

Supply—Privy Council

In that connection I wish to ask the minister whether a new schedule of fees for counsel has been arrived at. I know that the chief counsel receives \$450 a day while the junior counsel receives \$250. Is this the new revised version to meet the increased cost of living in this country? These are just a few matters on which I am sure the minister will be in a position to give a complete answer.

Mr. Favreau: I hope that the right hon. gentleman, whose wit is very well known, has once more spoken with tongue in cheek in putting those questions to me. He knows that the Royal Commission on Biculturalism and Bilingualism does not report to me and that I am only informed of the figures which are placed in the estimates, and the annotations and explanations for these figures. I must point out that I am not in a position to know when the commission is expected to make its final report. It has made an interim report already, and has studied a considerable number of presentations and reports. It is presently pursuing, through its research division, considerable studies in eight fields in particular.

• (3:10 p.m.)

In so far as the Spence commission is concerned, I have no indication of what work is being done. I have had no indication, directly or indirectly, as to what time it is expected to report.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Will the minister let the house know something about the activities of the commission on biculturalism. He made the statement that they were conducting some research activities. Can he tell us something about the unusual questions that are being asked of the armed forces as to their category, as to whether they belong to the high class, low class, middle class, intellectual class and the like? I am sure there must be some minister from whom this information might be secured, now that there has been this reorganization of the government to assure efficiency, effectiveness, and above all capacity to act.

The minister must be in a position to give some of this information. I would say to the minister that this divided responsibility is rather dangerous to the effectiveness of the operation. I know, now that these various matters have been placed under his control, they will be met head on. Surely he must have some responsibility, other than simply advising the house that there is a commission

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

and what it is doing. I have no information. I do not know where it is. What its expected life is, has not been vouchsafed to me. After all, we have spent \$4 million on the commission on biculturalism and bilingualism, and everything that was found and recommended in its initial report could have been written by anyone without very much trouble, certainly without the expense that has characterized this commission. I think it is the top of the shelf expenditure commission.

Has the minister any information regarding the perambulations or peregrinations of the commission? To what parts of the world have they been? What have they sought? What they sought, did they find? These are the things about which one wonders. If the minister is in a state of uncertainty, he can understand how the opposition must be in the same state. However, if there is some minister from whom this information can be secured, I certainly will not pursue it because I do not want to place the minister in a position of having to admit that, while he reports to parliament on the amount of the expenditure, what is done with the money nobody knows.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, just before the minister replies I want to bring it to your attention that there is an unauthorized person in the press gallery.

Mr. Diefenbaker: There must be a star in every firmament.

Mr. Favreau: I hope that the right hon. gentleman will not try to convey the impression that any member of this government is not fully interested in a commission which, in my view, is one of the most important that has ever been established in this country. The role of this commission in national unity should be accepted by all concerned as being of major consequence.

The right hon. gentleman has asked for certain particulars as to the travelling of the commission. I must say that, personally, it is not my function to take note daily or periodically of what the commission does by way of travelling. I believe he knows to what extent the commission has travelled in Canada and to what extent it has travelled outside of Canada. Personally, I am not aware, and it is not my function to be aware of this by virtue of my post. I might be interested, but it is not my function to ask the commission for reports about that. As President of the Privy Council, it is not my function to give the