

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gibson: What about the thousands of letters sent to us?

Mr. Stanfield: Why is there this stubbornness? Is it an indication of some god-like complex on the part of the government, or is it simply the result of the cocksureness of a government that believes it is not capable of error? Others may be subject to human error, but not this government!

Mr. Woolliams: They think they have the divine right to rule.

Mr. Stanfield: Part of the reason, I suggest, is that the government has become blindly arrogant in this matter. I say again that I have no choice but to vote for the measure if I want to get rid of the War Measures Act and the regulations under that act. I certainly want to do that. But I warn the government that we in the opposition will not forget the contempt that it has shown for Parliament, the contempt it has shown for the rights of individuals in this country and the contempt it has shown for the right of the public to be involved in this whole affair.

We shall be demanding an accounting from this government on behalf of all the people of Canada. The government has refused to establish an independent board of review, and no doubt it will also refuse our demands for an independent commission of inquiry to look into this whole sorry mess. If it were less arrogant it would not dare refuse that request. The arrogance of this government and its supporters passes all understanding, and therefore it is hard to say with any assurance what it may or may not dare to do.

An hon. Member: Why vote for the bill, then?

Mr. Stanfield: So, Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I have to vote for this measure.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Stanfield: I shall vote for this measure in order to get rid of the War Measures Act. But I want to make it clear, most emphatically, that I am not doing so out of any sense of confidence in this government, because I have no confidence in it whatsoever.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the third reading of the temporary emergency powers bill constitutes the final chapter in the legislative program which began with the kidnapping of James Cross and the kidnapping and murder of Pierre Laporte. Nevertheless, this is not the final chapter in so far as the consequences which will flow from the action which the government has taken are concerned. I submit that for years to come the results will be seen in the province of Quebec, where extraordinary powers have been abused and used for political intimidation and harassment.

Public Order Act, 1970

In years to come historians will scan the record to see what evidence the government had of an apprehended insurrection. I suggest, sir, that they will scan the record in vain. They may find the apprehended insurrection as groundless as the imaginary military coup which the late Right Hon. Mackenzie King dreamed up in order to frighten some of his ministers into supporting him on the conscription issue.

● (9:20 p.m.)

I want to point out that throughout this entire discussion, beginning with October 16, the position taken by the New Democratic Party has been consistent and clear-cut. On October 16 we made it clear that we had two objections to the resolution which was introduced by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) on that day. The first was that we had received no evidence whatsoever that there was a state of apprehended insurrection in Canada. We still have no such evidence.

I think it is rather significant that when the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson was asked on television to endorse the government's action in invoking the War Measures Act, he refused to do so on the ground that he did not have sufficient information. The former Prime Minister is in exactly the same position as the rest of us. We did not have information on October 16, and we still do not have any information that would justify curtailing the liberties of 21 million Canadians because of a state of apprehended insurrection which has neither been proven nor outlined.

Our second objection to invoking the War Measures Act was that we claimed that the regulations passed under the War Measures Act constituted an unnecessary abridgment of civil liberties in this country. The best proof of that is the bill which is now before us. The government has introduced legislation which is less repressive and less arbitrary than the regulations under the War Measures Act. The provisions in the regulations under the War Measures Act which were most heinous have been somewhat softened in the legislation now before us.

In the debate on the War Measures Act, members of this party maintained that the government could have acted under the provisions of the Criminal Code. There are adequate provisions there dealing with treason, seditious intention, seditious conspiracy, possession of offensive weapons and so on, which adequately provide the government with the necessary powers to deal with a terrorist conspiracy in the province of Quebec. As an alternative, we suggested that if the government wanted additional powers they should have asked Parliament for additional police powers. There were two powers which we indicated might be necessary: first, on a temporary basis to extend the length of time of detention and, second, to permit without warrant the search of private dwellings for explosives and other offensive weapons.

The Prime Minister wrote the party leaders asking for suggestions with respect to either temporary or permanent legislation to deal with emergencies. In a letter to the Prime Minister dated October 23, I set forth on behalf of the members of this party the additional