

It has been said that the increase should be thought of within the total framework of the social and economic life of the country. I myself, along with many others, feel very uneasy with regard to the poverty and unemployment which prevails. I am most uneasy about the housing shortage. If I were to receive an undertaking that most of the professional people in Canada would roll back their salary increases to bring salaries into line with the present salary of a Member of Parliament, I would be the first to agree we should tackle the situation in that way. If our incomes are not sufficient to maintain a family in decency and respectability, are we not closing the door to men of modest means? Surely Parliament should not be the preserve of the rich. We should be able to exercise independence and not be worried about fear or favour. I am particularly concerned about younger people. I think it is necessary to attract younger people to this institution where they may reflect the views of youth today. I do not want to set up any barriers for younger married men with children, many of whom will be attending university.

Having spent seven years as a Member of Parliament representing a working man's constituency, and being on call every weekend I go home, I ask myself: how much am I charging people in my constituency? Someone better versed in arithmetic than myself has worked out that I have 75,000 constituents, and if I divide that number into \$18,000 it comes to less than 25 cents per person for the services I perform to the constituents in my riding. I am proud I am available to people in my riding. I cannot go home on weekends without being faced with constituents varying in number from six to 12 come to seek advice on problems concerning unemployment insurance, pensions, immigration and so on. I am sure that the constituents of my riding would think that at a mere cost of less than 25 cents this is good service for good representation.

• (2:40 p.m.)

I would be the first to recommend that our salary increases be referred to the Prices and Incomes Commission, but I have been told today that the chairman of that commission has approved of them. Had the salary increases been referred to the Prices and Incomes Commission, I think it may well have helped us from the standpoint of public acceptance. But they were not. Therefore, I would be prepared to accept any recommendation regarding a referral of the proposed increases to the commission for study.

I do not have to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Beaupré recommended a \$23,000 salary for the balance of this session and \$25,000 for next session, with accountable expenses. I have no hesitation in saying that I agree with Mr. Beaupré and that I do not feel uneasy about accepting \$18,000 when he recommended \$23,000.

The second area of criticism relates to the increase of non-taxable allowances from \$6,000 to \$8,000. I agree with the President of the Privy Council that this affords a discretion to hon. members regarding how that money should be spent. May I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that my colleague, the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin)

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operates a constituency clinic within his riding and performs a service for his constituents at great expense to himself.

Because I am a married man with a young family, one of whom is attending university, it is impossible for me out of my present salary to maintain a constituency clinic. Therefore, when I go home at weekends my home is my constituency clinic. I should like to think that I had sufficient money to operate the same type of constituency clinic as does the hon. member for Greenwood. He performs a service that is not within his own home and that certainly assists the people that he represents. I agree that there should be a discretion. I have heard it said by many members that they do not want a constituency clinic within their riding. I think it should depend on a member's own judgment whether such a clinic is operated or not.

With regard to retroactivity, which is the third criticism, as far as I am concerned this problem started in 1965. I saw my own income depreciating every year as the result of the rise in the cost of living, and so I have been directly affected, having suffered a decreasing income each year since 1965 to the present day. Probably I should say that I want retroactivity back to 1965, and I certainly see nothing wrong in making the increases retroactive to October of last year. I think this question was studied by Mr. Beaupré and others prior to October, and I think the increase should be backdated to the commencement of the session.

The fourth area relates to adjustment of increases, and at the present time there is no method of adjusting our indemnities. Probably this is one question with which we are having greatest difficulty. So many people present the problem: What should we do with regard to increasing members' salaries? What mechanism should we use? When you ask a person who raises that problem what we should do about it, he fails to come forth with the answer. Should we tie our indemnity to some category in the public service, or should we use an average of a series of categories? The whole problem is very difficult.

By the time we commence our next session, whether I am here or not, I hope that the government will recommend some specific category to which we should attach our salaries so that we can avoid a repetition every few years or so of introducing legislation to catch up on salary increases. I hope that the figure decided on will be a reasonable one, one that takes into account an evaluation of our backgrounds, our responsibilities, our performance and the amount of time spent.

At one time I thought it was possible to hold down two positions, my professional position as a lawyer and also that of an M.P. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that since 1965 when I came to this House I have not practised law to any extent. My partner does 99.5 per cent of our law work. Being a Member of Parliament is a full time job, which I think is the way it should be. This must be taken into account in determining what our salary should be. To place a member in the position where his salary is insufficient and he has to look to other areas to supplement it diverts his time and his energy from his duties in the House to the making of money to meet his ongoing expenses.