

Dominion-Provincial Relations

yesterday, Mr. Speaker, but I would suggest this. If this government is going to take even this faltering step, and will continue taking similar steps in the years to come, if by good fortune they find themselves in office again after next week—

Mr. Power: Whose good fortune?

Mr. Cameron: Their good fortune; after all I, as a neutral, can observe with equal equanimity either of these two parties sitting in power.

Mr. Pickersgill: The hon. gentleman has no hope for posterity himself?

Mr. Cameron: At least I have an unblemished ancestry.

I am going to suggest that if this government is going to proceed with this type of policy which is designed to further the distribution of wealth throughout the country, then they are going to have to take some decisive steps in order to direct to the public treasury some portion of the enormous sums that are now left in the hands of private individuals, private groups and corporations.

We have had no word of that from the minister. It may be, of course, that he is considering doing that after certain events take place which shall be nameless, because of course it would not be wise to name them in view of the serious effect they may have on the sinews of war. I do hope the minister has been totting up the amounts on the stubs in his cheque book, getting a little help with the addition to make sure he is right. Then he will realize that what we are suffering from today is an impractical division of the wealth produced in this country, a division that prohibits this government from doing anything worth-while or effective in those fields in which the minister says this measure is supposed to operate, the very fields in which the previous Liberal government so signally failed to move.

I would hope that some time in the not too distant future we shall have this serial budget wound up and a bound volume thereof presented to us, outlining the minister's proposals for a whole 12-month period if he is able to look that far into the future; because while I would say Mr. Bennett on behalf of the province of British Columbia will welcome this \$2,800,000, it is not going to cope with the most serious problem in this country, namely the unemployment problem in the whole of Canada. I am afraid the people of British Columbia will look at this \$2,800,000 with a rather cynical and sardonic eye. It may, as I say, get Mr. Bennett's vote, but I doubt if it will get very many more votes in British Columbia.

Mr. Maurice Breton (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on this bill, not because I am against the principle of giving a few million to the provinces since there is never too much of a good thing, but there is one limit and that is the capacity to pay. A reproach has already been made to this government for spending large amounts of money without any planning or without introducing a budget. This, in my opinion, is the surest way to drive the economy of this country into a frightful mess.

I do not intend to go back to this aspect of the question, but in presenting his resolution the Minister of Finance said that the federal government is taking too large a share of the tax dollar, while at the same moment he has asked parliament to approve an appropriation of \$187 million and is boosting more than ever the spending on the part of the federal government. It is apparent that we are facing a big deficit for the present fiscal year, and I am wondering if it is sound business to redistribute the tax dollar by means of a federal deficit.

This, however, is not my main interest in this debate. What I want is clarification of a sentence used by the Minister of Finance in his speech on Monday, as reported at page 3581 of *Hansard*:

We respect the constitution; we are federalists, not centralists, and we must take into account the fact that the burdens carried by the provinces in the matters of education, highways, social services, etc. have been increasing in almost astronomical proportions.

It is evident that the meaning of centralization and decentralization has a different connotation on the government side of this house from that on the opposition side. I think it is most necessary in the circumstances to have from the Minister of Finance a clear definition of those words, which were also used by the Prime Minister, because they tried to convey the impression that the Liberal government was centralist and the Conservative government is decentralist, in other words that the present government is protecting the autonomy of the provinces.

From the implication of the many bills presented to this house in the present session it would seem that the distribution of money is, to the government, the yardstick of decentralization. In this respect I might say that the Liberal government has been decentralist to the extent of \$630 million, as compared with the small decentralization on the part of the present government to the extent of only \$82 million. According to a