

*Members' Salaries*

days were lost in Canada, three and a half million more than in 1973. We have the highest labour strike situation of any country in the world with the exception of Italy.

Wage demands go up and up. I can understand that as living costs go up. On the other hand there are corporations that are making unconscionable profits. There is open season on the Canadian consumer. The Combines Investigation Act is only touched. There has been no action by this government that was going to wrestle the problem.

This is supposed to benefit the private members. Most of them are having difficulty here with their families. I then ask why this bill provides the most terrific increases for the Prime Minister and the ministers of the Crown. This is their own legislation which they have introduced. It is a bill for which the government is responsible.

Surely ministers of the Crown have a solicitude for the average Canadian. Charity begins at home. Why, in addition to the regular increase in indemnities, have they added an extra \$15,000 a year for themselves? Why that? Is that to benefit the Canadian people? Is it because the various ministers who constitute this government are irreplaceable at present rates? I have only to ask the question to get the reply.

Is this participatory democracy? It certainly is participation in a grab by the ministers, from the Prime Minister on down. I can just see them sitting there saying, "If we can get some kind of agreement with the opposition, find out what they think, we can bring it in and slide in an extra allowance for ourselves."

I think this is a wonderful government. I think any government is wonderful that has members connected with some departments for which they are totally unqualified, and I would have no difficulty in filling those names in. They will receive \$15,000 or more a year in addition to the increased indemnity.

I was away when this legislation was brought in, but I made my position very clear the next day. The minister who is responsible smiles. I do not blame him. I can just see his eyes brightening as he sees this additional amount which is retroactive to July 8. What an example for the Canadian people. There was no inflation. There is now. The government said it would wrestle it, but nothing whatsoever has been done to bring about any restoration of a reasonable price in our country.

What about the Conservative party? As a Conservative I find it hard to understand. This party raised the standard all over the country, "Inflation is destroying us." The leader was right. A few months later this party, with the exception of a few I am going to refer to, joined together with the government and other members in the House to bring about a situation that can only add to the fires of inflation.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

Everywhere across this country the working man will say, "You complain when we ask for a 35, 40 or 50 per cent increase. What about the parliament of Canada, the custodian of the Canadian conscience?" What about it? How they rushed in order to secure the benefits and emoluments of a vast increase in indemnity!

I mentioned the freeze policy a moment ago. This salaries' policy means that gasoline will be added to the fires of inflation everywhere in this nation, for what parliament does, why should labour be denied? I simply ask it.

Is the parliament of Canada to become the pacesetter of salaries? The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Chrétien), who has done very well in his position, said the other day that the government must not become the pacesetter of salaries. He said Canada will not go bankrupt as a result of pay raises for civil servants, but the government must avoid becoming a pacesetter for industry. To me, it is beyond anything that this party would permit itself to support. It will simply add to the fires of inflation everywhere in the nation.

This legislation is inflationary. It is also imitatory. Unlike other Prime Ministers who preceded me, and I am not speaking of them in any disrespectful way, I have no wealth. When I pass away, no part ever having been removed and no assistance having been given at any time to me by any fund, it will amount to about 12 per cent of the lowest of the amounts of the last three Prime Ministers.

Provision was made that former Prime Ministers should be entitled to a pension. That was brought in by the Pearson government. Then there was a little addendum. Every other country in the world said a pension is paid no matter where its outgoing Prime Minister goes. In Canada provision was made that it should not be paid so long as a person remained in politics or in public life. Isn't that a strange situation?

Members of parliament are in a secondary position with regard to the Order of Canada. I will never have that order, so I am not speaking as one who will be included. The only people who are excluded, with the exception of a very limited number, are members of parliament. They do not have that practice in the United Kingdom. Why do they have it here? Civil servants have said that those who contribute to their country in the House of Commons or the Senate shall be denied any award. There is discrimination on every hand.

I followed the debates here. I built up great admiration for many who sit in opposition. I know it may be unusual to say so, but I am thinking of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). He came to parliament in 1942, I think it was in December. After the election of 1958 there was a hiatus—he was out for a period of almost five years. The stand he has taken in this House on this issue will live for a very long while.