

Supply—Privy Council

are housed in the same building, and there is some degree of intimacy in the work and objectives of both staffs. While in general the function of the privy council office is to serve as a secretariat for the cabinet and for the Governor General in Council, it is obvious that a number of functions carried out under this head will serve the secretarial needs of the Prime Minister in his capacity as representing Canada at federal-provincial conferences. To try to separate the two functions in a clear-cut way is difficult. Frankly I am not sure of what the hon. gentleman is getting at; it is difficult to know. I regret that in their present form our estimates do not show the cost, in terms of total resources and dollars and cents, of performing a specific function, because the functions are lumped together. There are distinctions between different grades of personnel, but none is made with respect to total resources required for a particular function.

[Translation]

Mr. Matte: I agree wholeheartedly with the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) who spoke earlier about the Royal commission on bilingualism and biculturalism. There was no need for him to apologize about his anti-French-Canadian feelings since I am in full agreement with him.

That completely useless item should be removed from the estimates and here is why: Everyone is perfectly aware of the situation in Canada and no inquiry is needed to bring it to light. In addition, there are organizations which will be happy to give us information free of charge and to divulge the facts without our having to spend millions of dollars to do it. For years the French-Canadian minorities of the nine other Canadian provinces have compiled numerous documents about the bilingualism and biculturalism of minorities throughout Canada.

As far as Quebec is concerned, we have been aware of the situation for a long time and the Sociétés Saint-Jean-Baptiste have been fighting for years for the French fact. It would have been possible, and it still is, to secure all information from them, and better still, free of charge. Moreover, the Estates General of French Canada, thanks to their working groups, could also provide all necessary information.

Hence, this royal commission on bilingualism and biculturalism constitutes an unnecessary expenditure and I would like to know

the exact amount of salaries paid to the co-chairman of the commission, Mr. Jean-Louis Gagnon.

• (4:10 p.m.)

[English]

The Deputy Chairman: Does the hon. member for Annapolis Valley wish to speak while the parliamentary secretary is getting this figure?

Mr. Nowlan: I should like to direct two questions either to the President of the Treasury Board or to the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister or to the President of the Privy Council.

An hon. Member: He is right there.

Mr. Nowlan: The President of the Privy Council is right over here. What is the complement of the Prime Minister's office today as compared with a year ago? I should like to ask the same question with respect to the privy council office. I am not worried now about the dollars and cents; I simply wish to know the number of bodies employed as compared with a year ago. We are dealing with the privy council and I do not think it is asking too much to expect the President of the Privy Council, who is present in this chamber, to answer these simple questions.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The hon. member has asked me about the complement of the privy council staff. May I say that, except with respect to the parliamentary returns branch which has been transferred from the Department of the Secretary of State, I do not have direct responsibility for any aspect of the privy council office. This falls within the responsibility of the Prime Minister who is represented here today through his parliamentary secretary. The President of the Treasury Board is also present to give details in connection with his responsibilities.

Mr. Nowlan: Would the President of the Privy Council not agree that this is a perfect expression of the difficulties encountered during the question period in determining who has jurisdiction? I asked the hon. gentleman for an answer, but I did not get one. This illustrates the value of having as many ministers as possible present in the chamber during the question period. But since the amiable and genial parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister—

Some hon. Members: Hear, Hear.