

Private Bills

exercise to assist this company in any way to expand its operations within the Canadian economy.

In addition to adding to the costs to the Canadian people of having insurance facilities available to them, because of the particular nature of the company and the fact that it will be owned outside our borders it will create a drain upon Canadian incomes to the extent that the profits of this company would be added to the actual costs of engaging in the insurance business. Although this is an argument which has been advanced many times, but no oftener than the circumstances which have developed in parliament justify, it does seem to me that the constant barrage of proposals we have been getting for the incorporation of new insurance companies should be an indication to the house and to the Canadian people that as the representatives of the Canadian people we are allowing a state of affairs to continue whereby obviously some people think they must have the opportunity to engage in a very lucrative business.

It is for this reason that I and some of my colleagues have been trying to make it clear that we cannot approve of this state of affairs. I think it is time that the Canadian parliament had a real look at this situation. I believe it is time that the Canadian people should be made aware of how they are being rooked by these people who pose as their benefactors through offering, as they say, the opportunity to be insured against individual loss.

I find it difficult to understand how placidly the majority of the members of this house—and of course as I look around me I note that there great throngs of members who are not in their places—generally are able to accept the continuance of this situation at a time when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) is telling us we are in a position of some economic difficulty and crisis in this country. We hear complaints from members in all parts of the house about the dangers and effects of the inflation which exists in the country today. Yet there appears to be very little or no apparent realization of the real sources or causes of inflation.

● (6:10 p.m.)

The hon. member for High Park, when sponsoring this bill at the second reading stage, suggested that by the passage of the bill we would increase employment in Canada. The more I think about that remark the more I am driven to the feeling that even

though employment might be increased so far as this company is concerned it might decrease so far as another similar company is concerned. The house will recall the remarks of my colleague, the hon. member for Nanaimo Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Cameron), who said in reply that the number of employees in this country might be increased but there are sufficient facilities and people in the business of supplying insurance services. He suggested there would not be a realistic increase in the number of people employed.

It seems to me that this argument makes it clear that the more people we have in this country engaged in non-wealth producing activities the worse off we are going to be.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): More leeches.

Mr. Barnett: I believe I have used that word on a number of occasions. These people are in effect leeches in our society, and this is the kind of activity which in my view is at the root of inflation. We have people perfectly capable of carrying on this type of activity now engaged in this business. By adding more people we are in effect precluding these people from taking part in a productive activity of some usefulness to the general economy of our society.

There is no better example of that than the entire field of casualty, accident and loss of property insurance. We have heard many debates in this country in respect of automobile insurance, one of the classes of insurance this company proposes to offer. There is an example of how this type of insurance can be made available cheaply and efficiently, and I refer to the publicly operated automobile insurance plan in the province of Saskatchewan. The only overhead involved is the cost of employing an individual in an office where license plates are issued, because the insurance is issued at the same time. There is, of course, the associated cost for the accounting which must be carried out.

The amendment before the house suggests that it is not in the public interest to give second reading to this bill. There have been many debates about a nation-wide insurance scheme to cover the cost of illness. This company is proposing to offer sickness insurance. It would be more efficient and less inflationary if provisions for sickness and loss of income as a result of illness were brought forward by the government as an addition to the medical health plan we hope is put into