

recession. Just think of all they can invent in the topsy-turvy system we are afflicted with.

The adjustment of members' salaries would cause no problem if the people enjoyed a decent standard of living. It would be a matter of setting up in this new economic era a true cost of living adjustment mechanism called indexation. This adjustment mechanism should take into account variations, either downward or upward, and crisis and prosperity periods. That would be a way of keeping awake legislators who have a tendency to fall asleep when unemployment becomes the nightmare of too many Canadians and strikes proliferate, with the known consequences, due to a financial system continuously divorced from the economic realities of the day.

I have good reason to believe that the Canadian people in general would be prepared to pay good salaries to legislators who would devise an economic system allowing each and every one of them to live decently. However, they are reluctant to pay large salaries to administrators who maintain a system of taxes, debts, strikes, increasing crime rate and all the difficulties we know.

My colleague from Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) made a practical suggestion to the House of Commons on November 25, 1974, during the budget debate, when he read excerpts from the bill put before American representatives on August 22, 1935. He also pointed out the importance of Bill C-201 introduced in the House by the hon. member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Caouette), which would have made it possible to improve appreciably the defective system with which we are plagued.

● (2110)

I have here an article from the January 29, 1969 edition of *Le Droit* entitled:

Reasonable guaranteed income a social right for all Canadians.

I quote, because it is short:

A program designed to ensure a reasonable guaranteed annual income, program which the Canadian Welfare Council regards as a social right for all Canadians, should be implemented "as soon as possible", the Council says in its statement.

Considering the economic difficulties encountered by the unemployed in receiving the benefits they are entitled to when they have no income because of the loss of their job and considering also the thousands of others who meagerly subsist on welfare, all of which are paralysed by a burdensome bureaucracy, which is too often more provoking than beneficent, it is well time that we establish a guaranteed income plan, not only for members of parliament, ministers, senators, judges and other officials of varied categories, but for each and every Canadian. This does not mean, as some simplistically suggest, that we must turn everything upside down or set up a printing press.

We have the institutions in place. It is a matter of adjusting values, a matter of accounting whereby the financial mechanism can reflect the real wealth taking into consideration the dignity of the human being, the value of things that can be produced in sufficient quantities to feed, lodge and clothe the population.

That is the solution—assuring each and every one of a guaranteed income. It is a social right of all Canadians.

Members' Salaries

This natural right to live derived from birth must pass well ahead of regulations set by those handling money and credit.

Note that it is impossible to establish a just society on borrowed money, and it is in that whirl of concerns, of fear of tomorrow for most Canadians that we witnessed in the month of December 1974, a little before the Christmas and New Year recess, a debate on Bill C-44, an act to increase the salaries of members of the House of Commons and senators, and by some strange coincidence, those who most contributed to tying up the negotiations are those members who benefited at the right time from contributions from labour unions whose main role is to obtain salary increases for their membership.

Inevitably, in a climate of this kind, adding to that the strategic errors of the outset, the negotiations were bound to abort even if most participants seemed anxious to get the proposed increase.

Fortunately the strike could be avoided and replaced by a one month holiday at the same salary as before, a period of study and reflection on the validity of the claims.

During the same period, another group of politicians in Quebec were fighting as best as they could—and more often not so good at that—to get salary increases using arguments of all kinds and not always appropriate.

It is unfortunate to see that often uncontrolled pride, greed, political ambitions contribute to so many mistakes being made. In their determination to hold down to the end, they got a backpay retroactive to April 1, 1974, and a complete change of furniture at a total cost of \$179,000 without taking too much in consideration a rarely practiced slogan—buy at home.

Some of our separatists will be able to muse sprawling comfortably in a lazy-boy made outside Quebec. Considering the good side of the deal, one could find for that team excellent cause for inspiration.

It would also be very interesting to see the various reactions of the participants if such debates took place during an election campaign. It would be really fascinating to hear a candidate promise his audience that, should he be elected, one of his main concerns would be to take every possible means to provide for himself a good salary increase. I often heard political organizers complain about the difficulty of getting their electors to attend meetings during an election campaign. I am surprised that nobody thought of putting on the "Trudeau Express" a pennant of an appropriate colour showing the desired salary: \$45,000 per year. That would have aroused the people's curiosity and prompted many questions. Of course, a politician's behaviour is not the same before and after an election. According to the January 16, 1975 issue of *Le Droit*, Ontario ministers were considering a 5 per cent token reduction in salary, explaining in all seriousness that «the fight against inflation should begin somewhere». That is a fine example of the variety of reactions.

Let us return to the negotiations here in Ottawa. It should be pointed out that we did not have the benefit of a favourable publicity. The press itself has its quota of dreamers, ideologists and false-minded people. Those three ingredients, mixed in variable proportions, give a product which could hardly be called honest. One should