

Members' Salaries

because they have no residence in their constituency or still because they travel by plane with passes from Air Canada, like the leader of the NDP, or rather the one who would very much like to be leader but who is not sure that he will be.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are members who do their work, like my colleagues and other parties who, I know, spend much more than that amount. That is why we would like to see in this bill a provision calling for supporting documents concerning the \$10,600. Mr. Speaker, the production of supporting documents would put an end to the criticisms against unjustified expenses, would enhance the influence of hon. members in people's mind, because the members could justify their expenses. The member who would fail to do so would not get the money and the one who would do so would not be penalized by the others who stay idle. That is another positive proposal from the Social Credit Party of Canada in order that those who work are not penalized by those who do nothing.

Since the debate began we have been entangled by puritan and electoralist opposition from the NDP. Mr. Speaker, if those people do not agree, let us be democratic like the New Democratic members and let us include in the bill an option formula whereby, after 15 days, if a member did not deem it necessary to accept the increase, he would simply forego the raise; but let him not penalize the others who need it.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the majority of NDP members will be the first to send their letter and by messenger to boot.

I have been elected democratically. I have been elected like my Social Credit colleagues, democratically, without election fund, without any contribution from aircraft or marine workers' unions. We got elected with our own resources, honestly, with the means at our disposal. The Progressive Conservatives bawl out the Grits but after they ask themselves where they are. These days I can hardly tell Grit from Tory.

Mr. Speaker, we got elected with the means at our disposal. We do not pay our representatives at the polls, we do not pay our organizers, we do not have any election fund. When there is an election, we help those people. We may be only eleven, but we do not have behind us 500 guys who have financed us. We represent thousands of Canadians who are like us, who do not have money, but who want members to represent them in Parliament.

Be warned: Thanks to the Election Expenses Act we will be more numerous next time. Mr. Speaker, people did vote for us in all conscience because we did a good job. The best evidence is that each time a minister comes in our riding, we gain 1,000 votes. So, we invite them to come back.

Mr. Speaker, once elected, we represent those people. What is the situation in my riding? I do not want to speak for the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (M. Knowles) because he does not go in his riding either. In the riding of Lotbinière, I work in my office on Friday evenings, on Saturdays and sometimes on Sundays and Mondays, then I return to Ottawa. On Fridays, Saturdays and sometimes Sundays, I accept invitations. Each time I have an unemployment case, I must call Drummondville and it is a long distance. Who pays for it? I would invite

[Mr. Fortin.]

the reporters to take notes. I see 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in the gallery. Not bad. Who is paying? Always the hon. member for Lotbinière. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to do it because I was elected to protect the interests of my fellow citizens.

● (2030)

Unemployment is now increasing in my riding. It is seasonal unemployment which we call Liberal unemployment. We have the Liberal economy, the unemployment insurance.

An hon. Member: Who is bringing the cheques?

Mr. Fortin: All of you. Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) to take note of the situation in the Lotbinière constituency, to increase the staff so that my fellow citizens who are unemployed, who are the victims of the economic system sponsored by the Grits and the Tories may be looked after. I asked him for more people to deal with the requests because 150 men are laid off at once and they have families.

The day after, this morning, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration phoned me and said: Mr. Fortin you have six persons more to look after your problems. He has thus showed that he is an honest man: he forgot his party and thought about the unemployed. It proves, Mr. Speaker, that when a member of the opposition is active, he is much better than a thousand backbenchers flopped on their benches. That is what it proves.

Mr. Speaker, some people criticize the members' salary increase. I can see here the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie), he understands what I mean. When multinational corporations increase their prices, when a so-called oil international crisis is used as a pretence, when the Progressive Conservatives and members of the New Democratic Party do not want eastern Canada to benefit from subsidized prices, Mr. Speaker, when oil companies increase their prices, multinational companies increase their rates, who pays? The people do.

It is strange to note, Mr. Speaker, that every time the price of oil goes up the people pay. Do papers mention it? Do newsmen speak of that situation? Not in the least. A veil of silence is drawn over the cost of oil. But when it comes to the increase in members' salaries, it gets into the headlines; they call it a national crisis. Newsmen are financed by the financial world, by multinational corporations, and it is high time for the people representatives to establish a master in the House.

We have stepped back with respect to the initial motion, but time has come to pass this motion without delay so that justice be done to members of the House, at least to those who deserve their salaries.

Mr. Speaker, when a citizen calls at our office, he expects to meet the representative he has elected in a democratic process. He relies on him. Then let us give this member of the House the necessary means to work and represent his constituents properly. As a first step, we already have an office in our constituency, for which an allowance of \$8,400 has been allocated to us; some Canadian Broadcasting Corporation newsmen are bent on adding it to the member's salary, while it has nothing at all to do with it.