

been advocating that similar action should be taken. Hon. members will recall that two years ago it was proposed to introduce legislation along these lines for the purpose of controlling the marketing of live stock. I do not know whether or not it is correct, but I have been informed that legislation was prepared for that purpose but was not introduced into the house. Under these circumstances may I express my appreciation of the fact that it is proposed to bring down legislation during this session for the purpose stated in this sentence.

Before I proceed further may I direct the attention of the house to the important significance of that sentence. It means that at last Canada is commencing a national planning. Because of things which have occurred during the past four or five years the government is now finding it necessary to begin a national planning in the interests of the Canadian people. While it is only a very small amount of planning that is proposed, at the same time the fact that the government has found it expedient to commence this thing is in my judgment worthy of our notice.

The next paragraph to which I desire to refer is the one dealing with the world monetary and economic conference. As hon. members know, this conference was held in London last summer but I think it is admitted on all sides that that conference was to all intents and purposes a failure. While some slight progress may have been made with regard to the possibility of future conferences, on the whole the conference was a failure. There are good reasons for its failure, and, in my judgment, one is the fact that the countries represented did not take into consideration the real economic factors which underlie the present depression. It was stated in the press that one of the most important functions which the conference undertook was to determine if possible in what commodities there could be a reduction in the volume of production. In my judgment that is not the crux of the situation. Would it not have been better for the conference to recognize the fact that we are now living in the midst of plenty and that the era of scarcity has long since passed? The conference should have given consideration to the distribution of the plenty now available. Just so long as these conferences meet and evade that important question, so long will they continue to be failures.

The next paragraph refers to the appointment of a royal commission to inquire into the banking and monetary system of Canada. Two important recommendations are made by

[Mr. Gardiner.]

this commission. One is the establishment of a central bank in Canada and the other is that a further investigation should be made into agricultural credits. So far as the central bank is concerned may I remind this house that for the last ten years the group in this corner have been advocating the establishment of such an organization. Almost year after year we have presented resolutions asking that a central bank should be established and now we are hoping, in view of the recommendations of this commission, that that action will be taken. In my judgment the value of this bank to the Canadian people will depend upon the plan of its organization. Under our present banking system the credit of Canada is placed at the disposal of our banking institutions; this has been so ever since the Bank Act came into existence. I believe that if this central bank is properly organized, if it is publicly owned and operated, it can render a great service to the various governments in Canada and at the same time be an important factor in the welfare of the masses of the Canadian people. But should this bank be privately owned, and operated for profit, the service given to Canada as a whole will be almost next to nothing; the profit factor will intervene almost entirely. Of course, I am not in the confidence of the government and I do not know what the Prime Minister and his colleagues have in their minds in this regard. It may be that they intend to have a publicly owned bank to be operated in the public interest. If it is privately owned, and operated in the interests of those who are its shareholders, then I shall be very much disappointed, as I am sure the people of Canada will be. The leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King), when discussing the central bank yesterday, did not make a declaration of his position in regard to the manner in which the bank will be financed—whether it will be a publicly owned or a privately owned bank. The nearest he came to an explanation was to say that he hoped the bank would be Canadian owned. It is quite true that it may be Canadian owned, and yet it might not render that service which the people would expect a central bank to give. I am not one of those who believe that it is the function of a central bank to lend money to all and sundry, but I do believe that through the efforts that may be put forward, provided the government assume control over the central bank, the monetary and credit situation in this country can be better taken care of than if the bank were privately owned and managed for profit. We shall have to wait and see