

administration of justice in the province of Quebec, and especially in the district of St. Francis? My hon. friend stated a moment ago that there were judges in the province of Quebec who had very little work to do, and I am prepared to admit that. But I must say that unless he is able to modify the geography of the province, there must always be there certain judges who will have less work to do than others. He has referred to the case of Gaspé, and according to his statistics, the judge for the district of Gaspé has almost nothing to do. The hon. gentleman stated that in one year the judge had only two cases to try. I think he gave statistics for the year 1889-90. The Solicitor General has just placed in my hands a report of the judicial statistics of the province published in 1895, showing that in the previous year there had been in the district of Gaspé 44 Superior Court cases taken out.

Mr. CASGRAIN. That was a very exceptional year, to my own personal knowledge.

The PRIME MINISTER. If only two writs were issued in 1891, was not that also an exceptional year?

Mr. CASGRAIN. I gave the statistics of six years, and that was the average.

The PRIME MINISTER. Let it be so, and if it be so, there is very little work for a judge in Gaspé. I find that in 1897 there were 31 cases, but I will take the argument of my hon. friend as he made it a moment ago, that there is very little business in the district of Gaspé, not enough to occupy the time of one man. But how would he remedy it? The district of Gaspé is a peninsula, at one end of the province, with no railway communication except with a small portion of the district. Under such circumstances, it is impossible not to have a judge resident in the district of Gaspé. A judge has been resident there from time immemorial, and I do not think that justice can be administered in the district of Gaspé unless you have a judge residing there, and unless, as I said, you could modify the physical geography of that part of the province, we shall have to submit to such exceptional conditions. It is only yesterday that our attention was called to the case of two young men who came to their death under most cruel circumstances. Somebody is guilty of the death of these two men, guilty either of murder or of manslaughter, and yet justice could not be done because there is no judge in that territory.

Mr. FOSTER. There was a judge.

The PRIME MINISTER. If there had been a judge who had only two cases to administer, justice would have been vindicated in the case I refer to, though probably the hon. gentleman would criticise the expenditure. But I must say to my hon. friend that there is a great deal to be

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

said in favour of the legislation which he introduced some years ago in favour of remodelling the judicial system of the province of Quebec. I am in favour of that principle, and I do not see why members representing rural districts should object to it. I do not think the case was fairly presented to them. But if my hon. friend is to change the number of districts and remodel the administration of justice in the province of Quebec, and if he is to base his reform upon the province of Ontario, though I could not believe that was his object, he would have to decrease the number of the Superior Court judges, and he would have to create County Court judges. The province of Ontario does not contemplate that judges should be resident in the city of Toronto, and that there should be none in any other part of the province. The system in force in Ontario contemplates that there should be County Court judges distributed all over the province to administer what I may call summary justice, to answer to the instant demands which may be made upon them. But the judges of the Superior Court reside in the city of Toronto, and go from district to district to administer justice only in the higher class of cases. My hon. friend would have to do something of that kind. Let him remember that in the province of Quebec there will be 37 judges of the Superior Court, after his legislation is passed, and 3 judges of the Circuit Court, 40 in all; whereas in Ontario, there are 64 County Court judges, and 15 Superior Court judges, or 79 in all, administering justice in the same manner as do the judges of Quebec. These 79 judges in Ontario perform the same work which is performed by the 40 judges of the province of Quebec. But the Superior Court judges in the province of Quebec have to administer justice in all classes of cases, from suits of \$1, as was stated by the Solicitor General, to suits of \$1,000,000; whereas the judges of the Superior Court in Ontario only administer justice in certain classes of cases, in what I may call superior cases, and the inferior cases of justice are administered by the County Court judges. Now, there are in Ontario just double the number of judges, less one, than there is in Quebec. There is not in Ontario double the population of the province of Quebec, there is not even one-third more. So my hon. friend will see that if he were to carry out his project he would have not only to diminish the number of districts—in which I am at one with him—but he would have to organize some such system of county courts as they have in Ontario. He would have to increase the number of Circuit Court judges and diminish the number of Superior Court judges. So far I am at one with him, and if I had the honour of being a member of the local legislature when he introduced his Bill, I would have held up both hands in support of it. But that legislation did not carry. My hon.