

THE SENATE

Thursday, March 8, 1934.

The Senate met at 3 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

HOSPITAL SWEEPSTAKES BILL

CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE

On motion of Right Hon. Mr. Meighen, the Senate went into Committee on Bill A, an Act with respect to Hospital Sweepstakes.

Hon. Mr. McLennan in the Chair.

Section 1 was agreed to.

On section 2—Attorney-General of any province may authorize sweepstakes for hospitals within that province:

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: Honourable senators, the second reading of this Bill was passed by a substantial majority, and I presume that every honourable member, whether favouring or opposing its principle, hopes that the Bill, if enacted, may help to lighten the heavy burden now borne by every province with respect to hospitals. But I would have the scope of the measure enlarged so as to empower the province of Quebec to apply the proceeds of sweepstakes for the benefit of the University of Montreal. Without doubt that is the most pressing need now confronting our province. I hope the honourable sponsor of the Bill will see no objection to the amendment. I beg to move, seconded by Honourable Mr. L'Espérance:

That in line 15 of section 2 there be added after the word "hospitals" the words "university or universities."

Hon. Mr. CALDER: Mr. Chairman, I do not know that I altogether like that amendment. I am not opposed to the province being able to give, say, a portion of this money to universities, but there may be other charities to which it would like to give money.

Hon. Mr. HUGHES: The Provincial Government?

Hon. Mr. CALDER: Yes. As I understand it, the matter is entirely under the control of the Provincial Government. I quite understand the need of the province of Quebec as far as universities are concerned, but I foresee that in some other provinces where there are State-maintained universities there may be no such need at all. To judge by what the honourable member from Vancouver (Hon. Mr. McRae) said the other day, it is

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN.

quite possible that one of these sweepstakes will provide more money than is required. It seems to me that the Bill should be made a little broader; that the Government of a province should have the right to devote such portion of the funds as it thinks advisable to education or to any other purpose which it deems fit.

Furthermore, I am inclined to think that we should keep in mind what has been referred to as the main object of the Bill. I think we will all agree that the maintenance of hospitals, the care of the sick, and that sort of thing, are very desirable, and I should like to see it provided in the Bill that the moneys derived from sweepstakes, or at least a portion of them—I should be inclined to say at least fifty per cent—shall be definitely earmarked for hospitals.

Hon. Mr. McMEANS: They might be used for election purposes.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: I do not know that the governments might not be permitted to use them for campaign purposes. We all remember the discussion that took place last year as to the necessity of campaign funds, and the method of raising them. It was also suggested at that time that the State should furnish these funds. I do not know that it would not be a good idea to have them come out of the sweepstake moneys. However, my main point is this: though I am not committing myself for the moment, I am inclined to think that a definite proportion of the funds derived from sweepstakes should be devoted to hospitals.

Hon. Mr. HUGHES: By the provincial governments.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: By the provincial governments. Then let them do as they see fit with the remainder.

Hon. Mr. FOSTER: Although I voted for the second reading of the Bill, its scope is not such as would commend itself to me, because in the province from which I come the public hospitals are supported by a general assessment upon real estate. For instance, there is a general assessment upon our homes and other buildings to provide for the maintenance of public hospitals. I may say in this connection that the assessment for hospitals is greater than the assessment for police or fire protection. Consequently, there is no necessity for collections or drives to raise money for hospitals, and they are not in debt at the end of the year.

I do not think that even the amendment proposed by the honourable senator from Montarville (Hon. Mr. Beaubien) goes far