

*National Capital Commission*

King, of course, had Kingsmere. The present Prime Minister inhabits a retreat at Harrington lake but I should not like it thought for an instant that I begrudge him that.

As a matter of fact, my first knowledge of the Prime Minister's visits to Harrington lake came when a waggish neighbour asked me if I knew that John the Baptist had gone into the wilderness. Then, he explained to me the newspaper account of the Prime Minister's going to Harrington lake. I said, "With the burdens that the Prime Minister has to carry today I do not blame him wanting to get the advantage of forest, water and solitude."

However, Mr. Chairman, my reading of history indicates that in the past the title of occupancy of those residences has been established by law or as the result of private ownership. So far as I can judge—and I have not had an explanation yet—this has been the cause of quite a lot of, not caustic but, interesting comment that is always aroused by this type of topic.

The present occupancy of the residence at Harrington lake, as I understand it, is based on rather slim legal foundations. The Prime Minister, coming from the west, may have thought he was living in the pioneer days and that the old squatters' rights still exist. In effect, it may be possible that he took the lead of some of the dictators of ancient Europe who occupied properties by what was known as the right of eminent appreciation, or possibly the federal district commission may have permitted a sort of trial occupancy until the owners, through parliament, decided what the terms of occupancy would be. We do not know what those terms of occupancy are. However, Mr. Chairman, I do think the procedure seems to be irregular and that is all I am going to deal with. I do not envy the Prime Minister one bit enjoying such a place. In fact, any tendency I have had during my lifetime of envying those in prominent and high positions has always been mellowed on remembering these lines in Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard":

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Anyway there is a possibility of a future cabinet with less rectitude than is exhibited by the government in power putting into effect without an order in council and without a bill being adopted by this parliament something along the same lines. The Minister of Transport—I see him here—could occupy a disused wharf shed, as a fishing camp. A minister of justice could occupy an empty penitentiary as a baronial castle. The minister of defence could use some decommissioned destroyer as a private yacht and a

postmaster general might use some antiquated post office mail van as a travelling trailer to spend his holidays in Canada. I can see the minister of public works in some future day making a house boat out of an obsolete dredge, and the secretary of state using the basement of the printing bureau as a private swimming pool. There are infinite possibilities, Mr. Chairman, for a cabinet that has not the conscience and rectitude that the present ministers of the cabinet have.

While everybody recognizes the need for an official country residence for the Prime Minister, this group and some members in other groups, some members in every party and some people in the country think it so necessary that it should be established by law and as a result of legislation in this house.

I want to refer to the bill that was adopted with respect to the official residence of the Prime Minister, and I am very glad that he has an official residence. The act is entitled, "An Act to provide for the Operation and Maintenance of a Residence for the Prime Minister of Canada." Clause 3 states:

The minister of public works shall furnish, maintain, heat and keep in repair the buildings situated on the lands described in the schedule, and the federal district commission shall maintain and, from time to time as required, improve such lands.

By this bill the federal district commission have the authority of parliament to do certain things in connection with the residence of the Prime Minister. I do not know how the present Harrington lake house is being maintained or whether there are any expenditures by the federal district commission for that purpose but, so far as I can find out, there is no actual provision by order in council or by law. In contrast with that, I want to draw briefly to the attention of the committee the remarks of the present Minister of Finance when the bill for the operation and maintenance of the Prime Minister's residence which I have mentioned was under discussion. I find at page 3346 of *Hansard* of 1950 the Minister of Finance, who was in opposition at that time, had this to say, and I expect in his usual, vigorous, lambasting manner;

I think it is time, sir, to face this situation very clearly. What the government has done is this: Without asking for specific approval of parliament, without bringing before the house last fall, as it should have done, a bill to set aside a particular property, if they thought that was the best property, they made an announcement in the house without mentioning anything of that idea. They proceeded by order in council to set aside a house that had been acquired by the government several years before by expropriation for a purpose that we did not then know,—