

laws, and then we employed a highly trained body of men—and highly paid too—to say what these laws meant.” There is unfortunately too much truth in the above. His Lordship, however, apparently did not know where the difficulty lay.

Sir Henry Fowler, President of the Incorporated Law Society, after his opening address at Oxford last month, referring to the same subject, explained it in the following remarks: “It has been for many years my privilege to take a share in legislation, and while as a member of Parliament I resent (and that is not too strong a word to use) the sneers with which some judges (both of superior and inferior Courts) criticise the drafting of Acts of Parliament, I am ready to admit that our present system is capable of improvement. Bills drawn by the eminent lawyers who are the permanent, impartial and able servants of the Government for the time being are often marred and muddled by badly drawn amendments adopted in a hurry by the committee to whom such bills are referred.” The result of all this is of course confusion, inconsistencies and difficulties of construction, and the “highly trained body of men” above referred to have to be called in to try and find out what the legislature meant.

Some curious illustrations of the result of these ill-considered alterations are given by our cotemporary, which we may here reproduce: “A good instance was cited by Lord Stanhope, of the House of Lords, in 1816. A statute enacted the punishment of fourteen years’ transportation for a particular offence, and upon conviction *‘one half thereof* should go to the King and one half to the informer.’ Mr. Sergeant Robinson in his Reminiscences of Bench and Bar alludes to the celebrated instance of the statute for the rebuilding of the Chelmsford Gaol. An early clause prescribed that prisoners should be confined in the old gaol until the new one was built, but at the last moment a section was added to the effect that the new prison should be constructed out of materials of the old one, and the bill passed for the time without the detection of the glaring inconsistency.”

In the address above referred to, Sir Henry Fowler makes a suggestion which is worthy of the consideration of the legislatures in this Dominion: “Bills in Parliament, after they have passed the gauntlet of Parliamentary discussion, should be referred back to the official Parliamentary counsel for their report as to the wording of such bills after they have passed through committee, so that an