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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Members' Pay Hike Suggested

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THERE'S NO sign of any move by Legislature members to boost their salaries - they're called indemnities - as the session grinds to a close. But here's one writer who wouldn't have any fault to find with them if they did.

The \$1,000 our members get, plus \$500 expenses, is peanuts, compared with what their fellow legislators get across the country. I reviewed several weeks ago the amounts other provinces pay, and they ran, you may recall, from the \$3,333.33 paid in Newfoundland to the \$10,000 they get in Quebec (That is made up of \$6,700 indemnity plus \$3,300 expenses). Manitoba members get \$4,000 and all the rest get more than that.

I know there will be criticism when our members do raise their allowances - there always is - but I can't see much sense in them taking so much less than the others, that there is simply no comparison.

I KNOW some of my best friends will disagree with me on this, some of the disagreements will be sharp. But I'm serious about it.

Most people think of a legislative session of four to six weeks - it ran six weeks this year - and say the members are getting plenty for that bit of work.

But the expenses of a member today have little relation to the few weeks spent in the actual session. The calls on a member come right through the year, and many of them add up to out-of-pocket expenses. There's travelling to be done, there are meetings to be attended, there are all sorts of community efforts, including fund-raising drives, and the member can never let himself even seem to be a poor sport, for he's always under the spotlight of public discernment.

I'm not going to labor the point, for I think I've given you some idea of what I mean.

More Money Is Expected For Mps

ONE OF the best friends I've made in the hunt for column material asked me for example, "What in the world do you do with all that money?" when we were speaking of the \$10,000 federal members get. I couldn't detail it but I did assure him that the unusual expenses eat it up rapidly.

I'm told reliably that 20 PC members now at Ottawa decided they would have to resign, and not seek re-election, because they couldn't get along on the money they get. And Douglas Fisher, former CCF, and now New Democratic member from Port Arthur, has taken a newspaper job to piece out his income.

The story I get - and it's said to be reliable, although I can't guarantee it - is that the members will get an additional tax-free allowance of \$3,000, after the next election. They get \$8,000 now, which is taxable, and \$2,000 expenses.

PAUL MARTIN, MP for Essex East, was telling me last summer how he goes home every weekend, and how hard he works in his law office. When I asked him why, he said simply "I have to make a living, Tiny".

I am not urging our members to take more money, but I certainly think they merit it. I know something of their problems. And I don't think the extra \$500 suggested by the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform is enough, although I have the highest personal regard for the Commission members.

Cattle Marketing Problems

THE MEETING of cattle producers called for the Charlottetown Hotel on April 10 is a culmination, apparently, of the interest that has been building up over the past few weeks in cattle marketing problems.

There are a few cattle producers who like to bargain with buyers for their stock, when selling time comes. Some of them do it to their own advantage, but others often lose out. I've often felt, when I have had cattle to sell, that it would be helpful to have some way of knowing I was getting all that was in the animals. I'm sure others must often feel the same way.

I don't know what's in view for the meeting here, but I'm looking forward to it with interest. It concerns marketing of beef cattle.

NORMALLY I want no part of bargaining, or dickering with a buyer, but one notable exception is so good I think I'll tell you about it. When I faced the prospect of going to Ottawa several years ago, I had to sell everything but one milk cow. I had a three-year old Jersey heifer I thought I might get something over \$100 for, but a neighbour told me to ask \$150. "You won't get it," he said, "but you should get something close to it."

A buyer from the Magdalene Islands wanted a cow like that for his own use. I asked him the \$150 and he offered me \$110. I asked him to come to the house and have "a cup of tea", adding "you apparently are not interested in cattle buying".

Well, that started it, and I finally got \$142.50 for her, which was a good deal more than I had intended to ask in the first place. It was my first and only experience of that exaggerated sort of bargaining. I'll admit I got a kick out of it, but I think there should be a better way to sell cattle, particularly for those who depend on livestock for their living. The young stuff on the Matheson place are mostly by-products of the two cows we keep for the family milk supply.

Fishing Yarn From Frank Fraser

This item came from Frank Fraser and sunny Florida through a mutual friend, Bruce Wonnacott. As they're both ardent anglers, it's natural they should be interested in fishing yarns.

Frank reports an American beer firm is offering prizes of up to \$10,000 in a \$500,000 fishing derby. The prizes go to the anglers who catch fish with the company's tags in

them. The number on the tag determines the size of the prize. Frank sent along a clipping telling of a poor Negro worker who pulled out a bass and got the \$10,000 top prize.

I don't know whether Frank is trying for a prize but he doesn't need any incentive to enjoy fishing. I don't know anyone who gets more kick out of the sport.