

The union of 1840 was the next important move in the political progress of the Provinces that now constitute the Dominion. The report which bears the name of Lord Durham, but which ~~really~~ was written by a man equally astute, Charles Buller, thoroughly exposed the causes of the rebellion of 1837-38 and explained clearly and emphatically the principles that should guide the government of England in their policy towards a people who so fully recognized the value of local freedom. The publication of this document was soon followed by the union of 1840 and the concession of responsible government in the complete sense of the term in the next few years. The provinces were at last given a real "image and transcript" of the British constitution—not a mere semblance like that which won the encomiums of the first governor of Upper Canada. It is true responsible government was not granted in a single day or even in one year, but it soon worked itself out the moment the British government agreed to its leading principles in the famous despatch written by Lord John Russell, when colonial secretary in 1839, to Mr. Poulett Thomson, afterwards Lord Sydenham. By 1848 all the provinces were practically in possession of a system of parliamentary government as understood in England. The people's house had full control of the people's purse, and chose a committee of their own to carry on the administration of public affairs. From 1841 to 1867 the provinces increased in population and wealth, in intellectual vigour, and in all the elements that go to constitute national strength. Not a year passed without some additional recognition being given to the imperial authorities of the ability of the people of the provinces to manage every matter affecting their local interests. Year by year it loosened its control over its dependencies and taught them to cultivate that self-reliance and self-confidence without which no community can ever become great and prosperous.

Then followed the federal union of the provinces as the natural sequence of their political progress. The difficulties between the French and English sections of the old province