

TUMULT AND INCENDIARISM

“difficult to discover a sufficient reason, so far as the representative of the Crown was concerned, for dealing with the one measure differently from the other.” And in the second place, “by reserving the bill he should only throw upon Her Majesty’s government or (as it would appear to the popular eye in Canada) on Her Majesty herself, a responsibility which rests and ought to rest” upon the governor-general of Canada. If he passed the bill, “whatever mischief ensues may probably be repaired,” if the worst came to the worst, “by the sacrifice” of himself. If the case were referred to England, on the other hand, it was not impossible that Her Majesty might “only have before her the alternative of provoking a rebellion in Lower Canada, by refusing her assent to a measure chiefly affecting the interests of the *habitants* and thus throwing the whole population into Papineau’s hands, or of wounding the susceptibilities of some of the best subjects she has in the province.”

A Canadian writer at the present time can refer only with a feeling of indignation and humiliation to the scenes of tumult, rioting and incendiarism, which followed the royal assent to the bill of indemnity. When Lord Elgin left Parliament House—formerly the Ste. Anne market—a large crowd insulted him with opprobrious epithets. In his own words he was “received with ironical cheers and hootings, and a small knot of individuals, consisting, it has since been ascertained, of persons