

On October 10, when Mr. Choquette, the Quebec Minister of Justice, outlined more fully the official position, he indicated, among other things, that the kidnapers would receive safe conduct in exchange for the release of Mr. Cross.

How were you able to feel the mood of the kidnapers?

There was a good deal of effort made to analyze very closely everything that came from them. There were signs in several of their communiqués that the so-called "Liberation Cell" was in no rush to kill Mr. Cross. The Government had already made certain gestures, such as broadcasting what the kidnapers called the manifesto. Deadlines put on Mr. Cross's life passed without mishap and gradually one saw that these people might wish to take advantage of an opportunity to get out of the predicament they had created for themselves. Some of their conditions were soon toned down; for instance, they declared that they would not kill for the sake of dollars. There was sufficient difference between the various communiqués to enable us to think that the situation was still fluid and that the kidnapers were not necessarily as unyielding as they had made out in the beginning. Unfortunately, the situation was radically altered by the subsequent kidnapping of Mr. Laporte and the rigid attitude adopted by his abductors.

Can you go into some detail on the safe-conduct arrangements?

The only discussion we ever had with the Cubans and Algerians concerned safe-conduct arrangements for the abductors. There was never any question in our minds of their receiving prisoners.

For various practical reasons (geographical distance, presence of a Cuban Consulate in Montreal and of a resident Canadian mission in Havana), it was decided that these arrangements should be made with Cuba. We made a request that Cuba assist us for humanitarian reasons, and the Cuban Government agreed. The safe-conduct offer was then formulated in consultation with the Cubans.

Planning and implementation of the safe conduct involved complex consultations and co-operation among federal and Quebec government authorities, Cuban representatives, the police forces and also the armed forces, which provided transport facilities. There were rehearsals by the Government personnel involved to ensure that the procedure worked out for the safe conduct would unfold without incident. The thoroughness and intensity of these consultations (including those with the Cubans) made it possible for the safe conduct to be effected as smoothly as it was. Although it is not necessary to repeat all the facts that are already public knowledge about these events, one should not forget the major role played by the lawyer Robert Demers, who, in consultation with all the authorities concerned, managed to secure the kidnapers' acceptance of the safe-conduct procedure.

Safe conduct was offered in general terms on the 10th. The offer was repeated by Mr. Bourassa in his statement of October 15, which included a