

Private Bills

sure it will be examined by a committee. I hope before this debate is concluded he will indicate that such is the case, thereby satisfying each of us that a bill of this type will be sent to the appropriate committee.

My reason for suggesting that it should be sent to a committee is that here we have a form of utility, and whether or not it is privately owned or not it should come under government scrutiny from time to time. Certainly much of the argument we have heard about old age pensions and other factors do enter into it, but we are agreed that possibly such subjects are extraneous to the subject matter of the bill itself and should be considered at another time. It is not my intention, therefore, to continue the debate along that line.

But I would suggest that here, when we have all the members of the house fully realizing the fact we have so many charges against the company itself in respect of the monopolistic way in which oil is being handled; with the recent price increases, and the fact that the Minister of Justice has been asked to ascertain if there is a combine in the oil industry because of the rise in price, then all these charges should be examined. Possibly when the bill comes before the committee the terms of reference will be such that they will make it possible to examine the need for dividing these shares as indicated in the bill.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member for New Westminster I was a bit puzzled by the remarks of our good friend from Vancouver South. Of course he is the member who can vote one way one year and another way another year. One minute he says this is a very simple bill, let us pass it; the next minute he says it is a very complicated bill. Well, perhaps he should make up his mind.

Mr. Philpott: I was talking about the amendment moved by your party when I spoke of it being complicated.

Mr. Knowles: The amendment is complicated but the bill is simple in the judgment of the hon. member. Perhaps if he has another interruption to make he will make it even more confused.

Mr. Speaker, there is one point which I think should be kept clear, and I realize it is a point upon which the house frequently gets confused. There is no question but that a private bill such as the bill that has been introduced by the hon. member for Victoria, B.C., if it is given second reading, has to go to the committee. We know that; all hon. members of the house know that. But, Mr. Speaker—and I recall your interest in this

point in the days before you were exalted to your present position—there is a difference in our view between sending to a committee a bill which has been given second reading, and sending to a committee the subject matter of a bill.

If we had before us merely the motion for second reading and that motion were to pass, of course the bill would go to the committee; but it would go as having had the endorsement of its principle by this house. We do not think this bill should have its principle endorsed before it goes to the committee. That is the reason for the amendment that has been moved by my colleague the hon. member for Nanaimo. We are quite prepared to have the subject matter of this bill discussed by the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines. We are also quite prepared to have the promoters of this bill go before that committee and state their reasons why parliament should consider this bill. But from our study of its provisions we feel that that questioning and discussion should take place in the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines before the House of Commons has been asked to endorse the principle of this bill. That is the reason for our amendment.

I say again, either way the matter will be referred to the committee. If the bill passes second reading the bill itself goes to the committee. If the present amendment passes, instead of the bill going to the committee the subject matter will go before it, and discussion will take place on the subject matter without the House of Commons having endorsed the principle of the bill.

I want to join with my colleagues the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, the hon. member for Nanaimo and the hon. member for Comox-Alberni, who have already spoken, in saying that we feel this bill should not be supported. The hon. member for Vancouver South expressed some amazement that we are not delighted when we hear of a private corporation like this making huge profits. Mr. Speaker, when we in this group stand up in this house and ask for certain things that are rather costly, let us say in the social security field, it is sometimes said to us by representatives of the government that for us to ask for these things is to ask for the taxpayers of Canada to pay for them. When the government does not want to agree to a request of ours it takes the position that it has to be responsible and has to consider whether or not all the taxpayers of Canada should be asked to provide money to pay for a particular piece of social legislation.

Mr. Harris: We only believe in telling the truth, you know.