

South—Weston, but I regret that under the circumstances it should not and cannot be dealt with as a question of privilege.

I can only say that I hope that having given the Hon. Member a chance to raise this serious matter in this Chamber may have assisted the Hon. Member and others to find some satisfactory resolution to the situation which the Hon. Member has brought to the attention of the House. I thank the Hon. Member for his intervention and for bringing this matter to our attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

EMERGENCIES ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Beatty that Bill C-77, an Act to authorize the taking of special temporary measures to ensure safety and security during national emergencies and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. John Parry (Kenora—Rainy River): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege today to rise to speak on behalf of the constituents of Kenora—Rainy River about the replacement of the infamous War Measures Act.

With Bill C-77, the House of Commons is finally considering replacing the War Measures Act, seventeen years after the last time it was invoked. In discussing this Bill, I would like to recall some of my own experiences at the time when the War Measures Act was last used in Canada.

I came to Montreal in July 1970 and the War Measures Act was invoked the following October. I therefore have intimate knowledge about the effects of this piece of legislation.

Madam Speaker, if I may say so, it was one of my most instructive experiences as a new immigrant to Canada. This was finally one of the factors which led me to the New Democratic Party because, at my arrival in Canada, I had had the impression that the Liberal Party was a progressive party, the party of renewal, the socialist party, as I then saw it, which Canada needed. However, finally, it was the position taken by the then leader of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Douglas, that convinced me that there were other factors to consider in choosing my party in the context of a democratic federal system.

Madam Speaker, I remember well the sad day of the funeral of Mr. Pierre Laporte. My office at the Bank of Montreal headquarters were directly opposite the Notre-Dame church in Montreal. I also remember quite clearly seeing soldiers in the streets of Montreal and the often very emotional interaction between the citizens and these soldiers, most of whom were unilingual anglophones. My experience in Montreal at the

Emergencies Act

time, when the War Measures Act was invoked, convinced me that it would eventually be necessary to replace it.

I am grateful that it is the Conservative Government which has finally introduced this replacement legislation in the House of Commons, even though the Liberals were in power for nearly 14 years and could have introduced their own piece of legislation. We had to wait for a change of Government to set a new Act.

We have to admit, Madam Speaker, that this Bill is clearly an improvement over the Act it replaces, but as members of the Opposition, it is our duty to see the defects in the legislation proposed by the Government.

[*English*]

In general terms, Bill C-77 sets out the general obligations of the Government for the safety and security of individuals, for the protection of the values of our society, and for the preservation of the orderly democratic function of the Canadian federal state. It says that there may be situations, although it does not adequately define or describe them, in which those functions of Government may be threatened by a form of national emergency which would imperil our collective well-being, either right across the country or in parts of the country, and might be beyond the power of the Government or, indeed, governments of the provinces, to address without additional powers provided for in this law.

While it would be easy for me to spend a considerable length of time reviewing the functions of a state, the philosophical and ideological underpinnings for the governments which we have at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels, I think I will content myself with a brief historical conspectus, simply to set the context for Bill C-77.

The theory of the state, of course, arose in Greece and was developed somewhat in Rome. The theory and practice of the city-state—for such the original states of Greece were—gave rise to the development of a philosophy of politics. Indeed, of course, the word does come from the Greek. In this philosophy of politics it was recognized that because the state was a collective value and supposedly served all members of the state, it owed not only itself but also the citizens a duty to preserve itself as the state it was.

• (1520)

We have progressed beyond the Greek models, but I think it is instructive to observe that for many centuries, indeed, perhaps almost two millennia, the question of the reserve powers of a state when faced with either an internal or external threat was rarely discussed. The powers were virtually taken for granted. After all, it was an era when fundamental political debate had fallen out of fashion. Indeed, the development of the theory of what the state was saw little progress between the time of the coming of Christ and the writings of Machiavelli.