

and destroying any concept of federalism in Canada if we keep on this course.

• (2132)

Admit that is an error and tomorrow or the next day, or within the next month, if the NDP amendment is carried, let the government withdraw what they have in this bill, pay over to the minister of finance of Quebec, to the government of Quebec or to the province of Quebec what they should pay—that is, the \$226 million—participate in the reductions they are making—that is, the complete sales tax reduction on clothing, furniture, footwear, etc.—and that will be it.

It is the simplest kind of thing, Mr. Speaker, but you have to be a bit flexible. The trouble is that the government is not flexible. The Minister of Finance has delivered a ukase, they used to call it in Czarist Russia—a command, an edict, an arbitrary order. They delivered an ultimatum to Quebec which Quebec does not have to accept and which Quebec is not accepting. They made a final proposal or a statement of terms. They have tried to dictate.

I want to tell the Minister of Finance what “consulting” means so we will be on the same wavelength when we consider terms. This is the definition given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary. It states that “consult” means to seek information or advice from; to take into consideration. Consultation means the act of consulting, deliberation. It does not mean that you call the provincial finance ministers and tell them you are going to take certain action, that you are going to do something and that they then have to agree, or if they express no reservation or no opinion you have consulted them. That is not consultation. That is not asking them for information or advice. That is not taking into consideration their views.

The minister when he called the premier of Newfoundland did not seek information or advice last Friday. He called the premier of Newfoundland when he could not get hold of the minister of finance and told him what he was going to do. He told him he was going to pay this \$85 per taxpayer direct to the Quebec taxpayer. I will not say what the premier of Newfoundland told the Minister of Finance on the phone. It is confidential, but I can assure you he did not agree. He did not give him the advice that this was the right thing to do. I will not say what he did tell him. The minister did not consult with the provincial ministers.

The humiliation of the four Atlantic provinces was that before April 10 the Minister of Finance never even met physically with a finance minister from any one of those four provinces. When I asked the minister a question today about whether he had any suggestions from the minister of finance for Newfoundland before he brought his budget down on April 10, he said in his reply—and if you look at his reply in *Hansard* tomorrow you will see what he meant—that he did not have to listen to what the minister of finance for Newfoundland said. He said that they were going to bear 100 per cent of the cost of the tax reduction, so I did not have to listen to him.

Income Tax Act

That is how Newfoundland and the four disadvantaged provinces of Canada are treated by this government here in Ottawa. That is what consultation is. That is what happens to the poor; the poor in resources and the poor in finances. That is the kind of consultation they get from this Liberal government at Ottawa. They are told what is going to happen, and because they are going to be compensated 100 per cent their suggestions are not welcome and not listened to. The minister of finance in Newfoundland did not agree with the six month hoist of this 3 per cent sales tax. He did not want it to come off in October of 1978 just when unemployment is starting to rise again to catastrophic and stratospheric heights in Newfoundland. He did not want that. He wanted it to go on at least until the spring, but he was not listened to because beggars cannot be choosers. That is the federal system we now have operating here in Canada, under Liberal domination for the last ten years. That is co-operative federalism.

Quebec, according to all the statistics, is disadvantaged also, but they are bigger and they have more of a sense of having their own homeland in Quebec. They have a history of every government and every political party in the province fighting for provincial rights in Quebec from 1867 to date. That is what they have, so they are prepared to make the financial sacrifice and make themselves heard and felt.

The minister was very incautious when he tried to consult in his usual way with Quebec, telling Quebec what he was going to do with their tax. Quebec just sat by and let him walk into his own trap, into his own arrogance. He delivered his ukase to Quebec and they told him to kiss their icons. That is what they told him, Mr. Speaker, and rightly so, and I congratulate them. I wish that Newfoundland had told him to kiss their icons also. These are Czarist edicts that come from this great monarchy here in Ottawa. The emperor Trudeau and his cohorts. They had better learn and consult. I have given the definition of consult.

“Dictate” means to prescribe, lay down authoritatively, terms, things to be done; lay down the law, give orders. What the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister tried to do was dictate. This was dictation, not consultation. He could not lay down terms to the province of Quebec. He could not lay down the law to them. He could not prescribe. They were not ready to lie down there, and I congratulate them for it. I do not care if they are péquiste, Union Nationale, Liberal or Conservative in Quebec; they took the right attitude. They were not going to be dictated to by Ottawa. I only wish the other nine provinces had done the same.

On budget night on April 10, the Minister of Finance did not pretend, lucky for him, that the provinces had all agreed. He did not even say there was agreement with nine provinces. What he said, as appears in his speech at page 14, was what he offered to do for them. He said at the bottom of page 14 that the measure can be an outstanding example of fiscal co-ordination, and if all provinces accept the federal offer it will mean such-and-such. There was no pretence that Quebec had accepted this federal dictation, this federal edict, this federal ukase; they did not say they were accepting it. When the