

entirely outside the law, and one of the most impudently stupid devices ever planned as a make-shift to amuse away time. Gosford, cunningly hiding his instructions, and pretending to have great power for redressing grievances when he had none, making himself peculiarly pleasant with the Canadian ladies of Quebec, and cajoling their husbands, had drawn several leading men from their party allegiance, when that mad-cap, Sir F. B. Head, Governor of Upper Canada, gave publicity to the instructions under which he was to act, and which, on the main points, being the same as Gosford's, and quite contrary to his pretensions, showed that he had been acting the part of a silly dupe to his own good-nature, or a cunning trickster in the game of others. The work of the Commission, as known from the beginning, was naught, and when published was thrown aside as rubbish. A "*Times* Commissioner" would have produced more effect.

The session of Parliament meeting in September, 1836, was opened by Lord Gosford with a speech, vague and meaningless, except in showing that no determined attention had been given by the Colonial Office to Canadian complaints. This could be endured no longer. Fourteen years of neglect, procrastinations, prevarications, and delusions, carrying trifling beyond all limits, had exhausted all patience, and the Assembly, rising in their dignity, in the name of an insulted people, replied to the address (3rd Oct, 1836) that, they should adjourn their deliberations until His Majesty's Government should by its acts commence the great work of justice and reform; until grievances were in progress of redress, they would listen to no demand for supplies. This Parliament was prorogued at the end of thirteen days—not one bill having been passed.

Government was thus left for the fourth year without a vote of supplies; and public officers remained unpaid, though there was £130,000 in the Provincial Chest, which led to the resolutions of Lord John Russell, then Colonial Secretary, in March 1837, enabling Lord Gosford to pay off the arrears, without waiting for a vote of the Assembly. These resolutions, though carried by a strong majority, were never acted on, as

Lord John, frightened at the wretchedness of his own expedient, dropped the resolutions in June, and obtained a vote to pay arrears out of the Military Chest, to be repaid by the Province thereafter. Thus all the offence, if any there be, in the general agitation of 1837, and the so-called rebellion, must rest at the door of Lord John Russell. Knowledge of these resolutions, presented on the 6th of March, only reached Canada—there being then no ocean steamer—in the middle of April, to be met by a storm of indignation that roused the Province from end to end in mass-meetings of whole counties, organization of political committees, speeches, and hot discussions. No one could foresee that Lord John was to break down in a scare, frightened at himself, and when the news did come that the resolutions were abandoned, though the more sedate remained quiet, the more ardent and the young continued the agitation till November, when warrants for high treason and general arrests brought old questions to an end. There is a momentum in the impulse of masses that cannot be suddenly arrested.

Though the word is familiar to us, future historians may hardly admit that there ever was a Lower Canada Rebellion, and the whole record may be reduced to read that the proceedings of the Colonial Office, in 1837, caused such excitement that towards the end of the year Lord Gosford, fearing a revolt, directed the Attorney-General to obtain warrants for high treason against several leading men, which the judges, there not being sufficient grounds of action, would not grant; and recourse was then had to the weak instrumentality of two magistrates. Many arrests were made of persons against whom there was no charge; many escaped them by going to the United States. Three persons only—Doctor Nelson at St. Denis, T. S. Brown at St. Charles, and Doctor Chenier at St. Eustache—headed resistance to these illegal warrants which ended speedily in the dispersion of their adherents. Elsewhere, men were quietly pursuing their usual course of life, employed in their usual occupations.

The Parliament of Lower Canada met for the last time on the 18th August, 1837, only to receive an unsatisfactory speech