

extreme salaries, insurance and pensions. I would have thought that the Government would have learnt a lesson from that, to be a little careful about pensions. Mr. Biggar may be a good man but I am opposed to any one in this country getting a pension from the Government, and I shall always vote against it. I will support the payment of good salaries, but I am wholly opposed to pensions. People who live in the country, after working hard all their lives, and who find themselves through some misfortune without means in their old age, have nothing before them but the county poorhouse, and I can see no reason why this Government should undertake to look after one class of people more than another. Let us pay a man well for his services, but let there be no pensions.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I ask my hon. friend if I am right in understanding that what he is now proposing makes no change whatever from what was proposed in the Bill as originally presented, except as to the person to be appointed. As I read the Bill as introduced by the minister it provides that the Chief Electoral Officer shall hold office upon the same tenure, and be removable only for cause and in the same manner as judges of the superior courts of the provinces. My hon. friend proposes to leave the Act in that particular just as it is—

Mr. GUTHRIE: Yes.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING:—so that the present proposal of my hon. friend does not affect one way or the other the tenure of office or the salary or any other feature of this provision except that it mentions a particular officer for the position.

In regard to Mr. Biggar, whose name is suggested, I may say that my hon. friend did mention to me that the Government had in mind asking Mr. Biggar to accept this position. He asked me whether in the event of Mr. Biggar being willing to accept the position I thought his appointment would be acceptable to members on this side of the House, as being that of a type of gentleman in whom in the administration of this Act the country would have confidence. I replied that I had every confidence in Mr. Biggar. Let me say, however, to my hon. friend from Ottawa that I mentioned to the minister at the time that so far as I was aware, Mr. Biggar, at the last election, was a supporter of Union Government. As my hon. friend knows, I

[Mr. Best.]

was opposed to the Union Government. If being a supporter of the Government was an evidence of partisanship, Mr. Biggar was certainly a partisan on that occasion. On the other hand I have reason to believe that Mr. Biggar in the judgment that he exercised at that time, took the position he did from an independent mind. He took, I believe, the course which seemed to him right and proper. I have the highest admiration for his character. I think he will prove an honourable and an efficient public servant, and although the fact that he supported this Government in the last election is a misfortune, I do not think that should be held against him indefinitely. I am prepared to say that as far as we on this side of the House are concerned we have implicit confidence in his integrity and ability.

Mr. CROTHERS: There is I think one aspect of this proposal that is objectionable. I think we are all agreed that to discharge the duties of this office we should have an honest and a capable man, one who would not be influenced one way or the other by partisanship. It is claimed that if this man were appointed, he would be entirely independent of the Government. Now this is where the inconsistency comes in as I see it. It is stated, I think, by the Acting Solicitor General, and it is generally understood, that this officer will be employed in this office only one year out of five, and that in the other four years he will be under the control of the Government. So he will not be independent of the Government at all. In these four years he would be getting directions from the Government telling him to take this position as a partisan or as a politician, and to take that position as a partisan or as a politician. That goes on for four years, and then in the fifth year he is expected to be absolutely unpartisan. I do not think it can be done.

I quite agree with my hon. friend from Dufferin as to pensions. I think my views on superannuation and pensions are very well known in this House. I do not approve of that aspect of the proposal. I think if this were to go through, we would have scores of men in the public service asking us in the near future to place them on the same basis as a judge of the Supreme Court of Ontario, or of the Supreme Court of Canada. Pensions and superannuation I do not like. I repeat that when a man is under the control and direction of the Government for four years out of five, I do