

The termination of the war was due to the ascendancy of the originally small but very active and capable party in the British Parliament which had, even from before the very outbreak of the war, constantly opposed the military measures of the government with regard to the trans-Atlantic colonies, and supported the cause of the revolutionists.

This party grew stronger and stronger as the war progressed, and the financial strain increased. England was but a very poor and small country in 1780 compared to what she is to-day. The Government majority in the House of Commons grew smaller and smaller, and in February, 1782, a motion was passed to send an address to the King praying "that the war might no longer be pursued." This being a vote of non-confidence, Lord North resigned in March, 1782, Lord Rockingham formed a new Ministry, and Lord Shelburne, his Colonial Secretary, at once opened negotiations for peace, which the Americans entered into. A provisional treaty was signed in November, 1782, between Britain and the United States, and final treaties between all the belligerents were signed at Versailles in September, 1783.

The treaty, as far as England and her colonies were concerned, was in the nature of a solemn compact, Britain exacting certain clearly specified conditions which it was thought would secure justice for those of her colonial subjects who had remained faithful to her during the trying years of the war.

This treaty distinctly stipulated that the loyalists should be given back their lands, confiscated during the war, that their civil rights should be restored, that debts due them before the war should be collectable, and that their security should be guaranteed. But no sooner had Britain withdrawn her armies from New York, Charleston, Savannah, and other points, and the revolutionists felt their position quite secure, than, with the characteristic tyranny of rampant democracy, their legislatures and courts ostentatiously set at defiance the provisions of the treaty so solemnly entered into. Deprived of the protection they had been guaranteed, the loyalists were hounded down by the fierce fanatical spirits of their various districts, who, inflamed with republican zeal, were determined that they should be proscribed and exiled.

Naturally, the loyalist exiles arrived on Canadian soil not merely with minds embittered towards their former republican neighbors, but themselves absolutely devoid of the least particle of faith in their promises or neighborly intentions. To less brave and less tried spirits, the prospect of trying to establish in Canada a new country secure from the attacks which democracy, envy, and undying hatred were morally certain to dictate, would have appeared hopeless. But it must always be remembered that they did not leave their own homes and come to their new, considering themselves as the victims of a lost, defeated cause, but as the martyrs of a sacrificed one. The numerous soldiers among them held their heads high, knowing that they and their comrades of the British army and the Hessian contingents had during the long war covered themselves with glory on many a bloody field. Their enemies boasted much of the surrender of two British armies, both isolated by the very success of their own victorious advances into the heart of their enemies' country, and both forced to surrender to greatly superior force solely owing to the miscarriage of faultily devised strategical combinations. But the loyalist soldiers felt that they had to their credit a long list of unquestionably glorious victories in the field which the historians of the revolutionists could not parallel.

So Upper Canada's loyal and hardy pioneers set about devising plans for the defence of the new land of their adoption without any misgivings.