

ers, our fellow citizens. This is the actual cost for Canadians, who are, like us, affected by inflation. That would be the cost for every Canadian citizen, for every voter, for every taxpayer, young and old, to maintain a democratic Parliament, where people can express themselves freely, where we can defend the interests of our fellow citizens without any partisanship, where we sometimes rub our ears, when we sometimes gain and sometimes lose. The maintenance of Parliament costs each citizen 29.9 cents a year. This is what it costs to maintain democracy in our country, and there is still some opposition to this, Mr. Speaker. There are four reporters now in the gallery. If we shout enough we will make them listen to us.

Mr. Speaker, comparatively to the previous costs, before the presentation of Bill C-44, it makes an increase of 6 cents per capita per annum. They say it is a shame to pay our public men properly whereas they pay \$20 to watch people who get \$120,000 a year play hockey, and find it quite natural. Mr. Speaker, our system of values is upside down. Some NDP members watch hockey, football or baseball matches and they find it natural. I imagine that if these people believe in democracy, if they believe in Parliament, they will believe that an increase of 6 cents a year per capita for the Canadian people is justified.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to stress another point. And therefore now three reporters left, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am being interrupted by Liberal and NDP members who probably will not have the guts of rising; it would be a good thing if they would keep quiet and let me speak.

Mr. Speaker, there are now only three reporters left; their number is decreasing.

Mr. Speaker, what I mean is I certainly did not pay them to come back.

An hon. Member: They are paid \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year.

Mr. Fortin: If I spoke English, would I be better understood?

An hon. Member: They would not understand any more.

Mr. Fortin: Well then, listen and be silent.

Mr. Speaker, what I am doing now is quite serious. When I had the means of having a constituency office at \$6,000 a year, plus \$2,400 for office expenses, I immediately opened one. I cut the secretary's salary in order to have two, so as to give better service to a 125-mile long by 80-mile wide area, comprising 57 parishes and 85,000 voters.

Mr. Speaker, listening to a CBC program the other night, I heard that members of Parliament will be voting themselves so much for salary, plus so much for expenses, plus \$8,400. This was creating the impression in the mind of the public that members of Parliament are going to put \$8,400 in their pockets.

Can you see, Mr. Speaker, what harm that can do, when people will have warped minds? This is why I am indicating I have a number of friends among newspapermen, but among those back home. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I

Members' Salaries

suggest this debate should show no partisanship. The debate should allow each member to express his views on the role of the member of Parliament and, by comparison, to conclude whether the proposed salaries are adequate, satisfactory or non-satisfactory, and to base his vote on such a conclusion, not on the fact it comes the Grits, the Tories, the NDP or the Social Credit party.

Personally, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe in the Senate, in the other House, to state things politely. I believe it is a non-entity. I believe it is a waste of money. I believe it has no significance, other than to allow the old political parties to organize their campaigns. I believe it is a means for political recognition, to which I shall never be entitled, and I have no desire for it anyway. Mr. Speaker, the other House—there is no irreverence in that, the truth will never be irreverent—the other House is useless. It gets on the nerves of Canadians generally, who are well-meaning citizens.

Let us take circumstances into account: let us give something to those who represent something and take what they have away from those who do not represent anything. Let us turn them back with the old age security pension, we have been thinking of them, they have all they need, they should leave us alone. Mr. Speaker, the Canadian people would appreciate such a gesture.

What is the Senate? It is a political reward. No use hiding it. Perhaps the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) hopes to get there. That is why he does not speak against the Senate but against members of parliament. That, I do not know. But Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Never.

Mr. Fortin: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is awake.

An hon. Member: He never sleeps.

Mr. Fortin: But, Mr. Speaker, they are five up there. Abolition of the Senate is an important issue. It is a shame. It is a little like the House of Lords in London where I have just come from. I have not been able to see them, they were not sitting, as it happens here.

An hon. Member: They were smoking cigars.

Mr. Fortin: You walk around after that, you look at it, and you wonder whether it is a mere gust of wind.

Actually they represent nothing. They are responsible to nobody. And they are paid the same salary as hon. members. That is a point on which my colleagues and I disagree about Bill C-44. Canadian institutions ought to be streamlined if we want our people to believe in them. That is one point.

The second one, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that members are allowed \$10,600 for their expenses. Let us forget the parties. I wish everybody would listen to what I am going to say. Several colleagues who are here—I do not pass judgment on them, but I would like them to understand what I am driving at—do not even spend a quarter of those \$10,600, either because they do not visit their constituency or because they do not listen, they do not provide the service asked by the people in their constituency or