

Prime Minister's Residence Act

that what this bill does is simply to legalize certain things that are already taking place. It makes it legal, proper and constitutional that public moneys be put into the maintenance of these residences and that their occupants be entitled to any benefits that they enjoy because they are living in them. I think that it is good that any doubt there might have been as to their right to enjoy the benefit of living in these residences has been cleared up or will be cleared up when this bill passes. That is the main purpose of this legislation, and we approve this being done.

I said there was one specific change that is made by this bill. It has to do with the \$5,000 per year that the Prime Minister is required to pay for board and lodging at 24 Sussex Drive. The hon. member for Hillsborough is quite correct that this provision was put into the bill because when 24 Sussex Drive was purchased during the time when Mr. St. Laurent was prime minister it was his own, personal insistence that he be required to make a payment to cover his family's board and lodging in that residence, and at his insistence it was put into the legislation. A case can certainly be made for our not requiring that, for if we are going to provide the Prime Minister with a residence in which he can live and in which he must do a fair amount of entertaining, in which he must be one of the nation's hosts, it does seem proper that we take care of the cost of it.

• (3:40 p.m.)

However, I am interested in the fact that the proposal to discontinue the requirement that this \$5,000 a year be paid by the Prime Minister does not come into effect until the end of this parliament. It comes into effect on the day of the general election following the dissolution of the 28th Parliament. No one knows who will be the occupant of that house at that point, but at any rate here is a clear case of deciding that a certain monetary benefit to one of the members of this House shall not accrue to him until after the next election.

It is very interesting that this bill will be going to the same committee to which Bill C-242 was sent yesterday. Perhaps in that committee we might try to do a little harmonizing between the two bills. If it is proper to say in this bill that a monetary benefit to one member of the House shall not accrue to him until after the next election, then maybe we should say the same thing in the bill that raises the salaries of all members. Mr. Speaker, I see you are looking at me and wondering if I am out of order, and therefore I will desist. We will deal with that matter when we get into the committee.

We are not surprised that, His Honour, the Speaker has asked one of his able assistants to take the Chair while we are debating this measure, and the main thing I want to say in this debate is that I wish the bill did something more for the office and the person of the Speaker than is being done by it. Actually, it does not do anything at all for him. He has had the privilege of living in the residence of The Farm for a long time. He has had the privilege of using it to entertain us, and so on, and when this bill is passed and becomes law the situation will still

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be the same, except that things will be legalized. But it really does not add anything to the perquisites and privileges of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Like the hon. member for Hillsborough, who spoke just a few minutes ago, I think we ought to be providing an official residence for the Speaker here in the city of Ottawa, within easy reach of the House of Commons. I would be most happy to support the suggested moves that he proposed, the musical chairs that he suggested. I think Stornoway would be a delightful place for the Speaker of the House of Commons.

The reason I press this is not for any financial benefit that might accrue to His Honour to have a proper and permanent residence fully paid for in this way, but rather because I think we should show the fullest respect that we can for the office of Speaker. And I also think we should say in very clear terms, and mince no words about it, that we like the Speaker we now have, that we like the Hon. Lucien Lamoureux; that we think he has done an excellent job as the Speaker of this House in two parliaments, and that there should be a clear indication to him on the part of this House that we want him to continue as Speaker of the House of Commons. That gets us over into another bill that I have on the order paper that would provide the basis for a continuing Speakership. It also gets us over into a matter that was under discussion between the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) and me on a late show a while ago, which ended rather inconclusively. And that is what bothers me about this now, that it is being left in an inconclusive state. All sorts of tributes are paid to the Speaker of the House of Commons, and he deserves all of them and more, but tributes that are not backed up by some real gesture, that are not backed up by an effort to take those steps that will make it possible for him to continue as Speaker, are subject to the charge of being a bit empty.

This is not the first time that the question of an official residence in Ottawa for the Speaker has been raised. The government has had reason to look at it for a few years. The proposal was made in very concrete terms by some of us in the House of Commons, and so it is not a new idea. In fact, when I first heard there was to be a piece of legislation regarding official residences, including an official residence for Mr. Speaker, for a moment I was delighted. I thought we had won. I thought that what we were going to get was an official residence in Ottawa for Mr. Speaker. But no, we are not getting that. Let us not pat ourselves on the back and say we are doing anything by passing this bill because we are not doing anything for Mr. Speaker at all. All he will have is the right to continue to make use of the Farm, several miles from here, at Kingsmere.

I hope the House will take this and other opportunities to make clear to the government that we think there should be an official residence here in Ottawa for the Speaker. Further, we think a move in that direction should be made while the present incumbent is in the Chair, so that he will know the House wants him to continue. And I think we should match this with other