

and yet I assert that there is not a single line of justification in the Act for the appointment of a professional man to that position. Yet we find that this Government, without regard to anything laid down in the Act, has appointed a practical accountant to the position of accountant in the Militia Department and appointed him without any examination and at the maximum salary. We certainly require more explanation of the policy of the Government regarding their interpretation of the Civil Service Act than we have been able to get to-day.

Mr. FOSTER. The point raised is a most important one. If the contention of the hon. Minister of Militia is to hold, we are going to have a complete change, with reference to one office at least in all the departments. We are going to take that office out of the Civil Service Act entirely and make it one to which any person can be appointed, whether he comes up to the requirements of the Act or not. I have had experience in the Government since 1895, and I confidently assert that never in the wildest times of Liberal-Conservative Administration did I know of the Government even contemplating the idea of making the position of accountant a technical office. It was never contemplated and it was never held by any Minister of Justice that it was possible to do it. But there seems to have been an accommodating Minister of Justice of late to warrant this departure from the Act, and we are asked to vote \$2,400 in order to pay this man, who has been appointed in violation of the Act, the maximum rate which an accountant will receive. And the word accountant is not used at all in the estimate. What we are asked to vote is the \$2,400 for a chief clerk, and the hon. Minister asks us to do that on the ground that it is a technical office. I want to know if the Government are going to take this as the basis of their administration of the civil service, and if from this time out we are to consider that any Minister may appoint an outsider, irrespective of the terms of the Civil Service Act, to any chief clerkship, simply by dubbing him an accountant and setting him to work keeping books. This is no light matter, and the member of the Government who leads it for the present, should give us the policy of the Government with reference to this.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. The point is whether, in legal parlance, the qualifications required for this particular office are such as warrant the Minister in considering it technical. On that point he consulted the Minister of Justice, and I understand he was informed that it did come within the terms of the Act. That is a legal question, and my hon. friend took the only means in his power of ascertaining whether he was within the law.

Mr. FOSTER. I do not think that quite meets the question I put. The

vote is not for an accountantship at all. We are asked for \$2,400 for a chief clerk. When we inquire whether the Civil Service Act has been complied with, we are told that the chief clerk is a technical officer in this respect, and that it is so construed to be a technical officer by the Minister who wants the office calling this man an accountant and telling the Minister of Justice, to whom he applies for an opinion, that an accountant, in his opinion, is a professional man, and consequently this may be held as a technical office. Now, if that be so, every accountant and sub-accountant in any department of the Government may be appointed on technical grounds, and the provisions of the Civil Service Act, as it has been administered from the first, set aside, because the Minister says, what I think is questionable, that the accountant, doing the work of book-keeping, is from this time forward to be called a member of a profession and his office a technical office. I do not see how we can vote this.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. I suppose the Minister of Militia would have no objection to bringing down the report of his deputy as to the appointment. I think we are fairly entitled to that, and also the report of the Minister of Justice should be brought down, for this reason—it seems to me to be antagonistic to the whole Civil Service Act, and in these reports we may be able to find some reasons why this appointment was made contrary to the Civil Service Act. The only ground on which I put it, not wishing to go behind the record, is simply that it seems to me that that report breaks through the Civil Service Act, and if so, we ought to know the reasons which induced the Minister to, as I believe, break the law existing up to that time.

Mr. FOSTER. I would suggest that this item stand until we have these reports and papers. This is a very important point and we want the opinion of the Minister of Justice and the presentation of the case made to him.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. The question does involve important considerations, and if the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) desires it, I will not object to the matter standing over. Now, it is twelve o'clock, and I do not wish to press hon. gentlemen opposite unduly. But there are two or three items in which there is absolutely no difference. Could he take these and adjourn?

Mr. FOSTER. The three following?

Mr. BERGERON. This other will stand over?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. It will stand over. I would suggest to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) that, as there is a considerable reduction