

Newfoundland

would be quite different from the old age pensions plan that was put on the statute books of Canada in 1927, and which has since been worked out by agreement with the provinces. It would require something quite different. Were we to make that different kind of arrangement, I believe there would be more people complaining about it than there are complaining about failure tonight, because we hope that after all Newfoundland will be the tenth province.

There are nine provinces which have made provision for old age pensions, and the plan is that the provinces shall administer them. The plan is that the provinces shall make agreements with the dominion. When there was no province it would surely have been quite wrong for us to have made an agreement with a commission of government, or any other agency which would have provided for those payments. Our hope is, however, that a province will be set up. That is why we are meeting here, and why we are discussing this matter. Our hope is that just as soon as that province is set up they will make an old age pension agreement along the lines of the agreements made by the nine other provinces of Canada. As we discussed this with the representatives of Newfoundland it seemed to us to be evident to them, as well as to us, that this was the only fair and right way to do it in accord with the will of parliament as expressed in 1927.

I feel that the union of Canada with Newfoundland is a matter of supreme importance. I believe everyone in this house does; but I must say that as this discussion has proceeded it has become clear that, while every group in this house is keenly in favour of that union, somehow they would like to see it worked out to their own advantage, and they are making one suggestion or another. Our feeling is that the agreement made with the representatives of Newfoundland can be supported on the basis of what is good for Canada and what their needs are in Newfoundland, and that it is an agreement which would commend itself as containing fair and equitable terms as the basis of union.

Mr. Drew: Since the incoming province of Newfoundland undoubtedly will be interested in the whole relationship of the provinces to the dominion government, and since it is very likely that they will join with the other provinces in the hope that they may have opportunities of meeting the dominion government in general conferences, I think it might be well to place on record now what was actually said at the conference on the occasion to which I referred, so the people of Newfoundland as well as others may know the way in

which statements emanate from this government from time to time. This very subject of the poll tax was discussed over and over again. It was discussed in the meetings of the economic committee and in the meetings of the co-ordinating committee, and I brought up the matter on April 30, 1946. Just for the purpose of letting the people of Newfoundland know that they should find out who make these statements, and that it would be well to make sure they are in fact official government statements, I should like to read this into the record. I rose on the morning of April 30, 1946, and said:

Mr. Chairman, before we proceed I think the correct practice would be for me to rise to a question of privilege on a matter that does affect this conference. I find that in this morning's press, as well as in the press of late yesterday afternoon, direct issue is taken with a statement that I made to the conference yesterday—

You see, it was mentioned the day before, as well as on a great many other occasions.

—and I would add that that direct issue is taken in a statement made outside this conference. That statement is carried generally in the press throughout Canada. It starts on the front page of the *Ottawa Citizen* of this morning and I would like to read briefly from it because it has a very direct bearing on the public understanding of what is taking place at this conference. I quote from today's *Ottawa Citizen*:

"A source close to federal social security plans said the dominion has always planned to impose a tax to cover some of the cost of health insurance, pensions to the aged and other welfare measures, but so far it has not been possible to work out a definite tax rate.

The source was commenting on a statement by Premier George Drew of Ontario to the dominion-provincial conference. Mr. Drew said the dominion had suggested to the provinces a plan under which health measures and old age pensions would be financed by an additional tax of from three to five per cent on all incomes and a poll tax of perhaps \$10 to be paid by all persons sixteen years and over."

I might interpolate here that in the later figures it was worked out at \$12.

"No poll tax was ever proposed by the federal authorities, said the source, and no definite rate of taxation was set because the rate would depend on how much of the social security program was brought into force."

If the "source" alone were the person to whom I feel called upon to pay attention, even this would be very objectionable because it is the very sort of thing that led me to move the motion in the co-ordinating committee last Thursday that we should go into open conference. As you will recall, I said at that time that amongst the reasons why I thought we should go into open conference was to prevent this very sort of thing.

But the "source" is not left in doubt because here is the *Toronto Daily Star* of last night, with this headline: "Plan No Poll Tax—Claxton."

Mr. Claxton: That is right.

Mr. Drew:

—and the *Toronto Daily Star* does not merely describe him as the source but mentions him by name.