

communication; how that operated will be examined in the next chapter. But besides being a post-office between the Crown and the Canadian Government, or between the home Government and the Canadian Government, the Governor General could, within limits and depending on his personal inclination, interpose his own views or advice in either direction; and exercise his personal influence on "his" Ministers in Canada or on the Colonial Office in England. His powers were largely what he made of them, although Royal Instructions circumscribed him in any excessive interference or assertiveness.

The personal role of the Governor General under a system of responsible government in the Dominion, while in some lights very limited, was not altogether a cypher. He could privately advise or consult with his Ministers. As Lord Dufferin, in the 1870's had said at the National Club in Toronto:

The head of the State in a constitutional regime is the depository of what, though undoubtedly a very great, is a latent power - a power which, under the auspices of wise parliamentary statesmanship, is never suffered to become active, and his ordinary duties are very similar to those of the humble functionary we see superintending the working of some complicated mass of steam-driven machinery. This personage merely walks about with a little tin vessel of oil in his hand and he pours in a drop here and a drop there, as occasion or the creaking of the joint may require, while his utmost vigilance is directed to no higher aim than the preservation of his wheels and cogs from the intrusion of dust, grits or other foreign bodies. (Roars of laughter).

Again, when Lord Aberdeen was being sworn as Governor General in Quebec, on September 18, ~~1886~~, 1893, he described his role:

If, and because, a Governor General is in the