

absolute monarch; but we must not forget that, at times, there were such legislative bodies as Sovereign Council and Superior Council. And yet, the restrictions thus put on the authority of one man were not as limited as they reasonably might have been; public opinion was never strong enough to have great bearing upon the measures adopted. The Council was both a legislative body and a Court of Justice; but in whatever capacity the highly talented persons composing it acted, they were subject to the will of the king whose edicts they were bound to enforce. Most undoubtedly they were responsible, but to the king, and not to the people; and as such they could be called anything but a responsible government.

During the whole century and a half that Canada was known as New France, this order of things prevailed only to be more strictly and severely adhered to in the first few years following England's victory. From the very moment Levis waved the white flag on the Island of Montreal, Canada, which was placed under a military rule, retrograded in the matter of responsible government and furnished anything but auspicious omens for the future welfare of the inhabitants. All the people had to obey the commander's orders with a soldier's promptitude and precision; the only part they were allowed to take in governmental affairs was the sending of petitions to the crown as protest against England's failing to apply her principle that, "a Britisher does not cease to be one, and does not lose his national rights from the moment he leaves England's shores." In 1764, an attempt at reformation was made, but the main part of it remained only as a theory. The power which Lord Amherst, General Murray, and Sir Guy Carleton successively possessed was nearly autocratic, and to say the least was not any more of the responsible kind than that of Champlain, Frontenac or Vaudreuil.

But time rolled on and continued to bring something new. As every ship coming from the United Kingdom brought inhabitants whose rights had to be respected, more or less; so the year 1774 brought to life an amendment to Canada's form of administration which was but the first of many steps towards responsible government. That was the one cause for the passing of the Quebec Act; for, while the Protestant minority was clamoring for the creation of a legislative and executive council, the French Canadians wanted no assembly to be created and simply asked for the restoration of the old laws. Both pleas were heard, and the Quebec Act seemed to satisfy everyone by restoring the old laws and establishing a legislative council. Of course, this legislative council