

The story of this Doukhobor revolt against the laws of Canada is an interesting one.

In June last the Doukhobors settled in the neighbourhood of Yorkton, N. W. T., addressed a petition to the Dominion government setting forth the grievances which they consider the Canadian laws impose upon them.

Their first objection was to their taking up homesteads individually, on the ground that private ownership of land is opposed to the law of God. They wished to have a tract of land set apart for their brotherhood, in the same manner that reserves are set apart for Indians, the title to the whole tract being vested in the sect and not in the individual members of the community.

This is a system to which the government cannot consent, and to which I do not believe they will consent. If the Doukhobors are going to settle in our country, they must take out land the same as other people and obey the laws just as our own people do. They cannot be allowed to live like Indians. We have got all the Indians we want, but while we are bound to take care of our Indian tribes, because they were the original owners of the soil and we have taken their property from them, we owe nothing to the Doukhobors and ought to insist that they comply with our land laws just the same as our own people.

Then they object very strongly to our marriage laws. They say:

We cannot accept such a law, for we believe that it also breaks the law of God. We cannot believe that a marriage can become legal because it is recorded in a police register and a fee of two dollars paid for it; on the contrary, we believe that such recording and payment annuls marriage and breaks up its real legality. We believe that the real legalization of a marriage union is when it is brought about freely as a result of pure feeling, of a mutual moral affection between man and woman.

How does that strike you, Sir, from a moral point of view. They do not recognize that the community has any right to determine on what conditions marriage shall be celebrated. They contend for the right to do as they please, and pretend that the open sin of leaving a wife and taking another woman in her place is less than what they call the secret sin committed by a husband of living with his wife after he has got tired of her.

Mr. McCREARY. Are you reading from the manifesto of one Bodjiansky?

Mr. WILSON. I am reading from the reports in the newspapers. There is a motion on the Order paper calling for all the papers in connection with this matter, but as the government has seen fit to take all the private members' days, that motion could not be made and the papers have not been brought down. I can, therefore, only use such papers as are at my disposal. Not having any access to the private office of the Minister of the Interior, I cannot get the documents, but no doubt my hon. friend

has the opportunity and can get them all if he wants to. I put the question myself to the minister, and he admitted that there had been a petition received from the Doukhobors expressing their dissatisfaction with our marriage, land and registry laws. And you will see, as I go on, that a copy of this petition was sent to the gentleman who was principally instrumental in bringing these people to the country; and he wrote a letter to the Doukhobors, advising them to comply with the laws of the country in a formal way. He said: You can take a wife and marry her; and, if you do not like to continue living with her, you can leave her and take another woman without marrying her—there is no law against bigamy in Canada, but there is no law against adultery. If that is the doctrine taught by the leaders of this society, what may we expect of the rank and file? To my mind, these are the most undesirable people we can possibly have, because they have no regard for our laws. I heard an instance the other day. A railway company was in a great hurry to build a piece of line, and some of these people were engaged for the work. They were poor, and the men who employed them paid their way out to the work. But when they got out there, he found that it was a holy season for them, and for two days they refused to enter upon the work, though they had been engaged specially for that purpose.

Mr. McCREARY. Was that not all right—not to work on Sunday or a holy day? Is that not all right according to any religion?

Mr. WILSON. I can only answer by saying that if these people were as religious as they pretended to be, they would have told this man: Our feast day comes at such and such a time, and we cannot go until after that time. Is that not what an honest man would have done? We do not want to be dishonest, whether we are religious or whether we are not. But, when men who profess to be better than their neighbours deceive people and get benefits under false pretenses, they are worse than the out-and-out man who does wrong things openly. I have not much use for the religious man who is dishonest—I do not think he has much religion or much principle. I am of opinion that if the government had to bring these people in to-day, they would hardly do it.

But, there is one matter I had overlooked, and that I want to refer to. We have appointed Mr. Preston as superintendent of immigration. If it was necessary to have such a man and he were a good man for the place, we would expect that he would increase the numbers coming from that part of the world in which he carried on the work. But, what are the results? We got from countries other than the United States in 1899, 32,598 immigrants, while in 1900, we got only 29,197, or 3,401 less. These are

Mr. WILSON.