

Invoking of War Measures Act

like to close by saying that we all hope and pray that God will give this government and this chamber the courage and the wisdom to know how to act in these difficult times.

An hon. Member: Amen.

Mr. Cafik: I also hope that the two men who are now captives of these bandits will gain their freedom. I know the government will do everything in its power to try to secure this objective, and I hope to God that they are successful.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Cafik) I find myself recalling the words of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) with a good deal of discomfort. I have always had a great deal of admiration for the Minister of Justice; I believe that he will always carry out his job to the best of his ability. He said, in effect, "Don't worry, I realize we are being given too much power, but as long as I hold the job of Minister of Justice the members of this chamber and Canadians generally do not have to worry." I should like to say through you, Mr. Speaker, that if the Minister of Justice were traded for the justice minister of the province of Ontario, I would not feel quite as safe about interpreting the regulations.

● (9:10 p.m.)

The point I want to emphasize is this. This sort of expression is often used as a Liberal trick, "Don't worry. As long as we are here, we won't do any harm". The fact is that it is the rule of law that governs, not the rule of people. I have absolute trust in the Minister of Justice, and I believe the average Canadian also has trust in the Minister.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woolliams: But men may come and men may go. Today we have a certain minister of Justice; before these rules and regulations expire we may have another minister of justice. At the outset may I say that I do not think anyone underestimates the crisis in Quebec at the present time, one which has no doubt brought about the passing of certain Orders in Council bringing into force the War Measures Act and the regulations made thereunder. The Minister of Justice and those working in his department are to be trusted with the powers they have been handed. But, Mr. Speaker, when the members of the government walked into this chamber this morning they had already proclaimed the law. It was proclaimed last night. Therefore, we are now debating something that took place last night. This law was proclaimed before Parliament met this morning.

That is the basic premise upon which I commence my speech. This law came about by executive action and was proclaimed before Parliament met. Although this is no time for recrimination and reproach, surely the government knew for a long time the crisis that existed particularly in this one province, as so ably described by the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker).

[Mr. Cafik.]

er), and could and should have taken action. Government members talk about confidentiality, about the element of surprise. This chamber could have met in camera and passed this law. We are all aware of the problems facing the province of Quebec. We are all aware that the situation is such that not only could law and order in the province break up, but so could the unity of this country.

However, it is the method in which the situation was handled about which we are complaining. We have pressed the government to take action. We have been asking the government to establish law and order in the province of Quebec. Many members on this side of the House—though some of us stand alone on this question—wanted our immigration laws tightened up so that the revolutionaries from other places who have caused the crisis in the province of Quebec would have been unable to come to this land and infiltrate themselves into our society in order to erode the rule of law. Consequently, the government must take some responsibility for this situation.

Let me repeat: when Parliament met today, this law was already in effect. The position I want to get across, and I take it to be my leader's position, is that we are saying there must be some extraordinary law passed at this time in order to restore law and order to the province of Quebec and to Canada wherever required. But, Mr. Speaker, what tools should we use in the process? We have asked for a war against crime. We begged the government as long as two or three years ago to set up a royal commission which would document the situation, hear evidence and list all the people who have infiltrated our society. Had this been done, we would have had their names and would have known what they had been doing. However, no action was taken along this line. That is why we asked for a war against crime, against those people who are trying to disrupt society and all that it stands for in Canada today.

I repeat, what kind of tools should we use? You cannot cure one evil with a worse. The first charge I make against the Minister of Justice is that what the government has done is just that; it has tried to cure one evil with a worse. This kind of law is as bad as that which it is trying to cure.

An hon. Member: What would you have done?

Mr. Woolliams: I will come to that, if the hon. member would listen. If he had listened to my leader today he would not need to ask that question, so I can only conclude he must have been absent from the Chamber. What this party would have done, as we have already said, is amend the Criminal Code to give it the necessary powers to cope with the situation and the crisis at hand. I congratulate the Minister of Justice for having some sympathy for this position, as revealed in his speech.

After procrastinating for so long, the government decided it needed surprise and it has already sprung its surprise. Let the government bring in next week a law to replace these regulations, a law that would establish the rule of law in Canada and at the same time protect the civil rights of every Canadian. I have heard what the mayor of Montreal said and what the Premier of the