

refusing to pay his debts. I am not aware that any of the employees of my department refuse to pay their debts. I am told, and I believe it is true, that the Intercolonial does take care by regulations to provide, as far as those regulations ought to be pushed, that the employees in the department do pay their debts; and if it is reported to the head of the department that one of the employees is not paying his debts, official steps are taken to insure that a fair proportion of his salary will be apportioned to pay debts which have been incurred for the support of his family. However, be that as it may, I take it there is not an hon. member in this House who is prepared to assume the responsibility of adopting this Bill as it stands.

Nor are they prepared to adopt even the third section of the Bill limiting the attachments to salary. My hon. friend from Laval pointed out that it would be unjust to attach the whole salary, and that we should adopt the system followed in the province of Quebec. I submit that in the different circumstances of the different provinces the local legislatures are in a better position to determine what proportion of these salaries should be attached and what left for the support of the family, than we are. Different rules prevail in the different provinces. These are matters which can be better determined by the provincial legislatures, and with the assistance which the Government have gained from the debate to-day, I think the better plan would be to let the matter stand over and give the Government opportunity to see whether it would be possible to introduce some legislation by which the prohibition now existing against attaching the salaries of civil servants might be removed and let the machinery for the attachment be afterwards carried out, if it can be, by the different provincial legislatures. My own judgment coincides very largely with that of the hon. member for Huron (Mr. Cameron). I sat down also and tried to work the thing out and failed. If you make the service on the Auditor General, of every attachment that goes out from one part of Canada to the other, he will have to employ an army of lawyers, and the expense will be appalling.

Mr. BERGERON. What about the plan of the hon. member for Huron (Mr. Cameron) ?

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. That plan commends itself to my mind very much. I think it is a plan which probably could be worked out, and if that is the evident sense of the House, I dare say the Government will take a note of it. Something of the kind is carried out by the Railway Department, and the same principle which has been for some years in operation in that department might be applied by the Treasury Board, in some careful and guarded way, to the

other branches of the public service. I think it would be better therefore that the debate should be adjourned and the matter carefully considered when the Bill comes up again. I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. CHOQUETTE. Before the debate is adjourned, I wish to say that I am entirely in accord with the object which the hon. member for Lisgar seeks to accomplish by his Bill, and I am sure that in that object he meets the approval of the commercial community. I consider that a measure of this kind is not only advantageous but absolutely necessary. No one can know better how necessary it is than those who are in business along the line of the Intercolonial Railway. We all, who have any experience over that route, know that employees of the Intercolonial are in the habit of making considerable exactions on the public. There are Intercolonial employees who will open a credit in one store, and when that is exhausted, choose another victim, and keep that process up as long as the public will stand it. A law to prevent this is not only necessary for the protection of the public but also for the protection of the railway employees themselves who pay their debts. Those who do not pay their debts give a bad reputation to the others. Last summer, I induced the Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Blair) to send a circular to all the employees, telling them that if they did not pay their debts, or come to some agreement with their creditors, they should be dismissed. And I was thanked by nearly two-thirds of the employees of the Intercolonial, because, they said, their reputations had previously been endangered by those who did not pay their debts. But a very interesting question arises in this case, that is, whether we have jurisdiction in the matter. For my part, I say decidedly that I do not think we have jurisdiction, while the provinces have. If we look at the code of procedure of the province of Quebec, at article 628 of the former code—and the same thing is repeated in article 599 in the new code—it is provided that the salaries of public officials are exempt from seizure, and that the salaries of public servants of the province shall be seizable up to one-fifth of the monthly payment, and so on. So, we see, the local legislature of the province of Quebec have declared that they have the right to exempt from seizure all the salaries of public employees, and have made an exception only in the case of employees of the province, whose salaries shall be seizable in part. So, the right of declaring the exemption from seizure of public employees has been taken by the province, and I think the province has the right to do so. Therefore, though I am entirely in accord with the Bill, and though wishing, for one, that all the provinces would enact laws to compel public employees to pay their debts, putting them