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For the WRITER.]

STENOGRAPHY IN THE QUEBEC LAW COURTS.

It has been truly said that Ontario is the banner province of the Dominion; and it may be as truly said,—especially with regard to law reporting,—that Quebec is the backward province of the Dominion. For years past the Quebec law courts, and especially those in Montreal, have been overrun by incompetent shorthand writers; and, notwithstanding the efforts of the efficient men, matters stenographical are still in anything but a satisfactory condition. The fees were reduced some three years ago from thirty to twenty cents per hundred words; and within the last few months a proposal was made by some members of the bar to reduce them still more; and no wonder, when the best means of obtaining access to the court as a practising stenographer, is not ability, but a commission to the lawyers or law students. This commission dodge has become so potent that lawyers have actually been known recently, in open court, to offer the stenographic work in a case to the man who would agree to give the highest commission on his fees; and in a case of this sort, noticed in the columns of the *Montreal Post* on the 6th April, the commission agreed upon by a stenographer was 25 per cent., as shown by the following extract from the *Post*:—

JOBGING IN STENOGRAPHY.

“Great indignation was manifested this morning among the stenographers in the Court House by a prominent lawyer openly canvassing the stenographers to find one who would take the evidence at the lowest figure. He first offered to give the case to anyone who would give him fifty per cent. of the fees, but finally came down to twenty-five. At this figure he secured a stenographer who does a great deal of “jobbing,” and who is being “boycotted” by the other members of his craft. They allege against him that he is incompetent, and consequently should not receive important cases when the evidence is the principal feature and often the turning point in favor of either side. They add that it is unjust to the client when a lawyer is interested in the amount of evidence taken, as if he is unscrupulous he may lengthen

it in order to receive a good per centage of the stenographic fees.”

EFFORTS TO RAISE THE PROFESSION.

About a year ago a vigorous effort was made by the more efficient men to remedy matters. An association was formed; steps were taken towards obtaining its incorporation under an Act of which the following is a summary:—

By section 1. Jean Toussaint Thompson (law stenographer), James Crankshaw (law student), Stephen A. Abbott (law stenographer), Francis R. Mariean (law student), Arthur P. Miller (law stenographer), J. B. Mouier (law student), Wm. McGoun (law stenographer), Patrick J. O'Brien (law stenographer), Joseph O. Marceau (law student), A. E. Phelan (law stenographer), Joseph Papineau (law stenographer), and Henry S. Stafford (law and general reporter), are incorporated as “The Law Stenographers' Association of the Province of Quebec,” with power to appoint, annually, a board of five examiners to examine stenographers and grant them certificates to practise in the courts, such examinations to be held half-yearly; provided that the incorporates, above named, shall, before the end of August, 1881, be examined by a provisional board, consisting of a prothonotary and two barristers understanding shorthand; and provided that any other persons, besides those above named, shall have the right to be examined in August next, by this provisional board, augmented by the addition of two members of the Association who have passed the examination.

Section 2 provides that every person whomsoever, of good character and general education, shall, on passing the examination, payment of fees, and compliance with by-laws, receive a certificate to practice stenography in the courts.

Section 3 empowers the association to make by-laws, consistent with the Act, for governing the association, electing officers, fixing meetings, regulating examinations, and granting certificates; provided that no lower test of speed shall be fixed than 130 words a minute and no higher than 150 words a minute; the