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The Mennonites

By Mrs. John J. Funk

THE Mennonites are divided by themselves and others into two distinct classes, The Village Mennonites and the Community Mennonites. The Village Mennonites, popularly known as Old-timers, retain as far as possible, all habits and customs brought originally from the Old Country. The Community Mennonites, with whom this article has mainly to deal, are the ones who are adopting, slowly it may seem, but undoubtedly surely, all that is most up-to-date, and progressive in Canadian civilization.

The Community Mennonites are represented in all trades and professions but the majority are farmers—farmers noted for their industry and prosperity. The most casual survey of a community reveals the fact that these farmers quickly wrest more than a living from the fertile soil possibly in good measure due to the extensively practised policy of mixed farming. Large houses are one of the first requisites of the Com-

the church while the men sit together on the other. Many of the Mennonites do not believe in having a church organ or piano so the choir is usually led by an instructor, who guides them with graceful motion in excellent time. Fests or feasts are institutions of peculiar and particular interest. They include Sanger Fests or Singing Feasts, Kinder Fests or Children's Feasts, etc. At these feasts, congregations gather from far and near. At a Singing Feast held in the Dalmeny M. B. church, choirs from different parts sang in unison or in selected groups. The Mennonites are noted musicians, learning part singing when mere tots.

The Community Mennonites attend the district public schools and learn quickly and willingly. Discipline is easily maintained on account of the strict home training. Each year sees more and more Mennonite children attending High School and qualifying for teachers.



A Mennonite double wedding.



A Mennonite public school group.

munity homes and these become yearly more efficiently built and sanitary. Barns and outbuildings must needs match the house and paint is not spared to make the whole collection as attractive as possible. Nowhere among Canadian farmers are found such beautiful flowers and well cared for vegetable gardens. These are attended to mainly by the women folk as is also the work of the dairy.

The Mennonites, as a rule, marry young and have large families. The affectionate endearments practised among English people are not commonly met with in Mennonite home life. There is a supreme law in every household—the law of strict obedience to parental control. This law finds little place for mere forms of politeness, indeed "Please," "Thank you," and such like are considered quite unnecessary in the average home vocabulary. Yet for all seeming harshness and sternness, Mennonite parents are extremely fond of their children and take great interest in what they consider the A, B, C of successful living.

Sunday finds everybody at church. They go in the morning and usually stay all day taking dinner and lunch with them. The women occupy one side of

The Mennonites have been most surely in the public eye the past few months. This limelight survey was due in the first place to their inquiry concerning National Service and secondly to the language question brought up by the Trustees in convention at Regina some few weeks ago. The religious belief of the Mennonites forbids of their bearing arms and when they came to Canada it was with the understanding that they would be immune from military service. Thus National Service came as a bomb among them, believing as they did that it would eventually lead to conscription. A delegation was immediately sent to Ottawa where the Government gave them every assurance that no promise would be forgotten. Since that time there has been the greatest expressions of loyalty and appreciation of Canadian citizenship. To prove this, steps are being taken by the Mennonites of the three prairie provinces to raise the sum of \$25,000 for patriotic purposes. Already, Hon. Arthur Meighen, solicitor-general at Ottawa, has received \$2,044.75 from Bishop Friesen of Reinfeld Mennonite church of Manitoba and \$1,383 from the Mennonites of Hague, Sask., while small amounts are being daily

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