



CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST PARLIAMENT OF UPPER CANADA.

1792—1796.

AN interesting chain of historical events preceded the gathering of the small band of men in old Newark, on the seventeenth day of September, 1792, in response to the first summons of vice-regal authority to the first Parliament of Upper Canada. The initial link was forged on a memorable day in 1763, when His Most Christian Majesty, King Louis XV. of France, was induced to renounce all claims to Nova Scotia or Acadia, ceding it and all its dependencies to His Britannic Majesty George III.—a kingly transaction involving the transfer of half a continent from Gaulish to Anglo-Saxon rule. Linked to this link is King George's proclamation of the same year, dividing his new possessions and defining the boundaries thereof. Thus was Quebec born as a province, although the Imperial Parliament, in 1774, enlarged its boundaries to the shores of Lake Erie and the banks of the Ohio and Mississippi, including the present American States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota, until their relinquishment in 1783. The third link was added in 1791, when King and Parliament divided the immense area of Quebec into two separate provinces—Upper and Lower Canada, each with a constitution of its own. Under this original provincial magna charta, John Graves Simcoe, an English Lieutenant-Colonel who had performed distinguished services in the revolution, was appointed the first Lieutenant-Governor. He it was therefore who set in motion the machinery of local self-government which has run, with more or less of friction, for a century.