

In a recent discussion in the House of Commons on judicial matters, the Minister of Justice announced his adherence to the principle "Once a puisne, always a puisne." We are glad of this statement, and are satisfied that it is his desire, as far as he personally can, to remove temptations in the way of promotions or appointments to judicial commissions. At the same time we are bound to express our regret that what we believe to be his views, have not had more weight; and, with many others, also deplore what we would venture respectfully to think has been, on the part of some judges, a want of sufficient appreciation of the result to the status of the Bench by the acceptance by them of positions outside their judicial duties, and especially where political issues might be involved. Another matter, which perhaps more affects the relation between the judges themselves, is that the absence of one judge on extra-judicial work throws an unfair burden on his brethren. This, moreover, is apt to delay litigation, and causes the not unnatural remark that more judges would not be required if they were all engaged in their legitimate duties. The simple business proposition is to pay judges handsomely for the very important work which properly belongs to their office, and let them do that and nothing else.

RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTION PETITIONS.

While it is not the province of this journal to deal with matters in any degree connected with party politics, there are questions affecting the working of the constitution, and therefore of interest to the whole body politic, to which we may properly refer.

It happens, sometimes, that what were intended for constitutional safeguards become, in the hands of the ingenious politician, constitutional abuses, and a means whereby, under the form of law, and by virtue of an Act of Parliament, he can do something to promote his own ends, and inflict corresponding injury upon his political opponents. Nor does the mischief end there; such practices tend to bring public affairs into disrepute, and deter men who have a regard for their own reputation from entering into them. An example of this is to be found in the way in which our present system of appointing returning officers has been made an instrument of party warfare, involving a direct violation of a great constitutional principle.