**Conquest Study- Group 6**

**The Quebec Act Debated: Chapais, Ouellet, Neatby**

By: Abbey, Alex & Joanna

**Sir Thomas Chapais** was born March 23rd, 1858 in Saint- Denis, Quebec. He was a French- Canadian author, editor, historian, journalist, professor and politician. Chapais studied at Laval University, and in 1876, he received his Bachelor’s degree. After graduating from Laval University, he became a history professor from 1907 to 1934. Chapais had been a member of many associations such as the Canadian Historical Association, and he was the president of the French section of the Royal Society of Canada in 1907, and again from 1923- 1924. Sir Thomas won many historical titles and honours such as the gold medal of the Historical Society in Montreal in 1922 and the Medal ‘Tyrell gold of the Royal Society of Canada in 1928 for his historical work.

Thesis:The Quebec Act set a constitutional precedent, but it chose to emphasize its effect on its efforts to protect and preserve the French Canadian way of life in Quebec.

Arguments:

1. The Quebec Act guaranteed rights to the French Canadians. Chapais stated that “We had emerged from a vague condition to assume definite status. We were freed from a precarious toleration and were put in possession of a legal guarantee.”
2. Although the English were Protestant and the French were Catholic, the English Parliament ruled in favor of allowing the French their religious rights. Therefore the Catholic Church was recognized in Canada.
3. It re-established the French Civil Law within the government, allowing them to better adapt to the governing ways of the British state.
4. The Quebec Act was not passed because of the revolution, but it was passed because of the persistency of the French Canadians and Carleton.

**Hilda Neatby** was born in 1904 in Sutton, Surrey, England. In 1906, her parents and their nine children immigrated to Earl Grey, Saskatchewan. In 1924, Neatby graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a BA Honours in history. In 1934, she was granted her PhD in history from the University of Minnesota. Neatby taught history and French at Regina College until 1946 when she moved to the University of Saskatchewan. In 1958, she became Head of the History Department. She then moved to Kingston where she wrote and researched history at Queen’s University.

Thesis: The Quebec Act was not a radical new policy, it solidified the policies that were previously outlined in the Articles of Capitulation, the Peace Treaty and the Royal Proclamation excluding the introduction of the new boundary policy that would join the community on the St. Lawrence to the Ohio River country.

Arguments:

1. Canadian Civil Law was never threatened- the Royal Proclamation of 1763 appeared to contemplate change however British ministers and law officers put this down. No legislation by the British Parliament was needed.

2. Under the Articles of Capitulation the law and religious freedoms of the Canadians were protected. Only confirmed what was already in place.

3. The modified Oath that allowed Roman Catholics to hold office granted civil equality. This applied an extension of the principle granted in 1765 by the King stating that Roman Catholics in the colonies of Britain would not be subject to the disabilities that were imposed on Roman Catholics living in the United Kingdom. The Governor of Quebec therefore, might have appointed Roman Catholics to hold office without the modified Oath.

4. The Quebec Act granted Roman Catholics a legislative body. However in 1769 the plan was to experiment with a legislative body that already included the Roman Catholics. The Act gave the citizens of Quebec a solid legislature without the risks of ignorance and inexperience from experimenting.

5. The Quebec Act became controversial only because of the extension of the boundaries of St. Lawrence community, linking it to the Ohio River Valley. This was the only significant shift in policy.

**Fernand Ouelette** was born 24 September 1926 in Quebec. Ouelette has a doctorate from Université de Laval and specialized his studies in Paris. He returned to teach history at Laval, then at Carleton University, the University of Ottawa and York University in Toronto. He is a member of the Royal Society of Canada and an Officer in the Order of Canada. The "Ouellet Revolution" is said to have shifted Canadian historians' attentions from nation to class and from dramatic events to social and economic structures and tendencies because he repudiated the nationalist interpretations and replaced traditional methods with scientific techniques. He writes this essay in 1980.

Thesis: The Quebec Act was a reversal of policy after the Proclamation of 1763, a realistic acceptance by the British that Quebec was not going to develop rapidly with a large English immigration, as they had first predicted.

Arguments:

• The Royal Proclamation did not set out to rule minority over majority or the subjugation of French Canadians, but rather that the origins of it believed that it would be possible to build, in the St. Lawrence Valley, a mercantile state populated with Anglo-Saxon majority

o But this was contradicted by the facts and thus the reversal of English policy happened

• Murray and Carleton abandoned previous objectives to create a new conception of Quebec’s future

• Murray and Carleton’s opposing to “mercantile spirit” attitude became accepted as the old attitude of assimilation was not working but British policy was a possibility

o London leaders did not yet recognize Quebec as big enough or economically important enough to deserve preferred treatment, this being a major cause of social tensions

• The British regime’s first governors did not have as much power over the colonial office as portrayed