

# THE FIRST PARLIAMENT OF UPPER CANADA

By H. S. SEAMAN

With the dissolution of the tenth federal parliament, and notices out for nomination and election of a new one, it does not require any especial effort to bring the mind to a consideration of that chapter of Canadian history which marked the birth of the section of the country, that was then known as Canada west.

As Frank Velgh, of Toronto, told the Canadian club on the occasion of his last visit to this city, "Years are only relative." Egypt's history embraces several thousand years, England's is covered by the round thousand, Canada is three hundred this year, and what we now call the west, is but a generation. One hundred and sixteen does not represent the number of years of Ontario's age by any means, but it does represent the number of years, during which she has exerted an individuality.

The steps, leading to the development from part of a unit into a full-fledged law-making constituency, are interesting as well as the conditions which surrounded the evolution.

The second Pitt, who among others, foresaw, something of the importance that Canada would assume, introduced into the British House of Commons on Feb. 7, 1791, a bill which would give the colony enlarged scope and the people representative institutions. One essential feature of the bill, was the di-

vision of the colony into Upper and Lower Canada.

## Caused Historical Quarrel.

This is the particular clause, be it remembered which was the occasion on account of the trend of the discussion it provoked, which led to the famous quarrel between Burke and Fox. After a friendship of more than a quarter of a century the discussion of this clause of this bill which lasted some days, resulted in a breach between these two which was never healed.

The bill became law on March 14, 1791, and provided for each of the provinces so formed, a legislature consisting of an appointed council, and an elective House of Assembly, and was to become effective before Dec. 31. The date upon which the instructions reached Sir Alured Clark, acting governor in Carleton's absence in England, was Nov. 11. Clark issued a proclamation dated Nov. 18 and the new law became effective on Dec. 26, 1791.

## Family Served the Empire.

Among those who served Canada and the home land, to the extent of laying down their lives, in the effort to give Canada to England under the leadership of the illustrious Wolfe, was Captain John Graves Simcoe, commander of H.M.S. Pembroke; but the