

"And yet," the member said, "you state in the most recent newsletter that you are against capital punishment on humanitarian grounds and because it has not been proven to be an effective deterrent.

"Do you not represent the views of your constituents?"

Mr. Abbott replied that the views of his constituents were indeed considered and when the time comes to make a decision in the House, all the information gathered on the topic would be instrumental in forming his decision on the topic.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The federal government's immigration policies came under attack as did the handling of the unemployment problem.

A small businessman in the audience spoke eloquently of his problems finding people to work. "They try their damndest to get fired so they can collect unemployment insurance. They may not get paid as much but they don't have to work for it," he said.

Latest figures released from Statistics Canada reveal that there are 800,000 unemployed in Canada, the rate, seasonally adjusted, 7.9 per cent.

"I agree," said Mr. Abbott, "that there has to be a better meeting of those needing work and those looking for workers."

Issues such as gun control, drug use, bail reform, and abortion were also raised.

wages, the possibility of indexing wages and, of course, the proposed increase in MPs' salaries.

It was a can of worms that many in the audience were eager to open. Mr. Abbott did more than open that can. He took the lid right off.

When asked if he would vote against an increase, he said, "No, I would probably vote for it."

He explained that he was aware of the salary when he decided to run for office. He knew his own financial position and, although he "would have to accept a substantial cut in pay," he nonetheless decided to run.

"But," he added, "I am not the only MP in the House. And I must consider those who have been in the House for a much longer period and have received no increase in salary since 1970."

HUMILIATING

He termed it a humiliating experience to have to vote for your own increase in salary and suggested that perhaps another system be implemented.

Mr. Abbott also maintained that the 33 per cent proposed increase is based on the 1970 salaries and, as such, represents only a cost of living increase.

Councillor Hubert Wolf interjected that we should all take a broader look at the total picture. He expressed his concern that not enough young people were being directed towards involvement in politics.

When asked exactly what the government considers an acceptable amount of inflation, Mr. Abbott replied, "I don't know, but I do know that the present rate is unacceptable.

"And I believe that the cure does not lie with any one country. It must be an international effort," he added.

The price of housing for low to middle income families did not escape discussion. Mr. Abbott agreed that a "patchwork policy" is inadequate and the past record has not been very bright. He agreed that more housing starts, in reasonable price ranges, are needed.

An emotional exchange occurred on the topic of capital punishment. One member stood to point out that 82 per cent of the 5,000 constituents who responded to the questionnaire on the topic in an Abbott newsletter were in favor of retaining capital punishment.



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Sitting reservedly throughout the meeting, knitting her anxiety into afghan squares, was Naomi Abbott.

Madame Defarge before the execution. The only differences were the fact that she was not looking for blood, nor did her husband shed any!

As a matter of fact, he seemed to welcome the enthusiasm with which the discussions took place.

So much so that tonight (Wednesday) at 8 p.m. at Huron Park Recreation Centre, Mr. Abbott is holding another public forum to communicate again with interested constituents.

He invites you all. So does Mrs. Abbott. She wants to get that afghan finished . . .