

Mr. MUTCH: Before the minister speaks, may I point out that the recommendation of the veterans committee was broader than has been indicated by press reports or by the remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver South. The recommendation of the committee with respect to firefighters was to the effect that they should have granted to them the residue of those benefits which are accorded to veterans, which are still applicable, and special reference was made to the C.V.S.M. and to the civil service preference, because the delegation which appeared before us laid particular stress on that. In the case of the C.V.S.M., they pointed out that they had themselves served in uniform continuously on the job and as such are entitled to wear the medal, and it was pointed out that their families were embarrassed by unfortunate incidents arising out of the fact that they did not have the medal.

The committee was aware of the fact that the very nature of the order which created the medal did present difficulties in the granting of the medal, because it is a volunteer medal for service in the armed forces of the country. The committee felt, in view of the fact that it had been given to certain other groups, that they were justified in making the recommendation. They do not restrict the recommendation to these two classes, although they were specifically mentioned.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have been asked to allow this item to stand, so that the Prime Minister may deal with his estimates.

Item stands.

GOVERNOR GENERAL AND LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS

113. Office of the secretary to the governor general, including the salary of the secretary to the governor general at \$7,600 additional to salary authorized by R.S.C. chap. 182, \$111,468.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: This item relates to His Excellency the Governor General and lieutenant governors. It is statutory for the most part.

Item agreed to.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

316. Salaries of staff and other pay-list items, \$93,972.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Carried.

Mr. POULIOT: No, Mr. Chairman; we cannot let this item pass like that tonight. This is the item for the Prime Minister's office. In the past there have been some little celebrations on the occasion of the departure of the Prime Minister for a trip overseas, when he was going to a conference. The members of the house wished him God-speed, a safe return and things like that. That was all very nice, timely and appropriate with

regard to those minor things like a trip overseas, a trip to the continent, a trip to Paris, or a trip to San Francisco. Before Mr. King went to San Francisco, I remember that it was suggested that he should be the president of the united nations; but he was not interested. Since then, the Prime Minister has made the decision to leave the position of Prime Minister. Two years ago I suggested to him that he should do so, and I was his best friend when I told him that. When I said that it was not because I am an unfaithful follower. At times I may be misunderstood, but I am always faithful. It was during the post-war period and it was necessary for us to rebuild over the ruins of the war. I thought then that the best man for the job was a man of action like the present Minister of Trade and Commerce, and I suggested him. I had made no pledge. I was just as independent as I am now. But, as the Prime Minister himself had said, without any suggestion being made to him by anybody, that it was his own express desire to get out of the picture, I thought we must respect the desires of a gentleman who has had a most successful career in politics and who thinks he has been leader of the party long enough. My idea was just to concur in the wishes expressed personally and often by my chief.

I then made another suggestion. I said that the Prime Minister should drop the portfolio of external affairs. He was dissatisfied with his trip to Paris in the spring of 1946 or in the fall of 1946, I forget which.

Mr. McLURE: Carried.

Mr. POULIOT: I would ask my hon. friend to wait a little; and if I do not interest him I suggest that he go to sleep.

Mr. McLURE: I have been waiting for a long time.

Mr. POULIOT: When my hon. friend interrupts me, I have the impression that he snores. It is a feeling that I understand quite well. I do not expect to keep anybody awake. But I leave it at that. These are matters of great importance; and they are of greater importance because tonight the alpha is the omega, meaning by that that the first letter of the alphabet is "Z"—omega in Greek. But my language will not be Greek; it will be easy to understand.

An hon. MEMBER: It is still Greek.

Mr. POULIOT: I will speak in my own plain English that puts the hon. member for Queens to sleep. Now that he is sleeping well—

Mr. KNOWLES: You hope.