

*Publication of Statutes Act*

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the applause one gets when his speech is brief I shall also be brief.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** We think that this proposal is a sensible one and we are happy to support the bill that is now before the house. The only serious objection that anyone has made to me has been to express the fear that if we do this with the statutes we might start doing it with *Hansard* and other documents, and *Hansard* would become very thick if it had to contain a days' work in both languages in one volume.

However, I think that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) has dealt with that point by making it clear that section 133 of the British North America Act does make a difference between debates in the House of Commons and acts which parliament passes. It is quite clear that the acts which parliament passes must be printed and published in both languages, and it seems to us it is a matter of common sense that both language versions should appear in the same document.

We have already had a bit of experience with this in that our bills introduced thus far this session have been printed this way. We have had a sort of companionate marriage of the two languages and it has worked. This idea might well be proceeded with, and we are happy to support this bill on second reading.

Motion agreed to and bill read the second time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton, seconded by Mr. McIlraith, moves that the said bill—

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps there is some disposition in the house to go on with the other stages today.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton)** moved that the house go into committee to consider Bill No. S-2, to amend the Publication of Statutes Act.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Béchard in the chair.

On clause 1—*Distribution*.

**Mr. Peters:** Mr. Chairman, before clause 2 carries I would like to say one or two words. It seems to me there is nothing wrong with

the bill and it is very hard to oppose this type of legislation. I had the opportunity of participating in the move to get rid of one section of the statutes that most members of parliament never saw. There used to be another section attached to the statutes that one could order privately each year if one wished. With the deletion of that section I suppose we now have a little more money for printing statutes, but I wonder whether this is not really looking ahead to something else.

The idea of printing both language versions side by side may be all right but it is something that does not apply to very many people. I am sure that those who wish to conduct their business in the French language probably do so in toto and those who wish to conduct their business in English do so in toto.

Except in the rarified field of appeals there does not seem to be much use for this step. In instances of appeals lawyers may discuss the interpretation of a particular phrase in both languages. They may even go further than that and look into the interpretation given by the legislature when passing the bill, but in the main both versions are not going to be used. It seems to me that this step is a sop, more than anything else, to an expression of opinion widely prevalent in Canada today to this effect: Let us do something that is not really going to do anything, but nobody is really opposed to it.

If this bill really means what it says, providing for universality of both official languages in our statutes, then it seems to me that the courts will have to give some consideration to this matter. When I go over to Hull in the province of Quebec to pay a parking ticket or a fine for going through a light, since the law there is different from what it is in Ontario the court proceedings are conducted entirely in French and I do not know what is going on. I have had this experience personally. I have stood in the prisoners' dock, or whatever it may be, but I have not required the statute covering the offence. In any case it was probably a provincial statute. Therefore the usefulness of this proposal to the individual is going to be limited.

This may apply only to courts but it raises the whole problem of bilingualism. If the statutes in future must be in both languages I will need a knowledge of both languages, and it is time the federal government gave consideration to moving forward with a national education program that would make it possible for the average person to read the statutes in both languages. This is not possible for the average person now; yet we do not