

Mr. CHARLES B. HOWARD (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, I think it is only right that I should express my opinion on this bill and tell the house why I oppose it and intend to vote for the amendment moved this afternoon by the hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Chevrier). In the first place I consider the translators as being a highly specialized department of government, and there should be no centralization. I think the Secretary of State (Mr. Cahan) will agree with me when I say that centralization is against the trend of the times.

For instance, take our banking situation. One of the greatest troubles the banks have is caused by complaints they receive from certain sections of Canada that the people of those districts cannot obtain satisfaction from the head offices. These head offices are not closely in touch with local conditions in the outlying districts. Take our railway situation. One of the main reasons advanced by many for the non-success of our railways is centralization; they are not receiving the support they should from people in the outlying districts. The centralized management is not alive to the situation which exists in the different parts of the country. Take the Gibb report, for instance: The government brought a gentleman from another country to investigate our harbours. A committee was formed which visited the harbours of this country. Its report has been brought in, but so far no legislation has been submitted to this house to bring about the centralization of control mentioned in that report. Why? It is because public opinion in Canada is against centralization. I state publicly that no control from Ottawa could know the wants of Vancouver, Montreal, Quebec, Chicoutimi, St. John and Halifax.

If this department were an ordinary department of government, the same argument would hold, but it is something different. It is a specialized department and those in it require training of an entirely different kind. Canada is not the only country having translators; they are found to be necessary by all the bilingual countries of the world and even by the unilingual countries. Translators are found to be necessary in unilingual countries not only to translate from other languages into their own, but because they are depended upon to know the mentality of the country from which a document is received. They are able to translate not only the words of a document but the attitude, the feelings and the sentiments of the nation from which the document comes. These translators keep in touch with the translations made

[Mr. Veniot.]

of the literature of the different countries in order that they may know the sentiments of those countries. The translators in our service translate foreign languages into English and French but their most important work is the translating of French into English or English into French. In order to translate from English into French or from French into English the translator must know the mentality of the two peoples. He must have studied the histories of the different nationalities and must be able not only to translate a document word for word but to translate the sentiment behind those words. Hon. members should realize how difficult it is to translate from English, a severe, concise and business-like language, into French, a beautiful, sentimental, poetical and flowery language; and vice versa. As I have said, it is not only a matter of translating words into words; it is a matter of translating the sentiment behind those words.

Something has been said as to the correctness of the translations, and in this connection I should like to quote from an authority on the subject and then refer to two other items of translation. Pierre Daviault says: (Translation)

To translate is not to substitute words for other words. To the translator the text is merely the author's thought in its raw state, that he must fashion into words. It is incumbent upon him to shape it into a form which will make it convey its full meaning. The translator's task is nothing short of a literary essay, and to translate, presents all the difficulties inherent to the essay, but is even more difficult. Translation is not the expression of one's thought, which is familiar and always present to one's mind. The translator must assimilate a thought that is not his own, a frame of mind and the shades of thought of another. Besides, he has to be imbued with the author's style, because the translation must preserve the original tone.

That is written by an authority on the subject. Now let me show how easy it is to transform certain expressions. By way of illustration I will give three quotations, indicating that an entirely wrong sense may be conveyed by the translation. For example, this phrase was given in English—and it is a common one: "The general realized the enemy's intentions." This was translated into French: "Le général a réalisé les intentions de l'ennemi." I know that those who are acquainted with both languages will realize how wrong that translation is; yet in many ways it is a fair rendering. Let me cite another one that nearly got certain people into trouble at one time: "Le gouvernement français demande." This was translated: