

bec right now," declared the Quebec expert in the House of Commons a few hours after the War Measures Act had been signed. There were conspirators who had "infiltrated all the vital places of the province of Quebec, in all the key posts where important decisions are taken." There were at least two tons of dynamite, detonators and electric circuits for setting off bombs, thousands of rifles and machine guns, bombs. "For whoever knows the FLQ right now," said the shuddering expert, "whoever knows this organization well cannot do otherwise than recognize that the provincial state of Quebec and the federal state are really in danger in Canada."

As the startled members of the House of Commons soaked this up Marchand perorated: "If we had not acted today, and if, in a month or a year separation had come about, I know very well what would have been said in this House: 'What sort of government is this? You had all that information in your hands and you could have used emergency powers and you did not do it. It's a government of incompetent people.'"

Just to make sure that the people who lived behind the Rockies, well-protected from the fanatics of French Canada knew what was going on, Marchand re-stated and even elaborated his claims on a British Columbia hot-line show a week after the government had struck. He had a new sensation to offer: the Front d'Action Politique (FRAP), the main opposition party in Montreal's civic election, only days away, was a front for the FLQ, (whose membership had now shrunk to "between 1,000 and 3,000"). There were to be explosions, more kidnappings, perhaps assassinations on election day. Anarchy was then to spread through the province, and after the province the nation. Thrones were to topple as the conspiracy leap-frogged across the continent.

In the end, of course, none of this happened. And perhaps more surprisingly, remarkably few conspirators were turned up by police. Even with the awesome powers of the War Measures Act, with its license to search, seize and arrest on no stronger grounds than mere suspicion, and with so many raids that, after 2,000, even the most conscientious reporters lost count, the police could come up with fewer than 400 captives. And of those, they could hold onto only 150 as October closed.

Is it these 150 people then who have placed the established order in Canada in grave danger? If so, they must indeed be supermen. And the police do not appear to be trying very hard to find out. According to Auf der Maur, Robert Lemieux, the lawyer who had acted as negotiator for the FLQ, was questioned for a total of two minutes during the first eight days of his imprisonment. Pierre Vallières, a leader of the 1966 FLQ, was also questioned for two minutes in these eight days. Charles Gagnon, another leader of the 1966 FLQ, was not questioned at all.

On one occasion, Prime Minister Trudeau observed to a bemused House that Kerensky too had been "pooh-poohing the possibility of an insurrection."

Mr. Trudeau is wrong; Kerensky knew very well that there was going to be an insurrection, and with good reason. For to state the parallel is to see its absurdity. Was Montreal on October 16 Petrograd, where in the Putilov plant 40,000 workers were prepared to go out into the streets, and the Grenade works had its entire work force mobilized in the Red Guards? Or was it Moscow, brought to its knees during the final weeks of the old order by widespread strikes?

Still the government now chose to spread scare stories about a sudden revolutionary upheaval, a notion it had repeatedly dismissed in the past. A year ago, Montreal's Drapeau administration journeyed to Ottawa for the government's investigation into the activities of the Company of Young Canadians. Piles of captured documents were produced to demonstrate that a far-ranging conspiracy was on the move. It was repeatedly noted at the time that, while the documents showed lots of smoke, it was difficult to find any fire. Beyond the well-known fact that FLQ cells existed, and might carry out isolated, anarchistic acts, the rest was vapor. The Drapeau administration's evidence was laughed out of town.

Two previous, abortive attempts (according to the police) at kidnapping people in high places, including the American consul-general in Montreal, had been taken with equanimity. And so, indeed, had the kidnapping of James Cross: there had been no indication in the first week of the crisis that upholders of the status quo had better nerve themselves for the crunch.

Nor did even the second kidnapping, that of Pierre Laporte, bring about sudden fears of insurrection. Why then did the government choose to unleash the vast conspiracy theory on October 16? Why did it give credence to a picture of the FLQ that could not be believed by anyone who had any knowledge of the situation in Quebec, that it could not have believed itself, but that might conceivably be widely believed in English Canada since the government and the police are the only sources of information?

One clue comes from Jean Marchand's Vancouver interview, for it contains more than the accusations that made the headlines (reaction to his statement about FRAP was so adverse that Prime Minister Trudeau had to dissociate himself from it the next day, and Marchand himself had to back off). Marchand made some other statements in that interview that, in the long term, may be a lot more significant. Having averred that there are between 1,000 and 3,000 members of the FLQ, Marchand says:

"Now all members of the FLQ are not terrorists. But there are enough to create a lot of trouble and a lot of killing and this is what we are trying to prevent."

Not all FLQ members are terrorists!

Then what are they?

Who is the FLQ?

Or more to the point: Who isn't?

If not all members of the FLQ are carrying arms, planning assassinations and stashing bombs, what are they doing? Organizing in the labor unions, perhaps. Organizing demonstrations, or working with FRAP and the Parti Québécois.

Maybe if you're a leftist or a Péquiste, you're in effect FLQ? The net is suddenly a little wider, and out for more fish, than we have been led to believe from the impression that the government was just hunting two or three kidnapping cells.

Is Marchand saying that the FLQ is everyone who is working for a socialist or independent Quebec?

Let's follow more of Marchand's interesting analysis.

He says: "How in a society like ours can such a movement like the FLQ flourish. You knew a year ago, two years ago or even five years ago that there were FLQ members. But as long as they do not recourse to violence, under which law can you do anything?"

None, Mr. Marchand. If they do not resort to violence they are not violating the Criminal Code. But perhaps exactly what Marchand is saying is that we need laws by which the government can arrest and prosecute those that follow their political aims even by peaceful means. This seems incredible, so let's follow what he said further:

He makes the point that "it is not the individual action we are worried about now. It's this vast organization supported by other bona fide organizations who are supporting, indirectly at least, the FLQ."

Mr. Marchand is not worried about the kidnapers, he seems to be saying, but about the people who "do not recourse to violence." People—it's now a "vast organization"—who are supported by bona fide groups.

What are these people doing? Where are they?

Marchand refers to "many important institutions in Quebec" that have been "infiltrated" by this strange breed of non-violent FLQers.

If there are so many people, in so many areas and institutions, it's going to be pretty hard to ferret them out. Especially if they lack the decency to commit a criminal act and facilitate the government's job of destroying them.

And so we come to the most distressing statement of all, and Marchand states the aims of the government bluntly.

Well, if it had been an isolated case of kidnapping I don't think we would have been justified in invoking the War Measures Act because there the Criminal Code would have been enough to try and get those men and punish them. But there is a whole organization and we have no instrument, no instrument to get those people and question them."

Let's summarize the implications of Marchand's logic.

There is a vast conspiracy of people numbering from 1,000 to 3,000.

They are not all terrorists, in fact some hold highly respectable and critical positions, and some have the protection of other bona fide groups.

They must be rooted out.

The Criminal Code permits us to root out kidnapers and billers, but not people who commit no crimes.

Therefore we need an "instrument" by which we can go after these people who commit no crimes, and it's not simply a question of kidnapers.

The Trudeau government is seeking a circumvention of the laws of the country in order to launch a hunt that extends into the highest reaches of Quebec, into the most respected, bona fide homes, in order to ferret out these dangerous people.

Whom is the Trudeau government after?

THE POLITICS

The comprehended insurrection-coup-plot-uprising-revolt shows more ridiculous every day and it is evidence that it does so from statements made even by cabinet ministers. Certainly, as far as armed uprisings of one-to-three thousand people are concerned, the government never believed its own case. It allowed and encouraged the story to spread in order to use it as currency to buy time and public support to keep the War Measures Act in force.

It is possible to piece together with some certainty that Trudeau, on the eve of implementing the emergency powers, feared he was losing control of the situation in Quebec, of French public opinion, to the nationalists and moderate separatists.

The Prime Minister had grounds for such fears. Contrary to the early statements by both federal and provincial spokesmen, a significant portion of the Quebec population had not recoiled in revulsion at the FLQ's action. Predictably radical youth, certain labor organizations, and a startling percentage of average citizens were reacting favorably to the content of the FLQ's political analysis; if not to their modus operandi. But even while most of the sympathetic repudiated the acts themselves, the FLQ's highwayman élan and the governments inept responses left many Quebecois inwardly pleased.