

*Dominion-Provincial Relations*

whole five years? Is that why this is being kept a secret? I ask the minister that question.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** The hon. member, if he knows as much as he claims, will know the answer to that question. It is a question of growth. If the growth is sufficient, Quebec will reap benefits in increased yields from the growth. The hon. member has no right, Mr. Chairman, to start imputing dark motives for the position I have taken.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Give us the information, then.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** It is not a matter of information. Hon. members opposite are asking me to engage in a high degree of speculation in regard to the future. I have already said I would not be rendering a service to the committee by engaging in that kind of speculation. Or course we have made forecasts. We have made all kinds of them, depending on all the factors that are involved in any particular year. The year 1962-63 was given to the provincial conference in this form.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** It was asked for though.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** Table 3 was given to the conference. Yes; although the proceedings are secret, the hon. member is aware that a request was made for that.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Well, I know that premiers are intelligent men and of course they would ask for it.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** It was not the premiers; it was one premier who asked for that, and evidently the hon. member has been having some discussions with the one premier who asked for that projection. I give the hon. member the same answer I gave to the premier who asked for this, and that is that it would involve entering into the realm of speculation. The answer depends upon hypothetical factors, and I do not think it would add to the knowledge of anyone, Mr. Chairman, to attempt to engage in that kind of speculation. The provincial premiers make their own calculations. They were in a position to assess what they considered to be the merits or demerits of the proposal, and they arrived at their own conclusions and based their arguments on those conclusions.

The hon. member knows, I think, that he already has adequate information to draw enough conclusions to enable him to take his position on this matter. It is interesting to me to hear him now requesting information when yesterday he denounced the bill and announced his intention of voting against it. Now he says he needs some more information but, presumably, no matter what

this information might be it is not going to affect his attitude toward the bill. I do not question the right of any hon. member to obtain information. I know when I was in opposition I did not desist from efforts to obtain information that was available and was necessary to a proper understanding of the provisions of any bill, whether or not I favoured the bill. I do not question the right of any hon. member to ask for whatever information may be available.

It is one thing, Mr. Chairman, to ask for information and quite another thing to invite a minister to indulge in speculation. I must say that I shrink from engaging in speculative or hypothetical pursuits.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Of course in 1955-56, when the new scheme was proposed for tax equalization, these projections were given over the whole period and a comparison was made between the new scheme and the old so the premiers would be given the best information that could possibly be given. The minister dared, a few years ago, to refer to Mr. C. D. Howe as arrogant. After seeing the attitude the minister has taken with this committee this afternoon I say there has never been such an example of arrogance. He says, we were so arrogant we told the premiers they had no right to know. We know they told the premiers that. We know they told them, you take it or else; but you do not even know what you are taking. You are not allowed to know.

However, we are parliament and the minister is the servant of this house, or he is supposed to be. This seems to be the idea that is most difficult to get through his head. This committee is entitled, especially in financial matters, to know the best projections on which we are asked to vote money. This is what we are being asked to do here, to vote money, and we are entitled to know to whom it is going and in what proportions.

It is obvious that in so far as Manitoba, Quebec and Saskatchewan are concerned, there is going to be no change in 1962-63. If, as the Prime Minister claimed yesterday, this is a more generous provision for all the provinces than the other, which I do not believe, there must be some point between now and the end of the five year period when Quebec will do better under the new formula than it will do under the existing formula. Surely it is reasonable to be told when, in the opinion of the government, that point will be reached, and approximately how much better off Quebec will be.

The minister says calculations have been made. Certainly calculations have been made. It should not really be necessary for us in parliament—and nobody should know this better than the minister—to have to engage

[Mr. Pickersgill.]