

● (1550)

[English]

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Nathan Nurgitz moved the second reading of Bill C-31, to amend the Governor General's Act.

He said: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today to say a few words in sponsorship of Bill C-31, an act to amend the Governor General's Act. I should point out, honourable senators, that Bill C-39 in its original form, when it was first introduced into the House of Commons on June 26, has been placed on your desks, and next to it appears a copy of page 1050 of the *Votes and Proceedings* of the House of Commons. So the bill that we have before us is as amended by those various items that appear on page 1050.

The substance of that change is that, as opposed to having an increase from \$70,000 per annum to \$80,000 per annum, the increase is now to \$83,800. That was rounded off. Thereafter, because there is a second part of this bill, the indexing of the salary commences on January 1, 1990, which was another amendment made to the bill.

● (1600)

Honourable senators, I believe that most members of this place and the other, and, indeed, most Canadians, fully recognize and appreciate the importance of the role played by the Governor General in our parliamentary system of government. I am sure that all Canadians support a bill that strengthens the position of the Governor General. It is precisely for that reason that this bill has been brought forward and that is the aim of it—to reinforce that office with a better salary.

In addition to a salary increase, as I mentioned, the bill establishes what might be termed an objective procedure allowing the Governor General's salary to be adjusted annually. I think nothing further need be said in sponsorship of this bill and I urge honourable senators to support it.

Hon. Earl A. Hastings: Would the honourable senator explain a phrase that he used? He said that the salary was "rounded off".

Senator Frith: He was jesting.

Senator Nurgitz: I was jesting and I ought not to have. The original bill, which was introduced in June, was for a salary of \$80,000 per annum. It is now \$83,800 per annum. I was being facetious. I ought not to have been and I apologize.

Senator Hastings: I just could not understand how \$83,800 rounded off to \$80,000. With those remarks, I adjourn the debate.

Hon. Finlay MacDonald: Honourable senators, before the adjournment of the debate, I should like to ask Senator Nurgitz a question. Would it be possible to place any conditions upon this increase? I had in mind the opening of the tennis courts at Rideau Hall, which have been closed for the last number of years.

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): How about the cricket pitch?

An Hon. Senator: You're on a sticky wicket now!

Senator MacDonald: Yes. I distinctly remember a situation in which all honourable senators were invited to a reception at Rideau Hall, but only spouses were allowed to accompany them. Senator Frith and I arrived alone.

Senator Frith: Not together!

Senator Nurgitz: Which one of you was the spouse?

Senator Frith: That is why I got the "not together" in there fast.

Senator MacDonald: And we complained bitterly to the Governor General at the time.

Senator Frith: Well, I complained politely, but he complained bitterly.

Senator MacDonald: Senator Frith and I made the point that if we were to continue to be forbidden to take an escort with us, we would have to prevail upon or molest the wives of our fellow senators.

The Governor General at that time was apologetic. She said that in the other place they had a certain amount of trouble because, when on the invitations "members and guests" were specified, they found that spouses were often not brought along and that some other person was in their place. This caused a little trouble, but surely that would not be the case with honourable senators.

Senator Frith: You notice that he specifies that that would not happen with "honourable" senators—he did not refer to any other sort.

Senator MacDonald: I think Senator Frith and I have corrected this situation, but I want to be sure, before I support this legislation, that that will not happen again and that the tennis courts will be opened.

Hon. Heath Macquarrie: Honourable senators, not being an aging Don Juan, I will not get into the discussion that has just been brought before us.

Senator Doody: Do you mean you are a young Don Juan?

Senator Macquarrie: Perhaps, but I will get into safer terrain. Sometimes in this place, when we are accommodating to our colleagues, there are procedural requirements. The fact that I was named by His Honour the Speaker as the seconder of this particular motion does not indicate a burning enthusiasm for the content of the bill.

Hon. John B. Stewart: Honourable senators, I take it that the bill we have before us is in the form in which it was introduced in the House of Commons for first reading. Is that correct?

Senator Nurgitz: Yes.

Senator Stewart: That explains, then, why this bill comes to us with the following recommendation: "Her Excellency the Governor General recommends this appropriation." I wonder