

commence to follow the plough who now wander off to the cities of the United States. All that I am asking for is that some facilities may be given to our western country to enable the farmers to obtain small loans for short periods at a moderate rate of interest, and I therefore respectfully ask the Government if they will kindly take into consideration the suggestion I have made, on behalf of the farmers in the North-West, in dealing with the Banking Act this session.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—I can assure my hon. friend that the important subject to which he has called the attention of the House has received, and is receiving, the most careful consideration of the Government; but as my hon. friend knows, this is one of the decennial crises in the banking interests of the country. A Bill is being prepared and will very shortly be introduced into the House of Commons by the Finance Minister. The Government consider that it would be inexpedient at the present moment, before the Finance Minister is prepared to develop his plans in the House, to disclose the principles which will govern them in the preparation of the legislation which they propose to place before the House on this subject.

GOLD COINAGE IN CANADA.

MOTION.

HON. MR. McINNES (B.C.) moved the following resolution:—

Resolved, as the opinion of this House, that it is both desirable and expedient that the Government should immediately pass a coinage Act and establish a mint.

He said: I am sorry that the duty of calling the attention of this House and of the Government to this most important subject has not fallen to some one else better qualified to do it the justice it demands. However, as no one else has seen fit to suggest the propriety of establishing a mint and having a gold coinage of our own, I take the liberty of doing so, coming as I do from the great gold and silver producing Province of the Dominion. Naturally I take, probably, a deeper interest in this subject than hon. gentlemen coming from the Provinces that are non-producers of the precious metals. I hope to place before the House such data as will cause them to agree—if they are not already

prepared to agree—with the resolution now before the House, and to support me to the utmost extent. However, before I do that I must deal with the question of the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada with reference to coinage. A few days after I gave notice of this motion several hon. gentlemen in this House, among the number the hon. member who has been leading the Senate for the last two or three weeks in the absence of our respected leader—who I am very glad, and I am sure all of us are glad, to see back amongst us again—who expressed a doubt as to the jurisdiction of the Dominion Parliament on this subject. Up to that time it had never occurred to me that we had not the power under the 14th subsection of the 91st section of the British North America Act. However, that induced me to look into the matter more carefully and consult all the authorities with respect to coinage that I could get. The result of my investigation is as follows: I find that the first attempt made to pass a coinage Act by the Parliament of Canada was in 1850. That Act received the assent of the Governor General contrary to the instructions from the Crown, and the consequence was that that Act was disallowed. Hon. gentlemen will find it in the Sessional Papers of 1851, in Appendix YY of that year. I find that the next step taken towards the passing of a coinage and currency Act by the Parliament of Canada was in 1868, and in 1871 the Parliament of Canada passed Acts expressly reserving the prerogatives of the Crown. I will ask hon. gentlemen to refer to 31 Vic., chap. 46, and 34 Vic., chap. 4, respectively. Again the next step that I find taken by the Parliament of Canada was in 1887. This was in connection with the proclamation of 1877, to be found in the Statutes at page 61, with respect to bronze coinage, and the hon. gentleman from Ottawa, who was then Secretary of State, signed that proclamation. That was allowed. The next thing I will call your attention to is section 91 of the British North America Act, which undoubtedly gives jurisdiction to the Parliament of Canada to establish a mint and to issue any coin they see fit. The question is now, what rights have the Canadian Parliament under section 91 of the British North America Act? Can the Parliament of Canada interfere with the Queen's prerogative?