

Quebec Act



Picture of Quebec in 1774

This article on the Quebec Act in Colonial America provides fast facts and information about the effects of these laws and taxes.

- What was the Quebec Act?
- The Meaning and Definition of the Quebec Act
- The purpose of the Quebec Act
- The effect of the Quebec Act
- The Quebec Act, suitable as an educational Social Studies resource for schools and kids

[Intolerable Acts of 1774](#)

[Boston Tea Party](#)

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History of the 13 Colonies and the laws & taxes that sparked rebellion against the British

The definition and purpose of the 1774 Quebec Act, one of the Intolerable Acts

Definition of the Quebec Act

The Meaning and Definition of the Quebec Act: The Quebec Act was passed by the Parliament of Great Britain on June 22, 1774. The Quebec Act was designed to extend the boundaries of Quebec and guaranteed religious freedom to Catholic Canadians.

Intolerable Acts - The Quebec Act

The [Intolerable Acts](#) were a series of British Laws, passed by the Parliament of Great Britain 1774. Four of the acts were specifically aimed at punishing the Massachusetts colonists for the actions taken in the incident known as the [Boston Tea Party](#).

The fifth act, the Quebec Act, included in the laws referred to as the Intolerable Acts, was not related to the punishment of Boston. It related to the expansion of the Province of Quebec and was seen as an additional threat to the liberty and expansion of the colonies.



The Quebec Act

Map of 13 Colonies & The Province of Quebec 1774

The Purpose of the Quebec Act

The purpose of the Quebec Act was to:

- Extend the Province of Quebec to include territory west to the Mississippi, north to Hudson's Bay territory, and the islands in the mouth of the St. Lawrence
- Passed religious reforms that were highly favorable to the Catholic majority in Quebec and allowed Catholics to hold

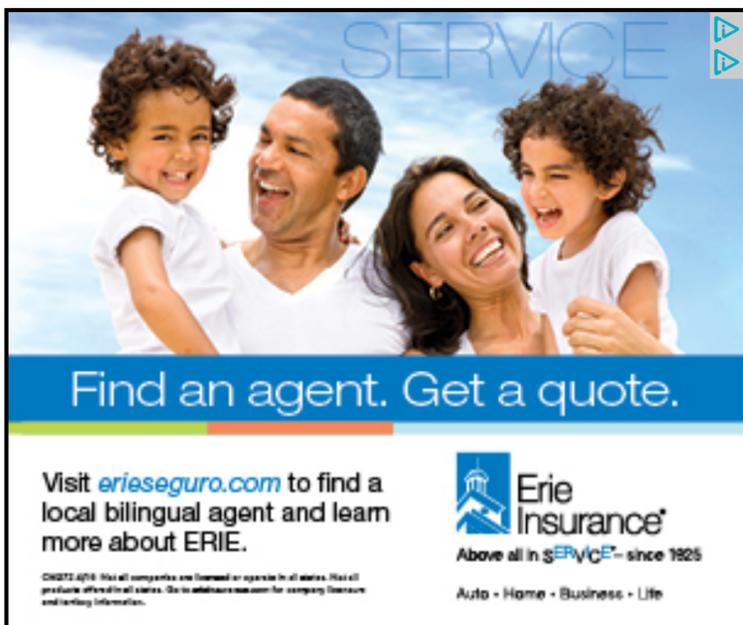
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- The religious reforms were designed to boost the loyalty of the king's Canadian subjects in the face of growing resistance in the American colonies
- Denied the right to an elected legislative assembly

The Quebec Act was perceived as a new model for British colonial administration. As a result of the Quebec Act, the American revolutionaries failed to gain the support of the Canadians during the American Revolution. Read the [1774 Quebec Act text and words](#).

The Quebec Act - Expansion of territories

The territory of the Province of Quebec was expanded to take over part of the Indian Reserve, including a vast area of what is now southern Ontario together with parts of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Much of this land was claimed by Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and other colonial land speculators were furious because the Quebec Act limited opportunities for colonies to expand on their western frontiers and deprived them of their rights to land in that region. Some colonists, ignoring the [Royal Proclamation of 1763](#) which was a temporary law, had already moved into the area.

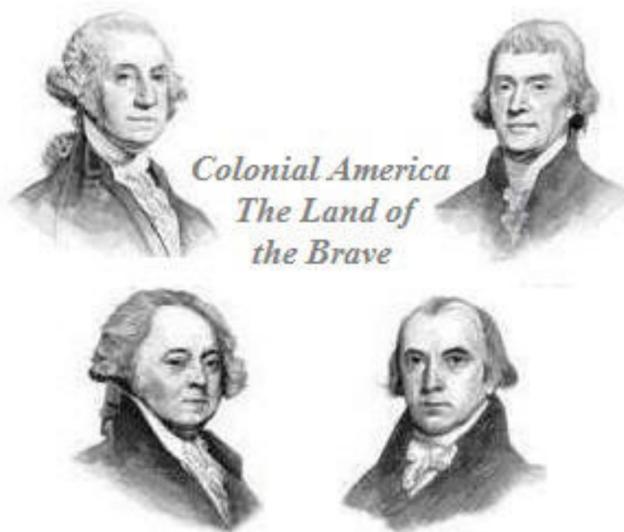


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The Quebec Act - Religious Reforms

The Quebec Act passed reforms favorable to the catholic French majority to boost their loyalty in the face of growing resistance in the New England colonies. The extension of tolerance to Catholics was viewed as a hostile act by predominantly Protestant America and that the British were actively promoting the Roman Catholic faith. This action by the British was viewed in total disbelief by the colonists - Catholicism was severely restricted in Britain itself! In 1688 the catholic King James II was replaced by the Protestant King William III during the [Glorious Revolution](#) for attempting to replace Protestant institutions with Catholic ones against the wishes of the English Parliament. To put the subject into even further perspective it is necessary to consider the ratio of Protestants to Catholics in Colonial America. Statistics available in 1785 show that in the newly founded United States (formerly the 13 Colonies) the American population totalled nearly 4 million people. There were fewer than 25,000 Catholics, equivalent to just 1.6% of the population of Colonial America.

The Quebec Act - Government Restrictions

Whilst the Quebec Act offered religious tolerance in Quebec Britain was not so liberal in respect of the government of Quebec. The Province of Quebec was not afforded the right of democracy or self-government.

- The law did not allow them to elect a legislative assembly
- Quebec was to be governed by a Royal appointed governor and council
- They would not be allowed a representative legislative body
- All laws were subject to royal veto



The Quebec Act was passed in British Parliament

The Quebec Act of 1774 became one of the Intolerable Acts

The Quebec Act of 1774 is one of the five Coercive, or Intolerable Acts, that led to dissent in the American colonies and to the creation of the Declaration of Rights and Grievances in 1774. The British measures that were classed as the Intolerable Acts were:

- March 31, 1774: [The Boston Port Act](#)
- May 20, 1774: [The Massachusetts Government Act](#)
- May 20, 1774: [The Administration of Justice Act](#)
- June 2, 1774: [The Quartering Act of 1774](#)
- June 22, 1774: The Quebec Act of 1774

Less than a year following the "Intolerable Acts" including the Quebec Act of 1774 the American Revolution erupted.

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- Social Studies Homework help for kids on the Quebec Act of 1774

