

March of the same year, in lieu of Monsieur Robert, who never reached the colony, Monsieur Talon was appointed Intendant of Justice, Police and Finance. He was authorized to do justice on the complaint of the military and others; to hear and determine criminal and civil cases under certain reservations, which we shall hereafter more fully explain.

Shortly after his appointment, the government of France having learned the disproportion of men and women in the colony, sent out 700 women. When they arrived the men of the colony were informed of it, and such of them as felt competent to support wives were offered their choice. The collection was described as tall, short, fair, brown, fat and lean. In less than fifteen days, the demand was so great that not one of the seven hundred women remained without a lord and master.

After this period, that is in 1672, de Coureelles was relieved by the Count of Frontenac, whose name a County in Upper Canada still bears.

In December, 1674, the West India Company, having given no greater satisfaction in their government of the colony than did the previous Company of the hundred associates, surrendered their charter to the Crown. De Chesneau was in the year following appointed Intendant of the colony; he was especially enjoined to see that the Sovereign Council conformed in all things to the custom of the *Prévôté* and *Vicomté* of Paris, and had power conferred on him to act without the Council when necessary to avoid delay. In 1678 an elaborate code of practice was decreed; and in the month of June, 1679, an edict was issued, by which the King approved of certain articles of the Code Civil, repealed others as inapplicable to the then state of the colony, and substituted new regulations.

In process of time, besides the Sovereign Council, inferior or District Courts were instituted at Quebec, Montreal, and Three Rivers. In the first two there was a magistrate, called Lieutenant General, who exercised criminal and civil jurisdiction; a magistrate who was also Judge of the Admiralty, called Lieutenant Particulier; a Crown Attorney, and a Clerk. In the Court at Three Rivers, with the exception of there being no Lieutenant Particulier, the officers were similar to those in Quebec and Montreal. Two sittings of these Courts were held every week throughout the year, except about six weeks in the month of September and October, and a fortnight at Easter. From each of the three District Courts an appeal lay to the Sovereign Council, and a further appeal to the King of France, in his Council of State.

It may not be out of place here to notice the powers of the Intendant as a Minister of Justice by virtue of the first part of his commission—Intendant de la Justice.

He had power to determine matters of civil property in a summary way. His jurisdiction was not limited to contests under any particular value, but was seldom exercised except in trifling cases, such as complaints of abusive language and the like. He was authorized to delegate his power to other persons, by commissions in writing for that purpose, and the persons so appointed by him to exercise judicial authority were called his *Sub-délegués*. There were usually seven appointed—two at Quebec, one at Three Rivers, two at Montreal, one at Detroit, and one at Michilimackinac—which two latter places, though now lying without the boundaries of the Province, were within the Province as bounded in the time of the French government. To the inhabitants of the western part of the Province, though few, the residence of the Deputies at these points was a great convenience, preventing as it did the necessity for journeys to Montreal, Three Rivers or Quebec, to attend the regular Courts. Though the jurisdiction of the Intendant himself was not circumscribed, with that of his deputies it was otherwise. They had no jurisdiction for money demands exceeding fifty livres, or about forty shillings sterling. They had, however, power to determine complaints concerning abusive words and the like small offences as much as the Intendant himself.

In addition to the several jurisdictions established by the King, and in which justice was administered in his name, there were in many seignories seignorial jurisdictions, in which justice might have been administered by the authority of the Seigniors. These Seigniors were persons to whom the King of France had granted large tracts of land to hold immediately of the Crown, upon certain conditions and with certain reservations. The right of a Seignior to administer justice was derived from the following words when used in his grant "*Nous donnons et concedons une telle étendue de terre à un tel à titre de Fief et Seigneurie, avec haute moyenne et basse justice.*" Thus there were three kinds of justice which might have been administered by them, viz., high, middle, and low justice. "*La haute Justice,*" or the highest of these jurisdictions, consisted in a right to decide criminal matters of the highest nature, that were punished by loss of life or limb. "*La moyenne Justice,*" was a right to determine inferior crimes that did not affect life or limb but were punishable by fine or imprisonment, or such as in the English law are termed misdemeanors. "*La basse Justice*" was a right to determine only civil actions or matters of property, and very trifling offences, such as abusive language or other injuries coming under the denomination of *Le petit criminel*, being a class of crimes still lower than those that were the objects of the *moyenne justice*. A Seignior who had the jurisdiction was obliged to keep a Judge to sit in the Seignorial Court, and