

Private Bills

trade and economic affairs certain amendments were proposed, the text of which can be found in *Votes and Proceedings* of October 25. I believe these amendments which were put forward by certain members of the committee changed the bill to assure the members of the committee that this bill will really provide for a Bank of British Columbia, not one entirely under the sponsorship of the government of the province. Having considered this bill and the amendments printed in *Votes and Proceedings* I have reached the conclusion, after conversations with members of all parties, that the measure in its present form has widespread support. People have said to me that it would be political suicide to vote against this imaginative piece of legislation. I have met prominent Liberals in my constituency who take the same point of view. However, I believe there were one or two supporters of the government on the committee who did not altogether agree with the point of view of their friends in the constituency I have the honour to represent.

Naturally the Social Credit members I approached were enthusiastic in their support for this bill. I found the same general support for it in my own area. I believe this support was based largely on two considerations. First, the headquarters of all the banking institutions in Canada have in the past been located in the eastern provinces. I believe this had some effect on public opinion. Again, there is a certain pride among the people with whom I spoke in feeling that for the first time there is a Bank of British Columbia, even though it will be a private bank operated as such. So I have no hesitation in supporting this bill.

That is all I wish to say except to ask the sponsor a question. Can the sponsor assure the committee that as sponsor of this bill before the committee and the House of Commons he has not received, either directly or indirectly, any emoluments for his services in this connection?

Mr. Leboe: May I assure the hon. member that I have not received anything in any way, shape or form. Incidentally, I am not a lawyer.

• (5:10 p.m.)

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to take up much of the committee's time but I should like to point out that this is a bill to incorpo-

[Mr. Herridge.]

rate a chartered bank under the same provisions that all other chartered banks were incorporated. The feature to which exception was taken in the other place was removed. I am not at all sure it was justifiable to remove it, and I am not at all sure that by its removal those who were afraid of a provincial government having shares in a bank have actually covered all the loopholes. As I remarked to one of the witnesses who appeared before the committee on finance, trade and economic affairs, it appears to me that the power to withdraw deposits is probably a very forceful weapon with regard to the bank's policies.

Having regard to another amendment, as my colleague the hon. member for Kootenay West mentioned, one clause was deleted because it was clearly in contradiction of the proposed amendments to the Bank Act. That was the provision which made it mandatory that all directors of this bank should be residents of British Columbia. As the inspector general of banks pointed out, the Bank Act leaves the choice of directors entirely in the hands of the shareholders without any conditions. Presumably if the shareholders are largely British Columbians and they wish to ensure that the operations of the bank will be located mainly in the province of British Columbia they will exercise some care in the selection of the directors.

The other amendment was one which prohibited officials of either the government or any of its agencies from being executive officers of the bank. Two amendments were proposed at that time. One prohibited any such persons from being directors of the bank and the committee wisely, I think, defeated that amendment. The committee, however, passed an amendment which prohibited officials of the provincial government or any of its agencies from being executive officers.

I supported the latter amendment on the ground that any such person could not do two jobs effectively. If I were a provincial premier I would perhaps be very much in favour of having one of my officials as a director of the bank because that would be more or less a part-time occupation, but I would have the strongest objection to a civil servant being a director because I would expect him to be doing another job.

With those words let me say that I support this measure to incorporate this bank in the hope that it will overcome some of the alleged difficulties created by the fact that the head offices of most banks in Canada are located in the cities of Montreal and Toronto.