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KING'S COUNSEL IN ONTARIO.

One of the responsibilities which Ministers of the Crown have to assume, is that of making recommendations to the Crown and its representative as to the bestowal of honours; and it is not too much to expect that the advisers of His Majesty, or of his representatives, in making recommendations for the bestowal of honours by the Crown, will take care that what is intended as a honour, and a public recognition of merit, shall not, by reason of its broadcast and indiscriminate distribution, cease to fulfil the sole purpose for which it exists.

To be named to be of counsel for His Majesty, either in the Dominion or Provincial Courts, ought to be no mean honour; and if due regard were to be had to the professional merits of those on whom the honour is conferred it would fulfil a perfectly legitimate object, and constitute a mark of professional distinction to which lawyers might reasonably aspire.

But if in making such appointments, professional standing is lost sight of by the advisers of the Crown, and the bestowal of what ought to be a mark of professional merit is made the vehicle of rewarding partisan services in the political arena, then, what ought to be an honourable distinction conferred for strictly professional merit ceases to be so, and an injustice is done, not only to the Crown, but also to the profession in thus prostituting its honours to alien purposes.

The list of those who have recently been appointed by the Government of Ontario as King's Counsel includes 188 members of the profession. A long and laboured semi-official memorandum is published accounting for, or rather excusing, this wholesale manufacture of "silk," and the proverb seems to apply—"Qui s'excuse, s'accuse."

It is needless to say that the announcement was received with