

Supply—Justice

Mr. Fulton: I think there may be an error of one in my figures. If my hon. friend looks at page 216 he will see that there are 17 senior advisory counsel as opposed to 16, 11 advisory counsel as opposed to 10, 3 advisory counsel grade 1 as opposed to 1. That accounts, I think, for an increase of four. I am told that one administrative officer grade 5 is a lawyer.

Mr. Pearson: He is an administrative officer.

Mr. Fulton: That makes an increase of five. Each one of those five requires a stenographer. I am told there are in addition two stenographers to take care of the extra work in two other sections; the extra work which, as I said, is accumulating and which is in part reflected by the addition of the five extra lawyers on the staff.

Mr. Pearson: On the same page there is a new appointment, an assistant private secretary. He appears in this list as private secretary to the Solicitor General. Is this assistant private secretary to the Solicitor General a new appointment?

Mr. Fulton: No; that is an assistant private secretary to the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Pearson: And that is a new appointment?

Mr. Fulton: That is correct.

Mr. Benidickson: An extra item of expense.

Mr. Richard (Ottawa East): Mr. Chairman, this gives me the opportunity to renew my annual plea to the Minister of Justice to set the wheels going to amend the Expropriation Act, or to study the Expropriation Act. As I have said before, the Expropriation Act in itself is an abrogation of civil rights and should be used sparingly. The Expropriation Act as it stands on our statute books now is very old. It was designed in the first place for strict government use in the days when it was first passed. For example, it was used for the expropriation of land for post offices, defence projects, etc. Over a number of years now the Expropriation Act has been used for various purposes for which it was not originally intended. That is why the provisions of the original Expropriation Act act unfairly toward the people whose property is expropriated. There are many cases of that. For example, I have brought this before the house many times, the case of land expropriated for parks or other purposes for the federal district commission.

I spoke to the Minister of Justice about this some time ago and he intimated to me that something was being done about the Expropriation Act. I might say, of course,

[Mr. Pearson.]

that I am not alone; there is enough correspondence I am sure with the Minister of Justice. There are also articles in the bar reviews and judgments of the exchequer court and other courts, all of which complain of the growing use of the Expropriation Act and the restricted clauses which do not define properly the basis upon which a value should be placed of lands which are expropriated. Therefore, without saying very much, I know the Minister of Justice knows what I am talking about. He appreciates, having read the bar reviews and the articles and judgments I have referred to, that something should be done with regard to the Expropriation Act to re-define it according to better modern usage.

Mr. Fulton: I might tell the hon. member that we have been studying the Expropriation Act within the department and we have now got to the point where it has become necessary for us to circularize other departments concerned. We have written all the other departments concerned and are awaiting their replies. As soon as their replies are received we shall be able to move our own studies forward.

Mr. Roberge: Mr. Chairman, on that question of the increase in staff in the office of the Solicitor General, I should like to refer the question to the Minister of Justice. I assure the minister that I am doing so not at all in the way of anti-friendship for the Solicitor General. On the contrary, the hon. Solicitor General is the only schoolmate I have in this house, and we were received at the bar in the same year and I have high regard for him. But I would like to know if possible the breakdown of the personnel working in this office of the Solicitor General.

Mr. Fulton: I will obtain that and give the hon. gentleman a detailed reply before the estimates are carried.

Mr. McIlraith: I would like to ask the Minister of Justice when he is dealing with the subject of expropriation if he would examine into the reason for the delays in his department in the handling of payments after settlement is made on land purchases through the national capital commission. I may tell him that there has been a considerable extension of the time required to make payment of those settlements after they leave the national capital commission and before they are received in the hands of his agents who actually deal with the closing out of the transactions. Would he look into that matter and seek to rectify it?