

Compensation

is not a motion merely to relegate the matter to a committee where it may then die but, indeed, was a motion which directed the committee to report back to the House. I would like you, sir, to clarify under those circumstances what might be the distinction which would allow you to put the motion so that we may have the feeling of the House on giving this matter more consideration in committee and, at the same time, that we not be precluded from debating the matter at the time the committee reports to the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is making a suggestion on which I do not have to agree or disagree, the merits of considering the motion either in committee or in the House. My difficulty is with the procedural aspect of the matter. I agree with regard to the topic of the debate, and if I were accepting the motion it would not preclude a debate. Procedurally, however, the debate should be on the amendment proposed by the hon. member, not on the main motion, although these debates sometimes allow members to spend most of their time debating the fundamentals of the main motion.

At the same time a suggestion to have the Chair allow a question of this kind to be put to the House so that the subject matter may be referred to a standing committee which would report back to the House, is not a practice that follows precedent. Perhaps the hon. member was not listening, but I read a citation from Beauchesne's, paragraph 6 of citation 202, which says very clearly that it is not an amendment to a motion to move that the question go to committee.

I realize what the hon. member is attempting to achieve. I believe he is trying to do what we sometimes do with private members' bills, when a motion is made that a bill not be read a second time, that the bill be struck from the order paper and that its subject matter be referred to a committee. Even in situations like that, we are not entitled to order the committee to report back to the House. We send the subject matter for consideration to the committee and that is the end of it, so even in that respect the hon. member is overstepping the rules.

With regard to the suggestion to allow his proposition to refer the subject matter to committee, the motion, which is for general discussion, is before the House at this time. It is here for discussion, decision, and recommendation, and I think that the hon. member's objective should be first to let the House go as far as it will with the debate and to hope for a vote. If things do not go as the hon. member would like, perhaps in another way he could make a proposal that might meet his objective. As it now stands, I do not think that we can deal with his amendment.

Mr. S. Victor Railton (Welland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for taking so long in coming to your decision. I followed your procedural perambulations with a great deal of interest, and I did not think the decision would take anybody with your experience quite as long. I was not really sure whether it was the legality of the procedure or the indecipherability of the longhand written amendment in the first place that was bothering you.

[Mr. Hnatyshyn.]

I thought that the motion by the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) was interesting, and still is for a couple of minutes. In the wording, the hon. member is limiting the compensation payable to so and so, and so and so:

—to an amount no greater than the maximum salary and allowance paid to the elected representative who receives the highest salary and allowance under the terms of the Senate and House of Commons Act.

In other words, this motion narrows it down to the question of what we pay executives in the civil service and Crown corporations.

The hon. member might have said in his motion that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)—knowing that he is underpaid because of all the flack that goes with the job—should get at least twice as much money.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): No, no!

Mr. Railton: The hon. member did not even say that the other members of the civil service at the lower grades should not be paid higher than members of parliament. However, members are so notoriously underpaid, they haven't had a raise, I think for about six or seven years, and they get nothing but flack. Right now members here do not get as much as members in the provincial legislatures. I do not know why the hon. member for Don Valley mentioned congressional salaries in the United States because they are so far ahead of our salaries that there should be no doubt about the foolishness of comparing or setting the same salaries based on the salaries of elected representatives to the House of Commons.

The other point I would like to make, if you will give me a little time, Mr. Speaker, is with regard to the suggestion that we set ceilings in the private sector. How can we do that unless we adopt the same authority as they have in Moscow? This is a democracy, and we do not set the salaries in the private sector. I could go on and on and really get down to my prepared notes, unless you wish—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I regret that I must interrupt the hon. member—

Mr. Gillies: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order and just so there is no further confusion, there is nothing whatever in my motion about setting salaries in the private sector.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Perhaps it is time to say that the hour provided for private members' business has expired. It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

● (2002)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.