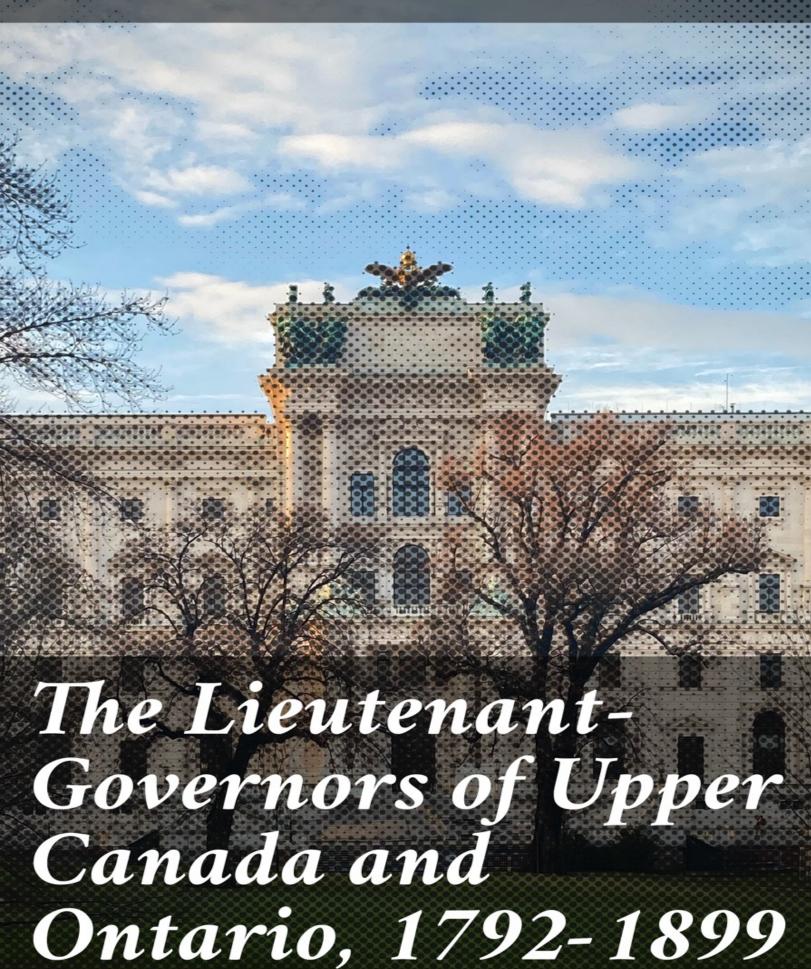
D. B. Read



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The Lieutenant-Governors of Upper Canada and Ontario, 1792-1899



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It was not my intention when I had completed "The Life and Times of Major-General John Graves Simcoe," and the past governors of the old Province of Upper Canada, to further pursue the investigation of the history of Canadian governors; but the favorable reception that volume received at the hands of the public has encouraged me to continue my writing of the series of lieutenant-governors from Simcoe's time to the incumbency of the present occupant of the office, Sir Oliver Mowat.

I am certain that all Canadians will take an interest in a connected historical account of the rulers that have been set over them for the last hundred years. A mere biographical sketch would hardly answer the purpose, so I have combined something of the political history of the governors with biography in order to convey a better idea of the men who have held so prominent a position as that of lieutenant-governor of this Province of the Dominion of Canada.

Before the union of the Provinces of Upper Canada and Lower Canada, in 1841, the lieutenant-governors and the administrators of the Government who were appointed as official heads of the State during the periods intervening between the retirement of one governor and the appointment of his successor, had much more power than the governors of the present time. I have therefore included sketches of those administrators in the series of executive

officers in this volume, as in more cases than one the administrators and provisionally appointed governors, in the performance of their duties, rendered very essential service to the Province whose affairs for the time being were committed to their hands.

In entitling the chapters I have followed the plan of giving to each of the Governors or Administrators his official designation in use during his term of office. Many of the governors and administrators received subsequent honors and rank, and many had military rank while holding office, but in filling the civil post of chief magistrate of the Province, the military rank was not regarded. Up to 1878 the lieutenant-governors were designated as His Excellency; after that date, as His Honor.

Special acknowledgment is made to Mr. Alfred Sandham, Toronto, for permission to make duplicates from his admirable collection of portraits of the lieutenant-governors, as well as of their autographs, which form a feature of this volume.

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The translator of Suetonius's "Lives of the Twelve Cæsars" says in the preface to his work: "Of the several sorts of history, biography is perhaps most adapted to perform the double service of administering at once delight and profit. For, though the general history of a nation, being more extended, and necessarily comprehending in it a far greater number and variety of events, may promise a higher pleasure and more diversified entertainment to the reader, yet biography, being restrained within a narrower limit, has this particular advantage, that the series of the action is embraced by the understanding with greater ease, and the instructions which arise from the most remarkable occurrences in the life of a single person are more directly and naturally applied than when the attention is dispersed through the affairs of a whole people."

These words, written in 1727, have more force now than when first published, since the vastly increased number of events happening every day makes it necessary to have recourse to biography to engage the attention of readers, which in a general history would be distracted by the very number of historical occurrences.

In the "Lives of the Lieutenant-Governors of Upper Canada and Ontario" I have endeavored to steer a middle course, giving to each governor so much of his political history as it is necessary to know without trespassing on the domain of biography in its essential feature of individual character. Without presuming to say I have hit the happy mean, I launch my bark upon the waters trusting to an indulgent public to give it protection in its hazardous voyage.

The more one makes himself familiar with the history of the governors of a state or country, the more he will become acquainted with the country itself.

Ontario, which, under the name of Upper Canada, is the author's native province, has reason to take a pride in having had as lieutenant-governors men of sterling integrity and worth, fit representatives of the constitutional government under which they lived. That it may be always so must be the ardent wish of every lover of his country.

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Canada fell into the hands of Britain after the fall of Quebec, where Wolfe so gallantly led the attack in a contest that resulted in half a continent being added to the Empire of Great Britain. This was in 1759, and from the time of the peace of 1763 until 1791 the whole country was governed as the Province of Quebec. After the American Revolution there was a large exodus of what has been called the United Empire Loyalists into Canada, and these hardy and intrepid settlers began to form settlements and take up land in the western part of the Province. They were devoted to English laws and institutions, and it was soon seen that they would not easily submit to the French laws and customs which then obtained in Canada. The British Ministry saw that the time had come to divide the country, keeping what was to be called Lower Canada for the French and giving Upper Canada to the British. The Canada Act of 1791 was accordingly introduced and passed in the House of Commons, establishing the new province west of the Ottawa.

For the Province of Upper Canada a governor had now to be appointed, and for this office no better man was available than the distinguished officer, Colonel John Graves Simcoe. Simcoe had served with distinction in the Revolutionary War, and when the new Republic of the United States was established had assisted many loyal emigrants who, persecuted on account of their adherence to Britain's cause, and with estates forfeited for having carried arms on her behalf, sought in the Canadian wilderness a refuge from the republican tempest blowing so fiercely to the south.

Simcoe was a member of the Parliament which passed the Imperial Act, and had acquired his knowledge of parliamentary procedure and of statecraft under the tutelage of those two great statesmen, William Pitt and Charles James Fox. He had indeed taken some part in the debate in the House of Commons which resulted in the enactment of the Canada Bill. He had further qualifications for the post to which he was appointed. As commander of the Queen's Rangers throughout the Revolutionary War he had shown his aptitude for command, a penetration which had been most serviceable to the British cause in many emergencies, a loving care for those who served under him, and administrative capacity that could not but command the respect of his superiors. Beyond and above all this he had endeared himself to all those who took part with him in the conflict which resulted in the independence of the United States. Some idea of his popularity and acceptability to Canadians in his new office of governor may be gathered

from the manner in which he was received at Johnstown on his first setting foot in the Province, in 1792, to take upon himself the responsibility of governing Upper Canada. There he was received by the inhabitants with a salvo of artillery, the ordnance for the occasion being an ancient cannon obtained from the old French fort on the island below Johnstown. Soon after the Governor left on his journey up the river, the gentry of the surrounding country, in their queer old broad-skirted military coats, their low tasselled boots, their looped chapeaux, with faded feathers fluttering in the wind, collected together, retired to St. John's Hall, and there did honor to the occasion in speech making and health drinking, as was the custom of the time. In the speech making, Colonel Tom Fraser said, "Now I am content content, I say—and can go home to reflect on this proud day. Our Governor, the man of all others, has come at last. Mine eyes have seen it—a health to him, gentlemen—he will do the best for us."

Simcoe, whose father was commander of His Majesty's ship *Pembroke*, and who lost his life in the Royal service in the important expedition against Quebec in the year 1759, was born in 1752. His father had while on service been taken prisoner by the French and carried up the St. Lawrence, and thus had obtained a knowledge which enabled him to make a chart of that river and conduct General Wolfe in his famous attack on the citadel of Quebec. Naturally, therefore, we find him inheriting a spirit which only needed the events of the American Revolution to produce mature development.

After the death of Commander Simcoe his widow resided at Exeter, in England, and young Simcoe was sent to the Free Grammar School of that town, and from there, at the age of fourteen, to Eton. Thence he removed to Merton College. Oxford, where his classical education completed, and where he acquired a love of Tacitus and Xenophon which made them his constant companions in after life. By the age of nineteen he had entered on his career, obtaining then a commission as ensign in the 35th Regiment of the line. He had been but three years in the army when his regiment was despatched to America to assist in quelling the rebellion of the colonists, and he landed at Boston on the day of the battle of Bunker Hill, June 17th, 1775. Soon after this he was promoted to command a company in the 40th Regiment, and was with it at the battle of Brandywine, when General Howe defeated General Washington and became master of Philadelphia. Captain Simcoe in this battle so distinguished himself that he was marked out for promotion, and in the following October, having attained his majority in the meantime, he was made second in command of the Queen's Rangers. This regiment, originally raised in Connecticut and around New York by Colonel Rogers, and sometimes called Rogers' Rangers, was a provincial corps of light cavalry of Loyalist Americans, with attached companies of light infantry, and was originally about four hundred strong. It had done valiant service, and was severely cut up at Brandywine, and was now recruited with gentlemen of Virginia and young men of the regular army. On receiving his commission, on October 17th, 1777, Major Simcoe joined his regiment, then stationed at Germantown, now a suburb of Philadelphia. Soon after the regiment was moved to New York, when recruiting was vigorously prosecuted in order to bring the regiment up to the required strength. During the war a company of Highlanders and a company of Irish were added to the infantry wing of the regiment, and at full strength it numbered five hundred and fifty infantry, and was one of the most efficient and active corps in the service, the companies being swift of action and adepts at ambuscade and stratagem. Until the early summer of 1778 the regiment was under command of Colonel Mawhood, and in March of that year took part in a successful expedition into the Jerseys, where they defeated a strong body of rebels under command of a French officer, who was taken prisoner. On the recall of General Howe, and upon Sir Henry Clinton taking command of the army, Major Simcoe was promoted to the command of the regiment, and at the same time was given the colonial rank of lieutenant-colonel. Marching through New Jersey in June, 1778, the Rangers encountered a force of seven or eight hundred Americans under Baron Steuben, of the American army, and General Dickenson, in command of the Jersey militia. In the engagement Colonel Simcoe was wounded. After the close of the summer campaign the Rangers wintered at Oyster Bay, Long Island.

During the campaign of 1779 the Rangers were principally occupied in endeavoring to keep down the rebels in the Jerseys, but in October, in an expedition near Brunswick, Simcoe was ambuscaded, had his horse shot under him and himself taken prisoner, and was kept prisoner, undergoing considerable hardship, until the end of