

tion. My hon. friend did not complain that the reporters were not efficient, and were not doing their work properly under the circumstances, but merely that the *Hansard* that was laid on our tables was not so accurate as it might be. We know that the reporters have been compelled to sit and report these debates some times for fifteen or sixteen hours in succession. The number of men who are employed is altogether inadequate for such a Session. Now, it is quite impossible when men are so much hurried that they can extend their notes with perfect accuracy. I know myself, in reading over the reports of the debates, that I have seen occasionally, one word put for another which it resembled in the stenographer's notes, a mistake which would not have occurred had the reporter had more time to do his work. The observations of my hon. friend pointed to this: that the staff is too few in numbers. If we had reasonable Sessions, if we adjourned here at ten o'clock in the evening, so as to give those gentlemen an opportunity of extending their notes with more care, I have no doubt the reports would be more accurate. But such an opportunity is not given them when we are sitting here until four o'clock in the morning, in which case it is quite obvious that the present staff is not at all adequate to the work they are called upon to perform; and unless we are prepared to shorten the sittings so as to give the reporters a reasonable opportunity of extending their notes, we must increase the staff.

Mr. STEPHENSON. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Bothwell, I may say that probably he takes more care in revising his speeches than the hon. member for West Durham. I believe it is a fact known to most of us that the hon. member for West Durham hardly ever looks over his speeches, and therefore he has probably occasion for complaint, but those who have plenty of time upon their hands are accustomed to revise their speeches with care, and they have the least reason to complain. As to an increase in the staff, it would involve some additional expense, but if it is the wish of the House that the staff should be increased, nothing will afford the Debates' Committee more pleasure than to take steps to increase its efficiency by that means. I think the House will agree that, so far as the present staff is concerned, the work they have been doing is a marvel, and the printing of the debates is also a marvel for our small country, and in a small city like this. I think the members of the staff are entitled to every credit, and, perhaps, we ought to give them more consideration than they have had yet, for I know that many members of this House have had their speeches reported in a manner superior in every way to the speeches as they were actually delivered, the members getting the credit of it.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I cannot speak with any authority on this matter as I never read the *Hansard*, so I cannot say whether I am reported or misreported. But I have heard from many members that the accuracy of the reports of this Session has been marvellous. I have heard so from hon. gentlemen who have gone over their own speeches, and who are therefore apt to be critical, whilst we are all aware that a person speaking on the *nonce*, without previous consideration or preparation, very frequently says things that he forgets afterwards. There is one great disadvantage in our present system, and that is the practice of allowing members to amend their speeches, which destroys the value of the *Hansard*. Hon. gentlemen who have made mistakes, or who repent of having made certain statements, and who are replied to at the moment, when they correct their speeches they leave out that part or modify it, and the consequence is that the person who replies to him actually appears to make a fool's speech, because he is firing against nothing; and for that reason I think that members should not be allowed to correct their speeches.

Mr. MILLS.

Mr. MACKENZIE. I thought they had not that right. I thought they were only allowed to make verbal corrections.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I have known it to occur—at least I have had representations made to me—that speeches have been altered completely, that the written speech is not a reflex, even in substance, of the spoken speech, which is unfair to the House, unfair to the country, and especially unfair to the gentleman who has made the reply. I have no doubt the hon. leader of the Opposition has found that.

Mr. BLAKE. I have found it, and have myself made observations in response to statements which I did not afterwards perceive in the *Hansard*.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. That must be the case so long as individual members have the power to correct their speeches, and hence the great value of the remark made by the leader of the Opposition, that in addition to accurate reporting—the stenographer being guided by the ear and not by the sense—there ought to be some person of literary attainments, who, for instance, can understand the value of a quotation, and who has some considerable acquaintance with the general run of political affairs in the country. This gentleman should sit in the gallery and listen to the speeches, as I am told the hon. member for Gloucester used to do, who with his marvelous memory, was able to report *verbatim* every word that was said, and as others with the same happy faculty have been known to do in England—Mr. Black, for instance, of the old *Morning Chronicle* and others, who were able to report verbally almost from recollection. There ought to be some such person, a superior person who should be well paid—you cannot get such a person without his being very well paid—who should undergo the wearisome task of sitting in the gallery and listening to the general current of the debate, and thus be able to read it over with intelligence. If there was such an officer, then there should be a most strict rule, that no hon. gentleman should be allowed to correct his speech, for the corrected speech is nothing more nor less than a garbled speech.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I do not like to differ with my hon. friend with whom ordinarily I see eye to eye, but I do not agree with him in saying that no alteration should be permitted in the report of the speeches that hon. members deliver. I quite agree with the hon. gentleman in the statement that as a rule the reporting, in my judgment, of some very long speeches, has been exceedingly well performed and reflects the very highest credit on the reporters; but I can take the *Hansard* of the present Session, and show where it was absolutely necessary to make slight corrections, or otherwise, on the most important questions, hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House would be made to say the very reverse of what they said; and while I think it is impossible to prevent such corrections being made, I think such should be done under great limitations. Under the present system we are furnished with a report of the speeches, as first taken down and put in print by the reporters and by the editor of the debates, and before it has been seen by any person, and, by referring to the corrected *Hansard*, it is very easy to compare and see whether an hon. gentleman has been permitted to change his speech, which I quite agree is utterly opposed to the system. No hon. gentleman should be permitted to make any change in his speech, but he should be permitted to correct any obvious inaccuracies in the report; or otherwise, as I have said, instead of its being a record of what took place, it would be in some instances, and those most important instances, a record of what did not take place. You must permit corrections of obvious inaccuracies to be made before the record goes into the permanent *Hansard*, but you must not permit any change in the construction of the speeches, or in the