

Dominion—Provincial Relations

what is permissible in my view, and I hope the minister will govern himself accordingly.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Then I draw attention, with the support of a Liberal source in this regard, to the fact that the charge which has been made in relation to this matter—and I shall be returning to this subject—“will not enhance Liberal party prestige in the rest of Canada or the cause of Canadian education which has suffered from the enforced poverty of Canadian universities”. I add this: that “this new arrangement, whatever its faults, has the merit of being acceptable to Quebec and providing funds for Quebec universities”.

Let me recall here just what it was that the hon. member for Laurier had to say about this measure when he spoke on April 26. This was the lead-off speech; this was the keynote speech for the Liberal opposition. This is what he said, as recorded at page 3282 of *Hansard*:

There is a new constitutional problem created by this bill.

And further:

This is, to say the least, a fantastic piece of legislation. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that no other federal government or minister of finance since confederation has dared to intervene so emphatically, so evidently and so thoroughly in an exclusively provincial matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Did you ever hear a more blatant example of irresponsibility in this house? The very members who now purport, by rapping their desks, to endorse this extraordinary statement by the hon. member for Laurier are those who in a few minutes will be in the invidious position of voting in favour of this measure.

The hon. member for Laurier proceeded:

The province will become a mere fiscal agent of the federal authority with respect to a direct provincial tax raised for a provincial purpose. This is surely the height of arrogance.

The height of arrogance? I say it is the height of irresponsibility for hon. members in this house to pretend any longer that they have a sense of responsibility and make such statements as that about a measure which is before them and then turn around and vote in favour of the measure. How can any self-respecting member, how can any self-respecting opposition, how can any self-respecting political party say those things about a measure and then vote for it? If hon. members opposite really believe what was said on their behalf by the hon. member for Laurier how can they follow such a course? How can they claim to be following an

honourable course except by voting against a measure which they have condemned in such emphatic terms?

How can the hon. member for Laurier describe this legislation as fantastic and then vote in favour of it? How can he say that no other federal government or minister of finance since confederation has dared to intervene in this way in an exclusively provincial matter, and yet vote in support of what he calls an intervention by the federal government in a provincial field? How can he, as a self-respecting member, say of this bill that the province will become a mere fiscal agent of the federal authority and then turn around and vote in favour of that very proposition?

The course that the opposition has followed in this debate amounts to an utter negation of responsibility. The hon. gentleman wound up by saying that this was surely the height of arrogance. Mr. Speaker, surely it is the height of folly on the part of the opposition to think they can carry conviction to the Canadian people when they talk out of both sides of their mouths while they are debating and then vote in exactly the opposite way. I say that if hon. members opposite believe what was said on their behalf by the hon. member for Laurier they are defaulting in their duty by not opposing this measure. I say, further, that the Leader of the Opposition, when he spoke in this house on May 5 announcing that he and his followers intended to vote for this measure, repudiated what was said earlier on behalf of himself and his party by the hon. member for Laurier, the hon. member for Levis and other members; and he repudiated Mr. Lesage. I say that we have surely heard the height of hypocrisy and double-talk.

Admittedly the opposition was faced with a dilemma with respect to this measure, but surely the way for them to win respect in the face of a dilemma is to take their courage in both hands and stick by what they say in this house, not run away from it. They will not win respect from the Canadian people by a pusillanimous attitude of this kind.

We saw an effort being made by the Leader of the Opposition on May 5 to introduce a diversionary tactic. He wanted to get the mind of the house away from the provisions of this bill with respect to university grants so he tried to bring in as a red herring an argument about equalization, as applied to the other amendment contained in this bill, in relation to the Federal-Provincial Tax-Sharing Arrangements Act.

It was a pretty transparent diversion. We did not oppose the principle of equalization in 1956. On the contrary, we extended the