

*Invoking of War Measures Act*

member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan) suggests that this may be too severe. He says that members of the opposition have been asked by the Prime Minister to make suggestions regarding the type of legislation that should be produced. But although the Prime Minister says that, he is unwilling to give us the facts about the seriousness of the situation. In the absence of documentation on the seriousness of the situation we are supposed to propose legislation for the government's consideration. How ridiculous could anything become? Mr. Speaker, it is the government's responsibility to produce legislation based on the facts that it has and outlining the degree of power it feels it should have. We are saying that nothing we know indicates that the government had to go to the extreme that it did in order to secure the power it has today.

Let us consider the country to our south, which is much bigger than Canada, with ten times as many people. It has all kinds of difficulties because of organizations like the FLQ. It has dozens of organizations like the FLQ which are bent on the destruction of that country, bent on the destruction of its system of government, just as the FLQ is bent on the destruction of our system of government. But that government has not announced that civil war exists in the United States. It has not proclaimed that the President of the United States should be made a dictator. It has logically and systematically asked its legislative bodies to increase the power of the President so that he may be better able to protect the individual through law and order. How much more reasonable it would have been had our government, when it knew the seriousness of the situation existing in the province of Quebec, moved to take the same steps, to produce the same kind of legislation that would have given the Prime Minister the type of power that the President of the United States achieved through the legislative process?

All Canadians have been asked by the Prime Minister to accept his decision, to agree to the elimination of liberty and freedom so far as the regulations passed under the War Measures Act are concerned. I watched the Prime Minister last night on television, as I am sure most Canadians did. He did a tremendous job in explaining his position; there is no argument about that. As a matter of fact, I think that even Barbra Streisand would have been proud of him last night because he acted so well. But, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is a Jekyll and Hyde. I recall seeing the Prime Minister in this House of Commons yesterday, when he was listening to a former prime minister outlining the documentation that had been presented to a committee of this House by the mayor and chairman of the executive committee of the city of Montreal. When he had finished gesturing, making fun of a former prime minister, he had this to say as recorded at page 204 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out to the hon. member that I was very willing to listen to him but if he intends to read nonsense in this way—

The "nonsense" that the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) was reading happened to be the evidence that had been placed before a special committee

[Mr. Coates.]

of this House inquiring into the activities of the Company of Young Canadians. That was the Prime Minister we saw in action in the House of Commons. He was a far different fellow from the individual who appeared on television last night pleading with the people of Canada, at his pleading best, to bear with him during the period in which liberty and freedom were to be set aside so that he could wipe out the insurgents in the province of Quebec. That is just one of the many examples of the type of Prime Minister we have.

I remember when he was Minister of Justice and he rose in this House and told members of the opposition, "We are the masters of the House." I remember very well when as Prime Minister he said on July 25, 1969, as recorded at page 11635 of *Hansard*:

The opposition seems to think it has nothing else to do but talk. They say: If there is a problem, we will talk. If there is a difficulty, we will talk about it. If the government is going too slowly, we will talk about it. If there is a real problem in some part of Canada, we will talk about it. That is all they have to do. They do not have to govern—

An hon. Member: Amen.

Mr. Coates:

—they have only to talk. The best place in which to talk, if they want a quorum is, of course, Parliament. When they get home, when they get out of Parliament, when they are 50 yards from Parliament Hill, they are no longer hon. members—they are just nobodies—

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Coates: Mr. Speaker, that is the Prime Minister who is asking the people of Canada to go along with him. If he says that Members of Parliament, who represent the 21 million people in this country, are nobodies, then what are the Canadians in the street whom the members of this House represent?

An hon. Member: Somebodies.

Mr. Coates: I wonder just how high is the Prime Minister's regard for the ordinary man in the street, if a Member of Parliament is a nobody. Yet he is the man who says, "Bear with me, my friends. I will be a benevolent dictator for 6½ months, or I will then tell you how much longer I will be a benevolent dictator." The Prime Minister allowed a situation to develop in the province of Quebec. He saw it developing even before he became a Member of Parliament. He saw it developing when he was in this House as Minister of Justice and then as Prime Minister. Then suddenly, at four o'clock in the morning, he said, "Today I assume new and greater powers; greater powers than any man has ever held in the history of this country." He took those powers unto himself.

● (3:20 p.m.)

Last night he put on sackcloth and ashes. He told us a fine story. No doubt Canadians were touched by his performance. If that had been the performance of the