

I am very strongly inclined to the view taken by the right honourable gentleman who sits to my left (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen), namely, that if this House or this Parliament will assist the rural communities, the people who are creating wealth, that is about as far as we should go at the present time. For that reason I intend to support the amendment.

Hon. DONALD SUTHERLAND: Honourable members, I have listened very carefully to the debate on the measure which is now before the Senate. It is a most significant and remarkable fact that a measure of such dubious merit as this one should be introduced at this stage of the session. We have been sitting here for something like five months, and now, when Parliament is expected to prorogue within a very short time, we are asked to take chances on this measure without the benefit of a well defined or confident expression of opinion by anyone as to what the outcome of it is going to be. We have experimented before this on many things which have not turned out as we expected. Earlier in this session we were dealing with our railway problem. Honourable members who were in Parliament years ago, when some of our large railway undertakings were being considered, will recall the glowing predictions that were made by persons sponsoring the undertakings. To-day our railway burden is so heavy that bankruptcy stares us in the face. Parliament may grant special privileges here, there and everywhere, but we may rest assured that in the final analysis it is the people who will have to pay the cost.

Now, at this late stage of the session we are asked to make another experiment, to see how it will turn out. The old gold-brick story is being repeated to us: if you do not seize the opportunity now, you may never have it again. But why should we run the risk of making an experiment of this kind? There is no question that our country is a great one, but we have passed legislation that has made it almost impossible for many people to earn a living in this country at the present time. That is not as it should be. Surely we have brains enough among our people to overcome the difficulties that face us. I for one am absolutely opposed to an experiment of this kind being entered into without proper consideration. In my view we have not given it proper consideration, and I am sure the people will agree with that view.

Credit is all right. Everybody is looking for credit. But somebody has to go out and earn money before bills can be paid. It is possible that our farmers are suffering more distress than is any other class in this

Hon. Mr. CALDER.

country, but taxation in general is mounting by leaps and bounds. And here is a Bill to reduce interest on mortgages, or to adjust them in such a way that money may be borrowed more easily than it has been. I doubt very much if it would have that effect. In any event, this granting of special privileges and attempting to fix by legislation what ought to be done by honest competition out in the open, will not get this country out of its difficulties.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. SUTHERLAND: I can assure honourable members that the people of this country will have something to say about what has been going on, not only during this session, but for years past. This is a democratic country, and Parliament must be held responsible for what is done. Many of our members, expecting Parliament would have prorogued before this, have gone home. Why should about thirty members have to decide upon this important piece of legislation? And why was it withheld until this late hour of the session? That in itself is enough to cause grave suspicion in the minds of the people.

I am absolutely opposed to much of the legislation which has been passed during recent sessions. And I feel the same way towards this Bill, which seeks special privileges for certain classes. I believe that if economic conditions were as we should like them to be, the condition of these classes would be adjusted in the usual and regular way.

The amendment of Right Hon. Mr. Meighen was agreed to on the following division:

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Hon. Mr. BUCHANAN: I was paired with the honourable senator from Victoria (Hon. Mr. Barnard). Had I not been paired, I should have voted against the amendment.