

*Senate and House of Commons Act*

Canadian government is, it would not go very far. Were that industry to pay as much interest to financiers as the largest industry in Canada does, I am afraid it could not continue to produce and sell at a profitable price. Yet that is the situation of the largest industry in Canada. The Canadian Parliament must bear that monumental debt and pay \$2 billion in interest this year. Yet, the administrators of that large industry are asking, in addition, that their allowances and expenses be increased.

When the last increase was voted in 1963, the main argument of the right hon. Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson was that in order to attract men of high caliber as prospective members of Parliament it was necessary to offer them a decent salary. I agree, but that same reason was given by the present Prime Minister, at least at a press conference following the introduction of the bill before us.

But did many men of value get closer to the present Liberal Party? I have no doubt that men of worth became interested in the Liberal party as in any other political party. However, have those talented men been fully efficient? Have they had the opportunity to let their constituents or the Canadian people benefit by their ability? This answer is quite simple. No. The system does not enable them to do so.

When we consider the actions of our government since 1963, we can ask ourselves if the laws enacted show the merits of the elected representatives. Do they represent what the people had asked from their representatives or from the government?

The repeal of death penalty for qualified murder, the legislation on divorce and homosexuality the liberalization and inflation, were those measures asked to the representatives of the people? Do we deserve, in their opinion, this raise?

I have here a recently established newspaper run by one of the former colleagues of my hon. friends opposite, the Hon. Yvon Dupuis. This week, he asks the following question:

Are our Members of Parliament worth \$30,000 a year?

According to Mr. Dupuis, the remuneration of \$26,000, of which \$8,000 are tax-free, is equivalent to a salary of \$30,000 in other fields of the Canadian industry.

Do they deserve such a salary?

If each citizen asks himself the following question: "Is my MP worth \$30,000 a year?", he may draw favourable or unfavourable conclusions according to the type of MP who represents his constituency in the Commons. Indeed, there are at least two kinds of MPs who have a different way of exercising their mandate. For instance, certain representatives of the people owe their election to the mere fact that they were candidates of the best party running or under the banner of the best leader—

Mr. Dupuis should have added "especially of the party with the biggest slush fund." There, he would have been on more familiar grounds.

He went on to say:

—our parliamentary system allows this kind of phenomenon even though this is basically unacceptable.

[Mr. Laprise.]

Then there are the members who were elected above all on the strength of their individual ability or of the prestige they enjoy in their communities. It is therefore easy to say that the former are overpaid while the latter deserve the greatest consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the best answer to that question is to be found in that paragraph. Many members have succeeded in getting elected only because they had the support of their party and they have spent some thirty years here without once opening their mouths. They are like fish. Do those members deserve a raise in salary such as the one now proposed?

• (8:30 p.m.)

On the other hand, there are many others in all parties who work hard for their constituents. Some give up 70 to 80 hours per week to the service of their electors. Those deserve a decent salary, at least as much as in the building trades in the large cities such as Montreal and Toronto.

Mr. Dupuis also speaks about the noodles, and I quote:

The late André Laurendeau and Gérard Pelletier (former newspaperman and editor of *La Presse*) were fond of saying that many of our members, especially in Ottawa, were noodles.

It is easy to describe the member who is a noodle. He is the one who never sees his electors, who does not take part in debates in the House, who does not belong to any committee, who is never seen anywhere during his four-year term and who only comes back before his electors once every four years to ask for re-election on behalf of this great leader or that great party.

Mr. Speaker, I have often heard a Liberal member of Montreal say that the best way to get elected is to be known as little as possible by the electors. Today this hon. member holds a certain post in the public service. He is now quite prosperous. And God knows that such members are numerous enough to be talked about.

We rely on our electors to find these ghost members who are not doing much in Ottawa. Of course, \$30,000 a year is much too much for them. Is it not paying rather a lot per pound for noodles?

While reading an article in a newspaper called *Défi*, a newspaper of the people for the people, written by the people, where everybody may express freely his opinions, I remembered that in the index of House of Commons Debates for the current session, from October 8, 1970 to March 11, 1971, that is 94 sessional days, there were 13 Liberal members who had not yet made any comment. On the other hand, there were 12 who had made comments only once, 12 who had made comments twice, and nine who had made comments three times. It is a rather poor record!

Mr. Speaker, I would rather not name these hon. members. I think it would be deemed unparliamentary. At least, objections would be raised somewhere, I think. If it is agreeable to the House, I am ready to table the list which could be published as an appendix to *Hansard*.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. member should know that, under Standing Orders, it is forbidden to table such a document. I will suggest to him that this is quite elementary.