

certain demands of the western province, and, as the council in Lower Canada was favourable to the scheme, he was able to draft a Bill which, with a few modifications, was enacted by the Home Government in 1840. General elections were held in February, 1841, and the legislature of the united provinces met in June. On September 3, Robert Baldwin, representing the constituency of North York, proposed certain resolutions which were carried with little or no opposition, affirming the principle of responsible government.

The United Provinces under Responsible Government.—The French Canadians were almost without exception opposed to the union, and it was therefore impossible at the time to obtain their co-operation in the formation of a ministry. Sir Charles Bagot (Lord Sydenham had died in September, 1841) fully recognized, as had his predecessor, that the situation was a most unsatisfactory one; moreover, he saw how easily a combination might at any moment be formed with the French Canadian vote in the assembly to defeat his government. He saw, indeed, such a combination on the point of being formed, and resolved to ask Mr. Lafontaine, the most influential French Canadian in the house, to take cabinet office. On condition that Baldwin should be taken in at the same time and that one or two other changes should be made in the cabinet, Lafontaine accepted the proposal, and the matter was arranged accordingly. The government so formed may be regarded as the first Canadian Ministry in the usual acceptance of the word.

Sir Charles Bagot's successor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, had a misunderstanding with his ministers on a question of patronage and 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 Hincks as Prime Minister and 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 the University of Toronto and 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 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 alternately to be the seat of government. The Hincks ministry 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.