

Session 1934Rt. Hon. R. B. Bennettpage 2177, April 16th, 1934.

Coming into office directly after, when the question of relief became an all-absorbing one, we discussed, as has been known to every member of this house, the question whether or not the federal government or the several provinces should be responsible for the administration of relief. And the several provinces disclaimed any intention to permit the federal power to exercise administrative privileges within their jurisdiction. And it is known in every province in Canada that while some of the provinces were not unwilling that such power should be entrusted to the federal authorities and that there should be a centralized administration of relief, there were others who as strongly insisted that it should not be so. And those others were the most powerful in point of population and wealth in the confederacy. So at that time we did not think, nor do I now, that in a time of distress and depression it would be possible to bring about a successful conference for amendment of the British North America Act when such an attempt failed in quiet times. I think almost every member of this house will agree that that is so .....

NOTE | .... But I say to him now, and I say to this House what every member of the house must know, that a federal commission could not function throughout this dominion unless the provinces were willing that it should, and the provinces were not and are not willing. Year after year they have stated

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