

their constituents to take charge of a bill at the time of its introduction, and to see that it was safely piloted through its initial stages in that house in which the hon. member occupied a seat. For that reason, in order not to deprive any member of parliament or any senator of the right of introducing a bill which might be specially confided to his care, it was decided merely to recommend that the distribution of all Private Bills be regulated by the Speakers of both Houses jointly, so that as far as practicable, all private legislation should be divided equally between the Senate and the House of Commons. The hon. members of the Senate who were members of this committee seem to be very anxious to do their share of work. They claim that during the opening weeks of the session they are often obliged to adjourn the Senate while waiting for legislation from this Chamber, and that if private legislation was introduced equally in both Houses—with the exception of divorce bills, which of course must be introduced in the other House—the time of parliament could be saved and that many days which are now devoted to private bills by the committees of this House could be better devoted to such government legislation as is sometimes referred to special committees.

The third, and perhaps the most important matter which was referred to the committee, is the practical operation of the provisions of the Senate and House of Commons Act 1906, respecting the attendance of senators and members of the House of Commons, and the expediency of amending these provisions. Let me say at once in this connection that I would not have considered it necessary to make any reference to the report had it not been for certain statements and editorial articles published in the press on Friday and Saturday of last week intimating that it was the desire of the committee to make it easier for senators and members of parliament to earn their sessional indemnities. This idea was far from our minds, and our only desire was to correct certain inconsistencies and anomalies existing in the present act. It will be found that section 32 of the amended act provides that

For every session of parliament which extends beyond fifty days there shall be payable to each member of the Senate and the House of Commons attending at such session a sessional allowance of \$4,000 and no more.

Section 38 provides:

That in each session of parliament of less than fifty days there shall be allowed to each member of the Senate and House of Commons attending at such session \$25 for each day's attendance.

[Mr. Boivin.]

This means, if the law is to be strictly interpreted, that in the event of a session lasting exactly fifty days, no indemnity whatever shall be paid to any member of parliament. This anomaly can be corrected by amending section 32 to read:

For every session of parliament which extends over a period of fifty days or more,

Another anomaly which we desire to have corrected is the following condition which now exists. If a member of the House of Commons is called away from the House on Thursday afternoon and does not return until the following Monday, he is penalized for three days' absence. If he leaves on Friday afternoon and does not return until the following Tuesday, he is penalized for only one day's absence. We believe this to be unfair and we recommend that in both cases, the member should be treated in the same manner.

Another inconsistency requires correction. If a member from western Canada is called home in the month of March owing to the serious illness of a member of his family, and is absent for fifteen days, but is regularly in attendance throughout the remainder of the session, he receives his full sessional indemnity. If an hon. member for some distant constituency is obliged to return home during the month of June by reason of family sickness, even if he has not been absent during the preceding months of the session, he is fined \$25 for each day that he is absent. We recommend that in both cases, the member should receive the same treatment.

The press in some of its articles has led the public to believe that our desire was to allow any member to leave this House during the last fifteen days of the session without being fined. That is not the spirit of our recommendation which is merely to extend the same rule from the beginning to the end of each session. We consider that important legislation may be introduced in the first part of a session as well as in the last days, and that a member who is called away by any matter of urgent importance in his constituency or for any well recognized personal reason should be treated in the same way whether he is absent during the first or the last days of the session.

There is only one other important change proposed. It has been pointed out that under our resolution we have done away with the clause in the amended act which provides that a member must be present for at least three-fourths of the sitting days of the session in order to be entitled to his full sessional indemnity. It is stated that in certain sessions this may operate to the advantage of