

depending on the prevailing salary rate being paid to judges. But simply willy-nilly tying the salaries of these public servants who perform important functions to the salaries of the judiciary is rather an inappropriate way for us to do justice with respect to their salaries, or indeed with respect to the questions of the role and the compensation of the judiciary in the country.

I simply wanted to point out these particular observations and to express my sincere concern respecting the pension provisions of this bill. I recall an article which was written some time ago by an English humorist, Geoffrey Lincoln. He pointed out that Her Majesty's judges, as everyone knows, are a race completely apart. He referred to the fact that their salaries were in the order of \$70,000 and that their pensions after retirement amounted to some two-thirds of that. To the uninformed layman, they might seem to occupy somewhat enviable positions, but as he humorously pointed out the judges are the first to point out that they are required to be at work at ten o'clock and to work through until four o'clock in the afternoon; that they have occupational hazards such as occasionally riding on public transportation, and cannot be found in enclosed places after dark. This was really said in jest, because it is an oversimplification of the great dedication of and duty performed by the judiciary, of which we can be justly proud.

Notwithstanding the fact that we have gone through periods of great crisis and serious political debate about divisions in our country, by and large the judiciary has been exemplary in its contribution to society, in its protection of the supremacy of law, and in its independent interpretation of law.

I say that judges must be independent. It is a principle in common law with which I find no dispute. Often it interests me, and sometimes quite frankly mystifies me, that in the course of discussions respecting constitutional matters some people feel very strongly that somehow it would be the prerogative of one level of government or another to have judicial appointments, that somehow the mere fact a federal court judge is appointed by a provincial government ensures that there will be a string attached to the judge in the course of his deliberations, and that somehow for time immemorial, or for the judge's time on the bench, his decisions will be influenced by who appointed him. I think history has demonstrated that nothing could be further from the truth. Once persons are appointed to the bench, because of their independence and their respect for common law traditions they have in fact operated in a completely independent fashion, one which is not affected by the government that appointed them. I compliment the judiciary from that point of view.

Having made these few remarks, I want to thank my colleagues and the minister for their attention. I hope we will have an opportunity to consider some of the points I have raised which are of serious concern to my party and me. I look forward to pursuing this matter on the floor of the House and to hearing the government response both here and in committee.

Business of the House

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would permit a brief question. Understandably, the hon. member referred to the importance of increasing the number of women who are appointed to the federal judiciary. In light of this, I wonder if the hon. member could explain why, since confederation, no Conservative government in this country ever appointed a single woman to the federal judiciary, including the government of which he was a member?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I might say that I am glad to respond to that question. Of course the hon. member forgets that for the few fleeting hours we were in government it was difficult to accomplish all goals. But I can understand the hon. member's sense of sanctimony; he has now been a member of the NDP caucus for a while and the holier-than-thou attitude has been bred into him. As far as my party is concerned, we stand second to none with respect to our determination to ensure that the women of Canada, not only in appointments to the judiciary but in every respect, receive proper attention. I must say I appreciate the subtlety of the particular question, because it comes from a member of a party which has been known to spend more time, in the course of deliberations, on rhetoric rather than action.

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● (1700)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Collenette: Mr. Speaker, before you move to the private members' hour, there have been discussions among the parties concerning the progress of two private members' private bills sponsored by my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of State for Trade. I believe there is a disposition with respect to Senate Bills Nos. 13 and 14, which were reported last week, to proceed with the report stage and third reading with no debate, with the caveat that my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, will be tabling some documents which have been requested by the hon. member for York-Peel (Mr. Stevens) in the context of the committee deliberations.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): That was our understanding as well. I have spoken personally to the hon. member and also to the hon. member for York-Peel. I understand that when these bills are introduced, with respect to each of these private members' bills the member will be making a statement to the House with respect to the tabling of certain documents. He may need consent to table those documents. He could have that consent today.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, there have been such discussions. We have agreed that a few minutes be taken for this purpose. I remind the parliamentary secretary that the assurance was that the whole operation would not take more than two or three minutes. My friend, the hon. member for Prince Albert, whose private member's motion is to follow, is willing to surrender those two or three minutes and no more, I trust.