

separatists because negotiations between Quebec and Ottawa have worn thin. I believe they were separatists even before these negotiations had started. They have spread confusion all along during the negotiations and, as far as they are concerned, successful negotiations necessarily meant that they should snatch away the whole bite from Ottawa.

Reference was made this afternoon, and the papers have also repeatedly taken up the subject, of a social file that has remained unchanged under the last four provincial parliaments. But let us realize one thing: that this social file of Quebec has been prepared by Mr. Morin himself. Of course, he has always put this file forward at every constitutional conference he has attended.

That is why the picture remains unchanged.

Yet I believe they are forgetting an important aspect of the problem. The situation has changed over the years as a result of agreements apt to be forgotten. For instance, the problem of adult education has been dealt with. The famous problem of universities was also settled in 1966. The situation therefore has changed and it is misleading to claim that it has not.

In the second place, I should like to say that deterioration of federal-provincial relations also takes the form of sensational statements made by some provincial ministers. Of course, some politicians here in Ottawa are guilty of the same. But they do not have the monopoly. How often, over the past years, have we seen provincial politicians, Quebec politicians, unable to resist the temptation of making sensational statements to hit the headlines every time they were confronted with a microphone or a television camera.

In the third place, it should also be said that journalists, whether eager for sensationalism or fanatics of independence for Quebec, have left no stone unturned to blow up any conflicts arising between the federal government and the provinces. In certain quarters, it has come to the point of believing one acquires importance by ranting at Ottawa. That is how Quebec Minister of Agriculture Normand Toupin, according to some journalists, became overnight one of the major ministers of the Bourassa cabinet, just for having attacked the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I know some excellent Quebec ministers who play, within their departments and respective fields, an extremely important role and yet who do not make headlines in the newspapers. I consider them important ministers in Mr. Bourassa's cabinet, even though they do not give hell to Ottawa, even though the separatist parliamentary reporters at the national assembly overlook them in their articles.

Fourthly, we must not forget, when we speak of federal-provincial relations, that one of the main causes of their deterioration is the activity of the Parti Québécois which make unending efforts to bring the people to believe that everything is going badly. It reminds me of the wellknown French saying according to which lies always leave a trace.

Fifthly, I am also thinking of those wet blankets, François-Albert Angers and Jacques-Yvan Morin who for over a year have been carrying on an underhand fight in university circles and the media to make us believe that

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we have come to a complete deadlock as far as federal-provincial relations are concerned. Jacques-Yvan Morin is so obsessed by the idea that he has written a book on the Victoria charter saying that it was absolutely essential that Ottawa should not bring out again that famous charter, which would be awful.

Those are, Mr. Speaker, five essential factors which must be taken into account when the record of federal-provincial relations is analyzed. It is unfair to blame this government as being responsible for the deterioration of federal-provincial relations. If it is responsible, you may be sure that it is not the only culprit.

The motion introduced today by the Social Credit states that the federal-provincial relations have deteriorated, especially as a result of the uncompromising attitudes and policies of the federal government. Let us give this a closer look.

First, it is wrong to claim that the Prime Minister is inflexible in the constitutional field. No Canadian Prime Minister has taken the constitutional reform more seriously than he does. Let us remember what has happened. This started with a meeting proposed by the Premiers of Quebec and Ontario, Messrs. Johnson and Robarts, who decided to open the constitutional case. A beautiful conference, full of nice speeches, was therefore held in Toronto.

I suggest, though, that it was the federal government which afterward worked hardest in order to achieve all the original objectives. This government has published, between 1968 and 1970, a series of nine documents covering all the aspects of the constitutional review. In these papers, it clearly stated its position; it stated publicly—what many other governments have not done—what powers it meant to keep as well as the reasons why it wanted to keep them. Neither did he fear to state publicly that he was ready for concessions and to say in which fields he was willing to make them. This is certainly not inflexibility, quite the contrary.

Must I remind hon. members and particularly those of the Social Credit party that despite everything that was said, the Victoria charter had been drafted to accommodate the provinces, Quebec especially. This charter did not intend to give any additional power to the federal government. On the contrary, the federal government had its powers restricted.

As for inflexibility it is mainly displayed by those who think that Ottawa must definitely say yes to all Quebec proposals, otherwise it does not understand anything. And these same persons think that Quebec must flatly refuse all Ottawa proposals, otherwise it disgraces itself and betrays Quebecers.

• (2030)

Do the people who want Ottawa to always agree Quebec also believe that Ottawa should always comply with the requests of the other provinces, particularly when the government of British Columbia asks the federal government to stop its equalization payments?

Mr. Speaker, there is another factor affecting the Province of Quebec especially to which I should like to refer. This is the intransigent attitude adopted several months