

Section 21 (1) provides:

No person, who is a member of the Senate—

This deals with the Senate situation.

—shall directly or indirectly, knowingly and willfully be a party to—

The Minister of Transport is looking forward to the early expectation of being in that body and is showing a particular interest in this section while I am reading it.

Mr. Pickersgill: Let's go together.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The section continues:

—or be concerned in any contract under which the public money of Canada is to be paid.

The Prime Minister glossed over the situation by stating that no member of the present parliament had received any payment from the C.B.C. The only reason they did not was that the C.B.C. refused to make any more payments. That is the only reason.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: No one can deny this. I know personally what the C.B.C. did.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the right hon. Leader of the Opposition—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Minister of Public Works—

Mr. Diefenbaker: I want to say that I personally—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am trying to arrange for a bit of order. I understand the Minister of Public Works wants to ask a question. He cannot do this without the permission of the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I first want to finish what I have to say, Mr. Speaker. I am always willing to answer the hon. gentleman. I was saying that the C.B.C. refused to make any payments after a legal opinion was secured from the law officers of the crown that the acceptance of any such payment would place in jeopardy the seat of an hon. member. That was not a passing opinion of the Minister of Justice; that was an opinion of the law officers of the crown. That is why in the present parliament no payments have been made.

23033—704½

Members' Acceptance of Fees from C.B.C.

• (3:20 p.m.)

The Prime Minister said that, whatever the rules may have been in the past, they do not apply from one parliament to the other. The only example I know in respect of a member losing his seat in the house was the case of the Hon. George B. Jones from New Brunswick. He found that his company had accepted certain payments from the Department of Indian Affairs. He resigned his seat immediately and was re-elected subsequently. That is the only case on record of which I know.

Furthermore I would point out that in September, 1964 the C.B.C. announced in a policy declaration that no further payments would be made because of the opinion given by the law officers of the crown. I think hon. members generally will agree that it is the course of wisdom not to accept payments for appearances from an institution such as the C.B.C., into which we sink such a large proportion of the moneys from parliament and from the Canadian people.

It is unfortunate that this question was not answered sooner. The Prime Minister said that the period of limitation has elapsed. I would point out to him that the following question was asked on May 16 by the hon. member for Saskatoon:

1. Has any member of the present cabinet, during the past three years received an honorarium or fee from the C.B.C. for appearances on television or radio?

2. If so (a) who (b) in what amounts?

This was a starred question and I bring it to Your Honour's attention because starred questions are not supposed to remain in cold storage for months and months. This is an example of the cavalier way in which the government has treated questions placed on the order paper when it does not suit their purpose to answer them.

A further question was asked on September 8—not a starred one—which was as follows:

Have any ministers of the crown who may have received an honorarium or fee from the C.B.C. in the past three years for appearances on TV and radio, returned such fee to the corporation?

2. If so, which ministers and on what dates were the cheques received and on what dates were payments made?

Answers to these two questions have been flagrantly postponed by the government, for which there can be no excuse whatsoever.

In so far as the law is concerned, the law officers gave their opinion. I am sure that hon. members in all parts of the house will come to the conclusion that the acceptance of this type