

Alleged Decentralization of Policies

provinces will not be asking so much from the federal government.

Let us be realistic about it, the "sucking" is not going to lessen. Is public demand for education, health services, hospitals, highways, transportation, expenses, postal services, going to diminish? Not in the slightest!

And yet, we are demanding a reduction of revenues in a certain area because we want to replace them. Such is at present the policy of federal and provincial governments, which indicate today that they need all those revenues.

Mr. Latulippe: It is a debt policy.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): It is not a debt policy, but rather a policy of responding to public demand, which is often overheated by partisan and political claims. This is what happens. We urge people to demand services from their governments without telling them that this is going to cost money, and that the public will have to foot the bill. Every single penny spent by government authorities in Canada comes out of the taxpayer's pocket, in one way or another.

An hon. Member: There is the Bank of Canada!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): There is no magic in that. It is very simple.

An hon. Member: And what about the public in all that?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): We will see whether the hon. member can offer another program to meet the legitimate requests of the Canadian public. The hon. member and his colleagues are always the first to add to that list of requests. Who will bear the cost? That is what is being demanded, and it is very often—

Mr. Prud'homme: The Bank of Canada.

Mr. Latulippe: It is the Bank of Canada.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I know who will pay for it: it is the Canadian taxpayer, with his efforts, his work, his ingenuity, in other words the whole industry, our economy as a whole. That is the source of income.

Mr. Prud'homme: The Creditists do not know that.

Mr. Latulippe: There is not a single worker who makes money.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): That is the source of income for all government activities. Municipalities—

An hon. Member: There are many of them.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Yes, there are many of them. As a matter of fact, the mayor of my own city is among the first to ask for more money. Why? With all due deference, that is just like him. A mayor has lots of more important things to do.

The municipalities are spending money. This is good but who foots the bill? Because in the final analysis there is always somebody who pays for it. Whether it is at the

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

municipal, provincial or federal level the taxpayer always ends up paying the shot.

We have now reached a point where if we want participatory democracy we must accept the *status quo* in the field of consultations between the federal government and the provinces although there is much room for improvement.

However, the hon. member will admit that the dialogue between him and his wife or the members of his family is sometimes not quite up to par.

Mr. Prud'homme: Just like within the creditiste party.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): No, no. One should recognize that it is a question of human relations. The people of this country are in constant communication. But let us leave them alone and start looking at what is happening in our own back yard.

I will now limit myself to the political or monetary question. In fact, do we not all agree that in the tax field there is a need for more consultation. This was brought up as recently as yesterday in a federal-provincial issue. I will not finger anyone or lay the blame on anyone in particular because everyone has to assume his share of responsibilities.

However, as far as the monetary system goes every province or area should have the right to make the decisions likely to meet their needs. But here we are going back to the Middle Ages because when is it going to stop? If the province of Alberta, Saskatchewan or New Brunswick wanted to develop a monetary policy with respect to interest rates, currency value, etc., we would be going back to the Middle Ages, to the era of the city-state. We would mint coins and bite in them or cut them to know their value. And this city-state money was worthless—

• (1240)

Mr. Latulippe (Compton): What is it worth today?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): It has a value. Today you can buy a shirt or a pair of trousers with a \$5 or \$10 bill. You put a price on the goods and the shopkeeper is willing to receive a bill in exchange. He does not accept—

Mr. Latulippe: He pays half of it to the government.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): He pays half of it to the government. He pays 37 per cent to the three levels of government. Today, 37 per cent of the gross national product goes to the state one way or another. If the state is required to spend more, then it will ask for more since, as I said earlier, he has to foot the bill at the end.

Any public service, or pension plan or health insurance scheme has to be paid for, and it is hon. members together with their families, their neighbours and other Canadian citizens who have to meet the whole cost.

But can one imagine the people of Alberta or British Columbia insisting on exercising any rights that would be detrimental to Quebecers? What would entitle them to do so since we are all Canadians irrespective of our province of origin?

Mr. Latulippe: Where do they get their money from?