

Senate and House of Commons Act

the plural. The leader of this party, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), can and will speak for himself. I trust the hon. member heard me make a declaration this morning similar to that made by others, namely that I will see to it that so far as I am concerned there will be no personal gain from this increase.

Mr. Goode: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member is speaking to the question of privilege—

Mr. Goode: On a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I suggest there is no question of privilege. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has clarified the point. I do not think it constitutes a question of privilege. Perhaps at this point I should recognize the next speaker.

Mr. Goode: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker; I must apologize to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I listened to his speech today, but I did not get that impression from it. Perhaps the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) would like to make a similar declaration.

Mr. Douglas: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker. If I want to make a declaration, I will make it in the course of the debate, not in answer to a half-baked question.

Mr. Goode: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Broadview.

• (2:30 p.m.)

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the legislation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gilbert: Thus, I have no difficulty in answering the question posed earlier by the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond (Mr. Goode). I was impressed by the tone which was set for the debate by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) yesterday when he attempted to deal with a very difficult subject in an objective way. I certainly agree with his assessment of the problem and the solution which is proposed. I also admire the courage of others who have spoken in the debate, either in favour of the proposed increases or against them. I think it is fair to say that the high tone set forth by the President of the Privy Council has been carried on throughout the discussion.

This question of an increase in salary and expense allowance has been a gnawing one for hon. members, more especially for me since I entered the House in 1965. I guess this is because of the increase in the cost of living, the heavy responsibilities of a Member of Parliament and the tremendous amount of time a member has to spend in the performance of his duties. Let me say at once that I respect the views of my hon. friends in this party, even though I do not agree with some of them. I am sure they also respect my views on this matter. There

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

is a diversity of thinking within our party, probably due to differences in age, professional skills, philosophical approaches and so on. There is one thing I can say—and I think this is in line with the attitude taken by some of my hon. friends who have already spoken: we are all in agreement with the principle that some increase is justifiable. It may be that the main criticism is related to the size of the increase proposed.

I ask myself, and I ask members generally: Just what is a fair salary for the performance of our duties? I am sure we do not wish to make this into a political matter. When I look at the salaries of some of the public officials, I see that deputy ministers receive between \$40,000 and \$42,000. I notice that judges of the Supreme Court make \$35,000 and that judges of County Courts will be making \$25,000 shortly. Salaries of high school principals range from \$16,000 to \$20,000. Administrative and staff positions command a salary range, certainly in the City of Toronto, upwards of \$30,000, and I ask myself: why are we not criticizing the size of the salaries received by these public officials? If I turn to private industry and private life, I notice that lawyers, doctors, dentists and business executives, with experience of ten years or more, are in a salary range upwards of \$30,000.

There has been much criticism with regard to the self-imposed nature of the increase which Members of Parliament are contemplating at this time. May I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that doctors, lawyers and many business executives use the same technique with regard to increases. They're not accountable to any price review board. When they want an increase they impose it, and we have seen this happen in the medical profession, in the legal profession and in the business area.

Since the salary ranges of officials in public and private life are of the order I have mentioned, I would ask: is not the responsibility of a Member of Parliament as great as, if not greater than, some of those in the categories to which I have referred? Is not the time we spend in performing our duties as long as the time spent by them in the performance of theirs, if not longer? Why is it considered morally acceptable for those in private industry to obtain increases but almost morally reprehensible for parliamentarians to do so? Members of Parliament come from all walks of life and perform services for all members of the community. The only reason we feel so hesitant to increase our salaries, as far as I can see, is that in the past there was a history of parsons, social workers and teachers performing services to the community in circumstances in which it was thought somewhat improper that the question of salary should be considered in respect of them. I think the same is true with regard to Parliaments in the past. If we were to make a list of the men who have come to Parliament in the last hundred years, we would find that most of them belonged to upper income groups and did not encounter the problems many of us face today. I might add that the parsons, the social workers and the schoolteachers have long upgraded their salaries and I, for one, am delighted to see this. I do not believe a person should suffer financially because he is making a contribution to the community.