

Supply—Finance

2410 did he not make the distinction which he is apparently making now?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I am not making any new distinction. I placed the matter firmly on the record of *Hansard* at page 2410 and these two matters were described under the caption to which I have referred. The matter is perfectly plain. There is no new distinction being drawn. It was placed there in the budget speech on April 9. I say that any suggestion that there is any thought of making federal contributions to primary and secondary education is far removed from the mind of anyone in this chamber.

Let me deal with this subject of university grants. University grants were first introduced by the former government and came into effect in the fiscal year 1951-52. The basis of these grants, while it has changed in amount, has not changed greatly in another sense. They began on the basis of 50 cents per capita of population in the country. They were raised subsequently to \$1 per capita and then a year ago were advanced to \$1.50. The original scheme contemplated the division of the total federal grant among the provinces on the basis of the respective populations of the provinces, and then within the province the basis of allocation was in relation to university population. The division, therefore, was within the defined institutions of higher learning within the province in proportion to their registration of students who came within the definition in the regulations.

At the beginning there was provision made for distribution within the provinces by a so-called dominion-provincial allocation board, and in the one year in which the universities of the province of Quebec accepted these grants the division in that province was made by a committee or panel composed of the then minister of finance, Mr. Abbott, and the then provincial treasurer of Quebec, Mr. Gagnon. But that was the only year in which the universities of the province of Quebec accepted their share of this provision.

Mr. Chevrier: That was 1951-52.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Yes, 1951-52, and consistently in the years since the universities of the province of Quebec have declined to participate in these grants.

Mr. Benidickson: What is the amount standing to their credit?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): At the commencement of the present fiscal year it was, in round figures, \$17 million, and out of the figure of some \$26 million, which constitutes

[Mr. Chevrier.]

item 124 now under discussion, the share that would be available to the institutions of higher learning in the province of Quebec this year would be approximately \$7½ million.

Last year when the house was discussing this item I made a statement indicating the view that I had of the difficulties of the situation and the rather unsatisfactory nature, to put it in mild terms, of the situation that was developing. May I recall the remarks I made on September 6, 1958, as found on pages 4725 and 4726 of *Hansard*. I said at the bottom of page 4725:

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.

Then, I continued, and I repeat this is the fundamental approach of the government. We recognize that education is the exclusive constitutional responsibility of the provinces of this country. I say in most emphatic terms, that as long as this government is in office never will it do one thing to interfere with the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces over education in this country. It was in that thought that I made these remarks last year as recorded on page 4726 of *Hansard*:

Let me make it abundantly clear, Mr. Chairman, that this government will always scrupulously respect the terms of the Canadian constitution. It is plainly recognized that education is a field of jurisdiction exclusively assigned to the provinces under the British North America Act. As long as this government is in office there will never be any attempt made to trespass on that jurisdiction exclusively vested in the provinces.

Having made that position abundantly clear, Mr. Chairman, I trust, let me go on to deal specifically with these grants which now have a history of eight years in this Canadian parliament. The situation, as I described it last year on the same page is this:

Now I say, Mr. Chairman, of this agreement—

That is to say the agreement between the Minister of Finance and the national conference of Canadian universities which at that time had been made the trustee for the distribution of these grants amongst the institutions of learning in Canada.

—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,