

*Supply—Justice*

**Mr. Crestohl:** When the minister speaks of additional officers does he refer to the estimate of the additional solicitors he said he would require?

**Mr. Fulton:** No. In any event, we have three vacancies on the present establishment. We have come to the conclusion that we will, whether the amendments now before the house pass or not, require two additional officers. If the amendments do pass, we think we would require a maximum at the present time of three additional officers on top of that.

**Mr. Crestohl:** Can the minister tell us whether the vacancy on the commission has already been filled or when it is expected it will be filled?

**Mr. Fulton:** No, the vacancy has not been filled and has not been filled for the reason that I have been waiting, first of all, to complete my study of the act and make my recommendations to the house as to the amendments that should be made. I would expect that, shortly after the amendments go through, because they do involve the assumption by the commission of additional responsibilities by way of report, I will be making the appointment to the vacancy on the commission.

Item agreed to.

158. Bankruptcy Act administration, \$52,620.

**Mr. Aiken:** There is one matter I should like to bring up on this item, Mr. Chairman. For several months now hon. members have been receiving voluminous letters concerning a certain bankruptcy matter in the city of Vancouver. They are being brought to our attention by one Samuel Morris, and a good many of those letters have been received. The author of the letters seems to feel that he has been badly mishandled and wronged in the courts of the country, and he goes so far as to allege fraud against certain individuals in connection with the bankruptcy. He names persons by name and he makes very strong allegations about them. What strikes me is that if there is no substance to his allegations he may be subject to very serious charges of criminal libel or something of that nature, but so far as I know up to this time no one has objected to the allegations he has made.

**Mr. Crestohl:** Has he brought charges?

**Mr. Aiken:** As far as I know he has not. Can the minister tell the house whether his department has taken any action in this matter or whether he intends to? The correspondence is very voluminous. It is difficult to sort out and really find out what the man is getting at without actually having the facts. It is for that reason that I bring it

[Mr. Fulton.]

to the attention of the minister, to see if he has any comment to make and to see if there is anything that is worthy of the attention of the minister under this vote.

**Mr. Fulton:** Mr. Chairman, I do not have the details in front of me but my recollection is fairly clear that this was a case in which there was an allegation of fraud in connection with a bankruptcy prosecution. Our investigation of the nature of the allegation satisfied us that there was nothing here that we could see that brought the matter under federal jurisdiction. The indication was rather that the question of action to be taken by governmental authority was one for the decision of the provincial government. Accordingly we referred the matter to the attorney general of British Columbia and I received an answer from him which indicated that he was causing an inquiry to be made. Since the first reference I have received further correspondence both on behalf of Mr. Morris and from others who were interested in his case and in each instance I have referred the additional correspondence to the attorney general of British Columbia. My present information is that he is still investigating the matter to see whether any and, if so, what action should be taken at the provincial level.

**Mr. Aiken:** My recollection of the correspondence is that the law society of British Columbia was also mentioned and that the conduct of a solicitor was brought into question. I am wondering whether this has been brought to the attention of the law society of British Columbia.

**Mr. Fulton:** I would imagine that the attorney general of the province would refer any matter involving the disciplining of a solicitor in British Columbia to the treasurer of the law society for such appropriate action as would be indicated. In any event, that would be a matter to be dealt with by the disciplinary body of the British Columbia law society.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Does the increase in this vote reflect an increase in the number of bankruptcies? Without too much research, can the minister readily give us the statistics on bankruptcies for the fiscal year?

**Mr. Fulton:** The increase in the vote is \$1,487 made up of \$687 on account of salaries, \$500 on account of travelling expenses and \$300 on account of office stationery, supplies and equipment for the Bankruptcy Act administration. With respect to the number of bankruptcies, my hon. friend asked for a comparison between the last fiscal year and the year before?