

resolution should be carried. If that resolution were carried it would mean we would not proceed with the reductions in taxation proposed by the Minister of Finance; and I do not think there is any question that the governor general would consider Mr. Bracken unable to carry on the administration, so that we would have an election.

What is the basis of this amendment? I am going to endeavour to show the house that there seems to be a lack of conviction on the part of the official opposition with respect to dominion-provincial policy, if we go back and look at the policies supported by the leaders in this particular field at a time when they were perhaps not as prejudiced as they might be now, having political motives for presenting an amendment of this kind. First of all, I want to deal with the record of the leader of the official opposition (Mr. Bracken), which I may know perhaps better than most of those now sitting behind him because I came from the province of Manitoba and at one time endeavoured to assist the hon. gentleman in attaining his political desires. Based on fifteen or twenty years of experience with him, I am probably in a position to know as much about his attitude toward dominion-provincial affairs as almost anyone sitting behind him in this parliament. I should like, then, to give just a few extracts to show the attitude taken by the hon. gentleman in 1941, when a somewhat similar situation existed to that which has developed in the last year or so. In 1941, with the war in progress, and so on, there was a desire to have some unification of the taxation proposals in certain fields. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there were great difficulties with certain provinces. I will give the leader of the opposition his due and say that at that conference he represented a province which was prepared to go along with the proposals advanced by the administration which was in charge of the war effort; but there were others who did not see it in that light, and the situation existing today is parallel to the situation in 1941. After that abortive conference, the present leader of the opposition went back to Winnipeg and as premier of the province of Manitoba went on the radio and had this to say—

Mr. COTE (Matapedia-Matane): As the Tory leader?

Mr. BENIDICKSON: No; at that time he was a Liberal Progressive. He said:

Two weeks ago tomorrow in the city of Ottawa the dominion-provincial conference which was called to consider the Sirois report, was wrecked.

He then went on to deal with the investigation which had been made by that commission,

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the reasons for calling the conference, and so on, and went on to say that there could be no just settlement of the problem without strengthening the powers of the dominion and that to do so, far from weakening, would actually buttress provincial autonomy. Then I have some further extracts. He said if they failed even to make agreements with those provinces that were willing, that the dominion in those circumstances—no; there were no qualifications; he said, "under any circumstances".

Failing the consent of all the provinces, should the dominion enter into agreements with such of them as were ready to make them, or should the dissenting provinces be conceded the right of veto?

What did the present leader of the opposition have to say in that respect? He said this:

Can we suppose that by erecting a Chinese wall around every province in Canada, by Balkanizing this country from coast to coast, that we would be adding to Canadian wealth or Canadian prestige or Canadian unity or making Canada a greater country than it has been in the past?

And he said:

The provincial governments are not the only governments in Canada which have a responsibility. . . . Indeed their responsibilities in this connection are of a minor character as compared with that of the dominion government.

Somebody may say that he had in mind simply the emergency of war. In that very radio speech, however, he quoted something said by the Prime Minister of this country (Mr. Mackenzie King); and when I give that quotation I think hon. members will see that he was going far beyond the necessities of the war. Again when I give this quotation hon. gentlemen will appreciate the far-sightedness of the Prime Minister, because this is what he said, as quoted by the present leader of the opposition:

The war inevitably will be followed by a period of reconstruction which will impose new obligations and burdens upon all Canadian governments. . . . All I am sure will agree that the sooner we are able to make the necessary adjustments, the better equipped we will be to finance the war and to cope with post-war problems.

That is a quotation from Mr. King that Mr. Bracken gave in Winnipeg following that conference. Then he had this to say:

Is the dominion government to be excused from the discharge of that responsibility by the fact that the premiers of three provinces walk out of a conference? . . . If we are to face the post-war period with a governmental system that has proven itself incapable of dealing with the depression years, the dominion government—not certain provincial governments—must bear the responsibility.