

Dominion-Provincial Relations

upon provincial jurisdiction. We have confined ourselves clearly to the exercise of federal jurisdiction and we have gone not one step further.

Mr. Pickersgill: I should like to say a few words about the points made by the Minister of Finance. All the sections he read from the main act which require the Minister of Finance to make certain decisions have relation either to disbursements out of the federal treasury or to financial arrangements made between the federal government and provincial governments on a voluntary basis. They have to do with the federal treasury which is our concern in this House of Commons. But what is being done here is for the minister to determine whether the action of a provincial government and a provincial legislature suits him and suits this government.

There is all the difference in the world between the minister's being clothed by this parliament with the power to pass judgment upon certain things that have to do with the federal treasury and giving the minister the power which he is seeking to get here to tell the province that their arrangements for providing assistance to their universities are or are not satisfactory. What this does is this. The minister says, "If I think you have the right kind of scheme to help your universities, then certain taxpayers in your province will not have to pay so much tax, but if I do not think so, they will have to pay more tax".

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Rot.

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister himself said that it determined their abatement on federal tax and that is quite right. It will determine whether the corporate taxpayers of Quebec pay 1 per cent more than do corporate taxpayers in other provinces and thereby put a disability upon the economy of that province. That will be determined. It is not even going to be determined by parliament. Parliament will turn over that determination not even to the governor in council but to a single minister who is going to decide whether or not these arrangements are satisfactory to him. If the words are left out, what do we have? We have this:

In which, for that fiscal year arrangements exist for the payment by the province directly to institutions of higher learning—

Of a certain amount of money.

I quite grant that if the arrangements are not there for the payment of this certain sum of money it would not be fair to the taxpayers of other parts of Canada to give this abatement in order to enable a province to raise an extra 1 per cent from its corporate taxpayers for its general revenue,

but the minister said this was an alternative to his scheme. However, as long as arrangements do exist for the payment to the universities of a sum equivalent to this abatement, what difference does it make to us in this parliament, and what right have we in this parliament to say what the character of these arrangements should be or to exercise a censorship over the character of the arrangements? That is precisely what we in our legislation and in our provision for university grants were seeking not to do. We were seeking to make sure that we did not exercise this kind of control, direction or censorship which the minister is now seeking to get parliament to arrogate to him so he can say whether or not the arrangement is satisfactory.

The minister then went on to say that we all know what the legislation is in the province of Quebec, we know they have already satisfied themselves on this point so it does not matter what we put into the law. But the minister himself says this law applies to all the provinces. How do we know that tomorrow one of the other provinces may not decide they want to become a prescribed province?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): You said they would not.

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister would surely be the first to admit that the fact that I said they would not is not a sufficient ground for generalizing the law nor is the fact that the minister said they would not. That is what shocked me in what the minister said. He said that because this is all right for Quebec the other nine provinces do not matter.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I did not say that at all.

Mr. Pickersgill: That is my interpretation of the plain sense of what the minister said, but what he said makes no sense at all.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): It is the hon. member's misinterpretation of what I said.

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister thinks that the other provinces are not going to do anything about it—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate said that, I did not.

Mr. Pickersgill:—but we believe that having the law in proper form is important. We have here the principle of this parliament trying to give to the Minister of Finance—I say "trying" because I question, even if we pass this, that he will really have that power; I question that very much—the power to exercise a censorship, a veto, a dictatorship