

report the debates of this House. I am informed that the committee have not done anything of the kind, and do not know what he can write or what he can do in that respect. They simply give him a pension of \$2,000 a year. When the Debates were established, it was never understood that we were to give a pension of \$2,000 a year to a friend of the Government. I am told that the reason why more competent shorthand writers have not been appointed, is that they do not belong to the Government party. If the reporting of the debates is to become a matter of Government patronage, we should know it at once. In that case we might waste our money, but we should know that we are doing it. I repeat that the reporting of the debates in French would be a farce if it were to be done by men not able to write more than 50 or 60 words a minute.

Mr. DESAULNIERS. (Translation.) Should the question raised by the hon. member for Quebec Centre (Mr. Langelier) have a good result, I would be much pleased, as the French Debates of the House of Commons would gain importance thereby. I have known personally the gentleman newly appointed to the staff of the French Debates, Mr. Desjardins, while I was a member of the Quebec Legislature. I know personally that this gentleman took down verbatim every one of the speeches pronounced in the House, although he was only obliged to give a condensed report of them. I would not praise him beyond his due, but I know a former member of the Quebec Assembly, Mr. Gagnon, who while he was a Minister in the Mercier Government, complimented Mr. Desjardins from his seat in the House. I do not wish to say more than I should. I do not like to weary the House with my speeches. But I would like to see the French Debates maintained even at the cost of heavy expenditure, if necessary, as an encouragement for those who dare to speak French in this House. Now, Mr. Speaker, since the Debates Committee have chosen a new stenographer, I believe—and I am sure that I am right—that Mr. Desjardins will be able to do justice to those who will have the courage to speak French in this House. I believe he will be able to take down verbatim every word they say. I wish to add a word with regard to the French translation of the Debates. As well as his colleagues, the chief translator, Mr. Beaulieu, has a driving task which knows no respite. Has not the House of Commons the means of paying, for the French Debates, officers who should not be overburdened and who should not each one have to do the work of several men? I speak in French. I express my opinion. I am not an orator, but as to the Debates, if the House wants them, let us have them translated. It is a step in the right direction to adopt the report of the Debates Committee. If we must speak English and cease enjoying the privilege granted us by the constitution of using our mother tongue, let us know it, and we may then do well to abolish the *Hansard* altogether, both English and French.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. I fully agree with the hon. member for Quebec Centre (Mr. Langelier) in his statement that we should have the very best shorthand writers to report the speeches which are pronounced in French in this House, and I am quite certain that the committee who have charge of this

Mr. LANGELIER.

important branch of the service of the House of Commons, would not have undertaken to select Mr. Desjardins or any other gentleman to report the speeches which are delivered in French without taking the necessary information and getting the recommendations which were considered to be sufficient as to his qualifications as a shorthand writer. I am told by members of that committee that the hon. member for Cardwell (Mr. White) who, as we all know, has vast experience in these matters, has gone to the trouble of ascertaining for himself the qualifications of Mr. Desjardins, and I am informed that from the information he has received, he is fully convinced that Mr. Desjardins is quite competent to fill the position which the committee have assigned to him. I am, moreover, informed that Mr. Desjardins, during the ten years that he practised stenography in the Local House of Quebec, took down verbatim in shorthand every word of every speech delivered by any hon. member who spoke in the Legislative Assembly, but his means of publishing the so-called Quebec Legislative *Hansard* were very limited indeed. He had to rely upon his own means to publish the report of the speeches as they appeared, or as they were reported in the Legislature of the Province of Quebec. Then from the full notes which he had taken in shorthand he made a *résumé* or synopsis of the speeches which had been delivered, reserving to himself the discretion of publishing *in extenso* only the most important of those speeches. Now, I am quite certain that Mr. Desjardins, from all the information which I have been able to collect, is fully competent to perform the duties which have been assigned to him, and that he will do justice to the position in which he has been placed. I have no doubt that all the gentlemen who compose that committee, and who attach just as much importance to the correct publication of the speeches delivered in French as of the speeches delivered in English, have taken pains to satisfy themselves that Mr. Desjardins is just as well qualified to report French speeches as the English reporters are qualified to report English speeches.

Mr. LAURIER. The fact that Mr. Desjardins has been selected by the committee is hardly evidence of his competency, if we may judge by the remarks of the hon. member for St. Maurice (Mr. Desaulniers). The hon. member for St. Maurice has referred to the translators who also are appointed by the same committee, and I understand him to say that the work of translation is done, not by these seven or eight men who compose the staff, but by two men alone, inferring thereby that these two men might be competent and that the others were not so. As to the qualifications of Mr. Desjardins I have nothing to say, because I have no knowledge, but we cannot attach much weight to the argument of the Postmaster General who says, that because he has been selected by the same committee who selected the translators he must therefore be competent, in view of the statement made by the hon. member for St. Maurice. I have been disposed to approve of the nomination of Mr. Desjardins, because I understood that the president of the committee had personally satisfied himself of his qualifications. I understand now, however, that he recommends him without having taken the trouble to enquire personally into his qualifications.