

Motions for Papers

paid by Canadian taxpayers. Then the people might have a different reaction about confederation.

Mr. Speaker, those figures exist. We think that they should be provided, and this is the reason why we have introduced the motion under consideration.

The Department of Finance should not be ashamed to publish those figures. If they are to the advantage of Quebec or another province, then the necessary steps could be taken to improve the situation or to set the facts straight as soon as these facts are known. But as long as we do not receive these figures from the Department of Finance, we shall continue to declare that the ones which we quoted on November 12, 1963, as is evidenced by *Hansard* of that date, as well as those we read into *Hansard* on August 7 last, and as long as the Minister of Finance will not bring forth the report of his experts, we shall keep maintaining that the figures we quoted are accurate and must be accepted as such.

The figures we submitted establish beyond any doubt that the province of Quebec is paying in taxes over \$600 million more than it is receiving, while other provinces draw up to \$300 million more than what they are paying in taxes.

Mr. Speaker, some members doubted our figures were correct. The Minister of Finance was so astonished by those figures that he has seen fit to have an inquiry made and a report prepared by the experts of his department. That report is now completed and we ask that it be tabled. We are making that request with no ill intent, but because we feel that, when those figures are known, the Minister of Finance will feel even more compelled to correct the situation, which could only benefit the whole country.

[Text]

Mr. L. T. Pennell (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): In rising to reply to the hon. member for Lapointe may I respectfully suggest that the hon. member dealt with the issue set forth in the motion in a somewhat distant and indifferent manner. I would suggest also that it would be profitable to look at the exchange which took place between myself and the hon. member for Lapointe when he moved his motion yesterday as reported at page 9515 of *Hansard*. The hon. member moved:

That an order of the house do issue for a copy of the report prepared by officials of the Department of Finance concerning federal expenditures in each of the provinces of Canada.

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To this, I replied as follows:

I should say that there is no such report as suggested in the motion. At the same time I should add that work has been done by the officials and is continuing to provide information for the minister with which to answer the large number of questions which have been asked on this subject matter. In view of the circumstances I would respectfully invite the hon. member to withdraw the motion.

Then the hon. member for Lapointe replied, in turn:

Mr. Speaker, the report we would like to have tabled is the one which the Minister of Finance promised October 7 last when he denied certain figures mentioned in the motion. We believe the Minister of Finance could at least table what he promised us on October 7 last.

My answer to that was as follows:

I am not aware of the precise answer given by the minister but I respectfully suggest that the hon. member put his question upon the order paper and I undertake to see that it is given attention.

This offer was rejected by the hon. member for Lapointe, who went on to say that these were not privileged documents and that the Minister of Finance had undertaken to communicate this material to the house at an appropriate time. The hon. member added:

If those documents are too incriminating for the government, let him say so.

I replied with respect to that observation:

I do not want to enter into a debate with the hon. member but I cannot accept the suggestion that there is anything compromising in the position of the Minister of Finance.

It seems to me that this motion arises out of a misunderstanding, an honest misunderstanding, on the part of the hon. member of what the Minister of Finance said during the debate on August 7 last. The Minister of Finance did not undertake to table any official report. What he did say to the house was that he was preparing answers to the many questions which had been raised on the subject of federal-provincial fiscal arrangements. In the course of a debate in which the hon. member for Lapointe played a conspicuous part, my minister said this would mean a great deal of work for the department but they were persisting in their efforts and would table the information.

In the interest of precision may I put on record the exact words used by the Minister of Finance during the debate on August 7? I now refer to page 6552 of *Hansard* for that date. My hon. friend said:

There is one other point on which I would ask the house to bear with me if I reply to it in detail. It is in connection with the figures which were read into the record last night by the hon. member—