

But, if there was no hopeful solution in sight from the Canadian side, there might be from Britain, and it was ultimately from this direction that relief came. Lord Durham's report of 1838, presenting an interesting and striking picture of the impasse at which Canada had arrived, and indicating the necessity for some change which would afford the people more power in their domestic affairs, came at the psychological moment, following a rather serious rebellion in Lower Canada and an abortive one in Upper Canada. The British government, realizing that something decisive must be attempted, in spite of the vigorous protests of practically all the imperialistic elements in both Britain and Canada, decided to attempt the bridging of the gap between the legislative and executive branches of the Canadian government. Convinced that this must be accompanied by some remedy for the fundamental mistake of the past in dividing Canada on racial lines, the British government passed an act for the reunion of Upper and Lower Canada into one province. Recognizing in this the likelihood of a British instead of a dual national future for the country, the French section opposed the measure most strenuously, and when it was passed adopted as its policy in the first legislature the repeal of the union. This naturally prevented the French members being admitted to that share in the executive government to which their numbers and influence would otherwise have entitled them, and to which they were subsequently admitted, when the policy of disrupting the union was largely abandoned. The ultra-conservative party in Upper Canada also strongly opposed the union on account of the professed intention of the British government to meet, as far as possible, the aspirations of the popular party for a voice in the executive government.

The first governor of United Canada had, therefore, to find, if possible, a practical solution for the new Canadian problem which confronted him, and which involved, on the one hand, the attempt to maintain a united Canada with nearly half the population bent on its disruption, and, on the other, an attempt to construct an executive government whose personnel and policy would satisfy the majority of the popular representatives in the