

commit, or being accessory after the fact to any of the above offences, also for bribery or undue influence, personation or other corrupt practice under the Dominion Elections Act. Also, where an offence is punishable with imprisonment for a period exceeding five years the Attorney General may require the charge to be tried by a jury.

In the Province of Quebec a district magistrate has powers extending beyond those of a magistrate in any other province. He has the same jurisdiction as a county court judge in Ontario, and disposes of cases under Part XVIII of the Criminal Code, whereas the jurisdiction of the magistrates of other provinces extends only to Parts XV and XVI of the Criminal Code.

Capital cases for the first twelve or fifteen years after Confederation included, besides murders, death sentences for attempts at murder, piracy, treason, levying war, rape and carnally knowing and abusing any girl under the age of ten years. The list of capital offences is now: levying war, murder, piracy in cases of violence, rape, and treason. This is a drastic modification in the Code from that which obtained a century and a half ago. In 1764, according to Blackstone, there were in England 160 capital offences on the Statute Book. It is stated that there was a strong feeling against the accompanying wholesale hangings and that judges and juries resorted to all sorts of subterfuges to evade the letter of the law. The work of practical reform and modification was slow, however, owing to the opposition of the House of Lords, but the days of the indiscriminate infliction of capital punishment ended with the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832, at which time forty kinds of forgery and many less serious offences were still capital crimes.

The statistics presented in this Chapter are collected directly from the criminal courts in the different judicial districts throughout Canada. There are 150 such districts divided by provinces as follows: Prince Edward Island 3, Nova Scotia 7, New Brunswick 15, Quebec 28, Ontario 48, Manitoba 6, Saskatchewan 21, Alberta 12, British Columbia 8, Yukon 1 and the Northwest Territories 1.

PART I.—OFFENCES OF ADULTS

Section 1.—Total Offences

The number of charges against adult offenders dealt with by the courts in the year ended Sept. 30, 1948, was 924,711 as compared with 803,139 in 1947. Charges for indictable offences showed an encouraging decrease from 50,681 in 1947 to 48,066 in 1948, but those for non-indictable offences increased from 752,458 to 876,645 in the same comparison.

As a consequence of the fewer charges for indictable offences, convictions in this class were also lower by almost 6 p.c., while convictions for non-indictable offences were higher by about 17 p.c. as compared with 1947. The increase in convictions for all offences amounted to 15 p.c.

An analysis of total convictions per 1,000 estimated population 16 years of age or over shows that Ontario had the highest ratio in 1948 with 147.4, followed by British Columbia with 109.9 and Manitoba with 103.6.