

I am angry when I hear my friends of the NDP talking about restraint. The fact is that they have not given, and are not prepared to give, anything but lip service to any program of restraint in this country. What has happened in the past will demonstrate the truth of my assertions more eloquently than anything I can say. It is important for us to exercise restraint. It is important for us to do our best for the less fortunate. But let me say that the NDP has no monopoly on that concern. I do not want anyone to think that my party or the leader of my party has not been concerned for a long time about lack of restraint and what it has done to the less fortunate. Need I remind the House that an election was fought in 1974 partly on the issue of restraint? The death-bed conversion of the last eight months or so, this turn around in government thinking, shows how right my leader was in 1974.

We support this bill, Madam Speaker, because we believe in the office and believe that the restrictions of the office, the inability of the office-holder to engage in commercial or professional enterprise, ought to be considered. I hope we shall never again hear the kind of speech that was made just before the luncheon adjournment about the holders of this office. Let me say to the government House leader that all kinds of public salaries falling within federal jurisdiction ought to be reviewed regularly, so that never again will the situation arise, through negligence, forgetfulness or any other reason, in which the salaries of public servants, including those of lieutenant governors and people in a similar position, are overlooked. We must avoid doing anything which brings the institution as such into disrepute because of the actions of those who attack it in a misguided way.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, before lunch the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) said that he would accept a question of mine at the end of his speech. Will he now do so?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Yes, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is prompted by a remark the hon. member made before one o'clock, to the effect that it is scandalous that these salaries have not been increased since 1962 or 1963. Does the hon. member not know that not one of our lieutenant governors was in office at that time; that seven of them have been in office for three years or less?

Mr. MacFarlane: I thought you were going to ask a question.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I am glad to see my hon. friend here on Friday afternoon.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): He is always here.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): As this increase is to be awarded to some who have given, so far, only three or four years of service, does the hon. member not feel that he was putting it a bit strongly when he said the delay is scandalous?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Madam Speaker, with respect—I have great respect for my hon. friend who is my neighbour outside the House and my colleague in this

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House, although I do not always agree with his opinions—I feel that the office itself, and not the one who may be the incumbent from time to time, is really the subject of the debate on this bill. The point I was trying to make was that the salary should be the last consideration which should either entice prospective office-holders into public life or deter them from it. Salary should be the last thing on the mind of the prospective office-holder when the Prime Minister offers the appointment.

● (1420)

I must say I do not know any of the gentlemen involved—I do know the one lady lieutenant governor—but I would be surprised if one of the considerations which went through the minds of prospective lieutenant governors was not the question of salary and allowances, especially in view of the fact that the person appointed might have to give up any interests which would conceivably be in conflict with his office, which could mean giving up virtually everything in terms of a business or other profession. Even though others have accepted appointment since 1962 to this high office, this does not remove from the government the obligation to increase the salaries paid in a regular way having regard to conditions in society.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Would the hon. member permit one further question?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): I would remind the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) that we are not in committee of the whole. However, perhaps the hon. member will allow a second question.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): In this instance the hon. member may well be agreeing with me. In view of his support of the principle of paying the same rate to lieutenant governors in all provinces, thus establishing a national rather than a regional rate, does he not believe that this strengthens our case for national rates to be paid in the public service generally?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I do not know whether the question can be regarded as anything other than frivolous.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It is very serious.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): The hon. member and I are among many in this chamber who are actively engaged, almost on a day to day basis, with issues affecting the public service. One of these is the question of national rates—the justice of such rates, or otherwise. I would not want to give an answer to this question other than the one I have given: I would have to examine the situation very carefully before I could answer specifically whether national rates would be applicable to the public service.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): I rise on a point of order arising out of a reference by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) to the one member of the press Gallery who is present. My point of order is this: I hope the lone member will assess, in terms