

Private Bills

● (4:20 p.m.)

For these reasons I do not feel I am asking my colleagues to do anything rash or out of the ordinary when I simply ask them to withhold making any judgment in this connection, and to withhold giving consent to this bill for a few months at least.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): As for us, of the Ralliement Créditiste, we do not object to Bill S-18, entitled an Act respecting Canadian Order of Foresters, being carried on second reading, for the simple reason that the passage of this bill would allow us at the committee stage to examine its consequences more thoroughly than we could in this house.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased with such a move which would enable the Canadian Order of Foresters to obtain a federal charter, in order to increase its social endeavours and to give Canadians in other provinces the increased benefit of the services it now provides to the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we would be pleased to see this bill carried on second reading, mainly on account of the "brotherhood" aspect of that corporation, as we are in favour of any measure to encourage groups whose guiding principle is brotherhood or co-operation.

Therefore, we support this bill and we would like it to be carried as quickly as possible on second reading, whereupon we could consider it clause by clause in committee, and finally approve the motion for third reading.

[*English*]

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I was very surprised on reading the proceedings in the Senate where this matter had been raised to learn that the question was asked which has to be asked in all cases, a question which is probably in a much different category with respect to a mutual insurance company than it is with respect to general life or general insurance companies.

In our form of government, the parliamentary agent has not really been an effective instrument. In England, the parliamentary agent is governed by very stringent legislation. Part of the responsibility of the parliamentary agent is to ascertain that certain steps which must be taken before officials of a company are able to take a specific action, have been taken. But in Canada it is doubtful whether the parliamentary agents have personally met with many of the people they

represent, and I believe they serve only a very dubious function in our parliamentary and committee system.

However, as the committee system grows this will have to change. In this instance, it is very important that we have the type of protection that the parliamentary agent should provide by being able to assure members of the House and of the Senate, the sponsors of bills and others, that he has gone through the documents necessary for the filing of a petition and can say that matters in connection with them are correct in every form.

I notice, as recorded in the Senate *Hansard* of November 26 last, that Senator Grosart asked the question that is now being asked by the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Schreyer), as to whether the steps necessary in establishing this change in the act had been taken. At that time the sponsor of the bill said he did not know, but he would check and would be in a position to say yes or no when the bill came up before the Senate Banking and Commerce Committee. When the matter came before the Senate committee the spokesman for the company, Mr. R. T. S. McIntosh, general counsel of the Canadian Order of Foresters, said:

First of all I would suggest that by the constitution the members of the fraternal organization and the policy holders are one and the same. There are different classifications of members, but the beneficiary members—that is, those who have voting privileges—are one and the same. I believe this is the answer to Senator Grosart's question which appears in *Hansard* of November 26.

He also wished to make clear to your committee that the provisions of the constitution had been fully complied with in all respects. The proposal to proceed with the application now before you originated from the Need and Welfare Committee of the Canadian Order of Foresters, which is composed of the membership itself. They suggested before and after the last biennial meeting, the last general meeting of the membership, held in July, 1967, that this be proceeded with. Following that presentation of the committee the matter was considered by the Executive Committee, and it was then suggested by the former Senator Ross Macdonald, who was legal counsel at that time, that every possible step should be taken to see that this was brought to the attention of each and every member of the Order of Foresters, of whom there are some 40,000.

The matter was then dealt with by the Executive Committee, who announced the holding of a special general meeting of the membership, which was ultimately held on February 1, 1968. Notice of that, in accordance with section 5 of the constitution, was duly sent to our subordinate courts and to each of the recording secretaries. The resolutions proposed to be dealt with at the time of the general meeting were outlined and were also sent with the notice.