

same way in regard to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick when the opportunity arose. Such an arrangement in the Customs service would be of the highest possible service to the country; because we all know that every Customs officer, however low his position, has a great deal of power in his hands—power with reference to the commercial community; and he can, supposing that he gets very intimate with a portion of the business community, render them services in an illegal manner without much chance of detection for a considerable time; or he can obstruct their business very materially. One idea connected with that interchange of officers would be that of preventing officers from becoming too well acquainted in the communities in which they are engaged. When a man goes to a strange place where he is not known and has no particular circle of friends he would be more apt to discharge his duties properly. No man can act independently when he is surrounded with his friends. I do not say that this happens in the direct operation of the customs; but I think the service would be increased in efficiency if the appointing power was in a Board, who, independent of all influences, could exercise some discretion and make this interchange that I have suggested.

Q. Do I understand you then to say that the present system of appointment scarcely gives you proper material for promotion?—Not so good material as we otherwise would have.

Q. On account of being sometimes compelled to take men from the outside?—That is not the reason why we do that; the reason is because of the pressure brought upon us to make certain appointments.

Q. Do you mean that you never have any difficulty in getting proper material for promotion?—We would not if we had the privilege of selecting from all parts of the province.

Q. What about the pressure of which you speak?—It is simply this: The patronage is virtually in the hands of you members of Parliament; the pressure is brought to bear upon you and you bring the pressure on the Government; you are surrounded with the parties who are applicants. I speak it with all modesty, but I think it places members of Parliament in unpleasant positions to look after such matters, and it does not give them really any more political popularity. My thoughts have been led into that channel perhaps more from examining into the nature of the regulations and laws which prevail in England, than from any other circumstance. The whole customs laws in England were consolidated last year, and on examining the law as it now stands you will find that all the power of appointment is vested in the Commissioners of Customs who are entirely outside of political influences. The appointments, dismissals, promotion and everything is vested in those Commissioners.

Q. Who are the Commissioners?—They are a body appointed by the Government—life appointments.

Q. They are not members of the Service?—No; nor members of Parliament. They have no political status whatever. I think there are five of them, but I am not quite certain.

*By Mr. Burpee:—*

Q. What are these especial duties?—To take the Customs Law and administer it, and all appointments are made by them from the list of persons who have undergone examinations. In England they have what are called competitive examinations. The parties who undergo that examination and are approved of, get graded to certain classes and are placed on an indexed list, and from this list all appointments are made by the Commissioners. I do not think that that system could be carried out in this country in its entirety; but a system of competitive examination adapted to each particular Department could very easily be devised and carried out. Some Departments would require a much higher grade than others.

*By the Chairman:—*

Q. Do you think your Department would require any special examination?—It requires, I think, that every man should be a good arithmetician and possess the other qualifications that I have mentioned.