for instance, often devoted as many as 14 densely printed columns a day to the previous day's proceedings. In Ottawa, the recently established *Times* reported the proceedings of the Commons and the Senate. Maritime newspapers and the francophone press, however, seldom posted reporters to Ottawa to cover Parliament. Proximity made the job of Ottawa newspapers like the *Times* easier, particularly when the Commons sat late into the evening and morning printing deadlines loomed.[13]

Each newspaper tended to apply its political bias to its coverage of the Commons debates. Toronto's pro-Liberal *Globe* tended to foreground Grit speakers and shortchange Tories. Conservative papers like the *Mail* and the *Times* gave prominence to the government of John A. Macdonald. Staff at the fledgling Library of Parliament collected these varied renditions and pasted them into scrapbooks in an attempt to reconstitute the debates in their entirety. In 1870, the enterprising editor of the Ottawa *Times*, James Cotton, produced a synthesized compendium of that year's debates. He repeated the process for the next two parliamentary sessions, but was never successful in securing official sanction or funding for his endeavour, although the House did vote in 1872 to buy six hundred copies of the previous two years' editions. The *Times* did not long survive this setback, going out of business in 1877.

While the "Scrapbook Debates" and "Cotton Debates" provide a precious historical record of Canadian parliamentary dialogue in these years, they also underscore the overall deficiency of relying on a partisan, free-enterprise press to transmit the deliberations of the nation's elected representatives. Newspaper circulation in these years was, for instance, tethered to narrow regions. Canada's largest paper, the *Globe*, had only 20,200 readers in 1872. So the dissemination of Parliament's affairs was restricted. There was also the problem of bias and accuracy. Grit papers shortchanged Tory speakers and vice versa. The newspaper renditions contained some worrisome traits. The reporters, for instance, showed no qualms in interjecting phrases such as "after some unimportant remarks from Mr. . . ." into their renditions of a debate. Many members also sometimes suspected the integrity of the reporters. James Cotton was, for instance, suspected of being a "ministerialist" sympathizer; he was, after all, trying to secure payment for his services from government coffers. In the 1871 session, Ontario Liberal David Mills categorically declared that "he would not accept any report made last year as a correct one." The French language completely defeated the reporters. Although francophone members appeared reluctant to debate in their mother tongue, when they did their remarks went unrecorded. On occasion, the newspaper debates noted that bilingual speakers like George-Étienne Cartier "repeated the above statement in French," but had no means of verifying exactly what then transpired.

Within months of its first sitting after the 1867 federal election, the Commons began debating the inadequacy of newspaper reporting of its affairs. The leading spirit in the agitation for some form of official *Hansard* was the Ontario Liberal Alexander Mackenzie, whose Clear Grit sensibilities predisposed him to any broadening of democratic privilege in the young nation. Mackenzie's biography in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* describes him as "a fierce defender of the supremacy of Parliament."[14] At Mackenzie's instigation, a joint committee of both houses was struck within a month of the opening of Canada's First Parliament. Mackenzie reminded the House that New Zealand already had such a system. Other members warmed to the idea. Nova Scotian Joseph Howe, although sitting in the House as an anti-confederate, liked

13. For an excellent account of parliamentary reporting by the private press, see: David Farr, "Reconstituting the Early Debates of the Parliament of Canada," *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 1992, pp. 26–32.

14. Ben Forster. "Mackenzie, Sir Alexander". *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Vol. XII, 1891–1900, p. 650.