

the right hon. gentleman for Prince Albert found it convenient to forget that.

● (1530)

When I am talking of Stornoway I am interrupted by concern for the swimming pool. Let me remind the Committee that there is a pretty good parallel between the two situations. Stornoway was put at the disposal of the leader of the opposition by a private group of people whose names have never been made public. He occupied it without our ever suspecting him of having been influenced by the Mafia who might have given it to him. This thought never entered our minds, nor should it. I believe the gentlemen and ladies who put this house at the disposal of the leader of the opposition were acting out of a sense of public duty because they believed it was an honourable gesture. I am prepared to wager that probably people from many parties helped ensure this trust through which the property of Stornoway was put at the disposal of the leader of the opposition.

When the government took over the property of Stornoway, for the reasons I gave earlier nobody on this side wanted to know the names of the donors. We did not suspect the leader of the opposition, past, present or future, of having been influenced by private builders. This is exactly the situation with the swimming pool.

Mr. Horner: There is a complete difference.

Mr. Trudeau: There are various ways for the federal government to obtain properties which are for the benefit of the people of Canada and present and future holders, whether they be the leader of the opposition, the prime minister or the Speaker. This, it seemed to me, was a perfectly correct way, to have private donors whose names were known to no one—certainly not to myself—make a gift of property to the prime minister's residence just as they have with the residence of the leader of the official opposition, remaining the property of the government for all time. I think this is how various public properties are given into the hands of the government. It is the way the museum is often enriched. It is certain that this is a question of being damned whatever I do. Of course, had I drawn upon the public purse there would have been a great number of accusations.

On a lighter note, Mr. Chairman, I was absolutely certain, when I chose the course of accepting from anonymous donors the gift of a swimming pool, that there would be editorials saying that this was not the way to proceed and that the pool should have been paid for out of public funds. It is certain that in a situation like this one can never be right in the eyes of people who are determined to see evil in everything. It is worth repeating that the parallel between Stornoway and the swimming pool is identical, and neither the Leader of the Opposition nor I know, nor presumably will know, through whose generosity we benefit from these amenities.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cossitt: Wasting a lot of time to say nothing.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Chairman, I know this is a waste of time and I regret that the concern of so many people on

Business of Supply

the other side has been with this very subject. They have forced me to address myself to this subject, precisely because even during the time I was speaking hon. members opposite asked questions about the swimming pool. Now that I have given them information, they are confounded and have found it a waste of time.

The Chairman: The hon. member for Peace River on a point of order.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Chairman, I am sure the Prime Minister wants to be fair with the committee. He has indicated and we accept the fact, that he cannot be here all the time, much as we would love him to be and I am sure as he would be delighted to be. The reason no earlier notice was given is because of an incident which took place only on Tuesday night which we construed to be unparliamentary and despotic action. As a result, we felt it was necessary to ask the Prime Minister to appear in this House before the committee.

If he has to leave, I am sure the questions we will be asking him, including the Leader of the Opposition, will touch upon many of the subjects he is dealing with and he will have his opportunity to answer them. I think if he is sincere—and I hope he is—with regard to this being a suitable opportunity for questioning, he will provide the opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition and members of the other parties, in connection with his estimates and the right of the House of Commons on behalf of the people of Canada, to air grievances before supply is voted. This is the principle on which we are proceeding, and I trust the Prime Minister will arrange that those questions will be answered.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Chairman, I understand the concern of the hon. member, and he has stated well the dilemma in which I find myself. I would remind him, however, that the dilemma is not of my making. It is the members of his party who repeatedly have been asking these questions of me through written questions, who have been raising these questions in committee, who have been interjecting every time I stand to answer any question, who have been indicating their concern about the very subjects I am dealing with. I find it quite unreasonable for the hon. member to show his disappointment for the time I am taking to deal with the questions that his own party has brought up. I can see no other course but for me to follow my present disposition of dealing with some of these accusations, I repeat, made by the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert, a former prime minister of this country and therefore—

Mr. Cossitt: Mr. Chairman, a point of order.

The Chairman: The hon. member for Leeds on a point of order.

Mr. Cossitt: Mr. Chairman, I do not think that anyone in this House should sit and listen to the Prime Minister say he is taking up his time because we have exercised our right to ask questions on the order paper and orally in this House. I think it is time that we heard something sensible or that he sat down. He is using us as an excuse for not answering, and hiding things from the Canadian people—