

a true insight into the causes of Canadian disputes, and provide some remedies for the discontent that commenced to gain ground in Canada after the war of 1812. The men who should have kept them informed as to the true situation of affairs were not always well chosen in point of political training. The military governors, who were so generally the choice of the Colonial Office, were too choleric and impatient of opposition from 'mere civilians,' and appeared to think restless colonial politicians could be managed like a regiment of soldiers. Obstinate Canadians who did not look at matters through the gubernatorial spectacles were lectured like so many unruly school-boys who did not aptly learn their lessons from the official text-books. If the birch-rod would not be actually applied to a Legislative Assembly, at all events it would be well scolded by a Sir James Craig, when it obstinately asserted its claim to legitimate influence in the government of the colony. But even though their intentions might have been most excellent, the governors were powerless in the face of a constitutional system only calculated to provoke political difficulties. It was inevitable that a system which gave all substantial power into the hands of officials, who owed no responsibility to the people, could only lead to political anarchy, according as the mass of the people understood the true meaning of representative government. British statesmen, for very many years, never could be brought to believe that the 'circumstances' of the colonies admitted the exact reproduction therein of the system of responsible government. And yet the experience of every day illustrated the impossibility of retaining power in the hands of an irresponsible Executive, only supported by a nominated branch, filled with officials, and animated by a desire to impede the legislation of a popular House, which, however factious and overbearing at times, had, at least, reason and

justice on its side when it claimed a larger share in the government of the country.

In Lower Canada the gravity of the situation was increased by the progress of national rivalry and animosity; but there, as in other sections of British North America, the existing evils were the natural result of the political system. In all the Provinces, representative government was coupled with an irresponsible Executive; the same constant collision existed between the several branches of the government; the representative bodies, owing to the anomaly of their position, were frequently abusing their power; and the Imperial authorities were ever interfering in the matters which should have been wholly left to the Provincial Governors. Yet, in spite of the numerous facts showing the absurdities and dangers of the constitutional system in operation, the Downing Street authorities were long unable to appreciate the necessity for such a radical change as would give the people an actual share, not a mere semblance of a part, in the government of the country. To suppose that such a system would work well implied a belief that Canadians could enjoy representative institutions for any time without acquiring any of the characteristics of a free people. Unhappily, not till blood was shed in an ill-advised rebellion, did the British Government feel itself compelled to take some practical measures to enquire into the causes of the disaffection. It is impossible to exaggerate the value of the services of Lord Durham during this national crisis. Canada owes him a deep debt of gratitude for a report, remarkable for its fairness, for its clear appreciation of the causes of discontent, and for its wise suggestions of the remedies that ought to be provided. The result was the new Constitution of 1840, under which the Canadas were again united in one legislature, and their constitutional rights considerably enlarged;