

occasion it has been found that that the greater number of these Arbitrators do not understand a single word of French, and are called upon to hold investigations in cases where the witnesses who are summoned and the parties themselves do not understand English. This has given rise to great inconveniences; interpreters are needed to translate to the witnesses the questions put by the Arbitrators, and to translate also the answers given by the witnesses; this doubles the cost and the length of the inquests. It seems to me that from a purely economical point of view, and also to do justice to the population of a whole Province, the Government ought to require that those officials should speak, or at least understand French. I think that the Government ought to require this knowledge in this branch of the Service as well as in the others; for at the present time, with Confederation as it is now constituted, with the exigencies of Civil Service, a perfect knowledge of the English language is required from an employé, who wishes to obtain a position here at Ottawa, and still in several places on lines of railway, on the Intercolonial Railway, and in the organization of the office which is now contemplated, persons who do not know a single word of French, who do not even understand it, are appointed, and our countrymen are obliged to appear before these courts. It is easy to understand, Mr. Speaker, in what a disagreeable and inferior position we are placed in that respect. I call the attention of the Government on this point, and I do hope that they will remedy the evil which I have pointed out. Again, very recently, at a sitting of this court, the President or one of the Arbitrators has had the impudence to tell one of the lawyers that if he did not know how to plead in English he had no business to plead before the Board, and that was said in the city of Quebec, in the capital of the Province of Quebec. I think the least that can be required of these officials, is that, if they do not understand French, at least they should have some idea of good breeding; and that in a country like ours, they should refrain from putting on the overbearing airs of a conqueror: they will not pass in our time. I take this opportunity to call the attention of the Government to a case which came before the Dominion Arbitrators, and for which I have, for the last two or three years, used my best endeavours, but without success, although the cause is perfectly just. The Government owns a railway which is called the Intercolonial Railway. One day, a locomotive which had left River du Loup for Quebec, set fire to a building belonging to one of the electors of my county. The building being burned down, the proprietor naturally asks the Government to make good his loss. The Government sends an Arbitrator; the Arbitrator hears evidence, finds that the fire was set to the building by one of the engines belonging to the Government, finds that the plaintiff's claim is not too high, and comes to the conclusion that in equity the Government is bound to refund to this man the money which he has lost by this fire. But it seems that when the engine left River du Loup for Quebec, the metallic screen placed on top of the chimney of the locomotive, and which is destined to prevent the sparks from flying out, was in good order. Now, the Government have refused on that ground to give this man the amount of money to which he is entitled for the damage they have caused to him. Well, I fail to see by virtue of what law a Government is not bound to make good the damage caused by them. I fail to see by virtue of what law, either natural or positive, the Government is exempt from paying the amount of the damage they have caused to a party by setting fire to his building. The position taken by the Government in the present case is very strange, inasmuch as we now have two precedents. In the county of Pictou, two individuals were in the same position; their fences—not their barns—but their fences and a few cords of wood were burned down by one of the locomotives of the Intercolonial Railway. In that case, as in the other, a kind of inquest was held by

Official Arbitrators, and the Arbitrator declared that in equity the Government were bound to pay, but that in law they were not, because the metallic screen covering the chimney of the locomotive was in perfect good order. The member for the county, or somebody else, for all I know, at all events, somebody having more influence than I have, approached the Government and obtained from them the decision that this cause on which an Arbitrator had made a report should be referred to the whole body of Arbitrators. The Court of Arbitrators, with a full attendance, decided that this individual, not only in equity, but also in justice, had a right to be paid, and he was paid. The case to which I now refer is that of Mr. Fraser. Another individual has also been paid under the same circumstances. Well, Mr. Speaker, I had the honour, to day, of putting a question to the Government on this subject, and I was told that the two men were not at all in the same circumstances. I know very well that they are not in the same circumstances, for one of them has been paid and the other has not; but when they are both paid they will be on the same footing, and it is for that reason I ask the Government to pay this man. If the Government allow themselves the sport of burning down a man's buildings, let them bear the consequences, and let them make good the losses of which they have been the cause. I think that if the case was referred to the whole Board of Arbitrators, as the Pictou case has been, the result would be the same as that which took place in the case of Mr. Fraser, and that justice, which has not been refused to a person who does not belong to our nationality, will not be refused to a person who speaks our language.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. (Translation.) Mr. Speaker, I am afraid my hon. friend made a mistake or misunderstood the question which is now before the House, because the last part of his speech has reference to a matter altogether different.

Mr. LANDRY. It has reference to the Arbitrators.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. (Translation.) I am afraid my hon. friend has forgotten the facts which took place during the interval which elapsed between the time when his question was put and the time when the present motion was made. At all events, I did not wish to interrupt him, because I thought the occasion was favourable for him to press the claims of the individual whose name he has mentioned in this House; but he will have to excuse me if I am not able to answer him as the hon. Minister of Railways, whom it concerns specially, would do. I shall speak to him on this question, and I am convinced that if there is any possibility of doing what the hon. member asks, the hon. Minister of Railways will certainly do it. As to the arbitrators to whom he has referred, there is no doubt it would be desirable that all of them should understand both languages. It would be desirable that all public officials in the Civil Service should understand and even speak both languages. But the hon. member knows that it is an impossibility, under the present circumstances. In the Province of Quebec it is altogether different; nearly all of those who speak the English language, at least most of our educated men, know French as well, and can understand and speak it; but, unfortunately, it is not so in other Provinces, although there are very remarkable exceptions in that respect. As to the facts concerning the St. Charles Branch Railway, I do not think that those who appeared before the Arbitrators have had any reason to complain a great deal, for I think that, taking it all in all, their cause has been well pleaded, since the amount which has been granted by the arbitrators has been quite large, and must have satisfied most of those who had reason to complain, and who had submitted their cause to them. The hon. member has spoken, I believe, of the President of the Arbitrators who, it is said, forgot himself in reference to an