

Thursday that the government was planning to restrict its increase in expenditures for the present year to 15 per cent, can the minister inform the House whether the government has changed its position on this matter both in terms of salaries it is considering for civil servants and in terms of other expenditures by the federal government for public construction and so on, in light of the fact that the government has today introduced a bill that is going to increase salaries of members of parliament by 50 per cent?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I think we will negotiate with the unions. I find the hon. member trying to play politics and I do not answer that kind of question.

INFLATION—POSSIBLE USE OF FIFTY PER CENT AS GUIDELINE IN SEEKING CONSENSUS OF VARIOUS GROUPS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, apparently members on both sides are a little sensitive on this issue. I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Can he inform the House if the proposed 50 per cent salary increase for members of parliament, not to mention cabinet ministers and other people, is the same formula which he or other cabinet members or their officials will use in discussions across the country with what the minister has described as a variety of interest groups. Is the 50 per cent going to be the figure used?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the hon. Minister is ready and anxious to answer the question. However, on previous occasions when there have been legislative measures before the House the Chair has quite properly taken the stand that if the matter is about to be considered by the House, surely the minister responsible for the legislation on behalf of the government will be compelled to attend either before a committee of the whole House or a standing committee of the House and questions of that sort ought to be put during the course of the legislative process. Questions in the question period ought not to concern themselves with items that are going to be before the House in a regular legislative way.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. With respect I share entirely your judgment about questions pertaining to bills that are just being introduced and are going to be debated later, of course. But my question has nothing to do with the bill that has been introduced. My question pertains to the 50 per cent guideline figure. I am asking the Minister of Finance if it is the government's position that a 50 per cent increase in salaries and wages, which is admittedly in the bill that is going to be discussed later but that is not the point of the question, is going to be the government's position in terms of its discussions with Canadians during the coming months which the minister has indicated are going to take place?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman refers to the fact that the last increase for members was three or three and a half years ago, and that this will be the only increase they would have for the life of this parliament, then the increase of 50 per cent if

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prorated over eight years would come to somewhere between 6 per cent and 6½ per cent per year.

SALARY INCREASE OF MEMBERS AS EXAMPLE OF LEADERSHIP—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, the minister of course did not answer my question, so my final supplementary is to the Prime Minister. Since the Minister of Finance said that the tax cuts in the budget were intended to increase disposable incomes of Canadians and I quote from *Hansard* of December 11 "particularly the lower income groups", and since those at the lowest end of the income scale save only the grand total of \$50 in taxes this year, does the Prime Minister regard the proposed annual salary increase for members of parliament of \$13,000, which is more than the total annual earnings of the majority of Canadians this year, as an example of effective leadership?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in so far as the question is addressed to myself, I would repeat what the House Leader said this morning at his press conference. This is an initiative which was put to the government by a group of members of all parties, including his own—

Some hon. Members: No, no!

Some hon. Members: Yes, yes!

Mr. Trudeau: I do want to say most emphatically that the government is prepared to take its responsibilities, out of respect for members of parliament, and we will not force this bill down the throats of members. We hope it corresponds to the general will of members, and we will see what the debate provides.

Mr. Broadbent: A question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister has just referred to a presentation made to the government House Leader by a group which he said was representative of all parties. I should like to make it perfectly clear that the New Democratic Party took no part in such a group—

An hon. Member: That is not true.

Mr. Broadbent: At no time was there any authorization by this party—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent:—for any member to take part, and if the Prime Minister checks with the government House Leader I think he will state that in clear terms. There was no such group in which this party was represented.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, on the same point. I believe that I could say the same for this cabinet. The group that met included some representatives of all parties.

Mr. Broadbent: No, it did not.

Mr. Trudeau: Certainly, the Liberals had no mandate from the government to negotiate anything. They were not