

NAME AND DATE OF NEWSPAPER

*Montreal Herald April 7/30.***Premier King's "Outburst"**

PREMIER KING is human. He is also a Liberal. The revelation of both qualities seems to have startled the Conservatives, who quite naturally are highly indignant at his blunt announcement that the federal Treasury under his guardianship will afford no pickings for Tory Governments in the Provinces.

There must have been something behind all this more than is observable on the surface. Our guess is that he believes the Provincial Conservative Governments have been exploiting the drop in business for purely political purposes; that in his opinion they have been magnifying the usual seasonal unemployment into a grave national issue for which the Federal Government is responsible, and that certain Conservative governments have been striving to make the Federal Government acknowledge its responsibility by sending money to them to be disbursed in the relief of the unemployed.

How much or how little truth there may be in this we do not know. But a careful reading of his speech as it appears in Hansard certainly gives the impression that, if the political aspect be set aside, he has good grounds for his refusal on general principles. Undoubtedly under our Constitution first responsibility for the care of unemployed rests with the local provincial and municipal authorities. In this Province and city we have never endeavored to sidestep this responsibility. For instance our snow-cleaning methods in Montreal are purposely kept antiquated in order that the largest possible amount of employment may be given to those who would otherwise be seasonally unemployed.

Premier King has taken the ground that conditions this winter have differed in no wise from average conditions. Looked at in the large we believe he is correct in this view. The employment index certainly does not show any abnormal conditions to exist. It stood at 110.2 for all industries in March, as compared with 111.4 in March, 1929. That being so, he asks why one taxing authority should expect to receive funds from another taxing authority? Provincial governments all over Canada have been constantly increasing their taxation while the Federal Government has been steadily decreasing its taxes. Why expect the Federal Government to raise taxes for provincial purposes? That is his argument.

It is true that the Federal Government does grant certain subsidies on a pro rata basis to the Provinces. Quebec, for instance, in 1929, received \$2,315,739 from the Dominion Government. But these subsidies were incorporated in the British North America Act expressly for the purpose of compensating the Provinces for the loss of the Customs and Excise revenues which they had been collecting prior to Confederation. It is expressly stated in the Act that "such grants shall be in full settlement of all future demands on Canada."

The position being such, how explain Premier King's outburst against "Tory" Governments in the Provinces? We believe the "outburst" was deliberate. Believing that the Conservatives would exploit this refusal of unemployment funds for party purposes, he adopted the principle that the best means of defence is to attack. In this instance he may be right, or he may be wrong. But attack he did, and to make it perfectly clear that he was attacking he deliberately repeated his declaration that not one cent of money should go to any Tory Government.

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

Speeches-1922 - 1932

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