

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

FROM the time of the surrender of Canada by the capitulation of Vaudreuil at Montreal in 1760, the government of the province presented an unsolved problem, whose difficulties finally culminated in the outbreak of 1837. In the beginning the country was entirely French, an appanage of the British Crown by right of conquest. Its population, some seventy thousand in number, thinly spread along the valley of the St. Lawrence, was almost entirely an agricultural peasantry. Ignorant and illiterate as they were, they cherished towards their Church an unfailing devotion, while a stubborn pride of nationality remained with them as a heritage from the great country from which they had sprung. Of initial loyalty to the British Crown there could be no question. Still less could there be any question of self-government. Military rule was established as a necessity of the situation. Even when, in 1764, a year after the final treaty of cession, the purely military rule was superseded by the institution of an executive council, this body consisted merely of a group of officials appointed by the governor of the province. Nor is it to be said that this form of government was of itself an injustice. The