

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—We have all acted upon that interpretation of the law. We were entitled under the old law to count in the days of attendance, and days that we sat upon committee, though not in the House.

Hon. Mr. MILLER—I should like to ask my hon. friend if his contention is to this effect, that a member who has not been here thirty-one days can count in the fifteen days which he is allowed to be absent, in order to make the attendance thirty-one days?

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—That I believe has been the interpretation given to the law.

Hon. Mr. MILLER—That has not been my opinion, and I have never met a lawyer who holds that opinion either.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I never consulted a lawyer about it. My recollection is that the fifteen days has been included in all cases. If a member sat thirty-one days he would be entitled to it, less the days he was not here, and there would be less advantage in giving fifteen days. I am stating the interpretation which has been given to the old law, and how we were paid. I want to point out that if the interpretation put upon the present law is correct, it will be a saving to the country rather than an increase. I have commenced at British Columbia and gone down to the maritime provinces, and I take ten cases and read the result. In reading these first figures it must be remembered they include the mileage; hence it will be much larger in the case of people coming from the Pacific than it would be for the same number of days a member would sit coming from a constituency near the capital. One drew \$3,003. He sat seventeen days, but he had the advantages to which I have called attention. Under the present law those advantages being taken from him, the mileage and other perquisites he would have drawn only \$340. Another drew \$2,191, though he sat in this House only four days. Under the new law he would have drawn \$80. Another drew \$2,243 for sixteen days attendance; under the present law as it has been interpreted he would have drawn only \$320. Another drew \$2,315 for twenty-three

days attendance. His sessional allowance under the present law, for the same attendance, would be only \$460, because he had not sat the thirty-one days which is provided for in the law. Another drew \$2,203 and he sat thirteen days. Under the present law he would have been entitled to \$260. Another, an Ontario senator, drew \$2,215 for ten days sitting. Under the present law he would have drawn \$200. Another drew \$2,187 for ten days attendance; his allowance under the present law would be \$200. Another in Ontario drew \$2,259 for eleven days sitting. Under the present law he would draw \$20 a day for the eleven days, making \$220. The ninth senator drew \$2,188 and he sat in the House twelve days. His allowance under the present law, with the interpretation placed on it, would be \$240. Another drew \$2,293 for eighteen days. Under the present law he would have been entitled to \$360. The total amount that these ten members of the House drew for these attendances was \$23,097, for one hundred and twenty-four days sitting. Under the present law they would have been entitled to only \$2,680, plus their actual expenses in coming to Ottawa and returning home, not including railway fares. I have not given the amounts drawn by members of the House of Commons, but the same principle applies to the indemnity paid in that House. If this comparison applied to this House with its small number of members, shows such a result, how much greater would be that comparison if applied to members of the House of Commons?

If the hon. gentleman will analyse these accounts they will find that what I have pointed out is strictly correct, that under the present law the payment of members would be less than if the previous law were in force and would cost the country less than it did under the old law. That was my opinion, and I took the trouble to look through the whole of the statement. I have all the particulars, and you can judge it from the file I have here. So much noise was made about it in the press and through the country, that I thought it a subject worthy of the consideration of every representative man, and my opinion has been verified by the fact. Amendments should be made to the present law. When the question comes up we can discuss them. It seems to be a jumble.