

OUR RUSSIAN CITIZENS

At an entertainment given by the Russian citizens of Edmonton on Monday evening a little girl gave a recitation in Russian and followed it by one in English. There was no trace of a foreign accent in the latter, and a former subject of the Czar's, who was sitting beside the writer, whispered: "She speaks better English than she does Russian."

The incident serves to show how quickly the work of assimilation is going on among these fellow-Canadians of ours. Even among those who were born and brought up across the sea an astonishing command of the English tongue is seen, while the second generation can be distinguished in few cases from the boys and girls of families that have lived in British countries for centuries. When they enter into the new life so fully their parents must share their feelings to a very large extent.

The homeland of our children must be ours;

With them we dwell beneath no alien sky.

No more than they for other scenes we sigh
Nor waste with vain regrets the golden hours.

When the program was finished the Russian National Anthem was sung, and those who have never heard the air given by Russians (it is used in some of our churches for Glymp purposes but is raced through there) do not know how beautiful it is.

As a finale came "God Save the King." The familiar words had a strange sound with that audience singing them. Apparently all knew them, for the chorus was a loud one, and they were sung with an impressiveness that contrasted more than favorably with the glibness with which they are reeled off by the average Canadian crowd. There was no reaching for hats and coats till the last note was sounded. The halting English of the majority of the singers was evident, but all seemed to be weighing the meaning of each line.

If His Majesty could have listened to that chorus it would have given him a new conception of the strength of the Empire of which he is the head.