

# Government Reform: Durham and the Act of Union—Key

<p><b>Two main recommendations of Lord Durham's Report:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Upper and Lower Canada should be united in one province.</i></li> <li>2. <i>There should be responsible government in the province, with less British interference. This meant that the Executive Council (cabinet) should be chosen by the elected representatives of the people (not by the Governor) and their decisions would need the support of the majority of the Legislative Assembly.</i></li> </ol>	<p><b>Why Lord Durham made these recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>He thought this would place the English in the majority in government, make English the only official language, and make decision making much easier.</i></li> <li>2. <i>He thought that this would satisfy some of the unrest that had caused the rebellions. (He also set most of the rebels free, and sent some into exile, instead of keeping them in prison or sentencing them to death as traitors.)</i></li> </ol>
<p><b>What was the "Union" in the Act of Union?</b> <i>Upper Canada and Lower Canada now became the United Province of Canada. It would have one Legislative Assembly, with representatives from Canada East (former Lower Canada) and Canada West (former Upper Canada).</i></p>	<p><b>What was the purpose of this Union?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It would make the government of the colonies simpler for Britain (only one government, not two).</i></li> <li>• <i>It would give the English control of the colony, because when the Canada East and Canada West representatives were combined, the English-speaking representatives were in the majority.</i></li> <li>• <i>It was hoped that the French-speaking people would become assimilated (join the majority culture) and the country would be more united.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Explain how the Legislative Assembly worked in the Province of Canada under the Act of Union.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Canada East and Canada West voters both elected their representatives to one Legislative Assembly.</i></li> <li>• <i>The Legislative Assembly could make local laws and impose taxes, subject to the approval of the Governor General, the Executive Council, and the Legislative Council (who were all appointed by the Governor General).</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>How could this create problems for the new Province of Canada?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>French-speaking Canadians would lose their power and voice in government, and they would be unhappy.</i></li> <li>• <i>It did not answer the people's demands for more responsible government, since most of the decisions were still made by appointed (not elected) members.</i></li> <li>• <i>The Reformers—even the moderate reformers—would be unhappy.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>In 1841, did the government have to answer to the people for its decisions?</b> <i>No—to the Governor General.</i></p>	<p><b>Who held most of the power in government?</b> <i>The Executive Council, who were usually English-speaking and were named by the Governor General.</i></p>
<p><b>Your conclusion: Did the Rebellions result in responsible government?</b></p>	