



CONDUCTED BY T. WILLIAM BELL.

### Duties of the Newspaper Reporter.

Reporters' Guide.

One of the principal duties assigned to the reporter is that of attending public meetings and reporting their proceedings. In corporate towns the periodical meetings of the town council require special attention. Other official bodies, such as boards of guardians, and commissioners appointed under local acts of parliament, commonly admit the press to their meetings, and the speeches are reported at more or less length according to their public interest and importance. Meetings of public companies,—railway, banking, insurance, and the like,—of benevolent, religious and literary societies, and of political associations, usually afford ample occupation to the reporter, especially in large towns.

In taking notes of a meeting, care should be taken to distinguish the speakers with accuracy. At what is commonly called a "public meeting," where the chairman calls on each speaker, this is an easy matter; but at meetings of deliberative bodies, and public companies, where persons rise, sometimes in rapid succession, and speak from different parts of the room, without any mention being made of their names, it is often very difficult accurately to distinguish them; especially is this the case in an excited conversational discussion in which several speakers take part. The reporter should do his best to make himself acquainted with the persons and the names of the prominent speakers at the meetings which he is expected to attend, or should take care to sit beside some one who can give him the required information.

The proper orthography of the names is a matter requiring special care on the part of the reporter, who may make an enemy for life of Mr. Smythe, by spelling his name Smith.

No general rule can be laid down as to the length to which reports of public meetings should

extend. This will necessarily depend on the public importance of the proceedings and the space at the reporter's disposal. It is usual to give prominence to the speech of the chairman, especially in the case of a meeting of the shareholders of a public company. The official "report" submitted to the shareholders is generally summarized; in many cases, however, this document has been previously issued, and, either in full or in an abridged form, has appeared in the newspapers, in which case it is not necessary to repeat it. In reporting the speeches, less attention will, of course, be given to minute financial details than to general principles of management; and if any piquant personal squabbles arise, the public, sometimes with questionable taste, desires to have full information respecting them.

At municipal and other local periodical meetings, the speaking is often confined to a comparatively few persons, who take a prominent part in all the proceedings. The reporter will generally report most fully the speakers who have the greatest influence with the public. Some newspapers give the proceedings at meetings of this description at great length, while others report them in a very summary manner. In this, as in other respects, the reporter must, of course, follow his instructions. If, however, he does his work well, and obtains the confidence of his employers, very much will probably be left to his own discretion.

To be continued.

In Toronto there is an agitation in favor of appointing shorthand reporters for the Police Court. It is claimed that the business of the Court would be greatly facilitated by such an appointment, and that some of the cases heard by the magistrate are of great legal importance. A proposition embodying the scheme will shortly be laid before the City Council.

*The Phonetic Magazine*, a monthly journal devoted to the reading and writing reform, edited and published by S. B. Wright, of Oskaloosa, Iowa, is a welcome visitor. The January number is well filled with interesting matter.

During the past year phonographic shorthand has been adapted to the Welsh and Spanish languages.

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