

*Salaries Act*

percentages involved in this bill. Even though I am not going to move another amendment or divide the House on this bill, it seems to me that it is appropriate for these words to be said. Restraint has been preached all over the place. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) has a paper, the paternity of which he sometimes admits but sometimes denies, which says that Canadians should not receive an increase of more than 12 per cent or \$2,400.

**Mr. Sharp:** Per year, Stanley.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Granted, but how many years is it since these people received a raise?

**Mr. Sharp:** It was in 1962 or 1963, 12 years ago.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** It is true that per year they are entitled to \$2,400 but those now in office have been there only a few years, and there are other increases, both in this bill and in the other bill, for expenses, so that their positions are being improved, and all told I think it is a pretty good deal for these ten Canadians. I could wish that they would be making the appeal to be part of the Canadian community generally which is accepting the fact that restraints are necessary, but I have not heard any such appeal from any of these ten persons. So I suppose they want these increases, and apparently this House is prepared to go along.

I just wonder where all this ends. Hon. members raised their own pay substantially, we raised the pay of the Senators substantially, we increased the pay of the cabinet ministers and parliamentary secretaries, and we provided for 7 per cent compounded increases starting January, 1976.

**Mr. Benjamin:** It ends when we get to the poor and the pensioners.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** This House gave the judges a pretty good deal in the bill that was passed a few moments ago. I suppose that before long there will probably be a report from a special committee about the salaries of deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and those who are receiving \$40,000 and \$50,000, making an appeal that they have to have something to meet the cost of living. In the meantime ordinary Canadians are being told they must get along on an increase of 12 per cent per year. Pensioners are being told that all they can receive is the actual cost of living, always in arrears.

This thing is out of joint, Madam Speaker. I welcome the fact that in the previous bill there are retroactive increases in pensions to widows of judges. I welcome the fact that in this bill there are some improvements in pensions. I hope before we recess at the end of June there will be some improvements for pensioners generally, and the particular appeal I make right now is to the government. I could make it to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), but he does not happen to be here tonight. The appeal is that with these improvements we are making for the retirement years of lieutenant governors and the retirement years of their survivors, if they leave any, we ought to do better for ordinary spouses between 60 and 65 and not just grant a pension under a means test.

We ought to realize that the age provisions in these bills about pensions are much more generous than the age provisions generally, and I would say that in the face of all this if the government brings in a bill amending the Old Age Security Act which provides pensions for spouses between 60 and 65 only where the other spouse is over 65 and only under a means test, that will be an insult.

● (2150)

I confess that it is difficult to make the kind of speech that my hon. friend from Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) would probably make if he were not in a committee which I understand will sit to all hours. We are talking about persons for whom we have particular respect because they represent the Crown, because they represent Canada and because they represent a form of government at the head of which is someone who is above partisan politics. But I still feel that it is a strange performance we have gone through in this House in 1975. Despite all the economic trouble we are in, despite all the preaching we hear about restraint, this House seems to find it easy to grant substantial increases in the pay of members of parliament, senators, cabinet ministers, judges and lieutenant governors. I hope that at some point we will start doing something substantial, something meaningful for ordinary Canadians.

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I hope, too, that the country will start to do something about inflation. I sat in the House and listened to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles)—

**Mr. Benjamin:** All day.

**Mr. Stanfield:** All day, all year—talk about restraint, but I have yet to hear the hon. gentleman give much support to any comprehensive program of restraint which has been put forward. I find myself in the position of having to deal with particular situations—members of parliament are one, judges another, and lieutenants governor still another—which have resulted from cumulative inflationary pressures bringing about increases in the cost of living in the past several years. I agree that these are particular instances. There are lots of others with which we are not dealing. A great many people of modest circumstance have been robbed, robbed of their savings.

**Mr. Benjamin:** And you voted for more pay for well-off people.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I beg your pardon?

**Mr. Benjamin:** You just finished voting in support of an increase for people who are already well off.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I will agree to the judges bill going to committee for consideration.

**Mr. Benjamin:** That is a tough deal for those already getting \$45,000. Big deal!

**Mr. Stanfield:** If the hon. gentleman wants to make a speech, he should make it.

**Mr. Benjamin:** I will be glad to.