

Act, and that all his other time will be at the disposal of the Government free. He will not be entitled to take any private practice; his full time must be given to Government work, but the first claim on his time will be in connection with his duties as Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Will he still act as counsel for the Government generally?

Mr. GUTHRIE: Yes, in any matters outside his duties as Chief Electoral Officer. He will be bound to perform without further remuneration any other duties in the way of counsel work, inquiry or the like, which the Government may ask him to perform.

Mr. POWER: Will he be an employee of the Department of Justice?

Mr. GUTHRIE: No, of the House of Commons.

Mr. POWER: But as Chief Government Counsel?

Mr. GUTHRIE: He will be at the direction of the Attorney General so far as counsel work is concerned.

Mr. POWER: Of the Solicitor General?

Mr. GUTHRIE: But he shall do all such further work as the Government may instruct him to do. I am satisfied that in Colonel Biggar's appointment we have made an excellent choice. I am perhaps as familiar as anybody with the present Franchise Bill, and I am satisfied that we want a man in charge as Chief Electoral Officer who is thoroughly un-partisan, who has youth on his side, who is thoroughly qualified as a lawyer, and who is of a judicial temperament and capable of coming to rapid decisions upon difficult legal problems which will arise under the Act, and I am satisfied that Colonel Biggar possesses all these qualifications in an eminent degree. The Government has very great confidence in recommending him for the appointment, and it is gratifying to know that the Government's action in this respect concerning the Franchise Bill has, I think, the unqualified concurrence of my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition.

I have therefore much pleasure in moving that the resolution be
3 p.m. amended as I have read it to the House.

Mr. FIELDING: What will be the tenure of office?

Mr. GUTHRIE: As stated in the Bill. This is only the financial clause.

Mr. FRIPP: Is the Mr. O. M. Biggar referred to Mr. Oliver Mowat Biggar?

Mr. GUTHRIE: Yes.

Mr. FRIPP: Then it would require some stretch of the imagination on the part of most of us to adhere to the idea that he is non-partisan. I understand that when Mr. Oliver Mowat Biggar resided in Edmonton he was a very active politician on the Liberal side.

Mr. WHITE: Not at all.

Mr. FRIPP: That is my information. Then I would like to ask the minister in charge why it is necessary to change from the Parliamentary Counsel, who undoubtedly is non-partisan and who has had a long experience in the service of the Government. I would further like to have some information as to the duties performed by Mr. Biggar in the Department of Justice. If he is Chief Counsel in that department at \$10,000 a year, why is it necessary to retain Mr. Tilley to conduct the arbitration proceedings in respect to the acquisition of the Grand Trunk Railway system?

Mr. GUTHRIE: I am not very familiar with the proceedings in connection with the Grand Trunk arbitration, and therefore I do not know that I could give my hon. friend an answer to that question. I do know from all inquiries that I have made—and I have inquired in a good many directions—that I am assured, and I think my colleagues in the Government have been assured, that Mr. Biggar is in no sense of the word a partisan, and never has been. He is not now and I do not think ever has been actively engaged in politics. So far as his legal attainments are concerned, I think his standing at the Bar is known throughout the length and breadth of the country. I am aware that since the beginning of the year, at all events, his time has been very fully engaged in Government Counsel work—not always before the courts, but in respect to various Government commissions. It has been found very much cheaper for the Department of Justice to employ Mr. Biggar at a straight salary of \$10,000 than to employ counsel, as has been the practice for many years heretofore, as and when we require them. I may tell my hon. friend that counsel fees have gone up enormously, and it is no uncommon thing to have to pay a fee of \$5,000, and perhaps more, in a single case. I think the Government has had that experience. I am satisfied that the salary paid to Mr. Biggar saves a large amount