

ances that were somewhat higher than those in the measure before us. You will recall the great dispute about the 50 per cent. Owing to serious misunderstandings in some quarters as to the true nature of the increase, in that it was to cover a period of eight years, representing in fact an increase well within all the established guidelines, parliamentarians have evolved a different method of remuneration, which is to be found in this bill. The different method adopted in the present bill calls for an increase as of the beginning of this Parliament of 33½ per cent above the prevailing indemnities and allowances. Again, this increase is several percentage points lower than the increase in the industrial composite index, from the effective date of the last adjustment until the beginning of this Parliament. Thereafter, beginning in 1976, the bill calls for an annual adjustment in indemnities and allowances in accordance with the percentage change in the industrial composite index between the two preceding years, subject, however, to a maximum increase in any year of 7 per cent.

I have described the proposal to have a commission to review the entire range of indemnities at the commencement of the next Parliament.

This measure, in its present form, represents an equitable solution, and a solution which is the result of a great deal of discussion. It is a solution as satisfactory as we are likely to get at the present time. It is a measure which will provide at least some relief for members of Parliament, many of whom are experiencing great economic difficulties.

Honourable senators, I commend this measure to you, and I hope you will give it your support.

**Hon. Edward M. Lawson:** Honourable senators, I should like to make a few comments in support of this legislation, and to make a few constructive criticisms.

I recall participating in a similar debate in 1970 in this chamber, and offering the advice to the government that they should find a different method of dealing with wage increases for members of both houses and members of the judiciary. The government obviously was not impressed by that advice, because they totally rejected it, and I have the scars to prove it. I think perhaps they should have the minister responsible for introducing the bill in the other chamber spend a short semester in some of the union halls, or in the boardrooms with management, learning how to negotiate.

I wrote an article on this subject, because I was troubled somewhat by a series of editorials that I read which said things like, "too sordid for belief," and "the increase was too outrageous to be believed." They talked about the venality of politicians; they accused us of being wickedly irresponsible, and said that it was a self-seeking raid on the treasury.

In reading all of the articles across the country that I have had the opportunity to see, I found, no matter how I searched, that I could not find one expressing the other point of view. I therefore wrote my article, and I called up the publishers of that great newspaper, the *Vancouver Sun*, and said, "Perhaps, as a refreshing experience for your newspaper, you will print the other side of the argument." To my surprise, they agreed. It was suggested by some of the newspaper types that I wrote the article

out of a sense of guilt, and that is true. I did it out of a sense of guilt but not, as they suspected, a sense of guilt arising from a feeling that we were receiving too much, but a sense of guilt that as a union representative I was responsible each week of the year for negotiating large increases for many sections of society while idly watching people on fixed incomes, such as judges, and members of the other house and of this house, not receiving any increase. It was indeed a sense of guilt.

I was accused of being opposed to senior citizens and their rights by supporting the legislation. Let me say at the outset, however, and set the record straight, that that was a vicious attack by some of the newspapers and their columnists, because I said that the increases for senior citizens were not relevant to this debate. So that there is no misunderstanding, let me say that I am prepared, as at least one member of this house, to support a 50 per cent increase to senior citizens. I am prepared to take off the top of the gross national product whatever is necessary to give senior citizens a decent standard of living. But that still has nothing whatever to do with the issue we are talking about in this legislation.

I did some research among material that was readily available to me, since I was responsible in many ways for the increases I am about to mention, and took some categories of workers at random. I took, for example, the woodworkers, because they represent 50 per cent of the economy of British Columbia. In a four-year period they had not received a 50 per cent increase; they had only received 49.8 per cent, and they are back in negotiations now.

I took plumbers, to see what they had done. In the five-year period, including 1975, they received 56.8 per cent.

I took teachers, because I did not want to single out the trades for comment. Teachers received 63.9 per cent, including a very handsome 16.5 per cent for the year 1975.

I took the labourers—and it was suggested to me that that was a fair comparison with us—and noted that they had received 88.7 per cent, which included 15.2 per cent for 1975.

Of course, the cause of all these nasty and vicious editorials are the journalists and newsmen. I thought, "Let us see what they have done." I recall vividly that in the previous nine years, when we received an increase of 50 per cent, they received 68 per cent. On this occasion, for the years 1971 to 1975 inclusive, they received an increase of only 70.4 per cent, and are presently enjoying, in the year 1975, a very handsome increase of 17.5 per cent. I do not begrudge newsmen, or all these other classifications of people, those kinds of increases.

It should also be pointed out, however, that in each of those years they received retroactive pay. They received a benefit in each year, and that applies to any classification you want to name. The newsmen already have in their hip pockets a cash increase of \$12,678. The labourers have already received the benefit of \$15,977; the plumbers have only received \$10,216; teachers have only received \$11,511. This is money they receive each year to offset inflation and the high cost of living. This is money they have had in their pockets to invest or spend, or otherwise benefit from.