

universally in Ontario as its merits deserve, and much difficulty and hesitation are apparent in changing from the older to this more modern system of land transfer. It seems evident that we are to have with us for some time the registry office, the search of title and the grant, with its historical and feudal associations, and it is worth while enquiring into the condition of our present forms for transferring realty in order to apprehend, not only what their present meaning is, but also to see whether there is no opportunity for improvement.

Few people who see an ordinary conveyance realize how little of its meaning appears upon its face.

Probably most lawyers would find it difficult to explain off-hand exactly what an ordinary grant means, and it is safe to say that no layman who signs or accepts one knows accurately what he is getting. It is an extraordinary thing, when we think of it, that there should be so much mystery about a land transaction, and so much that is hidden even from the wise and prudent.

The Short Forms Acts have made our conveyancing look simple enough, but the fact is, as all conveyancers know, that a grant, lease or mortgage is an exceedingly complicated affair, and that much of what is spread before us is merely a set of symbols conferring rights and imposing liabilities which must be looked for elsewhere. A document under one of these statutes is a cryptogram, containing meanings hidden from those who lack the key.

It is inevitable that transactions constantly taking place, such as dealings with lands, should habitually take substantially the same form, and equally inevitable that there should grow up a body of jurisprudence interpreting and regulating these constantly recurring transactions.

In no part of our law are these tendencies more evident than in conveyancing. In England, as in other civilized communities, land and crimes were the subjects chiefly demanding the attention of jurists during the formative period of the law. The principles affecting them were moulded at an early period in the country's development, and not only does this ensure a larger body of precedents and legislation, but much that is archaic has, in