

I will not have time to go into the faults of the provinces because often they cry for help when they actually put themselves in the hole by their own consent. They are crying for help because the federal government has become too powerful. That federal system of technocrats who control everything in this country has become very powerful. I listened earlier to the right hon. Prime Minister say that it was to have that secretary, to have more consultations, for example, about medicare.

Madam Speaker, health is an exclusively provincial area and after all the changes that were made there is still an attempt through our taxation power to interfere in the old age security plan, the family allowances plan, or we give 30, 40 or 50 per cent to the medical sector. The provinces must try and find a few comforting words in the discussions, while health comes specifically under their jurisdiction.

We claim that our purpose is to establish better contacts with the provinces, to obtain their advice on health matters and, to provide better assistance to the sick, the old and the young. As far as I am concerned, I repeat what I said ten years ago: the federal government should give back to the provinces their taxation rights, and we will do away with this duplication of offices in the ten provinces, in addition to the federal ones, which are trying to distribute the federal taxes to those in need of medical care or other assistance. Instead of allocating 50 per cent of the funds levied throughout Canada and on every level of government to administer the health department, let us go and find out what is going on in our hospitals. In the province of Quebec, our hospital system is worse than ever. I do not speak about other provinces but about mine which has the most expensive system; it costs \$88 a day to have the right to sleep in a bed and with none of the services we had 15 or 20 years ago. If at least we had them! Today, let us see what happens. There is too much red tape. Almost 50 per cent of the hospitals are occupied by offices. This is red tape. But as far as beds for patients are concerned, you will not find them!

This is why it is said that there was a transfer of responsibilities. We should leave to provinces their responsibilities but give them the taxation power needed to meet those responsibilities and let the federal government meet its own responsibilities and let us meet ours. We should stop interfering like this in provincial jurisdiction. Thus, Madam Speaker, I think that we should be able to reduce the staff of Prime Minister's office by 50 per cent and to do the same in other departments, in order to retain only good civil servants and dismiss those who are paid \$25,000, \$30,000, \$40,000 a year for doing nothing. Talk about salaries! But we should not forget that their expenses are paid by the government. This is something that people often forget.

Madam Speaker, I understand that we are going to send Bill C-38 to a standing committee of this House where it will be discussed because it demands some discussion and thought but, once more, let us forget about joint plans and projects and such nonsense. I remember the joint plans. The former Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson, had sworn to do away with all joint plans, but when he abandoned politics, there were still some left. Today, we have multiplied by six, these famous joint plans which

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are nothing more than federal government tentacles to strangle the provinces.

I consider that joint plans did not achieve a fair distribution. When I hear about fair distribution, I always think of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. I was a member of that committee, which was supposed to help underdeveloped areas. What nonsense! I know that at the time of the old department, the government gave assistance on a political basis not to underdeveloped areas, but to those which could bring in votes.

We are opposed to such joint departments, plans, projects, or programs. We are in favour of the principle that the provinces should have access to more information, should be consulted more often, not after the fact, but before a joint program is discussed. For many years, programs have been developed, before the provinces were consulted. Just imagine the situation, when everything had been done! We want the consultations to take place before in the areas which are strictly within the jurisdiction of the federal government. The provinces should be able to maintain their own fields of jurisdiction. This will eliminate a lot of the problems in Ottawa. This is what often causes problems in departments. People are always wondering, does this come under provincial or federal jurisdiction? This is so confused that, in the end, it is the federal government who has the right of veto.

In conclusion, I simply want to say that the best federal-provincial relations are those which take place among elected officials rather than public servants, among people who are truly responsible, who have been elected by the people, that is, the federal members of Parliament and the elected members from Quebec or Ontario. We must discuss these problems amongst ourselves. The discussion must not take place at a bureaucratic level. Bureaucracy has its place, but those who are truly responsible for the provinces and the country are the representatives elected by the people. All others are irresponsible . . .

**An hon. Member:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** . . . when programs, and projects are developed through consultations with the members of parliament, we will agree, Madam Speaker.

*[English]*

**Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona):** Madam Speaker, the first question that I ask myself as this bill comes before us is, why it has been brought into the House. Let me read the explanatory note to the bill:

The purpose of this Bill is to make provision for the appointment and remuneration of the Secretary to the Cabinet for Federal-Provincial Relations and to make the statutory designation of the office of the Clerk of the Privy Council conform to present practice.

It is obviously an important bill because the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) himself is taking the responsibility of bringing it before the House. But the explanatory note, or even the presence of the Prime Minister this afternoon is not sufficient to assist one in finding the real reason for this bill. I do not think it is necessarily a vehicle for the employment of specific civil servants.

The Prime Minister made reference to Mr. Gordon Robertson. I shall be making some comments about Mr. Robertson, but I do not think that the bill has to do with Mr.