Solomon Mussallem

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Herbert Baxter King

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SOLOMON MUSSALLEM

A Biography

BY HERBERT BAXTER KING

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PREFACE

This story of the life of a Canadian Syrian born in the Bekaa Valley within the shadows of the mountains of Lebanon was not intended, when I began to write it, to be anything so pretentious as a book. But it has grown and grown as I have dug into the facts concerning the career of the subject of this biography.

When I retired from the Civil Service of the province of British Columbia, and settled on a little farm in the rural district of Maple Ridge, in the green valley of the Fraser, I had already met Solomon Mussallem in the way of official business. I knew him as the perennial reeve of Maple Ridge and a power in the land.

As acquaintanceship grew into friendship I learned much about his life of more than half a century in Canada and of his origin in Lebanon. I found that I had discovered a personality, the story of whose rise in the Canadian world is of present interest and will be of even more interest to the future student of Canadian social history.

One day I chanced to say to his son, "George, your father's life has been very unusual. The way he came here from a remote valley in the Middle East, without a word of English, and worked up to the place he now holds in British Columbia, is extraordinary. It ought to be written up. It would be of historical interest in time to come."

George agreed with me. I had not thought of doing the writing myself, but the idea germinated, and this book is the result.

So many volumes spring today from the printing presses that one who has the temerity to add to their number is under obligation to justify his action.

I have had two reasons for writing the book. The first is to

give pleasure to an old friend, his family, and to his friends and acquaintances.

The second reason is more unusual.

I am writing for the benefit of some future historian digging into the débris of the present. To my mind comes the picture of an unknown researcher of a hundred years from now who will stumble upon this volume and find value in it as an historical and sociological record. It will tell him something of the making of a Canadian in the first half of this century. Over the gulf of years I stretch my hand to this unknown student of a distant day and hope that the story of Solomon Mussallem will throw some light for him upon aspects of Canadian life in a period of history which will then appear shrouded in the mists of a forgotten past.

In some portions of the book, the story is told in Solomon's own words. These I have indicated by the Latin: "*Solomon loquitur*" – that is, "Solomon speaks himself".

Pains have been taken to make sure that the facts recounted herein are correct, but there may be errors, for in the recollection of things which have happened in a period that exceeds the half of a century, certainty cannot be absolute. If any reader should discover such error, he should let the subject of this biography know of it by writing to Solomon at his address in Haney, British Columbia.

Herbert Baxter King.

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SOLOMON MUSSALLEM

A Biography

BY HERBERT BAXTER KING

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CHAPTER I

AN INCURSION INTO HISTORY

TO UNDERSTAND an Englishman you must know English history. To understand a Lebanese Syrian you must know something of the historic background of his country.

The study of history wearies many people and one should apologize for delving so far into the past, but in order to put the subject of this biography in proper setting, we must go back some thousand years or more.

The Bekaa Valley, lying between the parallel western and eastern ranges of the Lebanon mountains, is drained by the southernly flowing Leattany river, which at the southern end of the western-most Lebanon range, turns towards the west and empties into the Mediterranean near Tyre. This was the Leontes river of the ancients.

The ancient Greeks called the valley the Syrian valley (coele Syria). Between the mountains and the sea, in the coastal Phoenician plain, flourished of old the two rival Biblical cities, Tyre and Sidon, destroyed, it is said, by fire and brimstone, because of their wickedness. They probably burned down because of their wooden buildings, fashioned from the cedars of Lebanon, and the lack of a fire department. But they soon revived, for the plain and the Bekaa Valley were fruitful and the harbours were good and favourably placed for the Mediterranean trade. Their sailing ships voyaged even to the British Isles in search of lead and tin.

I have come to the conclusion, from historical reasoning which it would be inappropriate to set forth here except sketchily, that the Lebanese of this valley are the direct descendants of those who dwelt there in ancient times – that there has been no significant racial displacement of population. The cultivators of the soil have clung to it throughout the ages.

I think that the religious tenacity of the Lebanese Christians from the first Christian century up to the present points to

their racial identity throughout the same period. Their religion held them together racially.

If we can accept the racial identity of the Lebanese Christians of this present age with those of the time of St. Paul, there will be no difficulty in taking a further leap into the past, and assuming the unbroken continuity of this people throughout recorded history. Unfortunately this must be an assumption, for documentation is lacking, or unknown to me, but I can find nothing to suggest that the population of the valley was exterminated or removed.

The people that could stand up for a millennium and a half against the Moslem, Arabs and the Turks, would survive the milder dynasts of pre-Christian times.

Some of the Mussallem ancestors must then have been in the lumber business in the first and second millennia before Christ, for the western slopes of the two mountain ranges were forest-clad. The logs would come down along the route of the Leattany river and are known to have been transported to Egypt in the time of the Pharaohs. It will be recalled also that King Hiram of Tyre supplied King Solomon with cedar timbers for his temple.

The Phoenicians were a highly cultivated people – the merchants, manufacturers and artisans of the ancient world. They had at one time the monopoly of the trade of the Mediterranean.

In their cities they produced wares of surpassing quality and beauty. The country lying back of these Phoenician centres of trade and industry would share in their culture. The Bekaa Valley was part of this hinterland.

Great empires rose and fell, held dominion over this and neighboring lands and lost it – Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome, but life in the Bekaa Valley went on, if not peacefully, at least without great tragedy. It was just a little too much out of the way of totalitarian war.

Alexander the Great marched along the coastal road on his way to Egypt, taking time off along his way to capture Tyre, the very point from which Solomon set out for America long afterwards. Alexander probably foraged for his army in the Bekaa Valley, which was highly productive then.

Alexander formed a vast empire, extending from the Balkan

peninsula through Asia Minor, Egypt, Persia to the waters of the Indian Ocean.

He built magnificent cities on the Grecian model, and introduced Greek culture, civilization and the Greek language. This civilization is known as the Hellenistic civilizaton. Up near the headwaters of the Leattany river in the valley are the ruins of one such Hellenistic city – Heliopolis, the city of the sun.

After the death of Alexander, his empire broke up into a number of kingdoms, but the Hellenistic civilization continued. The Bekaa Valley was within the orbit of Hellenistic culture.

In the century before the birth of Christ and in the century after, Rome entered upon a course of conquest. Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, fell into her hands, but the Hellenistic civilization continued.

In 330 A.D. the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great established a new capital for the Roman Empire at Constantinople. By the end of his life he had made Christianity the state religion in place of paganism. Christianity had been spreading in the three preceding centuries, buts its practice was illegal. The church now flourished under Constantine's protection.

When the Roman Empire fell in the West (Italy, Spain, France, Britain) to the German barbarians, it continued for almost a thousand years as the Eastern Roman Empire, with its capital in Constantinople (now Istanbul) until its capture in 1453 by the Turks.

Greek was the official language of the Eastern Empire for this whole period. Lebanon was under Constantinople and its emperor.

When the Eastern Empire separated from the Roman West, the churches separated also. The Eastern churches were and are known as the Eastern Orthodox Churches, divided into four patriarchates: Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem.

The patriarch of Constantinople was the head of the Greek Orthodox church. This was the church of the Mussallems – an historic church, and also the national church of Greece today. Until its fall in 1453 to the Turk, Constantinople was the chief city of the Greek world and a continuing source of Greek cul-

tural influence in the Near East. Lebanon was subject to this culture.

But this influence was gradually retracted with the coming of the Moslems and the spread of Mohammedanism. In A.D. 622, Mohammed began his crusade, carrying the sword and the Koran.

His gospel spread like wildfire from its starting points of Mecca and Medina.

In the first fierce onslaught of his wild Arab horsemen, the choice of the conquered was between death and the Koran.

The Christian Syrians are the descendants of those who wouldn't accept the Koran, and wouldn't let themselves be killed. They gathered in centres of resistance, and held their own for centuries.

In time the Arabs became peaceful, acquired the culture of the Greeks and at the period of the Crusades were actually more civilized than many of the Crusaders. They developed science and mathematics – and the words algebra, alcohol, alkali, and chemistry are Arabic in origin.

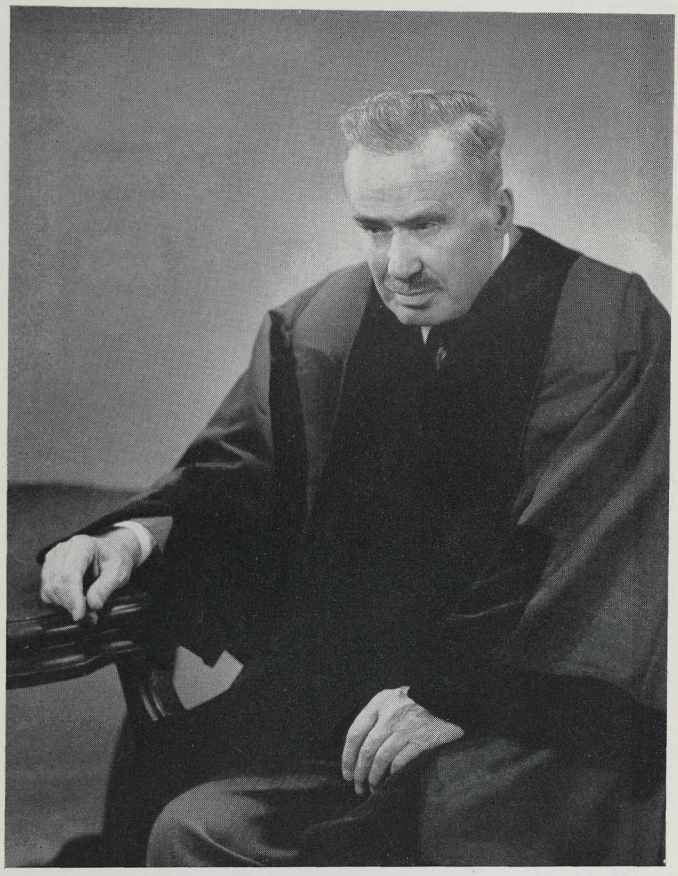
It was in this period of Moslem expansion that the Lebanese Syrians lost their language, which probably was Aramaic. Arabic was forced upon them with the sword.

Between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries came the Crusades. The Bekaa Valley lies just north of Palestine. The crusading armies spread over the country. There were years of occupation by the Christian invaders, and after the departure of their main forces, many of the troops remained behind, in a pleasant land, where a Christian population had received them, not as enemies but as rescuers. At any rate, it is a tradition in the Mussallem family that they descend from the Crusaders, and the tradition is probably true.

The Crusaders finally gave up their futile struggle and left the Holy Land to Islam and the Saracens.

Now a new invader comes into the picture and the hand of the clock is turned further back.

Turks from Central Asia began their conquest of Asiatic Turkey – from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf – in the thirteenth century.

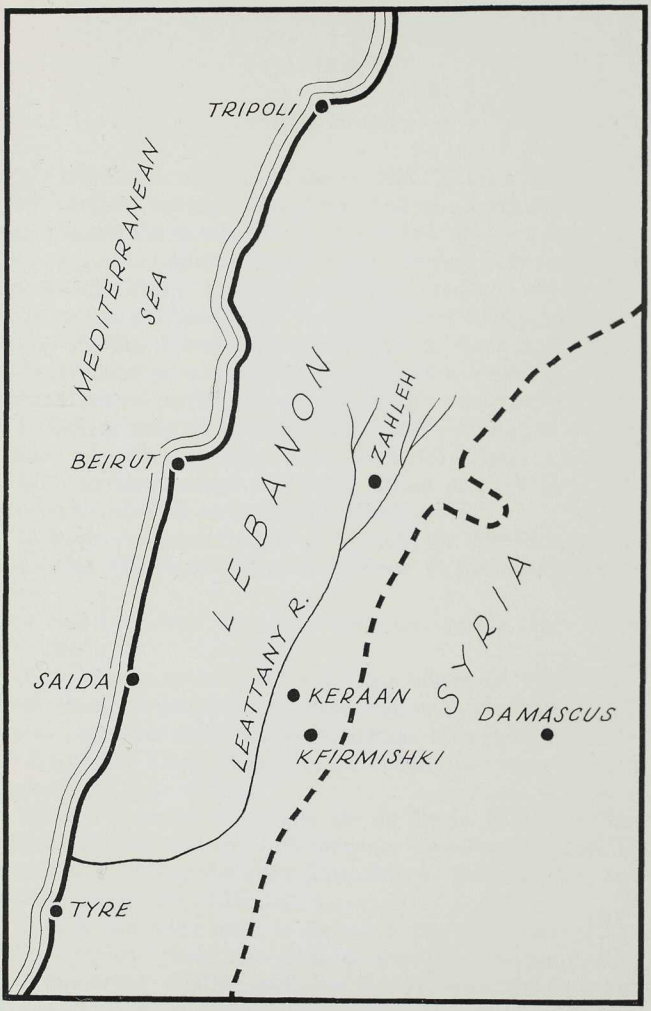


Reeve Mussallem in his municipal robes of office

They took Constantinople in 1453, and then spread their rule into the Balkan States of Europe. A dark night settled over the Moslem world. The Turks reached their greatest power in the sixteenth century, and then through sloth, corruption and inefficiency, the Turkish Empire began to crumble. In the nineteenth century Turkey was known as the "sick man of Europe". It was towards the end of this period that Solomon Mussallem escaped to Canada from the backward rule of the Turk. Even before he left, change was impending. A group of young Europeanized Turks was forming. In 1908 they led a revolt which stripped the Sultan of much power. But unfortunately they were enticed into World War I on the side of Germany. This led to attack in Asia by the British and revolt of the Arabic-speaking population, stimulated by Lawrence of Arabia. The capture of Jerusalem and Damascus by the armies of Allenby brought an end to the war. By the peace treaties Turkey was left with only Constantinople and the peninsula of Asia Minor. In 1922 the revolution was completed with the deposition of the Sultan. The establishment of a Turkish republic followed in 1925.

The peace treaties ending World War I established Lebanon with its capital Beirut, and also Syria (Damascus), as French "mandates", and Palestine as a British mandate. At the beginning of World War II the western allies recognized Lebanon and Syria as independent republics. In 1948, after a period of political agitation and many assassinations of British officers and officials, Palestine became an independent Jewish republic. It lies just south of Lebanon, but as of October 1954, there is no postal, telephone, or telegraphic connection between Israel and Lebanon.

Following their separation from Turkey, all of these countries have expanded, economically and socially. Their ancient culture is reviving.


TRIPOLI
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
BEIRUT
LEBANON
ZAHLEH
SYRIA
LEATTANY R.
SAIDA
KERAAN
DAMASCUS
KFIRMISHKI
TYRE

CHAPTER II

LEBANON TO-DAY

WHEN, on a September day in 1897, in the ancient town of Tyre, Solomon Mussallem climbed aboard the sailing vessel which was to take him to Port Said in the first leg of his long journey to Carleton Place, he was escaping from the rule of the Sublime Porte. Lebanon was then a province of Turkey. Solomon was a subject of the Turkish Sultan, seated precariously on his shaking throne in Constantinople on the Bosphorus.

Today Lebanon is an independent republic, a member of the United Nations, moving forward steadily as a modern democracy.

It flies proudly its national flag, horizontal stripes of red, white, red, with a green cedar on the white stripe.

With an area estimated at 3,400 square miles, it is in size just under one-fifth of Vancouver Island.

In length it extends from north to south for 135 miles, a little more than the Fraser Valley from Hope to the mouth of the river.

It runs back from the sea in distances varying from 25 to 50 miles.

Along the sea stretches the long plain where the Phoenicians lived. Back of the plain run north and south the eastern and western ranges of the Lebanese Mountains, whence the Pharoahs of Egypt and King Solomon in Jerusalem got cedar building material for their edifices.

Between the mountain ranges lies the Bekaa Valley. In this valley is Keraan, where in 1881 Solomon Mussallem was born, a little town midway between Jerusalem in Palestine and the historic Syrian city of Damascus.

Twenty-four miles north of Keraan is the chief town of the valley, Zahleh, where the governor lived and the Mussallem clan was strong. Further north lies Houran where the first four Mussallem brothers adopted that name.

Above Houran, at the headwaters of the river, you would

find, if you were an archaeologist or historian, whatever stones remain of the ancient Hellenistic city of Heliopolis.

Modern roads now run up this valley, and also from the Port of Beirut through Zahleh to Damascus.

To the south of Lebanon is the Jewish state of Israel. To the east and north lies Syria, almost wholly Moslem, and to the west the blue Mediterranean.

In this restricted area a million and a quarter people live.

In 1949, 672,000 of them were Christians and 557,000 were Moslems.

Of the Christians, 359,000 were Maronites, 123,000 were Greek Orthodox, 77,000 Armenians, 73,000 Greek and Roman Catholics and 12,000 were described as Protestants.

There is a group of Catholics who do not acknowledge Rome. They are called the Royal Catholics, neither Roman nor Greek Orthodox. The Mussallems of Keraan are Greek Orthodox. Of the Mussallems of Zahleh, some are Orthodox, some are Royal Catholic. The ritual of the Greek Orthodox is like that of the Church of England, in Arabic.

The Maronites are a religious body which is in obedience to the Pope in Rome. Their liturgy is in Syriac and their priests may marry, but not the bishops.

The Maronites suffered grievously in the middle of the last century at the hands of the fanatical Moslem Druses. The massacres of the Maronites in 1860 led to the intervention of France on behalf of the Europian Christian powers. This gave France a foothold in Syria and French political, religious and commercial influence followed and continued until World War II.

In 1860 the European governments forced Turkey to accept a Christian governor for Lebanon. A Mussallem was one of these early governors.

At this time the French established a Roman Catholic university in Beirut, the chief port and centre of commerce. They also established elementary schools.

The American Presbyterian church also established a university in Beirut and lower schools throughout the country. They established an elementary school in Keraan, in the Bekaa Valley, which Solomon attended.

The Church of England, which had an established friendly association with the Greek Orthodox Church, was not behind the other churches in founding schools.

The 557,000 Moslems are classified as Sunnis, Shiites, and Druses.

The Druses are a closely-knit Moslem brotherhood, inclined to fanaticism. They were the active agents of the massacres of 1860.

Until the establishment of the French mandate after World War I there were no public or government schools. But with freedom from the Turk, progress has been rapid. In 1951 there were 977 primary schools, 30 technical schools, and two teachers' training colleges. There were also over 600 private schools and 149 foreign (church) schools of all grades.

There are two universities in Beirut – one French (R.C.) and the other American (Presbyterian).

The only strictly national institution of higher learning is the Lebanon Academy of Fine Arts, which includes schools of architecture, letters, painting and sculpture, music, and political and social science.

Lebanon is essentially agricultural. Because of excessive timber-cutting in past ages and the grazing of goats, little is left of the famous forests. Soil erosion has been extensive.

Where soil conditions are favourable, there are grown wheat, maize, barley and potatoes, as well as the typical products of the Mediterranean or Californian variety of climate – water melons, olives, tomatoes, citrus fruits and grapes. In 1950, a modest crop of 16 thousand metric tons of apples was harvested. A metric ton is 2204.6 pounds.

The agricultural products of Lebanon are, therefore, much like those of our own Okanagan. As also in the Okanagan, tobacco is grown and this leads to the secondary industry of cigarette-making.

Mining is negligible, unless one counts quarrying as mining. Limestone, chalk, and dolomite provide material for building construction and cement production, and this latter is one of the new industries of today.

Slate for roofing is also available.

Industry, however, is on a minor scale, the processing of the products of the soil: that is to say, the spinning and weaving of cotton and silk, the production of olive oil, soap-making, and the tanning of the hides of sheep and goats. These industries existed but did not flourish in Solomon's time, for the Turkish government was ignorant of the processes of trade and indifferent to it.

The present-day development of Lebanon economically, and, one might add, socially, has come in part from the freeing of the people's creative activities when the Turkish yoke was thrown off, and democracy established, but also largely from the growth of petroleum products in the Near East.

The pipe line of the Iraq Petroleum Company brings oil from Iraq to the ancient Lebanese port of Tripoli. The company operates there a refinery, the petroleum production of which is sufficient for the country's needs.

With an abundance of road-building materials at hand, including locally manufactured cement and the by-products of petroleum refining, Lebanon has built a network of hard-surfaced motor highways which connect with the roads of neighboring countries.

Transportation has been motorized, by land and air.

In Solomon Mussallem's time there was no national road system. There were tracks beaten into the earth through the centuries by the feet of mules and donkeys, but not suitable for wheeled transport.

Solomon believes that there were some toll roads operated by foreign companies which had obtained concessions from the Turkish government. There may have been toll roads between Beirut and Damascus, and between Jerusalem and Damascus.

In the Bekaa Valley there were only the ancient tracks used by pack animals. The Turkish government had no Department of Public Works and was indifferent with respect to social and economic development.

Saida is the terminal of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company, which brings oil from Saudi Arabia.

Beirut is the market of the Levant. It is the main port of entry into Syria and has considerable trade with Jordan and Iraq.

A privately owned railway company operates in Lebanon and Syria, and affects rail connection from Beirut to Damascus, Bagdad, Ankara, Istanbul and all important centres.

A branch line runs into the Bekaa Valley.

In Solomon's time the telephone was unknown. It is widespread today, but for political and nationalistic reasons there was, in 1953, no telegraph, postal nor telephone connection with Israel.

In Beirut, in 1952, an automatic telephone system was on the point of being installed.

Through B.O.A.C. there is direct air service with London, European capitals, the Far East and the U.S.A.

Today, a Mussallem could fly to Beirut and then go on hard-surfaced highway to Zahleh and Keraan in the Bekaa Valley.

Or they could go by train from Beirut.

For entertainment, in 1952, the Lebanese had the choice of 53 cinemas with a seating capacity of 30,000.

In this book the word Lebanese is sometimes used interchangeably with Syrian, because the Lebanese racially are Syrians. The word Lebanese is a geographical and political rather than a racial term.

The spelling of place names is mostly that given in the Statesman's Year Book, 1952.

The language spoken in the country is Arabic, though the Syrians, at any rate the Christian urbanized Syrians, make a distinction between themselves and the Arabs. The Syrians are the descendants of the original races which occupied the land before the Arab followers of Mohammed brought the sword and the Koran and imposed their tongue on all and their religion on many.

CHAPTER III

THE BEKAA VALLEY

THE BEKAA Valley adjoined the ancient kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and at times was classified with Palestine. It was the agricultural country back of the ancient Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon, which latter name is preserved today in the town of Saida. In those days it undoubtedly was, like the land promised to the Jews, a "land of milk and honey", but the destruction of the forests which covered the Lebanese hills and the long ravages of wind and water erosion, and the neglect of fertilization, have much lowered the quality of the soil. Though there was ample food for the population in Solomon's time, there was not much for export, and this probably was a considerable factor in the lack of hard money until the modern period began after the First World War.

Some wheat was grown, and oats and barley. These were ground locally into flour, as in Biblical days, in grist mills, between upper and lower millstones, quarried in the neighboring mountains. Power was supplied by the waterfalls in streams coming from the mountains.

The flour so made was nutritious, not having been robbed of its minerals and vitamins like the white flour used in America. This nutritious bread was the staple item in the Lebanese diet.

While oats were grown, oatmeal and porridge were unknown. Solomon had his first porridge in Carleton County, Ontario.

There was plenty of fruit, especially grapes and figs. Figs were dried in their own sugar.

The grapes grew in immense bunches just as recorded in the Scriptures and reported by the spies sent by Moses to scout the Holy Land.

From the grapes wine was made and the molasses used in sweetening foods.

Raisins made from the grapes were used generously in cooking.

Rice pudding was a favorite dish, sweetened with molasses

and made more palatable with raisins. The rice came from Egypt.

Meat was rare. Land could not be spared for cattle raising, and the country was too dry to give luxuriant pasture. But sheep (ganamie) and goats (ganzi) were commonly raised. Both furnished milk and therefore proteins, minerals and vitamins. Cottage cheese was made from the goat milk.

Everybody kept a few hens and therefore eggs were plentiful. Occasionally there was a fowl for the pot.

Other meat, however, was rare. Mutton or goat meat would appear not oftener than once a month.

Fish, however, abounded in the streams flowing from the mountains. You went and caught your own fish.

The ordinary garden vegetables were in universal use. The potato had made its invincible march from Virginia to Ireland and England, and thence to the Bekaa Valley.

Consideration of the foods named above as products of the country, except the imported rice from Egypt, indicates that the people of the valley had a nutritionally sound diet. This accounts for the good physique of the Lebanese. It accounts also for the energy which manifested itself in their horse-tournaments, the *Sbac Kheel.*

Some variety in diet came from other fruits brought up from the coast – apples, peaches, and oranges – where the soil and climate favoured these products.

The sheep provided not only milk and mutton. It furnished wool, which was spun and woven in the cottages for clothing the people who had reared the sheep.

The economy of the valley was thus largely one of self-sufficiency, rather than a money-economy. The people would pass through a world depression without being much affected by it, unless it led to increased demands from the Turkish *Muktor* or tax-collector, crying for greater amounts of the scarce metallic money.

There were no grocery nor other stores in a country town or village, but at the end of the growing season there was a good deal of bartering. A man bartered his surplus food for some other food which he hadn't raised himself.

There was little chance of growing rich.

A rich man – the "man with a stone house" – was one who chanced to have a better piece of land, or was luckier, or more thrifty. But the difference between him and his neighbor was negligible and didn't differentiate him socially from them.

The valley was an egalitarian Utopia. Perhaps the motor car and the oil from Iraq have changed all that!

TRANSPORTATION AND TRADE

There were no roads in the valley, none worthy of the name, and there was no wheeled transport. There were simple tracks beaten into the earth throughout the centuries by the feet of horses, donkeys, mules, asses, and camels. Goods were transported on the backs of these animals. Zahleh was reached from Keraan by such an earthen track or "road".

A coastal road beaten out in this way ran parallel to the westernmost of the two parallel Lebanese mountains. There were also tracks across the mountains from the valley to the coastal road. These tracks were infested with robbers.

There was a much travelled and better route from Beirut to Damascus and a similar one from Jerusalem to Damascus.

During the last third of the Nineteenth Century these two roads were quite good, being kept up as toll roads by a foreign company which had a concession from the Turkish government.

Zahleh, being entirely a Christian community under a Christian governor, had a municipal government of its own and had good macadamized roads. There were carriages there and carts and wagons.

Beirut was Europeanized to a considerable degree, with its French and American colleges. The foreign trade of the country passed through Beirut, or chiefly through that city. Beirut then, as now, served as seaport to Damascus.

But except for the fairly good roads from Beirut to Damascus and from Jerusalem to Damascus, there were only the primitive tracks which have been described.

It was in such conditions that Solomon's father Asaph carried on his vocation of trader.

He had a string of pack animals – donkeys, mules, and asses.

and bought up the surplus products of the valley and carried them for sale in Zahleh, Damascus, Beirut, Tyre and Saida.

Because of the robbers it was necessary to go armed in travelling the mountain trails. Druses were the most formidable but not the only robbers.

To the coastal cities and the interior markets of Zahleh and Damascus, Asaph Mussallem carried grapes, figs, wheat, lentils, olive oil, and the cocoons of the silkworm.

Grapes were sold fresh, and also dried as raisins. From the grape also was produced molasses, commonly used instead of sugar, which was dear.

The Mussallems had farm products of their own, for they had a *feddan* of land, not all in one solid piece, but in scattered blocks, as in mediaeval Europe.

A *feddan* was about 60 acres, the amount of land a yoke of oxen could plough in the ploughing season.

They had mulberry trees for the silkworm, olive trees, and raised great quantities of grapes.

The elder Mussallem marketed the surplus products of his own *feddan* and those raised by others around Keraan and elsewhere in the valley. Thus he reaped the profits of his own farm and the profits of his trading.

For the most part the people lived directly upon the products of their own land and by barter. The money for the purchase of imported wares and for paying the Turkish taxes came from the goods carried out of the valley by such traders as Solomon's father.

From the coast he brought back apples, peaches, and foreign goods, such as bright cotton prints, hardware, laths, scantlings, candles and lamps.

Oil came from Mosul.

The imported wood was credited with having come from America, which was a great mysterious unknown from which all unusual things came.

EDUCATION IN A LEBANESE VILLAGE

The massacres of the Christians in Lebanon in 1860 not only

installed a Christian governor in Zahleh, a Mussallem, whose influence gave a measure of protection to the Christians in the rest of the valley: it brought also the beginning of organized education. There had been no system of public education under the Turks.

This is not to be taken as implying that the Lebanese were illiterate up to this time, for just as in the early days of Christianity in Europe, the church had not allowed the flame of learning to die. Some knowledge of letters was necessary for the services of the church, and schools and seminaries were maintained for this purpose. But only the brighter could profit from this instruction, which, however, did serve to transmit Christian culture. In places like Zahleh and Beirut schools were maintained by the modest contribution of fee-paying parents of means. In other places, the children depended upon the instruction they could obtain within the family circle.

The massacres of 1860 shocked the Christian world, and brought to the attention of Europe and America the plight of their long-forgotten fellow Christians in Lebanon. The Church of England, the Roman Catholics of France, and the American Presbyterians interested themselves in Lebanon.

The French established a university in Beirut. The American Presbyterians did likewise, as well as founding a hospital. The Church of England established numerous elementary schools and a teacher-training institution, as the French and Americans also did. The Americans established an elementary school in Keraan. It was here that Solomon got his schooling from his seventh to his twelfth year, when the death of his father compelled him to begin another phase of his career.

The school house in Keraan was a one-roomed building of sun-dried brick or *lebn*, built centrally in the village. There was ample play space about it, not much used for that purpose however.

It was about 40 feet by 80 feet, and had plenty of space for 50 pupils, though at times the number was more like 70. There were no girl pupils, or more rooms would have been needed, as about one-fourth or fifth of the 1,200 inhabitants of Keraan were Christians.

Along one side of the room ran an open space which served as a window. There was no glass. In winter this space was covered with a strip of cheesecloth, woven in the country. There was a fireplace built like an incinerator, not much used, however, as the pupils themselves had to forage for fuel.

The classroom was well supplied with blackboards of slate, quarried locally. Slate also took the place of paper exercise books and slate pencils the place of lead pencils. Paper was scarce and costly.

The curriculum was simple. The pupils learned to read, spell, and write the Arabic language. Readers and spelling books were provided by the American Presbyterians. There were also text books in history and geography. Solomon studied the history of Syria and Lebanon, and the rudiments of European history. He learned the geography of the Near East and in very general terms the geography of the world as a whole. But there were no attractive supplementary reading books in geography and other subjects, no reference books, no art, no music, no visual education, no physical education, no activities or projects, no industrial arts – in fact, no "frills" of any kind. There are people in British Columbia who would be happier in such an educational world than they are with the schools of today!

The pupils received also a good grounding in arithmetic, an art ancient in Arabic-speaking lands.

The Bible received considerable attention, as was natural in a school maintained by the church. A proud possession which Solomon still cherishes is a copy of the Bible, in Arabic, a prize for having repeated the whole of Chapter 5 of St. Matthew. This performance took place before the Presbyterian school inspector, Mr. Jessup, who was highly gratified by Solomon's proficiency.

It is to be recalled that the events recorded in the Gospels took place only a few miles away, and so the stories of the Bible seemed very real.

There were three months of summer vacation, but that was not a time for play. Life was too serious. In summer one worked.

Solomon also worked after school hours, learning the trade of shoemaker. This, in some degree, gave him the manual train-

ing which was lacking in the curriculum. It also kept him out of mischief.

While there was no organized physical education as part of the school programme, there was some unorganized sport, particularly the game called "tabby". This resembled our "duck on the rock".

There might also be some desultory throwing of a ball, a leather ball made by the village shoemaker. As 10 cents a day was good pay for a day's labour, the purchase of play equipment was out of the question. Nature provided the material for "tabby". This also was the only community sport, if one may except the inter-tribal or inter-communal horse-fighting or *sbac kheel.*

There were thus obvious deficiencies in equipment and in the scope of the curriculum. But the school compared fairly well with the rural schools in many parts of Canada and the United States in the same period. It left Solomon with the desire for further education, and when at the age of twelve he left Keraan to join his uncle Machool in Zahleh he took the opportunity there, and later in Canada, of obtaining further education.

Discipline was strict, and corporal punishment was common there as it was at the same time in English-speaking countries. A strictly formal curriculum has always been associated with punishment, leading to occasional revolt, and this was the case in Keraan. Upon one occasion the pupils rebelled and the big boys "beat up" the teacher. They met with no parental sympathy, however, but rather with multiplied woe, and no further disciplinary infractions occurred.

The chief social control in the community was the will of the elders, always deferred to.

While there were Turkish magistrates and police, the Christians avoided the use of these agents of the law. An informal council of elders controlled the Christian element.

The young Moslems of Keraan attended the Moslem school, taught by the Moslem priest. The pupils squatted on the floor around the teacher, all reciting the Koran together, at the top of their voices. The learning of a little arithmetic and the reading of the Koran comprised the total of the Moslem educational

process. It wasn't necessary to understand the Koran. Blessing was conferred by the utterance of the words.

In the Christian school, however, the understanding of the subject matter was required, just as in any modern school of the present day.

The teachers in the elementary schools controlled by the churches were natives of the country, trained for teaching in institutions maintained by the churches. They were paid by the churches, but the school buildings were built by the voluntary labour of the parents.

As there were few other professional outlets for young people in Syrian lands at this time, the churches were able to enlist quite an able class of young men for the vocation of teaching. Their training may have been deficient by modern standards but the teachers appear to have been devoted and zealous.

Like the village priest, they usually supplemented their official earnings by operating small farms of their own.

Reading material, other than text books and the Bible, was hard to come by. There were no newspapers or magazines nor public libraries. The teacher through the school inspector could obtain a book from the church headquarters in Beirut, but it took about six months to get it.

Being deprived of books in these early years, Solomon has prized them the more. It has been natural that he should have been one of the founders of the Fraser Valley Regional Library and a member of the Board from its inception. Later he was made a life member.

CHURCH AND SOCIAL LIFE

The church had an important place in the life of Keraan, if for no other reason than that there were no other community activities than those the church provided. The Sunday services were well attended.

As the Syrian Christians of the Bekaa Valley had conserved their Christianity from the time of the Apostles against Moslem pressure, the church meant a great deal to them. There was no conscious need of competing diversions.

In Keraan the Christians were practically all of the Greek Orthodox Church. They comprised from 20 to 25 per cent of the 1,200 people of the little town or *belled.*

The church or *kaneesey* was built in Solomon's time by volunteer labour. Solomon was part of that labour.

It was a substantial building approximately 80 feet by 40 feet, plain within and without.

The parishioners, when they had the time, had gone to the mountains which ran along the sides of the valley and quarried the soft native stone. They cut and trimmed the blocks so that they would fit the walls. Then the blocks were carried on men's backs to the site of the building.

Solomon remembers doing his share of the work, slinging a block of stone over his back, bound with a stout rope.

A master-builder directed the work of building.

The church held up to 200 worshippers. The congregation was not a wealthy one. While the people had plenty of food and clothing and simple houses and on the whole had a good life (save for the Turkish tax-collector), money in the form of cash was scarce, and this was due to the unenlightened Turkish economic and political policies.

The priest or *khoury* depended upon the scanty collections of Turkish coins which the congregation was able to scrape together. Three cents would be a generous offering from an individual.

But he had a small farm or *arath* which took up most of his week day time. He lived in a modest house or *byat* made of sun dried brick, just like his parishioners.

The services were conducted in the Syrian rite of the Greek Orthodox Church.

There was good congregational singing but no organ.

There were special Christmas and Easter services, as was to be expected in that ancient Christian land. Keraan was midway between Jerusalem and Damascus. The feet of the Apostles had trodden the road which connected the two cities. The air was full of tradition.

Easter was an occasion for festivity. At Easter it was the

custom of the Christians to visit each Christian house, and enter the door, left open to the delicious spring air.

The table was set with delicacies – rice pudding (sweetened with molasses made from grapes), nuts, raisins, sweets.

Immediately upon entering, the visitor cried, "Christ is risen!" Then came the answer, "Verily he is!" Until these words were spoken, nothing could be said, nor could any of the delicacies be touched.

Then politeness demanded that the visitor taste each of the delicacies and after some courteous words depart to the next house.

Social life in Keraan was rather restricted, and there was no social intermingling with the Moslems. There were occasional dances, parties and picnics, always carefully chaperoned. But in neighboring Kfir Mishki, where the Besytts lived, 90 per cent of the population was Christian and social life was more developed. There St. Eli's church was quite beautiful and had festivals to which people went from a wide area, travelling on horses and donkeys. The relations between Christian and Moslem were better in Kfir Mishki than was usual elsewhere, and there were some very nice young Moslems who took part freely in the social life of the town along with the Christians.

Also in Kfir Mishki the Christian girls attended school along with the boys.

There was little social distinction in this unsophisticated Christian world, perhaps because there were few rich people in these country towns and villages where a rich man was one who had a stone house, or perhaps because the original spirit of early Christianity had been passed along from the first century founders of the church.

Even the bishop in Zahleh had little of the pomp of prelates elsewhere.

If social life in general was conducted upon a subdued note, this did not apply to weddings. Then the young people, especially the maidens, really let themselves go! All the younger people gathered, dressed in their brightest colours, bedecked and garlanded with flowers. They moved in a long processional line singing and dancing before the bridal party as it moved

from the bride's home to the church. After the ceremony the procession formed again, accompanying the wedded pair to the home of the bride's parents where the rest of the day and the evening were given up to feasting and merriment.

Moslem weddings, too, were celebrated in the same way, at least in Kfir Mishki, where a liberal spirit prevailed.

ZAHLEH

When he finished his elementary school course in Keraan between the ages of 12 and 13, Solomon went to Zahleh to live there with his uncle Machool.

His father was now dead, being between 40 and 45 years old at the time of his decease. He left Solomon's mother and sister with a small estate in Keraan.

Solomon's uncle was a building contractor, proficient in the trades of stonemason, carpenter and tinsmith.

Solomon became apprenticed to his uncle in these trades.

The native stone in the Bekaa Valley is a soft calcareous rock, something in hardness between chalk and limestone.

It was their practice to cut these rocks into size for building, to trim them and to construct the walls of the house entirely of stone.

Doors, door frames and windows were made of wood.

Scantlings for roofing were imported, "from America", it was said, from that fabulous land, whence came all strange things.

Roofs and floors were of tile, a product of the country. Tile was cheaper than imported wood.

Indeed the cut and trimmed stone which his uncle made for his houses was cheaper than wood would have been.

Only the rich could afford a house of the kind just described.

As there was no free play of commerce in Turkish lands at this time there was no numerous wealthy class. The capitalistic system in the modern sense had not arrived.

Less wealthy people had houses of sun-dried brick, or *lebn*, strengthened, as in Biblical times, with straw or chaff in their making.

In that dry climate the sun-dried bricks had a long life.

A still cheaper house was made of mud, reinforced with chaff,

which was moulded into shape and dried and hardened as the walls and sides built up, like adobe huts in Mexico.

The poorer people made their own huts of sun-dried mud.

There was enough building going on in Zahleh and the valley to keep his uncle, Solomon, and a number of journeymen fully occupied.

His uncle took very seriously his responsibilities to his nephew and apprentice.

He gave him a good grounding in the building trades. He also saw to his further academic education.

Solomon's schooling in Keraan had ceased in his twelfth year. That was all the schooling that was to be had there.

But in Zahleh, the churches which had established elementary schools in the valley, had schools which went further and provided some secondary education. In fact, it was possible for the abler and more fortunate to go on from Zahleh to the new American university in Beirut.

His uncle may have been uneasy about the way he would spend his evenings after work, alone in Zahleh. Solomon thinks that he was desirous of finding something to occupy his nephew during the hours of evening idleness.

A friend of his uncle who taught in one of the schools in Zahleh was engaged to teach Solomon the more advanced academic studies.

The teacher taught the boy by night and his regular pupils by day.

Solomon received further instruction in the Arabic language and literature, more mathematics, including the beginnings of algebra and geometry, a good deal of history and geography and something of the keeping of accounts, all of which learnings later were of use to him.

There was, however, a great deficiency of books in the Arabic language.

On Sundays his strictly Orthodox uncle saw to it that Solomon performed his religious duties at the Greek Orthodox cathedral, where there was an impressive ritual, and the first pipe-organ of his experience.

Later, as told elsewhere, his uncle helped him get to America.

FRASER VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

In recognition and appreciation of twenty years valuable service (1934-1953) as Vice-Chairman and Member, the Board of Management of the Fraser Valley Regional Library has elected

SOLOMON MUSSALLEM

an Honorary Life Member

Given at Abbotsford, B.C., this 3rd day of February, 1954

D. Wilson Chairman

Secretary

CHAPTER IV

THE ORIGIN OF THE CLAN MUSSALLEM

THE MUSSALLEM name was originally Hakim, a name ancient in the Bekaa Valley and elsewhere in Lebanon. There are still Hakims there. The Hakims were Syrian Christians of the Greek Orthodox faith. Solomon describes them as "horse warriors". They prided themselves upon their horses, as their Canadian descendants do upon their automobiles. After centuries of fighting Moslems, apparently they would rather fight than eat.

Right up to the first half of the Nineteenth Century life in Lebanon, and of course, in the Bekaa Valley, was much like life in the Scottish border and in the Highlands in the days of the Stuart and Tudor kings.

There were warlike families or groups of families, just as among the Scottish clans. Their chiefs had fortified strongholds. They fought clan battles and rode on guerrilla raids, usually Christian against Moslem. The Moslems were in general the aggressors, and the Christian chieftains were obliged to be in a constant state of readiness to return attack with reprisal. In course of time an accumulation of mutual acts of violence brought the country to such a state of disorder that the peaceful transaction of ordinary business was well-nigh impossible.

Four Hakim brothers, famous "horse warriors" or guerrillas, came to the conclusion that the time had come to call a halt to perpetual fighting. Apparently they judged that they were strong enough to survive in a new way of life. They decided to abandon guerrilla warfare, forget their pride as horse-warriors and settle down to cultivate the lands which they had acquired and held with the sword. They decided to follow the ways of peace.

But no one in that part of Lebanon could take a Hakim seriously as a lover of peace, just as in the Scottish Highlands no one would have believed that a Macgregor, or a Macpherson

would have given up his old habit of raiding his neighbours. So the four Hakim brothers, sometime about the year 1775, decided that to be more convincing in their role of pacifists they ought to change their name from Hakim to a name less terrifying. They adopted the name Mussallem, "men of peace", and from these four converted Hakims are descended all the Mussallems of today.

The story has been passed on by family tradition, but has also been authenticated by history. It is recorded in the History of Zahleh by Alexander Malouf, written in Arabic and published in Zahleh in 1911.

Giving a special name to a child in the hope that the name will influence its character is an ancient practice, not often known to be effective. Not many children christened George Washington, or Gladstone, or Churchill have lived up to the names bestowed upon them. In ancient days the Black Sea was considered a dangerous, unlucky sea. To avert bad luck the superstitious Greek sailors of the classical age called it by a name which in Greek means the lucky sea, the Euxine Sea. But the Euxine kept on being unlucky in spite of its reassuring name.

Today Solomon is mellow and peaceful, and the name Mussallem fits him. He doesn't need to fight anyone and probably doesn't wish to. But in his long, tempestuous political career he was no model of the lover of peace. He dearly loved the smoke of battle, and unhorsed many an opponent in the political arena just as his grandfather once did in the *sbac keel* near Keraan.

I hazard the guess that the four Hakims who were the original Mussallems gave up their fighting because they had run out of people to fight with! They probably just consolidated their position, gave up aggression and temporarily took up the defensive. They no doubt honestly wished to be peaceful but some of their rascally neighbours kept frustrating them, and the Mussallems always rose to the occasion of battle.

When a tyrant is weak a horde of minor tyrants develops, struggling with each other for power. The weak Turkish imperial rule bred local tyrants.

At this time – the end of the 18th century and the beginning

of the next – Lebanon was under Egypt, as Palestine also was, and Egypt in turn was subordinate to Turkey. The hand of the Porte (Turkey) over Egypt was feeble and the hand of Egypt over Lebanon was feeble also.

Any unscrupulous "strong" man who could get a following of thugs could seize and rule whatever area he could hold.

By 1852 the Mussallems, preserving as well as they could the orderly life they had sought when they took the peaceful name, had prospered and had added to their possessions by thrift or conquest and were well entrenched in and about Zahleh.

They viewed with distaste the misrule in the valley, as did also others of the more substantial people of the city, where a civilized population, mostly Christian, was trying to maintain a decent standard of community life.

Abraham Mussallem and Joseph Shaeen went as a delegation to the Egyptian governor of Lebanon and "read the riot act" to him about the disorder in the land.

This was a very bold step, for Eastern potentates never took kindly to assertive democratic action.

They had a short way of dealing with such annoyances.

The governor must have been either a very enlightened man or else a badly frightened one, for he appointed Mussallem and Shaeen as joint governors of Zahleh, even though they were Christians. This was an administrative revolution, for up to this time the local governor had been any strong man who could grasp power and hold it.

Is not this the first stirring of a movement which in our day has brought something resembling democracy in the countries of the Near East?

This dyarchy appears to have worked well. The joint governors set about bringing the reign of law to Zahleh and its environs.

This did not please some of the local gangsters. In particular a family named Ontar, from a neighboring community, resented the Mussallem dominance, and the rule of law.

One of the Mussallems, Peter, a *khoury* or priest, of the Greek Orthodox church – of which the bishop's see was in Zahleh, was going home from his religious duties one Sunday, accom-

panied by members of his flock. He was met by the Ontars and their bravoes, who began to abuse and mishandle him.

The doughty *khoury*, ignoring the fact that he was doubly a man of peace, turned upon his assailants, "beat them up" in turn, some of his flock assisting, and put the ruffians to flight.

The battling prowess of the doughty Peter became legendary; thenceforward the Mussallems, reports the historian Malouf, were the undisputed leaders of Zahleh and the country thereabout. Peace came to the valley for a time.

The peaceful middle third of the 19th Century was a period of growing Mussallem power in Zahleh. The family had acquired estates like the European barons of the middle ages. Their lands were distributed in village communities like mediaeval manors. They had several such agricultural villages. The population lived in the villages and went out to work on the farms in the surrounding country, as in France today.

The nature of the tenancy is obscure, but the farmers were not serfs. They were free to leave, but rarely did so.

Houran also was a Mussallem stronghold. It was here that the four original Hakim brothers had taken the Mussallem name.

At Kfir Mishki, where the Besytts were the local leaders, 90 per cent of the population was Christian. These Christians owned their own little farms, as did also those of Keraan.

Amongst the Moslems, however, all land was owned by big landowners, and farmed by tenant farmers on severe terms.

In the Mussallem villages some of the land may have been worked by free tenants, some by hired labourers. The latter practice seems unlikely, as the country did not then operate freely on a money economy. The villagers were free but their relationship to the dominant Mussallems was a paternalistic, benevolent one – Highland and Celtic.

While the clan had originated in Houran, Zahleh had become its headquarters. Its present population of 25,000 is probably 10 times that of a century ago when the leading Mussallem there had his castle-like stronghold, surrounded by strong walls. In the centre of the enclosure rose a bell tower which served as an observation point. An alarm bell rang to rouse the clansmen in case of raid or invasion.

From this stronghold the Mussallems were able to give support to constitutional authority.

In 1834 the Moslem Abraham Pasha was the Egyptian governor of Lebanon, subject to the superior authority of the Turkish sultan in Istanbul.

A revolt occurred in Akaar in Lebanon against this governor.

Hykel, son of Abraham Mussallem, the strong man of Zahleh, was commissioned to put down the revolt.

Hykel was the champion fighter of the clan, in the full vigour of early manhood.

He gathered the Mussallems of fighting age, the tenants and other followers, as well as loyal families from and about Zahleh, whipped them into shape as a mobile mounted force and moved against the rebels.

They met in the Battle of the Bridge of Sin (Jasser). The rebels were scattered. The authority of the governor was restored. Peace returned to the valley, and the Mussallem prestige mounted. The numbers of the clan also grew and it is to be conjectured that more Hakims became Mussallems. In just this way the Highland clans used to grow. But the Mussallems of Maple Ridge are the direct descendants of the 18th century originals of the name.

In 1825 the first Mussallem governor of Zahleh had been appointed to that office by the Egyptian governor of Lebanon. In 1860, as recorded elsewhere, the fanatical Druses got out of control and massacred thousands of Christians.

The palsied hands of the Egyptian government were incapable of restoring order. The Christian powers of Europe intervened to halt the massacres and forced the Turkish sultan to accept responsibility for Lebanon. They insisted that there be again a Christian governor in Zahleh.

Murad Mussallem was elected in open voting by the heads of families of the Zahleh population to be governor under this new regime. He was soon securely entrenched in power with the backing of the Christian powers.

Peace at this time in Lebanon did not mean peace as understood today in the Fraser Valley. Clashes between Moslem and

Christian continued to occur but there was no more wholesale massacre.

In 1870, in the time of his father but before Solomon was born, there were fresh religious disturbances in Keraan, but no massacre.

The Christians were mobbed and "beaten up".

A mounted messenger *(khaal)* escaped from the village and sped to Zahleh.

The head Mussallem in Zahleh in his walled strong point rang the signal bell, calling the horsemen to assemble with their arms.

A hundred of them responded and galloped to Keraan.

A skirmish followed, in which the Moslems in their turn suffered defeat. They were reduced to submission and signed a solemn undertaking of good behaviour in the future. Thereafter there was relative peace.

As the Mussallems of Zahleh were the wealthiest and most influential of the name, and had the local governor in the family, and were known to be fighters for their rights, the hand of the Turk was not as heavy upon them as upon others. They had plenty of horses and could on short alarm assemble an armed force which prompted respect.

By the time of Solomon's father, the Mussallems had been multiplying for more than a century. The clan spread through the Bekaa Valley and beyond it. The time would come when the Mussallems would have to expand into the great, outer unknown world. That time came for Solomon at the end of the last century.

One of the Zahleh Mussallems, however, had preceded him. This was Dr. A. K. Mussallem, eminent physician and Freemason.

Dr. Mussallem died in Macon, Missouri, in 1946. He had arrived in the United States 55 years before, in 1891.

He would seem to have had no difficulty in getting through the Turkish iron curtain. A Mussallem of Zahleh rich enough to get a medical education in Beirut would not be lacking in political influence.

He was an eye-specialist. He must have had his first medical training in the Presbyterian University in Beirut, for he opened

his offices in Macon three years after his arrival in the United States.

He was particularly active in Freemasonry. He was the only Syrian in the world to attain the highest degree in masonry. His Masonic career was climaxed in Kansas City when he was inducted into the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States.

He advanced through all the higher stages in both the York and the Scottish rites of masonry.

Especially noteworthy, however, was his connection with masonry in the Near East.

He did not live continuously in the United States but sojourned from time to time in the countries of the old Ottoman Empire. He appears to have been the person who brought York and Scottish rite masonry to the countries of the Near East, or at any rate he promoted the reorganization of masonry there.

According to tradition, masonry had developed in that area in Biblical times, but had developed in its own way.

The nature of Dr. Mussallem's connection with masonry in the Near East may be interpreted by those competent to do so from the fact that he was active in the Supreme Council of Egypt, Valley of the Nile, Cairo, and in the Supreme Council of Constantinople, Orient of the Bosphorus.

He was a Past Master of Liberty and Moderation Lodge No. 12, Zahleh; Past Venerable Master of Lebanon Lodge of Perfection of Zahleh, and Past Wise Master of the Lebanon Chapter of the Rose Croix of Herodian. He was a Past Deputy Grand Master of Syria and also a Deputy Grand Master for the Ottoman Empire and Grand Correspondent for the Valley of the Nile in the United States. He attained the thirty-third degree of masonry.

He was unmarried.

His story has been included here because it sheds some more light upon the Mussallems.

Solomon never became a Mason but his three sons have done so.

He is a member of the Haney lodge of the Odd Fellows.

THE HADDADS

Solomon's mother was a Haddad, from the numerous Haddad clan, which had its share of fighting with the Turk, and the Turk's agents of bloodshed, the fanatical Druses of the mountains.

The massacres of 1860 were preceded by rumours that the Druses were soon to rise and exterminate the Christians. Not all Druses, however, were of this mind. There were some civilized people among them who got along well with their Christian neighbours. One such family lived in Rashaya, about eight miles from Keraan. This influential Druse family had stone farm-buildings, which could be made into a strong point or minor fortress. The head of the Rashaya Druses announced that he would protect the Christians in this redoubt. Relying upon this promise the Christians of the Bekaa Valley gathered in Rashaya and were housed in the main farm building, a large stone barn or stable, surrendering their arms as they entered. One estimate says 2,000 refugees were sheltered there; another estimate says 200.

In the meantime the wild Druses were gathering from all directions, from the Eastern and Western Lebanese mountains and from Mount Hermon, of Biblical fame. The Rashaya family was unable to hold the wild horde in check. The protecting Rashayas were thrust aside. The invaders hacked down the door of the stone building and called upon the Christians to come out. The defenders had no guns, nor other weapons with which to defend themselves, having surrendered them to the Rashayas. The Druses entered with their muskets, swords, axes and hatchets. The butchering began, indoors and out.

Solomon's maternal grandfather has recorded that a big Druse came at him with an axe, struck two blows at him but missed. At the third blow Haddad grasped the axe with his bare hand, which was cut badly. "Damn you!", said the angry Druse. "I could have killed three others in the time I have spent on you." He then moved off, and Haddad fell down amongst the heap of slain. There were few survivors.

His grandfather bore the scar for the rest of his life.

No Turkish troops came to restore order to that area but they

did go to Zahleh. However, they were as bad as the Druses.

As recorded earlier, this massacre and others in Lebanon brought about the intervention of the European powers and the appointment of a Christian governor for Lebanon.

CHAPTER V

THE SBAC KHEEL OR MELLAY

A SPORT PECULIAR to the Syrian world, and frequently practised in the Bekaa Valley, was the *Sbac Kheel,* which, literally translated, means the "horse contest". It resembled the tournament of the European knights of the middle ages. The origin of the sport is uncertain, but it is, or was, centuries old. It was still practised in Solomon's day, but as death could easily accompany the day's proceedings, no doubt with the establishment of civilized government of modern times the sport has been abolished or much modified. Our lacrosse and ice-hockey are mild in comparison. Both Christian and Moslem Syrians engaged in the game with gusto.

Possibly perpetuating something picked up originally from the Crusaders, or perchance older still, older than Christianity, the game began ceremoniously, but, like ice-hockey or lacrosse, it might end up in a free-for-all, with a gratifying sufficiency of cracked skulls. In theory, however, it was a gentleman's game, and the high-spirited cavaliers came to the meet, with their blooded Arabian horses and the most glittering accoutrements they could afford.

On the grasslands bordering the deserts, horses thrived. Every Syrian with pretence to gentility had his horse. He dearly loved to dash over the desert or the grassy plains, and when the spirit moved him he craved the excitement of the *sbac kheel,* or tournament. A challenge would be sent out and all the young bucks within leagues would gather for the contest.

The opposing teams drew up in two lines, facing each other, at a distance of about 600 yards. There was no fixed number of contestants, but there might be several score of them and there would be a large crowd of spectators, mostly mounted, all wearing the flowing Arabian headdress, and enveloped in the sheet-like *mahlhafee.*

The leaders each took position several horse lengths in advance of the two extended lines.

The leader of one of the sides would move at the trot towards the other leader and challenge him and his men to battle.

The invitation was always accepted, for they had all gathered for that purpose.

Then each leader signalled to one of his followers to join in single combat with a warrior from the other side.

The two warriors trotted to the encounter, armed with the *jaridy*.

The *jaridy* was something like a spear, made of stout wood, and at the end a metal point.

In the right hand was carried the spear; on the left forearm a shield was borne.

Each combatant, always a mounted man, rode quickly to find an opening so that he might hurl the *jaridy*, or thrust with it, or even aim a blow at his opponent, if he could do this without exposing himself to counter-attack.

The menaced man would defend himself with his shield, or using his *jaridy* to guard himself, as a fencer uses his sword.

If a rider hurled his spear and missed, he would ride back to his own lines and get another one, or pick up his own from the ground on the run and then return to the contest.

If one of the contestants was unhorsed, wounded, exhausted or killed, the leader would signal to a substitute to come forward to replace the casualty. The *sbac kheel* continued until all the players, or cavaliers, were used up.

Thereupon they would draw off, gather up their casualties, and return to their homes, taking leave of each other with polite adieus.

That is the way the end would come if they all remembered that they were gentlemen and that a strict etiquette governed the *sbac kheel*.

But it is hard to keep your poise indefinitely when you are being cracked over the head with a *jaridy*, or poked with it, or are unhorsed and stepped upon by a spirited Arabian stallion. It is also hard to see your own side getting the worst of it, and the Syrian was a fiery, hot-tempered person. As the tournament continued everybody's blood began to boil; the players on the

side lines would begin to lose self-control and would irrupt into the fray, and soon the orderly *sbac kheel* would be transformed into a free-for-all, a mellay, as indeed the mediaeval tournament often did. Casualties would mount, until the survivors of one side sought refuge in flight.

This, too, was just the way the Homeric warriors fought before Troy, thirteen centuries before Christ, as described in Homer's Iliad.

The people of Lebanon, apart from the pure desert Arabs, are descended from the races which occupied Asia Minor when the Greeks and Trojans fought before Troy. It is possible that the *sbac kheel* goes back to Homeric times.

The tournament was most likely to end in a mellay when the contest was between Christians and Moslems.

A relative of Solomon's grandfather, Milhem Mussallem of Keraan, lost his life after such a tournament.

Milhem had been 100 miles away at a *sbac kheel* in which the Moslems had been worsted. They withdrew from the field in an ugly mood.

Milhem, with a single servant, rode away to return to Keraan. He paused in the journey to descend the stone steps of an ancient well for a drink. The servant cried, "Master, the enemy are coming!"

A horde of burnoosed horsemen was approaching at the gallop.

Milhem ascended the steps to mount his horse, saying, "If I can get on this horse, they won't catch me!"

As he swung his leg over the saddle he fell to the ground, shot dead through the heart.

The horse dashed off, pursued by the Moslems, but they couldn't catch the superb steed, which got back safely to Keraan.

It was the aftermath of a *sbac kheel* held a few miles from Kfir that Solomon's grandfather, George Mussallem lost his life.

This branch of the Mussallem family lived at Kfir. George Mussallem, great-grandfather of the George Mussallem who lives in Haney today, was a champion "horse warrior".

On the day of his death he was participating in a tournament between rival troops of Moslems and Christians in what was supposed to be a friendly, sporting contest.

But George was having the best of it, unhorsing and putting out of action an irritating number of Moslem horsemen.

This roused the ire of the Moslem players and spectators alike. They forgot the rules of the game, as hockey and lacrosse players sometimes do in this country, and they all pitched in. Overwhelmed by numbers, grandfather Mussallem gave way and "beat it", pursued by a horde of blood-seeking Arabs.

As he fled, he loaded his muzzle-loading gun, turned and fired into the crowd of pursuers. Then, loading again, he turned and fired as he continued his gallop, and kept on loading and firing at the gallop, while the enemy in turn kept firing at him. Finally one bullet got him, and he dropped to the ground dead. The horse ran on to the home in Kfir, to the grief-stricken widow and the three orphaned children – Asaph (the father of Solomon), Habeeb and Abdullah.

Abdullah died shortly after Solomon came to Canada. Habeeb lived to the incredible age of 104. It is recorded that when he died all of his teeth were intact. He is said to have been a very strong man, and this legend is likely to be well-founded.

The Moslems were obviously in an excited mood. One Christian had been killed. A revival of massacring was to be feared.

The Mussallem kindred in Keraan took prompt action to protect the menaced orphans and their mother.

That night Moses Saloun Mussallem of Keraan and three or four armed relatives rode to Kfir and brought the three children and their mother (Solomon's grandmother) to Keraan.

There were half a dozen adult Mussallems in Keraan, where they had several *feddans,* and there are still Mussallems there.

Here the three boys were reared by their kinsmen.

Solomon's father Asaph grew to manhood here, acquired in time one of the family *feddans,* and became a trader, as recorded before, and died when Solomon was in his twelfth year.

CHAPTER VI

DECISION TO EMIGRATE

(Solomon Mussallem loquitur)

LOOKING BACK upon my life in my native Lebanon, I can see that there were three powerful influences which led me to seek a home in the New World.

There were the tales of the fabulous wealth of America and the ease with which fortunes might be made. Gold, the story ran, was lavished by the shovelful upon their employees by the generous Americans.

This fantastic story was actually believed.

The lure of gold has always led men afar to strange places, and these tales of gold made my contemporaries look upon America as Paradise.

The love of adventure also moved me. Though neither magazines nor newspapers circulated in the Bekaa Valley, stories were spread by word of mouth about the marvels of the fabled land. Syrians who had wandered abroad told of the luxury of the far-off Eldorada and of the amazing mechanical contrivances of Western civilization. They thrilled the young Syrian lads with romantic tales of the Wild West, of war-like Indians and cowboys. These legends fired the imagination of the youthful descendants of the Syrian horsemen who had for generations fought with Moslems scarcely less fierce than the Indians of the plains.

Dreams of wealth and adventure kept stirring me during the years I lived with my uncle in Zahleh. But it was the cruelty of the Turkish tax-collector which finally drove me away.

The intervention of the Christian powers after the massacres of 1860 led to the appointment of a Christian governor in Lebanon – one of them a Mussallem, in Zahleh. This led to a bettering of conditions for the Lebanese Christians. But many of the Syrian Christians lived outside of the bounds of Lebanon

as they were established there. The condition of these Syrian Christians continued to be oppressive except that there were no massacres. The lower part of the Bekaa Valley where Keraan is situated was not under the Christian governor and was not included in Lebanon until after World War I. It was included in Palestine, but after World War I, because of its Christian population, it was joined again with Lebanon under the French mandate. But in my time it came under direct Turkish rule, with all its harshness.

In the days before World War II, we used to hear much of Nazi and Fascist tyranny in Germany and Italy and of how Hitler and Mussolini dealt cruely with minorities. I had no difficulty in picturing the methods of rule employed by these tyrants. I had seen the same kind of thing in Keraan under the Turk.

Their cruelty did not take the form of suppressing political opinion. There was at this time no political movement to be suppressed in the Bekaa Valley. Later when the rule of the old Turkish government was overthrown, the revolution was the work of the young Turkish party, a group of partly Westernized intellectuals.

The oppression from which I rebelled lay in the levying and collection of taxes.

The Turkish Empire was divided into subordinate areas each under a governor.

The governor was responsible for raising a definitely prescribed sum from his district and transmitting it to the Imperial Treasury in Istanbul (Constantinople).

The governor's agents would visit each little farm or household while the crops were growing. They would determine, arbitrarily, what the harvested crop would be worth. That sum would be the basis of the tax imposed upon the owner or tenant. The taxes at this time appear to have been a charge, not against the property, but against the person.

Years after I left Keraan, I had occasion to sell property which had belonged to my family on which no taxes had been paid by any of us in our absence. I had no back taxes to pay, taxes being a charge upon the person.

The assessor, having levied the tax, took his departure. There was no appeal against extortion, although the levy included generous additions of charges intended to stick to the fingers of officials all along the line up to the governor himself.

Later when the crop was ready for harvest, the collector appeared, accompanied by military police bristling with weapons and flourishing savage rawhide whips, demanding money.

Then arose the wailing of women and cries for mercy.

Down the victims would get upon their knees, raising their hands to heaven.

"We have no money! We have no money! Have mercy upon us!" the cries would arise.

"You have lots of money. Out with it," the police would shout, and down upon the backs of the suppliants would fall the lash.

They would ransack the houses, looking for hiding places for hidden treasure, and at the end of the day make off with what they could get, and leave the distracted villagers to their lamentations.

One summer day in 1898 I happened to be home in Keraan on a brief vacation from my work in Zahleh. I witnessed just such a scene. I decided life in such conditions was not worth living.

Father had now been dead for five years, leaving my mother and sister with a small estate. I wanted the advice of some one who knew the world. When I went back to Zahleh I sought the advice of my uncle. I told him that I wanted to go to America.

ESCAPE TO THE SEA

Uncle was a man of some substance, as, indeed, were all of the Zahleh Mussallems. Zahleh today has a population of 25,000, and in 1897 was an important centre, with considerable business activity. Where there is business to be done a Mussallem usually lands upon his feet.

Uncle, as explained before, was a stonemason and building contractor. He approved of my plan to go to America and gave me 20 golden British sovereigns to help me on the way.

Twenty sovereigns seemed a lot of money then. It was con-

sidered ample for reaching America. British gold in our minds then was the only real money.

I soon found out that there were others in the valley moved with the same ambition: the middle-aged Ferhat Haddad, cousin on my mother's side, and his son Abdelour Haddad, about 18 months younger than I.

As we discussed our plans, sixteen others were drawn into the circle, young men ranging in years from 25 to 30. It was going to be quite a dash for freedom. We planned in great secrecy.

Not one of us had ever been out of the country, and we knew little of the world, and no language but Arabic.

All I knew was that somewhere in America there were some Syrians from the Bekaa Valley. Ferhat knew that there were Lebanese in Carleton Place, though he didn't know where Carleton Place might be. He thought that the Syrians in Carleton Place were called Braheam (Abraham).

Because of his greater maturity, Ferhat was conceded the leadership of the party.

It was essential that we depart as inconspicuously as possible, one by one, quietly.

In the late afternoon of a warm sunny day towards the end of September, we took leave of our families and made our separate ways to a rendezvous three miles from town. There we lay doggo until nightfall, whereupon we began our journey down the valley, heading for Tyre, some 80 miles away. Even if there had been a road passable for wheeled traffic, we would not have taken it, for it was essential that we elude observation. So we travelled by tracks and trails, which had been cut into the earth by the immemorial feet of goats and donkeys. Our path was lighted only by the moon and the September stars.

We travelled in small groups under the watchful eye of the tireless Ferhat, who kept in touch with all of the groups lest any of us stray and be lost. We travelled all night.

When dawn came we concentrated our groups, withdrew from the trails along which other people might be travelling during the day, and slept in the shade of some rock, or cliff, or tree. Three days we slept thus in the open.

As we moved we avoided farms and villages, and hoped that we had not been seen. But we could not really have escaped notice, as appeared later.

We carried bread with us, and baked potatoes but no meat. In Syrian lands meat is rare and dear.

We ate dates and figs along the way, sometimes helping ourselves to them, sometimes buying them when we felt it safe to do so.

On the day following the third night, at the false dawn, we reached the suburbs of Tyre, captured as you remember, centuries before by Alexander the Great, and one of the wicked cities of the coastal plain in Biblical times. We were there at last, and Ferhat, as usual, called the roll. The twenty of us were intact.

We began to debate whether we should go into Tyre, in the daylight, to the shipping office we had heard of, or should camp where we were until night fall.

While we were discussing this problem, we heard the galloping of horses.

Two of the dreaded Turkish military policemen, the *Khiall*, were galloping towards us, dust rising in clouds behind them, horses' tails flowing in the wind, polished leather and bridle ornaments flashing in the light of the rising sun.

They drew up beside us, magnificent with their gleaming cartridge belts, jewel-studded daggers, and inlaid-ivory revolvers.

They leaped from their horses to question us.

I do not deny that my heart sunk towards my boots.

They spoke to us harshly, pouring upon us in Turkish and Arabic all the vocabulary of abuse in which these languages are rich.

They wanted to know where we were going.

We didn't dare to say "America". So we said "Tyre", which, literally, was true.

Then they made us gather together and they drove us before them, like cowboys driving a herd of cattle, and took us into Tyre, two miles from where they had found us.

They crowded us into an old, unventilated building and

locked us up. It seemed to twenty frustrated despondent young Syrians that the American dream had turned into bitter awakening.

In the afternoon a pompous, fat individual, dressed in civilian clothes, appeared, along with the military policemen. He professed to be a magistrate.

In a rasping voice he demanded, "Why are you leaving the country ?"

"We are not leaving the country," we replied, "We are looking for work."

"I don't believe you ! I am going to fine you a dollar (magedy) apiece."

Twenty magedys would be several hundred dollars in today's money.

Then we were let loose.

This incident was typical of the behaviour of Turkish officials.

The twenty magedys probably never went past the pockets of the collector.

The three Turkish peculators having taken their departure, we went separately to foregather at a designated corner in the little port of Tyre. Ferhat went to a ticket agency he knew of to enquire about boats to America. There was no boat at the time but one was expected in a week or two.

The agent seemed to understand what we planned to do. It was his business to get people out of the country in spite of the government.

No doubt the local magistrate levied toll upon him and upon others seeking escape just as they had done to us.

We had gone to Tyre instead of to the larger town of Beirut because the harbour at Beirut was patrolled by Turkish steam launches.

There was no pier at Beirut at which ships could berth. They lay at anchor in the harbour and were reached by rowboat. The police in launches used to catch people trying to leave the country illegally. Ferhat had guessed that there would be no patrol at Tyre, (town of about 3,000) and there was no patrol. There was a hole in the iron curtain.

Ferhat dealt with the agent on our behalf. He learned that

there would be a ship leaving for Egypt soon but, for securitv reasons, he didn't tell us this, nor did we wish to know.

While waiting for the ship the agent sent us to a village called Azzi, about three miles from Tyre, and inland, in a region famous for figs. It was really a large farming establishment, what the Spaniards call a "hacienda", the property of some wealthy townsman, looked after by a manager and a number of servants.

We were there about three days, when we saw two new policemen approaching on horseback, glittering in the sun.

As soon as I saw them coming I ran to the big stable and started to clean out the cow manure. The policeman came to me first and began to question me. I acted the simpleton.

The manager came to my rescue and said, "My son has a habit of becoming sick when a stranger speaks to him. Don't bother him."

As soon as the other boys had seen the policemen, they had scattered and made for the woods about a mile away. All escaped but Ferhat and three others.

The senior of the two policemen said, "I am not accepting your story that you live here. I want $20.00 (magedys)."

Ferhat gave them $20.00 from his own pocket. The police took the money and departed.

By evening all of our party had returned and we repaid Ferhat.

FROM TYRE TO PORT SAID

We were on the farm about ten days when we got word to go to Tyre. A sailing vessel was about to leave for Port Said. The journey from Tyre to Port Said was supposed to take 24 hours. The next day, when we were half way on our journey, the wind fell. The ship lay motionless. For ten days we were becalmed beneath the hot Mediterranean sun. There was little drinking water – only two drums of it. The captain put a pail of sea water into each drum to discourage drinking. It surely was a discouragement. No meals were supplied on board. We ate what we had brought with us and slept on deck.

After ten days of torture, the wind rose, the sails filled, and

in another half-day we were at Port Said, then as now, one of the meeting places of the world – a city of bustle, colour, and rascality. We were given no chance to see the sights, guarded as we were by the watchful Ferhat, who had seen to our transportation throughout the journey.

We had left Tyre for Port Said with neither passports nor other documents giving us the right to enter Egypt, or to leave it. We were in danger of being caught in the entanglements of international law. It was now early October.

The shipping agency at Tyre had an agency at Port Said also. This agency took us by launch to a British steamer anchored three miles away in Egyptian waters.

There were two launches carrying us – ten of us in each.

A government steam launch was cruising about in order to stop such persons as we.

They sighted us and sped towards us.

When the race began, one launch was nearer the British ship than we were. The ten of the party on this launch reached the ship in good time and all of them clambered aboard.

We on the second launch had further to go, but the crew made all the speed they could. The pursuers were gaining upon us. Were all our hopes to be dashed down at this last moment? We prayed fervently for escape.

As we approached the steamer, the British sailors lowered the ladder.

I clambered up first.

Then followed Ferhat's son, Abdelour, and after him Ferhat.

As we neared the top, Ferhat gave me and Abdelour a push to help us over the gunwale. Then he got over, the others following.

All this time the pursuers were drawing close and reached the ship in time to seize the last two climbing up the ladder.

Eighteen of us were safe!

I learned afterwards that the two captives were hailed into an Egyptian court, beaten, fined and sent back to Keraan.

PORT SAID TO CARLETON PLACE

Once on board the steamer – a dirty freighter – we had a

few minutes to look about the strange world in which we found ourselves. Then we were ushered down to the steerage and shown our bunks.

The bunks were in tiers of three and we were put two to a bunk.

Our fellow-passengers were a miscellaneous collection from the Near and Middle East, speaking many tongues and garbed in strange fashions.

Soon food was brought to us – soup, in large cans carried by two men.

We couldn't sit comfortably in the bunks, and so we sat on the floor to eat the soup, supplementing the ration with the remains of the food we had brought with us from home.

The next meal was better; it included potatoes and other vegetables.

We were allowed to go on deck if weather permitted. Abdelour and I took advantage of this indulgence. We happened to pass the cook's galley on the way up.

We probably looked gaunt and hungry, for the cook, a stocky individual – English, we guessed – offered us a dish of vegetables and meat.

We sat down and ate with relish, much to the amusement of the cook, who gave us more of the same. This was the only meat I had on the ship.

It was probably the best enjoyed meal I have eaten.

I am blank as to the time it took us to go from Port Said to Marseilles, but in due time we were there.

We spent several days in Marseilles and there our party of 18 broke up, the destinations of the others being Mexico, Argentina, Brazil. I have met none of them since, nor have I heard of them.

Ferhat, Abdelour, and I continued our way towards the mysterious Carleton Place.

The journey through France by train to Havre was uneventful, but here again I am blank with regard to time.

We ate many apples while crossing France, but otherwise ate sparingly. We conserved our money to make sure of having enough to reach Carleton Place.

From Havre we went by cross-channel steamer to Portsmouth, where we caught a train to Liverpool. As usual, Ferhat looked after the business of purchasing tickets and shepherding us along the way. In Liverpool we got modest lodging accommodation not far from the railway station, kept, curiously enough, by a Lebanese. The accommodation was poor. We just slept on the floor.

Here we were now in a strange, bustling city, knowing not a word of English, and faced with the problem of obtaining transportation to a port in America from which Carleton Place might be reached! Did anyone in Liverpool know of Carleton Place?

We decided to go out into the crowded streets to find someone looking like a Syrian, who might be able to speak Arabic.

We caught sight of such a one, who, we thought, might be a Syrian, though he was dressed like a prosperous Englishman.

We approached him, explaining our predicament. He turned out to be a Syrian living in Liverpool. In spite of our travel-worn, unprepossessing appearance, and our ballooning trousers, he took us in hand. He said that he knew Syrians in Montreal and knew of Abraham Besytt in Carleton Place. Our courage rose: there really was a Carleton Place, and there were Syrians there!

This obliging Lebanese helped us buy our tickets. He laughed at the story of gold being shovelled like coal. Finally he saw us safely on board.

The journey from Liverpool to New York was pleasant. Each of us had a roomy bunk. The meals were good.

From New York to Carleton Place our experience was probably like that of other immigrants of that time. The shipping people, the immigration officers, and the railway employees pushed us along, step by step, until early in November we got off the train at Carleton Place. I had exactly four dollars left in the money belt I wore around my waist.

We went immediately to Kalil Abraham Besytt's place. We had been told in Liverpool by our Lebanese benefactor that it was 150 feet from the railway station. We soon found it.

Kalil wasn't visibly surprised to see us. He seemed to expect us.

He probably had been told of our coming by our Liverpool friend.

Another party had reached Carleton Place a few weeks before us.

Kalil had been four or five years in the country and a couple of years in Carleton Place. His home in Kfir Mishki had been only a few miles from Keraan, though I had never heard of him nor of his family.

He had a store from which he supplied peddlers, but he did not retail his goods to the townspeople. To the rear of the store were rooms fitted with bunks and furnished with a kitchen. Here he accommodated the Syrian peddlers as they came back to town from their trips and here he offered a haven for such newcomers as we.

He had a dozen or so peddlers on the road, whom he "staked" for their first trip.

The first thing we did was to brush up and make ourselves as presentable as we could, and then on Kalil's suggestion went to the neighbouring Mississippi Hotel for a bath. He rightly thought that we needed one.

There is a Mississippi River, tributary of the Ottawa, flowing through Carleton Place. This explains the name of the hotel.

At the Mississippi Hotel we had our baths – hot and cold water – with two towels, for 25 cents each.

This was my first bath since leaving Keraan, and my first experience of a bathtub with running water. Such things were unknown in Keraan. They were none too common then in rural Canada, as evidenced by the fact that hotels furnished this service to others than regular guests.

CHAPTER VII

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE IN PEDDLING

(Solomon Mussallem loquitur)

WITH MY pack full of goods supplied by Kalil I was ready to plunge into the making of a living in this new world. Kalil had given me a railway ticket from Carleton Place to Arnprior. I arrived in that tidy town on a chilly November morning. Then I encountered the first snow I had seen in Canada. It was a cold miserable day, and snowing steadily. Before my first week was over the snow had fallen to more than a depth of 18 inches.

I sought a road leading out of town. I knew that a licence would be required in Arnprior. I couldn't afford a licence. Even if I had the money I couldn't have made myself understood if I had gone to the town hall to get the licence. So I struck for the open country, where I knew there would be no police interference.

On the outskirts of Arnprior I approached my first farm house, my feelings much confused. How would the natives receive a strange-looking foreigner that they could neither understand nor identify? How could I do business with them when neither of us could make out what the other said? As I drew near the door, a dog gave a friendly bark. I prayed that the owners would be as friendly as the dog. I followed the path that led through the snow to a porch. The porch led to a door at which I knocked. A woman came to the door, which opened into a spacious kitchen where a large kitchen range (the first I saw in Canada) burned warmly. She was a lady of middle age, the farmer's wife. She greeted me with a smile. I stamped the snow from my boots and entered, embarrassed over the snow which, carried on my heels, was beginning to melt on the well-scrubbed hardwood floor. I lowered my pack, opened it, at the same time shedding more snow upon the floor. This

added to my confusion but it didn't perturb the mistress of the house.

I had no English to explain my presence but this did not prove necessary. She took in the situation at once and made her selections. I had to trust my customers to determine the prices, as I knew neither the names of the goods nor the names or value of the Canadian money with which she paid. Then I picked up my pack and made my exit. She gave me an encouraging sign and I left for the next house with more assurance.

I kept going all day with the same sort of experience at every dwelling.

In every house they bought something, whether because they were attracted to my wares or because they were moved by sympathy for a foreigner trying to earn a living in a hard way. I think they were influenced by the fact that the goods I had to sell were of the finest quality. There was not a shoddy article amongst them. Although I could not understand a word they spoke I gathered that they thought well of the quality of my merchandise. I thus learned early an important lesson in business – that success is greatest when it is based upon high quality of goods and services

That first day I kept on going through deepening snow. At dusk I came to the farm house of a man named Hart. I made signs in the best way I could to indicate that I would like to sleep there that night. He replied with a word which later I learned was "yes". So that night I spent in a warm, comfortable bed, thinking much, before falling asleep, of the hospitable folk amongst whom I had fallen.

In the morning a generous breakfast was awaiting me – my first experience of a Canadian farm breakfast. There was no fruit juice, no dry cereal, as there would be today, but porridge with cream, bread, bacon and eggs, fried potatoes, flapjacks, jam and coffee. Canadian farmers lived well, I decided, as the luncheon and dinner I had had the previous day had made me suspect.

I went through motions to let Mr. Hart know that I wished to pay him for the meal. He shook his head to indicate that he did not wish to be paid. But I kept insisting because I

wished to be able to come back there at some future time. Finally he accepted a little purse and some small change which he extracted from it at my insistence.

I did not know that it was contrary to old Canadian tradition to accept payment for a meal except in commercial establishments. A Canadian at that time thought is was a reflection upon his gentility either to ask or accept payment for a meal from anyone who stepped across his doorstep. But I was planning to establish myself as a respectable vendor doing a respectable business, and I thought that I, and others of my race, if they should come to this country, would be more respected if I paid my way. It proved to be a wise policy. While the native Ontarian was a hospitable person, he respected independence. I don't think I did any damage in that part of the world to the reputation of the Bekaa Valley. So I continued to pay my way in the farmers' hospitable houses, at weekends returning to my own quarters in Pembroke.

I must admit, that the first winter months of that year were pretty tough. Weather in Carleton, Lanark and the counties there about was more severe than anything I had known even in the hills of Lebanon. I suffered from home-sickness during that period when my ignorance of English cut me off from social intercourse with the people I met, and I was resolved that I would go back to Keraan just as soon as I could get money enough to pay my way.

The money did begin to accumulate. In three months I was free of debt and had sent $100.00 back to my uncle as repayment of the twenty sovereigns he had advanced for my escape from the Sultan Abdul Hamid. Uncle was gratified but astonished. He had expected never to see his twenty sovereigns again. From this time onward I could have paid for my passage to Lebanon, but now my nostalgia was over.

At the end of the first week I had sold my complete stock of goods. I returned to Carleton Place, to Kalil, where we reckoned up the receipts for the week. It turned out that I had earned enough to pay for the stock with which I set out, and to leave me with a profit of ten dollars for the week's work. Ten dollars was a comfortable sum of money at that time. My

customers hadn't cheated me. I felt encouraged to continue business as an independent merchant.

A word about my pack, which was the mark of my trade for many years.

I got it from Kalil. It was made of thin plywood, shaped like a box. On each side was a leather strap to slip over the shoulders. On the top was a hinged lid. Inside were four drawers, each resting upon the one below.

The opening of the pack for the display of the contents always excited interest, especially amongst the younger children. No doubt my foreign speech and appearance added to the fascination and sense of mystery in my appearance.

Later, I took the pack with me on my first visit to the West.

LEARNING ENGLISH

Learning English is not easy, but Solomon says that within two years he spoke English as well as he does now, and that is almost like a native.

He set himself at the task with system and determination.

He decided that his first step would be to learn the names of the physical objects which lay about him, or, as a grammarian would say, to acquire a vocabulary of nouns. He had a card prepared on which was written:

"I know very little English.

"Tell me this."

Then when he met people as he plied his trade, as he waited for his meals, or sat about the fire in the evenings, or at any time or in any place where there was opportunity of pushing his linguistic studies, he could produce the card and point to an object the name of which he wished to learn.

The patient victims of these enquiries would obligingly respond. Solomon would write down the English word in Arabic letters, phonetically, as the word sounded to him. He would then ask the names of other objects and would record them in the same way. He would continue thus until he had accumulated what he thought were enough words to learn for that day. Thereupon he would look at his list of English words as written in Arabic script, would speak them aloud and point to the things

to which he thought they applied. His hearers always responded readily.

Then when he was alone or on his travels, he would go over the words mentally, trying to recall the names of things, and "drilling" upon the words in his notebook when the opportunity occurred. His stock of nouns piled up.

He soon found that the impish humour of the Canadian boy could lead to embarrassment. The youngsters did not always give him the right word! Some young fellows would mischievously substitute other words more of eighteenth century flavour, such words as might be used in the vocabulary of the free-speaking Squire Western of Fielding's novel "Tom Jones". It didn't take Solomon long to discover that newly acquired words needed censoring.

Solomon practised his vocabulary upon all occasions. To nouns were added the other parts of speech. He added phrases and short sentences, and began to put his words and phrases together into continuous speech. He had a sense of growing power. In a few months, as he puts it, he was able to "get along".

In the early winter months of his first year, the English which he learned was entirely oral. This was a psychologically sound procedure, followed in the best teaching practice. But he couldn't read the printed word, nor could he write an English word or sentence. The next step would be to learn to read English and to write it. He was told there was a night school in Pembroke. He decided to enrol in it.

Night schools were rare, almost unheard of, in the Ontario of that day. There were a few in the larger cities, such as Toronto, but they were not common as they are now. In Pembroke, a woman teacher in the public elementary school had started a night school as a private venture to supplement her earnings as a public school teacher.

Her school was conducted in a large room in a private dwelling, equipped with some tables and chairs and a portable blackboard resting on an easel.

The lady was encouraging, cheerful, and very anxious to have her pupils progress. These pupils were mostly foreigners, a little trickle from the wave of immigration which was beginning to

lap over Canada. Some of them were native Canadians whose elementary education had been neglected.

She organized her pupils in small groups. As Solomon could attend the classes only on weekends, he was made a one-man class. He concentrated on learning to read and write. As he was already literate in Arabic and had mastered the fundamentals of an elementary education, it was not necessary for him to pay attention to such subjects as arithmetic. It will be remembered that our number system was developed by the Arabs at a high point of their civilization and was brought to Europe by the Crusaders. The figures by which we express numbers are known in the textbooks as the "Arabic Notation". In the Presbyterian elementary school in Keraan he had had a good training in the fundamentals of arithmetic. He was therefore able to concentrate on learning to read and write English. His spoken English improved rapidly at the same time, and soon he was able to use the new language freely for all purposes.

This, however, was only the first phase of a stubborn effort to improve his general education. He sent to New York for an Arabic-English dictionary and began to read all the books he could get his hands on. With this tool he could find for himself the English for an Arabic word or the Arabic for an English word. He also bought the textbooks used by pupils in the elementary and high schools, beginning with the easier books and working up to the more advanced. In this way he learned not only the language but also the subject matter with which the books dealt – the literature, the history, the geography and the science.

During this period of social adaptation he did not mingle much with Syrians. There were no other Arabic-speaking people in Pembroke and he went to Carleton Place but rarely and only on business. It had not escaped his notice that foreigners who became members of a colony of foreigners, continued to be foreigners.

They acquired the English language slowly and continued to speak it with a perceptible foreign accent. Solomon hastened the process of assimilation by deliberately seeking contact with Canadian families and participation in community life.

One of the community institutions was the church. In Lebanon the Christian community had for centuries held its own in a hostile world. Thus the church had had a unifying influence upon the Christians in spite of the theological divisions coming down from ancient days. In Lebanon the Mussallems belonged to the Greek Orthodox faith. Solomon remembers the festivals of the church, especially at Christmas and Easter time. He remembers the bearded village priest. He recalls the community efforts, in which he shared, to build a substantial church of cut stone in Keraan. Ordinarily when a family of the Greek Orthodox church dwells in the English speaking world, it attaches itself to the Anglican or Episcopalian church, with which the Greek Orthodox church has an historical association. But in Lebanon Solomon had attended an elementary school financed and run by the American Presbyterians. At this time he was not greatly conscious of the difference between Anglicanism and Presbyterianism. They were both alike, or at least scarcely distinguishable, and in any case he was not aware of the high-level arrangements which had been made between the Anglican and Greek Orthodox churches. He therefore attended in Pembroke a church with which he was familiar.

Thus he became a regular attendant of the Presbyterian Church and, in due time, of the United Church, but he is still a Greek Orthodox churchman, though his family are all members of the United Church. Solomon supports all the churches of the community, as he thinks they are all good.

The Presbyterians in Pembroke were a friendly folk, the descendants of that pioneer stock which had tamed the Ottawa valley, and turned the hardwood forests into fertile farmland. Solomon had arrived at a good point in Canadian history. The country then was not saturated with newcomers. These were still a novelty in Eastern Canada. No new social and economic problems had as yet followed in their wake. There were thus no prejudices to be overcome, none of the xenophobia which appears when an excess of immigration is poured into an area to the disturbance of its economy and *mores*. No doubt there was much curiosity about this young stranger with flashing eye and dark hair who had come from the vaguely known Biblical

land of Hiram of Tyre. I grew up in the Ontario of that period and know its small towns and country places as they were then, the well-kept streets and residences, the thrifty and hospitable people. They took the stranger to their hearts, and into their homes. His appearance at the morning church service meant an invitation to mid-day dinner. He was invited to their parties and picnics. Before he could grasp what had happened, he was in the full stream of Canadian life. His command of English advanced apace – at least, of English as modified by three-quarters of a century in the Ottawa valley.

He also began to play Canadian games, especially baseball.

In Lebanon there had not been much time for sport. The hard task of making a living called for ceaseless work from dawn to dusk. In the less grudging land of Canada there was time for play, and he had an exuberant energy which demanded outlet. He took to baseball like a duck to water. His friendships in Pembroke extended accordingly, and not there only. As he went about the Province with his buggy and pair of spanking bays, and put up his horses at some farmhouse or the stables of a village tavern, he would join the youths of the neighborhood in their evening game of baseball. The Canadianizing of Solomon went apace. There were good looking girls and young women in the Ontario towns and countryside at the turn of the century, but as Solomon recounts the tale of his existence then, the Ontario beauties do not seem to have figured in it to any noticeable degree, though they could have helped him in his language learning if he had given them the chance. His contacts with the fair sex seem to have been limited to his meeting them at parties and picnics. In those days the encounters of the sexes were conducted with great dignity and propriety. The chaperon was an established institution. There were no public dance halls. Motor cars were few. The motion picture theatre was known only in the larger cities. There was little of the free association of young men and women which is so familiar today.

Whether he would have passed onward from this stage of remote detachment cannot be guessed, for now there appeared in the Syrian circles of Carleton Place a Lebanese maiden from

his own Bekaa Valley, whose youthful beauty bowled him over. This, however, is another story.

MY FIRST STEP UP

(Solomon Mussallem loquitur)

When I resorted to peddling as a means of making a living, I had no idea of making a life-career of that business. Indeed, during the lonely early months when my ignorance of English cut me off from communication with my fellows, I thought much of returning to my native Bekaa Valley. So soon as I should save enough money I would go home. But after I had taken my course at the night school in Pembroke I could speak English fluently and I made friends. Then when I did have the money to go home, the desire was gone. I was becoming Canadian. I was fixed in my resolve to get a solid footing in the Canadian system, a new and to me a complicated system which I thought I had come to understand. This hadn't been an easy job. It had meant learning many new ways of thinking and acting.

I saw that itinerant peddling and the carrying of a pack would never get me far. It is true that I was making good money and gaining experience. But I was clearly at the foot of the mountain. I wished to climb the heights.

The first step up was to get the pack off my back and move into more profitable business. I had found that I had a gift for salesmanship. It would surely be as easy to sell more expensive goods than those which I carried – just as easy and more profitable. As I travelled on foot through the eastern counties of Ontario, through the Ottawa and St. Lawrence valleys, I saw the regular commercial travellers who visited the merchants in country towns and villages. They travelled comfortably by horse and buggy.

So in my second year I bought a pair of horses, a buggy, a stock of jewellery and went into business in style. The buggy was the smartest I could buy, the horses a spanking team of bays. The well-polished harness glittered. I moved up, too, in the world of fashion. I had learned to recognize the occupational and social significance in Canada of correct clothing. I was determined that so far as clothes and social usages were concerned I should not

be taken for an outsider. I bought a tailor-made suit, and overcoat, with all of what the ladies call the accessories. No young buck of the period outshone me in conservative elegance. I enjoyed myself as thoroughly as a youthful second-lieutenant enjoys his first uniform and the shine of his field boots.

From a firm of manufacturing jewellers in Toronto, I purchased a stock of jewellery – watches of different makes, rings, bracelets, lockets. As there was a demand for silk handkerchiefs and a good profit in them, I retained a stock of them, but they were the only items which I kept from my old trade.

With the horse and buggy I extended my operations widely over the greater part of the Ontario peninsula. The desire to see the country impelled me as well as the desire of gain. I can recall being in North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, the towns of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence valleys, London, Windsor, Stratford, Kincardine, Walkerton, Guelph, Parry Sound, and innumerable towns, cities, and villages in between these places. I soon knew more of Ontario than most of the native-born.

I sold jewellery to any likely customer, always for cash. A great deal of my trade was with town and village jewellers themselves, for as I bought in large quantities I purchased my jewellery more cheaply than they could. Thus it paid them to buy from me. My business throve.

But I began to feel restless. I kept hearing of the booming and expanding West. In Ontario the northern mining country was opening. The air was full of stories of the new fortunes that were being made.

A good friend of mine in Pembroke, an old gentleman of 70 named Moffat, head of a large family of sons and daughters with whom I associated, said to me one day, "My boy, if I were as young as you are, I would strike out for the West."

Thus the seed was sown, which in the fullness of time led me to Haney.

COMPETITION WITH THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

(Solomon Mussallem loquitur)

In 1904, my jewellery business began to pall. I craved

adventure and new scenery. I decided to go into the fur trade in the north country around Lake Abitibi.

This region the Hudson's Bay Company regarded as its own. For more than two hundred years it had fought interlopers. Originally, it had the monopoly of all the trade in the vast region trading into the Hudson's Bay. Though now it had lost these exclusive rights, it could throw plenty of obstacles in the way of an intruder. It had trading posts at all strategic points. The Indians depended upon these posts for supplies, and were usually in debt to the company. They were under obligation to bring their furs to the company in payment of their debts. Not to bring their furs to the "Hudson's Bay" meant that their credit would be cut off. While it was legal for any one to trade with the Indians, a newcomer would not find it easy to break into the trade. It would be necessary to offer more attractive goods than the company had, if the Indians were to be lured away from the "Hudson's Bay".

I took along 150 pounds of brightly colored shawls, blankets, bedspreads, towels, and strongly-scented perfume. They had the attractiveness of novelty, designedly being different from the standard Hudson's Bay wares.

At the end of steel at New Liskeard, on the new Northern Ontario Railway which was then a-building, I engaged two Indians, Angus Wabie and his son, both of them, when sober, very good fellows. They knew the country and the Indians. They were good guides and canoemen.

Loading the canoe with food, camp equipment and trade goods, we left New Liskeard on a sunny June day, for the 100 mile circuit to Lake Abitibi.

The Indians got drunk the first day. They had secreted some gin in the canoe. With considerable difficulty I enticed them to land, for I wished to get the gin away from them, as a drunken Indian is a hard person to manage. When finally we landed, I went for a stroll along the beach. I knew that the Indians if left alone would go to sleep and then I would be able to get possession of the gin.

Soon they were in a drunken slumber. I appropriated the rest of the gin and threw it in the lake.

The Indians woke up, full of apologies and repentance, but demanding their gin. I promised to replace it when they were through with the trip.

We traded for about 100 miles along Lake Abitibi and then turned about for New Liskeard, continuing to trade, exchanging shawls, bedspreads (which the women used as shawls), towels and perfume for mink and muskrat.

I paid 25 cents for a good muskrat, and $4.00 for a good mink.

On the way back we upset the canoe and lost all the food—ham, bacon, flour, sugar, salt, but the furs floated and we retrieved them.

We made our way to a Hudson's Bay trading post at the lake's edge. Our reception was chilly. The Company's employees wouldn't let us camp near the post. So we stayed on the shore not far from the post and I got my Indians to induce the natives to come to me with their furs.

In the meantime, we had a food problem. The company wouldn't sell us anything but flour, for which they charged 25 cents a pound. This flour had to be cooked Indian fashion, without salt or yeast. Our diet was reduced to unsalted, unleavened bread, and unsalted fish. I got heartily sick of this fare, until several days of hunger restored the appetite. Then the fresh lake fish became very palatable.

I had now disposed of all my trade goods and continued to buy furs for cash until I had acquired all that could be carried in the canoe. I could have bought more if I had had more trade goods, as the Indians preferred goods to money.

We stayed three days near the post and then made our way back to New Liskeard, much to the relief of the "Hudson's Bay", no doubt.

I sold the furs in Toronto, and made good money on the transaction. I decided not to repeat the invasion of the Hudson's Bay preserve. The waters in that country were treacherous and the hostitity of the company made trading difficult.

But I didn't forget to return to Angus the confiscated bottle.

Solomon and Mrs. Mussallem

CHAPTER VIII

THE WOOING OF HANNY BESYTT

THE STORY of Solomon's life would be incomplete if reference were not made to the place which his gracious wife has played in it, and this of course could be said of any truly successful man. The greatest reward in life is a family of good repute, and the attainment of this end is a joint accomplishment.

Universally respected, Mrs. Solomon Mussallem holds a high position in the public regard. Although the duties of family life have been her greatest concern – and greatest achievement – she has thrown herself into all good causes. She has performed with dignity the part in community life which the prominence of her husband has required.

Coming in her twelfth year to Canada to her brother's home in Carleton Place, she has accompanied Solomon in his wanderings – Pembroke, Winnipeg, Prince Rupert, Vancouver, until finally coming to rest in Haney, where the family has firmly planted its roots and grown to maturity.

Solomon owes a great deal to her. She taught him caution. Cobalt and Prince Rupert in the early years of their marriage showed her the vanity of riches unfound upon substantial reality, but she rejoiced in progress based on solid foundation. The family fortunes in Haney have been based upon reality.

The impetuous descendant of the Syrian cavaliers who fought the Turk needed solid anchorage to hold him down to a fixed occupation. His wife and family gave that anchorage. He chose Haney because he thought it would be a good place in which to rear a family. It may have been a good place in which to rear one, but Solomon has made it a better place. It follows that by anchoring Solomon to Haney, Hanny Besytt of Kfir Mishki has also had a share in making the Fraser Valley town a good place in which to live.

It was in Kfir Mishki, a town of 2,000 to 3,000 inhabitants lying

in the Bekaa Valley, a few miles from Keraan that Hanny Besytt was born. Her father Abraham was one of the notables of the place, highly regarded by his fellow townsmen, because for more than twenty years he held a position, by their choice, equivalent to mayor in our system. Though under Turkish rule, there was no municipal government comparable with ours, there was a sort of council of elders which exercised moral authority, though its legal powers might not have been great, and this council of notables chose a head, muktar or mayor. When Hanny Besytt's father died, the people wished his nineteen-year-old son Kalil to succeed, but the mother demurred.

In the time of Abraham Besytt's regime as mayor, the American Presbyterians established an elementary school in Kfir Mishki, Abraham Besytt having taken the initiative in inducing the Presbyterians to come to the town. Kfir Mishki was a favorable place to establish a school, for most of the population was Christian, chiefly Greek Orthodox. There was, in consequence, an ampler social life than, for example, in Keraan. As Mrs. Mussallem remembers it, there were parties, picnics, and dances, where the young of both sexes met under strict chaperonage. There were musical activities, too, and even some social intermingling with the young Moslems, who seem here to have been more advanced than Moslems elsewhere.

Kfir Mishki must also have been more advanced in its social thinking than other communities, for girls attended the elementary school, and some of the better-off sent their daughters to Beirut for more advanced schooling in the Presbyterian college there. This provision for the education of the girls of the town was an innovation attributable to Abraham Besytt.

The American Presbyterians, however, may have over-expanded in their educational programme, for they were forced to close the school. But Abraham was not to be balked by this. He organized a new school himself, relying upon local support. The Greek priest, the *khoury*, undertook the task of teaching, and the school re-opened.

This school Hanny attended up to her twelfth year.

Hanny was a sister of Kalil, who had made a business in Carleton Place of "grub staking" young Syrians who had escaped

from behind the Turkish iron curtain. Shortly after Solomon escaped, the curtain was raised a little and Kalil sent for his mother and two sisters, Hanny and Nedda, who was two years older than Hanny.

Nedda married one of the Syrian colony in Ottawa. She is now dead.

Kalil established a comfortable home in Carleton Place for his mother and sisters.

A family like the Besytts, which had broken Syrian tradition by educating its daughters, would insist upon giving them a Canadian education. Accordingly, after allowing Hanny a few free months to pick up some spoken English, she was enrolled in the public school in Carleton Place.

As a psychologist I can assure the readers of this book that she has a high I. Q., which she has passed on to her descendants. In school in Carleton Place she went ahead like a house on fire. She galloped through the lower classes, where she was first placed in order to learn to read English, and in her second year she was holding her own in a class of her own age.

It was about the year 1904 that Solomon discovered the attractiveness of Hanny – the spring of 1904. The maple trees were coming into leaf. Snow lingered in the hollows but the grass of the meadows was turning green. The rivers and streams of the countryside sang. The robins were returning from the South. Solomon was twenty-three.

Though from the time that he had established himself in Pembroke he had made few visits to Carleton Place, the call of his kind drew him one weekend to visit his Syrian friends in that town. He had just given way to an impulse to extravagance, had bought a tailor-made blue serge suit in West Meath which cost him the princely sum of twenty-two dollars. Its like would cost one hundred dollars today. In this magnificent apparel he appeared at the house of Kalil. And there sparkled Hanny Besytt, in the glow of budding womanhood, eyes shining, the ideal picture of Lebanese beauty! It was a psychological moment which settled the fate of both. Perhaps the blue serge suit helped, and the burgeoning of the vernal season, for each of the young pair fell instant victim to the other.

From this time onward Solomon haunted the Kalil home. He became like one of the family. Love, however, does not always travel in smooth waters. It happened that Kalil and Sol had a sudden falling out. Both were high-spirited and fiery. You can see from Solomon's countenance today that he could be proud and fierce. The occasion of the break was trivial, he narrates, nothing to it. But the tendency of each of them in their youth was to take quick offence. Sol spoke hasty words at which Kalil took umbrage. Sol, as he admits, should have apologized, for Kalil was a beloved friend and he had not meant to hurt him. But a stubborn unyielding pride kept him from speaking the words which would have put an end to the strain. His family sided with Kalil. Hanny thought Sol should apologize. A barrier shut off the growing intimacy. Sol was in the doghouse, but he would not budge. Today Hanny thinks, and Solomon agrees, that both of the hot-headed youths should have had the sense to apologize to each other.

The words of his old Pembroke friend Moffat came to his mind: "If I were you, my boy, I would strike out for the West." He decided to do that.

Thwarted affairs of the heart have driven many Canadian youths to what used to be the Wild West, as well as the youth of other lands. In fact, the Western prairies have been strewn with broken hearts in numbers which might well equal the blanching buffalo bones which used to whiten the planes of Saskatchewan. But Sol in his flight made but a half-hearted escape from the scene of his frustration. He retained his two-roomed suite in the Pembroke hotel and the store room in which he kept his merchandise. He intended to return and claim his bride, if necessary like the young Lochinvar of Scottish romance. He was a disappointed but not a heart-broken lover.

He took with him a thousand dollars to scout the West. That was plenty of money for a survey of the prairies at that time – at any rate for a young man with no expensive vices.

Those were the days of the boom, the days of railway building, of Mackenzie and Mann, the Grand Trunk Pacific. Sheep-coated immigrants from Central Europe crowded the wooden-seated colonist cars. New towns were sprouting on the open prairie at

places which were expected to become railway divisional points. Wheat elevators were rising like mushrooms where for a thousand years only the buffalo and the antelope had wandered. Lebanon had never been like this, even in the wild days of the Moslem invasion, when the desert hordes had spread over the land in a less peaceful movement of migration.

Solomon went first by C.P.R. to Port Arthur and Fort William, which, of course, were flourishing. Then he went by C.N.R. to Winnipeg, a feverish polyglot anthill. From there he moved on, always with an eye to future business, to all the larger growing centres – to Prince Albert, Edmonton, Calgary. The picturesque Western pioneer life fascinated him, but didn't absorb the whole of his mind. His thoughts kept turning to Carleton Place, and the vivacious Hanny. Letters flew back and forth. He had intended to go on to the Pacific Coast, but the eastward pull was becoming stronger. At Regina he decided to return to Pembroke. Until the unfinished business at Carleton Place should be brought to a satisfactory end, Solomon could not settle down to the prosaic business of making a living. So he brought his prairie excursion to an end and took the train for Pembroke.

Then followed a tempestuous period of adjustments, readjustments, reconciliations, marriage (October 7, 1905), the wedding feast and two weeks of honeymooning in and about Ogdensburg in New York state.

A new Mussallem craft was launched upon the ocean.

Mrs. Mussallem presenting winner's trophy at Maple Ridge gymkhana

CHAPTER IX

COBALT

NOW HE was married and responsible for the welfare of a wife.

In due course there would be a family to be brought up in Canada as Canadians. His hope was to be thoroughly integrated into Canadian life and rear a family of Canadian Mussallems.

His itinerant trading throughout Ontario had been profitable, successful enough financially for a beginning, but not good enough to found a family upon.

Just at this time northern Ontario was the centre of a feverish mining boom. Rich deposits of gold and silver had been discovered along the route of the new Northern Ontario railway, stretching northward from North Bay through the wild country between that point and its terminus on James Bay. Daily, fortunes were being made. The old Syrian tale of gold in America by the shovelful seemed almost literally true. He would go to the North and get his share of the gold.

But first he had to settle his young wife comfortably in a home. He bought a house in Pembroke, and furnished it well with the furniture and gadgets of North American living. Then he made haste to Cobalt and entered the venturous game of mining speculation. This was in early 1905.

Cobalt was a wild, frenzied town, much like Dawson in the Yukon at its most feverish hour. He knew, he admits, nothing about mining nor of the stock-market, but that did not deter him. He plunged in. He speculated in mining stocks with all the rashness of the greenhorn, and at first with the luck that sometimes the novice has.

The week days he spent in Cobalt in the excitement of the stock exchange. At weekends he went home to the peace of Pembroke; then off again to the madness of Cobalt.

With beginner's luck, his paper profits piled up and up, and then, behold, magically he had a fortune!

That would have been the time to quit. But deceptive visions lured him further. He sunk the whole fortune in a gold mine which, he expected, would make him richer than the Tretheweys.

It didn't take long to discover that the mine had been salted! In his simplicity, he says, he had been taken in by one of the oldest swindles used for the defrauding of innocents. He returned to Pembroke, stripped of his gains, crestfallen and feeling like Wolsey in Shakespeare's play:

> "Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!
> This is the state of man: today he puts forth
> The tender leaves of hope; tomorrow blossoms;
> The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
> And – when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
> His greatness is a ripening – nips his root,
> And then he falls as I do."

Well, the frost certainly nipped him, but it didn't kill him. So, though his fortunes had sunk low, he was lucky to have Hanny. She bucked him up in his depression. They would make a new life in the glamorous West, and establish there the home of which they had dreamed.

They sold the Pembroke house and its furnishings and took the train to Winnipeg.

Cobalt became a ghost town, eclipsed by Haileybury and other more permanent centres. But now, in the midsummer of 1953, a revival is under way there, a new boom, for the element cobalt after which the town was named now has metallurgical importance in the defence industry. Solomon, however, has no desire to review the scene of his first disappointment.

WINNIPEG

Solomon had no fears concerning his business prospects in the West. From his travels through the prairies previously to his marriage he was already familiar with the country. He had tested his ability to make money there, for in the first western exploratory trip he had taken his pack with him, and a

stock of jewellery. He had made more money than the trip had cost him.

In Winnipeg he had made contact with Abraham Haddad, a Syrian, relative of his family, for Solomon's mother was a Haddad.

Abraham Haddad was a wholesaler in drygoods and small wares, much like Kalil in Carleton Place. He supplied peddlers, who traded from Manitoba to the Rockies.

The peddlers were mostly Syrian, though some of them were Jewish and some Greek.

It had become easier for the Syrians to leave the Turkish empire than when Solomon and Ferhat had escaped. Some of them, like Haddad, had got out of the Syrian lands before Solomon had got away. Haddad had prospered but others of the Syrians were still peddling. They were the ones who would make a few thousand dollars, then go home to cut a dash in their old haunts, and come back to Canada broke, and have to start all over again. These never grew rich, or even well-to-do.

Haddad was now feeling the onset of age. He wished to retire. He offered Solomon the whole business at cost, with no charge for goodwill, a tempting offer, but the salted mine at Cobalt had stripped him to the bone. He had only $6.00 left of his Cobalt fortune. "I have no money," he said sadly. "That's all right," said Haddad, "I'll take your note on condition that you take my son Richard as partner to learn the business." It was a bargain.

They remained partners for six months but couldn't agree upon questions of management, and dissolved partnership amicably. On settlement of the business, Solomon had about $2,000.00 to the good. With this capital he began wholesaling himself, at 131 Disraeli Street, in Winnipeg North.

The business was a prosperous one, and in that year of 1906 he felt secure enough to buy a house. They lived upstairs, where there were nine rooms. Beneath was a store.

With them lived a cousin George Haddad, and his beautiful Brazilian wife.

Here two children were born. The eldest, a son, died in early infancy. George, the second son, now (1954) managing the main Haney enterprises, was born on January 5, 1909.

George, in accordance with the old Greek Orthodox tradition, was baptized Church of England. He is now United Church.

Life passed quietly, happily, and prosperously. The family circle grew. George had been born that year, the first of the surviving six. Later that year Solomon's mother and his sister Massadie and Massadie's husband Najeeb, a distant relative, came from Keraan.

His mother brought with her from Keraan the prized Syrian Bible which Solomon had won at the village school. He still has it, in the home in Haney.

Cousin George Haddad also lived with them in the expanding ménage.

At this time Solomon took his first active part in politics. This was the day when the glamour of Sir Wilfred Laurier was hard to resist. But when Solomon got to Winnipeg he found that a fellow-Syrian with the incongruous adopted name of Rooney, had organized and was president of a Syrian Conservative Club supporting the provincial premier, Sir R. P. Roblin. The Syrians didn't know much about Canadian politics, but their gregarious instincts made it easy to sweep them into the Conservative Syrian Club. That didn't suit Solomon. He called a meeting of all Syrians and explained the policies of the two parties. The majority were convinced of the virtues of Liberalism. There was some rumpus, as Solomon expresses it, made by a few of the friends of Rooney. Most of the crowd, however, adhered to Solomon and shouted, "We aren't Conservatives, we are Liberals!" They proceeded to form a Liberal Association on the spot, electing Solomon to the presidency.

The chagrined Rooney was present, but sat in glum silence as he watched the members of his club, en masse, switch their allegiance to the Liberal side.

Already in Pembroke, in 1903, encouraged by his old friend Moffat, he had taken his final naturalization papers and was a full-fledged British subject, an event which had given him great elation.

The early part of Solomon's life in Canada had been marked by recurrent restlessness and desire of change.

Distant hills now began again to beckon.

The Canadian National Railway had begun to build its Pacific terminal at Prince Rupert and was pushing its rails eastward, to join ultimately at some intermediate point with the rails which were being pushed westward.

Construction workers in thousands were crowding the right of way, with money to spend on watches, jewellery and other luxury goods. A fortune was awaiting him and his pack, carefully stored these many years.

Northern British Columbia, where the road was building, was a new legendary land, like the fabulous America of which he had heard such tales in his boyhood.

So in 1909, he broke up his partnership with cousin George, and sold his stock. His house he sold to his cousin, and in January or February he prepared to set out for Prince Rupert, leaving his wife, mother, and son in Winnipeg until he should find a new home somewhere in British Columbia.

He was now 28 years old, in the prime of health, familiar with more phases of Canadian life than most natives, and ready to rough it on the frontier.

CHAPTER X

PRINCE RUPERT

IT WAS not merely restlessness and love of the new which inspired Solomon's jump from Winnipeg to Prince Rupert. Times were changing in the prairie country.

In western Canada the last decade of the nineteenth and the first years of the twentieth century were hopeful years. Immigrants were pouring into the wheatlands, and wheat into the elevators on the first step of the way to the European markets hungering for it. Railways were radiating hither and yon, new towns were sprouting, large cities were growing larger. But by 1907, expansion had begun to slow down, people spoke ominously of money being "tight". The low point of the business cycle had been reached. In 1908 the curve had shown no sign of moving upwards. Although the business on Disraeli Street had remained solvent, the rosy promise with which it had started was less rosy. It was time to move on.

Out in British Columbia, however, the boom days were not over. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that a new boom was in the making. From the Yellowhead Pass in the Rockies to salt water at Kaien Island the Grand Trunk Pacific was being rushed to completion.

On Kaien Island, a terminal port to be named Prince Rupert was being laid out. It was expected soon to rival Vancouver in the South. There would be glittering prizes to be won for the snatching.

This vision had, towards the end of 1908, led to Solomon's decision to go to Prince Rupert. In January 1909, having dissolved his partnership with George Haddad, he took the train for Vancouver, leaving his family in Winnipeg.

The first sale of Prince Rupert building lots had already been made in Vancouver – one third of them being owned by the government, which thought that the public treasury should profit from the boom; the remainder were owned by the railway com-

pany. They sold like the proverbial hot cakes. People were crowding into the vessels bound for Rupert, just as a decade earlier they had rushed to Skagway on the road to the Yukon during the Klondike gold rush in the "days of '98".

Solomon had travelled in crowded ships before this – from Port Said to Marseilles, and from Liverpool to New York. But the trip of the "Camosun" in January 1909 passed all previous experience. Bunks in all available places replaced berths and staterooms. There was a heavy stench of crowded humanity. However, the cost of the fare to Rupert was no impediment to travel: it was only ten dollars, which included bunk and sandwich luncheons for the two-day trip.

His fellow travellers were a mixed, polygot group, including many Chinese and Japanese.

Later in 1919, he made the same trip again, from Vancouver to Rupert. The fare then was twenty dollars, which included berth and regular meals, and he travelled in civilized surroundings.

Rupert (the "Prince" is always omitted in local speech) was a tented town – a town of small tents and large, of sidewalks made of long planks each one foot wide – two planks on the main street, or Rupert Road, now known as Third Avenue.

Rupert rested shakily upon an immense body of muskeg lying three feet deep. There is still plenty of muskeg in and around Prince Rupert.

Solomon lived first in a big rooming "house", an immense canvas structure on a wooden framework. There were two tiers of bunks along each side and a great stove which swallowed sticks of cordwood four feet long. Along the side of the stove was a guard rail on which the patrons of the establishment dried their steaming woollen socks. Rupert is noted for its rain; the socks needed plenty of drying.

A night's sleeping in this abode cost $1.50.

Good meals, however, could be obtained elsewhere, in restaurants, at a cost of only fifty or seventy-five cents, from early times the standard price of meals in the north country.

The North has a long tradition of hearty eating.

It is undeniable that Rupert, at this time, was a wild, very

"woolly", very "open" town. The construction workers earned plenty of money and spent it lavishly. Their chief vice was excessive drinking, but they were fundamentally a decent human lot. There was little crime. The provincial police, as it always has done on the B. C. frontier, managed the restless population with discretion and firmness.

In 1910 (or 1911) Prince Rupert was incorporated as a city, with Fred Stork as first mayor, and soon began its long history of boom and depression, of hope and gloom, until today at long last its prosperity is based solidly upon its shipping facilities, its fishery resources, and the large scale industrial operations of the Celanese Corporation of America.

In Prince Rupert, party politics were volcanic from the earliest days of the city. Solomon could not keep out of the excitement and, as in Winnipeg, was active on the Liberal side.

JEWELLERY ON THE RIGHT-OF-WAY

When Solomon left Winnipeg for Prince Rupert he brought with him a stock of fine jewellery and the sturdy pack which Kalil had given him in Carleton Place. He planned to sell watches and other luxury articles to the free-spending workers building the railway from Rupert to Prince George. The profit from this trade would meet the immediate needs of himself and his family in Winnipeg. But he was thinking farther ahead than this. Along the route new towns would be springing up, and there would surely be opportunity somewhere to get in on the ground floor, establish a home and a permanent business and grow up with the country. He was scouting, his eye on the future.

This hope of finding a permanent lodgement was not finally realized until after years of seeking he planted his feet at last in Haney. From the Bekaa to the Fraser Valley!

He got permission from the general contractors to the Canadian National, Messrs. Foley, Welch, and Stewart, to "work" the line from Rupert to the old Hudson's Bay trading centre of Fort George, where the Nechaco pours its waters into the Fraser on its downward sweep towards the Pacific.

By consent of the Prince Rupert representative of the con-

tractors, he made arrangements with the sub-contractors along the right-of-way to build a small "shack" at each camp or to take over an already existing shack, and to use these places as headquarters from which he would trade in both directions. Sometimes he obtained the use of an office or space in the camp commissary. For these privileges he paid a token rent.

The dearer the watch the more it fascinated the men. Their preference was for the $400.00 watches, although he carried some which sold for as little as $20.00. The Goldsmith Watch Company, his Toronto wholesalers, must have been amazed by the business he did with them.

A pack full of such wares was worth thousands of dollars, but robbery was unknown in that country.

In the Ottawa Valley, in his first trading days, the value of the pack load was $50.00. Times had changed, and he with them.

Solomon never lost money in his dealings with the railway workers. A man would buy a watch, sign an order (checked by the sub-contractor) which directed Foley, Welch, and Stewart to pay Solomon. Then when he returned to Prince Rupert after a month's trip along the "grade", he collected the cash from the company and banked it.

Many of the men quickly got rid of the watches, some of them after only a very temporary enjoyment of them.

They took the watches to the nearest "town", or centre of trade, pawned or sold them and put their money into the more alluring investment of bootleg whisky. Port Essington, Telegraph Point, Terrace, Kitsilas, Old and New Hazelton were such places of irregular carrousal. In Telkwa, Aldermere, and Prince George there were regularly licensed hotels. The hotel in Prince George was famous for its incredibly long bar, reputed to be the longest in North America, and equally famous for its "snake room", adjoining the barroom, into which the casualties of a losing bout with Bacchus were cast until they returned to consciousness.

In the autumn of 1909, Solomon went back to Winnipeg to get his family. In February of 1910 he returned with them – mother, wife and son George. They lived in the best hotel which the town afforded, and the quietest, while he built a store or shop, with living quarters in the rear. Prince Rupert was

changing from a boisterous tented town to an orderly frontier community of wooden residences and business blocks.

The retail shop he stocked with high class jewellery and pottery (Limoges, Doulton, Spode), and his wife took charge. He himself resumed his profitable trade along the right-of-way.

But just as the fevers of the body die down, so railway booms come to an end. In 1914 the gang working from the east met the gang from the west at Fort Fraser. The building of the line was over and soon the boom would be over.

The mighty struggle of man against recalcitrant nature ended with a flourish. A mile of roadbed at Fort Fraser was left with the track unfinished. The two last gangs of track-layers agreed to have a race, to meet at a central point. A great crowd had gathered from miles along the right-of-way, including Carrier and Babine Indians with their wives, blanketed and befeathered. Very Important Persons were assembled to be present at the final historic moment.

The gangs took their positions, poised for the contest, breasts divested of shirts to be freer for the race. A signal sounded; they set feverishly to work, putting into the contest all their strength, speed and skill. Muscles strained, sweat poured down breasts and arms. It was a beautiful race. As the rivals came closer to each other, the excitement of the spectators grew intense. Cheers and shouts encouraged the racers. Even the stolid Indian braves and their phlegmatic klootchmen showed animation.

They drive on to the central point, scarcely an inch between them. The last spike is driven and the crews sink exhausted to the ground!

It was never decided who won. That was debated long and loudly as the rest of the day and much of the night were given over to wassail.

Solomon was there with the rest. He had formally offered the Grand Trunk Pacific the donation of a wooden spike for the ceremonial completion of the track-laying, in jesting imitation of the mythical golden spike long believed to have marked the finishing of the Canadian Pacific at Craigellachie.

The company did not accept the offer. Their headquarters in Montreal wired a laconic rejection, "Nothing doing".

THE END OF THE BOOM

From 1910 to 1914 Solomon had been doing very well in Prince Rupert. He had made plenty of money in the construction camps. The jewellery business in Rupert was profitable. Money was accumulating in the bank. The city was growing. Real estate values were climbing.

His savings and profits Solomon kept investing steadily in Prince Rupert real estate, which he hopefully sold and re-invested. By 1914 once more he had made, on paper, a fortune such as in an earlier time he had made in Cobalt.

In 1914, railway building was over. World War I was on.

Development of the Great Central Interior of British Columbia came to a standstill.

The construction workers departed – some of them to the wars. Many of them reached France and Belgium, whence many never returned.

The happy heydey of boom time came to a dead stop. Solomon's paper fortune melted.

He couldn't sell his real estate, nor even give it away.

When a depression comes, the luxury trades suffer first.

As soon as the construction work was finished along the Skeena and Nechaco, the workers departed, and the jewellery business along with them went *kaput*.

The business in the jewellery store in Rupert faded also. There was no more demand for Doulton, Limoges, and Spode.

Adjustment to the changed conditions had to be made. Solomon sold off his retail stock of silver and gold articles and the fine pottery and went into the less glamourous grocery business. The high-flying days were over, but people must eat, though they might not buy jewellery.

His grocery store occupied a comfortable 25 feet by 45 feet. He stayed with this modest business for three years, and made a living. But though he sold a great deal of merchandise, much of it was "on the books" – that is, sold on credit – and, in the worsening conditions, he couldn't collect.

The population upon which his business depended had thinned out to such an extent that there remained only the fishermen, the operating railway workers, and those others who were engaged in essential public services.

It was hard to collect a debt from a fisherman. The toilers of the sea were adept in avoiding payment. Equipped with motor boat they were mobile.

It was their practice to buy a stock of groceries, pay promptly at the end of the month, establish credit, then place a big order and vanish into the blue. And even if the fisherman did again become visible, he couldn't easily be garnisheed. He could be sued only in the Admiralty Court and there was no Admiralty Court in Rupert.

Losses on landsmen were not so heavy. It was customary to cut off a landsman's credit when his debt reached fifty dollars.

In Rupert, Solomon intensified that life of public activity which he had begun in Winnipeg when he headed the Syrian section of the Winnipeg Liberals. This public activity has continued with little interruption for well upon forty years.

He became a member of the Prince Rupert Board of Trade. He was indeed one of the early members.

He interested himself in Dominion politics. However, his main concern was his business and his family.

His family was growing. George was in elementary school.

Then came Nick, Mary, Helen, and Peter. But death, too, struck and laid his hand upon his mother who had followed him from Lebanon to Winnipeg, and then to Rupert, where she spent six years of suffering in the hospital.

All this time, from 1914 onward, Prince Rupert was going down hill, and money was harder and harder to collect.

It was time to move again. Solomon sold his stock of groceries – he retailed it – and turned the building over to the wholesalers. He didn't go "broke". He just quit, retaining, however, enough liquid cash to re-establish himself in some more promising location.

The little "towns" along the railway offered no prospects. Their lusty growth in the present decade was more than a generation distant.

CHAPTER XI

VANCOUVER TO HANEY

THE WAR had struck Rupert heavy blows. It might have been expected, in normal times, that the completion of the railway would have brought prosperity to a terminal city and that Rupert would have boomed as Vancouver had done thirty years before. But apart from fishing, including the activities of the cold storage plant connected with the processing of the halibut, there was no basic industry in the place. Wartime production had not come to Rupert. The able bodied men had gone either to the wars or to the booming war industries in the south or east. Then having disposed of his declining grocery business, Solomon had to look for more promising pastures.

He took a trip south, to Seattle, leaving his family in Rupert, in the dwelling house back of the store. Seattle, Tacoma and the other Puget Sound cities were busy in their war-time prosperity. There were opportunities for establishing himself in business there. But the Puget Sound country seemed alien. The social climate was quite unlike what in Canada he had learned to love. The Lebanese immigrant of two decades earlier was now conscious, within his very marrow, that he had become a Canadian. The flag which flew in Canada was his flag. He felt that he could not go through the painful process of readjustment to a new country and a new flag. His children, now five in number, had been born in Canada. He felt that he could not abandon the country of his children's birth, nor the flag under which they had been born. After three weeks in the United States he was back in Vancouver.

When Solomon began his Prince Rupert career, the motor car was in its noisy infancy. Now, at the time of his return to Canada in 1918, all the world was buying a car. Hard-surfaced highways were being built as fast as provincial government and local municipalities could raise the money to build them. Good roads were beginning to lure the town dwellers into the open

country. The business arising from motor transportation clearly was going to be a big thing in the future. In Prince Rupert, Solomon had bought a light delivery truck for use with his grocery business. Ordinary curiosity had led him to tinker with its mechanism. Having natural mechanical aptitude he soon acquired a working knowledge of motor mechanics. The transition from amateur to skilled operator would not be difficult.

He brought his family down from Rupert. Out of what he had salvaged from the debacle of the boom, he bought a building on Main Street, between 28th and 29th Avenues. The building comprised an empty garage suitable for the repairing of motor cars, a vacant store, and three residential suites above the garage and store. A plumber rented the store. Solomon let one of the three residential suites to a tenant. In the other two he installed his family.

There still remained a modest nest egg from the Prince Rupert adventure. With this nest egg and from the rentals he could keep going until he should be able to make a living from the motor repair trade.

The motor repair business is highly competitive. One must do good work if he is to retain his customers.

First, he spent three months at a motor school – Michelmore's on Main Street. Today, trade schools are licensed and inspected by the Department of Labour. In 1918 anyone could operate a trade school, and some of the schools were next door to being fraudulent. Michelmore's, however, was quite good and gave a sound basic training, but the tuition took $100.00 out of his carefully husbanded savings.

This training, however, was not enough to satisfy Solomon. He wanted actual shop experience. He went to a big garage at Granville Street and Beach Avenue and asked for work. The manager laughed. In 1918, work in commercial garages was not superabundant. In France in the spring of that year, the Allies were on the brink of the abyss. Gloom was spreading over Canada. Business was at a standstill. There was no work with pay for new hands.

What Solomon wanted, however, was experience. The pay-

off would come in the future. So he worked for nothing. The boss was quite agreeable to this arrangement.

Solomon worked every day, bringing his lunch with him. He went from car to car, wherever he could get a chance to do something, or to learn.

Solomon was something of a mystery to his fellow-workers. They couldn't make out his national origin, and he wouldn't tell them his name. Moreover, it was quite beyond their understanding that anyone should work, and work hard, without a cent of pay. They gave up trying to solve the mystery and bestowed upon him the nickname of "Goofy", but they treated him with kindly tolerance.

After five months of this experience Solomon felt equal to anything. Business was looking up. The armies of Foch and Haig were driving forward in the warm sunshine of mid-August. The world was once more right and Solomon was ready for new adventure.

He opened his repair garage on Main Street. There is a Safeway store there now. He had no gas pump – or filling station, as the English call it. The building was 30 feet by 40 feet, ample space for his needs.

With the remains of the Prince Rupert savings he bought essential equipment and hired the best mechanic he could get – the dependable Bill Warwick. Bill had been getting 65 cents an hour. Solomon paid him 75 cents, which was considered good pay. Today the wage would be $1.70 per hour.

Business was good from the start. Motor cars were becoming more available for civilians, and Solomon could have found use for larger premises. He made a comfortable living, and his children were doing well at school. There were no clouds upon the horizon.

This went on until 1919. Once more he grew restless. He decided that he could surely do better somewhere else. There were too many people ahead of him in Vancouver, with larger establishments and plenty of capital. He toyed with the idea of going to a smaller town and growing up with it. It should be a place that would grow, but would also be a healthy and wholesome community in which to rear his family.

Ever since his arrival in Canada there was back of his mind a longing for a place where he might take root. In this quest he had seen more of Canada than most Canadians. There were few places of size and importance in Ontario which he had not visited. He knew the prairies. He had worn out shoe leather along the right-of-way of the Grand Trunk Pacific from Prince George to Rupert. He had explored the country of Puget Sound. He had surveyed the possibilities of Vancouver and its environs. He had not found his resting place.

There remained the region traversed by the Canadian Pacific, along the mainline eastward to the Rockies, and the Okanagan and Kootenay Valleys. He would explore these regions. Perhaps the home of his seeking might be there.

PILGRIMAGE ONCE MORE

It was the thrifty habit of Solomon when he set out on a pilgrimage in search of the Promised Land to make the journey pay for itself. When he first burst out of the bounds of Ontario into the Prairies he brought his precious jewellery with him. He returned to Pembroke with a profit from his travels. In the north country of British Columbia – or rather in the Central Interior, as the sensitive natives prefer to call it, he studied the prospects of the newly opened country from Rupert to Fort George. Now in planning to reconnoitre the southern quarter of British Columbia from the coast to the Rockies, it was natural that he should seek a means of making the reconnaissance pay.

The Canadian housewife wages a relentless war upon all forms of dirt, as every morning listener to the radio knows. The vast North American soap business is based upon the craving of the North American woman for cleanliness – upon cleanliness combined with labour-saving. Millions of dollars in consequence have been invested in the making of soap-flakes. Today it would be difficult, without great capital resources, to break into this field and steal customers away from the makers of the much-advertised nationally known brands of cleaning agents. But in 1919, there was still an opening for an adventuring newcomer. Solomon had a manufacturer friend in Vancouver prepared to take this risk.

His friend had a soap which he called Electro Soap. His story – which the name of the soap itself suggested – was that the soap had unusual virtues and didn't require rubbing. The soap, it is true, was a good enough soap, but as Solomon learned later, not better than its competitors. Solomon did not know this fact, for at the time the chemistry of soap lay outside of his knowledge.

The manufacturer knew that Solomon was going on a journey of exploration to find a place in which to settle. He suggested that the explorer sell the soap on his travels. Solomon agreed to the proposal. He would at least be making his expenses.

The soap was put up in one-pound packages. He obtained a quantity of samples to carry with him, and shipped a larger supply to Kamloops by freight. Then he started on his way.

He got off the train at Hammond, 24 miles by rail from Vancouver, and walked along the River Road, three miles to Port Haney. In Port Haney he saw a sixteen-year-old boy, Harding Stephens, busily cranking a car. He thought him a strong vigorous lad. "This must be a healthful place," he mused, "a good place to raise a family." The boy's father, he found, ran a "jitney" between Haney and Vancouver. A "jitney", it may be explained, was a term then applied to an automobile used to ply an unlicensed trade in picking up casual passengers in competition with regular modes of transportation. The trade passed out of existence when the jitney owners were required to be licensed and to carry insurance to protect their passengers in case of death or accident.

The Maple Ridge Mills and the brickyard were the two chief industries in Port Haney. There were a few stores and odds and ends of struggling businesses.

He met the postmaster, William Storey, destined thereafter for long years to be his esteemed fellow-townsman. Storey still lives in Haney, in retirement.

Solomon did not give any inkling to Storey nor to anyone else that he was looking for a place in which to go into business and that Haney was attracting him. Later when he did establish himself in the little town, Storey looked upon the venture with undisguised skepticism.

There was already a commercial repair garage then in Haney,

on top of the hill on Eighth Avenue, at that time called Ontario Street, which led upward from the river front and railway station to the Dewdney Trunk Road. There, where the road levels off from its upward climb, Bill Knox ran his garage in a large, wooden, barn-like structure built on land belonging to the old pioneer family after whom Haney takes its name. Solomon asked Knox for information about the community, what he thought of it, the state of business, and the number of autos in the area. Knox was a friendly fellow and spoke freely.

After his sketchy reconnaissance of Haney, Solomon got on the next eastbound train and stopped at Chilliwack and Hope, and then for a day at Lytton, and the next morning, before dawn, he reached Kamloops where a shipment of soap was awaiting him. He registered at the hotel for a three days' stay.

That morning he put an advertisement in the local paper, the historic Kamloops "Sentinel".

LADIES ! NO MORE RUB

ELECTRO SOAP DOES THE WORK

LET ELECTRO SOAP DO IT FOR YOU

Then he went around the town with samples, not selling, but introducing himself as representative of the manufacturer. He told the housewives to ask the grocer for the soap.

His advertising must have been effective, for next day when he called upon a grocer in the east side of Kamloops, the grocer said, "We have been waiting for that soap. Everybody is asking for it."

He asked to be the sole agent. Solomon said that if the grocer bought Solomon's entire stock he could have the agency, and an agreement to this effect was made with the Vancouver manufacturer.

From Kamloops he continued his travels, stopping off for varying lengths of time at Revelstoke, Golden, Macleod, Cranbrook, Nelson, Trail, always looking for a place to enter the auto trade. He kept on with the vending of soap in all of these places, following the Kamloops plan of operation.

The manufacturer passed out of business shortly after Solo-

mon's trial venture. The soap could not compete with the product of the established companies, either in price, advertising, nor in efficiency of sales promotion and distribution. It was rubbed out.

In all this travelling Solomon was obsessed with the thought of Haney. He started back to the Coast, resolved to establish himself in the little town which had caught his fancy.

On his way East, he had not stopped at Mission. Establishing himself there was a possibility he had not yet considered. He got off the train at Mission and spent a day there, but the lure of Haney still drew him. He again got off the train when he reached Haney and took another look at the place. It still called him. His mind was made up.

Near Haney, the aggressive firm of Abernethy and Lougheed was building a logging railway into the primeval forest which stretched northward towards the Golden Ears. In this general area of Maple Ridge and on the mountain slopes, they were engaged in lumber operations on a vast scale. They were employing a large number of men at good pay. This encouraging fact swept away the last of Sol's hesitations. The loggers and railway construction workers and the mill employees would spend money on cars – now in good supply – just as the Grand Trunk Pacific construction workers had spent on expensive gold watches in the north. The cars would have to be repaired. Here was the opportunity for which he had been looking these many years.

Again he met Storey, the postmaster, back of the railway station, and he rented a barn from him, on Haney Street, one block off the River Road. The rent was $25.00 a month. Storey must have thought that he had got the better of a simple stranger. Solomon didn't confide his purpose in renting the barn, but discussed with Storey the prospects of the auto business. Storey was skeptical.

There was nothing else for Solomon to do that day but to go home to Vancouver on the late afternoon train. He arrived there with $200.00 more than he had when he set out. He informed the family of the location in which the Mussallem dynasty was to establish its seat. The news was received with elation.

It was now January, 1919. The European war was over, at least so far as fighting was concerned. The first lumbering steps towards demobilization were being taken. In a few months a flood of returning warriors would be pouring into British Columbia. The tides of industry would move in new channels. The flood would pour into the Fraser Valley. The Maple Ridge district would surge with new life. Haney seemed a key position for the anticipated development. In Storey's barn on Haney Street there was at least a toe-hold.

As soon as he returned from his peregrinations in the southern interior, Solomon set to work to carry out his plans. He went to New Westminster and bought $250.00 worth of spare parts from Ridley and Kennedy, the Ford agents in New Westminster, and signed up as a sub-agent for the Ford car. This meant that he would drum up buyers and then go to the agent in New Westminster, and place the order, obtaining a portion of the commission for himself.

The Ford agents didn't think much of his prospects in Haney. They laughed at him and prophesied that he would be broke before he started. But he now had a barn which could be converted into a garage, $250.00 of spare parts, and the mechanical or operating tools which he had used in the Vancouver establishment on Main Street.

The next step was to convert the old barn into a garage. He tore out the stalls. He repaired the walls and the cemented floor, which was badly cracked. He fixed up a room in the loft for living quarters.

There was no running water, but there was a well, conveniently placed. He installed a cooking-stove in the living quarters and cooked his own meals.

He painted a sign "Haney Garage" and set it up above what had been the barn door.

That name has continued to be the name of the business ever since. The name travelled with him up to the top of the Eighth Avenue hill. The spacious establishment at the corner of Seventh Avenue and the Lougheed Highway is the Haney Garage of today. Haney Garage Ltd. was legally incorporated in 1923.

No business came that first month of January, 1920, but one

day there arrived Sid Campkin, travelling for the Ford office in Vancouver. He looked around, saw Solomon in his overalls, unsoiled and unstained by grease, oil or toil; shook his head sadly, said nothing, and departed.

He reported back to his office, "There is a poor fellow in Haney who is starting up business. We don't need to call on him again. He won't last long."

He recommended taking away the sub-agency, as Solomon's make-shift establishment, he thought, reflected on the Ford name.

Campkin is still with Ford (1954). When they meet today, he always reminds Solomon of his prophecy.

THE FIRST CUSTOMERS

January of 1920 was a cold and gloomy month, snow, rain, and ice alternating only occasionally with splashes of lambent sunshine. The rushing waters of the Fraser, two hundred yards away, swirled their age-long course seaward. Beyond the river lay the lowlands of Langley, overgrown with willow and alder, and further to the east the site of old Fort Langley, with its historic memories. Between the shop on Haney Street and the river wound the main line of the Canadian Pacific, the mighty rumble of its loaded trains seeming to mock the dearth of business coming to the new garage. And down the slippery and precipitous Eighth Avenue, automobiles, light trucks and heavy trucks moved cautiously from the Dewdney Trunk to the River Road, ignoring with something like disdain the humble establishment on Haney Street, and its gaudy sign.

Up at the top of the hill was the garage of his competitor, Bill Knox. If there was any business to be had in Haney, Bill got it.

At this time the chief activities of the area centered about the operations of the Abernethy-Lougheed Logging Company. This firm was engaged in "big business" upon an impressive scale. It had a network of logging roads and railways in the neighborhood of Alco northward leading into the mountains and even well up the mountain-side to the heights of Garibaldi.

The logging methods were spectacular. Important dignitaries

visiting the province were brought to witness the daring of the high riggers and all the drama of the logger's craft.

Among such visitors was Ramsay Macdonald, Prime Minister of Great Britain.

A Major McEwen was engineer for Abernethy-Lougheed, in charge of their roads. Near the end of Solomon's first month of fruitless waiting, McEwen had occasion to have his Maxwell car repaired at Bill Knox's garage at the top of the hill. Bill was a good mechanic, but, by a piece of ill-luck, the car after it was repaired and the bill paid, stubbornly refused to start. Bill pushed the car to the place on the hill where the road begins to slope and told McEwen to start it by letting it descend the hill. The major entered the car dubiously; the wheels turned; the car began its descent. The major was afraid to go all the way down to the foot fearing the car would accelerate, get out of control, jump the railway track, and land in the icy Fraser. He turned at Haney Street, parallel to the railway tracks and to the river. The car stopped right in front of the Haney Garage. A considerate providence had brought the first customer.

McEwen was a rather imperious, regimental person. He was just out of the army, and accustomed to see the sappers jump at the word of command.

"Here you!" he shouted. "Do you know anything about automobiles?"

Solomon walked over to the car with a pair of pliers in his hip pocket, opened the hood and saw that by pure inadvertence the wires hadn't been properly connected. He "monkeyed" about with the mechanism for a bit, to make a mystery of it, then connected the wires and started the car.

McEwen thought Solomon was playing a trick on him. He drew away angrily, crying, "Another faker!" He was convinced that the car wouldn't run very long. Solomon knew that it would run, for Knox had done a good job of over-hauling it, though his attention must have wandered a little at the finish.

A few days later McEwen came back with George Abernethy. "I owe you an apology, man! What is your bill?"

"Fifty cents," said Solomon. The major cheerfully handed Solomon the fifty cents. Then, turning to Abernethy, said, "The

garage on the top of the hill charged me $84.00 and the car wouldn't run. This man for 50 cents has made it run better than ever."

George Abernethy said, "I have a D45 Buick," and, handing over the key to his garage, added, "Get the car and overhaul it."

Solomon made a good job of the Abernethy car – he put his best work into it. A week later Abernethy returned, expressed his satisfaction and paid the bill, which was slightly over $100.00.

So began the flourishing Mussallem business. From that time it has grown without let-up, and Solomon has more than made up for the fortunes lost in Cobalt and Prince Rupert.

Abernethy-Lougheed had quite a gang working for them. The Haney Garage got the company business, and most of the business of their men.

It also got most of the local business from this time onward. In the fall of 1922 Knox had to quit. Sol bought Knox's barn, and the land around it, from Mrs. Haney, the owner of the Haney estate, paying $1,500.00 for the land. He moved his business higher up the hill.

Haney Garage in its new location on Eighth Avenue was roomier, and better placed to catch transient business than it had been at the foot of the hill on a side street. At that time, and until the Lougheed Highway was opened in 1931, motorists driving from Vancouver to Mission came by the Dewdney Trunk Road to Osborne's Corner, at the junction of the Trunk Road and Ontario Street (now Eighth Avenue) and then went down the hill to the River Road. Turning east, the travellers went through Albion and on to the Stave River and so to Mission. This was a shorter route, shorter by eight miles, than to proceed straight eastward by the Dewdney Trunk Road. Solomon caught the business on the way.

After the school year ending in June 1920, Solomon felt sufficiently assured concerning the future to bring his family to Haney. Cooking for himself had lost its charm. He wanted the daily sight of his wife and his boisterous offspring – George, Nicholas, Mary, Helen and Peter. He rented a house from postmaster Storey, next to the old Municipal Hall on Callaghan Street. He could go home now for meals, and the children had

not far to go to school. The population of the school was growing too, and a high school had been established.

The old house is gone, replaced by a new one. The family lived in it, however, until 1930, when he bought the residence on Royal Crescent, which he has recently sold in this year (1953), whereupon he and his wife went off to the West Indies while a new house was a-building. At the moment of writing, in July 1953, their new home is under construction.

Note—It was finished and occupied in 1954.

HENRY FORD AND THE MUSSALLEMS

As a sub-dealer, Solomon began to sell cars in the spring of 1920. He didn't stock cars at first though he stocked parts for replacements. He would find a buyer and then order the car or would take the "prospect" in to New Westminster to Ridley and Kennedy.

In February or March of 1924, he was granted the regular Ford Agency. The first four cars came in by train direct from the factory. His landlord viewed their arrival pessimistically. "That's the first carload to land here and I am sure that it will be the last." But Sol had had orders for them in advance of their arrival. They were gone at once.

The next week another carload came. Solomon sold about 60 cars that year.

A new age had dawned in Maple Ridge.

The logging people were buying cars just as the railway builders had bought gold watches along the G. T. P.

That year he ceased to do repair work himself. He engaged a foreman, Frank Harding, and four or five mechanics. The yearly profits kept accumulating. Capital was now available for expansion. The time was opportune for a new venture.

Unveiling plaque to fallen of two wars.
Reeve Mussallem and Chaplain Hayward of Maple Ridge Branch No. 88, Canadian Legion.
April, 1952.

CHAPTER XII

THE MUNICIPALITY OF MAPLE RIDGE

MAPLE RIDGE, the Mussallem principality, is a rural district municipality of British Columbia.

The centre of local municipal government is Haney, an attractive unincorporated town lying within the municipality, 26 miles by the hard-surfaced Lougheed Highway from the city of Vancouver.

Maple Ridge, so called from the soft maple trees which flourished in the early days, is washed on its southern boundary by the waters of the Fraser. It stretches northward for some 13 miles to the foothills of Mount Garibaldi and the Golden Ears.

To the west are the alluvial lowlands of Pitt Meadows, wholly given over to dairying.

To the east lies the berry growing district of Mission, enclosing within its geographical limits the incorporated village of Mission City, where a combined vehicular and railway bridge gives access to the farming country on the south side of the Fraser.

Maple Ridge is separated from the district of Mission by a north and south line just a little to the west of the Stave River, which has its beginning in Stave Lake. Stave Falls on Stave River gives rise to an important hydro-electric plant of the B. C. Electric Company, one of the sources of hydro-electric power for the lower mainland.

The Stave River was the source of pine for the construction of staves for the making of barrels to hold the brine in which the Hudson's Bay Company, across the river at old Fort Langley, in 1828 began to pack salted salmon for the London and Hawaiian markets. This cutting of pine was the first industrial activity on the north side of the Fraser, the Stahlo of the Indians before the white man changed its name.

From the western end of the municipality to the eastern boundary near the Stave river the distance is approximately 13 miles.

The Alouette river, rising in the lake of the same name, mountain-girt, flows a crescent-shaped course through the centre of Maple Ridge westward, and through the lowlands of the adjoining district municipality of Pitt Meadows, enters the broad Pitt about four miles from the point where the latter river empties into the Fraser.

Mountain streams in the highland of the north eastern area of Maple Ridge and beyond unite to form the Kanaka which, deflected by the massif of Grant Hill, flows through a gently undulating countryside of pastoral beauty to join the Fraser just across from old Fort Langley.

Here Kanaka labourers more than a century ago had their encampment, rowing across the river to and from their daily work. They were the first inhabitants of the municipality other than the Indians. There were still survivors of them, or descendants, when the C. P. R. was being built in 1885.

The main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway traverses Maple Ridge, never far from the water's edge.

At the coming of the railway, Maple Ridge was already a municipality, having elected its first reeve and council in 1874, just 80 years ago. For 21 of these years Solomon Mussallem has been the reeve, and for two more years was a councillor. Thus in 1953 he had given 23 years to the service of the municipality.

The first railway station in Maple Ridge, as you travel eastward from Vancouver, is Hammond, long known as Port Hammond. Two miles to the east of Hammond is Port Haney, where there is a wharf, a sawmill and a brickyard. This is the old original Port Haney, as it was before the building of the Lougheed Highway led to the growth of the modern town where Eighth Avenue intersects the provincial highway. Here in the new Haney are the modernistic municipal offices where the reeve, gowned in formal robes, presides over the council meetings. Not far from these buildings is the cenotaph, in the form of a Celtic cross, a memorial to the fallen of two wars.

Hammond, the competing centre of trade, had its rise as the C. P. R. was being built. A townsite was laid out in 1885 – which the founders hopefully expected to be the terminus of the railway. It was their dream that on the banks of the river a

vast city could arise, and great ocean vessels would come up to the port on the river. But the railway pushed on, first to Port Moody and then to Vancouver. Hammond continued a torpid life until the Hammond Lumber Mill was built in 1905. This industry grew steadily to its present great importance and Hammond has grown too, though replaced in commercial importance by the faster growing Haney.

Port Haney is much older than Hammond. It goes back to the middle of the last century when retired employees of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Langley crossed the river to take up land on the north shore.

With the gold rush to the Cariboo in 1858 and after, the Fraser became the highway of trade. Paddle steamers plied from Victoria to Yale, stopping at every landing along the way. New settlers came in who engaged in mixed farming on a small scale. They sold their wood to the steamers as fuel. A little town grew up where the station now is, at the foot of Eighth Street, taking the name Port Haney from one of the original landowners.

At the beginning of the century the river steamer was still the regular means of reaching Hammond, Haney, Langley, Chilliwack and intermediate points until the building of modern roads and, on the south side of the river, the Canadian National Railway and the B. C. Electric tramline put an end to the life of the river steamer.

The building of the Dewdney Trunk Road, and in 1931 the completion of the Lougheed Highway gave improved access to the district and the population grew.

With the growth of the new Haney, the old historic Port Haney at the foot of Eighth Avenue became a somewhat faded area, though the railway station is still there, and the brickyard and a busy sawmill, as well as a public lumber wharf to which lumber barges resort to load for market the products of mill and brickyard.

The district was heavily forested and logging is still carried on in the highlands and foothills. The most intensive lumbering operations, however, were those of the Lougheed-Abernethy interests which were at their height when Solomon arrived.

Nelson Lougheed, the senior partner of the firm, was elected to the provincial legislature and became minister of public works. He caused the provincial highway which bears his name to be built along the north side of the river as far eastward as Agassiz. Thus though he had removed the forests, or much of them, he opened the country to settlement. There are now 10,000 people within the limits of Maple Ridge alone. There were about 3,000 to 4,000 when Solomon opened his garage on Haney Street in 1920.

Most of the residents earn their living in the immense mill in Hammond, in the smaller mills in Haney and Whonnock, and in the brick works in Haney. A considerable number are engaged in various forms of agriculture – dairying, general farming, fruit growing, poultry raising, most of them on small holdings. Others work in New Westminster, or even in Vancouver, which is only 45 minutes away by car over hard-surfaced road. There is the usual complement of business and professional people.

There are many retired persons who have come from the cities to spend the evening of their days in a rural community provided with the amenities to which they have been accustomed. I, who write this, am such a one.

There are schools – elementary and secondary – churches, fraternal societies, sporting organizations, a good (and physically clean) public library. There is a new and swank municipal hall in a setting which will be dignified and pleasing when the work now in progress is completed. There is an imposing Federal Building which houses the post office.

A philharmonic orchestra and a choral society, under distinguished leadership, operate on a high level of artistry.

The whole area is well electrified and much of it, including the farms, is provided with water obtained from the Greater Vancouver Water Board. Maple Ridge is a full partner in this water system.

There is local pride in Haney and Hammond, the two largest communities in the municipality, over the fact that these two centres of population are the only towns on the north side of the river which have properly constructed sewer systems. These two amenities were established during the Mussallem regime.

The annual exhibition of the Maple Ridge Agricultural Association is one of the main community events of the year.

It is a good place in which to live, whether you like to mingle with your fellows, or if you wish to avoid them.

Such is the principality, or the baroney, or the domain, over which Solomon Mussallem for twenty-one years presided as reeve, and of which he might say, like Aeneas of ancient time, "quorum pars magna fui."

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

In grateful acknowledgment to

Solomon Mussallem

who, as President of the Maple Ridge Board of Trade rendered valuable service to his community

The world is blessed most by the men who do things, and not by those who merely talk about them.

YEAR 1936

H. R. Shaw — PRESIDENT

Harry Ellen — SECRETARY

CHAPTER XIII

(Solomon Mussallem loquitur)

EXPANSION

SIXTEEN miles east of Haney lies the incorporated village of Mission City. It is a thriving community of 3,000 people.

"This village municipality lies within the fertile rural municipality called the District of Mission.

"Through it, as through Maple Ridge, runs the main line of the C.P.R. on its way westward to Vancouver.

"At Mission a branch of the Canadian Pacific carries the trains of that company to the tracks of the main C.P.R. in Mission.

"The railway crosses the Fraser at Mission by means of a combined railway and public vehicular bridge.

"Thus Mission is a centre of trade for a rich agricultural area on both sides of the Fraser.

"This seemed a promising field into which to expand.

"The chance came in May, 1924, just after I got the Ford agency.

"At that time Ford was represented in Mission by a man named Hargitt, who represented a number of manufacturers and had a sub-agency for Ford.

"Ford wasn't satisfied with the business he got from Hargitt, who was selling only 30 to 36 cars in a year. He asked me to take the agency.

"I went to Hargitt's garage to tell him that I was his competitor. With an appearance of magnanimity he gave me the names of two prospects. I went to the house of the first and asked to see the 'prospect'. His wife said that he was at Hargitt's, where he was Hargitt's salesman.

"I didn't pursue that prospect any further.

"Afterwards I got this employee of Hargitt as my own salesman for a period of three years. He is now a contractor on a large

scale, with headquarters in Matsqui, across the river from Mission.

"Then I looked up the other prospect.

"He was a man of evident culture but he was living in a dilapidated shack, obviously hard up. I introduced myself as a car salesman, wanting to sell him a car.

"He grinned with amusement and said, 'I thank you for the compliment. Nobody before you has offered to sell me anything. But I have no money'.

"I didn't overly appreciate Hargitt's idea of humour.

"In a couple of months the impecunious prospect received a legacy of $25,000.00 from a relative in England. He came to me and bought a car. I took him down in the car to see Hargitt, who was amazed and somewhat chagrined. His joke on me had back-fired.

"My place in Mission was registered as Mission Motors, Ltd. Subsequently we had it changed to Mussallem Motors (Mission) Ltd. We still have the name registered and renewed annually, but the business is at present dormant.

"In 1925 I took as partner in the Mission business my auditor (now of the auditing firm Griffith and Griffith). We made good money, but not as much as I had been making in Haney. Griffith, being an auditor, knew what I was making in Haney and was dissatisfied with our profits in Mission. The Mission business was younger and Griffith should have seen that it was growing. However, we decided to break up and in 1926 I sold my interest to him, making a clear profit of $10,000.00 in actual cash, which went into the bank.

"This was very satisfactory to my wife for she regarded the profit as real. Our Cobalt and Prince Rupert experiences had made her distrustful of the paper profits of mining and real estate.

"Since my Prince Rupert experiences I have never speculated in real estate.

"When Griffith bought me out in Mission, he didn't find fortune shining upon him. He soon sold out in his turn and has returned to auditing.

"In 1929, I gave up Ford. Then I got the agency for Willys-

Overland but in six months changed to Chrysler and finally in 1930 came to terms with General Motors, with whom I have stuck now for 23 years.

"When I got the General Motors agency in 1930, I returned to Mission, operating through a sub-agency which I gave to Lew Hudson. He had a garage which he rented from the Imperial Oil Company. When he became my sub-agent I paid half the rent and gave him a good commission.

"When World War II broke out, Lew joined the army. I made a deal on the same terms with Fred Newton. This continued until the end of the war.

"In 1946 I decided to build a modern establishment in Mission. I started to build early in 1947. On January 10, 1948, I opened for business under the name of Mussallem Motors (Mission). I did a good business but now I was beginning to feel the weight of years. I had two large establishments in Haney, and seemed to be the perennial reeve of Maple Ridge. In July, 1952, I sold the stock and the Mission business to Woods Motors, who have the business still (1954). I retained the building, which is rented to Woods for $300.00 monthly, which is a reasonable but not an excessive return upon the investment.

"In 1930, the Lougheed Highway was being pushed forward as a provincial highway eastward to Mission and Agassiz, and that, of course, was a promise of new population, new business for Maple Ridge and the whole northern side of the valley. I bought the corner of Lougheed and Eighth, which has turned out to be a key position in Haney. But I did not build there for five years. In the meantime the town of Haney was growing. Maple Ridge was filling up with a new population, as I had expected. The completion of the highway led to a growing traffic through the town, and in 1935 I judged the time ripe for building. Accordingly I put up the first part of the structure now housing Modern Motors.

"In 1930 I had given up Chrysler and took up with General Motors.

"In the new building I revived the name Modern Motors and under that name conducted a sales agency for General Motors, and also a gas station.

"The repair business was still carried on by Haney Garage in the old position on Eighth Avenue opposite the Canadian Legion building of today. There it continued throughout World War II. In 1947 there was again an opportunity to expand and I built the present building on Lougheed and Seventh, where the Haney Garage gives employment to 30 persons."

No more modern garage is to be found in the Fraser Valley. As Maple Ridge is still growing rapidly and the traffic on the highway daily becomes denser, both establishments are hives of industry. The business keeps the manager, George Mussallem, and a staff of 30 on the constant jump.

The other side of the business is the sale of motor vehicles – automobiles and trucks. This business, as well as the sale of motor fuels, is conducted by Modern Motors, at the strategic corner of Eighth Avenue and Lougheed, in a two-storied building, the main floor of which is given over to the display of the latest models of the giant General Motors Corporation. The sale of cars has always been a profitable thing for Solomon ever since he dazzled the natives with his first carload in the old days in the converted barn on Haney Street.

"In that old garage," he muses, "I handled the Ford car only. Then the Star car came on the market. It had certain attractions from the sales point of view and I wanted to deal in it. Ford wouldn't allow me to exercise the Ford agency and to sell the Star at the same time. I was unwilling to be thwarted, and organized Modern Motors Limited in order to sell the Star. I opened a garage and repair shop at Dewdney Trunk and Laity Road (now Third Avenue). This was in 1925.

"Two years after this, Ford learned that I was the owner of Modern Motors. Ford objected to my handling the Star. I was obliged to give up Star in order to hold the Ford agency.

"I operated at Dewdney Trunk and Third Avenue for about a year and then moved to the corner of Lougheed and Third. Being now obliged to get rid of the Star to retain the Ford connection, I sold the building and land at Lougheed and Third to James Nixon, who thereafter operated his own garage and repair shop there. This sale was affected in 1928.

"When I sold out to Nixon I retained for future use the name Modern Motors, Ltd. which had been duly incorporated."

(*Finis Loquendi*)

HANEY GARAGE AND MODERN MOTORS

The Haney Garage and Modern Motors are the two establishments which constitute the Mussallem business in Haney. Their growth parallels the growth of the community. The story of their development gives therefore a picture of an expanding Fraser Valley Community in the period following World War I up to the mid-century.

The two companies are separately incorporated, originated in different circumstances, and each has its own history.

Each business is housed in substantial buildings of steel, brick and concrete, and have been constructed on key positions in the little town. Their site-value will increase with the growing population of the valley.

Haney Garage was the first establishment upon which the Mussallem fortunes have been built. The business began, as narrated before, in December, 1919, in the converted Storey barn on Haney Street. It was moved to the top of the hill on Eighth Avenue when the garage established there by Bill Knox was acquired by Solomon in 1922 and the land and building bought from the Haney estate. Then followed years of hard slugging, of working, saving, and prudent investment.

In 1947 the business had outgrown the capacity of the premises to handle it and the present large Haney Garage at the corner of Lougheed Highway and Seventh Avenue was built. War II was over, and, in spite of the pessimists, no depression was in sight. All the signs pointed to progress. The new garage was built in time to profit from the post-war prosperity, which has continued up to the time of writing these chronicles. Even the invasion of Haney by competitors has not diminished the volume of Mussallem business.

The Haney Garage is given over to customers' repair work and the sale of gasoline, oil, and motor car accessories.

CHAPTER XIV

ENTRY INTO MUNICIPAL POLITICS

(Solomon Mussallem loquitur)

MY ENTRY into local municipal politics was not the result of design. It was unplanned, and due to an impulsiveness which often has driven me to sudden decisions. I had no idea then that I was entering upon a career which was to fill my life for the fourth part of a century. In 1928 a trifling matter of local friction tossed me into what has been called the maelstrom of politics.

"In front of the old garage on Eighth Avenue I had constructed a filling station, or gas pump, as an adjunct to my garage business. The pump was at a distance from the building line sufficient to let a car draw up beside it to have the gas tank filled. Actually the pump did trespass upon the street, but not to an extent that inconvenienced anyone or interfered with traffic. You would have to take a yardstick to discover that the pump was in the public domain. This invasion of the King's Highway affected one of our citizens whom I shall call John, with a sense of grievance. He brooded about it.

"It happened at this time that the Presbyterian Church was having an Old Timers' Banquet in the Agricultural Hall. There were between 200 and 300 men and women present, John and I among them, seated near to each other. John's resentment over my pump kept smouldering, and must have spoiled the evening for him. He began to upbraid me for my iniquity in having the pump in a position which was an annoyance to him. I replied hotly and declared that the pump would remain where I had placed it. He bet forty dollars that he would have the pump removed within thirty days. I took up the bet. The next morning we put the money in escrow in the bank, and then awaited the outcome.

"A friend of John, whose name I shall not mention, as he is

still alive, a quarrelsome, contentious person, injected himself into the quarrel. I replied warmly, and, I am afraid, provocatively. A well-meaning bystander broke in warningly: 'Be careful! He's a councillor! Leave him alone'.

"This warning and the idea behind it irritated me. I couldn't see that a councillor had rights which were denied to me. So I said aggressively, 'That doesn't count. Anybody can be a councillor if he wants to!' Goaded by this slight to his dignity, my mentor promptly challenged me to run against him in the elections which were soon to be held.

"This dispute occurred only a few days before nomination day. I put in my papers as a candidate but had little time to campaign and made only two speeches, one in Haney, the other in Yennadon. I was as surprised as my opponent when I beat him two to one. After this unpleasant blow to his pride he never once spoke to me in the next ten years. Now the scars have healed and we are friendly. He seems to approve of me. So began the municipal career which has come to an end (1953).

"But John was mistaken about having the pump removed. At the end of the thirty days it was still there.

"John felt so strongly about the matter that he went to Victoria about it, or said that he had done so, claiming to be an influential Liberal. The Department of Public Works doesn't seem to have been perturbed by this portentous information, for it took no action."

MUNICIPAL PROBLEMS FACED BY SOLOMON

Solomon's election to the Maple Ridge council in 1928 was followed by re-election in 1929. The people evidently approved of him, and he found the work to his satisfaction. A life of public activity seemed as necessary as the active management of his own business.

He gained a popular following which gave him steady support for a quarter of a century. While the population of the district kept growing and changing, the newcomers cheerfully accepted his perennial rule.

In January 1930 he was elected reeve. The year 1953 was his

twenty-second year as holder of the office, a prolonged tenure unequalled in British Columbia history.

Only one interruption broke this long succession of electoral victories: in December 1943, in the middle of World War II, a majority of the voters thought that they wanted a change. Mr. H. S. Cunningham, with the prestige of having been mayor of the city of Port Moody, and his own popularity, defeated Solomon, who was on the sidelines for the next two years. The people, however, missed their veteran head, and clamoured for his return. They elected him again three to one in December, 1945 when Reeve Cunningham's two-year turn of office was up.

At the time of the writing of this chapter in the lush spring of 1953 Solomon is still reeve*. The job is his as long as he wants it.

Naturally there has been plenty of municipal warfare during these decades; mostly questions of roads, bridges, municipal improvements, taxes – the universal subjects of municipal conflict, and of course the inevitable battles arising from rival ambition. It is unnecessary to go over the details of these forgotten battles. They are recorded in a large bound volume of cuttings from the local press, which will be a fine source of material for some future local historian. There are, however, features of the long Mussallem régime worthy of note, and incidents which should not pass into oblivion.

When Solomon retires, as he inevitably will, he will leave in the hands of his successor, a neat, tidy rural municipality, well-organized in respect to its government and services, and in good financial condition.

Thrift and safety have been his watch-words, both in personal and municipal matters.

In his younger days he had made two fortunes in times of boom – one in the Cobalt craze, the other in Prince Rupert. He had seen these fortunes melt like blocks of ice in the sun.

In the motor car business he took no undue speculative risks. He kept continuously moving forward. But he always kept his foot on solid ground. All his gains were real gains.

* *Solomon relinquished office at the end of* 1953.

In Prince Rupert he had seen a city go on the rocks from over expansion and financial rashness.

When the great depression of the 1930's struck British Columbia, he witnessed the plight and bankruptcies of other municipalities which had accumulated debts beyond their ability to carry.

In Maple Ridge Solomon pursued a policy of caution – practically a policy of pay-as-you-go. In consequence of this policy, the taxes were kept relatively low, and the municipality emerged from the depression, and the war, solvent, and in good thrift.

Yet he supported all measures essential to the well-being of Maple Ridge. He backed the money by-laws for school expansion, with some guile succeeding in extracting from the government more than the usual amount of provincial aid.

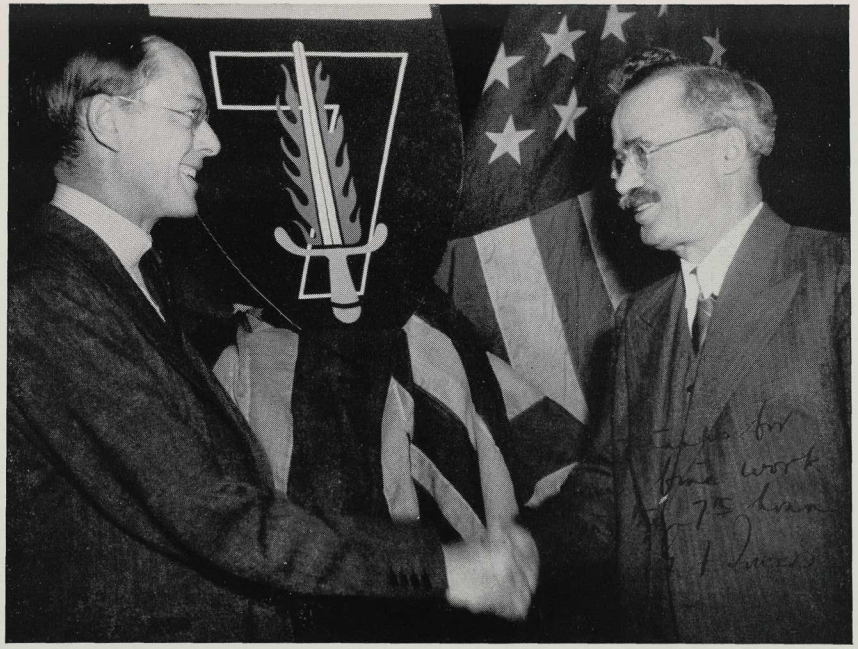
He brought the municipality into the orbit of the Greater Vancouver Water Board. Though this meant the borrowing of money, the project was, and is, self-liquidating, and therefore consistent with his policy of municipal thrift.

In the closing years of his era, the provincial government began to aid the municipalities by distributing amongst them one-third of the provincial sales tax. This largess he, with the support of his council, cannily spent upon permanent improvements, such as the hard-surfacing of municipal roads.

The great Fraser River flood of 1948 did extensive damage along the main Lougheed Highway, the repair of which was a responsibility of the provincial government. This made necessary the use of the alternative Dewdney highway. Solomon convinced the provincial government that it was the government's duty to put the Dewdney Trunk road into condition for use as a main highway, alternative to the Lougheed highway in that time of emergency.

This gave the Maple Ridge municipality some miles of new hard-surfaced road and a new long bridge.

Another achievement was the building of a new municipal hall. For many years the municipality had been getting along with inadequate ramshackle municipal headquarters built for a small pioneer population. The municipality was now growing rapidly, Haney in particular. But there were other centres of population



Reeve Mussallem, as chairman for Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows in the National War Loans campaigns, receiving the congratulations of Graham Towers, chairman of the National Committee, upon the completion of the 1944 campaign.

in Maple Ridge which viewed the expansion of Haney with something less than enthusiasm. They were not happy to be outstripped by the rival community and were unwilling further to increase its importance by building an imposing edifice there. So upon two successive occasions the outlying sections of the municipality voted down a money by-law to build a new municipal hall in Haney, the logical centre for it. But Solomon was not to be downed. With the consent of the council he took his opponents by surprise, adopting a course which was legally open to him and the council. They built the hall out of the accrued government grant from the sales tax. This action brought cries of anguish from frustrated opponents, but it received the support of the electorate, for once more he and his policy were endorsed at the polls.

World War II brought its share of troubles to Maple Ridge. It is a period to which the Reeve can look back with satisfaction. He guided the affairs of the municipality with the same cautious foresight that he employed in his own business.

His financial policy was to maintain essential services but to keep the ship of state from floundering on financial rocks – the same policy which he had followed during the depression preceding the war. Thus in both of these trying periods he kept the municipality out of new debt and out of the bankruptcy into which other municipalities fell.

The war created the problem of Japanese dispersion. Throughout the previous decades the Japanese population of the Fraser Valley had grown steadily. Almost half of the children of the Maple Ridge schools were Japanese. After the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor the Fraser Valley Japanese were considered a military danger: in the Philippines, it was noted, the Japanese settlers had joined the invaders in active military operations. There was fear in the valley over the possibility of Japanese sabotage. The white population was much perturbed.

It was decided by the Federal government to disperse the entire Japanese coastal population to other parts of Canada, and this was done.

Solomon's policy during this period was to keep the citizenry calm. There was real danger of public hysteria which might

have led to violence. The hot-heads who wanted the dangerous excitement of mass meetings were kept in check. The Japanese were removed to areas beyond the mountains, where they have prospered happily. There were no riots and there was no blood shed.

Solomon threw himself with energy into the various drives for the raising of money for war purposes, especially for the sale of war bonds and the raising of funds for the Red Cross.

He was chairman of the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows committee which had charge of the sale of bonds for the successive War Loans. He made stirring appeals in the defense of freedom. His early memories of Turkish oppression gave point to his pleas for the preservation of our freedom.

He was one of the founders of the Maple Ridge Red Cross and for three years was its president.

In the Haney Gazette of May 6, 1942, there is a rousing appeal from him on behalf of the drive of the Canadian Red Cross for the raising of $9,000,000 for Red Cross funds.

The difficulties of this time appear in the note at the bottom of the appeal: "Owing to the shortage of rubber and gasoline, don't ask the collector to call twice."

All of these drives were successful. Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows always exceeded their quota, Solomon himself stretching his resources to make them succeed.

PROVINCIAL HONOURS

The city and municipal councils of British Columbia are united into an organization known as the Union of B. C. Municipalities. This is a weighty body in British Columbia life. It deliberates upon matters affecting all the cities, district and village municipalities of the province. It keeps a watchful eye upon provincial legislation which might affect the municipalities. It takes the initiative in bringing to the attention of government desired amendments to existing legislation. Its presidency is considered a positon of high honour. It is usually held by a mayor or reeve of the larger cities or municipalities. The holding of the office

Union of British Columbia Municipalities

This will certify that

S. Mussallem

has been elected a

Life Member

of the

UNION *of* BRITISH COLUMBIA MUNICIPALITIES

at the Convention of the Union

held in Nelson *on*

19–21 Sept. 1950.

This Life Membership was granted as an appreciation of his services as

President

P. E. George
PRESIDENT

P. A. Howell
SECRETARY

is also a mark of the high personal prestige of the incumbent. In 1949-50 this office fell to the reeve of Maple Ridge.

The appreciation of his provincial colleagues was marked by their conferring upon him at Nelson during their convention in September of 1950 a life-membership in the union.

THE ROYAL VISIT OF 1939

The visit to Canada of his late Majesty King George VI and of his consort Queen Elizabeth profoundly stirred the Canadian people. It also excited officialdom at all levels of government. Mayors, reeves, aldermen and municipal councillors were anxious to know if their municipalities would be honoured by some moments of the royal presence so that they too might bask in the royal sunshine. Naturally a contest for recognition arose all over Canada among cities and rural municipalities alike. The International Committee for the Royal Visit was forced, from consideration of time, to eliminate most of the places where the royal pair were asked to stop and to restrict the number of presentations which would be permitted.

In British Columbia the King and Queen were scheduled to visit Chilliwack, the largest city in the Fraser Valley, on May 22. The Chilliwack mayor and city officials would be presented when the royal train stopped a few minutes in that attractive town, but there was no provision for the ten reeves and mayors of the Fraser Valley municipalities.

As president of the Fraser Valley Reeves' Association, Reeve Mussallem went up into the air. He bombarded the reluctant Ottawa committee with eloquent telegrams, which finally broke down official resistance. It was agreed that the reeves and their wives should be presented at Chilliwack.

I make the guess that their Majesties were intrigued by the word "reeves". It is not a word used in modern English municipal government. It is an old historic word used in England in Anglo-Saxon times in connection with local government before the Norman Conquest. The word is perpetuated in disguised form in the office of sheriff, which literally means "reeve of the shire." When municipal government was established in

Upper Canada (Ontario) a century ago, it was necessary to find a name for the head of the rural councils. Someone who knew early English history (I think Sir John A. Macdonald) suggested "reeve" for the head of a township council and "warden" for the head of a county council and these titles were adopted. But "reeve" is intriguingly suggestive of ancient times, and I think the King wanted to see what ten reeves and their ladies would be like. There were none in England.

The rest of the story is best told in the reeve's own words, and the press account of the event:

"The picture as their Majesties stepped down from the Royal Train is one that will never be forgotten by those privileged to be there; the King, sun-tanned and bearing the indelible stamp of the men of the sea, friendly and keenly interested in everything; the Queen, wonderfully beautiful, and with a smile that made whoever saw it, willing or not, her bond servant thereafter. Regal in bearing, yes, but yet so very human and friendly that they might have been relatives of the people they were meeting instead of the Emperor-King and his Queen.

"But surely the lumps that came into throats, and the tears that came unbidden into many eyes, as the train bore them away, speak more eloquently than words can ever do.

"The delighted reeves and their wives and the cheering thousands found that the 18-minute stop of Their Majesties seemed like only two minutes. At one time the King and Queen descended from the platform to mingle with the crowd, they were separated by fifty feet or more, each surrounded by happy throngs.

"It was a privilege, and a great one, for the Reeves of the Fraser Valley, with their wives, to be on the platform and to be presented to Their Majesties. The function was unique in that we were the only municipal reeves to be presented up to that time, excepting the official representatives at the various stopping places.

"On the return of Their Majesties to the platform before boarding the Royal Train, Mayor Barber called the King's attention to our presence. We had practised carefully the correct bow and the proper curtsy, but the smiling friendliness of

Their Majesties melted away all formality. I turned to present Reeve Alex. Paterson, and just said: 'This is our premier veteran reeve.' The King laughed at the introduction and greeted him: 'How do you do Mr. Premier Veteran Reeve.' This broke the ice, and as I presented the others we seemed like a jolly party together.

"His Majesty was graciously pleased to ask me about the Fraser Valley, and I was able to tell him something of its agricultural and industrial activities, mentioning the plant of the Hammond Cedar Company, the second biggest of its kind in the world, the Haney Brickworks, Maple Ridge and P. Bain Lumber Co., the acreage of strawberries and small fruits and other industires, when speaking of Maple Ridge.

"While His Majesty chatted, the Queen approached and asked to see my lady. Quite informally they talked together. To quote the Vancouver Daily Province:

"Before boarding their train His Majesty had a few minutes chat with Reeve Mussallem and appeared to be keenly interested in Maple Ridge District. While the conversation was taking place the Queen interrupted and asked to have Mrs. Mussallem again presented to her. 'Have you come very far?' asked the Queen. 'Only about fifty-five miles,' replied Mrs. Mussallem. 'Fifty-five miles – that's a long way to come to see us; it was very lovely of you,' the Queen replied."

CHAPTER XV

BACK TO THE EAST

THE GREAT Depression began in the stock-market crash in New York in 1929. Its disastrous effects spread over the world. There was much unemployment all over Canada, and British Columbia had its share of distress. Many businesses collapsed. Bankruptcy swept over the country.

The Mussallem interests, however, held their own. By the middle thirties the worst was over. Business picked up; profits began to accumulate; Solomon began to think of holidaying.

For years he and his wife had dreamed of revisiting old haunts, old friends, and of seeing the great cities of which they had read.

They planned to set out in May of 1937, as May and June would be the best months of the year for such a journey. They spent the months preceding May in careful planning, listing places and persons they wished to see.

On May 15, they set out with joyous anticipation as young people upon a holiday adventure. Friends gathered at the Haney station to see them off.

Their first stop was in Calgary. In his youth he had been there, while the wooing of his bride was still in an indecisive state. Now Calgary had grown, but the city had been hard hit by the depression, and presented an untidy appearance, from which, of course, it has since recovered.

Travelling through Saskatchewan they saw one of the dust storms which had such a disastrous effect upon the prairie provinces. By contrast British Columbia seemed in a more prosperous state than either Alberta or Saskatchewan. He felt it was lucky that he had stuck with British Columbia.

They arrived in Winnipeg on May 18, straightway going to the hotel.

From this time onward the story is a tale of visits, mostly surprise visits, to the far-flung Mussallem family connection.

I despair of untangling the complicated family relationships, for a swarm of the Mussallems, Besytts and Haddads had poured into Canada and the United States, before and subsequently to Solomon's escape from the Bekaa Valley.

After registering at the hotel, they walked over to Disraeli Street, where Solomon had been in business with George Haddad. George and his wife were still living at 131 Disraeli and gave joyous welcome.

From there they went to the home of the Mutters and saw their cousin Helwie and her husband, who were busy with the homely task of planting tomato plants. More joy and tales of the progress of the offspring.

Tearing themselves away they went to cousin Wardie Ferzely.

The next afternoon they set out to find Asaph Mussallem, whom Solomon had last seen as a baby 40 years before. More rapturous greeting and an invitation to stay for a month.

That evening the clan gathered at the Mutters, where cousin Helwie had prepared a royal repast. The table was stacked with delicacies – enough to supply a gathering ten times the size. It reminded some of them of the Christmas and Easter feasting in Lebanon.

The next day, still more kindred had to be seen – cousin Habaka (Mrs. David Ferzely) and her husband David, as well as the charming family of Asaph Mussallem.

I must omit all the motor trips, the gatherings of friends, the feasting, and the final sadness of farewell. There had been three days of concentrated emotion.

At Winnipeg they proceeded eastward by the Canadian National, through Nakina and Hearst, and reached Cochrane at 10:45 on the morning of May 22.

They were now in that area of northern Ontario where Solomon had competed with the Hudson's Bay Company for furs, and later had made a bid for fortune in the mining town of Cobalt.

That sojourn in Cochrane was a notable one, and stirred the heart.

Upon this occasion, Mrs. Mussallem's kindred predominated. John, Neda, and Georgina David met them at the station.

They were whisked to the home of Sadie, Mrs. Mussallem's sister. There they found Sadie and two other sisters.

Thus there were four Besytt sisters meeting for the first time after 32 years.

"I treasure the memory of that scene," says Solomon in his diary. "It was a very bright moment in my life. I was especially pleased to see my dear wife so thoroughly happy. It was a great re-union of the sisters, who spent all afternoon talking about the past. In the evening the house was filled with relatives and friends."

The next day was spent in sight-seeing and feasting.

Friends and relatives were numerous in the neighboring town of Timmins and on this day, May 23, twenty-five were gathered for dinner at Sadie's home – among them four families of Davids.

Their schedule had called for three days at Cochrane. When this was announced the visitors were shouted down and Sadie decreed that they could not leave until Sunday, May 30.

The visiting, sightseeing and dining kept up until that date.

One day "the reliable Mike" David (to quote the diary) took them to Lake Abitibi where Solomon had traded for furs under the guiding of Angus Wabie and his son.

At last the week came to an end and once more the sadness of farewell.

Since then the four sisters have never all met all at one time.

On Sunday, May 30, Mike David, his wife Mary and their lovely daughters, drove them by motor car from Cochrane to Timmins.

As one reads the itinerary of the safari of Solomon and Mrs. Mussallem one gets the impression of a royal progress. Ontario seems populated with hospitable Syrians well entrenched in prosperous business. So the journey of state proceeds from Cochrane to Timmins (25,000 people where there were only a few trappers when Solomon first knew it) and so on to Toronto.

The visit to Toronto was a joyous affair, for there they met Kalil again.

In December of 1897, Solomon first met Kalil Besytt, in Carelton Place, when Solomon, a stripling of 17, along with Ferhat and his son, appeared at Kalil's headquarters in Carleton

Place and began his career of commerce with a peddler's pack furnished by Kalil.

Then had followed the romantic wooing of Hanny Besytt, their founding of a home in Pembroke, their migration to the West and the Mussallem saga in British Columbia.

All the while Kalil, too, had prospered. He had brought out his mother, sisters, and younger brother from Lebanon. He gave up his business of wholesaling to newly arrived Syrians and had transferred himself to Toronto. With the capital he had accumulated in Carleton Place he had entered the clothing manufacturing business, with his son John and Frank Aboud, afterwards his son-in-law, and they became wealthy.

In Cochrane the four Besytt sisters had had a heart-warming reunion.

Now on June 3, the two brothers, Kalil and Mike, their sister Hanny, with brother-in-law Solomon had a historic reunion.

And adding to the joyousness of the gathering were the many sons and daughters, and the prideful story of achievements of the young folk.

For a week the lights glittered in the two Besytt mansions, the dinner tables were crowded with feasting guests.

Toronto, too, like northern Ontario seemed populated with Mussallems, Besytts, Abouds, Davids, Azizes, and other Syrians, mostly from the Bekaa Valley, all prosperous and all apparently bound together in intricate family relationships like Scottish Highlanders.

A short visit to Carleton Place was followed by two days spent in Ottawa, both places connected with his romantic wooing of Hanny Besytt 30 years before and their marriage. Once more the revival of old memories, and fraternizing with Lebanese friends.

Always a student of municipal affairs, Solomon was glad to be taken to view the filtering plant for the Ottawa city water. He was impressed with the purity and excellence of that city's water supply. Ten years later when he brought Maple Ridge into the Greater Vancouver Water Board he could boast that his fellow citizens in Maple Ridge had better water than that with which the Ottawans were blest.

In Montreal they were entertained by Mrs. Mussallem's brother Eli who showed them everything worth seeing in Montreal and vicinity.

Once more they entrained: Montreal, Atlantic City, New York, Buffalo, Niagara Falls.

At Niagara Falls Sol phoned to Toronto, to his brother-in-law Kalil, who insisted that the two travellers should return to Toronto before proceeding west by way of Chicago. His sister Hanny, he said, was his favorite sister (I have noticed that in these families all brothers and sisters are the favorite brothers and sisters) and they had been away for 32 years. His sister, he insisted, should stay at least 32 days. So Kalil's son John was despatched by car to bring them to Toronto, or more precisely to the lakeside resort of Port Credit, where Kalil's partner, Mr. Aboud, had a mansion. Once again there was a round of Syrian hospitality.

John was Mrs. Mussallem's nephew. They had already met, for the first time, in Toronto. Accompanying John to Niagara Falls were his wife, Laura, and his sister Edna, niece of Mrs. Mussallem.

Kalil died in 1951.

Life, however, does not consist of family reunions, feasting, sightseeing, and highly charged emotion. It was necessary to return to Haney, to business, and the municipal affairs of Maple Ridge. There was the last final farewell at Union Station, Toronto, on June 24, and then via Windsor and Detroit they reached Chicago on the evening of the same day.

For a Mussallem, it is much easier to get into Chicago than it is to get out of it, crowded as it seems to be with Syrian kinsmen – Mussallems, Haddads and others from the old familiar Bekaa Valley. Solomon and Mrs. Mussallem reached Chicago in the evening of June 24 but were not able to leave their hospitable friends and relatives until the morning of the 28th. This time, however, includes a side journey to neighbouring Rockford, to visit the home of first cousin Roger, brother of "Jimmie" Haddad, and the other brother Nimer, and their families. They also met Helen Haddad, aunt of the three Haddad brothers, whom Solomon had not seen since his early days in distant Zahleh, 43

years before. The venerable aunt had children and grandchildren in and about Chicago, to the number of 19, all prospering in the typical Syrian fashion when once a Syrian is transported to this country.

In Chicago they were entertained by Abdelour Mussallem and his family and that brings us back to the time of Christian and Moslem tension in the Bekaa Valley. Abdelour was one of the sons of that Moses Mussallem who was one of the brothers of Solomon's grandfather, killed by Moslems following a tournament or *sbac kheel,* a hundred miles from his home at Kfir. Moses was one of the Mussallems of Keraan who had ridden to Kfir the night after the slaying, rescued the widow and orphans and carried them to Keraan for upbringing. Abdelour was some years older than Solomon and had been in America some years earlier. He had escaped from the dominion of the Turk in the same way as Solomon four years later.

Solomon and Mrs. Mussallem took their departure from Chicago and their Chicago friends at 8 a.m. June 28, a beautiful time of the year when nature is at her best. Speeding by the streamlined Northern Pacific through the corn and wheatlands, the rolling cattle country, the "bad lands" of Montana, the sage bush, and the green forested slopes of the coastal mountains to Seattle, they reached, on Canada's natal day, July 1, the historic Royal City of New Westminster, being met there en masse by the Mussallem family and whisked quickly by motor car to the home in Haney, tired but happy after seven heart-warming weeks of travel and reunion.

Back in Haney they found that the indefatigable George, besides attending with his customary energy to the Mussallem interests, had almost completed the building of his own house, which had just been started when the journey eastward had begun. As one of Solomon's long cherished aims had been to find a good place in which to rear a family, and he had chosen Haney in the belief that it was such a place, it was a source of deep satisfaction to see his eldest son following his steps and establishing his own home there also.

The historic trip of 1937 to the scenes of his early days in Canada had revived in Solomon a taste for travel which has led to frequent journeys in later years. While in his diary he always vaunts the beauties of Haney and the Fraser Valley, he has never overcome the love of seeing the haunts of man elsewhere. So the odyssey of 1937 has been followed by others, all interesting but somewhat lacking in the emotional keenness of the first return after thirty-two years of separation from his kindred. For the historic record these later journeys will be touched on briefly.

In 1939 and in 1941 he made two trips into Montana, Idaho, and Washington.

The 1939 trip took him first by train to Regina at the Canadian point of departure for the United States, and then by motor car through Montana, Idaho, Washington to Seattle, and back to Haney on October 3. World War II had officially begun one month before that date.

The next trip was notable in that it was his first combination of air and motor travel, and that, as in 1937, he was accompanied by his wife. They flew from Vancouver to Regina, via Lethbridge, and experienced all the sensations one has in his first travel by air and in the sight from aloft of the mountain scenery of the Canadian Cordilleras.

As Solomon had done in 1939, so in 1941 they motored from Regina through the western states, but by a different route, this time visiting Old Faithful in Yellowstone Park. Then by way of the Coeur d'Alene, Wenatchee and Stevens Pass, they reached Seattle on August 13, where they saw daughter Helen, then finishing a graduate course in nursing administration in the University of Washington. After one day in Seattle they started northward, making a brief stop to visit still other relatives in Everett and then home to Haney, happy to see the greenery of the Fraser Valley after the endless sage brush and barren lands eastward of the coastal mountains.

After this 1941 trip, World War II entered its long critical phase, and the day of pleasure jaunts was over. Strict attention to private and municipal business became essential and any time that could be found for other activity had to be spent upon the

national war effort. Not until 1949 did the opportunity come to renew travel upon the grand scale. It was 12 years since the eastern relatives and friends had been visited. They were all growing older, all the originals of the Canadian Syrians; a new brood of them was maturing. It was time for the clan to gather again.

This time they went, the pair of them, luxuriously by air, taking off from the Sea Island Airport in a T.C.A. "North Star" in the afternoon glow of October 9. Edmonton - Saskatoon - Winnipeg. These places he had first seen in 1904 during his first survey of the west in his bachelor days. At Winnipeg he tried to reach his cousin George Mussallem by phone from the airport, but that vigorous gentleman was away on a hunting trip.

October 10, 11 and 12 were spent in Montreal, registered at the Mount Royal Hotel, where Solomon attended the Convention of the Federation of Automobile Dealers. This convention was the ostensible reason for their 6,000-mile round trip. At least it was as good a reason as any for being away from his own business. The real reason was to see his old friends and kinsmen, some of them now settled in Montreal, and like himself persons of substance and position. They all had thrived since Solomon had first seen that country 45 years before.

Ottawa, city of memory, occupied the 14th and 15th day of October.

Here George Cruickshank, M.P. for the Fraser Valley, took charge of them, entertained them at luncheon in the parliamentary restaurant, toured with them the parliament buildings, had them sign their names in the visitors' book in the Peace Tower, and got them seats in the gallery, where they were hailed from the floor by the British Columbia members who easily recognized them from their seats in the House – Arthur Laing, George Murray, O. L. Jones.

The balance of the two-day stay in Ottawa was passed in sightseeing and visits with Mrs. Mussallem's two sisters, reviving memories of their youth. In the interim George Cruickshank, a good politician himself, saw to it that Solomon met many of his parliamentary colleagues.

Sunday, October 16, brought them by Greyhound bus to

Oshawa, Canadian headquarters of General Motors. The next day they visited the plant and were entertained at luncheon by the administrative staff. They reached the Royal York Hotel in Toronto that evening, where they had an enjoyable time with old British Columbia friends whom they ran into there.

Not until the next day, Monday, October 17, did they notify their Toronto relatives of their arrival. Once again, as in 1937, there was a rapid rallying of the family connection and contention for the entertaining of them – Kalil and his wife Saleemie, their four daughters, Edna, Jean, Josephine and Adele, and their husbands, nephew John and his wife Laura, Henry another nephew, and friend, George Aziz. I mention these names as these persons will be reading this book and I wish to bring memories back to them. I almost feel that I know them. The beloved Kalil ("I loved him like a brother") has gone – a great Canadian, who helped many of his countrymen to get their feet on the first rung of the Canadian ladder.

Next day, October 20, the T.C.A. carried them to New York, which Solomon had not seen since that day, half a century before, when he had landed there, an immigrant boy, on his way to Carleton Place. This time they stayed in style in the Hotel Victoria in Radio City. Their first call was on daughter Helen, specialist in nursing education, doing advanced study at Columbia University and residing at the sumptuous International House, home for Columbia students coming from foreign lands. They spent three days with Helen, who showed them the sights of New York. You can imagine the joy it gave her to do this for her father and mother.

From New York they flew to Chicago on October 23, where "Jimmie" Haddad took charge. I tell the story of Jimmie elsewhere. Jimmie had prepared a two-day programme of entertainment. Among their other hosts was Jimmie's younger brother Nimer Haddad, whose beautifully furnished home is one of the show places of River Forest, Illinois. Here they met a growing brood of young Haddads, and other members of the Syrian colony. Later they were taken to the Syrian Lebanon Club, where they met many compatriots, relatives of those they

had known in by-gone days in the Bekaa Valley. It was a memorable emotional experience.

Autumn was nearing its end. The yellowing leaves were falling in the middle west. Soon the chill Arctic air would grip the central plains. The moist gentle breezes of the balmy Pacific began to call the travellers back. On October 25 they boarded the North West "Mainliner" and made the trip to Seattle in six and one half hours. In 1941 when the pair of them arrived in Seattle after their motor trip through the northwest States, Helen, studying at the University of Seattle, was there to meet them. From there they had motored through Everett to Haney. Upon this occasion they flew direct to the Sea Island (Vancouver) Airport, where Lily, with her father's Buick was on hand to meet them. She hustled them home to Haney in short order.

After 19 days of absence, and 26 hours of flying time, they were back where they had started. They had travelled from the Pacific to the Atlantic and home, more than 6,000 miles. They had seen many friends and relatives and had had many happy meetings, but nothing so joyful as the return to the domestic hearth and the green valley, their home for 30 years.

THE WEST INDIES (1953)

Solomon's insatiable love of travel was crowned by his most recent journey to the West Indies, accompanied by his wife who had long been his faithful fellow-traveller through the journey of life. He is now, in the evening of his days, free from the direct management of his affairs, which can be left to the competent administration of the energetic George. This unaccustomed leisure begets a craving for movement and at any moment he may decide to take flight to distant lands. The care of the municipal affairs of Maple Ridge and the Fraser Valley Regional Library he left temporarily to others while he took voyage through the skies. Most of February and March was spent in the Bahamas and Cuba in the winter of 1953.

Previous expeditions to the East had meant great excitement and activity among relatives and friends. In the trip to the West

Indies, Solomon and his life's partner were on their own. It was their first visit to the Tropics.

Leaving Vancouver by air on the evening of February 23, they were in Miami in the afternoon of February 24, by way of Seattle and Chicago.

His diary faithfully records the sights and happenings which fell under his observant eye. Evidently a business man and public administrator sees things which would escape other less practical persons. In Miami, being a member of the Haney Rotary Club, it was natural that he should lunch with Miami Rotary at the Miami Golf Club. That was no unusual happening. But a shop which sold nothing but neckties, of all colours, shapes and sizes, caught his commercial eye, as also the alligators on display in the Indian village.

In Miami he had his first experience of the "apartheid" policy of the Southern States – the separation of the blacks and the whites in public conveyances. His sense of democracy suffered a jarring.

All expenses of his trip are carefully recorded. Future historians may be interested to know that in 1953 in Miami a hotel room cost $12.00 a day; meals per person cost $1.15 for breakfast, $2.00 for lunch and $3.00 for dinner. They had even to pay a head tax of 70c per person when they left Miami on the one-hour flight which took them to Nassau in the Bahamas. Here once dwelt the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and the Canadian millionaire Sir Harry Oakes, of unhappy memory.

Nassau caters to a luxury trade in tourists. They took a three-roomed cottage in the Little Orchard Cottages, $100.00 a week, with maid service. There they spent three weeks, sightseeing, and absorbing the sunshine. A sightseeing taxi, however, cost a moderate $3.00 an hour.

As the person chiefly to be credited with bringing to Maple Ridge the clear mountain water of the Greater Vancouver Water Board he did not fail to observe the unique water supply of Nassau, furnished by artesian wells and pumped by about twenty windmills into large reservoirs and there chlorinated. He also saw a reservoir for holding rain water, roofed over with glass, which

concentrates the rays of the tropical sun, heating the water to such a degree that, piped into the house, it supplies the domestic needs of the occupants.

In the Bahamas he found a Lebanese family whose name, Khebaz, has been anglicized to Baker.

Baker landed in Nassau in 1894, where he became the father of 13 children. Repeating the success of the Canadian Lebanese, he prospered and he and his family have won both fortune and repute.

Baker, or Khebaz, has been a naturalized British subject for more than half a century. He is ardently British. He was much interested in the Canadian Syrians, in their progress and in their attitude to the country. Were they good British subjects, he wished to know, loyal to the Crown, to their government and to the British connection ? It made him happy to know that the Canadian Syrians were intensely loyal and that in the two World Wars and in the space between them and since the second, no taint of disloyalty, subversion or disaffection has ever appeared amongst the Canadian Syrians.

The silk farm in Nassau fascinated Mrs. Mussallem, but did not interest Solomon very much, as he had often fed the silkworm "in the old country", as he notes in his diary. The Mussallems of Keraan had raised the silkworm.

They left Nassau on March 22, once more, as in Miami, having to pay a head tax of $1.70 each to get out, an imposition made up for, in part, at the immigration office, where, as a gesture to departing tourists, glasses of rum were laid out for all to help themselves.

Life in Nassau he found luxurious for the small upper class (there is no middle class) and for tourists, but the state of the poor coloured folk was depressing.

He spent 10 days in Havana, $10.00 a night. Lunched once with Rotary. Visited the House of Representatives and saw all the usual sights. There was no revolution during his visit. He found beautiful scenery, splendid parks, magnificent public buildings, but also great differences in the condition of rich and poor.

Life in British Columbia by contrast was good for all.

This time it cost them a head tax of $1.90 each to get out of Cuba.

The return to Vancouver by air was pleasant but uneventful.

I have dwelt upon these travels with a good deal of particularity not because of any unusual features in them. Innumerable other persons have travelled widely, but because they reveal something of Solomon's personality which first expressed itself in the journey by foot with his sixteen companions from Keraan to Tyre – a craving to see new lands, far places, and the ways of men, and always also the pull backward to the Canadian home and family which he founded.

The visit to Cuba over, he was soon back to the Green Valley, and took over once again the direction of Maple Ridge.

Solomon Mussallem and Jimmie Haddad (Amin), when first they came to Canada.

CHAPTER XVI

MY FRIEND AMIN

(Solomon Mussallem loquitur)

I HAD BEEN two years in Canada when Amin entered my life. Amin was 13 years old when he came to Pembroke, a lively mischievous lad from my native Syria, what the Irish call "the broth of a boy". His father Mark was my mother's brother; so Amin was my cousin, for my mother was a Haddad.

Mark, my uncle, wrote me asking if I would take charge of Amin and break him into the ways of the country. I gladly agreed. Not only would the care of the boy be a service which I owed to kinship, but it would be comforting to have the companionship of a lively and likeable youth from my homeland.

Accordingly Amin was despatched to me in Pembroke, accompanied by power-of-attorney giving me full parental and disciplinary authority over him as though I were his father.

You may ask how power-of-attorney in English could be conveyed to me in Pembroke from a remote village in Lebanon at that period of incompetent Turkish rule and ill-organized government.

The power-of-attorney was written by a Syrian in Lebanon, a Dr. Ferzley, who had studied medicine in Beirut and afterwards in Chicago. Beirut even then was a city of no small importance, a Mediterranean port in touch with the western world. It had to be treated with some respect by the Turkish rulers, especially as its trade and wealth brought money to the Turkish treasury. There was a medical school in Beirut and there were other educational institutions established by the Christian churches of the western countries.

When Amin landed in Pembroke, it was my job to turn him into a young Canadian. I started in on his name. "Amin", I said to him, "that is a nice name in Keraan, but here it will be tough on you. From now on your name is 'Jimmie'."

So Jimmie it was, and Jimmie it is now, fifty years afterwards.

Jimmie went with me wherever I went, even to the north country, except when he was going to school in Pembroke.

It wasn't always easy to handle him, especially for one so young as I.

One night we were in a French village, on the Ontario side of the Ottawa river. We had a night's lodging at the house of a Mr. Stuart, who had some children the same size as Jimmie. I thought Jimmie was making too much noise, and I told him to be quiet. The more I cautioned him, the worse he got. Then I gave him a really good spanking, an operation which took more effort than it would have taken if his legs had not been flailing about in all directions while the treatment was being applied.

When I was through with this kindly but unappreciated service, Jimmie ran off a distance, then turned and said in fluent Arabic, "Darn you. I'll soon be a big man and I'll give you the darnest licking you ever got in your life!"

I knew then that he would be a success in life!

His anger soon cooled, and we got along beautifully thereafter.

When he was fourteen, he wanted to see the world on his own, and went west to Fernie, then a new booming coal-mining town. I lost track of him for about ten years. In the meantime I had come West and had established my garage in Vancouver at 28th and Main.

One day Jimmie walked into the garage. We looked at each other. I said, "Jimmie, I hope you haven't come to collect." "No," laughed he, "and looking at you I ought to wait 20 more years before I tackle that."

"And how have you been making out since you left Pembroke?" I enquired.

"Very nicely indeed! I have made $40,000.00 already."

Jimmie bought a shoe store in Vancouver on Granville Street, and prospered. He had a chance to go to Chicago, where he bought stock in an Orange Crush Company. He has a thriving business there and has about 114 trucks delivering his fruit juices, and that means money in any language.

Recently he has turned his business over to his son Leonard. The business now has branches in Detroit, South Bend, Fort

Wayne, Indianapolis, Davenport (Iowa), Lexington and Rockport.

In 1937, with my wife, I went to Chicago, primarily to look up Jimmie. We stayed at the historic Palmer House. Jimmie gave us a wonderful time. When I sent to settle the bill at the hotel, the clerk said, "Your bill has been paid."

"How can that be? I haven't paid it!"

"Jimmie Haddad has paid it. He is a friend of ours too."

Leaving Chicago that morning at 8 a.m., we found Jimmie at the station waiting for us. "Jimmie, why were you so crazy as to pay my bill?" I exclaimed.

"Oh, that is only interest for what you did for me long ago."

That was not the only interest that Jimmie has paid me.

In 1951, I made a trip south to California and Arizona. I sent Jimmie my itinerary. To my amazement, as I walked up to the Palm Hotel in Phoenix (swanky hotel, $34.00 a day) there was Jimmie, sitting in the lobby. He had driven to Phoenix from Chicago in his high-powered Cadillac to meet us.

"What's the smart idea now, Jimmie?" I cried.

"The idea is this: I want to drive you and Hanny all over California."

So he did, and paid the shot.

But this wasn't the end of his peregrinations with Jimmie Haddad.

When the year of 1954 dawned Solomon was no longer reeve of Maple Ridge. Son George, the active and efficient, saw to the management of the Mussallem business. There was nothing for Solomon to do, and idleness weighed upon him. So he and Jimmie decided to have one last fling together in southern climes.

Leaving the Vancouver airport one day near the end of February, Solomon and Mrs. Mussallem flew to Miami, where they met Jimmie, where, along with his many other enterprises, he has a motel. Here they stayed for four weeks and then flew on to Mexico City.

Here, for the first time, Solomon met the Mexican Mussallems, Aziz and Abdullah and their families.

Aziz Mussallem was the son of Nassif, the son of Moses Saloum Mussallem, who was one of the Mussallems of Keraan

who rode by night to rescue the Mussallem children when Solomon's grandfather was killed by the Turks. Aziz had been born in Keraan, a few years after Solomon left for Carleton Place. He had left Lebanon in 1923 and gone to Mexico, whither three uncles on his mother's side had preceded him. Aziz has had great success in Mexico in banking and manufacturing. There are numerous other Mussallems there, of whom one is Abdullah, likewise from Keraan.

In Mexico City, Solomon and Hanny and Jimmie, were royally entertained. It was a repetition of the feasting that characterized the re-unions in the East. But there was this difference: the Mexican Mussallems spoke Spanish, but not English. Conversation therefore had to be carried on in Arabic and Solomon found that, after more than 50 years in Canada, his Arabic came slowly. Hanny, however, had retained a better control of her Arabic. This linguistic difficulty did not affect the heartiness of the hospitality of their Spanish-speaking cousins, nor their guests' enjoyment of the scenery and the historic buildings which make Mexico City and its environs so fascinating. After three weeks and a half of this they flew back to Vancouver by United Airlines, and Jimmy Haddad flew to his motel in Miami.

This is the Royal Crescent house, the second Mussallem residence, in which they lived twenty-three years.
Standing (left to right): George, Peter, Helen, Lily, Mary, Nicholas. Seated: Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Mussallem.

CHAPTER XVII

THE MUSSALLEM OFFSPRING

TO THE PSYCHOLOGIST and sociologist the personality and the career of Solomon Mussallem are a fascinating study. Not less interesting are his sons and daughters, as the student of genetics sees them.

As I write this section I can picture the embarrassment of the members of the family when they see themselves regarded as subjects of a sociological study. But the opportunity to moralize is too good for a student in that field to miss it. If they are embarrassed I ask them to blame not me, but the learned Augustinian, Gregor Johann Mendel, the Austrian monk who with his round and wrinkled peas laid bare the secrets of heredity. The complex of characteristics which determine the intelligence, special gifts, and general effectiveness of a personality, are transmitted through the "genes" on Mendelian principles.

If you are bright it is because brightness was transmitted to you through the mysterious genes, and it is likely that your offspring will be bright also. But not necessarily so. There may in your family history be some dull ancestor whose dullness may have lain dormant or "recessive". It may crop out again. But if all of your grandparents were bright the probability is high that you will have bright offspring and still more likely if your partner in life also has bright ancestors. The way to be an intellectual prodigy is to select carefully eight good great-grandparents.

Now from the history of the Mussallems and Besytts in Lebanon, it is evident that they represent two able strains as the psychologist classifies people. Unfavorable or recessive traits carried by the genes must have been eliminated generations ago.

The evidence of this is in the six children of the Mussallems of Haney.

All six have been markedly successful academically and in the even more searching test of life.

Six superior offspring out of six is more than the mathematics of probability permit one to expect.

It means superior inheritance on both sides of the family tree.

The Canadian-born Mussallems have therefore much more to thank their parents for than their education and the start in life which they have given them. They have to thank them for their genes.

George, the eldest, born in Winnipeg on January 5, 1908, received his elementary and high school education in Maple Ridge. Solomon could not afford then to send him to University and so George worked for his father in the motor car business. Today he manages the Haney business. He has been thoroughly trained in General Motors schools in the mechanical and administrative sides of the business. George is one of the bulwarks of the community. He is the District Commissioner for the Boy Scouts Association. His children are Anne, David, and Robert.

Nicholas was born in Prince Rupert in 1910. From the Maple Ridge High School he went to the University of B. C. After graduating with the degree of Bachelor of Arts, he studied law with the legal firm of Lucas and Lucas and married the daughter of Edward Lucas. They have two boys, Frederick George and Peter. The name Frederick comes from the lad's uncle, the late Mr. Justice Lucas. Peter is an old Mussallem name. The priest who "beat up" his Moslem assailants a century ago, as told elsewhere, was named Peter.

Nicholas is a keen politician and an agile debater.

Mary, born in Prince Rupert, received her elementary and secondary education in Haney. She then trained as a nurse and graduated from the Vancouver General Hospital. Her professional career culminated as matron of the hospital in Zeballos, a new mining town on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Matrimony called her and she became Mrs. John Rushworth of Duncan on Vancouver Island. There are three sons, Donald, Richard and George, all thriving.

Helen, also born in Prince Rupert has had a shining career. From the Maple Ridge High School, she studied nursing in

the School of Nursing of the Vancouver General Hospital, graduating from that institution in 1937. She received a scholarship for further study in Operating Room Technique. She spent a year in this study in the Vancouver General Hospital, and this was followed by supervision in operating rooms in the same hospital.

The next year, 1940-41, was spent in studies in the University of Washington, Seattle. Here she received the University's diploma in Teaching, Supervision and Administration. This was followed by further study in Operating Room Supervision in the Harborview Hospital in Seattle.

In 1941-43 she was Operating Room Supervisor in the Vancouver General Hospital.

From 1943 to the end of World War II she served with the Royal Canadian Army Corps, in the rank of Lieutenant (Nursing Sister) both in Canada and overseas. She was sister-in-charge of Operating Theatres.

Then she added to her qualifications by obtaining from McGill University the Bachelor's degree in Nursing (B.N.).

Then followed two years as Senior Instructor in the School of Nursing in the Vancouver General Hospital.

The training which has been listed above would seem to cover all that could be learned. But it did not satisfy Helen. So she went to Columbia University, New York, and obtained her Master of Arts degree. She also was made a member of the honorary educational sorority, Pi Lambda Theta, a sorority composed of women who have taken, in the university, professional courses in education with grades better than B; in Canadian terms, have taken honours in Education.

At present, 1953, Helen is Associate Director of Nursing Education in the Vancouver General. She is in charge of all educational and recreational activities for all the students in what is now the largest School of Nursing in Canada. The present enrolment is about 500.

And if this exacting job is not enough to occupy her fully, she is also a part-time lecturer at the University of British Columbia.

The recital of the steps in her professional development show why she is considered an outstanding authority in Nursing Education.

Peter was born in Prince Rupert in 1916. From Maple Ridge High School, he went to the University of British Columbia, where he graduated B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering. He is the scientist of the family. He is now a chemist with the Imperial Oil Company and lives in Vancouver.

The mortality rate amongst chemistry students in the University of British Columbia is exceptionally high. You must start with well-endowed genes if you are to graduate Bachelor of Science in chemistry at that university.

Lily, the youngest, is married to Maurice Harper, and lives in Vancouver. She is the only Haney-born member of the family. She saw the light of day in the Green Valley.

She was a teacher before her marriage, trained in the Vancouver Normal School. She must have been a wonderful teacher and happy were those Mission and Vancouver young folks who were under her care.

Music was her specialty and she made a reputation in the teaching of it. She is still in demand as an adjudicator in the musical festivals which are a feature of life in British Columbia.

Six gifted persons in one family of six is more than any one family has the right to expect.

Solomon has often told me of what he owes to Canada for all the good things it has given to him.

It is very clear to any thoughtful beholder that he gives back to Canada an equal return.

The new Mussallem home (1954)

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CANADIAN SYRIAN: SOME SOCIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

AS I HAVE worked through Solomon's diary, and the stories I have extracted from him about his friends and relatives I have felt like an explorer making discoveries in a new land. I have discovered the Canadian Syrian! There is a book still to be written about this group. I leave the task to some research worker looking for an untouched field in Canadian sociology.

In this chapter I have named only a few of the far-flung Mussallem - Besytt - Haddad connections, to mention only three of the family names. I have been struck by the fact that through all their ramifications they have been successful and substantial people, many of them wealthy, all of them highly esteemed in their communities. Let us take the case of Kalil Besytt, brother-in-law of Solomon.

Fifty years ago he had a shop or supply centre in Carleton Place where he grub-staked young Syrians who were beginning their careers carrying a peddler's pack through Old Ontario.

Accumulating a modest capital in this way he moved to Toronto, became a manufacturer of brands of boys' and men's clothing which are sold today all over Canada, and became a millionaire.

While not many may have become millionaires the great majority of those who came early in this century worked their way up to comfort and even luxury. There are no "descamisados" amongst them.

I have difficulty in thinking of any minority group which has been so thoroughly integrated into Canadian life, except perhaps those people of northern European race whose language closely approximates English, and even they, I think, have not adapted themselves more fully to the spiritual climate of Canadian living. This is not what one would expect if he were to give weight to ethnic considerations alone.

To the eye of the sociologist these Canadian Syrians are a

superior group, socially, economically, and in intelligence and character. Their average in these respects is well above the general Canadian average. They vary of course amongst themselves in these characteristics. But the group as a whole, if there were objective measures by which to classify them, would undoubtedly be found to be distributed statistically through the upper half of the general population. Of no other ethnic group in our society could this be claimed. Whence comes this Syrian superiority?

The first important fact is that the original wave of Syrian immigrants in the beginning of the century, the foundation stock we might call it, were a select group. It required more than normal intelligence, courage, and enterprise to escape from Turkish rule. It also cost at least 20 golden British sovereigns, and that was a lot of money then, hard to come by under the Turkish economy.

Furthermore, the Syrian lands had never been drained by centuries of emigration of their abler elements, as today the rural parts of our western world are being drained of their abler young people by the lure of the great industrial and commercial cities. There had been a damming up of the population only partially alleviated by periodic massacre. Consequently the cream of Syrian youth was available for emigration (at the time when the holes began to appear in the iron curtain) and later when the curtain was raised shortly after Solomon's escape. They may not have brought much money with them but they brought character and ability.

Actually in their own land these Canadian Syrians belonged to what we call, in the English-speaking world, "good families". They were an élite of solid and respected people. Having no capital, or little, when they arrived in this country, they had to make a beginning in the humbler forms of commerce. In our free economy, they rose rapidly. Their hereditary gentility enabled them to be at home socially as they rose economically.

Another factor in the easy adjustment they made to Canadian living was the fact that their Christianity goes back to Apostolic times. It is older than the Christianity of western Europe. It survived centuries of Moslem inundation and massacre. As they

had held their own against a thousand years of Moslem pressure the consciousness of their Christianity was deepened. Then during three centuries, from the eleventh to the fourteenth, the armies of the Crusaders were spread over the land and ties with the West were strengthened. This Crusading influence has not been forgotten. The modern Christian Syrian proudly claims to carry the blood of the Crusaders.

These traditions have given the Christian Syrian a sense of kinship with the West. In consequence of this our Syrians when they began to infiltrate into this country more than half a century ago quickly felt that they were at home, that they were rejoining a spiritual communion where they were not alien. They felt that they belonged.

In achieving this sense of belonging there was no interference from ancient loyalities to another government. The rule of the Turk had been alien and harsh. The Syrian may have loved the Lebanese hills and the valleys where his ancestors had lived, but his native country invoked also bitter memories of ages of oppression. A Briton who becomes naturalized in a foreign country, even in one so much like his own as the United States, suffers some pangs in abandoning his old allegiance. A Syrian had no regret in abandoning the sovereignty of the Turk. But the human heart craves something to which it may be loyal. In Canada the Syrians found that object of loyalty. They adopted as their own our country, flag, and throne, with a kind of passion. During two wars not a single Canadian Syrian has been guilty of any kind of disloyalty, either in word or deed.

The Christian Syrians, whether in Lebanon, or in the country now called the Kingdom of Syria, or in Palestine, were a minority trying through the centuries to hold their religion and culture against the pressure of a foreign majority. This of course drew them together with a powerful group consciousness, and inevitably meant strong family integration, which magnified the influence of the family elders. The family honour became very precious and jealously preserved. In such circumstances a minority group tends to be alike inclusive and exclusive – inclusive in the sense that its members are held closely together, exclusive in the sense that foreign elements are kept out. This

policy was necessary in the old lands to prevent absorption by a kind of people by whom they were unwilling to be absorbed.

Transferred to a new environment, as, for example, to the fluid society of the Canadian civilization, how would a racial group so closely knit react to a novel social situation. Would they become integrated into the new community ? Or would they simply be in it but not of it ? If they had been Moslems, they would probably have remained in the outside, only physically a part of the community. If they had been Jews, they would have tried to belong, but with some portion of their souls they would still have lived in a spiritual ghetto, partly of their own creation. The Christian Syrian, too, might have immured himself in a Syrian colony and have been only externally a part of Canadian life. To some extent the Canadian Syrians did at first gather in colonies, which in some cases may have delayed their assimilation, but in general they felt no real inner barriers between themselves and their new neighbors. They felt rather a fundamental affinity, almost a hunger to belong and to be accepted. They Canadianized themselves with unusual speed. These are my interpretations of the workings of the Canadian Syrian soul. He may not have verbalized his feelings, but he has acted as if he were moved in the way I have described.

And what has been the reaction of the native Canadian towards him ? The Canadian is not given to abstract reflection upon the subtle processes of human behaviour, but he has responded to his Syrian neighbour much as the Syrian has reacted towards him. He has taken the Syrian into the community. There has never been any perceptible xenophobia towards him. In Maple Ridge, for example, Solomon Mussallem is the leading Canadian of the region.

This complete Canadianizing of our Syrians is so generally taken for granted that it seems unnecessary to elaborate upon it. It is, however, of unusual sociological interest, for we have not been equally fortunate with many of the Europeans who have settled amongst us. Again I draw attention to the fact that our Canadian Syrians spring from an intellectual and social élite, a natural aristocracy, and therefore with greater capacity for adjusting to our life. Whether the same success would have

accompanied a mass movement of the Syrian proletariat, if there be such a proletariat, may be questioned. Fortunately the Syrian immigration has been of such a kind that it has brought no social or political problems along with it – and that, one may say – is something unique in our history.

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