

formidable voice on the Canadian political scene. It is the principal source for this edition of the reconstituted Commons debates.

The other newspaper which nicely complemented the *Globe* during these years, both in its extensive reporting of parliamentary debates and in its political point of view, was the *Ottawa Times*. The *Times* was a young upstart compared to the *Globe*, having come to Ottawa as recently as 1865, the child of a Quebec City newspaper. Its editors, George and James Cotton, began their enterprise with the hope of winning the contract to publish an official *Hansard*. Thus during the first administration of Sir John A. Macdonald (1867-1873) they were particularly solicitous of the views of the government. Their reporting was often fuller respecting Conservative spokesmen than it was for the views of the opposition. In 1870 and 1871 James Cotton published a shortened version of the reports of the debates for the benefit of members of the Commons. This gesture did not gain the proprietor of the *Times* the prize he sought because the Macdonald government took no action to institute an official *Hansard*. That initiative was left to the new Liberal administration of Alexander Mackenzie when it came into office. The *Times* attempted to win the favour of the new government but its conversion was regarded with suspicion by the Liberals and the contract, when it was awarded, went to another interest. The *Times* faltered and surrendered its task, ceasing publication in 1877.

Other Canadian newspapers took only a passing interest in the debates in the federal Parliament. A partial exception would be the *Toronto Mail*, specifically founded by Macdonald and his associates (1872) to provide a Conservative voice in Toronto. Reports from the *Mail* occasionally found their way into the “Scrapbook Debates” and have been utilized in this compilation. Other English-language newspapers, in Montreal, Halifax and Saint John, paid only a fleeting attention to the debates in Ottawa. French-language newspapers showed even less interest, their legislative reporting being directed to the proceedings of the assembly in Quebec City. There were a number of reasons for this bias in favour of the provincial scene, one of the major ones being the virtually unilingual character of the debates in Ottawa. French-language contributions to the debates were rare in the 1870’s and when they were made they were often cursorily reported by the English-speaking correspondents in attendance. Occasionally a speech by a local member was reported in a Quebec newspaper but these instances were not frequent.

The rules for preparing the reconstituted version of the early Commons debates from the contemporary newspaper reports are straightforward. They were largely formulated by Professor P. B. Waite, who served as founding editor of the reconstituted debates series, producing the first three volumes (for the sessions of 1867-1868, 1869 and 1870). Professor Waite’s editorial guidelines are laid down in his introduction to the First Session of the First Parliament, published in English in 1967, and the present editor’s adaptation of Dr. Waite’s editorial rules is contained in his own introduction to the debates of the Fifth Session of the First Parliament (session of 1872).

- The most important rule is simply that in the preparation of the reconstituted text, editorial interventions are kept to a minimum. The attempt is to provide a clear and balanced account, as far as this is possible, of what was said in the chamber of the House of Commons.
- The source for particular speeches is not identified; indeed several sources may be drawn upon to produce the most credible account.