

government under which we live a picture of Canadian politics as they were in 1837. At that time, the government was popular but not responsible; and in addition, the executive machinery was singularly weak. The Executive Council were the advisers of the Governor, but there was no division into departments, no individual responsibility, and no individual superintendence. Each member of the Council took an equal part in all the business brought before it. The power of removing councillors was rarely exercised, so that the Governor was obliged either to consult advisers in whom he had no confidence, or to make use of only a portion of the Council. The secrecy of the proceedings, moreover, added to its irresponsibility. Upon the whole, no more unfit instrument could have been devised with which to oppose a demagogic Assembly. The Family Compact possessed themselves of all the important public offices by means of which, and of their influence in the Executive Council, they wielded all the power of government. The political friction which existed at this time is thus described by Lord Durham:

"Having no responsible ministers to deal with, it [The Assembly] entered upon that system of long enquiries, by means of its Committees, which brought the whole action of the Executive immediately under its purview, and transgressed our notions of the proper limits of Parliamentary interference. Having no influence in the choice of any public functionary, no power to procure the removal of such as were obnoxious to it on merely political grounds, and seeing almost every office in the colony filled by persons in whom it had no confidence, it entered upon that vicious course of assailing its prominent opponents individually, and disqualifying them for the public service by making them the subjects of enquiries and consequent impeachments; not always conducted with even the appearance of a due regard to justice; and when nothing else would attain its end of altering the policy or the composition of the Colonial Government, it had recourse to that ultima ratio of representative power, to which the more prudent forbearance of the Crown has never driven the House of Commons in England, and endeavored to disable the whole machinery of government by a general refusal of the supplies."