

Public Service

I think the reference to the comparison with members' salaries was a very good point. We do not receive salaries in this House comparable with that of junior executives. I think it is about time we did.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Railton: I quite agree with the hon. member for Winnipeg North, and it is about time that he and his party became realistic on this point. So, Mr. Speaker, to give some background to the reason these papers cannot be introduced I would refer the House to two *Hansard* references. I refer, first, to March 15, 1973, when several general principles were brought forward in Appendix B, to which I will refer later. There were 16 in all, and at least three of them refer to this request for the production of papers. On the same date, on the following page, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) made a request for the production of papers and a lengthy debate ensued. Of course, the hon. member took a prominent part in the debate. The then House leader also spoke very fluently on the subject.

The discussion on that day showed all of us why it is impossible to produce certain papers and why those papers should not be requested. We have to follow guidelines, and they are well defined. In another *Hansard* reference of July 26, 1973—the House was again debating a private member's motion—the hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Laprise), for the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert), again requested papers "relating to a grant by the Department of Regional Economic Expansion to the newspaper *Le Soleil* of Quebec". A great deal was said in the discussion that followed, and finally the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais) replied. His remarks irrefutably showed why these papers came within the category of those which could not be tabled in the House or read into *Hansard* because of their private character.

When this motion was first brought forward on October 1, near the opening of the present session of the thirtieth parliament, the answer was:

The studies prepared for the Advisory Group on Executive Compensation in the Public Service contain salary data taken from several surveys on the movement of executive salaries, both within and outside—

I repeat, "outside".

—the federal public service. Data taken from these surveys is considered to be proprietary—

That is why the mover of the motion was asked to withdraw it. However, he did not see fit to do so. I would like to say, further, that when the memorandum for the advisory group was prepared, a great deal of survey data had to be used as a comparison for the establishment of rates for other occupational groups and the surveys were acquired from organizations in the private sector such as Hay and Associates as well as the pay research bureau. Surveys are provided on condition that their contents remain confidential and are not given publicity. Circulation within the recipient organizations must be strictly limited to those concerned with salary and wage administration. If the Treasury Board or the advisory committee were forced to make the survey results public, we would be denied access to surveys in the future. This would make the task of pay comparison with the private and other

[Mr. Railton.]

public sectors most difficult, if not impossible. In these circumstances, I feel that the House should support this refusal.

Further, there is a quotation from the personnel policy branch procedures manual with respect to the handling of cabinet documents. The general principle is as follows:

To enable members of parliament to secure factual information about the operations of government to carry out their parliamentary duties and to make public as much factual information as possible consistent with effective administration, the protection of the security of the state, rights to privacy and other such matters, government papers, documents and consultant reports should be produced on notice of motion for the production of papers unless the paper or document falls within any of the categories outlined below; in which case, an exemption from production is to be claimed.

● (1730)

As I said, there are about 16 categories of exemptions from the rule for production of papers. They are legal opinions for the use of government; papers which would be detrimental to the security of the state; papers dealing with international relations where consent should be received from the originating country; papers which might be detrimental to the future conduct of federal-provincial relations or even relations between two provinces—consent must be obtained in such cases; papers containing information the release of which could allow a result in financial gain or loss by a person or group of persons; papers reflecting on an individual's character; papers of a voluminous character which would involve too much cost or time to print; papers relating to Senate business; papers which might embarrass Her Majesty or the Royal family or official representatives of Her Majesty; papers relating to negotiations leading up to a contract until the contract has been executed; papers excluded by statute; cabinet documents and those which include a Privy Council confidence; proceedings before a court or a judicial inquiry of any sort; papers that are private or confidential and not of a public or official character; internal departmental memoranda and, last, papers requested, submitted or received in confidence by the government from sources outside the government.

There are many other groups, but I think there is enough here to show that there are at least three categories of exemption which apply to this request.

Now I come to reasons why studies prepared for the Advisory Committee on Executive Compensation should be exempt. I should like to mention a few of them. Some utilize private surveys conducted by the American Management Association, H. V. Chapman, Hay and Associates, and the Pay Research Bureau. The surveys provided by Hay and Associates and the Pay Research Bureau are made available to the advisory group on the condition that the contents are not made public and, in fact, are reviewed only by those people directly involved in the compensation function. If this information were to be made public, either willingly or unwillingly, we would not have any access to such information in the future. It would be a breach of confidence. We have to realize that salaries in the private sector are extremely confidential at the executive level. Many employers are reluctant to divulge executive salaries and do so only under a guarantee that the information will be kept confidential.