

man must see that if we are going to deal with this matter at all we are going to raise a question as to the validity of our previous acts, what we have done in the way of guarantees and similar matters in the past. We have asked for a specific grant of power to deal with provinces when we have exercised this power without question with respect to every other body. What will be the result? Someone is going to ask: Why has the parliament of Canada thus blown upon its own credit? Why have we thus raised a question which has never been raised before, which everyone has accepted, and which even a layman who has followed what I said in the early part of my address this evening, as to the foundation upon which this constitution of ours was granted, will realize was wholly within our competence and power? If it is to be done at all then, for the reasons given by the minister this afternoon, at least it should be made retroactive to cover every power heretofore granted. Who has thrown doubt upon it? Have the law officers suggested that there was any doubt about it? I confess that I have never heard any question about it in times past. I know that if we go through the statute books we shall find that these guarantees have been given with respect to a very large number of transactions, notably in connection with transportation, sometimes with respect to interest only and sometimes with respect to principal and interest.

Mr. DUNNING: Not with respect to provincial bonds.

Mr. BENNETT: Not with respect to provincial bonds, but they do not stand in any different position. We assumed obligations by statute, for instance, when we took over the harbour of Saint John, for the payment of the bonds of that harbour. We have taken over provincial guarantees in connection with railways, without any statutory power.

Mr. DUNNING: We are merely paying them; the provincial guarantees still exist.

Mr. BENNETT: But without any statutory provision with regard to them, thus releasing the provinces of their debts. That was so in regard to British Columbia, which unfortunately had not a guarantee in the same terms as some of the others. We are paying that; we are paying the guarantees of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Then, in connection with Manitoba, though I have not thought of looking the matter up, in regard to the railway transactions of that province, the old Northern Pacific and matters of that kind, somewhere Manitoba is involved in guarantees, and legislation was passed here

[Mr. Bennett.]

the exact terms of which I do not carry in my mind at the moment, because it was very much involved. But this I do say: Let us get down to fundamentals. Why should there be any provision such as this when the law clearly provides that which it is sought to obtain?

Mr. FINN. I do not want to interrupt the right hon. gentleman—

Mr. BENNETT: I assure the hon. gentleman that he does not.

Mr. FINN: I only want to know where the right hon. gentleman gets his authority for that statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Eleven o'clock.

On motion of Mr. Bennett the debate was adjourned.

At eleven o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.

Friday, May 15, 1936

The house met at three o'clock.

VACANCY

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the house that I have received a communication from two members notifying me that the following vacancy has occurred in the representation, viz.: of D'Arcy Britton Plunkett, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Victoria, B.C., by decease.

I accordingly issued my warrant to the chief electoral officer to make out a new writ of election for the said electoral district.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

ASCENSION DAY AND VICTORIA DAY ADJOURNMENTS

On the order for motions:

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have given notice of a motion for Monday with reference to adjournment of the house over Ascension day and the Monday following, Victoria day. It might be well for me to say a word at this moment as to the view of the government in the matter. We are anxious to suit the convenience and further the wishes of hon. members. The motion is to the effect that the house adjourn over Ascension day and also over the Monday following, Victoria day, but if it should appear after consultation between the whips that it is the wish of hon. members that the house should sit on either of those days, or on both, so far as the government is