

*The Legal News.*

VOL. XII. JUNE 22, 1889. No. 25.

Sorel has never been conspicuous for brevity in legal matters. The new city, incorporated by 52 Vict., c. 80, has the honor to occupy a considerable space in the volume of Quebec Statutes just issued. The Act of incorporation comprises 685 sections, extending over 115 pages. One may be permitted to express the hope that the mayor and councillors may be able to walk without doubt or uncertainty by the light of this ample charter.

It is a curious circumstance that while the Legislative Council of Quebec refused last session to approve of the Assembly bill in the B.A. matter, it nevertheless passed three bills dispensing entirely with examination for admission to study, in the cases of three gentlemen who had never been regularly admitted to the study of the law. It also concurred in three Acts dispensing with examination for admission to the study of dentistry. If the Legislative Council approves of the law as it exists, it is difficult to understand why it is so ready to come to the aid of those who fail to comply with it.

Mr. Justice Church, in addressing the Grand Jury at the beginning of the recent term of the Court of Queen's Bench, at Montreal, gave his opinion in favour of maintaining the Grand Jury system. "The office which you are here to fill" said the learned judge, "is one of the most ancient and one of the most honorable known to our institutions, and although in late years it has become somewhat the fashion to assail it and question its necessity or value, assigning as grounds for so doing that it is inconvenient, useless, expensive, or any other reason which may suggest itself to the critic, nevertheless the office continues to exist, and, so far as I can see, is likely to last through our generation, to be in due course handed down to our successors, to be by them in turn transmitted or abrogated as to them shall seem wise. As

'threatened men' are said to 'live long', so institutions like that of the Grand Jury, which have become ingrained into our system of criminal law, are not likely to be lightly cast aside, and I cannot but think that the office of the Grand Jury, rightly understood and intelligently and carefully administered, is one of our most valuable safeguards, both to the subject and the state, affording, as it does, a protection against hasty and ill-considered accusations, and also a barrier to personal malevolence, prejudice or ill-will."

On the much controverted license question his Honor had also something to say:—"It does seem to me that a general law regulating the maximum number of licenses which might be granted in any municipality, and fixing that number with a view to keep the number of licensed houses fully within the actual public wants of the people, would be a very desirable step, and would be of material help in diminishing the pressure which is made upon licensing boards, a pressure which I am assured finds its abettors often amongst those whose social standing, public responsibility or private experience should have ranged amongst other circles and influences. It is not always easy for the best disposed men, exercising a discretionary power in a mixed community like ours, to resist the influence to grant an unnecessary number of licenses, which a well organized body of citizens, as in this city, several hundred in number, and supported by many others indirectly interested in their commerce, will bring to bear upon them, and if the hands of the licensing board were strengthened by legislation such as I have indicated, more satisfactory results might be achieved. High license has been suggested as an auxiliary measure to this or as a substitute for it. If, under our political system, revenue must be a consideration in dealing with this subject, any policy which secures the necessary revenue and stamps out the low grogeries and reduces the number of saloons, or of saloons and billiard parlors combined, should secure the active sympathy and countenance of all good citizens, especially of those who are concerned in the administration of the criminal law. The spectacle which every