

grettable mediæval period, the dark ages, that any body of people should be ostracised from political preferment for religious belief; the accident of birth or the heritage of ancestry. But no less dangerous is the doctrine that any such religion should receive state recognition, especially when contrary to the established faith of the Crown of the country to which it owes allegiance, or possess privileges not accorded to all other faiths, simply because it is numerically the strongest. Such was the blunder of Carleton's advice and Lord North's action; but this was a period of blunders for which kingcraft was more responsible than the elected ministry of the country; the "Quebeck Bill," which emanated from the king himself, contained many provisions contrary to the written opinion and views of the high law officers and ministers of the Crown, and it was largely owing to the authorship of the bill that it prevailed.

It is not therefore a matter of much surprise that the French-Canadian peasantry, uncertain of the benefits to accrue to them under this act in other regards than that of the rescinding of their religious disabilities, were not long in doubt as to the course they should adopt during the American invasion which almost immediately followed the coming into force of this obnoxious bill on the 1st May, 1775. Openly espousing the cause of the invaders, they rendered the way easy for the conquest of Montreal, the whole of Lower Canada, and the investiture of Quebec, many joining the invaders notwithstanding that Bishop Briand used all the thunders of the church to prevent them, and tried in vain to get them to join the British forces and remain loyal, but they were independent and free men then and shewed it, the clergy had not yet recovered its grip of former and after days.

With a very small garrison and requiring soldiers to repel the invaders, Carleton applied to the seigniors for help, the friends for whom he had done so much. Quoting from an author of the day, we will see in his own language how far