

and the union of the two principal Provinces having been accomplished in 1841, a new field in politics was opened for public men. There were at this time three classes of men engaged in the discussion and conduct of public affairs: (1) the old-time Tories, who looked upon all demands for constitutional changes as preliminary symptoms of revolution; (2) the moderate Conservatives, who did not love change of any sort for its own sake, but who were not afraid of improvement; and (3) the Radicals, who saw in responsible government and popular institutions the promise of the golden age. The strife of these factions was rendered more intense by the fact that the governors had no accepted traditions of political conduct, and fell sometimes under the influence of one faction, sometimes under that of another, while striving to seem free from the influence of all. To Lord Durham the people of Lower Canada had been hostile. Lord Metcalfe had been unpopular in Upper Canada. Lord Elgin had been stoned in the streets of Montreal and egged in the streets of Toronto. The House of Parliament had been burned by the excited loyal mob of Montreal in revenge for the passing of the Rebellion Losses Bill. The country was a victim to partisanship, and the strife of parties was unceasing.

Mr. John Alexander Macdonald belonged to the moderate Conservative party, which he was soon to lead. The older Tories had passed or were passing away. The last of them may be said to have been Sir Allan MacNab, who was Mr. Macdonald's leader at first, and who was in a few years succeeded by his subordinate.

The questions which the leaders of public opinion had now to face were of two kinds: —

(1.) Those arising out of the conquest.

These questions had by no means disappeared.

The Quebec act of 1774, which conferred on the French Canadian subjects of the crown the right to the use of their own language, religion, and laws, had always excited the hostility of a considerable section of the British population. The military rule of the British, however just, — and its justice was not without flaws, — was necessarily objectionable to the French people. Hence alienation prevailed between the races, which lasted long, and which is not yet wholly extinct, — an occasional eruption reminding us of ancient explosions. This feeling rendered the government of the country as a unit very difficult; and in 1791 it was divided into two Provinces, each with a legislature of its own, and each with its own laws. Out of this state of things political questions of much local consequence arose in both Provinces. In each there was a political agitation, which resulted in 1837 in a double rebellion, which was not suppressed without blood, and which left behind it bad passions that remained long a source of disturbance. In Lower Canada the old royal grants of land to the seigneurs had in course of time become oppressive and unpopular among the tenants. In Upper Canada the reserves of land for the clergy — claimed by the English Church, and this claim denied by the nonconformist bodies — had proved a source of enduring trouble. In addition, there arose after 1837 the claims of those who had sustained losses in the rebellion. All these questions must be decided in some manner.

One after another they were disposed of. The Rebellion Losses Bill was passed in 1849 by a Liberal government. The old Conservatives and the moderate men alike offered opposition to this measure, under which, they claimed, men who had been in rebellion would be repaid for the loss arising from their rebellious action. In 1849 Mr. Macdonald was under the leadership of Sir