

Mr. SPEAKER: I should point out that the House of Commons must vote the salaries; therefore the question does come before the House for consideration.

Mr. HOCKEN: Sometimes the title that a clerk bears is of considerable sentimental importance to him and he may consider that he is being degraded in the service by being grouped as one of five officials. Is it the intention to take these titles from these men, or to leave them as they are?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not the intention to take from any officer of the House any title which he may now possess or any salary which he may be entitled to receive. But the idea is for the future to get away from a multiplicity of titles. There is no reason in the world why a man who is clerk of a committee should not be able to act as a clerk of any one of the committees of the House. If, for example, a certain committee is sitting and the clerk designated for that committee happens for the moment to be acting as clerk of another special committee, a difficulty at once arises. The idea ought to be to have a staff of efficient committee clerks who should be available for any committee, regular or special, which may be sitting. That was the idea of the arrangement at present proposed.

Mr. CURRIE: In view of the explanation that has been given by the Speaker it would seem that there is a question of policy here involving the whole operation of the various committees of the House. The clerk of the Railway Committee, for instance, has been custodian of the records of that committee from time immemorial. It is apparently the intention to provide that we should have no permanent clerks of committees; that a committee may have one clerk to-day and another to-morrow. I do not think that I am prepared to support that proposal. I am very much of a Conservative, and I think it is only proper for us to maintain the precedents which have long been established in this regard. I have said that fundamental changes were to be suggested in this simple-looking organization scheme, and for that reason I again urge that a special committee of the whole House should go into the question and make a report upon what we should do in the matter. If we approve the whole thing this afternoon we may swallow something we shall find later on that we cannot very well digest.

Mr. LAPOINTE: My hon. friend (Mr. Currie) says that he is very much of a Con-

servative; I, being very much of a Liberal, support his suggestion that this matter should be dealt with by a special committee. If we have to decide upon a classification of the staff of the House we should do it in an intelligent way. We should hear any objections to that classification which may be made by officials of the House. We should hear their complaints; we should know all that pertains to the matter. I have the greatest confidence in His Honour the Speaker, but if we, the members of the House of Commons, are the judges as to a classification of our own staff, we have a right to hear the objections, the requests, the complaints, of the members of the staff, and to obtain from first sources a knowledge of the basis upon which a proper classification should be made. I do not see what objection there is to referring this matter to a special committee of the House for study and consideration.

So far as the question of the French translation is concerned, I do not think it is fair to put all the French translators of the various branches in a special branch by themselves; it looks as if we were conceding something which we should insist on as a right. It looks as if the equality of conditions that should prevail as between the two languages in connection with the various branches of this House has disappeared. What is the objection to leaving the translator of the Journals of the House in the same office as the head of that branch? He could be Assistant Chief of the Journals and remain in that branch. The mere fact of transferring the office so that it shall be included with all the other translators is a mark of inferiority that I do not like and that I am sure many others will not like. Why refuse the proposal of my hon. friend (Mr. Currie)? Why not refer the whole matter to a special committee of the House so that a decision may be arrived at based upon full knowledge of the conditions?

Mr. SPEAKER: There seems to be a slight difference of opinion in the Committee respecting the nature of this plan of organization, which only goes to show that the preparation of such a document is not so easy a matter as might be thought. It may not be a perfect document, but I do think that on the whole the plan submitted by the Clerk merits the approval of the House. But I cannot see that any useful purpose can be served by our continuing the discussion further, especially as more pressing Government business is awaiting consideration. I therefore move