

*Senate and House of Commons Act***SOCIAL SECURITY****SUPPLYING OF INSURANCE NUMBERS OR FILES BY HEALTH AND WELFARE TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS OR AGENCIES**

Mr. Mac T. McCutcheon (Lambton-Kent): I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Health and Welfare. Does the minister's department supply social insurance numbers or files on individuals to other departments of government or Crown agencies, particularly the Solicitor General's department or any agency responsible to the Solicitor General?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): No, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe so. I will check on it, but I am sure we do not.

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IMMIGRATION ACT**INQUIRY AS TO INTRODUCTION OF AMENDMENTS**

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): My question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. In view of the delays with regard to interviews and appeals concerning immigrants, when will the minister be introducing the legislation to amend the Immigration Act and regulations thereto? Will it be before the end of June?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): I expect so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

● (3:00 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**SENATE AND HOUSE OF COMMONS ACT****AMENDMENTS RESPECTING MEMBERS' SESSIONAL AND EXPENSE ALLOWANCES, ETC.**

The House resumed, from Friday, April 30, consideration of the motion of Mr. MacEachen that Bill C-242, to amend the Senate and House of Commons Act, the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowance Act, and the act to make provisions for the retirement of members of the Senate, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization.

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, prior to the adjournment of this debate on Friday afternoon, I discussed a number of considerations involved in dealing with the question of remuneration for Members of Parliament. I related the considerations that I have to take into account as the member for Regina East in terms of the effect that this legislation will have on the people of Regina East, as well as the effect of other legislation which has been passed during the life of this Parliament.

I have in mind a letter I received from a farmer in my constituency enclosing a copy of a letter he had sent to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Lang)

[Mr. Mackasey.]

who is in charge of the Wheat Board. The farmer who wrote this letter has a small farm; he has a half-section of land, but it is highly productive land. He was affected by Operation Lift in 1970 and because of the small acreage he was cultivating, his operation did not leave much room for flexibility. He put 50 or 60 acres to wheat and seeded some coarse grains as well. He was fortunate enough to harvest a good crop, wheat yields as high as 40 bushels an acre. When it came to delivering the grain he found himself boxed in by the regulations set out in the Lift program; he encountered great difficulty in moving even minimal amounts of the grain he had produced in 1970. The minister in charge of the Wheat Board was good enough to send me a copy of the reply he had sent to this farmer. In effect, it said: We shall be introducing all sorts of programs shortly, and the stabilization plan will not hurt small farmers. The minister also indicated he did not believe Operation Lift had done this particular farmer any harm at all.

I am speaking, now, from memory but I believe this man had to live on a cash income of some \$3,400 during 1970, out of which he had to pay his operating expenses as well as buy food and clothing for his family. This is shameful. Government programs have adversely affected people like this man. For this and many other reasons I intend to oppose the bill. I would oppose it even if it were designed to take effect only after the next federal election. I say this because I believe a new approach is needed to this whole matter.

Some question has been raised whether or not members should accept this money. That is academic. I want to inform the House that I shall take steps to ensure that whatever extra amount may accrue to me will not result in personal financial gain for myself. This will apply, as far as I am concerned, for the balance of the life of this Parliament. I do not accept arguments that it is up to members to refuse to accept part of the funds available to them. Whatever decision is reached on this matter by the majority of the House of Commons, each member should be treated equally. I am certainly not willing to accept any proposition that my services are worth any less than those of other members; the people of Regina East will pass judgment on that in good time. My situation is not related to any contractual concept involving the life of this Parliament. I have said for some time that I do not think there should be any increase in the indemnity of members during the life of this Parliament. This statement was related to the present level of pay, the general situation of hon. members and the general nature of government policies as they have affected people in my constituency and throughout Canada.

I am unhappy about some of the references which have been made to the percentage increase involved in the changes proposed by the legislation before us. The effect is unfortunate because it tends to minimize the real significance of the changes. Thinking in terms of percentage increases has the effect of accentuating inequities in our society. For a man living on \$2,000 a year, 6 per cent is far different from 6 per cent to a man with an income of \$12,000 a year or more. A different approach is needed. Many companies and trade unions view such