

Supply—Governor General's Office

Mr. Knowles: Well, the items are on page 26. One has to break them down because they include the lieutenant governors as well. One has to pick out the items that relate to the Governor General and the administration of government house. I think my figures will stand up, and they add up to \$228,129. The items on the page include \$177,000 for the lieutenant governors. If you subtract that, you arrive at my figure. It is just a question, Mr. Chairman, whether that is not a little too large a sum for this establishment.

I know that comparisons are always difficult to make, and this one may be a bit embarrassing; but I cannot help but compare what it costs for us to maintain the Governor General and his residence with what we pay to the Prime Minister and the maintenance of his residence. It is a much smaller figure. I believe there is \$23,000 altogether in salaries and allowances, and \$25,000 for the maintenance of that house. We are in a rather awkward position. The Governor General is the titular head of the country, yet he is appointed on the recommendation of the Prime Minister who is the political leader of the country. There seems to be a great difference between the \$25,000 for the maintenance of one establishment and the \$228,000 for the maintenance of the other establishment. I hear people say that the Prime Minister does not have to entertain, but I understand he does have to do a certain amount of entertaining.

The suggestion was made that the Governor General should not be required to dip into his own funds. We pay him this salary of \$48,667, which is not subject to income tax, although it has been pointed out that he pays income tax on his own private income. Now, the Prime Minister says that there have been few changes in the total amount we have paid for this establishment since 1914. I have not the books before me to look up the figures for the various years that far back. I am interested, however, in the figures for the year ending March 31, 1952. The amount requested by the Minister of Finance for the Governor General at that time represented a slight reduction. In other words, in that year apparently some effort was made to cut down the total amount being spent for this establishment, and there was a reduction in this very item we are now discussing of \$2,468 as compared with the 1950-51 fiscal year. It seems strange that it was possible, just two or three years ago, to apply the concept of economy and pare things down a bit at government house, but now we are told that there has been this substantial increase of \$50,000. I understand that this increase is in relation to the allowances for

[Mr. Abbott.]

the purchase of goods, the hiring of help and so on. You have to look at that in relation to what was spent on allowances before. The amount before was \$50,000, so it is not just a little increase in proportion to the current rise in the cost of living, it is actually a doubling of that amount. The Minister of Finance has had a fair amount to say about this item that is now before us being comparable to the item in the main estimates. May I point out that the item in the main estimates is, in effect, the beginning of a new policy of paying \$100,000 of allowances instead of \$50,000. This policy does not begin until the start of the new fiscal year on April 1. We are now being called upon to make this increase retroactive to last April 1. Frankly, I wonder whether there is not room, even with all the respect that we have for the office and the respect and regard we have for the person who occupies the office, for the kind of economy approach that was tried back in 1951-52, rather than this substantial increase.

Mr. Brooks: Mr. Chairman, I do not rise to object to this item. I must say that I do not altogether agree with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. When we consider that the Governor General represents the sovereign in this country, and when we realize the tremendous expense the sovereign must be to the people of England—to which I understand we make no contribution—I think the contribution which we in this country make to the Governor General is certainly not out of line for a country of our size and wealth.

My understanding from what the Prime Minister said is that it is costing us \$5,000 a month more for the upkeep of the present Governor General than it did in the past; that is \$60,000 a year. In his remarks he said he thought the Canadian people would wish to pay this amount in order to maintain the standard which we, as a great country, should have.

I should like to say that I feel the Canadian people should have been ashamed of the niggardly fashion in which they have treated governors general in the past. It seems to me that if we have been paying \$60,000 too little in the past to our governors general, it is time we were bringing that position up to the standard of a country like Canada.

Mr. St. Laurent: I was aware, in a general way, that the situation was difficult before Lord Alexander retired, but I did not know what the actual figures were. When the situation was brought to our attention some months ago, it was gone into, and I can assure hon. members that it was very carefully checked because we were not at all