

ard for these people we should not be cushioning ourselves, great as the need may be.

I think an attempt should be made to assess the needs of individual Members of Parliament and to meet the needs of those who need an increase more than others. This across-the-board increase does not sit well with me. I warn members of the House that when the gap between the rich and the poor in this country becomes too great, we will hear more of the type of criticism that we are hearing now, namely, that Parliament is becoming irrelevant.

Believe me, the criticism about Parliament becoming irrelevant is not made because members are not in their seats all day, as they should be according to the public; and it is not made because we do not have enough committees or because we do not have a system similar to the U.S. presidential system. That is not the basic reason for the criticism, and no amount of tinkering with the committee system, with trips here, there and yonder, or trying to make different rules in the House will do away with the criticism. The criticism stems from the fact that the poor people, the veterans, the old age pensioners, the cripples, people with big families and small incomes, feel that Parliament is completely irrelevant and cannot meet their problems or find solutions for them.

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): Do you think it is irrelevant?

Mrs. MacInnis: Yes, it is becoming irrelevant. The National Advisory Committee on Welfare agreed with me when they said that one of the things we should be doing now is to stop the business of patchwork welfare programs and come out with a national program for a guaranteed income, a level beneath which people will not be allowed to fall. They said that even if we had a guaranteed income of \$2,000 a year for a single person, \$3,400 for a family of adults, \$3,980 for a family of three and \$4,560 a year for a family of four, such an expenditure would be below Canada's annual expenditure on roads. It would be substantially less than the annual increase in tax revenues of \$3.1 billion between 1968 and 1969.

That is the kind of raise I want to see and the kind of raise I have been trying to get ever since I came here—a raise for the people who need it most. My goodness, neglecting the roads for a while might cause potholes in them, but if we neglect the people of this country much longer we will have something much worse than potholes in people. I am deadly serious about this. What is the sense of providing \$14.7 million for a do-it-yourself program for youth and then finding that you get applications involving a total expenditure of \$150 million? My own province and that of the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. Groos) has sent in applications for \$17 million, and programs to match, which is nearly \$3 million more than the total amount provided for all of Canada.

I think we are making the raises in the wrong places and we are beginning the spending in the wrong places, if this Parliament is to be relevant. I want Parliament to be relevant. What is the sense of our being here if it is

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not relevant? I do not think we should be any longer in the position of having to raise our own salaries. Why can we not set up the next time around, which I hope will be some time in the distant future, some kind of an independent body—and I mean independent—which would go into this matter and would fix a scale and a standard in accordance with the cost of living? Even so I will quarrel with it unless at the same time we provide cost of living raises for people with less than we have.

One of the most shameful things we did in the past year was to fix old age pensions at \$80 a month, with no escalation whatsoever no matter what happens to the cost of living. Yet here we are escalating our salaries and pensions without anybody being able to say "No" to us. There is the story of the little boy who came home after being punished at school for telling a lie. His father said, "You knew it was wrong to tell a lie, didn't you?" "Yes," the boy said "and, worse than that, it didn't work". This legislation is all wrong and, worse than that, it will not work because people will not put up with this sort of thing when they know what it is. In other words, if Parliament wants the confidence and trust of the people of this country, it has to deserve their trust and confidence. Has it been doing that?

Let me go back to the National Advisory Committee on Welfare. They said that welfare payments under the current legislation and regulations were modest compared with payments to the real beneficiaries of government welfare programs, the corporate rich—only these are not called welfare programs; they are called economic growth incentives. Ours is not called a welfare program either, it is called salaries for Members of Parliament; but it comes out of the same place and it is for the same purpose.

I want to be able to live with myself. I do not want to tell people that I am in favour of democracy and in favour of a fair deal for people and then tamely submit to this sort of thing and go along with it when I know it is wrong. Furthermore, I would not even be prepared to submit this question to the Prices and Incomes Commission. On a number of occasions I have seen what the commission can do with a large bucket of whitewash and I am not in favour of giving them a chance to do the same with this matter.

The House should face up to this situation and realize that the bill is intensely unpopular with the people we were sent here to represent. Even at this late date we should say "No" to this bill and cold-storage its consideration and its implementation until we have had a chance to find out how people feel when the next election rolls around.

● (3:20 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Romuald Rodrigue (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, a bill to increase the indemnities and allowances of members of Parliament and senators is now before us.

First of all, I should like to say that I echo the suggestions and remarks made yesterday by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin). Consequently, I do not intend