

port, Fox River and Griffin Cove, but all that for nothing, as the Judge had gone before he arrived, and all the expenses of these witnesses fell on the poor clients. The fact is, many persons are afraid to proceed in Court, on account of the shameful and uncertain manner in which the terms are held. The Judge said he had to go and hold the February term at Quebec, and attend to some election case at Kamouraska. The witnesses that had been summoned arrived yesterday and this morning—the 24th and 25th—and I do not believe that they will praise much the administration of justice when they will have returned home. They find that, since the Government will not give us a resident Judge, the least we can expect is that, when a Judge comes down, he ought to hold the term to the end, or at least hear the cases fixed for the term, and in which the witnesses who are summoned, and who live at great distances from the chief town, were on their way to the Court. The people do not go to law, because they are never sure to have a Judge when the term comes, and that is the reason why there are so few cases on the roll."

One can judge, from these extracts, of the unfortunate position in which the people of Gaspé are placed, as regards the administration of justice. But the position of the people of the Magdalen Islands is still worse. Suppose an inhabitant of the Magdalen Islands has a case before the Court at Percé, he consults the Court Calendar and sees that the terms are fixed to certain dates. He leaves his home and embarks on board the steamer for Pictou, distant 120 miles, and from Pictou to Percé 370 miles, making the distance travelled to reach Percé 490 miles. He has arrived at Percé, where he is liable, under the present system, to find the Judge absent or away; he returns home, another 490 miles, making in all 980 miles travelled, and at an expense of from \$50 to \$60; added to which is his disappointment at finding no Court and damage to his case and his business, a process liable to be repeated many times over. I have proved, by these extracts, that the administration of justice in the county of Gaspé has been faulty to say the least. Many people believe that the county of Gaspé and its population are small and insignificant, and that there is no progress in that part of the country. I will read a few statistics to show that the county of Gaspé, notwithstanding the bad administration of justice, and notwithstanding that the Government has never done much for it, has increased in population as much as any other part of the country. The county of Gaspé is 4,584 square miles in extent, or 2,933,760 acres, while Prince Edward Island is 2,133 square miles in extent, or 1,365,400 acres, showing that Gaspé is twice as large as Prince Edward Island. The county of Bonaventure is 3,465 square miles in extent, or 2,217,600 acres, one-half as large again as Prince Edward Island. We find that the population of Gaspé, by the Census of 1871 was 18,729, and by the Census of 1881, 25,001, an increase of 33 per cent. The population of Bonaventure, in 1871, was 15,923, and, in 1881, 18,908. Rimouski had a population of 27,418 in 1871 and has increased to 33,791 in 1881. The three counties of Gaspé, Bonaventure and Rimouski, in 1871, had a population of 62,070, while in 1881 they have a population of 77,700, so that the increase of population in these three counties in ten years has been 15,630. Now, let us compare this with the increase of population in Prince Edward Island, which has a Governor, a Legislature, a bench of six Judges, a railroad, and many other things which go to make up a country. According to the Census of 1871 the population of Prince Edward Island was 94,021, and according to the last Census, 108,891, showing an increase of only 14,870, against an increase of 15,630 in Gaspé. This shows that Gaspé must have resources which have not been credited to it; and remember, that no immigration from Scotland, England, Ireland, Germany or France has occurred during the last thirty years that I have been there, to that country. It has increased of its own blood. Let us also compare it with Cape Breton. In 1871, the population of Cape Breton was 75,483, while in 1881 it was 84,500, an increase of 9,017. These comparisons which I have made, without any idea of belittling Prince Edward Island or Cape Breton, show that Gaspé is of sufficient importance to deserve more attention and solicitude on the part of the Government. Let them give us one-tenth

Mr. FORTIN.

of the consideration they give the west, and we will be contented. While I am speaking of judicial decentralization, I must say a word on the principle of decentralization itself. The principle of decentralization is the principle of a free country, the principle of a free man, the principle which people want to have established when they emigrate from one country to another, while the opposite principle, that of centralization, which is doing so much harm in the Province of Quebec, seeks to control everything directly from a common centre. Such a system tends to make the resident in the country like an inhabitant of the town, and subservient to him and to crush out thereby the liberty and spirit of the people. I am in favor of decentralization. Although I was educated in a city—and possibly if I had continued to live there I would have held their ideas—I changed my views when I went to reside in Gaspé, for I found that the French idea of centralization was wrong and the English idea of decentralization was right. Why should we oblige the people of Gaspé to go to Quebec for everything? Gaspé possesses natural resources such as would make a country. It is larger than many of the kingdoms of Europe, and if increased judicial and other advantages had been afforded, the increase of the population would not be 15,000 only, but 50,000. Providence has done a great deal for that portion of the country, although there were some drawbacks, such as the climate and its remoteness from the great centres of commerce. Its resources are manifold and extensive, but alluding to the fisheries alone, I may say that, there were left last year, on the beach, millions of pounds of cod-fish refuse which, if skilled industry had been developed there, might have been converted into valuable, fertilizing substances which would have brought a great deal of money. What I ask on behalf of Gaspé is, that its people be afforded what was promised them by the Conservative and by the Liberal parties respectively. What we want is decentralization; we want the right to live as independent men, and not be compelled to go to Quebec in order to obtain what we should have at home.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD There can be no objection to grant all those reports and documents respecting the appointment of a Judge for the county of Gaspé and the system of judicial decentralization in Canada. Of course any confidential communication must be excluded of necessity. Mr. Speaker, there can be no objection to this resolution being passed. I must admit that the hon. member for Gaspé has a rightful claim to what he asks. Gaspé has the same right as any other portion of Quebec to have a resident Judge. From a series of circumstances, I do not know how it happened, either the Governments of 1872, of 1874, or 1880 have not been able to secure a resident Judge in the full sense of the term. I think, however, that the view enunciated by the hon. member must be carried out, that in any appointment made as Judge of Gaspé it shall be made a condition that he shall reside there, and that he should not consider he had satisfied his duty by visiting the county occasionally when his services were required. That part of the Province of Quebec has, as I have said, the same right as any other part to have a resident Judge, so that lawyers and other persons can apply for summary procedure and conduct general business without being compelled to go either to Montreal or Quebec or elsewhere for the purpose of receiving the Judge's decision. I can assure my hon. friend that we fully understand the difficulties of the case, and we will see that the evil shall be remedied as far as it can be remedied, and that it shall be an understanding, if a Judge is appointed, that he shall be a resident Judge, and if he does not carry that out it shall be a sufficient cause for a motion in both Houses of Parliament to remove him. Perhaps, as my hon. friend is the great telegraphic authority in this country, he may think that by establishing telephonic or telegraphic communication, we may make a compromise, but unless he holds that opinion