

so, particularly the past couple of years. The difficulties to which I am referring are those which involve themselves with confederation; the fact that the country, under the stewardship of the present Liberal administration, seems to be falling apart at the seams. The largest single contributing factor to the difficult situation which confederation is in is the fact that we have a government which is suffering from the disease which leaders and governments have suffered from ever since the first time history was recorded. The Greeks like to refer to this disease as a hubris. The term is appropriate to apply to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald), the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) and the key people who have been in charge of this government over the past few years.

Perhaps I should take some time to explain the condition. I am sure Your Honour will immediately recognize the similarity between the condition these men suffer and that originally described by the Greeks, if you care to refer to Greek history and the comments made at that time about the leaders of the day.

The condition to which I am referring involves a certain kind of pride. Everyone will agree that if an individual is to be successful in life he must have a certain amount of pride in himself and his ability to achieve. Through that kind of pride he has a certain amount of self-confidence which is required in order to propel an individual to strive for better things for his country, his family, himself, or whatever. In this case the particular pride has been destructive to leaders since time immemorial. It is a special kind of pride. It is an insolent pride, a pride of insolence and arrogance, a kind of pride which is really not justified. However, the keepers of it feel they are justified because they are appointed by divine right to rule and make decisions for everyone. This insolent pride is the reason we have a substantial strain between the federal government and virtually all of the provincial governments in this country. It is the reason for the loss of mutual trust and respect which is necessary between federal and provincial governments if confederation is to function in a meaningful way.

I am sure this mutual trust and respect existed when the party to which I am pleased to belong, the Conservative party, brought together a number of provinces to form confederation. If we review history ever since confederation we will not find that any other federal government has been as guilty of this insolent pride, and so destructive to confederation, as the present administration.

I mentioned Bill C-68 as the time when I, personally, became faced with this kind of pride in my dealings with the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It might be worth quoting some of the exchanges that took place between that minister and the members of the health committee who represented this party during the course of the deliberations on that subject. I wish to quote from the committee proceedings which took place about a year ago, No. 46:18. A questioner from this party asked in committee:

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements

But before quoting, Mr. Chairman, I want to come back to a subject which I had touched on previously. My concern is for the effect of this on confederation and federal-provincial relations in general.

We were talking about Bill C-68 which was a unilateral, arbitrary imposition of a federal government decision upon the provinces without any kind of meaningful agreement with the provinces and without having had sufficient negotiations to come to an agreement. I continue the quotation:

● (1620)

Now we know that at a federal-provincial ministers' meeting of health ministers in early 1975, the federal government had made a commitment to the provinces, or at least had agreed to abandon the rigid plan for imposing arbitrary federal expenditure limits. The federal government at that time also agreed with the provinces to explore various alternatives for improving the cost effectiveness of health programs within the context perhaps of a more flexible interpretation of the existing federal-provincial agreements. My understanding is that a federal-provincial committee was set up of officials where studies were under way in order to determine methods of improving the health care delivery system at, perhaps a lower cost. That committee was to meet to analyse results some time in July, but the minister of finance decided to announce in June, just two or three weeks before this meeting was to occur, exactly the kind of unilateral action which the minister had assured the provinces only a few months earlier would not take place. To my way of thinking, the country in which we live was built on a federal system. Confederation itself was built on the spirit of federal-provincial co-operation of such a kind as was necessary to keep the country together and to keep the citizens serviced with the best facilities possible under today's conditions.

We also know, for example, that during the administration of this government—and by that I mean since the advent of Prime Minister Trudeau—separatism in Quebec has grown perhaps by leaps and bounds. Alienation in the west has reached perhaps the highest peak since confederation or since the western provinces came in and the maritime provinces feel desperately neglected in many ways.

At this point, one of the Liberal members from New Brunswick shouted: "That is not true".

An hon. Member: Who was he?

Mr. Yewchuk: It was the hon. member for Madawaska-Victoria (Mr. Corbin). We are faced with legislation here with which virtually no province agrees. Every province has rejected it. Every province has indicated in no uncertain terms that it wants desperately to sit down with the minister of health in an effort to reach a mutually acceptable agreement with regard to changes in the health care delivery system. Yet the minister chooses to bulldoze his way ahead in spite of the fact that he has been before the committee on at least four or five occasions now, during all of which time he has failed to provide any reasonable explanation for choosing to take this route in the face of commitments to the provinces only a few months earlier that any changes which might be made would be arranged through mutually acceptable pathways of negotiation. The response of the minister to all that, and more, was this:

Mr. Chairman, several of the statements made by the hon. gentleman are so preposterous that I have difficulty in taking them seriously.

He went on to say that about 95 per cent of them were preposterous. He considered them to be so preposterous that he had difficulty in taking them seriously. Mr. Speaker, the statements which I made consisted largely of a summary of a number of letters sent to us by all the provincial ministers of