

The English colonists strongly opposed this measure, but the British Government acted wisely in favoring the majority. This action of England is worthy of admiration. Such was one of the means employed by Rome of old in establishing her empire, the greatest the world has ever seen. How much better would it be to-day for England's name and honor, had she so respected *all* the nations subdued by her arms. On the other hand the Canadians are to be justified in protesting against such oppression, and in demanding their rights, for they thereby showed to the world that their subjection was by no means servile, but one to be respected, and not unworthy of the great and noble men who had gone before them. England's honorable conduct was duly appreciated, and through gratitude, the French Canadians have to this day remained firm in their attachment to the British crown.

As yet no responsible government had been given the people of Canada. Thus far, each grievance had been redressed, except in the case of the English colonists, in the Ohio Valley especially, who termed the Quebec Act an oppressive measure. This dissatisfaction became one of the causes that precipitated the war of Independence, chiefly on account of the denial by this act of responsible government.

After the American Revolution there was a large influx of United Empire Loyalists into Western Canada. The English party became considerably strengthened, and the disputes with the French were correspondingly intensified. The former petitioned for the repeal of the Quebec Act, and the latter sent counter petitions to England. There were then two young nations growing up in Canada, different in blood, customs and creed. The chief cause of trouble was the system of land-tenure then in vogue, called the "Seigniorial tenure," obnoxious to the English, who wanted it abolished and clamored for "Freehold tenure" instead. In addition demands were made for responsible government. The English government was perplexed. No doubt the American war had taught England to act with extreme caution. A remedy was devised in the Constitutional Act of 1791. By it Canada was divided into two provinces, Upper and Lower. Each was ac-

corded a separate system of government composed of a Lieutenant Governor, a House of Assmblly elected by the people, and a Legislative Council chosen by the governor. He was also allowed to choose an Executive Council as an advising body. All monies arising from duties levied on commerce and from the sale of crown lands belonged to the Legislative Council. It was further enacted that "all laws and ordinances made under the Quebec Act were to remain in force until altered by the new parliaments." The English colonists (in Upper Canada) obtained the power to fix the right of holding land by Freehold tenure, while in the lower province it was to be fixed by the Legislature. There were also set apart large tracts of lands called Clergy Reserves for the support of the Protestant clergy in the two Canadas. Worthy of note among the first acts of the Upper Canada Legislature, was one abolishing slavery.

The privileges embodied in the Constitutional Act set at rest the chief disputes that had agitated the two provinces. However as years passed on it was found that too much power had been conferred on the Legislative Council. The right of disallowance had been reserved to the King, but practically this power was vested in the Council, which was in no way responsible to the country. Moreover it has already been pointed out that this body was perfectly independent of the Assembly, as it had a revenue of its own. Thus it was that the passage of an act emanating from the Assembly, but displeasing to the Council could be effectually impeded, and consequently the real wishes of the people despised. Here was an appalling defect in the new system.

In Upper Canada a new institution, incompatible with freedom, had arisen. It was the fruit of the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists with their principles of aristocratic government, that had restrained them from joining their fellow-countrymen in their struggle for independence. This faction obtained control of the Council, and held at defiance the interference of the Assembly. This organization has become known as the "Family Compact," a veritable oligarchy, that was in no way responsible for its deeds, and allowed no one to question its acts. The Assembly complained that judges were members of the Council, that