

Members' Salaries

He said: Madam Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. I am to put motion No. 8 also.

• (2040)

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka) moved:

That Bill C-44, An Act to amend the Senate and House of Commons Act, the Salaries Act and the Parliamentary Secretaries Act, be amended by deleting Clause 7 at page 7 and substituting the following therefor:

"7. This Act shall be deemed to have come into force on the 1st day of January, 1975."

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, although my motion comes ahead of the one moved by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling), perhaps he might be permitted to speak first and I would be happy to follow.

Mr. Darling: Madam Speaker, I hope this evening in respect of motion No. 8 standing in my name, on which I had some difficulty in getting a seconder, hon. members will give serious thought. I have put forward various ideas and have spoken on a number of occasions, both in the committee and here, about this proposed increase. It would certainly seem that hon. members will receive an increase of 33½ per cent when this bill receives third reading.

This bill in its present state will make this increase retroactive to July 8, 1974. This is something with which I take great exception. I have said that a pay raise is in order, but the idea of picking the pockets of the taxpayers retroactively for nine or ten months does not sit well with me. I have said this before. When I spoke in committee I said I would be perfectly agreeable to a pay increase that was effective when the bill received Royal Assent, but I expressed doubt that the House would go along with that.

In all fairness, and in all humility, members of parliament should at least say to themselves that they have the pay increase and the least they can do is make it effective on January 1 of this year rather than retroactively to July 8 of last year. This bill did not come in until December. There might be some rhyme or reason for making the effective date January 1 of this year, but if the bill is made retroactive for six months it will cost the taxpayers another \$1,480,000 to be distributed among members of this House and the other place.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: Some hon. members applaud, but to me this is absolutely unconscionable. If the bill makes the increase retroactive for the entire nine months, this will amount to an extra \$2,600,000 in back pay for members of parliament. I can see a lot of them with their eyes lit up. I suppose they have most of it spent already.

I hope members will say that, now they are sure of a pay increase they should not be greedy, and make the increase effective only to January 1 of this year. I would go along with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) in making it effective on July 1, 1975. If his motion happens to carry, I would agree with it. If it does not carry I hope hon. members will seriously consider

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

January 1 of this year as the effective date, leaving about \$1,480,000 in the treasury to be spent for some needy purpose.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) has just pointed out, it is extremely hard to make a case for the size of the increase being voted.

An hon. Member: We hear again from Stanley.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, there does seem to be something in the name of Stanley. It is even more difficult to make a case for making that pay increase retroactive to July 8, 1974, the date of the last election. I hope even at this stage the House will re-think this question and support one or other of these proposals either that the effective date be January 1, 1975, or, in my view, preferably July 1, 1975.

The fact still remains that when we ran in the election campaign in May and June of last year we knew what the salary was going to be if we were elected on July 8. I think it is unconscionable on our part to try to make this increase retroactive to that date. The same thing applies to all other items in this bill including the salaries of cabinet ministers, the Speakers of both houses, the parliamentary secretaries, and all the rest who are covered by this bill.

The least this House should do on this occasion is make these changes effective either January 1 or July 1 of this year. If I may put in another plug for July 1 as preferable to January 1, let me remind the House again that in a few weeks the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) will be bringing down a budget, and indications are that the budget will relate to the problems of our time and the need for restraint. This House is going to look pretty ridiculous a month from now when talking about restraints that are more severe than we were prepared to exercise for ourselves.

Members of the House may think they will get away with this because it will be an accomplished fact, but the public will be terribly aware of what has happened. I suggest the Minister of Finance and other members of the cabinet will have real trouble in trying to get co-operation for any program of restraint in view of the complete failure to exercise any restraint so far as members of parliament are concerned.

I suppose we are just about at the end of the report stage. There does not seem to be many members around who want to speak to these motions. No one today has spoken for Bill C-44. I am surprised the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) has had nothing to say today. Motion No. 4 was his, and the guts of the bill are in that motion. He allowed it to be put in his name, and has not said a word.

I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) has been able to sit out this whole debate. He did not take part in the debate in December or in April. Is that leadership? The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has taken no part in this debate either. My heavens, leadership just does not exist on this particular issue. There is one more day, tomorrow or whenever, when the government