

Senate and House of Commons Act

national security issue? I am wondering. I am waiting to be briefed on that particular topic.

Mr. McDermid: Hah, hah, hah.

Mr. Boudria: Then the Government has the unmitigated gall to tell Canadians they must tighten their belts after that string of excesses.

I was at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts earlier this week. Government officials were asked why a building in Hull, known as the Louis St. Laurent building, stayed vacant for nine months after construction.

Mr. Tupper: Why was it ever built?

Mr. Boudria: I am asked two questions and I will answer both of them. First to the Hon. Member for Nepean—Carleton (Mr. Tupper), and he was not at the committee and that is understandable because he is not a member, but I want him to be aware of the fact that the building was supposed to have been used at the time it was completed and there was a demand for every square foot of space, according to Government officials who appeared in front of the committee. We were told in committee on Tuesday morning that after the building was complete, the Minister was supposed to hire a person to do the interior design. That process normally takes 10 days. I asked how long it took in this case. The Government official said seven months. It took seven months for the Government to appoint a consultant to do the inside of the building.

Do you know how many taxpayers' dollars were wasted in that case? I asked what it was and I ask all Members to review the record of that committee. It cost \$1 million a month so that the Minister could decide who he wanted to do the interior design of that building. It is not I who said that. It was said in a committee of this House this week. That is a \$7 million waste. We are told by the Government that Canadians must tighten their belts. The Government must be a little more honest with Canadians. I invite the former Minister of Public Works to review the report of that committee. He will see what was said there. If it is inaccurate, I hope he will so state in the House of Commons.

● (1130)

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, today we are being asked to adopt this Bill. It is not a very important one financially speaking, but it is important as a symbol and for two reasons: first, the Government announced in its Budget that as a symbolic gesture, Members of this House and parliamentarians in the other place would be asked to forego \$1,000 of their annual increase.

[English]

On page 1338 of *Hansard* of yesterday the Parliamentary Secretary said:

In February of this year we had the budget address of the Minister of Finance. In this Budget, the Minister of Finance asked all Members of the House and the Senate to accept a reduction of \$1,000 in their salaries this year.

That is not correct, Mr. Speaker. You and I know that that is incorrect. Members of this House were asked to forego \$1,000 of their increase in salary for this year. The Parliamentary Secretary continued:

It means that the Prime Minister and all of our colleagues in Cabinet will have \$1,000 less at the end of this year in addition to the other reductions to which I referred previously.

That is incorrect as well, Mr. Speaker. We will not have \$1,000 less this year than we had last year. We will have about \$3,000 more in our salaries. I am not advocating that it be different, but why do we not reveal the facts and tell the Canadian people the truth? That which we are telling them is not correct.

During his speech yesterday the Parliamentary Secretary spoke about the plight of those less fortunate than many of us in this House. He talked about poverty. He said:

There are 300,000 fewer lower income Canadians in 1985 than there were in 1984.

The Member spent a considerable amount of time talking about that. However, he did not tell us that the budgetary changes will result in massive tax increases for the same people about whom we say we are so concerned.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I have a chart here showing that a family with one breadwinner and three dependents and an income of \$30,000 for a family of four—I would say this is certainly not a rich family, Mr. Speaker—will have to pay 2.1 per cent more in taxes this year, while a family with an annual income of \$50,000 will have a 1.2 per cent increase in income tax, and that from the very same Government which claims to be the defender of the needy. Mr. Speaker, I suggest it is less than honest to make claims of this kind.

I may draw the attention of the House to the fact that a single-parent family with two children and an annual income of \$20,000 will have to pay \$420 more in income tax in 1986, according to the last two Budgets. Now, the Parliamentary Secretary told the House that Hon. Members would, according to him, have to forego \$1,000 of their salaries. Mr. Speaker, that is not correct, that is not true. We are being asked to take a cut in our salary increases. However, Canadians who have to live on very low incomes, the family to which I referred earlier, are faced with a real increase in income tax and thus a net reduction in income for that family. That is what is happening to them. Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the Government's symbolic or quasi-symbolic gestures will not go down well with Canadians.

[English]

In the Parliamentary Secretary's fine speech yesterday he pretended that this Bill was important for deficit reduction by the Government. He knows that that is not the case. He knows