

APPENDIX

Montreal, October 21, 1970

PRESS RELEASE REGARDING INDIVIDUALS DETAINED IN APPLICATION OF THE ORDER-
IN-COUNCIL ADOPTED UNDER THE WAR MEASURES ACT.

In order to dispel concern which seems to have arisen in certain circles and to anticipate the spreading of false reports or interpretations, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Quebec, Mr. Jérôme Choquette, wants to clarify here and now in what manner the powers granted by the order-in-council adopted under the War Measures Act are being applied.

The Minister of Justice has announced that there will be no abuse, on the part of police services involved, of those powers, requested in these unprecedented circumstances.

Therefore, although simultaneous detention of some 300 individuals throughout Quebec, 250 of them in Montreal, creates substantial concrete problems, the police have already contacted the families or individuals the detained persons have requested to have informed.

A group of investigators and attorneys has been set up to study the record of each of those detained as promptly as possible, in order to determine whether they are to be indicted and brought before the courts or released because of lack of evidence. It will, however, be readily understood that the task of dealing with such an impressive number of files under present circumstances will inevitably take some time. However, instructions have been given to proceed with all reasonable haste.

The minister has also announced that he recognizes the right of the individuals detained to retain services of counsel, but here again there are administrative problems, which are being overcome.

The minister has emphasized, however, that it cannot be expected that the task of attorneys and investigators dealing with the examination of the detained individuals' files will be completed within the initial period of seven days provided by the order-in-council and that he therefore intends, where such action is justified in the light of information submitted to him, to extend the detention period to twenty-one days. We will however accept to release, as and when information becomes available, those persons against whom no crime or infraction under the order-in-council can be imputed. Indeed, during the past few days some fifty individuals have already been released.

As regards the provisions of the order-in-council declaring the FLQ to be an illegal association and prohibiting all support of the said group, the minister has announced that he would deal firmly with any persons violating the order, or in any way supporting the FLQ, and particularly the kidnappers of Messrs. Cross and Laporte.

Finally the minister strongly denies all insinuations to the effect that persons detained have been ill-treated in any way.