

*Members' Salaries*

The fact of the matter is that the amendment meets the other conditions of a reasoned amendment. It is based on opposition to the bill, and that is our position. It does not in itself involve the expenditure of money. We recommend that a commission be appointed, and I suppose that someone will say that a commission will require money and, therefore, it becomes a money proposition. So we put it that in the opinion of this House the government should do it. In other words, this leaves it as a matter to be decided later, and the money found for it.

I submit therefore, Mr. Speaker, that if this House is the sovereign body we feel it is, surely when we are discussing a subject as important to us, and as important as it is to the people of Canada, we have the right to ask for consideration by the House, not of a precise money-costing proposition, but of a proposal that this matter be referred for study to an independent commission.

**Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, it was a treat to listen to the exposé by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) on reasoned amendments. He has to be the expert in the House on reasoned amendments and how to achieve them.

I agree with a number of things both hon. members have said. I want to refer to Beauchesne's Fourth Edition at page 278, citation 387, which reads as follows:

On the motion for the second reading of a Bill to amend the Canada Grain Act, and a proposed amendment that the subject matter thereof be referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization, the Speaker ruled the proposed amendment out of order on the ground that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization had not yet been appointed. On an appeal the ruling was sustained by 108 yeas to 41 nays.

In respect of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), there is no such thing in existence at the present time as an independent commission of any kind to look into a matter of this nature. In the case I have quoted there was a committee of the House of Commons in existence to deal with the matter in respect of which it had competence, but because that committee had not yet been formally set up, Mr. Speaker disallowed the amendment. I would submit that in this case, where there is no independent commission at all, it is not possible for the amendment to be carried because the subject matter has no place to go.

The second point I should like to make is on the question of cost. It is quite clear that no matter how you slice it, whether it is the government that appoints the independent commission or whether it is the House of Commons that appoints it, money has to be found for it. Whether the government does it on the recommendation of the House of Commons it still becomes a money item which must be paid for by the taxpayers of Canada, and which must be approved by an estimate and an appropriation act. I do not believe there is any way to eliminate that proposition.

● (2100)

The next point I want to make is that we have had, in fact within the last four years, a commission to look into the levels of salaries of members of the House of Commons and the Senate, called the Beauré Commission, estab-

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

lished in 1970. Basically most of the material in this bill is based on the Beauré report. Surely it is a simple proposition that we should not appoint a new commission to investigate the work of another commission or a bill which is before us based on the report of that other commission. This does not seem worthwhile, and it would seem to represent an added expense to the taxpayers.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Reid:** My last point deals with a reasoned amendment. If such a reasoned amendment is at all in order then it must in some way oppose the principle of the bill. Further, it must not anticipate at any stage detailed provisions which may or may not come up later on. I would submit that, as cleverly as the motion is drawn, it does not meet that criterion or any of the other requirements I have mentioned.

[Translation]

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to make some remarks on the amendment put forward by the NDP member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent):

That Bill C-44 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this House the subject of salaries and allowances of members of parliament and cabinet ministers should be referred by the government to an independent commission.

Mr. Speaker, in 1970 an independent commission spent several months studying the problem which still concerns us today. That was the Beauré Commission. That commission laid down a report which contained a lot of recommendations. Mr. Speaker, even with the Beauré Commission report, Parliament has been put into a situation which we find ourselves in today, that is to legislate again on the subject of salaries of members of Parliament.

Here is another example: Tonight in the news, we learned that a bill concerning the salaries of the members of the Quebec National Assembly is being discussed. Mr. Speaker, we know that a commission has been looking into this matter for several months. This commission reported to the House and the House is still considering a bill concerning the salaries of the members of parliament. What is the purpose of all this? Mr. Speaker, I know that it is always very difficult for the members of a Parliament to pass legislation about their own salaries. I understand this and I am more aware of this now than ever before. Is there truly a conflict of interest? We may seriously wonder about this.

However, I believe that it is high time we showed the people that Parliament is the supreme authority in the country and that if the authority wants to be respected, it must take its responsibilities. That is my position. And when the authority takes its responsibilities, it sets an extraordinary example for the people who no longer question its sincerity or the validity of its actions and decisions. I am well aware that the authority sometimes makes mistakes but if it does so in good faith and in all honesty, I believe that it will still be respected. I have 12 children. I had and still have to use some authority. I do not consider myself God the Father. I know that I sometimes use my authority mistakenly, but my children have always been generous enough to understand that when I acted that