

Private Bills

The change is further desirable because the identity of the society as a purely Canadian association operating only within Canada would be strengthened. In addition, administrative work would be simplified.

The Canadian Order of Foresters Act, 1968, a special act of the legislative assembly of the province of Ontario, which was sponsored by Mr. Makarchuk, N.D.P. member for Brantford, Ontario, authorized the society to bring this petition which, if granted, will have the effect of terminating its Ontario corporation.

What the society requests could be accomplished by incorporating a new federal society and then selling the assets of the provincial society to the federal society but this would involve a great deal of administrative work and expense in the transferring of thousands of mortgages from the Ontario to the federal society as well as in the transferring of policies and matters to do with the investments of the society.

To avoid the expense of continuing as a provincial society doing business in the other provinces or incorporating a new federal society and then selling or transferring assets, the society requests a change or an amendment to its corporate life in order that it may continue as if it had been incorporated in the first place by special act of the Parliament of Canada. To put it another way, the society is asking for a special act incorporating it as a federal society under the name of Canadian Foresters Life Insurance Society and, in French, Forestiers Canadiens, Société d'Assurance-Vie.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, as is customary we feel that applications for this type of incorporation should pass the second reading stage after the sponsor has made his explanation. This matter is to be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, where witnesses will appear and go into the matter in detail. We, therefore, reserve detailed comments on this application until the bill appears before the committee. I recommend that the house give passage to the bill and refer it to committee.

Mr. Ed Schreyer (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a few remarks to Bill S-18, an act respecting Canadian Order of Foresters. I do so not because I wish to oppose the organization of the Order along the lines of an insurance company but because there seems to be considerable dissent within the ranks of the organization with regard to

what is being applied for in this bill. As I understand it, the Canadian Order of Foresters is seeking merely to change its form of incorporation. It wishes to operate under a federal instead of a provincial charter.

As many hon. members are aware no doubt, Canadian Order of Foresters is a fraternal benefit society and many of its members wish to preserve the fraternal aspect of it. I am informed by society members that the executive and rank and file membership disagree about certain steps that ought to be taken. Some members allege that the executive has acted in a high handed manner which borders on the improper. Although notice of intended action was given to the membership it was felt that, considering the time of year it was given, what was done barely met the terms of the constitution. The rank and file consider the notice inadequate.

When this bill was before the Banking and Commerce Committee of the Senate, Senator Grosart, I believe, in questioning a witness appearing on behalf of the executive, was assured there was no substantial body of opposition within the society to implementation of Bill S-18. It was also said that there was no significant opposition with respect to what the executive of the Canadian Order of Foresters proposed to do.

I am in no position to say categorically that the executive acted wrongly, but I am in a position to say that members of the organization feel quite sincerely that during the last two years the executive has acted in a high handed manner to suit its own convenience. The executive, further, seems determined to extend fewer and fewer privileges to the rank and file members and to convert the Canadian Order of Foresters into a full fledged insurance company. The rank and file maintain that they want the fraternal aspect of the company kept alive. They do not want the society turned into an insurance company only. They object to the drastic curtailment of the number of lodges, or courts, as they are known.

● (4:10 p.m.)

The executive has tried to disband existing courts. In some cases they have amalgamated courts in order to reduce the number of delegates representing lodges at a new convention. The next convention of the Canadian Order of Foresters will be held this July in Edmonton. It is the intention of the delegates attending this convention to discuss with the existing executive of this organization many