

*Communist Activities in Canada*

that there are fellow citizens, people who have enjoyed the immunities and amenities of our life, who are prepared as agents of a foreign power to try to destroy the civilization under which they have lived. It is natural, then, that on the one hand we may fall into the danger of impatiently feeling that we must take steps which will be sure to be vigorous enough to meet the situation, and that on the other hand we are haunted by the feeling that at our peril do we do anything which lessens or circumscribes the civil liberties which after all are the very cornerstone of our life.

It is in the face of these difficulties that we have to debate this question. I remember very well an anti-nazi German, who had become a Canadian citizen, coming to me in 1940, just after the war really began, full of alarm as to what might be done by way of sabotage. I remember well the words he used. He said: "You must regard nothing as fantastic". In other words he meant that the kind of thing which would be done might easily outrun anything we might imagine as possible. I think we owe a great debt to the police and others that his fears were not realized; but as we consider the present peril I think we are driven to the belief that in Russia we have a potential enemy even harder to grasp in our imagination, and that therefore we must deal with these things seriously and try not merely to jog along with the pleasant feeling that after all there are not very many people who will do these things. Surely we have learned in the last few years what can be done by a few determined men under direction.

Many hon. members have no doubt read a book which appeared some years ago entitled "It Can't Happen Here". It was an allegory describing fascism coming to the United States. I think everyone who read it had the feeling not that it could not happen here, but that it could happen anywhere if there was a let-down in the vigilance which we have to show.

I come now to the amendment moved yesterday by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew). I wish to recall to your mind, Mr. Speaker, for a moment the circumstances under which he introduced it. He recalled a letter written a year ago by him to the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent). He recalled the statement of the Prime Minister at that time, that the subject was under consideration by the Department of Justice, and that in due course we would be informed as to the result of the discussion. He recalled further that more than a year has passed and as yet no indication has been given by the government concerning the course it proposes to follow.

[Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood).]

I might also point out that later in the debate reference was made to a statement made in the summer of 1949 by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson). In a Canadian Press dispatch, referred to in the debate, there was the following:

He told the Montreal Rotary Club the domestic threat of communism must be met "by strengthening, if necessary, our Criminal Code against actions which threaten the security of the state."

Therefore when the leader of the opposition raised the question yesterday he was bringing up something which had been under discussion with the government, and which there was every reason to consider was being seriously pondered by the government.

I think the debate has been a useful one. I will not complain too much that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs rather disregarded the terms of the amendment and set up straw men which they then had great pleasure in knocking down, but which, of course, were not men whom we had set up to be knocked down at all. For instance, the Prime Minister explained that he thought it was wise that labour had gone ahead in dealing with their own communist situation, but of course that is a matter with which we would all agree. The leader of the opposition would agree with that just as much as the leader of the government. We made no suggestion of a purge, and if any suggestion of the kind emanates from government speakers on the other side, that of course is quite irrelevant. It was not a purge we were talking about; it was an amendment of the law.

I should like to point out that the amendment was cast in broad terms, and that it was quite open to the officials of the Department of Justice to take whatever appropriate remedies the situation required. I want to emphasize again what was emphasized yesterday, namely, that what we are talking about is communist activities.

One other thing I should like to point out is that there was a good deal of suggestion that laws were unnecessary, that all we needed to do was to trust to our own good sense. Nevertheless the Prime Minister, as reported at page 2088 of *Hansard*, speaking of the spy trial said:

I endured many a slap on the wrist in this house for the methods that were adopted to handle the situation.

I suggest to the Prime Minister that one of the reasons why there were slaps on the wrist at that time was that things were done which some people in the house at any rate thought were not consistent with parliamentary practice or with the gradually developed processes of constitutional government. Some members thought we had to go back prior to