

## RESIGNATION OF VICE CHANCELLOR BLAKE—RECENT JUDICIAL CHANGES.

changes in the Bench, and in this particular case they will suffer from the loss of a learned and most industrious judge trained in the duties of his office, his place being filled by an untried, but more especially by an untrained man. No matter how excellent the new judges of the Court of Chancery may prove, the presence of two who are necessarily devoid of judicial experience, may, for a time at least, be productive of some little embarrassment and occasional delay. We regret this step, also, on Mr. Blake's own account, inasmuch as many not familiar with the moving causes may possibly think that he was actuated by motives which we feel confident had no place in inducing him to take the step he has taken.

It cannot be denied that the deep and pronounced interest which Mr. Blake has shown, in word and deed, in philanthropic and Christian work has provoked hostile comment. His course was aggressive, and he came in contact with very strong interests; and whilst many have applauded his earnest action in such matters, others have not hesitated to state openly their objections; in fact have gone so far as to make unfavorable representations to the Government on the subject. The rule that "once a puisne always a puisne," is well recognized in England, but in this country is as much honored in the breach as the observance. As far as Mr. Blake's qualifications for the office of Chancellor are concerned, few will deny them; nor was the Government embarrassed in the selection of a good man to take the Vice-Chancellor's place in case of his promotion, inasmuch as Mr. Boyd, recognizing the services of one who was and is an old and valued friend, and his fitness for promotion to the vacant office, expressed his willingness to take the lower position. Under these circumstances it must be assumed that the Government, if not adopting the precedent they had before them in the appointment of the late Chief Justice Harrison, gave weight to the opinion that the line which Mr. Blake has marked

out for himself, in regard to the matters referred to, was incompatible with the position of Chancellor, and if incompatible with that position, was also undesirable for one holding the office of Vice-Chancellor. For our part, we utterly repudiate any doctrine that would cripple the Christian liberty of a judge—that would compel the man, who of all others should be an exemplar of morals in a community, to hide his principles and his conviction. But the conclusion to a conscientious mind was, under these circumstances, not unnatural, either for the person interested to give up the prominent part that he felt it his duty to take in reference to the temperance question and to other philanthropic and religious matters, or to resign his position on the Bench. He has chosen the latter course. Whilst, as we have said, we deeply deplore this result, and whilst many who love their country and hold in high reverence the judicial position, think that the circumstances did not warrant the action taken, and whilst others again who approve of the step, regret that it should have been taken at this particular juncture, those who appreciate the motives already referred to, will admire the strength of character of one who is prepared to stand by his convictions.

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**RECENT JUDICIAL CHANGES.**


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The long delayed appointments having at length been made, it is our pleasing duty to record them. The Hon. John Godfrey Spragge, who has been Chancellor for the past twelve years, now sits as Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal of Ontario. His long judicial service, extending over a period of forty-four years (dating from his appointment as Master of the Court of Chancery in 1837), his learning and reputation, made his appointment a foregone conclusion on the death of