

*Private Bills*

be indulged in by anybody representing these banks seeking incorporation.

The position we took last session and again so far this session with respect to the bill now before us to incorporate the Bank of Western Canada, and also with regard to the bill to incorporate the Laurentide Bank of Canada, is related to what has occurred and may occur with regard to the other new bank contemplated within the past year or two, the Bank of British Columbia. Our position has been predicated on the basis of what has occurred and may occur with regard to the application of the Bank of British Columbia.

As is well known, last session the Senate Committee which dealt with this matter decided to play favourites. They made favourable decisions as to the Bank of Western Canada and the Laurentide Bank of Canada, but because of their desire to play favourites and because of the investment interests of some of the Senators they decided to make an unfavourable decision with respect to the Bank of British Columbia. If some of the investors or supporters or promoters of the Bank of Western Canada feel upset or put out by the fact that their bill was not proceeded with last session, they need look no farther than the decision of the Senate Banking Committee to find the reason.

The action of that Committee was followed, of course, by a statement by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gordon) to the effect that he agreed with the decision of the Senate Banking Committee, and since then the Minister has introduced revisions to the Bank Act which indicate that it is the policy of the Government to prohibit provincial governments from investing in private chartered banks. We still think this is unwarranted interference in the constitutional rights of the provinces. The Province of British Columbia seems to have had the ball tossed back to it in this case and we hope that province will take whatever steps it can in the courts to have this question determined. It may well be that there will be a running battle over this question between the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada for the next two or three years.

There is no doubt on whose side I stand. I stand for the right of the Province of British Columbia to invest its money in banks if it so desires, and I say that the decision of the Senate and the Federal Government is nothing short of interference in the rights of

the province in order to protect certain vested interests.

A few weeks ago the bill to incorporate the Laurentide Bank of Canada was before us. On that occasion we made similar comments. We indicated that the deadline for the filing of petitions for private bills was the 17th of May and that because of the intrusion of the Federal Government into the right of the province to invest in banks we should wait until the 17th of May deadline was reached to give the sponsors of the Bank of British Columbia more time to consider the matter and to see whether they would determine that they should file another petition. We felt that if they did file a petition before the deadline, then all three bank bills could be proceeded with at relatively the same time and with relatively the same speed. I say "relatively" because it is not possible to proceed with them at the same time in that two of the bills have been initiated in this House and the other one has been initiated in the Senate. The result is that there will be a variation in the activity with regard to them because the two Houses move at different speeds in the consideration of the business before them.

Just the other day the sponsors of the Bank of British Columbia did present another petition to the Senate. I should like to read from page 44 of the *Minutes of Proceedings of the Senate of Canada* for Tuesday, May 11, 1965, where the following appears:

The following petitions were severally presented:—

By the Honourable Senator Farris:

Of Harold Barrington Elworthy, William Clark Mearns and John Alfred Griffith Wallace, of the City of Victoria, and others of the City of Vancouver, both in the Province of British Columbia; praying to be incorporated under the name of "Bank of British Columbia", and in French "Banque de la Colombie-Britannique".

The petition of the Bank of British Columbia was filed in the other place just two days ago and there is no need to worry about the sponsors having to meet the deadline of the 17th of May. Because of the decision of the Federal Government to prevent the legitimate desires of the Provincial Government of British Columbia from coming to fruition it is our desire, as it was earlier, to see that no one of the banks now seeking incorporation receives an advantage by being incorporated in advance of the others. Each one of these banks—

• (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. Basford: May I ask—