

personal income tax system. For three years Ontario has pressed the federal government to incorporate a credit against property taxes within the basic income tax system. Now, the federal government has agreed to administer this plan beginning with the 1972 taxation year, and the Ontario government will finance it for the benefit of Ontario taxpayers. For this positive decision I sincerely thank the Minister of Finance. I would also like to commend the Department of National Revenue which worked closely with us to iron out the administrative and operational details of our property tax credit plan. This is an excellent example of how two levels of government can work together harmoniously.

Secondly, may I turn to the 1972 budget address of the Hon. Saul Cherniack, Minister of Finance of the Province of Manitoba. On page 18 of the published text of his address I find the following statement made with reference to the Manitoba education property tax plan:

We have received excellent co-operation from the federal government and I want to express my appreciation to the former and the present federal Ministers of Finance, to their staffs, and to the Minister and staff of the Department of National Revenue. This is an example of good federal-provincial co-operation which hopefully will continue and grow.

Mr. Speaker, these are only two examples of the numerous ways in which the governments of Canada and the provinces are co-operating with each other. I might give a brief, quantitative analysis to indicate the extent of this co-operation. In 1957, there were five committees of ministers between the federal and provincial governments, that is first ministers or other ministers and of their federal and provincial counterparts. There were 59 federal-provincial committees of officials, for a total of 64 ongoing groups of committees that were meeting on either an ad hoc or on a regular basis. By 1967, the number of ministerial committees had increased to 14, the number of official committees to 105, for a total of 119. By 1970, the number of committees of joint federal-provincial ministers had increased to 18; there were over 200 ongoing federal-provincial committees for a total of well over 220 ongoing committees. In 1967, there was a total of 13 ministerial meetings between federal and provincial officials, that is formal meetings of first ministers and other ministers, and 18 meetings of deputy ministers, for a total of 31. In 1971, there were 20 formal ministerial meetings and 22 deputy ministerial meetings. So in four years the meetings increased from 31 to 42, just as standing committee numbers had increased from 64 in 1957 to 119 in 1967, to over 220 by 1970.

• (1630)

Another method of federal-provincial consultation is, of course, the bilateral consultation in which the federal ministers and their officials consult with their counterparts in all or a majority of the provinces, depending on the interest in important individual subjects. I will give a brief resume of the more conspicuous of these over the last three or four years. The former Minister of Justice visited all provincial attorneys general and justice ministers during the constitutional review. He visited all provincial justice ministers or attorneys general on the subject of the Official Languages Act before it was carried through the House of Commons. The former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs during that period had discussed security regulations with appropriate provincial ministers. The former Minister of Labour discussed the

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unemployment insurance legislation with all provincial governments before it was brought forward in the House.

The then Acting Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources discussed the Canada Water Act with the appropriate provincial ministers. The Minister of the Environment (Mr. Davis) discussed the Clean Air Act similarly. The Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) on separate occasions discussed with the responsible provincial ministers the financing of post secondary education, telecommunications, and the summer employment programs introduced by the government so successfully. The Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) discussed the housing and urban renewal legislation. The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) discussed the costs of health and post secondary education programs with the appropriate provincial ministers. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) discussed with the provincial agricultural ministers the agriculture stabilization legislation, and the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Gray) has just completed a round of meetings with provincial cabinet ministers on the subject of the takeover review legislation.

These examples are in addition to numerous private meetings between the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and provincial first ministers as they visit Ottawa or between federal ministers and individual provincial ministers on matters of particular interest and concern to them. There are, of course, differences between governments, but it would be an extraordinary thing if this were not the case, having regard to the numerous ways in which the actions of one government can affect the others. The important thing is not that there are differences but that the governments are continually striving to settle these differences, that they are doing so in a spirit of goodwill and co-operation, and that they are succeeding in so many areas.

Mr. Speaker, I must assert that the federal government has not displayed intransigent attitudes or policies; rather, it has explicitly recognized that many of its actions do affect the provinces and has repeatedly sought their views before implementing its own proposals. I could cite many examples where we have consulted with the provinces and have modified legislation in order to take account of the views which we have received from the provinces. Perhaps the most important example in recent years has been the federal income tax reform legislation enacted late in 1971. In this case, as hon. members know, many of the changes which were incorporated in the final legislation were made to meet criticisms received from the provinces at numerous conferences relating to this subject over a span of some years.

Another important illustration is provided by the new federal-provincial fiscal arrangements legislation which was enacted by Parliament earlier this year following nearly two years of discussions with the provinces. These discussions were undertaken at various levels; with ministers looking at broad policies, senior officials examining such matters in depth, and other officials—in working groups or subcommittees—undertaking intensive studies of particular areas.

I should note that one of the problems which inevitably tends to arise in federal-provincial discussions is that different provinces have differing interests and hence frequently opposing views. This is natural in any federa-