

WEEKLY LEADER

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CANADA'S CRIMINAL CLASSES

A blue book has just been issued from Ottawa, giving criminal statistics for the year ending Sept. 30, 1905.

Taking the total of both indictable and summary convictions, the two divisions which the blue book adopts, the number of convictions for 1905 and 1904 respectively are 62,569 and 54,946 or an increase of 13.85 per cent.

With the exception of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island every province shows an increased percentage of convictions. Manitoba leads with an increase of 37.5 per cent.

Turning to the ratio of convictions per population Quebec makes the worst showing on a comparison of the two years. From one conviction per 149 of population in 1904, the figure has fallen to 125 for 1905.

Examining cursorily the statistics for indictable offences, which practically cover offences reserved for trial by jury, we find that convictions for offences against the person increased during 1905 from 1607 to 1620.

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ery and convictions against currency, and there we find an increase of 21, or 173 convictions against 152.

Of the summary convictions, cases of drunkenness account for 21,621 out of 54,935 convictions, an increase of 2,726 or 14.73 per cent. for the whole Dominion.

Breaches of statutes and by-laws show an increase of 3,051, or 8,743 convictions as against 5,692. Assaults are responsible for 3,621 convictions in 1905 as against 3,611 in 1904, an increase of 10 convictions.

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IMPORTANT JUDGMENT AFFECTING HOMESTEADS.

A judgment of considerable importance to the people of this Province, and indeed to the whole Western population, has just been delivered in the Supreme Court. It has been held that a homesteader is not liable in respect of arrears of taxes due from a previous occupant of the homestead.

As the case was one calculated to affect materially the interests of rural school districts the Attorney-General deemed it his duty to intervene, and on behalf of the trustees of the rural school district in question an ingenious defence was put forward by the Deputy Attorney-General.

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The fifth class covers for-

succeeding occupant of the homestead. Such a theory is disposed of by the recent decision of Mr. Justice Newlands, and unless that judgment is upset on appeal the unpaid taxes of defaulting homesteaders will prove a dead loss to the community.

The matter is one which calls for adjustment by the Dominion Government, for the law, as it now stands, leaves a good deal to be desired. The homesteader is required to pay a fair price for improvements made by a defaulting predecessor, and the fact that a predecessor has been assessed under the School Assessment Ordinance simply means that the homesteader goes to the homestead with scholastic facilities already provided and to that extent the homestead is a more attractive one than would be a free farm outside the bounds of a rural school district.

The present decision recalls the controversy over the Seed Grain Lien, the circumstances of which were, in some respects, but not entirely like, those which have arisen in the case under examination. The institution of the Seed Grain Lien was finally found unsatisfactory and was abolished years ago.

LIBELLING THE PROVINCE.

Two prominent Provincial Rights organs in Saskatchewan, the Saskatoon Capital and the Regina Standard, applaud R. L. Richardson of the Winnipeg Tribune for characterizing the people of Canada as "a nation of 'easy marks'."

"There are mighty few intelligent 'men in this province that will not endorse what the Tribune says 'about the people of Saskatchewan 'being 'easy marks' when they permitted the men who now hold office 'to be foisted upon them by the 'gang at Ottawa in the first place, 'and then allowed them to steal and 'switch enough ballots to give them 'a working majority in the Legislature. Just where the 'honor' comes 'in, as far as it applies to Hon. 'Walter Scott, is not quite apparent. There is a good deal of truth 'in R. L. Richardson's utterances."

Provincial Rights must be capable of many meanings when it can be used to slander the people of the province for whose rights its advocates would have us believe they are so zealous. Hon. Walter Scott is today Premier of Saskatchewan—despite the slanders and falsehoods of The Tribune, The Standard and other like high minded journals—not because of "steals" or "switched ballots," but because the intelligent, sound common sense people of the province desired a policy of peace and progress rather than turmoil, bitterness and strife.

Partisanship has reached a pretty low ebb when editors of journals will decry, belittle and slander their own fellow citizens for the mere sake of scoring a point, as they believe, off their opponents. As a matter of fact, their dirt merely bespatters themselves.

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