

*Minimum Wage Rates for Employees*

We are in favour of workers, men or women, being treated in the best possible way in Canada. Now, under the circumstances, I feel that a guaranteed minimum salary of \$1.25 an hour is not adequate but it is better than the present minimum salary.

In the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan, we see governments now introducing legislation providing for a minimum salary for workers, men or women, in other words, for all ordinary salaried people in this country. Now, we are in favour of that minimum salary, but, under no circumstances would we like to see the government intervene.

As I have already said and repeated outside the house, and I repeat it again here today, we are in favour of the development of the human person. If a man feels that his rights have been impinged upon, he should be entitled to an appeal, but no yokes or plans should be imposed upon him by our socialist friends—they are our friends in the house, but outside they are less so—or by Liberals with socialistic leanings; we are absolutely against that, and I consider that the Social Credit movement, that Social Credit in Canada—

**An hon. Member:** —is coming.

**Mr. Caouette:** —which suggests security, with freedom, for each and every Canadian citizen, would solve the unemployment, industrial and consumption problems, much better than these bills before us.

Just the same, we are in favour of a strict minimum salary for the whole population, for each and every Canadian citizen. We do not approve of any government intervention in order to control, but we do accept government intervention to help the human person to develop, according to his wishes and aspirations.

**An hon. Member:** Why then are you voting with the government?

(Text):

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the hon. member asking a question or is he seeking the floor?

**Mr. Lewis:** I am asking for the floor.

**Mr. Speaker:** I recognize the hon. member for Athabasca.

**Mr. F. J. Bigg (Athabasca):** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that a bill purporting to give minimum wages to all employees under federal jurisdiction should be considered by anybody to be 100 per cent effective. When this type of bill was first introduced by

the Bennett government it was severely criticized by many members of the house. It was finally declared ultra vires of the powers of the dominion government. I am ready to admit that the present bill jumps over that hurdle and what it purports to do is legislate only with regard to people under federal labour jurisdiction.

I suggest that this bill as it is outlined is far too wide. It purports to give minimum wage rates to everybody under federal jurisdiction; but when one reads the bill carefully, as I have, he finds it is couched in such general terms that it would in fact include almost everybody working in Canada. Where would the R.C.M.P. be in a bill like this? This is an undertaking under federal jurisdiction. Where would nurses in the federal hospitals come in, or trainees in both those noble services to our country? With regard to an R.C.M.P. recruit who is obliged to remain in barracks 24 hours a day unless he goes out on pass, is the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre really suggesting he should be paid \$30 a day? That is \$1.25 an hour without overtime. Should he be paid overtime for this service? I do not think so. I am speaking from information received on this subject. It is necessary to devote your time and energy during training to the regulations, and you know the terms of your employment. I submit that this bill would purport to give an R.C.M.P. recruit \$30 a day or more.

I rose in this house some years ago and suggested \$1 a day for nursing students. My proposal met with no wide approval. It received no approval at all from the other side of the house, when hon. members opposite were sitting here. This was merely \$1 a day for girls who devote 24 hours of their time each day to learning the art of nursing. They are under federal jurisdiction in the federal hospitals and the service hospitals.

I could not see my way clear to underwriting from the taxpayer's pockets a guaranteed minimum wage of \$30 a day for nursing students, and I am surprised that people are ready to vote this amount of money when they were not prepared to give them \$1 a day. Why the change? I suggest that this is one of those phony bills. It is put forward by an hon. member who has no responsibility to the people except those in his own riding, who has no responsibility to an overtaxed budget and who has not thought the matter through clearly.

**Mr. Chairman,** I have only picked on two categories, but I could go on down the line. In places where people are learning trades there are those who are not worth \$1.25 an hour. I think anybody who has ever worked