The Legal News.

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The text of the decision of the Privy Council in *Attorney General & Reed* has been received, and we report the case in the present issue. The observations of the Lord Chancellor, who delivered the judgment of the Committee, are brief, but, so far as they extend, they do not appear to support the majority judgment of the Court of Appeal in the Provincial Tax cases. Their lordships adopt, or at least favor, Mr. Mills' definition of direct and indirect taxation. And as to local powers of taxation for local objects, although they do not attempt to define particularly the meaning of sub-section 16 of section 92, B.N.A. Act, their lordships indicate a mode of interpretation which seems to differ essentially from that laid down by the majority of the Court of Appeal in the recent decision.

The oath question came up in a new form a few days ago in Illinois. It appears that a religious society exists in that State known as the Beakmanites, or followers of the teachings of one Dora Beakman. Some of the members of this society, being called as witnesses in a suit, refused to take an oath or to affirm, declaring that their religious belief prohibited their doing either—citing 5th Matthew, verses 34-37: "Swear not at all, neither by heaven," etc. The minister of the society, who was present, being asked whether, as regards being witnesses, there was any recognized form or ceremony known to their sect, replied, "None whatever; we believe it sinful either to swear or to affirm." *The Court:* "You believe in the existence of a God?" *Ans.*: "We do." *The Court*: "And in a future existence?" *Ans.*: "Certainly." *The Court*: "Also in punishment here or hereafter for not speaking the truth when called upon to do so as a witness?" *Ans.*: "We believe in both, in punishment both here and hereafter for such a sin." Thereupon the witness was asked, "Do you, in the presence of Almighty God, solemnly state that you will speak the truth, and that you believe that if you do not you will be punished both in this world and in the world to come?" To which the witness answered, "I do," and was permitted to testify in the case. If the above is not an affirmation, it would be interesting to know what the witness' idea of an affirmation was.

Mr. Landry, the member for Montmagny, has introduced at an early stage of the session, his bill intituled: "Acte à l'effet de re-
"streindre la jurisdiction d'appel de la Cour
"Suprême." Being asked for explanations the hon. member said the bill would explain itself: "Comme le titre l'indique il s'agit de
"restreindre la jurisdiction de la Cour Su-
"prême dans les matières qui regardent les
"lois civiles des différentes provinces; le but
"de cette loi est de soustreindre ces causes-là
"à la jurisdiction de la Cour Suprême. Si le
"gouvernment a une mesure à proposer sur
"ce sujet qui soit plus propice que la mienne
"et qui rencontre nos vues, je n'ai pas d'ob-
"jection qu'elle soit substituée à mon bill;
"mais s'il n'en propose aucune, j'ai l'intention
"de demander le vote de cette Chambre."

The *London Law Journal*, referring to Mr. Frederick Pollock's new *Law Quarterly Review*, says: "By an unreasonable prejudice English lawyers are apt to look upon jurists as persons knowing a little law of every country except their own, and to leave their productions unread." This prejudice, we are sorry to say, is not confined to the lawyers of the metropolis. We are acquainted with a few whose colonial experience has not broadened their vision, and whose highest ambition is to be informed as to what the Courts before whom they practice have actually decided.

FOREIGN COPYRIGHT.

The following is a head-note which appears in the twenty-first volume of the Federal Reports to the case of *Estes* v. *Williams*, a decision of Mr. Justice Wheeler delivered on July 31 last, in the Circuit Court of the Southern District of New York, which is of the deepest interest and importance to English writers and publishers:—

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