

Grants to Newfoundland

But the latest example is the one put on *Hansard* by the Minister of Finance yesterday and by the Minister without Portfolio, the hon. member for St. John's West today. It is noteworthy that only one side of the picture is ever emphasized, namely the burden that Newfoundland is becoming upon the mainland taxpayers. Nothing whatever has been said about what Canada is receiving and has received from Newfoundland. The greatest care is taken not to mention by way of comparison what other provinces receive from the federal government. Newfoundland is singled out and presented in the worst possible light. When I asked the Minister of Finance for comparative figures on April 30 with regard to payments to other provinces he refused to give that information. I put a question on the order paper requesting the comparative figures for Saskatchewan. That question was made an order for return on May 13, eight weeks ago, but the government has not made them available and will very likely not do so this session. Is this conducive to national unity?

Mr. Speaker: I must inform the hon. member that his time has expired. The hon. member for Skeena—

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker—

An hon. Member: We have heard enough.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: If the hon. gentleman has not completed his remarks, in order to show the same consideration which has been extended from the other side, I am sure we should be delighted to have him continue.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for Burin-Burgeo wish to continue? Very well. The hon. member for Skeena—

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): I listened earlier today with a great deal of interest to the historical account and the statistical juggling engaged in by the hon. member for St. John's West, the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Browne), and his account of the affairs of Newfoundland, and how well they had been managed by the federal Minister of Finance (Mr. Fleming). If the Minister of Finance has been so able in handling the financial, fiscal and economic affairs of the province of Newfoundland then it is about time he turned his attention to Canada as a whole and tried to straighten out some of the difficulties we are facing.

I am sure that all hon. members appreciate my own dislike and distaste for the premier of Newfoundland because of certain actions in which he has been engaged and certain legislation which he arranged to channel through the legislature, legislation which denied justice and freedom to people. All

members might expect, that because of that they would hear of a move in retaliation, but we do not operate on that basis, and two wrongs do not make a right. Because the premier of Newfoundland has decided to deny justice to people is no reason why we should persist in the same sort of underhanded game. We approach this bill as we approach all other questions on the basis of fairness and justice to the people involved.

The government's present approach is, I think, regrettable, and if this administration had a sense of decency and honesty in this matter they would withdraw this bill, redraft it and resubmit it to this house in order that it might be in keeping with the solemn pledge and promise which was made to the people of Newfoundland when they entered confederation and the pledge which was made to them with regard to carrying out the terms of the union and the recommendations of the report of the royal commission. It is regrettable that the two gold dust twins over there, the Minister of Finance and the person who sits next to him have sought here to declare political warfare, with their legalistic terms and their twisty, fork-tongued interpretation of words in order to justify the awkward position that they are in. We believe that this is a betrayal of trust bordering very closely on treason.

Mr. Speaker: I must ask the hon. member to consider the language he is using. A minute ago he was reflecting on the honesty of the government, and now there is a mention of treason in connection with this bill. I must ask the hon. member to withdraw any suggestion of the word treason and also to moderate his language.

Mr. Howard: I certainly will. I understood that during previous proceedings in this house that self-same word had been used and allowed to pass, and it was on that basis that I proceeded.

Mr. Speaker: To remove any doubt, while I am sitting in the chair no one will impugn the honesty of any other member of the house.

Mr. Howard: I am sure you will recollect, Mr. Speaker, that when you suggested the word "treason" was unparliamentary the first word I said was that I would withdraw it without qualification. Then I explained why I had made use of it. I realize I was out of order and regret I was not better informed.

But we believe that political and economic justice should be provided for the people of Newfoundland, not political tomfoolery and back-stabbing, and on that basis we intend to oppose this bill.