

Inquiries of the Ministry

not included in the list given by the minister. I understood him to say more were being considered. I wish the parliamentary secretary would not become so annoyed about my statement.

There is still another problem in the area, and it concerns the plight of the smaller private operators who have suffered severely. A week ago today I made a suggestion to the minister regarding assistance in the reconstruction of water access facilities on behalf of certain of these people. It is necessary to keep these people in business, not only in their own interests but also in the interests of the highly concentrated tourist business in the Georgian bay area. I hope the minister has recovered from the surprise I gave him last week without notice of this proposal, and I hope the cabinet is giving some consideration not only to providing additional public facilities but to assisting private businesses.

CRIMINAL CODEAMENDMENT TO MAKE WIRE TAPPING
CRIMINAL OFFENCE

Mr. L. T. Pennell (Brant-Haldimand) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. C-103, to amend the Criminal Code (wire tapping, etc.)

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Pennell: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to make the wire tapping of telephone communications an offence under the Criminal Code, except in the case of law enforcement officers acting pursuant to an order of a judge of a superior court of criminal jurisdiction.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

PRIVILEGEMR. CAOUETTE—PAYMENT OF TELEPHONE
BILLS OF MEMBERS

On the orders of the day:

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege concerning all hon. members and which, I believe, has been drawn to the attention of everyone.

I refer to a piece of legislation passed in August last year, namely Bill No. C-91 which provides in section 4:

The purpose of this amendment is to provide that each member of the Senate and House of [Mr. Aiken.]

Commons will be allowed such actual moving or transportation and travelling expenses between his place of residence and Ottawa and such actual telecommunication expenses while in Ottawa as the respective houses may prescribe for their members.

Here is my question of privilege. For some time now we have been receiving calls from the Bell Telephone Company asking us to pay certain bills. Now, according to the act which was passed and which is retroactive to April 8, 1963, the internal administration of the House of Commons should have paid for those telephone calls and those telecommunication charges from our ridings.

I want to raise this matter so that we know where we stand in the future.

[*Text*]

Mr. Speaker: The question raised by the hon. member is a very important one, and has been under consideration and discussion for some time. However, if I understand the act correctly it authorizes or instructs, if I may put it that way, the internal economy commissioners to determine the time, place and conditions of any payments which may or may not be made. Up to the present time the commissioners have not decided that long distance telephone calls should be paid for, and until that decision has been reached by the commissioners it is not legal for the government to pay such accounts. Consequently the accounts remain the personal debt and charge of the individual member concerned for which the government is not responsible.

Now, I do not say that the question should not be studied carefully again. It is under constant study, but until a decision has been reached the legal position is that members are responsible for their own long distance telephone calls.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, if you will permit me I would have a remark to make on this subject.

Clause 1 of the bill provides that it will be retroactive to April 8, 1963. According to clause 1, retroactivity applies to all clauses mentioned in the bill, including the one concerning telecommunication charges.

Mr. Speaker, this measure was voted on a year ago. We believe that the year granted to members of treasury board is a fairly long period of time. Besides, this bill was passed in order to set up a system whereby all