

it will become more important over the next 20 years or even the next five that the federal government reassert its influence in the social policy field—not necessarily its power, Mr. Speaker, but its influence. Indeed, it struck me that since the government has been in office, and even when they were in office before, it has always missed the point that there is a big distinction between power and influence. It worried about power and lost its influence. Indeed, the way in which we have attempted to negotiate medicare with the provinces is nothing short of a scandal. You cannot expect people to co-operate if you are hitting them over the head.

● (1610)

I emphasize to the minister that if we want to have Canadian standards in social policy, and I do, then this government is going to have to learn that if it wants to expand its influence, it will have to curtail its concern for power. That way we will be able to be assured. For example, 1977, in the negotiations for EPF, much heralded, the federal government lost a considerable opportunity to continue to establish Canadian standards in the health care field.

In many of my remarks I have attempted to show that you can learn from the past and that you have to look at the future if you are going to do anything more useful than merely reorganize a bureaucratic framework. When I was preparing some of my notes, I had the feeling I had been listening to "All That Jazz" about "everything old is new again" coming true. I remember a passage from Robert Frost, and I pass it on to the minister for whatever value it may be to him. I quote:

For dear me, why abandon a belief
Merely because it ceases to be true?
Cling to it long enough, it will turn true again,
For so it goes.
Most of the change we think we see in life
Is due to truths being in and out of favour.

I suggest that the institutions which have served us for so long, and indeed have not been in use in the past 20 years, will become very useful to us in the next 20 years. I hope it is in that spirit that the minister approaches his responsibilities.

Hon. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the proposition before us this afternoon is wrapped up in beautiful paper, tied with a gorgeous piece of ribbon and has a very nice greeting card attached to it. Therefore, I suppose we are expected to accept it eagerly. However, I say to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) that inside the package there is a dangerous weapon. There is a time bomb. We do not think this motion should have the support of this House.

I shall comment in a few minutes on my reasons for the stand being taken by this caucus. However, may I first say that while the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) was telling us everything that was happening in 1960, I naturally wondered what my friends around here were doing. Therefore, I asked them one by one, "What were you doing in 1960?"

Mr. Crombie: Svend was a member of kindergarten!

Social Development Ministry

Mr. Knowles: The hon. member for New Westminster-Coquitlam (Miss Jewett) told me she was writing some academic treatises—

Mr. Cullen: As a Liberal.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles:—and also that she attended the Liberal policy gathering held at Kingston, Ontario. She went there as an academic for Carleton University. I gather that was the beginning of her disillusionment with the Liberal party.

I asked the hon. member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), whom we welcome back to the House after his illness—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles:—what he was doing in 1960. He told me that he was a station agent at Richmond, Saskatchewan. When I asked the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy) what he was doing in 1960, he told me the biggest issue he had to face that year was whether to walk to high school or ride his bicycle. I do not think he remembers how he solved it. I asked the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) what he was doing in 1960. He said he had just graduated from high school in Toronto and was entering Victoria College in Toronto. These, of course, are the older members of the group.

I spoke to my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie). He told me that in 1960 he was in grade three in Westview Elementary School in Transcona.

Mr. Benjamin: That's as far as he got.

Mr. Knowles: He did not tell how many years he spent in that grade. The record among those who are here seems to go to the hon. member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson). He was in grade two that year. He does not quite remember what school it was. No one seems to want to know what I was doing in 1960, but I am going to tell them anyway.

An hon. Member: You were right here.

Mr. Knowles: You are wrong, I was not here.

An hon. Member: He was in the other place.

Mr. Knowles: I was preparing to come back. From 1958 to 1962 was the one respite I had from this place in the last 38 years. During those four years, like the Minister of Justice, I held several positions. One of them was as an executive vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress. Another one was that I was chairman of the national committee for the New Party.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles: That was the group which did the groundwork that led to the formation of the New Democratic Party. In 1960 the CCF held its last convention as the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. That was in Regina. At that