

people of Rat Portage and Fort Frances were anxious for the establishment of Division Courts at those places as early as practicable; that the people were being robbed every day for the want of some process to facilitate the collection of small debts, and that the Dominion Government had declined taking any initiative in this direction. A petition to the Ontario Government from the leading citizens of Rat Portage set forth that, owing to the fact of there being no Court of Civil Jurisdiction as yet established, they were put to great inconvenience and loss for want of the necessary facilities to enforce payment of their outstanding debts. The loss and inconvenience complained of would, they said, be very much increased as portions of the works on the railway were finished, and the sub-contractors, traders and labourers began to move from place to place—many of them leaving the district and carrying their effects with them. The petitioners further complained that they had no power to detain the goods of defaulting creditors, or to enforce payment of lawful claims. They concluded by saying that a great number of business transactions took place at Rat Portage, and that a majority of such cases came within the jurisdiction of a Division Court, and they impressed upon the Ontario Government the urgent necessity of establishing such a Court there at as early a date as possible.

On the 28th May, 1880, an Order-in-Council was approved by His Honour the Lieut.-Governor of Ontario, establishing Division Courts, with head quarters at Rat Portage and Fort Frances.

In the meantime, an Act, passed by the Ontario Legislature in its preceding session, making additional provision for the Administration of Justice in the disputed territory, had been disallowed by the Dominion Government.

On 7th May, 1880, a Dominion Act respecting the Administration of Criminal Justice in the territory in dispute between the Province of Ontario and Dominion of Canada, received the assent of His Excellency the Governor-General.

Under the provisions of this Act, crimes and offences committed within the disputed territory might be enquired into, tried and punished within any county or district of the Provinces of Ontario or Manitoba, or the District of Keewatin, as though such crimes or offences had been committed within the county or district where such trial was had. It was also enacted that such crimes or offences would be sufficiently laid and charged, whether they were laid and charged to have been committed in Ontario or the District of Keewatin, and any sentences which might have been imposed upon offenders had the offences been committed either in an undisputed part of Ontario or an undisputed part of Keewatin, might be imposed upon offenders convicted under the Act. The Act also provided for the withdrawal of prisoners from the jails of the Province of Manitoba to the jails of Ontario or *vice versa* for trial, and for commitments to the jails at Winnipeg or Prince Arthur's Landing in the event of there being no proper place of confinement for or within the locality in which the conviction was had or the offence was committed.

No provision was made for carrying out civil law within the territory, and the dispute as to title paralyzed, to a large extent, the efforts of the Ontario Magistrate for the prevention of disorder and the administration of justice. Nevertheless, he was enabled to render effectual service for some time in checking the liquor traffic, and in breaking up the most notorious of the dens of prostitution which existed in the locality, owing to his having received the cordial co-operation of the railway contractors,