

Dominion-Provincial Relations

Mr. Chevrier: I wish the Minister of Finance would clear up one point for me. He has said that the premier of Quebec did not see the bill. Is that a fact? The Solicitor General says he has.

Mr. Balcer: No, no. On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I never said at any time that the premier of Quebec had seen the bill or approved it. I would like the hon. member for Laurier to withdraw his remark.

Mr. Chevrier: I will not withdraw.

Mr. Johnson: Withdraw or prove it.

Mr. Chevrier: Just a moment. I am going to put on the record the words of the Solicitor General.

Mr. Balcer: Please do.

Mr. Chevrier: What I have said is that the Minister of Finance stated that the premier of Quebec did not see the bill, but that the Solicitor General—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, perhaps the hon. gentleman would be good enough to give my statement in full. I was speaking as of the time of our meeting, and the question that was put to me was whether at that meeting the premier of Quebec saw the bill. I pointed out that the bill was not fully drafted at that time. I do not know what the premier has seen since. He does not consult me about his reading habits.

Mr. Chevrier: No, but my hon. friend raised his point of order when I was attempting to explain the statement I had made earlier. I was interrupted by the Solicitor General, who objected to what I had said. I now propose to again put on *Hansard* the exact words of the Solicitor General. I think I understood the Minister of Finance aright when he said that at his earlier meeting, before the bill was drafted, the premier of Quebec had not seen it. Is that not correct?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Yes, I said before the bill was fully drafted. I was asked if I had shown the premier the bill at that time, at our meeting in February. I said no, that the bill was not fully drafted. We discussed the legislative intentions of the government in reference to this project.

Mr. Chevrier: The Solicitor General has not taken that position but the very opposite one. I do not want to be unfair to him in any way whatsoever. I want to put on *Hansard* what he said, because there can be no other inference from these words but that the premier of Quebec had approved the bill; and at two places on page 3286 of *Hansard* of April 26, 1960 does that appear, wherein the Solicitor General said:

(Translation):

It was the Hon. Paul Sauvé who submitted that positive proposition—

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

(Text):

That can mean nothing other than the one mentioned in the correspondence between the premiers and afterwards included in this bill. I continue:

(Translation):

It was the Hon. Paul Sauvé who submitted that positive proposition.

(Text):

We all know that. I continue:

(Translation):

Federal ministers discussed it with Mr. Sauvé and, at the time of his tragic death, only a few details remained to be worked out, which was done during a private interview between Mr. Antonio Barrette, Mr. Sauvé's successor, and the Minister of Finance, sponsor of the bill which is now before us.

(Text):

Is there anything clearer than that? Is that not indicative of the fact that the premier of Quebec approved of the bill? Not satisfied with that, the Solicitor General goes a step further and states:

(Translation):

We have kept our word admirably, because Premier Barrette himself believes that this bill is consistent with the terms of Mr. Duplessis' proposal, which was submitted again by Mr. Sauvé and later by Mr. Barrette himself.

(Text):

I do not understand the French language or the English language—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chevrier:—because the translation indicates the same meaning—unless that is the meaning to be derived therefrom. In my opinion there is no doubt but that the Solicitor General has indicated by that statement that Mr. Barrette approved of the bill.

Mr. Balcer: Mr. Chairman, for the last two or three days the hon. member for Laurier has come across with about fifteen different interpretations of the same sentence I uttered on April 26. Every time I have had to ask the hon. gentleman to come back to the text; but after coming back to the text, the moment he has finished reading the sentence he has always concluded with some extraordinary statement which does not conform with what I have said.

I never said in this statement that when Mr. Barrette met the Minister of Finance he had seen the bill, or that the minister had shown him the bill and Mr. Barrette had said it was a good one and gave it his approval. I do not know at all whether Mr. Barrette has seen the bill. Perhaps I should say I did not know at that time, but I know now that the Minister of Finance states that the premier had not seen the bill. I am taking the word of the Minister of Finance. I would like the hon. member for Laurier to stop placing on my words interpretations that do not conform with the truth.