

*House of Commons Procedures*

Well, hire more staff. However, we must not forget that there are many and real difficulties involved when you want to recruit the qualified employees required for the dispatch of the business of the House.

Mr. Chairman, these remarks apply to every employee of the House, to the interpreters, and to the reporters who accurately report the proceedings of the House. It is a highly specialized work for which the reporters are inadequately paid in comparison with those who do similar work in private industry.

In fact, I know many official court stenographers who receive a much higher salary than those who are now serving in the same capacity in the House of Commons. They are highly qualified employees who seldom make mistakes or blunders.

It is not sufficient to hire other employees. The working conditions must be favourable to find extra personnel.

Up to now, because of the salary offered and especially of the inhuman conditions the staff must accept, the government is unable to hire the required personnel. To show how difficult it is to find qualified personnel for the debates section, especially the French debates section, it could be pointed out that a young stenographer from France had to be employed. We are very happy at the appointment of this young woman, because like the other members of the staff, she performs her work exceptionally well. But the fact that skilled personnel must be recruited abroad shows once again that recruiting is extremely difficult.

Also, if working conditions are going to get even worse, it seems to me that not only will it be impossible to recruit new personnel, but I am very much afraid that the present house staff members will plan to change jobs and go to private industry, because as I indicated a while ago, working conditions in private industry are surely much more attractive.

Mr. Chairman, the provisions of subsection 3 of paragraph 1 of resolution No. 15 are to allow hon. members to leave the House during meal hours because they provide for a suspension, so to speak, of a vote during normal meal hours.

I think that such a provision is discriminatory—

• (4:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. McIlraith: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I wonder what that argument has to do with the amendment to paragraph 2 which is before us.

[Mr. Martineau.]

Mr. Martineau: Mr. Chairman, I will answer the President of the Privy Council very briefly. It is not strictly pertinent to the amendment. The remarks that I have to make will be very, very brief; I have only two or three other points to raise. I believe that in view of the latitude shown by the Chair with regard to the discussion of this amendment we would certainly be able to dispose not only of the amendment but the whole question much more quickly if I were allowed to finish my remarks, instead of having to begin them over again when the amendment has been disposed of. I admit that the President of the Privy Council is right in his remarks, strictly speaking, but if you will be indulgent, Mr. Chairman, I will terminate my remarks as soon as possible.

Mr. Douglas: On the point of order, Mr. Chairman, I do not want to interrupt my hon. friend, and I agree wholeheartedly with what he is saying, but I think it would be advisable if we had some clarification from the Chair as to what the procedure is to be. Are we going to deal with each paragraph, pass it so it is disposed of and finished with, or are we going to roam all over item 15; because that way it seems to me we are going to have a great deal of difficulty. I had understood that what we were going to do today was start with paragraph 2, dispose of it, then revert to paragraph 1 and then go seriatim through each of the paragraphs. It seems to me that only if we do that will we know where we are. I have no objection to the hon. Member finishing his remarks, but I think there should be some clarification with regard to the rest of the debate. Otherwise I can see us wandering all over the place.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. In this matter the Chair is in the hands of the Committee. It is my opinion that with a resolution of this kind, particularly when the time for debate is limited, we might well work a little more effectively if we were to follow this resolution through paragraph by paragraph. On the other hand I must point out to the Committee that there is a single resolution before the Chair, and unless the Committee decides to discuss the resolution paragraph by paragraph the Chair would have to consider any comments made within the bounds of the resolution as being in order.

Mr. Winch: On this point, Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that when you took the Chair you read out an amendment that was before the Committee of the Whole House. I