

Mr. DURANLEAU: As I have said, up to the present we have been very successful; in two or three instances we have appointed judges. I think a few months ago we appointed an outstanding judge in marine matters in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, who made a very extensive and useful report. I can tell my hon. friend that it is the opinion of my officials that this policy is better and cheaper, because we have not had very many inquiries to make. I do not think we have held more than five or six inquiries since the wreck commissioner retired two or three years ago, and I think we are saving money.

Mr. NEILL: I think it was before the minister's time, but the department at one time kept a subcommissioner or deputy at Vancouver, and I often protested against that expense; I am glad to see that has been done away with. In the west, and I assume also on the Atlantic, there is a judge who devotes himself to admiralty cases; he is known as an admiralty judge. Would a judge of that character be employed in British Columbia, for instance? If I remember correctly it is Mr. Justice McPhillips in that province.

Mr. DURANLEAU: As a rule we pick out the best man in the locality. If he is a judge he does not cost very much because, as my hon. friend knows, some judges have no right to make any charge except for their expenses. For instance, when superior court judges are appointed commissioners they receive no fees.

Mr. NEILL: If the minister is appointing men of the calibre of judges I have no complaint at all, because we know their standing and their impartiality. But my point was this: I know how he made the appointment in my district in connection with a port warden and I was wondering if it was along the same lines.

Mr. DURANLEAU: Oh, no.

Mr. NEILL: I am glad to hear it.

Mr. DURANLEAU: We have to make inquiries. In connection with wrecks it is very important to have a judge or a man conversant with marine law so that we may obtain the whole facts.

Mr. CASGRAIN: I cannot agree with the stand taken by the Minister of Marine as a result of which no permanent wreck commissioner has been appointed, because I believe that by appointing wreck commissioners for given cases we are not giving justice to the parties concerned. The men appointed are selected at random in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Quebec or in the city of Montreal, as the case may be, as the hon. member

who has just taken his seat has said. It may be that those appointments are made upon the recommendation of persons friendly to the administration. On the other hand when we had a permanent official such as Captain Demers we had a man who had held office a number of years, one who had wide knowledge and experience and who based his opinions upon precedents and judgments which had been rendered in similar cases. When we went before that commission a certain degree of jurisprudence existed. I would point out further that where investigations were considered necessary such investigations were held, very often at the instance of the wreck commissioner, who, following the practice indicated by law, called for an examination. I do not know whether the law has been changed, but I am of the opinion that the marine legislation enacted last year provided for the services and appointment of a wreck commissioner. I know such provision did appear in the old act. I can recall instances where in my own constituency vessels had gone to the bottom of the river; in those cases the pilots and all concerned appeared before the wreck commissioner and had to stand an investigation. In those days the law was in force and maintained. To-day the government does not follow the law. It does not order an examination or investigation in the event of a wreck or a collision. That action is taken only at the discretion of the minister who may order an investigation when he believes one necessary. Formerly, when there was even the slightest damage, even in the event of a vessel being scraped, an investigation was held. Captain Demers told me on one occasion upon which I was objecting to an investigation that when a vessel strikes anything even slightly, an accident has occurred, according to statute, the law must be enforced and the commissioner must act. I have known in recent years of damage being done and have made application to the minister, but investigations have not been made, although the law still exists. The practice adopted by the department is not giving satisfaction to the public, and I would urge upon the government a reconsideration of its decision. Surely it can find at some point between the Atlantic and the Pacific a man qualified through ability and experience in marine matters to fill the position formerly occupied by Captain Demers.

Mr. REID: Is it the intention of the government to put into effect the Canada Shipping Act which was rushed through at the last session? I have particular reference to the use of tackle inspectors.