

Canada Law Journal.

VOL. XLIII.

MARCH 15.

NO. 6.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

A new measure is now before the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which aims at making the liability of employers to compensate their employees for injuries still more onerous.

Under the present law the liability is confined to employers of workmen engaged in manual labour, but not employers of domestic servants. The new bill includes all classes of employers of all kinds of working people. If it should become law, the best thing all small householders who employ domestic servants can do, would be to dismiss them and do their own work. If not, they may find themselves permanently crippled by having to maintain for the rest of her natural life some servant who happens to have sustained a serious injury whilst in their employ.

It may be said that employers can insure themselves against such contingencies, which is true enough, but that means adding so much more to the cost of living, which is already high and is gradually getting higher and higher, especially in the cities of Ontario, and notably so for professional men and those with fixed incomes.

If the Legislature thinks one class of the community should be specially insured against accidents, it should itself assume the burden, for to throw the expense of insuring one particular class of the community upon another class is class legislation of a most indefensible kind. If domestic and farm servants must be insured by their employers against all accidents, why should not every Government officer and clerk be similarly insured by the Government of the province? If servants are entitled to be insured at their employers' expense, why should not butchers and bakers and doctors and lawyers be insured by those who employ them? And as for clergymen it is well known that many of them have less of this world's goods than the women they are occasionally compelled to employ.