

over by the Government wholly and solely for the benefit of the people. Might it not be reasonable to say that, if that railway were to haul the coal from the West, even at a rate that would not pay, that if sufficient coal were brought to supply the needs of the people here to-day and for all time to come, that it would be a benefit to the people in not being dependent upon the United States for their coal supply, and that the extra cost, if any should be charged to the public debt of Canada? I cannot see why we should continue doing as we are to-day—paying exorbitant prices to the United States for coal when we have an illimitable supply in our own western country. When we can bring that coal here on railways owned by the people themselves, I do not see why the railways should not give up the satisfaction of saying “we have a surplus of \$20,000,000,” and content themselves instead with saying “we have no surplus, but we have supplied coal to the people of Canada, coal which is as necessary as bread or light, and they are not dependent in any way upon the United States.” It seems to me honourable gentlemen, that this suggestion might be considered in attempting to solve the difficulty so far as that commodity is concerned at the present time.

Let me for a moment touch upon the question of the St. Lawrence waterway. That is a much-mooted question, and one which is more and more being brought to the attention of the people of Canada every day. It is settled now, I think, that that work is purely a Dominion work, and a matter for the Federal Government here and the Federal Government in the United States. The question of power is simply incidental to the question of navigation. There is no doubt that such a great waterway from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence to the head waters of the Great Lakes would effect a vast saving in freights, and would be of tremendous benefit to people all along the route. All of which comes down again to the fundamental principle of reducing the cost of living. Although I have no word to say against the great good that the St. Lawrence waterway would do yet we in this country know pretty well what such an undertaking would involve. If we do not, we ought to, before entering upon an orgy of expenditure, a thing which always brings misery in its trail. All I have to say in that regard is that before the project is taken up, great though the benefit accruing from it might be, it should be most carefully looked into from every point of view, and we should know just where it is going to take us before we start, and just exactly where it is going to let us

Hon. Mr. PARDEE.

down. And I say that no Government should undertake it, and I do not believe any Government will undertake it, until it knows exactly what it is going to involve in the way of cost.

I am glad indeed to know that the Government is going to appoint a Commission to look into the affairs of the Home Bank. The Home Bank failure is perhaps one of the greatest scandals that ever took place in this country. Think of it, honourable gentlemen, that a very few men were enabled, under the law as it then was, to gather in millions upon millions of deposits and to sell to shareholders thousands and hundreds of thousands of shares of stock, while they were allowed to take the money and practically without let or hindrance invest it in what? Not in legitimate banking business, but in speculation to bring to themselves individually, not as directors of the bank, the profits arising from the speculation of that money. I say that when the state of the law is such that hundreds and thousands of people can be swindled in that way, it is quite time for the Government of Canada and the Bankers' Association to get together and draft stringent laws, laws even so stringent that they might curtail the operations of the other banks, so that no band of speculators could get together and perpetrate another such swindle on the public of the country. When we realize that there will be a shortage of \$7,000,000 and upwards, and that thousands of shareholders will be liable for the double liability, that thousands of depositors will have lost every cent they had, we must admit that it is time something was done. I am told—I do not say whether the authority is good or bad, but I am decidedly of the opinion that it is good—that not more than two months before the bank closed its doors—

Hon. Mr. POPE: Two days.

Hon. Mr. PARDEE: —that the directors themselves sent out to their various agents in the different parts of the country instructions to get in all the deposits possible, and that they would be paid an extra commission on the deposits they got. When that sort of thing is perpetrated, I am not a believer in too much paternalism being exercised in either House of Parliament. Perhaps we have too much of it now. But when any government takes a corporation under its ægis and grants it a charter to do business, and that charter advertises to the world that the corporation will receive deposits and make payments on them, the idea prevails that it will carry on business in a reputable way; and when that implied