

Finally Peter Verigin II died on February 11, 1939, leaving the community in an extremely bad condition financially and rent with internal dissensions. The community was in debt and the Sun Life Insurance Company and the National Trust Company held large mortgages on their property and were threatening to evict the Doukhobors. Prior to the war and during the early part of the war the government of British Columbia, in order to avoid the social difficulties that would surround their eviction, bought the Sun Life and National Trust Company out, so that at the present time the Doukhobors in Kootenay West own no land or property as a community. These properties are now held by the land settlement board of British Columbia on behalf of the government of that province. Since that time, under the direction of the supervisor they have tried to sell back individual blocks to these people, but with little success. A few blocks have been sold, but the great part of the property remains in the hands of the land settlement board of British Columbia.

Just at this point I want to pay a particular tribute to Mr. Ralph MacIntosh, supervisor of the land settlement board, for his work in connection with the Doukhobors and provincial constable I. Deboiu. Both of these men have a thorough knowledge of the situation and have been most capable, painstaking and patient.

In 1939 the war came along and the government again recognized the agreement of 1898. From that time on there has been a change in the actual conditions in the communities as regards the attitude of a large number of these people toward Canadian institutions and the Canadian government. I might say that in this war some 130 of these people served in the armed forces and some in the Pacific coast militia rangers. Arrangements were made for contributions to the Red Cross on quite a generous scale, and many of them worked in war industries and in the lumber industries. But during the war the cleavage between the different groups further developed. I might say that at the present time the former Christian community of the universal brotherhood is now known as the spiritual community of Christ. Then we have a large number of independents; and the faction who cause the trouble, the Sons of Freedom. There have been recent attempts by a core of these Sons of Freedom to terrorize the majority of the Doukhobors who wish to live as good Canadian citizens. In the last two or three months some fourteen homes have been burned down in Kootenay West; a cooperatively owned community hall has been burned, and a large irrigation system has been damaged. The

people of the district of Kootenay West are anxious that something be done to stop this incessant lawlessness of a few people who bring disgrace upon a whole community and their race.

There are some factors which exist to-day, favourable factors which never existed before, in my opinion and in the opinion of many people of the district, which make it possible for us to do something to solve this question on a permanent and satisfactory basis. The first is the experience of these young Doukhobors who served in the recent war. These young men have returned to the communities and they are having a good influence amongst the people who remained at home. The second is the experience gained by men and women who worked in war industries. Large numbers of these people have worked in the industrial plants at Trail, with the Kootenay engineering company in the construction of the east dam on the Kootenay river, and in other projects throughout the district, and in the lumbering industry. To a greater extent than before they have associated with the people who work in industry generally.

Then we have their experience in trade unions. In recent years quite a number of these Doukhobors have joined trade unions, and have begun to understand trade union principles and to see the benefits which derive therefrom. Then, again, quite a number of them are joining cooperative societies, in which the majority of the members are people of another race. Here, again, they are learning to work with other people and are gaining experience. I might say that at the present time the great majority of the younger people are attending school. I find that, on account of the work in industry during the war and association with other Canadians in trade unions and cooperatives, many of the younger people have developed a much higher standard of living than existed prior to the war. These people have now had a taste of what the Canadian standard of living is for working-men generally, and they want to maintain that standard of living. These young people do not want to return to the poverty and the destitution which they experienced for some years prior to the war.

In conversation with Doukhobor boys who have returned from the forces, men and women who have worked in trade unions and in the cooperative movement, and who have worked in industry in large numbers—and I know hundreds of them—I find a general desire to maintain the Canadian standard of living, accept Canadian institutions and live according to Canadian standards. Within all these groups there are large numbers of Doukhobor