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But though they were not without producing their effect upon his health, they were not, probably, the operating cause of his retirement. He, himself, says

The roads were in such a condition that he was generally compelled to make his circuits on horseback. Judge Gowan's district was the largest in the Province, and stretched over a wide tract of country, the greater part of which was but sparsely settled. He was frequently compelled to ride from sixty to seventy miles a day, and to dispose of five or six hundred cases at a single session. One of the newspapers published in the County of Simcoe gave an account, several years ago, of some of his early exploits; from which account it appears that he was often literally compelled to take his life in his hands in the course of his official peregrinations. It describes how, on one occasion, he was compelled to ride from Barrie to Collingwood when the forest was on fire. The heat and smoke were sufficiently trying, but he had also to encounter serious peril from the blazing trees which were falling all around him. On another occasion, while attempting to cross a river during high water, his horse was caught by the flood and carried down stream at such a rate that he might well have given himself up for lost. He saved himself by grasping his horse's tail, and thereby keeping his head above water until he came to a spot where he could find foothold, and so made the best of his way, more than half drowned, to the shore. He was also frequently compelled to encounter dangers from which travellers in the rural districts of Canada are not altogether free even at the present day—such dangers, for instance, as damp beds, unwholesome and ill-cooked food, and badly ventilated rooms. — *Law Journal and Canadian Portrait Gallery*. "Mr. Gowan," says the able and accomplished author of "The Irishman in Canada," "is one of the most venerable and learned figures on the Bench. When, in 1842, Mr. Baldwin made him judge of the District of Simcoe he was the youngest judge of the Province. Many a time in those days he had to ride seventy miles a day to meet his Court engagements, and his adventures by flood and field would make a little volume; yet he was scarcely ever absent from his duties."