

Historic Sites and Monuments Act

This bill is of a strictly administrative nature and is not very complicated. As a matter of fact, Bill C-153 purports to provide for membership on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of an officer of the National Museum of Canada simply by increasing the number of Board members from 14 to 15 and by bringing the quorum from 7 to 8.

As I said, the Board is established according to section 4 (1) of the present act, as follows:

- a) the Dominion Archivist;
- b) an officer of the National Museum of Canada—
- c) one representative for each of the provinces, and an officer of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Before the adoption in 1964 of the government re-organization act, the National Museum of Canada was represented on the Board. The proposed amendment will rectify the situation and that official will be appointed by the Secretary of State.

The purpose of the second amendment is to provide that the remuneration paid to members of the Board is more appropriate to the times.

According to the existing law, those persons may be paid \$20 for each day they are necessarily away from their ordinary places of residence for the purpose of attending meetings of the Board. However, considering the amount was fixed a few years ago and the depreciation of the dollar since, it is clearly insufficient and besides, less than what was paid previously to members of similar commissions.

Now, in view of the devotion and the ability of the members of that Board and the importance of the work they perform, it would be advisable and fair to grant them an increase.

The amendment provides that the remuneration will be fixed by the Governor in Council. This provision obviously allows periodic adjustments without it being necessary each time to amend the legislation.

This is the purpose of Bill C-153, which was moreover approved by the hon. members who had the opportunity to state their views on second reading. Some explanations were also given in committee which reported it without amendment. I am pleased to recommend it to the house so that it can be passed on third reading.

[English]

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, members of the official opposition [Mr. Forest.]

have no quarrel with Bill C-153. We indicated this when the bill first came before the house and when it was before the committee. We repeat that stand at the third and final stage of consideration of the bill. There are some pieces of legislation which come before the house which are highly controversial. An example of this is Bill C-150, the extended discussion on which has just been concluded this afternoon. There are other items of government business which are non-controversial. The reason the present bill is non-controversial so far as we are concerned is that actually it does nothing. One cannot disagree with a bill which, as the minister stated when he introduced it last January, merely is a housekeeping measure.

• (5:20 p.m.)

Indeed, it is unfortunate, as I indicated at that time, that all the machinery of parliament was moved into action to deal with a matter which has no significance. The parliamentary secretary verified this fact in the brief statement he made this afternoon.

This measure adds a member to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board. It increases the quorum and makes it possible for the Governor in Council to change the basis of compensation to members of this Board. I suppose this is necessary to keep up with the fires of inflation which have been generated by the present administration.

There are two different types of government action which might be referred to as sins of omission and sins of commission. Bill C-150 might be placed in the latter category, that is sins of commission. Bill C-153 is definitely in the area of sins of omission. It does nothing to deal with fundamental problems relating to the development of Canadian historic sites and monuments as a part of a growing demand for expanded parks and recreational facilities.

Let me use this opportunity to deal with some of the matters of omission which arise from a consideration of this bill. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board dealt with in Bill C-153 bears the great burden and responsibility for designating areas of historic interest suitable for preservation by the government of Canada. Since 1953 this Board has compiled a list of areas which should be preserved and developed as part of Canada's historic heritage.

It is entirely fitting, as the bill has suggested, that there should be some cross-fertilization of the National Museum of Canada because of recent adjustments in departmen-