

Public Order Act, 1970

In today's newspaper the Prime Minister is reported as having said that the commission will be able to look after the problems that would be raised in this respect. But the reporter for the *Globe and Mail*, in trying to check out the position this commission might hold in relation to the authorities in Quebec, was told this commission apparently has no legal power. A spokesman in the office of the Quebec justice minister, Mr. Jerome Choquette, said yesterday that he believed the commission has government approval but no government mandate. That is the sum and substance of it. The commission has government approval, presumably for as long as the government feels it is acting in its best interests, which is reasonable to assume, but has no government mandate. In fact, it operates merely at the whim of the authorities. I am sure that if Mr. Hebert could be here to report on everything he could give us a particular review of what has been happening in respect of the administration of War Measures regulations and it would not be a very encouraging tale.

The government has given the impression that the institution of such a review board would be difficult to achieve. One wonders where the members of the government have been for the past 30 or 40 years. I have been a member of this House long enough to know that almost every piece of legislation, whether in an area of joint jurisdiction, as much of it has been in the past two years, or legislation in one jurisdiction or another, has time and again included provision for review boards or boards of some kind. This provision gives the public and the members of this House some feeling that the administration of a particular measure will be carried on in an effective way. Right now, in this country there must be hundreds of separate advisory and review boards which act to protect the public interest. For the government to fall back on the weak and irrelevant constitutional argument seems to be the last vestige of any reasonable argument at all.

Yesterday afternoon in this House of Commons the Prime Minister reported that, as a result of the Liberal policy convention, he tried to work out with the Prime Minister of Quebec some kind of instrument. I find it difficult to believe the Prime Minister can sincerely believe in that argument or that he could be so short of imagination. I find it difficult to believe that he and the Quebec Prime Minister would be that unwilling to follow the express wishes of the country and of their party by failing to introduce an amendment which would provide for an effective review procedure that would guarantee at least minimal safeguards in respect of the administration of this bill. The dangers that are inherent in this bill are difficult for any member of this House to accept, but I think it is even more important that we remember the climate in which this bill is being brought forth. This bill has been introduced as a result of a special situation; in many senses of the word, it has been a crisis situation. From being in contact with and talking to people in the province of Quebec, I know there has been a deep feeling not only of unrest but of great fear.

The authorities who have been trying to root out those responsible for terrorism, kidnapping and murder must

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

be frustrated and must be becoming more and more tired. One might expect that some of the thousands of people who have been working night and day for a period of almost two months must be becoming almost desperate in trying to write an end to this unhappy page in our history. What makes me so fearful in this instance is that when men are frustrated, tired and desperate they are quite likely to do very desperate things and innocent people who have a right to expect basic protection under the law suddenly find themselves in the most unfortunate situations. This is something that members of this House should not treat lightly. If the Prime Minister can be so easily confused between the FLQ and separatists, and we know that some men and women in the province of Quebec have been moving toward separatism, we cannot be happy about the fact that the abuse and misuse of these sweeping powers could achieve ends opposite to those for which this legislation is intended.

If we should find ourselves in the unfortunate position of having to look back on this period and realize that the legislative action taken has, in fact, deepened and worsened the problems that exist in the province of Quebec, then not only the members of the government but all members of this House will bear a great sense of guilt. I am not saying we can remove ourselves from that guilt even with the introduction of a review commission, but I think it is the kind of minimal guarantee that the government surely must recognize is a necessary requirement, even at this point. If the government does not recognize this, then I can only say that, to the best of my knowledge and understanding, they have not acted in the best interests of this country.

Mr. Douglas A. Hogarth (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I had not planned on speaking today, but I am absolutely astonished that the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald) does not know what the FLQ is. There was a man in Quebec not too many weeks ago who pleaded guilty to being a member of the FLQ and received 15 months in prison. I think he knew what the FLQ was. There was a 65 year old Montreal watchman who, on April 20, 1963, was the first bombing victim of the FLQ, and his family knows who they are. A month later a demolitions expert was endeavouring to demolish one of the bombs that have been put in 15 mail boxes in the city of Montreal. That man knows who the FLQ are. There are 23 convicts in the penitentiary in Canada whom the FLQ are trying to get out. They know the FLQ exists and they are there because since 1964 there has been a series of thefts, hold ups and every other conceivable form of nefarious crime, including the theft of every type of weapon, munitions and equipment from military establishments. These people are obviously responsible for these crimes and at times boast about it.

• (4:00 p.m.)

On August 29, 1964 two people were killed during an unsuccessful attempt to hold up the International Firearms store in Montreal. This was attributed to the FLQ. Who are the members of the FLQ? They are a group of psychopathic terrorists who are doing exactly