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*PROLIXITY.*

Prolixity, or the use of unnecessary words, either in ordinary conversation, in the narration of events, or the stating of an argument, is always objectionable. In the first case it may be merely wearisome to the listeners, but in the others it may mean the loss of valuable time, and, often, the cause of confusion and misunderstanding. It is sometimes merely the indulgence in a habit which should be corrected; sometimes it is resorted to for the purpose of hiding the weak points of a case; sometimes it is due to the weakness of the person who uses it, and who seeks by a flow of words to conceal his real incapacity. In the reports of our Parliamentary debates we have prolixity in every form, and in every degree, and in a very costly form too, not merely in the printing of speeches, which nobody listens to when being delivered, or reads when reproduced by the printer, but in the prolongation of the sessions with all the expenditure involved.

It is, however, prolixity in the Courts with which we are concerned; and our attention is drawn to the subject by a recent Rule of Court passed by the Supreme Court of Canada, following the example of the Supreme Court of the United States. This rule is as follows: "Except by leave on special grounds no more than two counsel on each side shall be heard on any appeal, and but one counsel shall be heard in reply. Three hours on each side will be allowed for the argument, and no more, without special leave of the Court. The time thus allowed may be apportioned between the counsel on the same side at their discretion."

The intention, of course, is to prevent unnecessary time being occupied by addresses of counsel. We venture to suggest, however, that the vice of this rule is that upon every argument counsel will feel themselves at liberty to take the three hours which they are allowed. It would be better to educate loquacious barristers into the belief that "Brevity is the soul of wit," and trust to their discretion not to exceed the limits of necessity, common sense and good taste.