

Should Be One Law For All

"Two or three weeks ago a farmer living near Brantford was fined \$500 and costs for saying that 'we had just as well be under Prussian rule as under Canadian.' At Longueuil, as reported by the Canadian Press, Joseph Archambault, M.P., told a public gathering that 'only in Canada and Germany was legislation enacted without the consent of the people.' What is the difference between the two sentiments thus expressed?"—Mail and Empire.

The instances referred to by our contemporary show the necessity for a clear declaration by Parliament as to the limits of legitimate criticism of the Government and the law. At present such remarks as are cited may be punished in one place, and made with impunity in another, according to the varying opinions and inclinations of magistrates, the zeal or indifference of prosecuting officers. Few if any of the cases reach the higher courts, where an authoritative interpretation could be given.

The law should be made clear. It should be a statute, not an order-in-Council. And it may be that the procedure could be improved, so as to produce something like uniformity of interpretation, so that there should be one law for all. Treason and **sedition** must be punished, but free speech should not be interfered with, except to that extent. The time of the courts should not be taken up with inquiries into trivial matters. The Government should not be exempt from fair criticism, and mere exaggeration of language should not be treated as a crime.