

Each province is losing its identity, in a word each is self-governed as regards domestic matters in order to better contribute to this economic union that the Fathers of Confederation advocated. When we look at our history since the beginning of Confederation, we can see how strongly all the provinces have defended their independence. Young people in the English provinces feel that only the province of Quebec is fighting for its independence, which is completely wrong. I will surprise many of you when I say that it was one of Ontario's premiers, Mr. Mowat, who was the first one to launch discussions in favour of self-government in his province of Upper Canada, fearing Quebec or Lower Canada which had a much larger population than Upper Canada.

And here is another surprising fact: in 1886, Premier Fielding introduced a bill in the Nova Scotia provincial legislature calling for the separation of his province because he thought the independence of the province was threatened. All this arose from the fact that the right hon. Prime Minister of the time, Mr. Macdonald, was too much in favour of centralization. History is always repeating itself, Mr. Speaker. The provinces have always feared an overly centralizing federal government and the situation has grown even worse in terms of threat to Canadian unity since the coming into office of this government, which continuously encroached upon provincial territories and jurisdictions, taking unto itself all the best taxation fields to make full use of them. That is the real political and economic picture of Canada today. And what is even worse is that the usurper refuses to leave those territories he has violated in an attempt to hypocritically invade them through the back door. That is why national unity is jeopardized, Mr. Speaker. The federal government, established by the provinces to be responsible for some areas that were well defined by those very provinces has become the dictator of those who have created it. Before coming to the federal bureaucratic dictatorship as we know it today, there were three stages: from 1867 to 1887, there were lieutenant-governors who were the link between the provinces and the federal government; from 1887 to 1937, there were interprovincial conferences which the federal government did not attend; from 1937 to 1967, it was the time of administrative conferences between federal and provincial officials. It was in the heyday of bureaucracy, and finally came the federal-provincial conferences as we know them to-day and in which civil servants still play the leading role. According to some knowledgeable critics, those conferences have been and still are increasingly nothing but economic compromises. In short, those meetings are endless squabbles about who can tax and control the most. All the provinces, Mr. Speaker, want to win back their full autonomy in their respective jurisdictions. And to do so, they will have to have back their exclusive right to direct taxation.

However, the federal government does not want to withdraw from a field that brings it so much money. The only possible solution is therefore an interprovincial meeting so that the federal government may turn over a new leaf. We therefore suggest a constituent assembly of all the provinces, just like the one we had in the early days of Confederation, to deter-

mine what sectors they want to pool together and designate once again the federal government as administrator of those sectors.

● (1502)

I am convinced that only then shall we be able to live in harmony and in a new economic union which will respect the complete autonomy of each province. Canada will become a strong country only when all its members, the provinces, will be perfectly healthy, strong and free in their own realm of life.

When the Prime Minister tells us about the dissatisfaction which is felt throughout Canada, he seems to imply that this situation has been prevailing only since November 15, 1976, with the coming into power of the Parti Québécois. The Prime Minister did not feel the years of frustrations the people of Quebec went through under the previous administration of Mr. Bourassa who was even called "hot dog eater" when he was reluctant in submitting to the will of the federal government.

The explosion of November 15 was the expression of a feeling of disgust first towards the economy. Is it possible to understand this properly? And this feeling was the consequence of the federal dictatorship because the present government no longer respected the man the people of Quebec had elected democratically. Everyday the federal dictatorship was looking more menacing for Quebec which it seemed to treat as a second rank area without our premier being able to fight back.

Of course, the awakening of November 15 was brutal but when a man is awakened by being kicked what kind of awakening can he have, Mr. Speaker? What I am saying is hard to take but I am doing so reluctantly. My only purpose is to awaken the conscience of a government if that is still possible, to make it see reality to make it stop precipitating the destruction of Canada for the only purpose of saving face.

Mr. Speaker, that boxing bout between two fighters, Lévesque and Trudeau, must end while one awaits the next blow from the other, countering a referendum with another without clearly defining what those referendums will be. And, powerless, the people have to watch that fratricidal fight. I say that the people of Canada are powerless because the only referees are the governments of the provinces that must get together at the earliest to come up with concrete solutions that will satisfy the province of Quebec so it may find its economic interest in the renewed constitution. That was done for Nova Scotia in 1886 when it threatened to leave Confederation. The same ills call for the same remedies because the aspiration of peoples does not change, Mr. Speaker. They simply want more freedom.

The Prime Minister pitied the people of Canada, particularly the English-speaking group, by saying that Canada is going through a very dark period. I was happy to hear the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) talk about Manitoba the other day. He did it very timidly but still he mentioned it. For an Anglophone, that is great. Has the Prime Minister only read our history of the late nineteenth Century?