

stands with the explanation that has been given—and I am not criticising anything which Mr. Speaker has said—you will immediately make a certain class of people in this country who have equal rights with the majority, along certain lines at least, feel that they occupy a position of inferiority where those rights have been guaranteed by the British North America Act. What has been done in the past or what will be done in the future really does not affect the question at issue. The right which to-day belongs to the French-speaking people should be consecrated to them in order that the relations as between the English-speaking and the French-speaking people in this country may continue to be harmonious. I would like to use whatever influence I might have with a view, Mr. Speaker, toward delaying this item and giving further consideration to it with a view to finding some means by which, if necessary, the official at the head of this branch, shall know and be able to take his notes in both languages. I admit that it is a very difficult thing to do. It is a very difficult thing to become a good French scholar. I have been trying to learn the French language for a great many years and I have not as yet begun to do so. But while that is true we must respect the British North America Act as it stands, until we have another Act, giving the same guarantees, which will supplement it. Therefore I want, as strongly as possible, to approve the attitude of the hon. member for Quebec East and the hon. member for Beauce in the remarks which they have made this afternoon.

Mr. SPEAKER: May I, in reply to the hon. member for Wright, offer some further observations? I hope it is not necessary to assure the hon. gentleman that he is presenting an aspect which never entered my mind.

Mr. DEVLIN: Quite so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us face the situation squarely. If you are to have two Journals of the House printed—one in English and one in French—each of equal force and effect prepared by different individuals it would be quite impossible to have those Journals in an exact position on certain important public matters of record unless they are prepared in collaboration and in the one office. So that, in effect, in order to have a Journal which is accurate the French and English Journals must be the same; one must be an exact transcription of the other. It may be that hon. members speaking the French tongue wish to press

for a French head of the Journals branch, and in that case it is not for me to insist upon the present plan. I feel that in the interests of efficiency and economy I am doing my duty in defending this proposal before the House, but I would be the last person to insist upon its acceptance if the House is of a contrary opinion. If the objection presented by the hon. member for Wright (Mr. Devlin) be insisted upon, I would ask that this item be allowed to stand.

Mr. DEVLIN: Perhaps I did not make myself sufficiently clear. I did not blame the Speaker—I know him too well—nor did I impute any prejudice to him, if I may use that word for the moment for want of a more apt term. I simply submitted the constitutional aspect of the question to the Speaker and to the committee in order that it might be looked into. I certainly would be the last man to say anything against the Speaker.

Mr. STEIN: Mr. Speaker brought forward the question of economy. I submit that it is rather a question of principle for the minority of this country. We can replace dollars and cents, but when we do away with principles they are often gone forever. I submit that we should not discuss this matter from the standpoint of dollars and cents.

Mr. CURRIE: It must be apparent to the House that it would be better to have this matter threshed out before a special committee. We do not want to get into an argument on the bilingual question. In spite of the assurance of Mr. Speaker, and while he may look upon this classification as something that does not disturb the existing state of affairs, there is no doubt that it contains the germ of deep fundamental changes. For instance, the House may not know that since an earlier re-organization of the staff the Votes and Proceedings Branch and the Journals Branch have been amalgamated, and for the first time we have only one document, the Votes and Proceedings, having virtually done away with the Journals. I find that the clerks of committees have been made simply officials under the head of the committee, and many other changes have been made—changes which I think the House could not very well discuss right now, and it would be far better to refer them to a special committee to go into the merits. I might say that although I have read the British North America Act several times I did not know