

The Address—Mr. Fleming

his speech last Friday. I do not condemn the Prime Minister for the extent to which he professes himself to be in agreement with the leader of the opposition; I commend him for his frankness in that respect. I only regret he did not go the full distance and commit himself completely to agreement with the leader of the opposition.

But, Mr. Speaker, behold the welter of confusion, the welter of contradiction which always characterizes speeches from the right-hand side of the chamber immediately became apparent. When the new Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson), making his maiden speech in the house yesterday, undertook to be the spokesman of the government on the subject of dominion-provincial relations, what an extraordinary attitude he displayed! It is time the government decided where they stand on this subject, because here we have the man who apparently is to be the government spokesman on this question describing the fundamental conception of confederation, the kind of confederation that apparently he professes to cling to, at page 165 of *Hansard*:

The provinces were deliberately left with small revenues, which in some provinces were inadequate from the start, in order that the legal powers which they received under the constitution would be supported as little as possible by revenues wherewith to pay for exercising them. The idea was that after a short trial with that sort of federal system they would ultimately, in the language of Sir A. T. Galt, "at no distant day be enabled to do away with those artificial boundaries which separated one province from another, and come together as one united people"—without any provinces.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the conception of confederation that fell from the lips of the government spokesman on the subject of dominion-provincial relations. Then, very properly, he went on to give this description of his own conception, as already expressed; this is what he says at page 166.

Mr. Martin: If the hon. gentleman would permit a question, was that not a quotation?

Mr. Fleming: The part following the words "Sir A. T. Galt" is a quotation, until we get down to the words "without any provinces", which the minister added.

Mr. Cruickshank: The new way of doing it is to say "I am quoting now" and "I have stopped quoting."

Mr. Fleming: I have no time to deal with remarks of that kind. This is the way the spokesman for the government sums up his conception of Canadian confederation:

Well, sir, how did this limited and static conception of provincial responsibility . . . work out?

This "limited and static conception of provincial responsibility"—those are the words of the government spokesman on the subject of dominion-provincial relations. I suggest,

Mr. Speaker, you could not have a better description of the whole conception of confederation which has actuated the government since the time it took office, particularly in these years since the war, than in those words: "this limited and static conception of provincial responsibility." That is just the conception that has characterized the attitude of this government toward the provinces since this whole question became a national issue.

I would say to the minister, if I had the opportunity of speaking to him now, that he and his province owe very much to the stand my leader took at the dominion-provincial conference. Had it not been for that firm and courageous stand, taken with a due appreciation of the essential realities of confederation in Canada, the province of Manitoba would not have had nearly as good an agreement with the dominion government as it eventually got.

Step by step, just along the lines my leader and other leaders like the premier of Quebec and the premier of Nova Scotia had been taking at the dominion-provincial conference, the province of Manitoba and others properly began to get more and more under the agreements. The province of Manitoba and other provinces throughout this dominion, as time goes on and the truth sinks in, will come to appreciate more and more how much they owe to the courageous stand taken by my leader at the dominion-provincial conference.

Mr. Knowles: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Fleming: I would rather take the questions at the end of my statement, since time is running short.

Mr. Knowles: Is this an admission that your leader broke up the conference?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order; I should point out that a question cannot be asked without the consent of the member.

Mr. Cruickshank: He cannot answer him anyhow?

Mr. Fleming: When you get a question as absurd as the one asked by the hon. member from Winnipeg, it does not take long to dispose of it. I have just made it clear the dominion government sabotaged the conference and I may say it would have been sabotaged just as quickly if the C.C.F. had been the government, because the worst centralizers in this Dominion of Canada are the C.C.F. socialists.

This mentality that has been exhibited by the Minister of Justice is apparently the