

THE CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED SHORTHAND WRITER.

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Editorial and Contributed.

REPORTING IN THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS.

(Concluded.)

ADVANTAGES OF THE AMANOENSIS SYSTEM.

AMONG the advantages of this system are the following:—

(1.) The reporter being relieved to some extent from the drudgery of longhand writing could be in a better condition, both mentally and physically, to take full and accurate notes in the House.

(2.) With the assistance of an amanuensis the note-taker would be able to devote more time, and consequently more attention to the literary character of the report, and also be less liable to misinterpret the utterances of speakers.

Should the Committee concur in these suggestions we would respectfully urge the adoption of the method in force in the United States Congress, namely, that the reporters be paid salaries sufficient to enable them to employ amanuenses. The reasons we urge for having the engagement of the assistants in the hands of the staff are, among others:

(1.) That the reporters, being responsible for the character of their work would feel it to be in their interests to engage only competent men.

(2.) That owing to their professional connection throughout the country, they would have the best possible opportunities for obtaining men whose training and qualifications would fit them for the work.

EXTRA COST TRIFLING.

The net expense involved in the employment of amanuenses, under the above proposition, would be comparatively trifling. The charge for proof-corrections has always been one of the heavy items in connection with the cost of publication. By strengthening the staff in the manner suggested, this particular charge would be reduced to a minimum, both as regards proofs for the daily issue and those which embody corrections made by members for the issue in book form.

Further, we feel assured that members would be spared the trouble and annoyance of making more than the most trifling typographical cor-

rections, for it has been a matter of daily observation by members of the staff that the great bulk of the alterations are to be attributed (1) to inefficient proof-reading, and (2) to the haste with which the manuscript has necessarily been turned out, and to the difficulty experienced by the reporters in taking accurate notes after midnight, owing to their being engaged unremittingly during many hours in the drudgery of longhand writing from which they would be considerably relieved by the employment of amanuenses.

REMUNERATION OF THE STAFF.

The idea entertained by members of the staff when they accepted their present positions, was, that if they could demonstrate the practicability of issuing a daily report of the debates, which should be satisfactory in other respects, their salaries would be made commensurate with the onerous and responsible duties they are called upon to perform.

The salaries now paid are such as cannot afford any guarantee of the permanency of the staff, a feature which the Committee last year regarded as an essential element of the system.

The acceptance of a position on the debates staff precludes shorthand reporters from obtaining employment in that capacity during recess. For such men the only sources of employment are the newspapers and the Law Courts. The staffs of those journals that employ shorthand reporters, are filled almost exclusively with a view to sessional work, and during the summer months their staffs are usually reduced rather than increased. As regards law reporting there is no field for employment in Ontario during recess, as the work is now done by permanent official stenographers.

The remuneration allowed to members of the debates staff can therefore only be regarded as an annual salary, as there is no certainty of obtaining additional employment, and when it is obtained the scale of payment is so low that it cannot be taken into account in estimating the incomes of members of the staff.

Law reporters in Ontario, who are permanent officials of the Courts, paid by the Provincial Government, who enjoy as much leisure as the reporters of the House of Commons and whose positions required much less general experience