

Invoking of War Measures Act

mouth of Spiro Agnew of the United States. It was actually the same kind of statement.

Before I go any further let me say this to the Minister of Justice and, through him, to the Prime Minister. The government's excuse for taking action by Order in Council is that they have some intelligence of which we are not aware: it was required that all these steps be taken immediately, at night, in order that the government could deal with certain people and events by surprise. In all earnestness I say to the government: You have done this. I disapprove of it. I think it was wrong and unnecessary, as I will try to show, but you have done it now. You have been able to incarcerate 154, 200 or 300 people. You have been able to institute searches without warrants. If you are sincere in what you say, on Monday morning you will revoke this Order in Council. You will cancel it and you will bring before this House a bill to amend the law in order to deal with this matter.

I say this very seriously. You will have had three days, today, tomorrow and Sunday. You have already told the people in the Front de Libération du Québec what you intend to do. They know all about it; the surprise is over. You have done all you can by surprise. If you are sincere, and if you are guided by what you say, there is not the slightest excuse in the world why this Order in Council should not be annulled by Monday morning. There is no reason why this Parliament should not be presented with a projet de droit, a bill to amend the law to deal with the critical situation in Quebec.

If the government does not do that, I give it this warning now. It is the intention of my colleagues and myself to use subsection 3 of section 6 of the Bill of Rights and we will, within the ten days or the time limit specified in the bill, under the signature of ten Members of Parliament bring forward the necessary motion praying that the proclamation be revoked. There will no longer be any excuse for it. It is not necessary for the minister to continue this undemocratic, authoritarian order in force any longer than is necessary—and one minute longer than Monday morning is unnecessary, Mr. Speaker.

It should not be necessary for me or for others to declare that we detest the FLQ in Quebec and any other organization that seeks to overthrow our society by force.

If I may be permitted to make a personal reference, I have been in active politics for a great many years. During the time when some members now in this House who hold high office spoke kindly about communism, dictatorial methods and violent revolution, I fought them inside the CCF and inside the labour movement of this country. I, therefore, do not have to emphasize that fact. Other members in this House in high places have to explain their previous association with or sympathy for organizations that wanted to overthrow democratic governments by force.

● (3:40 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: That should not be necessary. After all that the Minister of Justice has thrown at this House, what

[Mr. Lewis.]

are we being asked to approve? I say to hon. members that we are being asked to approve the complete suspension of the ordinary laws of this country, all the rights and freedoms of our people throughout the whole of Canada. That is what we are being asked to approve. The minister read only the first part of section 3. The hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) was right in drawing the minister's attention to the second half of section 3. The minister only read these words:

The group of persons or association known as Le Front de Libération du Québec and any successor group or successor association of the said Le Front de Libération du Québec—

He finished there. Well, the section does not finish there; the section continues:

—or any group of persons or association that advocates the use of force or the commission of crime as a means of or as an aid in accomplishing governmental change—

Not within Quebec, but—

—within Canada is declared to be an unlawful association.

Even though it is unkind and perhaps even offensive, I say that the minister did not have the courage to answer the question of the hon. member for Yukon as to whether he intended any other organization in Canada to be covered by this law. Because he did not do that, every member, including members opposite, ought to look with the utmost suspicion at what we are being asked to approve today. We are being asked to approve placing in the hands of this government, in effect the Prime Minister, unrestricted and unlimited power. This is the first time it has been done in the peacetime history of Canada. We are discussing nothing less than this.

I am fully aware of the situation in Quebec. I am acquainted with the difficulties with the FLQ in that province. Despite all this, I believe the response of the federal government today to be excessive, hysterical and unacceptable. Furthermore, I doubt very much if it will be efficacious. Indeed, I deeply fear that in the long run this action may well do great harm to the unity in Canada and to the relations between Canada and the province of Quebec. I will have something to say about that matter later. The Prime Minister in his speech, and the Minister of Justice in his speech, in effect said, "Trust us. You know we are civil libertarians. We have made certain amendments to the Criminal Code. We propose other amendments to the Criminal Code. You know we are good democrats. Trust us. We will not do anything wrong. You know we are all in favour of civil liberty."

The Prime Minister has discarded and betrayed many progressive ideas in connection with the economic and social front which he formerly held. I am no more confident that he is not today also discarding his civil libertarian cloak, not in a temporary but in a permanent way.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Lewis: We cannot trust any man who takes unto himself dictatorial powers, myself, anyone in this House or anyone in this or any other country. I remind hon. members of the famous saying that power corrupts, and