

*Seigniorial Tenure.*

The system of granting lands, under the provisions of the feudal regime, had been restored in 1771. In the new instructions to Haldimand in 1873 (1) and to Lord Dorchester in 1786 (2), it was stated that all lands to be given the Loyalists "should be divided into distinct seigniories or fiefs to extend from two to four leagues in front and from three to five leagues in depth, if situated on a navigable river; otherwise, to be run square or in such shape and in such quantities as shall be deemed convenient and practicable."

The Loyalists already settled in the eastern part of the present Province of Ontario soon protested against this method of granting land.

Sir John Johnson, Superintendent of Indian affairs, had been directed to see to the settlement of the emigrants in Upper Canada. On the 12th April 1785, while in London, he presented a petition to the King, signed by the leading men among the Loyalists, in which they asked for a change in the land tenure and the formation of a new district from Pointe à Beaudet on lake St. Francis, westward to the boundary of the land that was being settled (3).

At the first inquiry concerning the settlement of Crown Lands, Sir John Johnson who was himself a member of the special committee, (4) again pronounced himself against the feudal tenure and presented a petition from the Loyalists settled at Cataraqui and New Oswegatchie, in which they prayed that lands be in future granted in free and common socage. (5)

Lastly, on the 13th June, 1787, Lord Dorchester wrote to Lord Sydney, saying: "But what urges more immediately is an alteration in the tenure of lands to be granted by the Crown. The instructions direct that these lands be granted in a manner in every way similar to the tenure under the French Government. Whatever merit this system may have had formerly, so great have been the changes of late years on this continent, that a new line of policy, adapted to the present relative condition of the neighbouring States and suited to the minds and temper of the King's subjects, has become indispensably necessary for Great Britain. I therefore humbly recommend that His Majesty would be graciously pleased to allow His Governor and

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(1) Express instructions were given by Haldimand to Sir John Johnson, who had charge of the settlement of the Loyalists in what is now Eastern Ontario, that the new surveys should not be called townships or given names, but be numbered as Royal Seigniories to be held under feudal tenure. See Haldimand Papers, B. 65, p. 34. Const. Doc., (1759-1791), p. 494.

(2) Const. Doc., (1759-1791), p. 561.

(3) Const. Doc., (1759-1791), p. 524. On the 24th July, 1787, that territory was erected into four new districts respectively called: Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nassau and Hesse; the district of Gaspé was also created by the same proclamation. Const. Doc., (1759-1791), p. 651.

(4) The other members of the committee were Messrs. DeLery, De Longueuil, Holland, Davidson and Boucherville. Const. Doc., (1759-1791), p. 640.

(5) Const. Doc., (1759-1791), pp. 640, 645.