

Statute Law Amendment Act, 1970

Mr. Bigg: Mr. Speaker, I have always considered it a right and a privilege to answer the interjections of hon. members of the House. If my hon. friends will please confine their remarks to a positive contribution to this debate and to what they think Members of Parliament are worth, it will be better. I know what some members of Parliament are worth perfectly well. I know perfectly well what the price of treason should be, and I have heard a great deal of treason in my day.

As a civil servant I was not allowed to take the positive action which is usually necessary, but I know something about serving my country—very inadequately—and I know something about the fault of past governments in refusing to pay me personally for my service in the civil service, in the armed forces and in the mounted police. While I am at it, I also want to congratulate this administration for increasing some of those pensions, for example the mounted police pension. That pension has been increased 42 per cent in some cases. The only thing I can see wrong about it is that some of those pensions should have been increased at least 100 per cent—and if you pardon me for saying so, I think that includes mine.

It may be of some interest to you to know that for 23½ years service I get the magnificent sum of \$100 a month. Is that adequate in this day and age, with the cost of socialism mounting daily, the socialism which my hon. friends on the left, the salmon-coloured gentlemen, are so fond of bringing forward? Everything free; medicare, education—everything but the protection of this country. And who is going to pay for it? Who is going to reward them adequately when it is over?

• (3:10 p.m.)

This bill is far from adequate; there are still holes in it. There are members of the mounted police who are not allowed to include their war service for pension purposes. You never heard that mentioned until now. Why not? Is active service and service to your country less valuable to the people of Canada than good, safe highway patrols at home? Where was your lobby then? Isn't it fair to assume that the reason is that they do not want to reward people for service to their country, for supporting western freedom and democracy, but only the new democracy? What is new democracy? Why use the word "democracy" if you refuse to reward one for service to it? I should think the New Democratic Party would rise to a man and say that a man who

serves his country is just as entitled to a pension as one who stays home in a safe job. I am sorry I have to make such a plea to this House, to cut out hypocrisy and get down to the fact that hon. members should be properly paid.

Mr. Speaker, I have received a letter from the *Toronto Star* asking me to explain how much money I am out of pocket by keeping two homes. I cannot afford to keep two homes. I do not own two cars, because I cannot afford it. If my wife comes here to visit me, I should not have to speak to my landlady and beg her to allow us to use the upper room, back, on the third floor. Surely, like a corset salesman, I should be able to put my wife up in an ordinary first-rate hotel without having to explain to the *Toronto Star* how much money I am out of pocket.

If you have a visitor from your own community who is travelling Canada—the most vital, prosperous young nation on earth—should you have to apologize for not being able to afford to take them out to dinner or send them home in a taxi because you do not have two cars and cannot afford anything but streetcar fare? When you represent 100,000 square miles of this wonderful country, are you supposed to travel over it winter and summer, day and night, at your own expense? Some hon. members pretend to be ashamed to stand up and ask the people of Canada to pay their reasonable expenses to get around.

If you have a constituency where you do not need \$6,000 to get around, you had better take a constituency like Athabasca—as I did for ten years—and you will be \$4,000 out of pocket every year. I do not have to tell the *Toronto Star*, Mr. Speaker: I am telling the House of Commons, if they do not know it already. The hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Orange) covers 2½ million square miles, and you ask him to do it on \$6,000 a year. How, in the name of decency, can any citizen of Canada ask a man to represent 2½ million square miles of this country on a miserable \$6,000 a year?

Don't get me wrong. I did not come down here for the money. I did not even know how much the job paid when I came. But I know that the average Member of Parliament today does not have enough take-home pay to make it worth while to give up teaching public school to sit in this House for the number of days and hours that we spend here. I am willing to give the Auditor General or anybody else access to my books. He can publish them, and if he can show that there is any