

of proposing for ourselves a salary of \$26,000, of which \$8,000 is tax free. There is no reason at all why we should lay ourselves open to this type of misrepresentation. It is imperative, therefore, that the legislation should make it entirely clear that we are entitled to have our expenses actually incurred in the course of our duties reimbursed, but that we are not giving ourselves anything in the nature of a tax free allowance which is not available to other taxpayers who are just as heavily burdened as we are.

I realize that the point I have made is not new, that it must have been considered by the cabinet and must have been rejected by the cabinet before the present bill was introduced. This poses of course the difficult question as to how to vote on second reading. I understand that the bill is going to be referred to a parliamentary committee and that changes in detail such as I have mentioned can be made before that committee. This may be a vain hope, but there has been a refreshing degree of independence shown from time to time by some of our parliamentary committees. I hope that the parliamentary committee to which this bill is referred will show a degree of independence, particularly in view of the nature of the legislation. I hope the chairman and the vice chairman, and all the members will adopt an objective and independent point of view. There is little use referring a bill such as this to a committee if members, when they consider it, merely rubber stamp views laid down for them by their party.

So, I hope that this bill will be given careful and independent consideration by a parliamentary committee. I will vote to send it to that committee, while reserving my right to urge as strongly as I can before that committee that the provisions for the tax free allowance be changed to make it entirely clear that members are only entitled to be reimbursed for expenses actually incurred by them in connection with their duties.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The debate on Bill C-242 to provide increased pay and allowances for parliamentarians has been conducted on a fairly high level, and I think this has been partly due to the very moderate and restrained manner in which the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) introduced this piece of legislation. It would be very easy, in a debate like this, for hon. members to descend into mutual recriminations and an imputation of motives. It would be very easy for those who are supporting the bill to be accused of being greedy moneygrabbers and those who are opposed to the bill of being hypocrites because they know that if the bill passes they will get the money and, therefore, they are merely grandstanding. Fortunately, there has been very little of this, except in a few isolated instances.

I begin by conceding to those who are supporting this bill that they are sincere in believing this bill is in the best interests of Parliament. I hope they will concede to those of us who are opposing the bill the same degree of sincerity. Those on the government side who may question our sincerity can test it, either by allowing the bill to drop, or when the bill is before the Standing Commit-

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tee on Procedure and Organization bringing in some of the changes which I am going to suggest in the course of my remarks.

• (3:50 p.m.)

The first thing which is apparent from this debate, Mr. Speaker, is that we very much need some better method of dealing with the periodic adjustment of members' salaries and allowances. Almost all members who have spoken have indicated that this is a very unpleasant task. The President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) himself said on April 29, as recorded at page 5355 of *Hansard*:

This is a difficult situation and makes the advocacy of this particular bill not the most pleasant task for a minister like myself, who usually has come into the House in support of measures affecting a broad class of people other than Members of Parliament.

I think that all of us feel the same way, that it is humiliating and embarrassing that periodically we should have to go through this soul-searching when determining what we should be paid out of the public purse. I had hoped that the government, which started out three years ago to break some new trails, would have brought some technique before the House by which it would be unnecessary to deal with parliamentary pay and allowances in the House of Commons itself. The government has not done so. It referred the matter to the Beaupré committee, but they have completely failed to deal with it. One page 43 of their report, paragraph 143, we find the following:

Our terms of reference invite us to suggest a procedure for the periodic review of financial arrangements for parliamentarians. In view of the great emphasis we have placed on the evolving role of the individual member, we do not see fit to recommend that salaries be tied to changes in certain economic indicators such as the Consumer Price Index, Gross National Expenditure or the Industrial Composite of Weekly Wages and salaries. Further, we do not accept the proposal that parliamentary salaries should be related to the salaries that the government establishes for the executive category in the Public Service.

The committee does not give its reasons for believing that salaries could not be tied to some category in the public service. I certainly would have been interested in knowing why it rejected that idea because it seems to me it has some merit, although there may be obstacles to it of which I am not aware.

Paragraph 145 of the Beaupré committee report reads:

Primarily for the reasons outlined in the previous two paragraphs, we recommend that another advisory committee, similar to the present one, be established within two years of the convening of the 29th Parliament. We also recommend that the government concurrently appoint an all-party committee from both Houses to act in an advisory role to the proposed review committee. We are of the opinion that it would be more appropriate for the next committee to consider a method for the future review of salaries, allowances, services and facilities for members of parliament.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that does not help us very much. I am hopeful that when this bill is before the Committee on Procedure and Organization some thought will be given to this matter. I think there are two or three