

CHAPTER III

EARLY STRUGGLES FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

THE state of political affairs in Canada at this time was somewhat anomalous, but deeply interesting. The excitement and bitter animosities of the Mackenzie-Papineau Rebellion had largely disappeared. The old Tory Family Compact, whose oligarchical rule, coupled with the bumptiousness and blundering of Sir Francis Bond Head, then Governor-General, had been the main cause of all the strife and bloodshed, had been dethroned and discarded. Lord Durham's famous Report, as already mentioned, resulted in the union of Upper and Lower Canada, but the wise recommendation of this enlightened statesman in favour of conferring upon Canadians a full measure of Responsible Government remained for several years in uncertainty.

Under the governorship of Lord Sydenham and especially of his successor, Sir Charles Bagot, this great reform was recognized and partly introduced. The latter gentleman, although Conservative, held to the principle that the majority in the Legislature should rule, and finally invited the Hon. L. H. Lafontaine, the Hon. Robert Baldwin, and several of their