

disclosure with regard to election contributions. I say to the right hon. gentleman that generally we on this side of the House, and I suspect many hon. members on his side of the House, do not accept the fact that these contributions are being received from undisclosed sources. The Prime Minister should reverse himself. As I say, I think the swimming pool is of an unjustifiable scale, and I have never heard the Prime Minister attempt to justify it.

Mr. Trudeau: Could you explain why things have changed with respect to Stornoway?

Mr. Stanfield: Many things have changed since Stornoway with regard to contributions.

Mr. Trudeau: Tell us what.

Mr. Stanfield: The general attitude of the Canadian people toward contributions to political parties.

An hon. Member: The elections act.

An hon. Member: Dredging.

Mr. Stanfield: The Prime Minister had an hour and 25 minutes in which to talk. I should like to make a point or two as bluntly and as fairly as I can to him. I say to him that the procedure followed with respect to Stornoway would not be acceptable today.

Mr. Trudeau: Because it applies to you, and this one to me.

Mr. Stanfield: There you go. I am not afraid to say what I have to say, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately, that is the attitude of the Prime Minister of this country today. He applies two standards in terms of expenditures. I say to him in all bluntness—he can argue any way he likes—the procedure followed with respect to Stornoway would not be acceptable today, and certainly the procedure being followed by him or whoever is in charge of the swimming pool operation is not acceptable to this committee and to the people of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: As to the expenditures associated with the office of the leader of the opposition and with the research budget, I simply want to say this and nothing more relating to the establishment of positions or the expenditures relating to the office of leader of the opposition: that they were approved by Mr. Speaker. I know that the Prime Minister did not intend to apply any criticism of Mr. Speaker with regard to that.

Second, I would point out to him that in terms of anything approaching the fighting of political battles on even terms, the scale is heavily weighted in favour of the government, in spite of these changes. For example, any travelling by the staff of the leader of the opposition is not paid for by the government. The prime minister can take all his staff with him wherever he wants to go. Next, with regard to research, I appreciate the fact that the research budget exists, but there is no way in which the official opposition—let alone the NDP—can compete with the government on anything like even terms so far as research is concerned. The prime minister has his personal establish-

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ment and the whole civil service. I say, quite bluntly, all we can attempt to do with this kind of research budget is to meet parliamentary needs for which the grant was intended. In terms of day to day and week to week preparations, and in terms of any research in depth on economic matters such as is necessary in connection with budgets, tax reform and that sort of thing, for research we have to go outside and get help on a voluntary basis.

With regard to the dissatisfaction of the opposition with some of the practices being followed by the government, I simply wish to say that the opposition accepts that members of the civil service should not come before committees to answer questions relating to confidential matters or to policy. However, we assert that committees of the House have the right to question members of the civil service with regard to the manner in which they are spending, for example, funds voted by the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1640)

Mr. Stanfield: We contest the right of the Prime Minister, let alone the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, to say which of his officials may come before a committee if the committee wishes to question those officials. We contest the authority of a minister to decide which of his officials should come before the committee, although we willingly agree that officials ought not to be expected to answer questions relating to matters of confidentiality or policy.

One of the reasons we wanted this day was to put this point very clearly before the Prime Minister. I suggest to him it is nonsense to suggest that this is a departure from responsible government. Certainly the ministers are responsible to this House. Certainly the ministers and the cabinet collectively are responsible for policy and the development of policy; but equally, committees of this House are entitled to question people in the government service as to how moneys are being spent. That is a right we assert, will continue to assert and which in our judgment the members of the government have no right to deny.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I intend to stay within the 15 minute rule in an attempt to set an example in that respect. There is also an area of the government which does not seem to be answerable to committees at all, the area in which the Privy Council and the office of the Prime Minister operate. As the hon. member for St. John's East indicated, the President of the Privy Council appeared before a committee and said that he had no administrative responsibility for the Privy Council. I want to insist, again, that we are not asking that any official in the Privy Council office should come before a committee and discuss anything of a confidential nature, but it is very clear that no minister is able to go before a committee and discuss with any degree of competence or authority what is taking place.

Mr. Beatty: It is like Edgar Bergen leaving Charlie McCarthy behind to answer questions.