

f whose meeting
ower—was pro-
ne for the pre-
which might be
the interests of
sped on, and at
e Ministry were
cial Parliament,
moned together

us elapsed had
lity in Canada,
ation of trade
quent thereon.
ovince a strong
f legislative ac-
d protection of
en of all races
litical opinion
cause in which
f the Province
f every descent
d Scotch—laid
which had kept
her as fellow-

Personal and
produce their
ual esteem and
ment which the
ad engendered
uch portions of
nada, was fast
majority of both
ether with en-
cy deemed the

ason chosen by
uce the Rebel-
g up anew the
and effectually
ne, at least, of
ith dismay and
ll as several of
he hustings at
to maintain the
e now conse-

quently found himself occupying a position, and necessitated to take a course, which would array against him a large and influential body of those to whom he owed his elevation to place and power, unless he disregarded his solemnly recorded pledges, or could devise some other means of extricating himself from so awkward a dilemma. In this view of the matter, I see little reason to doubt that the hope of alienating from each other the two sections into which the advocates of protection were, by national origin, divided, and the fear of being outbid and forestalled, in the contest for popularity with his countrymen, by a rival demagogue, were the considerations which encouraged Mr. LaFontaine to indulge his natural sympathies with those who had taken part in "the unhappy occurrences" of '37 and '38, (as your Lordship's Ministers are now pleased to style the Rebellion,) by bringing forward a "measure of indemnity," principally intended for their benefit and behoof. In one, at least, of these objects, he was but too successful; the events of the last three months, consequent on the introduction of this measure, have done more to sunder the French and British population of Lower Canada, than the last ten years had done to bring them into friendly feeling towards each other.

What arguments Mr. LaFontaine employed to gain the concurrence of his colleagues in the measure, and Your Lordship's consent to its introduction into Parliament, I can only guess at; that they were deemed urgent and powerful is shown by his ultimate success. There is, however, sufficient evidence to prove, in my opinion, that he was not unopposed by other members of the Ministry, and that, even after their consent had been won, (very reluctantly, it is whispered, in some cases,) a considerable time elapsed before the Hon. Attorney General (East) could muster sufficient courage to lay the matter before Your Lordship. The Hon. W. H. Merritt, President of Your Lordship's Exe-

cutive Council, addressed a letter to his constituents on the 6th March last, in which the following passage occurs:—

"On becoming a member of the Government, I found the payment determined on by the Administration. My first impression was, I confess, against it; but I soon became convinced that they (the Ministers) had no alternative.—[*Montreal Pilot*, 30th March, 1849.]

Mr. Merritt was gazetted on the 16th September, at which time, as above stated, the measure of indemnity was under consideration in the Council; and had Your Lordship been informed of the proposed measure previous to the meeting of Parliament on the 18th January, four months afterwards, I can scarcely suppose it would have been passed over unnoticed in the Speech with which you opened the Session, while so many matters of comparatively minor importance were announced.

Parliament had not been long in session, when it was rumoured abroad that a proposition to pay the losses incurred in 1837 and 1838, including those suffered by parties then in arms against the Sovereign, would shortly be laid before the House.

The report was not unfounded. On the 13th day of February, Mr. LaFontaine submitted to the Legislative Assembly certain Resolutions on the subject of the Rebellion Losses, which he proposed that the House should consider forthwith in Committee of the Whole. It was urged in opposition, that the measure had taken the country by surprise, and that no time had been afforded to allow an expression of opinion from places at any distance from Montreal. A motion was accordingly made for ten days delay, which, after a week's animated debate, was lost by a majority of 26; and on the 20th February, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole to consider the proposed resolutions.

In the course of these debates, scarcely an attempt was made to conceal the intention of the Ministry to indemnify those who had been engaged in the Rebellion; on the con-