

Invoking of War Measures Act

suggest that the Minister of Justice pursue his remarks.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I think that the House would want me now to deal with the justification for the government's action. The right hon. gentleman—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Possibly it is not appropriate at this moment, and I do not know whether he can give the information, but has the minister any information as to whether these two unfortunate men, the British diplomat and the minister of the Quebec cabinet, are still alive?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I am advised by my colleague, the Solicitor General (Mr. McIlraith), who is naturally closer to that particular problem because of his responsibilities, that there is no information at the moment.

The proclamation, Mr. Speaker, of course, depends on the government having appreciated a state of apprehended insurrection. I believe those are the words of the proclamation. Those words have to be interpreted in their ordinary meaning. Members are as capable as I am of referring to the dictionaries which state that "apprehend" is to anticipate with anxiety, and "insurrection", a rising up against an established authority, a revolution or a revolt. As I said earlier, this has to be a question of judgment based on the information available to members of the cabinet. Needless to say, some of that information, because of the current state of affairs, is not information that necessarily can be made public.

I think hon. members will appreciate the reasons for that. The right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) this morning tabled two letters, one from the Prime Minister of Quebec. I just want to read the appropriate words.

[Translation]

Under the circumstances, on behalf of the Government of Quebec, I request that emergency powers be provided as soon as possible so that more effective steps may be taken. I request particularly that such powers encompass the authority to apprehend and keep in custody individuals who, the Attorney General of Quebec has valid reasons to believe, are determined to overthrow the government through violence and illegal means. According to the information we have and which is available to you, we are facing a concerted effort to intimidate and overthrow the government and the democratic institutions of this province through planned and systematic illegal action, including insurrection. It is obvious that those participating in this concerted effort completely reject the principle of freedom under the rule of law.

In order to refresh the memory of hon. members, I shall read the relevant passage of the letter signed by both the mayor of Montreal, Mr. Jean Drapeau, and the chairman of the Executive Council of the City of Montreal, Mr. Lucien Saulnier:

The chief of the Montreal Police has informed us that the means available to him are proving inadequate and that the assistance of higher levels of government has become essential for the protection of society against the seditious plot and the apprehended insurrection in which the recent kidnappings were the first step.

[English]

The government of Canada has to take the final responsibility, but when the Government of the Province

[Mr. Speaker.]

of Quebec and the mayor of the largest city in this country, on the information available to them and the information available to us through our own law enforcement agencies, are of the opinion that the state has been reached where we ought to, as sound and commonsense human beings, anticipate a danger to our society in the form of insurrection and are willing to use that type of vocabulary to the Prime Minister of Canada, then that is material which we cannot ignore.

I want to recite a list of events that have contributed to the rapid acceleration of this dangerous situation in Quebec. They are the kidnappings, which in themselves if they were isolated would be a purely criminal affair but, within the context of a wider conspiracy and being used for ransom against a legitimately constituted government, are something else. We have the continuous threats to life and property in the communications of the FLQ of a seditious, violent and inflammatory nature. They have been issued and members are aware of them.

We have also a series of bombings and violence, a rising increase in thefts of dynamite now available in some hidden caches in the province of Quebec. More disturbing, we have a type of erosion of the public will in the feeling among some sincere people that an exchange of prisoners for the victims of the kidnappings would somehow ease the situation.

One of the difficulties in our society or in any free society is that we are not organized, and people are ordinarily not organized, against that sort of threat. Ordinary people generally believe that such actions as kidnapping, bombings, theft and violence by organized revolutionaries will not take place. The people of this country do not easily accept this because we have had a very happy history, as the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert said. This is a novel situation in Canada and it provokes the unprecedented use of a very severe measure for the first time in peacetime. We have been singularly fortunate since Confederation and we are now dealing with an unprecedented, serious situation.

• (3:00 p.m.)

This situation has arisen in other countries. The population resents violence but the population, taken generally, is not organized to meet it but relies upon governments to do so. Governments have to exercise and fulfil their responsibilities in meeting it. I might say, too, that the recent call for a public manifestation by men like Gagnon, Vallieres and Chartrand established and escalated the whole coming together of an infiltration of FLQ doctrine in certain areas of society in Quebec—in the unions, among universities and in the media—and the growing feeling among the people of Quebec, particularly the citizens of Montreal, that they are living under a reign of terror. You do not have to ask me; ask any member from Montreal and the people they represent just what they have been undergoing last week in the city of Montreal.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I believe we had to respond today in an urgent fashion to the call of the

At least no such seditious doc. was put out by RCMP within the next yr. + no one has even been reprimanded.