

Medicare

province with an adequate fiscal compensation, because I will not have the province of Quebec taxed again, by that bill, during five or six years and receive nothing in return. That has been going on for more than 50 years; it has acquired a new momentum since about 30 years, always for the benefit of others. A nice proposal is put forward, but there is a nigger in the woodpile: a tax will be levied on the Quebec workers, but Quebec will receive nothing in return and the minister is well aware of it, as a result of the statement made by the Prime Minister and the statement of all the other ministers. Moreover if you want other statements, you can find one in *Le Devoir* of October 19—it is quite recent—the hon. minister, Dozois said:

if Ottawa insists on keeping it, it will be necessary to find other means to recuperate its fiscal rights.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what is the government waiting for? Why wait to do justice to a province that simply wants to live within the law, that merely wants the constitution to be respected? We often hear that the present Quebec government is acting pretty smart, but I say that if it speaks harshly, the actions of the federal government, especially in the last 30 years, have also been pretty hard on the province of Quebec.

I fail to understand how the minister could answer as he did the other day when he was asked if there was for the province of Quebec, a fiscal compensation guarantee in the bill, either explicit or implicit. The minister replied coldly and directly in front of all the Quebec members seated on either side of him: No, the province of Quebec will receive nothing.

Mr. Speaker, as a Quebecker, I cannot allow such words to be spoken in this house. The province of Quebec will be taxed, that is the right of the federal government, but it will keep everything and give nothing. Then, in 1972, Ottawa will think about giving back something to Quebec, after having distributed everything, impoverished our workers and drained them dry during four or five years to satisfy that giant dictator, the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, we strongly favour this amendment which provides for fiscal compensation for such provinces as may not wish to avail themselves of the federal medicare plan. We will support it, Mr. Speaker, because as Quebec members it is our duty to do so, just as it is the duty of the representatives of other provinces.

[Mr. Gauthier.]

I heard earlier the claim put in by the hon. member for Jasper (Mr. Horner) on behalf of his province. He has the right to do so because this field, let us say it and repeat it, is a provincial matter. Let Ottawa leave provincial affairs alone. Ottawa should let the provinces administer their own affairs and leave them their own revenues.

We hear people say that provinces are taking no action. No wonder they are not taking any action. The federal government is continuously taxing the provinces; from the beginning of the war, it has taken all taxation powers from the provinces, and has returned hardly anything to them. And then, some people say that Quebec—as well as the other provinces—are not taking any action. I can well believe it. If you empty someone's wallet, how can he then purchase even 5 cents worth of vitally needed goods? Well, this is exactly what the federal government has done in respect of the provinces and particularly in respect of the province of Quebec.

There are some provinces—and I bear no grudge—like the prairie provinces, for which special legislation has been passed, to help them.

Well and good. But try to find one piece of legislation designed to help directly the province of Quebec. There is absolutely none.

Let Quebec be the goat. Let's take it out on Quebec. Make Quebec pay in order to weaken it. Thus, we will have its skin.

• (8:30 p.m.)

Well, times have changed, Mr. Speaker, and it will be up to the federal government to take action. It will have to consider giving a little justice—social justice does not exist solely for the federal government. Social justice will have to apply to every province, including Quebec, one of those calling for such justice.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that my remarks this evening will be considered as an appeal to all French Canadians from Quebec to support the amendment moved by the member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Allard). If someone votes against this amendment, I shall simply say that he betrayed his province.

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I have been so kindly invited by the member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) to take part in this debate and to state clearly how I will vote on the