

Motions for Papers

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that it is not customary—to use the same expression as the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance—for the government to make available to the house and to the general public the correspondence exchanged between a minister and government officials.

However, such a statement is a pure and simple admission of the fact that there does exist at present a report on the taxes collected and expenditures made in the various provinces. It means that it would not be proper for the government to give the house information on the correspondence exchanged between the Minister of Finance and his officials.

Mr. Speaker, there is seldom any smoke without fire. We saw in the newspapers that the report existed and proved that, in Quebec, hardly anything is spent as compared with the money spent in the other provinces. When we study the revenues and expenditures of any department at all, we soon see that there are real differences between what is spent in Quebec and what is spent in the other provinces, for instance, Ontario.

This morning, I learned about the expenses incurred by the Canadian National concerning railway crossings. In Ontario, where the population amounts to 6½ million, \$37 million were spent, whereas in Quebec, where there is a population of 5½ million people, \$11 million were spent. This means \$26 million less in Quebec.

If we look at agriculture, it is the same thing. The federal government gives 25 times more to the other provinces, but it is almost impossible to get a federal farm loan in the province of Quebec. It is useless here to point out that we have provincial loans. The fact remains that it is impossible to get a farm loan from the federal government. Only this afternoon, I received another complaint. Applications from Quebec are driven from pillar to post and nobody is able to find a solution.

An hon. Member: Right.

Mr. Caouette: Why? In the province of Quebec, there is a provincial farm loans program which is strictly and entirely financed by the citizens of that province, while the latter are also contributing to the federal grants and farm loans. We are paying exactly the same taxes as other Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, those differences are strange. I understand that it is embarrassing for the Minister of Finance to give us this report. He

[Mr. Pennell.]

has it in his hands; it really exists and it annoys the government. I admit that this does not apply only to the present government and that the same situation prevailed under the Conservative administration—

An hon. Member: Right.

Mr. Caouette:—and under the Liberal administration which preceded that of the Conservatives.

Mr. Grégoire: That is true.

Mr. Caouette: It has always been the same since 1867, since confederation became known as the Canadian confederation.

Mr. Speaker, time and again, we said that our group is not seeking any special treatment, but just and equitable treatment for the population of the province of Quebec.

We are prepared to pay our share and we are prepared to receive what we are entitled to, as a result of payment of our share.

The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) says that we receive more, whereas the figures compiled show that we pay \$600 million in excess of what we receive annually from Ottawa.

Mr. Choquette: Produce your figures.

Mr. Caouette: Let the hon. member for Lotbinière see for himself what is happening in his own riding.

Mr. Choquette: Everything is fine.

Mr. Caouette: We will know about that next week, because I am going there.

Mr. Speaker, it is in the province of Quebec that we find the greatest number of unemployed as well as the greatest number of designated areas, as they are called. It is time to look after our own affairs, and I say this for the information of the hon. member for Lotbinière who keeps badgering us, on this side of the house. He should co-operate with us in order to obtain for his riding and his province as much equity and justice as we are ready to allow to all the other Canadian provinces.

Mr. Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Caouette: There is no question of privilege.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Caouette: He only has the privilege to speak in his turn.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Lotbinière rises on a question of privilege.