

*Senate and House of Commons Act*

yesterday's French *Hansard* be corrected. In fact, I am quoted as saying:

...j'ai constaté que, heureusement (fortunately), des «gens de chez nous»...

whereas I said indeed:

...malheureusement (unfortunately), des Canadiens français, des «gens de chez nous», méprisaient le rôle des représentants du peuple.

I wanted to make that correction to *Hansard* so that people reading later our official report may see that I was deploring the situation instead of approving it.

Mr. Speaker, at the adjournment last night I was indicating that my position regarding members' sessional and expense allowances dates back to a long time ago. As early as May 1970 I submitted a brief to the Beaupré Committee expressing the following view:

As for myself, I find inconceivable that many officials, while getting better pay than hon. members, are enjoying greater privileges. For instance, a civil servant travels at the country's expense while the member who is visiting his constituency does it at his own costs. Furthermore, many civil servants' office are more spacious, better organized, more comfortable and so forth.

It is inconceivable that a member should work comfortably in a 12-by-12-foot office, where there are two other persons as well, in addition to the filing cabinets.

The Beaupré committee deplores the fact in their report where they say on page 25, and I quote:

(1) Underlying the problems of adequate office facilities for Members and their staff... is the drastic lack of space on or adjacent to Parliament Hill.

I had also suggested that the state provide an office and a secretary for the member in his riding that he might better serve his constituents. This is also noted in the Beaupré report, on page 25, and I quote:

(2) Staff assistance must also be improved if the Member is to adequately perform the heavy and varied tasks of counsellor, ombudsman, communicator and legislator.

(3) Another area of concern is the important relationship between the parliamentarian and the constituent. Facilities for better communication should be available and, in particular, more assistance must be given to Members of the House of Commons who represent large constituencies, which present special travel problems.

It would be quite normal for the state to establish a federal office in each constituency so that citizens may meet their member or his secretary to discuss matters concerning the national administration, since the member is the one link between the people and the government.

It must not be forgotten that the member is first of all a "legislator". He must be given as much time as possible to discharge his duties carefully.

Speaking on the freedom of hon. members and the sense of their responsibilities, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) was saying that at any rate they ought to be better paid. I agree with him on that and were I quite convinced that, through an increase of his parliamentary salary, each member, whatever his party might be, would really become free, and this to such a point that there would not be any longer in this

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

House a vote along party lines, whatever bill might be introduced, I would not hesitate to favour this increase, in order to secure this freedom and the sense of responsibility which are priceless. If it were to eliminate the electoral funds financed by big financial interests, it would be worth it.

Ever since I have been sitting in this House, I have very often stood for the right of the disadvantaged, without neglecting the others, by suggesting an increase in family allowances which would be useful to the mother of a family, especially during the period of unemployment we are experiencing presently which has many families worried.

I also requested an increase of basic exemptions for individuals and families. Hon. members will recall that on March 15, 1971, I moved a motion for Parliament to reject the bill respecting the continued application of the 3 per cent surtax on income, which motion was defeated by the Liberal and Progressive Conservative members.

Moreover, I have often pleaded in favour of the farmers, in order that the government might give them equal opportunities in society, thus enabling them to earn more and to live in a decent manner.

I realize that the salaries of members of Parliament do not account for such a large share of the budget, since the proposed increase will cost only about \$7 million out of a budget of \$14 billion. Provisions in respect of the judiciary will cost more than the legislative, since the proposed increase of the judges' salaries will cost \$9 million.

Thus the legislative power takes \$1 every \$2,000 of the budget or 32 cents a year for every Canadian.

As far as I am concerned, I am convinced that if the gross national product makes it possible to increase the salaries of members of Parliament, it also makes it possible to improve the living conditions of Canadian families. So why not do that too?

Just this morning a building contractor of Quebec city who had taken notice of Bill C-142 called me up to make this request: Please do not forget to take the opportunity of this debate to express our concern to Parliament. It is difficult for us to get paid when we sell a house, and building operations are more and more expensive. I hope that you will also think about increasing the income of families so they can pay us. And he had this to add: For goodness' sake, please revoke the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials.

I readily transmit his message because I feel that he is right. It will also be recalled that on March 25, 1971, a former member of the cabinet did ask for the abolition of that 11 per cent sales tax, because of the harm it was doing to Canadian families.

Another thing is also very costly for Canadians: the interest on the public debt, which now stands at \$2 billion per year. At least half that amount is paid to financial institutions that have the privilege of using the people's credit to their advantage. It is against this exploitation and this abuse that Parliament and the people should protest most strongly.