

measure. The word "highest" had not been struck out by mere accident. In 1872 or 1873 Mr. Irvine had introduced a Bill in the Quebec Legislature to prevent an appeal from the Court of Review to the Court of Queen's Bench. Since that time the Supreme Court had been established to take the place of the Privy Council. The object of this measure was to give every facility to reach the highest tribunal in Canada. This change had been sought not only by members of the Bar in the House, but by the Bar of the Province of Quebec. As to the other amendment proposed by the hon. gentleman, he might state that the right of appeal in matters involving rent, or where future rights might be bound existed already, and the hon. Senator surely did not wish to give up a right which suitors already possessed.

Hon. Mr. BELLEROSE was surprised at the argument of the hon. Minister of Agriculture with reference to the absence of members of the other House from their seats when, as a matter of fact, the hon. gentleman's own friends left their benches for a few days, and if their opponents from the Province of Quebec were absent on the same occasion, it was evident Quebec had very little representation in the other House when this measure was before it. But the extraordinary part of the argument was the statement that the lawyers of the House of Commons were unanimous in support of this legislation. Was Parliament to legislate for the benefit of the lawyers or of the people at large? The people of Quebec Province, as the hon. gentlemen opposite (Mr. Trudel) had to-day shown, were opposed to such legislation as this. The only means of ascertaining their opinion on the subject was from the legislation of the Local Legislature, and the direction that had taken, was to limit appeals as much as possible. They had refused the right of appeal from the Court of Review to the Appeal Court of the Province; how then could this Government step in and declare, contrary to the express will of the people of the Province of Quebec, that there should be an appeal, not to the courts of the Province, but to the Supreme Court of Canada? He thought this measure was detrimental to the public interest, and being in this House as a

Hon. Mr. Pelletier.

representative of the people, and not of the lawyers, he would support the amendment. He would have occasion to move another amendment with reference to appeals to the Supreme Court in connection with by-laws of municipalities. He would propose, at the proper time, to amend the Bill by providing that only in the case of by-laws upon which the vote of the people has been taken—such as by-laws granting bonuses in aid of railways—shall the right of appeal exist. When the Supreme Court Act was passed in 1875 it had met very strong opposition in this House, and its opponents were asked to allow it to pass, and when experience in its working would show its defects they could be remedied by Parliament. If there was one thing which the people of Canada had to complain of against this present Government it was the establishment of the Supreme Court. He said this, not because of any lack of confidence in the Judges of that Court, because of their ridiculous and absurd decision in the case of the Christian Brothers' Bill which they had declared was unconstitutional because it referred to education. If all judgments given in appeal were as absurd as that, it was no wonder that the people were losing confidence in that tribunal, and considered the \$75,000 a year which it cost the country was money thrown away. He had been a member of this Parliament ever since Confederation and he had used his efforts to prevent his friends from establishing the Supreme Court. The experience which had been gained in the working of that Court had confirmed the view he had always entertained of it. In Quebec it would be very much better for the people to go to their own Appeal Court, the judges of which were eminent men who had thoroughly studied the laws of the Province. In the Supreme Court two-thirds of the Judges had studied English law all their lives, and they knew very little about French law. Was the country to pay thousands on thousands of dollars every year to maintain a tribunal in which they had no confidence? Yet this Bill proposed to allow appeals on almost every question to the Supreme Court. This legislation might be in the interests of the lawyers, but it certainly was not in the interests of the people of the Province of Quebec.