

Laymen are not generally aware that a lawyer's bill, unlike that of any other professional man, is always subject to the pruning knife of a taxing officer, who ruthlessly lops off any undue excrescences which may come under his notice. The solicitor cannot, like a doctor, render a neat little bill, thus : " For professional services from such a day to such a day " ; but, in order to obtain his remuneration, must, item by item, charge for every attendance, every paper drawn, and every payment made, even though it be only a one-cent stamp. But, at the same time, there is a great deal of work done for which no charge, or no reasonably sufficient charge, can be made. The drawing of a bill under such circumstances is a work of time and thought. It is obviously quite against the interest of a solicitor under the present system to hurry proceedings, or to seek to shorten cases ; on the contrary, a great temptation is offered to every practitioner, and if some succumb to it, it is not very surprising, for though lawyers are quite as honest, as a class, as any other, and probably more so, some have not as much moral backbone as others. The plan generally adopted in the United States is for solicitors and clients to agree upon a certain sum for the work to be done or a commission on the amount recovered. This is said to be generally satisfactory.

Now for a suggestion : Probably in an ideal state, should any citizen require the assistance of the law to enforce his legal rights, or supposed legal rights, all necessary means of attaining a judicial determination of his case would be furnished at the public expense. Under such a system private litigation would become as much a public affair as is a criminal prosecution under our present imperfect conditions. Those charged with the conduct of legal proceedings would be public officers, whose services would be available to litigants, and would be paid not by the litigants, but by the State. Their interests would be to bring litigating parties together to get them to settle their difficulties, and if that should prove impossible, then to bring the points in controversy to a judicial determination in the speediest manner possible, the expense being borne by the State. Numerous details present themselves, but it would not now be profitable to spend time and space in discussing them ; they must wait, at least so far as we are concerned, until the subject becomes of practical interest. Many wise heads have honestly worked at the problems presented in the various matters above referred to, and have not yet found solutions which are satis-