

ment of the exaggerated statements made by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand). I would like to quote for the record several paragraphs from it as follows:

● (8:20 p.m.)

Justice Minister Jerome Choquette was quoted yesterday as describing as highly exaggerated an implication by Regional Economic Expansion Minister, Jean Marchand, that there may have been as many as 3,000 heavily armed revolutionaries ready to fight for Quebec independence.

Mr. Marchand cited the figure as a justification for Ottawa invoking the War Measures Act to combat FLQ terrorism.

In an impassioned defence of the act, Mr. Marchand told the Commons on October 16 that the FLQ has 3,000 members. He said many had infiltrated into decision-making positions throughout Quebec. He claimed that the FLQ had enough explosives and arms to destroy downtown Montreal and said it was ready to use them.

"There are maybe 100 or 125 active members of the Front de Libération du Québec in my opinion," Mr. Choquette was quoted as saying. "Mr. Marchand has his own way about him. His statement was highly exaggerated. There were far too many conflicting comments and opinions coming from Ottawa during the crisis."

Mr. Bourassa said: "I would like to see Mr. Marchand's statement. Was he speaking of active terrorists, or sympathizers?"

When pressed by reporters to say whether he considered 3,000 an exaggerated number for active FLQ members, he said, "Well, you saw the arrests, about 100 still held—you have your answer there."

I point out, Mr. Speaker, that in the latest results given to the House of Commons, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) told us there were 454 individuals arrested under the War Measures Act and that to date 403 of them had been released. Only 51 had been detained to date, and of these only two had been sentenced. No doubt a number of those presently being detained will also be released without charge. Despite an intensive police search in every part of Quebec, no large caches of weapons or large supplies of dynamite have been located.

All this information would clearly indicate that the claimed threat of apprehended insurrection never existed. In my opinion, when the full story of the FLQ crisis is written in the months and years to come it will become abundantly clear that governmental panic at both the federal and the provincial level was the main cause for invoking the War Measures Act.

Another important and supplementary reason was the desire of the federal government to prop up the weak and vacillating Liberal cabinet of Premier Bourassa. Only one member of that cabinet had really stood out against negotiating with the terrorists, and that was the Attorney General. To help save the political hide of a Liberal Premier, and to prevent further active negotiations by the province with the FLQ for release of prisoners, 22,000,000 Canadians were stripped of their civil liberties.

We must not forget the role played by the mayor of Montreal in this FLQ crisis. He rightly requested federal assistance, but under the cloak of the War Measures Act he was one of the first to abuse its powers by using it against his municipal political opponents. I personally feel that the real crisis in the city of Montreal and in the

province of Quebec is well in hand. There is no further need for the vast police powers of the War Measures Act and no need for the very extreme powers under the temporary emergency powers bill which is currently before the House. The crisis is in hand in Quebec and any remaining problems, in my opinion, could be handled adequately under the sections of the Criminal Code which I have already mentioned.

Let me add that recently the Prime Minister has tried to foist the blame on the news media for the wild rumours which were spread about plots, replacing of government administrations, etc. Every member and every reporter in this House knows where these wild rumours originated. They came from prominent cabinet ministers, from Liberal backbenchers and from the Prime Minister himself. Many of them are on record in speeches made by them. These members should get up in this House and tell the people of Canada what they have done. Trying to foist the blame on the news media is a disgraceful tactic and it must be highly embarrassing to those members who were guilty of originally spreading the rumours.

Despite the fact that the present measure is somewhat less restrictive than the War Measures Act, it nevertheless contains several very vicious and repugnant sections. In fact, these sections are so lacking in their protection of civil liberties and are so opposed to my ideas of Canadian justice that I refuse to endorse any type of legislation which contains them. Clause 8 will make offences retroactive. This is the most vicious feature of the bill. If something was legal five or six years ago, I fail to see the justice in now making it retroactively an illegal act.

Many hundreds of innocent individuals can be caught by this vicious feature and it should never be allowed to pass into law. Surely Canadians have a fairer sense of justice than to allow legislation of this type to be placed upon our statute books. This section makes an individual guilty until he proves himself innocent. No one who believes in basic civil liberties can endorse this abhorrent principle.

The second feature is the failure of this government to allow a review board or a review commission to make certain that the measures under this act are not abused. This safeguard is an absolute necessity, for many more innocent people may be arrested under this temporary measures act and could again suffer adversely because of our failure to allow an independent review to take place. The setting up of this board would in no way affect police action in the city of Montreal. Still this government remains adamant and refuses to allow this necessary protection of the civil rights of Canadians.

We are told that it is up to the province of Quebec to administer the act and that provision for a review board is not required. However, this is federal legislation and we have the powers delegated under the Constitution to insist upon the protection of the civil rights of every Canadian regardless of where he resides. We should protect those rights and insist that those who would use the powers of this new legislation must also agree to protect