

and which is in keeping with the national interest, we as a government are prepared to give it serious consideration.

This is still the position of the government. 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.

The hon. member for Laurier seemed to recognize the necessity of something being done along this line. 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.

The hon. member for Laurier made a suggestion that thought should be given to making the money payable to the various provinces or in any province that so desired, to a provincial conference of universities rather than to the national conference of Canadian universities. I question very much whether this will meet the views of the province of Quebec. The province of Quebec has a point of view in regard to education which I think all hon. members of this committee have a duty to recognize. It is patent that a different view altogether is taken of this subject in the province of Quebec from the view that is taken in the other provinces of Canada. Those who know the history of the province of Quebec understand the point of view of that province today and will know that Quebec regards this exclusive jurisdiction over education as something fundamental to the ethnic survival of that province and its people. This has been the view of the people of Quebec down through the years, that its jurisdiction over education is the sheet anchor of the survival of the culture, the language and the institutions of the province.

I am sure it is the desire of all hon. members of this house to approach this problem with proper understanding of that point of

view. I do say that that point of view is respected by the government. In connection with the other provinces, it is patent that there is no serious question raised as to the acceptance of their share of these grants by the institutions of higher learning of those other provinces. I feel something more will be required to meet the patent difficulty of this situation than the suggestion put forward by the hon. member for Laurier.

I also say to the members of this committee that at this time no modification can be introduced into this item since the item has been known to universities which are free to accept their share and they are counting on it. 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.

Mr. Chevrier: May I be allowed just one or two questions following what the minister has said? I have listened with great care to what the minister has said and, in some respects, I must say that I cannot find myself in disagreement with him, other than with reference to some of the suggestions which I made earlier. But I am impressed by the fact that the minister confirms the statements which I made earlier that the present position is a serious one and cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely.

Then, it occurs to me to ask him this, but before I ask the question I may say I appreciate what he has said with reference to the fact that he respects the constitutional position of the provinces in so far as education is concerned and that no proposal having been made to him from the province he feels he should take no further action. Notwithstanding that, the question I now ask him is this. Has any modification of the present formula been considered by the minister or his officials.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Yes. This subject naturally has been given very careful consideration within the Department of Finance.

Mr. Chevrier: Is it the intention, in the light of what the minister has said, to continue the same formula as has been established earlier and has been put into effect by the minister since his party has been in office?