

Supply—Justice

opposed to 7 last year; in the legal branch of the department, there are 116 as opposed to 103 last year. The increase, therefore, is mainly accounted for by the increased number of persons in the legal branch of the department.

Mr. Pearson: Page 216 of the blue book shows that there has been an addition during the last year of nine stenographers. Would the minister account for the necessity of having nine more stenographers?

Mr. Fulton: Mainly because of the increased volume of work.

Mr. Pickersgill: Can the minister explain why it takes from March 25 to June 18 not to produce a return for which this house has asked with these nine extra stenographers to do it?

Mr. Fulton: I do not bother my departmental staff with that kind of thing for which the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate asked; that is prepared in the minister's office and is ready for tabling now.

Mr. Pickersgill: This is the most preposterous statement that has been made by any member on the treasury benches since this government took office. What I referred to was an order of this house, of parliament itself, and this is the government that is upholding the rights of parliament. The answer is, I do not bother the department with what parliament desires; it is done in the spare time in the minister's office when they are not busy writing letters to Mr. Freeman, or whatever his name is. This is an absolutely outrageous attitude, and indicates quite clearly why parliament is not getting from this department what parliament has ordered.

Mr. Fulton: If the hon. member can show me any way in which he has suffered by the fact that the return is not yet brought down I shall be interested. I point out to you that I pay attention to the orders of the house, which is something different from when my hon. friend's government was in power. What my hon. friend asked for in the return which he—

Mr. Pickersgill: I did not order it, parliament ordered it.

Mr. Fulton:—now mentions was the reproduction of a number of personal letters exchanged between private individuals and the Minister of Justice. My department is not overstaffed. Many of the officers of the department are working overtime. We have not too many stenographers. The hon. member was interested in getting his return in

time for the discussion of my estimates, and he will have it in time for the discussion of my estimates. It has been prepared, in so far as I was able to see it could be done, without interference with the responsibilities of my department for the administration of justice in the interests of the people of Canada.

Mr. Pickersgill: I might point out that the minister is, of course, completely in error in saying that when I was a minister I did not comply with the orders of the house. He can examine the record any time he wishes and he will find that on very few occasions was there more careful compliance with these orders than during the period when Mr. St. Laurent was prime minister. The matter was reviewed by Mr. St. Laurent himself regularly, once a week, because of the great respect he did show for parliament.

I might say also that a motion was made by me to have a return from the Prime Minister as well as from the Minister of Justice, and although the Prime Minister's staff is a great deal smaller than the staff of the Minister of Justice the return was made by the Prime Minister over a month ago and we are still waiting for the return from the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Pearson: The minister used to talk a great deal about elimination of waste and extravagance and the unnecessary number of civil servants, so will he explain to the committee, as he has not yet explained, why it is necessary to have nine extra stenographers to do the work done by a smaller number a couple of years ago?

Mr. Fulton: One of the reasons is that we have taken on, in order to bring our establishment to what has always been agreed to be what we should have, but what we have not yet reached, some seven extra legal officers. I do not expect that the Leader of the Opposition would expect legal officers to function without stenographers, and that is one reason why the extra stenographers were necessary. In addition, I am assured by my officers that there has been a substantial increase in the volume of work and correspondence coming into the department and we are anxious to keep abreast of the work in order that people may receive immediate replies to their correspondence so that their problems and requests may be dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

Mr. Pearson: Will the minister point out where on page 216, which I have before me, which is the details of departmental administration, the seven extra legal officers mentioned on that page appear under departmental administration?