

ance of carrying out this extension of the telegraph system to the Island of Cape Sable. On my return I laid the views he expressed before my colleague, the Minister of Public Works, and subsequently transmitted a communication from that gentleman, urging, in the strongest possible manner, that the work should be carried out. I think that, under these circumstances, the hon. member for Shelburne should not go out of his way to belittle the services of a gentleman who has done so much to advance the interests of his county.

Mr. KILLAM. I would like to enquire if it is the intention of the Government to carry out this project. I might say that, apart from the use which this line will be in cases of shipwreck and for the purpose of transmitting weather reports, it will not likely be so great an expense to the Government as many of the cables will be, because the population on Sable Island should now be sufficient to support a telegraph company itself and I fancy that, apart from the expense of laying a cable and putting a telegraph line across the island, the other expenses—that is the annual expenses—will be very light.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. There is no objection to bringing down this correspondence. I might say, in answer to the last speaker that it is the intention of the Government to extend the line.

Motion agreed to.

CASES IN THE MARITIME COURT.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron) moved for a return showing the number of cases disposed of by the Judge and several Surrogate Judges of the Maritime Court since the creation of the said court, until the first day of February, 1882; showing the place where each of said cases was disposed of, the name of the plaintiff and defendant in each case, and of the vessel or property seized, the amount of each claim, the amount awarded and the final disposition of each case, whether by appeal or otherwise, the amount of costs taxed to the successful party, the amount of Marshall's fees, the amount received by each officer of the court in each case, the appraised value of the vessel or property seized, the amount sold for. He said: I believe a return of a similar character to the one asked for was brought down on the 8th of May, 1879, including a statement of the cases disposed of by the Maritime Court up to the 1st of May, 1879, but that report was a very imperfect one. It did not embrace the information which I seek to obtain by this motion. I wish to obtain fuller information on several points, and more especially in reference to the costs incurred in the disposal of cases in the Maritime Court, and the delays that usually take place in the investigation and trial of cases before that court. I recollect when this subject was before Parliament some years ago, the propriety of a Bill of this kind was pressed upon Parliament in the interest of sailors. It was supposed that sailors coming before this court would have a speedy means of collecting their wages. It was said that without some such measure the sailor was, to a large extent, at the mercy of the vessel owner when he was discharged at a port from which he did not ship, or discharged before the period of his engagement expired. He had to pursue his remedy by suit, although subsequently, I believe, an Act was passed empowering him to go before two magistrates, but this measure was found very imperfect in its operation. It was supposed when the present Act was passed that the sailor would have a speedy and inexpensive remedy in cases of small claims against vessel owners; but I am afraid that that object has not been fully realized; and that our anticipations respecting the working of the Act have been disappointed. The present law does not give a safe and expeditious mode of disposing of these cases;

and I know, as a matter of fact, that it affords an exceedingly expensive mode of proceeding, and that it is a very complicated piece of machinery. We have, first, the Statute itself, which is not a very long one though one of a considerable number of clauses; and, in addition, we have the rules of the court, 278 in number, all of which have the force of statutory provisions. In addition to all that, we have to issue the writ in the ordinary way, which is, of course, quite correct; then we have a statement of claims, then a defence, and then come the pleadings and replications and the demurrers and all the other machinery which is necessary for the purpose of putting this law in successful operation. It does appear to me that in cases where small collections have to be made, there should be a more expeditious and cheaper way of settling these disputes. Then, Sir, as to the question of costs, I am quite satisfied that if the Minister of Justice will examine the return which will be brought down in reply to this motion, he will be startled at the amount of costs incurred in the prosecution of cases under this law. I know of one case in which the amount in dispute was some \$300 or \$400, while the costs amounted to over \$1,000. In another case, the amount in dispute was the small sum of \$150, and the costs taxed to the successful party were \$352, besides the costs the defendant would have to pay. I know of another case in which the amount involved was \$110, and the costs on both sides were in the neighborhood of \$1,000. These are facts which, I think, the return will establish beyond controversy, and, if so, I think it will be the duty of the Minister of Justice to remedy so great a wrong, and to provide a cheaper and more expeditious mode of dealing with cases of this kind. I observe that the Government promise some legislation with reference to Vice-Admiralty jurisdiction. I do not know how far they propose dealing with the question of the Maritime Court, but I earnestly press upon the hon. the First Minister the necessity of some legislation in the direction of making the machinery of the court less complicated, and the expenses less than they are now. I know of no reason why cases involving \$100, or thereabouts, should not be disposed of in the same summary way as are cases in the Division Courts of the Province of Ontario, and at an expense not exceeding \$10 or \$20, including disbursements. Under the law as it stands, the Surrogate Judge has absolute and unrestricted power of allowing just what costs and fees he sees fit. I know of a case in which the amount involved did not exceed \$110, and in which counsel fees were allowed by the Judge to the extent of \$110. I say that it is an outrage and a scandal on the administration of justice, which, I trust, the Government will remedy without delay. I move for this return with the view of getting some information on the subject, and I wish, with the consent of the hon. the First Minister, to amend the motion by adding to it the words: "when the case was first instituted, and when finally disposed of."

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I have no objection to this motion. The Act has not been long in existence, and there cannot be many cases, I fancy, such as the hon. gentleman mentions. I have not heard of any complaints, and no complaints that I am aware of have been laid before the Government of the working of the Act or the proceedings under the Act. But I am quite willing that the hon. gentleman should have the return.

Mr. BLAKE. I fear there is only too much foundation for what my hon. friend has stated. Some time ago similar complaints were made, and I believe some remedy was applied in some of the smaller cases. The Act was framed with the view of giving the greatest measure of flexibility in the proceedings, so that the lessons of experience might not be lost; and with that view it was thought proper to submit the mode of procedure and the rules made by the Judge to the Governor in Council. What has happened is, therefore, not