

Mr. Low: The minister spoke of communicating with the countries behind the Iron Curtain. Is it in any way clear that the people are maintaining their desire to be free or is that declining?

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: I would have to be pretty careful in answering or attempting to answer that question, Mr. Chairman. There is no reason to believe—Mr. Macdonnell was stationed in Prague for some time and knows more about this than I do—that the people of Czechoslovakia, for example, have lost the desire for freedom at all. But, of course, as the years pass the regime becomes more and more firmly established with its repressive machinery and its education of the children.

Mr. Low: I was thinking of Bulgaria particularly in that respect.

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: I would not like to think that any of these countries have lost the desire for freedom. But in some of them, especially the USSR, I doubt if they have ever known freedom as we understand it. The regime in the USSR, whatever it may have done to the people, has not failed to convince millions of them that they are better off than they were under the czars.

Mr. QUELCH: I take it these broadcasts are to show these people beyond the Iron Curtain that the life of the free nations is better than the life they have and that they have the right of a free future and in view of the fact that they have not this right now the only way they can get it is by revolt. What I want to follow up is: is there any reason for them to believe that if they take action they will gain any support from the free world—and they get that idea from some of the Americans—and as you have pointed out they are not speaking with any official understanding—but what have they a right to believe will be our action if they fight against the present form of government.

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: There again I will have to be pretty careful in what I say. My own view is that to broadcast for the purpose of encouraging people now under communist dictatorship to revolt—to make that a policy of our own broadcasting—would be doing no good and might lead to tragedy and catastrophe.

Mr. GRAYDON: We could change the opinions of the leaders.

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: We are trying to get across to these people the fact that our way of life is better and we hope that this may have some effect on their own feelings and possibly eventually on their own actions, but we must not give them the impression that any action they might take at this time would be assisted by men and machines moving across the border of their country. Also when we talk about freedom to Russian listeners we have got to be careful that we are not talking about something they do not understand and possibly may never understand. Possibly they do not want our type of freedom. The Russians, from a study of their philosophy and history, do not necessarily feel that the type of political democracy of the western world should be for them, but if you study their history you will also find that every fifty or sixty or seventy years there has been some change in their attitude towards whatever regime they have.

Mr. DECORE: Is it the Russians we are concerned about or the minorities within Soviet Russia?

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: We broadcast to the USSR but the weakest point is on the periphery.

Mr. GRAYDON: Would you include the Ukraine in that?

Hon. Mr. PEARSON: The Ukrainians are a separate people as Mr. Decore will tell you.