

### *Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements*

to set social goals by himself or he accepts them blindly from some higher authority. As a result, individual citizens are becoming increasingly alienated from the political process.

As the elected officials of this country, we have the opportunity and, indeed, the responsibility to combat this alienation. In our capacity as members of parliament, MLAs or municipal councillors, we must make an active and determined effort to become familiar with the wishes and wants of our constituents. Canadians are in an excellent position to offer constructive input. The educational level of our citizenry is higher than it has ever been. It is time that we tapped the knowledge, experience and common sense of ordinary Canadians. Only by doing so will we have the tools necessary to help us in our search for good government policy.

In politics, as in industry, health and welfare and in education, goals have been set without the participation of those affected by them. Such goals will be increasingly hard to meet as citizens become more and more removed from the actual process of establishing them. What we need in this country is a dramatic reassessment of where we, as Canadians, are going. This reassessment must not be made only by politicians, sociologists or the elite, but by the people themselves. All of us must ask ourselves what kind of country we want to have ten, 20 or 30 years from now. Let us talk to the people of our provinces and to the people of Quebec. I believe we should attempt to reactivate the town hall meetings of an earlier era and rekindle the spirit of citizen participation which contributed so greatly to the strength of Canada. Only when people from all walks of life—students, parents, professionals, workers, intellectuals and executives—get together to discuss the options for the future can we be assured that we will have the guidance and the ideas we need.

From time to time all of us feel left out—those in the west, those in Quebec, those in the maritimes, and even, I am sure, those from the great province of Ontario. However, this feeling of alienation does not have to be an inevitable aspect of modern society. We can, and must, construct a system of feedback and of input to all government levels from all people. In light of the Parti Quebecois position on separatism, it is not just advisable that we open the lines of communication; I believe it is imperative.

Among industrialized nations, the United States has led the way in efforts to reinvolve the citizenry in the political process. Recently, the state of Washington conducted a very successful experiment in citizen participation. In its previous attempts to arrive at long-range plans for the state, expert reports had been relied upon and had regularly proved fruitless. Under the slogan "You are the experts", a massive information campaign was launched in the state. A questionnaire was circulated asking citizens what kind of country they wanted to live in in the year 2000. The views of individuals and groups within the state were assembled, and on the basis of these attitudes a citizens' committee selected 11 alternative policies for the future of the state of Washington. A broad publicity campaign was again launched in the press and on television asking citizens for comments on the 11 policy options. After receiving

[Mr. Schellenberger.]

this additional public input the governor of the state of Washington selected the priorities to be followed by government officials in the years to come.

While the idea of such extensive citizen involvement in the policy formation process is extremely innovative, there is no reason why the Washington model could not be adapted to Canada. Whether on a municipal, provincial or national level, consultation with the citizenry would allow for a more democratic decision-making process and a more coherent plan for the future. As a preliminary step we, as members of parliament, might start to canvas our own constituents for their opinions as to what kind of Canada they would like to see by the end of this century. This would force both ourselves and the people we represent to look at the possibilities and the constraints involved in planning for the future.

I ask hon. members to take some time to consider these ideas. The problems facing Canada—whether they be those regarding the economy, the environment, unity, or the quality of life—cannot be resolved solely by the technocrat tools of government bureaucrats. Their input is important, but it must be supplemented by the wisdom of Canadian citizens.

• (1550)

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-37, an act regarding federal-provincial fiscal arrangements, comes before parliament at a time when Canadian confederation faces its most serious challenge in our history. All parties in this House agree on the need to maintain our federal system. I think we all believe that the separation of Quebec from the rest of Canada would have serious consequences for that province and for the rest of Canada. The main question which members of this House and the Canadian people must consider is: how can we persuade the people of Quebec that it is to our mutual interest to retain confederation? I submit it will not be done by making inflammatory statements or taking inflexible positions. It will not be done by making the issue a personal contest between the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) and the Premier of the province of Quebec.

**Miss MacDonald:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** It would be unfortunate if the debate on federalism were to degenerate to that level. In the final analysis, the decision to hold Canada together will rest with the people of Quebec. It is our job to convince the people of that province that it is in their best interest to remain in confederation and to assure them that they can safeguard their language, culture and traditions within a federal system.

The federal government has not done too well in this regard. In 1968, when the Prime Minister led his party's general election campaign of that year, he poured scorn on the suggestion of the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield), then the leader of the Conservative party, and on my suggestion, then as leader of the New Democratic Party, that we should consider the concept of "des deux nations," that we should