

Dominion-Provincial Relations

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Chairman, my hon. friend gave me some words of warning this afternoon about making calculations in a hurry and I have heeded his warning. I will be very happy indeed to bring down the answers to his questions when there has been ample time for calculation, but I assure him that I did not make any detailed notes of his questions this afternoon nor have I attempted to work out in detail the answers to his questions. I will be glad to get that information for him. I will heed his warning most scrupulously.

Mr. Lesage: Mr. Chairman, I know that the very competent officials of the Department of Finance were in the gallery this afternoon when I asked my question and they could have given the answer easily because they would have it at the tip of their fingers.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): They can be brought on the floor right now.

Mr. Lesage: The minister could reply right now if he was not so proud.

Mr. Baskin: You should not talk about being proud.

Mr. Lesage: Do I have a lesson in arithmetic to receive from the hon. member who just spoke?

Mr. Baskin: I said you should not talk about being proud.

Mr. Lesage: I have learned humility during my life much more than the hon. member who just spoke. I should like to ask the Minister of Finance the following question, and surely he can answer it. Again I take him to account according to this table and I acknowledge again that the figures are only estimates and are for purposes of illustration. Taking the figures in the table—I am not inventing them—will the minister tell me what proportion of the \$18,859,000 increased benefit to the province of Quebec is represented by the amount of the equalization payment? Is it, as I said this afternoon, \$5.7 million?

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Chairman, I will have to work that out. I will be glad to do it for my hon. friend but I have not worked it out since he asked the question this afternoon.

Mr. Lesage: Again I am sure that one of the officials could answer immediately.

Mr. Sinclair: We do not want you to work it out.

Mr. Fleming: Yes, I have no doubt that he could.

Mr. Lesage: Where is the hon. member for Carleton? I am sure he could answer.

[Mr. Lesage.]

Mr. Fleming: My hon. friend can go ahead and put all his questions on the record. We will wait and have a look at them. I am not going to attempt to make snap answers to his detailed questions at this time.

Mr. Sinclair: He has learned his lesson.

Mr. Fleming: We shall be glad to have the hon. member's questions on the record.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Would the hon. member for Montmagny-L'Islet permit a question? Would he and the Minister of Finance not agree that it would save everybody's time if a table and two or three chairs were brought in and the minister were to request his officials to come down in front of him right now?

Mr. Lesage: They are in the gallery.

Mr. Fleming: In keeping with the practice that we found was observed in such situations by the former government, namely that questions involving calculation were put on the record at the resolution stage and answered on second reading, these questions will be answered in that way.

Mr. Lesage: Mr. Chairman, I know very well that when I was parliamentary assistant to the minister of finance and when the hon. member for Coast-Capilano was parliamentary assistant to the minister of finance—

Mr. Pallett: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lesage: Well, I am sure the hon. member for Peel will not be a parliamentary assistant if he continues to deal with matters before the house as he has in the past. When we were parliamentary assistants to the minister of finance—

An hon. Member: Take a bow.

Mr. Lesage:—and had to deal with resolutions preceding tax bills we had the officials in front of us and with their help we were ready to give answers as they were requested from us. These officials are learned. They know how to answer immediately and they are always accurate. But, as I said, the Minister of Finance is too proud to show the people of Canada that he needs the help of the officials of his department.

Mr. Sinclair: He told us so himself. He said he was the best minister of finance in history.

Mr. Lesage: Perhaps my next question will be for the record again, but I shall try it. This afternoon I asked the minister how the 13 per cent reduction, which would apply as partial relief from double taxation to the taxpayers of Quebec, would be deducted for the tax year 1958? This proposal takes effect only on April 1, 1958. When the taxpayers