

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

it would be expedient that they should do so,—yet tables follow Benchers', when it would be, we venture to think, very desirable that they should not do so. Thus those who hoped that the old Benchers' rooms would henceforth afford a quiet corner for real study are apparently doomed to be "crushed again," as Lady Jane says in "*Patience*." So far as we can gather, the intention of the Benchers with reference to these two rooms, is to use them as a test of how much the profession will stand.

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IN our number of January 16th, under this heading we had reached a point in the judicial history of British Columbia at which all the County Court work was sought to be compulsorily imposed by the Province on the Supreme Court Judges, which had been previously only conferred upon them by a clause in an old B. C. ordinance, as a discretionary power which they might and did use in cases of emergency. The County Court laws and system remain unchanged, running parallel and side by side with the Supreme Court system.

As we understand it, under the existing County Court laws, the Dominion could at any time appoint as many County Court Judges as it chose, for what districts it liked, and these could at this moment enter at once and discharge all the County Court duty of that very interesting but persistent Province, and relegate the Supreme Court Judges back to their Supreme Court duties alone.

The five—we believe that is the number,—at all events all the County Court Judges were pensioned off at two-thirds of their actual salaries, and it was done in a handsome manner too, which ought to count one for us with our fair sister, and no doubt will. But instead of the ordinary plan of replacing them by as many, or even a somewhat re-

duced number of lawyers as County Court Judges, the Province, or the Governor-General, or both combined, or some authority, we cannot quite tell what increased the number of Supreme Court Judges from three to five by the elevation to the Bench of two gentlemen out of the B. C. Bar.

Surely Canada might be supposed to exclaim, the waters that run down from Alaska must wash the shore of a happy and contented people in B. C.! They have an ample amount of learned and experienced judges; one single court in the country which combines in itself all possible jurisdictions in one, which is not divided in any way by fancy courts, or sub-courts, or side courts. Like the Utopian courts we read of in the poets, the Pacific Columbians have their one court for everything—"teres atque rotundus,"—one set of judges for all laws, all people and all occasions. They must surely be contented and happy now. Not quite, as we shall presently see.

A fashion seems to have set in about that time for codifying laws and enacting "great and comprehensive measures." It was *de rigueur* to unify conflicting institutions. And the B. C. Government appears to have caught the soft infection in a form decidedly peculiar, which probably, with some of our readers, will evoke a smile. This Bill was the result. It was ushered in with a great flourish of trumpets by the Lieutenant-Governor of that day in a speech from the Throne as a measure which should "reconcile conflicting jurisdictions" in B. C., abolish the hardships "suitors necessarily experienced in being driven from one court for the relief they sought to another." The fact was, as the B. C. statutes plainly show, that such conflicts in that Province were impossible, as there had always been but *one* Supreme Court, uniting in itself all jurisdictions, and having for a long series of years but *one* judge, who could not well conflict with himself. We wonder if the Legislature ever heard of the multitudinous bird that in the perplexed