

plored the absence of any reference to that gentleman except by members who had acted with him, while the distinguished merits of Mr Blake and Mr Mackenzie had been adverted to with so much eulogy. He spoke of the sale of timber lands by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, for which sale he held there was no necessity, and he held that before taking so important a step Parliament should have been consulted. At this stage he would not discuss further this paragraph of the Address, but he thought it might be his duty at a subsequent period of the session to endeavour to prevent any such proceeding as had taken place in the person of the Attorney-General. He thought this House should declare that it was unbecoming for any member of the Bench to retire from the Bench for the purpose of entering into political life. He thought no member of the Bench should be permitted to hold a position in political life again—certainly not till he had resigned his position on the Bench for a considerable period. It was strange that among all the Reformers in the House no one could be found fit to lead the Government, and that the Bench had to be resorted to. In making these remarks he wished it to be understood that no personal considerations entered into them. The Hon. Attorney-General was a gentleman for whom he entertained great respect, though he found that party seemed to be with him the all-important consideration. The Commissioner of Public Works had been treated by the public press with some very severe animadversions, and he was surprised that that hon. gentleman had not taken the earliest opportunity of relieving himself of these charges. He regretted that the House had not been called together early in December, as had been agreed to. But this only showed that hon. gentlemen opposite cared more for party considerations than for the interests of the country. For himself, he would be put to a considerable loss by the meeting of the House having been postponed.

Attorney-General MOWAT said he would remind the hon. gentleman that no man can engage in public life without losing a good deal personally, and that there is no hon. member but has had that experience. They must all make up their minds to that. In going into public life they were not to expect much from it. The hon. gentleman objected to the time at which Parliament had been called together. He (Mr. Mowat) had only to say that although they had been unfortunate as regarded the hon. gentleman, he thought it suited the general convenience, and that although the circumstances that led to the delay on this occasion were exceptional the public interest would not be injured. The chief evil which the hon. member saw in him (Mr. Mowat) was that he attached too much importance to party. He had been kind enough to say some very kind words of him—too kind and too flattering, but he could assure the hon. gentleman that the kindness of the feelings which he showed was not greater than the kindness he (Mr. M.) felt towards the hon. member. He (Mr. M.) confessed that he did attach a great deal of importance to party, but he did not place party before country, and he was for party because he was for country. (Cheers.) His attachment to party was because he believed—because he knew—that the interests of the country were best advanced by means of a well-organized party founded on well-recognized principles. The hon. gentleman had been kind enough to say that he had been chosen to lead the Reformers of Ontario because of his high moral worth. He thanked him for that compliment, but did not the hon. gentleman see that he was at the same time paying a compliment to the Reform party. They might be right or wrong in the estimate which they placed upon his character, but the fact of their choosing him for that particular recommendation showed their high appreciation of that virtue. There were many men in the Reform party well fitted to fill the place for which he had been selected, there were some among his colleagues and many in the House; but it was thought desirable by the party that one of the old leaders of the party should occupy the position again, and he thought it his duty not to refuse. It had been said that this position was not a Constitutional one—that it was an unconstitutional thing which he did when he accepted the office of Minister of the Crown after having been a judge. His hon. friend had not taken that ground. Nothing of this had been said by his hon. friend, an eminent Constitutional lawyer, on this subject, although the newspapers had been filled with statements of this kind. At all events he (Mr. Mowat) stood freed by the silence of the hon. member from the charge of unconstitutional action. The hon. gentleman had, however,

said that a judge who left the Bench to enter political life desecrated the sanctity of the Bench. He (Mr. Mowat) admitted the sanctity of the Bench, but he denied its desecration. He believed it a low, degrading view of a politician's life to say that there was no sanctity belonging to it. As he understood his position there as leader of the party, he thought there was as much sanctity in his position as leader of the Reform party and of the Government, as in any other in the land. It would be a sad thing for our country if the opposite opinion were to be held by the people. Our whole system of government was one that involved party as a necessity. All statesmen had united in that view, and that it must be changed if not worked by party. If this system of government, which had done so much for our own country and for the glorious motherland with which we are connected, and with which we all hope to be connected as long as we live, was one which degraded a man to take part in it, then it was a sad thing indeed for our future history. But this was inconsistent with the past history of both our own and the mother country. He felt that he was as much discharging his duty now, and acting upon as high moral principles as he possibly could on the Bench. (Cheers.) He entirely repudiated the notion that there was anything inferior in the position of a political man—a representative of the people, a maker of the laws, an administrator of justice—to the position of any judge. The hon. gentleman said it was dangerous for a judge to leave the Bench and again take part in politics, and he suggested the necessity of some legislative declaration upon the subject. Surely the hon. gentleman was not in earnest. He surely did not imagine that there was any very great danger of the judges one after another leaving the Bench and taking part in politics. One might just as well argue that it was dangerous for every man to become a lawyer, though it was perfectly constitutional for every man to do so, just as he believed it was constitutionally right for a judge to leave the Bench and take part in political life. It was constitutionally right for his hon. friend's opposite to come over to this side and support the Government, but he did not think there was much danger of their exercising that right. It would be a great pity if they were to exercise it, for he would like to have a larger Opposition than he now had. (Laughter.) There had been no pretensions made that what he had done was unconstitutional. Then his hon. friend had stated that he should have alluded to the position of three of his colleagues, in that they did not go back to the people for re-election after entering his Government. They did not go back because their seats were not vacated by any act of theirs. The Speaker would not have issued the writs if he had been applied to. There was nothing in the law or the Constitution to justify the issue of the writs. The hon. gentleman opposite could not point out that there was any English law requiring their re-election, and if there was any reason for it, it must be in our own law. Our statute declared that whenever any member holding certain offices, which are named, resigned his office, and one month after accepted another office, he should not thereby vacate his seat in the Assembly, unless the Administration of which such person was a member resigned, and he accepted office in a new Ministry—the two things must concur. The Administration must all resign and a new Administration must fill the offices. Well, a new Administration did not fill the offices, nor were the resignations of the old members accepted; they were asked to keep their offices till the new members were called in. But it had been said that the spirit of the Constitution had been violated; but the intention of the law was to prevent an Administration from resigning, a new Administration with an entirely different policy taking their places, suffering defeat, and then within a month the old Administration coming back and taking office without an appeal to the people. This was what happened in the case of the celebrated double shuffle, and the law was amended to prevent such things taking place. But in this case the present Administration adopted the policy of the preceding Administration, and an appeal to the people would have been a farce. His hon. friend then alluded to the surplus—complained of it in fact. He did not consider it a good thing. He thought the effect of it had been to rouse the jealousy of the other Provinces. He thought we got