

These constitutional changes were happily satisfactory both to the French and British colonists, and contributed in a great measure to the loyal attitude assumed by these provinces at the time the other thirteen British colonies to the south attempted and accomplished their severance from the mother country. Consequent upon the refusal of Canada to join the insurgents a double invasion of the country was determined upon, viz : by way of Lake Champlain and the Kennebec river. The insurgents were not successful in their attempts, and evacuated the country on the 18th of June, 1776, and until the termination of the struggle confined their operations to the defence of their own territory. This war was brought to a close in February, 1783, at which time the Treaty of Versailles was signed, recognizing the independence of the thirteen colonies, under the name of the United States of America.

From that time Canada began to prosper, retarded only by the difference of British and French habits, customs and notions of government, which eventually became so serious as to necessitate the passing of the Constitutional Act of 1791, by which Act the Province of Quebec was divided into Upper and Lower Canada.

Canada now found herself in possession of the fourth form of government in the short space of thirty-two years. From 1770 to 1773 she was ruled by martial law ; from 1773 to 1774 a tyrannical military government ruled the country ; from 1774 to 1791 a civil government of the most despotic cast was established, and in 1792 a new constitution was introduced, establishing freedom of election and responsibility to the people.

On the 17th December, 1792, the first Upper Canada parliament was convened at Niagara, being composed of 16 members, of which John Macdonald, of Glengarry, was speaker. By an Act of this parliament the names of the four Upper Canada districts (Luenburgh, Mecklenburgh, Nassau and Hesse) were changed into Eastern, Midland, Home and Western. An Act was also passed providing for the building of a gaol and court house in each of these districts. In the same year, during the administration of Col. John Graves Simcoe, the Province was divided into sixteen counties, which elected the representatives above alluded to as forming its first parliament.

The second session of the Upper Canada Parliament was held at York, (now Toronto,) at that time inhabited by only twelve families. During the administration of Lieutenant-Governor A. Gore, a Bill was passed determining the boundaries of the different townships and also an Act to establish public schools in every district of the Province (1807). Four years after this the first census of Upper Canada was taken, when the population amounted to seventy-seven thousand ; five thousand less than the combined population of the counties of Oxford and Norfolk at present.