

LORD ELGIN

inaction or silence would have been wiser for himself. We can only explain his conduct in relation to the constitutional controversy between Lord Metcalfe and the Liberal party by the supposition that he could not resist the blandishments of that eminent nobleman, when consulted by him, but allowed his reason to be captured and then gave expression to opinions and arguments which showed that he had entirely misunderstood the seriousness of the political crisis or the sound practice of the parliamentary system which Baldwin, LaFontaine and Howe had so long laboured to establish in British North America. The books he wrote can never be read with profit or interest. His "History of the United Empire Loyalists" is probably the dullest book ever compiled by a Canadian, and makes us thankful that he was never able to carry out the intention he expressed in a letter to Sir Francis Hincks of writing a constitutional history of Canada. But though he made no figure in Canadian letters, and was not always correct in his estimate of political issues, he succeeded in making for himself a reputation for public usefulness in connection with the educational system of Upper Canada far beyond that of the majority of his Canadian contemporaries.

The desire of the imperial and Canadian governments to bury in oblivion the unhappy events of 1837 and 1838 was very emphatically impressed by the concession of an amnesty in 1849 to all