



OFFICE OF MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE.

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Department of Agriculture
VICTORIA, B. C.
MINISTER'S OFFICE
Rec'd NOV 21 1942
File No *21*

EDMONTON, November 17, 1942.

Dear Mr. MacDonald:-

I have for acknowledgment your letter of November 5th, in which you ask for an outline of the grounds and conditions which prompted the Government of Alberta to pass the Act to prohibit the sale of lands to any Enemy Aliens and Hutterites for the duration of the war. This Act is Chapter 16 of the Statutes of Alberta, 1942. I am pleased to comply with your request.

The Hutterites, as you know, are communal in their habits and their economy. Of German origin, and speaking the German language, they do not assimilate in the slightest degree with Canadians, but rather they strive desperately to maintain their German and religious traditions against any inroads of influence from the Canadian community surrounding them. Each morning, at seven o'clock, the children are assembled at their own private school to be instructed by a member of the colony in the German language. From nine until four o'clock a regular English school is conducted under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education with a fully qualified teacher - usually a Canadian. Again, from four until five p.m., the children are taught by their German instructor, evidently to insure that they do not absorb too much English culture and in an effort to inculcate thoroughly German tradition and the religious tenets of Jacob Hutter. On Sunday, all members of the Colony must attend Church services from early in the morning. No musical instruments are allowed in the Colony, and no radios or newspapers are ever found there. And, while these people seem kindly disposed towards casual visitors to their Colonies, yet they do not mingle with their neighbors, nor are they allowed to take any part whatever in the community life around them.

The Hutterites came into Canada early in the 1900's under Agreement with the Federal Government, by which agreement they were exempted for all time from any form of military service or training. They do not become citizens of Canada, nor do they ever wish to take upon themselves any of the responsibilities

Honourable K. C. MacDonald.

Nov. 17, 1942.

of citizenship. It is only natural then, that during wartime they would be looked upon as a specially privileged class who, while their neighbors' sons go off to fight for their country's protection, keep their sons at home to raise more crops to make more money to buy more land.

They settle in colonies of about one hundred persons each. Because of their very simple way of life, and from the fact that everything is held by the Colony in common, their excellent farming abilities net them good returns, much of which is put into savings. Periodically the Colony becomes too large and they all 'swarm' like bees. With their hoarded cash they buy up large tracts of the best land - usually in close proximity to their old home, and soon a new Colony is thriving.

Thus there have grown up, in Southern Alberta particularly, between thirty and forty colonies of these people, numbering in all about 3,600 or 3,800, and since they do not contribute in any way to the culture or to the community life of our people, it is only natural that their expansion would be looked upon with considerable resentment by our people who try to perform all the duties of citizenship.

Shortly after the war broke out some of the Hutterites were indiscreet enough to pass the remark that, while their Canadian neighbors went off to fight and lose their lives, they, the Hutterites, would stay at home and make money selling wheat. They also were indiscreet enough to reach out in an effort to buy up lands which became available because our Canadian boys had to go into the army, and which therefore would have been out of production. Often the Hutterites would offer very high cash prices to get the land.

It became quite evident to the people of Southern Alberta that within a few years the Hutterites would own all of the best land and it would be necessary for the Canadian citizens there to seek other places in which to make their homes. Feeling began to run pretty high last year and the people in Southern Alberta petitioned the Government in the strongest possible terms to prevent,

Honourable K. C. MacDonald.

Nov. 17, 1942.

at least for the duration of the war, the further acquisition of land by these Hutterites, and also by the other Enemy Aliens, namely, the Japanese and the Germans; hence the Bill, which is now Chapter 16 of the 1942 Statutes.

The Government of Alberta is convinced that some orderly system of settlement will have to be worked out for these people before the war is over; a system perhaps which will prevent their swarming to a Colony within a certain specified distance of their former homes. It may be necessary to zone the Province and decree that only a limited number of Colonies may settle in each zone; otherwise, I fear that our people may rise to acts of violence. Even last year there were a good many threats that the Colonies might find themselves completely burned out if they continued to reach out for more land.

The Federal Government made a bad mistake in allowing them to come in to this country in the first place under the terms of the special Order-in-Council passed for them. The whole problem is really a Federal problem and should be dealt with by the Federal Government, but I doubt that they will be prepared to do anything about it.

You will note from the Bill that no restrictions were placed on the leasing or renting of land by the Hutterites. However, there exists an understanding between the Government and the heads of the Hutterite Colonies that should they attempt to contravene the terms of the Act by long-term lease or by arrangements for renting tracts of land, that the Act will be amended at the next Session, prohibiting the renting and leasing of further land for the duration of the war. There has only been about one complaint reach us with respect to this latter problem, so that it may not be necessary for us to be so drastic. However, the feeling still runs very high in Southern Alberta, and I am sure that sooner or later we are going to have to permanently dispose of the whole problem.

I trust you will find the outline given above sufficiently comprehensive for your needs. If there is any

- 4 -

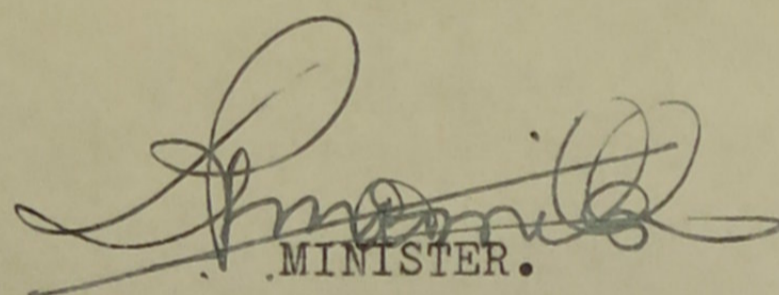
Honourable K. C. MacDonald.

Nov. 17, 1942.

further information which you may require, I will be happy to provide it.

With kindest personal regards, I am,

Yours very truly,


MINISTER.

November 5th
1942

Personal.

Hon. D. B. McMillan,
Minister of Agriculture,
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Mr. McMillan,

My attention has been drawn to Chapter 16 of the Statutes of Alberta, 1942, prohibiting the acquiring of land by the Hutterites sect and it has been suggested that we in this province should pass similar legislation.

I am not familiar with these people but from what I have heard am inclined to think that we should follow your precedent and would be inclined to so recommend. In doing so, however, I will of necessity be asked for the grounds for such action and am aware that such a measure will meet with considerable opposition in the Legislature.

Would you, therefore, give me or obtain for me an outline of the grounds and conditions which prompted your Government in passing Chapter 16 of the 1942 Statutes.

I trust that I am not unduly presuming on your generosity in making this request.

With kindest regards,

Faithfully yours,

K.C. MacDonald,
Minister.