

573 The collection of criminal statistics, provided for by 39 Vic., chap 13, constitutes the only attempt hitherto made by the Dominion Government to collect any one class of statistics for the whole Dominion. The Act came into operation in 1876, and the returns now made to the Department are considerably fuller than at the commencement of the system. They have not yet, however, attained that degree of completeness which is desirable, and it is to be regretted that more interest in making full and complete returns is not shown by the officials concerned, and more particularly by Justices of the Peace, who, in many cases, make no returns at all. Statistics of crime, when strictly accurate, are valuable indications of the social condition of a country, and are also of much importance in connection with the making of laws, both civil and criminal; but their value, to a large extent, disappears, when their accuracy or completeness can be called in question, and if those whose duty it is to make returns would only recognize the actual importance of their work, it is probable they would be at more pains to send in complete figures, and also to send them in with greater promptitude, much time being at present lost through delay on this account. Comparisons between the various Provinces might be of much practical value, but owing to the want of completeness, such comparisons are much impaired in value.

Collection of criminal statistics.

574. The various indictable offences are divided into six classes, as follow :—

Classification of indictable offences.

- Class I. Offences against the person.
- Class II. Offences against property, with violence.
- Class III. Offences against property, without violence.
- Class IV. Malicious offences against property.
- Class V. Forgery, and offences against the currency.
- Class VI. Other offences not included in the foregoing classes.