

An hon. Member: That was an excuse.

Mr. Lewis: When the hon. member says, "That was an excuse", I say to him that many of the people who have spoken to me in this way are not separatists but are against separatism, and they are heartbroken about the way in which the province of Quebec suffered as a result of the actions last fall of this government. I suggest that any other repressive legislation put on the books to replace the Public Order (Temporary Measures) Act, even when not used, will merely be an encouragement to the forces of disunity in the province of Quebec and in the whole of Canada.

Mr. Woolliams: And a disservice.

Mr. Lewis: And a disservice to our people. What has happened since the fall? The hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) spoke fully and eloquently on this subject. Permit me to spend a few minutes on it. We had a tremendous threat of apprehended insurrection, as far as the government was concerned. I will come back to that in a moment. We had all the powers under the War Measures Act and we had all the powers under the public order act. The total number arrested was about 500. The total released was about 440. About 60 people were charged, and most of the charges were laid under the Criminal Code.

Where was this tremendous threat of insurrection? Where are the 1,000 to 3,000 members of the FLQ the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) so shamelessly spoke of on the radio in Vancouver? Where are these people who have infiltrated every aspect and form of Canadian life, as the same minister shamelessly suggested in this House? We let loose the RCMP, the provincial police, the municipal police and we had thousands of soldiers on the job. What did they do? They caught about 490 people, 440 of whom were completely innocent.

• (8:40 p.m.)

What kind of apprehended insurrection was that? What kind of dishonesty was this government guilty of in making the people of Canada believe there was an apprehended insurrection in the province of Quebec? Then we were told there were weapons all over the place, that there was dynamite all over the place and that there were machine-guns. Then there was all this power of search. The police searched everybody they felt like searching, as dossier Z presented to a recent meeting of journalists showed. What did they find? They found, if I remember correctly—I can be corrected if I am wrong—some 30 weapons including a couple of hunting knives, a rusty rifle and a few hundred sticks of dynamite.

Either the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the members of the government were telling falsehoods, or the entire police force, including the defence forces, were totally and absolutely incompetent. I prefer to believe the first is probably the truth. I do not believe that the RCMP, the Quebec police, the municipal police and the armed forces are totally incompetent. I do believe, however, that the government acted in panic for a reason I

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shall mention in a moment, and that they built a scenario to justify their action which could not be defended by truth and fact.

That is what happened last fall. Why did they act last fall? I shall repeat what I said at the time. These statements are not based on fiction or on a scenario; they are based on legitimate, valid and logical conclusions from things said inside and outside this House. What was said to justify the statement that there was an apprehended insurrection? It was said that there were 1,000 or 3,000 members of the FLQ. Obviously that was an exaggeration beyond compare. It was said there were tons—these are not the words actually used—of arms all over the place. Obviously there were not. That was an exaggeration beyond compare. It was said there was dynamite lying around everywhere, to blow up everybody. That was obviously an exaggeration. We were told, as the Minister of Justice then put it, that there was erosion of will in Quebec. The Prime Minister said there was confusion in the province of Quebec. The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion said that FRAP was a dangerous organization.

Mr. Stanfield: There must have been an apprehended insurrection of the government.

Mr. Lewis: These are the things we were told. Then the government got a real bonanza. It learned of a conversation in the offices of Claude Ryan of *Le Devoir*. It learned that a few editors and other people had been sitting in a room discussing in a theoretical way the possibility that Bourassa's government was weakening and what would happen if it should fall. That immediately gave the government an opportunity to spread another rumour in innuendo in order to support their unsupportable purpose. Two ministers—I said this in the House last fall—two at least among the people directly concerned, told me about the spreading of the rumours, one at a cocktail party and one somewhere else, to the effect that there was an attempt in Montreal to provide an alternative government.

The Prime Minister acted with a kind of cunning for which I admire him more and more, although I admire him less and less for what he is doing to this country. With a kind of cunning, he never denied the rumour. He knew it was not fact, he knew what had happened; but he never denied it. On the contrary, as recently as the other day when he was interviewed for "Weekend"—the interview, I understand, is to appear this coming Sunday—he repeated the innuendo. In answer to a question on this subject he replied that there were people in Montreal seeking to establish an alternative government.

The number of times the Prime Minister when attending universities in Canada, England or elsewhere, when sitting around chatting with students, talked about this, and the number of times the Minister of Justice at a university in Canada, or at Oxford, talked about this when discussing the state of the country and what would happen if the government fell and what the alternative government should be, was legion. They probably are still doing it. This goes on all the time.