

In the making of this treaty Lord Elgin took the deepest interest, and it was largely due his skilful diplomacy and unusual powers of persuasion that the negotiations proved successful. Hincks himself visited Washington and argued the case in papers submitted to Congress. The treaty was undoubtedly beneficial to Canada, particularly when the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 caused a greatly increased demand for farm products of every kind.

Although the union of the provinces and the introduction of responsible government gave a new stimulus to the political and social life of Canada, grave political difficulties were not long in developing. The differences between the eastern and western sections of the province were very marked and any political party which rested mainly on the votes of either section was sure to incur keen opposition in the other. The Draper-Viger government, formed by Sir Charles Metcalfe, rested mainly on Upper Canada votes; the Baldwin-Lafontaine government, which followed, rested mainly on Lower Canada votes. The Act of Union had given equal representation in the Assembly—forty-two members—to each section of the province. Lower Canada at the time had the larger population; but owing to immigration, the census of 1851 showed a balance in favour of Upper Canada. An agitation then sprang up in the west for representation by population, but the demand was stoutly resisted by Lower Canada. The Hincks government was defeated in 1854 by a combination of Conservatives and Reformers, and was succeeded in September of that year by a coalition under the premiership of Sir Allan MacNab. Under the new government, two very important measures were carried,—the secularization of the clergy reserves, which for over twenty years had been a subject of contention in the country, and the abolition of what was known in Lower Canada as seigneurial tenure. Both were progressive measures, and the first was as strongly approved in Upper Canada as the second in Lower Canada.

In 1855, the seat of government, which had been removed from Toronto to Quebec in the fall of 1851, was again transferred to the former city, where it remained till the summer of 1859. In December, 1857, the question of a permanent seat of government was decided in favour of Ottawa by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, to whom it had been left by a vote of the Canadian Parliament.

In 1856 Mr. (afterwards Sir) John A. Macdonald, who, as Attorney General for the West, had been the most influential member of the coalition government, succeeded to the premiership, after ill-health had compelled the retirement of Sir Allan MacNab. Party spirit from this time onwards ran very high. Although a certain section of the Reformers had supported the coalition government, the bulk of the party remained in opposition under the leadership of George Brown, whose policy, while it won him many adherents in Upper Canada, had an opposite effect in Lower Canada, and thus arrayed the two sections of the province against each other.

Improvements in Transportation.—Considerable progress was meanwhile being made in the material development of the country. Even before the union, some important steps had been taken towards the development of a canal system. The Lachine canal was opened for traffic in 1825; the Welland canal in 1829; the Rideau canal, constructed entirely at the expense of the home government, in 1832, and the Burlington canal, which made Hamilton a lake port, in the same year. An appropriation was made by the legislature of Upper Canada in 1832 for the Cornwall canal, but various causes interfered with the progress of the work, and it was not till the end of the year 1842 that it was completed. Further developments