

## [Translation]

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, I did mention that we are seriously considering the possibility of reviewing this policy. Should the hon. member wish to make comments in this regard they will certainly be welcome. At all events, this is not my first intimation of that possibility. I mentioned it on different occasions and I must admit that so far I have not received many comments from hon. members.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let us proceed with orders of the day.

**Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix):** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the hon. member for Charlevoix rising on a question of privilege?

**Mr. Asselin:** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question period came to an end some three or four minutes ago and I believe supplementary questions could be put tomorrow.

● (3:20 p.m.)

[English]

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### PRIME MINISTER'S RESIDENCE ACT

#### AMENDMENTS TO CHANGE NAME AND PROVIDE RESIDENCES OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AND SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council)** moved that Bill C-241, to amend the Prime Minister's Residence Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill requires little explanation. It proposes the maintenance by the Crown of the three residences described therein for the Prime Minister of Canada the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons and the Speaker of the House of Commons on a rent-free basis.

The provisions of the proposed act would be effective as of January 1, 1970, but the present financial outlay to be payable on the Prime Minister's residence will continue at the present rate until the day following the next general election.

The government's decision to seek legislative authority to provide and maintain residences for the holders of these parliamentary offices is in keeping with the report of the Beupré advisory committee on salaries and expenses which recommended that neither the Prime Minister nor the Leader of the Opposition should be required to pay rent for publicly owned residences provided for their official use.

In accepting this particular recommendation, the government also felt that the bill should include provision of rent-free accommodation for the Speaker, and that the application of the principle should be contained in a

### Prime Minister's Residence Act

single piece of legislation. Since existing legislation provides for the operation and maintenance of the Prime Minister's residence at 24 Sussex Drive and at Harrington Lake, I think I might confine my remarks largely to the subjects of the residences for the Leader of the Opposition and the Speaker. I am sure hon. members will be interested in the background to the acquisition of the two properties by the government of Canada and the proposal to make them part of the official residences act.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) occupies a property called Stornoway located in the village of Rockcliffe Park. To a Scot that is a very good name. The title to this property has been held since 1950 by the Royal Trust Company in trust to provide, and I quote from the agreement between that company and the trustees of the property, "a suitable residence for the use and occupation of the leader of the Conservative party or of the Liberal party, whichever shall be in opposition."

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Order!

**Mr. MacEachen:** No rent is paid for the occupancy of Stornoway. In addition, the trustees have paid for the maintenance of the property, including the property taxes, and have provided about 60 per cent of the furnishings.

In 1969, the Hon. Grattan O'Leary, chairman of the board of trustees of Stornoway, approached the government with the proposal that the property be transferred to the government at no cost and maintained in the future by the government as an official residence for the Leader of the official Opposition. At that time Senator O'Leary explained that the purchase of Stornoway was made possible by a group of citizens representing all parties and residents in all of the provinces, who felt that the holder of the office of the Leader of the Opposition, an integral part of our parliamentary structure, should be provided with a residence consistent with the meaning and dignity of his position. These citizens, with others who were added over the years, have continued their contributions to maintain the property in a fitting manner. Senator O'Leary pointed out that Stornoway had been occupied successively by the Hon. George Drew, Right Hon. Lester Pearson, Right Hon. John Diefenbaker and, of course, by the present Leader of the Opposition. It was also made available to the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent for the short time he was Leader of the Opposition in this House.

Having carried the cost and care of the administration of Stornoway for some 20 years, it was the trustees' conclusion that the ownership and administration of the property should justly pass into the hands of the government and, as Senator O'Leary put it, become a part of the parliamentary structure. Negotiations have been completed by the government for the transfer of Stornoway to Her Majesty in right of Canada subject, of course, to the enactment by Parliament of legislation enabling the government to maintain the property as a residence for the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. members are aware, I am sure, that the Speaker of the House occupies a residence called The Farm in