

The truth was the reading public already had easy access to a form of parliamentary debates, and did not really feel an official version was needed, and this feeling was clearly shared by a substantial number of Senators and MP's. Nearly every newspaper supplied some account of the debates in the Commons, but the Senate got increasingly short shrift from the press, and had to subsidize the *Ottawa Times* in order to get any effective account of its debates. This edition of the Debates of the Senate is taken wholly from reports in the *Ottawa Times*, sometimes called the "Scrapbook Debates," from having been pasted up by an enterprising librarian in the Library of Parliament. The *Globe's* reports were almost invariably shorter than those in the *Times*, and most other newspapers were usually much worse. The *Ottawa Times* seems to have had an arrangement with the Senate through John Bourinot, son of Senator Bourinot, who joined the Parliamentary staff in 1868, and had been a reporter with the Nova Scotian Assembly before Confederation.

The session of 1867-1868 was the longest session of the Parliament of Canada until the session of 1903. The session was in two parts from November 5th to December 21st, and from March 15th, 1868, until May 22nd. It dealt with a vast range of business, but its great fascination lies in its being the first common meeting ground for Nova Scotians, New Brunswickers, and Canadians from the old Province of Canada, now at grips with the problems of a new political dimension.

Making these debates available in official form was first proposed by Professor Norman Ward late in 1961, in a letter to the then Speaker of the Commons, Hon. Roland Michener. It was subsequently taken up by the Parliamentary Librarian, Mr. Erik Spicer, as a project of Parliament for Canada's Centennial. Professor Ward had never expected to be able to organize the work, and I was approached in 1962 and the project was presented to Parliament and approved in May, 1963.

Here I must make kind acknowledgement for assistance in every respect to the Parliamentary Librarian, Mr. Erik Spicer, and to his staff, especially to the Associate Librarian, M. Guy Sylvestre and to the Assistant Librarian, Miss Pamela Hardisty; in Halifax to Mr. J. J. Tepas who laboured long and conscientiously on galley proof, and who helped me with page proof.

The imperfections in this version are numerous and frequently obvious; the reports are often uneven; they are certainly incomplete; there are places where one even has to strain sometimes for the sense; but they are the only version we have, or can have. Indeed they prove that official reporting had advantages, after all, whatever the Canadian Parliament may have thought of the idea before Alexander Mackenzie finally brought it in, in 1875. But, still more, the newspaper version of the Senate, 1867-1868, knots and all, has the strong grain of the best of Parliament in it; and with this cheerful reflection, Parliament redresses the decision of a hundred years ago, and presents its debates of 1867-8.

P. B. WAITE,
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