

Private Bills

pass on these matters and that is the extent of their participation.

Parliament is in the position of having to decide whether or not the incorporation of this group, the Evangelistic Tabernacle, will serve the public good and I submit we are not competent to do that. Surely we are being helped in our ignorance of the matter here because clause 1, after it mentions certain individuals, reads:

—together with such other persons—

That is satisfactory.

—and congregations as become members of the religious body—

They do not say what is the religious body to which such other persons and congregations can adhere or join and what constitutes the congregation is extremely vague. In the committee proceedings this matter was mentioned briefly by Mr. Smith asking:

Is there only one congregation of this organization?

● (6:50 p.m.)

Mr. Belfoi replied by saying:

The present incorporate corps are a Winnipeg congregation of about 120. There are four other groups, one in Saskatoon, one in Vancouver, one in Okanagan Valley and one in Kenora, Ontario.

Mr. Smith then asked:

Do the other groups have such an incorporation?

To which Mr. Belfoi replied:

No, the other groups do not, but they will all form part of this incorporation, after it is incorporated, of course.

There is no doubt in Mr. Belfoi's mind that the other groups will automatically become an integral part of the incorporated structure which we are now being asked to pass on in this house. If we are always going to be faced with the prospect of determining whether or not in the case of any bill, and with particular reference to the one before us, incorporation of the group will serve the public good, then we shall have to ask the committee to examine all groups and in this particular instance all the other potential congregations, especially the ones mentioned in the reply which I read just a few moments ago. The minute we get into the ludicrous situation of having to examine sundry unknown people and congregations, we might as well ask the Prime Minister to set up another royal commission of inquiry, because the matter will be that extensive.

[Mr. Howard.]

Mr. Nasserden: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the only thing ludicrous about this is the way the hon. member is dealing with it. Everyone knows what the definition of a congregation is in the sense in which it is used in this particular instance. We have here and now a display of a type of tactic to hold up the business of the house. It happens to be private members' hour, but this is an indication of something which has been done by the hon. member for Skeena and the hon. member for Timiskaming so many times during the last few years. On a question such as this I think they should think twice. They will have other opportunities to bring forward their ideas in regard to the procedures of the house rather than take up our time now.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Chairman, it is too bad one cannot approach an important matter such as the bill now before us in a reasoned way without having to be subjected to the asinine comments of the likes of the hon. member for Rosthern.

If I were to think twice about this that would be five times as often as the hon. member for Rosthern, because if he had half thought about the proposal I am making he would see the merits of it and would not have resorted to the mild castigation he indulged in just a moment ago.

Mr. Nasserden: It is just obstruction.

Mr. Howard: The hon. member says "obstruction". After the last four or five days I am sure he has served his full apprenticeship in that field. I am merely seeking to try to serve the public good in the best way I can and to examine the prospects—

An hon. Member: Hypocrisy.

Mr. Howard: There is another comment about hypocrisy. Hon. gentlemen to my right in the Conservative party are past-masters of that. There is no question in my mind about the passage of this bill by seven o'clock. All I want to do is place before the committee what I consider to be reasonable proposals. I will not disclose the names or the constituencies of members of the party to which my hon. friend for Rosthern belongs who said to me that I have got a good point and that we should try to do this some other way.

All I am trying to do is to seek to examine the bill in that light, and if the hon. member for Rosthern does not like it he can go and have supper. Perhaps he will listen carefully to what I am trying to establish. When a