

situation was a difficult and complicated one, and I personally spoke to Mr. Meighen about it. Mr. Meighen expressed some surprise at what had occurred and seemed to feel that the government that had just taken office was not acting towards him in a manner that in the circumstances was justified. I told him that what had occurred was contrary to anything in my own mind, and that if his own frank was not recognized he could use my frank; that if payment could not be made for his secretaries I was prepared to provide a secretary for him from my own office or arrange to have his own secretary paid; that if he did not receive his salary as leader of the opposition, I would ask parliament to vote the amount if the statute or some existing regulation did not permit the Speaker to pay it. My impression at the time was that the salary was voted to the leader of the opposition, whether still a member of parliament or not and Mr. Meighen was still leader of the opposition. He was not a member of parliament and I presume that not being a member of parliament technically and in fact legally, as we have just heard, he would not have been entitled to his salary as leader of the opposition for this period. But he filled the position and did the work of leader of the opposition until he resigned the leadership of his party and my hon. friend opposite was elected to the position of leader of the opposition. Under the circumstances I think it is only right that this House should allow Mr. Meighen that proportion of the salary of leader of the opposition that would have gone to him if he had been a member of the House, seeing that he was performing at that time the duties of leader of the opposition.

Mr. GARDINER: I appreciate very much the explanation the Prime Minister has given, but I would call his attention to the unfortunate fact that this is the second time we have had to have in the estimates such a sum for the leader of the official opposition, and unfortunately the present vote applies to Mr. Meighen. I appreciate the circumstances and I have no objection to the amount named in the estimate, but I do think it is placing the former leader of the opposition in a very humiliating position to have these amounts placed in the estimates and have such explanations given on these two occasions. I would therefore suggest to the Prime Minister that during the recess he take into consideration the desirability of revising that part of the statute so as to prevent repetition of such a thing as we have witnessed on the two occasions alluded to. One more question with regard to this item. I understand

that in the House of Commons Act provision is made for the salary of the Deputy Speaker. Now I notice in the supplementary an item of \$1,193 to provide for the salary of the Deputy Speaker from December 14, 1926, to March 31, 1927, inclusive. Would the Speaker be good enough to explain why this amount appears in these estimates?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is the balance due to the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough who occupied the position of Deputy Speaker in the last parliament. As Deputy Speaker he was entitled to \$4,000 a year, and this is to provide for the payment of the balance of his salary.

Mr. GARDINER: And is he entitled to his salary when he is not even a member of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. I consulted the Department of Justice on that point and received an opinion from them. I brought the matter before the Board of Internal Economy, and it was decided that his salary should be paid for the balance of the year based on that opinion of the Department of Justice.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I should like to bring up one point in connection with this question of an official opposition. The Prime Minister referred to the frank being used. At the last election, campaign literature was coming into my constituency under frank in support of candidates of the older parties. In my own constituency I had no opposition from the Liberal party, but literature was coming in under the frank of the right hon. gentleman who is now Prime Minister and who, I presume, was then leader of the official opposition. When there are several groups in this House, it is manifestly unfair that during election time the local candidates of the older parties should be supported by literature sent in under the frank of the government or the official opposition. This is not in harmony with the principle of fair play. I should like to call the attention of the Prime Minister to the need that some arrangement should be made with regard to the franking privilege whereby, if it is granted to one party in the House, it should be granted to all sections of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: After consultation with the Postmaster General, I am pleased to inform hon. members that they may use the franking privilege eight days after prorogation.