REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION

ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE

SECT OF DOUKHOBORS

IN THE PROVINCE OF

BRITISH COLUMBIA

1912

THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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VICTORIA, B.C., December 21st, 1912.

The Honourable the Provincial Secretary,
Victoria, B.C.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit to you herewith the evidence taken before the Royal Commission on the Doukhobors, together with my Report thereon.

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM BLAKEMORE,
Commissioner.

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COMMISSION.

THOS. W. PATERSON,
Lieutenant-Governor.

CANADA:

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

GEORGE THE FIFTH, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India.

In the matter of the "Public Inquiries Act."

A COMMISSION.

To William Blakemore, of the City of Victoria, and to all whom the same may in anywise concern,—Greeting.

J. P. McLeod, *Deputy Attorney-General.* WHEREAS an Order of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council of the fifteenth day of August instant directs that a Commission under the provisions of "An Act respecting Inquiries concerning Public Matters" be issued to you, William Blakemore, appointing you to be a sole Commissioner to inquire into the organization, habits, customs, and practices of the Doukhobor Community at Grand Forks, Brilliant, and elsewhere in the Province, including in the inquiry an investigation into the nature, source, and scope of the authority held or exercised by the leader or leaders of the Community over the other members thereof; the tenure and ownership of property, real and personal; the solemnization of marriages, the registration of births, deaths, and marriages, and domestic relations generally; naturalization; the observance of law; and generally all matters appertaining or relating to the Community and its social, intellectual, moral, and religious life:

NOW KNOW YE that, under and by virtue of the powers contained in and conferred by the said recited Act, and of all and every powers and power vested in us in that behalf, We, reposing trust and confidence in your loyalty, integrity, and ability, do hereby confer upon you, the said Commissioner, the power of making inquiry into the matter aforesaid, together with the power of summoning before you any person or witnesses and requiring them to give evidence on oath, orally or in writing, or solemn affirmation (if they be persons entitled to affirm in civil matters), and to produce such documents and things as you may deem requisite to the full investigation of the said matter; and We empower and direct you, the said Commissioner to report in writing to Our Lieutenant-Governor of Our said Province the result of such inquiry, with such recommendations as you may see fit to make, and that you do and perform all these matters and things in and about the taking of the said inquiry as by law in that behalf you are authorized to do.

In Testimony Whereof We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent, and the Great Seal of the said Province to be hereunto affixed:

Witness, His Honour Thomas Wilson Paterson, Lieutenant-Governor of Our said Province of British Columbia, in Our City of Victoria, in Our said Province, this fifteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twelve, and in the third year of Our Reign.

By Command.

RICHARD McBRIDE,
Acting Provincial Secretary.

On August 24th, A.D. 1912, William Blakemore, the within-named Commissioner, appeared before me and took the oath of office as prescribed by clause 6 of the "Public Inquiries Act," chapter 110, "Revised Statutes of British Columbia, 1911."

P. S. Lampman,
Co. J., Victoria.

PREFACE.

The following Report represents four months' continuous work under the provisions of the Royal Commission for Inquiry into the Doukhobor Settlements in British Columbia.

Public sittings were held and evidence taken on oath at Nelson, Grand Forks, and Trail. At these hearings 110 witnesses were examined.

Throughout the inquiry the Community Doukhobors were represented in the person of their counsel, Mr. A. M. Johnson, of Nelson. A number of non-Community Doukhobors who wished to give evidence presented themselves before the Court in Nelson; and, finding that the Community was represented by counsel, they made an application to the Court, asking that the Government would appoint some one to represent them, as they considered that they would be at a disadvantage. Although such a course was somewhat unusual, the request was submitted to the Provincial Government, with a recommendation that it be granted in order that all classes of Doukhobors interested might feel satisfied with the fairness of the inquiry. In the temporary absence of the Attorney-General from the Province, the Premier acceded to this request, and appointed Mr. F. G. Moffatt, who thereafter represented the non-Community Doukhobors.

After the first public sitting in Grand Forks, a request was preferred by a number of leading citizens that the inquiry should be adjourned, to give them an opportunity of securing the assistance of counsel. When the sittings were resumed, Mr. Sutton appeared on the instructions of a citizens' committee to represent the people of Grand Forks; but after a short hearing he retired from the case, having decided not to call any witnesses and expressing himself as satisfied with the thoroughness of the investigation.

In addition to the public sittings referred to, the Commissioner made a personal inspection and examination of all the Doukhobor Settlements in British Columbia; and, at the request of the leaders of the Community, held an all-day session, at which upwards of 1,000 Doukhobors attended, in the Settlement at Brilliant.

At this session lengthy discussion of the various points at issue took place, but the Commissioner was not successful in securing any undertaking that the Community would abandon its attitude of hostility to the registration laws and the "Public Schools Act."

During the course of the investigation in British Columbia, it was found that the internal economy of the local Settlements was so wrapped up with that of the Settlements in Saskatchewan that it would be impossible to make a complete and intelligent Report without studying the conditions in that Province, especially as the property interests in British Columbia were derived from prior holdings there. Although under the powers of the Commission no legal investigation could be held outside of British Columbia, it was deemed necessary to visit the Saskatchewan Settlements and to procure such information as would throw light on some of the problems which have already presented themselves in British Columbia.

Accordingly, several weeks were spent in the Prairie Province, during which the Towns of Yorkton, Prince Albert, Buchanan, and Verigin were visited.

The result of this inquiry was exceedingly satisfactory, as it enabled the Commissioner to obtain all the information required affecting the property interests and Community organization and management, as well as to learn on the spot the manner in which the Doukhobors had conducted themselves and their business during the thirteen years that they have spent on the Prairies.

In this connection, acknowledgment is made of the very valuable assistance rendered to the Commissioner by Dr. T. A. Patrick, of Yorkton, and Mr. Robert Buchanan, of Buchanan.

It is only fair, in concluding this Preface, to acknowledge the great readiness with which the Doukhobors and the leaders, both in British Columbia and in Saskatchewan, gave every information desired, even to the extent of placing their private books and statements of accounts in the hands of the Commissioner. They also showed him the utmost personal kindness at all times. In this regard, special thanks are due to Mr. Peter Verigin, the head of the Community; Mr. J. W. Sherbinin, their business manager in British Columbia; and Mr. Michael W. Cazakoff, their business manager in Saskatchewan.

For the collation of the historic facts which largely form the basis of the opening chapters, I am chiefly indebted to Mr. Joseph Elkinton, of the Society of Friends, Philadelphia, and to Mr. A. M. Evalenko, of New York.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON DOUKHOBORS.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOUKHOBORS, THEIR ORIGIN AND HISTORY.

Descended from "The Cossacks of the Don"—Persecutions during Early Part of Last Century—Attitude of the Greek Orthodox Church toward these Dissenters—Regarded and Treated as Heretics—Segregated in "The Milky Waters" Colony by Order of Tzar Alexander I. about Year 1800—Doukhobors First Refused Military Service in 1807, Throwing Down their Arms in the First Turkish War—Established Simple Manufacturing Industries in "The Milky Waters" Colony—Visited in 1818 by Tzar Alexander I.—Tzar Subsequently Attends Quaker Meeting in London—Explanation of Persecution by Greek Orthodox Church—"The Milky Waters" Colony Broken up in 1841, and the Doukhobors Exiled to Transcaucasia—Hardships Endured from Greek Church, Russian Officers, and the Tartar Tribesmen.

Expert opinion is divided as to the origin of the Doukhobors. General Djunkolesky, who was Minister of the Interior to the Russian Government one hundred years ago, laid evidence before the representatives of the Quaker sect in London which satisfied them that the Doukhobors came from the followers of John Russ.

On the other hand, the traditions of this interesting people teach that they were derived from three brothers—"Cossacks of the Don"—who, through the teaching of the Spirit, and the careful perusal of the New Testament, were led away from the ceremonies of the Russian Church to worship God "in Spirit and in truth."

The probability is that the latter view is the correct one, not only because it is so deeply implanted in the minds of the people themselves, but because it accords more completely with the spirit in which they have survived the numberless persecutions of the last hundred years.

To understand their present attitude towards Constitutional Government, and, indeed, towards all Government but their own; to fathom their obstinacy in view of the most considerate treatment; and to explain why a people, professing in all its simplicity the religion of the Christ, should be so suspicious of those who would befriend them, and so irreconcilable in all matters temporal, it is necessary to know by what processes they have been driven to this stand.

No one will be surprised to learn that one hundred years ago, when many barbarities were tolerated in the name of Justice, the sect, which had placed itself in antagonism to the Russian Government, should have been constantly subjected to persecution and cruelty.

In 1797, Andrei Tolstoev and his wife were tried because of their adherence to Doukhobor principles, and after being punished with the knout, and having their nostrils cut out (this punishment was frequently inflicted upon dissenters), were sentenced to hard labour in Irkutsk.

In 1806, the celebrated Russian Senator, Lapukhin, wrote:—

> No class has, up to this time, been so cruelly persecuted as the Doukhobortsi; and this is certainly not because they are the most harmful. They have been tortured in various ways, and whole families have been sentenced to hard labour and confinement in the most cruel prisons.

Perhaps the clearest idea of the attitude of the Government towards the Doukhobors at this time will be gathered from the following Edict, pronounced after the trial of thirty-four Doukhobors:—

> As the same prisoners remain inflexible to suggestion and persuasion, in order to guard men from like superstition in the future, and also to retaliate upon them for their renunciation of the Church, her sacraments and saints, they shall receive, each man, thirty strokes of the knout, and each woman forty strokes of the lash publicly. The Doukhobor, Jacob Laktev's daughter, Katrina, and Ivan Shalayer's daughter, Nastasia, as minors, are, in accordance with the Ukase of May 2nd, 1765, to be whipped with rods. After all these criminals have been thus punished they are to be sent to Siberia, their goods are to be confiscated and sold by public auction, and the money sent to the Treasury Office in Perekop, to be entered in the accounts of public revenue; the carrying-out of which sentence is to devolve on the Police Court of Perekop.

The high Criminal Court, to which this case came up from the District Court, altered the sentence as follows :—

The prisoners convicted of Doukhobortsi heresy are to be put in irons without punishment, and sent to work perpetually in the mines, at Ekaterinburg, Siberia, excepting the younger children. The bringing-up of the children under ten years of age in the faith of the Greek Orthodox Church is to devolve upon the Mayor of the town or of the parish, together with the priests.

This shows clearly that the persecution of the Doukhobors was due to the fact that they were dissenters from the Greek Orthodox Church—a conclusion which is placed beyond dispute by the fact that the Ukase issued in 1800 reads: "Everybody who shall be convicted of belonging to the sect of Doukhobortsi shall be condemned to lifelong hard labour."

Senator Lapukhin seems to have felt some sympathy for them, for, after this Ukase was issued, we find that he approached the Emperor, Alexander I., for the purpose of arranging for a place of settlement where they could live apart from Russians who belonged to the Greek Church. Lapukhin was successful in carrying his point, and the Doukhobors were allowed to emigrate to a section of country known as "The Milky Waters," near the Crimea, and each emigrant received from the Government about 45 acres of land. They were also granted exemption from taxation, and the authorities were instructed to leave them in peace unless they displayed an "open disobedience to legal authority." They were not to be convicted as criminals on account of their opinions, and the clergy, who had been their most violent persecutors, were ordered to stay away from them.

Many thousands took advantage of this opening, and settled just north of the Crimea, remaining there until 1840.

Before following the later history of "The Milky Waters" Settlement it may be interesting to note that about this time (1807) occurred the first instance of refusal on the part of the Doukhobors to bear arms. This occurred during the first Turkish war, when they threw away their arms in the midst of the fighting.

In 1809, the privates of the Kiev Regiment who were Doukhobors refused to receive ammunition, or to perform military service, and were sent to work in the Siberian factories. So obdurate were they on this subject of military service that ten years later, in 1817, the Ministerial Committee modified their attitude to this extent: that they ordered that Doukhobortsi should be taken into military service "without being compelled to swear."

At this time they had a narrow escape from what might have been a worse fate than that which befell them in Transcaucasia, for in 1811 a petition was presented to the Tzar by 4,000 Doukhobors, who declared that because they were oppressed everywhere and in every way they would be glad to settle on the banks of the Danube, in territory recently acquired from the Ottoman Porte. But this was not allowed.

Following the fortunes of "The Milky Waters" Colony, one gets a clear idea as to how those principles were established among the Doukhobors to which they still adhere with the utmost tenacity, and which are only strengthened by persecution or the application of harsh measures.

The Colony consisted of nine villages, the central one being Terpenie (Patience). In it sat the Parish Assembly. In it also was the Orphan House, called "Zion." The villages flourished in consequence of the abundance of fertile lands, the energy with which the people followed the arts of husbandry, and their fidelity to the communal system.

The Settlement consisted of 13,500 acres. The farming was all done in common, and the products divided into equal parts. Storehouses were erected for food in case of famine.

It is rather strange to notice, especially when reading the evidence given by Peter Verigin and others before this Commission, that farming was the only business of the Doukhobors, that "The Milky Waters" Colony did not confine itself to husbandry, but that several simple industries were successfully established, such as the manufacture of sashes and woollen hats.

As to the character and life of the Doukhobors in this Colony, there is on record the testimony of the Governor of the district, who could not be considered to be ultra-favourable to them, but who declared that "Drunkenness and idleness were rigidly prohibited. State taxes and commercial obligations were punctually discharged; they were active, indefatigable in labour, and industrious in agriculture, and, being sober and well-living men, they were more independent than others."

This testimony might well be taken as a summary of the evidence laid before the present Commission bearing upon the conduct of the Doukhobors in Canada, and shows that, whatever peculiarities may characterize them, they have in the main adhered to the principles of their founders.

In 1818, after they had been settled in "The Milky Waters" Colony nearly twenty years, the Emperor Alexander I. passed through their Settlement, and was so pleased with their prosperity that he ordered the prompt return to their native land of all the banished Doukhobortsi.

The sympathy evinced by Alexander I. is one of the most gratifying incidents in a long record of oppression and persecution, for not only did he grant them many privileges which relieved the misery of their lives, but used his influence with the clergy of the Greek Orthodox Church to abandon the campaign of persecution on which they had entered. So interested was the Emperor in their well-being that in 1814 he visited London and attended a Quaker meeting for worship, and here his favourable opinion of the Quakers was confirmed, and undoubtedly greatly influenced him in his subsequent relations with the Doukhobors.

As a result of his visit to London, Alexander I. subsequently sent to England for a member of the Society of Friends to come to Russia and take charge of the cultivation of certain extensive lands. One Daniel Wheeler was chosen, and he laboured in Russia for fifteen years, and the records state that he not only laboured, but "preached by the example of a holy and industrious life, and was occasionally visited by the Emperor, with whom he had the most cordial relations."

But nothing could appease the wrath of the clergy of the Greek Orthodox Church, who, in season and out of season, continued to persecute the Doukhobors; and perhaps it makes their offence against that Church more clearly understood if we recognize that they revolted against the Ikon worship of the Russian Church so radically as to place the emphasis of their belief upon the Spirit as their infallible guide.

Their religious creed is simplicity itself, and can be expressed in a few words: They claim to be followers of Christ, and to live in accordance with His teaching. They put emphasis upon the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, rather than upon His historical appearance. They interpret His teachings literally, so that the injunction to turn the other cheek when smitten ceases, in their eyes, to be a figure of speech. They believe in and practise the memorizing of the Scriptures, which has gone on among them for generations. They are opposed to the reading, even, of the Scriptures, and do not encourage their children to learn, but rely entirely on oral teaching.

A peculiar feature or custom of the Doukhobors is their frequent bowing, which has its origin in reverence for the Divine nature or Spirit in man.

That a people who, in their own country, have enjoyed so few outward advantages should retain so large a portion of their original simplicity of character and devotion to high spiritual conceptions is a most hopeful sign for the future.

In 1821, the persecution of the Greek Church continuing, we find that a Caucasian Chief, who had some 2,500 Doukhobors in his district, advised the Central Government that all their families should be dispersed among Russian villages, and that children should be separated from their parents "in order that the exhortations and example of the clergymen might influence them to embrace the Orthodox religion."

This was literally carried out in that locality seventy-five years afterwards, and Prince Hilkov's children were violently taken from him and placed with members of the Russian Church.

In 1826, Nicholas I. confirmed a Ministerial decision to transplant "The Milky Waters" Colony from the Crimea to the Caucasus, in order to disperse the "obnoxious sect," and although there was some delay in carrying it out, still, in 1841, effect was given to this iniquitous decree. The "Cossacks of the Don," as they were called, were the first to be transported to that inhospitable region, where they were brought into close contact with the fiercest hillsmen for the avowed purpose of compelling them to defend themselves, their property and families by force, and so voluntarily to deny their own teaching. The Imperial order read as follows:—

All the Doukhobortsi shall be removed from "The Milky Waters" to the Transcaucasian Provinces.

The dispersion began in 1840 and lasted four years. Twelve thousand Doukhobors were deported. Their whole property, acquired by long years of toil, was sold for almost nothing, the houses abandoned, and the fields given up. An historian of the time comments in picturesque language upon the scenes that were witnessed at the time of the exodus. He says:—

On parting from the land which for so many years had fed them, the Doukhobortsi women kneeled and pressed to her their breasts; they kissed her, and sobbing, threw their hands to heaven and sang mournful psalms. But the earth to which they pressed their breasts, and the men who should have heard them, all remained deaf to their sorrows.

This people, who up to this time were wealthy, were now removed to the Persian frontier, where they were continually subjected to robbery at the hands of the Tartars.

The Government tried to win over the emigrants by allowing all who were willing to join the Orthodox Church to remain in their own homes. It is a remarkable comment on their fidelity to their principles that, out of 12,000, only twenty-seven agreed to these conditions. Again it is profitable to quote from the historian :—

Banished to a strange land, where the soil, climate, and conditions of life were quite new and unknown to them, surrounded by hostile mountain tribes, and precluded by their religious principles from using arms, even in self-defence, the Doukhobors seemed doomed to perish without leaving a remnant. But such is the strength of their communal principle, which forms the basis of the life of this Community, that in spite of continual suffering from invasion, change of climate, and fevers, they at last succeeded in not only adapting themselves to local conditions, but even in reviving the trade of the Province and becoming the most prosperous section of the Transcaucasian population.

The moral influence of the Doukhobors was so generally recognized throughout the Caucasus that their absence came to be regretted by the Government itself. After the last Russo-Turkish war the Government actually solicited them to remove into the newly acquired District of Kars, to civilize the Mohammedans. These new Mohammedan neighbours soon made friends with them, concluding that they were *not* Christians, for, said they, "the Christians always fight."

"Such is," says Abramov, "the bitter irony of history upon the offensive measures directed against the Doukhobortsi."

"And these persecutions," says Count Tolstoi, "as is always the case, when they are endured with the Christian meekness shown by the Doukhobortsi, produce the result the very opposite of that intended by the persecutors."

"People wish to hide the fire which has appeared in the forest, and to extinguish it they press it to the earth with whatever comes to hand—leaves, grass, and wood—but the flame burns more and more fiercely, and its light spreads farther and farther."

It is not necessary to deal in detail with the experiences of the Doukhobors in the Transcaucasian Provinces of Tiflis, Kars, and Elizavetpol, to which they were exiled when they left "The Milky Waters." It would be a record of continual struggle, first of all with the forces of Nature, for the climate can be regarded only as inhospitable, and the land, when the exodus took place, unfruitful. Nor was the conflict with Nature the most difficult one the Doukhobors had to wage, for they were subject at all times to the unrelenting persecutions of the representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church, the semi-barbarous hordes of Tartars who bore down on them, pillaging their farms and wrecking their homes; and, later, the officers of the law, who haled them to the Courts, from whence they were exiled to Siberia for resistance to the military law. It is marvellous that under these conditions they held their own, in spite of repeated onslaughts and well-organized attempts to break up the sect, for nearly sixty years—for, until the exodus to Canada took place in 1898, they knew no home but the one they had carved for themselves amid the most forbidding and depressing surroundings.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOUKHOBORS IN RUSSIA.

Under three Tzars, Nicholas I., Alexander II., and Alexander III.—Reactionary Policy of Alexander III.—Liberty Curtailed, Education Suppressed, Press Stifled—Fiercer Persecutions for the Doukhobors—Famine of 1890—Colony in Transcaucasia Increased to 20,000—Prosperous in Spite of Adverse Conditions—Split in the Community in 1886—Rival Claimants for Leadership, Kalmykov and Peter Verigin—By Treachery of Opposing Faction, Verigin Exiled, first to Archangel, then to Siberia—Verigin a Pronounced Ascetic—Dictates Policy of Doukhobor Community from Siberian Prison—In his Absence Colony again Broken up and Property Confiscated—Appeal of Verigin to Dowager Empress Alexandra in Historic Letter—Final Consent of Tzar Nicholas to Doukhobors Leaving Russia—Negotiations with Canadian Government by Prince Hilkov and Aylmer Maude—Assistance of Count Tolstoi and the Quakers of London, New York, and Philadelphia.

During this period the Empire of the Russias acknowledged the sovereignty of three Tzars—Nicholas I., who was instrumental in banishing the Doukhobors to the Caucasus; Alexander II., who came to the throne in 1856; and Alexander III. Nicholas I. naturally earned the reprobation of those who sympathized with the Doukhobors for the harsh policy he

endorsed, although it is only fair to say that Queen Victoria, when he visited London in 1844, concluded that there was much in his character to admire, and his mistakes were due to lack of education, to natural obstinacy, and to the fact that he was kept in ignorance of many things he ought to have known, if he was to judge wisely and act rightly.

Alexander II. resembled his father in no respect, for he was a kind-hearted, liberal-minded man, and during his reign a marvellous amount of reform was set on foot. The Emancipation Act of 1861 liberated 50,000,000 serfs, at a cost to the Government of $500,000,000. The verdict of no less a person than Mr. Gladstone on the life of this Tzar, after his assassination, was: "The sole labour of a devoted life was to improve his inheritance for the benefit of his subjects and of mankind."

But, unfortunately, Alexander III. proved to be a reactionary. A few minutes before Alexander II. was assassinated, in March, 1881, he said to his consort: "I have just signed a paper which I hope will produce a good impression upon Russia and show that I am ready to give all that is possible to give. To-morrow it will be published. I have given the order." But "to-morrow" there was a new Tzar who knew not the ways of his predecessor, and, as has been picturesquely stated, the "liberator was succeeded by the persecutor." Unfortunately, Alexander III. came immediately under the influence and control of the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Pobiedonostzev, who was his evil genius throughout his reign. His adviser stimulated him to reactionary measures of every kind, and especially to hostility towards those who had offended the Greek Orthodox Church. Count Ignatiev became Minister of the Interior, and such a chapter of Russianization began as was scarcely ever attempted before by a Tzar.

It is now conceded that Alexander III. should not be held entirely responsible for the persecutions permitted in Russia, as they originated with the Holy Synod. The policy of Alexander III., condensed into a sentence, was to stamp out of Russia all non-Russian elements and set up an image, before which all must bow down and worship—the image of a Russia, single, homogeneous, exclusive, self-sufficing, self-contained. Education was suppressed. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that even the Doukhobors should feel strengthened in their traditional opposition to education. The press was not merely censored, but suppressed. The nation was virtually dumb, for it had no sort of parliamentary representation, and no press worth the name.

On a respectful appeal being made to the Tzar on behalf of his suffering subjects by a true patriot, Mary Tzebrikova, she was exiled for two years to a remote corner of the Empire.

It is not a matter of surprise, therefore, that, under these conditions, among the many millions who suffered, the Doukhobors should suffer more than their fellows, lacking the sympathy and protection of the Government, and being the butt, if not the sport, of the representatives of the Orthodox Church.

The climax was reached in 1890, when famine brought twenty million of the inhabitants of the Russian Empire to death's door. The Emperor died at Livadia on November 1st, 1894, and was succeeded by his son, Nicholas II., the present Tzar.

Whatever else may be associated with the name of Nicholas II., it can never be forgotten that he was the convener of the Hague Conference in 1899, and that he possesses many of the traits which rendered Alexander I. a humane monarch in an age when despotism ruled. It is a matter of common knowledge that the character of Nicholas II. has been moulded by the gracious influence of his mother, and it was she who ultimately prevailed upon him to grant the liberation of the Doukhobors.

When we regard the perpetual unrest which has perennially threatened the Russian Empire with revolution, apart from any religious dissent, and when we add to this the independent attitude of Christian faith assumed by the Doukhobors, we can clearly see how nothing but persecution awaited them; nor can it be doubted that the tenacity with which they have clung to their characteristic beliefs has been greatly accentuated by the persecutions to which they have been subjected.

A period of comparative ease and prosperity intervened between the last Russo-Turkish war in 1877, and 1887, when universal conscription was introduced into the Caucasus. It is a matter of history that during this period the strict observance of the religious practices of the Doukhobors lapsed to some extent, and considerable money was accumulated by their several Communities. Their numbers increased to 20,000. The conditions under which they lived had developed leaders of strong character. Pobirochin, Kapoustin, Kalmykov, his wife, Loukerya Vasilyevna Kalmykova, and now, Peter Verigin, have successfully occupied this

important position during the past century. That reliable historian, Novitsky, says: "These leaders endeavoured to govern wisely under the immediate control and with the co-operation of the Deity Himself by means of inward universal inspiration and revelation from above."

With all their limitations and deficiencies, with their history for a century before us, we may fairly say that they have managed their affairs well; they have suffered little from crimes of violence; that without priests or ministers they have cherished practical religion; without doctors or medicine they have been, on the average, healthier and stronger than most other races; that without political economists wealth among them has been better distributed, and that they have suffered less from the extremes of wealth and poverty. Without books they have educated their children to be industrious, useful people, and God-fearing men and women. They have instructed them in the tenets of their religion and taught them to produce the food, clothing, and shelter which they needed.

As a community, they are as a rule abstainers from alcohol, non-smokers, and, for the most part, vegetarians. It would be difficult to find a class of people, equally numerous, among whom there is less immorality, or among whom the family bond is more regarded.

This is the verdict of a veracious historian—Aylmer Maude—at the time the Doukhobors were leaving Russia for Canada.

During the hundred years under review, Communism, which the Russian peasants generally favour, became with the Doukhobors a religious principle; and it is not surprising, since all sects are human, that even the Doukhobors themselves were not free from those internal divisions which characterize all religious sects.

A contention arose among them in 1886, when Peter Verigin was banished to Archangel. He had been trained under Loukerya Vasilyevna Kalmykova with the express intention of succeeding her as the head of the Community; but, on the death of this remarkable woman, a small party, headed by her brother, opposed the ascendancy of Verigin. Here was an opportunity to invoke the aid of the Government in a policy which fitted admirably with their desire to scatter what they regarded as a rebellious community. So recourse was had to the Courts, and a number of the Verigin party, including the leader himself, were exiled to North-east Siberia. It is alleged, on fairly good authority, that this was finally accomplished by the "Small Party" bribing the Government officials with a gift of 10,000 roubles.

Full particulars of these events, including a remarkable letter by Count Tolstoi, appeared in the London *Times* of October 23rd, 1895.

The result of this act of gross injustice was that the larger section of the party drew closer together, collected a new fund of $100,000, and handed over the management of the fund to Peter Verigin.

And now a change came over the Community, which is full of significance when studying their after-history. The "Small Party," headed by the brother of Loukerya Vasilyevna Kalnykova, may be regarded as the party of broad views and tolerance, which looked with no unfriendly eye on the relaxing of some of the more rigid rules and observances of the sect. Peter Verigin took his stand at the other extreme of the pole, a pronounced ascetic. He ordered the abandonment of all luxuries and indulgences that were at variance with the traditional simplicity of the sect, stimulated a widespread religious awakening, under the influence of which the people ceased to smoke, to drink wine, or to eat flesh. They practised economy, and resolved no longer to bear arms, even in self-defence.

In connection with this latter phase, it should be mentioned that during the stormy times that had been experienced in the Caucasus they had armed themselves and fought in defence of their hearths and homes against the raids of the Tartars. But now this was all over.

The "Small Party" never relaxed their vigilance, and, by dint of retaining the support of the representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church and standing well with the Government, brought about the banishment of some of the leading men of the "Large Party," including the head, Peter Verigin, as already stated—first to Archangel, and then to Siberia. This banishment was a punishment for the resistance of Verigin and others to military service.

Whilst in Moscow, on the way from Archangel to Siberia, in 1894, Verigin issued instructions to the Community to abstain from oath-taking, from military duty, and from other participation in the violent acts of the Government, and to destroy all their arms. From that time the Doukhobortsi refused to serve in the army.

On the night of June 28th, 1896, the burning of the Doukhobor arms took place simultaneously in the Province of Kars, Elizavetpol, and Tiflis. This remarkable demonstration did not pass off without a clash between the Government soldiery and the Doukhobors, for in the Tiflis District a collision occurred between two battalions of infantry, 200 Cossacks, and the Doukhobors. The Cossacks rode into the midst of the Doukhobors and beat them without restraint, leaving them bruised and covered with blood. But no resistance was offered to this

devilish treatment, and the Doukhobors started to march to the residence of the Governor at Bagdanovka. They walked there, singing psalms, but the officers stopped their singing and ordered the ribald soldiery to sing obscene songs.

The interview with the Governor resulted in another beating, and subsequently Cossacks were quartered in all the villages of the Doukhobors. The soldiers were given the right to use the property of the inhabitants, and to behave in their homes, just as in a conquered country. The Cossacks behaved outrageously, and many violations of women occurred.

Then the Doukhobors were expelled from their villages. They would be given three days' notice to clear out, and at the end of the time their property would be sold for a mere bagatelle, and what was not sold was thrown away. The cattle were left to roam and the corn to rot in the fields. The whole population was absolutely ruined.

There were expelled from this district 464 families. They were scattered over adjoining districts, but no land was granted to them, and the intention was to starve them out.

In consequence of these terrible facts being made known through the columns of the London *Times*, endorsed as they were by the letter of the powerful religious patriot, Tolstoi, general interest was aroused, especially among the Quakers in England, and for the first time the idea was conceived of liberating the Doukhobors from the country where they had suffered such appalling injustice and persecution.

At this time their condition was indeed pitiable. The Community was practically broken up and the people scattered. Their property had been sacrificed. Nearly every family had some of its members exiled, or languishing in prisons, or in penal battalions. And in these battalions, according to the regulations, the prisoners were expected every day to comply with the demands of military discipline; and, as the Doukhobors could not conscientiously do this, they were subjected to an unceasing series of punishments—flogging, confinement in a cold, dark cell, diet of bread and water, prolongation of sentence, and other tortures.

Yet, in spite of such tribulations, visitors from England who went among them in 1896 found them abundant in fidelity and animations, by no means cast down, and possessing their souls in patience. One notable English visitor, Mr. A. St. John, spent some time among the sufferers, and then went to Cyprus in order to ascertain whether that island would be suitable as a home for the Doukhobors, in case they should be allowed to enter it. He remained there long enough to move the first party to Cyprus, and to help them in their difficulties in that unsuitable climate, and subsequently to assist them in removing to Canada.

Meanwhile, constant relays of messengers were kept travelling between the persecuted Doukhobors and Peter Verigin, far away in his home of exile in Siberia; and at this time he wrote a letter to the Empress Alexandra—a letter so remarkable, and so fully setting forth the standpoint and wishes of the Community, that it may be well to reproduce it in detail:—

May the Lord God preserve thy soul in this life, as well as in the future age, Sister Alexandra.

I, a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, am living in the testimony and glad tidings of his truth. I am in exile since the year 1886, from the "Spirit-wrestlers" (Doukhobors) Community of Transcaucasia. The word "Spirit-wrestler" should be understood thus: that we in our spirit and in our souls profess God (see, in the Gospel, the meeting of Christ with the Samaritan woman at the well).

I implore thee, sister in Christ the Lord, Alexandra, pray thy husband Nicholas to spare the Spirit-wrestlers in the Caucasus from persecution. It is to thee that I address myself, because I think thy heart is more turned towards the Lord God. And there are at this moment more women and children suffering; husbands and parents are confined in prisons, and families are dispersed in native villages where the authorities incite the population to behave coarsely with them. This falls especially heavy on the Christian women. Lately they have been putting women and children into prisons.

The fault on our part is that we, as far as it is possible to us, endeavour to become Christians. In regard to some of our actions, their understandings may not be sufficiently enlightened.

Thou art probably acquainted with the teachings of vegetarianism; we are sharers in these humanitarian views. Lately we have ceased to use flesh as food, and to drink wine, and have forsaken much of that which leads to a dissipated life and darkens the light of the human soul. Refusing to kill animals, we in no case regard it as possible to deprive men of life. If we were to kill an ordinary man, or even a robber, it would seem to us that we had decided to kill Christ.

The State demands that our brethren should learn the use of the gun, in order to know well how to kill. The Christians do not agree to this; they are put in prison, beaten and starved; the sisters and mothers are coarsely defiled as women, very often with railing exclamations, "Where is your God?" "Why does He not help you?" (Our God is in heaven and on earth, and fulfils all His will.)

This is sad, especially as it is all taking place in a Christian country. But our Community in the Caucasus consists of about twenty thousand men. Is it possible that such a small number could injure the organism of the State, if soldiers were not recruited from among them? At the present moment they *are* recruited, but uselessly. Thirty men are in the Ekaterinograd penal battalion, where the authorities are only tormenting themselves by torturing them.

Man we regard as the temple of the living God, and we can in no case prepare ourselves to kill him, though for this we were to be threatened by death.

The most convenient manner of dealing with us would be to establish us in one place where we might live and labour in peace. All State obligations in the form of taxes we would pay, only we cannot be soldiers.

If the Government were to find it impossible to consent to this, then let it give us the right of emigration into one of the foreign countries. We would willingly go to England or (which is most convenient) to America, where we have a great number of brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

From the fullness of my soul I pray the Lord for the welfare of thy family.

The servant of Christ, PETER
(Living in exile in the Government of Tobolsk).

Another epistle was addressed by the same writer to his suffering brethren, under date of January 2nd, 1896 :—

The concern of most importance to me, when thinking of my fellow, is that they might as far as possible try to become humble and meek, which is indispensable for entering the kingdom of God.

I think that when they have begun to be worried, and their material state to be ruined, they must be very careful not to be tempted. I hold that anxiety of material well-being constitutes already a great stumbling-block and injury to the soul. I ask that you will advise all who know me not to be angry, not to grumble at the Government because it oppresses them. But let them bear, with God's help, any trial which befalls them. Let them only remember what Christ, and afterwards the Apostles, had to suffer for the truth. It is important to bear, without complaint, scorn for the truth, but it is still more important, when suffering for truth's sake, to bear that patiently.

PETER VERIGIN.

In March, 1898, news was received by the Quakers in London that permission had been granted to the Doukhobors to emigrate. The immediate cause of this permission was a visit from the Dowager Empress to her son in the Caucasus. During that visit the Doukhobors presented her with a petition, asking to be allowed to emigrate. The Empress handed this petition to the authorities, and leave was granted.

A committee of the Society of Friends in London was appointed. This committee co-operated with V. Tchertkov in raising a fund, and in selecting a suitable place for a new settlement. In this they were aided constantly, and in the most practical manner, by Count Leo Tolstoi and other Russian sympathizers. The assistance of Prince Hilkov was invoked, and, after ascertaining that Cyprus was unsuitable, Mr. Aylmer Maude and Prince Hilkov undertook negotiations with the Canadian Government.

The Prince is a very remarkable man, a nephew of the Russian Minister of Railways. He was an officer in the Russian Army at the time of the war with Turkey in 1876. He served in the Caucasus, where he met many of the Doukhobors, and learned to know and to like them. Subsequently he left the military service and settled on his estates, acquiring great influence among the peasants. He finally arrayed himself in opposition to the Greek Orthodox Church, and lost his children, as has been previously stated. He failed in securing their restitution at the hands of the Tzar, who said that "No Prince of the Russian Empire should ever be brought up in the pernicious faith espoused by Prince Hilkov, if he could prevent it." The Prince was banished to the Caucasus, where he lived among the Doukhobors. From this short sketch it will be seen how closely his sympathies and interests are identified with theirs.

In carrying on negotiations with the Canadian Government, Mr. Aylmer Maude and Prince Hilkov were assisted by the Society of Friends in Philadelphia and in other places, and Count Leo Tolstoi himself contributed $17,000 by the sale of some of his publications.

Owing to its importance as an historic document, the following circular letter published at this time by Count Tolstoi is worthy of reproduction :—

I happen to know the details of the persecutions and sufferings of these people ; I am in communication with them, and they ask me to help them. Therefore I consider it my duty to address myself to all good people, whether Russian or not Russian, asking them to help the Doukhobortsi out of the terrible position in which they now are. I have attempted to address myself, through the medium of a Russian newspaper, to the Russian public, but do not know yet whether my appeal will be published or not ; and I now address myself once more to all sympathizers, asking for their assistance—(1) in the form of money, of which much will be needed for the removal of ten thousand people to a distant place ; and (2) in the form of advice and guidance in the difficulties of the coming emigration of people who do not understand any foreign language, and have never been out of Russia before.

I trust that the leading authorities of the Russian Government will not prevent such assistance being rendered, and that they will check the excessive zeal of the Caucasion administration, which is, at the present moment, not admitting any communication whatever with the Doukhobortsi.

In the meantime, I offer to act as intermediary to all those who are anxious to help the Doukhobortsi, and who wish to enter into communication with them, for until the present my communications with them have not been interrupted. My address is Moscow, Hamovnichesky, Pereoulok, 21.

Communications upon this subject may, for greater safety, be sent to me through the medium of my friend, Vladimir Tchertkov, now living in England, who will be glad to furnish further details, and the latest information on the subject, in answer to any inquiries addressed to him at Purleigh, Essex.

April 1st, 1898. LEO TOLSTOI.

Meanwhile, Mr. Aylmer Maude and Prince Hilkov continued their negotiations with the Canadian Government. They had an interview with the Minister of the Interior, and on October 5th, 1898, a memorandum was signed.

In concluding this agreement, the representatives of the Doukhobors justified their recommendation of Canada as a place to settle in by saying: "The case seems to be that Canada is as free as any country in the world." This will be found in a letter which Mr. Aylmer Maude wrote to Mr. V. Tchertkov in England at this time.

Everything was now ready for the exodus. The Society of Friends in England had done nobly, having raised a guarantee fund of $80,000, and the result was that 7,500 Doukhobors were brought out. Of these, 4,000 had the resources to bring them out, and 2,200 needed practically everything, the persecutions to which they had been subjected in Russia having resulted in their complete impoverishment.

The Canadian Government gave them free grants of land on which to settle.

There is an incident in connection with their departure from their Caucasian homes which is very characteristic of their consideration for others—not only for their own brethren, but for their oppressors—and it furnishes a startling comment on the character of a people who, after a century of the fiercest persecution, with their homes repeatedly destroyed and their belongings scattered, could still leave the land of their travail in such a remarkable manner.

Prince Hilkov is authority for the statement that "When they abandoned their cottages and houses, scattered through the Caucasian villages, these were left in a neat and tidy condition, and in each were arranged a table, two chairs, two loaves of bread, and a jug of water, so that any one who might come to them hungry would not go away unsatisfied."

Under such auspices and in such a spirit did these oppressed people trek, not to some distant part of their native land, to which, in spite of their sufferings, they were endeared, but to a land very far off, to reach which they, a simple and primitive people, who had known no travel but land trek, had to cross 4,000 miles of ocean, reaching foreign soil and plunging at once into the environment of a civilization of which they knew nothing, and into the society of a people whose manners and customs, whose modes of thought and system of government, were alien to anything the Doukhobors had met with. They came to escape persecution and to save their lives, for they had lost all else. They came in simple faith, and in the firm belief that they had for ever left behind them, not only the Russian knout, but all that it typifies of intolerance and inhumanity. They were assured by their leaders that Canada was a land of freedom in the sense that they would be unfettered and would not know interference; that they would be free to practise their religious observances, and to give effect to their most scrupulous convictions.

How far their expectations have been realized it remains to be told. How far they were misled, or, without being misled, were left in the dark as to the obligations they would necessarily assume in the country of their adoption, may be profitably discussed in subsequent chapters; but in order to get the right conception of their present attitude, it is indispensable that one should become possessed of their views and beliefs at the moment of their entering this phase in their history.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOUKHOBORS IN CANADA.

PART I.—SETTLEMENT IN SASKATCHEWAN.

Conditions of Entry—Capitation Grant and Exemption from Military Service—Order in Council Granting Exemption—Previous Exemption to Quakers, Mennonites, or Tunkers, under section 21, Dominion "Militia Act"—Land Reservation for Doukhobors—Hardships Endured during the First Winter in Saskatchewan—Society of Friends to the Rescue—Supplies Distributed by Dominion Government—Vagaries of Early Days—Notorious Yorkton Pilgrimage—Sensational Press Stories—Temperate Defence in Columns of *Montreal Weekly Witness*—Verigin sent for by Canadian Government—Arrival of Peter Verigin and Affecting Interview with his Sister—Relations with Dominion Government—Disregard of Registration Laws and "Schools Act"—No Prosecutions Instituted by Saskatchewan Government—Opinion of Mr. Robert Buchanan.

It was in September, 1898, that arrangements were completed for bringing the Doukhobors to Canada. These arrangements had been the subject of lengthy negotiation between V. Tchertkov, Aylmer Maude, Prince Hilkov, and representatives of the Canadian Government.

In order to understand the situation thoroughly, it will be necessary to deal in some detail with the evidence of Peter Verigin, given before the Commission at Nelson; but this can better be dealt with in a later chapter, when the difficulties that have arisen in British Columbia come to be considered, especially as Verigin did not accompany the first party of Doukhobors to Canada, he being still in exile in Siberia.

Perhaps at this stage the most important matter to consider is the conditions upon which the Canadian Government agreed to receive the Doukhobors and to assist them to settle.

First of all, with reference to land settlement: This matter had been very carefully looked into by representatives of the Doukhobors, and certain areas in Saskatchewan had been selected.

The original agreement with the Dominion Government was very brief, and dealt only with the immediate necessities of the case. It is dated October 5th, 1898, and reads thus:—

(1.) Those responsible for the organization of the emigration to receive the usual bonus of five dollars per adult, children counting half.

(2.) A further grant of one dollar and fifty cents for each man, woman, and child settled, towards organization and transportation expenses.

(3.) The use of the Immigration Halls in Manitoba and the North-west granted during the winter months.

The only other document bearing upon the admission of the Doukhobors is one which has excited a great deal of attention, dealing as it does with the question of military service.

There is no doubt, both from the contents of the memorandum and from the evidence of Peter Verigin, that exemption from military service was made a *sine qua non* by those who were representing the Doukhobors. The best evidence of this is to be found in the following memorandum:—

EXTRACT FROM A REPORT OF A COMMITTEE OF THE HONOURABLE THE PRIVY COUNCIL, APPROVED BY HIS EXCELLENCY ON DECEMBER 6TH, 1898.

On a report, dated November 30th, 1898, from the Minister of the Interior, stating that arrangements have been completed with Mr. Aylmer Maude, of London, England, the representative of the sect of Russians known as Doukhobors, who now inhabit the slopes of the Caucasus in Russia, for the immediate emigration to Canada of several thousands of these people. That from a dispatch dated May 27th, 1898, addressed to the Foreign Office by Her Majesty's Consul at Batoum, it would appear that since their settlement in the region of the Caucasus the Doukhobors have by their good behaviour, diligence, sobriety, and hard-working qualities brought nothing but prosperity to the barren localities in which they were originally settled, but as from religious doctrines they are averse to bearing arms, an exception which the Russian Government has refused to countenance, they have been permitted by the latter to depart from Russia.

The Minister, under the circumstances, and considering that the Doukhobors would appear to be a most desirable class of settlers to locate upon the vacant Dominion lands in Manitoba and the North-west Territories, is of opinion that it is important to give them the fullest assurance of absolute immunity from military service in the event of their settling in the country.

The Minister submits that subsection (3) of section 21 of the "Militia Act," chapter 41 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, contains the following provision:—

"Every person bearing a certificate from the Society of Quakers, Mennonites, or Tunkers, and every inhabitant of Canada of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military duty, who, from doctrines of his religion, is averse to bearing arms and refuses personal military service, shall be exempt from such service when balloted in times of peace or war upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Governor in Council from time to time prescribes."

The Minister recommends that, under the power vested in Your Excellency in Council by the above provision, the Doukhobors settling permanently in Canada be exempted, unconditionally, from service in the Militia, upon the production in each case of a certificate of membership from the proper authorities of their Community.

The Committee submit the same for Your Excellency's approval.

JOHN MCGHEE,
Clerk of the Privy Council.

The recommendation of the Minister was acceded to, the exemption was granted, and the Order in Council was printed in the Russian language and circulated among the Doukhobors.

It is not surprising that this exemption was sought, because much of the persecution to which they had been subjected in Russia was due to their resistance to military service. It was in connection with this resistance that their leader, Peter Verigin, was charged with rebellion, and exiled; and it was in connection with the burning of their arms that they were subjected to the grossest cruelties at the hands of the Cossacks.

Having adopted in its entirety the programme outlined by Peter Verigin, which involved the rigid observance of the traditional law of the Doukhobor which prohibited killing, it could not be otherwise than that, upon entering a new country, and a country which they regarded as the freest in the world, they should have required some absolute guarantee on this point.

Yet it is interesting, as illustrating the trend of their mind, that this guarantee was not sought before their admission, or even at the time of their landing. It was not until three months after they had reached Canada that the representations of their leaders were pressed upon the Government and the Order in Council obtained.

It is in evidence before the present Commission that the Doukhobors had taken everything "on faith," believed that they would be subject to no interference, and that no requirements alien to their religious beliefs would be made upon them; but after reaching Canada they quickly learned that there *was* such a thing as military service; and, fearing that in the event of war breaking out they might be compelled to join the army, they took the necessary steps to secure exemption.

No doubt the Government of the day was actuated by a spirit of fairness, and a desire to conciliate a large body of people who had proved themselves to be expert farmers, and who in this respect constituted the most desirable class of settlers Canada could have.

This policy found some support in the fact that there was already in existence an exemption clause (section 21 of the Dominion "Militia Act") which granted similar exemption to Quakers, Mennonites, or Tunkers, and other inhabitants of Canada of any religious denomination otherwise subject to military duty who, through the doctrines of their religion, are averse to bearing arms and refuse military service.

There will be a very wide difference of opinion as to the wisdom of granting such exemptions. While no one wishes to trample upon the beliefs of his fellow, or to curtail the privileges of those who live in a country which justly boasts of its freedom, it is very doubtful whether it is a wise policy to grant the privileges of citizenship and the protection of the Government to settlers who are not willing to assume all the responsibilities of citizenship and to take their full share of whatever sacrifice may be involved in defending the country of their adoption. It is certain that the granting of such exemptions opens the door to widespread dissatisfaction; and, if the number of exemptions should reach beyond a negligible quantity, there will be a general demand for the rescinding of any legislation or Order in Council according this privilege.

The Dominion Government set aside 270,480 acres of prairie land for the 7,361 Doukhobors who came to Canada. It may be interesting to note that of this 7,361, 1,500 were men.

The bulk of this tract was located about seventy-five miles north of Yorkton; but the most western settlement, on Duck Lake, was 300 miles away.

They at once settled on the land, began to collect all the light timber that was available, and to build houses. They were furnished with seed, and lost no time in ploughing and sowing.

Their methods brought them under severe criticism from the first, although an unbiased consideration of the subject would have led to the conclusion that some of the vagaries in which they indulged were not due to craziness, or even stubbornness, but rather to the new condition and environment with which they were not familiar, and the lack of suitable appliances.

For instance, much has been made of the fact that in the early days of settlement women were yoked to the plough—as many as twenty of them performing the work usually done by horses. But it must be remembered that at this time the Doukhobors had no horses; and that, although it may have been considered an unwomanly occupation, it reflects no little credit upon their courage and determination that they should have been willing to subject themselves to this arduous toil rather than run the risk of failing in the first season's crop. It is admitted that if they had not done this there would have been a scarcity of bread during the ensuing winter. Within a few weeks, more than 100 acres were thus ploughed and sowed without any injury to the women.

The fact of the matter is that everybody—men, women, and children—turned their hand to do whatever was necessary. The women also helped to build the houses, doing most of the plastering of the walls with their own hands.

On the first visit of a Government official to the Thunder Hill Settlement, shortly after these villages were laid out, he reported most favourably on the work that had been done. Not only were the houses well built and well plastered, but the furniture was all home-made, and consisted of rough stools to sit on, higher benches which served as tables, and bedsteads made of a series of poplar poles laid close together along the walls; on these hay was laid, and over all a piece of thick felt.

It was no palace of luxury to which these long-suffering people came, but they never complained; and they tackled the problem of carving their simple fortunes out of the prairie in the most practical and cheerful manner.

In each house they erected a Russian oven, which served the double purpose of warming the house and cooking the food. Each village was provided with a steam bath-house, steam being generated by pouring water on heated stones. From the first the Doukhobors were distinguished by their cleanly habits.

Each room had a window and a door, but ventilation played a very small part in their domestic economy.

All their clothing was made by themselves, and it has been estimated that the cost of living averaged about $2 per head per month.

Released from the fear of persecution, the Doukhobor Communities in Canada quickly established a reputation for cheerfulness, and whether at work or resting in the home, they were constantly singing or chanting their psalms.

In the earliest days of the Settlement most of the men had to go to work on railway-construction in order to earn a little money, for, so far as money was concerned, the new settlers were almost destitute. All the money thus earned was carefully hoarded, found its way to a common fund, and speedily became available for the benefit of the whole Community.

All this time Peter Verigin was in exile in Siberia, but he never lost touch with the Community, and at one of their many religious services a letter was read from him, in which he exhorted his people to remain firm in their belief; to remember always their God and their fathers' God; to teach their children to learn the commandments and to read the glorious psalms of David; but, above all, to learn to love their brethren. They must not only love one another, but must love their enemies, doing good to them that would despitefully use and persecute them.

The first winter was a hard one for the Doukhobors, and they had to appeal to the Society of Friends to help them out. They had been practically stranded in the midst of a vast continent, with a short summer, and the chilling frost of winter already approaching, and they had but two weeks' supply of bread.

The Society of Friends came to their aid, and provisions were forwarded to the colonists and distributed only just in time to prevent them from starving. Supplies were assembled at Yorkton. A car-load of sugar, four cars of cornmeal, one of rolled oats, one of onions, and several car-loads of potatoes were distributed throughout the fifty-seven villages which had been formed. Wool, yarn, leather, and lamps were forwarded from Philadelphia, also tea and linseed-oil, of which the Doukhobors are very fond. Three hundred spinning-wheels were also purchased, as well as forty-nine cows and ten yoke of oxen. A car of supplies intended especially for the sick, aged, and the younger children was particularly appreciated.

It may be interesting to mention that among the earliest settlers in Saskatchewan was the venerable Anastasia Verigin, mother of Peter Verigin, who at the time of her arrival was eighty years of age. At that time she had six sons in exile, of whom Peter was the most notable.

Settlement and land-cultivation proceeded apace. Once the rigours and privations of the first winter were passed and the earth began to yield her increase, conditions improved. The contributions of the many friends of the Doukhobors on the outside had tided them over their initial difficulty, and in the spring of the following year, and of many subsequent years, large sums of money were earned by the men on the outside, most of which was turned in to the communal coffers.

All went on well until the fall of 1902, when a most unfortunate occurrence took place, and one which, more than anything else, has brought the Doukhobors into disfavour, and caused them to be branded as irresponsible fanatics.

Several hundred Doukhobors—men and women—from the Yorkton Colony, having been influenced by a religious fanatic who did not originally belong to their Community, and who posed as a prophet, became the subject of a "craze" which may, perhaps, be fitly defined as hysteria. They started on a pilgrimage, first stripping themselves of all clothing. They marched, in bitter weather and with snow on the ground, some thirty or forty miles to Yorkton, where the women and children were detained by the authorities and housed and fed by the residents, while the men persisted on their march to Winnipeg, getting as far as Minnedosa, some 150 miles distant. From this point they were brought back on a special train and returned to their homes.

It is only fair to say that the pilgrimage was confined to the small number stated, and that the vast majority of the Doukhobors, in Yorkton and other Colonies, had no sympathy with the movement.

Naturally, the press, in search of a sensational story, published grossly exaggerated reports of the march, and so fastened on this well-meaning but deluded people a reproach which has not yet been entirly removed.

The fanatics who took part in this movement professed that they were "Looking for the Second Coming of Christ," and that they went out to find Him, believing that they would find Him on the prairie, and that He would lead them forth to evangelize the world.

The account has been so widely read that it is not necessary to deal with it further, except to emphasize the fact that the handful of fanatics who took part in it could in no sense be regarded as representative of the Community as a whole; that their acts were disavowed at the time by their fellows; and that, in giving evidence at Nelson before the present Commission, Peter Verigin denounced them in strong terms, and declared that they were religious fanatics.

Still, it must be remembered that many times in their history the Doukhobors have been the subjects of religious hysteria, and have "broken out" in various ways, although, perhaps, in no case quite so extravagantly as in the one under consideration.

Nor was this fanatical pilgrimage the only vagary in which they indulged, for shortly before the religious agitation among the Yorkton and Swan River colonists, they refused to work their horses or to milk their cows, turning them loose on the prairie. They refused to wear anything that had an animal origin. They discarded their leather boots and wore rubbers. They would not eat butter, eggs, or indeed any article of food connected, however remotely, with an animal.

One would have to be profoundly versed in the pyschology of this strange people to fully understand the impelling motive of their extravagant conduct; but some allowances must surely be made for the fact that they have been transplanted into a new country, with a different climate developing extreme rigours, and with all the traditions of life as different from what they had been accustomed to as it is possible to conceive. Then, remembering that they are of simple mind, and little more than grown-up children, placing implicit faith in their leaders, it is hardly open to doubt that they had painted with too roseate anticipations the new life to which they were travelling. They expected exemption from many things besides military service, and especially exemption from such bodily discomfort, privation, and hardship as they were compelled to endure during the first winter.

It may not appear to be of serious importance, but it is, nevertheless, a matter of record that the Doukhobors suffered greatly from the onslaught of mosquitoes, an insect with which they were entirely unfamiliar, and which tortured them in the earlier years of their settlement in Saskatchewan.

There can be little doubt that the testimony of Peter Verigin must be accepted when he states that it was this combination of circumstances, inducing nervousness, restlessness, and some discontent, all fanned by an irresponsible fanatic, which led to most of the vagaries in which the Doukhobors indulged at this time.

The *Montreal Weekly Witness*, one of the most sincere and reliable journals in the Dominion, spoke in noble defence of the Doukhobors, and in its issue of October 6th, 1902, said :—

> We do not censure the Puritans as a class because there were many religious fanatics among them. To censure the Doukhobors just because a minority of them are religious fanatics is as unjust as the Doukhobors themselves are in judging Canadians by the more uncivilized minority of our people whom they occasionally see on the frontiers of our civilization in the West.
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> Just as every Anglo-Saxon "craze" runs its course, declines and disappears, so will it be with this fanatical exuberance of the Doukhobortsi.

The craze had passed, and that rapidly, for even a month later the Government Agent was able to report that the Doukhobors had returned to their respective villages, were occupying their former homes, and that all arrangements had been made for their comfortable wintering.

On their way back from this march, the Doukhobors so far abandoned their objections to horses that they purchased a number and set them to work.

Perhaps the comment of Mr. J. Obed Smith, the Commissioner of Immigration, on this incident summarizes the opinion of a man well able to judge. In the *Manitoba Free Press* of September 23rd, 1902, he says :—

> The Doukhobors have been dealt with from the standpoint that they would and do form a most valuable acquisition to Canada, and are much-needed settlers of our vacant lands. To those who are disposed to criticize the presence of the Doukhobors I would say that the sociological condition of these people (except the few who have imbibed strange notions) before coming to Canada, and now, must be taken into consideration, and results will prove from that standpoint alone the real value to the country of the Community of Christian Brotherhood, as the Doukhobors delight to call themselves.

The troubles above referred to, combined with the slow progress made in actually cultivating the land, occasioned the Dominion Government considerable anxiety. They felt that they had no guarantee that there might not be a repetition of the scenes that had caused so much trouble, and they wisely came to the conclusion that the best thing to do was, if possible, to get Peter Verigin to Canada.

Many influences had to be invoked before this could be effected. He still had some years of his Siberian sentence to serve, but it is understood that the same august personages who had rendered their assistance in securing the consent of the Tzar to the exodus of the Doukhobors again came to the rescue, for permission was given for Peter Verigin to leave Russia and join his co-religionists in Canada.

The *Manitoba Free Press* of November 23rd, 1902, gave a graphic account of the long-looked-for arrival of the Doukhobor leader. It said :—

For hours before the train from the East pulled in yesterday afternoon, a woman promenaded the platform awaiting its arrival. She was awaiting her brother, whom she had not seen for fifteen years. When, a little before 3 o'clock, the train drew in, there alighted from one of the coaches a tall, quiet-looking man, carrying a black-leather valise studded with nickel bosses arranged in curious design. A dark-blue baberdine reached half-way to the knees ; over his trousers were fastened close-fitting, dark-grey leggings, piped at the edges with black cloth. His head-gear was a black Fedora. Around his neck he wore a long cord, fastened to which were a heavy silver watch and a richly chased gold pencil. Alongside the watch-pocket was a fountain pen, secured by loops of the cloth.

The traveller was Peter Verigin, newly come to Canada after fifteen years of Siberian exile. The woman was his sister.

In the crush of Christmas travel it was some time before those looking for the new arrival could find the object of their search. Accompanied by Interpreter Harvey, who had gone East to meet Verigin, and by Ewan Ivan, Paul Planidin, and Simeon Riibin, three Doukhobors who had been deputed by the Communities to extend to the Doukhobor leader a welcome on his arrival, Verigin walked eastward along the platform.

His sister saw him standing half a head taller than the average, and ran towards him, followed by the other waiting Doukhobors, with joyful cries. Verigin dropped his valise, took off his hat, opened his arms, and cried "Anna !" He kissed his sister and the others, and quietly walked on toward the Immigration Buildings, being introduced on the way to Mr. H. P. Archer, of Swan River ; to Immigration Agent Crerar, of Yorkton—both of whom had been for days in the city awaiting his coming ; to Mrs. Almanavsky, who acted as interpreter, and to the *Free Press* representative.

On the party's arriving at the Immigration Buildings, Verigin was shown the room set apart for his use. Here he spent a little time chatting with his sister and friends, inquiring after his mother, who is eighty-six years of age, and who lives at Poterpevshe Village with his sister, whose full name is Anna Vasilievna Podovinnikov. Then, after the baggage had been packed away and the foregoing domestic inquiries made, the party moved downstairs to Acting-Commissioner Moffatt's office.

Mr. Moffatt greeted Virigin warmly, welcoming him to the West in the name of the Dominion authorities. In answer to his inquiries as to his voyage, Verigin said it was a long journey—good, but rough. He had sailed from Liverpool, after crossing Europe from Moscow to Warsaw, and thence to England.

"You'll be glad to be in a country," said Mr. Moffatt, "where there is religious and individual freedom."

"I haven't looked round yet," answered Verigin, through the interpreter, "so I cannot tell whether this is a free country or not."

"You know, however," said Mr. Moffatt, "that in Canada we do not put people in prison because of their political or religious views."

"Oh, yes," answered Verigin, "I know that."

"People have been looking for your coming for a long time," said Agent Crerar. "There are three hundred Doukhobors at Yorkton Station, watching every train for you. And there is one person very anxious to see you—your mother."

Verigin had up to this time been quietly courteous and dignified ; but here his manner underwent a change, becoming alertly interested.

"Did you see my mother ; yes ?" he asked. "When did you see her ? Was she well ?"

Mr. Crerar satisfied him on these points, and then Verigin asked him when the train would take him there.

"I am in a hurry to see my mother," he said. "There is no train till to-morrow ; yes? I would go to-day if I could ; yes ?"

Then he realized that perhaps he might be taking up too much of the Commissioner's time.

"Shall I see you again ; yes ?" he asked. "You are perhaps now too occupied."

Being assured on this point, Mr. Moffatt asked him concerning his visit to Ottawa.

"I couldn't talk much business," he said, "for I have not seen the Doukhobors. For myself, I know nothing of their troubles—only what I have heard. They tell me the people would not take up their homestead lands."

"Did you hear of the pilgrimage ?" asked Mr. Crerar, "and the action taken by the Government to prevent the pilgrims being frozen to death ?"

"I have not heard any particulars," answered Verigin. "It was in print in the Russian papers. They said that two hundred people were frozen to death."

Mr. Crerar told him that this was entirely false. Pointing to the *Free Press* representative, who was the only newspaper man present at the interview, Mr. Crerar told Verigin that he had accompanied the pilgrims throughout their wanderings, and personally knew of all the facts in connection therewith.

"Is that so; yes?" said Verigin. "I shall have much to ask him."

It was evident that he would make no statement as to his future actions, or the counsel he would give the Doukhobors, who for months have been anxiously awaiting his coming, till he had personally familiarized himself with every phase of the situation. Mr. Moffatt, indeed, and wisely, did not attempt to draw from Verigin any statement.

"You will know all about the troubles the Government has had with the Doukhobors," he said, "when you get among them. We hope your coming may have a very good effect. We will do anything possible to help you. You must be tired after your long journey. And you must be hungry. So now I'll say good-bye to you, and wish you a safe journey to your mother to-morrow."

Verigin listened gravely, and when this was translated, rose and shook hands with the Commissioner.

"I thank you much," he said. "I hope my coming may be good. I hope so, indeed," and so he went upstairs to his room.

The interest in the Doukhobor Settlements in Saskatchewan, so far as the present inquiry is concerned, rests, first of all, upon their relations with the Dominion Government; secondly, upon their attitude toward the laws of the country; and, thirdly, upon their material advancement.

Their relations with the Government can never be said to have been satisfactory, because from the first it was obvious that there was a misconception on the part of the Doukhobors as to the privileges to be accorded to them. The matter of military service had been satisfactorily cleared up, but nothing had been said about the observance of the registration laws or compliance with the "Schools Act," and yet it was manifest from the very first that the Doukhobors would assume an attitude of indifference, if not of open hostility, to both.

It is not intended in this chapter to analyse the reasons upon which the Doukhobors based their refusal to comply with the laws. This can be better dealt with when considering the evidence of Peter Verigin and other Doukhobor leaders before the Commission.

Suffice it to say, here, that at no time during their residence in Saskatchewan was there any compliance on the part of Community Doukhobors with the registration laws or the "Schools Act."

There was, it is true, a colourable compliance with the latter, when for a short time the Settlement at Spirit Lake, near Buchanan, was provided with a school building, and two Quaker ladies were brought in by the Doukhobors to teach the children. But the arrangement fell through in a very short time through lack of interest, and because the Doukhobors were obviously unwilling to support it. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the leaders, including Peter Verigin, were not favourable to the scheme, because it is equally difficult to believe that, if they had favoured it, it would not have been persevered in.

The fact that the Society of Friends, which had done so much to establish the Doukhobors in Canada, favoured education had no weight. And, whilst concluding that the leaders could not have exercised their influence in favour of observing the "Schools Act," it is only fair to Peter Verigin to place on record the fact that before leaving Russia he wrote a letter to the Community in Saskatchewan, advising them to submit to elementary education.

It is difficult to decide exactly where the blame lies. It is quite conceivable that on the subject of education there was indifference among the rank and file, and when the reasons for this can be considered it will be understood; but it is, all the same, hard to believe that leaders who were able to exact such implicit obedience from their followers in other matters could not have secured a reasonable compliance with the law in this respect.

It is to be feared that the attitude of the Doukhobors on these as well as other important matters is due, in no small degree, to the persecution they have suffered, and their lack of confidence in the *bona fides* of all forms of government.

A people who think they have come, in spiritual descent at least, from the three children of Israel who came out of the fiery furnace without the smell of fire on their garments, and who believe the mission of evangelizing the world has been committed to them because they have the oracles of God—such a people are not likely to be led out of their mental darkness without offending their conscious convictions.

It must not, however, be supposed that, because this misguided people refuse elementary education for their children, they do not give them the best of home training.

The children are intelligent, respective, and observant. The home life is almost ideal. They are taught all the cardinal virtues with which most of us, as children, were acquainted, but which are now too often regarded as old-fashioned—such as obedience, reverence, industry, and thrift; and it is not a little to the credit of their parents to find that the chief objection they entertain to education is the fear that secular teaching may undermine the religious spirit.

Whilst dealing with the subject of observance of law, it should be pointed out that all non-Community Doukhobors—viz., those who, for reasons which will afterwards be considered, have left the Community and lead an independent life—comply with the registration laws and the "Schools Act" without the slightest demur; and as the number of these people is considerable, the fact is not without very great significance.

In dealing with this branch of the subject, it is desirable to point out that the Government of Saskatchewan made no attempt to enforce the laws referred to, or to prosecute the Doukhobors for infringement of their provisions.

The Commissioner discussed this matter fully with Mr. Robert Buchanan, an ex-member of the local Legislature, and a man who has had extensive dealings with the Doukhobors, and is probably better acquainted with them than any one else in the North-west.

Mr. Buchanan is a school trustee for his division, and stated that, beyond arguing with the Doukhobors, and urging them both to register and to send their children to school, no other steps had been taken, and he did not feel called upon, having regard to their general excellence of character, to resort to extreme measures, especially as he contemplated the ultimate breaking-up of the whole of the community system, and believed that the result would be the same as in the case of those individuals who had already left—a full compliance with the laws.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOUKHOBORS IN CANADA.

PART II.—HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY IN SASKATCHEWAN.

Trouble about Land Laws and Homestead Entries—Objection of Doukhobors to make Individual Entries—Dominion Land Commission—Cancellation of all Previous Entries and Demand for New Registrations—Change of Attitude towards Doukhobors by New Minister of the Interior, Mr. Frank Oliver—Transcript of Evidence of Peter Verigin before Commission, Dealing with his Agreement with Mr. Sifton—Defection of upwards of 1,000 Doukhobors, who Left Community and made Individual Entries—Independent Doukhobors Comply with all Laws—Disaffection within the Community—Younger Generation Seeking more Liberty—Account-books of Community—Accumulation of Communal Wealth—Favourable Impression of Doukhobors Created on Minds of Canadian Settlers—Valuable Views of Dr. Patrick, of Yorkton, on Character and Conduct of Doukhobors—Report of Peter Verigin and Nicholas Ziberoff, Advising Exodus to British Columbia—Departure of two Contingents from Verigin and Buchanan, Witnessed by Commissioner in October, 1912.

The real foundation for the trouble which ultimately led to such strained relations with the Dominion Government was in connection with the land settlement and titles. It is not necessary to go into all the details of this question. The trouble arose from the fact that, while, in the first instance, the Doukhobors were allowed to settle *en masse* on certain reserved lands, they never grasped the idea that they would ultimately have to comply with the land laws by making individual entries for each holding.

It is possible that a means would have been devised to obviate this necessity if matters had progressed satisfactorily from the first, but one trouble after another brought things to a head, and it was not long before the attention of the Community was drawn to the detailed requirements of the land laws of the Dominion.

The Doukhobors wished to retain their holdings as a Community; the Government insisted on individual entries. After considerable delay and much misunderstanding, a Commission was ultimately appointed to investigate the whole question of the Doukhobor land-holdings. Formerly, Peter Verigin had been allowed by the Land Office in Yorkton to make wholesale entries for individual Doukhobors, members of the Community. The result of the Commission was generally to condemn this system of entries, and to advise that re-entries should be made of the whole property.

The Community never recovered from the enforcement of this policy, and to the end fo their residence in Saskatchewan it continued to be not merely a bone of contention, but one of their strongest grounds of dissatisfaction.

After the lapse of eight years, Mr. Sifton, who was Minister of the Interior at the time the Doukhobors came to Canada, had been succeeded by Mr. Frank Oliver. Soon after that gentleman's assuming office, he took up with Peter Verigin the question of the naturalization as British subjects of the Doukhobors. Mr. Verigin pointed out to him that when the Doukhobors came to Canada this subject had been discussed, and they had received the assurance of the Minister that they need not be naturalized, and would never be required to take the oath. Mr. Oliver, on the other hand, pointed out that public opinion had undergone a change, and that the vagaries of the Doukhobors had led to the determination that they must be called upon to line up with the other citizens of the Dominion in this regard, and, at any rate, if they failed to do so, they could not be allowed to retain their land-holdings. Mr. Verigin regarded this, and charged it, as a breach of faith, but Mr. Oliver, while complaisant for a time, stood to his guns; and as the Doukhobors refused to yield, the result was that all who failed to make individual entries and become naturalized British subjects were deprived of their holdings and allowed to settle upon 15 acres of land for each member of the family, but no title was given to this land, which constituted them tenants at will.

The effect of this decision, when carried out in 1907, was to deprive the Community Doukhobors of 100,000 acres of land, much of which was under cultivation, and for all of which they paid at the statutory rate of $10 a homestead.

One can easily understand the spirit of resentment which this engendered among them, and it is not difficult to believe that it was at this stage that they first conceived the idea of leaving Saskatchewan and locating elsewhere.

In order to understand the exact position as it appears to the Doukhobors, it may be well at this point to quote from Peter Verigin's evidence, given before the Commission at Nelson:—

Mr. Verigin: The Minister of the Interior greeted me and said: "We are waiting impatiently for you on account of the Doukhobors. Come quick to the Doukhobor Settlement and pacify them."

Q.—What was the matter?

A.—I felt confused. I did not expect the Minister to come to me, to give me such a position; this was against my religious principles to take a position to pacify my countryman. The first time when I came to Saskatchewan a thousand people went to make an open propaganda on behalf of the religion of Jesus Christ. I met them there, and gave them my opinion, and told them they should live together for a little time. Then I learned the laws of Canada, that every one is given 160 acres of land. I asked the Doukhobors: "Did you accept that 160 acres?" They said "No." "Why?" "We do not like the climate; they brought them to a very bad place and left them there in a terrible lot of mosquitoes." Still I thought it was better to take something and go to work at once; I thought we had to support the Minister of the Interior, that we should respect his word. We had to put on our names, but it was very hard, so we put on only three names of our brethren for the land, Nicholas Ziberoff and Paul Pleneta.

Q.—Those three names stood for all the land taken in Saskatchewan?

A.—Yes; two thousand homesteads. He warned this Government that the people would not be subject to the British Government, and they should know that. They said: "That is all right; you will pay $10 for each homestead and you will be given the land." The Doukhobors positively told them they wanted to remain farmers, not to be subjects of the British Government. I warned the British Government that they should not spoil the land; there should not be any misunderstanding in the future.

Q.—Now, I want to know who he gave that warning to?

A.—Mr. Obed Smith, the Commissioner at Winnipeg; and then I was in Ottawa several times and saw the Minister, and spoke to him about it.

Q.—What Minister?

A.—The Minister of the Interior, Mr. Sifton.

Q.—He told Mr. Obed Smith, the Immigration Commissioner, and the Hon. Mr. Sifton, the Minister of the Interior, that the condition of the Doukhobors settling in this country was that they would remain foreigners——

Mr. Johnson: No, farmers.

Q.— ——and would not become British subjects?

A.—He expressed the opinion that the Doukhobors to the Government in order that there should be no misunderstanding.

Q.—He expressed his opinion concerning the Doukhobors in those words, in order that there might be no misunderstanding?

A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—Was this done by word of mouth or in writing?

A.—By word of mouth.

Q.—Was any such statement ever put in writing afterwards?

A.—No, never. They paid $20,000; they made such arrangements with the Government, and they paid $20,000 cash and they left them there. They made $20,000 on the railways there and paid that to the Government.

Mr. Sherbinin: They did not have the money at the time, but they went on the railways and earned the money, and the women had been ploughing at the time.

Q.—Well, we have it that they notified the Government, both the Immigration Commissioner and the Minister of the Interior, of the attitude they meant to take up in this country. And then they paid their money and got the land. Now, let him go on with his story from that point.

A.—When the men went to work on the railways, making the $20,000 to pay the Government for the land, the women and the old men went to plough, twelve pair in a plough.

Q.—While the other men worked on the railway?

A.—Yes. After two years of such work we bought horses, and a part of the land was already cultivated, and we also bought machines and cultivated a considerable amount of land. After five years the Minister, Mr. Oliver, gave them the land. I met Mr. Oliver in Winnipeg, and Mr. Smith also. I wanted at that time to go to Russia and asked for letters of introduction. The Minister said: "All right." He says: "How are you going to Russia? Maybe you will remain in Russia." "Now," he said, "the people must become citizens. I want to give you your land." Mr. Smith said: "And here is the Minister, Mr. Oliver, here," and he says: "It must be decided on account of the citizenship before you go to Russia." The Minister said: "Well, that is not important, but," he says, "I do not understand why they should not become citizens." The Minister said: "It is immaterial, you can become citizens or you can not; please yourselves. What we want is that they should be free to do with themselves what they like, to be citizens or not."

Q.—Who said that?

A.—Mr. Oliver. For eight years they had the land in their possession; no question was raised about citizenship; still he said: "I do not understand why you should not become citizens." I had explained that to Mr. Sifton, but he was a new one, and then I explained it to the new Minister. From Mr. Sifton I had a paper to work not on the homesteads, but wherever it is the best.

Mr. Johnson: They allowed them to join several homesteads and get a patent for all by working on one.

Mr. Verigin: Mr. Oliver gave me a nice letter to Europe, but he said in Russia that letter will not be any good. Joking, you know.

Q.—What did he want that letter for?

A.—He says we do not recognize any passports; he says Mr. Oliver gave a letter of introduction simply in case I had some trouble.

Q.—What did he do with the letter?

A.—I did not use that letter; I was in Russia and saw there the Minister of the Interior, M. Stolypin, but did not show him that letter; he did not even ask about the passport. "Well," he says, "you go and you will come back, and we will consider the question of citizenship when you come back from Europe." In two months after I left Canada the Government sent a Commissioner, McDougall, and cancelled all their homesteads, and instead of each 160 acres they left 15 acres for each person.

Q.—Do I understand that the Government retook possession of the balance of the land?

A.—Yes; opened it for entry.

Q.—And had they paid for the whole amount? Yes.

Mr. Johnson: They had paid originally $10 for each homestead under agreement with Mr. Sifton.

Q.—When did that cancellation take place?

A.—About five years ago. The women Doukhobors told the Commissioner: "Aren't you ashamed to take away the land thus after we have been working so hard?" He said: "It is not my business, I was sent by the Government."

Q.—Had they cultivated the whole of this land?

A.—For the five years they had cultivated more than half.

Q.—Then most of the land that was taken away had actually been cultivated?

A.—Yes. I did not believe the letters I received from the Doukhobors after I was on such good terms with the Government; I would not believe that the Minister would deceive me; he said: "When you come back, then we will consider the question of citizenship." After I had been away two months the Commissioner came and demanded emphatically: "Accept citizenship or lose your land."

Mr. Johnson: The fact is they allowed the Doukhobors to take their pick of the cultivated land, and most of the land taken back was uncultivated land.

Q.—I did not understand that from him?

A.—We had the right to choose the land.

Q.—If they originally had 160 acres each, and they cultivated about half of that——

A.—More than half, more than 10,000 acres.

Q.— ——and they retained only 15 acres each, even if they selected that 15 acres from the best cultivated land, they would still be surrendering as much cultivated as uncultivated land.

A.—It was 15 acres per head, every soul got 15 acres.

Q.—Can you get from the witness the total amount of land that was originally taken up by the Community, and the total amount that was retained when a portion was taken from them?

A.—320,000 acres taken up; 100,000 taken back. We had meetings continually considering what is to be done; it was very hard to make a living on a farm of 15 acres. Then we took an interpreter and went to look for other land. We came to Nelson four years ago, three of us, and went to Waterloo, and now it is Brilliant. We bought that land.

But from the Community's standpoint these untoward events had an even more disastrous effect, for what with the disaffection which had sprung up on various grounds and the realization of the fact that titles could be acquired only by individual entries, upwards of 1,000 Doukhobors had left the Community and set up on their own account, taking advantage of the offer of the Government to become naturalized British subjects and acquire homesteads. They acquired land, established homes, began to accumulate wealth, and, at the time of the Commissioner's visit, in October last, were among the most prosperous and contented farmers in the North-west. While this could only be regarded as a calamity from the standpoint of the Community, it will probably be regarded in an entirely different light by the average Canadian.

For, however much we may deplore the breaking-up of the communal system in which the members enjoyed many advantages and worked out many social and economic problems, with a far more satisfactory result than is possible to the individual member of society, we cannot regard otherwise than with approbation the assimilating effect of Canadian influence and polity, and we cannot but view with satisfaction the addition of so large a percentage of the Doukhobor Community, with their high characters and splendid qualifications as settlers, to the farming community of the Dominion.

It should also be chronicled that, once free from the controlling influences of the Community, the independent Doukhobor not only complies with the registration laws and the "Schools Act," but abandons most of the restrictive features of communal life, without, however, losing his hold on the simplicity of faith which beforetime characterized him. The home life remains the same; the home training is persevered with on similiar lines. Thrift and industry are inculcated, simplicity is taught, and luxuries are tabooed; and while it is inevitable that the young people in particular should secure more liberty and enjoyment, there is no room for regarding the independent Doukhobor as in any general sense decadent.

Possibly the strongest factor in bringing about this disintegration of the Saskatchewan Communities rests on economic grounds, and is due to a different environment than that to which the Doukhobors had been accustomed. In Russia pressure was always from without. They had to stand as a solid phalanx against persecution. The only safety they knew lay within the fold; to wander outside was to be destroyed. But in Canada it is different. The freedom of our institutions was quickly discerned by them. They realized that if there might be some sternness, especially for the law-breaker, there would be no injustice.

Then they realized something which was even more potent to break down their communal walls; they learnt that they were living in the midst of a civilization that recognized the claims of a man to the fruits of his toil; they realized that the altruistic spirit, however good in itself, might be carried too far, or, at any rate, that they were required by their communal laws to labour hard from one year's end to another to support, at least in a partial degree, others who neither laboured as hard nor earned as much.

Then the young men in particular rebelled against a system under which every dollar they earned by the most strenuous toil on the outside must be paid to the Community. To be *good* Doukhobors they might not even retain a cent, and if they did so they were dishonest. But they could not move about among Canadians and work alongside them without realizing the hardship involved in surrendering the whole of their earnings.

In putting forward this view, I am not losing sight of the corresponding advantages of the communal system, which are very great, but I am seeking to state what is known to have influenced many of the Doukhobors, and especially the young men, when leaving the Community. It is hardly possible to conceive that this tendency will not develop, at any rate when one remembers that within thirteen years something like 20 per cent. of the Community in Saskatchewan have thus been influenced to leave it. It requires no wide stretch of the imagination to contemplate the ultimate disintegration of the whole Community.

This brings one to consider the material results of some thirteen years of settlement and labour on the part of the Doukhobor Communities in Saskatchewan. During the visit of the Commissioner to Verigin last October, he was enabled, through the courtesy of Mr. Verigin and Mr. Cazakoff, to inspect the books of the Community, when he found that, according to the schedules attached to the evidence in this Commission, the balance-sheet of the Community, dated August 13th, 1912, shows total assets of $332,300. This includes 12,500 acres of land, which the Community has purchased from private owners, principally from the Hudson's Bay Company, at $15 an acre.

This valuation does not include the property owned by the separate villages, which, although Community property, is administered by the villagers themselves. What the latter valuation might amount to is uncertain, although there is no reason to doubt that it would double that of the Central Fund.

During the same financial period—that is, the year ending August last—the total income of the Central Fund was $342,099.31, and the total expenditures $375,999.56. These figures show the extent of the property-holdings of the Community in Saskatchewan, and the amount of business done, although I am informed by competent authorities that the land-valuations in particular are very low, and that probably $40 per acre would be nearer the correct value than the $15 at which they were estimated.

The books of the Community are well kept; there is a ledger account for every individual, showing his contribution to the Central Fund, and a ledger account for each village, showing its dealings with the Central Fund. The Central Fund is administered under the direction of Peter Verigin and the management of Michael Cazakoff for the benefit of the whole Community, and really represents the Communal Fund. The village property, following the traditional custom of the Russian Mir, belongs to each individual village and is managed by a village committee.

The relation between the villages and the Central Fund is maintained by an annual levy, which at present stands at $200 per annum for each man. From this Central Fund all Community lands have been purchased, and by its means the exodus of the Doukhobors to British Columbia and their establishment in their new home there was financed.

It is four years since the first exodus took place, when something like 2,000 left Saskatchewan for British Columbia, In October last, when the Commissioner was at Verigin and Buchanan, we witnessed the departure of 2,000 more, and at the time of writing this Report there are only about 2,500 left in the Verigin District of Saskatchewan, whilst the total number in British Columbia may be set at 5,000.

The departure of these people was a sight never to be forgotten, especially when one recalled their history in Russia, the hardships they had endured, the treks they had been forced to make, and the restless spirit which had even pursued them. Only thirteen years ago they came to Canada as to a promised land. It was to be their El Dorado. They felt that they had reached the end of all their earthly troubles. They were to be subjected to no interference; they were to taste of a freedom of which they had heard and which they little understood. Peace, prosperity, and happiness lay in front of them, and while their acknowledged leader was working out his dreary term of imprisonment in the Province of Tobolst, Siberia, his aged mother was wistfully waiting in her new home at Verigin for the arrival of her son.

He came, and again the hopes of the Community rose. With his advent; with his cool, clever head and strong right arm; with his indomitable courage and fearless will, they would come to the end of the troubles which had already threatened to overwhelm them in the land of their adoption. He came. They acknowledged his leadership. The troubles he quelled were those of internal origin, and even these resisted him in part, and he lost many of his followers.

It was a strange sight, the conjunction of this world-old people, of strong and rugged frame, with child at breast and burden on back, with sturdy women and sturdier men, collecting a few household goods, lingering about the station platform for hours in a drizzling rain, packed with the utmost discomfort into the colonist cars of a long train, and whirled away a thousand miles to their new destination. No wonder that there were many tears and much distress, for, after all, home is home, and in one decade its joys and sorrows may consecrate it.

Once again, at the bidding of a leader, they were going out to a land which they knew not, except that the spies had brought a good report, and while those of us who read this report know that, so far as material conditions and surroundings are concerned, they were going to a more congenial clime and possibly to better prospects, it was impossible to suppress a feeling of profound sympathy for a people so often and so sorely tried.

And now, at the end of a little more than one decade, this people once more have to face another long "trek," with the same accompanying conditions as signalized their departure from the land of their birth and persecution, for in each case it meant the abandoning of home and land, and without compensation—the homes they had built, the land they had cultivated, must be left behind for the new-comer and they would reap no benefit.

Record must be made of the impression created on the minds of the Canadian farming community in Saskatchewan by their Doukhobor neighbours.

The Commissioner had many opportunities, during his visit last fall, to discuss this subject with leading men in Yorkton, Buchanan, and Prince Albert.

There was perfect unanimity of opinion as to the excellent character, the industry, the thrift, and the phenomenal farming skill of the Doukhobors. They were spoken of everywhere as kind, hospitable, and gentle, as never known to quarrel, or to break any of the laws, except the registration laws and the "Schools Act."

One of the leading citizens in Buchanan, in commenting on the breaking-up of the local Community, told the Commissioner that it was a sorry day for that section of the country to see the Doukhobors going away. Their little peculiarities had hurt nobody, and they were the best class of settlers he had ever met with.

The Commissioner also discussed the subject with a number of Canadian women, and found that they were most sympathetic towards their Doukhobor sisters. They spoke in the highest terms of their motherliness and affection, of their domestic virtues, and their devotion to religion.

Dr. Patrick, of Yorkton, who has had special opportunities of seeing these people from the time of their arrival in Saskatchewan, and who has frequently rendered them medical service, is enthusiastic in their praise, whilst fully alive to their limitations.

A reference to his evidence will show that he regards the key-note of their conduct as a refusal "to acknowledge obligation to any one outside his Community. He wants his own particular regulations, customs, laws, his own private law in the midst of the national law. He is led by a leader who is able and shrewd and quite willing to lead, and whom he believes to be a reincarnation of Jesus Christ. The mere fact that his leader may exhibit imperfections does not shake his belief in him, for there is a convenient Doukhobor doctrine that a certain amount of wickedness is necessary in their reincarnated Christ, to prevent a repetition of his crucifixion. So that, in dealing with the Doukhobors, we are dealing with a people whose conceptions are those of Russian peasants, and whose leader is their Ruler, or Tzar, by Divine right, and whose policy, no matter how contradictory or absurd it may appear to others, is to them divinely inspired."

Dr. Patrick's final comment upon the working of the community system in Saskatchewan is worthy of note. He says :—

> Possibly their rather extensive experiments in communism will ultimately redound to the benefit of the country, if only in the negative way of proving, once again, that community of lands and goods is possible only among celibates ; for, even among Doukhobors, the industrious and effective are not altogether content to contribute more than they withdraw in order that the indolent and ineffective may withdraw more than they contribute to the common wealth.

The most instructive comment which one may have on this latest exodus, which may be the last, is to read a paragraph from the report of the general meeting of the Doukhobor Community, held at Verigin, Saskatchewan, January 25th, 1910, which sets forth exactly what Peter Verigin and Nicholas Zibiroff, who had visited British Columbia in order to report to the Community, had to say about the Province to which they were taking them.

Nothing is said in this section of the reasons for leaving Saskatchewan, but these have been sufficiently canvassed in this chapter, and no one who has followed it will fail to understand why the last West trek of the Doukhobors was made. The section is as follows :—

> The question was raised before the meeting in regard to the emigration to British Columbia. It was definitely shown that in Saskatchewan, where the Doukhobors live at present, in consequence of wide prairies lying a considerable distance from the sea, the climate in winter is very dry and cold. Temperature is often 30° Reaumur, and therefore some sickness prevails, such as coughs and rheumatism. Emigration to British Columbia was decided as most necessary.
>
> A particular report of the British Columbia climate was submitted by Peter Verigin and by Nicholas Zibiroff, delegated from British Columbia. The first party of Community Doukhobors emigrated to British Columbia for the purpose of starting work and are living there for two years. They have found the climate exceedingly mild in winter, temperature not being over 15° Reaumur. This occurs about ten times all winter, but generally temperature is 3, 5, and 7 degrees below zero Reaumur, and sometimes 2, 3, and 7 above zero Reaumur.
>
> In consequence of the mountains, the water for drinking is very pure, and the air also is very clear and healthy. The reporter, Peter Verigin, is under the impression that the air and waters are similar to those in Switzerland in nature, and even much healthier. Therefore, with a view to becoming healthier, emigration to British Columbia has been decided and possibly sooner than intended.
>
> In British Columbia it is possible to grow fruits of nearly all kinds—apples, pears, plums, cherries, etc. Small fruits and vegetables are grown wonderfully well. The Community have already bought about 10,000 acres of fruit lands. There is splendid timber on it for building purposes.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DOUKHOBORS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Attractions of British Columbia—Favourable Climate and Fruit-growing Possibilities—Chances for Profitable Investment in Land—Advantages of Abundant Communal Labour—All Land Purchased from Private Individuals—Peter Verigin Claims this Gave Doukhobors Immunity from Observing Certain Laws—Total of 14,403 Acres Acquired at Cost of $646,017—Cost of Transferring Doukhobors to British Columbia Upwards of $200,000—Great Intelligence shown in Acquiring Knowledge of New Industry, Fruit-growing—Vineyard Successfully Established in the Open at Grand Forks—Verigin in Full Control, with Sherbinin and Zibiroff as Local Business Managers—Waterworks and Electric-light Systems Established—Sawmills Erected on all Settlements—Brickworks in Operation at Grand Forks—Jam-factory Purchased and Operated at Nelson—Doukhobors found Satisfactory in Business Relations—Refusal to Obey Registration Laws Leads to Prosecutions and Imprisonment of Doukhobors at Grand Forks—This made the Pretext for Abandoning Schools—Letter from Chief of Police Dinsmore Chronicling Peter Verigin's Refusal to Obey Laws—Letter from Deputy Attorney-General Asserting Determination of Government to Insist Upon Observance of Laws—Complete Census of the Doukhobors in British Columbia up to October 22nd, 1912.

With the exodus of the Doukhobors to British Columbia, a new chapter opened in the history of this harassed people. Through all their wanderings, the guiding hand of Peter Verigin must be recognized. It was on his advice, after consultation with Count Tolstoi and other friends, that the faces of his people were first turned to the New World. He was the guiding spirit who controlled their destinies and ruled their lives during their thirteen to fourteen years' residence in Saskatchewan; and it was he who, looking farther afield for a country in which they could at once escape from the rigours of climate and other natural discomforts, as well as from a continual state of friction with the Dominion Government, discovered the Promised Land into which he has led them.

The favourable conditions which so impressed Verigin and Zibiroff are cited in the memorandum quoted in the previous chapter, and turned principally upon the climate, the fresh-water supply from the mountains, and the possibilities of engaging on fruit-growing on a large scale.

There is no doubt that the climate of Saskatchewan was a great disappointment to the Doukhobors. While they had many hardships to contend with in the Transcaucasian Provinces, they were not subjected to such extremes of temperature as confronted them in Saskatchewan. Then, in Russia, they had developed mixed farming, and had become stock-raisers. Indeed, the latter branch of farming occupied most of their attention.

In Saskatchewan they found that the conditions were not favourable for anything but grain-growing, except on a limited scale, and they were always hankering for a more moderate climate in which they could revert to the occupation to which they had been accustomed in their Mother-land.

To this must be added the fact that British Columbia was just now assuming a foremost place as a great fruit-producer, and that fruit-growing is a less onerous occupation than almost any other branch of husbandry.

There is no doubt that Peter Verigin, a man of extreme shrewdness, who had familiarized himself with all the conditions existing in British Columbia, realized not only that his people would be more happy and contented with an occupation that appealed to them, in a climate which subjected them to no extremes, but he also saw the possibility of doing on a large scale, by the aid of communal labour, what had already been effected on a small scale by many investors in British Columbia—the purchase of uncleared land at a nominal price, its development to the condition of a full-bearing orchard, with a rise in values which might range anywhere from a few hundred to a thousand dollars per acre.

No people in Canada could effect this so surely as the Doukhobors. They could place several thousand pairs of hands on the land, would take nothing from it but their sustenance, and would require no cash compensation for this labour, but they would add almost fabulous sums to the value of the land, year by year, until it reached a state of fruition.

According to the evidence of Peter Verigin before the Commission at Nelson, there may have been another thought lying beneath this exodus.

The lands which the Doukhobors acquired in Saskatchewan had caused them endless trouble, because they had been unable to qualify and obtain titles from the Government. They proposed to solve this problem by coming to British Columbia and purchasing their lands from private individuals, and with the lands would naturally go the Crown grants which these

individuals had obtained. There could therefore be no ground for contention with the Provincial Government in respect to the land titles; and, once clearly established on their own property, they would possess a solidarity and resilience to which they could never attain under the conditions that prevailed in Saskatchewan.

Peter Verigin went further in his evidence, and claimed, what it is difficult to accept, viz.: That the Doukhobors were under the impression that by acquiring title to the British Columbia lands from private individuals they acquired some immunity from the obligation to obey the laws.

The line of argument he adopted in supporting this contention is not easy to follow, and would appear to be altogether too weak to do justice to the intelligence of a man of Mr. Verigin's calibre.

If the Doukhobors came to British Columbia under such impression, it is not conceivable that it was so assumed by Mr. Verigin; and it was, further, his duty to have advised them fully in the premises.

This contention was put forward as an excuse for claiming exemption from the operation of the registration laws and of the "Schools Act"; but, as will be seen when the evidence comes to be analysed, it is hardly entitled to respect, and is mentioned at this point only in order to fully canvass the situation as it existed, and the views expressed by the Doukhobors, at the time they came to British Columbia.

In the spring of 1909, the first lands of the Brilliant Colony in British Columbia were acquired, on the banks of the Columbia River, three miles south of Castlegar, near the old gold-mining camp known as the "Waterloo Camp."

A complete list of the land-holdings of the Doukhobors in British Columbia at the date of this Report is attached as an Appendix to the evidence herein. It shows that the acreage owned by the Community has grown since the first purchase on March 2nd, 1909, to a total of 14,403 acres, the total purchase price of which amounts to $646,017; and the amount remaining unpaid stands in the books at $321,079.

In estimating the wealth of the Doukhobor Community, and taking stock of their thirteen years' work in Canada, one must bear in mind, first of all, the valuation of property in Saskatchewan, referred to in a previous chapter; then the valuation of land and stock in British Columbia; and, further, it must be remembered that no less a sum than $200,000 has ben expended in transferring their homes from Saskatchewan to British Columbia.

A map showing the extent and location of all the present holdings of the Community is attached. From this it will be seen that at this date there are four Settlements—one at Brilliant, on the banks of the Columbia River, containing 3,649 acres; one at Glade, on the bank of the Kootenay River, and only a short distance east of Brilliant, containing 1,092 acres; one at Grand Forks, on the immediate boundary of the city, where there are the best-developed orchards in the country, containing 4,182 acres; and one at Pass Creek, some fifteen miles north of Brilliant, which is in the earliest stages of clearing and development, and containing 2,465 acres.

There are also 527 acres on the North Fork of Kettle River; at Champion, south of Brilliant, 927 acres; in Crescent Valley, 1,320 acres; on Slocan River, exclusive of Crescent Valley, and between the latter and Slocan City, 837 acres; and on the Kootenay River, west of Nelson, 321 acres.

A copy of the list of properties purchased by the Community, furnished to the Commissioner, is appended to the evidence.

There are also accompanying this Report a number of photographs, taken by the official photographer of the Commission to illustrate the various stages of cultivation and clearing.

That of Grand Forks shows orchards from fifteen to twenty years old and in full bearing, and others five years old and just beginning to bear.

The photograph of the Brilliant Settlement shows the work of barely four years, for practically the whole of this Settlement was then forest. It is now cleared, planted with apple-trees, and the ingenious manager has left a few tall pines, which he has stripped of their branches, to show what the condition was when the land was taken possession of.

A long panoramic view of the Glade Settlement is, perhaps, the most interesting of all, as it shows every stage of clearing and cultivation, from the hewing-down of the trees and the burning of brush to the clearing-away of all stones and stumps, and ploughing and harrowing, ready for the seed.

On the photographs of Brilliant and Glade will be noticed a number of houses, in pairs, which illustrates the system of home-building adopted by the Community. Of this more will be said when the question of their habits and home life is considered.

A glance will suffice to show that an enormous amount of work has been done in a short time. The clearing alone would have been impossible to private individuals. It is the abundance of Community labour that has achieved such marvellous results.

The energy and enterprise of the Community have excited general admiration, and even at this stage it is permissible to say that, but for the unfortunate friction that has arisen in connection with the non-observance of certain laws, there would be nothing but praise for the Doukhobor settlers.

This extensive Settlement has been financed through the genius of Peter Verigin by the Saskatchewan Central Fund. This fund furnished the means of making the first payments on all land-purchases, and really formed the backbone of the financial scheme.

In addition the villages each contributed members to the new Community, and also sent a considerable quantity of stock, implements, and appliances. Indeed, the communal system gave them control of many things that were needed and which otherwise must have been purchased.

With the 2,000 people who constituted the first land-settlement came a number of the older members of the Community, thus ensuring a continuity of policy, tradition, and teaching.

Peter Verigin, who divided his time between Saskatchewan and British Columbia, exercised close supervision over all the affairs of his people, selected a ranch-house on the Grand Forks property, and made it his home in British Columbia. It is a home of which any man might be proud, being situated in the midst of a splendid orchard, with flower-gardens, kitchen-garden, lawns, stables, barns, outhouses, and all the concomitants of an up-to-date, high-class farm home.

Near by is the home of Mr. Nicholas Zibiroff, an old and highly respected member of the Community, who was selected as one of the first visitors to British Columbia to report on the land. He is now the local manager of the Grand Forks Settlement.

While much of this Settlement consists of developed orchard land, there are some hundreds of acres of the roughest and wildest land—some of it being in the process of clearing and cultivation, and all of it said to be capable of carrying high-grade fruit orchards.

Perhaps it is not out of place at this point to comment on the wonderful success that has attended the fruit-growing operations of the Doukhobors.

To them it was a new industry. They had never been engaged in it before coming to British Columbia. Yet, to-day, if you were to go through their orchards, you would find that they are the cleanest, the best-kept, and the heaviest-cropped of any in the district, whilst they have solved the problem, not previously attempted by any other fruit-grower—that of grape-production.

On a hill-slope in the Grand Forks Settlement is a vineyard in full bearing, in the open, from which it is claimed 20 tons of grapes were taken during the season of 1912. A photograph of this will be found accompanying this Report.

Another feature worthy of comment is the remarkable skill the Doukhobors have developed in grafting fruit-trees. They explained to the Commissioner that Mr. Verigin himself taught them, and repeated the operation until they had acquired skill. The result is that in a young orchard containing 50,000 plants they have not lost one.

With reference to the Brilliant Settlement, the soil there is very rich, and excellent progress has been made with clearing and planting. There are those who think it will prove more fertile than the Grand Forks Settlement. That remains to be seen. At any rate, it is being developed in the most intelligent and energetic manner, under the management of Mr. John W. Sherbinin, who is the business manager of all the Settlements, except that of Grand Forks, and who resides in a new residence built for him by the Doukhobors at Brilliant, situated on the Canadian Pacific Railway line.

In addition to the business of land-cultivation, the Doukhobors have manifested a spirit of enterprise at Brilliant by putting in a splendid concrete reservoir capable of holding 1,000,000 gallons of water, and from this reservoir the water is being piped all over the Settlement. It is to be used both for domestic purposes and irrigation.

The reservoir will be supplied partially from a creek in the mountains, and partially by an immense pumping plant which the Doukhobors have erected at the extremity of the Settle-

ment, on the banks of the Kootenay River. This is the largest pumping plant in British Columbia, and will not only pump water to the reservoir, but will generate light for use throughout the Settlements.

The Glade Settlement, as already stated, is in the earliest stages of cultivation. In fact, it is not yet completely cleared. It is delightfully situated on the south bank of the Kootenay River, being a long narrow strip of fertile land. At the present rate of clearing the whole of this will be planted in 1913.

Pass Creek lands are the latest cleared, and show the least development; but now that there has been an augmentation, due to the recent arrivals, clearing will proceed more quickly, and considerable planting will be done next year.

It is the intention of the Doukhobors to convert all their lands into fruit-growing lands, reserving only small areas to produce vegetables and a little hay and oats for their cattle.

Besides the farming industry, the Doukhobors have established sawmills on all their properties, which are used chiefly to convert the timber into building material for use on their own lands. They have also a good brick-making works at Grand Forks, which is producing a high-class brick, commanding a ready sale. This brick is being used in the new Government Buildings at Grand Forks, which is a fair testimony as to its quality.

The Doukhobors own one other industry in British Columbia, in the form of a jam-factory at Nelson. This property formerly belonged to the Kootenay Preserving Company, but was purchased from them by the Doukhobors, and is now a valuable asset. It is their intention to establish other similar factories at Brilliant and Grand Forks, in order to provide a market for certain classes of fruit which cannot be disposed of to advantage in a natural state.

So far as material advancement is concerned, this would seem to be a fairly satisfactory record for four years: The purchase of more than 14,000 acres of land, the payment of 50 per cent. of its cost, running at $325,000; the transfer, at a cost of $200,000, of a community exceeding 5,000 in number, from Saskatchewan to British Columbia; the planting of several thousand acres of fruit-trees on ground of their own clearing; and the successful establishing of at least three independent industries. And, alongside this, a record for paying their debts with at least average promptness, and a reputation for commercial integrity which makes them the most-sought-after and probably the most-trusted trading company (for that is what they call themselves) in the Province.

Of the latter, the Commissioner met with several striking instances, such as the purchase of large areas of land without any written agreement, with nothing but a verbal arrangement; and yet, as shown by the evidence, the punctual meeting of all obligations of purchase.

If everything had been as satisfactory as the business relations of the Doukhobors, there would have been none of the friction that has unfortunately arisen, but they have persistently maintained an attitude of hostility to the registration laws and the "Schools Act."

Dealing with the latter first, it may be stated, briefly, that for some time no attempt was made to send their children to school. Then, under pressure from the school authorities, the Doukhobors agreed that the children of Grand Forks Settlement should attend the public school, and that they would build a school-house on the Brilliant Settlement. As the details of these transactions will have to be commented upon in another chapter, it is sufficient to say here that they commenced well in both cases, but after one term at Brilliant they closed the school, and after less than twelve months' attendance at the Grand Forks School they withdrew their children. The ground upon which they did this was that some of their people had been prosecuted and imprisoned for disobedience of the registration laws.

When this question comes to be discussed it will be found that there were other reasons as well. But, in any event, there was no further attendance of Doukhobor children at the public schools.

This precipitated some definite action on the part of the Government to meet the conditions.

Another matter which demanded investigation was the refusal of the Doukhobors, at Grand Forks in particular, to register deaths.

In consequence of repeated refusals, prosecutions were ultimately instituted, and Nichola Zebin, John Negraff, John Domaska, and Wessel Domaska were charged before the Magistrate at Grand Forks and pleaded guilty to a violation of the "Births, Deaths, and Marriages Registration Act." They were sentenced to three months' imprisonment in the Nelson Gaol, and this action so aroused the hostility of the Doukhobors that a high state of friction was engendered between them and the citizens of Grand Forks. This prosecution led to a general

inquiry, and it was found that there had been practically no compliance with the registration laws by any of the Community Doukhobors.

Mr. J. A. Dinsmore, Chief Constable of the Grand Forks District, had an interview with Peter Verigin for the purpose of endeavouring, if possible, to bring about an amicable compliance with the law. In a letter dated July 13th, 1912, and addressed to the Deputy Attorney-General, Victoria, Mr. Dinsmore says :—

In an interview with Peter Verigin, the leader of the Doukhobor Society, he informed me that the Doukhobor Society had a large meeting, and they decided they would not comply with the "Births, Deaths, and Marriages Registration Act."

I also took up the question and served notices on these people for the destruction of noxious weeds growing on their properties, and they also refused to comply with the "Noxious Weeds Act."

As illustrating the attitude of the Government on this matter, it may be well to quote *in extenso* the following letter, written by the Deputy Attorney-General on July 20th, 1910, to Mr. Dinsmore :—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, reporting on the doings of the Doukhobor Society at Grand Forks. You may inform Mr. Verigin, the leader of the Society, that the laws of British Columbia must be obeyed by him and his associates, as well as by any other persons in the Province, and that the provisions of the "Noxious Weeds Act," as well as the "Births, Deaths, and Marriages Act," will be strictly carried out, without any favour being shown to him and members of his Society.

It may also serve to throw a little light on the subject if the statement of the Doukhobor Community, addressed to the Government of British Columbia at the time of these prosecutions, is quoted. It is as follows :—

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD DOUKHOBORS IN CANADA.

BRILLIANT, B.C., July 16th, 1912.

The Government of British Columbia.
To the Chief Police Officer, Victoria, B.C.
From the Doukhobor Community located around
Nelson and Grand Forks, B.C.

DEAR SIR,—We beg to acknowledge you, lately from our Community at Grand Forks, five men were put into the gaol, just because they did not report of the dead body of their relation. And by thus consequence we calculate it necessary to explain you our opinion of life.

The foundation of our religion concludes to believe into divinity power, at will which forming and holding all the world. Jesus Christ brought light intellection to the earth. We calculate that Jesus Christ Heaven comer from Anarchic Father Spirit, but in body Christ birth came from Mary (human woman).

Jesus Christ brought intellection of eternal divinity power, and therefore a man seeing that teaching, he himself can step over to eternal life. Second commandment of Christ : People should live on the earth pious and peaceful.

We believe that the favourable adorable power is ruling all the world and endeavour to be written in eternal life book, and propose ourselves obligation to live quietly and to employ honest labour on the earth, so as to get substance. All the human race registration we calculate unnecessary. We can say, briefly, our religion confines on two commandments to be gentle and to employ agriculture.

Spending of four years' time in British Columbia around Nelson and Grand Forks, B.C., employing early agriculture, and by hard labour have cleared more than 1,000 acres of land, and have planted with the orchard about 70,000 trees, with the most better kinds of fruit-trees—apples, pears, plums, cherries, and others.

The proof that we sincerely wish to be peaceful people is this, for four flowing years not one criminal question were about the Doukhobors.

We calculate the Government and especially police manages, no matter which country, only for the pacification of wicked people; therefore we conclusively ask you forsake, leave us in peace to occupy peacefully agricultural work in the Province of British Columbia. We promise to live peacefully and quietly, and ask you as so police should not mix into our life whatever by no business, because we wish to be citizens of all the world.

At the present time there are more than 2,000 people in British Columbia, and we all ask you in Jesus Christ's name to free our brothers—namely, Nicholas Zeibin, Vasily Demovsky, Evan Demovsky, Evan Negreiff, and Feodor Gritchin—for peaceful agricultural work to the present summer.

THE DEPUTATION OF THE DOUKHOBOR COMMUNITY,
Nelson and Grand Forks, B.C.

LWV. (Signed.) ANDPEU TPUGRUSEZ (?). MRS. ANPOCUSUR COMMUNIOCO (?).

This was the state of affairs when the Royal Commission was issued by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, and gives a brief synopsis of the course of events from the first entry of the Doukhobors into British Columbia down to that date.

It may be interesting if at this point a complete census of the Doukhobors in British Columbia is given. The census was taken by Mr. J. W. Sherbinin and guaranteed by him as correct. It includes the recent arrivals from Saskatchewan, whose exodus was described in a preceding chapter.

CENSUS OF DOUKHOBORS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA UP TO OCTOBER 22ND, 1912.

	No. of Men.	No. of Women.	No. of Widowers.	No. of Widows.	No. of Married Couples.	No. of Children.
Brilliant Settlement and other smaller surrounding Settlements....	768	781	36	67	396	654
Champion Creek Settlement.....	92	90	4	5	48	87
Glade Settlement.....	585	601	29	34	279	565
Pass Creek Settlement.....	248	257	14	19	118	236
Crescent Valley Settlement.....	15	21	.....	1	12	11
Grand Forks Settlement.....	269	261	16	11	160	183
Total.....	1,977	2,011	99	137	1,013	1,736

NOTE.—The acquisition of the areas at Champion to the south of Brilliant, in Crescent Valley, and between the latter place and Slocan City, had not been completed at the time the statement mentioned herein was prepared and handed to the Commissioner, and in consequence cannot be shown on the map attached hereto nor the additional cost given. The total acreage, however, is thus increased by about 1,000 acres.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

ORGANIZATION—THE COMMUNAL SYSTEM—LAND TENURE.

Foundation of Communal System, the Russian Mir—Preference of Doukhobors for this System—Implicit Obedience Yielded to Verigin as Head—Serious Split in Community over Homestead Titles in Saskatchewan—First Establishment of Individualism—Defection of 1,000 Adherents—How Property, Real and Personal, is Held—Village Communities and Central Fund—Accounts Strictly Kept and Business Well Managed—Strength of Community Lies in Influence of Leader—Loyalty of Doukhobor Women to their Leader—Prosperity of Independent Doukhobors—Further Defections from Community in British Columbia—Methods of Adjusting Claims of Doukhobors who Leave the Community—Why those who Left since Coming to British Columbia Unable to Obtain their Share—Method of Distributing Goods of Community—System of Land Tenure in British Columbia—All Lands vested in Verigin and Others as Trustees—No Trust Deed in Existence—Verigin Makes Will in Favour of Community—Some Better Adjustment of Titles Necessary.

For many centuries, the Russian peasant has lived exclusively the life of the Mir. He knew of no rights save such as he held by his Commune, recognized no duties save those he owed to his Commune.

The rights and privileges of such a Commune are, in accordance with ancient custom, necessarily numerous and extensive. In its capacity of association, it is a civil person. It can buy, lease, sell, rent land; more than that, it has its own particular regulations, customs, laws, which are binding within its own pale. It has its own private law in the midst of national law, as pledging its private members before the State. It wields for them the right of correction and expulsion, controls their goings-out and their comings-in—in fact, holds them in a sort of tutelage.

To be a member of such a community it is not enough to transfer one's residence to it. Admission can take place only by the consent of all those interested in the transaction. The Russian Commune is a closed association, with neither ingress nor egress free. Absent or present, nomadic or sedentary, the members of the Mir are still, in great measure, responsible to one another. They have their judges and their rustic courts of justice, as they have their traditional customs—very different from the civil rights applied to other classes.

Lastly, in its capacity of holder of the soil, the Commune has over the peasants the rights that a landlord has over his tenants, and can impose upon them such conditions as it pleases.

This is practically a summary of the composition of the Commune in Russia, taken from Ragozin's translation of "Empire of the Tzars and the Russias," by Anatole Leroy Beaulieu.

From time immemorial the Village Commune, or Mir, has been a unique Slavonic institution. This form of government includes five-sixths of the entire population in European Russia, and is one of the most democratic in the world.

Without any written law, its authority is recognized as equally binding upon every member of the Community. The methods of every Community vary, but some salient features are common to them all.

The peasants all live in villages and farm the adjacent land. The Mir was primarily instituted in order to secure payment of taxes to the Imperial Government, and each village is held responsible for a certain sum—so much in many cases as to impoverish it.

The Village Assembly is composed of heads of households, who meet frequently, preferably on the first day of the week, to discuss the affairs, civil and domestic, of the Community.

An elder is selected from the peasants of the Assembly, whose duty corresponds somewhat to those of a chairman or speaker in an English-speaking gathering.

Among those communities that have no religious scruples such as the Doukhobors have, affecting obedience to the registration laws and military service, the Mir supplies conscripts to the standing army, and has power to banish its members to Siberia, or to call them home from any place where they have settled.

Of course, these privileges were lost by the Doukhobors when they assumed a position of hostility to the Government, but they continued to live on the communal system, and in all matters except those specified to carry on the customs of the Mir.

One curious feature of this institution is the unreserved obedience which its members yield to its decision. There have been many cases where peasants have set at defiance the power of the police, of the Provincial Government, and of the Central Government itself, but not a single instance is on record where the will of the Mir was opposed by its members.

In working out the communal system in Russia, whilst its advantages have been great, it has not been without some disadvantages, which are reflected in the present conditions prevailing among the Doukhobors in Canada. For instance, when the redistribution of land has taken place, those who have improved their shares by cultivation have lost the benefit of their labour because they have often been transferred to land which has not been equally well tilled.

The members of a family all form together, year by year, when at home, and when earning money elsewhere are expected to pay that money into a common purse.

The households composing the Village Commune farm independently, and pay into the common treasury a fixed sum.

The Russian peasant may live most of his life in towns, but he never severs his connection with his village. He remains, whether he desires it or not, a member of the Commune, possessing a share of the communal property and liable for a share of the communal burden.

The Doukhobor in Canada apparently prefers the form of government he was used to in his native land. He came to Canada absolutely without any conception of individual ownership of land. This was clearly shown by the fact that he stubbornly refused, even when it came to a question of losing his homestead, to make individual entries in Saskatchewan. At least six-sevenths of the Community refused, and, as related in a previous chapter, only about 1,000 succumbed to the temptation of the offer of the Government to become British subjects and make individual land entries.

Those who left the Community are naturally criticized by those who remain. They are regarded as traitors to the traditional beliefs of the Doukhobors, and Peter Verigin went as far in his evidence as to say that he regarded the offer of the Dominion Government as a bribe. In any event, the fact that the offer was accepted by such a substantial number marks a great advance from the attitude of the Russian peasant towards land-holding, and also demonstrates the possibility of a still larger number assimilating the Canadian idea on the subject in the future.

But, with respect to the large majority of the Doukhobors, one has to consider them in their present relation to communal life, because the Doukhobors differ from the ordinary Russian peasant, in that his conception of government is theocratic. Peter Verigin is to him the supreme law. He wishes to recognize no duties save those he owes to his Community and to his leader. He wants his own particular regulations, customs, laws, his own private law in the midst of the national law.

Yielding obedience to Peter Verigin, they all authorized him to enter for homesteads for them. Later on, when other influences began to work, and some of the Doukhobors wished to act for themselves, efforts were made by the Community to frustrate them in their intentions. In this way, homestead entries which had been made *en bloc* were cancelled in some individual cases without the knowledge of the Doukhobor in whose name the entry had originally been made.

One Ivan Shukin was thus deprived of his homestead, but he refused to bow to his leader's will, and with the assistance of outsiders his entry was restored, and his certificate of title issued in due course.

In another case, Community Doukhobors invaded the homestead of one of their fellows who had become independent, and cut down and carried off timber for the use of their village. The marauders were promptly prosecuted, convicted, and punished, and the effect of this was that some of the Doukhobors began to realize, for the first time, that in the eyes of the Canadian law, and not the Village or Community, was the owner of the land, and that in this particular matter Peter Verigin had no authority.

It was after these repeated disturbances that the Dominion Government Doukhobor Commission was appointed to investigate the whole question of land-settlement, and the result was the cancellation of all Doukhobor entries for homesteads, and the granting of the privilege of re-entering in person without the intervention of Peter Verigin.

Naturally, the leader made every possible effort to have all the reserved lands set apart *en bloc* for those who still wished to remain in the Community. With each little village surrounded by independent Doukhobors, enjoying more prosperity and more freedom than the Communists, with settlers of other nationalities constantly coming into contact with them, with new school districts being organized, to include within their boundaries part of the reserves, with all the influences, both consciously and unconsciously, brought to bear on the Communists on the outside, Peter Verigin found his own influence and authority steadily on the wane.

What Russian tyranny had utterly failed to do—break up the Community—Canadian freedom may effect. Persecution is fuel to the flames of fanaticism. Withdraw the fuel, and the fire dies out.

This may throw a new light on the real reason for the removal of the Doukhobors to British Columbia. It shows how, in very material respects, the organization has failed to hold its own in Saskatchewan when subjected to the disintegrating influences of a free civilization.

The leader has tried to protect them from these influences by opposing the organization of schools, although he wrote from Russia favouring elementary education, and although he has since stated before the Commissioner at Nelson that he believes in elementary schools, and that he would use his influence to induce the Doukhobors to support them.

But it is obvious that the narrow valleys of British Columbia afford a better chance to isolate the Doukhobors from these disintegrating influences than could be afforded by the wide prairies of Saskatchewan.

Whether the organization will be more effective in British Columbia remains to be seen. It has been planted there on the lines of the Russion community system. All the features of Russian communal life, except living in villages, have been introduced. There is the same head in Peter Verigin. There are the same different groups of assemblies, which meet weekly. The assemblies choose their elder, who transacts business on their behalf. The assemblies assign the duties of each individual for the coming year and deal with all matters affecting the domestic and industrial life of its members.

All moneys earned on the outside are supposed to be paid into the Central Fund intact. Any moneys withheld are, according to Doukhobor law, wrongly withheld. But while there is, especially on the part of the older members, an almost implicit obedience to these laws, there has already been such open violation of some of them, and such discontent over others, as to lead to secession from the Community ever since it was established in British Columbia.

No doubt it is the intention of Peter Verigin to re-establish, in all its fullness, the communal life as it was lived by the strict Doukhobors in Russia. It is a difficult problem to work out, and evidences are not entirely in favour of its success.

From a material standpoint, the Doukhobors in British Columbia have already demonstrated that, under the communal system, they can clear and cultivate land, develop production, and amass wealth at a far greater rate than is possible on any individual system. But the question is: How long will the majority be content for this wealth to be amassed for the Community, and not for the individual? That is the key-note of the situation as it exists at present.

It is impossible to shut one's eyes to the fact that the strength of the Community is due mainly to the influence of the leader. The light in which he is regarded, as endowed with spiritual and even Divine authority, renders his will all-powerful with those who still yield him obedience; and as long as they retain this conception of his position and rights the Community will hold together.

But influences are already at work which clearly indicate that the younger generation will not yield the same loyalty to him as the older. His strength to-day rests first with elderly men who have shared his privations, and who have been identified with the Community in Russia, and beyond this, and above all, with the women.

The real strength of the organization lies in the loyalty of its women to Peter Verigin. That loyalty is so profound and so marked that there have been instances where the women still cling to the Community and remain in it even after their husbands and sons have left it.

This is not any more remarkable than the object-lesson that has been furnished in other religious communities, showing the strength of the religious idea on the mind of woman. Surely in this respect the position of the Doukhobors does not differ greatly from that of many of the orthodox Christians.

This attitude is confirmed and, indeed, crystallized in a phrase that is commonly used among the Doukhobors (of course, in their own tongue), when they speak of yielding obedience to the "holy will" of their leader.

It may at once be conceded that Peter Verigin is devoted to the interests of his people, and, as will be seen in a subsequent chapter, he has never attempted to advance his own personal interests, beyond consolidating his position as head of the Community. This naturally leads to the consideration of his personal relations with the Doukhobors, especially as to business transactions, the disposal of funds, and the general conduct of their financial affairs.

It was the necessity for getting a thorough understanding of this phase of the subject that led the Commissioner to visit Saskatchewan.

The whole of the money that had been used for the acquisition of lands and the development of the Community in British Columbia had been furnished by the Central Fund of the Saskatchewan Communities. In addition, there were individual contributions, if one may so term any private belongings of a Doukhobor Community, such as horses, cattle, implements, etc., which are recognized as the property of, or as at any rate vested in, the quasi-members of the Community Villagers in Saskatchewan.

The village property, considered apart from the Central Fund, is recognized as the property of the Doukhobors constituting the particular village affected.

As a rule, these villages consist of about 150 to 200 people. Their land boundaries are defined by the Community, and within the limit of their village they cultivate the lands thus defined, gather the crops, consume what is necessary, sell the rest, and the money thus earned belongs to that particular village. It may be used to purchase stock, implements, or other necessary requirements to develop the farming industry of the village.

Ownership in this property never passes from the village. To whichever of the forty villages established in Saskatchewan a man may belong, he can always look to that particular village to recognize his right and claim to a portion of this property.

The business accounts of all the villages are kept at the head office of the Doukhobor Community at Verigin, Saskatchewan. Here an office is maintained, and all entries are made in the most systematic manner. Indeed, the books afford a very excellent testimony to both the competency and the intelligence of the local manager, Mr. Michael Cazakoff, under whose immediate direction all the Communities work.

In passing, it may be said that Mr. Cazakoff is a man of very high personal character, of most amiable disposition, and the most excellent mental endowments. He has a grasp of all the principles of business that would do credit to a graduate of any of the large commercial institutions, whereas he is a self-educated man, the son of a peasant, and himself a labouring farmer until he was elected to his present position as business manager.

While he is subject to the control of Peter Verigin in all matters of policy, he has a tolerably free hand in dealing with purely commercial affairs.

The books, which he has designed, show, first of all, a ledger account for each village as a village. Then an individual account, where individual obligations have been incurred and payments made or received by or from individuals, such as when a man works on the outside and earns money. This department of the book-keeping shows the village accounts clear and separate.

There is an annual balance-sheet for each village, which sets forth the value of stock, stores, etc., and the contributions in earnings of each individual to his own village funds.

If a man leaves, he receives, on demand, his full share in the village funds, arrived at from the valuation shown in the books; and, as far as the Commissioner was able to ascertain, there has been no difficulty on the part of the Doukhobors leaving the Community in Saskatchewan in obtaining these settlements, either in the form of cash or stock.

With reference to the Doukhobors who have left the Community in British Columbia, the situation is a little different, and will require explanation. The number of these does not exceed twenty-five or thirty. Some of them have received from the villages in Saskatchewan the share to which they are entitled, others have not; but on investigation it appeared that the fault lay not with the central management, but with the village representatives, who in one or two instances had failed to reply to communications. The investigation of the books in Saskatchewan left no doubt that it was perfectly easy to determine the sum due to each individual under this head.

But there are a number of Doukhobors who have left since coming to British Columbia who have not been able to obtain their shares, and the condition is aggravated to some extent by the fact that in some cases horses and implements have been contributed by them to the British Columbia Settlement. So that they stand in this position: that they have worked for the Community for thirteen years since first coming to Canada, had received from it their

living, but no cash; had earned while living in Saskatchewan villages considerable money on the outside, which had been paid into the village funds, but, on leaving the Community in British Columbia, for various reasons, had been unable to obtain a settlement.

This matter was thoroughly thrashed out at the hearing before the Commissioner at Nelson. Each individual complaint was carefully investigated, and a reference to the evidence will show that in no case did Peter Verigin, who was present and was examined in rebuttal evidence of the evidence of the independent Doukhobors who complained, repudiate the liability. But he went on record to the effect that the Community admitted that there was a liability, even though the exact amount might not have been ascertained, and that when the funds are available every man who had left the Community would be paid in full what was due to him.

Most of the complaining Doukhobors expressed themselves satisfied with this undertaking, and on hearing Peter Verigin's statement at once admitted that they believed his word to be good, and that they had no doubt but that he would keep it.

This leads to the question as to whether there should be any difficulty in ascertaining the exact amount due and in paying it promptly. The answer to this is of a twofold nature:—

(1.) The difficulty of ascertaining the exact amount due is one which can be solved. It arose through the removal of a portion of the Communities to British Columbia, whilst a portion of some of the villages would remain behind, and those at this end would not be sufficiently in touch with those left in Saskatchewan to have their claim adjudicated upon promptly.

(2.) But Peter Verigin took other grounds, and with some show of reason. He pointed out that the Doukhobor Community was a trading company. That all the members of the Community had gone into a business venture. That they had instructed him on their behalf to purchase certain lands in British Columbia. He had purchased the lands, and entered into heavy obligations to complete certain payments. Of these payments no less a sum than $321,079 was still due. The British Columbia Settlements were still in their infancy, and only a limited area was as yet productive. In consequence of this, the cost of financing, and of even feeding, the Community was not an easy problem to grapple with, and until their debts were paid it was not reasonable for those who had entered into a business venture, and had brought about the imposition of certain financial burdens, to ask to have their money back.

Of course, this is only one side of the question, and such a line of argument was probably dictated by the consideration that if any considerable number of Doukhobors found that they could, at a moment's notice, demand and receive their full share in cash, there might, in certain circumstances, be a movement that would imperil the Community and even reduce it to bankruptcy.

It is a fair comment on the evidence adduced to say that, after hearing Mr. Verigin's statement, the number of discontented Doukhobors was very few, and the majority of them believed in his *bona fides* and expressed themselves ready to wait.

This does not do away with the fact that there were a few who are still dissatisfied, and who are inclined to insist upon an immediate settlement.

And this opens up the whole question of the financial relations of the various members of the Community to each other, to the Community, and to the leader, and the necessity for placing these relations on a more businesslike foundation. This, however, will form the subject of another chapter.

Meanwhile, to complete the story of their financial organization, it is necessary to refer in greater detail to the Central Fund in Saskatchewan.

This fund was formed from the surplus earnings of the forty-odd villages, in order to give greater elasticity to the operations of the whole Community, and to place the leaders in a position where they would have money in hand for necessary purposes.

In the first instance, Mr. Verigin borrowed the sum of $100,000. Then the Doukhobors developed their lands, and also earned considerable sums of money on the outside; the different villages made contributions of cash to the Central Fund. This cash was raised in the form of a levy which at one time stood at $100 per head, and was subsequently raised to $200, and levied on all the working-men in each village.

In the year 1911 these assessments yielded about $214,000, in addition to which moneys were paid into the Central Fund from Doukhobors working in Community places, such as trading stores and offices; from persons entering the Community; from persons who lived in

British Columbia leaving their capital in the villages; from people who removed to British Columbia leaving part of their stock, grain, and implements in Saskatchewan; and from Saskatchewan lands and town lots belonging to Doukhobors who went to British Columbia and which were sold at their request. These various items raised the Central Fund in the year 1911 to a total of $342,099. It may be asked: What became of this money? No less than $134,772 was used for payments on account of land purchased in British Columbia, and the bank overdraft of $17,939 brought forward from the previous year was paid off.

Over $112,000 was transmitted to British Columbia to cover overdrawn bank accounts and expenses of living there.

The railway companies got $82,827 for freight charges, and there were other sundry expenditures of smaller amounts, raising the total outlay for the year to $375,999.

As illustrated, the thoroughness with which the communal rights are recognized and lived up to by the Doukhobors, it will not be out of the way to state that men in the position of Michael Cazakoff, the manager, who could command a large salary in any similar position elsewhere, lives with the same simplicity as the humblest member of the Community, without any luxuries, and pays the whole of his salary into the Community funds.

The same remark applies to the other business managers, Mr. Sherbinin and Mr. Zibiroff; and as to the head of the Community, Mr. Peter Verigin, it will be necessary to deal with his case in a separate chapter.

It may be asked, and, although it is a minor matter, it will not be without interest: What is the system on which the books of the Community are distributed? The system is simplicity itself.

Taking the case of the Brilliant Settlement as an illustration, and it stands for all the others: Mr. Sherbinin orders everything that is necessary to feed and clothe the Community. In placing these orders, he is advised by the representative of each assembly of the probable requirements in the near future. He orders wherever possible by car-load. The goods are stored in a large warehouse at Brilliant. A Doukhobor is placed in charge of this warehouse or store, and members of the Community can come at will and ask for anything they like. There is no limit placed on their demands so far as the stock covers them. No accounts are kept of the consumption or of the quantity taken by any individual. It is a matter of honour whether they take more than is necessary or not.

The only ground for complaint in connection with the supplies arises from the fact that, so far as food is concerned, the range is somewhat limited, and some things which the ordinary member regards necessaries are regarded by the manager as luxuries, and are not therefore provided.

Reduced to its simplest elements, the system is that the people contribute their toil, and in return receive from a common fund their food and clothing. The surplus passes into the direct and, one might say, the sole control of Mr. Verigin, acting through his business managers.

The above gives a fairly complete idea of the organization of the Doukhobor Society, showing how it has been modified by new conditions with which it has been confronted in Canada, and when it has been weakened by the desertion of a considerable percentage of its adherents. It also shows clearly the method of financing and of handling and accounting for the funds placed under the control of the head and his business managers.

It remains to refer to the system on which the land-holdings of the Doukhobor Community in British Columbia have been registered, in order to show in whom the title is legally vested.

When the Community in Saskatchewan instructed Peter Verigin and Nicholas Zibiroff to investigate the question of British Columbia lands, it associated with them one Simeon Reibin, who was then one of the most prominent and active members of the Community, and, after the request of the members, these three names were associated in a number of the titles originally acquired. Later, in one or two instances, the name of Simeon Reibin was dropped and that of John Sherbinin used, also by request of the Community; and still later, by the same authority, all names were dropped except that of Peter Verigin, and most of the titles have been registered in his name alone.

It is quite clear that this has been done by the desire of the Doukhobors, and that they regard him as their trustee. In confirmation of this, also, there is the evidence of Peter Verigin given at Nelson to the effect that he regarded himself, Reibin, Zibiroff, and Sherbinin as trustees. But he frankly admitted, when examined by the Commissioner, that in the absence of a trustee there was a possibility of complications, and that it was desirable that the matter should be dealt with in legal form, so as to place the question of ownership beyond doubt or dispute.

It is admitted that in the previous history of the Doukhobors in Russia the personal cupidity of some members of the Community has overcome their religious scruples, and that in one case at least—that of a brother of Loukerya Vazilyevna Kalmykova—a successful attempt was made to obtain possession of the property of the Community. Peter Verigin admitted that; however sincere his desire might be to hold the property intact for the Community, difficulties might arise in consequence of the present tenure, and that he was willing to execute any trust deed or agreement which would make the title absolutely secure to the Community.

In this he was corroborated by his counsel, Mr. A. M. Johnson, who said that for at least two years he had been considering the best method of dealing with this subject, which bristled with difficulties and presented a real problem. He was particularly apprehensive of difficulty in case there should be a dispute between Mr. Verigin and any other of his co-trustees, with a possibility of the latter proceeding to make a personal claim.

In order to establish his own position clearly and to disavow any intention of personal aggrandizement, Mr. Johnson said that Mr. Verigin had made a will bequeathing the whole of the property registered in his name to the Community, and appointing members of the Community as trustees of the will. Mr. Verigin himself confirmed this statement, but the document was not produced or put in evidence; nor can such a document be regarded as satisfactory, however sincere the desire of the testator. In justice to the Community, who, whilst having implicit faith in their leader, are insufficiently protected in the eyes of the law under the existing arrangements, steps should be taken to establish the members' indefeasible title to their lands.

CHAPTER II.

HABITS, CUSTOMS, AND PRACTICES.

Universal Testimony to Kindness, Courtesy, and Hospitality of Doukhobors—Quaint Custom of Bowing—Singing and Chanting Psalms—Simplicity of Home Life—Individual Dwellings in Saskatchewan—Community Dwellings in British Columbia—Considerable Overcrowding on First Arrival—Remarkable Cleanliness of Dwellings—Deficient Ventilation—General Health Good—Tendency to Tuberculosis—General Disinclination to Employ Professional Medical Assistance—Verigin has no Confidence in Doctors and Discourages their Employment—Doukhobors Establish Hospital and Later Abandon it—As a Rule are Vegetarians and Abstain from Intoxicants—Refuse to Send Children to School—Condemn Fanatical Customs—Remarkable Means Adopted by Verigin to Discipline Doukhobors in Saskatchewan—Although Agriculturists, have Established other Industries—Refuse to Register Births, Deaths, and Marriages—Simplicity of their Marriage Ceremony, which they Consider Binding—Moral Standing High—Divorce Rare—Some Instances of Remarriage where Desertion has taken Place—Interesting Gathering at Brilliant Settlement, when Commissioner met the Community.

When one comes to deal with the personal character, with the habits, the customs, and the practices of the Doukhobors, one has nothing but a pleasant task. Whether in Russia, in Saskatchewan, or in British Columbia, they have at all times impressed those who have come into contact with them as being the very essence of kindliness, courtesy, and hospitality. They cannot do too much for a traveller. They give him their best, both of food and accommodation, and they refuse to accept payment. Not only so, but by every word and gesture they endeavour to convey the idea that he is welcome in the fullest sense of the word.

There is an amount of deference which is due to their religious beliefs. Among no people is there so much raising of the hat and bowing as among the Doukhobors. It strikes an observer as a little out of the common to see men, whenever they meet, raising their hats to each other as frequently as to their women-folk. And with the raising of the hat there is invariably a word of greeting. It seems as if their personal relations are of the most cordial character. During many days spent in their various Communities, the Commissioner did not once hear an angry word or notice any sign of friction or ill-feeling.

They are very fond of singing and chanting, and at all hours of the day can be heard indulging in what, to an outsider, is a monotonous chanting of their songs. When they gather together in their homes, it is no longer monotonous, for they raise their voices and sing heartily, as if they thoroughly enjoyed it.

Peter Verigin is a great singer, and often leads them in these exercises. One morning the Commissioner drove rather early to his home in Grand Forks, and, when almost a quarter of a mile away, heard singing. At the comparatively early hour of 8 o'clock he was leading a large choir in his own house. After the first public sitting in the Court-room at Nelson, Peter Verigin, accompanied by some thirty or forty men and women of the Community, who had been with him in Court, assembled at the nearest street corner and commenced singing songs. The townsfolk of Nelson gathered round until there was a large crowd. They were deeply interested and did nothing to molest the singers, appearing to recognize their devoutness. It is natural that the children should be influenced by this example, for they are taught to sing in the home, and they join in chanting the psalms at a very early age.

The home life of the Doukhobors is at once delightful and forbidding. Delightful in its simplicity, for everything is simple. The houses lack ornamentation or decoration. They are scrupulously clean and sanitary, but in the British Columbia Settlements, at any rate, there are no pictures on the walls and not a single superfluous article of furniture.

In Saskatchewan the village life developed individual dwellings, in which one family would reside; in British Columbia they have started out by building Community houses. These houses are built in pairs. The idea of this seems to be to get as near to the Village Community principle as is possible under different conditions. Since the area of land available is limited and is to be used for intensive culture only, the management has designed a pair of these houses for an average of, say, 100 acres. Each house will accommodate variously from thirty-five to fifty persons. There are eight bedrooms, approximately 9 or 10 feet square; each room has a window and a doorway, but few of the rooms have doors; curtains are used instead.

The furnishing of the bedrooms is exceedingly simple. It consists, generally speaking, of one or two beds, with an abundant supply of bed-linen, blankets, and coverlets, a small table, a lamp, and a chair. According to the evidence given by a number of witnesses, the rule is for the parents to occupy one bed and the young children another. As soon as any of the children reach the age of eight or ten, they are provided with a bed in another room. It is true that these conditions were not observed on the first arrival of the Doukhobors in British Columbia. At that time they were badly crowded together, and bitter complaints were made by some of them. The conditions might not have been sanitary, but there is no evidence that they led to other abuses, and, as explained by Mr. Verigin and his managers, they were terminated as soon as it was possible to increase the house accommodation.

All the bedrooms are upstairs. The downstairs of the house consists of a large sitting or living room, which contains one table and benches all around the room. Behind this there may be a couple of bedrooms, used generally by the head man of the house and his family; farther back, a large dining-room and kitchen. In the latter is the inevitable Russian oven, in which all the cooking is done and the bread baked. At the back of the house, a distance of some 30 or 40 feet, is a smaller building which contains a guest-chamber, and which is also used in case of sickness to isolate the invalid, a bath-house, a storehouse or pantry, and a kind of soup-kitchen, in which some of the cooking is done.

The premises were all clean and well kept. There was a notable absence of an accumulation of filth, and only in one respect was anything witnessed in any of the Settlements which laid them open to criticism from a hygienic standpoint, and that was the inadequate arrangement made for ventilation.

The Doukhobors made every effort to secure a good water-supply, as they use large quantities for cooking and domestic purposes and bathing, and at all their British Columbia Settlements they are assured of this.

Speaking of health naturally raises the question of sickness, and this has led to considerable discussion; indeed, several of the discontented Doukhobors who left the Community at Brilliant and Grand Forks did so on the alleged ground that they were unable to obtain medical attendance when required. The answer of Mr. Verigin and his managers to this is that in no case has medical attendance been refused any Doukhobor asking for it, but that the Community does not encourage the calling-in of doctors, because it does not believe in them. Mr. Verigin spoke very strongly, not to say contemptuously, on this subject, and there was considerable conflict of testimony. The evidence justifies the conclusion that, while there is no law of the Community against employing medical men, there is little faith in them, and their employment is discouraged. Latterly it has been discouraged on the definite instructions of Mr. Verigin, who found that doctors' fees were high, and apparently ordered that they were not to be incurred except in very extreme cases. There were cases where

medical attendance was not sought, because the attitude of the Community was well understood to be adverse; and one man, at any rate, left without asking for medical assistance, in order that he might place his wife in the hands of a medical man. This was done, an operation was performed, and her life was saved.

Yielding to outside pressure, Peter Verigin at one time agreed to establish a hospital and dispensary on the Settlement at Brilliant. The hospital, a well-constructed building, costing several thousand dollars, was erected, and the dispensary was equipped. But the mistake was made calling in a Russian "quack" instead of a properly qualified medical man. His vagaries were so obvious and displeasing to the Community that he was discharged in a short time, and they then became so disgusted with the whole proposition that they abandoned the project, and the hospital has never since been used.

In the earlier days of the Settlement, medical men in Grand Forks and Nelson were frequently called in, according to the evidence of Doctors Rose, Hartin, and Kingston, as often as once or twice a month, but about a year ago this stopped abruptly, and they have not since been called in at all.

The evidence points to the correctness of the statement that Mr. Verigin had given some instructions on this matter which led to an abandonment of the earlier policy, and his own evidence is a practical admission that the question of fees had a great deal to do with his altered attitude. There can be no doubt that the Doukhobors should receive the benefit of such medical attention as they may desire, and now that there are so many of them in the Province, it is clear that the problem will have to be solved by the employment of resident medical officers.

In this connection it is only fair to say that they are, on the whole, a healthy people. They are practically free from trachoma, which is one of the commonest complaints of European immigrants. Their general health is good, and the only disease which seems to trouble them is the dread disease of tuberculosis. According to the evidence of Dr. Rose and Dr. Hartin, both of whom have had special opportunities of studying the Doukhobors, this disease is rather more prevalent among them than among the average settlers of the Province, and has possibly been increased by overcrowding and lack of ventilation.

Speaking generally of the Doukhobors, it is fair to say that their habits are good. They do not indulge in violence of any kind; they are, in Community, strict vegetarians, and as a rule abstain from intoxicants. They are entirely free from crime. They dress simply and inexpensively, being strongly opposed to finery, and on this point it may be permissible to relate an amusing incident which occurred during the visit of the Commissioner to Brilliant.

While discussing the school question and the refusal of the parents to continue sending their children to school, after a number of speakers had addressed the Commissioner through an interpreter, an elderly woman stepped forward and requested permission to speak. She said that one of the reasons why the parents objected to send their children to school was that the teacher, a lady, "curled her hair and wore ribbons," and they noticed that after the girls had been attending school a few weeks they began to curl their hair, and she thought this was such a terrible thing, as an evidence of vanity, that on no account would she be willing to subject her children to such a degrading influence.

The Doukhobors are admittedly a moral, industrious, truthful, and honest people. They are human; there are a few black sheep in the flock, as in every flock, and a few men who bring discredit on the high moral standards which generally prevail among these people. There are men who will hold back a part of their earnings when working on the outside. There have been instances of Doukhobors abandoning the vegetarian diet and even breaking the rule as to the use of alcohol, but this is done with a shamefacedness which is a practical admission that it is a breach of regulations, although there is reason to fear that the practice is growing.

The Doukhobors have no eccentric or fanatical customs that are recognized by the Community. Nothing can be more emphatic than the manner in which the sensational prilgrimage in Saskatchewan was denounced by nine-tenths of the Community. At the same time, there is a streak of fanaticism among them, which will be more fully explained when we come to deal with their religious views. This is evidenced by the fact that, in response to the "holy will" of their leader, they will do things which cannot be accounted for on any other ground than that of fanaticism.

For instance, during the holding of this Commission, while Peter Verigin was in residence at Verigin, Saskatchewan, he appears to have conceived the idea that there was a growing laxity among some of the people, and in order to discipline them and impress them with the

importance of a more rigid adherence to their laws, he ordered, and led the way in, an eight-mile march to a river. Here, men and women, at his bidding, followed him through the stream. They waded up to their necks, and narrowly escaped drowning. They walked back barefooted to the Town of Verigin, many of them not merely footsore, but bleeding, and the women were bidden to cut off their hair, which they did.

It may not be easy for one who is not a Doukhobor to say where the line may be drawn by the head of a Community in disciplining his followers, and as they submitted to his will without demur, as they always do, it may be taken for granted that they conceded his right to give such orders. But, even so, it is hard to disassociate contemplation of this from the idea of fanaticism ; and that leads to many speculations as to the means by which leaders of religious communities retain their hold on their people. It also leads to much speculation as to how far and for how long it is possible to retain one's hold by such means in a country where the Community is surrounded by men who are educated and enlightened, and do not consider themselves bound by any supernatural obligations.

The Doukhobors, although they graft a few simple industries on to their main occupation, are practically an agricultural people, and their work on the land is of a very high order. They call themselves "Children of the Soil." They object to educate their children, because they claim that it would lead them to leave the soil and engage in commercial pursuits, a conclusion which it is impossible to combat, whatever one may think of its wisdom. They work long hours, but not strenuously, because they take intervals of rest at irregular periods, when they feel the need of it. They train their women to be nurses, and claim that they are the best nurses in the world. So far as gentleness, sympathy, and devotion are concerned, the claim may be a just one, but their knowledge is extremely limited, and they are not acquainted with any of the modern discoveries which are known to every trained nurse, and which do so much to alleviate human suffering.

A great deal of curiosity has been aroused in connection with the refusal of the Doukhobors to register births, deaths, and marriages, and the various arguments put forward in an attempt to justify their course will be dealt with later. It may, however, be interesting under this heading to draw attention to their custom with respect to the marriage ceremony. The form of solemnization is of the most primitive kind. It simply requires the consent of the contracting parties and their parents, and the endorsation of a Community meeting. When two young people have made up their minds to marry, and as a rule they do this at a very early age, they first obtain the parents' consent ; they then appear at the next meeting of the assembly, which means the assembly to which their particular residence belongs. They announce their engagement and their wish to be married. If there is no obstacle—and there rarely is—the assemblage endorses the marriage, and that practically constitutes the ceremony.

It might be imagined that a ceremony so informal and devoid of any religious features might be regarded lightly by the contracting parties, and it has been freely stated that this is the case, and that Doukhobor marriages are unmade as readily as they are made. No evidence has been obtained to justify this conclusion, and even in Saskatchewan, where some of the Doukhobor customs have lost much of their force, there is not sufficient ground to warrant so drastic a statement.

But there is some ground for believing that, for communal reasons, the objection to the registration of marriages may, at any rate to a certain extent, be based upon the unwillingness to bring those marriages under review for the purpose of preventing divorce. The teaching of the Doukhobor is that the people should marry and should live together. There is no reason whatever to doubt that the ceremony, such as it is, is regarded by them as being as valid and binding as the ordinary marriage ceremony is to the ordinary citizen. But conditions arise under which it is more easily dissolved, although divorce is not resorted to to any considerable extent. There have been a number of cases where men have left the Community, and their wives have refused to follow them. After the lapse of some time, the man, who had now become an independent Doukhobor, would marry again on the outside, and later on his wife would be permitted by the Community to take a husband on the inside.

There have been many cases, however, highly creditable to the Doukhobors, as illustrating their fidelity to their marriage obligations—cases where, although deserted, Doukhobors would not marry again during the lifetime of the wives who had deserted them, and one case at least where a Community Doukhobor, who was deserted by his wife, she going to live with another man, refused to remarry until he had obtained a legal divorce through the Canadian Courts.

In confirmation of the view that divorces are permitted in the Doukhobor Community possibly in special cases, but still without the formality of any appeal to the Canadian Courts, attention may be directed to the evidence of Peter Verigin. When under examination at Nelson, he refused to admit that there were divorces, and stated that he could not recall one instance. On reconsidering the matter, however, he wrote a letter to the Commissioner the following day, September 4th, 1912. This letter is written in Russian and signed "Peter Verigin," and was translated by the Official Interpreter as follows :—

SIR,—Additional to the evidence I submitted to you relative to the Doukhobor Society married life, I would say that at the present time we have several cases of divorce, the reason being that the husband leaves the Society, and on his becoming naturalized the wife, having children, does not like to follow the husband, but remains with the Society.

Please add this to my former statement regarding the married life of our Society.

(Signed.) PETER VERIGIN.

On the last occasion on which Mr. Verigin was examined, this subject of registration of marriages was again touched upon, and he asked whether, if the Doukhobors consented to registration, it would make any difference to the subject of divorce. The matter was not pursued, however, beyond informing him that British Columbia had control of its own divorce laws, but the question would appear to suggest that the possibility of registration of marriage rendering it either more difficult or impossible for the Community to deal with the subject of divorce was present in the mind of their leader.

A fair conclusion on this subject of marriage and divorce is that the simplicity of the ceremony does not weaken its moral force in the minds of the Doukhobors. When they marry, they intend to, and in the vast majority of cases do, remain faithful to each other, but the policy of the leaders is to keep the Community intact and practically to retain the authority of pronouncing or permitting divorce in their own hands, for this is what it amounts to when sanction is given for remarriage within the Community during the lifetime of both parties.

It is, however, fair to say that no evidence can be obtained showing that there was any general laxity in observing the marriage vows, or any lowering of the standard of morality, nor, indeed, any variation from what can be desired in this respect, other than the means by which divorce was brought about in certain cases, and permitted in nearly every case for the purpose of strengthening the Community principle.

In closing this chapter, it may be fitting to append an account of the very interesting meeting which the Commissioner held at Brilliant on September 5th, 1912, when, at the request of the leaders, he met upwards of a thousand members of the Community, and, through an interpreter, addressed them upon the subject of observance of the registration laws and the "Schools Act." This account was written at the time, and gives a vivid reflex of their quaintest customs, as well as giving at first hand the impression created by the discussion of these important matters. Feeling that possibly the imperfect representation of their views made through an interpreter failed to do justice to their case, they handed to the Commissioner at the close of the interview a written statement, summarizing their views on the subject.

The Doukhobor Inquiry Commissioner, with his secretary and photographer and others who accompanied him yesterday on a visit to the Doukhobor Settlements on the banks of the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers between Kinnaird and Brilliant, spent a day of unique and varied interest.

Crossing the Columbia River from Kinnaird on the cable-ferry installed by the Society, they came to what was in the early days of the mining development of this locality called Waterloo, then a local centre for gold-mining and timber operations near by. Here, with the original log buildings of the old town as a basis, though now greatly improved and beautified, the Society established the headquarters of their business administration, post-office, stores, etc. A well-appointed eight-room hospital is also maintained here, with dispensary and all required equipment, but owing to the general good health that prevails in the Community it is seldom occupied. The visitors were impressed from the first view of the Settlement throughout their trip with the neatness and beauty of the buildings, about all of which are gardens of flowers, and the general aspect of perfect cleanliness, both indoors and out. Here they saw the large Russian ovens in which large batches of bread are baked, each loaf about 14 inches in diameter, and of a quality that would make the reputation of any baker who would supply such bread to the people of Nelson. The party looked through the stock of the local store, and were told that the practice in the Community was for every member to come and ask for such goods as he desired, which were given out to all who asked, without restriction, without money, and without price.

Then lunch was served to the visitors, comprising many choice local products, including watermelons grown on the spot. Outside the visitors saw other notable examples of the skill of the people as producers of fine vegetables.

They were then taken by Mr. Sherbinin and driven in rigs drawn by teams which any admirer of fine horses would feel gratified to own, through what seemed innumerable acres of growing orchards, the extent and state of advancement and perfect state of cultivation of which seemed marvellous in view of the short

time in which it had been brought about, for it is only just over four years ago that the first detachment of Doukhobors came to British Columbia and began the clearing of this land, which was then in a state of nature and largely covered with heavy forests. Three well-equipped sawmills were seen, in which the timber cut off the land had been converted into material for the numerous houses with which the Community is now accommodated. Large numbers of valuable horses were seen, whose fine condition was commented upon by all, and they were informed that in all the time the Community had been there they had lost only one horse, owing to the careful attention they received. An extensive irrigation system is being installed for use in dry seasons, fed by two reservoirs, one of which has a capacity of 1,000,000 gallons, fed from the Kootenay River by means of a pump said to be the largest in British Columbia, the capacity being 1,500 gallons per minute. The Society is also installing an electric plant to operate the pumps, and an elevator and grist-mill which they propose to build to manufacture flour and meal from grain which they will ship in from the Prairies; also to supply power for sawmills and other uses.

After some hours spent in driving through and viewing the orchards, which in length cover many miles along the banks of both rivers, the party arrived at the meeting-house of the Community, where representatives of the different Doukhobor Settlements throughout the locality were assembled to a number which can have been little short of 1,000 people, men, women, and children. The men and boys were ranged on one side and the women and girls on the other side in front of the building, leaving a passage between to the steps of a large porch. In the centre of this passage, as also the centre of the auditorium inside, was placed a table, covered with a linen cloth, on which were placed bread, water, salt, and a pitcher holding flowers. Certain of the older men then stepped forward to receive and welcome the Commissioner, and they explained through George Verigin, who acted as spokesman, that this table was always thus placed in their Community gatherings, and that the bread and water had in their religion a sacramental significance, and in this case were also intended to stand as a token of the friendliness with which they received this visit, which they believed would produce good results and lead to a better knowledge of one another.

This speech of welcome being interpreted by John Sherbinin, the Commissioner replied, expressing his appreciation of their friendly reception. He said it was the purpose of his visit to promote friendly and sympathetic relations and a better mutual understanding and appreciation of each other between the Doukhobor people and the other inhabitants of this Province.

After this the children dispersed, having first been gathered by themselves in a group and photographed. To a lover of children, the healthy and well-cared-for appearance of the children, as well as their numbers, was a charming sight, and not the least notable feature of the day's events was the singing by the children of some of their national hymns, in which the clear childish voice of one of the boys who acted as leader was conspicuous. As they were about to leave, one little boy, named John Maslaff, asked permission to say a few words for himself and his fellow-scholars. He stated that they had been attending public school during the two months it had been in session there, but they did not wish to go to school again, because the teacher who had taught them, although she had been very kind to them and they loved her, belonged to the people who had put their friends in prison.

The Commissioner then spoke to the men and women regarding the views of English-speaking people as to the necessity and benefit of public schools, the desire of the Government and all those concerned to meet in every way possible the wishes of the Community, of which evidence had been given by the permission granted to teach Russian for a part of each day.

The proceedings, which were most harmonious throughout, terminated with a further exchange of courtesies, and the Commissioner and the members of the Community parted on the most friendly terms. The Commissioner's address was interpreted throughout by John Sherbinin, and several men and women asked questions and subsequently addressed the gathering. Many of these had suffered banishment in Siberia for refusal to comply with the registration laws of Russia on conscientious grounds, but none had committed political offences or been involved in any of the anarchistic movements in that country. Among the most notable were John Konkon and Timothy Samaroden.

Every one of those who enjoyed this opportunity to see at close range the domestic life and manners of this Society were deeply impressed with the high degree of cleanliness and the simplicity of their dwellings and surroundings, and with the courteous and cordial manner in which they treated their visitors.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS, MORAL, AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE—ATTITUDE TOWARDS OBSERVANCE OF LAWS.

Religious Views—"Spirit-wrestlers" and followers of Christ—Sing Hymns Derived from Greek Church—Specimen Hymn—Psychology of the Doukhobor Temperament—Children of the Soil—Objections to Education—High Morality—No Evidences of Improper Practices in Community—Illiteracy General—Rising Generation Influenced by Environment—Opinion of Mr. Joseph Elkinton—Intellectual and Reasoning Powers of High Order—Doukhobors Well Posted on World Affairs—Verigin's Outline of Doukhobor Religion—Discussion at Brilliant Between Commissioner and Community—Remarkable Manifesto handed to Commissioner by Delegation—Visit of Deputation to Victoria to Discuss Matters in Dispute with Commissioner—Letter from Community Refusing to Comply with Suggestions—Stubborn Attitude Maintained—Outline of Doukhobor Position by Mr. Simeon Veraschagan, one of Oldest Members of Community—Summary of Objection to Registration and Education—Letter from Miss B. Clarke, Ex-School Teacher at Brilliant, Relating her Experience there.

It is almost impossible to consider the attitude of the Doukhobor Community towards the observance of law, apart from a study of their religious life. Indeed, this seems to be the logical basis for discussion, because they claim that their hostility to certain laws is based entirely upon religious conviction and conscientious scruples.

The Doukhobors call themselves, or at any rate were designated by their leaders in Russia as, "Spirit-wrestlers," which is intended to indicate their profound belief in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, for whose help they constantly appeal to enable them to overcome the weaknesses of the flesh and to live the "life of Christ." This "life of Christ" is their ideal, and, as will be seen from some documents quoted later, they claim that it is the guiding principle of their life.

They yield implicit obedience to what they believe to be the teachings of Christ. They practise the simplicity of life which He exemplified. They "eschew the pomps and vanities of this wicked world." They affect extreme simplicity in dress, furniture, and everything connected with their home life. They believe in and practise the Golden Rule; and in spite of a small minority who may not live up to it, it is doubtful if any community of like numbers can point to a finer record of the simple, religious, Christ-like life.

The purity of their teaching is remarkable, because they do not study religious books, not even the Bible, but the sayings of Christ, and the teachings based upon them, are passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth. It is astonishing that in such a manner they should have acquired a perfect knowledge of the Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, although they are by no means superficially versed in the Old Testament. In the course of discussion on religious matters, they would frequently give Old Testament references, and always with accuracy.

They claim to be descended from the Three Hebrew Children, and maintain that their practice of abstaining from animal food is based upon this fact. They have a singularly vivid consciousness of the Divine presence and protection, and, however severe the persecution to which they may be subjected, they console themselves with the reflection that, since God can see all things, and knows all things, their cause is in His hands, and that whatever He does will be right.

They do not believe in preaching, nor much in teaching, although they are fond of religious services. At these services there is no exhortation; they are confined to prayers, Scripture recitals, and singing. Some of their hymns date back to A.D. 400, and are selected from the Greek Church hymns; and in these the Virgin Mary is frequently mentioned.

It may be interesting if one of their hymns is quoted, with their own crude translation into English, in order to illustrate, as nearly as possible, their attitude towards some of the Christian doctrines.

LIGHT OF LIFE.

Lord, You are light in my life,
Of my death You are resurrection;
For my sin You came to suffer,
On the cross of blood have torment.
For my debt Jesus stands my guarantee,
And His blood gave it for payment.

Let follow you on to Golgotha,
Go up with hearty emotions
And with contrite soul,
To see through all Your torments.
At my mind about Your love
Poured the tears from eyes.

In Gethsemane and in prayer,
In tears, in sweat, and in wrestling,
There till death Christ pray all night,
For my fault and sin.
For people's sin, bloody sweat,
Christ poured His love on to the ground.

The Glory to our God.

Together with this profound religious conviction, which amounts almost to fatalism, the Doukhobors have a remarkably supersensitive consciousness. This is well illustrated in their treatment of their animals, with respect to which they hold very strong and peculiar views.

One well-known Doukhobor in Saskatchewan is quoted as stating that when St. Paul wrote in Romans VIII., 19-22: "The whole creation waiteth and groaneth even until now for the manifestation of (mercy on the part of) the sons of God," he meant to include the animal creation as well as man in the term "sons of God"; and he made this the basis for treating his horses with even greater consideration than he would have treated his fellow-man.

Time and again, this man and his companions, in crossing the prairie, when coming to a dangerous spot—a slough or a creek—would unharness their horses and drag the wagon through, then reharness them on the other side. This one incident is representative of many others, and it may be said generally that they treat their animals with the same kindness as they treat their children.

It has been well said that it is a psychological problem to eliminate this overconscious mental attitude from such a kind and true spirit. So it is with all the fanaticism that has appeared among these people. A people who, in the main, will not fight, or steal, or drink anything intoxicating, or smoke, or use profane language, or lie, have a character which should bring forth the best qualities of Christian citizenship. And this is the teaching they impart to their children, and in which the children are growing up. But, as has been seen in Saskatchewan, it has been greatly discounted by the effect of external influences.

This circumstance, no doubt, adds weight to the contention of the Doukhobors that they should be allowed to retain their communal practices, and continue to rear their families in the faith of their fathers. They are "Children of the Soil"—that is their favourite designation—and, as will be seen from a statement shortly to follow, it is their great dread of seeing their children divorced from the soil that makes them so insistent in their refusal to educate them, or to come in contact with civilization more than they can help.

This subject of education follows hard on the heels of religious belief, and determines their intellectual studies. Perhaps, however, before dealing with it, it may be well to recapitulate the effect of their religious views upon their moral life.

When discussing the question of marriage and divorce, it was pointed out that, except for a variation from our recognized divorce laws, which probably has not been resorted to in many cases, the moral standpoint of the Doukhobors is higher than that of the average community—the term "community" not being used in any special sense. Rumours have been circulated which, if verified, might constitute a serious charge against the morality of the Doukhobors, but the closest investigation has failed to show any justification for these rumours, and no person who has started them has been willing to follow the matter to a conclusion, or been able to produce any evidence worthy of consideration.

Study of the people, of their habits of life, of their demeanour, of their temperament, and of all evidence available affecting their conduct would veto the suggestion that they are an immoral people, or that, under cover of Community regulations, they lower the moral standard. Indeed, everything points in the opposite direction. They encourage early marriage, which by all authorities is admitted as a bulwark against immorality; they inculcate the finest principles in their home life; and, while the Community may exercise powers through its leaders which are exceptional and peculiar, there is no ground for supposing that it is not strict as to all moral observances, and insistent upon maintaining its standards.

As to the intellectual life and the subject of education, it needs no amplification to show that these people are, in a sense, ignorant. A very small percentage can either read or write Russian, and a negligible number understand English. It is doubtful if, in the whole Community of 7,700 now resident in British Columbia, there are twenty who can converse in the simplest and most broken English, or who can understand a paragraph in a newspaper or a letter. The few among them who have begun to acquire our language, with perhaps half a dozen exceptions, have not persevered beyond the most elementary stage, and this is reflected in some of their attempts to address the Commissioner in the English language.

As they read no books, and practically acknowledge none, except the Bible, it is not surprising that intellectual progress has been stunted, nor that their view should be narrow and bigoted. They possess the obstinacy and suspicion characteristic of most uneducated people, and, although it may be true, as a writer on this subject has said, that the truth has always been entrusted largely to poor, ignorant men—that it was so in the first and in every subsequent century of our era—yet ignorance does not make any people easier to deal with, and is apt to confirm them not merely in their prejudices, but in what they believe to be their legitimate opposition to organized law and order.

Still, this intellectual dormancy is no longer characteristic of the rising generation. They have sensed a broader life and a greater freedom of thought, and are keen to know more about it. The children who attended school in Grand Forks were described by the teacher as being particularly intelligent, and on the whole quicker to learn than the average Canadian child. The same testimony was borne by the lady teacher who had charge of the Brilliant School for several months.

Perhaps no more competent opinion can be quoted than that of Mr. Joseph Elkinton, who says :—

The more I talked with these honest-hearted men and women, the more fully and deeply impressed became the conviction that they possessed the very germ of moral, civil, and spiritual reform, and that within a few years their children will acquire such knowledge of Canadian life and customs as to correct the misunderstandings of their parents.

It must not for a moment be supposed that, because the Doukhobor is uneducated, he does not possess intellectual and reasoning powers of at least an average order It is remarkable how, in common with many other uneducated people, they amass information. It must be through their leaders, who are in touch with everything, and seem to know all that is transpiring in the world, and who undoubtedly convey it orally to the members of the Community in the various meetings of the assemblies.

At any time when the Commissioner was discussing important matters with the Community, their spokesmen were able to quote reference after reference bearing upon the subject, knew what had taken place, not only in Canada, but in Europe and the United States, affecting the question at issue.

For instance, when the question of military service was under discussion, they not only referred to their Russian experience, but to the great military prowess of England, the enormous increase in naval and military expenditure, and a similar increase in the German expenditures ; and they put to the Commissioner this point : that if Britain and Germany went to war, as leading statesmen seemed to think was inevitable, would Canada be able to keep out of it ? And, if Canada had to fight, what would happen to the Doukhobors ? Might not they be called upon ?

They were well posted on all matters affecting their interests. For instance, when the schools question was under discussion, they asked if it were not a fact that there was a universal cry of "back to the land" ? And was not the problem of the day among educationists how to keep the people on the soil ? They asked if it was not a fact that Canadian and English boys and girls, when educated, would not work on the land, but sought positions in the cities ? And if this was a matter of concern and anxiety to their respective Governments, how could fault be found with the Doukhobors for trying to avert a similar calamity among their children ?

How could such questions be answered ?

Perhaps it would be well, before leaving the subject of religion and the attitude of the Doukhobors, to allow their leader, Peter Verigin, to speak for himself. In his evidence at Nelson, he said, in part :—

I will begin with the history of the Doukhobor religion. We take our religion from Jesus Christ. We think Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth. He was here, and explained the equality of men on earth. We accepted His teaching. For their propaganda of equality among men the Doukhobors were punished and sent to prison ; and because they heard that this was a very free country, they emigrated to Canada. The Doukhobors were established as a separate sect in Russia for three hundred years. They have always held the same religious beliefs as they hold to-day. They do not call their sect a church. They believe that the Church is composed of living people. They have no books of worship ; they believe in oral testimony. They are trying now to follow Jesus Christ. He said : "I give the law to your hearts and to your senses, and you will transmit it to your children."

The purpose of the visit of the Commissioner to Brilliant was to discuss with the people, face to face, the subject of their non-compliance with the registration laws and their refusal to send their children to school. Not that it was expected that the discussion would have any very definite result, but, in the course of the hearing at Nelson, it was stated specifically by one of their leaders that the exact reason for the registration laws had never been fully explained to the people, and that they would at least appreciate a full statement of the views of the Government on the subject.

As detailed in a previous chapter, the visit took place, and a very full discussion ensued. It is not necessary to go at length into the arguments used by the Commissioner. A brief summary of these appeared at the time in the Nelson *Daily News*, and is quoted here :—

The Commissioner then spoke to the men and women regarding the views of the English-speaking people as to the necessity and benefits of public schools ; the desire of the Government and all those con-

cerned to meet in every way possible the wishes of the Community, of which evidence had been given by the permission granted to teach Russian for a part of the day.

The spokesman of the Community then replied that, as in Russia their objections to war and militarism had caused difficulties between them and the Government, so in Canada they believed they saw reason to fear the same thing. The Governments of all civilized countries were engaged in making preparations for war, and the British Government, they saw, was taking a leading part in the same struggle. The first and chief purpose of the Doukhobor Society was to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ as they understood them; therefore they wished to have nothing to do with anything which seemed to them to have any connection with military preparations.

The Commissioner explained that there was no such connection between the registration laws of British Columbia and the military system of Great Britain or Canada; also that the purpose of Great Britain's military equipment and preparations was not to make war, but to maintain peace, and that it was admitted by all who understood the times that under present conditions in the world this state of preparedness was essential to the maintenance of the nation's peace.

With reference to the schools, several Doukhobor speakers urged that the reasons which led to their decision to discontinue sending their children to school were that education was likely to make the children discontented with their life of cultivation of the soil followed by their parents, and make them wish to get their living in easier ways, and would tend to separate the children from their parents and from the customs and habits of the Community.

These were the reasons which caused the Community to feel that their conscience would not permit them to comply with these laws.

One of the women told the Commissioner that among them crime was unknown, and that, whereas among educated people poverty existed, no Doukhobor ever suffered for want of food or clothing; so they thought that, while the laws spoken of were needed for other people, they did not think they were required among the Doukhobors.

The Commissioner pointed out that in no other country in the world was there the same amount of religious freedom and the same tolerance of other people's religious views as in the various countries of the British Empire, and that there was not the slightest desire on the part of the Government to interfere with the religious observances and conscientious views of the Doukhobor Community. The only desire was to see them line up with the other inhabitants of the country in obeying the laws, which were made for the good of all, and which might at any moment become as essential to the protection of the Doukhobors as any other class of the people. He added that, while it was is duty to reconcile any differences that had arisen between the Government and the Doukhobors, at the same time his last word to them was that some way must be found by which they could be induced to recognize their responsibilities to obey the laws of the Province. He pointed out that the people of British Columbia and the Doukhobors believed in the same Jesus Christ, and that none of the laws of this Province were contrary to His teachings.

Following this, the Community handed to the Commissioner a statement which they had carefully prepared. The translation is crude in the extreme, which is accounted for by the fact that they did not call in their manager as interpreter; but perhaps it is just as well to give it in the way in which they thought it out, as it is possible to gather their full meaning and to understand the grounds of their objection to both the registration laws and to education. This understanding is necessary if one is to consider how they should be dealt with, for, whatever else may be said, there can be no doubt as to their sincerity.

Three hundred years ago we carry name Doukhobors. For all this time at Russia russian spiritual-priests and the government authority command not once had aroused question about our Doukhobor religious doctrine, which our generations had we accepted from Christ, and we try to lead this teaching for all our life at excess power by deeds.

Our generations refused to worship the things made with hands all the substantial churches divine service, for what they suffered very much in imprisonment in monasterials torture-chambers....were banished to the galleys and the children were taken away and trained them by theirs own way. But after all this did not help the russian government and the clergy. The God is powerful in His righteousness. And the Doukhobors at Russia had been excluded from all the churches ceremony, and never had been entered in register books. This question the registration intimately had tied the Doukhobors with religious faith. And now just the same at the present time we wish to be citizens of all the world, and do not wish to register our children in the Royal Crown Government books, and to register dead-body it is insipidity.

Because our religion confines on us to believe into divine power from the self Governing-Spirit, and we consider that the adorable Divine Power is ruling and governing all the world. Jesus Christ brought light and intellect to the earth from the Father of self Governing Spirit from the Heaven, that is a man generates to earth can by creed into Divine Power step over this immortality spirit after the dead body.

We are not refusing to give knowledge of increase or decrease of our Doukhobor Community people in ten or five years once. But to enter in your register books we will never do it. Because we calculate we are already registered in the Book of Life before Him the Founder, which is called Eternity. At will of Lord the Founder of the earth, a man bornes and leaves in this world, by His holy will, a man is dying in body the heart returns to Father of self governor, so as to join with it's beginning. Our Father-God is that Power of self governor Spirit-Power of love, Power of Life, which had given beginning to whole essentiality. The Christ in his intellection opened to us in this power His Father's Anarchical Spirit. "Father and I is union."

The School teaching Doukhobors same did not accepted while being in Russia, and very seldom the children were thought to read and write, and if it had happened it was at home-school. We educate our children by means orally, so as not to have expense for the paper and the printing matter. The School education we turned aside by many reasons and the most important of them are: Three.

1. The school education teaches and prepares the people, that is children, to military service, where shed harmless blood of the people altogether uselessly. The most well educated people consider this dreadfully sinful such business as war, lawful. We consider this is great sin.

2. The school teaching at the present time had reached only to expedience for easy profit, thieves, cheaters, and to large exploitation working-class laborious on the earth. And we ourselves belong to working-class people and we try by the path of honest labour, so we may reap the necessary maintenance, and to this we adopt our children to learn at wide school of Eternal Nature.

3. The school teaching separates all the people on the earth. Just as soon as the person reached read and write education, then, within a short time leaves his parents and relations and undertakes unreturnable journey on all kinds of speculation, depravity and murder life. And never think off his duty, respecting his parents and elder-ones, but he looks opposite, turning themselves, enslaving of the people, for theirs own licentious and insatiableness gluttony....It is really dangerous to talk about all school education, to what extent crack-brained people attain in highest royal universities, in education science, where, Glory to God the common people is not admitted. But thousand times sorrowfully for this, well educated people, swallow down all the national peoples power and the capital....And the people suffer from not having land even a piece of daily bread....And therefore we distinctly understand instruction of Christ, we holding on to Community life and we calculate all the people on earth are our brothers and ones Fathers-Gods children.

We understand all the people equal to Lord, and no one can servitude a man. We distinctly remember instruction of Christ: "Whoever wants of youth's to be head, that's must be a servant to all." On the above basis we evade to give whatever may be of an oath-promise and swear in submission to execute the orders of the people similar to us. But we submitted only a law of God, who the Christ said to his disciples: "Embrace the law of God in your minds and in your hearts and preach to the world."

Because we are as followers of Christ and his instructions, we are even against russian reading and writing, but the English edict is altogether useless.

More of all we calculate it is necessary for a man to revivak spiritual part, this we calculate necessary is because, the Christ were ordinary man, without school and university who teaching spiritual man, with great horizontal MIND, permeability, depth centuries of past and coming of life and Light.

But educated Governors of earth and high-priests, in their's error-books and their's hard-hearted crucified on cross, our Great-King-Reformer-of-Divinity Genius, from whom should learn all the kings and nobles, governors of earth, lawyers, and all the spiritual-prier's, inclusively to a common agriculturist.

And now if they want to repeat same on us with their cruel royal government power, then this will be only added to an ancient hard-hearted people not efface to disgrace and insipidity to ruin the peaceful people, whom Christ calling to society evenness, and brotherhood to all people of the world. Our religion confines in above said, by hope of our generation that the peace will come on earth and will gratitude with the people.

Of all the past it seems to us, that we are unable to figure on to live constant in British Columbia, not by our own personal caprice and choice of good land and so forth, but for not understanding us by surrounded people book-worms at theirs selfish laws, the laws property material and alienation of all kinds of Apostolic rights, preaching pious labour and equality to all the people on the earth.

We are Israil posterity birth from three Adolescent—Annanias, Azer and Missel, whom king nevechedeneser consign to fire-stove. And the followers of Jesus Christ Eternal Glory of King and Lord our Saviour of all the earth.

GLORY TO GOD.

THE DOUKHOBOR COMMUNITY OF BRILLIANT, BRITISH COLUMBIA.
Power of Attorney's are:
CEAMUR BECUNBELURC BEPENGARNR.
ANAEMACUR MEPEMEVUMEBA.
UBAN EBC. KON-KUN.
FLAGBUNA X CEMENEBNA BEUKUNA.
(NEYANAYUAL.)

At a later stage of the proceedings, a deputation of Doukhobors, consisting of J. W. Sherbinin, John Kon-kin, and Simeon Verishagin, waited on the Commissioner at Victoria to discuss the possibility of some understanding with respect to the observance of the obnoxious laws. Unfortunately, this discussion was complicated by the arrest of two of the Doukhobors at Grand Forks in connection with a further breach of the registration laws. These arrests seemed to exasperate the Community, but whether the result would have been different if the arrests had not been made can only be a matter of conjecture. At any rate, the deputies returned to Brilliant with certain suggestions, and, having considered them in a Society meeting at which 4,000 people were present, addressed the following letter to the Commissioner on November 19th:—

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD DOUKHOBORS IN CANADA,
BRILLIANT, B.C., November 19th, 1912.

William Blakemore, Esq.,
Royal Commissioner, Victoria, B.C.

DEAR SIR,—Our deputies, John E. Kon-kin, Simeon W. Verishagin, and John W. Sherbinin, arrived from Vancouver and Victoria and have submitted to the Society your suggestions about the school and registration. And we all four-thousand-group of people, men and women in Brilliant and Grand Forks, have declared unisonantly *in re* our matter you have investigation a two month of time, for this time you indeed already

understand telling you by us in a letter and by word of mouth, that the foundation of our belief is containing in Jesus Christ's teaching. Therefore the school question is settling aside by us. So as we could better teach and educate our children ourselves in Jesus Christ's law and eternal righteousness, for which, as we told you before, flows a torrent of martyrs' blood of holy people. And we not agree at all to teach our children by foreign teachers and have darken by their science's children's our intellect. We are teaching our children by private methods, by not sense of dead letter, but by sense of alive word. So that and Christ embraced out his Apostles not from school educated at all, but out of simple agriculturist and fishers, which was turned to worthly of all the world in people and over all scientifical of schools and university, as Tzars, Kings, and Ministers. And the Doukhobors long time back follow their simple worthly and honest example. And on this we finish our final decision about the school.

The registration, about increase and decrease of our Community the Government always may get information in Doukhobor's office at Brilliant.

The land taxes we not refuse to fulfil.

For present of this letter the Society entrusted to deputies of Doukhobor Community, John Kon-kin and Simeon Verishagin.

Yours truly,

(Signed.) JOHN KON-KIN,
SIMEON VERISHAGIN,
Deputies of the Doukhobor Society.

From this letter it will be seen that they had not departed one jot from the position which they had always taken up, unless the clause in which they say that the Government can always get information in the Doukhobor office at Brilliant about the increase and decrease of the Community is to be regarded as a slight concession.

In addition to the letter which contains the ultimatum of the Community, a document was forwarded on November 1st, on the instructions of the Community. This document was prepared by one of their oldest and most respected members, Simeon W. Verashagin, and reads in part as follows, the omission being simply a recital of their history in Russia, and does not need repetition here :—

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD OF THE DOUKHOBORS IN CANADA,
BRILLIANT, B.C., November 1st, 1912.

William Blakemore, Esq.,
Royal Commissioner, Victoria, B.C.

DEAR SIR,—Since you left Brilliant I feel constrained to write you a few equitable lines about our Doukhobors' mode of life and religion from a long time back until now.

1st. By tradition of our forefathers the beginning of our Doukhobors originate from the three Israel adolescents, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, whom the wicked Assyrian King Nebuchadnezzar, in Babylon, threw into the burning fiery furnace.

2nd. The faith of Doukhobors is taken from Jesus Christ, whom the ancients Government killed on the Cross for Truth.

3rd. We in spirit and soul confess God, but we Doukhobors refuse churches made of wood and stone upon which the people expend so much labour and money long since ago. God's Spirit and Wisdom dwell in the heart of the humble believer in Jesus Christ, and this Divine Church we recognize in every part of the world.

For the building of this Divine Church it is not required that men's hands and money be employed. "Where two or three are gathered in Christ's name, God is amongst them."

4th. In the life beyond the tomb the soul passes into eternity, and we recognize as for holy ideal that the souls of the righteous inhabit eternity with the Lord in the province of radiant light, and in the bosom of the Heavenly Father ; but sinners will never perceive Divine Light. . . . .

Our party of 2,200 people left the Caucasus coast per steamship in the early part of May, 1899, the journey occupying twenty-seven days.

By God's grace we reached the American coast safely. We were held in quarantine for a whole month, and in the early part of July we took train from Quebec to a place near to Yorkton, Sask.

In Quebec the Minister of Canada, Mr. Sifton, met us at the railway station and complimented all with favour, and said : "Glory to God that you came out from Russia as from Egypt, where you and your forefathers terribly tormented now come to a country of liberty ; here you can rest and live your own faith as you wish. All that will be required from you is that you pay $10 for homesteads, and $2 for road taxes." In this way the Minister assured us. His words were interpreted to our Doukhobors word by word by a Russian interpreter, and our old men greatly rejoiced over the words of the Minister and thanked him.

The Doukhobors settled in Yorkton District, fifty miles from the railway amongst the marshes and forest. This land from the beginning was only waste on which the cattle-breeder only herded their cattle, and told us Doukhobors that the ground so froze as not to permit the growing of any grain-crops.

The Doukhobors, however, trusting in the favour of God and one's labour, settled and started to build houses from the bush. They hauled the timber themselves and began clearing the land of timber, and ploughed it themselves, not having any working animals, nor were they able to buy them. The ploughs were drawn by the women and the men went out to earn some money, and in extreme and great want the Doukhobors lived from three to four years before they were able to provide bread. After from six to seven years the Doukhobors turned this waste and unpeopled land into a cultivated grain-field.

They started their own grain-ship to sell in large quantities, and at this time the Government through their agents start to suggest to the Doukhobors that they become citizens to Britain's King. But the Doukhobors answered them: "We came from Russia to Canada for the very reason that we should not become citizens of any except God, and buy our homesteads, for which we paid $10 each"; but the Doukhobors were only allowed to occupy those homesteads for a very short time, as in the seventh and eighth years the Doukhobor homesteads were confiscated, while the Government ignored the fact that all this once waste land was cultivated into a grain-field by the hard labours and sweat of the Doukhobors. Seeing that the land was confiscated from them and to live in Saskatchewan without land would be impossible, we decided to send three deputies to buy land for themselves with their own money, thinking that the Government would not disturb us with any of their obligations. Our trustees bought the land in British Columbia in a wild and mountainous district covered with thick forest, and in about four years the Doukhobors cleared the great timbers and cultivated these dales, turning them into one of the fruitful orchards; after we put a very great amount of labour and money into the land the Government are not now going to allow us to live quietly, but start to arrest our brothers and put into gaol, and that not for any important matter; but all the Government's tortures and threats could not stop the Doukhobors on their holy path, because they strongly believe Christ's word: "If they persecute me they will also persecute you, but do not be afraid of them that kill the body, as the soul cannot be killed."

What an evidence to our young generation, thousands of martyrs' graves suffering in a victory for the truth. There in our native country far on the other side of the ocean where the ground is stained by the blood of holy people, from Christ until our day; and why do not the inhabitants of Canada pay any hearty attention to the Doukhobors' sufferings? Is it because they calculate the Doukhobor strangers, or that they do not believe in Jesus Christ, but the law of God long ago threatened the insults of effrontery and falsehood in a day terrible, and will again in witness of Jesus Christ change to the very foundation all the incorrect laws of man.

THE MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

(Signed.) SIMEON W. VERISHAGAN.

This statement shows how they regard the arrest and imprisonment of their fellows, and how they make use of the fact to offer a practical *non possumus* to all suggestions for compliance with the requirements of the registration laws and "Schools Act."

A brief summary of their objections may be thus set out. They will not register because they desire to remain unmolested in their communal life. They want no interference, as they call it, which means no intrusion of any kind. They claim that birth and death are the acts of God, and call for no cognizance on the part of man; and as to marriage, they take the high ground that it is purely a matter between the contracting parties. Then they raise the objection that in Russia registration was used as a means of tracing those who might become liable to military service, and while they admit that conditions in Canada are somewhat different, and that they have their Order in Council granting them immunity, still they profess to have no confidence in the future, and claim that possible developments which cannot at present be foreseen might swing them into the vortex of war.

With reference to schools, they take the ground that education unfits the young for the pursuits of the peasant, that this has become a problem already in nearly all countries; that their children are being educated in the best sense of the word, in their homes and on the soil, by being held down to the simple beliefs and traditions of their forefathers. They also fear that education will inoculate their children with the ideas of their educators, which they claim are alien to the Doukhobor belief; that people who can prosecute and persecute Doukhobors and throw them into gaol for what they consider is not an offence, but simply a conscientious discharge of a religious duty, are not safe people to be entrusted with the education of Doukhobor children—that the children would imbibe the same harsh, unjust, and cruel ideas.

These reasons are a fair reflection of the Doukhobor mind in its primitive state, and, as has already been pointed out in this Report, are still firmly held by a large section of the Community, and by practically all the older members. The children are being imbued with the same ideas, but, in spite of efforts to the contrary, the leaven has entered and is already working. And the few who have acquired a knowledge of our language and have made some advance in elementary education are not likely long to remain ignorant.

A fitting conclusion to this chapter will be found in the very interesting letter written by Miss Buelah Clarke, who was for several months the teacher in the Doukhobor School at Brilliant. This young lady is a certificated Canadian teacher and is spoken of by the Doukhobors in the highest terms. They admit that it would be impossible to find a more suitable person, or one to whom they could raise less objection, and yet at the end of the first term they closed the school, and notified Miss Clarke that she would not be wanted again.

In order to test the statements that had been made, and also to obtain Miss Clarke's version of her experience there, to which she replied by letter, as she had moved away and

taken charge of another school at Creston. The questions asked, together with Miss Clarke's reply, follow :—

1. Q.—While teaching at Brilliant, where did you reside? A.—While teaching at Brilliant, I resided in a corner room on the first floor of the school-house.

2. Q.—In whose house, and who were the other occupants (give names and ages of each person)? A.—My companion, a widow of about fifty, lived with me. We were the only occupants of the building, except for about three weeks, when Maria Alexandrona, a Russian girl, had a room upstairs. My companion's first name was Masha (Mary). I cannot tell you her last name, as I heard it only once. I had my meals at the next house, the one occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Sokareff. The meals were prepared by Caloosha, an old lady who lived in that house, and by my companion. My companion ate with me, and we had a small table with a tablecloth, and a good supply of dishes.

2A. Q.—What arrangements were made about your food, and who cooked it? Give particulars of your dietary for each meal of a sample day. A. (continued).—Menu: Breakfast—Excellent bread, butter, a glass of milk, soup made with potatoes, onions, butter, and a grain something like oatmeal. Potatoes and onions fried in butter. Baked apple or preserves. Dinner—Bread, butter, milk, vegetable soup. Beans, peas, and cabbages boiled together. Pancakes, made very thin and usually without baking-powder. Melted butter is poured over them, and I ate them either with sugar or jam. Supper—Bread, butter, milk, "lapshe." This is made from flour and water. It is rolled very thin and then shredded and put into boiling water; butter is added, and very often there are small pieces of potato with it. Preserves, turnovers; these are made from bread-dough, rolled very thin. Mashed potatoes were put in some, and rhubarb and sugar in others. They were put in the frying-pan and baked in a brick oven.

3. Q.—Did the food agree with you, or did you suffer in any respect, especially from dyspepsia or any stomach-trouble? A.—The food agreed with me all right. I suffered neither from dyspepsia nor stomach-trouble. The lack of variety was a little bit hard.

4. Q.—What arrangements were made with reference to your bedroom; was it comfortable, and entirely private? A.—My bedroom was very comfortable. Everything in it was new. I had a nice white iron bed, and very nice bedding. A bureau with a good looking-glass and two tables. They also picked out the best sewing-machine in the colony, and put it in my room for my use. My companion had a bed similar to mine, and shared the room with me. This arrangement suited me very well, as she was a most kind and thoughful person. I have never been better taken care of. During the daytime I often had a great many visitors. I think many of them came for fear I would be lonely. I always made them welcome, and was glad to have them. At times, if my companion thought I was tired or busy, she would send them away. There were locks to all the windows and to the outside doors. There were curtains at the windows. By locking the door and putting down the curtains I could be alone at any time I desired.

5. Q.—What were the bath-room arrangements? A.—Each group of houses has a large bath-room in the long low building back of the houses. On Saturday morning all the women bathe. I had mine in the bath-room belonging to the next house.

6. Q.—Did you, during your residence in the Community, observe anything which would justify a suspicion that the people were not perfectly well conducted and moral? A.—I saw nothing during my residence in the Community that would justify a suspicion that the people were not perfectly well conducted and moral. I saw everything to the contrary.

7. Q.—Were you aware that there was considerable overcrowding in the Community; if so, did you witness or become acquainted with any ill effects, not upon yourself, but upon others? A.—I was not aware that there was much overcrowding in the Community. Each bedroom had a window, and I think there were not more than two to a room, unless it was an extra large one, and then only members of the same family. The young women whom I knew had rooms to themselves. In June, when a large number of new people came, they were a little more crowded than they were before, but I understood it was only temporary. I noticed that in some houses the piazzas were curtained off, and perhaps a family slept out there. As it was warm weather, they would feel no discomfort. I think you would find more sickness among the same number of Canadians than you do among the Doukhobors.

8. Q.—What do you say about the personal habits and cleanliness—(*a*) of the children, (*b*) of the people? A.—(*a.*) My forty-eight pupils always had clean hands and faces, and were neat in their appearance. They were very well behaved, were always courteous and respectful, and as far as I could see had no bad habits. I had every chance to observe them, for they came to the school-house very early in the morning, and some of them returned after supper at night. (*b.*) The older people are equally clean and neat, and their habits are good. The men are respectful and thoughtful to the women, and are very kind to the children.

9. Q.—Did you form the impression that the people are sincerely religious as they claim; did you form the impression that their claim that they believe in and try to follow the teachings of Christ is an absolutely genuine one, and not a cloak for anything else? A.—I formed the opinion that the people are sincerely religious, and that their claim that they believe in and try to follow the teachings of Christ is an absolutely genuine one, and not a cloak for anything else.

10. Q.—Had you any personal acquaintance with Mr. Peter Verigin, Mr. John Sherbinin, Mr. John Kon-kin, Mr. George Verigin? If so, will you please state fully your personal impressions of each, especially as regards their character, their sincerity, and honesty of purpose? A.—I did not get to know Mr. Peter Verigin very well. He called at the school one morning and seemed interested in the work. He told me that his people would like to have me stay with them as long as I felt I could. He asked me to teach the children some English songs. I had no dealings with him. He was always pleasant when I met him, either bowing or shaking hands. Once he remarked to some one standing by that he would like to talk to me if he could. I met Mr. John Sherbinin a number of times, and I consider him a man of strong character, great sincerity, and honesty of purpose. I do not know whether I know Mr. John Kon-kin or not. His name is not familiar. If I knew his office, I could tell better. I had no acquaintance with Mr. George Verigin.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DOUKHOBORS IN THEIR TRADING RELATIONS.

Objection that Doukhobors do not Trade with Retail Stores—Evidence shows Extensive Purchases from Canadian Wholesalers, Little from Retailers—Extract from Community Books showing Total Purchases in British Columbia—Statement of Similar Purchases in Saskatchewan—Difference of Opinion among Retailers—Complaint is Practically Confined to Grand Forks—Second Sitting there at Request of Citizens' Committee—Citizens' Counsel Withdraws and Makes Written Statement—Question of Competing with Other Producers—Experience of Doukhobor Trading in Saskatchewan Favourable to Community—Co-operation of Community with Canadian Farmers to raise Value of Produce—Similar Arrangement Contemplated with Fruit-growers in British Columbia—Manager Kootenay Fruit-growers' Association Favourable to Doukhobors—Intention to Build Additional Jam-factories—Familiarity of Verigin with Market and Trade Conditions—Project to Establish Warehouses and Cold-storage Plants Throughout Prairie Provinces—American Competition and Slaughter Prices—High Business Standing of Doukhobor Community with Mercantile Houses.

Previous chapters have dealt with all the complaints against the Doukhobors on account of their non-observance of laws in force in British Columbia. But an objection has been raised, to a very limited extent in Nelson, and to a greater extent in Grand Forks, which, while it does not rest upon any legal basis, must, nevertheless, if sustained, have some weight in determining whether or not the Doukhobor is a desirable settler.

The objection is that he does not transact business with the local tradesmen, as private individuals do; but that, instead, the manager of the Community purchases all his supplies by car-load, and distributes them from the Community warehouses.

As a statement of fact, this is true of the Community Doukhobors, and, of course, the complaint has reference only to them, because the independent Doukhobor who has left the Community does his shopping where he pleases.

But is this an unfair method of conducting business, and does it entitle the local tradesmen to register a complaint?

The defence of the business managers of the Community is that they are traders. Their registered title is "The Doukhobor Trading Company," and they claim that in purchasing wholesale instead of retail they are only following the example of many other—indeed, of all—organized companies who have a large number of people to provide for. They point out that railway companies, contracters, and many other large employers of labour adopt this method, and that the Doukhobors do it with even more show of reason, because they are a close community, and the ownership of all goods is communal, not individual. They claim that it would be unreasonable and absurd to compel them to purchase all the food and clothing required for more than 5,000 people, or even a considerable percentage of it, from retail stores.

During the course of the investigation, the Commissioner found that as affecting this question some very erronous ideas were held.

For instance, witnesses who made the complaint that Doukhobors made no local purchases from retailers were not aware that they made extensive purchases from wholesalers. The general impression seemed to be that they bought nearly all their goods either in Eastern Canada or the United States, while the actual figures, taken by the Commissioner from their trading books, showed this to be entirely wrong.

Appended is a statement of all the merchandise purchased by the Community from the beginning of their Settlement, early in 1909, to September of the present year, and it is instructive as showing that of a total purchase amounting to $317,845, no less than $225,421 had been purchased from wholesalers in British Columbia, $75,361 from Eastern Canadian wholesalers, and the inconsiderable sum of $17,062 from the United States:—

STATEMENT OF MERCHANDISE PURCHASED FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE SETTLEMENT UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1ST, 1912.

Bought of J. H. Ashdown Hardware Co., Wood, Vallance Hardware Co., and A. Macdonald & Co., of Nelson, B.C.	$ 57,927 75
Bought from Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster, B.C.	85,769 48
Bought from different points in the Province of British Columbia	81,724 72
Total	$ 225,421 95
Bought from Eastern Canada, from different cities	$ 75,361 46
Bought from U.S.A	17,062 24

It may also be instructive, as showing that the Doukhobors pursued the same policy in Saskatchewan in respect to their purchases as they have established in British Columbia, to know that during the month of August, 1912, the Saskatchewan Colonies purchased from Canadian wholesalers in Yorkton, Medicine Hat, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal goods to the value of $188,621, and paid to the various railway companies for freight and transportation no less a sum than $136,081. This, with interest to banks of $7,029, made a total expenditure for the year of $327,027.

In the face of these figures, it is impossible to argue that the Doukhobor is no good to the Province in which he lives, as a trader; and, while it is true that he does only a limited amount of business with local retailers, he is only exercising his right to purchase wholesale, as any similar organization would do. Indeed, to quote perhaps one of the highest precedents, the Army and Navy Stores in England are expressly designed to give the advantage of practically wholesale prices in a corporate body because a large number of people have united for a common purpose.

In this connection, however, it is only fair to say that there is no prejudice on the part of the Doukhobors against the retail stores, because they use them to a limited extent, purely as a matter of convenience.

There is another striking feature of this complaint—that in both Nelson and Grand Forks there is a marked difference of opinion, even among storekeepers. One retail trader would come along and say that he had no fault to find with the Doukhobors; that they purchased considerable goods from his store, and that he found them satisfactory customers. Another would come and say that he had no use for them; that they did no business with him, and he did not seem to be aware that they patronized other stores.

As a matter of fact, it was only at Grand Forks that any serious complaint was made, and, in the end, this complaint was not sustained. The Commissioner was led to expect a large body of evidence adverse to the Doukhobors, both in connection with their trading and their personal conduct. But the evidence adduced did not bear out this representation. On the occasion of the first hearing of thirty-seven witnesses examined, eighteen witnesses were distinctly favourable to the Doukhobors and fifteen against them. Finding that there was a preponderance in their favour, some of the leading citizens requested the Commissioner to hold a second sitting, to give them an opportunity to secure counsel and prepare a case, as they felt that the evidence adduced did not fully and fairly represent the opinion of the citizens.

The Commissioner assented, and the second sitting was held ten days later. On this occasion Mr. Sutton appeared and stated that he had been instructed by a citizens' committee, that committee having been appointed by a public meeting.

Mr. Sutton called only four witnesses, when he announced that he was not prepared to go on, as he found the inquiry had fully covered the ground he wished to cover, and he had no other witnesses to call.

Mr. Sutton tendered a written statement, setting forth certain opinions adverse to the Doukhobors. This statement is attached to the evidence herein, and their objections will be dealt with in the findings of the Commission.

Apart from the question of the purchases by the Doukhobor Community, the point has been raised as to their competing with other producers. It has been urged that the fact that they have control of such a large amount of labour gives them an advantage which they could use to crush out other fruit-growers. For instance, it was alleged that in Grand Forks in particular they have flooded the local market with vegetables at a lower price than was being charged by individual producers.

As to whether the Doukhobors could, if they set themselves the task, crowd other producers out of the market by reason of their control of a large amount of labour which does not draw wages, there can be no question; but as to the probability of their adopting such a policy there is certainly no evidence that they are likely to do so, and it would appear to be entirely opposed to their own interests and the probabilities of the case.

The experience of their competitors in Saskatchewan, an experience that was related to the Commissioner on unquestionable authority during his visit to the Prairie Province, was that their trading system had honestly benefited their competitors.

For instance, when they commenced business in Saskatchewan, the farmers were in the hands of the Grain-growers' Association of Winnipeg, which, in respect, for instance, to oats, was charging from 10 to 12 cents a bushel for elevator use and marketing, which meant that, when oats were being marketed at 29 or 30 cents, the farmer received only 18 cents. The

Doukhobors erected their own elevators in which they marketed their own oats, and also everything offering from their neighbours. They charged only 1½ cents a bushel for elevating and marketing, and so they raised the price to the farmer from 18 to 28 cents; and they have continued to do business on this basis to date.

It is in evidence that they were approached by a representative of the Grain-growers' Association of Winnipeg, and the Doukhobor manager himself was subjected to severe criticism, and other efforts were made to induce him to come into line with the association; but he ignored the requests.

Something similar is contemplated in connection with the fruit-growing industry in British Columbia. Among the many witnesses examined at Nelson and Grand Forks, there were very few who anticipated any danger from Doukhobor competition, and those who are in the best position to judge—such as the manager of the Kootenay Fruit-growers' Association, Mr. Raymond Hicks—roundly declared that they anticipated no such difficulty. He took the ground that so far as the Doukhobors had traded in fruit and jam-making they had benefited the industry; the market was so much larger than the supply that he considered there was room for everybody, and there was far more to fear in the way of competition from American fruit, imported at slaughter prices, than from any possible competition from the Doukhobors.

This view was endorsed by most of the large fruit-ranchers, of whom Messrs. J. J. Campbell and J. P. Bealby may be regarded as fair representatives. These fruit-growers praised the Doukhobors for the assistance they had given the industry in supplying cheap labour to pick the fruit. It was shown that in most cases they had contracted to both purchase and pick the fruit for use in their own jam-factory, and that they had paid a higher price than could possibly have been secured if the grower had hired his own labour for picking.

Some of the growers contended that this aid could not be regarded as permanent, and that they were afraid to plant out any large area of fruit-trees lest the labour for picking should not be available.

When this matter was put before Mr. Sherbinin, he said that it was the intention of the Doukhobors to increase the number of jam-factories in British Columbia, and that at all these factories they would be prepared to purchase fruit from the growers, and would also be prepared to furnish the labour for picking it. He went further, and outlined the policy which Mr. Verigin had determined upon, and that was that the Doukhobors would not only take the small fruits at their jam-factories, but would be prepared to do the same for the shipping fruit in the Kootenay as they had done for the grain in Saskatchewan, and market it with their own produce wherever a market could be found.

In proof of this, the following advertisement was inserted in the Nelson *Daily News* by the secretary of the Doukhobor Jam-factory:—

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO FRUIT-GROWERS.

EXCESSIVE FRUIT-CROP.

The Kootenay Columbia Preserving Works, having learned that a very large number of fruit-growers are absolutely unable to find a market, at any price, for their excessive crop of apples, pears, and plums, they have made special arrangements to handle large quantities of same rather than allow the fruit to be lost, and they are willing to take immediate shipments at special prices to be obtained on application at the Factory.

R. C. TEVIOTDALE,
Secretary-Treasurer, Nelson, B.C.

As showing the thoroughness with which Mr. Verigin has studied all the economic questions affecting the interests of the Community Doukhobors, he outlined his scheme for marketing fruit. He realized the keenness of American competition, and the impossibility of selling against the American producer unless something were done to eliminate the middleman. He therefore proposed to erect large warehouses, with cold-storage, in the principal cities on the Prairies. He would ship fruit from British Columbia to these warehouses, and distribute it through Doukhobor agencies, without the intervention of middlemen or commission agents; and he wished to go on record as promising the full benefit of this system to the independent fruit-growers who might be willing to place their produce in his hands.

This system is one which undoubtedly must be adopted not only by the Doukhobors, but by others, for evidence is accumulating almost daily to show that there is little chance of British Columbia fruit successfully controlling the Prairie market as it should, so long as it passes through the hands of middlemen who extort an excessive profit.

The question of American competition rests on another basis. It ought to be possible to do something with fruit that is "dumped" at slaughter prices, and which, as was proved in evidence before this Commission, nets the American grower little or nothing after freight and duty charges are paid. This is the one destructive factor in the Canadian fruit trade, and was emphasized by the most expert witnesses in Nelson and Grand Forks.

The only other aspect of Doukhobor trading which seems to call for comment in this chapter has already been touched upon in preceding chapters—that is, their reputation, their integrity, and business standing.

The investigation revealed the fact that every one is anxious to do business with them, and those who have, pronounced their business transactions eminently satisfactory. In some cases their word was taken instead of the usual written agreement, although large sums of money were involved, and not one instance came under the notice of the Commissioner in which they failed to live up to their obligations. Bank managers speak of them in the highest terms, as customers whose accounts were most welcome. The largest trading firm gives them almost unlimited credit, and their books show that they are doing business with many of the best-known leading wholesalers and manufacturers in the Dominion.

Their business affairs are in the hands of men of integrity and of remarkable ability, presided over by one man who must be pronounced a genius—Peter Verigin.

BOOK III.

PETER VERIGIN.

Unquestioned Leader of Doukhobors—Identified with all their Important Movements—Directed Policy from Siberia—Meets Count Tolstoi in Moscow—Secured him as Permanent Friend of Community—His Official Leadership Admitted by Important Witnesses—His Authority Weakened in Saskatchewan—Conditions in British Columbia More Favourable to Communal Life—A Benevolent Despot—Deference Paid to Verigin—Commanding and Impressive Appearance—Change in Mode of Life since First Coming to Canada—Magnificent Residence Built by Him in Saskatchewan—Never Occupied—Recognizes Changing Conditions—Attitude Toward Observance of Law—Effect of Imprisonment on Doukhobor Mind—Playing into Their Leader's Hand—Dr. Patrick's Opinion—The Real Problem not the Doukhobors, but Peter Verigin.

No one who has studied the history of the Doukhobors for the last thirty years can doubt that Peter Verigin is their *deus ex machina.* He is not only their appointed leader, but he has been identified with every important movement they have made.

Peter Verigin was born in Transcaucasia fifty-two years ago. We find him leading the Doukhobors in rebellion against military service as early as 1886, with the result that he was exiled to Siberia.

We find him directing their policy, counselling and advising them from his home in Tobolsk, and maintaining communication with the Community by means of trusty messengers, who travelled in their sleighs over the snow for 2,000 miles to reach their leader.

When, in his absence, persecution increased, he finally issued an edict for the burning of arms, as the last emphatic protest against military service. It was compliance with this edict that led to the most violent scenes that had yet been enacted in the history of the Doukhobors.

It was Peter Verigin who enlisted the sympathy of Count Tolstoi for his people, and there is no greater testimony to his strength and importance than the endorsation he received from that great Russian. As Verigin was being transferred from Archangel to Tobolsk he passed through Moscow, and was temporarily incarcerated in the prison there. From this place he sent a message to Count Tolstoi, and the latter paid him a visit. What took place in that prison cell is known only in part, but the result was to arouse the sympathies and engage the help of Tolstoi, who from that moment identified himself with the fortunes of the Doukhobors, used his influence for their liberation, and ultimately sold his works in order to augment their funds.

It was Peter Verigin who, from his exile in Tobolsk, advised, and by his personal appeal to the Dowager Empress Alexandra ultimately secured, the permission of the Tzar for the Doukhobors to emigrate.

After they had settled in Saskatchewan and had created so much difficulty for the Canadian Government, it was to Peter Verigin that the latter turned, and, again by the aid of high influence, he was permitted to leave Siberia before the expiration of his term and to take up his position in Canada as the rightful head of the Community. From that day to this he has directed all their affairs. Not a movement has been made of which he was not the origin. He is everywhere recognized as the one man in authority. It is true that he disclaims that authority; that he classes himself as one of the rank and file, and maintains that he is in all things subject to the decisions of the assembly. But such a claim is untenable in view of the evidence adduced. He is on all hands acclaimed as the leader. The most influential men in the Community acknowledged this in their evidence. It was found that no matter of importance could be settled without reference to him; that all authority was vested in him; that, whatever he might elect to be called, or however much he might seek to belittle his own position, the fact remained that he had supreme authority, however derived, and that from the smallest incidents in their lives to the most important he was the one and only arbiter.

It is idle to contest this point, and although there have been defections from the ranks (if one excludes the thousand who left in Saskatchewan, because, in leaving, they greatly enriched themselves and became individual land-owners), there have been but few who have dared to dispute Peter Verigin's authority, or who have had the courage to leave the Community. That the thousand should have left is not to be so greatly wondered at when it is remembered that the Russian is a great lover of money and property, and that the Doukhobor

is no exception to this rule. It was a case of racial instincts being too strong for special belief, and no one knows this better than Peter Verigin himself.

It is because he saw that this desire for greater freedom and the individual ownership of property would spread in the future, and that the thousand who had left would be followed by others who would also like to own their own land and have the spending of their own money, that he determined to move the whole to a country where the conditions would be more favourable to Community rule and to the maintenance of his authority.

The man who understands Peter Verigin calls him "a benevolent despot," and the title is not misplaced. That he is benevolent cannot be denied, for all his schemes aim at the benefit of the Community and the maintenance of its integrity. Peter Verigin is a great man in every sense, though with the limitations and imperfections which most great men have manifested. He is a man of great mental capacity and force. He has inherited the characteristics of his race, among which reasoning capacity, diplomatic skill, and subtlety are prominent.

The history and traditions of his people, his own sufferings, his contact with great men, have been his education, and to-day he is fortified with an experience, a diplomatic training, a knowledge of men and affairs, and a degree of self-control which fit him for any occasion he may have to meet.

The greatest tribute to his ability is the manner in which he has for thirteen years been able, with comparative success, to hold his people together in the midst of an environment entirely alien to their ideas, their cherished beliefs, and their ambitions. In the freest country in the world, where individual freedom is the key-note of government and of social life, he still holds six-sevenths of the original settlement in the thrall of Community life, with individuality extinguished, except for his own personal control.

It is true that power and authority are nominally vested in the assembly, and that periodical meetings are held at which decisions on all matters of moment are arrived at; but behind all these decisions looms the gigantic figure of the leader. It is impossible to doubt that they reflect his wishes, unless one is to accept the conclusion that he has lost control and that the Community rules itself.

But this is impossible to believe. One has only to witness the deference paid to him; the certainty with which his wishes are adopted; the docility with which his various projects are carried out; the practical unanimity with which the members of the Community yield him obedience, to recognize that Peter Verigin is no mere nominal head, but in fact (what he has been called) "a theocratic Tzar."

Nor is this to be wondered at. For, while he is surrounded by men of great natural intelligence and shrewdness, many of whom have shared with him the sufferings and privations of persecution and exile, he towers head and shoulders above them all. He inherits not only the genius, but the capacity, for governing, and combines in his person the religious instincts, the natural endowments, the magnetism, and the force which make him at once irresistible and omnipotent.

His personality is both attractive and impressive. He is a big man in every sense of the word—tall, broad, muscular, massive, with a fine head, great natural dignity of carriage, and the very atmosphere of strength exuding from every pore. Yet, like many such men, he has a remarkably gentle manner. He speaks in a low tone of voice, but it is so musical and sweet as to be almost seductive.

His every movement is marked by a natural courtesy and simple dignity that would signal him out for notice anywhere. His features are regular and his skin of an olive pallor. His hair and beard were jet-black, but are now streaked with iron-grey. His eyes are dark and thoughtful, and in moments of excitement shine with hidden fire. His whole expression is that of a man who has suffered much, and has triumphed over everything through the force of courage and constancy.

No one can be in his presence long without believing in his benevolence. It is his nature to be kind, and no man could be kinder to those who obey him. How far he can be harsh to those who question his authority is a matter of doubt. He cannot delight in this, because acts of deliberate cruelty are inconsistent with the religious belief of the Doukhobor; and, whatever else may be said against Peter Verigin, there has been no suggestion against his fidelity to the principles on which the whole fabric of the Doukhobor Community is built, which it is the one obsession of his life to strengthen. He has fought before against persecution; he is fighting now against environment, and against the other disintegrating influences which have already made serious inroads on his Community, and which threaten to overwhelm it.

Peter Verigin has not deceived himself. He knows that he is in a different civilization from the Russian. He may even feel in his heart of hearts that he may have no successor, and that the existence of a Community within a community, in Canada, is an anachronism. It is possible that there are moments when he realizes that his own power is slipping away, and this may account for such drastic measures of discipline as the one which he recently adopted in Saskatchewan.

It is possible that the Community at Brilliant spoke the truth and reflected their innermost thoughts when they combated Peter Verigin's own advice to allow their school to be reopened. And when, in reply to the statement of the Commissioner that Mr. Verigin had expressed himself in favour of this, they deprecated his advice, and went so far as to say that he was too favourable to the Government.

There are evidences that Peter Verigin has on more than one occasion modified his plans in order to strengthen his hold on the Community, and this is specially true of some of his personal habits.

For instance, when he first arrived in Canada his dress was that of a gentleman of means and good taste, and he had six or seven different equipages. He drove in state from village to village, accompanied by a band of singers, and in his travels from place to place was invariably accompanied by a number of young women. The sharp tongue of criticism was let loose. Such display was declared to be inconsistent in the leader of a people whose primitive habits had always been praised and who were seeking in a new country to continue living the "simple life." The equipages were abandoned; a magnificent new house, which the leader had built for himself at an alleged cost of $75,000, was never occupied, and it stands to this day as empty as when it was built. Then the old straw hat, rough clothing, and trousers bound at the leg-bottoms with binder-twine were once more effected. Indeed, this was the garb in which he appeared at the sittings of the Commissioner at Nelson; and one can hardly doubt that this striking change was a tribute to the effectiveness of the criticism offered, and an attempt to revert to the old-fashioned, austere appearance with which the Community had been familiarized in Russia.

It may be that Peter Verigin was a true prophet when he said at Nelson that if the people could be assured, and feel confidence in the assurance, that there was no possibility of their becoming embroiled in military service, many of them might become naturalized British subjects. Indeed, it is hard to resist the conclusion that a man of such mental endowments—one who has travelled so far and seen so much, and who has been in Canada long enough to study conditions and to observe the character of our constitutional government—must believe that it is impossible permanently to maintain the communal system in its intregity in our midst.

But Peter Verigin has to deal with things as they are to-day. He has a Community of 8,000 people on his hands. He is their responsible head, as well as their religious leader. They came to Canada at his suggestion. They have been terribly disappointed in their experience on the Prairies. They have had to contend with an unsuitable climate, with other forbidding conditions, and, above all, with what they have regarded as an unsympathetic and unjust Government; and yet a Government that has made many concessions and sacrifices in order to satisfy the requirements of a people who, in spite of their vagaries, were regarded as desirable settlers.

The fight has been a long one. Peter Verigin emerged with serious loss, both in following and reputation. His authority was undermined. He was deserted by a thousand of his people, and their desertion meant the abandonment by them of the communal system and the triumph of individual ownership. He was deserted also by some of his leading men, who enriched themselves at the expense of the Community, and established independent businesses on the outside; and he was deserted by a few who tired of what they regarded as autocratic rule.

To remain in Saskatchewan under such conditions was to court final defeat. It would have been to subject the Community to the constant pressure of influences which had already shown themselves strong enough to make serious inroads. The wise leader looked afield. With admirable skill and judgment, he selected a Province where climate and natural conditions would be in every sense congenial, and where, by purchasing from private owners the whole of the land required, he would at once eliminate one of the most serious disintegrating influences, and would obviate the greatest difficulty he had had to contend with in Saskatchewan conflict with the Government over land titles. Then, the isolation of the Community among

the mountains of British Columbia would lessen the pressure from the outside, and would be more favourable to the maintenance of Community customs, habits, and practices, and ensure that insularity so essential to his ambition.

Just how far Peter Verigin thought it possible to continue resistance to the registration laws and the "Schools Act" is even now a matter of doubt. That is a question which he alone can answer, and he has not answered it, but it is possible to gather from his evidence that he did not expect immunity, because he yielded to pressure in establishing a school at Brilliant and in arranging for the children of the Doukhobors to attend the public school at Grand Forks; and while he never agreed to comply with the registration laws, he went as far as to suggest that the desired information would be supplied by the Community at stated times.

Knowing the law, and he admitted that he did know it, it is hardly possible to conceive that he did not expect to be called upon to comply with it. And then, what did he suppose would happen? Again, there is room for conjecture, and no certain answer.

The view of Dr. Patrick, of Yorkton, a gentleman whose opinion is entitled to the highest respect, is that the Doukhobors love persecution.

A reference to his statement appended to the evidence will show that on the notorious march or pilgrimage at Yorkton the Doukhobors expected persecution; his graphic words are that "their backs were itching for the knout"; he claims that it is persecution from without which, like a ring fence, has kept the Community together, and that nothing would serve Peter Verigin's purpose better to-day than the imprisonment of some of their number for non-compliance with the law. He thinks that such a course would be playing into the hands of the leader, as the people would regard it as a punishment for obeying his "holy will."

This opinion is given for what it is worth. Dr. Patrick has known these people ever since they came to Canada, and if this conclusion is sound, it furnishes the strongest argument for seeking some other means of enforcing the law rather than making martyrs of a misguided people.

But, through it all, the figure of Peter Verigin stands majestic and all-powerful. Whether or not he is losing control as evidenced by the growing dissatisfaction of the young men of the Community, or whether the number of the disaffected is so few that they cannot be regarded as representative, the fact remains that the Community affairs are in the hands of a man who is well able to handle them; who has achieved the most remarkable results; who is indeed a father to his people, teaching, guiding, and encouraging them; who combines with a unique knowledge of the Doukhobors, their history, their beliefs, and their character a business ability and a technical knowledge of everything connected with land and farming of such a remarkable order as to ensure prosperity and comfort for all the people under his control, if they can be brought to such a compliance with the laws of the country as will admit of his plans being carried out.

The real problem before the Government of British Columbia is not the Doukhobors, but their leader—Peter Verigin.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

OBJECTIONS.

Objections raised to the Doukhobors as settlers have been dealt with in the previous chapters as they arose. The only points not covered are those set forth in a statement dated September 23rd, 1912, presented to the Court in Grand Forks by a committee of citizens. That statement is attached to the evidence herein, and the objections are as follows :—

(1.) That the Doukhobors are likely, by reason of their large land-holdings, to swamp the community, and that locally their numbers might become so large that it would be impossible for them to be assimilated with the resident population.

To this the only answer is that the total land-holdings of the Doukhobors in the Grand Forks District aggregate only 4,182 acres, out of an estimated total of at least 30,000 acres suitable for fruit-farming. The sale of further lands to these people is entirely within the control of the owners; and, if it should be a detriment to the country generally, the remedy is in their own hands.

If it is borne in mind that there are only 2,500 Doukhobors, or thereabouts, left in Saskatchewan, and no probability whatever of more being brought from Russia, it does not seem that there is any real ground for fearing that they may swamp the local community.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the number of Doukhobors resident in Grand Forks District is 713.

(2.) That it is objectionable that any sect living within our borders should be allowed to subordinate the laws of the Province to their own religious beliefs.

This proposition is not open to argument; it must be admitted in its fullest sense. The Commissioner never lost an opportunity of impressing upon the Doukhobors that the law would have to be complied with, and that no recommendation of his could possibly contemplate an avoidance of their obligations in this respect.

(3.) It was objected that the peculiar marriage ceremony, the fact that the Community recognizes no outside authority, and that it refuses to register births, deaths, and marriages, removes from the Province one of our most important tests of morality, and must convey the conviction of improper conditions.

On this point it may be said that, while there can be no palliation of the offence of the Doukhobors in failing to observe the laws of the land, no evidence was laid before the Commissioner, nor could the Commissioner unearth any, which would sustain the suggestion of lax morals or other improper conditions in the Community. It is only fair to say that the weight of evidence is all in the other direction.

(4.) It was objected that the commercial life of the Doukhobors is different from that of our own people; that their example as citizens is not desirable; that their presence tends to keep out desirable settlers and to retard the development of the country.

That their life is in every sense different from that of the surrounding community must be admitted, but there is no evidence that their presence in the country has tended to retard its development or to prevent other settlers from coming in. In fact, the evidence is all the other way. Witness after witness holding large areas of land declared that he regarded the Doukhobors as desirable neighbours, because of the high-class cultivation of their lands and their peaceable, quiet habits. As to the effect upon land-values, while there were a few witnesses, especially at Grand Forks, who claimed that the Doukhobor holdings tended to lower the land-values, there were many more witnesses who thought otherwise; and in this connection the fact must not be overlooked that in the Grand Forks District land-values have continued to advance. Since the sitting of this Commission, one of the largest and oldest orchards in the district has been sold at the price set by the owner, well in advance of the

figure asked a year ago; and at the moment of closing this Report a telegram is to hand from Mr. Ernest Miller, M.P.P., who represents Grand Forks in the local Legislature, confirming a statement recently made that real-estate values in Grand Forks had advanced considerably. While this may not be due to the Doukhobors, it would certainly seem to discredit the suggestion that their presence makes for deterioration in values.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL FINDINGS.

(1.) That the Doukhobors are desirable settlers from the standpoimt of their personal character, farming skill, devotion to agriculture, and general industry.

(2.) That this investigation has failed to establish any valid objection to them, except their refusal to comply with the registration laws and the "Schools Act."

(3.) That there is no evidence of customs or practices of any kind detrimental to the general well-being of the Community.

(4.) That such minor objections as have been raised should not be allowed to weigh against their many good features, and especially against their qualifications as agriculturists.

(5.) That their refusal to comply with the registration laws and "Schools Act" is based upon their religious beliefs and conscientious scruples, and their attitude is genuine.

(6.) That there is sufficient evidence to justify the conclusion that their views will be modified as they become better acquainted with the true character of our institutions.

(7.) That the head of the Doukhobor Community, Peter Verigin, has sufficient influence and authority to bring about full compliance with these laws—if not at once, at any rate within a reasonable time.

(8.) That there is reason to believe that the Doukhobors have, to some extent, been kept in the dark as to their obligations under certain Canadian laws.

(9.) That they have imbibed the impression that as long as they did not become naturalized British subjects they would not be called upon to obey certain laws.

(10.) That they have been taught that in coming to British Columbia and acquiring their land by purchase from individuals, they would not be under the same obligations to obey the laws as in Saskatchewan, where they acquired their land from the Government.

(11.) That punishment by imprisonment fails of its effect in their case, because they regard it as persecution; and they are more inclined to this view because a spirit of distrust has been developed in them in consequence of the persecution to which they have been subjected for more than three hundred years.

CHAPTER III.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

(*a.*) That, having regard to the sincerity of the members of the Doukhobor Community in their opposition to the registration laws and the "Schools Act," and bearing in mind their strong religious views, their honesty of purpose, and their ingrained obstinacy, no drastic steps should be taken to force their immediate compliance, but that suitable representations be made to Peter Verigin, their head, of the determination of the Government to insist on compliance; and, meanwhile, if it is found necessary to resort to prosecution and conviction ensues, it is desirable that the punishment should take the form of fines rather than imprisonment, as the imposition of fines would be more effective, and would bring the matter home to the parties directly responsible—the leaders.

(*b.*) That all the conditions would appear to justify the Government in adopting a policy of patience with the people and putting pressure on their leaders.

(*c.*) That, with respect to the registration of births, deaths, and marriages, a responsible member of the Doukhobor Community might be appointed Sub-Registrar. This would facilitate registration on the spot, and prompt communication with the Chief Registrar of the district.

(*d.*) That, with respect to the "Public Schools Act," compliance should be insisted upon; and in order to give the Doukhobors confidence and secure their sympathy, some working arrangement might be made under which Russian teachers could be employed in conjunction with Canadian teachers, and the curriculum modified so as to include only elementary subjects.

(*e.*) That, having regard to the very extensive and important interests represented by the Doukhobors in this Province, it would be good policy to appoint a permanent Doukhobor Agent on somewhat similar lines to the Indian Agents.

(*f.*) That it is in the best interests of the country that the Order in Council granting exemption from military service should be cancelled.

(*g.*) That it is not desirable that any more Doukhobors should be admitted to Canada, except with the clear understanding that no exemptions of any kind will be allowed in the matter of observance of laws.

WILLIAM BLAKEMORE.

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