

British North America Act

If we examine both resolutions, we note a strange likeness between the two and it is for the benefit of this legislation that it will be passed.

The resolution concerning the amendment submitted by the federal government reads as follows:

The parliament of Canada may make laws in relation to old age pensions and supplementary benefits, including survivors' and disability benefits irrespective of age, but no such law shall affect the operation of any law present or future of a provincial legislature in relation to any such matter.

The motion submitted to the Quebec legislature is drafted along the same lines and reads as follows:

However, no existing law shall affect the operation of any law present or future of provincial legislatures in relation to any such matter.

We can conclude then that there has undoubtedly been consultation. I do not object to that; on the contrary, I am very happy about it.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition state this afternoon that he was unable to introduce his pension plan because the province of Quebec had not agreed to this amendment; I would say, Mr. Speaker, that if the province of Quebec refused its consent at that time, it was perhaps because the Diefenbaker government would not guarantee that the rights of Quebec would be safeguarded.

I think that any federal government should take this into account at the present time, because the province of Quebec, due to its present economic, cultural and social development, will never tolerate to have its rights infringed by a central government unwilling to acknowledge its special status.

I am glad that this government was successful in its negotiations with the province of Quebec in respect to this amendment. I am also convinced that if the Diefenbaker government had remained in office, it would have been impossible to reach an agreement because I am under the impression that the present Leader of the Opposition has some kind of grudge against Quebec which is becoming more and more obvious.

Mr. Pigeon: That is not true.

Mr. Chapdelaine: I shall even go further and say that if we still had a Conservative government in power, confederation would be a thing of the past, because Quebec would have separated.

Mr. Pigeon: What you are saying is untrue.

Mr. Côté: That is an impression.

[Mr. Chapdelaine.]

Mr. Chapdelaine: This is all the more true, Mr. Speaker, as—

Mr. Pigeon: Be logical.

Mr. Chapdelaine: —the Leader of the Opposition does not even have now the support of the Conservative members from Quebec.

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has just made a gratuitous statement.

Mr. Chapdelaine: When the vote is taken on the flag issue, we will have an opportunity to see whether my contention is true or not.

If the present Leader of the Opposition had acted with more diplomacy when he wanted to negotiate with Quebec, I feel that he might have obtained the same results as both the provincial and the federal governments have obtained as far as relations with Ottawa was concerned.

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. member for Sherbrooke, if he will permit.

Mr. Chapdelaine: I have no objection.

Mr. Favreau: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Pigeon: Sit down. I am going to ask my question. Is the hon. member talking about the Conservative party? Can he tell the house whether he shares the views of the hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. Leboe) who spoke on behalf of his party on the flag issue?

Mr. Chapdelaine: Mr. Speaker, I do not share them at all, and I am proud to say so.

Mr. Marcoux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. The hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm has just said that the hon. member for Cariboo spoke on behalf of his party, which is totally incorrect, since he said himself, on many occasions, and especially at the outset of his remarks:

The views that I express will be entirely my own and certainly will not involve concurrence by any other member of this group.

I am asking the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm to kindly withdraw his words.

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I am happy to find out, with my colleagues, that Mr. Thompson's party is divided in two, once again.