

more attention to them than he did to *viva voce* expressions of the same opinions as they promulgated. The hon. gentleman had taken up a line which he (Mr. Blake) failed to notice before. He regretted that the hon. gentleman should have so humble an opinion of the profession to which it was his (Mr. Blake's) pride and honor to belong, and the Bar at which it had been his pride and pleasure to practice. He supposed that members of the Bar in a free and enlightened country considered themselves as all being on an equal footing, whether they happened to be Minister of Justice or the humblest member of it. No one in this country, however high his position politically, had any rights before the Court except that the possession of a silk gown gave its owner the privilege to be first called. Beyond this, he had no greater rights than the man who was called to the Bar the day before. No matter whether a man wore a silk or a stuff gown, he must depend for his position on his success before the jurors and the community at large. It was, therefore, an unworthy insult to the Bar that any member of it could, for a moment, think so humbly of the profession to which he belonged. A man's arguments before the Bar received attention and had weight with the Judges in proportion to their merits; not for any other reason. He repeated, so far as he might be permitted to speak on behalf of the Bench, that they were not in any way influenced by the standing of the men who addressed them. Why, even in the Province of which the hon. gentleman was leader, there was an Attorney-General who used, he believed, to practice in that Province. And still the hon. gentleman said that such a state of things was perfectly appalling; that it was calculated to destroy all confidence in the administration of justice. It was quite possible that by alleging such a state of things existed, by alleging that the Bench was unduly and dishonourably swayed by the position of a counsel, public opinion might be influenced. When, therefore, such an opinion was expressed within these walls by a member of Parliament, he wished to raise his voice in contradiction of such an assertion. The hon. gentle-

MR. BLAKE.

man must place a very low estimate on the intelligence of the people of this country, on the dignity of the Bench and also of the Bar when he made an assertion of that kind—an assertion which implied that equal justice was not administered on all hands. The hon. gentleman differed from him also in thinking that this high patronage—as he called it—which the Minister of Justice held in his hands was an inducement to a wealthy man to accept the office. He (Mr. Blake) thought if there was one thing above another which would induce a man who felt properly on this subject to decline the office of Minister of Justice, it was just this question of patronage. He apprehended that instead of being a lure to a conscientious man it was really the greatest embarrassment and difficulty under which he laboured. The responsibility connected with the appointment of a Judge for twenty or thirty years, which might prove disastrous to a large section of the population among whom he lived, was one of the most serious character to a Minister of Justice. He quite admitted that the fame connected with some high political position might attract some men to such an office; but on the whole, with the qualifications which he stated in his former address on this subject and which he repeated, the first duty of every man, whether Minister of Justice or Minister of any other Department, was to discharge thoroughly and efficiently his sworn duties. He felt convinced that the public interests would be better served by the adoption of the view which he entertained, than that of the hon. member for Cumberland. An alternative was suggested by the hon. member for Kingston, who proposed the appointment of a Solicitor-General who should receive a salary of \$3,000 a year. Besides the time which the Court business occupied, he was expected to act as a sort of handy man, in doing other work, for which he should receive a portion of the fees. He (Mr. Blake) could not understand what sort of man could be got to give up the practice which he had been accumulating all his life, for a portion of the fees which he was earning. He