

say that there has not been a single debate in this House, since at least 1962, on such varied subjects as grain sales, bilingualism, the movement of feed grain in the East, the national capital, abortion, wiretapping, in which the Social Credit members have taken part, that did not end with their suggestion to use the magic method available to the government, namely the Bank of Canada, to settle all problems.

The absurdity of such a policy was once well described to the Canadian people, and especially to the Quebec people, by a former member of this House, a bitter opponent of Social Credit and, mainly, of this frivolous doctrine,—a serious and most effective opponent,—the former member for Saint-Jean-Iberville, Mr. Yvon Dupuis.

I sincerely urge Social Credit members to look through the Official Report of Debates of the House of Commons as well as the daily newspapers of that period, from 1961, 1962, 1963 onwards. They will find those speeches and I invite them to meditate on them for their own edification, because they were tremendous, they were not only a verbal but also a concrete condemnation of loony Social Credit theories.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Gauthier: Wait a while!

Mr. Béchard: Mr. Speaker, I hear some Social Credit members laughing. They should not laugh, they should be weeping because of the lies they have been bandying right and left for so many years and which they unfortunately succeeded in having too many of our people swallow. They know full well that they are unable to solve any problem from the corner where they sit, since they will never—and fortunately so—be in charge of the country's fortunes.

Mr. Gauthier: Wait a while.

Mr. Béchard: I hear the hon. member for Roberval saying: "Wait a while, wait a while." We have been waiting a long while, and there will, I hope, be a while more to wait so that the people of Canada may not be afflicted with such malaise and misfortune.

Mr. Speaker, even if there is no reason to be surprised by the kind of regrets expressed by the Social Credit, there is still reason to be seriously and deeply concerned with the attitude reflected by this proposition of the Social credit party from the constitutional viewpoint.

In fact all members of the House—at least those of the majority party, those of the official opposition and, I hope, those of the New Democratic Party—know that municipalities are brought into being by provinces and are therefore under provincial jurisdiction. Social Credit members are perhaps not yet aware of that.

As stated by the mover of the motion, who by the way disappeared this morning, so faint is his interest in this debate—although the municipalities do not want to be treated like little children, but be fed their revenue with the soup-spoon and not with the tea-spoon as was said this morning, and I do gladly agree with that, nevertheless the Canadian Government can in no way, within the present constitution and without incurring blame, extent its

Alleged Decentralization of Policies

authority to the municipal field which is under the exclusive control of the provinces. And we would be criticized legitimately if we interfered with the rights specifically attributed to the provinces by the British North America Act in 1867.

I agree with the mover of this motion to the effect that there should be some co-ordination of the jurisdictions in the vital tax field to prevent our municipal, provincial and other officials engaged in public administration being plagued with headaches.

But to say, however, that the Canadian government, as is suggested by the motion of the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte), and I quote in part:

—the government has not established consultative bodies with the provinces and municipalities—

—this, in my opinion, is bad faith.

When you are a representative of the Canadian people, when you were duly elected to inform and protect the rights of these people, I say that you are dishonest or partisan or else you show complete ignorance of the development of Canadian politics in the field of federal-provincial relations if you make such gratuitous statements.

I shall go one step further, Mr. Speaker, and say that a member who shows such ignorance—I dare not say, "crass ignorance"—is not worthy of the confidence that the people bestowed upon him in 1968 because he shamelessly misleads them by introducing such a motion and elaborating on the remarks that he made this morning during the debate.

Because of such remarks, because of such an attitude, those members have a duty not to ask their constituents again for this confidence which they abused and these people have a duty to show them to whom they should direct their confidence for the management of public affairs.

• (1520)

It is a sad thing to see that when the Social Credit party of Canada deplores the fact that the government has not taken steps to establish a consultation process in order to decentralize monetary and fiscal policies in a way which would allow each level of government to assume its responsibilities with less expense to the taxpayers, it deliberately forgets the positive efforts made by the government in this direction. It forgets one of the main formula for redistribution of taxes levied—the equalization formula, under which the richer provinces contribute to the greater well-being of the less favoured ones.

Incidentally, the share of Quebec—if this is the province to which the hon. member for Champlain and the Social Credit party are alluding in this motion—had been increasing continually since this measure was initiated in the forties. Renewal of those fiscal arrangements between the federal government and the provinces is provided for in Bill C-8 which is now under study, and which we discussed on third reading only yesterday.

Such arrangements were the result of continuous and intensive consultation with the provinces. In the past few years—as was very eloquently pointed out this morning by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury)—