

We have every reason to be and are exceedingly proud of our judiciary. Being mortal, they are imperfect. Some of them have personal characteristics which are occasionally irritating and possibly offensive, and which sometimes seriously detract from their usefulness, but on the whole we recognize their general worth and their conscientious regard for the duties connected with the responsible position in which the crown has placed them. Anything which lessens the dignity of the judicial position, or in the slightest degree conveys to the public any suspicion that justice is being carelessly and improperly administered, is most damaging to the welfare of the State. Each citizen is deeply interested in the maintenance of law and order, and we are only doing ourselves harm when we weaken the hands of those who dispense justice. The judges are the representatives of the Sovereign, and the Sovereign, under our present system of government, is practically the will of the people—ourselves.

There is no divinity to hedge a judge; and he cannot claim to be beyond reasonable criticism. If a judge ought to be retired by reason of his unfitness or incompetence whether on physical, mental or moral grounds, the Government is remiss in not dealing with such a case, and it is manifest that no such judge should be allowed to remain on the bench. If there is any ground of unfitness or incompetence, or any act which would indicate any departure from that high plane of moral rectitude which has happily always been and is now the pride of the Ontario bench, the press is certainly within its limit in drawing attention to particular instances in a calm and dispassionate manner. This, however, is very different from a general onslaught such as already spoken of, which too often has its foundation in the disappointment or malice of an unsuccessful solicitor or counsel.

It is the duty of the Minister of Justice to see that the machinery of the courts is kept in good running order; and the judges, as important parts of such machinery, have the right to be protected as well as the public, and it is for the public welfare that they should be. It would, therefore, seem to be the duty, when a proper occasion presents itself,