

sit in with them in drawing up the peace terms in connection with Germany. If we expect the Big Four to let us sit in with them in international matters, why should we not sit in again with the provinces to settle a domestic matter?

I said I hoped the Prime Minister would not make this an election issue. Personally I would not mind if he did; but in all courtesy I want to say to him that he will not find himself on the side of this proposal and the others against it. For ten years I have lived with this thing. Ten years ago I set out to try to get a square deal for the provinces in confederation. Five or six years ago I formed a coalition government in the province of Manitoba, and one of the four main issues upon which we were all united was that we would try to get a square deal for the provinces. When I accepted the leadership of this party that was one of the few things I required of it—that we undertake to try to get a square deal for the smaller provinces in confederation.

My attitude in this matter will not be unacceptable to the so-called "have-not" provinces of Canada. I do not believe it would be unacceptable to the province of Ontario. I rather gather that it is quite as acceptable as far as the province of Quebec is concerned as the government's policy, if not more so. What is it? Let us determine to solve this problem. Let us give the provinces the minor fields of taxation; let us not ask them to take any less than they have been offered. Let us reexamine the position with respect to succession duties. Let us set out to solve this problem by maintaining the maximum degree of provincial autonomy with the minimum of centralization in Canada. Here you come to a question of principle between fiscal need and centralization. These provinces can only be helped by the dominion taking increased taxes and giving more money to the provinces. To a degree that is centralization, but let us do that to the least extent necessary. Beyond that let us try to see that the provinces are kept strong in confederation, because that will give us the strongest Canada.

In the speech from the throne the government refers to the question of social security. An analysis of the various speeches from the throne during recent years—and I have gone back only four years—demonstrates that they are high in literary content but low in actual performance. In the speech from the throne this year, for example, we find this paragraph:

Once suitable financial relationships have been arrived at with the provinces—

That is what we have been talking about, and that has been interpreted to mean that all the provinces must be in agreement.

—my ministers have undertaken to seek, in a general conference or otherwise, to work out satisfactory arrangements with the provinces in regard to public investment and social security measures.

"My ministers have undertaken to seek". What consolation that will bring to those who are pensioners and those now in need of social assistance! After almost twenty years of power the Liberal ministers have graciously "undertaken to seek". Is this "the beacon light shining on the hills" for which the hon. member for Quebec South (Mr. Power) pleads? Or is the Prime Minister obeying the scriptural injunction to "seek and ye shall find"? Perhaps the Prime Minister hopes to rediscover the famous chart and compass so long buried under the shifting sands of expediency. Back in the days of that famous chart and compass the Prime Minister did not "undertake to seek." He was then determined to press on. Here is what he had to say in the speech from the throne delivered on January 28, 1943. I have only gone back four years, but I suppose it would be the same if I had gone back further:

My ministers believe that a comprehensive national scheme of social insurance should be worked out at once which will constitute a charter of social security for the whole of Canada.

Note that this was to be worked out at once. Four years and two days later all the Prime Minister promises is to undertake to seek. The right hon. gentleman returned to the subject in the speech from the throne on January 27, 1944, where I find this:

In the opinion of my ministers plans for the establishment of a national minimum of social security and human welfare should be advanced as rapidly as possible.

The Prime Minister weakened in his determination between 1943 and 1944. In 1943 it was to be worked out at once; in 1944 it was to be worked out as rapidly as possible. Then in the speech from the throne on September 6, 1945, this statement was made:

Plans for the establishment of a national minimum of social security and human welfare are being advanced as rapidly as possible.

Now, in this year of grace, 1947, the government has got around to the position where it undertakes to seek. It is evident that this government has no faith in any plan to advance social security and human welfare in the near future, but on the contrary is shifting from one expedient to another, hoping