

Supply—Privy Council

Mr. Drury: I am told that they are included in this vote. This means that within this vote there will be a number of people, some of whom are appointed through the civil service mechanism, mostly in the privy council office, and some limited number of whom are appointed by order in council to the staff of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Is there no way of looking at these estimates and getting an exact picture of the Prime Minister's staff as such? No matter how long I ask questions, I would not get an answer today, would I?

Mr. Drury: I am afraid not. This has been a source of regret to a number of us. I do acknowledge that this method we have employed in the past of putting total expenditures, I will not say "is designed to conceal", but it has this effect. I hope to be able to present to the public accounts committee a different and more effective system of setting forth the estimates so that one can distinguish main purposes, objectives and programs rather than have this global explication which does not explain too much.

● (4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It is the contention of some of us that all this could better be done in a standing committee.

Mr. Drury: My being here this afternoon is not my idea; I am here at the request of the house. The house chose to consider these estimates in committee of the whole rather than in a standing committee.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): When the President of the Treasury Board is putting through the estimates of the privy council, may I ask whom he is representing?

Mr. Drury: I represent the government.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I pass. It is hopeless.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): That is a wise move.

Mr. Orlikow: When I spoke earlier, Mr. Chairman, I was not being critical of the government. I am looking for information and have no desire to prolong discussion on these estimates. Could the President of the Privy Council or the assistant to the Prime Minister tell the committee—and I do not insist on great detail—how large is the staff in the Prime Minister's office this year as compared

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

with last year, and whether any changes have taken place. Are newspaper reports correct when they say that staff has doubled? Also what are the responsibilities of that staff?

Mr. Walker: Mr. Chairman, I am glad the hon. member asked this question, since it was answered fully in the press release of July 31, 1968, which dealt with the reorganization of the Prime Minister's office and named those who are filling particular categories.

To answer an earlier question I cannot, as the President of the Treasury Board said, pin down to specific figures salaries paid in the Prime Minister's office. Job classifications in the office are described in the press release, which I commend to the hon. member.

Mr. Orlikow: Surely we have not come to the point where the government does its business through press releases, although I do not object to press releases. I asked a legitimate question and I should like to have an answer which can be printed in *Hansard*, and thus form part of the official record. By that I am not asking the assistant to the Prime Minister to read into the record a lengthy press release. Could we not have an answer which could be printed in *Hansard*? For instance, are there 30 people in the Prime Minister's office now, as compared with 15 formerly. What are their responsibilities and so on? It should not take the assistant to the Prime Minister long to answer such questions.

Mr. Nowlan: It might help the President of the Treasury Board and the parliamentary assistant if this matter were approached from a different standpoint. In considering the office of the privy council, as distinct from the office of the Prime Minister, I should like to know whether there have been increases in staff positions in the former office. The vote before us indicates that, as between one year and another, there has been an increase in man years, but that is incidental to my question. What has been the staff increase in the privy council office? The answer to that question will determine whether I shall ask another one. In other words, under vote 10, what increase is to be ascribed to the office of the privy council and not to the office of the Prime Minister?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Those really ought to be separated.

Mr. Drury: Mr. Chairman, it is somewhat difficult to separate those categories. Those who are aware of the physical workings of the operation will know that both operations