

I say to the Government—I have no mission to give a guidance to those who administer the country, and I do not pretend to do so either—but I have a duty to perform. I am a member of this Parliament, I sit in the council of the nation, being in contact with a large part of the population, I lay before the Government facts which militate in favour of an extensive discussion and if the Government, after having heard our arguments, find them worthless, they are at liberty to reject them, but there is not a single man in his senses who would not give up before evidence, be he the most inveterate partisan you could find in this country.

If the Government would openly give the Opposition all the information they ask, and thereby prove their good faith—for, any way, I would not pass any rash judgment—but in the face of the Government's insistence, of its manner of proceeding, of the impediments they are putting in the way of the free discussion of this measure, I say that those who believe that there is a snake in the grass are probably not mistaken.

When we see men of the standing of those who have signed the Montreal manifesto, they may say what they please, the great majority of those who signed that document are men who hold the same political tenets as the hon. Minister of Finance.

Would any one for a single moment pretend that men supporting, as they have ever supported in the past, by their votes, by their work, by their influence, by their money contributions the candidates, the policy and the Bills of the present Government; would any one pretend that when they took the stand they have taken in censuring this Bill, they were inspired with the desire of harming the Government? No one can pretend that. Will any one pretend that the signers of this memorandum wish to promote the Opposition interests? Why not at all. What is then their mover in making them condemn this Bill? Their prime mover is that, being friends of the present Government, and seeing that this Government have entered into a dangerous path, they have the courage to sign a document in order to put them on their guard and prevent them from committing the iniquity they are in the way of perpetrating and, in the face of this calm, cool, rational protest of business men, friends of the Government, who assume to put the Government on their guard against an administrative Act and a legislative measure, the consequences of which have such a vast scope as the Bill we are now discussing, I say that the Government should treat their friends

more confidently. It may be possible, Mr. Chairman, that from this side of the House, all that we do, all that we say shall be supposed to bear the stamps of partisanship, but at least those who are not in the Opposition, the friends of the Government, who lay before the administrators of Canada the facts and the reasons which have induced them to sign this manifesto, should deserve some consideration.

But there is more than that; it is under the pressure of public opinion that these gentlemen have seen fit to warn the Government, and when warning the Government, the only answer they get from the country's administrators, is the gag and the closure, imposed upon the members of His Majesty's Opposition in this House. I say that the Government's responsibility is heavier than they seem to realize.

After these considerations, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the attention you have paid to my words and for the freedom of speech you have granted me, and I ask the Government to discuss and allow the discussion of that measure with the widest possible latitude, in order to reassure not only the members of the Opposition, but to reassure commerce, to reassure finance, to reassure the public.

Some may contend that this Bill is very bad. The Government may contend it is very good. It is perhaps not as good as the Government claim it to be and it may perhaps not be so very bad as the Government's adversaries contend it is; but all I do ask, in my own name and on behalf of the electors I here represent, is that the widest possible latitude be granted for its discussion, in order that, from its discussion in the House, public opinion may have some reasons for seeing or for understanding the Government's action which, for the present, is neither excusable nor comprehensible.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: I beg to move:

That all the words after "Fund" on line 4, page 2 of the Bill be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

Provided, however, that until authorized by Parliament the total of such advances shall not exceed the sum of twenty-five million dollars. A statement of any such advances showing in detail the purposes for which they were applied shall be presented to Parliament by the Minister of Finance within twenty days after the opening of the next ensuing session thereof.

That the words "and may apply their own judgment in determining such value", appearing on lines 24 and 25, page 2 of the Bill, be struck out.

That the following words be added to subsection 2 of section 4 of the Bill:

In determining the value of the said six hundred thousand shares the arbitrators should