

Members opposite might laugh, but I wish to tell them that since television came into the House, the Canadian people are more aware of these types of expenditures that the Government is putting out.

● (1210)

We are talking about the symbolism involved in a \$1,000 cut in the pay of MPs. If the Prime Minister would only stay home for one week, we could save as much money as that. Have we forgotten his sojourn in New York? Have we forgotten what it cost for the hotel suite in which the Prime Minister stayed in such regal style? Have we forgotten the cost of transporting all the media equipment required when the Prime Minister goes abroad? If Pierre Trudeau had done that, Tom Cossitt would have brought this House down brick by brick. Imagine Pierre Elliott Trudeau living that lifestyle and spending that kind of money.

Let us be fair about this. What is the symbolism of that kind of spending in the minds of Canadians? Canadians are not saying that those MPs are wonderful for taking a \$1,000 cut in pay because they are looking at the larger figures. We are not diverting their attention by making piddly cuts that actually mean nothing and are symbols of nothing. Canadians are looking at the bigger picture.

I well recall how Conservative Members used to count the number of people employed in Pierre Trudeau's office daily. Today, the Prime Minister's Office has undergone a geometric expansion. Perhaps he could provide an example to Canadian taxpayers by cutting back on the size of his office. It seems to me that Canadian taxpayers are looking at the way the leadership conducts itself and at the lifestyle here on the Hill. The Prime Minister's Office has expanded while the public looks on.

The other matter that comes to mind is the expenditure of \$9 million on the Forget Commission. That money is being spent to study the unemployment insurance program.

Mr. Blaikie: To figure out how to take away money from people who need it.

Mr. Rodriguez: This money is being spent largely because the Government did not have the courage to look at the program and make recommendations to the House with respect to changes it wanted. From where does this \$9 million come? The Government has not taken it from general operating revenues—

Mr. Blaikie: As it should have.

Mr. Rodriguez: It took it right out of the unemployment insurance fund. The Government has taken away funds contributed by employers and employees. That is the lousiest action that I have seen taken around here in a long, long time. Imagine if that had been done by the previous Government. The ceiling would have fallen into this place.

Mr. Nunziata: We wouldn't have done it.

Senate and House of Commons Act

Mr. Rodriguez: I know the Liberal Party's historic position on unemployment insurance. Do not let us get into that. We will have to look at how Mackenzie King handled unemployment insurance, brother, so, Liberal Members, do not think that you are squeaky clean on that matter.

I have never before seen behaviour like this, the taking of \$9 million for the Forget Commission from the unemployment insurance funds. The money is not even coming from the Government's contribution to the extended benefits. It is coming right out of the premiums contributed by working Canadians and employers. That is not fair.

Even more ridiculous is the fact that considering all the previews we have had of the Forget Commission Report, the Government will not touch its report with a 10-foot pole. The report will be put on a shelf because the Government is not interested in stirring up any hornets' nests two years before an election. The Government will simply sit on it and waste the \$9 million that has been spent from the unemployment insurance fund so that Mr. Claude Forget and his commission could travel around the country hearing briefs on the unemployment insurance program. What is the symbolism of that, Mr. Speaker?

There are 282 Members in the House of Commons. If each gives up \$1,000, that amounts to \$282,000. There are another 102 Members in the Senate. What is the symbolism of that? It is absolutely hollow. It is not even based—

Mr. Thacker: Put in an amendment increasing it to five.

Mr. Rodriguez: The Hon. Member from the other side said that I could amend it to five. I would certainly do that if I also had the power to cut out the large giveaways in which the Government has involved itself. I would do so if I had the power to say to the Prime Minister: "Thou shalt not send the transport plane with all your t.v. cameras and all the rest of it on trips and thou shalt leave your secret service butler and maid at home". If I had the power to say that, I would do so, but I am not interested in empty symbols like the offering up of a \$5,000, \$2,000 or \$1,000 cut in our pay.

Mr. Beatty: Are you going to vote against it?

Mr. Rodriguez: No, I am voting for it. All I am saying is that it is an empty symbol because it is not matched—

Mr. Beatty: Why did you just say you are opposed to it?

Mr. Rodriguez: It is not matched by more responsible behaviour in the spending of taxpayers' money.

The pay cuts would be meaningful if I had the power to fire Dalton Camp. The pay cuts would be meaningful if I had the power to tell the Prime Minister that the prison will not be built in Port Cartier and that he could get by with a much smaller staff. There are so many people on his staff that they are tripping over each other. They cannot even communicate with the press.