

them, they must be compensated. Ministers, he was persuaded, meant to keep the faith of the nation with them." Mr. Burke said, "at any rate, it must be agreed on all hands, that a vast number of the loyalists had been deluded by this country, and had resigned every thing in our cause; to such men the nation owed protection, and its honour was pledged for their security at all hazards." The Solicitor General, Mr. Macdonald, declared, "that he forebore to dwell upon the loyalists; as an assembly of human beings could scarcely trust their judgments when so powerful an attack was made upon their feelings. There was, however, a chance held out by America, of restoring some of those meritorious men to the natale solum on which they had been born and bred. If that chance fails," said he, "tax me to the teeth, and I will cheerfully stint myself to contribute to their relief, or to make up any deficiency." Lord Shelburne, the prime minister of the day, only justified the abandonment of the loyalists' rights, on the principle of a full compensation being afforded them by Great Britain. Speaking on the subject, he says, "I have but one answer to give the house; it is the answer I gave my own bleeding heart; a part must be wounded, that the whole empire may not perish. But, say the worst, and that, after all, this inestimable set of men are not received and cherished in the bosom of their own country; is England so lost to gratitude, and all the feelings of humanity, as not to afford them an asylum? who can be so base as to think she will refuse it to them? without one drop of blood spilt, and without one-fifth of the expense of one year's campaign, happiness and ease can be given the loyalists, in as ample a manner as these blessings were ever in their enjoyment, therefore let the outcry on this head cease." The speeches from the throne and the resolutions of both houses, on the peace, were in unison with these sentiments. His late Majesty, in his speech to Parliament on the 5th December 1782, says, "I trust you will agree with me, that a due and generous attention ought to be shown to those who have relinquished their properties or professions from motives of loyalty to me, or attachment to the mother country." These sentiments are echoed in the address of the Commons of 17th February 1783, in which they "feel that it would be superfluous to express to His Majesty the regards due from his nation to every description of men who, with the risk of their lives, and the sacrifice of their properties, have distinguished their loyalty and fidelity during a long and calamitous war."

In pursuance of these feelings, so universally and strongly excited by the case of the loyalists, Parliament, a short time after the conclusion of peace, proceeded to take measures for their relief, and the Act of 23 Geo. 3d, chap. 80, was passed expressly for that purpose. This Act recites that, "whereas, during the late unhappy dissensions in America, many of His Majesty's faithful subjects have, in consequence of their loyalty to His Majesty and attachment to the British Government, and their obedience to His Majesty's proclamations, and various other proclamations and manifestoes issued by His Majesty's commissioners, generals and governors, suffered in their rights, properties and professions, insomuch that several well deserving persons are reduced from affluence to circumstances so straightened, as to require the aid of a temporary support, which has been allotted to them by the commissioners of the treasury, by annual allowances made, and occasional assistance by sums of money given to them from the revenues of His Majesty's civil list; the amount of which hath hitherto been made good by Parliament: and the Commons not doubting but that His Majesty's most earnest endeavours will be employed for procuring from the United States of America, restitution of, or recompence for, the estates and effects of those who have thus unhappily suffered; and intending to give all due aid and assistance to those who may return to America for the recovery of their former possessions under the provisional articles, and to extend such relief to others, who may, by particular circumstances, be deprived of that advantage as their respective cases may require, and the public afford; to which end it is necessary, that a diligent and impartial inquiry should be made into the losses and services of all such persons as may, within the time hereinafter limited for that purpose, claim, or request such aid or relief as is hereby intended to be given." The Act then constitutes five commissioners "for enquiring into the respective losses and services of all such person and persons who have suffered in their rights, properties and professions during the late unhappy dissensions in America, in consequence of their loyalty to His Majesty and attachment to the British Government."

It might have been expected, that the commission thus established, would afford full and effectual compensation to all who made good their claim to the character of loyalists. But, while it administered complete indemnity to the majority of that