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**AN ORCHESTRATED CRISIS:  
FEDERALISM, NATIONALISM AND  
THE STATE IN OCTOBER 1970**

On October 16, 1970 the Canadian government, led by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, invoked the War Measures Act. Previously the Act had only been used during the two World Wars in order to grant the government extraordinary powers to quell domestic unrest during times of great national stress and insecurity. The invocation of the Act during peacetime has been described by Dominique Clement as “one of the most controversial human rights crises in Canadian history.”<sup>1</sup> While the powers the Act gave to state security forces were indeed an encompassing and zealous extension of their ordinary abilities, the truly puzzling aspect of the October Crisis is the motivation for the invocation of the Act. The pretext was that Robert Bourassa’s Quebec government faced an apprehended insurrection organized by the violent separatist organization the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ). As will be discussed, the justification for this claim was, and continues to be, tenuous at best. The subtext that becomes increasingly obvious is that the federal government utilized the semblance of a crisis and the hysterical public will to mobilize the state’s legislative and physical sources of power to intimidate and strangle Quebecois nationalism and burgeoning separatist sentiment. A discussion on the Crisis must recognize the multiple facets at play, including the political, intelligence, and democratic or legal aspects. Ultimately, the October Crisis entailed many successes, especially for the policing and intelligence services, but the invocation of the Act proved to be a democratic, political and legal failure.

Prior to the discussion on the War Measures Act and the October Crisis a brief description of the FLQ and the policing efforts concentrated against them is necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> Dominique Clement, *Canada’s Rights Revolution: Social Movements and Social Change, 1937-82* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008): 105.

The FLQ were an unfortunate by-product of the Quiet Revolution and the “larger separatist movement, widespread among French-speaking Canadians in the early 1960s that felt Quebecois cultural, economic and political were being ignored.”<sup>2</sup> The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) expressed an interest in the organization shortly after their 1963 founding, having deemed it a “subversive organization” as it aimed to overthrow the legitimate democratic power structure in Quebec by force. Due to the jurisdictional separation between the federal RCMP, the provincial Surete du Quebec (SQ) and the municipal Service de la police de la Ville de Montreal (SPVM), the RCMP was primarily restricted to investigations and intelligence gathering on the subversive aspects of the FLQ and the broader separatist movement, as well as crimes committed against federal property. The RCMP played a supplementary role with provincial and municipal police forces in apprehending suspects responsible for other, non-federal FLQ crimes.<sup>3</sup> Beginning in 1963 the FLQ pursued its campaign aimed at separating Quebec from the rest of Canada through bombings, armed robberies, shootings, kidnappings and petty vandalism. Early into the FLQ’s campaign the combined RCMP, SQ and SPVM Combined Anti-Terrorist Squad, or CATS, achieved some successes, most notably in the break-up of fledgling FLQ-inspired groups and the disruption of FLQ operations.<sup>4</sup> The RCMP had successfully infiltrated the FLQ by June 1963, leading to the August arrest of a large swathe of the FLQ leadership and the emergence of a new, decentralized FLQ that operated along an autonomous cell structure.<sup>5</sup> The RCMP was given an implicit directive

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<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey Ian Ross and Ted Robert Gurr, “Why Terrorism Subsides: A Comparative Study of Canada and the United States,” *Comparative Politics* Vol.21, No.4 (July 1989): 411.

<sup>3</sup> William and Nora Kelly, *The Royal Canadian Mounted Police: A Century of History* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1973): 278.

<sup>4</sup> Reg Whittaker, Greg Kealey and Andrew Parnaby, *Secret Service: Political Policing in Canada from the Fenians to Fortress North America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012): 277.

<sup>5</sup> Clement, *Canada’s Rights Revolution*, 106.

from its political masters to compile extensive dossiers on separatists, in particular FLQ suspects, in September 1964; shortly thereafter the RCMP increased the use of human sources placed inside the FLQ, leading to a marked increase in the quality and quantity of intelligence on the movement. With this broadened intelligence program the RCMP began to admit that there was little evidence of separatist leaders, both violent and democratic, working with communist elements, a noteworthy assessment for an organization plagued by accusations of “Cold War blinders.”<sup>6</sup> On Dominion Day 1966 the SPVM executed preventative arrests of over one hundred individuals with links to the FLQ or likely to cause disruptions and forced them to fill out “political questionnaires.” The SPVM’s zeal also manifested itself in the service’s reputation for holding and interrogating suspected violent separatists for days without charges, and for seizing membership lists from nationalist associations under the guise of explosive searches.<sup>7</sup> William and Nora Kelly claim that by the mid 1960s the FLQ was receiving assistance from elements of the Cuban and Algerian revolutionary socialist movements, and that the New York Police Department had advised the RCMP of links between the FLQ and the violent Black Power movement in the United States,<sup>8</sup> whereas *Secret Service* asserts that the RCMP had dismissed links between the FLQ and foreign elements at that time.<sup>9</sup> Kelly continues to claim that CATS intensively raided FLQ safe houses in 1969, resulting in the allegation that “members of leftist groups aimed to join the FLQ in a planned armed insurrection,” specifically members of the federally funded Company of Young

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<sup>6</sup> Whittaker, Kealey and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 278-279.

<sup>7</sup> Dominique Clement, “The October Crisis of 1970: Human Rights Abuses Under the “War Measures Act,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* Vol.42, No.2 (Spring 2008): 164-165.

<sup>8</sup> Kelly, *The Royal Canadian Mounted Police*, 279.

<sup>9</sup> Whittaker, Kealey and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 282.

Canadians.<sup>10</sup> Early 1969 also saw the bombing of the Montreal Stock Exchange by an FLQ cell lead by Pierre-Paul Geoffroy, in which twenty seven people were injured. For his efforts Geoffroy was sentenced to one hundred and twenty four life sentences, the most severe sentence in British Commonwealth history. The Canadian Army was called upon to quell October 1969 riots, and in November 1969 Montreal prohibited demonstrations and public assemblies.<sup>11</sup> The 1969 RCMP threat assessment on Quebec separatism is noteworthy, as it completely dismissed communist involvement and recognized the FLQ as a threat but disqualified a “revolutionary base” from which the FLQ could potentially achieve their aims. The assessment was also surprisingly commendatory of the democratic separatist Parti Quebecois’ “ethically and constitutionally correct approach to the Quebec question,” a key indicator that the RCMP had finally cut the correlation it had drawn between acceptable forms of separatist sentiment and violent insurrectionism.<sup>12</sup> Clement effectively summarizes the situation of “conflict between the police and the FLQ, and the radicalism of the 1960s, [setting] the context of the October Crisis.”<sup>13</sup>

The FLQ’s campaign had been stymied, largely due to basic police work and a competent intelligence program, but on October 5, 1970 a FLQ cell succeeded in kidnapping a British trade diplomat, James Cross, from his Montreal residence. The FLQ subsequently issued a list of demands, including a gold payment, the publication of their manifesto and the release of FLQ members from their various stages of incarceration. One of the largest manhunts in Canadian history ensued, with over one thousand raids

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<sup>10</sup> Kelly, *The Royal Canadian Mounted Police*, 280.

<sup>11</sup> Clement, “The October Crisis of 1970,” 164.

<sup>12</sup> Whittaker, Kealey and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 281.

<sup>13</sup> Clement, “The October Crisis of 1970,” 165.

and searches and the arrest, interrogation and eventual release of approximately fifty individuals.<sup>14</sup> A wave of protests and disruptions resulted. Quebec Labour Minister Pierre Laporte was abducted by a different cell of the FLQ on October 10, leading to the October 15 usage of the National Defence Act and the deployment of 6000 Canadian soldiers in Quebec, ostensibly to cope with the unrest, guard government property, and free the police to search for Messrs. Cross and Laporte.<sup>15</sup> There was an air of confusion and anger in Montreal and in Ottawa Trudeau's government deliberated on how to manage the situation.

Federal Justice Minister John Turner presented the Cabinet with three options on October 14. The first option was to declare that Quebec was in the midst of an 'apprehended insurrection' and invoke the War Measures Act, the second was to create special legislation giving additional powers to the police, but significantly less than the War Measures Act would have, and finally to amend the Act so that it can be used for more than just an insurrectionary or wartime case. Cabinet was unanimously in favour of emergency legislation,<sup>16</sup> but Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa had indicated his preference towards an invocation of the Act on October 11, the day after Laporte's abduction.<sup>17</sup> H.D. Munroe states that Trudeau needed Bourassa to request the Act in order to follow his own federalist doctrine of provincial-federal parity and to be seen as assisting, rather than undercutting, the Quebec government. The Premier had wanted to legislate an end to a doctor's strike before requesting federal assistance in dealing with the Crisis. On October 15 Bourassa was in the midst of a marathon session to end the

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<sup>14</sup> Clement, *Canada's Rights Revolution*, 106.

<sup>15</sup> H.D. Munroe, "Style within the centre: Pierre Trudeau, the War Measures Act, and the nature of prime ministerial power," *Canadian Public Administration* Vol.54, No.4 (Dec. 2011): 538.

<sup>16</sup> Clement, "The October Crisis of 1970," 167

<sup>17</sup> Munroe, "Style within the centre," 541.

strike and only finished that business at 1am the following day, two hours after the House of Commons' special sitting had ended. Bourassa's tardiness, according to Munroe, effectively forced Trudeau's hand into invoking the War Measures Act, his most readily available option. Trudeau declared a state of insurrection in Quebec and used an overnight order-in-council to invoke the Act at 4am on Friday, October 16.<sup>18</sup> The invocation was said to be in response to letters for assistance in managing an "apprehended insurrection" from Bourassa and Montreal mayor Jean Drapeau; this was despite the fact the Trudeau and his Justice Minister had recognized the potential civil libertarian backlash, and Turner's expressed belief that the Act was excessive.<sup>19</sup>

Before we can continue this narrative any further it is crucial to explain the War Measures Act, and understand just how potent it was. One of the Act's specific powers was that it gave Cabinet the authority to pass any regulations it deemed necessary in order to defend national security. Trudeau's Cabinet passed the Public Order Regulations (POR) which banned the FLQ and made criminal the membership of the FLQ, attendance of an FLQ meeting and the hosting of an FLQ function. Crucially, this offence was retroactive, meaning that an individual who attended an FLQ meeting in 1963 had committed a crime against the state. The War Measures Act's true power was its dominance over civil liberties. Police now had the power to arrest, search or seize based solely on "reason to suspect" grounds. The right of an arrested individual to *habeas corpus*, or the ancient right to have a charge confirmed before a judge, was revoked, as was his right to bail, counsel or outside contact. He could be held *incommunicado* and without charge for up to twenty one days. A glaring example of the draconian powers of

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<sup>18</sup> Munroe, "Style within the centre," 544-545.

<sup>19</sup> Clement, *Canada's Rights Revolution*, 107.

the Act was that its invocation temporarily abolished the 1960 Bill of Rights.<sup>20</sup> Thomas Berger declares that the Canadian government's assessment of the Crisis as an insurrection shocked Canadian complacency in an "end of innocence" that saw the latent "authoritarian impulse" of Canadian political culture manifest itself.<sup>21</sup>

Pre-dawn October 16 raids resulted in two hundred and eighty eight arrests. Ultimately four hundred and ninety seven individuals would be arrested under the authority of the Act. Eighty seven percent of those arrested were never charged, with the average time spent incarcerated being seven days, but many spent the full twenty one. Eventually sixty two people were actually charged, mostly with sedition, resulting in a meagre eighteen convictions. Over three thousand warrantless searches were conducted and were indicative of what Clement describes as a "clear bias against nationalists and the political left in general."<sup>22</sup> A scarcely known, and infinitely smaller, program of arrests also occurred in Halifax, Toronto and Vancouver, under questionable motives.<sup>23</sup> In a supreme example of vindictive savagery, Pierre Laporte was found dead inside a car's trunk the day after the invocation of the Act.<sup>24</sup>

When Trudeau sought the House of Commons' support for his invocation of the Act he received a strong response. One hundred and ninety Members of Parliament approved the measure, while sixteen New Democratic Party MPs, fearing a downward spiral of repression, disapproved.<sup>25</sup> Tommy Douglas condemned the invocation, especially as he saw Montreal mayor Jean Drapeau's decision to continue with the

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas R. Berger, *Fragile Freedoms: Human Rights and Dissent in Canada* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1981): 200-202.

<sup>21</sup> Berger, *Fragile Freedoms*, 190-191.

<sup>22</sup> Clement, *Canada's Rights Revolution*, 108.

<sup>23</sup> Berger, *Fragile Freedoms*, 202.

<sup>24</sup> Clement, *Canada's Rights Revolution*, 107.

<sup>25</sup> Kelly, *The Royal Canadian Mounted Police*, 282.



municipal elections troubling.<sup>26</sup> In particular, Douglas had qualms over Drapeau's tactic of labelling his opponents as FLQ members or supporters, a development Douglas termed "Canadian McCarthyism."<sup>27</sup> Drapeau would go on to win a landslide victory on October 25.<sup>28</sup> John Diefenbaker, the vociferous former Prime Minister, also complained about the situation. Though a strong supporter of the use of the War Measures Act, Diefenbaker remarked that he found soldiers in Ottawa, on the streets since October 12, wearing helmets to be unsettling; in response, Trudeau suggested that the soldiers wear a different type of hat while in Diefenbaker's presence.<sup>29</sup> Cabinet met with the RCMP secret service on Sunday, October 18 for a briefing; the Prime Minister had already discussed the matter with the RCMP and so was absent. According to Don Jamieson, the Minister of Transport, the RCMP were asked if they had any information, from before or after the use of the Act, to justify the government's claim that they faced an apprehended insurrection in Quebec. The RCMP declared that they had "no such evidence." The ministers were obviously startled, resulting in the police stating that despite the lack of evidence "the total pattern [of unrest] was sufficient to justify the government's actions." Jamieson also surmises that Trudeau had already been told that there was no evidence to concretely justify the Act's usage, explaining his absence at the Sunday meeting.<sup>30</sup>

Predictably, the invocation of the Act served to enflame the already prevalent hysteria. Nowhere was this more evident than in British Columbia. On November 2 B.C.'s provincial government passed an order-in-council prohibiting teachers from even

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<sup>26</sup> Clement, "The October Crisis of 1970," 169.

<sup>27</sup> Tommy Douglas, "Fronting the Storm", in *Trudeau's Darkest Hour: War Measures in a Time of Peace, October 1970*, ed. Guy Bouthillier and Edouard Cloutier, 139-148 (Montreal: Baraka Books, 2010): 144.

<sup>28</sup> Clement, "The October Crisis of 1970," 169.

<sup>29</sup> Clement, "The October Crisis of 1970," 171.

<sup>30</sup> Don Jamieson, "Pushing War Measures Through Cabinet" in *Trudeau's Darkest Hour: War Measures in a Time of Peace, October 1970*, ed. Guy Bouthillier and Edouard Cloutier, 59-65 (Montreal: Baraka Books, 2010): 64-65.

discussing the FLQ or the War Measures Act in the classroom; this was also restricted in Quebec schools.<sup>31</sup> An absurd twist to this narrative occurred when the mayor of Vancouver proposed to use the Act to deal with the “hippies and draft dodgers.” The musings of politicians on how to take full advantage of the situation continued: the Quebec Minister of Justice proposed the implementation of Canadian identity cards to be carried at all times and revoking the citizenship of FLQ members and proceeding to deport them. The solicitor general in Ottawa, Jean-Pierre Goyer, also discussed the possibility of creating emergency peacetime legislation to allow the government to quickly, and more conveniently, respond to crises. Clement asserts that these suggestions “are indicative of an atmosphere in which human rights had taken second place to national security concerns.”<sup>32</sup> This newly subservient status of human rights and civil liberties manifested itself in arguably more disturbing ways than the mayor of Vancouver’s suggestion.

The fundamental and irrevocable right to free speech came under intense pressure during the Crisis, in particular student publications in Quebec. Any student publication that wished to publish the FLQ’s manifesto or discuss the Crisis in a nonpartisan fashion were visited by the RCMP and “advised” to have a front page condemning the FLQ. Quebec provincial authorities sternly warned McGill University against an attack on the validity of the War Measures Act or any perceived sympathy with the FLQ. Several prominent political commentators and newspaper editors were singled out and arrested on October 16, and the government owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation experienced

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<sup>31</sup> Berger, *Fragile Freedoms*, 204.

<sup>32</sup> Clement, “The October Crisis of 1970,” 170.

a political purge.<sup>33</sup> The right to free assembly also came under scrutiny, highlighted by the case of the SQ raiding the home of a woman who had been photographed at an anti-War Measures demonstration.<sup>34</sup> The NDP was likewise targeted and had their Montreal offices raided by the SPVM, an act Thomas Berger claims was a result of the NDP's opposition to the Act.<sup>35</sup>

Fortunately, Canada had not completely succumbed to the Crisis rhetoric and there was notable opposition. Within Quebec there were large demonstrations and significant condemnations, but it was outside Quebec that the most meaningful criticism took place. *Ad hoc* civil liberties associations, as well as existing associations and legal groups demanded an end to the draconian War Measures Act, especially the threat posed towards free speech. The Communist Party of Canada deserves praise, as it represented a very small but very vocal, opposition. The weakest criticism, from a body that had previously garnered a reputation as an outspoken advocate of free speech, came from the Ligue des droits de l'homme, the leading Quebec civil rights association; Prime Minister Trudeau attempted to capitalize on this, which Berger surmises was due to fear of being targeted, and claimed that the Ligue's silence was evidence of their support for the Act. He declared that "it's easy when you're sitting in Toronto or Vancouver to talk about civil liberties."<sup>36</sup> When the Ligue demanded he rescind his comments he refused. In Waterloo, Ontario, a "Citizens Commission of Inquiry, composed of professors, labour and church leaders and journalists, was formed in December 1970 in order to educate the

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<sup>33</sup> Clement, *Canada's Rights Revolution*, 109.

<sup>34</sup> Clement, "The October Crisis of 1970," 169.

<sup>35</sup> Berger, *Fragile Freedoms*, 212.

<sup>36</sup> Clement, "The October Crisis of 1970," 172-175.

relatively sheltered province and to protest the seizure of a Guelph student newspaper and the arrest of a Kitchener resident for distributing the FLQ's manifesto.<sup>37</sup>

Ultimately, opposition to the Act was overshadowed by overwhelming public support.<sup>38</sup> A survey of London, Ontario residents' opinions, prior to the Act and in December, indicated that support for the government climaxed with the invocation of the War Measures Act at eighty nine percent.<sup>39</sup> Clement agrees with the London results and states that English Canada was almost entirely in agreement with the government's actions, and surprisingly a vast majority of Francophones were in favour of Ottawa's harsh measures. French and English media outlets' coverage generally coincided with public opinion.<sup>40</sup>

The strong public supporters of the Act began to question the need for its continued usage as October 1970 came to a close with sparse FLQ activity. Despite this, the federal government essentially prolonged the extra powers on November 2 with the introduction of the Public Order (Temporary Measures) Act. When the Act was passed on December 3 the War Measures Act was revoked, but under the Temporary Measures Act an arrested individual could still be held without a charge for seven days, a bail application required the attorney general's consent and the Bill of Rights' protection against arbitrary detention and denial of bail were overruled. The Temporary Act expired on April 30, 1971, ending the extra powers the government had given itself during the October Crisis.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Clement, *Canada's Rights Revolution*, 111.

<sup>38</sup> Berger, *Fragile Freedoms*, 202.

<sup>39</sup> Richard M. Sorrentino and Neil Vidmar, "Impact of Events: Short-vs Long-Term Effects of a Crisis," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* Vol.38, No.2 (Summer 1974): 274.

<sup>40</sup> Clement, "The October Crisis of 1970," 172.

<sup>41</sup> Berger, *Fragile Freedoms*, 206-207.

With the background of the Crisis, the Crisis itself, and the powers and uses of the War Measures Act having been described the question of motivation for the extreme powers, raised at the beginning of this discussion, needs to be resurrected. H.D. Munroe states that there are two dominant views on the Crisis: the first, that Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was an uncompromising advocate of democratic ideals who was forced by the FLQ into a harsh defence of those ideals; and the second is that the Crisis was a predictable product of the Quiet Revolution and Trudeau took advantage of the situation to use the power of the state to intimidate nationalism and separatism in Quebec.<sup>42</sup> The latter suggestion has become increasingly appealing, especially considering the RCMP's hesitancy over the Act's excessive powers. According to sworn testimony at the 1979 McDonald Commission the RCMP believed their apprehension to have been validated by the excesses of the SQ and in particular the SPVM in October 1970 and that the Crisis and the Act actually diverted attention and manpower away from the search for Cross and Laporte's killers.<sup>43</sup> Mr. Cross was eventually found in early December 1970 and Laporte's murderers were found through "good police work" and basic intelligence gathering tactics. The RCMP discovered Cross's whereabouts, but in order to be sure an RCMP constable moved into the apartment below where Cross was being held. The electricity was eventually shut off and negotiations began, culminating in the kidnappers being allowed to go to Cuba.<sup>44</sup> Also of note concerning the kidnappings were the earlier kidnapping attempts that were foiled by CATS. The FLQ had attempted to abduct an

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<sup>42</sup> H.D. Munroe, "The October Crisis Revisited: Counterterrorism as a Strategic Choice, Political Result, and Organizational Practice," *Terrorism & Political Violence* Vol.21, No.2 (April 2009): 289.

<sup>43</sup> Whittaker, Kealey and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 287.

<sup>44</sup> Kelly, *The Royal Canadian Mounted Police*, 283.

Israeli diplomat and a provincial politician; the police drew the obvious conclusion and warned their masters that the separatists would attempt a similar coup.<sup>45</sup>

The failure of the government to heed the warnings constitutes a broken intelligence cycle. The suppliers, being the RCMP/CATS, provided the consumers, the government, with the information required to make an informed decision, or at the very least to be prepared.<sup>46</sup> For whatever reason, the consumers failed to adequately act on the intelligence. It is extremely unlikely that the government deliberately ignored the warnings and allowed the abductions, but it is obvious that they did not fail to take advantage of the subsequent hysterical atmosphere. Even before the use of the War Measures Act, the government was able to respond to the abductions with massive raids, searches, and arrests, all applicable and justified under the Criminal Code, and the Canadian Army had been deployed under the National Defence Act in Ottawa on October 12 and in Quebec on the 15<sup>th</sup>. A decade of success in dealing with the FLQ and violent separatism in general had resulted in an accrued intelligence network and competent coping methods. No politician or intelligence officer had indicated the emergence of a legitimate parallel power structure in the FLQ. The invocation of the War Measures Act placed “the country, and particularly the province of Quebec...under martial law”<sup>47</sup> in response to a situation that really should be viewed as two kidnappings by two distinct and autonomous cells of a violent separatist group. The police, especially the RCMP, had consistently indicated that the FLQ was not orchestrating an insurrectionary plot but were instead a “group of youths wreaking a disproportionate amount of damage.”<sup>48</sup> Again, we

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<sup>45</sup> Whittaker, Kealey and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 282-283.

<sup>46</sup> Whittaker, Kealey and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 292.

<sup>47</sup> Sorrentino and Vidmar, “Impact of Events,” 272.

<sup>48</sup> Whittaker, Kealey and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 291.

can turn to Don Jamieson's memoirs: no Cabinet member actually believed there was an apprehended insurrection, and Jamieson surmises that Trudeau and his cadre of Quebec ministers, all devoted federalists, feared the decline of federalism within Quebec and sought to re-entrench it at the expense of burgeoning Quebecois nationalism.<sup>49</sup> Jean-Luc Pepin, Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, offered a lonely defence of the Act by saying that the wide scale arrests had likely deterred and prevented protestors from further enflaming the situation.<sup>50</sup>

Considering the excesses of October 1970, including the arrests, detainments, and limits on speech and association, and the pitiful tangible results of those arrests, it is hard to justify the use of the War Measures Act in numbers. It is also difficult to rationalize it given the seven years of conflict between the state and the FLQ; the kidnappings, while deplorable, did not mark a reinvigorated campaign, but were isolated and disconnected events. Against the advice of their intelligence service, rights advocates, and the misgivings and tepid enthusiasm of the politicians themselves Pierre Trudeau invoked one of the most powerful pieces of legislation in Canadian history. If the Act and the Crisis was actually intended to defeat the FLQ, it failed, as the group staggered into the early 1970s until it eventually succumbed to the political and public backlash from the murder of Pierre Laporte, and died. If one is more inclined to believe the Crisis was of a Machiavellian sort, intended to quash nationalism, it failed on that count as well, as the PQ became the Quebec government in 1976. Though public support, even within Quebec, had been for the Act, eventually the hysteria died. The extension of the extra

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<sup>49</sup> Whittaker, Kealey and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 289.

<sup>50</sup> Whittaker, Kealey and Parnaby, *Secret Service*, 291.

powers, long after any semblance of a Crisis, was a likely variable in the electoral boom the PQ enjoyed.<sup>51</sup>

The use of the War Measures Act in October 1970 was questionable on many fronts, none more apparent than the doubtful validity of the necessary 'state of insurrection' required to invoke it. The danger the FLQ posed had been recognized for years prior to the Crisis and was met with an appropriate response. The existing powers of the police were more than adequate but what was needed, if one were to adopt a radically federalist view, was a show of legislative and physical force.

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<sup>51</sup> Ross and Gurr, "Why Terrorism Subsides," 413.



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