

They gave the habitants a choice between bringing their grain to the half-broken-down windmill of the seigneurie or paying the seigneur a money fine for his permission to take their grist elsewhere. New seigneurial demands, unheard of in earlier days, were often put forth and enforced.

The grievances of the habitants were not mitigated, moreover, by the way in which the authorities of the province gave lands to the United Empire Loyalists. These exiles from the revolted seaboard colonies came by thousands during the years following the war, and they were given generous grants of land. And these lands were not made subject to any seigneurial dues. They were given in freehold, in free and common socage. The new owners of these lands paid no annual dues and rendered no regular services to any superior authority. Their tenure seemed to the habitants to be very attractive. Hence the influx of the Loyalists gave strength to a movement for the abolition of seigneurial tenure—a movement which may be said to have had its first real beginning about 1790.

It was in that year that the solicitor-general of the province, in response to a request of the legislative council, presented a long report on