

revision to many people throughout this dominion, and from beginning to end it was a tissue of misrepresentations and false statements that had to be corrected in order that it might have a semblance of truth attached to it. That is the position with respect to it, and I know whereof I speak.

Mr. MARTIN: That is not true.

Mr. BENNETT: Let there be no misunderstanding with respect to it.

Mr. DUNNING: What was the book?

Mr. BENNETT: I think it had to do with the foreign policy of the right hon. the Prime Minister—it was a tissue of misrepresentation, of inaccurate statements, untrue statements—I use the word deliberately, and any one who wants to see the proof can verify what I have said.

Mr. MARTIN: I have seen it.

Mr. BENNETT: And when it is corrected I have no doubt it will be put on a proper basis, because corrections have been made in some instances by those who are in a position to make them. What is more, copies were sent to many people in this country—

Mr. MARTIN: I am one of them.

Mr. BENNETT: That indicates a lack of prescience on the part of the author, because he knew there would be no doubt of what the hon. member would do as to agreeing with anything he might say.

In its very nature, this commission must be harmful rather than helpful in dealing with this problem. Look what you have done already. You have heard the claims of Manitoba, of Saskatchewan, of Alberta, of British Columbia; you are about to hear the claims of the eastern provinces; and now you have the two central provinces, through their premiers, already taking a definite position in the matter. This is what we have, instead of a meeting together as our fathers did at Quebec when they were forming this constitution—or meeting together as they did in the United States to frame the American constitution. Would there have been an American constitution had it been made a matter for a commission? No; the people of the American colonies met together; and those who have read the record that Madison kept of those proceedings realize how constitutions are framed. They realize that accommodation is indispensable, that accommodation can be arrived at only when men have an opportunity at once to controvert an opinion or to assail a position that is taken by an adversary. I take one view, you take another; I meet you at

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once with my argument and you meet me forthwith with yours in reply; and along a middle course we arrive at an accommodation. That is the manner in which our constitution was framed; that is the way in which it was done at Quebec. Those who have followed the debates of confederation and know the inner history of the subject as recorded by Macdonald in some of his correspondence will realize how difficult it was, in the very nature of things, to arrive at a conclusion.

Now let us look at the western position. The western position relied, more perhaps than upon anything else, upon a brief prepared by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Rogers), at a time when he did not occupy that position—a brief prepared on behalf of the province of Nova Scotia, and entitled, A Submission on Dominion-Provincial Relations and the Fiscal Disabilities of Nova Scotia Within the Canadian Federation. I hold the document in my hand, and I make this statement, that in respect of the presentation on behalf of the western provinces reliance has been placed upon this very document, showing how unkind, unjust and unfair we, as a dominion, have been to these provinces, because figures were given by the minister to show the extent to which the tariff, in his opinion, had operated to the detriment of these communities.

Let us go a step further. Setting out the basis upon which he proceeded, he took the tariff as it stood in 1930, taking it after it had been revised, and despite the fact that those who were concerned about it had said they would not increase their prices. Nor had they done so, except with respect to raw materials; and, as is well known, it was but a temporary tariff to meet an emergent situation. The Minister of Labour, with great care, sets out the whole historic side of confederation; then proceeds to show, in his own inimitable manner, the extent to which, as he says, the situation which he describes is attributable to the tariff. He takes, for the purpose of arriving at his conclusions, the prices of the goods plus duty, not what was actually paid, but what would be paid; and he computes therefrom, in a cumulative way, the losses sustained by these provinces by reason of the tariff. The figures are set out in great tables, and these tables have now been made the basis of the claims set up on behalf of the western provinces.

Let me ask this question: Is it consistent with our idea of democratic government that a Minister of Labour should remain in a government that has been practising the same sort of tariff policies with respect to these provinces as did the government of which he