

69. Difficulties associated with the introduction of recording equipment usually fall into three categories:

- (a) *Technical difficulties*—such as a requirement for additional technical personnel and the possibility of mechanical failure of the equipment. The present system is manned by two electronics technicians who are capable of providing whatever assistance may be required. Since the amplification equipment was installed in 1952 it has operated well below specified limits and alternative facilities are instantly available. This has resulted in almost perfect performance. A maintenance record indicates that service interruptions of more than two or three minutes have almost invariably been due to power failure. It is understood that the installation of an auxiliary power supply is being considered. Tape recording can be monitored and duplicate facilities installed at a very low cost.
- (b) *Procedural difficulties* associated with the use of transcribers, capturing interjections, identifying speakers and maintaining a regular time schedule to meet printers' deadlines have tended to discourage the development of tape recording in the House of Commons. The experience of others, which were largely confirmed by the experiments conducted during this survey, indicate these difficulties are more apparent than real. The solutions have already been discussed.
- (c) *Personnel* considerations will be of prime interest to the Speaker, the Clerk of the House and to ministers and members who have often expressed appreciation to the *Hansard* staff for the high quality of their work and a regard for their long service. Recommendations resulting from this survey have, therefore, taken into account the general feeling that the introduction of changes in the present procedure should not prejudice the continuing employment and prospects for advancement of editors and *Hansard* reporters now on the staff of the English and French debates reporting branches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

71. It is, therefore, recommended that:

- (a) a tape recording system be installed in both the English and French debates reporting offices, (see Appendix "E" for specifications),
- (b) ten magnetic tape transcribing machines, modified, if necessary, to meet the specifications in Appendix "E", be procured in conjunction with the tape recorders,
- (c) tapes be used, initially, to assist reporters in dictating notes, by editors, as necessary, in the performance of their work and by amanuenses for training purposes,
- (d) a new classification covering the duties to be performed by a parliamentary transcriber be established. The requirements of this class should include the ability to type from debates tape recordings at a speed of 50 words per minute and to take shorthand notes at 100 words per minute. At least one session as an amanuensis and a good knowledge of parliamentary procedure, the names of members and *Hansard* format should also be stipulated.
- (e) a training program for amanuenses be initiated in order to qualify them for duties as parliamentary transcribers. This program should include practice on transcribing machines and the opportunity to take shorthand notes of the names of speakers and short interjections from the floor of the house.
- (f) provision be made in the establishment for the redesignation of parliamentary reporters to parliamentary transcribers as vacancies