

RE-ARRANGEMENT OF THE ENGLISH COURTS.

so that the said school section, No. —, and the boundaries thereof as now altered, settled, and determined by us, shall be, and are, as follows, viz:—"School Section No. — of the said Township of —," &c. And the said By law and the school section No. —, thereby established, as thus altered, shall stand and remain. Done, &c.

[Communicated.]

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A letter written by Lord Selborne, the Chancellor of England, to the late Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, in October last, has resulted in some important alterations in the judicial arrangements of the High Court of Justice.

By the Judicature Act of 1873, sec. 32, the Queen may, by order in Council, upon the recommendation of a council of judges of the Supreme Court, reduce the number of Divisions of the High Court, and give any necessary consequent directions for that purpose; and may also provide for the abolition, on vacancy, of the distinction of the offices and salaries, &c., of the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas and the Chief Baron of the Exchequer from the offices, &c., of the puisne judges. Let it also be borne in mind that at the time Lord Selborne wrote, the Chief Barony of the Exchequer was vacant by the death of Sir Fitzroy Kelly.

The Lord Chancellor suggested that advantage might be taken of the present vacancy in the office of Chief Baron for the following purposes: (1) To reduce the number of the Divisions of the High Court of Justice by uniting in a single Division (which might, he thought, bear the name of the Queen's Bench Division), the three Divisions now called respectively the Queen's Bench Division, the Common Pleas Division, and the Exchequer Division; (2) to abolish the titular and other distinctions between the office, now vacant, of Lord Chief Baron and that of a puisne judge, so that the present vacancy should be

supplied by the appointment of an additional puisne judge only; and (3) to provide for the abolition, in like manner, upon the next vacancy, of the distinctions between the office of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas and that of a puisne judge. The new consolidated Division would, of course, be under the presidency of the Lord Chief Justice of England, and would be capable, under his authority, of full and complete unity of administration.

The letter also suggested a meeting of the Council of judges to take this matter into consideration. This meeting was accordingly held in November last, but in the meantime Chief Justice Cockburn had died, and Lord Coleridge had been appointed in his place. It will therefore be seen that when the meeting took place the only remaining difficulty in the way of carrying out Lord Selborne's suggestion, so far as the Common Law Divisions was concerned, was at an end.

It may here be remarked that Sir Alex. Cockburn had conceived a prejudice against the Judicature Act which, had he lived, might have been opposed to the proposed changes. The cause of this prejudice is said to have been Lord Hatherley's proposal to convert the Court of Queen's Bench into "Chamber No. 2," a suggestion exceedingly repugnant to the chief's conception of the dignity of the office he filled.

At the meeting of the Council it was accordingly resolved that the Queen's Bench, the Common Pleas, and the Exchequer Divisions should be consolidated and hereafter be known as the Queen's Bench Division, and that the distinction of the offices of the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas and the Chief Baron of the Exchequer should be abolished. This resolution will doubtless become law as soon as certain formalities have been complied with; and the vacancies on the Bench, will, under this new arrangement, be filled by two puisne judges in place of the extinguished chiefs. The names of those spoken of as likely to be appointed are Sir Henry M