

Government Orders

sorry to see debate reduced to these attacks and misrepresentations. Usually it is to avoid answering a question.

Responsible government. Baldwin and La Fontaine worked hard for it. How important was it to address the rights of fair representation, the rights for responsible government? Finally England faced its responsibilities. When a rebellion happens you have to see the writing on the wall.

Unfortunately though the colonial secretary, Lord John Russell, was in no way committed to responsible government. It was totally unacceptable to him. Although both rebellions failed, they succeeded. They succeeded because Britain became alarmed. Sixty years earlier it had lost its 13 colonies. Someone saw sense.

Lord Durham was sent to Canada. He was nicknamed Radical Jack, probably because he was a powerful advocate for political reform in the 1830s in England. He was instrumental in getting votes on the secret ballot and was also instrumental in getting the vote for all men. I believe he was probably chosen because of this. He certainly was a man who would look at the other side of things. He was a sick man; he was a dying man when he came to Canada.

Durham's appointment was seen as a welcome change on both sides of the Atlantic by those wishing for political change. He arrived in 1838. He was not well, as I said, but he was determined to do his duty.

Responsible government was suggested to Lord Durham, the new Governor General, by Robert Baldwin, a reformer for all of the six British colonies remaining in eastern North America: Upper Canada, Lower Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and Newfoundland.

Many similarities existed in the injustices in all six, injustices which led to the American revolution. Robert Baldwin was a moderate reformer. His proposal for responsible government appealed to Lord Durham. It was similar to Britain's form of government.

After the rebellion, Durham had to deal with political prisoners. His leniency toward the rebels, especially in Lower Canada angered the English minority in Montreal. Because of the constant antagonism against him, after five months he resigned and went back to Britain. He still wrote the Durham report and the result of that, as we know, was the Act of Union in 1840.

• (1335)

Favouring responsible government, the reaction in the Canadas for this favour it was now going to receive in Upper Canada was pretty positive. The Reformers knew political leaders were to emerge, like Francis Hincks who had been a newspaper man with the Toronto *Examiner*, and the Baldwins again, the people who had waited years for change. In Lower Canada, Étienne

Parent and Louis La Fontaine were also anxious to see these changes.

Lord Elgin was actually going to be the man who was instrumental in putting responsible government forward. He was actually the son-in-law of Lord Durham. He was married to Mary, Lord Durham's daughter. When he came the instrument was going to be the rebellion losses bill to make amends to those people who had lost valuable property.

We know what happened. We received responsible government. Lord Elgin listened to the people. He gave royal assent. In 1848, Nova Scotia had it because the Reform government was in power. In 1849, New Brunswick and the Canadas had it. In 1851, P.E.I. had it and Newfoundland had it in 1855.

What about the native people in Canada? What about the genocide committed on the Beothuk Nation in Newfoundland? We have made so many errors. What about the Japanese? During the war maybe we had to have security restraints but we did not have to give away all their property.

The Deputy Speaker: I wonder if there would be unanimous consent to give the member a few more minutes to finish her talk?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mrs. Jennings: Thank you. What of our errors in the way we treated our Japanese Canadians? They had a lot of valuable real estate, especially in British Columbia, which ended up in the hands of a lot of suspect people. I did not like what happened in British Columbia. It was wrong.

We have a lot to be ashamed of, but it is all of our shame. It is our history. It is us. We have to be equal. We have to care together. To remove and sell off people's possessions is wrong.

Should we visit the sins of the fathers on the sons? I think not. In my classroom we would often say: "Yesterday was another time; tomorrow is the first day of the rest of my life". That is where we should be going in Canada today. We had two mothers in Ireland, one Protestant, one Catholic, who tried to go for peace, who also used that idea. We have to make it a better world.

Any electoral changes must be to protect all Canadians equally, as equally as our Constitution at present will allow. I hope my friend from Chambly will concede that Reformers know their history. Perhaps it is with a little different emphasis, but I hope I respect all cultures in our country: no special privileges, no special interest groups, all of us working together in a federal union.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a comment and a question. We are currently debating the motion that Quebec should keep at least 25 per cent of the seats in this House.