

Dominion-Provincial Relations

sphere. The Prime Minister did not know what it was all about. This superior Minister of Finance changed the whole thing. But the funny thing is that Mr. Barrette also talked about an agreement in his reply. In his letter of February 5, after agreeing to have the Minister of Finance come to Quebec and talk to him, he said:

I presume—

Perhaps I had better start at the beginning of the sentence.

The suggestion which you make that I should meet the Hon. Donald M. Fleming, acting as representative of the federal government, and the speed with which you have replied to my letter, allow me—I presume—to anticipate that very soon you and I will be in a position to announce that the already expressed hope of a settlement regarding the grants to the universities has been realized.

Unless it has been made in a manner that has not been communicated to any member of the house, there never was any such announcement. There never was any announcement of any kind after the minister came back from Quebec. When the hon. member for Laurier asked the minister about this he said, "You will find out when you get the bill".

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No, no, that is not what I said. I said I would be glad to go into the matter fully on the resolution.

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister now says he would be glad to go into the matter fully.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That is not what I said now; that is what I said then.

Mr. Pickersgill: All right, that is what the minister said then about what he would do on the resolution stage, but when we asked for details on the resolution stage he said, "You can wait for the bill".

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No, I did not.

Mr. Pickersgill: Yes, you did, and when we get to the bill he says, "This was a secret meeting and you cannot know what went on".

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I did not say that.

Mr. Pickersgill: The Solicitor General says they had an agreement and the minister says they had not.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member has attributed to me words I never used. He said that I said it was a secret meeting, and a number of other things. I have not said any such thing. Stick to the facts.

Mr. Pickersgill: As a matter of fact, maybe it was a public meeting to which no one was

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

admitted, about which no communiqué was issued and about which we can find out nothing when we ask questions.

Mr. Fulton: The kind you and Joey have.

Mr. Pickersgill: Oh, not the kind of meeting the Minister of Justice had with the premier of Newfoundland, and if I were the Minister of Justice I would not talk very much about my visit to Newfoundland.

Mr. MacInnis: You cannot talk so much about your visits to Newfoundland.

Mr. Pickersgill: As a matter of fact, this goes farther back than that. In the letters that the minister put on *Hansard* in order that we would have the whole record clear, the letter that the Prime Minister wrote to the premier of Quebec, at that time Mr. Sauve, on December 22 also refers to this matter. Mr. Barrette's reply of January 21 also refers to it. He says:

—your government and ours will come to an agreement on this subject.

Now, three times, in the letter of January 21, the letter from Mr. Barrette, and the letters of February 2 and February 5, all of them talk about an agreement. The Solicitor General comes in and makes a speech in this house, and he certainly gives the impression or uses words that certainly give the impression there was an agreement. Then, all of a sudden—

Mr. Balcer: I have denied that about five times.

Mr. Pickersgill: You say there is disagreement, then, do you?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Graffey: Be responsible.

Mr. Pickersgill: You know, sir, before we had this government, either a thing was something or it was not. Now we have a kind of grey world in between. I say that either there is an agreement or there is not an agreement. It is very clear that this correspondence, right up until the last letter that was written, envisaged an agreement. I am not going to attempt once more to interpret those words of the Solicitor General. They have been advertised enough for everyone to judge for himself what they mean, if indeed they mean anything. One is beginning to wonder whether they did mean anything because the Minister of Finance will not say he did not have an agreement with the premier of Quebec and he will not say that he did. He will not tell us whether he did or whether he did not.

Surely before we are called upon to pass this legislation, which was supposed to solve