

not very clear, and the new Bill was mercilessly criticised by Peel. Lord John dared not risk a defeat, and he allowed Peel to amend in such a way that it was all but impossible to know what powers were or were not conferred on Lord Durham. On the 22nd the Bill was read a second time, and then Roebuck,¹ on the motion of Grote, was heard at the Bar of the House against the Bill. Some difficulty was raised as to the capacity in which he appeared, but it was smoothed over. Roebuck addressed the House in one of his usual speeches. Argument there was none, but what it lacked in argument was made up in invective. He attempted to show that the Canadians were wholly in the right, but the House heard him with little attention. He was followed by a number of speakers, all of whom agreed in nothing except eulogy of Lord Durham. On the 23rd the second reading was carried by 246. Only a little knot of Radicals opposed it, and even they did so as a mere formality. At the third reading, on January 29th, the Noes fell to 8, but it was a Bill amended to suit Sir Robert Peel and the Tories. The debate is dreary to read, for it only shows the utter absence of any real appreciation of the issues at stake. Men talked airily of the inevitable separation from the Mother Country, or proposed various impossible schemes for the federation or union of the British North-American Provinces. That the colonists themselves had any views on the matter never seemed to occur to the speakers. The ignorance upon the troubles in Upper Canada was only equalled by the perversity with which ministers and Opposition alike approached the question of Lower Canada. The one redeeming feature in the debate was the readiness with which all parties, from Lord John Russell to Hume, agreed in ascribing to Durham the most despotic authority in his new government.

If ever a man had an excuse for over-estimating his

¹ Roebuck, when M.P. for Bath, had supported the French Canadians, and had been made their Agent by the Assembly of Lower Canada. He lost his seat in 1835.