of all controversies respecting seigneurial claims ?

Unfortunately for this simple solution, there was a great and fundamental difference between these two tenures. The Canadian censitaire had a written title-deed which stated explicitly the dues and services he was bound to give his seigneur ; the copyholder had nothing of the kind. The habitant, moreover, had various rights guaranteed to him by royal decrees. No custom of the manor or seigneury could prevail against written contracts and statute-law. But the judges do not seem to have grasped this distinction ; when cases involving disputed obligations came before them they called in notaries to establish what the local customs were, and rendered judgment accordingly. This gave the seigneur a great advantage, for the notaries usually took their side. Moreover, the new judicial system was more expensive than the old, so that when a seigneur chose to take his claims into court the habitants often let him have judgment by default rather than incur heavy costs.

During the twenty years following the conquest the externals of the seigneurial system remained unaltered ; but its spirit underwent a great change. This was amply shown