
T H E W A R A N D O U R B A N K S

The chartered banks of Canada, however, will make a desperate fight against any such reform, and, as a matter of fact, they appear to have been the only parties consulted in the recent measures of Parliament to assist the financing of Canadian business by reason of this war; and apparently they are doing their best to minimize the service of these measures. They do not want to take advantage of the issue of excess currency, if they can help it, they do not want their own bank notes made legal tender in the Clearing House of the banks because it more or less interferes with their privileges and brings them one day nearer the adoption of an absolute national currency and absolute leadership on the part of the nation in the credit of the country.

The banks, having got the privileges and having acquired the leadership of credit in Canada, are under no compulsion to discharge the functions that should go with the right to issue currency and sell credit. They can refuse to act, and they have refused to act, in time of war, and have withheld their own currency and they have refused credits; because in the last analysis it will be found that they came to the conclusion that there was a risk in business of this kind in war time; and there was no force compelling them to take this risk!

Now, to force the banks to take the risk or share in taking the risk was the object of Lloyd George's legislation, and his issue of paper money by the State; this also was the object of the emergency legislation passed in Ottawa four weeks ago; but what seems to have been the outcome is that our banks still refuse to act and still distrust the general condition of business, and are therefore not willing to share the risk! That is where we get off!

These are the questions that the people of Canada must discuss from this time on, and there must be no let up until such time as national currency is established and that the nation has control of the credit created by the nation for the benefit of business generally. This may be a big undertaking, and it may be hard to get support for it at the start, but the cause has been launched, and it will win here, as in every other country. The pioneers in this work need not be discouraged if business men are slow in expressing themselves; they are thinking a great deal, and it might be as much as financial life is worth to directly antagonize those who now have a monopoly of credit. And this same dread has more or less characterized Parliament, and Parliament up to date has practically been a registering machine for strengthening the monopoly of chartered banks! As Mr. Money said in his article, "there are many things that will never be the same again after the war," and that "one of