

*The Address—Mr. Drew*

matter of fact, they may only hinder it, unless there is, in fact, some early solution of these difficulties.

This problem is not confined to our own country. This is a problem faced by all countries with a federal system, because in every country those who had a taste of concentrated power always felt that taste lingering in their mouths, and the flavour in some way affected their thinking. It happened in the United States after the war of 1812-14. Students of the history of that country will recall that the very same idea of a centralized taxing power was offered there as an efficient solution of their difficulties, much the same as we have seen here. It has been tried over and over again in different countries. Woodrow Wilson gave this warning in one of his discussions of governmental problems. I quote his words:

The history of liberty is the history of limitation of governmental power, not the increase of it. When we resist concentration of power, we are resisting the powers of death, because the concentration of power is what always precedes the destruction of human liberty.

Then, just to bring the last expert witness forward, I should like to quote the words of that great democrat, and I use that word with both the capital and the small "d", Franklin Roosevelt. In discussing this tendency of centralizing power under similar devices developing in the United States, he used these words:

To bring about government by oligarchy, masquerading as democracy, it is fundamentally essential that practically all authority and control be centralized in one federal government . . . the individual sovereignty of our states must first be destroyed.

The strength of this country has been built upon the combined strength of all the governments. The great developments that have taken place in the nine provinces across Canada have very largely been the result of the wise and intimate guidance of the provincial governments in each of those provinces. Canada has good reason to be proud of the enormous expansion of its productive capacity during these past years, particularly during the years of war, to meet the crisis this country then faced. Let it never be suggested for one moment that the dominion government was responsible for the whole of that great development. Remember that in every province the roads which carried the heavy movements of food, munitions and production of all kinds, were roads put there by the provincial governments. The resources which were used were resources brought to their development and made available under the wise and sensible administration of these same provincial governments.

[Mr. Drew.]

The thing which gave our workmen as high a degree of skill as that shown by the workmen of any country in the world was the educational system in each of those provinces with which the dominion government has nothing to do at all. Going right across the field you will find the ground had been laid for this great expansion. Please do not let anyone following me suggest that I am for a moment seeking to leave the impression that the vast industrial development was not in a great many cases carried out under the direction of the dominion government. The military production and the adoption of plans were also under the direction of the dominion government, but the ground work was there. The work which was done when these broad plans were laid was, very largely, the work of these provincial governments, which in peace and war, since confederation, have been close to the people. For that very reason the provincial governments were able to bring to the highest point of efficiency the efforts of the people from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Certain changes have taken place since the conference adjourned on May 3, 1946, at the instance of the dominion government. The present Prime Minister of Canada asserted the proposition that this parliament has the power, by majority decision, to change our constitution. His own words were:

The central power does not need to go back to the provinces in order to say what Canada shall be in the future.

At first glance that seems rather plausible. You have seen suggestions about the provinces assuming great measures of power and feeling they had to be consulted about this and that. The provinces came together to form a nation on the clear understanding there was a constitution which protected their rights and preserved their traditions and their laws. It is not for this parliament to change that constitution without consulting those provinces. Never mind whether anyone might think a sufficiently cogent argument could be put forward in any court to uphold that proposition. There is more than a legal decision involved in this; there is the unity of Canada. There will be a very real threat to the unity of this country if there is any doubt about the fact our constitution is not something which does, in fact, preserve those rights which were regarded as so important in 1867.

No country could possibly carry forward as a great nation without an understandable and workable constitution. Right now neither the dominion nor the provincial governments know where the border line is between many of their responsibilities. We see evidence of that in much of the legislation that is under consideration here. Some of the legislation