

CHAPTER XV.

Preparation of the Quebec Bill, 1770-1774—Petitions pro and con—American ideas adopted by a certain party in Canada—Passing of the Quebec Act, May, 1774—The importance of that measure—Carleton returns to Quebec, September, 1774—Alarming news from the neighbouring colonies.

On his arrival in England, the governor laid the question before the authorities and recommended action. Immediate decision upon a matter so important was not easy to secure, nevertheless, the Board of Trade agreed to advise the expediency of allowing further grants *en seigneurie* in the colony, and this was done by an order in council of the 27th of June, 1771. Practically, the importance of this action was not great. During the following years, there were numerous applications for grants of land, but in a very few cases were grants of seignories desired; almost invariably the applicants asked for concessions in free and common socage. The order in council is valuable mainly as showing that the authorities had come to the determination, not only to preserve intact the seigniorial system of the French era, but to give opportunity for its further extension.

The work for the preparation of the Quebec Bill can be studied in the volume of the Canadian Archives for 1906.

Here is a petition signed in 1770 and which followed Carleton to England:—

“Encouraged by your royal proclamation of the 7th of October, 1763 . . . that you had been graciously pleased to give direction to your governor, that so soon as the state and circumstances (of the province) would admit, he should with the advice of the members of the council, call a general assembly within the said government, in such manner as is used in the provinces of America under Your Majesty’s immediate government, your petitioners most humbly implore Your Majesty’s gracious attention to

their supplications. . . . As the great source of the wealth and riches of a country principally consists in the number of its inhabitants usefully employed, your petitioners cannot but lament that great numbers of Your Majesty's new subjects in this province for want of such public encouragement as an assembly only can properly give to improve its natural advantages, have hitherto proved rather a burthen than a benefit to themselves or advantage to the community; their extreme poverty and misery increasing with their numbers. Your Majesty's British subjects residing in this province have set examples and given every encouragement in their power to promote industry. They are the principal importers of British manufactures, carry on three-fourths of the trade of this country, annually returning a considerable revenue into Your Majesty's exchequer in Great Britain; and though the great natural advantages this country is naturally capable of are many and obvious for promoting the trade and manufactures of the mother country, yet for some time past, both its land and commercial interests have been declining and if a general assembly is not soon ordered by Your Majesty to make and enforce due obedience to laws for encouraging agriculture, regulating the trade and discouraging such importations from the other colonies as impoverish the province, your petitioners have the greatest reason to apprehend their own ruin as well as that of the province in general. There is now a sufficient number of Your Majesty's Protestant subjects residing in and possessed of real property in this province, and who are otherwise qualified to be members of a general assembly. (Signed) Henry Taylor, James Sinclair, Alexander Henry, George King, Lauch Smith, Jonas Clarke Minot, John Porteous, James McGill, George Gregory, Alexander Paterson, Lawrence Ermatinger, Richard Dobie, John Aitkin, Simon Fraser, John Fine, J. Fraser, Murd. Stuart, Aaron Hart, Edward Harrison, James Stanley Goddard, John Paterson, Isaac Todd, Alexander Martin, Charles Grant, John Lees, Zachary Macaulay, John McCord, P. Fargues, John Renaud, Abraham, Ogier, John Durss."

This petition of "freeholders, merchants and traders in the Province of Quebec" resembles somewhat the famous "we the people of England" signed by the nine tailors of Tooley St. Not satisfied with a share (three-fourths) of the trade of the province, they aspire to form a legislative

body among themselves, and so make laws, etc.—agreeably to their own interests, without minding the bulk of the population who seem to be fit only to buy goods from these merchants and otherwise amount to nothing.

The same year, 1770, another petition, this one from the leading Canadian families, was sent to the King. It read as follows:—

“From the moment of the union of this province to the dominion of your Crown, your most humble servants have taken the liberty of frequently representing to you of what importance to their interests it was to be judged and governed according to the laws, customs and regulations under which they were born, which serve as the basis and foundation of their possessions, and are the rule of their families and how painful and at the same time how humiliating it has been to them to be excluded from the offices which they might fill in this province, for the service of Your Majesty and the comfort of your Canadian people—the only way to excite emulation.

“From the different mode of procedure, both as regards form and essence in civil affairs, and from the exorbitant fees exacted by the lawyers, there has ensued the ruin of a considerable number of families. Your Canadian people, sire, who are already overwhelmed by so many other calamities, had no need of this further misfortune.

“Could the religion we profess, and in the possession of which it has pleased Your Majesty to assure us that we shall never be disturbed be a reason for excluding so considerable a number of your submissive and faithful children from participation in the favour of the best of Kings? . . . Your Canadians will always have for your august person the most perfect love, the greatest submission. (Signed) Lanaudière, Rigauville, Perrault, Perras, Panet, Marcoux, Lannier, Guérand, Dénéchaud, Soupiran, Manville, Saillant, Riverin, Langlois, Duchesnay, Louis Lizot, Alexis Jean, Parant, Pelerin, Beaubien, Boisseau, Courval, Joseph Duval, Berthelot, Marchand, Guichau, Louis Turgeon, J .B. Dufour, Charles Voyer, Descheaux, A. Dalciat, P. Foulard, Dufau, F. Bellet, Guillemard, Lecomte-Dupré, A. Raby, Amiot, De Léry, F. J. Cugnet, Rousseau, Lajus, Borneau, Corbin, Mignot, Sicard, Bouchard, Frémont, etc.”

These names represent the educated class of the time, which had identi-

fied itself with the interests of the population for a long series of years and had mutual confidence in each other. To them we owe the quiet state of the province during the period of uneasiness previous to the Quebec Bill of 1774. They were the advisors of the people and their efforts, combined with those of the clergy, kept every one peaceable—meantime the educated class did the needful as regards public interests.

Up to the time of the invasion of Canada by Arnold, Walker took the lead in Montreal in getting up memorials for a House of Assembly, and attempted, but unsuccessfully, to win over the Canadians to his side. On November, 1773, it was resolved by the followers of Walker to send him and Zachary Macaulay to London, and they sailed accordingly soon after, furnished with a letter of introduction to Francis Maseres, ex-attorney-general of Canada, who, on the 4th January, 1774, transmitted the petition for a House of Assembly to Lord Dartmouth, with a very cautiously worded letter, disclaiming responsibility for its terms. The petition was not favourably entertained by His Lordship, who wrote to Lieut.-Governor Cramahé on the 6th April, that the object was factious and that it was calculated and intended to interfere with the passage of the Quebec Act to be brought before Parliament at the approaching session.

In a letter from Cramahé to Dartmouth he states that the English-speaking residents in Canada “have in general adopted American ideas in regard to taxation, and a report, transmitted from one of their correspondents in Britain, that a duty upon spirits was intended to be imposed here by authority of Parliament, was a principal cause of inciting them to petition for an assembly and endeavouring to engage their fellow subjects to join therein.” For this purpose they met at the house of Miles Prenties, inn-keeper in the upper town of Quebec, in November, 1773, under the direction of John McCord, a dealer in spirituous liquors, and a committee was formed composed of Thomas Walker, Zachary Macaulay, William Grant, Charles Grant, Jenkin Williams, John Wells, Malcolm Fraser, Peter Fargues, Anthony Vialars and John Lees. The petition was sent to Lieut.-Governor Cramahé, who refused to receive it, but they forwarded the same to Maseres in London, and it passed into the hands of Lord Dartmouth as noted above. Maseres says on that subject (January 4th, 1774): “I told Mr.

Thomas Walker and Mr. Macaulay, when I saw them last winter in London, that I thought that a legislative council, consisting only of Protestants, and much more numerous than the present one, and made perfectly independent of the governor, so as to be neither removable nor suspendible by him upon any pretence, but only removable by the King in council, would be a better instrument of government for that province than an assembly, for seven or eight years to come, and until the Protestant religion and English manners, laws and affections shall have made a little more progress there." The Canadians of Quebec and Montreal having been invited in due time to sign this petition had refused to do so, therefore, out of ninety who put their names to it, only two seem to have been Canadians, and Cramahé writes the following remarks about the whole: "There are not above five of them who can be properly styled freeholders, and the value of four of these freeholders is very inconsiderable. The number of those possessing houses in the towns of Quebec and Montreal, or farms in the country, held of the King or some private seigneur, upon paying a yearly acknowledgment, is under thirty. . . . The whole of this transaction sufficiently evinces how necessary it is to give power and activity to the government of this province. The Canadians are tractable and submissive, but if matters were to remain here much longer in the loose way they are in at present, there is too much reason to apprehend that it might be attended with bad effects. A confirmation of their laws of property, and rights of inheritance, after which they most ardently sigh, would be most satisfactory to them all, and prove a very great means of attaching the Canadians effectually to His Majesty's royal person and government."

Another petition was signed in December, 1773, by sixty-five Canadians of the best families in the district of Montreal, in which it is stated: "Our gratitude obliges us to acknowledge that the fearful apprehension of the result of conquest by Your Majesty's victorious arms did not long continue to excite our lamentations and tears. They grow every day less and less as we gradually become more acquainted with the happiness of living under the wise regulations of the British empire. And even in the very moment of the conquest, we were far from feeling the melancholy effects of restraint and captivity. For the wise and virtuous general who conquered

us, being a worthy representative of the glorious sovereign who entrusted him with the command of his armies, left us in possession of our laws, and customs; the free exercise of our religion was preserved to us, and afterwards was confirmed by the treaty of peace; and our own former countrymen were appointed judges of our disputes concerning civil matters. This excess of kindness towards us we shall never forget. These generous proofs of the clemency of our benign conqueror will be carefully preserved in the annals of our history, and we shall transmit them from generation to generation to our remotest posterity. These are the pleasing ties by which, in the beginning of our subjection to Your Majesty's government, our hearts were strongly bound to Your Majesty; ties which can never be dissolved, but which time will only strengthen and draw closer.

“In the year 1764 Your Majesty thought fit to put an end to the military government of this province, and to establish a civil government in its stead. From the instant of this change we began to feel the inconveniences which resulted from the introduction of the laws of England, which till then we had been wholly unacquainted with. Our former countrymen, who till that time had been permitted to settle our civil disputes without any expense, were thanked for their services and dismissed. The militia of the province, which had till then been proud of bearing that honourable name under Your Majesty's command, was disbanded. It is true, indeed, we were admitted to serve on juries, but at the same time we were given to understand that there were certain obstacles that prevented our holding places under Your Majesty's government. We were also told that the laws of England were to take effect in the province, which, though we presume them to be wisely suited to the regulation of the mother country for which they were made, could not be blended and applied to our customs without totally overturning our fortunes and destroying our possessions. These innovations have been ever since the date of that change in the government, and are still at this time, our just causes of uneasiness and apprehension; which, however, we acknowledge to be rendered less alarming to us by the mildness with which Your Majesty's government has been administrated.”

In a memorial annexed to this petition are the following paragraphs: “We ardently desire to be admitted to a share of the civil and military

employments under His Majesty's government. The thought of being excluded from them is painful to us. We have taken the most solemn oath of fidelity to His Majesty and the august family of Hanover; and ever since the conquest of this country, we have behaved as his loyal subjects. And our zeal and attachment to our gracious sovereign will make us always ready to sacrifice our lives for his glory and the defence of the State.

“The province, as it is now bounded by a line through the 45th degree of north latitude, is confined within too narrow limits. This line is only fifteen leagues distant from Montreal, and yet it is only on this side that the lands of the province are fertile, and that agriculture can be pursued to much advantage. We desire, therefore, that as under the French government our colony was permitted to extend over all the upper countries known under the name of Michillimakinac, Detroit and other adjacent places, as far as the River Mississippi, so it may now be enlarged to the same extent.”

Dartmouth to Cramahé, December 1st, 1773: “There is no longer any hope of perfecting the plan of policy in respect to the interior country, which was in contemplation when the proclamation of 1763 was issued. Many circumstances with regard to the inhabitancy of parts of that country were then unknown.” In brief, the abrogation of the instrument of 1763 had become obvious. No government is so well disposed as the British Parliament to make a clean sheet of law and start anew, in case of necessity. On this occasion, Parliament had nothing to revoke of its own doing since the proclamation and ordinances had been issued by the King and the governor, two doubtful authorities in the matter. Parliament was called for the first time to legislate in regard to Canada. The Act of 1774 should have been passed in 1763, instead of the proclamation, to avoid misunderstanding and uneasiness, but it is hardly possible to imagine that it would have been better than the proclamation at that time—for want of experience in dealing with the new colony. Anyway it came just at the proper hour to pacify the people and prevent the propagation of the American ideas. Singularly enough also, the country was soon after saved to the

British interests by the attitude of the Canadians against the British settlers who would have gone soul and body to the other side if they could.

Murray, Carleton, Chief Justice Hey, Mr. de Lotbinière and others, were examined before a Parliamentary committee, and every effort was made to ascertain what was best for the administration of the colony. It was finally decided that the British minority ought not to be allowed to set up an assembly of men selected from themselves to rule the country, and that the laws to which the Canadians were accustomed should be restored.

The Quebec Bill was introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Dartmouth, May 2nd, 1774. There were two bills in fact: one granting a constitution to the province of Quebec; the other provided a revenue for defraying the expenses for the administration of justice and support of the civil government, by the imposition of certain duties on spirits and molasses, which duties were in lieu of others enjoyed by the French King previous to the conquest. They were, however, in the total but inconsiderable and far short of the amount annually required for the purpose to which they were appropriated, the deficiency being supplied from the Imperial treasury.

“The debates in Parliament developed considerable opposition. One of the points emphasized was that, since the French civil code made no provision for jury trials, questions involving important interests, such as titles to land, would, under the new bill, be decided by a judge alone. Indeed, the French civil procedure in general did not commend itself to most Englishmen. Under that system the evidence in a case was taken at a court of inquiry at which no judge was present; the record of the evidence and exhibits was then laid before the judge, who was addressed by the advocates of the opposing parties on the matter contained in it and on the points involved in the case. The judge did not come into contact with the witnesses. Now, while this procedure differed very decidedly from that followed in civil cases at English law, it did not differ so much from English actions at equity; but this seems to have been overlooked by those who opposed the legal provisions of the bill in Parliament.”*

*Munro: *Seigniorial System*, p. 210.

Several limitations inserted in the bill indicated that for the present the British authorities desired to retain a large measure of control over the province. During the debates in Parliament, Solicitor-General Wedderburn said that he did not believe in the theory of granting Canada a high degree of liberty. Edmund Burke observed the Canadians had not expressed any repugnance for the trial by jury, and that the bill contained nothing on that subject. "I see you wish the Canadians to follow the French régime perpetually." Lord Chatham wanted to impose the oath of supremacy of Queen Elizabeth, because the governor might be inclined to appoint Catholics only to his council. Lord North—Prime Minister—drew attention to the 150,000 Roman Catholics compared with some 160 Protestant families in the province, very few of the latter being land owners. As for an assembly, he adds, if it is granted, "it will be nothing else than a Catholic body. The seigneurs may enter the council, I am not uneasy about them. It is not for us to dictate their laws. Let them make use of laws which they understand. They can always modify or change them afterwards, if they wish."

The English-speaking residents in the province were no more than three hundred and fifty, according to Carleton, but that is probably an underestimate.

The Act states that the provisions of the proclamation of 1763 had been found unsuited to the circumstances of the province, because the Canadians profess the religion of the Church of Rome and enjoyed an established form of constitution and system of laws (at the time of the conquest) by which their persons and property had been protected, governed, and ordered for a long series of years. Then comes the delimitation of the province:—

To the east, Labrador, Anticosti and a number of small islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which had previously been under the government of Newfoundland, were added to Quebec, and remained part of that province until 1809. To the west, the territory was extended to the Mississippi. South, it included all the regions north of the Ohio. North, it embraced the lands of the Hudson's Bay Company. The people in the annexed regions, both east and west, were Canadians and Indians.

Owners of land might bequeath their real property according to English rules of bequest, if they chose to do so.

In all matters relating to property and civil rights the old laws and customs of Canada should prevail, but the legislative council had power to alter this provision if it should be found expedient.

The members of the legislative council were to be appointed by the Crown from persons resident in the province; their number: not less than seventeen, nor more than twenty-three. The right to levy taxes was withheld. The towns might be allowed to tax themselves for the purpose of local improvement. No ordinance of the council touching religion was to be valid until assented to in England.

The reasons for not calling an assembly are not stated in the Act. The reader is aware already of all the arguments invoked, pro and con, the creation of such a body since 1763. It was thought unjust to impose upon the Canadians an assembly of "representatives" so long as the harsh laws of England against Roman Catholics precluded them from being elected to it. Parliament, besides, did not wish to create a power composed of men who were suspected of favouring the claims of the neighbouring colonies.

The laws of England which debarred Roman Catholics from holding any public office because of their religion, were declared inapplicable to Canada. A simple oath of allegiance was substituted for the oath, required to be taken by His Majesty's Protestant subjects. Consequent on this declaration the governor called to his assistance eight Roman Catholic councillors, a minority to be sure, but a minority whose opinion had to be respected in all matters of administration.

As the certainty and lenity of the English criminal law, and the benefit resulting from its use, had been sensibly felt by the inhabitants, that law was therefore continued.

"For the more perfect security and ease of the minds of the inhabitants of said Province of Quebec it is hereby declared that His Majesty's subjects professing the religion of the Church of Rome of and in the said province, may have, hold, and enjoy, the free exercise of the religion of the Church of Rome, subject to the King's supremacy, declared and established by an Act made in the first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth over all

the dominions and countries which then did, or thereafter should belong, to the Imperial Crown of this Realm; and that the clergy of the said church may hold, receive, and enjoy their accustomed dues and rights, with respect to such persons only as shall profess the said religion."

"No person, professing the religion of the Church of Rome, and residing in the said province, shall be obliged to take the oath required by the said statute passed in the first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, or any other oaths substituted by any other Act in the place thereof; but that every such person, who by the said statute, is required to take the oath therein mentioned, shall be obliged, and is hereby required, to take and subscribe the following oath, before the governor, or such other person in such Court of Record as His Majesty shall appoint, who are hereby authorized to administer the same; *videlicet*, I, A.B., do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful, and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George, and him will defend to the utmost of my power, against all traitorous conspiracies and attempts whatsoever, which shall be made against his person, crown and dignity; and I will do my utmost endeavour to disclose and make known to His Majesty, his heirs and successors, all treasons and traitorous conspiracies and attempts, which I shall know to be against him, or any of them; and all this I do swear without any equivocation, mental evasion, or secret reservation, and renouncing all pardons and dispensations from any power or person whomsoever to the contrary."

"All His Majesty's Canadian subjects, within the Province of Quebec, the religious Orders and communities only excepted, may hold and enjoy their property and possessions, together with all customs and usages relative thereto, and all other their civil rights, is as large, ample, and beneficial manner, as if the said proclamation, commissions, ordinances, and other Acts and instruments, had not been made, and as may consist with their allegiance to His Majesty, and subjection to the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain; and that in all matters of controversy relative to property and civil rights, resort shall be had to the laws of Canada, as the rule for the decision of the same; and all causes that shall hereafter be instituted in any courts of justice, shall, with respect to such property and rights, be determined agreeable to the said laws and customs of Canada,

until they shall be varied or altered by any ordinances that shall, from time to time, be passed in the said province by the governor, lieutenant-governor, or commander-in-chief, for the time being, by and with the advice and consent of the legislative council of the same.”

The following remarks have their place here:—

“Whether the Quebec Act is viewed as a public declaration that Canadians were to enjoy the largest measure of religious toleration or whether it is viewed as an act of diplomacy to foster their attachment to the British Crown, or whether it is taken as a declaration of partnership deliberately formed between His Majesty and his new subjects for the better government of the country, it is a remarkable historical document. Certainly no Act of the British Parliament affecting one of her colonies ever displayed more foresight and statesmanship, and although it may not be that we owe the permanency of our Canadian possession to the passing of that Act, it is more than probable that had the British Parliament not adopted the conciliatory spirit towards the Canadians, of which it was the expression, the destiny of Canada might have been completely changed. To lose the loyal attachment of the Canadian clergy and the Canadian habitant was to lose Canada, and were it not for the concessions of the Quebec Act it is more than probable that the French Canadian would have listened to the appeals made by the revolting colonies, rather than submit to laws that deprived him of the ordinary privileges of citizenship.”*

“Perhaps the most important of the criticisms offered against the bill was that of the framers of the Declaration of Independence, who enumerated among the arbitrary and injudicious acts of the home authorities that of “abolishing the free system of English law in a neighbouring province.” It may very well be doubted, however, whether any other course would have been expedient. The attempt to impose English law relating to civil rights upon the province had failed miserably, and the endeavour to retain parts of the two systems side by side had produced legal chaos of the worst sort. It is, therefore, not strange that the home authorities should have decided to adopt the third alternative, that of restoring the old system. On the assumption that Quebec would for all time remain predominantly French

*Honourable G. W. Ross: *Historical Significance of the Plains of Abraham*, p. 7.

in language, traits, and traditions, their decision was neither unnatural nor unreasonable. It certainly was not reached hastily, or without due consideration of objections from every quarter.”*

At the same session of Parliament was passed another Act to establish a fund towards defraying the charges of the administration of justice, and the support of the civil government of the province: “Whereas certain duties were imposed by the authority of His Most Christian Majesty, upon wine, rum, brandy, eau-de-vie de liqueur imported into Canada; and also a duty of three pounds *per centum ad valorem*, upon all dry goods imported into, and exported from said province, which duties subsisted at the time of the surrender of the province . . . and whereas it is expedient that the said duties be discontinued, and that in lieu other duties should be raised . . . there shall, from and after the 5th day of April, 1775, be raised . . . over and above all other duties now payable in said province, the several rates and duties following:—

For every gallon of brandy, or other spirits, of the manufacture of Great Britain, 3 pence sterling.

For every gallon of rum, or other spirits, which shall be imported or brought from any of His Majesty’s sugar colonies in the West Indies, 6 pence.

For every gallon of rum, or other spirits, which shall be imported or brought from any of His Majesty’s colonies or dominion in America, 9 pence.

For every gallon of foreign brandy, or other spirits, of foreign manufacture, imported or brought from Great Britain, 1 shilling.

For every gallon of rum, or spirits of the produce or manufacture of any of the colonies or plantations in America, not in the possession or under the dominion of His Majesty, imported from any other place, except Great Britain, 1 shilling.

For every gallon of molasses and sirops, which shall be imported or brought into the said province, in ships or vessels belonging to His Majesty’s subjects in Great Britain or Ireland, or to His Majesty’s subjects in the said province, 3 pence.

*W. B. Munro: *Seigniorial System*, p. 210.

For every gallon of molasses and sirops, which shall be imported or brought into the said province, in any other ships or vessels, in which the same may be legally imported, 6 pence.

Houses of public entertainment, and retailers of liquors, to pay each 1 pound 16 shillings as a license.

“Nothing in this Act shall extend, discontinue, determine, or make void, any part of the territorial or casual revenues, fines, rents or profits whatsoever which were reserved to, and belonged to His Most Christian Majesty, before and at the time of the conquest and surrender thereof to His Majesty the King of Great Britain; but that the same, and every of them, shall remain and be continued to be levied, collected, and paid, in the same manner as if this Act had never been made; and anything therein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.”

Carleton arrived at Quebec on the 18th September, 1774, and wrote to Dartmouth on the 23rd that “His Majesty’s Canadian subjects are impressed with the strongest sense of the King’s great goodness towards them in the late Act of regulation for the government of this province. All ranks of people amongst them vied with each other in testifying their gratitude and respect, and the desire they have by every mark of duty and submission to prove themselves not undeserving of the treatment they have met with.”

Less than twenty hours after his arrival the governor received a letter from General Gage, dated Boston, 4th September, in which he said that the situation of affairs around him was such that he wished for the despatch from Canada of the 10th and 52nd regiments, but he did not know whether Carleton would feel secure to remain with only the Fusiliers in Quebec, part of the 26th regiment in Montreal, and the small detachments at Three Rivers and Chambly. He also asked if a body of Canadians and Indians could be raised and sent to him. The reply was that the 10th and 52nd regiments would go immediately to Boston *via* the gulf, and that the formation of a Canadian regiment was the very thing that they desired. Carleton himself had more than once pointed out the expediency of taking such action in this matter.

The first American Congress met in Philadelphia, September 5th, 1774,

and on the 26th of the following month invited the Canadians to send delegates to represent their province in the Continental Congress.

The passing of the Quebec Act afforded a pretext to the discontented in Montreal, headed by Thomas Walker to lend encouragement to the Congress of the American colonies, after it had met and agreed on certain resolutions. Montreal was evidently the focus of discontent, owing to the comparatively large number of Americans who had settled there and the constant intercourse they maintained with New England. A deputation proceeded to Quebec, and in November, 1774, succeeded in inducing a number of the English-speaking people of that place to sign a petition to the King, in which the Act was described as one disgraceful to them as British subjects, and ruinous to their interests.