

In the field of industrial legislation and of charitable endeavour as seen from the standpoint of Provincial and Municipal duty, there is a wide range of statutory provisions, and in them will be found the conception which from time to time animates the community in realizing its social and moral duties to those who are either toilers or the poor or afflicted in mind, body or estate.

The whole structure of law viewed in this way as indicating what is the genius of the nation and what are its ideas of right and wrong, of prudence, fair dealing and compassion and of the rights and duties of man, woman and child, is a very interesting one. It has shewn a great deal of development in the past half century. I cannot say, however, that in looking back I have recognized in our profession any thought or desire as professional men to look at the law other than as something to be studied, known and interpreted. It does not seem to have occurred to us that the very fact of our knowledge of, and familiarity with, the law of the land, and the high intellectual gifts demanded by our profession brings with it an obligation to suggest and strive that laws should be made as perfect as it is possible to make them, and that our duty is not wholly done when we have mastered their principles or studied the statute book.

Many fields of reform and hopeful experiment in the endeavour to make life better or more tolerable are open, in which no substantial progress can be made unless there is first laid down a proper and adequate frame-work of law. This back-ground or foundation is absolutely necessary for reasons which are obvious and readily seen in the working of some of our judicial and administrative processes.

Some of my occupations during the past few years have led me to think that no greater aid could be given in certain directions, to the spirit of social betterment, than by putting the attainments of our profession at the service of enlightened and progressive workers who are trying to improve the conditions in both normal and abnormal life.

It may be interesting to take some illustrations and see whether the point I desire to bring home does not make itself manifest, and that point is that law is only the expression of our national con-