Independent Acts are often passed on the same subject, the later Act frequently making no reference to the prior Act. This is a practice always more or less embarassing, as it may easily require judicial interpretation to say how far the earlier Act remains operative or unaffected. A recent instance may be stated: In 1894 an Act was passed called "The Unclaimed Lands Act," which was administered by the Public Trustee, and gave him very ample powers. In 1907 an Act was passed to amend the existing Acts relating to the Public Trust Office, which also gave the Public Trustee large powers with regard to uncared-for real and personal property. In certain particulars the Act of 1894 gave wider powers than that of 1907, and, although the former Act only applied to land, the later Act applied to all kinds of property. Here, it will be seen, is fertile ground for litigation, and possible conflict of laws. There are other like existing instances which could be referred to. But greater difficulty arises in connection with amending enactments. The existing practice is to pass an amending Act framed in the shortest way by incorporating or applying other Acts, wholly or in part, and frequently allowing the parent Act to remain intact without any express repeal or modification. Instead of clearing the ground by repealing obsolete or inconsistent enactments, or explaining how far the new law shall supersede the prior law, the amending process is repeated from time to time until a mass of inconsistent legislation is in existence only to bewilder and irritate those who have to administer it.

That this is an evil common to all legislative bodies is apparent from the following quotation from "Legislative Methods and Forms"—a work by Sir Courtenay Ilbert, for some time Parliamentary Counsel to the Treasury, and now Clerk to the House of Commons. At page 118 he says, "It is comparatively easy to amend a single Act. But when amendments of the law cannot be effected except by patching up several Acts, 'applying' or 'adapting' several more, and appending in schedules lists or fragments of others, the result is apt to be distracting to the legislator, the administrator, and the private citizen. Yet such is the inevitable result of piling Act upon Act without any attempt to weld into shape any part of the chaotic heap." These remarks put the whole case in a concrete form, and are well worthy of attention. One obvious remedy in such cases is to repeal the old Acts, and re-enact them so far as necessary. This could be adopted, at all events, in all cases where the prior Acts are short.

Many amending Acts are of a local nature, with a limited operation, or intended to affect only particular areas; but, instead of only doing this, they are often expressed in general terms and alter the general law. Hence, there is confusion and uncertainty. Again, such Acts are often drawn in different modes, and use language in various senses, thus leading to ambiguity and doubt.

We venture to think that in no case should an Act be submitted for Your Excellency's assent without a written certificate from some competent authority (*a*) that all necessary repeals and modifications of prior enactments have been duly made, and (*b*) that the Act is in harmony with the existing law, and is so expressed as to satisfactorily carry out its purpose.

That the consolidated edition which is now law will be found free from error is scarcely to be expected. We can only say we have done our best; and where mistakes appear the Legislature must supply the necessary corrections. One source of error it has been impossible to guard against. Accidents sometimes occur in the Printing Office when printing off on the machine. In such cases the broken matter is reset, and, according to the rules of the office, should be checked before further printing is gone on with. In our case the final printing-off was done under great pressure of time in order to save the session, and in one instance, at all events, the rule as to checking would seem not to have been observed. We refer to section 159 of the Licensing Act, which went to the machine correctly worded "sufficient to express the business for which his license has been granted," but now appears as "sufficient to the express business for which his license has been granted." Similar instances of misprints or verbal mistakes may exist and be similarly accounted for. Knowing as we do, however, how great was the mass of printing to be done, and how short the time in which to do it, we fully recognise that inaccuracies of that sort are inevitable, and cannot fairly be imputed to carelessness or inefficiency in the Printing Office. Indeed, we are aware that Mr. Mackay, the Government Printer, issued special instructions in the matter, and did everything that possibly could be done to insure accuracy.