

Public Order Act, 1970

Mr. Aiken: I don't mind losing a few. I hope the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher) did not identify himself as one. Supporters of the government are saying "See, we were right in everything we did; look at this poll; we are in tune with the mood of the people; the Prime Minister is a great statesman." I want to say that the government has created the mood of the people, and if that mood is really reflected in the poll we are really in trouble in this country. I believe that far from being a great statesman the Prime Minister has created a state of mind from which it will take years to recover. What do Canadians want, now that their baser instincts have been encouraged? They want student activists, hippies, labour militants, communists, women's liberation groups sent to gaol and stifled; they want censorship of the press and imposition of the death penalty for a host of new crimes, and Heaven knows what else.

An hon. Member: That came from Jack Horner.

Mr. Aiken: Is this something of which a so-called Liberal government could be proud? I am a Conservative, and I think it is tragic. It might be said that this was all brought on by the FLQ, not by the government. I deny this. The potential was there. There has been a growing reaction to the government's careless attitude toward the immigration of people with criminal records and its failure to enforce the law. There was an exchange a few minutes ago—it was out of order—involving everything that has happened in connection with the FLQ since 1963. The concern of the government was not very evident during those seven years, and we cannot say there was no violence. The hon. member who spoke before the last hon. member set out to prove that there had been FLQ violence over the last seven years. I say it was the government's panicky and fearful reaction to the situation in the City of Montreal which brought us to the difficulty we face today. We are now considering legislation which should not be found in any free country even in wartime, legislation under which people do not have the right to be represented or to have their cases looked into, legislation under which there is no recourse to appeal from the actions of police.

Even if the War Measures Act were the only tool available to the Montreal police in hunting the criminals responsible for the kidnapers of Mr. Cross and Mr. Laporte, even if its invocation was necessary, it should have been the objective of the government to abandon this extraordinary measure as quickly as possible and to take steps toward reestablishing normalcy. Even if the bill before us has to be passed—and there is some doubt about that—surely it should be our aim to approve a law as close to normalcy as possible. To leave this measure as it is merely advertises to the world that we are still in a state where insurrection is apprehended. This is where the government has taken the wrong course.

Like a good many other members, I feel trapped in voting on the War Measures Act and on this bill, because there is no doubt some need for continuing supervision of

[Mr. Aiken.]

the explosive situation in Montreal. That need exists. But I blame the government for what it has done in connection with hundreds of ancillary matters—for statements such as that made by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) that thousands of subversive people had infiltrated the civil service and that many of them held high rank in government employment. Dozens of other things were said and done in order to build up the situation in justification of the government's action.

In my view a more statesmanlike course would have been to cool off the situation and let the international community feel that at least we were masters in our own house and knew what we were doing. I believe the government has maintained a state of emergency either to justify its original action or because of a belief that there is still some danger.

Mr. Speaker, there is always danger. There is no way known to man to prevent murder or assassination. The only defence lies in removing the will to commit these crimes while maintaining ordinary prudence. Has this been accomplished in Canada during the last few weeks? I say it has not. There are many more dangerous mental psychopaths, sex criminals and potential murderers walking the streets than there are revolutionaries in hiding or in gaols. The average citizen is forced to take his chances with these maniacs. There are lots of them. There is an average of one murder every day in Canada—the figures show something like 364 reported murders a year on an average, although the murderers are not always convicted. There is one kidnapping, on an average, every week—in the neighbourhood of 67 charges of kidnapping are laid each year and convictions are secured at the rate of almost one a week. So we have one murder every day and one kidnapping every week.

Mr. Cross is entitled to special consideration. Mr. Laporte, we weep for. We do not know yet what happened to him. We hope we shall know. But with all this in the background, let us keep our perspective. Two mounted policemen were murdered in Saskatchewan in the course of their duties. Is this any less the concern of the Canadian people? I say that we will have freedom in our streets when law and order are established, but not so long as we have repressive measures. This is not law and order at all, and a lot of people are making this mistake today. I say clearly that those who say that we now have law and order are wrong. We have the opposite of law and order; we have repression. Law and order is respect for the law, and the maintenance of that respect.

• (4:50 p.m.)

In conclusion, may I say that this bill is directed toward maintaining or restoring law and order in Canada. Against whom is it directed? Certainly, it is not directed against the 300 people already picked up and released, nor against those now held under the War Measures Act. Certainly, it is not directed against the