

In the year 1770, the French-speaking subjects had presented a petition to the King in which they asked for the restoration of the old laws (1).

Eminent British statesmen, Alex. Wedderburn, Edward Thurlow and James Marriott, had made an exhaustive study of the situation of the country (2).

Again, in 1773, the Canadians sent a memorial to the King setting out their grievances; they claimed the right to have a share in civil and military employ; asked for the re-establishment of the former boundaries of the province and pronounced themselves against a House of Assembly (3) which the English merchants had asked for in a petition also addressed to the King (4).

To enlighten the British cabinet on all the questions and press the adoption of a more equitable form of government, Carleton went to England in 1770. Mr. de Lotbinière accompanied him to watch the interests of the French-speaking subjects, while Cramahé, the oldest councillor, was charged with the administration of the province during the Governor's absence.

Quebec Act (1774).

An important event was about to urge the British Government to act more promptly than it probably wished and to decide the ministers of George III, to grant a little more protection to His Majesty's new subjects. The revolt of the New England colonies threatened to spread to all the British possessions in North America; such a misfortune had to be averted and, to that end, the House of Commons passed an Act, for making more effectual provision for the Government of the Province of Quebec, in North America, that is the "Quebec Act" (5).

The new constitution pushed the boundaries of the Province of Quebec making them extend from New England to the Ohio river and to the left bank of the Mississippi on one side; and to the Hudson's Bay territory on the other. It secured to Catholics the free exercise of their religion; dispensed them from the supremacy oath; established the old French civil laws, and confirmed the criminal laws of England. It was considered that the time had not yet come for establishing a Legislative Assembly, but, the Legislative Council was to consist in

(1) Petitions of the French Canadian subjects for the restauration of the French laws and customs. Const. Doc. (1759-1791), p. 292.

(2) Report of Solicitor-General, Alex. A. Wedderburn, (1772). Const. Doc. (1760-1791), p. 296. Report of Attorney-General Edward Thurlow. Const. Doc. (1759-1791), - 305. Report of Advocate-General James Marriott. Const. Doc. (1759-1791), p. 310.

(3) Const. Doc. (1759-1791), p. 276.

(4) Const. Doc. (1759-1791), p. 345.

(5) Const. Doc. (1759-1791), p. 401.