

HAMILTON LAW ASSOCIATION—MR. WICKSTEED, Q.C.

Messrs. Martin, Q.C., and Mackelcan, Q.C., and Teetzel, were appointed delegates to represent the Hamilton Association at any meeting to be held in Toronto on the subject of the revision of the rules.

A letter was read from the Vice-President, Mr. Justice Robertson, resigning his position on account of his appointment to the Bench, and the following resolution was carried:

"That the Association take this opportunity of congratulating Mr. Thomas Robertson, Q.C., on his appointment to the Bench, and expressing their appreciation of his uniform kindness and courtesy as Vice-President of the Association, and the hope that he may long be spared to adorn the high and honourable position to which he has been promoted."

And Mr. Justice Robertson was also requested to dine with the Association.

In view of the important changes which are now taking place in connection with the revision of the practice a hope was expressed that members of the Bar throughout the Province would join in the movement and give it as much strength as possible. The Toronto, London and Hamilton Associations are taking active steps in the matter, but the hearty co-operation of the Bar throughout the Province is very desirable.

MR. WICKSTEED, Q.C.

We take great pleasure in extracting from the columns of the *Ottawa Citizen* the following references to an old friend of this journal, Mr. G. W. Wicksteed, Q.C., late Law Clerk of the House of Commons. The country has in him lost a most valuable and faithful servant. We trust he may live long to enjoy his well earned repose.

"When the next Parliament meets, one familiar face of the official staff will be missing. It has been known to three generations of politicians, and its absence cannot but be felt, especially by the older members who return to Ottawa. We allude to Mr. Wicksteed, who for nearly half a century has performed the important duties of law clerk to the Canadian Legislative Assembly and House of Commons. After this long period of official life, at his own request he has been relieved of his duties. Dr. Wilson, so long his efficient assistant, has been appointed to the position, with the creditable distinction of the recommendation of Mr. Wicksteed to succeed him.

"There are few men in any career, who have so ably, so continuously and so unexceptionably played their part on life's stage; close upon his ninetieth year, retaining his faculties, his memory, with unimpaired power, and, what is more remarkable, with all the geniality, with that milk of human kindness which are to be found in young and hopeful men, as yet unscoured by disappointment. Mr. Wicksteed is still the charm of the society which numbers him among its members. As we write of him we seem to go back to an epoch known to us only as history. Nelson's funeral took place on the 9th January, 1805. Mr. Wicksteed has a perfect recollection of having been sent from his uncle's house in Cecil street to the Coffee House in the Strand, from the balcony of which he saw the last honours paid to the great admiral as his coffin was carried eastward to St. Paul's.

"Mr. Wicksteed was induced by his uncle, Mr. Justice Fletcher, brother to Sir Richard Fletcher, of the Engineers, who fell at Saint Sebastian, to try his fortune in Canada. He arrived in 1821, in his twenty-second year, and, as was natural with such an introduction, his attention was directed to law. In those days French was of infinitely more importance to any one seeking a public position than it is at present.

"When Mr. Wicksteed arrived in Canada, Lord Dalhousie was Governor-General; one of the noblest and purest characters in Canadian history. At that date French-Canadian political thought was in the infancy of its training, and at the interval of half a century there are few high-toned French-Canadians who can read the part taken by the prominent among their countrymen without a blush. French was then indispensable. However fully the Merchant Tailors' School had furnished Mr. Wicksteed with an acquaintance with Horace and Tacitus, Xenophon and Thucydides, it had given him but a superficial knowledge of the language of Moliere. But this very classical training enabled Mr. Wicksteed rapidly to master the language. The universal character of grammar, the Latin etymology of much of the French, his training, which had taught him how to study, came to his aid. Very soon the question was resolved into a matter of memory: to learn words in French which differed from those in English. We believe it was Mr. Wicksteed who translated into English, in their day the celebrated ninety-two resolutions of Mr. Papineau. Mr. Wicksteed became a student of Mr. Guty, and in 1828 was appointed assistant law clerk to the Provincial Legislature. During the stormy period which succeeded, in the days of Lord Aylmer and Lord Gosford, on the suspension of the constitution after the rebellion, Mr. Wicksteed was attached to the office of Mr. Ogden, then Attorney-General. On the Union of Canada in 1841, he was appointed law clerk to the young Assembly of Canada, and has filled the same position in the parliament of the Dominion, the whole period extending over fifty-eight years.

"The versatility of his attainments, and his varied reading have been of much assistance to Mr. Wicksteed in the execution of his arduous, and somewhat prosaic, duties. The mere lawyer finds it difficult to drop the barbarism of phrase to which he was accustomed in his young days, hence Acts of Parliament are often marked by a verbiage which cumbers rather than is explanatory. There is the opposite extreme which is tempted to sacrifice prudence of phraseology to a brevity which would be seemly if it gave security, but which not unfrequently fails in its purpose. It is the true ability which can steer between these excesses. The long experience of Mr. Wicksteed, blended with a rare judgment, and based on a well-balanced, well-educated mind, have given an impress to the statutes drawn up by him, so that their language is precise and free from ambiguity, commanding the respect of the first lawyers in the country.

"The abilities of Mr. Wicksteed led to his frequent employment on important commissions. On every occasion when his services have been appealed to, he has shown the strong good sense, and undeviating integrity of his character. And this ability has been enlisted under many varied conditions. Few men indeed have lived to see such changes. When he came to the country the first steamboat had been but twelve years on the Saint Lawrence. The Lachine Canal had not been commenced. The only improve-