

nection with these references offer the personal explanations which I desire to make. Before proceeding to do so, I desire to say a few words with regard to the argument of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition yesterday, in his comparison of the cost of the old and the new Indemnity Acts. I do not, however, intend to raise any legal controversy here. It would be futile and of no good result. I can only say that the legal construction of the old Indemnity Act given yesterday by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition, is not the construction of that Act which was entertained by Sir Alexander Campbell, or Sir John Abbott or myself when I was speaker of this House and had frequent occasion to look into it. It is not necessary, however, that I should go into any legal argument with my hon. friend on that point, but I take issue with him with regard to the argument he based on the comparison he made of the operation of the old Indemnity Act and the Act now on the statute-book. In the first place I would say that taking last session as an illustration is in itself a very unfair beginning. Last session was exceptional in many respects, but especially in regard to this House because of its many and long adjournments. The Senate did hardly anything last session but adjourn, and the adjournments were very long. I do not blame the House for that; there was no business for it to do, and it might as well adjourn as remain here doing nothing, but I say it was an exceptional session, and I venture to assert that in no other session of parliament however short since confederation were there so few actual days of attendance to the credit of the members, in consequence of the long adjournments. Therefore to take last session to illustrate his comparison of the number of days of member's attendance, and to base an argument on that comparison such as my hon. friend used yesterday was very unfair. It would be fairer to take a session one or two years back when the anomalous conditions of last session did not prevail.

But there is another feature of my hon. friend's comparison yesterday which I cannot help considering as very surprising and incorrect. My hon. friend tried to show that the present law if carried strictly into operation would actually cost the country less

than the old Act as it was now enforced. When trying to prove this he took the old Act and applied it to the new indemnity of \$2,500, and made a comparison in this way between the two laws. Now if my hon. friend wanted to make a fair comparison he should have taken the old indemnity that was applicable to the old law, and not the new indemnity. According to my hon. friend's mode of reasoning, the larger the indemnity the more unfavourable the old law would show by his interpretation, and therefore the less the increase would cost the country under the new Act, and it was a pity for the sake of his argument that the indemnity had not been \$5,000 instead of \$2,500. My hon. friend will see that in making a comparison he should have applied the operation of the old Act as a whole, and the actual indemnity of \$1,500 under that Act, and compared it with the new Act and its operation on the indemnity of \$2,500. That would have been a fair comparison, but it would not have sustained the argument which my hon. friend placed before the House.

With regard to the general question of indemnity, when I first became a member of this House the amount was only \$600. It was afterwards raised to \$1,000, under the Conservative party, and at no time did I complain of its insufficiency, or hear complaints from other members of parliament in either House. It was felt at that time that until the experiment of confederation had become an assured success, the more economically the machinery of the government could be run the better, and the indemnity was therefore accepted not as an allowance or salary for services performed by members, but as what it was, an indemnity for money out of pocket in attending the sessions of parliament. This state of things continued until the change of government in 1896 and a few years after. In 1901 the present government increased the indemnity to \$1,500. Now I am frank to confess to the House that for some years past, and especially since the promulgation of the draft constitution of the commonwealth of Australia, I have been of opinion that the indemnity to members of parliament, should be \$2,000, I consider it would not be one dollar more than

Hon. Mr. MILLER.