

pass a single law. The Canadian premier is not only head of the Executive, but as leader of the House of Commons he controls the Legislature and can put through his own measures. The president cannot make appointments without the advice and consent of the Senate, but there is no such check on the minister, whose patronage (with public works as part of the constitution) is far larger and more extensive. The president is not necessarily the successful leader of a party; the Canadian premier must be. The president can only hold power for a limited period, but the successful leader of a party may hold it as prime minister for a life-time. Where, then, does the president have the advantage? Under responsible government, the minister, it is true, must retire before a hostile vote in the House of Commons; but "responsible government," again, is one of those old English traditional forms, which, like "the Crown," may mean a great deal or very little. In its original signification it certainly referred to the responsibility of ministers to Parliament for the acts of the Crown; but in Canada, where the Crown is the mere shadow of a shadow, it might, with almost equal truth, be taken as referring to the responsibility of the Queen's representative for the acts of his ministers, whose mouth-piece (on state occasions) he is bound to be, although the sentiments expressed cannot always harmonize with his own convictions. To speak of the responsibility of ministers to the people (as is constantly done) is, at any rate, inaccurate. The premier is not really responsible either to the Crown or to the people directly, but to the representatives of the people in the House of Commons; and so long as he can stand up and say, "I have a majority," his power is far more despotic than that of the strongest man that ever occupied the presidential chair.

It may be admitted, however, that if confederation was a political necessity, then a strong central government was also a political necessity. The history of confederations is