

took place during this inquiry. If those documents were deemed confidential, will not the Secretary of State tell me and this house where the hon. member for Labelle this afternoon got all those documents with regard to the number of pages translated in every department? I am refraining from accusing the Secretary of State of giving documents to the hon. member for Labelle—

Mr. CAHAN: I have certainly not, directly or indirectly, given documents to the hon. member for Labelle.

Mr. ST-PÈRE: I cannot therefore subscribe to this bill and I will certainly vote against it, hoping that our friends on the right will realize that the principle at stake is one going far beyond political considerations. It is not a proper time, I submit, Mr. Speaker, to shake the foundations of our constitutional structure and to enact a measure such as the one sponsored by the hon. gentleman, which cannot but aggravate the general situation in this country. This is a time for constructive policies and the hour has come to put an end to this reign of terror which has a demoralizing effect on the whole civil service. There is no more permanence, no more security in office; therefore the government should withdraw this bill and work towards binding all elements in this country in a common feeling of faith and confidence in the future and towards uniting all the energies in order to overcome our present difficulties; but instead of doing this, they add to the unrest and increase the people's misery. Instead of giving work to every man willing to work, as they pledged themselves to do, they throw out of their jobs five thousand civil servants and boast of it as the Secretary of State did in his radio broadcast of last November. At the rate at which these dismissals and retirements have been progressing, the government need not go ahead with the project of building another governmental block; they will not need it. All I suggest that they do is to clean up a large square and build therein a high platform where they can put their guillotine and publicly execute a few more thousands of civil servants whenever they feel like making any retrenchment. So far the only retrenchment accomplished has been at the expense of the civil service.

In conclusion, may I appeal to all those hon. members who uphold the principle of equality as between the French and English languages as the official languages of parliament and stand by the constitution, to vote against this bill. We must have courage; we must be above all party interest. Let us stand

against this bill as contrary to the general interest of the country, as impractical, and above all, as a direct violation of the rights and privileges of this house.

(Translation): Mr. Speaker, like all my colleagues of the House of Commons, it was with some apprehension that I listened to the statement made by the hon. Secretary of State, when introducing this bill in the house. As I stated in the speech I have just delivered in English, I place no reliance in the advantages expected from this bill, considered either from the efficiency or economic viewpoint. I regret that the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa, this afternoon, by a process of reasoning peculiar to himself endeavoured to justify this bill, leaving this house under the impression that among our translators, as well as in other departments of the service, there were to be found lazy fellows and drunkards, etc., etc. I never took upon myself to champion the cause of civil servants; however, I have among the translators a large number of former colleagues in journalism and I cannot find one member of the debate staff who has not fulfilled his duty or who has not, quite the opposite to what the hon. member for Labelle endeavoured to convey, worked on an average of ten to twelve hours and even fifteen hours per day in translating from French to English or vice versa the numerous speeches delivered in this house.

No intelligent person would establish a basis of comparison between the work performed by a highly educated man and that of an ordinary worker in our mills or a city-labourer. I have for these workers all the sympathy which is due to them. On many occasions, in this house, I have requested on their behalf higher wages; however this is not a reason for me, to-day, to be unfair by endorsing the statement which the hon. member for Labelle made this afternoon, when he said that among the translators there were to be found lazy fellows and drunkards whose work was out of proportion with the salary they received from the government.

The hon. member for Labelle is always full of compassion for his colleagues in the house. This afternoon, he warned us, we the members for the city of Montreal, to be on guard because, at the next election, these workmen who, at present, are out of jobs or those artisans who are not drawing a salary equal to that of translators of the House of Commons, will be the first to make them give an account of their mandate. Personally, I have no fear to appear before my constituents to prove to them—they are intelligent persons, and