

Inquiries of the Ministry

the equalization grant, as he did in the answer he gave to the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm?

Mr. Balcer: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, although he is fluent in French, should brush up on it a little more, because he has not properly interpreted my answer.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, did the hon. gentleman not say—I am directing this question to him—that the grants that were going to be proposed by his government would be different from those that had been proposed by the former Liberal government?

Mr. Gauthier (Portneuf): That is right.

Mr. Balcer: My answer was that the propositions of the federal government have not been formulated as yet, but I am sure they are going to be based on a different attitude toward the provinces from that of the last government.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I think this is the most important question that has yet been brought before the house. I have a supplementary question which I would like to address to the leader of the government. I feel that—

Some hon. Members: Question, question.

Mr. Pickersgill: I ask the leader of the government, is there any intention whatsoever on the part of the federal government to substitute something else for the equalization grants?

Hon. Howard C. Green (Acting Prime Minister): Well now, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the hon. member for Twillingate-Bonavista—

Mr. Pickersgill: Bonavista-Twillingate.

Mr. Green: Oh, Bonavista-Twillingate—he is all twisted up anyway. I suggest that he has already had his answer from the Solicitor General and he should know better than anybody else in this house that announcements of policy will be made in due course by the government.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am quite satisfied with that answer.

(Translation):

Mr. Breton: Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the hon. Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys? The stand taken by the Quebec government being well known in connection with direct taxation and subsidies

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

granted the provinces by the federal government, could he tell us whether, as the official representative of our province, he concurs in the opinions of the Quebec government about these matters?

Hon. Paul Comtois (Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm (Mr. Breton) for giving me notice of this question. I believe it is not appropriate, in view of the forthcoming federal-provincial conference, to answer this question or to express my opinion on this matter.

(Text):

HOUSE OF COMMONS

DISPOSITION OF SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION SYSTEM

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Maurice Breton (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): I have another question I should like to ask the Postmaster General. Since the government has disposed of the simultaneous translation system that was installed in the house for the benefit of the universal postal union, can the minister tell us to whom it has been sold and at what price?

Hon. W. M. Hamilton (Postmaster General): I should thank the hon. member for having given me notice of both his questions, which notice arrived just a moment ago. The simultaneous translation system which was installed in the house was developed and built by the Department of National Defence. It was installed in the House of Commons by that department, used for the purposes of the universal postal congress, and then taken back by the Department of National Defence which at all times retained ownership and possession of it. My understanding is that it is the intention of that department to retain it and keep it available for such conferences as it might be needed for.

If I may add one word, Mr. Speaker, because I have had comments and questions from several of the members, it should be pointed out that the simultaneous translation system which was installed in the house for the universal postal congress was on a temporary basis only and was for many reasons not suitable for permanent installation.

Mr. Breton: A supplementary question—

Hon. Leon Balcer (Solicitor General): Perhaps I can answer part of the hon. member's question. At the present time a committee is being set up to study the possibility of installing a simultaneous translation system in the House of Commons.