

of government, with certain members of the legislature as members of the executive council. The assembly had already enjoyed that experience to a limited extent, but it had not proved very encouraging, inasmuch as the members of the executive chosen from the assembly had invariably employed their influence in the assembly to promote the interests of the executive, instead of using their influence with the governor to promote the objects of the assembly. The assembly, in conjunction with a reformed legislative council amenable to the people, much preferred, as a means of influencing the policy of the executive, the control of the supplies, to any harboring of executive officers in its midst.

In all practical discussion of responsible government, involving the popular control of both sections of the legislature and in consequence the virtual control of the executive through the power of the purse, the inevitable question always emerged, what is to become of the governor as head of the executive administration, and of his veto power on legislation, and ultimately of the British connection. The representative of the crown and of the imperial government could not become a mere servant of the legislature, under penalty of being starved out.

Had the British dominions in North America been fairly homogeneous in population and more compact geographically, the solution of the problem might have been rather obvious. But the maritime provinces were not prepared to unite with Canada and could not have effectively done so; while to have severed Canada from Britain, whether as one or two provinces, would have inevitably resulted in civil war between the French and English elements, and annexation to the United States as the only solution for either side. But while the French were not averse to separation from Britain, the all-powerful clerical element was even more averse than the English section to any prospect of annexation to the United States. They very naturally doubted the possibility of retaining their exceptional civil and religious powers and privileges within the American Union. Canada therefore must remain a British province, even under the penalty of more or less continual deadlock between the popular assembly and the executive government.