

Our Own Land

In 1774 the Imperial Government passed the famous Quebec Act, many provisions of which are in operation to this day. This act created the original Province of Quebec, which included the Province of Ontario and five states of the American Union. Its jurisdiction extended westward far beyond the present City of Chicago, and on the south to the junction of the Ohio and the Mississippi. To the north-west it was a law as far as the eastern boundary of Manitoba and, as a fact of law and history, it is still unknown at what point it touched the Hudson Bay on the north. The Province of Ontario as it stands today was a part of the Province of Quebec for over sixteen years. Then began the next change in the domestic history of our country and began also the separate existence of the two Canadas. In 1791 the Imperial Government passed another act which it was hoped would satisfy the French and English settlers who differed in religion, traditions and language. By the Canada Bill of 1791 it was intended to allow one section of the country to remain French and the other to remain English, and probably, to hive both parties. The experiment, however well intended, proved disastrous, and shortly after followed the rebellion of Papineau in Lower Canada, and subsequently the rebellion of William Lyon Mackenzie, in this province.

It would be tedious to follow the changes of the civil government in these twin provinces with any regard to detail. You know that after Lord Durham's report, the Canadas were re-united in 1840. They were not dissolved, however, into one province, but like husband and wife had each its separate existence, while the bond of marriage remained unbroken. In 1864 the preamble and acts of the Quebec Conference were brought to England for the approval of the Imperial Government and in 1867 the Federation of all the provinces became a solidified and compact unity

SPEECH of DEAN HARRIS, delivered at the "OLD BOYS" Meeting at Beamsville, Ontario, Monday, September 3rd, 1900