

that any time we wish to amend our constitution or to obtain the power to have the constitution amended of our own right independently of Westminster altogether, all we have to do is to present an address from both houses of this parliament to the parliament at Westminster, and that address will be given effect to in legislation at Westminster.

Mr. BENNETT: But it is a statute at Westminster, and in New Zealand and South Africa and Australia such is not the case.

Mr. LAPOINTE: That was done by an act at Westminster.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: As the Minister of Justice has just stated, it is by an act at Westminster that the governments of Australia and New Zealand have the right to amend their constitution.

Mr. BENNETT: Quite so.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: And Westminster will be willing to concede the parliament of Canada the same right just as soon as we wish to have it conceded. The fact that within Canada itself there are those provinces or individuals in provinces who prefer to have retained at Westminster, as is the case at the present time, the right of amending our constitution upon addresses from this parliament, is only an evidence of the faith there is in Canada in the essential fairness and justice of the British parliament in dealing with matters of the kind. It means that some there are, who are of the minority in this country, who feel that minority rights in Canada will be better conserved if amendment to the constitution is made only by the British parliament and if the parliament of Great Britain acts only as a result of an address from both houses of this parliament. No greater tribute could be paid to the sense of British fair play and justice than is implied in that self-imposed limitation—a condition as to method—which controls the matter of the amendment of our constitution, but it is a self-imposed limitation; it is not something that is imposed from without, something imposed on Canada by Britain.

Mr. McGIBBON: What improved status has Canada to-day any more than was laid down in the imperial conference resolution of 1917?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend is going back a long way. I think there will be opportunities to discuss the whole question of status at another time, and I shall not go into the matter at the moment. Prior to 1926 there was no formal declaration as to the

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

position of this country in the matter of equality of status. That position was made very plain at the conference held in England in 1926.

Mr. McGIBBON: Surely the Prime Minister knows the resolution passed in 1917 on that very point.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am glad my hon. friend has brought this up, because I think he was among the ones who denounced the Minister of Justice and myself when we came back from the conference of 1926, and claimed that the conference had given a declaration of equality of status between the dominions and the mother country. My hon. friends opposite hardly gave us a hearing, so strongly did they denounce the assertion that we ever had obtained such a thing as equality of status. My hon. friend's leader at the moment is still disputing the fact that there is equality of status at this time.

Mr. McGIBBON: What I said was this, and I say it to-day: any improved status we have, be it great or little, we have got through the army—and it is so laid down in the imperial conference of 1927—and not through this government.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am rather surprised my hon. friend, in view of what he has just said, voted in support of an amendment moved by the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie), which was if I recollect aright to the effect that such a thing as equality of status had not been secured.

May I conclude by referring to just two other matters to which my hon. friend made reference? He made a passing reference, which he said was partly personal, to the economic conference. He said that last year I had not deigned to reply to his suggestion that an economic conference should be called. Now when in the speech from the throne it is made apparent that an economic conference is to be held, and that every effort was made by the present government to have that economic conference held not only soon but also in this country, my hon. friend does not even so much as thank me. He is critical no matter what is done. If one tries to please him, he won't be pleased.

Mr. MANION: The hon. member did not thank him for the suggestion.

Mr. CAHAN: Is the economic conference to be held in Canada?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am sorry to say it is not. We made an effort to have the conference held in this country last fall;