

are they not rendering service equal to or comparable with that of men employed by the government? Yet who provides for them if they do not themselves provide a competence for their old age? Probably they would have to apply to the government for an old age pension. I submit that these employees are fairly and generously dealt with and that in this particular case it would be an outrage on the public to give any man who had received a salary of \$15,000 a year an annuity of \$6,300 for the rest of his life.

I am sorry that after having been in this house for four or five years, I find myself not in accord with the views of the members of the government. But we have been told by the Minister of Finance that this is a matter of individual judgment. I propose to exercise my individual judgment on this matter, and if it comes to a vote I shall vote against the additional allowance.

Mr. VIEN: It might be useful to remind hon. members that acrimonious debates have taken place in this house with respect to salaries of the judges of Canada. These salaries do not compare favourably with salaries paid to judges of similar courts in Great Britain or the United States. Many eminent lawyers have refused appointments to our high courts, because of the inadequate compensation provided for in the law. Before begrudging the salaries paid to our judges, one should remember that these gentlemen are entrusted with our lives, our property and freedom. It is essential that the best talents be attracted to the bench. How could you do so with the meagre salary which does not equal one-half or one-fourth of the salary which eminent counsel could command, when, in their own professional practice, they can earn from \$30,000 to \$100,000 a year.

Mr. HOMUTH: If they work for the government.

Mr. VIEN: My point is that if you do not pay to judges of the high courts a salary that will attract the best lawyers you will get appointees of inferior quality. And yet in their hands you confide your life, your property and your freedom.

Mr. McCANN: Is the gentleman in question a lawyer?

Mr. VIEN: No.

Mr. McCANN: Then what is the point of the argument?

Mr. VIEN: I am drawing a parallel between judges of the high courts and the auditor general of Canada. The auditor general reports to parliament; he does so over and above

[Mr. McCann.]

the ministers of the crown. Every year, in the report of the auditor general, there is to be found independent criticism of the administration of departments. The correspondence exchanged between the departments and the auditor general on points in dispute is published in his report. Is it not extremely important for parliament and country that the auditor general be a man of the highest character? That was a decisive factor considered when the services of Mr. Gonthier were retained. Therefore, if a man is appointed to a position of such high standing, and appointed for life, how can he be treated as an ordinary civil servant? The compensation provided for him in the estimates is far from being adequate if you want to do him justice.

Mr. McCANN: Had the gentleman in question a contract with the government?

Mr. VIEN: He had.

Mr. McCANN: What was the nature of the contract?

Mr. VIEN: Just the same as the supreme court judges.

Mr. McCANN: No.

Mr. VIEN: My hon. friend says no. Let us compare the two cases. A lawyer is called to the supreme court bench; there is an order in council appointing him, and a statute fixing his compensation. The auditor general is appointed by order in council, he is called to be the auditor general. There is a statute, the Auditor General's Act, which provides for his salary. He is appointed for life and cannot be removed except by an address of both houses of parliament, like a judge of the supreme or exchequer court.

Mr. STIRLING: I have already asked for the order in council in question. It seems to me that would go a long way towards settling this matter.

Mr. McNEVIN: I have no desire to labour this point, but I should like to suggest that occupying ministerial positions in the government we have men who are making great sacrifices in the public interest, for whom no pension or superannuation provisions are made at all. Men occupying these positions have great demands made upon their resources by the public. I consider that the former auditor general has been well treated in the matter of his superannuation allowance, and I register my objection to this additional grant.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): I do not want to contribute to this debate at any length, but I think this affords an opportunity to discuss