

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE ORIGINS OF
MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE (CANADA)

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by

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The Origins of the Mennonite Central Committee (Canada).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Board	Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization
CHPC	Conference of Historic Peace Churches
CMC	Canadian Mennonite Council
CMRC	Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee
CMRIC	Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council
HPCCC	Historic Peace Church Council of Canada
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MCCC	Mennonite Central Committee (Canada)
MCRC	Mennonite Central Relief Committee
MDS	Mennonite Disaster Service
NRRO	Non-resistant Relief Organization
ZMIK	Central Mennonite Immigrant Committee

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INTRODUCTION

The formation of Mennonite Central Committee (Canada) (MCCC) in December 1963 was a significant development for the Mennonite people in Canada and indeed for Canada as a whole. For the first time all the diverse Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups had a common organization through which they could pursue various activities in such areas as immigration, relief, mutual aid, peace, and other social concerns. In the nearly two hundred years of Mennonite presence in Canada, no Mennonite organization had been created with such a wide scope in either purpose or representation.

MCCC was not founded, at least not explicitly, for other secondary reasons, but there were some important by-products. As it became a fundamental and central Mennonite institution, MCCC began to fulfill sociological and psychological functions for the minority group in question. It provided the closest substitute in Canada for the role filled, for example in Russia, by the Mennonite "Commonwealth,"¹ and as such increasingly came to represent the Mennonite identity in Canada. Though it did not replace the various congregational and conference families as the primary Mennonite collectivity, MCCC was the institution which helped to ensure the survival of the Canadian Mennonites as a cultural expression and more importantly, in their eyes, as a religious body.

The emergence of MCCC also had a multiple meaning for Canada. In the first place, the organization provided a helpful communications

link between Canadian institutions and the Mennonites as a whole. Through an established agency, the government could now speak to and hear from all the Mennonite groups on issues ranging from foreign aid to alternative service. Secondly, MCCC became a pioneer in aid and development projects, of which its sponsorship of Indo-Chinese refugees in the late 1970s was only one example. Finally, and perhaps most importantly in the context of multiculturalism and ongoing Canadian life, it encouraged minority survival in the midst of the assimilative pressures of majority institutions.

In an immediate sense, the origins of Mennonite Central Committee (Canada) can be traced back to 1959 and the founding of its predecessor, the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada. But in a more basic historical sense, the organizational roots go back to World War I and the establishment at that time of various organizations through which the Mennonites sought to demonstrate that they were good Canadians, while at the same time being good Mennonites. If these organizations were prompted by expediency as much as idealism, they nevertheless gave twentieth century expression to some of the theological and ethical impulses of the ancestral Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century. Because these impulses would bring into being later organizations, and eventually MCCC as well, they merit some examination.

One of the most important tenets of Anabaptist belief, and one that distinguished the "Radical Reformers"² from both the Protestant Reformers and the Catholics, was a unique understanding of the nature of the church. The Anabaptists believed that the church was a

community of voluntarily committed believers, members of which had undergone baptism upon their free confession of faith.³ They therefore understood the church to be something quite distinct from society as a whole. At a time when church and state were united in both Catholic and Protestant principalities, this kind of belief was tantamount to treason.

Even though the Anabaptists perceived the church and the state to be separate entities, and although their primary loyalty was to the former, they did not disparage the state and its functions. On the contrary, they believed that the state was ordained of God, and they recognized that its role in maintaining order was a God-given one.⁴ However, the state had jurisdiction over secular matters alone and could claim no power over ecclesiastical affairs or infringe upon the religious beliefs of the community. As such, the state was to be obeyed to the extent that such obedience did not conflict with the primary obedience which was to God.⁵ An obligation to the state was due even though the state could not demand the ultimate loyalty of the Christian.

This duality became problematic in the area of military service. The Anabaptists could pay taxes and submit to most of the laws of the land in good conscience, but the request to perform military service came into direct conflict with their principle of nonresistance. Because they believed that the New Testament was their guide for daily living, the Anabaptists interpreted Jesus's injunction not to resist evil (Matthew 5:39) quite literally. Christians, Jesus had said, were not to live by an earlier standard of returning an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Rather, they were to love their

enemies and return evil with good (Matthew 5:44). The Anabaptists understood that it was impossible to love someone and also take that person's life. As far as they were concerned, they could not engage in warfare because Jesus had forbidden it.

At first it was the Anabaptists' refusal to baptize their infants, rather than their rejection of military service, which brought them into conflict with the state. As the notion of a separation of church and state became more acceptable, and as standing armies became the order of the day, however, this pattern was reversed. In the past two centuries especially, the search for greater religious toleration in general and more complete military exemption in particular has been at least one important motivating factor behind many of the migrations the Mennonites have undertaken.⁷

Closely related to the understanding of nonresistance for the Anabaptists was their concept of service. Like nonresistance, it was rooted in the biblical admonition that love should characterize all human relations. Whereas the former might be called love's negative expression, service could be termed its positive expression. If love was manifested through refusing to take life, it was also demonstrated by looking after the physical needs of others. Nonresistance and service were thus seen as complementary. Without some form of relief or service ministry, nonresistance could hold little meaning--nor was it likely to be understood by the world.⁸

The practical interpretation which the Anabaptists gave to the concept of love extended to economic relations. Although those Anabaptists which later became known as Mennonites did not practice communal ownership, as the Hutterites did, they considered property

as a sacred trust to be utilized for the benefit of others.⁹ Thus they freely shared their possessions, occasionally held lands in common, and supported those who were without an income. The concept of private property quickly became entrenched among the Mennonites, but they retained the notion that they must be good stewards of their wealth.

If present day Mennonites differ greatly from their Anabaptist ancestors, the original impulses of that segment of the Reformation have not been totally lost. Indeed, the peace and service organizations developed by the Canadian Mennonites during and after World War I signified the renewal of some of those very impulses, for they manifested a greater appreciation of the obligations of citizenship, a more profound understanding of nonresistance, and a deeper commitment to a relief and service ministry.

World War II and the Cold War also spawned significant organizational developments among the Canadian Mennonites. Though there were some setbacks along the way, these developments similarly represented a strengthened peace and service witness, as well as a greater degree of cooperation among the Canadian Mennonites and greater coordination of their various activities. As such, they too provided the building blocks with which MCCC was formed in the early 1960s.

Ironically, the antecedents of MCCC were born as a response to events occurring beyond the Mennonite community itself. It took the shattering experiences of World Wars I and II and the tensions of the Cold War to prepare the soil for the germination of MCCC.

By 1960, however, the evolutionary process had gained its own momentum, so that when MCCC emerged, it did so independently of a crisis. The Mennonites were no longer responding to the past but were anticipating the future.

Notes

¹A number of scholars have used the term "Commonwealth" to describe the Mennonite community in the Ukraine between 1789 and World War I, most notably, E. K. Francis, "The Mennonite Commonwealth 1789-1914: A Sociological Interpretation," Mennonite Quarterly Review (hereafter MQR) 25 (July 1951): 173-82 and David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia: A Sketch of its Founding and Endurance 1789-1919," MQR 47 (October 1973): 259-308 and 48 (January 1974): 5-54. The most concise definition of this state-within-state phenomenon is provided by Frank H. Epp, Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), p. 161:

"The Commonwealth was a self-contained cultural island in which Mennonites governed themselves, established their own schools and welfare institutions, developed a self-sufficient economy with little outside interference, and practiced their religion with few restrictions."

MCC (Canada), quite obviously, did not resemble the Commonwealth as a political or socio-economic unit. The resemblance lay more in the manner in which the two entities defined the Mennonites.

²The Anabaptist movement has been termed the "Radical Reformation" by G. H. Williams, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 857 and Walter Klaassen, Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant (Waterloo, Ont.: Conrad Press, 1973), p. 9.

³See Franklin Hamlin Littell, The Anabaptist View of the Church: A Study in the Origins of Sectarian Protestantism, 2d. ed., rev. (Boston: Starr King Press, 1958).

⁴Hans J. Hillerbrand, "The Anabaptist View of the State," MQR 32 (April 1958): 84.

⁵Ibid., pp. 87-93; Robert Kreider, "Anabaptists and the State," in The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision: A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to Harold S. Bender, ed. Guy F. Hershberger (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1958), pp. 89-90.

⁶Guy Franklin Hershberger writes:
"It was inevitable that a people who took the Scriptures as seriously as these people did would come to believe in the doctrine of nonresistance. They made no attempt to rationalize the teachings of Christ; they engaged in no philosophical discussions about their meaning; they asked no questions as to their practicability. They simply took the words of Scripture as they found them and proceeded to live by them. They took for granted that Christ meant what He said, and they saw no reason why they should not obey without question. . . . Since the Scriptures had forbidden such conduct, the Christian could not engage in it. It was

as simple as that" (War, Peace, and Nonresistance [Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1944], p. 314).

⁷As an agricultural people characterized by large families, the need for land has frequently played an important role as well.

⁸M. C. Lehman, The History and Principles of Mennonite Relief Work: An Introduction (Akron, Pa.: Mennonite Central Committee, 1945), pp. 38-39.

⁹Peter James Klassen, "Mutual Aid Among the Anabaptists: Doctrine and Practice," MQR 37 (April 1963): 78.

CHAPTER I

WORLD WAR I AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

1916-1939

The experiences of World War I brought Canada the somewhat ironic distinction of having achieved both international recognition and internal discord. The Canadian contribution to the war effort undoubtedly enhanced the nation's image abroad. Yet that same contribution was largely responsible for the tension produced between Canada's two founding peoples. Whereas English Canada generally favoured a total war effort, French Canada felt it unnecessary and undesirable for the nation to become embroiled in what it perceived to be another of Britain's imperialist wars.

A considerable amount of tension also characterized the relationship, primarily in western Canada, between Canadians of British descent and recent immigrants of enemy and/or East European extraction. At a time when ethnic diversity was increasingly perceived as a threat to national unity and an impediment to the war effort, a polarization of society was not surprising.

One of the minority groups to experience the displeasure of the majority group was the Mennonites.¹ Although they had been in Canada for quite a number of years--the Swiss Mennonites had come to Upper Canada from the United States following the American Revolution and from Europe in the 1820s; the Russian Mennonites had arrived in

Manitoba in the 1870s, some later moving on to Saskatchewan--they were not yet regarded as bona fide citizens. There were a number of reasons for this. The Russian Mennonites in particular had not become assimilated as expected by the mainstream of Canadian society. In Manitoba, and later in Saskatchewan, they had been allowed to settle in blocks and to exercise a considerable degree of autonomy. Since they were able to meet most of their own needs without a great deal of contact with the "outside," they were free to nurture customs, such as their use of the German language, which only augmented their uniqueness. To many outsiders it appeared that the Mennonites had no intention of becoming Canadian, at least according to a certain definition.

Prior to World War I these Mennonites had been looked upon with curiosity and perhaps irritation. The war, however, translated these attitudes into one of hostility that was directed toward the more acculturated Swiss Mennonites based primarily in Ontario as well as the Russian Mennonites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The issue this time was the Mennonites' refusal to take up arms in Canada's defence.

The religious convictions of the Mennonites created dilemmas for both the Canadian government and the Mennonite people. The government was bound by legal statute to exempt the Mennonites from military service. Yet, in command of a nation at war, it also had to concern itself with the loyalty of all of its citizens. It remained true to the first of these duties, but also saw fit to fulfill the second through disenfranchising the Mennonites as conscientious objectors under the Wartime Elections Act and by

prohibiting any further immigration of Mennonites under an Order-in-Council of 1919.

The dilemma which the Mennonites faced necessitated that they adhere to their principle of nonresistance and at the same time demonstrate their support for and loyalty to the Canadian government. They accomplished the latter by making a more visible expression of the former. Rather ironically, the demands of the government and the Canadian public during wartime aroused within the Mennonites a renewed sense of the active nature of the peace position.

But as the war and the federal election of 1917 revealed Canada to be divided, so the experience had also found the Mennonites to be lacking in unity. At this point fragmentation was not caused by different objectives, as it would be in western Canada in World War II. Rather, it was a matter of lack of coordination and cooperation among the various Mennonite groups, particularly between those in Ontario and those in western Canada. In the 1920s the massive immigration of some 20,000 co-religionists would provide the opportunity for Canadian Mennonites to begin to overcome this weakness.

The first Mennonites to enter what remained of British North America in the 1780s had been promised complete military exemption as an inducement to immigrate.² In 1793 this promise was translated into law by an Act of the Upper Canada legislature which provided that the Mennonites, Quakers, and Tunkers (Brethren in Christ) be exempt from military obligations upon the payment of a sum of twenty shillings per year in peacetime and five pounds per year in wartime.³

These fines were removed in 1849 by the legislature of the Province of Canada, largely in response to a prolonged Mennonite lobby.⁴

After the Dominion of Canada was created in 1867, provisions were again made for exempting Mennonites, Quakers, and Tunkers from military service. An 1868 statute ensured that military exemption would be upheld "upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Governor-in-Council may from time to time prescribe."⁵ An 1873 Order-in-Council based on the statute, combined with the promise of free lands, was enough to persuade 7000 immigrating Russian Mennonites to choose Manitoba over the more agriculturally-appealing American midwest for their new home.⁶

In 1906 the Militia Act altered the provisions for exemption by removing the names of religious denominations and referring simply to "persons who from the doctrines of their religion are averse to bearing arms or rendering personal military service . . ."⁷ Neither this change, nor the outbreak of war in 1914, however, generated great concern among the Mennonites. Combined with past promises, the Minister of Militia's statement, that the Mennonites could not be forced to take up arms, gave the minority group considerable security.⁸

An event which did cause some anxiety was the Conservative government's decision in December 1916 to call for a national registration of all men between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five. Cognizant of the drastic change in public attitude toward them since the outset of the war, the Mennonites surmised that the government now found it necessary to withdraw their exemption privileges. A delegation of five ministers from Saskatchewan and Manitoba was sent

to Ottawa in January 1917 to determine the exact meaning of the registration and how it would affect the Mennonites. The ministers were assured that their beliefs would be respected and that their young men need only write "Mennonite" across the face of their completed National Service cards.⁹

If fears were allayed in this instance, they were roused again by the Military Service Act of August 1917 which introduced conscription of manpower. Once more a delegation, this time representing the Amish Mennonites and (Old) Mennonites of Ontario, travelled to Ottawa to gain some clarification as to the status of its people under the Act. The delegation was advised that the Ontario Mennonites should apply for the exemption from military duty on the grounds of conscientious objection.¹⁰ But for the vast majority of the Mennonites, this proved to be unacceptable, since the Act provided for exemption from combatant service only; noncombatant service, as an integral part of the military machine, was just as objectionable to them. One can well imagine their rejoicing shortly thereafter when the federal Department of Justice informed them that they, like the western Mennonites, would be considered exceptions from the Act. As such, they would not be required to perform any duties.¹¹

Despite this indication, the manner in which Mennonite men were processed became a very confused one. The Ontario Mennonites had been told that they were excepted from the Act, but in practice they were treated as exemptions under the Act.¹² Assigned to non-combatant duty, they had to negotiate leaves of absence without pay.¹³ The western Mennonites, consisting primarily of those who had immigrated to Canada on the strength of the 1873 Order-in-Council, on

the other hand, were generally regarded as exceptions from the Act. For the most part, they needed only to prove their identity as Mennonites before the local tribunals in order to be cleared,¹⁴ though in some parts of Saskatchewan overzealous officials made this process more difficult than it need have been.¹⁵

Despite these problems, however, the Canadian Mennonites had considerable reason to be happy with their government at the close of the war. For one thing, there had been absolutely no attempt to force them into combatant service. Moreover, virtually all of those assigned to noncombatant duty had been able to negotiate leaves of absence. Then too, the Mennonites recognized that the difficulties they had encountered had their source more in the local situation than in general government policy. That the United States was much less sympathetic to conscientious objectors was evidenced by the flocking of American Mennonites and Hutterites to Canada after 1917.

While the Canadian Mennonites were thus relieved of any military obligations, they were ready to show their loyalty to and support for the government in other ways. Significantly, they chose to do so in a manner which expressed their willingness to share in the sufferings caused by the war, that is, through financial contributions to relief organizations. Undoubtedly much of the impetus for this came from a desire to show to an increasingly hostile public that they were willing to make sacrifices, if not those of "dying for one's country."¹⁶ But the conviction that true nonresistance means an active relief ministry was also an important factor. S. F. Coffman, a leading (Old) Mennonite minister from Vineland, Ontario, wrote, "While we believed that the destruction of

life was wrong, we were not prominently active in the mission of saving life."¹⁷

The Mennonites thus supported the Patriotic Fund, a relief fund providing aid to war widows and orphans, and contributed liberally to the Red Cross in lieu of subscribing to objectionable victory loans. By the end of 1917 \$50,000 had been contributed to these two funds; by the end of 1918 that amount had nearly tripled.¹⁸ Late in the war the government took steps to negotiate a special loan with Mennonite leaders whereby it would set aside an amount equivalent to total Mennonite subscriptions for the support of convalescent homes and hospitals. Within a year Manitoba Mennonites alone had purchased \$600,000 to \$700,000 worth of these bonds.¹⁹

Both in east and west²⁰ Canadian Mennonites also chose to express their thanks more directly to the government for respecting their religious convictions. When the western delegates returned from Ottawa in January 1917 with the indication the Mennonites would not be adversely affected by the National Service registration, a special relief fund drive was organized. Amounting to \$5777.17, the fund was presented to the government as a demonstration of gratitude.²¹

The Ontario Mennonites attempted a similar project on a much larger scale later in the year. The idea seems to have first been intimated by Noah M. Bearinger of Elmira to his Member of Parliament.²² Bearinger was concerned that the Mennonites were doing nothing in return for their privilege of military exemption, and that they were not sharing in the experience of suffering caused by the war. He proposed that a memorial fund be established which would symbolize

the Mennonites' thankfulness to the government and contribute to war relief at the same time. By autumn it appears that Bearinger's idea had captured the imaginations of others. Several preliminary meetings were held in November and December, and on 16 January 1918 the Non-resistant Relief Organization (NRRO) was born.

The NRRO was organized as an inter-Mennonite effort; each conference or group wishing to participate was allowed one member on the executive committee and one or two others on the larger board. The charter member groups included the (Old) Mennonites, the Brethren in Christ, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, the Amish, and the Old Order Mennonites.²³ It was a major achievement that these divergent groups, some still smarting from the divisions of the previous century, could cooperate in such a joint effort.

The first meeting of the NRRO outlined the purposes of the organization. The NRRO's primary aim was to establish a fund which would be donated to the government "as a memorial of appreciation for the privilege of religious liberty and our freedom from Military Service," with the request that it be used for charitable purposes.²⁴ But the meeting's participants agreed that the organization should also continue to encourage the support of relief work for the duration of the war and as long thereafter as deemed necessary, and that it should represent the common interests of its participating churches in the area of military exemption.²⁵

It was significant that the Ontario Mennonites and Brethren in Christ created the NRRO as an organization combining the elements of peace and service in its functions. Although its sphere of activity would be narrowed in World War II, a pattern begun here was one to

which Mennonite Central Committee (Canada) would return many years later.

The collection of the NRRO memorial fund was delayed until fall of 1918 because of uncertainty and confusion in the exemption process. Formed shortly after the Justice Department's favourable ruling, the NRRO could hardly expect people to memorialize what they subsequently did not enjoy.²⁶ Early in 1919, however, it presented to the government a gift of \$70,000 that had been collected between October and January. Shortly thereafter it was informed that the government was not in a position to accept the gift as designated, so the fund was distributed among the Merchant Sailors' Relief Organization, the Soldiers' Aid Commission of Ontario, the Belgian Relief Fund, and the Canadian Serbian Relief Committee. The organization continued to appeal for war relief funds until mid-1919; in 1920 it raised funds for China famine relief and the following year for Russia famine relief.²⁷

The Canadian Mennonites emerged from the World War having upheld their principle of nonresistance and having contributed substantially to the relief of war sufferers. But the experience had also revealed real weaknesses in organization. They simply had no structure through which they could approach the government as a united body to discuss the issues related to military exemption. While the Ontario Mennonites were able to work together in the NRRO, Mennonites on the prairies had not been able to achieve such a unity. They sent several different delegations to Ottawa during the course of the war, and their most representative one, that of January 1917, lacked the crucial participation of the Old Colony

Mennonites. Moreover, contact between east and west was made only in October 1918 when H. H. Ewert, a Manitoba high school principal, enquired of S. F. Coffman how the Ontario Mennonites had fared during the war.²⁸ The statement made by George Reimer in reference to the lack of communication between government officials--"too often the right hand did not know what the left hand was doing"²⁹-- could be applied with equal accuracy to the Mennonites. It remained for the immigration of the Russian Mennonites several years later to bring about greater coordination among Canadian Mennonites.

The Mennonites in Canada heard of the plight of those in Russia, many of whom were friends and relatives, soon after the war ended through correspondence and periodicals. They learned first of murder, rape, plunder, and disease; later, of famine and starvation. In response to the needs of the Russian Mennonites, the Mennonites of the United States and Canada plunged into more cooperative ventures of assistance than had been previously realized in North America.

World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution heralded the eventual destruction of life as the South Russian Mennonites had come to know it. The period from 1880 to 1914 had been the golden years for the Mennonites' colonies in terms of economic prosperity and educational and cultural achievement,³⁰ but with the onset of the war the tide turned.³¹ As German-speaking people, the Mennonites soon felt the animosity of the Russian nationals, despite their professions of loyalty and the medical service rendered by their young men in lieu of military service. In November 1914 a decree prohibited the use of the German language in either public assembly or the press. The

following year other decrees ruled that property owned by Germans be liquidated. This latter edict was not enforced to any great extent, but it indicated the direction of things to come.

The October Revolution rapidly initiated the establishment of local soviets, removing the self-government which the Mennonites in the Ukraine had so long enjoyed. Local officials, distrustful of the Mennonites for both their Germanness and their wealth, proceeded to confiscate seed, livestock, food, and cash. For a time during 1918, when the Ukraine was under German occupation, things were relatively quiet. But when the German Army withdrew the colonies were subject to the terrorism of anarchist Nestor Machno and his cohorts. A Russian peasant who had worked for some of the Mennonite landowners in his youth, Machno was now anxious to wreak revenge for his low wages. At his hands many Mennonite men were killed, girls and women raped, and villages destroyed. When a Selbstschutz (self-defence) unit was formed to defend the colonies against Machno's raids, despite strong opposition, the attacks only became more severe. That the Selbstschutz units tended to identify with the White Army--one was even inducted³²--made matters worse for the colonists. The ebb and flow of the fighting line between Red and White Armies meant that the Mennonites were often victims even when they were not the immediate aim of attack.

Besides the more direct destruction caused by the civil war, the quartering of soldiers caused an epidemic of typhus in the colonies, in addition to the numerous cases of venereal disease. Agricultural production, already at low levels because of the malfunctioning of the government's nationalization and redistribution

schemes, was brought to a standstill by a severe drought which lasted from the spring of 1921 to the fall of 1922. Thousands of persons throughout the Ukraine, not only Mennonites, were now faced with the prospect of starvation.

Already in 1918 the Mennonites had begun to consider the possibility of emigration, and in the next few years the idea became more and more appealing. On 1 January 1920 a delegation of four men called the Studienkommission (study commission) left for Europe and North America to report on conditions among the Russian Mennonites and to locate possible areas for resettlement. The motivation for considering such a solution to the problem of survival was many-faceted. John B. Toews claims that, initially, economic motives were the predominant ones; consequently those first to leave were the most destitute and faced the least possibility of recovery. But as the conclusion of the famine and the inauguration of the New Economic Policy made economic recovery seem more feasible, reasons of religious conviction came to play a more major role.³³ An important feature in this regard, Toews asserts, was the growing realization that, despite Lenin's decree of 1919 to the contrary, there was little that Mennonites could do to prevent their young men from being drafted into the Red Army.³⁴ Whether or not Toews's argument is accurate--he probably has underestimated the fear that the prospect of collectivization produced in later years³⁵--it can be concluded that both socio-economic and religious factors played a role in encouraging the Russian Mennonites to emigrate.

When the Studienkommission arrived in the United States, it found American Mennonites cognizant of the problems facing those in

south Russia and anxious to assist in some way. What hampered the efforts of the Americans, however, was that they were divided into some six relief-oriented bodies (five were relief arms of individual conferences; one was an inter-conference relief committee), all attempting to carry out some form of relief work in war-stricken areas; no channel existed through which activities could be centralized.³⁶ The (Old) Mennonites were represented by the Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers (MRCWS), and each of the General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, and Central Conference (Illinois) Mennonites possessed its own relief committee or commission. As recently as January 1920 the General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren groups had joined forces to create the Emergency Relief Commission of the Mennonites of North America and had undertaken relief work in Europe.³⁷ But there was no indication that the joint efforts of the previous century, when in the 1870s the General Conference and (Old) Mennonites cooperated to assist an earlier group of Russian Mennonite immigrants, and when in the 1890s virtually all American Mennonites supported the Home and Foreign Relief Commission in alleviating the distress of famine in India, would be repeated. Guy F. Hershberger suggests that division within the ranks of the (Old) Mennonite leadership was one of the reasons why a cooperative effort was not realized with the outbreak of war.³⁸

The members of the Studienkommission thus saw it as their task to effect some form of unity among the various relief committees and conferences in order to assist the Russian Mennonites in the most efficient way. To that end they convened an informal meeting at

North Newton, Kansas on 13 July 1920 to present their proposal. Out of this initial meeting, attended by representatives from the central states, a committee of five members was appointed to secure data that "might be helpful in devising a feasible plan to help the Russian brethren in their misery and, if possible, to aid them in moving elsewhere."³⁹ This committee met on 19 and 20 July and agreed that a more representative meeting should be called for 27 July at Elkhart, Indiana. The latter meeting went on record to favour the creation of a Mennonite Central Committee

whose duty shall be to function with and for the several relief committees of the Mennonites in taking charge of all gifts for South Russia, to make all purchases of suitable articles for relief work, and to provide for the transportation and equitable distribution of the same.⁴⁰

Again a temporary committee was elected, this time delegated with the responsibility of contacting the six bodies carrying out relief programs and inviting them to create the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The MCC thus came into official existence on 27 September 1920. An executive committee of three persons was elected from those present, and it was agreed that each supporting conference and relief committee would be allowed to appoint one representative on the larger committee.

As MCC was taking shape, a delegation of three persons, consisting of Orie O. Miller (later to become secretary-treasurer of MCC), Arthur Slagel, and Clayton Kratz, was arriving at Constantinople to investigate the possibilities of an independent Mennonite relief project in the Ukraine. Although Kratz and Miller did manage to enter Russia to make preliminary arrangements, the Red Army soon captured the area in one of the seesaws of the front, preventing any

further work. After that it was not until August 1921 that the American Mennonite Relief, as the MCC's program was called, was allowed entry into Russia. By this time famine had already taken its toll in the Ukraine, and the relief program was geared to meet the immediate needs of food and clothing. With the easing of famine conditions, MCC helped to re-establish the Mennonites and their neighbours by providing tractors, plows, and horses which could be paid for over a period of time. In Siberia, where some of the Mennonites had moved in pre-revolutionary times, MCC provided loans for seed and livestock and exchanged other goods and services for labour done for the benefit of the community.⁴¹

Besides the significant work achieved by the MCC in Russia in the 1920s, the organization's importance lay in the manner in which it united all American Mennonite groups in a common effort. John D. Unruh describes, as a by-product of the Russian relief program, "a new sense of brotherhood on the part of those who administered the aid--a feeling of oneness in a common purpose that reached beyond the differences."⁴² That this spirit of cooperation had caught on among the various groups by the mid-1920s is shown by the fact that MCC did not disband after the Russian famine had ended. Created for the specific purpose of aid to South Russia, the conclusion of that emergency could have meant the dissolution of MCC. Though the plan was to replace MCC with a more permanent organization called the American Mennonite Relief Commission, this never occurred, one of the reasons being that the constituent groups were happy with the loose arrangement under MCC and were not ready for a more binding one.⁴³ By 1930 it was evident that MCC would continue to be an integral part

of American Mennonite life. It would soon become the model for inter-Mennonite organizational cooperation and as such would play an extremely important role in the lives of Canadian Mennonite organizations.

Though the Canadian Mennonites did not at this time achieve the same degree of cooperation and coordination as the American Mennonites, the Russian emergency did not leave them untouched. In the summer of 1920, David Toews, elder of the Rosenort Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan, and Gerhard Ens, a leading citizen of Mennonite upbringing, took it upon themselves to encourage contributions to the Russian relief effort. They contacted several churches in the Rosthern area and within a short time had collected \$3500.⁴⁴ A more systematic relief effort would soon follow.

After their sojourn in the United States, two members of the Studienkommission, A. A. Friesen and B. H. Unruh, travelled to western Canada to relate their tale and to promote a coordinated relief ministry. Their visit elicited a response similar to that in the United States. A small but representative meeting of Mennonites was held on 18 October 1920 in Regina at which time a Canadian Central Committee⁴⁵ was formed to work in conjunction with its American counterpart. An executive of five persons was elected, with P. P. Epp of Altona as chairperson. The committee thereafter appointed twenty-four⁴⁶ district convenors throughout the prairie provinces to coordinate the relief collection at the local level. By the following April, Epp could report having received \$15,478.36,⁴⁷ and by January of 1923 this had increased to \$54,347.47.⁴⁸ At the time of its dissolution, the Canadian Central Committee had forwarded

\$57,101.86 to MCC specifically for Russian relief.⁴⁹ In addition to cash, it sent large parcels of clothing and carloads of flour through the Save the Children Fund.⁵⁰

The Canadian Central Committee disbanded some time during 1923 or 1924 with the easing of famine conditions in Russia. It did not, as claimed by some,⁵¹ become the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (Board) in 1922. Though there may have been a close relationship between the two organizations due to the membership of P. P. Epp on the Board, the fact that the Central Committee and the Board reported separately to the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada in 1922, 1923, and 1924 indicates that they were distinct bodies.⁵² In 1924 Epp noted that the Central Committee had been inactive for some time, and the conference thereby resolved that future relief donations would be directed to the treasurer of the Emergency Relief Commission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.⁵³ When in 1929 the Russian Mennonites again needed assistance, the Board of Colonization undertook to forward relief monies.

The Studienkommission, besides initiating extensive relief efforts in the United States and Canada, also spent its time searching for possible areas of settlement in the event of a mass migration of Russian Mennonites. North America was the most appealing to A. A. Friesen, chairperson of the delegation, but because of the restrictive immigration policies of the U.S.A. and Canada's prohibition against the immigration of Mennonites, Hutterites, and Doukhobors, it appeared that Mexico would become the home of the emigrants. A number of factors, however, encouraged Friesen to take another look at Canada. A meeting with Mennonite leaders in Saskatchewan in June 1921

concluded that an effort must be made to have the Order-in-Council of 1919 rescinded. A delegation representing the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada, the Northern District of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, and the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, and including representatives from both western Canada and Ontario, approached Prime Minister Meighen in July with their request. Here they were unsuccessful, but William Lyon Mackenzie King, the leader of the Opposition, promised that he would have the order rescinded if victorious in the upcoming election. The following year the new prime minister proved true to his word, thereby ensuring almost solid Mennonite support for the Liberal party in years to come. The Mennonites then set about creating the structure necessary to supervise the anticipated immigration.

A preliminary meeting was held in Altona on 11 April 1922. Its participants heard one report on the government's recent decision and another on a visit with the officers of the Canadian Pacific Railway. They agreed to pursue the CPR's offer to transport the Russian Mennonites, resolving to guarantee the debt that would be owed to the company, and then drew up plans for an immigration agency. The agency was to consist of two representatives from the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada, one representative for each of the Sommerfelder, Mennonite Brethren, (Old) Mennonite, and Brethren in Christ groups, as well as one representative for the combined Bruderthaler, Kleingemeinde, and Church of God in Christ Mennonite (Holdeman) groups.⁵⁴ If not all of these groups named their representatives, the committee could nominate others to make a total of seven.

The permanent organization was effected at a meeting on 17 May 1922 in Gretna. David Toews of Rosthern was named chairperson, and A. A. Friesen, who had elected to remain in Canada to assist in the immigration process, was appointed corresponding secretary. The name Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization was decided upon, and Rosthern, Saskatchewan was chosen as the location for the office. A proposal for establishing a shareholding corporation (the Mennonite Colonization Association of North America) to finance the immigration and settlement operation was also approved, though it was abandoned later.

Through several contractual arrangements with the CPR, which provided credit to those who could not pay for their passage, the Board succeeded in bringing more than 20,000 Russian Mennonites to Canada between 1923 and 1930.⁵⁵ Many more would have come had the Soviet Union allowed them to leave and had Canada's doors not closed with the onset of the Depression. Yet the Board's accomplishments were little short of phenomenal considering the obstacles with which it was so frequently confronted: the opposition of some North American Mennonites to the entire immigration scheme, the impossibility of meeting the financial obligations owed the CPR, the strict health regulations of Canada's immigration laws, and the constant delays and difficulties of bureaucratic procedure.

The Board worked in close association with two other organizations. One of these was the Mennonite Land Settlement Board (MLSB). Created in 1924 to work with the Canadian Colonization Association (CCA), the MLSB was to provide immigrants with information on available land and to ensure that transactions were equitable. Though it

existed to protect the interests of the immigrants, and they and the Board of Colonization were each allowed to appoint three members to the nine-member committee, the Mennonites had little control over either policy or administration. "In fact, CCA had absorbed MLSB in everything but name."⁵⁶ The MLSB was able to provide generally sound terms for the purchase of land, and once the settlement process had begun, it proceeded swiftly. But it soon became apparent that greater control over this process would be desirable.

The second organization with which the Board worked was the Zentrales Mennonitisches Immigrantenkomitee (ZMIK) or Central Mennonite Immigrant Committee. This committee was formed by the immigrants to look after their needs in the areas of education, culture, medical care, social assistance, naturalization, and so on. It appealed for loans to send young people to the Mennonite normal schools, established community libraries, began a weekly publication, and supported persons needing hospitalization or mental health treatment. A grass roots organization which had formed at the district and provincial levels first, ZMIK functioned in an advisory capacity to the Board of Colonization and appointed three members to that body beginning in 1926.

In the early 1930s discussions concerning a merger of the Board and ZMIK began. There were several reasons for this. In the first place, the onset of the Depression left both organizations in financial difficulty, and, for another, the administrative limitations and loopholes of two organizations trying to serve the same group of people now appeared in much bolder relief.⁵⁷ Finally, David Toews, who in many ways epitomized the Board, increasingly felt that his ill

health and advanced age were hampering the collection of the Reiseschuld (travel debt owed to the CPR). He desired a more efficient organization that could complete the job should he not live to finish it.⁵⁸

Toews drew up a plan for the reorganized Board in which the ZMIK and some of the functions of the MLSB, though not the organization itself, were subsumed. An expanded membership of twenty-two individuals was to be divided into several committees: a finance committee was to collect the operating cost levies as well as assist in the Reiseschuld collection, a settlement committee was to locate possible settlement areas and supervise the transactions of sale, a Wohltaetigkeitskomitee (welfare or relief committee) was to alleviate need wherever possible, a cultural committee was to encourage instruction of the German language, and an organization committee was to oversee organizational changes at the district and provincial levels.⁵⁹ This last committee, it seems, concerned itself with the process by which the district and provincial branches of the ZMIK expanded their scope to become district and provincial branches of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization.

Toews's proposal, together with a list of twenty-two suggested members, was submitted to both the General Conference of Mennonites in Canada (formerly the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada) and the Northern District of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in July 1934 and was accepted by both conferences. The reorganized Board came into existence later that month. It marked a great improvement in the coordination of activities surrounding the immigration, settlement, and adjustment process. Not only

did the single executive overseeing various committees produce greater integration, but the district and provincial organizations provided a stronger support base for the activities of the Board. For some reason, however, the new structure of the organization did not outlive the Depression.⁶⁰

World War I and its aftermath left the Canadian Mennonites changed. Members of the minority group had learned that their privilege of military exemption was not to be taken for granted, a lesson that some would have to learn again in World War II, and that their conscientious objection had to be supplemented with an active relief effort, in order to have real integrity and to pacify critical fellow-Canadians. They had also learned that they owed the Canadian government an expression of their loyalty and appreciation. But where the war had encouraged a renewal of the peace and service witness among the Mennonites, it had also revealed them to be sadly lacking in overall coordination.

A significant achievement was the creation of the Non-resistant Relief Organization, which united all the Mennonite groups of Ontario, and which attended to both relief activities and military service concerns. Though it became inactive after 1924, its resurrection prior to World War II attested to its early strength and the high regard in which it was held. It would be many years before western Canadian Mennonites would achieve the same degree of organizational solidarity.

Still, it was not until news of the distress of the Russian Mennonites reached Canada that bridges began to span the distance

between the Ontario Swiss and the western Russian Mennonites. The initiative for this came from the west because the descendants of the Russian immigration fifty years earlier felt a much greater kinship with those now wanting to leave Russia than did the Swiss Mennonites. A. A. Friesen invited S. F. Coffman, the (Old) Mennonite bishop from Vineland, and D. M. Reesor from Markham to accompany the 1921 delegation to Ottawa seeking the repeal of the 1919 Order-in-Council.⁶¹ Later, the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, located at Rosthern, recruited Coffman as a member for the (Old) Mennonites of Ontario and made attempts to gain a Mennonite Brethren in Christ representative as well.⁶² The Ontario Mennonites responded to Coffman's encouragement first by purchasing shares in the Mennonite Colonization Association of North America, and later by providing loans through congregational trustees. They also opened their homes to and provided employment for many immigrants.⁶³

Within the western provinces, the Board also prompted a greater degree of inter-Mennonite cooperation, though unlike the NRRO it did not gain the support of all the Mennonite groups in the region. Besides the members of the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada, who provided the driving force in the early years, representatives of the Mennonite Brethren, the Bruderthaler, Kleingemeinde, and Church of God in Christ Mennonite groups also participated. The conservative Sommerfelder group chose not to appoint a representative, though it was given the opportunity.

The Board of Colonization not only fostered dialogue among the various Mennonite groups, but it also represented a greater integration of the activities of immigration, relief, and service. This

was evidenced particularly by the Board's coordination of a relief program for aid to Russia beginning in 1929 and by the reorganization of 1934 which, as noted above, brought several diverse activities under the umbrella of a single executive.

Some significant things had been achieved, but it was still a long road to the formation of a truly representative agency which would unite the peace, service, relief, and immigration programs of all Canadian Mennonites such as Mennonite Central Committee (Canada) would. In the first place, the dormancy of the NRRO between 1924 and 1937 suggested that the vision attending its early years may have eased with the return of peace. The inactivity of this period also contributed to a weakening of the link with the western Canadian Mennonites.

Then too, although the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization remained fairly active, it lost much of its representativeness over the years.⁶⁴ When P. H. Wiebe, delegate for the Kleingemeinde, Bruderthaler, and Church of God in Christ Mennonite groups, died in 1930, he was not replaced. In 1936 G. S. Rempel of Dalmeny, Saskatchewan was named as a new representative for the Bruderthaler, but his name does not appear in the minutes beyond that year. The (Old) Mennonites were represented throughout the period by both a westerner and an Ontarian, but the latter connection became increasingly tenuous; Coffman did not personally attend meetings after the first several years of involvement and eventually terminated his membership in 1941. Moreover, though the Board professed to represent the three conferences, it was really only responsible to two, the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada, and the Northern District of the General

Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Both the Non-resistant Relief Organization and the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization marked significant organizational developments for the Mennonites of Canada nevertheless. Their importance would be heightened nearly a half century later when they would help to create Mennonite Central Committee (Canada). If the pressures of war provided the soil, and the Anabaptist heritage the seed, then the NRRO and Board were the first shoots of an organization that would bloom many years hence.

Notes

- ¹The reader is directed to Appendix B for brief descriptions of the various Mennonite groups in Canada.
- ²Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 100.
- ³Ibid., pp. 100-101.
- ⁴A chronology of this lobby is found in ibid., pp. 102-7.
- ⁵Militia Act, 1868, 31 Victoria, ch. 10, sec. 17, quoted in J. B. Martin and N. M. Bearinger, comps., Laws Affecting Historic Peace Churches (n. p., [1941]), p. 5.
- ⁶Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 191; C. Henry Smith, The Coming of the Russian Mennonites: An Episode in the Settling of the Last Frontier, 1874-1884 (Berne, Ind.: Mennonite Book Concern, 1927), p. 60.
- ⁷Militia Act, Revised Statutes of Canada, 1906, ch. 41, sec. 10, quoted in Martin and Bearinger, Laws Affecting Historic Peace Churches, p. 5.
- ⁸Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 367.
- ⁹George H. Reimer, "Canadian Mennonites and World War I" (unpublished paper submitted to the Manitoba Historical Society, 1972), pp. 19-20.
- ¹⁰John S. Weber, "History of S. F. Coffman 1872-1954: The Mennonite Churchman" (M. A. research paper, University of Waterloo, 1975), p. 43.
- ¹¹Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 376; Weber, "History of S. F. Coffman," p. 45.
- ¹²Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 379.
- ¹³Eventually all those assigned to noncombatant duty were granted leaves of absence due to the efforts of S. F. Coffman and several Members of Parliament. S. F. Coffman, "Mennonites and Military Service," in A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario Giving a Description of Conditions in Early Ontario--the Coming of the Mennonites into Canada--Settlements--Congregations--Conferences--Other Activities--and Nearly 400 Ordinations, ed. L. J. Burkholder (Markham, Ont.: Mennonite Conference of Ontario, 1935), pp. 271-77.
- ¹⁴Epp, Mennonites in Canada, p. 382.
- ¹⁵Adolf Ens, "Mennonite Relations with Governments; Western Canada, 1870-1925" (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1979), pp. 296-301.

¹⁶Ens notes that organizers of a particular fund drive observed: "that such an action might help to obtain the goodwill of their Canadian neighbours who would be less likely to press for Mennonite enlistment if they saw evidence of voluntary sacrifices" (*ibid.*, p. 287).

¹⁷S. F. Coffman, "The Non-Resistant Relief Organization," in Mennonites in Ontario, ed. Burkholder, p. 273.

¹⁸Ens, "Mennonite Relations with Governments," p. 310.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 314-15.

²⁰The designation of "east," though inaccurate, is used because of the fact that the Mennonites in Ontario were situated furthest east in Canada; virtually no Mennonites lived in either Quebec or the three Atlantic provinces.

²¹Ens, "Mennonite Relations with Governments," pp. 286-87.

²²Noah M Bearinger to W. G. Weichel, 23 May 1917, Noah M. Bearinger Collection (hereafter NMB), 1-20.1, File: 1918-25, CGCA.

²³Coffman, "The Non-Resistant Relief Organization," p. 274. The statement of Frank H. Epp (Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution [Altona, Man.: D. W. Friesen and Sons for the Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council, 1962], p. 59), that General Conference Mennonites were involved, appears to be incorrect.

²⁴"Minutes of the Non-Resistant Relief Organization, 16 January 1918," NMB, 1-20.1, File: 1918-25, CGCA.

²⁵Coffman, "The Non-Resistant Relief Organization," p. 273.

²⁶Weber, "History of S. F. Coffman," p. 50.

²⁷Coffman, "The Non-Resistant Relief Organization," pp. 274-75.

²⁸Weber, "History of S. F. Coffman," p. 58.

²⁹Reimer, "Canadian Mennonites and World War I," p. 30.

³⁰For a description of some of these achievements, see David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia."

³¹For a broader discussion of the post-war period, see chapter three of Frank H. Epp, Mennonite Exodus, pp. 28-38 and chapters one and two of John B. Toews, Lost Fatherland: The Story of the Mennonite Emigration from Russia, 1921-1927 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1967), pp. 21-50.

³²Toews, Lost Fatherland, p. 32. Toews notes that the geographical position, economic organization, and cultural characteristics of the Mennonites also made them "vulnerable to the notion that they were supporters of the counter-revolution" in "Russian Mennonites in Canada: Some Background Aspects," Canadian Ethnic Studies 1 (December 1970): 132.

³³Toews advances this argument in Lost Fatherland, pp. 85-90.

³⁴Toews, "Russian Mennonites in Canada," pp. 138-39; idem, "The Russian Mennonites and the Military Question (1921-27)," MQR 43 (April 1969): 153-68.

³⁵Toews states:
 "For many such questions as the religious instruction of children, freedom of conscience as it pertained to pacifism, and freedom of worship became more critical than economics. Under the new regime the structure which distinguished the Mennonites as a separate entity was obliterated. Faced with uncompromising pressure they became willing to dispense with their economic structure and their social system, but not the basic religious values which ultimately undergirded their community" ("Russian Mennonites in Canada," p. 139).

³⁶John D. Unruh, In the Name of Christ: A History of the Mennonite Central Committee and its Service, 1920-1951 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1952), p. 14.

³⁷The origins and activities of these various organizations are described in chapter two of *ibid.*, pp. 11-40; chapter one of P. C. Hiebert and Orie O. Miller, eds., Feeding the Hungry: Russian Famine 1919-25: American Mennonite Relief Operations under the Auspices of Mennonite Central Committee (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Central Committee, 1929), pp. 27-46; Guy F. Hershberger, "Historical Background to the Formation of the Mennonite Central Committee," MQR 44 (July 1970): 213-44.

³⁸Hershberger, "Historical Background," p. 225.

³⁹Unruh, p. 14.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 18-22.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴³The later than anticipated termination of the AMR program in South Russia and the 1929 emergency, in which thousands of German-speaking residents flocked to Moscow in an attempt to emigrate, also prevented MCC from disbanding. Hiebert and Miller, Feeding the Hungry, pp. 425-27; Unruh, In the Name of Christ, p. 24.

⁴⁴This incident is related in Epp, Mennonite Exodus, p. 60.

⁴⁵Epp refers to this committee as the Central Relief Committee, in *ibid.*, p. 61, but the name Canadian Central Committee is the one used in Hershberger, "Historical Background," p. 242; Mennonite Encyclopedia, s. v. "Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization," by Jacob Gerbrandt; Harold S. Bender, "Mennonite Inter-group Relations," MQR 32 (January 1958): 54. Hiebert and Miller refer to Canadian Mennonite Central Committee in Feeding the Hungry, p. 328.

⁴⁶Epp, Mennonite Exodus, p. 61. Gerbrandt claims that 25 convenors were appointed (Mennonite Encyclopedia, s. v. "Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization").

⁴⁷"Aufruh zur Hilfeleistung," Der Mitarbeiter 14 (April 1921): 27.

⁴⁸"Bericht ueber die Arbeit des Mennonitischen Hilfskomitees fuer die Notleidenden in Russland und ueber den Erfolg derselben hauptsaechlich in Manitoba," *ibid.*, 16 (January 1923): 5.

⁴⁹Hiebert and Miller, Feeding the Hungry, p. 328.

⁵⁰Epp, Mennonite Exodus, pp. 61-62.

⁵¹Mennonite Encyclopedia, s. v. "Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization" by Jacob Gerbrandt; Hershberger, "Historical Background," p. 242.

⁵²"Protokoll der 20. Konferenz der Mennoniten im mittleren Canada, abgehalten in Winkler, Man., am 3., 4., und 5. Juli 1922," Der Mitarbeiter 15 (July 1922): 55; "Protokoll der 21. Konferenz der Mennoniten im mittleren Canada, abgehalten in Langham, Sask., den 2., 3., u. 4. Juli 1923," Der Mitarbeiter 16 (August 1923): 58; "Protokoll der 22. Konferenz der Mennoniten in der Northwestern Gemeinde zu Drake, Sask.," Der Mitarbeiter 17 (August 1924): 59.

⁵³"Protokoll der 22. Konferenz der Mennoniten im mittleren Canada," p. 59.

⁵⁴Epp (Mennonite Exodus, p. 73) states that the agency, besides the two Conference Mennonite representatives, was to consist of one representative from each of the Sommerfelder, Church of God in Christ Mennonite, Kleinegemeinde, Bruderthaler, Mennonite Brethren, (Old) Mennonite, and Brethren in Christ churches. But the minutes of the first Board meeting ("Protokoll der am 11. April 1922 zu Altona, Manitoba, abgehaltenen Sitzung von Vertretern verschiedener Mennoniten-Gemeinden in Manitoba bezueglich der Einwanderung der russischen Mennoniten nach Canada," Der Mitarbeiter 15 [April 1922]: 27) indicate that one person was meant to represent the three smallest groups. This was confirmed by a letter from David Toews to S. F. Coffman (10 July 1922, Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Files [hereafter CMBC], XXII-A-1, Vol. 1181, File 13, CMCA).

⁵⁵Epp lists the number of immigrants by year as follows: 1923, 2759; 1924, 5048; 1925, 3772; 1926, 5940; 1927, 847; 1928, 511; 1929, 1019; 1930, 305. Mennonite Exodus, p. 282.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 296-97.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸David Toews to S. F. Coffman, 9 July 1934, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1181, File 13, CMCA. As it turned out, the debt was liquidated in 1946. Toews died the following year.

⁵⁹David Toews to members of Board, 3 August 1934, *ibid.*, Vol. 1389, File 1533, CMCA.

⁶⁰The Board held no meetings between 18 August 1939 and 25 May 1944. When meetings resumed there was no mention of the various committees, though the provincial branches remained intact throughout this period.

⁶¹Weber, "History of S. F. Coffman," p. 75.

⁶²The original intent was to have a representative of the Brethren in Christ on the Board. For some reason, however, the Board made attempts to recruit Sam Goudie of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ as a member. Goudie may have assisted the immigration process in his own community, but he did not attend any Board meetings. A. A. Friesen to S. F. Coffman, 28 February 1923, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1181, File 13, CMCA.

⁶³The role of the NRRO in the immigration process is ambiguous. A letter from S. F. Coffman to A. A. Friesen (19 April 1923, CMBC, XV-1.2, File: 1923, CGCA) states that a recent meeting had endorsed the MCANA and recommended that its members purchase shares. Correspondence from the following year, however, suggests that the NRRO had officially withdrawn from the activity and that subsequent work was carried out independently:

"I have written . . . explaining my reasons for appealing to them, since they have not been receiving any information other than that which has previously come from our Non-resistant Relief Organization. It will be necessary for them to understand that our Relief Organization has nothing officially to do with the present movement and that what they do will be altogether independent of any other church organization and that they may act just as they determine among themselves" (S. F. Coffman to David Toews, 25 March 1924, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1181, File 13, CMCA).

⁶⁴Changes in Board membership were gleaned from the Board minutes in CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1389, Files 1533-35, CMCA.

CHAPTER II

WORLD WAR II AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

1939-1946

Both the Canadian government and the Canadian Mennonites faced many of the same problems in World War II that they had encountered twenty-five years earlier. For the government, the issue of conscription once more threatened to divide Canada along linguistic lines. The specific question was: How could it attain a level of war involvement that satisfied both Great Britain and English Canada and yet did not excessively alienate French Canada?

For the Mennonites, the question of exemption from military service once more became uppermost, and, as in World War I, this issue spawned others. What did the Canadian Mennonites owe the government in lieu of active military service? How could they convince their fellow-Canadians that their refusal to enlist was not because of disloyalty but because of religious principle. How could they help to alleviate some of the distress caused by the war? How could they do all of these things in the most effective manner?

The Mennonites responded to these problems in a way reminiscent of the Great War as well. Again they were prepared to show their support for the government in a concrete manner, although, as will be seen, they could not always agree on the form that this was to take. Again they undertook to organize massive relief programs to gain the

goodwill of the non-Mennonite community and to give their religious principle of nonresistance a more practical application. Once more, and this time much earlier, they recognized the need for unity amongst themselves, both in their negotiations for military exemption and in their relief programs, even if they could not always attain it.

This Canadian Mennonite response to World War II found expression in the development of a number of inter-Mennonite organizations. Most of them were new; others, like the NRRO, were revitalized. These organizations provided a focus for the Mennonites' military service-related concerns and their relief efforts. As such, they became important stepping stones to the formation of Mennonite Central Committee (Canada) two decades later.

When war broke out in 1914, the Canadian Mennonites had not considered it necessary to appeal to the government to honour their pacifist principles. This was not the case in 1939. Because they sensed that they might have more difficulty in securing exemption this time,¹ the Mennonites and other peace groups began early in the year to consider ways of presenting their position on war and military service to government officials. In Ontario the first groups to prepare statements for presentation were the Brethren in Christ (Tunkers) and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. These groups agreed that joint action would be advisable and together forwarded their position paper to the prime minister.² The Quakers and (Old) Mennonites sent similar statements to Ottawa prior to September's declaration of war.³

For nearly a year the Ontario Mennonites felt reasonably secure that they had nothing to fear. The sudden escalation of the war in the spring of 1940, and the authorization of conscription for home defence, however, convinced them that further action on their part was necessary. At the invitation of Brethren in Christ bishop Ernest J. Swalm, representatives of (Old) Mennonite, Old Order Mennonite, Amish, United Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ, and Mennonite Brethren in Christ churches met in Waterloo on 22 July 1940 to discuss their common concerns.

The implications, for the peace groups, of the recently passed National Resources Mobilization Act provided the focus for the meeting's discussion.⁴ Since the Act intimated to some that complete exemption might no longer be acceptable to the government, the possibility of an alternate service was raised. No decisions were reached, but a committee was appointed to meet with the Society of Friends which had, by way of letter, outlined a proposed national service project that it hoped to present to the government. The meeting adjourned after creating a Military Problems Committee consisting of several advisory members and one member from each church or conference. It was to concern itself with the day to day matters affecting all groups.

A second meeting was held on 3 September. The participants of this session adopted the name "Conference of Historic Peace Churches" (CHPC) as their official title. It was not an original choice,⁵ but it was a good one because it communicated the common principle which united such diverse groups as, for example, the Old Order Mennonites and the Quakers. The latter group had, upon invitation, agreed to

join forces with the Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in negotiating with the government. The CHPC later also gained the support of the Old Order Amish, the Old Order Dunkards, and the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church of Kitchener. That it was able to sustain the support of all these groups was no small achievement, particularly in view of the division that later tormented Mennonites in the western provinces.⁶

Throughout the war the CHPC provided the forum in which the Ontario peace groups could meet each other on common ground and the channel through which they could relate to the larger community. The Military Problems Committee became the working arm of the conference. It received direction from and reported to the larger body. Because it soon became apparent that the committee's original size of thirteen members was too unwieldy, a core committee of three members was appointed to make necessary government contacts and attend to the major part of the work. It consisted of J. B. Martin of the (Old) Mennonites, E. J. Swalm of the Brethren in Christ, and Fred Haslam of the Quakers.

Together with David Toews, who represented the western Canadian Mennonites, Martin,⁷ Swalm, and Haslam travelled to Ottawa in early September 1940 to learn how Mennonites and other peace groups would be affected by the National Resources Mobilization Act. Unable to meet with Minister of National War Services J. G. Gardiner, the four men were granted an audience with T. C. Davis, one of the deputy ministers. According to J. B. Martin, Davis received them cautiously but became considerably more cordial when they mentioned that their people did not want to become a burden to the government but wanted to assist in resolving problems that arose from their nonresistant



stance.⁸ It appears that Davis hedged when he was pressed on the issue of complete exemption. But his intimation, that some type of national service, possibly in road construction or national parks, would meet with the government's approval,⁹ gave the delegates the impression that complete exemption would not be possible. The discussion did not proceed beyond generalities at this point because neither Toews nor the members of the Military Problems Committee had received a mandate to negotiate some form of alternative service. The meeting was nevertheless a significant one because it indicated the direction that military exemption would take.

Exactly what the government expected of the Mennonites at this point is unclear. Speaking in the House of Commons on 18 June 1940, Prime Minister King had emphasized that

the government has no desire and no intention to disturb the existing rights of exemption from the bearing of arms which are enjoyed by the members of certain religious groups in Canada, as for instance the Mennonites.¹⁰

Several weeks later Minister of National War Services J. G. Gardiner also noted that Mennonites were among those individuals who, for various reasons, were exempt from military service.¹¹ Evidently government officials recognized their legal obligation to uphold the Mennonites' privilege of military exemption.

Even so, that Deputy Minister T. C. Davis and his associate, Major-General L. R. LaFleche, later turned down a November delegation's proposal for an alternative service program, offering only noncombatant service under military supervision,¹² suggests that there was, at least at some levels, considerable reluctance to go beyond the letter of the law. No doubt Davis and LaFleche were concerned about

the loyalty of the Mennonites, a concern certainly heightened by the recent immigrants' strong identification with Germany,¹³ and were afraid that complete exemption would produce a public outcry as it had in World War I.

There is no indication, however, that government officials intended to force Mennonites, or any other pacifist group, into combatant service. Indeed, after a sympathetic Minister heard of the November delegation's request, it was only a matter of time before an alternative service program was functioning.¹⁴ In all likelihood, the Mennonites' offer to perform some sort of alternative service provided the government with a way of abiding by its own obligations to the Mennonites and thus satisfying their concerns, while at the same time appeasing public sentiment, at least in part.

The idea of some type of substitute service had been brewing among certain Canadian Mennonite groups for some time. As early as 1920, for instance, the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada had agreed to elect a committee whose task it would be to discuss with other Mennonite conferences the possibility of offering such a service to the government in the event of a new conflict.¹⁵ It appears to have been motivated primarily by a desire to escape in the future the intense public criticism that had been encountered during the war.

Nothing concrete resulted from the resolution, but a number of factors ensured that the idea would not be forgotten. Probably most important was the influx of Russian Mennonites in the 1920s, many of whom had participated in alternative service programs in Russia and thought highly of them. Another factor was the growing interest

exhibited by American Mennonites in the concept of alternative service. In the United States, Mennonites had been offered only non-combatant service in World War I. An increasing number of them, including the leading (Old) Mennonite authority on nonresistance, now urged that the only way satisfactory provisions for military exemption could be obtained in the future would be if the peace churches themselves devised and proffered a substitute form of service.¹⁶

Not all Ontario Mennonites had been enamoured with the idea of presenting an alternative service proposal to the government. One of those opposed was S. F. Coffman, the (Old) Mennonite bishop who had played such a major role in representing the concerns of the Ontario Mennonites and Brethren in Christ during World War I. Coffman was not opposed to alternative service in principle, but he was convinced that the government would abide by past promises and ensure complete exemption once more.¹⁷ So firm was his faith that he even felt the meetings leading to the formation of the CHPC were unnecessary. His "wait-and-see" attitude, not shared by the majority of CHPC members,¹⁸ would be challenged very soon.

Shortly after Swalm, Martin, and Haslam returned from Ottawa with the indication that some form of national service would likely be required of the Mennonites, the Military Problems Committee appointed three men to draft a proposal for a form of service that would meet with the government's approval as well as reflect Mennonite principles. That Coffman was largely responsible for the resulting proposal¹⁹ suggests that his faith in the government may have been shaken by Davis's remarks. The CHPC accepted the proposal at its 8 October meeting and directed the Military Problems Committee to present it to

the government in some appropriate manner.²⁰

According to the proposal, an organization called Canadian Fellowship Service was to be given full responsibility for an alternative service program. It was to consist of eight different committees, each concerned with one particular area of service, whether relief, reconstruction, reclamation and forestry, public health and welfare, medical and hospital service, or industry, as well as a top-level executive committee, which was to provide coordination.²¹ To ensure that all services performed under its direction would be of a non-military nature, and that supervision would be carried out by civilians, Canadian Fellowship Service was to function under the aegis of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches.

The CHPC proposal for establishing Canadian Fellowship Service did not become the basis for the ensuing alternative service program. But the organization's constitution, as it was drafted, remains an important document because it provides early evidence of one of the most important insights the Mennonites would gain from World War II, namely, that serving one's country was not always at variance with serving God. Article I outlined the purpose of the organization as follows:

Since the Historic Peace Churches of Canada believe that the Gospel of Christ is love, peace and goodwill to all men, and that this testimony should be expressed in a practical manner both in times of peace and of war, they have organized a Canadian Fellowship Service to co-operate in the relief of suffering and distress, and in the performance of such services as will lighten the hardships resulting from local or national calamities.

Having for many years enjoyed under a gracious government, the privileges of liberty of conscience, the organization of this Canadian Fellowship Service is not alone an expression of appreciation to our government, but much more, acknowledgement of our Christian duty to God and to our fellow men.²²

The peace thrust of the Ontario Mennonites had by this time achieved a high degree of consolidation, both in form and content. The former was attested to by the very existence of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches as a body uniting virtually all the nonresistant groups in Ontario. The latter was evinced by the consensus that alternative service was acceptable and even desirable as a means of repaying the government for the privilege of not having to bear arms and of making a contribution that was of direct benefit to society. Quite a different situation existed in western Canada.

The first step in coordinating the peace and military service concerns of the western Canadian Mennonites took place in May 1939 and was initiated by David Toews, chairperson of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. Toews, together with three other Canadians, had recently attended a meeting in Chicago which had created a Mennonite Central Peace Committee, a committee that would represent the mutual interests of all American Mennonites in war-related issues. The Chicago meeting had impressed upon Toews the need for similar coordination among Canadian Mennonites, and he therefore invited ten Mennonite and Hutterite groups to a meeting at Winkler, Manitoba to discuss common concerns. Representatives of nine of the ten groups attended the meeting on 15 May. These included Mennonite Brethren, Conference Mennonites, (Old) Mennonites, Church of God in Christ Mennonites, Rudnerweider Mennonites, Evangelical Mennonite Brethren (Bruderthaler), Old Colony Mennonites, and Hutterian Brethren. The Sommerfelder Mennonites chose not to attend.²³

The purpose of the meeting, as outlined by chairperson Toews at its outset, was to find a way in which all the nonresistant churches

could proceed together in the event that Canada found itself at war.²⁴ Following an initial report on the Chicago meeting, each of the groups in attendance was asked to report briefly on its promotion of the peace position and its attitude toward military service. These reports revealed that, except for the (Old) Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren, most churches had not paid a great deal of attention to these issues in recent years. Moreover, though each group affirmed its adherence to a position of nonresistance and its opposition to military service, contrasting views on the issue of alternative service arose out of the discussion which followed.

The divergent opinions on this matter of alternative service prevented the meeting from arriving at a mutually satisfactory plan of action. The delegates agreed to send to King George VI a letter expressing their "deepest devotion and unwavering loyalty," and they acknowledged their indebtedness to the Canadian government, as the following resolution indicates:

Als Jünger unseres Herrn Jesu Christi und als Bürger von Canada sind wir dieser unserer Heimat dankbar, dass sie uns nicht nur aufgenommen, als wir in Not waren, sondern uns so lange auch Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit in vorbildlicher Weise gewährt hat. Wir wollen unserem Canada die Treue halten wie Gottes Wort es uns lehrt.²⁵

But they could not concur on how to express their loyalty concretely during wartime. The differences unveiled here did not bode well for the future.

The delegates adjourned the meeting by reaffirming the historic peace position, resolving to give it greater emphasis in the future, and creating a watchdog committee which would inform churches on developments in the area of military service and call additional

meetings if necessary. David Toews, S. F. Coffman, and B. B. Janz, pastor of the Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church and a leading figure in the immigration movement of the 1920s, were elected to this committee. For lack of a specific name, it will be referred to as the Winkler Committee.

As in Ontario, there were few new developments in the military service question, at least as far as the western Mennonites were concerned, for nearly a year. A Manitoba committee was formed in September 1939 to deal with the questions of young men anxious or confused about exemption procedures.²⁶ But it does not appear to have been very long-lived.

Autumn 1940 provided the occasion for the western Canadian Mennonites to tackle the issue of alternative service again. In early September David Toews travelled to Ottawa to determine how the Mennonites stood in relation to the National Resources Mobilization Act. On his way he stopped in Waterloo to learn how the Ontario Mennonites were proceeding. During the stopover he attended the second session of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches on 3 September and persuaded the assembly to appoint several representatives to accompany him to Ottawa, thus initiating a close working relationship between the CHPC and the western Canadian Mennonites that would be maintained for the course of the war.

Toews reported on the interview with Deputy Minister Davis in Blumenort and Winkler, Manitoba on 12 and 13 September, respectively. He obviously sensed that his report roused some controversy, for he wrote to C. F. Klassen, collector of Reiseschuld payments for the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization that, "die Stimmung in

Winkler war besonders, wenigstens zum Teil, nicht schön."²⁷ Klassen himself, sensing even before Toews's return that the question of alternative service would be a contentious one, wrote:

Ich bin sehr gespannt, was Du aus Ottawa mitbringen wirst. Ob sie dort Vorschläge machen werden, oder uns die Möglichkeit geben werden es zu tun. Dann müssten wir die Vorschläge ausarbeiten. Keine einfache Sache.²⁸

It was becoming increasingly evident that the issue of alternative service was going to divide the Mennonites of Manitoba. Descendants of those who had immigrated to the province in the 1870s, commonly referred to as Kanadier, saw no need for alternative service as it had not been required in the past, and they were adamantly opposed to it being offered to the government. Those who had immigrated in the 1920s (Russlaender), on the other hand, thought highly of the concept of alternative service and believed that they should offer to do some form of service even before it was requested of them.

The divergent opinions held by the Kanadier and Russlaender were rooted in different historical experiences. One of the main factors motivating the immigration of the Russian Mennonites in the 1870s had been the loss of complete military exemption, a privilege which had first been guaranteed by Catherine the Great a century earlier. Those who left Russia at this point, primarily the poorer and more conservative colonists, believed that they were choosing the only course of action open to them. They tended to regard those who remained and took part in the alternative forestry service (Forsteidienst), which was devised by the government on fear of losing all of what it considered to be its best farmers, as compro-

mising the faith. The formation of the Selbstschutz (see Chapter I) during the civil war convinced the Kanadier that alternative service was merely an intermediate step to forsaking the principle of non-resistance entirely. For them, an absolutist position remained the only true one.

The Russlaender, on the other hand, had found the alternative service program in Russia to be a positive experience. In the first place, it made a valuable contribution to the society, and it gave greater integrity to the Mennonite principle of nonresistance. This was particularly the case when in World War I a form of ambulance service detached from military supervision (Sanitaetsdienst) was created; the Mennonites' refusal to take life was now translated into an active effort to save life. Secondly, it allowed them to return a long-taken-for-granted favour. With the outbreak of World War II, the Russlaender now on Canadian soil saw no reason why they should not perform a similar service. Their haste to make an offer to the government was motivated by the belief that it would improve their chances of a favourable hearing. Moreover, they were anxious to express their gratitude to the government for allowing them entry into Canada when the public was still averse to their admittance.²⁹

Surprisingly, alternative service did not become an issue in Alberta and Saskatchewan. There the Russlaender gained the support of virtually all non-Russlaender groups, including Swiss Mennonites from Ontario, Russian Mennonites from the United States, direct immigrants from Prussia, and Kanadier from Manitoba. (The designation Russlaender hereafter includes these groups as well.) That they were able to sustain the support of the sizeable Kanadier community in Saskatchewan

has been attributed to the moderating influence of David Toews.³⁰

As a result of Toews's reports on the visit with Deputy Minister Davis, a number of Kanadier bishops and ministers in Manitoba met at Rosenhof on 16 September to discuss their situation.³¹ What emerged from the discussion, as at an earlier meeting, was the conviction that the government would distinguish between the immigrants of the 1870s and those of the 1920s in dealing with the Mennonites.³² Certain that the Order-in-Council of 1873 would once again exempt them from any military obligations, the Kanadier were convinced that Davis's intimation regarding alternative service would not apply to them.

The meeting then proceeded to elect an Aeltestenkomitee (Board of Bishops) consisting of Peter A. Toews, the Sommerfelder bishop; David Schulz, the Bergthaler bishop; and Jacob F. Barkman, a Church of God in Christ Mennonite minister. It was to appear before the Winnipeg divisional registrar to determine what the government had in mind for the Mennonites and to discover, "without giving the Board to understand that we were offering to undertake such service,"³³ when a call for alternative service duty might come. That the Aeltestenkomitee was also directed to intercede for the Russlaender suggests that a split was not yet envisioned. It reported on 28 September. Its information was rather vague, but it seems that the fears of Toews, Schulz, and Barkman regarding the prospect of alternative service had been assuaged.³⁴

Both David Toews and C. F. Klassen were dismayed by these developments. First of all, they were puzzled by the counsel given by the Winnipeg Board of National War Service, for it seemed to contradict

that of Deputy Minister Davis.³⁵ They were also worried about the independent actions taken by the Kanadier, particularly since Davis had emphatically stated that he would deal with one delegation representing all Mennonite groups, not each group separately.³⁶ On 24 September Klassen confided to Toews that he believed a split was imminent.³⁷ With the hope of averting such an event, he invited all the Russlaender and Kanadier groups in Manitoba to a meeting in Winnipeg for further discussion.³⁸

This meeting, held on 14 October, was attended by all the Kanadier groups as well as the Russlaender Mennonite Brethren.³⁹ (Presumably the Conference Russlaender were not represented because they had decided, at an earlier meeting, to support the alternative service option and had elected Bishop Johann Enns as their representative for Manitoba.)⁴⁰ The meeting's discussion quickly came to focus on the issue of alternative service, and the opposing views were argued forcefully, the Kanadier insisting that they should be prepared to suffer for the principles for which their forefathers had suffered, and the Russlaender emphasizing that alternative service was not just a civil duty but also a Christian duty. Jacob F. Barkman sensed that organizational unity was impossible with such irreconcilable opinions and therefore offered to appear before the National Services Board in Winnipeg to clarify that the Aeltestenkomitee no longer represented all the Mennonites of Manitoba. At C. F. Klassen's request, however, this was postponed until representatives of all four western provinces could meet together.

This larger meeting, held in Saskatoon on 22 October,⁴¹ merely delayed the schism for another week. The Russlaender clearly

outnumbered the Kanadier, and since they were convinced of the desirability of alternative service, the discussion quickly focused on the particular form of service that should be offered to the government. Jacob Barkman and David Schulz, who represented the interests of the Manitoba Kanadier, were severely distressed. When their pleas to proceed more slowly were ignored, they felt it was no longer worthwhile to participate in the deliberations.

From this point the Manitoba Kanadier went their separate way.⁴² Several attempts by Russlaender leaders, particularly David Toews and C. F. Klassen, to reunite the two groups failed. In subsequent months, therefore, two separate delegations would appear before the Ministry of National War Services in Ottawa. Ironically, the outcomes of their negotiations would be identical, and the fear of the Kanadier, that an offer by the Russlaender to perform alternative service would prejudice their case, would come true. Within a half year young Russlaender and Kanadier men would find themselves working side by side in the Alternative Service Work (ASW) camps.

David Fransen suggests that the different opinions regarding alternative service manifested different understandings of citizenship and its obligations.⁴³ More likely is the analysis that the difference was one of degree rather than kind. While the Kanadier felt that alternative service was going much too far, they did not believe, as Fransen seems to imply, that no demands would be placed upon them. However, they tended to perceive of these demands as they had in World War I. Consequently, they felt that, by presenting the government with monetary gifts for relief purposes, they were doing their part. At a Bergthaler membership meeting it was resolved

dass wir eine extra Anstrengung machen wollen, der Regierung ein Geldgeschenk zu machen, um unsere Dankbarkeit zu beweisen, die sie uns in unsrer Sonderstellung entgegenbringt ⁴⁴

and when Judge Adamson, the divisional registrar in Winnipeg, demanded larger relief contributions of the nonresistant Mennonites, the Manitoba Kanadier responded readily. By June of 1941 they had collected \$42,000. ⁴⁵ They also heartily supported the government bonds specifically designated for relief and reconstruction. Altogether, Canadian Mennonites purchased \$822,660.16 of non-interest-bearing loans and \$3,849,750.00 of interest-bearing loans. ⁴⁶

Even though the rest of western Canadian Mennonites remained united organizationally after the withdrawal of the Manitoba Kanadier, some ambiguity exists as to which body attended to the peace concerns of this group. David Fransen suggests that it was the Mennonite Central Relief Committee (MCRC), formed in 1940, which was responsible for administering the military service-related dealings of the majority of western Canadian Mennonites. ⁴⁷ This appears to be inaccurate, however, for the MCRC had from its outset been defined as a relief committee concerned solely with relief work. ⁴⁸ Fransen's confusion most likely arises from the fact that David Toews, B. B. Janz, and C. F. Klassen, who comprised the MCRC executive, were also the individuals most active in negotiating military exemption on behalf of western Mennonites. It is clear, however, that when involved in these negotiations, neither Toews, Janz, nor Klassen functioned in their roles as MCRC members; rather, each of them was merely carrying out the directives given by other assembled bodies. ⁴⁹

It was, in fact, the Winkler Committee, functioning as a western Canadian committee consisting of Toews and Janz, rather than

as an all-Canada committee consisting of Toews, Janz, and Coffman, which attended to the general concerns of the western Canadian Russlaender and those Mennonite groups in Saskatchewan and Alberta that had continued to support them. In April 1942 it was replaced by a Zentralkomitee fuer West-Canada in der Dienstfrage (Western Service Committee) which was to deal specifically with matters related to the alternative service program.⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, its executive consisted of Toews, Janz, and Klassen, representing Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, respectively, as well as J. B. Wiens of British Columbia.

Throughout Canada the Mennonites had keenly felt the need for unity amongst themselves at the war's outset. Deputy Minister Davis's statement, that he would deal with one delegation and no more, undoubtedly awakened memories of the lack of overall coordination that had characterized their dealings with government in World War I. It also prompted David Toews to remark that, "even though we do not agree in all things not to let the Government know of this, as they do not know how things are with us in this respect."⁵¹ The decision of the Manitoba Kanadier to pursue a course independently of the rest was a setback to hopes of achieving full inter-Mennonite cooperation. But despite this unfortunate occurrence, tremendous strides were made in bridging the distance between east and west during the course of the war.

A connection between Ontario and western Canadian Mennonites concerning matters related to military exemption was first established in May 1939 when, at the Winkler meeting, a committee consisting of B. B. Janz, David Toews, and S. F. Coffman was created. Though this

committee did not function as a national level committee, it provided the impetus for further contacts. Soon after the National Resources Mobilization Act was passed, a delegation consisting of Toews and CHPC representatives together appeared before government officials for the first time. This established a pattern of joint action that was maintained for the remainder of the war, a pattern that not only strengthened the sense of oneness among the Mennonites but also greatly enhanced Mennonite requests in the eyes of government officials.

In addition to the joint delegations, David Toews and C. F. Klassen frequently attended meetings of the CHPC, and in late 1941 or early 1942 they were co-opted as advisory members of the Military Problems Committee.⁵² CHPC members, J. B. Martin in particular, occasionally reciprocated by attending meetings of the Western Service Committee. In September 1943 a representative gathering of western Russlaender passed a recommendation encouraging the CHPC to create a national organization by enlarging its boundaries to include the four western provinces and by petitioning the Aeltestenkomitee of Manitoba to join as well.⁵³ The Western Service Committee would continue to exist but would function, like the Military Problems Committee, under the direction of the expanded CHPC. It is doubtful whether the CHPC approached the Aeltestenkomitee on this issue, but it cheerfully granted the Western Service Committee's request for affiliation.⁵⁴

The relationship between the CHPC and the Aeltestenkomitee was not as close as the one between the CHPC and the Western Service Committee, but it lacked the tension which marked the relationship

between the two western committees.⁵⁵ J. Harold Sherk, secretary of the CHPC, made sure that Jacob F. Barkman, Peter A. Toews, and David Schulz received conference mailings, and the Kanadier leaders occasionally attended CHPC and Military Problems Committee meetings. The Aeltestenkomitee did turn down an invitation to a CHPC-sponsored peace conference early in 1942 because the Sommerfelder group did not feel that participation would be advisable.⁵⁶ But Jacob F. Barkman wrote to Sherk that he would have been happy to attend had the date of the conference not conflicted with other matters.⁵⁷

Like World War I, World War II spawned massive relief efforts among the Canadian Mennonites. This time, however, relief organizations emerged much earlier and, more importantly, they did not disband after the war had ended.

The Non-resistant Relief Organization, which had been formed late during the first World War, had continued to collect and disburse relief monies until 1924. At that point it had become dormant, though it never officially disbanded. In 1937 a request from the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (MBMC) of the Mennonite General Conference brought the NRRO back to life.⁵⁸ The MBMC had begun relief work in Spain after the onset of civil war, and it now sought to appeal to the peripheries of its North American constituency through the more localized relief committees. The issue was first raised at an executive committee meeting of the NRRO on 18 October 1937. After some discussion, the members resolved that each church or group represented in the organization be encouraged to consider the relief project and decide upon appropriate action; if these groups agreed to support the project,

NRRO was to take steps to receive and disburse the funds through the relief committee of the MBMC. A later meeting on 7 January took more concrete steps to encourage support for the Spanish relief effort.⁵⁹

The conflict in Spain had barely ended when World War II forced NRRO to direct its energies to new areas of need. On 18 September 1939 the organization delegated a committee of five individuals to call for relief contributions from the churches and to decide upon the destination of forthcoming aid.⁶⁰ This committee contacted the Mennonite Central Committee of the United States, which was already working on a war sufferers relief program, and asked if it might participate.⁵⁷ MCC responded enthusiastically, and S. F. Coffman, as secretary of the NRRO, called a meeting for 14 November to discuss with MCC's secretary-treasurer, Orie O. Miller, the particulars of the program. At that meeting Miller described MCC's tentative plan of work for Europe and invited the NRRO to concentrate its support on relief projects in England.⁶² Evidently MCC was anxious to establish a base for itself among the Ontario Mennonites, for Miller also asked NRRO to recommend a Canadian individual who could act as a relief commissioner for MCC, exploring possible areas of service in Europe and making recommendations for the agency to act upon.⁶³

The NRRO functioned exclusively as a relief committee in World War II, the Military Problems Committee of the CHPC having assumed responsibility for military service-related concerns. There was no official link between CHPC and NRRO during the war years, but a close relationship existed between the two organizations nevertheless. For one thing, since the United Mennonites, Mennonite Brethren, and Stirling Avenue Church had joined NRRO in 1939, their constituent

groups were virtually identical. For another, officers of one organization were frequently active in the other. The result was a considerable degree of coordination and integration of the peace and service activities of the Ontario Mennonites. At the war's end a formal affiliation would give greater concretion to this relationship.

As secretary of the NRRO, S. F. Coffman was firmly convinced that the Mennonites should have their own relief committees during wartime. Since those in the west did not have such a committee, though the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization had from time to time collected and disbursed relief monies to Russia, he encouraged David Toews to organize a relief committee similar to the NRRO.⁶⁴ Toews responded enthusiastically to the suggestion, so Coffman arranged for both Toews and B. B. Janz to be present at a meeting of the NRRO on 1 December 1939 in order to familiarize them with the organization and its work. He also invited Orie Miller of MCC to be present to explain the relief program being initiated in Europe. Held in Vineland, the meeting impressed upon all the necessity of a western organization similar to NRRO, and it directed David Toews to assume responsibility in forming this organization.⁶⁵

Toews's plan was to hold preliminary meetings in each of the western provinces. Provincial committees consisting of two persons for each group would be elected, and a central committee executive would then be chosen from these provincial members. Meetings were held in Altona on 12 January 1940, Saskatoon on 19 January, Coaldale on 30 January, and Yarrow on 5 February. Each meeting was well attended by almost all the Mennonite groups in the respective provinces,⁶⁶ and each resolved unanimously to support the creation of

an inter-Mennonite relief committee.⁶⁷ A gathering of the provincial executives was held on 15 March in Winnipeg at which time the name Mennonite Central Relief Committee (MCRC) was chosen, and David Toews, B. B. Janz, and C. F. Klassen elected as chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary-treasurer, respectively.

At the outset the MCRC set for itself a goal of collecting \$400 by 15 April and notified member groups to hold monthly relief collections for this purpose.⁶⁸ In early April, Klassen and Toews attended meetings of the NRRO in Kitchener and the MCC in Chicago, and the joint relief program was finalized. At the recommendation of Amos Swartzentruber, recently returned Canadian commissioner, it was decided that the two Canadian committees would support MCC's projects in England with monthly contributions of \$400 each, aiming for a combined total of \$5000 by the beginning of September.⁶⁹ C. F. Klassen would collect relief monies from the provincial committees of the MCRC and forward them to Noah M. Bearinger, treasurer of the NRRO. Bearinger in turn would send them directly to London.

As in World War I the motivation that undergirded the workings of these two Canadian Mennonite relief committees was twofold. In the first place, the Mennonites believed that their avowals of the non-resistant position did not mean a great deal if they were not supplemented with an effort to lessen suffering in the world. Without an active relief ministry the peace position was quickly debased. David Toews, in reporting to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada in 1942, stated succinctly:

Wenn unsere Wehrlosigkeit nur auf dem Papier steht, dann hat sie keinen wirklichen Wert. . . .

Es ist nicht nur unsere Aufgabe, dass wir nicht Blut vergiessen

und dass wir nicht andern etwas zuleide tun, sondern unsere Aufgabe ist, sehr tätig zu sein, um Leben zu erhalten und andern in der Not zu helfen.⁷⁰

A second motivating force was the pressure of public opinion; indeed, it was often this one which roused the Mennonites to the first. Sensitive to criticism for their avoidance of military service, they were anxious to make visible sacrifices to placate their fellow-Canadians. In an invitation to Saskatchewan ministers to attend the 19 January meeting in Saskatoon, David Toews gave this feature an emphasis equal to the first by stating:

In organizing for relief work, we believe it is our Christian duty to relieve suffering, besides this, however, we believe that we act wisely not to arouse hostility of the Canadian people as would be the case if we do not do anything.⁷¹

It would have been a simple matter for Canadian Mennonites to increase their contributions to the non-Mennonite relief organizations which many had supported during peacetime. But they hesitated to continue that support now, one of the chief reasons being that there was no way of determining whether or not their gifts did not go to promote the war effort in some way or another. S. F. Coffman, in encouraging the formation of a relief committee in the west, wrote:

It seems to me that the brethren in the West are in a group strong enough to organize and carry on such work, staying clear of other organizations which are more or less connected with the army organizations and some which are purely patriotic organizations. Our efforts should be purely from the standpoint of our Christian profession . . . ⁷²

A strong joint Mennonite relief committee could maintain control over the destination of its funds and thus avoid this difficulty.

Another reason for favouring distinctly Mennonite organizations over non-Mennonite agencies was that it made possible an accurate assessment of Mennonite relief donations. The Mennonites wanted their

sacrifices to be visible to the non-Mennonite community in order to discourage the widely held notion that they were merely taking advantage of their privilege of military exemption. Contributions to general relief funds precluded that. Particularly concerned by public accusations, David Toews shared his thoughts with B. B. Janz shortly after the war broke out:

Die Gefahr liegt nahe, dass wir uns zersplittern und dass dann unsre Hilfe sehr unscheinbar erschienen wuerde. . . . Wenn eine Gruppe fuer das Rote Kreuz spendet, eine andere Gruppe vielleicht fuer YMCA, eine dritte noch fuer etwas anderes, dann verschwinden diese Spenden in der allgemeinen Hilfeleistung und es heisst dann bald unter unsern Eingeborenen, dass die Mennoniten ueberhaupt nichts tun wollen, und das gibt dann mancherlei Schwierigkeiten.⁷³

Toews was convinced that a treasury exclusively representing Mennonite relief efforts could be a much greater witness to the general public.

The relationship between MCRC and NRRO became an intimate one, and it remained so for the course of the war. This occurred at the level of leadership since officers of the respective organizations were in frequent consultation, C. F. Klassen and Noah Bearinger, most particularly. But it also occurred at the constituency level because the coordinated support of the same relief project provided a sense of common purpose. The "perfect harmony" for which David Toews had hoped⁷⁴ was in many ways achieved.

Where a lack of harmony did exist was within the MCRC itself. The issue of contention was alternative service and, predictably, it ranged the Manitoba Kanadier against the other participating groups. That this issue should affect the relationship between the Kanadier and Russlaender in the area of relief promotion seems somewhat strange in view of the assurance, given at each provincial organizational

meeting, that the MCRC would concern itself exclusively with relief activity and not with the military service question. Whether the Manitoba Kanadier were not aware of this distinction--the duplication of individuals comprising the MCRC executive and those involved in the service negotiations may have confused them--whether they chose to ignore it, or whether they felt that a matter of such importance rendered it inconsequential is unclear. In any case, they decided to terminate their contributions to the Manitoba branch of the MCRC as a direct result of the October meeting at Saskatoon, the meeting which had convinced them that they would have to deal with the government on their own.⁷⁵

The creation of a separate relief committee to which Kanadier groups could contribute did not occur until the end of December. In the meantime Julius G. Toews, a Steinbach school teacher and a member of one of the dissenting churches, contacted Kanadier bishops and ministers to drum up support for such a committee.⁷⁶ Then, in his capacity as secretary of the provincial committee of the MCRC, he called a meeting of that committee to proceed with the formal withdrawal of the Kanadier groups.

The meeting was held on 30 December.⁷⁷ According to the account given by C. F. Klassen, its outcome was a foregone conclusion. Since the decision to withdraw had been made, and since the number of individuals who opposed the move was exceedingly small (only three of the twelve-member provincial committee had been Russlaender, and only two of these were present at the meeting), little could be done to persuade the Kanadier to reconsider. Neither Klassen's insistence that a difference of opinion on the alternative service question was

not a sound reason for creating a separate relief committee, nor his brief description of the work of the MCRC could alter the minds of the Kanadier individuals present.

The meeting therefore proceeded to elect members to the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee (CMRC), as the new committee was named. The Sommerfelder and Bergthaler churches received three members each, perhaps due to their larger size, while the Rudnerweider, Kleinegemeinde, Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, and Church of God in Christ Mennonite groups received two each. Neither the Old Colony nor the Chortitzer groups were represented at the meeting, so they were not included in the original election. Both eventually became associated with CMRC. Julius Toews of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church in Steinbach was, ironically, elected as secretary of this new committee.

Both C. F. Klassen, as Manitoba representative on the MCRC executive, and David Toews, as its chairperson, were very disappointed in this turn of events. Klassen himself did not believe that the reason given by the Kanadier for discontinuing the cooperative effort was the real one. He was convinced that they simply did not wish to work with the Russlaender.⁷⁸ He was thus quick to accuse some of the Kanadier leaders of deception:

Etliche von ihnen haben uns Freundlichkeit vorgeheuchelt
und hinter dem Rücken haben sie uns schlecht gemacht und
angeschwärzt.⁷⁹

The more conciliatory individual, David Toews felt that he and the other members of the MCRC executive should accept the major part of the blame. He therefore suggested that he, Janz, and Klassen resign from their positions on MCRC, and that he and Janz also

withdraw from the Winkler Committee. With the obstacles to unity thus removed, he felt that a reconciliation would be possible.⁸⁰

If Klassen and Toews disagreed over who was at fault, they nevertheless concurred on the negative aspects of the split. Not only would the division set relations between the two groups back for years, but it would also exude a bad impression to non-Mennonites. Klassen shared this latter concern with his friend Orie Miller of Mennonite Central Committee:

Was mir schwer ist, ist das Vorgehen an und für sich, diese unnötige Trennung. In der Welt wollen wir Friedensträger sein und im eigenen Haus muss es zu Trennungen kommen.⁸¹

In the ensuing years C. F. Klassen approached Julius Toews of the CMRC on a number of occasions in an attempt to effect a reconciliation with the Kanadier.⁸² He was probably encouraged by the government's ruling that Kanadier men would also be required to perform alternative service, and by the indication of several smaller Kanadier groups that they would be prepared to cooperate in relief work again were it not for the opposition of the larger and more conservative groups.⁸³ Klassen's attempts, however, proved fruitless. Julius Toews himself was not opposed to a reconciliation, but he feared that it would mean losing the support of the very conservative Old Colony, Chortitzer, and Sommerfelder churches. For him, relief work itself was more important than the channel through which it was carried out.

Just how unnecessary a separate committee was, however, became apparent when it was learned that CMRC was forwarding its relief monies directly to the very program in England which NRRO and MCRC were supporting. Upon learning of this state of affairs through John

Coffman, the MCC worker in London, Noah Bearinger intimated that he hoped John would be the "innocent means" of having CMRC channel its funds through the NRRO treasury as MCRC did.⁸⁴ This did not occur (it may not even have been suggested to CMRC), but upon being approached by MCC itself, CMRC arranged to forward its relief monies through that organization.⁸⁵ If the Canadian organizations could not find common ground within their own borders, they at least achieved it beyond them.

Relationships between the eastern and western relief committees paralleled those between the peace committees. The intimate working relationship between the NRRO and MCRC, noted above, bore a close resemblance to that between the Military Problems Committee of the CHPC and the Winkler and Western Service Committees. Similarly, the more distant relationship between the Military Problems Committee and the Aeltestenkomitee was duplicated in that existing between NRRO and CMRC. There were occasional contacts between these two relief committees, but they seemed to be of a purely acquaintance-making nature. No joint actions ever followed. In May 1944 G. S. Rempel, chairperson of CMRC, attended one of the NRRO executive committee meetings, and a resolution suggesting that NRRO, CMRC, and MCRC hold joint annual conferences was unanimously endorsed.⁸⁶ It appears, however, that nothing came of this resolution.

When the war finally ended, the Mennonites had reason to believe that they had dealt adequately with the questions that had confronted them some six years earlier. First of all, they had demonstrated their loyalty to the Canadian government by purchasing specially

designed bonds and non-interest-bearing certificates, and more importantly by performing alternative service. Though for the most part unwilling to take up arms for their country, they recognized that "the benefits of citizenship could not be enjoyed without the accompanying obligations."⁸⁷ It is doubtful whether English-speaking Canadians as a whole accepted the alternative service model as of equal value to actual military service, but the majority of Mennonites at least perceived that it was possible to be a good Mennonite and a good Canadian at the same time. A small minority of Mennonites, mostly Sommerfelder from Manitoba and Saskatchewan, who felt that the demands of the government were infringing upon the demands of God, chose to emigrate to Paraguay where they would again be afforded complete military exemption.

For its part, the government was reasonably satisfied with the Mennonites at the war's conclusion. Most of the services rendered by the alternative service workers, particularly in fire fighting and agricultural services, made significant contributions to the nation's welfare. Moreover, the Mennonites in ASW camps had been generally cooperative, unlike members of other pacifist groups, which had expressed their opposition to any form of service by holding sit-down strikes and demonstrations. Ironically, however, it was the high level of enlistment among Mennonites--about 35% of those of military age according to the most authoritative estimate⁸⁸--that was the key reason for the government's satisfaction.⁸⁹

This last factor was of real embarrassment to the Mennonite leaders. But it came more as confirmation of what had become evident at the war's outset--that many churches had neglected teaching

nonresistance during the inter-war years--than as new information. As such, it provided the impetus for an intense renewal of interest in peace during the latter years of the war and long after.

An important by-product of the alternative service program was an increased service consciousness among the Mennonites. This seems somewhat ironic in view of the Anabaptist belief that the Christian was to be a witness to the world; in this case the civic duties demanded by the Canadian government were encouraging the Mennonites to be better Christians. Many of the Mennonite leaders and conscientious objectors would have preferred a form of service which helped to relieve human suffering directly, such as the Sanitaetsdienst they had known in Russia, rather than building roads and fighting forest fires. But this proved to be objectionable to most because of the government's stipulation that such work be carried out under military supervision.⁹⁰ Even so, it was no accident that, even before the ASW program and its American counterpart terminated, both Canadian and American Mennonite organizations were discussing the possibilities of training volunteer workers to aid in relief and reconstruction in Europe.

But if service was given a more personal dimension in World War II, relief committees did not lose their significance. In 1945 alone MCC reported contributions from NRRO, MCRC, and CMRC to its war sufferers relief program as \$26,147.56, \$24,830.55, and \$3771.16, respectively.⁹¹ The following year general receipts were up to \$49,852.92 for NRRO and \$100,745.85 for MCRC.⁹² Whereas the relief committees created during and after the first World War had either dissolved or become inactive after several years, those functioning

during the second World War remained strong. The scale of need created by the war was partially responsible for this. But no doubt many more Mennonites now realized that relief work was not necessary just during wartime, when the goodwill of fellow Canadians demanded it, but was a Christian duty to be promoted at all times.

The war experience had also encouraged a much higher degree of cooperation among the Canadian Mennonites, a fact which government officials found as pleasing as the Mennonites did themselves. Ontario nonresistant groups presented the best organizational model in their Conference of Historic Peace Churches. The CHPC's success in establishing strong bonds of fellowship between groups that spanned an entire spectrum of conservatism-liberalism was truly remarkable. The hesitancy with which many of the Ontario Mennonites approached the concept of Mennonite Central Committee (Canada) some twenty years later can, at least in part, be explained by their reluctance to give up their happy associations with the CHPC.

A similar degree of unity had been achieved prior to the war's outset by Mennonites in western Canada, but it had been short-lived. Within several months the Manitoba Kanadier had withdrawn from both the joint peace and relief committees to create their own. This division marked a severe setback to further cooperation, and it was some twenty-five years, long after the obstacles to unity had been removed, that a reunion could be effected. Nevertheless, the west could count in its favour the high level of cooperation realized between its predominantly Russlaender organizations and the CHPC and NRRO in Ontario.

The war experience also encouraged a greater degree of coordina-

tion and integration of the various Mennonite activities. Once again the best example was provided by Ontario, where the close ties between the CHPC and NRRO confirmed the complementarity of peace and relief activity. It seemed only natural that this association should be made more concrete. Thus in 1946 it was agreed that the NRRO should become, like the Military Problems Committee, a branch of the CHPC.⁹³

A similar integration of peace and relief activities was achieved in the west. For the Russlaender this evolved rather naturally, since the executive officers of the Western Service Committee and Mennonite Central Relief Committee were the same. For the Manitoba Kanadier it was achieved through a decision to create the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee as the relief arm of the Aeltestenkomitee.⁹⁴

Like World War I and the subsequent immigration of the Russian Mennonites in the 1920s, World War II had resulted in some important organizational developments for the Canadian Mennonites. Though these developments served significant internal needs, they evolved in response to events occurring beyond the Mennonites' own communities. Ironically, the demands of Canada and the world were encouraging the Canadian Mennonites to put their house in order, with the results being a renewal of the historic peace and service witness, greater cooperation among the various Mennonite groups, and greater coordination of their wartime activities. The experience of the second World War differed from the earlier one in that its results, as will be shown in the next chapter, would have more lasting significance.

Notes

¹Why there was uncertainty is unclear. Part of it was related to the status of the Russlaender (Russian Mennonites who had immigrated to Canada in the 1920s). Unlike the immigrants of the 1870s, this later group had not been guaranteed military exemption by an Order-in-Council, and there was some concern that it might not therefore be exempt. Although a letter from F. C. Blair, Acting Minister of Immigration, to David Toews in 1936 should have cleared this up, fears evidently persisted. J. A. Toews, "Alternative Service in Canada During World War II" (M. A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1957), pp. 32-34.

²Ibid., p. 35.

³Ibid.

⁴David Warren Fransen, "Canadian Mennonites and Conscientious Objection in World War II" (M. A. thesis, University of Waterloo, 1977), p. 45.

⁵This name had also been chosen by an association of Mennonites, Quakers, and Church of the Brethren in the United States, formed in 1935. Melvin Gingerich, Service for Peace: A History of Civilian Public Service (Akron, Pa.: The Mennonite Central Committee, 1949), p. 27; Guy Franklin Hershberger, The Mennonite Church in the Second World War (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1951), p. 9.

⁶Fransen attributes this to the flexibility of E. J. Swalm and J. B. Martin, chairpersons of the CHPC and Military Problems Committee, respectively. "Conscientious Objection," p. 82.

⁷Fransen (ibid.) states that J. Harold Sherk, a member of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, was a member of this core committee which met with government officials in early September, not J. B. Martin. However, Martin himself notes that he was a member ("Canadian Government Contacts" in Nonresistance under Test: A Compilation of Experiences of Conscientious Objectors as Encountered in Two World Wars, comp. E. J. Swalm [Nappanee, Ind.: E. V. Publishing House, 1949], p. 66) and does not mention Sherk. It appears that Martin is correct. A report on the meeting with government officials by David Toews notes that representatives of the (Old) Mennonites, Quakers, and Brethren in Christ were present ([David P. Reimer], ed., Experiences of the Mennonites in Canada During the Second World War 1939-1945 [n. p., n. d.], p. 65); no mention is made of a Mennonite Brethren in Christ representative.

⁸Martin, "Canadian Government Contacts," p. 67.

⁹[Reimer], Experiences, p. 59.

¹⁰Canada, Parliament, House of Commons Debates, 1940, Vol. 1, p. 904.

¹¹Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 2123.

¹²A report of this meeting is included in Minutes, 20 January 1941, Conference of Historic Peace Church Files (hereafter CHPC), XV-11.1.2, File: 1941-44, CGCA.

¹³Most Russian Mennonite immigrants of the 1920s identified with Germany because it represented the cultural homeland. A significant number, however, extended this to political identification with National Socialism. They were drawn to the Hitler regime largely because of its strong anti-communist thrust, a sentiment they had acquired through their own experiences in Russia, but also because its Volkish ideology provided a way of overcoming the alienation they felt in being thrust out of their comfortable pre-war existence in Russia. See Jonathan F. Wagner, "Transferred Crisis: German Volkish Thought Among Russian Mennonite Immigrants to Western Canada," Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism I (Spring 1974): 202-20.

¹⁴Minutes, 20 January 1941.

¹⁵J. G. Rempel, ed., Fünfzig Jahre Konferenzbestrebungen 1902-1952 (n. p., n. d.), p. 129.

¹⁶Guy F. Hershberger, a professor of sociology at Goshen College, was that authority. His views were published in "Is Alternative Service Possible?" MQR 9 (January 1935): 20-36.

¹⁷Weber, "Coffman," pp. 67-68; Fransen, "Conscientious Objection," pp. 44-45.

¹⁸One of those who was anxious to offer a form of alternative service was Noah Beringer. Several days prior to Canada's declaration of war, Beringer wrote to William D. Euler, his Member of Parliament, outlining some personal ideas which he hoped, if acted upon, "would afford us an opportunity to serve in a way that would be of service to those who rule over us and yet not conflict with our religious belief." He suggested 1) that Mennonites be denied the right to vote on national issues, 2) that their wealth be conscripted, 3) that their young men be conscripted for farm labour, and 4) that their farms, mills, factories, and other possessions be requisitioned for the duration of the war. Letter, 5 September 1939, NRRO, XV-11.2.2, File: 1939-45, CGCA.

¹⁹Fransen, "Conscientious Objection," p. 48.

²⁰Minutes, 8 October 1940, CHPC, XV-11.1.2, File: 1941-44, CGCA.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Although all ten groups were found in the western provinces, one of them, the (Old) Mennonite group, was officially represented at the meeting by an American. Toews had invited S. F. Coffman to speak for the (Old) Mennonites, but because Coffman was ill, Harold S. Bender of Goshen College attended the meeting. Both men were members of the Mennonite General Conference's Peace Problems Committee and thus equally capable of articulating the (Old) Mennonite position.

²⁴The following description is taken from "Bericht über eine Besprechung in der Wehrfrage von Vertretern Mennonitischer Gemeinden Canadas, abgehalten am 15. Mai 1939 in der M. B. Kirche zu Winkler, Manitoba," XXV-A, Vol. 1080, File 1, CMCA.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶In reality, an initial committee was formed on 4 September. It was supplanted by a second, more representative one on 27 September. Fransen, "Conscientious Objection," p. 41.

²⁷David Toews to C. F. Klassen, 18 September 1940, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1311, File 869, CMCA.

²⁸C. F. Klassen to David Toews, 4 September 1940, *ibid.*

²⁹Hildegard M. Martens, "Accommodation and Withdrawal: The Response of Mennonites in Canada to World War II," Histoire Sociale/Social History 7 (November 1974): 316.

³⁰Epp, Mennonite Exodus, p. 481.

³¹The minutes of this meeting are found in [Reimer], Experiences, pp. 60-62.

³²The minutes do not elaborate, but it seems that the Kanadier still believed the Russlaender were not able to claim exemption privileges. That was a misconception on their part. A distinction that was made between the two groups, at least theoretically, was that, while descendants of immigrants of the 1870s had only to prove they belonged to Mennonite churches, others had to prove that they were conscientious objectors because of personal religious principle. Fransen ("Conscientious Objection," p. 109) indicates, however, that as the war progressed there was "an increasing tendency of the mobilization board chairmen to require all Mennonites to articulate their dissent from participation in war."

³³[Reimer], Experiences, p. 61.

³⁴The minutes of this 28 September meeting are found in *ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

³⁵David Toews to C. F. Klassen, 3 October 1940, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1311, File 869, CMCA.

³⁶J. B. Martin, "Canadian Government Contacts," p. 67. Eventually Ottawa did deal with the Kanadier Aeltestenkomitee separately.

³⁷C. F. Klassen to David Toews, 24 September 1940, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1311, File 869, CMCA.

³⁸C. F. Klassen to David Toews, 10 October 1940, *ibid.*

³⁹"Protokoll der Beratung der Vertreter der Mennonitengemeinden verschiedener Benennung in Manitoba am 14. October 1940 in der Kirche der M. B. Gemeinde, 621 College Ave., Winnipeg." Benjamin Ewert Collection, XX-1, Vol. 544, File 28, CMCA.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*; C. F. Klassen to David Toews, 10 October 1940.

⁴¹[Reimer], Experiences, pp. 76-77; Fransen, "Conscientious Objection," pp. 60-61.

⁴²The comment by E. K. Francis (In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba [Altona, Man.: D. W. Friesen and Sons, 1955], p. 239), that the western Canadian Mennonites remained united on peace issues throughout the war, is obviously incorrect.

⁴³Fransen, "Conscientious Objection," p. 7.

⁴⁴"Die Bruderschaft," Bergthaler Gemeindeblatt 5 (December 1940): 4.

⁴⁵[Reimer], Experiences, p. 86.

⁴⁶Minutes, 23 October 1945, CHPC, XV-11.1.2, File: 1941-44, CGCA.

⁴⁷Fransen, "Conscientious Objection," p. 43.

⁴⁸This fact had been emphasized repeatedly at the early provincial committee meetings in order to calm the fears of the Kanadier members. "Mennonite Central Relief Committee," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1392, File 1545, CMCA; "Protokoll der Sitzung des mennonitischen Hilfskomitees von Manitoba am 1. Maerz 1940 in Bibelhaus, 184 Alexander Ave., Winnipeg," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1323, File 944, CMCA.

⁴⁹Toews and Janz, it will be recalled, were members of the Winkler Committee, which continued to function into 1942, though not as the Canada-wide body as had been the original intention. As such, Toews and Janz were responsible for initiating a number of meetings, and Toews for making the first governmental contact in September 1940.

C. F. Klassen was closely involved in the service question in Manitoba because he had been elected to a committee representing the interests of the Manitoba Russlaender on 14 October 1940. "Protokoll

der Beratung der Mennoniten gemeinden verschiedener Benennung in Manitoba am 14. Oktober 1940 in der Kirche der M. B. Gemeinde, 621 College Ave., Winnipeg."

Klassen and Janz, as well as Jacob Gerbrandt, were a part of the November delegation to Ottawa because they had been chosen to represent the western Canadian Russlaender and their supporting groups at the 22 October Saskatoon meeting. David Toews did not plan to accompany them but did at the last minute. Fransen, "Conscientious Objection," p. 93.

50 "Protokoll der Sitzung des Zentralkomitees fuer Westcanada in der Dienstfrage am 22. April 1942 in Coaldale, Alberta," B. B. Janz Collection (hereafter BBJ), Group IV, File 39 (c), MBSC; "Bericht über die Sitzung von Vertretern der Mennonitengemeinden im westlichen Canada, abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennonitengemeinde zu Saskatoon, Sask., am 29. January 1942," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1322, File 930, CMCA.

51 [Reimer], Experiences, p. 66.

52 "Bericht über die Sitzung von Vertretern der Mennonitengemeinden im westlichen Canada, abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennonitengemeinde zu Saskatoon, Sask., am 29. Januar 1942."

53 "Bericht über die Sitzung von Vertretern der Mennonitengemeinden zu Saskatoon am 29. September 1943," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1322, File 930, CMCA.

54 Minutes, 14 October 1943, CHPC, XV-11.1.2, File: 1941-44, CGCA.

55 David Fransen writes:

"The CHPC staked no claim of authority for itself in the west. Rather than viewing the MCRC or the Aeltestenkomitee as competitors, they were seen as colleagues in the same endeavor. Thus, the institutional rivalry that characterized the relationship of the MCRC to the Aeltestenkomitee was not at all descriptive of the relationship of these two to the CHPC" ("Conscientious Objection," p. 85).

The former CHPC secretary similarly wrote:

"Strangely, perhaps, the two western groups were not in those days able to find common ground in the west, but found it in the east through the CHPC" (J. Harold Sherk to William T. Snyder, 13 March 1957, CHPC, XV-11.1.3, File: 1957-58, CGCA).

56 [Reimer], Experiences, p. 95.

57 J. F. Barkman to J. Harold Sherk, 20 December 1941, CHPC, XV-11.1.5, File: 1941, CGCA.

58 "Minutes of an Executive Committee Meeting held in the Mission Building, Danforth Ave., Toronto, Ont. on Monday, October 18, 1937," NRRO, XV-11.2.1, File: 1917-48, CGCA.

In reality, the NRRO had held a meeting prior to this. In late December of 1936, S. F. Coffman, acting as a member of the Peace Problems Committee of the Mennonite General Conference, invited the NRRO to an Ontario peace conference on 3 and 4 February 1937 (S. F. Coffman to members of NRRO, 16 December 1936, NMB, 1-20.1, File: 1936-45, CGCA). The minutes of the NRRO show that it held a meeting in conjunction with the peace conference, but it appears that little, besides the election of a new executive, resulted (Minutes, 4 February 1937, NRRO, XV-11.2.1, File: 1917-48, CGCA).

⁵⁹Minutes of Special Meeting, 7 January 1938, NRRO, XV-11.2.1, File: 1917-48, CGCA.

⁶⁰Minutes, 18 September 1939, *ibid.*

⁶¹"Minutes of Mennonite Central Executive Committee held at Mennonite Home Mission, 1907 S. Union Ave., Chicago, Ill., Saturday, November 4, 1939," Mennonite Central Committee Files (hereafter MCC), IX-5-1, Box 1, File: 1939, AMC.

⁶²"Non-resistant Relief Organization: A Called Meeting of the Executive Committee with other Interested Relief Groups and Individuals, Waterloo, Ont., Nov. 14, 1939," NRRO, XV-11.2.1, File: 1917-48, CGCA.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴S. F. Coffman to David Toews, 23 September 1939, Military Problems Committee Files, XV-11.4.1, CGCA.

⁶⁵Minutes of Executive Committee, 1 December 1939, NRRO, XV-11.2.1, File: 1917-48, CGCA.

⁶⁶The Sommerfelder and Chortitzer Mennonites were not represented at the Altona meeting but later supported the provincial committee which resulted from it.

⁶⁷The minutes of each of the provincial organizational meetings were printed in a small pamphlet simply entitled "Mennonite Central Relief Committee," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1392, File 1545, CMCA.

⁶⁸"Protokoll der Sitzung des Zentralen mennonitischen Hilfskomitee, abgehalten den 15. Maerz 1940," *ibid.*, Vol. 1394, File 1557, CMCA.

⁶⁹"Bericht über die Sitzung in Kitchener (Hilfskomitee von Ontario) am 12. April und in Chicago (Executive des M. C. C.) am 13. April 1940," *ibid.*

⁷⁰Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada 1942 (Rosthern, Sask.: D. H. Epp, 1942), p. 67.

⁷¹David Toews to ministers in Saskatchewan, n. d., CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1321, File 928, CMCA.

⁷²S. F. Coffman to David Toews, 23 September 1939, Military Problems Committee Files, XV-11.4.1, CGCA.

⁷³David Toews to B. B. Janz, 17 October 1939, BBJ, Group II, File 18 (b), MBSC.

⁷⁴David Toews to S. F. Coffman, 12 March 1940, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1320, File 914, CMCA.

⁷⁵Following a report of the Saskatoon meeting, Kanadier ministers present at a meeting on 28 October resolved, "that we do not obligate ourselves to any further support of the general treasury nor to make any demands upon it." [Reimer], Experiences, p. 77.

⁷⁶Carolyn Enns, "A Historical Sketch of the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee" (research paper, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, 1977), p. 4.

⁷⁷The minutes of this meeting were unavailable but a detailed description is provided in C. F. Klassen to David Toews, 4 January 1941, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1311, File 869, CMCA and C. F. Klassen to Orie O. Miller, 12 January 1941, MGC, IX-6-3, Correspondence 1940-45, File 3: C. F. Klassen, AMC.

⁷⁸C. F. Klassen to J. B. Penner, 9 January 1941, C. F. Klassen Collection, MBSC.

⁷⁹C. F. Klassen to David Toews, 4 January 1941, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1311, File 869, CMCA.

⁸⁰David Toews to C. F. Klassen, 7 January 1941, *ibid.*; David Toews to J. J. Thiessen, 7 January 1941, *ibid.*, Vol. 1394, File 1557, CMCA.

⁸¹C. F. Klassen to Orie O. Miller, 12 January 1941.

⁸²Mr. Toews is not sure of the dates of Klassen's visits, but he believes that the first took place a year or two after the split and the second two or three years later. Julius G. Toews, interview held at Steinbach, Manitoba, 3 February 1979.

⁸³C. F. Klassen to David Toews, 10 February 1941, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1311, File 869, CMCA.

⁸⁴Noah M. Bearinger to S. F. Coffman, 27 December 1941, NRRO, XV-11.2.2, File: 1939-45, CGCA.

⁸⁵Orie O. Miller to J. G. Toews, 25 May 1942 and J. G. Toews to Orie O. Miller, 11 June 1942, MGC, IX-6-3, Correspondence, 1940-45, File 7: J. G. Toews, AMC.

86 "Non-resistant Report to the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada," NRRO, XV-11.2.4, File: 1950-55, CGCA.

87 Fransen, "Conscientious Objection," p. 6.

88 Frank H. Epp makes this estimate on the basis of a thorough study of Armed Forces records in Ottawa which revealed the names of 3837 Mennonites. His findings will be published in Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1950: A People's Struggle for Survival (Toronto: Macmillan, forthcoming).

Epp's conclusion overturns the earlier estimate of George G. Thielmann in "The Canadian Mennonites: A Study of an Ethnic Group in Relation to the State and Community with Emphasis on Factors Contributing to Success or Failure of Adjustment to Canadian Ways of Living" (Ph.D. dissertation, Western Reserve University, 1955), p. 336. Thielmann suggested that 50% of Canadian Mennonite men of military age enlisted.

89 Fransen, "Conscientious Objection," p. 156.

90 After a 16 September 1943 Order-in-Council, it became possible for conscientious objectors to serve in the medical and dental corps. Except for a few Russlaender, however, not many Mennonites chose this option because, in every respect except the carrying of guns, they would be soldiers. Ibid., pp. 128-29.

91 "Statement of Income and Expenditures by Sections and Divisions--Dec. 1, 1944-Nov. 30, 1945--War Sufferers Relief--Canadian," MCC, IX-5-1, Box 1, File: 1945: 1945, AMC.

92 "War Sufferers Relief Contributions--Canada," ibid., Box 2, File: 1 January 1947, AMC.

93 "Minutes of the Eleventh Annual Session of the CHPC held on Oct. 15, 1946 at the First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ontario," CHPC, XV-11.1.2, File: 1945-58, CGCA.

94 Julius G. Toews described the CMRC-Aeltestenkomitee relationship to Orié O. Miller of MCC in Letter, 14 February 1943, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1321, File 925, CMCA.

CHAPTER III

THE COLD WAR AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

1946-1959

The century's second great war had barely ended when the world found itself being drawn into the Cold War. The might which the Soviet Union had demonstrated in defeating the German forces on the eastern front had convinced the Allied powers that curbing Soviet control in Europe was a necessity. The United States, having emerged from the war as the other superpower, sought to achieve this through massive economic aid to European nations under the Marshall Plan. This policy of containment was supplemented by increased arms production which, it was hoped, would deter any Soviet designs of expansion. Only five years after the conclusion of the war, former allies were pitted against each other in what was increasingly being perceived as an ideological struggle between good and evil.

Canada could not help but be drawn into this power struggle. Both factors of geography and military alliance meant that the tensions found in the United States would be reproduced, at least to a degree, in Canada. First roused by the Gouzenko affair, Canadians soon grew to fear the Russian threat almost as much as their southern neighbours. Within a few years a Cold War mentality was much in evidence.

The Canadian Mennonites were not left untouched by this new

tension. Like their fellow North Americans they feared that the uneasy peace of the late 1940s could quickly become yet another and perhaps greater conflagration. Young conscientious objectors had barely arrived home when Mennonite groups began to discuss how to proceed if Canada returned to a state of war. In 1946, for example, the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches passed a resolution which thanked COs for upholding the peace position and established a committee whose task it would be to gain government approval for future forms of alternative service.¹

The Mennonites' haste to prepare for another war was motivated by three factors. In the first place, the Canadian government had repealed all Orders-in-Council pertaining to the alternative service program at the close of the war.² The Mennonites thus knew that they would have to start all over again in the event of another conflict. Two wars had taught them that arrangements for either complete exemption or alternative service took time to make, not only in negotiations with the government but in internal consolidation as well. This time they wanted to be ready.

A second factor was the fear that peacetime conscription would be enacted in Canada. Although it is doubtful whether the Canadian government ever considered such a course of action, given the fact that conscription had alienated French-Canadians so much in both World War I and II, the fear remained real for the Mennonites. E. J. Swalm, addressing the annual session of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches in 1948, noted that the United States had recently introduced conscription of manpower and that Canadians could soon expect the same.³ It was therefore important that the Mennonites get

to work.

Finally, the Mennonites were anxious to clarify their position with the government in light of the realignment of world powers. Since it was clear that a new conflict would pit the West against the Soviet Union, the Mennonites recognized that their own position would be made more difficult by the fact that many of them had come from the USSR only twenty years earlier, and that a new group of refugees was now beginning to arrive. A meeting of CHPC executive members with B. B. Janz and J. J. Thiessen in 1949 concluded that it was likely that Mennonites would be branded as communists in the future.⁴ In all probability they felt it was important to negotiate with the government before public opinion could prejudice their case.

It was generally conceded that a joint delegation representing all the Mennonite groups in Canada should approach the federal government to present their position. Although the unity achieved in World War II had represented a significant improvement over World War I, it had fallen short of the ideal when Mennonites in the west had come to loggerheads over the issue of alternative service. Now there was to be a concerted effort to unite all the Canadian Mennonites. First mention of this was made at the 1946 annual session of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Then it was suggested that the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization⁵ might be the appropriate organization to coordinate such an effort and that the Manitoba Aeltestenkomitee should be petitioned to participate.⁶

It was a number of years, however, before more concrete steps were taken to meet with government officials. The primary reason for this was the conviction, on the part of the Mennonite leadership,

that such a representation could jeopardize the immigration of Mennonite refugees which was just beginning. Some fifteen thousand of the thirty-five thousand Russian Mennonites who had accompanied the German retreat during the course of the war had successfully evaded repatriation. Some had settled in Germany, but the majority now sought resettlement in either Canada or South America. C. F. Klassen had been appointed to direct the movement of these refugees, and he strongly urged that nothing be done which might close Canada's doors to any further Mennonite immigration.⁸

Nevertheless, it was important that the Mennonites consolidate their own internal position before being able to approach the government. To that end the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization resolved that a meeting of all Canadian Mennonite conferences, including the Ontario Conference of Historic Peace Churches, should be held, and it instructed its new chairperson, J. J. Thiessen,⁹ and vice-chairperson, B. B. Janz, to make the necessary contacts with the churches in Manitoba and Ontario.¹⁰ After being approached by Thiessen and Janz, C. J. Rempel, the secretary of the CHPC, seconded the invitation to the Manitoba Kanadier in a letter to J. F. Barkman in January 1949.¹¹ An unofficial meeting was finally held on 11 March 1949 in Kitchener, but for some reason no Kanadier representatives were present. No concrete actions were taken.

A year later a similar meeting was held in Winnipeg on 2 May. This time the west was more heavily represented, but once again members of the Aeltestenkomitee were absent, this time because heavy flooding in the Red River valley prevented them from travelling to Winnipeg.¹² Thus by 1950 there still had been no meeting which could

claim to officially represent all the Mennonites in Canada.

Progress was being made within Manitoba, however. In 1949 the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba (the provincial counterpart to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada) passed a resolution calling for a meeting of all Mennonites in Manitoba to discuss alternative service, the issue which had divided them ten years earlier.¹³ A first meeting was held on 13 January 1950 and, in addition to representatives of the Mennonite Brethren and Conference groups, representatives of the Bergthaler, Rudnerweider, Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, Kleingemeinde, and Church of God in Christ Mennonite groups attended. It was followed by similar meetings on 24 March and 27 October.¹⁴

The minutes of these meetings indicate that the bone of contention was no longer alternative service in general but service in the medical corps in particular. The Kanadier groups seemed quite happy with camp service at this point, but they felt that medical corps service compromised their position on nonresistance too greatly. The Mennonite Brethren still favoured the Sanitaetsdienst option, but they stipulated that this include only the restricted medical corps, in which participants did not have to undergo combatant training. In a significant decision the previous summer, the Conference Mennonites had resolved that, because the CO medical corps required conscientious objectors to wear military uniforms and function under military supervision, it was unacceptable.¹⁶

These meetings did not result in definite action, but they were important in that they reopened the lines of communication between Russlaender and Kanadier groups in Manitoba. Because both groups had

modified their positions on alternative service since the war, and because there were no clear indications as to the form that such service would take in the future, there seemed to be little reason for not cooperating. When the participants in these meetings affirmed the importance of maintaining contact with the Ontario Mennonites,¹⁷ it seemed that a united Canadian Mennonite representation at Ottawa could be a real possibility.

It was a general assumption among the western Canadian groups that the Ontario CHPC would take the initiative in determining an appropriate time to approach government officials and in coordinating the joint Mennonite delegation.¹⁸ The issue was raised at a 15 September CHPC executive committee meeting.¹⁹ After a lengthy discussion it was resolved that a three-member committee should make efforts to contact the prime minister (who by this time was Louis St. Laurent) or as high an official as possible. The delegation was not to make proposals concerning a particular form of alternative service, since this had not yet been cleared among all groups, but it was to outline the peace position of the Mennonites, expressing the hope that it would be respected by the new government as it had by that of Mackenzie King. The secretary, C. J. Rempel, was asked to notify the western groups of these plans.

A second executive committee meeting on 17 November appointed E. J. Swalm and J. B. Martin to draft the statement which would be presented at Ottawa,²⁰ and in early January 1951 C. J. Rempel contacted B. B. Janz, J. J. Thiessen, and David Schulz with procedural details. Their response, despite some concern about the west being under-represented,²¹ was apparently favourable. An appointment with

the prime minister was thus arranged.

A delegation of nine men met with Prime Minister St. Laurent on 22 February. (For some reason the original plan of a three-member delegation was not adhered to, probably in an attempt to make the venture more representative.) The brief which it presented outlined how the Canadian government had consistently afforded the Mennonites the freedom to refrain from serving their country in a military way, either through exemption or alternative service.²² It then went on to request that, in the event of a national emergency requiring conscription, a representative group be given an opportunity to discuss with government officials a form of service in keeping with the peace testimony.²³ This request was accompanied with the assurance that the Mennonites were willing "to serve our country and fellowmen in relief work at home or abroad or to engage in work of national importance such as service in hospitals, mental institutions, industry or agriculture under civilian administration."²⁴

The prime minister received the delegation warmly and assured the members that ample opportunity would be given their group or any other to present its case prior to the enactment of conscription legislation. He also noted that, given the experiences of the past, there should be no difficulty in making suitable provisions in the future.²⁵ The delegates returned home convinced that their petition had been heard.

For the Mennonites the importance of this delegation lay not so much in what it accomplished, but rather in what it symbolized. Involving the CHPC, the western Russlaender, and the Manitoba Kanadier,²⁶ the delegation was truly the most representative that had

made its way to Ottawa as yet. Though a consensus had not been reached among the various groups concerning a form of alternative service,²⁷ the range of participation in this venture meant that the wounds of World War II were on their way to being healed. This healing had been promoted greatly by the Conference Mennonites' decision two years earlier to reverse their position on medical corps service.²⁸ It would be furthered even more in 1957 by a similar reversal on the part of the Mennonite Brethren conference.²⁹

The comments made by Prime Minister St. Laurent largely determined the direction that the peace activities of the different Mennonite conferences would take in the years to come. Because the issue had been settled with the government authorities, at least for the time being, the various committees could concentrate on nurturing the peace principle within their respective conferences. J. G. Rempel reported to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada that, since "der Weg nach aussen" (the outward direction) had been attended to, it was now possible to concentrate on "der Weg nach innen" (the inward direction).³⁰

Already at the conclusion of the war the Canadian Mennonites had recognized that their doctrine of nonresistance needed a great deal more emphasis. The high level of enlistment among the Mennonites conclusively indicated that it had been neglected. Undoubtedly the chief reason why those who had enlisted were treated so leniently, particularly by the Conference Mennonite group, was because the conferences realized that their own churches bore a large part of the guilt. They could hardly condemn their young men for choosing to serve their country militarily when they had been remiss in promoting

the peace teaching.³¹ As a result of some soul-searching the Mennonite groups engaged in a tremendous promotion of the doctrine of nonresistance through the 1950s. Numerous peace conferences were held, many of them becoming annual events, pamphlets and study guides were published, special mailings were distributed, and travelling peace teams were sponsored. Nonresistance was also taught in the Mennonite schools and colleges and preached from the pulpits with more regularity. So much attention did peace and nonresistance receive, that at one point, The Canadian Mennonite, an English-language inter-Mennonite weekly founded in 1953, solicited opinions on the topic "Are we making too much of nonresistance?"³²

The same emphasis on peace was found throughout the five Canadian provinces where Mennonites were found in significant numbers. A major difference existed between Ontario and the west, however, in the organizational structure dealing with peace concerns. In the west the wartime inter-Mennonite peace committees had either disbanded or become inactive. The Aeltestenkomitee had decided in 1946 to continue to function,³³ but it does not appear to have been very active. The Western Service Committee seems to have dissolved sometime in 1945. In the west, therefore, the peace focus once more became a denominationally-oriented issue. Numerous peace activities, particularly the provincial conferences, were inter-Mennonite affairs, but by and large the various Mennonite groups pursued their own courses independently.

A different situation existed in Ontario. There the war and the concerns it raised for the Ontario Mennonites had given birth to the Conference of Historic Peace Churches. It would not have been

very surprising had the CHPC disbanded at the war's end like its western counterparts, but quite the opposite was the case. The CHPC increased in strength and elicited greater interest in the post-war period than it had during the war. J. Harold Sherk, its first secretary, remarked on this in 1952:

It seems almost if not quite as much a miracle that the CHPC, born in the stress of the early days of World War II, should have gone on in this way with increasing strength and interest in the post-war years. Many of us had feared that the interest in this work would become slack when the pressure of war and conscription eased off, but it has not been so.³⁴

Much of this strength grew out of the recognition that the peace testimony had to be advanced as vigorously in peacetime as in wartime, and that a united front in this promotion increased its effectiveness as well as its integrity. Already at its 1944 annual session E. J. Swalm noted that the cooperative effort of the CHPC should continue after the war's end in order to give a visible expression of the doctrine of peace,³⁵ and in 1946 a guest speaker admonished the assembly that its task in the promotion of peace was only then beginning.³⁶

Both the strength and the continued existence of the CHPC held long-term significance for Canadian Mennonites. In subsequent years, as greater cooperation among all Canadian groups and greater coordination of their different activities came to be seen as a necessity, the CHPC provided not only the model after which a larger effort could be fashioned, but also an essential ingredient in that effort.

If in 1951 the Mennonites figured that "der Weg nach aussen" had been pursued as far as possible, a new avenue of peace and service

witness soon opened to them. It was related to the Civil Defence (CD) program begun by the federal Department of National Health and Welfare in conjunction with provincial and municipal governments. Prompted by the Cold War in general and the realization that a real war would most likely involve the use of nuclear weapons, the purpose of Civil Defence was to minimize the effects of disaster upon the Canadian population and Canadian property. One of its chief functions therefore was to train volunteer civilians in various skills necessary in the event of nuclear attack.

The question of participation in Civil Defence was raised at a number of Mennonite meetings in the next few years,³⁷ but it was not until the mid-1950s, when local CD units in Ontario began enthusiastic membership drives, that it became a real issue of concern. The Mennonites could support Civil Defence's life-preserving functions, but they remained apprehensive about the program's military flavour. No doubt some of this was imagined, since many people were under the impression that CD operated under the Department of Defence, as it did in the United States. Nevertheless, statements like that of Paul Martin, minister in charge, that civil disasters such as floods and tornadoes did not constitute civil defence, even though CD workers may be involved, understandably aroused suspicion.³⁸ Moreover, many people felt that, by helping to prepare people psychologically for war, Civil Defence was actually creating a climate that would produce it.³⁹ Many Mennonites had reason to be grateful for their early hesitation when in 1959 a major portion of Civil Defence jurisdiction was transferred to the Department of Defence.

The first group to tackle the issue of participation was the

Conference of Historic Peace Churches. An executive committee meeting in May 1956 agreed to arrange for a number of individuals to visit the Civil Defence college at Arnprior with the hope that they would be able to advise the conference on whether or not to participate.⁴⁰

Orland Gingerich and Elven Shantz were the individuals chosen. They reported on their visit to Arnprior at the annual session of the CHPC in November and indicated that cooperation with Civil Defence at this point would enhance the peace testimony as well as provide greater bargaining power if at some point the Mennonites had to say no.⁴¹

After considerable discussion the assembly resolved that

we provide for a cooperating church-directed programme in those specific areas of Civil Defence in which we can conscientiously serve in accordance with our understanding of discipleship as founded in scripture (but without direct affiliation to the full programme and all its phases) . . .⁴²

While the CHPC was taking these steps to clarify its position with Civil Defence officers, other developments were taking place in Ontario, as well as Manitoba and British Columbia, which would provide exactly the "cooperating church-directed programme" which the CHPC had in mind. These developments were the organization of service units which could lend assistance to victims of natural disasters. Such units had been formed in several American states a number of years earlier. It was possibly their example which prompted several groups of Ontario Mennonites to assist in the clean-up operations following a tornado in 1953 and a hurricane in 1954. These spontaneous offers of assistance, though sadly lacking in organization, marked significant beginnings.

It was in Manitoba, however, where a provincial Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) organization took more definite shape first.

This occurred in the spring of 1956 after the visit of Elmer Ediger, chairperson of the Kansas MDS, to several Mennonite communities.⁴³

The expectation of flooding in the Red River valley no doubt prompted the Manitoba Mennonites to follow up Ediger's suggestions immediately.⁴⁴ Within a week a top-level coordinating committee had been formed, and plans to appoint contact persons in each district were underway.

Similar developments were occurring in British Columbia. As in Manitoba, the visit of an American actively involved in the organization of state MDS units, and anticipated flooding in the Fraser River valley provided the impetus for the creation of a provincial MDS.⁴⁵ Unlike Manitoba, however, three separate MDS organizations were created, one for each of the three areas where Mennonites were concentrated, namely, Chilliwack, Abbotsford, and Vancouver.

Ironically, the organization of an Ontario Mennonite Disaster Service occurred somewhat later. It was discussed at a CHPC executive committee meeting in April 1956⁴⁶--exactly the time that Elmer Ediger was itinerating in Manitoba--but it was not until early in 1958 that the Military Problems Committee gave birth to Ontario MDS.⁴⁷ In Saskatchewan and Alberta MDS organizations came into existence only in 1959.

Even prior to the official organization of these Mennonite Disaster Service units, there had been some speculation that disaster service might be one way to be of service to Canada without full membership in Civil Defence. The Canadian Mennonite, which throughout its history directed the course of events almost as much as it

reported them, wrote in 1955:

It is still too early to make any sweeping conclusions, but it may well be that Mennonite Disaster Service will prove to be the most effective avenue of practical Christian witness and neighbourliness in our own communities in times of natural or war-time disasters. It may also grow to be the logical church alternative to Civil Defence, if an alternative is what we need.⁴⁸

In March 1956 the Mennonite Central Committee adopted a statement of guiding principles on civil defence, noting that the importance of disaster service could only grow.⁴⁹ It is therefore not surprising that, throughout the Canadian Mennonite community, Mennonite Disaster Service quickly became the alternative to Civil Defence. Though there were some regional variations in the extent to which MDS cooperated in Civil Defence programs, there did exist a common avenue through which the Mennonites could contribute to the welfare of the nation and maintain their religious scruples.

The development of Mennonite Disaster Service in the 1950s paralleled the development of relief action in World War I and alternative service in World War II. Once again the demands of the nation prompted a renewing and redefining of the Mennonite service witness. The secretary of Ontario MDS, speaking to a conference in 1959, admitted that the attempt on the part of CD officers to recruit Mennonite young people had been the key element in the development of the Ontario organization. He stated: "Local pressures from non-Christian sources prompted the church to action in this matter."⁵⁰ In attempting to fulfill their obligations as Canadian citizens, the Mennonites were also strengthening their Christian witness.

If the Cold War was thus responsible for the creation of Mennonite Disaster Service, it also renewed discussions regarding the

creation of a standing committee which could represent all the Canadian Mennonites before the government in such issues as alternative service, civil defence, and other peace-related concerns. The creation of such a body had been debated in the early 1950s, but nothing had resulted from these discussions.⁵¹ The prime minister's statements to the 1951 delegation had removed any sense of urgency, and the idea, if not forgotten, had at least been shelved. Now the organization became a reality.

The process through which this came about was rather complex. In January 1957 J. B. Martin of the Military Problems Committee of the CHPC suggested that a conference involving representatives of all Canadian Mennonite groups be convened to deal with a number of peace-related issues of general concern.⁵² Martin shared his idea with Harvey Taves,⁵³ director of the Mennonite Central Committee's Canadian office (see Chapter IV), and Taves in turn passed it on to David P. Neufeld, chairperson of the Board of Christian Service of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

Why Taves would forward this information to the Board of Christian Service is somewhat unclear. The most reasonable explanation is that, having discussed the need for a national inter-Mennonite peace organization with the Board's secretary, he felt that it would be receptive to the idea.⁵⁵ He was right. At its most recent meeting, the Board of Christian Service had itself discussed the possibility of a conference similar to that which J. B. Martin was now proposing. Chairperson Neufeld now responded to the suggestion with the comment that such a conference was long overdue.⁵⁶

Frank Epp, the Board's secretary, was similarly disposed. As

editor of The Canadian Mennonite, he had just sent to press an editorial entitled "A Loop-Hole in Organization."⁵⁷ It stressed the need for a body that would coordinate peace and service activities as well as represent the Canadian Mennonites before the federal government, an organization that would serve the kind of functions for Canadian Mennonites that the Mennonite Central Committee did for their American co-religionists. A conference like the one now being suggested, Epp thought, provided the perfect opportunity for moving toward this kind of organization.⁵⁸

It was not surprising that both the Board of Christian Service and The Canadian Mennonite should latch onto Martin's idea. As young institutions adding a new generation of leaders to the Mennonite scene, they were anxious to spearhead movements that would encourage inter-Mennonite cooperation. The Canadian Mennonite, as the first English language periodical that sought to serve all Mennonite groups in Canada rather than one particular conference, had in fact been created for that very purpose. That its editor, one of whose greatest passions was "Mennonite ecumenicity,"⁵⁹ was also secretary of the Board of Christian Service meant that the two institutions would often promote the same causes. Both would have a significant impact on future organizational developments.

If a number of groups had thus indicated their support for an inter-Mennonite peace conference, the question was, who should call it. David P. Neufeld suggested that the MCC Kitchener office (at that time actually based in Waterloo) take the initiative.⁶⁰ Director Harvey Taves seemed receptive to the idea, but MCC's new executive secretary in Akron, Pennsylvania, William Snyder, advised against it. He

suggested that the CHPC call the meeting.⁶¹ The CHPC agreed and secretary C. J. Rempel set about inviting each of the Mennonite groups in Canada to attend.

The organization which might have been expected to oppose the meeting, the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee, responded enthusiastically to the invitation and forwarded a resolution to the CHPC offering to assist in the organization of the meeting.⁶² Yet some strong opposition was voiced by the elder of one of CMRC's strongest member churches, David Schulz of the Altona Bergthaler Church. What was at issue was the stand taken by the CHPC the previous November endorsing limited participation in Civil Defence. Though the CHPC had clearly stated that it would participate in CD through a church-directed program, the press had given its decision a very different slant. A release which made its way across the country claimed that "the weight of 30,000 Mennonites was thrown behind Canada's Civil Defence program recently."⁶³ For David Schulz this was an unacceptable position. When he learned that the CHPC was to call a conference to deal specifically with alternative service, representation before the government, and Civil Defence, he concluded that the CHPC position was to be forced on the west.⁶⁴

Schulz's reaction to the proposed meeting convinced C. J. Rempel that it was exactly the need to clarify problems such as this which warranted the conference.⁶⁵ He and Frank Epp, both of whom probably felt the greatest responsibility for the upcoming meeting, attempted to set matters straight. Epp wrote an editorial pointing out how the press had misinterpreted the CHPC resolution⁶⁶ and published a similar article by Orland Gingerich which had first been written for the

benefit of CHPC members.⁶⁷ Rempel wrote to his Member of Parliament explaining how the recent statement of Paul Martin regarding civil disaster made a hypocrisy of the CHPC resolution and thus strained the relationship among the Mennonites. He demanded an explanation of the minister's remarks prior to the conference "in order not to nullify what has taken a long time to build up and which will take even longer to rebuild."⁶⁸ That Schulz still did not attend the conference was certainly not because its organizers had not gone out of their way to clarify the situation.

The meeting was held in Winnipeg on 3 and 4 May and was attended by some fifty delegates representing eleven Mennonite groups. Three Hutterites attended as observers. The purpose of the meeting was orientational in nature; the conference was not to formulate policies or draw up plans of action. Rather, it was to elicit the sharing of opinions and experiences with regard to three major issues: alternative service, Civil Defence, and representation to the government. Several major addresses dealing with these issues were planned to initiate discussion. While the thought had been expressed that some definite action might arise from the meeting,⁶⁹ it was generally felt that it would be necessary for the different groups to "feel each other out" before this could take place.

If the organizers of the conference were cautious in their expectations, they had good reason to be amazed at the amount of agreement reached.⁷⁰ With regards to the Civil Defence issue, for instance, short reports from each province quickly revealed that the positions were hardly at variance. While Ontario had gone the furthest in endorsing a limited form of participation, its stance was

certainly not the one described in the press. Moreover, it now indicated a willingness to drop the name Civil Defence in reference to its own activities. Conference delegates unanimously resolved to promote the organization of Mennonite Disaster Service units in each province and thus avoid direct affiliation with Civil Defence.

A similar degree of consensus resulted from the discussion on alternative service. The meeting's participants agreed that the alternative service program of World War II had been a more positive experience than they had previously thought. They also concurred that spiritual preparedness and flexibility of program would be the most important ingredients in any future form of substitute service. Clearly, the more moderate stands of both the Russlaender and the Kanadier, in evidence at the outset of the decade, still held, for the issue of Arbeitsdienst versus Sanitaetsdienst was not even raised.

The most significant action taken by the conference was to recommend the creation of a counselling body that would represent all the Canadian Mennonites before the federal government. This decision grew out of an address by J. B. Martin, whose idea had helped to give birth to the conference. Martin referred to a number of "united" representations that had been made in the past and indicated the importance of a united front for any contacts that would be made in the future. He suggested that this counselling body consist of twelve to fifteen individuals and that it should in turn appoint five of them to an "Ottawa Contact Board" which would make the necessary representations.

Martin's comments seem to have met with a considerable degree of approval, but the conference participants recognized that they did

not have the authority to create the counselling body. That was the task of the individual Mennonite conferences. At the recommendation of a fact-finding committee, they therefore agreed that Martin's plan should be submitted to each of the denominational conferences for approval and action (presumably this referred to the appointment of an official member), and that an interim committee of five be appointed to gather the results of the conference decisions and to arrange for an organizational meeting. The five members of the CHPC in attendance were appointed to this interim committee.

Immediate reaction to the conference and to the action taken was very positive. In a feature article in The Canadian Mennonite, Frank Epp claimed that few of the conferences he had covered since the founding of the paper could surpass this one in inspiration and encouragement.⁷¹ He did not indicate that the counselling body recommended by the conference was in keeping with the organizational structure he had advocated in his February editorial. But his comment, that the potential for such an inter-Mennonite coordinating organization was far from limited, suggested that it was definitely a step in the right direction.

Another inter-Mennonite paper, the Mennonite Observer, drew attention to the harmonious spirit that had been in evidence at Winnipeg and called the conference the most outstanding development in the recent growth of inter-Mennonite cooperation.⁷² In reference to the forthcoming counselling body, it remarked that spiritual unity in the area of peace and nonresistance had to be combined with representational unity. "As individual groups we have very little influence but as a united Mennonite brotherhood we can gain the

audience and the respect of government officials,"⁷³ it said.

This initial enthusiasm, however, did not necessarily mean that the counselling body would immediately come to life. Towards the end of May, C. J. Rempel, who now faced the task of encouraging the individual Mennonite conferences to take action, wrote to Epp:

I think we have started a fine thing which [sic] terrific potentials and I hope it does not die a fast death after such vigorous and encouraging life as evidenced at the conference.⁷⁴

The statement was somewhat prophetic, because it foresaw that there could be difficulty in relaying the recommendations and the enthusiasm that had produced them to the conference groups. Very soon Rempel's fears became reality.

Because most of the denominational conference sessions were held during the summer months, the Winnipeg conference had set 1 November 1957 as the deadline for replies.⁷⁵ That date passed with only a few conferences having responded, and a CHPC executive committee meeting therefore advised Rempel that he contact those which had not yet replied before taking any further action.⁷⁶ The following May, Rempel reported that only four appointments had as yet been made, and he was again directed to contact those not responding.⁷⁷ A few more appointments resulted from these contacts, but in July the CHPC executive still did not feel that it could proceed with an organizational meeting.⁷⁸

By this time pressure was being exerted on the CHPC to make the counselling body a reality. In early October the Board of Christian Service of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada forwarded a recently passed resolution to the five members of the CHPC who had been named the interim committee. The resolution expressed regret at the delay

and urged early implementation of the action agreed upon at the Winnipeg conference.⁷⁹ At the same time The Canadian Mennonite expressed the hope that "the Canada-wide inter-Mennonite peace organization which was initiated almost two years ago . . . will soon wake out of its sleep and become actively real."⁸⁰ As a result of these urgings the CHPC executive agreed to invite the appointed representatives to an organizational meeting that would be held in Ontario prior to an audience with the new prime minister.⁸¹ (A tradition of meeting with each new prime minister to acquaint him with the Mennonites and their concerns was beginning to develop.)

The long-awaited counselling body finally came into existence on 16 February 1959, nearly two years after it had first been conceived. In an Ottawa hotel eight individuals representing as many groups met to choose a name, elect an executive, and outline the goals of their new organization.⁸² The name Historic Peace Church Council of Canada (HPCCC) was decided upon, and J. B. Martin of the (Old) Mennonites, David P. Neufeld of the Conference Mennonites, and C. J. Rempel of the Mennonite Brethren were elected as chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary, respectively. As the most representative of Canadian inter-Mennonite organizations, the HPCCC was to make a joint representation to the federal government whenever it was felt necessary and to deal with problems of mutual concern in such areas as the peace witness and disaster service. HPCCC members also resolved to make yet another attempt to gain the active support of groups not yet participating.

The formation of the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada represented the attainment of an ideal sought in World War II, namely,

a body that could speak with authority for all Canadian Mennonites before the federal government. While it is true that a number of the most conservative groups in southern Manitoba were not officially represented by their own delegates, the presence of David P. Reimer of the Kleinegemeinde, John Penner of the Church of God in Christ Mennonite, C. Wilbert Loewen of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, and later G. H. Penner of the Rudnerweider (by then known as Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference) meant that the breach of World War II had in large part been bridged. Whether the Council would meet the expectations of those who had created it the following years would reveal.

If the 1950s thus witnessed a major structural alignment in the peace thrust of the Canadian Mennonites, intimations of a similar development were beginning to be felt in the area of relief activity as well. Members of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and the Mennonite Central Relief Committee were beginning to express the idea that a broader organizational base would promote more effective and efficient relief work. Although their conceptions of a new organization differed substantially in their inclusiveness--would the organization represent a merger of the Board and MCRC, or would it also include the Manitoba Kanadier and possibly the Ontario NRRO constituency?--they were all based on the assumption that greater integration and coordination of the various relief programs was desired.

It was not until 1958 that discussions regarding an amalgamation of several relief committees became serious, but the idea was much older. It appears to have been raised first at a Board meeting of

8 August 1947 when the members went on record as favouring a unification of all their relief activities in Canada.⁸³ The use of the pronoun "their" suggests that the intention behind the resolution may have been merely an amalgamation of the Board and MCRC, separate organizations with virtually the same leadership and constituency. A letter from J. J. Thiessen to B. B. Janz a year later indicates that this was how the former understood it.⁸⁴ Since the resolution concluded by stating that a reunification of MCRC and the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee of Manitoba was the first step in the creation of a new organization,⁸⁵ however, it seems that something more comprehensive was also perceived.

In 1951 the issue was raised again at the insistence of the provincial relief committee of British Columbia. Though the primary emphasis was on an immediate amalgamation of the Board and the MCRC,⁸⁶ a broader vision was again present. A. A. Wiens, secretary of the B. C. committee, expressed this vision in his hope for a Canadian organization that would resemble the Mennonite Central Committee.⁸⁷ Though such an organization would originate through a merger of the Board and MCRC, it would go on to include conferences that did not at that point participate in the work of these organizations. The Board discussed the issue in March at its annual meeting. It was receptive to the idea but felt that the time was inappropriate for major restructuring.⁸⁸ The issue was not raised again for a number of years.

In 1957 The Canadian Mennonite began to promote the formation of an organization similar to that mentioned by A. A. Wiens, though

whether it was aware of the earlier suggestion is unclear. An editorial on 15 November noted the flowering of a number of inter-Mennonite agencies such as the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, the Mennonite Central Relief Committee, and several others. While it undoubtedly regarded the existence of these organizations as positive examples of the "recent growth of inter-Mennonite activity," it went on to suggest that more was needed, specifically, integration and coordination of the different activities at both provincial and national levels. The first step in this process could be the amalgamation of the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee and the Manitoba Mennonite Relief Committee. Such a realignment, the editorial noted, would improve service, avoid confusion, and provide the maximum efficiency and outreach.⁸⁹

Possibly encouraged by this editorial, A. A. Wiens once again mentioned a restructuring at a joint Board/MCRC meeting in February 1958 and moved that serious study be given to the future of the organizations.⁹⁰ A month later he expanded on his views in a letter to B. B. Janz.⁹¹ He praised the Board and MCRC for their past accomplishments, but also indicated that they had lost much of their appeal, particularly among young people, and that their original raisons d'etre no longer held. He felt that they should be replaced by a new central office which would include both CMRC and NRRO (Wiens referred to "Sued Manitoba und Waterloo".) Fearful that Mennonite Central Committee would quickly assume control of the various Canadian relief programs if Canadians did not establish a central office of their own, Wiens wrote: "Dann sehe ich 'die Roemer kommen u. uns Land u. Leute nehmen.'"⁹²

Evidently this time Wiens's proposal, or at least that part of it calling for the amalgamation of the Board and MCRC, caught the imagination of other members. In response to J. J. Thiessen's request for their personal opinions, virtually all indicated that the time for such a merger was ripe. George Friesen of Ontario noted that a single organization would help to preserve unity in the conferences and would also be in a better position to tap the waning interest of young people.⁹³ A merger also made sense simply because constituents could no longer distinguish between the purposes of the two existing organizations. Jacob G. Gerbrandt of Saskatchewan felt that a more unified relief effort was necessary,⁹⁴ and J. J. Klassen of Alberta remarked that a more satisfactory relief program would thus be achieved.⁹⁵ Others made similar comments.

It seemed rather natural for the Board and MCRC to consider amalgamating, for the two organizations had had a close relationship since the latter's founding in 1940. Until 1946 the executives of both organizations had been identical, being comprised of David Toews, B. B. Janz, and C. F. Klassen. With Toews's resignation the change was only slight. J. J. Thiessen became chairperson of the Board and vice-chairperson of the MCRC; B. B. Janz became chairperson of the MCRC while remaining vice-chairperson of the Board. While this arrangement allowed for both the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches to have leadership roles (Thiessen being a member of the former, Janz the latter), to most people it appeared that one agency was being directed by two individuals.

In 1947 the relationship between the Board and MCRC was

strengthened when their provincial branches merged to form one strong committee in each of the five provinces. Previously most provinces had possessed both an immigration committee dating from the 1934 Board reorganization (see Chapter I) and a relief committee dating from the beginnings of the MCRC (see Chapter II).⁹⁶ This situation had been the cause of much duplication and confusion. After both conferences had approved the move, the two provincial committees fused to form a Mennonite provincial relief committee which would assist in the activities of both central organizations as well as direct any projects of a provincial nature.⁹⁷

In 1949 the Board and MCRC began to hold their annual meetings on successive days in the same location. This procedure was continued throughout the 1950s. It in turn raised the issue of membership, and in 1951 a Board meeting resolved that, for the sake of reducing travel expenses, the conferences should elect to MCRC individuals who were already members of the Board.⁹⁸ The recommendation was accepted by both conferences,⁹⁹ and in the following years Board and MCRC membership became virtually synonymous.

Though an official amalgamation of the two organizations had been suggested on a number of occasions in the past, it was not until Wiens posed the issue again in 1958 that it became a real possibility. There was a reason for this. In the early 1950s both organizations had been in the midst of massive projects: the Board was administering the immigration of a new wave of Russian Mennonite refugees, and the MCRC was establishing an independent aid program to assist those refugees who had settled in Paraguay. At that point it was felt that the scope and amount of work to be done was too much for one organi-

zation. Seven years later both undertakings had diminished considerably without being replaced by new ones, and the workload could now conceivably be handled by one committee.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the expense of maintaining two committees could not be justified indefinitely.

If reaction to Wiens's proposal of merging the Board and MCRC was favourable, response to his broader vision of a relief organization also embracing NRRO and CMRC was less so. Although George Friesen did go so far as to suggest how many members CMRC should be able to name to the new organization,¹⁰¹ most Board and MCRC members did not address this aspect of the issue. Moreover, at least two individuals voiced concern over the implications of an inclusive realignment. One of them was C. A. DeFehr, secretary-treasurer of MCRC. A member of the Mennonite Brethren conference, DeFehr felt that the involvement of the CMRC groups would lead to the loss of Mennonite Brethren influence in the new organization. He was prepared to support a reorganization if it maintained a one-to-one relationship between Canadian Conference and Mennonite Brethren membership, but he was very hesitant about a larger amalgamation.¹⁰²

B. B. Janz also had misgivings about the more comprehensive reorganization, but where DeFehr's hesitation coalesced around the CMRC, his focused on the NRRO. What caused this concern was Janz's keen awareness of the divergent interests that undergirded the respective relief programs of the NRRO and MCRC. Where NRRO supported MCC's world-wide relief program, MCRC was more interested in addressing the needs of the Mennonites in South America, a group which it felt the MCC was neglecting. (More will be said about this in Chapter IV.) Janz was convinced that the (Old) Mennonites of the NRRO would quickly

dominate a new Canada-wide relief organization and would seek to impose the "Akron line" on others. The interests of western Canada (the MCRC constituency, that is) and thus the needs of South American Mennonites would soon be forgotten.¹⁰³ In such an event, Janz speculated, the Mennonite Brethren conference might choose to retain direct control over its relief funds.

In response to A. A. Wiens's February motion that the subject of reorganization be given thorough study, a special meeting of Board and MCRC executives was held on 4 June. The members agreed to fuse the two organizations into one and directed J. J. Thiessen to prepare a recommendation on such action which could be presented to the two conferences for ratification in July.¹⁰⁴ Though this represented a smaller move than either Wiens or The Canadian Mennonite had been advocating, Thiessen made it clear that this decision was a step in the direction of an all-Canada relief organization that would eventually include the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee as well as the Non-resistant Relief Organization.¹⁰⁵ The new organization created through the amalgamation of the Board and MCRC would pave the way to a greater level of cooperation and coordination.

If DeFehr and Janz were at all upset by Thiessen's remarks, they could take comfort in the fact that there would be no immediate moves to draw CMRC or NRRO into the Board/MCRC orbit. J. J. Thiessen had given the assurance that some tactful and brotherly preparatory work would need to be done before any concrete steps toward the larger amalgamation could take place.¹⁰⁶ He had also suggested that the presentation of specific recommendations to the conferences be postponed for a year "um Konflikte und Trennungen zu verhueten."¹⁰⁷ Thus

convinced that the Board and MCRC were in no immediate danger, both Janz and DeFehr moderated their positions considerably. Within weeks both men were prepared to concede that a fusion with CMRC and NRRO would be possible at a future date.¹⁰⁸

In accordance with J. J. Thiessen's suggestion to postpone amalgamation procedures, the specific recommendations were drawn up in the spring of 1959 at the annual meeting of the Board and MCRC. They gave careful attention to the problem of equal control by the two conferences. The new organization was to consist of five members from each conference, each of the constituent provinces being represented by two persons. A four-member executive, consisting of two Conference Mennonites and two Mennonite Brethren, was to be elected therefrom. The main office was to remain in Saskatoon where the Board office had been, but two treasuries were to be administered, one for the Conference Mennonites in Saskatoon and one for the Mennonite Brethren in Winnipeg.¹⁰⁹ DeFehr was still somewhat concerned over what would happen if the CMRC groups joined the new organization, which was to be named the Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council (CMRIC), but he could not argue with the fairness of this arrangement.¹¹⁰

A four-member committee drew up the constitution for the CMRIC and presented it to the two conferences in July. The Conference of Mennonites in Canada accepted it, but the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches did not, giving the reason that the Board and MCRC themselves had not yet approved the statutes.¹¹¹ While no Board/MCRC meeting had officially ratified the proposed constitution, each member had been forwarded a copy in late April and had been asked to give his reaction. J. J. Thiessen had believed

this to be sufficient. A letter which he circulated to members of the Board, MCRC, and provincial relief committees revealed real frustration at what would mean another delay.¹¹²

Eleven representatives of the Mennonite Brethren conference met in Coaldale, Alberta on 5 October to discuss the constitution. Beyond suggesting some minor changes and recommending that the central office eventually be moved to Winnipeg, they gave their approval.¹¹³ Two days later a joint meeting of the Board and MCRC arranged for the incorporation of the Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council, and a charter was granted by the government early in 1960. A process begun more than two years earlier had finally been completed.

If the members of the Board and MCRC became preoccupied with the issue of their own amalgamation during those two years, they did not entirely lose sight of the ideal of a relief organization that would embrace all Canadian Mennonites. Recognizing that such an ideal could not be realized overnight, however, they concentrated at this point on opening the channels to a merger with the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee. A fusion with the Non-resistant Relief Organization would presumably come later. It was therefore agreed that provision should be made in the constitution for the CMRC to join the CMRIC if it so wished.¹¹⁴

Though it was the Board and MCRC which first broached the subject of a reunification with the CMRC, the first contact was initiated by the new secretary of the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee, Ted Friesen. The son of publisher D. W. Friesen, Ted Friesen had inherited his father's passion for inter-Mennonite cooperation. To

give one example, he was instrumental in establishing The Canadian Mennonite which, as a weekly claiming to represent no one conference and serving all, had been his father's dream.¹¹⁵ Undoubtedly those Canadian Mennonite editorials demanding new organizational structures expressed views close to Friesen's own. It is therefore hardly surprising that, when he first learned that the Board and MCRC were considering a merger and that the CMRC might also be involved, Friesen quickly wrote to J. J. Thiessen that "such a union, of all three boards, if it could be affected [sic], would be of the greatest possible significance and benefit for our brotherhood."¹¹⁶ Though he was cognizant that some members of his committee might be opposed, he assured Thiessen that he would work toward that goal.

J. J. Thiessen's reply to Friesen was a warm one. The chairperson of the Board agreed that a union of the relief organizations would "bring the different sections of the Canadian Mennonites closer together and our work would be even more blessed by the Lord."¹¹⁷ Since Friesen's remarks had been personal, Thiessen asked permission to use them in future discussions. But although the CMRC secretary gladly agreed,¹¹⁸ no further action was taken by the Board or MCRC, except perhaps to consider the letters at the 4 June meeting. One reason for this may have been not to arouse the fears of DeFehr and Janz unduly. Thiessen's statement to Friesen, that there must be internal unity on the question of a merger before such a process could be initiated, may have applied to the Board/MCRC as much as the CMRC.¹¹⁹

Since the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee was a provincial committee, it seemed natural that its chief contacts would be with

the Manitoba Mennonite Relief Committee, the provincial counterpart of the Board and MCRC. In his November 1957 editorial Frank Epp had noted that an amalgamation of these two committees could be the first step toward greater integration and coordination of Canadian Mennonite activities at the national level.¹²⁰ This was still a long way off, but it was evident that the relationship between the two committees had improved since the parting of the ways in 1940. During and after the war the two organizations had cooperated in a meat canning project in Reinland,¹²¹ and beginning in 1946 they had shared a clothing depot.¹²² In the 1950s members of one committee were frequently found in attendance at meetings of the other.

Contacts between the two committees increased in 1958. In August the CMRC discussed the possibility of a meeting with the Manitoba Mennonite Relief Committee.¹²³ Held in April 1959, the purpose of the meeting was threefold: it was to acquaint each committee with the other's work, to discuss general problems common to both, and to create the basis for a joint project.¹²⁴ Two significant decisions resulted from the discussion. First of all, it was agreed that joint executive committee meetings should be held on an annual basis. Secondly, it was decided that a joint clothing program would be initiated. A good beginning had been made to bridge the gulf that had separated the two Manitoba committees for almost twenty years.

As the 1950s drew to a close it was evident that real advances had been made in integrating and strengthening the peace and relief activities of the Canadian Mennonites. The Historic Peace Church

Council of Canada provided the channel for unifying the peace thrust of the Mennonites. While the major portion of peace education was carried on at the denominational conference level, the Council became the body which could represent before the federal government the collective position of the Mennonites on such issues as civil defence, conscription, and alternative service.

The achievement was not as great in the area of relief activity. Though there was talk of an all-Canada relief organization, only the initial step of unifying the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and the Mennonite Central Relief Committee took place. Nevertheless, that members of the Board/MCRC and CMRC were beginning to talk about a further merger meant that the process would not end here. It seemed that western Canadian Mennonites were finally beginning to catch up with the Ontario Mennonites in cooperation and organization.

The organizational developments of the 1950s, like those of World Wars I and II, were in part prompted by the pressures of war-- this time a cold war--and the demands which these pressures brought to bear on the Mennonites as Canadian citizens. Had Civil Defence not requested their participation, it is doubtful whether Mennonite Disaster Service would have developed. Had the threat of World War III not provoked fear and uncertainty about their status under a new round of compulsory military service, it is doubtful whether the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada would have been created. Once again the impetus for both service and cooperation was an external force.

There was a difference this time, however. Whereas in World Wars I and II the Mennonite response had largely followed upon the

heels of war and conscription, it now anticipated those events. At no point in the 1950s did Canada invoke military conscription nor demand compulsory participation in Civil Defence, yet the Mennonites proceeded as if these were distinct possibilities. While technically nothing was required of them, they did not hesitate to offer their services. It appeared that they were beginning to take both their civic obligations and their ethical teachings as seriously in peacetime as in wartime.

The Cold War did not influence organizational developments in the relief and service agencies directly, but it did so indirectly. The cooperation that it induced in the field of peace concerns could not help but extend to other areas as well. If the physical and ideological distances could be bridged with regard to peace issues, the same could be achieved in the area of relief work. It was hardly a coincidence that the development of the HPCCC was paralleled by talk of creating a Canada-wide relief organization. This development lagged behind the formation of HPCCC somewhat, but before the decade was over the peace council would be requested to convene a meeting of relief committees and related organizations in order to pursue this goal more actively.

There was much reason for satisfaction in these developments, but in at least one camp something broader was yet envisioned. The Canadian Mennonite had in part initiated the discussions calling for both the creation of a counselling body that would provide a national focus for the peace-related concerns of all the Canadian Mennonites and the formation of a Canada-wide relief organization, and it promoted these developments once they were underway. But what it

advocated for the future was an agency that would integrate both peace and relief concerns, as well as others. What it desired was a Mennonite Central Committee for Canada.¹²⁵ First described in a June 1958 editorial, it claimed that the future of Canadian Mennonites lay with such a realignment. Just how prophetic these words were the ensuing years would reveal.

Notes

¹1946 Yearbook of the 36th Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1946), pp. 101-3.

²Canada, Privy Council Office, Statutory Orders and Regulations Division, Statutory Orders and Regulations, 1946, Vol. III, No. 4., P. C. 3030.

³"Minutes of the Thirteenth Annual Session of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches, St. Jacobs, Ontario, October 5, 1948," CHPC, XV-11.1.2, File: 1945-58, CGCA.

⁴Minutes, CHPC executive meeting, 11 March 1949, *ibid.*, XV-11.1.6, File: 1941-58, CGCA.

⁵That the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization was considered suggests that the Western Service Committee was no longer in existence.

⁶Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada 1946 (Rosthern: D. H. Epp, 1946), p. 26.

⁷Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada 1948 (Rosthern: D. H. Epp, 1948), p. 30.

⁸Minutes, CHPC executive committee meeting, 11 March 1949.

⁹David Toews had resigned from this position in 1946. J. J. Thiessen was an immigrant of the 1920s, a member of the Board since 1934, and pastor of the Saskatoon First Mennonite Church.

¹⁰"Protokoll der Jaehrlichen Sitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, abgehalten den 14. Oktober 1948 in der Kirche der Ersten Mennoniten Gemeinde zu Saskatoon, Sask.," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1389, File 1535, CMCA.

¹¹C. J. Rempel to J. F. Barkman, 10 January 1949, *ibid.*, Vol. 1391, File 1540, CMCA.

¹²1950 Yearbook of the 40th Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1950), p. 122.

¹³"Protokoll der Konferenz der Mennoniten Manitobas (KMM) abgehalten am 10. und 11. November 1949 in Whitewater, Manitoba," Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba Collection, IV-B-1, Vol. 1595, File: 1949, CMCA.

¹⁴The minutes of these three meetings are found in David P. Reimer Collection (hereafter DPR), CMCA.

¹⁵The official position of the Mennonite Brethren at this point is found in 1950 Yearbook of the 40th Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, pp. 122-23.

¹⁶Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada 1949 (Rosthern: D. H. Epp, 1949), p. 28.

¹⁷"Protokoll einer allgemeinen mennonitischen Prediger Versammlung, von Manitoba. Abgehalten in dem Suedend M. B. Versammlungshause zu Winnipeg. Oktober 27, 1950," DPR, CMCA.

¹⁸B. B. Janz, reporting to the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in summer 1950, noted that this had been one of the decisions made at a meeting of the conference's military service committee with CHPC leaders prior to the 2 May 1950 meeting in Winnipeg. 1950 Yearbook of the 40th Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, pp. 120-22.

¹⁹"Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on Monday, September 18, 1950 at the Mennonite Central Committee Home," CHPC, XV-11.1.6, File: 1941-58, CGCA.

²⁰"Minutes of the Executive Meeting held at 10 Union Street East, Waterloo, Ontario on November 17, 1950," *ibid.*

²¹This concern, on the part of B. B. Janz, is alluded to in C. J. Rempel to E. J. Swalm and Elven Shantz, 15 January 1951, *ibid.*, XV-11.1.5, File: 1951, CGCA.

²²The untitled brief in sound in DPR, CMCA.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵"Comments of the Prime Minister on Statements Presented on Behalf of the Historic Peace Churches of Canada," *ibid.*, CMCA.

²⁶The members of the delegation were: Fred Haslam of the Society of Friends, C. J. Rempel and B. B. Janz of the Mennonite Brethren, Elven Shantz of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, J. B. Martin of the (Old) Mennonites, E. J. Swalm of the Brethren in Christ, J. G. Rempel of the Conference Mennonites, David Schulz of the Bergthaler, and David P. Reimer of the Kleingemeinde.

²⁷Because conscription was never invoked, the Mennonites could avoid having to reach a consensus on this issue.

²⁸In reporting to the annual session of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada in July 1951, J. G. Rempel noted that:

"Die Resolution, die unsere Konferenz im Sardis im Sommer 1949 in der Dienstfrage angenommen, hatte den Weg zu einer weiteren

Zusammenarbeit mit andern Gemeinden, wie beispielweise mit den Gemeinden, die im sogenannten Aeltestenrat in Manitoba vertreten sind, geebnet" (Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada 1951 [Rosthern: D. H. Epp, 1951], p. 97).

²⁹1957 Yearbook of the 47th Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1957), p. 60.

³⁰Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada 1951, p. 99.

³¹In 1946 the Conference of Mennonites in Canada resolved: "Wir bedauern aber auch tief, dass so viele unserer einberufenen Jungmannschaft dem Glauben ihrer Väter untreu geworden sind und in den Kriegsjahren wehrhaft am Kriege beteiligt waren. Wir wollen aber über diese jungen Männer nicht den Stab brechen, denn wir sind uns wohl bewusst, dass vonseiten der Gemeinden hier viel Schuld vorliegt. Daher wollen wir alle Busse tun und Gott um Vergebung bitten in dem Bewusstsein. Wir sind alle mitschuldig und mitverantwortlich. Wann wir als Gemeinden Busse tun, so erwarten wir das aber auch von der zurückgekehrten Jungmannschaft, sofern sie im aktiven Kriegsdienst gestanden hat. Nur so kann das Verhältnis zwischen ihnen und den Gemeinden wieder richtig gestellt werden" (Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada 1946, p. 25).

³²The Canadian Mennonite (hereafter CM), 9 April 1954, p. 7.

³³[Reimer], Experiences, p. 142.

³⁴J. Harold Sherk to Katherine Penner, 29 September 1952, CHPC, XV-11.1.4, File: 1952, CGCA.

³⁵Minutes, Annual Meeting, 11 October 1944, *ibid.*, XV-11.1.2, File: 1941-44, CGCA.

³⁶"Minutes of the Eleventh Annual Session of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches held on October 15, 1946 at the First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ontario," *ibid.*, File: 1945-58, CGCA.

³⁷The question was raised at the 1951 annual meeting of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization ("Protokoll der erweiterten Sitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennonitengemeinde zu Saskatoon, Sask. am 1. März 1951," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1389, File 1535, CMCA), and the 1954 annual session of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches (1954 Yearbook of the 44th Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Church [Yarrow: Columbia Press, 1954], p. 88).

³⁸Paul Martin's statement received heavy coverage in the press and prompted an editorial in The Canadian Mennonite. It read in part:

"Thanks for the explanation Mr. Martin! We hope you will rethink, but if the above is really the case, we will have to hurry up even more our Mennonite Disaster Service Organizations. What we are primarily interested in is Civil Disaster not Civil Defense" (11 May 1956, p. 2).

³⁹Ibid., 1 November 1957, p. 2.

⁴⁰"Conference of Historic Peace Churches Executive Meeting, Tuesday, May 29th, 1956 at the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church," CHPC, XV-11.1.6, File: 1941-58, CGCA.

⁴¹"Minutes of the 21st session of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches held at the Mennonite Brethren Church Kitchener, Ontario on Saturday, November 17, 1956," *ibid.*, XV-11.1.2, File: 1945-58, CGCA.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³CM, 20 April 1956, p. 1.

⁴⁴Ibid., 27 April 1956, p. 1.

⁴⁵"Protokoll der V. V. des Provinzialen Hilfswerkes von Br. Columbien, abgehalten am 6. Oktober, 1956 in der Kirche der West Abbotsford Mennoniten Gemeinde," H. M. Epp Collection, XX-16, Vol. 583, File: 1953-57, CMCA.

⁴⁶"CHPC Executive Committee Meeting held April 23, 1956 at the MCG, 10 Union Street East, Waterloo, Ont.," CHPC, XV-11.1.11, File: 1949, 1962-64, CGCA.

⁴⁷"Minutes of the 23rd Session of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches held at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, Saturday, Nov. 22, 1958," *ibid.*, XV-11.1.2, File: 1945-58, CGCA.

⁴⁸CM, 4 November 1955, p. 2.

⁴⁹Ibid., 4 May 1956, p. 2.

⁵⁰"Mennonite Disaster Report for Winnipeg Conference, September 25th and 26th," Historic Peace Church Council of Canada Files (hereafter HPCCG), XV-12.1, File: 1959-63, CGCA.

⁵¹It was mentioned at the 27 October 1950 meeting of Manitoba ministers ("Protokoll einer allgemeinen mennonitischen Prediger Versammlung von Manitoba. Abgehalten in dem Suedend M. B. Versammlungshause zu Winnipeg. Oktober 17, 1950") and the 1951 sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada 1951, p. 98), to give two examples.

⁵²David P. Neufeld to Frank H. Epp, 28 January 1957, Conference of Mennonites in Canada Board of Christian Service (hereafter BCS), II-E, Vol. 175, File: 1957, CMCA.

⁵³His surname originally "Toews," Harvey Taves anglicized its spelling in the late 1950s. "Taves" is used throughout the text of this thesis in order to avoid confusion. Footnotes, however, retain the spelling that is found on the particular document cited.

⁵⁴David P. Neufeld to Frank H. Epp, 28 January 1957.

⁵⁵Frank H. Epp to David P. Neufeld, 1 February 1957, BCS, II-E, Vol. 175, File: 1957, CMCA.

⁵⁶David P. Neufeld to Frank H. Epp, 28 January 1957.

⁵⁷CM, 1 February 1957, p. 2.

⁵⁸Frank H. Epp to David P. Neufeld, 1 February 1957.

⁵⁹Frank H. Epp, interview held at Waterloo, Ontario, 30 December 1979. See CM, 8 October 1954, p. 2 for an example of Epp's thought on this issue.

⁶⁰David P. Neufeld to Frank H. Epp, 28 January 1957.

⁶¹William T. Snyder to Frank H. Epp, 6 February 1957, CHPC, XV-11.1.6, File: 1941-58, CGCA.

⁶²"Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee, held in the Bergthaler Church, Morris, Manitoba, March 4, 1957," Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee Papers (hereafter CMRC), XXII-A-3, Vol. 657, CMCA.

⁶³CM, 8 March 1957, p. 2.

⁶⁴David Schulz to C. J. Rempel, March 1957, BCS, II-E, Vol. 193, File: 1956-61, CMCA; Frank H. Epp to C. J. Rempel, 12 March 1957, BCS, II-E, Vol. 175, File: 1957, CMCA.

⁶⁵C. J. Rempel to Frank H. Epp, 12 March 1957, *ibid.*, Vol. 193, File: 1956-61, CMCA.

⁶⁶CM, 8 March 1957, p. 2.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 5 April 1957, p. 1.

⁶⁸C. J. Rempel to Norman Schneider, 18 April 1957, HPCCC, XV-12.1, File: HPCCC, CGCA.

⁶⁹Frank H. Epp to Harvey Toews, 1 February 1957, BCS, II-E, Vol. 175, File: 1957, CMCA.

⁷⁰The following description of the meeting is taken from "Joint Meeting of Representatives of Various Historic Peace Churches in Canada, held at Winnipeg, Manitoba, May 3, 4, 1957," BCS, II-E, Vol. 193, File: 1956-61, CMCA.

⁷¹CM, 10 May 1957, p. 2.

⁷²Mennonite Observer, 10 May 1957, p. 2.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴C. J. Rempel to Frank H. Epp, 27 May 1957, BCS, II-E, Vol. 193, File: 1956-61, CMCA.

⁷⁵"Joint Meeting of Representatives of Various Historic Peace Churches in Canada, held at Winnipeg, Manitoba, May 3, 4, 1957."

⁷⁶"Executive Committee Meetings of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches held on the day of our Annual Conference at the Eden Christian Auditorium on Saturday, November 30th, 1957," CHPC, XV-11.1.6, File: 1941-58, CGCA.

⁷⁷"Executive Committee Meeting of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches held at the Golden Rule Book Store, Saturday, May 3, 1958 at 2:30 p. m.," ibid.

⁷⁸"Executive Committee Meeting of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches held at the Golden Rule Book Store, Monday, July 28th, 1948," ibid.

⁷⁹Frank H. Epp to C. J. Rempel, J. B. Martin, Elven Shantz, E. J. Swalm, J. J. Wichert, 2 October 1958, BCS, II-E, Vol. 175, File: 1958, CMCA.

⁸⁰CM, 3 October 1958, p. 2.

⁸¹"Executive Committee Meeting of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches, held at the Golden Rule Book Store, Tuesday, October 28, at 7:00 p. m.," CHPC, XV-11.1.6, File: 1941-58, CGCA.

⁸²"Minutes of the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada held at the Lord Elgin Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario, Saturday, February 14 and Monday, February 16, 1959," HPCCG, XV-12.1, File: 1959-63, CGCA.

⁸³"Protokoll der jaehrlichen Sitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennoniten Gemeinde, Saskatoon, Sask., den 8. Aug. 1947," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1389, File: 1535, CMCA.

⁸⁴J. J. Thiessen to B. B. Janz, 26 July 1948, ibid., Vol. 1307, File 851, CMCA.

- 85 "Protokoll der jaehrlichen Sitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennonitengemeinde, Saskatoon, Sask., den 8. Aug. 1947."
- 86 H. M. Epp to J. J. Thiessen, 30 January 1951 and J. J. Thiessen to H. M. Epp, 7 February 1951, J. J. Thiessen Collection, XX-44, Vol. 887, File 209, CMCA.
- 87 A. A. Wiens to J. J. Thiessen, 30 January 1951, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1395, File 1560, CMCA.
- 88 "Protokoll der erweiterten Sitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennonitengemeinde zu Saskatoon, Sask., am 1. Maerz 1951," *ibid.*, Vol. 1389, File 1535, CMCA.
- 89 CM, 15 November 1957, p. 2.
- 90 *Ibid.*, 7 March 1958, p. 3.
- 91 A. A. Wiens to B. B. Janz, 24 March 1958, BBJ, Group II, File 21 (e), MBSC.
- 92 *Ibid.*
- 93 George Friesen to J. J. Thiessen, 27 April 1958, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1586, CMCA.
- 94 J. G. Gerbrandt to J. J. Thiessen, 30 April 1958, *ibid.*
- 95 J. J. Klassen to J. J. Thiessen, 2 May 1958, *ibid.*
- 96 Ontario was the exception. Because of the existence of the NRRO, no provincial branch of the Mennonite Central Relief Committee had been formed in 1940 although a loosely organized immigration committee had been functioning since the 1930s. When the Board called for reorganization in 1947 an Ontario Mennonite Relief Committee was formed, as in the western provinces, with both relief and immigration functions. From this point on, the Mennonite Brethren and United Mennonite groups distributed their relief monies between both the NRRO and the new provincial relief committee on a fifty-fifty basis. "Report of the Ontario Mennonite Relief and Immigration Committee to the Joint Meeting of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Relief and Service Organizations, sponsored by HPCCC for April 19-20, 1963," NRRO, XV-11.2.3, File: 1963, CGCA.
- 97 "Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Memorandum re Provincial Organizations," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1389, File 1535, CMCA.
- 98 "Minutes of Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization held in the First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask., on March 2, 1951 at 9:00 a. m.," *ibid.*

⁹⁹Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada 1951, p. 28; 1951 Yearbook of the 41st Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America (Yarrow: Columbia Press, 1951), p. 90.

100 "Memorandum zur Frage der Reorganisierung der CMBC und des MCRC zu einer Hilfsorganisation," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1395, File 1568, CMCA.

101 George Friesen to J. J. Thiessen, 27 April 1958, *ibid.*, Vol. 1398, File 1586, CMCA.

102 C. A. DeFehr to B. B. Janz, 9 May 1958, BBJ, Group II, File 25 (i), MBSC.

103 B. B. Janz to J. J. Thiessen, 11 June 1958, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1587, CMCA.

104 "Protokoll der gemeinsamen Sitzung der Exekutiven des Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization und des Mennonite Central Relief Committee, abgehalten im Bureau der Board in Saskatoon, Sask., am 4. Juni 1958," *ibid.*, Vol. 1395, File 1586, CMCA.

105 J. J. Thiessen to B. B. Janz, 5 June 1958, BBJ, Group II, File 22 (f), MBSC; "Reorganisierung unserer Hilfsorganisationen," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1395, File 1568, CMCA.

106 J. J. Thiessen to B. B. Janz, 18 June 1958, BBJ, Group II, File 22 (f), MBSC.

107 *Ibid.*

108 B. B. Janz to J. J. Thiessen, 20 June 1958 and C. A. DeFehr to J. J. Thiessen, 11 July 1958, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1586, CMCA.

109 "Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and Mennonite Central Relief Committee: Protokoll der erweiterten Jahressitzung, abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennonitengemeinde zu Saskatoon am 1. und 2. April 1959," *ibid.*, Vol. 1392, File 1545, CMCA.

110 C. A. DeFehr to B. B. Janz, 25 May 1959, BBJ, Group II, File 25 (i), MBSC.

111 1959 Yearbook of the 49th Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1959), p. 202.

112 J. J. Thiessen to members of CMBC, MCRC, and provincial relief committees, 21 July 1959, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1587, CMCA.

113 "Protokoll einer privaten Besprechung in Fragen der Verschmelzung unserer beiden Hilfsorganisationen in Coaldale am 5. Oktober 1959," *ibid.*, Vol. 1390, File 1536, CMCA.

114 "Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and Mennonite Central Relief Committee: Protokoll der erweiterten Jahressitzung abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennonitengemeinde zu Saskatoon am 1. und 2. April 1959," *ibid.*, Vol. 1392, File 1545, CMCA.

The constitution itself made membership open to any conference of Mennonites in Canada. "Proposed Amended Constitution of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization," *ibid.*, Vol. 1398, File 1586, CMCA.

115 CM, 14 August 1959, p. 2.

116 T. E. Friesen to J. J. Thiessen, 25 March 1958, CMRC, XXII-A-3, Vol. 657, CMCA.

117 J. J. Thiessen to T. E. Friesen, 28 March 1959, *ibid.*

118 T. E. Friesen to J. J. Thiessen, 3 April 1958, *ibid.*

119 J. J. Thiessen to T. E. Friesen, 14 July 1958, *ibid.*

120 CM, 15 November 1957, p. 2.

121 Epp, Mennonite Exodus, p. 333.

122 "Protokoll der Sitzung des Zentralen Mennonitischen Hilfskomitee von Westcanada am 30. Januar 1946 in Saskatoon," and "Protokoll der Sitzung des Zentralen Mennonitischen Hilfskomitee von Westcanada am 23. Juli 1946," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1392, File 1545, CMCA.

123 "Minutes of the monthly Board meeting of the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee held in the Bergthaler Church at Morris, Manitoba on Monday, August 11, commencing at 8:00 p. m.," CMRC, XXII-A-3, Vol. 657, CMCA.

124 "Protokoll der gemeinsamen Sitzung des Can. Menn. Relief Comm. und des Man. Menn. Relief Comm. im Y.M.C.A. am 11. April 1959," *ibid.*

125 CM, 13 June 1958, p. 2.

CHAPTER IV

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE CANADIAN ORGANIZATIONS

1939-1959

As Canada's history cannot be fully understood without reference to the influence of the United States, so Canadian Mennonite history is incomplete if it does not examine the relationship of Canadian Mennonites to their American co-religionists. The same is true of the inter-Mennonite organizations described in the preceding chapters. Indeed, it is necessary to examine how the various Canadian Mennonite organizations related to the United States-based Mennonite Central Committee in order to understand why various Canadians came to advocate such an organization for Canada. That is the task of this chapter.

The Mennonite Central Committee, it will be recalled, was formed in 1920 to unify the American Mennonite relief efforts providing aid to the Russian Mennonites after World War I. Though it remained primarily a relief agency in the minds of its constituent groups, it soon grew to embrace a wide spectrum of inter-Mennonite activities.¹ In 1930, for instance, it undertook to transport to and resettle in Paraguay 2000 destitute Russian Mennonites. In the five years following World War II, it similarly assisted the 4000 Russian Mennonite refugees in Germany who were spared repatriation, but who

could not meet Canada's immigration requirements. A special section of the MCC created in 1944, the Mennonite Aid Section, soon devoted itself almost exclusively to this mammoth operation.

Besides immigration and colonization, World War II opened additional avenues of service and brought MCC more responsibilities. Peace and alternative service, originally under the direction of the Mennonite Central Peace Committee formed in 1939, were turned over to MCC in 1942 with the creation of its Peace Section. Thus helping to administer the Civilian Public Service program (the American counterpart to Alternative Service Work in Canada), MCC was led to establish a voluntary service (VS) program to continue in peacetime the kind of witness that was begun in wartime and to initiate training programs for overseas relief and reconstruction. The specific Civilian Public Service project of service in state mental institutions prompted MCC to establish a number of mental hospitals of its own. When the United States government invoked peacetime conscription in 1948, MCC became one of several agencies providing alternate service opportunities for conscientious objectors. Its overseas Pax program was a direct result.

Significantly, the "if-it's-inter-Mennonite-let-MCC-do-it principle"² did not wane as the years progressed. New programs, such as Menno Travel Service, which was designed to meet the transportation needs of MCC workers, Mennonite Disaster Service, which arose as an alternative to civil defence participation, the Teachers Abroad Program, which supplied teachers to independent African nations, and Child Sponsorship, which enabled persons to support a needy child over an extended period of time, took their place alongside MCC's

older activities during the 1950s and early 1960s. The organization had become much more than a relief agency.

Canadian Mennonite involvement in the work of MCC began in earnest with World War II. It is true that the NRRO may have supported the MCC in its early relief operations,³ and that there was a degree of cooperation between the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and the MCC in the immigration movement of the 1920s. But it was only with the relief program of World War II that this involvement became intense. At that time, it will be recalled, the Non-resistant Relief Organization in Ontario approached the MCC with an offer to assist in the latter's European relief operations. The Mennonite Central Relief Committee was formed shortly thereafter and through the NRRO it too supported MCC projects. At MCC's invitation, the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee in Manitoba also eventually directed its relief contributions to the agency's Akron, Pennsylvania offices.

MCC was very happy to receive the support of the Canadian organizations, and in the next few years it took a number of steps to draw them into a closer orbit. The first of its moves was to arrange for a meeting of its executive with members of the Canadian organizations. Held on 2 and 3 April 1943 in Winnipeg, this meeting was attended by representatives of the Non-resistant Relief Organization, the Conference of Historic Peace Churches, the Mennonite Central Relief Committee, and the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee, as well as the six members of the MCC executive.⁴ Its purpose was mainly to inform the Canadian organizations of the work being carried out by MCC at that time and to share with them its

plans for a relief training program for post-war reconstruction. That MCC was anxious for Canadian input in its programming is revealed by its request that the Canadian organizations nominate a Canadian commissioner who, together with an American, would advise the MCC on European relief needs.

Later in the year the MCC executive secretary, Orie Miller, broached the idea of establishing an MCC office in Canada in order to serve the Canadian constituency better.⁵ Miller received the approval of the executive committee, and then wrote to one of the leaders of each of the four organizations present at the April meeting, asking them to join him in Ottawa on December 8 and 9 for further discussions.⁶ He did not mention the proposed office in his letter, but he reiterated his concern that the Canadian organizations play a role in counselling the MCC on its activities. Minutes of the meeting are not available, but it is evident that the six Canadian representatives agreed to MCC's plan regarding a Canadian office.⁷ The office was established in January 1944 at Kitchener⁸ for the purpose of coordinating the clothing collection program in Canada, providing information to the Canadian churches on a bilingual basis, providing a repository for Canadian contributions, representing Mennonite relief interests to the government, and selecting and processing Canadian relief workers.⁹ C. J. Rempel, a member of the Mennonite Brethren conference from Kitchener, became the first manager of the office.

MCC established a second branch office in Winnipeg in 1948. Intended to supplement rather than supplant the functions of the Kitchener office, it was to concern itself specifically with peace and voluntary service promotion.¹⁰ It was quite successful in

establishing a number of VS units in western Canada, but an investigation in 1952 encouraged MCC to transfer the office's responsibilities to Kitchener.¹¹ Attempts to establish other MCC offices in western Canada were made throughout the 1950s, but, for reasons that will become clear below, they all failed.

Convinced that even greater communication with the participating Canadian organizations was possible, MCC invited each of them to appoint a representative to serve on the MCC board.¹² Now, in addition to MCC being able to appeal to the Canadian constituency through its branch office, the Canadian organizations could approach MCC through their representatives. C. F. Klassen of MCRC, J. G. Toews of CMRC, and Oscar Burkholder of NRRO thus became regular MCC members. The CHPC had been unofficially represented since 1941 by J. B. Martin;¹³ Martin now became a full member. Several years later the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization also affiliated.¹⁴ Thereafter, MCC referred to itself as an international agency.

It was the hope of the MCC directors that they would be able to establish a close relationship with each of the Canadian organizations. They were highly successful in most cases, less so in others. Each of these deserves some examination.

Undoubtedly the organization that developed the most intimate relationship with the Mennonite Central Committee was the Non-resistant Relief Organization in Ontario. This was apparent already at the outset of the war, when the NRRO determined that its relief efforts would be conducted through MCC and when MCC reciprocated by commissioning an Ontario man to investigate relief needs in Europe.

The relationship suffered somewhat of a setback in 1944, however, when the Kitchener office was opened. Though the NRRO representative had agreed to the proposed office at the Ottawa meeting, evidently MCC had not taken steps to clear the matter thoroughly with NRRO chairperson Oscar Burkholder.¹⁵ Therefore, despite an NRRO resolution of 5 January 1944 which read: "That we express our hearty appreciation to the Mennonite Central Committee for opening an office in Kitchener, Ont. and that we continue our support and cooperation with the MCC in the same spirit and manner as we have in the past [sic] ,"¹⁶ there was a certain amount of aloofness on Burkholder's part for some time.¹⁷

Eventually the relationship of NRRO with both MCC and its Kitchener office became a very warm one. No doubt the fact that MCC Kitchener manager C. J. Rempel was a local person who knew the NRRO well and also happened to be secretary of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches was a contributing factor. But the NRRO's decision beginning in 1954 to grant annual membership to the new office manager and his assistant¹⁸ indicated that the relationship between the organizations went deeper. William Snyder, Orie Miller's successor as MCC executive secretary, was probably not exaggerating when he wrote in 1963 that NRRO was one of the most active and most dependable of MCC's constituent bodies.¹⁹ Just how highly the NRRO and its constituency valued the MCC connection would be revealed in the 1960s when the possibility of that connection being severed by the creation of a Canada-wide relief organization would become very real to them.

The relationship between the Conference of Historic Peace

Churches and the MCC was also a close one. MCC personnel frequently gave reports to the CHPC sessions, and C. J. Rempel provided an important link with the MCC's Canadian headquarters in his dual capacity as secretary of the CHPC and manager, until 1951, of the Kitchener office. What made this relationship different, however, was the nature of the CHPC. As an organization devoted to peace-related issues rather than a relief agency concerned with the collection and distribution of relief goods, the CHPC had more in common with MCC's Peace Section than with MCC as a whole. Thus, beginning in 1946, it appointed a representative²⁰ and made regular contributions to that Section. CHPC's first secretary, J. Harold Sherk, later became executive secretary of MCC Peace Section.

A number of special projects were carried out cooperatively by the CHPC and the MCC Kitchener office. The most significant of these was the establishment and operation of the Ailsa Craig Boys Farm in the early 1950s. The inspiration for this home for boys came from Harvey Taves, then assistant manager of the MCC office. He and Jack Wall, a man destined to provide much of the leadership for the project, discussed its possibilities with the local Children's Aid Society and then approached the CHPC. The conference approved the project and then formally invited the Kitchener office to make it a reality. When Ailsa Craig became functional it therefore operated under the cooperative direction of the CHPC and the MCC office. Where the former provided the funds and an advisory council much like a board of directors, the latter was responsible for the actual day to day operation of the home.²¹

The Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee, based in southern

Manitoba, developed an intimacy with the Mennonite Central Committee that rivalled that of the NRRO. Although, it will be recalled, CMRC did not begin to send relief contributions to the MCC offices until well into 1942, it quickly became an ardent supporter of the United States-based agency. This was particularly the case after the MCC office in Kitchener opened in 1944. The extent to which CMRC appreciated that symbol of MCC's concern for the Canadian constituency was revealed by its reaction to MCC's proposal for a similar office in western Canada in 1956. The minutes of a 22 October meeting record that news of the proposal was "gladly received" and that members felt such an office would assist them in their own work.²²

One of the reasons why the CMRC felt such kinship with the MCC and the Kitchener office in particular was, as in the case of the CHPC, because of the personal connection embodied by several individuals. Upon C. J. Rempel's resignation in 1951, Julius G. Toews, former secretary of the CMRC, became office manager. When Toews resigned a year later, and MCC expanded the directorship of the office to two positions, Toews's son Harvey assumed one of them. Harvey Taves remained at the office until his early death in 1965, and, although he made Ontario his home, his Steinbach roots ensured that he would maintain the close ties with CMRC. Indeed, when illness prevented him from attending the CMRC annual meeting in 1959, secretary Ted Friesen wrote that his absence made the meeting incomplete.²³

The Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee was like the Non-resistant Relief Organization in that its primary purpose was to collect and forward relief monies and material goods from a number

of Mennonite groups. But the CMRC differed from the NRRO in that it took a more active interest in some of MCC's other activities. This was evident primarily in the area of peace concerns. CMRC consistently supported the Peace Section with annual allowances and, in the years between 1942 and 1950, contributed nearly as much as the Conference of Historic Peace Churches.²⁴ In the 1950s it was responsible for sponsoring the first Canadian under MCC's Pax program and in 1962 it appointed a representative to MCC's Peace Section.²⁵

The relationship of the Mennonite Central Relief Committee to the MCC was in many ways the antithesis of that between CMRC and MCC. Where CMRC did virtually all of its work through MCC, MCRC found it necessary to undertake certain projects independently. Where CMRC developed a good rapport with the MCC Kitchener office and encouraged the creation of a similar office in western Canada, MCRC frequently regarded the Canadian headquarters office as superfluous and consistently opposed any of MCC's efforts to establish another one in the west. Where CMRC promoted MCC's peace activities, MCRC felt that the American organization was interfering in what were rightly conference affairs. The relationship between the Mennonite Central Relief Committee and MCC was, in short, not a very harmonious one. Because MCRC and the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization were so closely linked, the latter organization was also affected.

The most significant issue of contention between MCRC and MCC was related to MCC's support of the Mennonites in Paraguay. The amount of financial assistance, material aid, and human effort that MCC poured into establishing the Russian Mennonite refugees in the South American country after World War II was truly phenomenal. The

Russlaender that had found refuge in Canada only twenty-five years earlier were grateful to MCC for the extent to which it helped these new refugees, many of whom were their friends and relatives. What disappointed them was the way they perceived MCC to withdraw its support before they felt these people had been adequately rehabilitated.

The first stage in the dispute between MCC and MCRC surfaced in 1947 when it became evident to the latter that the funds it was forwarding to MCC for transportation and resettlement purposes were being treated as loans. It was exasperating to the Russlaender, which constituted a large portion of the MCRC constituency, that MCC should demand repayment of the assistance which they had provided as a gift. C. J. Rempel first noticed their deep sense of disappointment in MCC after a trip through western Canada in the fall of 1947.²⁶ The following September, just after MCC had sold a large shipment of flour to the Paraguay colonists, he wrote to Orrie Miller:

The feeling is quite strong in certain sections of Canada particularly in the West, that the M.C.C. has a heart and also goods for everyone else, but when it comes to giving something on a contributory basis to Paraguay, then there always seems to be a reason for charging them with the goods rather than making it an outright gift. Had a portion of the flour been allocated to them upon a free distribution basis, then this act would help tremendously in meeting that criticism.²⁷

Despite these words of counsel and an angry letter from B. B. Janz,²⁸ there was no change in MCC policy.

What aggravated this situation for MCRC and the Board was that MCC was turning its attention to new areas of need in other parts of the world. It was disturbing to these organizations that relief and rehabilitation projects were being undertaken in such remote places as Java and Japan when their own kin were not being looked

after adequately. Should not the Glaubensgenossen, the co-religionists, receive first consideration? they asked repeatedly.

An examination of the minutes of Board and MCRC meetings during this period reveals something of the concern that this policy of MCC caused. On 8 August 1947 the Board's annual meeting noted that MCC should concern itself less with reconstruction in Poland and other countries and restrict itself more to helping Mennonite refugees.²⁹ Two years later the Board was informed that MCRC relief contributions had fallen off, the implication being that MCC's overseas relief program was responsible. J. J. Thiessen was therefore requested to raise this concern at the next MCC executive committee meeting.³⁰ In 1950 the MCRC found it necessary to forward directly to MCC a resolution expressing deep anxiety over what it felt to be a real imbalance in the agency's priorities.³¹

The Board's and MCRC's obsession with the situation of the Paraguay Mennonites is understandable in view of the close bond between those who had come to Canada from Russia in the 1920s and those who had gone to South America after World War II. Because they had experienced many of the trials which the World War II refugees were now facing and had been the beneficiaries of much assistance themselves, the Canadian Russlaender were now anxious to extend help to their friends and relatives in Paraguay. When MCC channels redirected a good portion of their contributions to projects that did not hold such a personal interest and advised against above-quota designated gifts because they would jeopardize the general relief program,³² it was inevitable that there would be tension.

It should be said in MCC's defence that its policy did not reflect a callous disregard for the counsel of its constituent groups. On the contrary, by broadening its sphere of activity to serve non-Mennonites as well as Mennonites, MCC was responding to the desires of a much larger group, namely those Mennonites of Swiss-German background who did not have the close ties with the refugees coming out of the Soviet Union. Their views favouring a non-discriminating relief program had to be considered as well, C. J. Rempel wrote to B. B. Janz.³³

Things came to a head in 1951 when MCC presented its budget for that year. Out of a total Mennonite Aid Section budget of \$180,000, only \$12,000 was designated for Paraguay. For the Board and MCRC this came as a slap in the face. It convinced B. B. Janz that something must be done directly by the Mennonite Central Relief Committee to aid the South American Mennonites, since it was evident that MCC was not about to alter its course. Therefore, in reporting to the annual meeting of MCRC in March 1951, he suggested that the relief committee begin a program whereby it continue to support the MCC Mennonite Aid Section with approximately half of its receipts and forward the other half directly to the Paraguay Mennonites.³⁴ With this kind of arrangement, MCRC could direct virtually all of its relief monies to the Glaubensgenossen in the southern hemisphere. The annual meeting accepted Janz's suggestion and approved a budget designating \$30,000 for MCC Mennonite Aid and \$34,000 for direct aid to Paraguay.³⁵

MCRC had forwarded some relief monies and material aid directly to South America for a number of years, but this decision meant that

TABLE 1

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS OF RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS
 COMPARED TO THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO MCC PROGRAMS

Organization	1954		1958		1961	
	Total Disbursements	Disbursements To MCC	Total Disbursements	Disbursements To MCC	Total Disbursements	Disbursements To MCC
MCRC/CMRIC*	\$78,701.34	\$9572.77	\$60,053.76	\$28,374.86	\$59,432.57	\$34,055.16**
CMRC*	\$18,909.98	\$12,826.00 ⁺	\$24,068.00	\$15,099.41 ⁺	\$51,321.62	\$35,327.88 ⁺
NRRO*	\$46,414.34	\$45,994.34 ⁺⁺	\$34,703.17	\$33,754.80 ⁺⁺	\$38,792.10	\$38,069.08 ⁺⁺

* The fiscal years of the organizations were as follows:

MCRC January to December
 CMRIC June to May
 CMRC January to December
 NRRO April to March

** Because CMRIC financial statements do not always specify whether or not certain designated funds go through MCC, this amount may be inaccurate by several thousand dollars.

⁺ Not included here are amounts which CMRC spent on purchasing fabric that was used to make garments for MCC's material aid program. Those amounts were \$4217.26, \$4715.75, and \$11,369.58 for 1954, 1958, and 1961, respectively.

⁺⁺ Included are sums NRRO allocated to special meat canning, and milk and pork shipment projects. The specific amounts were \$12,316.99, \$5926.69, and \$8500.00.

such activity would now be official policy. Until 1964, when the Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council would turn over its program and its assets to the newly formed Mennonite Central Committee (Canada), Paraguay Mennonites would receive direct assistance from the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. Indeed, concern over what would become of the Paraguay Mennonites caused both J. J. Thiessen and C. A. DeFehr (B. B. Janz's successor) to hesitate somewhat in supporting a new organization that would carry on all its overseas relief work through the MCC.³⁶

Although aid for the Paraguay Mennonites was the most contentious issue affecting the relationship between the Board/MCRC and MCC, it was not the only one. Another matter which caused these Canadian organizations much concern was MCC's attempt to establish a branch office in western Canada. They had consented to the creation of the Kitchener office in 1943, but they had no intention of allowing a similar office to be established in western Canada. That was their preserve and they were not about to lose their control over it.

MCC first made the suggestion that the Kitchener office be moved to Winnipeg in late 1950 at an executive committee meeting. (Why it felt that this move would be appropriate is unclear. Quite possibly Winnipeg's more central location was a factor.) The immediate reaction of both B. B. Janz and J. J. Thiessen was negative. Janz was indignant that neither he nor the Board's chairperson had been consulted prior to the issue being raised.³⁷ J. J. Thiessen was convinced that the churches did not approve of the move and that it was therefore unnecessary.³⁸ Both of them also wondered whether the

expense of operating the office could be justified.

C. J. Rempel in Kitchener soon learned of the opposition of the two western leaders. In two separate letters he tried to convince B. B. Janz that MCC had no intention of establishing a Winnipeg office over his or Thiessen's objections.³⁹ Indeed, the entire matter had been raised only as a suggestion and did not represent an intended policy. He therefore urged Janz not to bring the matter before the annual Board and MCRC meetings in March as the latter had indicated that he would. Not only would it be unfair to MCC to discuss something that it had not given thorough consideration, but it would intensify the already strained relationship between MCC and the Board/MCRC. Rempel encouraged Janz to discuss the issue personally with Oriie Miller.

Despite Rempel's pleas, the matter of moving the Canadian MCC office to Winnipeg was raised at the March meetings of the Board and MCRC. Not surprisingly, the members agreed that, since a relief organization already functioned in the west, an MCC office was unnecessary.⁴⁰ With that the idea was effectively squelched, at least for a few years.

In 1955 Oriie Miller wrote to J. J. Thiessen suggesting that MCC appoint an individual to serve the western Canadians in the areas of relief, voluntary service, and travel service.⁴¹ Undoubtedly remembering that the idea of a separate office had not been a popular one, Miller suggested that this person work out of the Board office in Saskatoon. This time the suggestion does not seem to have roused the ire of either Thiessen or Janz, but the Board still felt that such a representative was unnecessary.⁴² MCRC could attend to relief

work quite adequately, and the provincial committees could disseminate voluntary service information. The Board did, however, agree to consider the possibility of travel service coming under its purview.

A year and a half later Miller once again proposed that a regional office be established in Winnipeg to serve more adequately the needs of the Mennonites west of Ontario. Perhaps Miller felt that the enthusiastic reaction from the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee meant that the Board and MCRC might now also be more receptive to the idea.⁴³ Miller was to be disappointed once again. The Board did note that a certain sector of its constituency held little interest in the MCRC's Paraguay program, favouring greater support of MCC's general relief program instead, and the MCRC did double its budgeted MCC allocation from the previous year.⁴⁴ But both organizations once again agreed that a Winnipeg MCC office was not warranted.⁴⁵

If the Board and MCRC opposed the creation of an MCC relief office in western Canada, they at least tolerated the peace and voluntary service office under the direction of David Schroeder. The primary reason for this was that Schroeder's activities did not directly infringe upon the work of the Board or MCRC.⁴⁶ Whereas the two organizations could oppose efforts to establish a relief office similar to the Kitchener office because they felt that they were adequately serving relief needs, they could not convincingly argue that the voluntary service office was redundant. As long as Schroeder respected their sphere of jurisdiction, there were no immediate problems. Even so, the relationship was not the closest. Many years later Schroeder wrote:

This move on the part of MCC was not appreciated and the offices of CMRIC (at that time still two organizations) were desirous that no further inroads on their areas should be made by MCC. It aroused the suspicion that MCC was not wanted.⁴⁷

It seems evident that MCC's decision to close the office and transfer its responsibilities to the Kitchener headquarters in 1952 was at least in part related to the lack of enthusiasm felt for the office by the Board and MCRC.⁴⁸

One of the reasons why B. B. Janz in particular was not very enamoured with Schroeder's activities was because he saw them as an attempt by MCC to meddle in what was rightfully the work of the conferences.⁴⁹ Still regarding the MCC as little more than a relief agency, he was incensed when in 1949 David Schroeder called a peace conference and invited groups from across Canada to participate. Though Schroeder made it clear that the purpose of the conference was to promote the sharing of views rather than to decide upon, say, a course of action regarding alternative service, Janz was convinced that the proposed conference encroached upon the work of the peace committees of the various denominational conferences. He wrote:

Einerseits soll man dankbar sein fuer jede Hilfe. Andererseits haben wir unsere Konferenzen u. Zeitungen und einen gut vorge-merkten Weg zu gehen. Nun greift man von aussen her ungerufen hinein, was eventuell auch meint, Konferenzbeschluesse anzugreifen und abzutun.⁵⁰

This incident and others, such as MCC's support of several ministers for each of the Mennonite conferences in South America,⁵¹ or its advocacy of an inter-Mennonite seminary,⁵² confirmed Janz's belief that MCC was becoming a super-conference. That development he opposed wholeheartedly.

There was a final reason for the Board's and MCRC's

disillusionment with MCC in the post-war years. Increasingly, these organizations perceived that MCC was interfering in affairs that were the prerogative of Canadians. In the minds of Janz and Thiessen, a few Canadian members on the MCC board did not necessarily make the agency an international one, and they were perturbed when MCC attempted to serve as broad a function in Canada as it did in the United States. When in 1949 MCC Mennonite Aid director William Snyder and the Kitchener office manager met with government officials to discuss immigration, Janz and Thiessen were not only angered that the Board office had been bypassed, but they were dismayed that an American agency was attempting to influence the outcome in a Canadian matter. Thiessen wrote to his friend:

Es ist empörend, dass das MCC sich auch in Ottawa aufdraengt, wenn es sich um die Einwanderung nach Ottawa handelt. Es ist uns nie eingefallen nach Washington zu gehen, um die Einwanderung nach USA zu befuerworten.⁵³

Incidents such as this one and the MCC-sponsored peace conference that same year convinced the Canadian leaders that independence must be jealously guarded. B. B. Janz repeatedly refused to designate any MCRC relief monies to the Peace Section because, beyond disapproving of MCC's peace activities, he felt that such contributions would amount to an invitation to the section to represent Canadian Mennonite peace interests before the Canadian government as it did American Mennonite interests before the American government.⁵⁴ He was determined to prevent that from happening. Canadian Mennonites would deal with the Canadian government on their own. Janz wrote:

It would be the duty of the Peace Churches of Canada to present their case to the Government of Canada, not of the MCC. This was the way in the past and will be also for the future as the

conditions in Canada differ widely from conditions in the USA. No foreigners should speak for Canadians.⁵⁵

The same intent to preserve Canadian autonomy was undoubtedly a factor in A. A. Wiens's promotion of a new central office for all Canadian relief organizations in 1958 (see Chapter III).

Although the relationship between the Board/MCRC and MCC was fraught with considerable tension throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, there was never any danger of the connection being severed. The Board and MCC continued to cooperate in administering the immigration of Russian Mennonite refugees, and MCRC dutifully forwarded a significant portion of its relief contributions to MCC coffers throughout the decade. If a number of factors served to distance the Board and MCRC from MCC during these years, others evidently served to maintain their fellowship.

An incident in 1958 captured the essence of this paradoxical relationship. In that year the annual sessions of the Board and MCRC jointly passed a resolution communicating to MCC the frustration that had been mounting within their organizations over the past years. (This frustration had been brought to a head by MCC's recent moves to establish a travel service post in Winnipeg, just after the Board had requested that the service be based in its own Saskatoon office.) The resolution expressed regret that MCC had not understood the Canadian organizations in their pleas for greater support for Paraguay, and that it had not given them full recognition in other matters.⁵⁶ But if they found it necessary to reprimand MCC rather strongly, Board and MCRC members agreed to invite an MCC representative to their next annual meeting in the hope that a greater level of

understanding would result.⁵⁷ Apparently they felt that the good things about their relationship to MCC outweighed the bad.

An examination of the relationships of the various Canadian peace, relief, and service organizations to the Mennonite Central Committee reveals just how significant an element the latter was in the lives of the former. It is therefore hardly surprising that, when certain groups and individuals began to advocate simplifying and centralizing inter-Mennonite organizational structures in Canada, MCC provided them with a model. In an MCC-type organization, Canadian Mennonites would be able to do together all the things of which American Mennonites were now capable, whether it be relief work, peace education, or voluntary service. Moreover, they would have an appropriate framework for dealing with issues, such as civil defence and alternative service, which concerned them collectively as Canadian citizens.

In addition to providing a structural model, MCC performed another function which aided the development of a Canadian Mennonite Central Committee. That was to give the Canadian organizations a common base upon which they could later build their own national institution. With the exception of the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada, all the major inter-Mennonite peace and relief committees in Canada were related to the MCC in some way. These organizations, by supporting the United States-based agency, found a common purpose beyond their own borders which they sometimes had difficulty finding on their own, as the events in western Canada during World War II had shown. Although each organization related to MCC in its

own unique way, their common experience would eventually enable them to merge with a relative amount of ease.

Notes

¹For more detailed descriptions of this expansion, see Unruh, In the Name of Christ and Larry Kehler, "The Many Activities of the Mennonite Central Committee," MQR 44 (July 1970): 298-315.

²This expression is used by Kehler, "The Many Activities of the Mennonite Central Committee," p. 312.

³It seems evident that the NRRO was involved in the Russia famine relief operations in the early 1920s. The question is whether or not its relief contributions were channeled through MCC. One historical report ("Non-resistant Relief Report to the Historic Peace Church Council," NRRO, XV-11.2.4, File: 1950-55, CGCA) indicates that they were. But S. F. Coffman ("The Non-Resistant Relief Organization," p. 275) states that, in response to NRRO's appeal, each Mennonite group made contributions through its own relief channels.

⁴Descriptions of this meeting are found in "Report of Joint Meeting of Executive of Mennonite Central Committee and Delegates of Peace and Relief Organizations," NRRO, XV-11.2.2, File: 1917-48, CGCA; C. F. Klassen to David Toews, 4 April 1943, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1321, File 871, CMCA; "Meeting of MCC Executive Committee with Representatives of Canadian Mennonite groups, April 3, 1943," MCC, Box 1, File: Feb.-Aug. 1943, AMC.

⁵"Executive Committee Meeting of the Mennonite Central Committee, November 2, 1943," MCC, IX-5-1, Box 1, File: Dec. 1943, AMC.

⁶Orie O. Miller to C. F. Klassen, J. G. Toews, S. F. Coffman, J. B. Martin, *ibid.*, IX-6-3, Correspondence 1940-45, File 11: NRRO, AMC.

⁷"Report of my Trip to Ottawa on the 7th of November," NRRO, XV-11.2.2, File: 1917-48, CGCA.

⁸The office remained in Kitchener until the early 1950s, at which time it was moved to Waterloo, Kitchener's twin city. In 1963 a new building was constructed in Kitchener and the office was moved again. In order to avoid confusion, it will be referred to as the Kitchener office throughout this thesis.

⁹"Report of my Trip to Ottawa on the 7th of November"; Unruh, In the Name of Christ, p. 330.

¹⁰"Mennonite Central Committee Minutes, Executive Committee, September 25, 1948," MCC, IX-5-1, Box 2, File: Sept. 25, 1948, AMC.

¹¹"Report of MCC Canada Branch Office Investigation to the MCC Executive Committee, Atlantic Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, May 3, 1952," *ibid.*, Box 3, File: March-June 1952, AMC.

¹²"Special Joint Meeting of the Mennonite Central Committee and the Mennonite Aid Consultative Section, October 13, 1944," *ibid.*, Box 1, File: Sept. to Dec. 1944, AMC.

¹³J. Harold Sherk to E. J. Swalm, 24 November 1941, CHPC, XV-11.1.5, File: 1941: 1941, CGCA.

¹⁴A certain amount of discrepancy exists with regard to the representation of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization on MCC. Unruh (In the Name of Christ, p. 330) notes that the Board was invited to appoint a representative in 1948 and indicates (p. 371) that J. J. Thiessen was the Board representative beginning in that year. However, a special MCC meeting in 1946 ("Mennonite Central Committee Special Session, May 18, 1946," MCC, IX-5-1, Box 1, File: May 18-August 1946, AMC) recorded that Thiessen was present as a newly appointed representative of the Mennonite Central Relief Committee. Perhaps Thiessen served in the latter capacity until 1948 when he became a representative of the Board.

¹⁵C. J. Rempel, interview held at Kitchener, Ontario, 24 May 1979 (hereafter Rempel).

¹⁶"A Called Meeting of the Non-resistant Relief Organization, First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Jan. 5, 1944," NRRO, XV-11.2.2, File: 1917-48, CGCA.

¹⁷Rempel.

¹⁸"Annual Meeting--Non-resistant Relief Organization. United Missionary Church, April 29, 1953, 10 a. m.," NRRO, XV-11.2.4, File: 1948-54, CGCA.

¹⁹William Snyder to Wilfred Ulrich, 20 February 1963, HPCCC, XV-12.1, File: 1962 and 1963, CGCA.

²⁰"Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches at the MCC office, Monday, April 1, 1946--1:30 p. m.," CHPC, XV-11.1.6, File: 1941-58, CGCA.

²¹CM, 14 December 1956, p. 7.

²²Executive Committee Meeting, 22 October 1956, CMRC, XXII-A-3, Vol. 657, CMCA.

²³T. E. Friesen to Harvey Toews, 29 February 1959, *ibid.*, Vol. 658, CMCA.

²⁴CHPC forwarded \$2597.15 and CMRC \$2234.55 to MCC Peace Section during these years. Unruh, In the Name of Christ, p. [380].

²⁵T. E. Friesen to William T. Snyder, 6 March 1962, MCRC, XXII-A-3, Vol. 658, CMCA.

²⁶C. J. Rempel to Orié O. Miller and J. N. Byler, 9 December 1947, MCC, IX-6-3, Correspondence 1948, File 35: MCC Canadian Headquarters Dec.-Jan., AMC.

²⁷C. J. Rempel to Orié O. Miller, 29 September 1948, *ibid.*, File 35: MCC Canadian Headquarters Aug.-Sept., AMC.

²⁸B. B. Janz to C. J. Rempel, 2 December 1948, BBJ, Group III, File 33 (d), MBSC.

²⁹"Protokoll der jaehrlichen Sitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennoniten Gemeinde, Saskatoon, Sask. den 8. Aug. 1947," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1389, File 1535, CMCA.

³⁰"Protokoll der Jahressitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization abgehalten am 17. August 1949 in Saskatoon, Sask.," *ibid.*

³¹"Protokoll der Jahressitzung des Mennonitischen Zentralen Hilfskomitees (Westcanada) am 6. Februar 1950 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan," *ibid.*, Vol. 1307, File 851, CMCA.

³²William T. Snyder to C. A. DeFehr, 17 May 1950 and William T. Snyder to B. B. Janz, 14 June 1950, *ibid.*, Vol. 1391, File 1540, CMCA.

³³C. J. Rempel to B. B. Janz, 4 July 1950, BBJ, Group III, File 33 (d), MBSC.

³⁴"Bericht des Zentralen Mennonitischen Hilfskomitee fuer West Kanada an die Jaehrliche Hilfsversammlung von West Canada fuer das Jahr 1950 abzuhalten in Saskatoon am 2. Maerz 1951," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1391, File 1541, CMCA.

³⁵B. B. Janz to Orié O. Miller, 27 March 1951, *ibid.*, Vol. 1307, File 851, CMCA.

³⁶J. M. Klassen, interview held at Winnipeg, Manitoba, 16 October 1979 (hereafter Klassen).

³⁷B. B. Janz to J. J. Thiessen, 29 December 1950, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1307, File 851, CMCA.

³⁸J. J. Thiessen to B. B. Janz, 4 January 1951, *ibid.*

³⁹C. J. Rempel to B. B. Janz, 13 January 1951 and 20 January 1951, BBJ, Group III, File 33 (d), MBSC.

⁴⁰"Protokoll der erweiterten Sitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennoniten Gemeinde zu Saskatoon, Sask., am 1. Maerz," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1389, File 1535, CMCA.

⁴¹The letter is unavailable, but its contents are described in "Protokoll der Executivesitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, abgehalten in der Office der Board in Saskatoon am 8. Maerz 1955" and "Protokoll der erweiterten Jahressitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennoniten Gemeinde zu Saskatoon, am 9. Maerz 1955," *ibid.*, Vol. 1395, File 1564, CMCA.

⁴²J. J. Thiessen to Orie O. Miller, 14 March 1955, *ibid.*

⁴³On 2 January 1957 Miller wrote to Thiessen, mentioning that CMRC had reacted favourably to the proposal and wondering how the Board and MCRC were disposed. Quoted in J. J. Thiessen to members of CMBC executive, 9 January 1957, *ibid.*, Vol. 1375, File 1433, CMCA.

⁴⁴It is evident that a growing sector of the Board/MCRC constituency favoured a closer relationship with MCC in the latter part of the 1950s. J. J. Klassen of the Alberta Provincial Relief Committee was not alone when he observed the following:

"Meine Persoenlichen Eindruecke sind die, dass unsere jungen Gemeindeglieder nur immer wieder die MCC Nachrichten lesen. Ich komme viel herum in Alberta, und finde das die Jugend Albertas immer mehr verbunden wird mit der Arbeit des MCC . . . Man findet es, dass der Not entspricht die das MCC unter allen Voelkern tut. Soweit meine Beachtung" (J. J. Klassen to C. A. DeFehr, 11 April 1957, *ibid.*, Vol. 1391, File 1543, CMCA).

The Conference of Mennonites in Canada Board of Christian Service made it a policy to encourage greater support of MCC programs. In the process it earned the wrath of several Board and MCRC leaders, but Frank Epp was probably right in attributing MCRC's increased MCC allocation, at least in part, to the Board of Christian Service's promotional activities. Frank H. Epp to William H. Enns, 27 March 1957, BCS, II-E, Vol. 175, File: 1957, CMCA.

⁴⁵"Protokoll der erweiterten Jahressitzung des Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization abgehalten im Boardbureau zu Saskatoon, am 13. Maerz 1957," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1395, File 1566, CMCA.

⁴⁶David Schroeder, interview held at Winnipeg, Manitoba, 16 October 1979.

⁴⁷David Schroeder to J. M. Klassen, 15 July 1962, J. M. Klassen Collection (hereafter JMK), XX-34, Vol. 646, CMCA.

⁴⁸"Report of MCC Canada Branch Office Investigation to the MCC Executive Committee, Atlantic Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, May 3, 1952."

⁴⁹For a more substantial treatment of Janz's particular quarrels with MCC, see John B. Toews, With Courage to Spare: The Life of B. B. Janz (1877-1964) (Hillsboro, Ks.: Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1978), pp. 134-40.

⁵⁰B. B. Janz to David Schroeder, 22 February 1949, BBJ, Group III, File 32 (c), MBSC.

⁵¹B. B. Janz to J. H. Janzen, 22 June 1948, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1307, File 851, CMCA.

⁵²B. B. Janz to William T. Snyder, 11 October 1954, BBJ, Group III, File 33 (d), MBSC.

⁵³J. J. Thiessen to B. B. Janz, 10 September 1949, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1307, File 851, CMCA.

⁵⁴"Bericht von Zentralen Mennonitischen Hilfskomitee fuer West Canada abzuhalten auf der Komitee Sitzung am 6. Feb. 1950 in Saskatoon, Sask.," *ibid.*, Vol. 1392, File 1545, CMCA.

⁵⁵B. B. Janz to J. J. Thiessen, 15 March 1955, *ibid.*, Vol. 1391, File 1543, CMCA.

⁵⁶"Protokoll der erweiterten Jahressitzung des mennonitischen Zentralen Hilfskomitee von Canada am 27. Februar 1958 im Bethause der Mennoniten Gemeinde auf Sargent Ave., Winnipeg, Man.," *ibid.*, Vol. 1392, File 1545, CMCA.

⁵⁷"Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. Protokoll der erweiterten Jahressitzung abgehalten in der Kirche der Sargent Ave. Mennonitengemeinde zu Winnipeg, 26. Februar 1958," *ibid.*, Vol. 1390, File 1536, CMCA.

CHAPTER V

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE (CANADA), 1959-1964

By mid-1959 the idea of creating a Mennonite Central Committee-type organization for Canada was no longer confined to the minds of individuals like A. A. Wiens or Frank Epp. Wiens had carried it to the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and Mennonite Central Relief Committee as a member of both those organizations. Similarly, Epp had shared it with the Board of Christian Service of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada as secretary of the body, and with Ted Friesen of the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee through their mutual connection with The Canadian Mennonite. No doubt Epp's editorials struck responsive chords further afield, but this is more difficult to document.

If the idea of a Canadian MCC was becoming more appealing, perceptions of such an organization remained varied. It may be unfair to try to categorize these perceptions, for in most cases they were still nebulous. Most people were simply not certain about what kind of organization they wanted this Canadian MCC to be. But in general one can distinguish a narrower view and a broader view.

The narrow view--that is, one which expected the proposed organization to function within limited areas--is the one that developed within the CMRIC in response to Wiens's ideas. The CMRIC

was simply interested in a Canada-wide relief organization. Although the Manitoba Mennonite Relief Committee (later known as Manitoba Mennonite Relief and Immigration Committee or MMRIC) had forwarded a resolution to the CMRIC which suggested that the new relief organization function in the areas of peace education and voluntary service besides the more traditional fields of relief, immigration and colonization,¹ members of CMRIC continued to think only in terms of doing relief work on a more unified basis. If they thought they would be creating an organization resembling MCC, they evidently still perceived MCC to be little more than a relief agency.

A basic assumption that undergirded the CMRIC members' understanding of a Canadian MCC was that CMRIC itself would provide the foundation for the new relief agency. CMRC and NRRO would simply be invited to join that organization. This presupposition may have been justified by the size of the CMRIC operation--CMRIC was, after all, a national organization, whereas the other relief committees were provincially-based. But it also proved to be a stumbling block to a more comprehensive amalgamation.

The broader view of a Canadian MCC was the one described on the editorial pages of The Canadian Mennonite. What Epp visualized was an organization that would do relief work on a broad basis as well as coordinate activities in such areas as peace and disaster service,² an organization that would do all that MCC was capable of and more. Although Epp promoted moves to merge the three existing relief committees into one, as did the Board of Christian Service and the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee, he regarded this as an inter-

mediate step to something broader.³ In his mind he could therefore see the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada providing the starting point for a Canadian MCC⁴ as easily as the CMRIC.⁵

The existence of these two different conceptions of a Canadian MCC provided for some amount of confusion and misunderstanding in the next few years. Eventually CMRIC itself would set aside personal ambition and recommend the creation of an organization with a wider mandate than simply the promotion of relief work. But this would occur only after attempts to initiate a major structural realignment had been brought to a standstill.

The first thrust to inaugurate talks regarding the creation of a Canadian MCC occurred in the summer of 1959. It had its origins in discussions relating to the continuing problem of Civil Defence and Mennonite Disaster Service. Difficulties arising from the issue of participation in Civil Defence, it will be recalled, had revealed the need for a body that could represent all Canadian Mennonites before the federal government. The HPCCC had been created in response to that need, and one of its purposes was to deal with CD at the national level. But since there was no structural liaison between the council and the five Mennonite Disaster Service organizations, which negotiated with CD at the provincial level, problems persisted. When CD was reorganized in 1959, a number of individuals felt that it was time for a national MDS coordinating committee, and it seemed only natural to them that HPCCC should take the initiative in creating such a committee. Therefore, in describing a June meeting of Ontario MDS for The Canadian Mennonite, NRRO chairperson Henry H. Epp inserted a short paragraph calling on the HPCCC to give Canada-wide

direction to MDS.⁶

On his way to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada annual sessions in Clearbrook, B. C. several weeks later, Epp learned that others were in agreement with his idea of an HPCCC-sponsored meeting to discuss a national MDS. Within a month the HPCCC had received at least three letters encouraging it to take such action.⁷ The Canadian Mennonite had also suggested that "obviously Mennonite Disaster Service should become a concern of the newly formed Historic Peace Church Council of Canada."⁸

Both enroute to and returning from the conference, Epp stopped in Altona to visit his brother Frank Epp and friend Ted Friesen. Not surprisingly the discussion turned to the idea of a Canadian MCC. Friesen, who had corresponded with J. J. Thiessen in the spring regarding a merger of the various relief organizations (see Chapter III), invited Henry Epp to attend a meeting of the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee to share his views on the subject. Epp agreed. What resulted from that meeting was a resolution requesting the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada to convene a gathering of representatives of the three relief committees and other interested Canadian organizations in conjunction with MDS talks. The purpose of the meeting would be to explore

the possibilities of constituting an all-Canadian organization that would co-ordinate relief service, peace, immigration, etc. efforts in Canada in the Canadian context and speak with a national voice to government and to our Canadian neighbours.⁹

Presumably, the request went to the HPCCC because it was the most geographically and denominationally representative of all inter-Mennonite organizations.

Shortly after Ted Friesen had mailed a copy of the resolution to J. B. Martin and Elven Shantz of the HPCCC, J. J. Thiessen, who had learned of the development, voiced strong opposition. In view of the warm letters that Friesen and Thiessen had exchanged only months earlier, and in light of the latter's more recent statement that a merger of the Board and MCRC would hopefully lead to an amalgamation with CMRC and NRRO, this response is puzzling. But what disturbed Thiessen was that no one had raised the possibility of a major reorganization at the Canadian Conference earlier that month. A major organizational overhaul, such as Friesen was suggesting, was clearly a matter that had to have conference approval, and the only move that had been endorsed was a merger of the Board and MCRC. The entire matter was exacerbated by the fact that Henry Epp, who was Canadian Conference secretary as well as NRRO chairperson, had been at least partially responsible for the CMRC resolution.¹⁰

After HPCCC had sent out invitations to the requested meeting, B. B. Janz became equally perturbed. What he found annoying, however, was that a young, inexperienced, and unchartered peace council dared to make suggestions as to the future of an historically significant and incorporated organization such as the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. Moreover, what did a council concerned with peace activity have to do with an immigration and colonization agency?¹¹

The frustration of other members of the Board and MCRC seems to have been motivated less by considerations of procedure and protocol, than by fear for the fate of their organization. While they were ready to accept CMRC and NRRO into CMRIC, they were not at all happy about the prospect of burying CMRIC, which was not yet even fully

operational, in order to make way for something new.¹² Perhaps the sudden manner in which the entire issue of a major reorganization had been raised--had Thiessen not told them only weeks ago that much careful legwork would need to precede a larger amalgamation?--also contributed to their negative attitude.

Although Thiessen and others questioned the advisability of attending the HPCCC-sponsored meeting at first, letters from a number of individuals encouraged them to reconsider. One of them was from David P. Neufeld, vice-chairperson of the HPCCC and chairperson of the Board of Christian Service. In the latter role, Neufeld had opposed merging the Board and MCRC in 1958 because he felt that the creation of a broader base including CMRC and NRRO would have been the proper move;¹³ he was now happy that HPCCC was opening the way to such an amalgamation.¹⁴ But he did not hesitate to assure Thiessen that the purpose of the meeting was only to begin discussions on the possibility of unifying the various committees, and that there was no intention of bypassing the conferences on this matter.¹⁵ C. J. Rempel wrote to B. B. Janz in a similar vein. In confiding that he personally did not think a united effort would result, Rempel probably went a long way toward assuaging any fears that Janz may have harboured.¹⁶

Because NRRO records are incomplete for this period, it is difficult to determine how the Ontario relief organization reacted to the purpose of the proposed conference. No doubt Henry Epp favoured discussing the possibility of a national relief and service agency, for he had assured CMRC members, when present at their July meeting, that he would support their request of HPCCC.¹⁷ But at least one NRRO member, Fred Nighswander of the Waterloo-Markham

conference, had indicated that he saw no advantage in the amalgamation of the relief organizations.¹⁸ Evidently this opposition was not strong enough for the organization as a whole to question participating in the discussions.

The HPCCC-sponsored meeting was held on 25 and 26 September in Winnipeg. It was attended by representatives of the provincial Mennonite Disaster Service organizations, the four existing relief committees (Board, MCRC, NRRO, and CMRC), and members of CHPC and HPCCC. The first day was devoted to Mennonite Disaster Service matters. C. Wilbert Loewen of Manitoba MDS reported on a recent investigation of MDS units throughout North America, and Harvey Taves, secretary of Ontario MDS, spoke on recent CD legislation and how it might affect Mennonites. The discussion which followed revealed some of the organizational problems that the provincial units had encountered; a general consensus was that a national committee providing a liaison between the provincial committees would help to eliminate some of these difficulties. Upon motion by Harvey Taves, it was resolved that the HPCCC be asked to form a committee composed of representatives from each of the provincial MDS organizations and the HPCCC itself to provide for the coordination of Mennonite Disaster Service throughout Canada.¹⁹

The second day of the conference was allotted to the issue raised by CMRC, namely, the possibility of creating a structure that would unify existing activities in such areas as relief and peace. It began with reports from each of the four relief committees and was followed by a discussion that quickly turned to the desirability

of unifying these committees. A number of opinions, both positive and negative, were recorded in the minutes.²⁰ One person wondered if the dissolution of what were essentially provincial committees (NRRO and CMRC) would not mean that constituencies would lose their interest in relief work. But another noted that the present multiplicity of organizations was detrimental to the entire relief effort, and another, in obvious reference to the Manitoba situation, commented that the reason for such a multiplicity had largely been removed. One individual felt that caution should be exercised so as to ensure that a new structure would be more effective than the old ones, and another argued that concern for maintaining present organizational identities should not stand in the way of "a system which will serve all of us in a better God-glorifying way."

E. J. Swalm, Brethren in Christ bishop and chairperson of the CHPC, opened the afternoon session with an address entitled "The Christian Witness in Relief." Although he focused mainly on relief as a Christian duty, he did close his address by expressing the hope that an amalgamation of relief efforts could be effected.²¹ Harvey Taves had encouraged him to speak to this issue prior to the conference,²² but Swalm was undoubtedly speaking from his heart. His words and the spirit of unity felt by the conference participants led to a resolution recommending further study in the field of relief and related programs "in the hope of establishing a more unified effort." To facilitate such study, it was agreed that minutes of the meeting be sent to the various Mennonite conferences and relief and service organizations with the request that they be studied and acted upon within six months. (The vagueness of this latter resolution

would lead to problems later.) The HPCCC would take the matter from there.²³

Press reaction to the outcome of the conference was very favourable. The Canadian Mennonite called on its readers to support HPCCC in carrying out its directive,²⁴ and the Mennonitische Rundschau noted that only a Canadian MCC, such as had been suggested at the conference, would in the future be able to retain the interest of youth.²⁵ The Mennonite Observer did not comment editorially, but it devoted a large amount of space to conference coverage and even published a number of the reports that had been presented.²⁶ If this did not indicate approval of either the conference or the decisions made, it nevertheless implied that they were considered important.

If anyone expected the sudden blossoming of a Canadian MCC, they were to be disappointed. Once again charged with the task of encouraging various groups to take action, C. J. Rempel soon found himself in a situation that was reminiscent of the protracted process by which HPCCC was created. After the initial round of enthusiasm had dissipated, responses to the September resolution were less favourable than might have been expected. Minutes of a CMRC meeting during which the conference was discussed are unavailable, therefore it is impossible to determine whether or not that committee took action. Presumably it expressed itself in favour of further unification efforts. The annual meeting of the CHPC in November approved further study in the field of united peace and service testimony,²⁷ and the following spring the NRRO gave its executive a similar go-ahead.²⁸ The Board and MCRC in joint session, however, expressed the view that HPCCC should stick to peace and disaster service activity.²⁹

Evidently they felt threatened by the council's initiatives.

Conferences were much more negligent in passing on their reactions to the September resolution. Only two written responses, one from the Evangelical Mennonite Church and one from the Waterloo-Markham conference, were preserved in the files of HPCCC. The former indicated that it would support a central organization if the individual committees would be allowed to retain their identities.³⁰ The latter expressed itself in favour of a greater degree of cooperation but preferred to maintain the present structures.³¹ Other responses may not have been preserved, and some may have been transmitted verbally, but they certainly did not provide the HPCCC with enough incentive to forge ahead.³²

From mid-1960, therefore, until 1962 the HPCCC took no further steps to pursue a nation-wide relief and service agency. The matter arose at a meeting of HPCCC members in May 1961, but after some discussion it was tabled until the next meeting.³³ Whether there were any additional meetings in the next year is unclear. But it is evident that, when the matter was again raised in 1962, it was not because of HPCCC's own efforts. Once again the impetus would come from external sources.

One of the reasons why the Canadian MCC did not receive more of a thrust between 1959 and 1962 was related to the CMRIC's pursuit of a Canada-wide relief organization. The CMRIC, it will be recalled, had been created out of the merger of the Mennonite Central Relief Committee and the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, with the hope that the other two relief organizations, CMRC and NRRO, would eventually join as well. Ted Friesen and Henry H. Epp, of the CMRC

and NRRO respectively, may have been receptive to the idea of their organizations becoming part of the CMRIC, at least as an intermediate step, but they certainly did not have the support of their committees in this matter. As early as 1958 William M. Enns, then chairperson of CMRC, had indicated to David P. Neufeld that his committee would join the MCRC and Board with great reluctance; at that time he could not foresee it happening at all.³⁴ In 1960 when the issue was raised at the NRRO annual meeting, the response was also generally negative.³⁵ A year later the NRRO executive committee agreed to send two observers to future CMRIC meetings for an initial two year period, but nothing further was done in following up CMRIC's invitation.³⁶

Since both CMRC and NRRO had reacted to the HPCCC-sponsored meeting in September 1959 with mild approbation, their response to CMRIC overtures may seem puzzling and somewhat contradictory. This, however, is not really the case. While the two committees could see the benefit of creating an organization that would provide Canada-wide coordination for the various peace and relief programs of the Mennonites, they were not prepared to be swallowed up by the CMRIC. The broader view of a Canadian MCC, described at the outset of this chapter, was much more appealing to them than the narrow view. If there was to be a major realignment, all the existing organizations would have to defer equally to the new one.³⁷ It is quite possible that Ted Friesen approached the HPCCC rather than the Board/MCRC in 1959 precisely because he felt that the CMRIC route lacked promise.

That the majority of people perceived that in fact two different models of a Canadian MCC were being expounded is, however, questionable. To many in either CMRC or NRRO constituencies it undoubtedly

appeared that the HPCCC meeting's decision was merely helping to promote an expanded CMRIC, something they did not really want to be part of. Indeed, perhaps this is why conference reaction to the September meeting was less favourable than expected, and why virtually no progress was made toward realizing either the narrow or broad view of a Canadian MCC.

Another reason for the virtual standstill of the development of a Canadian MCC between 1959 and 1962 was that the HPCCC did not really know what was expected of it. The 1957 peace conference which had agreed to its formation had outlined the purpose of the council as being to represent the Canadian Mennonites in nationally significant peace-related issues. The HPCCC had accordingly spoken to Prime Minister Diefenbaker on the peace position of the Mennonites, and clarified the relationship of Mennonite Disaster Service to the new Emergency Measures Organization. Upon request it had intervened on behalf of a number of young men who had been denied citizenship because they had taken a stance as conscientious objectors. By the end of 1961 it would also have helped to create a national coordinating committee for Mennonite Disaster Service in Canada, as it had been directed to do by the September 1959 meeting.

While some considered the HPCCC to be doing its job well, others were disappointed that it was not forging ahead into new areas of peace witness. These divergent evaluations were rooted in different perceptions of the nature of the HPCCC. The majority of HPCCC members felt that the council was to act within the mandates agreed upon at the 1957 conference, and in other areas only upon the request

of one or more of the member conferences. This view was described by Elven Shantz, HPCCC treasurer, as follows:

It is my own opinion and I thought the opinion of the executive of the HPCCC that we are not a policy-making body nor do we necessarily foresee or try to foresee problems that arise, or try in any way to direct any of the numerous groups of Mennonites in their way of doing things but we are an organization functioning between groups, and between groups and government, trying to accomplish what they want done after the policy has been decided. In other words, to put it more crudely, we are a tool to be used by any group or organization.³⁸

Others felt that the HPCCC should play a more aggressive role in pioneering new avenues of service and witness. One member who subscribed to this school of thought was vice-chairperson David P. Neufeld. Neufeld had written to J. B. Martin just months after the council had come to life, suggesting that HPCCC should go beyond the more traditional issues and speak to some of the larger concerns of society, concerns such as nuclear testing, alcoholism, capital punishment, agricultural surpluses, and Sunday observance.³⁹

Neufeld's views were shared by a number of individuals outside the council. One of them was his old friend and co-worker in the Board of Christian Service, Frank Epp. Even before the HPCCC had been duly formed, Epp had written that its task would be to witness against the evils of war, not only when "the emergency becomes 'hot' for ourselves," that is, when conscription became a real possibility, but before the bombs started falling and before the results of war were evident.⁴⁰ Evidently, he understood peace-making to be more than negotiating alternative service.

Given these two very divergent views of the nature of the HPCCC, it is not surprising that different interpretations arose as to the role of the council in promoting the creation of a Canadian

MCC. Those who believed that the council should work only within prescribed guidelines felt that it had done its duty simply by soliciting the responses of conferences and organizations. Since those responses had not been exceptionally positive, and since the council had been given no mandate to take the matter beyond the stage of enquiry, it was understood that any further activity would be beyond its scope.⁴¹

Those who felt that HPCCC should blaze trails for the Mennonite groups, however, hoped that it would pursue the creation of a Canadian MCC further. David P. Neufeld was of this opinion. When a council meeting was proposed for the fall of 1962, he wrote to J. B. Martin that one of the items for discussion might be: "What have we done by way of uniting the relief efforts since the 1959 meeting?"⁴² Ted Friesen of the CMRC also felt that the issue should not be dropped. After speaking to Neufeld, he notified the HPCCC executive that the November meeting would be an opportune time to "begin exploring ways and means of moving in the direction of national organization of relief and other related activities." He wrote:

I understand the concern of the Council not to move beyond the mandate of the constituency. But I also believe that the Council has an obligation to provide leadership in shaping the future role of Christian service and witness in the Mennonite tradition in Canada.⁴³

A number of events in 1962 made it possible for the whole issue of a Canadian MCC to become an active concern once again. One of these was the decision of the Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council to hire an executive secretary. Since 1960 J. J. Thiessen had served as chairperson and C. A. DeFehr as vice-

chairperson of the council. Both men were now well over seventy and ready to pass the work on to others. Because the CMRIC had failed to recruit younger people in the past decade, however, there was no one within the council who was really capable of assuming the task. CMRIC officers believed that a full-time director might be able to breathe some new life into the aging organization, and they therefore agreed to invite Jacob M. Klassen to accept the position of executive secretary.

Klassen was a good choice for a number of reasons. As a native of Manitoba he had a good understanding of the Canadian west, and as former MCC director in Korea, and presently assistant director of Foreign Relief and Service at Akron, he had a thorough grasp of relief administration. Moreover, as a Mennonite Brethren, his acceptance could allay fears within his own conference that the Conference of Mennonites in Canada wanted to dominate the organization.

Klassen did not immediately accept the offer. For one thing, he enjoyed his work in Akron and in mid-1962 had only completed the first year of a three year commitment. For another, he did not find the prospect of working for CMRIC very attractive.⁴⁴ Since the government had largely removed voluntary agencies from the immigration process, that part of the council's functions amounted to little more than servicing the old records. Moreover, although funds allocated for MCC now surpassed those for direct aid to Paraguay, the latter operation still dominated CMRIC's program. To Klassen, and to a growing number of younger people, this represented a narrow understanding of what Christian charity was all about.

Despite his hesitation, Klassen did, however, write to a

number of Canadian Mennonite leaders asking for their opinion on the future of CMRIC and the advisability of his accepting the position. The responses he received altered his thinking on the entire matter considerably. Almost without exception they expressed the view that CMRIC, and indeed Canadian Mennonite organizations in general, were poorly equipped to face the future.⁴⁵ The answer, virtually all of the respondents felt, lay in the direction of a Canadian MCC. There were slight differences of opinion as to the role of CMRIC in building the Canadian MCC; some felt that it could provide the basis for the new organization,⁴⁶ others indicated that it would be an obstacle to the creation of such an organization.⁴⁷ There was nevertheless agreement that the times demanded a major change in the existing organizational structure.

Convinced that the future held some distinct possibilities for CMRIC and other relief, service, and peace organizations, and heartened by the encouragement to pursue a reorganization, J. M. Klassen accepted the CMRIC position in late August. He would commence his duties the following summer in conjunction with the transfer of the CMRIC office from Saskatoon to Winnipeg. Just how deeply he too had become committed to the conclusion that major changes were necessary was revealed in the condition which he attached to his acceptance. He wrote to C. A. DeFehr:

While strengthening the work as [sic] CMRIC as such, I would also like to promote a closer working relationship between CMRIC, CMRC, and NRRO, working towards, hopefully, an all Canadian MCC which could carry on its own domestic program of immigration, perhaps mental hospitals and Mennonite church-government relations as concerns the matter of non-resistance and alternate service, and its foreign service in cooperation with and through the Mennonite Central Committee . . . 48

It is evident by the statement that the organization which Klassen hoped to work toward resembled the HPCCC model more than it did the CMRIC model, at least in terms of the scope of its functions. That Klassen also believed CMRIC would hold no special place in the Canadian MCC was confirmed by an article written for The Canadian Mennonite early the next year. In describing his vision of the future of inter-Mennonite relations in Canada, he wrote:

Perhaps the only way real cooperation can be achieved is by complete dissolution of former relief and related committees and the birth of a totally new organization.⁴⁹

Surprisingly, J. J. Thiessen and C. A. DeFehr did not object to Klassen's plan to work toward a major reorganization. This may be because they did not expect a reorganization to occur. Had they not tried a number of times in the past few years to draw the NRRO and CMRC into the CMRIC fold? And had they not been unsuccessful in the attempt?⁵⁰ On the other hand, Klassen's conditional acceptance may well have been the element which finally led CMRIC leaders to embrace the broader concept of a Canadian MCC. Cognizant of their own failure to expand the CMRIC, they may have come to the realization that their council would have to make way for a more comprehensive agency.

The first indication that there had been a change in CMRIC policy regarding a Canadian MCC surfaced at the October annual meeting. In his report J. J. Thiessen recommended that the council once again give serious consideration to the possibility of creating a Canada-wide inter-Mennonite relief organization. This time, however, he spoke about CMRIC merging "with other organizations," rather than inviting the CMRC and NRRO to join CMRIC, and he also suggested that,

in addition to relief work, the new organization's functions include "peace service, disaster service, MTS (Menno Travel Service), voluntary service, mutual aid and other lines of service."⁵¹ In Thiessen's mind the broader view of the Canadian MCC had replaced the narrower view.

CMRIC members accepted their chairperson's recommendation and suggested that a conference involving representatives of the existing organizations be held in order to pursue the matter. They also called upon their executive to meet with the CMRC executive in the near future "den allgemeinen Zusammenschluss herbeifuehren zu helfen."⁵² From this point on, CMRIC would be in the forefront of the campaign to create a Canadian MCC.

The CMRIC's change of tune boded well for relations with the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee of Manitoba. Somewhat fearful of being swallowed up in an expanded CMRIC, CMRC members were ready to support a new organization into which existing bodies entered on an equal basis. Thus, when J. J. Thiessen invited the CMRC executive to a joint meeting, Ted Friesen was ready with a preliminary outline of the structure of the Canadian MCC--a structure patterned after MCC and assuming the functions of CMRIC, NRRO, CMRC, and HPCCC.

The joint CMRIC/CMRC meeting was held on 9 November 1962 and was devoted largely to a consideration of Friesen's outline. Evidently the seven participants were impressed with the proposal, for they agreed that it represented the goal toward which they should strive.⁵³ Friesen then drew attention to the fact that HPCCC had planned a meeting for the end of the month and that its tentative agenda called for a discussion of the "role and working policy of the council." He suggested and the others concurred that this might be an

appropriate time to resurrect the issue of amalgamating the relief and peace organizations.⁵⁴

Friesen wasted no time in informing both NRRO and HPCCC of what had taken place and encouraging the latter to add the subject of amalgamation to the agenda of its upcoming meeting. (No doubt he took to heart Frank Epp's statement at the previous CMRC annual meeting that CMRC should feel a special call to initiate reorganization since it had separated from other Canadian organizations in 1940.)⁵⁵ NRRO secretary Wilfred Ulrich called a special meeting to deal specifically with the issue raised in Friesen's letter. After some discussion, NRRO's executive committee agreed that there could be merit in greater cooperation among the various agencies. It therefore seconded the CMRIC/CMRC request that the HPCCC open the way for further discussions.⁵⁶

The HPCCC was less favourably disposed to the western request. Secretary G. J. Rempel was rather taken aback that Friesen had interpreted the agenda item "the role and working policy of the HPCCC" to be related to the issue of organizational amalgamation. He acknowledged that an amalgamation was something for which to strive, but he felt that taking concrete steps to effect such a move at the upcoming HPCCC meeting would be ill advised.⁵⁷ For one thing, such a delicate matter needed time; to discuss it at the forthcoming meeting would be premature. Secondly, the council needed a mandate to proceed with such an amalgamation. Rempel noted that the HPCCC would be happy to proceed further if it was asked to do so by the meeting, but not before.

The HPCCC meeting was held in Winnipeg on 30 November and 1

December. Most of the sessions were for members only, but a number were opened to the public. The most important public meeting heard David Schroeder, now a professor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, speak on the topic "The Historic Peace Church Council Serves the Mennonite Constituency."⁵⁸ Apparently C. J. Rempel had not been aware of the content of Schroeder's address prior to the meeting, for it spoke exactly to the issue that Friesen, and undoubtedly many others, hoped to raise.

Schroeder's thesis was that the HPCCC, and indeed the entire realm of inter-Mennonite organizations in Canada, were not adequately serving the needs of Canadian Mennonites. The HPCCC lacked the support base and the mandate to act beyond certain well-defined areas. The relief and service agencies were similarly bound to designated functions, and, since several committees were in existence, duplication in these fields was as much a problem as inactivity was in others. Schroeder advocated a realignment that would bring a holistic approach to inter-Mennonite activity and that would provide the flexibility and the leadership necessary to pioneer in new fields. Although he noted that HPCCC could supply the basis for such an alignment because of its broad representation, he felt that the surest footing would be provided by creating something completely new. Members of the new organization would be appointed directly by the conferences rather than by existing organizations.

No doubt Schroeder's words struck responsive chords for many of the CMRIC and CMRC representatives in attendance at the meeting. Indeed, they provided just the opportunity for some concrete action.

After some discussion, the following resolution was passed:

That we request the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada to call a representative meeting of all existing inter-Mennonite relief and service organizations and of representatives of all Mennonite relief and service organizations and of representatives of all Mennonite Brethren in Christ conferences or churches in Canada for the purpose of studying and exploring the establishment of an inter-Mennonite Canadian Organization that would include and coordinate the work of all existing inter-Mennonite organizations and related functions.⁵⁹

It was significant that the motion was introduced by Frank Epp and J. J. Thiessen. Epp had been one of the first persons to promote systematically the concept of a Canadian MCC in the 1950s. Although he had been more reticent in recent years, at least editorially, his recently published history of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization reiterated this passion.⁶⁰ Thiessen had also been one to encourage greater cooperation among the various branches of Canadian Mennonitism. His vision of a new organization had occasionally been at variance with that which now gained the upper hand, but his support of the motion illustrated conclusively his willingness to put aside personal considerations.

Exactly how the various committees reacted to the decision of the HPCCC meeting is somewhat unclear. It can be assumed that CMRIC and CMRC were generally happy about it, though a letter which William M. Enns wrote to The Canadian Mennonite⁶¹ indicated that at least one member of CMRC still harboured misgivings about an amalgamation. An organization that was somewhat dubious about what the resolution might lead to was NRRO. It had endorsed the CMRIC/CMRC request of HPCCC in November because it favoured a greater level of cooperation among the organizations, not because it was anxious to initiate a major reorganization. The minutes of a 12 February

executive committee meeting record a degree of concern over the resolution that had been passed at the HPCCC meeting. Evidently these concerns were considered to be of a serious nature, for a decision was made to ask the Conference of Historic Peace Churches to convene a special meeting to discuss them.⁶²

The CHPC complied with NRRO's request and called a meeting for 23 February. A special committee was assigned the task of summarizing the discussion. Its report sheds light on what some of NRRO's concerns were. The report noted, among other things, that any new structure should recognize the Mennonite Central Committee as the Mennonite relief agency (the implication was that there should be no attempt to supplant MCC), that it should provide for the existence of provincial branches, and that it should therefore look upon itself as serving a coordinative function in exclusively national issues such as immigration.⁶³ Because these concerns were very important to some of the Ontario Mennonites (primarily those of Swiss-German descent), and because they would surface on a number of occasions within the next few years, they merit some examination.

As indicated in Chapter IV, both NRRO and CHPC had developed close ties with MCC over the years because of their proximity to MCC's Pennsylvania headquarters, a region which represented the ancestral homeland for many, and because of the presence of MCC's Kitchener office in their midst. The Ontario organizations did not want to lose this intimacy, and they reacted negatively when they learned that a Canadian parallel to MCC was in the making. Although they favoured greater cooperation with other Canadian organizations, they did not want to gain it at the expense of destroying their

fellowship with MCC. In their minds the notion of a Canadian MCC was motivated by a narrow nationalism. Only as they became convinced that such an organization would work together with rather than independently of MCC would they become more receptive to the entire idea.⁶⁴

The Ontario organizations were also anxious about maintaining their provincial level of activity. In the NRRO in particular the inter-Mennonite experience had been a very meaningful and happy one. Almost every Mennonite and Brethren in Christ group in the province had participated, and because representation was on an equal basis, even the small and generally more conservative groups had played a significant role. A high degree of trust and sensitivity, the envy of many western Mennonites, had developed as a result. Many Ontario Mennonites felt that an organization constituted like MCC, with only a national level of administration, posed a real threat to this experience. For one thing, the intimacy of working at a grass roots level would be lost, and, for another, the role of small groups located in only one province, such as many in Ontario were, would be severely downgraded.⁶⁵ Many felt that most groups would lose interest in inter-Mennonite activity altogether if they could not do it at the provincial level. In this area as well Ontario would need a great deal of reassurance before agreeing to support a major reorganization.

In keeping with the directive received at the November meeting, HPCCC invited members of CMRIC, CMRC, NRRO, CHPC, MDS, and itself, as well as representatives of the various Mennonite and Brethren in

Christ conferences in Canada to a meeting in Winnipeg on 19 and 20 April. Some members of CMRIC objected to the scheme of representation because they felt that Ontarians would dominate. In the first place, they noted that no provision had been made for members of the CMRIC provincial branches to be present or to report on their work.⁶⁶

Secondly, they were convinced that Ontario controlled four of the six organizations that were to be represented.⁶⁷ B. B. Janz, who was no longer active in CMRIC but who maintained a keen interest in its affairs, and for whom adequate western representation had always been a passion, wrote: "Bedenkt das vor der Trauung, denn ein Brautpaar musz zu einander ebenbuertig stehen."⁶⁸ C. J. Rempel, secretary of HPCCC, was able to avert any major difficulties by including CMRIC provincial committee reports on the meeting's agenda and by pointing out that two of the organizations CMRIC had interpreted as being Ontario organizations, namely HPCCC and MDS, enjoyed the participation of both Ontario and western Mennonite groups.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the incident pointed out that east/west tensions would be an obstacle to overcome in the process of creating the Canadian MCC.

The meeting was attended by twelve different Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups. It began much like the second day of the September meeting almost four years earlier with reports from the various participating organizations. Most of these reports outlined the history and activities of the respective organizations. The one given by Wilfred Ulrich, secretary of NRRO, differed from the others in that it articulated some of the particular concerns of the Ontario organizations in the development of an organization like MCC.⁷⁰ Like

those raised at the joint CHPC/NRRO meeting in February, these concerns attested to the fear that some of the very desirable features characterizing the workings of NRRO would be lost in a Canadian MCC. Ulrich therefore insisted that the new organization should supplement rather than counteract the work of MCC, that it should strengthen rather than fragment the fellowship with American counterparts, that it should encourage activity on the provincial level, and that it should work through the existing MCC Kitchener office.

The remainder of the two day meeting was devoted to discussions on the structure of the new organization and the process of forming it. A resolutions committee consisting of J. J. Thiessen of CMRIC, Harvey Plett of CMRC, Fred Nighswander of NRRO, Elven Shantz of CHPC, and E. J. Swalm of HPGCC was appointed to draw up and present a proposal on these issues. The committee, reporting on the second morning of the meeting, made a number of key recommendations that would eventually define the nature of the Canadian MCC.⁷¹ Calling for the creation of a new national organization that would be "the administrative agency for peace education, relief, voluntary service, government contact, immigration and any other matter that would normally be the responsibility of a national body for the Mennonite Brotherhood of Canada," it recommended the new organization be named "Canadian Mennonite Council,"⁷² that it provide for strong and autonomous provincial counterparts, and that it maintain a vital relationship with the Mennonite Central Committee, MCC remaining the agency of international inter-Mennonite activity. The committee also advised that a constitution and by-laws be drafted for ratification by the

various Canadian Mennonite conferences at an early date and that HPCCC continue to direct the process of reorganization until Canadian Mennonite Council had been consummated. Its recommendations were accepted by a vote of 44 to 8.

Following the meeting HPCCC delegated six persons with the responsibility of drawing up the constitution for the Canadian Mennonite Council. Three of them--David P. Neufeld, David Schroeder, and Jacob Quiring--were from the western provinces, and the other three--Nick Dick, Newton Gingerich, and J. B. Martin--were from Ontario. Each of these two sub-committees was to produce a preliminary draft. Both drafts would then be utilized to draw up a constitution.

The two sub-committees met near the end of May. There does not appear to have been any disagreement on the basic plan they had been instructed to follow, namely the one David Schroeder had first outlined in November and recently elaborated upon in an article for The Canadian Mennonite.⁷³ Where the two committees evidently disagreed was with respect to the matters of provincial councils and the relationship of CMC to MCC, precisely the areas over which NRRO had expressed concern. The western committee's draft had mentioned the provincial councils only in relation to how many members they might name to CMC and had summed up the relationship to MCC with the short statement that CMC would "work together with Mennonite Central Committee in international relations."⁷⁴ The Ontario committee's draft is unavailable, but certain discernible differences between the western draft and the final proposal indicate that the Ontario committee insisted on further clarification in these two areas. The final proposal therefore included two major additions to the section defining the purposes of

CMC; one of them gave greater emphasis to the role of the provincial councils, and the other defined more carefully and closely the relationship of CMC to MCC.⁷⁵

Evidently the changes were enough to satisfy some of the Ontario Swiss Mennonites' concerns, for the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, which represented the largest of the NRRO groups, endorsed the proposed constitution at the end of June.⁷⁶ It was in fact the first conference to do so. The two largest Canadian conferences, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, gave their approval in early July. A number of smaller conferences suggested minor changes while approving the constitution in principle.

It is not clear whether it was necessary for the various organizations to ratify the CMC constitution. The CMRC did so at a meeting in November.⁷⁷ But there is no indication that CMRIC, NRRO, or CHPC did likewise. That these latter organizations were happy with the arrangement is, however, attested to by a number of events. First of all, the two Canadian conferences had accepted the concept of a major reorganization and the proposed CMC constitution on CMRIC's recommendation.⁷⁸ CMRIC would hardly recommend something that it found unacceptable. Secondly, NRRO had unanimously endorsed a motion calling for cooperation with the Ontario Mennonite Relief and Immigration Committee as a step toward the realization of CMC only a week after the April meeting.⁷⁹ This motion had been introduced following a report on the meeting by C. J. Rempel, a report which emphasized that NRRO's concerns regarding the preservation of both provincial activity and the MCC connection would be attended to.⁸⁰

One can infer that the CMC constitution would thus have met with NRRO's approval.

If anyone was amazed at the smoothness with which the entire process of reorganization had been carried out thus far, they could rest assured that not all the obstacles had as yet been overcome. An incident in late summer threatened to nip the creation of the Canadian Mennonite Council in the bud. It grew out of a resolution that was passed by the annual meeting of the CMRIC and was forwarded to HPCCC. It read as follows:

1. We favour and strongly encourage the early organization of the Canadian Mennonite Council according to the constitution recently ratified by the major participating conferences, and assure the HPCCC of our fullest cooperation in the implementation of the re-organization.
2. We reaffirm our concern that there eventually be one Canadian office or headquarters for CMC and that this office perform all the functions carried on by the MCC office in Kitchener, as a part of its total service to CMC.
3. As soon as the CMC is organized and prepared to assume administrative responsibilities, we will take the necessary steps to dissolve and disband.⁸¹

The resolution was meant to encourage the HPCCC in its task of organizing the Canadian Mennonite Council as well as to express some of CMRIC's particular concerns about the MCC Kitchener office. In the minds of CMRIC members, the creation of CMC would make MCC's Canadian headquarters superfluous. The CMC headquarters could easily carry on its own functions and assume those of the Kitchener office. It would therefore become the point of contact between MCC and the Canadian constituency. Maintaining the Kitchener office, CMRIC felt, could be detrimental to CMC in the long run because it would encourage eastern Mennonites to preserve their loyalties to that office rather than transferring them to the CMC office.⁸²

It appears that these thoughts and the resolution they produced were triggered by the recent decision of NRRO, CHPC, and MCC to construct jointly a new building for the Kitchener office. For one thing, J. J. Thiessen's opening remarks to the annual meeting noted that the new Kitchener office facility would become meaningless once the reorganization had taken place.⁸³ For another, the meeting's minutes record a general consensus that the new building would negatively influence the formation of the Canadian Mennonite Council.⁸⁴ How could Canadian Mennonites hope to develop successfully a new institution if they continued to buttress the old ones?

Intended to incite the HPCCC to early action, the CMRIC resolution had an opposite effect. It caused so much consternation within the NRRO and CHPC that C. J. Rempel told his HPCCC colleagues there could be no further moves until there had been some clarification.⁸⁵ What was most disturbing to the Ontario organizations was that the resolution attempted to define what the relationship of CMC to MCC would be.⁸⁶ There they felt that CMRIC had stepped out of line. In the first place, it was the job of the conferences to decide exactly what this relationship would be; CMC was in reality to be the creation of the conferences rather than the dissolving organizations. Secondly, it seemed to members of NRRO and CHPC that, by advocating that the Kitchener office be closed, CMRIC was violating the April decision to maintain close ties with MCC. Though they were probably over-reacting on this score, their response is understandable given the close bond that had developed between their two organizations and the Kitchener office. Since CMRIC had never experienced this bond, it could foresee a close relationship between

CMC and MCC without the Kitchener office. NRRO and CHPC, at least at this point, could not.

What exacerbated the entire matter was the transfer of the CMRIC office from Saskatoon to Winnipeg at the same time that the CMRIC resolution was being considered in Ontario. To many it undoubtedly appeared that CMRIC was trying to predetermine the location of the CMC office.⁸⁷ Although a letter from recently installed executive secretary, J. M. Klassen, explained that this was not at all the case,⁸⁸ there were a number of indications that CMRIC would lobby for a Winnipeg location for CMC. At a February meeting, CMRIC executive members had agreed that Winnipeg would be the most appropriate place for the CMC office,⁸⁹ and in his annual report to the two conferences, J. J. Thiessen had remarked that the council would support a Winnipeg location.⁹⁰ It is quite conceivable that these incidents were known to Ontario people.

A letter from J. M. Klassen went a long way to mitigating the fears of NRRO and CHPC.⁹¹ The emphasis it placed on cooperation with MCC was enough to assure them that there was no intention of supplanting MCC as the international relief agency of North American Mennonites; Klassen could foresee CMC taking on responsibility for certain overseas projects only in such areas as, say China and Cuba, where it would be impossible for a United States-based agency to gain entry. The letter also apparently convinced the Ontario organizations that, for reasons of economy, it would not be feasible to maintain both the MCC Kitchener office and a CMC headquarters-- though this may have been the point at which they decided to bid for an Ontario location for CMC.⁹² In any case, HPCCC felt that the

situation had been adequately clarified and that enough conferences had ratified the constitution for it to proceed with the Canadian Mennonite Council organizational meeting.

The meeting was held in Winnipeg from 12 to 14 December 1963. In accordance with the CMC constitution, representation was primarily through the various conferences, although one representative was allowed for each of the inter-Mennonite organizations. This meeting differed markedly from previous ones in that it was basically a business meeting. Delegates had come to create the Canadian Mennonite Council and put it to work.

Before the meeting could proceed with the election of the CMC executive, however, it was necessary to deal with a number of problems of a more general nature. One of these issues, though not new by any means, appears to have arisen out of several major addresses presented in the early sessions of the three day meeting. It had to do with the relationship of the Canadian Mennonite Council to the Mennonite Central Committee. More specifically, the question was, would CMC do all of its overseas relief work through MCC or would it also administer a number of projects on its own, as CMRIC had done in South America?

J. M. Klassen's September letter to the CHPC executive had emphasized that the former would be the case; separate projects would be undertaken only in an area where it was politically impossible for MCC to operate. Klassen now reiterated this point in a report outlining possible program areas for the new council.⁹³ Elven Shantz, treasurer of the HPCCC and a member of the CHPC executive, implied as much in his remarks on what he hoped would characterize the

relationship between CMC and MCC.⁹⁴ A different view, however, was expressed by David P. Neufeld, vice-chairperson of the HPCCC. Neufeld, in describing his long-nurtured dreams about CMC, claimed that the new organization needed an independent relief program, if only a limited one, in order to serve particular interests to which MCC might not direct itself.⁹⁵

Probably as a result of the different opinions expressed here, a motion was introduced stating that in all overseas relief work CMC would work through MCC.⁹⁶ It was carried. Though one would expect this resolution to appeal most directly to the Swiss Mennonites of Ontario, and undoubtedly it did, it was in fact introduced by two Russian Mennonites. That it was seconded by J. J. Thiessen says a great deal about CMRIC's changing attitude toward MCC.

Another major issue of concern was the name of the new organization. The April meeting had agreed upon "Canadian Mennonite Council," but it now became evident that this name was unsatisfactory to a number of delegates. Many found themselves supporting the arguments advanced by the Mennonitische Rundschau several months earlier. The German weekly, in reporting on the April meeting, had commented that a completely new name would simply enhance the confusion that people hoped an amalgamation of the various inter-Mennonite organizations would overcome. It advocated instead a name that would associate the new organization with the familiar MCC.⁹⁷

After some discussion, the delegates unanimously agreed to adopt the name "Mennonite Central Committee (Canada)" (MCCC).⁹⁸ It seemed an appropriate choice because it was one with which constituents could readily identify, and because it signified that a close

relationship with MCC would characterize its operations. Immediately a telegram was dispatched to MCC asking for permission to use the name. When no reply was forthcoming, MCC's silence was interpreted as approval.⁹⁹

A final major issue to be dealt with at the meeting was the location of the MCCC headquarters. A news release issued at the close of the meeting called it "the most controversial item on the agenda."¹⁰⁰ Whether Ontario representatives made a strong bid to have the office in Ontario, as Harvey Taves had predicted in a letter to William Snyder,¹⁰¹ is unclear. At the outset of the meeting one of them did send a memo to the "Architects of the Canadian Mennonite Council" indicating that an eastern office would be desirable.¹⁰² Another similarly disposed brief may also have been circulated.¹⁰³

In any case, the Ontario representatives had legitimate arguments. For one thing, an Ontario office would facilitate communication with MCC because of its proximity to Akron. For another, it would be able to utilize the recently completed centre in Kitchener. Thirdly, it would be in a better position to gain the loyalties of all Mennonite groups because of the province's healthy mixture of Russian and Swiss Mennonites of various stripes. Proponents of an Ontario location hastened to add that Winnipeg could still host the larger meetings; after all, MCC held many of its annual meetings in Chicago even though its headquarters remained in Akron, Pennsylvania.

Despite the validity of these considerations, however, Winnipeg's centrality proved to be a stronger drawing card. That only one negative vote was recorded in the decision suggests that the Ontario Swiss Mennonites were either ready to accept the Winnipeg office at

this point, or that they were under-represented at the meeting.¹⁰⁴

After they had thus resolved the major problems, the delegates busied themselves with the mechanics of making MCCC a reality. A seven-member executive was elected, consisting of David P. Neufeld as chairperson, Newton Gingerich as vice-chairperson, C. J. Rempel as secretary, Ted Friesen, E. J. Swalm, Harvey Plett, and J. J. Thiessen. This executive was empowered to appoint personnel to carry on necessary work until MCCC became fully operational, to set the date for the annual meeting, and, presumably, to discuss with the MCC executive a new pattern of Canadian representation on MCC. The delegates also approved an operating budget of \$13,750 which was to be raised by CMRIC, NRRO, and CMRC according to the ratio of 3/5, 1/5, and 1/5, respectively, and they agreed that the matter of transferring the functions of the various existing organizations to MCCC should be completed by 30 November 1964. One of the last decisions made by the gathering was to dissolve the HPCCC.

Undoubtedly the delegates returned to their homes with a sense of having participated in an historic event. For many a dream had come true. For the first time in Canadian Mennonite history an organization had been created which could represent all the Canadian Mennonites in issues affecting them collectively as Canadian citizens, as well as coordinate all those activities which they wished to do jointly. Whereas previous inter-Mennonite organizations had been limited in representation and/or purpose, there was now an institution which accepted, in fact encouraged, membership from all groups, and which possessed a wide-ranging mandate. The Canadian Mennonite, which had been one of the chief promoters of a Canadian

MCC from the beginning, called the emergence of MCCC the finest Christmas present that could have been conceived by the Canadian Mennonites.¹⁰⁵

But if Mennonite Central Committee (Canada) had finally become a reality through the actions of the December meeting, reorganization procedures had not been completed. On the contrary, the major portion was still to come. Each province had to undergo some changes. In British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan this was a relatively simple matter. Since only one inter-Mennonite relief committee existed in each of them, the only alterations necessary included changing the name of the committee, appointing a provincial representative to the MCCC board, and providing for other Mennonite groups to become members. Where an entirely new organization had been created at the national level, the existing CMRIC branches in the three westernmost provinces provided the basis upon which MCC (British Columbia), MCC (Alberta), and MCC (Saskatchewan) were built. By February of 1965 the reorganization process had generally been completed, and, if not all non-participating groups had yet joined, they were certainly free to do so.

The existence of more than one organization in both Manitoba and Ontario made reorganization more complicated in those two provinces. Yet in Manitoba the process proceeded smoothly. This was largely because of the increased contact between the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee and the Manitoba Mennonite Relief and Immigration Committee over the past few years. Although the joint clothing program agreed upon in 1959 had not materialized effectively, there had been other joint projects of a short-term nature and a

number of combined meetings. Therefore, when MCCC emerged in late 1963, the two Manitoba committees were prepared to amalgamate.

CMRC took the initiative in this process. Upon the encouragement of the CMRC executive, Ted Friesen contacted J. J. Wall, secretary of MMRIC, and arranged for a meeting of the two committees in the near future.¹⁰⁶ Held on 28 January 1964, the meeting produced an interim arrangement whereby the two committees would merge into one, with members of their respective executives comprising a new executive.¹⁰⁷ Details for future amalgamation would be worked out by the combined board, and a proposed constitution would be sent to all Mennonite groups for ratification. By autumn all the major groups had approved the constitution and either elected or appointed their designated number of representatives. These representatives met on 20 November and, with the election of an executive, MCC (Manitoba) was duly formed.¹⁰⁸ After twenty-four years of organizational disunity, Manitoba Mennonites were reunited.

The process of creating MCC (Ontario) was beset by many more difficulties. The problem here was not, however, one of integrating the NRRO and the Ontario Mennonite Relief and Immigration Committee. That was in fact achieved quite easily. In February members of the two committees prepared a joint budget,¹⁰⁹ and in April the NRRO annual meeting approved of combining the two executives until such a time as the new provincial organization would become operational.¹¹⁰ Rather, the difficulty lay in transforming the Conference of Historic Peace Churches and its four affiliated organizations, NRRO, Mennonite Disaster Service of Ontario, Ailsa Craig Boys Farm Advisory Council, and Military Problems Committee, into something new without losing

the ingredients that had made for their success.

A special CHPC-sponsored meeting held at Waterloo on 24 February revealed that considerable confusion and apprehension still existed in the minds of Ontario Swiss Mennonites¹¹¹ concerning MCCC and its meaning for Ontario. Reports from each of the affiliated organizations intimated the fear that MCCC was attempting to assume control of a number of provincial projects.¹¹² Perhaps this concern had been unearthed once again by J. M. Klassen's address to the December meeting, for, in projecting what he believed MCCC's program should be, Klassen had suggested that both Ailsa Craig Boys Farm and the newly constructed Kitchener clothing depot come under MCCC's purview.¹¹³ For the CHPC constituency, these suggestions struck at the very root of what had made the inter-Mennonite experience in Ontario such a meaningful one, namely, its provincial orientation. It simply would not do, Harvey Taves wrote to J. M. Klassen, to "achieve a paper unity on the top by destroying unity in the geographic area out here."¹¹⁴

What these Ontario Mennonites wanted was a strong provincial organization that would, through the creation of several departments or sections and with the assistance of a full-time executive director, retain control of the inter-Mennonite activities that had developed under CHPC and its affiliated organizations.¹¹⁵ In many ways it seemed they desired what Frank Epp had been advocating for some time in The Canadian Mennonite, namely, a regional MCCC office in Kitchener.¹¹⁶ Whereas British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba did not have need of such a strong office, Epp felt that the historical development of inter-Mennonitism in Ontario made

it necessary for that province. If the actual MCC (Ontario) office did not develop as fully as Epp might have hoped, it is quite likely that his views sensitized MCCC to Ontario's concerns.¹¹⁷

Even so, any alarm on the part of Ontario Mennonites was unnecessary. Prior to the February meeting, J. M. Klassen, now executive secretary of MCCC, had written a letter to the secretaries of CHFC, NRRO, and Ontario Mennonite Relief and Immigration Committee in which he indicated that some of his thinking had changed since he had addressed the December meeting.¹¹⁸ He now acknowledged that Ailsa Craig should probably be the responsibility of MCC (Ontario), and he was open to considering joint MCCC/MCC (Ontario) directorship of the Kitchener clothing depot. Moreover, in reference to a recent CM editorial, he intimated that a full-time executive director for MCC (Ontario) was a real possibility. Had this letter been read to the participants of the meeting, Harvey Taves speculated, many fears could have been allayed.¹¹⁹

If misgivings had once again surfaced, however, MCCC officials made a concerted attempt in the next few months to mitigate them. J. M. Klassen and D. P. Neufeld made a special trip to Ontario to assure the Mennonites that MCCC had no intention of usurping control of any activities that they wished to retain. In response to an article by Frank Epp entitled "MCC (Canada) Must Not Overlook Ontario,"¹²⁰ Klassen wrote that Ontario was being given every opportunity to make suggestions on inter-office relationships and administrative patterns and that its decision to participate in the national organization was to be made voluntarily.¹²¹ Undoubtedly more personal letters expressing similar sentiments went directly

to Ontario leaders.

Evidently these assurances were helpful, for MCC (Ontario) emerged at a November meeting under a plan that was satisfactory to both Ontario Mennonites and MCCC. The former were now convinced that the future would mean a continuation of rather than a break with the past. Not only would they retain control of virtually all the projects and programs previously carried out under the auspices of CHPC and its affiliated organizations, but, through the purchase of the Kitchener office facilities, and the hiring of an executive director, they would provide a focus for provincial inter-Mennonite activity that had previously been supplied by MCC. MCCC, on the other hand, could now depend on Ontario Mennonites and Brethren in Christ to assist it in supporting the various programs of MCC and in meeting the uniquely Canadian needs of its constituency.

If reorganizing the provincial structures in order to accommodate them to the MCCC pattern took some time, so did the process of transferring the programs of the existing committees to MCCC or its provincial counterparts. The first to make the transition was the HPCCC. It had been dissolved by the December organizational meeting with the understanding that MCCC would thereupon assume its responsibilities. CMRIC transferred its program in June 1964.¹²² A liquidation committee continued to exist until 1968, concerning itself with the publication of a number of manuscripts, the administration of debts owed by the Paraguay colonies, and the organization of archival records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, but for all intents and purposes CMRIC ceased to exist in mid-1964. CMRC followed CMRIC's decision by a month,¹²³ even though MCC (Manitoba)

did not come into official existence until November. The Ontario organizations continued to function as previously until after their November organizational meeting. By the time of MCC (Ontario)'s annual meeting in January 1965, however, they had also completed the changeover.¹²⁴

The case of recently created Canadian Mennonite Disaster Service was different. Rather than being entirely subsumed by MCCC or one of its provincial counterparts, MDS maintained its separate identity. It did, however, recognize MCCC as its parent organization in terms of representation to government and overall policy, and therefore transferred its treasury to the new organization.¹²⁵ Thus the relationship bore a close resemblance to that existing between MDS and MCC in the United States. Eventually this relationship would be duplicated at the provincial level as well.

This chapter cannot conclude without some reference to MCC's response to the formation of MCCC. Evidently William Snyder, MCC executive secretary, viewed the entire development with some trepidation. He feared that Canadian Mennonites, now possessing their own national agency, would want to withdraw their support from MCC, create their own parallel programs, and thus end a meaningful era of cooperation with American Mennonites.¹²⁶ For that reason he was less than enthusiastic when some Canadians began to speak seriously about an MCC organization for Canada. It has been suggested that the decision, on the part of MCCC's founding fathers, to continue to do all overseas relief work through MCC, was meant to allay the fears of Snyder and his colleagues as much as those of the Ontario Swiss Mennonites.¹²⁷

But if individuals within MCC may have harboured doubts about the idea of a Canadian MCC, they did not stand in its way. Their official policy was one of non-interference, and they generally stuck to it. Prior to the HPCCC's December 1962 meeting, William Snyder said to Harvey Taves that MCC would work together with "whatever grouping the Canadian Mennonites wished to make,"¹²⁸ and he meant it. When the time came to renegotiate Canadian representation on MCC, and to determine the fate of the Kitchener office, MCC officers were prepared to take such action as recommended by MCCC.¹²⁹

For Harvey Taves, director of MCC's Kitchener office, the development of MCCC was an unsettling experience. Taves's initial reaction to the 1958 discussions concerning the amalgamation of the various relief committees in Canada was favourable.¹³⁰ But he became more skeptical as perceptions of the new organization gained clarity. Like Snyder, he was afraid that Canadian Mennonites wanted to do independently what MCC was already doing for them. To him, such an arrangement would mean adding a new and costly layer of administration where it was not needed.¹³¹ Then too, he was concerned that the promotion of relief activity would lose its personal touch if not imparted by more localized organizations.¹³²

Taves saw the entire development in a more positive light when it became evident that the new Canadian organization would cooperate with rather than replace MCC, and that provincial components would have an important role to play,¹³³ but personal considerations later revived his misgivings. After it had been established that the Kitchener office functions would be assumed by the Canadian Mennonite

Council, he wondered how he would fit into the new organization. Many Ontarians hoped that the CMC headquarters would be in the east and that Taves would become CMC executive secretary,¹³⁴ and it is quite likely that he shared those expectations.¹³⁵ When it was decided that Winnipeg would be the office location and J. M. Klassen the executive secretary, Taves was thus left in a real predicament. Evidently the experience was difficult for him. At several points he offered to resign from his job¹³⁶ and suggested beginning a new assignment elsewhere.¹³⁷ He was encouraged to remain in Kitchener, however, and eventually he became director of MCC (Ontario). With time he became an ardent supporter of MCCC.

Notes

¹J. Wall to J. J. Thiessen, 22 May 1958, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1586, CMCA.

²CM, 13 June 1958, p. 2.

³Just after the Board and MCRC had taken steps to merge, Epp wrote:

"No doubt, in thinking of an over-all relief and service organization, the boards have in mind one that will also relate to MCC office in Waterloo, the Non-Resistant Relief Organization in Ontario, the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee in Manitoba, as well as the new Canada-wide inter-Mennonite peace and service organization now in the making" (ibid.).

It is doubtful whether the Board/MCRC had any intention of establishing a connection with the HPCCC, the last organization referred to in the editorial. In all likelihood Epp was describing the course he would have liked the Board/MCRC to take.

⁴Ibid., 6 March 1959, p. 2.

⁵Ibid., 13 June 1958, p. 2.

⁶Ibid., 3 July 1959, p. 1.

⁷Two of these letters were from council members (David P. Neufeld to J. B. Martin, C. J. Rempel, Elven Shantz, David P. Reimer, 23 July 1959 and David P. Reimer to J. B. Martin, 27 July 1959, D. P. Neufeld Collection [hereafter DPN], XX-74, Vol. 1103, File: HPCCC, CMCA). The third letter was from Harvey Taves to C. J. Rempel (27 July 1959, CHPC, XV-11.1.3, File: 1958-59, CGCA). It passed along similar requests from C. Wilbert Loewen of Manitoba and P. J. Froese of British Columbia.

⁸CM, 3 July 1959, p. 2.

⁹The minutes of the meeting are unavailable, but they are quoted in T. E. Friesen to J. B. Martin and Elven Shantz, 23 July 1959, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1587, CMCA.

¹⁰J. J. Thiessen to H. H. Epp, 30 July 1959 and J. J. Thiessen to J. M. Pauls, 10 September 1959, ibid.

¹¹B. B. Janz to C. J. Rempel, 15 September 1959, HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1959-61, CGCA.

¹²William H. Enns to J. J. Thiessen, 13 September 1959 and A. A. Wall to J. J. Thiessen, 15 September 1959, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1587, CMCA.

¹³D. P. Neufeld to William T. Snyder, 6 July 1958, BCS, II-E, Vol. 175, File: 1958, CMCA.

¹⁴D. P. Neufeld to C. J. Rempel, 10 August 1959, DPN, XX-74, Vol. 1103, File 44: HPCCC, CMCA.

¹⁵D. P. Neufeld to J. J. Thiessen, 15 September 1959, *ibid.*

¹⁶C. J. Rempel to B. B. Janz, 22 September 1959, HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1959-61, CGCA.

¹⁷Henry H. Epp to J. J. Thiessen, 1 August 1959, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1586, CMCA. Henry Epp's favourable attitude may be explained, at least in part, by the fact that he was a Russian Mennonite and a member of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (the only such person to become NRRO chairperson). He therefore had close ties with the western organizations.

¹⁸Fred Nighswander to Wilfred Ulrich, 10 August 1959, NRRO, XV-12.2, File: 1957-59, CGCA.

¹⁹"Minutes of the Joint Meeting Sponsored by the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada and held at the Elmwood Mennonite Brethren Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Friday and Saturday, September the 25th and 26th, 1959," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1587, CMCA.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*

²²Harvey Taves to E. J. Swalm, 8 September 1959, HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1959-61, CGCA.

²³"Minutes of the Board of Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee held August 17th, 1959, at 8:00 p. m. in the Bergthaler Church, Morris, Man.," CMBC, XXII-A-3, Vol. 658, CMCA.

²⁴CM, 9 October 1959, p. 2.

²⁵Mennonitische Rundschau, 7 October 1959, p. 4.

²⁶Mennonite Observer, 2 October 1959, p. 5; 9 October 1959, pp. 8-10; 23 October 1959, p. 8.

²⁷"Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches held at the East Zorra Amish Mennonite Church, Saturday, November 14, 1959," CHPC, XV-11.1.9, CGCA.

²⁸"The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Non-resistant Relief Organization held at the Almira Mennonite Church, Unionville, Ont., April 26, 1960," NRRO, XV-11.2.4, File: 1950-55, CGCA.

²⁹"Protokoll der Jahressitzung des Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and Mennonite Central Relief Committee abgehalten in der Kirche der Ersten Mennoniten Gemeinde zu Saskatoon, am 17. und 18. Februar 1960," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1390, File 1536, CMCA.

³⁰David P. Reimer to C. J. Rempel, 25 July 1960, HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1959-63, CGCA.

³¹Fred Nighswander to HPCCC, 27 May 1960, *ibid.*, File: 1959-61, CGCA.

³²C. J. Rempel to T. E. Friesen, 20 November 1952, NRRO, XV-11.2.3, File: 1962, CGCA.

³³"Minutes of the Meeting of the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada held at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba on Friday, May 5, 1961," HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1959-63, CGCA.

³⁴D. P. Neufeld to William T. Snyder, 6 July 1958, BCS, II-E, Vol. 175, File: 1958, CMCA.

³⁵A. A. Wall, of the Ontario Mennonite Relief and Immigration Committee, described the reaction as follows:

"Die Versammlung war wohl in ihrem Verhalten mehr oder weniger ablehnend. Corney Rempel meinte, es mueste [*sic*] untersucht werden, ob da noch genuegend Immigration sei, wenn nicht, waere es zwecklos beizutreten. Ed. Snyder sagte, sie haetten sich schon 1874 mit Immigration beschaefligt. Fred Nighswander war sich anscheinend ganz klar; er sagte ungefaehr so: 'I don't see no, [*sic*] benefit nor necessity for NRRO to join this organization'" (A. A. Wall to J. J. Thiessen, 21 June 1961, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1341, File 1066, CMCA).

³⁶"The meeting of the Executive Committee of the Non-resistant Relief Organization held at the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church on May 18, 1961," NRRO, XV-11.2.4, File: 1950-55, CGCA.

³⁷Sometime during the summer of 1962 David P. Neufeld wrote regarding the CMRIC:

"In a way, it has become a devisive [*sic*] factor in a unified relief effort of all Canadian Mennonites. There is a strong feeling in our Conference that a Canada-wide MCC would be desireable [*sic*]. Both CMRC and NRRO have specifically stated that they would be willing to become an MCC of Canada by joining forces with other relief agencies, but CMRIC found it objectionable. On the other hand CMRIC has invited the other organizations to join, but that will never be accepted by CMRC" (D. P. Neufeld to J. M. Klassen, n. d., JMK, XX-34, Vol. 646, CMCA).

Frank Epp (Frank H. Epp to J. M. Klassen, 29 October 1962, JMK, XX-34, Vol. 646, CMCA) and C. J. Rempel (C. J. Rempel to J. M. Klassen, 20 August 1962, JMK, XX-34, Vol. 646, CMCA) expressed similar sentiments.

³⁸Elven Shantz to J. B. Martin, 4 November 1961, HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1959-63, CGCA.

³⁹David P. Neufeld to J. B. Martin, DPN, XX-74, Vol. 1103, File 44: HPCCC, CMCA.

⁴⁰CM, 10 May 1957, p. 2.

⁴¹C. J. Rempel to T. E. Friesen, 20 November 1962, NRRO, XV-11.2.3, File: 1962, CGCA.

⁴²David P. Neufeld to J. B. Martin, 31 August 1962, HPCCC, XV-12.3, File: 1957-63, CGCA.

⁴³T. E. Friesen to C. J. Rempel, 23 November 1962, *ibid.*, XV-12.2, File: 1962-63, CGCA.

⁴⁴Klassen.

⁴⁵These replies are all found in JMK, XX-34, Vol. 646, CMCA.

⁴⁶Frank Epp was one of these. He wrote:
"I am of the opinion that we can build on CMRIC just by taking it one step further: merger with CMRC and NRRO . . ." (Frank H. Epp to J. M. Klassen, 29 October 1962, *ibid.*).

⁴⁷Larry Kehler, a Canadian serving as MCC's director of information services, wrote:

"I think a Canadian MCC would be desirable, but CMRIC would have to take its place in this organization as just another member, not as the 'mother' organization. In other words, each existing organization would maintain its identity in this large organization" (Larry Kehler to J. M. Klassen, 6 September 1962, *ibid.*).

⁴⁸J. M. Klassen to C. A. DeFehr, 23 August 1962, *ibid.*

⁴⁹CM, 15 February 1963, p. 7.

⁵⁰Klassen suggests this as one possibility.

⁵¹"Hitherto the Lord has helped us," by J. J. Thiessen, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1396, File 1574, CMCA.

⁵²"Protokoll des Jahressitzung des Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council und der Provinzialen Relief-und Immigrationskomitees, abgehalten am 4. Oktober 1962 in Saskatoon" *ibid.*

⁵³"Record of an informal meeting held between the executives and representatives of the Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council and the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee," *ibid.*, File 1588, CMCA.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵"Peace Activities Report to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee, February 24, 1962," *ibid.*, File 1576, CMCA.

⁵⁶"The Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Non-resistant Relief Organization held November 27, 1962," NRRO, XV-11.2.4, File: 1950-55, CGCA.

⁵⁷C. J. Rempel to T. E. Friesen, 20 November 1962.

⁵⁸"The Historic Peace Church Council of Canada Serves the Mennonite Constituency," by David Schroeder, HPCCC, XV-12.1, File: Stirling Avenue, CGCA.

⁵⁹"Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Historic Peace Church Council held at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba, November 29th to December 1st, 1962," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1588, CMCA.

⁶⁰Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, pp. 479-82.

⁶¹CM, 22 March 1963, pp. 6-7. Enns was no longer chairperson; for this reason his opinion no longer carried much weight.

⁶²"The Executive Committee of the Non-resistant Relief Organization, February 12, 1963 at the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church," NRRO, XV-11.2.4, File: 1950-55, CGCA.

⁶³"Conference of Historic Peace Churches meeting held at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Saturday, February 23, 1963," HPCCC, XV-12.1, File: Stirling Avenue, CGCA.

⁶⁴Even after MCCC had become a reality in December 1963 some individuals still expressed concern over the motivation that had brought it to birth, and the effect it might have on relations with MCC. One of them wrote:

"The basic question as to how most effectively and efficiently to carry out the MCC mission has not been squarely faced or clarified by this action. Interest seems to have centered in nationalistic and regional concerns and the power structures pertaining thereto.

"Instead of a step forward, two backward steps may have been taken (the weakening of the present connection with Akron and the suggestion to form 'strong Canadian provincial or regional committees' that might become vehicles for some of the present separatist inclinations" (CM, 25 February 1964, p. 5).

⁶⁵"Matters that Concern the Ontario Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Churches who Serve Together in the Conference of Historic Peace Churches," HPCCC, XV-12.1, File: Stirling Avenue, CGCA.

⁶⁶C. A. DeFehr to J. J. Thiessen, 29 March 1963, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1398, File 1588, CMCA.

⁶⁷A. A. Wiens to J. J. Thiessen, C. A. DeFehr, A. A. Wall, 3 April 1963, *ibid.*

⁶⁸B. B. Janz to J. J. Thiessen and C. A. DeFehr, n. d., *ibid.*

⁶⁹C. J. Rempel to J. J. Thiessen, 9 April 1963, *ibid.*

⁷⁰"The Non-resistant Relief Organization Report to the Historic Peace Church Council of Canada, April 19, 1963," CHPC, XV-11.1.11, File: 1949, 62-64, CGCA.

⁷¹The resolutions committee report was published in CM, 26 April 1963, p. 2.

⁷²Exactly where the name "Canadian Mennonite Council" originated is unclear. Frank Epp used it in a letter to several Mennonite leaders prior to the 1959 meeting (Frank H. Epp to C. Wilbert Loewen, T. E. Friesen, J. J. Thiessen, Harvey W. Taves, C. J. Rempel, David P. Neufeld, Henry H. Epp, 16 September 1959, HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1959-61, CGCA). But an editorial in The Canadian Mennonite several years later noted that the name was not one that he had originated (11 April 1963, p. 12).

⁷³CM, 22 February 1963, p. 7.

⁷⁴"Constitution of the Canadian Mennonite Council," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1390, File 1588, CMCA.

⁷⁵"Constitution of the Canadian Mennonite Council" (not the same as above), *ibid.*

⁷⁶CM, 21 June 1963, p. 1.

⁷⁷"Minutes of the Board Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee held on Monday, November 4th, 1963, in the EMC, Morris, Manitoba," CMRC, XXII-A-3, Vol. 659, CMCA.

⁷⁸1963 Yearbook of the Fifty-third Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1963), pp. 58-59; Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Kanada (Steinbach, Man.: Derksen Printers, 1963), p. 15.

⁷⁹"The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Non-resistant Relief Organization held at the Garnet St. Mennonite Church, St. Catharines, Ontario, April 27, 1963," NRRO, XV-11.2.4, File: 1950-55, CGCA.

⁸⁰"Report on a Conference held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 19-20, 1963," CHPC, XV-11.1.9, CGCA.

81. "Protokoll der Jahressitzung des Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council und der Provinzialen Relief-und Immigrationskomitees, abgehalten in Saskatoon am 14. August 1963," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1396, File 1575, CMCA.

82. J. M. Klassen to William T. Snyder, 20 August 1963, MCC, IX-6-3.102, File: CMRIC 1963, AMC.

83. "Einleitende Bemerkungen des Vorsitzenden des Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1396, File 1575, CMCA.

84. "Protokoll der Jahressitzung des Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council und der Provinzialen Relief-und Immigrationskomitees, abgehalten am 14. August 1963."

Evidently CMRIC members were not the only ones who felt this way. When William Snyder learned of the decision to build, he wrote to Harvey Taves:

"I must frankly confess, Harvey, that our moving ahead so aggressively in Ontario may make the gathering of forces in the Canadian Mennonite Council more difficult" (Letter, 24 June 1963, MCC, IX-6-3.103, File: MCC Canadian Headquarters 1963, AMC).

85. C. J. Rempel to members of HPCCC, 23 September 1963, HPCCC, XV-12.1, File: 1962-64 (E. Shantz), CGCA.

86. "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches held at the Mennonite Brethren Church, Thursday, September 19, 1963 at 4 p. m.," CHPC, XV-11.1.11, File: 1949, 62-64, CGCA.

87. On 10 September 1963 Frank Epp noted:
"Since the move comes at a time when the Canadian Mennonite Council . . . is in the making, it appears as an effort to predetermine both the location of the office and the staff of the Canadian Mennonite Council" (CM, p. 5).

88. J. M. Klassen to C. J. Rempel, 20 August 1963, HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1962-63, CGCA.

89. "Protokoll der Exekutivsitzen des Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council abgehalten zu Saskatoon am 26. Februar 1963," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1390, File 1537, CMCA.

90. 1963 Yearbook of the Fifty-third Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, p. 57; Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Kanada 1963, p. 60.

91. Harvey Taves wrote to William Snyder:
"I think that things will shake down to a reasonable basis because the forthright letter of Jake Klassen's to the Conference of Historic Peace Churches met with general approval when it was read to an

eastern caucus recently" (Letter, 21 October 1963, MCC, IX-6-3.103, File: MCC Canadian Headquarters 1963, AMC).

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³"The Program of the present relief and service organizations which need to be taken on by the Canadian Mennonite Council and the necessary organizational structure," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1397, File 1577, CMCA.

⁹⁴"Relation of M.C.C. and C.M.C.," *ibid.*

⁹⁵"My Dream About Canadian Mennonite Council," *ibid.*

⁹⁶"Meeting. Portage Ave. MB Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba, December 12-14, 1963," *ibid.*

⁹⁷Mennonitische Rundschau, 24 April 1963, pp. 1, 12.

⁹⁸"Protokoll der Exekutivsitzenng des Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council abgehalten zu Saskatoon am 26. Februar 1963."

⁹⁹In reality, MCC did not receive the telegram. Though MCC officers expressed some surprise when they eventually learned of the name change, they raised no objections. Klassen.

¹⁰⁰News release, 14 December 1963, MCC, IX-12-#(3), File: MCC (Canada), AMC.

¹⁰¹Letter, 21 October 1963.

¹⁰²John W. Snyder to "Architects of Canadian Mennonite Council," 12 December 1963, CHPC, XV-11.1.11, File: 1949, 62-64, CGCA.

¹⁰³"Some Considerations Regarding Location of the Future Canadian Mennonite Council Head Office," HPCCC, XV-12.3, File: 1963, CGCA.

¹⁰⁴The first explanation is offered by David P. Neufeld (interview held at Vancouver, B. C., October 1979 [hereafter Neufeld]), the second by Klassen.

¹⁰⁵CM, 17 December 1963, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶T. E. Friesen to J. J. Wall, 9 January 1964, CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1333, File 1011, CMCA.

¹⁰⁷"Notes taken at the joint meeting of the Executive Committees of the Manitoba Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council held at 2:00 p. m., January 28, 1964 at 104 Princess Street, Winnipeg, Man.," *ibid.*, Vol. 1397, File 1577, CMCA.

¹⁰⁸CM, 1 December 1964, p. 1.

109 "Minutes of a Joint Meeting of Members of the NRRO Budget Committee and Representatives of the Provincial Relief and Immigration Committee of Ontario held at 2:00 p. m., February 24, 1964 at 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener," NRRO, XV-11.2.3, File: 1962-64, CGCA.

110 "The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Non-resistant Relief Organization held at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ontario, April 11, 1964," *ibid.*

111 Harvey Taves wrote to J. M. Klassen that one of the striking things about the meeting was that there was a distinct cleavage along Russian Mennonite/Swiss Mennonite lines. Whereas the former welcomed the creation of MCCC, the latter had some distinct reservations. Letter, 29 February, Mennonite Central Committee (Canada) Files (hereafter MCCC), XXII-A-7, Vol. 1464, File: MCC (Ontario), CMCA.

112 "Memorandum: Organizational Structure of the Future Mennonite Central Committee (Ontario)," Mennonites in Canada Files, 1960, File: MCC (Ontario), CGCA; "Statement of Concerns Agreed Upon by the Chairman and Secretary of NRRO--January 28, 1964," NRRO, XV-11.2.3, File: 1962-64, CGCA.

113 "The Program of the present relief and service organizations which need to be taken on by the Canadian Mennonite Council and the necessary organizational structure."

114 Harvey Taves to J. M. Klassen, 29 February 1964.

115 "Memorandum: Organizational Structure of the Future Mennonite Central Committee (Ontario)"; "Statement of Concerns Agreed Upon by the Chairman and Secretary of NRRO--January 28, 1964."

116 CM, 11 April 1963, p. 12; 11 February 1964, p. 5.

117 David P. Neufeld responded to one of Epp's editorials as follows:

"Your editorial . . . rubbed me the wrong way until you sent your explanation as to the reason for your writing it. Thanks for explaining. Perhaps you are right in giving the Ontario view on the matter" (David P. Neufeld to Frank H. Epp, 21 February 1964, DPN, XX-74, Vol. 1100, File: 1963, CMCA).

118 J. M. Klassen to C. J. Rempel, Jacob Reimer, Gordon Weber, 19 February 1964, HPCCC, XV-12.3, File: 1963, CGCA.

119 Harvey Taves to J. M. Klassen, 29 February 1964.

120 CM, 7 April 1964, p. 6.

121 *Ibid.*, 28 April 1964, p. 6.

122, "Protokoll der Exekutivsitzenng des Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council, abgehalten in Winnipeg am 18. Juni, 1964," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1390, File 1537, CMCA.

123, "Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee Meeting held in the Offices of Mennonite Central Committee (Canada), 104 Princess Street, Winnipeg 2, Manitoba, on Thursday, June 25th, 1964," CMRC, XXII-A-3, Vol. 659, CMCA.

124, "Statement of Review by H. H. Epp, Nov. 1964, in Preparation for Organizational Meeting: MCC(Ontario), November 28, 1964," Mennonites in Canada Files, 1960, File: MCC(Ont.), CGCA.

125, "Minutes of the Canadian Mennonite Disaster Service Annual Meeting held at the Mennonite Brethren Church, Avenue C and 33rd Street, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, February 10, 1964," DPN, XX-74, Vol. 1100, File 1: MDS, CMCA.

126, Neufeld; Klassen; Frank H. Epp, interview held at Waterloo, Ontario, 30 December 1979; William T. Snyder to C. J. Rempel, 16 November 1963, HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1962-63, CGCA.

127, Frank Epp, interview held at Waterloo, Ontario, 30 December 1979.

128, William T. Snyder to Harvey Taves, 26 November 1962, MCC, IX-6-3.101, File: MCC Canadian Headquarters 1962, AMC.

129, "Notes taken at a consultation between MCC members from Western Canada and W. T. Snyder, the Executive Secretary of MCC, held at 104 Princess Street, Winnipeg, Man., on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 1964 between 1:30 and 5:00 p. m.," CMBC, XXII-A-1, Vol. 1397, File 1577, CMCA.

130, Blind P. S. to David P. Neufeld in Harvey Taves to C. A. DeFehr, A. A. Wiens, J. J. Thiessen, 10 July 1958, BCS, II-E, Vol. 175, File: 1958, CMCA.

131, "Memorandum: Subject---Merger of Canadian Relief Committees," HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1959-63, CGCA.

132, Harvey Taves to William T. Snyder, 4 December 1962, MCC, IX-6-3.103, File: MCC Canadian Headquarters 1963, AMC.

133, Ibid.

134, Rempel; John W. Snyder to "Architects of Canadian Mennonite Council."

135, Klassen; Frank H. Epp, interview held at Waterloo, Ontario, 26 May 1979.

¹³⁶Harvey Taves to J. M. Klassen, 3 March 1964, MCCC, XXII-A-7,
Vol. 1464, File: MCC (Ontario), CMCA.

¹³⁷William T. Snyder to D. P. Neufeld, 24 January 1964, MCC,
IX-6-3.105, File: MCC Canadian Headquarters 1964, AMC.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to show how MCCC evolved from certain inter-Mennonite organizational developments that were in turn precipitated by World Wars I and II and the Cold War. Two basic factors contributed to making MCCC and its organizational predecessors a reality. One of them was a renewed awareness of the peace and service witness of the church. The other was an increased spirit of inter-group cooperation. Without these two elements the developments described in the preceding chapters could hardly have been possible.

The Anabaptist conviction that nonresistance and service were simply two sides of the same coin has remained a major component of Mennonite faith. Long periods of peace and isolation, however, have generally allowed it to lose much of its vitality. For Canadian Mennonites before World War I this was no exception. It is true that the vast majority still called themselves nonresistant and that they were ready to help each other in times of need. But for the most part very few argued that nonresistance might have a deeper meaning than simply refusing to enlist or that it should be manifested by an ongoing service effort.

Prior to World War I Canadian Mennonites were also only beginning to test the waters of inter-group cooperation. The founding of the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada in 1903 was one example of a recent achievement in this area. But in general

the entire subject was still a delicate one. It was not easy for many to contemplate cooperating with groups with which they had such basic disagreements. Recent divisions such as those between the Bergthaler and Sommerfelder in Manitoba and the (Old) Mennonites, Old Order Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren in Christ in Ontario only made it more difficult.

The events which prompted a renewal of the peace and service witness were ones that originated beyond the immediate realm of Canadian Mennonite experience, namely, World Wars I and II and the Cold War. There were essentially two reasons for this. In the first place, the spectacle of suffering raised by the two wars, and the threat of even greater suffering posed by the Cold War led the Mennonites to consider more seriously the implications of some of the tenets of belief they had held for over four centuries. They came to recognize that, even if they could not participate in war, they were not absolved of trying either to alleviate its effects wherever these might be felt or averting new conflicts. To talk about peace and do nothing to make it more of a reality in the world was hypocrisy. A nonresistant stance had to be accompanied by an active relief and service ministry.

A second reason was related to the pressure of public opinion. Anxious to escape the accusations that they were shirking their duty to country, the Mennonites acted in ways which they hoped would express their loyalty to the government and their desire to promote the nation's general welfare. The purchase of special war bonds, the organization of memorial relief funds, and the negotiation of alternative service were largely intended to mitigate the criticism

that came their way. But these actions in turn evoked among the Mennonites a greater comprehension of the obligations of citizenship and a realization that serving one's country could be a form of Christian service as well. The establishment of Mennonite Disaster Service and the voluntary service programs in the 1950s suggest that motives of expediency were no longer the major ones at work.

The internal element of soul-searching and the external element of public pressure prompted by the war experience were also responsible for the increased level of inter-Mennonite cooperation through this period. In the first place, the Mennonites recognized that their professions of being a peace-loving people meant little if they could not get along with each other, and that a united relief and service ministry could be a much greater witness to the world than if each group pursued its own independent course. But they also knew that cooperation enhanced their image in the eyes of government officials and fellow-Canadians. Mindful of the fact that a united front would mean greater bargaining power in the negotiations for military exemption, they also realized that relief efforts would gain greater public recognition if they were carried out on a broad inter-Mennonite basis.

The organizations developed by the Canadian Mennonites in response to the major crises of this century were thus based on these two important elements. Whether they were concerned with negotiating a form of alternative service or encouraging relief contributions for a needy world, they expressed a broadened understanding of the ethic of Christian service. They also represented an increased willingness on the part of different Mennonite groups to work together in a

common cause.

If the trauma of war, either real or anticipated, was thus responsible for the creation of these inter-Mennonite organizations, the emergence of MCCC at a time of relative peace and stability may seem to contradict one of the major points of this thesis. This, however, is not the case. Rather, it suggests that some of the lessons learned during more trying times had finally taken hold. The creation of MCCC symbolized the Mennonites' determination to do voluntarily in peacetime what they had been required to do in wartime.

The formation of MCCC also meant that some of the organizational patterns of antecedent bodies had been taken to their logical conclusion.¹ In drawing together virtually all Canadian Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups and in pursuing a whole host of activities, MCCC may have seemed like something radically new. But in reality the pattern had been present, if only in embryo form, in the earlier organizations. From its beginnings the Non-resistant Relief Organization, for example, had enjoyed the participation of almost all Ontario Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups, and during World War I it had combined the functions of a relief committee with those of a peace organization. The Conference of Historic Peace Churches could also boast a wide-ranging membership. Moreover, through its affiliated organizations, it probably provided the founders of MCCC with the best structural model, other than MCCC itself, for administering a broad scope of activity.

The MCCC pattern was also present in the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. In later years membership on the Board dwindled to two conferences and the organization's realm of activity

became more limited. But at certain points its members represented six different Mennonite groups, and, following the 1934 reorganization, its field of involvement ranged from immigration to publication. Its provincial branches similarly undertook such diverse projects as establishing mental hospitals and providing insurance schemes. MCCC was thus built upon past experience to a greater degree than most probably realized.

One of the founding fathers of MCCC called the idea which gave birth to the organization as one that was right for its time.² His assessment was undoubtedly an accurate one, for MCCC has enjoyed wide support and a level of growth that few could have imagined. In its sixteen year history its headquarters office staff has increased from two to twenty-one,³ and its receipts from \$290,000⁴ to \$7.5 million.⁵ Its program has expanded to include nine separate departments working in such areas as, for example, overseas relief and development, offender ministries, peace and social concerns, and native concerns. If in 1979 actual membership in MCCC had not expanded beyond the original eleven groups, the organization nevertheless received contributions from eighteen groups, one of these being the Hutterites.⁶

But growth and maturity have been accompanied by growing pains as well. Probably the most significant of these is that involving the relationship of MCCC to MCC. In recent years a growing number of Canadians have demanded that MCC be restructured so as to enable Canadian and American Mennonites to cooperate as equals.⁷ Their demand is based on the presupposition that, Canadian representatives notwithstanding, MCC is in reality an American rather than an inter-

national agency. The answer, many Canadians feel, lies in recognizing MCC as an American institution and reorganizing it accordingly, thus opening the way for the creation of a truly international MCC.

The first phase of this process means filtering exclusively American concerns out of MCC's agenda and creating MCC (United States). It is well underway. The second phase, that of creating a binational MCC, is just beginning. A specially appointed committee consisting of MCC and MCCC members recently suggested equalizing the number of Americans and Canadians on MCC's plenary board and executive committee and possibly locating MCC (United States) offices in a place other than Akron, Pennsylvania. The recommendations have been received quite favourably, but at least one Canadian has argued that, as long as MCC's international aid program continues to be administered from a single centre in the United States, the agency will not become truly binational.⁸

Not surprisingly, the continuous process of reorganization has produced considerable tension, not only between Canadian and American Mennonites, but between Canadian Mennonites of different persuasions. Whereas some are apt to call MCC an agent of American imperialism, others insist that Christians should be able to transcend the narrow concerns of nationalism. How the entire matter will be resolved remains to be seen.

It is evident that the evolutionary process of adapting organizations to serve the needs and interests of Canadian Mennonites best did not end with the formation of MCCC in 1963. Indeed, the process may be far from complete. The reason that this thesis ends with that event is not because it neatly concludes a story, but because

the limits of space preclude further study. If one can justify terminating the discussion at this point, it is because the creation of MCCC marked the culmination of nearly fifty years of organizational development.

Notes

¹This idea has been expressed by Frank Epp in a letter to C. Wilbert Loewen, T. E. Friesen, J. J. Thiessen, Harvey W. Taves, C. J. Rempel, David P. Neufeld, Henry H. Epp, 16 September 1959, HPCCC, XV-12.2, File: 1959-61, CGCA and in Mennonite Exodus, p. 482.

²T. E. Friesen, interview held at Altona, Manitoba, 24 October 1979.

³Reports 1979 to the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of Mennonite Central Committee (Canada), January 18-19, 1980, Vineland, Ontario.

⁴CM, 9 February 1965, p. 2.

⁵It should be noted that only \$2.9 million was received from the constituency. Another \$3.2 million came from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through a matching program that has been in operation for several years. Self-help and voluntary service projects, as well as provincial grants, generated the balance of MCCC's total receipts.

⁶Reports 1979.

⁷Frank Epp has been one of the proponents of this. His thoughts are probably best outlined in chapter seven ("North American Relations") of Mennonite Peoplehood: A Plea for New Initiatives (Waterloo, Ont.: Conrad Press, 1977), pp. 63-74.

⁸Mennonite Reporter, 12 November 1979, p. 13.

APPENDIX A:

A SUMMARY OF INTER-MENNONITE ORGANIZATIONS IN CANADA

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Founded</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Type of Organization</u>
NRRO	1918	Ontario Mennonites and Brethren in Christ	Relief
CCC	1920	Western Canadian Mennonites	Relief
Board	1922	Various Mennonite groups from Ontario and west at first; later only Mennonite Brethren and Conference Mennonites	Immigration
ZMIK	c. 1926	Russian Mennonites of 1920s immigration in all 5 provinces	Immigrant Needs and Interests
MCRC	1940	Western Mennonites excluding Manitoba <u>Kanadier</u> ; later also Ontario <u>Russlaender</u>	Relief
CHPC	1940	Ontario Mennonites and Brethren in Christ	Peace
<u>Aeltesten-</u> <u>komitee</u>	1940	Manitoba <u>Kanadier</u>	Peace
Western Ser- vice Committee	1942	Western Mennonites excluding Manitoba <u>Kanadier</u>	Peace
CMRC	1940	Manitoba <u>Kanadier</u>	Relief
HPCCC	1959	Cross-section of Canadian Mennonitism	Peace
CMRIC	1960	Conference Mennonites, Mennonite Brethren	Relief and Immigration
MDS	1961	Cross-section of Canadian Mennonitism	Disaster Service
MCCC	1963	Cross-section of Canadian Mennonitism	Peace, Relief Service, etc.

APPENDIX B:

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MENNONITE GROUPS IN CANADA

The approximately 175,000 Mennonites in Canada trace their origins to basically two areas of Europe, namely, Switzerland-South Germany and Holland-North Germany. The Swiss-South German Mennonites (herein known as Swiss) came to Upper Canada from Pennsylvania after the American Revolution, their Amish relatives arriving directly from Europe in the 1820s. The Dutch-North German (herein known as Russian) migrated to Canada from Russia, where their presence dated back to 1789, in three major movements.

Each of these two branches possesses numerous sub-groups. They are described very briefly here to assist the reader in understanding the content of the thesis. The information is based primarily upon C. J. Dyck, ed., Introduction to Mennonite History: A Popular History of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1967) and Harold S. Bender and C. Henry Smith, eds., The Mennonite Encyclopedia: A Comprehensive Reference Work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite Movement, 4 vols. (Hillsboro, Ks.: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House; Newton, Ks.: Mennonite Publication Office; Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1955-59). Where a comprehensive examination of a specific group exists, it has been mentioned.

(Old) Mennonites. This group could be termed the mainstream of the Swiss Mennonite branch. It is the largest group in North America and the third largest in Canada. Most (Old) Mennonites are organized into the Mennonite General Conference (not to be confused with the General Conference Mennonite Church of North America). A loose affiliation of some eighteen separate conferences, three are found in Canada: the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, the Western Ontario Mennonite Conference, and the Alberta-Saskatchewan Mennonite Conference. The adjective (Old) is being used less and less; it is utilized here in order to differentiate this group from others. See J. C. Wenger, The Mennonite Church in America, Sometimes Called Old Mennonites (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1966).

Old Order Mennonites. There are actually several Old Order groups in existence, so it is somewhat erroneous to discuss them under one heading. What unites them is the fact that they all broke away from the (Old) Mennonite mainstream in the last decades of the previous century because they disapproved of such modern innovations as Sunday schools, prayer meetings, new dress styles, and the use of English, innovations that were increasingly making their way into (Old) Mennonite circles. Not organized formally into conferences, the Old Order Mennonites probably remain the most conservative of Canadian Mennonite groups.

Waterloo-Markham Mennonites. This group was formed when a number of more progressive Mennonites broke away from the Ontario Old Orders in the late 1920s. In terms of accommodation to the ways of the

world, Waterloo-Markhamers represent a medium between the (Old) and the Old Orders. If Old Orders can be distinguished by their horses and buggies, Waterloo-Markham Mennonites are known for their black cars.

Amish Mennonites. The Amish emerged as a distinct group in late seventeenth century Europe when Jacob Amman and his sympathizers were excommunicated from their church because they felt that the ban (the practice of shunning those who sinned repeatedly) was not being applied adequately. Marked by a conservative lifestyle in the past, the Amish have increasingly moved closer to the more accomodating (Old) Mennonites in recent years. In 1959 the Ontario Amish affiliated with the Mennonite General Conference, and in 1963 they changed their official name to Western Ontario Mennonite Conference. At present, discussions regarding a merger of the two Ontario conferences are underway. See Orland Gingerich, The Amish of Canada (Waterloo, Ont.: Conrad Press, 1972).

Old Order Amish. The Old Order Amish are to the Amish what the Old Order Mennonites are to the (Old) Mennonites. The particular issue which appears to have fomented the Amish division in the last century was the decision of some congregations to build meeting houses. Prior to this, meetings had always been in homes. Old Order Amish continue to practice a lifestyle of another era. In Canada their small numbers are found only in Ontario. See Gingerich, The Amish of Canada.

Brethren in Christ. Also known as Tunkers, the River Brethren originated in 1770 in Pennsylvania as the result of a revival movement involving Lutheran, Baptist, and Mennonite communities. Thus their theology combines an emphasis on a radical conversion experience with an Anabaptist understanding of the church and its relationship to the world. They adopted their present name in 1863. See Arthur W. Climenhaga, History of the Brethren in Christ Church (Nappanee, Ind.: Evangelical Publishing House, 1942).

Mennonite Brethren in Christ. This group originated in 1883 in Ohio and spread to parts of Canada through missionary activity. Like the Brethren in Christ Church, it embraces aspects of Wesleyan theology. Where the former seems to have moved closer to the related Mennonite groups both theologically and organizationally, however, the latter has done the opposite. After World War II, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ officially dropped nonresistance from their catechism and changed their name to United Missionary Church. See Everek Richard Storms, History of the United Missionary Church (Elkhart, Ind.: Bethel Publishing Co., 1958).

Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church. Not representing a separate Mennonite group, the Stirling Avenue Church was, for a time, free of all conference affiliations, and for that reason had its own representatives on some of the Ontario inter-Mennonite organizations. It was formed in 1924 when certain members of the Kitchener First Mennonite Church (Old) had a falling out with their congregation. In

1947 it joined the General Conference Mennonite Church, and in 1970 it rejoined the Mennonite Conference of Ontario.

Old Colony Mennonites. Old Colony is the name given to descendants of Chortitza, the first of the Mennonite colonies to be established in Russia. Almost all of the Old Colony Mennonites migrated to Manitoba beginning in 1874, some of them moving on to Saskatchewan at the turn of the century. The most conservative of the Russian Mennonites, a good portion migrated to Mexico and Paraguay in the 1920s in an attempt to escape the school legislation of their respective provinces. See Calvin Wall Redekop, The Old Colony Mennonites: Dilemmas of Ethnic Minority Life (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969).

Kleinegemeinde. Another of the original groups to migrate from Russia to Manitoba in the 1870s, the Kleinegemeinde had been formed in 1812 in reaction to the spiritual and ethical laxity present in the larger church. Historically it has emphasized strict moral behaviour while at the same time encouraging higher education and economic innovation. In 1952 its name was changed to Evangelical Mennonite Church; in 1959 this became Evangelical Mennonite Conference. See P. J. B. Reimer, ed., The Sesquicentennial Jubilee: The Evangelical Mennonite Conference 1812-1962.

Church of God in Christ Mennonite. This group originated among the (Old) Mennonites of Ohio in 1859 for much the same reason that the Kleinegemeinde was born in Russia. Perhaps this is why Church of God missionaries were so successful in converting members of the Kleinegemeinde in Manitoba in the 1880s. (The result of this effort was that the group came to embrace both Swiss and Russian Mennonite streams to a greater extent than any other.) Sometimes referred to as the Holdeman Mennonites, after their founding elder, members of this group stress the importance of discipleship and missions. See Clarence Hiebert, The Holdeman People: The Church of God in Christ Mennonite, 1859-1969 (South Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1973).

Bergthaler. The Bergthaler Mennonites were the third of the original groups to settle in Manitoba in the 1870s. They owed their name to their home colony of Bergthal, a daughter colony of Chortitza. Soon after arriving in Manitoba, the issues of public schools and individual settlement patterns split them into two groups, with the more progressive minority retaining the Bergthaler name. See Henry G. Gerbrandt, Adventure in Faith: The Background in Europe and the Development in Canada of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Manitoba (Altona, Man.: D. W. Friesen & Sons for the Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba, 1970).

Sommerfelder. The Sommerfelder Mennonites were those of Bergthaler origin who opposed establishing public schools and abandoning the old village settlements and who lived west of the Red River. They took their name from the name of the village in which their elder

resided. Resembling the Old Colony in degree of conservatism, a good portion of them left Canada for South America in the late 1920s and 1940s.

Chortitzer. Chortitzer is the name that was chosen by the conservative Bergthaler living east of the Red River. As in the case of the Sommerfelder, it came from the elder's home village. Resembling the Sommerfelder in theology and lifestyle, the two groups remain virtually indistinguishable.

General Conference Mennonites. This is the popular designation given to members of the General Conference Mennonite Church of North America. This conference was formed in Ohio in 1860 by a number of groups that had either become dissatisfied with the traditionalism of the (Old) Mennonite Church, or that had recently immigrated from Europe. Later it attracted a large number of Russian Mennonite immigrants; by 1964 they made up two thirds of the General Conference membership. Created with the hope that it would become the institution uniting all North American Mennonites, the General Conference has more or less become a denominational branch of the Mennonite faith, even though it encourages diversity. See Samuel Floyd Pannabecker, Open Doors: The History of the General Conference Mennonite Church (Newton, Ks.: Faith and Life Press, 1975).

Conference Mennonites. Not a commonly used name, this designation is utilized in this thesis to describe members of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Formed in 1903 as the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada, it was also known as the General Conference of Mennonites in Canada between 1932 and 1940 before adopting the present name. Its charter members were the Bergthaler Church of Manitoba and the Rosenort Church of Saskatchewan (a church of several congregations including progressive Mennonites from Russia, Prussia, the United States, and Manitoba). Buttressed by the immigrations of this century, it has become almost exclusively a Russian Mennonite conference.

Although an autonomous body, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada has become something of a district of the General Conference. In fact, most members of the former refer to themselves as General Conference Mennonites more than anything else. It should be remembered, however, that churches having membership in the Canadian conference are not automatically members of the General Conference. (For this reason the more popular designation has been avoided here.) While the Rosenort Church joined the North American conference almost immediately, the Manitoba Bergthaler Church did not follow suit until 1968.

Rudnerweider Mennonites. The Rudnerweide Church was created in 1936 by a group of dissident Sommerfelder Mennonites unhappy with the traditionalism and conservatism of the Sommerfelder Church. It places a strong emphasis on mission, as evidenced by its change of name in 1961 to Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference. See [J. D. Adrian], Die Entstehung der Rudnerweider Gemeinde 1936 [Winnipeg]:

By the Author, n. d.).

Bruderthaler Mennonites. This group began in 1889 in Minnesota as the result of a revival movement among some of the recent Russian Mennonite immigrants. It spread to Manitoba and Saskatchewan through mission outreach and resettlement. In keeping with its origins, it stresses the experience of a new birth, nonconformity, and church discipline. In 1937 the official name Evangelical Mennonite Brethren replaced the popular epithet. See G. S. Rempel, ed., A Historical Sketch of the Churches of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren (Rosthern, Sask.: D. H. Epp, n. d.).

Mennonite Brethren. The Mennonite Brethren trace their beginnings to a revival movement that swept the Mennonite colonies in the Ukraine in the late 1850s. Like so many of the groups mentioned above, the Mennonite Brethren were dismayed that so little evidence of spirituality and personal conversion could be found in the church. The mainstream group, or Kirchengemeinde, found the accusations of the Mennonite Brethren unjustified, and the entire episode left relationships between the two groups strained. More than a century later, vestiges of this tension still persist.

Some Mennonite Brethren migrated to the United States in the 1870s. Through extension efforts, a number of MB churches were established in western Canada. In 1909 the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (established in 1879) was divided into districts, Canada becoming the northern district. The immigration of the 1920s necessitated the establishment of an Ontario district conference. In 1946 these two conferences merged and became the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. See John A. Toews, A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church: Pioneers and Pilgrims, ed. A. J. Klassen (Fresno, Calif.: Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1975).

United Mennonites. United Mennonites are members of churches in Ontario that belong to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada; as such, they are Conference Mennonites. Formed by the Russian Mennonite immigrants of the 1920s who settled in Ontario, the United Mennonite Conference corresponds to the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba.

APPENDIX C:

A LIST OF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF SEVERAL
INTER-MENNONITE ORGANIZATIONS

I Officers of Non-Resistant Relief Organization (1918-1964)

<u>Chairperson</u>	<u>Vice-Chairperson</u>	<u>Secretary-Treasurer</u>	
L. J. Burkholder (1918-1923)	S. Goudie (1918-1923)	D. W. Heise (1918-1920)	
S. Goudie (1923-1924)	S. Goudie (1937-1941)	S. F. Coffman (1920-1929)	
		<u>Secretary</u>	<u>Treasurer</u>
D. W. Heise (1924-1937)	Oscar Burkholder (1941-1944)	S. F. Coffman (1939-1950)	N. M. Bearinger (1939-1944)
L. J. Burkholder (1937-1941)	P. G. Lehman (1944-1955)	Freeman Gingerich (1950-1955)	J. C. Hallman (1944-1956)
S. Goudie (1941-1944)	Fred Nighswander (1955-1961)	Wilfred Ulrich (1955-1963)	M. R. Good (1956-1959)
Oscar Burkholder (1944-1955)	C. J. Rempel (1961-1962)	Gordon S. Weber (1963-1964)	Etril Snyder (1959-1964)
P. G. Lehman (1955-1959)	Vernon Zehr (1962-1964)		
Henry H. Epp (1959-1961)			
Fred Nighswander (1961-1964)			

II Officers of Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (1922-1960)

<u>Chairperson</u>	<u>Vice-Chairperson</u>	<u>Secretary-Treasurer</u>
David Toews (1922-1946)	?	Daniel P. Enns (1924-1946)
J. J. Thiessen (1946-1960)	B. B. Janz (1946-1959)	Jacob Gerbrandt (1946-1960)
	C. A. DeFehr (1959-1960)	

III Officers of Conference of Historic Peace Churches (1940-1964)

Chairperson

E. J. Swalm
(1940-1964)

Secretary

J. Harold Sherk
(1940-1944)

C. J. Rempel
(1944-1964)

IV Officers of Mennonite Central Relief Committee (1940-1960)

Chairperson

David Toews
(1940-1946)

B. B. Janz
(1946-1959)

C. A. DeFehr
(1959-1960)

Vice-Chairperson

B. B. Janz
(1940-1946)

J. J. Thiessen
(1946-1960)

Secretary-Treasurer

C. F. Klassen
(1940-1946)

C. A. DeFehr
(1946-1960)

V Officers of Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee (1940-1964)

Chairperson

J. S. Rempel
(1940-1947)

G. S. Rempel
(1947- ?)

William M. Enns
(? -1959)

G. S. Rempel
(1959-1962)

George S. Fast
(1962-1964)

Vice-Chairperson

?

George S. Fast
(? - 1961)

William M. Enns
(1961-1962)

K. R. Barkman
(1962-1964)

Secretary-Treasurer

Julius G. Toews
(1940-1946)

J. Unrau
(1946- ?)

F. E. Dueck
(? - ?)

G. S. Rempel
(? -1957)

T. E. Friesen
(1957-1964)

VI Officers of Historic Peace Church Council of Canada (1959-1963)

Chairperson

J. B. Martin
(1959-1963)

Vice-Chairperson

David P. Neufeld
(1959-1963)

Secretary

C. J. Rempel
(1959-1963)

VII Officers of Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council
(1960-1964)

<u>Chairperson</u>	<u>Vice-Chairperson</u>	<u>Secretary</u>
J. J. Thiessen (1960-1964)	C. A. DeFehr (1960-1964)	A. A. Wiens (1960-1964)

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Service Files
H. M. Epp Collection
Benjamin Ewert Collection
J. M. Klassen Collection
Mennonite Central Committee (Canada) Files
David P. Neufeld Collection
David P. Reimer Collection
J. J. Thiessen Collection

Conrad Grebel College Archives (CGCA)
N. M. Bearinger Collection
Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Files
S. F. Coffman Collection
Conference of Historic Peace Churches Files
Newton Gingerich Collection
Historic Peace Church Council of Canada Files
J. B. Martin Collection
Mennonites in Canada Files
Non-resistant Relief Organization Files

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C. F. Klassen Collection

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