

*Private Bills*

• (6:10 p.m.)

I assume that these objectives are similar to, if not identical with, the objectives of related types of organizations whose applications for incorporation have been before parliament in the past. I think it might be well at this juncture to go back to my first point and ask ourselves whether we should not have some general statute setting out the requirements to be met by organizations such as Evangelistic Tabernacle when bringing forward applications for incorporation in the same way as we now have general laws such as the Companies Act which set out certain basic requirements in the fields which they cover. If we set out general standards for any group that seeks to be incorporated, we will establish the objects and purposes for which they may become incorporated and parliament will be dealing with one single statute establishing the criteria to be met by groups seeking to be incorporated similar to the one currently before us.

I do not know whether there is any great departure from comparable provisions in bills of like nature but it is interesting to note that there is extensive reference, ranging through six clauses of the bill before us, to the question of real property in all its aspects, dealing with holding, receiving, possessing, selling, buying, mortgaging, and the doing of all sorts of other things with respect to real property. It seems to me, therefore, that the preponderance of wording in the bill is taken up with the question of the activities of this corporation so far as real estate is concerned.

This may be standard practice. It may be necessary to set out, in all the details contained here the authority of the corporation so far as real property is concerned, but I do say there is an undue amount of consideration given to that particular question.

There is one part of the bill, clause 15, which deals with the related question of borrowing money, accepting promissory notes, issuing debentures, mortgages, pledges and so on on real and personal property of the company as well as the selling of bonds and generally giving authority to deal in the field of money so far as borrowings are concerned. That too may be a standard provision in bills of a similar nature, but I submit again that if it is standard it is something that could be set out in a general public law permitting groups of this sort simply to go through the process of incorporating as companies do under the Companies Act or as trust companies do

[Mr. Howard.]

under specific legislation. Parliament then would not thereafter have to take its time in concerning itself with matters of this sort, important as they might be.

I think it is a fact that this bill will engage the attention of just a few members of parliament. We found in the past that the only people generally interested and concerned, about such matters were the sponsor and the members of the standing committee who happened to be in attendance at the time a particular bill was considered. The hon. member for Danforth (Mr. Scott) says that would be the full committee. Possibly he goes to different committees than I attend for I have never yet been at a committee meeting which had a full attendance of members.

Generally speaking only a few members of parliament concern themselves with matters of this sort. I venture to say that only two or three members of the house, possibly a few more, would be interested in the subject matter of the bill before us. All other members would be sort of vaguely detached from it, having but a general understanding that something had gone on in the house today between the hours of six and seven o'clock that had something to do with the Tabernacle Society. That would be the extent of the knowledge of most members.

I think it is asking too much of parliament to take a great deal of time to deal with a subject matter relating to private individuals which of course is why this is a private bill. Second, the subject matter is one which engages the attention of so few members of parliament. I would much rather see some sort of general statute developed. Undoubtedly it would have to be done after consultation and discussion with the various religious orders in the nation to ensure that such a general law met the desires and purposes of the individual groups. Once we had developed a general law, parliament would not have to concern itself and consume its time in dealing with matters such as are before us at the moment.

Because these things can be so easily misunderstood I reiterate again that I am in no way saying anything against the organization that seeks to be incorporated, its objectives or anything else. I am simply saying that parliament should not concern itself and consume its time with matters like this when with far more efficiency and much more dispatch they could be dealt with in a different fashion.