SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF FERTILE BELT # 351 INCLUDING HISTORY, MATERIAL POPULATION, INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PERIODS OF DEPRESSION AND METHODS OF RELIEF

by

Donald Carlson

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

1934

Outline of M.A. Thesis in Sociology

Student D. Carlson.

Subject:

Social and Economic development of R.M. of Fertile Belt #351 including history, material population, institutional development, periods of depression and methods of relief.

Outline of Thesis

1. Brief summary of location, topographical, and agricultural features.

2. History.

The history of R.M. of Fertile Belt, largely the history of settlement by "colonies".

1884 - Founding of Round Lake Indian Mission (Presbyterian) by Rev. H. (Dr.) McKay. A short history of the work of this mission.

1886 - Founding of Kaposvar Hungarian Colony by Count Paul Esterhazy under direction of Lord Mount Stephen. C.P.R. and Federal Government co-operating. Grant of 155,000 acres. Location. First settlers from the United States. Reinforcements from Hungary in 1888.

1900 - Stockholm Hungarian colony daughter colony of Kaposvar.

1888 - Settlement of Bohemian, Slovak and other Slovenic elements in district north of Kaposvar. First settlers from mines of Pennsylvania. Bulk of settlers after 1900 from Austria and Poland.

1886 - only 1st - Founding of New Stockholm Scandinavian colony on the north bank of Qu'Appelle River above Round Lake. P.O. "Ohlen", founded in 1889.

Building of the C.P.R. Kirkella-Saskatoon branch through Fertile Belt in 1902, also G.T.P. through the same area ten miles north in 1907. The significance of these roads and the consequent settlement and development.

3. Material Population

Present status of the main national groups: Hungarian, Bohemian-Slovenic, and Scandinavian. Population of

Fertile Belt and approximate numbers of each.

Social life in early days of the colonies. The place of the church in community life. Traditions and customs of the old land transferred to the new. History and influence of churches in Fertile Belt. Church leaders as immigration and colonization agents for railroads and governments. Assimilation. The use of the Continental and English languages. The problem of the second generation. Education. Inter-marriage.

4. Institutional Development.

Churches and schools. From Local Improvement District to Rural Municipality. Farm organizations.

5. Periods of Depression and Methods of Relief.

Difficulties of early settlement including:

Drought of 1891-92. Low prices of agricultural products and their relation to other commodities. Long distance to markets.

The period centering on 1906-07, with some statistics relating to prices of farm products.

Period following The Great War. Review of Loan, Mortgage and Debt situation which developed chiefly in and during the five years following the War. Approximate numbers of farmers involved. Possibilities of recuperation.

Three dry years, 1929-30-31. Average yields. Summer 1931 R.M. Fertile Belt included in Provincial Relief area. Taxes, the mill rate, methods of collection. School taxes, difficulties of keeping schools in operation, low rates of teachers' salaries. The compulsory tax collection act of 1932 passed by the Provincial House.

The forced return to the farm and the community as an economic unit. The greater emphasis on mixed farming. The "Bennett" wagon, the spinning wheel, and home grown "coffee".

Depression psychology, including attitude to creditors.

Some remarks on the depression as it affects the standard of living, education, morals and the opportunities of the rising generation. Effects of depression on the social and religious life of the community.

Inclusion of R.M. Fertile Belt in Provincial Relief Area, "C" division, August 1931.

(1) Direct Relief:

Red Cross operating through municipal office. Notes in payment for clothing.

Direct relief given by municipality in form of orders on local stores.

(2) Indirect Relief:

Road work paid for by orders on local stores, a public work program supported jointly by province and municipality.

Road work in payment for taxes, a municipal project.

Construction of Highway No. 9 through R.M. of Fertile Belt. A provincial relief project, the farmer working under government contractor. Payment in cash.

General comments on the efficiency, utility, and feasibility of the above projects.

(3) Feed Relief.

Price. Quality. Terms of repayment. Amounts of hay and grain distributed. Administration.

(4) Seed Relief.

Price. Quality. Amounts. Terms of repayment. Administration.

M. A. Thesis in Sociology

Student: Donald Carlson
P. O. Box 213
Wilkie, Sask.

Subject: The Social and Economic Development of R. M. of Fertile Belt #183, including history, material population, institutional development, periods of depression and methods of relief

Location, Topographical and Agricultural Features

The R. M. of Fertile Belt includes that part of Township 18 north of the Qu'Appelle Valley and Round Lake, together with all of Townships 19a, 19, 20, 21 in Ranges 1, 2 and 3, West of the 2nd Meridian. The entire Municipality lies north of the Qu'Appelle River and the southern boundry is approximately fifteen miles north of the old town of Whitewood which figured largely in the early history of the municipality as the jumping-off place of settlers.

Topographical features vary considerably in Fertile Belt. The Qu'Appelle Valley is known as a place of great natural beauty. Abundant growths of white poplar, elm, ash, western maple, birch and even scrub oak are present there. The land north of the valley is broken by long deep ravines running out for several miles from the valley. Further north the land is less rough but still broken at times by minor water-courses. North of the valley, bluffs of white poplar make the country a semi-park area.

The soil of the valley is a rich loam but north of the valley the soil is of an average quality only, being mostly a clay loam. Stones are present in the soil but not in great abundance. The semi-wooded nature of the country has necessitated the clearing of trees and bush before cultivation could be accomplished. This condition has led to the establishment

of mixed farming and to the encouragement of those settlers interested in this type of farming.

History

The early history of Fertile Belt is a story of settlement by "colonies". Typical early western conditions contributed to make this kind of settlement most attractive to the first settlers. In the decade between 1880 and 1890 the west was still very sparsely settled. There was, further, no other railway north of Whitewood on the main line. At the same time, the Indians of the West were somewhat restive before and following the rebellion of 1885. Consequently, the settlers felt the necessity of the companionship of people of the same nationality and the same religious persuasion. Like much of the early settlement of the west, the settlement of Fertile Belt was arranged through the Federal government and the Canadian Pacific Railway and was generally under religious auspices.

The premier honors of pioneering in this portion of the West do not, however, go to the early land seeker. Again it is the intrepid missionary who was first. As so often in the West, the influence of the missionary over the Indian meant the security and welfare of the settler.

The missionary in this instance was the Rev. Hugh (later Dr.) McKay. A Presbyterian by faith, Rev. McKay left Guelph, Ontario in February of the year 1884 to minister to the Indians of the West. On the first of June, the missionary left Okavace, Manitoba by team following the old Hudson Bay trail. On June sixth he pitched his tent on what was later to be the site of the Round Lake Indian School. Here a house and stable were erected. In the early winter seventeen children were gathered and school was opened. An Indian, Jacob Bear, and his wife assisted in the work .

In March of 1885 the rebellion broke out and the Indians became much agitated. The children were hastily removed from

school by their parents. Weeks full of anxiety and fear followed. The nearby towns of Whitewood and Broadview were much agitated. There were at that time approximately a thousand Cree Indians in the neighborhood. Rev. McKay remained at his post pleading the cause of peace, warning the Indians at the same time that in the event of an uprising on their part that the "Red Coats" and soldiers would arrive from the East as numerous as the "leaves on the trees".

During the summer, the trouble subsided. Some of the Indians returned to the mission and helped to build a log school house sixteen by eighteen with thatched roof and stove fireplace. In November Jacob Bear returned and assisted in the work. He was faithful and trustworthy, being interested from an early age in missions. When a boy, he had attended an Anglican Church mission school north of where the city of Winnipeg now is. That winter progress at the school was encouraging. All were anxious to learn, the Indian children seeking to master the English and the Missionary the Cree language.

In 1887 the Foreign Mission Council of the Presbyterian Church gave a grant of $4000.00 which was used to erect a building twenty-four by fifty-four with full stone basement and a wing twenty-four by thirty, two stories high. This work was interrupted by sickness among the workmen, two of whom died of typhoid fever. The following winter the school opened with an attendance of sixty Indian children.

In the following year, 1888, a school house 24 x 42 on stone foundation with full basement was erected. Miss Mary McKay, daughter of Rev. John McKay of Elphinstone, Manitoba was the first paid teacher but being called to a higher position, remained only one year. This school house was surmounted by a belfry in which hung a sweet-toned bell, a gift of Rev. McPherson

Source of Information - Dr. McKay's Own Story

of Stratford, Ontario. Although this first school building later burned to the ground, the original bell still does duty several times a day and can be heard for miles up and down the picturesque old valley.

In January 1900 Chief Kewistahaw and his chief men made request of the Missionary for a church on the reserve. This request was granted and the chief and his men assisted in its erection, hauling stone, logs, lime and sand. The church, which still functions, is located ten miles due north of Broadview. The dedicatory services were conducted by Professor Hart of Manitoba College, July first 1900.

In 1922 Rev. R. J. Ross succeeded Dr. McKay as principal of the school. The same year a disastrous cyclone damaged the school property to such an extent that government assistance was required. As a result, the government purchased the school and property and assumed supervision of the entire enterprise.

In December of 1923 Dr. and Mrs. McKay (formerly Miss Silvie Sahlmark of Stockhom, Sask.) retired to Winnipeg. Dr. McKay died in that city September 20th 1928, but his memory is still very fresh in the minds of many, both Indians and settlers, who live in the Qu'Appelle region.

Founding of Kaposvar Hungarian Colony

Among the first settlers to brave the prevations of this particular part of the West were the Hungarians. The story of their settlement is one of the most romantic and interesting chapters of early western history.

There are purported to be 15,000 Hungarian farmers in Saskatchewan, living for the most part in so-called colonies. The oldest of these is the Kaposvar colony located in the south-eastern portion of Fertile Belt Municipality. It was founded by Count Paul Esterhazy. It is said he was a scion of the famous and noble family of Esterhazy, one of the richest and oldest families in Hungary. As a youth of eighteen, he fought in the army of Louis Kossuth during the revolution in 1848. After the suppression of

the revolution, he was compelled to go into exile with many other patriots. He emigrated to England where he joined the British army as a volunteer. It is probable that during his stay in London that he became interested in the colonization efforts of the Dominion and offered his services to the government.

Count Esterhazy made his first appearance in America in 1880 at Castle Garden, New York, in the capacity of agent for the Canadian Government and the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In Castle Garden he was like a protector and father to the Hungarians who were engaged as industrial laborers. More than seventy per cent of the immigrants had been agriculturalists in the Old Land and for this reason, found their occupations uncongenial. Count Esterhazy began to visualize the establishment of agricultural colonies. Assiniboia, Canada, through which the C.P.R. main line had been recently built, presented itself as a suitable place. Here, north of the railway were thousands of acres of homestead land where thousands of families could settle.

With this in mind, he presented himself in May of 1885 before the Marquis of Landsdowne, then Governor General. His plans met with approval and a concern of financiers, with the leadership of Lord Mount Stephen, was formed to carry out the details of the project.

It was decided that the settlers should enjoy all kinds of facilities until they could stand on their own feet; in particular, they should get frame houses with equipment and stock for their work. All this was intended as a loan to be paid off in ten years with interest at the rate of six per cent. According to the permission obtained by Count Esterhazy, the area destined for Hungarian settlement was to comprise four twonships: 18, 19a, 19 and 20 in ranges 1, 2, 3 and 4 west of the 2nd meridian, an area of 125,000 acres. It later developed that other groups occupied parts of the areas designated as Hungarian immigration did not warrant the reservation of this large area for Hungarians only.

After these details had been arranged Count Esterhazy sent a group of four to inspect the lands in question. This group arrived in Whitewood in July of 1885. They returned with a very favorable report. The following winter Count Esterhazy organized a group of thirty-five families, about one hundred and fifty individuals, from the States. This first contingent of prospective settlers arrived in Whitewood in July of 1886, conducted by Count Esterhazy and Lord Mount Stephen and accompanied by a government surveyor.

At the station they were provided with tents and provisions and after a long trip by ox-cart, arrived at their destination some twenty-five miles north of Whitewood. Building materials were hauled from Whitewood and carpenters employed by the C. P. R. started to build homes for the settlers. The houses were all uniform, measuring 20 x 30. With the advent of fall they were ready for occupation. The settlers had no reason for complaint. They came with practically no resources and were now potential owners at least of a quarter section of land and a substantial frame house. In addition they were given provisions of flour, lard, bacon, sugar, coffee and tea in monthly rations extending over a period of a year and a half. To facilitate the breaking of land for cultivation, they obtained three head of cattle chosen from the herds of nearby ranchers.

In spite of the initial assistance rendered them, most of this group did not make good settlers. The relative prosperity enjoyed by them did not compel the colonists to make any strenuous efforts to start pioneer work; on the contrary, they devoted their time to hunting and sports. After the first long and severe winter some of them made up their minds to leave for a milder climate. This feeling was intensified with the coming of the second winter. The exodus of the colonists continued then that winter until by spring only approximately one-third of the original group remained, and even these were prepared to quit.

Fortunately for the success of this colonization project, Count Esterhazy returned in 1888 with a fresh group of settlers direct from Hungary. These were of indomitable courage and energy

and revived the hopes of those already there and thus saved the colony from dissolution.

In the following year, 1889, still further recruits from Hungary and the United States joined the colony. Among these were also some Bohemian immigrants from Southern Russia.

These settlers enjoyed no advantages whatever from the C. P. R. even the provisions of food for the first winter being denied them by the man left in charge of the colony. Consequently, they faced real hardships. Some sought shelter in the houses of the earlier settlers, some in the houses abandoned by those who had left the colony, still others built homes of log and sod.

As there were notresources at hand to start farming, the newcomers were forced to find work. This was not the easiest matter either as the only work in Saskatchewan was railroad construction, at some considerable distance from their homes. Others sought work in Manitoba or even across the boundary. Father Woodcutter records of this period: "When I arrived here the first time, (1891) everything was like in a primitive state.....the people had to struggle hard till they could stand on their own feet." Another reliable survivor of this period reports the ~~baiting~~ use of gophers for human food!

Settlement of Bohemian and Slovak groups

As has already been stated, there was a small influx of Bohemians in 1888 and 89. This group settled on lands originally set aside for the Hungarians, east and north of the original Hungarian settlement called Kaposvar after an old Hungarian town.

The history of these peoples is so similar to the history of the Hungarian group that it scarcely requires a separate treatment. The bulk of the Bohemian-Slovanic group did not arrive, however, until in the period 1900-1905. These arrived directly from Austria and Poland. These peoples were energetic and met with quite ready succession their agricultural pursuits. Their original social and religious centre was with the Hungarians at Kaposvar but with the coming of the C. P. R. branch line (Kirkella-Saskatoon) they found their centre at the newly formed town of Esterhazy, named after the adventurous Count.

Founding of New Stockholm Scandinavian Colony

Another interesting chapter in the history of Fertile Belt Municipality concerns itself with the founding of the New Stockholm Scandinavian Colony by peoples chiefly of Swedish extraction.

A merchant, Emmanuel Ohlen by name, emigrated from Sweden to Canada in 1884. On arrival, he was appointed as a federal immigation agent and was commissioned to seek land in Western Canada for colonizing by Swedish peoples. In 1885, accompanied by a Mr. M. P. Peterson, he visited that area of land which lies north of Round Lake in the Qu'Appelle Valley. This he regarded as suitable for settlement. As a result, he returned to Sweden early in 1886 and acted as a federal immigration agent there seeking to draw settlers to this area.

Ohlen returned with a small party in June of the same year. They were held up in the Qu'Appelle Valley for a week by torrential rains, but finally arrived on the location of the proposed settlement on July 1st. This date has since been celebrated as the birthday of the Scandinavian colony.

During the following two years numbers of Scandinavian families joined the nucleus and the colony grew steadily. Ohlen visited the colony again the ppring of 1888 which visit turned out to be of some importance to the young colony. At this time, Alex. Stenberg was appointed Federal land-seeker to direct the flow of incoming immigrants. Great numbers of the early land seekers found hospitality in his home while Mrs. Stenberg served as nurse before the advent of trained medical practitioners. During these early years she probably ushered into the world as many or more new Canadians as the average doctor and quite as successfully, both among Scandinavians and others. However, it is unfair to single out any individual cases of ~~proven~~ hospitality and helpfulness as this attitude permeated the whole of the pioneer communities.

To return to this eventful year: The colony also received a Post Office named Ohlen in honor of its founder this same year. During the visit of Ohlen, a school district was also organized and in 1889 the first schoolhouse was erected of logs and named the New

Stockholm school.

These Scandinavian settlers received no assistance whatever, and in consequence suffered considerable hardships in their first years. Their first homes were of sod and log and it was necessary for the men to be absent a great deal in the summer in order to earn sufficient money with which to purchase needy equipment and supplies for their farms. However, once somewhat established, they made speedy progress toward independence and comparative prosperity.

The Coming of the Railroad

One of the great handicaps of the early settlers in Fertile Belt was the lack of railway facilities. Prior to 1902, it was necessary for the settlers to have their products some 25 miles across the Qu'Appelle Valley south to the old town of Whitewood on the main line of the C. P. R. This entailed considerable hardship as the trip necessitated an absence of two or three days from the farm with oxen.

The long cherished hope of the settlers was realized in 1902 with the building of the Kirkella-Saskatoon branch of the C. P. R. This line passed within three miles north of Kaposvar, the old centre of the Hungarian colony, and some eight miles north of Ohlen, the centre of the Scandinavian colony. At points opposite the old colony centres new towns sprang up: Esterhazy and Stockholm. Some time later (1907) Grand Trunk Pacific built a road parallel to the C. P. R. approximately ten miles north. On this line two additional villages came into existence: Atwater and Bangar.

With the advent of the railroads, the pioneer period of the colony ended and there began a time of even greater progress. The life of the old colonies was considerably stimulated. New settlers of all nationalities began to flock in. Many were added to the old Scandinavian colony and a larger Hungarian group settled immediately north of Stockholm and became a strong unit. Still further north about the G. T. P. line large numbers of British and Canadian settlers joined some of the early settlers and ranchers. From this time forward the municipality began to assume a more heterogeneous aspect as far as population was concerned. This influx of settlers was almost entirely unorganized as far as race or creed were concerned.

The individual settler no longer felt the neeâssity of segregation due to the improved nature of cummunication and the absence of isolation in general. The prime object now was the securing of land suitable for cultivation.

Material Population

In 1902 Count Esterhazy, though in old age, came from New York to witness the conduction of the new branch line of the C. P. R. and also to inspect the colony which he had founded. He was very agreeably impressed and instructed Martin Deme, former army officer, to make a permanent record. This work later appeared in book form and from it we get the following statistics: In July 1902 the area of occupied land 40,000 acres; broken and fenced land 14,000 acres; the number of homesteads 200, with a population of 960. Buildings recorded are: one Catholic church with rectory, two post offices (Esterhazy and Kaposvar), four schools, and 200 dwelling houses with barns, etc.

Further statistics may prove interesting. Crop figures for the preceeding year were: wheat 160,000 bushels, potatoes 20,000 bushels. Numbers of livestock were: cattle 2500, horses 600, hogs 1200. Agricultural equipment: threshing machines 1, plows 400, reapers 200, vehicles 200. The above figures cover the Kaposvar-Esterhazy settlement including both Hungarian and Bohemian settlers and any others who joined this group.

The Scandinavian group at this time, 1902, had grown somewhat too, and while no exact figures are available, most likely stood at some 300 or 400 souls. Their progress at this time would be more or less similar to that of the sister colony.

The population of Fertile Belt Municipality as given by the Secretary of that Municipality is given as follows: Hungarian 35%, Scandinavian 15%, Bohemian 10%, Canadian and British and other nationalities 40%, total population being approximately 4800.

Social Life in the Early Days of the Colonies

The early years of the colonies of Fertile Belt were marked by almost complete isolation from the world without. The only contact which the settler made with Canadian life was through infrequent visits to the town of Whitewood for the purpose of disposing of farm products or the purchase of supplies. Moreover, it was usually the man of the household who made these excursions and then generally alone. The colonies themselves were largely self-centred groups, a

condition accentuated by the comparative poverty of the early settler.

Within the colonies themselves there was no force outside the school which would tend toward assimilation of the people into Canadian life. The language of the old land was spoken almost exclusively in the home, the church and the community centres. The vast majority of children never heard English until they were of school age and then, sad to relate, some of the early efforts at instruction in the English language were rather half-hearted.

In fact, conditions in the new colonies were almost entirely a replica of conditions in the old lands except as they were modified by natural environment. The mind of the early settler was very little affected by his removal to a new environment. Social and religious customs were taken up, to a large extent, where they had been left off in the old land. In fact, there seems to have been a very definite effort and desire on the part of the early settlers, Hungarians, Bohemians and Scandinavians alike to preserve both the language and the customs of their native lands.

From the historical work of the Rev. Father Santha we gather a few facts concerning the early life in the Hungarian-Bohemian colony: In the home land the great majority of Hungarian settlers had enjoyed village life. The isolation of the West drove them therefore to observe and appreciate the common ties of language, religion and tradition which boundthem together. The whole colony seemed to be practically one great family. The aloofness from external influences made them preserve the good they inherited, and accept only the advantages of the new surroundings.

As a rule, the occasions of divine worship on Sundays and holidays brought the people very often together and church going was a habit of some social importance. Events in family life, births, deaths, marriages, were also occasions when traditional customs were observed.

The wife, of course, did the housework, but in pioneer times also lent her hands to outdoor labour, in which she was often quite as proficient as a man. She was in most cases a real expert in cuisine, utilizing to the best advantage all of the produce

which the farm and nature provided. Large families with six to ten children were quite usual; family life was pure and divorce unknown.

There was usually a good vegetable garden close to the house where amongst other things, melons, tobacco and poppies were grown. (Poppy seeds are used by the Hungarians for food, often as sandwich filling.)

The early Hungarian settler preserved his native customs even in manner of dress. The men wore light pants and top boots, the women wide skirts and coloured shawls. Though poor, they were always known for their hospitality and polite manners. Song and dance were their favorite recreation. J. Hawkes, author of "The Story of Saskatchewan" made a visit to the settlement in those early days and sums up his impressions in the following words: "I have two real memories of the Hungarian Colony. The one is the Barath girls' music; the other is the magnificent and grate ful and more than graceful bow of the man on the stack."

The same ties bound the early Scandinavian settlers together as bound the Hungarian-Bohemian settlers, namely language, religion and tradition. The Scandinavians as a whole were, of course, Protestant from the old land, being generally members there of the state church (Lutheran).

The Scandinavian immigrants were, for the most part, from the rural areas of Northern Sweden. They were, therefore, accustomed to agricultural pursuits. Furthermore, they made good use of the dense growths of trees found in the Qu'Appelle Valley and on the uplands, as they were well accustomed to working with timber in the old land. Comfortable homes were therefore established, a condition well pleasing to the Scandinavian who is above all else, a home lover.

Being religious by nature, the new settlers were not long in founding their own churches, a fact which will be referred to somewhat later. Here they worshipped in traditional manner with a fervent and faithful devotion, verifying the truth of the Psalmist:

"If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea:
Even there shall thy hand lead me
And thy right hand shall hold me."

The traditions and customs of the home land, dear to the hearts of these voluntary exiles, were observed as faithfully as conditions allowed. The celebration of Mid-summer Day (June 24, in the Scandinavian countries) was perhaps the most characteristic of these observances. It was generally marked by a whole day's celebration at Round Lake in the Qu'Appelle Valley when the whole colony gathered as a family. National sports, music and folk dances in national custumes were the order of the day, intermingled with speeches in the language of the reverred home land.

The fathers of the community on this occasion observed the age-old democratic institution of "Midsommartinget" (mid-summer parliament), a relic of the ancient religious-political gathering of the early Norsemen. At these meetings they discussed matters pertaining to the welfare of the community, and adopted policies for its development and progress. These gatherings were responsible for the birth of the Swedish-Canadian League (Svenska Forbundet i Kanada). This society has since grown to more or less national proportions among the various Swedish groups in Western Canada and has for its objective the fostering of the Swedish language and Swedish ideals among the peoples of Swedish descent in Western Canada.

The Scandinavian housewife played an important part in the life of the colony. Great credit must be given her for the skill and frugality she exercised in utilizing the products of farm and garden. When an animal was butchered all parts of the carcass were used to prepare some palatable and tasty dish. From the milk of the cow she made two kinds of nourishing cheese, one from the curds and one from the whey. Large families were customary and home life was pure and happy.

History and Influence of Churches in Fertile Belt

We revert again to the early history of the colonies in order to consider the place which the various churches occupied in the lives of the first settlers.

The Hungarian colonists were practically all devout Roman Catholics. Even to this day, their usual salutation has been of a religious character: "Praised be Jesus Christ!" "In eternity,

Amen." The first group of settlers who arrived in 1886 were unaccompanied by any spiritual leader. It has been suggested that this lack of spiritual leadership and the comfort of the church was a factor in the near failure of this first settlement. In fact, the organizers of the settlement seem to have forgotten entirely the religious needs of the community.

It was only in 1887 that the colony was visited by an oblate missionary in the person of Father Agapite Page who later took up permanent residence there. It is interesting to recall the way in which Father Page discovered the community. In 1886, Bishop Tache of St. Boniface happened to see in a newspaper a picture showing the group of new immigrants which were to form the colony. He then ordered Father Page to visit them as soon as possible. The next summer Father Page made the trip from St. Boniface on horseback and on his arrival was hailed as an angel of Providence. For a number of years he made his headquarters at Fort Ellis, a distance of fifty miles away, visiting the colony from there and saying masses at Esterhazy and St. Istvan School.

In 1892 the missionary built himself a small log house in the colony. Two years later a log church 24 x 50 was constructed. There was very little money collected for this edifice, the material and work being supplied by the faithful parishioners. Father Page was a man of devout and modest character. He had no regular salary or collections, but was content with the gifts of food and other things given by his people. He will ever be remembered with gratitude by the Hungarian colony as their first priest in the West.

In 1900 the parish was taken over by Father Woodcutter, a young priest of German descent. Before taking holy orders, he was a school teacher in the colony in 1891 and 1892. He was a zealous man, speaking several languages, among them Hungarian. Under his leadership a fine stone rectory was built at Kaposvar. To replace the old wooden structure, in 1907, an imposing large stone church under the title of the Assumption of B. V. M. was built by Father J. Pirot, then parish priest. This church measured 85 x 35 and is

one of the finest churches on the prairie. Its construction is entirely of native stone. During this time the needs of the growing Stockholm Hungarian settlement were attended to by the priest from Kapcsvar. In 1906 a spacious frame church was built there, under the title of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Father Soos became the first resident priest in 1919.

Concerning the pioneer priests Rev. Doctor P. Santha, present priest at Stockholm writes: "We cannot appreciate too much the activities of these pioneer priests and their followers who, renouncing the amenities of a highly cultured country, chose to work under these primitive conditions in order to save the souls of their former countrymen. To realize their difficulties, we have to consider that these people were unfamiliar with the idea of contributing towards the upkeep of the churches and support of their pastors; and even when they had adopted the novel system, they did not possess the means to practice generosity. But in spite of handicaps, these devoted priests blazed the trail for those whom Providence has called to follow in their footsteps."

The Scandinavians who settled in Fertile Belt were, of course, of the Protestant faith. Scandinavians possess a warm religious nature which usually expresses itself in democratic spiritual institutions. While the majority of Scandinavians are Lutherans from the State Church in the Old Land, the first church in the new colony was a branch of a free church, the Mission Friends Church. This group is a purely Scandinavian denomination, a Swedish theologian, Prof. Wallenstrom being its originator. This group organized a church the 30th of June 1888. The same year C. O. Hofstrand was called to be its pastor. In 1889 a church building of logs was commenced. The original building, with improvements, is in use at the present time. C. O. Hofstrand continued as pastor until 1908 when he was followed by Carl Lindoff, C. J. Engvall and finally, 1913-1920, by A. G. Olson.

Unfortunately, in spite of repeated efforts, material regarding the history of the Swedish Lutheran Church has been difficult to secure. The church was organized on the 3rd of October 1889 but a church building was not completed until 1896. This building was situated on a forty acre plot received gratis from the C.P.R. In 1919 a fine large brick structure costing $20,000 or more replaced the original log structure.

The Swedish Baptist Church was organized by a young Swedish immigrant of that faith in 1914. The original members were nearly all converts from the Swedish State Church. Two acres of suitable land were purchased near the banks of the Qu'Appelle Valley on the western boundary of the municipality. A comfortable frame church was erected and dedicated in 1916. The first ordained minister was Rev. Alfred Johnson, a young Swedish immigrant who received some training in Brandon College. He later proved unfaithful to his work and was succeeded by Rev. G. P. Mollberg after 1920.

Assimilation

The R. M. of Fertile Belt affords a rather unique opportunity for the study of settlement by colonies. To this day the various national groups are designated by local citizens as the "Hungarian colony", the "Bohemian colony" and the "Scandinavian colony". This designation indicates definitely that the effects of segregation are still very marked among these New Canadians. As to the advantages and disadvantages of settlement in segregated groups, the reader will have to draw his own conclusions from the observations made below.

To the prospective immigrants to Canada, settlement in "colonies" of people of the same race, language and religious faith made a decided appeal. Amongst other things, it was one of the inducements held out by the government and transportation companies' immigration agents. The appeal was quite natural. The immigrant felt that the hardships of settlement in a new land would certainly be ameliorated by the fellowship of like-minded people. For this reason, the federal government and the transportation companies, in the early days of settlement in the West, made considerable use of # the services of religious leaders in the various National groups. Religious leaders, in their turn, looked upon this method of inducing immigration to Western Canada with favor. It afforded them an opportunity of establishing outposts of peoples of their own particular faith and language in a new and growing country. To state that there was any keen competition among religious leaders for the settling of the West with people of their own faith is perhaps to exaggerate the true state of affairs. But certainly the religious leaders were aware of the opportunity and used it.

Other inducements which made for religious segregation included grants of lands for church sites given by the C.P.R. The Lutheran Church and the Mission Friends Church in the Scandinavian Colony each received forty acres.

The effects of segregation in R.M. of Fertile Belt are perhaps most apparent in the comparative use of the English and the continental European languages. Amongst the original settlers approximately fifty per cent. make exclusive use of their native tongue to this day. The other fifty per cent. possess a rather good command of the English as well, acquired generally though their employment in some minor public office in earlier days.

The second, and even to some extent the third generation, quite commonly make use of two languages interchangeably, English and the native language of their parents. The two languages are generally spoken quite freely, but neither with any great degree of perfection.

There is noticeable in each of the national groups a quite definite desire and effort for the continuation of the Continental languages at least for oral purposes. The motives behind this effort have been partly sentimental and partly religious. The older members of each of the colonies have insisted upon the use of their native languages as the only vehicle for the expression of their respective home-land cultures. Church leaders have felt that the use of the Continental language would best convey the traditions of the church and, at the same time, would be a force for religious solidity and a guarantee of the preservation of the faith.

It is interesting to note that the Continental languages were used exclusively in all churches, Catholic and Protestant, of the colonies until quite recently. The Catholic churches as yet have not adopted the use of the English language in their services but the Scandinavian churches now use both languages interchangeably, # an innovation which has arisen within the last decade.

The Swedish language was used exclusively in the Stockholm Swedish Baptist Church until my arrival as student pastor in 1929. English services were then introduced on a fifty-fifty basis with Swedish. This innovation was regarded with suspicion by some of the older members of the congregation and community, who felt that Canadian (English) Baptists in general were modernistic. Therefore, the Gospel in

It has been the custom in these colonies to use the Continental language almost exclusively in the home. In this way, children of pre-school age hear and learn only the one language. When ready for the public schools, they are therefore quite a problem for the teacher. This is particularly true of the eldest children in a family, the younger before school age often pick up the English from their brothers or sisters who attend school. Also the mother-tongue was often used by the children in free periods and recesses while at school, a practice which proved a very definite obstacle to the proper acquisition of the English language.

The total result of the above mentioned conditions has been that two languages are generally spoken by the peoples of continental European extraction in Fertile Belt. Unfortunately, neither of these languages is spoken with accuracy or purity. In fact, there is considerable evidence of a Jargon or mixture of two languages developing in each national group.

The problem of assimilation of New-Canada has been a rather pressing problem for some time. Certainly Canada has passed out some time ago from the "colonial" stage and bids fair to become a nation recognized in the world on its own merits. It is impossible to conceive that the heterogeneous population of Western Canada will accept holus bolus British traditions and British culture. Our New-Canadians are too self-willed for that and too conscious of their new freedom. Moreover, segregation into communities has provided the means of preserving the mother-tongue, the old-land faith, traditions and culture. The Canadian race to be, in Western Canada at least, must be a fusion of peoples of different national extraction. So, apparently, must the Canadian culture to be also be a fusion of different cultures. This, at least, is the theory which has been suggested as the only logical process which will finally fuse the

English could not be the same as the Gospel in Swedish. This incident illustrates rather well the whole psychology behind the insistence upon the use of the Continental languages.

heterogeneous population of Western Canada into a true Canadian race and people.

There exist, nevertheless, many obstacles to the successful prosecution of such a theory. For one thing, great numbers of peoples of Continental-European extraction are scarcely aware of the cultural heritage which is theirs. Many of them emigrated from their native lands because conditions there provided only the most

In the year 1932 the Stockholm Scandinavian Community entered a community progress competition sponsored by the C.N.R. among New Canadian communities. This community was successful in achieving third place with a prize of $250.00 to be used for community improvement. The judges of this competition included Dr. Murray, President of the University of Saskatchewan, Mrs. Violet McNaughton (lately recognized by H.M. King George for services among farm women) and Mr. England of the C.N.R. Department of Immigration and Colonization, Winnipeg. The Student was secretary of the local committee for the competition, and the experience proved quite valuable from a Sociological standpoint.

The judges required not only a general inspection of agricultural accomplishments but also visited schools and community social centres and churches. An exhibition of handicrafts and cooking was was also required and a display of musical and histrionic talent.

Strangely enough, the emphasis of the judges throughout was upon those features of the culture of the people, both material and otherwise, which they had inherited from the old land. The judges seemed extremely pleased over every display of old-world handicraft, folk songs and dances, and folk ways. In their remarks to the gatherings at the community centres they emphasized the value of these features, urging these New-Canadians to make determined efforts for the preservation of these elements. Apparently the judges felt that the preservation of the old-world cultural heritages is to play an essential part in the future development of a Western culture. This policy could, however, scarcely be prosecuted without a preservation of the vehicle of old-world culture, the Continental language.

meager means of livelihood. As a consequence, the racial culture which they knew in the old-land was hardly of a high order. Yet, at the same time, it is true that it would be easier for these people to become conscious of the higher culture of their own home-lands than an imposed culture arising from a people of different environment. It is a difficult thing to fuse cultures of a low standard, but true culture, though national in aspect, is universal in appeal. Could the various groups be made conscious of the higher elements in their various national cultures, the fusion of these into a truly fine Canadian culture would be greatly simplified.

The first generation of New-Canadians is quickly passing away and it is with the second and third and the future generations that the work of assimilation must take place. The second generation possesses in itself a rather unique psychology. Their lives are the battlefield of the old and the new world. To the former, they are drawn by sentiment, and to the latter, by the practical affairs of life. This is particularly true of those of the second generation living in segregated areas. After all, the tone of an individual's life is largely determined by cultural traditions. The cultural traditions of Canadian elementary education have been largely British in nature, the background being so foreign to Continental Europeans, it has hardly been possible for the second generation New-Canadian to accept them. This is not due to any anti-British feeling, but rather to the fact that an individual of one country is expected to settle in another and accept the culture of a third, which is rather an impossibility. Surely, there exists a great need for emphasis on truly Canadian traditions and a development of a truly Canadian culture.

Continental Europeans possess a genuine desire to become Canadianized. Witness the number of Nordic and Central European features masquerading under a sombrero. To many of these new people the Cowboy represents the Canadian hero and Canadian culture, hence the hats.

Legislators have scarcely assisted the second-generation New-Canadian. The census-taker still refuses to accept the term

Canadian as a designation of nationality. A woman who is a British subject still loses her naturalization on marriage to an unnaturalized resident os Canada. This type of legislation tends to make the second-generationer revolt against other forces tending towards assimilation.

Evidence of the difficulty of the transition from old-world culture to new-world culture is apparent amongst the second-generation New-Canadians of R.M. of Fertile Belt. Education was never greatly stressed by the original immigrant for the reason that the difficulty of making a livelihood in the early pioneer days necessitated the removal of children from the school at an early age to assist in farm operations. However, wherever talent has had the opportunity to develop, the evidence has shown that there exists considerable ability amongst these people of humble origin, which would lead one to believe that they are capable of making a genuine contribution to Canadian life. Generally speaking, however, the level of intellectual attainment is quite low in the colonies. The majority of the second generation have scarcely reached high-school entrance requirements. Approximately one in a hundred have completed matriculation. The high schools of Stockholm and Esterhazy are very poorly patronized.

Up to the present time, the three colonies have been larely endogamous groups. The number of inter-marriages between members of any of the three groups and non-members is practically ngligable. The barriers to inter-marriage are both racial and religious. Practically all members of the Scandinavian group are related by marriage at the present time. However, the process of endogamy has scarcely gone far enough to have any adverse effects on the progeny of such endogamous marriages.

Where inter-marriages have taken place between individuals of Hungarian, Bohemian or Scandinavian extraction and individuals of other national extraction, the results generally have proven to be advantageous. From a more or less cursory study of the offspring of such unions, evidence seems to be that there exists no biological or other objection to these unions. Local doctors who attend such

families testify also to the above statement. Occasionally evidence seems to present itself which would lead one to believe that there exist distinct advantages to inter-marriage of these groups with others. Some of the offspring seems to be extra-ordinarily well developed both physically and intellectually.

One thing must be borne in mind when considering the peoples of Continental origin living in Canada. It is unfair to judge the potentialities of these peoples by the original immigrants. The majority of them immigrated to this land because economic and other opportunity was lacking in their home lands. On arrival in Canada, pioneer conditions afforded no opportunity for cultural development. At the present time, it is rather enlightening to review some of the accomplishments of their offspring in the realm of education, the professions, the arts, business and agriculture.

Institutional Development

Considerable has already been said concerning the development of churches and schools and their effects on the life of the early settlers, and we shall consider this sufficient to cover these institutions. With the coming of the railways and the organization of towns, the Municipality entered into a new era. The towns became not only the commercial centres of the Municipality, but in some degree also the social and religious centres. With the development of the towns, there was an influx of business people and others of British stock and the general result was a tendency toward a more rapid assimilation amongst the original settlers and their children. This was especially true in the matter of language.

The area comprised in the Municipality was organized into a Local Improvement district on November 15, 1909. The Local Improvement district was erected into a Rural Municipality by special legislation effective January 1, 1913. It may be said that municipal government in Fertile Belt has had a history which reflects creditably on those who participated in it. The ability of the Continental Europeans to enter successfully into public life is reflected in the fact that in the history of the Municipality the Reeve has most often been chosen from amongst their group rather than from the British or Canadian stock living in the northern section of the Municipality.

Amongst the Hungarians and Bohemians there was little or no inclination for farm organization. Amongst the Scandinavians, however, the contrary is true. Judging from the number of organizations existing even today amongst the Scandinavians, it would appear that they are extremely fond of organization. Amongst active organizations there at present time are three churches, Independent Order of Good Templors, Swedish Canadian League, two Community Hall Associations, two dramatic and literary clubs, two sports clubs, United Farmers of Canada, calf clubs, etc., etc.

As early as 1889 the Scandinavian farmers formed an organization called "Coloni Föreningen Nys Stockholm" (New Stockholm Colony Association). This organization was concerned with purely

local issues only and cared for the welfare of the colony as a whole. How long this organization functioned is difficult to say.

The next organization to be heard of is a branch of the Territorial (Saskatchewan) Grain Growers Association. This organization was one of the fore-runners of the Grain Growers' Grain Company, the United Grain Growers. This occured in 1904, two years after the organization of this Association. How long this organization lasted is again difficult to say. The Scandinavians have a knack for letting these organizations die out.

The next major organization of which there exists any record is the I.O.G.T., organized in 1905. This organization, while of a different type, has a fine record of community service. A comfortable lodge hall was erected of log in 1908 which has since several times been enlarged and improved. In this building the lodge sponsored not only temperance education, but many other activities both educational and charitable. A fine library of Swedish and English books was instituted. Study groups were organized and carried on for years. Dramatics were sponsored and well supported, the hall having a fine stage and dressing rooms. This hall was the earliest social centre of the Scandinavian community. In 1930 the hall became community property.

Farmers' organizations have always made an appeal to the settlers in Fertile Belt, particularly the Scandinavians. Shortly after the organization of the Farmers Union of Canada a lodge of that organization was instituted in the Scandinavian community and achieved moderate success. This organization was almost entirely educational in function although it did sponsor, to some extent, the formation of the Wheat Pool and livestock pools. Pressure was also exerted on governmental policies through resolutions and representations.

In 1926 the Farmers' Union of Canada and the Grain Growers Trading Association (a co-operative buying and selling organization) were swallowed up in a new organization, The United Farmers of Canada. A lodge of this new organization has had a flourishing existence in the Scandinavian Community since that time. Since

the amalgamation of this organization with the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation the policies of the C.C.F. have found considerable sympathy in the community.

Strangely enough, as stated before, farmers' organizations have provoked little or no sympathy or supply amongst Hungarians and Bohemians. Aside from minor purely social organizations, there is little to tell concerning the history of organizations amongst these peoples. Undoubtedly, the church has exercised its influence in opposition to such organizations. Father Pirot of Kaposvar has complained of radical influence from the Hungarian and Bohemian press of the United States.

Periods of Depression and Methods of Relief

Difficulties of Early Settlement

Mention has already been made in the historical section of this thesis to some of the difficulties which beset the early Hungarian, Bohemian and Scandinavian settlers. It might be well to elaborate somewhat on these as they bear directly on conditions obtaining since the beginning of the present depression.

As has already been stated, the original Hungarian settlers were given considerable assistance through the C.P.R. at the time of their settlement in 1886. This group, however, was the only group to receive assistance. The Scandinavian, Bohemian and later Hungarian settlers received no assistance whatsoever. Moreover, the majority were practically without capital at the time of their settlement. The result was as has already been suggested, times of difficult pioneer work, the settlers using whatever resources were at hand. The majority found it necessary to spend long periods away from their homes in both summer and winter in whatever employment offered itself, in order to raise sufficient capital to purchase the necessary equipment for farm operations.

To add to their difficulties, the years 1891 and '92 brought drought conditions similar to or worse than the drought conditions of 1929-30-31. Particularly was the year 1891 difficult. Cultivated areas were as yet quite small and there was little or no

carryover of wheat or feed from the previous year. Nevertheless, the settlers, by great sacrifice and privation, were able to continue, depending to a large extent on what food resources could be garnered from wild life.

During the early '90's the prices paid for agricultural products were very close to the prices paid in the year 1932. Wheat brought from twenty-five to forty cents per bushel at Whitewood. Food and other commodity prices were also quite similar to those of 1932, perhaps a little higher. Low grade flour sold at a dollar and a-half to two dollars per hundredweight. During this period one of the great difficulties to be overcome was the long distance to the local market. The settlers were twenty-five to thirty-five miles distant from the town of Whitewood, the nearest market. Grain and other products were generally drawn by oxen in the early '90's. The road was poor and particularly difficult over the Qu'Appelle Valley which lies between Fertile Belt andthe town of Whitewood. Three to four days were generally consumed in taking one load of grain to the market.

The years 1906-07 saw a decided slump in agricultural activity due to world-wide economic conditions. Growing conditions were exceptionally good in Fertile Belt in 1906 but, unfortunately, an early frost practically destroyed the economic value of the crop. This condition produced an added obstacle to agricultural development in Fertile Belt. However, as in the difficult years of the early '90's, the crisis was met by the native ingenuity and the willingness of the early settlers to endure hardship. On neither occasion was any outside assistance requestednor offered.

With the high prices paid for farm products during the war period and the early post-war period, there came a period of great agricultural development in Fertile Belt as elsewhere. Agricultural credit was expanded and the farmers of Fertile Belt seized upon this opportunity to borrow capital for the improvement of farm equipment and the purchasing of more land.

Although no exact statistics are available on this matter,

it is safe to say that at least 80% of the farmers availed themselves of the agricultural credit then offered. Before the end of the decade following the war the farmer and the creditor alike began to realize that agricultural credit had been over-expanded in view of the economic trend. Some of the farmers were successful in paying off their indebtedness, but a conservative estimate would place approximately 50% of the owners with mortgages against some or all of their land. (This does not mean necessarily that 50% of the land is mortgaged.) Perhpas a-third of these at the present time have an indebtedness greater than the original mortgage, due to accrued interest which they were unable to pay during the last four or five years. It is safe to say that practically no interest was paid on mortgages during the years 1930-31-32 due to drought conditions prevailing. Under normal crop conditions and with present farm product prices, I would judge that there is little hope of these mortgagors ever emerging from their indebtedness. Moreover, in the event of vastly improved conditions for agriculture, there would still remain at least a-third of these who could never emerge. Only exceptional or boom conditions in agriculture would make it possible for them to emerge.

The banks have, of course, consistently refused credit to the farmer since 1929. The banks never have loaned large amounts to the farmers because of restrictions the Bank Act places upon methods of collection to be used by banks. Consequently, there is comparitively little bank indebtedness in Fertile Belt.

During the years 1929, '30, '31 Fertile Belt was subject to moreor less severe frought conditions. Being situated in a rough and somewhat wooded area, Fertile Belt did not suffer from drought as did the purely prairie municipalities. Nevertheless, in these three years drought conditions grew severer each year. Each year the average yield of wheat and other grains decreased. In 1929 the average yield of wheat was from ten to twelve bushels per acre, in 1930 from eight to ten, and in 1931 from five to eight. The fodder crops suffered even more than

the wheat crop, making the problem of feeding very difficult. In 1932 there was a swing back toward normal as far as precipitation was concerned. In 1933 moisture conditions were ideal and resulted in an excellent crop.

As a result of three years of drought conditions, Fertile Belt was included in the provincial relief area, Class "C", late in the summer of 1931, and remained so until the spring of 1932. This entitled the Municipality to assistance from the province in the dispensation of direct and indirect relief. The province also supplied feed and seed relief to the farmers of the Municipality during the winter of 1931-32 and in the spring of 1932. The provincial government appointed a relief officer who worked in co-operation with the local council who were responsible for the distribution of seed and feed relief.

Taxes and Tax Collections

The Municipal mill rate for 1931 and several years previous in Fertile Belt was six and a-half mills, in 1932 reduced to three and a-half and in 1933 to two and a-half mills. Formerly about four mills had been allotted yearly to road work. In 1931, however, about ten mills was allowed as a relief measure.

During the drought years collection of taxes became extremely difficult. Arrears began piling up and both the municipality and the farmers began to find themselves in difficulties. In 1932 the Provincial House passed The Compulsory Tax Collection Act, making it possible for the Municipality to seize, with the same reservations as obtain in any other case of seizure, the livestock or produce of the farm in payment of taxes. The Act provided for the appointment of a tax collector, in this case the Secretary-Treasurer. This tax collection act provoked considerable opposition amongst farmers generally as it provided the possibility of real hardship being imposed. However, in Fertile Belt a tax collection campaign was instituted in 1932, without resorting to seizure or other drastic methods, a payment of at least $25.00 per quarter being solicited with fair results.

The Compulsory Tax Collection Act of 1932 was almost

inevitable, however, for this reason: Due to the difficulties of the time, arrears of taxes had piled up tremendously. These arrears together with current taxes are held by local banks as security on Municipal loans. Fertile Belt, like many other municipalities, had come, in this year, 1932, almost to the limit of its credit in the bank. Banks holding taxes as security object to any road work being done in lieu of payment of the same in cash and so municipal activities come to a standstill until loans are paid and credit restored.

School tax rates in Fertile Belt have averaged between six and eight mills during the last years. School taxes were equally difficult with the municipal taxes to collect during the years 1929-32. The situation became acute in 1931-32. In spite of many threats to close schools during the years 1931-32, there were no actual cases of closing. The burden of the situation fell, of course, on the school teacher whose salary was reduced successively until salary rates were lower than they had ever been in the history of the municipality. The old system of "boarding around" with all its drawbacks was revived in a large number of school districts. In many cases the salary of the teacher was reduced to as low as $10.00 to $15.00 per month in addition to her keep. With the slight improvement in conditions at the end of 1932 salaries again rose but at present average between $300.00 and $500.00.

General Effects of the Depression

One of the most striking effects of the depression to be noted by the observer in Fertile Belt was the forced return to the farm and community as the economic and social unit. Depression in general is unique in its power to elicit all of the genius of the family and community to make itself comfortable both economically and socially on what resources are at hand. It may be said here that the people of Fertile Belt are to be congratulated on their resourcefulness, co-operation and cheerfulness under such a situation. The spirit of the pioneer has, by no means, been forgotten here in spite of the memories of the "good" years.

Following the crisis of 1929, the farmers began to realize that their first concern was the providing of the necessities of life from their own farms and within their own community. As a result, the attentions of the farmer and the housewife alike were turned to the production of as many foodstuffs as possible on the farm. Gardening took on a new impetus. Pork and beef were raised with a view to home consumption. More chickens were raised and more cows milked. The housewife busied herself with new methods and old of the preparation, preservation and curing of home-grown foodstuffs. Families began to discover how little needed to be bought in the line of foodstuffs. Wild fruits were substituted for imported fruits. In many cases, housewives burned rye or barley as a substitute for coffee. A few boiled small potatoes to get a sweet syrup to use as a substitute for sugar.

Spinning wheels, long in disuse, were restored to their former honored place in the living room. Veritable miracles were performed by thrifty housewives in the making over of old garments and the cutting down of the same for the use of the children.

The men, in turn, were equally active. A comfortable vehicle for travel, which has since become extremely popular, was made by converting the automobile into a rubber-tired buggy or democrat. These have since been dubbed "Bennett wagons". Fertile Belt is fortunate in possessing large growths of white poplar, birch and other trees. The farmers were not slow to realize that these trees could easily be converted into serviceable, though rough, lumber. This was accomplished by the construction of small saw mills using the ordinary circular saw. Due to the scarcity of ready cash, the system of barter has again become popular, whereby the necessities and sometimes some of the luxuries of life can be exchanged.

The depression saw not only a return to the farm and community as an economic unit but as a social unit as well. Commercialized recreation and amusement in the boom days before the depression had made great inroads upon even the agricultural

communities of the West. One of the heartening features of the depression has been the development of community recreation and amusement in such a form as to be available to even the most destitute.

The difficult years of '29, '30, '31 have seen a great growth of effort and organization whereby young and old could participate in such recreation as would contribute to their social welfare. Musical, literary and dramatic organization sprang up in all social centres to provide recreation and instruction. Travelling libraries began to flourish. In summer time amateur sports of various kinds suited to the community purse occupy the young and sometimes the older as well. Sports and picnics in summer and entertainments in winter saw unprecedented crowds gathered, for the most part by "Bennett wagon" or sleigh. Even churches benefited as far as attendance is concerned through this turn in events.

Depression Psychology

While generally, as stated above, the psychology of the farmer during depression has been one of cheerfulness and co-operation, this is unfortunately not true of all. There are always those, listless and restless even under the best of conditions, who find in the crises of the depression opportunity to take advantage of municipal and provincial governments alike. These, however, are fortunately in the minority.

As a whole, the farmers pride themselves upon their independence and resourcefulness. Nevertheless, even the most resourceful and independent grow restive under the burden of mortgage interest and taxes which have piled up during the depression and which assume such proportions as to seem an unsurmountable obstacle. While the government has afforded the farmer protection against unjust eviction, there has been growing a conviction amongst farmers generally that mortgage companies and other creditors must scale down or adjust the indebtedness owed them by the farmer. This feeling is also fairly widely prevalent with regard to arrears of taxes. Collections,

therefore, have become increasingly difficult in both these connections.

The attitude of the farmer to the mortgage holder has undergone a decided change. The mortgage company is no longer regarded as a friend who has loaned money upon which the farmer hopes to make a dividend, but rather as a parasite who refuses to cut profits and who holds a strangle hold on the farmer. The farmer generally is operating at a loss or nearly so. Consequently, he feels that the mortgage company should do the same. He argues often in this fashion: The farmer and the creditor are joint investors in the business of agriculture in varying proportions. The creditor was willing and often eager to invest his money. The agricultural business is undergoing bad days. Profits have dropped off almost altogether. While the one investor, the farmer, carrying all the burden, operates at a loss or nearly so, the mortgage company or other investor insists still on its former high dividend out of a losing business. This attitude brings the farmer to a near stand-still as far as progressive outlook is concerned. In turn, this whole psychology unconsciously affects all other aspects of his life, not only economic but social. The whole question of farm indebtedness at the present time is part and parcel of the depression psychology. In the meantime, the farmer realizes that he can sit tight and wait, due to the safety against eviction afforded him by the Debt Adjustment Act. At the same time, this sort of psychology is undoubtedly grist for the mill of radicalism sweeping the West today.

Effects of Depression on Social Standards

Social standards, as everywhere in the West, saw a decided drop following 1929. Ingenuity and independence counteracted to some extent the scarcity of economic means but in many realms were powerless to maintain former standards. Even with a great straining of ingenuity, a Western Canada bush farm can hardly supply all the physical needs of a growing family. In many instances the physical needs of children and others have been left

uncared for. Lack of medical attention to teeth, adenoids, tonsils, etc. is sufficient to illustrate the point.

More demoralizing, however, upon the individual has been the decline of social standards in other realms. Educational facilities have been tremendously impaired. Schools lack proper equipment and former facilities such as libraries cannot be maintained. Attendance in severe weather is impaired due to insufficient clothing for children or poor nourishment. Poor pay and "boarding around" has a demoralizing effect upon the teacher.

In the home educational features have also suffered. Magazine and newspaper subscriptions fall away until perhaps only one or two weekly or monthly magazines are received. The purchase of new books is impossible.

Communications also suffer the same fate. The automobile is stored in the garage or converted to a "Bennett wagon". The radio goes to the attic for want of batteries. The telephone is removed. Thus the family becomes more and more isolated from contact with the world. In general, education is neglected or even discouraged in the race for a "living".

During the years of depression, there was noticed in Fertile Belt a decided falling off of emigration to the city among the young people. In fact, numbers of them for some years resident in the city returned to the farm. Some of these had promising starts in educational or vocational pursuits. Of these, a number were content to find dwellings on their parent's farm and settle down to married life, being contented with sufficient for alivelihood. In fact, the marriage rate saw a decided increase, of at least forty per cent., in the years 1929-32. Apparently the young people became aware of how cheaply two could live on a farm during that period. On the other hand, these same years also saw a decided increase in illegitimate births and hasty marriages.

In its general effect upon the social and religious life of the communities, the depression has, to a large extent, restored the pioneer social and spiritual unity. Common adver-

cities draw people together and draw them again to the spiritual realities of life and of God. During the boom years the accumulation of material gains tended to stratify members of the communities into classes and divisions. At the same time, the development of transportation in the form of the automobile tended to disintegrate community unity both in its social and religious forms. The depression has tended to restore this lost unity again. The same thing might be said of the home. Home life flourishes in the midst of adverse circumstances. Home recreations and amusements again prove attractive. The home again becomes the training school for native capacities of both cultural and vocational natures.

Methods of relief in Fertile Belt 1931-32

Areas in Saskatchewan requiring relief are classified by the Provincial Government into three divisions, conveniently termed "A", "B", and "C". This classification is made according to the intensity of the need, "A" areas being the most needy and "C" areas the least. In the "A" division are included such areas as have suffered drought conditions for a number of years and where complete direct relief is needed for man and beast. This relief is financed through the Federal and Provincial Governments jointly, the Federal generally paying two-thirds of the cost and the Provincial one-third. Needy residents in such areas are generally not required to promise repayment of such advances. In the "C" division are included such areas as are less affected by drought or other adverse natural conditions, but where the municipal government is not capable of coping with the situation. In such areas relief efforts are financed jointly by the provincial and municipal governments, the financial burden being adjusted according to the relative financial strength of the municipality. In such areas, relief recipients are required to sign lien notes on crops due within two years with interest at six per cent. Generally, however, efforts are made to collect these notes, if possible, after the first crop. This holds true

for relief of all kinds extended, food, clothing, feed or seed. In the "A" division relief areas, collections are made for seed and feed relief when conditions permit.

Relief to rural areas in Saskatchewan is administered in one of two ways, to be decided on generally by the local council. Relief may be administered by the Saskatchewan Relief Commission operating directly through appointed representatives or through the local council, as in the case of Fertile Belt. Of these two methods, the latter is generally favored by public opinion for the reason of economy and sympathetic administration. It is perhaps difficult to judge as to which is the superior method. Certainly the former is more practical and more indifferent to the "human equation" and perhaps, in the long run, more economical to all concerned.

This much can certainly be said, that in their attitude to relief efforts generally, many potential recipients of the same have far from the proper attitude. In spite of the fact that the recipient of relief must sign lien notes for the same, many seem to regard relief as a wholesale distribution of gifts out of which they strive like children to get more than their share. Perhaps this attitude is a by-product of a depression psychology previously referred to where the individual, already burdened by indebtedness of mortgages and taxes, goes the limit, believing that nothing can remove him from his land. Still others lose their pride in financial independence and assume that sooner or later they must lose all their holdings and, therefore, are unafraid of increased indebtedness. Many farmers who are renters whose standards of living have sunk to the maintenance level in the last years, reason after the fashion that increased indebtedness connot, in any event, rob them of sufficient of the returns of the farm upon which to live. Not afew are anticipating a "change in the system" which shall miraculously cause all indebtedness to disappear or, at the least, to be so scaled down as no longer to be an obstacle to financial success. Verily

the depression breeds strange philosophies.

An impartial judgment with regard to the relief situation in Fertile Belt would certainly state that more relief was administered than was necessary. This refers particularly to clothing, direct and feed relief. Perhaps part of the fault of this arises through the method of administration as well, that is, through the local council. This is not intended as a reflection on the individuals but only on a method which does not permit a totally indifferent survey of the needs of a community.

Direct Relief

Direct clothing relief was not handled directly through the Saskatchewan Relief Commission, but through the Red Cross Society. This relief measure was, of course, financed by the Saskatchewan Government. The local administration of this relief was in the hands of the council and applications for clothing were received by the Secretary-Treasurer and passed by the council. Two-year notes bearing interest at six per cent. were given in payment. The clothing supplied was of a very superior quality and the prices comparatively moderate. This fact, alone, may partly account for the large demand.

From August of 1931 to the spring of 1932, the cost of clothing relief supplied to Fertile Belt, according to the Saskatchewan Relief Commission, amounted to $7,519.56. This amount seems abnormally large in view of the small population of Fertile Belt and general conditions. The majority of this relief was dispensed to the Hungarian farmers of the municipality.

Monies spent by the Saskatchewan Relief Commission in Fertile Belt for direct relief in 1931-32 amounted to $5,421.75.

Very little clothing relief was supplied to residents in Fertile Belt by outside charitable organizations. The only record I have is of 100 lbs. of clothing sent in by the Baptists of Ontario. The same is true of any other type of relief. This was, at the same time, no evidence worth recording of such organizations within the municipality.

Direct relief, mostly orders on local stores for food supplies, was also administered through the local council. Direct relief of this nature was cut off early in 1932, after which only cases of direst necessity received any consideration by the municipal government. A fair crop in the fall of 1932 saw the end of all direct relief of this nature.

Indirect Relief Through Public Works

Indirect relief through road building programs was initiated in the municipality in the late summer of 1931 and continued until freeze-up. A $3600.00 grant was received from the Provincial Government for this purpose and was divided amongst the divisions of the municipality according to their need. Payments were not made in cash but in the form of orders upon local stores. An attempt was made to restrict the variety and nature of goods to be purchased with these orders. This attempt, however, was hardly successful. It was difficult for local merchants, already in straightened circumstances, to turn away trade, while a less scrupulous competitor was willing to substitute exempted goods such as tobacco, etc. for those on the approved list.

There were, undoubtedly, many unjust angles to this program of indirect relief. Many needy farmers were prohibited from participating in this relief because of inability to leave farm operations or lack of proper equipment in the form of horses or other equipment. Farmers with a number of grown-up sons and plenty of equipment often took advantage of the situation in spite of regulations prohibiting such abuses.

Road work in payment of taxes has already been referred to. About four mills annually had been allotted to road work formerly in Fertile Belt. In 1931 farmers indebted for arrears of taxes were permitted to work off an amount equal to ten mills. This bold measure for the reduction of arrears of taxes so reduced the security in current and arrears of taxes demanded by the bank (Branch of the Royal Bank of Canada) before granting credit that

the bank refused to allow the municipality any roadwork as payment of taxes in 1932. This move on the part of the bank was resented deeply by both the local council and the general public.

In September of 1931 the Provincial Government, through the Department of Highways, built a portion of Highway No. 9 in Fertile Belt as a relief project. The contract for this piece of highway running south from the Village of Stockholm and across the Qu'Appelle Valley was let to private contractors. These contractors were bound to hire only farmers resident in the municipality, outside of foremen. The greater part of the work was done by horses although some tractors owned by farmers were used.

Statistics are not available as to the total amounts of monies dispensed to the farmers in this project. Payment was in cash. Farmers were paid sixty cents per hour per man and four-horse team. The contractors provided for the accomodation and feeding of men and horses at a rate which cut the wage approximately forty per cent. The individual, however, had the privilege of feeding and accomodating himself and his horses if he so desired, but generally found that this interfered with his efficiency and that of his horses. Work on this project continued well over two months and provided work for well over a hundred men during this time. Working conditions, however, as in all construction, were severe for both man and beast. Many of the farm horses in this season were in too poor a condition to be used in this work. Many farmers were released after a few days of labor on the highway because their horses were not fit for the work. In this way, many needy farmers were denied the opportunity of taking advantage of the relief offered. The number of single men, that is men without horses, needed in the work was strictly limited. Still other farmers were unable to avail themselves of this offer of relief because of inability to leave their homes or farming operations. Attempts were made at the commencement of this relief work to control employment so that those actually in need of relief

would have first opportunity. This was carried on under the direction of the Reeve. However, as time went on and the work progressed, numbers of farmers were eliminated because of the condition of their horses or the severity of the work. The authority of the Reeve in directing employment was, for the large part, assumed. Contractors, of course, favored the man with efficient horses and equipment. Finally it was the farmer with good stock and equipment and often least needy who benefited most.

Feed Relief

The Saskatchewan Relief Commission supplied to Fertile Belt in the fall, winter and spring of 1931-32 feed and fodder to the amount of $34,164.54. Freight on the same was $6,625.01. Requisitions for feed and fodder were received and passed by the local council. Payment was by lien note on crop, at six per cent., maturing in two years. A local representative of the Relief Commission was in charge of distribution of feed and fodder, which was handled through the local elevators.

The distribution of feed and fodder was slow and irregular. For example, one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five teams would appear in the village of Stockholm to divide a carload of two thousand bushels of feed grain. It was not until late in the spring that feed and fodder arrived in such quantities as to meet the demands. This might, however, be part of the policy of the Commission in order to curb the demand as much as possible.

The price of feed grain was from five to ten cents above market price. The quantity generally was mediocre and, in many cases, poor.

Seed Relief

The administration of seed relief was similar to that of feed relief and the same holds for terms of repayment. The price was five to ten cents above market price. Some seed wheat was available within the municipality and those in need of seed re-

lief were given the privilege to negotiate for the same with local farmers who were paid by the Commission. Otherwise, the seed relief was extremely late. Many farmers, in fact the majority waiting for seed relief to be shipped in, were forced to cultivate their fields a second time before seeding operations. Some of the relief feed oats and barley were cleaned and seeded by impatient farmers waiting for the seed grain. Relief wheat seed was of good quality but, unfortunately, the same cannot be said for all of the seed oats. Large amounts of this were decidedly inferior in quality.

Bibliography and References

History

Indian School History

Dr. H. McKay's autobiography and Indian School Records.

Hungarian History

"Hungarian Immigration in West" by Rev. Dr. P. Santha in North-West Review 1930 Jubilee Number.

Bohemian-Slovonic History

Rev. J. Pirot, priest at Kaposvar R. C. Church.

Scandinavian History

Reimar Remiday, Swedish-Canadian newspaperman in Svenska Canada-Tidningen of 21st June 1923.

Early settlers. Church records.

Material Population

Holger Munch, Secretary-Treasurer of Fertile Belt Municipality #183, Stockholm, Sask.

Institutional Development

Department of Municipal Affairs, Government of Saskatchewan.

Municipal Records.

Early letters.

Periods of Depression and Methods of Relief

Catholic literature referred to above.

Early settlers.

Municipal records.

General conclusions drawn from consultations and close contact with farmers and farming conditions.

Municipal Secretary-Treasurer and Municipal records.

Saskatchewan Relief Commission, C. B. Daniel, General Manager, Regina.