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That much can be established. Whether Trudeau thought the strange events in Quebec were bringing the province as close as it had ever come to separating, however, can only be speculated right now.

What is very probable is that, as hints in the Marchand interview might suggest, Trudeau at least saw the opportunity to move decisively against the separatist-nationalist tide in Quebec and set it back for years, if not stem it forever.

One of the most significant statements of the motives of the Trudeau government, and the steps by which it arrived at making the drastic move on October 16, is to be found in a column by Toronto Star Ottawa editor Anthony Westell appearing the day after the Act was invoked. Westell, a long-time Ottawa columnist formerly with the Globe and Mail, has extremely good sources inside the Liberal cabinet, and, along with Toronto Star editor Peter Newman, is one of the three or four most important Liberal Party intimates in the national press gallery.

Waiting under the heading "The Agony Behind Trudeau's Decision", Westell examined the basic premises on which Trudeau approaches the current situation in Quebec:

"The answer begins with Trudeau's analysis of the rise of separatism in the past five years. The decline and fall of the Lesage Liberal government, he believes, left a power vacuum which Union Nationale premier Daniel Johnson did not fill because he never took a firm position for federalism. René Lévesque left the Liberals to lead the Parti Québécois into the void, and win almost a quarter of the votes in the election this year."

The Trudeau administration's entire strategy toward Quebec is to make sure that the vacuum of social contradictions and frustrations is never left as open territory to the separatists, and particularly to René Lévesque. The Trudeau government fell over backwards pumping money and organizational talent into the election campaign of new Liberal leader Robert Bourassa, scarcely concealing the influx of everything from top advisors to Trudeau's personal hairdresser to Bourassa's side. The province was saturated with a well-oiled campaign that reeked of money, and no one had any doubts that much, if not most of it, came from the federal Liberals.

When the FLQ struck, Westell reports, "Trudeau's instinct was to refuse negotiations or concessions to the terrorists. Nor were there any doves in the federal cabinet."

But he stresses that "...Trudeau grew increasingly concerned at the threat to Bourassa's fledgling and inexperienced government posed by the new terrorism."

Initially, the threat came from one specific source—the vacillation of the Quebec cabinet in the face of Laporte's kidnapping five days after Cross's abduction.

Trudeau's strategy of strength depended on Bourassa emerging as the strongman, the pillar of fortitude around which Quebec could rally, the dam that could keep the flood-tides of nationalist and separatist feeling from moving into that dangerous political vacuum of which Westell spoke.

"But with the kidnapping of Quebec Labor Minister Pierre Laporte, the crisis changed and deepened. It became at once a terrible question striking deep into the hearts and consciences of Bourassa's own ministers. Many Quebec Liberals owe more friendship to Laporte than to Bourassa, a relative newcomer. In the cabinet pressing around the young minister at the moment of crisis, there were agonized men who wanted nothing more than to save their colleague.

"The pressure on Bourassa was enormous. The danger last weekend that he would cave in, opening a disastrous new power vacuum, seemed terribly real."

It has been reliably reported by several journalists, and Westell carries the information, that Trudeau spent hours on the phone at his Harrington Lake summer home encouraging the premier to hold fast.

Marc Lalonde, one of Trudeau's top advisors, is believed to have rushed to Quebec City to buttress the premier at this juncture, when, according to several reports, Bourassa's cabinet was on the verge of crumbling.

The leadership of the crisis, which had appeared to come largely from Quebec with Trudeau in the background making sure things went as he wanted them to, suddenly began to revert to Ottawa.

Here the crux of the entire crisis developed.

It centres around the way public opinion in Quebec was reacting to the kidnapping. Trudeau made at least one tactical error, and one massive political blunder. Those mistakes proved to be the factors destroying his strategy.

Pierre Desrosiers suggests in the weekly Montreal paper Quebec-Press an interpretation that has also been voiced by Parti Québécois economic expert Jacques Parizeau, and backed up by some reporters in Ottawa. It is this:

Trudeau's initial tactic had been to remain firm, in an effort to force that FLQ's hand. They might have killed Cross: Desrosiers and Parizeau suggest Trudeau was prepared to let that happen, betting public opinions would swing to him out of revulsion. But instead, the FLQ upped the ante. It kidnapped Pierre Laporte. Trudeau's tactic to back the FLQ into a corner had failed.

This unexpected response to Trudeau's immediate strategy, however, would only have been a temporary tactical setback, if Trudeau had not made one critical political opinion in Quebec.

Westell himself makes this point:

Another minister feared that after the first shock and outrage at the kidnappings, Quebec opinion was being won around to the rationalization that while violence may be wrong, the terrorists were somehow glamorous patriots fighting a noble cause—the same sort of shift of opinion that happened after Charles de Gaulle's 'Vive le Quebec Libre' speech in 1967.

"A backbencher close to Trudeau expressed much the same fear more precisely," Westell states, "when he said that the Quebec media—television, radio, newspapers—were heavily infiltrated by FLQ propagandists and suggested drastic action would be necessary to eventually deal with the problem." By "FLQ propagandists", of course, the backbencher meant journalists who were expressing the sympathy felt by many in Quebec for the goals and principles expressed in the FLQ manifesto.

"A Montreal MP, on the other hand," Westell continues, "told the Liberal caucus Wednesday that the FLQ was appealing dangerously well to real grievances among French Canadians, and that it would not stand for repression."

We have confirmed that this "Montreal MP" was Marcel Prud'homme, who was taken aback when he took a poll in his constituency and found that the vast majority of the young supported what the FLQ did, and that the older constituents violently condemned the tactic but frequently expressed some sympathy for the content of the manifesto. Prud'homme communicated these facts to an emergency caucus meeting.

Trudeau himself let slip in the Commons a thought that has been more and more in his mind by now: the media were playing into the hands of the FLQ by giving them too much publicity.

The government was so frazzled by this PR problem that, while the cabinet was planning the emergency regulations, it actually considered press censorship, of which Trudeau was the leading advocate.

Trudeau's aides had initially tried to suppress the publication of the FLQ manifesto in the Quebec papers, one of them arguing for an hour with the editor of the National Union paper Montreal Matin, in vain, against running the text.

"As the week wore on," Westell reported in the Toronto Star, "the question as to how to quiet the Quebec media came more frequently into conversations around the government."

"This was because the critical battle was seen as the struggle for public opinion. Would Quebecers rally to law, order and a strong Bourassa government, or drift towards a new 'moderate' position?"

Others arguing in support of this thesis report that Trudeau, when he was unable to prevent the spread of the manifesto in the Quebec press, himself ordered the CBC's French network to broadcast the manifesto, as the FLQ had demanded. They argue that this was a sign of Trudeau's overconfidence that the broadcasting of the manifesto would actually cause Quebecois to react against its 'extreme' language.

In any event, on October 8, the manifesto was broadcast over the CBC's French network in Quebec, as demanded by the FLQ, and subsequently published in most of the province's major commercial newspapers. The document, broadly expressing many of Quebec's long-standing grievances, states that the FLQ is a "response to aggression", emphasizes the foreign exploitation of labor and resources, and voices the need for a mass-based revolutionary upheaval. Its spirit was one with which many Quebecois found they could identify, and their clearly established failure to retreat in horror provided the federal government with its greatest shock.

FRAP, Montreal's union-and-citizen-based civic opposition movement, publicly endorsed the objectives of the manifesto, while rejecting the FLQ's tactics. It added that it could not condemn the violence of the FLQ without condemning the violence of the system, and its statement enumerated a long list of labor and political conflicts. It also noted that the FLQ's terrorism is directed not against wage workers but against the violence of the establishment. However, FRAP said it opted to fight with democratic means.

The executive committee of the Laurentian and Montreal Councils of the Confederation of National Trade Unions expressed their unequivocal support of the manifesto.

Montreal Council president Michel Chartrand (now in Jail) said the authorities were getting extremely agitated by the possible death of two men but did not seem to be able to summon the same anxiety for thousands of people whose lives were potentially threatened by a walkout of medical specialists.

Later he said "who's scared of the FLQ? Are the workers terrorized by the FLQ? Are the students terrorized by the FLQ? The only people who are afraid of the FLQ are those who should be scared—the popular elite. So who says the FLQ is terrorizing the population?"

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