

chief engineer, who would attend to the ventilation.

The report was adopted.

The Senate adjourned at 4.40 p.m.

## THE SENATE.

*Monday, March 21st, 1881.*

The Speaker took the chair at twelve o'clock, noon.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

### THE EUROPEAN, AMERICAN, CANADIAN AND ASIATIC CABLE COMPANY.

#### AN EXPLANATION.

Hon. Mr. DICKEY — I beg to call the attention of the House once more to the unfortunate position in which we are placed by having public and private legislation thrust upon us in such a hurried manner at the close of the session. I do not make this observation with reference to the Supply Bill — which, I believe, is the only bill now remaining — because we cannot amend it, and the only effect of introducing it here at such a late period of the session is to limit the time that hon. members have to discuss it. With regard to the question itself, I do not propose at present to enter into it at length, because it would lead to a very long discussion, but, if no measures are taken at the beginning of next session to effect a change of this system of legislating, I shall call the attention of the House to the subject. There has been one notable instance in which it has led to great injustice being done to public as well as to private interests, which, I think, ought not to be passed over — I allude to the Bill to incorporate the European, American and Canadian Cable Company. That Bill was to authorize the Company to lay a cable between Europe and America. Every assistance was given to the men who had charge of it in this House, and there was but one amendment limiting the charge for messages introduced, and it went down to another place. In the meantime, the project originated by Mr. Sandford Fleming to lay a submarine cable between Canada and Japan had been laid before the

*Hon. Mr. Reesor.*

House, and was the subject of legislation in another place. In the House of Commons this Bill was amended by adding, "and also to build from any point or points from the Pacific Coast, in the Dominion of Canada, to Japan and the Continent of Asia." The Bill was amended in other particulars. The clause which we had introduced restricting the price of messages was struck out, and power was given to the Governor in Council to regulate those matters, and another clause was added, which was thought necessary in reference to the Japan part of the project. Now, those amendments were brought up to this House and passed, or rather passed over, without any discussion. There was no opportunity given to the House to consider them or the effect that they would have, and the result was that we passed in this hasty manner, legislation which most seriously impairs, and, I may add, defeats the great project of connecting Asia and Canada by means of submarine cable, because the proviso in that Bill, in the 20th section, was to this effect—"the works of the Company shall be commenced within two years, and one or more cables laid within four years from the passage of this Act; otherwise the charter shall be void." The effect will be that the Company, by laying a cable from Sable Island across the Atlantic, will satisfy the terms of the charter, and there will be no limit to the time within which a cable may be laid to Japan; while, in the other charter, the Company will be restricted to a certain time within which they may act. The consequence is that this European, American and Canadian Cable Company will have the power to keep this matter open indefinitely — certainly for ten years — if they choose to do so. The House will see at once that the persons acting under the authority of the other charter cannot possibly raise money to carry out their project while this remains on the statute book. I think it is necessary to call attention to this as not only affecting the interests of the original projector of this great enterprise, but also doing great injury to the public, because it retards a project in which we ought all to feel an interest. I, therefore, feel that there is no apology due to the House for bringing this matter before them, and I only wish we