

LITERARY NOTES.

Mr. J. Thomas, Honorary Editor of the English *Phonographer's Herald*, in reviewing his eighth year's work, refers to some developments in the English phonographic world during the year. Regarding "Legible Shorthand," he registers his opinion that "Mr. Pockwell fails entirely in his alphabet, and as the foundation of the work is a muddle, so is the superstructure. The editor fears Mr. Anderson's "History of Shorthand" will be a financial failure, as it would interest only a few readers. He admits Anderson's talent as an author, but thinks it a pity he did not confine himself exclusively to history, as no doubt in the opinion of many he has spoiled the work by finding fault with Mr. Pitman's phonography, and advocating a new system of stenography. With Mr. Locke's "Rapid Shorthand Writer" Mr. Thomas entirely disagrees; the author of that book having set himself to the task of criticising Mr. Pitman's system as presented in the instruction books. Mr. Thomas thinks there are persons who cannot learn phonography, even under the best teachers, and mentions as a well-known fact that there are "heaps" of persons who have taken up phonography and dropped it at the moment they reached the "r" and "l" hooks. Of this fact there is ample evidence; but we are not led to infer that Mr. Locke has aided in simplifying the study—a consummation devoutly wished by many an unsuccessful student. Mr. Thomas states that his editorial aim has been to furnish thoroughly good reading matter, "written in perfectly correct style, according to the rules furnished by Mr. Pitman in his instruction books" a statement which shows that Mr. Thomas is not, perhaps, totally unbiassed in his judgment of the work of rival authors, who certainly have to publish their productions against heavy odds in the United Kingdom—the tendency of British phonographers, as of English people generally—viewed from this side the ocean—being conservative.

PHONOGRAPHY IN THE COURTS.

(To the Editor of the St. John Telegraph.)

SIR,—Recently I learned that a project was on foot for the introduction of shorthand reporting in the Circuit and Equity Courts of this Province. A society formed in this city last fall was said to have the matter in hand; since then it was represented that the Government were taking steps to have an Act passed at the coming session of the Legislature for the appointment and remuneration of four shorthand writers to test the scheme. I sincerely trust that such is the case, and that the new Government will immortalize itself by a useful Act, and one that will establish its claim as a party of progress. It is almost amazing that this subject has been regarded

with so much indifference in the past. In nearly every State in the Union the Court records are taken by stenographers, who are paid salaries per diem and per annum ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,000 yearly. In Ontario the system is in vogue, and is proving a direct financial benefit to the Province, besides conferring an immense boon upon litigants and judges. Only one Judge in Ontario has uttered a syllable against the system, and he is an expert stenographer. In Quebec the scheme is now being tested with excellent prospects of success—although the highbred population renders the employment of French and English reporters a necessity, and of course greatly complicates the work. In several of the Nova Scotia circuit courts, if I mistake not, shorthand is employed, and for a number of years the proceedings of the Legislature have been efficiently reported by two capable phonographers. I have never heard of an instance where the system was fairly tried and capable men secured that it did not give complete satisfaction.

And now in *re N. B.* As I understand it, the proposal is to appoint four stenographers to report the proceedings of the Circuit and Equity courts of this Province, under the immediate jurisdiction of the Chief Justice, who shall give them their assignments in the various circuits. These reporters shall be sworn officers of the courts, and shall make transcripts of the shorthand notes as the record of the court, under the personal direction of the presiding Judge. They shall receive an annual salary (say \$800), obtain their appointments by competitive examination, and hold their offices for life or during good behaviour. As a partial reimbursement to the Government for their outlay of \$3,200, the clients in each case shall be liable to a per diem fee of \$5. This will largely, perhaps entirely, remunerate the Government. This income from litigants, supposing these four reporters are required and enabled to attend the sittings of every circuit court in the Province during the year, as I believe they shall, should more than meet the outlay. With the imperfect returns of all the civil suits tried before the various circuit courts during the last calendar year, I should place the income accruing from these per diem fees at \$2,600—allowing 50 per cent. for the reduction in time which I believe would be effected by the taking of the evidence in shorthand. The saving in the expenses of running the courts in jury fees, clerk and constable fees, light, fuel, etc., I roughly estimate at \$600 more, though no less an authority than Sheriff Harding considers that the amount annually saved by the Province from this source would greatly exceed that sum. At all events, taking the inside figures from increased revenue and decreased outlay for the administration of justice, the Province would make \$3,400 to offset the \$3,200 paid as salaries to