

regular justices instead of justices of the peace. This led to a parliamentary investigation of the judicial system and to the Act of 1791. The Act created a court of civil jurisdiction at St. John's with a Chief Justice, to continue for one year. In 1792 the court was designated the Supreme Court of Judicature of Newfoundland. The Court was prolonged yearly against the opposition of the West Country merchants until 1809 when it was made permanent. The Chief Justice and soon afterwards the magistrates were given regular stipends. In 1824 came the Act for the Better Administration of Justice, which provided for a Supreme Court of Newfoundland having all civil and criminal jurisdiction in Newfoundland and jurisdiction over all crimes committed on the banks of Newfoundland or any seas or island to which ships repaired from Newfoundland for carrying on the fishery. The Court was to have a Chief Justice and two puisne judges. The Governor was empowered to establish three annual circuit courts. From these there was a right of appeal to the Supreme Court, with which the circuit courts shared a similar jurisdiction save over certain crimes and violations of certain trade and revenue statutes. In the last resort, appeals could be made to the Privy Council in London. Provision was also made for a civil court on the Coast of Labrador. The Supreme Court was set up in 1826. The state of affairs recorded in 1784 was thus remedied and the administration of justice was entrusted to the Colony.

The Consolidated Statutes of Newfoundland of 1916 provided for a Department of Justice. The Minister of Justice was also Attorney General and was charged with the administration of justice.

The supreme civil and criminal jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the right of appeal from it to the Privy Council were continued. The Court administered both law and equity. It had been made a Court of Admiralty in 1890 and was also a Court of Probate. The bench consisted of a Chief Justice and two puisne judges. The grand jury was retained. Criminal trials were held before a court of one judge with a petty jury of twelve. Civil cases could be heard before one judge with or without a jury and with a right of appeal to the full bench.

The justices of this Court travelled on circuit from St. John's by rail in the spring and autumn to serve the larger towns, including Grand Falls and Corner Brook. The boat circuit, which had been abandoned between 1931 and 1938, was given up again in 1940.

The Central District Court was given a limited civil jurisdiction in the central district comprising St. John's and vicinity with a right of appeal to the Supreme Court. The Court was to have one judge who would also be ex officio stipendiary magistrate for the district.

Stipendiary magistrates replaced the old courts of quarter sessions composed of justices of the peace sitting together. A complete reorganization of the stipendiary magistracy was undertaken in 1935. At the time of union in 1949 there were seven district magistrates, whose districts covered the whole of the Island outside the central district. The magistrate at St. Anthony also makes an annual tour of the Labrador Coast. Most of the magistrates have been laymen. Under the 1935