

The Budget—Mr. Garson

no conceivable prejudice whatsoever concerning these Canadian matters. What did he say of them in writing? He said this:

The premiers' conference resumed on April 29, 1946, but owing to the uncompromising attitude of the premier of Ontario, Hon. G. A. Drew, and the impossible attitude of the premier of Quebec, Hon. M. L. Duplessis, who did no more than reiterate time and again that the British North America Act, 1867, was sacrosanct, the conference broke up.

Mr. Drew: He must have obtained his information from the minister.

Mr. Fleming: That statement read by the minister is completely untrue on the face of it. It did not break up. It adjourned *sine die*.

Mr. Rowe: That shows that he did not know any more about it than the minister.

Mr. Garson: My hon. friends do not like these statements.

Mr. Fleming: Can the minister not find a supporting Canadian statement?

Mr. Garson: But my hon. friends cannot challenge them. They endeavour to laugh them off, but these are statements made by the best experts in these fields, who have no prejudice or bias.

Mr. Fleming: Can the minister not find any supporting Canadian statement?

Mr. Drew: May I ask this question—

Mr. Pickersgill: Are you in favour of Canadian babies?

Mr. Fleming: I think the minister has just made another babyish remark.

Mr. Drew: For my own information, may I ask the minister, first, what is the date of his own speech from which he is reading, and second, whether the person whom he is quoting got all this reliable information from the minister's department?

Mr. Sinclair: That is a weak defence.

Mr. Garson: I thought my hon. friend's memory was better than he has just demonstrated. My own department at that time was in the government of the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Drew: That is what I mean.

Mr. Garson: Oh, no.

Mr. Drew: That is exactly what I mean; because the minister was making some extremely inaccurate speeches then.

Mr. Garson: Oh, no. This is an expression of opinion by an expert sent here by the Australian government.

Mr. Drew: This is the man from Australia, is it?

[Mr. Garson.]

Mr. Rowe: The man from Missouri.

Mr. Garson: My hon. friend refers to having spoken to him. He spoke to me.

Mr. Drew: Who is the man from Australia?

Mr. Garson: The man from Australia is Mr. K. J. Binns. He said, but not in writing, that the generosity of the federal government's offer was only exceeded by the stupidity of those who turned it down.

There is another authority in this field, the mere mention of whose name will at once identify him as a competent expert. I refer to Professor J. A. Maxwell of Clark University in the United States, who is an outstanding authority on dominion-provincial relations. At page 15 of his paper entitled "Recent Developments in Dominion-Provincial Fiscal Relations in Canada", he says this:

On April 29, 1946, the conference reassembled at Ottawa to consider revised proposals. After reviewing the two major concessions which the dominion government had made up to that time, it was then apparent that the key to agreement was in the hands of Ontario and Quebec. Except for minor qualifications, the seven other provinces would accept the revised proposals. The attitude of Quebec was enigmatic although the generalizations of Premier Duplessis were such as to connote the impossibility of agreement . . . Premier Drew was more specific in his demands for Ontario . . . A rough reckoning indicated that acceptance of the Ontario proposals would add at least \$134 million a year, possibly \$234 million, beyond what the federal government had set as its maximum concession.

And listen to this:

On this rock the conference foundered on May 3. So large a difference, after negotiations extending over nine months, seemed impossible to bridge.

That, Mr. Speaker, is my answer to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Drew: It is a poor one.

Mr. Fleming: Those two men were certainly taken in when they came here.

Mr. Rowe: Are there any more cabinet ministers to speak today?

Mr. Sinclair: Independent authority; that is what you want.

Mr. Fleming: What about some Canadian opinion?

Mr. H. R. Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, our nation is in the midst of an extremely severe economic recession. Interesting as it may be to the members of this house, I suggest that this threshing of old straw this afternoon is making little contribution toward solving the main important problems that face our Canadian nation. I am sure the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the Minister of Justice, and the Leader of the Opposition were all in fine debating form