

other provinces to follow more or less the example of the province of Quebec, that is, collect their own taxes and administer their own programs.

It is clear that the federal government will need tax sources from other areas which come under its jurisdiction. It is for this reason, of course, that we levy taxes.

[English]

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I have both a supplementary and a related question. First, would the right hon. gentleman inform the house whether, in view of the difficulties which seem to have emerged during the conferences now in progress, the government is giving consideration to setting up permanent machinery to enable continual consultation between the federal and provincial governments in the fields of fiscal matters, social welfare and old age security?

Mr. Trudeau: Such machinery presently exists in the form of a tax structure committee. I believe more could be done. We stated to the federal-provincial conference in February that we were prepared to examine such questions, but this will be a matter to be debated at the federal-provincial conference. For the time being the tax structure committee exists, as it has existed for several years.

Mr. Lewis: In view of the Prime Minister's statements yesterday and earlier today that the federal government intends to vacate all the shared program fields, may I ask whether he has an alternative plan to ensure equal and national standards for Canadians in every region in these fields of social services and social security?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes. This plan was stated by the then minister of finance in 1966 at a meeting of ministers of finance of the federal government and the provinces. I repeat, it is an indication that we are prepared to withdraw in a general way from the kind of programs followed now, which is a joint program consisting largely of the federal government transferring some of the revenues of its taxation to the provinces. This is the general approach, and it was explained quite thoroughly in 1966. It is still our approach today.

I do not say quite as blandly as did the hon. member that we shall vacate every area of social security. As I told the other hon. member a few moments ago, it depends on what you mean by social security, but in general our approach to joint programs is that the taxation for and administration of

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them should be in the hands of the provincial governments.

Mr. Lewis: Before asking a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say I was not bland about it. I hadn't the right under the rules as presently constituted to express my indignation—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would the hon. member ask his question.

Mr. Lewis: May I ask the right hon. gentleman to explain to the house how vacating certain tax points, 17 or whatever it may be, can be of help to poorer provinces who do not have the base to raise revenues?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would think this supplementary is clearly argumentative.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the Prime Minister is, does this include programs devised and proposed by the federal government and imposed upon the provinces without prior consultation?

Mr. Trudeau: This question, Mr. Speaker, is surely argumentative—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): What about your answer?

Mr. Speaker: In view of the Prime Minister's ruling I shall recognize the hon. member for Brandon-Souris.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. In view of the comments made by provincial finance ministers, would the Prime Minister not agree it is highly desirable to improve immediately the consultative machinery which presently exists between the federal government and the provincial governments?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are always prepared to improve the machinery. As the hon. member knows there is a great deal, in fact a tremendous amount, of federal-provincial consultation going on at all levels. There are literally hundreds of meetings every year between federal and provincial officials on all aspects of law which involve both levels of government. There are dozens of meetings at the ministerial level, and