

member for Vancouver-Burrard (Mr. Merritt), the hon. member for Souris (Mr. Ross), and some others who come from provinces from which there is at least a semblance of Progressive Conservative representation—whether they feel that their governments, and the members they have in those governments, have sold their provinces down the river by concluding agreements with the federal government. I believe the finance minister of British Columbia is a member of the Conservative party. I want to know whether they think that either they have been neglecting their province and have made a poor agreement or that the agreement was a good one and that these agreements are robbery as far as the provinces of Ontario and Quebec are concerned. I do not think they are. I do not think the constitutional bogey is the real motivating force when it comes to the opposition which we have been getting from the chiefs of the major provinces. I believe the premier of Ontario disclosed his real objection when he said at the last conference, as reported on page 1206:

I think it will help us reach the agreement which is so essential if we realize that most of the beclouding difficulties which still exist between complete settlement and the position we have reached lie in the fact that we do not proceed simply to substitute for one tax agreement another tax agreement to deal with the same problem.

What has led to the increasingly wide circle of discussion has been the introduction into that relatively simple problem of a great number of projected promises in fields which were in no way directly related to the tax agreement which was coming to an end.

What was he afraid of? He was afraid of the proposals for the extension of social services. However, he had time to think about the matter; he went out to lunch; he came back and in continuing that particular speech he said:

We are now faced with the statement that it is essential for the dominion government to have very large revenues because of the undertakings they have given.

He referred to the war costs, and then he went on to say:

I would recall that in addition to these obligations created by expenditures on war itself . . . we realize that beyond all these are obligations that have been incurred since January 6, 1944—

That is when he protested that he thought his own government had nothing to fear in introducing itself into social legislation, and he asked for a conference. He went on:

—to the extent of many hundreds of millions of dollars, in regard to which no province was consulted in advance. It may be that the dominion government is committed to the continuance of those obligations it has undertaken, a point which means they must carry on.

[Mr. Benidickson.]

Then, the following day he went on to say:

I said yesterday that a large part of the difficulty created for the dominion government was that instead of dealing strictly with the tax agreement they incorporated in these proposals a number of extraneous subjects which impose heavy additional burdens.

What is he thinking about? Social services. The proposals that had been made really exceeded the revenues that were ever received from those sources by these governments in days gone by. They claim that there is an invasion of provincial rights, but I say that that claim must be dismissed. I do not think they could find a lawyer who would support them in the statement that there is any invasion in that respect. I am sure that the real reason back of the opposition that we are getting is that they feel they can block the social security programme contained in these measures.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must inform the hon. member that his time has expired.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Go on.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: With unanimous consent.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Mr. BENIDICKSON: I will conclude by saying that I consider it necessary that each government should arrive at some financial agreement. I am the first to say that if a further step is to be taken—and it is promised that it will be taken before the agreements are made—we must have a conference for the parties to decide upon dominion and provincial jurisdiction when it comes to this necessary social services programme. I would not support the agreements if I felt that there was an invasion of the constitution, which I appreciate and which I know the members of the federal government appreciate as being very dear. I am sure that the fight which we have been reading about in the newspapers is a phony fight. The real reason these people are backing out of this conference, the real reason for their procrastinating and so on is that they cannot see that we are moving along very quickly with respect to these wonderful proposals for the people of Canada in the way of social services.

Mr. RODNEY ADAMSON (York West): Mr. Speaker, before I commence my remarks I want to deal with two things that the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Benidickson) referred to in opening his speech. First, I want to correct something that he has assumed in error was said by the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario (Mr. Macdon-