

Private Bills

Mr. Howard: I wonder if the hon. Member for Vancouver-Burrard would mind waiting until I conclude my remarks, and then I will be happy to answer any question to the best of my ability?

Because the three banks are all of primary concern to British Columbia, we think that they should be proceeded with and given either favourable or unfavourable consideration at about the same time. We took the position two weeks ago that there should be a delay in the progress of the bill to establish the Laurentide Bank only because that was the one before us at that time. The same remarks would have applied equally to the Bank of Western Canada had it been before us. There should be a delay until the other bills have been presented. We said we should wait to ascertain whether or not the promoters of the Bank of British Columbia wanted to file another petition for the incorporation of that bank. This condition was met the other day, on May 11. It seems reasonable, then, that this Parliament should be able to proceed at a reasonably equal speed in the consideration of the three measures to establish these banks. They should be considered on the basis of their merits at about the same time, so that they all might either be defeated at the same time or might receive endorsement at about the same time.

Mr. Basford: I wonder if the hon. Member would permit a question? He used, throughout his speech, the word "we". I should like him to identify whom he means by "we".

Mr. Howard: I speak for countless thousands of people in British Columbia.

Mr. Basford: I ask him, then, does he speak for the New Democratic Party?

Mr. Howard: I suggest the hon. Member might be able to discover that, if he were to get his colleagues to call for a standing division on the measure. He will see how we vote. There is an old saying that—

You cannot be a Socialist
No matter how you try
Until you think in terms of we
Instead of terms of I.

Mr. Joseph Slogan (Springfield): I am not going to speak very long on this subject, but I should like to say a few words because it seems to me something is going on in this House which is prejudicial to the interests of Canadians. By that I mean that any group of Canadians or any Canadian who brings a petition for a bill into this House should

[Mr. Basford.]

have that bill considered on its own merits. It should not be used as a tool to put pressure on the Government to accede to some request or desire of another small group who are not representative of the Canadian people as a whole.

In the particular instance of banks, this Parliament has exclusive jurisdiction and therefore a group desiring incorporation have to come to this House for approval. The conditions under which approval is given are very stringent and the group has generally met these conditions. The matter is then one for the scrutiny of this House. I think the Bank of Western Canada, if considered on its own merits, amongst the three banks presently before the House is by far the most worthy of consideration by this House. I think it grossly unfair for any small group of people who are serving a special interest, in this case I think it is their own interest, to attempt to exert pressure in one direction. I think they are trying to garner a few votes, nothing more and nothing less.

Mr. Howard: Just like you are doing.

Mr. Slogan: I feel that a group which tries to speak so strongly for Canadian nationalism, Canadian ownership show here how hypocritical and ambivalent they can be. It just so happens that the group which is promoting this Bank of Western Canada already have a bank charter. If you have read the newspapers recently you will have noticed that the Wellington Bank offered shares on the market of Canada. There is nothing to prevent them from establishing branches across Canada. I believe it would be preferable to have a bank incorporated in Canada by Canadians, and given the right by this House of Commons to follow their business in this country, rather than having a foreign based bank in this country and having all the profits taken out of the country.

What this group in this House is doing, in essence, is forcing the promoters of this bank to take the other course, if the approval of this House is not given. They have advanced some spurious arguments, such as the one that these bank charters should be proceeded with at the same rate. It is obvious that the Bank of Western Canada and the Laurentide Bank have come to the House of Commons rather than the Senate, as they did before, because this is where they experienced their difficulties. The Bank of British Columbia is petitioning in the Senate first, rather than the House of Commons, because they know