

## Newfoundland

it can enter into a contract and will be entitled to reimbursement of three-quarters of its expenditure from the date of the contract.

**Mr. Claxton:** With regard to the incidence of certain health insurance taxation, the leader of the opposition made an assertion which I think I should answer. He suggested that it was part of the federal government's plan, as proposed at the 1945 conference, that there should be a poll tax of \$12 to meet the cost of health insurance. The government's plan with regard to health insurance was explained fully in the green book proposals and was amplified right through the conference.

There was never any suggestion of a poll tax of \$12 or \$10 or any other figure. What was indicated as one of the conditions for the introduction of health insurance was that there should be a registration fee, but the way in which the provinces met their share of the cost of health insurance was left to the provinces to be worked out. There was never at any stage of the proceedings, either in public or in private, any suggestion of a poll tax of \$10 or \$12.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Chairman, I find it difficult to understand the extraordinarily faulty memory of the minister who has just spoken. If he will examine the *Hansard* record of the proceedings which took place in May—

**Mr. Claxton:** I have just done so.

**Mr. Drew:**—1946, he will find that it was discussed then as it was on other occasions. I am pleased to have the opportunity to make clear exactly the kind of misunderstanding that has been created about the nature of the proposals that were put forward by the dominion government. Certainly it was called a registration fee, but the fact that the dominion government happened to call it a registration fee did not make it any less a poll tax. That registration fee was to be paid by every man, woman and child for the purpose of meeting these payments. As the minister who has just spoken will remember, I checked him up on the same inaccuracies at the conference and—

**Mr. Claxton:** I replied in the same sense that I have tonight.

**Mr. Drew:**—it was pointed out that he was just as inaccurate then as he has been now.

**Mr. Claxton:** The record does not bear that out for a second.

**Mr. Drew:** I think hon. members should know that there were amusing as well as other aspects to this discussion and there was one particularly amusing aspect. One of the things that I noticed while I was premier of

Ontario was the number of statements in regard to the dominion-provincial conference and similar matters with which the provinces were concerned that appeared in the press under words such as "A well informed government source says". Then the statement would go on with no name attached.

The conference was sitting here in Ottawa, and on the previous day, speaking on behalf of Ontario, I had pointed out that while we were discussing this it would be well if we examined exactly what the whole picture was. I pointed out that this registration fee was a poll tax; call it any other name, it was a poll tax. I pointed out also that the minister who has just spoken, and who was then Minister of National Health and Welfare had written to the minister of health in Alberta explaining that this special income tax over and above all other income taxes would be five per cent.

We got the \$12 poll tax in the case of Ontario from the meetings of the dominion-provincial economic committee which had been studying the figures and which had found the original dominion figures to be hopelessly inaccurate. That committee had brought forward the exact figures to which the dominion as well as the provincial officials agreed, and those were the figures we had before us.

Then the minister who has just spoken, following the practice to which I have just referred, gave a statement to the press. That statement was not intended to refer to his own name. It was intended to be like all other statements that went out—I am not quoting the exact words—to the effect that a high government source had said that there was absolutely nothing in the suggestion of a poll tax or special income tax.

Unfortunately the reporter of the *Toronto Daily Star*, who had very close access to the minister in question, did not realize that that reservation should have been imposed and he gave the minister full publicity. The report in the *Toronto Daily Star* said that Mr. Claxton had said that there was nothing in this. As the record will show, I pointed out to Mr. Claxton—I am using the name that appears in the record—exactly what the facts were. There was an ensuing discussion and the facts were just as I have stated.

The five per cent was based upon his letter to the minister of health in Alberta, and the \$12 poll tax in the case of Ontario was the result of an accurate computation, and the officials of the dominion government and the Ontario government both agreed to that computation as being the correct figure. The \$12 poll tax was to be paid and, in addition, a five per cent special income tax over and above all other payments.