

or reason in fixing \$200 as the limit of the jurisdiction of these courts in this particular instance. All these county courts in these various provinces had jurisdiction up to \$500 involving claims of a similar character between individuals. I pressed upon the Minister of Justice at the time the desirability and common sense of the proposition that the county court should have jurisdiction to deal with claims of this character, to the extent that they could deal with other claims and I have been unable to see why \$200 was fixed as the limit. The object of this legislation is to provide that the county courts, or the courts that have jurisdiction in such provinces as do not have county courts, shall have jurisdiction up to the extent of \$500 instead of \$200. That is the only provision in the Bill. I hope the minister will take up this question and treat it as a Government measure. So far in this session of Parliament I do not think that any Bills have reached their second reading, but the present system of disposing of matter must occasion a lot of difficulty to the department and its officers and therefore this proposed legislation ought to be welcomed, I think, by the minister.

Mr. BORDEN: Is it already provided that claims of not over \$200 can be decided by the county court?

Mr. MACDONALD: Yes. In Nova Scotia the jurisdiction is conferred on the county courts to deal with such claims up to \$200, and in numerous cases that provision of the law has been taken advantage of. Once the principle is recognized that these claims may be submitted to a court of competent jurisdiction in a particular locality, there seems to be no reason whatever why that same court should not have jurisdiction in these claims to the extent of its jurisdiction in disputes between parties. The Bill proposes to increase the amount from \$200 to \$500 in these departmental cases. It will relieve the department from having to deal with a number of these claims, and it will afford a ready method to enable the parties who have these claims to have them disposed of. I would be much pleased if the Minister of Railways would take this up as a Government measure, so as to facilitate its passage this session.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

#### PRIVATE BILLS.

##### FIRST READINGS.

Bill No. 96, respecting the Canadian Northern Railway Company.—Mr. Sharpe (Lisgar).

Bill No. 97, respecting the Canadian Northern Branch Lines Company.—Mr. Sharpe (Lisgar).

Bill No. 98, respecting the Canadian Northern Ontario Railway Company and to ratify and confirm the purchase of a portion of the Carillon and Grenville Railway Company's property.—Mr. Currie.

Bill No. 99, respecting the Canadian Northern Quebec Railway Company.—Mr. Guilbault.

Bill No. 100, respecting a patent of the Honourable Ambrose D. Richard and others.—Mr. Fowler.

Bill No. 101, respecting patents of Frederick Jacob Newman and others.—Mr. Macdonnell.

Bill No. 102, respecting the Niagara, St. Catharines and Toronto Railway Company.—Mr. Wilson (Wentworth).

#### EXAMINATIONS IN SEAMANSHIP.

Mr. BELAND: Before the Orders of the Day are called, I wish to ask the Minister of Marine if he has received a report as to the examinations in seamanship which were held in London, England, on the 13th January last; can he say what has been the result of said examinations with respect to the young Canadians who wrote in them?

Mr. HAZEN: No formal report has yet been received by the Naval Department, but I understand unofficial information has been received to the effect that the Canadians have all passed, and, as I understand, they have nearly all passed in the first class. I will send the information to my hon. friend.

#### STRIKE AT PORCUPINE.

Mr. VERVILLE: Has the Minister of Labour any information to impart to the House with reference to the case of the labour leaders who were arrested in connection with the strike at Porcupine and fined \$300 or three months' imprisonment?

Mr. CROTHERS: I have seen the press despatch referring to the matter. That, while announcing the fine or in the alternative imprisonment, also stated that an appeal against the judgment had been or was about to be taken, in which case, of course, the proceedings would be stayed until the appeal had been determined. I have taken the matter up with the Attorney General of Ontario in order to ascertain the facts, and to see what steps should be taken, if any, with regard to the matter.

#### WEST INDIAN TRADE AGREEMENT.

House again in Committee on Bill No. 23, respecting an Agreement between Canada and certain of the West Indian Colonies.—Mr. Foster (Minister of Trade and