

● (1740)

I can assure the minister that we will be giving him a list of amendments and that we will be co-operating with him in terms of not letting our guard down, just as I did when the Conservative party was in power and we presented them with amendments on different bills to let them know exactly where they stood and where we stood. We intend to let the minister know, with the changes in the House of Commons which have taken place since 1977 and with the fact that we now have a very large turnover of membership, that we intend to have a close look at this legislation.

In closing, I want to contrast the kind of activity which we expect to take place in the committee with what Mr. George Haig, who was then the general manager of the Bank of Toronto, said in providing a candid description to his fellow Canadians as to how the 1871 Bank Act was written, "Representatives of the chartered banks from all parts of the country sat in conference, day by day discussing the clauses of the proposed act one by one. We sat in one of the committee rooms of the House and discussed the bill with considerable sense of responsibility, being well aware not only that our conclusions would affect the whole banking interests of the country, but every other interest; commercial, manufacturing, industrial, not to speak of the interests of the government itself".

This is not an act which we think is written by banks for banks. This is an act which is written for the people of Canada by the people of Canada to determine the best, safest, most human, fair, and industrious way to use credit and the granting of credit for the benefit of our industry, our small business, our economic sovereignty, and for the benefit of the interests of each and every consumer in Canada. We intend to bring that perspective to the committee in a constructive way.

Indeed, on second reading, we will have a number of speakers who will be going into more depth on the points on which I have only been able to touch. I would like to give the minister a word, not of warning, but of assurance, that we intend to see that this legislation is understandable to Canadians, that it provides them with protection, and that it is a piece of legislation in which they, not simply the banks, will have a great deal of confidence for the next ten years to come.

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, this is the second time that I participate in a go-around on the Bank Act. It is too bad that the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) has been called away from the chamber because I think perhaps one could offer him, considering his enthusiasm and recent arrival in this House, some words of caution and advice with regard to the Bank Act.

It has been over a year since I have had an opportunity to address this House. I would like to make a few preliminary remarks before I get into a fairly extensive examination of the legislation which is before us and the reports of the committee that laboured very greatly, certainly on the basis of two major parties in the House, in producing the report of the Standing

### *Bank Act*

Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, which appeared in *Votes and Proceedings* of March 20, 1979.

I find it strange, while I look at the benches across the way, with hon. members dispersed in their own seats, that there is a tendency in this House—and it is not done here as far as I am concerned—for hon. members to gather behind a speaking member in order to background an attendance in the House. We have a TV flying squad. I could not care less how many members there are sitting behind me. If that camera is aimed in this direction, the television will show no members, but myself.

I am passing on my reflection on the matter as a result of a number of years in this House—and I have spoken to other members who have the same feeling—feeling that the appearance of television in this chamber has changed greatly the concept, the behaviour, and so much of this chamber. This is no longer the forum where hon. members speak to fellow elected members. This has become a stage where people with claque respond because an hon. member has risen to ask a simple question during question period. Why? Clapping used to be an ironic gesture at times in support of a member who had risen perhaps 20 times or more in an attempt to catch the eye of Mr. Speaker. There was this ironic cheer that he had finally made it, but now we have a claque. Why?

Is this a stage or a hippodrome where some people are coming on for return so that there must be all this clapping? It seems to me to be a total debasement of this chamber, and it should not be a practice that continues. It is something new in this session, and I will pass my judgment on it. I do not like it, and it is not in keeping with this chamber, nor do I think that these travelling squads are in keeping with the chamber.

The third point which I would like to make deals with a matter which I have raised in committees in the past and which I have discussed privately with a good number of members. That is the practice which has grown up in the past three years of Mr. Speaker occupying the chair primarily for the question period, the votes, and occasionally to come in to deliver a ruling. Mr. Deputy Speaker or the Assistant Chairman of Committee of the Whole—

**Mr. Evans:** I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is very difficult for me to interrupt the golden oratory coming from the other side of the House, but I fail to see where this commentary has any relevance whatsoever to the Bank Act which is before the House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Speaker, I had indicated that I intended to deliver a few remarks. The hon. member during the last session had an opportunity—

**Mr. Evans:** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, to my knowledge there is no provision in Standing Orders which gives the hon. member the right to make a few remarks that go on for 15 minutes.