

THE PARTY SYSTEM -
THE FUNDAMENTAL INSTITUTION OF
CANADIAN DEMOCRACY

by

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INTRODUCTION

Do the masses of the people merely serve as footstools for super-men demonstrating to history their inimitable talents in the creation of a millennium or paradise? Are those human beings to be whipped into straight lines, numerically ordered and generically trimmed for the unquestioning service of the great cause or social progress? Or, shall the ravenous mob satiate its craving for justice by dragging its leaders through the mud of its accustomed environment? Has a pack of senseless beasts the right to desecrate the human and noble only because they are stronger and more numerous? Or, is civil society merely a bellum omnium contra omnes of small but ambitious groups?

Must not the perpetual problem of human association - the regulation of social forces - be infinitely more vexing and insoluble in a country where an unusually high degree of heterogeneity increases the density of conflicting social forces, as in Canada: a landmass exceeding the size of Europe, yet tamed by as many as there are people in New York State; a narrow band stretching across the North American continent, yet housing the entire spectrum of European religious conflict since the Reformation; a segment of the Babylonian confusion of languages in the existence of two

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tongues in one body politic; a colonial economy almost evenly split between agriculture and industry, sandwiched between the repulsive wastes of an arctic North and the wake of an economic world power to the South; a land, according to Lord Durham's Report, with "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state"?

Certainly, any one of these principal facets of Canadian heterogeneity could have made the development of a single national community in British North America impossible. Each of them is generally considered to constitute a latent source of social friction and conflict powerful enough to provoke a complete rupture of national ties. Indeed, in accordance with nationalist concepts, the absence of a forceful desire for unity issuing from common descent, language, culture and religion, appears to deprive Canada of the unyielding backbone so indispensable for prolonged and vigorous subsistence.

Yet, inspite of all this singular dissimilarity, a stable and strong polity has been established. Canadians have not merely been able to foil the designs of a "manifest destiny" by resisting the attraction of the American neighbour, but have also been able to win independence from the mother country without recourse to forceful means. Canadians have succeeded in consolidating their vast territory into a single nation, and in allaying the separatist tendencies

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of some sections, like Nova Scotia, and the Laurentianism of Quebec. Moreover, though greatly affected by the fluctuations of the world market, and contradicting North American geography, the Canadian economy has yielded the second highest standard of living in the world. In fact, the colony which, half a century ago, could not yet conclude its own treaties, has come to be highly respected internationally, and has assumed a leading role in the council of nations, epitomized by the distinction of a Nobel peace-prize being awarded to one of Canada's ministers of external affairs.

Undoubtedly, these remarkable results could not have been attained unless Canadian society was free from major prejudices and aversions hostile to a union of several heterogeneous elements, and was endowed with positive inclinations promoting that kind of harmony. Only on the basis of such prerequisites could the general behaviour patterns have developed which promise a continued flourishing of Canada in spite of, and possibly even on account of its internal diversities.

Yet, these tendencies, latent within society, are not fully crystallized and activated unless they are provided with adequate media of expression. Traditionally, this function is fulfilled by political parties. But, in a country as heterogeneous as Canada, the instrumentality

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of political parties, notorious for their factious character, takes on a highly problematic quality. How could their essential partiality possibly be kept from increasing and intensifying those many social diversities? How could Canadian parties possibly contribute to national integration and cohesion?

Perhaps, the problem might not be quite as difficult, if there were only a single political party in Canada. But, the political scene has been the battle-field of at least two parties which the eminent observer of Canadian political life, John Dafoe, has described as "organized states within the state". Yet, even though it seems unlikely that the common good could possibly emerge safe and sound from the ravages of a relentless party struggle, the remarkable economic and political stability has not been achieved through coercion and dictatorship but through governments formed by the main political parties.

This thesis intends to analyse the various factors, concepts and relationships responsible for the transformation of a heterogeneous society into a national community through the instrumentality of political parties. How the parties themselves are affected by the peculiar conditions of Canadian political life. How the party system regulates the flow of political dynamism, and influences the overall conduct of government and the efforts of the major

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opposition party.

With the background of the social and political turmoil of the 20th century, and with the prospects of an increasing urgency to harmonize different interests in a rapidly shrinking world, the present study indicates those essential realities of human association which must be respected in the establishment of social harmony, if human dignity is not to be degraded by the use of police and totalitarian methods.

CHAPTER I

CANADIAN SOCIETY

A country's institutions - social, economic, legal, political - are directly related to the character of its society.¹ In order to understand the political party system as a fundamental institution of Canadian democracy, it becomes necessary to obtain a clear view of the major characteristics of Canadian society.² What excites and motivates the predominant patterns of political action?

The distinctive features of Canadian society have been crystallized only during an extended evolution. In

¹Talcott Parsons, "Society", in Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Edited by E. R. A. Seligman. Vol. XIV, (1935), p. 231, : "In the light of the analysis presented here, society may be defined as the total complex of human relationships in so far as they grow out of action in terms of the means-end relationship, intrinsic or symbolic. According to such a definition society is but an element in the concrete whole of human social life, which is also affected by the factors of heredity and environment as well as by the element of culture - scientific knowledge and techniques, religions, metaphysical and ethical systems of ideas and forms of artistic expression. Society cannot exist apart from these things; they play a part in all its concrete manifestations, but they are not society, which comprises only the complex of social relationships as such".

²Lipson, Leslie, "The Two-Party System in British Politics", The American Political Science Review, XLVII, (June 1953), p. 358. Leslie Lipson concludes that "if this survey of the causes of the two-party system in Britain warrants any general hypothesis it is that parties appear primarily to be the product of their society and are only secondarily the off-shoot of governmental institutions".

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this process, the most significant and tenacious characteristics are revealed under the stimulus of historic events, changing conditions, and social needs. Canadian society has had many occasions in its development from a tiny colony to a nation, to demonstrate its underlying attitudes, feelings and interests: in the way it treated the institutions imposed upon the colony; in the way it created its own institutions; and in the way it lives its daily life.

The Effect of Imported Institutions

Mother countries have always attempted to insure control over their colonies by imposing on them their own institutions. Frequently, the imported institutions fail to harmonize with colonial requirements or the wishes of the people. Has this been the case in Canada? Was Canadian society satisfied with the institutional arrangement imported into the colony? Did it react to the same institutions in a similar way as the people of the mother country reacted? What kept Canada from revolting against these imposed institutions?

French Institutions

Royal absolutism, economic servitude and clericalism which constituted the mainstays of the French regime in Canada, have become to many people inevitable causes of

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revolution and political instability.¹ How did Canadian society react to these institutions? Did they poison the entire subsequent growth of society? Did they incapacitate their subjects for democratic government or the free expression of their will?

Absolutism: --The beginnings of Canadian society have been placed at about 1663.² The same year saw the introduction of the governmental institutions of French provinces in New France, and for the next one hundred years, until the Conquest in 1760, the earliest growth of Canadian

¹cf. Parkman, Francis, The Jesuits in North America in the 17th Century, (Boston: Little, Brown and Comp., 1891), p. 448. Parkman revealed this type of thinking when he lauded the effect of Iroquois raids on the young colony: "Liberty may thank the Iroquois, that, by their insensate fury, the plans of her adversary were brought to nought, and a peril and a woe averted from her future. They ruined the trade which was the life-blood of New France; they stopped the current of her arteries and made all her early years a misery and a terror. Not that they changed her destinies. The contest on this continent between Liberty and Absolutism was never doubtful; but the triumph of the one would have been dearly bought, and the downfall of the other incomplete. Populations formed in the ideas and habits of a feudal monarchy, and controlled by a hierarchy profoundly hostile to freedom of thought would have remained a hinderance and stumbling-block in the way of that majestic experiment of which America is the field."

²Lanctot, G., Le Canada, (Montreal: Editions Albert Lévesque, 1935), p. 38. Lanctot maintains that in 1663 Canada possessed already the rudiments of a society.

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society was subject to royal absolutism.¹

This form of government was expected to remove through its firm and unified administration the corruption and disorder supposedly issuing from a division of power.² In the case of New France however, the mothercountry had to avoid the creation of a governmental agency whose strength might have invited inclinations toward independence.³ Consequently, the North American colony has never been exposed to the full brunt of royal absolutism. On the one hand, local government was intentionally weakened by the practically inevitable conflict between the Governor who was usually a noble and a veteran, and the Intendant who was a civil servant and who, as a rule, held more effective

¹Lanctot, Gustave, "The Founding of French Canada", in Canada, ed. by George Brown (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950), p. 63. Following the failure of the trading companies in the colonization of New France, Louis XIV cancelled in 1663 the charter of the Hundred Associates and restored to his domain all New France, including Acadia. The colony became simply a French "province" in America. There was however the exception of the West India Company which received a charter in 1664. It lasted until 1674.

²Weir, Stanley, R., The Administration of the Old Regime in Canada, (Montreal: L. E. and A. F. Waters, 1897), p. 7.

³Lanctot, Gustave, L'Administration de la Nouvelle France, (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honore Champion, 1929), pp. 13 - 125. The Sovereign Council of Quebec consisted of the Governor-General, as the personal representative of the King who was the honorary president of the Council, the Intendant who was the functioning head of the Council, and a number of councillors of whom the bishop was the most potent.

power.¹ On the other hand, royal absolutism lost the effect of immediate and irrevocable action in New France owing to the delays of the monarch's decisions amounting to as much as half a year because of the great distances and the freeze-up of the St. Lawrence River. The relative laxity of rule led to a much freer life than the one the settlers had been accustomed to in their mothercountry.

Of course, the people who were brought out to colonize New France, were 'formed in the ideas and habits of a feudal monarchy'. But men simply are not slaves by nature. The new environment of the wide country, the frontier-type society and the distance from the mothercountry helped the people to change their ideas and habits. Royal absolutism did not strike roots in the North American colony but remained an institution of France from whence came the officials who administered its external manifestations.

Despite royal despotism, the inhabitants of New France did not develop revolutionary tendencies or hatred of royal government, nor was their appreciation of political liberty seriously impaired.² In fact, when the colony came under the control of Great Britain, the "habitants" quite naturally took to the very practice to which the origin of

¹Wade, Mason, The French Canadians, 1760 - 1945, (Toronto: The MacMillan Company, 1956), p. 33.

²Weir, op. cit., p. 8.

liberal democracy has been traced,¹ and made their wishes known through petitions.²

Feudalism: --While the absolutist form of government did not develop any significant native branches and was taken away with the return to France of the royal officials, the seigneurial system provided the very pattern for the development of local society.³ But, let us not identify the colonial branch of feudalism with that of the mothercountry. Although they both represent the same basic structure,⁴ the colonizing character of New France was responsible for a

¹Ostrogorski, M., Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, (London: MacMillan and Company, 1902), Vol. I, p. 118.

²Sir Henry Cavendish, Government of Canada, - Debates of the House of Commons, 1774, J. Wright (ed.), (London: Ridgway, 1839), p. 111, - General Carleton while testifying before the Committee on the Bill which became the Quebec Act of 1774, described his experience with the petitioning of the habitants in terms that do not apply to a quivering flock of serfs: "When I was in the provinces, seeing great heats and animosities upon every occasion in various sorts of people, and that petitions of all kinds greatly incited these animosities, I persuaded them, as much as it was in my power, from measures of that sort. Before my arrival they had expressed their desire in a petition to the King. They frequently repeated the substance of that petition, as their earnest desire and wish, and would have drawn up a fresh one, had I not dissuaded them from doing so."

³W. B. Munro, The Seigneurs of Old Canada, (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook and Company, 1914), p. 25. The hey-day of Canadian feudalism falls into the period of 1663 to 1750, when nearly 300 fiefs were granted.

⁴The feudal system is a polity based on the relationship of vassal and superior arising from holding of land in feud.

paramount difference. In the colony, the feudal type of personal and hierarchic organization fulfilled a definite and highly useful purpose in the struggle for survival and the opening of the country¹ - a purpose long before achieved in France where the feudal system had become a symbol of servitude and oppression. In Canada, the constant danger and the lack of men forced the resident seigneurs to struggle along with their subjects and kept them from leading lives of leisure and idleness² in magnificent mansions "contrasted with the clay-built hut and miserable cabin where cattle and men keep each other warm and dwell in meanness, smoke and indigence".³

Nor did the colony continue the tremendous, invincible differentiation between common people and nobility. Everybody could work himself up to become a noble as there was practically no hereditary nobility, nor sufficient wealth to serve as the foundation of social classification.⁴

¹W. B. Munro, The Seigneurs of Old Canada, p. 150.

²Mason Wade, op. cit., p. 35.

³Jean de Crèvecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer, Letter III, "What is an American?", Everyman's Library 640.

⁴M. Wade, op. cit., p. 35. "Like humble Gascon Antoine Laumet who came to call himself Antoine de Lamothe, Sieur de Cadillac."

As long as defense and colonization was more important than opulence and sophistication, feudalism could fully justify its existence, especially as the Intendants being praetor and tribune combined, did their best to keep the seigneurial system from becoming an object of oppression.¹ As a consequence, the habitants were rather contented with the terms upon which they held their lands, and thought only of the great measure of freedom from burdens they enjoyed as compared with their friends at home.²

Potentially, feudalism in Canada could have grown into the same burden it was for many European societies. But, when the English took over, no more seigneuries were formed although existing ones remained. They provided a nucleus for the formation of a small aristocracy in the first decades of British rule.³ This development went hand in hand with a growing resentment against the remains of an institution which was rapidly becoming obsolete.

In 1841, the abolition of seigneurial tenure was proposed. By 1850, the opposition had assumed such proportions that Lafontaine urged the abolition with compensation to the landlords in order to prevent revolution, and he

¹W. B. Munro, The Seigneurs of Old Canada, p. 25.

²Ibid., p. 88.

³A. G. Bradley, Colonial Americans in Exile, (New York: E. B. Dutton and Company, 1932), p. 172.

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warned the seigneurs that "delay gives new occasion for the propagation of principles which tend to overturn society".¹ At the general election of 1854, the question was made a leading issue. A definite mandate from the people was the result, and "An Act for the Abolition of Feudal Rights and Duties in Lower Canada" officially put an end to feudalism in Canada.²

Generally, the abolition of seigneurial tenure hardly received the attention due to a great achievement. Yet, from the point of view of a healthy growth of Canadian society, the timely abolition was possibly as important as the winning of responsible government.

On first sight, of course, the peaceful abolition of feudal institutions prevented the pain and sorrow of a forceful solution with the evil after-effects on society produced by revolutions.³

Much more important was the fact that the legal abolition of seigneurial tenure actually removed the potential powder keg Lafontaine was afraid of. This meant that whatever evil feudalism had created did not affect very deeply

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 280, quoting from T. Chapais, "Cours d'histoire du Canada", Quebec 1919, Vol. VI, p. 152.

²M. B. Munro, The Seigneurs of Old Canada, p. 147.

³Ibid., p. 146. - In the Rebellion of 1838, seigneurial tenure contributed some of the grievances already.

Canadian society, because hatred cannot be abolished by legislation. In Canada, 'feudalism' did not become a watchword evoking the bitterness of succeeding generations, and providing campaigning material for political parties. Feudal institutions rather helped in implementing and fulfilling Canada's history. They did not impede progress but were indeed progressive by promoting the development of the country. The peaceful settlement of seigneurial tenure confirmed this beneficent influence of feudalism, and provided Canadian society with a sense of fuller integration.¹

Clericalism: --From the very first beginnings of New France, the Roman Catholic Church established itself in the colony and received the support of the French government which considered the missionary efforts as a practical means to strengthen its own power.² Did the clergy therefore become an instrument of oppression resented by the habitants?

To begin with, the Canadian hierarchy although co-operating with civil authorities, was never their agency. As a matter of fact, the Church provided more support and encouragement for the colony than either Crown or Court.³

¹Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955), p. 69.

²Arthur R. M. Lower, Colony to Nation, (Toronto: Dougmans, Green and Company, 1946), p. 25.

³M. Wade, op.cit., p. 14.

Consequently, the clergy soon was looked upon as the one agency which was genuinely interested in the prosperity and wellbeing of the colony. A further demonstration of this fact was supplied in several of the bishops' quarrels with the civil authorities.

However, it was not until after the conquest of New France by the English that the position of the clergy became fully appreciated. Only then did the French Canadians realize that the Church provided the only institution in a position to make the survival of their national character possible.¹ Unlike the Catholic Church in many European countries, it did not have to support in Canada an old monarchy which had lost the popular sympathies, but stood in full support of the people. Consequently, the Church maintained a position of reverence and influence, while the parish priests continued to be the natural leaders of the French Canadians.

More than half a century ago, André Siegfried thought that eventually the price for that leadership - which he described as "intellectual bondage" - would be too high and cause a break in the allegiance of the French Canadians.² But his apprehensions were not fulfilled as

¹A. Brady, Canada, (Ernest Benn Limited, London: 1932), p. 122.

²André Siegfried, The Race Question in Canada, (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1907), p. 50.

anti-clericalism among French-speaking Canadians - and for that matter also among English-speaking Catholics¹ - never developed on any significant scale.²

There is little doubt that royal absolutism, feudalism and clericalism could have affected Canada in a similar way as they affected France. Certainly, they could not have served without modification for the entire development of Canada. But, in the period when they were in effect, these three institutions fulfilled their functions in a way beneficial to the country, and thus conditioned the society of the colony to be better disposed for the future evolution.

English Institutions

The conquest of New France by England naturally hurt the national pride of French Canadian society. It was the kind of experience that makes people resentful and eager for revenge. French Canadians turned more than ever to their own resources, and found consolation in the memory of past glories. But there were no major up-risings against the

¹A. R. M. Lower, "Religion and Religious Institutions", Canada, G. W. Brown (ed.), p. 459.

²S. D. Clark, "The Canadian Community", Canada, G. W. Brown (ed.), p. 388. - There has been some evidence of secularism. Whatever anti-clericalism does exist in certain sections of Canada, has been introduced from abroad, and was not caused by a Canadian institution.

English military government. And particularly after France had officially handed her North American colony over to England, the French Canadians strove to reconcile themselves with the new situation rather than to follow any mutinous schemes.

When the American Revolution challenged British authority, the Canadian provinces consisted of Quebec, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island of which the two maritime provinces had already obtained representative legislatures in 1758 and 1773 respectively. But it was not so much due to these institutions, as it was due to the immanence of English sea power that the two colonies - predominantly settled by people from New England - abstained from joining in the Revolution.¹

A different motive led to similar results in Quebec. The province was without a representative assembly because, as the Quebec Act of 1774 declared, it was "inexpedient to call an assembly" because of the current rule excluding Roman Catholics from holding office,² would have made the assembly represent only the small English minority. Despite this seeming injustice, Quebec decided - though not unanimously - against becoming the fourteenth American state.

¹A. L. Burt, "The British North American Colonies", Canada, Brown (ed.), pp. 81 - 82.

²Sir H. Cavendish, op. cit. pp. 246 - 248.

What Quebec valued much more than independence from England, was the assurance contained in the Quebec Act, of the official recognition of the faith, the civil laws and the customs of the French-Canadians.¹ There was no such assurance in the Americans revolting against English authority.

Quite differently, the U. K. Loyalists who came to Canada from the American Republic in 1783, were not at all satisfied with the provisions of the Quebec Act and objected to its restrictions. Although the loyalists did not favour republican ideas, they were sufficiently Anglo-American to demand representative government. The demand was granted by the Constitutional Act of 1791.² With this Act came also the division of the province into Lower and Upper Canada, which, though intended to reduce the area of friction, created two sanctuaries where the French- and English-Canadians could entrench themselves.

The situation that began to develop in British North America, was one in which two minorities were forced to live side by side fearful that the other one might abuse its power for the destruction of the partner: the French who were a majority in numbers but a minority when the government was concerned, were alarmed by attempts to anglicize

¹M. Wade, op. cit., pp. 63 -64.

²British North America Act and Amendments, E. Cloutier (ed.), (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1948), p. 18, section II of the Act.

them and even more so by the influx of U. K. Loyalists into Canada;¹ the English, a minority in numbers, controlled the government. They had gone through a good scare in the American colonies and when the French Reign of Terror rocked the world, they became frightened of the French even in Canada.² The knowledge of its own weakness, however, kept each group from becoming too aggressive. On both sides, the prime interest was rather defensive in character - a determined effort at survival.

Although the institutions imported by France and England did not reflect the character of Canadian society, its fundamental outlines were already revealed in its reaction to these institutions, in the way they were modified, in the adaptability to the insurmountable, and in the intensity of the effort to preserve the individuality of major ethnic groups. However, there was no guaranty that the political development of the colony might not follow new trends once the control of the mother country began to give way to independent self-expression of Canadian society. Nor was there any guaranty that those basic features would eventually lead to the establishment of democratic government.

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 83.

²Ibid., p. 93.

Constitutional Evolution

With the beginning of the 19th century, the independent constitutional evolution became increasingly perceptible in the North American colonies. It was the type of gradual development which reveals the basic patterns of political motivation through the direction taken by the political dynamism at the crucial points of that evolution. On each of these occasions, Canadian society had a choice of various courses of action which, if followed, might have hindered the further development of democracy. What type of characteristics guided Canadian society through the key events of its constitutional evolution? What made the satisfactory solution of the problem of the co-existence of two major ethnic groups in one body politic possible?

The Rebellion

Although the governmental organs provided by the Constitutional Act reflected the structure of the English parliamentary system, they lacked the central principle of parliamentary control because the executive had sufficient revenue to be independent of the Assembly. This shortcoming made government a virtual monopoly of a small section of the population, called the "Chateau Clique" in Lower Canada, and the "Family Compact" in Upper Canada. These groups wished of course to perpetuate the status quo. But the great

majority of the people, increasingly aware that it could possibly take its destiny into its own hands, began to favour a reform of the political situation. Yet, there was no unanimity as to how reform could be brought about. So far Canadian society had been mainly on the defensive, trying to preserve what it already had. But the reform sought for, required positive action, a choice between possible solutions and, as it turned out, the finding of a new one.

In the first decades of the 19th century, the examples of the 'reform' of the French and the American Revolutions were still quite vivid in the memory of the Western World and for some even the ideal formula for progress. In Canada, the examples appealed particularly to more radical-minded reformers.

In Lower Canada, radical reformers were naturally inclined to the French example. They became inebriated with the ideas of the French Revolution and the suggestive effect of its progressivism. Considering the subsequent adoption of the revolutionary ceremonies, jargon and thinking,¹ one might perhaps have been justified in describing the

¹M. Wade, *op. cit.*, p. 165 and p. 167. The organization of the "Fils de la Liberté" in Montreal was hailed as an example which each parish should follow, and a ceremony, modelled upon that of 1789 on the Champs de Mars in Paris, was held about a liberty pole, crowned with a Phrygian bonnet and bearing the inscription, 'To Papineau, his grateful compatriots, 1837'.

Rebellion of 1837 - 1838 as Stanley Ryerson did in his book
1837 the Birth of Canadian Democracy:

The patriot-rebels of 1837, in Upper and Lower Canada, were inspired by a passionate love for freedom. This love of freedom, which is the very life-blood of our Canadian democratic tradition, has its roots deep in the past. It was born of the century-long struggle of the rising European middle-class against oppression; a struggle whose sweep enveloped the New World along with the Old.¹

But, if this "sweep" is meant to imply a relationship between the fundamental dispositions of European and Canadian society, the description is far from being justified.

Despite the trimmings and the ideological facade, despite some amount of spontaneity at the outset, the Rebellion did not rise out of the depth of Canadian society. The great masses of the population - even in French Canada - had not experienced the social frustration and injustice, necessary to the kind of revolution France had seen. The Rebellion lacked the fundamental surge of popular indignation capable of crushing all obstacles.

Nor were the Reformers, rank and file, subject to a blind fanaticism or a "passionate love for freedom". Their Canadian realism was much too strong. At times, they were stunned by the violence of their leaders' words and intentions. Papineau himself came to be appalled by the latter

¹Stanley B. Ryerson, 1837 the Birth of Canadian Democracy, Toronto: Francis White Ltd., 1937, p. 12.

stages of his movement.¹ The handful of men who led their ideas and words to the logical conclusion, were unable to preserve the allegiance of their followers in the face of adversity. Left alone, the small band was soon defeated.

The second source of inspiration of the Canadian Rebellion, particularly in Upper Canada, was the American Revolution.² It was more akin to the nature of Canadian society than the French Revolution, especially as reinforced by the American democratic movement of the same decade under Andrew Jackson who, by wresting the power from the enlightened classes, had vindicated the common man in his rights.³ Likewise in Canada, common people were ruled by a small elite upheld by England. The American example appealed to the Canadian pioneer spirit of self-help in its practical approach. Little ideology was needed to understand the right of the people to a voice in government.

In Upper Canada, the attraction of the American example was further boosted as radical reformers derived much support from Americans who had followed the U. K. Loyalists.⁴

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 167 and p. 173.

²Ibid., p. 152.

³W. B. Munro, American Influences on Canadian Government, Toronto: The MacMillan Co., 1929, p. 5.

⁴John W. Dafoe, Canada an American Nation, New York: Columbia University Press, 1935, p. 46. When the War of 1812 stopped the influx of Americans, they constituted about half of the residents of Upper Canada.

Yet, despite the affinity in nature of the American example, the difference between the attitudes of the American and the Canadian society became obvious when the actual conflict approached. True, the rebels of Upper Canada took up arms in an attempt at a forceful solution. But they were not sure of themselves. Aside from adverse circumstances and poor planning, the central weakness of the insurgents consisted of a lack of conviction and self-confidence. Canadian pioneer society hardly knew the characteristics of a lawless frontier ready to make its own actions into law. The first violence of the Rebellion made many of its participants and most of its friends aware of their illegal position and of the risks involved.

The rebel leaders had thought that a similar problem could be solved in a similar way in every country. But, the character of Canadian society was not yet fully crystallized as to offer them a clear picture of the capabilities and inclinations of the country's political dynamism.

As every revolution creates its own anti-toxin, the Canadian Rebellion brought forth an immediate reaction: Canadians rejected the use of force as a means to solve political problems. This general reaction was indicated by the defection of the moderate wing of the Reform movement, and was epitomized in the desire to uphold the connection with England. In the Canadian mind this adherence to the mother

country was always much more than merely a question of loyalty, it was associated with general order and peace. Hence, the fundamental motive of this loyalty consisted of the - possibly unconscious - realization that England, by preserving the balance between the two major ethnic groups, represented the actual guarantee of the inner harmony of Canada.

Unlike the French and American Revolutions, where the radically democratic forces scored a smashing triumph over the forces of conservatism, and thereby caused society to disassociate itself from its past, and to make the revolutionary disposition into a supreme rule and an annually celebrated achievement,¹ the Canadian Rebellion saw the conservative tendencies of society victorious and reaffirmed. The defeat of the Rebellion consequently also strengthened the social disposition toward moderation. Canadian society respected established order and law more than its desire for liberal self-expression. It recoiled from the lawlessness of the radical reformers because it was able to sense the danger of mutual destruction which would have ensued from a civil war where each group made its own will into its supreme law. The danger became particularly obvious in Lower Canada, where the struggle for self-government became

¹It is significant that Canada has no equivalent to the 4th of July or the Bastille Day, but celebrates Victoria Day and Confederation or Canada Day.

inevitably a struggle between the two races, as the French majority in control of the Assembly, was pitted against the English-speaking minority which supported the ruling oligarchy, causing each side to fear that the other was determined to crush it.¹

Although radical ideas became generally discredited and democratic ideas somewhat suspect, true democracy was rather strengthened by the defeat of the Rebellion, because it demonstrated that Canadian society would not accept any solution which endangers the legal safeguards for minorities.

The Union Act

The temporary disorganization of the democratic forces together with the popular reaction in favour of the established order, invited an attempt at a forceful solution abusing the power of law at the expense of the French Canadians.

The attempt was based on the Report of Lord Durham whom the British authorities had sent to Canada after the Rebellion to investigate the political situation. Though his Report advocated responsible government and condemned the clique-system, it failed to recognize the basic problem of Canadian politics: that a heterogeneous society must respect and protect all its diverse elements. Otherwise the

¹A. L. Burt, op. cit., p. 96.

Report would not have suggested a "complete amalgamation of peoples, races, languages and laws",¹ which meant a complete Anglicization. But, social harmony cannot be imposed upon a country by government decree, nor can mere legal technicalities turn a heterogeneous society into a homogeneous one.

The Durham Report resulted in the Act of Union of 1840, which united Upper and Lower Canada with equal representation from both provinces. Consequently, the French speaking majority had a smaller representation than the English speaking minority, because the representation of Lower Canada included a number of English speaking deputies from constituencies in Montreal and the Eastern Townships. The arrangement was expected to bring the French Canadians under the domination of the English Canadians,² and, had it so functioned, would have offered a way to eliminate the guaranties of the Quebec and the Constitutional Acts.³

How did the major sections of Canadian society react to this plan?

The French Canadians, threatened with national extinction, did not resort to violence, but drew even closer

¹C. P. Lucas, (ed.), Lord Durham's Report, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), vol. I. p. 124.

²Stephen Leacock, Baldwin, Lafontaine, Hincks - Responsible Government, (Toronto: Morang and Co. Ltd., 1907), pp. 61 - 62.

³M. Wade, op. cit., p. 223, The consent of Lower Canada to the passing of the Union Bill was given by a council selected by Governor Colborne.

together, forging a bond of remarkable solidarity.¹

The elements of reform in Upper Canada opposed the Union Act, as it failed to provide responsible government. Yet, their opposition was temporarily allayed by the promise of an imperial guarantee for a sizable loan.

Not even the adherents of the ruling cliques were happy with the Union Act because it contained the prerequisites of responsible government. However, as an outright opposition to the Union would have contradicted their professions of loyalty, these cliques became the principal agents intent upon the implementation of the anti-French aspects of the Union Act.

The lack of cohesion among English-speaking Canadians ruined the designs of the Union scheme. There was really no general desire to crush and eliminate the French sections of Canada. Hence, the door was kept open for a satisfying solution of the political problem.

Responsible Government

After the effect of the imperial loan began to wear off, the democratic forces in Canada resumed their agitation for political reform. Gradually, the proposal of the Durham Report that "matters that should not directly involve the

¹Ibid., p. 220.

mother country and the Colony"¹, should be subjected to popular control, became commonly accepted as the best remedy for Canada's political difficulties. But how could this solution work, as long as the greater part of Canadian society was excluded from the participation in the executive government?

That the position of French Canada was rectified as a preliminary to the introduction of responsible government, and the way in which this correction was brought about, represents probably the most important development responsible for the permanent establishment of democracy in Canada. The development was made possible by the most signal characteristics of Canadian society: a respect for the individuality of diverse groups, and a stubborn urge to find coherence in the inconsistent.

Sacrificing their immediate personal interests, leading political figures in Upper Canada refused to join in the ethnic conspiracy prepared by the Union Act. Their abstention from participation in, and their obstruction of the ministry opened up an avenue of understanding and confidence with their excluded compatriots from Lower Canada.² Under the leadership of Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine, Canadian society went on to disprove Durham's theory

¹C. P. Lucas, op. cit., Vol. II. p. 280.

²M. Wade, op. cit., p. 232.

of the political inferiority of French Canadians, by finding common ground upon which a stable and lasting community spirit could be built.¹ The development of this inner cohesion was best born out by the election of the French Catholic Lafontaine in the English Protestant constituency of York. Despite racial and religious differences, Canadian society became more homogeneous through a general desire to obtain a just solution.

After the admission of the French Canadians to the ministry in 1842, the introduction of responsible government as a constitutional technicality, became mostly a question of building up the pressure of popular demand, and of electing a strong reform-minded Assembly which happened in the election of 1847.

Had there been a permanent split within society along ethnic lines, responsible government as established in 1848, would hardly have succeeded in Canada. Its success was based upon democratic government as a principle of the Canadian constitution. This principle took definite shape in the period of 1840 - 1842, when the political dynamism of the country proved that it valued justice more than liberty.

¹Ibid., p. 234. - Etienne Parent hailed the electors of York in "Le Canadien": "It is on the principle of true equal justice that they intend to live with their brethren of Lower Canada, as the step they have officially taken indicates. They elect Mr. Lafontaine to show, they say, their sympathy for the Lower Canadians and their detestation of _____ the injustices to which we have been exposed."

Confederation

The strength of democratic government as a constitutional principle rested essentially upon the agreement between English and French Reformers. It had not yet been legally confirmed. The possibility of official attempts at destroying the national individuality of the French Canadians was still present. To provide some means of upholding distinction and separatness, the legislative union of the Union Act had to be modified.¹

The French fear of Anglicization was increased immediately after the introduction of responsible government, by the Montreal riots of 1849 which demanded annexation to the United States. But annexation did not appeal to the French Canadians other than radical republicans.²

The most important attempt however to settle the political problem by means of English domination, came with the demand for 'representation by population'. This agitation gathered strength as soon as Upper Canadian population figures surpassed those of Lower Canada following the census of 1860. Readily, the two extreme sections, the Family Compact and the radical Reformers, joined forces in the fight

¹D. G. Creighton, British North America at Confederation, Ottawa: The King's Printer, 1939, p. 21.

²M. Wade, op. cit., p. 311, The followers of Louis-Joseph Papineau were at that time impressed by the governmental system of the American Republic.

for a "just deal to Upper Canada".¹

This new temptation to put English racism into effect, naturally made the French Canadians resentful and obstinate. Governments of the Union period were signally unstable. In the search for a satisfactory solution, the idea of the double majority played an important part. By providing that every government should have the support of a majority from both provinces, the idea of the double majority was an effort to introduce a form of federation vested in the life of the government itself.² Practical politics however demonstrated that the measure was inadequate to remove instability, as it gave too much importance to the demands of sectionalism.

To find a different solution became increasingly more urgent. But the ways and means were still a hotly debated mystery. Yet, unlike many other countries, the debate did not split major political groups into a permanent conflict. On the contrary, the political leaders once more took resort to the traditionally Canadian approach to serious difficulties; the exponents of diverse opinions combined to work out a solution. The resulting coalition of 1863 united under the neutral leadership of Dr. Etienne-Pascal

¹D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, The MacMillan Comp., 1952, Vol. I. p. 308. cf. "Census of Canada 1860 - 1861", Quebec 1863, Vol. I. pp. 42 - 43, and pp. 78 - 79.

²S. Leacock, op. cit., pp. 263 - 264.

Taché, George Brown, a leading advocate of 'rep. by pop.', John A. Macdonald, the leader of the moderate elements in Upper Canada, and Georges-Etienne Cartier, a leader of the French Canadians. Their object was to obtain Confederation¹.

Through the co-operation of these men, Canada was not very deeply involved in the attainment of Confederation. Of course, John A. Macdonald managed to utilize the Fenian raids to stimulate sufficient British North American patriotism in support of his project.² But this sentiment was not very strong nor did it fully convince people of the desirability of Confederation. Consequently, when the new scheme came into effect, it created the feeling of having been imposed upon the country by cunning politicians. Such feelings were greatly strengthened by secessionist agitations. From the point of view of patriotism this development was regrettable, because it kept Canadians from being as proud as they would have been, had Confederation been obtained in a hard and prolonged struggle. In compensation however, the peaceful solution left Canadians free to fret perhaps, but also free from major inhibiting prejudices, and free to combine political concepts which might otherwise have contradicted the pledge required by a more determined effort.

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 319.

²D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. I., p. 439 and p. 443. The Fenian movement was an Irish society organized to obtain independence from England by force. Following the Civil War, the Fenian raids were directed against Canada to acquire a base of operations.

Typical of the Canadian lack of emotional satisfaction with Confederation is this comment on the political settlement of 1867:

Again the situation was met by a compromise, that of Confederation, which attempted to solve the problems of the day by diluting them, that is, by bringing in other provinces and inventing a new framework of government. This framework, contained in the British North America Act, was a remarkable piece of political architecture, but like its predecessors it had nothing to say as to the nature of society itself. In other words Confederation was an ad hoc device founded on no particular political philosophy. It was a piece of mechanical expediency, not the expression of any dynamic idea.¹

Here are the intriguing catchwords which make a political achievement fascinating: 'political philosophy' and 'dynamic idea'. But, why must a constitutional structure be based upon a 'political philosophy' instead of the needs of society? Cannot the very absence of such a 'political philosophy' provide ample indication 'as to the nature of society'? Was the problem of Canadian politics really met by a 'compromise' and merely 'diluted' by the inclusion of other provinces?

Of course, compared with the complexity and expansion, the key clause of Confederation seems like an administrative expediency. The switch from the legislative union envisaged by John A. Macdonald, to the federal union proposed by Georges-Etienne Cartier, made Confederation the foundation

¹A. R. M. Lower, "Canadian Unity and its Conditions", in Problems in Canadian Unity, Violet Anderson (ed.), Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1938, p. 3.

stone of Canadian national unity by providing a new guaranty for the protection of sectional identities.

The British North America Act provided a rigid legal basis, like the American Constitution, and ensured the fundamental distinction between nation and province by delineating the specific dominion of each. But unlike the American Constitution, the British North America Act refrained from the use of the theories of the limitation of government, and the division of power, but rather adhered to the concept of parliamentary sovereignty.¹

Confederation was in effect the legalization of the agreement between the English and French Reformers of 1840 - 1842. The final victory of the democratic inclinations of Canadian society over the temptations of rebellion, of government power, and of majority, was embodied in the federal union.

This type of union was by no means a compromise or a concession to French Canadians. Other provinces had no reason to be dissatisfied with the solution. Upper Canada, which prior to Confederation had felt restrained in its energies and ambitions by being chained to the older province,² was now free to pursue its own objects. However,

¹G. W. Brown, "Canada in the Making", The Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report 1944, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1944,) p. 8.

²D. G. Creighton, British North America at Confederation, p. 21.

what actually determined John A. Macdonald to change his opinion in favour of federal union, was the fact that the Maritimes too thought they had to preserve their own separate individuality.¹

By ensuring the security of minority interests, the stage was set for the complete removal of imperial controls. Full autonomy was obtained without major incidents or political upheavals which could have created a permanent antipathy against the mother country.

The last hurdle for the Canadian constitutional evolution came with the need for amending the British North America Act. Here was the last opportunity where minority rights could have been jeopardized. But the central principles of Canadian democracy were already too firmly established to be disregarded. As a consequence, the process of amendment as proposed by the Report of the Special Committee of the House of Commons on the British North America Act of 1935, recognized the rigidity of the Act's basic provisions by suggesting that matters concerning provincial and minority rights should only be amended with the concurrence of the federal Parliament and all provincial legislatures.²

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 320.

²H. McD. Clokie, "Basic Problems of the Canadian Constitution", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, February 1942, pp. 1 - 32. Report of the Special Committee of the House of Commons on the British North America Act, 1935, p. 60.

Each of the key events in the constitutional evolution and particularly the settlement of Confederation crystallized and revealed the basic nature of Canadian society. The central struggle of this evolution aimed at the preservation of sectional individualities. Yet, although there was great determination, individuality was not permitted to become exclusiveness. Nor was there a wide-spread desire to impose any one individuality on other sections. Under these circumstances, the sincere desire to obtain social harmony drew the various sections closer together. Relatively free from the poisons produced by social upheavals and injustices, Canadians were not only able to combine men of different opinions, as epitomized by the coalition of 1863, but were also able to combine different political systems into a consistent whole. Without this ability to combine divergencies, no single community could have been built in British North America.

Pessimists of course bewail these persistent 'compromises' as a weakness of the basic principles upon which Canadian society rests. Yet, the strength of these principles has been felt far beyond Canada's borders in the conversion of the British Empire from one of dominance and colonization into one of fraternity and co-operation.¹

¹H. McD. Clokie, Canadian Government and Politics, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1950), p. 39.

The Main Characteristics of Canadian Society

The Canadian constitutional evolution was dominated by a central and persistent theme: the preservation of sectional identities through their unification. This pattern of political expression reveals the most important characteristics of Canadian society: individuality and cohesion. How do these paradoxical features manifest themselves? What is the nature of the Canadian tendency toward individuality and toward cohesion? What is the relationship between the two?

Individuality

What does 'individuality' mean in terms of Canadian society? Is it a "passionate love for freedom ... born of century-long struggle of the rising European middle-class against oppression"?¹ Is it an American frontier-type revolt against constituted society?² Or is it plain backwardness hindering progress by retarding assimilation?

Assimilation's greatest impediment is spaciousness. It makes isolation possible and conveys a feeling of independence. In Canada, people were similarly affected by the vastness of the country. An attitude of live and let live, and a respect for individuality and freedom became attributes

¹S. B. Ryerson, op. cit., p. 12.

²S. D. Clark, op. cit., p. 378.

not particularly noticed by the inhabitants but quite conspicuous to visitors.¹

Perhaps the most important stimulus to the development of Canadian individuality came from the mothercountry. In order to preserve her North American colonies from a 'manifest destiny',² England attempted through land-grants and political preferment to create and strengthen an aristocracy in the colonies of New France, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Upper Canada and British Columbia.³ Although continued in a less obvious fashion after Confederation, the practice had to be abandoned when Canadians, aware that too much of such individuality would invite social division, objected in speeches filled with equalitarian sentiments.⁴

¹cf. L. P. Kellogg, (ed.) Charlevoix's Journal of a Voyage to North America, Chicago, 1923, Vol. I. P. 247. The Jesuit Father described the social climate in New France in the early 18th century as follows: "It seems that the air which one breathes in this continent contributes to it, but the example and the habits of its natural inhabitants, who put all their happiness in liberty and independence, are more than sufficient to form this character."

²C. P. Lucas, (ed.), op. cit., Vol. II, p. 311. Lord Durham's Report suggested that: "If we wish to prevent the extension of this (American) influence, it can only be done by raising up for the North American colonist some nationality of his own: by elevating the small and unimportant communities into a society having some objects of a national importance and by thus giving their inhabitants a country which they will be unwilling to see absorbed..."

³S. D. Clark, op. cit., p. 385 and p. 386.

⁴W. B. Munro, American Influences on Canadian Government, p. 90. cf. Parliamentary Debates, May 1919 and Feb. 1929.

Developing freely under England's aegis, Canadian individuality did not have to become an obsession in order to survive. It did not have to identify itself with a political ideology. Thus, despite an appearance of being liberal due to the underlying pioneer self-reliance and independence, this individuality is not bound by any Liberal dogmas but is guided by its inherent realism. Similarly, there is no relationship to the European class struggle as Canada does not have any comparable social stratification. Nor is this seemingly liberal individualism in conflict with religion because in Canada religion has become an instrument in the preservation of individuality.¹ Perhaps, this Canadian characteristic can be best described in the terms of Alexis de Tocqueville's observation of a similar trend in the American Republic, namely that "the great advantage of the American is that he has arrived at a state of democracy without having to endure a democratic revolution and that he is born free without having to become so".²

What are some of the peculiar manifestations of being "born free"?

Certainly the most eloquent testimony for Canadian individuality is provided by the extreme position the

¹cf. L. Hartz, op. cit., pp. 40 - 41. In the United States, religion was on the side of the Revolution.

²Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, F. Bowen (ed.), Boston, 1873, Vol. II, p. 123.

Dukhobor sect has been able to maintain. In a more general way, Canadians tend to fall not only into English or French speaking categories, but usually are able to provide themselves with a personal pre-fix as Irish-Canadian, Scottish-Canadian, or German-Canadian. The concept of a full-blooded all-Canadian has yet to be thoroughly popularized north of the 49th parallel.

The influence of this attitude toward individuality can also be found in the young French-Canadians, the famous soueurs de bois, abandoning the advantages of community life for the freedom of the wilderness,¹ in the perennial difficulty of getting domestic servants who are mostly supplied by immigrants,² as well as in the fact that in Canada the percentage of families living in homes owned by themselves, is the highest in the world.³

In the political field, Canadian individuality accounts for the modification of the parliamentary principle through the almost invariable practice of choosing representatives who are resident in their constituency.⁴ Here, the

¹W. B. Munro, Seigneurs, p. 30.

²Goldwin Smith, The Empire, (London: Oxford University Press, 1863) p. 28. "One sign of the pervading democratic sentiment is the servant difficulty about which a continual wail from the mistresses of households fills the social air. ... The main cause is probably the democratic dislike of service."

³Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada 1951 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), Vol. III, p. 6. It was 65 %.

⁴G. W. Brown, "Canada in the Making", *op. cit.*, p. 8.

emphasis is not so much on the ability of the candidate but rather on the prospects of finding a faithful representative for the particular needs and interests of the constituency.

Similarly, the national political parties are strongly marked by sectional individuality. Although tacitly postulated by many commentators and sincerely demanded by ideological parties, a monolith political party constitutes something 'un-Canadian'. Perhaps one of the most striking examples was supplied in 1940 by the Ontario Liberal provincial organization which carried its independence even to the point of open conflict with the avowed purposes and policies of the national party. Mr. Hepburn, the Liberal Prime Minister of Ontario and his Liberal Members of Parliament joined the provincial Conservative party in carrying a formal vote of censure on the Canadian Prime Minister and leader of the National Liberal party, Mr. King.¹

In Canada therefore, sectional individuality is frequently stronger than partisan adherence. By stimulating this individuality through the fear of its infringement, several provincial leaders have already built for themselves successful political careers. However, despite the secessionist agitation in the Maritimes, and despite the idea of an independent Laurentian state, the Canadian characteristic of individuality did not become an exclusive extreme

¹H. McD. Clokie, Canadian Government and Politics, p. 101.

dividing society permanently, or provoking a civil war.

Cohesion

In the United States, national cohesion was brought about by an overemphasis of liberal and individualist attitudes. The revolutionary "tinge" and the tendency to indiscriminate sympathy with rebellion contracted by American sentiment in the contest with George III,¹ and symbolized by the Jeffersonian aspects of the American constitution, have become "saturate" to the extent of assuming a quality of traditionalism capable of being reactionary,² making it possible to continue the society through a conformity in externals.³

Are the cohesive inclinations of Canadian society of a similar nature? Certainly there is some semblance especially in time of crisis due to a general similarity of North American society, and due to the inescapable influence of the big neighbour. However, essentially there is considerable difference, as in Canada cohesion being a characteristic of society, actually counteracts extreme individuality.⁴

¹Goldwin Smith, op. cit., p. 27.

²L. Hartz, op. cit., pp. 47 - 48.

³Robin M. Williams, Jr., American Society, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), p. 425.

⁴S. D. Clark, op. cit., p. 381. Clark describes the Canadian tendency toward cohesion even as "counter-revolutionary" in comparison with the American Republic.

If British power served as protection for the development of Canadian individuality, it also served as an agent of unification and consolidation as all the various sections belonged to one mother country. Although the complete assimilation proposed by Lord Durham had to be abandoned because it divided the colony, England nevertheless contributed also actively to the development of Canadian cohesion by strengthening the moderate forces in the different provinces, and particularly by the effective assistance given to the realization of the Quebec scheme of 1864.¹

From its pioneer past, Canadian society has also learned the importance of united action in the face of danger and necessity. But this type of cohesion did not bear the stigma of a lawless frontier, as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, helped by the local churches, was able to preserve the political control in the pioneering era.² Yet, the Canadian characteristic of cohesion is more than mere law-abidance, it is the ability to unite in order to adapt individual desires and actions to the needs of the country, or the requirements of nature, or any other superior necessity.

¹Chester Martin, "British Policy in Canadian Confederation", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XIII, pp. 3 - 19.

²S. D. Clark, "The Canadian Community", op. cit., pp. 379 - 382. Clark points particularly, in the way of comparison, to the difficulties the Texas Rangers encountered in the enforcement of law and order.

Aside from the settlement of the constitutional problem discussed earlier, this disposition toward cohesion can also be traced in most of the other endeavours of Canadian society.

Geography strongly supports the contention that all economic interests of Canada run north-south. Yet, Canadians have set out to build an economy running east-west. In this endeavour they bound up the individual parts into a great system held together by the construction of railways. But a more fundamental adaptation was needed. Hence, Canadian economy, like the American being based upon individual initiative and enterprise, met the peculiar situation and the relentless pressure of American competition by a greater degree of integration and a closer relationship with the government.¹ As a result capitalist enterprises are found in happy harmony with such state enterprises as the Ontario Hydroelectric Company, the Canadian Broadcasting Company, Wheat Pools and others.

Religion too came under the influence of Canadian cohesion, much in contrast to the situation in the United States where the frontier became a breeding ground for new churches and sects. In the early English-speaking sections of Canada, there existed a variety of Protestant religions brought in from Europe and America. But here the different

¹ G. Brown, "Canada in the Making", op. cit., p. 7.

groups could little afford the waste of a separate and competitive existence. This realization initiated a movement of church union.¹ In a process of gradual amalgamation, several Protestant groups were united in a national body, the United Church of Canada.² Canadian Presbyterianism followed similar patterns. At present it seems quite possible that the movement of church union might eventually lead to a single Protestant Church in Canada by joining the Anglican, Presbyterian and United Churches.

The actual effect of this cohesion is basically conservative,³ indicated on the one hand by the centralist tendencies of Confederation, and on the other hand by the protection the same constitutional instrument provides for sectional individualities. Thus, without contradicting Tocqueville, Friedrich Engels, the leading theoretician of Marxism, could say that Americans "are born conservatives - just because America is so purely bourgeois, so entirely without a feudal past".⁴ Although the cohesive features

¹S. D. Clark, "Religious Organization and the Rise of the Canadian Nation", The Canadian Historical Association Annual Report 1944, p. 91. "The period of 1850 - 1885 seems to have seen the greatest expansion of national consciousness as detected in religious affairs". p. 86.

²G. Brown, "Canada in the Making", op. cit., p. 11.

³S. D. Clark, "The Canadian Community", op. cit., p. 380.

⁴Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Correspondence 1846 - 1895, (New York: International Publishers, 1936), Letter 209, p. 467.

of Canadian society differ from those of the United States, the basic fact to which Friedrich Engels refers, is that the resulting conservative effect in both countries is not produced by any political philosophy or any social injury, but constitutes a national characteristic and a way of life.

Accordingly, the national parties of Canada are able to unite divergent groups and interests not on the basis of a homogeneous ideology but on a unity of purpose to obtain the various individual demands. Under ordinary circumstances, this type of partisanship works against a multiplicity of political parties, as Canadians are generally unwilling to support a minor party which has little chance of fulfilling the wishes of its adherents.

Of course, the national consciousness produced by this type of cohesion does not compare with a strong nationalism which would probably have broken as heterogeneous a country as Canada. Yet, Canadian national consciousness not being imbued with a concept of national sovereignty as inconsistent with the English connection, made the development of a bond capable of maintaining the connection with the mother country possible, despite the introduction of colonial self-government which Englishmen generally interpreted as the beginning of complete separation.¹ Thus, the Canadian type

¹St. Leacock, op. cit., pp. 229 - 230. The initial inability of Englishmen to grasp the Canadian ideas on that matter, contrasts Canadian society against that of the mother country.

of cohesion aside from holding together the divergent sections of the country, also holds together the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Realism

What makes it possible that such conflicting tendencies as individuality and cohesion can exist side by side in one body politic? Does not the perpetual contest between the two tendencies weaken Canada?

Being able to mature gradually under the shelter and guidance of the British Empire - the center of internationalism during the 19th century, well called the Pax Britannica - Canadian society could develop a healthy realism. If Canada's evolution would have been subject to the emotional excesses provoked by religious, economic or political upheavals, this realism would have been dimmed or destroyed. But, as neither the French institutions of an absolute government, a feudal economy and an hierarchical church, nor the movement toward self-government and autonomy, created wide-spread and deep-seated prejudices, Canadians remained in a position to appreciate the advantages of individuality and of cohesion.

Unlike individuality and cohesion however, Canadian realism does not, strictly speaking, constitute a characteristic of society, but rather a harmonizing factor which,

by a strange logic, counteracts extreme manifestations of cohesion or individuality. Such manifestations have of course greatly diminished in strength and frequency, particularly since minority rights have been constitutionally secured. In his book The French Canadians 1760 - 1945, Mason Wade has stated that the traditional Canadian tactic to compel concessions, has been the threat of annexation to the United States.¹ Although this threat has probably outlived its usefulness, it still lives on in a more moderate form in the perpetual Canadian argument between co-operation with the United States and a closer relationship with England and the British Commonwealth.

The reaction of Canadian realism to such extreme manifestations was best demonstrated when they assumed forms of illegality as in the Rebellion of 1837 - 1838, or in the North-West Rebellion of 1885. On these occasions, sections of the population which were sympathetic to the demands of the rebels, rallied to support constituted authority. Thus, the moderate Reformers of 1837, though interested in a political change, did not participate in the Rebellion. Again, when Canada had to put down the North-West Rebellion of 1885, French-Canadian troupes despite their sympathies for the métis population, did their share in quelling the uprising.

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 512. This threat was particularly used in connection with the Rebellion of 1837 - 1838, the Montreal Riots of 1849, and the French-Canadian opposition to England's imperialist designs prior to World War I.

By taking off the edge of political extremism, Canadian realism enhances the ability to compromise which is so indispensable for the achievement of social harmony and general prosperity in a heterogeneous society.

But Canadian realism goes even further by creating a very common aversion and even suspicion against political theories. The consequent lack of strong ideological convictions makes Canadians reserved, hesitant and uncertain. George Brown described this hesitation as a kind of "incurable adolescence" combining a curious feeling of achievement and frustration.¹ In the field of politics, Canadian uncertainty has probably never been better demonstrated than by the young men of a section of the Liberal Party, called "Canada First" and formed in 1874. They were never quite sure whether their watch-word meant political independence or not, and whether their function was to liberalize the Liberal Party, or to found a new third party, or merely to help in creating a deeper consciousness of the implications of the new nationality among the community at large.²

This hesitation and uncertainty must not be construed as a weakness, but rather as a source of sober stability which has kept Canada out of revolution and civil war. The

¹G. Brown, "Canada in the Making", op. cit., pp. 6-7.

²Frank Underhill, "Goldwin Smith", University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol. II, p. 297. Goldwin Smith was the first president of the National Club of the Canada First movement founded in Toronto in 1874.

longevity of Canadian governments also reflects this stability brought on by an unwillingness to install a new government as long as the one in office performs satisfactorily.

Despite its moderating and harmonizing influence, Canadian realism does not eliminate the contest between individuality and cohesion, but perpetuates the constant interaction of these two characteristics. As one of the consequences, assimilation in Canada, although drawing newcomers into an allegiance, tacit or overt, to one of the dominant cultures, is nevertheless a far cry from the American melting pot action.¹

A far more important consequence, however, is the fact that, if the character of Canadian society is considered as the first principle of political dynamism, this persistent struggle between individuality and cohesion, tempered by realism, represents the basic pattern of political motivation. Indeed, ever since the social homogeneity of New France gave way to the heterogeneity of Canada, this pattern has inspired political action and has given direction to the constitutional evolution.

Of course, in times of social harmony and general prosperity, this interaction of the dual characteristics of society tends to be less perceptible. But, whenever the

¹E. McInnis, "The People", Canada, G. Brown, (ed.) p. 12.

balance is disturbed by a crisis, be it a general election or a World War, individuality and cohesion exert themselves to combat the various dangers. Thus, during both World Wars, Canadians readily accepted the closer integration required by the war effort. But, when the demand for military conscription arose, French-Canadians objected to it, because it appeared to be an unjustifiable infringement on individuality.

However, since minority rights have been secured by Confederation, the contest between individuality and cohesion does not follow any longer primarily the lines of ethnic division, but runs increasingly along those separating federal and provincial authority. In that way, the Canadian constitution removes the ethnic division of the country by creating a new division, between Ottawa and the provinces, which identifies the federal authority almost automatically with centralist and conservative tendencies, leaving the rest of the country to pride itself with being democratic and liberally-minded.

Canadian realism may prompt the conclusion that, "what concerns people mostly, is their wellbeing".¹ The truth of this conclusion depends upon the satisfaction of individuality and cohesion, those key characteristics which permeate the history and the endeavours of Canadian society.

¹A. Siegfried, The Race Question in Canada, p. 176.

Such persistency and strength warrant the hypothesis that these dual features also constitute the fundamental characteristics of the Canadian party system which, symbolically enough, sustains a monarchical form of government by essentially democratic processes.

CHAPTER II

THE CANADIAN PARTIES

Throughout history, responsible men were agreed in the condemnation of political parties because, as George Washington declared in his Farewell Address, all such "combinations and associations under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract or awe the regular deliberations of the constituted authorities, are destructive ... and of fatal tendency".¹ Should the Canadian political parties likewise be condemned for their interference with good government?

The type of political parties, George Washington had to contend with, were "self-constituted democratic societies" modelled on the Paris Jacobins Club.² Through their agitation against tyrants and their attacks on all constituted authorities in the United States, these political organizations became a veritable menace to public order.³

Before entering upon a consideration of the Canadian party system, it is necessary to analyse the constituent

¹Wilfred E. Binkley, American Political Parties, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954), p. 51. Quoting President Washington.

²M. Ostrogorski, Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, Vol. II, p. 6.

³Ibid., Vol. II, p. 6.

parts of this system. Canadian parties, like political parties throughout history, aim at controlling constituted authority. "Party", as John A. Macdonald has remarked, "is only a struggle for power".¹ Yet, if the object is the same in all parties does it follow that the method of obtaining power must be the same too? Are Canadian parties fanatical élites which grasp power through subversion and revolution, after the type of political organization Lenin has recommended to the working classes? Or, are Canadian parties merely bribing voters into allegiance with the spoils of office?

The Evolution of the Major Parties

Without considering the entire history of the major Canadian parties, their essential structure is best revealed in several crucial situations of their evolution. Which influences prevented Canadian parties from becoming agents of a class, a race, or an ideology?

Sectional Groupings

The arrival of the U. E. Loyalists in 1783, brought a politically very active group to Canada. Through their unfortunate experience with democratic rule in the United

¹A. Brady, Canada, (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1932) p. 84.

States, they were the more fortified in the conviction to represent an élite alone capable of loyalty to the mother country and consequently alone trustworthy enough to govern the colony to preserve it for the mother country and the influence of their own group.¹ With England's support, government power in the British North American colonies became the prerogative of small oligarchies whose members together with their friends and adherents, formed from 1815 onwards, distinct sectional parties.² The inner unity of these parties derived from ties of mutual interest and social association. Hence, their inherent character was that of an aristocratic class party.

Against these oligarchies, the political forces of the excluded majority began to rally, and there developed the Reform movement in Upper Canada, the French party in Lower Canada and a Reform movement led by Joseph Howe in the Maritimes. These sectional parties of protest were based on a varying amount of political theory as a justification of their opposition. But essentially, they too were class parties being chiefly supported by rural areas, particularly in Upper Canada,³ In addition, this class complexion

¹A. G. Bradley, Colonial Americans in Exile, p. 174.

²S. Leacock, Baldwin, Lafontaine, Hincks, Responsible Government, (Toronto: Morang and Comp. 1907) pp. 11 - 12.

³A. Brady, Canada, p. 103.

assumed racial aspects in Lower Canada. Hence, in the early 19 th century, the Canadian political groupings possessed potentially the prerequisites for the development of a class struggle.¹

Canadian politics however contained two features which counteracted such a division along class lines. On the one hand, the sections of the population which were excluded from the participation in government, were not completely suppressed but could voice their grievances through their representatives in the popular assemblies. Consequently, the Reform movements were not forced into an extreme revolutionary position.

On the other hand, the oligarchies, unlike the American Federalists, who had refused to compete for popular support because of their concept of government by an élite,² entered election campaigns despite a similar concept of government. Using on many occasions the Governors to throw over their programmes and performances the sanction of the Crown, the oligarchies set out to win a popular following. Their efforts were particularly successful when the protestations, inquiries and memorials of a Reform controlled

¹J. W. Longley, Joseph Howe, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1926), pp. 15 - 16.

²E. E. Schattschneider, "United States, The Functional Approach to Party Government", Modern Political Parties, S. Neumann, (ed.), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956) p. 196.

assembly seemed to justify the claim that the Reformers desired to bring in the American systems of administration and government, looking to separation from Great Britain and ultimate union with the United States.¹ Hence, aside from the claim to support due to the ability to provide good government,- which was not at all unjustified² - these oligarchies could already quite effectively influence public support by the promise to protect the various minorities from the extremes of majority rule.

The unpopularity of extreme political action was particularly reflected in the defeat of the Rebellion of 1836 - 1837. Canadians rather supported the more moderate leaders of the Reform movement whose primary concern was the achievement of responsible government through constitutional means. Moderation went even so far as to defer the introduction of this government reform by seven years. Thus, when Robert Baldwin, the leader of the Upper Canadian Reformers, resigned from the executive council at the beginning of the first session of the Union Parliament in 1841, he was counting on the majority of 45 Reformers in the 84 member legislature to bring about ministerial responsibility. But, he had overestimated the unity of the various sections of the Reform party, and his move failed to lead to a defeat of

¹John Dafoe, op. cit., p. 47.

²J. W. Longley, op. cit., p. 283.

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the government which managed to get the necessary support because of the promise of an imperial guarantee for a loan of £ 1,500,000.¹

However, in the election of 1847, the Reform movement finally obtained a majority great enough to secure responsible government. In this election the government clique also lost its most important ally - the Governor, for Lord Elgin remained neutral in the electoral fray.² At first, the extent of this loss was not fully comprehended. But the Rebellion Losses Bill roused the members of the oligarchy to the reality of their political impotence. Unable to prevent the passage of the bill, they relied upon the British Governor to veto or reserve it. Yet, Lord Elgin only confirmed responsible government by playing the constitutional role required of a governor, and thus ended the attempted separation of King and constitution by upholding the historic English interpretation, according to which loyalty is due equally from all subjects of the King - a constitutional monarch who acts according to the law of the realm.³ Thus,

¹S. Leacock, op. cit., pp. 81 - 82. There were then at least five different groups in the legislature: the party pledged to support the government with 24 members; the extreme wing of Upper Canadian Tories with seven members; the two groups of Reformers with different shades of moderation with 20 members each; the five members of the Ultra Reformers and the remaining eight members were of doubtful disposition.

²M. Wade, op. cit., p. 253.

³W. Hancock, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, (London: Oxford University Press, 1937) Vol. I, pp. 95 - 96.

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the correct conduct of the Governor Lord Elgin, broke the basis for the development of a privileged class party. Divested of its claim of being alone able to govern loyally, the oligarchy sank to an equal level with the other party groups.

The overwhelming election victory of the Reform movement in 1847, proved to be almost as disintegrating as the oligarchy's defeat.¹ Following the resignation of the two leaders of the movement, Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine, the various groups had no reason to hold together. Indeed, the united strength of the Reformers, Radicals,² Clear Grits,³ Independents and the Parti Rouge⁴ so completely

¹O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, (Toronto: Oxford University Press) 1921, Vol. I, p. 53.

²S. Leacock, op. cit., pp. 27 - 30. The Reformers were the followers of Robert Baldwin, who worked for responsible government through constitutional means. They were also profoundly attached to the British connection. The Radicals were the followers of William Lyon Mackenzie, who agitated for the American type of institutions.

³John Lewis, George Brown, (Toronto, Morgan and Co. Ltd., 1906), p. 41. The Clear Grits came mainly from west of Toronto, the newest part of the province, and were a characteristic North American pioneer and agrarian group, born generally on Canadian soil but consciously influenced by American precedents. Typical pioneer democrats, they would have elected all officials from the Governor down; universal suffrage; vote by ballot; biennial parliament; abolition of property qualifications for parliamentary representation, etc.

⁴M. Wade, op. cit., p. 262, The Parti Rouge or Parti Démocratique was formed by Louis-Joseph Papineau and advocated the tenets of European Liberalism. The party also supported the extension of the elective principle to every branch of the government.

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outnumbered the oligarchy and their supporters, that it was vain to expect all sections of the movement to disregard their own special views for the sake of outvoting so small a minority.¹

Hence, soon after responsible government had been won, the political forces of the country disintegrated into a number of similar sectional groupings, each trying to win popular support with various shades of programmes and political convictions which appealed only to a small section of the electorate. The inability of these groups to obtain a majority in the legislature, was responsible for the great government instability of that period.

The National Parties

According to Robert Michels' book Political Parties which was mostly based on the situation in Europe, the Canadian Tory sections should have become a permanent source of social friction:

Where the old conservative elements have been expelled from direct participation in power, and have been replaced by innovators fighting under the banner of democracy, the conservative party assumes an aspect hostile to the existing order of the state, and sometimes even a revolutionary character.²

¹S. Leacock, op. cit., p. 351.

²Robert Michels, Political Parties, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1949), p. 3.

The first reaction to the disappointment over Lord Elgin's refusal to intervene against the Rebellion Losses Bill, certainly seemed to confirm this statement. The hostility of the oligarchy and its supporters, exploded in the Montreal riots of 1849 which went as far as demanding annexation to the United States in order to undo the existing order of state.¹ These riots were followed by a strong upsurge of a virulent racism among the conservative elements.²

However, as responsible government did not result from a revolutionary movement, the deposed elements were not forced to assume a revolutionary character. Nor were they permanently expelled from the direct participation in power, or in any way persecuted or humiliated. Under such circumstances, Canadian realism began to exert its moderating influence. Led by John A. Macdonald, the Tory group was soon "becoming reasonable", as Lord Elgin put it,³ and began to adapt itself to the new constitutional arrangement. By accepting the principle of democratic government, the Conservative group laid the foundation for the development of a consistent party system free of the conflicts between oppositionist class parties.

¹D. Creighton, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 139 - 140.

²M. Wade, op. cit., p. 277.

³A. G. Doughty, (ed.), Elgin - Grey Papers, 1846 - 1852, (Ottawa: The King's Printer, 1937), Vol. II, p. 715, Elgin to Grey, September 27, 1850.

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Moreover, the converted Tory group became actually a leading agent in the move to unite the various sectional groups. Their failure to provide stable administrations, stimulated Canadian cohesion. But all potential combinations with more radical groups were thwarted by an overemphasis of sectional interests and issues. Conversely, the transformation of the Tory elements had removed the major difference separating them from the moderate Reformers. First indications of a mutual rapprochement appeared as early as 1851.¹ But it was not after the election of 1854, when no single political group had a majority, that the two groups were united in a coalition controlled by John A. Macdonald and Georges-Etienne Cartier. This coalition grew into a permanent national party under the genuinely Canadian title of Liberal-Conservative.²

The coalition comprised four principal groups: an alliance of French Canadian Roman Catholics and Montreal industrial and commercial interests, made possible by the leadership of G.-E. Cartier; Lower Canadian English led by Alexander Galt; Hincksite Reformers who had been "moderates" among Upper Canadian followers of Robert Baldwin; and Upper Canadian Tories under the leadership of John A.

¹D. Creighton, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 169.

²G. M. Carter, "The Commonwealth Overseas: Variations on a British Theme", S. Neumann, op. cit., p. 62.

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Macdonald.¹ Aside from a characteristically loose association of these groups, the most important aspect of this coalition consisted in its French-Canadian support which the Conservatives had obtained through their performance in the different contests over schools, clergy reserves and religious corporations.² This support indicated that the Canadian political parties had begun to break down the race barrier in the effort to provide good government.³

The failure to overcome the racial division was the chief cause why the remaining political groups were unable to form a similar 'coalition'. George Brown, the leading political figure of these opposition groups, carried on a relentless campaign against "French-Canadian tyranny" which repelled the Parti Rouge of Lower Canada.⁴ In addition, he also espoused the cause of representation by population, as soon as Upper Canada's population figures surpassed those of Lower Canada. In order to have this representational concept included in the projected federation of the British North American provinces, George Brown even joined the Liberal-Conservative coalition in 1863. Through these efforts,

¹J. R. Williams, The Conservative Party of Canada, (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1956), pp. 8 - 9.

²D. Creighton, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 193.

³F. H. Underhill, Canadian Political Parties, (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1957) p. 13.

⁴D. Creighton, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 225. He used the Separate School Bill of 1855 as example of this tyranny.

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he created a lasting suspicion among French Canadians against the Clear Grits, so much so that it required a French-Canadian leader to overcome effectively the ethnic division between the political groups which were to unite in the national Liberal party.

But, before these Liberal groups could be combined in a national entity, they also had to abandon their over-emphasis of sectional individuality and political doctrines. This prerequisite was well demonstrated by the opposition of these groups to Confederation, and by their performance as federal government from 1873 - 1878.

While the efforts to obtain Confederation consolidated and extended the Liberal-Conservative party, the opposition to Confederation had just the contrary effect on the Liberal groups. They attempted to win power over the issue of sectional dissatisfaction. There was no national interest or purpose to unite the anti-Confederation groups, and indeed every effort to unite them would have contradicted their position. In Nova Scotia, this negative agitation was carried on long after the secessionists had realized that it would be hopeless and fruitless.¹

¹J. W. Longley, *op. cit.*, p. 207. Joseph Howe, the secessionist leader of Nova Scotia, who joined the Liberal-Conservative party early in 1869, when he realized that Confederation was a good thing for the country, revealed very well the negative opposition of the secessionists, when he wrote to Isaac Buchanan on June 20th 1866: "I resist the Quebec scheme of government because I do not like it..." pp. 190 - 191.

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But, the tendency toward national unity of the Liberal groups, produced the Canada First movement which tried soon after Confederation to counteract their oppositionism by pointing to the need that they serve the entire nation constructively as an alternative to the Conservative party, and with a moderate programme.¹

The movement was savagely attacked particularly by George Brown and his Clear Grits as a possible competitor. In such a factious mood, the political suicide of the Conservative party in the Pacific scandal of 1873 surprised the Liberal groups with the task of forming a federal government.² Due to the additional handicap of holding office in a period of economic depression and financial stringency,³ together with the administration's observance of political rectitude and stern principles, as well as its reluctance to

¹J. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 235 - 236. Their platform embraced the following items: British connection; closer trade relations with the British West Indian Islands, with a view of ultimate political connection; an income franchise; the ballot with the addition of compulsory voting; a scheme for the representation of minorities; encouragement of immigration and free homesteads in the public domain; the imposition of duties for revenue so adjusted as to afford every possible encouragement to native industry; an improved militia system under command of trained Dominion officers; no property qualifications for members of Parliament; re-organization of the Senate.

²E. M. Reid, "The Rise of National Parties in Canada" The Canadian Political Science Association Proceedings 1932, p. 195. The dominant groups in the new coalition were the Ontario Clear Grits and the Quebec Rouges.

³D. Creighton, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 188.

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utilize freely such lowly devices as patronage and lavish expenditures, the Liberals left office after five years forming a party in name only.¹

Following the defeat of this Liberal administration, the more accurate understanding of the role and character a national party had to assume in Canadian political life, as expounded by the Canada First movement, became more and more prevalent among the Liberal groups. Particularly Edward Blake who took over their leadership in 1880, was greatly inspired with this concept, as he had revealed five years earlier in his famous Aurora speech.² His main contributions to a national orientation of the Liberal groups consisted in his attempts to overcome George Brown's anti-French tradition, especially by siding with Quebec on the Riel issue, and in his abandonment of the traditionally Liberal principle of free trade by accepting a moderate tariff.³ But compared with the nation-building efforts of the Conservative party, Blake's position still seemed to constitute a type of "little Canadianism" in his antipathy against trans-continental development, and in his suspicion of the

¹Robert MacG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1948), p. 499.

²cf. W. S. Wallace, "Edward Blake's Aurora Speech", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. II, Sept. 1921, pp. 249 - 271.

³F. H. Underhill, Canadian Political Parties, p. 16.

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imperial connection.¹

Upon this groundwork, Wilfrid Laurier who became Liberal leader in 1887, succeeded in building the national Liberal party. The very choice of a French-Canadian as leader symbolized the transition from sectional racial and ideological groups to a bi-racial and national-minded political organization. Continuing the gradual emergence from the narrow confines of Liberal party doctrines, Laurier was able to base his policies upon an understanding of the character of Canadian society. Thus, he taught his party that in a country like Canada, political authority must associate with big business² - not just for the sake of campaign contributions, but primarily for the sake of national prosperity. Similarly he recognized that the inherent Canadian duality forbade an extreme position on Canada's autonomy. Accordingly, the concern with the removal of the last vestiges of imperial control, was replaced by a positive effort to define the imperial relationship, as it was done by advocating a preferential tariff.³

The evolution of the major Canadian parties shows that each of them has to forgo the temptation of utilizing

¹ D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 191.

² G. W. Carter, op. cit., p. 62.

³ Ibid., p. 63.

the bonds of class, race, section or ideology as a means of party unity, because in Canada none of these groupings are vast or coherent enough to control the rest of the country. Yet, the national party must respect these individual forms of groupings to obtain their support. Hence, party cohesion on a national level is achieved through a typically Canadian unity of purpose to serve as many sections and interests as possible.

Such a type of political association is only possible because of the underlying Canadian realism which manifests itself in a fairly strong non-partisan spirit. Until the late eighties and early nineties, this disposition produced a significant phenomenon in Canadian politics, the so-called "ministerials", representatives who pledged to support the administration irrespective of which party formed the government. Although the introduction of the ballot and of simultaneous voting in 1878 encouraged partisanship,¹ the western provinces continued to avoid any wide-spread partisan affiliation. The politics of Manitoba and British Columbia in that period was largely motivated by their desire for the Pacific Railway. As their elections were held a few weeks after the elections of the east had been declared, the west

¹E. M. Reid, op. cit., p. 187. Under the open voting system used in the first three general elections of 1867, 1872 and 1874, civil servants, contractors and anyone who wanted to obtain favours from the government, could not vote without risking their jobs or their expected favours if the party of their choice lost the election.

could easily be ministerial.¹ Opposition representatives did not appear in Manitoba until 1882 and in British Columbia until 1891, while the North West Territories avoided party loyalties until 1896.²

Today, the same non-partisan spirit prevails in Canadian local government which is usually not elected or supported by means of regularly organized, identified, and opposed political machines, but is chosen for efficiency in the administration of policies on which there is no deep and lasting division among the electorate.³

In the process of nationalization, the Liberal and Conservative parties had relinquished so much of their partisan complexion as to become institutionalized. Unlike the minor parties which try to implement political doctrines or sectional interests, the national parties are politically neutral enough to allow the affiliation of diverse and even antagonistic groups and elements. Hence, the basic structure of the national parties combines the flexibility of inclusiveness with the rigidity against extremes to provide a channel for the free expression of the political dynamism.

¹Ibid., p. 196. Some constituencies were left uncontested, so that their representatives did not have to commit themselves to any party.

²Ibid., pp. 197 - 198.

³C. B. MacPherson, Democracy in Alberta, (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1953), p. 238.

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Canadian Party Organization

Through their institutionalization, the national parties are in danger of being identified solely with their mechanical organizations.¹ Have these party organizations become objects in themselves? Do they exercise such a complete control over their followers as to repress all spontaneous and democratic reactions of the political community? When, after the first World War, the Progressives formed a separate political movement in protest against party control,² did their appearance not prove the unwillingness of the big parties to respect their demands? Again, during the depression of 1930, two more political parties broke through the confines of big party organization, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, commonly known as C.C.F. party, and the Social Credit movement. Is the C.C.F. party not justified in maintaining that "both the old parties in Canada are the instruments of capitalist interests and cannot serve as agents of social reconstruction", and that "they are bound to carry on government in accordance with the dictates of big business interests who finance them"?³

¹ cf. M. Ostrogorski, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 623. He predicted the same development for the English parties, after observing them separate politics from principles.

² P. F. Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1948) p. 151

³ M. J. Coldwell, Left Turn, Canada, (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1945), p. 210.

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The Poll Organization

The effectiveness of a party organization in controlling the electorate, depends on the efficiency of the party's smallest units. Their sphere of influence usually follows the outlines of the electoral divisions in each constituency. There, the closest contact of party organization and voter is possible. Party workers are able to exercise a constant and direct influence on the local electorate. It is in the poll organization that a political party which is nothing but an organizational apparatus, must be strongest to win elections.

In Canada, the smallest unit of the Liberal and Conservative party organizations is the poll committee. It is composed of a chairman and about six or seven party workers. The main task of this groups is to check the voters' lists, to have them revised, to approach the people of the district to vote for its party, to provide transportation on election day, and to serve as scrutineers at the polls.¹

As these activities show, the peak effort of these poll committees coincides with the election date. In addition, being required only for the election of a small number of candidates - an average two or three within a span of

¹R. MacG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, p. 522. There are about 150 polls in an average constituency. The number is smaller in cities, and higher in rural areas.

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four years - makes for a less elaborate and intense 'grass-root' organization than in the United States for instance, where a great number of offices are contested at regular intervals. The absence of another feature of American political life, the political boss-system, a consequence of the Jacksonian spoil-system, further moderates Canadian party organization which resembles rather the English type of organizational machinery.¹ Moderation, in effect, goes so far that the maintenance of interest becomes a great problem of national party organization during the inter-election period.² Then, the poll committees are mainly engaged in keeping up their own enthusiasm without aspiring to high efficiency in influencing the electorate.

In the C.C.F. party which claims to be much more democratic than the older parties, the organ corresponding to the poll committees is the local club.³ It comprises anyone who subscribes to its principles and pays the three

¹James Bryce, Modern Democracies, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1921), p. 472.

²R. MacG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, p. 526.

³A. Brady, Canada, p. 106. The club system had already been introduced in Canada by the United Farmers of Ontario who, though lacking the usual agencies of suggestion as news paper support - they had only one, the "Farmers' Sun" - an elaborate party machine and a richly stocked party treasury, managed through their extensive network of local clubs to win the provincial election of 1919 and demonstrate the superior power of direct local democracy over the machine methods of a large and composite party.

dollars fee, and who, of course, can pass the scrutiny of the proper authorities.¹

Compared to the grass-root organization of the old parties, these clubs are distinguished by their incessant activity throughout the off-season, brought about through a continuous programme of study and propaganda.² From this activity results an aggressive cadre of party members, and a much more efficient party organization.

Despite these advantages, the C.C.F. party did not yet succeed in winning a federal election. On the contrary, after almost a whole generation of propagandist activity, the electoral contest of 1958 with its defeat of the party's leaders, and with the reduction of the party's parliamentary representation from 22 to 8, proved that Canadian parties cannot rely only on the efficiency of their organizations to win elections.

What the C.C.F. organization hopes to achieve with its persistent club activity, is the creation of a class-type section among the electorate in order to insure permanent and invariable support. A similar effect is expected from the party's affiliation with Canadian Trade Unions. But Canadian individuality dislikes affiliations and

¹G. M. Carter, op. cit., p. 73.

²J. A. Corry, Democratic Government and Politics, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952), p. 262.

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loyalties which tend to leave little independence. Certainly, there is a considerable number of people who always vote for the same party, giving rise to such a phenomenon as "safe" constituencies. But generally speaking, it cannot be said of Canada as Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan could sing in the 1880's that "every boy and every gal that's born into this world alive, is either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative", because here the uncommitted vote is relatively large. This fact has been best demonstrated in the elections of 1957 and 1958 in the course of which the Conservative party accumulated more than four times as many seats as it held prior to the first of the two elections.¹

As the efficiency of the organizational methods of the C.C.F. party does not seem to produce any particularly remarkable results over a prolonged period of time, the conclusion appears to be justified that the poll organization employed by the two national parties, owes some of its effectiveness to a closer harmony with the characteristics of Canadian society. By being rather inconspicuous during the inter-election period, the national party organization provides reassurance to the popular feeling of independence, and, at the same time, promotes social cohesion by relaxing the political cleavage of the country.

¹The Conservative party obtained 51 seats in the election of 1953 and 207 seats in the election of 1958.

Internal Party Organization

It has been stated that the modern democratic party constitutes a fighting party, dominated by militarist ideas and methods, and that, "in their constitution, these parties exhibit, if not unconditional Caesarism, at least extremely strong centralizing and oligarchical tendencies".¹ Is this statement applicable to the internal organization of the major Canadian parties?

Quite naturally, their internal organization is marked by a strong effort at co-operation and co-ordination. To demand a persistent state of rebellion among the various party units as proof of internal democracy would be unrealistic and completely unwarranted. What must be shown is that the organizational co-operation is not a relationship of blind obedience and absolute command, but rather a free association capable of checking the inevitable oligarchic trends. In the case of the major Canadian parties, their type of "inside" democracy can best be demonstrated by analysing their federal structure of organization, the procedure of selecting party candidates, and the rate at which members of Parliament are exchanged.

Formally, Canadian parties have the same hierarchic structure used by political parties throughout the world.

¹R. Michels, op. cit., pp. 41 - 44.

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The poll organizations of each constituency are united in the riding association which in turn comes under the leadership of the provincial association.¹ On the highest level of the organizational pyramid, there are the various national associations.²

If the militarist tendencies inside the Canadian parties would be very strong, the control over the party should increase with every higher level of organization. But there are no exact regulations attesting to the existence of such a cumulative power arrangement within the Progressive Conservative and the Liberal parties. One rather finds that the constitutions of the two major parties carefully limit the scope of their national association to assistance in organizing local party units, and to co-ordination of the efforts of the different provincial

¹R. MacG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, pp. 524 - 525. There are also intermediate organizations in the form of regional, young people's, and women's associations. pp. 532 - 534.

²J. A. Corry, op. cit., p. 256. The National Liberal Federation was set up in its present form in 1932. It is composed mostly of elected representatives from provincial Liberal associations and Liberal members of Parliament.

J. R. Williams, op. cit., pp. 111 - 113. The National Conservative Association was formed in 1924, but being unsatisfactory because it neglected the representation of outlying provinces, it has been reorganized as the Progressive Conservative Association with a similar composition as the Liberal Federation.

organizations.¹ These functions definitely constitute the minimum requirement for the formation of a nation-wide political entity.

Moreover, in the definition of the functions of the lower party units, the two constitutions try - each in its peculiar way - to provide for democratic participation and independent co-operation.

As indicated by its name, the National Liberal Federation bases its inside democracy upon the federal principle. Accordingly, the constitution lists as members the provincial Liberal associations together with the provincial units of the Liberal women, youth, and university federations.² This arrangement aims at precluding any interference of the national organization in the domain of the provincial party units.

In turn however, all these groups are represented in the advisory council of the federation: there are ten party members elected by the Liberal association of each province, five members elected by each provincial women's

¹Constitution of the National Liberal Federation of Canada, - As Amended at a Meeting of the Advisory Council held in Ottawa, December 7 and 8, 1959. Clause No. 1.

Constitution of the Progressive Conservative Association of Canada, - As Amended November 30, 1959. Clause No. 2.

²Constitution of the National Liberal Federation of Canada, Clause No. 2.

organization, five members elected by each provincial Young Liberal association, and one member sent by each provincial university federation.¹ Such a composition makes the advisory council an excellent instrument to relay the opinions and dispositions of the grass-root organization and of the various constituencies to the party leadership. Unlike the C. C. F. party however, where the national convention is the supreme authority in all matters of policy and programme,² the Liberal party leaders are not bound by the suggestions passed at the annual meeting of the advisory council. Yet, in a fashion typical of Canadian democracy, the strong moral pressure of these resolutions is sufficient to make the party leadership consider them seriously and implement those of merit.³

Though less emphatic about federal aspects, the constitution of the national Progressive Conservative association provides for a similarly nation-wide representation at the general meetings of the association. Aside from

¹Ibid., Clause No. 5. The electoral districts of Yukon and Mackenzie River are each represented by one member of the Liberal associations, the women's organizations and the Young Liberal associations.

²C. C. F. National Constitution, - As Amended by the Fifteenth National Convention, Clause VI, Paragraph 7.

³R. MacG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, pp. 548-549. "Family allowances, for example, made their initial appearance in Liberal policy by this route, although they did not at first receive the support of a majority of the Liberal members of Parliament".

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Progressive Conservative Senators and members of the federal and provincial legislatures, the party organization is represented by two delegates, including the president, of each federal constituency association, thirty representatives-at-large from Ontario and Quebec, and twenty each from the other provinces.¹ In contrast to the elective procedure of the Liberal party, most of these representatives are appointed by the provincial Progressive Conservative associations². The contrast, however, is not as significant as it may appear at first sight, partly because the provincial associations are fairly independent in their choice, and partly because the elective procedure selects pretty much the same people who would be appointed. Consequently, the annual general meeting of the national Progressive Conservative association is just as capable as its Liberal counterpart to express the political opinion of the lower party units even if it does not suit the party leadership.³

There is still another clause designed to promote inside democracy. As the general membership of the national

¹Constitution of the Progressive Conservative Association of Canada, Clause No. 4. - There are also two representatives each from the Yukon and Mackenzie River, and one delegate elected by the student membership of each recognized Progressive Conservative university club.

²Ibid., Clause No. 4.

³R. MacG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, pp. 550 - 551.

association is not based upon provincial party units but includes all individual members of any recognized federal constituency association,¹ the national Progressive Conservative constitution is in a position to reassure the individual party members by granting them a 'right of appeal'. Under this provision, any ten Progressive Conservative supporters of a constituency may protest to the national director of the party against irregularities within their constituency association.²

Of course, all these provisions of the party constitutions are by no means a complete insurance against oligarchic and autocratic tendencies within the major party organizations. Yet, the very existence of such provisions attests to the acute awareness on the part of the leaders that any attempts to establish a strong centralized control would alienate a great majority of supporters in a society as much disposed to individuality as the Canadian.

The one thing a party leadership - especially an oligarchic one - is least willing to forgo from the point of view of inner party control, consists in the selection of those who may gain influence over the party, as it is the case with candidates for seats in the legislatures.

¹Constitution of the Progressive Conservative Association of Canada, Clause No. 5.

²Ibid., Clause No. 10.

According to the constitutions of the two major Canadian parties and of the C.C.F., party affairs are handled by the executive of the national organization, which pretends to be little influenced by the members of Parliament.¹ They nevertheless constitute the most potent section of the party leadership. Hence, the amount of independence enjoyed by the lower party units in the selection of party candidates reveals better than anything else the real extent of inside democracy.

The most commonly used method of selection is the nominating convention.² However, there have also been occasions when the candidate was selected by the riding executive. Particularly in the province of Quebec, the frequency of nominations being settled without convention

¹Constitution of the National Liberal Federation of Canada, Clause No. 4, Section A and B. - No member of Parliament is ex-officio member of the national executive of the Liberal Federation.

Constitution of the Progressive Conservative Association of Canada, Clause No. 6 and No. 7. - Up to 22 members of Parliament are annually elected as executive officers of the national association, while two members of Parliament are included in the executive committee of the association.

C. C. F. National Constitution, Clause 7. Members of Parliament are not ex-officio members of the national council of the C.C.F. party.

²R. MacG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, pp. 527 - 528. The nominating convention may be an open one where either everybody present, or party supporters only may participate; or it may be a closed one where the attendance is confined to delegates chosen by the polling sub-divisions.

was relatively high since the provincial leadership of both major parties was in the habit of refusing requests for conventions whenever the nominee was already a member of the legislature.¹ This practice tends to disappear completely. To hold a nominating convention in each constituency becomes more and more customary. If the representative of the constituency seeks re-election, the nominating convention turns into a forum where his past performance can be submitted for approval, and where the party's confidence in him can be reaffirmed.

With their constituency-wide participation, with their open and constitutionally regulated process of choosing a representative, and with their finality of choice², these nominating conventions constitute definitely a much more democratic approach to the selection of candidates than their appointment by the riding executive. Surely, there are and always will be constituencies where the party leadership can decisively influence the outcome of the nominating convention due to a languid riding

¹J. A. Corry, op. cit., pp. 252 - 253.
cf. Montreal Gazette, August 21, 23, 29, September 6, 24, November 5, 1935 and February 7, 1936, for examples of refusals of Liberal and Conservative nominating conventions in Quebec.

²J. A. Corry, op. cit., p. 259. Neither of the two national parties possesses the acknowledged power of vetoing a candidature. In contrast, the C. C. F. national constitution (Clause 11) empowers the national council of the party to intervene in the interest of the national movement.

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association. And, there always will be nominating conventions without any real contest because of the vast superiority in status or personality or popularity of one of the nominees. Such inevitable occurrences do not diminish the democratic qualities of nominating conventions.

The really crucial test revealing the strength of inside democracy, comes with situations where the unity of the riding organization - so essential to electoral success - is threatened by internal dissension in connection with the selection of candidates. In a party organized along military ideas, an order from headquarters would expeditiously put an end to such discord. But, the Canadian party leaders are not at all quick to intervene. In fact, they display a marked reluctance to make use of their authoritative position. And, if action becomes unavoidable, it takes the form of mediation and compromise.

Prior to the federal election of 1958, the East Ottawa Progressive Conservative women's association was split up merely because it had not been invited to the meeting setting the date of the nominating convention. Immediately charging that the riding association was dominated by a clique, the rebellious section threatened to boycott the nominating convention and even to refuse to support the candidate. As another group of women, which included the unsuccessful candidate of the preceding election, found

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nothing wrong in not being consulted, there were soon two women's associations each of them claiming to be the recognized one. Having to take a stand, the national organizer of the Progressive Conservative party made this revealing statement:

There is no lack of unity here. We have the situation of two women's groups operating under the same name. I am not saying that is correct, but under our democratic system there is nothing to prevent the women from forming two or more organizations.¹

The independence of lower party units could hardly have been more forcibly endorsed. The national organizer could have pointed out that the women's organization constitutes only an auxiliary unit which does not need to be consulted - an opinion brought up by the president of the Progressive Conservative women's association of Canada.² But he did not use this pretext to quell the dispute. Rather, by permitting both groups of women to be right and to express their views, the door was opened to a reconciliation in which the executive of the riding association emphasized the equal right of Progressive Conservative men, women and young people to participate in the selection of a candidate.³

¹The Ottawa Citizen, February 8, 1958.

²Ibid., February 11, 1958.

³Ibid., February 14, 1958.

Organizational democracy as expressed in the reluctance of the party leadership to intervene authoritatively, has its complementary expression in the fact that generally speaking the riding conventions are extremely sensitive against any infringement of their powers and independence.¹

The incident in Ottawa East - having been touched off by the neglect of the women's organization in the selection of the convention date - is particularly remarkable for how slight a provocation may be sufficient to rouse the antagonism against party dictatorship.

In another incident of the 1958 election campaign, an inner-organizational dispute was caused by the hesitation of the executive of the Ottawa West Progressive Conservative association to hand over its membership lists to the women's association which needed them to rally support for its nominee, Miss Charlotte Whitton, the former mayor of Ottawa.² Since her opponent for nomination was a member of the association executive, the suspicion was quickly aroused that the executive intended to influence the nominating convention in behalf of its own nominee.

¹R. MacG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, p. 531. "A mere intimation to one of the outlying constituencies that the Toronto headquarters wanted a delegate convention has been known to be decisive in influencing its choice for an open one."

²The Ottawa Citizen, February 3, 1958.

In order to get redress, the offended sections of the organization resort to the threat of boycott and even active opposition against their own party. In this way, the dissident women in Ottawa East threatened to refuse to support the official candidate,¹ while their colleagues in Ottawa West were prepared to split up their party's vote by nominating Miss Whitton as an independent candidate.²

Of course, in a political organization governed by military ideas, such threats would amount to open disobedience and to a flagrant betrayal of the cause, punishable with disgrace and expulsion. In the Progressive Conservative and the Liberal parties however, these threats constitute a defensive measure which usually brings redress even to the extent that the nominee of an unruly group may become the official party candidate, as in the case of Charlotte Whitton.³

The effectiveness of these threats by lower party units is greatly enhanced by public reaction. Being relatively free from the deceptive influences of class consciousness and ideology, Canadian society is inclined to be rather sympathetic to rebellions against organizational

¹Ibid., February 8, 1958.

²Ibid., February 3, 1958.

³Ibid., February 25, 1958.

dictatorship. Accordingly, in 1906, when the sensitivity against candidates sponsored by the party leadership had not yet been fully recognized, an independent Liberal managed to win the by-election in Quebec County by campaigning against the imposition of the official Liberal candidate on the constituents and their degradation to voting machines.¹

Finally, the strength of democracy within the national party organizations can also be gauged by the frequency of change among those persons who occupy influential positions. With regard to the national party officers and executives, such change is intended by the constitutional provision stipulating their annual election.² But, this provision looses much of its effect due to frequent re-elections.

Yet, where a relatively frequent change of personnel really matters, is in the parliamentary groups of the various parties, which, tempted by their prominent position, are much more likely to disregard the recommendations and

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 549. The official Liberal candidate, G.-E. Amyot, was a successful manufacturer. The independent Liberal, Lorenzo Robitaille, was a native son. He received the support of Henri Bourassa, who was at that time a leading Liberal member of Parliament.

²Constitution of the Progressive Conservative Association of Canada, Clause No. 6.

Constitution of the National Liberal Federation of Canada, Clause No. 6.

decisions of the party conventions, and to form separate groups.¹ To find a high turnover in those groups is the more significant as party organizations do not distort the actual tendencies by constitutional regulations or otherwise, but rather wish to perpetuate the tenure of parliamentary representatives as long as possible.

A study of the first 19 Parliaments reveals that between 35 and 55 per cent of the members leave the Canadian House of Commons after their first term, while only about 8 - 10 per cent of the members reach a tenure in excess of ten years.² With a maximum of 245 seats at the time of the dissolution of the 19th Parliament in 1945, the average number of members with a prolonged tenure would be 18 to 24, or about 9 to 12 for each national party, if third parties are neglected.

In using these figures, one must of course avoid the the implication that membership in party oligarchies is limited to representatives with at least two re-elections to their credit. However, since the formation of such a

¹cf. R. Michels, op. cit., pp. 136 - 140.

²Norman Ward, The Canadian House of Commons - Representation, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 137. "In general terms, each Parliament meets with roughly the following composition: no previous experience, 35 - 55 per cent; 0 - 5 years of experience, 20 - 35 per cent; 5 - 10 years of experience, 10 - 20 per cent; and over 10 years of experience, 8 - 10 per cent." Very important is also the fact that "there is in the statistics no convincing evidence that the passage of time tends to increase the number of experienced members in the House..."

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closed political group requires a stable association of its members for many years, and since a decade does not constitute an exceptionally long period in a successful political career, the above rate of change within the parliamentary groups represents a fair indication that possible oligarchic tendencies within the two national parties are very slight and quite compatible with competent political leadership.

Despite some imperfections and the lack of the ultimate in democratic devices like the recall system¹, the national organizations of both major Canadian parties are animated by a real and vigorous spirit of democracy. Due to this organizational democracy, the danger is averted that the institutionalized parties petrify into purely bureaucratic machines, or deteriorate into political police forces. Through the independent selection of party officers and representatives, they become agents for the particular demands and convictions of their sections and constituencies. In that way, the national parties are freed from the

¹Under the recall system, every candidate must submit to his party a signed but undated resignation, so that a member of Parliament can be recalled whenever he deviates from the wishes of the constituency, by dating and publishing the document. This system, widely used in continental Europe, where it has become an effective disciplinary instrument wielded by the party leaders, was also introduced in Western Canada immediately after the first World War. - Paul F. Sharp, *op. cit.*, pp. 86, 93, and 150. At present, a statutory regulation in the Dominion Elections Act disqualifies members of Parliament who sign advance resignations. - Norman Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

necessity to espouse each of these sectional concepts and needs as political dogmas and policies which have to be accepted by everybody else. Thus, organizational democracy solves the problem of how to keep a nation-wide political entity together and, at the same time, flexible enough to absorb the major currents of political dynamism.

Canadian Party Leaders

Though helping to preserve party unity by reducing the possibility of splits over ideological or sectional differences, inner-organizational democracy also promotes the looseness of association of the constituent parts. The function of the party leader is to convert these loosely associated parts into a coherent political entity capable of pursuing its national purpose.

Such an arrangement of course is not completely in harmony with the ideal conception of liberalist democracy which seems to deny the need of people to be led, by rationalizing Rousseau's "natural goodness of man" into a naive faith in the masses. But, aside from the usual incompetence of men, which necessitates leadership in general¹, the peculiar situation of a national Canadian party requires quite particularly a person with outstanding talents for leadership.

¹R. Michels, op. cit., pp. 87 - 88.

What must be discussed, therefore, is not the need of leadership, but rather the way in which leadership is conditioned and regulated by the character of the national parties. Does not the special urgency of this need endow the position of party leader with unlimited power and security of tenure? Or, is effective leadership undermined by persistent attempts of party officers to win control over the party?¹ Is the ideal leader a perfect party man?

The dominant position of Canadian political leaders has already been noted by Lord Durham.² His observation has since been repeatedly confirmed by men who have been in command of their parties over long periods of time. After Confederation, John A. Macdonald, one of its architects, who had united the Conservative party in the effort, retained the party leadership for almost a quarter of a century. Continuing the example, Wilfrid Laurier and his successor W. L. Mackenzie King led the Liberal party for 32

¹cf. R. Michels, op. cit., p. 168. "In all modern democratic parties a spirit of genuine fraternity is conspicuously lacking; we do not see sincere and cordial mutual trust; there is a continual struggle, a spirit of irritation determined by reciprocal mistrust of the leaders, and this spirit has become one of the most essential characteristics of every democracy."

²C. P. Lucas, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 33. "Since the educated man sprang from the people and was separated by no barrier of manners, or pride, or distinct interests, from the singularly ignorant peasantry ... he combines therefore, the influences of superior education and social equality to wield a power over the mass, which I do not believe that the educated class of any other portion of the world possesses."

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and 29 years respectively.

Due to its extraordinary importance, the position of party leader has become institutionalized.¹ In particular, the custom has developed that the party leader becomes Prime Minister if he succeeds to elect a majority of party candidates to the House of Commons, while the leader of the second largest party group in Parliament becomes the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Indeed, Canadians have been accused of heroworship. This charge is mainly based upon the old tradition of the party identifying itself in election campaigns with the party leader through the use of such slogans as "follow the white plume" to solicit votes for Wilfrid Laurier, or calling Louis St. Laurent "uncle Louis", or, most recently, "follow John" in reference to John Diefenbaker.

Does all that evidence prove that the party leader possesses dictatorial power? Are there no means of checking this power?

Considering the career of John A. Macdonald, the statement of Robert Michels seems to be confirmed, that party leaders, far from being checked, can turn their own resignation into a means to enforce their will:

Whenever an obstacle is encountered, the leaders are apt to offer to resign, professing that they

¹H. McD. Clockie, Canadian Government and Politics, p. 140.

are weary of office, but really aiming to show to the dissentients the indispensability of their own leadership... Such actions willing or unwilling have a fine democratic air, and yet hardly serve to conceal the dictatorial spirit of those who perform them.¹

Whenever John A. Macdonald offered his resignation, the party refused to accept it. Even in 1873, when he had been defeated over the Pacific Scandal, and when his prestige seemed to have been completely destroyed, the party caucus reiterated its confidence in his abilities.² Another resignation was refused in 1880, after Macdonald had won the general election of 1878. His indispensability was proven beyond the shadow of a doubt. In fact, he had to remain at the helm of his party until his death in 1891 because his retirement would have completed the disintegration of the party and the ruin of the government.³

If these rejected resignations attest to the strong position of the party leader, they nevertheless fail to prove Michels' point. Macdonald did not offer his resignations because he encountered threats to his position, nor because he intended to subdue the party to his dictate. His motive was always the sincere conviction that he was unable to render the type of leadership required by a national

¹R. Michels, op. cit., pp. 46 - 47.

²D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, pp. 180 - 181.

³Ibid., Vol. II, p. 421.

party. In 1873, this conviction was based upon the notion that the ill repute incurred through his involvement in the Pacific Scandal would hurt the party's chances of political success as long as he was the leader. In his resignation offer of 1880, and in his wish to retire in the years to follow, this same conviction derived from the realization that, in order to provide good leadership, more was needed than merely a man to fill a post. Accordingly he wrote in 1885: "Now is the time to retire. I have finished my work. Everything that I proposed to do from Confederation down to the present time has been completed."¹

Conversely, when Wilfrid Laurier actually applied the threat to resign in 1905 in order to quell the opposition within his party over separate schools in the Canadian West, he failed to impress his dissentient followers.² Indeed, what mended the split and preserved Laurier's leadership was rather the acceptance of a compromise worked out by the rebels.³

¹Ibid., Vol. II, p. 429. Macdonald to Charles Tupper, July 27, 1885.

²John W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to his Times, (Toronto: The MacMillan Co., 1931), p. 291. Headed by Clifford Sifton, the Secretary of State, a groupe of Protestant Liberals demanded that a secularized educational system be provided in the Autonomy Bills establishing the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. When Sifton found out that his wishes had been neglected, he resigned. Laurier replied with the threat to resign himself because of the evident lack of confidence in him as a Roman Catholic.

³Ibid., p. 297.

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The ineffectiveness of the threat to resign shows that in the Canadian national parties, the position of party leader does not inspire sufficient awe to reduce the party to a servile tool in the hands of a dictator. Hence, the length of tenure depends essentially on leadership abilities. If a party leader obviously cannot handle a situation or the opposition within his party, his resignation is readily accepted. Otherwise, he may offer his resignation as often as he wants without being able to relinquish his post.

Most people equate these leadership abilities with the winning of government power. This opinion receives some confirmation through the greater consumption of leaders on the part of the national party in opposition. During the reign of John A. Macdonald, the Liberals had three leaders: Alexander Mackenzie, Edward Blake and Wilfrid Laurier; Laurier's rule in turn saw two Conservative opposition leaders, Charles Tupper and Robert Borden; while the combined hegemonies of Mackenzie King and Louis St. Laurent witnessed seven changes in the leadership of the Conservative party: succeeding Arthur Meighen in 1926 was Hugh Guthrie, who was followed by R. B. Bennett in 1927, and by R. J. Manion in 1938; after a return of Arthur Meighen in 1941, the line of leaders was continued by John Bracken in 1942, George Drew in 1948, and John Diefenbaker in 1956.

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However, there is an inherent fallacy in using the winning of elections as the criterion of good leadership. The acceptance of this criterion nearly cost Canada one of the foremost leaders. When Mackenzie King lost the election of 1925, a group of Liberals prepared already for his replacement by Charles Dunning, the Premier of Saskatchewan.¹

In contrast, Alexander Mackenzie was able to defeat the Conservative government in 1873, and to win the election of the following year. Yet, already in 1874, the Governor-General Lord Dufferin reported to the Colonial Office: "the fear has been gradually growing in me that my Prime Minister is not strong enough for the place".²

Indeed, due to the peculiar character of the Canadian national parties, an incapable leader is deposed even if he is the Prime Minister. Accordingly, Mackenzie Bowell was forced to retire as Prime Minister in 1895 by the resignation of a prominent section of his cabinet. The revolt was touched off by his inaction with regard to a remedial bill in behalf of the Roman Catholic minority in the Manitoba school question. But the actual cause was given in the statement justifying the resignations: "... the Prime

¹Bruce Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1952), pp. 101 - 102.

²D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 187 Lord Dufferin to Lord Carnarvon, April 16, 1874.

Minister had not sufficient force of character to be entrusted with the leadership of the party and the government".¹

To charge Canadians or their national parties with heroworship therefore, is to confuse their willingness to follow a good leader, with the unthinking adherence to a person on account of its office or reputation. There is a quite realistic attitude discriminating between the respect due to a hero, and the loyalty due to a good leader. How else could the early resignation of Robert Baldwin and of Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine be explained? Undoubtedly, they were the most outstanding heroes of Canadian political life. Yet, scarcely three years after their great triumph, they retired from public life when Baldwin was only forty-nine and Lafontaine only forty-four. Although Baldwin resigned over difficulties within his own political group², the real reason for the retirement of both leaders lay in their conviction to have accomplished their purpose.³ If Canadians were heroworshippers, they would not have given any confirmation to this conviction, nor would party officials have forgone the public appeal of two such famous personalities.

¹J. W. Longley, op. cit., pp. 219 - 223.

²M. Wade, op. cit., p. 284. Both leaders resigned in 1851.

³St. Leacock, op. cit., p. 359.

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The strict necessity to get the person best suited for the leadership of a national party, has also affected the method of selection. Originally, the leaders were chosen by the party's representatives in the legislature meeting in caucus.¹ Induced by the election victories which followed the national Liberal convention of 1893 and the Liberal leadership convention of 1919, the belief in the efficacy of this American method² began to grow. This belief seemed to be reaffirmed when the Conservative party tried the convention system in 1927, and selected R. B. Bennett who went on to win the election of 1930.³ Now however, after the illusion of certain success has been shattered by the electoral defeats following the Conservative conventions of 1938, 1942, and 1948, this method of selecting the party leader is too well established as a "democratic and representative institution" to be challenged with impunity.⁴

¹R. Dawson, The Government of Canada, pp. 551 - 552. There were also variations: In 1920, Robert Borden selected Arthur Meighen after receiving from each Conservative Senator and member of Parliament a list of names in order of preference, which included the reason for the choice.

²W. B. Munro, American Influences on Canadian Government, p. 64.

F.H. Underhill, Canadian Political Parties, p. 7. The Upper Canadian Grits held the first convention in 1859.

³G. M. Carter, op. cit., p. 71.

⁴Ibid., p. 72.

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That many people other than scoffers of democracy take exception to the theatrical qualities associated with this "institution", is not entirely unfounded. It is unlikely that the electorate is decisively impressed by the spectacular performance of a nominating convention. It is also unlikely that there is much difference in the final choice only because the one or the other system is used. However, if the two methods of selection are compared in the light of the function which the leader must fulfil within his party, the convention system offers a definite advantage.

If the leader is chosen by the party's legislative representatives meeting in caucus, their choice is surrounded with secrecy, it is made by the group most likely to disregard the rest of the party, and it is liable to evoke the feeling of being imposed. Conversely, in a selection by a national convention, the participation of delegates from all over the country forestalls the feeling of imposition. But most important is the fact that the new leader is chosen openly by a majority of delegates. By this procedure, the likelihood of internal struggles and dissensions is greatly reduced, and rival candidates are obliged by the decision.

The convention system, therefore, has its prime value in reaffirming party unity at that crucial cessation

where the accustomed agent of national cohesion is replaced by a new and as yet untried leader. This important function is much enhanced by the fact that such conventions are a special affair and not an administrative regularity as it is the case in the C. C. F. party.¹

Indeed, the very fact that the national parties use the convention system to give a mandate to the leader, but fail to use the same method to scrutinize his performance regularly, contrasts his position in the national parties with that in other parties like the C. C. F.. While the leader of a minor party remains bound by its programme - a procedure which may seem to be more truly democratic, the leader of a national party becomes somehow a distinct entity, and his final and decisive test lies beyond the narrow confines of his own party.

Of course, party conventions can pass a judgement on the basic abilities required for good leadership, such as a higher education - the majority of Canadian party leaders have come from the legal profession, an extended parliamentary training², a good record of public service, and a considerable degree of self-discipline to which John A.

¹From this point of view, even the theatrical aspects of a leadership convention appear to be justified.

²N. Ward, op. cit., p. 139. An extended term in the House of Commons provides members with a certain instinct with regard to tactics and policies.

Macdonald has attributed his superiority over George Brown.¹

But these qualities alone are not sufficient, as it has been shown by the failure of Arthur Meighen.

As a politician, Meighen had every essential item of equipment - brains, scholarship, courage, twelve years of administrative experience, an encyclopedic knowledge of government, shining integrity, unequalled oratory, corrosive satire - everything except a gift for politics and an understanding of people.²

Those who advocate regular checking of the leader's performance, readily equate these special qualities, the "gift for politics" and the "understanding of people", with what Michels maintains to be the counterpart of the need of the masses for guidance, namely "the leaders' natural greed for power" which they are able to retain because they "study men, note their weaknesses and their passions, and endeavour to turn these to their own advantage".³ Such an equation, however, identifies a leader with a dictator because of a similarity of methods. Surely, the leaders of the Canadian national parties 'study men', and strive for government

¹D. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 188. "The great reason why I have always been able to beat Brown, is that I have been able to look a little ahead, while he could on no occasion forgo the temptation of a temporary triumph". Sir Joseph Pope, "The Correspondence of Sir John Macdonald, p. 161, Macdonald to Matthew Crooks Cameron, January 3, 1872.

²B. Hutchison, op. cit., p. 53. - Because of these qualities, the author likens the contest between Meighen and King to the race between the hare and the tortoise.

³R. Michels, op. cit., pp. 205 - 207.

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power. But these things are done with the intention to promote the common good, and not for the satisfaction of personal self-interest.

This difference between a Canadian leader and a dictator has been well expressed in a remark by Wilfrid Laurier concerning his opponent John A. Macdonald:

Sir John Macdonald was the supreme student of human nature. That was the secret of his power... He could play on the strength and weaknesses of each and all his followers at his will... He had imagination, he had a deep and responsible interest in Canada's welfare... Of course, he was a master of strategy, but not in the detached, objective fashion of the bloodless chess-player... it was his instinctive, sympathetic reading of the men in the mêlée about him that made him sense the way out and turned the game.¹

In the national parties, therefore, it is both unnecessary and contrary to the purpose of the party leader to make his position subject to periodic re-elections by national conventions.

On the one hand, the party leader motivated by a sincere intention, offers his resignation as soon as he realizes that he is unable to fulfil his political functions properly. Should he fail to draw the consequences, his resignation is forced upon him by internal pressure.²

On the other hand, the leader must have unrestricted discretion regarding the direction and co-ordination of his

¹O. D. Skelton, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 425.

²The best example is Mackenzie Bowell's deposition.

party. He must be permitted to overcome unjustified demands and opposition by means of persuasion and attraction¹, and, if necessary, even by eliminating an intractable person.²

What happens, if such a managerial faculty is missing or not assumed, has been shown by the division of the Liberal party prior to the leadership of Wilfrid Laurier. The party's inability to unite its separatist groups in a national entity was mostly due to the failure to solve the problem of leadership.³

¹Wilfrid Laurier was genuinely impressed by John A. Macdonald's ability to attract people. Speaking in the House of Commons at the occasion of Macdonald's death, Laurier said: "The fact that he could congregate together elements the most homogenous, and blend them into one compact party, and to the end of his life keep them steadily under his hand is perhaps altogether unprecedented. The fact that during all those years he retained unimpaired not only the confidence but the devotion, the ardent devotion of his party is evidence that besides those higher qualities of statesmanship... he was also endowed with those inner, subtle, undefinable graces of soul which can win and keep the hearts of men." - O. D. Skelton, The Day of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook and Co., 1916) pp. 153 - 154. - But Laurier himself was similarly distinguished: "His instinctive honour, his kindness and forgetfulness of self, that shining out of nobility and distinction of character which men call magnetism, made every man who entered his presence a better man for it." - O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. II., p. 588.

²Much of the "meanness, smallness, and cruelty" Mackenzie King has been reproached for, could be explained by the requirements of leadership. - B. Hutchison, op. cit., p. 450. - When Henri Bourassa left the House of Commons in favour of provincial politics, his leader, Laurier, remarked pointedly: "I regret your departure. We need a man like you at Ottawa... though I should not want two." M. Wade, op. cit., p. 554,

³D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 188.

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Hence, the position of the Canadian national party leader is endowed with a commanding authority capable of harmonizing and combining the divergent elements and interests of Canadian society within the framework of a single political entity. It is by providing competent and firm leadership to his own party, that the party leader becomes an agent of national cohesion and peace. In the final issue, however, the degree of his success depends on the ability to overcome his own party sentiments and sectional loyalties. Only on this basis, can the performance of a leader be judged, as it has been done by Arthur Lower with respect to the relative contribution of Macdonald and Laurier. "Macdonald was a party man, he divided Canada deeply; Laurier too was a party man, but his character gradually wore down the sharp outlines of party in his case and though he never spoke for all Canadians, he came within range of the exalted position of leader of his people."¹

In defining the Canadian political parties, one can still make use of the classic definition given by Edmund Burke: "Party is a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavour the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed".² There is

¹Arthur R. M. Lower, Canada, Nation and Neighbour, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1952) p. 140.

²E. Burke, Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents.

no essential difference between the political parties of various ages and countries.¹

The specific difference distinguishing the Canadian national parties consists in a more moderate emphasis upon "united" and "principle". They neither exaggerate unity and principle into an ideological conspiracy similar to the Communist party with its militant fanaticism, nor do they represent a formless political movement similar to the Progressives of Western Canada, who, by refusing to form a party organization, have lasted only a few years. Having been institutionalized, the national parties have attained a balance between firmness and flexibility. Firmness or cohesion is provided by the party leader and the party organization as an administrative machine, while a certain toleration with regard to ideas and principles, together with the looseness of organization leave room for sectional individuality and a considerable adaptability to new needs and concepts.

Hence, due to their peculiar structure, the Canadian national parties - without being perfect - are best suited to absorb the major currents of political dynamism on a nation-wide scale.

¹A mid-twentieth century variation of Burke's dictum of 1770, defines a party as "the articulate organization of society's active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of governmental power and who compete for popular support with another group or groups holding divergent views". - S. Neumann, op. cit., p. 396.

CHAPTER III

THE CANADIAN PARTY SYSTEM

Although, individually, the national parties exert a unifying influence upon Canadian society, is that effect not obliterated in the relentless competition for power?

John Adams, as Vice-President of George Washington, declared:

There is nothing I dread so much as the division of the Republic into two great parties, each under its leader. -- This, in my humble opinion, is to be feared as the greatest political evil under our Constitution.¹

His fear was based upon the characteristic factiousness present to some degree in all political parties.

James Madison, too, revealed a similar apprehension in The Federalist. According to him, the latent causes of faction are sown in the very nature of man; and they appear everywhere:

A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment of different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have ... divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each

¹Wilfred E. Binkley, American Political Parties, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954), p. 19.

other than to co-operate for their common good.¹

These statements, though containing the wisdom of American politicians, seem to be general enough to be applicable to the Canadian scene, especially if the affinity of the social climate in the two countries is kept in mind.

Indeed, about half a century subsequent to these statements, Governor Sir Charles Metcalfe was greatly alarmed by the bitterness of party faction existing in Canada.² Reporting his apprehensions to Lord Stanley, he wrote:

The violence of party spirit forces itself on one's notice immediately on arrival in the colony; and threatens to be the source of all the difficulties which are likely to impede the successful administration of the government for the welfare and happiness of the country.³

Since then, of course, the central issue provoking so much bitterness of party faction, the desire for responsible government, has been settled, and Canada has gone through an evolution which has eliminated several other

¹James Madison, The Federalist, No. X. - His definition of a faction differs from that of a party only with respect to purpose or intention. "By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community".

²S. B. Leacock, op. cit., p. 167.

³Ibid., p. 167, Sir Charles Metcalfe to Lord Stanley, April 25th, 1843.

causes of discord, as it has been shown in the first chapter of this thesis. The great parties, too, have been transformed from sectional groups into national and institutionalized political entities, as it has been shown in the second chapter. But, despite of all those changes, does not the basic factiousness remain as potent as ever? There is no doubt about that according to Madison, because

so strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts.¹

And indeed, the Canadian political scene does nothing to disavow the reality and the vigour of party strife. Hence, unless the social harmony in a country is identified with the hushed silence of a prison-yard, such factious conflicts must be accepted as the ordinary and the proper.

The important question, however, is whether the persistent political conflict has inevitably ill effects upon the common good, as Madison, Adams and Metcalfe have maintained. Does not the party system evolve certain patterns capable of modifying and ameliorating the ill effects of party struggle?

¹James Madison, The Federalist, No. X.

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The Nature of the Canadian Party System

The basic classification and characterization of party systems is made according to the number of political organizations participating in the party struggle. In that way, political scientists distinguish between multi-party systems, two-party systems, and one-party systems. The last type - if such a combination really constitutes a party system - can safely be excluded from a consideration of the political situation in Canada. Here, the argument revolves around the first two systems.

Has Canada a Two-Party System?

In the opinion of Professor Frank Underhill, "all English-speaking countries have tended towards the two-party system, though Canada can hardly be said to have conducted her politics since 1921 in a two-party framework".¹ The event which supposedly has terminated the Canadian dual party system, has been the rise of a number of protest parties, beginning with the Progressives in 1921.² Does it follow therefore, that the Canadian party system should be designated as a multi-party system, like the one that plagued the Fourth French Republic?

¹F. H. Underhill, Canadian Political Parties, p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 18.

If this conclusion is accepted, the only criterion to determine the difference between a two-party system and a multi-party system, would be one of numbers. That is, of course, what the two terms suggest. For the final decision, however, the numerical test must be supplemented by examining whether those conditions which can only be met by a two-party system, are present or not.

Leslie Lipson writing about the two-party system in British politics, lists three such conditions: firstly, not more than two parties at any given time have a genuine chance to gain power; secondly, one of these parties is able to win the requisite majority, and to stay in office without help from a third party; and thirdly, over a number of decades, two parties alternate in power.¹

To what extent can the Canadian party system satisfy these conditions?

To decide whether a party has a genuine chance of winning power, it is best to make use of the various election results as an indicator. Accordingly, the first condition would be met, because since Confederation, the federal Government and the official Opposition have always been formed by the Conservative and the Liberal parties. Only once, following the general election of 1921, has a

¹Leslie Lipson, The Two-Party System in British Politics, The American Political Science Review, XLVII, June 1953, p. 338.

third party been qualified to become the official Opposition.¹ Significantly enough however, T. A. Crerar, the leader of the Progressives, failed to claim the place of the official Leader of the Opposition, and thus left this privilege to the Conservatives.²

If applied in its strictest sense, the satisfaction of the second condition may be disputed on the grounds that there have been two periods when neither of the two major parties has been able to obtain an absolute majority of seats in the House of Commons.

The first period, from 1921 to 1930, has seen three Parliaments, the fourteenth, the fifteenth, and the sixteenth. During the first and the third of these, the Liberal administration was only one, and seven seats respectively short of full control over the House of Commons. The situation was more serious in the fifteenth Parliament which lasted only for the first seven months of 1926. Then, the Conservative party had seven, and the Liberal party twenty-two seats less than the absolute majority. As a consequence, throughout these nine years, the government of the day had to depend to some extent upon the support of the Progressive members of Parliament.

¹In 1921. the Progressives had the second largest party group in the House of Commons, with 65 members as compared to 50 of the Conservatives.

²A. R. M. Lower, Colony to Nation, p. 498.

The second time that a minority government had to carry on in Canada, was during the twenty-third Parliament of 1957 - 1958, when the Conservative administration could muster only 112 supporters among 265 members of Parliament.

Hence, occasionally, none of the major Canadian parties is able to win the necessary majority since the appearance of third parties. However, it seems that those occasions represent rather the exception than the rule, particularly if it is kept in mind that three out of the four elections which have produced minority governments, have also brought a change of the party in office. The rule appears to consist definitely in those twenty other general elections held since Confederation, which have resulted in clear victories for one of the major parties.¹

In spite of some reservations, therefore, there is sufficient evidence to satisfy the second condition indicating a two-party system.

Similarly, the third condition is met by the Canadian party system because only two parties, the Conservative party and the Liberal party, have alternated in the conduct of government.

¹The margin of victory in those twenty elections has been: in 1867, 21; in 1873, 6; in 1874, 60; in 1878, 68; in 1882, 68; in 1887, 31; in 1891, 31; in 1896, 21; in 1900, 42; in 1904, 64; in 1908, 45; in 1911, 44; in 1917, 71; in 1930, 29; in 1935, 96; in 1940, 103; in 1945, 5; in 1949, 118; in 1953, 75; and in 1958, 151. - "Canadian Political History", in Encyclopedia Canadiana (Ottawa: The Canadiana Comp. Ltd., 1958), Vol. VIII, pp. 239 b - 239 d.

To conclude that Canada has a multi-party system, would certainly be incorrect. Nor does Professor Underhill draw such a conclusion from his denial of the existence of a two-party system. His "thesis is that what has been happening in Canada ... is a transition from an old two-party system to a new and more effective one".¹ Yet, however 'new' it may be, as long as it does not deteriorate into a multi-party system, the Canadian party system must still be considered to be basically a two-party system as indicated by the ability to fulfil the above conditions.²

¹Frank H. Underhill, "The Canadian Party System in Transition", in the Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. IX, 1943, p. 306.

²According to Dr. A. Beauchesne, the authority on Canadian Parliamentary Procedure, the two-party system finds its recognition also in the House of Commons. If the Leader of the Opposition "is recognized as such either by agreement between opposition groups or because he lead the largest opposition unit, he becomes, on matters concerning the business of the House, the spokesman of all the Members who do not support the Government, and the Prime Minister is justified in dealing with him alone as the Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition. When at the end of a sitting the official Leader of the Opposition inquires as to the programme for the next day, or when he asks questions with regard to the progress of legislation, he speaks on behalf of all Opposition Members. If the anti-government groups who do not owe him allegiance, are not satisfied with any arrangement made between him and the Prime Minister, they are free to criticize, but they cannot expect the Government to give special consideration to them in its dealings with the Opposition." Dr. A. Beauchesne, "The two-party system in Canada and its relation to Parliamentary Procedure", in the Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Empire Parliaments, Owen Clough (ed.), (London: Butterworth and Co., 1939), Vol. VII, pp. 159 - 160. - In practice however, third parties are recognized as a subordinate manifestation of the Canadian dual party system by the Speaker's preference shown to their leaders' requests to speak.

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The Basic Structure of the Canadian Party System.

At first sight, it may sound like splitting hairs to make a distinction between a two-party system and one that is basically a two-party system, or to state that a plurality of parties - the count could be run up to six, if the Communist party and the Union Nationale is included - does not form a multi-party system. How can such strange distinctions and statements be justified? Is not a two-party system the same thing the world over? What are the peculiar features of the Canadian party system?

The necessity to introduce certain conditions supplementary to the numerical test, shows that a party system is not merely the undiscerning aggregation of all the parties of a given country, nor a lawless bellum omnium contra omnes, but rather a pattern of political expression which is deeply embedded in the peculiar nature of a society.

In the Canadian party system, the most outstanding single feature consists in the predominant position of the Progressive-Conservative and Liberal parties. Surely, there are also third parties in Canada, which must not be neglected. They, too, play a definite role in rounding off the proper functioning of the political pattern. But, their function is not an essential feature which would alter the basic dual party character of the Canadian system.

However, the preponderance of two major parties is a manifestation which can emanate from quite different political patterns. Indeed, there are countries which can meet all the conditions for a two-party system, but when their political structures are compared with the situation in Canada, they show very important variations.

For all its similarity in appearance, the Austrian party system is almost diagonally different in nature from that of Canada. In Austria, too, the political scene is dominated by two major parties: the one being the Social Democratic or Socialist party, the other the Christian Social or People's party. They are each based upon the faithful support of about half the population. This situation is brought about because the Socialist party is the sole spokesman and representative of the politically enrolled 'class conscious', not only of the manual workers, the employees in trade and industry, and for their trade unions, but also of a great mass of intellectual 'proletarians', while the conservatively disposed People's party can count only on the support of the agrarian population and the petty bourgeoisie.¹

¹Victor Heller, "The Economic and Political Background of Austria's Reconstruction", in the Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. VI, No. 3, October 1946, pp. 286 - 287. There also minor parties like the Communist party, which are unable to impair the predominant position of the two major parties.

This political structure must, of course, be classified as a two-party system. In contrast to that of Canada, the Austrian system appears to be rigid and all-pervading as it runs down from the highest level of government to the smallest village council. At the various elections, no real choice is offered to the voters as most of them are unwilling and unable because of religious or ideological convictions to support a party which, they are certain, is opposed or at least indifferent to their interests. As a consequence, election results fail to bring any significant changes, or to give a clear majority to one of the parties. In fact, so evenly is the Parliamentary representation split up among the two big parties, that there is no other possibility than to form a permanent coalition between these arch-rivals, if a perpetual interchange of one-party governments is to be avoided.

In Britain, which is said to have provided the prototype of the Canadian party system,¹ the present political pattern varies from that of Canada along analogue lines, although it is much less rigid than that of Austria. With the Labour party being organically connected with the English trade-unions, the two major parties have inevitably become representatives of definite social strata.

¹G. M. Cartier, op. cit., p. 58. - The author writes about the Canadian party system under the heading: "The Commonwealth Overseas: Variation on a British Theme".

Accordingly, the Labour party derives its principal support from the industrial working class, while the Conservatives have the backing of the middle and upper classes and of the agricultural sections.¹

In England too, therefore, the electorate's choice is on the whole limited by economic interest and social position. There however, class support does not produce the same stalemate situation as in Austria, because the contrast between the two big parties is much smaller in fact and emphasis. Hence, with English political allegiance being less militant, there exists a considerable number of dissidents among all the various classes, which makes it possible that one of the parties gets a clear mandate to be able to govern independently.²

These examples of the Austrian and English two-party systems are not to suggest that in Canada party support would be evenly distributed throughout all sections of the country and of society. Certainly, there are several

¹Samuel H. Beer, "Great Britain: From Governing Elite to Organized Mass Parties", in Modern Political Parties, S. Neumann (ed.), p. 49.

²Ibid., pp. 49 - 50. - "The British Institute of Public Opinion divides the voting population into four groups: the well-to-do, comprising 5 per cent of the population; a 'middle class', comprising 21 per cent; a large lower stratum, comprising 59 per cent; and ... the 'very poor', comprising 15 per cent. Its polls in recent years... show a substantial portion of the very poor - about a fifth - and of the third stratum - about a third - with Conservative affiliations, ... while a tenth of the well-to-do and a fifth of the middle class declare for Labour."

concentrations of party affiliations, like the Province of Quebec which is described as the stronghold of the Liberal party, or like the Toronto region which is claimed to have strong Tory sympathies, or like the Prairie farmers who have shown a preference for the Liberal party.

But, as Canadian society is relatively devoid of major dividing lines useful in defining the political complexion of a party, these sectional concentrations of political support are based on a rather shallow allegiance, and hence, are by no means immutable fixtures. It is precisely this very mutability which characterizes and distinguishes the Canadian party system.

Surely, under the English party system, government power has been in the hands of both the Conservative party as well as the Labour party. However, to conclude, as Samuel Beer does, that "neither on sectional nor on class lines is Britain sharply divided into 'two nations'," ¹ is correct only within the narrow limitations of this extreme proposition. If this conclusion is applied to the present English party system, it is definitely misleading because it is based upon the small margin of laxity in political affiliation, and disregards the militant party adherence of the majority of voters. What matters mostly with respect

¹Ibid., p. 50.

to the nature of a party system, is the amount of flexibility in the expression of a society's political dynamism. In his statement, Samuel Beer specifically refers to the fact that in England even highly industrialized areas have a few Conservative representatives, just as Tory regions elect a certain number of Labour candidates.¹ Under such conditions, of course, a certain modicum of mutability cannot be denied. Yet, in terms of an overall picture, the English party system is characterized by a fairly rigid pattern of political adherence, and none of the two big parties has a chance of winning a majority in the stronghold of the opponent.

The existence of this basic rigidity would probably be much more obvious if England would be a federation like Canada, or like Austria where the provincial administrations of predominantly industrial sections are always in the hands of the Socialist party which in turn is constantly defeated in the agricultural regions.

¹Ibid., p. 50. - "In the 1950 election, for instance, the mining country in Glamorgan and Monmouth in Wales returned twenty-one Labour M.P.s and only two Conservatives, but the popular vote in that area included a little more than 26 per cent for the Conservatives. Similarly, in the industrial area around Durham and in the Yorkshire coal and steel district, the Conservatives managed to win more than 30 per cent of the popular vote, and in the Black Country around Birmingham nearly 40 per cent. In the strongly Tory regions of the southern counties and northern Scotland, on the other hand, Labour polled from a third to two-fifths of the vote. Only in Northern Ireland was the Labour poll relatively insignificant."

In Canada however, the federal character of politics helps to bring out the remarkable flexibility of the party system. Indeed, those three examples of concentrated party support mentioned above, become pretty deficient under close scrutiny.

In the Prairie provinces, the loyalty to the Liberal party lasted from 1896, when partisanship was first established there,¹ until 1911.² During the first World War, the conscription issue eliminated Liberal support in the West as effectively as the tariff question had wrecked that of the Conservatives.³ The vacuum was filled by new parties. First came the Progressive movement which, in the general election of 1921, managed to capture 37 out of the 43 federal constituencies of the three Prairie provinces, and to reduce Liberal representation to three.⁴ Within a decade, the Progressive movement disintegrated and gave way to two new parties, the C.C.F. and the Social Credit party, the former of which, according to its leader, was partly brought on by "the election in 1930 of a Tory government".⁵ Both

¹E. M. Reid, "The Rise of National Parties in Canada" pp. 198 - 199.

²W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, (Toronto: The MacMillan Comp., 1950) p. 8.

³P. F. Sharp, op. cit., p. 127.

⁴A. Brady, Canada, pp. 106 - 107.

⁵M. J. Coldwell, op. cit., p. 2.

parties made considerable gains in the provincial as well as in the federal fields. Yet, while Alberta and Saskatchewan were in the firm control of the Social Credit party and the C.C.F. - they had won power in the respective provinces, - the Liberal party began to increase its support, and managed to win 25 or nearly half of the 53 Prairie constituencies in the 1949 federal election.¹ All these trends of political allegiance, however, were completely reversed in 1958 with the Social Credit party and the C.C.F. still in power in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Then, all but one of the federal seats of the three Prairie provinces were captured by the Progressive Conservative party. Thus, the party which, ten months earlier, had succeeded only in 13 constituencies, was able to obtain 47 out of 48 seats.²

Also in a restricted area like the city of Toronto, gains by an opposing party are not precluded because of local sympathies for the Conservatives. In the provincial and federal elections of 1945, the Ontario section of the Liberal party was not particularly successful. From 82 federal constituencies, the party could obtain only 34.

¹Dominion Bureau of Statistics, The Canada Year Book 1950, (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, King's Printer, 1950), pp. 104 - 105.

²The Ottawa Citizen, April 1, 1958, p. 1. Previous to their 1958 victory, the Conservatives had won only 4 seats in 1949, 6 in 1953. Since that victory, the minor party governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan have been sustained.

Provincially, the Liberal strength in the 90 seat legislature was reduced to 11 representatives, a situation which was barely improved in the next provincial election of 1948 with the addition of two Liberal members. Nevertheless, one year later, in 1949, when 83 federal ridings were contested in Ontario, 56 Liberal candidates were successful. Even from the 11 constituencies of Toronto, seven Liberal candidates went to Ottawa.¹ In the next three federal elections, Toronto's allegiance reverted again to the Conservative party with 6 and 10 constituencies in 1953 and 1957 respectively,² and with all of the city's ridings in 1958.³

But, the most revealing example of major changes in regional party affiliation, is that of the supposedly most conservative section of Canada. The contention that Quebec is the stronghold of the Liberal party, stems mainly from the huge majorities of Liberal representatives which the province has sent to Ottawa for forty years between 1917 and 1957. After faithfully supporting the Conservative party during the first quarter century of Confederation,⁴

¹The Canada Year Book 1950, p. 104.

²The Ottawa Citizen, June 11, 1957. p. 4.

³Ibid., April 1, 1958. p. 5.

⁴A. Brady, Canada, pp. 97 - 98. - The numbers of representatives elected by the two parties were: in 1867, 45 Conservatives and 20 Liberals; in 1872, 38 Conservatives and 27 Liberals; in 1874, 32 Conservatives and 33 Liberals; in 1878, 45 Conservatives and 20 Liberals; in 1882, 48 Conservatives and 17 Liberals; in 1887, 36 and 29 respectively.

Quebec began to favour the Liberal party in 1891, when J. A. Macdonald in his last election was able to win only 30 as compared to Laurier's 35 seats.¹ In the next four elections for the federal House of Commons, Liberal party strength reflected the establishment of a strong allegiance throughout the province.² This political attachment proved to be solid enough to sustain the party in Quebec, when the Liberals met defeat in the general election of 1911. Then, the province gave them a somewhat reduced majority by electing 37 Liberal candidates.³

During the first World War, the insistence on military conscription by the Conservative party completed the Liberal hegemony in Quebec which desired a more moderate approach to the problem of manpower.⁴ When the introduction of military conscription became the main issue of the general election in 1917, support of the Liberal party reached overwhelming proportions. Quebec gave Laurier 62 of its 65 seats - a majority which was at that time entirely without

¹Ibid., p. 98.

²Edgar P. Dean, "How Canada has voted: 1867 to 1945" in The Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXX, No. 3, September 1949, p. 233. In these four elections, the Liberals won 49 seats in 1896, 56 in 1900, 54 in 1904, and 53 in 1908.

³Ibid., p. 232. - The Conservative party succeeded in 27 constituencies.

⁴M. Wade, op. cit., pp. 735 - 736.

precedent.¹

However, even this majority was surpassed in the first election after the War. Then, in 1921, Quebec's firm allegiance culminated in virtual unanimity with all 65 federal constituencies returning Liberal candidates.²

During the next 36 years, the province of Quebec continued to elect great Liberal majorities in the various federal elections.³ In spite of this Liberal inclination however, the party was defeated in the provincial election of 1936, by Maurice Duplessis who had been leader of the Quebec Conservatives, but subsequently formed a separate

¹E. P. Dean, op. cit., p. 234. - How strong Quebec's support of the Liberal party has been in 1917, shows this analysis: "Throughout all of Canada, from 1896 to 1917, members elected by acclamation totalled no more than 20. The nation-wide total for the period 1921 - 1945 is only 3. In the province of Quebec in 1917, some 17 members were elected by acclamations. Unanimity of opinion is likewise apparent in the number of easy victories, that is, contests in which the successful candidate has a 2 to 1 lead or better over the runner-up. Although such victories occur in every election, they are few. In the Quebec of 1917, some 29 Laurier Liberals won by margins of 2 to 1 or better - generally better. The Charlevoix-Montmorency member scored a 40 to 1 triumph, the Bellechasse member a 62 to 1 triumph. Acclamations and easy victories totalled 46; in other words, three-quarters of the 62 Laurier Liberals were elected in what was virtually no contest." - Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, 13th General Election, 1917, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1920), pp. 133 - 202.

²Ibid., p. 233.

³Ibid., p. 233. - In the general elections of that period, the Liberals won 60 seats in 1925 and 1926, 40 in 1930, 55 in 1935, 61 in 1940, 54 in 1945, 68 in 1949, 66 in 1953, and 64 in 1957. After 1947, Quebec's representation was increased from 65 to 73, and to 75 after 1950.

splinter party, the Union Nationale.¹

It has been suggested that "after forty years of so-called liberal rule, it is quite easy to understand that... Mr. Duplessis...may have succeeded in fooling the people, a people so eager for economic reform, so desirous of cleaner politics...so intolerant of the old regime, which it thought rotten to the core".² This statement seems to imply that Quebec has been utterly disgusted with the Liberal party, and that Duplessis's victory has merely been the meaningless decision of a blind wrath. Surely, the underlying political pattern has been more complex than that, especially since Quebec neither discontinued its support of the Liberal party, nor abandoned the Union Nationale to political annihilation. Although defeated by the Liberal party in the subsequent provincial election early in the second World War, the Union Nationale was able to stage a come-back in 1944, and to enter upon a prolonged period of government, which lasted until 1960.³

¹G. M. Carter, op. cit., p. 66.

A. R. M. Lower, Colony to Nation, p. 527.

²Roger Ouimet, "The Preservation of French-Canadian Culture within Confederation", in Problems in Canadian Unity V. Anderson, (ed.) p. 54.

³The Canadian Press, Election Handbook 1951 - 1952, (Toronto; 1953), p. 30. - The majorities of the Union Nationale were pretty large. In 1952 the party won 68 seats out of 92, and in 1956, 72 out of 93.

In the meantime, with the loyal support of Quebec, the national Liberal party was firmly entrenched at Ottawa during the second World War and for a full decade thereafter. In the election of 1957, Quebec's Liberal allegiance continued as faithfully as ever, although the party was defeated in most of the other provinces. Necessitated by the minority position of the new Conservative government, another election was called in 1958. On that occasion, Quebec supplied the most singular demonstration of the inherent flexibility of the Canadian party system, as the province switched its support to the new government party not merely by a narrow margin, but with a sizable majority comparable to what the Liberals had been accustomed to. Within the short space of less than ten months, there were only 25 Liberal seats left from the 64 of 1957, while the meagre total of 7 Conservative seats was increased to 50 in 1958.¹

Seemingly, Quebec had finally returned to its original political affiliation with its support of the Progressive Conservative party in federal politics, and of the Union Nationale in provincial affairs between 1958 and 1960. Yet, once more, the province altered its allegiance to the Union Nationale, which had lasted for 16 years. In the election of 1960, the Liberals were returned to power in

¹The Ottawa Citizen, April 1, 1958, p. 7.

Quebec. Again, it was not a marginal change, but a clear cut decision.¹

Hence, neither the province of Quebec, whose faithful support of the Liberal party has previously been likened to the 'Solid South' of the American party system, nor other sections of the country, like the Prairie provinces or the city of Toronto, are especially rigid in their political attachment. It is this characteristic flexibility of party support, which distinguishes the Canadian party system from that of England or Austria. Indeed, to sing with Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan that 'every boy and every gal, that's born into this world alive, is either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative', is certainly somewhat misleading in Canada, where a considerable section of the electorate not only votes habitually for different political parties in provincial and federal elections,² but also transfers, occasionally within a very short period, a customary regional allegiance from one party to another.

Yet, the proper functioning of Canadian democracy would be seriously paralysed if this flexibility were not reinforced with the majority support required under the

¹The Ottawa Citizen, June 23, 1960. p. 1. - When the 93 seat Legislature was dissolved, the Union Nationale held 71 and the Liberals 17 seats. In the new 95 seat Legislature, the Union Nationale has 44 and the Liberals 50 members.

²F. H. Underhill, Canadian Political Parties, p. 19.

cabinet system. While some two-party systems obtain such majority support on account of the permanent allegiance to one political party by the more numerous classes of voters, the Canadian party system achieves the same result by its peculiar ability to concentrate the uncommitted sections of the electorate upon a single favourite party.

In a mechanical approach to political science, a multiplicity of parties means automatically a proportionate diffusion of electoral support. That is the reason why many political commentators hesitate to confirm the existence of a two-party system in Canada.

But, here lies the qualifying distinction between the Canadian party system and the multi-party system in general: that in Canada, despite a multiplicity of parties, one of them is usually able to win sufficient electoral support to have an absolute majority in the House of Commons or in one of the provincial legislatures.

This ability was not completely articulate at the time that parties of protest began to appear during the 1920's. In federal politics, the situation remained relatively unsettled for almost a decade before the party system reassumed its proper functioning. Since then, however, the diffusion of electoral support over an increased number of parties did not seriously hamper the production of convincing majorities. Indeed, some of these majorities have set

new records,¹ while the consistently large pluralities of the Liberal party prior to 1957, prompted Bruce Hutchison, the famous author, to wonder whether Canada was not gradually sinking into a one-party system.²

In provincial politics, the same situation has been prevailing. There, however, the winning of majorities is no longer restricted to the Progressive Conservative party and the Liberal party. In fact, third parties, like the Social Credit party in British Columbia and Alberta, the C.C.F. in Saskatchewan, or the Union Nationale in the province of Quebec, have not only succeeded in dominating their respective provincial spheres, but even in reducing one or both national parties to an inferior position. Accordingly, although the present Progressive Conservative government in Ottawa has been elected in 1958 with huge majorities in Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia,³ the party held only 3 seats in the Alberta legislature,⁴ while

¹These records occurred in 1935 with a majority of 96 seats, in 1940 with 103, in 1949 with 118, and in 1958 with 151 seats. - "Canadian Political History", in Encyclopedia Canadiana, Vol. VIII, pp. 239 c - 239 d.

²Bruce Hutchison, "Is the Two-Party System Doomed?" in Maclean's Magazine, October 15, 1953, p. 9.

³In the province of Quebec, the Progressive Conservatives won 50 out of 75 federal ridings, in Saskatchewan 16 out of 17, in Alberta all 17 ridings, and in British Columbia 18 out of 22 constituencies. - The Ottawa Citizen, April 1, 1958. p. 7.

⁴The Ottawa Citizen, June 19, 1959, p. 27.

it was without any legislative representation in the other three provinces.¹

Of course, the introduction of third parties has occasioned the election of minority governments also on the provincial level. One of them was brought about in 1919, when the United Farmers of Ontario, upon entering their first electoral contest, were surprised with the task of forming the government after they had become the largest party group in the legislature.² In order to remedy their minority position, they had to enter into an agreement with the members elect of the Labour party.³

On the whole, however, the multiplicity of political parties did not have any adverse effects upon the Canadian party system in the provincial sphere either, as the ability to concentrate political support upon a single party remained unimpaired.

If anything like a tendency has become traceable, it points even more than in the federal sphere, towards

¹Ibid., May 30, 1960, p. 38.

²W. L. Morton, op. cit., p. 85. - The United Farmers won 43 seats, Liberals 28, Conservatives 26, the Labour party 12, and independent candidates obtained two seats. - An indication of how unprepared the Farmers were for such a success, was the fact that they had to choose a leader before they could address themselves to the task of forming a government.

³A. Brady, Canada, p. 106. - It is a significant indication of the nature of Canadian democracy that the Farmers won without an elaborate party machine, a richly stocked party treasury, and strong newspaper support.

an enlargement of majorities. Indeed, on one occasion, in 1935, the Liberal party was able to capture all 30 seats of the Prince Edward Island legislature.¹

Yet, although such a complete victory has not been scored since then, there have been several rather one-sided election results.² Particularly in Alberta, sizable pluralities have been fairly frequent. Because these majorities have helped to keep the Social Credit party in power for more than a quarter of a century since 1935, it has been suggested that a virtual one-party system has emerged in the province.³ This contention has probably received its strongest confirmation in the provincial election of 1959, when the Social Credit party defeated its three competitors by winning 61 of the 65 seats in the legislature.⁴ This result, however, taken as such, definitely overrates the party's strength by giving 94 per cent of the legislative seats for 56 per cent of the popular vote.⁵ In fact, the Social Credit party is by no means the only party capable

¹Election Handbook 1951 - 1952, p. 13.

²In Ontario, the Progressive Conservatives won 79 out of 90 seats in 1951, and 84 out of 98 in 1955; In Quebec, the Union Nationale won 68 out of 92 seats in 1952, and 72 out of 93 in 1956. Ibid., pp. 30, and 49.

³C. B. MacPherson, Democracy in Alberta, p. 218.

⁴The Ottawa Citizen, June 19, 1959, p. 27.

⁵Ibid., p. 27. - In the preceding election of 1955, the Social Credit party obtained a smaller majority with only 47 per cent of the popular vote.

of gaining Alberta's support. This independence of affiliation has been amply demonstrated in the federal election of 1958, when the Social Credit party could not obtain a single seat.¹ Hence, big majorities or a prolonged popularity of one party - though they may not be exactly an ideal arrangement - appear to be fully in keeping with the fundamental flexibility of the Canadian party system.

Finally, in order to preserve the essential dual-party pattern, a special feature has been developing, particularly during the 1950's, namely, the securing of a firm parliamentary position for minority governments by means of a follow-up election.

The first time that two federal elections took place in quick succession to solve a parliamentary stalemate, was in 1925 and 1926.² Then, the confused political situation was sufficiently settled to produce a stable government for the following four years without an absolute majority.³ On that occasion, the failure to reach such a plurality was most probably due to a reversal in the trend of popular support during the inter-election period. Whereas the

¹The Ottawa Citizen, April 1, 1958, p. 1.

²Prior to that, there have, of course, been the two elections of 1873 and 1874. But they were contested by two parties only.

³B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 146. The Liberal government could count on the general support of 11 farmer candidates from Alberta, 13 Progressives, and 9 Liberal Progressives.

election of 1925 had revealed a trend in favour of the Conservatives,¹ the 1926 election returned the Liberals as the largest group in Parliament.² However, barring another switch in popular support, an additional election within a short period would have confirmed, in all likelihood, the 1926 results with an absolute majority.

So far, the only occasion when such a follow-up election became necessary in federal politics, and was applied with conspicuous success, has been in 1958. Then, the minority government of the Progressive Conservative party elected in 1957, asked for a clear mandate, and received an overwhelming majority within ten months of the preceding election.³

It may perhaps be objected that this one example is insufficient to establish the hypothesis that follow-up elections constitute a peculiar regulative feature of the Canadian party system. Yet, although such examples are unlikely to abound under this system, there have been two

¹They were able to increase their parliamentary representation from 50 to 116 in the election of 1925. - Encyclopedia Canadiana, Vol. VIII, p. 239 c.

²In that election, the Liberal party increased its parliamentary representation from 101 to 116, while the Conservative total fell to 91. Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 239 c.

³The Progressive Conservatives who had only 51 seats at dissolution of Parliament in 1957, were able to obtain 112 seats in the election of the same year, and 207 seats in that of 1958. - Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 239 d.

similar instances on the provincial level where, due to the greater prevalence of third parties, such examples are twice as valuable.

Indeed, the functioning of the Canadian party system and its supplementary mechanism of follow-up elections could hardly be any better demonstrated than by the firm establishment of the Social Credit party in British Columbia after the party had been unable to obtain even a single victory in any of the provincial constituencies.¹ When the Social Credit party won its first seats in the British Columbia election of 1952, the party became at the same time the largest group in the legislature.² But, the minority government under W. A. C. Bennett did not last very long. When it met defeat in the provincial parliament, a follow-up election was called in 1953, which gave an absolute majority to the Social Credit party³ - a party unrepresented in the legislature only a year earlier.

In a similar, though perhaps less spectacular manner, the Progressive Conservative party succeeded in strengthening its position in Manitoba. In the provincial election of

¹Election Handbook 1951 - 1952, p. 95.

²Ibid., p. 95. - The Social Credit party won 19 seats, the C.C.F. 18, the Liberals 6, and the Progressive Conservative party 4.

³The Ottawa Citizen, June 10, 1953, p. 40. - The party obtained 28 of 48 seats. It has since been sustained in the elections of 1956 and 1960.

1958, the Conservatives deposed the Liberal-Progressive party which had been in power for 36 years.¹ In order to remedy its minority position, the new Progressive Conservative government called a follow-up election in 1959. On that occasion, the desired absolute majority was once more forthcoming, as the Conservatives were able to win 35 of the 55 seats at stake.²

It would certainly be inaccurate to describe the mechanism of follow-up elections as a sure means of obtaining absolute majorities for parties forming minority governments. The proper functioning of this mechanism is quite definitely limited by its dependence upon a continuation of the popular favour indicated in the first of the two elections. In spite of this limitation, however, the fact that such follow-up elections are capable of clarifying the political situation, provides an excellent proof that the Canadian party system is able to concentrate popular support upon one of the contending parties.

Thus, unlike the party systems of the United States, England, or Austria, where the predominance of two big parties ensures one of them an absolute majority, the basic

¹The Ottawa Citizen, June 18, 1958, p. 6. - In this election, the Progressive Conservatives won 26 seats, the Liberal-Progressives 19, the C.C.F. 11, with one seat being won by an independent candidate.

²Ibid., May 15, 1959, p. 1, and p. 28.

structure of the Canadian party system is marked by a singular mutability of political allegiance, combined with a high concentration of party support. In this way, the essential dual-party pattern has been preserved despite a multiplicity of parties, since what really matters in a party system as a channel of political power, is the fact that there is only one single party in full control of government power at any given time. As long as this feature can be preserved, Canada has a two-party system, because for the purpose of government the number of opposition parties is entirely irrelevant. Hence, the fundamental division of the Canadian two-party system is not primarily between the two national parties, the Progressive Conservative and Liberal parties, but rather between the government party and the opposition parties irrespective of their political denomination.

The Function of the National Parties

In the above consideration of the basic character of the Canadian party system on both the federal and the provincial level, one particular feature appears to delineate the two spheres of politics in the otherwise similar pattern, namely that none of the third parties which have been successful in the provinces, has ever formed the Government or the official Opposition in the Canadian House of Commons. Is there a special reason for the predominance of

the two national parties? What is their special function in the framework of the party system?

Basic Agreement

When considering the evolution of the Canadian parties, it has been shown that the national parties have arrived at a condition described as institutionalized. This phenomenon has brought about a form of nation-wide party organization which derives its unity and continuity from the solidarity of a relatively small number of partisans, while the party's popular support depends on the ability to absorb and represent a majority of the legitimate demands and interests of the various sections of the country. This comprehensiveness of political purpose on the part of the national parties has modified the basic direction of their struggle in the federal sphere. Here, the conflict is not primarily a fight between the exponents of two opposed social, racial or ideological classes, but rather a competition for the support of the same sections of the population.

This state of affairs has induced several commentators to upbraid the Progressive Conservative and the Liberal parties for their political listlessness and lack of principle. One of those writers, J. H. Stewart Reid, has maintained that:

If we accept the definition of Burke that a political party is in essence a body of men united in agreement about the validity of certain political convictions, then the obvious and inescapable conclusion is that there actually exists no such thing in Canada today.¹

That this conclusion is obvious and inescapable, betrays a completely empirical approach: the national parties are not forced by the present political situation to demonstrate and defend their principles - therefore, these parties have none whatsoever.

Yet, if the political parties which have formed all Canadian governments since Confederation, had no principles, what did the Canadians who gave their lives during the second World War, die for? Certainly, they did not die for the Progressive Conservative or Liberal parties. But, these men did give their lives essentially for the same basic principles which the two national parties accept and uphold as a true conviction and not merely as a political embellishment.

Indubitably, there are some Conservative and Liberal partisans who are unable to enumerate these principles because they have become commonplaces in Canada, and are no longer issues of every-day party struggle. Nevertheless, these fundamental tenets of the Canadian body politic would

¹J. H. Stewart Reid, "Wanted: A Political Party for Canada", in Saturday Night, December 8, 1956, p. 7.

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certainly come much more to the fore, if the C.C.F., for instance, would be more of a force in federal politics. In such a position, this party might be able and obliged to implement its principles laid down in the Regina Manifesto. Accordingly, the C.C.F. would

aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the domination and exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated, in which economic planning will supersede unregulated private enterprise and competition, and in which genuine democratic self-government, based upon economic equality, will be possible.¹

When the C.C.F. was still on the rise in the early 1930's, these socialist concepts drew heated objections from the two national parties. In the ensuing argument, only a few politicians were able to dispense with derision and invective, and to understand and face the C.C.F. proposals as a legitimate political theory. One of these few was Mackenzie King who pointed out that the key defect of the C.C.F. principles was their extreme position in relation to the Canadian polity.²

There was nothing wrong with the idea of public ownership. It had long been accepted by the two national parties, as they never shrunk from collectivism when it was

¹Regina Manifesto, - Programme of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, (Ottawa: Mutual Press Ltd.) July 1933, p. 1.

²B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, pp. 183 - 184.

deemed necessary for the provision of transport or the development of resources.¹

But, the national parties would not turn such public ownership into the only form of business enterprise, as it is proposed by the C.C.F. programme - at least if taken at face value. They want to prevent both state capitalism as well as monopoly capitalism from harassing the well-being of the community. The Liberal party, much like the Progressive Conservative party, "rejects the theory that state ownership of the instruments of production in itself constitutes progress and a solution of social problems".² Rather, the two national parties have proven by their statements and actions that they

believe the state should be the servant of the people and that our national progress depends on a competitive economy which, accepting its social responsibilities, allows to every individual, freedom of opportunity and initiative, and the peaceful enjoyment of the fruits of his labour.³

¹A. Brady, Democracy in the Dominions, p. 116, "The wide range of public ownership in the utilities of the Canadian economy (is) relatively greater than in the United States".

²The National Liberal Federation of Canada, Liberal Action for a Greater Canada, (Ottawa: Le Droit, 1957) p. 36. - "This statement of principles is in the preamble to the Resolutions adopted by the third National Liberal Convention, Ottawa, August 1948."

³Constitution of the Progressive Conservative Association of Canada, (as amended November 30, 1959), Clause II. (a), containing the party's "aims and principles, as set forth ... at the National Convention on December 14, 1956".

These quotations are, of course, party pronouncements which, according to popular custom, are to be sneered at and held inadmissible as evidence in an objective analysis. Yet, as the entire political situation throughout Canada proves, these statements reflect an integral and important part of the central principle cherished by both national parties, namely the preservation and improvement of a free society.

This principle implies not only a free-enterprise economy, but demands the safeguard of all the traditional freedom and values associated with democracy. Thus, the Liberals vow to "protect, sustain and enlarge the freedom of the individual".¹ To the same effect, the Progressive Conservatives "believe in freedom of worship, speech and assembly; and the rule of law."²

Perhaps for people who are so much bored by Canada's social harmony that they cry out for a new party with ideas, - "almost any ideas will do"³, - this principle may not be worth mentioning. But, in this world which is darkened by totalitarianism, such a fundamental concept becomes a beacon

¹The National Liberal Federation of Canada, op. cit. p. 36. - Statement of principles.

²Constitution of the Progressive Conservative Association of Canada, Clause II, (a). - Statement of principles.

³J. H. S. Reid, "Wanted: A Political Party for Canada", op. cit., p. 8.

of hope and harmony, which is much more vital than any smug set of political ideas, and which is by far the most desirable feature in any political group and at all times.

The whole situation would be half as dull if only the national parties would not persist in committing another crime against public excitement by the omission of becoming exclusive extremists. Accordingly, it is maintained that "there is no real difference of principles between Liberal and Conservative in Canada".¹

That there is really a basic agreement in the fundamental principle of the two national parties becomes evident from the notable similarity in purpose of most of their major policies. Even the party slogans echo each other. While it is "Unity, Security, Freedom" which sums up Liberal convictions², it is "Freedom, Security, Opportunity and the British Partnership" which has been applied by the Conservatives.³

What is the significance of such a basic agreement in party principles? Is it really incompatible with Burke's definition of a party?

¹Ibid., p. 7.

²The National Liberal Federation of Canada, op. cit., pp. 35 - 36.

³The Progressive Conservative Association of Canada, Freedom, Security, Opportunity and the British Partnership, (Ottawa: 1943), Policy of the Progressive Conservative party, adopted at the National Convention held in Winnipeg, December 1942. p. 1.

The Burkean formula does not insist upon a consistent or radical philosophy in order to unite a body of men to a party. To uphold a free society, and to provide for the various needs of the community, is certainly principle enough to qualify the Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals. But, beyond these fundamentals, the national parties are mostly restricted to ideas which apply to particular sections or endeavours, like the Maritimes or agriculture, as there are few principles with a nation-wide applicability such as the idea of social security.

Nor does Burke's definition demand explicitly that one party must differ in its principles from those of the other parties. It is, however, a widely accepted attitude to see in the absence of such a difference, a deterioration and perversion of the democratic functions of a party system.¹

Yet, in Canadian federal politics, the basic agreement in the principles of the national parties constitutes the prime prerequisite for the proper functioning of the political system. The Confederation settlement would long have been broken up if the two parties would have stood for exclusive or too strongly divergent points of

¹The twentieth century definition of a political party given by Sigmund Neumann, includes the idea of opposing political "groups holding divergent views". cf. S. Neumann, op. cit., p. 396.

view.¹ Unless the party's programme is generally acceptable to most citizens, its government becomes unbearable to the adherents of defeated parties. By the same token, political adherence can also be transferred with greater ease if the parties concerned have like principles.

Hence, the important merit of the basic agreement in the political ideas of the Progressive Conservative and Liberal parties, consists in making the remarkable flexibility of the Canadian party system possible without causing a concomitant rupture in the continuity of government. In that way, Canadians have a real choice in the federal field as long as the national parties alternate in power, as neither of them would change the general direction of government or the basic structure of the polity. Here, ultimately, in the context of the party system as a mechanism regulating political power, lies the most important aspect of an institutionalized party, namely that it harmonizes as far as humanly possible with the general character of society.

¹Because such divergent views demand the strongest loyalty of their followers, the cleavages within society will be deepened and that area of common agreement wherein men may safely agree to disagree will be narrowed. - cf. F. H. Underhill, "The Canadian Party System in Transition", op. cit., p. 303.

Specific Difference

Many people, particularly those who lament about the lack of principles on the part of the Conservatives and Liberals, are induced to jump to the conclusion that a similarity of ideas means an absence of difference. Is such a conclusion justified? Are the national parties identical? Is their struggle mostly a "sorry sham fight"¹?

Attempts to prove the virtual identity of the two parties are usually based upon three major items: the tariff policy, the promotion of the 'national status', and the solicitude for provincial autonomy. Each of these three has been the specialty of one of the parties. During the first quarter century after Confederation, tariffs were advocated by the Conservative party, and figured predominantly in its election victory of 1878 when protection of the economy was the chief plank in John A. Macdonald's platform. However, upon regaining power in 1896, the Liberals began with an assimilation of their original idea of free trade to the Conservative concept of a 'national policy' which provided tariff protection to industry. Eventually, the main lines of difference between the two views became greatly obliterated.²

¹A. Brady, Canada, p. 86.

²Ibid., pp. 87 - 89.

Similarly, the promotion of the 'national status' and the solicitude for provincial autonomy are no longer exclusive attributes of the Liberal party. Its claim to be more national-minded has been based upon the tradition of the struggle for responsible government against the Tory groups. Yet, their successors, the Conservatives, have come to lay a claim to the same tradition on account of their union with the Moderate Reformers.¹ Moreover, the Conservative party has had several opportunities to surpass the Liberals in promoting Canadian nationhood, as for instance in the efforts to obtain power to negotiate directly commercial treaties,² or, when the Conservative Prime Minister Borden won for Canada international recognition at Versailles in 1919, as well as separate membership in the League of Nations and the World Court.³

Provincial autonomy, too, has first been championed by the Liberal party, especially in the election of 1896 when the Conservative administration intended to intervene through a remedial bill in Manitoba's affairs. But, the Conservatives have become equally solicitous about provincial autonomy as demonstrated by their opposition to the use of

¹J. R. Williams, op. cit., pp. 9 - 10.

²A. Brady, Canada, pp. 89 - 91. - The "Conservative Sir Charles Tupper, in his position as High Commissioner in London (1883 - 1896), probably did more than any other statesman to aid Canada in obtaining (this) power".

³H. Clokie, Canadian Government and Politics, p. 77.

federal disallowance by the Liberal administration in 1923.¹

However, the consideration of these policies indicates much more the remarkable adaptability of the institutionalized parties than their supposed identity of character. In fact, if the similarity discernible in the application of these policies, is closer scrutinized, it frequently seems to result from the contemporaneous position of a national party in government or opposition, rather than from a lack of a specific difference.

As it has been shown by the fatal adherence of Alexander Mackenzie's administration to free trade principles,² the above policies are much too important to the community to admit a consistent demonstration of party individuality. Hence, they are just as incompetent as the attempt to show the virtual identity of the national parties by considering the temperament of their leaders. Surely, the fact that "the two most distinguished leaders of the Conservative party, Sir John Macdonald and Sir Robert Borden, were bold in innovation",³ does not prove that these individuals were not basically - in terms of their party - Conservative-minded, nor that their party was not different from the Liberal party.

¹A. Brady, Canada, pp. 86 - 87.

²D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 211

³A. Brady, Canada, p. 84.

In order to fathom the contrast in the general character of the national parties, one must turn to manifestations lying beyond the influence of expediency; one must try to find persistent traditions and attitudes; and one must attempt an analysis of the political appeal to those who are permanent supporters of one of the parties.

Not being a perfect incarnation of party ideals, a single party leader can hardly serve as a satisfying indicator of what they are. Yet, he has sufficient in common with the general party complexion to become such an indicator if he is made use of in unison with all his leadership colleagues. Thus, for instance, it can be observed that since Confederation the Conservatives have never been led by a Roman Catholic French Canadian, while the Liberals have had already two such leaders in Wilfrid Laurier and Louis St. Laurent. Conversely, all Liberal leaders have come from Ontario and Quebec, while Conservative leaders have come from the Maritimes, like Charles Tupper, and from Western Canada, like John Bracken and John Diefenbaker. Although no rule can be deduced from these contrasts, they nevertheless indicate a Liberal inclination towards Quebec, and a Conservative trend towards Western Canada.

As little as any political leader can incorporate all ideals of his party, just as little are avowed partisans perfect Liberals or Conservatives. Nevertheless, in most

people, either a liberal or a conservative bent of character can be detected, which does not exclude traits belonging to the other disposition. Accordingly, John A. Macdonald and Robert Borden, the two Conservative Prime Ministers whose boldness in innovation has been used as an argument against the validity of these two categories of temperament,¹ are, in spite of all progressiveness, characterized by a predominance of conservative features. The former, also known as the 'Old Tomorrow', has always been noted for his conspicuous reluctance to risk uncertainty and rash decisions.² The latter was able to obtain his greatest victory, the defeat of the Liberal administration in 1911, by utilizing the traditional Conservative appeal to the imperial sentiments of English-speaking Canada. That these sentiments had been very much his own, was revealed when he advocated a common foreign policy for the Empire even after his well-known efforts to promote Canadian nationhood.³

There can be no doubt that the great majority of steady supporters is attracted to the party which offers

¹Ibid., p. 84.

²D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, pp. 251 - 252.

³M. Wade, op. cit., p. 785. - Speech of April 27, 1921. By then, Robert Borden had already been succeeded by Arthur Meighen, as Prime Minister, but was still active in the diplomatic field. - Canadian Annual Review, 1921, p. 211.

offers more peculiarities agreeable to personal predilection. With due allowance for the enthusiasm for the own party, this basic division could be described in the terms of Wilfrid Laurier:

Everywhere there is a class of men who cling with fondness to whatever is ancient and who, even when convinced by overpowering reasons that innovation would be beneficial, consent to it with many misgivings and forebodings. We find also everywhere another class of men, sanguine in hope, bold in speculation, always pressing forward, quick to discern the imperfection whatever exists, disposed to think lightly of the risks and inconveniences which attend improvements and disposed to give every change credit for being an improvement.¹

Generally speaking, neither of the two national parties tries to contradict this widely accepted characterization. Accordingly, the Liberal statement of principles mentions explicitly that "Liberalism rejects the unreasoning preservation, in the name of freedom, of outworn existing arrangements and measures".² In like manner, the principles of the Progressive Conservative party profess the conviction "that progress and stability can best be achieved by building on the firm foundations of those things proved good by experience".³

¹Ibid., p. 363. quoting from U. Barthe, "Wilfrid Laurier on the Platform", (Quebec, 1890), p. 59.

²The National Liberal Federation of Canada, op. cit. p. 36.

³Constitution of the Progressive Conservative Association, Clause II, (a).

That there is a higher concentration of radically progressive-disposed people among the members of the Liberal party, can best be seen in the great number of protest movements which have arisen out of this party. Soon after Confederation, the Canada First movement objected to Liberal oppositionism.¹ The Progressive movement was a reaction against Liberal policies during the first World War.² When this movement broke up under the stress of its own progressiveness, some of the splinter groups reverted to the Liberal fold, while others went into the formation of the present protest parties, the C. C. F., and the Social Credit party.³

Perhaps most eloquently, party complexion was revealed in a roundabout way in the Ontario election of 1919, which saw the United Farmers of Ontario victorious in their first electoral contest. Some time prior to the election, a significant pattern began to emerge: the first fifty-five U. F. O. candidates had been nominated mostly in traditionally Liberal constituencies, while of the fifty-six seats not contested by the Farmers, forty-six were traditionally Conservative. Although a few more candidates were subsequently added, the striking coincidence between the areas

¹J. Lewis, op. cit., p. 240.

²P. F. Sharp, op. cit., p. 127.

³G. M. Carter, op. cit., p. 67.

of the United Farmers' activity and those of the old Grit party was preserved,¹ and testified very well to what the more radically disposed Farmers were aiming at.

To reduce however the specific difference between the Liberal and the Conservative parties to a simple 'only-change' and 'no-change' proposition, would be grossly unjust to each of them. Despite the wide diffusion of this oversimplification not merely among ordinary citizens but, unfortunately, even among faithful partisans, each of the two approaches to the problem of social harmony, has a distinct and firm basis from whence the great Canadian leaders have been able to draw those visions and master-plans which are an essential prerequisite for the purposeful advancement of the common good.

The basic conservative attitude has perhaps most aptly been described as

a treasure house, sometimes an infuriatingly dusty one, of generations of accumulated experience, which any ephemeral rebellious generation has a right to disregard - at its peril. The conservative principles par excellence are proportion and measure; self-expression through self-restraint; preservation through reform; humanism and classical balance; a fruitful nostalgia for the permanent beneath the flux; and a fruitful obsession for unbroken historic continuity. These principles together create freedom, a freedom built not on the quicksand of adolescent

¹W. L. Morton, op. cit., p. 83. - The observation was contained in an article in the Toronto Globe, September 26, 1919, p. 6.

defiance but on the bedrock of ethics and law.¹

In contrast, the fundamental disposition of the Canadian Liberal party has been outlined by Wilfrid Laurier in defence against the charge of his party being an exponent of European Radicalism.

The principle of Liberalism is inherent in the very essence of our nature, in that desire for happiness with which we are all born into the world, which pursues us through life, and which is never completely gratified this side of the grave. Our souls are immortal, but our means are limited. We constantly gravitate towards an ideal which we never attain. We dream of good but never realize the best. We only reach the goal we have proposed for ourselves, to discover new horizons opening up which we had not even suspected before. We rush on towards them, and those horizons, explored in their turn, reveal to us others which lead us on ever further and further.

This condition of our nature is precisely what makes the greatness of man, for it condemns him irrevocably to movement, to progress: our means are limited, but our nature is always perfectible, and we have the infinite for our arena. Thus there is always room for improvement of our condition, for the perfecting of our nature, and for² the attainment of an easier life by a larger number.

Here, then, are the two approaches: the one takes the sparrow at hand, the other reaches for the pair in the bush.

Of course, in everyday politics, these general attitudes are almost completely obliterated by a confusing

¹Peter Viereck, Conservatism Revisited, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), pp. 5 - 6.

²M. Wade, op. cit., p. 363. - Quoting U. Barthe, Wilfrid Laurier on the Platform, (Quebec: 1890), pp. 61 - 62.

similarity of terms. Under closer examination, however, the party peculiarities concealed in these terms, can be uncovered.

One of those common terms is 'society'. Certainly, both parties agree in its factual definition. But, their efforts to preserve and promote an open society, are determined by the mental picture associated with this definition. Accordingly, in the conservative view, "society is a living organism with roots deep in the past".¹ No such comparison can be found in Liberal party literature. There, society is referred to as "the Canadian family (which) consists of individual beings".²

This difference of interpretation has its effects in practical politics.

If society is a living organism, it cannot decide by itself. It must be guided by those who know best how to govern. As a consequence, the Conservatives favour firm leadership which tends to be authoritarian. "Prescription, not fiat, is the chief creative force in the social

¹Clinton Rossiter, Conservatism in America, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956) p. 27. - This association is also found in the English Conservative party. cf. Maurice Woods, A History of the Tory Party, (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1924), p. 13.

²The National Liberal Federation of Canada, op. cit., p. 35. Quoting a speech by Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, Ottawa, November 24, 1953.

process."¹ This feature of the Conservative party has best been evidenced in the centralist aspects of the British North America Act,² and in the way Confederation has been brought about without the various votes demanded by the Liberals.³ Similarly, during the first World War, the Conservative government felt that the danger of the situation was serious enough to overrule Quebec's solid opposition to conscription.

Conversely, the Liberal concept of society being a family of individuals, implies no difficulty with respect to guidance. Rather, there is the Rousseauian belief "in the capacity and judgement of ordinary people".⁴ No abstract idea of what the common good is, must frustrate the will of the majority. Accordingly, the Upper Canadian Clear Grit party has been advocating 'Representation by Population' as its main proposal to remedy the political problems

¹C. Rossiter, op. cit., p. 27.

²A. Brady, Canada, p. 43. - The American Civil War which was raging at that time, was attributed to the weakness of the federal government, a constitutional flaw which John A. Macdonald was determined to avoid by paying more attention to the exponent of centralized government, Alexander Hamilton.

³J. W. Longley, op. cit., pp. 189 - 190. - Joseph Howe of Nova Scotia, in particular, opposed the plan to get the Confederation scheme legally adopted before a hostile vote of the people was risked.

⁴The National Liberal Federation of Canada, op. cit., p. 36. - Statement of Principles.

of the pre-Confederation era¹, and after 1867, the Liberals have worked for the extension of the franchise², and, upon coming to power in 1874, have abolished the property qualification for members of Parliament.³ During the twentieth century, the Liberal party has come to stand for "the supreme command of the people over the Parliament",⁴ a stand which, according to Mackenzie King, has been the "real

¹F. H. Underhill, Canadian Political Parties, p. 15. This concept was particularly emphasized after the census of 1850 showed higher population figures for Upper Canada than for Lower Canada. - Although the principle of representation by population had been implicitly incorporated in the British North America Act, the Conservative government soon disposed of this principle when Manitoba and British Columbia entered the federation in 1870 and 1871, as Manitoba which had an electorate far too small to entitle it to even one member, was given four, while British Columbia which could muster almost enough citizens to justify a single representative, was given six. cf. House of Commons Debates, 1870, pp. 1290 ff, and 1871, pp. 660 ff. The Liberals objected, of course, to this departure from the principle, an action seemingly inconsistent with the terms of the British North America Act. - N. Ward, op. cit., pp. 23 - 24.

²"The draft bills (pertaining to the franchise) introduced by the Conservatives between 1867 and 1874 were interesting indications of that party's reluctance to extend the franchise. Proposed statutes in 1869 and 1870 would have established an income qualification of 400 Dollars but 'it did not apply to day-labourers, who might as a matter of fact earn 400 Dollars in a year ... because they had no abiding interest in the country'." - N. Ward, op. cit., p. 213, referring to the House of Commons Debates, 1870, p. 356. - When John A. Macdonald introduced the Electoral Franchise Act in 1885, which provided a low property test, the Liberal government of Ontario surpassed his Act by extending the provincial franchise to include urban artisans and wage-earners. N. Ward, op. cit., p. 216.

³N. Ward, op. cit., p. 64.

⁴The National Liberal Federation of Canada, op. cit., p. 37.

issue" of the 1921 federal election.¹

This Liberal stand differs quite significantly from the Conservatives' concern for Parliament. They, too, have turned this concern into leading election issues, especially in 1949² and 1957. On the latter occasion, John Diefenbaker has specifically promised to "restore Parliament as the custodian of freedom", and to "abolish Closure to guard against its abuse", because "Parliament had been treated with shocking contempt, sorely wounded and robbed of its rights".³ Evidently, the prime Conservative motive has been the preservation of a well-proven tradition and institution, rather than a Rousseauian belief in the competence of the masses. Moreover, the Conservative party has been speaking about the "supremacy of Parliament"⁴, while the Liberal party has insisted on the "supreme command of the people over the Parliament and legislatures"⁵, a stand which

¹B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 64.

²The Ottawa Citizen, May 16, 1949, p. 1. - Speaking in Petitcodiac, Newfoundland, George Drew stated that the election issue was that the government was autocratic. "Much was done by the government without the consent of Parliament, much was done by order-in-council, and arbitrary rules were made by government officials although members knew of no parliamentary authority for the regulations".

³The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, It's Time for a Diefenbaker Government (Ottawa: 1957), p. 2.

⁴Ibid., p. 2.

⁵The National Liberal Federation of Canada, op. cit., p. 37.

reveals a basically Lockian aversion to government control. Hence, at least in their speeches, Liberals place special emphasis on their "endeavour to reconcile essential social authority with a maximum of individuality and freedom of action".¹

Another term which has two connotations depending on the political affiliation of the speaker, is nationalism.

To a Liberal, nationalism is primarily a legal term. He thinks of the Austinian concept of sovereignty, and of a distinct national anthem and flag. His first efforts to win an independent nationality began with the struggle for responsible government. The next step concerned itself with the removal of the institutional vestiges of colonial inferiority.² During the first decades of the twentieth century, the Liberal party continued to be the exponent of a zealous political nationalism³. It was the Liberal Prime Minister Mackenzie King, who initiated the process which led to the proclamation and codification of Dominion autonomy in the Balfour Declaration of 1926, and in the Statute of Westminster of 1931.

¹Ibid., p. 35. - Quoting a speech by Louis St. Laurent, Ottawa, November 24, 1953.

²A. Brady, Democracy in the Dominions, p. 98. - Most notable were the efforts of Edward Blake who, as Canadian Minister of Justice, obtained a curtailment of the prerogative powers of Governor-Generals.

³Ibid., p. 99.

Though hardly less important, the Conservatives' contributions to Canadian nationalism have been unmistakably different from those of the Liberals. Being less concerned with legal independence, the attitude of the Conservative party may seem utterly colonial and even reactionary to radically disposed people.

During and after the first World War, the Conservative Prime Minister Robert Borden has had several occasions to promote the national stature. When the English government showed itself reluctant to increase mutual consultation with respect to military affairs, he immediately protested. Yet, this protest was not based upon a legal right, but upon the strength of Canada's contribution to the war effort.¹

As a consequence of this argument, Canada obtained a voice of its own in important matters of common Imperial concern with the establishment of the Imperial War Cabinet.² In 1918, the right of Dominion Prime Ministers to communicate with the English Prime Minister was also recognized.³

¹Ibid., p. 99. - The Prime Minister stated that "it can hardly be expected that we shall put 400,000 or 500,000 men in the field and willingly accept the position of having no more voice and receiving no more consideration than if we were toy automata". cf. F. H. Soward, "Sir Robert Borden and Canadian External Policy", in the Report of the Canadian Historical Association, 1941, p. 72.

²Henry Borden (ed.), Robert Laird Borden (Toronto: The MacMillan Co. Ltd., 1938), Vol. II, p. 666.

³A. Brady, Democracy in the Dominions, p. 99.

Although Robert Borden has also helped to increase Canada's separate nationality by securing the country's membership in the League of Nations, the ideal he was then hoping to achieve, conceived the entire Empire acting like one body politic with each member having an equal voice.¹ His concept of Canadian nationality was partially realized at the Imperial Conference of 1921, when his like-minded successor, Arthur Meighen, was able to bring the British Pacific policy in line with the Canadian views which tried to mediate between England and the United States.²

But to the Liberals, this type of Canadian nationalism was too uncertain. Wilfrid Laurier had already pointed out the principal flaw of the Conservative ideal when he commented on the Imperial Cabinet that it was merely a consultative body whose decisions were not binding.³ After coming to power in 1921, the new Liberal leader, Mackenzie King, asserted Canadian autonomy by turning down the English request for aid against the Turkish aggression in the Chanak Crisis of 1922. To the Conservatives, like Arthur Meighen,

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 785.

²Ibid., pp. 785 - 787. - The matter in question concerned the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty which was opposed by the United States. The Canadian achievement is the more important as it had also to overcome at the Imperial Conference the opposition of Australia and New Zealand.

³O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. II, pp. 503 - 504, letter to the Manchester Guardian, February 13, 1917.

this action constituted selfish isolationism.¹ Nevertheless, with the help of precedents like the Halibut Treaty signed by Canada and the United States, or the Lausanne Treaty which settled the Chanak affair without Canadian participation, Mackenzie King was able to demolish, at the Imperial Conference of 1923, the concept of a common Empire foreign policy.²

Afterwards, in 1926, the autonomy question was raised on the domestic level. On that occasion too, the battle lines between the Liberal and Conservative parties were drawn along the same pattern as before. Once more, the issue was a legal point brought on by Governor-General Byng's refusal to dissolve Parliament as suggested by his Prime Minister, Mackenzie King. According to the Liberal position, this refusal reduced "Canada from the status of a self-governing Dominion to the status of a Crown Colony".³ In contrast, the Conservatives described the entire issue as mere "quibbling". According to their opinion, Governor Byng's action was quite responsible inasmuch as he was "determined to preserve the parliamentary system".⁴

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 794.

²B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, pp. 93 - 94.

³Ibid., p. 132. - Quoting Mackenzie King.

⁴Ibid., pp. 139 - 140. Quoting Arthur Meighen's campaign speech for the election of 1926.

Hence, whenever Conservatives speak of nationalism, they associate it with patriotism: to them it means loyalty to the present and the past; it means readiness to bring all sacrifices required for the defence of the country; and it means economic strength to be truly independent.

Accordingly, the Conservative party has always been mindful of Canada's traditional ties with the mothercountry,¹ while the Liberal party has been more inclined to follow the North-South axis indicated by geography.² Again, during both World Wars, the Conservative party has been more willing to implement compulsory measures than the Liberal party which has always been reluctant to offend individual liberty.³

Finally, Conservative nationalism has expressed itself in protective tariffs which have generally been higher

¹At the occasion of the formation of a Conservative paper, John A. Macdonald discussed the name, nature and programme of his party. The very adjective 'Conservative' itself seemed to him a little unfortunate, though he was sure it could not be entirely dropped. Thus, he wrote to the editor: "I think, however, that it should be kept in the background as much as possible, and that our party should be called the 'Union party'; going in for union with England against all annexationists and independents, and for the union of all the provinces of British North America..." D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, pp. 118 - 119. Macdonald to T. C. Patterson, February 24, 1872.

²A. Brady, Democracy in the Dominions, p. 97.

³J. R. Williams, op. cit., p. 217. - The English Liberal party showed a like reluctance to introduce conscription and compulsory labour during the first World War. cf. H. Slessor, A History of the Liberal Party (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1944) p. 164.

than those of the laissez-faire-disposed Liberals¹, and in policies of national development, which have earned the party the attribute of being a 'nation-building' party.² In fact, beginning in 1840 with the public works programme initiated by Governor Sydenham³, and continuing with John A. Macdonald's transcontinental railway project and with John Diefenbaker's project to open up the Canadian North⁴, these Conservative policies of national development have made the objecting Liberal party appear as an exponent of a 'little Canadianism'⁵ which one would rather have expected from 'anti-progress' Conservatives.

This very paradox, however, provides one of the most eloquent proofs that there exists for each national party a distinct and consistent set of political concepts, because the Liberal little-Canada attitude represents a

¹A. Brady, Canada, p. 87.

The National Liberal Federation of Canada, op. cit., p. 249. - "The Liberal party is Canada's historic Free Trade party."

²F. H. Underhill, Canadian Political Parties, p. 16.

³D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. I, p. 70. On account of this achievement, Professor Creighton holds that Governor Sydenham has been the actual founder of the Liberal-Conservative party.

⁴The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, op. cit., pp. 4 - 5.

⁵D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 191. The Liberals objected to the Canadian Pacific Railway as it went through unprofitable and infertile country, Ibid., p. 306, and to the Roads-to-Resources plan as connecting igloo to igloo.

logical consequence of the party's endeavour "to protect, sustain and enlarge the freedom of the individual".¹ As there are no individuals to be served in the Canadian North, the Liberals concentrate their efforts upon those areas where Canadians are really living and working.

Hence, one must agree with John Dafoe, that "the cheap saying that there is no difference between the two parties does not stand up well under investigation".² In spite of all similarities imposed by expediency and the political superstition of campaign managers, the two national parties are characterized by specific and consistent concepts which prevent political rivalry from becoming meaningless.³ Indeed, inasmuch as these two sets of concepts constitute - generally speaking - mutually supplementary approaches to Canadian problems, the opportune alternation of the Progressive Conservative and the Liberal parties in the federal government procures optimum results from the party struggle for the entire community.

¹The National Liberal Federation of Canada, op. cit., p. 36, Statement of Principles.

²J. R. Williams, op. cit., p. 15, quoting from a letter by J. W. Dafoe to R. M. MacIver, July 17, 1929, in Dafoe Papers, Winnipeg, Free Press Building, Manitoba.

³H. McD. Clokie, Canadian Government and Politics, p. 77.

Flexibility

In the Regina Manifesto of 1933, the founders of the C. C. F. party have stated that "both the old parties in Canada cannot serve as agents of social reconstruction", because "they are bound to carry on government in accordance with the dictates of big business interests".¹ Is it really true then, that these parties are no longer able to adapt themselves to the changing flow of political dynamism? Do their policies really reveal the petrification consequent to such a dictate by rigid interests?

Early in Canadian political history, Lord Elgin has pointed out the main prerequisite for social harmony:

I believe that the problem of how to govern Canada would be solved, if the French would split up into a Liberal and a Conservative party and join the Upper Canadian parties bearing the corresponding names. - The great difficulty hitherto has been that a Conservative government has meant government of Upper Canadians which is intolerable to the French - and a Radical government, a government of the French which is no less hateful to the British.²

As Canadian society has had hardly any major social classes, the ethnic division between English and French Canadians has been the most dangerous temptation for the development of a rigid two party system. Fortunately,

¹Regina Manifesto, Programme of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, p. 1.

²A. G. Doughty (ed.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 20, Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, March 27, 1847.

through the efforts of John A. Macdonald to align the Conservative party with the French Canadians under Georges-Etienne Cartier, and of Wilfrid Laurier to make the Liberal party acceptable to Quebec, the type of comprehensive party system Lord Elgin had envisaged, has been brought about.

In discussing the evolution of the Canadian parties¹, the term 'institutionalized' has been applied to describe this condition of comprehensiveness. This term, however, refers primarily to the internal structure required by parties capable of serving diverse interests. If this characteristic is discussed with reference to the society served by the party in question, the proper adjective to be used is 'national'.

There is a wide-spread assumption that a political party is a national party if it can obtain 50.1 per cent of the votes cast in a general election, or if it has at least one representative in every legislature throughout the country. But, such a wide territorial distribution must not necessarily be a consequence of that feature which justifies the term 'national', namely to champion the varying needs of society.

This flexibility of a major party is by no means an inevitable or permanent feature. Undoubtedly, one could describe the Reform party as a national party in reference

¹Supra, the first part of the second chapter.

to those few years of its greatest success around 1848. Yet, with its prime purpose, responsible government, achieved, this party has been unable to espouse new goals without disintegrating.¹

Likewise, the inflexibility of the pre-Laurier Liberal party has been very well demonstrated by its uncompromising hostility against the Canada First movement of 1874, whose nationalist spirit was considered as an uprising against the conventional party line. Disappointed over this harsh lack of understanding, many members of the movement drifted over to the Conservative party, whose leader was able to perceive the strength of the spirit of nationalism, and to give it what countenance he could. In fact, the Conservative policy of protection triumphed at the polls in 1878, not merely by the use of economic arguments, but because it was heralded as the "National Policy" and hailed as a declaration of the commercial independence of Canada.²

As this example shows, the above claim of the Regina Manifesto would be justified if the two 'old' parties really rejected the demands of all but big business interests. However, there are no indications that either of these

¹S. B. Leacock, op. cit., p. 351.

²J. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 239 - 241. - The "Globe", in its attacks upon the ideas of the Canada First movement, "displayed every purely intellectual quality necessary for the treatment of the subject, but lacked the insight that comes from imagination and sympathy". cf. October 27, 1874.

parties has lost the ability to adapt its political concepts to the major needs of Canadian society.

The flexibility of the national parties has been most severely tested in times of major crises like the first World War or the great depression of the early 1930's.

During the first World War, both parties were confronted with the problem of providing military manpower in the face of the virtually unanimous opposition of French Canadians to conscription. The Conservative government party, on the one hand, felt justified to disregard Quebec's wishes in the solution of this problem. The province, of course, returned the complement in several general elections thereafter. On the other hand, the Liberal party under the leadership of Wilfrid Laurier was more considerate of French Canadian objections. As a consequence, a large section of English-speaking Liberals left the party to form the Union government under Robert Borden. The Liberal stand on conscription alienated also much party support in the Prairie provinces, and became a major cause for the development of the Progressive movement.

In this crisis, therefore, the flexibility of both parties was greatly reduced because the demands of the two ethnic groups appeared to be too incompatible to be combined within the confines of the most elastic political organization. Nevertheless, this experience enabled the two

national parties to find a less disruptive solution when the same problem arose again during the second World War.

As soon as the crisis had passed in 1918, the Conservatives and Liberals addressed themselves to the cure of the ill effects of their temporary inflexibility. Faced with a general election in 1921, Arthur Meighen added three French Canadians to his ministry in order to improve Conservative fortunes in the province of Quebec.¹ The new Liberal leader, Mackenzie King, in turn, had to revitalize his party's strength in English-speaking Canada. At the price of antagonizing a few faithful Laurier Liberals of an unforgiving attitude, King insisted on the readmission of those who had deserted the party over the conscription issue.²

With respect to the agrarian revolt on the Prairies, King's task was far more difficult. For a while, it looked as if the farm leaders intended to come to an agreement with the Liberal party.³ In fact, the Saskatchewan farmers did work through the Liberal party whose government was practically a Grain Growers' government in all but name.⁴ Another

¹M. Wade, op. cit., pp. 788 - 789.

²B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 57.

³W. L. Morton, op. cit., p. 66. - Refers to a letter of John Daffoe to Clifford Sifton, July 24, 1919, indicating that some of the most influential farm leaders had such hopes.

⁴P. Sharp, op. cit., p. 170. - The Grain Growers' Societies were class-conscious farmers' organizations. p. 32.

agreement came about in 1922, when the Liberals and the United Farmers of Manitoba entered into a coalition which governed the province for 36 years.¹ But, in the other farm regions of Ontario and the Canadian West, the formation of an independent political movement was unavoidable, particularly after the agricultural deflation of 1920 had made farmers frantic.² Nevertheless, the Liberals did not treat the Progressive movement as a political enemy, and were manifestly reluctant to oppose farmer candidates.³ In the general election of 1926, the Liberals went even as far as to abstain from contesting 48 constituencies where they actively supported the Progressive candidates.⁴ With the improvement of the economic situation after 1926, the most important objective of the Progressives had been fulfilled however. As a consequence, the gradual disintegration of the movement set in. The two national parties had proven their flexibility, and were ready to absorb the rests of the Progressive movement. Many of its members returned to the Liberal party while others drifted to the Conservative party

¹The Ottawa Citizen, "Manitoba's Farm Government out at Last", June 18, 1958, p. 6.

²P. F. Sharp, op. cit., p. 130.

³Ibid., p. 149.

⁴M. Wade, op. cit., p. 803. - The Liberals were, of course, also mindful of avoiding a split of the non-Conservative vote by preventing a three-cornered contest.

especially in Manitoba¹ and in Saskatchewan where dissatisfaction with the Liberal government brought a predominantly Conservative government to power in 1929.²

Yet, before all splinter sections of the Progressive movement could be absorbed, a new crisis hit Canada with the great depression of the early 1930's. Once more, Prairie radicalism was aroused.³ It again blamed the old parties for the hardship of the situation⁴, and turned to independent political action resulting in the formation of the C. C. F. and the Social Credit parties.

Of these new parties, the C. C. F. was potentially more dangerous for the party system. Having a socialist programme, this party threatened to replace the Liberal party in the same manner as the Labour party has succeeded in supplanting the Liberal party in the English party

¹G. W. Carter, op. cit., p. 65.

²P. F. Sharp, op. cit., p. 188.

³S. M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan: A Study in Political Sociology, (Berkeley: University of California, 1950) p. 81. - The dislike of Eastern Canada led in the winter of 1930 - 1931 to a movement of secession.

⁴Ibid., p. 83. - The tenor of contemporaneous agrarian opinion was expressed by the following quotation taken from the minutes of the 1931 United Farmers of Canada convention (p. 211.): "We are fighting the capitalist party. Why is it that these members of two different political parties are really fighting for one group? The reason is that the majority of the members are engaged in callings that depend on profit, and are those who exploit the farmers."

system. However, while the ruin of the English Liberals was greatly precipitated by their outright opposition to Labour particularly in the election of 1929,¹ the Canadian Liberal leader did not attack the C. C. F. with abuse and sneer, but appealed to it to work within his own party.² Indeed, Mackenzie King had already explored the social injustices caused by the extremes of capitalism more than 20 years earlier.³ What he proposed to do as a remedy against the abuses of capitalism was not to change the ownership of the means of production, but to establish a central bank, under public control, to determine the supply of currency in terms of public need.⁴ Accordingly, by putting individual freedom above everything else, the Liberal party was able to provide social security without denying the right to private property or free enterprise.

¹H. Slessor, op. cit., p. 159. As a result of this election, the Labour party became for the first time the biggest party group in the English House of Commons. - The author shows that the decay of the English Liberal party was caused by its inability to adapt itself to the changing conditions.

²B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 183. - Although the C. C. F. was unlikely to accept this offer, it must not be construed as being entirely spurious.

³H. S. Ferns and B. Ostry, The Age of Mackenzie King (Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1955), In particular, Mackenzie King has published his views on the subject in his book Industry and Humanity (Toronto and Boston, 1918) which is discussed in chapter IX, pp. 243 - 282.

⁴B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 185.

Basing themselves on the concept of social responsibility, the Conservatives, too, were able to advocate social security without having to resort to collectivism. Already at their national convention of 1927, they included an extensive programme for social security in the plank on labour.¹ When in power during the depression, the Conservative party tried to alleviate the wide-spread suffering through R. B. Bennett's "New Deal". Under his regime, the Employment and Social Insurance Act was passed to provide for a national employment service, for insurance against unemployment, and for aid to unemployed workers.²

Although R. B. Bennett's government was badly defeated in the first general election following the depression crisis, the voters turned to the Liberal party rather than to the two new protest movements. Nor have these two parties been able to replace the Progressive Conservative party³ whose position has been challenged particularly by the Social Credit movement after it had become highly conservative during the second World War.⁴ The most

¹J. R. Williams, op. cit., p. 230.

²Ibid., p. 230.

³Not even the combined C. C. F. and Social Credit representation in the House of Commons has ever exceeded that of the Progressive Conservative party. cf. Encyclopedia Canadiana, Vol. VIII, pp. 239 c - 239 d.

⁴G. M. Carter, op. cit., p. 69. - In order to preserve its hold on power in Alberta against the challenge of the C. C. F., the Social Credit party opposed socialism.

critical period came when W. A. C. Bennett, encouraged by his Social Credit victory in British Columbia, began a major drive in 1953 to come to power in Ottawa.¹ However, the position of the Social Credit party being too extreme, this drive failed to reach its objectives.²

Eventually, in the general election of 1958, the national character of the Progressive Conservative and the Liberal parties has been reaffirmed by the elimination of the Social Credit party from Parliament, and by the decimation of the C. C. F.'s representation.

Hence, the great virtue responsible for the national parties' predominance in the federal sphere, consists in their ability to give not merely promissory but truly adequate expression to diverse interest groups and minorities without forcing upon them a uniformity or exclusiveness of party doctrine. Such a flexible accommodation can only be provided because both parties on the one hand occupy that pivotal area of Canadian politics epitomized in their basic agreement of principle, and on the other hand try to interpret their specific party concepts in terms of the major needs of society. In that way, the national parties serve

¹B. Hutchison, "Is the Two-Party System Doomed?", op. cit., p. 50. - W. A. C. Bennett had left the Progressive Conservative party only a few months before because he considered it bankrupt.

²Ibid., p. 50.

very well as 'agents of social reconstruction', even though the indulgence of ethnic and other interest blocs within the framework of these parties may not be in perfect harmony with Lord Elgin's proposal that French Canadians split up into a Liberal and a Conservative section. Yet, in the final analysis, this less dominating organization is the main factor which enables the national parties to fulfil in a congenially Canadian way their prime function of promoting national cohesion.

The Functions of Third Parties

Despite their remarkable flexibility and inclusiveness, the national parties cannot possibly cover every single interest and opinion in the country. Particularly, exclusive or doctrinaire views are frequently incompatible with the compromising and harmonizing attitude of the two major parties. Under the pressure of various crises, such dissatisfied areas of public opinion crystallize into separate political parties. If they manage to reach notable proportions, these third parties also assume definite functions within the Canadian party system.

Provincial Politics

In contrast to the federal arena, the provincial sphere offers politicians a much more homogeneous field for

the application of their ideas and policies. As each province has a specific complexion, fairly radical measures and solutions can be advocated. In order to cope with that situation, the national parties permit each provincial association to have its own programme. Occasionally, such a provincial organization becomes practically an independent party group in all but name, as it has been the case with the Liberal party in Manitoba¹ and Saskatchewan² following the first World War. Similarly, it could be argued that the Union Nationale is actually not at all a third party but rather the Quebec section of the Progressive Conservatives, especially as Maurice Duplessis has been the leader of that section prior to organizing the Union Nationale, and as his group has been in a tacit alliance with the national Progressive Conservative party.³

In order to be an adequate representative of Quebec's nationalism, the Union Nationale had to be an independent political entity. The contrast between such a purely provincial party and the provincial section of a national party has been very well demonstrated in the Quebec election of

¹Stuart Shaw, "West Holds Balance of Power", in Saturday Night, October 27, 1956, p. 7. - For fifteen years after 1927, the Liberal-Progressive coalition in Manitoba was under the leadership of John Bracken who eventually became the leader of the national Progressive Conservative party in December of 1942.

²P. Sharp, op. cit., p. 170.

³G. M. Carter, op. cit., p. 67.

October 1939. On that occasion, Maurice Duplessis hoped to win by appealing to the province's nationalist sentiments. He based his campaign upon opposition to the war and to conscription. But, Quebec was not prepared to endorse these electoral proposals, and rather supported the Liberal party which had condemned them as 'an act of national sabotage'.¹

Five years later, however, French Canada's dissatisfaction with the war measures and conscription had reached such proportions as to require the type of nationalism Duplessis had to offer. In that provincial election of 1944, there appeared also a more extremely nationalist competitor in the Bloc Populaire.² Much like the Union Nationale in 1939, this second provincial party was not successful because it had been deceived by the widely held opinion that Quebec was blindly radical and that it would rush to the most extreme ideas available. Accordingly, in the general election of 1945, the Bloc Populaire attempted to go even a step further and to transform itself into a federal party representing French Canada. Much like the Irish Nationalists between 1885 and 1918,³ the Bloc Populaire speculated on becoming the balance of power at Ottawa.⁴

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 930.

²Ibid., pp. 1013 - 1015.

³L. Lipson, op. cit., pp. 352 - 353.

⁴M. Wade, op. cit., p. 1095.

In defeating the Bloc Populaire, Quebec proved, however, that it was basically moderate and an integral part of the Canadian community.¹

With the return of normal conditions, and with the death of Maurice Duplessis, the genius of the Union Nationale, this provincial party, too, began to disintegrate. Having satisfied Quebec's individuality with an autonomy-minded regime following the second World War, the Union Nationale was defeated in 1960 by the more national-minded Liberal party under the leadership of Jean Lesage, formerly a federal cabinet minister.²

Another major area of third party activity has been the Canadian West. There, too, peculiar local conditions have been the main cause for the formation of separate parties.

Right after the first World War, when the Progressive movement appeared, the Prairie provinces faced conditions which the rest of the country did not share to the same extent. In fact, even an anti-eastern sentiment developed over the lack of sufficient capital for agricultural expansion, exorbitant interest rates, the control of

¹Ibid., pp. 1095 - 1096.

²Bruce Phillips, "Quebec Campaign Careening to a Furious Climax", in The Ottawa Citizen, June 21, 1960, p. 19, - The successor of Maurice Duplessis, Paul Sauvé, too, improved his party's relations with the federal government.

farm prices by the manipulation of middlemen, and the protectionist policy of the federal government.¹ On the one hand, the farmers blamed the corruption of the national parties for these unfavourable conditions brought about by the undemocratic neglect of agricultural interests by Conservative and Liberal governments.² On the other hand, in their individualist revolt against Eastern financial and political control, the farmers were essentially aiming at a strengthening of capitalism while trying to save their own enterprises from destruction.³

Both these trends of the agrarian revolt were incorporated in the Progressive movement. It not only offered an independent political agency capable of expressing and implementing the demands of agriculture, but also represented a movement highly individualistic in organization⁴ as well as in programme.⁵

¹P. Sharp, op. cit., pp. 56 - 57.

²Ibid., p. 132. - Particularly, the refusal of the federal government to re-establish the Wheat Board for the 1920 crop was a very keen disappointment which convinced Western farmers that nothing could be expected from the old parties.

³Ibid., p. 57.

⁴A. Brady, Canada, p. 109 and p. 113. - A strict party discipline and party machinery were largely missing. Instead, the Progressives advocated direct democracy with popular initiative, referendum and recall.

⁵R. MacG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, p. 512. - It proposed the immediate abolition of the tariff on many raw materials, on all foodstuffs, and on certain machinery.

In order to obtain the desired improvements, the farmers had to concentrate their political efforts on the provincial governments under whose jurisdiction many solutions to marketing and credit problems fell.¹ Hence, during the 1920's, the Progressives elected substantial groups of representatives to all three Prairie legislatures. But, only in one of these provinces, in Alberta, did the Progressives venture to form the government independently of any other party. In Saskatchewan, the farmers worked through the Liberal party, while the Liberals and the Progressives formed a coalition government in Manitoba.²

On account of their radical principles, the formation of the farmers' government in Alberta was accompanied by dire predictions of financial ruin and political sovietism.³ Initially, this administration followed faithfully the programme prepared during the decade of agrarian agitation preceding the seizure of power in 1921. However, under the heavy burden of the severe agricultural depression, the same government quickly settled down to provide the province with a thoroughly competent administration.⁴

¹P. Sharp, op. cit., p. 164.

²S. Shaw, op. cit., pp. 7 - 8.

³P. Sharp, op. cit., p. 166.

⁴Ibid., p. 166. - With the necessity of seed grain Acts and relief Acts, which low prices and severe droughts had brought about, the farmers' government had to adopt strict economies leading to additional moderation.

Such moderation, of course, did not please the more radically inclined elements of the Progressive movement. Contending that the co-operative credit societies, which were rapidly expanding their service of rural credits, were inadequate, these radical farmers advocated the nationalization of banking and credit facilities. This position was justified on the basis of the ultimately social function of credit which, inasmuch as it promoted human well-being by maintaining production and distribution, was most properly controlled by the government.¹

Eventually, under the severe conditions of the great depression, this radical view came into prominence and was adopted by the rising C. C. F. and Social Credit parties with the one stressing nationalization, and the other the social aspects of credit.

In Alberta, the 'deviating' farmers' government was replaced in 1935 by the Social Credit party which had adapted its programme particularly to suit the peculiar situation in the province.² During the first eighteen months in power, indecision over the execution of the social credit ideas resulted in a continuation of the orthodox system of finance. In 1937, a revolt within the party

¹Ibid., pp. 166 - 167.

²C. B. MacPherson, op. cit., pp. 149 - 150.

forced its leader, William Aberhart, to introduce social credit legislation which was followed by mortgage and debt legislation. However, the programme perished through the federal power of disallowance, and because the courts ruled parts of these bills to be ultra vires. Finally, with the outbreak of the second World War, the Social Credit party moved to subordinate its controversial measures to a policy of co-operation with the federal government in the war effort, and to provide the province of Alberta with a competent administration.¹

Again, the more radical partisans were disappointed at this neglect of the political programme, and deserted to the C. C. F. which became the major challenge to the Social Credit party in the provincial election of 1940.²

But, the C. C. F. party had to wait until 1944 for its first opportunity to implement some of its ideas, when the party came to power in Saskatchewan. By that time, many of the party's leaders had been convinced that the emphasis on socialist principles made little impression on the general electorate. This fact was expressed by George Williams, the leader of the C. C. F. in Saskatchewan, when

¹Ibid., p. 202. - Also in British Columbia, where the Social Credit party came to power in 1952, the party has been more concerned with providing good government than with implementing its monetary doctrines.

²S. Shaw, op. cit., p. 8. - In that election, Social Credit strength in the Alberta legislature dropped from 51 to 35 seats.

he stated:

The growing popularity (of the Saskatchewan C. C. F.) is caused by the policy we have adopted. We have purposely and painstakingly avoided theoretical discussion and we have addressed ourselves to the task of offering worthwhile and practical suggestions as to the solution or alleviation of current problems¹.

Indeed, since assuming office in 1944, the Saskatchewan C. C. F. party has not exerted itself very much with respect to nationalization.² The main merit of this administration has been its competency for solving provincial problems, which has found expression in such progressive measures as provincial insurance and health services.³

In provincial politics, therefore, the national parties are occasionally forced into an inferior position by third parties which emerge out of special local or sectional needs, and which espouse these needs to such an extent as to rationalize them into a party doctrine. If such a party, however, has to assume the responsibility of government,

¹S. M. Lipset, op. cit., p. 116. - Quotation from an unpublished address before the C. C. F. national convention in 1937. - G. Williams was the successor of M. J. Coldwell who became a Member of Parliament in 1935.

²Dean E. McHenry, The Third Force in Canada, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950), pp. 237 - 238. - This fact is, of course, to some extent caused by the limited power of a provincial government, and by the absence of major industries in the rural Saskatchewan.

³S. M. Lipset, op. cit., p. 279.

these doctrines tend to give way to a competent administration. In that way, third parties satisfy those special requirements in whose fulfilment the Liberal and the Conservative parties are sometimes handicapped by their national complexion.

Federal Politics

On account of their very specialization in representing sectional interests, third parties have been unable to play a deciding role in federal politics. Surely, the Progressives forced the Liberal government to pursue a low tariff policy when they held the balance of power during the 1920's.¹ But, the Progressives' unwillingness to become the official Opposition in the House of Commons, proved clearly that they were just a group in Parliament for the furtherance of their own interests, and not a party which aspired to the government of the nation.² Accordingly, the function which third parties have most frequently fulfilled in federal politics, has chiefly consisted in dramatizing specific neglects on the part of the national parties, and

¹B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 70.

²A. R. M. Lower, Colony to Nation, p. 498.

P. Sharp, op. cit., pp. 155 - 156. - The refusal of the Progressives was, of course, consonant with their doctrinaire objections to the evils of partyism. But, it is also important to remember that the farmers had for so many years thought in terms of wielding a 'balance of power', that it had become a fixed idea seriously limiting their parliamentary horizon.

in introducing new ideas and concepts.

This function constitutes the initial manifestation of the main purpose of third parties in terms of a national party system, namely to watch over the flexibility of the national parties, and to replace them if they should become too rigid.

So far, the party with the highest potential for replacing one of the old parties, has been the C. C. F., on the one hand because it emerged at a time when the Liberal party had just been defeated during "a spell of blindness"¹, and on the other hand because the new party had an exceptionally wide basis inasmuch as it included farmers and industrial workers.²

This alliance between the industrially employed and the agricultural entrepreneur became possible on account of the peculiar plight of the farmers in the early 1930's which proved to them with convincing rigour that the use of property is more important than its ownership. There was poverty and hunger in the midst of plenty.³ Although there was enough bread available, the unemployed workers were unable to buy it. In turn, the farmers could not earn the

¹B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, pp. 180 - 181.

²M. J. Coldwell, op. cit., p. 3.

³Ibid., p. 2.

money to meet their obligations, a failure which entailed a great number of foreclosures and evictions throughout the Prairies. In their quest for security, many farmers proposed to let the commonwealth hold the title, provided they could cultivate the land and concentrate on their proper business as wheat growers.¹

Strongly supported by a religious fervour and by various sects, particularly the Methodists,² this proposal was merged by the C. C. F. with the socialist principles brought to Canada by immigrant workers from England.³ As a consequence, that party came to advocate the nationalization not only of industry and finance, but of farm land as well.⁴

In its first electoral contests, the C. C. F. lost much support because of these socialist concepts which frightened many farmers into believing that the new party would take away their land and set up state farms similar

¹S. M. Lipset, op. cit., p. 83.

²A. Brady, Democracy in the Dominions, p. 115. - There has actually been party literature emphasizing this religious connexion, like the leaflet entitled "Religion and the C. C. F. party", which stated on page 1: "The question is not so much whether the C. C. F. is opposed to Religion as to whether Capitalism is opposed to Christianity. The Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Churches have declared that the Capitalist system is opposed to Christianity. On the one side of the fence - Christianity; on the other the social system under which we live". cf. S. M. Lipset, op. cit., p. 137.

³P. Sharp, op. cit., p. 58.

⁴S. M. Lipset, op. cit., p. 105.

to those in the Soviet Union.¹ Hence, the main error of the C. C. F. was its equation of Christian ideas about property with the European doctrines of socialism which were quite alien to the propensities of Canadian society. Indeed, not even Canadian labour has been class-conscious enough to provide consistent support to this party.²

When the party finally decided to modify its stand at the Winnipeg convention of 1956,³ the spheres of popular dissatisfaction which had given rise to the party, had already been absorbed to a great extent by the national parties. Accordingly, in the federal election of 1958, the C. C. F. lost its farm wing together with the party's two top leaders.

Presently, the party is engaged in a re-organization which aims at a closer association with labour. But, it appears that these efforts are once more headed towards a misinterpretation of Canadian society. At the moment, there are no major political requirements which could only be satisfied by the C. C. F. party. In fact, not even the

¹Ibid., p. 105.

²H. McD. Clokie, Canadian Government and Politics, p. 89.

³1956 Winnipeg Declaration of Principles of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, (Montreal: Metcalfe Robinson Printing Service, 1956), p. 3, "...the C. C. F. also recognizes that in many fields there will be need for private enterprise which can make a useful contribution to the development of our economy."

Canadian trade unions are willing to bind themselves exclusively and permanently to one political party.¹ However, by stressing a preference for labour, the C. C. F. or its successor is likely to continue the characteristic rigidity of third parties.

Hence, aside from satisfying specialized needs, third parties promote the functioning of the Canadian party system by forcing the national parties to retain their flexibility, and by preventing them from the formation of a tacit alliance which may bring them an unchallenged control over the country. Without having to replace any of the national parties, therefore, the very existence of these third parties is sufficient to make the party system more "efficient".²

Thus, due to the peculiar character of Canadian society - whose individuality refrains generally from permanent party affiliations, whose cohesion concentrates as a rule political support upon one of several contending

¹H. A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada, (Toronto: The MacMillan Comp., 1948), pp. 435 - 436. - Much like the national parties, most of the larger trade union organizations like the Canadian Trade and Labour Congress, are institutionalized organs whose greatest virtue consists in the successful accommodation of smaller groups differing widely in their political inclinations.

²F. H. Underhill, "The Canadian Party System in Transition", op. cit., p. 306.

parties, and whose realism ensures normally the election of the party best fitted for each situation, - the Canadian party system has become an articulate mechanism providing social harmony and national cohesion in spite of the heterogeneity of society, the factiousness of petty politics, and the disruptive evils of partyism. Through the constant competition between two such flexible political organs as the national parties, society is not split into as many camps as there are parties, but rather unified as all its various needs must be adequately represented by each national party. In that way, minority interests, too, are much better taken care of, than by any artificially created system of minority representation.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOVERNMENT PARTY

The regulative mechanism of the Canadian party system becomes most perceptibly effective at the occasion of an electoral contest. Under ordinary circumstances, one of the contestants receives a clear majority vesting full authority in a single political party. Conceivably, the government party could exercise an entirely irresponsible regime during its term of office. Yet, despite the corruptive influence of such enormous power, it has rarely been openly abused in Canada. To what extent does the action of the party system promote responsible government? In what way are individual government parties subject to the regulative influence of the party system?

The Conditioning of Government Power

That a party upon winning an election, receives full authority is due to the fact that the members of the House of Commons vote according to party affiliation in the parliamentary divisions, and not according to their individual judgement as the ideally democratic conception proposes. Which are the most important and significant of such modifications affecting the exercise of power in federal politics?

The Senate

The upper chamber traditionally preserves the 'vested interests' in the struggle between the elite and the masses. In order to remove the influence of numbers, the members of that chamber are usually appointed or elected indirectly or obtain their seats through a hereditary process.

The Canadian Senate, too, has been expected to preserve interests endangered by popular majorities. Being "the essence of the compromise of Confederation," according to George Brown's definition¹, the Senate has been created by the Fathers of Confederation as a safeguard for provincial and minority interests. However, there exists little evidence that this function is consistently and effectively fulfilled.²

The reason for this failure to function according to plan, lies in the intervention of the party system. Under the British North America Act, Senators are appointed for life-time by the Governor-General.³ Hence, the choice

¹W. B. Munro, American Influences on Canadian Government, pp. 40 - 41.

²R. McG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, p. 353, Referring to the analysis by R. A. MacKay, "The Unreformed Senate of Canada", pp. 138 - 172.

³E. Cloutier (ed.) The British North America Act and Amendments, pp. 66 - 67, Sections 24 and 29.

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of Senators belongs to the prerogatives of the leader of the government party. He, of course, sees to it that only staunch supporters of his own party are awarded with a senatorship. In its composition, therefore, the Canadian Senate reflects the predominance in federal politics of the two national parties, and tends to come under the full control of the individual government party after its first few years in office. In that way, the party system helps to strengthen and expedite the conduct of government.

Does that modification of its functions mean that the Senate is of no service to the community, and that it should be abolished as the C. C. F. proposes?¹

Such proposals are mainly based upon the actual inferiority of the Senate's position to that of the House of Commons. This inferiority results mostly from the fact that the Senate cannot initiate money bills, that the cabinet is not responsible to it, and that it lacks the support of a popular mandate. Nevertheless, as the Senate's approval is required for every Bill, the upper chamber can exercise a form of veto which is, of course, unlikely to be applied as long as both Houses of Parliament are controlled by the same party.

¹Let's Go Forward, The National C. C. F. Programme, (Ottawa: C. C. F. National Office, 1958), p. 6.

However, due to the life-time tenure and due to the lack of such a mechanism which brings down a majority of the opposition in the English House of Lords through the creation of new peers,¹ the Canadian Senate is usually controlled by the opposition party whenever there is a change of the party in power.² It is during those years of opposition control that the Senate's veto takes on a special significance, and that a supervisory function is exercised. Indeed, the opposition Senate has already rejected about one hundred and fifty Government Bills, the most far-reaching rejection being the refusal of the Liberal Senators to pass the Naval Bill of 1912 whereby the entire naval programme of Prime Minister Robert Borden was terminated.³

Although these rejections are not as serious as they would be in the House of Commons, the government party is definitely sensitive to them. Hence, in order to avoid the embarrassment of such corrections, one Senator is usually included in the cabinet as minister without

¹Section 26 of the British North America Act provides that four or eight Senators representing equally the four sections of Canada, may be added to the present membership of the Senate. cf. E. Cloutier (ed.), op. cit., pp. 66 - 67. - However, the sole Canadian request for the application of this section was rejected by the British advisers to the Crown in 1873. cf. H. McD. Clokie, Canadian Government and Politics, p. 119.

²H. McD. Clokie, Canadian Government and Politics, p. 118.

³A. R. M. Lower, Colony to Nation, p. 435.

portfolio. Aside from his official business as Government Leader of the Senate, he advises the cabinet on matters that might raise objections in the upper chamber.

Thus, the Senate exercises some measure of supervision over the legislative programme during those crucial years when the fresh government party may not yet be sufficiently tempered by responsibility to abstain from extreme or impractical measures. In that way, the function of the Senate has been modified to watch not so much over provincial rights than over the continuity of government and the preservation of those principles in which both national parties agree.

The Parliamentary Caucus

Descriptions, especially by opposition politicians, of the partisan support which ensures the tenure of the government party, frequently convey the impression of an unthinkingly obedient allegiance. As the prime cause of this submissiveness, the powerful control of the parliamentary whip is usually specified with its threats of punishing unfaithful representatives by excluding them from the distribution of patronage, or by withdrawing from them the support of the party organization at the next election.¹

¹The whip is an official appointed to maintain discipline among, secure attendance of, and give necessary information to, members of his party in the House of Parliament.

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Yet, although the whips are quite effective in organizing and articulating majority support in the House of Commons, their efforts have undoubtedly been greatly overrated with respect to the mitigation of dissenting opinions. Being usually veteran partisans, the parliamentary representatives of the government party are quite willing to co-operate with the whips, and to promote the efforts of the administration. But, party organization being as loose as that of the Canadian national parties, the majority of the members of Parliament cannot be kept in line by the whips only, if crucial matters are at stake. One such occasion has been the parliamentary division on the amendment to the National Resources Mobilization Act in 1942, when the Liberal government permitted a free vote in order to avoid the open defiance of the party representatives from Quebec.¹

The organ which does most to harmonize and co-ordinate the views of the administration with those of the government supporters in the legislature, is the parliamentary caucus. In the description of Prime Minister Mackenzie King, such a caucus

is nothing more than a gathering of a certain number of members of Parliament. In the case of a government caucus it is the bringing together of the majority of members in the House of Commons supporting the government. It is the means whereby a government can ascertain through its following

¹N. Ward, op. cit., p. 13.

what the views and opinions of the public as represented by their various constituencies may be. It is not a means of over-riding Parliament. It is a means of discovering the will of the people through their representatives in a manner which cannot be done under the formal procedure which is required in this chamber. ... (It) is simply a coming into closer consultation with the people's representatives in a manner that permits of the greatest freedom of expression on their part.¹

Primarily, therefore, the parliamentary caucus helps to save the government party from embarrassment and possible defeat on the floor of the House. In that way, a definite strengthening of the government's hand in the execution of its programme is the result. But, this consolidation of power does not entail an increase in extent or licence, but rather a concentration in the direction of the demands put forth by the party representatives behind the closed doors of the caucus room. Hence, the ultimate effect of this consultation is a supervisory one which controls and even determines the exercise of government power quite effectively, especially as the capacity of the members of Parliament to vote against the administration in the House of Commons remains unimpaired.

Thus, the parliamentary caucus has become the major instrument by which the Canadian party system modifies the power of the government party.

¹The House of Commons Debates, February 12, 1923, p. 219.

The Federal Character of the Cabinet

Even if the Canadian Senate does not serve the various sectional and provincial interests with conspicuous competency, they are by no means neglected as they have found much more attentive and influential champions in the Cabinet.

Indeed, the Cabinet constitutes a fairly accurate inventory of the major items of Canadian heterogeneity. Among the members of the Cabinet, there is, if at all possible, at least one representative from every Canadian province, while the larger provinces like Ontario and Quebec supply up to four ministers each. The observation of this important constitutional convention has occasionally been quite difficult, especially in the case of Prince Edward Island which has only four seats in the House of Commons, and in such instances where a province has failed to elect even a single member of the government party, which has happened in Alberta in 1921.¹

¹R. MacG. Dawson, The Government of Canada, pp. 212 - 213. - "The strength of this ... convention of the constitution was well illustrated in 1921 when Mr. Mackenzie King formed his first Cabinet. The province of Alberta had by a singular oversight neglected to return even one Liberal to Parliament, and none of the twelve United Farmers of Alberta would betray his party for a portfolio or help Mr. King and advance the provincial interest by resigning in favour of a Liberal. The new Prime Minister, however, was not easily discouraged, and ... found a solution: he appointed to the Cabinet Charles Stewart, a Liberal ex-Premier of Alberta, and then opened up a seat for him in the province of Quebec."

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Aside from a regional representation, the Cabinet also tries to incorporate as many religious, ethnic and occupational interests as possible. Sometimes, such diverse interests are aggregated in the Cabinet that it becomes difficult to imagine how they can be co-ordinated to produce a smoothly functioning administration. In particular, the Cabinet which Prime Minister Robert Borden formed in 1911, has been called an 'unholy alliance' by the Liberals because of its singularly contrasting membership.¹

In making the Cabinet as widely representative as possible, the government party hopes to appeal to as many sections of the country as possible in order to perpetuate the party's hold on power. However, this effect is not achieved without the advance payment of a definite price, namely, the modification of the government party's policies in accordance with the wishes of the major sectional interests.

Although government parties are anxious to avoid such a rigid position which might cause the resignation of one or more ministers in protest over the failure to respect an urgent enough demand, there are some instances like the

¹A. R. M. Lower, Colony to Nation, p. 434. - "Here was a coalition, the first in history, between old Papineau-rebel-Rouge tradition and the Tory loyalist. Papineau-ism, mixed in a strange amalgam with Castor ultra-montanism, had come full circle: once on the extreme left, it was now on the extreme right."

Sifton crisis, which demonstrate the effectiveness of the influence exercised over the ministry by its regionally representative members. On that particular occasion in 1905, when the Liberal government introduced the Autonomy Bills for Alberta and Saskatchewan, they conformed in all but the educational provisions to the views of Clifford Sifton, the leading representative of Western Canada in the Cabinet. In order to ameliorate the serious restrictions on religious education contained in Sifton's proposals, the Prime Minister, Wilfrid Laurier, attempted to bring the school clause into better harmony with the constitutional principle permitting minorities to establish separate schools and to share in public funds for education.¹ When Sifton realized that his views were not fully implemented, he resigned as minister of the interior.² Eventually, although there was little agitation in Western Canada, such pressure built up in Ontario, that Laurier was forced to give in to a compromise proposal.³

¹O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, pp. 226 - 227. - This principle had already been incorporated in the North-West Territories Act of 1875, but ordinances passed in 1892 and 1901 had subjected separate schools in the territory to serious restrictions.

²J. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, p. 291.

³O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, p. 239.

Hence, through its federal composition, the Cabinet attains in a typically Canadian manner administrative strength and cohesion by submitting to the justified demands of sectional and minority interests.

Because of the peculiar influence which the Senate, the parliamentary caucus and the federal character of the Cabinet exercise, the power of the government party is modified in such a way as to be concentrated upon the execution of popular demands, and to be checked in affairs involving minority rights or measures of an extreme nature. Ultimately, however, this conditioning of government authority is due to the special character of the Canadian party system with its persistent struggle to rectify and improve the political situation on a national scale.

The Claim to Office

Aside from those modifying influences, the government party has still considerable independence of decision and action left to conduct the administration either according to the party programme or according to popular demands. Of the various individual government parties, there have so far been five ministries which have won one or more re-elections. What was the special merit upon which these parties based their claim to office? Did they particularly faithfully implement their party programme? Were they

fully subservient to every demand of the people? How was the common good affected?

John A. Macdonald's Ministry

Of all Canadian ministries that of John A. Macdonald has been most often re-elected. Was this success really due to what Goldwin Smith has described as a "policy of paying bribes or blackmail first to one section of the country and then to another?"¹

Undoubtedly, the prime achievement of this ministry consisted in the implementation of what was called the "National Policy". Here was great national programme whose objective was not merely the political unification of British North America², but rather the de facto construction of a transcontinental nation. Such an effort entailed the development of a transcontinental economy held together by a railroad link; it required a national trade policy counter-acting the absorptive effects of the American economy; and it implied the need for some form of national defence.

¹F. H. Underhill, "Some Observations upon Nationalism and Provincialism", in V. Anderson (ed.), op. cit., p. 69.

²That this unification continued to be a definite aim even after Confederation, has been revealed by the subsequent efforts to incorporate Western Canada and by Macdonald's triumphant comment on the "very momentous" parliamentary session of 1869: "We have quietly and almost without observation annexed all the country between here and the Rocky Mountains..." Macdonald to Sir Hastings Doyle, June 16, 1869, cf. D. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 35.

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All these requirements would not have been fulfilled had the ministry been a slave of popular demands. They were not interested in the construction of a railway through uninhabited and unprofitable country north of Lake Superior.¹ Nor was the general public particularly eager to pay for the dues imposed by a protective tariff. And, as Macdonald fully realized, if it would not have been for rumours of impending attacks by Russian naval and land forces in 1878, he would not have been able to strengthen and enlarge the small military nucleus established seven years earlier.²

Yet, despite his conviction that the National Policy was the best scheme for Canada's development, Macdonald did not impose his programme in an exclusive and dictatorial manner, but tried to respect and satisfy as many justified aspirations as possible. Accordingly, although he knew that certain influential sections of the electorate would be offended, Macdonald espoused the cause of the Canadian trade unions which were agitating for a reduction of working hours. In 1872, he introduced legislation regulating

¹House of Commons Debates, 1880 - 1881, Vol. I. pp. 102 - 106, and p. 144.

²With respect to this increase of military strength, Macdonald has written that, "in a time of profound peace, such a proposition would be unpopular - would be objected to by the opposition of the day, and could not be carried by any ministry". Macdonald to Sir Stafford Northcote, May 1, 1878. - D. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, p. 236, quoting from J. Pope, Correspondence of Sir John Macdonald, pp. 329 - 342.

strikes and other trade union activities.¹

Similarly, when Macdonald perceived the basic truth and justification of the ideas held by the Canada First movement, he did not hesitate to apply them as far as possible even though the movement had risen from the Liberal party.² In this way, Macdonald's ministry was aiming at providing a competent administration in the interests of the entire country and merely of its own party.

This competency was probably best exemplified by the way in which Macdonald came out in support of the controversial Washington Treaty of 1871.³ He said:

I have kept silence to this day thinking it better that the subject should be discussed on its own merits. How eagerly was I watched. If the government should come out in favour of the Treaty, then it was to be taken as a betrayal of the people of Canada. If the government should come out against the Treaty, then the first minister was to be charged with opposing the interests of the Empire. Whichever course we might take, they were laying in wait, ready with some mode of attack. But 'silence is golden', Mr. Speaker, and I kept silence. I believe the sober second thought of this country accords with the sober second thought of this government, and we come down here and ask the people of Canada through their representatives to accept this Treaty, to accept it with all its

¹D. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, pp. 123 - 125, and p. 129.

²J. Lewis, op. cit., p. 241.

³The government had hoped to obtain some form of a reciprocal trade agreement with the United States. The only positive aspect associated with the Treaty was a loan for railways and canals as a recompense paid by England for the losses of the Fenian raids which the Americans refused to discuss. - D. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 85, and p. 115.

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imperfections, to accept it for the sake of peace, and for the sake of the great Empire of which we form a part.¹

Thus, the prime claim to office of the Macdonald ministry lay in its ability to provide the country with a competent administration without a demagogue subservience to every single popular demand. The National Policy was the guiding star in the light of which the various particular demands were satisfied or repressed. To a narrowly sectional mind, such a policy may very well have given the impression of paying bribes or blackmail first to one section of the country and then to another.

Wilfrid Laurier's Ministry

When the Liberal party under Wilfrid Laurier came to power in 1896, the Conservative leader Charles Tupper thought that his defeat was due to party mismanagement, and that he would only have to wait for the first mistakes of the new administration to regain power.² However, it turned out that he was unable to recover the reins of government as the new administration succeeded in avoiding major mistakes, and in being re-elected consecutively on the next three occasions.

¹House of Commons Debates, 1872, pp. 344 - 345.

²J. W. Longley, Sir Charles Tupper, (Toronto: Oxford University Press; 1926), pp. 237 - 238.

Undoubtedly, the general political and economic situation at the time that Laurier assumed office, was sad enough to justify such expectations of early mistakes on the part of the new administration. The depression which had set in in 1890, had not yet passed.¹ As the economic stagnation was of world-wide proportions, Laurier's ministry would have been unable to provide a complete and immediate remedy for that situation however spectacular a programme may have been applied. But, the Liberal administration did not even propose a programme comparable to the National Policy of the Conservative party under Macdonald. There was no need to produce such a programme - distinctly Liberal in character - in order to replace the basic concepts of the National Policy, because they were essentially good and proper for Canada.

But, the National Policy in its practical application, had not been adapted to the current difficulties, and consequently some of its provisions contributed much to accentuate the ills of the economic stagnation in Canada. The protective tariff had become a burden to many businessmen. Even manufacturers whose enterprises had been stimulated by the National Policy, found the home market too small. Yet, foreign trade advanced slowly and uncertainly.

¹O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. II, p. 44.

In that respect, the protective tariff had an isolating effect. Aiming at self-sufficiency, the National Policy had come to proceed at a pace too rapid for the development of the country whose population was still too sparse and too scattered to be consolidated into a consistent economic unit. The depression had worsened the situation even more by keeping away immigrants, and by causing many of those who did come, to join in the exodus of the native Canadians to the United States.¹

Yet, Laurier's administration did not tackle this problem by introducing any revolutionary fiscal legislation². In fact, being rebuffed in its efforts to obtain an agreement of reciprocity or other tariff concessions from the United States early in 1897, the first budget of the new Liberal administration continued - except for an over-all reduction of about 10 per cent in duties, and for a minimum tariff for British goods - the protectionist tendency of the National Policy, which the party had denounced during its eighteen years in opposition.³

By adopting some of the previously condemned concepts, the new government party proved that it had corrected

¹Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 44 - 45.

²J. W. Longley, Sir Charles Tupper, p. 238.

³M. Wade, op. cit., p. 472.

those views in which it had been mistaken, and that it had fully understood the essential points of the difficult situation. Accordingly, Laurier's ministry was able to provide a competent administration even if it approached the domestic problems from a different angle.

Aside from adequate modifications and improvements in the various administrative fields, the one single action which contributed most to the amelioration of the economic difficulties, was the implementation of a new land and immigration policy. It had been developed by Clifford Sifton who was intimately familiar with the Canadian West which had to be settled.¹ In particular, his policy eased and simplified the regulations concerning homesteads, and stimulated the flow of immigrants through special agents and a newspaper advertising campaign.²

These measures were highly successful. An unprecedented influx of settlers brought new problems, but was also a major factor in the general prosperity which Canada experienced soon after the new government party had been installed. When a world-wide economic recovery set in at the turn of the century, this prosperity assumed unexpected

¹The consequent success of Sifton's policy is a fine example of how much the federal character of the Cabinet can contribute to achieve competent administration.

²O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. II, pp. 46 - 47.

proportions. An enormous expansion of trade followed. The manufacturing industry flourished, and the Canadian North West began to realize its fondest dreams. Vastly increased revenues produced surplusses as great as the entire revenue of the country of 1867.¹ This flood-tide of material advance justified the Liberal government, its policies and its expenditures, and even swept away whatever suspicion industrialists might have had against Liberal concepts.²

Hence, Laurier's ministry, too, based its claim to power on its ability to provide a competent administration. Accordingly, in all three federal elections which sustained this government in office, the Liberal party campaigned, among other things, on its record.³ And this record was indeed an achievement because the administration had correctly diagnosed the type of adjustment required for the most profitable application of the National Policy, and because it did not give, at least until 1908, more room to the satisfaction of sectional interests than the implementation of this diagnosis warranted.

¹J. W. Longley, Sir Charles Tupper, p. 238.

²A. Brady, Canada, p. 94.

³O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, pp. 113, 218, and 282. - In the 1908 election campaign Laurier said: "We have been twelve years in office and these years will be remembered in the history of Canada. In them Canada has been lifted from the humble position of a colony, hardly known in the United States and Europe, to the position of a nation".

Robert Borden's Ministry

Whether the re-election of Robert Borden's party in 1917 has been a genuine reaffirmation of a public mandate, or whether it has merely been due to the default and disintegration of the Liberal party, is, of course, a debatable question. Yet, since the present analysis does not regard the re-election of an individual government party as an absolute criterion for the good quality of the party's administration, but merely as an indication of the kind of administration which the party system tends to sustain, the basic trends of Borden's ministry can be considered without solving this question.

The central issue confronting Borden's ministry was the general return to greater national cohesion particularly stimulated by the increasing threat of a major military conflict. Aside from rejecting the reciprocity agreement with the United States, this tendency had also contributed, especially in the province of Quebec, to Borden's victory of 1911 by repudiating the Liberal naval policy which had stipulated that Canadian war ships may be put under imperial control in the case of any war involving Great Britain.¹ Borden's ministry, therefore, had to find a different approach to prepare Canada for the imminent danger of war.

¹M. Wade, op. cit., pp. 567 - 568,

In its initial actions, the Conservative government did not introduce any abrupt changes, but continued along the general lines followed by its predecessor. In fact, even Liberal critics had to credit the new administration with a "very fair amount of progressive legislation".¹

But, the problem of a new naval policy was a much more delicate matter. Its solution had to satisfy imperialist minded supporters as well as the nationalist attitudes of French Canada. After considerable consultation and meditation, Prime Minister Borden proposed to solve the problem by contributing 35,000,000 Dollars for the construction of three battleships for the British Admiralty.² This proposal was well designed to avoid the accusation of promoting imperial control, and to demonstrate the willingness to stand by the mother country. But, from the point of view of Canada, Borden's solution was entirely negative. As was pointed out by Wilfrid Laurier, England was neither in need of aid nor in actual danger to justify the expenditure of 35,000,000 Canadian Dollars, a great sum which advanced in no way the establishment of a Canadian Navy.³

¹O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. II, p. 392. - "Particularly the decennial revision of the Bank Act, provisions for aiding the provinces in agricultural instruction, and a trade agreement with the British West Indies".

²H. Borden (ed.), op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 403 - 404.

³O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. II, pp. 398 - 401.

Although Borden's proposal was passed by the House of Commons under the pressure of closure, his Bill was defeated in the opposition controlled Senate on the basis of the very objections which had been raised by Wilfrid Laurier.¹ Off-hand, this defeat may have been pure factiousness. But, inasmuch as the opposition Senate had to avoid the accusation of obstructionism, this defiance meant that the government proposal fell considerably short from what could have been expected from a good administration.

Indeed, Borden's ministry had given too much attention to possible objections to produce an adequate solution to the problem of defence. After the Bill's defeat, the administration contented itself with following the general wish of the great majority to drop the whole matter and to save the money. Thus, when the first World War finally broke out, the ministry had to meet the emergency with impromptu measures.²

Borden's administration, therefore, failed to satisfy the essential issue of its reign. If his party was re-elected in 1917, it was not so much due to a competent national policy, but mostly to a compliance with the demands of a majority agitated by the crisis of the World War.

¹M. Wade, op. cit., pp. 632 - 633.

²Ibid., p. 642.

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The Mackenzie King - St. Laurent Ministry

Although the uninterrupted regime of the Liberal party under Mackenzie King and Louis St. Laurent has lasted from 1935 to 1957, Mackenzie King's administration during the 1920's is also included under this heading in order to consider how a single, more or less continuous ministry has adapted itself to the principal requirements of a number of diverse phases of Canadian history.

After the first World War, Canada recoiled from war-time regimentation towards national cohesion based upon the respect for individuality. In this reaction, the traditional liberal policies promised to bring the best results. Accordingly, Mackenzie King's administration concentrated on economy in government, immigration, the construction of railway branch lines, and, above all, the reduction of the tariff.¹ Helped by a general improvement of the economic situation, these measures soon brought about Canada's recovery from the effects of the War. In 1924, the administration gave Canada the first revenue surplus since 1913, and even reduced the national debt. Trade reached new heights, and unemployment was diminishing.² The most tell-tale indication, however, for the fairly competent conduct

¹B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 70.

²Ibid., pp. 73 - 74.

of the administration, was the failure of the Conservative opposition party to persuade the Progressives who held the balance of power in Parliament, to turn the Liberal minority government out of office.

With regard to international affairs, the Canadian reaction produced an inclination towards isolationism. Such a disposition supported, of course, Mackenzie King's efforts in behalf of Canadian autonomy. Government policies in this respect and particularly in the Chanak affair of 1922, were also heartily endorsed by the Progressives.¹

But, this dependence on the support of the Progressives proved to be costly. In his desire to satisfy their wishes, Mackenzie King had given too much consideration to the reduction of tariffs at the expense of neglecting legitimate protectionist interests which were increasingly supported even by Liberals from Quebec.² He also avoided to adopt a special issue or programme when he asked the voters in 1925 for a mandate to continue his policies. This approach did not prove to be particularly effective. Despite the general prosperity, the Liberal administration, though continuing in office through the Progressives' support, suffered a moral defeat at the hand of Arthur Meighen who

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 794.

²Ibid., pp. 798 - 799. - The concessions to free-trade views played a part in bringing about the resignation in 1924 of one of the most prominent members of the Cabinet, Sir Lomer Gouin, and later of W. S. Fielding.

who had campaigned on the clear-cut historic issue of tariff protection as a means to revive the National Policy.¹

For the following election of 1926, however, Mackenzie King, too, had a clear issue, namely that of domestic autonomy. The fact that Governor General Lord Byng had refused to act on the advice of his Prime Minister to dissolve Parliament, and instead had called on Arthur Meighen to form a new administration, was an issue which touched the fundamentals of Canadian democracy. Indeed, this issue proved to be stronger than the indignation over the mismanagement of the Customs Department under the Liberals, which had been revealed just prior to the constitutional crisis, and on which Arthur Meighen's campaign concentrated.²

But, despite its importance and its effectiveness in the electoral contest, the constitutional issue did not affect any basic changes in Mackenzie King's administrative programme. He continued his efforts to achieve good government on an essentially capitalist basis. By lowering the tariff, by balancing the budget, by reducing the national debt, and by achieving economy of government, Mackenzie King

¹B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, pp. 99 - 100
Arthur Meighen also attacked the government's extravagance, especially with respect to railways.

²M. Wade, op. cit., pp. 802 - 803.

hoped to provide an irreproachable administration. In his concentration on government accounts, he failed to perceive the fundamental social changes taking place prior to the great depression of the 1930's. Accordingly, Mackenzie King maintained in a parliamentary debate on April 3, 1930, that unemployment was not a matter of federal concern, and that he would not give any money to a 'Tory' government for provincial relief.¹

It was only after the defeat of the Liberal party in 1930, and under the threat of a growing socialist movement, that Mackenzie King developed a national programme based on the concept that the government had to regulate the economy, and was responsible for unemployment.² Soon after the Liberal party had returned to office in 1935, this programme was carried into legislation, particularly with the nationalization of the Bank of Canada, and with the creation of the National Employment Commission.³ But, as much of the emergency economic legislation was hampered by the limits of the British North America Act which had been drawn up before a centralized economy was conceivable, the

¹J. C. Hopkins, The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1929 - 1930, (Toronto: The Annual Review Publishing Co.), p. 54.

²B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, pp. 184 and 198.

³J. C. Hopkins, (ed.), The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1935 - 1936, pp. 125 - 126.

Royal Commission on Dominion - Provincial Relations was set up in 1937.¹

Yet, the domestic scene was once more overshadowed by international affairs. The rising threat of a military conflict had to be met, a development which in turn was destined to become the major factor in Canada's final recuperation from the great depression by producing the War boom.² To meet this threat, the administration increased defence spending in 1936 by 70 per cent. As the general public was opposed to any military involvement, this expenditure was described as being strictly necessary to protect Canadian neutrality.³ In the last two pre-War years, this policy was further expanded, and the 1939 defence estimates were almost double the amount spent in the preceding year.⁴

Although Mackenzie King's ministry had taken these preparatory measures, it moved with extreme caution when the second World War began, in order to avoid a repetition of the discord associated with the first War.⁵ Accordingly,

¹Ibid., 1937 - 1938, p. 56.

²M. Wade, op. cit., pp. 848 - 849.

³House of Commons Debates, 1937, January 25, Vol. I, p. 246.

⁴Ibid., 1939, January 16, Vol. I, p. 53.

⁵Ibid., 1939, Special War Session, September 8, p. 25. - By justifying his caution as a means to avoid distrust and division, King expressed the conviction that necessary measures would be accepted if, "when the moment for decision came, all should so see the issue itself".

the powers given the government under the National Resources Mobilization Act, requiring 'persons to place themselves, their services, and their property' at the disposition of the country, was carefully limited against requiring 'persons to serve in the military, naval or air forces outside of Canada and the territorial waters thereof'.¹ Similarly, in the federal election of 1940, all political parties pledged themselves against military conscription.²

Even when military conscription became an absolute necessity, the government abstained from imposing its will outright, but provided for a plebiscite in which French Canadians could express their opposition. Another such opportunity to register this opposition before the entire nation, was provided by the government party when it permitted a free vote on the conscription measure in the House of Commons.³ In that way, Quebec could hardly refuse to submit to this unpleasant necessity which was also supported by Louis St. Laurent, the new French Canadian leader.⁴ Hence, in the first post-war election of 1945, French Canada did not decide against the party which had introduced

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 932. - Quoting the text of the National Resources Mobilization Act, 1940.

²N. Ward, op. cit., p. 11.

³Ibid., pp. 12 - 13.

⁴B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, pp. 397 - 398.

conscription, but on the contrary became a major factor in sustaining the Liberal party because it had tried as long as possible to respect Quebec's view.

Just prior to the 1945 election, Mackenzie King's ministry tabled a White Paper on post-war policy, which became the final chart of the economic transition launched in the great depression.¹ On the basis of this programme, Mackenzie King and his successor Louis St. Laurent carried on a competent reconstruction policy which succeeded in averting most dislocations anticipated at the end of the second World War.² When Louis St. Laurent faced his first election in 1949, the general prosperity³ was cogent evidence for the competent administration provided by his party. In the following years, this policy was continued and gave St. Laurent's ministry a re-election in 1953.

Thus, the Mackenzie King - St. Laurent ministry, though providing a fairly competent administration during

¹Ibid., pp. 406 - 407. - "In the White Paper, for the first time, the Government accepted the whole theory of the cyclical budget, compensatory spending to cure depression, the use of the state's financial power to supplement the market mechanism and maintain full employment".

²Dominion Bureau of Statistics, The Canada Year Book, 1948 - 1949, pp. 1113 - 1125.

³In 1949, the gross national product reached a new peak and showed a rising trend. The general prosperity even enabled the government to reduce the national debt by more than 1,6 billion Dollars between 1947 and 1949. cf. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, The Canada Year Book, 1950, p. 1024.

most of its tenure, achieved a firm hold on office only after being guided by an overall and consistent programme. In accordance with this programme, which was quite distinct from the party's traditional concepts, individual and sectional demands could be adequately supported and satisfied.

John Diefenbaker's Ministry

The latest instance in which a government party was able to obtain a confirmation of its mandate, has been the re-election of John Diefenbaker's ministry in 1958.

On that occasion, too, the result and particularly the surprising increase of Progressive Conservative strength in Quebec has been ascribed to competent administration during those ten months between June 1957 and March 1958, in which the party had to carry on as a minority government.¹ In that period, the ministry followed the general lines laid down by the Liberal post-war reconstruction programme, and used government spending in order to stimulate the sagging economy.²

¹Lenore Crawford, "Grit Defeat in Quebec", in The Ottawa Citizen, April 9, 1958, p. 5.

²J. A. Hume, "How Successful Mr. Diefenbaker?", in The Ottawa Citizen, December 28, 1957. - The government released 150 million Dollars for loans under the National Housing Act; it provided the same amount for cash advances on Western farm-stored grain; it granted sizable loans for provincial development projects; and it increased social benefits by about 110 million Dollars a year.

Continuing this policy during the first few years after the re-election in 1958, the Progressive Conservative administration has incurred a deficit of more than one and a half billion Dollars. This trend raised apprehensions of possible inflationary results. Even business interests supporting the government party became highly critical of its administration.¹ Yet, although presently aiming at a balanced budget, the ministry has so far not introduced any essential changes in its initial policies. Thus, it has been pointed out that the Progressive Conservative party "may have undergone a complete transformation in its basic character and be claiming a fresh mandate on the ground that it is a genuinely progressive party, primarily concerned with the interests of the plain folk of Canada".² This speculation has been further substantiated early in 1961 with the publication of a 72 page pamphlet entitled "The Record Speaks", with the sub-title "The Government of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker has Accomplished more for the

¹J. A. Stevenson, "Ottawa Letter", in the Canadian Commentator, March 1959, pp. 7 - 8. - Prompted by these inflationary prospects, A. K. Hugessen, a leading Liberal Senator, also exhorted the government in an important speech delivered in the Upper Chamber on February 3, 1959, to be conservative in fact as well as in name.

²Ibid., p. 8. - In the context of the present thesis, this quotation must, of course, be qualified inasmuch as the 'transition' was neither complete nor did it affect the basis character of this national party. But, in substance, the quotation rightly points to a transition or adaptation, and to the basis of the government party's appeal for re-election.

Ordinary Man and Woman of Canada than any Government in our History".¹

Thus, John Diefenbaker's ministry has been the latest link in a continuous chain of individual government parties since Confederation, which have based their appeal for re-election upon the good quality of their administration.

Hence, the prime claim of the government party to office does not derive from a faithful implementation of party doctrines and principles, nor from a blind subservience to various sectional demands. What is required, is a general understanding of the nation's needs as embodied in an ad hoc programme in accordance to which individual demands can be satisfied to an adequate and just extent. Through the proper execution of this understanding, the type of competent or "progressive" administration is produced, which constitutes the chief claim of the government party to office. In that way, the Canadian party system compels each individual government party to exert its power to achieve the best possible results for the entire community.

¹P. MacAdam (ed.), The Record Speaks, (Ottawa: The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, 1961), - The contents of this pamphlet is described as "some up-to-date information about the accomplishments of the Progressive Conservative Government at Ottawa over the last three years".

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The Decline of Ministries

That the prime claim to office of the government party consists in the ability to provide competent administration seems to imply that any political party is capable to govern just as well as the one which has been elected. Is it not entirely unjustified to attach any reasonable meaning to the outcome of the party struggle? Are elections not won through a skilful application of patronage, through a full campaign chest, and through eloquent speeches? How could a group of highly intelligent people with proven administrative abilities, become unfit to carry on good government? Or, is it possible to detect definite causes for the decline of various ministries? Do these causes have anything in common?

Political Scandals

The most easily detectable and least disputable cause of a government party's loss of power consists in political scandals. So far, there have been two ministries whose resignation was directly brought on by the revelation of incriminating facts.

The first of these instances has been the 'Pacific Scandal' of 1873. In this affair, the Conservative administration under John A. Macdonald was found to have accepted and asked for sizable contributions to the 1872 election

campaign from a company which hoped to obtain the contract for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.¹

The second occasion has been the 'Customs Scandal' of 1926. When the opposition found out that there had been irregularities in the Customs Department, the Liberal administration under Mackenzie King had a select committee of the House of Commons investigate the entire case. The committee's report substantiated the charges of corruption.² Over these revelations, the Liberal minority government lost the required support of the Progressives in Parliament, and had to resign.³

Conceivably, these two scandals might not have caused the resignation of the government party, if Mackenzie King had commanded an absolute majority in the House of Commons, and if John A. Macdonald could have relied on a stricter Parliamentary party discipline. Indeed, there have been occasions when the government party continued in office in spite of political scandals. Yet, even if some of them might have been less serious than the two mentioned above,

¹D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 153 f.

²J. C. Hopkins (ed.), op. cit., 1925 - 1926, p. 81.
- "The evidence submitted to the committee leads to the general conclusion that for a long time the Department of Customs and Excise has been slowly degrading in efficiency".

³B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, pp. 117 - 120.

these scandals tend to accumulate and to haunt the government party as long as it stays in office. Thus, prior to the federal election of 1911, the opposition party has published the Liberal-Conservative Handbook containing more than two dozens of "crimes against the common good" perpetrated by the administration.¹

On most occasions, however, these scandals do not result from mal-administration but rather from individual failures. Consequently, both John A. Macdonald and Mackenzie King were able to return to office some time after their resignations, and to provide the nation with competent administration.

Party Programmes

According to the ideal concept of a political party, its programme must be in complete harmony with its ideological principles. If the needs of the nation are misinterpreted in such a programme, its attempted execution brings the government party into a position where even impromptu policies are unable to save the administration.

The defeat of the Liberal ministry of Alexander Mackenzie in 1878 was principally due to his party's programme. Based upon the principle of laissez faire, this

¹The Conservative Party of Canada, The Liberal-Conservative Handbook (Ottawa: 1911), p. 1. The indictment covers 209 pages.

programme committed the administration to free-trade policies. However, they were badly suited to the economic depression which had produced a deplorable industrial situation by the beginning of 1876.¹ The greatly diminished consumption resulted in over-production. Similar conditions existed in the United States. But there, the manufacturers had their own market preserved by protective duties, while Canada had only a 17,5 per cent revenue tariff. To stop the ruinous competition of American goods, Canadian manufacturers appealed for a change in tariffs. Yet, as commercial and shipping interests in the Maritimes objected to any system of protection, the government abandoned the contemplated remedies.² Hence, the party programme and principles were faithfully carried out, even though Alexander Mackenzie's ministry must have been quite aware that its policies really failed to improve the situation at hand.

Though definitely in clear contradiction of the economic needs, this adherence to the programme was not motivated by malice or stupidity. Rather, as it was revealed when the Minister of Finance, Richard Cartwright, defended in his budget speech the continuation of free-trade policies on the ground that every increase in taxation was a positive

¹A. R. M. Lower, Colony to Nation, p. 362.

²J. W. Longley, Sir Charles Tupper, pp. 146 - 147.

evil, and that it was not the time for "experiments"¹, the government was convinced that the inherent merits of its programme would eventually come to the fore, and that a sudden change would bring no real improvement. Though this conviction has turned out to have been erroneous, there was some truth in it, since the adoption of protectionist measures which the ministry neither trusted nor fully understood, would certainly have failed to provide the type of competent administration required of successful government parties.

After the days of Alexander Mackenzie, the programmes of the national parties have become more flexible and independent of political principles. Of course, this flexibility facilitates the adoption of various measures proposed by the opposition parties. Nevertheless, when it comes to major policies which are inconsistent with the ministry's programme, their adoption still proves to bring little success.

In this respect, Alexander Mackenzie's ministry has had an interesting counterpart in that of R. B. Bennett. He assumed office at the outset of the great depression of the 1930's. Having been basically capitalist-orientated, his programme proposed to combat the economic emergency with

¹House of Commons Debates, 1876, p. 261.

unemployment relief through public works, and with radical increases in the protective tariff.¹ When these measures proved to be fairly ineffective, Bennett's ministry decided to adopt the opposition proposal to create a central Bank of Canada as a means to regulate the national economy. However, unaccustomed to the line of thought leading to this proposal, the government left this bank to private ownership instead of putting it under public control.² Later on, the Prime Minister also introduced a New Deal meant to relieve the depression. But, this measure, too, proved to be rather ineffective because it aimed primarily at the improvement and preservation of the capitalist system, and did little to tackle the fundamental problem of the rising need for social security.³

Hence, the decline of R. B. Bennett's ministry was primarily due to the misinterpretation of the nation's needs in the basic programme of the administration.

In an analogous situation, though there have not been any comparable attempts to absorb alien policies, the

¹J. C. Hopkins, (ed.), op. cit., 1930 - 1931, p. 35.

²Ibid., 1934, p. 33.

³B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 192. - The New Deal comprised "legislation to limit working hours and enforce minimum wages in all industries; to establish unemployment insurance; to give the Federal Government wider control over the marketing and price of basic materials; to provide relief for farm debtors by a scaling down of mortgages; to police the issuance of securities; to jail swindlers and exterminate unfair practices in business".

decline of Makenzie King's ministry in 1930 was also brought on by its inability to adjust the fundamental approach to the political situation. This administration, too, was working so much along capitalist lines that its measures were inadequate to combat the growing social distress. At that time, this failure was evidenced by the government's reluctance to spend federal funds on major public projects like the St. Lawrence Seaway, and on unemployment relief through the provinces.¹

Finally, the defeat of the Conservative administration under Arthur Meighen in 1926 has been another point in question. Due to a short tenure, his basic evaluation of the political situation had no opportunity to find expression in governmental action. Nevertheless, by fighting the election campaign on the basis of the Custom's Scandal² which incriminated the Liberal party, he revealed that he had underestimated the significance of the Byng - King affair which was the more important election issue. Similarly, Meighen campaigned on the economic plight of the country which was actually headed towards a new boom.³

¹J. C. Hopkins, (ed.) op. cit., 1929 - 1930, p. 54.
- cf. Parliamentary debate of April 3, 1930.

²Ibid., 1926 - 1927, p. 35.

³B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 145.

In all of these four instances, therefore, the decline of the government party has mainly been due to mistaken programmes. Without an adequate understanding of the issues at stake, even the best policies are liable to produce inferior administration.

Sectional Demands

In its effort to achieve social harmony, the federal government is persistently confronted with decisions determining the extent to which various sectional demands may be justified. Occasionally, particular needs receive too much emphasis. If serious enough, such a misjudgement can turn a party out of office.

Such an occasion has been the Reciprocity Agreement of 1911 with the United States. Ever since the termination in 1866 of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, both the Liberals and the Conservatives had attempted to revive the free exchange of goods and materials between the two North American nations.¹ Indeed, these efforts had much popular support. Yet, by the time that a new agreement was reached, Canada consisted no longer of only two provinces as in pre-Confederation days, but had vastly increased in complexity. Particularly with the evolution of a transcontinental

¹A. Brady, Democracy in the Dominions, pp. 96 - 97.

economy, the demands for reciprocity had lost much significance. By 1911, reciprocity served mostly the commercial interests in the Maritimes, and the primary producers of Western Ontario and the Prairies whose pressure was chiefly responsible for the opening of the negotiations with the United States.¹ To the rest of the country, the agreement seemed to jeopardize the entire economic development of the first half century since Confederation in order to satisfy sectional demands. Thus, the cohesive characteristics of Canadian society came to the fore to defeat Wilfrid Laurier's ministry in the election of 1911.

Similarly, Makenzie King's administration suffered a moral defeat in the election of 1925 because he neglected to satisfy a general trend towards tariff protection, in order to avoid the loss of the Progressives' support which advocated free-trade policies.²

Hence, a government party is forced strive for just decisions in the satisfaction of the various sectional needs. This satisfaction does not merely consist in uniformly 'bribing' each section, but must comply with the various demands in such a way as to correlate them to each other and to the general well-being of the nation.

¹P. Sharp, op. cit., pp. 45 - 46. - In December 1910, 900 Western farmers came to Ottawa to demand reciprocity.

²B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, pp. 98 - 99.

Majority Demands

As a rule, the government party enjoys the support of the majority of the population. Does it follow therefore, that the party in power may indiscriminately impose the demands of that majority?¹

Undoubtedly the most important instance in which a government party has abused its majority support, has occurred in connection with the introduction of military conscription during the first World War. Surely, some form of compulsory recruitment was an absolute necessity. But, the ministry under Robert Borden utilized the majority demand for military conscription, to weaken and eliminate as far as possible the opposition party. This attempt was particularly evidenced by the introduction of the Military Voters Act and the War-Times Election Bill in 1917.²

¹John Stuart Mill thought that the danger of an "offensive" majority could be checked through proportional representation. But in practice, this mechanism succumbed to the organizing efforts of parties. cf. M. Ostrogorski, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 103 - 104, and pp. 161 - 163. - In Alberta where proportional representation had been introduced in 1921, it was discontinued in 1956. The Ottawa Citizen, June 19, 1959, Phil Adler, "Manning Sweeps Alberta".

²N. Ward, op. cit., p. 227. The franchise was given to those women who had or had had husbands, sons or fathers in the Canadian or British armed forces, to those men who might be disqualified by provincial property or income qualifications but who had sons or grandsons in the services. Conscious objectors were disenfranchised together with all British subjects born in enemy country and nationalized after March 31, 1902. Most of the new Canadians were supporters of the Liberal party under whose regime they had found prosperity.

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There was, of course, no immediate reaction in form of a defeat of the government party. Yet, as soon as the emergency had passed, Canadians recoiled. In the province of Quebec, the Conservative party encountered prolonged unpopularity as the pro-conscriptionist mistakes had mainly been directed against French Canadians. But also on the Prairies, dissatisfaction over the handling of conscription became a major factor in the rising agrarian revolt, particularly as the government had repudiated its promise to the farmers that their sons would not be called up from the farms where they were needed to produce food.¹

In a somewhat analogous situation, John A. Macdonald decided in favour of the majority when he was faced with the question whether or not to uphold the death sentence of Jean-Louis Riel, the leader of the North-West Rebellion of 1885. On the one hand, French Canada felt that Riel was not accountable due to his insanity, on the other hand, English Canada insisted on the punishment of the insurrectionist. Instead of working out an acceptable compromise, Macdonald gave in to the latter demand because he thought that the loss of a number of Quebec seats was easier to afford than the loss of Ontario's support.²

¹B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 58.

²D. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 450.

Here again, this action was not followed by immediate defeat. But, the ethnic division accentuated by the execution of Riel ruined the basis of the long rule of Macdonald's ministry.

Hence, in implementing majority demands, the government party must be mindful of minority aspirations. Due to the great heterogeneity of Canadian society, every majority is only transitory. Moreover, there is a curious habit among the various sections to espouse the problems of minorities. Accordingly, the Riel affair became a major issue in Eastern Canada. The same thing happened with the Manitoba school question of 1895, and with the Autonomy Bills of 1905, establishing the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

If, therefore, a government party becomes completely subservient to majority demands, they bring on the ruin of the ministry even if there is some delay.

Autocratic Administration

In its efforts to achieve as competent an administration as possible, the government party tends, especially after a long tenure, to become so preoccupied with its responsibility and with the preservation of the good record that the administration becomes rather autocratic. Such a situation resembles that of the days prior to the

introduction of responsible government. Then, too, inspite of the 'colourful' descriptions given by the Reformers, the administration was by no means incompetent. In fact, with respect to practical measures, it was even fairly progressive. Its main mistake was a supercilious lack of sympathy with popular aspirations.¹

If a national party manages to avoid major mistakes, its early administrative successes usually sustain its ministry although its main programme has already been implemented, and although its flexibility has somewhat diminished. Eager to remain in power, the administration tries to preserve its good record by avoiding as many risks as possible, and by imposing promising measures even if there may be strong but seemingly destructive opposition to them.

This "aging" of a government party has been quite evident in John A. Macdonald's ministry. With the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the administration reached the end of its optimum contribution. This fact was well recognized by Macdonald himself, when he wrote: "I have finished my work. Everything that I proposed to do from Confederation down to the present time has been completed".² Yet, the ministry had to and wished to carry on. Its

¹J. W. Longley, Joseph Howe, p. 293.

²D. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II. p. 429, quoting from a letter to Sir Charles Tupper, July 27, 1885.

initiative began to slip away, as the failure to find an adequate solution to the problem of Riel's sentence, has revealed. The strength of the government party declined irretrievably. John A. Macdonald realized clearly that the main cause for this decline lay in the fact that the "ministry was too old and too long in office".¹

A similar fate overtook the Liberal administration under Wilfrid Laurier. After reaching its zenith in 1904, the government party began to degenerate. There was "some slackening of energy in the administration, some carelessness in party organization and neglect of the never-ending work of popular education in the principles of the party, (and) some growth of personal demoralization and departmental corruption".² Finally, in 1911, the reciprocity agreement with the United States seemed to promise a revival of the party's fortunes. But, this "desperate expedient by an aging administration to stave off dissolution"³ could not reverse the decline of the ministry.

After the longest tenure in Canadian history, the end of the Liberal administration in 1957 was also brought

¹D. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 545, Macdonald to Chevrier, March 25, 1890.

²O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. II, p. 220.

³J. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, pp. 364 - 365.

on by the inflexibility associated with the aging of a ministry. This process set in somewhere around 1952, the year which witnessed the Defence Scandal.¹ In the years following the re-election of 1953, the symptoms of administrative decline became increasingly evident. There was the refusal to assume the risk of subscribing the provincial loans for such major projects as the South Saskatchewan Dam² or the Beechwood Hydro Electric Plant in New Brunswick. In 1956, the government tackled in the construction of the Trans-Canada Pipeline for natural gas a scheme which promised a nation-wide development comparable to the one made possible by the transcontinental railway.³ But, this project did not enhance the record of the administration which was forced by the opposition to the Pipe Line Bill to limit rather autocratically the debate in the House of Commons in order to meet a contractual obligation stipulating the payment of 10 million Dollars if the legislation required for the construction of the line was not passed by June 1, 1956.

¹cf. Michael Barkway, "Parliament Probes Waste in Defence", in Saturday Night, June 7, 1952, pp. 10 and 27. - Fred Bodsworth, "How Serious is the Defence Scandal?", in Maclean's Magazine, February 1, 1953, pp. 7, 50 - 53. - Discusses the "Currie Report" which investigated the various irregularities.

²S. Shaw, "West Holds Balance of Power", op. cit., p. 8.

³Alan Phillips, "What the Pipeline will do for Canada", in Maclean's Magazine, September 14, 1957, pp. 26, 66 - 69. - Blair Fraser, "The Pipeline Uproar: How much smoke? How much fire?", Ibid., July 5, 1958, pp. 13, 53 - 55.

Finally, the St. Laurent ministry also created much indignation by applying budget surplusses towards the reduction of the national debt¹ rather than towards adequate increases of the pensions for the aged and the disabled.

Hence, all successful government parties reach a point where a general decline sets in, because their zeal for improvement has subsided after the implementation of their individual programmes, and has been replaced by the desire to stay in office on the basis of good but occasionally quite autocratic management.

The decline of the various government parties shows that the tenure of any ministry depends on its proper conduct. With respect to the general outcome, elections are not decided by such accidents as superior oratory or enormous campaign funds. If a ministry is defeated, it is primarily due to some kind of failure on the part of those in power. Moreover, though some of the failures are avoidable, defeats are inevitable. Not even the most intelligent men are able to provide consistently the type of government required under the Canadian party system. This type of competent administration does not merely consist in good and honest management, but rather results from carefully co-ordinating party concepts, majority demands and sectional needs.

¹The National Liberal Federation of Canada, op. cit. p. 105. - During its last four years in office, the party reduced the national debt by 165 million Dollars.

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The difficulty to maintain this co-ordination stems from a constant oscillation of the major inclinations of society in accordance with various economic, political and international developments. Of course, as the instance of Mackenzie King's ministry demonstrates, government parties can quite successfully adapt themselves to these variations. But, inasmuch as the understanding required for such adaptations represents primarily an asset of the leader and not of the party, this flexibility constitutes only a transitory feature.

In the final analysis, therefore, the Canadian party system does not merely force the government party to apply its great power in a responsible way, but also brings about a peculiarly Canadian type of administration irrespective of the character of the individual party in office.¹

¹A. Lower, Canada Nation and Neighbour, p. 134. - The author points out that all Canadian governments, even that of R. B. Bennett, have been "Canada First" governments.

CHAPTER V

THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION PARTY

The concept of a one-party system is primarily justified on the basis that opposition parties exert a destructive influence upon national unity and upon the achievement of social harmony. Undoubtedly, such a contention can be supported with some of the actions of Canadian opposition parties. But, does such evidence permit the conclusion that opposition parties are completely worthless and bad for the polity?

Under the Canadian party system, third parties have already been shown to fulfil definite and positive functions. What function can national parties fulfil, after they have been turned out of office because of some serious fault on their part? Do these ex-government parties merely work for their return to power by undermining the administration with negative criticism and obstructionist tactics, and by stirring up the population with false statements and promises? Or, are these parties transformed and rejuvenated to play an integral part in the proper functioning of the Canadian party system?

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The Defeated Government Party

Inasmuch as an election represents a judgement on the conduct of the government party, its defeat indicates the existence of more or less important short-comings within the party. Accordingly, commencing with the humble acceptance of the people's decision, the defeated government party sets out to correct whatever may have contributed to its downfall. Although the causes of defeat are not always the same and equally serious, the therapy for the party's recuperation tends to follow a similar pattern: a scrutiny of the leadership, a revival of the party organization, and a demonstration of a responsible attitude.

The scrutiny of the leadership concerns primarily the ex-Prime Minister. He is the one single person upon whom most blame for the loss of power concentrates. Under such circumstances, the compulsion to resign becomes fairly strong.

Of course, not all leaders resign immediately after their ministry has been turned out of office. Especially those who assumed their post only a short time prior to the defeat, have remained at the helm of the party. Thus, neither Charles Tupper nor Arthur Meighen resigned over their first defeat in 1896 and 1921 respectively.

Following the virtual defeat of the Liberals in the election of 1925, they concluded that Mackenzie King was not

the right leader, and prepared already for his replacement. He, too, thought of resigning during the first few days after the election, but finally changed his mind.¹

Aside from John A. Macdonald's resignation in 1873 which has been refused², however, the parties are generally quite prepared to accept the resignation of their leader in the wake of defeat. Accordingly, Alexander Mackenzie resigned in 1878, Arthur Meighen in 1926, and Louis St. Laurent in 1957.³

Occasionally, there are also certain members of a ministry, who are unpopular because of their association with particular opinions or measures. Arthur Meighen, for instance, who was mostly responsible for the introduction of the War-Times Election Bill in 1917, lost much popularity on this account, particularly in the province of Quebec. But, due to his prominence in the Conservative party, he was spared the fate of falling into oblivion, which overtook a prominent member of Louis St. Laurent's ministry. This minister was C. D. Howe who, as chief architect of the Trans-Canada Pipeline, became associated with the autocratic

¹B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, pp. 101 - 102.

²D. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 180.

³The Ottawa Citizen, September 7, 1957, pp. 1, 6, 14, and 20. - Originally, St. Laurent stated that he would lead the party in the election which was expected to be called early in 1958. cf. Ibid., July 2, 1957, p. 21.

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tendencies of the Liberal administration. Hence, following the defeat in 1957, he retired into private life, and at the leadership convention of the Liberal party in January 1958, he remained as inconspicuous as possible.¹

The scrutiny of the leadership, therefore, initiates the revival of the party organization. This is particularly the case when the resignation of the ex-Prime Minister makes a leadership convention necessary², a method of selection which has become firmly established during the past few decades.³ On such occasions, the leadership sometimes admits how callous it has become towards the suggestions of lower party ranks under the influence of everyday government business.⁴ In turn, these conventions represent the most important opportunity of ordinary party members to participate directly in top-level discussions leading to the formulation of a new programme.

If there is no leadership convention, this revitalizing of the close connection between leadership and supporters assumes various forms, like the political picnic of

¹cf. The Ottawa Citizen, January 16, 1958, "Howe Takes Back Seat at Coliseum".

²So far, this has been the case in 1927 when R. B. Bennett was selected by the Conservative party, and in 1958 when Lester B. Pearson became leader of the Liberal party.

³G. M. Carter, op. cit., pp. 71 - 72.

⁴Lester B. Pearson made this admission already four months prior to the Liberal leadership convention. cf. The Ottawa Citizen, September 9, 1957, p. 19.

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the days of John A. Macdonald¹, or national or regional party conventions, or nation-wide speaking tours. But, whatever method may be most appropriate under the given circumstances, the strengthening of the inner party ties is not a purely internal and organizational matter, but rather serves as a medium to convey to all potential supporters and to all the various sections the party's eagerness to give democratic representation to the wishes and demands of all major interests and minorities.

In order to fulfil this wider purpose, the revival of the party organization must concentrate more on the effort to discover new ideas and neglected needs, than on an attempt to inspire fanatic adherence to the party's principles. Certainly, party concepts play an important part in the rationalization and interpretation of the political situation. But, they must be kept in the background.

This type of relationship has been revealed by an incident involving the Liberal party after its loss of power in June 1957. Right after Louis St. Laurent's resignation early in September 1957, his eventual successor, Lester B. Pearson, in addressing the annual summer conference of the Ontario Young Liberal Association, made a statement calling

¹D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 224. - These picnics combined entertainment with the solicitation for political support.

for a "new Liberalism".¹ Though Mr. Pearson subsequently modified his statements concerning Liberalism, his earlier remark was nevertheless held to have played a major role in the losses which the Liberal party suffered in the province of Quebec in the federal election of 1958.²

Aside from demonstrating its democratic attitude in the revival of the organization, the defeated government party also tries to exhibit its responsible disposition with respect to the conduct of government.

Of course, being in opposition offers little opportunity to exhibit such a disposition. Nevertheless, the party can do its best to avoid destructive criticism and unnecessary obstruction. In that way, for instance, Mackenzie King did not interfere with the execution of the programme whereby R. B. Bennett had won the election of July 1930, and waited until June 1931 before making the first guarded attack.³

¹Douglas Leiterman, "A New Liberalism Needed - Pearson", in The Ottawa Citizen, September 9, 1957, p. 19. "His (Pearson's) theme was utterly simple: Liberalism was 100 years out of date. His party must learn how to apply the principles of liberalism to the practical problems facing Canada today - so it could present 'a great charter of the new Liberalism in terms of the problems of 1957, not 1857'." The difference in the spelling of 'liberalism' corresponds to the way it was written in the newspaper. It is difficult to say whether Mr. Pearson really meant Liberalism.

²L. Crawford, "Grit Defeat in Quebec", op. cit., p. 5. - An editorial of Le Devoir (Montreal) maintained this opinion.

³B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 167.

Usually, however, the defeated government party has a pretty good opportunity to demonstrate a responsible attitude if the Senate is controlled by the opposition. It is in this way, that the opposition Senate can exercise a supervisory function over the new administration without giving it a pretext for the reform or abolition of the Upper Chamber.

Finally, the best but rather rare opportunity to exhibit a positive approach, is offered to the defeated government party on those occasions where the ministry lacks the support of an absolute majority in Parliament. Accordingly, when the ministry of John A. Macdonald had to leave office over the Pacific Scandal in 1873, he promised Alexander Mackenzie who headed the Liberal minority government: "You will never find us opposing any measure in the interest of the nation for the sake of opposition".¹

¹D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 181, Speech of November 6, 1873, - Macdonald had acted in such a way already prior to Confederation in 1862 when his ministry was defeated in the House. cf. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 335, In a letter to Amsden of July 30, 1862, J. A. Macdonald wrote: "When Cartier and I crossed the floor, we resolved to show the country what a gentlemanlike and patriotic opposition was. We resolved to give the new-comers fair play and offer no factious opposition. Some hot-headed friends of ours were dissatisfied with this, but I think they see now that we were correct. We have shown that we did not wish to cling to office for its own sake and we wish to show that we prefer the good of the country to mere party triumph. When the House meets I will endeavour to prevent any vote of want of confidence. Let the ministry have every chance to propose their measures. If they are for the good of the country pass them. If not, oppose them."

Similarly, in 1957, when the Conservatives had to form a minority government, the opposition under Louis St. Laurent promised to ensure that the administration would have a majority.¹

Hence, the defeated government party tries to dissociate itself as quickly as possible from all persons, ideas and actions which could have brought on the loss of power. At the same time, this transition aims at the acquisition and confirmation of two peculiar characteristics, namely a high sensitivity to sectional and minority demands, and a marked solicitude to promote good government. Through such a metamorphosis, the party somehow apologizes for its past errors, and, by installing a new leader and by introducing new policies, seems to pledge that the old mistakes would not be repeated - just like a run-down business which displays a sign reading: 'under new management'.

Negative Opposition

The official opposition parties are not always able to substantiate the professions of their democratic and responsible qualities by a positive approach to national

¹Warren Baldwin, "Opposition will Ensure Government has Majority", in The Ottawa Citizen, July 3, 1957, p. 18. - Significantly enough, when Prime Minister Diefenbaker called the election of 1958, he justified his move on the ground that "the government's programme has encountered increasing obstruction and delays in the House". House of Commons Debates, 1957 - 1958, Vol. IV, February 1, 1958, p. 4201.

problems. Basically, such failure is frequently induced by the belief that any opposition party can displace an adequately functioning government party through the cunning application of vote-catching schemes. The resulting opposition is negative with respect to those qualities which the Canadian party system tends to promote.

Of course, there have been occasions when an unqualified party assumed office, as it has been the case in 1873, when the government party committed political suicide. But, even if such negatively disposed opposition parties may have come to power, their success was neither lasting nor due to their programme.

Indeed, under ordinary circumstances, Alexander Mackenzie's Liberal party would hardly have been elected. In spite of personal ability,

Canadian Liberalism in the 1870's did not succeed in making itself a real force in the land. It no longer had the crusading fervour that comes from abuses to be ended: there was no 'Rep. by Pop.' agitation to be conducted, no battle against a family compact to be waged. Maledictions of Sir John Macdonald for his corruption or his adroit political footwork were no adequate¹ substitute. Liberalism really had no programme.

Similarly, under the leadership of Alexander Mackenzie's successor, Edward Blake, the Liberal party

¹A. R. M. Lower, Colony to Nation, p. 362, The section of the Liberal party, which did offer a more positive approach, the Canada First movement, was disregarded and attacked by the party.

failed to develop an adequate programme, even though - especially during the late 1880's - the country was full of depression, of cultural conflict, and of a sense of national frustration and discouragement.¹ Edward Blake's approach was quite responsible and sober, specifically in his refusal to support demands for the replacement of tariff protection by commercial union with the United States - a traditionally Liberal concept - because he thought that the size of the Canadian debt made the reduction of Canadian taxation impossible. But, he offered no adequate substitute to remedy the depression. Moreover, by implicitly advocating tariff protection, he appeared like a convert to the Conservative policy which he had condemned earlier.²

A responsible attitude, therefore, must be completed by some concrete proposal for the improvement of the situation at hand. Of course, as long as the government party provides adequate administration, it is virtually impossible to devise a more positive programme. Hence, during the first decade of this century, the Conservative opposition party was also unable to propose a programme which would have brought an appreciable improvement in the administration of that period, even though Robert Borden was convinced

¹D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 468.

²Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 468 - 469.

that his programme was truly in the interest of Canada.¹

However, there have also been occasions when national opposition parties have attempted to bring about the government's downfall through various negative devices. Some of them have been so inconsistent with the tradition and character of the particular party that faithful supporters took offence, while the rest of the electorate began to doubt the sincerity of the party's maneuvers.

Following its conscriptionist stand during the first World War, and its objections to the Liberal policy with respect to the Chanak affair, the Conservative opposition party suddenly decided in 1925 to modify its stand in order to win the support of French Canadians. Accordingly, Arthur Meighen, the Conservative leader, declared in a speech that his party would first consult the people before sending troops to war.² Because of this move, Arthur Meighen rather lost some followers instead of attracting any new supporters. Not only were Canadians generally unwilling to have anything to do with war, but Meighen's effort also stirred up vigorous attacks in Ontario where he refused to discuss his policy changes, while Quebec remained sceptical.³

¹H. Borden, (ed.), op. cit., Vol. I, p. 130.

²J. C. Hopkins, (ed.) op. cit., 1925 - 1926, pp. 48 - 49, Speech of November 16, 1925, in Hamilton, Ontario.

³M. Wade, op. cit., p. 803.

Similarly, early in the second World War, another Conservative leader, Robert Manion, hoped to win French Canada's support with a no-conscription platform in 1940. Yet, even though he was a Roman Catholic, he failed to convince Quebec where his party could win only a single seat.¹

Having been unable to attract the province of Quebec, the Conservative opposition party switched its tactics and began to concentrate its efforts on the rest of the country. Indicated by the addition of 'Progressive' to the name of the party, this change in name and policy was introduced by the successor of Robert Manion, John Braken, who had not even been a Conservative prior to becoming the party leader in 1942, but the Liberal-Progressive Premier of Manitoba. It was his intention to "satisfy the Canadian people that this was a new party, the newest party in Canada" which has "kept all that was worth saving from the past, and thrown away all that was obsolete and useless".²

In his drive to become as widely acceptable as possible, John Braken promised that his actions with respect to Canadian policy would be guided by a "People's Charter" which based itself upon the 'rights' of various interest groups, and thus gave a general endorsement to all 'fair'

¹B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 275.

²John Braken, John Braken Says, p. 96, quoting from a speech held in Ottawa, March 3, 1944.

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demands of these groups.¹ In fact, this charter even offered to discard the traditional Conservative policy of economic protection in favour of free trade ideas, since the people had the right "to expect from their leaders a determined effort to disencumber society from the barriers to world trade, world progress and world peace".²

However, neither the willingness to satisfy everybody, nor the diviation from the party line brought real success but actually, by undermining the confidence of the faithful supporters, played into the hands of the Liberal party.

Indeed, contrary to the precedent of the first World War, John Braken did not even succeed in his attempt to obtain the united support of English-speaking Canada over the conscription issue.³ In the federal election of 1945, this attempt was repudiated not merely by Quebec, but also by the rest of Canada as only Ontario gave a bare majority

¹Ibid., pp. 3 - 8. The main points were: the right of every man to have a job; the right of every worker to a fair day's pay for a fair day's work; the right...to equal pay for all; the right of farmers...to a fair share in the nation's income; the right of private enterprise to a fair return on the investment; the right of youth to equal opportunity for health and education; the right of every citizen to social security; and the right of future generations to a world of plenty.

²Ibid., p. 8.

³M. Wade, op. cit., p. 1040. - In Parliament the Progressive Conservative party pledged itself to co-operate with any government willing to send Canadian soldiers overseas. - House of Commons Debates, November 29, 1944, p. 6642.

of forty-eight out of eighty-two seats to the Progressive Conservative party.¹

Another form of negative opposition was practised by George Drew, John Braken's successor. Though he returned to the traditional Conservative concepts, he still failed to propose a truly national policy. Having been Premier of Ontario prior to his selection as party leader in 1948, Mr. Drew continued to advocate the views of the big provinces with respect to the problem of the tax agreements between federal and provincial governments.² Consequently, his party became rather sectional in appearance.

Finally, with the improvements in the art and media of propaganda, there have also been attempts to provoke wholesale stampedes of voters by promising large sections of the population benefits from the public treasury.³

Accordingly, George Drew promised in his 1953 election programme to cut taxes by five hundred million Dollars, a sum of money which, as Prime Minister St. Laurent pointed out, could only have been taken from eight hundred million Dollars of government expenditures if defence and

¹Ibid., p. 1096.

²Grant Dexter, "Mr. Drew in Action", Winnipeg Free Press, Pamphlet No. 23, 1949, pp. 28 - 29.

B. Hutchison, "Is the Two-Party System Doomed?", p. 47.

³A. Corry, op. cit., p. 229.

social security were not to be curtailed.¹

In the federal election of 1957, this claim of over-taxation was repeated for good measure by George Drew's successor, John Diefenbaker who maintained that Canadians had paid some 536 million Dollars too much during the first ten months of 1957.²

Seemingly, the Conservative victory of that year convinced the Liberal party of the effectiveness of promising such munificent bonuses from the public treasury, as the party proposed early in 1958 a spending programme similar to the one it had opposed only eight months earlier.³ But, in the subsequent election, Canadians shunned the 'Tax Holiday' offered by the Liberals⁴. Hence, these promises failed to meet the party's expectations, and even damaged its reputation as the loss of more than half of its parliamentary representation has indicated.

¹The Ottawa Letter, June 29, 1953, No. 427, p. 3304, referring to a speech of Louis St. Laurent in Guelph, Ont.

²Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, "Its Time for a Diefenbaker Government", p. 6. This overtaxation was said to "neutralize incentive, and to diminish production".

³Norman Campbell, "Offers Answer to Job Crisis", in The Ottawa Citizen, February 10, 1958. p. 1. At a press conference, "Hon. Lester Pearson today pledged a Liberal government to tax cuts of 400 million Dollars a year". He stated that "the Liberal party believed that the quickest and best way to restore jobs and relieve unemployment was to increase consumer spending through the reduction of taxes".

⁴The Ottawa Citizen, March 27, 1958, p. 14. - The Liberal party advertised: "Vote yourself a 'Tax Holiday'."

Though nobody can prove the exact effect of each single plank in Mr. Diefenbaker's 1957 opposition platform, it is quite certain that the promised tax reductions have not been the real reason of his success. As the difficulty of their fulfilment has proven,¹ these promises were definitely exaggerated. Yet, it was precisely the enormous size of the amounts involved, which gave rise to much criticism and ridicule not only from political opponents but also from uncommitted people. Inevitably, some hesitation and uncertainty resulted. In that way, these promises must have had a rather adverse effect upon the Conservative victory.

Hence, in the effort to enhance their popular appeal, opposition parties occasionally advocate quite negative policies merely because of their supposedly vote-catching capability. Probably the most persistent of these planks is that of Senate reform which has been used by both national parties², even though it is extremely doubtful whether any Canadian could be swayed by this proposal.

Under the Canadian party system, therefore, there is no shortcut which may help the official opposition party to

¹According to the Conservative pamphlet "The Record Speaks", the entire tax reductions totalled 204 million Dollars (p. 19).

²Senate reform was advocated by the Conservative party under Robert Borden, (H. Borden, op. cit., vol. I, p. 193.), by the Liberal party in 1921 (B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 64.), and by the Progressive Conservative party in 1957. (The Ottawa Citizen, May 16, 1957, p. 27.

win power as long as the country has a properly functioning administration. In fact, attempts to use such shortcuts or negative policies tend to backfire as they reveal an inordinate appetite for power incompatible with Canadian democracy.

The Claim to Office

If at times it is virtually impossible to replace the government party, does it mean that the official opposition party merely has to wait for its turn, or are there certain essential prerequisites that validate the party's claim to office?

The first prerequisite, of course, consists in some definite failure of the administration. But, these shortcomings are rarely striking enough to bring about an automatic change of the government party. The official opposition party must recognize these mistakes, it must sort them out according to their proper significance, and it must concentrate its attention upon the really important mistakes. Particularly John A. Macdonald when in opposition during the 1870's followed this procedure par excellence, as he withstood the temptation to occupy himself with small side issues and insignificant scandals, and struggled to understand the main causes of the government's failure.¹

¹D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 205.

If no major errors are committed, the return of the opposition party to office comes about in a gradual process which can usually be detected in the provincial sphere. There, smaller mistakes can more effectively undermine the influence of the government party. Consequently, after an extended tenure, a situation is reached when the majority of the provinces is controlled by the opposition. Towards the end of John A. Macdonald's reign, the major provinces had Liberal administrations.¹ Again, in 1919, the Liberals were in power in eight provinces.² Conversely, at the end of 23 years of Liberal rule in 1957, seven provinces had come under the control of opposition parties.³

Occasionally, the official opposition fails to discern the inadequacy of a certain government measure. The most significant incident of such a situation has been the reciprocity agreement with the United States proposed by the Liberal administration in 1911. As the leader of the opposition, Robert Borden, has revealed, the Conservative party caucus was quite dejected over this proposal which was

¹D. G. Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. II, p. 468. Aside from Ontario and Quebec, Nova Scotia and Manitoba were governed by the Liberal party.

²Ontario was the only province with a Conservative administration.

³F. Swanson, "The Swing of the Pendulum", The Ottawa Citizen, April 24, 1958. - Liberal governments were in Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Manitoba.

expected to appeal to the country, and to give to the government party a long tenure.¹ It was only after those Conservative Members of Parliament from Ontario who were in the habit of spending the week-ends in their home constituencies, had returned to Ottawa, that the party realized that the reciprocity agreement was contrary to the national inclinations of Canada.²

Hence, the difficulty of recognizing the really important mistakes derives from the fact that they are not - aside from scandals - bad according to any moral and permanent standard, but rather according to the general inclinations of society.

All successful opposition parties have grasped - at least in a general way - those aspects of society's disposition which have been offended or neglected by the administration. In 1874, Canadians demanded honest administration which John A. Macdonald had failed to provide. In 1878, Canadian national cohesion had been offended by Alexander Mackenzie's free trade policies. In 1896, Wilfrid Laurier realized that sectional individuality had been gravely neglected. In 1911, the reciprocity agreement with the United States and the naval policy in support of England had

¹H. Borden, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 303.

²Ibid., Vol. I, p. 304.

offended the feelings of national integrity. In the 1920's, Canadian individuality recoiled from the regimentation of the first World War. In 1930 and 1935, the failure to cope with the need for social security inclined Canadians towards greater cohesion and control. And finally, in 1957, the administration's parsimoniousness had been contrary to the general notion of social justice.

These offended inclinations of Canadian society produce a popular reaction of protest which justifies the opposition's claim to office. However, as Robert Borden's enlightenment with respect to reciprocity has shown, the popular reaction does not always agree with the thinking of the official opposition party. Consequently, and specially with the existence of third parties, the national opposition party must adapt itself to this reaction to obtain its support.

But, this adaptability and flexibility of the official opposition party must not go to the extreme. Rather, the popular reactions must be interpreted in relation to the general character of the Canadian polity. Accordingly, when John A. Madonald realized in 1876, that economic protection was generally desired¹, he nevertheless did not turn it

¹House of Commons Debates, 1876, p. 321. - There was even a revolt of protectionist Liberals who offered to switch their party allegiance, if Macdonald would take a clear stand in favour of economic protection.

into an absolute proposition, but merely advocated a "readjustment of the tariff".¹

Similarly, in 1917, when Wilfrid Laurier saw clearly that the English-speaking majority was united in the demand for military conscription, he opposed this measure because it was contrary to the fundamental nature of the Canadian polity, although he must have known that such opposition would mean defeat in the election of that year. His motivation has been clearly revealed in this statement concerning the Military Service Bill:

I oppose this Bill because it has in it the seeds of discord and disunion; because it is an obstacle and a bar to that union of heart and soul without which it is impossible to hope that this Confederation will attain the aims and ends that were had in view when Confederation was effected.²

Undoubtedly, this responsible opposition stand has been a major factor in the preservation of Canadian democracy, and has averted the danger that Canada in conquering Prussia would be conquered by the Prussian spirit and the Prussian worship of the State.³

Makenzie King too, when in opposition, was careful not to take an extreme position in support of popular

¹House of Commons Debates, 1876, p. 490. His intention was to "afford fitting encouragement and protection to the struggling manufacturers and industries, as well as to agricultural products of the country".

²H. Borden, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 705, citing Laurier's speech of July 24, 1917.

³O. D. Skelton, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. II, p. 508.

reactions. Already at the leadership convention of 1919, he consciously refrained from satisfying the Prairie farmers with an explicit and prompt endorsement of the tariff plank, and even rejected their doctrinaire inclinations by treating the party platform as a matter of general guidance and not as specific instruction as the Western delegates had meant it to be.¹ In the subsequent election campaign, he repeatedly explained that the Liberal party did not stand for free trade, but only for freer trade.²

Likewise, during the great depression of the early 1930's, Makenzie King realized that society was prepared to accept quite radical measures to relieve the economic distress. Yet, he did not advocate outright socialism which would have been contrary to the general character of Canadian society.³

Hence, the official opposition party's claim to office is ultimately justified by an adequate re-alignment of the party's thinking to the popular reactions of protest in accordance with the fundamental character of society. In that way, the party tries to provide a new common

¹W. L. Morton, op. cit., p. 81. - The author refers to "The National Liberal Convention: The Story of the Convention and the Report of the Proceedings", Ottawa 1919, pp. 199 - 200.

²B. Hutchison, The Incredible Canadian, p. 55.

³Ibid., p. 181.

denominator, a generally acceptable proposition embodied in a programme which makes the co-operation of various interests and sections possible.

This basic prerequisite of the official opposition party has probably never been better demonstrated and expressed than by Wilfrid Laurier prior to his victory in 1896. The most important problem of that period was the Manitoba school question. As the province had passed legislation incompatible with the French-speaking minority's right to separate educational facilities, the Conservative government in Ottawa decided to pass a remedial bill. Yet, although Wilfrid Laurier could have used the occasion to please the province of Quebec where he had been charged with adhering to an anti-religious Liberalism, he did not support this bill in spite of the pressure of the Catholic hierarchy. Nor did this stand give any support to the concepts leading to Manitoba's legislation. Rather, his position was positively Canadian:

I am here the acknowledged leader of a great party, composed of Roman Catholics and Protestants as well, as Protestants must be in the majority in every party in Canada. Am I to be told, occupying such a position, that I am to be dictated the course I am to take in this House, by reasons that can appeal to the consciences of my fellow-Catholic members, but which do not appeal as well to the consciences of my Protestant colleagues? No. So long as I have a seat in this House, so long as I occupy the position I do now, whenever it shall become my duty to take a stand upon any question whatever, that stand I will take not upon grounds of Roman Catholicism,

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not upon grounds of Protestantism, but upon grounds which can appeal to the conscience of all men, irrespective of their particular faith, upon grounds which can be occupied by all men who love justice, freedom, and toleration.¹

Under the Canadian party system, therefore, the official opposition party cannot count on an automatic return to power, as third parties are eager to replace any national party which fails to adapt itself. Neither can the national opposition party bribe and promise the country into allegiance, as those interests which come out on the short end of such an unfair bargain, are bound to spoil the party's triumph. The only true opposition success derives from a positive effort to remedy abuses and to improve the well-being of society as a whole, from a sincere desire to achieve the optimum with imperfect human endeavours, in short, from finding those 'grounds which can be occupied by all men who love justice, freedom, and toleration'.

¹O. D. Skelton, The Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. I, p. 475.

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Abandoning the customary Canadian cautiousness, John Dafoe, the eminent student of the political scene, has declared:

I make bold to say on Canada's behalf that there is no country in the world where there is a more complete acceptance of the democratic principles of government, or in which these are more thoroughly exemplified.¹

In a free community, such a form of government cannot be attained by constitutional statutes alone. In order to succeed, it must be deeply rooted in the very character of society itself.

Probably the most influential aspect of Canadian society lies in the fact that a major social classification has never had an opportunity to establish itself permanently. As a result, the political activities of society are not determined by a persistent class struggle. Rather, there is an essential social equality which provides Canadian society with a homogeneous basis for a symbiosis of all the many divergent interests within a single body politic.

¹J. W. Dafoe, Canada an American Nation, pp. 84 - 85.

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Yet, if there is no class struggle, it does not mean that there are no major categories of motivation determining and inciting political action. The very heterogeneity of Canadian society, provides such categories namely, the desire for the preservation of the various individual diversities, and the maintenance of the political order which makes that preservation possible.

Individually, the national parties are also characterized by these underlying tendencies: a relatively loose organization which permits the adherence of different but not aggressive interests and ideas. In other words, these parties are "sectional in caucus, homogeneous in public, and federal in reality".¹ Due to this form of organization, each national party is not strictly identifiable with any one of the major interest groups which, as a consequence, loose much of their incompatibility.

In their mutual competition for power, this harmonizing effect of the national parties is further increased. The main interests and demands of society are recognized and accepted by both the Liberal and the Progressive Conservative parties. In that way, the great diversities are neutralized and the party struggle concentrates itself primarily upon the practical approach to the solution of

¹E. M. Reid, op. cit., p. 199.

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the most important problems of the day.

This state of affairs may lead the unwary observer to conclude that Canadian democracy has reached the stage where every single wish is complied with somewhat along the following lines:

From a humanitarian point of view the best government is that which we find in an insane asylum. In such a government the physicians in charge do not separate the ideas of the insane into any separate sciences such as law, economics, and sociology; nor then instruct the insane in the intricacies of those three sciences. Nor do they argue with the insane as to the soundness or unsoundness of their ideas. Their aim is to make the inmates of the asylum as comfortable as possible,¹ regardless of their respective moral deserts.

There are many who would also advocate this "humanitarian point of view". But in actual fact, it is not only contrary to human dignity but is completely out of keeping with reality. However incompetent the individual citizen may be, society is a very good judge of the quality of administration provided. Aside from being unrealizable, it is also contrary to good government to attempt the satisfaction of every single demand which may rise in a community. There must be a constant balancing of divergent interests according to their individual merits. As Henri Bourassa once has said:

¹T. W. Arnold, The Symbols of Government, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935) p. 232.

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Certainly conciliation is good, always and everywhere, and in our country necessary to the existence of our institutions and of our national organization. But conciliation is never good, it is never possible, between two contrary principles, between truth and error, between justice and iniquity. To search for the union of the two races of Canada, beyond the mutual respect that they owe to their respective rights, is to build the nation on a fragile foundation, to give it as cornerstone an element of ruin and destruction.¹

Yet, even beyond these fundamental rules of the Canadian community, there must also be a continuous co-ordinating of interests and demands in accordance with their individual urgency and justification. Hence, Canadian governments in a very peculiar way must combine a very high degree of consideration towards all the diverse rights, wishes and needs issuing from a heterogeneous society, with a firm stand once all the relevant facts have been fully explored and an adequate decision has been reached. Accordingly, as Wilfrid Laurier has stated in reference to a particular case emblematic of the Canadian approach to the achievement of social harmony: "The hand must be firm and the touch must be soft".²

Due to the peculiar character of the Canadian party system, even the official opposition party tends to contribute to this type of democratic government. In its

¹M. Wade, op. cit., p. 543, quoting from H. Bourassa "Les Ecoles du Nord-Ouest", (Montreal: 1905) p. 28.

²O. D. Skelton, The Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. I, p. 463. Speech of 1895.

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efforts to regain power, this party, too, has to exert itself to find a similar approach to the principal problems of the day. Unable to rely on the permanent allegiance of any particular section of the country, the party must propose a programme which offers reasonable improvement in accord with the necessary equilibrium of the major interests. Hence, together with the minor parties, the official opposition party assumes that role of eternal vigilance which alone guarantees freedom.

In that way, the party system truly constitutes the fundamental institution of Canadian democracy - a polity which does not represent the dictatorship of a 50.1 per cent majority, nor the instability of a demagogue anarchy, but a regime capable of adequately combining government with the dignity of common men and women. Here, is a political order which, by doing justice to human individuality, is able to achieve a free and stable association of the highly heterogeneous Canadian society. Indeed, - although there may be more work for the politicians - these divergencies constitute something beautiful, desirable and enriching as they promote the establishment of that kind of human community whose social harmony does not result from the acquiescence of impotence, but rather flows from the agreement of wills.

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SUMMARY

If a nation is defined as a distinct race or people having common descent, language, history or political institutions, Canada's prospects are rather poor. Nearly all these attributes are missing. Yet, in spite of its unusual heterogeneity, Canada has developed into a stable national community governed by administrations formed by one of the major political parties.

A consideration of the antecedent political evolution reveals that the early colonial society has not been subjected to the social injustices generally associated with some of the old-world institutions. Royal absolutism, feudal servitude and clericalism have had a positive influence in Canada. Likewise, the rule of England over New France did not lead to any insurmountable hatred between the English and French inhabitants.

With the growing political complexity, the diversity between the two ethnic groups produced serious stresses inducing attempts at radical solutions. But, the lack of deep social divisions kept Canadian society from giving sufficient support to any one of these attempts. Hence, when responsible government was finally achieved, it did

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not constitute the victory of a privileged or influential group or race, but rather was build on the co-operation of the major sections of the country. In the ensuing constitutional evolution, and in the Confederation agreement, this basic trend was further strengthened and articulated.

In the absence of a definite class struggle, Canadian society has developed new categories of motivation. Modified by a distinct realism, they consist in the desire for the preservation of individual peculiarities and of the political order protecting them.

Having been the principal actors in the constitutional development, the political parties were also shaped by the underlying characteristics of society. Starting out from sectional groups, there evolved major parties which, through a gradual modification of their narrow interests, became truly national in scope. Not only did these parties cut through the various dividing lines of heterogeneity, but they also came to approach the solution of particular problems from a national point of view.

With respect to the internal organization, these major parties are much more loosely associated than smaller and ideologically based ones. As a consequence, the adherence of a greater number of diversified interests becomes possible, as well as a fair degree of organizational democracy.

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These loose federations of the national parties are held together by the personality of the leader. Yet, although Canadian party leaders have achieved remarkable influence, it is not unconditional nor an automatic consequence of his position. In his effort to unite the various sections of his party, the party leader becomes a factor contributing to national cohesion. Indeed, his highest perfection as leader consists in overcoming the sharp outlines of partyism to become a national leader.

The essential effect of these major parties on Canadian society is a unifying and harmonizing one. Through the peculiar character of the Canadian party system this effect is even increased.

Essentially, this system is a two-party system with the Liberal and the Progressive Conservative parties dominating the federal arena. Their position has not been seriously affected by the rise of third parties. Conversely, no party can count on the unfailing support of any particular section of the country. As a consequence, the parties are supported on their own merits, and frequently different parties are chosen by the same electorate in provincial and federal elections.

The mutual competition for power among the two national parties is characterized by a basic agreement on the fundamental principles of the Canadian polity, providing

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a homogeneous basis for the political conflict within the heterogeneous society.

But, the two national parties are also sufficiently different in their specific inclinations to prevent the party struggle from becoming meaningless. In part, also third parties are watching that each of the national parties keeps up its flexibility in the search according to its individual concepts for better approaches to the major problems at hand. In that way, the big parties are constantly under pressure to adapt to the changing needs of the entire community.

The principal function of third parties consists in giving representation to those interests and needs which are neglected by the national parties, or too extreme for their flexibility. As a consequence, third parties constitute a rather predominant factor in provincial politics where they are occasionally better qualified to provide good government and, indeed, have registered prolonged periods of administration. In that way, these minor parties complete the functions of the political system.

Inasmuch as the party system tends to give to one of the national parties an absolute majority in the House of Commons, the government party is provided with a theoretically unlimited power. However, the party system has also developed a few devices such as the opposition Senate, the

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Parliamentary Caucus, or the federal composition of the Cabinet, which influence and modify the exercise of administrative authority in a peculiarly Canadian manner. As the general conduct of the major ministries reveals, the government party's claim to office rests primarily on the ability to find in a practical application that adequate equilibrium between the diverse interests of Canadian heterogeneity and the changing demands of a growing community, which alone can promote the common good. This fact is further illustrated by the major causes which have brought on the decline of the different ministries.

Because of the fundamental consensus between the two national parties, the official opposition party, too, must exert itself to find that optimum combination which permits the united support of most of the sections of the country.

In that way, the two party system does not divide society into two hostile camps, but becomes an agent of national cohesion. The resulting form of democracy proves that a heterogeneous population can be harmonized in a national community if the dignity of each peculiar individuality is recognized. Without being perfect, therefore, Canadian democracy has been able through the instrumentality of the party system to approximate that ideal of social harmony which provides an adequate balance between government and freedom.