

7. The Recorder's Court.

I wish to call the attention of this House only to the first three courts, viz., the Court of Queen's Bench, the Superior Court, the District Court.

The Superior Court.

What is the constitution of the Superior Court and what is its jurisdiction? The answer to this question will be found in sections 26, 27, 28 and 76 of the bill. Here are sections 26 and 27, which deal with the constitution of the Court. I will read them. I would first observe to the House that there is a printer's error in both these sections, a mistake in the figures. Thus, instead of 15 in the second line of section 26 we should have 16, and in the first line of section 27 instead of 9 we must put 10, so that the sections read as follows:

26. The Superior Court, which is a court of record, consists of fifteen (should be sixteen) judges, having jurisdiction throughout the province; that is to say, of the chief justice and fourteen puisne judges.

For the purposes of the administration of justice for the Superior Court, the Province of Quebec is divided into three parts:

1. The Montreal division, comprising the nine following districts:—Montreal, Ottawa, Terrebonne, Joliette, Richelieu, Beauharnois, Bedford, Iberville and St. Hyacinthe;

2. The Quebec division, comprising the ten following districts: Quebec, Three Rivers, Saguenay, Chicoutimi, Gaspé, Rimouski, Kamouraska, Montmagny, Beauce and Arthabaska;

3. The St. Francis division, comprising the district of St. Francis.

27. Nine (should be ten) judges of the Superior Court reside in or near the city of Montreal, and exercise their ordinary judicial functions in the Montreal division; five of the said judges reside in or near the city of Quebec, and exercise their ordinary judicial functions in the Quebec division; and one of the said judges residing in or near the city of Sherbrooke, and exercising his ordinary judicial functions in the St. Francis division.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it will perhaps be said: "That is the commencement of judicial centralization." I say no. I say that judicial centralization or decentralization does not result from the residence or non-residence of the judge, and I will explain later on what I mean by judicial centralization. If we refer to section 76 it will be seen that there is nothing in the constitution of the Superior Court to lead to the belief that I wished for an instant to centralize the administration of justice in the Province of Quebec. Section 38 of the bill reads as follows:

38. There shall be terms and sittings of the Superior Court and of the judges of this court, as often as the due despatch of business and the public convenience may require, at the *chef lieu* of each of the judicial districts of the province, at the dates and during the periods appointed by order of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council.

The sittings of the Superior Court cannot commence before nine of the clock in the forenoon, nor end after six of the clock in the afternoon.