

is carried on, it may not be out of place here to give a summary of the work which has to be done in each department; the following observations will also serve to throw light on all the bearings of the scheme of reduction which has been lately submitted to them:

#### *Clerk.*

The Clerk of the Commons has many and important duties to perform; his responsibility is very great. He has the direct control of all the officers in the service of the House. He is responsible for all errors of omission or of commission, which may occur in the performance of the duties intrusted to each individual officer. During the sittings of the House he takes minutes of the proceedings; he is charged with the duty of interpreting into both languages all motions, resolutions, &c., under discussion; he watches over the working of every branch of the service. He controls the expenditure of the moneys voted by the House, and is responsible for it. In a word, he is the principal moving power of the inner mechanism of the House, and he is bound to see that all is done with exactitude and despatch. Mr. Lindsay has served for many years, and the tribute of praise, which he received at time of his appointment, and the confidence in him displayed by the Privy Council in continuing him in the performance of the duties of his office, render it unnecessary for us to add another word to the foregoing remarks. Mr. Lindsay is assisted by Mr. Patrick, who, for thirty-two years, has diligently devoted himself to the performance of his duty; to this latter gentleman is also intrusted the management of the Department of Controverted Elections. Before the Union a third clerk had a seat at the table, but these two gentlemen have, in pursuance of an economical system, taken upon themselves the performance of the duties formerly discharged by him.

#### *The Law Department.*

This Department, which also includes the two offices of translation, is presided over by Mr. Wicksteed. It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Wicksteed is one of the most well-known men in Canada. There is not a judge, not a lawyer, not a notary, to whom his name is not familiar. He is the soul of our statute law, the *Deus ex machina* of our legislation. Well might the regretted and illustrious Sir L. H. Lafontaine characterise him one of the best juriconsults in the country. So great has been the confidence reposed in him by consecutive Governments, that successively he was appointed Queen's Counsel, Commissioner for the revision of the Statutes in 1842, Commissioner for the consolidation of the Statutes of Canada, of Upper Canada, and of Lower Canada, Commissioner for the regulation of the postal subsidy, &c. He prepares the measures of the Government and those which are presented by individual Members. The amount of work performed by him is enormous; to another possessing neither his aptitude, nor his great experience, the task would appear beyond performance. Mr. Wicksteed is assisted by Messrs. Badgley and Dorion, who are also the heads of the two offices of translation. Mr. Badgley is most favorably known and his worth appreciated by all who interest themselves in the labour of legislation. Sir John A. Macdonald specially signified the confidence which he reposed in him by associating him with Messrs. Wicksteed and Bernard in the important work of consolidating the Criminal Law of the Dominion.

#### *The Translators.*

The task assigned to the translators is a most ungrateful one, and one which is greatly misunderstood, for work of this kind is done in solitude and apart from observation.—The man who aspires to be a translator must be well versed in both languages, must be deeply learned in all the laws, and in everything more or less closely connected with legislation; he must have a good classical education, and more, an iron constitution, for there is no rest, either by day or by night, for the translator. The effects of long hours, constant study and the continual stretch on which the mind is kept, rapidly thin the ranks of these officers, who, on an average, pass away and are replaced by others every fourteen years. Their labours consist of the translation of Departmental Reports, Laws, Bills, Reports of Committees, Returns to Addresses, Petitions, Votes and Proceedings, Journals, &c.

One day's work by a translator is equal to two ordinary days, and their labours are indefinitely continued during the recess. Since the 1st July last, the French translators'