

criminal and civil, enforced. The French on the other hand could not understand the British system, and a French seigneur would have suffered any injustice rather than have his case tried by a jury composed of his tenants. There is a very radical distinction between the French and English civil law—the law that relates to the transference of property, to bequests, etc. The English were as strongly averse to the French civil code as the French were to trial by jury; yet, it seems that the early governors endeavoured to please both French and British, by allowing the former the civil law of France, and the latter the criminal law of England. The result was dissatisfaction on the part of both French and English, a dissatisfaction that found vent in petitions from both parties to the British Government for a change in the system of governing the Colony.

The French *noblesse*, or ruling class, petitioned for French laws, the full enjoyment of former ecclesiastical privileges, and the right to share in the filling of positions of official trust. Not one word was dropped indicating the desire for an Assembly. The French people were not opposed to representative institutions, but they disliked the establishment of institutions in which they could have no part.

On the other hand, the few British residents in the Colony petitioned for an elected Assembly, British civil, as well as criminal laws, trial by jury in all cases, and the Habeas Corpus Act. Events were hastening on the revolt of the American Colonies, and the disaffected were hoping to enlist the people of Canada in their hostility to the measures of the British government. Canada, it was fully expected, would join her neighbours in the anticipated rebellion; nor was such an expectation wholly without reason. The denial for so many years of re-

presentative institutions had been felt as a real grievance by the British settlers, and it could not be expected that the French would prove very loyal to a nation which had so recently conquered them, and which, while tolerant in rule, had not fully conceded their old rights and customs, nor given their Church its former power over their people.

Under these circumstances, it is said Governor Carleton advised the passage of an Act which would concede the more important claims of the French clergy and nobility, and thus secure their loyalty in the event of an outbreak in the American Colonies. The interests of the mass of the French people were not considered, as they were supposed to be under the control of their leaders, the clergy. Nor were the remonstrances of the British allowed any weight, their numbers being small, and their loyalty more fully assured.

So the British Government of Lord North, that government which was merely the mouth-piece of George III., passed in 1774, despite the remonstrances of the more enlightened and patriotic members of Parliament, the famous Quebec Act. It will now be in order to state in outline the main provisions of an Act which has affected the whole course of our political and social history to this day, and which, notwithstanding its effect in preserving the neutrality of the French Canadians during the American invasion of Montgomery and Arnold, has saddled Quebec Province with a State Church and an ecclesiastical control wholly out of harmony with modern democratic ideas.

The Quebec Act provided in the first instance for an extension of the boundaries of the Province to the West, so as to include the valleys of the Ohio and the Mississippi. Thus the present States of Michigan, Illinois,