

other that caused irritation and discontent with the operation of the Constitutional Act, and fastened the fetters of the Family Compact on the people, it was that the greater portion of the revenue was under the control of the Governor and his Councils. Now this source of bitterness was removed for good. Money bills were to originate with the Governor and to be passed first by the Legislative Assembly.

Provision, too, was made for the better administration of justice, and the judges became more independent. The power of veto or disallowance continued to exist in the Imperial Government, and it was expressly stated that all laws affecting religion, the rights of the clergy, Roman Catholic or Protestant, Clergy Reserves, etc., should have no force without the express sanction of the Imperial Parliament. There is, however, one noticeable omission in this Act. There is no clause making it compulsory that the Executive Council or Ministry must be chosen from the party having a majority in the Legislative Assembly. In other words, Responsible Government was not mentioned; but the fact that the control of the revenue was given to the Legislature may be held to imply that Responsible Government was in the thoughts of the Imperial Parliament when the Act was passed. Responsible Government came to us, not by the provisions of any Act, but under and through instructions from the British Government to the governors it appointed. They were advised to choose the members of their Canadian ministry from the party having popular approval. True some of the governors, noticeably Sir Chas. Metcalfe, violated this principle and for a brief period ruled almost despotically. With Lord Elgin who came to Canada

in 1847, we may date the full and unreserved acceptance of this cardinal and vital principle of Parliamentary government.

The Act of Union was not entirely acceptable to all classes of the Canadian population. The French feared the loss of their legitimate influence; the Family Compact of this Province did not relish the loss of much of their power, but all difficulties in the way of its acceptance were skilfully removed.

The Special Council of Lower Canada promptly endorsed it, and Mr. Poulett Thompson who came out as the first Governor, by appealing to the professions of loyalty of the Family Compact, succeeded in procuring a somewhat reluctant assent from the Legislative Council of Upper Canada. Many important changes since that time have taken place, which deserve the greatest attention. Our Municipal system, our Educational system, the acquirement of full control of our trade and commerce, the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, thus severing the link which connected the Church and State; the abolition of Seigniorial Tenure, the introduction of an elective Legislative Council, are perhaps the most noticeable of the constitutional changes prior to the Confederation of the provinces. We have seen Canada as one province, under the Quebec Act; then divided into two with separate Legislatures under the Constitutional Act of 1791; then again united under one Parliament in 1841, and once more decentralized by the Confederation of 1867. It would be a rash prophecy to say that we have even now reached our final political development. Great changes are without doubt in store for us. What particular forms they will take none can tell.