

assembly, prove acceptable to the legislative council, and at the same time meet the approval of the home government. Such was the task entrusted to Lord Sydenham. In addition to a fortunate combination of personal qualities, he was the first Canadian governor who was a trained politician, a member of the British parliament and a member of the British cabinet. Practically all of the imperialists in Britain and in the colony itself, regarded the parliamentary system of cabinet government as quite impossible of operation in the colonies. It was held to be indispensable that the executive government should hold itself aloof from the popular branch of the legislature, and that some such system of distinct powers with mutual checks and balances as that of the United States was the only workable one consistent with the retention of the colony as a part of the British Empire. All these predictions, however, Lord Sydenham completely belied, for he boldly introduced the British parliamentary system into Canada, thus completely revolutionizing the previous system of colonial government. This he accomplished by personally undertaking its introduction, directly combining in himself the duties of governor-general, prime minister, and party leader. He initiated his personally selected cabinet into the mysteries of cabinet government, dependent for its life upon retaining the support of a majority of the legislature including the assembly and the council. To accomplish this, he organized and maintained for the first time in Canada a government party, of which he was the recognized leader and upon which he depended for getting his numerous and important bills through the legislature, for voting the necessary supplies, and supporting his executive government.

It must be admitted that the government party was dependent largely upon the personality of the governor for its numerical strength and cohesion. Nevertheless on his untimely death, he left to his successor, Sir Charles Bagot, a fairly united government party, to which Bagot was able to add a certain French element which had agreed to abandon the policy of disrupting the union. Of course the maintenance of an organized government party led to the formation of an opposition party on fairly definite lines. This was evidenced when Lord Metcalfe, disagreeing with the