

The Rebellions in Lower Canada 1837 – 38

Role of Newspapers

- Both parties used newspapers to spread their ideas and opinions
- British party: *Quebec Mercury*, *Montreal Herald*, *Montreal Gazette*
- Parti Canadien: *Le Canadien*, *the Vindicator*, *La Minerve*
- 1810 Governor James Craig- ordered *Le Canadien* closed and jailed the editor and founders for treason

Creation of the Parti Patriote

- 1826 the Parti Canadien changed its name to the Parti Patriote
- Louis Joseph Papineau became its leader
- The change signaled a change from reform [moderate] ideas to a more radical [extreme] position

Causes for discontent in Lower Canada

1. Economic:

- Agricultural crisis (overcrowding on seigneuries and food shortages) led to tension and discontent
- The British government refused to grant new seigneuries
- Seigniorial dues were increased in 1820 and 1830 adding to the hardship of the population
- The British government reserved land in the eastern townships for British Immigrants

2. Political:

- Constitutional Act led to disputes between elected assembly + the appointed governor and councils.
- the Canadiens depended on their elected representatives in the **legislative assembly** to improve conditions
- the Governor's power to appoint members to the executive and legislative council and his power of veto severely limited the power of the legislative assembly

The Influence of Ideas: Republicanism

- Connected to liberalism
- the belief that supreme power is held by the population and their elected representatives and not the Monarchy
- republics replace the monarch with an elected president

Main Stages in the Rebellions

The 92 Resolutions 1834: Louis Joseph Papineau and Patriotes issued the 92 Resolutions (demands) to the British government – They demanded:

- An elected legislative council,
- Control by the assembly of the budget (all government money)
- Responsible Government (executive council chosen by the majority party in the legislative assembly)
- Protection of the French language

Lord Russel's 10 Resolutions 1837

- British government replies with– rejected the Patriote demands.
- The British government increased the power of the Governor by giving him control of the legislative assembly's subsidies(\$)

Popular Assemblies 1837 – led by Louis Joseph Papineau

- Patriotes organize demonstrations to protest the 92 resolutions and the British government's actions
- The Patriotes call for a boycott of British imports
- Some more radical members like Dr. Wolfred Nelson openly called for armed resistance

Repression by the Colonial Authorities

- 1837 Governor Gosford banned popular assemblies
- 1837 Governor Gosford dissolved the Legislative Assembly after it refused to vote on the budget
- 1837 Governor Gosford issued arrest warrants for 26 Patriote leaders after they held illegal popular assemblies

Main Battles 1837

- After the arrest warrants were issued the patriotes armed themselves for battle
- Nov. 23, 1837 St. Denis – Patriotes win
- Nov. 25, 1837 St. Charles – Patriotes lose
- Dec. 14, 1837 St Eustache – patriotes lose – British military crushed revolt

1838 the Declaration of Independence of Lower Canada

- Published by Robert Nelson and Chevalier de Lorimier with 300 Canadiens
- Resumed fighting in 1838
- The rebellion was defeated by the British forces in 1838

Consequences – British Actions

- Patriote leaders hung
- Many participants exiled to Australia or West Indies
- Most granted amnesty (set free)

Reasons for Failure of Patriotes

- Led by French Canadian professionals in the assembly
- Did not get enough support from common people
- RC Church + Seigneurs opposed rebellions/supported British government

Rebellions in Upper Canada

- Led by William Lyon Mackenzie
- Assembly of Upper Canada (English representatives) opposed to British government (demands for more power for the elected assembly)
- Also put down by the British authorities (military)