

indexing of parliamentary salaries. I do not believe that we should be, ideally—although there has been so much neglect in this respect that it is hard to avoid it—legislating a change in our remuneration without having received an independent recommendation in this respect.

I believe we should have taken the recommendations of the Beupré commission to heart and implemented them at the time the commission's report was received. One of the recommendations in that report was to do away with the non-taxable expense allowance and to make the salary a reasonable one. I think that if members will inspect the recommendations of that commission with respect to expenses, they will find those recommendations eminently sensible and reasonable.

I do not want to take up much time on this matter. I cannot beat my breast and appear here in sackcloth and ashes and tell you that I think the proposed salaries for members of parliament and others provided for in this bill are excessive, because I do not think they are. But I object to the process we are adopting and I deplore the neglect of the government over too many years to establish a sensible system of independent review and adjustment of remuneration for federal executive, legislative and judicial officers. I believe that we should attempt in this bill, if we do nothing else, to establish such a system.

I welcome the amendment of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) to provide for a commission of sorts, and I welcome the change in his amendment which would leave the decision as to the implementation of the recommendations of the commission to parliament and not to the cabinet; but I still object to the manner in which the commission is to operate. It is my suggestion that a commission should be appointed in the middle of a parliamentary term, not at the beginning.

We can see now how difficult it is for brand new members of parliament to face the prospect of awarding themselves an increase in remuneration. Surely such a commission should be appointed in the middle of a parliamentary term and it should report as promptly as possible. Parliament should have the opportunity to act on its recommendations, but any variations in remuneration which may be enacted as a result of those recommendations should take effect after the next general election.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Halton (Mr. Philbrook):

That motion No. 4 be amended by deleting therefrom the words "within two months" from subclause (7) and substituting therefor the words "within one year after this act comes into force and within two years", and by adding subclause (9) as follows:

"Any variations in remuneration which may be enacted in any parliament shall take effect on the day of the next subsequent general election".

This would have the effect of requiring the commission to be appointed within a year from this act coming into force. There would be time for the commission to report, to have its report tabled, for the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council to make his contribution as to what he thinks is reasonable in the recommendations, and for other members of parliament to do so. We would then make a decision as to what would be reasonable remuneration, not for ourselves, unless we happened to be re-elected, but for members of the next parliament. I

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urge hon. members to give serious consideration to this proposal.

● (1620)

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak to motions Nos. 2, 3, and 4 which are before the House. I wish to move another amendment to motion No. 4 but I am awaiting direction from the Chair. Are we now debating motions Nos. 2, 3, and 4, or are we debating the amendment proposed by the hon. member for York-Scarborough (Mr. Stanbury)? If we are debating them all and there will be a whole series of deferred votes, I am prepared to speak now; but I await Your Honour's direction.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): The decision of the Chair in this regard is to defer all votes until the debate is concluded. Then, when motion No. 4 and its amendments are called, the division will take place on motion No. 4 and the two previous motions, along with the amendments to motion No. 4.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It struck me that there were two or three ways to do it, but your way is very sensible. I rise also to move an amendment to motion No. 4 dealing with other subclauses besides the subclauses which the hon. member for York-Scarborough seeks to amend. My amendment will deal with what I think is a most dishonest step the House is taking if it passes motion No. 4. But before I come to that may I say just a few words about the matter as a whole.

Hon. members are fully aware, I trust, that I am opposed to our raising our salaries and allowances at this time. I think it is far too soon after we sought election at the polls at rates we knew were in effect. I think the economic situation in this country is very serious. It is so serious that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) has promised to bring down another budget within a month. It is likely that he will have something to say about restraint practices and for us to be exercising no restraint, but to be doing the very opposite with respect to our own salaries and allowances, at this time is utterly irresponsible. I earnestly hope that despite all the emotion and feeling which exists about this measure, hon. members will yet agree that action by us on this question should be deferred.

My hon. friend from Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) has made a point which I feel is very cogent. We have before us a proposal that the salaries and expenses of members of parliament should, in a sense, be related to the industrial composite index. I realize that there is a 7 per cent ceiling, but nevertheless it is the industrial composite index which is cited for us, whereas we have refused to give the benefit of that better index to old age pensioners, veterans, recipients of family allowances, retired public servants, retired RCMP and armed forces persons, retired railway workers and all the rest. What kind of beings are we to say no to this for everyone else, but to take it for ourselves?

An hon. Member: Greedy.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I plead with hon. members to do some thinking about this. I know there are hon. members who keep citing what other per-