

*Invoking of War Measures Act*

It is my duty not to miss any opportunity to defend the interests of my province which are, really, those of Canada.

The speeches of some of my colleagues have left me with a feeling of disappointment. They took advantage of this debate to make points that reeked of partisanship.

The leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Douglas) does not shy away from doing just that, upbraiding the people responsible for the atmosphere which has in the end brought about the problem which we must face now.

The leader of the Ralliement créditiste (Mr. Caouette) has charged the leaders of the opposition parties with partisan politics but could not refrain from ending his speech with a manifesto which, if carried out, would in his estimation bring about a settlement, but I doubt that it would be effective.

When such an important problem is discussed it is wrong to waste time since the enemy is still free. In fact, the enemy is upon us.

Of course I have not always been in agreement with the measures moved by the government in this House. Nevertheless I feel that I was able to support the wise ones tending directly to the preservation of the interests of Quebec and Canada.

I have listened with attention to the speech made yesterday by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) and I greatly appreciated it. I take the liberty of also mentioning the one made last night by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I must admit that the latter has, in a very dignified manner, drawn a clear picture of the present situation. If all my colleagues in the House followed this speech very closely, I must say, in all fairness, that it is because the Prime Minister explained plainly and objectively the situation prevailing in Quebec and in Canada.

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

**Mr. La Salle:** I am not saying this to win the applause of the government members. I have said that I am not always in agreement with the government's proposals, but I believe that I am brave enough to support the adoption of measures that I believe adequate and necessary. In my view, the Prime Minister's speech yesterday gave the best possible description of the situation we are facing at the present time. We wonder why the government acted with such haste in this matter. We have been told that the city of Montreal through its representatives and the province of Quebec through the prime minister officially applied to the federal government. I certainly would not have supported the government if they had refused help and assistance. I do not question the veracity of the facts submitted by Messrs. Bourassa and Drapeau.

● (5:30 p.m.)

Last year, Mr. Saulnier painted a dark picture of the situation and of the FLQ.

[Mr. La Salle.]

We all know that today unfortunately the young people of Quebec are led by hot-heads. I am not saying that they belong to the FLQ or support it.

They were left to do as they pleased, which is unfortunate. They succeeded in securing election to associations which seem very prestigious to all Canadians.

Mr. Saulnier was certainly right. But I do not believe this is the proper time to blame the government, delay adoption of the measure now before us, or panic about what we have been told. However, certain reasons led a very small part of the people to support movements like the FLQ. But I will give the benefit of doubt to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to the provincial police and to other police authorities who probably thought that it was not yet time to act immediately.

The fact that they waited for some time allowed us to get rid of a greater number of revolutionaries. The experts among the police force know much more than we do about it and I wonder if, precisely, we are not passing unfair judgment. As I would rather not worry about what seems to be indecision from the government, I reserve myself the right to discuss that in due time. I shall not hesitate in doing so if it ever becomes necessary.

Like several hon. members, I wonder whether the legislation is not too strict.

From what the Minister of Justice said yesterday, I understood that it might be amended and that the enforcement of the act could be suspended if it was deemed that the emergency situation warranted it. I am still convinced that emergency measures should be passed. Needless to say that I shall not hesitate to vote for the measure now before us.

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

**Mr. La Salle:** Last Thursday, I had prepared a press release because I felt the government had to take action. I did not have to send it out Friday morning, since the government's action met my views completely.

Nevertheless, I should like to read it. It dealt in particular with the detention of two hostages, in this case Messrs. Laporte and Cross. It is clear that this situation will be coming to an end soon.

It appears on the one hand that our governments must exercise a certain flexibility in this matter and on the other hand, that we must protect the moral authority of the state and the democratic institutions because they have to be safeguarded.

In my opinion, yielding to all the FLQ's demands would be equal to the worst kind of prostitution. Nothing would be settled and the outlaw's would certainly do it again. We would therefore accept to become conditioned to an anarchic dimension. Whether we admit it or not, we are dealing with a group of terrorists who are leaving our governments no other alternative but a final confrontation.