

The same thing has been said before now by other distinguished judges, but it is a matter in which everything depends upon the point of view. The practitioner, groping amid the dusty tomes for an authority, is glad enough to find some case which even remotely bears upon the point which is troubling him. Even an *obiter dictum* which (according to a phrase quoted by Mr. Augustine Birrell), is, in the language of the law, "an individual impertinence, which, whether it be wise or foolish, right or wrong, bindeth none—not even the lips that utter it" may serve a useful purpose. Possibly when the Lord Chief Justice was inveighing against the practice of reporting too many cases, he had in mind one peculiarity of English reports which may or may not be a difficulty in Canada. We are embarrassed by the multiplication of reports.

We have the *Law Reports*, sometimes (but quite erroneously) described as the official reports; the *Law Journal Reports*; *Law Times Reports*; "*Times*" *Law Reports*; *Justice of the Peace*, *Local Government Reports*; the *Solicitors' Journal*; *Cox's Criminal Cases*, *Butterworth's Compensation Cases*; the *Reports of the Patent Cases* and the *Reports of Tax Cases*. Of these series all, save the last two, are private ventures. Were the other reports to cease publication to-morrow there would be no record, so far as the Government is concerned, of the proceedings of the Courts.

Even in the House of Lords, the reporter is appointed by the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting. The Reports do not all overlap. Thus the Reports of Patent Cases and Tax Cases contain notes of many decisions which are recorded nowhere else. On the other hand, the *Law Journal* reports every case which is to be found in the *Law Reports*. The editor of the *Law Reports*, however, excludes from his pages many cases which appear in the *Law Times* and the "*Times*" *Law Reports*.

#### HOW REPORTS ARE COMPILED.

When a learned judge has written his judgment, the task of the reporter is comparatively simple. But where he delivers it *ex cathedra*, difficulties begin to arise. No official shorthand note is taken, except in patent and revenue cases. True, one or other of