

### Members' Salaries

not however come to rash conclusions, because a good number of editorials and other interesting newspaper items are written by people with a sense of duty and responsibility. It is unfortunate that there are not more of them.

I have here an article published in the newspaper *Mont-réal Matin* of October 4, 1974, under the very topical heading "Big Salaries".

I feel I should quote from it:

We often hear complaints about high salaries paid to company executives, judges and public figures. People are amazed at salaries paid company presidents, premiers, members of Parliament, but they accept quite naturally that huge amounts are paid to sports figures or performers.

Also union leaders are paid on a different scale than union members. We find that in some unions, the president earns \$75,000 a year, the secretary-treasurer \$55,000, and directors \$35,000. I am thinking of the Steel Workers of America.

It is often seen that a good number of people are not always consistent in their ideas. They criticize salary increases for members of parliament, but they accept that millions of dollars go to the world of sports, such as hockey, boxing and wrestling. In some instances, people pay from \$10 to \$100 for a reserved seat.

A well-written article in the *Vancouver Sun* of January 18, 1975 summarized the situation with valid comparisons between salaries paid newspapermen, plumbers, teachers, including pay increases given members of the British Columbia legislature under an NDP administration. Our hon. friends from the New Democratic Party could no doubt take heed. The author concludes as follows, and I quote:

I have never read in an editorial "We newspapermen received a salary increase. What we got for ourselves we want for the others, and we urge the government to recommend to Parliament similar increases for our elected representatives".

Looking at doctors' and lawyers' incomes, we find variations pointing to strong tendencies to higher incomes. In our present society, too many people seem to be striving for the highest possible return for a minimum of effort, with the result that contestation creeps in.

I had the advantage to read in *Le Droit* of August 20, 1974 an interesting article concerning members' salaries by Mr. Normand Messier. After pointing out that many men of merit refuse to accept all the annoyances which more often than not members of parliament are facing daily for \$26,000 a year, when they can get much more in another area, safe from any popular criticism, he continues and I quote these two paragraphs of his article as they contain very practical suggestions:

Members of Parliament should not vote themselves a salary increase just for the sake of it. They should be consistent with themselves and adopt inflexible guidelines concerning for instance conflicts of interest, abuse of power and any other tampering. Of course, not everyone does such things, but everyone can be occasionally tempted by "l'herbe tendre", as La Fontaine put it in his fable.

The best would be that members of parliament get salaries high enough so that they would be absolutely forbidden to have any other paid activities during their office. Offenders should be should be automatically dismissed.

I found these suggestions very practical. I already voted twice here in this House in 1963 and 1971 against salary

[Mr. Dionne (Kamouraska).]

increases for ministers, members, senators and judges. I recognize that there were few of us against it, but I was not the only one. You just have to check the official report of July 29, 1963, the result of the vote was 200 yeas and 10 nays.

In 1971 we got the report of the Beaupré Commission that seemed to be based on six basic principles: the representation, the qualification and the aleatory nature of the office due to the risk of lost elections. I noted particularly the fifth point as it pointed out that the office of a member of parliament was becoming more and more an all absorbing, difficult and ticklish occupation and it is true in some cases. It was also mentioned that it required tremendous moral strength and it is also true. Obviously, a member conscious of his responsibility is likely to exhaust his moral strength in trying to make Canadians accept the inflationary system we now have. The Canadian people are noting the various reactions of their representatives and we should not be surprised if some who used to be moderates begin to protest after losing patience.

At the present time, I realize that we have been through the conciliation stage, we are now discussing the reduction of the raise in terms of percentages. I hope that the best decision will be taken. Some Canadians already know that several hundred dollars will be distributed as gifts to athletic or philanthropic organizations and some pitiful poverty cases. The surplus could always be used to advantage.

For example, I have in hand an article published in a Montreal paper some ten years ago. It deals with an important issue, since it shows how salary increases for politicians are justified. It is quite pertinent. At that time, the author of that article was a reporter who wrote freely. A few will undoubtedly recognize him. I acknowledge his ability since he was a gifted writer. It is especially appropriate under the circumstances to quote a few excerpts of his article entitled: The cost of political life.

After having referred to the causes of ageing, according to the general belief, such as obesity, baldness, rheumatism, the condition of arteries, he concludes that a quadragenarian becomes conscious of his age when he reflects on the cost of living and I quote the following excerpt of his article:

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Today, boys, it is fantastic how everything is going up.

Just imagine, this was written 10 years ago!

In some departments, it is quite understandable. The price increase is often justified by a better quality or by some degree of improvement in the item provided. Today's provincial minister, for instance, shows a real improvement over the comparable item in use around 1936. A Carrier Fortin clearly out-classes a William Tremblay.

Further on the author, after referring to the changes that have taken place since then, mentioned:

In days of old, when a buyer was handing out a large sum of money (which would seem ludicrously low today) to purchase a Taschereau or a Duplessis, he was almost exclusively concerned with getting two qualities: colour and ability to withstand wear and tear. The colour was blue or red, according to individual taste, but the product had to last at least fifteen or twenty years. You see how things are changing. In recent years, we have not been so keen anymore about colour or even stalwartness. Provided the article is in good shape it does not matter whether you have to change it within two or five years;