

attitudes. The revolutionaries then employ this evidence of alleged authoritarianism as justification for the need to use violence in their renewed attacks on the social structure. I appeal to all Canadians not to become so obsessed by what the government has done today in response to terrorism that they forget the opening play in this vicious game. That play was taken by the revolutionaries; they chose to use bombing, murder and kidnapping. *

To those who will voice concern at the extent of the powers assumed by the government under this procedure, I can only say that I sympathize with their attitude, and applaud them for speaking out. I hasten to suggest, however, that the legislative record of this Parliament in the field of individual liberties contributes unequivocally to its credibility and good faith.

I promise that the House shall be kept fully informed if any changes in the regulations are made. Furthermore, I pledge that all extraordinary powers will be withdrawn as soon as it has been demonstrated that there is a cessation of the violence and the threats of violence which made necessary their introduction. I intend to repeat that assurance and offer an explanation of government activities in this matter to the Canadian people through the public media later today.

Before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, it would be inappropriate were I not to mention to the House my gratitude for the understanding which has been offered me in the last 24 hours by the leaders of the opposition parties and by certain members of the Privy Council, including the right hon. member for Prince Albert and the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson. For their wise counsel I say, thank you.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we are discussing a most serious matter, a matter fraught with the most serious consequences for our country and one which I hope I can discuss in that sense and in the full recognition of the very grave issues that are involved in the measures that the government has taken. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) did inform me and the leaders of the other parties last night about the probability of this action being taken, and I appreciate that courtesy. There was also some discussion. I know the Prime Minister did not intend at all to indicate that the action the government proposed to take had been approved by the leaders of the opposition parties, but I wish to make it perfectly clear that while I was informed of the decision to be taken and while there was an opportunity for some discussion I was, of course, in no position to and did not give any approval.

I am certainly not contesting the legitimacy of the proclaiming of the War Measures Act, or the legal power of the government to issue this proclamation and these regulations. My understanding is that the finding of the government that there is real or apprehended insurrection is conclusive. The government is the only one in a position to know. The government has received the letters to which the Prime Minister referred from the government of Quebec and the civic authorities in the city of

* This was not murder of reports, which came later.

Invoking of War Measures Act

Montreal. Therefore I certainly am not questioning the legitimacy of the proclamation.

Nor, Sir, am I questioning the need for governments, including the government of Canada, to take effective action to enforce law and order at this time particularly in view of the kidnappings which have taken place, the holding of these two men for ransom and the apparent failure of the methods that were being used to bring this crisis to a conclusion. I emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that I do not question the need for effective action to be taken to enforce the laws of this country. Yet we must recognize that the measure that has been adopted, the invoking of the War Measures Act, is the most serious and drastic measure the government could have taken. It gives the government very broad powers. I wish to emphasize, of course, that it is the government that has taken this action and that it is the government which must accept the responsibility for invoking this Act, because we in the opposition are not in a position to judge whether there is real or apprehended insurrection.

I say this is a very serious measure because obviously it has broad ramifications. The War Measures Act provides for the possibility of very sweeping interference with what we ordinarily consider to be the civil rights and liberties of Canadians. It is true that the government has presented and adopted regulations which do not invoke all the powers of the War Measures Act but, the War Measures Act having been invoked, there certainly are many additional powers in reserve which the government could utilize by regulation at any time. Furthermore, the extensive powers described in the regulations are to be in effect until April 30, 1971, a very considerable length of time. These powers apply, of course, throughout the country.

The Prime Minister has touched upon something that is of great concern to me. I refer to the possibility that a measure such as this could lead to escalation and might perhaps increase the tendency of some people to be attracted to radical movements. Therefore, because I recognize the need for action and am very concerned about the sweeping measures the government has adopted, I think it is important that at this time we consider the need of restricting any extraordinary measures to the greatest possible extent and for the shortest period of time.

• (11:30 a.m.)

I do not want to be partisan and I do not propose to be partisan on this occasion, at least, but in due course questions will have to be asked about how the condition in which we now find ourselves in this country developed. But I think the Prime Minister must find himself in a most extraordinary position as a man who advocated fervently the entrenchment of civil rights in our constitution and, within a relatively short period thereafter, is in the position of invoking the War Measures Act and suspending in a substantial way the tradition of civil liberties of Canadians for a substantial period of time.

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