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The Province of Quebec was the battleground on which Canadian stenographers first fought and conquered the time-honored long-handed usages which still prevail in some of the Canadian Provincial Courts. But there has been retrogression instead of progression in the Quebec Courts, owing to the lack of system in the education, encouragement, and control of efficient stenographers. The late lamented Samuel Hutchinson—one of the best reporters who ever wielded a pencil in Canada—at one time had a flourishing practice in Montreal. At a later date the brothers Holland, now Senate reporters, piloted the Courts through tedious litigation so efficiently as to leave the judges nothing to do but sit and watch the proceedings with interest and amazement.

But the very efficiency of the Hollands' management of the business injured it. It happened in this wise:—At a particular juncture during their administration of stenographic justice there was an appalling plethora of business which confused and confounded the judges. To relieve their despair, the Hollands proposed that, instead of having the evidence of each witness read from the stenographic notes and corrected by the witness in open court—a cumbrous proceeding required by Quebec law—they would arrange to have two reporters, so that the one who had stenographed the evidence of a witness might retire with the witness to an ante-room and there in private read over and correct the notes, while the relieving reporter would be engaged taking the evidence of the next witness. This plan worked admirably in accomplishing its immediate object—the clearing of the docket—but it proved a boomerang to the Hollands; for, immediately, the way was open to less skilled reporters to step in and take advantage of this private correcting process, which enabled them to cover up their defective work of note-taking. The newly-fledged reporters were quite willing—even anxious

—to accept less remuneration than the old hands demanded. The results were: a sudden development of stenographic skill on the part of the freshmen; a demand for their services by the attorneys, who were in some cases the principals of the shorthand law-clerks; and a stampede of the Senate stenographers in the direction of Ottawa.

These events happened several years ago. Since then there has been a lively demand for stenographers, and a pretty general appreciation of their services in saving time and expediting business; but there has been no standard of efficiency, and the rate of remuneration has been lowered from 30 cents to 20 cents per folio. Mr. James Crankshaw, formerly of the House of Commons Hansard staff, has now come to the rescue, and has submitted to the Council of the Bar of Montreal a scheme for the maintenance of a staff of official court stenographers. The judges and members of the Bar are quite favorable to the idea. Ex-Judge Loranger, who was deputed by the Provincial Government of Quebec to make an official report embodying radical changes in the judicial system and laws of the Province, recommended, among other things, "that the existing system of taking evidence be changed, and a sufficient number of competent official stenographers be appointed in every district, whose duty it shall be to take evidence in all cases, to the end that all the Superior Court cases may be tried in the presence and under the direction of the court; that the stenographers' record be extended only in cases of appeal or at the request of either party at their own expense, and then at the original expense of the appellant, who shall be bound to print a case for appeal, the rest to be re-imbursed in the event of judgment being reversed."

There is every reason to hope that the scheme as outlined in the following circular of Mr. Crankshaw will become part of the Quebec judicial system:—