

It gives me great pleasure to have the floor after having heard the hon. member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) standing up for his government by saying that it is not being obstinate, that everything is rosy and that we have in the prime minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) the most flexible man in the world.

Mr. Speaker, if this government is so flexible, how do you explain the stiffness of the press release following the constitutional conference held in Victoria on June 14 and 16, 1971?

• (2040)

I would like to refer the House to paragraph 2 of the conclusions which appeared in release jointly published and which probably came from the thinkers on constitutional matters of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I quote paragraph 2:

If the Charter that must be considered as a whole is accepted and that this fact is made known to the secretary of the constitutional conference on Monday June 28<sup>th</sup> 1971 at the latest, governments will recommend the Charter to their legislatures and, in the case of the federal government, to both Houses of the Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, we had said that the provincial government has been given exactly 11 days to submit all of the foreseen constitutional amendments which included the formula itself and we told the provinces: "This is the subtlety and flexibility of the Prime Minister". It is that subtlety and flexibility that the hon. member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) has just told us about.

The Prime Minister of Canada and his team told the provinces that they were giving them a mere 11 days to accept definitely a charter which would bind them all to conditions that they could not accept at that time. They needed time to try and decipher this whole muddle contained in the conditions discussed at the constitutional conference.

If this is what the hon. member for Papineau calls flexibility, I tell him that he cannot read and that he easily confuses flexibility with rigidity and arrogance.

Mr. Speaker, the main reason why the Victoria conference was a failure is that the provincial governments were denied the time to assess and give mature deliberation to the terms of the proposals made at this conference. I say that under these circumstances, it was certainly not flexibility or comprehension but rather arrogance and rigidity, which have led to the confrontation which we are now facing.

Mr. Speaker, the motion now before us not only deserves the support of hon. members but also of the whole population.

Its terms are wide enough in scope that they can encompass a wide range of opinions. This is why the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) engaged in a flight of oratory that was far more emotional than responsible. For 20 minutes, he beat his chest like a buddha and congratulated himself for his so-called administrative achievements, since no one else would do it for him. And like Archimedes he exclaimed, Eureka, I have discovered the principle of the lever. As if the minister had just discovered electric light!

#### *Federal-Provincial Relations*

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Regional Economic Expansion has attempted to persuade us this afternoon of the favours he has done to designated areas by giving millions of dollars. He has obviously omitted to say that these hundreds of millions come from the taxpayer's pocket and not from the present government, and that moreover, these grants became necessary because of the irresponsible economic policies of his government which brought about an unprecedented level of unemployment in the designated areas.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the minister's argument is extremely faulty and is an insult to the provinces, and to the province of Quebec in particular, because I want the minister and his colleagues to know that a constitution is not bought, that it is negotiated in good faith with understanding and in the required spirit of conciliation.

This afternoon, the hon. minister spoke of "verbal stupidities" and on this matter, Mr. Speaker, I would advise him to reread his own statements made in the House and elsewhere during the October crisis and he would find there the true definition of "verbal stupidities". He is not much more deserving than those of his friends he was accusing this afternoon.

The hon. minister accuses those who are concerned about real problems in Canada of being "scarecrows and prophets of gloom" to quote his own words.

**Mr. Béchard:** It is true.

**Mr. Valade:** If it is true as the hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine says, according to the minister, Mr. Bourassa, Mr. Castonguay and Mr. L'Allier, who are all members of the Liberal government of Quebec are "prophets of gloom and alarmists" because they are the ones who have been complaining for many months, if not many years, about the obstinacy of the Liberal government and of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion's attitude.

If such is the case, Mr. Speaker, if the words of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion must be taken as a serious statement, I say that the minister will have an obligation in the next provincial elections in Quebec to commit itself to fight officially and openly against the government of Mr. Bourassa, or else we shall consider the words he said this afternoon as nonsense and proof of his irresponsibility.

If such is the case, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Ouellet:** Phoney!

**Mr. Valade:** Are you finished belching? If you are sick, retire.

**An hon. Member:** You started it.

**Mr. Valade:** Mr. Speaker, I should very much like to receive advice from a well-behaved person but if I read the things that the Prime Minister has said about Mr. Cournoyer a few days ago, I have no lessons in politeness to receive from the government.