

*Judges Act and Financial Act*

general public whose opinion men who have a degree in law are called upon to judge. It is common knowledge that all judges have made a thorough study of all the laws in Canada as well as their application.

The amendment and the bill now before us provide for an increase both in the number of judges and in their remuneration.

Mr. Speaker, in the opinion of the public and of some judges with whom we have had an opportunity to converse from time to time, it is not so much the possibility of applying the law that is lacking as the possibility of preventing infractions.

Mr. Speaker, we have dealt with an act on juvenile delinquency, and will do so again. There also, judges are able to punish juvenile delinquents. The same situation prevails in all courts of justice. However, it would seem that ways and means of preventing crime and ensuring rehabilitation of former inmates are lacking and apparently there is not enough concern with this problem. In fact, as a thorough study of their cases reveals, they are not fully responsible for their misdeeds. They have been rejected one way or another by a society that does not openly give them the opportunity of adapting themselves to it. They are rejected through laws whose administration requires too much time or laws that do not now fit in the social climate, the development of our society.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, that the goal we must pursue is not so much to award judges higher salaries or appoint a greater number of them, although I believe they have to deal with too many cases, since the crime rate is rising continually. I do not object too much to the salary increase but I feel that selected candidates should be more competent. I don't think that salary increases will bring that about.

As for the increase in judges' salaries, some objective will have to be reached. Some high officials are paid as much as \$75,000 per year; soon increases will have to be granted to them as they are granted to all the others, but where will this end? Is the one receiving \$75,000 annually more competent than the one who gets \$25,000 or \$30,000? I do not think so.

So, considering that the government does not appear to be interested in anything else but the payment of higher salaries to those who are responsible for the administration of the law, we must oppose this amendment.

[English]

**Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, I feel that I cannot let this motion go without saying a few words in connection with the bill. It is an important bill but one which is moving in a direction which I think is leading us deeper and deeper into trouble in this country because it is widening the gap between the people who have a great deal of income and those who have very little. When we have in Canada a situation where about 20 per cent of the people have 40 per cent of the income and 7 per cent of the people at the bottom have about 20 per cent of the income, we find therein the cause of a great deal of our difficulty. To single out groups of people and give them higher incomes at this time, particularly groups in the upper echelons with a high income, is in my view to compound our difficulties. I said so on an

[Mr. Laprise.]

earlier occasion concerning Members of Parliament. I believe that the same thing is true for the judges.

I know that this is regarded as a highly treacherous thing to say because you are supposed to pay judges well to keep them on the straight and narrow track, and apparently they have to be paid more now than ever before so as to ensure that they do not go off the track under the pressure of circumstances. I just want to point out that if judges have to be paid to keep them on the straight and narrow, it might be a good idea, instead of raising judges salaries at this time, to consider using some money to help the people who make the clients for so many of the judges, people without incomes or with very low incomes. They are the ones whom I think we should be helping to keep down the need for so many judges whose numbers we are being asked to increase at this time.

• (3:10 p.m.)

I do not know why we have to have this large increase in the number of judges. I think we should be told a little more about the reasons for the increase. But I do think it is a great mistake to have people who are very comfortably insulated dealing with the lives of others who are not so well situated. Since the pressures on those not comfortably insulated are partly responsible for the crimes they commit, I think it is a bad thing to increase the disparity in income between those who have, namely, the judges, and those who appear before the judges.

From the standpoint of people on low incomes, this sort of measure will not raise the judiciary in their estimation. It will not give them more confidence in the judiciary. It will make them feel that if they infringe the law they will be brought before people who do not know what it is like to live under the tremendous pressure of tough economic circumstances.

I do not think we should be doing this sort of thing in this Parliament. If we feel it necessary to increase the income of people in higher brackets, people like judges, I say let us wait until we have provided the necessary increases to people in the lower income brackets. There is no need to enumerate the latter; we all know who they are. Why should they always have to take a back seat and wait and wait for necessary increases to meet the rise in the cost of living?

I wish to place myself on record as being opposed to this measure at this time. I believe it should wait until we have shown that we know where the real priorities are. We should see that all people have bread and butter before some people are given cake and champagne. This bill does not meet that situation. Consequently, I wish to register myself as opposing this increase in judges' salaries at this time.

**Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal):** Mr. Speaker, I usually admire the hon. lady from Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis), but her rhetoric on this occasion does not meet the issue. It is not a matter of priorities or that anyone, including the minister, is not anxious to look after those who comprise that large segment of our population who find themselves in difficult circumstances. After all, the state has an obligation to those who serve it. The judiciary is in this category. Members of the judiciary are servants of the state. Leaving aside any