

JUDGE GOWAN.

paralleled in the judicial annals of the Dominion, and yet Judge Gowan has the satisfaction of retiring from an onerous post, with the knowledge, that though physically he feels the inroad made upon his health by his long judicial labors, yet that he retains in an unusual degree his faculties unimpaired, and is enabled by the blessing of Providence to enjoy his well-earned rest with the keen zest that arises from the possession of a vigorous intellect and a cultivated and well-stored mind. This merited enjoyment of ease and comfort will be materially enhanced by the feeling that the greater part of his past life has been usefully and profitably spent in the service of his country.

Appointed to the County Court of the County of Simcoe, in 1843, at the early age of 25, Judge Gowan has for over two score years discharged his duties as a County Judge, and during that period has probably done as much as, if not more than any living politician or judge, towards improving, cementing together, and building up our local Courts' judicial system to the perfection it has now attained. Developing before his appointment to the bench a singular readiness and skill as a legal draftsman, this rare ability has been constantly drawn upon by successive Governments, and the imprint of his legal capacity, his practical knowledge of the requirements of the country, and the marks of his patient industry can be traced in numerous statutes passed from time to time, and particularly in the various consolidations of the statutes which periodically the Legislature has been compelled to make in order to compress, prune and simplify our somewhat luxuriant and redundant law-making. Judge Gowan, in 1853, was one of the five Judges appointed to frame rules regulating the procedure in the Division Courts under the act of that year. In the year 1857 he was associated with the Judges of the Superior Courts of Common Law, to frame a tariff of fees for those Courts. He was also associated about the same time with the late Sir J. B.

Macauley, in consolidating the Statutes of Upper Canada and Canada; and likewise with Mr. Justice Burns and Vice-Chancellor Spragge (the present Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal), in framing the rules and orders regulating proceedings in the Probate and Surrogate Courts. In 1869 he was appointed Chairman of the Board of County Judges, which position, we understand, he has been requested by Attorney-General Mowat to retain, notwithstanding his retirement from the County Bench—a graceful, and at the same time merited, acknowledgement of his past valuable services, and one which enables a much-desired bond of connection to be maintained between Judge Gowan and his brethren of the County Bench. In 1870 he was appointed by the Dominion Government one of a committee to consolidate the Criminal Laws, and about the same time received an appointment from the Ontario Government as one of five commissioners, to consider the feasibility of a fusion of the Courts of Law and Equity, a result since summated by the Judicature Act. In 1873 he was nominated as one of the Royal Commissioners to enquire into the Pacific Railway scandal; his duties connected with this enquiry he discharged with his usual fidelity, fairness and conspicuous impartiality; and notwithstanding the excited political feeling of the period he seems to have escaped, with a slight sprinkling, the shower of abuse which was so indiscriminately poured (whether properly or not we offer no opinion) upon the party then in power, and upon all connected with them officially or otherwise. In 1874 Judge Gowan was appointed by the Ontario Government one of the Commissioners for the revision, consolidation and classification of the Public General Statutes relating to the Province—a work which was finally completed, much to the satisfaction of the public and the profession in 1877.

The foregoing is but a brief *resumé* of some of the more important judicial and public work in which Judge Gowan has taken a