

nearest point at which a public conveyance could be obtained, the said conveyance taking the form of stage in winter or steamboat in summer. So, as the season of which I am now writing was midwinter our delegate had either to take the stage from Toronto to Kingston, or walk the entire distance. Which course he adopted I forget if I ever knew, but he might as well have stayed at home as his mission amounted to nothing. There was no money in the treasury at the disposal of the Government which might be spent on the Garafraxa road, and the instructions to the agents respecting the reserves were neither to be enforced for the present nor withdrawn. In consequence of the state of uncertainty this involved many persons parted with their reserves by selling them for a mere trifle to the first new comer who made them an offer, preferring to get a trifle for their right to losing it altogether. The Government that ruled Canada was not a corrupt Tory institution such as we read about, but was composed of genuine Reformers under a Tory Governor General who allowed his ministers to run the country in their own way. This was the first trial of responsible government in Canada, or any British Colony. So far as we were concerned I don't know that the political character of the Government made any difference, as we did not belong to any organized territories and consequently had no one at headquarters to champion our cause.

I think that the first legal decision ever delivered in Owen Sound deserves to be recorded, as it shows that differences between neighbors can be satisfactorily arranged without the intervention of lawyers. The cause of the dispute that led to this decision was as follows: James Oliver and Edward Sparling, lived side by side, always on good terms as neighbors should be. Nothing occurred to disturb the existing harmony until one day Oliver felled a tree which struck

one of Sparling's oxen and killed it on the spot. The matter was purely accidental as the animal was concealed from view by a pile of brush and logs. The mischief was done, however, and had to be made the best of. Oliver was willing to pay, and Sparling to accept compensation, but the difficulty lay in their being unable to agree as to the amount; and, as there were, fortunately, no lawyers to consult, by which the affair could be complicated, they agreed to submit their case to Mr. Telford, the Land Agent, and W. C. Boyd, and abide by their decision. Those gentlemen, not being posted in the statutes of the country, thought they could not go far wrong in referring to the Law of Moses, and considered that the 35th verse of the 21st chapter of Exodus fairly met the case. They therefore placed a value on the dead ox and decided that Oliver should pay half the amount to Sparling and the carcass be divided between them. Both parties were satisfied to fulfill these terms, and went home good friends. It is not likely that these men were either better or worse than the average Upper Canadian, and if the same facility for entering into lawsuits now enjoyed by this community had existed then, the probability is that each would have sought legal advice from his favourite solicitor, putting the most favourable construction on his own case and carefully concealing every circumstance that would seem to weaken it, and as might be expected, have obtained advice in accordance with his own wishes, the result being a lawsuit, a heavy bill of costs, and two friendly neighbors made enemies for life. But whether we like it or not the legal profession has become a part of our civilization, and lawyers are here to stay; and while they are not an unmixed good, they are by no means an unmixed evil and it is difficult to understand how they could be dispensed with, though many people perhaps, sympathize with the fleeced client who is said