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Editorial and Contributed.

STENOGRAPHERS IN COUNCIL.

FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NEW YORK STATE STENOGRAPHERS' ASSOCIATION AT SYRACUSE, N. Y. — SKETCH OF THE ORGANIZATION—HOW THE CONVENTION IMPRESSED A CANADIAN.

(Editorial Correspondence of the WRITER.)



FOREIGNER, after noting men and things on the other side of our lakes, sentimentally remarked:—"Everything in the United States is organized." This remark, though not fully borne out by the facts, is particularly applicable to the stenographic profession in the State of New York—the organization here spoken of being entirely distinct from a similar one, whose membership is confined to the capital city of the State. The benefits to be secured by organization, provided there be something to organize, are so evident that it would seem a useless waste of wind and words to enlarge upon the theme; and yet, outside of the State which is blessed by the Association it was my privilege to attend on August 19th, Stenographic Associations are not nearly as numerous as they should be, even among the people who are supposed to organize everything. If such Associations aimed for nothing more and nothing greater than the promotion of the feeling of fraternity which should characterize phonographers, there would be sufficient reason for bringing them into existence; but when, as in the case of the one which I visited, the organization avows as the purpose of its existence, "the establishing and maintaining a proper standard of efficiency in the profession," and when, in fact, it not only influences, but controls, all local legislation affecting the profession, it is impossible to calculate the benefits to be derived by competent reporters from its existence.

I use the phrase "competent reporters" advisedly, for the New York State Association chose first-class material with which to organize, no member being enrolled who had not had "at least five years actual experience in the practice of his profession," and it has maintained the standard of efficiency by an initial

tory test, such as is in vogue in the Associations in other parts of the Union. It may be interesting to quote from the constitution the following, in reference to this test, to be applied by the members of the Examining Committee to whom the application is referred:—

FIRST.—The applicant shall be fairly tried as to his speed in writing. If he fails to write legibly, at the rate of 150 words per minute, matter never before written by him, for five consecutive minutes, his application shall be rejected.

SECOND.—If this preliminary test be successfully passed, the applicant shall be fairly tried in actual reporting, and the result of such trial, including a specimen of his notes and a transcript thereof, shall be submitted to the other members of the Committee.

A candidate who successfully passes this examination is received on a two-thirds vote of the members present at the next regular meeting. These tests may be waived, however, in the case of a stenographer of well-known or sufficiently vouched for competency,—a provision which is thoroughly safe, for each member is interested in maintaining the high character of the Association, and no one would recommend an incompetent stenographer for membership.

As originally organized in 1876, the name of the Association was: "New York State Law Stenographers' Association." The constitution was, however, amended last year, and the scope of the organization was enlarged by dropping the word "Law." There is now an active membership of over forty, and there are about twenty honorary members. Very few of the whole number are other than Law Reporters, and seldom does a more law-abiding assembly ever meet than that which filled the rooms of Messrs. Tinsley and Morgan, at the beautiful city of Syracuse, N. Y., on Thursday, 19th August, 1880. I say nothing of the proceedings at the "clam-bake" provided on the following day by the firm mentioned, for I was unable to remain; but the unbounded generosity of the hosts, combined with the very evident intention on the part of the guests to make the occasion memorable, might suggest a considerable degree of rollicking enjoyment.

Arriving at Syracuse in the early forenoon, I repaired to the Empire House