

If the government really carried out its duties in a responsible way, it would call on the Bank of Canada to issue the credits required to finance the public sector. Canadians would pay less taxes, now used to pay unnecessary interest charges and they would more readily accept their representatives granting themselves a more substantial increase.

Considering the number of hours I give to my work as a member of the House every day of the week, I do not have to be ashamed of the salary I receive, because I really earn it. I am also convinced that my constituents are aware of this. As far as I am concerned, I believe I am working for the establishment of a just society.

Yesterday a Liberal member told me it lies with each member of Parliament to "evaluate himself" and if a member votes against Bill C-242, it means he does not think he is worth more.

Is it on that basis that the Liberal government has always refused to increase family allowances, because it did not think the dedication of mothers was worth more? Is it on that basis that the government did not see fit to increase by more than 42 cents a month the regular old-age pension?

If the people who serve the community must be paid according to the services rendered, then in view of the bad economic situation prevailing in the country, the bad financial policy followed by the Governor of the Bank of Canada, the salary of that public servant should be reduced immediately.

Mr. Speaker, those were the comments I had to make on second reading of Bill C-242, but I may have more to say in due time when the bill is referred to the committee.

[English]

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about this legislation before it is passed. What I am going to say will perhaps be very unpopular in this chamber. I realize that. However, we are not here to win popularity contests among fellow members, but to do what we believe is right for our constituents and the country.

A Member of Parliament often serves his constituents and this country at a financial loss. My brother is a medical doctor. He had a fairly good practice. He came to Parliament for nine years. Every year that he was here he suffered a financial loss. He did not regret any of those years because he felt that the psychic reward of serving others was worth any financial loss he may have had during his period here.

Members of Parliament should receive a high enough salary to enable them to have a good standard of living. They must receive enough so that they will be above any temptation which may come their way to put their hand in the pot, take money illegally or accept bribes from those people who might want a Member of Parliament to do something for them.

The salary of a Member of Parliament should be high enough to attract men of proven ability, as stated by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) when he announced this

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bill. I agree with the Prime Minister that it should attract the best people possible to our Parliamentary system. However, there was no difficulty in attracting people in the 1968 election. There were plenty of candidates running in nearly every riding in Canada. There were huge nominating conventions held in many ridings for persons seeking the opportunity to serve their constituency and Canada.

If the majority of the people in Canada were of low intelligence, there would perhaps be the danger of people with low intelligence being elected to Parliament. Actually, the reverse is true. Our standards of education in Canada have risen markedly, particularly in the past 20 years. Canadian have a high level of intelligence compared with the people of some other countries. The chance of attracting Parliamentarians of proven ability and high calibre is certainly very good.

We must consider the other possibility. We are now being asked to grant ourselves a huge pay increase. Those who ran in the last election entered into a contract with their voters that they would serve them under the present conditions until the next election. It would be far more appropriate if this legislation became effective following the next election. In other words, the pay raise and other conditions for Members of Parliament should take effect after the next election. Improvements in the position, staff and facilities of Members of Parliament, as well as their financial reward, should not go into effect before the next election. I believe it would be morally correct to adopt this attitude.

We must consider the economic climate in Canada today, of which we are not proud. I think that the cabinet minister who recently resigned did so because of the economic conditions in Canada. We have a very high level of unemployment. Many people are quite depressed about the available opportunities in this country. Many young people are not able to find employment suitable to their taste and ability. This is leading to a great deal of unrest. We have hired Mr. Young to preside over a Prices and Incomes Commission to examine the economy and attempt to stem the tide of huge wage demands and price increases. After hiring Mr. Young, if we really believed he could do something, in all conscience we cannot grant ourselves retroactive pay increases back to October at this time. We could, I think, increase the pay of members but only to take effect after the next election.

● (12:10 p.m.)

A Member of Parliament going through a number of elections soon realizes that tenure of office is very insecure. A Member of Parliament does give up a lot of the opportunities which would come his way if he were not a Member of Parliament, particularly a young man in his most progressive period. When he is through he has to go back to where he started, and there is no question in my mind that many Members of Parliament find that when they are defeated or when they leave this place they have very little to go back to.

There is no question in my mind that in the 13 years I have served as a member, the workload has increased