

Mr. ERVIN: Yes, I agree. This is really what I mean to say. I think one of the essential elements of such an experiment is that it must be conducted under controlled circumstances. One must try to duplicate as closely as possible the events that would take place under a properly controlled system. This is what I attempted to do.

Mr. AIKEN: May I ask a couple of questions related to Mr. Frenette's evidence? Your experiment was conducted in the English debates only?

Mr. ERVIN: That is correct.

Mr. AIKEN: Did you make any study of the French reporting system which would enable you to make a comparison between that and the study you made of the English, and to assess the effect that might be brought about in the French?

Mr. ERVIN: Yes, I did. I interviewed Mr. Frenette and his assistant on a number of occasions—perhaps three or four. I have a record of the interviews. I came to the conclusion that there was nothing characteristic of the French debates that would not render it at least as effective for this type of transcription as did the English debates. I think I could also say that there exists the fluctuating workload of which Mr. Frenette speaks—feast and famine, long periods when they sit in the house waiting for someone to speak French, and then suddenly all the debate is carried on in French for a period of time, thus creating a pressure of work that is very difficult to balance as far as the facilities and workload are concerned. For this reason, I did feel that perhaps a tape recording system would be the means of bringing about a more equitable balance of workload, because then what would be involved largely would be editing, in which I think much of the important skill is involved.

Mr. AIKEN: But, Mr. Ervin, you would have to have both English and French if the system were installed.

Mr. ERVIN: Exactly. That is why I investigated the practicability, although it was not within the terms of reference.

Mr. AIKEN: There is one other question that I believe is important. Both Mr. Buskard and Mr. Frenette have an immediate problem of staff shortages. If the committee were to recommend that there be an immediate staff increase to cover this emergency, would it set back considerably the plan that you have suggested, or could they be worked together?

Mr. ERVIN: May I express disagreement before this committee on something that has just been said?

The CHAIRMAN: Absolutely.

Mr. ERVIN: I do not share the opinion that there is an immediate problem. If you refer to my report, on page 6 you will find we have conducted a survey of the working conditions of the reporters and their hours of work. I find their average hours per day are considerably less than that of civil servants, and I have taken into consideration the fact that their work becomes quite intense at times and therefore a certain amount of this is justified. I do not agree that the working conditions or the workload would support an addition to the staff.

As far as recruiting is concerned, I do believe that should there be a vacancy in the staff some difficulty might exist in filling it. This would not be impossible, however. Furthermore, I draw to your attention the fact that all the positions, according to the personnel department, are now filled. All the positions that are authorized are filled. Therefore I must answer your question in the light of my understanding of the problem of shortage of staff and difficulty in recruiting. However, if in their wisdom the committee decide to