

sary to introduce, every five or ten years, an increase which never fails to draw heavy criticism. Its percentage might be determined in advance, or established according to the increase in the cost of living. Criticism would thus be avoided and everybody, those who govern and those who are governed, would know in advance what they may expect.

For these reasons, my intention is to vote against this legislation. To conclude my remarks, I will add that I am struck by the difference between standards governing those who enjoy a privileged position and the rest of the people.

[English]

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I think that the indecent haste with which this legislation is being proceeded with in the House of Commons will be noted by people in all parts of Canada. In the last couple of days the House has tried to proceed with this measure in an atmosphere of indecent haste. I have not seen the government move as fast this session on any piece of legislation as it is moving on this bill.

• (3:30 p.m.)

Let us see what took place this week. First, on Monday the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) announced in the House that this measure was the government's proposal. Also, no ice of intention to introduce the bill was placed on the order paper. At the earliest opportunity provided in the rules, on Wednesday the bill was given first reading. Then the bill had to stay on the order paper for one day until second reading could be proceeded with on Thursday. On Thursday the bill was called for second reading. I only received a copy of the bill on my desk on Thursday morning. Since then all sorts of attempts have been made to wind up this debate in one day or in two days in an effort to get the bill out of the way as rapidly as possible. There is much evidence to suggest that this has been attempted in the House during the last couple of days.

I suggest that the Canadian people will wonder, rightly so, why it has taken us so long to deal with the many problems involving unemployment, the people on fixed incomes, the farmers of this country, and so on, whereas the House has shown such an amazing burst of speed in dealing with this legislation which is in the interests of Members of Parliament.

An hon. Member: We have been discussing this question for two years.

Mr. Burton: This is the first occasion on which it has been discussed on the floor of the House. If the hon. member wishes to make comments, I suggest that he do so from his own seat and not from the front bench seat in which he is now sitting. He does not have a position on the treasury benches yet, even though he may imagine himself in such a role in the future.

Debating this issue is, of course, difficult. Intemperate remarks are bound to be made by hon. members; some have been made already. I think all hon. members of the House have made remarks which they have later regret-

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ted in dealing with this issue. They made them in the heat of the moment when feelings were running high. On the other hand, it is fair to say—I think this needs to be said—that many intemperate remarks are made by the public with respect to the remuneration of Members of Parliament. There is a lack of awareness of the needs of members and their situation and hon. members often become the whipping-post or scapegoat when the public feels unhappy about a certain matter. Of course, this is easy to understand. It is to be regretted that the government did not proceed to deal with this matter in another way.

I think the general public ought to be aware of the special situation that faces Members of Parliament. We live different sorts of lives. Part of this is by choice and part is through necessity. When I say that people lack an adequate awareness of the situation of Members of Parliament I should qualify those words by pointing out that many people in my constituency and elsewhere have acknowledged in a courteous and friendly way the very difficult sort of life which a Member of Parliament of ten has to live. When I say that there is a lack of awareness and adequate understanding of the situation of a member I must be very careful to qualify that statement by making it clear that many people do recognize the special needs and situation of Members of Parliament.

We work very long hours. This can be said of members of all political parties. Most members of the House work long and often unusual hours, although members of the public sometimes gain the impression when they visit the galleries that because members are absent from the chamber they are not working very hard. Also, I think there is a lack of awareness of some of the things a Member of Parliament must do if he is adequately to perform his job. It is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that many Members of Parliament work exceedingly hard. Many work much harder than the average person who lives a normal, ordinary life. Of course, there are some exceptions but this applies to any group of people.

It must also be noted that the family life of a Member of Parliament is affected by the life he is called upon to live. Members of Parliament must of necessity be absent from their homes for more time than they like. This applies to most hon. members and certainly applies to me. Very real conflicts develop for a member such as myself who has small children and is trying to fulfil his family responsibilities at the same time as he is attempting to carry out his responsibilities as a Member of Parliament.

It must be noted that being a Member of Parliament is a full-time occupation today. Certainly that is the case for the member who wants to do an adequate job. The day when a member could carry on another line of work while performing his duties as a Member of Parliament is past in almost all cases.

Also, a Member of Parliament is called on to do considerable travelling in his constituency and in other parts of Canada to meet a wide variety of obligations and commitments. Members of the public look with envy on these opportunities for travel, but it is safe to say—and I