

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements

health. So, in effect, the minister was saying that everything that those provincial ministers had said was preposterous and was not worth replying to at all. Then he flipped his lid, lost his temper, as he usually does, and said:

To come to some of your points. I will not spend much time on separatism in Quebec. I suggest you look at scientific surveys which have been carried on in Quebec over the last ten years—and I am ready to compare my expertise on Quebec with yours—and you will find that the percentage of people in favour of separatism in Quebec has not grown in the last ten years.

That statement was made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare only a year ago. At that time he was the Quebec lieutenant. We all know he is now a corporal or a private, but at that time he was in charge of organization in Quebec. I called attention to those exchanges because they illustrate two things: first, the sanctimonious, arrogant pride these people on the other side have, and, second, their total misreading of the situation in Quebec as far as the seriousness of the separatist movement is concerned. We have heard no further statements from that minister on the subject. However, we know he has now been replaced by another minister as Quebec lieutenant or organizer.

We know that the government since 1963, and particularly since the coming to power of the present Prime Minister in 1967, has had all the power needed to govern this country effectively, to come to grips with the problems of the nation and to devise appropriate solutions for them so as to ensure that the provinces would stay together on the basis of the evident advantages of a united country. I am sorry to say that these "leaders"—I put that word in quotation marks—completely lost that opportunity to keep the country together. We saw a similar failure on the part of the Liberal administration which was in power in Quebec for such a long time. It had taken to the habit of saying to Canadians over the years, in effect, "We are the only people who are capable of keeping the country together", and it was blaming Canadians at large for the country's falling apart.

Almost every time he goes on television these days, the Prime Minister blames all Canadians for the problems facing the country. He tells them he is working, he is trying as hard as he can, but it is the fault of all those naughty Canadians who refuse to do the things he says they should do to keep the country together. There is a certain short-sightedness on his part in taking an attitude of that kind because hon. members know as well as he does, if he is as intelligent as hon. members think he is, that the difficulties surrounding confederation are a direct result of his own policies and his own approach to governing this country.

An hon. Member: He is an expert on the simplistic approach.

Mr. Yewchuk: Hon. members on the other side are very sensitive. They always become a little excited when somebody on this side tells the plain truth about how things stand. They cannot bear to hear the truth because they are not accustomed to living by it. I am not trying to pose as an expert on Quebec, but I can pose as an individual who knows as much about confederation from the western point of view as the hon.

[Mr. Yewchuk.]

member from Quebec who has just interjected knows about the western point of view.

I hear the hon. member from New Brunswick also interjecting to say he does not agree with the comments I am making. The fact is, it is the leadership of the Prime Minister and the government which is in question. The ideas and policies they have been putting forward are not accepted by anyone any more. It is not a matter of English Canadians not accepting French Canadians; it is a matter of all Canadians not accepting this particular leader and this government any more. The reason is that their policies, instead of unifying this country, have divided it to an extent never known before.

● (1630)

Mr. Breau: That is your opinion.

Mr. Yewchuk: That is my opinion, and I believe it is the correct situation. I am saying to hon. gentlemen opposite who are getting so excited that they should stop blaming Canadians for the problems we have and start blaming themselves. After all, they are the ones who have been in power in this country for nearly 15 years—and look where the country is after 15 years of Liberal government!

Mr. Whelan: The country is doing very well.

Mr. Yewchuk: Certainly, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) is not the envy of the world. Let us consider, Mr. Speaker, why Canadians are angry. Canadians are not angry at each other. I do not believe that Anglo-Canadians are angry at Franco-Canadians or that Franco-Canadians are angry at Anglo-Canadians. I think all Canadians are simply angry at governments which have been dishonest, which have been totally incapable of comprehending their problems, let alone of solving them. We still see the same kind of attitude persisting. Let me give the House an example. Even the former illustrious minister of finance, Mr. Turner, left that bunch in disgust. But he contributed—

Mr. MacFarlane: You should let him speak for himself.

Mr. Yewchuk: I will certainly do that.

Mr. MacFarlane: I would not dare to.

Mr. Yewchuk: Even he contributed to the difficulty that we find in Canada with regard to relations between the people and their elected politicians. The government has a program having to do with indexing of income tax, and I remember that that particular minister, whom I have to say was fairly well respected on all sides of the House most of the time, and perhaps in all parts of the country, attacked my formed leader, the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield), with great vigor in his own home town of Truro, Nova Scotia, which he visited to try to belittle the tax indexing proposals which my former leader made at the time. Indeed, he spent a good deal of time during the 1972 election campaign belittling my leader for having put those proposals forward, saying that they would bankrupt the country, that the country would fall apart under