

Under special circumstances the king may decide that legal proceedings for offences committed shall be stopped. He may also grant pardons and amnesty. He cannot, however, without the sanction of Althingi, quash the impeachment of a minister or free him from suffering the punishment to which he has been sentenced by the high court of the realm. The king may, either himself or through the authorities, grant licences and allow exemptions from the laws, but only according to the rules which were observed under such circumstances before the constitution came into force, i. e. before Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> 1874.

### JUSTICE

According to § 2 of the constitution, the administration of justice is exercised by judges. Other authorities can, therefore, neither alter nor influence the decisions of the courts. The constitution, moreover, prescribes that the courts shall settle all points of dispute, that may arise respecting the extent of power possessed by the officials. This implies that whenever there is a doubt whether the executive or judicial authority is to be exercised in a matter, the decision rests with the courts. As regards laws (provisional as well as other laws) the courts shall decide whether or not they conflict with the constitution; and as the judges in all their official duties are to be guided solely by the law, the executive can in no possible way dictate to them how to give their decisions. The king appoints the judges, and the government supervises the discharge of their duties and has the power to prosecute them in case of official misdemeanour. To safeguard the independence of the judges against any such interference on the part of the executive, the constitution provides that those of them who have no other administrative duties cannot be removed from the bench against their will, except by a legal judgment having been passed upon them; nor can a judge be transferred from one office to another against his will, except in case of a new system being introduced. When a judge has reached the age of 65 years, he may be allowed to retire on full salary. This provision is, however, of minor importance, as it applies only to those judges who have no administrative duties, for in most cases the judges at the lower courts exercise administrative functions as well. Finally the constitution prescribes that the system of administration of justice can only be fixed by an act of parliament. It is, however, held that the king can appoint judicial commissions to deal with special cases.

The *courts of law* are of two kinds, ordinary and special. In the