FEES TO OFFICERS.

We understand that a representation was made to the Board of County Judges at their late sitting, as to the propriety of making some increase to the fees of clerks and bailiffs, or rather making such an alteration in the tariff, as would give them some adequate remuneration for the services they have to perform in the discharge of their duties. Without pretending to prophesy what course the judges may think fit to pursue in this branch of the matters submitted to them, we can safely say that knowing as they do, practically as well as theoretically, the whole working of the system, they will take such steps in the premises as may conduce to its efficiency. For our part we have but one opinion on this subject. Division Court officers do more for less money than any other persons, officials or otherwise, in the Province. They are, as a rule, men of the highest respectability in their different stations, and they have to give large securities for the proper discharge of their duties. They receive nothing approaching adequate remuneration for their services, whilst they are expected to be above reproach. We now, as this is the time, earnestly hope that the Board may find it not inconsistent with the public interests to make a reasonable (and that means a large) addition to their fees, both by increasing the amount of some items in the present tariff, and by giving some remuneration for services for which there is now no provision, some payments for each of the various duties devolving on them.

A correspondent writes a letter on the subject which speaks for itself.

LAW REFORM ACT.

Of the many cases that have been tried at the Spring Assizes throughout the country, many very important ones have been tried without the intervention of jurymen, and, so far we have heard no complaints have been made of the findings of the judges on questions of fact; and there seems to be no reason why they should not be (at least in those classes of cases which are ever likely under the present law to be left to judges as sole arbiters,) as satisfactorily determined by one of the judges of a Superior Court of common law, as questions of fact in a suit have hitherto been by an Equity judge. There may be some minor difficulties in Term, in ascertaining and deciding the exact position of cases tried under the new practice, but anything of this kind will soon be put right. We notice, however, an inconvenience, which, though only felt probably in a slight degree at an Assize with a small docket, becomes serious where, as in Toronto and occasionally elsewhere, several weeks are occupied in the disposal of the business, and the inconvenience is this, that jurors are needlessly kept in Court, and away from their homes or business, whilst cases in which their services are not required are being tried. A simple remedy would be to provide that all jury cases should be tried first. A separate list might be made for them, to come on next in order after the disposal of assessments and undefended issues.

Much greater evils were found during the last assizes as the result of this Act—firstly, the length of time prisoners are kept lying in gaol awaiting trial, very often for offences of the most trifling nature; and secondly, the great waste of time to all parties attending the Assizes, by the trial of all sorts of paltry offences, which could be as well at the sessions, or perhaps by a magistrate. It is all very well that individual convenience should give way to the public advantage, but the advantages to the public must be of a very tangible nature before some of the leading features of British justice—that every person accused of crime shall have a speedy trial, and shall be held to be innocent until found guilty—are overlooked. At one assize, at least, the presiding Judge remarked upon the hardship of keeping prisoners charged with some paltry offence in gaol for months without trial,—accused as one was for stealing a rail off a fence; another for stealing a hammer, &c. In one of these cases the learned Judge sentenced the prisoner after conviction, to one hour in gaol. Here the punishment came first, and the conviction afterwards;—rather hard it would have been if the accused were innocent after all.

Another practical result of the Act is, that County Court cases are tried by Superior Court Judges; and the cases which there is no time for the Judge of Assise to try, are either left for a County Court Judge to finish, or have to lie over for six months. Every day brings up some new difficulty, the result of this hasty attempt to reform what had much better have been left alone than badly done. The remedy is worse than was the disease.

Some one will doubtless try his hand at an amendment of the Law Reform Act next ses-