

Industrial Relations

Mr. Mitchell: That is, as it is now. What my hon. friend is preaching there, probably unconsciously—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mitchell: I say that analytically, not in a critical sense. The hon. member is preaching compulsory arbitration. He knows as well as I do that the labour movement of North America, even the 300,000 people of whom he has spoken, is opposed to compulsory arbitration. I am talking trade union language now. Let the lawyers, with all their faults from some people's point of view, speak about the law. My hon. friend knows that this bill has been on the statute books since 1948. I think it has worked reasonably well.

Mr. Gillis: It has not worked at all.

Mr. Mitchell: My hon. friend says that it has not worked at all. Look at the picture to the south of us; look at the picture in other countries such as Australia, Great Britain, if you like, or New Zealand, that second heaven of my hon. friend. I believe the good sense used is responsible for our situation. I do not take credit for it, nor should this parliament altogether. The credit should go to the partners in industry. This piece of legislation was passed in 1948 after consultation with every province in Canada, after consultation with every trade union centre in Canada, and after consultation with representatives of industry and commerce.

By and large, I think we did not do a bad job. My friend was a member of the labour relations committee. He did not get everything his way, nor did I get everything my way. I think he will agree with me that is the genius of British institutions. In this House of Commons the spirit of compromise is the guiding formula on any question that comes before it.

Mr. Speaker: The hour for private and public bills having expired, the house will resume consideration of the business before it at six o'clock.

THE BUDGET**ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE**

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Hon. Douglas Abbott (Minister of Finance) that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair for the house to go into committee of ways and means, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Rowe, and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Thatcher.

Mr. T. L. Church (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, I believe about fifteen minutes of my time remains. At six o'clock, I was speaking on [Mr. Gillis.]

the amendment which has been moved by the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe), with reference to the immediate calling of an interprovincial conference as well as a meeting of the commonwealth countries and crown colonies to discuss the sterling situation which is causing so much trouble between the dollar countries and the sterling countries. The amendment speaks for itself.

As you know, a dominion-provincial conference could be called immediately. Most of the provinces have recently elected new prime ministers, although some of them are holding elections almost immediately. In my opinion, there is no reason why a dominion-provincial conference should not meet at once. I am surprised that the Prime Minister has not already called such a meeting. As my hon. leader very wisely said, there is no reason why such a conference should not be called immediately. You are going to make a scrap of paper out of the whole British North America Act. You have the cart before the horse. The conference should be held now or never, and now and forever or not at all.

I was referring to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe). In it he spoke about calling a commonwealth conference immediately for the purpose of discussing with our best customer, Britain and the dominions and colonies—what? The sterling situation. Are we to toss our best customer clean overboard? She has been our best customer all these years. Hon. members will recall that preferential trade was started by the Liberals themselves. You are not supporting the Liberalism of the past.

As I say, this house should not be a rubber stamp. A great many of the younger members come up from the municipalities. We hope there will no longer be yes-men and noddies in this house. Dear knows we have had them long enough. While I am a party man, and support Conservative principles, I am not a bigoted party man—far from it. I think I have shown that ever since I first entered the house. An immediate conference should be called with the dominions and the crown colonies. All these countries should get together and map out a program so that we shall not lose our best customer. I do hope that something will be done about it.

In this debate reference has been made to many matters. During the debate on human rights and also on March 24, 1938—hon. members will recall that date—before the second war started, I said almost the same thing. I do not agree with the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) who said there is no great danger of a war for five years. He corrected that the other day. When you consider