

Interim Supply

ask that this bill be given priority. And the Prime Minister should encourage the adoption of this bill, especially as it has been introduced by one of his supporters. We would then have at last some positive action. But why must we always wait until it is too late?

The present Prime Minister should remember that the province of Quebec long advocated bilingual cheques. It was put off for 12 years and then suddenly, on the eve of a general election, the former prime minister who has now become the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker), decided to give in. However, we had been requesting that for so long that Quebec's reaction was: "Too little and too late".

Is the Prime Minister going to delay the solutions until he also is told that it is too little and too late?

Now is the time to act.

The province of Quebec is willing to stay within confederation and to live in harmony with the other provinces and the other great ethnic group which makes up Canada but, above everything, it wants to develop by its own means. It is as simple as that. When it is given the chance to develop itself, when it has its own sources of income and can spend its money as it sees fit, then, Mr. Speaker, will both cultures peacefully coexist in Canada.

The cabinet too often forgets that, and I feel that is the fault of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Lamontagne) who, in a very confidential report to his cabinet colleagues, said the following:

French Canada is not proud enough to act big.

In a 200-page brief he submitted to the cabinet, the President of the Privy Council also stated this:

The people of Quebec have no time for great ideals.

This is what he said lately:

Quebec stands to lose if it separates from the rest of Canada.

As if that were the end of the world.

All that implies that the province of Quebec can neither run its own affairs nor develop on its own. But if our sources of revenue were left to us, and also our direct taxation system, if we were allowed to collect and spend ourselves instead of always seeing the federal government interfere with our business, we might succeed. So, if the province of Quebec had someone to blame, it would not be the federal government but itself.

Then harmony would be possible between the two great races that live in our country, but not otherwise.

[Mr. Gregoire.]

The ultimatum that was delivered a year ago enabled everybody to procrastinate for a while and wait to see what would happen.

When the province of Quebec was content to crawl and beg, as it always did in the past, it got nothing. We were happy to see at last a man who demanded, who claimed and did not merely ask: "Would you—please—by any chance, if you would be kind enough—" It was a demand.

The present cabinet should not deceive itself about the consequences of this ultimatum, for I am the first one, Mr. Chairman, to tell the members of the cabinet and the Prime Minister, that if the country refuses to mend its ways and let the province of Quebec develop itself, I for one shall not hesitate to break up confederation.

Let the hon. members on the side of the present cabinet laugh if they want to. If they do, it is because they try to deceive themselves, not to see the forthcoming day of reckoning, because the province of Quebec will not accept indefinitely the system imposed on it or her present situation. What happens when it wants to have a heart-to-heart talk with the federal government? Ten provinces, 11 governments are called for a meeting, and the province of Quebec is overwhelmed.

The Chairman: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

[Text]

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, this afternoon the Prime Minister gave a very excellent and interesting review of the federal-provincial conference which concluded last Friday. I think he is to be commended for reporting to the house so early on that conference, so that we might have the opportunity of discussing some of the matters arising out of the conference, and expressing an opinion with regard to them.

Federal-provincial relations are always ticklish in any federal system and have always put a great strain on confederation in Canada; and I imagine they will continue to do so for a great many years to come. I think the Prime Minister, with his excellent training in international diplomacy, is probably fitted as well as anyone to chair federal-provincial conferences, and from reports which I have had he conducted himself very ably last week. But when we come to face up to federal-provincial problems it will take a great deal more than high sounding phrases and clichés to solve these problems.

I should like to look at one or two of the things the Prime Minister said, with many of which I was in complete agreement. He said that each government must be able to