

dealing with this matter, but it is impossible to deal with matters of this character in a short time, and when they are dealt with they must be considered fully.

Just prior to leaving for the conference of 1930 I received a communication from the province of Ontario saying that they did not desire that these changes should take place until they had an opportunity to be heard. I also received a communication from the province of Quebec. It is not necessary at this time to relate fully the attitude of the provinces, but they agreed that inasmuch as their constitutional rights as defined by the original act might be amended in the opinion of the governments of those provinces by this parliament by a majority vote they should have the opportunity before any such action was taken to present their views and make known their decisions. Having reached London, communications were sent to the various provinces by the premier of Ontario, who asked them, I was informed, whether or not they shared his views. I was not formally given notice with respect to all the views, and as the conference developed it became clear that it was essential that some step should be taken whereby no hasty or precipitate action on our part would in any sense induce the provinces to believe that their constitutional rights had been invaded or that there was any lessening of their power or authority.

We thus come to the conference of 1930. This conference gave extended consideration to the constitutional questions considered in the 1929 conference on dominion legislation. Two main resolutions were passed. The first approved the 1929 report, subject to certain provisions which I shall mention, and the second recommended the enactment by the United Kingdom parliament before December 1, 1931, of the statute of Westminster embodying the positive proposals of the 1929 report after the receipt of resolutions from the dominion parliaments with any desired further provisions applying to a particular dominion.

Hon. members will observe by my hasty reading that the effect of the conference of 1930 was that it recommended that action be taken by the parliament at Westminster to pass a statute before December 1 of this year whereby we should have conferred upon all the parliaments of the dominions the authority I have just mentioned, without again repeating them in detail.

As to Canada however special reference was made. Obviously the position of the Canadian delegation was one of some difficulty. I at once made the announcement to the con-

ference that I had voted in this house for the adoption of the 1929 report, and that I did not purpose to change my view merely because my status had been changed. Therefore the next problem was as to what should be done at the moment to safeguard the interests of Ontario, Quebec and the other provinces, and not in any sense stop or prevent action being taken by the conference for the empire as a whole. I am bound to say the delegates from the other parts of the empire were extremely courteous in that regard. These paragraphs were inserted in the report:

The Imperial conference examined the various questions arising with regard to the report of the conference on the operation of dominion legislation and in particular took into consideration the difficulties which were explained by the Prime Minister of Canada regarding the representations which had been received by him from the Canadian provinces in relation to that report.

A special question arose in respect to the application to Canada of the sections of the statute proposed to be passed by the parliament of Westminster—which it was thought might conveniently be called the statute of Westminster—relating to the Colonial Laws Validity Act and other matters. On the one hand it appeared that approval had been given to the report of the conference on the operation of dominion legislation by resolution of the House of Commons of Canada, and accordingly, that the Canadian representatives felt themselves bound not to take any action which might properly be construed as a departure from the spirit of that resolution. On the other hand, it appeared that representations had been received from certain of the provinces of Canada subsequent to the passing of the resolution, protesting against action on the report until an opportunity had been given to the provinces to determine whether their rights would be adversely affected by such action.

Accordingly, it appeared necessary to provide for two things. In the first place it was necessary to provide an opportunity for His Majesty's government in Canada to take such action as might be appropriate to enable the provinces to present their views. In the second place it was necessary to provide for the extension of the sections of the proposed statute to Canada or for the exclusion of Canada from their operation after the provinces had been consulted. To this end it seemed desirable to place on record the view that the sections of the statute relating to the Colonial Laws Validity Act should be so drafted as not to extend to Canada unless the statute was enacted in response to such requests as are appropriate to an amendment of the British North America Act. It also seemed desirable to place on record the view that the sections should not subsequently be extended to Canada except by an act of the parliament of the United Kingdom enacted in response to such requests as are appropriate to an amendment of the British North America Act.

I need not dwell upon those provisions. It is sufficient to say that those provisions having been inserted, on my return to Canada