

cannot accept the whole motion although I am in favour of parts of it.

This motion takes us back to the history of federalism, joint tax programs, and federal government spending power.

I had the privilege today of listening to the speech of the hon. Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde). I was pleased to hear a former technocrat expressing his view on the profitability of federalism which he has been preaching for some years, as he did especially when he was the great mind behind the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). And the statements he made today did not surprise me, as I knew nothing had changed, for every proposal made in the House was inspired by those technocrats. Indeed, I have always said that the present Parliament is being led by the technocrats, and that it is they who think up the legislation before asking us to pass it.

The proposals made at the meeting on May 8 were simply a repetition of those made at the meeting on January 19, although some have been slightly amended.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare said earlier that he needed more money. When health is concerned he needs more money and we get less for our money from those services.

I think we should consider carefully the current government proposals modified for the provinces. As recorded in *Hansard* for May 9 on page 3599, the Minister of Finance who was giving details of those proposals stated, and I quote:

First, we would be prepared to reduce the rate of federal personal income tax by 6 percentage points. These tax points would be equalized to the national average under the existing provisions of the Fiscal Arrangements Act. The federal government would give a firm undertaking to effect this transfer. But, for reasons I shall explain in a moment, . . .

And he gave a few reasons for proceeding immediately with certain transfers. Again I quote:

Second, we would be prepared to eliminate the existing federal excise taxes and duties on domestic and imported tobacco products, spirits, brandy, wine and beer. Provincial governments would then be able to move into this tax room without any increase in costs to consumers . . . Third, to the extent that the value of the tax cut is not sufficient to pay for the federal contribution for health services, as determined under the GNP-escalated formula, the federal government would make this up by a cash adjustment.

However, when you consider that these proposals have been submitted by the provincial governments we say on their behalf that of course the current proposals are unacceptable to the provinces for the good reason that they will get even less, whatever the minister says, in return for the rights they have given up in favour of the federal government more than 40 years ago. What astounds me is the behaviour of the government which is always making submissions to the provinces whereas under a true federalism, the provinces should express their wishes to the central government. We are doing here what we blame the large unions for, that is, we are entirely forgetting the wishes of the grass roots to consider only those of the leaders. I think that the federal government is asserting itself in the same way as the big union leaders. The Minister of National Health and Welfare said elsewhere in

### Health Care

his statement: "If the provinces do not approve of it, all they have to do is reject it." But he failed to add that if they refuse they will have nothing, which is simple. Reference is made to agreements with the provinces. But what is the nature of those agreements? The federal government stands before the provincial governments and says: This is what we want. You are free to accept it or reject it, but if you reject it, you will get nothing. The Minister of National Health and Welfare himself has just repeated those words.

● (1440)

Mr. Speaker, we call this coercion by leaders antidemocracy or dictatorial federalism, and the provinces cannot submit to this any more than union members can accept the conduct of certain union leaders who unilaterally impose their decisions on the provinces without even consulting them. And that is exactly what the federal government has been doing for many years as we witness ever more inquiries and federal-provincial conferences such as that of May 8, with decreasing success. And we witness the clash of brains between officials who are well installed in all departments and who are seeking a new gimmick in order to pester everybody and give more authority to the central government, while provinces are being turned into mere vassal institutions. What is regrettable in Quebec is that we do not have a government strong enough to stop this invasion by the federal government. What did all these meetings with provinces bring as concrete results?

Mr. Speaker, one has only to read the newspapers of the day following this famous meeting to see once again the deplorable state of the situation. In the *Montréal-Matin* of May 9, for instance, we read and I quote:

Ottawa and the provinces on the warpath.

There is nothing new about them being on the warpath and I think they will continue to be because responsibilities are not outlined. I for one have always been opposed to these joint programs. I was glad, in the years of the former prime minister, the late Right Hon. Mr. Pearson, when he informed us that should he stay in office for another two years, there would not remain a single joint program. He had promised to remove them all. But six months later, the Liberal party compelled him to resign and elected another prime minister. Since then, joint plans have been increased threefold, and I say that so long as we have that system without a sharing of responsibilities, we shall have this quibbling. What I am hoping for is that if a province turns any specific field over to the federal government it does so on a 100 per cent basis, and not 25, 40, 75 or 80 per cent, a little game that leads to all this continuous bickering. It is still true that "Ottawa and the provinces are on the warpath". Here is what one can read in the May 9, 1973, issue of *Montréal-Matin*:

#### TOTAL FAILURE OF CONFERENCE SQUABBLING OF FINANCE, HEALTH AND EDUCATION MINISTERS

The double conference of ministers of Finance and Health and Finance and Education respectively ended in total failure. Having been unable to agree on the financing formula proposed, at both levels, by the Trudeau government, the participants decided to go home and refer the whole problem to the premiers who are to meet in two weeks in Ottawa.