

Supply—Privy Council

amount that was going to be spent on the maintenance of his residence.

But if we turn from page 380 to page 382 we will discover that according to this book—and I can only assume it is correct—the amount expended in 1967-68, although it is marked as estimated, was only \$37,780. So when we are being asked to vote \$40,300, if I can add and subtract, it looks to me as though instead of spending less on the Prime Minister's residence we are voting \$2,520 more than was spent on the operation and maintenance of the Prime Minister's residence in the previous fiscal year. On the theory that this is the committee of supply in which we examine estimates in detail, could someone explain this to us and in particular tell us what one is to think about this business of giving the nation the notion that a saving of \$800 is being made when in point of fact we are being asked to vote \$2,520 more than was spent in the previous year?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure that anybody made representations that savings were being made. Perhaps these were the conclusions drawn by those who did not analyse the figures put forward as thoroughly as did the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. If he looks at the detail on page 382 to which he has referred he will see that the principal item in the cost of running this establishment is salaries and wages; and I think he will be aware, as most of us are, that during the course of the current year we have been engaged in extensive collective bargaining, the result of which has been generally an increase in the total emoluments paid by the government and received by its employees. One would expect that running the same establishment with the same staff and providing the same degree of facilities would cost more in the current fiscal year than it did in the previous one. As the figure shows, this in fact is borne out.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I think it is now time for me to return to the minister the compliment he paid me a while ago. He told me I was describing the question period honestly. In return I congratulate him on his honesty. He is now making it clear that despite all the publicity about cutting down the cost of running the Prime Minister's residence we are actually going to spend more in this year than we did in the last.

Mr. Drury: That is correct. The hon. member knows that we do not control Mr. Ferguson in his programs.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Perhaps Mr. Ferguson will note this increase and give us another show on it next week.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a few remarks today, and hope they will not be taken as a sign of criticism, or as a complaint. I really want to raise a question about which members of parliament and the public should be concerned. There have been frequent reports from the press in recent months about the very sharp increase in the staff in the Prime Minister's office. I do not have the press clippings here with me today and I do not think it is important that I should read them, but in fact there has been virtually a doubling in the number of people working in the Prime Minister's office. I am not necessarily objecting to this.

● (3:50 p.m.)

When I think of recent Canadian elections in which attention has been focussed on the leaders of the various political parties, when I think of the results of the 1958 and 1968 elections, it seems to me obvious that the Canadian people—and I am not being critical—are paying a good deal more attention to the leadership of the political parties, and are increasingly voting for the candidate to the Prime Minister's office. They cannot do it as directly as do the people of the United States, when they vote for one candidate for president. The people in Canada vote in their constituency for the candidate of the party whose leader they want to be prime minister. I can remember that in the 1958 election in my constituency people came into the polls and wanted to vote for Mr. Diefenbaker. They were surprised when nobody would tell them who Mr. Diefenbaker's candidate was. This was the only time in the last 50 years in which a Conservative was elected in that constituency. As I say, I am not objecting to this. The people of Canada have a right to make this choice if they wish. However, it does seem to me that if we are going to do what, in effect, I think we are doing, that is moving toward a presidential system, then some changes would seem to be necessary in relation to the form of government we have had in this country for many years.

It seems to me that to the extent the Prime Minister's office becomes more important, to the extent the Prime Minister has a larger staff of experts and technicians dealing with general policy matters which traditionally have been dealt with by government departments, the importance of the cabinet is reduced. The Prime Minister's office takes on