

How Many Times Should A Taxpayer Pay Taxes

The Financial Structures of Different Provinces Are In An Unsatisfactory Condition, Says Editorial in Montreal Daily Star

Premier Pattullo of British Columbia raises a question in a recent statement which must be dealt with frankly and fully in the very near future. The financial structure of his Province is, like more than one other sister province, in an unsatisfactory condition. But he does not propose to make any drastic changes in it until a conference can be held between all the Provinces and the Federal Government "to clarify and re-define the entire position of the Dominion and the Provinces in the financial and taxation fields."

Such a conference was scheduled to be held last autumn. But Mr. Bennett found it impossible to get the various Provincial Governments to agree upon a date. Mr. Pattullo now assumes that it must be postponed until after the approaching Federal elections. This is desirable for more than one reason. There will not be time to insert so important a gathering in between the embattled session of parliament that opens this week and the elections which must follow soon upon its prorogation. Moreover, the intervening period would be far too feverish in a partisan sense for much progress to be hoped in the way of concession and compromise. Then it would be better to hold such a conference under the leadership of a Dominion Government having a fresh mandate from the people, whether it be Conservative or Liberal.

But there certainly should be a clear line drawn between the fields of Federal, Provincial and municipal taxation. It is bad enough for the taxpayer to be harried along a particular road by one authority without living in constant fear of meeting two highwaymen on the same thoroughfare. The income taxpayer, for example, looks forward to April with anything but pleasant feelings, for it is taken that he must gird up his loins and meet the Federal "revenueur." He ought, however, to be able to feel that, after he has passed this toll-gate, he can pretty well count on the rest of his hard-earned income as his own. But now he is met with constant threats, first on this side and then on that, that he will be overtaken and taxed again. Even a criminal is not put in jeopardy twice for the same offence—i.e., that of having earned a little money.

Then there is the field of responsibility. Who, for instance, is responsible for "relief"? We have all been chipping in, with disastrous results. Municipalities, not being geared to deal with this additional and temporary burden have been bankrupted. With their limited powers of taxation, they simply cannot get the money. The Provinces come to their help, sometimes with contributions and sometimes with loans, but the Province



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The Bennett Deal

(Owing to the unprecedented interest in Mr. Bennett's series of addresses we publish a selection of representative opinions on the new Bennett programme.)

Less Interference

Victoria Colonist (Cons.): Normal recovery without benefit of makeshift legislation, is the only kind that can be in any way very healthy and permanent. The forces of Nature are stronger than those of any government. It will be despite what governments do in the way of interference with trade and industry and business generally—beyond seeing that they are legitimately conducted—that recovery will come. It will come all the quicker the less interference there may be. That is the history of the way out of all depressions.

Clear on One Thing

Saint John Telegraph - Journal (Ind.): On a basis of moderate distributism he outlined projects to cut the cancer out of capitalism, chiefly by taxation and social insurance on a contributory basis. All this is, of course, in line with the trend everywhere, whether the system is capitalistic, Communist, Fascist or Nazi, and it therefore becomes necessary to await much further detail ere any judgment can be delivered. One point in Mr. Bennett's remarks is of special note: when he mentions the state he means that and not the government, as is so often done in this type of speech, to the confusion of all clear thought.

Worthy of Confidence

Edmonton Journal (Cons.): A programme of that character is unquestionably required and Mr. Bennett is especially well fitted to put it through. Under his leadership it will receive the support of many who would otherwise be inclined to look askance at the proposals. This is because of the confidence that his public and private career inspires and also because it is recognized that the responsibilities that he has carried during the past four years have given him an exceptional grasp of what the national interests demand.

Too Late For Conversion

Vancouver Province (Cons.): Mr. Bennett's policy will, of course, be criticised. It is being criticised already. The Liberals say it lacks sincerity, that it is mere death-bed repentance. The Socialists hold that the only progressive legislation we can hope to get from Mr. Bennett will mark progress in the direction of Fascism. There is no reason to take this criticism seriously. The Prime Minister's voice has the ring of sincerity in it. His courage is a byword. His opponents may sneer at it, but they respect it. It took moral courage of no mean order to make the change in policy the Prime Minister has recently made. Taking all things into consideration, there appears to be every reason why the Canadian people, who are well aware of the need of reform should give Mr. Bennett his opportunity. He has a plan of reform which

promises a New Deal for the country, and no other party yet has a plan which promises anything.

Offering Little Comfort

Winnipeg Free Press (Lib.): What however is not absent from Mr. Bennett's speeches is the appearance of a meaning which is not there. Let anyone after reading the declaration that capitalism must be changed, let him examine the phraseology of the paragraphs in which the Prime Minister makes his most emphatic affirmations. They will offer little comfort to the person seeking clarity and precision as to Mr. Bennett's purpose, and they infer an amount of time for the search that completely nullifies them as contributions to political affairs. Listened to under the spell of Mr. Bennett's persuasive accents, his words seem to mean that he intends to up and remold the economic system; so that unemployment and distress will soon vanish away. But read on the morning after, it is all too plain that Mr. Bennett hasn't more than the sketchiest designs on capitalism, and that he will expect to be given pretty nearly all eternity to carry into action such projects as may ultimately, sometime, meet with his extremely critical approval.

A Striking Parallel

Regina Leader-Post (Lib.): There has been good showmanship in the arrangement of the speeches. The first one was reminiscent of the fat boy in Pickwick — (wasn't it?) — who announced "I am going to make your flesh creep" or words to that effect, thus catching the interest of the listeners. But somehow the second and third speeches seemed to catch in part the air of another country. It would be the height of unkindness to suggest that Mr. Bennett had not written his own speeches, but it is impossible not to feel that he has had in their preparation the advantage of intimate contact with someone who has been very close to recent developments south of the line. The parallel in the speeches of Mr. Bennett and that of the President of the United States delivered within a few days of each other, containing elaborate references to the need of abolition of the dole, to unemployment insurance and other social developments, may, of course, be purely coincidence, but it is a curious commentary that two individuals of very different outlooks on life should have come to similar conclusions.

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