

EX REBUS ANTIQUIS ERUDITIS ORIATUR.

Report

of the

Ontario Bureau of Archives

PREFATORY

The large number of United Empire Loyalists that settled in Upper Canada during the years immediately succeeding the close of the Revolutionary War in 1783 developed conditions to meet which the Province of Quebec was in 1791 divided into the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. The Imperial Statute making the division is known as the Constitutional Act, 31 George III., Cap. 31.

The form of government for these Provinces was moulded on that of Britain:—A Governor-General, and for each Province a Lieutenant-Governor, an Executive Council, a Legislative Council and a Legislative Assembly, corresponding, generally, to the Crown, the Cabinet of Ministers, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. The Lieutenant-Governor was vested with the powers of the Governor-General except when the latter was present in the Province in his official capacity, and he practically directed the policy of the Government through the Executive Council; yet from the beginning the functions of the various branches forming the Provincial Parliament were fairly well defined and carried in them the seed of representative government.

The first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada was Lieut.-Colonel John Graves Simcoe. He arrived at Kingston on the 8th of July, 1792, and on the 16th of July issued a Proclamation* dividing the Province into nineteen counties, from which sixteen members of the Legislative Assembly were to be elected by the people. The Legislative Council consisted of not fewer than seven members who, as well as the members of the Executive Council, were appointed by the Crown.

The General Election for the Legislative Assembly took place in August, 1792, and Parliament met on the 17th September at Newark. The constituencies had then a population which has been placed at about 25,000 souls.

*Ontario Archives, 1906, p. 176.