

tion to change from a flat expense allowance to an accountable expense allowance.

There may have been reasons for hesitating at the time to accept in full the recommended increases in the levels of remuneration proposed by the Beaupre commission. Four years later, after a further very substantial increase in the cost of living and in other expenses and—what I think is more significant, Madam Speaker—in the level of remuneration prevailing in private life and in public life, the reasons for hesitation surely disappear.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sharp: Indeed, I believe that we would be justified in going well beyond those four year-old recommendations. At what level, then, should remuneration be fixed now? This, obviously, is a question of judgment. The most acceptable test seems to be the one proposed by the Beaupre commission. Let me refresh the memories of hon. members as to what the Beaupre commission said. I quote from page 39 of the report made to the government of the day in November, 1970:

● (1600)

Salaries should be high enough to attract to parliament on a full-time basis people of proven ability, regardless of their chosen field of endeavour, at a time when their earning potential may be at its highest, and, having attained legislative office, grant a measure of dignity and financial security for themselves and their families. An equitable representation of all segments of our society is an essential ingredient of a good parliament.

The position of the parliamentarian is essentially a full-time occupation. This has been recognized to the extent that members are now paid on an annual rather than a sessional basis. It underlines the fact that the member of parliament has duties not only in the chamber, but also in committee meetings, as a member of parliamentary delegations, in consultation with officials, in private research, and in contacts with the public either through correspondence or personal visits. A member of the House of Commons, in particular, normally has a heavy work load in his constituency and his working day in the House of Commons is usually much longer than the industrial average.

That was the test laid down by those three men. One of them was an industrialist, one of them a former member of parliament and one of them had had great experience in labour negotiations. Obviously, the present level of remuneration does not meet that test. By and large, members of parliament are still being paid as if being in parliament were a part-time occupation. Many MPs with dependent families are being severely pinched financially and are going into debt or using up their savings.

More important, perhaps, people who should be considering running for parliament are deterred by the insecurity coupled with the low prevailing rates of remuneration. May I cite an example in my own city. One sometimes wonders why, in the circumstances, people prefer to run for the federal parliament rather than for city council. In my own city of Toronto, a senior alderman who is on the executive committee and on metro receives \$36,500 of which \$12,000 is tax free. Moreover, he is assigned an automobile and driver.

An hon. Member: And he lives in that city.

Mr. Sharp: And he lives in that city. One does not enter politics for financial gain. If any do, they become disillusioned quickly and they will be disillusioned in the future

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even if we accept this bill. At least a candidate for parliament should not be required to sacrifice the education of his children in order to serve the public. There should be some compensation for the insecurity, the interruption of his or her career and the special working conditions applying in this particular occupation. Other legislative bodies are having to face up to the same facts and they are reacting similarly by increasing or proposing to increase substantially indemnities and allowances.

In determining upon \$27,000 for indemnities and \$12,000 for allowances, the government was influenced by the recommendations of the ad hoc group of private members to which I have already referred and which has been referred to by one of the members of the group during this debate. Moreover, it is the private members who will have to defend this legislation before their constituents. In that sense this is not a government bill. The government is acting in this case on behalf of what we have reason to believe is the bulk of members of parliament and not only those on the government side of the House. Of course, I want it to be quite clear that we accept our share of responsibility as members of parliament. Moreover, we have satisfied ourselves, of course, that the proposals in this bill are not inconsistent with public policy. In doing this we have carried out our responsibilities as members of the government, responsibilities which we share with members of parliament although ours is perhaps the greater burden because we must also take responsibility for the government of the country.

The recommendations we received from the ad hoc committee of private members included an annual adjustment, beginning next year, based upon changes in the industrial composite prepared by Statistics Canada which is the broadest available indicator of average weekly wages and salaries. We did not accept this particular recommendation. We believe that the level of their remuneration should be fixed for the duration of this parliament. We do not believe that as members of this parliament we should protect ourselves in a special way against all possible future increases in prices and costs. The proposals in the bill represent an effort to bring the level of MPs' remuneration roughly into line with what has been happening elsewhere in the country. It does not protect us in this parliament from what may happen in the next four years or so, if that should be the duration of this parliament.

The government does agree, however, that there is a good case for bringing indemnities into line with prevailing community standards at each parliament, so that we do not have to repeat this present performance and so that prospective candidates will have a better idea of the level of remuneration for the parliament they seek to enter. The bill, therefore, does propose that an adjustment, either upward or downward, should be made at each parliament to reflect changing levels of remuneration in the country at large, and it is therefore proposing that at the beginning of each parliament, beginning with the next, the level of indemnities—but not the allowances—should be adjusted in accordance with the change that had taken place during the previous parliament in the industrial composite figure. This seemed to the government to be the most acceptable statistic on which to make adjustments, although it is by no means free from defects. We definitely rejected adjustments based upon the salaries of civil servants since some