

Suggested Dominion-Provincial Conference

the inevitable consequence of great changes in the pressure upon governments for immediate and prompt action. When in 1942 the provincial governments agreed to certain proposals that were then made, they did so recognizing that the urgent demands of war called for some measure of joint action which would avoid any delays that might embarrass the government of Canada in accepting its international obligations at that time. There were differences of opinion in those days. Generally, however, the situation was accepted as one of the necessities of world war. The same situation developed in large measure in the United States, Australia and other countries where a federal system has been established.

I recognize that it is not appropriate at this time to discuss the details that are set forth in the budget or in any way to parallel that discussion or invade the field of the budget debate. However, I do want to point out something that apparently needs to be pointed out in view of certain comments I have seen. I pointed out on an earlier occasion that the request for a conference of this nature, which has been asked for, I believe, by every province in Canada either in the form of letter, statements in the legislature or by requests by the premiers of the provinces, does not in any way suggest that our position has changed with regard to any of those details which may be related to the problems that have arisen, largely as a result of the failure to have such a conference.

May I say without any reservation that our position has not changed in any way with respect to the rights of the provinces in the field of taxation, with respect to the right of the provinces to determine their own course and with respect to the rights of the provinces voluntarily to enter into agreements or not to enter into agreements as the case may be. I certainly wish it clearly understood that in again emphasizing the need for such a conference I am not in any way changing the position which has been stated emphatically over and over again, that any province which does not enter into an agreement to abandon its traditional field of taxation has a perfect right to tax in that field and should be able to do so with the kind of co-operation it received from the government of Canada in earlier days when taxes levied by the provinces were, in the case of several provinces, collected by the federal authorities.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I be permitted to interrupt the Leader of the Opposition? I do so because a moment ago he indicated that it was his understanding that this debate today on a motion to go into supply should not parallel the debate on the motion to go into

ways and means already on the order paper. I was happy to hear him say that was his understanding because he will probably recall that on the motion to go into ways and means the hon. member for Greenwood moved an amendment the other day, paragraph (f) of which reads as follows:

(f) has failed to reach agreement with the provincial governments in regard to a clearly defined reallocation of taxing powers so that the provincial governments and municipal councils may have adequate financial resources to carry out their rapidly-increasing responsibilities.

I have been listening intently to the Leader of the Opposition ever since he began his remarks and it struck me that whatever he had to say about the responsibilities of either municipalities or provincial governments with respect to civil defence could have been fully discussed under this amendment which, I think, covers the ground that he himself covered in his speech today. The minute he left the subject of civil defence he went into the question of the taxing powers of the provincial governments and their need for additional revenue and, if I recall correctly, his suggestion as to a dominion-provincial conference was made when he was discussing the motion to go into ways and means prior to which this amendment was moved.

I merely ask for clarification at this moment. It is also my understanding that during this debate we should not parallel a debate of which notice has been given and which is supposed to be resumed within a reasonable time. I am reminded at this time of citation 246 of Beauchesne, third edition, which reads as follows:

Besides the prohibitions contained in standing order 41, it has been sanctioned by usage both in England and in Canada, that a member, while speaking, must not: . . .

(d) anticipate discussion on a motion set down for future consideration.

I know that the Leader of the Opposition does not want to duplicate a debate. It is a wholesome restraint upon members that they should not debate now a question which they can debate on a motion already on the order paper. I would be glad to hear him explain the position he takes with respect to what I have said.

Mr. Drew: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Winch: I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I have asked that a point of order be clarified and the Leader of the Opposition is entitled to explain his position.

Mr. Drew: I will explain as briefly as I can the reason for presenting the remarks I have and the reason why I believe they are appropriate under the circumstances. I availed myself before adjournment of the very wide

[Mr. Drew.]