

*Dominion-Provincial Conference*

unfortunately we have been too slow to rectify?

I should like to make a side comment concerning a study on taxation and the problem around which the attention was particularly centered during the federal-provincial conference. After three days of conference on the theme of the new constitution for Canada, the financial and fiscal issue was the main topic in the newspapers and on television and radio. In spite of the importance of the taxation question, what strikes us most is the total omission, concerted so to say, of the Carter report, which included the conclusions of the recent royal commission of inquiry on taxation.

Public opinion had to let that Commission's report fall into oblivion even at the federal-provincial conference, where the taxation issue enjoyed all the publicity it could get. In fact, that question calls for the attention of all public administrators who are all fighting against a lack of funds.

The six volumes of the Carter commission's report contain 2,600 pages of closely printed text. The cost of such an inquiry was estimated at \$3 million and was paid through public funds; this represents about \$1,385 for each page of the report.

Why must we, two years after the submission of that commission's report, bring all that question up again in another form, namely the sharing of powers between the different governments as to taxation and taxes, while not even one of the commission's recommendations has been implemented up to now by the federal government.

That federal-provincial conference received much publicity before it began and had thus raised great expectations about an early solution. The conference is over, and unfortunately, the Canadian people wonder what problem it may actually have solved.

After the conference, an honourable senator who sat with me in this house for many years wondered what benefit this conference might have brought forth. It is illusory, he said, to suggest that this conference, or any other for that matter, did solve the problem of the constitution.

**Hon. John Turner (Minister of Justice):** What senator?

**Mr. Rondeau:** The Speaker of the Senate.

I asked him then if he believed that this conference had brought about any good results. "Yes", he answered me, "it will have given Canadians, thanks to television, an

opportunity to see what happened at the conference and to become aware of the problems we knew existed before those meetings were held."

The TV coverage of the meetings of the conference enabled all Canadians to become aware of our constitutional problems. In this regard, an honourable member asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) yesterday whether he intended shortly to televise the debates of this house, because that would enable all Canadians to see what is going on in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, those who have been in the house for several years agree with a senator that nothing much was accomplished at federal-provincial conferences, apart from acquainting the public with problems that administrators already know about.

We all knew and we still know that our problems are ever increasing and becoming more and more serious. In the meantime, the bad feeling subsists and the Canadian people rightly ask themselves the following question: Will the governments, whether Liberal or Conservative, which have allowed, for the past hundred years, the constitutional problems to arise in our country be able to correct them?

Some reforms are necessary, we agree but before going ahead, we should seek the causes of the present unrest and realize the mistakes made in the past regarding the constitution. In fact, every year, governments make a mess of it. How do we know that what we want to reform today will be more respected tomorrow?

● (2:50 p.m.)

In my opinion, the basic flaw in our present constitution is the division of powers among the provinces even though those powers are clearly defined in the constitution. But once again money is the source of trouble. Still, we were supposed to pay much more attention to the question of languages at the last federal-provincial conference.

I noticed that during the three days of the conference, the representatives of all the provinces spoke the same language with the federal government: the dollar language.

All provincial representatives spoke of the money problem and, yet, there is talk of bilingualism and biculturalism. The formalists know their responsibilities in matters of road construction and health, because the constitution allots the money to federal government. This government was given the means to