

Medicare

I then mentioned that I had just read section 8 which indicated that no fiscal compensation would be paid and I quote what I said, as recorded on the same page of *Hansard*.

—and no fiscal compensation shall be paid before March 31, 1972, even if a province does not participate in this plan.

And I asked that some clarification be given and to that the member for Lotbinière replied:

This can be improved.

● (8:10 p.m.)

The amendment is meant only to improve the situation.

I see the whip of the Liberal party (Mr. Pilon), a member from Quebec, who should get the Liberal members from Quebec together and see to it that pressure is brought to bear on the Minister of National Health and Welfare to include in the bill a clause providing immediate fiscal adjustments for Quebec or any other province which prefers or wishes to set up, as it has every right to, its own medicare scheme.

Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of the amendment—indeed I seconded it—which asks for the setting up of a fiscal compensation scheme. At the present time, Ottawa is forever trying to interfere in fields of provincial jurisdiction. I think the time has come to tell Ottawa: That is enough. Mind your own business and leave to the provinces the fields which come under their jurisdiction. And health is one of them.

Fiscal compensation should be provided for the provinces which will want to set up their own medicare plan.

My colleague, the hon. member for Sherbrooke, reminds me that the Quebec premier will be here next week.

It might be a good idea to put aside for a few days, say until next Wednesday or Thursday, the discussion of this bill precisely to get the opinion of the man who represents Quebec at the present time, namely the premier of Quebec, to find out if he would not prefer a fiscal adjustment to the federal scheme. I think that would be simply a sign of good will. But no. It seems that the federal government is dead set on its decisions. It is obvious in the decision of the Labour Relations Board which will not give workers in the province of Quebec the right to choose their own labour union. And the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, the former president of the C.N.T.U., did not protest. The

[Mr. Grégoire.]

Minister of Labour (Mr. Nicholson) does not protest.

Today we see another encroachment upon provincial jurisdiction and the Liberal members do not raise any protest. Mr. Speaker, I would like to see them rise. The only minister in the house at present is the Associate Minister of National Defence. I should like to see him rise to tell us whether or not he supports the amendment that is now before us or why he would not support it. I always realized that the Associate Minister of National Defence, the hon. member for Terrebonne, was very sympathetic. He always defended the rights of French Canadians, or at least he did so on some occasions. Among other things, I remember that when the question of appointing commissioners to the National Art Centre came up, he was one of those who defended the interests of French Canadians in spite of some of his colleagues.

Right now, we face a similar problem. I would be pleased if the only minister who is in the house at this moment could at least tell us whether he intends to support the amendment, and whether he will try to convince his colleagues from the other provinces to support it also.

Actually, Quebec relies on its representatives in Ottawa. At present its best representative in the house is the only minister who is present right now, it is the Associate Minister of National Defence. And today, the province of Quebec counts on him to act as its spokesman, to set forth the views of the province and to urge the Minister of National Health and Welfare to make sure that the amendment, should go through so as to provide fiscal compensation which would allow Quebec to enter into a field which comes under provincial jurisdiction according to the constitution. Mr. Speaker, I believe the Associate Minister of National Defence is bound to make this gesture today, being the only Quebec representative in the cabinet, and it is his duty to convince his colleagues from the other provinces, and this with no beating about the bush.

And all other members should act in the same way, be it the member for Matapédia-Matane or the member for Hochelaga, the member for Stanstead, (Mr. Forest), Lévis, (Mr. Guay), Verdun, (Mr. Mackasey). There are not very many, and that is why we can take the liberty of naming them all. That is what I have just done.

An hon. Member: Bonaventure.