

## LAWYERS IN PARLIAMENT.

our own language what has already been stated publicly by lawyers in Parliament on this subject. Mr. Blake, in one of his speeches, said, when replying to some attack made upon him:

"When I went into public life, I was an active member of a large firm, and had a large and increasing share of the profits, producing to me at that time over £3,100 a year. Now my position is very different, for I have a fixed income from the firm of £1,200 a year only, while I should be receiving over £3,000 if I had remained in private life. I can gain nothing from the increased profits of the firm," &c.

Small encouragement this to ruin one's health in the public service. Even if in receipt of an official income in addition, Mr. Blake's salary would be considerably less than what he would receive from his profession. Of course, professional men who enter public life do not do so (at least we do not care to discuss the standing of those who do, if such there be) for the purpose of increasing their incomes, but those who thus devote themselves to their country, have other ills to bear than the mere loss of incomes. This part of the subject has been amplified by Mr. Harrison, when replying to an address of his constituents asking him again to become a candidate for West Toronto. His observations contain so much sound common sense, and so fully cover the ground, that we reproduce them. He says:

"I cannot longer owe a divided allegiance, part to professional and part to parliamentary duties, \* \* \* and I cannot, after mature deliberation, hesitate as to the choice.

"What is it to be a member of the Parliament of Canada? It is yearly, at a most inconvenient time, to leave one's home, to neglect one's business, to work hard for the public, with the prospect of little or no thanks; to be abused when honestly doing what one's conscience conceives to be for the public interest; to have the worst possible motives imputed; to work day by day in committees of the House, considering all manner of details; to pass sleepless nights in an unhealthy atmosphere; and so to continue from year to year, and in the end, to be cast aside or elevated to office—and, if so elevated, to live a life of great drudgery and respectable poverty.

"What is it to be a member of the Canadian bar? It is to attend to one's business, to be well paid for what one does, to be praised for the honest discharge of duty, to be free from the imputation of unworthy motives, to work when

and so often as one pleases, to have one's rest when rest is needed, to obtain a position worthy of honourable ambition, to retain it so long as one's health and energies will permit, and so to work from year to year in the almost certain hope of independence.

"It may be said that these views are selfish. No doubt they are so. But the law of self is a fundamental law of nature. The man who affects to disregard this natural law is as surely punished as the man who violates human law. An empty pocket and broken health are too often the penalties of faithfully serving the public, to the neglect of one's immediate interests.

"There are, in almost every constituency, some men who can serve the public with less inconvenience to themselves than others. Men who, by reason of large fortune, are independent of the sheriff, may safely do so. Men who have nothing to lose, and so nothing for the sheriff, may also do so. But the middle man, who has something to lose, and is desirous of increasing that something for the sake of his family, has everything to lose and little to gain. What is the gain? Perhaps after years of toil a position in the Government, a position which enables the malignant to attack with greater malignity, a position which demands of the sufferer unwearied exertions for less pay than the salary of a bank manager or the income of a second-class lawyer. And yet men are found, election after election, to summon caucuses, to attend conventions, to accept nominations, to address public meetings, to be slandered by one political party for enlisting under the banner of the other political party, to banish themselves from house and home, and yearly to imprison themselves for two or three months at hard labour within the walls of a House of Parliament. It is well that there should be such men. Selfishness is, I admit, a low spring of action, ambition is a more popular one. Some men are vain of distinctions. The ability to write M.P. after one's name, or to have the prefix of "Honourable" is, by some, deemed worthy of all the sacrifices which I have detailed. I have counted the cost, and am no longer prepared to continue the sacrifice. If ambition alone were the object of my life I would, perhaps, continue in public life. But one, in flights of ambition, is frequently reminded that humanity needs sustenance, and that other calls, if not so lofty, are not, on that account, to be despised."

We may here *en passant* quote an observation on the above remarks of Mr. Harrison by Mr. Goldwin Smith, in the *Canadian Monthly*, when speaking of the demoralizing tendency of political struggles:—