

Municipal Development and Loan Board

perity and at last finding a solution to the unemployment problem. But what is much more important, Mr. Chairman, is to respect the Canadian constitution. And we shall see to it that the provinces do not lose an inch of their autonomy in the field of taxation, as we took it upon ourselves to do while studying the resolution now before us.

I suggest that we must, before final passage of this bill, obtain from the minister all the required information. We would like to know whether the provinces have been consulted. This is the cornerstone upon which the present legislation must be built because otherwise we are not entitled to go further in our study of this resolution as it would interfere with provincial autonomy.

We must consider this legislation seriously in the light of the information which could be provided by the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Justice, the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Chevrier) who, everyone knows is the spokesman for the province of Quebec. He will probably be able to enlighten his colleagues who sit on your right, Mr. Chairman, and at the same time the members sitting on your left. It will be necessary to put partisanship aside so that the Canadian constitution be respected.

I am quite sure that the hon. member for Quebec South (Mr. Cantin) will bring enough pressure to bear on members of the cabinet for us to get the information we need before we are called upon to decide on the advisability of this legislation.

Thus, we will be in a position to decide how we should vote on this bill.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Chairman, since this is the first time you have been in the chair when I am on my feet, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment.

We are now wondering a lot about their proposed financial assistance to municipalities in the form of loans to reduce unemployment.

We are very happy that this resolution was submitted, but it remains to be seen whether we will be as pleased with the administration of the act.

First of all, we find there some of the ideas advocated for several years by our group about a municipal development bank. Even though that name is not given to the new organization, we hope that this was the minister's idea in moving this resolution.

[Mr. Paul.]

Otherwise, we should be forced to agree with those who have doubts as to infringement of provincial jurisdiction.

If the minister wants to feed his \$400 million fund which he needs to carry out this plan in the same way as the other parties do, there is no doubt that he will encroach upon provincial autonomy. As a matter of fact, he will have to delve deeply in the taxpayer's pocket and get three times as much as he will be able to pay out to the unemployed. Mind you, on the basis of what the Liberals said during the last election campaign, when speaking about the Social Credit, whenever the government gives you a dollar, it has levied three from the taxpayer.

Under the circumstances, Mr. Chairman, the provinces should have the right to levy their own taxes; they are now old enough to set up their own taxes; they hardly need to be shown the trick by the federal government.

Let us start by leaving the provinces their revenues. And you will be surprised to find that there are among those provincial legislators, men who are quite as qualified as the federal ones to spend their revenue in a judicious way.

The great principle to the effect that a right is attached to every duty is still true. If the municipalities have the obligation and the power, much more so than the federal government, to carry out such duty, if it is their duty to create a climate favourable to the development of their area, then the central government cannot take away from them the rights that are necessary to the fulfilment of their duty.

There is no end to recriminations about everything going wrong in Canada! Why? Because no one, beginning with the central government, is playing his own part. Because the strong still seek to displace the weak.

Do you not think we are going back to the law of the jungle? Everybody wants to interfere with other people's business and at the same time neglects his own business. While the provinces urge the central government to give them back the sources of income they had lent it when danger threatened, that same government, grateful as a lion, does not want to give back anything to those who came to his help. Far from giving them back their old taxation powers, the government does the utmost every day to find new devices to restrict a little more their freedom of action before choking them for good.