

Dominion-Provincial Relations

house. He omitted my declared determination to find some solution for the problems we had inherited from them. I would crave the right to remind the hon. member of something that I said in this house on September 6, 1958 when I asked the house to approve the estimates of the Department of Finance including the item for federal grants to universities that year. This was not referred to by the hon. member in his speech. I am quoting from page 4725 of *Hansard* for September 6, 1958:

I wish to make it clear on behalf of the government that we would wish the institutions of higher learning in Quebec to have the benefit of the provision intended on their behalf by parliament. The province of Quebec has more than a quarter of the population of Canada. Last year it had one-third of the students of all of Canada attending institutions of higher learning. Quebec pays its full share of taxes out of which this vote is made available, and the matter has been the subject of representations made by our members of parliament from Quebec.

The hon. member did not quote that and did not say anything in accord with sentiments of that kind. Further on the following page I said:

Now I say, Mr. Chairman, of this agreement in relation to the attitude of the present government, that while the formula contained in the present agreement has not so far been such as to be viewed with favour in the province of Quebec, if there is any formula or modification of the present agreement which anyone cares to put forward which would permit the institutions of higher learning in the province of Quebec to participate, and which is in keeping with the national interest, we as a government are prepared to give it serious consideration.

Mr. Pickersgill: That is exactly what Mr. St. Laurent said.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That is exactly what Mr. St. Laurent did not do, and not one of the hon. members opposite did what we have done in this regard.

The next year, while asking the house to approve a similar estimate for federal grants to universities, I made the following observation as reported at page 6393 of *Hansard* of July 18, 1959. This somehow escaped the attention of the hon. member for Laurier.

This is still the position of the government.

That was said with reference to what I had said the year before, just now quoted.

I add to what I said last year that as this situation develops, if there is no change of attitude, no change in the basis on which these university grants are payable, it must be recognized by all that the present situation cannot continue. In other words, some way acceptable to the jurisdiction that controls universities in Quebec, some method must be worked out that will make those sums intended for the province of Quebec available to the institutions in that province in some form or other.

I can say, Mr. Chairman, I shall certainly devote the best efforts of which I am capable in trying

to evolve some modification of this present provision that will make the grants available to all parts of Canada in a way that will be fair and equitable. I say without reservation that the committee cannot contemplate with equanimity a situation under which a large portion of this grant that is earmarked for the institutions of higher learning in Quebec is simply accumulating and is not being made available to be used for the purpose for which parliament intended it.

I closed with these words, Mr. Chairman:

But, Mr. Chairman, having regard to the fact that nearly all of the universities of one province of this country are not receiving their share of these grants, before such an item or any item on this subject is presented to the house in another year a most intensive effort must be made to grapple with this very great difficulty. For my part, I give the committee my personal assurance that anything I can do to help to resolve this difficulty will certainly be done if effort and understanding can do it.

The hon. member did his best to equalize the position of the government and the opposition. We want no part of the position of the opposition in this respect. Our position was that we were not satisfied with the provisions in relation to the university grants. We were not satisfied as long as they were on the basis under which it became impossible for the institutions of higher learning in the province of Quebec to derive any benefit from them. I reject any attempt to link us with the interpretations that the hon. gentleman opposite has used.

Then he talked about the constitution and he got all mixed up in the constitution. He wandered into the theory of delegation, that there is no right on the part of one level of government in this country to delegate jurisdiction to another level. That was completely irrelevant because there is no delegation whatsoever involved in this measure.

Let me endeavour to clarify the position for the hon. member because he has completely misapprehended it and consequently has allowed himself to stray into a most far fetched interpretation of this measure. What does this bill do? It offers an alternative, an alternative to the present system of university grants, and it offers that alternative to all provinces in this country. This is open to every province. It does not matter whether it has signed an agreement to rent the corporation tax field to the federal government or not, we want to put all provinces in this country on a footing of equality; therefore, this legislation provides that any province that had rented that field to the federal government and desires to alter its agreement and resume the collection of corporation taxes will be permitted to do so and then it can act on the alternative basis with respect to the university grants.

The decision is left to each province. Nothing is forced upon any province; nothing