

at any time be faced with insolvency. I ask hon. gentlemen to consider who suffers or who gains by investments of the Sun Life Assurance Company. Surely only two classes of persons can gain and only two classes of persons can suffer, namely, the policyholders and the shareholders. And, I would ask, who of either of these classes is now coming forward and asking parliament to interest itself, through its banking and commerce committee, in an investigation of this kind?

As a participating policyholder I was highly delighted with the policy of the Sun Life company in its investments in common stock, because I received such substantial dividends on my participating policies that my premiums were greatly reduced. And surely it little behooves me now, because, by a turn of the wheel and a change of time, the market value of these stocks has depreciated, to come forward and howl about a policy of which I so heartily approved, and the dividends resulting from which I so readily and gladly received.

What is causing this agitation? I think it has been fairly well demonstrated that it comes very largely from one source—from Mr. J. J. Harpell and this Journal of Commerce. I have no personal knowledge of the gentleman or of the Journal of Commerce, but if I can accept the record published in the Financial Post of January 30, 1932, in reply to a letter from a policyholder in the Sun Life Company, this journal seems to be one which is published intermittently and which is apparently not supported either by the public or by the business community, to the extent of having advertising in its columns, or a published and sworn subscription list of paid subscriptions. It seems to me that before this parliament or any committee of it is asked to take upon itself the onerous task of making such an investigation we should at least have complaint from a substantial number of persons interested, and we should at least have the hon. member who sponsors such a resolution come forward and establish in this chamber a prima facie case. But, as against that, what have we? Instead of having presented to us a prima facie case in favour of an investigation we have the record of the actuarial investigation of all jurisdictions under which this company does business. Their report is: They are solvent. We have the report of our own superintendent of insurance, of whose qualifications much has been said this evening, and his report is: They are solvent. And last but not least we have the word of the Prime Minister of this country (Mr. Bennett), a gentleman whose

[Mr. Lawson.]

qualifications and knowledge of business in general and of insurance in particular, I am confident, will be conceded by all members on both sides of the house irrespective of their political views, and he says that, after investigating the matter thoroughly, he is of the opinion that this company is solvent.

To my mind, Mr. Speaker, to pass this resolution in view of the evidence before the house and in view of the records we have available, would be highly detrimental to the interests of the only people who stand to suffer by the insolvency of the company, if it ever became insolvent, namely, the policyholders.

Hon. CHARLES STEWART (West Edmonton): I, too, have a vital interest in the resolution before the house, because I happen to be a policyholder in the North American Life Assurance Company. I fail to see, after what has been said this evening, why that company should have been brought into the resolution at all. I have not very much to say with respect to the position which the North American company occupies, after what has been so well said by the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett), but I notice in the pamphlet issued by the so-called Policyholders' Association a statement that Mr. Bradshaw and Mr. Gundy held 1,415 shares of North American Life stock and that evidently it was held in trust by one Mr. Martin. That should be cleared up. We who are policyholders happen to know all about this transaction, and the Mr. Martin who held these shares in trust for the gentleman mentioned was Mr. Martin of the Imperial bank. When they were able to pay him, the shares were transferred. May I say further, with respect to these very shares, and others held by these two gentlemen, that the average cost was \$127. That was the price they received for the shares when the company was mutualized. I can hardly conceive that hon. gentlemen in that corner of the house would have any objection to the mutualization of the North American Life Assurance Company. I felt it was in the interests of the policyholders, and as an interested party I was very glad to see it accomplished.

There is one other matter with respect to this company's standing, and that is the statement made by the Prime Minister that only five per cent of the securities of the company were held in ordinary stocks. One-half of one per cent only is invested in common stocks, so I think, after all that has been said about this company, there can be no question about its solvency and standing in the community.