

Mr. Macquarrie: After hearing the minister "elucidate" this morning I now know it was complicated.

Mr. Stanfield: Deliberately so.

Mr. Macquarrie: In this I agree with that great organ in the city of Toronto, the *Globe and Mail* which in an editorial this morning said:

Whether it was another failure or a bargaining ploy by the provinces, one thing is certain: the federal proposals were so complex that most Canadians would not have read them, let alone understood them, which is a bad state of affairs in a democracy.

When I read that I thought perhaps that gray shadowy person behind the legislative process in this country, that "genius" who dreamed up the FISP bill of the last parliament, must have employed himself in the convolutions that went into this plan.

Mr. Stanfield: The same fellow.

Mr. Macquarrie: It may indeed, as some of my colleagues suggest, be more than one. Perhaps it was a group effort or a committee effort and we know what committees can do sometimes. The formula is certainly cumbersome. But one thing about it was crystal clear; it was a bum deal for the provinces which they very smartly rejected on behalf of the people for whom they are trying to provide the best of medical service. I cannot but agree with the course they took.

I noticed with pleasure the reference of the mover of this motion to a document which I have often mentioned in this House, the Rowell-Sirois Commission Report on Dominion-Provincial Relations. It seemed to me that the minister somewhat denigrated this by suggesting that it happened to be a document of some decades ago. I am not one who necessarily believes that those things which are well established are automatically of no value. I think I have read most, if not all, documents on the Canadian constitution since the Rowell-Sirois Commission Report and I have yet to see one which in my judgment has a firmer grasp of the needs and values and priorities of our federal structure than that very fine document.

The only place where I may differ from the hon. member from Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands, is that being an ardent Canadian nationalist, I use the word "dominion" when I discuss these matters whereas he uses the more American expression "federal" but we all know what document we are talking about. I was impressed by what the hon. mover said about the irony of zeroing in on liquor and tobacco. Long ago in the legislature of the province of Prince Edward Island where the tax base is not so broad, Mr. Speaker, and where it is important to find every area you can for revenue, there was a discussion on the estimates and it seemed that the only place where revenues were expanding was from the taxes on liquor. The leader of my party at that time, a very distinguished physician, Dr. MacMillan, said "I still think, Mr. Speaker, that we cannot really drink our way into prosperity". I say to the people of Canada that they cannot smoke and drink their way into improved health.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care

Mr. Macquarrie: I think we have to base our confidence on something a little better than that. I believe, as one who is something of an authority at least in a part of this realm because I gave up smoking long before I even heard of Miss Judy LaMarsh—

An hon. Member: How about drinking?

Mr. Macquarrie: I am here to orate, not to confess. I should like to say that, while we can find our moments of levity as demonstrated by the mover of the motion who has the light touch which I lack, being a dour, serious man on Highland Scottish extraction, the question is in fact a very serious one.

This week we had the very disturbing collapse of an essential dialogue between the two jurisdictions in this country. We had assembled the ministers representing the provinces and dominion in an area of immense importance to all Canadians, the field of health. A two-day conference was arranged which broke up after a one-day meeting, and I think the abruptness of the termination disturbed all of us and disturbed the people we represent. I have been looking over the various news items because I was not allowed into the conference. These things are now held behind closed doors. As I read the items I find room for deeper anxiety. The headlines read: "Federalism endangered by plan, Manitoba says"; "There's no gain in it for us," Crosbie says in rejecting proposal"; "No agreement on health costs", and all across the board there is a lack of confidence and a feeling of dismay that on this important question the two jurisdictions were not able to proceed.

The minister closed his peroration with the suggestion that it would not be difficult to place the blame and he implied that it lay with the provinces. I say that the major responsibility for the collapse of this very important conference lies in the inflexibility of the federal government of the day.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: Attitudes like that are revealed in an article by Peter Calamai, one of the most highly informed journalists in this field, which appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen* on May 7. The column is headlined, "No more sweetening of kitty: Lalonde". With an attitude like that at the beginning of a dominion-provincial conference, how in the world can we expect there to be a reasonable and harmonious discussion of this important matter. This government, which I consider as having been in office for one decade, and God knows that is too long, laid upon the provinces rigid restrictions in this field. Into that rigid framework the provinces have had to enter and administer the important and costly program of health care. It ill becomes the representative of the federal government at this stage of the game, after having laid down the rigid rules, to suggest that now he will leave to the provinces these rapidly accelerating costs and try to escape as far as he can from bearing the burden of these costs, many of them geared to the rigid formula inspired here, in Ottawa.

● (1420)

I am sure we all want the people of Canada to have a health care plan that is not only adequate but ample. I agree with the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The