

*Federal-Provincial Relations*

other provinces for other reasons and this is clearly understandable, as we admitted for that matter.

This does not mean that in the last four years Quebec has not received considerable amounts of money under agreements with Ottawa, for the implementation of cost-sharing programs. In my opinion, Quebec has received its share in the last four years. It has received interesting amounts of money, but that is not enough, and I do not believe that mere hand-outs of money would meet the expectations of the province of Quebec.

I would like to call your attention especially on those federal-provincial relations directly connected with constitutional matters, for I know perfectly well that Quebec is after major amendments, namely that certain powers be given back to her. Just how much power is the federal government prepared to yield? I also know that some other provinces have indicated and given notice to Ottawa of their intention of asking that some powers, perhaps not at all the same ones and for reasons different from ours, be handed back to them.

I think it is very important that we give special consideration to those claims. I said it before, there is a special situation existing in Quebec where people are losing confidence in federalism as we have it today. I am not suggesting that the majority of the people in Quebec have no more faith in our kind of federalism; that is not what I meant. But I think that a large percentage should make us consider seriously the possibility of transferring some powers to the province of Quebec and answering favourably the requests made during federal provincial conferences.

I bring this problem before the House because I feel it is extremely important. It does seem that the premier of Quebec has recently confirmed his intention of resuming negotiations. It seems obvious that, as far as Quebec is concerned, this is an urgent issue and it would be a serious mistake to deal with it simply by offering money.

The reason for this is a particular situation, a people who, for very valid reasons wishes to obtain certain constitutional guarantees.

However I must admit, as I said earlier that certain amounts of money have been paid to Quebec in the last four years, which pleases me greatly. In fact on several occasions, I have had the opportunity to support programs which enabled Quebec to get that money, but once again I am sorry that there has not been more constitutional progress.

And the poor achievements in the field of constitutional amendments have generated a good deal of concern in Quebec and allowed a party advocating secession of the province to progress in spite of what is being said.

I believe that the government's reluctance on the subject of constitutional amendments are concerned has been a great help to a party which wants the province to separate.

On the other hand, I am convinced that had the federal government reacted more favourably to the minimum requests made by some ministers during the past few years, the province of Quebec would have had evidence that it is possible in this great country, to be considered as

[Mr. La Salle.]

one of the founding nations and be assured of an existence in keeping with its aspirations and wishes.

Mr. Speaker, in concluding my remarks, I would like this House to seriously ponder over what I have said about federal-provincial relations. I believe it is still possible for the province of Quebec to hold an interesting position in Canada but we should put an end to this current procrastinating.

I believe that unanimous agreement will develop among our French-speaking members whose duty it is to keep the country informed about Quebec problems, about the requests that have been coming from this province during the last ten years, and to explain the reasons they should be dealt with favourably. In so doing, I am under the clear impression that we will meet the wishes of a province without hurting the others.

**Mr. André Ouellet (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, the Social Credit Party today blames the federal government for the deterioration of federal-provincial relations.

That judgment seems to me much too hasty and summary, for it simply is the echo of a whole series of statements by Quebeckers who want at any rate the federal-provincial relations to be bad.

There are in this respect prejudices and myths which of necessity must be destroyed. I think that the Cr ditistes are falling into the trap by presenting that motion today.

It is false to suggest that this government is centralizing more than any other preceding government, but I think that that is exactly what the separatists would nevertheless lead us to believe.

I would not have been surprised to hear the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte) take part in the debate. I was not surprised either to see the hon. member for Lotbini re (Mr. Fortin) who, like the hon. member for Champlain shows certain separatist tendencies, intervene in this debate. But I have been really disappointed to hear the hon. member for Roberval (Mr. Gauthier), who seems to me a serious and level-headed man, move such a motion.

• (2020)

One wonders who is to blame if federal-provincial relations are not as good as we would wish them to be. I have always thought that there were two sides to the medal and I am amazed to note that the Social Credit party of Canada, which is a federalist party, does not realize at all that a host of factors constantly complicate matters and are perhaps, more than the federal government, at the cause of the deterioration of federal-provincial relations.

First, we should not forget that Messrs. Jacques Parizeau and Claude Morin have been advising the government of Quebec for the last few years and have taken an active part in various constitutional conferences. These men are today members of the Parti Qu b cois and they openly advocate Quebec's independence. They have ceased to be public servants because they have realized they would not, in their official capacity, attain their objective, that is Quebec's independence. In other words, I do not think that Messrs. Parizeau and Morin have turned