

*Communist Activities in Canada*

I rose to say that I view with a considerable amount of misgiving the obvious intent of an amendment of this description placed before the House of Commons. Throughout the ages our forefathers have fought for certain civil rights, and I believe that the freer people are to express opinions, the freer to organize, even when we think the organization may be against the public interest, so long as there is no conspiracy to commit overt acts, and overt acts are not committed, the better it will be. Throughout the ages we have found the way of dealing with movements such as we are now discussing. Go back into our history, and we find that the foundations of the freedoms that we now possess were established in Magna Carta as long ago as 1215, guaranteeing to every man a fair trial by his peers. Then we have habeas corpus whereby no man may be arrested and incarcerated without charge and trial. Yesterday when the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) was speaking, he referred to criticisms of himself as minister of justice several years ago. The criticism that was made of the government and of the minister of justice at that time was that people had been picked up without charge and without trial, and incarcerated, and that no opportunity was given for their production in court to be properly charged under the law. I think that was the criticism that was made of the government at that time. On occasion we contrast that with what happened in the United Kingdom, where, for example, Dr. Allan Nunn May was picked up, taken into Old Bailey, charged, speedily tried and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. That is the method which is time-honoured under our democratic procedure.

I do not like to see any suggestion introduced into this chamber which would seem to indicate that we are going to do something beyond what we have done so successfully to curb subversive activities in the past.

About a week ago I was asked by telegram to express an opinion on this very matter. Not knowing it was going to be introduced into this house, I replied by telegram in these words:

Speaking as the leader of a democratic socialist party actively opposing communism, I believe outlawing of communist party political error of the first magnitude. All of our countries have seditious conspiracy acts under which subversive activities can be dealt with according to law. To drive the party underground encourages secret conspiracy, arouses ill-placed sympathy, jeopardizes legitimate political discussion and undermines faith in our democratic institutions.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the position that I want to emphasize before this house this afternoon. There is of course always a danger from people who do not believe in constitutional methods. That danger comes not only

from the communist party, but from other parties right on the other side that today we lump under the heading of fascists. When we speak of safeguarding our Christian civilization let us bear in mind that the churches have recognized—and when I say “the churches” I mean all the churches—that communism as we know it today arises very largely out of the misery and want of depressed peoples.

A few moments ago the hon. member for Greenwood pointed out that often the leaders of those movements were not those who suffered poverty, misery and want. To some extent that is true; but the following which they gain is among the mass of the people who suffer from evil conditions; and we have to beware lest we confuse agitation against evil conditions with communist activities. Not so long ago practically everyone who criticized the evils of the present system of society was classified as communist, and sometimes was persecuted as such.

I have on my desk the report and encyclical of the archbishops and the bishops of the church of which I happen to be a member. In 1948, at Lambeth, 329 archbishops and bishops of the Anglican communion in all lands met to consider what they termed the nature of man and man's obligations to society. They have one or two things to say in that report that I think are pertinent to a discussion of this kind. They say this:

Communism cannot be overcome by argument alone. It has to be outlived, not merely out-fought. Under the providence of God its truths will pass into the experience of humanity; its untruths and half-truths will be self-destructive. It is for the church to be faithful to the word of God and for Christians to live, and, if need be, die for the truth of God as He allows them to see it. But let us be sure that its martyrs die for the Kingdom of Christ and not for some lesser loyalty. By making common cause with anti-communist forces, the church might have some success but such a short-term policy would prove in the end to be disastrous to the church, both in the east and in the west.

And then this to the members of their communion:

(Churchmen) must do full justice to the truth in communism, both its critical insights into history and its desire to help the oppressed.

The church ought not to allow itself to be identified with social reaction. Its members should be ready for social and economic change and quick to welcome into the councils of the church men and women with the workers' experience of living conditions.

What is true of a church is true of this assembly. If I understand the basis of this institution, it is an institution in which ideas of various sorts may be expressed and advanced, sifted, accepted or rejected. It seems to me if we are going to agree that in this institution that is the democratic