

Dominion-Provincial Relations

Besides, Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Lesage is not very well known in Quebec, I thought I would describe him in order that people may better know who I was talking about.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I though I had clearly indicated to the hon. member what would be relevant, that is to say discussion of opinions expressed on this bill. I do not think we should go any further than that, and discuss opinions on other matters or attitudes about other matters.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker—

An hon. Member: He is all at sea, now.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker I feel that in reporting the views expressed by Mr. Lesage on federal assistance to universities, I am respecting the principle of the bill.

I was saying that Mr. Lesage stated, in a press conference, that Messrs. Duplessis and Sauve would not have agreed to such a compromise.

Consequently, I would ask Mr. Lesage—and I ask also my Liberal friends opposite—why, when he was sitting in this house, he did not proclaim to the country as a whole that Mr. Duplessis was right in not giving in on that matter of university grants?

If he is prepared to admit today that federal assistance to universities is unconstitutional, I would ask him to deny his previous statements and to deny those of the hon. member for Papineau (Mr. Meunier) who, in this house, on April 26 last, blamed Mr. Duplessis for his failure to discuss any compromise with the St. Laurent government.

Incidentally, would the hon. member for Papineau, who is a lawyer, advise a lady client, who had been a victim of attempted rape to discuss any compromise with her attacker?

Mr. Speaker, if Mr. Lesage is sincere, why does he not repudiate his statement in favour of federal assistance to universities? For instance, would he be willing to repudiate what he said to McGill students on January 12, 1959 and that I find in *Le Devoir* of January 13, 1959? I quote:

As you know, I was a member of the government which established grants to universities. You may thus infer my personal opinion.

If Mr. Lesage is sincere, when will he deny the statement of the Liberal member for Notre Dame de Grace, Mr. Paul Earl, who stated the following at the provincial legislature on February 24, 1959:

We should accept the federal grants.

If Mr. Lesage is sincere, when will he repudiate the speech he made in the House

[Mr. Johnson.]

of Commons in 1954, since he says he is willing to defend the autonomy of the province of Quebec?

If Mr. Lesage is sincere, he who in 1954 criticized Quebec for taxing Ottawa, why is he criticizing Ottawa today for "untaxing" Quebec?

How can this new convert to autonomy reconcile his former attitudes with the position he pretends to take now? Mr. Speaker, it is on purpose I use the word "pretends", because I do not believe in his conversion. I think he certainly does not deserve that the voters forgive him like Peter was forgiven.

The voters of Quebec feel that instead of this he deserves the fate of the apostle who hanged himself to an olive tree.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the population of Quebec has enough wisdom to settle the Lesage case at the next elections. Therefore, I would not have wasted my time, nor that of the house, in discussing his case, if the Liberal members had not first transposed the debate to the provincial level. Because Mr. Lesage, forgetting the advice of a political friend who told him one day to forget his rhetorical speech, plunged headlong into a denunciation of Bill C-56, probably without having read it properly, or at least understood it properly, the federal Liberal members from Quebec decided to oppose this bill in order, they believe, to help their branch manager who is in deep trouble.

Trying to use every means to attain their ends, they took this opportunity to try to clarify a principle which is obscure, to say the least.

In fact, what logical argument did the Liberals make in this house which could prove a single one of their statements? Oh, I realize it is easy now to judge, out of their context, the attitudes adopted by Mr. Duplessis in 1951, and to condemn him in absentia, when he is no longer here to reply. I personally witnessed the behaviour of some Liberals in the legislature. I remember that when Mr. Duplessis was there they never dared state in his presence the shocking and nonsensical things, not to say the smut, they were pouring out about him outside the house.

Like unmannerly street-boys, they did not dare provoke him to his face. They preferred to fling mud at him when his back was turned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I really believe the hon. member for Chambly-Rouville is again straying from the matter under discussion. What may happen in the Quebec legislature, especially as far as Bill C-56 is concerned, is absolutely out of order.