

# The Foreigner In Our Midst

Arthur Hawkes writes to the Toronto World: When you say that Canada is behind Britain in the war do you stop to think of the diverse peoples who contribute heavily to our upbuilding, but to whom Canada is only a place in which to make money? Let me suggest a few aspects of a situation which may mean trouble if we do not actively turn it to good account. Its very danger, noticed yesterday by Le Devoir, Mr. Bourassa's paper, may become a constructive bulwark. Draw a little on very widespread experience in the west.

As a man came from his thatched shack to show us the trail between Yorkton and Troubitska, we could see a woman cooking as she held a babe—a Canadian born babe—in her arms. Three children came to the door to watch the strangers. Their father could speak very little English. When I enquired if he liked Canada his face lighted. Asked for the chief reason for his hope, he said "No soldier here: In Austria we serve hard—very hard," and, after a pause, "One meal a day."

Next dinner time after a Dukhobor woman had given us the exquisitely polite hospitality for which she and her kind will always be memorable, I asked her how she liked Canada and her face glowed as she threw out her hands and said "Only fruit as we have in Kowcass and it would be b-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l, b-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l. Ten years my man in mines, Sibere. Here no fear. It is b-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l."

I drove fifty miles to Yorkton with her man and three of his friends who had come to us to breathe free air and to be not afraid for the first time in their lives. The limitless prairie, the soil liberal to extravagance, the villages managed in perfect peace and without any outward sign of compulsion, the courteous men and women, the children sturdy and quick to see every new thing, the crops abundant and the beasts of the field sleek and fat—here were scenes and conditions so remote from the average Canadian apprehension of what lies in the Canadian life of tomorrow as to make you wonder what the future could bring forth in citizenship, and in what has given to our breed its envied place in all the earth.

Again I spoke with a Saskatchewan legislator who a dozen years before could speak in no tongue except that of a southeastern European principality. "We love this country," he said "and we like to be in the British Empire. But we have only seen as much of it as you can watch from the train between Montreal and Saskatchewan. So you must be patient with us if we seem to learn slowly to go with you. We had a hard time where we came from, but it was all we knew, and our dead are there. You will be

patient with us?" he asked with a pleading note in his voice.

Last winter a Methodist minister described to me the community in which he lives northeast of Edmonton. Except for the climate and the land, you might as well be in Austria. Fifty thousand Austrians are there with practically no other people to influence them. They have their own member in the legislature and already are demanding schools as exclusively theirs as the French schools in Quebec are French.

We are at war with their Austria fatherland. We are fighting alongside the Cossacks who whipped the Doukhobor farmers out of Caucasia to the mines. The children of Ruthenian and Doukhobor are native-born Canadians even as yours and mine are.

The question that is most pertinent to ask is not what is our duty to these ingredients of our national life, but what is our duty to ourselves in regard to our present and future relation to the deathly conflict in which we are involved. What is their place in the unification and expression of national sentiment from which our boys in the fighting line, on the watch tower, and in the reserve must derive their invincible morale? Most of them will feel like aliens at the beginning. We must not be content for them to be mere onlookers at a fight which does not concern them. It is our bounden duty to see that if it be possible they become knit with us as the contest lengthens and to see that the union is worthily expressed among ourselves and in the hearing of those who watch. No man who is now or who is likely to be the father of a Canadian-born child; no woman who has carried or who will carry a native of this incomparable land should be left without a transfusion of spirit which will daily increase the strength on which the Empire relies. Here, indeed, is a recruiting ground, a theatre for a campaign, such as no belligerent people have ever before been presented with. It is open to us with a foresight, courage and ability to make a blessed gospel out of this war.

The present covenant of our patriotism, then, need not be confined to fighting, nursing and praying. Some who though considered too old for bivouac and march have volunteered for every activity that is in us. Others who have neither youth nor health for the field will chafe at their comparative impotence. All may find place in organizing, unifying and expressing national sentiment against the grievous times which the war is sure to bring and in prospect of the era of reconstruction which pray God will discover the national, imperial soul of Canada to have saved and renewed as by fire.