

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: It is far from that. Even with the amendment now proposed we are giving to the governor in council powers with which that body should not be entrusted at any time. May I make my point clear in this way; this amendment gives to the governor in council, notwithstanding the provisions of any statute, power to—

—take all such measures as in his discretion may be deemed necessary or advisable to maintain, within the competence of parliament, peace, order and good government throughout Canada, and to protect the credit and financial position of the dominion or any province thereof.

This afternoon we have been enacting legislation which would place the governor in council in a position to meet a financial crisis. I believe that is the proper way to proceed, namely, that parliament shall pass what enactments are in its opinion necessary to meet each and every situation. When parliament has done that it seems to me parliament has done all that can be expected of it, and the governor in council has all the powers he needs. At any rate, if while parliament is actually sitting, the governor in council needs any additional power to meet a financial crisis or any other situation, he has in parliament the agency at hand to give him that power at a moment's notice. The other evening the Prime Minister said that something might happen between eleven o'clock at night and three o'clock the next afternoon which would require immediate action on the part of the government. If a situation of that kind did present itself I venture to say that if the governor in council took action which he thought necessary, though not wholly in accord with some statute, the Prime Minister with the majority he has could come to the House of Commons immediately with the utmost confidence that the house would at once legalize the action which had been taken. In fact this afternoon the Prime Minister referred to the Bank of England having taken at one time to meet an emergency, a step that was illegal, and parliament forthwith passing an act indemnifying the bank against loss for its action, and protecting the situation in that way. My thought in all this does not spring from any desire to be querulous over the powers to be given to the governor in council, but is rather due to the regard I have for the pride and security which the people of the country have in their parliamentary institutions, and for the wisdom of preserving in all things the power of the commons, and of parliament to the greatest extent possible.

The Prime Minister this afternoon in speaking of financial matters laid great stress upon

the place that gold has in maintaining the credit of a country. He spoke of the metal coverage as being all important in internal and international relations. If I may apply the parallel which comes to my mind at the moment, I would say my thought is that the brains of this House of Commons are after all the real asset of this nation in dealing with its problems, and that the common sense coverage of hon. members of the House of Commons as a whole is a much better security for the nation than the action that the governor in council may take at any particular moment in endeavouring to deal with a particular situation. I do not believe that we in Canada need these arbitrary powers, or anything resembling the dictatorships of other lands. I believe every step we take in that direction is leading us towards the abyss that we want to escape. After all the great security of British countries lies in their free institutions and in the free expression of opinion in their parliaments by the representatives of the people with regard to all questions that may arise. It is on that ground in the main that I do not like this legislation, and that I take exception to the particular section we are amending. I wish nevertheless, to thank the Prime Minister for helping to save the face of the entire House of Commons by providing that while we are actually in session the governor in council shall not be permitted to override by orders in council the legislation which we may be passing at the same time.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported.

Mr. SPEAKER: When shall the said bill be read the third time?

Mr. BENNETT: With the consent of the house, now.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Before the bill is read the third time, I do not wish to repeat the arguments that have been put forward so emphatically in the different stages of the measure up to the present, and with equal force and emphasis in preceding sessions of this parliament when similar measures were enacted. Especially would I refer to what was said on April 1, 1932, on the third reading of the relief bill of that session. But I do feel that inasmuch as everything that is done here counts later as a precedent, and particularly as hon. gentlemen opposite in regard to this very measure have urged that one of the reasons it should be allowed to pass now