

members of German colonies in Siberia, descendants of the Mennonites who emigrated to Siberia in the last century, became Russian subjects and have lived there since. They received land from the Russian Government on favourable conditions, and as they were skilled and energetic workers and respectable, honest people, they built up a good position for themselves, and when the revolution broke out they were all well to do.

Already in the middle of October about 6,000 arrived. They lived in summer villas along the stations on the Siberian railway, in the neighbourhood of Moscow, crowded together in small rooms and under unhealthy sanitary conditions. They related they had sold everything they owned, houses, cattle and furniture, and had come to Moscow in the hope of emigrating. In the first years after the revolution they had managed fairly well, even though difficulties increased year by year, but this year conditions had been quite unbearable. The harvest was very bad, in many places a total failure, so that they had not reaped as much as they had sown. At the same time public burdens, taxes, compulsory sale of corn, etc. had steadily become heavier, so that they had given up all hope of the future. But the most serious cause was religious persecution by the authorities, which made their lives unbearable. They could not speak or think of their children growing up in such a godless community. The mothers also maintained that efforts made to take children away from the influence of their parents and homes completely spoiled their lives.

The first colonists to arrive were in possession of money obtained by the sale of their property, but on account of the lack of purchasers and the great poverty in the district they had been obliged to sell houses, stock and other property at prices which were only a small fraction of their real value.

The invasion has continued since the middle of October, and colonists have come not only from Siberia, but also from Ukraine, Caucasus and even from the German Volga Republic, so that the number is now about 8,000. And those who remained behind have only one wish, to emigrate. I have been told that in Siberia alone, there are 10,000 families, and about 50,000 individuals who intend to leave their homes. The Russian peasants too are following their example. Such emigrants constantly come to the Legation and ask regarding the possibility of going to Canada.

At first the Soviet authorities did not appear to pay very much attention to the matter, but when the foreign correspondents began to interest themselves in these colonists and the supply of food for so many caused difficulties, the authorities announced that those who had already come would be given passports but that any further invasion would be stopped. The Mennonites in Canada provided the necessary travelling expenses, and it was believed that the majority of those who had already arrived would be able to emigrate. Passports have been made out for over 3,000 of these colonists