

*Economic Conditions*

Mr. Speaker, the situation in Quebec is not easy to determine, and when someone wants to make a judgment, I believe he must have the wisdom and the intelligence to see that the fact of blaming one group is to show a lack of understanding. It would be just as absurd to say that it is the fault of the Progressive Conservatives, the New Democrats, the Social Crediters or the government. All these politically biased judgments are dangerous because they leave people with the impression that only the governments or the members of parliament are able to find solutions to problems as serious as those we are now facing in Quebec.

The social climate in Quebec is an issue which dates back several years ago, and if the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) who spoke earlier were to come to Quebec to meet the Quebecers and tell them he is ready to accept them as first class citizens with their own language and culture, I think it would be a more positive attitude because I do not hesitate to tell my English-speaking colleagues on both sides of this House that not only I respect them but that I am ready to accept their language and culture. I think this attitude is definitely a positive one. It tends to demonstrate that as a French-speaking Canadian, I am ready to make an effort to sit down with them at the same table in an attempt to deal with, in a spirit of brotherhood, friendship and mutual understanding, the problems we are now facing and which we all want to solve.

In Quebec, there are housing problems, and the federal government has offered a \$90 million housing grant to the province of Quebec. Quebec has not yet accepted that grant because the money comes from the federal government. All kinds of reasons are invoked. In the meantime, people suffer from a lack of housing because it has not been possible to come to an agreement at the higher level. In spite of divergent opinions, it has not been possible to work out a compromise such as the agreement reached by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) and Mr. Couture from Quebec. The Minister of Manpower and Immigration is to be commended for coming to an arrangement and working out a solution with Mr. Couture. Solutions can be found, but it is not always easy. I urge the members of this House to start seeking a solution to our problems not only in Quebec but across Canada. I think it is possible and I am sure that we can do it together.

**Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Mr. Speaker, I know there are only 30 minutes left and that my colleagues from Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) intends to take the floor so I shall be very pleased to share the rest of the time with him.

Of course, I wish to make a few remarks on the motion before us which I find very timely. But first I shall comment on the remarks of my colleague, the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Marceau) who called for objectivity. I think he is right. It is urgent that the House take the time to discuss the issues in all objectivity. Like him I think it is urgent to be more open-minded about the present problems and the present economic context. I think he is as aware as I am of the importance—particularly in Quebec, since we come from the

[Mr. Marceau.]

same province—of restoring a sound economic climate and to do it urgently to demonstrate to the people of Quebec it is possible to achieve legitimate aspirations without going beyond the constitutional framework. Should we give it the flexibility I think everybody wishes? Should we also conceive in some cases a new consultation mechanism?

● (1730)

I noted yesterday, for example, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Recreation and Sport at the the Winnipeg conference pointed out or rather criticized the federal grants because they hindered their planning in the recreational field. He referred to Opportunities for Youth which has become Young Canada Works, the New Horizons program, etc.

What is important, Mr. Speaker, is surely not to blame the government for its generosity but to ask for further assistance in order to set up new mechanisms for consultation if necessary. Perhaps there were no adequate prior negotiations with the provinces. I therefore urge the minister responsible for the programs to enter into a more realistic dialogue with the responsible provincial ministers, especially in Quebec, to see that federal subsidies do not go against the interests of the provinces. No member opposite nor any government member would support lower grants to the provinces.

But I believe that we are also promoting national unity, since this subject is constantly cropping up, and that we are of course aware of the respect that we owe to the planning of provincial programs. This could be the root cause of the whole problem, that is the attitude or the implementation of the present federalism which has irritated many Canadians and many provinces and is consequently giving rise to certain problems concerning national unity.

Of course, I congratulate the members of the Social Credit Party of Canada, and I take this opportunity to congratulate the new member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Caouette). If he was elected, Mr. Speaker, I had nothing to do with it, and in all honesty, I must congratulate him and wish him much success in the House in the best interests of his voters. I should like to quote the motion:

That this House regrets the lack of foresight and leadership of the Government in the management of State affairs, particularly in view of the fact that it deliberately permits the worsening of inflation . . .

“Deliberately” is perhaps an overstatement, because I do not think the government deliberately wants to create problems for the provinces or the citizens, but as representatives of the people and members of the opposition, it still remains that we have the responsibility to denounce the government for its failure to take some action or measures likely to solve our present problems. In my opinion, this is not a criticism that should be brushed aside, as it is our job to make it. I continue the quotation:

. . . which directly leads to a very marked deterioration of the social climate . . .

It is certain, Mr. Speaker, that there is a real danger. If my memory serves me right, the chairman of the Canadian Labour Congress said recently that maintaining the 40 per cent of the 1,000,000 unemployed who are between 18 and 24