

came the first demand for larger liberty. These men of British antecedents felt that they could not and would not tolerate military sway or civil absolutism. They demanded, and they taught the Gallo-Canadians to demand, the rights of free men. At the same time, immigration began to flow into that western part of Canada, now called the Province of Ontario. It could easily be foreseen that this western part would continue to receive a population essentially different from that of Eastern or Lower Canada. A wise statesmanship resolved to allow the Eastern and Western sections to develop according to their own sentiments, and to give to all Canada a constitution modelled, as far as the circumstances of the age and country permitted, on the British Constitution. To secure these objects, Mr. Pitt passed the Act of 1791—an Act that well deserves the name, subsequently given to it, of the first “Magna Charta of Canadian freedom.” The bill divided the ancient “Province of Quebec” into two distinct colonies, under the names of Upper and Lower Canada, each section to have a separate elective Assembly. Fox strenuously opposed the division of Canada. “It would be wiser,” he said, “to unite still more closely the two races than separate them.” Burke lent the weight of political philosophy to the practical statesmanship of Pitt. “For us to attempt to amalgamate two populations composed of races of men diverse in language, laws and habits, is a complete absurdity,” he warmly argued. Pitt’s policy combined all that was valuable in the arguments of both Fox and Burke. It was designed to accomplish all that is now accomplished, according to the spirit as well as the forms of the British Constitution, by that federal system under which we are happily living. In order to make the Act of 1791 successful, only fair play was required, or a disposition on the part of the leaders of the people to accept it loyally. All constitutions require that as the condition of success. Under Pitt’s Act the bounds of freedom could have been widened gradually and peacefully. But it did not get fair play in Lower Canada, from either the representatives of the minority or of the majority of the people. The minority had clamoured for representative institutions. They got them, and then made the discovery that the gift implied the government of the country, not according to their wishes, but according to the wishes of the great body of the people. Naturally enough, they then fell back on the Legislative Council, holding that it should be composed of men of British race only or their sympathisers, and that the Executive should be guided not by the representative Chamber, but by the Divinely-appointed Council. On the other hand, the representatives of the majority soon awoke to understand the power of the weapon that had been put into their hands. When they did understand, there was no end to their delight in the use of the weapon. A boy is ready to use his first jack-knife or hatchet on anything and everything. So they acted, as if their new weapon could not be used too much. As with their countrymen in Old France, their logical powers interfered with their success in the practical work of government. They were slow to learn that life is broader than logic, and that free institutions are possible only by the