

Canada Law Journal.

VOL. L.

TORONTO, OCTOBER, 1914

Nos. 19 & 20

ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS.

An address was recently given at Chicago by Mr. Robert McMurdy, president of the Illinois State Bar Association, which contains some startling information, frankly given by him, though not to the credit of his country. He introduces his remarks by quoting a saying that "before we can make progress we must make admissions." He makes the admissions and we trust with him that progress will come in due course. We refer to this matter, not to throw stones at our neighbours, but because we have sins of our own which we should repent of, and the occasion is opportune to take stock of them.

The foundation admission which he makes is in the words following:—"We must admit at the outset that the inhabitants of our own United States are the most lawless of all civilized people." He quotes the words of a great educator and diplomat who says:—"In no civilized country on earth is the first of the three great rights named in the Declaration of Independence, that is to say, the right of life, so disregarded as in this. Homicide is the most rapidly growing of serious crimes in this country and it is increasing more alarmingly here than in any other land." A learned Senator is also quoted as saying, "There is no country of first importance where there is so little respect for the law, because it is the law, as here in our own republic." An ex-President of Harvard University declares that "the impunity with which crimes of violence are now permitted is a disgrace to the country."

These statements, sorrowfully made no doubt, are substantiated by carefully compiled statistics. We are told, for example, that the number of homicides in London, England, with its enormous population, were for 1912 only eighty-six, whilst during