

in which the extraordinary powers which have been requested by the government are to be effectively administered in the best interests of the people.

I would say that nothing in the statements or actions of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) or the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) have in any way alleviated the fears, doubts and disquiet of members of this House or of the people generally. If anything, events over the past few weeks only confirm the tremendous need to have clearly stated in the law an effective form of review that will prevent, or at least will redress, the abuses that are more than likely to occur.

• (3:30 p.m.)

The arguments that have been put before the House both by the Minister of Justice and by the Prime Minister to the effect that we should trust the provincial authorities, particularly the Minister of Justice, seem to me to be fallacious reasoning, if not to say a rather ill-informed view, as to how the law operates in this country. The minister of justice or attorney general of any province is as much bound to observe federal and provincial statutes as any other individual citizen. To say that in certain instances, particularly instances where extraordinary powers are to be set forth, we should simply set aside the normal processes of protection and allow what we believe to be the wisdom, good faith and good judgment of the provincial minister to be exercised, to me is the weakest form of argument possible.

I think it is an even weaker argument when there is the kind of pressure—and the pressure must be very great indeed—that there is on provincial officials at this moment. When those of us who are concerned about basic questions of civil liberties and civil rights in this country examine some of the things said by the Quebec Minister of Justice—I refer only to the possible introduction of identity cards—we are given a clear indication that in passing this legislation the members of the House must be given assurance, not through some statement of good intent or through trust of any given individual but through the only kind of guarantee that is possible with regard to the workings of this House, namely a guarantee in law.

If there are any doubts, Mr. Speaker, that abuse of the law by the authorities is possible, then those doubts should surely have been confirmed last evening and yesterday afternoon when we heard the Prime Minister, not only in this House but on the national media, respond to the question why a review clause was not inserted into the bill. The Prime Minister responded in his well-known, off-hand manner by saying: "Well, you know, there is a lot of propaganda being circulated by the separatists and the FLQ about how we are calling the shots for the provincial government".

In the first instance, I wondered why it was that he referred to the separatists and the FLQ. The people of this country have been told by the government over past weeks and months that the one threat the government and the country must move against is the FLQ. In the

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Prime Minister's statement heard nationally on television and radio last night, he said that it was the propaganda that was being circulated by the separatists and the FLQ, indicating at the very least a confusion of mind, or if not confusion, a very dangerous intent, on the part of the Prime Minister. If the right hon. gentleman who leads this government is that confused, then how can the members of this House be expected to trust good intention and good judgment, not just of a provincial attorney general and minister of justice, but of individual police officers and authorities, thousands of whom will be acting under this special legislation?

If the Prime Minister is so confused as to lump together all those of separatist persuasion in the province of Quebec—a factor that some of us have feared for some time now—and the members of the FLQ, who surely must to most reasonable people in this country be an entirely different order of individual, then it is all the more important that the amendment that has been requested over past days to this law be not only earnestly considered by the Minister of Justice, but acted upon at once.

Once more the Prime Minister seemed to return to his favourite argument, all reason seeming to be unworkable and all answers seeming to be not worth mentioning, when he resorted over the past week end to suggesting that there is, of course, the well-known constitutional problem. How often it has been convenient for the Prime Minister to talk about the constitution posing a major problem. He has talked about it in response to the tremendous need there has been in this country over past years for something to be done about the desperate plight of those people who have no decent housing. His only response has been that we really cannot effectively meet that situation because there is the constitutional problem.

We are now again being told in this grave situation that there is this constitutional problem. I think Canadians should know that when the Prime Minister throws in, as his final and strongest argument, the statement that there is a constitutional problem, what he is really saying is: "I won't do it, I don't want to do it, and I have made up my mind I am not going to do it". That is what the Prime Minister means. When dealing with questions of great importance to this country it is high time the Prime Minister stopped resorting to this shabby "non-argument", because, frankly, that is all it is.

Why is the question of review so important to this legislation? It is important for any number of reasons. I would say in a general way that, as we have gone through the clause by clause study of this bill during the past few days, we have come to realize collectively, as individual members have made contributions to the debate in this House, that there is much more than a first glance would indicate that is dangerous and unclear in this legislation. Even worse than the things it does say are the things that the legislation does not say, but to which there are hazy references. The fact that almost every clause is open to very dangerous misinterpretation should itself demand that the government be only too willing to respond to something that is overwhelmingly supported by the people of this country. Surely this was