

dramatically. It should be noted that between October 1970 and July 1974, which was the beginning of the present Parliament, the industrial composite index rose by something like 37 per cent. In fact, the increase in the industrial composite index between those dates was somewhat more than 37 per cent, and between July 1974 and the present time, there have been further increases.

There have been many articles written by a good many people about elected officials at all levels of government. I have served in public life now for over 16 years, and I have yet to meet anyone who entered public life in order to become rich and affluent. I am sure all honourable senators, including a number who have served much longer than I, will agree with me. Public life, wherever we serve, requires considerably greater motivation than the motivation of personal aggrandizement.

As I have stated, I know of no person, in my years of service, who has aspired to the goal of becoming wealthy in public life. Indeed, I know of no one who has achieved that goal. I do know of many in public life who have exhausted all their personal resources and have become heavily in debt in the process. They have made sacrifices that are above and beyond the call of duty. Some of the personal sacrifices as far as their families are concerned are beyond description.

Most of those who serve in public life do so because they believe they have a contribution to make to this country. They do not complain about the financial rewards. The fact is that there are intangible rewards that come from public service which only those who serve in Parliament, the legislatures and municipal councils, can have knowledge. Without question, at the present time many parliamentarians are in real financial difficulty. Many of them do not like to admit it; it is a matter of pride to them. You know them and I know them.

The government has decided, in the interests of supporting a policy of restraint, to recommend an upward adjustment of only 33½ per cent in indemnities and allowances for the more than four-year period since the last increase, rather than the almost 40 per cent amount supported by the industrial composite index and the cost of living figures. Indeed, one of our colleagues, the Honourable Senator Lawson, recently wrote an excellent essay on the subject, comparing the proposed adjustments in allowances and indemnities paid in Parliament to those in other sectors of our community. I thought it a very excellent effort indeed.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Perrault: In this bill now before us, Bill C-44, it is proposed that annual adjustments be made on the basis of the intervening changes in the industrial composite index. The first annual adjustment would take place at the beginning of 1976.

Between 1970 and 1974, members of Parliament were probably one of the few sectors in the community to hold the line. I know there are some critics in the other place and some commentators who have said, "Well, the adjustment in late 1970 was designed to hold you over for a few years." That is precisely incorrect. Some honourable senators will recall the debate of that year, in which the 1970

adjustment was to make up for the period 1962 to 1970—and not to extend into the future.

The current one-third increase, representing a catch-up over a five-year period, constitutes one of the most moderate adjustments to be found anywhere in the country. I must say, honourable senators, that when I read the comments of some of our friends in the media, who have written of "parliamentary greed," I can only remind them that during the comparable 1970-75 period the street price of some of Canada's newspapers has increased by 100 per cent. And subscription rates have skyrocketed by far more than the one-third increase proposed for members of Parliament.

The last increase members received was in 1971 and related back to 1970. It was designed to cover the period 1962 to 1970. During that time members of Parliament denied themselves any further increases. The 1971 increase was 50 per cent, yet increases in many other categories of service during the comparable period went substantially beyond that. For example, many newspaper reporters and editorial writers on the West Coast received a 58 per cent increase during the same 1962-1971 period. And if members of Parliament had proposed for themselves the same percentage increase as that negotiated by members of the West Coast journalistic profession between 1971 and 1975, they would have been asking for a 70.5 per cent increase.

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I mention these figures facetiously because, after all, perhaps it is unfair to compare the situation of members of Parliament with that of people in television, radio and the news media generally. As public servants we have our own standards to establish, and our own responsibilities. I do not want in any way to reflect on the hard-working members of the press gallery, because I do not think anyone resents what they receive. But I want to remind them that the increases sought by members of Parliament are not inordinate, and they are not out of line.

The question is often raised: When is it a good time to increase indemnities? I have been in public office for some time, and I know the honourable Leader of the Opposition has as well. I am aware that many of you have served in this place for many years. The answer to the question is that there is never a good time to raise indemnities. One of the most difficult tasks confronting those in public life is to establish a level of indemnities which will enable those of even moderate means to serve in Parliament. Surely we do not want a situation where only those people with substantial private means can afford to serve in Parliament. That would not be the kind of representative body we require here. Surely, we do not want only those people to serve in Parliament who have been able to divest themselves of all financial responsibilities in that their youngsters have grown up and are now in the workaday world.

Honourable senators, the bill before us provides that at the beginning of the next Parliament the Governor in Council shall appoint commissioners to inquire into the adequacy of the annual variations of sessional allowances payable to members. That, I think, is substantial progress. The agonizing, periodic process which occupies so much of Parliament's time and public attention is a difficult