

the conditions under which alone this can be done. Yet it is not at all an uncommon thing to hear the counsel and witness talking both at the same time for several minutes in succession.

One of the worst classes of counsel, from a stenographer's point of view, is the one who, knowing the story the witness has to tell, endeavors to hurry him through with it by telling part of it himself, while the witness at the same time is assenting to or denying, with or without modification, what his interlocutors is saying, and occasionally detailing snatches of the narrative himself, and equally confusing to the reporter is it to have two or three questions shot at the witness in rapid succession before he is permitted to answer one. Sometimes a witness commences to say something which the counsel then examining him seems to think of no account, because when the witness has uttered no more than a phrase which in itself conveys no meaning, the counsel interrupts him with a question on quite a different point, and what the witness has commenced to say is never completed. Yet, at a later stage of the case, though it may not have been noted by the stenographer, counsel on the other side will, if it suits his purpose, be found commenting upon this phrase, some other portion of the testimony having contributed to give meaning to the two or three disconnected words which, when originally spoken, conveyed no complete idea.

At present the shorthand writer is almost entirely ignored by counsel in our courts until transcripts of his notes are required, then not only all the evidence, but generally every objection also is wanted, although at the trial no attempt has been made to state the latter with any degree of clearness and conciseness, but on the contrary, the stenographer has been left to gather them as best he can from a discussion, sometimes of a very technical character, between judge and counsel.

Other difficulties which the court stenographer has to contend with might be mentioned, but let these suffice. If counsel would conduct the examinations with an eye to all the questions as well as all the answers and all the objections being taken down, the stenographer would be able to do his work satisfactorily to himself and all concerned, and the great danger which he now incurs of being led into mistakes, would be reduced to a minimum. To ensure an accurate report of the testimony, counsel should try to approximate the speed of both themselves and the witness to that of a moderately fast orator. Mr. T. A. Reed, of London, England, the fastest shorthand writer in the world, claims as his utmost speed only 185 words per minute. Yet, from timing myself, I find that I can read and "mind my stops" at the rate of 250 words per minute. With his mind distraught by such confusing elements, it is too much to expect of even the most skillful shorthand writer that he should be able to record the exact words of such witnesses. The fact that the evils complained of do not prevail to any appreciable extent in the

Courts of Chancery, seems to show that what is needed to cure them in the Common Law courts is the co-operation of counsel with the official reporter in the taking down of the evidence as actually given, i.e., in the form of question and answer."

Next month we will give the views of Mr. George Eyvel, of the Hausard staff of stenographers, on reporting in the Ontario Courts, and the difficulties reporters meet with.

### MISREPRESENTING A SPEAKER.

BY T. W. G.

**O**NE of the most aggravating of the many annoyances with which a newspaper reporter is afflicted, is that of being charged with misrepresenting the statements of a speaker. Reporters have to be intelligent; as a rule they are conscientious, and have no motive to give anything but an accurate report. Yet you will seldom find a speaker who thinks he has received full justice from the reporter. His all-important speech has been cut down to one-eighth; the reporters plead "crowded columns" and lack of time; his weightiest arguments and most telling figures do not appear in print at all; the reporter cannot see why his paper should re-print that which it has already published two or three times, but worst of all, statements have been put into his mouth which he did not make use of at all. Now experiences have shown that a speaker's recollection of what he has said in an *extempore* speech is frequently anything but reliable. He knows what he intended to say, but in the excitement of delivery, he is apt to be thrown off the track by interpretation, etc., and to say things he had no intention of saying. Slips of the tongue are common and incomplete explanations and half-finished sentences are so many traps into which the reporter, in the hurry of transcription, is in no small danger of falling. Knights of the pencil are liable to err, just as other people are, but when a mistake occurs in the report of a speech, the chances are that the fault is not the reporters, but the speakers.

### THE SPELLING REFORM.

**W**HAT shall we do with our English language? The majority of people are content to allow the "arbitrary spelling" to remain. A considerable number would strictly oppose any interference with the much-loved forms of words, however unphonetic and misleading they may be; while a determined majority are bent upon the destruction of the present forms. Every month brings us a new "phonetic alphabet." Some are elaborate compilations that can never become popular; others differ from ordinary spelling mainly in the inversion of the ordinary letters, insertion of small capitals, and similar expedients; while the American Philological Society asks only for the omission of superfluities.