

Research Assistance to Liberal Members

all members should be treated alike. In this respect I am sure that neither the Prime Minister nor anybody else will be surprised when I say that we think that the allocation of funds is not in proportion to the strength of the parties. We think that the amount accorded to our party should be greater, and we shall continue to press for this, but in any case we are making the fullest use that we can of the amount that is made available to our party.

A particular reason for our being in support of this proposition is that we believe it is proper that it should be the Members of Parliament, on whatever side of the House they sit, from whom the government should be getting its advice. We are disturbed over the extent to which the coterie of people who are attached to the Prime Minister's Office and the offices of ministers is growing and is producing what people sometimes refer to as the presidential system. I see the action announced today as an antidote to that.

When we complain about a presidential system we are not thinking just in terms of a name, of the Prime Minister being called the president instead of the Prime Minister, or being greeted with "Hail to the Chief" or something like that. We are thinking rather of the fact that under a presidential system the president makes the decisions on the basis of the advice he gets from those with whom he surrounds himself—his staff, which is responsible only to him. We think that is going in the wrong direction, and that it is to go in the right direction to get more advice from Parliament itself, either on this floor or from the members of the various parties. To the extent that strengthening the work hon. members on the government side can do is an antidote to any movement in the other direction, we welcome it. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was quite right when he noted that his proposal has the support of all parties in the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, for some time I had been expecting such a statement. As a matter of fact, when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) decided to make certain sums of money available to opposition parties for research purposes I wondered why members on the government side did not enjoy the same privileges.

At the time I surmised that the government was no doubt providing them with other documentation facilities. I feel that the action

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

announced by the Prime Minister is excellent since the same advantages are given to all members.

On our part, Mr. Speaker, we have used the funds at our disposal to the best advantage, but people will admit that even before this became the practice we were not doing too badly.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, it will be quite apparent to Your Honour and to all hon. members that there is discrimination here against the independent party consisting of yourself and myself, and I would hope that the government would hasten to remedy this situation.

An hon. Member: Come back to this side, Perry.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a comment on the announcement, if I may.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is not my impression that the hon. member has that status required by the Standing Orders. I should not think that he can make a statement at this time.

Mr. Douglas (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

Mr. Douglas (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the backbenchers who have not had an opportunity to express themselves, I was going to thank the government for this action.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

ALLOWANCES AND DISABILITY PENSIONS—
REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO
MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent of the House to make the following motion under Standing Order 43:

That the matter of increases in war veterans allowances and disability pensions be referred to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs.

I move the motion for the following reasons, and I will be brief. First, the concern with regard to the need for increases in assistance for veterans is continually being