

*External Affairs*

gentle hills, valleys and groves. Their aspect is fertile and lively. There is such wealth of cattle, game and birds that you might think it were the home of Diana and Ceres. Such quantities of honey are taken from the countless hives that you could forget the Sicilian Hela and the Attic Hymettus. Grapes grow there in plenty and the vine can be easily cultivated. Walnuts are in such plentiful abundance that the Ukraine might once have been an Italian land. It would be impossible to enumerate all the fishponds, lakes and rivers. But why should I vainly scatter magnificent descriptions when I might say in a word that Ukraine is the promised land that our Lord spoke of to the Jews, the land that flows with milk and honey. Once to have been in the Ukraine is never to leave it, it draws everyone as a magnet draws steel, on account of its many advantages. The sky above the Ukraine is smiling, its climate is healthy, its soil fertile . . .

Thus it goes on in a very flowery manner to describe this country. As I mentioned a while ago, its richness and beauty were at once the inspiration of the country and perhaps its greatest tragedy because its richness and its productivity were the attractions for these invaders, many of them almost half primitive, who came with nothing but greed and avarice and left nothing but ruin and desolation in their wake.

That was the early history of the Ukraine—turbulent, uncertain, full of struggles and yet at the same time developing a tradition of democracy, a love of beauty and culture. Then we come to the time that was referred to the other day by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew), that of the treaty of Pereyaslav of 1654, which—and I agree with the Leader of the Opposition in that respect—had tragic consequences. It was entered into with Russia in a spirit of brotherhood, friendship and the hope that they could live side by side as neighbours. But with all the good intentions on the part of the Ukrainians the regime in Russia pulled what is today known as a classic double-cross.

They betrayed the Ukraine and, instead of having peace and security, the Ukrainian people found themselves involved in intrigues and wars with their other neighbours. The result of the whole series of wars was that they lost their national sovereignty. For almost the next three hundred years the people had no country that they could call their own; they were divided first amongst one group of countries and then amongst another. It is interesting to note that in 1917, when the Russian revolution broke out in March in St. Petersburg, although for almost three hundred years these people had had no organized nation of their own or no national sovereignty, almost instantaneously they sprang to action and formed what was called the Ukrainian central council with the objective of winning back their sovereignty and

independence. I think that fact indicates how deeply rooted in their consciousness and in their very existence was their love of their country, their love of freedom, and their desire to live as masters in their own house.

The rest is almost recent history known by most hon. members, and I will not carry on much longer except to say that in January, 1918, this central council proclaimed the independence of the Ukraine. Unfortunately, owing to the circumstances of the time, the nation did not long remain sovereign but after a few struggles again lost its sovereignty.

I have given that outline just as a background, as briefly as I could, because I believe it is important that we know something about the circumstances of the problem which I am discussing. The question that I started with was the question of self-determination. Here we have a situation where almost forty million people, with a national tradition, a culture and a language of their own, are today part of what is known as the Soviet union. Although the regime at Moscow on paper claims to have given the Ukraine a certain amount of autonomy and has even gone to the extent of having a representative at the United Nations, yet I think no one is kidded by those gestures. Any person knowing anything at all about the situation knows that under those circumstances the Ukraine cannot call itself a nation in its own right. No nation which does not have control of its own foreign policy, and control over its own armed forces, can say that it is a sovereign nation. So we have that problem before us. We have this nation of forty million people who are under the domination of a foreign power. We know—history teaches us this, if nothing else—that those people are waiting and hoping for an opportunity to have their independence again.

May I also point out that in 1918 when the Ukrainian Central Council managed to set up an independent Ukraine, they tried to have it recognized by the peace conference. When they appeared at that peace conference they were greatly disappointed to find that the powers-that-be of that time were not prepared to recognize them. The question that is now before us is this: In what way can we be of assistance to these people to regain their independence?

Here I should like to refer again to some of the statements made by the various leaders in this country. First of all, the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), speaking in July of 1953 to the fourth all-Canada congress of the Ukrainian-Canadian committee in Winnipeg, referred to this question of Ukraine independence and pointed out that although