

Alleged Decentralization of Policies

demands of the Quebec government whose duty it was to look after the best interests of that province.

We know what was the comment of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) about the recommendations made by the then provincial secretary Mr. Mario Beaulieu. I will not repeat his first comment: it was the second time that he was using the term, but I will say however that he dismissed as stupid the claim of the Quebec provincial secretary.

Such refusals and arrogant attitudes give rise in Quebec to an antifederal feeling which is used as a springboard by those who wish to create dissension and promote separatism in Quebec. It is high time, Mr. Speaker, for the members opposite to throw off their own arrogance, to accept finally to hear the province of Quebec through its elected representatives, and to accede to their claims not only for its good, but also for the sake of good understanding and national unity.

Until our current leaders carry out that policy, Mr. Speaker, we will go from bad to worse and have one trouble after another.

The sooner this government becomes more flexible, the sooner it listens to reason, the better it will be for everyone.

And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that those who are from the province of Quebec, the friends of the Liberal party, will convince of that those who hold the reins of power, those who occupy the government benches.

Mr. Ouellet: You have forgotten to talk about family allowances.

Mr. Albert Béchard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I must tell my colleague the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Ricard) that, although I listened with both ears, I did not learn anything new from his diatribe this afternoon, except—

Hon. Théogène Ricard (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, there are some who never understand anything.

Mr. Béchard: I would ask the hon. member to please listen.

Mr. Ricard: Some never understand anything, and you are one of them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. I believe that it is now the turn of the hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine to have the floor, and I would ask hon. members to show him some courtesy.

Mr. Ricard: That is exactly what I am doing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Béchard: Mr. Speaker, I have not deemed it advisable to ask you to call to order the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe, because, as he is very courteous, he would not dare challenge what I have just said.

I was greatly surprised to hear the allegedly accurate remarks of the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe. In fact, he stated that the Liberal party is the most centralizing

[Mr. Ricard.]

since Confederation, and that the legally and democratically elected government of the province of Quebec had been refused the refund of this famous tax, that is an amount of \$200,000. What is right—and I shall say it for the information of the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe, who is a former neighbour of the late Daniel Johnson—is that Mr. Johnson himself refused to put into force, in our province, the medicare plan which had been accepted by his predecessor, the hon. Jean Lesage.

Would a truly centralizing government make such proposals as, for instance, that he has just made to the provinces respecting family allowances? Is this a centralizing government?

It shall also completely withdraw, and this is retroactive to January, from the estate tax field. Is this the action of a centralizing government? This government also will negotiate tax agreements such as it is negotiating under Bill C-8, now before this House on third reading. Some will say, as the Progressive Conservatives are always doing, that the Liberal party is the most centralizing party.

Strangely enough, Mr. Speaker, the province of Quebec has always put its trust in the Liberal party, as it will again at the next elections.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would not like to get into electoral matters, but I want to say that there is no reason to be surprised or overly concerned because of the regret expressed today in the motion brought in by the Ralliement, sorry, the Social Credit party—it is always changing its name—and which reads as follows:

That this House regrets that the government has not established consultative bodies with the provinces and municipalities, with a view to decentralizing monetary and fiscal policies in such a way as to permit each level of government to assume its own responsibilities in a manner less burdensome to the taxpayer.

• (1510)

No need to be surprised, Mr. Speaker, at the regret expressed in the motion of the Social Credit Party of Canada if we recall the events since Canada was introduced to the policy of Major Douglas—that was his name, I think. Then there were the John Blackmores, the Solon Lowes—deliberately forgetting of course the Mannings and the Bennetts who are simply Conservatives in disguise, not even Progressive Conservatives, the Thompsons, another one who became a Conservative—he was one and he stayed one—the Caouettes, the Samsons and the Bois who don't even know whether they should cheer for Créditistes, Péquistes, Indépendantistes or the Ralliement national (nobody knows any more), they morbidly took it upon themselves to settle all economic problems through the Bank of Canada.

You will agree, Mr. Speaker, that it does not take a great deal of imagination to propose such a childish and, on the surface, such an easy solution to settle the economic problems of a country.

Strangely enough, however, until now, no other country faced with economic, monetary or other difficulties has ever thought to use the cure-all advocated by the Social Credit.

You will not learn anything from me, Mr. Speaker, since you are quite familiar with this Social Credit theory, if I