

of revolutionary activity in Canada. I ask: What is the basis for that statement? There certainly was no foundation for it in anything that was said by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday. Can it seriously be argued that the Government of this country was not and is not aware of the aims of certain groups, and one group in particular, which recognize the primacy of organized violence?

Is it to be argued that the War Measures Act, or something such as was formerly contained in section 98 of the Criminal Code, should have been enacted long before it was enacted two weeks ago? I ask, is there anyone in Canada who, given his responsibility, has shown more awareness of the threat that exists in our country than the present Prime Minister who, almost from the time he first became leader, in fact before he became leader, identified the kind of federalism he believed desirable and practical in this country? Is there anyone who expressed in such an articulate way the formula for the preservation of the unity of our country, a unity that would recognize the right of each section of the country to enjoy its own particular racial, cultural or political personality within the context of the terms of Confederation?

I can say that I do not believe that there can be any substantial argument put forward to support the view that the Prime Minister was derelict in his duty and that the Government was derelict in its duty. I believe that no one has expressed our national ambitions more forcefully or more persuasively than the present Prime Minister. I believe more than that: I believe no one has shown in these hours of crisis, if you will, greater leadership, a leadership that has commended itself in this particular to the Leader of the Opposition, to all senators, to a majority in the other place, to a great majority of the people in this country and, as I found out last Sunday, to people outside our country. The representations are that all over the world there is nothing but admiration for the leadership which in this difficult situation has been given by the present Prime Minister.

I ask, was there anyone in our country who long before these events crept on us spoke of the dangers, or who outlined in conferences to the provinces, to people in all parts of the country the potential dangers that existed, the threats to our unity, the tolerance that must follow if our unity was to be asserted and guaranteed? I am sure that on reflection it will generally be agreed that I am not overstating the contribution of the Prime Minister in this regard, nor am I overstating the confidence which his handling of the situation has received from the Canadian people.

The Leader of the Opposition said:

Had the Government taken firm action when such was obviously necessary, the calamitous events of the past two weeks might never have been vomited into the annals of Canada's history.

Well, the Government has taken firm action, so firm that the steadfastness and leadership of the Prime Minister has been applauded all over the country, all over the

[Hon. Mr. Martin.]

world and, indeed, in this house. The Leader of the Opposition said further:

Either the Government was totally ignorant of the grave situation, or it lied when it claimed in the Throne Speech that ours is a calm, peaceful, placid society, devoid of all that grubby violence which afflicts many of the other nations in North, Central and South America.

I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would want to revise that paragraph, because he is a fair-minded man. Ours is exactly what this Speech from the Throne says—a calm, a peaceful and a placid society. Ours is a society that does not recognize organized violence. Ours, however, is a free society, so free that we have all been concerned, in the Government and in the Opposition, about the extreme character of the measures we felt we had to take, so concerned are we with the liberty of the subject. The fact that some people would use violence—as some people have in the case of Pierre Laporte or in the case of the other abduction—does not destroy the character or the nature of the Canadian scene in Quebec or in any other part of Canada. I am sure that the great majority of the people of Canada want our unity to be preserved, and want us to live as a free people in a democratic society.

The Government was not ignorant of these situations. This was clear from observations made by the Prime Minister over the last two years. It was clear by evidence that was public and known to all who followed events in our country. It is easy now to say what should have been done at a particular time, but I wonder what would have been done if, for instance, a year ago, without the kind of evidence that has lately descended upon us, the Government had resorted to the very extreme measures it has felt necessary to resort to.

Hon. Mr. Flynn: I never suggested that.

Hon. Mr. Martin: If the Leader of the Opposition says so, I accept that statement at once.

Hon. Mr. Flynn: The honourable Leader of the Government has skated around my argument very well up to now, but what I suggested was that perhaps some measures of the kind the Government is now envisaging, which would be designed to cope with the very situation we are now faced with, could have been designed before resorting to the War Measures Act. You know the reserve we have about that.

Hon. Mr. Martin: I accept that refinement, and if the Leader of the Opposition says that is what he meant, then that is what he meant. I only point out, as was said in the other place when this matter was discussed, that that would have required legislative initiative. It would have required a debate, and would have opened up the whole question. I submit this in as fair a way as I can. Would it have been possible at the time to take the necessary steps that were taken to meet a serious situation that confronted the nation? These are the kinds of questions we have to bear in mind.