

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

WESTERN CANADA.

As the western part of Canada was chiefly settled by United Empire Loyalists, to whom the British Government had liberally granted land and subsistence for two years ; it was deemed advisable to confer upon these settlers a form of Government similar to that which they had formerly enjoyed. In the east the seignorial or feudal tenure had prevailed since 1627, but in the west, that of free and common socage was established. In 1788, Lord Dorchester divided what afterwards became Upper Canada into four districts, namely : Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nassaug and Hesse. The Colony was divided into Upper and Lower Canada. In 1792 the Upper Canada Legislature changed the above names of the districts into Eastern, Midland, Home and Western. These districts were afterwards divided and their number increased, but they were abolished in 1849. In 1841 Upper and Lower Canada were united, and in 1850 the districts were formed into Counties, and on the 1st July, 1867, the Provinces of British America were united and the Dominion of Canada established. By this act each province has control of its own affairs, while to the general government is left matters common to all.

UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS.—As the object of the American Revolutionists was to destroy the unity of the British Empire so the object of the American Loyalists was to prevent it. The adherents to the Royal cause, actuated by the noblest terms and feeling that loyalty to their Sovereign was an imperative duty, took up arms to maintain them, and never laid them down until they were vanquished. At the conclusion of the war these patriots abandoned their possessions, homes and friends, that they might still enjoy as exiles protection under the British flag.