

into power, they would grant relief from this thing that the Liberals were doing. That is the chief offence that I lay at his door. He knows he was not fair, he was not candid in so speaking. Who composed this convention? Who agreed to this scheme of distribution? Foremost among them was the Prime Minister of the Conservative province of Ontario. All the governments of the Dominion are not in harmony with the Dominion government of to-day; and I suppose that it is not at all likely that all the provincial governments will be in harmony with the Dominion government at any time. We had at this conference in Ottawa, Mr. Whitney, the Premier of Ontario; Mr. Foy, Attorney General; Mr. Matheson, Treasurer. We had Mr. Roblin, premier and Mr. Colin Campbell, Attorney General, representing the great Conservative province of Manitoba. We had also, representing the other provinces, their premiers and ministers whose names are well known. Mr. McBride was here to represent British Columbia, and he is the head of a Conservative government. He came forward with an apparent determination that nothing you could do for him would satisfy him. It is evident that he had not come to get an arrangement for British Columbia; he had come there to find a grievance. He did not want to agree to anything that the conference would agree upon. He said: I want a Royal Commission to look into the case of British Columbia. Now, there was no reason why we should grant a Royal Commission to one province and not to another. This was a matter, as I have said, which had been agitated for twenty years. The provinces needed the money. The time was ripe, not for commissions and further inquiry, but for action. If it was right that Mr. McBride should be given a commission for British Columbia, why should not Mr. Whitney say: I am not satisfied with this arrangement, and I want a Royal Commission to investigate for Ontario? And so with the Premier of Quebec, the Premier of Nova Scotia and the rest. To grant a commission meant a disturbance of the arrangement. My right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) said yesterday that no commission was better qualified to deal with that question than were the men at that conference. They were men who had a general knowledge of the affairs of the Dominion. They were not prompted by an ungenerous spirit towards British Columbia. I can speak of that with the most perfect certainty. I have said elsewhere, and I repeat now, that I went to some of the members of the conference before it assembled, and asked them to consider British Columbia's claims as favourably as possible, to strain a point in her favour, and treat her generously. And I am glad to say that they were disposed to do that, and that a proposition was made to treat British Columbia generously.

Mr. FIELDING.

I do not want to pander to any particular section of the Dominion. British Columbia is a big, rich province. Her people are not a party of children, and I do not believe they need a Baby Act for their protection. They came into confederation of their own free will, and if they were asked to live up to their bargain they would have no right to complain. But when the whole condition was known, and the other provinces were disposed to treat them generously and liberally, the premier of British Columbia should have responded and accepted the consideration with which he was treated. He wanted a commission, and the matter was considered. The conference considered it, Mr. Whitney considered it. Again I say, the leader of the opposition has done his best to make the people of British Columbia believe that this was a quarrel between Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the province of British Columbia. It was not. My right hon. friend the Prime Minister took no part in that transaction that was not heartily supported by the Hon. J. P. Whitney and all the other Conservatives present at that conference. And that conference, not a Liberal conference, but made up in the manner I have described, having heard Mr. McBride's argument, having heard what he could say, passed this resolution:

That in the opinion of the conference it is inadvisable that a claim in the way of subsidies of any province be referred to arbitration.

Why should the claim of one province be referred to arbitration? Why should we give arbitration to British Columbia when the province of New Brunswick might think it could present even stronger claims.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. New Brunswick did have an arbitration, so did Nova Scotia.

Mr. FIELDING. Not as respects subsidies.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. In respect of claims.

Mr. FIELDING. I am talking of subsidies.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I am talking of the entire subject.

Mr. FIELDING. The hon. gentleman has no right to interpose other questions in connection with subsidies.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. May I ask what is the difference in principle?

Mr. FIELDING. This is the difference in principle. If the province of Nova Scotia had a claim, it was a claim for property, and was a proper subject for arbitration. A claim for property of any province in the Dominion may be claim for arbitration.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. It was not a claim for property it was a claim for money.