

Federal-Provincial Relations

seems to me this is totally inconsistent and that it is imperative—and again this may be presumptuous for a new member to suggest—that we progress with the legislative burden we have inherited, as the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) pointed out to this house this afternoon. It is wrong and hypocritical to admonish the government for failure to take initiative in policy matters when on the other side of the house there is a refusal to allow the government to get into that field. We know the legislation is ready.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would suggest to the hon. member that he now is straying away from the resolution which is before the house and which we should be considering at this time. I invite him to return to the subject matter of the motion.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member to define more clearly what he has in mind?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member who has the floor has not indicated his willingness to be asked a question at this time.

Mr. Faulkner: Mr. Speaker, I would receive the question.

Mr. Pepin: Thank you. I was very interested in some of the things the hon. member said with regard to pollution, because obviously I am very much involved in that. He said that the jurisdiction of the federal government and of the provincial governments could be defined very clearly in that field. I think he said that. Would he expand on this suggestion.

Mr. Faulkner: That is not exactly what I said. What I intended to say is that it is necessary, for decisive legislative action in this field of pollution, that the jurisdiction be clarified and be precise. The reason I said that is I do not feel the consensus of eleven heads of government so-called is the best way to deal with these immediate problems, and that presently is how we are trying to do it. The brunt of my argument is that the legislative demands upon this house are such that we must have clear authority and clear jurisdiction. This is equally true at the provincial level. It seems to me the present motion does not really help us much in arriving at this goal which would be a *sine qua non* of a viable federal system.

[Mr. Faulkner.]

Mr. David MacDonald (Prince): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make one or two comments on this motion. First of all I would like to concur most heartily with the great amount of good sense and intelligent comment made by the previous speaker, except for the comment he made when he seemed to wander away from his sound good judgment. He previously has wandered more than once, because he still is sitting on that side of the house.

I want to speak very feelingly because, coming from the smallest province in this dominion, I know that we have participated in federal-provincial conferences which have tried to place a good deal of responsibility and decision making in the hands of a new institution. Earlier in this parliament it was recorded that we had something like 130 or more federal-provincial conferences last year. A small province such as Prince Edward Island finds it almost impossible—and indeed I would say impossible—to try to institute a new program, either in the field of welfare, community development, or perhaps education; it is difficult to institute these programs so that they will have equal value to a province the size of say, Ontario, and the province of Prince Edward Island.

I say it is impossible because we must realize there obviously must be a different kind of administrative set up for a small province than for a larger one, if both are to be effective. We have seen the kind of situation at federal-provincial conferences where the financial solution is adequately suited to the ability of the larger province but certainly not financially suited to a province like Prince Edward Island. In many cases it causes great harm.

• (6:40 p.m.)

But it was assumed that by the implementation of these programs things would happen which really did not happen. It is therefore of great concern to me that there be appointed at the very earliest possible date some responsible body that would deal with this problem. I think it is most fitting and appropriate that such a body involve the parliamentarians of this country, because I believe there has been a great sense of helplessness on the part of the representatives of the various constituencies throughout this country in their being, shall I say relegated to the minor position of approving *faits accomplis* on questions that have been grappled with, are on the threshold of implementation,