

shortage of stenographers or reporters. The difficulty that was imposed on the speaker, in connection with the system was that he had no confidence it could be sustained because of the shortage of reporters. He may have had other reasons; if so, he did not state them to me.

Mr. AIKEN: You understood that the main reason had to do with the shortage of competent staff.

Mr. ERVIN: That is right.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions?

Mr. AIKEN: I have a few more questions, Mr. Chairman, if there is no one else.

Mr. Ervin, this may be a difficult question; however, I think it is one the committee is going to have to decide eventually. From the studies you have made, do you believe there would be any improvement in the *Hansard* reporting if the new system came in, or would it be merely a case of substituting one system for another? Do you believe the recording apparatus, either immediately or after a set period of trial, can improve on the present system?

Mr. ERVIN: First of all, I would have to say that during my survey I was impressed with the quality of the reporting and the finished product as published in *Hansard*.

There might be some problem for a while, and for this reason I suggest there be a training period to ensure this quality is maintained under a new system. I believe once the training had been effected, the quality would be equally good. This would depend on the editing of the copy. If there was an improvement, it would be a marginal one. The improvement would be that the editor would have the actual spoken word to guide him in the editing of the material; whereas now there is a certain element of judgment involved. I do not say this critically, because I am not in a position to be critical of the judgment involved. However, there are occasions when a spoken word, perhaps, is not reported in exactly the way it is said, because of the editing. The editor does not have an opportunity to do this as well as a reporter, because he cannot listen to what has been said; he has to take the reporter's judgment. In this sense there might be some marginal improvement. However, in my opinion I do not think the object of the exercise would be to improve the quality of *Hansard*.

Mr. AIKEN: Speaking for myself, I think there are times when improvements can be made by the intervention of some human judgment in the use of words. The reason I am asking these questions is that I know of no member who has any complaint whatever about the end result; that is, the reporting, transcribing and the printing. We have it in the mail boxes the next morning almost verbatim.

Before we finish our hearings I believe the committee is going to have to decide whether or not we are going to improve on what we have now, or whether we are going to run into the danger of disruptions over a period of a year, or perhaps two years with no end result that would be beneficial in respect of the reporting. I do not know whether or not you have any comment on this; these are my comments.

Mr. ERVIN: As I say, there should be a very careful transition period which should involve some form of training program. Persons should not switch to the new system until they are competent to do so.

I have no doubt the quality will be maintained. There may be some marginal improvement by helping the editor to exercise better judgment because of the ability to listen to what has been said. Certainly I agree with you entirely that over the years, from information which I have been able to gain, *Hansard* has been entirely satisfactory and, to the best of my knowl-