

Invoking of War Measures Act

country. I hope the government will lean over backwards, as I hope I shall do, to see that from now on the FLQ will have 265 enemies, not people who are obviously their enemies but people who are forced into this position. I, for one, will go a long way with the government, with my own party and with other members of this House to see that law in Canada is restored to normal.

Mr. Ray Perrault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. speaker, at the outset I wish to commend my good friend the hon. member representing Pembina (Mr. Bigg) for a very constructive and positive contribution to this debate. I believe he deserves the commendation of all of us. He has expressed very well the feeling of all members of all parties in this House that, while we may differ in our approach to what is a very serious problem, we are all deeply committed to keeping Canada united and to fighting as diligently as is possible threats to national unity by any forces which would destroy this country.

I have had the honour of serving in the opposition in another House. It is not an easy task to be in opposition. An opposition has a responsibility to set forth a diversity of opinion on the range of issues which may exist in the country. I believe the views of an opposition should be considered, listened to and pondered well. I espouse, the cause of a strong opposition because that is the only way to keep our parliamentary system strong.

In this debate in the past two days, we have listened with interest to a great many valuable opposition speeches. There has been vigorous opposition here to some of the remarks made from the other side of the House. Some members there have expressed serious concern about certain aspects of the War Measures Act. If we are a responsible government on this side, we will do our best to allay those fears which, in some cases at least, may appear to have partial basis in fact. I agree with my hon. friend across the way in opposition who just spoke when he suggested that perhaps we should attempt to gather together as much unanimity of opinion as possible in the House. It seems to me the most damaging blow to the FLQ, and to other groups seeking to destroy Canada, would be an opinion from this House that we disapprove of what they are attempting to do and condemn them with one voice.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Perrault: If in order to achieve that degree of unanimity it may be necessary for certain assurances to be provided from the government side to our friends in opposition, then I think we should provide them. I did not hesitate, when I was in opposition, to suggest that there should be more consultation particularly on important matters among the leaders of the parties in the House. On the rare occasion when it was done in my previous forum of activity, I believe the people benefited by the sharing of knowledge among the party leaders. In matters relating to the security of the state it is not possible, of course, to open every file and dossier. My friend who was formerly a member of the RCMP I believe realizes

[Mr. Bigg.]

this. All security files cannot be opened to a wide range of people. But in so far as it is possible I hope the government does share with the other party leaders as much information as possible about the nature and the extent of the challenge facing Canada at this hour.

In the sort of oratorical snowstorm which has taken place in the past two days, perhaps some members on that side have overlooked some relevant facts. Many have said in this debate that the action of the government is unnecessary. They have said that we are guilty of over-kill. But really, in the final analyses, how is the urgency of a situation to be determined? When we are told by the leader of one of the major provinces in Canada that after consultation with authorities directly responsible for the administration of justice the Quebec government is convinced that the law as it stands now is inadequate to meet the situation satisfactorily, when a communiqué of that kind is received by the federal government and immediate action is requested, and when the mayor of the largest city in Canada, a great disciple of Canadian unity, suggests as he did that society is being threatened by seditious action—

Mr. Alkenbrack: He told you that a year and a half ago.

Mr. Perrault: When such information is communicated urgently to the government of Canada, that government must act immediately in the manner requested by those other levels of government. When the head of the police department of the city of Montreal states, as recorded at page 245 of *Hansard*, the following,

An extremely dangerous subversive organization has gradually developed in Quebec over the last several years with a view to preparing the overthrow of the legitimate government by seditious means and eventually armed insurrection.

no government, Conservative, Liberal, NDP, Social Credit or anything else can remain supine and silent. The government must act and it must fully seize the only legislative weapon, the only statutory piece of machinery available to it, to act in the immediate fashion that these governments crying out for action demand.

The Prime Minister certainly did not defend the War Measures Act as being a perfect piece of legislation. I hope some members will re-read his statements. He said that the measure was too wide-ranging. It should be repeated that the regulations which have been proclaimed permit the exercise of only a limited number of provisions under the act. As well, the Prime Minister, as recorded at page 194 of *Hansard*, said:

—I wish to make it clear today that the government regards the use of the War Measures Act as only an interim and... somewhat unsatisfactory measure.

And in all the oratory we have heard during the past few days, I wonder whether the members of the opposition parties have ignored the request made by the Prime Minister to them. He said this:

—it is my firm intention to discuss with the leaders of the opposition parties the desirability of introducing legislation of a less comprehensive nature. In this respect I earnestly solicit