

Private Bills

that my remarks will not have that similarity the hon. member for Skeena said his remarks would have to those of the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman).

I have looked at the terms of this bill, however, and the question has arisen in my mind, as indeed it has on quite a number of occasions during this and recent sessions, as to just what direction we are moving in dealing with an almost endless series of bills which seek to incorporate new insurance companies.

Once again I think one should examine the preamble to this bill, which seems to be in a rather stock form, indicating that the persons named in the bill have by their petition prayed that it be enacted as hereinafter set forth, in other words in the details of the bill, and make the bland statement that it is expedient to grant the prayer of the petition; that therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons, enacts as follows, and then goes on to set out the detailed clauses. Let me suggest again today, as I have done on some previous occasions when discussing bills to incorporate insurance companies, that this embodies the basic question we are being asked to consider when we come to the second reading stage of a private bill to incorporate a company. This is something which ought to give us cause at least to look seriously at the proposal put before us.

The hon. member acting for the sponsors in introducing the bill, and the hon. member for Skeena, have apparently made some examination of the terms of the proposal in so far as they relate to the shareholdings of the company, and whether it is to be a Canadian owned company or a company owned by the nationals of other countries. This is a very important aspect of the consideration which should be given to the incorporation of a particular company at this stage of our history, be it an insurance company, or indeed any corporation.

There is another question which warrants our attention, and once again I should like to suggest in connection with this bill, as I have suggested on previous occasion in reference to other bills, that we should consider the economic advisability of incorporating an almost endless proliferation of insurance companies. An insurance company in my view is a company which is not a wealth producing organization. It is indeed a wealth diverting organization in that it diverts the savings of individuals who pay premiums for insurance companies into the channels which fit the

[Mr. Barnett.]

desires of the directors or the management of the company. This indeed is a very important aspect of the advisability of granting petitions for the incorporation of a great number of insurance companies.

This is a question which in my view deserves very careful attention. Indeed I think the time has come when members of this house, if they have not already done so, should ask the Dominion Bureau of Statistics to prepare a much more detailed and careful analysis of the situation with particular reference to the number of insurance companies in different areas of the country, and the incidence or relationship of the number of companies to the number of Canadians living in Canada. We do have such figures of interest and concern relating to the number of doctors per capita in a given area of the country, or to the total population of the country.

• (6:50 p.m.)

In view of the almost endless series of incorporations we have been asked to consider, one might begin to raise the question as to whether we will soon have more insurance companies in the country than we have inhabitants. We will find ourselves in the position that is often referred to in many connections as simply taking in one another's washing. In other words, I will be insuring the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman), the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra will be insuring me, and the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) will probably be looking after the insurance requirements of the Minister of Industry (Mr. Drury). And so, on it will go, right around the piece amongst the members of this house and across the country. I am not suggesting that the passage of this particular bill will create a situation that will literally be as I have been suggesting, but nevertheless it is one of the important matters which should be of concern to us as we consider any and all applications for the incorporation of new insurance companies.

Motion agreed to and bill read the second time.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 105, the said bill stands referred to the standing committee on finance, trade and economic affairs.