

● (4:30 p.m.)

[English]

**Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, during the time I have been here, which covers six Parliaments, I have, I fear, made a good many speeches. Never have I spoken with less joy, with more pain and distress, than I bring to my engagement in this very serious discussion. Indeed, I would say that I couple immense sorrow with considerable fear.

The strain upon members of this House has been great. It has been much greater on those who lead the country. We all know the immense stress which surrounds the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his associates, and even that is very much less than the awful anxiety which those who belong to Mr. Cross and Mr. Laporte have been bearing and enduring for far too long. Then, today, we have another sad postscript with the loss of a young Canadian, a member of the Armed Forces.

This is an important discussion and it is interesting, I think, to recall that we are now purely in a deliberative role rather than a legislative role because the impact of that which we are discussing has already been felt. The operation is in effect, and we are here not legislating in the sense that we are passing any law. We are seeking to appraise an action, a very important action, a very serious and unprecedented action already undertaken.

Tom Paine, many years ago, spoke of his age as "times that try men's souls," and we in public life in recent years might well say the same thing about this period in Canada. I verily believe that this House and this country are passing through fires which will leave such a mark upon our country and its institutions that they will never be quite the same again. I never thought that on a beautiful autumn Saturday I would be with my colleagues discussing in peacetime, or what we call peacetime, the question of the approval of the invocation of the War Measures Act in a situation wherein there has been no foreign invasion of this country.

● (4:40 p.m.)

We delude ourselves, Mr. Speaker, if we do not acknowledge that because of the terrible events of recent weeks, months and years Canada stands a little less tall than once it stood. In such times, and I have seen evidence of this in the debate, it is hard even for reasonable men to maintain a reasoned, reasonable and deliberative approach to public questions. These virtues are all the more essential to a steady deliberation of public questions because of the stresses and strains of the society around us and the easy inducements to quick, emotional responses to very serious matters. Already in this debate things have happened occasionally which I find regrettable. I had hoped that no one would seriously suggest, in trying to score debating points, that any one in this House, in this atmosphere of anxiety and tension, wants anything but the termination of the terror and the eradication of the terrorists in the FLQ just as quickly as possible. To suggest otherwise is, I think, shameless and regrettable. Let it not be suggested that any member cares less about the terrible travail of the people of

#### *Invoking of War Measures Act*

Quebec than does any other member. I have no friends in the FLQ and no former friends in the FLQ.

I am happy that at long last some measures are being taken against these people. I hope they will be efficacious. But it is unworthy for anyone to suggest, however subtly, that any group or any individual is soft on these unworthy and unwholesome residents of this land and on those whose actions have brought us to this dread state of crisis. What we are trying to evaluate at present is the efficacy and propriety of various steps taken in respect thereof. But as to the desire and the need to rid the land of these diabolically active and evil men, there is no question; nor should anyone state that there is. Nor is it really helpful in these difficult times, when people are sorting out what they think are best approaches, for anyone to use designations such as, "bleeding hearts", or "weak kneed" or "timid". We are all terribly traumatized by the tragedy. I do not describe as weak-livered people those who, like the Premier of Saskatchewan, suggest, while recognizing as we all must the sanctity of human life, that perhaps throwing a few goons out of the country once and for all was a price that he would consider paying if he were in Premier Bourassa's shoes.

I think what is essentially the problem in this serious question, and since other members have advanced their points of view I will put my views in an abbreviated form, is that one might designate the government's handling of this situation very simply as, "Too much too late". The question which must be answered, and I think it is incumbent upon those in charge of the nation's affairs to answer it, is this: was there any other way of dealing with the situation, other than the suspension of the civil rights of Canadians, as is the case. There is no point I think, sir, in our discussing whether in fact there has been a suspension of civil rights. Of course, there has been a suspension of civil rights. Many people say that this is fine and that is their point of view. I have a feeling that many who applaud this particular exercise are, as the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) pointed out this morning, rejoicing that something is being done—and God help us, it is time that something was done. But it is our duty at this time to examine the nature of the action. Perhaps I ought to call it an extreme reaction.

People approve some action being taken. I think the whole country, except the possible victims of the action, is at one on this. But has it yet been demonstrated to us that this was the best, that this was the only solution? Many people in Canada are not, thank God, too familiar with the War Measures Act. I am sure that many people who have proclaimed their delight have not had the opportunity to read the regulations and probably are far from familiar with the War Measures Act. I am glad of that. I am glad that it is many, many years since this very, very serious piece of legislation has been operative, in this land in peace.

I am not going to indulge in a series of tirades or bring forward a catalogue of criticisms. That will not help much and it is not essentially in my nature so to do. Nevertheless, I think there is a terrible onus on the Prime Minister and his associates in two respects: they will have