

already there is one on the order paper which offers just as great latitude to discuss all these points.

I would say that what is contained in this amendment today is merely the substance of the amendment made on the motion which is already on the order paper. As a matter of fact paragraph (f) could have read:

has failed to extend an invitation to the premiers of the provinces to a conference which would resume discussion of those matters being considered by the constitutional conference which adjourned on the 28th September, 1950, and such other matters as now require joint consideration by all the governments of Canada—

And so on, to the very end. That would include exactly what is in the amendment offered today. And if the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Macdonnell) the other day in moving his amendment failed to include that part which is contained in the amendment today, then I think that he ought to resort to other methods to bring it about, but it should not be done by way of an amendment to the motion to go into supply today, particularly when the discussion is to be resumed on the amendment to the motion to go into ways and means.

Mr. Drew: Mr. Speaker, I wish to deal with only one point you raised. I take no exception to what Your Honour has said, other than that I would not wish to leave it unchallenged on the record that there was any suspicion in my own mind that the amendment I have now offered is covered by an amendment already on the order paper. I do not propose to debate the point, but I did wish to make that clear. Your Honour can make your ruling, and I do not wish to raise any unnecessary issue on a point of procedure of this nature. But I do wish to point out that my only thought in raising the point today is to seek an indication in the house in regard to a positive expression of a desire for a conference. I have asked the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) for a statement. We are waiting for a statement from the Prime Minister, and I think we should have a statement from him as to whether he will or will not call a conference.

Mr. Speaker: At this moment I think my position must be that I shall rule the amendment out of order. However, I should like to have the sense of the house on that ruling. If the hon. member is not going to appeal the ruling I would ask the house to make its opinion known, because it is a very important matter.

We have before us a motion to go into committee of ways and means, and the debate on that motion is known generally as the budget debate. To that motion we have had

Suggested Dominion-Provincial Conference an amendment; and in that amendment is included much of what is now contained in this new amendment offered by the Leader of the Opposition to the motion to go into committee of supply.

As the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell) has said, the debate on the motion to go into committee of supply covers a very wide field. There is not a single word in the amendment, however, which could not be covered in the debate for which provision is now made on the order paper. I have quoted citation 246, which states that we should not anticipate discussion of a motion of which notice has been given, or which is already on the order paper for future discussion.

I think for the purpose of protecting the observance of the rules I must hold that, by virtue of the citations I have quoted, the amendment now offered is not in order; and I would ask the house to express its views in the matter. In order to bring it to a head I shall say that the amendment now offered is not in order.

Mr. Drew: Since I have indicated that I do not propose to force a vote on the matter, I hope Your Honour will permit me to point out the tremendous difference between a statement of regret that a result has not been achieved, and a positive proposal that something should be done with which this house certainly, in my opinion, has a right to deal.

Let me give an illustration. Surely under the broad field and scope of the budget we deal with all aspects of national defence and subjects of that nature. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that there were a necessity to have some international conference of some kind—and the government shows a great inclination to attend conferences not held in this country—then surely there would be an opportunity to present a motion indicating the view of the house that such a conference should be held.

In the present instance I am simply presenting to the house a positive request that there be called a conference which has been asked for by the provincial governments. And no reason has been given why it should not be called. The calling of that conference is not, in itself, related to the budget. It could bring under discussion subjects entirely independent of the budget. I say that under the circumstances we should be permitted to vote on this, so that there might be an indication of the views held in the house on the subject. If on the other hand Your Honour follows what is an unusual course, that of preventing a motion of this kind, then most