

STANDARD TIME.

Suppose for example a poll closed by the "current" railway time, when by the true local time it should have been kept open some minutes longer. How would an election be affected by this action under certain circumstances, or what would be the position of a returning officer as to rejecting or receiving votes in the debateable *mauvais quart d'heure*. Night, in legal parlance, is defined for certain purposes of the criminal law as being "the time between nine o'clock in the evening and six o'clock in the morning of the succeeding day." It is easy to see how important the question of "What o'clock"? might become to a prisoner. So also in regard to an information for keeping a public house open beyond the lawful hour. Again, in matters of contract what about the expiration of a policy of fire insurance at noon on a certain day, or, finally, what would be the result of a registry office being open before or after the legal time, and an instrument recorded before or after proper hours and a loss occurring, what would be position of the parties or the Registrar? We might refer to a number of other cases where difficulties might arise, but these are sufficient.

We are not advised as to whether there is any pretended authority for the change of time that has so quietly taken place without a thought of possible consequences; but we apprehend there can be no legal authority inasmuch as neither Parliament nor Legislature has met since the change. We understand that the Attorney-General of Ontario has issued instructions that all offices under control of the Ontario Government, wherein the office hours are fixed by statute shall be opened and closed according to local time. Hence an intelligent official of our acquaintance in Toronto will have to discontinue displaying his impartiality by opening by the old time and closing by the new. Doubtless, good worthy man, he thought, like Charles Lamb, to compensate for coming late to his office in the morning by going away early in the afternoon. Some legislation will probably

be introduced on the subject next session either by the Dominion or Provincial Government. The former *may* consider it necessary for "the peace, welfare and good government of the Dominion" to do so, or the latter may find it desirable for the more safe conduct of business in public offices. It would be well that any uncertainty or cause for litigation in the premises should be removed.

That serious legal complications may arise from changes in time is illustrated by a story for the truth of which we can vouch. Mr. G. O. the head of a well known landed family in England, came to a conveyancing counsel of our acquaintance for advice under the following circumstances. It appeared that his family held certain lands under a lease for two hundred years, granted in the time of Charles II. These lands were at the time of our story in the hands of a tenant from year to year. By an excusable, but apparently fatal oversight, no notice to quit had been served on the tenant from year to year, and the two hundred year lease would terminate before the requisite six months' notice could be given; for only five months and twenty-nine days remained before the two hundred year lease would be over, which would not be till after the close of the current year of the tenancy of the tenant from year to year. The tenant from year to year had got wind, it was feared, of the position of the title. The reversioners, after the two hundred year lease, were of course unknown. The consequence was at the end of the two hundred year lease the tenant from year to year would be in the position of a disseisor, having a good title against every one but the disseisee, the original reversioners; and consequently Mr. G. O. would see a valuable property go out of his family to one who had apparently a good legal, but no moral right to it. The conveyancing counsel got him out of the difficulty. But how? We leave it to our ingenious reader to reply, and will give him till February 15th to do it in.