

LAFONTAINE'S RESOLUTION

have satisfactorily dealt with a question which required the interposition of a government having the confidence of both sections of the province. One thing is quite certain. This ministry, weak as it was, Tory and ultra-loyalist as it claimed to be, had recognized by the appointment of a commission, the justice of giving compensation to French Canada on the principles which had governed the settlement of claims from Upper Canada. Had the party which supported that ministry been influenced by any regard for consistency or principle, it was bound in 1849 to give full consideration to the question, and treat it entirely on its merits with the view of preventing its being made a political issue and a means of arousing racial and sectional animosities. As we shall now see, however, party passion, political demagogism, and racial hatred prevailed above all high considerations of the public peace and welfare, when parliament was asked by the LaFontaine-Baldwin ministry to deal seriously and practically with the question of indemnity to Lower Canada.

The session was not far advanced when La-Fontaine brought forward a series of resolutions, on which were subsequently based a bill, which set forth in the preamble that "in order to redeem the pledge given to the sufferers of such losses. . . it is necessary and just that the particulars of such losses, not yet paid and satisfied, should form the subject of more minute inquiry under legislative