

Supply—Privy Council

I do doubt, however, whether they should receive that much money, when the man who is entrusted with the responsibility of guiding our country, a responsibility which at times might involve decisions of peace or war, does not receive as high a remuneration as is received by the head of the real estate branch in the government.

That does not make sense to me at all. If I were allowed to state a figure I would be glad to do so. However, I realize I cannot recommend the expenditure of public funds. I must say, however, that no matter who the prime minister of the country may be, he should be amply rewarded. And such reward or remuneration should be entirely free of income tax or any other levies that may be made against it.

A man who holds the position of prime minister in this country carries a terrific responsibility, not only in the duties he discharges in Ottawa but when he represents us in foreign countries. During the discussion of the international wheat agreement today we were told that some 43 countries were taking part. If it is of vital importance that Canada take part in an international wheat agreement, then how much more important must it be that the Prime Minister should be properly rewarded, in so far as we can do it in a monetary fashion.

One of our brightest days was the day we decided to erect a residence for the prime minister of Canada, no matter who he might be. Since we were small boys we have heard about No. 10 Downing street and the White House; and I hope every Canadian will become just as familiar with the residence of the prime minister of Canada, whoever he may be.

I am sure the people of Canada are anxious to have their prime minister properly rewarded in a financial way. Members of the government can recommend the expenditure of money, while private members do not have that privilege. Perhaps they will consider what I have said. It will be recalled that, although Mr. Truman was not even a candidate in the last presidential election, he said before leaving office much the same as I have been saying this afternoon.

We are a greater country than the United States, and we should be prepared to set an example they might follow in future. I realize that, as the Prime Minister is in his seat, he might be embarrassed by what I have said. But I must say that he should not feel embarrassed. He is the prime minister of the day, and there are many who will hope that he will continue to remain

[Mr. Cruickshank.]

so. And so long as he is Prime Minister of Canada he should be accorded the dignity attached to that office, irrespective of party.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I might ask the Prime Minister a general question under this item. As he will recall, the Massey commission some time ago recommended that there be established a Canada council for the encouragement of the arts, letters, humanities and social sciences. Can the Prime Minister tell us what steps have been taken thus far to implement what I am sure he will agree was a very important recommendation?

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Chairman, first of all I must thank the hon. member for Fraser Valley for the good will he expressed toward whosoever may at any time be prime minister of Canada. But I wish to assure him that the only worth-while compensation for whosoever is prime minister of Canada is the feeling that, though all his fellow citizens may not agree with him, they will all admit that he is always trying to do his best for the community at large.

With respect to the creation of a Canada council, I do not know to what extent I might be discussing matters with which I should not deal at this time. I will say, however, that this matter has received very serious consideration. Last summer and early fall there were discussions with several prominent Canadians about it. I hoped at that time that I could induce some of them to say that they would favourably consider assuming the responsibilities that would have to be discharged by the officials of a Canada council.

At that time to my disappointment I found I could not go to my colleagues with the prospect of getting acceptance from the several gentlemen with whom I had discussed the matter. They were all interested; they all told me that they realized the importance to the Canadian nation of the work this would involve, and that at some future date they might be prepared to consider it. They pointed out, however, that just at that time they were not in a position where they could step out of the matters to which they were devoting their time.

I had to come to the conclusion that I was not in a position to recommend a set-up for the kind of council that in my view would meet the objectives aimed at in the recommendations of the Massey commission. Here, too, is a place where we would not be paying money for the services the nation would receive from those who would be discharging the responsibilities that would be