

hardihood to tell a new king's councillor of the now rising French-Canadian nation, that it was not customary to hang for so trivial an offence in England, Mr. Picotté de Belestre shewed his authority by having him committed to prison. This may have been for the insult to his dignity, rather than any well-grounded suspicion that he was the perpetrator. In those days a magistrate could imprison without assigning cause, and thus Mr. Franks was not aware of the crime laid at his feet. The whole body of English merchants offered to become his bail; but the Governor, as soon as it reached his ears at Quebec, saw fit, without enquiry of any kind, to release him within a week and to severely reprimand Mr. Belestre for his officiousness.

History oft repeats itself and we have here a verification of the adage, for the self-same cause occasioned this insult to the King as in after years, 1849, the loss of the seat of Government to Montreal; acts of sedition, unpardonable in themselves, but the expression or voice of an indignant people in condemnation of the Government for granting or yielding to French supremacy in an English colony to the detriment of English rule.

No day in the annals of Canada since the conquest, has been invested with the constitutional importance of this memorable May day of 1775. We may well call it "the birthday of Canada's autonomy," for on this day the "Quebec Act" was to come into force, the first act of the British Legislature having reference to Canada, the foundation of our present political status and the laws under which we are governed.

It was this act which had aroused the indignation of the British population, and a large number of the French citizens of Montreal, from whose hand, no doubt, the insult had emanated, as the language used, and subsequent acts, would imply, and well would it have been had this childish treatment of the king's effigy been the sole outcome of the wrath of the people; but unfortunately it was not destined