

mittee to initiate that, to consider the whole subject, and to bring forward those facts which are necessary upon which to form a decision; and I dare say that we shall be able, as we have hitherto been, to adopt their views. But certainly we do not intend to usurp their functions in a perfunctory manner like this, and to chalk out their work for them.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. When I spoke first I did not mention the third paragraph of the petition of the reporters, because I thought I should not do so at that moment; but as my hon. friend from Provencher (Mr. Royal) has just mentioned it, I may say that I regret very much that that paragraph was there, because it made a comparison which would necessarily lead to a discussion which had better, perhaps, have been avoided; therefore, after having said these few words on that paragraph I need say no more in reference to that point. I observe that the Committee recommend an increase in the salaries of the official reporting staff to \$2,000 per annum, but to take effect next year only. That makes a difference, certainly, and a very important one, because there is plenty of time before the end of the Session to bring up the subject of the translators, and to do justice to them if they are not properly remunerated.

Mr. BLAKE. Hear, hear.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. Therefore as this increase is only to take effect next year, I do not see the same objections to adopting this report now. I may say, however, that I would be glad to have from the Committee a comprehensive statement of the position of the whole translating staff, showing us exactly how we stand in reference to that staff, and then we would be in a better position to come to a decision. I do not say whether their salaries should be increased or not, but representations have been made to me, as well as to other members, that the staff is hardly paid enough. Some time ago I called the attention of the chairman of the Committee to the fact that these French translators were obliged to remain here a couple of months after the Session, and that we should consider that fact when we came to fix their salaries. I now understand from members of the Committee that the number of translators has not yet been determined, and that probably they will have to increase the staff by one or two members in order to meet the requirements of the translation into French. I think it is very important that the Committee should consider that matter before this Session ends, and that they should bring in a report informing us how the whole case stands. Besides that the members of the Committee, one and all, have expressed their desire and their determination that justice should be rendered to the staff, and in particular to the French translators. I think with that assurance on all sides we should not insist any longer on delaying the report, but allow it to be adopted.

Mr. DESJARDINS. I wish the position of the Committee to be well understood by this House. We have almost been accused of treating the French translators differently from the reporters. Well, I must say this, that the House must remember that when we first gave the contract for translation we had to pay \$2.50 per page to the contractors. Then one or two years ago we applied for tenders, and one of the tenderers offered to do the work for \$1.75 per page, and the expenses were brought down to the sum of \$3,500 upon that basis. The contractor went to work, he had his own staff and did the work in his own way, and the result was that we had a good translation. When we came to consider the question of securing the permanency of the officers of the staff, we took the contract sum we had been paying as the basis of expenditure we would have to incur in making that staff permanent, and we engaged as chief translator the gentleman who had contracted to do it at \$1.75 a page, and we distributed between four translators the amount the translation

Mr. BLAKE.

had cost the year before, so that if the salary now looks to be a low one it is not the fault of the Committee, but the fault of those who offered to do the work for the price mentioned in order to secure the contract. The Session has not closed yet, and we have still under consideration the best means by which the translation can be done as regularly and as punctually as possible. We have added two translators to the staff, and now we are confronted with a motion saying in effect that we have dealt unjustly with that branch of the *Hansard*. Well, I think that we ought to know what the sense of the House is on the question of the salaries to the translators. For my own part I have no objection to increasing the salaries. I fully acknowledge that the translators are not men of ordinary attainments; they require to be men of great efficiency, and of considerable literary ability, and if the House is ready to acknowledge that fact, and is ready to vote an additional amount, I am ready for my part to recommend that to the Committee. But it would be useless, now that the matter has been brought before the House, to go to the Committee and make a report recommending an additional amount to be paid to the staff, and then to be met by a rebuke from the House.

Mr. LANDRY (Kent). I regret that the hon. Minister of Public Works has been so easily convinced that he was wrong in his first expression of opinion as to the propriety of allowing this report to lie on the Table for some little time. I would myself very much prefer that it should do so. Some hon. gentlemen have argued that each branch of the subject should be considered on its own merits. Well, Sir, I cannot agree with that view. It seems to me that whatever pertains to this matter cannot suffer in being left a little longer to the consideration of the Committee, particularly as they say they have another branch of the same matter under consideration. This subject does not require immediate action; if the report were adopted it only comes into effect next year. There is no hurry about it; it is not to remedy any existing evil, and no harm can be done by a little delay. Therefore, I think, this subject ought not to be dealt with by piecemeal, more particularly when a comparison of the one with the other might enable the members of this House to arrive at a just conclusion. It is desirable that employees should be judged on their merits; yet we judge the value of labour relatively. We take a certain class of labour, and because it is skilled labour, and is paid so much by somebody else, we are thereby able to decide how much we should pay for it. The chairman of the Committee intimated that it was the opinion of the Committee that the cost of publishing the *Hansard* was too great; and though he made that statement the other day, he now asks that the salaries of a certain number of those employed in the work should be increased—and if a decrease is to take place, in what direction is it to be made, except in that of the French translators? If the first expression of opinion was correct, if the Committee considered it desirable to reduce the expense, it is strange that the present proposition to increase salaries should be submitted. I do not wish to be understood as being opposed to the increase of the salaries of the reporters. I agree with other hon. members in expressing my high appreciation of their labours and the manner in which they discharge their duty; but when there was an expression of opinion the other day that the expenses should be curtailed, and yet a few days afterwards it is proposed to increase the expenses, the matter becomes a difficult one to deal with; and under the circumstances, I think it is only fair that the reports respecting the stenographers and the translators should be made together, in order that we may be able to judge whose salary should be reduced and whose increased. I look upon translating as a work which requires almost as much skill, I was going to say more skill, than