Paraguay; b) a Canadian government report (PAC, RG. 25, G.I., Vol. 1472, File 416-26c) lists the figure at 1,876; c) *Mennonitische Post* 1 (21 July 1977):2 reports the total as 1,742; d) Quiring,

"The Canadian Mennonite Immigration," p. 37, indicates 1,765 Mennonites settled in Paraguay. The total of 1,785 quoted in the present text again relies on Adolf Ens, p. 354. In the year from 1926 to 1927 the Chortitzer church membership dropped from 1,232 to 819 and the population from 2,930 to 1,939. Archives of Chortitzer Mennonite Conference, Chortitzer Mennonite Church, Register A, p. 394.

124 Adolf Ens, p. 354.

125 Peter D. Zacharias, p. 202.

126 It is alleged that, by selling their lands to non-Mennonites, the Reinlaender would force those who had remained behind to follow them to Mexico. Harry Leonard Sawatzky, pp. 47–48.

127 PAC, RG. 6, 58764, Vol. 9, A.P. Elias to Department of Immigration and Colonization, 12 October 1923.

128 W. J. Egan, the Deputy Minister in the Department of Immigration, related in a letter to David Toews on 26 June 1925 that "the Department has done everything possible to facilitate the entry of Mennonites for settlement on the land in Canada, and I am disappointed to hear of their movement [to Mexico]." He asked whether an additional large-scale exodus was pending. PAC, RG. 6, 58764, Vol. 9. Negative or indifferent Canadian attitudes are also documented in NARS, RG.85, 54623/130. In the words of one immigration inspector: "The writer in conversation with civil officers has been told repeatedly that the continued presence in Canada of this sect was detrimental to the interests of the country and that every pressure would be brought to bear to influence them to leave Canada."

129 Robert England, p. 54. The automobile was a symbol of *Gleichstellung* (accommodation) with the world. The Reinlaender had a rule forbidding members the use of the automobile. See Harder, p.8.

130 PAC, RG. 6, 58764, Vol. 9, Premier Martin to A.W. Golzen, 25 October 1922.

131 Donald Avery, pp. 9, 25.

132 The entire letter is reproduced in Walter Quiring, *Russlanddeutsche*, pp. 65–66.

133 Gerald M. Brown, "Progressive Mennonites Get in Step," *Saskatoon Phoenix* (28 June 1924):13.

134 "The Mennonites," *Victoria Daily Times*, 9 October 1922; see also "Mennonite Dreamers," *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 14 May 1920.

135 See Adolf Ens, "The Mennonites as Reflected by the *Manitoba Free Press*, 1910–1929" (research paper, University of Ottawa, 1973).

136 "The Plea of the Mennonites," *Manitoba Free Press*, 18 May 1920. See also "The Threatened Mennonite Exodus," *Manitoba Free Press*, 11 May 1920.

137 NARS, RG. 59, Secretary of State Decimal File, Paraguay, 1910–

1929, 834.51/132–834.543017, President José P. Guggiari to Mennonnite settlers, *c.* 29 September 1928.

138 NARS, RG. 59, State Decimal File, Mexico, 1910–1929, 812.5541–812.556 IM52, Thomas McNelly, American Consulate, Chihuahua, Mexico, to Department of State, 31 December 1924.