

Work, health and order are the main components required to give our country a powerful and prosperous impetus; we need citizens who wish Canada to become their sole country and who, merging with our masses, will help to build a great and united country, free within as it is without, consisting of different races which, without repudiating their native heritage, will contribute their own genius and fine traditions to the development of the Canadian nation.

I shall discuss briefly the relations between the dominion and the provinces. The Minister of Finance referred to the fiscal proposals made by the government to the provinces. The latter are asked to waive in favour of the federal authorities their right to tax personal and corporation income and to levy succession duties.

Such proposals, Mr. Chairman, would undoubtedly tend to deprive the provinces of their main source of revenue and to make them dependent on the central government. In other words, they are aimed at holding the provinces in bondage. In effect, they would mean interference with the exercise of the legislative powers which have been reserved exclusively to the provinces in social and educational matters.

The respective powers of the dominion and the legislatures in the fields of legislation and taxation have been set forth in the act of 1867. For a long time the constitution was respected, but during the past ten years repeated assaults have been launched by centralists with a view to concentrating in Ottawa fiscal and legislation and administration.

That campaign has become more aggressive recently; it has even become a sort of bargaining which brings to light the true designs of its sponsors. I believe in provincial autonomy and in the part which French Canadians are called upon to play within confederation. Therefore, I feel that it would be a sheer betrayal to accept such proposals which not only violate the provisions of the pact of 1867, but encroach upon our most sacred rights. If there could have been any doubt in regard to the intentions of some advocates of centralization, the speech delivered by the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) while he was Minister of National Health, has dispelled them. According to *L'Action Catholique* of December 16, he made the following remarks:

Through its proposals, the dominion government is trying to place the provinces in such a position that they might relinquish their constitutional responsibilities. The dominion government is striving to avoid double taxation and to place the whole of Canada on an equal foot-

ing, which would enable all sections to develop their resources and to relinquish their responsibilities in matters of education and welfare.

Such was the statement made by the Minister of National Defence, while he was Minister of National Health.

We seek not to shirk our responsibilities, nor do we need the advice of Ottawa centralists on the Quebec educational system. We merely ask to be allowed to exercise our powers in the matter.

Let us briefly review the federal government's real or attempted encroachments on provincial jurisdiction. Advantage was taken of prewar unemployment to intrude upon social legislation, through unemployment insurance. In January 1941, the government called upon the provinces to accept the tax proposals embodied in the report of the Rowell-Sirois commission. These proposals which called for the permanent waiver of the three taxes under discussion, were turned down. Note that the Prime Minister took care to state that the report did not aim at centralizing powers in Ottawa. Thus are provinces despoiled of their rights on the claim that those rights are being respected.

In 1942, Ottawa secured from the provinces the power to enter certain tax fields until then reserved to provinces, but for the duration of war only.

Now that the war is over, the federal government wants to be allowed to exercise that power for another five years.

In 1917, income tax was inaugurated with the understanding that it would disappear at the end of the war. It has remained. It is thus that centralization in the hands of the federal government is gradually realized: the provinces are deprived, bit by bit, of their powers and the means of exercising them.

Under the pretext of temporary arrangements, precedents are created leading to permanent conditions.

The province of Quebec has more reasons than the other provinces for fearing such political centralization. Besides realizing that Ottawa will raise the greater part of its revenues from within our frontiers to return only a fraction of them to us, we know that it will be in a position to decide what use we shall make of that fraction it will return to us.

Here is what Mr. Angus Macdonald, premier of Nova Scotia, said on March 7 last:

Could anyone deny that, if the greater part of the revenue accruing to the provinces has to be paid by the dominion, the time may come,—indeed, is it not probable that the time will surely come,—when the dominion will insist on deciding what use the provinces will put them to? The advent of that day will mark the end of provincial autonomy.