

## INTRODUCTION.

---

From the settlement of this Province up to the year 1854, —when the system of Government under which we now live, was first put into operation—the conduct and management of public affairs and business, and the distribution of patronage, rested in the hands, and were under the control of a dominant class. The “family compact,” as it was familiarly and systematically styled by those outside the pale, was composed of men of consideration who, with seats in the Executive Council, held all the higher offices to which large salaries were attached. The compact was a kind of autocracy—the members of which maintained that they were not amenable for their acts to the people; but while holding themselves independent of the popular voice, they were subject to a power higher than their own—namely, the Lieutenant Governor, who carried out the will of the Colonial Secretary. The Province in the first half century of its existence was in fact governed from “Downing Street.” Holding their positions and offices from the Crown, it was the interest of the Council to uphold the prerogative vested in the hands of the Lieutenant Governor; and it happened that the members of the Executive seldom resisted any encroachment of the Governor on the power it was assumed they