

*Private Bills*

like to increase its capitalization in order to enable it to take part in the general insurance business which would include among other things, fire insurance, various types of accident insurance, aircraft and automobile insurance, credit insurance, even earthquake insurance, as well as boiler insurance and falling aircraft insurance.

I do not understand the difference between aircraft insurance and the special type of insurance known as falling aircraft insurance but I am sure the company would be delighted to furnish this type of insurance if it were possible to make money for its shareholders by doing so. I notice also that the company is interested in extending its business into forgery insurance. It has taken an interest in the farm problems of this country because I notice it wishes to get into the hail insurance business. Community service clubs and similar organizations which arrange outdoor celebrations in our country and run the risk of losing money should the weather turn out to be inclement might well be interested in hail insurance.

The company is also interested in real property insurance. Again, despite the fact that we are well on the way to bringing medicare to most Canadians it wishes to become involved in sickness insurance. Apparently the company feels that coverage under the medicare plan will not be sufficient; it wants to expand its business in such a way as to bring greater security to the average Canadian. This is an altruistic move and an example of good corporate citizenship.

I see the company also wishes to provide sprinkler leakage insurance. This brings up all sorts of erotic connotations. I would be pleased if the hon. member who sponsored this bill would indicate what this type of insurance actually means. If it is needed in our country and if it provides a service which Canadians do not enjoy at the present time it would certainly be a point in favour of the bill. Theft insurance is well known to most of us; it is applicable as long as we make certain that we lock our doors. If we neglect to do so, I am told that in order to collect theft insurance the thing to do is to smash the lock with a hammer as soon as you get home in order to indicate to people in official circles that a theft has really taken place. Then there is water damage insurance. I suppose the need for that arises as a direct result of sprinkler leakage. As to insurance against wind storms, this is something in which all members of the house will be interested, judging from the debate here in recent days.

It is all very interesting and helpful but I think it begs the real question. The real question with regard to insurance in Canada, as in other parts of the world, is the influence which the insurance industry has on our financial institutions. I propose to read briefly from a book called "The Mortality Merchants" by G. Scott Reynolds, which is obtainable from the Library of Parliament. I am going to read, in fact, from the jacket. These words are presumably by the author, though I cannot be sure:

Insurance companies today have such swollen reserves that they own or control 67 per cent of the nation's wealth—assets which are doing nothing to increase the death benefits the public is getting.

The book goes on to describe some of the things insurance companies are doing generally to mislead and rook the public.

A great many people are involved in the insurance industry and I am sure that a large number of them are providing an adequate service. I do not think we could do without various types of insurance. Certainly we have to accept some risk ourselves—and the "deductible" clause provides for this—but we cannot insure ourselves against all losses. There is a definite need for insurance in our country, and if we damn the activities of the various insurance companies this does not necessarily mean we are damning the concept of insurance in general. What is of particular concern to most people who are interested in the subject at all is the fact that insurance companies do not really provide the protection they say they do. There is very much in their selling techniques which is left to the imagination of the salesmen or may be implied by the efforts of the salesmen.

Then again, it seems to me there is almost endless duplication of the various services we have in Canada already. I cannot for the life of me understand why we should need any more of them. It is beyond my understanding that Aetna could come up with the statement that the public would benefit because competition within the industry would be increased. I have never seen this happen before, and there are a great number of insurance companies operating today. We find company after company, salesman after salesman, running around doing essentially the same things and, what is more, at the same price. I would be prepared to sit down and relinquish the floor if anyone in this house can show me how the multiplicity and variety of insurance companies has led in any meaningful way to lower rates of insurance to the general public. It seems to me it will do just the opposite. If