

The **PRIME MINISTER.** The hon. gentleman honours me too much; I was not a member of the Government in 1876. I have enough sins to bear without being called upon to answer for the sins of others.

Mr. BERGERON. The hon. gentleman was elected in the fall of 1877 as a Minister.

The **PRIME MINISTER.** That was not in the session of 1877. I have only this to say in conclusion. I have stated my opinion, over and over again, that our present constitution, so far as this matter is concerned and other similar matters, is not only imperfect, but is a source of great danger to the country. Some time or other, and perhaps sooner than later, the Parliament of Canada will have to be asked to invite the Imperial Parliament to amend the constitution and remove what is admittedly a great danger to us as a people, but so long as the constitution is as it is, it behooves every true Canadian to endeavour to prevent friction between the federal authorities and the local authorities.

Mr. McNEILL. I am afraid if the right hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat and I were to discuss the question which he opened a few moments ago as to whether Conservative policy or Reform policy was the better policy for this country, we might not altogether agree. I am afraid I should not agree with my hon. friend in thinking that the Reform party was the only party that could reform, and the Conservative party was unable to do anything well. However, that is not just what I propose to discuss at the present moment. I want to take up a moment or two of the time of the House in expressing my views with respect to the question now before the House. With a great deal that has fallen from hon. members on this side of the House I agree. I agree entirely in thinking that it is, to say the least, anomalous that we should be called upon to provide the funds to pay judges, for the appointment of whom we are not responsible.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES.** They may be responsible for the appointment, but not for the necessity of the appointment.

Mr. McNEILL. The local legislature declares that a judge is required for a certain district, and it seems anomalous that we should be called upon to defray the expenses of that judge without our having the power to decide whether the judge be necessary or unnecessary in that district. It seems to me that as matters now stand, what we have to decide in any particular case is whether or not the recommendation which is made to us is a good one, and whether there be need for the additional judge. So far as the province of Quebec is concerned, as to the local affairs of which I am to some extent ignorant, I have listened very carefully to the

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

views that have been expressed on both sides of the House in reference to these two judges whom it is proposed to appoint. I learned from my hon. friend (Mr. Casgrain) that he approved of the appointment of this additional Circuit Court judge at Montreal. I suppose there is no hon. gentleman in this House whose view will have greater weight than that of my hon. friend (Mr. Casgrain), who was Attorney General for the province, and so we may put that question as to the Circuit Court judge aside. What fell from my hon. friend (Mr. Casgrain) certainly impressed me very much with regard to the St. Francis district, because it would seem that all that was necessary was to have brought a judge in from another district to assist the present judge in overtaking the work. But, from the remarks of the right hon. leader of the Government, it would seem that the very highest authority in the province has distinctly stated that another resident judge is necessary for the district of St. Francis.

The **PRIME MINISTER.** Hear, hear.

Mr. CASGRAIN. I do not interpret the words of Sir Melbourne Tait as does the right hon. the Premier. Sir Melbourne Tait meant that another judge should be appointed for Sherbrooke, but not necessarily a resident judge.

The **PRIME MINISTER.** Yes, a resident judge.

Mr. CASGRAIN. Then, let the judge for the district of Bedford reside in Sherbrooke, and that will cover the point perfectly.

Mr. McNEILL. It seems to me that the words read by the right hon. the Premier did imply that Sir Melbourne Tait thought there should be a resident judge there. I do not know as to the possibility of bringing in another judge who is not already appointed to the district of St. Francis, nor do I know that this House is competent to deal with that matter. Does my hon. friend (Mr. Casgrain) say that we have the power to compel one of the other judges to reside in the St. Francis district?

Mr. CASGRAIN. No.

Mr. McNEILL. Then, it comes back to the point which has been admitted on both sides of the House, that there is not that arrangement of judicial districts in the province of Quebec which there should be. However, we are face to face with the fact that we require a resident judge in the district of St. Francis, that we have not the power to transfer another judge to reside there, and the question is: shall we, so far as we are concerned, leave that district without this necessary additional judge? I think this would be a desirable time, when the right hon. gentleman and his party are in power, and when probably the best possible results would flow from