was represented at that conference by one who had the approval of the then government. I have always been wondering just why, when the Bank Act was revised in 1923, no provision was made for a central bank. That is what I desire to say, and I say frankly that hon. gentlemen who sit opposite and to the right did three years ago argue for a central bank. I think it would have been a little better this afternoon if they had said that it would be quite impossible to create a central bank in this country without revising the Bank Act, and as the Bank Act was for a period of ten years, to have undertaken at the end of seven years to withdraw or to lessen the privileges which parliament had conferred for ten years, to create a central bank at the end of the seven year period, would have brought about great difficulties. I think there is no doubt in the mind of any hon. member that that is so.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Does the Prime Minister really suggest that there can be no revision of the Bank Act within the ten year period?

Mr. BENNETT: He certainly does not, Mr. Speaker. But he does desire to assure the hon. gentleman from Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) that when privileges are granted for a period of ten years the abrogation of those privileges before the end of the period cannot take place unless something in reason is substituted for them.

Now the essential feature of our banking legislation has been that we have conferred certain privileges upon organizations or corporate entities that came into being by the exercise of their powers by parliament. That is, parliament has said that a given number of individuals who will subscribe a given amount of capital shall thereby become organized, not as a trading corporation but as an entity called a bank, with a proper name; and amongst the privileges which we have conferred upon the banks heretofore in the last fifty years was the privilege of issuing paper money. That is, during the period of ten years, from 1923 until 1933, and by appropriate legislation in 1933 until the first of July, 1934, the chartered banks, created by statute of this parliament, had conferred upon them a privilege—the privilege of issuing paper money to the extent of their paid-up capital. And I think it will be common ground with us all that to have deprived the banks of that privilege within the ten years would have been an improper exercise of the powers of parliament. I merely mention that, because I am not going to discuss the various features of the legislation, which have been so fully explained to the house by the Minister of Finance. I merely wish to indicate that as long ago as 1923 this parliament was aware of the fact that the nations of the world had met together at Genoa and had declared that a central bank was desirable for all countries that did not possess one. The present president of the Bank of Montreal was one of the delegates who attended that gathering, and for good reasons the government of the day, when amending the Bank Act, did not make any provision for the establishment of a central bank.

I do not know that any very great purpose is served by wandering around to ascertain who was the putative father of this particular idea in days gone by. It might be sufficient for our purposes to say that this government at the present time is assuming paternity for the measure introduced by the Minister of Finance. That perhaps covers the situation sufficiently for our purposes, and there is no necessity of making further observations with respect thereto. I do not think any useful purpose will be served at this stage by traversing the various observations made by the hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat (Mr. Woodsworth), nor by traversing the various matters referred to by the leader of the official opposition. All that need be said is that by passing the resolution now standing in the name of the Minister of Finance we are not approving of the details of the measure, for the house is not yet possessed of a knowledge of those details. We are merely pronouncing in favour of a central bank, and when the measure has been introduced and the bill given the first reading the house will have an opportunity to consider later the extent to which it approves of the details as they appear in the measure.

On the other hand it will go to the committee on banking and commerce where I am sure, if it follows the course that similar measures have done in days gone by, it will meet, at the hands of those who sit opposite and to the right, with that warm reception that characterizes all measures that emanate from any government. That their ideas with respect to finance are sometimes extreme is well known, but that many of the suggestions they have made from time to time with respect to credit, banking facilities and so forth are generally recognized as having some merit is but a very commonplace statement to make. One could not expect that every possible suggestion that has ever appeared in any part of the world would all be wrong. I am sure that is the attitude of mind with which the hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Irvine), for instance, views this matter. There