The Timeline of Governmental Change in Canada from the Conquest to Confederation

The Royal Proclamation of 1763

- St. Lawrence Region of New France Became “Province of Quebec”
- Murray was named as Governor
- Promised English law and assemblies of elected protestant landowners.
- Murray ignored this (assembly would have excluded 95% of population
- Concerned rising English merchant class would run roughshod over Canadiens
- Allowed French laws and customs to be followed in courts
- Many complaints, Murray was recalled

The Quebec Act 1774

- Murray replaced by Carleton
- Act revoked most of royal proclamation
- Colony would be administered directly by governor and handpicked council, could include French Canadians
- French Civil Law reinstated
- English law retained for criminal matters
- Seigneurial system confirmed
- Roman Catholic Church granted rights to raise money through tithes (taxes).

The Constitution Act of 1791

- Colony of Quebec divided into Upper and Lower Canada
- Upper Canada in West to be English (Ontario)
- Lower Canada in East to be French (Quebec)
- "Mob Rule" of democracy to be avoided (like U.S)
- Hence, a colonial hierarchy created.
  - Governor/Lieutenant-Governor
    - (Representing British authority)
  - Council
    - (Appointed by the governor to help run the colony). Selected from established families and modelled after British House of Lords.
  - Assembly
    - Elected; representing male landowners). Did not have any final authority.

- In matters of land ownership and civil law:
  - Upper Canada: Private ownership and sales of lan allowed, 1/7 of all land granted to Protestant Clergy.
  - Lower Canada: The semi-feudalistic seigneurial system was reaffirmed.