

Private Bills

private bills. I had understood that we were proceeding with the bill relating to the Royal Victoria Hospital, which is No. 1 in any event.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is quite right; that was merely an oversight.

ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL

Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce) moved that Bill S-19, respecting the Royal Victoria Hospital, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a bill to amend the charter of the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, one of the great hospitals not only in Canada but in the entire world. It has provided outstanding medical care to several generations of Canadians and produced many great medical personalities.

The Royal Victoria Hospital was incorporated as a charitable corporation by act of Parliament in 1887. Its charter is found in the statutes of Canada 1887, 50-51 Victoria, chapter 125. As members of the House might expect, the charter is very much out of date. It was passed at a time when hospitals were established by individual initiative and philanthropic associations. There was no medicare and very little government intervention. Times have changed and now the state is very much involved.

The purpose of this bill is to bring the charter up to date, and in particular to bring it into line with the provisions of the Quebec Hospitals Act and the medicare legislation. The principal provisions of the bill are as follows. First, it eliminates the right to establish branch hospitals. Second, it eliminates the provisions for ex officio governors. Third, it provides a new method for appointing governors to the board of governors. Fourth, it eliminates certain passages regarding indigent patients due to the introduction of the Quebec Hospitals Act and medicare. Fifth, it eliminates certain references to the laws of England and it changes the provisions regarding the official visitor. Sixth, it eliminates the requirement to obtain the consent of the heirs of Lord Mount Stephen and Lord Strathcona for a change in the charter. Both men have been dead for many years and their heirs are in the third and fourth generation and scattered all over the world. Lastly, the bill amends the charter so that the minister of health of Quebec under the Quebec Hospitals Act can recommend adoption of certain orders in council for financial grants and bond issues.

Since it is urgent that this bill be passed as soon as possible, I would ask the House to give it quick passage at this stage so that it can go to committee.

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few observations on this bill. Since such a famous institution as the Royal Victoria Hospital is under discussion, I think acknowledgement should be made of those men who founded it. Eight men founded this hospital, and they were Sir George Stephen, Sir Donald A. Smith, Hon. John J.C. Abbott, Alexander T. Paterson, James Wentworth Buchanan, Richard B. Angus, Andrew Robertson and Thomas Davidson.

[Mr. Howard (Skeena).]

This hospital was established in 1887, at a time when there were not many hospitals in Canada. It was one of the first hospitals in the province of Quebec, and it has achieved a very enviable reputation over the years. It was one of the first hospitals in the province that treated the sick, medically and surgically, and those who were indigent in whole or in part and unable to provide for their own welfare.

I think it might be worthwhile to draw to the attention of the House the fact that hospitals were often founded by religious bodies. In Judaism it was always believed that the rich should look after the poor. The Christian religion established this principle, and Christ himself in his own teachings said—and many Christians at all periods have found the motive for their philanthropy in these words—“Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me”. Some, however, with a materialistic view of the rewards and punishments of the afterlife, have seen, in almsgiving especially, a means of making God their debtor, and this was particularly obvious in the mediaeval period.

When St. Bartholomew's Hospital and Guy's Hospital were established in London in the year 1100, it is interesting to note that a lot of their patients were poor people who had no place to sleep or to rest. They were down and out and they went there to get a meal or to be looked after. Of course, some of them were sick. So that the founding of these hospitals lies in the humanities.

As I have said, the Royal Victoria has a very enviable record. From the time the hospital was a private corporation until the present day it has been one of the famous teaching hospitals in Canada, in fact on the North American continent. It is renowned in the field of medicine and has been made famous by many of its graduates. Among those who have held teaching positions in this institution is the name of Osler, and it is of interest to note that Osler was born about 40 miles north of the city of Toronto. It is a name known in medical circles throughout the world. Osler held the post of professor of medicine at Oxford University. Dr. Archibald, the great chest surgeon, also taught at the Royal Victoria Hospital and at McGill University. Wilder Penfield, the neurosurgeon who established the department of neurosurgery at the hospital is recognized as an authority in his field throughout the world.

I could go on at length to name outstanding doctors who have graduated from this institution, doctors who have not only made their name in the field of medicine in Canada, but in the United States and other countries they visited. In the march of events, however, it is necessary that changes now made in the charter and statutes of this hospital to comply with the Quebec Hospitals Act and the Quebec medicare plan. It is hoped that under the Quebec Hospitals Act this teaching hospital will continue its great progress, not only in disseminating the knowledge of medicine but in the care of the sick.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, when Parliament in 1971 seeks to amend a statute that has remained intact for 84 years—since 1887—I think it is a unique occasion. I understood the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand) to say there is a two-fold purpose in the bill; first, to modernize or bring the charter up to