

February, 1896. 5. His services were dispensed with. 6. He was notified in February that his services would no longer be required. 7. He did not devote his time to the service of the railway. The department did not feel that it would be of any material advantage to the railway service to have this gentleman studying law in Halifax, while in receipt of a salary as station agent on the Intercolonial Railway.

In regard to question 3, I do not think the hon. gentleman should expect me to answer it. I do not consider it is necessary or in the public interest that the Government should disclose the names of persons with whom it consults confidentially on matters of appointments, and therefore, I do not feel called upon to answer it, although I should like to comply with the wish and to gratify the curiosity of the hon. gentleman.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I think, Mr. Speaker, I must call your attention to the fact that it has been the universal practice of all governments in this House to answer such a question.

Mr. SPEAKER. It is entirely discretionary with the Minister as to how he should answer a question put by a member of the House.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. But the hon. gentleman does not propose to answer it at all.

Mr. SPEAKER. If the hon. Minister does not desire to answer it, I cannot say anything, nor can any member of the House.

#### PROPOSED SAVINGS BANK AT MAGDALEN ISLANDS.

Mr. CHOQUETTE (for Mr. Lemieux) asked :

Whether it is the intention of the Government to establish a savings bank at the Magdalen Islands?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Mulock). The hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Lemieux) has applied to the department for the establishment of a savings bank at Magdalen Islands. There are some difficulties in the way, but the Government have endeavoured to comply with the request, believing it to be a meritorious one, and it is expected that a savings bank will be established at Magdalen Islands in due course.

#### MAILS TO MAGDALEN ISLANDS.

Mr. CHOQUETTE (for Mr. Lemieux) asked :

1. What steps were taken during the course of last winter to provide for the carrying of the mails to the Magdalen Islands?

2. Is it the intention of the Government to assist those who shall undertake to carry the said mails for the future?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Mulock). At Mr. Lemieux's request, it was determined, if practicable, to take the mails to the Magdalen Islands during the course of last winter, and whilst negotiations were being had for securing a steamer for such purpose it was ascertained that the Islands were ice-bound, which rendered it impossible to carry out the plan and it therefore had to be abandoned for the time.

#### PROPOSED STEAMBOAT LINE BETWEEN QUEBEC AND GASPE BASIN.

Mr. CHOQUETTE (for Mr. Lemieux) asked :

1. Whether the Government are aware that the north shore of Gaspé, from Cape Chat to Gaspé Basin, is wholly unprovided with means of communication by railway or steamboat?

2. Is it the intention of the Government to aid in the establishment of a steamboat line to perform a weekly service between Quebec and Gaspé Basin?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE (Sir Richard Cartwright). I believe the hon. gentleman is correct in saying that the north shore of Gaspé is almost wholly unprovided with means of communication either by railway or steamboat. In reply to the second question I beg to say, that the matter is now under the consideration of the Government.

#### WHARF CONSTRUCTION AT GRAND RIVER, P.Q.

Mr. CHOQUETTE (for Mr. Lemieux) asked :

1. How much has Mr. Atkinson, a contractor of Quebec, received from the Government for the construction of the wharf at Grand River, county of Gaspé?

2. Is the Government aware that about seventy-five to one hundred workmen, who worked on the construction of the said wharf, have never been paid?

3. Has the Government returned to the said Atkinson the deposit placed by him in the hands of the Minister of Public Works as security for the execution of the work? If so, on what date was the deposit returned?

4. What is the date of the last payment made by the Government to the said Atkinson?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS (Mr. Tarte). 1. \$8,800. 2. The department has seen to the payment of certain claims preferred for wages by men who worked for Mr. Atkinson on the wharf at Grand River, P.Q., but there remains a balance claimed by certain of the workmen which up to the present time Mr. Atkinson has refused to recognize, he stating that he did not owe the amounts claimed. 3. No. 4. 28th June, 1895.