

sive national plan of automobile insurance. There are not many voices raised any more against that form of insurance. Even its greatest detractors now accept its value.

There is another area of insurance, and again this was pioneered in that much-maligned province of Saskatchewan, hospital insurance. There is not a province in Canada that does not have it, and I doubt whether there is 5 per cent of the population of the country who would do without it any more. It has proven its value over and over again, and it is a great example of the kind of thing that we have been able to do in the field of insurance through public involvement.

During one election campaign when I was knocking on doors and talking to people about the issues, a man came out quite angrily, waving his finger at me, and telling me about the dreadful hospital insurance program. This was in the early days before people got used to it. He was telling me how terrible it was, how disastrous it would be, and how costly it would be. He said that everything the government touches costs more money, rates go up, and the whole thing becomes more inefficient. He said that when this scheme was in private hands it was very efficient. I did not really know the answer to his particular complaint, but I had a chance to find out. I wrote to the Ontario Hospital Commission to ask what their costs of administration were. Their costs were less than 2½ per cent. Some 97½ cents out of every dollar they collected went for actual hospital insurance, for helping people who were ill. I also looked up the figures of the cost when a private hospital insurance company operated in the province of Ontario. It ran from between 27 cents to 37 cents out of every dollar collected, which is a most compelling reason for the kind of public program that developed.

I am not going to say that just because the government took over that this insurance program it was more effective. Perhaps we could have accomplished the same thing by giving a monopoly to a private insurance company. The real reason for the inefficiency of the private carriers was that senseless, idiotic competition of their's, of which they were so proud. If we had selected a responsible private insurance carrier, and there are a lot of them, and said, "Here is a monopoly. You take charge, except for two things"—if there is going to be a monopoly, then it should be the government that has—

Trust Companies Act

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member might allow me to interrupt him for just a moment. I have some misgivings as to whether the hon. member is not getting away to some extent from the principle of the bill before us. He has been speaking for the last few moments about automobile insurance and health insurance. I appreciate there is a relationship with the bill, but the relationship seems to be a bit distant. The hon. member may want eventually, to return to what appears to be closer to what ought to be discussed on this bill.

● (3:30 p.m.)

Mr. Saltzman: As I pointed out in my opening remarks, we had two objections to the legislation. The first one was that the passage of this bill would be inflationary and the second one was that we needed to examine the interrelationship and the role of the financial institution in our society. I shall try not to stray too far from those two points that we wish to make.

It is not my intention, Mr. Speaker, to retract these remarks. We have spoken on this subject before and we have said some of these things before. It is, however, a last opportunity for us and it is for this reason that my colleagues and I wish to speak. It is the last opportunity in the sense that no longer will it be possible for us to examine these bills relating to financial institutions in private members' hour. Whatever the difficulties may have been with the private members' hour procedure, whatever the criticism may have been, at least it provided an opportunity to take a look at some of these matters.

If we look back over the history of these trust companies, we can see that many of the things we now accept and approve were raised in private members' hour. Now, these bills will not come to private members' hour any more. The minister can approve these changes in financial institutions without recourse to Parliament. I do not know when it will be that Parliament will again have an opportunity to examine this legislation, and some of the other legislation affecting other financial institutions. Therefore, in closing, I would urge hon. members to support the amendment we have before the House. If this bill is passed, I am very certain that it will not be of help to the general policy of restraint; it will be inflationary and in the long run will work against finding a more reasonable and rational approach to the organization of the financial institutions of this country.