

On October 25, 1970, the motion to increase family allowances was defeated by the government.

On May 4, 1970, an amendment concerning the increase of old age security pensions was also defeated by the government. Legislation on young people unemployment had the same fate on December 15, 1970.

Mr. Speaker, if the government members were asked why they voted against all these social measures, they would reply that we have to fight inflation, therefore not give too much buying power to the taxpayer. To make purchasing power available to the most disadvantaged consumers, to those who need it most for food, shelter and clothing is, in the eyes of this government, bad and dangerous.

But to increase the salaries and allowances of members of Parliament and of the senators from \$18,000 to \$26,000 a year is not dangerous, there is nothing wrong with that. Mr. Speaker, history repeats itself: the rich administrator is getting fat on the national income but denies a minimum income to those most in need of it and mainly to those it is his duty to protect.

For all those reasons I will have to vote against increasing parliamentary salaries and expenses until such time as the government sees fit to propose some social measures to improve the plight of the poor and the plight of the families unable to live on their budget.

Let the government move to increase family allowances and old age security pensions, and I will immediately vote in favour of an increase in our salaries and allowances. But if nothing is done for our citizens, if no legislation is introduced to increase family allowances and mainly to increase the buying power of those who need it most, I will object to increasing our salaries and allowances.

[English]

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, hon. members in this part of the House, including our leader, the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Harding), the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and, more recently, the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert), have thoroughly gone over the provisions of this legislation. I must say I will join with the majority of the members of this party and oppose this bill.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mrs. MacInnis: I hope the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Goode) is not too far away. I wish to repeat for his benefit what I have already told members of the press. Whatever I net as a result of this increase I intend to give to suitable causes and charities in my constituency. My constituents will be taxed as a result of this increase, and I want to be sure they get at least some benefit from it. I feel I will be in a better position to do this than perhaps even the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury). I intend to look after the disbursement of this increase myself, but I shall not keep it. Without being too presumptuous, I think it would be better if those hon. members on the other side of the

Senate and House of Commons Act

House who are so anxious to divest themselves of any advantage they might gain as a result of a salary increase would use their weight to prevail on the government even at this time to withdraw this legislation.

When this legislation is fully understood, I am sure it will have a boomerang effect upon not only their own fortunes but the feelings generally of the people of this country. Let me quote from the *Toronto Globe and Mail* of yesterday.

An hon. Member: Oh, no!

Mrs. MacInnis: It is not a bad paper compared to some that are read by members on the other side of the House. The editorial states in part:

It will interest Canadians, however, to discover with what speed the government is prepared to move in a matter involving its own personal pockets, when it has been so slow to move—claiming as excuse always that it was being obstructed by the opposition—in a multitude of great matters that involve the country.

This I think is the point that has most shocked the public. I refer to the fact that for so long we have been trying to get a better deal for the veterans, the aged, the young people, the handicapped, the crippled and the people on social assistance, and always the same cry has been heard—that the matter is being carefully considered, it is being studied and that it will take some time before the cabinet makes up its mind.

● (3:00 p.m.)

People have been patient; they have waited in vain for the reports to come forward. Then suddenly this measure comes forward involving a great increase in the salaries of Members of Parliament, and the government practically falls over itself in its attempt to get the measure through with all possible speed.

As I said a moment ago, members of my party have canvassed all the major arguments against this bill from our point of view. They have emphasized the fact that the amount is unconscionably large at a time when inflation and unemployment are raging across the country, the Prime Minister's opinion to the contrary; that it is very wrong for the leaders of the country, the people who are supposed to be giving the lead in Parliament, to choose this time to add to the flames of inflation and the misery of unemployment by making their own position more secure and insulated. This is rather like the situation in the old days when there was a shipwreck at sea. What if the captain and the officers had rushed for the lifeboats first, to make sure that they would get aboard, leaving the women and children to take their chances with the sea? It is a little bit that way with this legislation.

I am speaking this afternoon because I shall be away from the House when the vote is taken, if one is taken, on the first or second day of next week. I feel very strongly on this matter. Furthermore, I do not want there to be any ambiguity about where I stand when it is essential that my constituents and people in other parts of the country who write to me about this matter—I receive a great deal of mail on the question—should