

*Suggested Dominion-Provincial Conference*

latitude afforded by the budget debate to make a request which was not directly related to any point in the amendment. I indicated at that time that I did not propose to discuss the budget but that I would do so on a later occasion. I then expressed the hope that the Prime Minister would meet an increasingly difficult situation by announcing that a conference, long overdue, would be called. I have today sought to indicate why I believe that is more urgent than ever. In doing so, I sought to mention one or two subjects that in my opinion did suggest increasing urgency in relation to that matter.

The remarks I was making at the time Your Honour rose related to certain suggestions that were made, in spite of my very clear statement that I was merely making a request for a conference and not discussing the budget at that time, that this meant a change in attitude with regard to certain fiscal problems. I am simply stating this is not the case, that I was confining my remarks at that time to the need for a conference. I have sought today to express my belief that a conference is necessary. I have sought to emphasize the way in which certain recent events and statements support that claim and, Mr. Speaker, I have made the remarks that I had proposed to make in that respect. Therefore I will present the motion I had intended to move which will indicate to you what my purpose was. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming):

That all the words after "That" to the end of the question be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"in the opinion of this house immediate consideration should be given to the extension of an invitation by the Prime Minister of Canada 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 of September, 1950, and such other matters as now require joint consideration by all the governments of Canada."

**Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggar):** I am not sure what interpretation to put upon this amendment. It seems to me that if it simply criticizes the government for having failed to reconvene the conference which adjourned on September 28, 1950, it is of course in line with some criticisms I made myself during the budget debate. But as I understand the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew), he was discussing one phase of dominion-provincial relations which is not directly involved in the constitutional discussions that he suggests should have been carried on during the past few years, that is to say, civil defence.

It seems to me that this is a very broad amendment.

**Mr. Drew:** I do not want to interrupt the hon. member, but perhaps I might be of assistance by saying I had hoped I had made it clear it was the financial consequences of civil defence I was discussing, and the need for dealing with that problem, not in any way the problem of civil defence as such.

**Mr. Coldwell:** If we are discussing the financial problems connected with civil defence, this resolution, it seems to me, goes far beyond that, and cannot be related to the conference which adjourned on September 28, 1950, because my recollection is that when I raised this subject during the budget debate and began to criticize the government on the ground that the conference should have been reconvened at an earlier date because some financial matters needed to be discussed, I was told that the conference on constitutional matters was not intended to deal with the financial relationships of the provinces and the dominion. I accepted that because I recognized immediately that that interpretation was correct.

If, however, we are discussing civil defence there is quite a lot I should like to say about it. The dangers of the hydrogen bomb, which have been revived this afternoon, were brought to the attention of this house two or three weeks ago, not only by me but in a very able and forceful speech by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch). I should like to express the opinion once more that, while we should take every precaution we can, and that includes, of course, any system of warnings required to warn us of the approach of hostile planes, we should see to it also that our national defence department retains in Canada such interceptor planes as might be necessary under those circumstances. I want to say very explicitly that this new weapon has changed the whole picture of civil defence within the past two or three months.

While we must take every precaution and prepare for any emergency, I am one of those who believe there is no real defence against the hydrogen bomb, except the defence that can be obtained through settling international disputes through the United Nations Organization, and by the representatives of the government of Canada pressing by every means possible the study of a general reduction in armaments. It is all very well to say we have to press for an agreement not to use the hydrogen or atomic bomb, but when a nation gets into a corner we cannot tell whether or not such an agreement will be honoured. On behalf of those associated with me, I want to say that we believe Canada should take every available means to