

writer remembers having an official pointed out to him as "a man who drew £1,500 a year for handing pens up to a judge." That is, of course, an exaggeration; but nevertheless, when a European war is costing £5,000,000 a day, such an officer might well be dispensed with.

THE PASSING OF THE "INDICTMENT."

The Indictments Act, 1915, is not of any special interest to Colonial lawyers but it deserves to be mentioned because it heralds the entry of the law reformer into the domain of the criminal pleader.

While the rules of pleading in civil cases have been greatly relaxed in the last few decades, no profane hand has ventured until last year to tamper with the indictment—the necessary statement of the case in every charge of felony or misdemeanour. Every visitor to assizes will have witnessed the solemn presentation of "a true bill" by the grand jury. Hitherto indictments have had to be written on parchment; in future they may be written on paper. Hitherto the offence has had to be described in language which might appear to the mere layman to have nought but ancient usage to commend it. In future, brevity and simplicity are the order of the day. But one does not take leave of the old order without regret. Compare the wording of an old style indictment for murder with the new form which is prescribed in the appendix to the above mentioned statute.

This is the new style—

"Statement of Offence"

"Murder

"Particulars of Offence."

"A.B. on the day of in the County of murdered J. S."

Now listen to the stately form to which English lawyers have been accustomed from time immemorial:—

"County of Kent to wit:

"The jurors of our Sovereign Lord, the King, upon their oath present that John Brown on the 16th day of February, 1916,