

## Enclosure D in No. 15.

## PRO AND CON. OF OFFICIAL STENOGRAPHERS.

SIR,—

In compliance with the request of some persons interested in our profession, I send you this; but I can assure you that my views do not meet with much favour among either those reporters who are at present "officials" or those who would like to become officials. Among the latter may be counted nearly all those living in States that have no official laws as yet, Illinois, for example, but who will secure an "official" law in some shape as soon as the would-be officials can delude their respective Legislatures to enact such law. As the majority of the members of legislative bodies are lawyers, who can see through a grindstone as far as the next man, they can at once perceive that it will give them "free reporting" of their cases in the Courts, as the taxpayers will then pay the reporter, instead of their clients.

The question arises, Is reporting a profession? On the answer to this question depends whether I or any one else in the business of reporting have the right to complain of the enactment of official reporting laws. Judging of my own experience in acquiring the art, I think I am safe in saying that I could have secured a diploma to practice either law, medicine, dentistry, or pharmacy in one-half the time that has been necessary for me to acquire the skill and knowledge to do reporting.

If it is a profession, and I maintain that it is, can any "official" tell me why all the reporting of a particular Court or of a circuit should be done by one person, to the exclusion of every one else; and that every other reporter is excluded needs no proof, for lawyers are not, as a rule, going to employ outside men to report their cases, and pay them, when the circuit or county furnishes them with a reporter to do the same work for nothing, as far as attendance is concerned.

If a law could be (?) enacted by a Legislature appointing and paying out of the circuit or county funds two official lawyers for each Court to conduct the two sides of each case, the plaintiff and defendant tossing up for head or tail for first choice of these two officials, there would be a howl among lawyers at once, and they would insist that their profession was being interfered with and one of their means of livelihood cut off, as litigants would not pay them for services that would be rendered them for nothing by the official lawyers. This would be a somewhat analogous case to that of having official reporters. How long, think you, would lawyers submit to such an unjust discrimination in favour of two of their members? And yet those reporters who are not "official," although there may be better reporters among them than the "official," have to content themselves with the crumbs falling from the "official's" table, or else move into some other State where the reporter has no "official" existence as yet; and it will puzzle him somewhat to find that State, for one can travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean and travel every foot of the way on "official" soil.

Some of the very reporters who have assisted in securing the passage of official laws in some States are now looking around for some one to assist them in giving proper expression to their feelings in regard to these laws by reason of the amendments which have been added thereto since the laws were passed in their pristine glory, which amendments have made the official crib so meagre that the "official" is glad to emigrate to a "free" State. The truth of the matter is, these official laws have been engineered through the various Legislatures by "selfishness," which is one of the great vices of humanity.

Reporting is one of the grandest accomplishments known to our day, and the crack reporter can do more brain and handwork in the same space of time than any other human being; and why they should not be permitted to practice their profession in a supposed-to-be-free country, and why every member of this profession should not stand upon his own merits for employment, is something that our Courts will have to investigate in many States before long.

I notice an effort is now on foot to induce Congress to pass a law appointing official reporters for all the United States Circuit and District Courts. In the language of Patrick Henry let me say, "Forbid it, Almighty God." "Officials" have waxed so bold and arrogant by reason of the fat salaries and perquisites they enjoy that they now want to go into the very halls of Congress and ask that body—each member of which is sworn to support the Constitution of the United States, which instrument guarantees to every citizen life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—to increase their powers. Are reporters to be excluded from that guarantee? Congress is about to be petitioned to debar all but "official" reporters from practising in Federal Courts.

Will some one please furnish the amount in dollars and cents which Uncle Sam is going to be asked to put into the pockets of favourite reporters? Will some one please furnish the amount in dollars and cents which the taxpayers of the States of New York and Pennsylvania pay into the pockets of their favoured "officials" per annum? I will venture to say that the people of those States have but a very faint idea of what it costs them annually to have every "cow case" adjudicated and sat upon by Judge and jury reported.

How much would the appointment of an official reporter to either the District or Circuit Court of the United States for the Northern District of Illinois be worth to the appointee? If one man can gobble up and secure the appointment on five circuits under a State law, one man ought to be smart enough to gobble both the above Courts, as they are only about one hundred feet apart, under the same roof, and on the same floor of the building; and what would such an appointment mean? It means, if it means anything, that he shall have the exclusive reporting of all the cases tried in either one of these Courts, and the furnishing of transcripts of the evidence, to the exclusion of every other reporter; and he need not do the work himself, either, if it means anything.

When "official" legislation was brought to the attention of the Supreme Court of the State of Illinois the members of that Court did not have to rummage through many law-books for precedents