

After the Rebellion of 1837-8 the Home Government suspended the constitution of the country, and created a special Council, half English and half French, to act in the place of the legislature. The first act of the Council, whose decrees had all the force of law, was the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, in order to the more prompt and effective suppression of the revolt. The Earl of Durham was, at the same time, appointed Governor-General and High Commissioner for the settlement of public affairs in the two Canadas. He was a nobleman of great political experience, and had been educated in a liberal school. His personal character was attractive, and his private hospitality princely. He was to the last degree unmercenary, refusing any recompense for his distinguished services. He was refined and courteous in manner, but tenacious of his convictions of duty, and firm in carrying them into execution. On his arrival in the country, May 27, he announced himself as the friend and arbitrator of the people, without distinction of party, race or creed. And amply he fulfilled his pledge in the spirit of the purest and most disinterested statesmanship.

A difficult question, which met him at the very outset, was how to deal with the political prisoners, with whom the jails were crowded. The excited state of public feeling prevented impartial trial by jury. An amnesty was, therefore, granted to the great mass of the prisoners, which was appropriately proclaimed on the day appointed for the coronation of the maiden Queen—June the fourteenth. The Imperial Parliament, however, annulled the ordinance as *ultra vires*, but indemnified the Governor and Council from blame for their unconstitutional act. The proud and sensitive Earl resigned his commission, and returned to England, and Sir John Colborne became the administrator of the province. Lord Durham's health was utterly broken, and two years later he died. His Report on the state of Canada is a monument of elaborate and impartial research. Its wise and liberal suggestions greatly tended to the pacification of public feeling in the colonies. It urged the principle of the dependence of the Executive upon the representatives of the people, and prepared the way for the establishment of responsible government. "From first to last," wrote Lord Durham, "I have discerned in those dissensions which fill the parliamentary history of Canada, that the Assembly has always been at war with the