appreciate very much, and which will facilitate sending this bill to the committee.

The bill before us would authorize additional salaries for judicial positions involving 15 judges throughout the provinces of Canada and additional positions as well as salaries with respect to four judges in the case of the federal court. In view of the increase in the workload in the federal court, there is a requirement for these judges to be available in order to keep up with appeals which may reach that court and with applications which may reach it in connection with a variety of boards and tribunals.

With respect to the 15 judges throughout the provinces, the legislation matches the positions which have been created by provincial legislation. The positions have been created in accordance with the judgment of the various attorneys-general of the provinces, as confirmed by our own investigations with respect to requirements and needs.

In this bill we are adding an additional feature in the creation of a group of potential salaries that will be available for matching with future positions that may be created by the provinces. We want thereby to be in the position to move relatively expeditiously when it appears that there is a need for an additional judicial position as determined, as usual, by the judgment in the first instance of the provincial attorney-general, after which we can make the necessary appointment in order to expedite the handling of judicial matters which are so important to all our citizens.

The additional feature in the bill is an amendment to the supernumerary provisions which were introduced in the last amendment to the Judges Act. Here, we propose to recognize the desirability on occasion of making it possible for judges who have reached the age of 65 and who have served for at least 15 years in the court to move into the supernumerary category and thereby, although no longer being called on to assume a complete load of work, to be available still at the call of the chief justice to serve the court and, therefore, to further expedite justice. It seems, in view of the younger appointments which have been made, that it is appropriate to move the supernumerary provisions in that direction. We must recognize that, on occasion, judges who have reached that age may find it most desirable to remove themselves from the necessity to carry a full load. Under these provisions, however, they are still to be available to the court to do a portion of the work, as the chief justice may find suitable. I commend the bill to members and its study in committee for the facilitation of judicial causes throughout the country.

● (1720)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, this is an example of allocation of time by consent, a consent that I am very glad to facilitate on behalf of our party.

As the minister said, the purpose is very simple, namely to add certain judicial positions and salaries to the federal, provincial and county courts. We are not discussing jurisdiction. If we had been, perhaps many of us would have wanted to speak at a little greater length.

[Mr. Lang.]

I think the minister agrees that some of the terminology now in the bill does not make very much sense in modern times. My own province of New Brunswick has to all intents and purposes abolished the word "county". I agree it is up to the provincial legislatures to make the changes to their statutes to accommodate this. However, I am always struck by the anomaly in contemporary times of having this divided jurisdiction, that is county or district judges and Supreme Court judges. I hope we will soon move to the position where there will be a supreme court or a superior court. As a matter of fact, I think this division goes back to the days when travel was difficult. It was a good idea to have an identifiable justice near the scene of litigation, so to speak. Nowadays, there is much more mobility and flexibility. Perhaps some of the problems would be overcome if we moved from the provincial courts straight to the supreme or superior court of the particular province.

I commend the minister for clause 10. I think it is an excellent idea. It will mean that the provinces will not be at the beck and call of this institution when they feel they need additional judges. Except for one or two days of emergency debate last September, we had the experience of not having a parliament from June to January and the minister vying with other ministers to get his legislation considered by parliament. This additional judge provision in clause 10 will give the minister and the provinces a needed flexibility. It is interesting that it has taken so long to think up what seems to me to be a rather sensible and simple proposal.

I hope the government, particularly the minister, will look at a bill standing in my name which discusses in statutory form the matter of judges taking on additional duties. I am in no way to be understood as commenting on the very special work being done by the Law Reform Commission. However, I have long felt that if governments could avoid making judges sort of whipping boys on rather difficult labour negotiations, conciliations, arbitrations and so on, the country and the independent judiciary would be better served. It has been a curious thing about our development of jurisprudence that we have always gone to the judges. We have the other place with very distinguished Senators and people in the academic community and many other walks of life who could fulfil this independent role that is so essential and at the same time move judges out of the hurly-burly of things that may have political overtones.

We will be glad to help move along the bill and will await its more deliberative discussion or examination in the committee.

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I, too, will attempt to be as brief as possible. We support the bill. We wish to expedite its passage here today so that it can go to committee for a more detailed discussion.

We particularly welcome it because we know something about the backlog of trials that have accumulated, both in the federal courts and in the courts of the provinces. I checked the situation in my province of British Columbia today. If you set down a trial in the Supreme Court today, you are given a date in February, 1974. That assumes all the pleadings have been done to this point. With regard to divorces, in my city of New Westminster, no uncontested