

1863, the register was produced by the judge, the only judgment omitted (for which a blank page was left) being a judgment in a case where the record was at the time in the hands of an advocate. The petitioners hence infer that these judgments were only entered up during the twelve months preceding the production of the register, during which time Mr. Lafontaine was acting as judge.

The petition further states that "his neglect of duty, his inefficiency and incapacity have become only more conspicuous since he has been raised to the bench. It might have been expected that, considering the past, he would have laboured to efface its impression by assiduously discharging his duties—that he would, if not intelligently, at least promptly, perform the small amount of business entrusted to him. It is, however, certain that, with less to do than any other judge of the Superior Court, there is hardly a case which he has to determine in which some party does not suffer from his delay in rendering his judgments. (Some instances are here given). In short, such delays have become so provoking and injurious to suitors that the courts of justice over which he presides have become almost totally discredited as means of enforcing legal obligations. The business of the civil courts is almost entirely of a mercantile nature, and by a judge of the most ordinary legal knowledge, the judicial decisions therein could be rendered almost immediately after the hearing of the cases, as has been done when other judges have presided over the same courts. What proves moreover that these delays are merely the result of neglect and gross contempt for the public interest, is the fact that, even after they are incurred, he never or seldom gives the reasons or motives of his judgments. Without appointing a time for their delivery, he generally goes into Court when no one but the Clerk, and perchance one or two individuals are present, and then hands in his judgments, one motive usually answering for those in favor of plaintiffs, and one in like manner for those in favor of defendants.

"Your petitioners would further represent that the Hon. Aimé Lafontaine has important duties, such as the granting of writs of Habeas Corpus, the taking of bail, security, and other

matters of like nature, to perform out of term at his chambers, where he seldom, sometimes not for days, attends; and when he does attend it is only for a few minutes in the morning. Parties who come to Aylmer during business hours after eleven o'clock, if they have business of this nature to transact, must send for him at their expense to his residence at a distance of nearly two miles, to notify him that there is something for him to do. In short he so manages to procrastinate everything by his delays and his absence, that it is almost impossible to transact business in which he has any function to perform.

"As a judge in criminal matters the said Hon. A. Lafontaine is still more inefficient and incapable than in any other position. He is so destitute of any knowledge of criminal law that, when even a most elementary question arises in the course of a trial, he has to go for his books and study it on the bench. In English he is incapable of explaining the most simple case to a jury, so as to be understood. In fact, he does not attempt it. In the case of Laderoute lately convicted and hanged for murder, a case which was complicated by numerous and grave questions of law and fact, his charge to the jury in English and French did not last three minutes. So it is in every case; and it is only repeating what is notorious in the district of Ottawa, that the administration of criminal law therein since he has been a judge has failed in most cases through his inefficiency and incapacity."

Mr. CARTIER objected to Mr. WRIGHT's motion being made without notice. He was, moreover, of opinion that the member for Ottawa had not made out a case, the offences specified being committed before Mr. LAFONTAINE'S elevation to the bench, with which the House had nothing to do. If (added Mr. CARTIER) he was guilty of offences whilst Crown Lands Agent, it was the duty of the Crown Lands Department to enquire into the matter. Mr. CAUCHON then embraced the opportunity to extend the charge of incapacity to the bench in general. He said, that when so grave an accusation was made against a judge, if the judge did not think proper to ask for an investigation, it was the duty of the House, in the interest of public morality, to