

Inquiries of the Ministry

of two heads of Government in a matter of this kind, but I should like to tell the hon. gentleman that we had a very useful discussion on questions of mutual interest. Our discussions are to be referred to our respective Governments, and in due course this question which we have been considering will undoubtedly come before the House of Commons.

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland): Is it the intention of the Prime Minister to hold private meetings with the remaining nine provincial premiers prior to the Federal-Provincial Conference?

Mr. Pearson: I have already had discussions with some of the Provincial Premiers including the Premier of Newfoundland, with regard to matters which will be coming before the forthcoming Conference, and I will be delighted to have discussions with any other Premiers who feel such preliminary discussion would be useful.

Mr. Coates: A further supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. Is it his intention to hold talks with his counterparts in the nine other Provinces, especially with his counterpart in British Columbia?

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): I am always delighted to see any provincial representatives at any time.

[Translation]

Hon. Paul Martineau (Pontiac-Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

Can he tell us, in order to clarify the answer he has just given, whether it is the government's intention to submit to the house a formula which would allow the provinces, later on, to negotiate international agreements within their own jurisdictions?

[Text]

Mr. Pearson: No, there is no question of a formula being involved. It is a question of each Government understanding the position of the other in matters of mutual concern including, as I have just mentioned, arrangements which may have to be made between Provinces and authorities outside the Province on matters having regard to the responsibility which the Federal Government has for the conduct of foreign affairs.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): I would ask the Prime Minister whether the report in *Le Devoir* is cor-

[Mr. Pearson.]

rect that the Canadian Government forwarded for the approval of the Province of Quebec a draft of a master agreement or accord. Further, does the Prime Minister give approval to the right of a province—would he reiterate his position in this regard—to enter into agreements as though that province were a Sovereign state?

Mr. Pearson: It is quite proper for the Federal Government in working out a cultural agreement with another country—any country—to consult with a province which is particularly concerned in such an agreement and which, indeed, within the main agreement might be working out cultural and educational arrangements of its own. I can see nothing improper in that kind of arrangement at all. Indeed, I think it would be improper if any province which was definitely concerned with matters of this kind arising in the course of the exercise of Federal jurisdiction was not informed.

Mr. Diefenbaker: With all respect, that does not answer the question. I asked the Prime Minister whether his Government forwarded for approval the draft of a master agreement or accord with France under the terms of which the Province of Quebec would have the right to conclude with France agreements or accords dealing with cultural, educational or economic matters, as reported in *Le Devoir*.

Mr. Pearson: No, there was no question of forwarding to the Government of Quebec for approval a draft agreement between Canada and a foreign country.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Was there a draft agreement or a draft arrangement forwarded which was acceptable to the Federal Government?

Mr. Pearson: The Quebec Government was kept informed of the discussions which were going on between the Governments of Canada and France with respect to this question.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I see how you have evaded the question.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. Prime Minister spent the whole week end in Montreal. He then heard the very clear statement of his colleague, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Favreau), concerning the "conjugation" about which he spoke to us for three days.