

The Legal News.

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CRIMINAL STATISTICS.

The appendix to the Report of the Minister of Agriculture, which has just been issued, contains the criminal statistics of the Dominion for the year 1881. The total convictions during this period numbered 29,225; 4,353 being for offences against the person, 144 for offences against property with violence, 2,094 for offences against property without violence, 499 for malicious offences against property, 35 for forgery and offences against the currency, and 22,100 for offences not included in the above classes, such as drunkenness, contravention of municipal by-laws, &c.

The Province of Quebec exhibits the superiority noticed last year (5 L. N. 122). A comparison with Ontario gives the following result:—

	Ontario.	Quebec.
Offences against the person . . .	2,914	762
Offences against property, with violence	81	45
Offences against property without violence	1,150	631
Malicious offences against property	340	94
Forgery and offences against the currency	22	10
Other offences not included in the above classes	12,603	4,888
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	17,110	6,430

THE BELT CASE.

A remarkable instance of disagreement between Court and counsel as to the conduct of a cause occurred in England lately, during the hearing of the rule in the *Belt* matter. "A surprise," says the *Law Times*, "befell the counsel in the *Belt* case on Tuesday. Sir Hardinge Giffard appears to have assumed, that like meek beasts of burden, the Lord Chief Justice of England and his colleagues would patiently bear the yoke which he imposed upon them, and slumber though the summing-up of Baron Huddleston—the task of reading which was left to the junior counsel. Very early on Tuesday the patience of the court was exhausted, and

Lord Coleridge, in terms none too strong, represented the course adopted of leaving a cause 'supposed to convulse society' to the chapter of accidents. He suddenly called upon the plaintiff's counsel to deal with the grounds of the rule. The leader being still absent, the leading junior was required to argue, and the lively time he had of it will be seen from the newspaper report." The reported observations of the Lord Chief Justice were to this effect: "My learned brethren and myself, seeing the endless length to which this case is likely to run, are desirous of avoiding what seems very much like a public scandal. The reading of the summing-up now seems to have reached a point at which in my judgment it might properly terminate. Sir Hardinge Giffard told us on the first day, with an air of authority, that it was absolutely necessary to read the whole of the evidence, but on the second day he gave way to our remonstrances. Then in the same short peremptory way he told us that it was absolutely necessary that the whole of the summing-up should be read. That has now occupied the better part of three days, and there is much more yet to be read. Well, it is not doing us any good—this reading of the summing-up without any comment. In the absence of the leader, when any question is put to the junior counsel, they very properly say that they cannot take the responsibility of answering it. Speaking for myself, and I believe for my learned brethren, this reading has become a rather serious waste of time."

NOTES OF CASES.

SUPERIOR COURT.

MONTREAL, JUNE 28, 1883.

Before TORRANCE, J.

GEOFFRION V. SÉNÉCAL.

Alternative obligation—Default—C. C. 1069.

The defendant undertook to return a certain number of shares in a railway before a day stated, or to pay an amount in money. The shares were not returned. Held, that the contract being of a commercial nature, the debtor was put in default by the lapse of the time of performance.

The demand was to recover \$3,400. On the 7th March, 1882, the defendant acknowledged