

and I have to repeat the observation I made last Session, that my belief is that the English-speaking staff is not adequate in point of strength. I do not often look at the Reports of the Debates, although I occasionally do so, and I observe, this Session, what I did last Session, namely, manifest errors, arising, so far as I can judge, from the fact that the writing out of the reports, in the first instance, must be done with very great rapidity, and mechanically. I observe most amusing instances of words, similar in the writing, in long-hand, and similar in sound, being substituted for those used. As I have said, I very seldom look at any of the reports, and least often of all to those of my own speeches; it is too trying to my patience; but my attention was called by an hon. member the other day, to a report of my speech, in which it was said: "Lawyers have said this, and priests have said this." "Surely you did not say priests have said it," said he? I could hardly remember what I did say, but I recollected it was "jurists." And still absurd misstatements are constantly made. So, again, with reference to the punctuation—sentences are almost knocked into pi, if even these sentences were spoken. I believe all these things are due, not to the want of skill or knowledge, or diligence, or the part of the reporters, so far as I can judge from the work presented, but to the simple circumstance that unless we have an adequate staff, you impose too much labor upon that staff, and press it too hard. Now, I have more than once expressed my doubt as to the expediency, on the whole, of keeping up the Official Debates. I am more and more confirmed in the opinion that it protracts the Session; that it induces a great many men to speak rather for the *Hansard* than for the House; and that the main object of a deliberative assembly, in which it ought to be the height of every man's ambition who addresses it to maintain the attention of his audience, instead of speaking to the reporters, is not accomplished. But while I hold that opinion, and am prepared to carry it into action, I still maintain that we owe it to ourselves, and to the country, that so long as we decide to keep up the report of the debates, we should have the strength necessary to give us a fair and accurate report; and I believe that with one more reporter, in addition to those of the excellent quality we have now on the staff—I have not observed it, but it appears to me to be equal to the former quality—the opportunity of extension would be greater, the weariness of hand, and eye, and mind, would not be so great, and the whole work would probably be accomplished in a manner creditable to us, and to them, which I do not think now to be the case, so far as I can see, for lack of an efficient officer.

Sir LEONARD TILLEY. I stated \$4,000 or \$5,000 had been asked for the current year, and a like sum for next year, and I presume that it is to cover the cost of the additional numbers of *Hansard*; so that it will amount to about \$10,000. As an illustration of what the hon. gentleman has just said, that while the reports as a whole are very accurate, still, from the pressure of the work and other causes, mistakes do occur. I may mention one that created some little excitement lately. An hon. member asked me a question with reference to the duty on jellies and jams, and I was made to say in *Hansard* that there was a duty of 5 cts. a lb. on hams, I had telegrams from everywhere in the country asking if this was correct.

Mr. CHARLTON. The additional vote for the *Hansard* is not exclusively for the three additional numbers to each member. There has been already an additional French reporter appointed, and there is a scheme, as the hon. member for West Middlesex has stated, for having the translating done by a staff. With reference to the question whether the English staff is sufficiently strong, that has engaged the attention of the Committee, and the Committee are at a loss whether to arrive at the conclusion that another

Mr. BLAKE.

reporter is necessary, or whether a change should be made in one or two members of the staff. But it is impossible to have reports taken in the way they are taken here without mistakes occurring similar to that to which the hon. Finance Minister referred when the word "hams" was reported instead of "jams." On the whole the *Hansard* reports are fairly correct. In my speeches I have found, as a rule, two or three takes admirably reported, scarcely calling for any correction; then perhaps one would follow very much involved. If that is the fault of any one or more of the staff, it may be necessary to make a change; but it may be possible that the staff is over-worked, and that all the change required is the addition of another reporter. With reference to the extra numbers of the *Hansard*, some hon. members may be disposed to find fault with that proposal as an excessive allowance. I, for one, have found that requisitions have been made to me for numbers of the *Hansard* for the Mechanics' Institute and other institutions, and I have been very sorry to be unable to comply with their request. In the great majority of cases hon. members could find good use for four extra copies, and if we compare our allowance with that of members of the United States Congress it will be found very moderate. While the new arrangement gives each hon. member five numbers, each member of the United States Senate received twenty-four copies of the *Congressional Record*, so that, on the ground of comparison, we should, even with our additional four numbers, exercise a very fair degree of economy. The complaint that the *Hansard* tends to lengthen the Session is undoubtedly well founded. No doubt, our Session is lengthened by two or three weeks from the fact that the speeches of hon. members are fully reported. Whether this evil is more than counterbalanced by the benefit of having an accurate report of the proceedings of Parliament is fairly open to question, and it may be maintained that it is better to prolong our Session to this extent than have no official report of our proceedings. If we wished to cut down this tendency to lengthen the Session, we might do so by adopting the rule enforced in the United States House of Representatives, where no member is allowed to speak for more than one hour, and when, in certain stages of debate, the duration of the speeches is cut down to five minutes. At the expiration of the allotted period the Speaker brings down his mallet on the marble table, and the member who has the floor is obliged to resume his seat. If we adopted that rule we would get rid of the evil of making unduly long speeches. Hon. members would be more concise in their remarks, and it would be very important that, before abolishing the *Hansard*, for the sake of short Sessions, we should try this system.

Mr. BOWELL. Hon. members could write out their speeches and hand them to the *Hansard*—

Mr. CHARLTON. That would shorten the Session, but would not reduce the volume of the *Hansard*.

Mr. BOWELL. That is what they do in the United States.

Mr. CHARLTON. And it would be entirely at variance with our traditions. The *Hansard* would not then be a memorandum of the transactions of Parliament.

Mr. BOWELL. And the suggestion of the hon. gentleman is altogether at variance with the spirit of British institutions.

Mr. CHARLTON. It is, perhaps, a great evil that an hon. member should abuse the privilege by using unduly the valuable time of the House. Under ordinary circumstances it would be possible to limit the time, but on occasions such as the presentation of the hon. Finance Minister's financial statement it would be necessary to give more latitude.