

REPORT

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

June 19, 1935.

SECOND REPORT

The Special Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to study and report on the best method by which the British North America Act may be amended so that while safeguarding the existing rights of racial and religious minorities and legitimate provincial claims to autonomy, the Dominion Government may be given adequate power to deal effectively with urgent economic problems which are essentially national in scope, begs leave to present the following as its second and final report.

Your Committee has held ten sessions and has heard the opinions of a number of witnesses.

Under the instructions of the Committee, telegrams were sent to the respective Attorneys General of the nine provinces in the following terms:—

“The Special Committee of the House of Commons on the British North America Act desires to have the views of your Government with respect to methods of securing amendments to said Act. The Resolution referred to the Committee follows. ‘Resolved, that in the opinion of this House a Special Committee should be set up to study and report on the best method by which the British North America Act may be amended so that while safeguarding the existing rights of racial and religious minorities and legitimate provincial claims to autonomy, the Dominion Government may be given adequate power to deal effectively with urgent economic problems which are essentially national in scope.’ While the Committee does not object to the personal attendance of a representative of your Government it was thought less costly to ask for a written submission. Copies of proceedings have been sent you, please intimate when we may expect to receive your submission.”

The following answers were received:—

Prince Edward Island.—“Your wire March twenty-seventh Government of Prince Edward Island is of opinion that Dominion Government should formulate its plan and policy for the purposes intended and that this should be submitted to the Provincial Governments and afterwards discussed at a conference of representatives of the Provinces and the Dominion. Signed by H. F. MacPhee, Attorney-General.”

New Brunswick.—“Will wire views as soon as available. Delay unavoidable. Signed by W. H. Harrison, Attorney-General.” (New Brunswick views not yet received.)

Nova Scotia.—“Our legislature now in session and most difficult to attend to matter of this kind now in way you suggest. We feel matter should be approached by conference between representatives of Provinces and Dominion, where each would have the views of the other and ample time to discuss the matter. Signed by J. H. MacQuarrie, Attorney-General.”

Quebec.—“Your telegram received. Surely the committee cannot expect that the views of the province of Quebec will be discussed by a change of telegrams or letters. In a matter of such importance I suggest that a conference of the Dominion and the provinces should be held. Signed by L. A. Taschereau, Attorney-General.”