

of money annually to the Government in counsel fees.

Mr. FRIPP: The minister has missed the point. The point of the amendment is that the Chief Electoral Officer shall be given the same superannuation as a puisne judge. When you retain counsel you do not superannuate him; you pay him for the work he does, and that is an end of the matter. Why should this gentleman be given superannuation the same as a puisne judge simply because he is a special officer of the Department of Justice at a salary of \$10,000? It is absolutely unfair to the rest of the service to select one man for this favoured treatment. Why should he because he is holding these dual positions be given superannuation the same as a puisne judge of the Supreme Court of Canada? It is a new departure, and as far as I am personally concerned I desire to register my protest against it, because if this proposal is carried into effect you leave the door open to other men employed in the Government service the same right to come here and ask to be paid superannuation upon a much higher scale than they can get under the present Civil Service Act.

Mr. GUTHRIE: This is not a case of superannuation, at all. The object of the Government and, I fancy, the object of the House is to appoint to the position of Chief Electoral Officer a man who is absolutely removed from political influence or control, who is at the beck or call of nobody. In order to have such a man, you must make his tenure of office secure, absolutely removed from the power of the Government to displace the individual from office. I may say that Colonel Biggar is not an applicant for this position. He has been consulted on several occasions and finally he has agreed to accept the position. He is a young man, an active practitioner, and the salary involved would be nothing to a man of his prospects. In order, however, to secure a man in permanent position absolutely removed from political influence, we have agreed to give him the same tenure of office as that of a Supreme Court judge, with the same salary and the same retiring allowance if he lives to entitle himself to such. That is the object we sought to attain. We are not adding this on to his present duties. We are creating this office by Act of Parliament for the first time in Canada. We realize that after the work is organized, as he will organize it, it will not take all his time. In years when there is

[Mr. Guthrie.]

no general election, the work will take only a small portion of his time, and we want to utilize his ability during those off years. This is too large a salary to pay a man for work of this character, unless he has other duties to perform. We intend, therefore, to use his ability as much as possible during all the intervening years when there is no general election, and I think, in the end, we are going to save money by so doing. This will certainly relieve us of the necessity, in many important cases, of employing eminent counsel.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I am glad, indeed, to agree with the Minister of Militia on at least one feature of this law. If we accept the principle that there must be a Chief Electoral Officer, that man must be independent of the Government of the day, and he must be placed in such a position as to make him independent of any Government or party. The only way to do that is to place him in the same position as the judges of the land and, therefore, I am in perfect accord with this disposition. I have not the pleasure of knowing Colonel Biggar personally, but I have been told that he is a well qualified lawyer and a gentleman who would not lend himself to anything that would not be just and fair to everybody. I certainly support this resolution.

Mr. BEST: I am not opposed to the salary which it is proposed to pay, but I think when an employee of the Government is in receipt of a salary of ten thousand to twelve thousand dollars a year, that ought to be sufficient. Many people living to-day in Canada have done very much more for this country than many men who are superannuated, and I am strictly opposed to the superannuation of any one. I do not believe in bringing up a race of paupers in this country. It will soon be that all the lawyers will be superannuated—

Mr. LAPOINTE: That might be better for the community.

Mr. BEST: —and we may later have the doctors superannuated. I am in favour of paying every Government employee a good salary and of letting them take care of what they get and save something for the future. Ninety-five per cent of the people of the Dominion of Canada, if misfortune should overtake them, have no superannuation to fall back upon and they would have to go to the poor house. That being the case, is it any wonder that the common people of this country are rising up to oppose this principle of superannuation? I think it is a great crime. We have to-day in our county