

*Members' Salaries*

**Mr. Broadbent:** Indeed, if the behind the scenes consensus is accepted, it will have the effect of muffling everyone and shortening the debate. We will see, in terms of the response of other parties in the House to this issue, if that is the case.

In terms of the substance of the matter, I would first like to deal with the question of the necessity for an increase in the salaries of members of parliament. I, personally, will not be dealing with increases for cabinet ministers, the prime minister and members of the Senate. That issue will be dealt with by other people. I think the crucial matter here is the salary level of MPs, as that is what affects the vast majority of the people in this chamber. In doing that, I want to draw to the attention of the House the shift in the line of reasoning we have seen on the part of the government House leader in justifying the new proposal, as compared to the presentation of the former government House leader, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), when he introduced the wage increase in 1971 and 1972.

Let me note that the present House leader has put it on the line, in most bold and categorical terms, that the government uses as its standard just what the market will bear. The government House leader said, if I understood his argument correctly, that we must have wages at a sufficient level to induce persons—presumably at any level, in terms of the economy—to run and become members of parliament. The rates must, by implication, not be such that would turn off, from an income point of view, those who are in the top 1½ per cent of the hierarchy in this country.

This is an entirely different argument from the one presented by the Secretary of State for External Affairs when he was government House leader in 1971. Let me say at the outset that my colleagues and I accept as totally reasonable the twofold proposition presented to the House in April, 1971, by the then government House leader. At that time he said the government ought to ensure that members of parliament were provided for in two ways. He said they must have the necessary resources to discharge their tasks. By that he meant very important facilities like constituency offices, and a real capacity to fly back to their constituencies at regular intervals without assuming an undue personal burden; the right to communicate directly, through newsletters, with their constituents; the right to have research staffs and ample telephone privileges in order to communicate with the country. All of these the NDP endorses 100 per cent.

I give credit to the Liberal government for the things it has done in this regard in the past few years. In my judgment, every cent spent in that direction is a cent from which the taxpayer benefits substantially. Anything that improves the performance of members of parliament is something this party will support. There is no question but that the spending in recent years in this area has been good.

That was the first task referred to by the government House leader in 1971. He then said that the salary level must be sufficient for MPs to maintain a decent and reasonable standard of living for themselves and their families. That is to be found in *Hansard* for April 29, 1971, at page 5352. I hope hon. members will note the distinction

[Mr. Broadbent.]

between what was said at that time and what the present government House leader said when presenting the bill for second reading this afternoon. As I said a moment ago, my colleagues and I agree completely with this twofold requirement.

● (1650)

I might say that he added a rather negative consideration which should be kept in mind by all legislative bodies in a democracy. I could not put it more eloquently than he did, and I could not agree with him more substantially on any matter than I do on this. He said that the level of remuneration must draw a line between what is necessary and adequate compensation for those without private income, while at the same time rejecting the principle that parliament should be made attractive purely as a source of income. I could not agree with him more. But let us apply these tests or criteria in the present circumstances.

We have these two positive points; then we have the negative. The first point to be made is that if we look at the facilities required by a member of parliament to fulfil the joint obligations to his constituents on the one hand, and to the people of Canada on the other, the situation has improved immensely: it has improved, at public expense, since 1971. First of all, what was always provided out of a member of parliament's salary, if he was doing his job, up to and including 1971 is now being paid through the government by the people of Canada.

We might look at the facilities that I will list, most of which have been introduced or substantially improved since 1971. First, there are the constituency newsletters; second, there are the constituency offices; third, the constituency secretaries; fourth, the weekly flight and/or car expenses; fifth, the caucus research staffs; sixth, expanded office facilities in Ottawa. I repeat that each and every one of these is a justifiable government expenditure; there is no argument about that.

**Mr. Lalonde:** Then why did you vote against it?

**Mr. Broadbent:** The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) asks why we voted against it. We did not. If he will check the record he will see that these facilities were not presented with the measure related to the salaries of members of parliament, but were brought in separately and most of them were supported by this party. The point I am making is that almost all these improvements have been introduced since 1971, or at least have been substantially improved since that period. In none of these respects has the personal disposable income of a member of parliament been increased. No member from any party on either side of the House has gained in any way from the improvements in these facilities. They have enabled a member to do a better job, and as such they have been accepted widely in the House and in this country.

However, it is also important to note that when we consider the amount of income required by members of parliament, the amount must decline in proportion to the level of facilities provided elsewhere at public expense. We cannot have it both ways and say on the one hand that we need a fantastically high income and facilities to service our constituents and to provide travel which in the