

The Address—Hon. A. Fournier

and listen to him. Being polite, we do not say anything. During his speech tonight we heard such words as "folly", "senseless" and "nonsense". The hon. member is one of these big men from Toronto who come down here to tell everybody else that nobody else has any sense. The hon. member is the only one who agrees with that opinion.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Alphonse Fournier (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I have never attempted to remonstrate with the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming). He is a young member of parliament who came to the house in 1945 after we had purchased the property at 24 Sussex street. We had never heard his name before and we did not know where he came from until he entered the house and sat at the other end with another young man. When he made his first speech he was a little nervous, but he did not try to abuse anybody. But he has grown older, and when there is an election in the offing he seems to have no control over his words or expressions. He thinks he is as effective outside as he is in the house, but I know that nobody believes what he said tonight about the Prime Minister's residence. I will not say a word more on this because I do not want to imitate the hon. member.

In 1943 or 1944 by expropriation proceedings, not by negotiation, the government purchased the last property available on the Ottawa river in the eastern part of the city. It was a real domain, a lovely property. For twenty-five years both parties had been talking about having a residence for the Prime Minister. This property was not purchased to provide a home for the late prime minister or his successor. The Australian government required space for their offices, and the property was rented to them under a moderate month to month lease. The property was paid for by the Department of Finance after a judgment of the exchequer court set the price at \$140,000. I did not come here tonight prepared to speak on this subject, but as I recall it the owner of the property asked \$275,000. That was a value placed upon the property by the valuers and assessors who gave evidence in the exchequer court. The judge of the court visited the property before rendering judgment.

This was an old residence which had been built in the first years of confederation. Everybody admired the site and the home. That property was paid for; and then in the dying days of the 1949 session the late prime minister—he was not interested in this personally because he was going out of public life—made a moving speech in which he

suggested that this property should be acquired as a residence for the Prime Minister.

Mr. Green: I think it was the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) who made that speech. I was here.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Mr. King made that speech when he was not in the government. It was in the dying days of the last session before the election. Mr. King had received Laurier House from Lady Laurier and had also been provided with sufficient money by friends to renovate the residence. He told us that during his lifetime he would have liked to entertain more people but he did not feel he was able to do that with the salary paid to him as Prime Minister and the cost of upkeep of that residence.

Some days after the opening of the new session my colleague, the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe), told the house that in the absence of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) the government had decided to build a residence for the Prime Minister of Canada. I recall the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) and the leaders of all other parties agreeing that this should be done, that after eighty and some odd years this country should provide a residence for its first citizen where he could receive people. The matter was discussed pro and con and everybody seemed to be in agreement. I think it was a good decision.

We hear many speeches made in an effort to show that we are spending money uselessly, but I do not think it becomes the hon. member for Eglinton to speak in the way he has spoken tonight, especially when he has not given the facts as they actually exist. I think he is a bigger man than that. Sometimes he seems to forget himself.

Mr. Fleming: What we are concerned with is how you spent the other \$460,000?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): If the hon. member will only listen to me perhaps he will learn. I may be wrong, but if so there are many people in Canada who are wrong in the same way. Does the hon. member say that the Prime Minister should still be living in four rooms at the Roxborough? If he does, I do not agree with him.

An hon. Member: No one said that.

Mr. Fleming: That is not the question at all. We are all in favour of providing a residence.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Why should the hon. member interrupt me when I did not interrupt him when he spoke and said everything.

Mr. Fleming: Your colleague interrupted me about fifteen times.