

The Address—Mr. Vincent

country, from British Columbia to Newfoundland, people who in addition to speaking their mother tongue could also make themselves understood in the other official language of this country. What a wonderful asset this would be to the social and cultural strength of Canada.

As a newcomer to this house may I be permitted the candour of stating that I feel quite impressed by being surrounded by outstanding parliamentarians, men of great wisdom and experience, who are most numerous on this side of the chamber, of course—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Vincent: —but who are also found on the other side.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Speaker, permit me to say a word about the commonwealth conference which has just taken place in London. Despite some slanted dispatches carried in a few newspapers, it can truly be said that our Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) made out a perfect case there for the necessity of safeguarding the economic interests of the commonwealth as a whole, if and when Great Britain enters the common market. This is the sound opinion of impartial observers. The Canadian people know that he had the courage to follow a Canada-first policy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you, in the name of the people of Canada: who else could speak for the agriculture industry of this country? Who else could speak, or would speak for its dairy and cheese industry, for the great wheat producing Canadian west? Who else could speak—would speak—for our lumber industry, our pulp and paper industry, our mines and all our various secondary industries? Every Canadian, every member of every party in this house, knows that our Prime Minister spoke for Canada in his own great capacity, defending the greatness of Canada's industrial economy.

(Translation):

As a newly elected member of parliament, Mr. Speaker, I would now like to pay tribute to my party for the efforts it has made since June 21, 1957, for restoring the fiscal structure of Canada according to the truest spirit of the 1867 pact.

When the Conservatives came to power more than five years ago, the federal-provincial fiscal relations were in pretty bad shape.

The conference of the 11 governments, held in July 1956, created a distressing impression, even on the Liberal premiers.

Following the meeting, the prime minister of Manitoba, Mr. Campbell, made this statement on behalf of his province:

[Mr. Vincent.]

Manitoba has been disappointed to see that so very little attention had been paid to the real financial needs which the provinces will face in the next few years.

Another Liberal premier, Mr. Matheson of Prince Edward Island, had also complained of his own party's doings in Ottawa. On the day following the July conference, he stated:

The new distribution of funds collected takes no account of the fiscal needs of the provinces or their fiscal possibilities.

Mr. Manning, Social Credit premier of Alberta, expressed his feelings with as much bitterness as his Liberal colleagues from the other provinces. He said:

The Liberal government kept for itself the largest and the most profitable areas of the tax fields. It has not recognized the financial needs of neither the provinces nor the municipalities.

The right hon. Prime Minister lost no time in correcting the errors admitted by the Liberals themselves. In November 1957, he called the first of a series of federal-provincial conferences to examine fully the claims of the provinces. Early in 1958 the government moved the adoption of two important pieces of legislation: One involved raising from 10 per cent to 13 per cent the share in income tax revenues going to the provinces, the other concerned adjustment grants to the Atlantic provinces. The generosity of the Conservative government meant, for the provinces as a whole, an additional revenue of \$90 million a year.

And so, the present Minister of Justice (Mr. Fleming) was able to say in the house at the beginning of last year:

The policy of equalization under which the federal government assists provinces faced with special needs has been applied more widely by this government than at any time in the past.

Figures show this most emphatically. Within five years, from 1956 to 1961, the federal treasury doubled its payments to the provinces. The provinces received less than \$690 million in 1956; last year they received at least \$1½ billion.

The right hon. Prime Minister, however, felt that the provinces should get more. So, he obtained that the Federal-Provincial Tax-Sharing Arrangements Act, 1956, be radically changed. And it is under his guidance that the new act, which today governs the fiscal arrangements between Ottawa and the provinces, came into being on April 1 of this year.

In order to be fair to the interested parties, he called half a dozen preliminary meetings. Apart from the sittings of the standing committee of officials, two conferences of finance ministers and, in 1960, two general meetings of the premiers with the Prime Minister of Canada have been held.