

his indictment, said : ' According to our Constitution we have no sole or Prime Minister ; we ought always to have several Prime Ministers or officers of State ; every such officer has his own proper department, and no officer ought to meddle in the affairs belonging to the department of another ! ' At the same time a protest was signed in the House of Lords to this effect : ' We are persuaded that a sole or even a first Minister is an officer unknown to the law of Britain, inconsistent with the constitution of this country, and destructive of liberty in any country whatever. ' ¹

Walpole himself repudiated the title with derision : ' Having first, ' he says of his opponent, ' conferred upon me a kind of mock dignity and styled me the prime minister, they carry on the fiction which has once heated their imaginations, and impute to me an unpardonable abuse of that chimerical authority which only they have thought it necessary to bestow. ' Yet from his time onward the office has been a living reality, ever increasing in influence and engrossing power, until it has become the dominant factor in the government of England, and of those representative institutions to which that government has given birth.

It has been observed, with some degree of warrant, that in its essential features the form of government which Canada enjoys is not so far removed from that of the United States as at first sight may appear. In the United States the executive power is committed by the people to one man for four years. In Canada the governance of the people is in effect entrusted by their representatives to one man for an indefinite period. One nation styles its ruler the president, the other the prime minister. Stripped of ceremonial forms and phrases, such is, with certain qualifications, the broad fact. Of course, like most analogies, this one must not be pressed too far. Canada is not a sovereign power. Her prime minister's jurisdiction is therefore circumscribed, and extends in its plenitude only over the domestic concerns of the Dominion. Nor do his electors disperse

¹ *George II and his Ministers*, by Reginald Lucas, pp. 74-5. The same author says of Chatham : ' The title of Prime Minister he always repudiated, both in public and private life ' (*op. cit.*, p. 353).