

Mr. FIELDING. It was a claim for property which the Dominion of Canada had taken over and insufficiently paid for.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Was it not a money claim?

Mr. FIELDING. It was a money claim for property. But the claim of Mr. McBride was a money claim, not for property. Does my hon. friend see the difference?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. No, I do not.

Mr. FIELDING. Then I am sorry for it. I think if the Dominion of Canada had a property transaction with any individual, that individual might claim the right to go to a court or an arbitration and see whether he could get justice, and if the arbitration or court awarded him \$100,000, no province in the Dominion, as a province, would feel it had thereby any grievance. But if there was a treaty as to subsidies between the provinces, and then some scheme was devised whereby one province would get something and the other province would get nothing, that is quite a different transaction.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. If it depended on a treaty, how could you alter that treaty without the consent of British Columbia?

Mr. FIELDING. I say you could not insist upon a large number of provinces coming to an absolute agreement, you could not expect it. We took nothing away from British Columbia.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The hon. gentleman does not understand my question. If the hon. gentleman puts the case as that of a treaty, how can you alter that treaty without the consent of British Columbia?

Mr. FIELDING. The hon. gentleman is proposing to do it absolutely without the consent of the other provinces. I say the attitude of the Dominion government in the matter was absolutely fair. We said to these provinces: Now, there may not be absolute harmony among you, although we wish there could be. But whatever you agree upon, try to be unanimous. If you can agree as to what is fair and reasonable we will take the responsibility of asking for the legislation.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Did the province of British Columbia, through its Prime Minister, agree that the question as to its right to arbitration should be determined by the Prime Ministers of the other provinces?

Mr. FIELDING. There was no question as to the right of British Columbia to arbitration. How can the hon. gentleman say there was any question of right? He may give any body a privilege if he likes, but there was never any question of the right of British Columbia to arbitration.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I understood the minister to say that the question was

left to the members of the conference composed of the prime ministers and their colleagues from all the provinces; that question was left to them to determine, and they decided adversely to the province of British Columbia. Now what I do not know, and what I am desirous of ascertaining is, whether the province of British Columbia, through its Prime Minister, consented that that question should be left to the adjudication of these gentlemen, and to be bound by their determination?

Mr. FIELDING. No, it did not.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I thought not.

Mr. FIELDING. I have not said anything to the contrary. The position the government took was this: This is a delicate question as between the provinces. We remembered past differences, as to which I have already called the attention of the House. Now, we said, we are not going to get into a quarrel with you on this matter; but if you can come to something like an understanding—we would like it to be unanimous—then we will take the responsibility of asking parliament to vote this large amount of money. We found in the end that the hon. gentleman who represented British Columbia apparently was not satisfied with anything except the appointment of a commission. Now I understand that there is no more right why that gentleman should ask for a commission than that the premier of Ontario should ask for a commission. They had equal rights. They both came into the union voluntarily; and therefore I say that the hon. gentleman's idea that British Columbia had a right to get a commission is absolutely without foundation. This question had been dragging along for twenty years. The provinces represented to us that they needed the money, and there was almost an unanimous agreement. When Mr. McBride demanded a commission for British Columbia, if we had granted him that commission we would have been obliged in fairness to grant it to any other province in the Dominion who asked for it.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Did any other province ask for it?

Mr. FIELDING. No, the other provinces said: We do not want commissions, we do not want delay, we have been delaying for twenty years, we want action, we want the money. That is what the other provinces said, not what we said.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Have they got it yet?

Mr. FIELDING. Yes, and they are delighted. The gladdest province of all is the province of Ontario, I am quite sure. I had a very polite acknowledgment from my friend, the premier of Ontario, who said he was very glad to receive the money; no doubt they all were. It was no