

I have been meaning to write a letter in regards to my feelings about pay raises for Federal Judges. I hope this e-mail will make it into the record as it is not exactly the way you directed input from the public.

The last time I heard about judicial compensation, the judiciary wanted par with English judges as they felt underpaid. Of course the judges in England were receiving sickening pay rates in my opinion. Why didn't our learned and just folks ask for pay rates like those in other commonwealth countries such as those in Africa?

We just went through provincial pay increases here in Saskatchewan and it never ceases to amaze me that always the decision is made to reward already very well paid positions even more.

There is a crisis I believe in what citizens think about Justice issues in this country. The exorbitant pay received by the supposed men and women in charge smack of the early days in Europe where the well to do insulate themselves from the public. Their aloofness only leads to contempt and a lack of respect for positions of authority and the law and an us versus them mentality. Judges are meant to serve and protect, not profit in the extreme.

I know the argument about having to pay adequately to retain the best and brightest on the bench but I challenge anyone to give me examples of such outstanding Canadian jurisprudence that it is reported on the international stage with applications of new insight and intelligence.

What happened to the idea of public service, respect for the society in which ones lives and a desire to be part of living within ones means. Why not try a fair and equitable pay increase and see who takes it without protest and who complains they are underpaid. Then you will know who is just and honorable and who has money as the first priority. And getting back to the best and brightest-why not be honest and start with the fact judges have traditionally been appointed as supporters of the party in power, first and foremost. We are then stuck with that person because there is no way to get rid of incompetent judges. This is a serious fault in our democracy and leads to a lack of justice for many and an erosion of respect for the law.

Why not find some formula tied to other positions in government so that raises to members of parliament result in raises for civil servants, like judges. Otherwise you know where this process will eventually end - million dollar payouts to ensure we have judges while healthcare and education budgets suffer in the extreme. To me that would be the ultimate betrayal of justice and fair play.

Calvin Loth (953-2849)