

lations now in force the attendance has been excellent. The work of the Senate has been tremendously improved by reason of the increased attendance, and I am afraid that if we relax these regulations—because that is what we are doing—we will fall back into the old slipshod ways that prevailed before the Act of 1920 was passed. I have no more desire to be here than anybody else, but I recognize my responsibility and the duty that I owe to the people of this country in the position which I occupy as a Senator of Canada; and I protest against any change, because I am afraid it will be for the worse.

I know of no reason why there should be such a change. The honourable gentleman who proposed the Bill has not given any reason why the relaxation should be made. You are breaking a solemn contract entered into with the people of this country—more than an implied contract, an actual contract, entered into for a very important and valuable consideration, to wit, the increase of the indemnity from \$2,500 to \$4,000 per year. You are breaking that contract in the face of the people of this country. You are relaxing the law in a way which, I greatly fear, will reduce the efficiency of this chamber. You ask the people of Canada to let you out of the contract that you entered into by the Act of 1920, and you say you are going to make certain regulations. You ought to produce those regulations so that it may be seen whether or not you make up for what the country loses by the breach.

I am here very often at as great an inconvenience and injury to my private business as any other member of the Senate, but, in accepting appointment I realize that unless I could fulfil the duties and responsibilities attendant upon the position, I ought not to accept it. In accepting the position I undertook to fulfil those duties and responsibilities, and this I have tried to do. There are many members of this House who are regular in their attendance and take an interest in the proceedings. There are other members who take no interest whatever; and that is true, I suppose, of every deliberative assembly. It is not necessarily the man who is silent that is not taking interest; it is the man who absents himself.

If you revert to the old regulations, a member may draw almost the full indemnity, if the Session lasts only 65 days, even though he may have been here only one day. That is something that is absolutely wrong. If any member of this House is so conscienceless as to be willing to take his full indemnity under those circumstances, you should not permit him to do so. It is almost equal to stealing

to take money under such circumstances, yet it has been done. You are reverting to the regulations that prevailed before you entered into the contract set out in the Act of 1920, for this Session at least, because there is not time in the last days of the Session to make new regulations.

I quite understand that this is not a popular speech that I am making, but there are in this Chamber some honourable members to whom it will appeal. There are some—I hope there are a good many—honourable members who have a proper idea of the solemnity and importance of a contract and their duty to endeavour to keep it. You are absolutely violating the contract. You are discarding it for this Session at least, and members who have been hardly ever in attendance will draw considerable sums to which they would not be entitled under the existing Act. Is that right? Do honourable gentlemen think that is right?

I would suggest to the honourable leader of the Government and the honourable leader of the Opposition, who seem to be in perfect harmony in this matter, that they add some sort of rider to this amendment that will permit of the existing Act applying to the present Session, because you have not provided regulations to modify the amended Act. Does the honourable gentleman follow me?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I understand the point.

Hon. Mr. FOWLER: You understand it? I hope my appeal does not fall upon deaf ears. I hope that you not only understand it but will adopt the suggestion. There is the difficulty. I say that the change in the Act is not fair to the country.

Now let me repeat, at the risk of being somewhat prolix, the argument which I have advanced. I think it important, though my honourable friend may not. In 1920 this Senate entered into a contract with the people of Canada, agreeing, in consideration of the indemnity being increased from \$2,500 to \$4,000, to abide by certain regulations which were incorporated into the Act, with regard to attendance and other matters. Now you are changing that Act without any mandate from the people. You, a party of the one part, are changing a contract between two parties, namely, the people of Canada and the Senate. Instead of doing that, would it not be honest to adhere to the Act of 1920 at least for this Session, until it is possible to put into force the regulations which you say you are going to supply to make up for the relaxation of the former requirements? What does my honourable friend think of that proposition?