

*Invoking of War Measures Act*

The second option which was open to the government was that if it came to the conclusion that the powers it now enjoys under the Criminal Code and various other statutes were not sufficient to cope with this situation, the magnitude of which the rest of us are not fully aware of, the government had the option of coming to Parliament and asking Parliament, in a democratic way, to clothe it with the authority to deal with this unusual situation.

• (11:50 a.m.)

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

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Certainly I can say, so far as this party is concerned, we would have been prepared to facilitate very quickly such matters coming before Parliament in order that the government might be able to indicate the areas in which it had not sufficient power and the justification for requiring greater powers and greater authority. But the government has not utilized this option. Instead, the government has taken the unusual step of invoking the War Measures Act. In my opinion the government has over-reacted to what is undoubtedly a critical situation. Does civil disturbance constitute apprehended insurrection?

**An hon. Member:** Yes.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** We have had civil disturbances in Canada before.

**An hon. Member:** Not like this.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Well, I recall as a boy the Winnipeg strike and the riot.

**Mr. Sharp:** But there was no kidnapping then.

**Mr. Howard (Skeena):** Why don't you listen, Mitch, and learn?

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** I recall the trek of the unemployed from Vancouver on the way to Ottawa and the riots in Regina. There have been civil disturbances before; there have been subversive organizations at work in our society before. Governments have been able to secure from Parliament the necessary power and authority to deal with these situations without invoking the War Measures Act.

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

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** This is the first time, to my knowledge, in Canadian history that the War Measures Act has been invoked in peacetime. So far as the New Democratic Party is concerned, we have been prepared and are prepared to support enlarging the police powers if the government thinks it necessary to give the police greater authority in the matter of searching for dynamite or offensive weapons. They have the power now to search for dynamite and offensive weapons but there is one exclusion—personal dwellings. If

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

the government required the inclusion of personal dwellings for a stated period of time, under some protection we would certainly be prepared to consider the advisability of giving those additional powers. We are prepared to support the government in taking whatever measures are necessary to safeguard life and to maintain law and order in this country. But, Mr. Speaker, we are not prepared to use the preservation of law and order as a smokescreen to destroy the liberties and the freedom of the people of Canada.

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

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

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**An hon. Member:** There is no shame.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** I wonder if the Liberal members who are shouting "Shame" have read the regulations.

**An hon. Member:** Yes.

**Mr. Langlois:** The hon. member should go to Quebec and find out about the situation.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** The government, I submit, is using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut.

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

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** This is over-kill on a gargantuan scale.

Why has the government invoked the War Measures Act? May I point out that the FLQ have been around for some six or seven years. For several years now it is well known that they have committed and been found guilty of acts of sabotage, the placing of bombs in mail boxes and blowing up of public buildings.

**An hon. Member:** Is the hon. member condoning that?

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** The Prime Minister was Minister of Justice for three years and has been Prime Minister of this country for over two years. Why have we not been asked to supply the government with the powers to deal with the growing menace which it now says is so tremendous that we must invoke the War Measures Act to deal with an apprehended insurrection? The fact is, and this is very clear, that the government has panicked and is now putting on a dramatic performance to cover up its own ineptitude.

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

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

**Mr. Sharp:** Not at all.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** In the process of invoking the War Measures Act I wonder if