

## CUSTOMS DUTIES ON CHURCH ORNAMENTS.

### ENQUIRY.

HON. MR. GIRARD inquired of the Government:

Whether it is their intention, during the present session, to amend the revenue laws so as to allow the entry free of duty, into Manitoba, the North-West Territories, Keewatin and the Mackenzie River Basin, of church ornaments and other effects gratuitously given for mission purposes?

He said: I shall not make much addition to my enquiry as it appears on the Notice Paper. I may remark, however, that my question is not confined to the interests of any special denomination. Hon. gentlemen might, perhaps, understand, from the terms in which it appears on the Paper, that it affects particularly one nationality or one religious interest. It is not so, however; but we all claim that everything that is given gratuitously for the advancement of the church, in the shape of church ornaments, should be exempt from duty. We pay a large sum of money for the advancement of colonization. People who enter into that distant North-West suffer great inconvenience, and at times a good deal of misery of every kind, and it appears to me that they deserve some consideration from the Government. My inquiry applies particularly to articles sent from Europe and other places gratuitously for the use of the church. Duties are imposed at the present time on such articles, and it would only be just and right that they should be placed upon the free list. It is perhaps the first time that such a question has been brought before this honourable House, but it is one of justice, and if it is not possible at the moment to give the relief asked for, it is hoped that at no distant time steps will be taken to grant this request of the people who settle in the far North-West, who have no other interest to serve than the advancement of religion and civilization.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—As I had the honour of mentioning to my hon. friend a moment ago privately, this is a kind of question that it is not the practice of the Government to answer. When alterations in the tariff are proposed they are always kept private until they are declared in the House, so that everybody has the advantage of them, and I am, there-

fore, unfortunately unable to answer my hon. friend's question.

## SETTLEMENT OF ACCOUNTS BETWEEN THE DOMINION AND THE PROVINCES OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC BILL.

### THIRD READING.

The House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on Bill (E) "An Act respecting the settlement of Accounts between the Dominion of Canada and the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, and between the said Provinces."

(In the Committee.)

On the third clause,—

HON. MR. POWER—Why is that third clause worded that way? Would it not be better to allow the arbitrators to decide every question? It would probably save doing things over twice. As the Bill stands, if a constitutional question comes up the arbitrators, who are to be three judges of some superior court, I presume, are estopped from undertaking to deal with it. Then this constitutional question is referred to the Supreme Court of Canada, and thence to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and then the award is to be referred back to the arbitrators. Would it not be shorter to allow the arbitrators to settle the whole question, and then, if there is an appeal from their decision on the constitutional ground, let that fact go before the Supreme Court, or the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and avoid circumlocution?

HON. MR. ABBOTT—If it were in my discretion to make the law as I thought best, I think I should be of the opinion of my hon. friend, that it would be better to let them decide any constitutional question and allow an appeal upon that, the same as any other question of law, but; as I explained when introducing the Bill, this embodying an agreement which has been come to by the representatives of the three Governments, it cannot be altered.

HON. MR. POWER—I had forgotten about that.

HON. MR. DEBOUCHERVILLE, from