

Salaries and Allowances

Mr. Lewis: The classification might be suitable for the hon. member for Ontario or it might even be too high; I do not know. But if all hon. members agree that this is what should be done, surely this is the time to do it. Salaries should be set at some appropriate and not exaggerated level so Members of Parliament do not have to go through the unpleasant and distasteful job every few years of voting large increases because over a period of years there has been no adjustment at all.

I am particularly disturbed by the fact that increases of considerable size are being given members of the Senate. Their job is certainly not full time. They have ample time to carry on whatever business they have. We have always thought the Senate was an unnecessary institution anyway, and we do so now. I cannot in my mind justify the very exaggerated increase suggested for members of the other place any more than I can justify the increase suggested for members of this House.

May I say a word or two about one or two other matters. It is my understanding that the adjustment with regard to the residence of Mr. Speaker, and I hope I am wrong, is merely to legalize something that has already been done for some time. My understanding is that it refers only to the farm at Kingsmere. I think I am right in suggesting that the general feeling in the country as well as in the House is that we should make the Speaker's position more permanent and that one day Mr. Speaker will be provided with a home in Ottawa rather than being limited to the farm at Kingsmere.

As far as other personnel are concerned, I do not know exactly what the government is proposing because the details are not yet before us. I have already spoken too long and I do not wish to take any more time, but let me say to the government that the time is overdue for the setting up of machinery to take the place of collective bargaining for that part of the civil service which is not entitled to collective bargaining under the law.

I have deliberately spoken without the emphasis I usually employ because of my knowledge of the sensitivity of the problem. I conclude by repeating that, while in my view an increase in the salaries of hon. members is obviously justified after eight years without any adjustment, the government is wrong and the people who advised it are wrong when they come up with a figure of a 44 per cent increase in total, a 50 per cent increase in salary alone and a 33 per cent increase in expense allowances for which hon. members do not have to account by vouchers showing actual expenses. I am certain it was done in good faith. I am not making any accusations. But I am always impressed by the double standard we use in our society. We use one standard for people like ourselves who are in a privileged position and another standard for people who are not in a privileged position.

• (2:50 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles-Eugène Dionne (Kamouraska): Mr. Speaker, I see the government is no longer reluctant to

[*Mr. Lewis.*]

introduce the conclusions of the Beaupré Committee. Judging from consultations that have been going on behind the scenes, there was anxiety.

However, I do not think that at any point of the negotiations there has ever been any threat of strike in the event the proposals would have been deemed unacceptable. Everything seems to be geared towards friendly relations among all concerned and the solution of what appears to be a salary increase problem.

I am pleased to congratulate the members of the Beaupré Committee for having given a report which does not apparently lead to too many unfavourable comments. I had the opportunity of finding out that arbitration reports on some negotiations are not always that welcome.

On the second page of the right hon. Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) remarks, it is mentioned that the committee was guided in its report by six basic principles of which I will quote some:

(1) The future of Canada depends largely upon the ability of the public to secure the services of the best possible people as parliamentarians.

We agree entirely on that.

The fourth is as follows:

(4) The tenure of office of a Member of the House of Commons is uncertain; 292 members have been defeated in the past 12 years.

No doubt would it be interesting to analyse the causes of past changes. I do not think they could be attributed to the members' indemnity.

Here is the fifth:

(5) The nature of the position is becoming increasingly more time consuming, more complicated, more sensitive—

In fact, this is true in some cases.

—and requiring considerable moral courage.

An hon. member is undoubtedly liable to exhaust his fortitude reserves in order to bring Canadians to accept the present system.

In so far as incomes are concerned, I see that a great percentage of civil servants earn more than \$25,000 a year, some \$35,000 or \$40,000, and I would like to mention in particular the Governor of the Bank of Canada, who earns \$75,000 a year.

After that statement, I will add that we were much more interested in the improvement of working conditions in Parliament offices. Many hon. members are faced with space problems which should be solved. We think that it would have been in order for each hon. member to benefit from a secretarial office in his constituency in order to make available to his constituents the information which they need.

It can be read on page 44 of the report of the committee, and I quote:

For Members of the House of Commons wishing to establish constituency offices, provision of space in federal buildings or alternatively, payment up to \$1,200 per annum for the rental of office accommodation and payment up to \$1,500 per annum for office assistance.