

Indeed, the Prime Minister has told us that he well understands the problem in Quebec. He has told us ever since he became leader of his party that he knew how to handle this problem, that if the country would entrust leadership to him he would deal with it effectively, that there would be no more of the difficulties, uncertainties and fears that had been growing in number in the province of Quebec in the middle and late 1960's, that he was the man to deal with the problem rationally, coolly and without provocation. We can now see the result of his dealing with the matter.

Of course, the reason advanced by the government for what has happened is that it has special information which, if it were revealed, would endanger the very kind of detection and apprehension that needs to be undertaken if we are to overcome this serious and grave risk to society and its governments. In how many other countries throughout the centuries have certain individuals, having asked for in effect dictatorial powers, said to the people, "Give us these powers because only we know best, only we know how to deal with the difficult situation that exists in this country today, so trust us and we will not desert you"? Mr. Speaker, such words have always been, and still are where they are echoed, an invitation to accept a dictatorship.

I hope the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand), who has left his place in the chamber, will not go too far. I would like to raise a question with regard to his speech in a moment. As I was saying, such words are an invitation to accept the kind of authoritarian or totalitarian state that I am sure no right-thinking person in this country would ever choose.

Surely the very reason that we have Parliament and this House is that people can be fully informed, so that the people can in fact exercise their right to know.

We have lost this week, Mr. Speaker, not only all individual and property rights that pertain to living in this country but we have also lost the most basic right of all, the right to know. That is what the government has deprived this House of both yesterday and today. Is there panic? Has the government responded in some degree to panic?

There is another possibility, one so terrible that I am extremely reluctant to raise it this morning, but I certainly could not be true to myself, to my own opinions and to my own ideas, which I feel I have a right to express in this House, were I not to express it in this debate. Does the action which has now been taken by the government represent, in effect, the seizure of an opportunity to suppress and repress those who have disagreed with them and whom they cannot accept?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I hear some ohs and ahs as if this were a terrible thing to say, and that is why I want to quote what the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion said in the debate last night. I am glad he is still here because he can correct me if I misquote him.

An hon. Member: Quote *Hansard*, not a newspaper.

Invoking of War Measures Act

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I certainly have not had a chance to read *Hansard* this morning. It was a little late in reaching us. The minister is here and he can certainly say if it is a misquotation. He is reported as having said in the debate yesterday:

If we had not acted, the separation of Quebec would have been a fact, a month or a year from today.

I ask the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion—I will allow him a moment if he wishes to return to his seat—if in fact—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not the question period. The hon. member should make his speech.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I will ask him rhetorically, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps he can communicate with that well known nod of his head. Is there some confusion, perhaps not confusion, but is there some feeling—

An hon. Member: In your mind?

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): —in the mind of the government, particularly in the minds of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, the Prime Minister and perhaps others in the government, that the FLQ to some degree or other means separatism? Is that what the Prime Minister is saying, that separatists are the FLQ, that somehow or other you really cannot distinguish, that they are one and the same thing?

Has the minister in fact spoken for the government in saying that what we are really out to deal with here by these measures is not just acts of terrorism by one relatively small group of people, who are seeking through violent and anarchic means to destroy society, but a much larger group of people, 25 per cent if we can go by the last provincial election results, who believe there is a realistic option in considering some form of independence for the province of Quebec? Is that what the minister was saying to us yesterday afternoon? If it is, Mr. Speaker, then all of us, English-speaking and French-speaking alike, had better examine our consciences extremely quickly because we have allowed to be launched in this country this week the most dangerous kind of political action ever known in the history of the country and one that I refuse to accept.

Let me be perfectly clear. I am not a separatist either for the province of Prince Edward Island or for la belle province de Quebec. I do not support those who believe that the people of Quebec, French-speaking, English-speaking, whatever language they speak, would find a better destiny apart from Canada than within it. I support a viable and vital place for the people of Quebec within the Canadian confederation. But God help me if I believe that the only way I can convince those who disagree rationally, honestly and fairly with me is by the taking up of arms, that men who do not hold this opinion can only be subjugated by force of arms and by repression. If that be so, Mr. Speaker, this country is on the threshold of doom and disaster. This is of such paramount importance that if the Prime Minister or the Minis-