
Translating the Laws of Canada: 1841-1935

by Alain Otis

The first Parliament of the Province of Canada was called into session in June 1841. It was not altogether clear that the laws would be translated. The Union Act provided that: "... from and after the said Re-union of the said Two Provinces ... all Writs and public Instruments whatsoever relating to the said Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly ... shall be in the English Language only ...". While no rules actually prohibited translation, the Act did stipulate that "... no such Copy shall be kept among the Records of the Legislative Council or Legislative Assembly, or be deemed in any Case to have the Force of an original Record." The process of translating the laws thus got off to an inauspicious start, but the practice would develop over time and become better organized. This article looks at the establishment of a translation process that has become a model for countries having more than one official language.

The Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland promulgated a law on July 23, 1840 that served to unite the provinces of Upper Canada and Lower Canada and to give a constitution to this new political entity, the Province of Canada. This statute was known as the *Union Act*. The *Union Act* made English the only language of legislation and Parliament. When Parliament convened in June 1841, both of its houses—the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly—appointed French and English translators. This was necessary because French was the only language understood by a large portion of the Canadian population. Several years later, when the Parliament of Canada adopted a resolution asking the British Parliament to amend this provision of the Act and to permit the use of French, the argument was in fact made

that all government documents were translated into French from the very first Session and the use of French was allowed during debates and before the courts.¹

Translating the Laws

The Bill proposed by Étienne Parent, member for Saguenay, relating to translation of laws received Royal Assent on September 18, 1841. Henceforth the Laws of Canada would not be in English only! The preamble of the *Act to provide for the translation into the French Language of the Laws of this Province ...* defines the capabilities and skills a translator must possess. Such an individual must be a "... competent person, versed in legal knowledge and having received a classical French education, and possessing a sufficient knowledge of the English language..." The Act was adopted without great debate in either the Assembly or the Legislative Council.

The following December a contract was given for the translation of the laws for 1841 to Joseph Édouard Turcotte, lawyer and member for Saint-Maurice in the Legislative Assembly. Born in Gentilly in October 1808

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Table I
Organization of Translation of Laws of the Government of Canada
(1841-1935)

I Law Clerks	
	1828-1887 – Gustavus William Wicksteed 1887 - 1889 – William Wilson† 1889 - 1908 – Frederick Augustus McCord† 1908 - 1913 – Arthur Henry O’Brien 1913 - 1922 – Frederick Hernaman Gisborne ¹ 1920 - 1936 – Arthur G. Troop ² 1920 - 1924 – Joseph Kearney Foran ² 1925 - 1970 – Paul Maurice Ollivier ³
II Translators	
a. Contract	1841 - 1844 – Joseph Édouard Turcotte
b. Chief Translator	1844 - 1856 – Thomas Amyot
c. Assistant laws clerk and Chief translator (English and French)	1857 - 1860 – Dominique Prosper Myrand† 1857 - 1871 – Francis Heaton Badgley† 1871 - 1885 – William Wilson ⁴ 1860 - 1872 – Eugène Philippe Dorion† 1872 - 1903 – Toussaint Gédéon Coursolles
d. Chief Translator and Translator of the Laws	1903 - 1909 – Achille Fréchette 1909 - 1910 – Émery Perrin (acting) 1910 - 1917 – Louis Laframboise 1917 - 1923 – Dyonis Desaulniers
e. House Translation Division	1923 - 1937 – Oscar Paradis†

1. Parliamentary Counsel

2. Parliamentary Counsel until 1922, subsequently Assistant Law Clerk

3. Assistant Law Clerk

4. Office abolished in 1885

† Died in office

Turcotte pursued his classical education in the Nicolet seminary. He had initially planned to enter the priesthood, but was seriously injured during a visit to a sawmill during his summer vacation in 1831 and suffered the loss of his right arm. Under Church Canon 984, an individual who has lost an arm can no longer be ordained as a priest. Turcotte then turned to the law and began articling in Quebec City. He was called to the Bar in 1836. Turcotte also tried politics and defended “patriots” following the 1837-38 rebellion. In 1839, he left Quebec City and settled in Trois-Rivières, stood as a candidate and was elected in Saint-Maurice during the first elections to the Assembly. Since Members of Parliament were not allowed to accept remunerative employment while serving in the Assembly, Turcotte was obliged to resign his office. He did so, but ran again in July 1842 and was re-elected. Using his left hand, Turcotte translated the

statutes of the Province of Canada for 1841, 1842 and 1843.

Organization of translation in the Assembly

In 1842, the first statutes were translated only after they had been enacted, but from that date, draft legislation was translated as well. However, not every bill was translated at first. A special committee created in December 1844 to review the translation situation in the Assembly provided certain clarifications on the matter. Assembly Clerk William B. Lindsay was called before the committee on December 12 and was asked whether the bills introduced in the House were so generally presented in French by the Members as to obviate the necessity of translating them. Mr. Lindsay answered no and said that for the 1843 session the translators were sent for

beforehand, so as to translate the measures of government. Lindsay was then asked whether all draft legislation was translated before being tabled for second reading. He replied that it has not been done hitherto, but it was always liable to be so if asked for.

The translation of draft legislation quickly became more systematic, as can be seen in the aftermath of the fire that destroyed the Parliament Buildings in Montreal on April 25, 1849. Three days after the disaster a report to the Legislative Council noted that of the 22 Bills before the Council twenty were in English and French.

On December 17, 1844, the Assembly decided to obtain the services of a “government French translator.” One of this person’s tasks would be to translate the laws. The position was given to Thomas Amyot, a lawyer and former Clerk in Chancery in the Assembly of Lower Canada. Oddly enough, Amyot was appointed Deputy Provincial Registrar the following year, which might suggest that the duties involved in translating the laws or the work in the office of the Deputy Provincial Registrar were light. According to a statement of the Provincial Secretary dated June 14, 1850 Mr. Amyot was appointed Deputy Provincial Registrar but never came to this province, i.e. Toronto, to fulfill these duties. In any event, Mr. Amyot held a position in the Department of the Provincial Secretary and also acted as Government translator, and for his work as a translator received an annual salary of £250.

The manner in which translation was organized in the Assembly in the early 1850s left much to be desired. This situation was confirmed by one observer at that time, Antoine Gérin-Lajoie. Gérin-Lajoie was present at the Legislative Assembly in Quebec City in 1852, working as a journalist for *La Minerve*. On November 2, he was appointed to the position of supernumerary translator. Gérin-Lajoie quickly realized how poorly the service was organized. “Everyone works in any way he chooses,” he noted with disdain in his diary.

There was no shortage of work in the office of the French translators, who were required to spend 12 to 15 hours each day translating draft legislation, among other texts, and proofreading the French of translated texts, all documents submitted in French and particularly bills tabled for third reading. This effort required the chief translator to read the draft legislation while the Law Clerk followed in the original text.

On November 8, 1852, the Standing Committee on Contingencies which oversaw the translation process, conducted an investigation following the October 1851 departure of Chief Translator Henri Voyer. The investigation report cast light on two aspects of the translation process. The first was the translation method, especially for bills tabled for third reading, and the second was the

chief translator’s role in the process. The report noted that texts were translated by two-person teams. The Chief Translator took the French text and read it to the Law Clerk, who followed in the original text. This technique was aimed at detecting and eliminating any errors in understanding or phrasing. While the Chief Translator did not translate all draft legislation, he did review the translation of bills prior to their third reading, because he was ultimately responsible for the work.

Gérin-Lajoie went beyond merely expressing disdain for the lack of organization. On October 24, 1854, he recommended that the Speaker of the Assembly, Louis Victor Sicotte, restructure the French translators’ office and divide the work into three major categories: laws, parliamentary documents and Votes and Proceedings. The laws would be translated by Chief Translator Guillaume Lévesque, assisted by another translator, who in this case happened to be Gérin-Lajoie. It took almost three years for the plan to be implemented. In March 1857, the Standing Committee on Contingencies announced a reorganization of the French translators’ office. M. Gérin-Lajoie and the Chief Translator D.P. Myrand were responsible for the translation of the laws. The office of government French translator disappeared.

This reform resulted in the chief French translator and his English counterpart serving as assistants to the Law Clerk. The logic of the reorganization – the two translators working side by side with the Law Clerk demonstrated the heavy workload involved – two translators are required – and the importance of the translation of the laws – the Chief translators are assigned to the job.

From Union to Confederation

The period from 1855 to 1860 proved difficult for the translation of the laws. Guillaume Lévesque, who succeeded Henri Voyer in November 1851, died suddenly on January 6, 1856. He was replaced by Dominique Prosper Myrand, who had been a translator since 1845. Like Lévesque, Myrand was a lawyer. In the spring of 1859, Myrand fell ill and could no longer work. Eugène Philippe Dorion replaced him, initially on an interim basis. Having been hired as a translator by the Assembly in 1855, Dorion had probably begun translating legislative texts by 1857. When Myrand died in December 1860, Acting Chief Translator Dorion, who despite a mere five years of experience in the field was the most experienced member of the team, took over.

Confederation did not result in any material changes in the organization of translation work. In 1868, the Standing Committee on Contingencies examined the organization of the House with a view of “ascertaining whether, under the new constitutional regime, it would

not be possible to employ a smaller number of officers and servants in the House." The Law Department would not be affected. G.W. Wicksteed, Chief of the Law division, was still assisted by Badgley and Dorion, the two Chief Translators, who were at the same time responsible for the management of their respective sections.

Including the chief, five staff worked at the time in the English translators' office. The number of French translators was reduced by one, so seven persons were employed by the French translators' office. However, the latter was also served by four or five part-time translators during the session.

In 1868 the government adopted *An Act respecting the internal Economy of the House of Commons, and for other purposes*, which created a body known as the Board of Internal Economy responsible for the administration of the House. Henceforth the translation services came under this body which was composed of the Speaker and four Ministers of the Crown.

An April 1880 report by a Joint Committee "appointed to consider whether it would not be attended with economy and advantage ... if the Law Department of each House and that of Translation were amalgamated" outlined the working methods of the Law Division. In preparing its report, the committee spoke with Law Clerk G.W. Wicksteed, and the Chief English and French Translators for the Senate and the House.

The report provided that bills could be drafted in whole or in part in departments or in the law clerk's office. But one thing was certain: all legislation would be revised by the law clerks. The Law Clerk's English assistant, Dr. Wilson, who succeeded F.H. Badgley in April 1871, would look after private bills and the final collation of public bills with the French translator.

At the time, bills received at the office of the Law Clerk were first carefully read and re-read. A copy was then produced, marginal notes were inserted, and the copy was given to the French translator - bills were translated by the permanent translators in the French translators' office - who translated the bill in consultation, whenever necessary, with the Law Clerk. While the bill was being considered, care must be taken to ensure that all changes were included in the text and the version for third reading was checked by the Chief Translator and by the Law Clerk or his assistant. This process involved the translator reading the French text while the clerk or his assistant followed in the English version. Since the French text of the statute would be signed by the Governor General and have the same authority as the English, it was vital that both versions be fully consistent with each other.

It is almost certain that the chief translator did not translate all bills. There were too many. He did, however,

the work of comparing the English text for its third reading, the preparation of marginal notes in French and the index to the Statutes. Did the actual translation of laws take much of his time? In this regard, Joseph Tassé, MP for Ottawa and himself a former translator in the House, stated on July 16, 1885 that "... in the translators' office the first assistant is practically the chief translator; the chief translator who is, at the same time, assistant law clerk, being, consequently, obliged to devote the most of his time to the legal branch; so that the assistant is practically the chief translator."

Bills originating in the Senate were translated by Senate translators, together with any changes to bills received from the House.

Translating the statutes was a thankless task, with the results coming under fire from all quarters and more often than not judged very harshly. For example, E.P. Dorion, of whom we have spoken so glowingly with reference to his professional qualities, received no mercy from his judges. Jean-Charles Bonenfant, a lawyer and the librarian of the Quebec Legislative Assembly in the 1940s, maintained that the *British North America Act* was the work of a Canadian translator, because it had the tone of Canadian legislative texts of the time. In his capacity as Chief Translator at that time, Dorion was certainly the person whose work it was. Bonenfant said that the Act was written using a horrendous argot and served as a compendium of all kinds of improper expressions and every error and lapse in syntax that had appeared in many of our statutes over the preceding 75 years. His verdict: the translator was not up to the task.

Translating the statutes was particularly sensitive because any mistake could have ramifications in court. For example, Joseph Royal, MP for Provencher from 1879 to 1888 and a translator at the time of the Union, stated during a debate in the House on February 17, 1881 that: "... there are two translators' offices here in connection with the House of Commons, one for debates, the other for the statutes." While he gave good marks to the manner in which the debates had been translated, he was not so generous toward the translators of the laws, saying "... in that office there are to be found some very able men; nevertheless I think there is in that office room for improvement. I am told, and that on good authority, that some Statutes have been translated in so defective a fashion, that last year, one of the Judges of the Superior Court sitting in Montreal, refused to consider the French translation as the official text..." A comparison of the two texts bore out the judge's claims and it was necessary to pass amending legislation.

Thirty years later, G.H. Bergeron, MP for Beauharnois, took issue with the translators of the laws, whose work,

he said, had for many years left much to be desired because they used English words in laws in which French words would have served equally well. "What do you suppose a Frenchman from France would think on reading in the index to our Statutes of 1907, the following: '*Loi concernant la cie. de Brockville, Westport and Northwestern Railway Company.*' If all the translations were made in this way, the idea might prevail that the names of those companies could not be translated just as we do not translate a man's name. Previous to five years ago, ... we found them (i.e. company's names) printed in good French." Sir Wilfrid took the floor to say that names that could be translated should be and those that could not be should be left in their original language, citing as an example "*Crédit mobilier.*" Moving on to the *British North America Act*, he said that it had been translated in 1868—for better or worse, he did not say—and he had been asked whether the text could be improved in the course of revising the statutes. He objected to this idea, arguing that the Act had acquired historic significance and that it would be preferable not to alter the text.

Structural Evolution

The Board of Internal Economy authorized a reorganization of the House services in 1885. The Department of the Law Clerk and the French and English translators' offices were merged into a single department known as the Law and Translation Division. Dr. Wilson remained assistant to the Law Clerk but lost responsibility for translation. The two English translators and the seven permanent French translators were put into the same administrative unit.

As to laws, the Division was responsible for the preparation and revision of public as well as private bills. The workload of a translator of the laws was substantial. This situation was amply demonstrated in the annual statutes compilation, but failed to take into account all the draft legislation that had also been translated, since only those bills that are passed appear in that compilation. Many such bills were not passed but had nonetheless been tabled in both languages for second reading. Although the organization chart of the Law and Translation Division provides little detail in this regard, it is virtually certain that the Chief Translator alone was not responsible for handling all this work.

The House overhauled its structures in 1904 and eliminated the former Law and Translation Division to create two departments, one a Law Division, which resembled the Law Clerk's team and what remained of the English translators' office, and a Translation Division, which included all of the French translators. At the same time, the

House created two positions of secretaries to the two divisions, each occupied by translators.

Achille Fréchette, who succeeded T.G. Coursolles in July, 1903, would serve as Chief Translator and Translator of the Laws for seven years. He had studied law at Université Laval in the 1860s, but had moved to the United States and worked as a journalist in Chicago. After returning to Canada around 1872, he worked for a while at the *Courrier d'Outaouais*, and then at the House of Commons as a Committee Clerk. He had been employed by the Translation Section since 1875. Fréchette, who was the recipient of an ISO, would remain for more than 35 years in that Section. However, he is even better known in the field of translation for his report on translation in Belgium and in Switzerland, which appeared in 1910.

Saga of the Revised Statutes of 1906

In 1902, the Government of Canada undertook the task of consolidating the statutes of Canada. A commission was created for this purpose and Horace St-Louis, a lawyer, was appointed as its secretary. Once the consolidation effort in English had been completed in 1906, the government enacted a statute (SC 1906-1907, c. 43) to bring the statutes into force, even though the French version was not yet ready. Section 10 of this Act also provided that the French version of the *Revised Statutes* would be produced as quickly as possible and then brought into force.

This same Horace St-Louis, who served as Secretary of the Revision Commission, was appointed Translator of the Revised Statutes on October 25. In December, he was given an assistant, recommended by Minister L.P. Brodeur, Antonio Perreault, who would later become the President of the Quebec Bar Association. The translation work was almost complete at that point, with only the long and fastidious process of cross-comparison and final revision remaining.

The work got off to a rocky start. On October 26, Deputy Minister of Railways and Canals, M.J. Butler, contacted his counterpart in Justice, E.L. Newcombe, to advise him of a serious omission in Chapter 110 of the *Revised Statutes, 1886* concerning the sale of passenger tickets. Train conductors were keeping train tickets and handed them out to friends. One of them had been caught in the act. Under the law, he was subject to a fine, imprisonment or both. The Department's counsel, who presented the case to the judge, sought both penalties. However, while the two penalties clearly appeared in the English text, this was not the case in the French version. The judge imposed only the fine. Counsel condemned the omission, but had no choice but to abide by the deci-

sion. Mr. Butler stated that this oversight had allowed the conductor to get off easily. There was nothing that could be done now, however, no such mistakes, of course, would occur in the *Statuts révisés* soon to be released! Newcombe wrote to the translators on November 20 to advise them of the situation and to encourage them to increase their vigilance and ensure that no mistake of this type should mar the *Statuts révisés* de 1906. An eloquent warning!

While St-Louis was working on the *Statuts révisés*, Achille Fréchette began receiving draft legislation for the session. A minor difficulty presented itself. Since the *Revised Statutes* did not yet exist in French, what source would serve for the titles and the appropriate terms used in translating the draft legislation? Fréchette wrote to the Department of Justice on January 27, 1907, providing a list of the full titles, the abbreviated titles and the texts of the sections that he would need. Newcombe asked St-Louis to take care of that expeditiously.

On the following April 2, St-Louis is working on the Index to the *Statuts*. On May 27, Newcombe wrote to the Secretary of State to advise him that he received word from St-Louis to the effect that the work would be completed by July 1st, provided the printers worked diligently, and asked him to make sure that nothing would hinder printing.

With the time passing, things became more pressing. In August 1907, Newcombe, the translators and the King's Printer exchanged correspondence over the completion of the work. The King's Printer said that the typesetting was completed and that the translator had the pages in hand for revision. However, he also complained about the presence of mistakes in the pages sent to typesetting, although they were said to be O.K. to print. The Deputy advised St-Louis.

On October 21, the King's Printer announced that three or four copies of the *Statuts révisés* would soon be ready. St-Louis and Perreault signed the work completion notice on October 24. On November 7, a telegram was sent to the Clerk of Parliament, S.E. St-O. Chapleau, in New York, calling him back early so that he could sign the order bringing the statutes into force. Chapleau returned from New York on November 14 and did as he was requested; the French-language version of the *Revised Statutes, 1906* was finally submitted to the office of the Clerk of Parliament and officially came into force.

One of the most obvious changes in the French version of the *Revised Statutes 1906* was the use of the word "*Loi*" for "*Acte*." Both words remained in use for some time. This situation, which was noted by Robert Borden, who later became Sir Robert, on February 14, 1908. He remarked that he found both "*Loi*" and "*Acte*" in the index,

but failed to see any systematic use of either. Borden said it would be appropriate to use just one term: "*Loi*" or "*Acte*." The word "*Acte*" finally became obsolete.

Despite the great care that St-Louis and Perreault had devoted to their work, a large number of mistakes similar to those of which they had been previously advised crept in. Amending legislation was passed in 1912 to rectify four statutes. The Minister of Justice, who tabled the bill, recalled that the French revised statutes contained many errors that had to be corrected whenever they were discovered. There were, however, many statutes to read. The MPs did not on that occasion heap blame on the translators, perhaps realizing that to err was not only human but virtually inevitable in a task of that magnitude.

End of an Era

Achille Fréchette left for Europe in the fall of 1909. On an acting basis, Émery Perrin replaced Achille Fréchette as Division Head. In 1910, Louis Laframboise, who had been a translator for more than 35 years and until that time Secretary of the Division, became Chief Translator and Translator of the Laws. Laframboise was a lawyer as well as a journalist and had previously served as secretary to the Minister of Justice and for the Department of Inland Revenue in 1876. He had been a translator since October 1876. He continued the work of his predecessors, but beginning in 1914, received support from a team assigned to the House's Division, which included the translators of the laws. At first, he was assisted by only two translators, Sylva Clapin and Louis Noailles. When Noailles left for France to serve in the French army (and was later killed in action in 1915), he was replaced by Oscar Paradis.

Louis Laframboise retired in 1916 at the age of 68 and was replaced by Dyonis Desaulniers, who had until then been the Blue Book Chief. Dyonis Desaulniers, a McGill graduate, a lawyer who had been a translator since 1881, would put in more than 40 years of service by the time he retired and would be the last person to hold the title of Chief Translator and Translator of the Laws. Upon his departure, the position was abolished and the two departments (Law and Blue Book) were separated.

In July 1923, Oscar Paradis became head of the Law Division. Paradis, who was a lawyer, had begun his translation career in 1904 and was a member of the House Division since 1915. His team generally consisted of three translators, in addition to Paradis. This department would employ such individuals as Uldéric Tremblay, a former reporter with *Le Devoir* who studied law at Université de Montréal; Paul Gédéon Ouimet, who had begun but had failed to complete his study of law in Montreal; Gédéon de la Durantaye, a former translator for Debates for over 20 years; René de la Durantaye, law-

yer, war veteran and son of Gédéon, whose career in laws extended over more than 30 years. The latter Durantaye is particularly well known for a range of lexicographic works he produced over the years, some of which were used by Hector Carbonneau, Chief of the Blue Book Translation Division, when he prepared his celebrated *Vocabulaire général*.

At the end of 1923 the government undertook to consolidate its Statutes. So far, the secretary to the Commission had always been a translator, however, this time, the Secretary, Napol Laliberté, was not one. The translation work involved was made by a few translators, including P.G. Ouimet of the Law Translation Division and Ralph Albert Benoît, a former translator in the Blue Book Division and in the Senate, L.P. Geoffrion, Charles E. Duckett, and Uldéric Tremblay. The French version of the *Revised Statutes, 1927*, will come into force on January 31, 1928.

Translation Bureau

Bill 4 respecting the Bureau for Translations was tabled in the House of Commons on January 29, 1934. The Bill was referred to a special committee in March, which called as witnesses certain Translation Department Chiefs, including Oscar Paradis. The committee members questioned witnesses on the operations of their respective departments, who provided some idea of how things worked at the time in those departments.

Paradis said that the Law Translation Division generally translated public and private bills, which began to arrive in the unit some three months before Parliament was called into session and continued to arrive throughout the session for translation into French—and, although the unit was equipped to work into English, very rarely the other way, indicating that virtually everything was written at that time in English. That had not been the case at the time of the Union.

Within the organization, short texts were assigned to a single person. When they were long, they were completed by two translators working as a team. The Division Chief carefully revised all long and short texts in conjunction with one team member. Three revisions followed: the first, before the bill was introduced, the second, after it was enacted, and the third, after it was published in the statutes. Division translators were also required to translate the explanatory comments pertaining to sections of the bills. This work was not published, because these comments were removed once the bill had been passed.

Once the session was concluded, the Division dealt with the preparation of the Statutes in French (the Law Division of the House was responsible for the English

volume). This work took from six to eight weeks. The Chief then reviewed all of the statutes that had been enacted and signed the notice of distribution of the French text. It was also necessary to produce the index of the statutes and prepare the Prefix of the Statutes, which was the laws and orders of the Parliament of Great Britain pertaining to Canada and the Canadian orders in council appearing in the Statutes. This Prefix would be much less voluminous after 1931.

During study of this Bill in the Senate it was proposed that the law translators would not be considered as "... chiefly engaged as translators or in the work of translating ..." as they are in fact writers, and not translators. This interpretation, curious at first sight, would be borne by the fact that Acts, once translated, are originals. So, the translators would in fact be writers. The Bill would not be amended along those lines and the law translators would be considered translators and among the first to be transferred to the new Bureau for Translations. However, the law translators in the Senate will not and it would not be until May, 1955 that the Bureau for Translations would gain responsibility for the translation of all Acts.

Conclusion

Since 1841 the translation of the laws has been done in a very meticulous manner by individuals trained in law and following strict procedures including reading and rereading bills at every stage of the legislative process. These procedures bear testimony to the importance of the function.

The translations of the laws stand out in terms of both the product and those who produced them. In terms of the product, we must bear in mind that once a legal text has been translated, it is no longer considered a translation, but an original. If this original embodies any errors, they must be amended through the same process. This is unique to the translation of the laws. With respect to those who translate legislation, it should be noted that the translation of laws was the first type of translation for which the credentials and qualifications required by practitioners were stipulated—in legislation, of course! These stipulations were observed throughout the entire period in question. There is no other equivalent in the field of translation.

The laws were translated under contract for some years, and were then entrusted to the care of an officer in the government, and then given to a small specialized team. Changes in the organization that translated the laws were similar to changes in the product itself, as the Law Translation Division expanded its range of products to include agreements, contracts, treaties, reports, judgments, etc. By the 1940s, the Division maintained a

subsection in the Privy Council to translate orders in council. The work would continue to expand and the translation in the field, which had been limited at the start to laws, would ultimately include all legal and judicial texts within the federal government, and units were added to serve the Department of Justice, the Solicitor General, the Privy Council and the Courts.

Notes

1. The main works on the history of translation in Canada highlight this topic: *Au cœur du triologue canadien*, by Jean Delisle, *Histoire de la traduction au Canada*, a special issue of *META* (vol. 22, No. 1, March 1977), *Special 50th Anniversary Issue, Terminology Update* (vol. 17, Nos. 5-6, Jul.-Aug. 1984). A few biographies exist on translators from that era, but they rarely make much mention of translation. Nonetheless, they include *Renaissance d'un patriote canadien*, by Léon Gérin, on Antoine Gérin-Lajoie, *Joseph Édouard Turcotte: ses débuts politiques (1808-1840)*, Master's degree thesis by Louise Pothier, on J.É. Turcotte, and *Annie Howells and Achille Fréchette*, by David Doyle, on Achille Fréchette. Some of the individuals named in the article – Parent, Turcotte, Lindsay, Gérin-Lajoie, Lévesque Sicotte, Wicksteed, Dorion,

Tassé, Royal – are dealt with in the *Canadian Biographical Dictionary*. Much biographical information pertaining to some translators of that era is contained in *Les Avocats de la région de Québec*, by P.G. Roy. Statutory references are taken from the *Statutes of Canada*, which have been published every year since 1841, and the *Revised Statutes*, which have been published periodically since 1845. The Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Canada, the Journals of the Legislative Council of Canada, and the Journals of the House of Commons are sources of highly valuable information, as are the debates of the Legislative Assembly of Canada and the debates of the House of Commons, which were published in French and English as of 1876. The September 1910 report by Achille Fréchette on the Study in Belgium and Switzerland contains some information on the translation of laws. The report of the Select committee responsible for reviewing Bill 4 is essential to illustrate how the laws translation division operated just before the creation of the Bureau for Translations. Certain archival documents, including a file on the *Revised Statutes 1906*, indicate the context in which the *Revised Statutes* were translated. Finally, certain newspapers from that period, including *Le Temps*, *Le Droit* and *La Presse*, provide useful details to complement the other sources.