

*Members' Salaries*

What are the parameters of a reasonable salary for a member of parliament? I thought the Beaupré committee set forth these parameters very well. I should like to read them to hon. members as I think we should all be familiar with them. This is a summary of what the Beaupré committee said in respect of six basic principles.

**An hon. Member:** What year?

**Mr. Gilbert:** This was in 1970, and it sets forth the basic guides or principles we should follow in respect of any pay increase. They are as follows:

(1) The future of Canada depends largely upon the ability of the public to secure the services of the best possible people as parliamentarians.

(2) Salaries should be high enough to attract persons of proven ability at a time when their earning potential may be at its highest.

(3) The position of the parliamentarian is essentially a full-time occupation; his working day in the House of Commons is usually much longer than the industrial average.

(4) The tenure of office of a member of the House of Commons is uncertain; 292 members have been defeated in the past 12 years.

(5) The nature of the position is becoming increasingly more time consuming, more complicated, more sensitive and requiring considerable moral courage.

(6) A member of parliament must meet many expenses that are not common to other salary earners and that are not deductible for income tax purposes as is the practice in many other countries.

I agree completely with those basic principles set forth by the Beaupré committee. We must have the best possible people as parliamentarians in this country, and they must be men of proven ability.

**Mrs. Campagnolo:** Men?

**Mr. Gilbert:** Men and women of proven ability. They have to consider this as a full-time job. There certainly is an uncertainty of tenure, and the job at times requires the moral courage to speak out in respect of certain problems. There is no doubt in my mind that there are certain extra expenditures involved in the job. After 10 years as a member of parliament in this House I have found this to be a very tough job, but a very exciting, satisfactory and worth-while job. I have found that it takes my full time, my full talent, my full dedication, and my full sacrifice. If I had known when I was first elected what I know now, I would have demanded a higher salary to cover my job, my work, my hours, and my family separation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

● (2100)

**Mr. Gilbert:** What worries me as a Canadian is the cookie jar mentality of so many groups in our society. I refer to the doctors, lawyers, dentists, teachers, businessmen, trade unionists and parliamentarians. These appear to be groups in our society which have their hands in the cookie jar trying to take out as much as possible. The result is that we do not have the type of economy of which we could be proud. This situation has created an inflationary condition which is hitting the fixed and low income groups. It reflects itself in unemployment, lack of housing, and an improper distribution of income.

Gone are the days when a man dedicated his talents and his time to serving his fellowmen. When I think of the

[Mr. Gilbert.]

school teachers, the social workers, the lawyers who have developed a cookie jar mentality in an attempt to protect themselves to the limit, I realize we are not heading in the right direction. I should like to see a redistribution of income which would be fair and reasonable in respect of all Canadians, and a deep sense of concern for our fellow Canadians.

Specifically in respect of the salary increase I feel it is fair and reasonable when compared with the incomes of business officers, professional people, and trade unionists. I asked in 1971 why it should be morally acceptable for people in business and the professions to obtain increases, yet be morally reprehensible for parliamentarians to demand the same treatment. I feel the same way today. I believe it is morally acceptable for parliamentarians to demand a fair and reasonable wage for the work they are doing. What I would demand myself, and what I would prefer, is a salary of about \$30,000 adjusted to the cost of living. I would want my expenses to be on a voucher basis for rent, meals, reasonable entertainment of constituents, and donations to worthy causes. The voucher system in respect of expenses was recommended by the Beaupré commission. I think we have made a serious mistake in not accepting that recommendation.

I think that because of our present expense account system we find ourselves in very difficult situations. If we had a decent salary of about \$30,000, as I mentioned earlier, I think we should be in the same position as salesmen and professional people who are held accountable for their expenses whether it be in respect of rent here in Ottawa, meals, entertainment, donations to worthy causes, or travel. I think this would eliminate a great deal of the criticism we receive.

I have set forth my ideas in respect of this bill. I said I would support it. I hope the bill will pass quickly so that we might direct our attention and our time to problems such as unemployment, inflation, housing, and a fair tax system, as well as a fair and reasonable distribution of income. If we were to do so I do not think the Canadian people would object for one moment to a generous salary being paid parliamentarians.

[Translation]

**Mr. Charles-Eugène Dionne (Kamouraska):** Madam Speaker, I know that at this point most hon. members would like to end the debate. However, I feel it quite in order for me to express my views on the present situation. We have long since noticed the results of the methods used to steer those negotiations, and that in various fields, with the generally recognized objective of improving the living conditions of those who are concerned in the negotiations. Everyone will admit that there are failures and even strikes.

By observing the situation seriously, it is easy to realize that most negotiators insist on obtaining increases in salaries from those who pay rather than exerting the required pressures on those who deprive them.

One readily recognizes amongst those, the people who control money and credit, who at will create upheavals in the whole economy of the country, forcing most of our political puppets to flounder about in both inflation and