

Emergencies Act

disagrees with him, he certainly held office for three terms and his Government was elected again very recently with a substantial majority vote. Presumably, that Government enjoys the respect of the population of that province.

• (1540)

In 1970 the Premier of Quebec wrote to his federal counterpart asking for assistance. I remind the Hon. Member for Portneuf (Mr. Ferland), who spoke a little earlier today about unilateral actions taken by the federal Government against Quebec, of an excerpt of the letter which reads:

Under the circumstances, on behalf of the Government of Quebec, I request that emergency powers be provided as soon as possible so that more effective steps may be taken. I request particularly that such powers encompass the authority to apprehend and keep in custody individuals who, the Attorney General of Quebec has valid reasons to believe, are determined to overthrow the Government through violence and illegal means.

According to the information we have and which is available to you, we are facing a concerted effort to intimidate and overthrow the Government and the democratic institutions of this province through planned and systematic illegal action, including insurrection. It is obvious that those participating in this concerted effort completely reject the principle of freedom under the rule of law.

That is a very strong letter written by the Premier of Quebec at that time, sharing with his federal counterparts the opinion not only of himself but that of his Attorney General. A letter written by the Mayor of Montreal has already been read in part into the record. The Mayor of Montreal, with probably the largest or the second largest municipal police force in this country, said at that time:

The Chief of the Montreal Police has informed us that the means available to him are proving inadequate and that the assistance of higher levels of Government has become essential for the protection of society against the seditious plot and the apprehended insurrection in which the recent kidnappings were the first step.

We all know which kidnappings were referred to in that letter. It referred to the kidnappings of a prominent provincial cabinet Minister and the British Trade Commissioner in Canada. Those activities, eventually led to a manifesto being read on television. We all remember that. It was read by the media which at that time certainly felt that what was happening was so intimidating that it must read the upsetting FLQ manifesto on air.

Those people who were not living in the Province of Quebec at the time and those who pretended that nothing had happened then, could moralize today. I suppose that is their right. But at least they should remember what happened then.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I myself am a native of Quebec and represent a Franco-Ontarian riding; the border between Ontario and Quebec, where I live in my riding, is mostly the Ottawa River. I remember crossing the bridge between Grenville, Quebec and Hawkesbury, Ontario the evening that the late Mr. Laporte was found dead in the trunk of a car. I remember waiting three hours that night to cross Perley Bridge into Hawkesbury, something that should have taken about 45 seconds. We all

remember those days. But as a Canadian that night, Mr. Speaker, I certainly felt some frustration when I had to wait to cross the Perley Bridge to return home. I was coming back from work in Quebec, where I used to work on the weekend, and still I think that all of us who were waiting there knew—or at any rate, believed—that the measures that had been taken were necessary.

[English]

It is important to remember that the letters written by the Premier of Quebec and the Mayor of Montreal, who was responding to a request of the Chief of the Montreal Police, referred to acts of apprehended insurrection. The Premier requested powers encompassing the authority to apprehend and keep in custody individuals who, the Attorney General of Quebec had valid reasons to believe, were determined to overthrow the Government through violence and illegal means. So the federal Government at that time used the tools it had.

Today, of course, we will have a better law or, at least, a law which we hope will be better. Heaven forbid that this new law will ever be used, but in the unfortunate event that it is used, will we look at it and say what a blunt instrument it is and how inappropriate? That was the only law available to us to do the job we had to do, given what we knew at the time. So I remind all Members about those facts.

Enough about that part of our history. We should really address the new Bill which, of course, is one all Members of this House will agree is better than the one we had, as it should be better. If the new Bill is not going to be better than what we had before, we would really have to question the work of all Members of Parliament, the legislative draft persons, and so on, all those who assisted us with the drafting, amending, correcting and passage of the legislation. I just want to remind the Parliamentary Secretary about the speech he gave us a little earlier today. In large measure, it was a fairly good speech.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Just fairly good, Bud.

Mr. Boudria: Well, we can say it was a good speech, in large measure. I want to remind the Parliamentary Secretary, as I reminded members of the New Democratic Party, to the imposition of the War Measures Act of 1970. The Parliamentary Secretary said earlier today: "Some things are above politics. I think Bill C-77 is one of them". He further stated, we have seen some old wounds reopened in recent weeks. Publication of Mr. Jamieson's diaries with their allegations of political expediency and public representations made by the National Association of Japanese Canadians has reminded us of the horrors of the events of October 1970 and the early 1940s.

• (1550)

I suggest to the Parliamentary Secretary that he should remind whoever it is who prepared his notes that these two paragraphs should be used together in a speech to lecture