

## HISTORY OF CANADA.

taine, the most influential French Canadian in the House, whether he could not consent to take Cabinet office. On condition that Mr. Baldwin should be taken in at the same time and one or two other changes made in the Cabinet, that statesman was prepared to accept the proposal, and the matter was arranged accordingly. The Government so formed may be regarded as the first Canadian Ministry in the usual acceptation of the word.

Sir Charles Bagot died at Kingston in the spring of 1843, after a long and distressing illness. His successor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, had a misunderstanding with his Ministers on a question of patronage. With one exception they resigned. A general election followed, with the result that the Governor General was overwhelmingly sustained in Upper Canada, while Lower Canada gave an almost equal majority in favour of the late Government. The Draper-Viger Government which now came into power, had a most precarious support in the Assembly, and in the general election of January, 1848, Lord Elgin being Governor-General at the time, Baldwin and Lafontaine were restored to office by a large majority. A leading member of their Government was Mr. (afterwards Sir) Francis Hincks, who occupied the post of Inspector General, or, as he would to-day be designated Finance Minister. Baldwin and Lafontaine having both retired in 1851 the Government was reconstructed, with Mr. Hincks as Prime Minister and Mr. A. N. Morin as leader of the Lower Canada section.

Much useful legislation must be credited to the Baldwin-Lafontaine Ministry. The session of 1849 alone produced: the Judicature Act; the Municipal Corporations Act, which gave Canada a workable system of local government substantially the same as that which exists to-day; the Act for amending the charter of Toronto University and greatly enlarging the basis of that institution; an Amnesty Act, which enabled any hitherto unpardoned rebels of 1837-8 to return to the country; and the Rebellion Losses Act. The latter Act, though carefully framed to exclude any payments to persons who had actively participated in the rebellion, was represented by certain opponents of the Government as designed to recompense such persons; and its signature by Lord Elgin was followed by rioting in Montreal, then the seat of Government. The Governor General was mobbed as he drove through the streets, and early in the evening the legislative buildings were set on fire and totally destroyed (April 25, 1849). One result was the removal of the seat of government to Toronto in the fall of the same year and the adoption of a system by which that city and Quebec were to be the seat of government alternately. The Ministry of Mr. Hincks was chiefly remarkable for the steps taken to develop a railway system in Canada and for the adoption of a Reciprocity Treaty between Canada and the United States. In the arrangement of this treaty Lord Elgin took the deepest interest, and it was due in a large measure to his skilful diplomacy and unusual powers of persuasion that the negotiations proved successful. Mr. Hincks himself visited Washington and argued the case very strongly in papers submitted to Congress. The treaty was undoubtedly beneficial to Canada, particularly when the outbreak of the War of Secession (1861) caused a greatly increased demand for farm products of every kind.