

hardly need proofs—that the employees of the House of Commons, those intellectual workers who have passed part of their life in our classical colleges and another part in such an important work as the translation of our public documents, are entitled to the fair salary they receive. My constituents, may it please the hon. member for Labelle, understand what is meant by distributive justice and a man is appreciated according to his real merit.

The hon. member for Labelle gave us to understand that the translators of debates were very fortunate; once the session is over, these gentlemen could take a three or four months' holiday. But the hon. member for Labelle, who claims to be an expert in translations, a connoisseur, a purist of the French language, must not ignore all the work pertaining to translation: such as scientific researches, the exact terms to be used, etc., and that they are entitled to a rest after such strenuous work.

Would the hon. Secretary of State be kind enough to inform the house whether all documents prepared in his department—namely type-written copies of bills, etc., have been always sent early enough so as to be translated by the House of Commons staff? I am informed from a reliable source that many of these typewritten copies, these documents the translation of which is required immediately in order to issue them without delay to the public, as the hon. member for Labelle stated this afternoon, are sometimes handed in at the last minute to the translators of the house, even after they have been issued in English.

Most of the complaints which were made to-day, were not on account of the delay in the publication of official documents in French, but that too small a number of reports and department documents were not translated and printed in one of the official languages. Must we place the blame on the translators?

My hon. friend may pound his desk. I do not mind being interrupted, but I prefer to be interrupted by an intelligent man.

Mr. ALPHONSE FOURNIER (Hull): Mr. Speaker, I have listened very attentively to the speeches made pro and con this bill this afternoon and during the evening. The Secretary of State, (Mr. Cahan) and the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) have given all the reasons available in favour of this measure, and the senior member for Ottawa (Mr. Chevrier), the hon. member for North Timiskaming (Mr. Bradette) and the hon. member for Hochelaga (Mr. St-Père),

[Mr. St-Père.]

have given their reasons for voting against it. May I summarize the reasons given by the hon. member for Labelle and then state why I am going to oppose this motion and vote in favour of the amendment moved by the senior member for Ottawa.

The hon. member for Labelle stated that under the present system there were delays in the translation and printing of documents and on this account they became useless so far as public interest was concerned. He mentioned that forty, thirty-five, twenty-five years ago he had found under different ministries bundles of documents which had been translated and printed after a long delay and which had not been distributed to the public, but which had cost enormous sums of money and had become absolutely useless. He stated that the same thing occurred fifteen years ago, ten years ago and again last year. This was one of the main reasons for his favouring the bill presented by the Secretary of State.

A further reason given was that among the translators many did not possess the qualifications required to occupy the position; that some were lazy and that others were drunkards and did not fulfil their duties. Another reason given was the limited time during which the translators worked; that after four or five months of work they had a vacation for the remainder of the year, and were paid an annual salary of \$3,000 or \$4,000. From these facts he deduced that the quality of the translations suffered, and he referred to many cases in which translations were not well made. Furthermore he pretends that having all the translators united under the direction of one superintendent would be preferable to the system of having translators in different departments under the various deputy ministers. This comprised the first part of his speech, and he concluded his remarks by referring to the constitutional aspect of the question, stating that by the passing of this bill there would be a further recognition of the French language in the different departments of the government.

The reasons given by the hon. member were all mentioned in 1909 and 1910 when the committee of the House of Commons, after receiving numerous complaints, appointed a former translator of the House of Commons to investigate the situation in European countries where duality and plurality of languages existed. This former clerk made his report to the committee and to the house in 1910, and in his report he mentioned that during