

The Examiner.—L'Observateur.

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IN the early part of this month, a Supplement to the *Canada Gazette* was published, containing Abstracts of the Statements made under the provisions of the "Act to provide for Annual Statistical Returns of Judicial Matters (23 Vict. cap. 58), for the year 1860. The importance of the matter thus submitted to the public cannot be over-estimated. As a return of the legal business of Lower Canada, as documentary evidence of Judicial labours, and as irrefragable testimony to the fallacy of the principle of decentralisation, and the folly of funding the fees of Clerks of Courts, the Supplement in question is decisive. In order fully to comprehend all the points set at rest, something more than a mere cursory examination of the Abstracts is required; long lists of figures, and many divisions of cases which are again subdivided, tend to confuse more than to enlighten those who have devoted but a small portion of time to their examination. It is absolutely necessary, for the full comprehension of the Returns, that particular classes of proceedings should be grouped together, and that attention should thereby be called to the defects of our system.

It would appear that, in the year 1860, 2867 writs of summons, in actions for over £50, were issued in the 20 Districts of Lower Canada, of which 853 were taken out in that of Quebec, 1080 in that of Montreal, leaving 934 as the share of the other 18 Districts, being 51 writs and a fraction to each. 1915 writs were returned in Lower Canada in 1860, of which Quebec is credited with 515, Montreal with 733, leaving 667 for the other 18 Districts, making 37 returns and a fraction for each.

Of the 1915 writs so returned, 1001 were contested, 239 in Quebec, 274 in Montreal, leaving 488 for the other Districts, or 21 and a fraction each; there were 604 judgments rendered in contested causes, 189 in Quebec, 248 in Montreal, leaving 167 for the other 18 Districts, making 9 and a fraction for each; the number of judgments rendered by default were 927, Quebec claiming 288, Montreal 475, leaving 223 for the other Districts, or 12 and a fraction each.

There were 2041 oppositions returned in Lower Canada, 800 in Quebec, 659 in Montreal, leaving 581 for the other Districts; but the greater number of them being *afin de conserver* and not contested, or, if contested, classed with the contested cases, they did not add much to the labours of the Judges.

In thus shewing the business of the country, as established by the Records of the Superior Court, it is only intended to bring prominently forward the relative importance of the minor Districts of Lower Canada, as compared with those of Quebec and Montreal. Of course some of the Districts exceeded in the number