

Private Members' Business

his annual report for 1971, the ombudsman noted that he felt obliged to investigate each complaint submitted to him. He said that he investigated the facts and reconstructed them insofar as possible. He tried to understand each person's situation and was able to consult files that seemed relevant.

The matter was settled provincially, and it is not up to this government or to Parliament to re-examine it.

Almost 25 years have passed since the events of October 1970. In this period, the legislative and political climate in Canada has changed considerably. We have witnessed the emergence of a strong tendency to protect individual rights, expressed more specifically in the enshrinement of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the constitution. Canadians' changing attitude is also reflected in the broad interpretation the courts have given to the charter.

• (1130)

Not only has the constitutional landscape of Canadian society changed since 1970, but also the legislation itself. The Government and Parliament of Canada have replaced the War Measures Act with the Emergencies Act, which limits the amount of force which can be used to deal with an emergency. The government would not be able to tap the wide-ranging powers it did in 1970 as easily today. This is also a reflection of how societal attitudes have evolved.

Judged within today's legislative, judicial and philosophical framework, some people would question the government's response to the events of 1970. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, at the time, the government did what it judged was necessary and what the constitutional and legislative framework in place then legally entitled it to do.

During the November 4, 1970 debate in the House on the legislation introduced to replace the regulations, Mr. Turner said the following: "And to suggest, as some members of the opposition have, that because an insurrection did not occur, therefore it could not have been apprehended, is an exercise in false logic".

This statement is more revealing 25 years after the fact than it was immediately following it. In 1970, the Government of Quebec apprehended an insurrection. The federal government acted, and its actions were driven by that apprehension. The measures it took were approved by tribunals and deemed to be in step with the powers which the law conferred to the government at that time.

We can and must learn from the past. The question begging an answer is whether we should review the past or invest in the future. We believe that the best choice is to use the government's

limited resources to secure a brighter future for generations to come.

Any residents of Quebec who had been unjustly or arbitrarily targeted by the measures have been compensated by the Province of Quebec. In my opinion, it would be futile to rehash yet again this rocky period in Canada's history.

[English]

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read the motion to make it clear. Motion No. 332 reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should immediately make an official public apology, accompanied by financial compensation, to the hundreds of citizens of Quebec who were the victims of arbitrary arrest and unjustified detention during the enforcement of the War Measures Act in the early '70s.

Should the War Measures Act have been invoked? The answer is very debatable.

It might serve the purpose of the House to go through a bit of the history of the time. In late 1969 some bombs were detonated in Montreal at the Board of Trade and le Club Canadien. In February 1970 Charles Gagnon, the FLQ leader, was freed on bail. In May 1970 Pierre Vallières was freed on bail. In June 1970 the justice minister of Quebec, Jérôme Choquette, announced a \$50,000 reward for information on activities leading to the arrest of key members of the FLQ. The reward led to tips which allowed the various police forces, the Quebec Provincial Police, the Montreal police and the RCMP, to make arrests.

• (1135)

It is helpful to realize all those forces were at work. It allowed them to make a series of arrests and uncover information which cited the FLQ's intent to kidnap the Israeli and American consuls as a sign of protest against American imperialism and the FLQ's solidarity with the Palestine liberation movement.

On October 5, 1970, James Cross, the senior trade commissioner at the British Trade Commission was abducted by the FLQ. On October 10, Pierre Laporte, the minister of labour in the Bourassa cabinet, was kidnapped. On October 15 the federal cabinet agreed to use the War Measures Act if the situation deteriorated. On October 16 the cabinet made the decision and implemented it. On October 18, two days after the implementation of the War Measures Act, the body of Pierre Laporte was discovered. On October 19, one day later, the House voted to support the government's decision.

On November 2 a bill called Public Order Temporary Measures Act was introduced to replace the War Measures Act. That bill correctly was limited to the FLQ. On December 1 the bill was passed in the House, 174 to 31.