

ought to consider the other question to which the hon. member for Wentworth (Mr. Bain) has alluded, namely, the practical utility of it. I may say it is one of those things in regard to which it is a little difficult to retrace one's steps. If we distribute four copies among our constituents it is somewhat difficult to explain to them why only one copy should be distributed next year.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Ascribe it to the economy of the Tory Government.

Mr. BLAKE. That is exactly like the Tory Government. First, they make extravagant expenditures; and, afterwards, they claim great credit for having retrenched their own extravagance.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We become repentant, which hon. gentlemen opposite do not.

Mr. CHARLTON. I hardly think we can consider five copies an extravagant number. In the United States every Senator and Representative receives forty copies; thirty-nine copies for distribution. I apprehend that most of the members will find it easy to distribute four copies. The expense is trifling compared with the benefits to be derived.

Mr. MILLS. A member of Congress hardly ever returns to the House, and the effect of such a large distribution might be the same here. I see a great deal of difficulty in reducing the number of copies. You excite expectations which you will be obliged to meet in some way or other. Hon. gentlemen opposite say we can attribute the change to the economy of the Tory Government. There is no one who would believe it, and I am perfectly certain the organs of the hon. gentlemen opposite would insist that it was a base calumny.

Mr. MACKENZIE. As whatever action is to be taken for next Session must be taken this Session, the matter should be considered fairly. For my own part, I am against a continuance of five copies, and I see no difficulty in going back to the former number-two. We had a very large vote, 60 to 100, in favour of abolishing the system of official reporting altogether. That showed a very strong feeling in the House against the expenditure as now proposed. I merely rise to give expression to my own views in favour of returning to the system of distributing to members only two copies, or abolishing the reporting altogether, which I would much prefer.

Mr. SPROULE. Year after year the reports from the Debates Committee are in the direction of increasing the expense; and there can be no doubt that at no very distant time the House will be compelled to reconsider the whole question, and do something to reduce the expenditure. I believe the reporting at the commencement of last Parliament was introduced more as an experiment than otherwise. It was then considered that the work could be done for a certain sum. Experience has gone to prove that the expense could not be kept within that limit; and during the last part of the Session, the Report of the Debates Committee recommended the appointment of additional officers, so as to get out the work with the expedition demanded. I do not see any reason why members should receive more than one copy. When they receive two or three copies, members are liable to give offence in their distribution. If a copy is required for a Mechanics' Institute, it could be sent there direct. In view of the fact that the expense is increasing, and that the Committee, from time to time, in their reports, recommended the appointment of another translator, another reporter, or another officer, or clerk, the House will be compelled before long to reconsider the whole subject, with a view, if not to abolish it altogether, at least to curtail and very considerably decrease the expense.

Mr. MULOCK. And also consider the propriety of diminishing the length of speeches.

Mr. LANDRY (Kent). I think the Committee should devise some means by which the expenditure on this item might be reduced. I would not advise the suspension of the publication of the *Debates*, although I voted the other day in that direction; but I would like to see some means adopted by which the expenditure would be very much reduced. Had the mover of the motion for the abolition of the *Debates* given the details of the expenditure to the House, and had the House thoroughly understood how large the expenditure was in proportion to the results, the vote in favour of that motion would have been still larger than it was; and, therefore, I say that it is well worthy of the attention of the Government whether something cannot be done next Session to reduce the expenditure. We know that early this Session the Chairman of the Committee in a report, or in his remarks in moving the adoption of a report, expressed the opinion that the expenditure was considerably too large, and that the Committee were considering some means by which it might be reduced. I do not find fault, because I know it is difficult to retrench; nevertheless, instead of reducing the expenditure it has been increased from \$28,000 for this year to \$42,000 for next year. After the expression of opinion given by the House, it appears to me that something must be done in some way or other to curtail the expenditure. And, Sir, I feel that unless this is done, the sentiment which was expressed by the vote a few days ago, for abolishing *Hansard*, will grow stronger and stronger, if the expense increases, or even if it remains where it is, and that year after year we will have votes proposing to do away with it altogether.

Mr. BLAKE. There is an item to cover extra claims of certain returning officers at the last General Election, on which no explanation has been given.

Mr. CHAPLEAU. This item is to pay the claims of some returning officers, especially in the city of Montreal. Those claims have been before the Government since the last election. One large item of their expenditure was the copying of the municipal lists, according to the new method, and distributing them at the places of voting in the cities. By a clerical error in the law, the expenditure which is allowable has not been paid, this section of the Statute having been inadvertently, I am sure, taken from the electoral law of Quebec. The election law of Quebec, section 64, says, that the lists shall be taken in such a manner, and the expenditure allowed by the Act was referred to the wrong clause. The item for the copying of the lists, I think, alone amounts to the sum of \$300 for each of these three returning officers. The auditor and the officers of the Government will have to examine the different accounts, and I am sure that a sum of \$1,500, or perhaps a little more, will have to be paid those gentlemen for regular and necessary expenses which they have incurred. In two or three instances the cases have been taken to court, and judgments have been given against the returning officers, but the Auditor-General here was unable to authorize the payments. This amount will be to cover those expenditures if they are found to be regular, according to the disposition of the Statute.

Mr. BLAKE. I do not think the explanation is at all satisfactory. We know that there is a Statute which prescribes what a returning officer shall receive and for what services, and the Government is entitled to pay for those services by virtue of that Statute, without a special vote—they are entitled to pay all that the law authorizes. The hon. gentleman says, with reference to the copying of the lists, that there has been an error in the law, and that there