

*Invoking of War Measures Act*

In my opinion, the motion before the House should not only be examined further but passed while too many people in Quebec seem to be giving way to dejection.

Some have referred to social order and to problems due to unemployment. Those things maintain a revolutionary atmosphere. I will have the opportunity to talk about it some other time. I shall not fail then to ask the government to act quickly in order to solve problems. I do not think that now is the time. I shall appeal to the French Canadian people and seize the opportunity to discuss the theory that the present system has not been able to bring the French Canadian people what they expected of federalism.

I often say that in the last 10 years we have made giant steps. A review of the 100 years of Confederation shows that I am one of those who have reason to be disappointed.

Considering the developments of the last ten years and the statements made by some French Canadians in various walks of life, in politics or business, I see no reason to get discouraged.

Considering the open-mindedness of our colleagues in other provinces, I have every reason to be hopeful for the future. I wish to remind the French-Canadian nation in Quebec that it should not get discouraged but should trust the representatives it has chosen.

Whatever my political affiliation, I believe that it is my duty, as an opposition member, to take part in the nation's business. I wish to do it objectively, opposing some measures if I am deeply convinced that they go against the interests of the French-Canadian nation of which I am a representative in this House.

As so many other hon. members, I make it a point to look after the interests of Quebec and those of Canada. The liberation of Quebec cannot but help the liberation of Canada. And as much as my Ontario colleague, I hope that we shall build together a marvelous Canada, in the framework of well-organized Confederation.

That is how I see the possibility for greater happiness for the French-Canadian nation, the population of the province of Quebec and that of the other provinces. There is no doubt that the indecision of the Canadian government when the constitution was discussed did not do much to give hope to the people of Quebec. The government should seriously consider the amendments which are being sought to the constitution. I ask the government to consider particularly the briefs presented by the premiers of Quebec in the last 10 years. The subject matter of those briefs is identical, because the needs and aspirations of Quebec have not changed. Furthermore, the peaceful means of Quebec have not changed, except that the province has been infiltrated by a movement of which we are trying to rid ourselves by an act which, in my opinion, is perfectly justified, and that is why I will not hesitate to approve it. I therefore appeal to other hon. members to do the same in the interest of Canada.

[Mr. La Salle.]

This measure does not provide exclusively for the protection of the province of Quebec, but also of Canada as a whole. There is no evidence that such a movement does not have supporters in other provinces where it will carry out its operations. Mr. Chairman, it is interesting to note that all hon. members have been allowed to express their opinions freely. It made it possible for me to understand how few are those who really understand Quebec's problems. The most unbiased speeches made in this House have allowed our colleagues of the other provinces to understand Quebec's aspirations which do not run counter to those of Canada.

The government was obliged to take an embarrassing measure but it was necessary. When the nation is threatened, there is reason for concern and this is how I feel now. When I say that a majority does not want to be crushed by a slim minority in Quebec, this is a fact.

The sacrifices made by the French Canadians from Quebec have been rewarded with some degree of success. I said earlier that in the last ten years, the province of Quebec asserted itself by peaceful, democratic means. I might disturb the peace of mind of certain members by saying that to my great pleasure, the Canadian government includes an unprecedented French Canadian representation. If some day we were in power, I would wish for a French Canadian representation as numerous and as competent as the one we see today in the cabinet.

Considering all the sacrifices willingly accepted by Quebecers, I believe that we are in the process of asserting ourselves in Canada and of proving to the English-speaking majority that we are willing to co-operate in the building of a magnificent country.

Some rays of hope seem to be appearing on the horizon; on the other hand, the FLQ, by its evil actions, can but reduce this hope to dust. That is why I am asking the people of Quebec and all members, wherever their electoral district is located, to consider the importance of this measure, so that the province of Quebec may continue to grow and to strive towards the same objective: that of a Canada at peace.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I ask why a less stringent measure was not proposed. At this moment, two hostages are in the hands of the kidnappers, and it has been proved that an amicable arrangement would have been equivalent, for the government, to a rejection of basic principles, and the hostages would not have been freed for all that.

It is foolish to believe that this action was unnecessary. I say this quite objectively. My intention is not to save the face of the government; but I think that, in all conscience, I must be objective about such a serious matter. Whatever my colleagues may think, I shall be convinced that I have said not only what I had in mind but also what I ought to say in these circumstances.

Last night, I heard on television the leader of the Parti Québécois, Mr. Lévesque, who was very concerned about the arrest of some PQ members in the province of Quebec. Let us not imagine that at present, the police merely arrest members of the Parti Québécois. Such a