

THE CANADIAN SHORTHAND CONVENTION.

BY SOME ANONYMOUS CRITIC.

[The following racy sketch of the Canadian Convention was unofficially reported for the *Shorthand News*, and appeared in the October number.]

The first Canadian Shorthand Convention that really deserved the name was held at the Rossin House, Toronto, on Tuesday and Wednesday, August the 29th and 30th. The shorthand writers, assembled from all parts of the country, formed themselves into an association, to be called the Canadian Shorthand Society. Mr. G. B. Bradley, of the Canadian Hansard staff, was elected President, and Mr. Thomas Bengough, Secretary. To his latter gentleman and to Alderman John Taylor, of Toronto, belong the credit of working up the interest in the convention among Canadian shorthand writers. Mr. Taylor was elected the honorary President of the society. The presence of ladies was an agreeable feature of the sessions of the convention, and at the public meeting, held in the City Hall on Wednesday evening, there were present a great many ladies belonging to the Toronto Ladies' Literary Club, the members of which are amongst the most thoroughly intelligent and cultured women of the country. The proceedings of the convention were officially reported by Miss Fraser, a lady who is associated with the genial secretary in his office work, and whom he has trained to take his notes of court proceedings and transcribe them on the type-writer, without any help from him in the reading of them, beyond an occasional deciphering of a form representing some technical term. Miss Ashley, of Belleville, read a well-written paper on shorthand writing and efficient women to write it. In this paper she made a strong appeal to the sterner sex to give the ladies every facility in pursuing the profession of shorthand writing, but in the case of the gentlemen present Miss Ashley need not have pleaded long, for they all seemed most glad to have the ladies with them, and supported her arguments heartily.

One of the most pleasant features of the gathering was the consideration shown to the young shorthand writers by the many old members of the profession present. Young Ambitious was made to feel perfectly at home, and that he was looked upon not as a nuisance, but as the stenographer of the very near future.

The addresses of the delegates from a distance were highly interesting, and in some cases amusing. Among those who took a great deal of interest in the proceedings was Rev. Robt. Torrance of Guelph, a writer of an old English stenography. He gave a very amusing account of the way in which he came to learn shorthand at home in Scotland, over forty years ago. He stated, with pardonable pride, that he had notes at home, taken many years ago,

which he could now read with great facility. But at the public meeting before mentioned, he tried to put up a job—if one may use the expression—on the shorthand writers present who had read papers before the convention, for which he deserves to be placed on record. Mr. Torrance was making a speech, and again told his experience in learning shorthand, and with what facility he could read his notes, and made this cruel remark: "But, Meester Chairman, I may say that I observed one thing at the meeting this day which to me appeared extremely odd, and that, Meester Chairman, was this: all the shorthand writers who read essays read them from longhand, and not from shorthand notes." Now, coming right after the reverend gentleman's declaration of his own ability to read his notes taken years before, this was just a little too bad. So to relieve the minds of the public from the false impression which the gentleman's statement would be likely to leave upon them, a delegate arose and informed those present that, while it was true that the authors of the papers had read them from longhand manuscript, it was done because the papers were to be given to the printer, and to have written them in shorthand and then had to transcribe them for the printer would have been a waste of labor. And to make assurance doubly sure, the delegate further informed the audience that he had at that moment a United States postal card, on which was written, in one of the modern systems, an essay, which was read from that card before the Chicago convention of one year ago.

Mr. E. V. Murphy, of the Murphy Brothers, senate reporters, Washington, was present on both days, and helped to make the proceedings enjoyable. Mr. J. K. Edwards, also a congressional reporter, formerly on the staff of the *Toronto Globe*, arrived on the second day. Mr. Murphy told a brace of good stories of his reporting life, which aptly illustrated the trials and tribulations reporters have to go through in the course of their work.

On one occasion he was detailed to report the speech of a very prominent man. On arriving at the hall it was found that the gentleman had taken too much stimulant for his brain; and ere he had gone far in his speech the reporter had made up his mind that he was in for a hard night of it. The net result of the night's work on the part of the reporter was a mass of notes, which were fearfully and wonderfully made, so far as the language was concerned. In despair the reporter at a late hour sought an interview with the befogged and befogging orator, and told him that unfortunately, he was unable to make a readable report of the speech. By this time the great man had sobered up considerably, and he asked the reporter to sit down and read to him some parts of the speech which he had already to write out. Mr. Murphy complied, and read a few paragraphs. "O, my dear sir," said the orator, "that is not what I said at all; that will never do. Now just sit down, and I will