

Dominion-Provincial Relations

(Translation):

—applies to the present case. The rest of this citation seems to show that, if the government accepts extensive alterations it may withdraw its bill and introduce a new one. However, such is not the case here. This time, the proposal emanates from the opposition, in accordance with citation 408, and I believe this citation is sufficient to clarify the situation and allow the chairman of the committee to accept the amendment.

(Text):

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, there is very little I can add to what the hon. member for Hull has just said, but there are a couple of points that perhaps could reinforce it a little. On the last point made by the minister, namely that this amendment was seeking to direct the government or the minister to make an expenditure, that of course is quite incorrect. The amount of money involved in this measure is not changed in any respect whatsoever. All that would be changed, and only if it were wished by the province, would be the destination of the money in certain provinces. We do not know whether there is going to be any prescribed province at this time because that is outside the knowledge of this committee, but under the present bill the minister can, if there should be no prescribed provinces, make payments of \$1.50 a head to the Canadian universities foundation for the whole of Canada.

So far as ways and means are concerned, all my hon. friend is doing in his amendment is suggesting that in any province where a provincial council is set up the minister instead may—not must but may—pay that sum of money to the provincial council rather than to the national council. That is absolutely all there is so far as the financial side of the amendment is concerned.

As for the minister's suggestion not that the amendment was nebulous—he did not say that—but that the provincial council was nebulous—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No, I said the amendment was nebulous too.

Mr. Pickersgill: On that ground, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that the amendment speaks for itself. There are those who can only see clouds of their own making, and that is what "nebulous" means, I remind the minister, but to any plain person reading plain words there is nothing nebulous about it. It is not for the Chair to decide, I submit, whether or not there are provincial university councils in existence or whether they may be set up in the future. That is for the committee to decide. That is not a point of order.

If an amendment is offered to the house suggesting that the money may be paid to some organism that may be set up in the future, that is perfectly within the rights of parliament and it is for the members elected by the people, not for the Chair or the Minister of Finance, to decide whether such legislation should be enacted. I am sure you will agree with that view, Mr. Chairman.

With reference to the only substantial point made by the Minister of Finance, that the amendment introduces some new principle, may I say that there are two principles in the bill before us now. There is the principle with respect to equalization payments which is not in question in this amendment. There is also another principle that university grants may be paid to the Canadian universities foundation. The principle is that university grants may be paid to a foundation. All my hon. friend is suggesting is that they may be paid to one foundation or another foundation. He is not suggesting any new principle whatsoever. He is suggesting that the principle which has been followed before the introduction of this bill should be followed still but that instead of there being only one possible foundation as the recipient there should be two. That is a matter of detail, not of principle, and therefore it seems to me that the minister's objection completely falls to the ground.

Mr. Crestohl: Mr. Chairman, when we talk about principle, as the hon. member who has just taken his seat did, I think every member of the house agrees with the principle of the bill and supports and has supported in the past the granting of aid to universities. We are all agreed on that.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Crestohl: Is there someone who says that grants should not be given to the universities?

Mr. Pickersgill: Why did he vote for the bill then?

Mr. Johnson: That is not the principle of the bill.

Mr. Crestohl: If there is an hon. member who does not agree that grants should be made to the universities, then my statement is not correct.

The Chairman: Order; I should like to hear the hon. member as to the validity of the amendment.

Mr. Crestohl: I am speaking to the amendment. I said that we are all agreed with that; we voted for that principle. What we are now debating is the method of implementing the principle.