

The CHAIRMAN: Are your reporters separated—the House of Commons reporters from the committee reporters?

Mr. BUSKARD: Yes, I have two staffs.

Mr. AIKEN: Is that the total number of your establishment, four reporters?

Even if you get more at this moment you have no authority to hire them; that is, if you could get two more reporters.

Mr. FRENETTE: Well I think I could. I do not imagine they would be able to refuse a suitable offer.

Mr. BUSKARD: Was your establishment not increased? Were you not allowed to have up to six reporters?

Mr. FRENETTE: No, not that I heard of. Maybe it is in some report which I did not see; but not that I heard of.

Mr. AIKEN: Since you have not seen the report, there is no point in discussing it. There again it relates only to the English debates section which has been taken, shall I say, as an experiment, rather than the whole parliamentary reporting system. But speaking in general terms, would you welcome accepting the possibility of a different reporting system such as by tape recording? Do you think that might be an answer to your problem?

Mr. FRENETTE: Well, I will tell you this, I think Mr. Buskard and I are experts in tape reporting. We have been using it for years, from 25 to 30 years, and we have had all kinds of recording machines, the best and the worst. We have tried everything. I will tell frankly that a machine is better than no reporter, but it will not accelerate the work at any time. We had experience, if I may speak of it, some two years ago, was it not?

Mr. BUSKARD: You mean when Mr. Ervin's machines were put in, or before Mr. Ervin's experiment when the dictaphones were tried?

Mr. FRENETTE: Yes. The dictaphone organization installed one of their best systems which was connected to the public address system in the house. I decided I would give this machine a fair trial, the best I could.

As a matter of fact, my female transcribing staff, and Mr. Buskard's transcribing staff in committees are the only ones who are used to working with these machines, because they do it all the time. I can say after working one afternoon under ideal conditions, that is, when there were very few interruptions, and using the most competent transcribers I could find, and a good staff of reporters under ideal conditions, it took us just twice as much time as it usually takes us to do the same work, except that it was not as well done because there was no editing done yet.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you talking about the experiment which Mr. Ervin conducted, or the one prior to that?

Mr. FRENETTE: I did not know it was he; but I mean the one before that.

Mr. ERVIN: There is a short reference to it at page 22 of my report, paragraph 25. There was an experiment conducted. There was no report submitted on it that I could find. The only one I could find was one written prior to the installation of the equipment, as a preliminary report on whether or not they should even consider the experiment. But it was as a result of the inconclusive nature of the first experiment that the Speaker decided that something more elaborate should be conducted to determine whether or not there was any benefit to using it.

Mr. AIKEN: Mr. Ervin, would you say that an experiment which was jettisoned in the manner that has been suggested may not prove in truth the real results that could be achieved by a system that would be introduced gradually and with some training background?