



Vol. XV.

OTTAWA, ONT., MAY, 1913.

No. 8

Entered at the Post Office at Ottawa, Ont., as Second-Class Matter.

Responsible Government in Canada.

IF one were to know of Canadian Government only what is shown to him by our present form of administration, he might be led to think that this autonomy has been in vogue for ever or at least, that it has sprung up all of a sudden by a radical change. However such is not the case; even a superficial study of history shows us that it has accrued as a result of a slow and tedious process of evolution.

Thus the question arises: "What is responsible government as applied to a colony?" Speaking Bourinot's words, we could say that it is "One in which the King or his representative does not exercise any power, legislative or executive, except through the legislature, which makes the law and an executive which is practically chosen by that legislature to carry out that law." Or, again, quoting Mr. Ewart, we could call it "The rule by which the administration of the day resigns its executive functions whenever it ceases to possess the confidence of the people as represented by the House of Commons."

Well enough are we aware of the fact that we now possess such political freedom; but a good many of us — the great majority perhaps—ignore completely the long and wearisome struggles, both physical and diplomatical, that were fought in the attainment of it. As in all other countries, the fate of government was linked very closely to the social development of the people; instruction, education and general civilization opened their minds to new ideas