

Many were the devices planned by the assembly, when passing appropriations, to limit them to specific objects and services, in order to prevent their being diverted by the executive to the relief of those sections of the service which the assembly were endeavouring to starve with a view to bringing the executive government to terms.

Regarded from the vantage ground of the present, one cannot say that the struggle for responsible government in Canada was a struggle for progressive measures. It was simply a struggle for the control of the executive government by the house of assembly. The members of the assembly had little conception of all that was involved in such a change. It is true that even at present the party in opposition, not having to maintain its power by a well disciplined majority, may allow itself considerable freedom in discussion and laxity of organization. Nevertheless, there is no uncertainty on the part of its leaders as to what is involved on assuming the responsibilities of office. During the period of the struggle for responsible government, however, there was the most nebulous conception as to how the administration was to be conducted, should the control of the government pass from the governor to the legislature. Apparently what was contemplated by the more clear-sighted of those who were clamoring for responsible government before 1840, was not the British form of cabinet government, which was wholly unknown in Canada, and frankly regarded as impossible under the colonial status, but something more nearly akin to the American system than that which then prevailed. It involved the rendering of the legislative council an elective body, and thus amenable to popular sentiment. It involved also the continuance of the executive government as then constituted under the control of the governor, but, in all matters of domestic policy, subject to the general sanction of the legislature, through the power of the latter to grant or withhold supplies. In matters of legislation the governor might continue to have a limited veto, but, without the support of the legislative council and an independent source of revenue, it was reasonably assumed that he would be sparing in the use of it. There was little enthusiasm for the cabinet form