

ment would give the provinces or sections of our people reason to accuse us here of using authoritarian methods, at least in this piece of legislation.

The amendment has been proposed by the leader of the official opposition (Mr. Drew), who leads the Conservative party in this country. The hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore) has mentioned already that it is not a matter of voting with the Conservatives or with some other party. That might be what is in the minds of hard and fast machine politicians, but the issue is whether we are to vote for something that is right or something that is wrong. If our Conservative friends propose something we believe is right, we will vote for it. If on the other hand they propose something that is wrong, then we will most vehemently oppose it and vote against it. I know that in the past when we have voted for that which we have believed to be right and our Conservative friends have been like-minded, it has left the impression throughout the country, and certain sections of the press have tried to make it appear, that in their philosophy and beliefs the Social Crediters in reality are Conservatives politically. Well, Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. As far as political parties are concerned, we desire to travel a road which is consistent with the fundamental beliefs embodied in our social credit position.

May I say this, that our C.C.F. friends, my socialist friends, sit next to me—and by reason of that I have to try to love them as best I can. They are very fine gentlemen. I do not know whether they believe all they say they believe, but they are very fine gentlemen anyway. I agree with my hon. friend the member for Calgary West (Mr. Smith) that, whenever there is a measure before the house, the theme of which is the centralization of power, we can depend upon the C.C.F. to support it. I am not saying that in criticism of them. In fact, I think it is a commendation because, on this measure, they will run true to form and support it.

If there is any reflection upon any party, it is a reflection on the party that now holds office in this country. It will be a reflection for this reason, that they will go throughout the country and, by word of mouth, preach decentralization, the recommendation of provincial autonomy, democracy, free enterprise, freedom and all the rest of it. Mark you, Mr. Speaker, they will go throughout the country in a few months' time preaching those things; yet by legislative action they deny what they say with their lips. During the war years we felt there might be some excuse for that, but that excuse no longer holds good. Let us remain an absolutely free people. Let us

do all we can to protect the autonomy of the various provinces of this country. In referring this matter to the provinces, we are referring it to them so they can be satisfied we are not stepping over their heads and railroading something through which they themselves do not want.

I call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the wording of this amendment. The wording of this amendment does not ask that the provinces agree. It does not mention anything about a right or a wrong constitutional interpretation. As I read this amendment, it simply says to the government that we, as a parliament, are asking them to consult the provinces. After they have received the views of the provinces, then we will move an address to His Majesty.

May I read the main portions of the amendment?

And whereas it is desirable that the government of Canada should consult with the governments of the several provinces in respect to the said matter—

Now, is that desirable? I do not see anything undesirable about it.

—now therefore be it resolved, that the government of Canada be required to consult at once the governments of the several provinces and that upon a satisfactory conclusion of such consultations, a humble address be presented to His Majesty—

And so forth.

I claim that that would be the proper thing to do so that no accusation could be leveled either at the government or at parliament that we are going beyond our authority or that we are refusing to consult the provinces. Surely the provinces should be entitled to express their views when another partner is to be admitted into this great Canadian corporation.

There is one other matter, Mr. Speaker, which I should like to mention. This afternoon the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton), who has been one of the main speakers for the government in this debate, made a statement at which I was very much surprised. He expressed considerable alarm at this amendment having been made. I think the words he used, and I will stand correction while awaiting their appearance in *Hansard*, were that this was a sort of surprise move. I am sure the minister could not possibly have meant that, Mr. Speaker. The minister is an intelligent man. I have always regarded him as such. He is a very able man and a clever lawyer. Surely, he could anticipate any move that might be made in the course of one short debate. Surely, he could diagnose or, to use a favourite word of mine, prognose the situation. One would think he could anticipate any future move that might be made. He is a responsible minister of the