

**D**eclaration by Adélarde Godbout,  
Prime Minister of Québec, during  
the debate on the Act respecting an  
Agreement between the Governments of  
the Dominion and of the Province of  
Québec for the suspension of certain  
taxes during the war, Québec Legislative  
Assembly, April 1942.

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[Translation]

The Leader of the Opposition has brilliantly expounded a cause that does not exist. I would like to repeat word by word, if I had the eloquence to do so, all of the words he has uttered about provincial autonomy. We don't wish to sacrifice any of the province's rights. Never, for any consideration, be it on a primordial point or a secondary one, shall we consent to ceding a portion of the rights and privileges that are guaranteed us by the federative pact. This pact must be honoured in its integrity.

But absolutely none of this applies to the measure that is before the House. I am one hundred per cent for ceding nothing. Everyone is. What does the bill

say? We are not ceding the right to tax, but we are temporarily suspending the levying of two taxes. Ottawa will collect these taxes in return for a compensation that works in our favour. And we 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.

One may ask why the federal government is consenting to an agreement that is so advantageous to us. The reason is clear. The federal government wishes to increase the taxes that we will let it collect for a while. Because of the war, Ottawa needs more revenue. A tax surplus is required. I do not agree with the Leader of the Opposition when he says that this surplus should come from the sales tax, which weighs more heavily on large families in particular. I would rather have the increased burden borne by the corporations, first because they are better able to bear it and second because the corporations are profiting from the war through an increase in their business. [...]

Source: Réal Bélanger et al., *Les grands débats parlementaires*, Sainte-Foy, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1994, p. 167-168.