

planation of the item, that I find that the work of the Indian Department suffers by reason of the fact that we do not have the exclusive service of a solicitor. There is a very considerable amount of work that involves legal knowledge in connection with the construction of the Indian Act, the Indian Advancement Act, the legal advice to agents and the conduct of disputes, and preparation of questions with regard to disputes, that arise in reference to the various treaties; and it is, I find, almost impossible to have these matters satisfactorily disposed of unless I have some person who will perform the duties of a law clerk, and will be able to deal with these matters, and give them his constant attention. I in no way reflect upon the conduct of the work of Mr. Newcombe, the Deputy Minister of Justice, but the difficulty arises in the preparation of questions, and in watching legal matters which are referred when they are very important, to the Department of Justice, and when they are not very important, are decided by clerks of the department. I think the work would be much more effectively done if we had a law clerk, and I therefore ask for provision to be made for one. There is a considerable number of matters which specially require attention in that direction, which I expect to take up after the present session of Parliament is over, and there is no immediate necessity why a clerk should be appointed until some time after the 1st of July.

Mr. FOSTER. I hope my hon. friend does not propose, in carrying on his department where so many intricate questions arise, to make a law clerk the arbiter of legal questions.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Yes, unless it is an important matter. There are many minor matters which could be conducted by an ordinary lawyer. Of course specially important matters will be referred to myself, and I will refer them to the Minister of Justice, as is the practice in other departments. There are, however, more minor legal matters in connection with this department than in connection with any department except perhaps the Department of the Interior. Of course this officer will not handle important cases, but he will act rather as a solicitor, the important matters being referred to the Minister of Justice in the regular course.

Mr. FOSTER. Then this officer will be an intelligent clerk who will deal with certain matters, and important questions will be referred to the Department of Justice. The hon. Minister has made another break. He is asking an appropriation to pay for two private secretaries.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Yes.

Mr. FOSTER. I suppose the hon. gentleman has read the political history of this country for the last five, six or ten years?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. The "Debates?" I confess I have not read them all.

Mr. FOSTER. Then the hon. gentleman is at a disadvantage, and he does not know what kind of stone wall he is running against. Of course he has never come down and asked allowances for two private secretaries. He is not aware probably that by all the strong men in the Opposition this crime of having two private secretaries for one Minister was very strongly reprehended. It never ceased to be a ground of contention when the Estimates were up, and a ground of condemnation of the Minister for his extravagance and of the department for its extreme extravagance. I am sorry the Hon. David Mills, who now has a seat in another and higher sphere, is not present. I am sure the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) if not so verbose was just as eloquent in condemning a Minister for having two private secretaries; but the hon. member for Bothwell at that time particularly attacked the Department of Indian Affairs for its tremendous extravagance, and one of his main points was that there was a second private secretary. So strong was the cannonade, so furious and fast were the bombs and shells that in his good nature the Minister of the Interior gave way, and wagged along for two or three years with one private secretary, and seemed to do very well. Now, we have a new Minister, and the first thing he does is to make this terrible demand on the conscientious convictions of his supporters by asking them for a second private secretary. Would it not be the best thing, in the interest of the hon. gentleman's own friends, to drop the item?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Will the hon. gentleman say he objects to it?

Mr. FOSTER. Yes.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. On what grounds?

Mr. FOSTER. Simply because I think you ought to do with one. And if not, for shame's sake, when a party has year after year inveighed strongly against the appointment of two private secretaries, the hon. gentleman ought not to ask for two. He even should not have a double one—he should have only one.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I fancy the hon. gentleman in his desire to exercise the talent which he possesses as a debater is losing sight of the fact that the purpose of asking for Estimates for the Department of Indian Affairs is to get the business of the department done in the most efficient way possible. I suppose the hon. gentleman will admit that, for it is a simple proposition. It is purely a question of how the service shall be organized, as to whether by