

*Members Salaries*

● (1530)

[Translation]

**THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF COMMONS ACT, THE SALARIES ACT AND THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES ACT****AMENDMENTS RESPECTING SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES**

The House resumed, from Thursday, December 19, 1974, consideration of the motion of Mr. Sharp that Bill C-44, to amend the Senate and House of Commons Act, the Salaries Act and the Parliamentary Secretaries Act, be read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-44 was the subject of numerous comments in the newspapers and other media throughout the country. It is unfortunate to find that in 1975 we are still obliged to introduce a bill forcing us to vote ourselves a raise in members' salaries.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that future increments for members of the Commons and the Senate be decided by an independent board. I said earlier that the bill raised many comments, rebukes and criticisms. However, reasonable people supported the raise in principle, since members of Parliament are going through an inflation period just as are all other Canadian taxpayers.

When this bill was first introduced in 1974, my colleague for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) said to the House, in a masterful speech, why he supported an increase in parliamentary salaries. On December 19, he reminded the press, the journalists who are here in the press gallery, what ridiculous concept they have of the serious role of federal members in this House.

Mr. Speaker, that is so true that I have never seen the press protest so vehemently and scathingly against an increase in the MPs' salaries, while they agree with salary increases right and left to just about anybody. But an increase to the MPs, that makes no sense!

For instance, one evening, I heard my friend Jean-Marc Poliquin tell us over the French CBC television network and in all seriousness: "The members of parliament gave (*se taper*) themselves a raise here, gave themselves another raise there, then gave themselves something extra for expenses." According to Jean-Marc Poliquin, of the CBC's French network, we were a gang of "tapés".

**An hon. Member:** "Tapettes" (gays)?

**Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Not "tapettes". I do not think he said "tapettes" but "tapés". The following evening, it was Mr. Larin's turn, again on CBC!

**An hon. Member:** He is being paid by the government!

**Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue):** He is of course a state employee. Well, these people earn as much as any federal MP—

**An hon. Member:** More!

**Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Out of public funds! We are those who vote their pay increases in the budget

[Mr. Speaker.]

and permit them to get adequate pay cheques. That is quite normal in their cases, but in the cases of hon. members, it is a shame!

Mr. Speaker, we can establish well-founded parallels. When CBC employees go on strike at the expense of Canadian taxpayers to obtain pay raises, do we hear them say anything against strikes? Of course not! The poor chaps need more to make ends meet and live a decent living. However, they do not find anything vile enough to say against hon. members, they ridicule them as much as they possibly can, as my colleague from Lotbinière was saying on December 19, 1974.

The day after the speech of the hon. member for Lotbinière, no one reported one word of what that member had said in the House.

I personally made a survey in my riding, as some of my colleagues did in their own, asking flatly to the electors what they thought about it. For instance, in the riding of Villeneuve, 571 of the 600 survey-letters received favoured a rise in members' salaries, while only 20 were opposed to it. Those are on the side of the press, the others on the side of common sense.

Mr. Speaker, the union leaders, Pépin, Laberge, Charbonneau and—

**An hon. Member:** \$50,000 a year!

**Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue):** —the others, the thieves of the James Bay, who earn salaries higher than any member's salary.

● (1540)

Do you hear the reports on television or do you read them in the newspapers? Do they object against Pépin, Laberge, Charbonneau, Chartrand and all their confederates, Mr. Speaker, do they denounce them? Such individuals as Pépin, Laberge, Charbonneau and Chartrand are better paid than the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau)!

The Quebec provincial members also granted themselves a raise. They were criticized a day or two, but you no longer hear about it today. Those people are better paid than any federal member! The Quebec premier draws a higher salary than the Prime Minister of Canada yet with fewer responsibilities. What are the responsibilities of the union leaders? Pépin and Laberge say: We represent 300,000 workers! It is incredible how those individuals entirely devote themselves to the working class. We, the federal members, are responsible for 22 million Canadians and not merely 300,000! So it is scandalous for members of Parliament to be paid! That there are members who do not deserve an increase, I agree, just like there are journalists who would not deserve to be journalists. Yet they still are. Mr. Speaker, let us compare other people with responsibilities. I read recently in the airline companies' expenditure budgets that B-747, DC-9 or DC-8 pilots are being paid \$50,000 to \$75,000 a year, and we agree that those people deserve their salaries.

Mr. Speaker, why do we accept to pay those people such large, substantial salaries? Because we recognize that they are responsible for 300 or 200 passengers behind them, that they pilot aircraft all across the world. Mr. Speaker, we