

that he would move some of his followers to Kootenay West. I might say that after a survey of the district Verigin reported as follows:

In British Columbia we will buy our land and own it so it will not be necessary to be subject to the English king, and keep our land. No schools are there. The air is very pure, like Switzerland. So we will live in good health in the Christian way with no government to bother us, no rheumatism and few mosquitoes. Slava Bohu.

Peter Verigin was a capable person, and realized that he had found a good country. His visit resulted in the spring of 1909 in some 800 persons arriving on a special train at Brilliant. In 1910 another contingent arrived, and in 1911 a further thousand settled in the Kootenay West and Grand Forks district. At that time they purchased 14,403 acres of land on an agreement of sale for \$646,000. They were very industrious, and by 1912 they had reduced the amount owing on that agreement of sale to \$325,000. The virgin forest gave way to orchards. They built a jam factory and sold jam in western Canada which became quite famous—the Kootenay Columbia brand of jam. They established an irrigation system and erected sawmills. At the end of 1912 in Kootenay West we had over 5,000 Doukhobors, and out of those 5,000, were over 700 children who had never set foot in a Canadian school.

What was then known as the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood continued to prosper. The industry of these people was, I remember very well, admired by the people of the surrounding districts and their neighbors; but because of the failure of these people to register births, marriages and deaths, protests were made to the provincial government, and the government of British Columbia was asked to take some action in this respect. I might say in regard to this matter vigorous protests were registered by the Doukhobors because of the gaoling of some of their people. Right at that point, about 1912, is when the first serious trouble commenced in Kootenay West. Trouble has continued over the years by a series of burnings of school houses, community halls and, in some cases other buildings. As a result of the protests of people in the district, in 1912 the provincial government established, on August 24, a royal commission, and Mr. William Blackmore was named commissioner to inquire into the organization, habits, customs and practices of the Doukhobors, and make recommendations. Very little was known about the Doukhobors, their habits, customs and practices, at that time, and the

[Mr. Herridge.]

commissioner had no previous experience in this type of work. Really, the findings of the commissioner only resulted in causing the Doukhobors to lose confidence in our government institutions and our ideas of keeping an agreement, because the commissioner's major finding was that the order in council granting military exemption be cancelled. That caused considerable disturbance amongst the Doukhobor people. The difficulties in the districts surrounding their communities continued and schools continued to be burnt.

Then we come to 1914-18, war years, and there was considerable trouble at that time. The dominion government recognized the agreement of 1898 and they were exempted from military service, although there was some difficulty as between the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood and what were known at that time as the independent Doukhobors. On April 28, 1917, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood was incorporated with a capitalization of \$1,000,000, although as a matter of fact at that time, I believe, their assets were worth three times that in value. On October 28, 1924, Peter Verigin was killed by an explosion while on the Kootenay express at Farrow. Usually we do not exaggerate things in Kootenay West, but I think the term "Kootenay express" is an overstatement.

In the fall of 1927 Peter Verigin II came to Canada after considerable consultation between the various groups in Canada and certain representatives of the Doukhobor community in the Soviet Union. While Peter Verigin II openly supported the government, there is no question about it that behind the scenes amongst the Doukhobor community and the Doukhobor factions he held the government up to ridicule. From the time of his assuming leadership the community got into financial difficulties and internal dissention developed. About that time the Sons of Freedom, who were becoming stronger, developed the nude strategy, and that is why over a period of years, on occasion, we have had parades of nude Doukhobors protesting against some difficulty within the community or some laws of the land.

In 1932 Peter Verigin II was sentenced to three years for perjury. This sentence and conditions arising out of the mismanagement of the community and the depression caused the Sons of Freedom to stage their first large-scale nude parade. As a result, hundreds were arrested in Kootenay West in the fall of 1932 and interned on Piers island; some of them were released during the summer of 1933, but some were not finally released until 1935.