

That the House approves the action of the government in invoking the powers of the War Measures Act to meet the state of apprehended insurrection in the Province of Quebec as communicated to the Prime Minister by the Government of Quebec and the civic authorities of Montreal and further approves the orders and regulations tabled today by the Prime Minister on the clear understanding that the proclamation invoking the powers as contained in the regulations will be revoked on or before April 30, 1971, unless a resolution authorizing their extension beyond the date specified has been approved by the House.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I resume my remarks this morning even more disappointed, if that is possible, than I was last night at the inability of the government, as reflected through the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the members of the cabinet, to give the House sufficient indication why it should support the extreme and, in my view at least, unwarranted measures which have been taken by the government.

It is very difficult for an individual member of the House to believe that he is actually participating in this kind of debate and that at one stroke both the constitution and the civil rights of the people of this country have been suspended.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): It is also difficult to believe that a man who used as the thread of his campaign for election a little more than two years ago the unification of the country should now threaten to divide it.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Those who do not see this are victims of their own blindness. Perhaps they do not recall the remarks of the Prime Minister earlier this week to a press conference in response to a number of questions relating to the dreadful kidnappings in Montreal. He replied:

Yes, well there are a lot of bleeding hearts around who just don't like to see people with helmets and guns. All I can say is, go on and bleed, but it is more important to keep law and order in the society than to be worried about weak-kneed people who don't like the looks of—

Then the reporter interrupted:

At any cost? How far would you go with that? How far would you extend that?

The Prime Minister answered:

Well, just watch me.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I hope it will be recorded that a number of government members applauded that quotation.

Some hon. Members: Shame, shame!

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Are these the words of a man who seeks both to resolve the differences of opinion and points of view in this country and to accept the rule of law? They are the words of a man who in fact has suspended the rule of law.

Invoking of War Measures Act

• (11:20 a.m.)

I am troubled by the many grave aspects of this problem, not the least of which is the indication, much too obvious across the country at this moment, of a fanning of the flame of ancient misunderstanding, prejudice and bigotry that would pit English-speaking and French-speaking people against each other in this country.

An hon. Member: Shame on you.

An hon. Member: You can do better than that.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): These may be difficult words both to hear and say but they must be said if we are to face the problems confronting this country in a manner that will allow for the continuity of all that is best and good in Canadian life and its social fabric, because the traditions, attitudes and hopes of Canadians have been dealt a serious body blow by the actions of this government this week. Those who argued so strenuously yesterday, and who I assume will do so again today, that what has been done is really a very limited kind of action will soon become aware that the limits to this action are not at all narrow and involve not just a few or a few hundred but many thousands and, potentially, perhaps even millions of our fellow Canadians.

I shall not read at any length what is being reported by the press of this country, but we are told that political literature is being confiscated. I venture to guess it is not just literature advocating the overthrow of government—municipal, provincial or federal—but political literature of many different aspects and produced by many different parties.

An hon. Member: That is a lie.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): If it is a lie then I trust this will be fully established in the days to come in light of what seems to be becoming painfully apparent now. Not only in the area of political literature, however, is there seeming indecision concerning what constitutes a grave threat to the safety of the state and its citizens. We also see the abuse, arrest and detention of innocent individuals and in a free society the fear—

Mr. Cafik: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Would it be one worth replying to?

Mr. Cafik: You can judge that. You suggested that innocent people have been arrested because of these measures. Would you care to name one who is innocent?

Mr. Baldwin: The police will not release the names.

Mr. Nowlan: We cannot even get names in this police state.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): The question merely indicates the ignorance of the author.