

Salaries Act

pretty well for themselves in getting a cabinet position at the salary as it was at that time.

The Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Howe) said that the remuneration is not out of line with that paid in private enterprise. I do not think the two can be compared at all. I am quite willing to admit right now that when the Acting Prime Minister came into this parliament and took a position in the cabinet, he could have made much more than he got here. I do not want him to think there is anything in the nature of flattery in what I am saying or that it is my purpose to flatter. However, I feel this country owes him a great deal because he has spent himself for this country since he became a member of the cabinet in 1935. I am sure he did not seek the position because of the salary that went with the office. I am quite willing to admit that. He will not work any harder because of this increase, because he cannot work any harder.

There are other members of the cabinet—a person gets on rather dangerous ground when he singles out an individual—who have spent themselves and given their lives to the welfare of this country. However, to say that, by and large, every member who comes into the cabinet could earn the salary now proposed is just sheer nonsense. I can imagine what sort of a figure some of them would make if they were separated from their efficient deputy ministers and staffs. When you mention an increase such as we are now considering to the average Joe, as the saying is, he just cannot understand it. He sees a \$9,000 increase on top of all the fringe benefits that a member of parliament now receives. I was going over some of the fringe benefits in my mind the other day, but for the good of the country perhaps I should not mention them. It might create unrest. They are there, however, and members of the press gallery enlarge upon them every now and then.

I should like to tell the house and the government that they are making a terrible mistake at this time. As someone has said, for the first three days of this week we were discussing the unemployment situation in this country. There are men and women who do not know where to turn; hundreds of thousands of them. Any minister who does not know that only has to read the newspapers from his home town. The ministers from Vancouver could read the newspapers from that city and find out about the condition of the old age pensioners, persons on social assistance and those who are unemployed. I say we should come to our senses and maintain the faith of the people of this

[Mr. MacInnis.]

country in our representative institutions. I am quite sure we are doing much harm at the present time.

Mr. A. M. Nicholson (Mackenzie): In rising to oppose this measure, I feel that the present members of the cabinet deserve some sympathy. I feel that they are going to receive public criticism which is not entirely deserved. I do not share the opinions expressed by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew), who suggested that probably the Australian policy of a flat sum which the Prime Minister could distribute as he might see fit would be a good practice. I am afraid I cannot go along with the views expressed by a number of speakers who have suggested that there are some weak members in the cabinet. I want to say that I have had a very happy association with all the members of the cabinet. What I am about to say is not prompted by any grievance with any department.

I am afraid I cannot agree entirely with the member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. MacInnis) because I think that most cabinet ministers, if they had worked as hard in the business world as they have worked here, would probably have collected more money than they are ever likely to receive here. Again, I am speaking only for myself. I have expressed this view before. I feel that the highest salary in the country should go to the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent). Next to the Prime Minister, I think that the members of the cabinet and His Honour the Speaker deserve to be mentioned.

I have a great deal of sympathy for His Honour the Speaker who is not able to leave this chamber and take a walk when the proceedings become boring. The Speaker and his deputy really have to take a lot of punishment in the course of a parliament. I feel there should be adequate compensation for that. I want to make it clear that I am not suggesting we bring the salaries of the Prime Minister or the members of the cabinet to the top in Canada. I think some day we should accept the principle that the highest income a nation can give should go to the one who has the highest office the people can give. Before we can reach that stage, however, we have to make some radical changes in our way of doing things.

I believe we should ask ourselves, what is an income for? In answer, we might say it is to provide security and security involves an income that will enable us to look after sickness when it comes to the family and provide for our old age. Canada, with all her resources, should be able to provide those things for all her people. If we can provide for sickness for all our people and