

to each member. Alexander Mackenzie, who was to form the country's first Liberal administration in 1873, opposed the government's motion, claiming that the proposal had already been rejected by the House and that Cotton's reports were "partisan." Dr. Charles Tupper, from Nova Scotia and President of the Privy Council, defended the quality of Cotton's debates, stating that there was a strong need for a permanent record of the House's deliberations. The discussion continued "at some length" until a sparsely attended House approved Macdonald's motion, 41 to 5. Six hundred copies of the Cotton Debates were subsequently purchased. Although shorter than the account found in the *Times*, they are occasionally useful for confirming ambiguous texts in the newspaper account, or identifying speakers.

Cotton's reporting of the debates did not continue for long. In 1873, when the government of Sir John A. Macdonald fell, the newspaper quickly changed ownership and began to support the Reform or Liberal party that then took office. It did not receive the *Hansard* contract when it was awarded in 1875, and two years later the *Ottawa Times* ceased publication.³

The *Toronto Globe* offered an alternative source for an account of the debates. Its version was, of course, more to the taste of the Ontario voters who supported George Brown and the Grit or Reform party. Its reports were generally not as full as those of the *Times*, but they tended to be livelier. The *Globe's* readership resided in the populous districts around Toronto and westward to the American border. In 1872 it enjoyed a circulation higher than any other newspaper in the new Dominion.⁴ Edward Blake and Alexander Mackenzie, the leaders of the opposition in Parliament in 1872, received full attention in its columns. Sir John A. Macdonald and his Conservative colleagues were given more cavalier treatment.

Students of early post-Confederation Canada have relied on the accounts of the debates found in the *Times* and the *Globe*. During these years, the Library of Parliament regularly pasted the accounts of the two newspapers into large scrapbooks, informally referred to as the "Scrapbook Debates." Until recently, these large and fragile volumes, their pages brittle and yellow with age, have served along with the official Journals printed by order of the House of Commons as the indispensable references for the proceedings of the early Parliament of Canada. The scrapbooks have been microfilmed to give their contents a more durable form.

As a project to mark the 1967 Centennial of Canada's Confederation, Erik J. Spicer, the Parliamentary Librarian, decided to commission an account, as definitive as possible, of the early debates of the Dominion Parliament. It would be drawn largely from the reports of the *Times* and the *Globe*. The task of preparing an authoritative version of the early debates was entrusted to the well-known historian of the Confederation period, Dr. Peter B. Waite of Dalhousie University. Over the next several years Dr. Waite compiled three volumes of the debates of the First Parliament: the First Session (1867–1868) published in 1967; the Second Session (1869) published in 1975; and the Third Session (1870) published in 1979. More recently, the late Dr. Norman Ward of the University of Saskatchewan, a foremost student of the workings of Parliament and an early advocate of bringing out a new edition of the debates, completed a text for a fourth volume, that for the 1871 session. The text that is reproduced here, for the 1872 session of the Commons, represents the fifth volume in the series.

³ Canadian Library Association, *News Notes, Microfilm Project*, Vol. 4 (December 1965).

⁴ This statement appears on the second page of the 2 January 1872 edition of the *Globe*: "The subscribers for the Daily and Weekly editions of The Globe include so vast a proportion of the English-speaking population as to make its circulation all but universal throughout the Dominion."