

changes in terms of percentage increase rather than on a more equitable basis. They are going to have to change their approach.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) ought to be unhappy about some of the changes proposed. I draw attention to the fact that members of the other place will receive the same increase in indemnity as is proposed for Members of the House of Commons. This is in direct conflict with the principle the minister put forward during the debate on the Labour (Standards) Code. He embodied in that legislation the concept of equal pay for equal work. By no stretch of the imagination could it be argued that the work involved in being a member of the other place compares with the work involved in being a member of this chamber.

This is poor legislation, and its introduction is untimely. It does not reflect the type of thinking needed to deal with the problems of society today or of tomorrow. Consequently, I intend to oppose the bill.

Mr. Douglas A. Hogarth (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I have had occasion to make some painful speeches before, but they have always been far more painful to my audiences than to me. Today, I find the situation reversed. This speech hurts me more than anyone who may be listening.

I am sorry I was not in the House last week to speak during the early part of this debate since it might appear I was waiting to see which way the political wind was blowing. That is not so. I might be said to find myself in a position similar to that in which Jack Benny found himself when confronted with a burglar carrying a gun. The burglar said: Your money or your life. And then there were five minutes of dead air on the radio.

Without commenting on the position other members or the government have taken in connection with this matter, I would like to go on record as saying that I cannot accept any increase in my salary as a Member of Parliament during the course of the present Parliament. As far as I am concerned, having made a commitment to my constituents long before the government decided its policy in respect of this issue, I am not in a position to accept the increment. To my mind, the only way in which I can dispose of the increase, should it be granted, would be to make a gift back to the Crown and pray to God it is not used in another attempt to refit the *Bona-venture*. I cannot see that it would be possible to accept the money, and then make donations to charity without deriving some benefit politically or personally from such a course. My position is that the commitment I made to my constituents prevents me from voting in favour of this bill. Accordingly, I shall abstain throughout. In conclusion, I can only say: Thanks, but no, and—ouch!

[Translation]

Mr. Henry Laflamme (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to say a few words about Bill C-242.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I should like to suggest to this House that the bill is untimely, even though many hon.

Senate and House of Commons Act

members certainly need a salary increase. In fact, the cost of living has increased for them as well as for others, and the expenses in their ridings are getting higher and higher. Consequently, the parliamentary allowance, decent as it is, is not sufficient to allow them to provide people with the services they need, and it is not very important if we take into account members' expenses, both in this House and in their ridings.

But, while I have a great deal of sympathy for those who need a salary increase—I do myself—I find it most unfortunate that 75 per cent of the citizens in rural and urban ridings have to tighten their belts so terribly, because they are far from receiving a suitable income.

Therefore, I must say I find it impossible to support this bill because there is still too much to do to balance the economy, and I believe that we have not taken the necessary steps to enable everyone to have a fair share of the goods and services available in our society. I blame hon. members for not having discharged their duties in order to reach that goal.

In such circumstances, where the economy is crumbling, where it has lost its way, I believe that we do not deserve a higher allowance.

• (3:10 p.m.)

A salary increase for us would be justified and the population would be only too happy to accept it had we given them a chance to live reasonably well.

Because of present conditions, we are only aware of inflation, poverty, indebtedness and tax increases. Some 45 per cent of our fellow citizens are living on social welfare; they are living at somebody else's expense. We are stealing from one class of people to provide for the needs of another. There is nothing there to justify whatever the members are now asking for.

If we had a prosperous economy, our population would also be prosperous and indeed we could be. We all can get along with the salary we are now being paid. We can spend less and do without a few luxuries, as other people do, if we have not enough money.

The people do not ask for promises, wishes, words, laws, heaps of white books, slogans or inquiries, but a just distribution of the magnificent annual production of Canada, according to the needs of all citizens. This is not what exists now.

Members of Parliament have not done their duty and their work, for 34 commissions have been created since 1957. One was set up to determine whether there exists any poverty in Canada. We know that poverty exists in Canada, but do we know what to do to eliminate it? Have we put an end to poverty? These inquiries were financed with the money that would have been used to increase parliamentary allowances. If we had done our work, we would not have given all these millions to investigators. The reports of all these commissions of inquiry gather dust on shelves and in the long run all this amounts to nothing since one cannot implement the good recommendations they contain. Some are good, others are bad. Several good ones should have been implemented. We knew beforehand what they were. We did