

Supply—Legislation

is piloting these particular estimates through the committee. I should like to inquire whether the practice brought in last session of giving a week's pay to members of the sessional staff at the end of the session will be continued this session. At the same time perhaps His Honour can state whether this will be a permanent practice.

Second, has any consideration been given to revising the salaries of employees of the house whose salaries were not revised in the last two or three revisions that have taken place? I realize that this is something that involves a relationship between the House of Commons and the civil service commission, but hon. members will recall that once in a while these reports come before us for approval. There are certain categories of employees and certain individual employees whose salaries were not increased on those occasions, and I wonder if consideration will be given to their cases.

Third and last, is any consideration being given to changing the basis upon which sessional employees work? Quite a number of our employees are on annual salary, some being required to be here the whole year, while others are required to be here only while parliament is in session. There are other employees, however, and I have in mind particularly the stenographers who work for us, who are employed only during the session and for such additional period as may be necessary, and who have no other income for the remainder of the year.

I have suggested before that they be put on an annual basis, and in saying that I do not suggest that the annual salary should be unreasonably high, considering the fact that they would be working only a certain number of months in the year. It seems to me that consideration might be given to providing some reasonable basis upon which they would be paid an annual salary and in turn required to work for the time that we need their services, just as is the case with our good friends the *Hansard* reporters whom we are working to death today.

Mr. Speaker: In regard to the first question, I may say that the extra week's salary was given at the close of the first session of this parliament when we were approaching the Christmas season, and it was felt that we could be a little more generous at that season of the year than we had been at the close of other sessions. We felt that this session reasonable notice had been given to the sessional employees of when the session might end, and for that reason additional salary after the close of the session has not been provided. I might say that a number

of the sessional employees are being retained for three or four days after the close of the session.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre then asked whether there was to be a revision of the salaries of employees who had not received an increase. I can assure him and the committee that this matter is receiving the attention of those responsible, and I expect that a further report will be brought in next session. That, of course, does not include all the employees who did not get an increase, but there are certain employees who we feel should receive an increase as soon as possible.

The third question was with regard to setting up a permanent establishment of sessional employees. I do not know whether the hon. member intended to include all sessional employees in the house, but he did refer to the stenographers. Many more stenographers are required during the session than between sessions, and it would be difficult, and I do not know whether it would be practicable, to have a great many stenographers around the building during a recess with nothing to do. I realize the difficult position in which some of them find themselves, having worked here for three or four months and then probably not securing work elsewhere. The matter is receiving consideration, but I cannot say that we are near to reaching a solution to the question. I would say, however, that we hope to set up a permanent establishment with a definite number of stenographers who will be retained throughout the year.

Hon. members realize that between sessions members come to Ottawa and need stenographic service; therefore it is necessary to have a number of stenographers available. The matter is receiving our careful attention and we hope that at the end of another session we shall have something definite to report.

Mr. Knowles: I want to thank the Speaker for the answers he has given to my questions. I thank him particularly for the answers to the second and third questions. I am sorry that the answer to the first was in effect in the negative. It seemed to me that the gesture made at the end of the last session was a reasonable one. I recall that at Christmas time we often express the hope that the spirit of Christmas will last the year round. It would seem to me that the same good will we were prepared to show to our employees just before Christmas should be shown just before Dominion day, especially at a time when their employment is being terminated. I will not extend the argument, except to express the hope that it may yet be considered. Indeed, if no other way can be found