

*The Budget—Mr. Dorion*

(a) That in addition to the help already given for research and other purposes the federal government make annual contributions to support the work of the universities on the basis of the population of each of the provinces of Canada.

(b) that those contributions be made after consultation between the government and the universities in each of the provinces, and that they be distributed to each university in proportion to the number of students registered.

(c) that those contributions be such as to allow universities in Canada to carry on their work according to the nation's needs.

(d) that all institutions that are members of the national conference of Canadian universities may have access to the above-mentioned federal grants.

As will be noted, Mr. Speaker, the members of the commission toned down their recommendations by making a significant reservation: the contributions were to be made only after consultation with the government of each province. Why such reservation, if it did not mean an implicit recognition, in such a serious matter, of the provinces' right to say the last word? Otherwise, what could have been the purpose of a previous consultation? Alas! That advice was to be ignored, pushed aside, and the federal government was to take action, without considering the likely results in a province like Quebec, which for reasons of an ethnical and cultural nature, looks upon its own education as the essential condition for the preservation and survival of a group that the province has the responsibility to defend and protect.

It is true, that, later on, one of the commissioners tried to justify the federal government's unilateral attitude by making a singularly specious distinction between education and culture, a distinction which might well cover every abuse of power. In 1956, in a lecture entitled "The dilemma of contemporary education", delivered before the Canadian Institute for public affairs at Ste. Adele, the French historian Irénée Maron referred in this connection to the meaning and the order of those two words: education and culture. I quote:

The problem of education cannot be separated from that of culture, culture being the purpose of education.

The fact that nine out of ten provinces have accepted those grants does not change the basic principle in any way. But some one is sure to say, by way of objection: "Why did the Conservative government persist and still persists in that course traced by the Liberal party? Why did you not

yourself, last year, voice your opposition?" To that, as far as I am concerned, I reply that, being a federal member, I could not afford to ignore the nine other provinces which had raised no objection in principle and felt no inconvenience of a regional nature in accepting the grants. I could not afford to ignore the fact that the universities and colleges of those provinces had drawn up their budget and their development projects in the light of the precedent of 1952, which has been firmly established ever since. Nor could I afford to ignore that, in those provinces and within those colleges and universities there are fellow compatriots of mine, of the same origin as my own, who have derived and still are deriving from those grants, unquestionable benefits without which their institutions of higher learning would have found it difficult to survive. Nor could I afford to ignore that, among the ten provinces of the confederation, there are some which, unfortunately, are not financially in a position to provide for the maintenance and development of their own institutions of higher learning.

I know that nothing is harder to uproot than a precedent. Let me, in that connection, quote a remark made by the Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux when, in 1917, during a debate here in the House of Commons, he recalled this page from the history of England:

The minister states, however—at least, that is what I gathered from his remarks this afternoon—that this income tax is only temporary, that when the war is over it will be either revised or wiped out. Personally, I do not share the optimism of my hon. friend on this point because as a student of history, I remember that when the first income tax was introduced in England by the younger Pitt at the time of the Napoleonic wars, a distinct pledge was given that it was only for the duration of the war, but Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Gladstone, and all the other great chancellors of England had to admit that the thin edge had been introduced into the taxation system of the United Kingdom, and the income tax was there to remain. In spite of the hopes of my hon. friend, bright as he thinks they are, I really believe that the income tax has to-day entered into the politico-economic system of Canada, to stay there for many generations.

Whatever may be the value and strength of the precedent, in a federated country such as ours, the rights and powers conferred by the constitution are not subject to prescription. They never lapse. And this tenet is all the more to the point since the province