

near-Cabinet rank will be no surprise to those who have followed events at Ottawa.

It has been an open secret for some time that the Government intended the next Solicitor-General to be more than a figurehead, as has usually been the case in the past. Anyone acquainted with the new Solicitor-General knows that he will not only undertake, but will seek for useful work which ought to be done by the incumbent of that position.

We have, before now, urged in these pages that the office of Solicitor-General should either be abolished or that the Solicitor-General should be given work which would make him a natural successor to the Minister of Justice, for which position the value of training and experience need not be emphasized. At the present time the Department of Justice is notoriously undermanned. The experience and ability of the present Deputy Minister (Mr. Newcombe) enables him to do more than should be expected of any one man, but it cannot be expected that he can give sufficient attention to all of the many matters coming before him. The Departmental work is heavy, and even with a numerically large staff the Deputy himself must have personal knowledge of it. In addition to Departmental work, Mr. Newcombe takes Government briefs in the Supreme and Exchequer Courts and before the Privy Council.

Without venturing to suggest what the duties of the Solicitor-General ought to be, we think we have sufficiently indicated that a good man can render most valuable assistance to the Minister of Justice and to his Department. Further, he should have such knowledge of the Department as would enable him to speak authoritatively and to answer questions in the House in the absence of the Minister of Justice, following the practice of Under Secretaries in the Parliament of Great Britain.

We congratulate both the Government and Mr. Meighen on the present appointment.