

Mr. PORTER: What is the date of that?

Mr. MURDOCK: The letter which accompanied the statement is dated May 16; the statement itself is dated May 20. The postmark on the envelope shows that the letter was posted at 8.30 p.m. on May 20.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is all which it would seem necessary for me to say at the present time. I leave the matter entirely in the hands of the House.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, with all that the hon. member for West Hastings (Mr. Porter) has said respecting the importance of maintaining the honour, the dignity and integrity of parliament, of members of parliament, and particularly of ministers of the Crown, I am, and I believe every hon. member of this House is in most hearty accord. The hon. member was careful to state when he made his presentation to the House that he was doing so, to use his own words, "in the light of facts as they have been disclosed to me". Since he has made his statement he has had further facts disclosed to him; he has now that full information before him which hon. members would wish to have in judging matters of this kind, and I leave it to him to say whether in the light of the full knowledge which he now has he thinks he will be maintaining the dignity, integrity and honour of this House by pressing his motion to a division.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that with respect to this particular matter any necessity for an inquiry by a select standing committee of parliament is unnecessary in view of action which the government has already taken. My hon. friend said that he hoped the government would permit an investigation of the charge which he had made. Possibly he has forgotten that quite early in the session, after the government had announced to parliament that Mr. Justice McKeown had been appointed to investigate representations which had been made to the government with regard to the interests of the depositors of the Home Bank, some hon. members drew attention to the fact that the commission appeared to be limited in the matter of time, and did not extend up to the moment of the bank's failure nor did it go back to the time when the bank itself was established. Rather than have it appear—quite erroneously, certainly—that the government was in any way seeking to circumscribe the extent of the inquiry, and in order to demonstrate our desire for the fullest possible investigation into all phases of the bank's failure, the order

in council originally passed was amended on the 17th March last. I laid on the Table a copy of this amended order at the time, and I will now read it to the House in order that its terms may be incorporated as part of the record. It is as follows:

The Committee of the Privy Council have had before them a report, dated 11th March, 1924, from the Hon. G. P. Graham, for the Prime Minister, submitting that since the publication of the order in council of the 23rd February, 1924 (P.C. 306), providing for an investigation into the affairs of the Home Bank of Canada, representations have been made to the government, in the House of Commons and from other quarters, as to the advisability of extending the inquiry.

It was explained by the Right Honourable the Prime Minister that, in referring to a commissioner allegations prepared and presented to the government by the depositors of the bank, the government were possibly going as far as the depositors would think it necessary or advisable, but that in view of the representations now made, the government was prepared to have the fullest possible investigation made and to authorize the commissioner to investigate the affairs of the said bank from the issue of its charter down to the date of its failure.

The Committee of the Privy Council therefore advise that the powers of the commissioner under the said order in council be not limited to the specific years 1915, 1916 and 1918 referred to in the petition of the depositors, but should extend to an investigation of the affairs of the said bank during the whole interval between the issue of the bank's charter and the failure of the said bank, including any representations made to the government of the day, as to its condition, any action taken by any of the Ministers of Finance upon such representations as may have been made, and the effect on the position of the depositors of any audit under section 56a of the Bank Act if made at any time in consequence of such representations.

In view of additional representations which have been made to the government that at divers times while the said bank was in existence deposits were made and afterwards withdrawn by various depositors, under conditions which might require explanation, the Committee of the Privy Council further advise that the attention of the commissioner be especially directed to this feature in the course of his investigation.

So, Mr. Speaker, on the 17th March last this government had already by order in council referred to the commissioner who has been, and is still, taking evidence, any "representations which have been made that at divers times while the said bank was in existence deposits were made and afterwards withdrawn by various depositors under conditions which might require explanation." The commissioner has completed one part of the inquiry. The government have asked him not to continue to the end, but rather to hasten the part of his report which is of most concern to the depositors, and to present this to the government as quickly as possible so that we can deal with it this session. It has of course, been assumed that the commissioner would continue his work after he had made an interim report on the one phase he has been inquiring into and take