

Interim Supply

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I do not mind the hon. gentleman interrupting me, but I do not like him debating with others.

Mr. Woolliams: Would the minister explain, as he sees it, how those powers delegated to the central government can be amended, under the formula he is talking about?

Mr. Pickersgill: I do not even understand that question, and I think the hon. gentleman will realize why when he looks at *Hansard*. I would not like to be so rude as to say it does not make much sense.

Mr. Woolliams: I will put this question to you.

Mr. Pickersgill: No, the hon. gentleman won't. I will treat the hon. gentleman a little more politely than he treated some hon. gentlemen over here who wanted to ask him questions. When I have concluded I will be glad to answer a question from the hon. gentleman, but before I conclude I think it would be desirable to have this point made very clear. As I said before, if parliament and the ten provincial legislatures see fit to accept these recommendations, the power of delegation to provincial legislatures, the power for provincial legislatures to exercise legislative authority with respect to any matter mentioned in section 91, could only be exercised after four provincial legislatures and this parliament had all agreed to it, and only for so long as that agreement continued.

That is why I did not think Mr. Fulton's suggestion was any danger at all to the powers of the federal parliament. I do not think the right hon. gentleman, who prides himself on being a great lawyer, would ever have recommended it, as he did, to all the provinces if that had been the case. His government circulated it to all the provinces and begged them to accept it, and castigated the former government of Saskatchewan because they would not accept it. It was not that the former government of Saskatchewan objected to this part of it; the former government of Saskatchewan, as I understand it—and this was repeated by the hon. member for Greenwood the other day—and the New Democratic party were not objecting to this power of delegation at all; they were objecting to the inflexibility, as they put it, which provides that in a great many cases no powers can be transferred one way or the other without the approval of all ten provinces. They say that is too inflexible. I do not happen to agree with them, but at least it is an honest point of view, put for-

[Mr. Woolliams.]

ward honestly with reference to real facts and not to fictions.

It is astonishing that the right hon. gentleman, who himself sponsored this formula, goes on television—and even does this in the house—and misrepresents the facts about this matter. That is what he has done. This is the thing for which he took responsibility as head of the government of Canada, and when we put it forward in precisely the same terms he condemns our government for doing something that he did, that we approved of and agree should continue to be done.

Those are the facts. I do not think this is a proper place to discuss their interpretation. Of course if the right hon. gentleman thinks he made a grave mistake at that time and wants to change his mind, he can get up honestly and say "I made a fool of myself when I was prime minister. I was willing, when I was prime minister, to surrender these powers. Now I am not. I am sorry. I will put on sackcloth and ashes and admit that I made an awful fool of myself. But I am going to fight it now because it is being put forward by another government." If he wanted to do that, that would be honest; but he goes on television and says "This is different from what we did", when any person who will take the trouble to read can see there is not one syllable of difference. That is not what I would call political honesty.

Of course I am rather simple about these things; I do not have that power to make black appear white and white appear black which seems to be the outstanding quality of some other politicians in this country whose practices I have no desire to emulate. I rather prefer what was said by an honest and honourable gentleman who sat in this house as minister of justice for a number of years, though I did not agree with the government he belonged to and often disagreed with him.

Mr. Woolliams: They are always honest when they are not here, but dishonest when they are here.

Mr. Pickersgill: The hon. gentleman can look through all the pages of *Hansard* and all the debates I had with Mr. Fulton—and there were a great many—when we were on opposite sides of the house, and nowhere will he find any occasion when either of us ever imputed any dishonest motive to the other.

Mr. Woolliams: Yes; but let him end up as leader and then see what you do with him.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.