

chequer Court, which makes reference to them, from time to time, for the purpose of taking evidence as to quantities and values in relation to claims before that court. Their services are likewise used by the various departments in order to obtain reports upon claims.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Did they do any work last year?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Yes; a good deal.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Is there any means of ascertaining what they did? We do not see their reports, or any evidence of their labours. Does the hon. gentleman know?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I do not remember any reference from the Exchequer Court to them, and cannot say how far their services were used by any department. It is very common in the Lower Provinces for the Railway Department, in connection with claims, in respect of which values have to be ascertained, to send Mr. Compton to report.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) I do not remember last year of their going to the Maritime Provinces. Will the Minister of Railways say whether he made any references to them or not?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Mr. Compton lives at Halifax.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) I understand from the Minister of Railways that he made no reference.

Mr. HAGGART. I am not sure about any reference.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Are you bound to pay them?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. As members of the Board, they had a permanent position, and instead of paying them a superannuation allowance, as we did in the case of one or two who were very advanced in years, we thought it more economical to make use of their services. Mr. Cowan was superannuated and Mr. Simard. The two others were continued in office for the reason I have given.

Mr. McMULLEN. Are any of the present men eligible for superannuation?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Yes, Mr. Compton would certainly be, because he is nearly 70 years of age, although very capable as regards intelligence.

Mr. McMULLEN. If there is really nothing for them to do, and it appears they have done nothing in the past, it is a great pity that they should go on drawing \$2,000 a year. The best evidence that they are not required is that they have done no work.

Mr. LANDERKIN. The First Minister must be something in error about Mr. Cowan. I think he is still living.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I am very glad to hear it.

Mr. LANDERKIN. Those who are superannuated draw their allowance and do nothing, and those who are continued in the office draw their pay and do nothing. They ought to be transferred to the Solicitor General's office, where they would not be overworked.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. They do work, and are available now.

Mr. MULOCK. I understand that the Minister of Justice is not able to say whether these men did anything in the past year or not, and that the Minister of Railways says they did nothing for his department.

Mr. HAGGART. I am not sure about that. I think one of them did some valuation at Halifax of some property expropriated. I do not know whether it was Mr. Compton or not.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) It would not be left for one man to value property expropriated.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. He makes a valuation of the property preparatory to a tender being made.

Mr. MULOCK. Has he power to swear witnesses and sit as a court?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. He swears witnesses and hears evidence.

Mr. MULOCK. Have these gentlemen been long in this position?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Over 20 years.

Mr. MULOCK. Appointed at this salary?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Yes.

Mr. MULOCK. How long is it since they have done anything? I cannot see the object of retaining men in the service long after there is no necessity for them. There must be some implied understanding that the office must cease with the necessity for it.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. We could not dispense with the services of these gentlemen without pensioning them, and their pension would amount to three-fourths of their salary. We generally do get a good deal of service out of them in the way of references.

Mr. McMULLEN. Would it not be better to put them in the Senate?

Supreme Court of Canada—three
messengers \$1,500

Mr. McMULLEN. Is there a necessity for three messengers in the Supreme Court?