

*Communist Activities in Canada*

out time and again, by curing all those things on which communism battens and fattens, by getting rid of social injustice, racial discrimination, slums and the needless poverty which exist. Get rid of these and there will be no communism in Canada.

I want to make my position amply clear. It is a pity I always have to when I speak on the subject. I am no friend of the communists. A couple of years ago I received a letter dated March 18, 1948, from the rather well known Mr. Tim Buck. I shall read only a part of it. It reads:

Recent press reports indicate that the House of Commons may soon be considering the private bill presented by Mr. Wilfrid LaCroix, M.P. This LaCroix bill proposes that legislation be enacted to declare the Labor-Progressive party an illegal organization . . .

And so on. I replied as follows under date of March 20, 1948:

Dear Mr. Buck:

I am in receipt of your mimeographed letter of March 18, protesting the bill which is before the House of Commons sponsored by Mr. LaCroix. We shall oppose it, not because we like your party particularly much but because we like democratic freedom more. You will notice here the difference between democracy in the real sense of the word and what is happening in Czechoslovakia.

Believe me your party is not unpopular because you are in the foreground of the current struggle of Canadians against profiteering, etc. The reason is that many suspect you are in the struggle just now because it suits you. Three years ago you were in the struggle during the general election, as you may remember, to elect the very party which you now condemn as the upholders of monopoly and the profit system.

It so happens that you have decided to support the C.C.F. just now, because it is the current North American line to support a third party. You have even told constituents of mine in Winnipeg North that they have to support me. Let me tell you that your policy will change before the next election and that you will oppose me in Winnipeg North as you will oppose the C.C.F. in other areas. That prediction approaches certainty. Nevertheless, despite the known enmity of your party towards the C.C.F., over many years, we will defend your right to express that enmity, even when it is disguised under the cloak of friendship.

That is the position I took then and it is the position which I take now. I know something about communists because I have had to fight against them much harder than many members of the house. So far as I am concerned, the communist party is a very odd mixture of political treachery and intellectual lechery. They cannot be trusted in any sense whatsoever, but I see no reason for adopting communist tactics to defeat communism. If democracy is strong enough, as I think it is, we can defeat communism without doing what is suggested in the amendment. I have

seen communists at work in Canada, and I have seen them at work in the country of my birth, in the coal fields of Scotland where they were very strong indeed.

We have seen what has happened in the United Kingdom as a result of a general improvement in the conditions of the people and as a result of a greater measure of social security for all the people. Today the communist party in the United Kingdom is a negligible factor. I think that is so in this country too, although it is always ready to spring into action again when the opportunity presents itself. Nevertheless it is true to say that the communist party in Canada today represents much less of a threat to Canada than it has for many years past.

One thing we have to remember, and which we are constantly inclined to forget, is that we cannot outlaw ideas. We have been told that we are not going to outlaw the communist party; we are just going to outlaw the activities which spring from that party; but I should like to point out again that we never can tell where such legislation is going to stop. It has been pointed out by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) that there is a danger of infiltration. None of us will deny that. That danger is always present, but the danger does not arise from known communists. In my opinion it arises from those who are sympathetic to communism, those whom we do not know to be sympathetic. Certainly the dangerous ones are not the members of the communist party.

Again I think it should be pointed out that if by any chance communism is outlawed in Canada it will have one effect only. Communism will be driven underground, and there is a sufficiently lunatic fringe in every society who like some sort of perverted excitement and who would be encouraged to try to join such a group if it were declared outlawed, not because they like communism but because of the thrill which they feel they are getting. For my part I want to see communists put where we can point a finger at them, where we can watch what they are doing. If we want to find out how to handle communists adequately in this country all we have to do is to look at what the trade unions have done.

I said earlier that I believe Canadian democracy is strong enough to stand up against any subversive attempts such as communists, fascists, or any other group can bring to bear. I say that because I have complete faith in the common sense of the Canadian people. When we suggest that we