

The Address—Mr. Perron

farm and they are offered the ARDA program which has a striking similarity to the program of community farms, the five year plans adopted by some countries. And that will take place under the guidance of the minister responsible for rural dismemberment.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the grievances of the province of Quebec are justified. In the name of this unity which is so often mentioned and referred to, I feel that the time has come for a better understanding. Mention is made of unity while the government is planning to introduce in this very house at least two pieces of legislation which will achieve nothing but a still greater discord.

The province of Ontario, like the province of Quebec, has practically taken its stand on the matter of portable pensions. A portable and contributory pension plan and a student loan plan have been submitted to us.

Nevertheless, we are not the only ones to express views that are contrary to those of the present Liberal party upon which fall the administrative responsibilities in this house.

In regard to loans to students, the premier of Quebec, Hon. Jean Lesage, made the following statement, as reported in *La Presse* in its February 20, 1964 issue:

Federal loans to students, another intrusion... in the provincial field, said Hon. Jean Lesage.

And the minister of youth of the province of Quebec, Hon. Paul Gerin-Lajoie, declared in turn:

It is an indirect intrusion through the back door.

Still, I would not think that these gentlemen could be classified as "séparatistes" but they also reckon that this problem has become a burning question.

If we must take a new look at confederation, let us do so by all means, but at least let us cease to overstep certain rights, in a way that is hurting or vexing in a disgraceful manner certain groups who have indisputable rights in the Canadian confederation.

The province of Quebec also realizes something else. While the gross national product has increased by 60 per cent and the national income by only 30 per cent, national indebtedness has reached such a point that the province of Quebec holds the record concerning finance companies. That is so true that a bill was introduced in the Quebec legislature recently to control the rate of interest charged in the province by certain loan companies on instalment buying and on direct consumer loans.

Indebtedness has soared. I have here statistics on the national indebtedness. They are fairly discouraging for anyone who has some understanding of our banking system.

The federal debt, which amounted to \$15 billion 200 million in 1956, has increased to \$18 billion 600 million in 1961. The total debt of the ten provinces, which was \$4 billion 600 million, has now risen to \$8 billion 200 million in a period of only five years.

The municipal and school board debt, of \$2 billion 400 million is now \$4 billion. The mortgage liabilities have increased from \$3 billion 300 million to \$5 billion 400 million.

Personal debts and liabilities which were \$2 billion 300 million, are now \$4 billion 200 million, which means an increase of 52 per cent in a period of only five years.

Certain groups in the province of Quebec are aware of the fact that the present system certainly cannot go very far.

Those enormous liabilities call for a payment of interest of over \$150 a year per Canadian citizen taken from the taxpayer at all levels of public administration.

For the head of a family with four children, that is a family of six persons counting the mother, it means a burden of \$900 a year in interest payments, because of our liability system.

Yet those who are sitting on the official opposition benches and those who are occupying the treasury benches do not seem in a hurry to review the monetary policy of this country. They seem to talk for the sake of talking. They speak about a new co-operative federalism. As long as the present banking system will continue to control public administration and to crush us under the burden of interest and loans, Mr. Speaker, I think that we shall be on the wrong track and that problems will necessarily multiply, if no bold and drastic solution is found.

In my opinion, while speaking of co-operative federalism, the federal government owes it to itself to consult the provincial ministers of revenue and, with their co-operation, to launch a new monetary policy in the country. I believe that it is high time to do it in 1964.

For two years, an inquiry has been going on in Canada on banking activities. Associations of businessmen and provincial groups, the Canadian association of municipalities have been presenting briefs in which they claim loudly the establishment of a municipal bank to facilitate credit.

They are not the only ones to request a revision of the monetary policy in Canada. In fact, we say: let the federal government begin at least by handing to the province of Quebec that to which it is entitled, through constitution, in the taxation field.

Then, instead of loans to students being granted to students by the federal government, the province of Quebec itself may assume this responsibility. The students of