

the hon. gentlemen (Hon. Messrs. Miller and Bourinot) as to the utility and advantages to be derived from so great and important a work. He hoped that they would be satisfied with the assurance that it was the intention of the Government to have it carried out. He could also inform them that the engineers had received instructions to take the work in hand, and proceed with it during the present year. He hoped this explanation would be satisfactory to the hon. gentlemen.

CONTINGENCIES OF THE SENATE.

HON. MR. LETELLIER DE ST. JUST moved the appointment of a Standing Committee on Contingencies.

HON. MR. DICKEY said he had some remarks to make before the Motion was put. In the Session of 1867 or 1868 a scale of fees was adopted for the officers of the Senate, which remained untouched till the Session of 1872. When the hon. leader of the present Opposition—who stood then in a different capacity—thought proper to move a Resolution on the last day of the Session but one, authorising certain gentlemen to form a new scale. That was referred to the Contingencies Committee in the Session of 1873, with a result which he would presently state. A scale of fees was then returned to the House and adopted as a compromise, and, as he would show presently, as a final measure, which scale increased the salaries of the Officers of the House by amounts varying from 30 to 60 per cent. He was not going to say whether it was right or wrong; but the scale was accepted by the House, he believed, without opposition. He found, however, that in the absence of most of the Members of the Committee, and with only a very thin House—some thirty Members—the very evening before the prorogation, last year, the following Resolution had been placed upon the journals:—

“Moved by the Hon. Mr. Letellier, seconded by Hon. Mr. Scott, That the schedule of the salaries of the employees of the Senate be referred to the Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture, and the Secretary of State, for their consideration as to the relative amounts of salaries paid to the employees in the two

Houses, with a view to their readjustment; and also, for such action as to the Senate employees and their salaries, as they might deem just and reasonable.”

He (Mr. Dickey) might remind the House that there was an Order on record which stated that the whole Question—the appointment of officers and their salaries—was one entirely for the Senate. Now, this was an Order made on the very eve of the prorogation, delegating the power in question to certain gentlemen. He was quite sure that none of his hon. friends, whose names were mentioned, would imagine he was casting the slightest reflection upon any one of them, for he had too high a respect for them to do so. He would say then, that the late Government, in the Session of 1872, thought proper to take this course, and the present Government thought proper to follow their example. Yet, with regard to the first action, that of the leader of the Opposition, then the leader of the House, on the eve of prorogation, in his (Mr. Dickey's) absence, and in that of the Chairman of the Committee, well known as having taken a deep interest in these matters, this Order was passed; as he had stated, the same thing was done, under similar circumstances, on the succeeding occasion. But objectionable as he thought the first action, by the leader of the late Government, it had, at all events, the merit of finality; because, only so long ago as the 14th May, 1873, this clause appeared in the Report adopted by the House: That the annexed Schedule, from the 1st January last, except when another day was stated in the Schedule, should leave it understood that the said salaries should be considered as permanent, not to be increased except in case of such Clerks as might reasonably expect that as their knowledge and usefulness increased, their salaries would be reconsidered. He must not be accused of anything like personality in this matter. He was bound to except the Clerk of the House, respecting whom it was agreed that he should have a salary equal to that of a Deputy Head of a Department. Now, when that Order was about a twelve month old, they found action taken by the present