

Senate and House of Commons

assurance of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) that, as it stands, this bill does not provide for any additional allowances, except for days that members have actually attended in session.

Mr. St. Laurent: That is right, but with this qualification, that it does not exclude the two Sundays that intervened while we have been proceeding with the business of parliament, and it would not provide for any allowance whatsoever from the time a long adjournment came into force until such time as is fixed by that adjournment, or until such day as the Speaker might recall members to resume the sittings.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Dion in the chair.

On section 1—*If either house adjourned for more than one week.*

Mr. Hansell: Mr. Chairman, in connection with a bill of this kind I fancy I detect among members the feeling that, should they rise and speak to it, they would run the risk of becoming a sort of goat. I have run that risk before, and I do not think my constituents have held it against me. I am not now speaking for this group. I am speaking on my own responsibility. I am not going to complain about the bill, but I do believe there is a feeling among the members that perhaps, because of the long hours we have put in, and the fact that some members have had to leave their businesses, a little bit in addition to the \$25 a day might have been granted to us.

I would not stand here and ask for anything more than we deserve—but I do not believe we should be required to take any less, particularly when one considers that we have been sitting from eleven in the morning until eleven at night, six days of the week, which ordinarily would amount to two or three days more than our ordinary sitting weeks. Then we have had to do our other work in addition to that, some hon. members having found it necessary to get to this building at eight o'clock in the morning. I do not come here that early, but there are some who do. Sometimes I have been detained until after midnight.

Having these points in mind I had thought that perhaps, under the circumstances, we might have expected a little more consideration. However, as I said I am not one who would ask for more than we deserve—but I do not believe we should be given any less. If we counted the extra hours which, in labour circles, might have been considered as overtime, I should think we might have expected some further consideration.

I agree that we should not adjourn and receive a full indemnity, but I do think there is a danger of cheapening our parliamentary institutions. I am not referring particularly to this bill when I say that I think it is a shame that we pay the Prime Minister of Canada such a small salary, especially when we stop to think that there are officials running governmental institutions who are paid two, three and perhaps four times as much as is paid to the Prime Minister for running the whole country. That does not add up. The ministers of the crown bear heavy responsibilities and I am quite sure that if they applied their abilities to the running of a corporation or in other ways they would earn much more. There are members of parliament who are lawyers and doctors or who follow other professions who lose money every day they sit in this house.

That does not go for clergymen. I could say that I am quite content as I do not suppose there is a church that would pay me the same salary I receive as a member of parliament. Therefore I can speak with some authority and feeling on this matter. But I repeat that there is a danger of cheapening parliament in respect to these things. I do not think the time should be far distant when this act should be overhauled. Let us pay members of the cabinet and members of parliament an amount commensurate with that paid by business organizations of this country for similar responsibilities.

Pensions for members have been referred to in days gone by. There are some members of parliament who give their whole lives to their parliamentary careers, and I am one of those. I do not serve any particular church and when I do go out to serve—perhaps I should not say this—it costs me money. Quite often they say, "Oh, yes, Hansell will come, he is a member of parliament and we do not need to pay him". Many of us give our whole lives to our parliamentary careers and we cannot look forward to a pension until some pension scheme is brought in for members of parliament.

Perhaps in mentioning these things I shall be dubbed the goat, but I am quite certain that I am voicing the feelings of a large majority of hon. members.

There are one or two questions I should like to ask under this section. Will members be paid for one week of adjournment? I realize that they will not be paid if the house adjourns for more than one week, but will they be paid for one week of adjournment? Shall we be paid before leaving here? Some of us may be broke. I am not broke exactly. I do not want all of you to come to me now and borrow money from me in order to get