

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 16, 1970

The House met at 11 a.m.

WAR MEASURES ACT

TABLING OF PROCLAMATION THAT APPREHENDED
INSURRECTION EXISTS AND PUBLIC ORDER
REGULATIONS, 1970

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 41(2) I wish to table an Order in Council under the War Measures Act authorizing the issuing of a proclamation and a copy of the proclamation.

I also wish to table a second Order in Council under the War Measures Act authorizing certain regulations to provide emergency powers.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): May I ask the Prime Minister if copies of these regulations will be circulated to members immediately?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I understand this is being done at the present time. The document is being circulated.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

APPREHENDED INSURRECTION—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43 TO
APPROVE ACTION OF GOVERNMENT IN INVOKING
WAR MEASURES ACT

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 43 I request the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion. I move:

That the House approves the action of the government in invoking the powers of the War Measures Act to meet the state of apprehended insurrection in the province of Quebec as communicated to the Prime Minister by the government of Quebec and the civic authorities of Montreal and further approves the orders and regulations tabled today by the Prime Minister on the clear understanding that the proclamation invoking the powers as contained in the regulations will be revoked on or before April 30, 1971, unless a resolution authorizing their extension beyond the date specified has been approved by the House.

Mr. Speaker: Does the right hon. Prime Minister have unanimous consent to proceed with the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, it is my grave duty to inform the House that at 4 a.m. this morning the government proclaimed the War Measures Act. This step was taken after consideration of all the facts, and particularly of letters received from the Prime Minister of Quebec

and the authorities of the city of Montreal reporting a state of apprehended insurrection. The letter from the Prime Minister of the province of Quebec, which was received at 3 a.m., reads as follows:

[Translation]

Quebec City, October 16, 1970.

Mr. Prime Minister,

During the last few days the people of Quebec have been greatly shocked by the kidnappings of Mr. James R. Cross, representative of the British Government in Montreal, and the Hon. Pierre Laporte, Minister of Labour and Manpower and Minister of Immigration of Quebec, as well as by the threats to the security of the state and individuals expressed in communiqués issued by the Front de Libération du Québec or on its behalf, and finally all the circumstances surrounding these events.

After consultation with authorities directly responsible for the administration of justice in Quebec, the Quebec Government is convinced that the law, as it stands now, is inadequate to meet this situation satisfactorily.

Under the circumstances, on behalf of the Government of Quebec, I request that emergency powers be provided as soon as possible so that more effective steps may be taken. I request particularly that such powers encompass the authority to apprehend and keep in custody individuals who, the Attorney General of Quebec has valid reasons to believe, are determined to overthrow the government through violence and illegal means. According to the information we have and which is available to you, we are facing a concerted effort to intimidate and overthrow the government and the democratic institutions of this province through planned and systematic illegal action, including insurrection. It is obvious that those participating in this concerted effort completely reject the principle of freedom under the rule of law.

The Quebec Government is convinced that such powers are necessary to meet the present emergency. Not only are two completely innocent men threatened with death, but we are also faced with an attempt by a minority to destroy social order through criminal action; it is for those reasons that our government is making the present request.

The government is confident that, through such powers, it will be able to put an immediate stop to intimidation and terror and to ensure peace and security for all citizens.

Please accept, Mr. Prime Minister, my very best regards.

Robert Bourassa

● (11:10 a.m.)

[English]

I also received from the civic authorities of the city of Montreal a letter addressed to me which reads as follows:

[Translation]

Mr. Prime Minister,

The chief of the Montreal Police has informed us that the means available to him are proving inadequate and that the assistance of higher levels of government has become essential for the protection of society against the seditious plot and the apprehended insurrection in which the recent kidnappings were the first step.