

CHAPTER V

THE END OF THE LAFONTAINE-BALDWIN MINISTRY, 1851

THE LaFontaine-Baldwin government remained in office until October, 1851, when it was constitutionally dissolved by the retirement of the prime minister soon after the resignation of his colleague from Upper Canada, whose ability as a statesman and integrity as a man had given such popularity to the cabinet throughout the country. It has been well described by historians as "The Great Ministry." During its existence Canada obtained a full measure of self-government in all provincial affairs. Trade was left perfectly untrammelled by the repeal in June, 1849, of the navigation laws, in accordance with the urgent appeals of the governor-general to the colonial secretary. The immediate results were a stimulus to the whole commerce of the province, and an influx of shipping to the ports of the St. Lawrence. The full control of the post-office was handed over to the Canadian government. This was one of the most popular concessions made to the Canadian people, since it gave them opportunities for cheaper circulation of letters and newspapers, so necessary in a new and sparsely settled country, where the people were