

and the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) with respect to putting more than just discussions concerning major renovations and changes in federal-provincial matters before this Chamber, before such renovations and changes become a *fait accompli*. The government will be very much strengthened and improved by that kind of approach. Certainly the Canadian people will feel they have been much better served.

● (2030)

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to follow my good friend, the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald). I have been very interested in this debate which primarily has been conducted by members of this party. It is too bad the government members are again sitting on their hands rather than participating in the debate on this very important legislation. We would like to know whether they are slavishly following the dictates of the cabinet with regard to this legislation. As is so often the case, again they are not voicing the perspective from their constituencies.

I was particularly proud of the way in which the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) initiated the debate on our behalf with respect to this legislation. In an incisive way he dealt with the context in which this legislation should be considered. He made observations with regard to the kind of Canada he would like to see when he becomes Prime Minister of this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I was also very interested in the remarks of my colleague, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald). At this time, when there is a lot of interest in equality of the sexes and the promotion of women's rights in this country, it is significant that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands should be the first woman to analyse and deal with a financial bill of this importance in the House of Commons. She is the first woman in Canadian history to make such a contribution on this kind of legislation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I want to point out to the members on the government side that we are interested in looking at this legislation in its proper context. We are attempting to develop a meaningful debate with regard to the future of the country. It is very easy for members opposite to rely on their leader, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), to enunciate whatever policies they may have. However, in view of the developments that have taken place over the past few months, it is important for all members, regardless of party, to stand in their places and express the kind of Canada they see and want, and the reasons why they think it is imperative that this country stay together as one unit rather than splitting in separate directions.

As far as this party is concerned, I am not in the position of having to be modest on this occasion. The Conservative party has made a great contribution to matters of national unity. I am proud to serve in this House with the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker). When he was prime

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minister of this country he led an administration which paid attention to the various regions. It attempted to come to terms with some of the regional disparities we faced as a matter of tradition after many under a Liberal regime.

The right hon. member was aided in that particular government by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton). I recall very vividly some of the types of legislation and initiatives taken by that government. There were innovative and creative programs which dealt with regional matters in a new and challenging way.

It was a time when some of the hinterlands of this country were remembered and recognized by the central government. There were programs such as Roads to Resources, the ARDA legislation, and legislation with respect to Atlantic Canada. Regional equalization grants were given to Atlantic Canada. Initiatives were taken to bring some regional planning in terms of energy and power to Atlantic Canada. I recall the Atlantic Provinces Power Development Act.

Mr. McGrath: The Atlantic Development Board.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: My friend from St. John's East corrects me. Regional initiatives such as this were taken by that government which was truly concerned about equality of opportunity regardless of region. They were not only related to electoral gains or electoral prospects, which seem to be the only guidelines of the present government.

The government led by the right hon. member for Prince Albert was roundly criticized by spokesmen for the Liberal party. Its then leaders travelled across Ontario saying that the prime minister was giving everything to the west. Because some attention was being paid to regional disparities in an attempt to bring equal opportunity across this country, this was turned against the government in Ontario and Quebec.

A lot can be learned from the initiatives taken by that Conservative government. I can assure hon. members that with a return to the proposition where all parts of this country are regarded in equal terms and all will receive reasonable attention.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: There is one thing that characterizes this government's approach to federal-provincial relations. As others of my colleagues have pointed out, there has been a spirit of confrontation. It is fair to say not one provincial government, regardless of political stripe, trust the national government at this time. The whole aura that surrounds federal-provincial meetings is one of confrontation, the adversary system. There is not one co-operative endeavour for the best interests of our national, provincial and regional areas.

I want to say something to the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Goodale), who henceforth will be known as "one-term Goodale".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!