

totally inadequate. But we declined to make any contract or to take that question up, because we considered that until this railway communication was established from the Intercolonial to Cape Tormentine on the one side, and from the Island Railway to Cape Traverse on the other, it would be unwise to enter into a new contract until we had seen, by further experience and further investigation, the very best means that could be used, not only as regards winter, but also in relation to summer communication, to bring the Island into as perfect intercommunication with the main land as possible. I can only say that if we had possessed the information which the hon. gentleman seems to possess we would not have been obliged to defer this arrangement. I think this committee ought to be granted if for no other purpose than to give the Government the benefit of the information and the opinions that the hon. gentleman possesses, for if he has studied the subject so thoroughly as to have more information than the Government have been able to obtain, it is desirable that it should be placed at our service. I shall be glad to have this Committee appointed, because I think there is a good deal to be learned; and I am quite satisfied, although I have given this question a great deal of personal attention from the time of the Union of Prince Edward Island with the Dominion—and the previous Government gave the subject I am sure a great deal of consideration, as well as the present Government—that there is a good deal to be learned, and I shall be only too glad to hear any person who is in a position to assure us that it would be no doubtful experiment to adopt a line of action that will render that communication as perfect as possible. There is no delay involved in it at all, because, as I have said, the railway works are going on on the main land and will be vigorously prosecuted on the Island to make communication. In the meantime the *Northern Light* will keep up the service as heretofore between Pictou and Georgetown, and measures will be devised and a scheme adopted by the time that the railway is in operation to make the communication as perfect as possible, both in summer and in winter.

Motion agreed to.

SUPERNUMERARY CLERKS IN THE MONTREAL CUSTOM HOUSE.

Mr. CURRAN, in moving for a return containing names of persons in the employ of the Customs Department in the City of Montreal as supernumerary clerks who have been constantly employed for not less than six months previous to the first day of July, 1883, said: My object in making this motion is to draw the attention of the House to a state of things which I think is an injustice to a very considerable number of persons who have been up to the present time discharging their duties as employés in the Customs House—or as supernumerary clerks if you will—some of them for a considerable number of years without having their appointments confirmed. As the House is aware, during last Session a Civil Service Bill was passed, and to some extent it was experimental legislation; but I believe, on the whole, the people of the country are satisfied, and the members of this House are satisfied, that the law has been an exceedingly good one. But there is one which I think deserves attention, and in which that law, like all other human laws, is defective. There are not only in the Montreal Custom House, but in the various other Departments, a number of persons who have been appointed merely as supernumeraries, some of them having filled the office not merely for six months previous to the 1st July, 1882, when the Civil Service Act came into force, but some of them for even five or six years, and whose appointments have never been ratified. Now a number of these persons are men who have been absent from the school room for perhaps twenty or twenty-five

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years, and who are rather rusty upon some of the subjects which have been put into the curriculum of examination, and therefore they are placed at a great disadvantage with young boys, perhaps who have just left school and who are better capable of undergoing examination, while those men who have been employed as supernumeraries, discharging their duties well and efficiently, are placed at a disadvantage besides these new comers. Under the law as it now exists those gentlemen cannot be appointed permanently to their present positions without having to undergo this examination. I am of the impression, and it is the opinion of hon. gentlemen to whom I have spoken, that in any amendments which may be made in the Civil Service Act, the position of these men should be taken into consideration, as they have served the Government faithfully and efficiently, and that they should be entitled, upon procuring a certificate from the Chief of their Departments, that they are fully competent to discharge their duties, to be appointed permanently without having to undergo the examination which is now prescribed for them as for all others, and which I think is only right in the case of new applicants. I am satisfied that the return I now ask for will show that a state of things exists which is an injustice, not perhaps to very many persons in the City of Montreal alone, but to perhaps some hundreds of persons throughout the Dominion. I am satisfied the Government and the House are only anxious that all cause of complaint should be removed and that justice should be done to this class of supernumerary officers the same as to all other classes in this country.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. The Civil Service Act past last year provides for a certain examination for this class of officers—I think a preliminary examination—and which is a very simple one. So far as I can recollect, it embraces reading, writing and the four first rules in arithmetic, and should the Department judge that these officers should be made permanent it would be easy for them to pass that examination. My hon. friend is mistaken if he thinks that a qualifying examination is required, because merely a preliminary examination is required for these officers of a lower grade—if I may so call them. I would also remind the hon. gentleman that a Bill may be introduced this Session in which some modifications may be made in that direction. Whilst I am on my feet I desire to congratulate my hon. friend as a speaker, and I am certain that he will prove a great accession to this House.

Motion agreed to.

IMMIGRATION TO BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Mr. SHAKESPEARE moved for all correspondence between the Government of British Columbia and the Dominion Government, respecting immigration to British Columbia, also, all correspondence on the question of Chinese immigration. He said: I have been informed that correspondence has taken place between the two Governments on this very important subject. Looking at the Public Accounts of last year, and of the previous years, I find that a very large sum of money has been voted by this House for immigration purposes. I believe that every Province in the Dominion, except British Columbia, received a portion of that appropriation. I think it is a little unfair that British Columbia should be left entirely out in the cold in this matter, for, as she contributed her share to the revenue of the Dominion, she is entitled to a share of that appropriation. It cannot be said that British Columbia is not in want of immigrants; that is the great want of that Province to-day. It is a matter respecting which we have been crying out for years. We are in want of immigrants; we are in want of men for our farm work, for our industries and canneries, and our railroad, and I am able to state here, to-day, that 2,000 men will find employ-