

Newfoundland

All I am saying is that, when we are told about the proposals that were made, we should remember that along with them went these contributions; and when you say, "let us have these payments", let us also be quite sure that the people of Canada want to make them, because they are part and parcel of the same proposal. Since this matter has come up, and the difficulties of dealing with it at a conference have been mentioned, may I repeat that there is absolutely no place where the responsibility lies for the conference not meeting again except at the doorstep of the dominion government which has refused to call it.

Mr. Claxton: Mr. Chairman, there is one statement of the hon. leader of the opposition with which I can agree, and I think only one. That is that these things have to be paid for. That is the fact. They have to be paid for out of taxes—

An hon. Member: Why?

Mr. Claxton: —or out of levies on the Canadian people in one way or another. With that one point of agreement, I leave the hon. gentleman to his remarks. I remember the incident.

Mr. Drew: That was the occasion when I referred to it as a babbling brook of inaccuracy.

Mr. Claxton: I remember the occasion. I remember the hon. leader of the opposition had made a fine speech at the beginning. He referred to well-informed government sources as having been the source of this story. There were no well-informed government sources from which his story was produced.

Mr. Drew: That was quite right.

Mr. Claxton: Because everyone who knew anything about the subject knew what the government's proposals were. They were contained in the green book, and we had been working over that with the provinces from the beginning of August 1945 until the first week of May 1946. All through that period I do not think there were many people concerned with this business who did not know what the proposals were. Then the present leader of the opposition made the statement about the \$10 or \$12 poll tax at the beginning of one of our meetings in the final week. I rose and denied it, and referred to the record. The record stands, and I deny the statement again. I also deny everything except the concluding remark that he made to which I have just referred, that social security payments of this kind must be met by somebody. It was understood right from the beginning

[Mr. Drew.]

that if we were to have health insurance it must be on a dominion-provincial basis, achieved through co-operation of the provinces, and met by contributions in part by the provinces, in part through the provinces by the individuals, and in part by the federal treasury. The amounts of those contributions were indicated in the green book proposals, and there was never at any moment any suggestion of a poll tax. That is an invention or appellation given by the leader of the opposition then and now. There was also every indication that, in the interest of the people concerned, and because of the way in which health insurance has worked all over the world, the people should contribute. Who in this house disagrees with the idea that the people should contribute to health insurance? Who in this house?

Mr. Ashby: I do.

Mr. Claxton: The hon. member for Edmonton East. That is one. Who else? The leader of the opposition has made a great parade of this business, but the fact is that his party in their social security proposals advanced the same idea as the Liberal party did in their social security proposals, and as the government did in their green book, but they did it about a year and half later.

Mr. Knowles: You started in 1919.

Mr. Claxton: Yes.

Mr. MacNicol: Thirty years ago.

Mr. Claxton: And the fact is we all know, except perhaps some hon. members from the far left corner of the house, that social security payments, whether they be for old age pensions or for health insurance, must be met by the people themselves. We are cheating the people unless we declare that, and unless we are willing to face the responsibilities of that kind of thing. With regard to the contretemps between the hon. leader of the opposition and myself, I think that if he locates the right page in the green book, for which he is now looking, and if he reads the whole passage, he will find that the point I have made tonight was made then, that it is completely in accord with the record, and that any other account is completely out of accord with it.

With regard to Newfoundland, which we are supposed to be discussing tonight, and which I regard as a matter of supreme importance to the people of Canada and of Newfoundland, it is obvious from the remarks of the Prime Minister that if we introduced any plan by which old age pensions might be arrived at before there was a provincial government to make an arrangement, it