

Order of the House for copies of Correspondence between the Minister of Customs and the Collector of Customs at the Port of Montreal, in relation to the appointment of a successor to the late Mr. Bryson, valuator of hardware at that Port, said: My object in making this motion is this: The late Mr. Bryson was a most valuable officer, and one who had been appointed at the suggestion of the late Mr. Holton. Shortly after Mr. Bryson's demise, as a member of the city, I received a notification by letter to suggest the name of a successor. I enquired into the facts, and got them from Mr. Simpson, the Collector of the Port. I found that the deputy had been appointed eleven or twelve years ago, and had performed his duties without any complaint in writing against him. I recommended that if the officer or assistant was able to perform the duties of chief, he should be appointed. I submitted the name of the deputy, and, to my surprise, a few days after, I was informed that the deputy had been set aside, and another party appointed to be the valuator of hardware. I had to keep silent until now, when I could make my voice heard in this House. A few weeks ago, I placed a motion on the paper to enquire whether a successor had been appointed to Mr. Bryson, and whether the appointment, if made, was temporary or permanent. The answer that came from the Minister of Customs was that the appointment made was temporary, so as to give the appointee a trial before making his appointment permanent. Now, Sir, why was not the deputy so appointed, temporarily, so as to test his ability to perform the duties of the office? I think it only fair-play that he should be tried. Why should he be passed over? I should be sorry to recommend anyone not qualified or undeserving, but, if not unqualified, whether he be a French-Canadian, or of any other nationality, the next man in position to that made vacant, as in this case, by death, should be promoted to the position. On the instigation of men who were jealous, and those who had something to gain by it, influence has been brought to bear against the deputy in this case. Whether the new man has been since appointed permanently, I know not; but I think it very wrong that a good

officer, who has performed his duties efficiently for eleven or twelve years, should be set aside, and another put over his head, for there are no grounds of complaint. If there were any they should have been placed on record; they should not be merely put forward by mere verbal assertions of a few parties who may have been interested.

MR. BOWELL: Very little correspondence has taken place in connection with this appointment, between the Collector of Customs and the Department; and such portions as are proper to bring down shall be brought down. My hon. friend for Montreal East (Mr. Coursol), will excuse me for saying that he has scarcely told the House all he knows in connection with this appointment. It has been my desire, since I have had the honour of occupying the position of Minister of Customs, to make appointments to any vacancies by promotion. In all cases in the Montreal Customs Department, in which where it was possible this has been done. There has not been a vacancy in the Customs house at Montreal, during my term of office, to which I have not promoted some one in the Department. I may say here that in any appointment made since the present Government came into power, this course has been followed where practicable. In the present instance, I found it necessary to depart from this theory, and make enquiry as to the fitness of the assistant to fill the position of hardware appraiser, and I found that he was not fit to be the head of the hardware department in so important a port as that of Montreal. My hon. friend says, that I refused to appoint him temporarily, so as to test his qualifications. Now the hon. gentleman admits that the deputy has been in office eleven or twelve years; if after that the Collector reported to me that he was not fit to fill properly and efficiently the position of Chief Appraiser, though he might be competent to perform the duties of assistant under another, I am satisfied that the House and the country will admit that further trial was unnecessary, and will justify his not being promoted to the office for which he had been reported as not qualified. As my hon. predecessor—who has had more experience than I have—knows, one of the