

Private Bills

Mr. Howard (Skeena): There is one thing I would like to say to the hon. member for Spadina. I appreciate the narrow concept he has, belonging to the party to which he belongs, and the difficulty he has in understanding this; but we do not deal with things on the basis of politics. We deal with them on the basis of propriety and what is correct.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): If a member of the legislature of the province of Ontario, who belongs to the same party to which I belong, advances a certain course of action, this does not mean, as it does in the Liberal party, that everybody bows down and says, "That is correct". We do not have that sort of suppression of thought in our party. We are independent-minded in this party. We are concerned about what is correct with regard to this organization.

● (4:50 p.m.)

Am I to accept the declaration of the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Ryan) that he has been informed that the sponsor of the bill, the hon. member for Peel South (Mr. Chappell), has affidavits in his possession that everything is hunky dory and correct, or am I to believe what is in the official publication of the Winnipeg Council, the *Canadian Forester* dated March, 1968 which points out that there is a serious difference of opinion as to whether the proper thing was done, and raises serious objection to the manner in which the executive were operating? The editorial signed by the editor goes into great detail and says that everything was not right and correct so far as the group in Winnipeg is concerned. Whom am I to believe?

Mr. Ryan: Would the hon. member permit a question? Does he not think that if this were the situation, if there were anything really behind it, legal proceedings of a civil nature would have been taken long before this?

Mr. Howard (Skeena): I really do not think so. I am inclined to think that the Winnipeg Council of the Canadian Order of Foresters hopefully has enough faith in this parliament to believe we will not follow blindly what has been presented but will look at things in a subjective way. I see the sponsor of the bill rising and I think he wants to ask me a question. I will gladly give him that opportunity, but perhaps I can precede it with the suggestion that he should withdraw the bill

because of the doubt and objection. In addition, within a few months a bi-annual convention will be held in Edmonton when all this may be resolved and then parliament will not be in the position of having to pick and choose sides. However, I will gladly submit to the question.

Mr. Chappell: Does the hon. member realize that he is referring to a publication dated March 1968, the bill did not receive royal assent in the Ontario legislature until April, and that this society is in the riding of the sponsor, Mr. Makarchuk, the N.D.P. member of the legislature for Brantford? The head office of the organization is in his riding, and he of all people would know if anything were wrong.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): This is the sort of question that does not need any comment. If there were any validity in it I am sure the hon. member would have mentioned it earlier. If he read the Senate committee proceedings he would realize that, regardless of the fact that this publication is dated March, 1968 and that the bill proceeded through the legislature at a later time than that, practically the entire evidence before the Senate Banking and Commerce Committee was based upon one little question. Mr. McIntosh went into extreme detail about the internal activities of the organization, about notices and meetings, whether there was or there was not a quorum, and so on. He wound up not being sure himself of the constitutional correctness of the meetings that were held. At page 95 of the committee's proceedings Mr. McIntosh, after a long and detailed explanation in which he seemed to be mostly protesting against the fact that anyone should question what the hierarchy was doing, said the following:

I would therefore suggest that proper notice was given in accordance with the constitution, and further that it was publicized in the magazine that goes out to each member to ensure that every member had full and adequate knowledge of the meeting—

And he goes on and on in this way. Is the sponsor of the bill able to say with certainty that there was no difference of opinion and that everything is sweetness and light? Can he tell us that Premier Walter Weir of Manitoba, who, I understand, is a member of the Foresters presumably in the Winnipeg area, endorses this and that everything is hunky dory there?

This assurance cannot be given because the sponsor of the bill is not in a position to do so