

Supply—Privy Council

other hand we have two ministers receiving money that has never been voted by parliament. It seems to me this is really worthy of Alice in Wonderland or Through the Looking Glass.

Mr. Pearson: Before we leave this particular point, I think it has been made quite clear, in view of what has been said and the argument that has been developed, that there is some doubt as to the legality of the procedure adopted for the payment of these ministers without portfolio. The Prime Minister himself has indicated that there is doubt as to the proper application of the act in this connection.

Surely, Mr. Chairman, if that is true the best way of removing that doubt is not to follow the suggestion he made—he could not have made it very seriously—that we take a case before the courts. Surely the best way to do that is for the government itself to get the views of the law officers of the crown on this matter. If that legal opinion justifies the position we have taken—and it is an important and serious matter affecting the privileges of parliament about which the Prime Minister has talked so often over so many years—then it is incumbent upon the Prime Minister to regularize what has happened and prevent it from happening again by taking the necessary legislative action.

Mr. Diefenbaker: If it had not been for the intervention of the Leader of the Opposition I would have said nothing further, because the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate pretty well covered the entire situation. By the time he concluded I thought he had pretty well proven everything he had set out not to prove. In other words he had established the validity of the stand taken by the government in this connection.

So far as the regularity of what has taken place is concerned, there has been nothing said here that in any way would lead anyone looking at the matter objectively to conclude that what was done was in any way a derogation of parliament, and with that I rest.

Mr. Chevrier: The matter I should like to take up with the Prime Minister is not along the same lines as the one which has just been discussed. Strictly speaking, Mr. Chairman, I am perhaps not in order, but in view of its importance and in view of the fact that it concerns the Prime Minister I hope he will allow me to bring it to his attention at this time.

This matter has to do with a suggestion the Prime Minister has made, I believe, on more than one occasion concerning the census and the fact that an individual should not be required to state his ethnic origin. I thought

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

perhaps I might say just one word in connection with it today. I should like, as objectively as possible, to state the reasons why I should like to bring it to the Prime Minister's attention. The matter is one which has been of particular interest to my compatriots in Quebec, and also in other provinces in Canada.

It has seemed to them that if that suggestion were put into effect it might well work not only a hardship but great difficulties. I know the Prime Minister's attention has been drawn to this subject by a number of organizations across Canada. For instance, I believe that la fédération des associations de parents et d'instituteurs de langue française d'Ontario have written the Prime Minister, as have l'association canadienne-française d'éducation d'Ontario, and the point they made and the point which I should like to reiterate on their behalf is that it is not felt by them that the leaving in of the ethnic origin is a matter which will be conducive to disunity. On the contrary, they feel that it will be conducive to unity. They say, and have so asserted, that they are quite favourable to union and unity of all Canadians of all origins, but always in diversity. They say that what makes the strength, grandeur and originality of our country is the respect for the diversity of origins and various cultures which develop loyalty to the country and to the crown.

They also make the point that the slightest attempt or the slightest infringement of the spirit of the constitution and of the program they have set out for their people would be, in their opinion, a source of difficulty. They go on and state that they have in the past relied a great deal upon information of the ethnical origins of their people from one end of the country to the other. There are, as the Prime Minister knows, associations like the ones I have mentioned in practically every province of Canada save perhaps one or two.

While I am not speaking for all of them, I think I speak for the group that brought this matter to my attention. They state that the information they get from the national census has been of tremendous assistance and importance to them in the development of our traditions, our customs, our culture, and in a comparison of these things with other groups across Canada.

Then I should like to state that in a letter which was addressed to the Prime Minister by l'association canadienne-française d'éducation d'Ontario they point with particular emphasis to a paragraph contained in the report of the royal commission on arts, letters and sciences, which can be found at page 4. It is difficult for me to translate it without more