

*Dominion-Provincial Relations*

stated in this house that the province of Quebec did not shell out amounts of money in excess of what the federal government had levied in taxes, evidence showed recently that the province of Quebec paid over \$278 million for its tribute to the federal government. The time has therefore come for such a procedure to end.

A short while ago, I heard the Minister of Finance state that most joint programs came specifically under provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, I think that the federal government should not in any way hinder the handing back of such plans to the provinces that want them. I think that those are vested rights absolutely essential to protect the autonomy of each one of the provinces.

Even if the federal government still undertakes to hand back certain amounts to the provinces, in the form of equalization payments or otherwise, to balance the joint programs which will now remain under the central government's control, I maintain that this will still constitute an encroachment on the part of the centralizers, in short, an infringement upon the autonomy and independence of each province, in its own jurisdiction.

The minister also stated that, under this measure, a sum of nearly \$900 million will be transferred to the provinces. We are not necessarily worried by the amount. I always come back to this principle that the provinces have the right to own and control, for themselves, the three main fields of taxation I mentioned a while ago. I wonder why the federal government is so reluctant to hand those fiscal powers back to the provinces. I think I know or I can guess why from the centralizing and often socialistic ideas behind the federal government's actions.

The purpose is to have a strong federal government, to the prejudice of the provinces.

It is said that most programs come under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces, though most of these programs have been retained for 20 years. This is a farce—which we will no longer put up with—on the part of this government.

We were happy to read, at the top of the electoral platform of the party in office, "the complete handing over of the shared programs". But we were not so happy when we read this bill which is probably only a smokescreen behind which the government would hold out the prospect of the fulfilment of its promises. This fulfilment is very small

[Mr. Gauthier.]

as far as the province of Quebec is concerned.

We want the province of Quebec, and any other province which wants it, but especially the province of Quebec because we are from that province—to recover its field of activity so that it can boost its economy which has been going down for 20 or 25 years.

The province of Quebec needs its taxing powers and I can assure the minister that if he grants Quebec, not this favour as I was about to say, but this right, its economy in a few years from now will be comparable to that of the other provinces in Canada. You can be sure, Mr. Speaker, that its present revenues will allow Quebec to stand proudly with the other Canadian provinces.

Therefore I hope that this bill will be more complete.

With regard to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), which would give the priority to the provinces of Canada, I see there a logical step because it is a start toward giving jurisdiction to the rightful bodies in the fields which come exclusively under the provinces.

The provinces will insist that the federal government give them back those taxation fields and then they will stop being dependant on the federal government and forced to accept the crumbs it gives them.

Mr. Speaker, in his last speech, the minister said: "Let us look ahead not back."

But, in my opinion, in order to look ahead, one must know what happened in the past, and that is precisely what I want to point out to the minister. I looked a little at what happened in the past and if he knows how to look forward, I am sure that Quebec will be treated fairly.

[Text]

**Mr. Gordon:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a word or two on this amendment.

**Mr. Knowles:** Is it in order?

**Mr. Gordon:** Perhaps I might come to that. I would like to say a word or two on the terms of the amendment, for a number of reasons. First of all, I am sure most hon. members were surprised at the nature of the remarks of the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), in the light of all the furore, the fanfare and the excitement that has been generated in the press about this particular bill over the last several weeks. I suspect that some hon. members, at least, expected that the party opposite might be