

Britain, known as Quakers, made the necessary arrangement with the Canadian Government for their settlement in Canada. Throughout the books reference is made to the Doukhobors as Russian Quakers. Their belief has centred on a direct revelation and guidance which denied the need for a church organization and, by an extension, included a denial of government authority or the right of anyone to use force in human affairs.

They live in communal existence and do not undertake military service. That was a condition of their entry into this country. I think the house will find it interesting to know that 124 Freedomites served as volunteers during World War II. The vast majority of Doukhobors have adapted themselves to Canada and its way of life. Originally they settled in what is now the province of Saskatchewan. You will recall that I said they came here at the turn of the century. Saskatchewan became a province in 1905, and when in that year the provincial government was organized and had some time to look around they decided to open schools in these settlements. The extremist minority then moved on to British Columbia in 1908.

Now, the extremist minority, the Freedomites, have at times refused to pay taxes, to send their children to school or register births, marriages or deaths. We have to face facts—they have been troublesome. Moreover, as a form of passive resistance they sometimes parade in the nude, and when hard pressed by the authorities they dynamite schools and bridges and burn their own homes. They appear to have about 2,000 adherents of whom 200 or 300 are the unrepentant fanatical minority.

I repeat that the vast majority of Doukhobors have adapted themselves and have entered into and contributed to the Canadian stream of life.

In 1958 the Freedomites sought to leave Canada, and the authorities agreed to help them, but negotiations for their emigration broke down. It would appear that Russia refused to exempt them from military service. Some negotiations were also carried on with Brazil, but they seem to have been unproductive.

I said earlier that they are sometimes referred to as Russian Quakers. Originally they came here as pacifists, but about forty years ago they abandoned the original tradition of pacifism and resorted to violence—burning and dynamiting—which was originally directed against the orthodox backsliding Doukhobors but later extended to the whole community. The authorities have tried many expedients: prosecution, imprisonment, exiling to an island, and separating Freedomite children from their parents. A royal

commission investigated the problem in 1912, and a fruitless attempt was made at conciliation.

In 1952 the province of British Columbia established a Doukhobor Research Committee, which made a painstaking and understanding report. Nothing seems to have come of that. Now, ten years after that report was made, we are back where we started, and we must report failure. As recently as last week, the Attorney-General of British Columbia made this statement:

The problem is beyond solving by the provincial government.

The Freedomites are religious fanatics, and to date have been unmoved by punishment and pressures; moreover, they are successful in transmitting their fanaticism to their children.

From time to time remedies have been suggested, such as compulsory relocation as a group in an isolated community or being scattered across the country, but Canadians find such solutions repugnant and unacceptable. These people cannot be deported, they were born here; there is no place for them to go.

In 1959 there was a ray of hope: the women took over control of the Freedomites, and there seemed to be some reason to believe there was a chance of possible integration into the community. Then Stefan Sorokin came from Uruguay to Canada, where he resided for some time. He is the recognized head of the Freedomites. After he left Canada in 1960 the burning and bombings began again.

Prosecution does not seem effective. In 1932 a special prison was built on Pearse Island near Vancouver, where 600 men were confined for illegal acts. In the middle forties there was a further breakout, and 400 were confined. We recently built a prison at Agassiz, British Columbia, where nearly one hundred are now confined. But we are back where we started, building prisons. Certainly that is not a solution. To jail them is an easy way out, but solves nothing. As we look at the Freedomite problem we might very well also take a look at ourselves and realize that we have been lax; there has been an inertia on the part of the Canadian people, a standing-by when we should have been doing something. There has been indifference where there should have been concern; there has been apathy where there should have been indignation. Yet I must make it quite clear that this country will not tolerate violence. Ours is a nation of law. For anyone to defy the law and the constituted judicial process is to strike a blow at the very foundation of our country. In time, people who do so will break themselves against the law.