

I see by the list that has been read by the hon. Minister of the Interior that out of our regularly paid agents in the United States, the total being twenty-three, with a total salary of \$25,700, there are six French Canadians, from Quebec, with a total salary of \$5,000. The list that is given to-night does not give the residences of these gentlemen, but I have here a list that was laid on the Table of the House at the beginning of the session at my request, and I find that out of these six French Canadian agents, five are residing in Quebec and only one in the United States; while there are seventeen English speaking agents among the regularly paid agents. In the list that is given to-night of the commissioned agents, I find that out of forty-nine commissioned agents there are only two French Canadians in the United States. I make this point not to offer any reproach to the hon. Minister of the Interior on racial grounds, but I think I may fairly say, without making any comparison disadvantageous to any other race, that there is no better class of settlers that can be brought into Canada than the French Canadians resident in the United States, men who have left Quebec of late years, induced as they were by the attraction of the industrial centres of the United States, and who, being disappointed with the results of their life which do not come up to what they had expected, are ready and desirous of coming back to Canada. It may be said that they had no business to leave this country, but we may say that of all other parts of the population. We may say the same of the farmers who have left Ontario and the eastern provinces. The point I want to make is that we should have some agents in the United States coming into personal contact with the people there, knowing how to discriminate between an emigrated Canadian who desires to come back and one that should be left there. Take a Canadian who has been in the United States for twenty-five or thirty years, who is accustomed to the city life of the United States, and I do not think it would be the duty of the government to make any special effort to induce him to come back and become a farm settler. I think he would be disappointed and go back, and rather act as an emigration agent than as an immigration agent; because, the very best immigration agent you could have is a satisfied settler. The kind of men in the United States that we should make a special effort to secure are the men who have been born and brought up on the farm, who have gone to the United States because they were disappointed in their life here, who are fitted for farming life, and who are ready to come back. I hope the hon. minister will follow the advice that has been given to him by the repatriation and colonization societies of Quebec and Montreal. The request that has been laid before the hon. minister is

Mr. BOURASSA.

a most reasonable one. They ask for a very small increase in their allowance, being much less than is generally paid to our agents now. The work done by this society would be far more effectual and more valuable than what could be done by the paid agents of the government. I would like to insist upon this point. The agents that we have here in Canada,—I am especially referring to the French Canadian agents—may be well meaning, but it is a well known fact to those who have visited the French Canadian centres in the United States that most of these people are not prepared to come back at the request of a paid agent of the government of Canada who would go there simply for the purpose of asking them to come back. The best policy would be to choose some good citizens, clergymen, if possible, residing in the United States, knowing these people, living with them, who have no special interest in urging them to come back to Canada and who would choose the proper time at which to begin the movement and the proper people to work amongst.

For example, I happened to pass through Fall River and Lowell this spring during the big strike there, and if at that time we had a couple of good French Canadians who were known and trusted by the people there, I believe that quite a number of French Canadian families would have been induced to come back to Canada and would have made good settlers. I believe myself that at the proper time and with the proper means we could have induced several thousands of these people to return. But unfortunately we send agents there who do not know the people personally, who only meet them at large meetings when they speak about the advantages of Canada, but that is not the way in which the work should be done. Speaking for the French Canadian element I am quite sure that if the work had been left to the Colonization and Repatriation Society, much more effective work would have been done with much less expenditure. During the absence of the Minister of the Interior, the Colonization societies of Montreal and Quebec laid a statement before the department which was supported by several members from the province of Quebec, and I trust that the minister will give due consideration to that statement. I think it would meet the views of the Minister of Finance as well as the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) if an effort were made to induce the French Canadians of Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois and the western states to settle in Manitoba and the North-west; while the French Canadians in the eastern states who mostly come from the province of Quebec might be induced to move back to Quebec and Ontario in which provinces they would make excellent settlers indeed.

Mr. MONK. In reply to my hon. friend from Labelle (Mr. Bourassa), I wish to say