

Hall at Niagara (which Simcoe had renamed Newark) on March 21, 1793—he had arrived in Upper Canada just the year before—at which were present the Chief Justice, William Osgoode (after whom Osgoode Hall, Toronto, is named) and also Hon. Peter Russell (the Receiver-General who gave his name to Russell Square in Toronto), appeared Peter Martin, a negro in the service of Col. Butler, of Butler's Rangers fame. Martin produced one William Grisley (or Crisly), who told a shocking story of violence. He said that, March 14, one Fromand, or Frooman, had told him that he was going to sell his negro wench Chloe to someone in the States, and that on that evening, Fromand, his brother and one Van-every had forced the poor girl, tied with a rope, into a boat, had taken her across the Niagara River and delivered her to a man on the bank, the girl screaming violently and resisting to the best of her power. Grisley said that he saw another negro at a distance tied in the same state and that he had heard that many other people meant to do the same with their negroes.

The Council was horrified. It determined to take immediate steps to prevent the continuance of such violent breaches of the public peace, and for that purpose it directed the Attorney-General to prosecute Fromand.

The Attorney-General, John White, was a sound lawyer: he knew that by the old law of Canada the slave was the absolute property of his master, and that the introduction of the English law into the Province in 1792, in lieu of the former French-Canadian law, had made the condition of the slave if anything worse than before. For, strange as it may appear, while the civil law of Rome and the laws derived from it recognize the status of slavery and accordingly give the slave certain rights against his master, the English law having no room for slavery as a status, and having therefore no law for the slave, when it is com-

pelled to deal with slaves, considers them as mere property, chattels with no more rights than a horse. Nothing came of the order to prosecute Fromand, nor could anything come of it—Fromand had the same right to tie, export and sell his slave as to tie, export and sell his cow.

But it was determined to put an end to slavery in the Province as soon as possible and to as great an extent as was possible without violating private property.

Accordingly, in the session of 1793, beginning May 31, a bill was early introduced and rapidly passed through the two Houses, receiving the Royal Assent July 6, and thereby becoming law.

This Act repealed the Imperial Act of 1790 so far as Upper Canada was concerned, forbade the granting of licences to import slaves and enacted that no negro or other person who should come or be brought into the Province should be subject to the condition of a slave. It also voided all contracts for voluntary service for longer than nine years—these, of course, might be utilized to evade the Act under a pretence of voluntary hiring.

By this Act all lawful owners of slaves in the Province were confirmed in their ownership; but any child thereafter born of a female slave was to become free at twenty-five, the master to give "proper nourishment and clothing" to such child in the meantime, but to be entitled to put it to work. To prevent emancipation from an improper motive, everyone who should free a slave was required to give security against the freedman becoming a public charge.

This Province thus had the proud satisfaction of being the first British possession to abolish slavery from its territory.

The legislation did not long remain without attack. In June, 1798, Christopher Robinson, a United Empire Loyalist, Member of the House of Assembly for Addington and Ontario