

THE BENCH AND THE BAR.

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The following was the address presented by the Bar of the County of Simcoe to His Honor Judge Gowan, on the occasion of his retirement from the Bench, with his reply thereto :

His Honor James R. Gowan, late local Judge of the High Court of Justice, and Senior Judge of the Judicial District of Simcoe.

We, the practising barristers and solicitors of the County of Simcoe, cannot allow the occasion of your retirement from the judicial bench to pass without testifying, however inadequately, the high esteem in which we hold you, and our regret that the relations so long existing between us, are about to be severed.

The benefits derived by this County during the last forty-one years from your high attainments and administrative ability, have been incalculable. Courts have been organised; the legal business has been conducted with precision and decorum; and the judgments you have given in the vast number of cases that have come before you, have been luminous, dignified and impartial. Nor can we forget that some of the most important enactments on our statute book owe their development and moulding into shape, to the sagacious advice you were at all times willing to afford, when called on by the rulers of the state.

And not to the county alone have your services been beneficial, for your system of organization, and the example of your courts, have spread beyond our borders, and have had marked influence in every county of the Province, but space will not permit us to enlarge on this, otherwise we should be led into a general reference to the affairs of the Dominion, and possibly of the whole Dominion, so great has been the influence of your abilities and industry in various directions during your term of office.

To us, you have ever been courteous, considerate and kind; to your discouragement of all that is unworthy, by your inspiring sense of honour, we attribute the high standing we have attained, and we feel assured that the tradition of your career will be long remembered, not only by the generation now living, but by those who may come after us.

We accordingly contemplate with affectionate concern the withdrawal from us of one to whom we owe so much.

We trust, however, that your intended sojourn in a more genial climate will produce every good result, and that under the care of an all-disposing God, your return to us may be the commencement of a new era in your life, and you may be enabled to pursue it with continued usefulness.

That you may be sometimes reminded of the cordial relations that existed for so many years between yourself and the County of Simcoe, we desire to present you with the accompanying

piece of plate, which we know you will value, not for its intrinsic worth, but for the feelings that prompted the gift.

On behalf of the Bar of the County of Simcoe.

J. E. P. PEPLER,
Secretary.

W. LOUNT, Q.C.,
Chairman of Committee.

Barrie, Oct. 16, 1883.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE REPLY :

Mr. Lount and Gentlemen,

I thank you with all my heart for the very kind address with which you have honored me. I wish I could feel that I fully deserved all you say. Ever sensible of my many deficiencies, I tried to make up for them by a laborious assiduity and exactitude in fulfilling every known duty to the utmost of my ability. It is the only merit I can claim, and I am by no means sure I could have done much had I been without the stimulus which a learned and energetic bar always gives to the Bench. And now, in retiring from the accustomed scene of my labors, and severing the relations that have connected us for so many years, the sadness, to me, is soothed by the regrets you express, whilst the approving testimony you bear to my humble services is the best award any public servant could desire.

When I recall the state of things as they were when I first set foot here, and the wonderful improvements that have, since 1843, been effected in our legal, municipal and educational systems, the increased facilities for travelling, and the marvellous progress and prosperity of the country at large, there is opened to me a wide and pleasant field for observation upon which I should like to dwell, but it is not possible to do so at present. This I may say, however: in no particular is progress so marked as in the growth of the Bar here and elsewhere, in numbers, in influence and trained knowledge.

The rapid flight of time is brought before me when I remember that of the present large Bar several of the seniors were school boys when I was appointed to the judicial office, and several others were born since my first Court was held in the District. It has been my great good fortune to be surrounded and aided in the discharge of my official duties by those whom I have known since their childhood, and never, in a single instance, has anything disturbed the pleasant relations between the Bench and the Bar in this judicial district. You can understand, then, how warmly I reciprocate all you can possibly feel towards me. I well know that the industry and ability of the Bar has smoothed many a difficulty for me in the way of judicial investigations, and it is exceedingly gratifying to me to recall the high professional tone which always prevailed, and could always be safely confided in, being grounded on convictions of duty, and a nice sense of honor—securing a liberality in