

PREFACE

IN the present volume the narrative of personal biography is subordinated to the record of political achievement. The name of Robert Baldwin and that of his distinguished colleague Louis LaFontaine will always be associated with the words responsible government. Baldwin was frequently derided by his contemporaries as a "man of one idea." Time has shown that this "one idea" of Robert Baldwin,—the conception of responsible government,—has proved the corner-stone of the British imperial system. It is fitting, therefore, that this brief account of the political career of Robert Baldwin and his associates should centre round the evolution of responsible government in the province of Canada. In other works of the present series the periods of Canadian history preceding and following the LaFontaine-Baldwin administrations have already been treated. The biography of Papineau, already published, and the forthcoming biography of William Lyon Mackenzie offer an ample account of the stirring events of the rebellion. Sir John Bourinot in his *Lord Elgin* and Mr. Lewis in his *George Brown* have told the story of the administration of Hincks and Morin after the retirement of their former chiefs. The present narrative is therefore especially concerned with the two LaFon-