

attention to labours whose value to the country and the House can only be fully appreciated by those who have been initiated into the mysteries of Committee work.

It necessarily takes a large staff to perform the official work of legislation. The Chief Clerk, who sits at the head of the table, is appointed by the Crown, and is sworn to make 'true entries, remembrances, and journals of the things done and passed in the House of Commons.' He keeps notes of the proceedings, which are made up in the shape of journals, where all the forms are strictly carried out. [Mr. Patrick, the present Chief, has just completed his fiftieth year of official life, and has won his way to his present responsible position through all the gradations of office.] He is aided by two Assistants, who sit on each side of him. Then there is in the Department a large number of officials who are kept constantly occupied during the session with the multifarious duties required of them. [The venerable Law Clerk, Mr. Wickstead, has also been between forty and fifty years in official harness, and though now beyond three score years and ten, is still able to perform his laborious duties with the same assiduity and carefulness he did twenty years ago.] The work of translation occupies the time of several officials, and the impossibility of attending to the numerous Committees and other work consequent on a session, renders the employment of a few extra clerks necessary. The Sergeant-at-Arms has charge of the messengers, servants, post office, and furnishings of the Department. He attends the Speaker with the mace on all public occasions, serves orders on persons who are to appear at the bar, takes into custody all persons who misconduct themselves in the galleries or other parts of the House, and performs other duties of an important character, which are prescribed by usage. [The Librarian of Parliament is another officer whose duties bring him daily into contact with members of the House.] The gentleman who now fills the position, Mr. Alpheus Todd, is the author of an elaborate work on Parliamentary Government in England, and years of

close study of Parliamentary precedents and usages have made him one of the first authorities on all such subjects.

In its obedience to the Chair, in its respect for constitutional authority, in the patience and calmness of its deliberations, the Canadian House of Commons is in no respect inferior to its illustrious prototype in the parent state. The Speaker has always the gratification of knowing that his orders are respectfully heard, and that he has the confidence of the House as long as he continues to observe that strict impartiality which, it is acknowledged on all sides, the first Commoners of Canada have never failed to exhibit whilst presiding over the debates and deliberations of the popular branch. In the Commons of this country the rules and practice of Parliament—*lex et consuetudo Parliamenti*—are observed as closely as in the British House, and whenever our own rules and usages fail as a guide, we fall back on those of the British Parliament, where centuries of legislation have built up volumes of precedents which have been arranged and explained so admirably in the invaluable work of Sir Erskine May, now the Chief Clerk of the Commons of England. [Some persons may find mysteries and even absurdities in the numerous formalities which surround our legislation, but no one who has studied constitutional history will be ignorant of the fact that such formalities are found absolutely necessary by the experience of the greatest deliberative body in the world. We have already shown that Parliamentary rules are particularly valuable in the direction of careful deliberation on all questions affecting the public purse, but they also tend to assist that slow and patient enquiry and discussion which can best mature useful legislation, and help to moderate the spirit of faction and the play of personal animosities.] It is a proud thing to be able to say that in this young country the deliberations of our most important representative assembly are conducted in that spirit of moderation and anxious enquiry, which is the distinguishing feature of the British Legislature.

J. G. BOURINOT.