

been seconded to the Prime Minister's office. I think that is a very desirable practice to have followed. But the Prime Minister's office should, I believe, be increasingly staffed with its own officials to a number which would be adequate. The same is true of drawing for assistance upon the office of the president of the privy council. That office I think has become one to which a minister of the crown might well give his whole time, regard being had to the extent to which the duties of the office have expanded in recent years, the number of questions that have to be considered, the many subjects, both of national and international concern, that have to be taken up by the cabinet as a whole, to say nothing of the business of the cabinet as it has to be arranged and carried on from day to day.

There is one other thought I should like to express. I can make this observation now when possibly it might have been misunderstood before. I hope that subsequent parliaments will make provision for an official residence for the Prime Minister. Ours is one of the few countries in the world where that has not been done. Personally I have been fortunate in having had Laurier House left to me by Lady Laurier. I was left the house itself, but all its contents were, under Lady Laurier's will, left to her nephews and nieces, as one would expect would be the case. Had it not been for the generosity of friends who helped me to furnish Laurier House, I doubt very much whether I would have been in a position to occupy it. However, through the generosity of some friends, and, in particular, I would mention the late Hon. Peter Larkin, I was fortunate enough to be able to have my house furnished in a way which lends dignity to one's home, and particularly the home of one who is occupying high office.

I hope through a kind Providence I may be spared for some years to enjoy Laurier House as my home. I should, however, be very sorry indeed if my successor in the office of Prime Minister were to find himself in the position in which I have been right along of being obliged, in addition to paying taxes on his income, his salaries and the like, to have to pay taxes on the house in which he is living and which is regarded by most people as an official residence and be obliged to provide the lighting and the heating, as well as the necessary services, and to have in addition to look after maintenance and repairs.

There is an impression among a great many people in this country that Laurier House has been maintained by the state. It has been maintained by myself personally out of my own pocket and my own income, and if I

have not been able to invite my hon. friend and some members who are about me at the moment and many others as often as I should like to have done and extended as much in the way of hospitality as I should like to have done, that is one of the reasons. I hope that my successor, whoever he may be, and subsequent gentlemen holding the office of Prime Minister will not be embarrassed in that way. The obligations are very great indeed upon the individual who holds the high office of Prime Minister of his country. The state should seek to make the leader of its government independent of considerations of the kind, that he may give his whole time and thought and energy to the discharge of his public duties in the largest possible way.

Item agreed to.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

Federal district commission—

809. To authorize the establishment of a special account in the consolidated revenue fund, to be known as the national capital fund, consisting of such amounts as may be appropriated by parliament for the purpose out of which the Minister of Finance may from time to time, on the recommendation of the president of His Majesty's privy council for Canada, pay to the federal district commission amounts to be expended by the federal district commission with the approval of the governor in council for the construction, operation and maintenance of works or projects within the national capital district in keeping with an approved general plan for the improvement and development of the national capital and not in the nature of ordinary municipal improvements—amount required for the fund, to be effective July 1, 1948, \$2,500,000.

Mr. McLURE: I would ask the Prime Minister with reference to this item of \$2,500,000 for the national capital fund, whether he proposes to implement his suggestion of a year ago and appoint a man from each of the provinces of Canada to the national capital planning committee.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am glad my hon. friend has asked that question. The answer is yes. The reason no appointments have been made up to the present is that it was thought advisable to wait until the time when parliament had expressed its intention to carry out the larger essential developments, the first of which was mentioned the other day.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

532. Departmental administration, \$2,253,340.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Inasmuch as the hour is so late in respect of both the evening and the session I would be very happy to be