

Supply—Governor General's Office

GOVERNOR GENERAL AND LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS

576. Office of the secretary to the Governor General—further amount required, 50,000.

Mr. St. Laurent: Mr. Chairman, it will have been noticed by hon. members that in the estimates for 1953-54 there is an increase of \$56,000 provided in the item for the office of the secretary to His Excellency the Governor General. Here there is \$50,000 which is not the whole amount of the difference between everything paid for the Governor General's remuneration and allowances and the actual expenditure incurred to discharge the duties and responsibilities of that office. The reason for the proposed increase is that the annual grant for the maintenance, operation and upkeep of government house has not been adjusted to any significant extent since 1914, and since that time costs have of course at least doubled.

The principal increases come under the headings of salaries and wages, provisions, fuel and light. The result has been that during the past year there has been a difference of something of the order of \$5,000 a month between the one-twelfth of the annual provision and the expenditure. It happened that His Excellency's predecessor was able to carry on without there being any increases at all in salaries from those that had been established when he first came to Canada. But with respect to several of the services for which provision had to be made, there was just about twice as much required as had continued to be paid during the term of Lord Alexander.

I think the comptroller of the household is very careful, and these matters were carefully checked by officials of the comptroller of the treasury department so that we might have a realistic picture of what was being done. Those are the actual costs. One of two things had to be done. There either had to be a very substantial reduction in the scale according to which government house has been carrying on, or there had to be an increase to cover the additional expenditure. We thought that it would be the feeling of the Canadian public that there should not be any reduction in the scale on which government house is carried on in Ottawa.

I think most hon. members have been guests at government house, and I do not think any of us have felt that it would be proper that there should be a substantial curtailment in the scale of the expenditures made there. For that reason we are taking the responsibility of recommending to parliament that the required increase should be granted. Unless the scale is to be diminished, we do not think that the people of

Canada would desire that the incumbent of that office should have to make the expense of carrying out his public responsibilities a part of his own personal expenditure. The remuneration, which at the time of confederation was set at £10,000, or the equivalent in dollars at the fixed rate of \$4.86½, and the allowances are all paid into the same account and are insufficient to cover the expenditures which are not, it seems to me, of a scale that is out of proportion with what should be done by the representative of the sovereign in our capital.

When one reads of what went on twenty-five, thirty or forty years ago with respect to entertainment at government house, one realizes that it was possible to do things then that have not been done in these last few years because it would have meant a more grandiose scale than has become the set pattern in the last few years. We felt that the pattern of the last few years should be continued at public expense and it should not be such as would have to be contributed to substantially from the personal income from other sources of the one who had the honour to be designated as the sovereign's representative.

Mr. Lennard: I want it understood that I was not objecting to the amount. I was merely seeking information.

Mr. St. Laurent: Quite so.

Mr. Murphy: I think the minister did not finish his explanation with respect to item 591.

Mr. Abbott: We are on item 576.

The Chairman: We can deal with that later if the hon. member wishes to do so, but let us conclude the discussion on item 576.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, I am sure we all appreciate the remarks the Prime Minister has made as to this item. I know that any criticism anyone offers of this kind of item is sometimes looked upon as carping, but it does seem to me that the total cost of the establishment at government house is getting to be quite a large figure. If my arithmetic is correct, if I can add at least as well as some of those who have been trying to add this afternoon, we will now be spending on the salary of the Governor General and the maintenance of government house a total of \$228,129 a year. That includes the salary of the Governor General of \$48,667, the \$10,000 salary of the secretary, which is provided for in two parts, and something over \$170,000 for the office of the secretary, including the running of government house and various allowances. I am looking at page 26.

Mr. Abbott: This is not a new item. It will be \$206,224.