

# Report of the Annual Meeting

## Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada

Report of the Annual Meeting

# The Rebellion of 1837 in its Larger Setting

## Presidential Address

Chester W. New

Volume 16, Number 1, 1937

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/290001ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/290001ar>

[See table of contents](#)

### Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

### ISSN

0317-0594 (print)

1712-9095 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

### Cite this article

New, C. W. (1937). The Rebellion of 1837 in its Larger Setting: Presidential Address. *Report of the Annual Meeting / Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada*, 16(1), 5–17. <https://doi.org/10.7202/290001ar>

All rights reserved © The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada, 1937

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

**é**rudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

## THE REBELLION OF 1837 IN ITS LARGER SETTING

Presidential Address Delivered by

CHESTER W. NEW

In contemplating a topic for this occasion, I found myself confronted at the outset with this question: To what extent is one justified in a presidential address in stating purely individual convictions that may evoke controversy and suggest a break from tradition? Certainly my own strongest conviction in respect to the study and teaching of history in Canada at the present time is that too much emphasis is being placed on Canadian history. On the research side, the reasons for this over-emphasis can readily be discerned. The history of Canada has not yet been worked out as satisfactorily as that of other nations and the material for it lies ready to hand; these facts constitute a challenge to productive work. But they should not be permitted to thwart and cripple the interest of our Canadian people in that larger world out of which we have come. A better understanding on the part of Canadians of the history of that larger world is too essential to the development of a broad-visioned national life and of any culture worthy of the name, to be neglected either on account of the exigencies of research on the one hand or the call of a short-sighted patriotism on the other. At this formative stage of our national culture surely there is more patriotism to be served in attempting to rescue the thinking of our people from its provincialism, its isolationism, and the crasser aspects of its materialism, than in focussing their attention on purely Canadian history. I trust that I am at least not committing treason in expressing the hope that some day either in this association, or in some other, we may be able to provide at once a clearing-house and a source of inspiration to all Canadians who are interested in *History*, ancient, medieval, or modern, European, British, or American, political, social, or intellectual.

In the meantime, the topic discussed in the presidential address of the Canadian Historical Association should be a Canadian one. We have centred our programme this year around the Rebellion of 1837, of which this is the centenary year. I have selected my topic in relation to that rebellion, under the influence of a consideration which has some connection with the conviction which I have just expressed. It is also desirable that the history of our own country should be developed in the light of that larger world. Canadian history has, on the whole, been written too much as though it were a very private affair; as though like Topsy we had "just growed", and as though that elemental but inexplicable process had taken place in a self-contained hermetically sealed Canadian vacuum. I am not implying that others have not caught that point of view, and done something in that direction, but I do insist that none of us has yet done enough of it, and that every inch of our national history needs to be re-written in the light of a fuller knowledge of that larger world on whose Western outposts we have come to be what we are. And so, I have selected as my topic, "The Rebellion of 1837 in its Larger Setting".

I shall not consider anything more remote than the American and French Revolutions. I shall merely mention the *indirect* effect of the

American Revolution on the Canadian situation in the thirties through its influence on the Quebec Act and the Loyalist settlement of Upper Canada. Certainly the American Revolution did much to create that alignment of constitutional, political, and social forces in Upper and Lower Canada out of which the Rebellion of 1837 developed. The early history of neither province can be understood without a clear and even detailed understanding of the life and institutions of the American colonists, the issues between British and colonial governments, and the development of Loyalism in the colonies before it emigrated to Upper Canada. Democracy was not a popular word in British territory in the pre-rebellion period and other terminology was employed, but that does not alter the strength of the democratic institutions, traditions, and sentiments which the Loyalists brought with them, the Upper Canada Loyalists belonging particularly to what may be called the democracy of Loyalism. And, for all their feeling for British connection, their insistence on a goodly measure of self-government and their hunger for more at times were equally strong. They were the first to bring to this province the forces that were to make for rebellion as well as those which were to discourage it, just as their descendants were to be found in the ranks of both the Radical leaders and the Tory leaders. As for the influence of the Revolution on British colonial policy, it may suffice to note that it was from the Canadian Rebellion of 1837 and not from the American Revolution that Great Britain learned her great lessons in colonial policy; and that the result of the Revolution was a tightening up of her treatment of colonies.

There are times when one is tempted to feel that the Rebellion of 1837 *is* the American Revolution in the Canada colonies. Certainly much of the pre-Revolution history of the American colonies repeated itself in the Canadas of the twenties and thirties of the following century. As I have summarized these factors elsewhere:

An English executive in conflict with colonial Assemblies, well-meaning Governors tied up by instructions from London which were the result of ignorance rather than tyranny, colonial legislatures increasingly resentful of overseas restrictions on their legislation, the Assembly seeking to get its way through the control of appropriations, conflicts over a suggested Civil List, the refusal to vote supplies, the exaggerated importance and undisciplined ambitions of demagogues who constituted themselves tribunes of the people—they had been the staples of political warfare in the colonial days on the Atlantic sea-board, and they recurred in the history of the Canadas.

In the Canadian rebellions as in the American Revolution, there was an incipient nationalism breaking through the fetters that would bind it, the desire that a people should determine its own destiny. No one can read the radical papers in both Canadas in the thirties without feeling that strongly. And when the rebellion did come, the slogans of the American Revolution such as, "no use of the people's money without their consent" were thrown into the foreground, a boycott against British goods (in both provinces) preceded a recourse to arms, and the vocabulary of the American Revolution was repeated in the terminology of "vigilance committees", "committees of public safety", "committees of correspondence", and "the

Sons of Liberty". Much of this, no doubt, was purposeful imitation adopted on the spur of the moment, but there is plenty of evidence in the preceding years that whenever dissatisfaction reached its high points, there came to the top of men's minds in the Canadas the memory of that earlier bid for freedom that had been made by the liberty-loving men of this American continent. In every striking protest of the period in both provinces, allusions to the American Revolution were frequent, and they recurred again in the year before the rebellion in a letter from Papineau to Bidwell, which the latter laid before the assembly of Upper Canada.

Turning to the French Revolution, I shall omit the indirect effect on Canada of letting loose on Europe the forces of nationalism and democracy, the two great forces of the Canadian rebellion, and confine myself to direct influences. It is, of course, easy to discern the *negative* result of the French Revolution in the antagonism to everything it represented, of an extremely influential ultramontane clergy in French Canada. But there were French-Canadian politicians who had little enough real sympathy with the clergy, and who were deeply imbued with the doctrines of the French Revolution. They were the very men who created the Rebellion of 1837. The influence exerted on the mind and spirit of Louis Joseph Papineau by the French Revolution and by the writers who preceded and to a large extent created it, is a topic which the biographers of Papineau have managed almost entirely to avoid. But one of them has stated that he was nurtured on the teachings of Rousseau. Sir Thomas Chapais in discussing Papineau's political lieutenants accuses them "d'avoir trop souvent charmé leurs loisirs avec les pires ouvrages des écrivains impies du XVIIIe siècle". Papineau's religious as well as his political views appear to have been formed under the influence of the French Revolution. Apparently he was more of a deist than a Catholic. The Church in Lower Canada could never feel quite easy about Papineau and some of his colleagues, but on the other hand it was extremely favourable, in fact devoted, to Papineau's championship of French-Canadian institutions and racial integrity, and to his defence of the good old social and economic régime against the incursions of commercialism and Anglo-Saxon ideas of progress. Even the democracy which otherwise the Church would have considered anathema was a powerful instrument for the securing of those fundamental religious, social, and economic ends. These ends seemed too important, and the Church and Papineau were both too powerful for them to afford to oppose one another at first. But the cleavage created by the French Revolution was there and when in the early thirties unrest and tension in Lower Canada became more acute, and Papineau and his lieutenants became more democratic and more anti-clerical, that cleavage became more apparent. In 1831 in the controversy over the *fabriques*, these men attempted to carry their democracy into the government of the Church itself, and, for the time being, the Catholic clergy formed a strange alliance with the Presbyterians of the Château Clique to fight the democratic leaders of the assembly. In the words of one of the champions of that alliance in the stormy debate that ensued, "The same individuals who have sought for a long time to undermine the constitution and to introduce democratic and republican principles have now lifted their hands against the altar".

The Church feared an extreme nationalism as well as an extreme

democracy. The generous treatment accorded it by the British government and the fear of Americanism made it apprehensive of any suggestion of an independent French Canada. The clergy were discerning enough to realize that if the British connection were cut, no Canadian nation could remain for any length of time really independent of the United States, even if it could remain nominally independent. The Americanism of the Ninety-Two Resolutions in 1834 widened the breach between Papineau and the Church. When violent agitation began in the spring of the rebellion year the Church took its stand squarely against the assembly leaders. In the meeting held in the summer of 1837 against a background of drilling and minor infractions of the law, some of the utterances of Papineau, Wolfred Nelson, and other fiery orators were violently anti-clerical and many of them betrayed a *direct* acquaintance with the political philosophy of Rousseau and the French Revolution. On the other hand, there is not a trace of the British democratic theory of Bentham. When the rebellion broke the Catholic Church was by far the most powerful repressive factor. It saved the situation for British rule and British forms of government. Just as in Upper Canada the strongest loyalist force that counteracted the rebellion, the loyalism of the U.E.L.'s, came out of the American Revolution, so in Lower Canada it emanated from the French Revolution. To understand fully why the negative forces in 1837 were so much stronger than the positive ones, we must go out to the broader streams of world history and back to the eighteenth century.

But I am more concerned with the influences coming from the outside world in the years immediately preceding the Canadian rebellions. The eighteen-thirties opened in Europe with a series of revolutions, several in 1830, and others in 1832 and 1833. The direct influences of those continental revolutions on Canada was slight enough, but for the whole Western world the decade of the thirties was a period of unrest. These European revolutions influenced Canada mainly through Great Britain. For Britain, too, had its revolution in the early thirties, a revolution of characteristically British type, effected not by barricades and bayonets, but by ordinary process of law. The Reform Bill of 1832 finally dislodged oligarchy and placed the British people on the high road to democracy. The influence on the British situation of the July revolution in France may be easily exaggerated, for there were native elements of revolt that were coming to a head in Britain in the *early* months of 1830, but the revolution across the channel was undoubtedly the occasion for the crisis in Great Britain which resulted in the Reform Bill.

I would like to go back for a moment and point to the influence on colonial policy of a changing political situation in Great Britain before the Reform Bill. From the death of Castlereagh in 1822, the old Toryism was a declining force within the Tory party and the liberalism of the Canningites was making significant progress; but with the Colonial Office in the hands of Bathurst, there was little change in the attitude toward Canada until 1827 when, following the retirement of Lord Liverpool, the Old Tories refused to follow Canning and the more liberal of the Whigs rallied to his support. The shuffle in the cabinet brought Huskisson, a pronounced liberal, to the Colonial Office, and since he was a liberal Tory, he remained there after the dissolution of the coalition and the re-forming of a Tory government. So in 1828 we have a committee under Huskis-

son's chairmanship studying the political problems of Canada for the first time both in a liberal spirit and with a highly statesmanlike outlook. When due allowance is made for the fact that at that time no one had thought of what we call Responsible Government, one is inclined to believe that the recommendations of that committee of 1828 were almost the best that could have been made. After the Tories fell, they became a general guide to British policy toward Canada and the fact that many of them went into operation before the Rebellion of 1837 did much to ease the situation. But they were not adopted immediately. Huskisson did not work easily with other men, and the Duke of Wellington would not have two commanders-in-chief in his cabinet. So at the first good opportunity Huskisson was eased out. For the time being the Canada recommendations went with him and colonial policy reverted to the old Toryism.

When the Whigs came in in 1830 it was under circumstances that forced them to adopt a liberal policy in Great Britain which for a time was reflected in Canada. Goderich's under-secretary at the Colonial Office was Lord Howick, who, as the third Earl Grey, was sixteen years later to establish in Canada the new system of Responsible Government which resulted from the rebellion and Lord Durham's *Report*. Back in 1830 he was already for a short time running the Colonial Office and he immediately instituted a liberal and generous policy toward Canada that to the darkest spirits over here was nothing short of a revelation. Papineau was appointed to the executive council, although he refused to act. The Canadian assemblies were offered control of all the provincial revenues except the casual and territorial, in return for a very limited and reasonable civil list, and when the Lower Canada assembly refused the offer on that condition, the Howick Act of 1831 gave them those revenues without condition. But just at that point, a shift in the British cabinet made Stanley colonial secretary, and Stanley was the most conservative member of the Grey administration. He had made trouble in Ireland, as Irish secretary, and now he was shifted to the colonies where, from the British point of view at that time, trouble would not matter so much. O'Connell said that Stanley had achieved something in Ireland that no other man had been able to accomplish. At long last he had united all Irishmen in one common feeling. That feeling was one of antipathy toward himself. Now Stanley was secretary of state for the colonies and Howick under-secretary for the colonies! The two were as oil and water. Within a few weeks Howick had resigned. Stanley, left in charge of the colonies, without Howick to trouble him, quickly hardened the hearts of Canadian liberals in both provinces. His re-instatement of Hagerman turned Mackenzie from hope to despair. Stanley was about to amend the Howick Act of 1831, Papineau's chief English adviser Roebuck was already suggesting rebellion,—and then in the middle of a speech of Lord John Russell's on Ireland, Stanley wrote on a scrap of paper, "Johnny has upset the coach", passed it over to Graham, and within a few days Stanley and Graham had left the ministry and the Whig party forever. A crisis in Canada was averted, for Spring Rice, who succeeded Stanley as colonial secretary, refused to proceed with the repeal of the Act of 1831 and initiated a conciliatory policy. Roebuck counselled Papineau to modify his recalcitrant attitude. Spring Rice remained in office for six months, the Tories were back in power for five months with Aberdeen

at the Colonial Office, and in April, 1835, the Whigs came in again and Lord Glenelg was colonial secretary for the year and a half approximately which preceded the Canadian rebellions.

Lord Glenelg has suffered unduly at the hands of contemporaries and historians. Many a man's reputation has been blasted by one particular habit and Glenelg had an unfortunate habit of falling asleep at the most inopportune moments. When something was going on that was of great interest, they would glance around and discover that Glenelg was asleep. In a manuscript diary to which I secured access in England, I ran across the following entry on the coronation of Queen Victoria: "Lord Glenelg sat next me at the Coronation. In the midst of the proceedings he *fell asleep* and his coronet fell off and disappeared from an opening under his seat, falling among the tombs below the Abbey."

That habit of going to sleep anywhere and everywhere naturally led to an assumption that colonial policy in the hands of the sleepy Lord Glenelg was a doddering one, but in the minds of English politicians a doddering colonial policy did not matter very much—*before the Rebellion of 1837*. After the Canadian rebellion it mattered a great deal and Lord Glenelg had to take himself and his naps out of the government, never to return. James Stephen, who became permanent under-secretary in the Colonial Office in the year before the rebellion, who was the "Mr. Mother Country" of Charles Buller's famous sketch, and who ultimately saw so many colonial secretaries come and go, said that of them all none gave such close attention to the affairs of the colonies as did Lord Glenelg, that none was more painstaking in the study and preparation of despatches and the shaping of measures. That suggests that Glenelg may have *had* to catch up, at coronations and elsewhere, the sleep that he had lost in the hours after midnight pondering the problems of the far-flung Empire. But whatever may be said about that, and whether its policies were Glenelg's or "Mr. Mother Country's", the colonial administration of Lord Glenelg was, in spite of its conciliation and its good intentions, altogether too irresolute and too ambiguous to check the Canadian extremists and their course toward rebellion.

But the forces that were making a new England in those days were operating through pressure from outside the Tory and Whig parties, from outside the ruling class. What was essentially a great movement for democracy (although the word "democracy" was avoided) was making its way, accompanied by the economic movement which we call the Industrial Revolution and a tremendous development of education among the middle and lower classes, each of these three factors continually re-acting on and speeding up the others. It was an age in which pre-eminently humanity was on the march. Old things in England were passing away, all things were being made new. The series of reforms achieved in the ten years before 1837 was, relatively speaking, the most striking in British history. They are too familiar for me to recount them here. Through all this the advocates of democracy called themselves interchangeably Radicals and Reformers, and sometimes Radical Reformers.

This peaceful revolution that was being effected in Great Britain in the ten years before 1837 influenced Canadian political development, roughly speaking, through three channels: the political ideas and outlook of the thousands who moved from one country to the other in this greatest

period of emigration from Britain to Canada, the reporting in various ways to new Britain of the doings of old Britain, and the direct influence and advice of Radical leaders, particularly Hume and Roebuck.

Of the thousands who went out to Canada—8,000 in 1825, 30,000 in 1830, 66,000 in 1832—few left any record of what they thought about politics and democracy, but there are some conclusions which I think we may safely form. Most of them came from the lower classes, they came out with a modicum of education, and we must not suppose any elaborate understanding of political theories. In other words, we will not find their thoughts in books like Halévy's *Philosophical Radicalism*, but rather in that simple practical democracy which one runs across in Bamford's *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, Lovett's autobiography, and Holyoake's *Fifty Years of an Agitator's Life*. Only a few, of course, went as far in their democracy as the lower-class authors of those books, but the general ideas referred to had a wide currency. To the suggestion that many of them thought little of politics and democracy, I would reply that politics and the practical development of democratic aspirations electrified the whole life of England in this period marked by the preachings of Cobbett that the only hopes of the lower classes lay in their securing a voice in government, the monster mass meetings addressed by Orator Hunt and others, the excitement caused by Peterloo in 1819 when England was on the verge of an armed rising, the clamour around the Queen's Trial, the nation-wide organization of the Political Unions, the dramatic struggle for the Reform Bill of 1832, the popular disappointment that the Reform Bill was not followed up by further extensions of democracy, and the consequent agitation which culminated just after the Canadian rebellion in the demonstrations of Chartism. That was the period when, as in no other, the lower class of Britain poured its life into Canada. In the Reform Bill of the early thirties Britain experienced a peaceful political revolution with suggestions of an armed revolution constantly on its heels; in the late thirties after a decade of unrest, the extremists were suggesting a physical force revolution. (In 1837 the extremists in Canada staged their rebellion.)

I have said that those who agitated for democracy in England in these years called themselves Reformers. The Reformers or Radicals constituted a third political party. In Canada, in the same period, the political parties called themselves Reformers and Tories. The term Whig was rarely employed in Canadian politics. Nobody in Canada could really be a Whig. The head and centre of that party in England was a closely intermarried group of aristocratic and blue-blooded families. As Charles Lamb said, "These damned Whigs are all cousins". None of the cousins came to Canada.

The Reformers in Canada did not adopt the same political programme as the Reformers in Great Britain. The extension of the franchise was not a goal of endeavour because in Canada the franchise was already democratic in character. But the assembly members so elected found themselves thwarted by the fact that an oligarchic legislative council could throw out their measures when it pleased and an oligarchic executive administered the government no matter how elections might go. Reformers in Canada found in that oligarchy many of the objectionable features of the aristocratic government which they had learned to hate in England.

But some features of the British Radical programme were adopted in Canada. To the more discerning British Radicals, the ballot was as important as franchise extension. Inquiries on the eve of the Reform Bill elicited the conclusion that the popular leaders would prefer the ballot and a twenty-pound franchise to a ten-pound franchise without the ballot. As I have worked through the Place manuscripts in the British Museum, I have constantly run across the conviction expressed by Francis Place and by many of his coadjutors that almost any degree of franchise extension would do so long as the ballot was adopted. They were to seek the ballot and all things would be added unto it. The greatest obstacle in the path to democracy was open voting. So far as public utterances were concerned, with the exception of Grote, the most ardent and persistent advocate of the ballot was Roebuck, who at the same time was one of the two principal British advisers of the Canadian Radicals. In many of the manifestoes of Canadian Reformers, the demand for the ballot occurs. In 1835 a Ballot Bill was passed by the assembly of Upper Canada and rejected by the legislative council. The need for the ballot in Canada may be illustrated by the fact that in the *Patriot* (Toronto Tory organ) of July 1, 1836, there was printed a list of all those who had voted for Draper, Tory candidate and those who had voted for Small, Reform candidate in the 1836 election for the legislature. To make the list doubly useful, the address and occupation of each voter on each side were given. It should be added, of course, that the ballot was already in use in the United States and that there was probably an American as well as a British influence in that direction.

Another aim of the British Radicals was educational development, and particularly secular education. That also, of course, was an American ideal. But when we turn from primary education to colleges and universities, we find that the latter were in the United States religious foundations with religious instruction. There was only one university in the English-speaking world at that time that was secular in character. That was the University of London which was founded in 1826 by a group of liberal Whigs, of whom the most active was Brougham, and Radicals, of whom the most active was Joseph Hume, who was in constant correspondence with the Reform leaders of Upper Canada. It was a secular university in Upper Canada for which the Reformers contended against Strachan and the Family Compact. In the course of the interminable debates on that question, one finds at least an occasional reference to the University of London. The abolition of property qualifications for members of parliament, another article of the Radical programme in Great Britain, was one of the measures proposed by the Reformers of Upper Canada.

It is, of course, difficult to say how much of the activity of the Canadian Reformers was due to direct suggestion and advice from British Radical leaders, but I believe that factor to have been of very considerable importance. The outstanding Radical leader in parliament before the Reform Bill was Joseph Hume; after 1832 Hume shared that distinction with John Arthur Roebuck. And those were the two Englishmen who were giving the most constant advice, counsel, and stimulus to the Canadian Radical leaders in the period preceding the rebellion.

Hume was the most persistent "watch-dog of the treasury" in the history of the nineteenth century. Possessing a real capacity for finance,

he subjected all government appropriations to ruthless review, but was particularly hard on pensions, high salaries, and sinecures. In that respect he reminds us of no one so much as of William Lyon Mackenzie, to whom he became in the early thirties a guide, a counsellor, and friend. Mackenzie may not have needed promptings from Hume to spur him on his career of grievance-hunting, but I have little doubt that he regarded Hume as a shining example, and a constant source of encouragement. Joseph Hume, incidentally, had a cutting tongue. On one occasion when an aristocratic member of parliament made some slighting remarks on Hume's family background, the latter replied, "All that I care to say is that if my father was the first gentleman in my family, the honourable gentleman's father was the last gentleman in his".

John Arthur Roebuck was the grandson of one of the great men of the Industrial Revolution on the scientific side. The fact that he spent his boyhood and early manhood in Lower Canada is incidental to his later career except that it probably gave him a greater interest in the fortunes of Canada. Certainly he was not aware that there was anything amiss in Lower Canada as long as he lived there and there was nothing of the Radical about Roebuck until he returned to England in 1824, met James Mill, and swallowed the doctrines of Bentham in their entirety. Unlike Hume, Roebuck was a doctrinaire who saw the cure of all things in the putting into practice of the Benthamite political philosophy. And we must not overlook the fact that one of Bentham's earliest works had been entitled *Emancipate your Colonies*, that Francis Place and his friends were constantly having new editions of that pamphlet reprinted, and that every good Radical believed that the sooner colonies declared their independence the better for everyone concerned. Roebuck was by far the most eloquent of all the Radical members of parliament and he was the most uncompromising democrat of them all. At a time when the word "democracy" was still avoided, although the thing itself was well on its way, Roebuck took delight in flinging the offensive word into the teeth of the house of commons. In 1835 he became the official agent in London of the Lower Canada assembly, but long before that he had established close relations with Papineau and his *confrères*. Hume corresponded with the Upper Canada Radical leaders and looked after them when they went to London; Roebuck did the same for the Lower Canada leaders.

The victory of British democracy over the house of lords in the Reform Bill crisis of 1832 whetted the appetite of the Radicals, and when several reform measures were rejected by the lords, they raised the question of permanently curbing that house. In 1835 Daniel O'Connell staged a speaking campaign in the north of England for an elective house of lords and Roebuck gave notice of a bill to establish a suspensive veto similar to that of the lords at the present time. In the summer of 1833 those thoughts were already in the minds of the Radical leaders and in an editorial in August even *The Times* raised the question, what should be done with the lords? Now in Canada to a much *greater* extent than in England, an upper house was a fundamental obstacle to democracy. I have found no suggestion of an elective legislative council in Canada before this year, 1833. But in that summer two influential Canadian politicians, Viger and Mackenzie, were in England, in close touch with Roebuck and Hume. Immediately after their return to Canada we hear of an elective

upper house in both provinces. The proposal was made in the Lower Canada assembly before the year was out, and in the Upper Canada election of the ensuing year it was a leading issue raised by the Reformers and a test question to all candidates. Speaking several years later in the house of commons, Roebuck said that his original advice to the Canadian Radical leaders had been to attempt to get rid of their legislative councils altogether, but that that had been modified to the proposal of elective councils.

As events worked out, that proposal led straight to rebellion. Papineau would have an elective council or nothing. The refusal of the British government to make the legislative council elective was the main cause of the refusal of supplies in Lower Canada for the four years preceding the rebellion, and the Russell Resolutions, which provided an arbitrary means of financing the government without the supplies, precipitated the rebellion in both provinces.

To return to the summer of 1833,—Mackenzie had been in England for over a year, living as the companion of Hume, Roebuck, and Francis Place in an atmosphere saturated by British Radicalism. At first he had been pleased at Goderich's (or Howick's) order that he should be permitted to take his seat in the Upper Canada assembly, and at the dismissal from office, on account of their recalcitrant attitude, of Hagerman and Boulton who had been mainly responsible for his ejection. But when Stanley became colonial secretary, reinstated Hagerman, and generally reversed the liberal policy of Goderich and Howick, Mackenzie developed a state of mind that was peculiarly receptive to the talk of his British Radical friends about the hopelessness of expecting anything from the aristocratic Whigs and the necessity of the colonies' emancipating themselves. While looking for something very different, I ran across in the Place manuscripts a passage which reports Mackenzie as saying at that time that if the Canadas did not get what they wanted they would march the British troops down the river, and that he was confident that a Canadian rebellion would receive an adequate support from the neighbouring states of the American union.

In the next year Hume wrote his "baneful domination" letter to Mackenzie, which is too well known for me to dwell on it except to express my conviction that by "baneful domination of the mother country" Hume meant British rule and that by "independence" he meant exactly what he said. And those things were precisely what Mackenzie said in stronger language while he was calling on Upper Canada to rebel in 1837. In the same year, 1834, Roebuck wrote to a Radical committee in Montreal that certain things were to be attempted before they resorted to an armed rising.

When the Russell Resolutions were presented to the British parliament in March, 1837, the Radical leaders, Molesworth, Roebuck, and Hume stated that the money of the people of Lower Canada was to be used without their consent, that the issue was similar to that of the American Revolution, and that the Canadians were bound to rebel. The speeches of Molesworth and Roebuck were so strong that they were practically direct incitements to rebellion. Roebuck outlined the course which Papineau pursued during the summer of that rebellion year and O'Callaghan and the others completed in the autumn.

The following relation between Chartism and the Canadian rebellion is at least interesting. William Lovett in his now rather obscure autobiography entitled *Life and Struggles in Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* describes the formation of the London Workingmen's Association in June, 1836, and proceeds as follows: "In February 1837, our Association convened a public meeting for the purpose of petitioning Parliament for [the six points of Chartism]. The prayer of that petition formed the nucleus of the far-famed People's Charter which may be said to have had its origin at this meeting. . . . When Lord John Russell [a few weeks later] proposed to Parliament his infamous resolutions for the coercion of the Canadas . . . our association felt indignant on the subject. We accordingly called a public meeting to petition Parliament. . . . [A little later] our Workingmen's Association sent the following 'Address to the Canadian people.'" I will read only a few sentences from it. "Friends in the course of freedom, brothers under oppression . . . Liberty in a smock-frock is more than a match for tyranny in armour. . . . If the mother country will not render justice to her colonies, she must not feel disappointed to find her offspring deserting her. . . . That you will yet find the sun of *independence* smiling on your rising cities, your cheerful lanes, tangled forests, and frozen lakes, is the ardent wish of the members of the Workingmen's Association." To which Lovett adds that "this address was widely circulated in Canada".

I have devoted so much time to these English developments that I must limit myself to a very few minutes in suggesting some of the possible American political influences on the Canadas of the pre-rebellion period. One clear and strong influence was that of the separation of church and state, including the opposition to state subsidizing of any religious undertakings, a distinctly American conception. Throughout this period that force was struggling in Canada against British traditions. Apart from the restrictions on democracy, the greatest grievance in Upper Canada was that of the Clergy Reserves. Certainly the policy of those who rebelled, that of the secularization of the Reserves, was an American policy. The American practice of leading the majority party in the legislature from the speaker's chair was also apparent in Canada in the dominance of Papineau who was a perpetual speaker of the Lower Canada assembly, and in the fact that Bidwell, who was elected speaker when the Reformers had a majority, was clearly recognized throughout the period as the leader of the Upper Canada Reformers. Although the direct suggestions for an elective upper house and the ballot came from England, their existence and operation in the United States were probably stimulating factors to those who urged them. Here and there among the sources of the period one runs across suggestions for the election of judges and election of sheriffs. The Radicals frequently suggested the selection of judges, sheriffs, and magistrates by the representative house of the legislature. These were clearly American ideas. Mackenzie, O'Callaghan, and Dr. Morrison, all leaders of the rebellion when it came, suggested at times the election of governors. In the months immediately preceding the rebellion, Mackenzie printed in his newspaper extracts from American state constitutions, and the scheme of government which he proposed for Upper Canada was modelled throughout on American forms.

While these facts are illustrative of American influence on the

extreme Radicals in Upper Canada, the group from which the rebellion emanated, they also illustrate the utter impracticability of the men who launched a rebellion in this province in 1837. For such American institutions could never be accepted by the majority of its inhabitants. The prejudice against Americans, emanating not only from the Loyalists but also from the attachment to the British connection felt by the immigrants from Great Britain, was much too strong. Every American suggestion played into the hands of the Tories and the Tory press confidently encouraged the anti-American prejudice. Incidentally the *Toronto Patriot* collected all the accounts of lynchings, mob scenes, and deeds of violence that could be gathered from all parts of the American union and published them week after week under the heading "The Sovereign People".

The pre-rebellion period was, of course, that of Jacksonian democracy in the United States. No student of American history needs to be reminded of that day, eight years before the Canadian rebellion, when that motley horde from outlying states of the union invaded the national capital, improvised the wildest of celebrations, and trailed the feet of Demos across the rich trappings of the White House. They came to inaugurate the rule of the common man, to celebrate the election to the presidency of the hero of the common man, the victory of the people over aristocrats, bureaucrats, bankers, and big business. They came to enthrone a political messiah; they came also for the loaves and the fishes. For Andrew Jackson was to dismiss from office all political opponents and reward all political friends. The "spoils system" was to be inaugurated and all who were interested in the scramble must be on the spot. A little later Postmaster-General McLean told President Jackson that he was opposed to the dismissal of efficient post-masters for political reasons alone. Jackson pulled on his pipe for a few minutes, walked to the window, looked out, walked back again and said, "Mr. McLean, will you accept a seat on the bench of the Supreme Court?" McLean accepted and the post-masters went. Jackson's apologists have pointed out that only 800 post-masters were dismissed out of a total of 8,000 and that the massacre of office-holders was not nearly so great as that, for instance, which marked the election of honest Abe Lincoln. The inauguration of Jackson was simply a beginning of bigger things.

Evidence of direct influence of Jacksonian democracy in Canada is difficult to find. And it may be worth calling attention to the fact that the part of the United States that bordered directly on Upper Canada went against Jackson in 1832 and against Van Buren in 1836. But the stir made by Jacksonian democracy must inevitably have stimulated the unrest already existent in the Canadas and increased the discontent of the common man here with the insolence of privilege and the restrictions of a repressive and arbitrary government. The Canadian Radicals came to talk about banks very much as Jackson did. The Canadian frontier, like the American frontier, was arrayed to some extent against big business in the east. In Canada, as a matter of fact, it was much further east, in London not Montreal. The policies of the Montreal merchants who called themselves "the British party" were shaped to a large extent by the Canadian interests in the British metropolis.

The Jacksonian "spoils system" had a marked influence on Canadian politics, but most of that came after the rebellion. The use of patronage

for political purposes was, of course, rampant in the Family Compact and in the English rotten-borough system long before the rule of Jackson, but the sight of a wholesale change of office-holders following an election was a new factor which must have added to the impatience with which some in Upper Canada regarded their government. The first election won by the Upper Canada Reformers after the accession of Jackson in the United States, was that of 1834. Immediately the Reformers began to create as much patronage as possible through their control of the assembly. The big spoils were beyond their reach but the assembly created an amazing number of commissionerships, practically all held by Reformers and the greater number by Reform members of parliament. Peter Perry, who came next to Bidwell in the leadership of the Reform party, held six of these commissionerships. But Peter Perry and most of these commissioners belonged to the moderate Reformers. Of the rebellion leaders Duncombe and Gibson were in the list, but Mackenzie's name does not appear nor do those of Morrison or Lount. Mackenzie was honestly and deeply disgusted.

I have said a great deal about democracy because I am convinced that the lot of the inhabitants of the Canadas a hundred years ago was anything but an unfortunate one as compared with the rest of the world. that their economic and social condition was a relatively happy one and could not have produced or have justified a rebellion. But in the world in which they lived, they could not be indefinitely satisfied with anything short of control of their government—that is democracy. Full-fledged democracy was established in Canada as a result of the rebellion, that is the result of Lord Durham's *Report*, itself a result of the rebellion. The method by which it came was Responsible Government, but I have said nothing of that, because what we call Responsible Government was not an important factor in the pre-rebellion period and was certainly not in the minds of the rebels.

My purpose was to deal with causes rather than results, but one result of the Canadian rebellion was Lord Durham's *Report*, and of its place in the history of the larger world, I have written elsewhere: "Lord Durham's *Report* is more than the charter of Canadian democracy and self-government, the corner-stone of the first British nation beyond the seas. It is the great watershed of British imperial history. It is one of the few events of world-history of which one can say that this is the beginning of something absolutely new under the sun. When the unique type of empire which it created has completely worked out its destiny, it will be time to venture a final estimate of its significance."