

wishes to centralize the translators, place them under one roof, not so much for efficiency sake in translation or economy, but so as to decrease, in various departments, French prestige. And it is for such reasons, that I most strenuously oppose the bill. I expect the majority to respect the rights of the French Canadian minority and leave things as they are. I trust that the French language will be more respected in the future and that the translation of all governmental reports will be speeded up.

Mr. PAUL MERCIER (St. Henri) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, I have followed with much interest the speeches delivered, on both sides of the house, on the second reading of bill No. 4, introduced by the hon. Secretary of State (Mr. Cahan). From the viewpoint of the French language, numerous arguments have been set forth, and I think we all agree on the subject. The hon. Solicitor general (Mr. Dupré), if I am not mistaken, endeavoured to prove, just now, that bill No. 4 constituted a complement to section 133 of the British North America Act. Although the letter of the law is not very precise as to the use of the French language and the publication in French of the various official documents of Canada, we have always been under the impression since confederation, and especially within the last twenty years, that the French language was to occupy a place of honour in this country. Translators were appointed in all departments. That was an official recognition of the French language. These translators, scattered here and there, over the government departments, occupy, each of them, a place of honour and translate not only the documents of their departments but often those of other departments when their special qualifications are required. They were, so to speak, the French ornament of each department, and they are still. They accomplished their task scrupulously. Perhaps, defects appeared, at times, but this is not a reason to blame the system. There are no rules without exception, if in such and such a department unqualified translators are met with, let them be replaced. However, one must not, for such a reason, upset the entire system of translation and concentrate them in a large study hall.

It is stated that one of the advantages of the act will be to ensure the simultaneous publication of English and French documents. I respectfully submit that this is a myth. They must first be printed in English before the translators begin their work. Complaints come from the government side that docu-

[Mr. Denis.]

ments, proceedings and departmental reports were not translated in sufficient numbers or when required. It must be that the departments were short of men or of qualified persons. Yet, we find in the explanatory notes that this bill is introduced to obtain more efficiency and to economize the public moneys.

I take it for granted that our translators, on the whole, are efficient. In no way was it proved that there existed unqualified, lazy persons or parasites; translators that sleep over their work. Then if you wish to have a larger output of translated reports and obtain the object which the Solicitor General mentioned, more translators will be required and, therefore, it will be at a greater cost to the country. All have complained, for twenty years, under all administrations, of the small number of translated publications. If you wish to have a larger number of these, additional translators will be required, the cost will increase, as a greater efficiency can not be obtained at a lower cost; the two clash.

It was with pleasure, sir, that I listened, just now, to the sincere statement of the hon. Solicitor General. One says in English—it sounds better than in French—it is a pious wish. However, from a legal angle, I shall examine clause 3 which reads as follows:

There shall be a bureau under the minister to be called the bureau for translations, the duties and functions of which shall be to collaborate with and act for all departments of the public service, and both houses of parliament of Canada.

Where is to be found the obligation of implementing the last provision of section 3? Where is the principle? It is a matter of collaboration, nothing else, one cannot interpret as a stipulation the wish momentarily expressed in the speech of the hon. Solicitor General.

I deny to any commission the right of removing from the House of Commons the translation service; such a privilege is adherent to the House and Senate; these translators are our distinguished collaborators. They are, so to speak, the radio broadcasting our speeches both in English and French—always at the right time, I trust—and informing the people who like to read. I enjoy seeing our translators in this building, on the first floor where we can easily get information. I should not like to have to walk to the Confederation building or the Public Works buildings, and in a large study hall—reminding me of my college days, when I use to call on my fellow student—and having to knock at the door and ask the supervisor or superinten-