

Mr. FULFORD: I would like to ask, Mr. Wilgress,—some months ago there appeared in a magazine pictures of balloons being released in Munich which the prevailing winds carried to a certain altitude and at that altitude they would drop to earth many hundreds of propaganda pamphlets attached to the balloons. The idea of this was to overcome the fact that the air waves were being jammed by the Russians and with the balloons they would drop propaganda or drop the truth over the satellite nations of, say, Czechoslovakia and Poland. I presume there is a lot of waste for many of these balloons would drop over wasteland and never be seen. We do know that in the second world war the Japanese sent balloons across the Pacific Ocean and some of them dropped in the ocean, but some were picked up in the interior of North America.

It strikes me this could be a very valuable way of spreading our gospel and I was wondering first of all Mr. Chairman, whether Mr. Wilgress has a report on how effective these—I believe they were experiments—have been, and, secondly, whether our Canadian Department of External Affairs has ever considered using this method of getting our propaganda into the satellite nations and into soviet Russia itself.

The WITNESS: I have no information here on that Mr. Fulford, but I will endeavour to see if we have any information in the department and I could let the committee know. We have never considered this particular method in the department largely because our activities in this direction are necessarily on a modest scale at present.

Mr. FULFORD: The whole scheme, of course, was to overcome the jamming of the airwaves by soviet Russia.

Mr. QUELCH: Mr. Wilgress, can you tell me whether the governments behind the iron curtain have issued definite instructions to the people forbidding anyone to listen to these broadcasts, or whether it is a question of anyone being found listening to these broadcasts is placed under suspicion.

The WITNESS: I believe anyone found listening to such broadcasts is subject to a penalty.

Mr. QUELCH: They are actually forbidden.

The WITNESS: Yes. I understand the only radios on sale in these countries now are those which will make it difficult to pick up these broadcasts, but there are some radios there which can pick them up.

Mr. FRASER: I read some weeks ago in one of the New York papers that four script writers for the Voice of America were dismissed owing to the fact that they were pro-Russian. What check-up have we on that here?

The WITNESS: Naturally the antecedents of all of those engaged in this work would be investigated.

Mr. FRASER: They have been or—

The WITNESS: They would be.

Mr. FRASER: This must have been going on in the States for some time before they were checked up.

Mr. QUELCH: Are all the radios in Europe shortwave receiving sets?

The WITNESS: That I cannot answer.

Mr. QUELCH: In this country so very few people use the shortwave.

The WITNESS: I am not sure that it is the same in Europe, but is a matter on which Mr. Désy could give you information.

Mr. McCUSKER: Can you tell us, Mr. Wilgress, if the Russians are carrying on some counter-propagands?