

trouble, possibly because a doctor in Prague punctured her sinus bones.³³ She was miserable, and within a week she had two more operations on her nose.³⁴ Her troubles with the doctors yielded a yearning for home. To her great sorrow, her mother also passed away while Martha was still across the ocean, which made her only more homesick and “blue.”³⁵

On November 28, 1936, while the Torontos were at a member’s home for dinner, Martha fainted at the dinner table and moaned about some pain in her side. Thinking it might be appendicitis, she went to the doctor, who put her to bed and said that the new arrival would come that evening. He gave her a few pills to stimulate labor pains, but nothing happened. Then they gave her an injection to induce labor. Because of her limited Czech language, an interpreter had to assist with the childbirth.³⁶ By 8:30 in the evening, she was in full labor, and at 9:30 “a fine healthy seven pound son was born.” The baby’s “cries could be heard all over the hospital. And Marty took it all like a ‘brick’—as brave and as fine as anyone could have done.”³⁷ They decided to name their new son Robert Sharp Toronto.³⁸

Although Wally and Martha were serving a mission, they did not neglect to enjoy many things that, as a young family, they would not want to miss. Like any ordinary Christian family, they decorated a big pine tree for Christmas. They filled stockings and put the gifts beneath the lowest branches of the beautifully decorated tree, and they played Santa Claus.³⁹ Little Marion woke up at the crack of dawn and, in ecstasy, played with her new dolly. The Torontos’ Christmas was completely normal, except for the myriad of missionaries that accompanied them in all their festivities.⁴⁰ It was a great ending to a wonderful year.

33. Toronto, journal, February 14–20, 1937, 80.

34. Toronto, journal, February 21–27, 1937, 81.

35. Toronto, journal, March 14–20, 1937, 89.

36. Mehr, *Mormon Missionaries Enter Eastern Europe*, 67.

37. Toronto, journal, November 21–28, 1936, 56.

38. Toronto, journal, December 15–19, 1936, 60.

39. Toronto, journal, December 19–25, 1937, 176.

40. Toronto, journal, December 25–31, 1938, 307.

5

“HOW CAN OUR BRETHREN BECOME MORE ZEALOUS?”

When Wally first presided over the mission, he had grave misgivings about being able to carry on the successful work of mission president Arthur Gaeth. Wally called Gaeth “a man of great ability, foresight and humility.” On arriving, Wally voiced his fears and apprehensions to the newly released mission president. President Gaeth’s reply to Wally’s concerns “sunk deep into [his] heart.” He told Wally, “Just remember, Wally, that one and the Lord are always a majority.”¹

Wally was less flamboyant than Gaeth and decided to continue only a portion of Gaeth’s public activities, which included serving as secretary for the English Club Union and lecturing frequently. “Overall, [Wally] spent less time in social activities and more time nurturing a growing membership.”² As he energetically visited

1. Wallace F. Toronto, “Lord’s Help Indispensable,” *Hvězdička* [*The Star*, Czechoslovakian Mission newsletter], July 1938, found in Jiří Šnederfler papers, Europe Church History Center, Bad Homburg, Germany, transcription in author’s possession.

2. Mehr, *Mormon Missionaries Enter Eastern Europe*, 67.

each branch every month, he found turmoil in the Mladá Boleslav Branch but was encouraged with the stability of the branches in both Brno and Prague. These visits resulted in a revamping of the missionary effort. Consequently, the Mnichovo Hradiště and Kolín Branches were opened in 1936. “Furthermore, he removed missionaries from cities where meetings were poorly attended or where lack of baptisms prohibited the organization of a branch. The revamping closed Pardubice in 1936 and Mladá Boleslav in 1937, and the missionaries [who had served previously in those branches] were reassigned elsewhere.”³

Wally studied the Czech people. He found them to be a thriving, happy, progressive people who leaned heavily towards becoming a great world democracy. “He found them sincere and loyal, but always suspicious of new influences from the outside [world].” He was very conscious of the difference of behaviors between the Czechs and Germans. He kept a careful record of the attitudes that were reflected in his daily contracts with the people.⁴ At times, Wally was a bit distraught with the Czechs because, as he saw it, they had “no organizing ability” and often made arrangements without enough consideration. Wally found that the Czechs simply said, “‘Yes, we will have it this way or that way,’ and then the affair usually [flopped] because they [did] little or nothing about the details.”⁵

The work in Czechoslovakia changed under Wally’s direction. Missionary Edward B. Morrell said that they did not have street meetings. Instead, under President Toronto, they had very large public meetings, often with 100 to 370 people present. However, on other occasions they could only get 10 to attend. The elders, particularly in Prague, worked out a strategy for attracting people. After meetings on Sunday, they wrote down the names of the visitors and went to their homes. That way, they were able to hold meetings in the investigators’ homes.⁶

3. Czechoslovak Mission Manuscript History, June 20, 1936, December 20, 1936, and September 20, 1937.

4. Toronto, “Some Socio-psychological Aspects,” 7–8.

5. Toronto, journal, December 6–12, 1936, 59.

6. Ed and Norma Morrell, interview, May 8, 2013, 10.

Wally had some concerns about how to preach the gospel in Czechoslovakia. One was that there were only two large cities. The majority of the fourteen million Czechoslovakians lived in small, scattered villages. Wally wondered how he could have elders learn Czech sufficiently enough to be able to travel from village to village preaching to “the honest in heart.”⁷ To answer the quandary, the missionaries went tracting. Wally sensed that they did make some progress that way. The Czech missionaries had about seven tracts written in Czech. Those assigned to smaller villages went to every house; sometimes they visited the same home two or three times.⁸ One lady wrote to Wally to tell him that she could hardly wait for the young man (a missionary who had come to her door during one of their tracts) to return with more.⁹

Even when missionaries were not assigned to a certain area, the meetings were still important, and the Czech Saints continued holding them even without missionary influence. In October 1938, the Saints in Tabor held a meeting at a sister’s home. Wally intended to go to that meeting, but he was unable to find the house until about nine o’clock that evening. Everyone was still there—three members and two friends that had not given up hope that he would come. They had a song and prayer and then discussed their Sunday School lesson while they waited. When he got there, Wally blessed the sacrament. They stayed until almost midnight talking about recent events in light of the gospel. Regarding the late night meeting, Wally recorded, “It is glorious to feel the spirit of these splendid ‘lone’ members, who, although without missionaries, meet together each week and conduct meetings of their own.” Wally became convinced that “people can do the work if we only give them the necessary suggestions and place our trust and confidence in them.”¹⁰

While tracting was successful, the most important part of Wally’s “modus operandi” was not tracting; rather, it was holding these

7. Toronto, journal, August 15–21, 1937, 137.

8. Ed and Norma Morrell, interview, May 8, 2013, 9.

9. Toronto, journal, August 23–29, 1936, 32.

10. Toronto, journal, October 23–29, 1938, 285–86.



Wallace Toronto (right) with Czechoslovakian missionaries, 1937. Courtesy of Church History Library.

public meetings. Wally did all he could to get as many investigators to meetings as possible. On one occasion, he personally distributed three thousand handbills. However, only thirty people showed up to the meeting. Wally titled his talk “Is Death the End of All?” There were some new faces there, and Wally felt that some good had been accomplished even with such a low turnout. At the meeting, Wally had given the first part of his speech without paper and knew he was blessed by the Lord to be able to speak without notes. “The people were interested and seemed eager to know the truth,” Wally wrote. “I am convinced more and more that the only way we will make headway here is to preach the Gospel as straightforward as we know how. We are not here to please the people, but are here to give the message.”¹¹

Holding meetings was rarely easy. Wally was frequently required to petition the local government or police for permission to hold meetings in certain

11. Toronto, journal, October 25–31, 1936, 48.

locations. For instance, in Plzeň, when the police had denied to see him, he succeeded in getting to see the chief commissioner. He told Wally that the missionaries had been denied the privilege once before because there had been a Mr. Craig—who was not a Mormon—who had applied to give lectures under the title of “Mormon.” When the police commissioner learned that Craig was not LDS, he “changed his demeanor” and asked for the names of all the missionaries in the area “as well as a letter of appeal from their former decision.”¹² In one particular location, Wally was told he could not receive permission to hold meetings because only Czech citizens had that right. When he told the police officer that they held English lessons after the meetings, the officer changed his mind. Permission was granted, and the officer even attended one himself.¹³

President Toronto’s practices did begin to bear fruit. The number of baptisms increased the first year that Wally served, reaching a high of thirty in 1936. But then, as political conflict developed, they declined to seventeen in 1937 and to just six in both 1938 and 1939.¹⁴ The baptisms were held in various places: in the dead of the night in a river with ice cut away, in a swimming pool in Prague, in a bathhouse, and on the Beroun River.¹⁵ Wally attended each and every one.¹⁶ Nevertheless, he began to become very concerned that those being baptized were not truly converted. He was worried that some missionaries were baptizing people without making any effort to prepare the converts for living the gospel. He recorded, “Many of them have no conception of the real meaning of their baptism. They probably consented in a moment of spiritual up-lift or to please some missionary. And when a crisis came, they had no solid foundation upon which to stand.” Sub-

12. Toronto, journal, October 17–23, 1937, 157–58.

13. Toronto, journal, December 26–31, 1937, 179.

14. Mehr, *Mormon Missionaries Enter Eastern Europe*, 69.

15. Marion Toronto Miller and Judith Toronto Richards, interview by Mary Jane Woodger, May 3, 2013, Salt Lake City, 16, 20, in author’s possession; Toronto, journal, July 12–18, 1936, 13; and Toronto, journal, October 9–15, 1938, 280.

16. Gad Vojkúvka, “Memories of President Wallace Felt Toronto,” email to Mary Jane Woodger, November 9, 2013, transcription in author’s possession.

sequently, he encouraged missionaries to be sure that the converts' testimonies were strong.¹⁷ He developed instructions for missionaries to use in deciding when it was time to baptize a convert. He requested that missionaries follow an outline of eight important steps in teaching and guiding people to the gospel and then to baptism.¹⁸ One could possibly look at these eight steps as a pre-*Preach My Gospel* handbook for missionaries of that day and age.

One of Wally's biggest struggles was opposition from the Catholic Church. Priests constantly caused trouble for him and the missionaries by fostering anti-Mormon feelings. In Kolín, there was a Catholic priest who worked very hard against allowing Wally and the Church to hold meetings. Wally traced all the problems in the location to that particular priest, who had given a lengthy lecture about Mormons. Wally informed Mr. Potter, the American Consulate, of the problem. Potter became very upset about the treatment that Wally and the missionaries, as Americans, were receiving.¹⁹ The situation in Kolín was finally escalated to a judiciary hearing.

At the hearing, the police commissioner testified that the missionaries had been denied permission to hold meetings on the grounds that they were foreigners. His conclusion was based on an 1867 law that forbade foreigners to meet. Ironically, the same law had given the missionaries permission to remain in the first place. After examination, the commissioner finally admitted that the problem was not the 1869 statute, but rather Catholic intolerance. A denial had been registered against the Mormons. It was decided that they would have to put in an appeal to the Land Office in Prague. Wally wrote an appeal that afternoon to Prague.²⁰ He then found out that part of the problem was that he was not forming his application correctly. He had been asking for permission to hold a series of lectures, but the law required him to ask for one meeting or lecture at a time. Wally was very surprised that

17. Toronto, journal, December 12–18, 1937, 174.

18. Toronto, journal, February 20–26, 1938, 200.

19. Toronto, journal, September 6–12, 1936, 36.

20. Toronto, journal, January 1–8, 1938, 181.

the local police officers had not informed him of that requirement.²¹ He decided to lie low for a month and then make a new application. In the meantime, the missionaries worked quietly among their friends.²² Wally later prepared individual applications for each separate meeting and handed them to the police officers. Permission was finally granted.²³

Getting permission was also a problem in Benešov, stemming again from Catholic party objectors who accused the missionaries of being a threat to the public peace of the city. Wally thought, "This is just like in the dark ages!" He visited an official of the country office who had previously denied them permission to hold meetings there because of a deliberate uprising from the Catholic party to get rid of them. He had a long gospel talk with the country official and pointed out the virtues of the gospel. The official happened to be a Catholic and said he could never conform to Mormon views. But when Wally explained that the teachings of the Church "were those of Christ and of his early church, and that the present day religious organizations had changed and despoiled much of the former truth, he became very interested." They talked for about an hour. When Wally left, the official told him that if he wanted to go to Benešov again, he should visit the official, who would do all he could to grant them permission. Wally truly knew that the Lord had blessed him and that he had made a fine cause to have the official understand the nature of the work.²⁴

When Wally spoke, he often found big crowds gathered to hear him. In Benešov, he had a packed hall of 180 people. Part of the crowd was probably there because of the "advertising" that the Catholic priest had given against it "from his pulpit the Sunday before." Some of the missionaries had gone to that meeting. They heard the priest "denounce the new Christian sects which had arisen as a result of an apostasy from the Mother church and 'especially the newest of them,

21. Toronto, journal, January 16–22, 1938, 186.

22. Toronto, journal, February 6–19, 1938, 197.

23. Toronto, journal, February 27–26, 1938, 200.

24. Toronto, journal, August 7–13, 1938, 253.

the Mormons.” Many people who attended simply out of curiosity were impressed by Wally’s lecture on the life of Christ.²⁵

However, at other places, attendance was sparse. In Olomouc, Wally gave a lecture to just twenty-three people. Following the lecture, he held a short meeting with the missionaries and insisted that they find a new hall near the heart of town. He had a feeling that the problem was that the location of their hall was unfavorable. “Time will tell the Gospel story of Olomouc too—the seat of the Archbishopric of the Catholic Church.” Wally felt like they were “blasting boulders to get those people interested in religious matters.”²⁶ He found it strange that some places were inclined toward hearing the word of God and that others totally rejected it.

A priest in Hradiště had forbidden his congregation from attending an upcoming LDS meeting and had spoken against the missionaries. But at the meeting, Wally was delighted when they counted eighty people in the hall. Some even had to stand. Wally talked about why he had come to Czechoslovakia. One of the missionaries also gave a talk on the important principles of Mormonism. The crowd seemed pleased with the meeting. Wally observed, “I am afraid that the priest actually helped out our attendance by railing against us. At any rate the Lord blessed us in our undertaking.”²⁷

Catholic interference became a constant problem for Wally. Priests caused havoc wherever and whenever they could. After one member’s funeral, a police officer stopped Wally and asked him if he had conducted a service at the cemetery. When he affirmed that he had been in charge, the police officer asked him if he had received permission to do so. Wally was astonished. He had never needed written permission before to conduct a funeral. He later learned that someone had seen them at the cemetery and had run to the police to tell them about it, hoping to get them in trouble; permission to hold public meetings was then denied temporarily. “The Catholics do seem to rise up against us

25. Toronto, journal, December 19–25, 1937, 176.

26. Toronto, journal, February 2–March 5, 1938, 202.

27. Toronto, journal, September 6–12, 1936, 35.



in that town. I offered to go to the police station with the officer. On the way we met the Chief Inspector, who told him to merely take my name and address, and to have the Benešov missionaries come in the following morning, and fix the matter up. He indicated that there would be no difficulty about it.”²⁸

Catholic opposition even began to appear in some newspaper articles, containing what Wally called “a rather unfriendly smack.” However, in the long run he did not think it did the Church much damage.²⁹ He was sure that the Catholic or clerical party was trying to eliminate Mormons in Czechoslovakia. But he was intent not to let it happen. “They will not do these things without a fight on their hands. Encouraged, possibly, by the Benešov

Torontos with Czechoslovakian missionaries, 1938–39. Courtesy of Church History Library.

28. Toronto, journal, January 23–29, 1938, 188.

29. Toronto, journal, March 28–April 3, 1937, 93.

incident, they seem inclined to carry it farther.”³⁰ Wally decided one time to join them instead of fight them. On an Easter Sunday, he and Martha went inside St. Vitus Cathedral to attend Easter Mass. They wormed through the throngs of people and “went to the great cold edifice, where [they] saw the archbishop and all his bishops” proceeding through what Wally called “pompous and monotonous ceremonies.” He and Martha “didn’t have the patience to sit through it all, and so [they] wended [their] way home, thankful that [they had] no convictions which [led them] to that kind of pitiful worship—nothing but show, pomp, ceremony and pageantry—perhaps soothing and edifying if one likes it.”³¹

When political unrest developed, Wally often had to inform the missionaries that some activities in Czechoslovakia could be dangerous. In June 1938, he warned the elders, “It is our great desire to have nothing come up which will endanger the good name of the Church and our mission. We as a mission want to ‘come through clean,’ and particularly in connection with the Czech people and government.” He reminded his missionaries, “These folks are going through trying times and must seek every avenue of precaution against outside interference. Let us be aware of the fact that we are foreigners among them—thus subject to suspicion, and let us remember that the unwise use of a camera increases this suspicion a hundredfold.” He then told the elders to never take photos without first securing permission from a police officer.³²

Despite Wally’s warnings on that front, his missionaries got into trouble on multiple occasions for taking pictures, and he was constantly exerting effort and time getting them out of it. Two elders who had ignored Wally’s rules had taken unauthorized photos and immediately received notice to leave the country. They were given fifteen days to make an appeal. Wally formulated a letter for the missionaries stating the reasons why they were in Czechoslovakia and what their

30. Toronto, journal, April 3–9, 1938, 213.

31. Toronto, journal, April 10–16, 1938, 216.

32. Toronto, “Restricted Use of Cameras,” *Hvězdička*, June 1938.

official connection was to the mission office. He sent the letter to the judge. With such goings on, it seemed to Wally “like the devil himself is busying himself in our work. But we must fight him as best we can—and above all avoid issues which cast suspicion on us. It may be that I shall have to forbid the use of cameras.”³³ He warned, “If you do not follow this out, we shall have to call all cameras into the mission office and keep them for you until you are released—and thus forbid their use entirely. We must take every precaution.”³⁴

The next morning, Wally went to the district court with the three missionaries in question, along with C. D. Wallenfels from the American Consulate in Prague. The judge said he had received Wally’s letter concerning the situation. Each elder was then called in and questioned as to what he was doing there, why he had taken the trip to the Sázava in the Benešov district, why he had taken pictures, what he had taken pictures of, and so on. The whole proceeding lasted about forty minutes. The missionaries were then required to sign a written statement that ultimately ended the hearing.³⁵

However, just a few days later, one of the elders sent an express letter to Wally that startled him profusely. The elder had received an order from the police to leave the country at once. Wally turned the letter over to a lawyer, who informed him that the orders were given because the missionaries were under suspicion of being spies. Wally called the judge who had handled the previous case. After discussing the matter, the case was dropped.³⁶

Then the problem with taking illegal photos surfaced again in February 1937 when another elder was ordered to leave the country. Wally called Mr. Chapman of the American Embassy, who had been in touch with the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Interior was actually surprised that the case had not been concluded. Mr. Chapman, however, was optimistic and promised that he would see that the Prague police

33. Toronto, journal, September 6–12, 1936, 37.

34. Toronto, “Restricted Use of Cameras,” *Hvězdička*, June 1938.

35. Toronto, journal, September 13–19, 1936, 39.

36. Toronto, journal, September 20–26, 1936, 41–42.

did not interfere with Wally's mission work again.³⁷ Sure enough, the elder received a notice the next Saturday to report to the police station, and he found that all charges of espionage had been dropped. Wally was relieved by the news. A considerable number of comments had been in the newspapers about internal spies and how the death penalty was inflicted on citizens who betrayed the country's secrets. He knew of one officer who was condemned to die that very week. The laws were tightening up to thwart espionage. Wally again reiterated to his missionaries, "We cannot afford to be tangled up with any charges even when such charges are groundless." He warned and forewarned the missionaries that they had to be very careful about their actions.³⁸

Unfortunately, that was not the last time that missionaries got into trouble with the Czech government for breaking various rules. On January 5, 1937, two elders made their appearance in Prague because the county police refused to register them. They ordered the missionaries out because of a new military law regarding border zones in Třebová, where the missionaries were working. Wally secured copies of the laws of the counties and attempted to discover which bordering counties the elders could not go in without the consent of military authorities. On behalf of the American Consulate, Mr. Potter offered to attempt to find out what the missionaries' rights were. He certainly helped to clarify the situation. Wally was constantly on alert. "One mis-step and all twenty of our brethren could be ordered out of the country. We must be so very careful."³⁹

It was one worry after another for Wally; however, he had decided that this was why he was there—to handle the problems. Everything the missionaries did required that they receive permission. Even when Wally ordered some radio tunes from home, he discovered that he had to get permission from the Ministry of War because they were the ones in control of everything that had to do with communication.⁴⁰

37. Toronto, journal, February 21–27, 1937, 82.

38. Toronto, journal, February 21–27, 1937, 82.

39. Toronto, journal, January 1–9, 1937, 66.

40. Toronto, journal, February 14–20, 1937, 80.

Again, one elder wrote Wally to tell him he had been called into the police station and questioned about his permission to stay in the country. Previously, in February of 1936, the elder had received a note from the police that he had neglected to read. At the police station, he found out that he had been in the country without permission since the time the note was issued. It was then September of 1937. "Another head-ache," recorded Wally. "But I think that we will be able to pull the right strings and fix it up. I advised him immediately that we would get to work on it, and I called Mr. Chapin of the American legation concerning the matter."⁴¹

Another missionary neglected to read the orders issued to him and was only permitted to stay in Czechoslovakia until September 1, 1937, because of the technicality. Wally remarked that the incident would surely add another gray hair to his head. "Great guns, if I can only get the brethren to look out for themselves and take a little responsibility in this matter." He "wrote a long letter of explanation and excuse to the Zemský Úřad in Brno." The matter was cleared up without difficulty.⁴²

Although he was frustrated at times, Wally's sense of humor was part of his missionary leadership. He once dressed up in one of Martha's dresses, put on makeup, and went to a masquerade ball that was hosted in the Prague Branch hall by the Mutual Improvement Association. A total of 150 people attended. Among the group was a host of new faces who laughed at Wally's antics. The program that followed was excellent. He recognized it as "one of the finest evenings" that had ever been held "since the mission was organized."⁴³ An event called an anniversary social was held at Prague Hall with more than 130 people present. It was full of entertainment. The "Melody Boys" (a quartet that Wally put together) performed at the social and sang humorous Czech melodies that brought down the house. During the intermission, the kitchen sold sandwiches, cakes, and drinks.⁴⁴

41. Toronto, journal, August 29–September 4, 1937, 140.

42. Toronto, journal, October 3–9, 1937, 152.

43. Toronto, journal, February 19–25, 1939, 335.

44. Toronto, journal, July 16–22, 1939, 386.

And, despite all the difficulty with the Czechoslovakian government and the Catholic party, Wally and his missionaries continued to find ways to spread the gospel. One way was through music—hence, the “Melody Boys.” In Brno, he discussed the plan of having a musical quartet made up of missionaries. He suggested, “We need some kind of a plan to draw the people to us during these times of stress and tension. We need to get also within the reach of the better-to-do classes and acquaint them with the message as well. A musical quartet, if good enough, might be able to find openings on the radio, receive press comments and be invited to perform for all kinds of clubs and organizations—but only along with a talk on Mormonism.”⁴⁵ However, his plan was not so easy to carry out. He found that he did not have the essential talent in his elders for the quartet, so he wrote to the First Presidency and asked for missionaries to be sent to Czechoslovakia with the necessary skill set. President McKay replied that he would try to send some new missionaries before May 1, including both a pianist and a first tenor. In addition, President McKay impressed upon Wally the “necessity of carrying on the mission work, even though conditions [were becoming] unfavorable.”⁴⁶

When the quartet was finally formed, they made great strides, just as Wally had envisioned. In his journal dated February 1939, he recorded that they had been practicing quite regularly and that at a Mutual Improvement Association meeting in Prague, they were called back by applause several times. He also saw the possibility of the elders singing over the radio in Brno and performing at the Brno and Prague English Clubs. He hoped “to be able to establish a reputation and do some good for the work [there] through the medium of music.”⁴⁷ Wally had become a regular at the English clubs, an interesting practice that he used in his missionary work. In particular, the English Club Union, which he attended frequently, began to be a great blessing in the work of the mission. He often gave talks at the Private

45. Toronto, journal, August 14–20, 1938, 255.

46. Toronto, journal, March 5–11, 1939, 339.

47. Toronto, journal, February 26–March 4, 1939, 337.



English Circle of Prague. On one occasion, he gave a talk to about forty people and spoke about “A Crisis with the U.S. Constitution” and about President Roosevelt’s plan to reconfigure the Supreme Court. Usually he felt like his talks were well received.⁴⁸

Wally was invited to attend various other clubs as well. One member arranged for Wally to give a “Utah” lecture at the Pansky Club, one of the most exclusive men’s organizations in Brno. There, Wally became acquainted with several influential men, including Dr. Jar Lorek (reputed to be a millionaire) and Dr. Nedela (a famous builder), with whom he had a fine gospel talk. He was glad that he had the chance to meet the “monied men” and that they had an opportunity to hear something about Mormonism. He distributed a number of booklets at the clubs. Wally used his club meetings to make headway.

48. Toronto, journal, April 4–10, 1937, 95.

Members in Prague Mutual Improvement Association meeting hall, 1949. Courtesy of Church History Library.

However, when there was a little progress, there was also backlash. He noted, “Wherever we work the devil is on his toes.” The same evening that he gave his lecture at the Pansky Club, “several people [had] stood outside . . . and passed out anti-Mormon literature to all who had been in attendance.” In typical optimistic fashion, he said, “It may do us more good than harm. I never fear such things.”⁴⁹

Though both the quartet and Wally’s work in the clubs received some favorable attention, Wally met with several elders back at the mission home to discuss why missionary work was not progressing faster in other areas. It seemed to Wally that they were continually “undertaking a process of gleaning” and that few were accepting the message. He asked the elders, “What can we do to improve our methods and our efficiency?” Wally admitted that the question burned in his heart “most of the time. How can our brethren become more zealous in the work?”⁵⁰ He spent much of his time over the three years that followed working on that question.

49. Toronto, journal, December 5–11, 1937, 172; and Toronto, journal, July 11–17, 1937, 125.

50. Toronto, journal, October 24–30, 1937, 158.

6 MAKING THE CZECH PEOPLE “MORMON CONSCIOUS”

Wally’s efforts to refocus missionary work and open new areas were boosted by a visit from the prophet, President Heber J. Grant, and President J. Reuben Clark Jr. in July 1937.¹ Throughout that summer, Wally spent a great deal of time preparing for their visit by distributing news articles among a number of newspaper editors. During their stay there, forty articles appeared about them and their visit in various publications. Wally also wrote articles for the *Deseret News*, such as one he titled “Czechoslovakia Welcomes the President,” and sent them home with a number of photos of President Grant.² And Wally was sure that the visit of these great leaders would never be forgotten by the missionaries who clustered about them and received their inspiration and blessings.

When the prophet arrived, everyone was impressed with his appealing and fascinating manner and keen intellect. He and his associates in turn voiced their

1. Mehr, “Czech Saints: A Brighter Day,” 48.

2. Toronto, journal, July 4–10, 1937, 121; and Toronto, journal, July 25–31, 1937, 131.