

how the mere enunciation of a platitude such as that has anything whatever to do with the concrete and practical proposal which the hon. member has introduced. I desire to differ with him in point of manner from the very start by not endeavouring to buttress any argument of mine with appeals in that fashion to more or less clever sayings of other people. After all, this is a very simple proposition with which we have to deal.

I think my hon. friend will not object if I point out that if this bill were enacted in the manner in which it is now presented to the house it would not make one iota of difference to any of the problems that he has laid before the house this evening. Not one particle of difference would result. The sum total result of this enactment would be that this chamber would have listened to observations upon the subject by himself and to what I am now saying and what others may say who may follow me, and there would be an end of it. There would be no disclosure of anything to anybody by anybody as a result of the passage of this amendment. I do not know how carefully my hon. friend has studied the section he seeks to amend, but I am confident that in a moment or two he will agree with me that his amendment, if carried, could not possibly make any difference with regard to disclosures such as he desires to get.

My first reason for being opposed to voting for this particular amendment as it is, is that I would be merely voting for nothing; it does not mean anything. It is a great deal like a person lighting matches and throwing them into the river. They have no effect.

Mr. KNOWLES: Be careful that you do not use platitudes.

Mr. MAYBANK: The hon. member need not fear that I will imitate him in any respect. It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I would not imitate him with a view to complimenting him and certainly I would not indulge in any flattery.

I am sure that Your Honour and hon. members will agree with me when I say that the addition to the present law of the words proposed would mean nothing. The underlined words, which are the amendment, are:

Provided that nothing in this subsection shall operate to prevent a minister of the crown from communicating to the Senate or to the House of Commons any information obtained under the provisions of this act.

When you read the whole section as it now stands you will see that the Minister of National Revenue is not prevented by the section from giving to the House of Commons information which he may obtain from

various officers of the crown, which is what my hon. friend seeks to obtain. The section itself as it is now, unamended, before my hon. friend's words come in, reads:

No person employed in the service of His Majesty shall communicate or allow to be communicated to any person not legally entitled thereto, any information obtained under the provisions of this act, or allow any such person to inspect or have access to any written statement furnished under the provisions of this act.

Of course, there will be by all people different meanings assigned to the word "employed". When you have the verb "employed" you naturally think of the noun and you know that a person employed is an employee. There will not be any argument about that. One meaning of the word "employed" would be such as to comprehend a minister of the crown. Let us say that ministers of the crown, all members of the House of Commons, all members of the Senate, as well as many others are, in one way of looking at the matter, "employed" in the service of the crown that is, they are employed in the service of the country. They are not "employed" in the service of the country any more than millions of other people about the country are also employed. All good citizens are employed, in the popular sense of the word, in the service of the country. But that is not the meaning which is ascribed to such a word in the statute. A person who is employed, an employee, is one who is paid a certain sum of money and performs certain definite services, although the degree of definiteness may vary. That person is an employee. But by no stretch of the imagination could ministers of the crown, or members of parliament, or members of the senate be called "employees" of the crown, any more than His Excellency could be called an employee of the crown. I feel quite sure that my hon. friend will agree with what I am saying when he gives consideration to it. It is not just an ordinary technical legal argument such as might be offered by reason of endeavouring to exercise ingenuity. This is one of those propositions in law upon which I am confident there will not be any disagreement.

Mr. WRIGHT: Is there such a thing?

Mr. MAYBANK: Oh, yes, there are such ideas now and then, and this happens to be one of them. I appreciate the intervention from the other side of the house; it is a natural one. There is merit in such thought that lay behind that interruption, because it is true that in law, as, I have been told, in other professions even the profession to which the hon. member belongs, the clerical