

*Dominion-Provincial Relations*

this because the minister may say, after he has listened to my argument, that I have been inconsistent.

With regard to grants in aid for specific purposes, the federal government has undoubtedly in the past not always made these grants after consultation with the provinces. But I think the practice, particularly in the last decade, has been that generally speaking the federal government does not embark on programs without having some form of informal consultative arrangement with the ten provinces, which have within their sphere, under the constitution, an important field of legislative as well as executive authority.

Regarding this matter of fiscal arrangement, however, this is another matter altogether. Section 118 of the British North America Act recognizes the principle that there devolves on the federal government a responsibility for providing assistance to the provinces in the discharge of their various responsibilities and, perhaps, as an indication of the growth of our country, all one has to do is to examine section 118 of the act to ascertain the relative insignificance of the original basic financial requirements in this respect imposed on the central government. But the fact is that right at the beginning and arising out of the very terms of discussion of the British North America Act at Charlottetown and at Quebec there was the concept that while we were going to create on the North American continent under the monarchy a country that would be united and that would develop its own national aspirations and integrity, it was recognized as a fundamental prerequisite of this constitutional arrangement that the provinces would have to acquire assistance from the federal government, the government in the area afforded unlimited constitutional opportunity of having the necessary funds to carry out its responsibilities.

I submit that in this matter the relations between the federal government and the provinces have been dealt a blow the like of which we have not witnessed in this country for many years, a blow that involves not only the principle of fiscal relationships but particularly the relationship of one government in Canada in its treatment of other governments.

**Mr. Fleming:** Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, we are on the committee stage of this bill. The house has approved the principle of the bill. If my hon. friend's remarks were to have any relevance to the measure at all they must surely have been delivered on second reading. I am not saying they would have been relevant there but certainly they could not be considered relevant at this stage after the house has approved the principle of

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

the bill. We are now supposed to be discussing the terms of the clauses in the bill.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Mr. Chairman, under clause 1 of the bill, as the Minister of Public Works so often indicated in this house, it is open to any hon. member to discuss without restriction, within the terms of the bill itself, just as is done in the resolution stage.

**Mr. Fleming:** No.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** My hon. friend says "no" but I say that is one of the reasons why the statutes are arranged in the order they are as a means of bringing home to the government or to the opposition the importance of a resolution, or the principle involved in a bill. For this reason there is no limit at this particular stage of discussion.

**Mr. Fleming:** On the point of order, Mr. Chairman, there is certainly a limit. The principle of the bill cannot be attacked in a discussion of clause 1. It is quite true that in discussions as to the extent of debate on clause 1 of a bill there has been a difference of view. The chairman of the committee in former sessions has referred to the citation that discussion in committee must be relevant to the particular item in the bill under discussion; there has been another view that there is more latitude allowed on clause 1 of the bill in committee than on other clauses. However, Mr. Chairman, that it not the question before us now. Never was it contended or pretended that the principle of the bill was open to attack in the committee of the whole in the discussion of clause 1. My hon. friend is surely now attacking the principle of the bill and the house has decided that.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** No, Mr. Chairman. Either I have not been as lucid as I had hoped or my hon. friend has not followed what I have said. I am certainly not attacking the principle. What I am attacking is something that flows from the way in which my hon. friend and his colleagues are dealing with this particular matter. That is what I am seeking to establish.

**Mr. Fleming:** That is the principle of the bill.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** What I am seeking to establish is this. My hon. friend, the Minister of Finance, and his Prime Minister and his colleagues, during the course of the last election vigorously expressed their opposition to the way the former administration dealt with the provinces. They opposed the kind of financial arrangements that it made with the provinces and said that as a result the provinces were not put in the position of being able properly to discharge functions which under the alleged non-centralist policy of the