

Private Bills

The scout organization has done a great deal in a positive rather than a negative way to prevent juvenile delinquency and to advance the cause of the development of good citizens in Canada.

In all frankness I must point out to the house that this bill has a retroactive effect. It is feared that the limit provided in the original act of incorporation has now been exceeded many times. The organization feels that to remove any doubt as to its title to various lands it holds retroactive effect must be given. There were similar associations organized at about the same time most of which had a similar limitation on the real estate held and several have already been required to come back to parliament to ask that the ceiling be lifted.

I do not wish to burden the house with details of the real estate held by the boy scouts association but I shall simply state that in the early days an attempt was made to record centrally all real estate that the association owned or that was held for it. As the movement grew such central recording became impossible. Scout groups in some cases own their own premises. In some cases the title is taken in the name of the central board. In still other cases the title is taken in the name of trustees. It is therefore difficult to know exactly how much real estate is held but it exceeds many times at this moment the amount originally authorized.

Most provinces have their own offices and campsites. The Canadian general council owns its own headquarters, property on which a new headquarters is to be built, and a property in the Gatineau that will provide income. I have great pleasure in moving second reading of this bill.

Mr. J. F. Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity this afternoon to say a few words in support of this measure introduced by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken). As the hon. member pointed out to us the purpose of this amendment is to repeal the financial limitations that were placed on the Canadian general council of the Boy Scouts association at the time of its incorporation. I do not think we should be surprised that a measure of this nature has come before us today when we realize that this organization was incorporated some 45 years ago and when we consider prices in those days as compared with current prices.

As the hon. member also pointed out, the limitation initially imposed has unfortunately probably already been exceeded and therefore the bill includes a retroactive feature in order to cover the operations of the

organization. I believe that can be explained not only by the great expansion of the association but by the increased value of property and other developments that have occurred since the time of the incorporation of the association.

In reviewing discussions that occurred at the time of the original incorporation the question of the financial limitation was one of the two main points that were raised.

The other was the fear that was expressed about this being a military organization which perhaps arose because of the association of Lord Baden-Powell with the army. However, I believe that fear has been dispelled and every hon. member of this house will agree that the boy scouts association has made an extremely notable contribution to the welfare of the youth of this country. One of its purposes throughout the years is to make good citizens of our youngsters. I believe it has been highly successful in this respect and to that extent it may have had some connection with the army because many of the chaps who were members of the organization went on to serve their country faithfully during the war.

Preparation for military service was not, however, the primary purpose of the organization. The association has made a great contribution to almost every aspect of our national life. While we are speaking here of the Canadian boy scouts association it could also be noted that there are groups in some 57 nations and therefore they play their part in building up better international relations throughout the world.

In terms of legislation this bill appears to be of a minor character but the amendments it embodies are of great importance to the association in helping them carry out their activities. At this time I feel it is fitting that we should pay tribute to the many thousands of leaders who have devoted their time and energy to directing boy scout groups throughout the years. As the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka mentioned, most hon. members of this house have been associated with the boy scouts in one way or another throughout the years and are perhaps particularly aware of the values arising from the organization. We all know from our own experience that in most efforts of this kind it is difficult to find people who will devote their time and energy year after year to the work being carried on. Sometimes organizations of this kind are started and later fall by the wayside through lack of volunteer support. For that reason I wish to pay tribute to those selfless individuals who have devoted their time to serving as leaders of these groups throughout the years.

[Mr. Aiken.]