

Procedure Committee

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to second the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) for concurrence in the seventh report of the special committee on procedure and organization.

It is obvious that we were faced with an emergency due to the shortage of bilingual or French speaking stenographers and reporters in the various committees of the house.

As mentioned by the hon. member for Edmonton West, these last few years, mostly in the last two years, the French language has asserted itself more and more in the house and this has contributed to emphasize the bilingual character of our country. However, bilingual or French speaking reporters could not be found.

What is strange in the situation that is developing today is that we are obliged to call on machines to replace people, that is electronic machines to replace the reporters who could have been used.

While I second this motion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out that it does not necessarily mean that reporters will be replaced but that their work will be made easier and more complete. I suggest at the same time that the responsible authorities make the necessary efforts to find bilingual or French reporters. I am convinced that their smallest efforts will meet with success and that it will be possible and even easy to find very good French or bilingual stenographers and reporters in our country.

Mr. Pigeon: If we offer a good salary, we will find some.

[Text]

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a word on this motion as a member of the special committee on procedure and organization. We are pleased on this side of the house to consent to the waiving of the usual notice and make concurrence in this report possible today. We do that because of the emergency situation that has prevailed in the standing committees with respect to the problem of French reporting. I think it ought to be noted that considerable flexibility is being observed by the special committee on procedure and organization, in that the hon. member who has moved concurrence in this report is recommending to the house the installation of recording apparatus on a trial basis, which will ultimately involve an expenditure of public funds. It ought to be indicated at this point that a special prerogative is involved here on the

[Mr. Lambert.]

part of the government, which will be discharged in the proper way at a later date.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the hon. member for Edmonton West, seconded by the hon. member for Lapointe, that by unanimous consent this house do now concur in the seventh report of the special committee on procedure and organization. Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the said motion?

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, may I just say a word on this, or is that not permitted?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Mr. Winch: I apologize if I did not catch your eye but I did want to make a very brief statement on this matter. In no way whatsoever do I oppose the suggestion which has been made or the principle involved, but I do want to make clear, because no one else has, the semi-hypocritical attitude involved. Mention was made of a committee meeting some two weeks ago which had to be postponed because a French reporter was not there. Mr. Speaker, an English reporter was there, and we in the House of Commons have a marvellous translation branch. Anything taken down at that committee would have been available in both languages within a matter of hours.

You may ask why I raise this point. It is because we now have a recommendation to instal electronic equipment. I agree with that recommendation, but I would draw to your attention that electronic equipment takes down the exact words spoken. There is no simultaneous translation by electronic machine. There is no such animal as a bilingual electronic machine taking something down in one language and immediately translating it into another.

An hon. Member: Oh, yes, there is.

Mr. Winch: No, sir, there is not. The only reason I have got up now is to speak not only in support of this motion but to draw to the attention of others that it will still require the services of the most efficient translation branch of the House of Commons to translate from one language to another what is taken in by the electronic brain. Let us not forget that.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I also support the motion which has been moved, but I should like to ask whether any consideration has been given to the training of the necessary personnel to operate this