

From this brief statement it will be seen that the past decade has been a memorable one in the history of newspaper libel. We are quite safe in saying that, since the passage of Lord Campbell's Act, in the early part of the present reign (6 and 7 Vict., c. 96), which materially extended the benefits of Fox's Libel Act (32 Geo. 3, c. 60)—the *magna charta* of the press—there has been no period more fruitful in amendments, and on the whole salutary amendments, of the law, than that which, commencing in 1882, will close with the present year. It will be impossible to discuss all these amendments in the present thesis. In a paper which the writer had the honour of reading at the winter meeting of the Association held at Toronto in 1889, and which was afterwards published amongst the transactions of the Association, the amendments of the criminal law of libel, then just passed, were fully reviewed. Some suggestions contained in that paper for a further improvement of the law, along the lines of recent legislation in England, may be worth considering at the present meeting, especially in view of the revised criminal code which the Minister will again bring before Parliament. The provisions of the Ontario Act of 1887, in regard to security for costs in libel actions against newspapers, were also discussed by the writer in a paper which was published in The Globe of 19th July, 1890. It is proposed now to review, as briefly as the importance of the subject will permit, the other amendments of the law contained in the Ontario Acts of 1882 and 1887. The Association will then have, in something like a permanent form, a concise commentary, which it is hoped may be of some practical service, on the past decade of legislation affecting the newspaper press.

DEFINITION OF "NEWSPAPER."

The first amendments of the law are embodied in "The Ontario Newspaper Libel Act, 1882." This contains the first definition by a Canadian statute of the word "Newspaper." It declares that "the word 'Newspaper,' or other periodical publication, as used in the Act, shall be held to include any paper containing public news, intelligence, or occurrences, or any remarks or observations *therein*, printed for sale and published periodically, or in parts or numbers, at intervals *not exceeding twenty-six days* between the publication of any two such papers, parts or numbers, and also any paper printed in order to be dispersed and made public weekly or oftener, or at intervals *not exceeding twenty-six days*, and containing only or principally advertisements."

The term, it will be seen, has a much wider signification than is popularly supposed, and covers most ordinary publications. Still it does not