PENDING LEGISLATION.

The present session of the Ontario Legislature has not been behind its predecessors in the number of bills introduced to amend the Municipal Act, Assessment Act, Drainage Act, the High and Public Schools Acts, etc. To amend signifies to change for the better, but it is very questionable if some of the proposed amendments would not be a change for the worse. Fortunately a majority of bills introduced have to run the gauntlet of adverse criticism from members of the House, and have generally to stand considerable pruning in committee before being finally passed, and it may be taken for granted that the most objectionale features in such bills will be expunged before passing a final reading. It will, therefore, be unnecessary to refer at much length on the merits or demerits of the proposed changes at this stage. Probably by next issue some of the proposed measures will have so far advanced through the Legislature as to leave something tangible to discuss in the changes contemplated in municipal and school laws.

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The proposed High School Act as introduced by Hon. Mr. Ross is intended to make considerable change in the organization and management of these schools. The method of support, the manner of appointing trustees, the method of conducting examinations, the necessary increased staff of teachers called for, and the clauses relating to the peculiar facilities for dissolving existing union boards, are all changes which will evoke considerable adverse criticism in the country. We have often observed that those who are the most enthusiastic in demanding changes in commercial and social laws, are the most conservative when either churches or schools are interfered with by lawmakers, and the important changes proposed by the Minister of Education will no doubt create considerable dissatisfaction in the minds of many who had become accustomed to the existing state of managing school affairs, and against which but little complaint has been heard.

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The Education Department, for reasons no doubt satisfactory to the Minister, is decidedly opposed to union boards of High and Public School trustees. The existing school laws provided that in the event of a majority of any existing union board resolving to disunite they could do so, and in that event no union was thereafter permissable. Nor were the trustees of Public and High Schools not already a union board allowed to unite as such. It would appear that so well did the existing union boards give satisfaction, that few, if any, have taken advantage of the law to disunite, and the High School Act now going through the House has provision made for making dissolutions of union boards a matter so easy of accomplishment, at the mere whim of a small minority, that it is likely if so passed to accomplish the purpose evidently intended by the Education Department. By the new act two-thirds only of one section of the school board is required. The proposed clause reads : "If at any meeting of a board of Education called for that purpose a majority of all the members thereof, or if two-thirds of all the trustees representing the High School, or if two-thirds of the trustees representing the Public School vote in favor of the dissolution of any board of education, such board shall be dissolved on and after the close of the current calendar year." It can easily be imagined that a combination of four or five from either section out of a total of fourteen members comprising the union board can thus hold a whip over the head of the majority who may favor union, and by this means the minority would have vastly increased powers in influencing any other business brought before the board, such as the engagement of teachers. If the Education Department at Toronto are so firmly of opinion that union boards are a detriment to the cause of education, it would be better to enact a clause to abolish them without further ceremony.

Since the foregoing was set in type we observe that the Minister of Education has decided to expunge the clauses of the School Bill relating to the method of dissolving union boards, so that the law will remain as at present so far as that is concerned.

COURT OF REVISION.

Appeals against the assessment must be made in writing and delivered to the clerk within fourteen days after the return of the roll. As the roll requires to be returned on or before the 30th of April, appeals would have to be filed with the clerk not later than the 14th May. If the assessor made a return of the roll previous to the 30th April appellants would still have the fourteen days of May to file appeals, but if from any cause the roll had not been returned to the clerk until some days after the time fixed, appellants would be entitled to a similar extension of time in which to file appeals. The law requires the roll to be open for inspection and a shortening of the time for inspection owing to the roll not being returned would not debar the rights of ratepayers to the full fourteen days allowed them. On receipt of the roll from the assessor it is well for the clerk to at once make a memorandum on the roll of the date when received. We have known of persons leaving notice of appeal against neighbors at a late hour on the last day of appeal, in order that a counter appeal might not be entered against themselves. This is a sort of midnight assassin business, but as the law stands it appears to be permissable, as the court can only investigate cases of appeal entered within the time laid down.

As soon as the time has expired for entering appeals the clerk should notify all the appellants and the assessor of the day and hour at which the court of revision will be held. In the event of any appeal affecting persons other than the appellant himself, such persons should also be notified of the time and the matter of the appeal, in order that the latter may attend the court if they so wish. The law does not explicitly lay this duty on the clerk, but as the appellant is not required to notify others than the clerk it is evident that a gross injustice might be perpetrated on individuals whose assessments might be changed without their knowledge. No doubt the list of complainants containing the matters complained against has to be posted up in some convenient and public place in the municipality, but as this is frequently the clerk's own office it does