

This, then, is how the Canadian Government met the threat to peace and order in Canada. As you know, the release of James Cross was secured. Pierre Laporte was murdered. Those charged with the crime are now being tried in court. I am satisfied, and every evidence indicates the vast majority of Canadians is satisfied, that the Government acted with courage, determination, skill and humanity.

I should now like to deal very briefly with three common misapprehensions about what happened that have been given wide circulation.

The first of these is that troops of the Canadian Armed Forces were deployed under the War Measures Act and were used to enforce its provisions. Not so -- the troops, most of them French-speaking, were deployed, at the request of the Government of Quebec, as part of their normal function in support of the civil authority before the Act was invoked and under the normal law of the land. Support of the civil authority, when requested, is a recognized duty of the armed forces in every country I know, including your own. Their duties were confined to the protection of prominent individuals, public buildings and essential installations. There was no single incident of a soldier harming a civilian. And, to the best of my knowledge, not even an unpleasant incident between troops and civilians. The fact that our troops have specific instruction, training and experience in peacekeeping operations, which necessarily involve close but non-aggressive contact with civilian populations, is a source of strength and reassurance in circumstances like these. Any notion that Quebec was under military occupation is nonsense.

The second misapprehension is that Canadians, for a time at least, lived under martial law. I think that what I have already said gives the lie to this idea. Martial law involves abrogating the constitution, even if only for a time, putting the whole apparatus of democracy into escrow and ruling by fiat, the use of summary courts-martial and other like measures, none of which Canadians would have stood for.

The third misapprehension, one of special interest to this audience, was that there was some form of press censorship. No one who lived through those days in Canada could support such a proposition. The FLQ themselves were able to use the media for propaganda purposes and did so with a modicum of skill compounded into a great success by the gullibility and predilection for sensationalism of the media themselves. Their every word was amplified on the air and blazoned in the press. Attacks upon the Government and its policy were given the widest publicity and a few leading editorial writers, who disagreed with the Government's policy, wrote their views freely and forcefully. The Government was aware that publicity was one of the FLQ's main objectives and aware that the press, knowingly or not, was giving them the greatest assistance.

The Attorney-General of Quebec publicly called upon the media to exercise more responsibility in their coverage of the crisis. As he might have foreseen, this resulted in loud complaints about censorship and absolutely no increase in responsibility. You will understand that I am referring only to certain elements of the media. In general, the press in Canada acted responsibly. The fact that reporting events in a crisis like this in accordance with normal editorial judgment tends to play into the hands of the terrorists is something that should, I believe, concern us all -- the press, government and citizens alike.