

GOVERNMENT OF ADÉLARD GODBOUT

(NOVEMBER 8, 1939 TO AUGUST 8, 1944)



Source: Archives nationales du Québec

••• Distribution of powers

a) General principles

5. It is essential to Canadian unity and to Canada's progress that provincial rights be rigorously respected. Any encroachment on these rights would necessarily weaken Confederation.⁵
6. If Canada is to become a powerful nation, it will be because of the strength and well being of each province of the Dominion. We will never succeed in building a great nation if our provinces do not have sufficient freedom of action and responsibilities, elements of progress that are so necessary in public affairs.⁶
7. Québec considers that after the war, it will be necessary and even imperative not only to deprive the federal government of the exceptional powers it has

held since 1939, to restore to the provinces the prerogatives many of them have yielded, but also to revise the text and spirit of the British North America Act, to specify the powers of the provincial governments in certain matters and increase their powers in certain others.⁷

b) Unilateral powers

8. If there exists in any part of the country a situation that could compromise the effectiveness of Canada's war effort, no province of the Dominion nor any group of its population would deny the federal government the right and duty to take the measures necessary to remedy it. But exceptional measures should be used to deal with an exceptional situation.⁸

••• Intergovernmental policy

Financial aspects of federalism

9. Under the Tax Rental Agreement 1942, the government of Québec does not cede the right to tax, but only temporarily suspends the levying of two taxes. Ottawa will collect these taxes in return for a compensation favourable to Québec. The government of Québec can put an end to this agreement with one month's notice whereas the federal government can put an end to it only one year after the end of the war.⁹ The preamble of the Agreement has the following recital: "Whereas the Province shall not, by agreeing, as hereinafter

5. Declaration by Adélar Godbout, Dominion-Provincial Conference, January 15, 1941, p. 85 (quotation), King's Printer, 1941.

6. Declaration by Adélar Godbout, Dominion-Provincial Conference, January 14, 1941, p. 18 (quotation), King's Printer, 1941.

7. Declaration by Adélar Godbout in 1944, taken from Claude Morin, *Le combat québécois*, Les Éditions du Boréal express, 1973, p. 68 (quotation).

8. Opening statement by Adélar Godbout, Dominion-Provincial Conference, January 14, 1941, p. 18 (quotation), King's Printer, 1941.

9. Declaration by Adélar Godbout before the Québec Legislative Assembly, April 1942, reproduced in Réal Bélanger et al., *Les grands débats parlementaires*, Sainte-Foy, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1994, p. 167 (See part 2 of this document). The temporary nature of the suspension of the provincial tax was also reasserted by Adélar Godbout in a letter dated June 9, 1942 addressed to the Prime Minister of Canada, W. L. MacKenzie King.

provided, to desist from imposing certain taxes during the terms of this agreement, be deemed to have surrendered, abandoned or given over to the Dominion any of the powers, rights, privileges or authority vested in the

Province under the provisions of The British North America Act, 1867, or any subsequent Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, or to have otherwise impaired any of such powers, rights, privileges or authority.”¹⁰

10. *Agreement between the Governments of the Dominion and of the Province of Quebec*, May 27, 1942 (Part 3: document no. 2).