

CHAPTER II.

DISTRICT OF ST. FRANCIS.

When Created—Boundary—Dates of Enquêtes, Courts, etc.—Names of Past and Present Court Officials—Its Educational Advantages.

IN 1823 the Inferior District of St. Francis was established, by an Act of the Provincial Legislature, chap. 77, of the 3rd year of George IV., with appeals to lie in either of the Judicial Districts of Three Rivers or Montreal. Bouchette says: "This district is in the form of a parallelogram, more than 50 miles in width from west to east, and upwards of 100 miles from north to south. Its superficial extent is supposed to cover 3,500 square miles. Situated in the District of Three Rivers, except four townships and part of a fifth in the District of Montreal. It extends from the southern bounds of Wickham, Simpson, Warwick and Arthabaska, to the southern boundary of the Province. Its western limits are Lake Memphremagog and a line traversing Bolton, between the 22nd and 23rd ranges, and extending along the eastern boundaries of Stukely, Ely and Acton. On the east it extends to the western bounds of the counties of Megantic and Beauce. Contains 38 townships and part of another. Population in 1831, 13,500." Or in other words composing the present counties of Stanstead, Compton, Sherbrooke, Richmond and Wolfe, together with four townships, afterwards added to the District of Arthabaska—Chester, Tingwick, Kingsey and Durham.

By an Act of the third year of William IV., (1833), this was called the District of St. Francis. After the formation of the County of Stanstead, in 1829, the remainder of the District formed the County of Sherbrooke. The District now consists of the counties of Stanstead, Compton, Sherbrooke, Richmond and Wolfe, and the city of Sherbrooke, which is the chef lieu. The Court House, jail, and public offices for the District are located at the city of Sherbrooke.

The Queen's Bench meets on the first of the months of April and October. The terms of the Superior Court are held from the 20th to the 26th of the months of February, May and October; and from the 21st to the 26th of December. Superior Enquêtes, from the 28th to the end of the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, September, October, November and December. The Circuit Court for the District of St. Francis is held from the 10th to the 15th of the month of February; from the 11th to the 16th of May; and from the 10th to the 16th of the months of October and December. Enquêtes, Sherbrooke, from the 21st to the 23rd of January; April 9th; June 25th and 26th; and from the 9th to the 11th November.

Records in the Prothonotaries office at Sherbrooke, do not indicate that any legal business was done in this District previous to 1828, although it had been created an Inferior District five years before, in 1823. Previous to this time all business was transacted at Three Rivers. This necessitated very heavy expenses on both sides, with the result that courts of justice were very seldom called on. The people took the law into their own hands, and settled their difficulties either by arbitration or in some other way, without having recourse to the courts. Instances are known where a suit for ten shillings, brought against a defendant in Compton County, cost as much as \$14 for the service of the summons, and return of the same to the Court of Three Rivers, independent of further proceedings.