

Mr. McINERNEY. But I would like to ask now if the Postmaster General does not object to answer me.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. The Chairman is quite correct that we are drifting away from the item, but I will answer my hon. friend if I may be allowed. I do not think there is any item in the Main Estimates for the purpose my hon. friend refers to.

Mr. McINERNEY. Would I be in order in asking the Postmaster General if he intends to bring down an item to that effect. Mr. Wathen was appointed by the party to which the hon. gentleman (Mr. Mulock) belongs, and has been in the service ever since his first appointment. He has passed his examination and every person who knows him will know that he is well qualified for a first-class clerkship. I have brought this case before the Postmaster General, believing that he will do him justice. I would ask him now if he intends to bring down the vote at any time this year to put him in a position to give Mr. Wathen what I think he is entitled to, a first-class clerkship.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I will say to my hon. friend, that I am anxious to have an opportunity of going through the whole staff of the service. Speaking roughly, there are some 1,800 on the staff, and as soon as this session is over, I intend to make a study, to inform myself as to the merits of every member of the staff. As a matter of fact it has been simply impossible, to me at least, to do that work properly, since I have been in office, and for that reason and no other I have not felt able to make suggestions and recommendations to my colleagues, or now to the House, dealing with promotions of any kind. Therefore it has not been from a determination not to do it, but because I want to have an opportunity during recess of carefully studying the claims of each member of the staff so as, if possible, to do justice all round. It is for that purpose alone that I am unable, during this session, to deal with the question of promotions at all.

Mr. HUGHES. I think the proposition of the hon. Minister to make a seniority list, has a good deal of merit in it. Now, in making his seniority list, it would be well to consider localities from which appointments come. At the present time he will understand of course that appointments are made, for instance, in the New Brunswick division, from New Brunswick, in the Quebec division, from Quebec, and so on from the other provinces. Now, if a vacancy occurs in the seniority list, is the appointment to come from the district from which the vacancy occurs? I suggest to the hon. Minister that there might be difficulty in

that respect in the new seniority arrangement. A locality might possibly lose its chance of having its members appointed on this staff.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. As I mentioned before, whilst I regard the mail service of Canada as one unbroken service, at the same time I think public opinion would not warrant me in disregarding provincial lines. It seems to me that that is about as far as efficiency will warrant one going, in having regard to territorial divisions of any kind.

Department of Customs..... \$38,600

The CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS (Mr. Paterson). There is a decrease of \$1,387.50 since last year.

Mr. FOSTER. Why are there three additional first-class clerks?

The CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS. In the first place, it is proposed to dispense with the services of a chief clerk whose salary is \$1,800, and there are three gentlemen who will be promoted from the second-class to the first-class, and one Mr. Moran, from the third-class to the second-class. His present salary is \$1,350, very near the maximum of the second.

Mr. FOSTER. That is another break.

The CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS. No, it is expected that he will have extra duties to perform in the re-arrangement of the staff, owing to the discontinuance of the services of a chief clerk.

Mr. FOSTER. And you are giving him an extra \$50 besides?

The CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS. Yes, but I am saving \$1,800 on other grounds.

Mr. HUGHES. Who is the chief clerk whose services are being dispensed with?

The CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS. Mr. Webster; I am trying to re-organize the department and work it at somewhat less cost.

Mr. FOSTER. I think I will have to ask my hon. friend to let this stand over till to-morrow. The ex-Controller of Customs has something to ask him specially.

The CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS. I have no objection, if the hon. gentleman will feel that I am not neglecting my duties. I am asked out on public business a good deal during the day.

Department of Marine and Fisheries..... \$55,780

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES (Mr. Davies). In this matter the hon. gentleman will see there is \$200 of a decrease. There are one or two votes on which explanations will no doubt be asked. In the first place, I ask for an in-