The Legal News.

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Chief Justice Waite, of the U. S. Supreme Court, speaking at a breakfast given to the Justices of that Court by the Bar of Philadelphia, referred to the crowded docket of his Court in the following terms:—"The law which fixes at this time the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was enacted substantially in its present form at the first session of Congress, nearly one hundred years ago. With few exceptions, and these for all practical purposes unimportant to the point I wish to make, the jurisdiction remains to-day as it was at first, and consequently, with a population in the United States approaching 60,000,000 and a territory embracing nearly 3,000,000 square miles, the Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction in all of the classes of cases it had when the population was less than 4,000,000 and the territory but little more than 800,000 square miles. Under such circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the annual appeal docket of that court has increased from 100 cases, or perhaps a little more, half a century ago, to nearly 1,400, and that its business is now more than three years and a half behind; that is to say, that cases entered now, when the term of 1887 is about to begin, are not likely to be reached in their regular order for hearing until late in the term of 1890. In the face of such facts it cannot admit of a doubt that something should be done, and that at once, for relief against this oppressive wrong. It is not for me to say what this relief shall be, neither is this the time to consider it. My present end will be accomplished if the attention of the public is called to the subject and its importance urged in some appropriate way on Congress. What is required is a reduction of the present appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, and if this is insisted upon it will be easy to find very many classes of cases which need not necessarily be taken to that court for final determination, and which can be disposed of with much less expense and quite as satisfactorily by some proper inferior court having the necessary jurisdiction for that purpose, and having sufficient character and dignity to meet the requirements of litigants. Such a court will not be the Supreme Court, but it will be the highest court of the United States which can under the Constitution, be afforded for the hearing and determination of such causes. I ask the Bar of Philadelphia to do what it can in this behalf and thus help to make the Supreme Court what its name implies, a powerful auxiliary in the administration of justice, and not what unfortunately with its present jurisdiction it now is, to too great an extent, an obstacle standing in the way of a speedy disposition of appealed cases. It is worthy of, and certainly was intended for better things."

The delays in the administration of justice in the district of Montreal have recently been discussed at considerable length, and also with considerable warmth. The criticisms of the bar have provoked retorts from the bench. These differences are hardly conducive to the good feeling which should exist between the parties concerned. No one has ventured to state that the majority of the judges are not anxious to facilitate the dispatch of business, and the object in view would probably be better attained by a conference at which the difficulties could be freely discussed.

SUPREME COURT OF CANADA.

The following order, entitled "General Order No. 83," has been passed by the Judges of the Supreme Court:—

Whereas by "The Supreme and Exchequer Courts Act," sec. 109, as amended by chap. 16 of the Act passed in the 51st year of Her Majesty's reign intituled "An Act to amend 'The Supreme and Exchequer Courts Act' and to make better provision for the trial of claims against the Crown," it is provided that the judges of the Supreme Court, or any five of them, may, from time to time,