

These men desire to be heard before the committee and the Government or the Cabinet in respect to several of the clauses proposed to be amended. The Retail Merchants' Association also wish to place representations before the Government before this Bill is finally passed. They communicated with the Finance Minister on the subject, and it is not any breach of confidence for me to produce the letter that the minister wrote in reply to the secretary of that association. It is as follows:

Ottawa, September, 5, 1917.

Dear Mr. Trowern:—

I have yours of the 4th instant with reference to the Act amending the Companies Act. Your representations will receive our careful consideration. It is possible that the Bill may not be proceeded with in the Commons on account of congestion of business there.

Yours faithfully,

W. T. White.

The Finance Minister told me that the Bill would not be proceeded with. I was very much surprised when I heard from Mr. Trowern that the Bill was being taken up at this late day in the session.

Mr. CARVELL: What are the sections of the Bill in respect of which the parties to whom my hon. friend refers would be injuriously affected?

Mr. CURRIE: There is one amending clause in this Act enabling co-operative companies to be established all over the country.

Mr. MEIGHEN: There is no such clause. It was in apprehension of that that the persons to whom my hon. friend refers asked that the matter be considered.

Mr. CURRIE: The other section to which objection is taken is that which does away with the advertising of incorporation. Several newspaper proprietors communicated with me on the subject, they wanted to send a deputation.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: What do you think about that yourself?

Mr. CURRIE: I think it is a proper thing.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: To cut it out?

Mr. CURRIE: No.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: What is the good of compelling companies to spend money advertising in newspapers the fact that they have been incorporated?

Mr. CARVELL: If they were compelled to put in only an ordinary notice of eight

or ten lines stating that certain gentlemen had been incorporated under the Companies Act, it would not be so bad; but when they have to print columns of material which the average man would not understand if he did read—

Mr. R. B. BENNETT: And which nobody does read.

Mr. CARVELL: I do not think that the newspapers need business so badly as all that.

Mr. CURRIE: That is the ground that the newspaper proprietors are taking, and in justice to them they should be heard. Half a dozen of them have told me that they do not desire any changes to be made in this Act. This Bill proposes to do away almost entirely with the present method of incorporating companies and to adopt what is known as the Ontario Act. A number of clauses in the Ontario Act, while they may do very well in provincial legislation, should not be incorporated in a Dominion Act. For instance, one clause provides that a list of shareholders must be sent annually to the Government.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is struck out.

Mr. MIDDLEBRO: Neither names nor amounts are required by this Bill.

Mr. CURRIE: In view of the fact that the public were given to understand that the Bill would not be gone on with, I do not see the necessity for going on with it at this late hour in the session. It is a very important Bill, one that should go before a special committee and be just as carefully considered as the Bank Act. On several occasions since I became a member of this House attempts were made to bring about amendments to the Companies Act, but on each occasion nothing was done. Now it is proposed in the dying hours of the longest session of the longest Parliament that we have had to go on with these important amendments to the Companies Act. I should like the Government to consider whether it is good policy to make these changes. I have not had time to read the Bill, but I have received a dozen letters with regard to it. I have given people the assurance that the Bill would not be gone on with.

Mr. CARVELL: Does the hon. member not realize that this Bill was carefully threshed out in the Senate?

Mr. R. B. BENNETT: For five weeks, off and on.