

**Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, last night, when I felt compelled to enter this debate, I gave much thought during the evening as to the philosophy underlying the type of speech that I would make today. I do not like talking from a prepared text. I have listened to the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald). He is a man with whom I have sat in this House for many years. I respect him and I know that everything he said today was said with that degree of sincerity which is one of his characteristics. Nevertheless, when he says that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) of the country—I believe I have his exact words—is fanning the fires of bigotry or increasing the possibility of bigotry across this country, it indicates that if there is any panic that panic lies in the remarks of the hon. member for Egmont.

• (11:50 a.m.)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mackasey:** Despite the five weeks the hon. member spent in the province of Quebec he does not understand the difference between the FLQ, the terrorists and bandits who make up that organization, and the legitimate political party known as the Parti Quebecois of Quebec. I would sacrifice my life to see the existence of that party preserved because it is a legitimate, political party. It wants to bring an end to this country through democratic means, but that is the privilege of that party. That is what the House of Commons and democracy are all about. I endorse the right of the Parti Quebecois to exist, but when we try to equate the FLQ with the Parti Quebecois we are equating bandits, terrorists and part of an international movement with a legitimate political party in this country.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Minister of Labour deliberately wants to misquote me. I was not confusing the difference between those who support separatism and the FLQ in Quebec. I was asking whether the confusion did not lie in the minds of the government.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mackasey:** Mr. Speaker, I also have a question of privilege. I have been in this House of Commons since 1962. I am a member of the government and of the cabinet. What is even more important to me at this moment is that I am a Canadian from the province of Quebec. I was born in that province 49 years ago. My family still lives in Montreal. We will remain in Quebec as long as it is part of confederation, which will be long after all of us are dead. No separatist group that espouses violence, such as the FLQ, will force me or anyone in my family out of our homes. To suggest that the Prime Minister does not understand the difference is ironic.

The speech I want to make today is on the failure to make a distinction in the debate yesterday between separatism and the FLQ. I have a few words to say about that.

### *Invoking of War Measures Act*

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** Why don't you—

**Mr. Mackasey:** I listened to the hon. member with respect and I ask him to do precisely what he asked us to do, listen in quiet. Possibly he will learn something.

I have often been laughed at, sometimes even by members of my own party, for regarding myself as a House of Commons man. I am not ashamed of that. Some backbenchers were in my office last night. They reminded me of what I told them when they were elected to this House two years ago. No matter what changes we make in our parliamentary system, sooner or later the action comes back to the House of Commons. We must understand this procedure and its existence. It is the heart of the democratic system of this country.

Having understood this all my life, having sat in cabinet and having taken part in the agonizing decision which the government took under the War Measures Act, let me say that there are very good reasons why people who pride themselves on their liberalism made this decision. At the risk of being accused of vanity, I think I am one of those. I support the government, not because of cabinet solidarity but because I am convinced as an individual, a member of this House and a citizen of this country, that what the government did the other night was the right action for the future of this country. I now want to direct my speech to the motion.

This country has been blessed like no other country. Until the last few years we have never known bloodshed. In the eyes of some cynics we were united 100 years ago in a way that was too peaceful. We have never known civil war. Perhaps we have taken democracy too lightly on both sides of this House. We have been blessed like no other country.

For some ironic reason, throughout Canadian history we have had the right Prime Minister at the right time to deal with the particular crises that have faced this nation. We had Laurier when we needed a man to bridge the gap between the two cultures. We had Sir John A. Macdonald who had the vision to weld together the British colonies. We had Mackenzie King for many years, who piloted this country very skilfully through the war, the problems of conscription and other things that could have torn this country apart.

When this party got too smug and too arrogant we were replaced by the right hon. member who sits opposite in 1956 or 1957 until 1963. That reminded this party that there is no room for arrogance or dictatorship veiled or otherwise. This party had grown old in office. The right hon. member for Prince Albert was eventually replaced by another, Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson who gave this country some of the symbols that stand us in good stead today including our flag. Finally, we have the present Prime Minister, the man who in 1964 had the power to stand up in Quebec when very few people were standing up at the height of the separatist movement and say, I am a federalist and prepared to say so.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!