

under other bills than this, and you may draw upon this fund to the extent provided for the operation of any or all of them without coming back to this house again." In other words, it is a blank cheque of a size that we do not know. Not only is it a blank cheque of a size that we do not know, but it can be arranged by the government in any way it choose after we have gone. It is in effect an appropriation bill not for this year only but for as long as the measure remains on the statute books. We thereby give the government power to draw on any balance that there may be in the consolidated revenue fund of this country, to operate these companies. My submission is that it is much too broad powers to take away from parliament and put in the hands of the governor in council. That is the only point I propose to raise on this measure at this time. I think it is a matter of fundamental concern to the house and to the country. The minister said that it had been done before in some cases. Suppose it has been. It does not need to be continued. And generally when it has been done before it has been done for specific measures. Therefore I wish to move, seconded by the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Boucher):

That Bill No. 155 be not now read a third time but that it be referred back to committee so as to be amended as follows:

1. That the word "unappropriated" in the third line of paragraph (a) of section 4 of the said act be deleted and the word "appropriated" be substituted in its place.

2. That the word "unappropriated" in the second line of paragraph (b) of clause 5 of the said act be deleted and the word "appropriated" substituted in its place.

3. That the word "unappropriated" in the third line of paragraph (c) of clause 5 of the said act be deleted and the word "appropriated" substituted in its place.

This amendment means simply that the government may draw upon funds that may be appropriated from time to time for the operation of these companies, but that we do not give the government a blank cheque now of unknown size. This bill is an appropriation measure for as long as the act remains on the statute books, the result of which is that the government may draw huge sums for the operation of present and subsequently formed companies without coming back to this house again for the appropriation of funds. The amendment I have moved would require the government to get the approval of parliament for specific expenditures. It is opposed to giving the government a blank cheque of unknown size.

Hon. C. D. HOWE (Minister of Reconstruction and Supply): The purpose of the amend-

ment would be to destroy any meaning whatever of sections 4 and 5. The bill would then read:

The governor in council may

(a) authorize the Minister of Finance to advance to a company, by way of loan, additional working capital out of appropriated moneys in the consolidated revenue fund.

Obviously, if the moneys were appropriated it would not require this bill to authorize the Minister of Finance to pay the money over to the company. In authorizing the appropriation bill, parliament would have already taken that step. The purpose of sections 4 and 5 is to authorize the government to afford temporary relief in case of need to the company, subject to later appropriation by parliament. The reason is that these companies are now operating in a commercial field and are not able to predict their financial requirements in advance as accurately as is a government department.

My hon. friend has referred to the present provision as a blank cheque. The cheque is not blank. A maximum amount is definitely specified. It is \$500,000 in the case of working capital, and \$500,000 in the case of capital advances.

An hon. MEMBER: For each company.

Mr. BRACKEN: But there are a number of them.

Mr. HOWE: For each company. It does not matter if there are thirteen companies, the advance to one cannot be \$500,000 multiplied by thirteen.

Mr. BRACKEN: It may mean thirteen more.

Mr. HOWE: It may. In any event, each company is taken individually. They do not make application all together. The practice is not new. I have referred to the Canadian Broadcasting Act where the limit is \$100,000 for working capital advances and \$500,000 for improvement of capital works. In the case of Bretton Woods, which hon. gentlemen opposite voted for only a few months ago, the limit was \$700,000, and in the case of the Central Mortgage and Housing corporation the limit is \$7,000,000 that can be drawn. Exactly the same words were used in all these acts. In other words, they are standard provisions which have been placed in the acts setting up government corporations.

As I have said, to change the word "unappropriated" to "appropriated" would make the provision absolutely meaningless, because if the money has been appropriated it does not require any provision in any act other than the Appropriation Act to place it at the