

BALDWIN LAFONTAINE HINCKS

their origin, chafed under autocratic control, and in repeated petitions demanded of the home government the privilege of a representative assembly.¹

To meet this situation the British parliament adopted the Constitutional Act of 1791,² by which the province was separated into two distinct governments under the names of Upper and Lower Canada. It was presumed that a natural solution of the vexed question of British and French rivalry had thus been found. "I hope," said Pitt, "that this settlement will put an end to the competition between the old French inhabitants and the new settlers from Britain and the British colonies." Burke at the same time expressed the opinion that "to attempt to amalgamate two populations composed of races of men diverse in language, laws, and customs, was a complete absurdity."³ To each province was given a legislature consisting of two Houses, the Lower House, or assembly, being elected by the people, the Upper, called the legislative council, being nominated for life by the Crown. By the Crown also were to be appointed all public officers of each district, including the governor-general of the two provinces, the lieutenant-governor who conducted the administration of Upper Canada, and the members of the executive councils which aided in

¹ *Canadian Archives*, Q. 24. 1. pp., 76, 232.

² 31 Geo. III. c. 31.

³ See *Parliamentary History*. Vol. xxvii, p. 1271, Vol. xxxix, pp. 359-459.