

This is one point we have to get across, that is, that anything that functions as money is money.

I have no wish to take up the time of the house any longer but I would like to remind hon. members that the Bank Act comes up for revision this year. There is considerably more interest to-day in this subject than there was eleven years ago.

Mr. IRVINE: You would not think so to look at the house.

Mr. SPENCER: No, you would not.

It is only natural that the banks will do their best to defend their privileges. I do not blame them at all, but there is a responsibility upon our shoulders to look after the interests of the public. I am not aware of what the banks intend to do with regard to employing people to look after their interests, but in 1923 they engaged three of the most eminent legal men in this country, Sir Thomas White, Mr. Aime Geoffrion and Mr. H. J. Symington. There were also other legal men engaged, and with the cost of printing and distributing a pamphlet as propaganda, etc., they spent in that year a total of \$96,646.50. Somebody whispered to me the other day that already the banks had engaged Mr. Geoffrion the second time. I do not blame them for engaging these very highly paid men to look after their interests, but we are here to look after the interests of the people, and it is up to us to do our best to see that the people get a square deal when the Bank Act comes up for revision.

Hon. E. N. RHODES (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I take no exception to the fact that the hon. member for Camrose (Mr. Lucas) has made this motion, but I must point out that a large portion of the discussion, particularly that of the hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Spencer), has had reference to a central bank and other matters mentioned in the speech from the throne and which will be dealt with in the very near future.

Mr. SPENCER: May I interrupt? I did not mention the central bank.

Mr. RHODES: Having said so much, it is not my purpose to raise any point of order; my particular object in mentioning the circumstance was to indicate that I do not propose to deal with the matter at length in view of the fact that in measures which are to come before the house we will be discussing the whole question of banking in all its ramifications.

I hope that my hon. friend from Camrose and my hon. friend from Battle River will not take it amiss if I say to them that, listening to their remarks, I could not help bearing in mind a statement made not long since by a very eminent professor in the United States who has specialized in economics and finance, and who gave public utterance to the view that there were only sixteen persons in the world who knew anything about finance. Among those he cited there was not one Canadian. So far as I am personally concerned, therefore, I approach the subject with great humility; but I am glad to know that the views expressed by this eminent professor did not in the least deter my hon. friend from Camrose and my hon. friend from Battle River from discussing this very large question.

The first recital in the resolution reads:

Whereas the provision of an adequate medium of exchange through the issue and control of currency is a function inherent in the state, and one which is wholly within the jurisdiction of the federal parliament. . . .

I take no exception to that recital. I have only to point out in that connection that since confederation the control of the issue of currency has undoubtedly been recognized as coming under dominion jurisdiction, and control has been exercised through the passing of the Bank Act and similar financial statutes bearing upon banks and banking during each decennial revision down to the present year. It may be a debatable question whether that control has been as adequate or as complete as the circumstances warrant. But whether it was or was not complete, the fact remains that during all this period we have had control of the issue of currency.

In the second recital my hon. friend has taken in rather large territory. The second recital reads:

Whereas, the transfer of this function to private interests to be used as a means of profit rather than as a public service has enabled those controlling finance to dominate every phase in the industrial and economic life of the nation. . . .

I do not propose to discuss that second recital at any length, but I wish to take exception to the very sweeping statements which it contains. Nor do I intend to debate the last assertion, that those who control finance dominate every phase of the industrial and economic life of the nation. But I do wish to make one or two observations with respect to the third recital, because it seems to me that it puts forward a point of view which gave colour to the whole of the utterances of my hon. friend from Camrose