

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

STATEMENT ON RESUMPTION OF ELEVATOR SERVICE IN PEACE TOWER

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Robert H. Winters (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. member for Oxford asked when the elevator in the peace tower would be back in operation. The answer is that it will be in full operation tomorrow.

CIVIL DEFENCE

PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN EVACUATION EXERCISE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. M. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): May I ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare whether, since a major international civil defence exercise is planned for this summer, members of this house will be called upon to co-operate in the evacuation plan if the house is still in session?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Having in mind the date of the exercise to which my hon. friend directs my attention, I do not know whether I am to construe from his question that this is an indication that we are going to be here in session as a result of his persistence. In any event, the matter which he raises is, as he would expect, fully under consideration.

JUDGES ACT

AMENDMENT TO PROVIDE SALARIES FOR ADDITIONAL JUDGES IN QUEBEC AND BRITISH COLUMBIA

Hon. Stuart S. Garson (Minister of Justice) moved that the house go into committee to consider the following resolution:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Judges Act to provide salaries for four additional judges of the superior court of Quebec and two additional judges of the supreme court of British Columbia.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Robinson (Simcoe East) in the chair.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, it might, I think, shorten the discussion if the minister would just tell the committee in general terms the nature of the request and the reasons for it. I know in my own province there have been requests and I imagine the same is true of the province of Quebec, but perhaps we might have the details.

Mr. Garson: Mr. Chairman, as hon. members are all aware, in our judicial system in Canada the provincial legislatures determine by provincial legislation the number

Judges Act

of judicial vacancies that there are from time to time upon provincial courts. Where the business of the courts increases to the point that an additional number of judges are necessary the required provincial legislation is passed to create these additional vacancies. After the additional vacancies have been created in this way we here at Ottawa take the power by an amendment to the federal Judges Act, such as is being ushered in by this resolution, to make appointments to fill these new judicial vacancies in provincial courts.

In the present case the amendment covers two additional judges to the trial division of the supreme court of British Columbia and four additional appointments to the superior court of the province of Quebec. I have satisfied myself by inquiries that there is ample reason for the provincial legislation being passed to create these vacancies and that it is necessary that we should take the power by means of the legislation to which this resolution will lead, to fill those vacancies in due course.

Mr. Fulton: With respect to the two additional appointments being provided for the province of British Columbia, when were those requested? My recollection is that last year provision was made out there for one additional judge and that a request was made for one additional judge. My recollection may be faulty but it seems to me that the request for the second judge must be somewhat more recent. Could the minister confirm that impression; or if I am wrong, can he tell me when the request was received?

Mr. Garson: So far as we are concerned, Mr. Chairman, the request does not really become too effective until the provincial legislature has actually passed the legislation. As I am sure my friend the hon. member for Kamloops himself is aware, that legislation was proclaimed within the last two or three weeks. In other words, we had been having correspondence with the attorney general of British Columbia and with the chief justice of the court in British Columbia prior to that time but we were not in a position to take too great cognizance of that until the actual vacancies had been created and the provincial act passed to that end had been proclaimed.

Mr. Fulton: That was just this spring, then.

Mr. Castleden: Can the minister give the house a breakdown of the number of supreme court cases by provinces and also the number of cases per judge over say a five-year period?