

Motions for Papers

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I think the comment just made and the comment made by the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) indicated what that party really thinks about the area I represent.

Mr. Howard: It is not what we think about the area, but the member who represents the area.

Mr. Gray: It has been apparent up until now that the people of that area have a lot better judgment than the hon. member has. I am sure the attitudes which have been expressed and, I am sure, held as a matter of deep conviction, will be understood by the people of that area, and if the members of that party across from me continue in this way they will receive the rebuff they deserve by those very sensible people in that area which I have the honour to represent.

Mr. Fisher: We are all honourable men.

Mr. Gray: It takes one honourable man to know another honourable man.

The motion before us calls for a very interesting type of decision. The question involved is one which is something of a novelty in that it calls not merely for the production of documents tabled by the federal government at a federal-provincial conference but, as I understand it, also the documents produced by provincial governments or individuals representing provincial governments. It is my understanding that this type of a motion has never before in its entire history been passed by this house.

I rise at this time to suggest to the house that it would not be proper to accept this motion because it would have a very harmful effect on the very fruitful pattern that has been evolving, and on the constructive degree of continuing federal-provincial consultation, with a resulting harmful effect on the interests of the people of this country.

In looking at this motion we must realize that we are dealing with documents that were produced by various provincial governments and which still can be considered as the property of the various provincial governments concerned. I submit that without the permission of each and every one of the provincial governments concerned we would have no right to pass a motion of this type. As far as I am aware, and if I am wrong I am sure the hon. member will correct me, the hon. member who presented this motion has not indicated that the provincial governments concerned are willing to have these documents, the production of which he is

asking at this time, made public in the manner suggested by this motion. For that reason alone this motion should not be accepted by this house.

Mr. Howard: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Gray: Yes.

Mr. Howard: Is the hon. member aware that invariably when parliament passes motions involving documents relating to or formerly the property of provincial governments they always contain the proviso that the governments concerned have given consent?

Mr. Gray: I think the hon. member has raised a useful point, but before this point can be given the weight the hon. member would like it to be given, we should have some indication of the attitudes of the provincial governments concerned. Otherwise we could be placing ourselves, this house, this government and the provincial governments concerned into what essentially would be a rather embarrassing position; a position involving actual and potential conflict between the various provinces and the federal government. At this time in our national history, Mr. Speaker, we should have co-operation rather than conflict. Surely we have experienced enough conflict.

Mr. Fisher: Particularly over this non-secrecy.

Mr. Gray: There has been enough unnecessary conflict in the relationships between the various levels of government in this country. I do not think hon. members who are concerned with national interest should present motions of this type which can lead only to the exacerbation of such conflict, or the creation of such conflict where it has not before existed.

Mr. Barnett: Would the hon. member permit a question? In view of the announcement made earlier this discussion is not likely to continue for much longer this afternoon, and I should like to know at this time whether the hon. member is suggesting that during the interval between now and the resumption of this discussion he would like the federal government to obtain consent from the provincial governments concerned in connection with the motion now before us?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I think that is a concept worthy of looking into. I think it is directly relevant to the point I was attempting to make. However, I do not think that is a