

the statute expresses in some way the will of the people through their legislatures. If that be so, and if there be certain immunities and rights and privileges which flow to men who constitute themselves into corporations, it follows that the parliament or legislature that created them, that gave them birth and existence, has the power to impose upon them limitations commensurate with the demands and necessities of the people. I remember a minister of the Crown a few months ago, in western Canada, declaiming against the undue capitalization of certain companies organized during the past few years. But it must be remembered that they were organized under a law that had the sanction and approval of this parliament, and under the sanction of the government of which he was a member. It was the fault of the legislature, and not of these corporations, because we cannot take away from men the inherent right to merge, to unite their business interests; that is the inalienable and inherent right of all men, as we have learned during the past. But we have also learned that it is of the utmost importance, that it is absolutely essential for the development of the commercial life of this country, that men should know in advance just what they may do within the law and what they may do without the law. It is only a few years ago that the United States was passing through an era of development the like of which we are fast approaching, an era of trusts and combinations, and that situation gave rise to what is known as the Sherman Act. It was a punitive measure, it was not a piece of constructive statesmanship, it was not successful legislation, it did not indicate to the large business corporations what they might do or might not do with impunity. I submit that in this country we should at the earliest possible moment give our best attention to the consideration of some measure that will provide a tribunal that will limit the issue of securities by corporations, and will protect the public by enacting some measure by which they can know the real value of those securities.

Mr. MACLEAN (East York). Hear, hear. We are getting there.

Mr. BENNETT (Calgary). I am glad to hear my hon. friend (Mr. Maclean) say 'hear, hear,' and I trust that this subject will engage his attention in the years to come. There is no subject to which a public man may more usefully turn his attention than this very subject. But if my hon. friend's 'hear, hear,' means only a sneer at what has already been done—

Mr. MACLEAN (East York). No, no.

Mr. BENNETT (Calgary). Then we will accept the hon. gentleman's disclaimer.

Some hon. MEMBERS. C. P. R.

Mr. BENNETT (Calgary). It is perhaps rather early in the day to raise a question of this kind, but I am glad to see that some hon. gentlemen have the temerity to raise it. Their interrogation offers me an opportunity to say, now at the outset of my career in this House, that for many years I was associate solicitor and counsel for that great corporation, the Canadian Pacific railway, and I gave to it the best services in my power. But as soon as I was elected to this House I severed my connection with that corporation, and with all other railway companies or corporations; and I propose to devote my abilities, and whatever experience I have gained to advancing what I believe to be the best interests of the people of this Dominion. I will just say, Mr. Speaker, that it is of the utmost importance that this matter should engage the early serious attention of this House. I have seen railway securities issued, for instance, by new companies in western Canada whereby a large paid up capitalization was secured, by giving all the bonds and all the stock to some construction company formed for the construction of the railway often at a less cost than the amount realized from the sale of such bonds and that means that all the watered stock was scattered through the country, and that dividends on that stock will ultimately have to be paid by the people of the west. It is of transcendent importance that this House and this parliament should be seized of the fact that the people demand that some tribunal shall be created that will have control over the extent of the issue of securities by railway companies and by public utility companies, and that the capitalization of industrial concerns should bear some just proportion to the outlay, and to the physical value of the enterprise which it represents. My excuse for venturing to mention this subject is the fact that it has always been closely allied with the question of tariffs.

Now, Sir, there is one other matter in the speech from the Throne with which His Royal Highness the Governor General was pleased to open this House, that certainly should engage the consideration of every man, that referring to the promotion of trade within the British Empire. During the recent campaign I advocated that we should first endeavour to promote trade within the British Empire before we turned to promoting trade with other lands; and I believe that in seeking the extension of our trade in the British West Indies and in British Guiana we are fulfilling the pledges that we made in days gone by. It is important if we are to bring about