

who represent the people of Canada. I really do not think the people of Canada believe that a deputy minister is more important than a minister just because the deputy is paid more. I believe that the people of Canada and the people in this House are willing to pay for performance.

I also believe—and the Auditor General endorses this—that if performance is not forthcoming, that man should go. That is one part of our system we should look at in terms of establishing checks. I would much prefer to see our public servants and the officers of Crown corporations and Crown agencies paid salaries, remuneration and benefits which are comparable with those paid to men of equal ability in the private sector, with the knowledge that, if performance is not forthcoming, the people of Canada have a right to terminate services in the same way they are terminated in the private sector.

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I am anxious that this matter be dealt with during the course of this private members' hour so I will confine my remarks to a minimal length of time.

I was glad to hear the comments of the hon. member for Westmount (Mr. Johnston), which in essence indicated to me that while the hon. member has certain reservations as to what would necessarily flow from this resolution, by and large he is very much interested in and sympathetic with the objectives set forth by my colleague the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies), who, incidentally, is to be congratulated for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

Generally speaking, I think all of us in this House feel that this resolution has great merit, that it should receive some very serious consideration in terms of the operation of the public service vis-à-vis the operation of the legislative arm of our parliamentary system. I suggest, however, that there is a problem with respect to defining precisely what effect this resolution might have on the whole question of secrecy in government and in government agencies. As the hon. member for Don Valley pointed out in his introductory remarks, very often we in parliament inquire about the salaries of chief executive officers of Crown corporations or government agencies and are told by ministers responsible over and over again that that information is confidential and not available to the people of Canada.

Perhaps the hon. member argued this matter on the basis of principle, but we really do not know in pragmatic terms exactly how many senior public servants and chief executive officers of Crown corporations might be affected. The most immediate example of which I can think is the recent appointment of the chairman of the board of Air Canada. I think there is information, not through the House but through press reports, to the effect that this new chairman qualifies to be part of a very elite group of chief executive officers of Crown corporations and that he will receive a salary and other incidental benefits which will bring his level of total remuneration above that of the person who was responsible for his appointment, namely the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau).

The main reason I join in this debate is that I think most hon. members feel that this subject matter should receive

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detailed consideration in a committee of this House. That would provide an opportunity for us to examine the context within which this motion might be beneficial to our system in an institutional manner. That is to say, are there ways by which we in parliament can come forward with suggestions or amendments in accordance with the motives which brought the hon. member for Don Valley to put this motion before the House? Are there specific suggestions, guidelines or legislative provisions which could be brought forward for consideration and which might bring about the perspective I know we all want to have with respect to this division between legislative and executive or, indeed, public servant pay scales and the relationship which exists between these two segments of our system of government?

Under those circumstances, I would like to propose an amendment to the motion before us. I propose to move, seconded by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath):

That this motion be not now further debated but be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs for consideration and report back to this House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member for Gatineau (Mr. Clermont) want to rise on a point of order or does he want to participate in the debate?

I shall now consider the motion that is being proposed.

● (1732)

[*English*]

I want to consider the amendment attentively because it is a new perspective and at first glance seems to be a new proposition. At this time I will now recognize members who are interested in contributing to this. However, if the House has no objection, while I am contemplating the amendment, I will recognize the hon. member for Gatineau (Mr. Clermont).

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaston Clermont (Gatineau): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words on the amendment to the motion of the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies). According to that motion, and I quote:

—the government should consider the advisability of introducing legislation to limit the total compensation payable to—

Mr. Speaker, suggestion is made here, not that the motion be referred to a committee, but that it be discussed by the House. First of all, I should like to say that the motion of the hon. member is intended primarily to restrict, generally, the expenditures of the government by offering civil servants reasonable, good and equitable salaries. That is an objective to which no hon. member in this House could possibly object, and towards which this government has constantly strived, and continues to do so. I believe one can say, in all fairness, that the various succeeding governments of this country have always endeavoured to achieve that objective, regardless of their respective accomplishments.

The motion raises a problem since it endeavours to compare and conciliate two quite different facts, that is the compensa-