the Legislature," whatever may be its provisions and however their insertion may have been obtained, must at all events remain in force for the traditional "year and a day" without the possibility of amendment or redress, it is not too much to ask that this "transcendent power" should not be rashly, hastily, or arbitrarily exercised, and that before a private bill is submitted for the assent of the Lieutenant-Governor some tribunal should exist for determining—(1) That all parties whose interests may be affected shall have had due notice of the enactment and of its provisions; and (2) That those provisions should themselves be consistent with equity, good sense and the rest of the law.

In theory both of these requirements are fully met and answered. The first, by the appointment of a committee, called the Committee on Standing Orders, whose duty it is to see that due notice, in the manner directed by the rules of the House has been given for six weeks before the introduction of the petition for any private bill; and the second by the practice of referring all those bills first to a Committee specially charged with their consideration, and afterwards examining them in Committee of the whole House.

In practice, however, these wholesome regulations are seldom carried out in spirit, although the letter may seldom be violated. The question of due notice is, we fear, determined in most cases, not by the Committee on Standing Orders, but by the Clerk of Private Bills, and if that gentleman found it not incompatible with the duties of his office to be absent from Canada during a large part of the last session of the Legislature, it may be inferred that too much time is not devoted to the determination of a question most essential to the full and fair consideration of Private Bills.

Again during a recent Session of Parliament the control of the Private Bills Committee was entrusted to a young and promising supporter of the Administration who had only been admitted as an Attorney a few weeks previous, and who, though doubtless destined to take rank in the future as a leading politician, could scarcely be expected to possess as yet either the age or the parliamentary experience required for a post so important. It may be in consequence of this loose method of procedure that such bills as the Toronto Water Works Amendment Act were introduced last session without any notice whatever having been given in the Ontario Gazette or in any local paper—and in direct defiance of a rule of the House; that Townships have been "grouped" for bonus by-laws in several Railway Acts of the past three or four sessions without notice either to their inhabitants or to their municipal councils; and that during the last session an Act (38 Vict. cap. 50) was passed, incorporating a Company for the construction of a Railway "from some point on Lake Ontario to some point on the Georgian Bay" without any opportunity being afforded to the Northern, or the Toronto, Grey & Bruce Railway Companies to see that their vested rights were not interfered with.

Some of these cases—and others could easily be given—may serve as instances where the "solemn act" of the legislature has hardly been characterized by that equity and good sense which might be hoped for in the highest tribunal of the Province, but there are others, the peculiar provisions of which will only become known to the world by the criticisms of a perplexed and long suffering Bench.

One of these peculiar Acts came up for discussion before Mr. Justice Gwynne a short time since, upon an application for a *mandamus* by a Railway Company, incorporated in 1874 with power to construct a road "from or near the town of Barrie, or *some other point on the line of the*