

I heard him remark that the mission of the Jews was to teach Christianity to the Christians.

In this chamber, with one single exception, we are all Christians—nominally at least. Perhaps to some degree we are all Christians, and I submit that we had a magnificent lesson in Christianity when the honourable senator from Toronto-Spadina (Hon. Mr. Croll) moved his resolution to establish a special committee to inquire into and report on the continuing problems of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors. That lesson was reinforced and enlarged by the kindly and truly Christian address which he delivered to us in support of that motion.

For sixty years a small section of the Doukhobor immigrants who came to Canada as long ago as that has harassed and frustrated the Canadian authorities. While the great bulk of Doukhobors have behaved themselves in a law-abiding manner, that small minority have refused to obey our laws and have marked their protests against fancied wrongs by acts of criminal violence, such as the dynamiting of schools, bridges and electric power plant facilities; by arson, the burning of homes belonging to themselves, to their more Canadianized fellow immigrants, and to others. They have refused to assimilate with their neighbours and they have outraged the respectable portions of the community by parading in the nude. It was for a group of people such as this that the honourable senator from Toronto-Spadina moved his resolution, to benefit these people who have troubled Canada for more than half a century.

It was for them and for ourselves, for the people of British Columbia and to some extent for the people of Saskatchewan, that he made his eloquent plea. In words which, I humbly submit, might have been used by the founder of Christianity himself under similar circumstances, he asked us to extend the hand of friendship, with a sympathetic understanding; to turn the other cheek, as it were, and with a fourfold forgiveness to proceed to rescue these "Peck's bad boys" from self-imposed disaster.

The honourable senator from Toronto-Spadina gently suggested that we too may bear some responsibility—a small and undefined responsibility, it is true—by our own neglect for the one thousand men, women and children who are now bogged down beside the road to Agassiz, after a trek of 300 miles.

Honourable senators, notwithstanding the facts, which I have recited as forcibly as I can, you must know that I agree with him, for I have seconded his motion. And why not?

I am reminded of the words attributed to Edward Wallis Hoch, sometime Governor of

the State of Kansas, and the owner of the *Marion Record*, a newspaper of that state.

The words are as follows:

There is so much good in the worst of us,  
And so much bad in the best of us,  
That it hardly becomes any of us  
To talk about the rest of us.

I will go along with the senator from Toronto-Spadina on the principle that, while the light hangs out to burn, the vilest sinner may return; and I would like to open the door, if only just a crack, for the sinner to return. I do not agree with the statement which has been made that an act of Christian kindness on our part in an attempt to bring about better conditions will offend the law-abiding portion of the Doukhobor community. I think it is much more likely that these people, who perhaps individually have suffered from the lawlessness of the Sons of Freedom, will hope, perhaps somewhat hopelessly, that we succeed.

I am not one to pass over the difficulties or to shut my eyes to them; you and I, of course, must recognize that there are difficulties to be encountered. The first difficulty that comes to my mind is the Doukhobors' lack of responsible and effective leadership, and so it may be difficult, if we nominate a committee such as is proposed, to arrange the proceedings, to conduct negotiations, and finally to achieve some communal understanding. That difficulty may not be insurmountable, but certainly it is something that we should recognize in advance, and not try to close our eyes to it.

The next difficulty that occurs to me is that these present martyrs, who are in such a bad way on the road from Krestova to Agassiz, have burned and destroyed their own homes behind them and now have nowhere to go where they may resume a normal form of living with lessened tension and, I would hope, with better intentions. What is to be done with them? I am frank to confess that I do not know what is to be done with them, but I do know that neither the people of British Columbia nor we as senior statesmen of this great country can stand idly by while these people die like flies in the course of a hard Canadian winter.

The third difficulty is an economic one. I do not pose as having any special knowledge about the Doukhobors and their community, or even their lawlessness. I have done my best to read and inform myself on the subject, and I have gone through a magnificent report, produced ten years ago, by the University of British Columbia, which gives one some understanding of these people, but I am not posing at all as an expert in this matter.