

Communist Activities in Canada

I shall have a little more to say about that later.

Mr. Stick: Send that book to Dr. Endicott.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): He may have seen it; and he may be incorrigible. I want to read a sentence or two further, because I think they illustrate the great mental gulf that exists between ourselves and these people. Here is an extract from that part of the book written by an Italian named Silone, who was in Moscow a great deal between 1921 and 1927:

What struck me most about the Russian communists, even in such really exceptional personalities as Lenin and Trotsky, was their utter incapacity to be fair in discussing opinions that conflicted with their own. The adversary, simply for daring to contradict, at once became a traitor, an opportunist, a hireling. An adversary in good faith is inconceivable to the Russian communists.

A little later he speaks of a conversation he had with a communist woman, who said to him:

If you happen to read in the papers that Lenin has had me arrested for stealing the silver spoons in the Kremlin, that simply means that I am not entirely in agreement with him about some little problem of agricultural or industrial policy.

Later he speaks of other things along the same line. I have outlined these things to you and brought these points before you briefly because I believe they are things that serious people should be thinking about. After all, we all face the fact that at the present time the western world is competing with the communist world, you may say, for the minds and hearts of hundreds and hundreds of millions of other people.

It is customary to say—and of course there is a great deal of truth in saying it—that what we must do is to make it clear that our economic organization is better. I do not belittle the importance of that suggestion at all. But that is not the whole story. The economic condition in Czechoslovakia could have been improved until it was an earthly paradise and it would not have affected what happened there two years ago. That happened not because the men engaged in it were in want. As a matter of fact, most of the leaders in this movement are not in want. It is not people who are in want who head up these things. It is people with dominating personalities, with this strange aberration which I have brought to your attention. I say, therefore, it seems to me that we are just on the fringe of the problem if we content ourselves with saying that all we have to do is to make it appear that we are more prosperous in the democracies than others are under the communists. We all believe that we are immensely more prosperous than the people are in Russia today. I do not think

anyone doubts that. But that has not been sufficient to affect the situation. We say, of course, that it is partly because they do not know; but it is much more than that. In the end we have to admit that,—I was going to say it is moral values, but it is a bit hard to use the word “moral” about a system that we detest and abominate so greatly, and so I change the wording a little and say it is non-material values which are going to control this situation in the end. After all, what have you in Russia today? You have a small number—I suppose there are less than five million people in the communist party, as they call it—who, by their cohesion, fanaticism and something which approaches faith, are dominating well on to two hundred million other people. That is what we have. We cannot bring ourselves to call it a faith but we must at any rate concede that it is a tremendous motive power. As I said a moment ago, we are competing with this, and the competition raises all kinds of questions.

Some hon. members will have seen it reported a couple of days ago—I think it was in the press yesterday—that Lord Boyd Orr at some meeting put forth the view that the world might as well face the fact that it had, as it were, to match deficiencies with surpluses or we would be in grave peril. As a matter of fact, we have been doing that for years with regard to western Europe and far east in Europe. Lord Boyd Orr raised the whole question as to whether our imagination has got to range much more widely. Without undertaking an expression of opinion on that matter I suggest that it is not a matter which any of us can disregard.

I have tried to bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker, this strange intellectual aberration which took these people into the communist fold—and then happily their better natures reasserted themselves and they came back. But we know that there are a great many people who have not come back. I suggest that we are “put on the spot” in no uncertain way to consider our own position. A striking speech was made about a year ago by a man who is well known to most hon. members. I refer to Bruce Hutchison. He made it in Winnipeg, and he says some things with which we may not agree; nevertheless they are said by a serious man to serious people. He was speaking to the St. Andrew's society, and I think you will agree that is serious enough. He says some things that I think we should not brush aside. He said:

Now, clearly the idea of democracy is at war with the idea of dictatorship. Freedom is at war with slavery. Certainly, but what do we mean by