

ALIEN PROBLEMS IN THE WEST.

The Mennonites who are invading the Canadian West have not permitted their peculiar religious tenets to blunt their business instincts. Before the colonies which recently settled near Lethbridge bought land "a committee of these long-whiskered Germans," says a correspondent of The Calgary Herald, "went over every acre with spades, turning over the soil at almost every rod." They made notes, secured an analysis of the soil, and employed the best legal talent to examine the deeds. Papers of incorporation were drawn up under the brotherhood plan, whereby all will share in the land and its products. The committee deposited a million dollars in two Canadian banks and all of it was paid out. In one district they paid \$200,000 in cash for 27 sections, and agreed to pay \$669,000 more in five annual instalments. Immediately on taking possession each colony began the erection of large buildings, 60 by 200 feet, and two stories, to be used as community dining halls and living rooms, all the cooking being done in common.

The Herald's correspondent tells of a visit to the first school established by these colonies, 25 miles south of Lethbridge. The children and their parents spoke English fluently, but all the text-books in sight were German, and apparently the children's exercises were written in the same language. The Provincial Government has declared that only the English language will be permitted in Mennonite schools as the medium of instruction, and that only the authorized text-books may be used. Evidently the Education Department has a problem on its hands.

It is a pity that settlers so thrifty and industrious as the Mennonites persist in the community habit. These colonies are like islets which refuse to mingle with the stream of Canadian ideas and Canadian citizenship. The current passes by them unheeded. The production of wealth is their only contribution to the country, but a nation cannot be built on that foundation. The Mennonites are made more insoluble than some other foreign groups by their affection for the German language and their refusal to perform military service.

The English-speaking people of the West are much concerned over the alien question. Of the population of 1,240,374 of the age of ten and over in the Prairie Provinces 449,443 are foreign-born, according to the Provincial census. Of the 36,102 Ukrainians 39.8 per cent. cannot speak English. There are 136,250 Austro-Hungarians, and 35 per cent. of these cannot speak English. There are 27,907 Poles, and 27.2 per cent. cannot speak English. There are 63,735 Russians, and 27.1 per cent. cannot speak English. There are 139,968 of German origin, and 12.4 per cent. of those Germans who reported themselves to have been born in Germany cannot speak English. It is not surprising that the people of the English-speaking races feel strongly on the language issue and insist on the children being taught to speak and think in English as one of the most effective methods of Canadianizing them.