

right to govern the country and it has always discharged its functions in that spirit.

Mr. Béchard: What are you driving at?

Mr. Ricard: If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles de la Madeleine (Mr. Béchard) that if he has any remarks to make he can make them after I am finished. However, if he does not want to be polite enough to listen to me he could at least in all due respect for this House listen to what is being said. I am certain he will learn a great deal not only from the one who has the floor at this time but also from those who will follow me.

One vital condition to the progress of the business of this House is to know how to listen and learn when the opportunity arises. So, I suggest strongly to my hon. friend the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Justice to keep his ears wide open. It would be to his advantage and also to that of the House which could benefit from the same courtesy I have shown for those who have spoken before me.

Mr. Béchard: I hesitate to listen to the hon. member.

Mr. Ricard: You see, Mr. Speaker, he will never understand. If you wish to call him to order, you are welcome, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. In keeping with the usual practice, whenever a member has been recognized, other members should let him exercise his right to speak and listen to him with as much attention as possible and without interrupting him.

Mr. Béchard: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member. I will simply make some comments after his speech, which is more or less excellent.

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, I notice the hon. member said "more or less excellent". He is probably short of vocabulary.

Mr. Speaker, in his motion the hon. member for Champlain deplores the lack of communication between provinces and the central government and the fact that it has been worsening during the last four years. I will quote from a few newspaper clippings to prove what I am saying, and I shall not rely only on evidence from opponents of the present government. Mr. Speaker, I have here a clipping from the March 5, 1968, issue of *Le Devoir*, bearing the headline "Provinces unanimously denounce central government fiscal policy" and where one can read:

All of them denounce what they consider as the law of the fiscal jungle which was proposed to them by the federal government in 1966.

All of them denounce the inflexibility introduced in fiscal relations as an aftermath of the federal government's determination to impose joint programs and its firm intention of withdrawing from them now.

I will also quote the words of former Quebec Prime Minister Jean-Jacques Bertrand, as reproduced in the November 5, 1968 edition of *Le Devoir*:

Alleged Decentralization of Policies

What strange thing are we witnessing at the present time, more particularly since the last four months? We are witnessing—and I regret to have to deplore it—an arrogant and imperialist attitude on the part of the federal government.

Now let us read what the Ontario Minister of Finance, Mr. Charles MacNaughton, had to say as reported in *Le Devoir* of November 14, 1968:

Last week, those taking part in the federal-provincial conference have been assured that the federal government would reconsider the question of tax sharing. But since then, we heard the central government make another statement to the effect that the provinces must collect themselves their additional taxes if they need supplementary revenues.

This is certainly evidence of a lack of communication, a lack of exchange of views between the central government and the provincial governments.

What does the present premier of Quebec, Mr. Robert Bourassa, now say? In *Le Devoir* of November 16, 1971, one can read this:

Quebec premier, Mr. Robert Bourassa, blamed yesterday the federal government for failing to consult the provinces when formulating its policy against unemployment, and he called the conference of the premiers of the country, which he attends until tomorrow, an *a posteriori* consultation.

• (1500)

The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) would surely be offended, and he would probably accuse the Quebec premier of racism, if he heard the words the premier is reported to have said. I quote:

In fact, the premier stated that the activity of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, headed by Mr. Jean Marchand, had not changed things very much. More specifically, Mr. Bourassa said, the report had not affected the overall situation in Quebec and on the whole, the results were not very satisfactory.

Mr. Speaker, were the Minister to hear this, there would be no end to his laments, to the effect that we merely want to destroy him. We have no intention of destroying anyone, but as members of the official opposition, it is our duty to ensure that the government produces the best possible administration for the Canadian people.

The quotation goes on:

Basically, the premier wants the federal government to adopt more selective economic remedial measures.

That is what we have been asking the present government all along.

As I said at the beginning this government interfered in fields of exclusively provincial jurisdiction, and later on warned the most interested parties, that is the provinces.

For instance, the federal government meddled in health insurance. Originally, the legislation was to have come into force on July 1st, 1967, but because of the objections of several provinces, its application throughout Canada was delayed by at least one year. We know that the Quebec government, through its premier, the hon. Daniel Johnson, had opposed the measure. He wanted Quebec to receive the tax levied in his province, the so-called social improvement tax. Not only was he the only one to demand that those payments be remitted to the province of Quebec, but after him, the provincial Liberal government has always done likewise while the federal and centralizing Liberal government has refused to accede to the