

JEWISH COLONIZATION IN THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TIMOTHY RICHARD NEUFELD

1982

A STUDY OF JEWISH PHILANTHROPIC COMPANY COLONIZATION  
IN CANADA'S NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
DURING THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

TIMOTHY R. NEUFELD

31 December 1982

A THESIS SUBMITTED  
TO THE COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
FROM THE  
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN  
SASKATOON  
SASKATCHEWAN

Copyright (C) 1982 TIMOTHY R. NEUFELD

THE RESEARCH THAT PRODUCED THIS STUDY WAS FUNDED, IN PART, BY THE U. OF S. COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN THE FORM OF A GRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWSHIP AND A SUMMER RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP AND TRAVEL AWARD, 1977-1978; IN PART BY A FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL SECOND LANGUAGE STUDY SCHOLARSHIP, HELD AT THE U. OF OTTAWA, 1978-79; IN PART BY THE FEDERAL SECOND LANGUAGE MONITOR PROGRAM, 1979-80, AND 80-81, OTTAWA; IN PART BY THE CANADA STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM, SUMMER, 1980; IN PART BY A GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP, SUMMER RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP AND TRAVEL AWARD, U. OF S., 1981-82.

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

PERMISSION TO USE POSTGRADUATE THESES

Title of Thesis A Study of Jewish Philanthropic Company Colonization in  
Canada's Northwest Territories During the Late Nineteenth Century

Name of Author Timothy Richard Neufeld

Department or College History

Degree Master of Arts

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the Libraries of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professors or professor who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department of the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

Signature

Address

Date January 6, 1972

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of some of the many people who helped to bring this project to a successful conclusion. At the same time, he accepts full responsibility for any and all errors, omissions or shortcomings which may be found in the study itself.

My parents, John and Elizabeth encouraged and supported my academic endeavours from their very beginnings. Without their continued support my graduate studies would have certainly taken a different and more difficult course.

Dr. T.D. Regehr, my thesis advisor, inspired me to do graduate work in Western Canadian History and his comments and encouragement throughout the project were instrumental in my struggle to bring it to a successful conclusion. I should also like to thank the other faculty members who agreed to read and examine the thesis, Professors H. Johnson, G. Hanson, and M. Hallett, of the History Department, and Professor A. Anderson of the Sociology Department. They also found the time to hold the Defense on the 20th of December, a busy time for all concerned. Special mention and thanks are also extended to the History Department's able Assistants, Mrs. Peg McVeen and Ms. Jackie Fraser, who guided my course through the various administrative dilemmas and pitfalls associated with my extended absences from the campus.

I should also like to offer my thanks to Mr. Doug Eocking of the Saskatchewan Archives in Saskatoon and Mr. Walter Neutel of the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa. In addition I should say that the staff at the Saskatchewan Archives and Public Archives and the National Library were always willing and ready to help this researcher in his search for materials. Thanks are also in order for the staff of the Main Library

and Shortt Collections, U. of S., the Microfilm Reading Room in the Main Library at Dalhousie University in Halifax, the Butler Library, Columbia University, New York City, and the Morrisette Library, Ottawa University.

I should also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Victor O.L. Lalonde and Mr. Roy E. Shatz, Coordinators of the Second Language Monitor Program in Saskatchewan and Ontario, who made it possible for me to research at the Public Archives of Canada while working as an English Language Monitor for the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate Schools Board between 1979 and 1981. Special thanks are also in order for Mr. Richard Landry of the O.R.C.S.S, and Ms. Francois Desormeaux, Principal of Ecole Baribeau, who did everything in their power to ensure that my work as a monitor was as fruitful and enjoyable as possible and thereby enabled me to focus my remaining energies on the research and writing of this thesis.

Similarly, Donald E. Graves, Historian, colleague, and friend, deserves my most sincere thanks for helping me make a smooth transition to life in the Nation's capital and archival research and for giving me many insights into the profession of history. He did not hesitate to extend his generous hospitality whenever it was called upon. In fact, several early drafts of this study were made possible because he unselfishly offered me the use of his office and typewriter when I had no suitable place of my own.

I am also indebted to Dr. Charles Hope who graciously opened his home to me during the summer of 1978 while I read microfilm at Dalhousie University. The generous hospitality extended by Dr. Hope, his wife Anne and their children, Andrew, Penny, and Angus contributed to an extremely positive atmosphere for research, study, and relaxation.

While I was researching and teaching in Ottawa my life was further enriched by the friendship of the Greiners, Phyllis, Kathy, Karel and Trever-Lee, who added new dimensions to my academic pursuits. I should also like to gratefully acknowledge Phyllis for typing the first drafts of several early chapters of this study.

In addition to the academic and governmental sources listed in the Research Credits section of the title page I should also like to point out several non-academic sources which made it possible for me to complete this study. During the summer of 1979 employment with Jamesville Farms, Almonte, John Ferrier, Custom Farmer, Perth, in Eastern Ontario, and with Alpha Cubers Mutual, Ltd., Outlook, in Saskatchewan, made it possible to continue my studies on a full-time basis in the fall. Employment with Wilderness Tours Whitewater Rafting Company, Beachburg, Ontario in the summer of 1981 played a similar role.

Throughout my graduate studies my parents were always ready with the financial and moral support I needed. A loan from my father during the summer of 1982 made certain that the time and effort and money already invested in this study would not be for naught. Furthermore, the examples set by my brothers, and their wives, Steven and Audrey, and Eric and Jane, have been a tremendous inspiration and encouragement to me throughout my academic career.

During the various stages of the research and writing of this study several people deserve special recognition and thanks. Tina and Ernest Warkentin extended their hospitality on many occasions in a manner which enabled me to devote the maximum time available to my studies. They made sure that I always had a place to work and rest while in Saskatoon. Anne Hope, my vocal coach, Professor Robert Solem, Director of the U. of S. Greystone Singers, and Earl Finnell, my

wrestling coach all did their best to help me balance my academic pursuit, History, with an involvement in the art and practice of Music and Sport.

Several Saskatchewan families also contributed to the completion of this work through their generous hospitality: the Gauchers, Coderre, the Altrogges, St. Benedict, and the the Podhanuiks, Kamsack. Special thanks are also extended to Bill and Marli, especially for the opportunity to participate in the 'W. Waiser Wakaw Lake Urban Renewal Project' in the summer of 1978.

I should also like to give special recognition to my colleagues and co-founders of the 'Marquis Meetings', a noon hour series of informal, yet penetrating, talks and discussions which pioneered an interdisciplinary approach to selected historical, political, social, legal and economic issues: Alain 'Go Go' Gaucher, B.A., L.L.B., L.L.M.; Colin 'Spencer' Spencer, B.A., L.L.B.; James 'Sleepy' Bessler, B.A., B.Com., C.A.; and Dale 'Steinsvol' Steinsvolle, B.A., B.Com.; Special thanks as well go out to Cindi, Judy, and Maureena for hosting the group's periodic evening and weekend 'Round Table Forums' and otherwise aiding, abetting and instigating our membership's wide variety of social and sporting activities which were highlighted over the years by Rocky Mountain Ski Adventures, River Cruises, and numerous tennis, hockey, golf and softball matches and tournaments.

Finally I should extend my sincerest thanks to several people in Academic Computing Services at the University of Saskatchewan. Peter Hardie, David Emigh, Sheila Flory and Barb Sokalofsky all contributed to my application of the Dec-20 Computer and Scribe Formatting Program to the problem of writing and editing this study. For their conscientious devotion to their duties I am thankful. For their willingness to go

beyond the call of duty and address themselves and their resources to meeting my conceptual and logistical needs I am sincerely and deeply grateful.

My life as a student, particularly as a graduate student in History, has occasioned many new friendships and associations for which I am especially grateful. These shared experiences have expanded the usefulness of this study by making it more than an academic or intellectual achievement. It has also been a vehicle for emotional and spiritual growth. For all these reasons I thank God, as I thank Him for having been given the the opportunity to begin to learn how to research, write and teach.

## PREFACE

Since the author of this study is of Mennonite ethnic origin it is perhaps in order to explain how he came to write this study of an aspect of Jewish History. As an undergraduate his interests lay in modern European History and Russian Intellectual History during the late nineteenth century. In 1975, however, his attention was drawn to a national essay competition sponsored by the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada in honour of the Bronfman Family. The author was able to complete a paper, 'Jewish Agricultural Settlement in Western Canada, 1870-1930' while doing contract research related to the development of a travelling display for the Western Development Museum in Saskatoon during the summer of 1976. Dr. T.D. Regehr, who supervised the research permitted the paper to be submitted to the contest and it was awarded second prize of \$200.

Although the paper was based on available secondary sources only, the author had been able to ascertain that there were primary sources available for more detailed study of aspects of Jewish Agricultural Settlement in the West. The author's attention was drawn to Hirsch Colony in particular because of the sharply divergent portrayals of its history and role in the development of Jewish agriculture in Western Canada. Jewish literature suggested that it was at least a moderate success and that it contributed significantly to the later improvement of Jewish agriculture's progress in the West. Government sources often quoted in the secondary sources, however, were generally very negative about Jewish agriculture in general and about Hirsch Colony in particular. This intrigued the author and resulted in this study of the Colony's role in determining the direction taken by Jewish Agricultural Colonization in Western Canada and its influence on Dominion Lands Policy regarding assisted settlement in general and

Jewish agriculture in particular.

This study grew out of the natural curiosity sparked by the essay contest, the contract research, and the author's own interest in the ethnic variety and agricultural foundations of Western Canada.

THIS STUDY  
IS  
DEDICATED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY GRANDPARENTS' QUEST  
FOR RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC  
FREEDOM

WHICH BROUGHT THEM FROM  
MENNONITE FARMING COLONIES  
IN SOVIET RUSSIA  
TO NEW LIVES AND HOMES IN  
WESTERN CANADA  
IN THE 1920'S.

## 1. DREAMS AND SCHEMES

The salient features of western Canada's growth and development were clearly established, though not yet flourishing, in the 1880's. Schemes to promote European immigration, construct a transcontinental railway, and assist agricultural settlement had been implemented, but these had been sorely tested by economic stagnation. This chapter will outline the evolution of Dominion Lands Policy prior to the 1890's, especially in respect to group settlement and company colonization. After discussing briefly two examples of group settlements on the Prairies, the Mennonites and the Icelanders, and describing the fortunes of company colonization attempts begun in the early 1880's, the chapter will conclude with the first attempt by European Jewish philanthropy to establish a Jewish agricultural colony in the Northwest Territories. It should be noted that for the purposes of this study the term Colonization Lands has been defined in a very specific way and should not be confused with the more general use of the term which simply describes all lands which have been colonized. Colonization Lands in this analysis refers to homesteads granted to settlers who obtained assistance from a colonization company, gave mortgages on their lands to secure the loans they had received, and subsequently abandoned the land before the debt had been repaid.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>The Dominion government's encouragement of colonization and assisted settlement schemes prior to 1896 did not attract large numbers of farmers. [See Appendix A and Appendix B] The Colonization Lands which resulted from this policy were, however, a new class of lands with their own special legal and administrative problems which were dealt with by the Department of the Interior on an ad hoc basis until after the turn of the century. At that time the ever increasing pressure of settlement made even such encumbered lands attractive for settlement and the government was forced to make a new policy statement regarding those lands.

Canada's first government, a Conservative administration under the leadership of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald prepared the way for the settlement of the territory by providing for the administration and survey of the land, formulating a settlement policy, and establishing a judicial system and policing organization. As well, the government in Ottawa addressed itself to the gigantic problems of transportation and communication posed by the isolated and distant lands.

In 1871 the Conservatives placed the Northwest Territories under the administration of a Governor and Council. That same year the government also instituted the American township survey system. In 1872 it adopted the American homestead policy for its own settlement program for the West. Settlers willing to homestead in Manitoba and the Northwest would be entitled to a free grant of Dominion Lands.

The township survey divided the fertile prairies into blocks of thirty-six square miles called townships. Each township was further subdivided into thirty-six sections. According to the Dominion Lands Act of 1872, anyone twenty-one years and older who was head of a household was eligible to obtain a quarter-section of land, 160 acres, for the homestead entry fee, a nominal ten dollars. The Crown, however, did not immediately grant the homesteader the patent to the land. A Canadian settler was eligible to receive the title to his homestead after three years had elapsed and proof of settlement and cultivation had been submitted.<sup>2</sup> Anticipating a deluge of immigrants from Eastern

---

<sup>2</sup>Statutes of Canada, 35 Vic., Cap. 23. Not all the sections in each township were available for homestead entry. The Hudson's Bay Company was allotted sections 8 and three-quarters of section 26 in partial fulfillment of the terms of the transfer agreement of 1870. Sections 11 and 29 were reserved by the Crown, as an endowment for the future development of public schools. The remaining lands in each surveyed township were available for purchase at the rate of a dollar per acre, though no individual could buy more than 640 acres at this special government price. Statutes of Canada, Ibid.

Canada, the British Isles and Europe, parliament provided for the administration of justice in the Territories in 1873. The Governor was authorized to appoint magistrates, erect jails and see to the organization of a mounted police force for the Northwest.<sup>3</sup>

The use of the lands to build a transcontinental railroad was of great importance to the Dominion. The government was confident that such a railroad would speed up the settlement of its dominion lands in the Northwest while uniting the nation from sea to sea.<sup>4</sup> While persuading British Columbia to join the Dominion in 1871, Canadian statesmen promised to build a railroad to the Pacific by 1881. That railroad was also to provide access to the Northwest Territories. Macdonald insisted that Canadian taxpayers' dollars would not be used to finance the construction of the vital artery. He proposed instead that the tracks would be laid by private enterprise and that the necessary capital would be secured through the use of the lands in the West.<sup>5</sup> The task of finding a Company both willing and worthy of the project was not an easy one, and the government's efforts in the early 1870's ended in scandal and the defeat of the Conservatives.

Unfortunately for the new administration, their assumption of

---

<sup>3</sup>Statutes of Canada, 36 Vic., Cap. 35.

<sup>4</sup>The use of dominion lands for railroad construction became a dominant and significant factor in federal policy very quickly. The free-homestead system, Martin suggests, though closely associated with the policy of railway land grants "reached its maximum development only after the abrogation of railway land grants" in the United States in 1894. Martin, Chester, Dominion Lands Policy, edited by Lewis H. Thomas, McClelland and Stewart Limited, Toronto, 1973; p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Skelton, O. D., General Economic History of the Dominion, 1867-1912, The Publishers Association of Canada Limited, Toronto, 1913, p. 149.

power in 1874 coincided with a depression which struck North America and Europe. Triggered by the failure of a large number of American banks which had been heavily involved in speculative railway building and by the collapse of an economic boom in Europe, the depression paralyzed financial activities in Canada.<sup>6</sup> The Liberals were unable to secure any offers from syndicates willing to undertake the construction of the transcontinental, and so were forced to build the railway at public expense. The work was begun in sections and proceeded as funds permitted, utilizing existing water and road transportation wherever feasible. In Manitoba the Pembina line was built during the 70's while the federal government attended to other matters concerning the settlement and development of the Northwest Territories.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the free-homestead policy and the easing of the conditions of land settlement and purchase, the Dominion failed to arouse significant interest in the Canadian Northwest, or divert the flow of European and Canadian land seekers which continued to surge towards the beckoning American plains during the 1870's. As the tide of immigration and settlement by individual agriculturalists showed no sign of turning to Canada, the federal government explored the possibilities

---

<sup>6</sup>Skelton, p. 137-38.

<sup>7</sup>The Dominion Lands Act of 1872 was amended in 1874 to offer more liberal terms of settlement to potential agriculturalists. The age requirement to permit homestead entry was lowered from twenty-one to eighteen years. Also, a settler who had acquired title to his land was permitted to buy an adjoining quarter-section, known as a pre-emption, for one dollar per acre. This meant that anyone over eighteen could obtain 320 acres of Dominion Lands for only \$170.00, the ten dollar homestead entry fee and \$160 for the pre-emption. Statutes of Canada, 37 Vic., Cap. 19, Sec. 33. This latter provision was amended two years later to enable the settler to purchase his pre-emption on the same day that he entered for his homestead grant. Ibid., 39 Vic., Cap. 19.

offered by group settlement schemes and the promotion of company colonization. Since Canadian and British farmers were turning a cold shoulder to the Northwest, other groups from Europe became acceptable, even desirable. Two notable group settlements initiated during the '70's were made by the Mennonites and the Icelanders.

The Mennonites had been prospering on farming colonies in Russia since the reign of Catherine the Great. They began searching for land in North America in the early 1870's when new laws were introduced which threatened to annul the special privileges which their forefathers had been guaranteed when they had migrated from Prussia, such as exemption from military service, religious freedom and educational autonomy. Delegates investigated possible sites in both the United States and Canada.<sup>8</sup> Although the Dominion government offered special inducements, only about half of the Mennonite immigrants from Russia chose Canada as their new home. The rest, like so many other settlers during the period, were attracted to the American plains further south. For those who did decide on Canada, townships were reserved in Manitoba by orders in council passed in November 1872 and April, 1873, and the migration of Mennonites began shortly thereafter.

In addition to the homestead grant, Mennonite settlers were allowed to purchase 480 acres at \$1.00 per acre. They also took advantage of a provision of the Dominion Lands Act, the Hamlet Clause, which allowed homesteaders to settle together in village settlements. Work done by the settlers on their homes in the village would be counted as part of the "improvements" required in the fulfillment of their

---

<sup>8</sup>Dyck, C.J., An Introduction to Mennonite History, Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1967; p. 154-56.

homestead duties. The government also agreed to advance loans to assist the group in paying for their transportation costs to Canada. By 1880 over seven thousand Mennonites were reported to be prospering in Manitoba.<sup>9</sup>

The Mennonites were soon followed by Icelanders. The Icelandic economy had gone through a severe downturn and the fallout from a volcanic eruption in 1874 had ruined much of the Island's scant grazing and agricultural land. The first group reached the shores of Lake Winnipeg in 1875. The chosen site was not ideally suited to agriculture and the people were mainly fishermen. Several years of floods and bad weather coupled with an epidemic of smallpox nearly wiped out the original settlement. A great deal of public money was spent alleviating poverty and distress in the settlement, but it was not until later, between 1887 and 1890 that renewed immigration revitalized Icelandic fortunes in the West. By 1890 there were approximately seven thousand Icelanders in Western Canada.<sup>10</sup>

The colonization of Dominion Lands was viewed as the process through which groups of farmers could be brought into the country from other parts of the world and enticed to settle together in the Northwest by the Free Homestead Grant. Prior to their fall from power in 1873 the federal Conservatives clearly indicated that they favoured the colonization of lands in the west by willing individuals, groups or companies but no part of the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 dealt specifically with this practice. The Mackenzie administration remedied

---

<sup>9</sup>Macdonald, Norman, Canada, Immigration and Colonization, 1841-1903, Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, 1966; p. 197-204.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 208-213.

this deficiency in 1874 by passing amendments to the Act which permitted the crown to reserve specific townships for individuals and companies who were willing to undertake the colonization of public lands free of expense to the government.<sup>11</sup> Although the Liberals reserved lands for a number of individual entrepreneurs and associations, very little land was actually put under cultivation in the Northwest as a result.<sup>12</sup> Opposition to the activities of such colonization companies as well as their overall record of failure persuaded the Liberal cabinet to cancel all grants and resume possession of the lands involved. In 1877 all the areas were available for individual settlement once again. The Minister of the Interior concluded that "instead of stimulating settlement, these colonization schemes tended to inhibit the development of Manitoba and the North-west Territories by bona fide settlers."<sup>13</sup> Discouragements dogged the Liberals during their term in office, and when that term was up they faced the electorate with few achievements to garner their cause fresh support.

---

<sup>11</sup>Statutes of Canada, 37 Vic., Cap. 19, Sec., 14.

<sup>12</sup>The British Canadian Land and Settlement Company, organized by Colonel D. Shaw, collapsed after the founder's death in 1876, before commencing colonization activities. Robert F. Rowen of Kingston was allotted four townships upon which he intended to begin a settlement of Danish immigrants; John Ralston reserved four townships on the Little Saskatchewan River; and the German Society of Montreal was granted one and three-quarter townships for the settlement of German immigrants in the Northwest. None of these schemes located so much as a single immigrant on their reserves. A plan by Spencer A. Jones to create a colony in Manitoba failed, and the Dominion Steamship Company only located a few settlers. The Manitoba Colonization Company's projected settlement failed when "its attempts to repatriate French Canadians in the United States fell flat." Lalonde, A., The Settlement of the North West Territories by Colonization Companies, 1881-1891, unpublished doctoral thesis, Laval University, 1971, p. 18-19.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

The Conservative Party campaigned energetically in 1878 for the endorsement of three election promises, the immediate construction of the transcontinental railway, the settlement of the West, and the institution of protective tariffs. Canadian voters overwhelmingly supported a return to Conservative government, and Macdonald was granted the opportunity to bind the country together along the lines envisaged by these National Policies. The importance of the Northwest Territories in the fulfillment of the Conservative's electoral promises was made clear when the Old Chieftan himself took on the portfolio of the Minister of the Interior and immediately proceeded to amend and consolidate the Dominion Lands Act.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the previous administration's lack of success in the area of company colonization, lands were again reserved for colonization by individuals and groups.<sup>15</sup> The efforts of the government and private enterprise were effectively thwarted, however, by the absence of adequate transportation to and through the Northwest.

To get the railway built the government had to provide a \$25

---

<sup>14</sup>When the dust had settled on the Statutes again however, the Act of 1872 and its amendments remained basically intact. Aside from making a few minor changes the Minister had been content merely to bring all the related legislation together to facilitate the administration of the regulations by government officials and to clarify the legislation of the rights and responsibilities of intending settlers. Ibid., p. 23-24.

<sup>15</sup>In his discussion of Clifford Sifton's contribution to immigration and settlement policy and practice Hall suggests that "Sifton was consistent with past policy in another crucial area of dominion lands policy. In the previous quarter century the lands had been an integral part of the patronage system, and so they continued under Sifton. For years the Tories had grown fat at the trough, and after 1896 the starving Liberal faithful hungrily lined up for their share. Sifton did not hesitate to strengthen the party machinery in this way." Hall, D.J., Clifford Sifton: Immigration and Settlement Policy 1896-1905., in Palmer, H., editor, The Settlement of the West, University of Calgary, Comprint Publishing, 1977; p. 67.

million cash subsidy despite its earlier promise that the government would not raise taxes to finance the railway. Macdonald therefore submitted a scheme which "enabled the Governor in Council to sell land to people of wealth and standing who would promote settlement in the West."<sup>16</sup> Despite much criticism that the legislation would promote speculation and thus retard the progress of settlement the Minister divided public lands in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories into railway and non-railway lands. The latter could be homesteaded or purchased by promoters of colonization schemes<sup>17</sup> at half the regular price in return for settling two homesteaders on each section in the tract of land reserved for them. Colonizers were also allowed to advance a maximum of \$500.00 to each of their settlers and to put a lien on the land to secure the advance until the principle and 6% interest per annum had been repaid in full. The privilege of colonization and the sale could be revoked by the Governor in Council at any time if the

---

<sup>16</sup>Lalonde, p. 34. These regulations immediately came under severe attack from both the Opposition and prominent Conservatives who considered them too stringent and hence not competitive with the more liberal conditions for settlement available in the United States. Macdonald recognized the validity of the criticisms and the amended regulations became law on October 14, 1879. Lalonde, p. 25-26. The purpose of the October modifications was to make the settlement and purchase of Canadian lands as attractive as or more attractive than the lands available south of the border from competitors such as the Northern Pacific and the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroads. Easterbrook, W.T., and Aitken, H.G.J., Canadian Economic History, Toronto, The Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited, 1958; p. 422.

<sup>17</sup>The railway belt took in all land twenty-four miles on each side of the proposed line. Within this zone the even-numbered sections were available for homesteading and pre-emption, the rate for the latter being set at \$2.50 per acre. The odd-numbered sections in the belt could be purchased from the railway. In the townships outside the railway zone the even-numbered sections were reserved for homestead entry and pre-emption while the odd-numbered sections could be purchased from the government. The price of the odd-numbered sections and pre-emptions was set at \$2.00 per acre. Lalonde, p. 36.

promoters failed to fulfil the terms of their contract. The land would then revert to the Crown for sale at regular prices.<sup>18</sup>

The Canadian government promptly publicized these new Land Regulations in the European news media and circulated pamphlets which described the agricultural possibilities of its western lands in glowing, if not utopian terms. It was soon swamped with schemes by potential colonizers. Most of the plans called for advancing money "to newcomers on the security of the land, while others requested that reserves be set aside for colonization purposes."<sup>19</sup>

The ratification of the CPR contract touched off a land boom in Manitoba. Both domestic and foreign investors began to consider seriously the profits possible in Western lands and colonization schemes. The government however, moved slowly; no colonization projects were approved until more comprehensive regulations were drafted and approved. On December 23, 1881, revised regulations were made public. Four zones were created to govern the sale and settlement of Dominion Lands in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.<sup>20</sup> The parts of the new

---

<sup>18</sup>Sessional Papers of Canada, 1882, vol. 30h, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup>Lalonde, A., p. 37-38.

<sup>20</sup>Zone "One" consisted of the lands twenty-four miles on each side of the CPR; zone "Two" contained all lands twelve miles from any projected railway other than the CPR mainline; zone "Three" was all the land south of the CPR and not in either of the first two zones; and zone "Four" included all other lands. In all the zones except for the school lands the even-numbered sections were reserved for homestead and pre-emption. Pre-emptions were set at \$2.50 per acre in the first three zones and two dollars per acre in zone "Four". The odd-numbered sections in zone "One" were reserved for the CPR. The odd-numbered sections in zones "Two" and "Three" were for sale at \$2.50 per acre and in zone "Four" at \$2.00 per acre. Ibid., p. 42-43.

regulations which were of particular interest to potential colonization companies made all the odd-numbered sections in zone "Four" available for purchase by business concerns in five annual installments. The business interests, individuals or companies, had to satisfy the government of their good intentions, capacity and interests in the promotion of the colonization of Western lands. The intent of the regulations was to encourage colonization companies to place as many settlers as possible on their lands. The rationale was that once colonists had taken up the government lands within the tract they would form a community which would attract other pioneers who "would have to pay prices fluctuating from three to fifteen dollars per acre for the odd-numbered sections, thus allowing the promoters of settlement enormous returns on their investments."<sup>21</sup>

The Prime Minister was confident that the colonization companies would initiate a flow of immigration into the Northwest. The sale of the lands to the companies would also provide the government with all of

---

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 44. There was, however, the threat of repossession by the Crown if at any time during the five years the company failed to live up to its part of the bargain, if it failed actively to encourage settlement on its tract of land. An applicant whose plan was approved was allowed to purchase the odd-numbered sections in in the area or tract, and for that privilege was required to place two settlers on each section within the tract, before five years elapsed. As the government retained control of the even-numbered sections within any colonization company's tract, these lands were open to homestead entry and pre-emption. A company however, was given the right to purchase any settler's pre-emption at a rate of \$2.00 per acre, cash, if the settler had not exercised his pre-emption right within three months. If a company satisfied its settlement duties it was entitled to a reduction of the price paid for its odd-numbered sections, a rebate of \$120 for each bona fide settler it had established on its tract. An additional rebate of \$40 per settler would be granted if at the end of the five years the company had succeeded in colonizing its lands completely; but for each settler less than the number required at the termination of the contract period the company would be required to forfeit \$160 to the government. Ibid., p. 43-44.

the money required to fulfill the contract with the CPR.<sup>22</sup> Macdonald did not think the colonization companies would have any difficulties in securing the immigrants they required to fulfill their contracts. These companies, he was convinced, would assume the role in Western Canada which branch railroads played<sup>23</sup> in the development of the American frontier.<sup>24</sup> The government felt that the colonies started by companies which were promoted by 'men with capital' would create centres around which a substantial western population would soon grow. The scheme came under immediate attack from the Opposition. The Liberals denounced the regulations, claiming that such legislation was not only opening the door to bribery and corruption, but also favoured speculators at the expense of the individual homesteader.<sup>25</sup> The criticisms leveled at the land regulations whetted the appetites of those with speculative inclinations even more. Indeed, the prospect of the construction of the railroad across the prairies, the land boom in Manitoba, and the land regulations encouraging company colonization "aroused the cupidity of

---

<sup>22</sup>"Beyond a possibility of a doubt,' declared Sir John Macdonald in 1882, 'not a farthing in money will have to be paid by the people of Canada.'" Hansard, April 21, 1882; cited by Skelton, p. 150.

<sup>23</sup>In the United States "Land was also used to speed the construction of railways, the pacemaker of western settlement. Approximately 135 million acres were granted by the federal government for this purpose and state assistance in this form exceeded 50 million acres....Not only did this 'land' bonus greatly stimulate railroad construction, it gave new momentum to western development in the form of colonization activities of railroad companies. Rapid disposal of much of these lands on credit at \$4 to \$5 per acre both yielded revenues from their sale and increased traffic resulting from the growth of settlement. Free or cheap land drew manpower and capital on scale unequalled in the history of 'open frontiers'." Easterbrook and Aitken, p. 398.

<sup>24</sup>Lalonde, p. 45-46.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

several people in Eastern Canada, the British Isles, and the European Continent."<sup>26</sup>

The notion that profits were to be made in Western Canadian land through company colonization reached the news stands in Europe at about the same time that Russian Jewish refugees, fleeing pogroms in their native land, began massing at the major ports on the continent and in Britain. These pogroms received international press coverage. Protests were sent to the Tsar from major centres in Western Europe and America.

<sup>27</sup> The Russian government's concern about its Jewish population had been intensifying throughout the nineteenth century. After its annexation of the White Russian and Ukrainian provinces of Poland, Russian authorities created the 'Pale of Settlement' to limit the movement of the Polish Jews now within the Empire and thereby prevent them from taking up residence in provinces which lacked significant numbers of Jews.<sup>28</sup> Restricted to the south and west of 'Russian Europe' and subjected to more and more political, economic, social and educational restrictions, the Jews "formed the most alive and best

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>27</sup>This new wave of pogroms broke out on April 27, 1881, in Yelisavetgrad; a second occurred in Kiev on May 8th, and was followed by months of anti-Semitic disturbances and violence throughout southern Russia. The inactivity of the Russian government appeared to many as complicity and increased the indignation of humanitarians throughout the world. Sack, B.G., History of the Jews in Canada, Harvest House, Montreal, 1965, p. 192. For a detailed study of the conditions of the Jews in Russia and the Pale, and their emigration to North America during this period, refer to Joseph, Samuel, Jewish Immigration to the United States from 1881 to 1910, Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1914.

<sup>28</sup>Vernadsky, George, Political and Diplomatic History of Russia, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1936, p. 354.

educated section of the urban population" in the Pale during the 19th century.<sup>29</sup>

On March 13, 1881, a member of the terrorist organization Narodnaya Volya, 'The Will of the People', assassinated Tsar Alexander II. His successor, Tsar Alexander III immediately set out to restore absolute autocracy and suppress everything which smacked of liberalism and revolution. Religious persecution surfaced again in such a favourable atmosphere. The fact that three of the terrorists involved in the plot were Jewish was used to stir up violent anti-Semitism. Constantine Pobyeonostev (1827-1907), who had been the new Tsar's tutor, was now the Procurator of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church. He provided much of the energy behind a reign of terror which was organized and directed by Plehve, the Director of the Police Department. While all non-Orthodox peoples and dissenters suffered, it was the Jews who were singled out for the most bitter and relentless persecution. Jews in some 170 locations in the southeast of European Russia were subjected to vicious atrocities, pogroms, which occurred in 1881 and 1882.<sup>30</sup> The events in Russia took on an even more immediate importance for Jewish communities throughout Western Europe as the months passed and the Jews who had left their home and country to escape the violence reached the major ports in large numbers. Emergency committees were set up to organize relief efforts on their behalf. After simultaneous protest meetings in New York City and London on February 1st, 1882, a Mansion House Committee was formed in the British capital to take on the

---

<sup>29</sup>Pokrovsky, M.N., Brief History of Russia, Volume 2, International Publishers, New York, 1936, p. 90.

<sup>30</sup>Pokrovsky, p. 91.

task of assisting refugees who had reached Britain. One of the members of the the Committee was Sir Alexander T. Galt, Canada's able High Commissioner in London.

Galt's presence on the Committee, along with a host of English notables such as the Lord Mayor of London, Cardinal Manning, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, illustrated the degree of concern aroused by the events in Russia. Galt acted as an intermediary between Jewish leaders in London and the Prime Minister in Canada. He sought to devise a plan which would bring together the re-settlement of the homeless refugees pouring out of the Pale, and the recently announced legislation encouraging 'men of wealth and standing' to undertake the colonization of lands in the Northwest Territories.<sup>31</sup> In late January, 1882, just prior to the formation of the Mansion House Committee, Galt had explained in a private letter to the Prime Minister that the persecution of the Jews in Russia had inspired him to write to Baron Rothschild<sup>32</sup> to interest "the Hebrews in [Canada's] North-west."<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup>The High Commissioner brought to London a first hand knowledge of the Northwest. A.A. den Otter, Civilizing the West, the Galts and the Development of the West, University of Alberta Press, Edmonton, 1982, p. 55. In 1879 he had learned from his son Elliot that substantial coal deposits were located along the Belly and Old Man Rivers in southern Alberta. He had taken leave from his position in London to explore the coal prospects in the West during the summer of 1881, with his son and Colonel J.S. Dennis, the Surveyor General. Their impressions were positive and in 1882 the Northwestern Coal and Navigation Company was organized in London. Waite, P.B., Canada 1867-1896: Arduous Destiny, McClelland and Stewart: Toronto, 1971, p. 127.

<sup>32</sup>Baron Edmond de Rothschild was already involved in the support of Jewish agricultural colonies in Palestine and other parts of the world.

<sup>33</sup>Galt to Macdonald, January 25, 1882, cited by Sack, B.G., History of the Jews in Canada, Harvest House, Montreal, 1965; p. 273.

A week later the High Commissioner elaborated his position in another letter to Macdonald in which he stated that though most of the refugees reaching Britain had been financially ruined by their hurried flight, it appeared that prospective Jewish settlers were still to be found in Russia. These Jews had means of their own which they could use to re-locate in North America should their emigration be permitted by the Tsar. Galt also reported that American Jews were actively promoting emigration from Russia to the United States and urged that "what was good for [America], could not be bad for [Canada]".<sup>34</sup> He promised to work through the Mansion House Committee to get Canada a share of the Russian Jewish emigration. He was convinced that because of the influence of the Jews in Europe Canada could come to no harm by "cultivating them".<sup>35</sup>

During 1882 more than one hundred applications for lands for colonization purposes were approved by the government. "The beneficiaries included Senators, elected members of the House of Commons, religious sects, municipal associations, German, Irish, British, Scottish and Canadian capitalists, labour unions and trade

---

<sup>34</sup>Galt to Macdonald, February 3, 1882, cited in Sack, p. 273-74.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. The Prime Minister's first reaction to Galt's efforts to promote Russian Jewish agricultural colonization in Canada was positive and to the point. The Canadian government, he stated in a letter to the Marquis of Lorne, the Governor General of Canada, was "quite ready to assign the Jews lands." Macdonald to Lorne, February 20, 1882, cited in Sack, p. 195. A week later however, in a private letter to Galt, he stated his feelings less judiciously- "They would at once go in for peddling and politics and be of as much use in the new Country as Cheap Jacks and Chapmen." Macdonald to Galt, February 27, 1882; cited in Sack, p. 274.

associations."<sup>36</sup> Thanks largely to the efforts of the High Commissioner, the London Mansion House Committee was among the successful applicants.  
37

By late summer of 1882 the two major 'liberal' papers, The Globe and the Manitoba Daily Free Press had already contributed their proper share to the store of rumours and allegations regarding the implementation of the land regulations and the assignment of lands. Suggestion was made at one point that over three hundred colonization companies existed and that the government was "distributing land solely to applicants whose politics suited the Minister of the Interior."<sup>38</sup> It soon became clear that even those capitalists with 'suitable' politics were hesitant to commit themselves to the colonization of western lands according to the government's rules. "After careful consideration numerous capitalists opted out of the scheme. Others were unable to

---

<sup>36</sup>Lalonde, p. 59.

<sup>37</sup>Galt had returned to Canada during the summer and in late July, shortly before his return to London, he had presented the Mansion House Committee's position regarding Jewish settlement in Canada. Galt had impressed upon the Prime Minister the importance of giving the Committee a district for settlement; he pointed to the considerable influence which leading Jews in London held. He suggested that the government, if necessary, could allot the Committee some of the still empty townships reserved for the Mennonites; failing that, he suggested that the government could call upon some of the colonization companies either to take or leave their tracts immediately. It seemed to Galt "absurd to have the whole district covered with bogus applications (in many cases) to the exclusion of bona fide settlers." Galt to Macdonald, July 27, 1882; cited in Sack, p. 274.

<sup>38</sup>Lalonde, p. 82. It will never be known exactly how many companies were planned to be organized during the wave of enthusiasm and optimism which followed the publication of the regulations in December of 1881, but the tide subsided rapidly over the following six months.

muster the necessary funds to pay their first installment."<sup>39</sup> Only twenty-seven companies signed contracts and paid their first installments.<sup>40</sup> Other individuals, groups and associations such as the Mansion House Committee which had been assigned lands on a non-commercial basis, whose colonization plans hinged on the government's permission to lend money to colonists and secure the loans by putting liens on the homesteads, did not have to sign a contract or come up with a lump sum. They were free to find colonists and set their schemes in motion at once.

The Mansion House Committee had chosen colonists for its scheme several months before the Canadian government had officially granted it permission to undertake a colonization project. A crisis had arisen in the small Galician village of Brody, near the Russian border, when several thousand Jews who had fled the pogroms of 1881 took refuge in that town. The tiny local Jewish community had appealed for outside assistance and early in 1882 the Mansion House Committee had sent representatives to the town. They found among the refugees nearly 300 who wished to take up agriculture in North America.<sup>41</sup>

This group arrived in Winnipeg in the spring of 1882 only to find that no preparations had been made and that no lands had been selected for them. The group was made up of a mixture of well-educated people and skilled tradesmen, but few, if any, experienced farmers. No one in the group had any dryland farming or homesteading experience. The government's immigration sheds in Winnipeg became the temporary home

---

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>41</sup>Sack, p. 196.

for the group which was completely destitute. This posed a serious relief problem for both the tiny prairie community of Winnipeg whose population was only about 8,000 and the existing Jewish community which until then had numbered less than thirty. Work was offered to members of the group by a local firm which needed a shipment of lumber unloaded. During the summer about 150 of the men worked on a CPR construction crew laying track further west. By the fall the immigrants who had worked for the railroad and others who had opened small shops or taken up peddling had been able to move their families out of the immigration sheds into shelter suitable for the coming winter. But when the winter did arrive there were still about two dozen families living in the poorly heated sheds with little or no money for food and fuel. The united efforts of the Winnipeg gentile and Jewish communities met their needs that winter.<sup>42</sup>

During the following summer Galt continued to work on the Jewish Colonization project on behalf of the Mansion House Committee. Late in 1883 W.A. Thompson, a government official acting for Galt in the West, selected two townships of Zone 4 lands about 25 miles south of Moosomin in the Northwest Territories.<sup>43</sup> The Mansion House Committee agreed to make loans available to the Jewish refugees in Winnipeg who still wished to homestead. As a result, the following spring a group of 100 Jewish refugees left Winnipeg and entered for 27 homesteads and 24 pre-emptions in the townships selected. The Mansion House Committee advanced individuals loans which ranged from \$259 to \$476, taking a lien on each

---

<sup>42</sup>Belkin, Simon, Through Narrow Gates, Canadian Jewish Congress and Jewish Colonization Association, Eagle Publishing Co., Ltd., Montreal, 1966, p. 31.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

homestead as security for the repayment of the debt.

The settlement was nicknamed New Jerusalem by the Gentile neighbours. A crop failure during the first season and a hail storm the next quickly exhausted the loans and left the colonists dependent upon their co-religionists in Winnipeg for subsistence. These discouragements, combined with the isolation, the rigors of homesteading and the lack of capital resulted in the gradual disintegration of the Colony. In a few years only the ruins of their efforts remained. Most of the settlers returned to Winnipeg or cities in the United States.<sup>44</sup>

While the New Jerusalem Colony was disintegrating, a Russian Jew named John Hepner arrived in the area in search of a homestead. He found suitable land in 1886 northeast of Wapella, another town on the CPR, neighbouring Moosomin. Hepner had passed through London on his way to Canada and had been financed by a prominent Anglo-Jewish financier, Herman Landau, the CPR's Canadian representative. Part of Landau's responsibilities involved attracting Europeans to settle in the Northwest. His philanthropic instincts made him eager to help Russian Jews find refuge from the persecution they faced; he was also determined to show the world that Jews could succeed as farmers. Extending financial help to Hepner was a step in that direction; he hoped that he could persuade a larger group to follow Hepner's example.

Hepner's first Jewish neighbour, however, arrived without Landau's encouragement or support. Abraham Klenman and his family, including his son-in-law, Solomon Barish, migrated to Canada from Bessarabia in 1887. Klenman and Barish both had some prior agricultural experience, Klenman as an overseer on an estate and Barish as a farmer

---

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

at Dombroveni, a Russian-Jewish colony. Shortly after arriving in Montreal, Klenman decided to settle in the West on homestead lands he heard were available from the Government. He was 57 years old. After investigating several areas of the Northwest, he heard about Hepner's farm. The presence of another Jewish farmer as well as the fertile black soil in the area which reminded him of the land he had worked in Bessarabia convinced him to homestead near Hepner's farm. Barish joined his father-in-law and took up a homestead in the area in 1892 after training as a Shochet, kosher butcher, in Chicago. These Jewish farmers attracted others and eventually the area became known as the Wapella Farm Settlement. A settlement, rather than a colony, the Jewish farming community developed a degree of continuity due to the dedication of the original founding families as well as several others who homesteaded there about the same time and remained for many years.<sup>45</sup>

The success of the Wapella Farm Settlement was remarkable when compared to the history of other Jewish farm colonies, including the one at nearby New Jerusalem. In the 1880's at least sixteen attempts at Jewish agricultural colonization were made in the United States. Colonies were founded in Louisiana, Oregon, Colorado, Arkansas, Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, Michigan, and New Jersey. Only three small groups established in New Jersey managed to survive into the 90's. Poor planning, poor site choices, lack of qualified leadership, and

---

<sup>45</sup>Some of the farmers had tried homesteading in North Dakota, others had worked for the CPR. Most originated from Southern Russian and Bessarabia, although a few came from Rumania, Galicia, and Lithuania. Fifty Jewish families homesteaded in the area between 1886 and 1907. Forty years after its beginning some 13 families remained on the land. Leonoff, C.E., 'Wapella Farm Settlement', a Joint Publication of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba and Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, in a Supplement to The Transactions, Series III, Number 27, 1970-71, p. 1-5.

inexperience played a part in the overall failure of the North American Jewish colonization schemes.<sup>46</sup>

Unlike the groups committed to colonization in Palestine, the North American Jewish colonization schemes did not command a large following. Isolated and far from Eastern Europe and the source of new recruits to replace those who could not withstand the struggle of pioneering, the North American colonies were easily extinguished by the forces of attrition. Also, the movement had internal divisions over important issues such as the nature of the settlements. Some favoured communal organization while others were intensely individualistic. An even more powerful force behind the disintegration of such settlements was related to the motivation of the individual settlers.

During the 1880's and 90's the masses of Jewish immigrants who left Eastern Europe were not deeply committed to agriculture. They were primarily concerned with providing themselves with the basic elements of survival in their new environments. They needed to find jobs and build new homes for their families. For the many Jews who left Russia between 1881 and the Great War the highest personal ideal was that of rescuing next of kin from the old country. All other ideologies and "isms" were secondary. When homesteading in some isolated and distant part of the country did not provide both homes and the extra cash needed to provide passage for relatives still stranded in Russia or Europe, it was quickly abandoned. This was the attitude of "the decided majority of Jewish immigrants to both Canada and the United States in the late nineteenth century."<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>47</sup>Belkin, p. 53.

Ironically, as New Jerusalem disintegrated in the Northwest, communal leaders in Montreal's Jewish community were earnestly considering even more grandiose undertakings related to the promotion of "agricultural pursuits among the Jews".<sup>48</sup> Inspired by the belief that 'the plough brings good luck' a plan was drafted to make Jewish immigrants from the ghettos of Eastern Europe into independent prairie farmers.<sup>49</sup> A letter inaugurating renewed commitment to Jewish agricultural colonization was circulated by a Canadian branch of the Montefiore Agricultural Aid Association in Montreal on January 8th, 1885, but it seems to have been the only evidence of the work the organizers undertook at the time. It was, however, a clearly articulated expression of a Jewish 'back to a Jewish soil' philosophy in the Canadian context. It indicated the direction which would be followed by later efforts to get large numbers of Jewish immigrants settled as farmers in Canada. The establishment of Hirsch Colony in 1892 embodied this philosophy.

On religious grounds our people cannot be wholly isolated from one another. They must dwell more or less together in communities, so that any plan of getting them to enter in large numbers in an agricultural life must include a plan of settling them in colonies.

---

<sup>48</sup>Sack, p. 207.

<sup>49</sup>The notion that proportionally Jews were usually over-represented in commercial activities and under-represented in agricultural pursuits, an imbalance which laid Jews open to certain anti-Semitic attacks, had been long considered by Jewish intellectuals from many countries; it was a condition which many worked hard to remedy during the nineteenth century through schemes aimed at getting Jews 'back to the soil'. In America, the philanthropy of Sir Moses Montefiore, a wealthy and respected British Jew who supported Jewish agricultural improvement, was known and revered.

<sup>50</sup> The failure of New Jerusalem was a major setback for the advocates of the 'back to the soil' ideal in both Canadian and British Jewry, but most other colonization companies were also disappointing. The hundred thousand colonists whom the Minister of the Interior had anticipated would be attracted to the West by the companies during their five year contracts with the government turned out to be a meagre 1,080 settlers.

<sup>51</sup> Other factors such as crop failures, the availability of land in the United States, sagging wheat prices, the harsh prairie climate, the Northwest Rebellion and adverse publicity all took their toll in homestead abandonments and as deterrents to prospective settlers considering the Northwest during the 1880's.<sup>52</sup> The failure of large scale colonization schemes "contributed to the waning of enthusiasm which had characterized the early years of the 1880's and the introduction of discouragement, hopelessness, and despair which characterized most of the 1880's".<sup>53</sup> As the decade came to a close, the vast stretches of unbroken prairie waited; the completed transcontinental waited; the politicians waited; the proponents of Jewish agricultural colonization in North America waited; and the abandoned Colonization Lands at New Jerusalem and elsewhere waited with their now clouded titles. Everyone and everything waited for the flood of immigration that would make the broken schemes and unfulfilled dreams a reality.

---

<sup>50</sup>Circular Letter of the Montefiore Agricultural Aid Association, Montreal Branch, Jan. 8, 1885; cited in Sack, p. 208.

<sup>51</sup>Lalonde, p. 208.

<sup>52</sup>Skelton, p. 151-52.

<sup>53</sup>Lalonde, p. 259.

## 2. SIT EVERY MAN UNDER HIS VINE AND HIS FIG TREE

This chapter introduces the circumstances which eventually united the efforts of Canadian and European Jewish philanthropists in the promotion of Jewish agricultural colonization in Canada. The 'skein' of Colonization Lands which resulted from their efforts was a by-product of their plan to prove to the world that Jews could become prosperous farmers and landowners by resettling destitute refugees on homesteads in the Northwest. Jewish agriculture was seen as a way to silence certain anti-Semitic attacks that portrayed that people as 'unproductive' elements of society. Jewish colonization was an answer to the search for new homes and jobs for the destitute refugees whose growing presence in Montreal presented serious relief problems for that community's Jewish population.

The Canadian Jewish community was still in its infancy in the 1880's and 1890's, taking its first faltering steps in the direction of greater religious, social and philanthropic activity and organization. In terms of both numbers and financial resources Canada's few thousand Jews were ill-equipped to face the demands of destitute Jewish refugees. The total Jewish population in Canada was only about 2,400 in 1881. Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton were the only cities with more than one hundred Jewish residents. Quebec, London, St. John and Victoria were the only other Canadian centres in which a minyan, the minimum number of ten adult males needed for Jewish religious ceremonies, could be formed.

<sup>54</sup> Canadian Jewish congregations did exist, but they were few in

---

<sup>54</sup> Rosenberg, L., Some Aspects of the Historical Development of the Canadian Jewish Community, Montreal, Bureau of Social and Economic Research, Canadian Jewish Congress, 1961, p. 135.

number- two in Montreal,<sup>55</sup> and single congregations in Toronto, Hamilton and Victoria. Because of the dispersed nature of the few existing centres of Jewish populations, the burden of caring for the refugees could not be equitably shared by the different communities. Montreal, with the largest concentration of Jews in Canada, was also the main port of entry for the refugees and so the responsibilities for their relief fell most heavily on that community and its Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society.

The Montreal YMHBS had been founded in 1862 and received its provincial charter in 1870. Its pioneering efforts were largely directed towards the relief of local Jewish poor, although occasional incidents arose during the seventies when it was called upon to assist a few individuals and families of immigrants. Local subscriptions, though adequate for local needs, were rapidly outstripped by increased Eastern European immigration after 1881; indeed, providing relief to immigrants quickly became a nagging worry and vexation for the whole community.<sup>56</sup> At times the Society found itself in such a desperate situation that it had to appeal to Jewish communities and organizations in Europe for help. In the late seventies, for example, the Montreal YMHBS successfully persuaded the Jewish community in London to send them funds for the relief of Eastern European Jewish immigrants who had been sent

---

<sup>55</sup>"Until 1846 Shearath Israel, or Spanish and Portuguese congregation, as it was called, was the only Jewish congregation....In 1846 the first Ashkenazi congregation or English, German and Polish Jews, subsequently named the Sha'ar ha Shamayim congregation, was incorporated in Montreal...." Ibid., 'Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada, 1760-1960', Canadian Jewish Population Studies, no. 3, 1961, p 31.

<sup>56</sup>Sack, p. 169-72.

to Canada by Jewish organizations in that country.<sup>57</sup> In 1890 Baron de Hirsch provided the Society with funds<sup>58</sup> a portion of which were used to purchase a building, which was called the Baron de Hirsch Institute, and which became the centre of the YMHBS's philanthropic work.<sup>59</sup> It was the Baron's interest in Jewish agricultural colonization and the re-settlement of Eastern European Jews that encouraged his affiliation with the YMHBS in Montreal from 1891 until his death in 1896.

The examples provided by the philanthropy of Sir Moses Montefiore and the foray into agricultural colonization in the Canadian West by the Mansion House Committee inspired some in Montreal to talk of expanding Jewish agricultural colonization in Canada. After the failure

---

<sup>57</sup>"By 1877 immigration had attained a hitherto unequalled peak. Heedless of the terrible plight that awaited them, the London organization was shipping emigrants overseas at an alarming rate. Communal leaders in England were concerned only with ridding themselves of the mass of Eastern and Southern European Jews, who having descended upon them, constituted a serious problem. This in turn tended to aggravate...the already acute position of the local Jews. Hardly established here themselves, even by the most prodigious efforts they could not adapt themselves to a situation for which they were ill-equipped. New protests, sterner in tone, were sent to London accusing communal leaders there of attempting to free themselves of a burden by shifting it on to the Jews of Canada. It should be noted that between 1871 and 1881, due mainly to the influx of immigrants, the Jewish population had more than doubled." Ibid., p. 183-184.

<sup>58</sup>"When it was learned that Baron de Hirsch had donated large sums to American Jewish Benevolent organizations, communal leaders in Montreal made haste to contact him and place their own problems before him. The great philanthropist was evidently impressed for he allocated a fund of twenty-thousand dollars for relief work amongst Jewish immigrants in Canada." Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>59</sup>After the Baron's death in 1896 the Society gave further recognition to the Baron's generous contributions to Canadian Jewish efforts at immigrant relief and agricultural colonization by amending its act of incorporation in 1900 to become officially known as the Baron de Hirsch Institute and Hebrew Benevolent Society of Montreal. Ibid., p. 253.

of New Jerusalem, however, nothing was initiated from Montreal in this regard during the 80's. Renewed repression of the Jews in Russia in the early 1890's forced another major exodus of Jewish refugees. Committees formed or re-formed in Jewish communities in centres such as Berlin, Hamberg, Brussels, and London to handle the relief of the refugees who were for the most part destitute. For many of the refugees the preferred destination was America, and many of the communities in Europe were only too happy to give their impoverished co-religionists a steamer ticket to North America. Initially, however, the relief efforts and forwarding of immigrants from Europe to North America was done on an ad hoc basis with little or no coordination of efforts between the many Jewish relief organizations involved.

In 1891, however, Baron Maurice de Hirsch, a wealthy Jewish philanthropist and entrepreneur, stepped forward with a plan to coordinate the movement of Jews from Russia and provide the funds to organize and carry out this plan. Jewish relief organizations the world over were already well acquainted with the Baron's past business and philanthropic undertakings and were aware of his intention to improve the lot of the Jews in Russia. With his announcement in the summer of 1891 of a gigantic plan to re-settle Russian Jews in other parts of the world came increased emigration from Russia, and more calls for immediate financial aid from relief organizations like the YMHBS in Montreal who were now trying to cope with larger and larger numbers of refugees who were seeking new homes. While building the Oriental Railway de Hirsch had encountered the terrible conditions in which the Jews of Turkey existed. When the world's attention was drawn to the plight of the Russian Jews fleeing pogroms and persecution in 1881 and 1882, the Baron had also taken an immediate and direct interest,

contributing one million francs towards relief efforts.<sup>60</sup> Several years later, in 1888, the untimely death of his son Lucien coincided with the successful completion of his Oriental Railway project, creating a void in the life of a man who had amassed a vast fortune and had gained an international reputation as a banker, entrepreneur, railroad builder and philanthropist.<sup>61</sup>

The Baron immediately embarked on a plan to devote 50,000,000 francs to nonsectarian education in the Pale of Settlement in Russia. He stipulated that Jewish children were to be free to attend the schools, and that he retain control over the distribution of the money. He wanted to keep the capital in France or England and have complete control of the use of the interest for the construction and maintenance of the schools. The Russian government was equally firm in its determination to hold the capital and be solely responsible for the management of the project. "The Baron did not hesitate; as he had no confidence in the Russian authorities, he withdrew his offer."<sup>62</sup>

The collapse of his plan to improve the conditions for Russian Jews through education led the Baron to conclude that emigration from

---

<sup>60</sup>Lee, Samuel J., Moses of the New World: The work of Baron de Hirsch, Thomas Yoseloff, Publisher, London, 1970, p. 202.

<sup>61</sup>Sources suggest that it was the Baron's wife Clara who was instrumental in guiding his efforts towards the relief of the Jews of eastern Europe. "She was determined that, if his name were to go down to posterity at all, he should be remembered as the benefactor of a suffering and downtrodden Jewish people. As a result, Maurice almost entirely withdrew from business to devote all of his time as well as the greater part of his immense fortune to charitable enterprises." Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid. p.211; from an article published by the Alliance Israelite Universelle, November 14, 1919.

Russia was the only solution. He decided that he would try to give a portion of the downtrodden Jews of Russia an opportunity to find

a new existence, primarily as farmers and also as handicraftsmen, in those lands where the laws and religious tolerance permit them to carry on the struggle for existence as noble and responsible subjects of a humane government.

<sup>63</sup>In April, 1891, the Baron expressed his intention to set up a fund of three million pounds for the purpose of establishing colonies in other parts of the world for the resettlement of the Russian Jews. This announcement brought a flood of requests from charities all over the world who had colonization plans for settling the Jews in remote spots. Offers of available tracts of land were also sent from countries such as Egypt, Australia, and Canada.<sup>64</sup> But most pressure came from groups which wanted the Baron to use his wealth to settle the Russian Jews in Palestine. Colonies had already been established there earlier by Sir Moses Montefiore, Baron Edmond de Rothschild, as well as emigre groups from Russia.

The Baron's announcement brought joy and high expectations to the Jewish inhabitants of the Pale, but government authorities and Christian groups in the countries rumoured to be possible sites for

---

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 214. Regarding the possibility of Jewish agriculture he was equally determined and convinced: "My own personal experience has led me to recognize that the Jews have very good ability in agriculture...I have seen this personally in the Jewish agricultural colonies of Turkey. My efforts shall show that the Jews have not lost the agricultural qualities that their forefathers possessed. I shall try to make for them a new home in different lands where, as free farmers on their own soil, they can make themselves useful to the country. If this should not come to pass among the present generation, the next will surely fulfill this expectation." Ibid., p.214-215.

<sup>64</sup>"The agent-general of the Province of Manitoba... tried to interest Baron de Hirsch in a colony in Manitoba, offering farms to the settlers as free land grants."Ibid., p. 216.

colonization by impoverished Russian Jews reacted with consternation and concern. More than a year earlier rumours circulating internationally about the Baron's intention to re-settle large numbers of Jews in colonies throughout the world had aroused apprehension in Canada's Northwest. In an article entitled "Hebrew Immigration" the editor of the Saskatchewan Herald, P.G. Laurie, made it clear that he was in favour of an 'Anglo-Canadian' West and a homogeneous prairie society. His remarks about Jewish agricultural colonization were similar to those he made about other ethnic settlements by groups like the Mennonites and the Mormons. Although he was sympathetic to the plight of the Jews in Russia, he remained firmly opposed to any policy of granting any prospective immigrants special privileges, especially the privilege of establishing a closed or block settlement.<sup>65</sup> Even Jewish communities in these countries issued protests.<sup>66</sup> Baron de Hirsch came to the conclusion that Argentina offered the most favourable climatic, political, and social conditions.

During the summer of 1891 the Baron sent representatives to

---

<sup>65</sup>He stated that "...this foreign speaking Jewish colonization scheme is objectionable on account of the tenacity with which they will cling together, ignoring the true development of the country, striving only after the preservation of their own particular tenets and practices. If scattered throughout the country, surrounded by people of liberality and intelligence, they would be much more likely to enter into competition with their neighbours, developing the energy so characteristic of their own race where they mix on equal terms with the surrounding population; in the end becoming good citizens and none the less faithful in their traditions that they are loyal to the country of their adoption." Saskatchewan Herald, February 5, 1890; cited in Hildebrandt, Walter, H., P.G. Laurie: The Aspirations of a Western Enthusiast, M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1978; p. 93.

<sup>66</sup>"there was worldwide support among Jewish organizations for Baron de Hirsch's scheme only as long as the refugees were being shipped to some other country." Lee, p.232.

negotiate with the government's of both Russia and Argentina. By the fall Argentina had agreed to the purchase of land and Russia had given the Jews permission to leave. The Baron then took steps to set up the Jewish Colonization Association to carry out his scheme. He attempted to win the support of the numerous other large Jewish organizations by offering their representatives management positions in the new Association. He held meetings with members of the Central German Committee for Russo-Jewish Refugees, leaders of the Anglo-Jewish Association of London, and the Alliance Israelite Universelle.

The Baron was convinced that his gigantic philanthropic venture would have to be organized and run like a business. The Association was registered by the Board of Trade in London on September 10th, 1891, as a limited liability company with headquarters in that city. Floated with a capital of 2 million pounds sterling, the Association's 'Memorandum and Articles' were written to give it powers to do everything imaginable related to the emigration and settlement of the Russian Jews.<sup>67</sup> During the summer of 1891 the press all over the world gave extensive coverage to the Baron's activities in setting up the Association. These press reports and rumours of large scale emigration and colonization, coupled with the recent expulsion of the Jews from Moscow, set large numbers of Jews in motion. They crossed the Russian frontier illegally and

---

<sup>67</sup>Adler-Rudel, S., Moritz Baron Hirsch: Profile of a Great Philanthropist, Leo Baeck Institute Year Book, volume 8, Leo Baeck Institute, East and West Library, London, 1963, p. 50-52.

congregated in centres in Western Europe.<sup>68</sup>

The month of June, 1891, signalled the beginning of a new era for the YMHBS of Montreal.<sup>69</sup> Harris Vineberg, the Society's President, informed the Baron about the community's relief work. He emphasized the growing refugee relief problems which the Society was experiencing because of the increased emigration of displaced Russian-Jews from Western Europe to Canada.<sup>70</sup> Vineberg explained that since the opening of the navigation season refugees had been arriving in Montreal daily and then either forwarded to a new destination or aided in some other way. The need for assistance was increasing daily, while the community's resources were being rapidly exhausted.<sup>71</sup>

He also told the Baron that Jews who were living in Montreal

---

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 52-53. It was, ironically perhaps, a Jewish organization, the YMHBS of Montreal, which proposed limitations and controls on Jewish immigration to Canada in 1891; in effect however, the Society was really just demanding that its European counterparts, the committees which had forwarded the refugees to North America, should shoulder a portion of the responsibility. The YMHBS of Montreal needed financial support and proposed, as an alternative to the continuous drain of temporary relief efforts, that they, and their colleagues in Europe, initiate an organized system of immigration and colonization which would meet the needs of the growing numbers of homeless Jews being forced to leave Russia.

<sup>69</sup>Public Archives of Canada, M.G. 28, Volume 83, Jewish Colonization Association[henceforth JCA]; Vineberg to Hirsch, June 23, 1891.

<sup>70</sup>Vineberg also reported in some detail how the Baron's past donation was being administered in Montreal. Purchasing the building and renovating it to meet the needs of the proposed school and temporary shelter for refugees had already used about \$12,000 of the money. Maintenance of the Institute and school was estimated at \$3,000 per annum. The remainder of the donation was being kept by the Society for emergencies such as refugee relief. Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

were very interested in moving to the Canadian Northwest to take up farming. Also, many of the newly arrived refugees from Russia were aware of the Baron's intention to resettle Russian Jewry in colonies in various parts of the world. One group of refugees in particular was most anxious to settle in the Canadian West.<sup>72</sup> The Society had no money of its own with which to help the eager colonists take up agriculture in the West. Because of its sympathy with the 'Back to the Land' ideal, however, the Society also approached the Dominion government on behalf of the group during the summer of 1891.<sup>73</sup> The news of the group's desire to take up farming in the West reached the press shortly after

---

<sup>72</sup>In the spring of 1891 about fifty families applied to the Society in Montreal to be sent to the Northwest so they could take up farming. These families had been residing in the city for varying lengths of time which ranged from one to five years. The Society's Board of Directors however, had been unable to provide the necessary financial assistance. While the general feeling among the members of the Board was that the idea was a worthy one, the Society had other more pressing priorities. They realized that outfitting such a group with all that was necessary to homestead in Western Canada would take much more money than they had. Later that summer a group of more recent immigrants also asked for assistance to go West and take up farming. Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>W.H. Baker, the clerk of the Society and the Principal of its newly established school, approached John Lowe, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture by letter. Baker described the plight of the refugees recently arrived from Russia and their interest in settling in the West. The refugees, Baker explained, wanted to know more about available government lands and particularly whether a group such as theirs could find an area that they could settle as a colony. Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, R.G. 15, Dominion Lands Branch, file 269180, volume 2 [henceforth DLB]; Baker to Lowe, July 16, 1891.

the Society's letter was sent to the government.<sup>74</sup> The newspaper story put some pressure on the government to reply promptly to the Society's inquiry.<sup>75</sup> The government's reply made it clear that if the Russian Jewish refugees could reach the Northwest they would certainly be able

---

<sup>74</sup>The speed with which the Government answered Baker's letter and the speed that the story was reported in the press caused some ripples in the Department of Agriculture a few days after it had been written. On July 17th, the Toronto Mail printed an article in the 'Doings in Montreal' section of the paper captioned 'Without Friends and Without Employment'. DLB, clipping from Toronto Mail, Toronto, July 17, 1891. The article described the situation of the Jewish refugees who had recently arrived from Russia, having been expelled from their homeland by the order of the Tsar. The group, sixty in all, including ten or fifteen women and children, had arrived in Montreal on a German ship. As they had no friends or relatives on the continent who could offer them help they were staying at the Baron de Hirsch Institute. Their desperate situation was aggravated because they could not speak any English. The group included a few farmers, but mainly consisted of people in the mechanical trades, such as carpenters, jewellers, tinsmiths, compositors, and painters. Seven of the refugees had already found work, and the others remained unemployed largely because of "their ignorance of the English language." Hopes were high however, among the unemployed, that they would soon have new homes and livelihoods in the Canadian West since they had already applied to the Dominion Government for a tract of land in Manitoba where they proposed to found Jewish colony. As yet, the report stated, the Government had given no answer to their application. Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>A day after the article had appeared in the news the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, in a note to his Minister, the Honorable John Carling, explained that he had been made aware of a complaint made in the Toronto Mail that no answer had been given to the Baron de Hirsch Institute's request for information about settling some Jewish families in the West. Lowe first assured the Minister that he had promptly acknowledged the Society's letter and had informed Mr. Baker that the matter had been transferred to the Department of the Interior. Lowe felt that little time had actually been lost but, "in view of the circumstances of the case" he thought it might be just as well if the Minister would ask the Honorable E. Dewdney, the Minister of the Interior to get the people in his Department to find an answer as soon as possible. DLB, Lowe to Carling, July, 1891.

to find suitable places to settle.<sup>76</sup>

Since both the Society and the prospective colonists lacked the money necessary to initiate and carry through a colonization project, Vineberg put the issue before the Baron repeatedly during the summer of 1891.<sup>77</sup> The West appeared to hold a solution for the Society's relief problems as well as the refugees search for new homes and jobs. Montreal was already "overcrowded and its labour market overstocked"<sup>78</sup> and the Board felt that the situation in other cities and towns in Quebec and Ontario was much the same. Vineberg reported to the Baron

---

<sup>76</sup>John R. Hall, the Acting Deputy Minister of the Interior, responded to Mr. Baker's letter. He stated curtly that during the past two years the Department had received similar applications, people of the same nationality wishing to settle together, and that these requests had been "invariably...refused." Hall was of the opinion that there was plenty of good land in the Northwest which had already been surveyed and was available for settlement under the conditions described in the Dominion Lands Act. His only suggestion was that if the Society in Montreal could assist the Jewish families to reach the Northwest the Department's officers there would offer them "every information and assistance in their power in selecting lands suitable for settlement." DLB, Hall to Department of Agriculture, July 21, 1891.

<sup>77</sup>Vineberg's letter to the Baron in late June had elicited no reply by August so he sent a new one. He pointed out that the Baron de Hirsch Institute was in an even more difficult situation than had been indicated in his earlier letter. Jewish refugees recently expelled from Russia were encountering "great difficulty landing at the various ports of the United States." Those who were refused entry at U.S. ports had turned to Montreal as their only alternative and so, throughout the summer Jewish immigrants had been arriving in Montreal in such numbers that the Society's Board of Directors was becoming very much alarmed. Since the funds at the Baron de Hirsch Institute and its facilities for accommodating refugees were already under a great strain, the Society could only look into the future with great anxiety. The Board now agreed that on their arrival immigrants who could not find immediate employment in Montreal should be sent to the West where "ample opening for labour of all kinds" existed. JCA, Vineberg to Hirsch, August 3, 1891.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

that his Society could not even muster enough to cover the costs of transporting the number of refugees that were arriving in Montreal to the West, much less provide them with assistance until they could earn their own living there.<sup>79</sup>

In September, 1891, a group of about 110 poverty-stricken immigrants arrived and the Society had absolutely no money with which to assist them. Only an unexpected donation from a member of the Jewish community provided the YMHBS with enough money to send the majority of the group West, where, it was expected, they would readily find work.<sup>80</sup> This lack of funds, a rumour that hundreds more equally destitute immigrants were already enroute from Europe, as well as "numerous representations...from the Agriculture Department of the Dominion that [they] should endeavour to avoid... a 'scandal'"<sup>81</sup> prompted the Board of Directors to hold a special meeting on September 13, 1891. At that meeting it was resolved that the YMHBS of Montreal

was unable to afford any relief to further arrivals of destitute immigrant Jews, and until a proper plan of colonization be formulated and the necessary means provided therefore, it [was] inadvisable to allow the present method of the indiscriminate forwarding of destitute immigrants to [continue].

<sup>82</sup> To that end the Society also resolved that

---

<sup>79</sup>Canada, Vineberg informed the Baron, was a large country, "with plenty of scope for the industrious" ; the Jewish community in Montreal, however, was a small one which now found itself "powerless to render all the help that [was] necessary". Since the opening of the navigation season the Institute had housed approximately one hundred persons a day, every vacated spot immediately filled by another needy person. Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>JCA, Vineberg to Hirsch, September 14, 1891.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

the Baron de Hirsch, Steamboat Lines, and foreign committees be immediately notified of the foregoing resolution, and... requested to act accordingly.

83

Three weeks after Vineberg sent the Resolutions and a letter of explanation to the Baron, the Society received the long-awaited assistance. The Baron notified them in a telegram that he had placed 10,000 francs at their disposal for the relief of Russian Jewish refugees.<sup>84</sup>

Several additional meetings were held by the Society regarding the passage of the September Resolutions. Vineberg assured the Baron that it was the Society's concern for the future of the refugees and their children which had necessitated their position in September.<sup>85</sup> Vineberg made it clear to the Baron that if something was not done to

---

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Vineberg, in a letter acknowledging the Baron's donation and thanking him on behalf of the Society, outlined the relief efforts undertaken in Montreal during the summer and fall. Some artisans and tradesmen had been found jobs and homes in the city of Montreal and were expected to support themselves through the coming winter. Immigrants who had relatives or friends in other cities in Canada or the United States had been given railway fare to those destinations from the Society's emergency relief fund. Any who claimed some knowledge of farming had been given train fare and a small sum of cash for subsistence until they could find work in the Northwest, where the Society felt employment could "easily be obtained and where the industrious [would] do well." In addition to relieving the immediate needs of the refugees, the Baron's donation had been used to establish a Free Day School at the Institute where 250 students were being given instructions in English to prepare them for their entrance into the city's public schools. As well, a Free Night School for adults had been organized to give the refugees some knowledge of the English language, a skill "absolutely necessary to enable them to obtain a livelihood." JCA, Vineberg to Hirsch, October 7, 1891.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

counter the results of the disorderly and indiscriminate movement of destitute Jewish refugees to Canada, that country, a potential haven for Eastern European Jews, could be forever lost.<sup>86</sup>

The Society in Montreal, however, could see one avenue through which some of the destitute refugees in their city and others still in Europe, could be helped. The Canadian Northwest appeared to be a potential solution for the relief problems in Montreal and for the refugees search for homes and work, since Dominion Lands were available there for homesteading. All that would be required to form a Jewish colony somewhere in the West was the money to send the refugees there and provide them with equipment and provisions til their first crop was harvested. The Society realized that such a colonization scheme would have to be organized and properly managed and offered its total cooperation and assistance in such an undertaking.<sup>87</sup> A group of approximately 30 families who had been living in Montreal for three or four years had already decided on their own to head West the following season. They had sent one of their number to the Northwest to select a site and he had returned with a very promising report. On the strength of that information Vineberg assured the Baron that there was a good opening for Jewish refugees in the West, and that the only thing barring them from taking advantage of free Dominion lands available was the

---

<sup>86</sup>In addition to the lack of relief funds, Montreal was already overfull with recent immigrants; the United States was refusing more and more Jewish refugees entry and "other towns and cities in the Dominion complained bitterly at having persons thrust upon them whom they consider as pests to society and whom they look upon with jealousy and hatred." Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

absence of "some definite and distinct plan"<sup>88</sup> to initiate such colonization.

The Society realized that during the coming winter its resources would be absorbed by the needs of the unemployed immigrants still in their city. It made it clear, however, that it considered such temporary relief to be of secondary importance to the development of a plan of colonization which would "prove to permanent and lasting importance to those who [were] willing to work with industry and diligence in their adopted country."<sup>89</sup> Vineberg therefore asked the Baron for additional financial aid and sought to impress upon the philanthropist that

during the interregnum of the Boat Season, something should be done to promote and carry out a thoroughly organized and practical scheme of immigration and colonization.

<sup>90</sup> The Society's actions effectively brought the Baron's attention to bear on the Dominion's Northwest and its potential for large scale colonization. The ideas which created Canadian Jewish agriculture's Colonization Lands were firmly rooted in the minds of the members of the YMHS by the fall of 1891. As a result of the Society's efforts those same ideas began to take hold in the Jewish Colonization Association which had been established to implement the Baron's plans.

---

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

### 3. WHAT SUM WOULD BE REQUIRED?

In late October of 1891 the YMHBS in Montreal set out to gain the support, both moral and financial, of European Jewish philanthropy for the establishment of a Jewish agricultural colony in the Northwest Territories. The Society's actions were prompted by an inquiry from Dr. Sigismund Sonnenfeld, the Director of the newly established Jewish Colonization Association, about the estimated cost of establishing Jewish colonists on farms in the Canadian West. A Colonization Committee was organized to prepare a comprehensive report for submission to the JCA.

Vineberg and the other members of the Colonization Committee learned a good deal about the potential of the West in general and the Mansion House Lands in particular during their research for the JCA. Dr. Sonnenfeld asked the Society for an estimate of the cost involved to settle one family or group of ten persons on a farm in the Northwest or some other part of Canada.<sup>91</sup> The Committee consulted "Colonization Agents... and other practical and experienced persons"<sup>92</sup> in their endeavours to come up with an accurate estimate. They concluded that \$500 would be needed for purchasing the cattle, seed, implements and a

---

<sup>91</sup>JCA, Report of the Colonization Committee to the Board of Directors, December 13, 1891. Sonnenfeld's question was: "What sum would be required- as advanced money, of course- to establish a family or group of colonists- say of 10 persons- in the northwest, or any other part of Canada; to provide them all with the proper quantity of land to work on with the instruments of husbandy, the necessary cattle and seed, the most economical material for building a shed, and with food strictly necessary to sustain them during the first year?" Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

year's supply of provisions to see a family of ten<sup>93</sup> through the first year of homesteading in the Northwest. Their estimate was based on the assumption that

the food...be of the most frugal kind... purchased at the cheapest possible rates...and supplied from a general store, which would be established in the Colony. The cattle and implements, etc., would also have to be purchased wholesale, and similarly supplied to the colonists.

<sup>94</sup>Other items such as a shed and furniture could be purchased in the locality, and these costs were included in the estimate. If it was practical to have two families share one yoke of oxen the estimate could be revised downward proportionally. An additional expense, also included in the estimate was the cost of employing at least one experienced farmer to act as an overseer for every 20 to 25 families in the Colony. The Committee felt that such an expense was absolutely necessary if the Colony was to prove a success. These overseers would be employed to instruct the colonists in their operations. Such men, the Committee conceded would probably be "Gentiles with a full knowledge of Canadian farming, and... either Canadian or experienced English or Scottish settlers."<sup>95</sup>

The only additional expense was the land itself and this cost was insignificant in relation to the other expenses. For the payment of an Entrance or Office Fee of \$10.00 a settler was entitled to homestead

---

<sup>93</sup>The Committee had taken 'family or group of 10 persons' to mean "a Jewish family in the strictest sense, with a son or daughter grown up and married but still living under the same roof with the parents and thus occupying one plot of land." Such a family would number ten on the average, but they felt that "two or three children more or less would make very little difference on the cost." Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

on a quarter-section, 160 acres, of Dominion Land in the Northwest. Their information indicated that there was plenty of land available in areas of the West which were readily accessible by rail, with excellent agricultural potential and well supplied with water and timber. Since a homestead could be granted to the head of a family and each male over 18 years of age, within the Committee's definition of a family two homesteads could be entered for by one such group. Though the Committee had already narrowed its search for a site for the Colony to the Northwest where free Dominion Lands were available and plentiful, it did not have enough information to give the JCA a final recommendation. The Mansion House Lands in the Moosomin area were a possibility, of course, but other districts in the West were being considered.<sup>96</sup>

The Committee made several other suggestions to Dr. Sonnenfeld which it hoped would facilitate preparations for colonization. They suggested that the first group of colonists should not be more than 100 families or groups of ten; after the first colony was located and put under efficient management, new preparations could be made for others. Timing was important in the undertaking; the colonists would have to reach the West early in the spring so they would be ready to take advantage of the full crop season. Their investigations indicated that in the Northwest the land was usually ready for spring work by the beginning of April.<sup>97</sup>

Transportation arrangements for colonists could be best made in Europe, with a departure date in late winter or early spring. Colonists could be sent to the West from either Portland, Maine, the Atlantic

---

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

terminus of the Grand Trunk Railway system, or from the Inter-Colonial Railway terminus at Halifax. The fare from either port to Winnipeg was the same, \$13.50 for each adult and half price for children between 5 and 12 years of age. For colonists heading West from Montreal the fare to Winnipeg was 12.00. The trip from Montreal took four or five days and the Committee suggested that 20 cents a day per person would cover food costs for that part of the journey. The Committee was still making an effort to obtain a special reduced fare for its colonization scheme from the CPR, but nothing had been secured yet.

Since the money was to be advanced to the colonists it was also suggested that the JCA could take out a first mortgage on each family's homestead as security for the advance. While the Report put the possibility of establishing a Jewish agricultural colony in the Northwest in a very positive light, the Committee felt that it had done its best to answer Dr. Sonnenfeld's question in a straight-forward manner, and as completely as possible

without placing it before the Board in too glowing terms; but keeping in view the permanent good which may be done for the poor suffering and persecuted refugees.

<sup>98</sup> The short-term relief efforts which had been draining the society ever since the opening of the 1891 Navigation season were clearly not the answer to the growing refugee problem. Though the demand had been stabilized by the close of navigation the opening of the ports in spring was viewed with anxiety by the Society. The Colonization Committee stated the case plainly to Dr. Sonnenfeld:

That something must be done for them if they come to this country is perfectly clear. The cities are already overcrowded and they will be unable to gain a livelihood in them; whilst it is impossible to place them on the land without

---

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

providing them with the funds necessary to procure implements of husbandry, seed, and food till the first harvest is realized.

<sup>99</sup> The Colonization Committee's Report was mailed to Dr. Sonnenfeld along with some clippings from The Official Handbook of Canada and a copy of a letter from the CPR to the Society regarding its transportation rates. D. McNicholl, the General Passenger Agent stated that his company's rates for transporting European immigrants from the seaboard to the West were already very low, "being about one-third that charged by the United States lines to equal points in the North West."

<sup>100</sup> No additional reduction could be offered to the Baron de Hirsch Institute. The Agent added that he thought that the Dominion Government intended to grant a \$10.00 bonus for settlers coming from Europe during the approaching season, and suggested that the Society might contact the Government for information in that regard and any other concessions to which their scheme might be entitled, including commissions to booking agents. He further assured the Society that his company would be very glad to aid any immigrant coming from Europe and intending to settle in the Northwest. He pointed out, as an example, that should the number of immigrants be sufficient, the CPR had a supply of colonist cars which could be run directly from the port of entry to their destination, thus eliminating the inconvenience and expense of train changes and stop-overs.<sup>101</sup>

Vineberg had already written the Department of Agriculture for

---

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>JCA, McNicholl to YMHS, received by the Society on December 18, 1891.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

information about the Government's bonus policy. He was informed by the Deputy Minister, John Lowe, that the government was granting a bonus of \$10.00 for the head of a family and five dollars for each member of the family over twelve who settled "at any point in the northwest of the Dominion west of the Manitoba frontier."<sup>102</sup> Lowe was uncertain whether an additional bonus of \$5.00 contributed by the steamship companies was to be continued. The negotiations were underway and would be published when a decision was made. Lowe also assured the Society that immigrants were allowed to give a first mortgage on their homestead to secure advances made to them. The limit to the mortgage was \$600 and "such advance had to be bona-fide and approved"<sup>103</sup> before the mortgage could be given. Since Lowe's letter seemed to corroborate the Colonization Committee's findings, Vineberg immediately forwarded a copy to Dr. Sonnenfeld at the Paris offices of the JCA. The Board was anxious that he receive all relevant information as it became available; any delay might prevent the Colony from being established in the Spring of 1892.

While information was being gathered for the report the Committee Chairman, D.A. Ansell, sent a letter to the Russo-Jewish Committee in London informing them of the possibility of a new attempt at colonization in Canada's Northwest and appealing for their aid and support. The appeal could not have been made to a more unreceptive audience; the letter only recalled all the unpleasant memories which the Committee in London associated with the failure of the New Jerusalem Colony.

Reverend Herman Adler, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire

---

<sup>102</sup>JCA, Lowe to Society, December 18, 1891.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

regretfully informed Ansell that those he spoke for in London were not in favour of the Canadian scheme because of their own past experience with agricultural colonization in Canada. They felt that everything possible had been done to ensure the success of the undertaking. An excellent site had been selected, approximately 3,000 pounds had been spent to equip and settle the colonists, and they had had the advantage of "the invaluable aid and council of Sir Alexander Galt at every step."

<sup>104</sup> Since the colonization attempt had ended so dismally, despite these advantages, a second such experiment could not be justified. Members of the Russo-Jewish Committee in London were convinced that Canada's long and severe winters would always "prove an insuperable hindrance".<sup>105</sup> Although it was unwilling to spend any more money on Colonization in the Northwest, the London Committee was ready to transfer its lands to anyone interested in settling Russian Jews on them. Ansell's appeal had thus gained something for the consideration of the Colonization Committee and the JCA, a firm offer of the Moosomin lands for the purpose of colonization.<sup>106</sup>

Ansell was not content to leave the negative attitude in London regarding the potential of the Canadian West unchallenged. He addressed a letter to the Honorable E. Dewdney, the Minister of the Interior, and included Adler's letter with his own. He asked the Minister for the Department's report on the Moosomin colony, particularly its opinion about the reasons for the failure. Ansell expressed his hope that a government report would help him change the prevailing opinion in London

---

<sup>104</sup>DLB, Adler to Ansell, November 10, 1891.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

that the Canadian Northwest was inhospitable and unfit for settlement and so encourage the Committee there to use its influence, organization and financial resources to promote settlement in Western Canada. Reverend Adler, he informed Mr. Dewdney, could exert a strong influence on emigration and was "in a position to devote large amounts of money in furthering settlement of desirable people in the North-West."<sup>107</sup>

According to the Dominion Government's information concerning the settlement the majority of the settlers had abandoned their homesteads soon after entering for them. Through an order-in-council passed on April 4, 1887, authority was granted to allow the land to be transferred to the Mansion House Committee's Trustee, Sir Alexander Galt, "in consideration for the sums advanced upon the property, should the settlers not keep their engagement and pay the sums due for the interest and principle."<sup>108</sup> In accordance with that order, Galt had made an application for the land on January 23, 1889. As a result the Department of the Interior initiated inquiries about the lands in question and found that, as of February 6, 1889, excepting two or three settlers, all the holdings at Moosomin had been abandoned. Upon further investigation the Department discovered that as of December 1889, the only settler remaining on the land was a Mr. Mordecai Weidman. In February of 1890 Mr. Weidman had violated the conditions under which the land had been granted him as he was at that time residing in the town of Montgomery, which was more than two miles from the land he had entered for at Moosomin.

The lands abandoned totalling some 9,600 acres in 32 lots of

---

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., Ansell to Dewdney, November 24, 1891.

<sup>108</sup>JCA, Supplementary Report of the Deputation, January 14, 1892.

either 160 or 320 acres each were scattered throughout townships 11 and 12, Range 2, West of the Second Meridian. Since the lands were abandoned, proceedings had been started to transfer the titles to Mr. Galt. While communications with the Government on the matter had ceased on June 14, 1890, the process had reached the Patent Office so the land could be transferred to the nominee of the Mansion House Committee at any time.<sup>109</sup>

John R. Hall, the Secretary of the Department of the Interior informed Ansell that although no special report had been prepared on the Moosomin Colony, he could rest assured that neither the land nor the terms of settlement had been the cause of its demise. The settlement had disintegrated simply because the colonists "had no aptitude for agricultural pursuits."<sup>110</sup>

While the Colonization Committee continued its investigations, Vineberg, the President of the Society, contacted Reverend Adler on a matter of more general concern- the difficulty which his community was experiencing as a result of the increased immigration of Jewish refugees to Canada. The Society's relief efforts had made it possible for almost seven hundred refugees to settle in their city, while hundreds of others had been given temporary aid and free transportation to other parts of the country. Of the number settled in Montreal almost half were already self-supporting. That still left over 300 who were entirely dependent on charity for their subsistence. Having expended nearly \$3,000 during October and November for the care of these people, the Society was in a desperate situation financially. Vineberg assured Adler that the Board

---

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>DLB, Hall to Ansell, December 12, 1891.

had administered its relief with extreme care, giving only the absolute necessities in each case. Everyone in the community who was willing and able had given freely to help. Not only had money been donated, but time and effort as well. The women, for example, were helping the Board in its work by making clothing for the children of the refugees who were now attending school at the Baron de Hirsch Institute. Over a hundred new students had been taken in during the year.

When the resources of the Montreal area had been exhausted the Society had gone further afield, seeking donations from neighbouring townships. Then an additional problem had arisen. Although the refugees who had been sent West early in the season had been able to make provisions for the winter those who had been sent out later had not, and they were now making appeals to the Society for aid during the winter months. The position of the Society and the refugees was desperate, and Vineberg hoped that Adler would use his influence in the London Jewish community to enlist their financial support.<sup>111</sup> Closing his note on a more optimistic tone, Vineberg spoke of the Society's colonization plans briefly, emphasizing that much had changed in the Northwest since the demise of New Jerusalem primarily because of the completion of the CPR which had opened up the whole Northwest. The Mansion House Lands, he postulated, could have great potential, given improved access to the region by rail and the fact that there was "not likely to be another 'boom' in the district, as there was at Winnipeg when the original settlers were drawn away, and abandoned their farms."

112

---

<sup>111</sup>JCA, Vineberg to Adler, December 3, 1891.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

#### 4. DEPUTATION TO OTTAWA

The Deputation met with Prime Minister J.J.C. Abbott and John Carling, the Minister of Agriculture, in Ottawa on January 11, 1892. Maxwell Goldstein, the Society's solicitor, first outlined to the Ministers the situation of the Russian Jewish refugees who had arrived in Montreal; the resolutions regarding the future of such immigration to their country; and the interest which had been expressed by the JCA concerning colonization in the Canadian Northwest. He summarized the information which the Colonization Committee had passed on to the JCA and explained that the Deputation's purpose, in addition to acquainting the Prime Minister with their scheme, was to find out his views and opinions about the subject. Mr. Abbott informed the group that he was not only in favour of their project, but would assist them wherever possible.<sup>113</sup> The Deputation's first concern was finding a suitable location for the colony: they expressed their wish to find an area in the Northwest which was open for settlement and would permit the colonists to take up neighbouring quarter-sections rather than alternate plots as the government's general settlement policy dictated. They suggested the possibility of having the government re-allocate or exchange lands designated for the CPR or other owners in order to create a separate block for Jewish colonization alone.

The Prime Minister immediately rejected that idea, saying such a land exchange would present a great number of difficulties. He suggested there were areas in the West where adjoining lands were available, and mentioned the Red Deer District as a prime possibility. He also informed the group that his Government did not view a closed

---

<sup>113</sup>JCA, Report of the Deputation, January 14, 1892.

settlement favourably.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, Abbott offered to have two reports made up if the Deputation so desired. One would indicate areas where the Society could establish a closed settlement and one showing districts where the colonists would be separated, "though not by a great distance, and where lands adjoining their homesteads would later be settled by other nationalities and creeds."<sup>115</sup>

The next major concern voiced by the Deputation was related to transportation. They inquired whether federal money was available for building roads in the West. Abbott stated that there was no provision for such aid; he then assured the group that although "making roads over the Prairies was an easy matter...a simpler solution was to select lands in the vicinity of the railway, where alternate plots were available."<sup>116</sup> The Society's application for federal aid to defray the cost of transporting its colonists from the port of entry to the West would receive the government's further consideration.

As the meeting progressed, all the members of the Deputation had an opportunity to question the Ministers about settlement and colonization in the West; but by the time the meeting came to an end they had all been unsuccessful in their attempt to find out if their

---

<sup>114</sup>It felt that settling "colonists of other nationalities... in alternative plots" was advantageous for all concerned. Experience had shown that these mixed settlements "were always more successful". Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

colonization scheme would be granted any special concessions.<sup>117</sup> In concluding the interview Abbott advised the Deputation to send him a prepared statement which clearly set out the points which had been discussed. He would then see to it that the proper reports were prepared and sent to the Baron de Hirsch Institute within a week or ten days.

After the Deputation's interview with the Ministers Mr. Baker, the Society's Clerk, was instructed to meet with the Ministers or their Deputies, in the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture. He was to get more information likely to assist the Colonization Committee in its planning, especially about the Mansion House Lands at Moosomin.

Mr. Baker remained in Ottawa that night, and the following morning had a lengthy discussion with Mr. A.M. Burgess, the Deputy Minister of the Interior. He provided Mr. Baker with a complete history of his Department's administration of the lands at Moosomin, and additional information which he felt would aid the Committee in their selection of a site for the colony. During the discussion Mr. Burgess depicted the lands at New Jerusalem in such glowing terms that in his Report to the Committee Mr. Baker recommended that the Board of Directors of the Society should immediately begin negotiations with the London Committee to have the lands transferred to it for colonization.

---

<sup>117</sup>The Prime Minister "was unable to say whether any, or what, special facilities would be granted" to Jewish agricultural colonization. The Deputation was encouraged however, as Abbott did say that his government was "prepared to make concessions for their object was to get people to occupy the land." Ibid.

118 Burgess repeated the Prime Minister's position regarding the nature of the proposed colony. He strongly opposed the idea of concentrating the Jewish colonists in an area all to themselves. He had observed that "when different nationalities were mixed together it created a feeling of emulation"<sup>119</sup> which encouraged an inexperienced settler to follow the example of his neighbours and "use every effort so that he should not be left behind in his farming operations."<sup>120</sup> Baker told Burgess that the Society was interested in establishing some industry which would provide employment in the winter time when farming operations had ceased. Burgess was not enthusiastic. He explained to Baker that the Icelanders had tried to combine fishing with agriculture unsuccessfully, and he therefore did not consider the Society's idea a practical one.<sup>121</sup>

Mr. Baker then proceeded to a second interview, this time with Mr. John Lowe, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture. Lowe endorsed the resolutions passed by the Society the previous fall to halt the indiscriminate movement of impoverished refugees from Western Europe to Canada.<sup>122</sup> Baker pressed the Deputy Minister for additional information about rail service in the Northwest. Lowe stated that while his Department was always willing to do all possible to benefit colonists,

---

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., Supplementary Report of the Deputation, January 14, 1892.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>He felt all steamship companies should be told that "it would be at their own risk if they conveyed crofters " to Canada. He suggested that if conditions warranted it, he could "place vessels containing such 'in bond' on their arrival." Ibid.

the question of extending rail service to the site of the Society's colony would only be considered if the colony's size "proved the necessity for further and additional railway communications."<sup>123</sup> Lowe also suggested in a more practical vein, that the Society's representatives in Europe make certain that all the immigrants bring their personal possessions with them on the same vessel; that was the best way to avoid the baggage problems which immigrants occasionally encountered.

Baker then returned to Montreal where he prepared a Report for the Board of Directors in which he outlined the Deputation's interview with the Ministers, and a Supplementary Report describing his meetings with the Deputies. In addition, he prepared a written statement of questions for the Prime Minister. Baker's questions clearly indicated that the Society was not only interested in information which the government might provide, but also hoped that other 'concessions' might be offered by the Dominion.

Baker first asked the government to suggest areas of settlement where a colony of 1,000 families (10,000 people) could homestead Dominion Lands. In making its recommendations Baker suggested the government bear in mind that if the scheme was found to work well, the number of colonists could grow even larger. In addition to considering possible expansion at some later date, Baker asked the government to give the Society sites for both closed and open settlements. He added, however, that the Prime Minister's point had been well taken by the Deputation, and that they, and "the majority of the Board" had been converted to the government's view and so thought "it better that the

---

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

second plan be adopted, thus giving the settlers the advantage of gaining by the experience of their neighbours."<sup>124</sup> Transportation to the colony and later within the established community was also an important issue for the Committee. Baker asked the government whether it would use its influence with the railroad to extend a line to their colony should they choose a site far from the line, and also whether the federal government would give the colonists assistance in building a road to the nearest town.<sup>125</sup> Baker assured the Prime Minister that the cost of transporting the colonists from Europe to Canada would be "paid for by the promoters of the scheme" but wanted to know if the government could persuade the CPR to give their Society a reduction of the rates within Canada, or failing that, if the government itself would be willing to subsidise a portion of the transit costs from the port of

---

<sup>124</sup>DLB, Baker to Abbott, January 16, 1892. After receiving Baker's questions Prime Minister Abbott had given them to Mr. Lowe for "a rough sketch of answers" emphasizing that "all information possible...be provided... as it [was] most important to secure such a large influx of immigrants." DLB, Abbott to Lowe, January, 19, 1892. Lowe completed a memo the next day in which he gave a detailed answer to the questions which he felt fell under his Department's jurisdiction. Although the Society seemed to want help in selecting land for its colonists, Lowe could only restate the policy of the Department of agriculture. It took no responsibility for the selection of land for immigrants. Such selection was to be done either by the settler himself or by agents appointed by him. Ibid., Memo, John Lowe, January 20, 1892.

<sup>125</sup>In relation to the Society's concern about future railway connections for its Colony Lowe could not answer "Departmentally". The Department's past policy was to say only that when large numbers of settlers took up lands in an area they found suitable, "the necessary transportation would not be long in reaching them." The Society's question about roads, he felt, was impossible to answer until a site had been selected. Ibid., Memo, John Lowe.

entry to the West.<sup>126</sup> The Society also had an interpreter who was fully conversant with the language of the prospective colonists and familiar with the work involved in getting them to their destinations. Baker wondered if the Society would be able to employ such a person from their own ranks and receive from the government the money to pay his expenses which would normally go to the Government Immigration Agents?<sup>127</sup> Baker also asked about a description of the assistance available for establishing schools in the Northwest and for help to drill wells in the

---

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., Baker to Abbott. It was the Lowe's opinion that "to grant any subsidy or aid towards the expense of transit from the maritime port to the North West" would contravene "the distinct policy of the Department." If such a grant was made to the Baron de Hirsch colonists, it would also have to be made to others and "a door would be opened for indefinite and large expenditures of public money." In any case, he added, the Department had already used all its influence to get transportation companies to offer the lowest rates possible. The CPR's General Passenger Agent had informed him that their immigrant rate from Europe "was a positive loss to the Company." That rate he emphasized, was "the lowest immigration rate on the continent and... it [was] out of all competition with any of the rates from New York." Lowe's strict interpretation of government policy put an end to any hopes the Society may have had that their colonization scheme might receive some federal aid for the costs involved in transporting colonists from the port at which they entered Canada to the site of the colony in the West. Ibid., Memo, John Lowe.

<sup>127</sup>The Society's desire to use its own people as interpreters who would take the place and salary of government Immigration Agents proved fruitless. Lowe felt that under the established government regulations his Department could not authorize an payment for such services which the Society might assume. Ibid., Memo, Lowe.

colony.<sup>128</sup> The Society also needed information about colonization company bonuses and more details about the 'character of the land' in the Northwest.<sup>129</sup> Having outlined the concerns of the Society, Baker expressed his hope that the P.M. would provide the Society with an early reply, as the Chairman of the Colonization Committee, Mr. Ansell, was leaving for Europe on the 25th of the month. Since Ansell was to meet with the Baron de Hirsch and others interested in colonization, he wished to have as much information as possible in his hands before his

---

<sup>128</sup>Lowe felt that the Society was misinformed about School Grants, since the Immigration Department had no authority in such matters. Schools, he explained, were a local issue and the Society should be informed that once their colony was established the settlers "would be in the same favourable position as all others in the North West, to avail themselves of school grants and school laws." Government policy on well drilling was not "to afford assistance in the sinking of wells except experimentally and for the purpose of establishing tests." The reasoning behind this policy was simply that there was "nothing more indefinite or uncertain than the results of boring" and the Government could only offer that service to the Baron de Hirsch colonists if it also offered it to all the other settlers in the West, "as what is done for one must be done for another." His advice to the Society was that they make sure "that a selection is made in localities where water can easily be found." Ibid., Memo, Lowe.

<sup>129</sup>Mr. Burgess offered a copy of an order-in-council passed on April 28, 1886, which explained how companies colonizing Dominion lands could earn free grants of land for their efforts. [See Appendix A.] He felt that the Society's request for detailed information about land in the Northwest was premature; something of a specific nature could be offered after the Society had decided on a particular area or district within which they wished to place their colony. Mr. Burgess was however, ready to give a general reply to a general question. He suggested that the Prime Minister could reassure the Society of the Northwest's suitability for settlement in no uncertain terms: "Generally speaking, it may be said that the land in the North West is the most fertile land available for settlement in the world at the present time." He also included a set of printed extracts from the field notes of surveyors, to illustrate to the Colonization Committee how they could get an idea about the land in a particular township once they had settled on a particular area to consider for colonization. Ibid., Burgess to Abbott, January, 1892.

departure.<sup>130</sup>

The findings of the Deputation were presented to its Board on January 14, 1892. Vineberg forwarded the Report and Mr. Baker's Supplement to Dr. Sonnenfeld in Paris. Vineberg was anxious to impress upon the JCA that the Society in Montreal was now firmly convinced that colonization in the Northwest was "the best method of providing a permanent livelihood for large numbers of immigrants."<sup>131</sup> He hoped, moreover, that the Mansion House Committee's failure at Moosomin would not cause the JCA to decide against providing the necessary financial support for his Society's scheme. Because conditions had changed greatly in the Northwest since the settlement at New Jerusalem, and since the Society felt that proper management had been lacking in that colonization attempt, Vineberg was confident that a new colony could be made to work.

Vineberg's next concern was a list which the Society had received from the JCA. A number of the immigrants in Montreal had grown impatient with the efforts of the Society to secure financial backing from Europe for agricultural colonization. They had chosen two of their number to go to Paris as delegates and petition the Baron for aid.

---

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., Baker to Abbott. It was more than a month, however, before the government's refusal to offer the Society's scheme any special concessions reached the Board in Montreal. A draft of answers to Mr. Baker's questions was prepared in the Department of Agriculture which combined the statements of Mr. Burgess and Mr. Lowe. The Department's Secretary, Mr. Small, had the completed draft returned to Mr. Burgess for his final comments and took a copy to Mr. Carling with whom he discussed both the Baron de Hirsch Colony scheme, and the Department's handling of it to that point. Ibid., Small to Burgess, February 1, 1892. That draft was then sent to the Prime Minister's Office, where a final draft was approved and forwarded to the Society in Montreal.

<sup>131</sup>JCA, Vineberg to Sonnenfeld, January 18, 1892.

Sonnenfeld had sent the list of names which they had presented to the Baron back to Montreal for the Society's opinion as to their suitability for agricultural pursuits.

Vineberg felt obliged to apologize for what he realized had not only been a duplication of effort, but also an action which could have caused some serious confusion and thus jeopardized the work of the Society and the hopes of all the immigrants in Montreal who wished to settle on farms in the West. The Society had tried to persuade the group to leave the arrangements in its hands, but their words had not been heeded. Vineberg was unwilling to place a great deal of blame on the immigrants though, as he remembered very distinctly

the terrible disappointment which awaited them on their arrival in this country, expecting as they did to find land ready for them to colonize, but instead thereof, to realize the fact that they were landed in this city without any means of support and nothing but distress and destitution staring them in the face.

<sup>132</sup>He insisted, however, that the success of the proposed colony would only be assured "by making wise and judicious selections of those competent, able, or willing to work on land and become practical and useful farmers."<sup>133</sup> On that note he began a lengthy commentary on the list of 74 families which Sonnenfeld had sent to him.

He began by saying that "fully one-half are entirely unfit or ineligible for colonization as farmers." A great number of those named on the list knew nothing about farming, and it was the Society's opinion that they never would. Others were considered ineligible because they did not fall into the category of real need. There were, for example,

---

<sup>132</sup>Ibid.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid.

people named on the list who had been residing in Montreal for a number of years and who were known to be making a good living, "whose only idea of going to the northwest was of a visionary nature, and purely speculative."<sup>134</sup> Some were also well-known to the Society as

mere agitators who would be a most dangerous element in any colony; who would not only set at defiance all rules and regulations laid down for the welfare of the colonists, but would also excite others to do the same, and thus lead to the inevitable ruin of the colony.

<sup>135</sup> Vineberg felt that the Society was doing others named on the list a great favour by declaring them ineligible for colonization. These were good citizens, who were making a good living in town, but had been persuaded "to think that this was an easy way of quickly becoming rich". Such colonists, Vineberg was sure, would "abandon their farms for the more congenial life of the town, as other settlers had done before them"<sup>136</sup> as soon as they realized the hardships involved in homesteading. Others on the list did not have the slightest intention of becoming farmers. They had their names placed on the list by the delegates, but had really only helped support the families of the delegates while they were in Paris.

The Board was convinced that close scrutiny of the applicants

---

<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid. It should be noted that the use of the term 'agitator' does not hold any political connotations as it is used here or in the remainder of the study. 'Trouble-maker' would be a suitable synonym. In the minds of the Colonization Committee it was firmly believed that very strict rules and regulations governing the colonists' activities would be required if the Colony was going to succeed. They attributed the failure at New Jerusalem to a lack of such close supervision and management.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid.

would be necessary to insure that the best candidates were sent out as colonists. Vineberg indicated his Society's willingness to assume the complete responsibility for the selection. He was confident in its good judgement in this area, since they were familiar with the character of all the arrivals of several years past, and because of their sincere concern and desire to contribute to the permanent improvement of the situation of all the immigrants concerned. Indeed, on the positive side of the list, there were the names of

many most desirable colonists, worthy, hardworking, and fully deserving of every support and encouragement, who would undoubtedly labour earnestly and unceasingly to improve the condition of themselves and their families and who would also be amenable to the laws and regulations laid down for the government of the colony and thus, in no small degree insuring its success.

137

Vineberg also pointed out to Dr. Sonnenfeld that of the approximately 1500 arrivals during the past navigation season "some of the most eligible farmers"<sup>138</sup> had been sent to Winnipeg and Regina where they had obtained work as farm labourers. Those who had been sent out earliest in the year had done well for themselves and were pleased with the Northwest. Others sent out later in the season had not been able to earn enough money to maintain themselves through the winter and were receiving intermittent assistance from the Society in Montreal. They were also anxiously awaiting word from the Society about funds to take up homesteads and "work for their own permanent advantage".<sup>139</sup> Finally,

---

<sup>137</sup>Ibid.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

\_\_\_\_\_ , there were named on the list people who needed no financial aid at all. They needed a place to go in the vast unsettled plains, the moral support and organizational experience of the Society, and "the advantages to be gained by forming a part of the proposed community."<sup>140</sup> Vineberg was certain that the Society could pick the most suitable families for colonization.

In making the selection Vineberg realized that a balance would have to be found between each family's need, and the Society's evaluation of its capability to withstand the rigors of farming in the Northwest. Sonnenfeld was assured that those selected would be honest, reliable, and certain to repay the amount advanced to them by the JCA. The Society was aware that the Dominion Lands Act specified the conditions under which money could be advanced to colonists by individuals, companies, and associations, and that care had to be taken by those making such advances if they wished to have some security for the repayment.<sup>141</sup> Vineberg impressed upon Dr. Sonnenfeld that immediate action was necessary if the colony was to be established in the spring. Money would be needed in the very near future to buy the cattle, implements, seed and other necessities. All would have to be in readiness for the beginning of April so that the colonists could begin working the land as soon as conditions permitted.

---

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> In order to insure the legality of such arrangements Mr. Davis, a member of the Colonization Committee who had recently gone to New York City on business, had been instructed to request "a copy of the contract used at the Woodbine Colony which it was assumed would be suitable for the colonists going west." Ibid. The Woodbine Colony was a combined agricultural and industrial settlement in the state of New York established in 1891 with the JCA's support.

Vineberg informed Sonnenfeld that Mr. Ansell was leaving for England in late January, and that he intended to interview all those in Europe who had an interest in their scheme of colonization.<sup>142</sup> The Committee would remain active in his absence, making inquiries and obtaining as much information as possible to insure the success of the scheme.<sup>143</sup> Ansell, however, was unable to meet with the Baron de Hirsch during his stay in Europe. When he arrived in London he cabled the Baron who was overseeing the operations of the JCA from his Paris office, explaining his mission and asking to arrange an interview. Ansell was sure that such a meeting was the only way to explain his Society's work on behalf of the Russian Jewish immigrants in Montreal, and at the same time impress upon the Baron the "absolute necessity of providing lands for [such refugees] if they continued to come to Canada."<sup>144</sup>

Unable to arrange a meeting, however, Ansell posted a letter to Sonnenfeld several days later, in mid-February. He first warned the JCA against buying any land in the West from speculators since good homestead land was available from the Canadian government. The previous failure in the Moosomin area should not cause the Baron any undue anxiety he added; "the cause of the...fiasco was want of organization. Immigrants [had gone] out without arrangements having been made before

---

<sup>142</sup>Mr. Ansell was combining the Society's business with a well-deserved vacation, and in his absence Mr. Davis was 'Acting Chairman'.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., Ansell to Hirsch, February 12, 1892. ,

hand, and without provisions for them after their arrival."<sup>145</sup> The immigrants the Society had sent West early enough in the season had done well, and Ansell was confident that a new effort at colonization would succeed in the Northwest. He suggested that if the JCA advanced \$500 per family through the YMHBS in Montreal the money advanced would be repaid with interest in three or four years. In the meantime he suggested, "the enhanced value of the land acquired by the settlers would provide a valuable investment"<sup>146</sup> for the JCA. Tight organization of the scheme and the employment of Gentile overseers to superintend the farming operations of the Colonists would be necessary, he cautioned. In closing, he expressed the hope that Sonnenfeld would contact him immediately if there was anything that still needed explanation; he reassured the Director that the YMHBS was interested only in assisting the JCA achieve its objectives.<sup>147</sup>

Ansell's exhortation was unnecessary. On February the 15th, the day before he posted his letter to Sonnenfeld, the Society had informed the government that financial backing for their colonization scheme had been confirmed. The JCA had informed the Society that it should

...make arrangements for settling 60 of the families of the Russian refugees who arrived last season, and [who were] likely to make good farmers, on land in Canada, directly the season [opened]. Sufficient funds would be provided for the purpose.

<sup>148</sup>With funding secured, the work of the Colonization Committee

---

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., Ansell to Hirsch, February 16, 1892.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid.

continued with renewed vigor. They were undaunted by the tardiness of the government's reply to Mr. Baker's questions which also reached the Society in mid-February, and they were undaunted by the steadfastness of the government to refuse to grant them any of the special concession which their Deputation had sought in its meeting with the Prime Minister in January.<sup>149</sup>

Although the government decided not to grant the Jewish colonization scheme any special concessions the Society was confident that the support offered by the JCA would make the project possible and eventually successful. The Society's report and Mr. Ansell's remarks strongly supported the contention that, inspite of the failure of New Jerusalem, the Canadian Northwest offered excellent conditions for both farming and colonization. Both the Society and the Russian-Jewish refugees in Montreal felt that quick action was imperative. The colonists would have to be selected, outfitted and sent to the West in early spring so that they could take advantage of the entire season and manage to become self-sufficient by the fall of the year.

---

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., Burgess to Abbott, January 26, 1892.

## 5. WISE AND JUDICIOUS SELECTION

The Colonization committee set to work with renewed vigor in mid-February in spite of the government's refusal to grant any special concessions. With the funding for the colony assured by the JCA much work had to be completed before spring. The Committee set itself the task of selecting the families which would become agriculturalists in the Northwest. They also began searching for someone to organize and manage the colony in the West for the Society. The Committee realized that it would have to appoint someone immediately to explore possible areas for colonization and make a selection.<sup>150</sup>

It was early March before the Colonization Committee forwarded its selection of colonists to Paris for the JCA's approval. The Committee had commented on each of those named. The Committee's selection of colonists began with a careful analysis of the names on the petition sent to Paris earlier by the dissidents. The refugees named in the Paris list were carefully evaluated for their "fitness...to be placed on land as farmers in the North West."<sup>151</sup> Thirty-three of those who had petitioned Baron de Hirsch were finally selected by the Committee in Montreal. Eleven other families who had also arrived in the city in 1891 were also placed on the Committee's list. In addition, the committee selected thirty-one other families of Jewish refugees who were already in the West for the colonization scheme. They had arrived as immigrants in 1891 and had been sent out to Winnipeg, Regina, and Brandon, where they had managed to find work as farm labourers. Nine other families were suggested for the colony who had not come in 1891.

---

<sup>150</sup>JCA, Vineberg to Sonnenfeld, February 11, 1892.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid., Vineberg to Sonnenfeld, March 3, 1892.

They had been living in Montreal for some time, had some savings of their own, but needed a little financial help to start farming.

The two delegates who had petitioned the Baron in Paris earlier that winter did not fare too well in the Report. They were, Vineberg stated, "both agitators and would undoubtedly lead to the ruin of the Colony if placed upon it." Another man whose name had also been on the list taken to Paris by the delegates was considered to be even more dangerous. He was known to have a history of troublemaking; he had been forced to leave Palestine because of difficulties he experienced with authorities there with whom he had subsequently "entered into litigation".<sup>152</sup> The total number of families which the Committee recommended for the Colony was 84. The JCA's limit of funds had been for sixty families of ten persons each. At five hundred dollars per family the Committee had calculated that the JCA would be sending the Society \$30,000 to start a colony of 600 persons. Since its suggested list of 84 families fell well below the average size of ten persons the Committee felt that by "judicious arrangement and management"<sup>153</sup> it could amalgamate some of the families and so have the sixty units for which funds were to be provided.

Vineberg also informed Sonnenfeld that they had obtained a copy of the contract which had been used to secure money advanced to individuals in the Woodbine Colony, but that it was unsuitable for their purposes. Maxwell Goldstein, the Society's lawyer, had therefore been asked to prepare a more suitable contract. It would be forwarded to Paris for the JCA's approval when it was completed. In the meantime the

---

<sup>152</sup>Ibid.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid.

Society was anxiously waiting for the money promised by the JCA in mid-February. In March the Society heard reports that spring would probably arrive early in the Northwest. The colonists had to be ready to work the land as soon as conditions permitted. That meant that they should be on their land by the first week of April.<sup>154</sup> With the opening of the navigation season also just around the corner, the Society was even more alarmed by a letter it received from a Committee in Berlin. The Berlin Committee told the Society in Montreal to be prepared to receive about two hundred refugees. The Society had immediately informed Berlin that the money designated by the Baron de Hirsch through the JCA was to be used on behalf of the Russian Jewish refugees who had arrived in Canada in 1891, not for those who might be sent in the current year.

In a letter to Sonnenfeld the Society's president made it clear that because of the nearness of spring the money for the colonization scheme would have to be forthcoming in the very near future if the Society was to ensure that the colonists could be ready for the spring seeding. Something definite had to be done immediately to get the colonists out of the city and working to support themselves, as otherwise the Society would be totally incapacitated by the pressure of new arrivals from Europe.<sup>155</sup> Another week passed and the Society had still received no word from Paris. As the middle of March approached Vineberg again wrote to Sonnenfeld to impress upon him the urgency and need for immediate funds in Canada. Spring would not wait for the colonists: the money was needed so that everyone and everything necessary to get the Colony off to a good start would be in place in the

---

<sup>154</sup>Ibid., Vineberg to Sonnenfeld, March 3, 1892.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid.

West when the weather and the land were ready for seeding.

The Society obtained the forms of contract which the colonists would be required to sign for the money which would be advanced to them by the JCA through the YMHBS. Vineberg enclosed copies of the three forms for Sonnenfeld's approval: the first was an Agreement Made at the City of Montreal, which had been drawn up by Mr. Goldstein; the second and third were an Acknowledgement and Charge and Statement of Expense form, and an Acknowledgement and charge for Intending Settlers form, which had been obtained from the government. The first form had been drawn up by the Society's solicitor because the two government forms only provided security for monies which had already been advanced to the colonists. Mr. Goldstein had been advised to apply on the Society's behalf for the government's permission "to insert a clause to provide for advances which may be made in the future."<sup>156</sup> The first form would have to suffice until the mortgages were duly executed in accordance with the Dominion Lands Act, after the settlers had selected their homesteads. Nothing further could be done by the Society in Montreal until the funds were in its hands.

The Society appointed two men to investigate possible sites for the colony. Their orders were to examine the Moosomin Lands and then check lands in the Prince Albert, Edmonton, Red Deer and other areas which had been suggested to the Colonization Committee by the Dominion government. The two men entrusted with the task of finding a suitable site for the colony were the Superintendent of the school at the Baron de Hirsch Institute, Mr. Ignatius Roth, and the man hired by the Society to manage its colony, Mr. Charles McDiarmid, "an experienced Canadian

---

<sup>156</sup>Ibid.

farmer of Scottish descent"<sup>157</sup> who had been highly recommended to the Society for his reliability, experience and ability to tackle their special project. The Board was convinced of his integrity and felt certain that he would be able to both instruct and manage the colonists. They hired him for a one year period at a salary of \$100 per month.<sup>158</sup> Armed with a letter of introduction from Mr. Burgess to agents of the Dominion Lands Branch, the two men set out for the West in late March. But it was not until April 25th that they were able to agree on a site for the colony. Mr. McDiarmid sent a telegram to the Dominion Lands Branch Office in Winnipeg asking that lands in Township 3, Range 5, West of the second meridian be reserved for Jewish settlers who would be arriving in the West from Montreal in a short time.<sup>159</sup> The site selected for the Colony by McDiarmid and Roth was not in the vicinity of the Moosomin Lands which the London Committee had offered to the Society for colonization purposes. A site in the south-eastern corner of the Northwest Territories and only 12 miles north of the border was selected. The lands reserved for Jewish colonization were only four miles from the Souris River and 7 miles from the Souris Coal Fields.

The inspection of the Moosomin lands convinced the men to look elsewhere for lands. The only remains of New Jerusalem that they found were the ruins of the synagogue and two houses, all without doors, windows or flooring. Any other buildings which had been erected had either been destroyed by a prairie fire or dismantled and taken away.

---

<sup>157</sup>JCA, Vineberg to Sonnenfeld, May 5, 1892.

<sup>158</sup>"as a matter of business he...furnished bonds for the faithful discharge of his duties to the amount of \$3000". Ibid.

<sup>159</sup>DLB, McDiarmid to D.L.B., April 24, 1892.

Since the lands did not have any assets such as usable buildings which would help cut down the initial expenses of building a new colony it seemed reasonable to opt for a new site, if one could be found that was more attractive.<sup>160</sup> The Moosomin lands would still be available should the London Committee desire to make another attempt at Colonization to aid the Russian Jewish refugees in its charge. Although the Moosomin lands were not saleable at the time, the Society realized that as soon as the adjacent quarter-sections were settled the abandoned lands would become valuable.<sup>161</sup>

The Souris site had several qualities which convinced the Society that it had found an excellent colonization site. The area was reported to be perfectly suited for agriculture, predominantly rolling prairie, with some meadow land which would be ideal for raising stock, some excellent hay sloughs, an abundant surface water supply and spring water available from wells at a depth of 15 to 25 feet. In addition, poles for building houses could be found along the nearby river, and coal for heating in winter from the coal fields for only \$1.50 a ton.<sup>162</sup> Vineberg was sure that labour would be in demand there and that the colonists could easily supplement their income in the winter months. He also hinted to the JCA that the Society was considering another enterprise in concert with the agricultural colony which would further aid the colonists during the winter months. The proximity of the Souris Coal fields and the abundance of excellent 'brick earth' within the Colony site encouraged Vineberg to assert that establishing a brick

---

<sup>160</sup>JCA, Vineberg to Sonnenfeld, May 5, 1892.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid.

factory at the Colony would

not only give plenty of employment to the colonists when not engaged in agricultural pursuits, but [would] also make the settlement one of the most thriving in the North West.

<sup>163</sup> A final consideration which made the Souris site attractive was its location along the right of way for a CPR branch line being constructed through the area. If construction of the line proceeded as planned, none of the colonists would be further than six miles from the railway station which was to be opened in the township. When completed, the Souris Branch line would link the colony to Brandon and Winnipeg to the East, and later to Regina, the capital of the Territories to the west and north. The nearest town to the site was Oxbow, about 17 miles east. A railway station had already been built there, and the CPR was expected to open the line seven miles further west, to the proposed townsite of Alameda, by the end of May. Before the fall a station was to be opened in the township of the colony site.

The news came as a welcome relief to the Society in Montreal as it had been plagued by a shortage of money and time while McDiarmid and Roth had been scouring the West for suitable lands. The target date for getting the colonists to the West, the first week of April, passed before a site was selected and before any money arrived. The Board began to despair at that point because it was clear to them that if the colonists were not sent west early enough it would soon "be too late for them to do much good"<sup>164</sup> on their farms during that season. In spite of a frantic exchange of letters and telegrams, however, it was mid-April before money was in the Society's hands and members of the Colonization

---

<sup>163</sup>Ibid.

<sup>164</sup>JCA, Vineberg to Sonnenfeld, April 5, 1892.

Committee could begin purchasing supplies to outfit their colonists. Even so, they were still unable to purchase everything that was necessary, as they had been sent less money than they had expected. Initially, when the JCA had approved the Colony of 60 families at \$500 per family, the figure of 100,000 francs had been mooted. The Society had assumed that the whole sum was to be put at their disposal at once, but the Association had seen fit to limit the number of families it would advance funds to from 60 to 40 and sent an installment of only 35,000 francs.<sup>165</sup>

This turn of events bitterly disappointed the Society's Board of Directors; they felt that the curtailment of funds reflected a lack of confidence in their ability to undertake the project. Some were so discouraged that they considered abandoning the whole project. Their interest and involvement in the work to that time, and their sincere desire to ease the distress of the refugees who were now prospective colonists, encouraged them to press on with the work.<sup>166</sup> The Colonization Committee spent 33,200 francs (approximately \$6,640) buying equipment for the settlers and purchasing their railway fares for the trip West. With a manager hired and a site selected for the Colony, the Society members felt confident that they had done their best to ensure the success of the project.

Little time was wasted once word was received about the location of the Colony. On April 28, 1892, at 9:30 p.m., the President and Officers of the YMHBS and "many of the most influential members of the Jewish community in the city and some prominent citizens whose sympathy

---

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., April 14, 1892.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid.

was with the Society and the work it had undertaken...", gathered at the Railway Depot in Montreal to witness the departure of the men selected as colonists.<sup>167</sup> Their train was scheduled to arrive at Oxbow, some 1600 miles to the West, on the following Monday, May 2, 1892. From there the colonists would go overland to the area reserved for their Colony.

Since the colonists left too late to hope to plant and harvest a wheat crop, the Society gave McDiarmid specific instructions for the colony's first few months of development. Once the colonists reached the site McDiarmid was to hire four experienced Westerners to help him for a few weeks to teach the men how to plough and seed the land. Instead of wheat they would plant faster maturing crops such as oats and barley as well as garden vegetables so that everyone would be well supplied with food in the winter. In the fall they would plough up some land so that they would be ready for seeding wheat in the spring.<sup>168</sup> Because of the shortage of funds for stock and equipment and because of their late start, the Society had decided that initially the colonists would work in four groups, sharing the available tools, implements and animals. Each of McDiarmid's assistants would take charge of one group. When the seeding was finished, houses would have to be constructed immediately so that the Society could forward the families of the men to the Colony. The expense of keeping the men's families in Montreal to that time was to be "charged to the account"<sup>169</sup> which the Society was keeping for each colonist. Once the ploughing, seeding, and

---

<sup>167</sup>Ibid., May 5, 1892.

<sup>168</sup>Ibid.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid.

construction was finished the work groups would be disbanded, the assistants discharged, the homesteads selected, and the cattle, implements and tools divided among the colonists "under the supervision of one of the members of the Board"<sup>170</sup> who would go West for that purpose.

In the interim, McDiarmid was instructed to obtain 73 homesteads for the Colony, a quarter-section for each of the males over 18 selected as colonists. Before leaving Montreal each colonist had an account opened with the Society and signed a preliminary agreement to repay the amounts charged to his account. The preliminary agreement would be

replaced by the Government Mortgage, as defined by the Dominion Lands Act, as soon as its terms had been completed by the Society and the value of the advances to the Colonists certified to by the Dominion Land Agent in accordance with the said act.

<sup>171</sup>The Society paid the fees for homestead entry, which would be refunded when the homesteader had fulfilled his homestead obligations. These obligations included the breaking and cultivation of at least five acres in the first year, ten in the second and fifteen more in the third. Each settler also had to build a house and reside on his land or within two miles of it for at least six months of every year. The Society was confident that all of its colonists would be able to meet these requirements. They had selected "for the most part" men who appeared to be strong and ready to work. While all professed "some knowledge of farming" only a few had actually worked on the land previously. McDiarmid's management and farming assistants would be charged with overcoming this deficiency in practical farming knowledge

---

<sup>170</sup>Ibid.

<sup>171</sup>Ibid.

and experience; their efforts would however be supplemented by the skills of several tradesmen in the group, including a carpenter, a bricklayer, and a blacksmith. One colonist was a shochet, a ritual slaughterer, so the dietary requirements of the new prairie Jewish community would not be neglected.<sup>172</sup>

The departure of the colonists from Montreal in late April signalled an end to one phase of the Colonization Committee's work, and the commencement of a new phase, with added responsibilities. The YMHBS in Montreal was confronted in the summer of 1891 with a large influx of destitute Russian Jewish refugees. For some of those refugees who had no hope of finding employment in Montreal or Eastern Canada and no friends or relations to turn to in all of North America, a solution had been proposed and initiated. Colonization in Western Canada, homesteading Dominion lands, would be their new livelihoods and security. From this moment forward the Society's attention would be pulled in two directions: to the East, far across the Atlantic to Paris where the the JCA was in charge of disbursing money for the many projects recently undertaken by the Baron de Hirsch; and to the West where the Colony was in need of assistance.

---

<sup>172</sup>Ibid.

## 6. MORE GENEROUS THAN MOSES

The Hirsch Colony attempted to fulfill two major goals shared by the JCA and the YMHBS. The colonization scheme promised homes and jobs for many of the unemployed Jewish refugees who had arrived in Montreal in 1891. The Colony was also to prove to the world that Jews could become successful farmers if they were given the opportunity. According to the mandate given the JCA by its founder, Baron de Hirsch, these two goals were to be achieved by philanthropy operating according to business principles. The philanthropic aspect of the JCA's work was that loans were made available to individuals willing and able to pursue these goals whose circumstances were such that in the normal course of the business world they would not have been eligible for loans. The JCA had been founded as a 'Limited Company' but remained a non-profit organization as its shares were made non-dividend paying in an article of its charter. Its work, however, was to be carried on according to sound business practices, including the repayment of loans or advances to the colonists.

The large-scale abandonment of lands at Hirsch was precipitated by three separate and distinct problems. These problems were, first, the general nature of the financial and administrative arrangements made between the JCA, the YMHBS, and the Colonists; second, the management of the Colony's day to day operation by the agents selected by the YMHBS; and third, the colonists' reaction to the practical and material challenges they faced at Hirsch Colony. The conclusion of the chapter is that the departure of the majority of the Hirsch Colonists resulted from the cumulative effects of the three problems. The chapter proceeds in a chronological fashion, highlighting the three themes as they arise in the narrative. The focus is provided by the various agents sent by the YMHBS to the Colony for its management, administration and

investigation. Mr. Charles McDiarmid's term as the Colony's first manager/administrator begins the chapter, followed by Mr. Roth, Mr. Baker, Mr. Lazarus Cohen, Mr. Baker and Mr. Isaac Mendels.<sup>173</sup>

Mr. McDiarmid faced an arduous task at Hirsch in the late spring of 1892. Having accepted the job as both the manager of the Colony and administrator of the funds entrusted to the YMHBS by the JCA his responsibilities were heavy. His job was made even more difficult from the very beginning by the financial arrangements between the JCA and the Society in Montreal. The project got off to a late and consequently bad start because the money did not arrive early enough in the spring. As a result the colonists reached the West too late to put in a wheat crop on their homesteads. The next major source of headaches for the manager and discontent among the settlers was that the money was made available to the Society in several installments rather than in a lump sum. From the beginning the colonists lacked complete outfits and this prevented them from starting work on their own homesteads. Also, because some of the 'groups of 10' were made up of several families, McDiarmid had to see that the available equipment and teams were shared equitably among these smaller units, each of which was trying to cultivate land on different quarter-sections within the Colony. Other factors made it

---

<sup>173</sup>Mr. McDiarmid was responsible for the Colony from the spring of 1892 until the end of December of that year. Mr. Roth arrived in November to assist McDiarmid and assumed his duties until Mr. Baker arrived in late March of 1893. Mr. Baker returned to Montreal in the fall of 1893 to report to the Board and attend to his own business and personal affairs. Later, in the fall of 1893 Mr. Cohen, the Society's treasurer visited the colony. He returned to Montreal and reported to the Board in late January of 1894. Mr. Baker agreed to return to the West and manage the colony during the spring and summer of 1894. Another member of the Society, Mr. Mendels, managed the Society's remaining colonists from 1895 until the JCA took over the responsibility at the turn of the century. He was asked to continue in that role by the JCA.

clear from the outset that the funds which the JCA designated for the completion of the entire project would be insufficient. The JCA had finally limited the Colony to forty groups or families of ten, at \$500 per group. The Society allowed the Colony to swell to forty-nine units.

In the face of these early financial restrictions the Board of the Society decided to economize on the overall cost of the project by hiring one man, McDiarmid, to be both their administrator and manager. Although it had wanted to fill the position with someone of the Jewish faith who could also easily relate to the Russian refugees, it had been unable to find a Jew who combined the necessary managerial and administrative talents with a practical knowledge and experience in farming. Mr. McDiarmid came with strong recommendations.<sup>174</sup>

In Montreal McDiarmid was issued a complete set of account books and instructed on their use. He was also given an account book for each colonist and was told that he could spend a maximum of \$500 to outfit and maintain each family or group of ten. He was told that full details of the expenses of each colonist were required for the legal completion of the government mortgages which he would need to complete for the Society to secure the advances. The Society also opened a special colonization account through which the money from the JCA was to be channelled to the Colony. The Society was determined at first that all accounts would be paid by cheques written in Montreal on the Colonization Account by two members of the Board entrusted with the responsibility. The Board's vision of the financial administration and management of the Colony were quickly altered by the realities faced by McDiarmid and the colonists in the Northwest.

---

<sup>174</sup>JCA, hart to Sonnenfeld, December 12, 1892.

McDiarmid soon realized that he had undertaken more than he could properly handle. The colonists were even "greener" than he had imagined and required close supervision and instruction in almost all the tasks involved in homesteading. He decided to neglect the administrative side of his responsibilities and concentrate on ploughing and planting and then house construction. The Society wanted housing completed as soon as possible after the spring work was finished so that the men's families could be sent out to the Colony from Montreal.

The colonists were divided into four work groups before they left for the West. McDiarmid was instructed to hire four assistants from the local area who could help him teach the colonists ploughing and planting. Because of the shortage of equipment and the men's inexperience McDiarmid had all four groups work the land on a vacant quarter-section in the Colony. This quarter became known as the 'Society Farm' and later as Hirsch Colony's 'Experimental Farm'. In the process of the training the groups ploughed and planted between 40 and 50 acres.

After the spring work and training had been finished on the Society Farm the colonists selected their homesteads. Because of a shortage of carpentry tools and experience McDiarmid decided to keep the work groups together for the house construction. The colonists' inexperience and lack of tools caused McDiarmid to think that the houses would not be completed by his men so he hired two local carpenters to supervise the work and see that the houses were properly constructed. The shortage of tools and equipment resulted in much enforced idleness and discouragement among the colonists. The large work groups were inefficient and the units of ten made equitable use of the society's resources difficult. Some of the teams of oxen and horses were badly overworked. The slow progress with the house construction delayed the

arrival of the colonists' families who were still in Montreal. There was also much unrest among the Colonists whose families were still in Russia or stranded somewhere in Europe. With no opportunity to harvest a wheat crop, the colonists realized that they would be without cash to send to their families for their subsistence during the winter and would certainly not be able to provide them with passage to Canada. Because the colonists were generally strangers to one another, the group work parties and the communal use of the available equipment broke down. As each colonist tried to get as much breaking done on his own homestead as possible, quarrels broke out over the equipment and rapidly overworked teams. The arrival of the families from Montreal in the late summer eased some of the colonists' anxieties, but other troubles were already brewing at the Colony.<sup>175</sup>

The troubles stemmed from McDiarmid's neglect of his financial and administrative responsibilities. His loose accounting methods were quickly and clearly perceived by both the colonists and the local merchants. As a result the Society's manager became known among the colonists as a man 'more generous than Moses'. He unwittingly gave the appearance of a generous benefactor who doled out supplies and kept no ledgers. This behaviour fostered a feeling of continued dependence at the Colony which was further aggravated by the shortages of equipment and the uncertainty of funds and supplies arriving from Montreal. Many felt that 'relief' was being continued rather than advances being made. Inequalities occurred as well, as some colonists' houses were more

---

<sup>175</sup>JCA, Examination of McDiarmid by Board of YMHBS, Montreal, December 22, 1892.

expensive than others.<sup>176</sup>

McDiarmid's most serious shortcoming, however, was in the issuing of supplies. He allowed colonists to pick up goods from local merchants without written orders from him and usually without a receipt with details of the purchases. Furthermore he circumvented the Society's decision to have all the Colony's financial transactions go through its Montreal account. McDiarmid insisted that he had to deal with local people who would only deal in cash, so he asked the Society to forward bank drafts which he cashed and applied as necessary. There was a delay of one month to six weeks before the Society received an installment it requested from Paris and forwarding drafts to the manager took additional time. Because the nearest bank was at Brandon, and the funds were also sent in installments, banking trips often kept McDiarmid away from the Colony for several days at a time.<sup>177</sup> His absence left his assistants, carpenters and the colonists unsupervised and this, coupled with the shortage of equipment, encouraged idleness and quarrels. In McDiarmid's absence there was no one with the authority to settle the problems fairly. Problems among the colonists were further aggravated by a number of 'external' Jewish colonists who had followed the Society's colonists into the area to homestead on their own. Some, however, made use of the Society's resources as if it were communal

---

<sup>176</sup>Ibid.

<sup>177</sup>McDiarmid had no safe place to keep the money at the Colony. He apparently made an arrangement with the local Land Agent, Major C.E. Phipps, who agreed to act as his banker. Their transactions were a source of confusion when the dispute between the government and the Society arose regarding lands later abandoned at Hirsch.

property.<sup>178</sup>

In August two members of the Board paid a visit to the Colony. Mr. Friedman and Mr. M. Vineberg inspected the Colony and divided up the equipment hitherto used in common by the colonists. Both were busy men of business who had only a short time available for the purpose and their limited time was quickly exhausted settling the disputes which had arisen, and rearranging the colonists on homesteads which suited family members better. They also split up the families which had been living together on one quarter. They had time to see that land had been ploughed, crops and gardens planted and that good frame houses had been built. They assumed that the Society was getting a fair return for the money it had expended for the JCA. They did not, however, have time to go into McDiarmid's bookkeeping system, which they later learned was practically non-existent, and the Manager did not mention that he was not keeping individual accounts for the colonists. Nor did he suggest that accounts had been opened in local stores by many of the colonists.

<sup>179</sup> After the departure of the Board members the problems of McDiarmid's management intensified.

The lack of cash among the colonists and the desire of many of them to be united with families still in Europe led to several incidents which tarnished the image of independent Jewish homesteaders. Neither the JCA nor the Society would come forward with funds for the passage of family members of colonists still overseas. With no cash crop of their own to harvest, some of the colonist neglected their land to work on

---

<sup>178</sup>JCA, Hart to Sonnenfeld, December 12, 1892.

<sup>179</sup>JCA, Report of Board Members' Visit to Hirsch, YMHS, Montreal, August 14, 1892.

farms in the area in order to get some cash. Others, in desperation, sold some of their stock and equipment so that they could at least provide some support for their far off families. Still others took advantage of McDiarmid's loose accounting system to order extra goods or coal which they peddled in the area for a profit. Inequalities became clear as it seemed that some were getting the better of McDiarmid and the Society's funds. Then, during one of McDiarmid's banking trips, a rumour circulated that McDiarmid had made a homestead entry in his own name for the 'Society Farm', the land ploughed and seeded collectively by the colonists. After that the majority of the colonists completely lost confidence in their manager and refused to listen to his orders and stopped working. A delay in funding from Paris in the fall, after the original allotment had been used up, also caused much anxiety as supplies began running out. The colonists' refusal to share the mowing and raking machines meant that the Colony approached the winter without an adequate supply of hay. Late in the fall the Society in Montreal began receiving complaints, in letters from the colonists, about their manager and shortages of essential supplies at the Colony. Then accounts began arriving in Montreal from local merchants in the vicinity of the Colony which the Society had no idea had been contracted.

The Society had instructed McDiarmid to send in monthly financial reports before he left for the Colony in the spring. Throughout the summer and fall the Society had repeatedly asked for the accounts and statements, but had been constantly rebuffed by the Manager's reply that he would do the books when he had time. When unfavourable reports, talk of shortages, new accounts and demands for payment started arriving however, the Board took action. In November it

sent Mr. Roth to the colony with instructions to assist McDiarmid.<sup>180</sup>

A storeroom had been completed in the townsite of Hirsch near the railway station. To economize on the winter maintenance costs, the Board was now able to supply the colonists through their own store, with goods purchased and supplied to the colony at wholesale prices from Montreal. Roth was to take charge of the issuing of supplies and any other tasks that would leave McDiarmid the time to do the books and send them to Montreal. Roth's first letters convinced the Board that McDiarmid and all his accounts and receipts had to be recalled to Montreal at once. Not only were the colonists poorly supplied for the winter, but the Colony's finances were in a mess.<sup>181</sup>

It was late in December, however, before McDiarmid appeared before the Board to answer their many questions and complete the colony's financial report. McDiarmid's answers convinced the Board that his loose management had encouraged the Colonists to take advantage of him and the resources at his disposal. Because he had allowed them to obtain goods from local merchants without written orders or receipts, it was almost impossible to ascertain how much each individual had received or if the accounts they were being asked to pay were accurate. McDiarmid had permitted many extravagant purchases despite the knowledge that he could spend a maximum of only 500 dollars per family. An audit

---

<sup>180</sup>Mr. Roth had been employed by the Society as Superintendent of the Baron de Hirsch Institute during the winter and worked as an Interpreter for the Steamship Companies in Montreal during the summer. After his experience managing Hirsch he returned to the Colony and homesteaded the quarter known as the Society Farm. Although buildings had been erected and about fifty acres ploughed by the work parties being trained by McDiarmid in 1892, Roth abandoned his land along with many of the other Hirsch Colonists.

<sup>181</sup>JCA, Roth to Vineberg, November 22, 1892.

of the Colonization Account revealed a deficit of over \$5000.<sup>182</sup>

The Board's examination of McDiamid and his accounts and explanations did not uncover any hint of dishonesty in his actions. But his failure to follow instructions and keep detailed accounts as well as his management of the colonists provided them with ample cause to dismiss him from his position. This was done after his examination before the Board in late December of 1892. Mr. Roth was left in charge of the storeroom at Hirsch for the next several months. He kept a strict account of supplies issued to each colonist and from time to time came across new irregularities and outstanding accounts, about which he dutifully informed the Board. Roth also warned all the local merchants that any new accounts opened by colonists would no longer be underwritten by the Society.

The Baron de Hirsch was extremely unhappy with the Society's report on the financial condition of the JCA's only colonization project in Canada which was submitted to Paris early in 1893, after McDiamid had been questioned and the Colonization accounts audited. The \$20,000 originally estimated by the Colonization Committee as the total amount necessary to outfit and maintain forty families or groups of ten on homesteads in the West had been exhausted by the late summer. In view of the late start which prevented the colonists from planting and harvesting a cash crop that season, the JCA had agreed to provide \$16,500 more which the Society estimated would complete the outfitting of the colonists and maintain them until they harvested their first crop the next fall. Now the JCA faced a huge deficit, the colonists were

---

<sup>182</sup>JCA, Examination of McDiamid by the Board of the YMHBS, Montreal, December 22, 1892.

still not independently outfitted, and they still needed relief.<sup>183</sup>

The Board accepted full responsibility for the state of affairs which had developed because it had placed too much trust in its Manager. It also admitted that the Colonization Committee's first estimate had been far too low and not based on sufficient information. The Board also concluded that based on this experience, it was impossible for the Society to oversee such a project at a distance of more than 1600 miles. It was strongly recommended that the JCA should hire an administrator and a manager of its own choice who could devote their complete attention to the work.<sup>184</sup> The Board was convinced that all was not lost or wasted by the months of inefficient management. Mr. Roth was now keeping accounts and the amount advanced to each colonist would be determined as accurately as possible. It was estimated that the work would be completed with an additional \$12,000 which would cover the ourstanding accounts and keep the colonists supplied until the next fall.

To bolster its case the Board pointed out that all the lands at the colony had increased in value as a result of the cultivation and construction. The Society Farm had buildings on it, and almost 50 acres broken and ready for the spring seedinng of wheat. At the Hirsch townsite the Society was operating a store which was also the dwelling for its manager. It had purchased the lot from the CPR near the railway station. The stock, tools, and equipment and houses provided other

---

<sup>183</sup>Ibid., L. A. Hart to Sonnenfeld, December 12, 1892. Hart had taken over as President of the Society in November, but Vineberg remained an active member of the Board and the Colonization Committee.

<sup>184</sup>JCA, Hart, to Sonnenfeld, December 12, 1892.

material evidence of the money already spent. The colonists had signed preliminary agreements to mortgage their homesteads to the Society for the amounts advanced to them, and the government permitted advances of up to 600 dollars to be secured by such liens.<sup>185</sup> The Association agreed to continue the project, but the problem of managing and administrating the Colony was left in the hands of the Society. Late in February, 1893, the Board sent its Clerk and the Principal of the Baron de Hirsch School to the Colony to take over for Mr. Roth and Manage the Colony during the next crop year.

Mr. Baker was charged with four major assignments. He was to carry out a thorough investigation and submit a complete report on any remaining outstanding liabilities which the Society had incurred at Hirsch and vicinity. Secondly, he was to supply the colonists with seed grain and see that it was planted. Thirdly, he was to see to the establishment of schools in the colony. And fourth, he was to obtain the government mortgages or liens, to replace the preliminary agreements and secure the advances made to the colonists.

Mr. Baker's investigation suggested that almost everyone in the locality, the colonists, local storekeepers and other settlers had been encouraged to take full advantage of the Society's funds as a result of McDiarmid's unsystematic administration. All kinds of claims were filed and for a time new accounts seemed to pop up daily. Some were adjusted on the spot, while others were held back, until it could be determined whether the Society should challenge them in court. Baker found that not only had the colonists had an easy time under McDiarmid, but that some of the locals employed by McDiarmid had enjoyed what was known as a

---

<sup>185</sup>Ibid., Hart to Sonnenfeld, January 19, 1893.

"soft snap" while on the Society's payroll.<sup>186</sup>

Baker made it clear that a new order had come to the colony. Often referred to as 'Captain Baker', he was well acquainted with the exercise of discipline and authority. He brought to the Colony the qualifications of a teacher with a First Class Diploma supplemented by a military certificate in drill.<sup>187</sup> His approach to the colony's management soon resulted in trouble. He proclaimed rules for the issuing of supplies which limited the number of Colonists permitted in the store at one time to two. A large group marched up to the Store and demanded to be issued their supplies as a group as had been done before. When Baker refused a disturbance ensued and the colonists forced their way into the store to make their demands heard. Two colonists were subsequently arrested by the NWMP for their parts in the disturbance and convicted of forcible entry and assault.<sup>188</sup>

Mr. Baker had been given much latitude by the Society to insure that order would be re-established at the Colony. He chose to press charges after the disturbance in order to make an example of the colonists and show the others that his orders and rules were law at the colony. In order to get the colonists back to work on their homesteads he was allowed to cut off supplies to those who did not work. Although his actions caused a good deal of resentment and animosity, the

---

<sup>186</sup>Ibid., Baker Report, August 24, 1893.

<sup>187</sup>Mr. Baker, the principal of the Baron de Hirsch School, possessed a Teachers Act Certificate from South Kensington, London and was a graduate of the school at Wellington Barracks, London. He was also recognized as a qualified musician. JCA, Ansell to JCA, May 29, 1900.

<sup>188</sup>Public Archives of Canada, RCMP Records, RG 18, [Henceforth RCMP], volume 76, file 137-151, April 1893.

conviction of the two 'rioters' put an end to active resistance and for the time being the colonists got back to their work.<sup>189</sup>

Mr. Baker saw to it that each colonist had seed wheat planted in the land they had broken the previous fall and potatoes planted in the new breaking. Flax and oats were also seeded and everyone put in large gardens. Although equipment shortages remained a problem much work was accomplished on the individual homesteads. Baker's assessment of the colonists, despite the early disturbance, convinced him that they were "a good, strong, hardy set of men, superior to most of the neighbouring settlers and if they would only work, would soon do well."<sup>190</sup> The colonists organized school districts which they named Hirsch, Vineberg and Ansell. Three colonists were elected to each district and plans were made to construct school houses valued at \$600 each.<sup>191</sup>

Baker's fourth task, having the mortgages signed, was more difficult. Under McDiarmid not all the entries had been completed. Switches had occurred during the summer and fall as sons old enough to enter for land tried to get quarters as close to their parents' homesteads as possible. Because the government had reserved the area for the Colony McDiarmid had not been worried about the incomplete entries. On Baker's advice the Society sent the local Dominion Lands Agent, Major C.E. Phipps, \$150 to complete the Society's payment for the remaining entries. Once the entries were all completed the Society's designated agent, the manager, had to complete a statement of expenses

---

<sup>189</sup>JCA, Baker Report, August, 1893.

<sup>190</sup>Ibid.

<sup>191</sup>JCA, Baker Report.

for each colonist, with all the expenses supported by vouchers. The statement was then examined by a government official to ensure that all the charges enumerated were correct and permitted by statute. If everything was in order he would examine the colonist and the Society's agent under oath to certify the truth of the charge against the homestead. The colonist then completed the mortgage by signing for the certified amount due.<sup>192</sup>

The Society was aware that Mr. Baker could encounter difficulty in obtaining the signatures of all the colonists because everyone in the Colony knew that McDiarmid had not kept proper accounts. The colonists had not kept their own details and memories were unreliable, but it was also possible that some could be tempted to deny having received a large proportion of what was procured from Montreal and the local shopkeepers. Indeed, letters were sent from colonists' friends and relations still in Montreal advising them not sign any documents. It was up to Baker to prepare the statements of expenses as accurately as possible and also to persuade each colonist to sign.<sup>193</sup> The first delay occurred because the government could not spare any of its busy homestead Inspectors for the trip to Hirsch to certify the liens when Baker first applied early in the spring. Then the field work began and he postponed the signing until the ploughing and seeding was finished so that he would not interrupt the colonists during that important phase of their work. As soon as the spring work was done Baker sent for a Homestead Inspector once more and in his presence served the colonists with their accounts and asked for their signatures. The government inspector, Mr. Jarvis,

---

<sup>192</sup>Ibid.

<sup>193</sup>JCA, Hart, to JCA, April 10, 1893.

took great care to explain the documents to the homesteaders and purged from the accounts any expenses which could not be secured by lien according to the Statute. Although the colonists all agreed with their total charges and did not deny their debt, the majority refused to sign.  
194

Fear about their future and distrust of both the Society and its new agent had taken hold of most of the colonists who wished to have several things guaranteed before signing. First, they wanted some assurance that because of their late start in 1892 they would be entitled to maintenance for the following year. Secondly, they wanted to be completely outfitted, so each family could work independently. That meant more wagons, more mowers, and for the winter more sleighs. Finally, they had a counter-claim against the Society. They felt that some compensation should be made for the work they had done for the Society Farm in 1892 as well as for not having received their complete outfits of oxen and implements in the first season.<sup>195</sup>

Mr. Jarvis listened to their claims but argued forcefully that the liens were only for supplies which they already received and had nothing to do with future supplies. He pointed out that they had every right to settle their counter-claim against the Society in court, but that the issue should not be used as an excuse for not completing their mortgages. As a result eight colonists signed in Jarvis' presence and five more signed later for Mr. Baker. The remainder stood firm on their

---

<sup>194</sup>DLB, Jarvis to H.H. Smith, June 28, 1893.

<sup>195</sup>Ibid.

refusals.<sup>196</sup>

Baker felt that the group was led by two or three 'agitators' who were, he learned, getting quasi-legal advice from a local Justice of the Peace, a Mr. Loughland. Loughland later took affidavits from the disgruntled colonists in which they stated their claims against the Society and he forwarded them to the Minister of the Interior. The local M.P., A.P. Macdonald visited the colony and satisfied himself that the Society was, as it claimed, trying to help the colonists become independent prairie farmers, and was not trying to enslave them as some of the colonists suggested. Baker, however, realized that the discontent was going to be difficult for the Society to handle as it had no legal right to expel the agitators from the Colony as the lands they occupied were legally in their names. The liens remained in the background for the remainder of the season, but the majority of the colonists worked hard at improving their homesteads.<sup>197</sup>

By late summer each of the colonists had their frame houses well insulated with sods on the outside and most had also constructed sod stables and root cellars. Though each family also had one cow, there were still three families without a team of oxen or horses for field work. There were only three mowers for the whole colony and three sleighs. Two and often three families were still forced to share a wagon. Though each colonist had been supplied with a plough and harrows, some had grown impatient with the Society and had gone to local machinery dealers and purchased mowers and horse rakes on installments.

---

<sup>196</sup>DLB, Ibid.

<sup>197</sup>JCA, Ibid.

198 The colonists were, none-the-less, all in good health and, aside from the matter of the claims against the Society and unsigned liens, all seemed pleased with their new homes and occupations.

By the fall, however, the Colony's future had dimmed considerably owing to a severe drought. The Board in Montreal looked into the Colony's future "with feelings of gravest perplexity."<sup>199</sup> During the season of 1893 it had disbursed another \$28,000 provided by the JCA for the completion of the colonization work. The drought brought with it reports of destitution and hardship at the colony.

W.H. Allison, a Homestead Inspector for the Dominion, investigated the claims in September after Mr. Baker had returned to the East to Report to the Board and attend to some other business. He backed up Mr. Baker's assessment of the colonists who, he observed, were hardworking and capable of becoming successful settlers. He noted as well that the crop failure seemed to discourage the local settlers far more than the Jewish colonists, who in the face of disaster were "making a better show of farming than such men as Mr. Loughland."<sup>200</sup> Allison also reported that public opinion in the locality suggested that the troubles under McDiarmid's management stemmed from the fact that a few of "the more selfish and persistent among them got the biggest share, leaving a smaller allowance for the better and less clamorous class."<sup>201</sup> Good management was all the colony needed to be successful. Trying to

---

<sup>198</sup>Ibid.

<sup>199</sup>JCA, YMHBS 30th Annual Report, October 1, 1893.

<sup>200</sup>DLB, Allison to Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Sept 18, 1893.

<sup>201</sup>Ibid.

manage the business from Montreal, however, was out of the question in Allison's opinion. He was sure that the colony needed the constant presence and attention of a man of experience, with the "qualifications of a good Indian farm instructor or with business ability and tact in the management of men."<sup>202</sup>

During the fall of 1893 anxiety mounted at the colony as supplies dwindled and it was uncertain whether or not funds would be forthcoming to maintain the colonists for the winter. Mr. Baker's responsibilities as Principal and Clerk to the Board kept him in Montreal during the fall and winter of 1893. The Society sent a new representative, its Treasurer, Lazarus Cohen, to the Colony early in the winter to re-establish good relations with the colonists, ascertain their exact condition and see to the signing of the liens. Mr. Cohen's tact was able to mollify the colonists' position regarding the liens only after he had uncovered the source of their resentment and distrust. He discovered that because of the constant uncertainty about supplies and equipment and the actions of the Society's managers, the Society had begun to appear as an agent of oppression to the colonists.

The Society's chosen representatives had aggravated this situation because they had not been able to command the respect of the colonists. Mr. Baker, for example, had appeared not only unsympathetic, but also arrogant and overbearing. His inclination to "rule with a rod of iron" was all too reminiscent of Russia. Cohen was able to persuade the group that a great misunderstanding had arisen and that in fact both they and the Society had two important and shared interests. The Society wanted each colonist to become a successful settler and by that

---

<sup>202</sup>Ibid.

success to "show the world that the Jew could become a good farmer."<sup>203</sup> Cohen's inspirational approach and message convinced 27 more colonists to sign their liens in December of 1893. This left only 5 unsigned liens of colonists who had been away from the colony during Cohen's visit. That visit was the only ray of hope in the colonization project.

The drought had placed the colonists and many of the 'externals' in the neighbourhood in a precarious position. All reports suggested that the colonists had worked hard during the summer and that they had done a respectable job of cultivating and seeding their crops and gardens as well as improving their homesteads with storehouses, stables and chicken houses. The drought, however, killed the promising crops and gardens, a prairie fire burned valuable hay fields and gophers "devoured what drought, hot winds and fires had left."<sup>204</sup>

Cohen's visit also showed that families of colonists which had been formed into groups of 10 were still sharing equipment and that situation remained one of the most serious obstacles to the development of independent settlers at the colony. Cohen realised that it was up to the Society to impress upon the JCA that no time should be lost in completely eliminating the system of dual ownership of wagons stock and equipment.

The drought had placed the Society in another difficult situation. All the funds granted by the JCA had been expended, yet the colonists were still not self-supporting. The Society again explained the Colony's situation and made a new estimate of the needs for the

---

<sup>203</sup>JCA, Cohen Report, January 25, 1894.

<sup>204</sup>Ibid.

coming season. In February of 1894 Hirsch Colony consisted of 266 persons. This did not include 39 members of colonists' families still overseas or thirteen of the original colonists who had already left the colony. In addition, Hirsch had attracted 37 other Jewish farm families, the 'external colonists' who had taken up land in the vicinity and who numbered 100 persons. Of the externals, fifteen families or 46 persons were also in need of assistance from the JCA because of the crop failure. The total number of Jewish agriculturalists brought into Southeastern Assiniboia by the project was 366.<sup>205</sup>

The Society remained optimistic about the Colony's chances of success. It reported to the JCA that older settlers in the area were still of the opinion that one good crop year could make up for two or even three bad years. It was suggested that an average crop on 30 acres of cultivated land could amply provide for the needs of a family. Having already expended a considerable sum the JCA reluctantly agreed to gamble on the Colony and the weather in the Northwest for another season. It declared, however, that after 1894's harvest the colonists were to be self supporting and absolutely no additional funds would be sent.

The crop year of 1894 proved disastrous for the district in general and the Hirsch Colonists in particular. A total crop failure occurred in the Regina and Moose Jaw areas which discouraged both old and new settlers. In Eastern Assiniboia scattered rains had given some settlers fair yields, but the low price for grain that year did not make it a paying proposition. American settlers who had moved into the Northwest from the Dakotas and had taken up lands along the projected

---

<sup>205</sup>Ibid., Isaac Mendels Report, September 9, 1894.

line of the Manitoba Northwest Railway left for other parts when the line was not extended. Most went to destinations in the States, such as Oregon, and Montana, although a few moved into the Lake Dauphin area in Manitoba.

During the early 1890's Hirsch Colony, like some other assisted settlements in the Assiniboia District, fared poorly. A settlement of crofters from Scotland had been established by British philanthropy near Saltcoats, but after 1894 only a few of its settlers remained and the "Hebrew Colony at Hirsch had been practically abandoned."<sup>206</sup> Inspector Wilson of the Estevan detachment of the NWMP suggested that these two examples provided excellent proof of the "unsoundness of assisted immigration."<sup>207</sup> Although Hirsch was not completely abandoned, only 16 families remained in the fall of 1894. Inspector Wilson was certain that even those few would be gone in the spring and was ready, prematurely, to classify Hirsch as a "complete failure."<sup>208</sup> His opinion of the settlement was coloured by the troubles which had developed during the spring and summer as a result of the dual ownership of property at the Colony.<sup>209</sup> Mr. Baker had returned to manage the Colony during the 1894 crop season and had seen fit to prosecute several of the

---

<sup>206</sup>Sessional Papers, 58 Vic., no 15, Annual Report of Superintendent A.B. Perry, NWMP.

<sup>207</sup>Ibid.

<sup>208</sup>Ibid.

<sup>209</sup>In June, 1894, two colonists had been charged with and convicted of theft. Their cases were tried before Major Phipps and Inspector Wilson, NWMP, the local Justices of the Peace, who handed out sentences of two and six months hard labour. Government of Canada, Sessional Papers[No. 15], 58 Victoria, 1895; Report of Inspector James O. Wilson, NWMP, Estevan, November, 1894, p. 198-200.

colonists for stealing and selling implements "loaned to them by the Society."<sup>210</sup> When the Colony began breaking up during the late spring and early summer the shared property and equipment caused many problems. Since the counter-claim of the colonists had not been settled many took the liberty of selling their equipment and stock or leaving with it. Mr. Baker decided to take a firm stand. He took the uncompromising position that all the implements and property on the Colony belonged to the Society. He tried to set a firm example by prosecuting several colonists, but the trickle became a flood as the crop conditions deteriorated. The Colonists began selling their equipment and stock for whatever they could get for it, and departing for Winnipeg and cities in the United States with the proceeds.<sup>211</sup>

The abandonment of lands at Hirsch Colony in 1894 came about through the pressures of a combination of factors which caused the colonists who left to lose hope that the Northwest could ever provide them with secure livelihoods. Three seasons at Hirsch without a crop and no prospect of aid from the JCA for the winter was enough to convince many that it was time to sell their chattels and return to the city. There the cash might give them a start in a trade or occupation with which they could begin new lives of independence, prosperity, and relief from the barren and hostile prairies. In the end the financial and managerial problems had not been enough to defeat the colonists. Nor had the colonists' inexperience prevented them from breaking and tilling the prairie sod. But these conditions coupled with the hot dry prairie winds had finally been enough to convince many that they were

---

<sup>210</sup>Ibid.

<sup>211</sup>JCA, Cohen Report to JCA on Hirsch Colony, Paris, 1900.

not chosen to fulfil the 'back to the soil' ideal at Hirsch Colony. Finding secure livelihoods and homes took priority over all other ideals. The lands abandoned by the colonists were the source of a tangled skein of Colonization Lands at Hirsch.

## 7. UNTANGLING THE SKEIN

The abandonment of lands by Hirsch Colonists created a 'skein' of lands with clouded titles. The colonists had abandoned their homesteads without repaying their loans to the YMHBS. In the cases where the Society had obtained liens on the homesteads to secure the monies advanced, it could apply for the patent to the land. When such an application was received by the Department of the Interior proceedings were initiated to investigate the circumstances of the lands and verify that they were in fact abandoned and that a lien had been legally secured. Should these facts be properly established the patent was issued. When the Society applied for the patents to the abandoned lands at Hirsch Colony numerous differences were discovered between the Department of the Interior's records in Ottawa, the local Land Agent's records, and the Society's records.

During the investigation of the Society's claims, the civil servants who were involved with the issue from the beginning tended to support and press for a liberal interpretation of the law. The feeling persisted in the Department that the Society's problems stemmed from the 'bungling' of a local land agent. The politicians who finally took the responsibility for the settlement of the cases, Mr. Sifton and his Deputy Minister, Mr. Smart, were inclined to take a more legalistic stand. Where the Land Agent had been in error and the Society held a legal lien, the patents could be issued. Where the Land Agent had been in error and the Society had not received a legal lien no patent could be issued.

The Society began making inquiries about the patents to the lands abandoned at the Colony in 1895. It was informed by the new Land Agent at Estevan that numerous irregularities existed regarding the claims. Many of the lands described in the Society's liens had not been

entered. Some of the Hirsch Colonists had given liens on lands other than the homestead for which they had entered. This news prompted the Society to make a thorough investigation of its colonization account and receipts. In September, 1895, it forwarded a complete list of 68 abandoned homesteads to the Department in Ottawa. It claimed to have paid the entry fees on the lands concerned and to have advanced money to the settlers. The Department examined its records and in October returned to the Society a list of 27 of the cases in which it found that no entries had been completed.<sup>212</sup>

From the beginning the Society maintained that its agents, McDiarmid and Baker, had done all in their power to complete the entries and that if some entries had not been registered it had been due to the negligence of the Dominion Lands Agent. The Department launched an investigation into the matter which took the better part of a year to complete. One of the difficulties was that the two men who figured largely in the dispute, Mr. McDiarmid and the local land agent, were no longer in the positions they had occupied when the transactions had taken place. Also, several years had passed so the actual events were no longer fresh in their minds.

McDiarmid had been fired in late December of 1892 for neglecting his accounting duties at Hirsch and for his mismanagement of the colonists and the funds in his charge. Major C.E. Phipps, the local Dominion Lands Agent, who had handled all the Colony's entries, and who had dealt with both McDiarmid and Baker, had been demoted from his position as Dominion Lands Agent at Estevan to clerk in the Dominion Lands Office in Regina. Complaints of a similar nature to those of the

---

<sup>212</sup>DLB, J.M. Gordon to A.M. Burgess, October 30, 1895.

Society had been made against him by others and the Minister of the Interior, T. Mayne Daly, had investigated the matter. He decided that a demotion would be "sufficient punishment" for Phipps' conduct.<sup>213</sup> Throughout the dispute the Society's position was strengthened by two major factors: Major Phipps' tarnished employment record as a Dominion Lands Agent, and Mr. Baker, who remained with the Society and was able to provide complete and fully documented statements regarding the transactions which had transpired in the Northwest.

As the investigation proceeded Phipps' interpretation lost a good deal of its credibility. Phipps asserted that not all the money paid to him by the Society's agents had been for homestead entries. He stated that on several occasions he acted in a private capacity by holding money for the Colony's managers for 'safe keeping', returning portions of the sums as requested. Phipps also maintained that during the disputes regarding the signing of the liens he had been instructed by the Society's agent, Mr. Baker, not to complete entries for colonists who had not signed their mortgages. He also stated that some of the entries had not been made because the colonists switched homesteads to suit family arrangements and the groups or units of ten which had been arranged.<sup>214</sup>

Mr. Baker categorically denied that money had been given to the Agent for 'safe keeping' or that he had ever instructed Phipps not to make entries for colonists unwilling to sign their mortgages. He also insisted that no additional changes were made by the colonists after he arrived at the colony in 1893. The Society therefore maintained that

---

<sup>213</sup>DLB, H.H. Smith to A.M. Burgess, October 10, 1896.

<sup>214</sup>DLB, Phipps' Statutory Declaration, December 12, 1895.

all monies entrusted to the Agent had been for homestead entries and that its agents had never requested that entries be refused for any of the colonists for any reason. If the Department's records showed some of their entries had not been completed that was the Agent's responsibility and furthermore, some account had to be made of the funds paid to the Agent for which no entries had been made.<sup>215</sup>

In November, 1895, shortly after the Society's claims reached the Department, Phipps privately returned \$120 to the Society. The Society immediately deposited the amount to the credit of the Receiver General, stating to the Department at the same time that it had no knowledge of any private debt owed them by Phipps. Any of the Society's money in his possession, it maintained, he had been given for the payment of entry fees and thus it belonged with the government.

The Department's investigation showed that Phipps could not account for another \$180 for which the Society held his receipts showing that he had indeed received the funds. The \$300 discrepancy could explain the Society's claim to have paid some 27 entries which according to the Department's records had never been completed. The Society's good faith and intentions in the matter were bolstered by the fact that it had disbursed some \$60,000 in the settlement of Hirsch Colony in Southeastern Assiniboia. The Society felt that it would be suffering a grave injustice if it should come to any loss whatsoever because of the neglect of duty on the part of an official of the Crown.

216

---

<sup>215</sup>JCA, Baker Declaration, February 20, 1896.

<sup>216</sup>DLB, Baker to Burpe, October 6, 1896.

The weakness in the Society's position lay in the fact that the investigation suggested that some of the responsibility for the irregularities such as pencilled in entries in the township records and confusion and discrepancies between entries and liens were obviously a result of the Land Agent accommodating the Society's agents' desire to avoid extra charges which would be incurred if the settlers decided to switch locations after their entries had been completed. Also, the Society had failed to secure legal mortgages from some of the homesteaders to whom it advanced money. However, in the case of the money transactions, the Department held that Phipps had been acting in a private capacity. If he had withheld money from the Society for which the Society did not hold official homestead receipts, it was a matter to be settled between the two parties involved. But Phipps had contravened government regulations in undertaking such actions, and would certainly not have been entrusted with the funds had he not been employed as Land Agent. The Department therefore assumed no responsibility for these transactions "although it [was] desired to force [Phipps] to make restitution of any monies which he had improperly obtained."<sup>217</sup>

The dispute commenced under a Conservative government and was passed on to the new Liberal ministry which assigned Clifford Sifton to the position of Minister of the Interior. A prompt decision was not forthcoming. Several years passed and a considerable amount of correspondence was exchanged between the Department and the Society's agents and solicitors regarding the issuing of the patents. To settle the money claim the government decided to make a deduction of \$10 per month from Phipps salary until the debt was cleared. Major Phipps

---

<sup>217</sup>DLB, Cote to A.M. Burgess, October 5, 1896.

agreed to the deduction "under protest".<sup>218</sup> The Society continued to press its claim to the patents of the lands.

The Society divided the lands into four groups and requested the Department's action. The first request dealt with 34 abandoned homesteads for which the Society alleged entries had been paid and for which liens had been given to the Society for advances made to the settler. In this group the Department found many clerical errors and unreported entries.<sup>219</sup> The second request dealt with 24 homesteads for which the Society claimed to have paid entry and upon which it had advanced money on the understanding that liens would be signed. These settlers had refused to sign the liens before they abandoned their lands. The third request concerned the Society Farm which the Society claimed had been entered for on its behalf by Mr. Roth. But as in the cases in request 2, Mr. Roth had not given a lien to the Society and it was clear that he had never intended to give such a lien. During his brief tenure as manager at Hirsch after McDiarmid's dismissal late in 1892, and before Mr. Baker was sent out in the spring of 1893, Roth was impressed by the area's agricultural potential. Since no one occupied the farm, the Society had been quite willing to allow him to farm it for himself. Unlike the colonists, however, Roth had not needed a loan from the Society so the farm had no lien against it when it was abandoned. The fourth request listed lands which it claimed were part of the existing colony and which had liens in favour of the Society. On these nine quarters the Society simply wanted its rights to be officially acknowledged. In several of these cases too, land descriptions in the

---

<sup>218</sup>DLB, Phipps to Department of the Interior, December 1, 1896.

<sup>219</sup>DLB, Goodeve to Smart, November 13, 1899.

Department's records did not match the Society's records.<sup>220</sup>

The officials in the Department of the Interior who were familiar with the Hirsch Colony from its beginnings were generally agreed that the Society's first two requests should be granted, since it had acted in good faith and since "no doubt, most of the trouble [had] been caused by the bungling on the part of the Agent of the Department."

<sup>221</sup> But in the cases where no liens had been given such an action would create a precedent. In the case of the Society Farm where no lien existed, the government sold the land to the Society at a reduced rate of \$1 per acre. The Department recommended that the Minister exercise as much lenency as possible toward the Society

owing to the circumstances surrounding the case and the difficulties the Society has experienced in their work of colonization in the North West.

<sup>222</sup>Special legislation to facilitate the ends of the Society was recommended in the cases which fell beyond the limitations provided by Statute.

Sifton, however, stopped well short of circumventing existing legislation in order to bring the issue to a close. His directive to the Deputy Minister, Mr. Smart, was that "where the loss to the Society was thro' neglect on the part of the Agent of the Department patents should issue."<sup>223</sup> If no legal acknowledgment of indebtedness had been

---

<sup>220</sup>DLB, Statement of YMHBS of Montreal Acting on Behalf of the JCA of Paris in Respect of the Hirsch Colony, Assa., NWT, August 5, 1896.

<sup>221</sup>Ibid.

<sup>222</sup>Ibid.

<sup>223</sup>DLB, Memo, J. Smart to Goodever, February 24, 1899.

secured by the Society from the the Colonist the government would not overstep the law. The Society's requests could not be handled together or even in the four groups. Each case had to be investigated individually.

Of the Society's 68 applications for rights and patents the patents issued in 44 cases. The twenty-four quarters in Request 2 had no liens so no patents could be issued. A request was made to have the entries cancelled so that new Jewish settlers could settle there. Once the entries were cancelled the Department gave the JCA the first chance to nominate a settler for entry to the vacant land. The name of the settler had to be forwarded to the Department within 20 days of the land becoming available. The new settler could take up the land on the homestead free of any encumbrance related to the previous debt.

Investigations showed that in 11 of the 24 cases no entry had ever been made, though the Society claimed to have paid the entry fee. In the township register, however, all the lands were marked "Hold for Society". Investigations also showed that some settlers had been squatting on the lands for several years but had been unable to obtain an entry because the lands were still reserved. The Deputy Minister ruled that in these cases "settlers...residing in the lands [were] not to be disturbed."<sup>224</sup> If the residents were part of the Colony they were to be granted entry.<sup>225</sup>

Colonization Lands like those patented to the YMHBS on behalf of the JCA at the turn of the century were, in many cases, the only

---

<sup>224</sup>DLB, Memo To Goodeve, note by J. Smart, September 24, 1900.

<sup>225</sup>DLB, Pereira to Dominion Lands Agent., Alameda, September 27, 1900.

tangible relics of the government's policy to encourage assisted settlement in the 1880's and '90's by offering the security of Dominion Lands to those who advanced monies to settlers under the provisions of Clause 44 of the Dominion Lands Act. The JCA's experience with assisted Jewish agricultural colonization at Hirsch influenced the Association's later decisions and directions in the promotion and support of Jewish agricultural immigration to Western Canada during the 20th century.<sup>226</sup> Walter Cohen, the JCA's Canadian representative investigated conditions at Hirsch in 1899.

Cohen's findings led him to several lucid interpretations of the scheme's past, and its current difficulties, as well as its future prospects. In October of 1899 the colony consisted of 21 families. Five families had been among the original Hirsch Colonists of 1892. Three families had moved from Red Deer to Hirsch about three years earlier. Ten were new settlers and three others were independent Jewish farmers in the area. Since the general abandonment of the colony five years earlier, the management of the colony had been in the hands of Mr. Isaac Mendels, the only member of the YMHS willing and able to spare the time necessary for the work.

Cohen's analysis suggested that from its very beginnings Hirsch Colony had "suffered from a superabundance of inefficient management."

---

<sup>226</sup>For a more detailed study of the work of the JCA in Western Canada after the turn of the century refer to Fox, Maureen, Jewish Agricultural Colonies in Saskatchewan with Special Reference to the Colonies of Sonnenfeld and Edenbridge, unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1979.

227 The colonists had been "spoon fed"<sup>228</sup> during their first season, and continually encouraged to look to the Society for support from that time onward. When the JCA notified them in 1894 that they were to be henceforth self-supporting

the majority realised as much of their own and the Society's goods as they could and with the proceeds returned to their previous occupations of peddling, thus advertising the failure of the Colony in every settlement of the West.

229 Cohen felt, however, that with a few changes the future of the colony could be bright. Several factors inherent in the management and administration of the colony had discouraged the colonists and prevented them from putting their hearts into their work. Great damage had been done by what Cohen described as "years of mistaken philanthropy".<sup>230</sup> Unwholesome feelings of dependence had dimmed the colony's prospects from the beginning. Indeed, because of this attitude Cohen found it difficult to get an accurate count of the land under cultivation at Hirsch or the yield per acre.

Contrary to the general practice of the West where the farmers exaggerate their property in order, by getting the reputation of being good farmers, to improve their credit, the settlers at Hirsch give grossly underestimates of their crops, stock, etc., in order to exact compassion and obtain "loans".

231 The younger generation at the Colony looked promising and Cohen felt that if a spirit of independence could be generated there would be good

---

227 JCA, Cohen Report on Hirsch, Paris, 1900.

228 Ibid.

229 Ibid.

230 Ibid.

231 Ibid.

reason to look to the Colony's future with hope rather than despair. He made several recommendations to facilitate that end: First, all the settlers at Hirsch were to be issued patents and allowed to make their own entries. Since the beginning of the project "the YMHBS, with entirely unnecessary caution [had] refused to let them enter or obtain patents for their homesteads."<sup>232</sup> This had been a great source of discouragement to the colonists who were constantly in the position that the Society could legally foreclose on them at any time. Secondly, the management of the Colony was to be taken out of the hands of the Colonization Committee. The Colonization work had been a bountiful source of disagreement within the YMHBS for many years. In the course of the colony's history, the Society had made many appeals to the the JCA to take over the management and administration by appointing its own personnel. Also, the Society's meetings had frequently witnessed resolutions which favoured giving up the colonization work.<sup>233</sup>

It appeared that no fixed schedule had been followed for the repayment of the advances. Cohen's suggestion was that the plan adopted in the South Jersey and Woodbine colonies in the United States be used. That plan included a 50% remission of debt for all the original settlers. The repayment of the principal and interest was to be spread over 16 years. During the first three years no payments were required on the principal and no interest was charged. For the next three years the colonists were to pay 3.5% interest per year. The debt was to be retired during the next ten years through payments of 10% of the

---

<sup>232</sup>Ibid.

<sup>233</sup>Ibid.

principal and 3.5% interest each year.<sup>234</sup>

He insisted that no further advances be made to Hirsch Colonists and that no attempt be made to increase the size of Hirsch. Cohen felt that the site had been an unfortunate choice. Although mixed farming could be made to pay, the district was too dry for strictly wheat growing and there was not enough shade and protection for dairy herds. Better areas could be found for new colonization work in the West. Ending further advances to the Colonists and not enlarging the colony was Cohen's remedy for the years of mismanagement and the consequent development of dependency and other bad feelings. "The colonists must be left severely alone as far as possible and allowed a certain period in which to recover their credit." When the first payments were due they were to be "collected with firmness and an example made if necessary."<sup>235</sup>

The long standing offer of the lands at New Jerusalem from the Russo-Jewish Committee caused Cohen to investigate them as well as Hirsch. He found that the 27 homesteads were all registered in the original settlers' names and liened to the now deceased Sir A.T. Galt, the Mansion House Committee's Canadian trustee of old. Since the abandonments the Russo-Jewish Committee had applied for the issue of patents. Fourteen of the entries had been cancelled and the patents could be issued to the designate of the Committee at any time. The past owners of eight of the remaining homesteads had fulfilled the homestead requirements before they had abandoned the lands, but because they had not sent in naturalization certificates, patents had not been issued.

---

<sup>234</sup>Ibid.

<sup>235</sup>Ibid.

Four other owners had also fulfilled homestead requirements but had not applied for patents. In the last case it was doubtful whether the homestead conditions had been fulfilled. Because the whereabouts of these 13 settlers was now unknown, special legislation had been promised. That legislation would authorize the issue of patents without the filing of naturalization certificates. Once the patents were issued the lienholder could foreclose on the property.<sup>236</sup>

Although the lands were in what Cohen described as excellent cattle country, and had ample wood, water and hay, the distance of 25 miles to the CPR mainline at Moosomin and Wapella was generally considered too far for hauling wheat. This isolation had been an important reason for colony's demise. Cohen's investigation suggested that a more important cause of the colony's trouble had been, as in the case of Hirsch, that the management had given them supplies and equipment in common which had "led to the usual disputes."<sup>237</sup> Because of the distance from the railway Cohen felt that the area was still unsuitable for Jewish colonization. If the JCA was to accept the lands from the London Committee it could only hope to do so "with the idea of holding it, and eventually recovering some of the money which [had] been sunk in it."<sup>238</sup> Currently the lowest price the CPR was accepting for adjacent lands was \$3.00 per acre, though land in that area was not selling. Cohen was certain that in time the lands would bring that amount and more when a railway was constructed through the area, as he felt would eventually happen.

---

<sup>236</sup>Ibid.

<sup>237</sup>Ibid.

<sup>238</sup>Ibid.

Although Cohen's report on the potential of the lands at Hirsch and New Jerusalem was not overly optimistic, the JCA remained very interested in expanding Jewish agricultural colonization in Canada. On May 5, 1900, the JCA officially relieved the YMHS of its responsibilities and received the government's permission to have the liens at Hirsch transferred to its name. Mr. Mendels was hired to continue as the JCA's manager at Hirsch. He had been handling the Colony for the Society since 1895.

Mr. Mendels was given new and explicit instructions regarding his role at Hirsch. He was to make the settlers understand that absolutely no additional advances would be made. Also the repayment terms were to be followed exactly. In addition Mendels was not to induce anyone to take up lands at the colony as in Cohen's opinion, the district was "unfavourable...and the JCA [did] not wish to extend Hirsch in any way, but merely to have done with it."<sup>239</sup> The Colonization Lands at both New Jerusalem and Hirsch were in the same legal position. The patents issued to the lien holder gave the new owner the right to place a settler on the land within two years. Failure to exercise this right meant that the government could force the owner to sell the land to anyone willing to homestead it and pay the existing charges on the land. Failure to make such a sale would result in forfeiture of the land which would then be opened to normal homestead entry conditions. Cohen felt that it was improbable that the government could find settlers willing to take up the lands so encumbered even if it wanted to do so.<sup>240</sup>

When proceedings were initiated to cancel some of the abandoned

---

<sup>239</sup>JCA, Cohen to Mendels, December 24, 1899.

<sup>240</sup>Ibid., Cohen Report.

Hirsch lands to which the Society had not secured liens the government discovered that some settlers had been squatting on the lands for several years but had been unable to get entry because the area was still reserved for the colony. The Deputy Minister, Mr. Smart, ruled that in these cases "settlers...residing on the lands [were] not to be disturbed."<sup>241</sup> and if the residents were members of the Colony then they were to be allowed entry.<sup>242</sup> Pressure on the government to make a final decision on the legal status of the lands reserved for Hirsch Colony eight years earlier came from the local residents. A group of settlers informed their M.P., J.M. Douglas, that they were prepared to petition Sifton with one hundred and fifty names of people who were demanding that vacant lands in the Hirsch area be opened for homestead entry. They were incensed by the government's administration of the lands there which they felt had caused the local settlers to suffer needlessly for many years.

Since the departure of the majority of the colonists no one in the community had been able to get accurate information about the exact boundary of the colony. Townships 3 and 4, ranges 5 and 6 remained practically unsettled and much of townships 3 and 4, range 4 were also thought to be unavailable for settlement "being held for Jews who have long since been absentees."<sup>243</sup> So much vacant land withheld from homestead entry by the Hirsch Colony annoyed the community because many of the remaining lands were also held by companies and other interests.

---

<sup>241</sup>DLB, Memo to Goodeve, note by J. Smart, September 24, 1900.

<sup>242</sup>Ibid., Pereira, to D.L.O., Alameda, September 27, 1900.

<sup>243</sup>DLB, T. Collopy and George Moore, Alameda, to J.M. Douglas, M.P., April 8, 1900.

People knew why the CPR seemed to own half their district, but the Canadian NorthWest Land Company took up many of the even-numbered sections, and lands were also held by the Free Homestead Company and nobody in the community seemed to know "who they [were] and why land [had] been given away- probably for nothing in the way of actual benefits."<sup>244</sup>

So much vacant land between Frobyshire, Hirsch and Alameda was, the residents claimed, slowing down the district's growth and holding back general prosperity. Because of the sparse settlement it was almost impossible to get roads built in the Local Improvement District which had been organized.<sup>245</sup> For years the locals had watched would-be settlers being turned away from the area because so much good land was unavailable for homesteading. Each time local discussions had come close to action, a report or rumour surfaced that the whole area would soon be thrown open to general settlement and the protest dissipated. Now there was a growing influx of new settlers to the West while at the same time news was received at the local Land Office that the Society responsible for the Hirsch Colony was applying for and was likely to receive patents for much of the land still vacant. This had stirred the residents to action again. They felt that the government was sadly misinformed regarding the Jewish colonization lands. Public opinion in the area was that "the Hirsch Colony [had] not earned their lands or

---

<sup>244</sup>Ibid.; See Appendix B regarding the Free Homestead Company.

<sup>245</sup>It was calculated that at the current rate of progress it would take 81 years just to get the preliminary road work done in the area.Ibid.

only a small part of them."<sup>246</sup> The disgruntled settlers brought their longstanding grievances into focus in a letter to their M.P. They wished to show that the preponderance of lands withheld from settlement by various interests meant that there was "little left for the poor settler who [came] in after these companies [which had] seemingly chosen all lands near railways, and who must go into the background."<sup>247</sup> They demanded that all vacant lands in the area be thrown open for homestead entry.

In the disposition of the Colonization lands at Hirsch, however, the government's action was limited by Statute. It could not throw those lands open to settlement as they were subject to the special conditions of sale and forfeiture. The Colonization lands were available for sale but not for homestead entry unless the forfeiture feature came into play. In 1902, nearly ten years after the lands had been reserved for the Jewish Colony the Department of the Interior declared that

any other lands which may have been reserved for settlement by the Hirsch Colony and all other lands embraced by cancelled entries in the tract reserved for such colony against which no liens are registered in favour of the Society, are open to general settlement.

<sup>248</sup>Since the JCA was not planning to extend Hirsch the opening up of the Colony to general settlement was of no concern to it. One positive aspect of the government's decision was that if settlement did fill up the area, the colonization lands which it held there would increase in

---

<sup>246</sup>Ibid.

<sup>247</sup>Ibid.

<sup>248</sup>Ibid., P.G. Keyes, to J. Obed Smith, February 17, 1902.

value. By 1905 Jewish agricultural settlement in the area of Qu'Appelle was attracting other Jews. Many, however, lacked sufficient capital to begin homesteading. The JCA approached the Department of the Interior for permission again to advance monies to settlers and to secure the advances with liens against the homesteads. Their application asked that in addition to assisting immigrants from Europe and the United States to take up homesteads, it also wished to help Jewish settlers who were already living in Canada to take up homesteads in the West.<sup>249</sup> Louis Kahn, the JCA's resident Canadian manager met with the new Minister of the Interior, Frank Oliver, in May of 1905 to discuss the JCA's application. He emphasized to the Minister the "fair degree of success"<sup>250</sup> which the JCA had achieved in the West. He also pointed out that the Association made very careful selection of the immigrants it picked for colonization because it measured its own success by the numbers of self-supporting Jewish farmers it aided to settle permanently on the land.

It was immediately clear to the Department that part of the JCA's request was untenable. The Department's past policy stood "steadfastly on the rule laid down that it would not be in the public interest to permit companies to make advances to settlers already in the country upon the security of Dominion Lands."<sup>251</sup> Accepting the other part of the JCA's plan meant reviving the "colonization plans that were tried many years ago and which [had] unfortunately proved an utter

---

<sup>249</sup>Ibid., Lewis and Smellie to Minister of the Interior, April 26, 1905.

<sup>250</sup>Ibid., L. Kahn, to F.A. Oliver, May 10, 1905.

<sup>251</sup>Ibid., Corry to Oliver, June 16, 1905.

failure."<sup>252</sup> The JCA's application re-opened the general question in the Department regarding the policy initiated so many years earlier which remained in the statutes but which had not been used for some time. The question needed careful consideration "in view of the large numbers of desirable and well-to-do settlers who [were] ...pouring into the North West without assistance of any kind whatever."<sup>253</sup> Both the YMHBS and the JCA were notified that as of the 9th of March, 1906, the privilege "granted under Section 44 of the Dominion Lands Act, to individuals or corporations to make advances to intending settlers under the security of the latter's homesteads" had been withdrawn. Oliver's decision sounded the death knell for assisted settlements secured by Dominion Lands.

During the 20th century, however, the Canadian branch of the JCA continued to help Jewish farmers in Western Canada as well as to dairy and fruit farmers in other parts of the country. Its presence was felt by Jewish agriculturalists and Canadian agriculture long after the untangling of the skein Colonization Lands at Hirsch Colony by the officials in the Department of the Interior.

---

<sup>252</sup>Ibid.

<sup>253</sup>Ibid.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

The creation and administration of Colonization Lands at Hirsch Colony played a significant role in the evolution of Dominion Lands Policy and its administration. During the 1880's and 1890's the federal Conservatives displayed an interest in playing an active role in shaping the settlement of the West. The transcontinental was completed and branch lines were constructed to facilitate settlement. The government also actively promoted company colonization and other assisted settlement schemes by allowing colonizers to secure their investments with Dominion Lands. By the mid-nineties, however, company colonization projects had been proven to be completely powerless to promote the rapid settlement of the West. The policy, moreover, had generated a new class of lands in the West which soon proved to be an administrative nightmare for federal bureaucrats and a legalistic jungle for the federal politicians.

The assumption of power by the Liberals in 1896 marked an end to any tendency in the federal government to provide paternalistic guidance to settlers in the West or to initiate a planned or scientific approach to the problems posed by prairie settlement. Sifton's character, his background and his interpretation of the Conservatives' failure to influence settlement positively through legislation led him to believe that the least government intervention in settlement possible would create the best administrative climate for a settler's ultimate success. The fact that Sifton inherited the administrative problems associated with Hirsch Colony helped confirm his resolve in that regard. Unfortunately, these administrative problems made the Liberal government excessively pessimistic regarding the role and importance of planning an effective administrative strategy and settlement policy for the West. It also gave the government an excessively negative opinion of the

potential of Jewish agricultural settlement in the West. The fact that a large proportion of the fuss about the Hirsch Lands was a result of the 'bungling' efforts of a Public Servant, and the complexities inherent in the legislation regarding colonization schemes tended to be forgotten in the shuffling of papers related to the troublesome 'Jewish business' as it came to be known.

The JCA, on the other hand, did not see its experiences at Hirsch in nearly so dark a light. After the initial abandonments it moved in new colonists and kept the colony alive. During the 20th century the Association's activities expanded considerably. Wapella, (1886), and Hirsch, (1892), were augmented by settlements at Lipton, (1902), Edenbridge, (1906), and Sonnenfeld, which was later called Hoffer, (1906). Although the aforementioned were the best known and largest settlements, numerous other smaller settlements were started in other parts of Saskatchewan, as well as in Alberta and Manitoba.

Hirsch has a special significance in the history of Jewish agriculture on the prairies and in the process of Western settlement in general. Hirsch was the first and last 'Colony' established in Canada while the JCA was under the direct control of the the Baron de Hirsch. The Association's experience at Hirsch, moreover, dictated a different approach toward later Jewish agriculturists who came to the West and required help in starting or continuing to farm. The problems encountered at Hirsch as a result of the manner in which funds and supplies were disbursed, and the discontent which arose from the concept of a 'Colony', governed by an overseer and strict rules and regulations, as well as communal labour and goods, were avoided by a much looser, albeit still paternalistic, system. Jewish farmers who appealed to the JCA for aid were largely left to their own devices in the day-to-day operation of their farms. They were free to buy and sell their own

chattels, their stock and implements, and produce as they pleased. They could work out for neighbours for extra cash. The Association took a more detached view of the situation than had been the case at Hirsch. It became the Jewish farmer's 'friendly banker'. By providing low interest loans, advice on farming techniques, teachers and shochets for the Jewish agricultural settlements, the Association nurtured Jewish agriculture on the Prairies for several decades.

Like any philanthropy which has a responsibility to balance its accounts at the end of each fiscal year, the Association had its share of agonizing decisions to make during the course of its work to foster the growth of Jewish agriculture. In every philanthropy involving business arrangements there eventually comes a time when the bill comes due. If payment is not forthcoming the situation becomes difficult for everyone concerned. The circumstances of the individual cases must be investigated and carefully weighed before a decision can be made. "During its lifespan of more than fifty years- from 1907 until the 1960's- the Canadian Committee of the JCA never collected on more than half its outstanding loans."<sup>254</sup> By subsidising Jewish agriculture in this manner the Association clearly placed its role as a benevolent supporter and friend of Jewish agriculture far ahead of its business responsibilities regarding the funds in its charge. Although its rigidity in perpetuating a conventional and conservative approach to its original mandate combining philanthropy and business limited its effectiveness to cope with the vast changes in Western agriculture during and after the Depression of the Thirties, the positive achievements of the Association in Western Canada cannot be denied or

---

<sup>254</sup>Paris, Erna, Jews, An Account of their Experience in Canada, Macmillan of Canada, Toronto, 1980, p. 235.

minimized. Jewish settlers were among the first groups homesteading lands in the West. Many Jewish refugees were given a new start by the Association on lands in the West. Although not all remained on the land, some did and made a very successful go of prairie farming. Regardless of the ultimate fate of Jewish agriculture in the West, the Association's aid came to those who desperately needed it.

The polarizing of interpretations regarding Jewish agriculture was simply a function of the different orientations to the settlement process held by the government and Jewish philanthropists. The philanthropists were not troubled by the abandonments at Hirsch or the later administration problems to the degree that the bureaucrats and politicians were. At least when the colonist left he was assumed to be once again independent and self-supporting. There were always more refugees who could be found to take up the lands made available. For the government, however, each departure meant more paperwork and more land which was both vacant and encumbered and hence less attractive for settlement. This created frustration in the bureaucracy and a bad taste in the mouths of the politicians who were ultimately responsible. Thus references to Hirsch were used by Jewish leaders to bolster the case for increased Jewish immigration to Canada on the one hand, and by politicians and bureaucrats to urge greater caution regarding renewed Jewish immigration on the other. The modest success of the Association through its paternalistic support of Jewish agriculture does, moreover, lend some support to the view that a judicious application of timely aid and a positive approach towards planning and strategy produced positive results in at least one aspect of Western settlement, Jewish agriculture.

The example provided by the work of the JCA in Western Canada suggests that a somewhat more positive role could also have been played

by the federal government during the settlement process. The 'hands off' policy, the feeling that settlers had to sink or swim on their own efforts alone, was adhered to almost fanatically by bureaucrats and politicians in office during the rapid settlement of the West after the turn of the century. Blind faith in the efficacy of the homestead policy was a backlash against the failure of attempts to encourage and assist settlement in the 1880's and early nineties. This attitude effectively prevented the development of a scientific or planned approach to the challenges of prairie settlement and dryland farming by the government. During the Thirties the West paid the price for the rapid and haphazard settlement and exploitation of the country's Dominion Lands.

A great waste of human and natural resources accompanied the human suffering and loss occasioned by the Depression. The hardship and waste was made almost inevitable because of earlier decisions based on ignorance and insufficient information. People were simply not aware that their efforts were doomed to fail because they had settled in marginal or sub-marginal agricultural areas. Greater knowledge and awareness of the prairie environment and its agricultural potential and limitations early in the settlement process would have certainly paid dividends to both the individual settler and the nation as a whole. Just as the JCA sought to create a balance between philanthropy and business, there was scope for a federal settlement policy which could offer the benefits of a scientific, planned approach to settlement without excessively limiting or restricting the initiative and independence of the individual prairie farmer.

For those with a special interest in assisted settlement, company colonization and philanthropic colonization schemes in the Canadian West it is hoped that this study provides some useful insights

into both the evolution of Dominion Lands Policy and a corollary of that policy, the creation and administration of Colonization Lands. This work provides a bridge between Andre Lalonde's pioneering work on Company Colonization and Maureen Fox's useful and insightful work on Jewish settlements in Saskatchewan at Sonnenfeld and Edenbridge.

## 9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

## ARCHIVAL PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Baron de Hirsch Institute and Hebrew Benevolent Society; Public Archives of Canada, [Henceforth PAC], MG 28, Volume 86.
2. Baron Maurice Hirsch auf Gereuth Collection, 1831-1896; PAC, MG 29, C98.
3. T. Mayne Daly Papers; PAC, MG 27, I, D6.
4. Department of Agriculture Records, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, [Henceforth PAS], RG 76.
5. Department of the Interior- Dominion Lands Branch Records, PAS, RG 15, file 212189 and 269180, 73568, 331594, 838450; and Immigration Branch Records, PAS, vol. 82, file 8520, Vol. 83, file 8520, vol. 50, file 2183, and vol. 28, file 711703.
6. Industrial Removal Office (1901-1916) and Immigration and Resettlement Aid Society, PAC, MG 28, V 67.
7. Jewish Colonization Association, London, England; PAC, MG 28, V 83.
8. Laurier Papers, PAC, MG 26 G V 181.
9. Montefiore Club (est. 1880.), PAC, MG 28 V 80.
10. Orders-in-Council, PAC, RG 1, 2, volumes 334, 335, 587, 588.
11. Louis Rosenberg Collection, PAC, MG 30, C 119.
12. RCMP Records, PAC, RG 18, volumes 76, 91, and 92.
13. Clifford Sifton Papers, PAC, MG 27 II D.
14. Henry Hall Smith Papers, PAC, MG 27 I I19.

## PRINTED PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Canada, Government of, ACTS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND, printed by Brown Chamberlain, Ottawa; 1872, 1874, 1883, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891.
2. Canada, Government of, THE REVISED STATUTES OF CANADA, CHAPTER 54; DOMINION LANDS ACT, AS AMENDED BY 50-51 VIC., CHAPTER 31; 51 VIC., CHAPTER 21; AND 52 VIC., CHAPTER 27; CONSOLIDATED FOR OFFICE PURPOSES; ALSO 54-55 VIC., CHAPTER 24, FURTHER AMENDING THE ACT; 1891.

3. Sonnenfeld, S., VOYAGE AU CANADA ET AUX ETATS UNIS, 1907; PAC, MG 30, C119, volume 24.

#### THESES

1. Joseph, Samuel, "Jewish Immigration to the United States from 1881 to 1910." Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1914.
2. Lalonde, Andre, N., "Settlement in the North-West Territories by Colonization Companies, 1881-1891." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 1970.
3. Fox, Maureen, "Jewish Agricultural Colonies in Saskatchewan with Special Reference to the Colonies of Sonnenfeld and Edenbridge." M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, June, 1979.
4. Hildebrandt, Walter H., "P.G. Laurier: The Aspirations of a Western Enthusiast." M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1978.

#### REFERENCE WORKS

1. ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA. William Benton, Publisher, Toronto, 1966.
2. ENCYCLOPAEDIA JUDAICA. Keter Publishing House Ltd., Jerusalem, Israel, 1971.
3. ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ZIONISM AND ISRAEL. edited by Raphael Patai, Herzl Press/McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971.
4. THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA. Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York and London, 1925.
5. THE STANDARD JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA. The Encyclopedia Publishing Company, 1962.

#### NEWSPAPERS

1. The Manitoba Free Press.
2. The Montreal Gazette.
3. The Saskatchewan Herald.
4. The Toronto Globe.

## BOOKS

1. Belkin, Simon, THROUGH NARROW GATES. The Eagle Publishing Co. Ltd.: Montreal, Canada, 1966.
2. Brasch, R., THE JUDAIC HERITAGE. David McKay Company: New York. 1969.
3. Brown, R.C. and Ramsay Cook, CANADA: A NATION TRANSFORMED. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974.
4. Chiel, Arthur, JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA. Manitoba Jewish Publications: Winnipeg, 1955.
5. Chiel, Arthur, THE JEWS IN MANITOBA. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1961.
6. Cohen, M. R., REFLEXIONS OF A WONDERING JEW. Beacon Press: Boston, 1950.
7. Creighton, Donald, JOHN A. MACDONALD, VOL. 2: THE OLD CHIEFTAIN. Toronto: Macmillan, 1956.
8. Dafoe, J.W., CLIFFORD SIFTON IN RELATION TO HIS TIMES, Toronto: Macmillan, 1931.
9. Dales, J.H., THE PROTECTIVE TARIFF IN CANADA'S DEVELOPMENT. Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1966.
10. Davies, R.A., (compiled), PRINTED JEWISH CANADIANA 1685-1900. Shortt Collections, U. of S., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
11. Dawson, C.A., PIONEERING IN THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES: THE SOCIAL SIDE OF THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS. Toronto: Macmillan, 1936.
12. Dawson, C.A., GROUP SETTLEMENT: ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN CANADA. Toronto: Macmillan, 1939.
13. Easterbrook, W.T. and H.G. Aitken, CANADIAN ECONOMIC HISTORY Toronto: Macmillan, 1956.
14. England, Robert, THE COLONIZATION OF WESTERN CANADA: A CONTEMPORARY STUDY OF LAND SETTLEMENT. P.S. King: London, 1936.
15. England, Robert, THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN IMMIGRANT IN CANADA, Toronto: Macmillan, 1929.
16. Fowke, V.C., THE NATIONAL POLICY AND THE WHEAT ECONOMY, Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1957.

17. Gibbon, J.M., CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL POLICY, THE HISTORICAL PATTERN. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1939.
18. Grossman, Vladimir, THE SOIL'S CALLING, 1938.
19. Hedges, James B., BUILDING THE CANADIAN WEST, THE LAND AND COLONIZATION POLICIES OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY. New York: Macmillan, 1939.
20. HENDERSON'S MANITOBA, NWT, AND BRITISH COLUMBIA GAZETTEER AND DIRECTORY, 1891, 1892, 1893.
21. Hexter, J.H., THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION. Harper and Row Publishers: New York, 1966.
22. Hoffer, Clara and Kahan, F.A., LAND OF HOPE, Modern Press: Saskatoon, 1960.
23. Innis, H.A., A HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1923.
24. Jewish Museum of Western Canada, JOURNEY INTO OUR HERITAGE. Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, 1973.
25. Kage, Joseph, WITH FAITH AND THANKSGIVING: THE STORY OF TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF JEWISH IMMIGRATION AND IMMIGRANT AID EFFORT IN CANADA 1760-1960, Montreal, Eagle Publishing Company, 1962.
26. Lamb, W. Kaye, HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY. New York: Macmillan, 1976.
27. Lewisohn, Ludwig, WHAT IS THIS JEWISH HERITAGE? B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation: New York, 1957.
28. LOVELL'S MONTREAL DIRECTORY, 1890-91, 1892-93.
29. Macdonald, Norman, CANADA IMMIGRATION AND COLONIZATION 1841-1903. Aberdeen University Press: Aberdeen, 1966.
30. Mackintosh, W.A., ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES. Toronto: Macmillan, 1935.
31. Macleod, R.C., THE NORTHWEST MOUNTED POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT, 1873-1905. Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1970.
32. Martin, Chester, 'DOMINION LANDS' POLICY. Edited by Lewis H. Thomas, Carleton Library No. 69. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973.
33. Morton, A.S., and Martin, Chester, HISTORY OF PRAIRIE

- SETTLEMENT AND DOMINION LANDS POLICY. Toronto: Macmillan, 1937.
34. Otter, A.A. den, CIVILIZING THE WEST: THE GALTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN CANADA. UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA PRESS, EDMONTON, 1982.
  35. Palmer, Howard, IMMIGRATION AND THE RISE OF MULTICULTURALISM. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1975.
  36. Palmer, Howard, LAND OF THE SECOND CHANCE, A HISTORY OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA. Lethbridge: Lethbridge Herald, 1972.
  37. Paris, Erna, JEWS, AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR EXPERIENCE IN CANADA, Macmillan of Canada, Toronto, 1980.
  38. Patterson, D. G., BRITISH DIRECT INVESTMENT IN CANADA, 1890-1914: ESTIMATES AND DETERMINANTS. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976.
  39. Pokrovsky, N.M., BRIEF HISTORY OF RUSSIA, VOLUME 2, International Publishers, New York, 1936.
  40. Regehr, T.D., THE CANADIAN NORTHERN RAILWAY: PIONEER ROAD OF THE NORTHERN PRAIRIES, 1895-1918. Toronto: Macmillan, 1976.
  41. Rose, Albert, A PEOPLE AND ITS FAITH. U. of T. Press: Toronto, 1959.
  42. Rosenberg, Louis, CANADA'S JEWS, A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STUDY OF THE JEWS IN CANADA. Bureau of Social and Economic Research, Canadian Jewish Congress: Montreal, 1939.
  43. Rosenberg, Stuart, A HISTORY OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CANADA. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970.
  44. Roth, Leon, JUDAISM, A PORTRAIT. Faber and Faber, London, 1960.
  45. Sack, B.G., HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN CANADA. Harvest House, Montreal, 1965.
  46. Skelton, O.D., GENERAL ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE DOMINION, 1867-1912. The Publisher's Association of Canada: Toronto, 1913.
  47. Skelton, O.D., LIFE AND TIMES OF SIR ALEXANDER TILLOCH GALT. Carleton Library, No. 26. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966.
  48. Spector, Ivar, INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE, D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., New York, 1949.

49. Stanley, G.F., THE BIRTH OF WESTERN CANADA: A HISTORY OF THE RIEL REBELLIONS. Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1961.
50. Steinberg, Milton, BASIC JUDAISM. Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc.: New York, 1947.
51. Thomas, Lewis H., THE STRUGGLE FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT IN THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES, 1870-97. Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1956.
52. Vernadsky, George, POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF RUSSIA, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1936.
53. Waite, P.B., CANADA 1867-1896, ARDUOUS DESTINY. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971.
54. Woodcock, George, CANADA AND THE CANADIANS. London, Faber, 1970.
55. Wren, Melvin C., THE COURSE OF RUSSIAN HISTORY, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1958.

#### ARTICLES

1. Arnold, A.J., "The Jewish Contribution to the Opening and Development of the West." Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Series III, No. 25, 1968-69, pp. 23-28.
2. Arnold, A.J., "Jewish Pioneer Settlements." The Beaver Outfit, no. 306, 1975, pp. 20-26.
3. Chiel, Arthur, "Early Jewish Contact in the Canadian North West". Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Series III, pp. 15-21.
4. Dales, John H., "Some Historical and Theoretical Comment on Canada's National Policies", in CANADIAN HISTORY SINCE CONFEDERATION, ESSAYS AND INTERPRETATIONS, Edited by Bruce Hodgins and Robert Page; Irwin-Dorsey Limited, Georgetown, Ontario, 1972.
5. Field, A.J., "The Saskatoon Jewish Community 1905-1962." Shortt Collections, U. of S., Saskatoon, 1963.
6. Hall, D.J., "Clifford Sifton: Immigration and Settlement Policy 1896-1905", in THE SETTLEMENT OF THE WEST, Comprint Publishing co., Calgary, 1977.
7. Lecnoff, C.E., "Wappella Farm Settlement", Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba and the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, Winnipeg, 1972.

8. Rosenberg, Louis, "The History of the Regina Jewish Community", Jewish Post, 1923; copy in the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina.
9. Rosenberg, Louis, "The Demography of the Jewish Community in Canada," 1959; "Linguistic and Mother Tongue of Jews in Canada," 1960; and "Some Aspects of the Historical Development of the Canadian Jewish Community," 1960. The Montreal Bureau of Social and Economic Research, Canadian Jewish Community.
10. Rosenberg, Louis, "Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada, 1760-1960," 1961; and "Ninety Years of Jewish Life in Western Canada," the first annual publication of the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, 1970.

## 10. APPENDIX A

On a memorandum dated 26 April, 1886, from the Minister of the Interior representing that certain persons propose to organize a system for promoting the immigration of settlers into Manitoba and the North West Territories, on condition that the Government shall grant them, in land, some compensation for settlers who actually make homestead entries.

The Minister is of opinion that some simple and comparatively inexpensive method of aiding persons so engaged in the work of settling Agriculturalists on the lands, the property of Canada, ought to be at once devised and recommends the adoption of the following scheme:

That the Minister of the Interior be authorized to make arrangements with such companies as shall furnish him with satisfactory evidence of their being equipped whereby for every sixteen settlers who, through their direct exertions, have been induced to obtain entries for homesteads at any Agency of Dominion Lands in Manitoba or the North West Territories by making in each instance application therefor in person, and paying the fees prescribed in that behalf by the Dominion Lands Act, a free grant of one hundred and sixty acres, or one quarter-section of any lands open for homestead and pre-emption entry in the District or vicinity in which the said sixteen settlers have been placed shall be made to the said companies as compensation for their services, and that the Minister be authorized to make such Regulations from time to time as he may find expedient as to the manner in which this system shall be carried into effect, and the evidence which he may require from properly authorized companies that they have actually been the means of placing the settlers in respect of whom they claim to be compensated as herein

Provided,255

---

255p. A. C., RG 2, 1, volume 334(Pt. 2 - volume 335[Pt. 1];  
Orders-in-council, April 28,1886.

## 11. APPENDIX B

On a Report, dated 14th February, 1894, from the Minister of the Interior, stating that under the authority of an Order in Council, dated 28th April, 1886, the Canada Homestead Settlement Company was, in the month of January, 1887, given permission to work in the interests of immigration, and was promised the compensation for its efforts which the said Order in Council set forth. In the month of January, 1891, the same Company was allowed to extend its operations to the United States, on the same plan. The Company issued a certificate to the intending settler, which was good for one dollar in part payment of his homestead entry fee. These certificates were afterwards redeemed, and served as a means of identifying the settler as one whom the Company had induced to emigrate.

The Minister further states that, in the month of July, 1890, permission was given to the Free Homestead Company, Limited, to work under the same arrangement. In the month of July, 1891, these Companies made a proposition to the Department that they should be permitted to work together, and issue joint certificates, the Government to issue patents to the Companies jointly for such lands as they might earn under such joint certificates. The issue of certificates by the Companies in the United States, was stopped by order of the Minister of the Interior on the 7th of January, 1893, and in Europe on the 1st of January, 1894.

The Minister observes that the reasons which led to this action were practically the same in both instances, namely, (1) That the operations of the Companies had apparently no appreciable effect on the flow of immigration to the Canadian North-West; and (2) it was found that the Companies were not acting strictly in accordance with the terms of the Order in Council, of the 28th of April, 1886, in that they were not by their direct exertions placing settlers upon Dominion lands.

That they were of little or no assistance to the Department of the Interior in its immigration work in the United States, is shewn clearly by the fact that the number of persons from that country who have become settlers on Dominion lands during the calendar year which has elapsed since the arrangement with the Companies was abrogated, is almost double what it was during the next preceding calendar year, when the arrangement with the Companies was in force, and the same argument holds good with respect to Europe, as there has been a very disappointing decrease in the numbers of settlers on Dominion Lands from that Continent in 1893, during the whole of which year the Companies in question were engaged in their alleged operations, as compared with one or two years preceeding the arrangement with them.

The Minister further reports that, as to the Companies claiming credit for settlers who had not actually come to Canada through their instrumentality, it came to his knowledge, and was admitted by the Companies, that their certificates were distributed through the salaried Agents of the Department of the Interior for a considerable time in the United States, and it appeared at the time that this was their only means of operating in that country.

The Minister further states that as to the European countries, the records of the Department of the Interior shew that during the year 1892, the Commissioner of Dominion Lands at Winnipeg forwarded to the Department numerous affidavits and statements made by new arrivals in the country, in regard to the inducements or reasons which caused them to emigrate to the Canadian Northwest, and, in almost every instance, they stated that they came on their own account. and without any action or inducement on the part of either of the Companies in question, whose certificates they nevertheless brought with them and intended to use. In fact, as the Dominion Lands Commissioner reports, in most instances

they were entirely ignorant of the existence of such Companies until the certificates were placed in their hands.

The Minister observes that the practice adopted by the Companies appears to have been to appoint Steamship and Railway Agents as their Agents, and whenever an intending emigrant purchased a ticket to Canada, he was handed a certificate of the Companies, in many instances without ever going through the formality of inserting the name of the holder. The Companies not only utilized the Steamship and Railway Companies' Agents, but also, in one instance at least, they utilized the services of Mr. Connolly, late Agent of the Government at Dublin, for the purpose of distributing their identification certificates to persons leaving for Canada, and the Companies were thus enabled to obtain grants of lands through the exertions of at least one Government Agent.

The Department of the Interior has proof also that the Companies in question utilized the services of the Agent of the Self-Help Immigration Society, a concern which has been engaged in promoting emigration to Canada for some years past on its own account.

The Minister confidently believes that the Canada Homestead Settlement Company and the Free Homestead Company, Limited, either independently or jointly, employed no Agents of their own, and has never seen nor heard of any immigration literature being put forth by them. Their plan evidently has been to convey their certificates to the hands of intending settlers in Northwestern Canada, through Agents of the Department of the Interior, Steamship Booking Agents, and others already engaged in immigration work, and the said Companies do not appear to have initiated or carried on any operations of their own for the promotion of the settlement of the Canadian Northwest, although the Order in Council of the 28th of April 1886, and the arrangements made

with these Companies in accordance therewith, distinctly required that the compensation they were to get should be for settlers, who through the direct exertions of the said companies, were induced to obtain entries for homesteads, a most important condition which the evidence of record in the Department of the Interior shews has not been fulfilled by the Companies.

The Minister therefore submits that he had ample grounds for discontinuing the arrangements with the Companies as stated above, and upon the same ground he recommends that the Order in Council of the 28th of April, 1886, above referred to, be rescinded.

The Committee advise that the said Order in Council of the 28th of April, 1886, be rescinded accordingly.<sup>256</sup>

---

<sup>256</sup>P.A.C., RG2, volumes 587-588[Part 1]; Order-in-Council, February 21, 1894.

12. APPENDIX C

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. CPR- CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILROAD.
2. DLB- DOMINION LANDS BRANCH.
3. JCA- JEWISH COLONIZATION ASSOCIATION.
4. NWMP- NORTHWEST MOUNTED POLICE.
5. NWT- NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.
6. PAC- PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA.
7. PAS- PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF SASKATCHEWAN.
8. RCMP- ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE.
9. YMHBS- YOUNG MEN'S HEBREW BENEVOLENT SOCIETY OF MONTREAL.