

the amendment to the leader of the opposition, but we are just as much interested as he is in understanding what is the law. I say that with goodwill and with the best disposition that one could have with respect to the Minister of Public Works and everyone in this chamber, but we must know what is going on. It is not the privilege of the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition only to be familiar with changes made in the legislation which is submitted to us. I strongly protest. I am not precisely a freshman in the matter, for I have studied law and have made a special study of statute law. It is impossible most of the time to understand anything. Why? Because, as the right hon. gentleman who now leads the opposition has said either in this session or an earlier session, the laws are drafted by the officers of the crown; they are submitted to the house by the government; they are passed by a majority, and the courts are there to interpret them. That is what he has said; I cannot quote the page but I have heard him say it. Where is the intent of the lawmaker in them? Each one of us, when a piece of legislation is passed, is supposed to have an intention. Where is the intention when no one understands anything? It is pretty hard to tell. What I say now does not apply especially to this bill; it applies to legislation in toto. This is a piece of legislation—and I mention it not on account of this particular piece of legislation but in relation to statute language, both federal and provincial and I would apply the same to municipal bylaws—that no layman can understand. This is not surprising because those who passed the enactment did not understand a word of what was going on.

What I regret very much is that when the leader of the opposition makes his most important pronouncements it is impossible to hear a word of what he says. When he spoke not long ago I thought he was saying his evening prayer. Naturally I gave him the benefit of the doubt. But, sir, here we are, just in the middle of the chamber, in a very favourable position to follow the discussion, but it is impossible to catch what is being said. This does not depend so much upon the acoustics, because the acoustics of the house cannot be so bad, but it means that no hon. member is familiar with what is going on. I tried to catch what was said, and this is what I understood of it: "Fourth and fifth line describe the proper provision, and there is the word 'and' before 'auditing.' It would have read thus, 'to secure and auditing of expenditures of all moneys.'" I did not understand a word of that. And there were other words put ahead of that which give a

different meaning. The whole thing referred naturally to the audit act, which includes some duplication brought into it by the right hon. gentleman when he was Prime Minister; I refer to the comptroller of the treasury, under part 3. The right hon. gentleman has put a duplication there, a duplication of the auditor general, and he complains of other auditing. This makes the whole thing so vague that it is to be regretted by all. It will be regretted by the judges, by the lawyers and by everybody who will have to give an opinion on the matter. I have nothing to say about the character of judges, but what do hon. members think of the poor farmer or labourer who goes to court to have a case heard before a judge; the lawyer argues the case for an hour or so; the judge listens patiently, sometimes closes his eyes but does not sleep, listens and finally says: "Well, learned sir, I do not understand." The lawyer says: "I did not understand at first but I tried to understand and to explain it to you." Well, sir, no one understands; what will the judgment be in such cases?

Mr. BENNETT: Action dismissed!

Mr. POULIOT: Probably the right hon. gentleman says that because he does not understand any more than does the judge.

But to summarize the whole thing, may I suggest to the government one point which seems to be reasonable: It is that when we have such an important piece of legislation and when it is to be amended, the amendment should be printed in the Votes and Proceedings the day before it is to be discussed. I see the Minister of Labour nodding his head; I hope this time at least everyone agrees with me.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I say to my hon. friend that speaking generally I think the committee will agree with him that the course suggested is a desirable one to pursue, but as he knows, when bills are in committee there are frequently minor amendments, and it would certainly delay the procedure very considerably if that rule were invariably followed. In this case the change is one to bring out more clearly the intent of the clause. It is not in the nature of an addition or subtraction from the intent of the measure but simply a clarifying of its meaning.

Mr. POULIOT: I did not catch the amendment very well.

Mr. BETTS: I notice, Mr. Chairman, that by this section one of the functions of the commission will be to recommend to the minister conditions to be complied with by any provinces obtaining grants for relief purposes from the government. Now, I take it that