

*Invoking of War Measures Act*

Some speakers today took pleasure in attacking the government about certain social and economic conditions existing in Quebec which they blame for the situation now prevailing in our province. Obviously, this is choosing the easy way.

We cannot ask that those who live outside Quebec be fully aware of what is going on presently in our province, and I express the wish that our fellow members from the other provinces will never have to live through an ordeal like the one we French Canadians are experiencing in Quebec at the moment. Now, it is Quebec's turn, but maybe in a week, in a month from now, it will be the turn of Ontario or of any other province.

Obviously, the younger generation in Quebec is far from satisfied with the social security programs, or with the political system. Obviously, changes are called for in the province of Quebec as in other provinces. I have often said so. The young people want governments to do something. They no longer want to get involved in an obsolete structure, the Canadian Constitution. The majority of young Quebecers want to stay within Confederation, provided they are recognized by our English-speaking colleagues as equal partners in this great country of ours.

Have we, members of Parliament, done anything to reassure them in that regard? Amending or redrafting the Constitution is taking too much time. Decision-making in the fields of social security and political mechanisms is being delayed. Knowing very well the temperament of our young people, I am aware that they are restless, that they want change and progress. They protest and most of them protest objectively. In Quebec some professional agitators have no respect whatever for democracy and take the opportunity to stir up university students and organize demonstrations similar to the one we watched last night on television. 3,000 young people gathered to discuss the present situation in Quebec and unscrupulous people, one of whom was Michel Chartrand, lectured them and stirred them up to agitation.

As Canadian parliamentarians, we have our responsibility in the crisis Quebec is going through at the present time.

Our immigration regulations have not been strict enough for one thing. We have admitted from Algeria people who have come here to preach revolution. We have also admitted Cubans who have come to set up Maoist groups in Montreal, Quebec and Trois-Rivières, because this is a democracy and we must respect freedom of speech. In so doing, we have been remiss through our failure to assume our responsibilities.

It is useless to cry. Even if we could correct our past mistakes, our task now is to build for the future and to restore in our country the respect for authority of people who wish to live under a truly democratic system.

The government has decided to adopt emergency measures and we are considering them now.

This afternoon the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) admitted quite frankly that this measure granted the government much greater

[Mr. Asselin.]

powers than were needed to control the situation in Quebec. It is true.

• (8:10 p.m.)

It is true and as a lawyer I should think, first, that this measure which is going to be applied for six months and a half, will perhaps reduce for too long civil liberties of our fellow citizens. The danger I should like to point out to the House is that the government has that power in its hands. Who will use it, if not the police? How will they use the means put at their disposal by the government in order to control the situation?

Here is where the danger lies, Mr. Speaker. Because of that, maybe, innocent people who have nothing to do with the FLQ will pay for those who support a measure such as the one taken today by the government.

Some families will be searched, even though they have nothing to do with the FLQ in Quebec, because it is an emergency measure.

My leader was asking the government today, in an objective manner, to apply these urgency measures on a temporary basis. He also asked the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) to introduce as soon as possible amendments to the Criminal Code sections dealing with sedition and kidnapping. He was then merely suggesting amendments to the measure in order to give back to citizens the civil liberties that this measure tends to remove.

Mr. Speaker, such is the position that my leader took today on this important issue. Naturally, dishonest news-men will say tonight, as they have done during the day, that the Progressive Conservative party through its leader supported the subversive movements in Quebec. I say those people are in bad faith because what the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party wanted to point out to the government is that implementation of these measures has been solicited for a period of six and a half months and that our leader, considering this to be too long, would wish to see other means taken.

The Minister of Justice could introduce in the House amendments to the Criminal Code in order to achieve the objectives the government set when deciding to adopt this emergency measure. That is what the Progressive Conservative Party is requesting of the government through this evening's amendment.

I repeat that we parliamentarians should have a feeling of guilt because of the present situation in Quebec. Today, the situation which has prevailed in Quebec for close to 15 days has been clearly outlined.

Of course you cannot expect that people who live in British Columbia be aware of that situation. But, Mr. Speaker, we know that our people live in an atmosphere of terror and fear.

Some public men receive anonymous calls or blackmail threats. The terrorists will try by any means to spread panic among the people.

Unfortunately, I think that subversive forces in Quebec are better organized than we think. As a matter of fact, the Quebec Labour Minister was abducted a week ago and a British diplomat was kidnapped more than ten