

**THE MAKERS OF  
CANADA: JOHN  
GRAVES SIMCOE**

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The makers of Canada: John Graves Simcoe by Duncan Campbell Scott

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**DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT**

**THE MAKERS OF  
CANADA: JOHN  
GRAVES SIMCOE**





*James Innes*

THE MAKERS OF CANADA

JOHN GRAVES  
SIMCOE

BY

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT

TORONTO

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1910

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## CHAPTER I

### THE CANADA ACT

IT was on February 25th, 1791, that a royal message apprised the House of Commons that it was the intention to divide Quebec into two separate provinces, and the bill was introduced on March 7th by Pitt. The advisability of repealing the Quebec Act had been the subject of much agitation and debate, and hardly had the peace been concluded when demands were made, mainly by the English-speaking inhabitants of the province, for a properly constituted House of Assembly and for the trial by jury in criminal cases.

The portions of the province above Montreal had become settled by soldiers of the disbanded regiments and by Loyalist refugees, and they desired a change in the tenure of land to free and common socage from the feudal tenure which obtained under the Quebec Act of 1774. The partizan bias of some of the foremost agitators for these changes, in what afterwards became the lower province, led to proposals designed rather to place the strength of government in the hands of the minority than to establish upon broad and generous principles a government for the people, legislating for the good of the province. The spokesman of these agitators

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for constitutional changes, Mr. Adam Lymburner, a Quebec merchant of Scottish extraction, requested that one half the representatives from Lower Canada should be chosen from the towns, which would throw the balance of power into the hands of his party and race. But it was with a very different desire and actuated by a nobler motive that the bill which was to inaugurate the principle of colonial self-government was designed and carried. Grenville, writing to Guy Carleton, Lord Dorchester, then governor-general of Canada, on October 20th, 1789, accompanied a draft of the proposed bill with a general survey of the measure. The letter contains a paragraph elucidating the principles upon which the bill was drawn: "Your Lordship will observe that the general object of this Plan is to assimilate the constitution of that Province to that of Great Britain, as nearly as the difference arising from the manners of the People and from the present situation of the Province will admit. In doing this a considerable degree of attention is due to the prejudices and habits of the French Inhabitants, who compose so large a proportion of the community, and every degree of caution should be used to continue to them the enjoyment of those civil and religious Rights which were secured to them by the Capitulation of the Province, or have since been granted by the liberal and enlightened spirit of the British Government."

It is upon the life and power of these principles