

Dominion-Provincial Relations

Finance in opening this discussion said that one of the reasons for these extra payments at this time was to assist in relieving the current unemployment situation.

Mr. Speaker: I follow the hon. member that far, but if he goes on to deal with the unemployment problem then I think he is going beyond the scope of the bill.

Mr. Sinclair: I certainly bow to your direction in that respect. I assure you I was not going to go into actual details with respect to employment. In view of the fact that we are asked to support the bill, one of the reasons for which is to provide money to relieve unemployment, what I was asking for was a reconciliation between the statement made by the Prime Minister to the premiers at the dominion-provincial conference which occasioned this bill and the statement made to the House of Commons by the Minister of Finance at the opening of the debate, at the resolution stage. If I wander into the actual field of unemployment and what should be done I hope, sir, you will check me.

I think the members of the house in discussing the bill on this basis would also like to have the benefit of the confidential reports, which the Prime Minister must have had before he addressed the premiers at the dominion-provincial conference, reports from both the Department of Finance and the Department of Trade and Commerce. Normally, of course, these reports made by a departmental head, a civil servant, to a minister have been regarded as confidential and secret, but the Prime Minister has broken new trails this session by tabling one of them.

In tabling that confidential document he justified himself this morning by saying he had done so because the opposition had asked for it. I am a member of the opposition, and I should like to ask for these confidential reports for the three quarters before the Prime Minister made his speech, made by the deputy minister of trade and commerce and the deputy minister of finance. They are not hidden but they are confidential; and since they are confidential they are not lying around on a desk for a charwoman to pick up. But I can tell you where you can find them. You will find them where they should be, in the files of the deputy minister of finance and the deputy minister of trade and commerce.

I come back to the point I was raising about the need for the bill. If, as the Prime Minister assured the premiers, all is well and this is just a short term unemployment situation we are experiencing this winter, why does the Minister of Finance put forward in justification of the measure the fact

that the extra money which is going to be paid will help the provinces this winter with their very serious unemployment problem? I raise this point and make this request. It would be very helpful in our discussion of the bill if we could have these confidential reports from the two deputy ministers on which the Prime Minister must have based his reassuring remarks to the premiers. If the Prime Minister wants to rip off the two covers of these reports, and table them without classification I think we will not object, because that principle has been established by him.

I should like to close by stating by way of summary that this bill changes not one iota the principle of the dominion-provincial fiscal arrangements which were passed by this house this spring, as sponsored by the former minister of finance, Mr. Walter Harris. There has been one minor amendment to increase one tax division from 10 per cent to 13 per cent. So far as British Columbia is concerned I think the people will want a much better explanation than they have received so far as to why they were led up the garden path to believe they were getting \$5.5 million instead of getting just \$2.8 million. They will want an explanation, too, as to why the per capita extra payments made to our province are just half those made to the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, which are the only two provinces that could be fairly compared with British Columbia.

I think, however, the great interest of the nation will be in the payments made to Ontario. This province got the most, and it continues to get the most.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Sinclair: A Tory member says, "Hear, hear". This indicates the way they value the equalization payments and the special grants to the Atlantic provinces which are, of course, in direct contradiction to this position that Ontario wants everything for itself.

What I want to talk about is the fact that last spring when Premier Frost was here he said he had to have at least \$100 million to discharge his constitutional responsibilities in his province. Then last June on the platform he again announced to an audience in Toronto—I shall quote from the red book. No; hon. members opposite now know the Prime Minister's promises as well as we do, so quotation is unnecessary. Premier Frost pointed and said, "This man Diefenbaker will get us an extra \$100 million". Well, Premier Frost did not get \$100 million, but he got \$22 million. He is happy with it, so it was only a bargaining position he was establishing last spring when he asked the