

The Budget—Mr. Kaplan

provincial jurisdiction. Does the Government intend to draft a bill which would tie down Quebec in connection with education. I do not believe that things have gone that far.

The minister surely did not think very much before saying that Quebec would not get one damn penny from the federal government if it refused to give some kind of publicity. I suggest this government has enough members to do this kind of publicity, to tell the Quebec people about the federal financial contributions to various projects. For my part, I never fail to say, in my riding, what contribution is the federal government making to various projects. It is up to me to do it. I think that all members should say to their constituents that the Quebec government does not give enough publicity to the federal contributions to various projects. I do not believe that it is up to the provincial government to do so. It is the provincial government's duty to carry out these projects and to obtain the largest possible subsidies from the federal government. As for us, it is our duty, as representatives from Quebec here, to support the Quebec government, in the interest of young people who need education, with regard to the carrying out of such projects, which benefit Quebec in particular and Canada in general.

It is therefore to be hoped that these idle discussions become meaningful ones. I also express the hope that federal and provincial representatives may some day hold joint discussions and establish joint goals based on fundamental principles, in the best interests of Canada in general, Quebec in particular, and parliament.

● (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, I took this opportunity to express my views. I think it will be at last possible for Canada to go ahead thanks to the contribution of strong provinces, run by governments that will have their say in discussions leading to shared-cost programs.

It is unthinkable that the government should continue to run Canada without consulting the provinces. Provinces have now a right to be heard. The federal government must hold important discussions with the provinces, and it will be hand in hand that the provincial and federal governments will build up something good to the advantage of the whole Canadian society. Only then will we be able to get closer and closer to the just society which I desire as much as the Prime Minister. All hon. members, I think, are for it.

How are we going to build it if at the start we refuse to the provinces the justice they are entitled to? I am not speaking of Quebec only, but of all the other provinces as well.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the budget tabled next year will propose solutions to some of the problems I have brought up so that our Canada will be more prosperous and a better place in which to live.

[English]

Mr. Robert P. Kaplan (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, it seems appropriate, in view of the latitude permitted in the budget debate, to turn away for a time from our usual perspective on our legislative work and look at that work from the point of view of the country. What is the public's perspective of what is happening in Ottawa and of the direction the government is taking? What does the public think is happening in Ottawa and, perhaps more interestingly, how does the public's view of what is happening, which of course is a political reality, compare with the facts? It seems that we have had data with which to work. We do our homework; hon. members spend time with their constituents and gather their views. Lately, we have been bombarded with briefs, opinions and representations. But a dialogue, even though well intentioned on both sides, can rapidly become a confrontation, with opposed parties being polarized and stating maximum positions: absolutely for and absolutely against certain questions.

In these circumstances, every question can become an attack and every answer or explanation a defence. When this happens, analyzing public opinion becomes harder. We must go behind the public attack, so to speak, and try to determine what people are really objecting to, how far they are "with it" and what are the terms of their continued support. Consider, for example, the White Paper on Tax Reform. I have received many letters about it—

Mr. Orlikow: And how many coupons?

Mr. Kaplan: — and heard many discussions. I am convinced that changes are required and am also satisfied that there will be changes. Many wise suggestions for improvement have been made and I, for one, will be seeking opportunities during the work of the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs to marshal support for these views. Nevertheless, underlying the criticism or accompanying it, are some hostile themes which represent extremely widespread opinions which ought to have some exposure and