

Supply—Labour

a year ago, the end of the fiscal year 1957-58. Unless the Quebec government should suddenly come in between now and the end of the present fiscal year it is indicated that there will be no payments accruing to Quebec during the present fiscal year. I do emphasize, however, that the terms of this act and the agreements for which it provides are open to the province of Quebec as they are to all other provinces. I stressed last night that all the provinces are on an equal footing in this respect.

Mr. Denis: In other words, when the minister said Quebec was receiving its full share, he meant after all zero, or that it was receiving nothing. It received nothing this year or in the previous year. In 1957-58 I believe the province received not one cent. I base this statement on an answer given by the Minister of Labour to the hon. member for Papineau on March 3. On that occasion the hon. gentleman inquired about the amounts paid to Quebec each year since 1942 to date under the provisions of the Vocational Training Co-Ordination Act. In reply the Minister of Labour said that nothing was received in the fiscal year 1957-58 for youth training, vocational training school assistance, apprenticeship training or for unemployed workers. Of course we have no unemployed workers in the province of Quebec, and we do not need any money from Ottawa.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That information is correct, Mr. Chairman, but may I point out that there are various headings under the schedule. This payment to the province of Quebec in the fiscal year 1957-58 came under a later item, the training of persons to fit them for the armed forces. The amount was \$2,849.

Mr. Denis: But we are discussing item No. 751 referring to vocational training co-ordination.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): It comes under that.

Mr. Denis: The question addressed to the Minister of Labour was under the same item, and his answer was that nothing was received by Quebec. On the other hand the Minister of Finance says there was a payment of a few thousand dollars out of a possible \$8 million total. I think these hon. gentlemen should compare their figures before it is too late.

This is the third set of supplementary estimates we have had. I believe the present government is using supplementary estimates rather too freely with respect to somewhat

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

large sums of money. I was reading Beauchesne's fourth edition yesterday with respect to supplementary estimates, and this is what I find in citation No. 240:

Supplementary estimates, when treated as customary and as a matter of course, instead of being restricted to occasion of unforeseen contingencies, do more to destroy effectual parliamentary control than any other indirect method that could be devised.

And later:

The introduction of supplementary estimates of any considerable amount is really a breach of contract between the government and parliament, for when this is done the budget statement is destroyed, and in effect a supplementary budget is set up.

These are the words of a gentleman who is supposed to know something about these matters. The sum of \$1 million out of a total of \$8 million represents more than one-tenth of the whole amount. Those who are looking for suggestions from this side of the house say that we never give any suggestions. Next year the Minister of Finance should see that these supplementary estimates are reduced to the minimum so that the government, the house and the country will know exactly the amount of money that we are called upon to vote. That might change the picture altogether. If a few items in the supplementary estimates for every department were calculated in the millions of dollars, instead of having a deficit of \$700 million we might go over \$1 billion. This is one suggestion I humbly submit to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I humbly receive the suggestion of the hon. member in the same spirit.

Mr. Denis: Thank you. I would like a vote on this item.

Mr. Chevrier: Call the yeas and nays.

Mr. Fisher: Before it goes to a vote I wish to ask the minister whether he can tell us from his intimate knowledge of provincial-federal relations that the reason Quebec is not taking advantage of this particular vote is its stand on autonomy and its general attitude toward those questions.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I have no specific communication as to the reasons the Quebec government has not seen fit to enter into the new five-year agreement.

The Chairman: Shall the item carry?

(Translation):

Mr. Denis: Mr. Chairman, I would like the yeas and nays to be recorded before this item is passed.

(Text):

I would like a vote called.

Mr. Chevrier: Question.