

*JUDICIAL PENSIONS.*

When the late John W. Ritchie, Judge in Equity for the Province of Nova Scotia, retired after many years of distinguished service he was in the full possession of all his faculties, and as well able as he ever had been to discharge the duties of his office. It is related that one of his friends expostulated with him for retiring under such circumstances. Why should he not have continued in the full enjoyment of his emoluments until he should become incapacitated for judicial work? His reply is worthy to be written in letters of gold over every judicial bench. "True enough, I am, I believe, fully competent to discharge my judicial duties, but the time will surely come and cannot be far distant when I shall no longer be competent and may not have the discernment to be aware of my incapacity. I might then be tempted to continue in office when I could no longer perform its duties with satisfaction to the public."

This incident naturally occurs to one's mind when reflecting upon the subject of judicial pensions and the difficult questions connected with the terms of the judicial office. It will be remembered that a number of years ago somewhere near the beginning of the present century an Act was passed providing that a judge who had reached a certain age and held office for a certain term of years should, on his retirement, receive a pension equal to the full amount of his judicial salary. As a temporary enactment its effect was most beneficial. A number of judges in several of the provinces availed themselves of its provisions to retire from service when they would, probably, but for the enactment of this provision, have continued in harness long after it had begun to gall them, and possibly in some instances after they had lost the power to carry the load with efficiency. It is probable enough that some pains were taken to impress them with the temporary nature of the provision. We are credibly informed that it was not the intention of those who were chiefly instrumental in securing the enactment that it should be a permanent arrangement. As a temporary provision its effect was excellent. It materially increased the efficiency of