

The Budget—Mr. Balcer

according to the principles of confederation, without, however, repeating the resolution adopted at the convention.

But I am pleased, in my capacity as senior member of my party for Quebec, to repeat once more that that resolution was adopted unanimously at our party's convention, and that our party and our leader demand that the federal government allow that deduction.

I insist upon the fact, though, that this deductibility should only be a temporary measure, and that a stop must be put to federal centralization. A new conference should be called so that the provinces may recover their autonomy within the limits of their rights and obligations.

The whole basis of taxation must be revised for, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier once said: "Every successful attempt made by the parliament at Ottawa to deprive a province of a right it enjoys, however immaterial that power might be, is a step further in the direction of legislative union."

And more recently, the Right Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King spoke along the same lines.

We know that the Right Hon. Mr. Mackenzie King, during the earlier part of his political career and when he was in the opposition, always wanted and always tried to be looked upon as the emulator of the great Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

On one of those occasions when Mr. King took his inspiration from the policies of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, he stated, on April 3, 1930, here in this house:

(Text):

When on a previous occasion we were discussing this matter of grants from one treasury to another, I said I thought it was an unsound principle; in fact, I think I used the expression that it was a vicious principle to have one body raise the taxes and another body spend the people's moneys thus raised. Is there any hon. member who will disagree with me in that statement? There is none. That is the extent of the statement I made. I was referring to a principle of financing, speaking simply in relation to what is sound and what is unsound in financing. Anyone interested in financing, whether of a municipality, a province, a dominion, an empire, or a league of nations, will, I think, admit it is unwise, an unsound, a wrong principle for one body to have to do with raising the taxes and another to be concerned with the spending of the money so raised, that other body not having to account to the representatives of those who have paid the taxes.

(Translation):

We can readily see the tremendous difference between the centralizing policy of the federal Liberal members of today and the attitude of their heroes of the past.

If the other provinces are interested, rather from a financial point of view, in resisting

[Mr. Balcer.]

any attempt on the part of the federal government to seize their rights, it is both human and quite understandable that Ottawa's alluring offer could have an effect on the poorer provinces, which must, indeed, get special assistance.

I believe, however, that the campaign launched by the Liberals against the prime minister of Quebec, because he refuses to play their game, is very damaging. They are trying to make out the provincial government of Quebec as a "troublesome" government, with which it is impossible to get along, and they even go so far as to accuse it of separatism and of wanting to consider the rest of the country as a foreign state.

But if, from 1945 to this day, the province of Quebec has had to refuse this deal, which would have brought it more money, the reason for this rejection may be found in its history. Indeed, whether we accept it or not, the fact remains that the province of Quebec is different from the other provinces. Its population is French-speaking and Roman Catholic in a country where the majority is Protestant and Anglo-Saxon.

Up to now, in Canada, even with this duality of language and religion, we always did get along very well together. There have been some clashes, some temporary difficulties but everyone will agree, I think, that Quebec has always tried to deal fairly with the Protestant minority and to grant it freedom and its most sincere co-operation.

Under all our provincial governments, our Protestant school system has always enjoyed the greatest freedom, a fact which can be quoted as an example to all the countries of the world.

Mr. Gauthier (Portneuf): Hear! Hear!

Mr. Balcer: What the government of the province of Quebec is asking today is that the federal government, which represents the country as a whole, should treat Quebec with this same fair play in the matter of provincial taxation.

And I do not call fair play the refusal by the federal government to allow the deductibility of the provincial tax with the sole purpose of forcing Quebec to sign an agreement which the population of the province does not want its government to conclude.

Within the last twelve days, I have realized, by reading the newspapers and discussing this question with the citizens of my riding, that the immense majority feel that the federal government is dealing unfairly with them by refusing to allow the deductibility of that tax.

I am therefore convinced that I would not honourably represent the electors of my constituency if I did not avail myself of every