

advocate, who was pleading before him. If that is the case, the official has not acted as he should have; he should have remembered that the French language had a perfect right to be used before the court, as before any of the other courts in the Province of Quebec, and before the Federal courts. But I am satisfied that, in his desire to do justice, this Arbitrator has tried to impress on the mind of the advocate that if he pleaded in the language which was the most familiar, and, perhaps, the only language familiar to the President, he would run a better chance of obtaining justice. At any rate, I hope that the advocate who pleaded there will understand it so, and will not believe that the President had any intention of showing any disregard for him, or for the French population of Canada, for I am acquainted with the President of the Board of Arbitrators, and in spite of his exterior, which may be somewhat rough, I know that he is kind hearted, and he is a man who would not deliberately act as he must have acted or else the hon. member would not have said so. Neither is there any doubt, Mr. Speaker, that in the future choice of the Arbitrators, the remarks just made by the hon. member must be borne in mind. When an appointment is made, if it should be possible for us to find a man who understands and can speak both languages, it will be a great deal better than to have men who can speak only one language, especially for a court whose services are required in the Province of Quebec as well as in the other Provinces. During recess it may be deemed expedient to enquire into the composition of this Board and to see if means could not be devised to improve the present system, so as to make it more effective and less expensive. My attention has been called by one of the hon. members of this House to the delays and cost, and I think that there will be a possibility of improving the composition of this Board during our next Session. The question will be taken into consideration, and although I am not prepared to promise a measure on this subject, we will see whether or not there is any means of making improvements.

Mr. CASGRAIN. (Translation.) Mr. Speaker, I desire to draw the attention of the Minister of Railways on a case which is similar to that which has just been stated by the hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Landry). I refer to the case of a man named Narcisse Pelletier, whose fences were burned down by sparks from a locomotive on the Intercolonial Railway. A report was made to the Department, but on a point of law, the question of the responsibility of the Government was suspended—that is to say, the entire responsibility of the Government was not admitted, because the chimney of the locomotive was covered with this metallic screen, which is used as a protection against fire. I make this remark because it is a matter of civil law and of property in the Province of Quebec. Now, according to law, in the Province of Quebec, the Government ought to see that an article of our Civil Code provides that damages caused to others in any way whatever must be paid. All damages must be paid. It may be that in other Provinces, civil law is applied differently, but in the Province of Quebec—and I call particular attention from the hon. Minister on this point—the law is as I have said before. I submit these facts so that the hon. Minister of Public Works may bring them to the knowledge of the Minister of Railways, that he may take them into serious consideration. I believe these individuals have a right to be indemnified, for it is known in fact that the fire was caused by the fire of a locomotive. Only in law the responsibility of the Government has been denied. This question ought to be decided once for all, as decisions have been given for and against this point.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. (Translation.) Mr. Speaker, if the House will allow me to answer immediately to the hon. member for l'Islet (Mr. Casgrain), I shall tell him that the rule followed by the Railway Department, and consequently by the Government, with respect to damages

caused by the Intercolonial Railway, is exactly that followed by all railway companies throughout the country. When a fire is caused by sparks from a locomotive, the investigation must show whether or not the chimney was covered with the metallic screen referred to by the hon. member, and if it is proved that this metallic screen was fixed on as required by law, the responsibility of the railway company does not exist and the damage is not paid. That is the policy carried out on the Intercolonial Railway with respect to damages caused by fire. Because a railway is operated by the Government that is no reason why the responsibility should be different from what it is when the railway is under the management of a company. And the hon. member may be sure that, although a Government is not more anxious to pay out money than an individual is, it is always more agreeable to them to make up for damages or to show that they are making up for them, than to be obliged to refuse. If in certain cases the Government has paid damages, it must be that it had been proved that the cover had not been properly fixed on the chimney of the locomotive, or that there was other defects and that the railway was at fault. At all events, the Minister of Railways is perfectly willing to examine each case and to decide it according to the evidence made out. If in the case pointed out by the hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Landry), the case of one Fraser, in one of the Maritime Provinces, the damages were paid, it is because it must have been proved that the Intercolonial Railway was at fault, or that whoever had charge of the locomotive was at fault, and that consequently the Government ought to pay. If the hon. member who has brought this matter before the Minister of Railways has new proofs to give in favour of the man he wishes to protect, he may be sure that the hon. Minister will take the matter into consideration.

Mr. LANDRY. (Translation.) If the House will allow me, I shall state that in the case I have referred to the chimney was in perfect good order; but it must be borne in mind that the fire was not communicated by the chimney; the fireman was building his fire and he threw some on this man's building. The chimney was in perfect order, but the fire came out of the other end.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. (Translation.) In that case, the hon. member will have to bring the matter again before the Minister of Railways, in order to see by which end the fire came out.

Mr. LANDRY. (Translation.) But I see no end to the delay of the Government in paying my elector.

Motion agreed to.

CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Mr. SHAKESPEARE, in moving that in the opinion of this House it is expedient to enact a law prohibiting the incoming of Chinese to that portion of Canada known as British Columbia, said: This is a question which has been before this House on several occasions, which has been thoroughly discussed, and hence, I intend, for my part, on this occasion, to be brief. No one regrets more than I do myself that the condition of things in British Columbia makes it necessary to enact a law prohibiting any further immigration of Chinese to that Province; but, Sir, it is necessary that such a law should be passed—not only necessary, but, it is, in my opinion, imperative. The people of that Province have been aware of this fact for years past. They have repeatedly petitioned the Federal Government on this point, asking for some restrictive measure to be passed to restrict the immigration of Chinese to that Province. Orders in Council have been passed by the Provincial Government there to the Federal Government here, asking relief. The people themselves have peti-

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN.