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JUSTICE.

The organization in 1793 of Constitutional Government and of its administrative machinery brought to Gaspé, as to the rest of the Province of Lower Canada, the establishment of a new judicial system. The "Inferior District of Gaspé" was created and a provincial court was established for civil cases, composed of a resident judge and limited to personal actions, not exceeding eighty-four pounds (\$320) and without appeal; all other actions had to be initiated before the Court of King's Bench in Quebec. It held its sessions at Carleton, New Carlisle, Percé and Douglastown. French Civil Law was used in this court.

At the same time, with regard to criminal law; it was provided: "that there will be held four times a year in the Inferior District of Gaspé a general session of the peace by the justices of the peace of the District, or three of the said justices, for the conservation of peace, according to the criminal laws of England and the ordinances in force in this province; the sessions for the Inferior ^{District} of Gaspé will be held at Bonaventure, Carleton, Percé and Douglastown, during the eight days immediately following the terms of the Provincial Court.

The certified copies of all recognizances which might hereafter be forfeited, in the general and special sessions ^{of} the peace for the Inferior District of Gaspé, will be conveyed once each year to the Court of King's Bench, which will be held for the District of Quebec in February".

As this judicial system contained many flaws, complaints were soon voiced. The Commission of Inquiry of 1819 and the Special Commission of 1830 registered these complaints. "The administration of Justice is very defective" states the report of 1820.

In 1830, witnesses testified that though the Civil Court gave satisfaction this was not true of the Court of Sessions. They explained that these courts were at Carleton, New Carlisle, Percé and Douglastown; that the prison was at New Carlisle; that the judge and the Sheriff lived at Paspébiac, the Clerk of the Court at New Carlisle, one of the justices of the peace at Restigouche, one at New Richmond, one at Bonaventure, one at New Carlisle, one at Percé and a few at Gaspé Bay. The sessions were held at a time when the people could least afford the time to serve on juries and this led the president to choose juries on the spot in order subsequently to do what he wished.

Pierre Laforce, notary at Quebec, adds that the collection of fees left to the arbitrary will of the officials occasioned deplorable exploitation.

In the light of the witnesses heard (about a dozen) the committee stated: "It appears that the distribution of justices of the peace is imperfect and that an inequitable portion of these justices of the peace is taken from persons who are not sufficiently bound to the mass of the inhabitants as much by residence as by property. That the quarter-sessions and the choice of jurors produce discontent.

Then he concludes: That a new Commission of the peace is necessary for the District and that justice of the peace, resident and qualified as to real property should be appointed, without distinction of origin or of religion and established equitably in all the more populated parts of the County of Gaspé and Bonaventure.

For this period we note the following names of Commissioners of the peace, at Gaspé.

1779-Felix O'Hara,	1820- William Annett,
1788-Hugh O'Hara,	1824- Charlie Davis,
1794-Olivier D'Hara,	1828- John, Douglas, McConnell,
1802-Peter Patterson	1832- Abraham Coffin,
1811-John Patterson	1836- James Adams.
1816-James Stuart. .	

It was necessary to wait until the time of the Union of Upper and Lower Canada, in order to obtain certain reforms. On July 9th, 1842, Wm. Cochrane and P. B. Dumoulin were appointed to enquire, into the administration of justice in Gaspé. On the following October 6th they published the report of the investigation they had carried on during the course of the summer. This report admitted the right of the complaints mentioned above, suggested the establishment of a District Court for Gaspé and for Bonaventure and of a Superior Court, and recommended that the seat of these Courts be located at Gaspé.

As a practical result of this enquiry, the report of which was accepted and applied, the district was endowed with a judicial structure, which, while not perfect, was much superior to the previous one. In spite of modifications it has remained substantially the same.

At present, our judicial structure consists of a Magistrate's Court, which meets each week; a Superior Court which sits twice a year; an Assize Court which is called at irregular intervals according to the need; and finally the Justices of the Peace, for minor disputes and for attestations.

Meanwhile the area of Ste-Anne-des-Monts obtained its own Magistrate Court and the authority to transfer to Rimouski actions within the jurisdiction of the Superior Court. Only the criminal actions continued to be tried at Percé. This is still the case today.

Edmund Gagnon was the first to practice law at Gaspé Basin. At present there are four lawyers practicing there: A. R. Garneau and Rock Roy while Terence Pidgeon and Maurice Dussault practice in partnership. In 1928 Emile d'Esperance was appointed road Police, for the county of Gaspé. He was among the first The Royal Canadian Mounted Police were stationed at Gaspé Basin from 1930 to 1940. The Provincial Police established an Office at Gaspé Basin in 1939.

The following is a list of the Gaspé Village Police:

1938-41 Joseph Lavoie
1941-1946 Camille Chicoine
1946 Joseph Poirier
1946-47 ~~Ernest~~ Sennett
1947-47 Norman Brochett
1947 Joseph Poirier.

Kingsley Suddard was a night Patrol Police for the Basin Point for the winters of 1930-31-32.
