

However, it does come to me that a possible explanation of the remarkable conduct of these people is in the economic phase of their existence.

When the Doukhobors came to Canada some sixty years ago they formed co-operatives for the cultivation of the land which we gave them. Their industry was entirely agriculture, but unfortunately these communistic communities have not been successful; they have failed, and failed with a good deal of bitterness. Some of these people have been left rather high and dry. Those of the Sons of Freedom who have not established their own homes on their own farms now work for wages; and as honourable senators are aware, employment during these last few years has been seriously depressed. The Sons of Freedom who are now in jail at Agassiz, and those on the highway leading to that place from Krestova, have given up farming almost entirely. I am credibly informed that in Krestova there is not sufficient land around their homes to make a family garden. Those who farm their own land, of course, are respected members of the community. Those who are otherwise employed are liked by their employers, who find them quiet and docile, obedient and industrious. However, their employment has been adversely affected, and very much so during the current depression.

I am not pronouncing a possible solution, but is it not possible that the basic cause of the trouble among these people is their poverty? Might it not be that disastrous economic conditions are the basic cause of the discontent of the Sons of Freedom?

Mr. Choquette: How many are they, all told?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: By the widest count, about 2,000; about 1,300 are bogged down on the road. In all, there are approximately 20,000 Doukhobors, perhaps more.

Hon. Mr. Drouin: Basically, what do they want?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: That is what we are here to find out. I do not know. I may be wrong in my assumption with regard to economic conditions.

Hon. Mr. Horner: You are absolutely wrong.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Well, perhaps so. The honourable senator from Blaine Lake (Hon. Mr. Horner) knows a certain portion of them, and he spoke about that portion. He made a plea for the self-respecting, the law-abiding, settled Doukhobors of this country. With his plea I entirely agree; but I am talking about the landless men and women, families who have no place in the sun, and who are on the

road to Agassiz—a very different people from the well-to-do farmers for whom the honourable senator spoke.

Hon. Mr. Reid: They walked away from their own properties.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I am not saying that they did not. I said a self-imposed disaster.

Hon. Mr. Reid: Nobody chased them out.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: No; but my friend should just listen to me, rather than make his speech over again.

Hon. M. Reid: Well, I know something about them.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Yes, and you told us that. I have the floor at the moment.

Hon. Mr. Reid: This is all theory.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Well, good theory is good logic, my friend.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: A good start.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Yes, a good start, and that is all that we propose at the moment. My friend himself says he does not know what to do with the Doukhobors, and I agree with him on that.

Honourable senators, I was endeavouring to say that I may be wrong in attributing the discontent of these people and evil deeds of some of them to economic causes, but that question is what this resolution is designed to solve. That is why Senator Croll moved this resolution, that we may make an effort to find the answer.

A further difficulty that must be recognized is that the mischief is of long standing. Others have tried and have failed. But for the most part it has been the police mind that has been trying, not such men and women who made this university inquiry some ten years ago. Their only authority was to inquire. They made recommendations which, like most reports of bodies of that kind, went into a pigeon hole. Still others have tried and have failed, but I would like to point out that a Senate committee has not yet even tried. I do not concede that Senator Croll, if his proposed committee is established, will fail. He may, but I am not conceding that for one moment, because I would point out that few if any can assess the power of kindness. If you want to defeat an enemy—and that is what is proposed—the way to accomplish it is to make of him a friend.

That these Sons of Freedom are not impervious to acts of kindness would appear from a dispatch from Hope, a little town near which these Sons of Freedom are now encamped. It was a dispatch to the Toronto