

greatest difficulties of a Minister of Customs has been in the appointment of appraisers. Many have been appointed who were not qualified, and who have allowed invoices to pass improperly, because of not having a knowledge of the goods, and who have allowed other invoices to pass which had upon their face an under valuation of the goods; all which has caused constant complaints from merchants who presented correct invoices. Before the late appraiser, Mr. Bryson, died, he called upon me to ask for superannuation, on account of ill-health. After agreeing to represent his claim to superannuation to my colleagues, I took the opportunity to question him regarding his assistant. I said: "Mr. Bryson, is your assistant qualified for the position you hold?" Mr. Simpson was present at the time. I added, "You know that in no case have I made an appointment in Montreal, except by promoting the next man in order, and I intend to carry out the same principle in this case, provided your assistant is fit for the position." Mr. Bryson then told me, distinctly and positively, that his assistant was not fit for the position of Chief Appraiser. Mr. Simpson, who, as I have said, was present, went further, and said that they had taken steps, years before, to obtain an assistant better qualified than the person then filling that position, by asking for the appointment of another assistant. Mr. Bryson had wanted an assistant long previously, of superior qualities, one on whom he could rely when he was obliged to be absent, as he was on many occasions, through ill-health. I wish the hon. gentleman and this House to understand that I have no other object than to secure the appointment of a well-qualified person as Chief Appraiser, one in whom the trade and the Government could have the most implicit confidence. I have no desire, and the Government have no desire, to say one word against the faithfulness, in the performance of the duties of the present appraiser or against his qualifications for the position he now holds; but as the House will see, from my explanation, he is not fit for the position of Chief Appraiser. If I had any evidence whatever of his being qualified, my hon.

friend would have had no cause to complain, or to bring this motion before the House. As I have before said, when an appraiser is to be appointed, he should be one of unqualified business habits. A clerk could learn the duties of his office in a short time, so could a locker; but in the case of an appraiser he should have long experience and special qualifications and knowledge of business to fill the position of Chief Appraiser. After this statement my hon. friend from Montreal East will not suppose, for a moment, that the Government had any other reasons for seeking another man other than the assistant, for this chief position as hardware appraiser than the desire to have an efficient officer. My hon. friend must see that three or four month's test of this assistant's qualifications would be of no use, after he had been in the position of assistant for eleven or twelve years, without giving any evidence of having the necessary qualifications. I am sorry my hon. friend has imputed to the Collector of Montreal, motives of an improper character. I have no knowledge of anything of the kind, and I do not think that if any of his officers were qualified for the position in question, he would object; nor do I see any reason why Mr. Bryson himself should make the same representations as the Collector had done against the assistant, if the latter were really qualified. I say, in justice to his memory, that he very unwillingly made the representation he did. He declined at first expressing an opinion, and not until I impressed upon him that it was his duty to inform me, he gave me the information very reluctantly. I was told that in important matters, when Mr. Bryson was ill, the assistant had to carry the invoices to his sick-bed for instructions. I trust I may never have any greater sin to answer for than my endeavour, on behalf of the Government, to strictly adhere to the principle of appointing no man to a position unless he is fully qualified to perform the duties of that position.

MR. COURSOL: Notwithstanding the explanation given by the hon. the Minister of Customs, his fiery and unreasoning language as Minister, I must persist in saying that I sincerely believe that a gross injustice has been done to the deputy-appraiser in Montreal. It is all very well now, after Mr. Bryson's death, to cite