

*Salaries Act*

through a committee of inquiry to find out whether there may not be some alternative method which would be much better than the flat method now proposed.

It is true that ministers must devote their whole time to this task. It is true that ministers have heavy responsibilities, and that those responsibilities increase constantly. But how do we arrive at the figure which is before us now? We have no method of arriving at it beyond the fact that it has been placed before us in this statute.

The Acting Prime Minister has said that the salaries paid in other jurisdictions differ greatly. He pointed out that the President of the United States receives a salary and an expense allowance far beyond anything contemplated in this measure before us.

He also pointed out that in Britain there is a salary of £10,000 paid to the Prime Minister. That amount, in terms of the present value of the dollar, would be less than is now proposed by this measure.

Having said that, may I point out that there is, however, another consideration in Britain which should not be overlooked. The Prime Minister of Britain, when he ceases to be Prime Minister, retains his right to the same salary for the rest of his life. That amount, capitalized in terms of the immediate amount that would be paid at the time of the retirement of any Prime Minister, would be a very substantial sum. We therefore cannot say and could not suggest that, even though the amount paid to the Prime Minister of Great Britain in present dollar values of the pound is less than that proposed here, this measure, in fact, suggests a larger payment. It does not. The provision in regard to the continuing payments after the retirement of the Prime Minister of Great Britain is one of very considerable importance. It does, however, suggest that there are alternatives that should have been considered.

The Acting Prime Minister has also pointed out that in Australia there is a payment of £41,000 to what is known as a cabinet fund, which is then administered by the Prime Minister. That gives to the Prime Minister of Australia the right to make variable arrangements in regard to the remuneration to his ministers. There again you have another alternative.

I believe it would have been a very good thing if a committee or a commission had had an opportunity to examine these different methods, and several other methods that present themselves, and simply place before us an analysis of the comparative advantages of these systems and then let us decide, on the basis of the evidence produced, which

method this house would prefer, and also what figures should be adopted having regard to the over-all plan employed.

If, for the sake of argument, it were decided that we should adopt a system similar to that which has been long in use in Great Britain, then it would seem that there should be a different amount. If the salary were going to continue, that would have to be taken into consideration, and there might be strong arguments for that. I believe that the same practice is followed in France. We have not examined this matter for some time. As the Acting Prime Minister and the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) have both pointed out, it has not been considered since 1920. Therefore it is highly desirable that the alternative methods employed in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and France, where there are a number of similarities which do not exist in the government of the United States, should have been examined, given consideration and placed before us for final decision.

One of the points made by the Prime Minister was that some regard should be had to the amount that men of similar capacity would receive in executive offices in private employment. I think there will be general agreement with that. I think it should be recognized that the government of the country is big business on a very large scale and that executive capacity should be attracted by what is paid. Nevertheless one thing that hardly needs to be emphasized is that executive salaries in private business or in the professions are not the same. You do not reward executive efficiency by one single fixed salary. On the contrary, you gear the salary of the executive to the responsibility of the office as well as to the capacity of the individual.

There is already in operation a system of different salary levels for cabinet ministers in the United Kingdom. In Australia ministers receive different amounts for offices that are regarded as having a different weight of responsibility. This is made possible by the single amount paid to the cabinet fund which is administered by the Prime Minister of Australia. I think this is something that could well be considered. We are not dealing now with the individuals who may be in office today. No one should suggest for a moment that any comment that is made is related to the individual occupying any particular office of government. We are dealing with the government as part of our parliamentary system and we are considering the remuneration to be paid to those who assume these administrative offices.