

Salaries Act

of quantity, the quality of the press gallery, as its members consistently try to assess the quality of this chamber in terms of quantity.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order. That is not a valid point of order.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): One might even mention that they are still up in the subsidized restaurant.

An hon. Member: Obviously, there are no newspapers in Miramichi.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, if I may return the debate to a semi-serious tone, at least I would like to say one or two things about the bill before us. I am referring, of course, to the interruptions and not to the very excellent speech of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker).

I am very happy to speak on the measure before us and I have no reservation at all in commending the minister responsible, not only for the legislation but for the remarks which he made. They struck me as being very apropos, very sound constitutionally, and a serious prelude to a measure which is extremely important. I have no personal axe to grind—I am as likely to become a lieutenant governor as I am to become a senator.

Mr. McGrath: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: It is the impossible dream of my public career!

Mr. Basford: Which do you want?

Mr. Macquarrie: Yes the legislation before us is a source of personal satisfaction to me because ever since I came to this House I have been appalled by the inequity which existed as between provinces. During the years when the Progressive Conservative Party was in office in the country, I spent much time and effort pleading with the Hon. Donald Fleming to make adjustments. The rate in Prince Edward Island was \$8,000, in Quebec and Ontario it was \$10,000 and in all the other provinces it was \$9,000. I could never find anyone who could explain to me why that situation should prevail. I commend the government for establishing, once and for all, that since the provinces are juridically equal and constitutionally equal—if, god knows, not economically equal—the very epitome of their constitution, the chief person there, the lieutenant governor, should reflect that in this particular matter. It is for this reason that I commend the government for recognizing this aspect. I think where the minister shows wisdom is in recognizing differences in expenditure. This is done through the expense allowances. It just happens that it is not always the lieutenant governor of the largest province or the most populous province who most dutifully fills that office or works hardest at it.

I remember that one of our journalists, who is not in the gallery at the present time, Charles Lynch, made quite a sensation in Prince Edward Island when he visited Government House and was reported to have found the wife of the lieutenant governor sewing up drapes in preparation for the royal visit. Some people were appalled by that, but

I was not at all disturbed. She was the wife of a very distinguished soldier and scholar, she was the mother of very distinguished Canadians in the professions, in the arts, and if she sews as part of her devotion to her duties, it does not offend me at all.

I remember another governor of Prince Edward Island, the late Governor MacKay, who died only about a year ago, I think. There was a young lad of about 13 who had been sent by his teacher to find out all he could about Government House. He went to the Island Heritage and got the pamphlets there, but he thought he might investigate a little further. He had nerve enough to go up to the front door of Government House and was admitted by Lieutenant Governor MacKay who took him through the ancient and very beautiful building. The young fellow told his mother later that the lieutenant governor had told him many things which were not in the booklet. When he was through with the tour, he was taken to the kitchen where Mrs. MacKay gave him some milk and cookies. That is probably a more eloquent demonstration of the value of an office properly filled than the treatises of many learned political scientists.

I suggest that we must believe in this system; and those who know me in the House know that I am not an emotional monarchist but that I am a rational monarchist. I suppose this is what you would expect from one whose forefathers were defeated in 1745. We have lost a certain sense of emotion because our man was beaten there. If the system is to function, we must respect the office. I would assiduously avoid dragging the office of the lieutenant governor through any bric-a-brac about costs and salaries. I believe that my colleague who has just spoken is profoundly correct when he stated—and it is something which has concerned me throughout my life, especially in the last few years—that there is great danger in the tendency to play the political game, to denigrate not only the participants but the institutions.

● (1430)

I think in recent years, the press in this country, which I fear is not as strong or as perceptive or as sensitive as it should be, in getting after the politicians, who are fair game, may bring down the institution with them. We are inured to and expect criticism. There is a syndrome about the politician; we are supposed to be smooth and hypocritical. But when this is moved over to a denigration of the House of Commons or parliament itself, then we are in danger.

I do not care for this discussion about the occupants of a gubernatorial office belonging to a political party; that they are this or that. It is an office which we respect and one that is essential to our system. If we do not regard it with the proper respect and dignity and, I hope, affection, then we should change the system. We are talking about the most important person in each province, man or woman. It is the number one person occupying a post of honour that should not be restricted to the rich and well born. To do so would be disastrous. I have known people in my own province, the small province of Prince Edward Island, who have been fine, dedicated men who have exhausted a great deal of their personal finances in doing a proper job as lieutenant governor, and that should not be. That is wrong. Nor should the post be exclusive to