

*Judges Act*

Shefford (Mr. Rondeau) who urges the minister to appoint a greater number of judges to speed up justice and increase its efficiency.

In concluding my remarks, I should like to congratulate the minister for introducing bill C-114, and I hope he will introduce other bills of this kind, so that justice will be a reality, especially in the case of underprivileged people.

• (4:50 p.m.)

[English]

**Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants):** Mr. Speaker, I shall forgo the speech I had planned to make because I think we can pass this measure before five o'clock. I wish to ask the Minister of Justice a question but first of all I should like to preface it in this manner. The remarks of the hon. and learned member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams), about the Exchequer Court of Canada were quite impressive. I believe it is important that justice not be remote from the people and that the courts be as close to the people as they can possibly be. This is a point we made without success during the consideration of the divorce bill. We attempted to have a provision included that would automatically give county court judges jurisdiction in divorce matters.

I should like to ask the minister whether these 11 new judges of the Superior Court of Quebec will all be charged with jurisdiction in divorce cases. If he nods his head "yes" I will have completed my speech. He does not nod his head and therefore I shall ask him during the committee stage to give an explanation.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the said motion?

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Faulkner in the chair.

On clause 1.

**Mr. McCleave:** Mr. Chairman, is the Minister of Justice prepared to answer my question at this point?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** During the second reading stage the hon. member asked me whether the 11 new judges would all be employed in the divorce division. As I understand it, one out of the three judges in the Quebec appeal district is being appointed because of the increased jurisdiction relating to divorce, and five out of the eight judges in the Montreal appeal district. They will not be

divorce judges. As judges of the superior court they will be assigned on a rotating basis to various divisions of the court as is the case now in respect of the bankruptcy division and so on.

**Mr. McCleave:** I compliment the minister on that answer. The fact is that none of them is a divorce judge per se. They will simply be assigned to that duty. The minister nods his head indicating he is content with what I have said and therefore I also am content.

**Mr. Howard (Skeena):** Has the minister or the government looked at the possibility of participating with the provinces in helping to finance the legal aid program and extend it if necessary?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** We are reviewing the legal aid programs in the provinces at the moment to see what distinctions there are in the various systems. I shall not be in a position to answer this question until we have the factual background.

[Translation]

**Mr. Asselin:** Mr. Chairman, since the administration of justice comes under provincial jurisdiction, I should like the minister to tell me whether the provincial ministers of justice or attorneys general make recommendations to him, as regards the appointment of judges.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I have understood the question correctly. Does the hon. member want to know whether the provincial attorneys general recommend certain appointments?

**Mr. Asselin:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Chairman, it does not happen too often.

**Mr. Asselin:** Mr. Chairman, I should like to know if the provinces decided to make such recommendations, whether the hon. minister would consider them.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Chairman, I receive suggestions from everywhere.

**Mr. Asselin:** Mr. Chairman, I should also like to say that I come from a rural area, and it can be said that good lawyers of rural law associations have not always been treated fairly with regard to the appointment of judges to the Superior Court as made by the Department of Justice. In view of the fact