

told that this afternoon. There were glorious speeches of good will, but what has been accomplished? The British North America Act has not yet been amended; it is going to be, but the method has not been settled. There are differences of opinion with respect to that. What has been accomplished by this government? The loan council, is that in being? Perhaps before the debate ends the Minister of Finance will tell us the position of this young child. The hon. member for Parry Sound referred to the quintuplets. Perhaps he will be able to refer to the octuplets or something like that, because there were eight, not five, in this particular gathering, or nine if you include the federal government. But what has been accomplished? Look at it. Well, you know, it is an illustration of what can be done by just making and printing speeches.

Mr. LAPOINTE: We are having that just now.

Mr. BENNETT: And judging by the very little impression it seems to make upon the hon. gentleman, I should judge that he would rank it on a par with this report of his conference. At any rate, I fail to find in this report any concrete proposals; I fail to find any resolutions agreed upon. I remember a conference at which we agreed that we would have a uniform companies act. Everybody agreed to it, but we did not get it. We did not print anything about it afterwards; we did not have any speeches of good will or otherwise.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): They were not allowed to speak.

Mr. BENNETT: I will come to that presently; I have that before me to deal with. The only difficulty I see is to find out exactly what is the net result of this conference. At one place I notice that, providence being their guide, they builded better than they knew. Let us hope they have some epitaph better than that in view, for certainly there is no present realization of it. We will await developments in the future, before we endeavour to make any observations upon concrete proposals, because it would be idle to discuss these speeches. When there is some crystallized legislation to consider, it might be useful to discover just what has been done.

One feature of this conference, however, involves a second paragraph in the speech from the throne, dealing with financial problems. We are going to deal with our difficulties with the provinces, and a committee is now engaged in consideration of a method of procedure in order to effect constitutional

[Mr. Bennett.]

amendments. Obviously before one sees those amendments it would be improper to deal with them, but here and now I desire to say to the Minister of Finance that any assistance that can be given to him in dealing with the complex financial problems of this dominion we will give to him with the greatest possible alacrity and vigour, for we realize indeed that the problems of finance in this country are of the first magnitude. I cannot overestimate the seriousness of the situation. It is idle to try to make it appear to be simple; it is quite the opposite; it is complex and difficult, but there is one phase of it that I should like to urge upon the government. It is that by those well known methods of diplomacy of which they have so frequently held themselves to be masters they should induce the province of Ontario to realize that, from its size, its wealth and its importance, legislation that repudiates contracts, however trifling it may be apparently, has the effect of injuring the whole body politic. In other words it affects the national credit as distinguished from the provincial credit. If by the exercise of those qualities of heart and mind of which we are so constantly reminded the government is able to effectuate that purpose, it will not have lived in vain, and I do commend to it the desirability of endeavouring to accomplish that end, for never was there greater need for it.

I sometimes wonder whether our friends who have to do with local politics realize just how great the real effect upon our credit has been and will be of action taken by any province to repudiate its obligations, and I do urge upon the government that by the means I have indicated, if sterner means be not at hand, they endeavour to accomplish the end I have suggested. Any Canadian, I care not what his politics may be, I care not who he may be or where he may reside, who takes the trouble to familiarize himself with the whole problem of public credit, the sensitiveness of it and the effect upon that credit of actions, however trifling they may seem to be, that deprive men of the right to go into the courts to assert their rights, knows that such action is fraught with the gravest possible danger to our whole body politic. I say that with great seriousness, without in any sense desiring to become embroiled in any quarrel there may be between the provinces and the federal power, because I realize that "provincial rights" are very sacred words. But there was a government the minister of justice of which saw fit to disallow a statute from Nova Scotia because he felt it undertook to do something that was not essentially just and proper