

so that it covered all the material points in the fewest possible words, and from numerous dashes at it, I had become so well acquainted with its contents that when he started in at one end, I knew precisely where he would come out at the other.

It was along in the fall, and nearly every night I was due about 9 o'clock with the rest of the boys in some neighbors' orchard or grape-arbor. You know it is more pleasant to pick some other man's fruit by moonlight, because you don't have so much trouble in making a selection as you would in daylight.

So when Deacon Gibbs settled down for the wind-up I could run up my end of the meeting with my finger, and come down the home-stretch on an easy canter about seventy-five words ahead of him, and when he got around to "amen," I was waiting for him to come under the wire.

That can not be done by any long-hand writer on the surface of the globe.

#### REPORTING IN THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS.

**M**R. STEPHENSON, from the select Committee appointed to superintend the official report of the debates of this House during the present session, presented the third report of the said Committee, which is as follows:--

The Committee would respectfully recommend that each reporter of the official staff be allowed an *amanuensis*, at a remuneration, not exceeding \$12 a week, each, the said payment to be made by the accountant of this House.

Appended to this report will be found a communication from the official reporters of the House, submitted for the information of the Committee, but which was not taken into consideration at this late period of the session.

To the Members of the Sub-Committee of the Select Committee appointed to superintend the official debates of the House during the present Session:

Gentlemen,—The members of the debates reporting staff beg respectfully to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded them of laying before the Committee a detailed statement of practical working of the present system of reporting and publishing the debates, and of offering some suggestions which we trust may prove of assistance to the Committee in perfecting the scheme which was adopted last session.

#### SUCCESS OF THE NEW SYSTEM.

Notwithstanding the difficulties incident to the inauguration of a new system by a staff whose members had not previously worked together on an official report, we venture to believe that the Committee will concede the general success of the scheme. In addition to the favor with which the reports have been received by members of the House, we can confidently claim that a comparison of our work, not only with all previous official reports of the debates of this House, but with the reports

published either in the United States, Europe, or the Australian colonies, will still more clearly demonstrate the success of the experiment.

The "Debates," will, we believe, compare very favorably with the "congressional record" whose reporters are experienced and thoroughly trained, and in the publication of which no expense is spared in securing a thoroughly satisfactory report.

Mr. Edwards, of the congressional staff, for many years a well known Canadian reporter, upon receiving, from Mr. George Holland, of the Senate official staff, copies of the "debates" in its new form, wrote that the work "seems to be very creditably got through, though I like the type of our 'congressional record' better."

#### CHIEF OBSTACLES OVERCOME.

The present system which was adopted as an experiment has, we hope, so far fulfilled the intention of the House in establishing an official report, that it may now be regarded as a permanent institution.

Not only were the staff called upon this session to overcome the difficulties inseparable from an experimental system, but at the very outset they were put to a severe test in being called upon to issue promptly each day a report of the Pacific Railway debate during which the House sat nightly, to an unusually late hour, for a period of six weeks.

The failure of all systems previously tried by this House is due to the great delay which has taken place in issuing the report in that form, a delay so great as to render that issue practically valueless. Instead of the report, as in past years, drifting further behind every week until at the close of the session it was frequently six weeks in arrears, the issue each session has been promptly made each day, even after an all night's sitting. This being the case we submit that all that is necessary to the complete success of the system which the House has established, is to adopt such measures as may tend to improve the character of the report.

#### WORK OF THE STAFF.

In order that the Committee may have some idea of the difficulties under which the report has thus far been issued, and may gather the reasons why it has not been of as high a character as the staff believe to be attainable, we beg to submit some facts and comparison bearing upon the daily work of the staff.

From the opening of the session to the first of February, the total number of the pages of the "debates" is about 825—an amount of matter exceeding the average sessional issue of the official report of previous years. This gives an average length daily of about 30 pages. The daily issue has reached as many as 48 pages.

The reports after publication are carefully read for book form; members corrections received and inserted; revisions received after corrections have been made, and these again carefully examined. The preparation of an index is also part of the daily work, and there are