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## R E P 0RT.

The Conarrtee to whom was referred the Returns to Addressess to His Excellency the Governor General, of the 23rd January last, praying for Statements of the Income derived by the Sheriff of the District of Montreal, and by the Crier, and Tipstaff of the Court of Queen's Bench for the said District, for the last five years ;have agreed to make this their First Report:-

## Cosmittee Rooss, <br> 17th April, 1849.

Your Committee, submitting herewith the evidence which they have taken, report herein the points which appear to them the most worthy of the attention of Your Honourable House.
It behoves Your Committee, in the first place, to report that Mr. Sheriff Coffin was the first witness examined, and that at his request, preferred during bis examination, Your Committee permitted him to take communication of all the evidence. On the seventh instant it was accordingly placed in his hands for perusal, a fact which he has recorded in his letter to the Chairman, received on the ninth, at noon, hereunto annexed, (marked A.,) and to which Your Committee refer. Mr. Meredith, Queen's Counsel, also spontaneously appeared before Your Committee, not in a professional capacity, as he himself cautiously stated, but in the character of a mere friend, on behalf of Mr. Boston, who was stated to be absent. Mr. Meredith further tendered some testimony, of which he saw fit to transmit the substance to the Chairman, in a letter dated the seventh, but received on the ninth, at four in the afternoon, also hereunto annexed, (and marked B.) Mr. Boston himself, however, called on the ninth instant, and took communication of the evidence. Mr. Coffin was desirous of obtaining, firstly, a copy of the evidence, and secondly, an indefinite delay; but Your Committee could not accede to either request without foregoing the hope of placing their labours before Your Honourable House during the present Session. The arrival in town of Mr. Boston seems, too, to have removed the ground upon which the application of Mr . Meredith was based, and Your Committee are of opinion, that to have admitted him under the circumstances to give the evidence which he tendered would have been to introduce a bad precedent. Your Committee are, however, relieved of much of the difficulties incident to their position and duties, by the conviction that the Sheriffs have, from the first, been acquainted with the nature of their pro-
ceedings,-that the latter have been perfectly open to their inspection,-and that it was competent to the Sheriffs, bad they seen fit, to have interposed either personally or by Attorney.
The Sheriffs of Montreal are by law the Depositaries of large sums, the proceeds of levies made under writs of execution, by the sale of chattels as well as of immovables. For reasons to to be hereafter stated, the precise amount of these sums could not be accurately ascertained, but they must be very considerable. In relation to this subject, there are two Statutory provisions. The first, being the Act 25 George III, chap. 2, provides for the compensation of the Sheriffs, and permits them to retain, over and above all their disbursements, a sum of $2 \frac{1}{2}$ per cent. upon all moneys which they may levy. This per centage is the only profit that the law allows the Sheriffs. But Your Committee bave ascertained, and Mr. Coffin, one of the Sheriffs, has admitted, that they make a large annual addition to their income in the shape of interest upon the public funds. The original Sheriffs Returns contained an admission of the fact, and in his personal examination, Mr. Coffin has spontaneously avowed it. On this head, Your Committee are of opinion that such an application of any part of the public funds to the Sheriff's use, was not contemplated by law. If the funds levied be insufficient to meet the demands of the creditors, it is evident that it would be desirable, proper, and necessary, that any addition of which they are susceptible, any interestaccruing upon the principal during the pending of the proceedings, should form a part of the debtor's assets, and should be paid over to the creditors. If, on the other hand, the levy be sufficient, the debtor and his family should benefit by the interest accruing upon the sum produced by the sale of his property. These funds are levied by execution upon unsuccessful litigants, upon men involved in hopeless embarrassments, the most unhappy of mankind. And Your Committee invite Your Honourable House to pronounce upon the claim of the Sheriffs, thus to make a profit upon the proceeds of levies;
and to apply that profit to their own use, to the prejudice of parties and creditors.
Seconllly.-Mr. Sheriff Coffin has disclosed a fact of an extraordinary nature. It seems that while these gentlemen benefit in one way by interest, they bave actually invested a part of the public funds in Bank Stock. They thus purchased Bank Stock with the public funds, and they receive the dividends thereon, but they do not give the public credit for those dividends. On the contrary, they apply those dividends, like the interest, to their own use. It is true that Mr. Coffin attempted to defend that course by alleging that it was pursued solely to ensure the safe keeping of the funds. But surely if the Bank be the only safe custodier, it must be possible to dispense with the Sheriffs, to relieve them of all responsibility, and to place the public funds directly in the keeping of the Banks. Among the advantages of that system, it is manifest that the profit, in the shape of interest and of dividends, would be added to the principal. Thus the creditor, or the debtor himself, as the case might be, both of whom have sacred rights preferable to the claim of the Sheriffs, and which ought not to be lightly defeated, would have the benefit of that interest, and of those dividends, as well as of the two and a half per cent now taken by the Sheriffs. Admitting that their opinion is unfavourable to the claim of the Sheriffs, Your Committee respectfully invite Your Honourable House to decide the question. This, in the opinion of Your Committee, is an objectionable practice, an abuse, for which a remedy should be provided by law, and though Your Committee will not enter into the details of the measure which they would recommend, they deem it fitting to add that they have given the subject some consideration, and that such a measure would be susceptible of no difficulty.

There is, however, another point; it is the question of right set up by the Sheriff to deal or trade with the public funds, in the manner detailed in the evidence of Mr. Coffin. It is manifestly open to grave objections, and the evidence justifies Your Committee in reporting that the unwillingness of Mr. Coffin promply to satisfy the public creditors, and the illegal and vexatious delays interposed by him, are the result of the above described disposal of the public funds. So long as they retain these funds in their hands, a profit accrues to the Sheriffs, and it is manifest that they had, and have, an interest in disobeying the Orders of the Court, and in resorting, as it is proved that they did resort, to very unjustifiable means, to use moneys which they had no right to receive or hold, as well as to avoid making satisfaction when regularly called upon.
The second Statute relating to the public funds, is the Act 6 Wm . IV., cap.15. This Act is intended for the public security, as also to afford every individual a cheap and easy mode of ascertaining the precise amount in the hands of Sheriffs. It provides that, "On the first
" juridical day in every Term of the Court of "King's Bench, the Sheriffs shall exhibit an "accurate and detailed statement, and account
"upon oath, of all moneys in their hands, by
"them received as Sheriffs, when, and from
" whom received, and of all Orders and Judg-
" ments directing any moneys to be paid, spe-
"cifying to whom the same are payable, and to
"whom paid, and of all moneys remaining unpaid."

From the use of the word "Statement," as well as "Account," and the term "detailed," it is manifest that the law cannot be satisfied by a mere arithmetical sketch. It requires the fullest information, and as time is an important element in all computations, the Sheriffs are bound to specify the period at which each particular sum has come into their hands. There being four Terms of the Court of King's Bench, this statement is to be repeated four times every year.

Your Committee regret to be obliged to report, however, that the Sheriffs have treated these wise provisions of the law with marked contempt. In one word, they have, (Your Committce can scarcely suppose from ignorance, ) disobeyed the law. In the first place, it is true that in the year 1847, the Sheriffs fyled four different statements, but those statements are not in the form required by law, and they positively convey no available information whatever. Then, in the year 1848, the Sheriffs did not even prepare the number of statements required by the Statute; on the contrary, they fyled only two instead of four, and those two are as informal, irregular, and unavailable as those fyled by them in the preceding year. Owing to the irregularities and insufficiencies affecting these six Returns, all in the hand-writing of Mr. Coffin, and attested by him, Your Committee hare not extended their researches farther.
Wir Commiltee have here to remark that in Lever Canada, for civil purposes, the office cfst riff is not only unnecessary, but positively mischie rous. The Sheriffs themselvcs never execute a writ, but they receive large fees, while the Bailiff, who do all the work, necessarily also receive fees. The latter being mere automatons, subject to the patronage of the Sheriff, are not all as respectable, as intelligent, as well informed, as they might be, and lasthey ought to be, andwould doubtless be, if they were employed directly by the Bar, without the intervention of the Sheriff. That intervention is founded upon reasons which may at one time have existed, but which exist no longer, and instead of the monopoly enjoyed by the Sheriffs, suitors ought to have the privilege of choosing among numbers of competent and worthy men, who would be found ready to serve the public were an opportunity afforded them. Stimulated by interest, and urged by competilion, to acquit themselves in a satisfactory manner of their duties, those men would contribute powerfully to the ends for
which Courts of Justice are established. At present the interposition of the Sheriffs is injurious, not only because they have that monopoly, but because, from their wealth, and their station in life, they can never be expected to promote economy, or personally to take any pains promptly and effectually to satisfy suitors. They are, in fact, above the details of the business of their office. By a fiction somewhat reprehensible, they are daily made to certify that they have themselves executed writs, which is notoriously untrue: but unless it be desirable to gire those gentlemen a pretext for claiming the prodigious income which they annually reccive, there is no cause for resorting to any fiction whatever. On reference to Mr. Coffin's evidence, it will be found that every writ is entrusted to a Bailiff, every service performed by a Bailif, and that each of these Bailiffs, having given good and sufficient security, the Sheriffs are not exposed to any danger, and have in factnever suffered any loss. Now, it were surely practicable to make the Bailiff give security to the public, and to dispense with the circuitous, cumbrous, and expensive course, andmachinery, out of which the Sheriffs make so undue a profit.

Though every Defendant, condemned to satisfy his Creditor, is allowed a delay of fifteen days after the date of Judgment, Your Comimittee, are uranimously of opinion that the Sheriffs, who are mere depositaries, have no right to claim any delay whatever. It would seem that but for the use to which they apply the public funds, and the profit which they thereby make, they would have no reason for refusing instant obedience to the Orders of the Court. But whether they be or be not allowed to use the public funds as their own, it is the unanimous opinion of Your Committee that the Sheriffs are bound to satisfy, at sight, every order or judgment of the Court enjoining them to pay.
According to the evidence adduced before them, the duties devolving on the Sheriffs have been negligently and ill performed. Those gentlemen do not reach their office in time; they are both often absent during office hours; they withhold funds which they should pay; they put both Bar and suitors to daily inconvenience and loss. The division and internal arrangements of that office are represented to be not only unusual, but offensive, and the deportment of Mr. Coffin, who is stated to be the acting and managing partner, is proved to be habitually, and even intentionally, insulting. There is indeed evidently but too much reason to complain, not merely of his unaccommodating and insolent conduct, but of his avidity, verging upon, if it does not quite amount to, extortion.
The enumeration of the duties devolving on the Sheriffs, furnished by Mr. Coffin, is ingenious, but it rests on no solid foundation. In point of fact, excepting only their attendance in Court, and the subscription of their signatures, they themselves perform no single
act. The list furnished by Mr. Coffin is long, but the details are all managed by mere Clerks of ordinary capacity and acquirements. Mr. Coffin bas made some parade of the title deeds which he declares the Sheriffs to have been engaged in signing. This is the naked fact, but it is so worded as to imply much more, and he has omitted 10 state, firstly, that they were not indispensable; and secondly, that the Sheriffs were well paid for so signing them. Asit is the Law which grants the title, and not the Sheriff, a copy of the Writ of Execution and Sheriff's Return, at a cost of five shillings, would suffice; but the Sheriff's charge is, in some cases, twenty shillings, in some as much as thirty shillings for a deed. Now, this deed is a mere printed form, applicable to every case. It contains blanks for the name of the cause, of the purchaser, of the description of the properity, of the price, and of the dates. As these blanks can be filled, and are always filled up by a mere Clerk, and as the Sheriffs merely subscribe their names, it is quite clear that Mr. Coffin was not justified in laying upon this act all the stress he has done. The same remark would apply to all the official acts enumerated by Mr. Coffin, and it cannot be too often repeated, that the Sheriff's functions, in civil cases, are all much of the same character.

Their income certainly seems to be, even on their own shewing, quite out of all proportion to the services they render, as well as to the circumstances of the country. It is a fact, which was brought by Petition under the notice of the Court in the year 1839, but that -Petition was followed by no results, and there is reason to apprehend that, unless Your Honourable House should be pleased to interfere, that income will not be reduced.

Under these circumstances, Your Committee cannothesitate to conclude that the Sberiffs do not deserve to retain so large an income, wrung, as it is, from the scanty means of the poor and the unfortunate. Your Committee are prepared to maintain, too, that the members of the Profession, the suitors, and the public at large, have an undoubted right not only to expect from every public officer a due degree of readiness and zeal to discharge hisoduties, but the utmost courtesy.

Your Committee are also of opinion, thal the exorbitant and prodigious income of the Crier and Tipstaff should be reduced, and Your Committee are of opinion that $£ 100$ per annum for the first, and $£ 75$ for the second, would be amply sufficient.

If he excessive emoluments of those parties, as well as of the Sheriffs, were reduced, they might be applied to the erection of a CourtHouse with great and lasting advantage to the community.

Such are the points upon which Your Honourable House is respectfully invited to determine.

The whole, nevertheless, humbly submitted,
A. GUGY, Chairman.

## minutes 0fevidenoe.

Tuesdix, 13th 3farch, 1849.
W. F. Cofin, Esquire, one of the Sheriffs for the District of Montreal, examined:-

1. When were you appointed Joint Sherif??-In March, 1S42.
2. What is the amount of profits that you have received for the year 1848? - The total amount of profits of our office for the year 1848, is $£ 1609$ 12 s . Sd. ; that is to sar, official emoluments $£ 1165$ 17s. 4d., amount of salary £111, and amount of interest, \&ce., £332 15s. 4d.
3. Please to say what et cetera significs?-Dividends on bank stock, amount of interest on deposits, amount of interest on notes which we bave received from parties, bearing interest.
4. Under what circumstances have you taken, and do you take notes?-These notes have been taken froin purchasers of land sold at Sheriff's sale, as a matter of accommodation to such purchasers.
5. Assuming that you would not of course accomodate partics of whose solvency you entertain the slightest dubt, will you state whether you have made it a rule to accommodate in the manner implied in your last answer?-Certainly not: the rule has been the reierse since I have had the honour to be associated in the Sheriffs Ufice. From my first entrance into the Sheriffs Office, I have in principle opposed the granting of such accommodation, although the parties asking such accommodation have often been some of the most responsible persons in the District?
6. What is meant, in your third answer, by the words, "Dividends on bank stork?"-have you so investel any portion of the public money? The public moncys are at our risk and at our disposal, so at least we humbly apprehend, and so it has hitherto been understood. A small portion of these public moneys have, for safe keeping, been invested in bank stock.
7. In what bank? and how much ?-In the Bank of Montreal, and City Bank. I will bring a statement tommorrow, slowing how much Mr. Boston and myself had on the Ist January last, in these banks.
Moneys invested in bank stock, as fullows:-
Mr . Boston, Montreal Bank Stock......£1343 150 Mr. Coffin, do do do......£682 100

Do City Bank ... $500 \quad 0 \quad 0$
£1152 $10 \quad 0$
$£ 2526 \quad 5 \quad 0$
I know of no law, or Ordinance, or custom, or practice, which prescribes, or cven suggests, to the Sheriff, the course he ought to pursue in the disposal of these moneys. The only obligation imposed by law upon the sheriff, is the obligation to pay over all such moners to the partics thereunto entitled, when lawfully ordered to do so. Indeed, it appears to me that responsibility would be incompatible with restriction. If the Sheriff is to be answerable for the forthcoming of all such moneys at proper place and legal time, he must, as a consequence, be a free agent in disposing of them. If the law compels him to adopt a specified course, it must necessarily relieve him from any responsibility in the event that such course should prove to be a bad one.
The same process of argament extends to the interest or profit, in whatever shape it may accrue,
arising from the safe kceping of such moneys. He may keep them in his chest if he chooses, and derive no pecumary benefit from their investment; but if the Court House barns, as bas been the case, neither the Sheriff nor his sureties could plead such fire, or any other accident as a release from their responsibilities; so in case a bank should fail, the Sheriff must supply the deficiency, or submit to the alternative, go to gaol. If he accepts the peril, he takes the profit with it. I add hereto a copy of a letter deposited by us with the Cashier of the Montreal Bauk, relative to the above-mentioned bank stock :-

Montreal, $23 r d$ May, 1845.
$\mathrm{SIR},-$ We hereby declare that twenty-five shares of Montreal Bank stock, paid up in full, at a premium of seven and a half per cent per share, being equal in value to a sum of thirteen hundred and forty-three pounds fifteen shillings currency, held in the name of John Boston, Esquire; and twenty-two shares of like Montreal Bank stock, also paid up in full at a premiam of seven and a half per cent per share, being equal in value to a sum of eleven hundred and eightytwo pounds ten shillings currency, held in the name of William F. Coffin, Esquire, are, to all intents and purposes, public property, to be accounted for by each of us respectively, in the above proportions and amounts, to the office of Sheriff of Montreal, and that we individually are only entitled to the interest or dividends which may, from time to time, accrue thereupon.

> We have the houour to be, Sir, Your most obdt. servants, (Signed) JOHN BOSTON.

To the Cashier,
Montreal Bink.
S. What amount of interest or profit do you get on these deposits?-Upon the amount invested in bank stock, we get the dividends, whaterer they may be. Upon the amount deposited in the Bank of British North America, in which we place our deposits, they allow us 3 per cent. For our own security, as well as for the security of our sureties and of the public, we place our deposits as widely as is consistent with convenience and safety, in the best monied institutions in this city.
9. Do you consider them safe where they are? I know of no safer investment or deposit. We generally pay public claims upon us, under judgments of orders of the Court of Queen's bench, and all other demands upon us in our capacity of Sherifis, by checks upon the Bank of British North America.
10. Is the Committee to understand that this is a profit which you derive upon the public moners entrusted to you, over and above the $2 \frac{1}{2}$ per cent allowed you by law? -Assuredly.
11. Has any part of this money so derived by you, in the shape of interest and dividends, been returned 50 as to be distributed among creditors, or part to a plaintiff, or returned to a defendant? - Certainly not.
12. Is the disposal of jublic moneys based upon any law or rule of practice of the Courts? -No: the course adopted by us in the depositing of this money, las been adopted for the parpose of protecting both - ourselves and the public, and to secure profit to ourselves consistent with safety.
13. What functions do you or your partuer personally perform as Sheriffs, and please to specify explicitly what acts you yourself perform?-We are compelled to attend day by day, and at all times during the Session of the Court of Queen's Bench, both on the Criminal and Civil side in Superior Term. Within the last few years, we have, under the special instructions of Her Majesty's Government, heen compelled in like manner, day by day, and at all times, during the Session of the Court, personally to attend in the Court of Quarter Scssions. We are officers of the Court of Bankruptcy, and as such, are compelled to give our attendance when required; these duties impose the necessity of a comstant, if not an unintermitted attendance in our office. One of the two incumbents of the office, receives all moners which, day by day, and at all times during the day, are paid into the office of the Sheriff, and to make the necessary entries of the same; to convey such moneys to the Bank, and take the usual receipts; to pay all muney's ordered to be paid under orders from the Court of Queen's Bench or ju!gments; to pay out all the ordinary and daily disbursements of the office, and to sign all warrants, orders, commissims, or other documents, which the Sheriffs of the District issue under their official-signature.
With reference to this question, I beg permission to add certain details to my original reply, which I trust may more fully inform the Cormmittee as to the nature and extent of our duties. To effect this I will endeavour to detail the daties performed within the last three momths, say from the 15th Decenber, 1845 . up t. Yesterday, the 15th March, 1849, as nearly as possible.
On or about the 15th December, 1848, we commenced the "detailed statement" presented to the Court of Queen's Bench on the first day. of Term, (7th January, 1849) under the provisions 6 William, IV., cap. 15, sec. 18 , to which section we respectfully refer the Committee for the details of the same. This statement would of itself furnish occupation to one person for a fortnight, the time which the law evidently contemplates as necessary for its preparation, as it involves the necessity of running through books and examining julgments. Since my appointment to the office in 1842, up to ihe opening of the Civil Term Court of Queen's Bench; and during the same (7th to 31st January,) our clerk's prepared and we examinel and signed about 240 returns': We beg leave to observe, that careful perusal and examination of such returus is indispensable, secing that a trifing clerical error may involve the Sheriff in the cost and other legal consequences of previous proceedings. During this period also, we received about $£ 3,000$ of public moneys, in sums varying from 5 s upwards, in silver, notes, and cheques, all of which required counting, receipts to be given for the same, to be entered upon our books, to be taken to the bank by us personally, to be there comted and receipts taken for the same. From the 7th to the 31st Jinnary we attended personally the Court of Queen's Bench every day during the Bession of the Court, to receive the orders of the Court, surrender of prisoners, \&c. On the 10th January, 1849, commenced the Quarter Sessions, at which Court we gave personal attendance day by day during the Session to the 19th, this Court and the (ivil Term Queen's Bench sitting simultaneously, having previously prepared the lists of Grand and Petty Jurors, and issued summonses for the same, (for which we receive no compensation) ; during the same period also, it was necessary to sign deeds of sale of lands, to examine and sign bonds prepared before Notary, to sign Commissions of Bankruptey, to examine Bailiffs' returns to the same, and to sign our own returns to the same. On the first February conmenced the Criminal Term of the Court of Queen's

Bench, which continues for fifteen days. This Court we attended also, personally, during the Session, being called upon to furnish a separate panel for the trial of every individual casc. I should have stated that we bad also prepared the lists of Grand and Petty Jurors, and issued summonses for the same, withont fee or compensation for such duty. During this period of three months we have paid out of our office a sum of $£ 2539$ 15s 8 d currency, in sums from five shillings upwards upon judgments ind orders for the distribution of moners, all of which had to be examined and verified, the authoritics onder which parties clained payments to be inquired into, receipts to be prepared and.cheques s'gned, Bailiffs' accounts and printers accounts to be examined and paid. During this period also, we have repeatedly visited the Common Gaol of this District, going through all the wards and inspecting the premises.
14. Referring to the tenour of the last question, please to say whether most of the acts performed nominally by you, are not in fact execated by Bailiffs?-The great proportion of them are executed by Bailiffs. It would be impossible for the Sheriff of such an immense District as Montreal, to execute personally all warrants technically executed by him ; practically, and sa far as the public is concerned they are executed by him, seeing that he and his securities are responsible for the acts of the Bailiffs.

15 Are the Bailiffs allowed any fees for such acts?-Yes, the -principal expense incurred in the employment of Bailifis is the cost of travel. If the Sheriff could execute personally the duties discharged by the Bailiffs, he would be entitled to similar costs of travel.
16. Do you mean to say that the Bailiff gets no fee?-Yes, he gets a small fee, but the clifef expense is the cost of travel, depending of course upon the distance.
17. Is the Committee to understand in ane word; that the work is done by Bailiffs, and that in one shape or other they receive remuneration thercior?The work above referred to is done by Bailiffs and they are paid for it, the Sherif being responsible for the due and legal performance of such work.
18. Then the enolument allowed you is for responsibility only?-I infer that part of such emolument has been allowed for work, and part for responsibility. I cannot, however, aftirm the principle upon which such emoluments have been accorded by the Legislature, or by the rules of practice of Courts of Justice.
19. Did you ever personally execute a warrant or writ of execution?-No, never.
20. Do you claim a delay of 15 days on the presentation to you of a judgment of distribution, or of an order for the payment of money to a successful litigant? We have claimed such delay, but do not, as the Montreal Bar can testify, punctiliously adhere to that rule. The claim has been founded on a belief, an unconfuted belief thus far, of its legality; and of the necessity which exists that the Sheriff should be allowed sufficient time, after the delivery of judgment of distribution into-his hands, to examine and compare the same, and to verify the accuracy of their own calculations. We do not make any claim to delay in payment of orders for the distribution of money, let the amount of the same be what they may, the simplicity of the details of such orders enabling us to dispense with any such rule or claim for delay.
21. Can you direct the Committee to the law upon which what you call your unrefuted belief is founded? -The law is in the bands of the lawyers. I presume that if we are wrong, the lawyers would long since have refuted our hitherto unrefuted belief.
22. The Committee is not satisfied with the foregoing answer; please to state distinctly whetheryou
are guided in that particular by any known law, and what it is?-I cannot, on the spur of the moment, cite any law, but I know there is a rule of practioe by which no judgment becomes executory until after a lapse of 15 days, and I conceive that this rule of prattice applics as much to judgments of distribution as to any other judgment.
23. Will you be pleased at your carliest convenience to produce and fyle a cope of that rule of practice? -I believe 1 can produce it, and to the best of my ability. I will.

In answering the above question I was wrong as to therule of practice, and riglit as to the law. The practice has alwars existed and required no confirmation by rule or order of Court. It is an incident of the French law, in force in this part of the Province of Camada, that no judgrnent becomes exccutory until after the cxpiration of fifteen days.

But hy the Statutelaw of this Province, Act 25 Geo. III, cap. 2 , sec. 29 introducingappeals, an interval of fifteen days from the rendering of any judgment is the limited period for fyling an appeal. Now an appeal will lie as much from a judement of distribution as from any other judgment, and should the Sheriff divest himself of moners adjulged mader any such juigment of distribution before the fifteen days have expired, he would distribute moneys in anticipation and to the prejudice of any such appellant, and would become thereby personally responsible for the reproduction and repayment of such moneys to the appellant, should appellant succeed in his appeal; such at least is my view of the law.
24. Are not all the Bailiffs whom you employ bound in bonds to you in cood and sufficient security for the pertormance of their duties?- Fvery Sheriffs Bailiff is bound to the Sheriff in a bond with two sureties, to the extent of $\mathfrak{L} 500$. This security is ostensibly good and sufficient; we take every precaution to have it so, and ret it mav be loubted whether, withall possible precaution, such security, if unfortunately it came to be tested, would prove to be good and sufficient.
25. Who was the Bailiff in the cases cited in your letter of the 5th February to Mr. Secretary Lesilic, and itid you lose money in conseguence of the employment of a Bailiff in any one of these cases?No, only in the case of Bowman against Dawson No. 1250. I cannot just now state facts with accuracy.
26. Will you be pleased to make the necessiry inquiry, and to return hither prepared to state ail the facts connected with the cases cited in your said letter to Mr. Secretary Leslic?-I will. The case of Vaneps $v$ s. Platt is one of those cases especially referred to in our official letter to Mr. Secretary Leslie of 5 th February, 1849, as involving us in heary responsibility, in taking bail under Capias ad respondenclum.

In this instance the defendant appeared in compliance with one of the conditions of the bond. The Court held his appearance to be insufficient. The case remained pending before the Court from the 15 th January, 1845, to the 31st of March, 1846, when judgment was rendered against the defendant, who had absconded in the interim, and thercupon the Sheriff was ruled to pay the debt or stand committed for contempt. We paid the debt, and have sued the bail; this action is still undecided. Before it is decided the bail who, up to this time, bear all appearance of being good, inay prove to be bad; and it is no disparagement to any bail of whatever standing or respectability, to express an apprehension that in times of commercial difficulty like the present, and especially in Montreal, some doubt may be entertained of their ultimate sufficiency.

To illustrate the process for the information of the Committee, we will state a case. $\Lambda$ defendant is arrested on Capias ad respondendum, and tenders
bail for his appearanes on return of writ. If the Sheriff refuses such bail, he is liable to an action of damages. The best men are doubtful in doubtful times, and yet the expression of a doubt is looked upon as an insult. A strong case would be made out against the public officer of having denied lawful liberty to the suliject, by refusing bail to all appearance urimpeachable, and the case would most probably be tried by a Jury of the associates or friends, or of persons of congenial pursuits both to the defendant and bail. Public sympathy would be with the parties, and the chances sorely againt the public officer.

On the other hand, suppose the Sheriff takes bail aparently good, and in reality solvent at the time, for the appearance of the defendant on the return day, say three months distant. The Sheriff may feel sure of the sufficiency of such bail for three months, should their sufficiency be challenged within that period; but reasoning from the precarious circumstances of a mercantile community, he would be unwifling to incur a more extensive or indefinite risk. And yet if the defendant fails to appear, the Sheriff is held responsible not only for the sufficiency of the bail at the time when defendant failed to appear, but for the further sufficiency of the bail up to the time when julgment is rendered against defendant; in the case above cited, Vaneps $\tau s$. Platt, an interval of fourteen months or thereabouts occurred, i;at which may vary more or less according to circumstances in every case. But the responsibility of the Sheriff does not cease here; judgment being rendered against defendant, instead of accepting an assignment of bail bond, as heretofore had been the practice, the present practice is for the plaintiff to rule the Sherif to produce the body of defendant or pay the debt. The debt having been paid by thic Sheriff, that offieer may then proceed against the bail, upon the bailbond, for the recovery of the amount thereof, risking the failure or insufficiency of the bail daring the time which may elapse in the process of a tedious litigation. Thus having taken bail originally for a period of three months, the Sheriff, under the influence of circumstances over which he can exercise no control, is compelled to be responsible for such bail remaining good and solvent during a period of three years and upwards, as in the case of Vaneps $v s$. Platt, first above cited.
This explanation, detailed as it is, and unavoidably prolix, will perhaps spare me the necessity of occupying the time of the Committee with the details of the other two cases, adverted to in your return to Mr. Secretary Leslic, to wit, Try es. Daily, and Torrance $v s$. Scott, further than to say that the first is a case in which we have lost the amount stated from the insufficiency of the Bail, and the second a case wherein the bail demurs to paying the amount of the judgment, leaving thereby the responsibility on the Sherifl.

The case of Durochers vs. Mount is a case of a different description. By the $15 t h$ Sect. 41 Geo. III, chap. 7, a Plaintiff purchasing lands sold at his own suit is autliorized to retain in his hands so much of the purchase money as may equal the amount of the judgment upon which said lands were sold, giving a bond to the Sheriff in lieu of the price In the case above cited, through the inadvertence of a clerk, the plaintiff was allowed to give his bond for the whole amount of purchase, which very much exceeded the amount of his judement, and the Sheriff's return to the Court was a return prejudicial to themselves as well as crroncous, sceing that they returned that they held moneys and not bond; as we could not recede from our return we were compelled to pay the moneys and fall back on the bond, which proved to be valueless.
I would beg leave to observe, in conclusion, that
these cases have been cited by me, not so much to show the amount of losses specially incurred, as to particularize the class of cases to which our responsibility extends, and to call attention to the fact, that cases which have occurred once may and probably will occur again.

Monday, 19th March.
W. F. Coffin, Esq, again examined by the Committec.
27. In the case of Bowman vs Dawson, No. 1250, which you cite as an example, in which you paid costs and charges to the cextent of $£ 328 \mathrm{~s} 2 \mathrm{~d}$ currency, have you no hope of recovering the amount? please to explain.-l am very sure we have no means of recovering the amount. The lands were seized by one Ennch Holt, a Bailiff of the Court of Queen's Bench, (but not one of ours) ; he seized the lands of another person by mistake, and thus made us responsible for that anount.
23. Can you inform the Committee as to who employed Holt?-I cannot; we would not employ one whio is not bound to us, if we could find one who is bound to us; and our practice has been to allow the attorncys concerned to employ the Bailiffs themsclves, in remote parts of the country. In this particular case, I rather think that Holt was employed by the attorney.
29. Can you in a day or two ascertain and state to the Committer, who was the attorney, and who employed Holt?-I will endeavour to do so. The attorneys of record in the case Bowman es. Dawson, were Messrs Fisher and Smith; Mr. Drummond was attorney for the opposant, Buchanan; Holt was employed by Messrs. Fisher and Smith.
30 Are you now ready to answer in detail the 26th question?-I will endeavour to do so on Wednesday next.

Friday, 23rd March.
W. F. Coffin, Esquirc, again examined by the Cominittec.
31. Without reference to probahilitics, please to state whether you have suffered loss in any other cases than those which you have just enumerated? - 1 cannot at the moment recall facts.
32. Have you accounted in detail for all the cases cited in your letter to Mr. Secretary Leslie?-T have.
33. How were you engaged before rour appointment as Sheriff?-I am an $\Lambda$ dvocate by protession, and at the time of my appointment to the office of Sheriff, I held the office of Commissioner of Police for the Province of Canada.
34. Will you favour the Committee with a copy of that Commission ?-I will. (See Appendix C.)
35. How long had jou been called to the Bar before your appointment as Sheriff?-I think I was called to the Bar in 1836.
36. In how many cases were you engaged before your appointment?-Very few.
37. Had you six?-I was professionally associated with C. R. Ogden, Esq., in the summer of 1838, who was then the Attorney General, wind as so associated with him, I had several cases at the Quebec Bar, and I had also several at the Montreal Bar prior to that.
38. Did it occur to you in the case of Durocher against Mount, that the difficulty in which you were -placen, is the result of your own mistake?-The difficulty is which we were placed arose from the
mistake of a clerk, which occurred (if I eir not) during a pressure of public business. For this mistake we were liable, hence a portion of our responsibilitics.
39. Have you in fact lost any thing in the way which you have alluded to?-No, we have not, but we have serious apprelension that we will.

## Mr. Coffin handed in the following two memoran-

 dums:-1st. The Committee having expressed its readiness to receive any details as to the operation of law or of forms of law which impose responsibility, and justify the claim to adequate compensation, I would heg leave to call the attention of the Committee to the risk which has been hitherto incurred from the manner in which we have been induced, I may say, from force of circumstances, compelled to execute writs of exccution de bonis. These writs are of course exccutable throughout the whole extent of this very extensice District. The execution of them is very often a mere preliminary, but indispensable, from the return being frequently, if not for the must part "nulla bona," nothing. Strictly speaking, we ought to execute these writs through our Bailifs, but as in most cases the probability is, that the proceeds of sale, if any, would not suffice to pay the expenses, of a man sent from Montreal to an indefinite distance into the country, we have, to mect the public convenience, and to obviate costs and eharges to the parties, been in the habit of confiding our warrant in the writ "de bonis" to the Plaintiff's attorney, allowing him to transmit it in the most economical way to the residence of the defendant, and to cause it to be there executed by any Bailiff of the Court of Queen's Bench, whether such Bailiff has given security to the Sheriff or not. We in fast assume a heavy responsibility to convenience the public, for it does occasionally oceur that these writs de bonis are productive of large sums of money, which the Bailif, from inexperience, or a hasty desire to perform a duty he docs not exactly understand, may pay over io the wrong person, or which, being in no way personally liable to the Sheriff, he may appropriate to his own purposes, or which, from ignorance, he may fail to levy and return in a proper and-legal form, in all these cases making the Sheriff responsible and liable for his errors or inadvertency. It is difficult to assign a limit to our liability in this matter, as cases of which we have long since lost sight may at any time be brought up against us. In fact I look upon the responsibility of the Sherif?s office, in these as well as in other cases, to be, in the words of one of the ablest and most respected members of the Montreal Bar "not so much that of which he knows anything as that of which he does not." This gentloman would I am sure, if invited by the Cominittee, give the benefit of his testimony and of his professional experience to this effect.
' 2 nd. I wish to call the attention of the Committec to the dishursements which we are compelled to make in the matter of printers charges, and to the risks and responsibilitics involved thercin. In the execration of writs de terris, writs against lands, it has been the practice in the Sherift's office, from a period antecedent to my association in it, when the seizure has been made and the property so seized is so far known as to be capable of description, to send such description, in compliance with the law, to the Quebec Official Gazetto, for publication previous to sale. The publications continue during a period of four months, and the expense is charged against the office of Sheriff. The printer of the Quebcc Official Gazette sends in bis bill for payment every three months, and up, to a late period, has been paid in full upon a simple verification of the fact that the publications charged had been made under our instruc-
tions. We, however, can only be reimbursed our disbursements after the land lias been sold and the price therenf realized. The costs and charges of the sale are deducted from the amonnt so realized. But it often occurs that the sale durs not take place, that the plaintiffs attorney suspends the sale, or proceedings are stupped by uppositiun, which in the not unusual process of tedious litigation may remain undecided for years. In these cases, having made the disbursements, we too must await the decision of the Cuart before we can be reimbursed or reimburse ourselves. The effect of this practice has been, until within the last few montlis, to make the public uur debtor to the extent of some $\mathcal{E} \mathcal{S} 0$ and upwards. Within the last year or fifteen months, we have adopted a different course, and have declined paying the printers except in cases wherein the sale has been made and money realized, or wherein, in the case of suspension, the costs hare been paid to us. Thus far the printer of the Quebec Gazette has acquiesced in this course, from an assurance, or an impression of assuranee, that the deduction of the unpaid cases is only a delar, that the arrears, in the cuurse of time, will be paid to us and landed over to hinn, but if anysudder change takes place in his office, as appears just nowy to be contemphated by the Legislature, the question may and possibly will be raised by him, or his representatives, as to our immediate liability towards him, to an amount, I should say at this moment, of at least $£ 250$ currency. I wishthe Committee to cinderstand that I do not complain of these responsibilities. As far as I am concerned, I assumed them with the emoluments of the oflice; I only cite them to show that responsibilities do exist, and that these responsibilities are conducive to the convenience of the public.

## Saturdar, 31st March.

Réné Auguste Richard Hubert, Esq., Advocate, ex-amined:-
40. Can you give to the Committec any information on the subject referred to them?-I know that when parties have recovered judgment, and presented themselves at the Sheriff's office with ibeir rules of Cuurt, ordering the said Sheriffs to pay them the anounts allowed them by the Court, they have been put of by them to sume later period. This has very frepuently happened, - it is a notorious fact, that in all distributions the Sherifs invariably insist on their right to a delay of fifteen days from the parties coliocated; whether they come from a distance or reside near, it matters not. These gentlemen have made arrangements with each other, in ennsequence of which Mr. Boston never pays; he may be in the office, but it matters not, and if Mr. Coffin is out of the way, one must either wait or return another time, for Mr. Cuffin alone is the cashier. It is certain that both these gentlemen are very frequently absent from their office, nor do they ever get there before eleven o'elock in the morning, I have cven known Mr. Boston to be absent at his Seigniury, while Mr. Coffin was at Boston, in the United States. This state of things las been a source of great inconvenience to parties engaged in iawsuits, particularly those residing in the country; there is not, however, the slightest chance of obtaining justice from the Court, for this reason, amongst others, that the distributions being made at the end of the Term, can only be presented to the Sheriffs during the Vacation; now there is no means of applying to the Court out of Term, and parties having to wait during three months, are obliged to submit to the Sheriffs. These gentlemen have also the means of retaiuing in their hands, the funds of private indi-
viduals. It appears that the Sheriffs are even interested in duing so, for they receive interest on these fumds as long as they retain them in this manner; I have not the slightest doabt that the Sherifis could advantageonsly be dispensed with in all civil matters. We have, it is true, two officers, but there is really but one Sheriff, for Mr. Boston appears to be completely under the control of Mr. Coffin, and interferes very little in the business of the office.

## David Rochon, Esq., Adrocate, examined.

41. Can you give the Committee any information relative to the Sheriffs office?-I was cmployed in the Sheriff's office previous to the appointment of Mr. Cuffin, and continued in that office until about eighteen months ago. I cannot say that these gentlemen were very punctual in their attendance at the office. They were sometimes both absent during office hours; they often came to the office at eleven o'clock in the morning ; I think the public must sometimes have suffered from their absence. Mr. Boston, buwever, cance earlier than Mr. Coffin.

According to the rules of practice, the office should be kept open from $100^{\circ}$ clock A. M., until 4 P. M. in Vacation; during Term it should be kept open from 8 A. M., to 6 P. M. These gentlemen had made an arrangement tugether, by which Mr. Coffin alune had the management of the moneys. Mr. Coffin's absence from office was therefore more felt than Mr. Buston's-for even when the latter was present, the judgments of distribution could not be paid unless Mr. Coffin was present. I have frequently beard complaints made in my presence of the delay required by the Sheriffs before satisfying the judgments of distribution. The reason Mr. Colfin gave was that he was obliged to examine the judgments before he could pay the different sums allowed; judgments sometimes came in requiring very minute examination, and I remember that, from not having examined with sufficient care a judgment of distribution that came in, the Sheriff once paid a sum which was nut due. I do not recollect whether any complaints were made against Mr. Boston, individually. As to the Sheriff's returns now before the House, I canuot say whether they are correct or not, execpt that the amomit of moneys mentioned in the accounth annexed to the return appears to me rather low; I must, however, say, that if it is not correct, it must be through an involuntary error on the part of the Sheriff.

## A. D. Dorval, Esq., examined.

42. Can you furnish this Committee with any infurmation un the subject referred to them? - I do not believe that the duties of the Sheriff are correctly fulfilled, and I will state a case, to prove how much the public suffer. In the case of "Beandry versus Trudean," and four opposants, judgment of distribution was rendered in January 1847 ; as usual a great deal of time was taken in preparing it at the Prothonotary's oflice, and the Sheriffs had had it several days in their lands, when I sent for my elients the four opposants, from the country, to receive the amounts for which they were respectively collocated. We went to the Sheriffs office and I addressed myself to Mr. Coffin in the name of the parties then with me, and requested bim to pay them the amounts they were entitled to; Mr. Coffin told me plainly, that he had not time to pay theu then, and pat them off for cight days, the opposauts are from St. Sulpice, and they were obliged to go home and return again. It is a pity that Mr. Coflin's manner and tone, cannot be described on paper, they were very
offensive and grossly insulting to me. My clients were paid on their second journcy to town.

Charles Drolet, Esq., Adrocate, called in, and examined:
43. Can you give to the Committee any information upon the sabject of reference?-These Sheriffs do not appear to me to devote that attention to their duties which the public has a right to expect from them; they are often both alsent at the same time during business hours. I have also repeatedly called before eleven in the morning, and never found either of them in their office, nor do I belicere that they erer attend until after that hour. I would state also that in that office the public are not treated with that courtesy to which they are entitled, nor las the appointment of a second Sheriff been attended with any of those advantages that might have been, and perhaps were expected. On the contrary, since that appointment, both of them have been very lax in the perfurmance of their functions. It would appear indeed that Mr. Boston transacts in that office only his own private business, and that Mr. Coffin is exclusively charged with the public business. On application to Mr. Boston upon any subject, however simple, he has invariably referred me to Mr. Ceffin, and in money matters Mr. Boston never interferes. He seems entirely to submit to Mr . Colfin, and as to that import:int branch of the Sheriffs business, we have in fact but one officer. This creates great inconvenience to the public, for Mr. Coffin resides out of town, and is scldom at his oflice in the morning before eleven or twelve at noon, and very often not at all. I have called with clients for moner, and been told Mr. Boston was out of town, and that Mr. Coffin had not come in. I have repeatedly returned during the day in the hopes of seeing Mr. Coffin, but in vain. I cite the case of Mr. Bonncau, of Laprairic, as an example. In this case, as in many others, I had called after the expiration of the fifteen dass of delay which they unjustly claim before paying deposits in their hands. A poor blind man from St. Cesaire, led in by another, came to the Sheriffs office for some three or fuur pounds for which he hat the order of the Court upon the Sherifs, but both the Sheriffs being absent this man could not be paid. Mr. Kurcerv, a clerk in the Sherifts office, wishing to spare the mann a detention over night in town, begged of Mr. Monk, one of the Prothonotaries, to lend him the money, but unfortunately conld not obtain it. This man was not my client; it was only by accilent that I witnessed the fact. To exhibit the spirit in which the Sheriffs act, I shall cite the case of Mrs. Langlois, who was my' client. Being illtreated by her husband she obtained a separation, and upon the sale of the husband's effects the proceeds were to be paid to her, less the costs. Her claim being established by the notary practician, slie bought in almost all, and under these circumstances she did not pay the price in cash, but gave to the Sherifis the most undoubted security to pay. This was to cover the possibility of appositions adverse to ber being fyled. However, none were fyled, and the Court ordered the proceeds to be paid to her. When sle presented her order to the Slieriffs to be exchangel for the bail boud, Mr. Coffin affected to consider that he had lent her money, and he charged her (over and above all fees incident to the bond) the sum of thirteen shillings and ninepence currency; or thercabouts, for interest, as if he had lent her the money, which he had not. The Sheriff also, having the patronage of the bailiffs (wlich the bar should have), put the partics to great expence, which miglit be saved upon executions. In some cases I have known enormous unnecessary expenses incurred by
the Sheriffs, as much as one-fourth of the proceeds of the sale has been thus absorbed. I can cite a case; it is that of Titas and Layin, St. John's. I have been told that as much as serenty pounds of expenses has been incurred for selling a piece of property. This might be done much cheaper, if the Sheriff did not interfere or could be dispensed with.
The kind of bar and box, with a sliding pannel, behind which Mr. Cofin places himself in the Sheriff's office, is always ridiculous, and sometimes offensive,

It is my opinion that the crier and tipstaffs are most unreasonably and exorbitantly pail. I know from the latter himself that he bas made in some years as much as sevenhundred pounds; whereasserenty-five pounds would be enough for such a man in a purcly menial ofice, and at the ntmost the crier might bave a handred and twenty-five pounds to pay these salaries.
The public is taxed five shillings on erery writ, and large sums upon judgments of distribution for the payment of moneys; they also get a shilling upon every witness examined in Court.

Tuesday, 3 rd $A p r i l, 1849$.

## J. Romuald Cherrier, Esq., examined :-

44. Can you give any information to this Committee respecting the Sherifls Office? -In the cause, No. 122, of Jean Baptiste Cadieux dit St. Pierre, and divers opposants, the Sherif had sold three lots of ground, and returned into Court, on the 17th October last, a sum of $£ 726 \mathrm{~s} .6 \mathrm{~d}$. currency, as being the amount derived from the sale of the Lots Nos. 2 and 3, and had made out a return of folle enchere against one Ambroise Pelletier, who had bought the lot No. 1, for the sum of $£ 43$ currency. I represented three privileged creditors, opposants in the said cause, and who, together, were to have the greatest portion of the money returned, in part payment of the amounts due then. My clients, consequently, were interested in there being only one judgment of distribution in order to avoid costs. I fyled, on the 16th October last, in the office of the Prothonotary of the Court of Queen's Bench for this District, during the sitting of the Court, a motion de droit, upon which a rule of the said Court intervened the same day, anthorizing the Sheriff to withdraw his first return, and to add thereto immediately a supplementary return of the amount derived from the sale of the said lot No. 1, which had beea paid, in the interval, by the purchaser. I immediately took the said rule to the Sheriffs Oflice, and one of the Clerks thereupon prepared the supplementary return in question, dated 16 th October last, in conformity with the said rule, but when it was presented to be signed, to William Foster Coffin, Esquire, one of the SLeritts, he went off to the Prothonotary's. Office, and reproached them severely for having issued the said rale on a motion which had not been directly made to the Court. The Pronothotaries having replied to him that the motion and rule were de droit, according to the ordinary practice of the Court, the said W. F. Coffin, Esquire, persisted in his refusal to conform thereto, or to make a return as required. To please Mr. Coffin, who had also attempted to reprimand me, pretending that I was wroug in thus acting, and particularly in the hopes of obtaining the distribution of the said moneys in the October term, I next unorning rencwed the motion in petition before the said Court, which was granted as de droit, and I hastened again with the said order to the Sheriff's Office, and begged of him to sign his return, which was already prepared as before mentioned, and to send it immediately to the Prothonotary's Office, as it was the last day, in accordance with the Rules of Practice, for obtaining
judrment of distribution in the sail Octuber Term. It was in vain that I renewed morentreaties with his clerks during the whole of the diay of the 10 th last October, intimating that the strirt delay for posting up the sail julgment of distribntion rould expire on that very dar. The only answer I could obtain was as follows: that Mr. Coflin had the papers before him, and that he had said that there was no hurry, and that he rould make his return when he hat time. I therefure left, waiting till Mr. Coffin shonld be pleased to decide the fate of my judement of aistribution for that Term, or the Term following. I was not deceired in my apprehensions: the return was made one day too late for me to obtain my judgment of distribution in the October Term, that is to sar, the 1Sth of Oetober, and the moners remained in the hands of the Sheriff without being distributed, antil the last Jumary Term. when they were distributed principally to the elients I represented. The moners would have lieen distributed in the October Term if the return in gucstion had been made one day sooner, as I had justly demanded. All these facts can le verified by the record in the cause I have just citcel.
As to the tone of superiority, and even want of politeness, with which the gentlemen of the bar and other parties are often treated by Mr. Coffin, in the exercise of his duties as Sheriff, I can say that, besides the complaints I have heard made, I was myself treated by him on the above necasion, in a manner that I would not make use of meself towards my equals, nor even towards my inferiors, although I only exercised, for the interests of my clients, a right which was afterwards sanctioned by the Court. I must here, however, do justice io his colleague, Mr. Boston, from whom, as yet, I bave received every politeness and attention.

As regards the question to determine how far the office of Sheriff is indispensable in this part of the Province, I must say that I an not competent to the solution of this question, but there is one thing certain, and which no one will gainsay, that if, instead of the system now in force, another less expensive and more expeditious could be substituted, more particularly for the taking in execution of seized debtors, both they and the public in general would gain thereby, in my humble opinion, as far as regarts the management of property for the mutnal benefit of debtor and creditor. There exist in fact, great abnses in the present system, and here is one which is not the least among them. It is, that the Sherifis who are in reality but the proxies of the creditor, receive annually for their own profit, independently of the sufficiently high commission allowed to them by law, the interest on considerable sums of moncy, that which the lery and deposit in banks, in many instances for years together. While the creditor is there waiting for a distribution, which is often retarded for several terms, throngh dilatoriness or negligence on the part of the public officer, in making his returns to the competent tribunals or through other circumstances, by which the Sheriff at all events, ought not to profit, to the prejudice of the creditor; and this, perhaps, is one of the motives that may help to give us an explanation of the interpretation which the Sheriff gives to judgments of distribution, which he only commences to liquidate a fortnight after they have been fyled in his office, although there is nothing in the tenor of the said judgment of distribution which can give rise to such an interpretation. In speaking of the case of the opposants in question, -1 must say that I feel convinced that Mr. Coffin had the intention of depriving them of their judgment of distribution, as well as the intention to insult me; he cren intimated to me that I ought to have asked him confidentially, and as a favour, to make the return in question.

## Thomas Judal, Esq., Advocate, eramined:-

45. Can yougive the Committec any informationapon the subject referred to them?-I have had during several years daily opportunities of knowing how the public business is transacted in the Sherifts Office. These officers are rery often both absent;they always arrive late, and the conduct of one of them, Mr. Coffin, is habitually, and, I think, intentionally, offensire, and cren insulting. I understamil that by an arrangement made between them, Mr. Coffin has alwars been the exclusive manager. I will give one instance out of a bundred: I had a judgment against a Mr. Bahy, brother-in-law to Mr. Prothonotary Coffin, who is cousin to Mr. Sheriff Coffin. Mr. Baby made an opposition to a writ of exceation, which opposition had been dismissed. Ife subecquently made a second on the same grounds, which was also dismissed. I must also remark that a form of affilavit is in such cases prescribed, and it is so framed as to prevent frivolous oppositions. But to prevent the sale of his effects, Mr. Baby made a third opposition without the affidavit prescribed by the rules, and Mr. Sheriff Coffin evinced a readiness to suspend the sale. I therefore called at the office, with the Rules of Practice in my hand, to show the particular rule to Mr. Coffin, but he wonid not look at it: he cut me short, though I spoke most civilly, an! slammed the door in my face, not only in a rule manner, but with the most marked intention to irsnlt me. Eventually, the third opposition was dismissed with costs. As Mr. Baby was insolvent, this was no consolation to my client, for he not only had to wait for the money for which the writ had issued, but had to pay costs. I obtained a rule, it is true, against the Sheriff, founded on these ficts, but, as usual, my rule was dismissed with costs. The Sheriffs are proverbially great favourites with the Court, and no one can succeed against tliem. Each opposition cost my client abont nine pounds of costs. This was a consequence of Mr. Coffin's conduct; but what is worse, on cach writ of execution he insisted on having his fees paid in advance, so that he managed to get three sets of fees, when, if he had done his dnty, he would only have had one. I mean to say, that the second opposition was dismissed because of the insufficiency of the affidavit, and the thirdopposition was syled without anyaffidavit whatever. If writs were addressed to bailifis, I have no doubr that justice, in such cases, would be impartially administered. In the Sheriff's Office there is a sort of bar, such as are scen in low taverns, and Mr. Coffin has a sliding pannel, which he opens and shuts at pleasurc. Tbe gentlemen of the profession are thus kept waiting outside, mixed up with the Sherift's serrants; and the whole appearance of the place, as well as the mode of transacting the business, is very offensive to gentlemen who are Mr. Coffin's equals, if not his superiors. I have often called on official business when Mr. Coffin has been inside engaged in conversing on topics interesting to himself, as, for instance, upon railroads. I have had orders for money, and have had to wait, and to return, and have thus been put to great inconvenience and loss of time, because Mr. Coffin conld not be distarbed. Mr. Coffin's clerks stand in such dread of him that not one would dare to interrupt him under any circumstances. It is due to Mr. Boston to say that he has always been personally mild and civil.

Referring to the affidavit which should have been appended to Mr. Baby's opposition, and which was not; I have to add, that the rule is so worded, that according to its letter, as well as according to its spirit, the Sheriff should have proceeded to sell in despite of Mr. Baby's opposition. It is also worthy of note, that my motion to dismiss the opposition was kept under consideration by the Judges during
the whole Term. It was made on the first dar, and the opposition was dismissed on the last; the Judges thas taking the whole Term to determine a question which should not have occupied them above five minutes.

## Alexis Giard, Esq., Advocate, examined :-

46. Can sou give any information to this Committee on the sulject referred to it?-In the casce of Leste es. Lorice, in which I acted for the plaintiff, I placed a writ of execution in the hands of the Sheriffs; they did not seize under it because the defendant paid without any sale taking place. On these grounds, the Sheriffs ought not to have $2 \frac{1}{2}$ per cent, because there was no sale; they ought not either to receive the proceeds, nor still less to retain them in their hand. In this case the bailiff who received the moiney nught to have been sent with it to the plaintiff to pay him. Nevertheless, the Sheriffs thok the moner, and paid themselves their $2 \frac{1}{2}$ per cent. When I went with the plaintiff to ask for the mones, Mr. Boston referred me to Mr . Coffin, who refused to par,- he made his retarn in the Court, and made the plaintiff wait about six weeks. I must add, that about the same time he paid a sum of money in a similar circumstance to Mr. Dumas, a member of your Committee, which induced me to think that Mr. Coffin did not act through ignorance ; this fact was told me by Mr. Dumas limself.

The Chiairman gives the following statement to the Committee:-

In August, 1839, I felt the fees and emoluments of the Sheriff to be so oppressive, that for their reduction I presented to the Court a Petition, which I submit herewith. The Court took not the least notice of it; the subject was not eren mentioned by any one of the Jadges, and the fees' remaining the same, the income was ceventually found to be too large for one person. Some three or four years afterwards, (as I heard and believe, because the income was too large for one person,) Mr. Coffin, a gentleman who Gad not been long at the bar, who cannot say that lie had cren six causes; and who, if I mistake not, had not many more than two, was promoted orer the whole profession, and joined in the commission with Mr. Boston. It appears to me that it would have been better to have reduced the income one half, than to have named a second Sheriff because the income was too large for one. I wish to add, that it is extremely inconvenient and unpleasant to have any business with the Sheriffs; for my part I very seldom can find them in their office, Mr. Boston being very frequently at his seigniory, and Mr. Coffin said to be engaged at the Railroad office; I have also very frequently witnessed their being called for in Court without success. In that office, to my certain knowledge, as far as my observation extends, no attention is paid to the wants of the sutitors; Mr. Coffin, who scems to be the managing partner, either does not know or choose to know anybody, and I have known him to refuse as bail for about $£ 70$, a man worth two or three thousand pounds; he is not only unaccommodating, but his deportment as a public officer is very offensive. I do not cinter into the causes, buit I venture to remark that it seems to me to be inexpedient that a subordinate officer like the Sheriff should so rapidly acquire wealth, as to be in that particular immediately placed above the bar. That they possess great wealth; anid that it has affected Mr. Coffin's conduct is, I think, tuaquestionable.

In all those arrangements too, incident to process in rcm. as' for instance a saisie conservatoire, on pretext of their responsibility, the Sheriffs will interfere, but they cannot stoop to take measures to do the
work promptly and cffectualls, nor yet to promote economy.- Dealing with the funds of others, they can lose nothing, and they know it; but if the plaintiff were allowed to chose his own officer, the latter would be responsible, would find it for his own interest to be efficient and to study economy, as it would secure him a preference. The Sheriffs possess, in fact, an odious monopoly, enjoying an immense income, without any other labour than what is necessary for the receipt and investment of it, and without any real responsibility whatever. Most of their duties are also very negligently performed, that of preparing Jury lists is one; thas out of 24 names in one list, nine had been absent or dead, some for a length of time,-one man had been dead three years, and a man well known to all the world was not summoned because theSheriff did not choose to know him, or would not condeseend to interfere. This occarred in a case of my own, delay and costs followed, and I could get no satisfaction, and the rule which I obtained, to make the Sheriffs pay the costs of their own negligence, was discharged.

In the forty-eight names composing a Jury list, the same name would be sometimes found down twice, described in one place as his place of residence, and in a second as his place of business. In another case in which I am concerned, this has been one of the grounds for demanding a new trial.
The kind of bar behind which they sit in their office, coupled with other circumstances, is not pleasant, and the wicket with a sliding pannel, which Mr. Coffin draws or closes at pleasure, while the gentlemen of the bar are kept standing, waiting his pleasure outside, certainly sarours of indignity.
To the Honourable the Justices of Her Majesty's Conrt of King's Bench for the District of Montreal.
The Petition of Bartholemeriv Conrad Augustus Gugy, Esquire,

## Respectrolly Sheweth:-

That in common with all Her Majesty's subjects; and more particularly as a suitor before this Court, Your Petitioner has an interest in the redaction of such of the fees of the officers of the Court as may be exorbitant.
That for some years at least, those of the Sherif of this'District have been admitted, not only by the community at large, but by the Legislative bodies; and as Your Petitioner is informed and believes, even by this Court, to be unreasonably high, and that Your Petitioner has greatly süfered ioln consequence.
That they have been generally understood to amount to upwards of two thousand pounds, a sum not only much beyond the means of the country, and out of all proportion, with the incomes of professional men of talent, learning, and industry, but unquestionably four times more than a just compensation for duties, most of which are purely mechanical, or per-formed-by the printer, or hy officers of the lowest clast.
That during the suspension of the constitution, Your Petitioner submits, that it is the duty of this tribunal not only to protect the Qaeen's faithful lieges, but to cxclude the possibility of a pretext for complaint and disaffection, by redressing a grievance which has been widely felt.

That Your Petitioner, relying not only on your sènse of justice and of sound policy; bat on a distinct pledge, which this' Court is understood to have long since given, confidently appeals to Your Honours for the reduction of these extravagant fees; more particularly as the length of the present vacation will afford abundant leisure for the paipose.
And- Your Petitioner, as in daty bound, will ever pray.
A. GUGY.
(Signeds) RICIIARD D. JACKSON.

## Province of $\}$ <br> Lower Cisid.s.

Vietoria, by the Grace of Cind, of the Enited [L.S.] Kingdom of Great Britain and
Queen, Defender of the Faith.
To all to whom these presents shall come, or whom the same may concern,

## Greeting:

WHEREAS in and by a certain 0 -dinance of the Governor of Our said Province of Lower Canada, and of the Special Comeil, for the affairs thereof, made and passed in the Session thereof held in the third and fourth gears of Our Reign, and intituled s: An Ordinance to repeal certain parts of "an Ordinance therein mentioned, and to amend "certain other parts of the said Orlinance, and "to amend certain parts of another Ordinance there"in mentioned, and to make further provision for "establishing and maintaining an efficient srstem of "Police in the Cities of Quebec and Montreal, and " the Tuwa and Borough of Three Rivers,"' it is among other things enacted, that it shall be lawful for the Governor of our said Province to nominate and appoint a fit and proper person to be Commissioner of Police for the Province of Lower Canada, to have, hold, exercise, and discharge certain powers, authority, and duties in the said Ordinance set forth, expressed, and contained, and thereby vested in such Commissiuner of Police.

Now, know ye, that reposing full trust and confidence in the loyalty, interritr-, fitness, and capacityof William Fuster Cuffin, of the City of Montreai, Esquire, We have nominated and appointed, and by these Our Letters Patent do nominate and appoint the said William Foster Coffin to be Commissioner of Police for the Province of Lower Canada, and to have, hold, exercise, and discharge all and singular the powers, authority, and duties in the said Ordinance expressed, contained, and set forth, and thereby or by law vested in such Commissioner of Police for the Province of Lower Canada.
To have and to hold unto him the said William Foster Coffin, the said Office of Commissioner of Police for the said Province of Lower Canada, with all and singular the rights, powers, authority, and emoluments to the said ofice appertaining or in any wise belonging, under the said Ordinance or by law, for and during Our Roval pleasure, and the residence of the said William Foster Cofin within our said Province; subject always to all and every the conditions, enactments, requirements, and provisions of the said Ordinance, or of the law, touching or concerning the said Office.

In testimony whereof we have caused these Our Letters to be made patent, and the Great Scal of Our said Province of Lower Canada to be hereunto affixed.
Witness Our trusty and well belovedSir Richard Duwnes Jackson, Kinight Commander of the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath, Administrator of the Government of Our Province of Lower Canada, and Commander of Our Forces in British North America, at Our Castle of St. Lewis, in Our City of Quebee, in Our said Province of Lower Canada, the eighth day of July, in the year of Our Lord one thousand cight hundred and forty, and in the fourth year of Onr Reign.
(Signed,)
D. DALY, Secretary.

## Saturdar Nigit, 7 th April, 1849.

Sin,-By permission of the Commitec appointed to inquire into the returns of the Sheriff of Montreal, of which you are Chairman. I perused in the Committee Room the evidence which las been taken by the Committee since I had last the hononr to appear before it.
In requesting this permission from you personally, in the lobby of the House this evening, I stated to ron the facts, first, that my associate in office, Mr. Boston, was not in Montreal, having been sent upon public husiness to the United States by Her Majestr's Gorernment; and, secondly, that in consequence of his absence, my personal attendance in Conrt or in my office during this week, from 10 A. M. to 6 , P. M. in accordance with the Rules of Practice, had precluded me from taking commanication of this evidence during that time.

For the correctness of the latter part of this statement, I can, with confidence, appeal to yourself from your familiarity with the details and duties of the office of Sheriff, and from the circumstance that your own constant attendance in Court, during the week, camnt but have brought mine under your notice.
I beg leave now to state that the evidence above referred to, being that of five or six members of the Montreal Bar, contiuns imputations affecting seriousIy the office I have the honour to hold, and myself individually; and I do not hesitate to express my conviction that there is no part of such evidence, so far at least as a cursory perusal has enabled me to judge of it, which with time and opportunity, I shall not be able either to refute entirely or explain satisfactorily.

I liave, therefore, to request most respectfully that the Committec will be pleased to ${ }^{-}$suspend further action on the said evidence until I am furnished with a transcript thereof, which I pray may be so ordered, and until I have had an opportunity afforded me of producing evidence in refutation of any charges which may be preferred against me and my office, and further that such postponement may be granted as will admit of the return of Mr. Boston, and enable him to meet any charge or imputations contained in the said evidence which may affect him, either individually or in connection with his office.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

## Your obedient scrrant,

> WILLIAM F. COFFIN, Joint Sherif, Montreal.

Colonel Gumj;
Chairman, \&c.

Montreal, 7 th April, 1849.
Sir,-I now beg leave to inform you and the other honourable gentlemen composing the Committee, before whom I deem it my duty to appear this afternoon, that the evidence which I am prepared to give as to the manner in which the duties of the office of Sheriff have been perlormed by Messrs. Boston \& Coffin is to the following effect: That so far as I have had the means of judging, (and my practice as an advocate of the Montreal Bar has for some years past been very extensive, as I believe is known to some of the members of the Committee), Messrs. Boston \& Coffin have faithfully and efficiently perforned the duties of their office, from the time they were appointed to it until the present time, and more particularly that I have never known
or heard of an instance of their improperly delaying the payment of any sum of money, which they were required to pay by any jadgment or order of the Court.

Mr. Johnson, Q.C., Mr. Rose, Q.C., Mr. Andrews, Mr. Andrew Robertson, Mr. Cross, and Mr. Bethune, who, as advocates enjoying a highly respectable and very extensive practice, have had ample opportunities of forming their opinions on this subject, authorize me to say, as I informed the Committee, that they were ready to be examined before the Committee, if required; and I am now authorized by those gentlenen to say that they are prepared to testify as to the efficient manner in which Messrs. Boston \& Coffin have at all times performed their official daties, and especially as to the promptitude with which they have invariably raid all orders or judgments, distributing moners in their hands. A number of other advocates, holding a high rank in their profession, to whom I fare since spoken on the subject, are prepared to give their evidence to the same effect. [ may mention the names of Mr. Grifing, Mr. Bleakley, Mr. Mackay, and Mr. Gcorge Robertson.

Although I very gratefully acknowledge the courtesy which was extended towards me by you, and the other gentlemen before whom I had the honour of appearing to-day, yet I do not consider it necessary to offer any apology for having so appeared, or for the present letter. As a friend of Mr. Boston, I think it proper that the Committee should be made aware that he is now absent from this Province, on public business connected with his office, and as a lover of justice, I deem it my duty to apprise the Committee that a number of gentlemen, competent to give evidence on the subject of the inquiry now being made by the Committec, are ready to be examined if required.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your very obedt. servt,
W. C. MEREDITH.

Col. Gugy, M.P.P., Chairman.

April 9th.-Since writing the above, I have learned that Mr. Boston returned to this city yesterday.
W. C. M.

## RETURN

To an Address from the Honourable the Legislative Assembly to His Excellency the Governor General, of the 23d January ultimo, praying that His Excellency would be pleased to cause to be laid before the Ilouse, a Statement in detail of the Income derived by the Sheriff of the District of Montreal in virtue of their office, distinguishing the several sources thereof, and specifying the amount of Public Moneys in their hands, together with profit, in the shape of intevest or otherwise, derived by them for the last five years; and accompanied by a copy: of certain remarks, in connection with the above, by the Sheriff.

By command,

## J. LESLIE, Secretary.

Secretary's Office,
Montreal, 6th February, 1849.

## Sheriff's Office, <br> Montreal, 5th February, 1849.

$\mathrm{Sir}_{3}$-In obedience to the commands of His Excellency the Governor General, we have the honour to transmit, enclosed, a Statement, in detail, of the income derived by us as Sheriff of Montreal, in virtue of our office, distinguishing the several sources thereof, and specifying the amount of Public Moneys in our hands, together with the profit, in the shape of interest or otherwise, derived by us for the last five years.
This statement contains:
First, The total average amount of Public Moncys in our hands, in each of the rears above specified.
-Secondly, The amount of income derived by us as Sheriff of Montreal, in virtue of our office.
Thirdly, The salary allowed annually to the Sheriff of this District as a compensation for personal services rendered the Government in superintending the government of the Gaol, in summoning Grand and Petty Jurors for the Courts of Queen's Bench and Quarter Sessions, for preparing Jury Lists of Grand, Petty, and Special Jurors, making Registers of the same, and for various other services involving expenses far exceeding the amount of salary.

Fourthly, The amount of profit, in the shape of interest or otherwise, which has arisen annnally from the dispositions made by us of the Public Moneys, which the law places in our safe keeping, and for the forthcoming of which, as commanded by the Court of Queen's Bench, we, and our sureties, are at all times responsible.

There remains yet another source of income under. the head of receipts under "Mesne Process." The proceeds of fees under mesne process, have been devoted to defray the expenses of the Sheriff's Office, and have proved to be insufficient for that purpose. To support the carrent expenses of the Sheriff's Office, and as clerks' salaries, registers, stationery, and printing, we have disbursed a sum of $£ 6997 \mathrm{~s}$. $10 \frac{1}{2}$ d., over and above the proceeds under mesne process, during these five years past, which sum of $£ 6997 \mathrm{~s}$. $10 \frac{1}{2} \mathrm{~d}$., divided among these five years, and deducted from the annual return of net income in each; reduces the annual-emoluments of the Sherift's Office of the District of Montreal, to the amount specified in the return made for each year.
We may be permitted to remark that, by the 17th Section of the Judicature Act, 7 Vict., c. 16, the service of writs of summons, issuing from any Court of Queen's Bench; was taken from the office of Sheriff, and transferred to the hands of the Bailiffs of these Courts; by this Act, the office of Sheriff was deprived of the service of writs, which, with little comparative responsibility, ensured a certain amount of income, while it was, at the same time, and under the same clause in the same Act, expressly charged with the execution of all other writs; such as writs of Capias ad respondendum, Saisie arrêt before judgment, Saisie gagerie, and Saisie revendication, which repay a very great amount of responsibility, by a very trifling and inadequate remuneration; the abstraction of this source of income, without any compensation, will account for the diminution of the proceeds of our office, under the denomination of fees under "mesne process;" as it is, they by no means meet the annual expense of the office.

It would, however, be difficult; in the time at our disposal for preparing these returns, and inconvenient from length of detail, to give here a statement of daily receipts and expenditures covering a space of five years. Should, however, any more detailed statement be desired; with sufficient time we are prepared to furnish the same.

With reference to these Returns of the emoluments of the office of Sheriff, we beg leave to bring under
the notice of Mis Excellency the Governor General, the notice of nature and extent of sunce of the responsibilities of this oflice, and we submit respectfulls to the consideration of Ilis Execllener how far these emolaments, divided between two incumbents, are or are not disproportionate to the pecuniary responsibilities involied in its tenure.

We would, in the first place, call attention in general terms to the fact, that the Sheriff of this extensive district is held responsible for the acts of all Bailiffs to whom the execution of warrants must be necessarily confided.

These duties can only be prerformed through the instrumentality of agents who, remote from our immediate dirccion, supervision, or control, and in despite of all precaution, constanty involve us in the consequences of their inaduertencies and omissions, as will be more fully exemplified hereafter.

We do not attempt to question that the responsibility of the Sheriff should be, as it always has been, an effectual protection to the public, but it should not be forgotten how much, from the circumstances of comatry and climate, from the remoteness and dispersion of settlements, and from the meagre choice of men, the responsibilities of Sheriffs are increased in Canada; and with these considerations before it, we are sure that the public, which profits by the protection, will not refuse a fair compensation for the risk.

As Custodicrs of the Montreal Gaol, not norr, as formerly, situated in close contiguity to the Court House and our office, or under our cje and constant observation, we are responsible fur the safe keeping of all debtors, with the alternative of paying the debt for which each party is confined, in the erent of escape, nor are we responsible for our own acts alone, but for the negligence or inattention or inadvertence of every subordinate Officer of the Gaol. Some idea may be formed of the nature and extent of this responsibility, when we state that we hold at this moment one party under alleged liabilitics, amounting to $£ 5000$, while by a late judgment of the Court of Queen's Bench, Mr. Boston was adjudged to pay arsum of upwards of $£ 200$ currency, in the case of IIcFarlane oss. Boston, being a case of escape, arising from one of those acts of accitenfal, and almost unconscious carelessness on the part of a subordinate, which no foresight can guard against, and no precaution control.

But it is in cases of ar"esi under process of Capias ad Respondendum, and in the taking of bail thereupon, that the pressure of our responsibility proves most onerous and most arbitrary. By the law as it operates practically, and as interpreted by our Courts, the Sheriff is not only compelled to take bail, or to be answerable for such hail being good and solvent when taken, but that officer is made responsible for such bail remaining good for an indefinite period during the time while one, perhaps two series of legal proceedings, are in protracted progress, to final decision. In the interim, the Sheriff is, by a summary proceeding; held to produce the body; or pay the debt, or go to gaol.

It will be easily understood that in a large commercial community, such as that of Montreal, bail which might be unimpeachable, when taken, might bear a very different aspect in a few months or cren weeks after.

How agravated, therefore, must be the nature of the responsibility, which under such circumstances, may extend to a period of years. The practical effect of this anomaly will be still more intelligible, when we state, that as far as we are concerned, it has within the last few months resulted in the payment of $£ 129$ 3 s .3 d . in the case No.

Vaness $2 s$. Platt, of $£ 7610 \mathrm{~s} .4 \mathrm{t}$. in the case No. 1643 , Try $e s$. Daly, and that in another case, No. 10:5, 'Jorrance es. Scott, judgment against us for the sum of $£ 260$ has only
heen deferred from the Term now sitting to the next, by the courtesy of Counsel.

Thus also, in the matter of bonds, which, under the provisions of the 41 Geo. III., chap. 7, sect. 15, a plaintiff, when he becomes the purchaser of lands sold at his suit, is authorised to give to the Sheriff, in lieu of the purchase money pending adjudication of such parchase money; in one instance, the case No. 2315, Durocher es. Mount, we were compelled to pay a sum of $£ 216$, having taken therein security, which we could not refuse, which we could not compel to justify (the law affording us no such remedy) and which finally proved to be insufficient.

So also in the case of an crroneous seizure, where a Bailiff is sent to attach and sell real property some 200 miles up the Ottawa, and in the confusion of the trackless furest seizes the land of another owner; in cases such as these, the procecdings are of conrse quashed at the expense of the Sheriff. In the case No. 1250, Bowman vs. Dawson, for example, we paid costs and charges to the extent of $£ 32 \mathrm{Ss}$. 2d. cy.

We might easily multiply the instances of responsibility, to show that such responsibilities ought not to be imposed, without adeqnate compensation ; but we refruin, first, from the belief that enough has been said upon this head, and secondly from the necessity we are uniler to extend this already protracted communication, by praying the attention of His Excellency to another feature in the unequal operation of progressive legislation, so far at least as it has affected the office of Sheriff, within the last few years.

When the Legislature in its wisdom has thought fit to transfer to others the lighter daties of our office, and the emoluments therefrom arising, it is not for us to complain. We may have thought that we were entitled to some compensation for the income taken away; looking to the onerous character of the duties cxpressly retained, but we felt that it was our part to submit cheerfully to a decision based, doubtlessly, on public considerations onty, and we did so. But in carrying ont the details of a subsequent legislation, cases have arisen involving the Sheriff in new and heavy responsibilities, undesigned, we feel convineed, and unforeseen by the Legislature, for which too, from like reasons, no compensation has been provided whatever.

Thus under the operation of the 37th Section of the Tth Vic., c. 16, a Bailifl under a Writ of Saisic Arrêt, before judgment issucd out of a Circuit Court, may scize a floating raft, precarious property, which the Sheriff, under the provisions of Gth Win. IV. cap. 15, Sec. 22, could not be compelled to seize, (except under security to hold him harmuless from the consequences), and on making his ${ }^{\text {a return to the Sheriff, }}$ impose thereby upon that officer the whole responsibility of the seizure, and the responsibility which might accrue in the interval, between the making of such return to the Sheriff, and the taking into possession by the Sheriff, of a raft of valuable timber, lyines, perhaps, in an insecure position at Aylmer, on the Ottawa, or, as actually did occur, in the same river opposite to Bytown, and, of course, all subsequent responsibility. For the same reason, doubtless, that the responsibility was unforeseen: no fee or compensation is provided for this service.

We would also call attention particularly to the operation of the Bankrupt Act, 7 th Vict. c. 10 , and 9 th Vict. c. 30, which transferred from the Office of Sheriff, to the charge of Assignees, all' the large estates, movable, and inımovabie, sold by Judicial sale, since the passing of the same, deducting so much from the two and a lialf per centage of the Sheriff's Office, while, at the same time, novel duties and heavy responsibilities were imposed upon the Sheriff, without any remuneration being provided by such Acts; and it was only when the Commissioners in Bankruptcy were authorized to establish a Tariff that the Sheriff
obtained, in a rery modified per centage, some compensation for the responsibilities incurred, and to be incurred.
The nature of these responsibilities may be inferred from the fact, that there impends over Mr, Boston in his capacity of Sheriff sole, at this moment, a judgment in appeal, involving a sum of at least $£ 1000$. Case No. Fisher vs. Boston.
We trust, therefore, that in making a return of the income of our office, we shall be pardoned these details. It may be very necessary for the public protection to impose upon the public office the responsibilities referred to. It may be within the letter of the law to exact rigoronsly the penalty of such responsibilities, but it can never have been in the contemplation of the Legislature to reduce the average of emoluments, below the arerage of responsibility, nor could it have been intended, by any inadvertent
process, to aggravate the liabilities of office, without the knowledge of the Incumbent, while, at the same time, the income of the office, upon the faith of which he accepted the original liabilities, is from time to time reduced without his cognizance, and withont compensation.
In the firm belief that the facts above related only require to be known to ensure attention, jastice, and remedy, we submit the same to the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General, with a renewal of the expression of our deep respect, and have the honour to subscribe ourselves.

## Sir,

Your most ob't serv't,
(Signed,) BOSTON \& COFFIN, Sheriff.

## 1844.

Statement of Income of Office of Sheriff, for the year 1844.


5th February, 1849.

## 1845.

Statement of Income of Office of Sheriff, for the year 1845.

| Average amount of Public Moneys in Sheriff's hands.................... | £ s.r. d. | £ s. ${ }^{\text {d. }}$ | $\begin{array}{ccc}  \pm & \text { s. } & \mathrm{d} . \\ 16572 & 10 & 0 \end{array}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Amount of receipts on sale of movable and immovable property........ | 9351210 |  |  |
| Amount receipts on Deeds, Bonds, and in Bankruptcy.................. | 258100 | 1194210 |  |
| Amount of the expenses of Office, being Clerks' salaries, Stationery, \&c. | 574211 |  |  |
| Deduct amount received on Mesne Process.................................. | 321 1. $1 \frac{1}{2}$ | $\begin{array}{lll}253 & 1 & 9 \frac{1}{2}\end{array}$ |  |
| Amount of salaries as received from Government...................... . | 11100 | 941110 |  |
| Amount of Interest as received from Bank on Deposits, \&c............. | 608.18 8, | $\because$ | '* |

## 1846.

Statement of Income of Office of Sheriff, for the year $1 S 46$.

1847.

Statement of Income of Office of Sheriff, for the year, IS47.


5th February, 1849.

## 1848.

Statement of Income of Office of Sheriff, for the year 1848.

| Average amount of Public Moneys in Sheriff's hands.. | ( s. d. | £ s.r. d. | $\begin{array}{ccc} £ & \text { s. } & \text { d. } \\ 5424 & 12 & 8 \frac{1}{2} \end{array}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Amount receipts on sales of movable and immorable property........... | 894111 |  |  |
| Amount receipts on Deeds and Bonds, and in Bankruptcy................. | 47440 | 1368511 |  |
| Amount of the expenses of Office, being Clerks' Salaries, Stationery, \&cc. | 76715 ¢ |  |  |
| Deduct amount received on Mesne Process................................ | $565 \quad 610$ | 20287 |  |
| Amount of Salary as received from Government........................... | 11100 | $116517 \quad 4$ |  |
| Amount of Interest, \&c., as received from Bank on Deposits, \&cc........ | 332154 |  |  |
| BOSTON \& COFFIN, Sheriff. |  |  |  |

5th February, 1849.

Statement and Account of all Moneys received and which are in the hands of John Boston and William Foster Coffin, Esquires, Sheriff of Montreal, from the 27th day of December, 1846, and of the payments thereof since made, rendered according to the requirements of the Provincial Act, 6 Will. IV, cap. 15, intituled, "An Act for making regulation respecting the Office of Sheriff."


Statement and Account of all Moncys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


Statement and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


We certify that the above written Statement is correct, and corresponds with the returns made by us to the Court of Queen's Bench of the District of Montreal, to the several Writs to us addressed as Sheriff of this said District, up to this 16th day of March, 1847, inclusive.
(Signed,)
BOSTON \& COFFIN, Sheriff.
Sworn before me at Montreal, this 1st day of April, 1847, by William Foster Coffin, Esquire.
(Signed,) Cras. D. Day, J. B. R. $\}$
We, the Joint Prothonotary of Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for the District of Montreal, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true Copy of the Statement and Account of Moneys received and paid by the Sheriff, for the District of Montreal, from the 27th day of December, 1846, to the 16th day of March, 1847; the original whereof was deposited by the said Sheriff in our Office, on the first day of April, one thousand eight bundred and forty-seven.

Given at Montreal, this 14th day of April, 1849.

Statenent and Account of all Moneys received and which are in the hands of John Boston and William Foster Coffin, Esquires, Sheriff of Montreal, from the 16 th day of March, 1847, and of the payment thereof since made, rendered according to the requirements of the Provincial Act, 6 Will. IV, cap. 15, intituled, "An Act for making regulation respecting the Office of Sheriff."


Statement and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


Statenent and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


Statement and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


We certify that the above written Statement is correct, and corresponds with the returns made by us to the Court of Queen's Bench of the District of Montreal, to the several Writs to us addresssed as Sheriff, up to this 20th day of September, 1847.
(Signed,) BOSTON \& COFFIN, $\underset{\text { Shi iff. }}{ }$
Sworn before me at Montreal, this 29th day of September,
1847, by William Foster Coffin, Esquire. (Signed,) CHas. D. Day, J. B. R. $\}$
We, the Joint Prothonotary of Her Majesty's Coart of Queen's Bench for the District of Montreal, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a truc Copy of the Statement and Account of Moneys received and paid by the Sheriff, for the District of Montreal, from the 16th day of March, 1847, to the 20th day of September, 1847 ; the original whereof was deposited by the said Sheriff in•our Office, on the 1st day of October, one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven.

Given at Montreal, this 14th day of April, 1849.

Stitement and Account of all Moneys received and which are in the hands of John Boston and William Foster Coffin, Esquires, Sheriff of Montreal, from the 20th day of September, 1847, and of the payments thereof since made, rendered according to the requirements of the Provincial Act, 6 Will. IV, cap. 15, intituled, "An Act for making regulation respecting the Office of Sheriff:"


Statenent and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


Statement and Account of all Moncys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


Statement and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


We certify that the abore written Statement is correct, and corresponds with the Returns made by us to the Court of Queen's Bench of the District of Montreal, to the several writs to us addressed as Sheriff, up to this 16 th day of Marcl, 1848.

Sworn before me at Montreal, this 1st day of April, $\}$
1848, by William F. Coffin, Esquire,

> (Signed,) Ceas. D. Dar, J. B. R.

We, the Joint Prothonotary of Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for the District of Montreal, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the statement and account of moneys received and paid by the Sheriff for the District of Montreal, from the 26th day of September, 1847, to the 16th day of March, 1848, the original whereof was deposited by the said Sheriff in our office on the 1st day of April, one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight.

Given at Montreal, this 14th day of April, 1849.

Statement and Account of all Moneys received and which are in the hands of John Boston and Willimm Foster Coffin, Esquires, Sheriff of Montreal, from the 16th day of March, 1S48, and of the payments theroof since made, rendered according to the requirements of the Provincial Act, 6 Will. IV, cap. 15, intituled, "An Act for making regulations respecting the Office of Sheriff."


Statement and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


Statement and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


Statement and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


We certify that the above written Statement is correct, and corresponds with the returns made by us to the Court of Queen's Bench of the District of Montreal, to the several Writs to us addressed as Sheriff, up to this 16th day of September, 1848.
(Signed,)
BOSTON \& COFFIN, Sheriff.
Sworn before me at Montreal, this 2nd day of Octuber,
1848; by William. Foster Coftin, Esquirc.
(Signed,) Chas. D. Dar, J. B. R. $\}$
We, the Joint Prothonotary of Her Majesty's Court of Qucen's Bench for the District of Montreal, do hereby certify that the foregoing is.a true copy of thie Statement and. Account of Moneys received and paid by the Sheriff, for the District of Montreal, from the 16th day of March, 1848 , to the 16 th day of September, 1848; the original whereof was deposited by the said Sherif in our Office, on the 2nd day of October, one thousand eight hundrel and forty-cight.

Given at Montreal, this 14th day of April, 1849.
MONK; COFFIN \& PAPINEAU,
Prothonotary.

Statement of all Moneys reccived, and which are in the hands of John Boston and Willian Foster Coffin, Esquires, Sheriff of Montreal, from the 2nd day of October, 1848 , and of the payments thereof since roade, rendered according to the requirements of the Provincial Act, 6 Will. IV, cap. 15, intituled, "An Act for making regulations respecting the Office of Sheriff."


Statement and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


Statenext and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&cc.-Continued.


Statement and Account of all Moneys received by the Sheriff of Montreal, \&c.-Continued.


We certify that the Statement hereinbefore written is correct, and corresponds with the Returns made by us to the Court of Queen's Bench of the District of Montreal, to the several writs addressed to us as Sheriff, up to this 20th day of December, 1848.
(Signeed,)
BOSTON \& COFFIN,
Sheriff.
Sworn before me at Montreal, this Sth day of Jan., \} 1849, by William F. Coffin, Esquire.
(Signed,) J. Smith, J. Q. B.

We, the Joint Prothonotary of Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for the District of Montreal, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the statement and account of moneys received and paid by the Sherf for the District of Montreal, from the 2nd day of October, 1848, to the 20th day of December, 1848, the original whereof was deposited by the said Sheriff in our office on the 8th day of January, one thousand eight hundred and forty-ninc.

Given at Montreal, this 14th day of April, 1849.
MONK, COFFIN \& PAPINEAU,
Prothonotary.

Aftontreal:

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