

Invoking of War Measures Act

says: "Get the local angle on this. We need a follow-up on that. Why weren't you at this or that press conference?" Most of the time these editors can get everything they need along these lines from the Canadian Press. But when an editor gets what he calls his "own man" in Ottawa, he cannot seem to rest unless he is poking, prodding and chivvying him around.

Of course, the introduction of a number of crackerjack reporters into the press gallery will not be an unalloyed joy to the government. But it would be very healthy for the government. Active reporters would find out secrets and print them, and that is how it should be. What is needed, if the Canadian public is to get the factual information it should be getting from Parliament Hill, is new blood in the press gallery. I thank hon. members for their attention.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I should like to congratulate the hon. member who spoke before me for the courage and the audacity he has shown in saying in a loud voice what several hon. members have been thinking for many years. He touched upon a subject which I wanted to bring up myself during my remarks. Although his speech did not deal solely with the subject matter under consideration, namely the passage of measures intended to remedy the difficult situation in Quebec, he said some things which should make us think and should remind the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) that it is his responsibility to see to it that his department exercise more stringent control over the C.B.C. which, in the past few days namely, has given too much publicity to the FLQ anarchists, much more than it has ever granted hon. members.

Therefore, I congratulate again the member who has the expertise since he is of the trade, I am told, and who is aware that the criticisms of his government bring out some deficiencies of this Liberal government which otherwise would not be noticed by the public. However, he should also remember that in 1962, 1963, 1965 and 1968, we, the Conservatives, especially those from Quebec, have been the victims of a partisan and blind press which was seeking to show but one side instead of stressing the quality of the candidates.

Mr. Speaker, I will have the opportunity of dealing with this question on another occasion. I should like now to deal with the subject under discussion. What is strange is the fact that we are expressing our opinions on the emergency measures to be taken in order to end this emergency.

In the circumstances, it seems rather cynical or ironical that today we should discuss the survival of democracy in Canada.

This is the first opportunity provided us by the government to take advantage of democracy. Since the government took office, the opposition has never been able to outline its views and have them accepted, partly if not

[Mr. St. Pierre.]

totally. Even if the amendments proposed by the opposition were good, the government would reject them. Today, for the first time, we are enjoying complete freedom to discuss an important matter.

Yesterday, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner), for whom I have great admiration and much personal friendship, told us in his speech that the House should sit long enough to allow all hon. members to express their opinions on the war measures.

He even suggested that the government was ready to move that the House should sit until all hon. members had stated their views.

This is the first time that we see the government recognize that it must set an example of democracy, if it wants to impose it by force on Canada, and especially on Quebec. I hope that this will be a lesson to the government and that it will realize that democracy is not a one-way proposition or concession, in short that democracy really exist only when all members of society have the same rights, the same privileges and the same possibilities to represent their fellow-citizens.

• (3:50 p.m.)

Of course we could quote several examples showing that this government has never respected this democracy of which he proclaims itself the sole defender.

Mr. Speaker, we have been living through some dark and painful hours in Quebec. Some hon. members have expressed their opinions in an honest, conscientious and responsible way. As for those who do not agree with me, I respect their opinion and I hope that they will respect mine. Nobody in this House is in a better position to judge the seriousness of the situation than the hon. members from Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish for a moment to excuse the way the government has acted, but in the circumstances the authorities did not have any other means available to thwart the organized offensive prepared perhaps by the Company of Young Canadians which has been financed by the federal government for several years. The members of the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs have found out that a great many members of the Company of Young Canadians were activists, anarchists who, with the financial means provided by the government, had been able to spread their hate and prepare disorder and revolt.

I wittingly refrain from answering certain political provocations coming from some government members answer these considerations. In the interest of all Canadians, we should limit ourselves to the careful study of the question and try to understand that there is an explosive situation in Quebec and everywhere in Canada, if it admitted that Quebec is a part of Canada, and that the authorities had not only the moral but the political obligation to intervene—according to the information given to us by the government—upon request not from the Quebec Liberal party but from the government of the province of Quebec.