

*Health Resources Fund*

where, for one hour, because a backbencher rose in his seat and not one minister stood up trying to point out the error of his ways, the time of the house has been wasted. We almost had this piece of legislation through.

All I say is, let us have some good, sound reasoning from the government side of the house, let us try to run this country. You are the government, and if you are not capable of running the country, then tell the people of Canada that you are not capable of so doing. Let us stop all this nonsense. Let us quit playing around. Let us quit playing politics with legislation in this house.

**Mr. Deachman:** Could I ask the hon. member a question? Will he say to the house that if his party were the government of this country it would not permit backbenchers to pass amendments, and to question government policy?

**Mr. Starr:** Not at all, provided what was raised had the merit of common sense. But we have not seen that today.

**Mr. Saltsman:** Mr. Chairman, I have some brief remarks to make about this resolution. I make them because I think this is a serious matter, and that this resolution, if carried, would do great damage.

● (9:00 p.m.)

I think it introduces a needless irritant into what is already a difficult situation in the field of federal-provincial relationships. The hon. member seems to ignore the fact that many of these programs are supported only under duress by the provinces, and that the passage of such legislation as this could, in the case of some provinces, confirm their worst fears and lead to increased demands to collect their own revenues and go their own way.

To my mind this is a most dangerous piece of legislation. It arises perhaps from local pique in some areas of Canada. I fail to see the merit of foisting it upon the whole country. I have seen evidence of this petty kind of thinking at municipal level. Councils say: We are not going to be responsible for raising funds needed by boards of education; let them raise their own. Surely we are bigger than that in this house, and surely we need not descend to such petty levels, pitting the provinces against the federal government. I believe the hon. member who put this forward is preoccupied with public relations rather than the substance of the legislation,

[Mr. Starr.]

and for this reason I hope the amendment will not be adopted.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mongrain:** Mr. Chairman, if I understand correctly, the purpose of this bill is to ensure that the people will credit the government with the blessing bestowed upon them.

Of course, I understand—and I thank the member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman) for his intervention—that since political parties are soulless and will never go to heaven, they must be rewarded in this world. Such concern probably does credit to the member for Vancouver-Burrard, since he shows himself loyal to the party by assuring it that Canada will find the best legislation in the best interests of all.

But the fact remains, it seems, that the mover and seconder of this amendment overlooked two or three main things. First of all, what does this amendment mean? Does the issue actually concern the federal government or rather the provincial government? What is involved, for instance, education or health? Those matters should nevertheless be cleared up.

So then, when education or health are involved, and under the constitution these are provincial fields, is the federal government well inspired to tell the provinces: I am giving you a pittance, and setting a proviso upon its use? I think that those of our colleagues who referred to federal-provincial relations were perfectly right. If this comes under the jurisdiction of the federal government, let it fulfil its responsibilities without requiring the provinces to discharge them. If, on the other hand, this is a matter of provincial concern and if the provinces feel they are incapable of coping with it, let us then come to an agreement, by mutual consent and unconditionally, and let not the provinces be required to publicize the federal government.

On the other hand, Mr. Chairman, as an independent member—I am at liberty to say so—when I hear the good and great Liberal party or the good and great Conservative party mentioned by party supporters, I say to myself: There is quite a bit of truth in this, because the two parties have done much for the country. But if the legislation is going to contain a clause to ensure that the provinces which are being reimbursed money that is normally theirs and that they could have collected by themselves, and if the further obligation is imposed upon them to advertise