

carefully his statements in the proceedings of the conference; and while he took the stand, when the conference had practically broken up, that he would like to see it reconvened at some future date, he certainly did not make any contribution to keep the conference on an even keel or try to adjust the differences which existed between those who sponsored the meeting and those who, in my opinion, were trying to wreck it. His stand left much to be desired. As a member from Nova Scotia I am quite free to criticize him here or elsewhere, and to a greater extent than are some others.

The plea made by some of the provinces to the effect that provincial governments will be merely a fifth wheel on the coach, that they will lose their constitution and forfeit their power and authority, arouses the reflection that if their performances in the past seventy-five years are the criterion for justifying their existence, it is pretty nearly time that some of them were uprooted. At any rate, in the province from which I come, and in New Brunswick as well, for the past fifty years we have been nothing but overseers of the poor. Everything we had when we went into confederation was siphoned up without any protest from those who had jurisdiction to manage the affairs of the country. Social legislation has been completely lacking. Yet they want to hold on to their positions. It means more prestige for them. To my mind, any premier who takes that stand is thinking of himself and not of the country, and I am convinced that if we cling to these old ideas, and the attitude which wrecked the dominion-provincial conference persists, we are betraying the people who fought this war for a new deal, a new world, and a new order of society. I am reasonably sure that had these agreements gone through and an understanding been arrived at in the conference, the programme mapped out by the reconstruction committee in regard to public works across Canada could have been proceeded with and we in the maritimes would not have the unemployment problem which we have at the present time. That applies also to the health programme and to many other social measures. The wrecking of that conference is the most serious thing that has happened in this country since confederation.

I realize that perhaps the Minister of Finance has not all his own way in the cabinet. His organization is a large and complicated one that cannot be presided over and understood in all its ramifications by any one man, and he has taken a creditable stand and one for which we give him all the praise in the world, in that he is prepared to make agreements with any province that wishes to make them. But

he did not follow that through and decide to go forward in that province, if it so desired, with the social measures that were outlined in the dominion-provincial conference. I think that around him and behind him are too many Tories, and I suggest that he should try to weed them out because, unless that question of dominion-provincial jurisdiction in the field of taxation is decided, a serious road lies ahead of the Dominion of Canada.

Another point in the budget upon which I wish to comment briefly is the proposal to tax cooperatives. An agitation was carried on across the country for several months by an organization known as the income tax payers' association.

An hon. MEMBER: Who are they?

Mr. GILLIS: That is just what I should like to know, who they are.

An hon. MEMBER: That should not be too hard to find out.

Mr. GILLIS: If the hon. member has information he would be doing a public service by giving it to the house.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): It was given before a senate committee, every word of it.

Mr. GILLIS: I have here an editorial from which I wish to quote a few sentences for the benefit of my hon. friends to my right, and if some of them follow me in this debate I want them to comment on this editorial and give the information asked for in it:

Just about a year ago the secretary of the income tax payers' association was questioned by the McDougall commission sitting in Winnipeg. The association claimed a membership of 6,300. The secretary said that it depended on membership fees of \$1 per member to finance its activities. At that rate and with that membership its revenue could be computed at a little over \$6,000 a year—if the members all paid their dues.

Which does not happen all the time.

Just at present the income tax payers' association is spending money for radio broadcasts at the rate of \$10,000 a week, estimated. The spot campaign is already in its third week and, we gather, will continue into the fourth week. Briefly, this means that the income tax payers' association is spending \$40,000 (more or less) to misinform the public regarding the cooperatives.

These are the questions I should like hon. members to my right to answer, if they are prepared to defend the income tax payers' association:

Where is the association getting the big money to carry on its campaign? That is a question which we believe the average Canadian citizen wants to see answered. Is it subscribed by cartels and like-minded big interests and deducted from profits and charged to advertising or some other account in order to escape the income tax?