

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI[®]



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university

FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES
ET POSTDOCTORALES



FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

Ralph Sharples

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

M.A. (History)

GRADE / DEGRÉ

Department of History

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

Facing Down the Lion:
Canada's Refusal to Support the Egyptian Expedition, 1882

TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

Jeffrey Keshen

DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS (EXAMINATRICES) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS EXAMINERS

Richard Connors

Serge Durlinger

Gary W. Slater

LE DOYEN DE LA FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES ET POSTDOCTORALES /
DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

FACING DOWN THE LION:
Canada's Refusal to Support the Egyptian Expedition, 1882

by

Ralph Sharples

Thesis submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
M.A. degree in History.

Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa

© Ralph Sharples, Ottawa, Canada, 2005



Library and
Archives Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*

ISBN: 0-494-11407-X

Our file *Notre référence*

ISBN: 0-494-11407-X

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.


Canada

ABSTRACT

This thesis outlines the influences that shaped Canada's refusal to support Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1882. Here, Canada set a precedent of inaction that continued as a seminal part of its approach to foreign policy. The excuse of legal constraints in the Militia Act was given as the official reason for the refusal in 1882; of greater importance, however, were the series of underlying factors that brought Canada to this decision. Indeed, in many ways, this was a decision more than a decade in the making. As an often overlooked event in Canadian history, this thesis has relied on a variety of primary sources to assess the influences that affected the key decision-makers, provide an indication of the popular opinion, and, in a larger sense, point to the fact that this episode is of more significance than the attention it has garnered to date in Canadian historiography.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, whose continual commitment to learning and knowledge has inspired many of my educational choices.

I would like to thank a number of people, for their support during the research and writing of this work. Firstly, for developing this topic with me from its inception and continuing to oversee the writing, this thesis would have not been possible without the support of my academic advisor, Dr Jeffrey Keshen. I have also benefited from the courteous assistance of the staffs at Morisset Library at the University of Ottawa, Stauffer Library at Queen's University, Maxwell MacOdrum Library at Carleton University, and most significantly from Library and Archives Canada. Finally - for their constant support and advice - I would like to thank my family and friends who have taken an interest in this study and kept me directed throughout the process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: CHARGING INTO QUICKSAND	11
1.1: The Birth Of a Crisis	11
1.2: The British Mishandling of the Egyptian Imbrolio	19
CHAPTER 2: LEARNING TO SAY NO	38
2.1: Breeding Disaffection	38
2.2: Finding the Legal Cause For Denial	58
2.3: The Paper Trail – Popular Perspectives	65
CHAPTER 3: EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES	81
3.1: The Irish Question and Economic Realities	81
3.2: Military Matters	93
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION	105
BIBLIOGRAPHY	112
1. Archival Sources	112
2. Printed Primary Sources	112
3. Secondary Sources	112

Introduction

Through the later half of 2002 and into the following year, Canada came under pressure from the United States to lend military support for the invasion of Iraq. Though already committed to stabilizing Afghanistan after the removal of the Taliban leadership, the increased demands from the Bush Administration left Jean Chrétien's Liberal government in a quandary. On a diplomatic level, Canadian-American relations had been strained for a prolonged period, and a negative response to the American request held the potential to deepen the rift. Conversely, Canada was committed to using its military for missions in conjunction with mandates from the United Nations.¹ The conflicting pulls on Canadian policy opened the debate as to the value of joining the American invasion. Of main concern were the repercussions the ultimate decision would have on both a domestic and an international level.

Ultimately, since "[m]ystery shrouded the *casus belli*,"² the Canadian government refused to bow to pro-war pressures. Instead, Chrétien balked at Bush's calls for support leaving the predominantly Anglo-American force to invade Iraq and oust Hussein. However the prime minister's decision to define Canada's policy independently of the United States and Britain through a choice of inaction - while maintaining its friendship with its allies - was not a unique path for the country. In reality, it was a familiar direction that held its roots in the nascent years of the Dominion.

Over a century earlier, under the Conservative leadership of Sir John A. Macdonald, the burgeoning Dominion saw fit to deny support for the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 thereby creating a policy that put Canadian interests first. It was a

¹ *Globe and Mail*, 24 January 2003, p. A1.

² *Ibid.*, p.2

policy that was revived and repeated on multiple occasions (including the Sudan in 1884-85, the Chanak Affair in 1922, and in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s), before Chrétien had the opportunity to utilise it once again in 2003. Thus Canada's decision in 1882 was important because the Dominion remained inactive and followed its own interests, thus following a divergent path from the more martial attitudes of the Mother Country.

Though the aid requested of Canada was simply to relieve the Royal Navy's garrison at Halifax with Canadian troops, by denying any support Macdonald emphasised Canada's reluctance back British endeavours. The basis of Macdonald's decision came from a stipulation in the Dominion's Militia Act that restricted the use of the military to the defence of the Empire when threatened by war, invasion, or insurrection. Since Britain sought to occupy Egypt, and therefore be the invading force, Macdonald contended that the act restricted Canada's options to one – refusal. However, though this surface explanation gives the official reason for the negative response, the motivation behind Macdonald's precedent-setting decision has been left undetermined, leaving the question: as an economic and military dependency of Britain in this period, why did Canada so adamantly refuse to aid Britain in its occupation of Egypt?

Instead of concentrating on the far-reaching ramifications of Macdonald's decision, historians of this period have been more apt to centre their studies on the action of the Sudan Campaign two to three years later or on the South African War at the century's close. As a result, much of the information utilized for this study has been extrapolated from Canadian dailies, private letters, telegraphs, and prime ministerial fonds to gain a clearer perspective of this period and the circumstances that led to

Macdonald's decision. Additionally, the secondary sources have been employed to gain a wider historical context for the development of British imperial and foreign policy as it affected both Canada and Egypt. More relevant to Macdonald's denial, these sources were also employed to assess the nature and pressures of Canadian decision-making in the period as well as the condition and capabilities of the militia.

It is also relevant that not only is Macdonald's decision considered of minor importance to historians, but also that the general public - at the time - was left out of the debate. The public's ignorance is evidenced by the lack of direct response from the dailies regarding Macdonald's refusal to join the expedition when the Egyptian Crisis was foremost in the newspapers' coverage. Instead the press concentrated on the mobilization of British forces and their ultimate success in the field.

As such, this study will analyse the issues that shaped Canadian policy in regard to Britain's expedition to Egypt. In so doing, it will demonstrate that there was more to Canada's precedent setting refusal than a simple technicality built into the Militia Act, 1868 that kept the Dominion from fulfilling a military role for the Empire. Instead, this paper will illustrate that the act served as a polite excuse to conceal a series of complaints that Canada held in its relationship with Britain.

In contrast to the dearth of material related to the Canadian inaction of 1882, the historiography regarding Britain's involvement in Egypt is extensive as the "occupation of Egypt opened a new chapter in imperial history. Indeed, in many ways, it was the real trigger for the African Scramble."³ In a similar respect, Britain's vested involvement in Egypt also marked a significant shift in Prime Minister Gladstone's approach to the

³ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*. New York: Basic Books, 2002, p. 195.

Empire's foreign policy. During the late 1870s, Gladstone vehemently opposed (then prime minister) Disraeli's foreign policy in the Near East,⁴ but instead of divesting Britain from its colonial millstones, Gladstone let the Egyptian Crisis drag the Empire into a series of questionable military endeavours as the period of imperial devolution quickly returned to one of renewed imperial fervour. As such, the impetus behind and the importance of Gladstone's management of the Egyptian Crisis continue to be debated and have created an extensive historiography. However, much of the existing material on this topic was written from the British perspective and the majority of those works were written over fifteen years ago. Nonetheless, many of the more recent additions to the crisis do not solely concentrate on the event and only treat it on a superficial level, leaving the topic without a wider modern perspective.

Moreover, the material covered in works such as Robinson and Gallagher's *Africa and the Victorians* concentrates on the effects of the crisis for Britain and Egypt, as well as the balance of power in Europe, but generally ignore how it affected other parts of the Empire – especially those dependencies situated to the west of the Suez Canal. For this reason, the sources regarding the British drive to occupy Egypt will serve to establish the historical context of the crisis as well as demonstrate the failures in British policy-making that hindered the development the Khedivate.⁵ In addition, the material will also indicate that through a series of international decisions, Britain spent much of the period leading up to the crisis distancing itself from Canada, which also led to Macdonald's policy of refusal.

⁴ Ibid., p. 195.

⁵ The term 'Khedivate' was used by the Ottomans to describe Egypt's quasi-autonomous state that existed from 1867 to 1914. Similar to Canada's dominion status, Egypt was still under the rule of the Ottoman Empire and ruled by a viceroy or 'Khedive.' The rulers held monarchical status, but officially owed allegiance to the Sultan.

As in the case of the British involvement in Egypt, the historiography of Canada's reactions and position during the crisis has been relatively sparse over the past fifteen to twenty years. To compound the lack of information, most of the material often does not concern itself directly with Canadian reactions to the occupation much less the reasons for Macdonald's outright refusal to lend Canadian assistance. Instead, the nationalist/imperialist tack of Canadian thought was documented in the broader sense by writers such as Carl Berger in both *Imperialism and Nationalism, 1884-1914* and *The Sense of Power*, Norman Penlington in *Canada and Imperialism, 1896-1899*, and C.P. Stacey in *Canada and the Age of Conflict*. However since the real debate over this issue did not gain any tangible momentum until later in the 1880s with the establishment of the Imperial Federation League in Canada,⁶ the material bears little relation to the period in question.

On a military level, works like Desmond Morton's *A Military History of Canada* and Jack Granatstein's *Canada's Army* set the basis for some of the underlying reasons for the Canadian denial of support, but they do not expound on the 1882 crisis and only account for the roles of the media and Canadian government on superficial levels. Similarly, more recent articles such as Peter Burrough's "Defence and Imperial Disunity" and David Killingray's "Imperial Defence" focus on the political relationship between the Dominion and the Mother Country, again with little if any reference to the events of 1882, leaving the topic a virtual sidebar to the period's historical record.

From the perspective of public opinion in Canada, all of the aforementioned sources add little to the historiography and so, the majority of insights have been

⁶ Carl Berger, *Imperialism and Nationalism, 1884-1914: A Conflict in Canadian Thought*. Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1969, p.1.

garnered through the use of the Dominion's daily newspapers or from the reflections found in the personal papers of key political figures who made mention of the popular view. Since the crisis occurred a mere fifteen years after Confederation it was one of the first major events that began Canada's move to acting in its own interests, separate from that of Britain and the Empire. For this reason, newspapers from across the country will be utilised to demonstrate the societal pressures and desires that existed in Canada at the time.

The dailies demonstrated their sympathies through the selective use of wire service reports and as such, along with their editorials, gave an indication of the public opinion regarding the crisis. Though it is accepted that the dailies did not necessarily carry the majority opinion for their regions and that they did carry some distinct biases, it is also true that the newspapers consulted in this study held influence over their respective regions as they had one of the wider readerships in their cities. Moreover, in order to remain competitive in their respective markets, the articles needed to take their readership into consideration, which means that their positions were not unique to the beliefs of their owners and/or editors.

In using journalistic sources, this study relied on works such as W.H. Kesterton's *A History of Journalism in Canada* and Paul Rutherford's *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada*, for insights into the newspapers of the period and the methodological issues concerning their use. With this background information, this work has depended upon some of the principal dailies of the time that spanned the contiguous parts of the country, namely, *The Halifax Morning Chronicle*, *The Gazette*, *La Patrie*, *The Globe*, and *Manitoba Daily Free Press*. The majority of

these dailies were chosen because they were Liberal organs and thus more ready to question the decisions of the Conservative Macdonald government. Conversely, the *Gazette* was used to act as the 'control' for the study as the main conservative voice. In this regard, most of the newspapers act as a counter balance to the political papers of the Conservative government members included in this study. *La Patrie* has been used to measure the opinions of French-Canadians.

The personal papers employed for this study centred on the correspondence of Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, Minister of Railways and Canals Sir Charles Tupper, and Governor-General Lord Lorne (including his secretary Colonel F.W. de Winton) as well as the *de facto* leader of the Quebec Conservatives, Sir Hector Langevin. Together, they constituted the key figures in the consolidation of Canada's official position during the crisis. Since the Canadian refusal was generally kept out of the press and few historians have maintained its importance, much of the material about the decision-making process has been drawn from various correspondences between these principal actors. In so doing, many of the underlying issues are brought to the fore in these letters indicating the conflicted loyalties that Canadian politicians contradictorily held, based in Canadian self-interest and a desire for imperial grandeur.

As such, the concentration on all of the above primary sources will focus on the perceptions of the issue from both a popular and elite level. By demonstrating how Canadians viewed the expedition at the time, this work will illustrate the reasons behind Canada's rejection of involvement in the expedition and indicate that the event was instrumental in shaping a fundamental aspect of the Canadian political identity, which was once again revived in 2003. For this reason, Canada's position with respect to the

Egyptian expedition is important, essentially, and somewhat ironically, because of the inaction of the government. By failing to succumb to the internal and external pressures that attempted to drag Canada into the imperialist fray, the new Dominion was able to set an important precedent that guided future policies. This study will analyse the issues that shaped the Canadian policy leading to the precedent of inaction.

To achieve this purpose, the thesis is divided into three chapters. The first concentrates on the British involvement in Egypt and will outline the basic factors behind the crisis and its inflammation. These factors include, but are not restricted to, the growth of Egyptian nationalism, the failing Egyptian economy, control of the Suez Canal, and Anglo-French relations. Their combined effect will be used to indicate why the British action was controversial, and why they added to Canada's abstention from the occupation.

Though this context will be necessary to establish an understanding of the period, it will be overshadowed by the more relevant concern of how Imperial policy was regarded in Canada and its effect on the Canadian political landscape. By demonstrating Britain's shift in policy toward increased attachment to Egyptian affairs, this material will be developed in order to more clearly appraise British and Canadian views at the time of the crisis. In so doing, the opening chapter will also set the foundation of the clumsiness of the British approach in Egypt which tainted Canadians' views of the expedition. By setting the historical context on the international scale, this section will give a background to the events that climaxed in Gladstone's decision to break from his traditional course of action and occupy Egypt, which in turn led to Lorne's request for Canadian support. Moreover, it will set the tone of the Canadian reaction to the request,

in light of the renewal of imperialist ventures that continued to shift Britain's focus away from Canada.

The paper will then concentrate on the more than decade long division between Canadian and British policy-makers and the latent animosity that festered between the Mother Country and its colony in the form of subtle reproaches. The second chapter will begin by incorporating the effects of Britain's political and military detachment from North American affairs as well as the patronising attitude Britain took with its first Dominion. As a result of the shifts in Imperial policy, Canada's discontent from these rebuffs was amplified by the crisis of 1882 and culminated in Macdonald's denial of aid for Britain's undertaking in Egypt. Though much of this tension was restricted to the political level, the chapter will also indicate the views of the general public through Canadian newspapers. Again, it is important to note that the dailies employed in this study were generally Liberal organs and were used since they would tend to be more critical of the Macdonald government than their Conservative equivalents. That both sides of the political spectrum in Canada were of similar opinions demonstrates that limited military spending and inaction enjoyed wide support. Consequently, though the Egyptian Crisis did not unite political factions in Canada, it did set the precedent for Canadian refusals to participate in minor wars, especially when they did not threaten the integrity of the Empire.

The final chapter will provide further, though more indirect, causes of Macdonald's refusal. In so doing, it will develop the influences of the Irish Question on Canadian politics and the potential ramifications it held for the Dominion. As a result of the incongruity of opinion between Britain and Canada, the issue increased tensions,

which was heightened when the Egyptian Crisis coincided with the debate over Ireland. The effect was that the combination of crises directed Macdonald's ultimate decision. Moreover, arguments regarding the influences of Canada's lack of commitment to the development of the militia along with the weakened state of its economy are also advanced, as they not only concern the lack of national will to follow the imperial lead, but also the impracticality of Canadian involvement in the occupation. These additional influences provide underlying yet pragmatic arguments for Canada's refusal as the Dominion had yet to unify its people and firmly consolidate its own territories and economy.

Thus, Canada's denial of the request carries historical importance in that its response to imperial needs during the 1882 crisis were instrumental in defining the direction of the country in the limited conflicts of the twentieth century. Additionally, it reveals the beginnings of an independent Canadian direction in which the Dominion could deny its support without fracturing its close relationships. In examining the Egyptian Crisis, a widely overlooked event in Canadian history, this thesis will demonstrate that regardless of its motives, Canada's attachment to non-intervention has long been a thread in the fabric of the nation's past and arguably more so than its spurts of military action.

CHAPTER 1

Charging Into Quicksand: The British Embroilment in the Egyptian Crisis

1.1 The Birth of a Crisis

Throughout the mid-nineteenth century Egypt sought to cultivate its commercial networks in order to become a more attractive alternative for foreign markets. In order to achieve this aim, the Khedivate relied heavily upon extensive loans that far exceeded its annual revenues and eventually over-extended its financial capabilities to the point of bankruptcy. Even so, during the early 1860s Egypt's economy grew in importance as an appealing option for European financiers. Not only did the advent of the American Civil War effectively curtail cotton trade with the Confederate States, but the Khedivate also willingly incurred greater debt to modernize Egypt in response to the increased revenues from its cotton trade.

The Khedive's modernization projects were dominated by improvements to Egypt's transportation and administrative infrastructures, but it was the completion of the Suez Canal, in 1869, that signified a new era in Anglo-Egyptian affairs. Britain's depth of financial interests in the region coupled with the completion of the waterway meant that Egypt was not just a valuable market in need of protecting, but also the holder of a key passage to Britain's eastern empire, for Britain believed that its status as a great global power lay in its possession and control of India.⁷ That the Suez Canal was viewed as the gateway to maintaining this power put Egypt in an awkward position, for though it was an Ottoman territory, it quickly became a central piece in British economic and military strategies.

⁷ David Killingray, "Imperial Defence." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V*, Robin W. Winks, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 347.

However, the effects of the Depression of the 1870s severely hampered the economic revitalisation of Egypt and made the situation increasingly dire for the Khedivate. To further complicate Egypt's financial woes, the continued unrestrained spending of Khedive Ismail drove the territory deeper into debt without generating the necessary returns to satisfy loan payments.⁸ This fiscal discrepancy was not overlooked in Westminster, but European investors were unable to extricate themselves from the situation without suffering extreme financial losses.

In 1875, London attempted to buoy Egyptian affairs through the acquisition of a forty-four percent share of the Suez Canal, which was liquidated by the Khedive in an attempt to gain solvency.⁹ Disraeli's ministry defended the decision as not being one of imperial aggrandizement through supremacy over the waterway, but as a move to sustain a British voice in the maintenance of and influence over the canal.¹⁰ Nevertheless the acquisition of the shares coupled with the domination of the canal's use by British freight deepened Britain's involvement in Egypt. The domination became so extensive, that as early as 1881 over eighty-two percent of all shipping passing through the channel flew under the Union Jack.¹¹ As a result, Britain placed greater importance on the Khedivate and could not afford to have Egypt move in a direction contrary to its wishes. However, the British public assailed Gladstone's intensified attachment to Egypt, as it served to entrench Britain in the Khedivate's affairs at the cost of its taxpayers.

⁸ Afaf Lufti al-Sayyid-Marsot, "The British Occupation of Egypt from 1882." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III*, Andrew Porter, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 653.

⁹ Timothy Parsons, *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1999, p. 24.

¹⁰ Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*. Hong Kong: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983, p. 83; Anthony G. Hopkins "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882." In *The Journal of African History* 27, 2 (1986), p. 373.

¹¹ Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1994, p. 273.

In the Egyptian context, Gladstone's choices were more disastrous. Egypt's sale of the shares exemplified the plight of an economy racked by depressed markets and over-spending. The result was that the Khedivate's economy fell into bankruptcy a year after the sale, which led to internal discord. To stabilise the economy, Britain – in conjunction with France and to a lesser extent the other Powers¹² – took control of Egypt's treasury in order to ensure that debts to European investors were honoured. For different reasons there was a desire to avoid further infringements on Egyptian sovereignty, as France sought to divest itself from the Egyptian economic quagmire, and Britain was opposed - in principle - to making guarantees to its private investors.¹³

The inherent weaknesses of the imposed Dual Control subjected Egypt to strict monetary restraints. The Egyptians resented the foreign intervention, especially since it only appeared to benefit the investors. By the early 1880s, Egypt's debt surpassed £100 million, which found little relief from the relatively meagre annual revenues of £8 million, especially in light of the rates of interest that averaged fifteen percent, even though the legal rate was three percent less.¹⁴

In addition, Egypt was forced to finance the salaries of over 1,300 overpaid foreign officials who were there ostensibly to right the economic woes, but simply added more stress to the already floundering economy.¹⁵ The costs were so great for Egypt that the Toronto-based *Globe* sympathetically indicated that the Khedivate's "annual budget

¹² For the context of this thesis, the term 'Powers' is used to include Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Austro-Hungary and to a lesser extent the Ottoman Empire and Italy, all of which maintained separate designs for Egypt's future.

¹³ Hopkins, pp. 379-380.

¹⁴ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 12 July 1882, p. 4.

¹⁵ John S. Galbraith and Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid-Marsot. "The British Occupation of Egypt: Another View." In *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 9, 4 (1978), p. 474.

[was] £8,000,000 of which one-half [was] for interest on the public debt,"¹⁶ and another £400,000 (or ten percent) of the remaining budget was spent on the foreign overseers.¹⁷ Hence rather than righting the flagging economy, the European plan served to weaken the already over-extended Egyptian economy leaving its financial interests in a more volatile state.¹⁸ In the end, the Europeans' response to extend their control eroded Egypt's sovereignty so severely that the Powers were able to orchestrate the removal of Khedive Ismail in 1879 and replace the ruler with one more subservient to their aims.¹⁹

Although Egypt only accounted for five percent of the world's cotton trade, the economies of Britain and Egypt became inextricably linked in the following decade as Lancastrian mills became dependent on the steady supply of Egyptian cotton. Egypt responded to the influx of trade by devoting more of its arable land to the cash crop - which by 1880 accounted for seventy-six percent of all exports.²⁰ Thus, when Egypt's situation spiralled toward violence, British concerns over the cotton supply soared. As voiced in both the *Globe* and the *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, the concerns meant a potential spike in international cotton prices like that which had been witnessed during the American Civil War resulting in great losses for the Egyptian economy. Employing the same wire service report, the two dailies indicated,

In all, the cotton supply from Egypt runs from 400,000 to 500,000 bales annually, with a rising tendency. This is about as much as the cotton production of Louisiana. Everybody knows where the cotton market would be if it were to be telegraphed that a mob in New Orleans killed 300 or 400 people and that industry was disorganised all over the State. Yet as far as the general cotton supply of

¹⁶ *Globe*, 7 July 1882, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Globe*, 12 July 1882, p. 3.

¹⁸ Al-Sayyid-Marsot, p. 652.

¹⁹ Ferguson, p. 194.

²⁰ Al-Sayyid-Marsot, p. 658.

the world is concerned, this has taken place in Egypt. The supply from this is one-twentieth of the total supply, but in price a twentieth, more or less, counts as southern speculators found when half their deficit of 1,000,000 bales was made up from Egypt.²¹

With the growth of interdependence between the two markets, Britain's interest in maintaining Egyptian stability mounted, as did Egypt's dependency on British trade. At this time "Britain took 80 per cent of Egypt's exports and supplied 44 per cent of her imports," and in return "[c]ommercial expansion was accompanied by railway and harbour construction, and by the installation of industrial machinery – all of which gave employment to British manufacturers and personnel."²² In short, Britain could not afford to have Egypt become insolvent.

Thus as the century progressed, the continued instability of the Egyptian markets remained a threat to British security on both an economic and a strategic level. Pressure within Britain to protect the finances of its foreign investors became increasingly evident as defending against the instability began to be viewed as essential to protecting Britain's pre-eminence in the world. Even so, British involvement at this point was directed by a "fear of the French, not tenderness for the bondholders,"²³ since Britain did not want to lose Egypt to the French. France held similar concerns in regard to Britain, and for this reason the two powers worked in conjunction with each other for their mutual benefit. Their motives were not missed in Canada. Common to articles printed in many dailies, the *Gazette's* appraisal of the situation related that

...England and France consider the maintenance of the Khedive's authority the only possible guarantee for the maintenance of order and the development and prosperity

²¹ *Globe*, 21 June 1882, p. 5; *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 1 July 1882, p. 7.

²² Hopkins, p. 379.

²³ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 84.

of the country. The two Governments are closely associated in their determination to ward off, by united efforts, all causes of internal and external complications which might menace the *regime* they established in Egypt. They do not doubt that this publicly expressed assurance will contribute to prevent dangers which might threaten the Khedive's government, and which England and France would certainly unite to face.²⁴

The European desire to create an Egypt with a stable yet co-operative government was a paradox in this context, for the Egyptians resisted greater foreign control in favour of a burgeoning nationalist movement. In order to have stability under a domestic power-base, the Europeans needed to give control to the Egyptians; however a domestic government was not likely to favour foreign interests. As such, the Franco-British plan created a greater level of instability, as the nationalist-driven Egyptian military began to threaten the Anglo-French guidance of the economy and government.²⁵ Ultimately, the European control of the economy provoked a nationalist revolt against both the Ottoman rulers and foreign controllers. In September 1881 the four native Egyptian colonels - under Arabi Pasha - led a revolt voicing resentment about Egypt's predicament, thereby fuelling anti-European sentiments as well as debasing the Khedive's support.²⁶

To protect against instability and to safeguard the foreign investments of its prominent holders, Britain embarked on a series of questionable military endeavours that marked a significant change in British policy as it returned to the imperialist focus that Prime Minister Gladstone had sought to eliminate. Nonetheless, the initial distaste for intervention was generated from moral arguments that expansion of the Empire only

²⁴ *Gazette*, 10 January 1882, p. 1.

²⁵ Hopkins, p. 376.

²⁶ Robinson and Gallagher, p.87; Al-Sayyid-Marsot, p. 653.

benefited the upper echelons of society at the expense of the taxpayers.²⁷ This attitude was bolstered by the imperial enthusiasts' discriminatory position that focussed on the consolidation of the 'white empire,' not extending to tropical dependencies.²⁸ The British electorate voted in accordance with this belief in 1880 when it responded by electing the traditionally non-imperialist leaning Liberals. In such an atmosphere, the Egyptian Crisis was fraught with a lack of popular support in Britain - a sentiment that was evidenced in the Canadian dailies with wires from London's *The Times* in which it was stated in early January 1882 that

The people of England would view with serious apprehension any further interference in the internal affairs of Egypt. The idea of a joint Anglo-French military intervention would excite gravest misgivings and would only be entertained in any case with the utmost reluctance.²⁹

Disregarding such reports and in response to the popular growth of nationalism under Arabi Pasha as the newly elevated Minister of War, Britain sent warships to Alexandria's harbour in the spring of 1882. As a staple of British diplomacy the purpose of the manoeuvre was to intimidate the Egyptian forces and quell potential unrest or insurrection. Ironically, it served to create greater animosity between the Egyptians and their foreign controllers. Resentment toward Europeans deepened, prompting riots in mid-June that targeted foreigners.

Even after such violent attacks against British and other European citizens, there were still popular elements in Britain against an invasion as noted in the *Globe* almost two weeks after the disturbance. The Toronto daily indicated "a great meeting will be

²⁷ John E. Flint, "Britain and the Scramble for Africa." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V*, Robin W. Winks, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 450.

²⁸ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 23.

²⁹ *Halifax Morning Chronicle*, 6 January 1882, p. 3.

held in London next week to formulate a vehement protest against the Egyptian policy of the Government.”³⁰ However the downward spiral of events led to “British fears for the security of the Suez Canal and worry among Europeans that the Egyptian nationalists might renege on repayment of the Debt.”³¹ It was a fear that eventually resulted in the bombardment of Alexandria in mid-July and the landing of Royal Marines to protect European interests. By claiming the defence of the canal as the impetus for the occupation, Gladstone garnered support for the cause, and Britain began to mobilize its armies in Britain and India for the occupation of Egypt.

Even though the Canadian dailies offered criticisms of Britain’s approach throughout the crisis, they also recognised the logic behind the decision giving an overall sense of approval for the expedition. The *Manitoba Daily Free Press*’ wire from *The Pall Mall Gazette* proposed that to “defend the Suez Canal with any fair prospect of success against a hostile force existing in the country, it would be admissible and almost necessary to defeat that hostile force in the field and take possession of the whole country.”³² However as a unilateral decision, many still viewed the approach as contrary to Gladstone’s policies and questioned the feasibility of such an action until the occupation actually met with success.

Opinions in Canada throughout the crisis tended to mirror those held in Britain. In general, a sense of oneness with the Mother Country existed in that Canadians “were moved by and responded to the urges of imperialism; and...their growing native

³⁰ *Globe*, 26 June 1882, p.2.

³¹ Al-Sayyid-Marsot, p. 653.

³² *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 24 July 1882, p. 6.

nationalism found expression through imperial channels.”³³ However, in post-Confederation Canada, the Dominion government tended to be wary of British or Imperial projects for fear that their centralizing factors would keep Canada from following its own interests in favour of the Empire’s.³⁴ As such, when Governor-General Lord Lorne requested that Canada aid Britain by relieving the garrison at Halifax, the official stance taken by the Macdonald government nullified any real opportunity for the Canadian public to back plans that offered military aid to the British cause. Instead, as Britain became increasingly embroiled in Egyptian affairs with the landing of its force in August,³⁵ the situation gave Canada mounting reasons to distance itself from Imperial policies.

1.2 The British Mishandling of the Egyptian Imbrolio

As prime minister, Gladstone’s prevailing foreign policy of both divestment of territories and the elimination of colonial obligations was contradicted by his approach to Egypt. There, it was epitomised by years of inconsistent strategy and ill-informed decision-making, which resulted in a legacy of occupation.³⁶ However, it was Gladstone's desire to placate the Powers – in regard to a solution in Egypt – that generated his volatile approach, which in turn, made a united response from the Empire effectively unattainable.

³³ Charles P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict, Volume 1: 1867-1921*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984, pp. 40-41.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³⁵ Colin Newbury, “Great Britain and the Partition of Africa, 1870-1914.” In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III*, Andrew Porter, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 633.

³⁶ Galbraith and Al-Sayyid-Marsot, p. 488.

Part of the reason for his fluctuating policy lay in the fact that the Egyptian Situation³⁷ did not receive the attention it warranted because it was overshadowed in the Imperial parliament by the issue of Irish Home Rule. The Irish Question became so divisive that it contributed to a split in the Liberal Party that imposed definite strains on Gladstone's ability to govern Britain effectively. The split worsened in March of 1882 when his majority in the House of Commons dropped to only thirty-nine.³⁸ For this reason, the prime minister's preoccupation with the Irish Question and its implications for his government left him relatively ignorant of foreign affairs.³⁹

Under these conditions, British politicians and diplomatic personnel were inconsistent in their attitudes and advice. Whereas leading members of the Liberal Party, such as Joseph Chamberlain (President of the Board of Trade) and Charles Dilke (Under-Secretary of State Foreign Affairs) were "overt antagonists of their Whig colleagues, [the two] did not follow a consistent path of dissent from the majority position," leaving Gladstone insecure in his decision-making when formulating the government's policies. Similarly the British Consul General in Egypt, Sir Edward Malet, directed Gladstone in two diametrically opposed directions between January and February 1882. Malet originally justified the Egyptian disdain for foreign intervention and believed that he could control the crisis. By February he made a *volte-face* and advocated a radical approach that supported armed intervention, as he later believed that the Egyptians were incapable of self-government.⁴⁰ These shifts in direction gave Gladstone no firm

³⁷ Throughout the crisis, Canadian dailies consistently referred to three main titles: 'Egyptian Situation,' 'Egyptian Crisis,' or 'Egyptian Imbroglio.'

³⁸ Robinson and Gallagher, p.100; Peter Marshall, "The Imperial Factor in the Liberal Decline, 1880-1885." In *Perspectives of Empire*, John E. Flynt, and Glyndwr Williams eds. London: Longman Group Limited, 1973, pp. 130-131.

³⁹ Hopkins, p. 382.

⁴⁰ Galbraith and Al-Sayyid-Marsot, pp. 473-477.

foundation from which to develop an effective Egyptian policy. Similarly, Britain's waffling left the rest of the Empire unable to give unconditional support since it did not know to which policy of Britain's they were committing.

However, blame for this diplomatic inconsistency could not be simply placed on Gladstone, for in late July it extended through the British political spectrum. Even the British Conservatives could not agree on a united course and were described in Canada as "divided in opinion to the policy in Egypt ... [since] Lord Randolph Churchill, whose fiery followers...decided not to follow the policy of Lord Salisbury ... [supported] the establishment of a popular native government."⁴¹

Just as the magnitude of the Egyptian Crisis gained stature in Westminster, the Irish Question again surpassed it in importance, when in May 1882 Lord Cavendish – the chief secretary for Ireland – was assassinated in Phoenix Park. Again, the Irish Question was pushed to the fore of the British political scene at the expense of other Imperial concerns. Consequently Gladstone left his foreign secretary, Earl Granville, to solve the situation in Egypt. Unfortunately, for Gladstone – and Egypt – the secretary did not have the necessary skills to fulfill his role.⁴² Instead, the crisis was suppressed with temporary measures and patchwork solutions until a more drastic response was demanded of Britain. Ultimately the British government's course of action was developed neither to protect investors nor the integrity of the Suez Canal, but to maintain the prestige of the Empire.

Even before the Alexandria Riots in June, Canadian dailies saw the potential for a loss of prestige. The *Globe* intimated this sentiment by printing that "[t]he prestige of

⁴¹ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 22 July 1882, p. 4.

⁴² Galbraith and Al-Sayyid-Marsot, pp. 479-480.

England and France is gone unless energetic steps to suppress Arabi, diminish the army, and control the administration are taken.”⁴³ This belief was re-emphasised five weeks later when the ramifications of lost prestige were considered from an Indian perspective. The Toronto newspaper again expounded on the role of prestige by quoting Sir Rivers Wilson,⁴⁴ when he articulated that Britain’s

...first and greatest interest in Egypt is connection with our Indian Empire. The general belief is that this interest is explained through Egypt being the highway to India. That is, no doubt, the primary cause of the interest we take in the country: but there is more than this. We govern India by means of our prestige, some 60,000 British troops, and by the people’s belief in the resolution, determination, and strength of the British Empire. Without these qualities, and a confidence in them, it is not 60,000 men we should need to hold India, but an incalculably larger number; therefore destroy that prestige and our difficulties in retaining India would enormously increase.⁴⁵

Fears of a ‘domino effect’ throughout Britain’s colonial structure made the government steadfast in its maintenance of control over Egyptian affairs - especially since concerns extended to India and more acutely to Ireland. Initially, Gladstone’s reluctance to solve the Egyptian Crisis through military channels stemmed from his aversion to involving Britain in the internal matters of the Ottoman Empire on behalf of British investors. Both he and Granville believed that strict diplomatic pressure on Egypt would be enough to maintain Egypt’s stability, and that any military action was the Ottomans’ responsibility. However, the Porte⁴⁶ proved unable to control the situation as its sovereignty over Egypt was threatened on so many fronts that it could not defend one

⁴³ *Globe*, 9 June 1882, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Sir Rivers Wilson had been the Financial Adviser to the Khedive and in 1878 held a principal role on a commission of inquiry regarding the Egyptian economy.

⁴⁵ *Globe*, 20 July 1882, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Porte is used as a synonym for the government of the Ottoman Empire.

front without leaving the others open to exploitation. Instead - through diplomacy - the Ottomans tried to set the other Powers against each other in order to maintain their hold on Egypt, as de Winton suggested to Macdonald in August 1882 when he wrote,

One cannot help admiring Turkish Diplomacy, it is so very thorough of its kind. In '77 it was all for England who really stayed a victorious entry of the Grand Duke Nicholas into Constantinople. Then she coquetted with Germany, who would use her as a tool in the event of war with Russia – now she has turned to Russia against England. If she could only govern as well as diplomatize [sic] and fight, she would again be a power.⁴⁷

The Porte's diplomatic ambiguity stemmed from circumstances that demanded that the Sultanate be unresponsive to both the Egyptian nationalists and European Powers. Its tenuous position meant that it could not raise a force against the Egyptians for fear of sparking a revolt and losing sovereignty over the territory. Similarly, the Ottomans did not trust the intentions of either a British or French force subduing the Egyptian nationalists and therefore stymied talks that enabled a unified plan of action from the Europeans. The result of the Turkish policy was that it succeeded in empowering the Egyptian nationalists and frustrating the other Powers involved. Unsurprisingly, the course of action taken combined with the entrance of foreign warships in Alexandria's harbour provoked the Egyptian military to unrest against both their Ottoman rulers and the economic controllers of Britain and France.⁴⁸

To compound the inconsistent management of the Egyptian Crisis were Britain's diplomatic solutions with France. In the early 1880s, British interest in the situation was bracketed by the treble purposes of protecting the investments of foreign bondholders,

⁴⁷ Library Archives Canada (LAC), MG26-A, Macdonald Fonds, C-1509. pp. 25318-25319, de Winton to Macdonald, 7 August 1882.

⁴⁸ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 87.

maintaining the fluidity of the Suez Canal, and ensuring that British influence over Egyptian affairs remained level with that of France.⁴⁹ To do so, Gladstone wanted to maintain a unified plan of action with France, but he balked at France's suggestion of the possibility of an occupation force in the autumn of 1881. Again, in the summer of 1882 and less than a month before the occupation, the prime minister maintained that his interest was to solve the crisis with as little interference in Egyptian affairs as possible, but his "principal concern in the first half of 1882 was to maintain harmony with France. Given the bewildering shifts in French policy toward Egypt, such a burden would have taxed the ablest of statesmen."⁵⁰ Granville was not such a statesman, and his unskilled approach left Britain with a bungled and often conflicting course of action.

The situation worsened as the crisis drew into the summer of 1882. France's government under De Freycinet suffered a parliamentary defeat when it asked for funds for a military expedition to Egypt. The joint approach with Britain lacked popular support in France, and thus the new French government withdrew any support for an armed occupation just as the crisis reached its climax. However displeasing this change of direction was regarded in Westminster, the Canadian dailies did not regard the loss of support as a major obstacle to British success in Egypt. The *Globe* simply reported that "De Freycinet's Cabinet...has resigned on the vote for an Egyptian war credit....The result is looked upon favourably in Germany as a sign that France favours a policy of non-intervention. In England the preparations to push the rebel chief to the wall are being actively continued."⁵¹ Similarly, rather than question France's policy reversal *La Patrie* sympathised with De Freycinet's position, when it asserted, "*L'attitude du gouvernement*

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 83.

⁵⁰ Galbraith and Al-Sayyid-Marsot, pp. 480-481.

⁵¹ *Globe*, 31 July 1882, p. 1.

français sur la question égyptienne est mal comprise. Il ne faut pas oublier que tandis que le gouvernement anglais avait les main libres pour agir, le gouvernement français est tenu de par la constitution de consulter les chambres et d'obtenir leur sanction avant de s'engager dans aucun acte qui pourrait amener la guerre."⁵² Consequently, Britain was left alone to guard European interests in Egypt.⁵³

Though the Porte was opposed to any British and/or French military intervention in Egypt in late July 1882, the Sultan contradictorily offered Britain control of Egypt as a protectorate. The *Gazette* exaggerated the point in its page one headlines as it printed "England Offered Possession of Egypt," for the actual terms of possession included Britain relinquishing its hold of Cyprus in exchange for the Ottoman territory.⁵⁴ It was a trade few expected Britain to accept, and at that late stage in the imbroglio the offer was rejected. Instead, Gladstone's Cabinet demanded reparations for the June riots and reasserted its unwillingness to act until the conference of the Powers in Constantinople had convened.⁵⁵

To maintain peace in Europe, Gladstone attempted to placate the other Powers to ensure that the crisis did not spark a general European war. In response, each Power vied for a result that bettered its respective position, which meant that even without France, Britain was still unable to formulate a clear policy until the other Powers had stated their goals or desires. Consequently by relying on a reactionary policy, British aims remained in a state of flux, and the rest of the Empire had no basis from which to secure the support of its people. As Britain sought international acceptance for unilaterally entering Egypt,

⁵² *La Patrie*, 18 July 1882, p. 3.

⁵³ Hopkins, p. 372.

⁵⁴ *Gazette*, 29 July 1882, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 109.

it was stymied by the diplomatic wrangling of the Porte, Russia, and Germany. Even into August concerns about the other Powers were raised in the dailies, where significant apprehension was directed toward Russia because early in the month it was “about to quit a passive attitude in favor of one directly hostile to British pretensions in Egypt.”⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Gladstone was able to gain the moral support of Germany and France - in exchange for protecting the Suez Canal. Be that as it may, Westminster was unable to lend legitimacy to the cause by garnering the military support of any of the Powers.⁵⁷

Ultimately, the British helped to create a situation that gave it cause for action when it sent an ultimatum demanding the insurgent Egyptian military’s surrender. Upon its refusal, the British were forced to act in order to maintain their prestige. Though a questionable decision, Britain put itself in a position that if it failed in Egypt then it would have repercussions in its own territories for “[i]f Egypt could pull the lion’s tail and not be mauled,”⁵⁸ its foreign possessions may have attempted the same. Consequently, the decision to send troops to Egypt was not formalised until the last two weeks of July.

It was at this point that Lorne sought Canada’s support. France’s waffling gave cause for concern, but Gladstone believed that the failed diplomatic solutions left Britain with the singular option of intervention. Britain’s inability to construct a peace compounded concerns over the Suez Canal since it was determined to protect its main route to India. As such, it was Gladstone and his cabinet’s “disillusionment with Arabi’s liberalism, despair of Turkish and international action, suspicion of French loyalty, anxiety for the Canal, and their Irish confusions [that] had driven this non-interventionist

⁵⁶ *Gazette*, 2 August 1882, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Gallagher and Robinson, pp. 116-117.

⁵⁸ Hopkins, p. 383.

ministry to the point of action.”⁵⁹ Though Gladstone did not advocate military action to maintain the canal’s security prior to the summer of 1882, concerns over an Egyptian nationalist movement appeared to put the waterway in jeopardy. Ultimately it was this fear that established the rationale for the occupation in the minds of some cabinet members in Westminster.⁶⁰ In order to finalise this decision though, Gladstone and his loosely unified Cabinet had to convince both the British people and the Imperial parliament that intervention was a necessity. The need to do so illustrated a level of reluctance in Britain that was shared in Canada.

Gladstone was able to act because he emphasised British interests over specific financial concerns; stressed the dangers to the Suez Canal; called for safeguarding the freedom of the seas; upheld the duty of protecting British nationals abroad; and described the issue as protecting Christianity from militant Islam.⁶¹ Ironically, India – with its large Muslim population - was the first to be called upon for support. The fact that the colony was directly affected by the crisis and more importantly, had the largest organised military force within the Empire (that had for years supported imperial military endeavours) drew it into the fray.

For Britain, the use of the Indian forces made intervention a more palatable idea as it eased pressures on the British taxpayers.⁶² From a Canadian perspective – as reported in the dailies – India’s aid was, for the most part, viewed matter-of-factly. The colony had long been a source for the Empire’s expeditions, and reports of Indian assistance were common in the Dominion’s dailies through July, as indicated by the

⁵⁹ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 111.

⁶⁰ Galbraith and Al -Sayyid-Marsot, pp. 472-473.

⁶¹ Hopkins, p. 384.

⁶² Ibid.

Gazette's mention on the 27th that "secret military preparations for an [Indian] expedition to Egypt had been going on for some time."⁶³ Moreover, since the cause safeguarded Indian interests, the use of the colony's troops was considered reasonable in Canada because it gave India "the honor of guarding its own avenue, and standing sentinel at its own gate."⁶⁴ However despite these impressions, there existed some pity for the colony as seen in the *Globe*'s wire from a New York newspaper in which it contended:

Poor India! Indian troops are to be conveyed to Egypt to fight England's battles against their own co-religionists, and India is to bear the burden of the expedition. It is rather hard on a dependency to ask it to fight for the Home Government and at the same time to pay for the privilege of being allowed to fight.⁶⁵

Moreover, since the historical precedent that India was expected to help Britain when needed had already been reached earlier in the century, the rest of the Empire also came to recognise and rely on this support. Thus, when Macdonald communicated his refusal to Lorne that summer, he kept Canada from falling victim to a similar precedent.

For Canadians, the British mishandling of the Egyptian Crisis was multi-layered. Westminster's inability to grant Egypt the attention it warranted left Canadians unprepared as how to respond to the crisis when the circumstances became bleaker. More significantly for Canada, since British concerns throughout 1882 revolved around Irish Home Rule and the Egyptian Situation, the British prioritizing of imperial affairs meant that any Canadian concerns were subordinated. This fact was made evident to Lorne in December 1881 when he was informed in a letter from Lord Carnarvon⁶⁶ that

⁶³ *Gazette*, 27 July 1882, p. 5.

⁶⁴ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 25 July 1882, p. 7.

⁶⁵ *Globe*, 28 July 1882, p. 2.

⁶⁶ Lord Carnarvon had a vested interest in Canada as he introduced the British North America Act, 1867 in the Imperial parliament and twice acted as Colonial Secretary prior to 1882.

Canadian issues would not gain any prominence in Britain. Though understandable from the British position, the relegation of Canadian interests was made clear when Carnarvon wrote:

I do not think that there need be any hurry as regards any communication that you may think it desirable to make us on behalf of the Canadian Government, [as] our hands will be for some months to come full with details which are now arriving from the more distant stations; and there is much to consider and digest; but by the middle of February we shall be I think ready for any Canadian question that you may propose.⁶⁷

Carnarvon's appraisal was overly hopeful though, and the point was reiterated in June 1882 when the Egyptian Crisis took its violent turn. In this instance, Lord Dufferin⁶⁸ explained to Sir Charles Tupper⁶⁹ that although the latter's speech about the CPR was informative that he was "in the midst of an Egyptian crisis and of a European Conference,"⁷⁰ and so had no time to discuss the issue. In both instances Canada's place in the Empire was relegated to the second tier at best. The unclear message of British intent in Egypt and the marginalization of Canadian interests did not breed an atmosphere of imperial unity, especially when less than one month from Dufferin's letter, Canadian support was suggested.

That the events leading to the occupation were muddled for the first half of 1882 because of an undefined British policy meant that Canada could not formulate its own direction. To compound the matter, the Dominion's empathy for the nationalist movements in both Ireland and Egypt did not help to garner support for the cause within

⁶⁷ Macdonald Fonds, C-1521, p. 39740, Carnarvon to Lorne, 6 December 1881.

⁶⁸ At the time Lord Dufferin was the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, and thus embroiled in the Egyptian Crisis. However, his connections with Canada were strong as he had been Governor-General from 1872-1878 during which he attempted to strengthen ties between the Dominion and Britain.

⁶⁹ As Minister of Railways and Canals during the completion of the CPR, Tupper sought both financial support and rail material from British interests and so maintained a number of links with prominent Britons.

⁷⁰ LAC, MG26-F, Tupper Fonds, C-3203, p. 2483, Dufferin to Tupper, 28 June 1882.

Canada - especially since Gladstone had previously advocated a territory's right to the pursuit of self-interest through his liberal policies.⁷¹ However, Canadian loyalty to Britain overcame the empathy, and the dailies did alleviate negative attention toward British policy in Egypt by indicating that Gladstone sought European support, keeping Britain from acting unilaterally. Nonetheless, this attention served to work against Britain, for in August the crisis appeared to be one of solely European concern that needed no outside support from the Empire. Moreover, France's collaboration with Britain meant that "[m]any contemporaries doubted neither the necessity nor the ultimate success of Britain's intervention in Egypt."⁷² This assumption allowed Canadians to back the cause in name without any expectations of being called upon to support the Empire in what was widely viewed as an unnecessary expedition.

To add credence to this belief was the message from British officials during much of the crisis. In December 1881 Lorne commented in a letter to Macdonald that "It [was] just as well to keep Canada out of this [Egyptian] unpleasantness."⁷³ A message reiterated in a 26th of June letter to Tupper from Lord Milner who believed that "[o]ur business in Egypt has been a mistake. Our Diplomacy has been faulty and our true knowledge of Egypt has been made clear to our rulers at Home. And Arabi Pasha has beat England and France."⁷⁴ Yet further news distancing Canada's need to prepare for an Imperial war came on the 5th of July when de Winton informed Macdonald that

Egyptian affairs will, I think, wind up in a fizzle. Arabi will provoke a contest with the Fleet simply because by the force of circumstances, he cannot help himself. Their [sic] then will be a...bombardment, then the Egyptian soldiers

⁷¹ Hopkins, p. 382.

⁷² Al-Sayyid-Marsot, p. 651.

⁷³ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 31950, Lorne to Macdonald, 17 December 1881.

⁷⁴ Tupper Fonds, C-3203, p. 2486, Milner to Tupper, 26 June 1882.

will run away. Then they cut off Arabi's head as a peace offering, saying it was all his fault and then misrule will begin again....⁷⁵

For this reason, prior indications that the Dominion's assistance was desired were virtually non-existent, and it was generally intimated that Canada was best to stay out of the dispute. As such, when the suggestion to relieve the Halifax garrison was made, Canada was not in a position to respond quickly and effectively. It was not until Lord Lorne's letter to Macdonald on the 22nd of July that the Governor-General inquired,

Could we not aid the Empire in its present multiplicity of work by offering to garrison Halifax until the conclusion of the Egyptian occupation?

The effect would be good, and in time of emergency the Canadian Militia should be able to perform Home Duties. We might ask that the Artillery and Engineers be left and the Infantry duties [taken] by 4 Canadian Regiments embodied for the time. Please think over my proposal.⁷⁶

Though Lorne's suggestion centred on relief of the Halifax garrison, the timeframe offered to Canada was unreasonable. Given the timing of Lorne's first letter, on the 22nd of July, and the British schedule for embarkation to Egypt, the request allowed less than two weeks preparation, as indicated by the *Globe's* report that "[t]he force for Egypt has been ordered to embark. It has been reduced to 5,000 men. A proclamation has been issued summoning the reserves to assemble by August 2."⁷⁷ As such, the British garrison stationed at Halifax would not have been of much use to the expedition since it was unlikely that it could reach Britain by that time.

⁷⁵ Macdonald Fonds, C-1509, pp. 25307-25308, de Winton to Macdonald, 5 July 1882.

⁷⁶ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, pp. 32108-32110, Lorne to Macdonald, 22 July 1882.

⁷⁷ *Globe*, 26 July 1882, p. 2.

The plausibility of relieving the British garrison only became less realistic as Lorne continued to press for support into August. Thus, in a pragmatic sense, in order for Canada to be of any assistance Macdonald would have had to raise and transport the necessary Canadian units to Halifax prior to or on the day of Lorne's request. Though a small logistical window did exist to affect the relief of the garrison, the British garrison's voyage to Britain would have lasted at least eleven days making their arrival – at best – the same day as the embarkation of troops to Egypt. Under this scenario, the relieved garrison could only act as part of a reserve force that appeared superfluous in light of the additional seven to ten thousand Indian troops that the Imperial parliament had promised on the 25th of July.⁷⁸ By the 16th of August, it was reported in the *Manitoba Daily Free Press* that “[t]he last of the British troops intended for the contest against Arabi have embarked, and the force is an imposing one. The probability is that 30,000 from Britain itself and 10,000 from India will compose the English portion of the attacking army. Operations will commence in a few days,”⁷⁹ thereby indicating no real need for Canada to relieve the east coast garrison.

Though the logistics of the movement to Halifax and effective training of troops in a sufficient period of time was a virtual impossibility given the timeframe set by London, Lorne's request did reflect a suggestion made to him by Colonel Patrick MacDougall, the Adjutant-General of the Militia, in a February 1882 Militia memorandum. After soliciting support for the retention the remaining Royal Canadian Regiment in Canada from the Duke of Cambridge,⁸⁰ Lord Kimberley,⁸¹ and Hugh

⁷⁸ *Globe*, 26 July 1882, p. 2.

⁷⁹ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 16 August 1882, p. 4.

⁸⁰ At the time, the Duke of Cambridge was the commander-in-chief of the British Army.

Childers⁸² the Colonel then informed Lorne that “Troops can be maintained for more cheaply in Canada than in England, or even in any other Colony...[and that] at Halifax they are practically within eleven days of England, at all seasons of the year, if required to replace troops sent abroad. They are also available as troops in England for a sudden call to many places where they might be wanted.”⁸³

Nevertheless, Lorne’s communication of the request did not insinuate a sense of emergency or dire need that necessitated the implementation of MacDougall’s suggestion. Instead, one week after Lorne’s first proposal for Canadian aid, he followed it by one short telegram where he indicated that ministers in Quebec wanted to offer support.⁸⁴ On the same day, Hector Langevin sent an independent telegraph where the entire note only stated, “Lorne asks us for your decision in Halifax proposal contained in his letter of twenty-second to you.”⁸⁵

However, the following day Langevin wrote a more extensive letter in which he clarified Lorne’s suggestion to indicate that the Governor-General believed that volunteers fulfilling their sixteen-day training camp could replace the garrison. If this suggestion had been taken up, it would have released the British regulars and the volunteers would have acted as replacements, but simply the return voyage across the Atlantic extended well past the two-week period of the camps making it an unrealistic option. Langevin’s letter continued to contradict Lorne’s assertion of the previous day, dissuading Macdonald from action when he suggested that Lorne was not convinced that

⁸¹ As Lord Lieutenant of Ireland - in the mid-1860s - Lord Kimberley successfully responded to the beginnings of Fenianism in Ireland. He was later made Britain’s Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1870-1874 and again from 1880-1882.

⁸² Hugh Childers was a career politician who from April 1880 until December 1882 was Britain’s Secretary for War.

⁸³ Macdonald Fonds, C-1521, pp. 39735-39739, MacDougall to Lorne, 28 February 1882.

⁸⁴ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 32112, Lorne to Macdonald, 29 July 1882.

⁸⁵ Macdonald Fonds, C-1657, p. 97182, Langevin to Macdonald, 29 July 1882.

Canada should help, even though the Governor-General still pushed the idea. Furthermore, it did not help that Lorne had advised Macdonald not to become involved in British affairs in Egypt the previous December, while the Imperial parliament reiterated that message in May and July. Langevin also indicated that Adolphe Caron, the Minister of Militia and Defence, informed him that the cost of garrisoning Halifax with the militia was \$200,000 or a fifth of Canada's military budget.⁸⁶ The amount acted as yet another deterrent since it was close to one that the Mackenzie Government had been unwilling to spend to defend Canada against the Russian threat of the 1870s, and such expenditure would have not sat well with the Dominion's electorate.

All the same, Lorne continued to push for Canadian support into August, but Macdonald's decision was firm as indicated by the fact that Caron left for holidays to the Gaspé on the 3rd of August. A day later, Macdonald – who though on holidays in Rivière-du-Loup and bed-ridden throughout late July with dysentery - wrote Lorne and explained that he was legally bound to say no since there was no threat to Britain or the Empire. He also explained that he feared losing the British garrison in that, “if the Halifax Garrison were ever removed at our request, we have no security that they would be returned to us.”⁸⁷ However, the main strength of his denial came from a cleverly crafted, and rather cyclical, argument that Canada could only help in the event of a general war, but even still, in the event of a general war the garrison at Halifax could not leave because its purpose in Halifax was to defend the port in case of war.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Macdonald Fonds, C-1657, p. 97197, Langevin to Macdonald, 30 July 1882.

⁸⁷ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, pp. 32117, Macdonald to Lorne, 4 August 1882.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 32117-32118.

Lorne again pressed for Canadian support on the 5th of August,⁸⁹ but his attempts were futile as Macdonald reiterated that there was nothing he could do and that if something were to be done, the Dominion parliament had to be recalled from its summer recess.⁹⁰ By the time that could have occurred, any acceptance would have been too late. On the 10th of August Lorne acquiesced and suggested the existence of the vague possibility that Britain would try to enlist Canadian recruits. Macdonald had no aversion to this option as there was no cost to Canada, and it was Britain's legal right. However Lorne ended the letter by intimating his plans to begin a three-month vacation on the 31st of August, signalling his compliance with Macdonald's decision.⁹¹

Once the British expedition landed in Egypt, pressure from Lorne for Canadian support waned. With the reality of the journey by ship to Britain, the Halifax garrison would not have arrived in Egypt early enough to affect the outcome. That nothing more was to be expected or asked of Canada became clear when – in mid-August and close to three weeks after his first suggestion for aid - Lorne did depart on an extended vacation to Western Canada and the United States while events in Egypt reached their climax. The newspapers reported his decision to go on vacation as were aspects of his journey, relaying the message to Canadians that the situation in Egypt was being well managed since Britain's representative in Canada thought it prudent to relax far away from the din of the political landscape. The lack of real need for Canadian support added credibility to Macdonald's decision.

By the time the request to support the British cause was made in late July, the only reasonable option was the relief of the trained British garrison at Halifax. To garner

⁸⁹ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, pp. 32120-32123, Lorne to Macdonald, 5 August 1882.

⁹⁰ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, pp. 32124-32126, Macdonald to Lorne, 8 August 1882.

⁹¹ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, pp. 32132-32135, Lorne to Macdonald, 10 August 1882.

backing for such a mundane deployment - in aid of a dubious cause - was not worth the potential fallout to Macdonald. Not only would he have had to recall and convince the Dominion parliament of the merits of garrisoning Halifax over its costs, but the Canadian populace also needed similar convincing. Though Macdonald had won a mandate in June of 1882, which would have allowed him the opportunity to make an unpopular decision, his desire to do so had to overcome displeasure with Britain's subordination of the Dominion in Imperial affairs.

Ultimately, a decision to support the cause may have been politically fatal at the following election if Britain's troops failed to return to garrison Halifax. The cost of replacing the garrison had the potential to extend past 1882 and meant further increases to government spending. It was from this fear that Macdonald's refusal appeared to have some basis.

Nonetheless, there were those Canadians who believed that the Dominion was obliged to aid Britain. The main push to join the cause came from officers in the small permanent force that wanted to experience war. Macdonald also received requests from imperialist-inclined civilians, and even from some Canadians who had moved to the United States, to be a part of any contingent venturing to Egypt. In return, they offered their services through the summer of 1882. However, none offered to garrison Halifax. Instead, all envisioned the adventure to be found in Egypt. Only Major P.O.J. Hébert joined the British contingent, but he had already been seconded to the Imperial Forces. However, his opportunity to gain experience was limited to Cairo. He died of fever before finding the battlefield.⁹²

⁹² Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada From Champlain to Kosovo*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1999, p. 109.

Regardless of the aforementioned reasons not to garrison Halifax, only one official reason for Canada's refusal existed. It lay in a piece of legislation that restricted the involvement of the Canadian Militia from deployments that did not amount to protecting the Empire from an immediate threat. This legal technicality gave Macdonald enough leverage to deny Lorne's request. However, the decision was also influenced by over a decade of British neglect of Canadian interests.

CHAPTER 2

Learning to Say No: The Canadian Refusal to Support the Occupation

2.1 Breeding Disaffection

During the years between Confederation and the Egyptian Crisis, Britain either distanced or extricated itself from Canada through its overall revamping of colonial policies. Westminster knew little of Canadian affairs, regarding the Dominion as a backward and inferior state that still required Britain's informal guidance, but preferably not its military backing.⁹³ Through this principle, Canadian concerns were generally ignored in Britain regardless of the governing party in the Imperial parliament. As a result, Canada became increasingly isolated from the protection of the Empire. Conversely, the Dominion was expected to fill the military void left by the British withdrawal - in the name of imperial defence - placing a heavy burden on Canadian resources while accentuating the British rebuff of Canadian concerns.

Thus, from a Canadian standpoint, British foreign policies in North America were seen to benefit British demands at the expense of Canadian interests. Even still, Canadians maintained a sense of loyalty toward Britain and the Empire, not because of the attitudes taken toward the Dominion on a policy level, but because attachment to the Empire seemingly protected the country from the expansionist dreams fostered in the United States.⁹⁴ Moreover, the supposed superiority of Anglo-Saxons also benefited Canadians who, through their imperial ties, saw themselves as British and thus, considered themselves a part of what was considered by many as the world's most

⁹³ Ged Martin, "Canada From 1815." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III*, Andrew Porter, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 528.

⁹⁴ Doug R. Owsam, "Canada and the Empire." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V*, Robin W. Winks ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 148.

progressive and culturally advanced society.⁹⁵ It was this greatness that also made Britain attractive to much of French-Canada, especially since the Empire fostered diversity over assimilation and a faithfulness to Christian values (including Roman Catholic) that remained fundamental to Francophones.⁹⁶

Politically too, the attachment to Britain was still seen as a necessity because of the theoretical protection Canada was granted under its umbrella. In this context, Canadians also bolstered their opinion of themselves within the Empire because theirs was the oldest Dominion, and based on seniority, they were not ready to relinquish - to colonies like India and Australia - what they believed was their rightful and privileged position in the Empire.⁹⁷ Ultimately, as indicated by Douglas Owram, “[b]eing a part of a great Empire was a source of pride, protection, and sometimes delusion, for generations of Canadians.”⁹⁸ Yet, public support for Britain did not come without criticism, as Canadians were keen to secure their independence while maintaining strong ties with the Mother Country.

However, Canadians did not always feel the benefits of these ties since loyalty to Britain in the post-Confederation era came with the understanding that the Dominion would become more militarily and financially self-sufficient for the benefit of the Empire. These new pressures caused friction, but Westminster defended its position by stating that the change in relationship was designed to help Canada gain greater maturity as a sovereign country. Canadians viewed the position as an excuse for dumping expenses upon the Dominion parliament. It was a view that was reinforced when Canada

⁹⁵ Robinson and Gallagher, pp. 2-3.

⁹⁶ Arthur Silver, “Quelques considérations sur les rapports du Canada français avec l’impérialisme britannique aux XIXe siècle.” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 15, 1 (1981), p. 66.

⁹⁷ Owram, p. 149.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

reaped few benefits from the revamped system, while simultaneously becoming increasingly vulnerable to threats to its security posed by its association with Britain. On numerous occasions from Confederation to the Egyptian Crisis, Britain demonstrated its lack of concern for Canada, as the Dominion's defence issues were not entertained on the Imperial level. Part of the British attitude stemmed from the inability of Canada and Britain to reach a consensus discerning what actually constituted imperial defence. The lack of a unified defence policy served to magnify the disharmony that existed between the two states, leaving defence issues to become intertwined with both political and economic decisions where both sides followed independent paths.⁹⁹

Threats to Canadian security most commonly took the form of Fenian activity, which existed because of Canada's imperial connections. The interests of the disaffected Irish, in Canada, were made more attractive because the lack of a capable military in the Dominion, making it a soft target for Fenian activity. Britain responded to Canadian requests for support by explaining that even if the Mother Country were responsible for the threats, it was Canada's duty to dispel them since not doing so would only result in the destruction of Canadian integrity.¹⁰⁰

The possibility of Fenian plots against Canada meant that the Dominion had to prioritise local concerns over the imperial aims. With this existent threat to the Dominion's security and a Canadian force that was inadequate to fully protect Canada's extensive border, it left out any realistic possibility for supporting imperial endeavours even if Macdonald wished to do so. In addition, since the plots were anti-British in nature, by staving off these threats Macdonald could argue that he was fulfilling Canada's

⁹⁹ Peter Burroughs, "Defence and Imperial Disunity." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III*, Andrew Porter, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 323.

¹⁰⁰ Macdonald Fonds, C-1521, pp. 39746, Powell Memorandum, 11 May 1882.

obligations to imperial defence by maintaining the integrity of the Empire in North America. Consequently, Canada's position in regard to the Irish was that Britain had a responsibility to the Dominion when the Imperial parliament decided upon its course of action. For Canada, the import of the situation was more than a desire to calm imperial dissension. Its main concern was maintaining the integrity and security of the country.

This attitude was not held in Britain. Although Westminster's actions were the cause of security scares in Canada, the Imperial government did not seem to add these concerns to its decision-making process. Instead, Canadian priorities were dismissed in favour of the Mother Country's needs. This attitude served to heighten levels of disenchantment on an official level, contributing to the intangible factors affecting Macdonald's decision respecting Egypt in the summer of 1882.

On a more international level, Britain's attitudes elsewhere in the world clearly demonstrated the chosen direction of the Empire. Two years after Confederation, the opening of the Suez Canal extended Britain's detachment from Canada. Its completion solidified the change in British focus from the Atlantic to the Indian and Pacific Oceans. As the Egyptian Crisis worsened in July, many of the dailies reminded Canadians of this shift in direction as evidenced by the *Gazette* when - even though favouring British action - it contended,

From the first, her [Britain's] shipping that passed through it was three times as great as that of all the other nations combined. And, apart from commerce, it is the road to India and Australia, that vast empire and second England beyond the sea.¹⁰¹

Though the canal was a French-engineered waterway originally owned by mainly French and Egyptian investors, the British became increasingly preoccupied with its

¹⁰¹ *Gazette*, 7 July 1882, p. 4.

security as the 1870s progressed. Throughout the decade, British trade routes via the canal increased so dramatically that by the late 1870s Britain sought to protect the canal by influencing the decisions of the Egyptian Khedive and Ottoman Sultan, making it clear that its ambition was to protect the second yet most important waterway to India.¹⁰² Again, the change in trade and the importance of the canal was not lost on Canadians as reports in the Dominion's dailies indicated British aspirations to establish a secondary canal route in the same region as the Suez, in case of any French or Egyptian interference with the original waterway.

Hence, the canal threatened Canadian trade with Britain as the Mother Country effectively established stronger markets in its eastern empire. The difference in trade, investment, and immigration rates between the periods 1865-69 prior to the opening of the canal and that of 1880-84 after its completion emphasise the shift in British direction. Through these periods Canada did experience some growth in trade with Britain. However the growth did not challenge the commercial advances Britain fostered with India and Australasia over the same periods, for though investment in Canada rose over fivefold in the fifteen years between the two periods, it remained less than half of investments in either India or Australasia.

Similarly, Canadian exports to Britain had a relatively low increase of thirty-three percent from £6 to £9 million in comparison to the over eighty percent increase in trade with Australasia from £12 to £22 million or the fifty percent increase in Indian exports from £20 to £30 million. The clear shift in British focus was further demonstrated with the decline in immigration to Canada between the two periods in favour of an over one hundred percent increase in immigration to Australasia. Though some of the differences

¹⁰² Robinson and Gallagher, p. 16.

can be explained through the development of the newer colonies, the difference in commercial and migratory traffic indicates a shift after the canal's completion and establishment as a major trading route.¹⁰³

As a result of this change in trade, the importance of India grew to become increasingly essential to the British economy. Alone it represented almost one fifth of all British overseas investments and when coupled with that of Australasia the two areas represented almost forty percent of British overseas trade. The canal served to accentuate this difference and placed Canada at a distinct trading disadvantage from which it was unable to challenge.¹⁰⁴

To make matters worse, from the Canadian perspective, the growth of eastern markets meant that Britain had to concentrate more of its military strength east of the Suez Canal as Westminster viewed India as needing protection from threats such as Russia. Additionally, since much of the eastern Empire had yet to be consolidated, it again required attention and India along with Australasia were seen as the major political and military nodes for the region.¹⁰⁵ Conversely, threats to Canadian security between 1867 and 1882 were ignored by Britain or diffused at Canadian expense, leaving Westminster to concentrate more fully on eastern matters.

While on the surface increased trade in the Empire appeared to create greater opportunities for Canadian growth, in reality the canal held more negative connotations for the Dominion. As the 1870s drew into depression and British imperialists "began to take a much greater interest in Egyptian affairs,"¹⁰⁶ Britain's shift in focus meant greater

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁰⁶ Parsons, p. 24.

competition for Canadian goods. The shift was solidified by 1875 when Britain bought forty-four percent of the canal's governing shares for £4 million, from the economically flagging Egyptian government. At the time, this amount was more than half of what Britain spent on Canadian imports.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the sale embroiled Britain in Egyptian politics and permanently shifted its focus eastward, as the Mother Country could not afford to lose control of the canal nor the quantity of shipping that passed through it. In all, maintaining “[c]ontrol of the Suez Canal, astride the route to the East, remained central to British Imperial strategic thinking from the 1880s to the crisis in 1956.”¹⁰⁸ Unfortunately for Canada, the widening trade gap with the eastern empire came during the Depression, which further accentuated the degree of loss and displeasure with Britain's direction.

To emphasise Canada's discontent with the new reality that the canal presented, on the 10th of May 1882 the *Manitoba Daily Free Press* printed a wire from the London *Spectator* that noted the effects on Canadian trade the waterway created. The article began,

The following extract is from London, Eng., *Spectator*, and touches on a matter in which Manitobans are vitally concerned: -

“It would be an odd freak of destiny if the opening of the Suez Canal were seriously to affect the fortunes of Canada, yet that is not impossible. The shippers of wheat from India appear to have completely surmounted the old transport difficulties, and the value of the export last year exceeded £7,000,000, while more than a million's worth was shipped during the past month. It is quite possible therefore, that India may carry off a large share of wheat trade from the United States, as the States carried it off from Russia, and so stop the rapid expansion of cultivation

¹⁰⁷ James, p. 269.

¹⁰⁸ Killingley, p. 348.

in Manitoba....Grant even a slight improvement in internal transit, and England would be fed from India, - an enormous addition to the importance of the Suez Canal.”¹⁰⁹

To add to the new commercial advantages, India also appeared more attractive to the British cabinet because it financed its own military, which Westminster used to defend imperial interests.¹¹⁰ It was a view that indicated the two-fold effect of the canal: it created greater competition for Canada and shifted Britain’s focus away from the Dominion. This view was further emphasised in 1870 during the revamping of the Imperial military system under the Cardwell Reforms.

Britain’s revision of military policies was a response to changes in the balance of power in Europe that the Franco-Prussian War clarified. The threat of a Russian invasion of India coupled with the re-emergence of Germany and France as continental powers further complicated Britain’s security system. At the time, Britain already spent over a third of its budget on the military and needed to overhaul its system in order to accommodate the changing political realities. In order to do so Cardwell sought to concentrate British forces in Britain and India, while relieving troops from other colonial duties.¹¹¹ In this manner, the loss of troops in Canada clearly signified Britain’s concerned attachment to India and a willingness to protect access to its eastern empire over Canadian security. The point was further emphasised by the fact that recruitment in Britain actually increased from 12,000 in 1869 to over twice that number in both 1870 and 1871, but Whitehall still demanded the removal of troops from Canada.¹¹² The withdrawal combined with these increases frustrated Canadian politicians especially

¹⁰⁹ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 10 May 1882, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ Burroughs, p. 323.

¹¹¹ Parsons, p. 22.

¹¹² Albert V. Tucker, “Army and Society in England 1870-1900: A Reassessment of the Cardwell Reforms.” In *The Journal of British Studies*, 2, 2, (May 1963), p. 132.

when as late as 1882 it was still less expensive to station British troops in Canada than in Britain, and the travel time to Britain was under two weeks.¹¹³

The military arrangement for Canada during its first two years after Confederation copied that which had applied to the former colonies of Upper and Lower Canada. While the Dominion was responsible for raising over 40,000 militia troops as well as \$1,500,000, Britain still maintained a force of 16,000 regulars with a budget three times that of the Dominion's military expenditures. The need to modify this system to ease the burden of Britain's defence spending was the core of the Cardwell Reforms.¹¹⁴ Although the policy was not directed solely against Canada, within the first two years of the 1870s Canada saw clearer indications that Britain's approach to the new Dominion was one of disengagement. The introduction of the reforms caused the trimming of British military commitments throughout the Empire in favour of locally organized units that remained under British command. However in Canada's case, the lack of a strong military meant that the void left by the British withdrawal was not effectively filled.

The British taxpayers supported Cardwell's plan, and in February 1870 Whitehall informed Governor-General Lorne of the consequences for Canada - the dissolution of the Royal Canadian Rifles and the withdrawal of British forces from the Dominion. The decision ignored the protests of Lorne and a number of Canadian Ministers, not to mention the concerns expressed by both the Duke of Cambridge and Queen Victoria. However, the chances of Canada maintaining its force were eliminated when Cardwell saw fit to recall British forces from New Zealand during a Maori war. If he believed that the war did not warrant British support, the relative peace of Canada did not leave much

¹¹³ Macdonald Fonds, C-1521, p. 39737, MacDougall Memorandum, 27 February 1882.

¹¹⁴ Norman Penlington, *Canada and Imperialism, 1896-1899*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965, p. 13.

promise of retaining the contingent. Instead Cardwell established the precedent of centralizing Imperial forces as a field army in Britain and India.¹¹⁵

For Canada, the result of the reforms was that by April 1871 all but the British garrisons in Halifax and Esquimalt were recalled.¹¹⁶ In both cases, the decision to maintain troops in North America was the continued need of the Royal Navy to retain bases abroad to ensure its ability to 'rule the waves' and less so for Canada's defence. Cardwell's assurances that the security of Canada lay in its association with the Empire - since any country attacking Canada would be at war with Britain - did little to dispel Canadian concerns over Fenian activity, suspected American ambitions, and later, Russian aggression. The Duke of Cambridge, who viewed the withdrawal as a desertion of the colonies, mirrored the Dominion's opinion.¹¹⁷ For Canada, the 'desertion' did not set a tone for supporting any expansionist British policies. In response, the Macdonald government's first official sign of disapproval was that it ignored Britain's offer to buy surplus supplies from the withdrawing forces, so as not to add any legitimacy to Cardwell's system.¹¹⁸

The timing and execution of the reforms were – from a Canadian standpoint – problematic. Though relations with the United States had improved since the American Civil War, Canadians still viewed their southern neighbour as the greatest threat to their security. Fears of retribution for Britain's support of the Confederacy as demonstrated by the St Alban's raid¹¹⁹ and the 'escape' of the *Alabama* from English custody¹²⁰ lingered

¹¹⁵ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, p. 91.

¹¹⁶ George. F. G. Stanley, *Canada's Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People*. Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1974, p. 240-241.

¹¹⁷ Burroughs, p. 332.

¹¹⁸ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, p. 92.

¹¹⁹ In 1864, about twenty Confederate soldiers raided three banks in St Alban's, Vermont in order to secure funds for the Confederacy and to a lesser extent to draw Union forces north. They crossed into Vermont

in the Canadian psyche. However, the real fear came from renewed threats from Fenian agents who attempted actions along the Quebec border in 1870 and who also planned to contest British control by uniting with disenchanting Métis in Manitoba.

To add to these cross-border concerns, internal unrest did arise in the form of Métis disaffection in 1870.¹²¹ As a parting gesture, Britain managed the campaign against Louis Riel's forces during the Red River Rebellion and allowed just over 1,000 regulars to partake in the operation. However Whitehall's gesture did not unify Imperial Forces, because the campaign marked the termination of British military involvement in the interior of Canada.

Indeed, the more prevalent theme of perceived ill treatment by Britain created a sometimes-fractious environment between the two states, making the achievement of a common Imperial goal less likely. Canada felt deserted by the imperial parent, leaving the Dominion to establish the North-West Mounted Police in 1873 to secure its interior. To add to the Canadian disenchantment was that the "British expected Canadians to defend themselves from dangers the British had helped create,"¹²² but would not give the Dominion any military or financial support to succeed in this goal.

Not only did the withdrawal of British troops raise fears in Canada of potential foreign attacks, it also set the distinct precedent of British retreat from issues of Canadian

from Canada, where they returned after the attack. The raiders were caught, but later released - because of a technicality - by a Montreal court. Their stolen money was also returned to them, which they transported to the Confederacy. The raid infuriated the Union sparking an international incident, since the soldiers left from neutral Canadian territory and were not extradited to the Union.

¹²⁰ Breaching Britain's claim of neutrality during the American Civil War, the *Alabama* was constructed in Britain and first sailed from a Liverpool shipyard, even though the British were aware that it would be put in the service of the Confederate Navy. The *Alabama* sank a number of Union merchant ships, and it was for these losses that the American government sought reparations after the war. Along with reparations for the St Alban's Raid, compensation was granted in the Treaty of Washington, 1871.

¹²¹ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, p. 89.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

security. Nevertheless, Britain's retreat was based upon the realisation that protecting Canada with an effective military force was an economic and strategic impossibility because of the Dominion's size.¹²³ Unfortunately for Canada, the costs of it doing so were even more economically prohibitive.

As reported in the *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, the Dominion parliament's expenditures did not surpass \$20 million until the 1873-74 fiscal year where for the remainder of the decade it wavered between \$23 and \$24 million.¹²⁴ In such a financial environment - and with the emphasis placed on commercial growth and infrastructural development - Canada was unable to even fulfill the obligation of spending \$1 million *per annum* (or between four to five percent of the budget) to sustain its militia force through much of the 1870s, much less the over \$4 million that Britain spent before the reforms.

At the time, Canada's main concerns were the consolidation of its territory and the development of its economy so that it was not subject to physical or economic takeover from the United States. Thus with Canadians already upset because of the near doubling of government expenditures from 1867 to the mid-1870s, the added burden of paying for its own defence so soon after Confederation had the dual effect of putting pressure on the Dominion parliament to resist any further expenditures (even if they were in the name of imperial ambitions) and widening the chasm in British-Canadian relations.

In line with the military redress of the Cardwell Reforms, Britain politically distanced itself from Canadian affairs in 1871 through the negotiations of the Treaty of Washington. Though Macdonald and Tupper attended the proceedings as part of the

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹²⁴ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 17 June 1882, p. 4.

British delegation, Canadian concerns were essentially disregarded leaving the two statesmen ineffectual and virtually unable to influence a decision in Canada's favour. Compromises regarding Canadian waters and fishing rights – among others – were made as per the wishes of Westminster, while Canadian concerns were overlooked in favour of a British desire to quell the disaffection that arose during the American Civil War.

Under the treaty, Canada was forced to pay reparations for the damages of the St Alban's Raid, but Britain did not press for similar payments from the United States for the numerous yet unsuccessful Fenian raids on Canadian soil. The British rationalized their appeasement of the United States by claiming that the treaty would placate the Americans and therefore enhance the peaceful relations between Canada and the United States, which – in turn - would secure Canada's integrity at relatively little cost. Though this benefit did nullify the greatest real military threat against Canada, the terms of the treaty "confirmed the impression that Britain was more interested in pacifying the republic [the United States] than in defending the interests of the Dominion."¹²⁵

The peaceful relations in North America, as a result of the treaty, enabled Britain to concentrate more of its energies on the development of its eastern empire, while strengthening its position internationally. All of this occurred at a time when "British strategists and politicians were in the invidious position of hoping to extract Canadian military contributions for imperial defence while no longer being able to supply the *quid pro quo* (British assistance in defending Canada from the United States) which the relationship still formally presumed."¹²⁶ Thus, regardless of the long-term benefits to

¹²⁵ Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971, p. 63.

¹²⁶ Gwynne Dyer and Tina Viljoen, *The Defence of Canada*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1990, p. 155

Canadian security, Canada viewed the Treaty of Washington as an economic, a political, and a military loss.¹²⁷

For Canada, the negotiations again illustrated that it had to pay for British blunders, but was left with an ambiguous message from the Mother Country. Militarily, Canada was expected to take on the role of a sovereign nation, but politically Britain contradicted this expectation by treating the Dominion as a subservient dependency. In both cases the decisions favoured Britain. The negotiations also illustrated Canada's inability to effectively influence Westminster's decision-making, leaving the Dominion's international relations reliant on the whims of the Imperial parliament. Ironically, there were those in Britain who were concerned that the self-governing colonies were becoming too independent for by 1882 the Macdonald government had introduced high tariffs on finished imports – including Britain's - through the National Policy.¹²⁸

The detachment of Britain from Canadian affairs not only held its significance in the policy retreats of the Cardwell Reforms and the Treaty of Washington, but also in military matters as graphically demonstrated during the Russian Scare of 1877-78. Discord between Russia and Britain grew over British involvement in the protection of the Ottoman Empire against Russia aggression. In Canada, rumours spread that the Russians had commissioned a freighter to stage privateer attacks against the Canadian east coast and that a squadron of Russian warships in San Francisco awaited orders to attack British Columbia's harbours.¹²⁹ Though the rumours magnified the reality of the

¹²⁷ Serge Bernier, *Canadian Military History: Volume III, 1872-2000*. Montreal: Art Global Inc., 1993, pp. 14-15.

¹²⁸ E.H.H. Green, "The Political Economy of Empire, 1880-1914." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III*, Andrew Porter, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 353.

¹²⁹ Stanley, p. 246.

situation, the poorly defended Canadian coastline offered Russia ample opportunity to stage bombardments against the British Empire with impunity.

As with the threats from American territory, Canada became a target not because of its own interests or policies, but because of its continued association with Britain. The Halifax garrison was an ineffective force in this instance since it was not capable of thwarting such a mobile attack. In response to British diplomatic failures, Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie's Liberal government asked Westminster for naval support to dissuade the Russians from their rumoured course of action. In keeping with the Cardwell Reforms, it was reasonable to assume that aid would be forthcoming, but Britain did not fulfill its obligations. Instead Canada was rebuked and told to defend its own territory or face the repercussions of a Russian attack, clearly demonstrating that Cardwell's view - that association with Britain ensured Canada's security - was empty rhetoric.

Although concerns of a Russian attack were based on conjecture and rumour, fears throughout coastal Canada were real enough to affect decisions in Ottawa. In response, the Mackenzie government ordered the refurbishment of obsolete cannons at batteries along the east coast as well as rudimentary improvements to the defences at Esquimalt.¹³⁰ Additionally, the formation of new batteries at Quebec and Lévis were ordered and plans were devised to raise 10,000 militia troops. However, when British officers told Mackenzie that the cost to properly defend St John and Sydney was \$250,000, some politicians responded by suggesting that letting the Russians attack would be less expensive and only \$10,000 was allotted to defences.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Stacey, p. 41.

¹³¹ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, p. 99.

The event made it clear to Canadians that in situations of distress Britain's aid was not always forthcoming even though the Mother Country was the cause. Though the Russian Scare was eventually defused diplomatically, it gave Canadians an indication of Britain's attitudes toward their security. Conversely, Britain had proven that it was far more willing to protect India from the threat of Russian aggression than it was for its first Dominion, making it less likely that Canada's parliament would work to convince its taxpayers of the need for expenditures for imperial defence.

A memo sent to Macdonald from the Adjutant-General's Office confirmed British attitudes when it stipulated that Canada had to take a more active role in its defence strategies. Though not a new demand from Britain, the lack of British support in case of war was reasserted when the memo stated that

the Country [Canada] is liable to attack during any war between Great Britain and a foreign nation; and that the lives and property of Canadians might be placed in jeopardy, not as a consequence of their own acts, but because a blow struck on this continent would add to the desolating influences of that war. In such a case, even should assistance be given by Great Britain, it would not prevent sacrifices which invasion by a hostile army would demand. It is therefore obvious some more definite provision should be made for defence.¹³²

Though the memo did not go so far as deny British support, it repeated the message of the Russian Scare by not assuring Canada of the necessary aid if the Dominion were attacked as a result of failed British diplomacy.

Consequently, the umbrage that grew in Canada from the scare resurfaced during the Egyptian Crisis. The increasingly fractious relations grew more heated in mid-1882 after British newspapers questioned the level of Canadian loyalty toward the Empire.

¹³² Macdonald Fonds, C-1521, pp. 39722-39723 and p. 39746, Walker Powell Memorandum, 22 March and 11 May 1882.

Most notably, the Office of the Canadian High Commission in London sent word of disparaging comments against the Canadian government on the same day that Lord Lorne reiterated his suggestion of Canadian support. The report opened with comments against Canada that stated, “I send you a strong article from today’s *Times* the remarks about the Canadian Parliament and statesmen are absurd....You will notice the article also has a dig at the tariff.”¹³³

Though the letter referred to the state of Canadian tariffs, the British press appeared to be more upset with the Dominion parliament’s official stance of applying the Dominion system to Ireland in order to grant the colony Home Rule. The correspondence stated that Canada’s favouring of Irish Home Rule had to be frequently defended, but that as part of the Empire, Canada had a right to voice its opinions on imperial matters, especially if Britain were able to do the same in Canada.¹³⁴ The rejection from Britain was made clear when the *Gazette* reported that “the Imperial Government expressed emphatic disapproval of the Dominion authorities”¹³⁵ for the pro-Irish resolution passed in Canada.

The stir created by the disapproval was sufficiently strong that it was carried by a number of Canadian papers. Although in late April both the *Halifax Morning Chronicle* and *La Patrie* printed a positive message from Britain that the “Home Rule members of [the Imperial] Parliament will meet on Wednesday and pass a vote of thanks to the Canadian House of Commons for adopting a resolution in favor of an address to the Queen praying for autonomy for Ireland,”¹³⁶ by July this message had been lost in the

¹³³ Macdonald Fonds, C-1599, p. 93556, Colmer to Macdonald 29 July 1882.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 93557-93558.

¹³⁵ *Gazette*, 11 July 1882, p. 1.

¹³⁶ *Halifax Morning Chronicle; La Patrie*, 26 April 1882, p. 1 and p. 3

indignation felt in Canada because of Britain's negative attitudes. By then, the articles were more typically like the *Globe's* abridged version of the British reproach of the 29th of July when it republished the *London Times'* response to Canada's views on the Irish Question. Similarly, on the following Monday, the *Manitoba Daily Free Press* printed the same piece, and in both instances it was part of the headline news for the day. In the article Canada was censured, leaving the English daily

at a loss to determine whether the circumstances that the address is simply an electioneering dodge to catch the Irish vote ought to be regarded as an aggravation or an excuse for the offence. If the more charitable view is taken, it condemns the Canadian Parliament as guilty of levity of thought which will seriously detract from the value of any opinion it may form. Our colonies owe us a great deal and make a remarkably small return.¹³⁷

Two days later, the Toronto daily angrily responded to the *Times's* view with;

"A cat may look at a king," but according to the *London Times* a Colonial Parliament may not, under any circumstances, tender the benefit of its experience to the Mother Country. If there is a crisis existing, the conduct of a colony in offering advice would, it seems, be little less than treason; if there is no crisis, the advice would manifestly be useless.

According to this theory, the whole duty of a colony consists in never officially expressing its satisfaction with the measures of freedom it enjoys, lest haply some less free portion of the Empire may be induced to ask for larger liberty.¹³⁸

A day later, the *Gazette* weighed in with its appraisal of the situation. Like the other dailies, it too derided the British position thereby placing national pride above Imperial loyalty. The Montreal daily opined that "[t]here are in Canada nearly a million of Irish people, prosperous, contented and loyal, and it was natural enough both that they should

¹³⁷ *Globe*, 29 July 1882, p. 2; *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 31 July 1882, p. 1.

¹³⁸ *Globe*, 31 July 1882, p. 4.

feel deeply the privation of their less fortunate kinsmen at home and that they should imagine that an experiment which had succeeded so well with their adopted country might be tried in Ireland with some prospect of equal success.”¹³⁹

Officially, Macdonald supported the view as proposed in the dailies, indicating that the government’s position was aligned with the populace, not Britain. The weight of the articles further clouded relations between Westminster and Ottawa, as Canada claimed it was fulfilling its obligations to the Empire and that the reverse needed review.

Just as worries about loyalty subsided, Canadians gained the strengths of their convictions when the Russian Scare resurfaced. Both *La Patrie* and the *Gazette* reminded its readership of the 1877-78 scare, when they wrote about the renewed possibility of a Russian naval attack against Canadian territory. Again the cause of the threat was tense Anglo-Russian relations, worsened - this time - by the Egyptian Crisis. On the 4th of August *La Patrie* warned its readership of the renewed potential of a Russian naval menace with its front-page article that suggested,

*Il est rumeur, paraît-il, que les autorités militaires du Dominion ont reçu l'ordre de se tenir prêtes a toutes surprises, et surtout de mettre les fortifications de Quebec sur un pied de défense effectif, dans l'éventualité d'une guerre entre l'Angleterre et la Russie,*¹⁴⁰

In a similar vein, the *Gazette* reiterated the offence that Canada took from British policies during this period when, in late August, it printed that the “Empire which they had to defend was made up of a great variety of communities – in North America, a coast line exposed to hostile cruisers from Europe and the Chinese Seas, and a long land frontier

¹³⁹ *Gazette*, 1 August 1882, p. 4.

¹⁴⁰ *La Patrie*, 4 August 1882, p. 1.

facing the United States.”¹⁴¹ In all, these fears reiterated Britain’s decade long abandonment of Canadian concerns while emphasising the Dominion’s need to develop its own defence system rather than protect British goals in the east.

To further complicate matters, Britain’s increased involvement in Egyptian affairs from 1878-1882 appeared - from the Canadian perspective - to further emphasise the movement of imperial policy to incorporate India and Australasia to Canada’s detriment. Additionally, the approach that Britain took with Egypt lacked any coherent structure and appeared to many as meddling in the affairs of a foreign land to which Britain had no real entitlement. For this reason, many Canadians could empathise with the plight of the Egyptian government, especially in light of British attitudes toward Canada throughout the 1870s and early 1880s. The fact that British policy in Egypt was focussed on debasing a nationalist movement in favour of European investors not only contradicted Gladstone’s guiding principles, but also struck a chord with Canadian nationalists.

However, the overall tone during the crisis made it clear that Canadians – regardless of political affiliation – though divided about British concerns in Egypt, came to support the Mother Country, in spirit, by the summer of 1882. But, this support remained detached and with the expectation that the victory would come easily to Britain, thus negating any need for Canadian support. This appraisal was accurate, and Macdonald’s refusal not only kept Canada out of another of Britain’s minor wars, but also maintained the British garrison in Halifax for decades. Nonetheless, Macdonald’s refusal held its official weight in a legal technicality.

¹⁴¹ *Gazette*, 25 August 1882, p. 4.

2.2 Finding the Legal Cause for Denial

Though Canadians - on the whole - supported a continuation of imperial unity, this support was widely based in the economic and military gains Canada received at Britain's expense. However, since the Imperial Federation League was in its nascent stages in Britain and only later brought to Canada, the nationalist-imperialist debate over support for the Egyptian expedition was a muted version of what existed later in the decade.¹⁴²

The reported horrors of the Alexandria Riots in June 1882 presented a direct threat to the over 37,000 Europeans living in Egypt, dramatically altering Western perceptions as to the nature of the crisis. The rioters targeted Western citizens and properties in the city, transforming the struggle into an anti-European affair.¹⁴³ In response, the riots forced a change in Westminster's attitudes toward the Egyptian Crisis as both Charles Dilke and Joseph Chamberlain pressed Gladstone for Arabi Pasha's removal.¹⁴⁴ However, Canadians did not view the disturbances as a threat to British hegemony, much less to the Dominion's security.

The British response to the Egyptian violence was first one of naval intimidation. Under the command of Admiral Seymour, Britain sent warships to Alexandria as a warning against further violence. Shortly after that, the British ships were joined by vessels of other countries that had a vested interest in Egypt's future. The British and French fleets were most prolific, but warships from countries such as Italy, Russia, Austria, and Greece appeared to vindicate the British action. Even a ship from the United States entered the harbour (its presence as pro-British or pro-Egyptian was debated).

¹⁴² Berger, *Imperialism and Nationalism*, p. 2.

¹⁴³ Ferguson, p. 195.

¹⁴⁴ Hopkins, p. 372.

Though sceptical, Canada began to accept the British rendition of events, and the papers increasingly reprinted pro-British jingoistic articles and commentaries from British wire services as the crisis worsened. One of the most overt examples came from the *Globe's* use of a poem written in reaction to Gladstone's inconsistent foreign policy. It demanded action against those involved in the attacks against Britons in Egypt, a stance that was clearly evident in the final stanza in which it avowed,

The meteor flag of England
Shall flare across the foam,
Till Arabi his eunuch sends
To bid us take it home.
To-day, ye ocean warriors.
In song and feast engage,
To the fame of your name,
When the rabble cease to rage.
When no more Englishmen are killed,
And their butchers cease to rage.¹⁴⁵

As tensions rose through the summer, the Egyptian military disregarded the show of force and defied British and French demands. Rather than deter Arabi, the foreign warships were viewed as a further European infringement on Egyptian sovereignty. The obstinate stance of both sides as well as further reports of massacres of Christians pushed the crisis toward greater violence. A month after the riots, the worsening situation led the British government to move toward intervention and prompted the bombardment of Alexandria, thereby threatening the general peace and security of the Suez Canal.¹⁴⁶ However, since the violence only threatened British private interests it did not constitute an actual threat to Britain. Under these conditions, Canada had no legal obligation to help protect the Mother Country.

¹⁴⁵ *Globe*, 4 July 1882, p. 5.

¹⁴⁶ Hopkins, pp. 374-375.

The Militia Act, 1868, restricted Canada from sending out troops to aid Empire except in cases of war, defence, or insurrection. Since the British purpose in Egypt was one of occupation, Macdonald effectively hid behind the legality of the situation, but used the public conscience to defend his position. He also indicated that to support Britain was politically unsound because the “opposition press would come out loudly against the embodying a force in consequence of an obscure quarrel in a remote country with which Canada has no concern, and it might give an impetus to the cry for independence.”¹⁴⁷ However, above, all, he also indicated that Canada was legally bound to say ‘no’ since there was no direct threat to Britain. His decisiveness over the matter was exemplified as he began by stating:

In looking at the Militia Act it would seem that this contingency has not arisen when the Militia can be called out for actual service. This can only be done in case of war, invasion or insurrection or danger of any of them. Now England is not at war, nor is there any danger of invasion or insurrection. War may ultimately grow out of the present Egyptian complication, but we cannot say that there is any present or immediate danger of it. There is certainly no danger of the war reaching Canada.¹⁴⁸

Despite these restrictions, Macdonald could have circumvented the Act by order of the Dominion parliament. However, such a move would have been logistically ineffective because by the time it reconvened from its summer recess, agreed to relieve the Halifax garrison, and gathered enough troops to act, the window of opportunity would have certainly closed. A position that was further bolstered when the dailies indicated that India had had close to a month to prepare for its involvement and had already started sending regiments to Egypt.

¹⁴⁷ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 32116, Macdonald to Lorne, 4 August 1882.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 32113-32114.

Under these circumstances, Macdonald responded to Lorne's reiteration of the request, three days later, by indicating that he was sure that a Canadian offer to garrison Halifax would have a positive response in Britain, but that he feared that Canada did not legally have the "power to carry such an offer into effect without the assent of [the Dominion] Parliament."¹⁴⁹ Even though he led a majority government, Macdonald claimed that he could not promise Parliament's approval of such measures as any "aid would be given grudgingly and not without strong opposition."¹⁵⁰ Macdonald then opined that to recall Parliament to circumvent the Militia Act was unnecessary for maintaining Imperial integrity since he saw that Europe was "going to allow England to put down Arabi without resistance or remonstrance."¹⁵¹

In all, the letter illustrated Macdonald's reluctance to relieve the Halifax garrison, but his belief in the European acceptance of Britain's direction was either ill informed or purposely misstated, for the dailies presented a different point of view. For example, on the 31st of July, the *Globe* began its coverage of the crisis by stating "[t]he dispatches concerning the war show that the influence of the trouble is extending wider every day,"¹⁵² while four days later the *Gazette* intimated a lack of cohesion among the Powers as a whole and that "[t]he relations between England and Russia are becoming quite strained and in view of the facts just ascertained, recent indications of Russia's disapprobation of England's course in the East have a grave significance."¹⁵³ In light of the Russian Scare in the late 1870s, Macdonald's nonchalant attitude - as indicated in his letter to Lorne - seemed to understate the situation.

¹⁴⁹ MG26-A, Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 32124, Macdonald to Lorne, 8 August 1882.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32125.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32126.

¹⁵² *Globe*, 31 July 1882, p. 1.

¹⁵³ *Gazette*, 4 August 1882, p. 1.

By basing his decision in legal principal, Macdonald was able keep Canada from aiding the imperial cause without creating a political stir, for although many officers in the permanent force actively advocated serving in Egypt, the dailies showed little interest in such possibilities. Part of Canada's apparent indifference to aiding the British cause stemmed from its new standing as a Dominion. Unconditional support for Britain in this cause was viewed as reverting to the colonial controls Canada was in the process of escaping. To do so concerned Canadians that the path to autonomy would be far more arduous.¹⁵⁴ As such the Canadian public did even less to press the government to support the British cause.

The strength of Macdonald's argument also weakened the ability of his detractors to sway his decision. His explanation officially distanced the refusal from his opinion, thereby appearing as though the point of support was moot regardless of any desires he may have intimated to the contrary. Thus, Macdonald was saved the trouble of a potentially fractious decision by hiding behind the Militia Act, allowing him to politely decline the request.

Once the decision was confirmed, there was little pressure for Macdonald to change his mind, for the overwhelming view in Canada was that aid was unnecessary. Lorne signalled acceptance of Macdonald's stance on the 10th of August. In this correspondence, he indicated a lack of real need for Canadian support by stating, "I do not think that it is probable that the British gov't will wish for His troops now at Halifax,"¹⁵⁵ thereby sending the underlying message that Britain was not desperate for

¹⁵⁴ Penlington, p. 24.

¹⁵⁵ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 32132, Lorne to Macdonald, 10 August 1882.

Canada's aid, and that Lorne recognized that he was not better served by staying through to the crisis's end.

Thus Macdonald's decision not only set a precedent for Canadian inaction, it clearly demonstrated that Britain's emissary's were willing to request support when the Empire was in no real danger. Ultimately, the refusal maintained the relative permanence of the British garrison at Halifax and forced the tangible military attachment with Britain to be maintained under Canadian terms.

Though legally accurate, Macdonald's decision demonstrated more deeply seeded aversions to aiding Britain. Had he wanted to support the British cause, it was possible to garner support. In late June, his party had won a majority mandate in which the Conservatives held over 130 seats out of a Parliament of 213 for the second straight general election. As such, as the leader of the party that tended to be more pro-imperialist, Macdonald not only had a majority government from which to garner support to aid Britain, but if Canadians did not want to join the fray, he had a full term in which to either convince them of the righteousness of his decision or to let it be forgotten in light of other policies later in the term. Nevertheless, he declined to offer support.

That Macdonald relied on a legal technicality that could have been easily circumvented was made evident seventeen years later when Laurier's government supported imperial ambitions by sending Canadian soldiers to participate in the South African War. However, in 1899 the Dominion parliament was in session; there was a reorganised and larger permanent force at Laurier's disposal; Canada was proportionately more British than in 1882;¹⁵⁶ imperialism was far stronger in both Britain and Canada;

¹⁵⁶ Martin, p.535.

and more importantly, on the whole the Canadian public – bar French Canada - supported the cause.

Even so, Laurier's decision came with a great deal of hesitation. He was aware that Britain wanted to break Canada's reluctance to aid in imperial causes that did not parallel Canadian interests, and that Britain "asked Canada to send troops to the South African war because it needed to set a [new] precedent."¹⁵⁷ With this understanding Laurier initially indicated that he had no intention of sending Canadian troops to South Africa and depended on Macdonald's reasoning that "the Militia Act would not permit the automatic dispatch of Canadian troops overseas."¹⁵⁸ Even so, the issue divided English and French Canada so dramatically that the "same division was present in Laurier's party and cabinet."¹⁵⁹

As the crisis heightened, the cry for war in English-Canada was so great that even the *Globe's* editor, J.S. Willison, warned Laurier privately that only two alternatives existed for the prime minister: to leave office or to go to war.¹⁶⁰ In the end Laurier attempted a compromise by denying that "there was any real departure from the past – participation was purely voluntary with the government doing the minimum to assist."¹⁶¹ It was "a move which in itself was a sure indication of the growth of imperial sentiment since 1885 [and even back to 1882] when Macdonald dismissed suggestions for Canadian

¹⁵⁷ Dyer and Viljoen, p. 157.

¹⁵⁸ Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada, 1896-1921*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1974, p. 39.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁶⁰ Dyer and Viljoen, p. 161.

¹⁶¹ Brown and Cook, p. 40.

military involvement in the Sudan with a quip.”¹⁶² In all, Canada’s minimal assistance amounted to 7,300 soldiers.

In contrast, Canada’s aid in 1882 amounted to one seconded officer and commandeered merchant ships that were grudgingly released to Britain for supply duties. In reality though, apart from legal technicalities, Macdonald held underlying and deep-seeded concerns that led to his decision to choose inaction over support. The root of these concerns began shortly after Confederation and actually made his decision based less in legal restrictions and more so as the result of over a decade of British neglect, in addition to Canadian military weakness and financial strain.

2.3 The Paper Trail – Popular Perspectives

In the public context, Canadians followed the progress of the crisis through the dailies, as the “greatest part of the information that the public received about conflicts came through the press.”¹⁶³ The magnitude of the Egyptian Situation through 1882 became so great that it was frequently the lead story, supplanting the Irish Question. Regardless of the political affiliation of the paper, the crisis gained extensive coverage, but the dailies left their readership with a somewhat nebulous and contradictory message.

At times, the newspapers demonised Arabi in one article, only to condone him in the next as evidenced shortly after the Alexandria Riots. In one case, the *Globe* painted Arabi as a rogue threat to British security by printing that “if France and England interfere actively in Egyptian affairs Arabi will blow up the Suez Canal, cut the railway

¹⁶² Berger, *The Sense of Power*, p. 5; Macdonald’s quip in 1885 was essentially that he was unwilling to bail out Gladstone and company from their troubles because it was caused by their own ineptitude.

¹⁶³ Matthews, p. 147.

to Cairo, and oppose the landing of European troops in Alexandria.”¹⁶⁴ Contradictorily, on the same page another piece stressed Arabi was a peaceful man who was “well read not only in Arabic, but in Turkish and English literature, is of a religious temperament, mild in disposition, and humane.”¹⁶⁵

The delivery of conflicting messages continued into July and on the day of the bombardment of Alexandria, the *Globe* again contracted itself when it published an article entitled “Egypt for the Egyptians” in which it blamed the Europeans for Egypt’s woes and voiced support for the nationalist movement. The article began with,

No wonder the cry of Egypt for the Egyptians is again raised in the land of the Pharoahs. It is evident from a paper issued to-day, which has been sent home by Sir Edward Malet, that we have left hardly a place in the Egyptian Civil Service which is worth having to the Egyptians themselves; and even some of those which are hardly worth the possession, and which might in all conscience be left to the Khedive’s own subjects, have been appropriated by the Occidentals.¹⁶⁶

Nevertheless this support for the Egyptian economic woes and rationalisation for the nationalist movement was contradicted on the following page. In the *Globe*’s exhaustive coverage of the event, Britain’s role in the crisis was glorified and the pressures its shared control placed on Egypt were ignored when another article commented that,

However much the philanthropist who longs for the era of universal peace may regret the circumstances which have forced the most peace-loving Cabinet which has ever ruled Great Britain into war, it is still matter for congratulations that that war is not the result of a quarrel forced upon a weak people by a policy of national ambition or greed, but one entered upon reluctantly as a last resort in the interests of order and justice.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ *Globe*, 23 June 1882, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Globe*, 12 July 1882, p. 3.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Like other dailies, the *Halifax Morning Chronicle* also gave conflicting reports about where the fault lay for the crisis. On the 14th of July, two days after the bombardment, the blame was fixed solely on Britain and France since they

persistently refused to allow Turkey to send troops to Egypt except under conditions that would have cost Abdul Hamid his Khalifate, and as England and France feared to go there themselves lest Egypt should prove their Schleswig-Holstein, the result has been a *versoehnung* [reconciliation], which has greatly damaged the prestige of England, of France, of the Sultan, of the Khedive, and in fact of everybody except Arabi who has now more than ever shown himself to be the sole master of the situation.¹⁶⁸

However a page later, the daily shifted the fault to Egypt when it claimed that, “[e]vents have moved rapidly in Egypt and she is now reaping the crop of troubles which has been so assiduously sown by herself and advisers since last September.”¹⁶⁹

Though *La Patrie* was generally consistent in its negative portrayal of the Egyptian minister, it too succumbed to conflicting reports. Generally, Arabi was reported as being a rebel in league with fanatical Muslims and released prisoners. Nevertheless, in late July *La Patrie* contradicted itself by first presenting Arabi as responsible for the Muslim led massacres against Christians, only to illustrate his humanitarian side three days later when it reported that “*Arabi Pasha a mis un convoi de chemin de fer à la disposition des chrétiens qui avait échappés aux massacres,*”¹⁷⁰ and therefore helped to save Christians from the violence. As a result, Canadians on the whole were left with an inconsistent appraisal of the crisis and Arabi.

¹⁶⁸ *Halifax Morning Chronicle*, 14 July 1882, p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁷⁰ *La Patrie*, 25 July 1882, p. 2.

However not all of the newspapers gave such bi-polar accounts of the crisis as consistency was more readily available in the Conservative-leaning *Gazette*. In most examples, the Egyptian minister was regarded as a dangerous rebel, who sought violence. Early in July 1882, the daily intimated its stance on Arabi when it besmirched his character by associating him with unsavoury individuals, thereby making him evil by association. One despatch recounted that an “Alexandrian correspondent alleges that the ex-Communists have drawn up a list of hostages for Arabi Pasha, and that Arabi is being advised by renegade Frenchmen.”¹⁷¹ Arabi’s connection to such groups gave a nefarious impression of his ambitions, which effectively overrode his basic desire for Egyptian autonomy. By shifting attitudes about him, the newspaper gained moral support for Britain, but not cries for a Canadian military response.

On the whole though, the overall inconsistency of the articles served to exemplify an unresolved theme within the Dominion: the question of self-determination versus succumbing to the imperial will. Thus, the waffling stance of the dailies emphasised the lack of defined will within Canada. It was not until the late spring, when foreign warships began to enter Alexandria’s harbour that Arabi was more consistently demonised in the press. The British action demonstrated a greater degree of commitment to the crisis, and Canada responded by following a more pro-British stance. Nonetheless, Canadian dailies still published articles that demonstrated some empathy for the nationalist movement when the British were in the midst of their operations. Even on the day of the bombardment of Alexandria, the *Manitoba Daily Free Press* questioned Westminster’s course of action by asking,

¹⁷¹ *Gazette*, 6 July 1882, p. 1.

Is it consistent with the instincts of a Liberal government and especially of one led by a man who has done so much in the past for nationalities struggling for independence as Mr Gladstone, to crush out a similar movement on the part of the Egyptians?...Can we not have some appreciation of the discontent of the native inhabitants of Egypt when we find them ground down with taxation in order to support an army of foreign officials who are drawing enormous salaries, and in regard to whose appointments they have nothing to say?¹⁷²

The divergence from the British stance demonstrated both a lack of cohesion within the Empire and that Canadians – though proud to be a part of the Empire – found some common ground with the Egyptian complaints. Similarly, though generally supportive of British policy, the *Halifax Morning Chronicle* published a pro-Egyptian poem a week after the bombardment in which it called for an end to the European involvement in the Khedivate. The message was clearest in the penultimate stanza where the author claimed,

“Egypt for Egyptians only,”
Is the watch-word of today.
Let Egyptians prove that in them
Lives the will to do away
With the evils that enslave them,
Prove that they are really men;
Then they will obtain their freedom,
And deserve it.¹⁷³

Nonetheless, throughout the crisis Canadians regarded it as an affair of the Powers. The dailies repeatedly indicated the attempts of the Europeans to convene conferences to determine the future of the Khedivate during much of the first half of 1882. However the message was generally one of failed diplomacy. Throughout this period Britain denied any desire to occupy Egypt, but did express a desire to quell Arabi

¹⁷² *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 12 July 1882, p. 4.

¹⁷³ *Halifax Morning Chronicle*, 19 July 1882, p. 4.

through either a purely Ottoman occupation of the territory or in a venture where the Powers worked in conjunction with each other. Support for these plans was offered and rescinded on a number of occasions, as the European diplomats involved sought to arrive at a consensus that best suited their home countries' interests. The failure of the conferences was printed throughout the Dominion demonstrating that much like Britain (and the Empire), the issue divided other nations. However, the commentaries in the dailies remained in favour of the British direction. The basic message - as seen in *La Patrie* - was,

*On mande de Berlin que toute les Puissances à l'exception de la France sont d'accord que si une intervention armée est nécessaire en Egypte, pour maintenir le status quo, cette intervention devra être faite par la Turquie.*¹⁷⁴

Under such conditions, solving the crisis with so many interested parties meant that satisfying one negated the support of another. Contrary to the above quotation, most often it was the Porte that brought the deliberations to a halt.

The Canadian dailies reported the vacillation of the European states, which served to distance the country from the affair on two counts. Firstly, the inability of the Powers to come to any sort of accord emphasised the ambiguous nature of the crisis, which heightened questions over the legitimacy of occupation. In a similar vein, the involvement of the Powers made the crisis appear as a European, not British, situation and as such there was no need for anything more than moral support from Canada. Even the Conservative-leaning *Gazette* did not propose the raising of Canadian troops for the cause. Instead, at the time of Macdonald's refusal, the Montreal daily published an article furthering the point that the crisis was a European affair not requiring Canada's

¹⁷⁴ *La Patrie*, 29 May 1882, p. 3.

support. Under the headline “The Consequences of the Egyptian War” the newspaper opined,

The worst effect of such a disturbance as that which has taken place in Egypt is that it diverts means and energies which are greatly in need elsewhere from the objects to which they ought to be devoted. There is not one of the Powers actually or sentimentally concerned in the fate of Egypt which could not find more advantageous use for the time which it is expending in the discussions of that country's affairs.¹⁷⁵

Thus not only was the Egyptian Crisis seen as a waste of time for Canada, but more significantly it wasted the energies of the Powers. At the same time that the dailies questioned the involvement in the Egyptian Crisis, they - somewhat contradictorily - delivered a message of oneness with Britain. The effect was such that Canadians loyally supported the decisions of the Imperial parliament and expected, as well as desired, a pro-British result to the crisis. The attitude was emphasised with the common use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ to describe Britain's actions, where the use of the first-person plural indicated a oneness with Britain and a direct connection between the two states. During the opening of hostilities against Arabi's forces in July, both the *Gazette* and the liberal-minded *Manitoba Daily Free Press* demonstrated the sense of unity. On the day of the bombardment it was reported in Montreal that

At the opening of the attack there was manifested the customary nervousness on the part of the gunners, the large majority of whom were engaged in warfare for the first time but in a few moments, the tremulousness disappeared, and it must have sent a thrill of delight and pride through every Canadian to read that on settling down to work every shot fired by the fleet performed its mission of destruction, and that so fine an exhibition of naval warfare as that of yesterday has not been witnessed in modern times.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ *Gazette*, 2 August 1882, p. 4.

¹⁷⁶ *Gazette*, 12 July 1882, p. 4.

Five days after this action, the Winnipeg newspaper offered confirmation of the bond with Britain and its choice to occupy Egypt when it asserted,

Far better to have annexed Egypt at once, which Lord Beaconsfield might have done in 1875, when France was in no condition to resist. We should then have become masters of the situation; might have governed Egypt so as to make it pay its way and yet improve the condition of the peasantry; might have had the Suez Canal all to ourselves instead of being merely the holders of some shares in it.¹⁷⁷

Though the article took a more imperialist tack than normal for the daily, this article along with that of the *Gazette* indicated that a sentiment of oneness with Britain existed throughout Canada and crossed political affiliations. However, this sense of unity attributed to the lack of Canadian military support during the dispute. Since Canadians viewed the situation with the attitude that ‘what was British was Canadian,’ the use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ gave the sense that Canada was already involved in the crisis, and therefore did not need to offer any supplementary aid.

Conversely, the request for Canadian support came in the same week that the Imperial parliament and British dailies rebuked the Macdonald government for its opinion over the issue of Irish Home Rule. Canadian dailies – regardless of political affiliation – found ample opportunity to publish British opinions about the Dominion, but did not report Lorne’s request. Though the rebuff from Britain had been noted in the *Gazette* a day before the bombardment of Alexandria in July, the message was clearly stated in both the *Globe* and the *Manitoba Daily Free Press* which using the same article at the end of July intimated that Canada was instructed that

Her Majesty will always gladly receive the advice of the Parliament of Canada on all matters relating to the

¹⁷⁷ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 17 July 1882, p. 6.

Dominion and the administration of its affairs, but, in respect to questions referred to in the address Her Majesty will, in accordance with the constitution of this country, have regard to the advice of the Imperial Parliament and Ministers, to whom all matters relating to the affairs of the United Kingdom exclusively appertain.”¹⁷⁸

On the 31st of July, at the time that Lord Lorne reiterated his request for support, the *Globe* again illustrated the negative British attitudes toward the Dominion as seen through *The Times*. The Liberal daily not only defended the Macdonald government’s position, but also attacked the legitimacy of the London newspaper’s accounts when it stated,

It is but a few years since Canada had to contend against the entire force the London *Times* could bring force to bear against her with the object of severing the Dominion from the body of the Empire. To-day it is the London *Times* that is complaining – in part with reason, but principally with unreason – of the hostility to the Empire shown by Canada. Was there ever a more complete change in attitude than this?¹⁷⁹

The offence taken by the Canadian dailies was again echoed in Montreal where the *Gazette* expounded on the appropriateness of Canada’s suggestion on the 1st of August, when it stated,

...there was nothing wrong in Mr Costigan’s resolutions. It is even possible to advance reasons why the respectful suggestions which they contained should issue especially from the Legislature of the Dominion of Canada, in which Home Rule has been found to work so happily.¹⁸⁰

Thus the message of oneness with Britain became blurred. Though the papers generally delivered a message that a positive outcome in Egypt was desired for the Empire, they also paradoxically distanced Canada from the proceedings by showing no

¹⁷⁸ *Globe*, 29 July 1882, p. 2; *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, July 31/82, p. 1.

¹⁷⁹ *Globe*, 31 July 1882, p. 4.

¹⁸⁰ *Gazette*, 1 August 1882, p. 4.

expectation of the Dominion's direct involvement. In this respect, the Canadian dailies served to help create a basic loyalty toward the Empire, but did not rile the populace enough to push for a Canadian contingent to help in the cause. Even the few articles that indicated that the Canadian Militia's Colonel Laurie had "sent to the Imperial authorities an offer to raise a regiment in Nova Scotia for active service with the British army in Egypt"¹⁸¹ were conveyed unemotionally and did not even give information where interested recruits could enlist. Similarly the news that Major Hérbert joined the British forces to be Canada's one-man contingent found even less coverage as the papers simply imparted that he had "obtained leave of absence for twelve months, and leaves for Egypt on Saturday, his service having been accepted by Imperial authorities."¹⁸² As such Canadians generally were not compelled to press the government to send support, much less relieve the Halifax garrison.

Indeed, the artistic and sporting successes of Canadians seemed as publicized at the time. Directly under an article that presented the strength of the Anglo-Indian expedition, the *Gazette* placed an unrelated piece about the successes of a Canadian artist in the South of France. The article praised the work of the artist and concluded by stating "[w]ith the perfection to which art has attained in France, we should be justly proud that Canada can come to the front and successfully compete with those to whom we, as a young nation, have looked up as treckers [sic] and *connoisseurs*."¹⁸³

Similarly, the dailies not only regaled the country throughout July with the successes of the rifle team at Wimbledon, but also included articles such as one found in the *Gazette* in which it proposed that "[w]ithin a few years Canadians have attained a

¹⁸¹ *Globe*, 21 July 1882, p. 2.

¹⁸² *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 9 August 1882, p. 1.

¹⁸³ *Gazette*, 27 July 1882, p. 5.

foremost rank in those sports requiring muscle, skill, and brain. In almost every important gathering of athletes, oarsmen, and marksmen, whether in America or Europe, Canada is now represented, and, what is better still her sons acquit themselves with honor.”¹⁸⁴

To add to the Dominion’s indifferent attitude to the crisis, reports in the summer came via the wire service that the Imperial government requisitioned Canadian merchant ships in British ports in order to supply the occupation force. The articles were written matter-of-factly, but held the tone that the shipping line was not given an option as to whether or not it was willing to help. Under the headline of “A Canadian Vessel for the East,” the *Globe* disclosed that “...the managers of the Beaver Line of steamships here today received a cablegram from England to the affect that their ship, the *Lake Manitoba*, which is at present laying at Liverpool, will probably be used for war transportation purposes to the East.”¹⁸⁵ Like other articles of this nature the ambivalent tone did not demonstrate enthusiasm for aiding the British cause.

Overall, the dailies consulted diverged little in their views of the British approach in Egypt or the Canadian response to the imperial direction, though regional variations did exist. For the most part, the dailies received the same British wire reports from newspapers such as the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *The Times*, but the importance attached to the reports and the flanking articles often indicated the implications that the news held for the region. In this regard, at the crisis’s height the news from the Halifax daily often accorded at least one page of its four-page format to Egypt. As the one city in eastern Canada with a British garrison, the daily catered to this reality by tending to relate the

¹⁸⁴ *Gazette*, 11 August 1882, p. 4.

¹⁸⁵ *Globe*, 20 July 1882, p. 2.

news from a British perspective. However, their overall message remained nebulous like that in other dailies across the Dominion. As the financial hub of Canada, Montreal's *Gazette* viewed the crisis more from its economic standpoint, but once again since the vast majority of Canadian foreign trade was with Britain, this meant delivering the news from the British standpoint. Even so, these dailies were not wholly in favour of Britain's stance in Egypt, which gained greater criticism west of Montreal.

In Toronto, the *Globe* extended more coverage to the crisis than any of the other dailies in this study. It held the widest readership, but did not depend solely on British wires for its sources of international news. Much like the *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, both dailies interspersed their coverage of the crisis with articles from American papers, which often gave an alternate perspective of the situation. However, even though the newspapers were liberal-leaning publications, they were not overly critical of Macdonald's handling of Britain, but found it easier to criticize the British Whigs.

These dailies also noted the effects that the crisis had on the Canadian economy. Shortly after the Alexandria Riots, the *Globe* informed its readership about "the somewhat bad effects of the Egyptian imbroglio on Canadian securities,"¹⁸⁶ thereby giving the crisis a local context and connecting the Dominion to the affairs of the Empire. As the hostilities mounted though, the threats to the Suez Canal were seen to benefit both American and Canadian trade. Contradicting its message of June, the *Globe* printed articles in July proposing that any disruption of trade through the waterway served to benefit the two North American countries, since "[w]ith the canal closed...the millions of bushels of Indian wheat destined for the English market will remain on storage. England, deprived of her supply from this source, which now ranks as the third producing country

¹⁸⁶ *Globe*, 23 June 1882, p. 1.

on the globe, will have to look elsewhere and elsewhere means the United States.”¹⁸⁷ Though put in the American context because the article came from a New York wire service, the benefit from such a closure offered a similar opportunity for Canadian products and selfish motives provided a reason for denying aid to protect the waterway.

Within French-Canada the message tended to reflect that of the English-Canadian newspapers. Though more dependent on wire service reports from France, this news differed only in that France was not viewed as the main contributor to problems in Egypt as was the case in the English language newspapers across the Dominion. On many occasions though, the articles found in *La Patrie* were simply translations of the wire reports from Britain used by the English-Canadian dailies and thus carried the same message. At this time, the French-Canadian attitude toward the Empire was generally positive, since “the blame for colonialism...tended to be put on local zealots [Canadian-Anglophones] rather than on the British government.”¹⁸⁸

In this atmosphere the French-Canadian allegiance to the Empire lay first in the simple choice of governance. As was the case for English-Canada, Britain offered protection from the United States, and Francophones viewed attachment to the Empire as the only real alternative.¹⁸⁹ Contrary to their expectations if ruled by either English-Canada or the United States, French-Canadians relied on the British stance of not forcing assimilation.¹⁹⁰ Though there were some suspicions over the intentions of the Imperial government, it had protected Catholic rights internationally, leaving Francophones with the choice between the benevolence of the Empire or the aggressively Anglophone

¹⁸⁷ *Globe*, 18 July 1882, p. 3.

¹⁸⁸ Owsram, p. 147.

¹⁸⁹ Silver, p. 68.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

attitudes existent in English-Canada.¹⁹¹ Arthur Silver encapsulated this view when he wrote that “[c]ette conception implique une distinction très nette entre le Canada anglais, fanatique, francophobe, assimilateur, et la Grande-Bretagne, tolérante, généreuse, protectrice des particularités des peuples.”¹⁹² However, this was an attitude that changed greatly by the end of the century as French-Canadians felt betrayed by Britain only three years later during the North-West Rebellion and increasingly apprehensive over the growth of imperialist attitudes in Canada which demanded not only tighter political connections with Britain, but assimilation to British language and culture.

Nevertheless, at the time, *La Patrie* tended to convey this attitude of unity in its articles pertaining to the Egyptian Crisis, especially once the situation gained a religious tone. Even before the British engaged in hostilities with Arabi’s forces, the daily printed a wire in which it illustrated its support for the British cause by claiming that “*Grande Bretagne a raison de vouloir agir seule en Egypte....Le contrôle du canal de Suez appartient de droit à l’Angleterre et lui appartiendra de facto. C’est pour lui une question de vie ou de mort.*”¹⁹³ Such allegiance with Britain continued in the French-Canadian media throughout the crisis, and it was often more critical of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire than its English counterparts.

Furthermore, in the French-Canadian context “*la Grande-Bretagne pouvait aussi être considérée comme représentant la civilisation chrétienne dans la monde,*”¹⁹⁴ and by extension Roman Catholicism. Incidents dating to the mid-1800s prompted this attitude, such as the British protection of Catholic interests in the Crimea at the expense of

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁹³ *La Patrie*, 1 July 1882, p. 3.

¹⁹⁴ Silver, p. 60.

Russia's Orthodoxy. Thus once anti-Christian violence arose in Egypt much of the blame was placed on Arabi, and the crisis moved from one of economic attachment and protectionism to the defence of Christians in Egypt.¹⁹⁵ Reports included atrocities whereby, “[o]n dit que 36 Européens ont été tués dans le camp d’Arabi-bey,”¹⁹⁶ the result of which affirmed French-Canadian beliefs in the British action.

By July 1882 the Dominion was relatively united in sentiment, as both French and English-Canada saw the event as part of the Christian struggle over Islam, and both saw Britain as fulfilling its role as protector of Christianity. French and English dailies reflected this standpoint, as the press became increasingly vitriolic in its appraisals of Arabi. The change in outlook led to continued support of the Empire, but like their English-speaking counterparts, the French-Canadians did not raise the call to levy troops in support of the action. Again, moral support and the expectation of a British victory made Canadian military aid appear superfluous in light of the formidable British military. Interestingly, the one officer Canada allowed to join the British force was French-Canadian.

Ultimately, the press played no overt role in Macdonald's decision to refuse aid; however he did recognise the views of the Canadian populace and the opposition press in a letter to Lord Lorne on the 4th of August 1882. In the correspondence, he insisted, “The country would it appears to me look with disfavour on our people being called away from their peaceful pursuits in consequence of the Eastern Embroglio [sic],”¹⁹⁷ thereby intimating that there was little support to join the Egyptian cause in Canada and that he was not in a position to attempt to garner support.

¹⁹⁵ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 114.

¹⁹⁶ *La Patrie*, 22 July 1882, p. 3.

¹⁹⁷ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 32114, Macdonald to Lorne, 4 August 1882.

Reference to his decision did not make its way into the dailies, nor was the crisis given a high profile by the politicians involved. In this respect, Macdonald gave little opportunity for the option to be decided by public opinion, and the Canadian people were unable to offer any tangible support for the occupation. Within the Dominion's parliamentary debates, Egypt carried even less weight, not making it into the records or even the election campaign of that year. Instead, the more pressing matter was the consideration of Irish Home Rule. For a number of reasons that issue played an important role in the debates of both parliaments and on the outcome of Canada's involvement in the Egyptian Crisis.

CHAPTER 3

Extenuating Circumstances: Underlying Reasons for Refusal

3.1 The Irish Question and Economic Realities

Though seemingly outside of the scope of the Canadian context, the issue of Irish Home Rule played a major role in the shaping of the political agenda and attitudes of the Dominion. Canadian concerns regarding Home Rule rested in its proportionately high population of Irish settlers and their voting patterns as well as the number of Irish nationalists in the United States who were want to settle any perceived injustices to Ireland by attacking Canada.

Within Britain, much of the Imperial parliament's energies from the 1870s through to the 1890s were spent trying to formulate an effective solution for Ireland's governmental structure. As such, Canadian concerns were often subordinated while Westminster struggled with the Irish Question. Of main concern in Westminster was the degree of autonomy to grant Ireland, for the situation had the potential to disrupt internal order in Britain. The threat gave added cause for concern as violence in the home country jeopardised its international security.¹⁹⁸ The issue was so divisive that "no ministry commanded more than a composite and conditional majority between 1881 and 1895."¹⁹⁹ This political instability disrupted British policy-makers so much so that at the time of the Egyptian Crisis no clear direction was taken by Britain in either imperial or international affairs.

In the political spectrum, an anti-Irish pronouncement in Westminster had the potential for yet another British decision to adversely affect Canadian affairs. There were

¹⁹⁸ Marshall, p. 135.

¹⁹⁹ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 23.

grounds for real concern as Macdonald had received notes in late 1881 informing him of the poor handling of the issue by the Imperial government and the potential for dire consequences for Canada. In one critical note, de Winton indicated that the “state of Ireland is deplorable, and a strong feeling is rising in the country against the present Government in consequence.”²⁰⁰ Such a response from the Irish affected Macdonald politically as he was just over six months away from a general election and the nearly one million Irish-Canadians accounted for close to twenty-five percent of the Dominion’s population of 4,275,000. Though the Irish-Canadian Protestants – who were more likely to support Britain - constituted a small majority of this total, their Catholic counterparts were generally pro-Home Rule and still populous enough to affect the election’s outcome. As a result of these Canadian realities, the Dominion’s view on Irish matters differed significantly from Westminster’s, which caused a rift between the two governments for much of 1882.

The Dominion government inflamed tensions in early 1882 when it sent a proposal to Westminster that advised the creation of an Irish government using the Dominion model. The reception of the recommendation was regarded as antagonistic, for the perception in Britain was that Canada was following its own agenda and that it offered the proposal in order to placate Irish-Canadian voters. Accordingly, Canada was quickly admonished for its suggestion and told that it was not its place to interfere in the decisions of Westminster regardless how the decision affected Canadian realities. Lord Lorne attempted to put a more polite tone to the message, when he wrote that the Canadian resolutions were inoffensive, but added that “although circumstances made it difficult to avoid an Irish debate ... we are too far off here to feel this patients [sic]

²⁰⁰ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, pp. 31934-31935, de Winton to Macdonald, 2 December 1881.

pulse.”²⁰¹ His parting words on the subject instructed Macdonald to keep Canadian opinions in Canada as indicated by his comment, “However, as I say, these opinions...may be held in Canada, but must remain matter of abstract philosophy, except in so far as they may shield Canada against renewed Fenian Raids.”²⁰² The Canadian response to the concerns, as relayed by the High Commission in London, presented matters differently claiming that, “Canada is interested in the integrity of the Empire and has a perfect right to make respectful suggestions to Her Majesty, just the same as any individual or body of persons - say the Birmingham Town Council – has.”²⁰³

However, the implications of the Irish Question held more importance than simply its effect on Canadian voting patterns, for as indicated by Lorne’s note of the 2nd of May the even greater concern was the fear of Fenian reprisals or internal insurrection. Though Britain believed that Fenian activity had dissipated following the 1866 raids, attempted attacks in the early 1870s and renewed rumours of aggression in the early 1880s demonstrated that a threat still existed. The threat of Fenian attacks also placed undue pressure on Macdonald as it put the security of the Dominion at risk, especially since the events of the previous decade taught the prime minister that he could not expect British help if Canada were targeted.

Prior to the Cardwell Reforms, Britain accepted the obligation of defending Canada from Fenian aggression and saw the threat as real enough that in the mid-1860s the British force in Canada was raised to over 16,000 troops, and the naval base at Kingston was reopened with a force of fifteen gunboats.²⁰⁴ However, in the post-

²⁰¹ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 32036, Lorne to Macdonald, 2 May 1882.

²⁰² Ibid., p. 32038.

²⁰³ Macdonald Fonds, C-1599, p. 93557, Colmer to Macdonald, 29 July 1882.

²⁰⁴ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, p. 89.

Cardwell era Britain neglected any responsibilities it owed Canada in defence of Fenian plots and attacks.

Through much of the 1870s the threats from Fenian activity subsided, but preparations to guard the border from the Great Lakes to Sherbrooke were developed to counter the still existent danger.²⁰⁵ During the early 1880s the issues of Irish Home Rule and the Egyptian Crisis gave the Fenians both motive and opportunity to act against Canada while Britain was otherwise disposed. Direct threats to Canadian security gained prominence in early 1882 with reports of increased Fenian activity in American cities such as Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco. Consideration of the activity was taken seriously enough that Lord Lorne directly informed Macdonald about the potential for striking Canada as the Irish Question became more prominent and the Egyptian Crisis intensified. The *Gazette* reflected these concerns when it maintained that

The Egyptian war has greatly excited the dynamite Irishmen in the United States...He [Patrick Crowe – a Fenian activist] thinks the “Saxon’s” hands are so full of the Egyptian business that this would be a good time to undermine the whole British Empire and blow it up. To this end he summoned a convention to meet in Chicago in August, to make preparations for the explosion. We shudder to think what might happen should Mr Crowe begin on Canada.²⁰⁶

In response, the prime minister was pushed for a decision to combat the eventuality of such a situation – which, in part, was to distance Canada from Britain’s imperialist and aggressive policies.

When Macdonald refused to garrison Halifax in his correspondence with Lorne, he mentioned that the increased threat of Fenian activity through the summer of 1882

²⁰⁵ Stanley, p. 245.

²⁰⁶ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 24 July 1882, p. 4.

meant that Canada's undersized defence forces had to emphasise border security to stave off any plots from the south. In a letter to Lord Lorne dated the 8th of August 1882 - at the same time that Macdonald reiterated his denial of support - the prime minister mentioned that Canada still had to contend with Fenian plots. In so doing, he intimated that Canada needed a permanent force, as had been the case prior to the Cardwell Reforms. His point was made directly after the refusal when he felt the need to remind Lorne that

My own opinion has been ever since 1866 [the time of first Fenian Raid] that we should have a regular force embodied and not to be obliged to the pay of our Volunteer Force exclusively.

The latter [the Militia] are not sufficiently trained for an emergency, and being composed principally of the higher order of artisans and yeomanry are too valuable to be drawn away from their avocations for any length of time.²⁰⁷

The Fenian threat at the time of the letter served to strengthen the prime minister's attitude. Ironically Macdonald's source for this information came at Lorne's behest, who - through de Winton - informed the prime minister in a letter from the 7th of August that the "accompanying Secret despatch arrived by last mail. Its contents were partly communicated by telegraph but His Excellency [Lorne] thinks you should see the despatch because of allusions to Canada."²⁰⁸

The effect of the Irish Question on Canadian decision-makers was great enough that on the 2nd of August Langevin indicated to Macdonald that he had responded to Lord Lorne's request to aid the British campaign in Egypt by stating: "Do you not think that we might be told to mind our own business, as the Senate and House of Commons have

²⁰⁷ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, pp. 32126-32127, Macdonald to Lorne, 8 August 1882.

²⁰⁸ Macdonald Fonds, C-1509, p. 25315, de Winton to Macdonald, 7 August 1882.

just been told?”²⁰⁹ The reference to Westminster’s rebuff confirmed that the sting of Britain’s remonstrations played negatively upon the mindset of Canada’s politicians thereby affecting Macdonald’s ultimate decision when asked to relieve the Halifax garrison.

To add to the volatile political and defence issues, Britain compounded Canadian concerns with yet another stress: Princess Louise’s return to Canada during 1882 and her subsequent vacation across the country. As the wife of Lord Lorne, under normal circumstances her arrival would have caused little concern for those in office, but the timing and her status made the return problematic - especially since her vacation was intended to last from late May until late November. Lorne had long advocated that he and his wife should be protected with “military guards and escorts appropriate to their dignity,”²¹⁰ and expected this protection to come from the permanent force. With defence and policing forces already over-stretched, protection of the princess brought additional strains to Canadian security concerns, particularly since it offered another opportunity for Fenian plotters.

During her vacation in Canada, a plot to kidnap the royal was uncovered, necessitating even greater security. The plot gained more than rumour status when a number of the Irish conspirators were followed to Victoria, British Columbia. Again de Winton made Macdonald aware of this threat. The first indication came in early July and the fear was repeated on the 29th of the month – once again, on the same day that Lorne reiterated his request for Canada to garrison Halifax and Canadian dailies intimated Britain’s displeasure in the Dominion’s proposal for Irish Home Rule.

²⁰⁹ Macdonald Fonds, C-1657, p. 97197, Langevin to Macdonald, 30 July 1882.

²¹⁰ Desmond Morton. *Ministers and Generals*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970, p. 55.

The first of de Winton's letters warned Macdonald of the plot against the princess and associated the rise in Fenian activity with British policies toward Ireland. The plot itself was discovered in New York with the plan to "attempt to carry off the Princess while she was away fishing."²¹¹ However, that de Winton thought it prudent to make Macdonald aware of the activity gives a clear impression of the perceived reality of the danger and that Lorne's aide laid blame on Britain is evidenced when he wrote:

... while one does not fear any present evil the events now going on in England, with reference to Irish affairs, cannot fail to stir up Fenianism into increased activity which may find a vent in an attempt on Lord Lorne or H.R.H. [Princess Louise] Would it not be well therefore to organize now some enquiries as to the state of Fenian doings in America or rather in those quarters where they have central organizations.²¹²

The repetition of the threat also surfaced on the 29th of July in a letter classified as "Canada Secret" from Lord Kimberley to Lord Lorne. On this occasion the source of the information was the British Consul in Philadelphia, but the message was essentially the same – Princess Louise was in danger of being kidnapped.²¹³

Further credence was given to these fears as the dailies indicated that stories "of American sympathy seem to corroborate the rumor that Arabi is being assisted and advised in fomenting anti-English feeling by American Fenians present in large numbers in Egypt."²¹⁴ The apparent willingness of these Fenian agents to go as far as Egypt in order to destroy British interests was developed in both the *Gazette* and the *Globe* during early July and served to alarm the Canadian government.

²¹¹ Macdonald Fonds, C-1509, p. 25301, de Winton to Macdonald, 5 July 1882.

²¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 25303-25304.

²¹³ Macdonald Fonds, C-1509, p. 25321, Kimberley to Lorne, 29 July 1882.

²¹⁴ *Gazette*, 10 July 1882, p. 1.

Keen to avoid the embarrassment of having Queen Victoria's daughter at the mercy of the Fenians, the Dominion government ensured the princess's safety, but required greater expenditure to do so. The undertaking further sapped resources, and as such, the added pressures placed on Canada by the threats of Fenian activity - at the same time as the Egyptian Crisis reached its climax - made Macdonald's decision to refuse support to Britain reasonable on two intertwined bases.

Firstly, the British course of action regarding Ireland caused sufficient discord in the Irish community in North America that it put Canada's security in jeopardy. While having to contend with this possible menace - of British making - Canada was not in a position to be able to afford the manpower to relieve the Halifax garrison, nor did it want to become more deeply involved in British affairs. Secondly, the arrival of Princess Louise in Canada sparked even greater Fenian activity leaving Canada with increased security concerns because of its connections to the Empire. Added to these factors were Macdonald's concerns of further straining the unstable Canadian economy.

By 1882 Canada's economic situation held some promise for growth, but it was still in the process of recovering from the Depression of the previous decade. At the time, the main impetus for government spending was to improve Canada's position through economic - not military - growth. The peaceful path to Confederation and the relatively calm relations with the United States, as well as an inherited distaste for large standing armies, made Canadians sceptical of the need for a large military. In this atmosphere, spending on the militia and the fledgling permanent force was tightly controlled.

Many dailies were highly critical of government expenditures in this area and those of Liberal backing, in particular, sought to publicize the increases in spending through the years of Tory government. During the election campaign of 1882, Liberal backed papers emphasised Canada's financial situation, which when coupled with the resultant budgetary restraints meant that the Macdonald government could not afford to support what could be seen as unnecessary military spending. Of note was an article from the Liberal-inclined *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, which launched into something of a rant against the Macdonald government's increased spending and taxation, with scathing commentary such as,

Each year they [the Macdonald government] increased their expenditure, until in 1881-82 it has grown to the alarming figure of \$28,102,628, an increase over 1877-78 [the last year of Liberal government] of over four and a half million dollars....The course of the Tory Government with regard to taxation has been even more injurious to the country than their increase of the expenditure. In fact the surplus wrung from the pockets of the people, by means of grinding taxes, has encouraged them to give free reign to their extravagance.²¹⁵

Attacks of this sort on the government's fiscal difficulties served a political purpose during the election, but they also indicated a rapid increase of taxation from \$5.46 per head in 1880 to \$7.02 in 1882, or an increase of almost twenty-nine percent at a time when the average annual salary was about \$500.²¹⁶ By 1882 government revenues had yet to keep pace with pre-Depression levels, leaving Macdonald less able to incur further expenses. Some of the causes of the shortfall were the new expenditures inherent

²¹⁵ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 17 June 1882, p. 4.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

in becoming a Dominion such as those pressed upon Canada by a British government that wanted to disentangle itself from the costs of maintaining a former colony.

Nevertheless, once the country lessened its economic woes brought on by Confederation and the Depression, its general goals still did not include creating a substantial military. Instead, Canada aimed to become economically competitive with other emerging markets, while keeping its industry from being overrun by American business. In keeping with this belief it was difficult for the government to legitimize any extra expenditures, and annual defence spending remained below \$1million.²¹⁷

Without a developed and strong military, Canada countered pressures favouring spending on imperial defence by citing the construction of the CPR. The basis of the argument was that before Canada could create a substantial military and aid in imperial endeavours, it first had to consolidate its own territory to ward off threats of American aggrandizement. In this regard, the railroad served multiple goals all of which strengthened the unity and security of Canada and by extension, the Empire. It was an argument that was supported by the Imperial Federation League in Britain as indicated in a letter to Tupper as the minister in charge of the CPR's completion. The correspondence from early May 1882 stated that the colonies accounted for their fair share of imperial defence "by means of training local military forces and by expending their resources on the development of their territory, e.g. by means of the Canadian Pacific Railway."²¹⁸ This support from the League only strengthened the Canadian position that increased spending on imperial defence was unnecessary and that the Dominion's financial goals were reasonable.

²¹⁷ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, p.90.

²¹⁸ Tupper Fonds, C-3203, p. 2478, Brassey to Tupper, 6 May 1882.

To further the League's argument, incidents during the Red River Rebellion demonstrated how the lack of an effective transportation system slowed the overall response to the internal threat. It was argued that the completion of the CPR would allow for the rapid transfer of troops across the continent if needed either in the interior or in a Pacific theatre of war. Simultaneously the rail link consolidated Canadian claims by opening the west to further settlement and wheat production to foreign markets. However, by 1882 the rail link only extended as far west as Winnipeg. Not only did this shortfall leave much of the interior inaccessible and keep British Columbia unattached to other parts of Canada, it also gave the government a more pressing area in which to spend its revenues.

The need to spend the Dominion's capital in order to consolidate its territory also came from threats to its integrity from expansionists in the United States. The consequence of this reality meant that Canada had to establish a tangible presence in the interior and assert Canadian sovereignty. The CPR helped to solidify Canada's claim to the West as it could be more easily populated and supplied via the east, thereby diminishing annexationist desires from areas such as Minnesota and Washington.²¹⁹ In this manner, the rail system did fulfill a necessary defence role for the Empire, but not one related to Britain's most pressing needs.

That Canadians saw a greater need to complete the railroad than to spend capital on the military was underlined after the Russian Scare when Canadians, or their newspapers, did not press the federal government to divert spending for an adequate coastal defence system. In light of the diminished Russian threat by the 1880s and the more pacific relations with the United States - thanks in large part to the Treaty of

²¹⁹ Stanley, p. 250.

Washington - Canadians saw no need to increase defence spending. This sentiment was deepened through the early 1880s, for the growth of commerce in the post-Depression period solidified relations between the North American neighbours so much so that the lack of direct threats to their respective security meant that, on “both sides of the border, capital and labour were too scarce to be wasted on military show.”²²⁰

Since the rail service benefited both the populace as well as the military, the costs of construction meant that there was less revenue to be considered for the defence budget, especially when in 1882 the railroad was still three years short of completion.²²¹ Thus when Britain asked Canada to relieve the Halifax garrison at the Dominion’s expense and then extend the militia’s camps, it was met with reluctance from Ottawa, in part, due to these financial constraints.

To add additional credence to Canada’s reluctance to aid Britain in its Egyptian campaign was the fact that the Dominion was not in a position to compensate for increased competition from eastern markets. The occupation of Egypt appeared to worsen both Canada’s economy and its long-term position in the Empire. Therefore, though not an opinion Canada could readily voice, the reality was that it was not in the Dominion’s commercial interests to support British aims in Egypt. Rather, maintaining the security of Egypt under the direction of Britain assured that the Suez Canal continued to cater to imperial economic expansion in the east. Such interest in the east served to add to the prominence of India within the Empire at the expense of western territories, such as Canada.

²²⁰ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, p. 85.

²²¹ Burroughs, p. 356.

Furthermore, both India and Australasia were in direct competition with Canadian exports, such as wheat. The easier and less expensive trade routes east via the Egyptian waterway signified losses for Canadian markets. Consequently, Canadian support for the British cause meant that the Dominion stood to lose on two monetary fronts: from increased military expenditures it could not afford, and from the inevitable loss in trade. Indeed, a significant decline in this trade had the potential to return Canada to the economic doldrums of the 1870s. For Macdonald's government, such a reversal would have been politically disastrous.

3.2 Military Matters

Even though monetary concerns - compounded with a decade of perceived maltreatment by Britain - gave significant cause for Canada's refusal to support the occupation, some sectors of Canadian society still supported a more active role. Understandably, this push tended to come from the small permanent force that in actuality was in no condition to offer aid. Nonetheless military realities also pushed Canada toward a policy of inaction, which in turn helped the country avoid the embarrassment of showcasing its woefully ineffective military establishment.

The development of an effective and reliable military during the early decades of the Dominion was a long and arduous path, for "there was confusion about the need for regular soldiers, what they should do, how they should be managed, and who should be appointed and promoted."²²² Naively, Canadians held the uninformed view "that soldiers were created, not trained [for in] recurrent crises, arms, equipment, and fortifications

²²² Steven J. Harris, *Canadian Brass: the Making of a Professional Army, 1860-1939*. Toronto: "University of Toronto Press, 1988, p. 6.

simply appeared without costly Canadian effort.”²²³ This belief was generated from the fact that Canadians thought that funding for Canada’s defence should come from Britain, since the Empire’s foreign policy was firmly guided by Westminster.²²⁴ Accordingly, without a military tradition, Canada’s reluctance to form an effective military force was entrenched. Bolstering this attitude was the misguided notion that because of the so-called hardiness of Canadians, as a ‘frontier people’ and ‘northern race,’ defence of the country could always be achieved through the part-time training of a militia. In this manner, Canadians believed that they could form a substantial fighting force at little expense by depending on its citizenry to heed the call to arms in times of war. It was a myth that held its roots in the War of 1812 and by the 1880s was taken as an unalterable truth.²²⁵

However, with Dominion status came the legislated responsibility of the Militia Act, 1868. It followed the guidelines of the 1863 Militia Act of the Canadas calling for a militia force of 40,000 that trained sixteen days a year, and a compulsory reserve militia that included every able-bodied male between eighteen and sixty years of age which, by 1871, totalled close to 700,000 on paper. However, the act was never fully implemented.²²⁶ The Depression of the 1870s and the added expenditures of the CPR caused funding problems for the militia.

The effect of the monetary drain during the militia’s nascent years led to the deterioration of an already poor military organisation. By way of example, in 1876 the military budget was so strained that it only amounted to \$550, 451. As a result, training

²²³ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, p. 85.

²²⁴ Harris, *Canadian Brass*, p. 17.

²²⁵ Jack L. Granatstein, *Canada’s Army: Waging War and Keeping Peace*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002, pp. 3-4.

²²⁶ Bernier, pp. 16-26.

camps were not held because of the dearth of funds. Instead, they were limited to battalion or company headquarters, which essentially restricted participation to those in urban centres. Throughout the decade, equipment became obsolete and uniforms tattered, adding to the adverse effect that the financial shortfall had on the militia's already poor reputation.²²⁷ Not only did the government's lack of commitment to the militia negatively affect public perceptions of the force, but it also meant that only a minority of the troops were veterans, as men were reluctant to enlist beyond the minimum service.

The founding of the Royal Military College (RMC) at Kingston in 1876 stood out as one of the few early successes of the military. Though it began at the ebb of military funding, the college quickly gained high praise from British and American observers.²²⁸ Cadets were trained to be officers within permanent and non-permanent units, the North-West Mounted Police, and the Imperial Forces. However, it did not yet train a permanent military force of note, or a militia that was moving toward the level of professionalism desired by Britain. Indeed Dominion governments appeared, above all, to view the militia system as an avenue for patronage. Accordingly, basing promotions and commissions on merit or military acumen "was unwelcome in political quarters because it threatened the government's freedom to use a national institution for political gain."²²⁹

The maintenance of the militia under such circumstances frustrated Major-General Richard Luard, the British General-Officer Commanding (GOC) Canadian troops, from bringing a greater degree of professionalism to the military for Caron used his post as Minister of Militia and Defence to appoint officers based on their social connections and regional representation, sometimes resulting in the commissioning of

²²⁷ Stanley, p. 243.

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 245.

²²⁹ Harris, *Canadian Brass*, p. 6.

candidates with no prior military experience as well as others who had under-performed in the militia.²³⁰ This inefficiency undermined the success of the militia as well as the working relationship between Luard and Caron.²³¹

To further complicate the militia's growth, even though the Dominion parliament allocated close to \$1 million to the militia in 1869, government defence spending fluctuated so significantly that it was difficult for the GOC to formulate any consistent vision for the military. For instance, the nearly \$1 million of 1869 was increased to \$1.6 million in 1873, but three years later the budget was slashed to just over \$550,000. The dearth of funds during the Depression continued into the 1880s, as defence spending did not surpass \$1 million again until 1885 when the Macdonald government responded to the North-West Rebellion.²³²

The result of such budgetary fluctuations was that by 1882 the military was poorly prepared and, in fact, in worse condition after the Depression than it had been at the time of Confederation. Moreover, opinion of the militia was so poor that the dailies often fostered the negative or apathetic attitudes Canadians had toward defence spending. By way of example, a London wire used in the *Manitoba Daily Free Press* complimented the artillery volunteers for their skill, but then questioned the practicality of Canada's choice of artillery over infantry since the militia "would have to meet the enemy in the open, and they would be infantry without guns."²³³

Under such conditions, in 1882 the permanent force remained a negligible, misdirected service of fewer than 500. The main deployment of these men was to either

²³⁰ Granatstein, p. 28.

²³¹ Granatstein, p. 32.

²³² Bernier, p. 20-21.

²³³ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 26 April 1882, p. 6.

manage the artillery batteries of Kingston and Quebec City or to train the non-permanent militia, but in reality it was a force that did not have a clearly defined mandate. Though the Militia Act, 1883 offered greater direction with the addition of a third artillery battery, the incorporation of a cavalry unit, and the expansion of the permanent force to 750, this change occurred after the Egyptian Crisis.²³⁴ Even at that time large numbers of Canadians opposed the expansion of the force, as the Dominion had inherited a general distaste for large standing armies from Britain.²³⁵ Consequently, in August 1882, the permanent force was of little use, especially if they were to also fulfill their original mandates in Kingston and Quebec City.

On paper the militia buffeted the small permanent force with a reported 40,000 volunteers, which appeared sufficient to fulfill all duties of internal and external security. In reality the militia's numbers and strength were highly inflated. One reason for these overstated numbers was that officer positions were often created in exchange for political favours. In order to warrant the 'need' for these officers, the number of enlisted recruits was purposely misrepresented to create an acceptable ratio of officers to men. This imaginative accounting resulted in officers claiming a disproportionate share of the militia's budget, leaving training, equipment, and volunteers at sub-par levels.²³⁶

At best Canada was lucky to have half of the 40,000 troops materialise at the yearly training periods, which generally lasted for two weeks. Thus, in 1880 when 'trained' men exceeded 21,000 - and that was considered a good year - the GOC still condemned the state of the militia in his annual report.²³⁷ In it, he expounded upon the

²³⁴ Bernier, p. 18.

²³⁵ Stanley, p. 248.

²³⁶ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, p. 96.

²³⁷ Bernier, p. 32.

“inefficiency of the militia, the deterioration of equipment and the restriction of the period of training at battalion camps. Camps that as far as the rural units were concerned, had degenerated into little more than armed musters. Urban units...were in a better position than those in country districts, but they were poorly trained.”²³⁸ Adding to problems was that the militia system heavily depended on the rural units to sustain its force.²³⁹

The unit numbers were also exaggerated with the names of trainees who did not pass minimum physical standards. To add to complications, those who did muster often could not be promised a uniform or arms by their regiment. Annual reports consistently underlined the inefficiency of the militia and the poor treatment of supplies and equipment, so the reality in 1882 was that the militia was not prepared for any proper military service.²⁴⁰

To add to the militia’s woes, its consistently poor reputation further weakened both the public’s desire for increased military expenditures and the desire of men to enlist. Moreover, the improved economic situation in Canada meant that as employment increased, the militia was an even less attractive option when given the meagre pay of recruits.²⁴¹ For example, during the 1870s daily pay rates for a militiaman under the rank of Sergeant-Major was between fifty and seventy cents per day at a time when a common labourer expected close to one dollar a day. Additionally, volunteers were charged ten cents a day for rations and were not paid for their transportation to their annual training

²³⁸ Stanley, p. 247.

²³⁹ Bernier, p. 32.

²⁴⁰ Stanley, p. 247.

²⁴¹ Steven. J. Harris, “The Permanent Force and ‘Real Soldiering,’ 1883-1914.” In *Canadian Military History: Selected Readings*, Marc Milner, ed., Toronto : Copp Clark Pitman, 1993, pp. 38-39.

camps.²⁴² It was also the case that many men did not complete their yearly training because they could not gain leave from their permanent employment without putting their jobs in jeopardy – something true even for government employees.²⁴³

Absenteeism from the camps was also high, which not only distorted actual numbers, but adversely affected morale as those not present were often still paid. For example, the reported numbers from Quebec City's roll in 1882 was 1,706, but only 1,049, or sixty-one percent, actually trained.²⁴⁴ To add to matters, plans to muster the main regiments in 1882 were not scheduled until after the harvests in September. Though it was more common for training to occur in the spring, the camps were shifted to the autumn all so as not to conflict with the general election of that year, as Caron used his position for partisan ends.²⁴⁵ Since the force was heavily dependent on its rural volunteers, their compliance to garrison Halifax could not be expected, as they could not leave their farms for such a lengthy period.²⁴⁶

As tensions in Egypt worsened the dailies commented on the Dominion's inability to act if needed. The potential of a Canadian response was mockingly developed in the *Manitoba Daily Free Press* as it derided the Dominion's military by suggesting,

What is wanted now to complete the marine display at Alexandria is the presence of Canada's fleet, consisting of the *Charybdis*, which is only a standing, or rather floating, menace to all the merchant ships in St. John harbor, but at Alexandria she might bring to the Dominion some of the glory that is now in danger of being monopolized by the United States. And, as Major Domville has been left at home by his former constituents, suppose we send him in command of our fleet. Admiral Domville sounds almost as

²⁴² Bernier, pp. 23-24.

²⁴³ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, p. 98.

²⁴⁴ Bernier, p. 30.

²⁴⁵ Morton, *Ministers and Generals*, p. 63.

²⁴⁶ *Gazette*, 9 and 22 August 1882, pp. 8 and 3.

fine as Admiral Seymour. The only thing that deters us is our consideration for the Empire; because if the *Charbydis* should play any of the pranks in the harbor of Alexandria that she did recently in the harbor of St. John, when she drifted from her moorings and tried to run down a lot of innocent and harmless fishing boats, she might knock the British fleet into a cocked hat.²⁴⁷

To compound matters prior to the summer of 1882, the Canadian public raised questions over Luard's stewardship over the militia, as it considered his leadership suspect. As GOC, Luard attempted to attach discipline and professionalism to the force by eradicating inefficiency, implementing a higher standard of operations, and eliminating the effects of patronage.²⁴⁸ However, the structure that Luard attempted to create was too foreign for the militiamen and resulted in contempt for his leadership.²⁴⁹ After the questionable upbraiding of a Canadian officer by the GOC in June 1881, the dailies depicted him as inadequate for the position.

However, it was not just the public that wished for Luard's permanent removal, for the negativity surrounding him was also evident in his relations with Canada's politicians, particularly the Minister of Militia and Defence. Contrary to Luard's professional goals for the militia, "Caron's purpose, with the blessing of Macdonald, was to popularize his department and to alleviate the discontents which might make enemies of militiamen in the next general election."²⁵⁰ As such, Caron found it difficult to work with the general as the two clashed over who held ultimate authority over the militia and what direction it was to follow, thus further straining Anglo-Canadian relations. Lord Lorne recognised the tension and on the 9th of June, 1882 sent Macdonald a note in which

²⁴⁷ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 20 July 1882, p. 4.

²⁴⁸ Morton, *Ministers and Generals*, p. 58.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

he asserted: "I think that any actual outbreak of quarrel between the Minister [Caron] and the general [Luard] will make Imperial Officer unpopular in Canada that I counselled the Duke [of Cambridge] to make a change."²⁵¹

Lorne's sentiments reflected reports in the Dominion's dailies; however the concerns over Luard's ability to lead Canada's militia were not confined to Canadian circles. The Duke of Cambridge also questioned Luard's ability, but the commander-in-chief was unable to affect a change because he had to concern himself with the more pressing matters in Egypt during the summer of 1882. Thus, in late July, Luard returned to Canada as per the Imperial Army's orders. Prior to his return Lorne expressed his gratitude to Macdonald for accepting the decision from Whitehall, but he did warn that, "he [Luard] must have some very distinct arrangement made to prevent clashing. If this be not done the presence of an Imperial officer will lead to the unpopularity of such an appointment."²⁵²

As a result, Canada was unable to refuse Luard's return as GOC. News of his return was greeted unenthusiastically as evidenced by the *Globe's* single sentence comment, "Major-general Luard will return in August,"²⁵³ and the *Manitoba Daily Free Press'* longer, yet no less animated, "Maj.-Gen. Luard has determined to return to Canada, and will sail from England on Thursday next. He is anxious to get back in time for the militia camps."²⁵⁴ Again British desires pre-empted Canadian concerns, this time by reaffirming the appointment of a GOC to which many Canadians - including Canadian politicians - held some antipathy.

²⁵¹ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 32067, Lorne to Macdonald, 9 June 1882.

²⁵² Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 32100, Lorne to Macdonald, 18 July 1882.

²⁵³ *Globe*, 21 July 1882, p. 1.

²⁵⁴ *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 21 July 1882, p. 1.

Luard's absence through June and July also meant that the militia was without its commander when his presence was crucial if Canada were to aid Britain. Consequently, the militia was in no position to fill the role of regular British troops, and the permanent force did not have the numbers to do so. Thus, the reality in July 1882 was that the militia was even weaker than its real numbers suggested, and it lacked the necessary support branches of established medical, transportation, supply, and engineering departments. Up until 1871 these military essentials had been under the mandate of the Imperial Forces and as with most aspects of the Canadian militia, had yet to be developed.²⁵⁵

Lord Lorne was aware of the poor state of the militia, for on July 18th, 1882 in a letter to Macdonald, he indicated that the "Canadian troops of men...are either rusty or have seen no active service at all."²⁵⁶ However, even though he had no positive comment regarding the militia in this letter and clearly indicated its poor state, he followed the correspondence four days later with the first request for troops when he asked Macdonald, "Could we not aid the Empire in its present multiplicity of work by offering to garrison Halifax until the conclusion of the Egyptian occupation?"²⁵⁷

Luckily for Macdonald, he refused, because the occupation lasted until the 1950s. However, based upon the Militia Act, it was the term 'occupation' that gave Macdonald his legal excuse for not supporting Britain, and a demonstration of the substandard state of the Canadian Militia was averted.

Moreover the reported force was one that was spread throughout the Dominion and was regional in nature. Transportation of the troops was unorganized, creating

²⁵⁵ Bernier, p. 21.

²⁵⁶ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 32097, Lorne to Macdonald, 18 July 1882.

²⁵⁷ Macdonald Fonds, C-1515, p. 32108, Lorne to Macdonald, 22 July 1882.

logistical problems that further added to the militia's inability to support Britain. Since the part-time force had yet to be called and trained for the year, to do so within the limited time period offered by Britain added to difficulties. In order to use the militia, Macdonald would have had to make the unpopular decision of extending the term of the militia past its prescribed sixteen days per year. Thus, although it appeared reasonable for Canada to replace the British garrison with the necessary troops, the quality of these troops as soldiers, their willingness to commit, and the reality of the state of the militia all made it implausible. Moreover, since the CPR only reached Winnipeg, willing troops from further west than that terminus were too far away to be of any use to the garrison, thereby further supporting Macdonald's opinions that the railroad's completion was essential to imperial defence.

Ultimately, since the expectation was that the Canadian troops would garrison Halifax for an indefinite period, it meant that the militia was being called upon to extend the duties of its volunteers. In this situation few recruits would have accepted the added responsibility, as they feared losing their civilian jobs without gaining the opportunity of the 'adventure' of going to Egypt.

The militia was also clearly over-stretched, for as Britain had previously indicated when it had 16,000 troops in Canada, the defence of the Dominion's interior was an impossible challenge. As such, Canada could not realistically offer troops without endangering the physical integrity of the Dominion. In all, the situation left Macdonald with no real options, since to garrison Halifax would have undoubtedly demonstrated the weak state of the Canadian military. When meshed with the decade of British neglect as

well as the poor handling of the situation by Westminster, Macdonald concluded that Canada could not support the British occupation of Egypt.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

To claim that Macdonald denied aid in Egypt based on a specific aspect of the Militia Act misses many of the underlying reasons for his decision and relegates the crisis to minor importance within the Canadian context. Instead, there were far greater rationales that combined to lead the Macdonald government to its ultimate decision. Of consequence was the long standing divergence between Canadian and British policies that often led to division between Britain and its dependency, for the perception in Canada of mistreatment on a political and military level laid the foundation for the Dominion's discontent. Moreover, the Canadian view that Britain abandoned the Dominion in favour of its eastern empire was strengthened in this period with British reactions to the Russian and Fenian threats. It was from this foundation that all other essential reasons for Canada's refusal stemmed.

Arguably one of the more significant elements that directed the Macdonald government's response was the Irish Question. As indicated, Ottawa and Westminster's divergent positions served to cause a rift that was brought to the public forum in newspapers of both Canada and Britain. Since this division overlapped the Egyptian Crisis, the timing of Lorne's request for support was inopportune. That this divergence added to the resentment Canadians felt and to the final decision over the Halifax garrison was noted in the personal papers of leading Conservative members of the Dominion government. Not only does this element of the issue demonstrate the effect of outside influences on the policy-makers, but also that the ultimate decision was not simply the result of a legal loophole.

Nevertheless, there was still more to Canada's reluctance to follow the imperial will than these reasons. On a pragmatic level both the poor state of the militia and the recovering economy meant that Macdonald was not in a position to assent to the British proposal. Ironically, Canada's inheritance of Britain's distaste for large standing armies ensured that the Dominion remained relatively apathetic to the growth and development of its military. As such, the lack of effective training as well as the dearth of funds actually allotted to defence over the decade preceding the crisis, left the Canadian military in disarray and unable to realistically garrison Halifax. To further complicate matters, since Canada was still in the process of recovering from the Depression of the 1870s, the public was critical of added government expenditures especially if it meant the further withdrawal of a British presence in Canada.

From the British perspective, the Canadian reluctance to aid in Arabi Pasha's defeat held little importance for the outcome of the campaign. With added troops from India as well as some Mediterranean outposts, Britain was able to amass a force of over 25,000 soldiers who were mainly "veterans, well led and armed with the latest artillery."²⁵⁸ Under Lieutenant-General Garnett Wolseley's command, the British landed the bulk of their forces between the 8th and 17th of August, and though they engaged the enemy forces in a number of minor skirmishes the fate of the campaign lay in the Battles of Kassassin and Tel el-Kebir. On the whole British losses were minimal, considering that at the pivotal and final battle at Tel el-Kebir there were only fifty-seven dead and twenty-two missing in a battle that engaged over 17,000 British troops and left close to

²⁵⁸ Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: 1876 – 1912*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991, p.135.

10,000 of Arabi's men dead.²⁵⁹ In all, "no British campaign had ever gone more smoothly,"²⁶⁰ for in less than five weeks Arabi's forces were defeated, leaving Britain to occupy Egypt - under the pretence of a mandate - until the situation stabilized. Though there were numerous attempts to extricate Britain from Egyptian affairs through the rest of the century, Britain maintained its control over the area until the 1950s without necessitating any aid from Canada.

With this result, even if the British garrison in Halifax had been excused of its duty to join the expedition, it would have done little to affect a change in the campaign's outcome. At best, had Macdonald agreed to Lorne's proposal and the garrison left by the 1st of August, the journey alone would have kept it out of at least half of the operation. Hence, all Britain would have achieved was the extrication of its garrison from Canada only to embed it in Egypt. As such, the successful outcome of the British expedition served to emphasise the unnecessary nature of the request for aid, while vindicating Macdonald's choice. Even still, since the British were ultimately successful and suffered relatively few losses, it was easier for Westminster to disregard the Canadian rebuff as it became inconsequential to the outcome of the occupation. If any aid had been forthcoming it would have only been indirect at best. As a result, the ease of the British victory in Egypt has been partly responsible for the scarcity of material directly regarding Macdonald's refusal to assist Britain during the crisis within both the Canadian and Imperial historiographies of the period.

However, it was not long after this first refusal that Canada was again given the opportunity to apply the precedent of inaction. Three years after the crisis, the Egyptian

²⁵⁹ Peter Mansfield, *The British in Egypt*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971, p. 49.

²⁶⁰ Pakenham, p.136.

territories once more became the centre of British concerns. The mismanagement of Egypt's expansion into the Sudan sparked the widespread growth of an Islamic-based insurrection to cast off the Egyptian authorities. Under the leadership of the *Mahdi* the movement gained prominence as it found early and decisive successes against the British-officered Egyptian military.

With its inability to distance itself from Egyptian matters, the British were dragged into the conflict and quickly fell victim to the manoeuvres of the insurgents. The ill-advised tactics of General Charles Gordon resulted in his surrounding at Khartoum by the *Mahdi's* forces, and subsequently Wolseley led a rescue attempt.²⁶¹ As in 1882, Britain asked Canada to support the expedition, but was once again met with a Canadian reluctance to involve itself in British endeavours that did not benefit the Dominion. Though Macdonald faced more pressure to aid Britain from the Canadian public as a result of Gordon's icon status in the Empire, all that Britain was able to attain from the Dominion were seconded officers and non-military boatmen or '*voyageurs*' who negotiated the Nile for the British forces.²⁶²

On the surface, this aid may appear as a reversal in Canadian policy by the Macdonald government, but in reality it reiterated the precedent set in 1882. Macdonald still denied Britain access to any support financed by the Canadian government because there was no threat to the Empire and even under the revamped Militia Act, 1883, no provision existed for Canadian troops to be deployed under such circumstances. Instead, Macdonald endorsed what he had proposed in 1882 – for the British to recruit and pay the wages of any Canadians who wanted to join the Imperial Army to be a part of a wholly

²⁶¹ Ferguson, pp.222-223.

²⁶² Roy MacLaren, *Canadians on the Nile, 1882-1898*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978, pp. 60-61.

British expedition. Thus the Canadian officers who joined the expedition did so as seconded officers under the pay of Britain, and their responsibility was not to fight the *Mahdi's* forces, but to organize and direct the *voyageurs* as they navigated the rapids and cataracts of the Nile.

Even the over 350 *voyageurs* were not trained soldiers, but were mainly Canadian boatmen who were employed as transportation specialists. More importantly, they held no connection to the Canadian forces, as they were civilians who fell under the command of the Imperial Army from which they received their wages.²⁶³ As such, a mere three years after the Egyptian Crisis, Macdonald's reluctance to support imperial ventures was reaffirmed.

Canada's commitment to international inaction during the 1880s came at a crucial period in the development of the Dominion. Indeed, had its strained economic and military resources been pressed further by a commitment to Britain's imperialism, the Dominion would have found it more difficult to successfully consolidate its position in North America. Considering that the British withdrawal from Halifax would have demanded the replacement of the garrison by a permanent Canadian force of a size and training that did not exist in the Dominion, it would have diverted needed funds from future budgets to the military rather than the more popular choice of the Dominion's infrastructure. The importance of Macdonald's decision lies in the fact that he did not allow Canadian resources to be unduly strained for a purpose that - for the most part - would have had detrimental effects for the country.

It is understandable that Canada's reluctance to assist the Egyptian expedition does not warrant comment in the British historiography of the period. In the grander

²⁶³ Ibid., pp. 129.

sense of imperial historical record, the refusal of Macdonald did not affect the campaign's outcome, nor did it create an acrimonious atmosphere between Ottawa and Westminster. However within the context of Canadian history, this event holds a much greater, yet often overlooked, importance. After years of following British policy to Canada's perceived detriment, Macdonald's refusal to aid Britain set a precedent whereby the Dominion's own interests became the focal point for decisions regarding involvement in military endeavours. By doing so, the Macdonald government added to Canada's growth as an independent nation by giving the country a direction different to yet still compatible with the Mother Country. Still, this precedent was not the only point of importance of Macdonald's decision worthy of study.

By retaining the British garrison in Halifax, Macdonald helped to ensure a continuing British military presence in Canada into the early twentieth century. As Macdonald noted, the potential existed that if the British regulars departed from Canadian soil they would not return. The fact that in early 1882 the further reduction of the British force in Canada was tabled by Whitehall made it appear more real. Instead, not only did the denial result in lower Canadian defence spending and thereby allow the Dominion to spend capital on the expansion of its commercial infrastructure rather than the military, it also emphasised the continued cooperation between Britain and Canada.

Moreover, Britain's decision to maintain the Halifax garrison symbolized that regardless of the disagreements between the two countries that Canada still fell under the umbrella of the Empire's protection. The lack of necessity to spend government revenues on the military gave Canada the opportunity to concentrate on the consolidation of its territories and physically link the Dominion through the completion of the CPR in 1885.

However, the reliance also furthered Canadian expectations that military protection came from its allies (whether it be Britain or the United States) and at the expense of the development of its own defence initiatives.

Macdonald's refusal also maintains its importance in that it acted as a subtle reproach to Britain in response to the years of perceived neglect. Rather than creating an incident or using the crisis as a platform to vent Canada's displeasure over previous misgivings, the prime minister denied aid by officially basing it in a technicality and not on an emotional response. This tact allowed the refusal to be given without cooling relations with the Mother Country, and demonstrated that Canada could both forge its own direction yet stay loyal to the Empire. As such, this episode in the history of the Dominion – though generally neglected – holds great importance. In many ways, it marked the beginnings of the country's approach to a foreign policy that placed Canadian interests first.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- *Fonds -- Library and Archives of Canada*
Adolphe Caron
Sir John A. Macdonald
Sir Charles Tupper
- *Newspapers*
La Patrie (Montreal)
Manitoba Free Press (Winnipeg)
The Gazette (Montreal)
The Globe (Toronto)
The Morning Herald (Halifax)

Secondary Sources

Books

- Bernier, Serge. *Canadian Military History: Volume III, 1872-2000*. Montreal: Art Global Inc., 1993.
- Berger, Carl. *Imperialism and Nationalism, 1884-1914: A Conflict in Canadian Thought*. Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1969.
- _____. *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971.
- Brown, Robert Craig and Cook, Ramsay. *Canada, 1896-1921*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited., 1974.
- Dyer, Gwynne and Viljoen, Tina. *The Defence of Canada*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1990.
- Ewart, John Skirving. *Canada and British Wars*. Ottawa: 1923.
- Ferguson, Niall. *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.
- Gann, L.H. and Duignan, Peter. *The Rulers of British Africa, 1870-1914*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978.
- Granatstein, Jack Lawrence. *Canada's Army: Waging War and Keeping Peace*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.

- Harris, Stephen J. *Canadian Brass: the Making of a Professional Army, 1860-1939*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.
- James, Lawrence. *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1994.
- Keegan, John. *The Iraq War*. Toronto: Key Porter Books Limited, 2004.
- Keown-Boyd, Henry. *A Good Dusting: A Centenary Review of the Sudan Campaigns, 1883-1899*. London: Butler and Tanner Limited, 1986.
- Kesterton, Wilfrid H. *A History of Journalism in Canada*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967.
- MacLaren, Roy. *Canadians on the Nile*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978.
- Mansfield, Peter. *The British In Egypt*. London: Cox and Wyman Ltd., 1971.
- Morton, Desmond. *A Military History of Canada From Champlain to Kosovo*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1999.
- _____. *Canada and War*. Toronto: Butterworth & Co. (Canada) Ltd., 1981.
- _____. *Ministers and Generals*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.
- Moyles, Robert Gordon and Owsram, Doug R. *Imperialism Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.
- Newman, Edward William Polson. *Great Britain in Egypt*. Toronto: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1928.
- Pakenham, Thomas. *The Scramble for Africa: 1876 – 1912*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991.
- Parsons, Timothy. *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1999.
- Penlington, Norman. *Canada and Imperialism, 1896-1899*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965.
- Robinson, Ronald and Gallagher, John with Denny, Alice. *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*. Hong Kong: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983.

Rutherford, Paul. *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in the Late Nineteenth-Century Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

_____. *The Making of the Canadian Media*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1978.

Stacey, Charles P. *Canada and the Age of Conflict, Volume 1: 1867-1921*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.

Stanley, George. *Canada's Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People*. Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1974.

Articles

Afaf Lufti al-Sayyid-Marsot, "The British Occupation of Egypt from 1882." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III*, ed. Andrew Porter, 651-664. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Peter Burroughs, "Defence and Imperial Disunity." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III*, ed. Andrew Porter, 320-345. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

John E. Flint, "Britain and the Scramble for Africa." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V*, ed. Robin W. Winks, 450-462. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

_____. "Britain and the Partition of West Africa." In *Perspectives of Empire*, eds. John E. Flynt, and Glyndwr Williams, 93-111. London: Longman Group Limited, 1973.

Galbraith, John S. and Al-Sayyid-Marsot, Afaf Lufti. "The British Occupation of Egypt: Another View." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 9, 4 (1978): 471-488.

E.H.H. Green, "The Political Economy of Empire, 1880-1914." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III*, ed. Andrew Porter, 346-368. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Steven J. Harris, "The Permanent Force and 'Real Soldiering,' 1883-1914." In *Canadian Military History: Selected Readings*, ed. Marc Milner, 35-52. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993.

Hopkins, A.G. "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882." *The Journal of African History* 27, 2 (1986): 363-391.

David Killingray, "Imperial Defence." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V*, ed. Robin W. Winks, 342-353. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Macintyre, Stuart. "Australia and the Empire." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V*, ed. Winks, R.W., 163-181. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Marling Percival. "The Nile Campaign: 1884-1885." *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 35, 139 (1936): 143-152.

Peter Marshall, "The Imperial Factor in the Liberal Decline, 1880-1885." In *Perspectives of Empire*, eds John E. Flynt, and Glyndwr Williams, 130-147. London: Longman Group Limited, 1973.

Ged Martin, "Canada From 1815." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III*, ed. Andrew Porter, 522-545. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Joseph J. Matthews, "Heralds of Imperialistic Wars." In *Military Affairs* 19, 3 (Autumn 1955): 145-155.

Colin Newbury, "Great Britain and the Partition of Africa, 1870-1914." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III*, ed. Andrew Porter, 624-650. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Owram, Doug R. "Canada and the Empire." In *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V*, ed. Winks, R.W., 146-162. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Silver, Arthur I. "Quelques considérations sur les rapports du Canada français avec l'impérialisme britannique aux XIXe siècle." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 15, 1 (1981): 55-75.

Albert V. Tucker, "Army and Society in England 1870-1900: A Reassessment of the Cardwell Reforms." In *The Journal of British Studies*, 2, 2, (May 1963): 110-141.

Websites

http://www.rcmp.ca/history/origins2_e.htm, 30 April 2005.