

*Communist Activities in Canada*

As you know, this committee has been sitting in Toronto considering these cases since September 29, and completed the hearings on Saturday, October 3.

In view of the publicity given to your telegram, I am also informing the press.

I would point out that the action in that respect suggested that the activities of the communist party were not to be carried on, and that the conditional aspect of the release was related to that understanding. It does not leave too strong a feeling of confidence as to the way in which the government has from time to time dealt with this subject that in the Grey North by-election, when General McNaughton was a candidate, a number of the most prominent communists in Canada, some of whom had been released under that order, actively campaigned for General McNaughton in that by-election, and that advertisements appearing over the names of such well-known communists as George Harris, C. S. Jackson, Jack Shaw, Pat Sullivan, Harold Pritchard and others were published by the authority of the Grey North Liberal Association.

Nevertheless that is in the past, and the government can make its own decision about the wisdom of having accepted support from men of that type. It is a very high tribute to the good judgment of the people of Grey North, and elsewhere, that they took appropriate action to deal with the support of men of that kind. Nevertheless it suggests a failure to recognize the full seriousness of this threat, both then and now. It is perfectly true that Russia was fighting Germany because it had been attacked by Germany on June 22, 1941, and for no other reason. Russia would still be helping Germany today if Hitler's dream of a united Europe under his control had been fulfilled. Russia was fighting Germany, and because of that it was considered advisable in the higher realms of international decision that all who were fighting nazi Germany should stand together for that purpose; but these men against whom orders for arrest had been made, Tim Buck and others like him, were just the same men as they were before. The fact that Russia was forced to take up arms for the defence of its own soil in no way purified Tim Buck of his treachery, nor did it make any more decent citizens of the remainder of those people than they were before or than they are today.

There are many people who for one reason or another, and undoubtedly with the most sincere purpose in many cases, seem to think that it is not desirable to take positive action against communism, and that the only way to deal with it is to state publicly that communism does not meet with their approval. One reason why this subject should be under

consideration in the house at this particular time is certain events of the past few days in different parts of the world. Last week a bill was introduced in the Australian house of representatives which, when it is passed by their parliament, will have the effect of making communism a criminal offence punishable by very severe penalties. On Saturday it was announced that the government of South Africa will introduce in the South African parliament this week a bill to make communism a crime in that country and subject to very severe penalties. Last week it was announced that the government of Malaya has not only decided to make communism a crime, but in certain aspects thereof a crime punishable by the death penalty, and that this new law will come into effect on June 1. Yesterday it was announced that the government of Panama had introduced a most severe act which will make communism a criminal offence there. India has dealt with communism, and has made it a criminal offence; the law has been in effect now for several months.

I think it might be helpful if, while this debate is taking place, we were informed whether this subject was under discussion in Colombo, and whether this uniform pattern which is taking shape throughout the commonwealth was one of the things agreed upon but not disclosed at that time. I believe it would indicate that the Colombo conference was of more use than it appeared to be, if in fact there was such a decision on that occasion. In any event, it is rather significant that there should be this rapid sequence of events of a similar nature in different nations of the commonwealth which were represented at Colombo.

There are those who still take the position that it is not wise to pass laws which would make communism a criminal offence. There is an editorial in today's *Montreal Gazette* under the heading "Its Strength and our Danger", relating to this subject. I should like to read the first two paragraphs:

Whenever it is suggested that communism should be brought under legal control in Canada, many at once reply that this would involve an alarming invasion of civil liberties.

This type of reply has been well and fairly expressed by Hon. L. B. Pearson, Canada's Minister of External Affairs. Mr. Pearson explained that he considered it wise to reserve the penalties of the Criminal Code for those who by some overt act have threatened the peace and security of the country. He thought it would be dangerous to go further.

"Once we make it a crime to hold political ideas," he said, "merely because they are thought to be dangerous, it will then be but a short step to suppressing political ideas because they are not liked."

The editorial goes on to discuss this subject further, but I wish to refer to this statement by the Secretary of State for External