

*Supply—Justice*

**Mr. Ricard:** So you were doing it then.

**Mr. Denis:** I rose just to ask one question of the Minister of Justice. I am very surprised not to see his assistant, the Solicitor General, who should be here because, although he has no ministry of his own, although he has no job to do because he was replaced by a kind of commission, still in the estimates of the Minister of Justice there is an item which concerns the Solicitor General. There is a statutory item of \$17,000 but maybe the Solicitor General does not care and is not interested because we cannot lower the amount. I should like to know from the Minister of Justice if the Solicitor General is still in office and still has a job to do since the inauguration of the new commission. We do not see much of him, especially when his department is to be discussed.

I am told by many members of the government that they are checking the number of speeches made in the house but without checking anything we know that the Solicitor General is not so loquacious as the previous speaker who dealt with the Freeman matter. The Minister of Justice has invited us to ask questions or make observations before he makes a general statement, and we would like to know what is left to the Solicitor General as far as his job is concerned. Is he interested in this new unemployment insurance scheme extending the benefits he will get from 36 weeks to 52 weeks? We do not know.

**The Chairman:** Order—

**Mr. Denis:** I should like, Mr. Chairman, just in passing—

**The Chairman:** Order; I must remind the hon. member that we are at present discussing the estimates of the Department of Justice and it is out of order to discuss the actions of the Solicitor General or of any other member of the Department of Justice. At the moment, we must confine our remarks to matters that touch upon the administration of justice.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** On the point of order—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Pickersgill:**—surely, the salary of the Solicitor General, which is a statutory item, is shown under the heading of the Department of Justice in the blue book. Surely when my hon. friend is seeking to find out what functions, if any, the Solicitor General performs, he is seeking to find out how the Department of Justice is administered.

**Mr. Denis:** Exactly; that is the question I wanted to ask the Minister of Justice. However, I have had a bad example from him and

[Mr. Denis.]

from the other hon. member who has just taken his seat, in making lengthy statements. What are the functions of the Solicitor General, now that some of his duties have been removed from him?

**Mr. Fulton:** Now that the hon. member has come to his question and has refrained from making these rather light remarks about his colleague from Quebec, the Solicitor General, I can tell him that the functions of the Solicitor General still relate to advising His Excellency with respect to the prerogative of mercy, with respect to pardons and remissions which are under the royal prerogative, and advising on capital cases.

**Mr. Denis:** May I ask—

**Mr. Fulton:** The functions of the Solicitor General have not been altered that substantially from what they were under the previous administration, when his salary was not questioned.

**Mr. Denis:** Far from questioning the salary of the Solicitor General, I may say that the previous solicitor general had more to do than the present holder of that office. Most of his duties have been taken away from him since the commission has been established. He may do some other job in this department, but I am surprised that he is not here because, after all, he is working for the Department of Justice. If he is an adviser to the department, why is he not here? Perhaps he has something to do with the new definition of obscene literature or something, we do not know.

**Mr. Fulton:** No, the answer, Mr. Chairman, as the hon. member well knows in spite of what he is saying is that the Minister of Justice is responsible for the administration of the Department of Justice. The Minister of Justice is here to answer questions that may be asked with respect to the administration of his department. If my hon. friend will confine himself to asking questions instead of casting needless slurs, I shall be glad to answer his questions.

**Mr. Pearson:** The Solicitor General's functions obviously have not increased, which makes it perhaps more surprising that under this item we find, whereas the department was able to do with 117 employees last year, this year they find it necessary to have 133. Why has there been this increase in staff?

**Mr. Fulton:** The answer, Mr. Chairman, is that the number of personnel in the department has been increased. The comparison with last year is as follows: In the office of the Minister of Justice there are 10 persons as opposed to 11 last year; in the office of the Solicitor General, there are 7 as