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THE POLITICAL CAREER OF SIR JOSEPH-ADOLPHE CHAPLEAU

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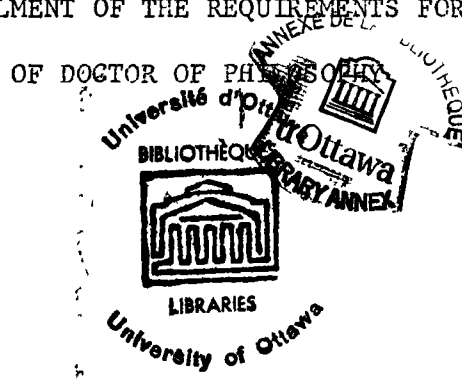
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PREFACE

This thesis is a study of the political failure of Sir Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau. It is an examination of the ideas and actions of the last great French Canadian Conservative¹ disciple of the LaFontaine political tradition. That tradition stemmed from Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine's claims during the 1840's that in a union with English-speaking Canadians the flexibility of the British constitutional system could best ensure the acquired rights of French Canadians and also a healthy climate for the favourable growth of their language, institutions and nationality. LaFontaine's doctrine which, he claimed, would ensure not only la survivance but also l'épanouissement of French Canada, demanded that a French Canadian political leader possess the confidence of his anglophone and francophone colleagues if he wished to be successful in the political arena. This study seeks to establish and to explain Chapleau's inability to cement those necessary ties.

By the time Chapleau arrived on the federal political stage in 1882 to reaffirm the francophone-anglophone political alliance that LaFontaine and Baldwin had created and Cartier and Macdonald had continued, English-speaking Conservatives seriously questioned the need and advantage of a relationship based on equality with French-speaking Conservatives. That anglophone position resulted from the decrease in the francophone community's electoral power as the population in English-

¹The term Conservative and Liberal-Conservative shall be used interchangeably throughout the thesis.

speaking Canada after Confederation increased in proportion to that of French-speaking Canada. In addition, many English-speaking Canadians contended that dual language and separate schools had failed to establish a true national amalgam--a necessity if Canada were to realize the aim of Confederation and become a great nation. Consequently, French Canadians found that their views were often neglected and aspirations thwarted by the anglophone majority. This situation produced friction between the two communities which became apparent in the early 1870's with the rejection of French Canadian wishes in the New Brunswick School issue. Therefore, Chapleau, who desired to secure Cartier's mantle as co-leader of the party with Macdonald after Cartier's death in 1873, faced two major difficulties. From a position of political weakness, Chapleau was not only forced to attempt to secure anglophone trust in himself, but also to obtain for French Canadians an equal voice in the determination of national policy.

Those problems that Chapleau confronted were coupled with the necessity to ensure his dominance in French Canada. That task was not easy because by the end of the 1840's a section of the LaFontaine party had turned from a larger perspective to concentrate on Church-State problems in French Canada. That group which became entrenched within the Liberal-Conservative party of Macdonald and Cartier turned from parliamentarianism towards authoritarianism.² By 1882, those dissident

²Jacques Monet, s. j., "French-Canadian nationalism and the challenge of ultramontaniam", CHAR, 1966, p. 41.

Conservatives, nominally led by Senator F.-X.-A. Trudel, openly challenged those Quebec Conservatives who maintained a larger perspective, such as Chapleau. A second obstacle Chapleau faced was Sir Hector Langevin. Langevin had been the nominal leader of French Canada since Cartier's death. However, once Chapleau clashed with his Quebec colleague over the position of the small coterie of particularist Conservatives within the party and Langevin's handling of the Riel affair, Chapleau was determined to supplant Langevin as Quebec chef.

In the discussion of these themes, each of the chapters of the dissertation focuses on an element of Chapleau's thought and action. Although all of Chapleau's life is examined in a chronological fashion, the thesis concentrates on the latter part of his life from 1882 when he entered federal politics, through his term as Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Quebec until his death in 1898.

The material to document this study was rather sparse and probably accounts for the fact that no biography or major work on Chapleau has ever been written.³ Since Adolphe Chapleau, as well as Honoré Mercier and Wilfrid Laurier dominated Quebec politics in the last quarter of the

³Chapleau's private secretary, L.-H. Taché, under the pseudonym of A. de Bonnetterre, wrote a short sketch of Chapleau's life as an introduction to a collection of Chapleau's speeches. The book was published in 1887 under the title: L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau. Sa biographie, suivie de ses principaux discours.... (See Montreal Gazette Saturday November 19, 1887, and L'Etendard jeudi le 20 octobre 1887). Since that date only two major articles have appeared concerning Chapleau. (See Jacques Gouin, "Histoire d'une amitié: correspondance intime entre Chapleau et DeCelles (1876-1898)", RHAF, 18.3 (déc. 1964), 363-386; 18.4 (mars 1965), 541-565; and H. Blair Neatby and John T. Saywell, "Chapleau and the Conservative party in Quebec", CHR, 37.1 (March 1956), 1-22.)

nineteenth century, the fact that Chapleau is largely forgotten is lamentable and an error that this thesis hopefully rectifies to some extent. Undoubtedly, Canadians do not remember Chapleau because very little of his private correspondence remains. Chapleau had saved his letters and stored them in his office at the Crédit Foncier Franco-Canadien in Montreal. After his death, Lady Chapleau had the material transferred to the basement of La Banque d'Epargne, where all the material was destroyed in a fire.⁴ Consequently, Chapleau's ideas and outlook must be gleaned from other sources. Valuable information about Adolphe Chapleau can be found in the private papers of the Prime Ministers at the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa, private collections in the National Archives of Quebec at Quebec City or the files of political and religious leaders at the various religious archives in Quebec and Manitoba. In addition, other private archives contain some of Chapleau's correspondence. Mr. Jacques Gouin of Hull kindly allowed me to read the DeCelles-Chapleau correspondence which he possessed. Most of these letters (now in the Fonds Gouin at the Centre de Recherche en Civilisation Canadienne-Française at the Université d'Ottawa) were addressed from DeCelles to Chapleau. The letters from Chapleau to DeCelles are located at Le Séminaire St -Joseph, aux Trois-Rivières. I am also indebted to Dr. Jean Bruchési, m. s. r. c., who not only allowed me to see correspondence between Chapleau and his maternal grandfather, Mathias C.

⁴Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, Montréal: éditions Bernard Valiquette, [n. d.], IX, 54_n.

Desnoyers, but also spoke to me about the relations between his uncle, Mgr. Bruchési and Chapleau.

Besides correspondence, pamphlets, and speeches, newspapers were extremely beneficial in the preparation of this thesis. La Minerve, Chapleau's personal organ, and La Presse, presented his viewpoint. Senator Trudel's thought was revealed in L'Etendard and Liberal attitudes appeared in La Patrie. Other newspapers, both in the English and French language added valuable material on specific questions and on the general atmosphere of the period.

I express sincerest thanks to those who helped proof-read my thesis--Jeryl McLean, John Rasmussen, André Lamalice, François-Xavier Nève de Mévergnies--, to Mrs. V. Gowing who aided with some typing, to Mrs. B. Steel for her advice in reproducing this work and to my excellent typist Mrs. Minnie Cutts. In addition, I am indebted to the many archivists and librarians who aided me in finding materials. I wish to express special thanks to Mr. Ralph Heintzman who listened attentively during our many conversations and who pointed out valuable information about Chapleau which he discovered during his own research. Most of all, I thank Dr. Jacques Monet, s. j., for supervising my dissertation. Without his patience, encouragement and suggestions, I would never have completed this thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AAM -- Archives de l'Archevêché de Montréal
- AAQ -- Archives de l'Archevêché de Québec
- AAR -- Archives de l'Archevêché de Rimouski
- AAS -- Archives de l'Archevêché de Sherbrooke
- AASB -- Archives de l'Archevêché de Saint-Boniface
- ANQ -- Archives Nationales du Québec
- ASJCF -- Archives de la Société de Jésus du Canada français
- ASSH -- Archives du Séminaire de St -Hyacinthe
- ASSM -- Archives du Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice à Montréal
- ASTR -- Archives du Séminaire St -Joseph aux Trois-Rivières
- AUM -- Archives de l'université de Montréal
- BRH -- Bulletin des recherches historiques
- CHAR -- Canadian Historical Association Annual Report
- CHR -- Canadian Historical Review
- CJEPS -- Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science
- JCS -- Journal of Canadian Studies
- PAC -- Public Archives of Canada
- PAO -- Public Archives of Ontario
- RAPQ -- Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec
- RHAF -- Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française
- RSCHEC -- Rapport de la Société canadienne d'histoire de l'Eglise catholique

INTRODUCTION

Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau was born at Ste -Thérèse, November 9, 1840. When Chapleau was young, his father, a stonemason, moved his family to Terrebonne where Adolphe began his classical education at Masson College under the patronage of its founder, Madame Sophie Raymond Masson, the unofficial head of that family of seigneurs of Terrebonne. Chapleau continued his education at the Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe. There, under the influence of teachers such as the dogmatic and persuasive orator, l'abbé Isaac Desaulniers and the liberally minded abbé Sabin Raymond, he was imbued with a Thomist outlook on life. At Saint-Hyacinthe as a member of the class of 1856, Chapleau's rebellious character and concern for the oppressed became apparent. Once, from on top of a bench in the recreation grounds he made a vehement public protestation against the authorities who had apparently "escamoté, salé injustement un congé."¹ During that period his abilities as a lawyer became evident with his defense of several students before the college's justice tribunal.² Consequently, few people were surprised, when after graduation, Chapleau entered law and was admitted to the bar in 1861.³

¹C. P. Choquette, Histoire du Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe depuis sa fondation jusqu'à nos jours, Montréal: Imprimerie de l'institution des sourds-muets, 1911, I, 409.

²Ibid., p. 409.

³Abbé Elie-J. Auclair, "Sir Adolphe Chapleau", Figures Canadiennes, 2 ème série, Montréal: éditions Albert Lévesque; 1933, pp. 99-100. Chapleau first entered the legal offices of Moreau & Ouimet; then Mousseau, Chapleau et Archambault; then Carter, Church et Chapleau; and finally Chapleau, Hall, Nicolls et Brown.

Quickly, Chapleau's reputation as a criminal lawyer soared throughout French Canada. Besides his superior intellect which allowed him to resolve the most difficult algebra problem as well as to appreciate the most delicate sonnet or even simple vaudeville, Chapleau's oratorical abilities were his greatest asset. Gifted with a lively and fertile imagination, Chapleau spoke directly to the heart. With his well-controlled voice, he always found words and sentiments that touched the passions and feelings in his listeners. As a criminal lawyer he possessed those valuable traits--"l'inspiration du regard, la beauté des traits, la noblesse du geste, le pathétique de l'action."⁴ His oratorical ability not only earned him the title of "le Démosthène Canadien"⁵, but also allowed him to save twenty-one of twenty-two defendants from the scaffold.⁶ One of his most famous cases occurred in 1869.

In a trial before the Criminal Assises, a betrayed husband was accused of the murder of his wife's lover. Family troubles had caused the accused to live estranged from his wife and children for several years. The day his child of eleven was to receive her first communion, the accused returned home to partake in the joyous event. When he entered his home to perform his pious duty of benediction, he found himself

⁴La Patrie, vendredi le 17 juin 1898. H. C. Sainte-Pierre, C. R., spoke of Chapleau at a special meeting of the Barreau assembled in order to adopt a resolution of condolence for Lady Chapleau upon Chapleau's death.

⁵La Patrie, le 26 octobre 1901.

⁶Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, Montréal: éditions Bernard Valiquette, [1940], I, 323.

confronted with the seducer of his wife. A violent altercation ensued, a bitter fight erupted, and in the battle the seducer was killed.

Chapleau was charged with the defense of the unfortunate husband in court. Only twenty-nine, Chapleau was at the height of his career. His elegant and distinguished presence captivated the entire courtroom assembly. He began his defense by speaking slowly. Quickening his pace, Chapleau's gestures became more animated as his voice warmed. He poignantly spoke of the crime of adultery and of the terrible consequences that it produced. In pathetic terms he painted a sad picture of the wretchedness of the scorned husband's heart and of the bad fortune which, in spite of himself, held him away from his wife and children. Tears appeared in his voice by the end of his defense and sobs were heard from all areas of the courtroom. That masterly oratorical plea was rewarded by the acquittal of the accused and the enthusiastic bravos of a delirious crowd.⁷

Although his oratory aided him to win many such cases, Chapleau sometimes used his speaking ability with such effectiveness that he undermined the very point he desired to establish. One such occasion resulted the first time Chapleau had an opportunity to speak in public after he had left college. In 1859 at Terrebonne during the celebrations of Saint Jean-Baptiste, Chapleau addressed an audience composed of a great many workers. He attempted to make them understand the real merits and advantages of the artisan life. In addition, he tried to convince

⁷La Patrie, vendredi le 17 juin 1898.

them to remain attached to French Canadian institutions and of the importance of their class in society in the formation of the French Canadian nationality. After the meeting one of the workers who came up to him to shake his hand lamented: "C'est vraiment regrettable que le fils d'un brave homme comme vous l'êtes, aille se gaspiller dans un bureau d'avocat; vous auriez fait un bon ouvrier!"⁸

Although he rejected the gentleman's conclusion, Chapleau accepted the suggestion that he was wasting his time as a lawyer. Like many other bright young French Canadians, he turned to politics whose horizons appeared more challenging. He received his political baptism on Christmas day, 1859, in front of the church of Terrebonne in an assemblée contradictoire. The assemblée contradictoire was a popular form of election meeting at which politicians of both rouge and bleu colouring faced each other on the same platform. Time was apportioned equally between the two opposing groups of speakers and the leading candidate of each party was granted a few minutes for rebuttal at the end of the discussions. Often those manifestations lasted the entire afternoon as was the case that December in Terrebonne in which the Liberal-Conservative Louis-Siméon Morin faced a Liberal opponent in a by-election contest. Chapleau spoke on behalf of Morin, French Canada's most distinguished criminal lawyer of the time who had just entered the Cartier-Macdonald Ministry as Solicitor-General. After an initial triumphant oratorical duel with Morin's opponents at that first assemblée contradictoire,

⁸J.-A. Chapleau, Discours prononcé par l'Hon. J.-A. Chapleau au Banquet des Ouvriers à Ottawa le 18 octobre 1888, p. 3.

Chapleau accompanied Morin throughout the constituency for the remainder of the campaign. With his head as noble and majestic as a lion, blue clear eyes and golden voice, Chapleau electrified and charmed his audiences. When he spoke, he turned his head repeatedly to survey the whole crowd and regarded his listeners with an eye that penetrated like steel.⁹ Possessed of a fertile imagination, Chapleau excelled in off-the-cuff remarks and repartie. His subtle use of sarcasm drew his listeners to his point of view. In addition, his attractive physique and eloquent voice made him irresistible to the electorate which awarded Morin an easy victory.¹⁰ Because of his services to Morin, Chapleau was offered a position in the civil service, but he declined the invitation and decided to devote himself to the service of his country in the political arena.¹¹

From the moment Chapleau decided to make a career of politics within the Liberal-Conservative party, he was forced to prove his value to his party. His first step was to found a paper with several other young aspiring politicians in order to publish his views on the issues that confronted French Canadians. In 1862, Ludger Labelle, L.-O. David, L.-W. Sicotte, D. Richard, L.-W. Tessier, L.-U. Fontaine, J.-A. Mousseau and Chapleau, united to establish Le Colonisateur. The difficulty that had faced French Canadians for over a decade was their inferiority of numbers with respect to English-speaking Canadians. One major cause of

⁹ Auclair, "Sir Adolphe Chapleau", Figures Canadiennes, pp. 102-103.

¹⁰ La Presse, vendredi le 22 mai 1896.

¹¹ Montreal Gazette, Tuesday October 11, 1887. Chapleau spoke in French at the Château de Ramezay on October 10th upon his return from Europe

the imbalance was the emigration of French Canadians to the factories of the northern United States. Although such a flow had begun during the early years of the Union of the Canadas, the movement increased dramatically during the American Civil War. In addition to the outflow of French Canadians from Canada East, the population balance was further affected by an increase of anglophone immigration into that area. One solution the young men of Le Colonisateur proposed to that dilemma was colonization. French Canadians should take possession of the land, they urged, because "l'étranger menace d'envahir...." and because the depopulation of the province by French Canadians could be curbed. Consequently, their cry became: "Emparons-nous du sol, si nous voulons conserver notre nationalité."¹² Le Colonisateur argued that the establishment of institutions such as a crédit foncier would aid French Canadians to repossess the land in Canada East.

Chapleau and his fellow crusaders failed to spark French Canadians to action and their newspaper floundered about a year after its inception. However, that young group did not fail to be attracted by the new political problem which absorbed the energies of French Canada, that of Confederation. In 1864, Confederation dominated political discussion in the province of Canada. Chapleau and his former colleague of Le Colonisateur, L.-O. David, debated the subject at the Institut Canadien-Français, the ecclesiastically approved answer to the radical rouge's Institut Canadien. Chapleau's conservative nature was exposed in the duel with David who opposed

¹²La Minerve, vendredi le 18 août 1882.

Confederation. According to Chapleau, French Canadians should be proud to form part of a vast British Empire that England wished to form in North America. Such a confederation would be better than to see British North America formed into a sort of separate municipality, a type of St. Martin's republic, little and insignificant. Not only did history sanction the project, Chapleau asserted, but it was necessary to have confidence in authority and to await the decision of French Canada's leaders.¹³ Later, Chapleau's arguments in favour of the 1867 Confederation settlement became grounded more in the political realities of Quebec politics. By 1872 he was convinced that Confederation, through the explicit guarantees given to the minorities, assured the protection of the rights of every Canadian. With a local legislature, Quebec could more actively develop her own resources. In addition, the creation of local legislatures could dissipate the sectional jealousies while at the same time protect the rights of the minorities.¹⁴ Those two results of the federal system of 1867 could promote the fulfilment of the work of Confederation, the creation of a great Canadian nationality.¹⁵

Once the Confederation settlement was confirmed in 1867, Chapleau turned from the esoteric intellectual duels to face political

¹³La Presse, le 1er septembre 1864.

¹⁴J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé à St -Jérôme, le 15 février 1872, devant une assemblée convoquée au sujet du 'chemin de fer de Colonisation du Nord.'", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau. Sa biographie.... ed. L.-H. Taché, Montréal: Eusèbe Senécal & Fils, 1887, p. 50.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 50.

opposition on the hustings and to demand his party's nomination in the constituency of Terrebonne for the local Legislature. Since Rodrigue Masson of the powerful seigneurial family of Terrebonne desired both the federal and provincial seats,¹⁶ the obstinate Chapleau faced a formidable obstacle to his career. Chapleau's ability to persuade Masson to accept only the federal nomination demonstrated his acute political dexterity. On the other hand, the necessity for Chapleau to force his way into the nomination after he had rendered so many services to the party such as his promotion of the Confederation scheme, was perhaps symptomatic of a weakness. Yet Chapleau was not discouraged. He campaigned for the Liberal-Conservative party in both the federal and provincial elections that were held simultaneously at the beginning of September of 1867. Because he was elected by acclamation in Terrebonne, Chapleau helped the ministerial forces backed by La Minerve, the Conservative Montreal daily, in other areas of the Montreal district. This act was especially appreciated in Montreal-East, the foyer of anti-Confederation resistance.

In that constituency, George-Etienne Cartier faced the petulant Médéric Lanctôt federally and the city alderman, and former Chapleau colleague on Le Colonisateur, Ludger Labelle, provincially. At one crowded meeting, Cartier faced a hall packed with opponents. Neither the Quebec chef nor other hand-picked notables could be heard. Then the handsome proud Chapleau made his way through the crowd to the platform. With confident voice and gestures, studied emphasis and brilliant images,

¹⁶Rumilly, Histoire, 1, 109.

the passionate speaker succeeded in imposing himself on the crowd. Cartier was overcome, and advanced and shook Chapleau's hands. In a typical reply which exposed a character trait that later would cause distrust of him by his colleagues, Chapleau responded to Cartier's gesture with the haughty remark: "Il n'y a pas de quoi, M. Cartier, ce n'est pas pour vous que je l'ai fait."¹⁷ Despite Chapleau's failure to acknowledge his appreciation to Cartier, the Quebec chef wisely continued to employ Chapleau in the electoral contest that ended in a Conservative victory.

Once success had blessed the Conservative party and the provincial Legislature opened in December 1867, Chapleau attracted all of the public's attention. He sat directly behind Cartier and his chief federal protégé, Hector Langevin. As a desk mate, Chapleau enjoyed the company of Joseph Cauchon, Speaker of the Senate, mayor of Quebec city and director of an influential paper, Le Journal de Québec. As a reward for his services to the party, Chapleau was chosen to propose the resolutions to the address in reply to the speech from the throne. Faithful to the ideas he had expressed in Le Colonisateur, Chapleau spoke of the necessity for French Canadians to develop their own resources to ensure their survival and to partake in the progress that most people saw and desired. To accomplish that end, Chapleau returned to the theme of colonization. Although he recognized that immigration would also allow the French Canadian community to increase in size, that method of population increase

¹⁷Arthur Dansereau, "J.-A. Chapleau", Les Hommes du Jour, ed. L.-H. Taché, Montréal: La compagnie de moulins à papier de Montréal, 1891, I, 50.

had proved a failure in the past. Thus, he set that policy aside for the moment.¹⁸

Later in the Legislative debates, Chapleau advocated two other methods to slow the drain of population from Quebec. He stressed that improvement in agricultural techniques and better education of the farmers would enable those who worked the land to earn a higher income. Besides development in the agricultural sector, Chapleau also envisaged the establishment of industries, especially in those sectors tied to agriculture and forest exploitation. An apostle of industrialization, Chapleau claimed in 1869 that

Notre pays n'est pas assez manufacturier, pour ce qu'il devrait être. C'est en vain qu'on nous dira que le Bas-Canada est un pays essentiellement agricole; c'est une erreur. Un pays qui a six ou sept mois d'hiver n'est pas, ne peut être essentiellement agricole. Ayez des manufactures et vous utiliserez la moitié de l'année que l'agriculture perd presque complètement; ayez des manufactures, et vous retiendrez ceux qui n'aiment pas la culture; ayez des manufactures, et vous permettrez au jeune homme laborieux et économe de ramasser des économies pour aller ensuite affronter les misères de la forêt.¹⁹

¹⁸ J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé le 30 décembre 1867, dans l'Assemblée Législative de Québec, en proposant les résolutions à l'adresse en réponse au discours du trône", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, pp. 5-7.

¹⁹ L'Événement, samedi le 23 janvier 1869 (du Journal de Québec). Chapleau spoke in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec on January 21, 1869. In his thesis, Marcel Hamelin lists other apostles of industrialization--P. S. Gendron, Louis Molleur, Louis Beaubien, L.-O. David, Siméon Lesage, Edward A. Barnard. Hamelin notes that because the politicians were powerless before the slowness of industrialization, they preached the improvement of agriculture and the encouragement of colonization. See Marcel Hamelin, La Chambre d'Assemblée du Québec de 1867-1878, D. ès L., Laval, 1972, pp. 450 & 273.

The key factor in the realization of the ambitious economic program Chapleau had envisaged for his province was the construction of a network of railways. Improved communications were necessary to provide the required economic base for the new areas to be developed. Not only would railways provide the necessary link between the forest, mineral and farm producers from colonization areas, and the mercantile, financial and cultural establishments of the settled areas, but railways would ensure the dominance of metropolitan centres over a larger hinterland.²⁰ An advocate of Montreal's ascendancy within Quebec, Chapleau hoped that that metropolitan centre would become the focal point of a network of railway lines that would penetrate into the province's interior. Those lines, he believed, should be constructed by private enterprise, although he did realize that government aid was required. That assistance he advocated in the form of land grants to railway companies which would obtain revenue by selling the land to colonists. Ideally, the land would increase in value because of improved communications and colonization would be favoured.²¹

²⁰ L'Administration Chapleau, Montréal: 1881, p. 12. Morris Zaslow makes the point that colonization railways "however, were only links binding the countryside with the most efficient long-distant transportation media--navigable lakes or rivers, or more particularly, railways--by means of which the frontier districts would be connected with ambitious metropolitan centres. Hence the building of colonization railways was supported both by settlers of remote districts and by civic business interests who could throw political weight into the campaign." See Morris Zaslow, The Opening of the Canadian North 1876-1914, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, [1971], pp. 147 & 154.

²¹ L'Événement, samedi 1e 23 janvier 1869. Chapleau spoke in the Legislative Assembly January 21, 1869.

Besides being concerned for the economic development of Quebec, Chapleau was also determined to secure justice for both francophones and anglophones under Confederation. His views on the relations between the two communities were revealed at the outset of his legislative career. In the first Legislature, P.-J.-O. Chauveau, the Premier, Provincial Secretary and Registrar, introduced an education bill by which school tax was to be apportioned according to property and not population.²² Chapleau held that since the Protestant minority possessed a far greater proportion of the property in Montreal than the Catholic majority, the bill would constitute an injustice towards Catholics, and especially French Canadians who formed the largest part of the Catholic group. In the Legislature, he reminded his colleagues that "en définitive, c'est le locataire qui paie la taxe et il arrivera alors que non seulement la taxe sera payée par lui, mais qu'elle servira à maintenir des écoles qui ne seront pas de la majorité et qui ne seront pas de sa croyance."²³ Chapleau noted that in Ontario, corporation and individual taxes for those who did not expressly state otherwise, went to the schools of the majority. In addition, Chapleau criticized another feature of the bill which accorded the Protestant minority an autonomy that the Catholics of Ontario did not

²²This bill of 1869 reproduced almost intact the Langevin bill of pre-Confederation days. The bill was an attempt to placate Protestant sentiment which desired a greater degree of autonomy in the direction of their schools and desired that taxes paid by Protestants be used for the maintenance of their own schools.

²³Le Journal de Québec, samedi le 20 mars 1869. Chapleau spoke in the Legislative Assembly Friday March 19, 1869.

enjoy. Thus,

Cette mesure consacre une politique de favoritisme contraire à l'esprit de la constitution et dangereuse pour l'avenir.... Comme tous mes compatriotes, sur cette question, M. l'Orateur, j'aime la libéralité, et certes, ce n'est pas moi qu'on accusera jamais de fanatisme, mais il est des conditions, des circonstances où la libéralité est dangereuse, où les privilèges deviennent odieux; c'est lorsque cette libéralité, ces privilèges ouvrent la porte à des empiètements et donnent lieu à des récriminations. Et je crains, M. l'Orateur, que la présente mesure soit de nature à faire appréhender de pareils dangers.²⁴

Because Chauveau refused to entertain these criticisms and since he did not wish to bolt the party, Chapleau was forced to admit defeat and vote for a bill that he believed to be detrimental to the 1867 understanding between the two major communities in Canada.

Besides the relations between the French and English-speaking Canadians that formed the basis of Confederation and in addition to the development of his province, Chapleau also discussed matters that concerned the federal structure of the new nation that had been created. For example, he opposed the establishment of a provincial police force because he contended the matter involved criminal law, a concern of the central jurisdiction.²⁵ Another question with more tenuous ties to the area of federalism involved the double mandate. For both personal and philosophical reasons, Chapleau, from the outset of his career, opposed the idea that an individual should be allowed to sit simultaneously in the House of Commons and the provincial Legislature. He realized that

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Le Journal de Québec, jeudi le 23 décembre 1869. Chapleau spoke in the Legislative Assembly December 22, 1869.

provincial representatives like himself could feel intimidated in the presence of federal ministers--"un élément de nature à nous contrôler ou du moins à gêner, à entraver notre action."²⁶ More important, however, was the philosophical reason. "La base essentielle, de l'organisation de tout corps délibérant est qu'il ne renferme pas dans son sein d'élément, de force, qui le contrôle, sans cela ses délibérations ne sont plus complètement libres comme elles devraient l'être." On the other hand, the basic argument in favour of the retention of the double mandate was "pour respecter la volonté populaire!"²⁷ Such reasoning horrified a conservative and elitist like Chapleau. He queried:

quand le peuple vous demandera le suffrage universel, l'exemption de la qualification électorale, l'élection de ses magistrates, une loi du travail, toutes ses utopies enfin que le penchant naturel à la liberté inspire à la volonté populaire, ne lui répondrez-vous pas qu'il y a au fond de toutes ces doctrines des principes sociaux ou politiques qui sont dangereux pour les destinées d'une société? Oh! monsieur l'Orateur, je suis étonné de voir qu'un gouvernement, qui est censé représenter l'opinion essentiellement conservatrice de l'immense majorité de cette province, ne trouve pas de meilleur argument dans une grande question politique, qu'un lambeau de paradoxe qui l'on va chercher dans les théories les plus démocratiques.²⁸

With the Assembly's decision to retain the double mandate, the first Quebec Legislature neared an end and preparations began for the election of 1871. In the early months of that year, a small group of

²⁶ Le Journal de Québec, vendredi le 2 décembre 1870. Chapleau spoke in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec December 1st, 1870.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Conservatives met in Montreal and produced a political manifesto--Le Programme Catholique. Those programmistes, of whom the most notable were F.-X.-A. Trudel, Alphonse Desjardins, Adolphe-Basile Routhier and Louis-Olivier Taillon, developed their doctrine upon a Roman Catholic religious base. Following the intellectual traditions of de Maistre and Louis Veillot in France, they affirmed that the State should be subordinate to the Church. That assertion, which was the first principle of Le Programme Catholique, was "essentiellement SAUVEUR ET CONSERVATEUR des sociétés."²⁹ In particular, "la subordination de la législation provinciale, en ce qui regarde notre religion, aux lois de l'Eglise catholique" would ensure French Canada's survival.³⁰ The programmists urged the Quebec population to support only those candidates which adhered to Le Programme Catholique.

That document which represented an attempt to establish a political organization that rested on the doctrines of a single Christian denomination horrified Chapleau. Such a narrowly based party, he believed, would lead to conflict in the pluralistic Canadian society. He dismissed the programmistes with scorn and prepared to fight the election without the aid of a manifesto. He accompanied Conservative leaders to nearly all the hustings of the Montreal district. At Langevin's request, he had also earlier campaigned in the county of Prescott in Ontario on behalf of John Sandfield Macdonald's Conservatives who were also fighting

²⁹ Le Nouveau Monde, vendredi 1e 19 mai 1871.

³⁰ Ibid.

an Ontario provincial election in 1871. Within eleven days he had travelled an exhausting 241 miles en voiture. So gruelling was the exercise that he had lost count of the boxes of Brown's Bronchial Troches he had swallowed to keep his voice lubricated. Although Chapleau had not felt Sandfield Macdonald was worth so much effort, he had plodded to his aid in the hope of a reward and to revenge Thomas D'Arcy McGee's name. He claimed that after McGee's assassination, he had sworn "de lui rapporter un triomphe de l'endroit où ses compatriotes et ses co-religionnaires l'avaient honteusement laissé battu, il y a quatre ans...."³¹

Because of his vigorous efforts to secure Conservative victories in both Quebec and Ontario, Chapleau desired the Speaker's chair in the Conservative dominated Legislative Assembly of Quebec as a reward. However, those Conservatives who adhered to Le Programme Catholique produced their candidate for the post, Joseph-Hyacinthe Bellerose. A member of both the House of Commons and the Legislative Assembly for Laval, Bellerose was President of the Union Navigation Company and Vice-President of the Sovereign Fire Insurance Company. Since he was educated at the Collège de Nicolet and the Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe, Bellerose's proclivities for the ultramontane religious authorities of the province was not surprising. His demand to be rewarded for his loyalty to the Liberal-Conservative party was equalled only by Chapleau's. Since neither

³¹Chapleau à Langevin, Montréal, le 8 avril 1871, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Fernand Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 38. In 1867, McGee ran for election to the Ontario Legislature in the county of Prescott and was defeated.

Chapleau nor Bellerose could secure a majority of Conservative votes, Joseph-G. Blanchet, who had been Speaker since 1867, emerged as the compromise choice.³²

Hampered in his attempts to rise in the party at the provincial level, Chapleau entered the federal election contest of 1872 as the Conservative candidate in Verchères. Chapleau, like Cartier, was defeated largely due to an anti-Conservative feeling that resulted from Cartier's inability to convince the citizens of Montreal that the terminus of the Pacific railway would be located in their city. Chastened by his experience as a federal candidate, Chapleau decided to remain in the provincial arena and to press his claims for recognition with vigour.

In 1873, Chapleau revealed his ambitions and wounded pride to Hector Langevin who acted as Quebec chef due to Cartier's illness. Chapleau warned Langevin that Montreal, which was quickly becoming the metropole of Canada to the detriment of Quebec city, felt underrepresented in the Chauveau cabinet.³³ The aspiring leader stressed his rights to a promotion based upon his work for the party, an undoubted reference to a comment he had made two years earlier to Langevin that "pour tout le District de Montréal, il n'y a pas deux sièges du côté droit de la Chambre où je n'ai pas posé au moins un clou...."³⁴

³²Le Nouveau Monde, le 26 octobre 1871, and La Minerve, le 26 octobre 1871.

³³ANQ, Collection Chapais, Chapleau à Langevin, le 25 juin 1873.

³⁴Chapleau à Langevin, Montréal, le 8 avril 1871, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 39.

Chapleau's pleas to be accepted into the upper echelons of the party paid dividends in February 1873. Gédéon Ouimet replaced Chauveau as Premier and Chapleau entered his cabinet as Solicitor-General. With his acceptance of remuneration from the Crown, he was forced to seek re-election to the Legislative Assembly. Such an occasion proved propitious for Chapleau's opponents within the party to raise the question of his refusal to sign Le Programme Catholique, especially since Chapleau's promotion to cabinet rank had precluded F.-X.-A. Trudel's entry into that exclusive club.³⁵ Trudel was the only politician who had signed Le Programme Catholique to be elected to the Assembly in 1871. Very pious, Trudel placed a statue of the Sacred Heart in a place of honour in his salon. Educated at the collège de Nicolet, he sided with Quebec's ultramontane clerics and was determined to persuade all Conservatives to sign the Programme Catholique or to force them to leave the party. Aware of Trudel's views, Chapleau faced the question of the Programme squarely at his nomination meeting at St -Jérôme March 12, 1873.

Before a sympathetic audience, Chapleau claimed that he had no cause to blush if he were referred to as "le plus libéral des conservateurs", because adherence to principle did not exclude toleration and understanding. To question his Catholic sympathies as his Conservative opponents had done was unjustified, and to sign the Programme would cast doubt on his word.

³⁵ Andrée Désilets, Hector-Louis Langevin: Un père de la Confédération canadienne (1826-1906), Québec: Les presses de l'université Laval, 1969, pp. 275-276. As the Macdonald government collapsed at the end of 1873, F.-X.-A. Trudel had the distinction of being one of Macdonald's eleventh hour appointments. Trudel was named to the Senate to replace his father-in-law, Louis Renaud.

He was a Roman Catholic in heart and soul, he explained, but he respected all religious beliefs. Such a position was essential in a country like Canada. In conclusion, Chapleau stated his belief in the separation of Church and State in an argument he erroneously borrowed from St. Thomas Aquinas and from Auctore Petro Scavini, a darling of ultramontane Catholic scholars. Unlike St. Thomas and Scavini, Chapleau did not continue his analysis to explain whose opinion should dominate in a jurisdictional conflict between the Church and the State.³⁶ Since Chapleau faced no opposition and was re-elected in Terrebonne by acclamation, a resolution of the question was not of immediate importance for his successful election.

Although Chapleau won a cherished cabinet position in 1873 and was named a Queen's Counsellor that year, he and the Conservative party also suffered. Not only did Sir George-Etienne Cartier die, but the Pacific Scandal broke. The Conservative government was accused by the Liberals of accepting money from Sir Hugh Allan, a Montreal shipowner who had banking, newspaper and railway interests and who desired the Pacific railway charter. Chapleau, who earned the appellation "Vendu!" for his defense of the federal Conservatives, campaigned throughout Quebec during July and August in an attempt to deflect Liberal attacks from the Macdonald régime. Despite the valiant efforts of the Conservatives to present their case before the royal commission that examined the Liberal charges and before the House of Commons, Macdonald lost the

³⁶La Minerve, samedi le 15 mars 1873.

loyalty of some of his followers and was forced to resign in November 1873. A Liberal government led by Alexander Mackenzie replaced him in Ottawa.

The federal arena was not the only place the Conservatives and thus Chapleau, faced difficulties. The provincial Quebec Liberals obtained their opportunity during the summer of 1874 to exploit a scandal which involved the Ouimet government. The so-called Tanneries scandal involved the exchange of a parcel of land at Tanneries de Saint-Henri for a farm situated just outside of Montreal. The arrangement to exchange the land and have the Protestant hospital for contagious diseases built at the Leduc farm instead of Tanneries was opposed by some English-speaking Montreal speculators. They affirmed that the transaction was a speculation that left \$50,000 in the hands of Arthur Dansereau, a personal friend of Chapleau. One English-speaking representative in the cabinet, the Attorney-General, George Irvine, resigned. Rumours spread that the other anglophone representative in the Ministry, J. G. Robertson, who was then in England, would also resign. As public opinion drifted without direction, Ouimet called Chapleau back from a visit to the United States in desperation in order to meet the opposition. Upon his return to Montreal, Chapleau judged the situation lost because of the lassitude of his political friends before the aggressive enemy. Nevertheless, not willing to concede defeat before battle, Chapleau spoke at a meeting of electors gathered at Tanneries and in spite of an impressive battery of opposition forces, he completely dominated the assembly and demonstrated the absurdity of the accusation. Unfortunately, Chapleau's aid was not sufficient to allow Ouimet to maintain power. The Premier was abandoned by three colleagues--Irvine,

Robertson, and J.-J. Ross. Ross, the final member of the trio to desert the government, was the francophone Speaker of the Legislative Council who suddenly developed pangs of moral indignation. With the withdrawal of support by these Conservatives, Ouimet resigned in September.³⁷

Because the Liberal party's cries of corruption and wrong-doing led to the resignation of the Ouimet administration, another Conservative Ministry headed by the scrupulously honest Charles de Boucherville, a member of the Legislative Council, assumed office. The new government was pruned of those Conservatives who had any connection with the Tanneries affair. Consequently, Chapleau found himself in the political cold once again. Fortunately, just at that period, Ambroise Lépine's trial began in Manitoba. The métis leader was charged with the murder of Thomas Scott during the Red River Rebellion. In response to a request from Lépine's lawyer, Joseph Royal, Chapleau left for Winnipeg to defend the métis for whom many French Canadians felt sympathy. Despite his failure to acquit Lépine, Chapleau returned as a hero to Montreal in November. In appreciation for his moving pleas on behalf of Lépine and two other métis, Nault and Lagimodière, whom Chapleau had also defended while in the West, the Montreal populace presented him with a gift at a reception in his honour at the St. Lawrence Hall.³⁸

³⁷ L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, pp. XIV & XV.

³⁸ La Minerve, vendredi 1e 20 novembre 1874, and La Minerve, lundi 1e 9 novembre 1874. Because of his forthcoming marriage, the citizens of Montreal gave their idol silverware marked with Chapleau's initials. The silverware was enclosed in a black walnut case. Chapleau also received a silver tea service.

Six days after thanking the Montreal people for their generosity, Chapleau married an English-speaking protestant, Mary Louisa King at the parish church of St. Michael in Sherbrooke. Chapleau's friend, Father Edouard-Charles Fabre, later Bishop of Montreal, had obtained the necessary dispensation for him to enter into a mixed marriage. After a beautiful mass sung by the young girls from the Sherbrooke convent, the couple returned to the bride's home in the city for a reception. Later the same day they left for New York on a special train that had been placed at their disposal by the Massawippi Company.³⁹

After a honeymoon in the Unites States, Chapleau returned to Quebec and attempted to rise once again within Conservative ranks. His oratorical ability caused his star to shine more brightly as he employed his talents in the Conservative cause for the provincial general election set for July 1875. At the famous assemblée contradictoire at Sainte-Croix June 6, Chapleau rose in defense of his leader, Charles de Boucherville. Contrary to tradition, the opposition leader, Joly de Lotbinière, had challenged the Premier to a confrontation. In the past everyone but a Premier could be asked to defend himself at such a political gathering. To the surprise of many, the Premier, a very poor speaker, not only accepted Joly's challenge, but also chose Sainte-Croix, the centre of Conservative strength in the Liberal county of Lotbinière as the battleground. Chapleau heeded the frantic call for aid from a helpless de Boucherville. Before 3,000 spectators, he exploded in a passionate oration which turned Joly's wily

³⁹ La Minerve, jeudi le 26 novembre 1874.

election gambit into a disastrous defeat. From that moment there was no doubt about a Conservative victory in July.

Even after the Conservative triumph at the polls, Chapleau was not completely rehabilitated until October 30, 1875, with the publication of Judge Johnson's decision on a suit launched by the government against one of the principals in the Tanneries affair. The judge found no proof of conspiracy, fraud nor unlawful activity by the Ouimet government.⁴⁰ That ruling allowed de Boucherville to offer Chapleau the post of Provincial Secretary and Registrar in his cabinet in January 1876. Despite Chapleau's dislike of the government decision the previous month to take charge and construct the railways on the north shore of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers,⁴¹ the lure of office proved too great for Chapleau to spurn an offer for which he craved.

Within the government again, Chapleau passed through a very quiet session of the Legislature in 1876. He seconded Louis Beaubien's nomination as Speaker. Beaubien, a wealthy politician, had represented Hochelaga since Confederation. He had converted his land near Montreal

⁴⁰ Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, Montréal: éditions Bernard Valiquette, [1941], II, 13.

⁴¹ Chapleau did not believe that a government should or could, unless it was unable to do otherwise, administer or work a railway. This assumption was based on the belief that a government should not enter into trade. If a government undertook to work quarries or mines, for example, it would be forced to become a speculator. For the purposes of commerce, the government constituted itself a common carrier, and yet the immunity which the government enjoyed in not being liable to be sued at law was really in contradiction with the calling it exercised. Montreal Gazette, Tuesday May 2, 1882. The Gazette reports a speech by Chapleau in the Legislative Assembly.

into a model farm and possessed interests in several financial and railway enterprises, most notably the Montreal, Ottawa, and Occidental railway. Ironically, he would later clash with Chapleau who appeared to threaten those railway investments. However, in 1876, both worked well together in the dull atmosphere of the fall session. Unfortunately, controversy could not escape Chapleau for long.

In 1877, Chapleau became entwined in a question of public morality over his ties with railway entrepreneurs. A contractor, J.-B. Deslongchamp, had obtained the right from the provincial government to build the chemin de fer des Laurentides in 1875. In order to permit Chapleau, the representative of Terrebonne, the county through which the railway was to pass, to occupy a directorship in the company, the entrepreneur had transferred shares of the enterprise into Chapleau's name. For those shares, Chapleau had paid nothing. When Deslongchamp faced financial difficulties in 1877, he obtained personal funds from Chapleau to carry him along. At the same time, as a Minister, Chapleau secured a public subsidy for the company. In effect, the grants procured by Chapleau in cabinet, served to cover the loans he had advanced to the company. Consequently, there appeared to be a conflict of interest between Chapleau as Minister and Chapleau as director of the enterprise. However, when a member of the Legislature raised the question in an attempt to seek a condemnation as illegal and reprehensible the transfer of shares to a deputy who had not paid for the shares, the majority of the Legislative Assembly declared that there was nothing illegal in the

practice.⁴²

Although Chapleau's relations with railway entrepreneurs caused hardly a stir in 1877, Chapleau's other activities produced embarrassment for the de Boucherville government. With the support of Rodrigue Masson, Chapleau persuaded the government to build the Montreal-Quebec section of the Q. M. O. & O. railway through Terrebonne and Saint-Thérèse and to provide those towns, rather than Montreal, with the principal stations and work shops. Because of the decision, Montreal decided to retain a one million dollar grant it had previously promised to contribute to the line. As Provincial Secretary and Registrar, Chapleau further alienated opinion with his scheme of a dépôt de livres. Under the jurisdiction of the superintendant of education, the depot was to buy and resell books, maps and furniture to all municipalities at reasonable prices. Although the plan was instituted to aid poorer schools to obtain necessary educational material, book shop owners protested because of the monopolistic position of the government agency. Religious bodies complained because of the uniformity engendered by the system and because the state appeared to remove the Church from an important area of the educational field. Unwilling to placate his detractors, Chapleau stumbled into a third difficulty that raised howls from within Conservative ranks. He was distressed that many of his fellow Conservatives had misunderstood the

⁴²This incident is culled from the thesis of Marcel Hamelin. He claims that railway companies often resorted to the practice of appointing the local deputy as one of the company directors. The company would thus obtain an excellent lawyer in the Legislature and possess the ear of the cabinet. See Hamelin, La Chambre d'Assemblée du Québec, pp. 741-742.

intention of his brash move at St -Lin where he had extended the branche d'olivier to the Liberal, Wilfrid Laurier.⁴³ They had failed to realize that he had wanted no coalition with Laurier. Rather, he had invited the prominent Liberal to join the Conservative party and aid that organization ensure French Canada's future through the economic development of the province. Fortunately, before the end of 1877, Chapleau was presented with an occasion in which he could endeavour to heal the wounds he had created and prove his adherence to the Conservative party.

In October, Wilfrid Laurier sought re-election in his riding of Drummond-Arthabaska after he had been named to the Mackenzie Liberal cabinet as Minister of Revenue and Minister of the Interior. At that time, Chapleau attempted to prove his true bleu colours by preventing Laurier's success at the polls. During that by-election, he also cemented his ties with Louis-Adélarde Sénécal whom he persuaded to work against Laurier. Sénécal was a tall, slim railway entrepreneur, sawmill owner, and industrialist concerned with naval construction and commerce in forest products who was always in a hurry, always on the move. In the first Legislature he had sat as the Liberal deputy for Yamaska and in the Commons as the representative for Drummond-Arthabaska. When he did not obtain a Senate appointment from Mackenzie, he had become disillusioned and had placed his enterprise and energy at the service of the Conservative party. After his political conversion, he had established business relations with Arthur Dansereau, the editor of La Minerve, and had

⁴³ANQ, Collection Chapais, Langevin à Chapleau, Québec, le 11 septembre 1877, and Chapleau à Langevin, Montréal, le 15 septembre 1877.

become friendly with Chapleau. Chapleau's organizational and oratorical powers coupled with Sénécal's financial assistance were no match for the Liberals. Laurier was defeated by a narrow margin October 27 which forced him to secure election in a safer Liberal seat without the pressure of a campaign directed by Chapleau.

Although Chapleau had helped to defeat Laurier, he was not re-deemed in the eyes of all Conservatives. Many Conservatives could not forget that during 1877 Chapleau had seriously embarrassed the de Boucherville government on several occasions. However, it was not Chapleau, but de Boucherville's railway policy which determined the demise of that Conservative government in 1878. In 1875, Chapleau had warned in the Legislative Assembly that if the government operated the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental railway between Quebec and Ottawa, the province could face financial difficulties.⁴⁴ De Boucherville had refused Chapleau's advice and soon faced the necessity to seek more revenue. Consequently, in an attempt to secure the one million dollar grant promised but withheld by Montreal, de Boucherville announced that the line between Quebec and Montreal would run on a direct route from Terrebonne to terminate in Montreal and that Montreal would be the site of the depots and work shops. Unfortunately, opposition continued in Montreal which wished the line to run from Quebec to Montreal directly without passing through Terrebonne. In addition to Montreal, other

⁴⁴J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé en décembre 1875, dans l'Assemblée Législative de Québec, lors des débats sur la politique des chemins de fer", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, éd. Taché, p. 87.

municipalities, such as Quebec city, decided to retain their promised financial grant towards the railway. In desperation, the Attorney-General, Auguste-Réal Angers, presented resolutions in the Legislature which would force payment of the promised sums. The Lieutenant-Governor, Luc Letellier de Saint-Just, an appointee of the Liberal Mackenzie government, refused to sign the bill based on Angers' resolutions and wrote a mémoire to de Boucherville which, in effect, dismissed the Premier from office. The Liberal leader, Joly de Lotbinière accepted responsibility for Letellier's actions and formed a government. Since he did not have the support of the Legislature, the Liberal Premier was forced to seek a dissolution, which the Lieutenant-Governor willingly granted.

With elections scheduled for May 1st, Chapleau was able again to demonstrate his importance to the Conservative party. As the leader of the provincial forces in the Montreal district, he opened the provincial campaign with other Conservative leaders in an historic speech on March 10th at Lévis. Inflamed and excited, Chapleau condemned the coup d'état executed by "Luc I". He structured his censure of Letellier de St -Just, the occupant of the Lieutenant-Governor's mansion at Spencer Wood, upon the theme of the miserable despot against the innocent people in the person of their representatives in the Legislature. A master of oratorical technique, Chapleau saved the climax of his diatribe until the end when he affirmed with defiance ringing in his voice: "Faites taire la voix de Spencer Wood et laissez parler la grande voix du peuple!"⁴⁵

⁴⁵J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé à une assemblée tenue à Lévis, le 10 mars 1878, pour protester contre le coup d'état Letellier", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, p. 149.

That phrase of challenge was quickly transformed into the Conservative campaign slogan.

Although Chapleau led Conservative forces in the Montreal area, he was forced to spend much effort in his own constituency of Terrebonne because of the strength of his Liberal opponent. His adversary was Dr. Jules Prévost, a member of the powerful rouge family of Terrebonne, but on the hustings, he was faced by Prévost's brother Wilfrid, a man of the north who could better challenge Chapleau in an oratorical duel. At one point in the campaign, Chapleau even doubted his own victory since confidence had deserted Conservative ranks and money was scarce. To Alfred DeCelles, an editor of La Minerve and secretary-treasurer of the party, Chapleau confided that he would never forgive Letellier for having sent him to the fire in a region that seemed too close to the North Pole during that late winter season. He related that Wilfrid Prévost followed him as his shadow. During the evenings they rested under the same roof since there was often only one hotel in the northern towns. At those meetings in which they faced each other seated at the same table, neither spoke, but sometimes they did play cards to pass the time before the silence was broken in a verbal bout at an assemblée contradictoire the following day. Chapleau complained in a jocular manner about his attempts at colonization of the north. Unfortunately, "les malheureux m'ont écouté, et aujourd'hui je suis obligé de courir après eux dans les montagnes et les bas-fonds, pays interdits aux voies respiratoires affectées comme les miennes."⁴⁶ He begged DeCelles for \$50.00 so that

⁴⁶La Presse, samedi le 7 juin 1902.

he could escape back to civilization.

Chapleau did return to Montreal victorious in his own constituency and in the Montreal area. However, the party did not fare as well in the remainder of the province. Although all of Joly's cabinet was elected, three former ministers in de Boucherville's government, including the Conservative leader of the Legislative Assembly, A.-R. Angers, were defeated. However, the Liberal victory was not a disaster for the Conservative party or for Chapleau. Despite the drop in Conservative representation after the election, the Liberals under Joly were only able to cling to power because of the defection of William Price from Conservative ranks and the acceptance of the position as Legislative Assembly Speaker by Arthur Turcotte, Conservative representative for Trois-Rivières. In addition, because Angers was rejected by the electors of Montmorency and since de Boucherville sat in the Legislative Council, Chapleau led the opposition in the Assembly. He was chosen by the caucus to lead the party in the Assembly because of his skill in debate, his organizational ability, and his leadership qualities.

As leader of the opposition in the Legislative Assembly, Chapleau held the Joly government under fire for two sessions. He exposed the secret manoeuvres of Joly's colleagues, their schemes to enrich their friends and their lack of sound finance. Almost singlehanded, Chapleau destroyed the illusion of the Liberal party as the haven of honest politicians and an organization of strict economy. "Jamais il n'eut plus de verve mordante, plus d'esprit d'à-propos, plus de logique impitoyable; jamais on ne vit politique plus avisé, debater plus

alerte."⁴⁷ Within eighteen months, Joly's government was weak and listless. Yet the Liberals were not defeated. Chapleau and the provincial Conservatives lacked the force required to topple Joly who was backed by a sympathetic Lieutenant-Governor and a Liberal Ottawa administration. However, political fortune began to swing in the Conservative favour as a result of the federal general election of September 18, 1878.

In that political contest, Chapleau did not underestimate the need of a Conservative victory to serve the provincial Conservative cause. Although he refused to run in the election as a candidate out of fear that his departure would only serve to consolidate Joly in Quebec, Chapleau and the provincial party worked energetically to secure Macdonald's triumph. When the results indicated a Macdonald victory, the provincial Conservatives shared the old chieftain's euphoria. With the demise of the federal Liberal government, they immediately set about to demolish the next obstacle to Joly's defeat, the Lieutenant-Governor, Letellier de St -Just.

To obtain Letellier's head, a contingent of Quebec Conservatives established an organizational headquarters on Metcalfe street in Ottawa at la maison bleue, called after the political colour of its occupants. One of Chapleau's former colleagues from Le Colonisateur who had supported Confederation, Joseph-Alfred Mousseau, the huge double-chinned debater from Bagot, presented a motion in the newly elected House of Commons that condemned Letellier's actions. Following a long and acrimonious debate,

⁴⁷ L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, p. XVIII.

Mousseau's motion carried at 4:30 a.m. March 14, 1879. That morning, the generous Sénécal provided a champagne party for his friends at the maison bleue to celebrate the victory which was not to be complete until the Governor-General, the Marquis of Lorne, acting on Macdonald's advice, finally dismissed Letellier July 25, 1879. Immediately after that act, a Conservative, Théodore Robitaille assumed the vacant office.

With a sympathetic Lieutenant-Governor installed at Spencer Wood, the Conservatives in both Houses of the Quebec Legislature sought a method to cause the defeat of the Joly administration. At the end of August, 1879, J. J. Ross, the conscientious and easily influenced Legislative Councillor whose resignation in 1874 had helped to destroy the Ouimet government, proposed a resolution to withhold a vote on a Supply bill in the Conservative dominated upper chamber. Ross specified that his motion represented a direct attack against the Joly government. When the motion passed, Joly secured the adjournment of the Assembly until October 28th. During the two month recess, he hoped to turn public opinion against the actions of the Legislative Council. However, despite frantic attempts to gain support during September and October, Joly was unable to arrest the wave of disfavour in his régime that the action of the Legislative Council had reflected. On October 29th when the Assembly supported a Conservative motion which advocated the formation of a coalition ministry to resolve the conflict between the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council, Joly sought a dissolution from the Lieutenant-Governor. Because Robitaille refused his request, Joly resigned. Chapleau was then called by Robitaille and asked to form a

government. Conservative leadership fell to Chapleau because English-speaking Quebecers refused to serve under another de Boucherville government.⁴⁸ In addition, Auguste-Réal Angers who might have been asked to become Premier, was passed over because he had lost his seat in the Assembly as a result of the 1878 provincial election. Consequently, Chapleau, whose prestige and authority had increased since Joly's assumption of power in 1878, appeared to be the logical choice for the position of Premier. Although there was some discontent from de Boucherville and Angers followers over Chapleau's leadership, Chapleau succeeded in building a ministry and his government was sworn into office October 30, 1879.

As Premier of Quebec, Chapleau stressed the necessity of the economic development of the province and of the continued partnership between English and French-speaking Canadians. Unlike some of his compatriots, Chapleau had no fear of French Canada's minority position in Confederation for "au moins dans la province de Québec, les conditions les plus favorables pour l'expansion de nos forces nationales et religieuses...." existed.⁴⁹ Because of the liberality of French Canadians, anglophones in Quebec were deprived of all pretexts for aggression against French Canadians and could not prevent nor retard French Canada's progress. With reference to the English-speaking citizens of Quebec, Chapleau explained to the Bishop of Trois-Rivières, Louis-François Laflèche, that

Nous nous emparons rapidement des Cantons de l'Est que
l'Angleterre avait voulu leur réserver comme patrimoine

⁴⁸ Désilets, Langevin, pp. 341-342.

⁴⁹ ASTR, Chapleau à Laflèche, Québec, le 26 avril 1881.

spécial; notre colonisation absorbe tous les ans des sommes considérables, presque exclusivement dans nos intérêts; leurs capitaux sont taxés pour l'entretien de nos écoles; le mouvement financier, que nous avons déterminé par l'ouverture de nos relations avec la France, détourne une force énorme de capital anglais et ne contribue pas peu à l'affirmation de notre race dans la Province. Et tout se produit au milieu⁵⁰ de notre société, sans soulever le moindre bruit apparent.

In order to maintain that harmony, Chapleau rejected Laflèche's request for provincial legislation which would proclaim the immunity of clerics in their relations with the electorate when the latter was called to choose its representatives to Parliament. Chapleau was convinced that such legislation would be considered as aggression by Protestants who would incite a controversy and "les grands mouvements de progrès ... seraient retardés par l'action absorbante de ces discussions...."⁵¹

That movement of progress, which to Chapleau signified the economic development of the province, was the corner-stone of his policy as Premier. "Le développement rapide de toutes les ressources dont nous pouvons disposer, l'envahissement paisible du sol, l'essor libre et vigoureux de notre population, le maintien non discuté de nos institutions, tel est le vaste champ qui s'ouvre à l'énergie et à l'intelligence de ceux qui visent au progrès durable de notre société civile."⁵² One of the first steps in the realization of his grand design was to re-establish commercial and financial relations with France. Without a

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

realistic appraisal of the economic and political considerations necessary to cement the commercial link, Chapleau failed to organize a direct steamship line between Rouen and Quebec in 1881.⁵³ However, he did obtain greater success in the financial field with the successful negotiation of a loan. Consequently, a new money market was opened for Quebec governments. In addition, Chapleau secured the foundation of the Crédit Foncier Franco-Canadien. That institution was conceived in order to attempt to halt the flow of emigration from Quebec by providing rural inhabitants with a source for loans other than usurious speculators who accumulated large areas of the countryside by dispossessing poor indebted farmers of their land and livelihood. Besides "l'affranchissement de ce domaine agricole que dévorait l'usure ... les capitaux, autrefois alléchés par les énormes bénéfices de l'ancien système, vont désormais chercher à s'employer ailleurs, et contribuer aux développements d'autres entreprises."⁵⁴ Contrary to the government's hopes, the Crédit Foncier did not stop emigration nor keep French Canadians in control of the land they farmed. One reason for this failure was the shift in the Crédit Foncier's activities from long term rural loans to urban loans at simple interest. This change occurred about 1889 because of the severe competition from insurance companies with regard to loans on mortgage.⁵⁵

⁵³L'Administration Chapleau, p. 22. Also Maurice Guénard-Hodent, La tradition renouée. Les relations entre la France et le Canada depuis soixante années, Paris: éditions de Paris-Canada, 1930, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁴L'Administration Chapleau, pp. 23-25.

⁵⁵Magella Quinn, "Les Capitaux français et le Québec, 1855-1900", RHAF, 24.4 (mars 1971), 554.

In addition to the aid the rural population received from closer ties with France, the Chapleau government attempted to encourage the agricultural industry of the province directly. Not only did Chapleau further the establishment of butter and cheese factories and marketing co-operatives,⁵⁶ but the Premier enthusiastically embraced Antoine Casavant's idea for the development of a sugar-beet industry in the province. Casavant had preached that since the growing of sugar-beets was highly remunerative, the adoption of that type of agriculture by Quebec farmers would cause emigration to the United States to cease.⁵⁷

In a further effort to decrease emigration Chapleau encouraged forest exploitation, water power development, and mineral exploration.⁵⁸ To provide the province with the necessary mining technicians, Chapleau favoured the foundation of a school of mines. Although that project was announced in the Speech from the Throne in 1882, the scheme was not realized while Chapleau was Premier.⁵⁹

As head of the Quebec government, Chapleau tackled a final area of economic concern--the balancing of the province's finances through the

⁵⁶La Presse, le 5 juin 1903. Arthur Dansereau recalls that Chapleau was responsible for the creation of the dairy industry in Quebec through the formation of butter and cheese marketing co-operation.

⁵⁷Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, Montréal: éditions Bernard Valiquette, [1941], III, 22-23.

⁵⁸J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours-Programme prononcé à Ste.-Thérèse, le 3 novembre 1881, à l'ouverture de la campagne électorale terminée le 2 décembre 1881", in L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, pp. 186-187.

⁵⁹Rumilly, Histoire, III, 125-137.

sale of the provincially owned Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental railway. After fighting a successful election in December 1881 on that issue, Chapleau managed to relieve the province of a heavy financial burden through the sale of the Q. M. O. & O. for \$8,000,000. Although a small group of dissenters, centred around disappointed Conservative speculators, formed within his own party, Chapleau never flinched from the course he had set to ensure that Quebec would not fall behind Ontario in the economic, and thus, political sphere. His lack of success was not a result of inaction or want of perseverance. The accomplishment of his plans concerning the Q. M. O. & O. testified to the contrary.

Once the sale of the Q. M. O. & O. had been sanctioned by the Quebec Legislature, Chapleau turned his gaze towards the federal political arena. As an elected politician, he had reached the summit of his ambitions as Premier and master of Quebec after a long battle for recognition within the Liberal-Conservative party. During the summer of 1882, he was prepared and desired to enter upon a vaster political stage. The release from the Premiership would allow him to improve his ailing health and he could serve his province in areas the federal constitution closed to him as a provincial politician.

CHAPTER I

ENTREE EN SCENE

On Saturday July 29, 1882, the day he resigned as Premier of Quebec, Adolphe Chapleau was broken in health¹ and in need of an extended rest from political duties. However, poor health was not the prime factor for Chapleau's decision to leave the provincial government. He desired to continue his political career in the federal Macdonald Ministry. He considered his task as a provincial politician and as Premier had been completed. During his term of office he had helped to restore the financial position of the province of Quebec by the sale of the provincially owned railway--the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa & Occidental. With J.-S.-C. Wurtele, a young representative in the Legislative Assembly from Yamaska, the man who had become Provincial Treasurer in his cabinet in January 1882, Chapleau had been able to break into the Paris money market and had negotiated a long term loan for the province. By his stress on colonization, agriculture and railways, the basis for economic growth in the province had been laid. His administration had stimulated production in forest products, mining, agriculture and industry. But, as provincial Premier, he had been unable to do more. By 1882 markets were required to ensure that the goods the province produced and those that would flow through Montreal, the terminus of

¹Chapleau suffered from a kidney ailment and bronchitis caused by weak lungs.

the uncompleted transcontinental railway, would be sold. Such a task fell within the federal government's jurisdiction. Tariff regulation which would provide a protected market in Canada and the regulation of commerce which would open markets abroad, belonged to Ottawa under the British North America Act. Thus, to obtain those markets for Quebec products and to ensure that western goods passed through the port of Montreal, Chapleau wished to leave the provincial government and join the federal cabinet.²

The Macdonald government attracted Chapleau in 1882 because he sensed he was prepared to take yet another step towards the coveted role of chef for Quebec. After his landslide electoral triumph of December 1881, Chapleau believed he had forged a cohesive group out of a party that had been disunited since 1871. In addition, that handsome Conservative majority and well disciplined House³ would remain since the new Premier, Joseph Mousseau, enjoyed "the confidence of both the church party (so called) and the school of the old conservatives."⁴ Upon request, the forceful provincial machine he had created could be mobilized to further his federal ambitions. On the other hand, he felt that in federal politics, he could acquire more know-how from the

²J.-A. Chapleau, "Manifeste aux électeurs du comté de Terrebonne, le 2 août 1882", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau. Sa biographie.... ed. L.-H. Taché, Montréal: Eusèbe Sénécal & Fils, 1887, p. 281.

³PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Quebec, July 25, 1882.

⁴PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, [June 29], 1882.

experienced Ottawa veterans⁵ and continue his political education while he worked directly with Macdonald and the chef of Quebec, Hector Langevin. That experience was indispensable for someone his friends were confident was "to be the man of the province...."⁶ and even "un jour le Premier Ministre de la Puissance...."⁷

Since Chapleau desired to enter federal politics, he undoubtedly considered he should be embraced by the Canadian Prime Minister because of his merit and history of toil for the party. However, Macdonald remained hesitant. He was rather reluctant to accept Chapleau as a colleague and refused to admit Chapleau into his cabinet on the Quebec Premier's expectation of power. According to Arthur Dansereau, Chapleau's confidant, Macdonald agreed to bring Chapleau to Ottawa because the Quebec Premier had increased the prestige of the provincial government to the detriment of the federal administration. In Quebec, Chapleau had attained a position unequalled by any previous provincial Premier. Because of his presence in the local Legislature, the press and population discussed the deliberations of the Quebec Assembly more than those of the federal Parliament. Chapleau's personal qualities and his government's actions, such as the renewal of close ties with France, had

⁵ J.-A. Chapleau, "Manifeste aux électeurs du comté de Terrebonne", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, p. 281.

⁶ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Dansereau to Macdonald, Montreal, November 1, 1880.

⁷ Le Nord (St -Jérôme), jeudi le 10 août 1882. This statement is contained in an article by Chapleau's protégé, G.-A. Nantel.

increased the influence of the provincial government. Those events raised fears in certain English-speaking quarters of provincial and of French Canadian ascendancy. "On résolut alors, sous prétexte d'une promotion, de l'amener à Ottawa où, selon une expression restée célèbre, il pourrait accomplir moins pour l'avancement matériel et le prestige moral de la province de Québec dans la Confédération."⁸

Macdonald probably also agreed that Chapleau should become a member of his government as a recompense for Chapleau's successful organization of the federal election of 1882 in the Montreal region. That victory was undoubtedly facilitated by Chapleau's experience, gleaned through his direction of the Conservatives' 1878 triumph. During both general elections Chapleau had filled a vacuum left by Rodrigue Masson who had become the Conservative chef in the Montreal region after Cartier's death. Because of Masson's illness in 1878 and his retirement from active politics in 1882, and since Langevin, the Quebec chef was occupied in the Quebec city region, Chapleau was called upon to lead the party in Montreal. His success on both occasions did not escape Sir John Macdonald's attention. Macdonald, who desired accomplished campaigners on his team, had twice tempted Chapleau with offers of a federal portfolio since 1878.⁹ Although under pressure from Macdonald to seek election, Chapleau had not run in the federal contest of that year because he had realized that veterans, such as Hector Langevin, should obtain key

⁸La Presse, lundi le 14 janvier 1907.

⁹La Minerve, vendredi le 28 juillet 1882.

cabinet posts to maintain French Canada's position within the cabinet. He feared that "le Département des Travaux Publics nous échappe si on ne se range pas tous auprès de...." Langevin.¹⁰ Chapleau had continued to refuse to heed Macdonald's call in order to maintain party unity in Quebec. Some Conservatives, such as the cabinet minister Georges Baby, had objected to Chapleau's entry into the Macdonald administration without first undergoing an apprenticeship as a back-bencher. Baby had contended that those Conservatives who had fought the Liberal Mackenzie government in opposition for the previous five years should reap the fruits of victory. Others, such as Joseph-Alfred Mousseau, who was to become Secretary of State in 1881, had argued in Chapleau's favour. Mousseau had promoted the latter's candidacy for the cabinet because Chapleau had fought vigorously for the party in both the local and federal elections since 1867. Thus in 1878, in order to resolve the conflict and to maintain his control on the party in Quebec, Chapleau had refused Macdonald's offer and urged the Prime Minister to accept Langevin back into his cabinet as chef.¹²

Macdonald had again asked Chapleau to join his cabinet once the federal and provincial Conservatives together had removed the Provincial

¹⁰Chapleau à Langevin, Montréal, le 3 octobre 1878, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)" ed. Fernand Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 52.

¹¹ANQ, Collection Chapais, Chapleau à Langevin, Montréal, le 3 octobre 1878.

¹²PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, September 19, 1878.

Liberal Joly de Lotbinière administration and Lieutenant-Governor Letellier de St -Just from office. In the fall of 1880 when Macdonald had made the request, the Conservative party was "in a state of disorganization preceeding defeat."¹³ Again Chapleau rejected Macdonald's offer in order to attempt to weld the party in Quebec into an effective cohesive force.

Undoubtedly because Chapleau had appeared to obtain party unity after his land-slide victory in the 1881 provincial election and because he had aided the party cause federally in June 1882 in the election, Sir John Macdonald consented to accept Chapleau as a cabinet colleague. Some of Macdonald's colleagues stressed that Chapleau's "strongly magnetic personality rendered him a political necessity...."¹⁴ However, the Conservative leader never regarded Chapleau as the rising star of French Canada and always doubted "sa force et son prestige."¹⁵ In the final analysis, Macdonald probably asked Chapleau to join his cabinet because Langevin, the chef of French Canada,¹⁶ wanted him in Ottawa.

Although Macdonald and Langevin desired Chapleau's presence at the federal level by 1882, the actual timing of Chapleau's assumption of his

¹³PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Quebec, October 31, 1880.

¹⁴Sir Joseph Pope, Public Servant: The Memoires of Sir Joseph Pope, ed. Maurice Pope, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 49.

¹⁵La Presse, samedi 1e 10 décembre 1892. This editorial was probably written by G.-A. Nantel.

¹⁶H. Langevin, Notes intimes (203) cited by Andrée Désilets, Hector-Louis Langevin: Un père de la Confédération canadienne (1826-1906), Québec: Les presses de l'université Laval, 1969, p. 340.

new tasks as a federal minister was precipitated by Chapleau who imposed himself upon a reluctant Prime Minister. In a letter at the end of June 1882, Macdonald had stated his intention to have Chapleau enter his cabinet in the autumn,¹⁷ but that decision had to be abandoned because of the political difficulty Chapleau faced in Quebec with respect to cabinet changes. As an economic measure, the Chapleau government had decided to abolish the post of Solicitor-General in the Quebec cabinet as of June 30, 1882. Since William Warren Lynch, one of the two anglophone representatives in the cabinet held that ministry, Chapleau had been faced with a dilemma. He had to phase out the ministry, yet he could not drop Lynch from his cabinet because by custom every Quebec government required two representatives from the English-speaking minority of the province. As a solution to his problem, Chapleau had hoped to leave Quebec for Ottawa at the end of June. A new Prime Minister could then remake the cabinet completely.

Chapleau had submitted such a proposition to Macdonald on June 29. In his letter, he had suggested that the Secretary of State, Mousseau, might accept the leadership of the provincial government. Anticipating criticism such as Baby had levelled in 1878, Chapleau had noted that "The concession of the House at Quebec in accepting an outsider at once for a leader, would perhaps conciliate the Quebec members of the Commons in accepting me as a minister before having a seat

¹⁷PAC, Macdonald letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, Ottawa, June 30, 1882.

in the Commons."¹⁸ As an alternative to his withdrawal from Quebec, Chapleau had suggested that he could remain as Premier if L.-O. Loranger, his Attorney-General, were immediately offered a judgeship. Lynch could then fill the vacancy.

Because Mousseau had declined the offer of the Quebec Premiership, Macdonald, after consultation with Langevin,¹⁹ had accepted Chapleau's second proposition that Loranger should resign and receive a position on the bench. Chapleau, who had favoured the first plan because of his desire to leave provincial politics, was angered at Mousseau. With reference to Mousseau's obesity, Chapleau had commented with caustic contempt that "nothing under an Appeal or Supreme judgeship will satisfy him, and he thinks the step from a Quebec Premiership to the Bench he is coveting would be too high for his weight!"²⁰ Despite his irritation with Mousseau, Chapleau acquiesced in Macdonald's decision and prepared to travel to France on July 22 to seek treatment and a sunny climate for his lung and kidney condition that had attained a very serious state by the summer of 1882. However, because of problems caused largely by Macdonald's tardiness in offering Loranger a judgeship and Chapleau a cabinet post, the Quebec Premier was forced to defer his overseas trip.

¹⁸ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, [June 29], 1882.

¹⁹ PAC, Macdonald letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, Ottawa, June 30, 1882.

²⁰ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, July 18, 1882.

When the post of Solicitor-General had been abolished at the end of June without Loranger being appointed to the bench, Chapleau had resigned as Minister of Railways in order to offer the post to Lynch. Loranger had remained Attorney-General. Consequently, Chapleau had found himself without the salary of a department head and had protested to Macdonald near the end of the month of July that he could not "afford to live such an ethereal life."²¹ He had warned the Canadian Prime Minister that he would require a department and thus, be forced to dismiss one of his colleagues and seek re-election when he took a portfolio. Such action would inevitably cause dissension within the party.

Chapleau's personal predicament had added further complications to the malaise that had already descended upon the Quebec Conservative party after the June federal election--a quandary occasioned by the uncertainty that surrounded Chapleau's future within the party. Alphonse Desjardins, the Montreal entrepreneur whose interests lay in railways, mining and secondary industries and who was also former editor of Le Nouveau Monde, had expressed the fears of one group of French Canadian Conservatives. He had argued that the rumours and political commentaries in the pro-Chapleau newspapers on the necessary entry in the near future of Chapleau into the federal cabinet, harmed the Conservative party in Quebec. Although he would prefer to see Chapleau elected as a simple Member of Parliament, Desjardins had stated that he had no personal objection to Chapleau's direct entry into the federal cabinet. But he

²¹PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Quebec, July 25, 1882.

did oppose the Chapleautiste press in its persistence in stating "qu'un portefeuille est en permanence à sa disposition de sorte que du moment qu'il voudra le prendre il n'aura qu'à le dire et il faudra qu'un de vos ministres actuels se retire bon gré mal gré."²² Desjardins had asserted that such statements created impressions which tended to discredit the influence of French Canada's political leaders in Ottawa.

Conservative dissent as expressed by Desjardins and Chapleau's personal problems caused Langevin to advise Macdonald on July 27 to nominate Chapleau as a Privy Councillor and as President of the Privy Council. Macdonald adopted the advice of the French Conservative leader with respect to Chapleau's nomination to the cabinet. However, Macdonald decided to award Chapleau a more prestigious post than President of the Privy Council and asked Chapleau to assume Mousseau's duties as Secretary of State. At the same time, Macdonald forced Mousseau to accept the Premiership of Quebec. Thus, at the citadel in Quebec city, July 29, Chapleau was finally sworn in as Secretary of State of Canada, culminating two months of exasperation!

I

As Chapleau left the citadel in his new capacity as Secretary of State he undoubtedly brimmed with enthusiasm and immediately commenced preparation for his electoral contest in Terrebonne.

²²PAC, Macdonald Papers, Alphonse Desjardins à Macdonald, Montréal, 1e 21 juillet 1882.

The campaign began in a great flurry of hope. On August 3rd Chapleau travelled to St Jérôme to hear G.-A. Nantel, editor of Le Nord, announce to an agreeable audience that he wished to retire from the federal Parliament in favour of Chapleau. That action of Nantel had been planned in advance. During the federal election of June 1882, Chapleau had made special preparations in the riding of Terrebonne which would facilitate his eventual arrival in Ottawa. Because Rodrigue Masson had retired as the federal representative before the 1882 election, Chapleau had made certain that his friend, Nantel, had been nominated as the Conservative candidate in the constituency for that contest. In return for the Premier's support, Nantel had agreed that if Chapleau entered Macdonald's cabinet, he would resign and contest the provincial Terrebonne riding that would be left vacant by Chapleau. Chapleau would then be free to run for election in the federal constituency of Terrebonne. To Chapleau's satisfaction, Nantel had defeated the Liberal, A.-Eudore Poirier on June 20.

Despite that careful preparation, Chapleau's victory was tarnished. Enthusiasm soon died and a campaign which augured ill for the rest of his career began. At the outset, he was struck down with his recurring bronchitis and forced to spend several days in bed in a hotel in Cacouna. On August 14, he was able to return to Montreal and issue a Manifeste aux Electeurs de Terrebonne²³ to explain his desire to enter federal politics,

²³ J.-A. Chapleau, "Manifeste aux électeurs du comté de Terrebonne, 1e 2 août 1882", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, pp. 281-286.

but he was not well enough to continue a vigorous campaign.

Other complications quickly followed his health problem. Chapleau hoped that the Liberals would not oppose him in the by-election since he feared that a strong Liberal candidate might allow him to win only a narrow victory due to his inability to campaign actively. Also, the prestige gained through an election by acclamation would be lost. Nevertheless, his desire not to face opposition was dashed on the 16th when A.-E. Poirier who had been defeated by Nantel in June, accepted the Liberal nomination. Then, two days before the election set for August 23, Poirier withdrew his candidacy and Chapleau was declared elected by acclamation. However, Poirier's retreat from the race was later to cause Chapleau much embarrassment through his involvement in a scandal referred to as the "\$3,880 job".

The affair concerning Poirier had its beginnings during the federal election of June 1882. Poirier claimed that he had been libelled during that electoral battle by the Conservative daily, La Minerve, which had stated that Poirier was a freemason. Poirier had immediately entered a suit for damages against the paper. With the announcement of the by-election in August in Terrebonne, Honoré Mercier, a Liberal organizer, advised Poirier to enter the contest against La Minerve's darling, the ailing Chapleau, in order to try to force the paper to retract its accusation.

Mercier's scheme succeeded. Once Poirier's candidacy was announced, Chapleau immediately requested a meeting with the Liberal organizers, Mercier and James McShane Jr. The Liberals agreed that Poirier would

withdraw from the race upon the fulfillment of two conditions. First, La Minerve was required to print a complete retraction of its accusation against Poirier. Chapleau agreed and he and Mercier composed a notice which was then published by the paper.²⁴ Second, the Liberals demanded \$3,880. Of that amount, \$3,000 was to be paid to Dr. J.-A. Duchesneau, a local Liberal leader and an ex-prefect of the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul penitentiary whom the federal Conservatives had dismissed. The remainder was to cover the costs of the suit against La Minerve and the costs of the campaign such as Poirier's deposit of \$200. Chapleau also agreed to that second condition. Thus, Poirier withdrew his candidacy August 21, and Chapleau was elected without opposition.

That "\$3,880 job" broke in January 1883 when Mercier became leader of the Liberal party in Quebec. Two Liberals, Honoré Beaugrand, director of La Patrie and Senator J.-R. Thibaudeau, in the hope of embarrassing Mercier whom they disliked, revealed that Poirier had accepted money before he had withdrawn his candidacy against Chapleau. The accusation caused Mercier to write a long letter to La Patrie which exposed the affair in all its details.²⁵ Although not immediately harmful to Chapleau's interests, this scandal would return to plague him later in his career. In the meantime, following his impressive victory of August 1882, Chapleau was riding the crest of a wave of approval.

²⁴La Minerve, lundi le 21 août 1882.

²⁵La Minerve, mardi le 30 janvier 1883. This article was re-printed from La Patrie.

II

Immediately after his election victory, Chapleau was able to seek treatment for his bronchial condition that had plagued him for a number of years and intolerable neuralgic pains in the region of the kidneys. This latter condition was not aided by Chapleau's inability to stop drinking nor his careless attitude about his health. Full of energy, Chapleau was capable of spending entire nights around a gambling table. This zest for life, characterized by heavy drinking, eating and inability to sleep regularly brought about a marked deterioration in his physical condition. Only when he was unable to work did Chapleau seek a rest to restore his dissipated resources. By the summer of 1882, he had reached such a stage. Consequently, from September 2 until November 17, 1882 he rested in France where he suffered "No sleep, no rest, a burning fever and splitting headaches...." and lost twenty pounds.²⁶ He returned to Canada briefly, received an oil painting of himself from his friends and the public that greeted him at Bonaventure station in Montreal,²⁷ attended the funeral of his former benefactor, Madame Masson, and departed again.²⁸ From December 5 until May 22, 1883, he continued to follow the

²⁶PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Nice, October 15, 1882.

²⁷Montreal Gazette, Friday November 17, 1882.

²⁸La Minerve, mardi le 5 décembre 1882.

doctor's prescription of complete rest by convalescing in the United States. At Los Angeles he remained quiet under a regime of much exercise, a strict diet and good sleep. There were no visits and no public amusements. In the evenings he talked with a few friends or played a game of Casino "pour rire".²⁹ To pass the time and maintain some knowledge of current Canadian affairs, Chapleau read newspapers from Quebec that arrived ten days after their publication in Canada. During that nine month period of relative asceticism, Chapleau's new duties as Secretary of State caused him no worries since the senior French Canadian politician, Sir Hector Langevin, ably fulfilled those functions. Chapleau was proud to be associated with Langevin who was charged with the burden of "la responsabilité de chef...." of French Canada³⁰ even if he had "always accepted a subordinate position...." to Macdonald.³¹ The new Secretary of State was prepared to place his entire confidence in Langevin's "sagacité pour la protection des intérêts que nous avons particulièrement à défendre...."³² Undoubtedly, Chapleau believed that he and Langevin

²⁹ASJCF, Chapleau à Alphonse Desjardins, Cosmopolitan Hotel, Los Angeles, le 8 mars 1883.

³⁰Chapleau à Langevin, New York, le 6 avril 1883, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 83.

³¹PAC, Macdonald letterbook, Macdonald to J. C. C. Abbott, Ottawa, July 23, 1879.

³²Chapleau à Langevin, New York, le 6 avril 1883, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 83.

would be able to work harmoniously together to further French Canada's interests because their ideas on the role of French Canadians within Confederation were similar.

Both politicians contended that French Canada, as a distinct community, could flourish if francophones worked with anglophones within a constitutional framework that embodied their shared traditions. Chapleau extolled the virtues of the British constitution which allowed both communities in Canada to preserve their distinctive identities while working together.³³ The common allegiance to the Crown which was "the tried guardian of their [French Canada's] language, their institutions and their laws...." united all Canadians.³⁴ Langevin agreed for he realized that "nous [French Canadians] avons conquis la position que nous occupons aujourd'hui par notre énergie et notre constance, avec l'aide d'une partie des représentants du Haut-Canada."³⁵ Confederation would guarantee French Canadian institutions, language and traditions.³⁶ Likewise, both Chapleau and Langevin rejected the notion, propagated by a small group

³³J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé à Montréal, le 14 janvier 1885, au banquet donné à sir John A. Macdonald lors de la célébration du 40^{ème} anniversaire de son entrée dans la politique", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, p. 284.

³⁴J.-A. Chapleau, Canada as it is! An address delivered November 28th, 1891, before the Commercial Club of Providence, R. I., Providence, R. I.: December 1891, p. 8.

³⁵Débats Parlementaires sur la question de la Confédération des Provinces de l'Amérique Britannique du Nord, Québec: Hunter, Rose et Lemieux, 1865, p. 370.

³⁶Ibid., p. 397.

of Conservatives, that French Canada could survive only if its particularity in language and religion were stressed.³⁷ Chapleau emphasized that it was not "un peuple à part que nous voulons être dans la patrie commune."³⁸ French Canada's ambition was to be free and respected in a common country with equal rights and responsibilities to English-speaking Canadians. He had confidence in the providential destiny of French Canada to exist and flourish in North America for he was convinced "que l'on n'a jamais pu anglifier notre peuple...."³⁹

Besides their similarity of views on Confederation, Chapleau and Langevin had accomplished a great deal together in the past. At the time of the formation of the new provincial Conservative administration in 1873, Langevin had accepted Chapleau's advice on the matter. He appointed Gédéon Ouimet as Premier instead of Joseph Coursol, his personal preference. In return, Langevin, in opposition to Ouimet, had demanded that Chapleau be made Solicitor General instead of Chapleau's chief political rival, F.-X.-A. Trudel. Furthermore, upon Chapleau's insistence, Langevin had agreed to allow both Joseph Coursol and Chapleau to

³⁷ Désilets, Langevin, pp. 228 & 387.

³⁸ La Presse, lundi le 1er juillet 1895.

³⁹ La Minerve, vendredi le 3 mars 1882. Chapleau spoke at Ste-Adèle on the question of lengthening the St -Jérôme railway to Ste-Agathe and then on to lake Nominique.

enter the ministry.⁴⁰ In that same year Langevin had delegated the task of building a Ligue Conservatrice in Montreal upon Chapleau.⁴¹

Again, during the Letellier affair which had ended in the dismissal of the Lieutenant-Governor, Langevin and Chapleau had worked closely together to prevent a Quebec Conservative revolt. At the end of 1878 Chapleau had warned Langevin of the difficulties that lay ahead for the Conservatives in Quebec if Letellier remained at his post. Likening Spencer Wood to a barometer, Chapleau had remarked that "Si le bonhomme sort, c'est le beau temps, s'il reste chez lui c'est du mauvais!..." He emphasized that "c'est vous à Ottawa qui faites la pluie & le beau Temps!..."⁴² Langevin had immediately seized the import of Chapleau's call. After a three month trip to England in order to clarify the constitutionality of the Quebec Conservative demand for Letellier's dismissal by the Governor-General, Langevin had returned triumphantly to Canada in July. By the end of the month, the Marquis of Lorne, upon

⁴⁰Désilets, Langevin, pp. 275-277. The information in this paragraph is largely culled from Désilet's book. Coursol was not appointed to the Ouimet ministry because Chapleau backed down in the end and did not insist that he obtain a portfolio. If Chapleau had maintained his position, Langevin was willing to give in to him, according to Désilets. Marcel Hamelin claims that Désilets exaggerates the role of Chapleau in the formation of the Ouimet cabinet. He denies that Chapleau "domine littéralement Langevin..." as Désilets claims. See Marcel Hamelin, La Chambre d'Assemblée du Québec de 1867-1878, D. ès L., Laval, 1972, p. 391.

⁴¹Chapleau à Langevin, le 24 mars 1873, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 46.

⁴²Chapleau à Langevin, Montréal le 20 décembre 1878, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1897)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 54.

Macdonald's advice, had removed Letellier from office.⁴³ During the period of uncertainty that had reigned in Quebec before Langevin's return from England, Chapleau had managed to keep the majority of Quebec Conservatives loyal to Macdonald and to the Conservative party.⁴⁴ As a reward, Chapleau had been able to head the new Conservative government in October of that year "avec une plateforme politique où l'aide matériel du gouvernement fédéral compterait pour une grande part."⁴⁵ For his efforts in the Letellier affair, Langevin's position "comme le successeur de Sir George E. Cartier et leader du parti conservateur de la Province de Québec est reconnue de nouveau ouvertement, et sans courir le risque d'offenser M. Masson qui avait des prétentions à cette position."⁴⁶ Like the other French Canadian Members of Parliament, Chapleau recognized Langevin as undisputed chef of French Canada. He realized "combien les événements, qui se pressent dans l'histoire de notre pays, réclament l'unité de nos vus [sic], la ferveur de nos sentiments, l'énergie de notre action, et pour tout cela, la foi dans nos chefs!"⁴⁷ Even though

⁴³Désilets, Langevin, p. 338.

⁴⁴PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, May 15, 1879.

⁴⁵Chapleau à Langevin, Montréal le 3 octobre 1878, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 52.

⁴⁶Langevin, Notes Intimes (203), cited by Désilets, Langevin, p. 240. See also Désilets, Langevin, p. 343.

⁴⁷Chapleau à Langevin, Los Angeles, le 2 février 1883, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 80.

Chapleau was ill, he believed he could aid Langevin because "il arrive parfois que l'aide même d'un invalide peut devenir important.... [pour le] chef de notre province."⁴⁸

Langevin was not unhappy to receive Chapleau's support, nor was he disappointed at his entry into the Macdonald Ministry. However, he did regard the new Secretary of State as a threat to his position of dominance in Quebec; and desired to see Chapleau in Ottawa where Langevin himself could control the dashing politician whose power and prestige were "manifestement antipathique...." to him.⁴⁹ As Premier of the province of Quebec, Chapleau's railway policy had undermined Langevin's power base in the Quebec city area. In particular, Chapleau's actions were detrimental to Thomas McGreevy, Langevin's brother-in-law who was an organizer and collector of campaign funds for the party in the Quebec area. According to some observers, such as Thomas White, owner of the Montreal Gazette, Langevin might have desired Chapleau to leave provincial politics in order to further the interests of Thomas McGreevy. During Chapleau's Premiership, Thomas McGreevy had claimed that the province owed him nearly \$1,500,000 for the construction of the provincial railway between Montreal and Quebec city. Chapleau had submitted the claim to arbitration which granted McGreevy \$147,473 the 14th of

⁴⁸ Chapleau à Langevin, New York le 6 avril 1883, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 83.

⁴⁹ AHM, Desjardins à R. Masson, le 23 novembre 1881, cited in Désilets, Langevin, pp. 360-361.

June 1882. With a new provincial Premier more sympathetic to his demands than Chapleau, McGreevy could then reopen the affair and probably obtain the money he wanted.⁵⁰

Langevin was not worried about Chapleau's power once he came to Ottawa. Because he had Macdonald's ear, Langevin was confident that he would be able to check Chapleau if he diverged from the path Langevin had established. Langevin had successfully blocked Mousseau from acquiring more authority than himself by preventing "toute chose qui n'a pas d'abord passé par ses mains ou dont on a oublié de lui donner crédit dès le début."⁵¹ Indeed, Langevin, with Macdonald's complete approbation, was initially very successful in holding Chapleau in check. Macdonald appointed him Secretary of State, a post that possessed little patronage with which he could build a sound political base. Even in purely routine departmental matters, Chapleau's will was disregarded by both Langevin and Macdonald. For example, in a letter to Chapleau in 1882, Macdonald had promised him that he could choose his own Under-Secretary of State.⁵² Just before he was to leave for Los Angeles to convalesce at the end of

⁵⁰La Patrie, mardi le 12 septembre 1882. La Patrie commented on the story in the Gazette. This question was later discussed over ten years later in the Conservative newspaper, La Presse, upon Chapleau's retirement from active politics at the federal level. See La Presse, samedi le 10 décembre 1892.

⁵¹AHM, A. Desjardins à R. Masson, le 23 novembre 1881, cited by Désilets, Langevin, p. 260.

⁵²PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau à Macdonald, Ottawa, le 20 janvier 1887.

1882, Chapleau had informed Langevin that he desired "qu'aucune nomination importante ne soit faite dans le Département avant mon retour. Si le Poste de Député-Secrétaire d'Etat menaçait de devenir vacant je voudrais suggérer le nom de son successeur."⁵³ In complete disregard of Chapleau's wishes, Langevin, on January 24, 1883, appointed Grant Powell, Chief Clerk of the Department of the Secretary of State since 1873, as Under-Secretary of State. Chapleau had to accept a fait accompli. From Los Angeles, he wrote to express his confidence in Langevin's choice with the hope that his (Chapleau's) desire to increase French Canadian representation in the Civil Service "n'en serait que mieux servi en définitive."⁵⁴ Such thoughts were quickly dashed and as late as 1887 Chapleau would still be trying to rid his department of Powell, and to appoint his own nominee as Under-Secretary.⁵⁵

The success of Langevin's plan and Chapleau's subordinate position to Langevin and the second most important French Canadian in the government, Adolphe-Philippe Caron, was manifest in public May 22, 1883. Although Chapleau, restored in health, received the distinction of being escorted into the House of Commons by Sir John A. Macdonald

⁵³ Chapleau à Langevin, Ottawa le 27 novembre 1882, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 80.

⁵⁴ Chapleau à Langevin, Los Angeles le 2 février 1883, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, pp. 80-81.

⁵⁵ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau à Macdonald, Ottawa, le 20 janvier 1887.

and Sir Hector Langevin, he was forced to sit in the second row of desks behind all important ministers, including Langevin and Caron.⁵⁶ Langevin, who as Minister of Public Works was charged with the seating arrangements in the House was determined to assert his authority! No difficulties emerged because of Chapleau's status since he was prepared to submit to the authority of French Canada's more senior politicians at the beginning of his career in federal politics. To that sphere, Chapleau brought a willingness to learn all the techniques of political mastery. However, because he was forced to leave for an extended period of rest in Europe and America upon his entrance into the cabinet, Chapleau was obliged to postpone his apprenticeship until he returned to the country in May 1883.

In the spring of 1883 when Chapleau arrived in Ottawa with his health restored, the House of Commons was just terminating its spring session. Therefore, Chapleau contributed nothing to the debate in that forum. After having arrived in Ottawa at the wrong moment, after having laboured in vain to demonstrate his importance to Macdonald, and after having been dramatically subjected to Langevin's will, Chapleau failed to make a name for himself at the session. He had missed his great "entrée en scène". However, during the summer months, he became acquainted with his new post as Secretary of State and prepared for one of the most important speeches of his political career. That speech was to

⁵⁶La Minerve, mardi le 13 février 1883.

be delivered on the anniversary of George-Etienne Cartier's birthday,
September 6, 1883, at St. Laurent.

CHAPTER II

LES CASTORS

Early on the morning of September 6, 1883, hundreds of Quebeckers took to the road in order to attend the political assembly at St -Laurent in the riding of Jacques-Cartier. Few of those political pilgrims realized that Adolphe Chapleau not only would use the occasion to define the differences which centred on philosophy and political strategy between himself and a group of dissident Conservatives, but also would accept the opportunity to attack his Conservative critics for their attitude. Chapleau's strategy was not widely known since the meeting was merely one of many to be held during the by-election in which the Quebec Premier, Joseph Mousseau, attempted to obtain a seat in the Legislative Assembly. However, St -Laurent was destined to become the most important campaign rally of that by-election.

By eleven o'clock, the line of phaétons, carrosses, omnibus, and many other types of transport had assumed the character of a procession. By noon, St -Laurent had swallowed five to six thousand people. These electors and interested strangers as well as the representatives of all the Montreal papers and several journalists from Quebec city and other important centres of the province, assembled in the square before the church. At one o'clock, everybody was prepared for the assemblée contradictoire. Yet, an hour was wasted as a suitable chairman was sought. Finally, Chapleau and Honoré Mercier, the Liberal's provincial leader, resolved the problem and consented to conduct the meeting jointly.

The rules of procedure were quickly agreed upon and Adolphe Chapleau, the first speaker of the day, rose to present a defense of Conservative government policy and to defend the candidacy of Mousseau.¹

The great tribune, Chapleau, had been called upon to support Mousseau who was uncertain of winning the by-election in this his second attempt to enter the Quebec Legislative Assembly. Mousseau's victory in Jacques-Cartier immediately after he had become Premier had been annulled due to revelations of corruption. Consequently, this second by-election was called in which the Premier asked Chapleau for assistance. Chapleau seized the opportunity to reply to his critics within the Conservative party who also opposed Mousseau's election. He realized that the group of dissident Quebec Conservatives really objected to his policy and not that of Mousseau, whom they considered to be a puppet of the federal politician. Thus, Chapleau was to speak as ex-premier of the province on that first Thursday in September and not as a federal cabinet minister.²

Chapleau's speech was an attack against that group within the Conservative party which had assumed a visible form over thirteen years earlier with the publication of their political manifesto, Le Programme Catholique. A Montreal lawyer, F.-X.-A. Trudel, had unofficially assumed the leadership of that amorphous Conservative faction that wished to capture control of the party. Propelled by fear and a lack of confidence

¹La Minerve, vendredi 1e 7 septembre 1883.

²Montreal Gazette, Saturday August 25, 1883.

in the future of French Canada,³ that clique desired the party to embody an ideology which expressed the need for the Roman Catholic Church to play a dominant role in society. Because the Church was a key pillar of French Canadian society which Trudel and his disciples believed to be threatened,⁴ that policy would preserve "à la fois l'honneur de la Patrie et la liberté de l'Eglise...."⁵

Such a stance had been opposed at the outset by outward looking, optimistic Conservatives like Chapleau.⁶ Piqued at Chapleau's attitude throughout the 1870's and his policies as Premier, Trudel had lashed out at him in August 1882 in a pamphlet entitled Le Pays, le Parti et le Grand Homme. Since Trudel's written diatribe was signed Castor, those Conservatives who adhered to Trudel's standard were henceforth branded as Castors by irate Chapleautistes.⁷ Chapleau's speech at St -Laurent

³ J.-A. Chapleau, Noces d'or de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste 1884, Montréal: 1885, pp. 9-10.

⁴ Le Nouveau Monde, mardi le 23 mai 1871.

⁵ Le Nouveau Monde, vendredi le 21 avril 1871 (du Journal des Trois-Rivières).

⁶ L'Etendard, mercredi le 26 novembre 1884.

⁷ Chapleau and his friends often used the term Castor in a derogatory sense and branded many of their opponents as Castors simply because they opposed Chapleau's policies. On the other hand, Senator Trudel often included individuals within his Castor group in order to bolster the number of his adherents. Often these men were not supporters of Trudel's views. With this note of caution, several names that appeared on the Castor side of the ledger in the battle between Trudel and Chapleau may be indicated. At one point in the debate, Trudel claimed that he had the

was his reply to Trudel's invective.

At St -Laurent, Chapleau also indicated that the division of French Canadian Conservatives that resulted from the philosophical disagreement between himself and the Castors adversely affected French Canada. Consequently, Chapleau proposed an alliance with moderate Liberals and an expulsion of Castors from Conservative ranks. That political strategy flowed from the inability of Chapleautistes and other moderate Conservatives to govern Quebec without support from some other source. In addition, Chapleau's call for a conciliation between moderate Conservatives and Liberals sprang from what Chapleau considered to be the major priority for French Canada. He stressed the need for Quebec's development and the necessity of French Canada to partake in the direction of Canada's growth. Those vital interests to the francophone community were hindered by the dissensions in Quebec's body politic. The Secretary of State warned French Canadians that

The Northwest is on the way to pass us by. Our old province has been mortgaged for the millions that are absorbed in the construction of the Pacific and westward immigration and we

support of Sir Narcisse Belleau, Thomas Chapais, Charles de Boucherville, Louis Beaubien, Joseph-Hyacinthe Bellerose, Joseph-François Armand, Joseph-Gaspard Laviolette, and Pierre-Eustache Dostaler. (L'Etendard, lundi le 17 septembre 1883). Chapleau had his own list of Conservative dissidents which included Auguste-Réal Angers, Edouard de Bellefeuille (PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, New York, May 20, 1883), Siméon Pagnuelo (ASTR, Chapleau à de La Bruère, Ottawa, le 7 juin 1889), Louis-Olivier Taillon (PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Québec, le 16 novembre 1896) and Philippe Landry. (PAC, Tarte Papers, Chapleau à Dansereau, Québec, le 27 juin, 1897). Arthur Dansereau lumped both J.-J. Ross and Charles-Alphonse-Pantaléon Pelletier with the Castors. (PAC, Tarte Papers, Dansereau à Tarte, Montréal, le 28 mai 1897).

do not even think of profiting by that movement. Our agriculture is not making even a tenth part of the progress that it ought to make. The last census has left us behind the other provinces. Our forests are disappearing, and with them our natural wealth. Our mines continue hidden beneath the surface of the soil, and education is neglected and is too much dissociated from the material progress of the present. Colonization has a few heroic apostles amongst us, but that individual effort is not seconded as it ought to be.⁸

The reason for French Canada's stagnation and indifference, Chapleau contended, lay in "this division that is wasting our energies."⁹

I

Because he realized the discord the Castor doctrine of Church supremacy--Roman Catholic supremacy--would cause in Canada's pluralist society, Chapleau opposed the notion with vigour. For that reason he had refused to sign the Programme Catholique in 1871. He later affirmed that "Il ne peut pas y avoir d'ostracisme religieux dans notre pays...."¹⁰ As "la puissance civile et la puissance ecclésiastique sont suprêmes dans leur sphère et que l'une ne dépend nullement de l'autre dans l'exercice de ses droits.... Dans les matières qui sont du domaine civil, il vaut mieux obéir à la puissance séculière qu'à la puissance spirituelle."¹¹

⁸Montreal Gazette, Monday September 10, 1883.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰La Minerve, samedi le 15 mai 1873. Chapleau spoke at his political nomination meeting at St -Jérôme in the by-election he fought after he had been appointed to the cabinet of Gédéon Ouimet in 1873.

¹¹Ibid.

Chapleau admitted that the clergy had a right to interest themselves in politics and a duty to express their opinions on public questions related to morality and religion. But he condemned that portion of the clergy which permitted politicians, such as F.-X.-A. Trudel, to use them for secular purposes, which allowed "politicians admission to that fortress of society into which faith, charity and virtue alone should gain admittance." Speaking directly to clerics, Chapleau observed that the fault "was to have allowed a few men ... to have you for their partners, for their sureties, their defenders, to take refuge in your sacred ark, to hide their own weakness and avoid disaster. In fine, the fault was that you intervened to receive the blows which they drew upon themselves by their temerity."¹² Chapleau warned the clergy to "Beware, for those who would have you make that mistake have their personal interest in your doing so, and to that interest they are not afraid to sacrifice religion and the Church."¹³

During his remarks addressed to the ecclesiastics of Quebec, Chapleau referred to the charge that had been levelled against him by Bishop Laflèche during the spring of 1882. Upon his return from Europe, Bishop Laflèche of Trois-Rivières, who supported and eventually became the ecclesiastical leader of the ultramontanes in the province, had gone so far as to accuse Chapleau of being a freemason. Apparently the Bishop had claimed that he had gleaned this information from Claudio

¹²Montreal Gazette, (supplement) Saturday September 8, 1883.

¹³Ibid.

Jannet, a respected ultramontane writer in France. Chapleau had never replied to that lie in public because, he asserted, "I had no need of a certificate to prove that I am a French-Canadian and a Catholic."¹⁴ However, because he had been told the serious charge had originated in ecclesiastical circles, he had decided to conduct an inquiry among the Bishops of the province to discover the culprit and to silence him. Thus, at the end of July 1882, Chapleau had addressed a letter to each Bishop of the province to glean further information about the accusation. Some replies had been almost immediate. Chapleau's friend, the influential Bishop Fabre who had replaced Mgr Bourget in the Montreal diocese, had expressed his belief in Chapleau's attachment to Catholic principles.¹⁵ Bishop Moreau of St -Hyacinthe had confirmed that the gossip had emanated from Bishop Laflèche.¹⁶ In the case of the Bishop of Trois-Rivières, Chapleau had been forced to await a reply for almost one month. When the Bishop did reply, he had side-stepped the issue. Again Chapleau had requested information from Bishop Laflèche, but he had never received a reply.¹⁷ Although Bishop Laflèche had remained quiet, Chapleau had asked for and received an explanation from Claudio Jannet. At St -Laurent

¹⁴Montreal Gazette, Saturday September 8, 1883. Chapleau spoke at St -Laurent September 6, 1883.

¹⁵AAM, Fabre à Chapleau, Montréal, le 25 juillet 1882.

¹⁶ASTR, Evêque de St- Hyacinthe à Chapleau, St- Hyacinthe, le 25 juillet 1882. This letter is a copy of the original.

¹⁷ASTR, Chapleau à Laflèche, Québec, le 2 septembre 1882.

Chapleau read Jannet's letter in which the French writer claimed he had never "said nor written to anyone that you belonged either to Freemasonry, or to any secret society whatever."¹⁸

Implied in his attempt to remove suspicions that he was a free-mason was Chapleau's contention that to be a good Catholic one did not have to be an ultramontane. Although the Castors might doubt his faith, Chapleau knew he was an orthodox Roman Catholic and he had never been and never would be timorous in saying so publicly. However, during his speech at St -Laurent, Chapleau undoubtedly thought of three issues that had erupted while he was Premier of Quebec and which culminated in Bishop Laflèche's charge of unorthodoxy and freemasonry.

Chapleau was well aware that in discussion over l'influence indue and Laval University in 1881 and the educational bill controversy of 1882, some clerics such as Bishop Laflèche had allowed themselves to become pawns in the hands of the dissident Conservatives.

In the case of l'influence indue, F.-X.-A. Trudel and his supporters had upheld Bishop Laflèche and other ultramontane clerics in Quebec in their demand in 1881 that the Chapleau government should prohibit civil tribunals from trying clerics for supposed intervention in elections. Chapleau had refused to accede to Laflèche's desire, partly at the request of Archbishop Taschereau, because he believed that in a mixed community like Quebec, such legislation would cause discord.

¹⁸ Montreal Gazette, Saturday September 8, 1883. Chapleau spoke at a by-election rally at St -Laurent September 6; 1883.

Protestants would never accept an amendment. In addition, priests, as clerics, Chapleau contended, should abstain from any interference in purely political--civil--matters.¹⁹ Conservatives who supported Trudel had been furious with Chapleau's stand. They viewed the Church as a good propaganda forum and because they believed they could induce ultramontane clerics to advocate their cause in elections, they naturally were forced to combat the law which would prevent priests, as priests, from lending their support to a political party. Le Journal des Trois-Rivières, the unofficial organ of Bishop Laflèche and most important ultramontane paper during the period, had explained that spiritual penalties respected the voter's liberty as much as temporal penalties. "Nous dirons plus; elles sont autrement efficaces pour le protéger et le défendre contre les séductions, la corruption, et la violence, si souvent employées dans les élections."²⁰ But the newspaper had also betrayed itself and had showed that it was opposed to the traditional type of election campaign in which liquor and bullies played a role, because such methods caused voters "à voter contrairement à leur devoir..."²¹ that is, against Trudel's followers.

Besides the question of undue influence, the Laval University affair had also reached a critical phase during the Quebec Legislative session of 1881. On April 29, Charles-Louis Champagne, member for

¹⁹Ibid. Also see ASTR, Chapleau à Laflèche, Québec, le 26 avril 1881.

²⁰Le Journal des Trois-Rivières, lundi le 11 janvier 1881.

²¹Ibid.

Deux Montagnes who was a sympathizer of the Castors, had introduced a private member's bill which would allow Laval University, centred in Quebec city, to establish faculties anywhere in the province.²² Since the university's Royal Charter of 1852 had restricted the university to Quebec city, such legislation was necessary if Laval was to be able legally to establish a branch in Montreal.²³ The legality of the Laval branch which already existed in Montreal was being contested before the courts at the time Champagne had introduced his bill.

The question of whether Montreal would be allowed its own autonomous university or be forced to accept a branch of the Quebec city institution had begun as a conflict within the Catholic Church in 1862.²⁴ In 1881, Conservatives like Trudel had been prepared to use the ultramontane Catholics who desired an autonomous institution as a club in order to embarrass the Chapleau government which had supported the Champagne bill. Using arguments cloaked in religious rhetoric, they had hoped to defeat the bill in order to secure a separate university for Montreal where they could teach, or preach, their ideas and in which they could secure recruits for their theories on French Canada.

The main thrust of Trudel's argument had been directed towards the monopoly Laval would obtain in the province if that institution of

²²Le Monde, samedi le 30 avril 1881.

²³L'abbé Hermann Plante, L'Eglise Catholique au Canada (1604-1886), Trois-Rivières: éditions du bien public, 1970, p. 471.

²⁴Ibid., p. 454.

higher education were allowed to establish branches throughout Quebec. Such a prospect had made Trudel shudder. He and his followers had realized that a Montreal branch of Laval would espouse liberal Catholic doctrine, hire professors imbued with liberal Catholic ideas, and produce students which would likely follow the Chapleautiste line in politics. Consequently, Le Journal des Trois-Rivières had argued, just as a monopoly was dangerous in commerce and in industry, so it was in the field of higher education.²⁵

Le Journal des Trois-Rivières had stressed the fact that with a monopoly, Laval would determine that all higher education in the province would be imbued with liberal Catholic doctrine. Such a deplorable situation would result because the liberal Catholic Archbishop, Taschereau, "qui est Evêque de Québec et visiteur de droit de l'université, et qui peut par là contrôler non-seulement le haut enseignement de son Diocèse...."²⁶ but that of any diocese where the university established a branch. Consequently any ultramontane bishop whom the Trudel group hoped to use would be rendered helpless in the university field.

Because of the monopoly, Laval could hire liberal Catholics, such as Chapleau, who was a professor of law at Laval's Montreal campus. Aghast at such a thought, Chapleau's Conservative opponents had wailed that the Cavour government had been able to shake the foundations of

²⁵Le Monde, samedi le 11 juin 1881 (du Journal des Trois-Rivières).

²⁶Le Monde, mercredi le 1er juin 1881 (du Journal des Trois-Rivières).

Catholic Italy and prepare the overthrow of the temporal power of the Pope because of the influence of university professors.²⁷ Students under the guidance of those liberal Catholic professors would espouse the same cause. As the Journal des Trois-Rivières noted:

Depuis vingt ans, bien des questions fondamentales pour la religion, la société, et notre chère patrie, se sont débattues dans le monde entier, devant notre parlement, et dans la presse canadienne; et nous avons toujours été à la recherche des soldats de Laval.... Où sont les hommes de Laval qui se sont posés en face des adversaires, pour le soutien du droit, de la justice et de la vérité?²⁸

A monopoly also brought pecuniary difficulties to Montreal professors at the Laval branch in the city. Although the Montreal diocese paid the costs of the branch, Montreal could not pay its professors what it wished or what it could afford. Montreal professors could only receive what Quebec city staff obtained, even though the cost of living in Montreal was higher and salaries generally higher in Montreal than in Quebec city.²⁹

For these personal, secular and philosophic reasons some Conservatives had fought for an autonomous university in Montreal. Although they had implied that they represented true Catholic interests, they had opposed all of the Quebec hierarchy, except Bishop Laflèche, on the university issue. On April 9, 1881, the Archbishop and all Bishops

²⁷Le Monde, samedi le 11 juin 1881 (du Journal des Trois-Rivières).

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Le Monde, mercredi le 27 avril 1881.

except Laflèche, had signed a petition to be sent to the Quebec government which recommended the adoption of a bill similar to the one Champagne had introduced.³⁰ Trudel had then promptly appeared before the committee on private bills of the Assembly to tell the legislators to disregard the wishes of the ecclesiastical authorities of the province. He had asserted before the assembled legislators that the Church,

si jalouse de ses droits, est également anxieuse de ne jamais sortir des limites de sa juridiction, et elle veille avec une grande sollicitude à la conservation des droits qu'elle reconnaît à l'Etat. Ici, lorsqu'il s'agit, pour la Législature de Québec, de décréter une loi civile du ressort de votre parlement, vous êtes souverain dans les limites de votre juridiction....³¹

By removing university education from the religious sphere in that instance, Trudel could argue that the ecclesiastical authorities had no right to command or to impose their views on the Legislature. Obviously, when the Church was not useful, Trudel could quickly downgrade its role in society. It soon had become obvious that Conservatives such as Trudel were opposed to Laval because, as Le Journal des Trois-Rivières had reported: "Nous le disons, les larmes aux yeux, trop souvent nous en avons vus de ces professeurs, de ces élèves, de ces partisans de Laval dans le camp adverse....",³² that is, opposed to Trudel's followers.

³⁰Le Monde, vendredi le 17 juin 1881.

³¹F.-X.-A. Trudel, Projet de Loi de l'université Laval devant le comité des bills privés 20 mai 1881. Discours de l'honorable F.-X.-A. Trudel contre le bill, pp. 9-10.

³²Le Monde, samedi le 11 juin 1881 (du Journal des Trois-Rivières).

It is not surprising that the Pope's nomination of Chapleau as Commander of the Order of Saint Gregory for services rendered in the Laval cause, did not endear him to Trudel.³³

Besides the problems of l'influence indue and Laval university in 1881, the introduction of an educational bill in the provincial Assembly in May 1882 had given Trudel's friends yet another opportunity to discredit Chapleau and had prompted Bishop Laflèche's charge of free-masonry against Chapleau. This proposed legislation would remove control of the inspection of schools from the Conseil de l'Instruction publique, composed principally of Bishops, and bestow this function on a lay, government-appointed inspector-general. Also, the clergy's sole right to choose the books to be used for religious and moral instruction was to be abrogated.³⁴ Joseph-Israël Tarte, the ambitious political director of Le Canadien of Quebec city and Conservative organizer who supported the right of clerics to intervene in politics, had cried in his newspaper that there was "de l'esprit maçonnique dans ce bill...."³⁵ This thinly disguised attempt to brand Chapleau as a freemason and to suggest that the legislation was inspired from such a scandalous source, had undoubtedly aided in the bill's defeat in the Legislative Council. In that Upper Chamber, de Boucherville, whom one Chapleautiste had claimed was

³³L'Etendard, samedi le 15 septembre 1883; La Minerve, vendredi le 20 janvier 1882; & La Patrie, jeudi le 12 janvier 1882.

³⁴Plante, L'Eglise, pp. 492-493.

³⁵Le Canadien, mercredi le 17 mai 1882.

"plus catholique que le pape",³⁶ had led the attack. By employing such methods, those Conservatives had sought to discredit Chapleau and to pursue their aim of inoculating Quebec society with Roman Catholic moral principles through religious supervision in all areas of life. It was in reference to just such tactics and specifically to Bishop Laflèche's charge which arose directly from the education bill controversy, that Chapleau referred while he spoke to the clergy in his speech at St - Laurent.

Although Chapleau was aware that lay leaders of Quebec society could use clerics to further their secular goals, he also realized that the liberal Catholic and ultramontane groups within the Roman Catholic Church could use politicians to further their very different religious goal--the dominance of the Church in Quebec. The battle between liberal Catholics and ultramontanes for control administratively and ideologically of the Quebec Roman Catholic Church had begun in earnest once Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau³⁷ had become Archbishop of Quebec city and nominal head of the Church in the province in 1870. This conflict had been revealed to the public on the occasion of the golden anniversary celebrations in honour of Bishop Bourget of Montreal's entrance into the priesthood. In a sermon to commemorate that joyous occasion on October 29, 1872 in Notre-Dame, the Jesuit Antonin-Nicolas Braun had expounded

³⁶La Vérité, mardi le 27 mai 1882.

³⁷The abbé Hermann Plante calls Archbishop Taschereau a liberal Catholic. See Plante, L'Eglise p. 452.

the ultramontane doctrine and passionately denounced those clerics who disagreed with that particular theological point of view. Once Bishop Bourget, the head of the ultramontane cause in theological circles, had retired in 1876, Bishop Laflèche of Trois-Rivières had assumed the leadership of that faction within the Church.

There were undoubtedly deep philosophical and theological differences between the two groups within the Church in Quebec.³⁸ For example, the liberal Catholics espoused moderation, tolerance and prudence. They had assumed an attitude that was conciliatory towards civil power and democratic liberties.³⁹ Like the liberal Catholics, the ultramontanes demanded that civil society correspond to their theological and philosophical notions. They desired to establish a Catholic state directly, through the "conformité de la législation civile au droit canon; soumission de l'autorité politique à l'autorité religieuse; obligation pour les catholiques de se soumettre aux enseignements politiques du clergé."⁴⁰ It was not surprising that the liberal Catholics and ultramontanes who espoused those different views should

³⁸ René Hardy, "Libéralisme catholique et ultramontain au Québec: éléments de définitions," RHAF, 25.2 (septembre 1971), 251.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 248-249.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 249-251. The divergence between the liberal Catholics and ultramontanes was often hidden behind the temperament, the opportunism, and the tactics of the individuals involved in each group. For a discussion of the ultramontane group in French Canada, see H. L. Robertson, The Ultramontane Group in French Canada 1867-1886, M. A. thesis, Queen's University, 1952.

clash.

During Chapleau's Premiership, the three issues over which lay politicians collided--l'influence indue, Laval University and l'instruction publique--were essentially issues over which the two opposing forces within the Roman Catholic Church struggled. These controversies had spilled onto the political stage as both the ultramontane and liberal Catholic factions within the Church had tried to use politicians to aid them in their struggle for dominance. Because the ultramontanes were so very weak, Laflèche could only hope for success if the particularist Conservatives could wrest control of the party from the Chapleautistes and if he could then manoeuvre them to enact legislation on those matters which would undermine Archbishop Taschereau's hold on the Church. This scheme seems to have been the plan of attack Laflèche followed during Chapleau's term as Premier. It was the reason why Chapleau and the Bishop were at odds during those years. It was also one of the political facts of life in Quebec upon which Chapleau probably contemplated before he decided to speak directly to Roman Catholic clerics during a portion of his speech at St -Laurent. He considered that there was no place for political differences based on religion in Quebec society, nor within the Conservative party.

II

To remove from the Conservative party the philosophical divergence between the Chapleautistes and the Castors, a separation abetted by the power struggle within Quebec's Roman Catholic ecclesiastical

circles, Chapleau formulated a political strategy that enraged the Castors. He proposed to expel them from the Conservative party. The secretary of State developed his plan after he had observed that the Liberal party in addition to the Conservative party was divided into two warring factions.⁴¹ In 1883 at St -Laurent, Chapleau reviewed the steps he had taken to try to restore unity of purpose in the political arena.

Chapleau believed it was essential to unite all political opinions in one great party in order to avoid excited and violent struggles, defeats and victories of party at the end of which would appear only impoverishment and ruin and insignificance for French Canada in Confederation.⁴² Chapleau denied he spoke of coalition. He abhorred the very idea⁴³ which to him signified "a compromise between two political parties, by which the respective programmes of those parties are modified for the purpose of adopting one programme acceptable to everybody."⁴⁴ Rather, Chapleau preached conciliation, "the union of all the active forces of the nation for a common work, the good of the province by the development of its material resources, and the enlargement of its political and moral influence in the confederation."⁴⁵ Conciliation of

⁴¹Montreal Gazette, Monday September 10, 1883.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Quebec, October 31, 1880.

⁴⁴Montreal Gazette, Monday September 10, 1883.

⁴⁵Ibid.

Conservatives and Liberals could be effected because "all the Radicals and the Liberals who attain power become Liberal-Conservatives; there are not two methods of Government."⁴⁶ In other words, Chapleau desired those Liberals who wanted a truce from the violent political struggles to rally to the Conservative standard. But he warned those Liberals who might greet his words with sympathy not to ask Conservatives "d'abandonner un seul de nos principes."⁴⁷

This policy of conciliation Chapleau had first publicly announced in 1877 when he had dramatically extended the branche d'olivier to Wilfrid Laurier. On August 22 of that year, at the inauguration of le chemin de fer les Laurentides, Chapleau had spoken at St -Lin on the subject of unity. To the assembled crowd of 200, which had included Laurier, he had remarked that

Le gouvernement de Québec N'EST LIÉ A AUCUN PARTI.... CE N'EST PAS un gouvernement DE PARTI mais de progrès.... JE SERAIS HEUREUX de voir mon ami personnel et mon adversaire politique M. Laurier concourir AVEC MOI au bonheur du pays. Soyons le parti du progrès, et si vous avez de la répugnance à vous appeler conservateur, nous l'appellerons le parti libéral-conservateur. FORMONS-LE, ce parti, et engageons nos citoyens à nous prêter main-forte.⁴⁸

This St -Lin speech had been a clear statement in favour of the unity

⁴⁶Montreal Gazette, Wednesday February 9, 1898. The translation of Chapleau's interview with La Presse was published.

⁴⁷J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé le 8 janvier 1881, au Banquet donné à l'honorable J.-A. Chapleau, par le 'Junior Conservative Club' de Montréal", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau. Sa biographie.... ed. L.-H. Taché, Montréal: Eusèbe Senécal & Fils, 1887, p. 173.

⁴⁸Le Canadien, lundi le 10 septembre 1877.

of French Canada in order to develop Quebec's natural resources and to enable the francophone community to assert its proper influence in the country at large.⁴⁹

Again in 1878 when the term coalition had been attached to Chapleau's name, Chapleau had not diverged from his position of the previous year. In June 1878, the question of coalition with the provincial Liberals had arisen as a federal election approached. The Mackenzie Liberal government held power in Ottawa and two Conservatives, Arthur Turcotte and William Price, had deserted the party fold to aid the Liberal Premier Joly de Lotbinière in obtaining and maintaining power in Quebec. Chapleau's task as Conservative party leader was to obtain a victory for Macdonald in the federal elections expected in the fall. To ensure a Conservative win, Chapleau had believed that he had to maintain a cohesive Conservative opposition in Quebec. That task would be difficult since the Liberals controlled both the federal and provincial governments. Because he had feared that Joly might break the Conservative solidarity Chapleau had so skillfully maintained after the defection of the "brainless speechless and faithless Englishman" and French Canadian "traitor",⁵⁰ Chapleau had questioned Macdonald about the possibility of a coalition. Chapleau had wondered what he should do if many Conservatives began to think that a liberal era had begun and that all hopes had vanished for

⁴⁹ La Minerve, lundi le 3 septembre 1877 & vendredi le 7 septembre 1877.

⁵⁰ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Quebec, June 16, 1878.

Joly's overthrow. He had pondered what course he should follow "if my friends would not all follow me; if I was afraid of two or three desertions, and coalition was offered--...."? The Conservative leader had hastened to add that "I do not want it, I would not take it for myself; I would not be a part in it. But to neutralize the bad effect of a full provincial influence during your elections here, should it be accepted, and on what terms?"⁵¹ Again in August Chapleau had reiterated his stand that he himself would never enter a coalition, "unless forced to do so by the party, and even then...."⁵² He never did finish his sentence! Since Chapleau had been able to prevent Conservative defections by the time of the federal election of September 1878, no further discussion of coalition had followed. However, Chapleau was not to stop discussion of his policy of conciliation.

The day following the formation of Chapleau's government in 1879, he had again repeated his grand design of unity in a speech at Lévis. When he had realized that the Programmistes within his own party and some of Joly's vanquished Liberals had rejected and even ridiculed his project,

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Sherbrooke, August 6, 1878. Rumilly interprets this affair somewhat differently. He states that "Des conciliateurs songèrent à une coalition, dans laquelle entrerait Chapleau. Celui-ci ne dit pas absolument non. La coalition lui apparaît comme un moyen de neutraliser le gouvernement provincial, aux élections prochaines. Guidé par cette pensée--du moins; il l'affirme--Chapleau consulte John Macdonald. Mais la manœuvre neutraliserait aussi Chapleau, et Macdonald [sic] compte sur lui, a besoin de lui. Pas de coalition! Pas de trêve!" Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, Montréal: éditions Bernard Valiquette, [1940], II, 154.

Chapleau had become convinced that it was "le devoir des véritables amis de la province de s'unir pour lui assurer un bon gouvernement, la faire sortir des embarras et empêcher ses hommes politiques d'être à la merci de certain [sic] coterie et des fanatiques des deux partis."⁵³ Chapleau's plan of conciliation between like-minded Liberals and Conservatives would prevent power from falling into the hands of "the ignorant set" in the Liberal party and "the contemptible clique of enviers" in the Conservative camp. He could then "form a strong Cabinet able to carry out, without any assistance, the programme which an intelligent government must follow to harmonize the action of the province with the general progress of federal institutions."⁵⁴ Chapleau's attraction of two important Liberals into his cabinet in 1879 had flowed from such thought. Both Edmund-James Flynn, a professor at Laval, and Etienne-Théodore Paquet, a politician who had testified for the Liberals in La Malbaie judicial dispute over undue influence, had broken from Joly in order to work with the Conservatives. In fact, their defection from the Liberal party had seemed to reinforce Chapleau's determination to continue his conciliation efforts in 1880 and 1881 to the chagrin of Trudel and his cohorts.

In furtherance of such a plan, discussions had begun on a very informal basis between Arthur Dansereau, Chapleau's newspaper friend who

⁵³"La Coalition", Débats de la Législature de la Province de Québec, publiés par Alphonse Desjardins, Québec: 1883, p. 1517.

⁵⁴PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Quebec, October 31, 1880.

had left La Minerve in 1880 to become a court clerk in the Montreal district, and a wine merchant, Jean de Beaufort. The latter, although a Liberal, was a relation of Mousseau. As a result of talks that had occurred between these two men, Mousseau, Honoré Mercier, the renegade Conservative who had been Joly's Solicitor-General, and the Liberal Senator and party organizer Rossaire Thibaudeau, had met at de Beaufort's on February 21, 1880. According to Mercier, Mousseau had outlined Chapleau's policy of conciliation.⁵⁵ Mercier had not understood Chapleau's viewpoint for he had viewed the meeting as a first step in the formation of a coalition, that is, the joint action of two distinct groups for a single purpose and a limited time.

Mercier had desired a coalition in order to obtain the abolition of the Legislative Council which had been the direct cause of Joly's loss of power. After the abolition had occurred, the Liberals could then withdraw from the alliance for "Le Conseil aboli, les libéraux sont maîtres de la situation et la province peut-être sauvée...."⁵⁶ In addition, Mercier, a very adroit political animal, had informed Senator Thibaudeau, who was cool to the idea of coalition, that without an entente with Chapleau, the Premier would call a general election in May in which the Conservative party would sweep the province. Chapleau could then enjoy four years of power in which he could impose taxes to lift the

⁵⁵"La Coalition", Débats de la Législature, p. 1517.

⁵⁶Ibid., Mercier à l'honorable Thibaudeau, sénateur, le 27 février 1880, p. 1522.

province from financial straits and drop any notion of the abolition of the Legislative Council. In the meantime, the people would forget the taxes and the Liberals.⁵⁷

Negotiations were to be continued in a formal way on March 18, based on the Liberal desire to abolish the Legislative Council and to obtain a fair share of cabinet posts.⁵⁸ However, before the meeting could be held, La Patrie, a Liberal paper, had revealed that negotiations with a view to the formation of a coalition between Liberals and Conservatives were in progress. Consequently, the Conservatives had cancelled the March meeting, the goal Beaugrand of La Patrie had sought. No further discussions were then held for over a year.

Opposition to the negotiations was not to be found solely within the Liberal party. With the public disclosure of the February meeting, Trudel with other dissidents within the Conservative party had risen in a chorus of opposition because he had realized the implications of such a policy for himself and his followers within Conservative ranks. In 1881 in an article appropriately entitled "Conciliation" in La Revue Canadienne, he had set forth his views. He had claimed that French Canada was divided into two groups, a minority which denied the Church's absolute independence of civil power and a majority that recognized the

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 1523.

⁵⁸ Chapleau denied the rumour that Mercier would be Premier in a coalition Ministry. ASTR, Chapleau à de La Buère, Québec, le 10 décembre 1879 [telegram].

supremacy of the Church over the State.⁵⁹ The latter was the responsible French Canadian body

qui croit à la conservation de notre nationalité, qui a foi dans les destinées canadiennes et veut préparer notre peuple au rôle providentiel que Dieu nous réserve sur ce continent, en face de cet autre parti réaliste et utilitaire qui hâte de ses vœux notre assimilation, ou plutôt notre absorption par une autre race, parce que là seulement il voit le gage de notre fortune matérielle et la réalisation du progrès qu'il rêve....⁶⁰

Trudel hoped to see the political parties coincide with those divisions.

Trudel was horrified that Chapleau's policy might succeed. Success for Chapleau's scheme would signal his liberty to act as he pleased and to scorn the counsels of the old and faithful friends of the party.⁶¹ In such an event, Trudel and his followers would lose all hope of benefiting from patronage. Trudel had complained that in a party of the nature Chapleau envisaged

Le patronage public deviendra une prime offerte à la trahison, au lieu d'être le prix des services rendus à l'Etat. Le bénéfice des hauts emplois, l'avancement, légitimes récompenses dues à la fidélité au drapeau, deviendront le partage d'hommes sans principes qui s'en serviront comme de leviers puissants pour démolir nos institutions. Ensuite, pour un ennemi concilié, on se sera aliéné des amis véritables. Il y aura progrès apparent dans le sens de l'union avec les adversaires, mais aussi progrès réel dans le sens de la division au sein des amis.⁶²

⁵⁹F.-X.-A. Trudel, "Conciliation", La Revue Canadienne, février 1881, p. 84.

⁶⁰F.-X.-A. Trudel, "Conciliation", La Revue Canadienne, mars 1881, p. 147.

⁶¹L'Etendard, lundi le 30 juillet 1883 (du Pionnier de Sherbrooke).

⁶²Trudel, "Conciliation", La Revue Canadienne, mars 1881 (cited in Le Monde, vendredi le 22 avril 1881).

Despite Trudel's foreboding, Chapleau had continued his attempt to attract moderate Liberals to the Conservative fold. On March 30, 1881, Chapleau had arranged a rendez-vous between Mercier and himself at his usual haunt, Victor's restaurant in Montreal.⁶³ There, Chapleau and Mercier had spoken in private for approximately fifteen minutes. Following this tête-à-tête it had been apparent to both men that they could not join hands in the same political party. Chapleau's idea of conciliation was incompatible with Mercier's notion of coalition. On all major questions of government policy, the two politicians agreed. Both men were protectionists and both concurred on the advisability of selling the provincially owned railway. Chapleau had been convinced that he and the Liberal leaders only differed on a couple of minor points: "l'organisation de l'instruction publique et le Conseil législatif; et encore sur ces deux points seraient-ils prêts à attendre pour le premier, et à accepter une réduction des dépenses pour l'autre."⁶⁴ Mercier simply had refused to rearrange political allegiances in the province, a necessity demanded by Chapleau's policy. He had refused to enter any ministry in which the renegade Liberals, Flynn and Paquet, played a role. Considering Mercier's notion of coalition, it was only proper for Chapleau to remove the two former Liberals from office in order to demonstrate his

⁶³Memoires sur la Coalition: étude politique, [Saint-Hyacinthe]: Des Presses du Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe, 1886, p. 34.

⁶⁴"La Coalition", Débats de la Législature, Chapleau à Dansereau, Québec, le 18 octobre 1881, p. 1535.

good faith to the Liberal party which would be an equal partner in an alliance with the Conservative party--a union in which each would maintain their distinctive identity. On the other hand, how could Chapleau who envisaged a new political party in which like-minded politicians participated, sack two loyal friends? Was Mercier not about to enter the Chapleau government in the same manner that Flynn and Paquet had done?

Chapleau had been stunned at Mercier's demand to force the resignation of Flynn and Paquet before he would enter the government.

Mercier's demand to throw them

sur la voie comme une holocauste à la haine de ceux qui veulent venir travailler avec moi, les donner comme prix du marché que je ferais! Non. Je ne fais pas de ce commerce là! [sic].

If that was one of the Liberal leader's conditions of union, Chapleau had been prepared to wait "pour encore longtemps ceux qui s'offrent à ce prix."⁶⁵ And that is precisely what Chapleau did. He had recognized that Mercier did not understand his conception of conciliation, or at least had not been willing to accept such a policy, and had never made any further attempts to bring Mercier or other Liberals into his government. However, Chapleau's Quebec followers had not admitted defeat so easily. Their attempt to bring Mercier into the Mousseau cabinet the moment Chapleau had left the provincial scene had led directly to the Jacques-Cartier by election of 1883.

L.-A. Sénécal had begun his effort to woo Mercier to the

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 1535-1536.

Conservative fold July 28th, the very day Chapleau had received his invitation to enter the Macdonald cabinet. Later, because Sénécal had become ill, Dansereau had continued the conversation Sénécal had initiated with Mercier. The discussions between Dansereau and Mercier had reached a stage that had caused Mercier to quieten Liberal enthusiasm during the election which had returned Mousseau to the Legislative Assembly. Unfortunately, Dansereau who had campaigned with Chapleau in Terrebonne had been unaware of Mousseau's feelings on the subject of Mercier. He had been shattered at the end of August, after Conservative election victories by Chapleau and Mousseau, to learn that Mousseau did not desire Mercier in his cabinet. Dansereau had realized that Mercier probably thought he had been tricked into remaining quiet during the elections.⁶⁶ Indeed, Mercier had not been amused by the Conservative action. When he had realized that he would not obtain a cabinet post, Mercier had contested Mousseau's election in Jacques-Cartier on grounds of corruption. Because Mercier's case was sound, Mousseau had resigned his seat on May 3, 1883, two days after legal action had commenced in the courts. A by-election had then been duly set for September 27th. Thus, Chapleau seized the occasion to explain and defend his position on conciliation at the largest election rally of that campaign at St -Laurent on September 6, 1883.

Although Chapleau's rousing oration undoubtedly contributed to

⁶⁶"La Coalition", Débats de la Législature, "Notes sur la coalition" par Arthur Dansereau, Montréal, le 15 septembre 1883, pp. 1538-1540.

Mousseau's victory on September 27th against the combined strength of the Liberals and renegade Conservatives, the significance of Chapleau's address lay elsewhere. After Chapleau had delivered his speech at St -Laurent, the divisions within the Conservative party were laid bare. The Secretary of State had explicitly defined the points of contention between himself and the Castor dissidents. In addition, Chapleau's definition of the political Castors as something less good than the Castors --those little black beasts who live in bands upon the surface of stagnant waters and who do their work with mud⁶⁷--was not intended to flatter Senator Trudel and his followers. At the end of Chapleau's speech, few would deny that there could be no reconciliation over philosophy and political strategy between the Chapleautistes and Castors. That fact had already become apparent to vigilant observers of the Quebec political scene before September 1883. Those internal Conservative problems had appeared as a result of the debate on Chapleau's policy of economic development of Quebec--a policy centred upon railways.

⁶⁷Montreal Gazette, Saturday September 8, 1883. Chapleau spoke at a by-election rally at St- Laurent September 6, 1883.

CHAPTER III

A RAILWAY RIDE TO RUIN

Chapleau's eventual failure as a federal politician was anticipated at the beginning of his career in Ottawa through the controversy that erupted over railways. Chapleau realized his political vulnerability on the issue because by the time he arrived in Ottawa during the summer of 1883, he had already been severely criticized for his railway policy which he had developed as Premier of Quebec. The rivalry between Montreal and Quebec city for the economic benefits which would result from the transcontinental Pacific railway had caused a rift within the Conservative party which Chapleau tried unsuccessfully to heal before the competition between the two commercial centres wrested the ancient capital from its Conservative allegiance. Second, the Montreal-based Castors led by F.-X.-A. Trudel claimed that Chapleau's railway endeavours were fraught with corruption and that his railway strategy would prevent the achievement of the economic growth that all Quebec desired. In an attempt to silence his critics and to restore unity within the Conservative party on the issue, Chapleau reviewed the sale of the government owned provincial railway at the election rally at St -Laurent on September 6, 1883. His lengthy discussion about the economic development of Quebec during that assemblée contradictoire did nothing to placate his opponents. In fact, his outline of events, punctuated with attacks upon his adversaries, increased hostility between himself and those who reproached him for his railway scheme. Furthermore, within

six months of his St -Laurent speech, Chapleau alienated Sir John A. Macdonald and strained his relations with Sir Hector Langevin because of his determination to pursue his Quebec railway policy at the federal level.

It was not by accident that Chapleau should be attacked for his railway policy and that railways should have rent apart the Conservative party in Quebec and weakened Chapleau's position within the federal government. Railways dominated the economic thinking of French Canadians during the latter half of the nineteenth century, because they were considered the key to the economic development of the province of Quebec and, therefore, to the survival of French Canadians in North America. Like many French Canadians, Chapleau was determined that the province of Quebec should be a manufacturing as well as an agricultural community. Ever since he had entered active politics in 1867 as the representative of the riding of Terrebonne in the Quebec Legislative Assembly, he had asserted that "the efforts of legislation in the Province of Quebec should be turned towards the development of its industrial and manufacturing wealth."¹ The advantages which the abundant source of water power offered for industrial operation boded well for the economic future of the province. But in order to realize the commercial and industrial potential of Quebec, Chapleau, like many of his contemporaries, believed that railways were essential.

¹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) April 12, 1884, p. 1537.

A network of branch lines that protruded into the virgin Quebec countryside from a national trunk Pacific railway would allow enterprising colonists to develop agriculture or industry² in hitherto inaccessible areas of the province, and also furnish the new settlers with an easy access to the markets of Canada.³ These railways would lead French Canadians in Quebec and expatriates in the United States to take possession of the land of Quebec "que l'étranger menace d'envahir"⁴ and thus ensure la survivance of French Canada by allowing French Canadians to develop their own natural resources. Furthermore, a transcontinental Canadian railway with a summer terminus in the province of Quebec would assure the province "sinon la prépondérance absolue du moins une influence considérable sur les destinées de la Puissance...." because of the added economic advantages such a line would inevitably bestow upon the terminus.⁵ Development would occur at that point with the construction

²La Presse, jeudi le 6 juin 1895. Chapleau spoke at the inauguration of the monument erected to the memory of Sir John A. Macdonald on Dominion Square in Montreal June 6, 1895. See also, Montreal Gazette, Wednesday April 30, 1884. Chapleau spoke in the House of Commons April 12th on the Federal Government's railway policy.

³Montreal Gazette, Thursday December 8, 1892. Chapleau wrote an adieu to his electors of Terrebonne.

⁴La Minerve, vendredi le 18 août 1882. This quotation is a part of the program signed by Chapleau as one of the founders of the newspaper, Le Colonisateur, in 1862.

⁵Le Canadien, jeudi le 23 décembre 1875. Chapleau spoke in the Legislative Assembly in a debate on the formation of the Q. M. O. & O. railway.

of installations such as elevators and railway yards. In addition, land would be developed as industrial activity increased.⁶ Finally, the proposed Canadian Pacific railway would carry not only the products of Asia but also the resources of the Canadian North West to the province of Quebec.⁷ For these reasons Chapleau was determined from the outset of his political career that Quebec should build a railway on the north shore of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers and that it should be "un chaînon du Pacifique",⁸ the great pan-Canadian railway with which the Conservative party under Sir John A. Macdonald hoped to cement the bonds of Confederation.

Although Conservative plans for a transcontinental railway seemed to have been shattered by the Pacific scandal in 1873, the Quebec government, led by the Conservative de Boucherville, had decided in 1875 to build a section of the line within the province in the belief that the visionary idea could not die and would eventually be realized. This "Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway", which joined Quebec city, Montreal and Ottawa, had been completed by 1880. Chapleau, who

⁶Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) June 16, 1885, p. 2572.

⁷J.-A. Chapleau, "Manifeste aux électeurs du comté de Terrebonne à l'ouverture de la campagne électorale terminée le 27 février 1887", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau. Sa biographie.... ed. L.-H. Taché, Montréal: Eusèbe Senécal & Fils, 1887, pp. 508-509.

⁸Le Canadien, mercredi 1e 22 décembre 1875. Chapleau spoke in the Legislative Assembly during a debate on the formation of the Q. M. O. & O. railway.

had become Premier of Quebec in October 1879, had attempted to secure the incorporation of the provincial railway, the Q. M. O. & O., into the new pan-Canadian line which was to be completed within ten years. At Lévis on the 1st of November 1879, Chapleau had announced that he wished to "faire acheter ce chemin provincial par le gouvernement Fédéral, pour en faire une partie intégrante du chemin de fer du Pacifique, qui n'était pas encore entre les mains d'une compagnie."⁹ Besides the long-term goal of increased economic activity, in the short run, such a sale would restore order to the finances of the province and thus forestall the necessity of a direct provincial tax.

By the autumn of 1881, after two years of unproductive discussion with the federal government and Pacific railway syndicate, Chapleau had determined to relieve the province of the financially burdensome Q. M. O. & O. and had centred an election on the sale of that railway. In his opening speech of the campaign at Ste-Thérèse on November 3, 1881, Chapleau had revealed his government's intention of selling the Q. M. O. & O. for not less than \$8,000,000. He had assumed that the Pacific syndicate would buy the railway for that price. The line had cost the province a total of \$13,000,000 but the Premier had assured his constituents that Quebec would not lose any money by the sale. According to the railway policy of de Boucherville's government in 1875, a grant of about \$5,000,000 in the form of money and land was to be offered to the

⁹Canada, Province of Quebec, Commission Royale. Enquête concernant le chemin de fer Q. M. O. & O., (Chapleau) Québec: 1887, III, 643.

contractors for the construction of the line. Since the government had never parted with the money or the land, Chapleau's transaction would involve no expenditure not foreseen in 1875. The sale of the line for \$8,000,000 would leave a debit of \$5,000,000, but the province had intended to grant that amount to the railway entrepreneurs in any case.¹⁰ Employing such logic, Chapleau had faced the Quebec electorate.

To Chapleau's delight, the Quebec population had endorsed his policy by according the Conservatives 53 seats out of a total of 65 in the December 2nd election. However, the Premier had no time for complacency, because even before celebrations of victory had ceased, Chapleau's railway project had encountered obstacles.

The Pacific syndicate had not greeted Chapleau's proposals with enthusiasm. Yet, despite the Pacific's obstinacy, Chapleau had continued to try to persuade Macdonald to force the company to come to terms with Quebec. In response to this pressure, Macdonald had induced the Pacific to purchase the western section of the provincial line from Ottawa to Montreal. Aware that if this deal were refused the Pacific would construct its own line from the Ottawa region to Montreal, Chapleau had grudgingly decided to sell the Q. M. O. & O. in two parts. Thus, in February 1882 the province had surrendered the western section of the Q. M. O. & O. for \$3,600,000 with the provision for the expenditure by the Pacific of an additional \$400,000 on necessary work to put the

¹⁰J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours-Programme prononcé à Ste -Thérèse, le 3 novembre 1881, à l'ouverture de la campagne électorale.", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, p. 191.

railway into first class condition. In addition, the government had signed a contract for the sale of the remainder of the old Q. M. O. & O. for \$4,000,000. This eastern section, thereafter called the North Shore Railway, had been bought by a syndicate headed by L.-A. Sénécal, Chapleau's personal friend whom the Premier had appointed as superintendent of the provincially owned line in 1880.

The long and acrimonious debate on the government measure had commenced at the end of March after a brief delay due to Chapleau's illness--his bronchitis and a "fièvre gastrique".¹¹ By early May both Houses had approved the sale of the two sections of the Q. M. O. & O. which had then been handed over to their new owners on June 30, 1882.¹² Adolphe Chapleau had successfully accomplished his plan to obtain the summer terminus of the Pacific for the Province of Quebec. The terminus would belong to Montreal but since Chapleau had enabled the Pacific company to obtain running rights over the North Shore Railway between Montreal and Quebec city, the Pacific could reach the old capital. Because the Intercolonial stopped at Lévis across from Quebec city,

¹¹ANQ, Fonds Labelle, Chapleau à Labelle, Québec, le 26 mars 1882.

¹²The Canadian Pacific received the line from Ottawa to Montreal and the Aylmer and Saint-Jérôme branch lines. In addition, the company received the two privately owned branch lines that it was forced to buy by Chapleau--the Saint-Lin and Saint-Eustache. The Sénécal syndicate which included Thomas McGreevy, Alphonse Desjardins and Aldéric Ouimet, received the section from Saint-Martin to Quebec city including the Joliette, Berthier, and Piles branches and the Three Rivers belt line. La Minerve, lundi le 6 mars 1882.

Chapleau had provided the Pacific with an opportunity to follow an all Canadian rail route to the Maritimes. Satisfied with his accomplishment, he had left the provincial scene in the hope of furthering his policies in the federal cabinet.

Although Chapleau had resigned as Premier, the opposition to his railway policy did not abate, and, in fact, was most vociferous within his own party. The most serious threat to Conservative unity and Chapleau's political strength had been posed by Senator Trudel who had been appointed to that position by Macdonald who had resolved to fill all vacant posts in October 1873 before he had resigned because of the Pacific scandal. In his famous pamphlet, Le Pays, le Parti et le Grand Homme, Trudel had implicated Chapleau in a conspiracy to obtain the Q. M. O. & O. for his friend L.-A. Sénécal.¹³ During 1883, Trudel had embroidered his thesis with many new and daring accusations in the columns of his newspaper, L'Etendard, a paper Chapleau claimed was written by a fool and believed by imbeciles.¹⁴ Trudel had asserted that an alliance existed between Sénécal, Chapleau and Arthur Dansereau, the Premier's

¹³F.-X.-A. Trudel, Le Pays, Le Parti et le Grand Homme, Montréal: 1882, pp. 61-78. H. L. Robertson claims that "The division and sale of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway (Le Chemin de fer du Nord) was the issue on which the Ultramontane group separated from the ranks of the Conservative Party.... It was ironic that an avowedly clerical party should declare its independence on so mundane and temporal a question--but so, in fact, it was." See L. H. Robertson, The Ultramontane Group in French Canada 1867-1886, M. A. thesis, Queen's University, 1952, p. 187.

¹⁴L'Etendard, samedi 19 mars 1887.

personal friend who often helped him write his speeches.¹⁵ The Trinity, as Trudel had deprecatingly tagged them, had united for the purpose of speculation and the service of personal interests. The Senator had affirmed that when Chapleau had become Premier of Quebec, "c'était dans le but exprès, prémédité d'avance, de s'emparer du chemin de fer que M. Chapleau avait imposé M. Sénécal comme administrateur du chemin...."¹⁶ Chapleau and Dansereau had been rewarded financially for their untiring efforts to aid Sénécal in his execution of "cette conspiration audacieuse."¹⁷

Senator Trudel had based his entire conspiracy on hearsay, "des ouï-dires ou certaines faits, qui paraissaient être enfin de notoriété publique." In elaboration, Trudel had noted that there are "une foule de choses qui sont de notoriété publique, dont on acquiert la certitude absolue, qui sont vraies, mais on ne pourrait pas dire, où est la source, où on a puisé notre certitude, c'est un fait de cette nature-là."¹⁸ Armed with these rumours and with a sense of indignation and self-righteousness, Trudel had been ready to begin his campaign of vindictiveness against an already much maligned leader. His determination to assault his political rival had heightened with the announcement in December 1882 that the Grand Trunk would obtain control of the North Shore Railway--the former

¹⁵La Minerve, samedi le 20 juin 1885.

¹⁶L'Etendard, lundi le 21 juillet 1883 & L'Etendard, samedi le 2 juin 1883.

¹⁷Trudel, Le Pays, le Parti et le Grand Homme, p. 72.

¹⁸Commission Royale. Enquête, (Trudel) III, 76-77.

eastern section of the Q. M. O. & O. between Montreal and Quebec city. Trudel had remembered that Chapleau had claimed he had sold the line to Sénécal "pour la garder à nos compatriotes" and to prevent the Grand Trunk, "le pire ennemi de la Province" from acquiring the line!¹⁹

An agreement by which the Grand Trunk Railway had acquired control of the North Shore Railway had been signed and ratified by March 1883.²⁰ Sénécal had made an earlier attempt to sell the North Shore to the Pacific, but, when his generous offer had been refused, he had sold his shares and those he had bought from his partners to the Grand Trunk at a higher price.²¹ Sénécal had remained president of the North Shore Railway Company.

As a condition of the transfer of control of the North Shore to the Grand Trunk, the latter company had allowed the North Shore to issue bonds to the Sénécal group at 5 per cent interest for a total of \$5,250,000. Because the North Shore Company had bought the eastern section for \$4,000,000 with an initial cash payment of \$500,000 and because the government had retained a mortgage of \$3,500,000, the Sénécal syndicate had been able in theory to realize a profit of \$1,500,000 on this transaction with the receipt of \$250,000 in cash from the Grand

¹⁹L'Etendard, mardi le 27 mars 1883.

²⁰Montreal Gazette, Tuesday October 27, 1885.

²¹Une Question de Vérité: Correspondance entre Sir Hector Langevin, M. George Stephen, Président du Pacifique et M. L.-A. Sénécal, Président du chemin de fer du Nord, sur l'achat du chemin de fer du Nord, L.-A. Sénécal à Sir Hector Langevin, Montréal, le 6 mars 1884, p. 7.

Trunk for the shares.²² However, all knowledgeable financiers had realized that this hypothetical profit of over one million dollars was almost impossible to realize. The North Shore had spent \$200,000 on the line before the transfer to the Grand Trunk and the bonds held by Sénécal and his partners in the company would realize only what the market would offer. In addition, it was necessary to pay off the mortgage of \$3,500,000 held by the Quebec government. If this mortgage was not paid, the bonds issued by virtue of the agreement with the Grand Trunk would be worthless since they constituted a second mortgage.²³

Trudel had only been able to see a dark plot behind what he had considered to be a dire deal. He had charged that Chapleau had given the North Shore to Sénécal so that he could make a large profit by a later sale. Thomas White's Gazette, the Conservative party's English language organ in Montreal, had defended Chapleau who had been convalescing in the United States at the time. A White-inspired editorial had affirmed that as the Pacific had refused the offer of the Quebec government in 1882, it had appeared unlikely that the company would ever offer more money for the line. And as no one had believed in 1882 that the Grand Trunk would buy the line, there had been no proof that Chapleau had sacrificed the railway in order to give Sénécal the opportunity to make a fortune by selling it shortly after.²⁴

²²L'Etendard, lundi le 28 septembre 1885.

²³La Minerve, samedi le 12 mai 1883.

²⁴Montreal Gazette, Tuesday December 19, 1882.

Conservative English language newspapers, such as the Gazette, did defend Chapleau because of the political threat Trudel's criticism had posed to the Secretary of State. On the other hand, the French language papers, in particular, Chapleau's own La Minerve, had published articles "qui touchent le moins possible à ce qu'il faudrait brosser sans cesse."²⁵ However, one French Canadian from Quebec city, Joseph-Israël Tarte, had not been as reticent as his Montreal colleagues. Tarte had stunned political circles in Quebec with his revelation about the Grand Vicaire, Trudel. Senator Trudel had constantly criticized Chapleau for succumbing to Sénécal's will during lavish feasts given by the railway magnate. In an attempt to stifle those accusations, Tarte had announced that Trudel had also enjoyed Sénécal's hospitality. Furious, the Senator had exploded in two detailed editorials relating how he had been tricked by Chapleau into sharing a sumptuous Sénécal meal during the summer of 1881 in Paris. Trudel had stressed that it was "la seule fois que j'aie mangé à la même table que M. Sénécal."²⁶ Even more tantalizing to Le Canadien readers had been Tarte's claim that the self-righteous Trudel had enjoyed the pleasures of the Folies-Bergères with Chapleau that hot summer. Again Trudel had pleaded innocence. He had reluctantly accepted Chapleau's invitation to attend a play at the Châtelet theatre, but to his surprise, Chapleau had had the coach driver take them to the Folies-Bergères. Thus it was that Tarte had been able to declare that Trudel

²⁵Fonds Gouin, DeCelles à Chapleau, Ottawa, le 15 mai 1883.

²⁶L'Etendard, lundi le 30 avril 1883.

had tempted his "vertu à Paris" and "fait le réveillon à la clarté des étoiles qui brillent au firmament des Folies-Bergères...."²⁷ Tarte, who had mended his differences with Chapleau during a visit to Paris in the fall of 1882, had attacked Trudel and his friends despite their comparative insignificance. However, they did pose a threat to Chapleau within the Conservative party since the Castors had obtained support in important regions outside of Montreal. One of those centres had been Quebec city. Quebecers en province had seconded Trudel's cries, not because they had suddenly awoken to his dogma, but because they had contended Chapleau's railway policy favoured Montreal and contributed to the economic decline of Trois-Rivières and Quebec city. Quebec city, which Chapleau described as "Cette ville si tortueuse par ses rues, mais si droite par l'esprit et les intentions de ses habitants...."²⁸ had reacted like a jilted lover.

One voice that had expressed the sentiments of Quebec city residents had been Joseph-Israël Tarte, before he had rallied to Chapleau's standard about four months after the sale of the Q. M. O. & O. Tarte had criticized the sale of the line in two sections. According to him, the division of the line had deprived Quebec city of communication with the west and consequently had given the advantage to the terminus, that is, to Montreal. "Du moment que cette possession se borne au tronçon qui

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ La Patrie, le 1er février 1896. Louis Fréchelette quoted Chapleau.

aboutit à Montréal, il y a place pour les craintes les mieux fondées que Québec se voie à toujours privé du commerce de l'ouest, et que son port soit réduit à un fatal isolement."²⁹ The Quebec editorialist had wanted the government to sell the whole line, either immediately or, if the Pacific refused it, at a later date.³⁰ Even though Chapleau had obtained running rights for the Pacific on the North Shore between Montreal and Quebec city, Tarte had not been convinced that the interest of the Pacific would extend beyond Montreal to the old capital.³¹ Liberal politicians from Quebec, such as the mayor, Charles Langelier, had expressed similar sentiments to those of the famous Quebec city journalist of Le Canadien.³²

Other newspapers outside Montreal, such as Le Courrier du Canada and L'Electeur had manifested the same fears. In a burst of emotion, L'Electeur had complained of the destruction of Quebec city, which otherwise would be "la métropole commerciale de la Puissance du Canada."³³ Le Journal des Trois-Rivières had seen only disaster for its community.³⁴

²⁹ Le Canadien, jeudi le 23 février 1882.

³⁰ Commission Royale, Enquête, (Tarte) III, 35-36.

³¹ Le Canadien, samedi le 25 février 1882.

³² Commission Royale, Enquête, (Langelier) III, 235.

³³ La Patrie, vendredi le 3 mars 1882.

³⁴ Le Canadien, vendredi le 24 février 1882.

Trudel had effectively used such sentiment based on economic motives to further his own cause. Because he had possessed that apparent support, his venomous campaign against Adolphe Chapleau had caused immediate and visible disorder within the party ranks. That unsettling effect had been, to a large extent, the result of Trudel's successful strategy to undermine Chapleau's political base by discrediting the former Premier's friend and successor, Joseph Mousseau. From the outset, Trudel had expressed his apprehensions about Mousseau;³⁵ and later, he had declared war against the new Conservative provincial leader whom he had accused of assuming responsibility for the sale of the eastern section of the Q. M. O. & O. and thus, for the conspiracy, by the exclusion of certain Conservatives, who had been hostile to the sale, from his cabinet.³⁶ In addition, Mousseau had accepted into his cabinet the former Liberal, Henry Starnes, the Montreal financier who had been mayor of the city and whose vote in favour of Chapleau's railway policy in the Legislative Council had ensured its success.³⁷ While Trudel had preached his dislike for Chapleau's successor in Quebec, the Senator and his allies in the Senate had seized an opportunity in the spring of 1883 to pursue Chapleau at the federal level.

In response to an address by a delegation of Conservatives from

³⁵ L'Etendard, jeudi le 22 février 1883.

³⁶ L'Etendard, jeudi le 19 avril 1883 & vendredi le 20 juillet 1883.

³⁷ L'Etendard, samedi le 7 avril 1883.

the Quebec Assembly and personal friends who had travelled to New York to greet him April 1, 1883, Chapleau had replied by referring to the great work of the Conservative party in the Canadian Confederation. Without naming names, he had criticized those in the party who had been plotting against him and who thereby had risked the future of the party. Calling on all Conservatives to follow the advice of the leaders who had given to French Canadians a glorious heritage, Chapleau had also asked them to pardon the mistakes that their leaders would sometimes make. In reaction to the author of Le Pays, le Parti et le Grand Homme, Chapleau had ended with the exhortation: "Mais ne pardonnez jamais à la vénalité, à la trahison. Ce sont là des crimes qui perdent les nations."³⁸ This declaration had prompted three Conservative Senators--Trudel, de Boucherville and Bellerose, who had suspected Chapleau's pointed remarks had been directed towards them--to denounce the Secretary of State. An incensed Trudel had denounced the event itself as much as Chapleau's speech. He had been convinced that some sinister motive had lain behind "Une promenade à New-York en chars-palais et au champagne! à la seule condition de présenter des compliments de bienvenue à M. Chapleau, après plusieurs mois d'absence!"³⁹

Enraged by wounded pride, the zealous Senator Bellerose an ardent admirer of the ultramontane ecclesiastical cause and Senator Trudel's Castors, had taken advantage of the first opportunity to launch a personal

³⁸L'Etendard, mardi le 14 avril 1883.

³⁹L'Etendard, lundi le 2 avril 1883.

tirade against Chapleau. He had declared maliciously that after having known Chapleau since he had entered political life in 1867 he "could not at any time give him ... [his] confidence as a politician...."⁴⁰ On May 8th he had opposed better terms for the province of Quebec because the province "had fallen into the hands of jobbers and intriguers" who had since arrived in Ottawa.⁴¹

The respected Senator de Boucherville, who never forgave Chapleau for assuming the Provincial Premiership in 1879 instead of supporting de Boucherville's claims for the post, had called for an inquiry into the sale of the Q. M. O. & O. "because accusations of fraud in this transaction are as thick as autumn leaves."⁴² Naturally, the lack of evidence had prevented anyone from formulating precise charges against Chapleau!

With such a bitter battle raging within the Conservative party at both the provincial and federal levels in Quebec, the Liberals, under their new leader, Honoré Mercier, had waited patiently to profit from the disorder. To take full advantage of the situation, Mercier had slowly modified his position on the subject of the sale of the North Shore. In the spring of 1882 he had had no objections to the sale. But by September 1883 he was accusing Chapleau and Mousseau of having betrayed

⁴⁰Canada, Senate, Debates, (Bellerose) April 10, 1883, p. 188.

⁴¹Ibid., (Bellerose) May 8, 1883, p. 426.

⁴²Ibid., (de Boucherville) May 8, 1883, p. 437.

the interests of the province. He affirmed that the two Conservative politicians had compromised "les intérêts de notre pays, l'un, M. Chapleau, en brocantant notre plus belle propriété, le chemin de fer Q. M. O. & O., en le vendant à vil prix à des spéculateurs; l'autre, M. Mousseau, en continuant l'oeuvre et en empirant la situation."⁴³

Mercier appeared to adopt the position of Trudel for political advantage. The success of the Liberal, Dr. Amédée Gaboury in a provincial by-election in Laval, had indicated the wisdom of his policy. Dr. Gaboury had received additional support from the Conservative Senators Trudel and Bellerose and Louis Beaubien, the Conservative deputy for Hochelaga who was interested in colonization railways for personal financial reasons. Since Beaubien had been excluded from the Sénécal syndicate which had purchased the eastern section of the Q. M. O. & O., he had joined Trudel in crying foul against Chapleau. In order to embarrass Chapleau by undermining the leadership of Mousseau, Chapleau's provincial ally, these Castors had joined with the Liberal party in its fight against the official Conservative candidate, Evariste Leblanc.⁴⁴ The circumstances surrounding the by-election as well as its outcome, had borne witness to the state of weakness of the Conservative party and

⁴³La Patrie, vendredi le 7 septembre 1883.

⁴⁴L'Etendard, jeudi le 7 juin 1883; jeudi le 14 juin 1883; samedi le 9 juin 1883; & La Minerve, samedi le 9 juin 1883. Leblanc had resigned his Laval seat after having been accused in court of obtaining his election by corrupt practices. He then ran again under the Conservative banner.

had foreshadowed the alliance in the 1886 provincial election between Mercier and a group of dissident Conservatives, who had supported Trudel. The position of strength attained by the Conservatives in the December 1881 election had deteriorated to such an extent by the fall of 1883 that the Prime Minister, Mousseau, had been uncertain of winning a by-election in Jacques-Cartier in his second attempt to enter the Quebec Legislative Assembly. Consequently, the electrifying orator, Chapleau, had been invited to speak on Mousseau's behalf at the most important political rally of the campaign.

When Chapleau turned to discuss the railway issue in his speech in support of Mousseau at St -Laurent, he attacked Trudel and his Castor coterie with verve. As early as 1875 Chapleau had conceded that "Il est toujours facile de découvrir des fautes quand on veut trouver un prétexte pour accuser."⁴⁵ It was in that context that the Conservative leader placed Trudel's accusations. Yet this assumption begged the question of why Trudel pursued Chapleau. The Senator's actions were even more perplexing, since he had never raised any objection to the idea of the sale of the provincial line as a single unit or in two separate sections. He even had admitted that the price of the sale was of no consequence if the Q. M. O. & O. could become an integral part of the Pacific line. Trudel was proud of his struggle at Ottawa to assure the province of Quebec the commerce of the west by means of the Pacific. He had only

⁴⁵Le Canadien, mercredi le 22 décembre 1875. Chapleau spoke in the Legislative debate on the formation of the Q. M. O. & O. railway.

begun his attacks against the sale of the eastern section of the provincial line after he had become aware, so he had claimed, of the fraud perpetrated by Chapleau and Sénécal.⁴⁶

To Chapleau, the accusation of a plot was merely a mask constructed to hide Trudel's personal hatred of him. The sale of the eastern section of the Q. M. O. & O. between Montreal and Quebec city conveniently presented Trudel with an occasion to criticize Chapleau without having to divulge the real nature of the conflict. But Chapleau was determined to expose Trudel's true motivation. In a brutal speech he publicly defrocked the Grand Vicaire.

Chapleau contended that behind the Senator's action lay the jealousy of a man who had the pretensions of a financier without the ability, whose failure had ruined his parents, his family, and his personal credit.⁴⁷ Another source of Trudel's animosity, according to Chapleau, was Chapleau's reluctance (or inability) to obtain for Trudel an appointment to the bench or the Governorship of the North West when the poverty-stricken Senator had pleaded with Dansereau for such a post.⁴⁸ In L'Etendard Trudel admitted that he had made the request, but to Mousseau, the Secretary of State at the time, because his creditors had

⁴⁶Commission Royale. Enquête, (Trudel) III, 57 & 59.

⁴⁷J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé à l'assemblée de Saint-Laurent, comté de Jacques-Cartier, le 6 septembre 1883", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, p. 291.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 291.

demanded money that he did not have. Trudel claimed that he would have accepted any position that would have permitted him to leave Quebec and secure his credit "de manière à me permettre de rendre justice à mes créanciers."⁴⁹ He continued to harbour a grudge against Chapleau, who was then Premier of Quebec, for not actively pursuing the subject with Macdonald. In Le Canadien, after his conversion to the Chapleau camp, Tarte had also noted that Trudel had supported Chapleau until the latter had accepted a position in the federal cabinet, a position Trudel apparently coveted. In his pamphlet of 1882, Trudel had condemned Macdonald several times for not inviting a French Canadian from the Senate, undoubtedly alluding to himself, to sit on the ministerial benches.

In reply to the demand for an investigation of the railway deal the Secretary of State claimed at St -Laurent that such a request made without responsibility on the part of the accuser did not conform to parliamentary practice. Those who called for an inquiry under such circumstances did so by counting on the refusal of the government to incriminate itself and on the consequent impression that the accusations had some foundation in fact. According to British parliamentary tradition, an accuser must make his accusation and risk his name before the courts or risk his seat in Parliament. Otherwise, he must be quiet.

On September 6 at St -Laurent, Chapleau was somewhat unfair to Trudel. Despite Chapleau's affirmations to the contrary, Trudel did not attack the former Premier for petty personal motives alone. Trudel

⁴⁹L'Etendard, mardi le 1er mai 1883.

reproached Chapleau on the railway issue because that question clearly illustrated what Trudel called Chapleau's adherence to utilitarianism. He charged before and after the St -Laurent meeting that Chapleau held a philosophy which could be summarized as follows: "Qu'importe que l'on corrompe notre nation jusque dans la moelle de ses os, pourvu que le pays s'enrichisse et que les citoyens fassent beaucoup d'argent." The distraught Senator longed for the old days when, he claimed, before asking if a measure was profitable, if it produced money or material progress, "on se demandait si elle était morale, si elle était honnête...."⁵⁰

In the case of the sale of the Q. M. O. & O., Trudel was convinced that Chapleau had used money dishonestly and fraudulently for his own purposes and not those of la patrie.⁵¹ Some features of the sale tended to add credence to Trudel's claims. For example, Chapleau's demand that the Pacific buy the branch lines of Saint-Lin and Saint-Eustache which were owned privately by Sénécal, had prompted questions that the government had never satisfactorily answered. That feature of the sale raised the patronage issue for Trudel. He asserted that under the patronage system, the civil service had become a hunting ground for the unemployed where the more capable and righteous often had to cede before the most habile or intriguing.⁵² Such a question was neglected by Chapleau in

⁵⁰ L'Etendard, mardi le 26 août 1884.

⁵¹ L'Etendard, mercredi le 26 novembre 1884.

⁵² L'Etendard, mardi le 26 août 1884.

his attack against Trudel!

I

On September 27, 1883, Chapleau was heartened by the Quebec Premier's electoral triumph. However, he was not interested in ephemeral success nor in gaining points against the Castors. He desired Conservative unity and the public's attention to be drawn to the really important question of the day--the economic development of Quebec. Mousseau's win in September provided hope that the Conservative party would become more cohesive. However, events unravelled differently.

Although Mousseau's leadership appeared to be confirmed by the results of the Jacques-Cartier by-election in September, the contrary was true. Antagonism mounted between the two warring factions within the Conservative party. That conflict not only widened the rift between Castors and Chapleautistes, but the discord also led to a clash between Langevin and Chapleau. Both politicians disagreed on the method that should be used to handle the problem. Trudel and his followers presented to the party. Chapleau wished to expel the Castors and admit moderate Liberals to the fold in their place. Langevin preferred to attempt a conciliation with the dissident Conservatives. During the summer of 1883, both policies had proved unworkable.

Chapleau had first attempted to effect his policy of conciliation with the Liberals. After Mousseau had effectively scuttled his plan because he had refused to allow any rouges to enter his government, Chapleau had reluctantly adopted Langevin's strategy. He had agreed to

accept the entry of two apparent Castor partisans, J.-J. Ross and Louis-Olivier Taillon, the latter a law partner of Trudel, into a Mousseau government that was composed entirely of Chapleautistes. Trudel, Bellerose, Beaubien and a few insignificant men would be left "to support the faction of L'Etendard."⁵³ Because Trudel had opposed such a reconciliation when consulted by Taillon and Ross, those efforts to produce unity had also collapsed.⁵⁴ Chapleau's speech at St -Laurent had not been destined to promote harmony, nor was his address on October 20, 1883, at the Vermond banquet likely to secure peace.

Aguste Vermond was a member of the French National Assembly for Seine-et-Oise. He was a strong Republican who had been persuaded by L.-A. Sénécal to come to Canada to promote the investment of French capital in Canadian enterprises. As a gesture of gratitude for his efforts in that domaine, French Canadian entrepreneurs offered him a dinner at the St. Lawrence Hall in Montreal. Since Chapleau was the leading politician from the Montreal district and because he had re-established Franco-Canadian relations on a sound basis after a century of separation, he was asked to preside at the banquet.

In his toast to the French guest, Chapleau called on France to aid Quebec to exploit its agricultural, industrial and commercial resources. French Canadians, he explained, loved France, their mother

⁵³PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, May 1, 1883.

⁵⁴L'Etendard, jeudi le 13 décembre 1883.

country, in spite of the differences in ideas and aspirations that separated them. He personally admired the French national heroes, Gambetta and Charette, although he condemned Gambetta's attack on religious communities, for French Canadians were sincere Catholics. "Nous considérons que nous sommes ainsi doublement fidèles aux traditions de nos ancêtres. C'est ce qui explique comment.... je puis être à la fois décoré du Saint-Siège et décoré du gouvernement français...."⁵⁵

Chapleau's speech caused an immediate reaction in the Castor press. In total disregard of the thrust of the Secretary of State's statement, Trudel attacked Chapleau for his praise of the anti-Catholic Gambetta. He also denounced Chapleau's association with the unsavoury Vermond whom Trudel charged was a freemason.⁵⁶ Infuriated with an unrepentant Chapleau, Trudel announced "la guerre à la clique!"⁵⁷

Because of that Trudel outburst, Chapleau reluctantly concluded that Mousseau, whom he had hoped would produce harmony, aggravated Conservative difficulties and harmed the party's cause. The Castor-Liberal alliance which produced a rouge victory in a provincial by-election in

⁵⁵La Minerve, lundi 1e 22 octobre 1883. Chapleau had been appointed Commander of the Legion of Honour on November 10, 1882.

⁵⁶L'Etendard, jeudi 1e 25 octobre 1883. For the next four years, Trudel continued to parade the affair of the Vermond Banquet before his readers. With great delight he announced in 1887 that Vermond, no longer a French Parliamentarian, had been condemned to three months in prison for a "tentative d'escroquerie". See L'Etendard, jeudi 1e 7 avril 1887.

⁵⁷L'Etendard, vendredi 1e 23 novembre 1883.

Lévis November 16th, only served to underline the Premier's inability to resolve the internal dissensions that racked the party.⁵⁸ Consequently, by the end of November, Chapleau reached a conclusion that Langevin had come to several months earlier. Mousseau had to be replaced! After pressures from Langevin and Chapleau and apparently on the understanding that he would be allowed to don a judge's gown, Mousseau agreed to resign at the earliest convenient opportunity.

The Secretary of State seized the occasion of Mousseau's impending withdrawal to attempt to force Langevin to condemn the Castors. Chapleau's friend, the director of Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe, Pierre Boucher de La Bruère, wrote of a supposed conflict that had developed between Quebec's two major federal politicians. Much to Chapleau's dismay,⁵⁹ Langevin refused to veer from his neutral position and declined to proclaim his support for the Chapleautistes.

Besides Langevin's refusal to submit to Chapleau's will on the question of the Castors, Chapleau recognized that he would not obtain his wish to exclude that group from any new Quebec Ministry. Until Mousseau's resignation, Chapleau had achieved that goal. Since the Quebec Premier was a faithful Chapleau follower, Chapleau had been able to prevent his opponents from obtaining cabinet portfolios in the provincial government. However, with Mousseau's departure and without

⁵⁸Andrée Désilets, Hector-Louis Langevin: Un père de la Confédération canadienne (1826-1906), Québec: Les Presses de l'université Laval, 1969, p. 362.

⁵⁹ASTR, Chapleau à de La Bruère, Ottawa, le 28 novembre 1883.

a prominent Chapleautiste capable of assuming control of the government, Chapleau could not forestall the establishment of a Quebec ministry that would include Castor representation. Yet, he had obtained Mousseau's withdrawal from politics. Because of that feat and in compensation for the admission of the extreme Conservative element into the Quebec cabinet, Chapleau argued that he deserved a reward, namely, the appointment of his friend, L.-A. Sénécal, to the Senate.⁶⁰ Macdonald refused and insisted "that these positions should be given so as to strengthen the Federal Gov't rather than with a view to settle any complication in Quebec."⁶¹ He and Langevin understood that Trudel considered such a nomination to be "une insulte lancée à la figure de la majorité des conservateurs de notre Province et le signal d'une guerre implacable contre ceux qui en seraient les auteurs...."⁶² Consequently, Macdonald appointed Alexandre Lacoste, the second choice of both Trudel and Chapleau. Lacoste, a very wise and intimate friend of Chapleau, director of the Manitoba Assurance Company and the Liverpool, London and Globe Insurance Company, had not endeared himself to Trudel because he had supported Laval university in its conflict with Bishop Bourget and had voted for the sale of the Q. M. O. & O. in the Legislative Council.⁶³

⁶⁰PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, December 13, 1883.

⁶¹PAC, Macdonald letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, December 13, 1883.

⁶²L'Etendard, vendredi le 14 décembre 1883 & samedi le 15 décembre 1883.

⁶³L'Etendard, jeudi le 27 décembre 1883.

Because Lacoste was not as wealthy as Sénécal, Chapleau was more anxious to ensure Sénécal's support through his entry into the Senate than he was to see Lacoste become a member of that body. Therefore, although Trudel did not favour the elevation of Lacoste to the Senate, Lacoste's appointment did not represent a victory for Chapleau.

Despite such irritations which appeared to plague Chapleau, complete success did not accrue to Langevin. The Minister of Public Works failed to convince Mousseau that his usefulness to the party had ceased.⁶⁴ That task was left for Chapleau. Thus, the Secretary of State who disliked to execute a trusted friend, nevertheless, informed the Quebec Premier "qu'il devait en prendre son parti."⁶⁵ Without support in Ottawa or Quebec, Mousseau wavered and finally left the Premier's office in January 1884. Chapleau had succeeded where Langevin had proved to be impotent. The new Premier, John-Jones Ross, a Quebec city doctor who was born of an English-speaking father and French Canadian mother and who married a French Canadian after his studies at the Séminaire de Québec, produced relative calm in provincial Conservative circles. He was grudgingly accepted by both factions of the party including Trudel even though he had denounced Le Programme Catholique shortly after he had signed the document and in spite of his silence after his resignation from the Chapleau cabinet over the sale of the

⁶⁴Désilets, Langevin, p. 364.

⁶⁵ANQ, Fonds Labelle, Chapleau au curé Labelle, Ottawa, le 27 novembre 1883.

Q. M. O. & O.⁶⁶

Meanwhile in Ottawa, aware of Mousseau's impending retirement by January 1, 1884, federal Conservatives attended the Governor General's New Year's levee in high spirits. Chapleau, as Secretary of State and thus, custodian of the Great Seal of the realm, arrived looking very picturesque attired in a superb seal-skin coat that fell below his knees. Sir John A. Macdonald, always ready to deflate a pompous colleague's ego decided to introduce Chapleau to Lord Landsdowne personally. Taking Chapleau by the arm he presented him to His Excellency: "My Lord," he said, "this is the Great Seal."⁶⁷ Unfortunately for Macdonald, this seal was not trained and by the end of the month an issue arose which disclosed that fact. The contentious problem concerned railways and revealed a divergence of opinion between Chapleau and Langevin and irritated relations between Chapleau and Macdonald. That crisis was precipitated by the decision of Macdonald at the end of January 1884 to grant the Pacific railway an advance of approximately \$30,000,000 in order to overcome a financial crisis. Shortly after this announcement, the Quebec provincial government through a memorandum of February 12th, again requested an increase in provincial grants in addition to the long desired subsidy for Quebec's contribution towards the building of the

⁶⁶ L'Etendard, 1e 31 août 1886 & samedi 1e 12 janvier 1884.

⁶⁷ Sir Joseph Pope, Public Servant: The Memoirs of Sir Joseph Pope, ed. Maurice Pope, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 48 and also E. B. Biggar, Anecdotal Life of Sir John Macdonald, Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1891, p. 220.

Pacific railway, the former Q. M. O. & O. The provincial government also requested that the Pacific obtain its own direct line from Montreal to Quebec city. This desire was expressed because by 1884 the running rights Chapleau had so carefully obtained for the Pacific over the North Shore railway were not effective and Quebec city was not able to attract the traffic from the West that it desired or expected. Reports indicated that many federal Quebec Members of Parliament, inspired by Chapleau, would refuse to vote in favour of Macdonald's grant to the Pacific unless the Quebec government demands were fulfilled and unless the Pacific bought the bonds Sénécal held in the North Shore Railway. On both questions, Chapleau's stand differed from Langevin's.

The North Shore bonds affair not only served to spice Trudel's polemical articles in L'Etendard, but also to reveal a conflict between Langevin and Chapleau. In L'Etendard, Trudel charged that "les intérêts de la clique [Chapleau, Sénécal and Dansereau] ont été la vraie cause de la profonde division qui vient de menacer si sérieusement l'existence du gouvernement de sir John et de ruiner à jamais ce parti conservateur."⁶⁸ That accusation Trudel based on his belief that Chapleau would oppose Macdonald's policy until the Pacific bought the bonds of Sénécal that the latter had received as a result of the transfer of control of the North Shore railway from the Sénécal syndicate to the Grand Trunk in 1883.⁶⁹ Trudel proposed that Chapleau ostensibly remained aloof from the

⁶⁸L'Etendard, samedi le 23 février 1884.

⁶⁹L'Etendard, jeudi le 14 février 1884.

movement in order to preserve his options and to be able to join the victors.⁷⁰

Sir Hector Langevin implicitly accepted Trudel's position. On the evening of January 19, 1884, at a caucus of federal Quebec Conservatives, he announced that "la Compagnie du Pacifique ou M. Stephen devaient acheter les débentures du chemin de fer du Nord."⁷¹ That declaration suggested that Chapleau and Sénécal were in league to force the Pacific to buy the bonds in order to give Sénécal the money that was denied him by the transfer of control to the Grand Trunk. La Minerve and Le Monde, Chapleau's organs in Montreal, denounced Langevin's endeavor to embarrass their mentor.⁷² Those newspapers knew that the key figure in the affair had been Arthur Dansereau.

To preserve the friendship between Chapleau and Sénécal, Dansereau had made two unsuccessful attempts to entice the Pacific to buy Sénécal's bonds. The Grand Trunk and the Pacific were competitors, and, following the transaction between the Sénécal syndicate and the Grand Trunk, Sénécal naturally would be allied with the latter railway, while Chapleau, as a member of the government, would support the Pacific. Dansereau feared that, because of the conflict between the two companies, disagreements would develop between his two mutual friends or insinuation

⁷⁰L'Etendard, mardi le 12 février 1884.

⁷¹Une Question de Vérité, Sénécal à Langevin, Montréal, le 22 janvier 1884, p. 3.

⁷²L'Etendard, samedi le 23 février 1884.

would be directed at one or the other by political or personal adversaries. Thus, he had acted to preclude such an ugly eventuality.⁷³ Dansereau's confession, published in a pamphlet, shattered Trudel's assertion but did not serve to clarify Langevin's stance. Langevin had not been heartened with Chapleau's sale of the Q. M. O. & O. in two sections. He believed that geography made Quebec city the inevitable terminal port of the Pacific railway during the summer and concluded that by tampering with the laws of commerce which demanded an uninterrupted rail line from Ottawa to Quebec city, Chapleau had effectively prevented western commerce from reaching the old capital.⁷⁴ For that reason, he was suspicious of Chapleau's motives and actions.⁷⁵

On the matter of Quebec's memorandum, Langevin remained on the sidelines while Chapleau and Trudel clashed. Senator Trudel, who believed Chapleau was behind the Ross government's appeal, vociferously opposed Quebec's requests. He feared the province would suffer if it pursued blackmail tactics supported by politicians like the Secretary of State. The Senator accused the Chapleautistes of assailing "le pouvoir fédéral et lui arracher, le couteau sur la gorge, des concessions que notre province a droit d'obtenir loyalement, et qu'elle obtiendra par une

⁷³Question de Vérité, "Mémoire sur une offre pour échange de débentures" par Arthur Dansereau, Montréal, le 20 mars 1884, pp. 22-23.

⁷⁴Ibid., Langevin à Sénécal, Ottawa, le 17 mars 1884, p. 10.

⁷⁵Trudel claimed that the railway issue was the key to the Langevin-Chapleau dispute. See L'Etendard, jeudi le 10 avril 1884 & samedi le 25 octobre 1884.

politique honorable...."⁷⁶ Trudel protested that without the federal grant the Pacific would be unable to complete the railway to Calendar Station by 1891 and would be forced to stop at Thunder Bay. He assumed that western traffic would then pass from Lake Huron ports to Toronto which would quickly surpass Montreal as the metropolis of Canada.

Chapleau opposed that view. He was exasperated by the federal government's continued refusal to recognize that Quebec had built a section of the great C. P. R. line for which it had not received compensation. Under the provisions of the original Pacific charter, a subsidy of \$12,000 per mile had been provided for a line built east from Lake Nipissing in the direction of Ottawa. In 1874, the Canada Central which joined those two points had received the subsidy. Since that period, Quebec politicians had asked for a similar grant for lines built within the province which were to connect with the Pacific. By the end of 1883 because of Ottawa's refusal to grant compensation, Chapleau had begun "à douter de l'avenir de notre Province. Tout pour ailleurs, rien pour nous. On dirait que Québec n'est dans la Confédération que pour 'porter de l'eau' au moulin des autres...."⁷⁷ In his first major speech in the House of Commons, April 12, 1884, Chapleau explained that the former Q. M. O. & O. which produced a huge deficit in Quebec was a federal rather than a local work. The railway's construction benefitted the

⁷⁶L'Etendard, mercredi le 13 février 1884. See also L'Etendard, mardi le 19 février 1885.

⁷⁷ANQ, Fonds Labelle, Chapleau à Labelle, Ottawa, le 27 novembre 1883.

commerce of Canada and provided compensation for the federal rather than the provincial treasury. The material imported and men attracted to Quebec to construct the line were a profit for the Dominion and an expense for Quebec. Hence, the province "demande que l'on empêche de peser sur elle, une partie du fardeau de cette dette, contractée toute entière dans l'exécution d'une entreprise d'un caractère essentiellement fédéral."⁷⁸

Chapleau never explained why he did not share Trudel's fears that the Pacific might by-pass Quebec altogether if the subsidy was not granted without delay. However, he probably shared the views of his friend Joseph Tassé who had represented Ottawa city in the House of Commons since 1878. Tassé, who had succeeded Dansereau as director of La Minerve in 1880, rejected Trudel's analysis because the Pacific made no guarantee that the \$30,000,000 advance would be used to complete the Lake Superior section of the line. Toronto had access to the Great Lakes, but so did Montreal on a railway from Algoma at the northern end of Lake Huron. Thus, goods could travel to Montreal from the Lakehead as easily as they could to Toronto. Finally, Tassé claimed that Quebec possessed political leverage which should be used to obtain money that was due her, for in the future, Quebec Conservatives might not be strong enough to obtain a favourable hearing from Macdonald and his English-speaking friends.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Canada, Chambre des Communes, Débats, (Chapleau) le 12 avril 1884, p. 1633.

⁷⁹La Minerve, vendredi le 15 février 1884.

Besides his desire to settle all questions connected with the Pacific before the government advanced any monies to the company, Chapleau, in opposition to Trudel, sympathized with the Quebec desire for an increase in provincial grants.⁸⁰ However, the disunion among federal Quebec Members of Parliament allowed Macdonald to refuse to discuss both matters jointly. After much wrangling, the federal and provincial Quebec politicians decided on a common course. Langevin was largely responsible for the reconciliation between the Chapleau and Trudel forces. The Quebec government agreed to drop its demand for increased grants and, with the aid of federal Quebec Members of Parliament, to press instead for the railway subsidy and the C. P. R. direct link with Quebec city. Macdonald bowed before the majority of the Quebec Conservative caucus. The province received \$12,000 per mile for the line from Montreal to Ottawa (\$1,416,000) and \$6,000 per mile for the line from St. Martin's Junction to Quebec city. In addition, \$6,000 per mile (\$960,000) was set aside to subsidize a C. P. R. line between Montreal and Quebec city. By Act of Parliament, the Pacific was allowed six months to reach Quebec city by buying the North Shore or by obtaining a workable agreement with the Grand Trunk for the use of that line. Otherwise, it would be

⁸⁰H. L. Robertson claims that "It became quite clear that Chapleau had mounted the 'better terms' insurrection to embarrass Langevin". Robertson, The Ultramontane Group in French Canada, p. 233. There is no direct evidence to suggest that Chapleau acted in the matter in order to embarrass Langevin. It should also be noted that Beaubien, a Trudel supporter, had stock in the C. P. R. and naturally opposed the province's demands because they jeopardized the C. P. R. project.

required to construct a new railway between those two cities.⁸¹ In return for Macdonald's generosity, the Quebec Members of Parliament supported the government legislation to grant \$30,000,000 to the Pacific.

In February, Chapleau's tactic of confrontation with Trudel and Macdonald contrasted sharply with Langevin's methods of accommodation and led to a call for Chapleau's resignation. Scandalized by Chapleau's stance and the pamphlet S  n  cal published in April sharply critical of Langevin,⁸² over twenty Quebec Members of Parliament sent a petition to Macdonald to ask him to remove the cause of division in the party. In effect, they called for the Secretary of State's dismissal.⁸³ Although no action was taken because of Chapleau's ability to deliver needed votes in Quebec, Chapleau's position in the cabinet and party was severely shaken, and this so short a time after his coming to Ottawa. Many Ottawa observers must have wondered if Chapleau had not embarked on a railway ride to political ruin.⁸⁴ At all events, Macdonald may well

⁸¹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Langevin) April 10, 1884, pp. 1493-1494.

⁸²La Patrie, samedi 1e 12 avril 1884. S  n  cal's pamphlet was entitled Question de V  racit  .

⁸³PAC, Macdonald Papers, Petition to Macdonald, Ottawa, April 18, 1884. See also L'Etendard, mercredi 1e 17 d  cembre 1884 & La Presse, lundi 1e 19 janvier 1885.

⁸⁴While Chapleau was able to escape political tragedy, he was unable to prevent personal disaster. On March 28th most of his possessions were destroyed or damaged when his furnace overheated and caused a fire at his home on Th  odore Street (later Laurier Avenue) in Ottawa. Fortunately, Chapleau and his wife were able to escape to take refuge

have been wishing to remove him when he appointed the Secretary of State to head a commission on the question of Chinese immigration into British Columbia.

in the Russell House after the fire. They returned to their rented dwelling on Théodore Street after repairs were made and continued to live in the house until 1886. In that year, Chapleau and his wife moved to another residence which they rented. They lived in this new location at 160 Cooper Street from 1886 until 1892 when Chapleau left Ottawa to become Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec. (La Minerve, samedi le 29 mars 1884; lundi le 31 mars 1884; & vendredi le 11 juin 1886.)

One pleasant event that emerged from Chapleau's railway difficulties was the naming of a station in Northern Ontario after the Secretary of State. (La Presse, mercredi le 2 octobre 1895.) Later Chapleau Ontario was to be noted for the fact that Louis Hémon, author of Maria Chapdelaine, was buried there after being killed while walking down the railroad tracks near the town July 13, 1913.

CHAPTER IV

LES CHINOIS ET LES CHINOISERIES DU GOUVERNEMENT

The Canadian government first confronted agitation on the Chinese immigration question when British Columbia joined Confederation in 1871. However, not until April of 1884, under great pressure from the west coast province, had Macdonald promised to study the Chinese problem "to consider its trade relations, its social relations, and all those moral considerations which made Chinese immigration inadvisable...."¹ He had guaranteed that legislation based on the conclusions of the report would be introduced to the House during the next session after evidence gathered in inquiries in Australia, California and Washington had been considered, collated and submitted to Parliament.²

Besides a desire to remove Chapleau from the Ottawa scene after the difficulties over the C. P. R. grant, the Secretary of State was probably chosen by Macdonald to head the inquiry on the question of Chinese immigration into British Columbia because his department was charged with the naturalization of "new Canadians" after the passage of

¹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Macdonald) April 2, 1884, p. 1287. For background on the British Columbia agitation on this issue, see John A. Munro, "British Columbia and the 'Chinese Evil': Canada's first anti-Asiatic immigration law", JCS, 6.4 (November 1971), 42-45.

²John A. Munro's conclusion that "It seems probable that doubts on the question were as to the wisdom of legislating at all...." is rather ambiguous and not sustained by Macdonald's promise to the House of Commons. See Munro "British Columbia and the 'Chinese Evil': Canada's first anti-Asiatic immigration law", JCS, p. 48.

the Naturalization and Alien Act of 1881. The Agriculture Minister, J. H. Pope, who was responsible for immigration and who might have undertaken the inquiry, was too busy for such a task because of his appointment as Acting Minister of Railways and Canals in June 1884. Since British Columbia was unlikely to be satisfied with a simple Ministerial report which Macdonald favoured and Chapleau could provide, the Prime Minister selected John Hamilton Gray as a second commissioner. A Father of Confederation from New Brunswick, Gray had been appointed to the bench in British Columbia after that province had entered Confederation.³ Chapleau acquiesced in Gray's nomination, but balked at the appointment of Nicholas Flood Davin, editor of the Regina Leader, as Secretary.

Macdonald's lack of regard for Chapleau's wishes was particularly galling to the Secretary of State, the man whom a majority of the French Canadian electorate had chosen as Premier of Quebec. As chairman of the Royal Commission Chapleau claimed the right to appoint the Secretary. His demand was based on a desire for patronage--the politician's indispensable tool, a tool that the Office of the Secretary of State so conspicuously lacked. Chapleau's wish to nominate his friend and law partner, Levi-Ruggles Church, was termed "an unfortunate selection" by Macdonald. Church had been the instigator of the ill-fated attempt to bolster the weak Mousseau government of Quebec in the spring of 1883

³PAC, Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, Rivière du Loup, July 3, 1884.

through a rapprochement between the anglophone community of the province and the Mousseau forces. Chapleau hoped to reward his ex-colleague "for his earnestness and good work in the matter."⁴ The Prime Minister asserted that Church's relations with Chapleau "would make it look like favouritism and would render ... [Chapleau] liable to unfavourable comment in the opposition press, not without some reason as Doctor Church although an able man has no special qualification for the position."⁵

On the other hand, Davin, Macdonald's choice, also had faults. Chapleau personally found him "too great a man and too great a bore" who was prone to "little accidents" of drunkenness which happened in Ottawa and thus were bound to occur on such a long and lonesome trip.⁶ While he conceded that Davin was not perfect, Macdonald retorted that he was "exceedingly industrious, well read, and can sift and classify evidence."⁷ In the end Chapleau grudgingly submitted to Macdonald's will; despite his early reluctance, he even agreed to accept Davin as his travelling companion on the journey west.⁸ However, Chapleau's complete retreat did not erase

⁴PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, May 1, 1883.

⁵Ibid.

⁶PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, July 1, 1884.

⁷PAC, Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, Rivière du Loup, July 3, 1884.

⁸PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, July 1, 1884.

the fact that Macdonald, by refusing to grant him that control of patronage which was so essential for political power had displayed a haughty indifference to the Secretary of State's political needs.⁹

Another impediment to Chapleau's work was the severe limitations which Macdonald imposed upon the duties and powers of the commission.

In Macdonald's view, the purpose of the Royal Commission was merely to collect information. Because Chapleau was a Minister of the Crown, he could not make any recommendations or reach any conclusions, because the Ministry might not agree with them; and "it would never do for any difference of opinion among members of the same government upon such an important question to be expressed to Parliament and the public."¹⁰

Although the government did not want Chinese immigrants, Macdonald had refused to act in the past because he feared any restrictions on the inflow of Chinese labourers would jeopardize the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Since white European immigration would not flow into British Columbia until the railway from the East was built, he contended that the Chinese problem on the West coast had to be accepted. As Macdonald had explained to the country in 1882:

I share very much the feeling of the people of the United States, and the Australian colonies, against a Mongolian or Chinese population in our country as permanent settlers. I believe they would not be a wholesome element in this country. I believe that it is an alien race in every sense, that would

⁹PAC, Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, Rivière du Loup, July 3, 1884.

¹⁰Ibid.

not and could not be expected to assimilate with our Arian population; and, therefore, if the temporary necessity had been overcome, and the railway constructed across the continent, with the means of sending the European settlers and laborers [sic] into British Columbia, then it would be quite right to join to a reasonable extent in preventing the permanent settlement in this country of Mongolian, Chinese or Japanese immigrants.¹¹

But the problem was "to discover how far we can admit Chinese labor [sic] without introducing a permanent evil to the country by allowing to come into it, in some respects, an inferior race, and, at all events, a foreign and alien race."¹² Only as the railway neared completion did Macdonald consent to introduce legislation based on the findings of a commission, legislation which would be of a restrictive nature.¹³ Armed with these guidelines, Chapleau set out from Ottawa July 9, 1884 "to obtain proof that the principle of restricting Chinese immigration is proper and in the interests of the Province and the Dominion."¹⁴

Chapleau and his entourage set off in the official government railway car in what one observer ironically described as the style of an Eastern Potentate;¹⁵ but they did not proceed directly to British

¹¹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Macdonald) May 12, 1882, p. 1477.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Macdonald) April 2, 1884, p. 1287.

¹⁴Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, Ottawa: 1885, p. ix.

¹⁵Canada, Senate, Debates, (Power) March 26, 1885, p. 460.

Columbia. Church, who was allowed to work on the Commission as a private secretary to Chapleau, L.-H. Taché, Chapleau's personal secretary, Davin, who joined the party at Omaha, and the Secretary of State first travelled to California, "the classical land ... of the struggles between anti-Chinese advocates and the pro-Chinese sympathisers."¹⁶ At San Francisco, in conversations and in visits to Chinese areas, Chapleau gleaned information from both the American and Chinese standpoint. After approximately three weeks of study in the American city, Chapleau and his party proceeded north to Victoria by boat to meet Gray and to study the Canadian situation at first hand.

British Columbians, who generally expected the Commission to be soft on the Chinese for no other reason than that the members of the Commission were not known anti-Chinese advocates, greeted Chapleau coolly as he stepped from the Mexico at Victoria on August 6. Some citizens were opposed to the Royal Commission itself. They argued that the Chinese evil was well-known by the British Columbian population and the 1879 Parliamentary Committee's study should form the basis of legislation.¹⁷ The large public meeting at the Victoria city hall August 9th, organized by the political and labour leaders of the province, adopted resolutions which denounced the appointment of the Commission and called

¹⁶Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) July 2, 1885, p. 3003.

¹⁷Weekly British Colonist, Friday July 25, 1884.

for immediate legislation.¹⁸ Despite the passage of a resolution which urged anti-Chinese immigration exponents not to present their views to the Commission, such counsel was not followed by many of the politicians nor by the important Knights of Labour. The Knights of Labour was an association of workers that included all trades. Established in the United States, the Knights of Labour entered Canada in 1881 and preached political action, co-operation, arbitration, education of its members and monetary and land reform. The organization reached its peak during the mid-1880's and was very influential in British Columbia in 1884. Although the Knights of Labour supposedly professed that if their movement was to succeed they must acknowledge the brotherhood of humanity, the Canadian Knights failed to consider the Chinese immigrant in that light.¹⁹

Other interests in the province, such as the Victoria Daily (and Weekly) British Colonist and Victoria Times accepted the Commission but criticized its composition. The Colonist stressed the need for someone attuned to provincial interests to sit on the Commission, because Chapleau who had no knowledge of the Chinese and Justice Gray who was informed but decidedly pro-Chinese, were unacceptable.²⁰ The Colonist

¹⁸ Weekly British Colonist, Friday August 15, 1884.

¹⁹ Weekly British Colonist, Friday August 29, 1884 & Daily British Colonist, Tuesday August 19, 1884. See also Victor O. Chan, Canadian Knights of Labor with special reference to the 1880's, M. A. thesis, McGill University, 1949, p. 15.

²⁰ Weekly British Colonist, Friday August 22, 1884; Daily British Colonist, Saturday August 9, 1884; & Montreal Gazette, Wednesday August 20, 1884.

wanted a local representative, a man who could place the "anti" side of the inquiry before his colleagues in order to make the proceedings "full and impartial...."²¹ The Times, less tactful perhaps, wondered how highly educated elegant gentlemen could, while "driving around in carriages, HOBNOBBING WITH THE HIGH MONGOLIAN MERCHANT PRINCES, OCCASIONALLY DIVING INTO THE OPIUM DEN OR ANY OTHER SLUM OF VICE, really get any other than a superficial idea, if any, of the real difficulties that exist?"²²

But there were also those who accepted the Commission because of its apparent pro-Chinese sentiments. This group, whose views were expressed in the Standard, was composed largely of businessmen, people who employed Chinese or owned property occupied by Chinese. They warmly welcomed the Commission for, as one of their opponents pointed out, they had "a direct interest in having the whole thing end in a farce."²³

Within a few days of Chapleau's arrival, the hostility of most white Columbians towards Chapleau and the Commission faded. Davin, undoubtedly with some exaggeration, claimed that Chapleau's splendid knowledge of the Chinese question, his charm of manner and his oratorical skills caused passions to cool and permitted the commissioners to perform

²¹Daily British Colonist, Wednesday July 23, 1884 & Friday July 25, 1884.

²²Weekly British Colonist, Friday August 22, 1884.

²³Weekly British Colonist, Friday August 1, 1884.

their task in a more temperate atmosphere.²⁴ Thus, at 11:30 a.m. August 12th when Chapleau, Gray and Davin took their seats on the Speaker's stand in the Legislative Chamber to begin the public hearings, the opponents of Chinese immigration appeared more willing to present their case to the Royal Commission.

At these meetings all public men as well as representatives from various organizations such as municipal corporations or boards of trade were invited to express their views in written documents or viva voce. In order to obtain as many opinions as possible, the Commission also addressed a circular containing a series of questions to all members of the Dominion and local Parliaments and others whom the commissioners believed would be in a position to judge the social, industrial, or economic advantages of Chinese immigration.²⁵ After sessions in Victoria, the commissioners left for New Westminster and from there on a leisurely journey by the Canadian Pacific into the interior. The commissioners also travelled to Nanaimo aboard the Sir James Douglas before they returned to Victoria to conclude public hearings.

During their sojourn in British Columbia, the Commission heard three recurring themes from the opponents of Chinese immigration. First, the anti-Chinese group claimed that the Chinese were not civilized. John A. Bradly, a working man who appeared before the Commission in Victoria expressed the common belief that the Chinese were immoral people.

²⁴Regina Leader, Thursday September 11, 1884.

²⁵Montreal Gazette, Monday September 8, 1884.

He asserted that

They defy and despise our laws. They make their own laws. They are constantly smuggling in defiance of law. They are, many of them, habitual drinkers, but drink does not affect them as it does Europeans. They only get stupidly drunk, like animals when intoxicated. A man must have brains to get hilariously tipsy and noisy under the influence of strong drink. They have introduced leprosy on this coast, and many white persons are now afflicted with this terrible disease. The youth of the coast are being corrupted and depraved by these people. The gross clasp of a lascivious Chinawoman can be procured for fifty cents or less. Hundreds of men and women are now irredeemably lost by the vice of opium-smoking, and the habit is on the increase.²⁶

Second, the opponents of Chinese immigration complained that Chinese labour competed unfairly with white labour. As Gilbert Malcolm Sproat explained to the Commission:

The Canadian workman is unfairly weighted, and weighted because he is a civilized man, in being forced to offer his labor [sic] in competition with that of a man who, as the product of a debased social condition, is capable of existing here on ten cents a day, the bulk of his earnings going to his contract-masters, and who remains absolutely outside our community, in a state of low animal apathy to all that concerns its well-being.²⁷

John Robson, the Provincial Secretary, also noted that "we must remember Chinese labor [sic] means impoverishing the country, as all their savings go back to China, and they do not contribute in any way to the building up of a country."²⁸

Finally, the commissioners were told that the Chinese race could

²⁶Report on Chinese Immigration, p. 161.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 166-167.

²⁸Ibid., p. 65.

not assimilate with white Canadians. The Attorney-General of British Columbia, A. E. B. Davie, spoke in a language that almost every Canadian could understand when he claimed that the Chinese were a foreign element and that there was no desire for assimilation from the whites and probably none on the part of the Chinese.²⁹ While the commissioners heard many witnesses deny that the Chinese were not civilized, or immoral, and that they were necessary to build the province, no one denied that they were a race that could not be assimilated. Even the Chinese Consul in San Francisco, Huang Sing Chen, who travelled to Victoria to testify, did not question the truth of the assertion that the Chinese were unable to assimilate with white Canadians.³⁰

While his short journey around the province enabled Chapleau to appreciate the bitterness in British Columbia caused by Chinese immigration, his travels also allowed him to seize the majesty of the country. He admired the beauties, "unequalled in any country, of the canyons of the Fraser River on the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway...." He professed that he had "never seen anything to surpass the beauty of the sight when one arrives at Mount Hope seeing there ... like in a dream, an anchor made by the glaring ice on the top of the mountain, as if the hope of the country was well rested in that colony, so true to the Crown and so decided to mark its way in the path of the progress of Confederation."³¹

²⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 162.

³¹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates (Chapleau) July 2, 1885, pp. 3003-3004.

Besides acquainting the visitors from eastern Canada with the marvels that were the geographical features of the province, the Commission presented British Columbian society with a splendid occasion for ostentation. Chapleau was welcomed officially at a gala ball on the 14th, given by Lieutenant-Governor Cornwall. The highly rated Palmer's band played the latest waltzes for the local élite and distinguished guests. Much to Chapleau's delight, a sumptuous meal was served before the cheerful guests departed in the early hours of the morning.³² Official dinners, the most common form of social entertainment for Canada's politicians during that period, were freely bestowed upon the Secretary of State. Food and wine were plentiful, the songs delightful and the speeches witty. It was the French Canadian's oratory in English that disarmed his hosts for Chapleau demonstrated that he appreciated the genius of the English language. He "showed that his mind could play with ease with the instrument. There was a sparkle and playfulness wholly inconsistent with mere mechanical knowledge."³³

These extra-curricular activities, while not jeopardizing Chapleau's delicate health, caused Davin to suffer one of his "little accidents". Apparently the liquids of British Columbia did not agree with Davin for they completely incapacitated him from business for many days at a stretch, "rendering it necessary for him at times to so secrete himself from the public that it is reported that official aid

³²Weekly British Colonist, Friday August 15, 1884.

³³Regina Leader, Thursday September 11, 1884.

had to be called into requisition to ascertain his whereabouts."³⁴ Davin explained that his disability was induced, not by liquor, but opium. He asserted that the opium smoke which he had inhaled on his official visits to opium dens "would derange anyone not accustomed to it."⁵

Other matters caused Chapleau some embarrassment as a member of the Macdonald government. For example, groups such as the Board of Trade of British Columbia were concerned about the neglect of their province by the federal government. The Board presented several demands concerning harbour facilities, navigation laws, communications, and insolvency matters. Since these questions did not fall under the Secretary of State's jurisdiction, Chapleau could only reply that he would lay all such matters before his colleagues whom he would urge to act wherever practicable.³⁶

Finally, after only just over three weeks in British Columbia, Chapleau left Victoria August 27th for Portland, from where he returned to Ottawa. Bestowing a parting benediction on the Royal Commission, the Victoria Times which disliked Chinese immigration and was disappointed the Commission refused to condemn the government's open door policy publicly, solemnly declared: "'Thus ends the greatest fiasco ever perpetrated on a suffering community.'"³⁷

³⁴The Globe, Wednesday September 3, 1884.

³⁵Regina Leader, Thursday September 18, 1884.

³⁶Weekly British Colonist, Friday August 29, 1884.

³⁷The Globe, Wednesday September 3, 1884.

I

Once back in the East, Chapleau attended banquets that were held to honour Sir John A. Macdonald's forty years in politics. In both Toronto and Montreal, Chapleau, French Canada's most magnetic orator, praised his chief in the English language. Before 500 guests at the Junior Conservative Club in Montreal, Chapleau's barely perceptible nuances of an accent added piquancy to his diction and charm in a speech that appealed "à la fois du cerveau et du coeur." According to Trudel, Chapleau's address was eloquent for the first twenty minutes, "malheureusement, comme toujours d'ailleurs," he spoke too long in a review of British political history of half a century. Consequently, other important cabinet ministers were forced to talk in a room that was three-quarters empty.³⁸

After those celebrations for Macdonald in December 1884 and January 1885, Chapleau began to prepare his report on Chinese immigration in earnest. In early February 1885, as both the government and opposition were becoming impatient for the report upon which legislation was to be based that session, Chapleau was again hampered by Davin. In a state of helpless anger Chapleau complained to Macdonald that "Your Davin is again lost since some days, and that work of the Commission is delayed.--That man has cost more than \$5,000 out of the \$9,000 which

³⁸Montreal Gazette, Friday January 16, 1885; La Minerve, vendredi le 16 janvier 1885; & L'Etendard, mercredi le 14 janvier 1885.

the Commission will require. What a nuisance!"³⁹ In contrast to Chapleau's disapproving comments on Davin, Gray less than a month earlier had heaped praise on the Irish-born editor. Gray, who did not have to suffer Davin's eccentricities at close range, eulogized Davin's hard work on the report, his "toiling late into the night" and his excellent analysis of the American Congressional evidence of 1876.⁴⁰ Ironically, in an editorial in the Regina Leader March 3, 1885, Davin praised Chapleau's analysis of the Chinese situation but found much fault with Gray's report.⁴¹

By February, Chapleau's sensitivity to Davin and the question of patronage must have impressed Macdonald for the Prime Minister allowed Chapleau to choose a translator and a printer for the Royal Commission's report. The Secretary of State promptly bestowed the task of translation upon his brother, Pierre, who duly completed the work at \$1.00 per page. To La Minerve, his personal newspaper in Montreal, he awarded the printing contract. In the Commons and from F.-X.-A. Trudel in L'Etendard, Chapleau faced questions about the high publication costs of the report, but he was able to present a convincing defense which disarmed his critics.⁴²

³⁹PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, February 4, 1885.

⁴⁰PAC, Macdonald Papers, Gray to Macdonald, Montreal, January 14, 1885.

⁴¹Regina Leader, Tuesday March 3, 1885.

⁴²Canada, House of Commons, Debates (Chapleau) May 26, 1886, p. 1530.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration of 1885 consisted essentially of two separate reports bound together with documentary evidence. The submission of two distinct statements on the Chinese problem by Chapleau and Gray would not only allow each commissioner to concentrate on a particular aspect of the question, but also would enable Chapleau to omit any conclusions that might conflict with the views of the cabinet. Gray might then be more specific in his summation, thus adding credibility to the investigation without unduly causing embarrassment to Macdonald's government. Consequently, Chapleau prepared and signed one account which concerned all facets of the question in Canada and abroad, while judge Gray concentrated exclusively on the situation in British Columbia. In his report and his three hour long speech in the House of Commons, July 2, 1885, Chapleau explained why white Columbians opposed the Chinese and commented upon each point in turn.

The Secretary of State found no evidence to support the contention that the Chinese were not civilized. He asserted that

the contrast between the whites and the Chinese is not as their enemies fondly and foolishly say, the contrast between the civilized and the barbarian, but between too [sic] kinds of civilization, the one modern and of the West the other ancient and of the East. It is not that he is of another race, differentiated by physical, intellectual, moral, and religious characteristics, the whole stamped and sealed by color [sic]. He comes a highly civilized man, proud of those things which distinguish him as one of the sons of Han....⁴³

They were no less moral than the same classes of other nationalities and

⁴³Report on Chinese Immigration, (Chapleau) p. xcix.

the evils connected with their custom of living in "Chinatowns" such as overcrowding and filth could be handled by police supervision. In fact, most of the complaints levelled against the Chinese were based on ignorance of the Chinese character and habits.⁴⁴ The white Columbians disliked the Chinese because of prejudice, "that tyrannical and narrow judgment ever found confident and aggressive where ignorance is supreme...."⁴⁵ Unconscious prejudices even turned Chinese virtues into defects. The pig-tail, the shaving the front part of the head, the blowse, their particular shoes were considered as marks of inferiority although they might not have been the object of special attention and estrangement except for prejudice.⁴⁶

The Secretary of State struck hard against prejudice. Where prejudice was present, he noted, the individual loses his identity and merges with the group. The fault of the individual is used to stigmatize the whole group to which he belongs. For example, if one Chinaman steals, it is concluded that all are thieves.⁴⁷ Worse still,

the sin committed against me is taken up by my race as a sin committed against our whole family, and individual crimes are thus catalogued into national grievances. This sort of race hostility is materially strengthened by a large class of men who find their principal scope feeling and fostering race enmities.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. cxxx-cxxxi.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. xiv.

⁴⁶Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) July 2, 1885, p. 3006.

⁴⁷Report on Chinese Immigration, (Chapleau) p. xiv.

To them the community is everything, the individual is nothing. Insult them and you may be forgiven, but insult their sect and you have committed an unpardonable sin. Lost in such a generalisation, they become morbidly sensitive as to its grievances, and inordinately jealous of its rivals and competitors. For such small cattle they are capable of a great deal of harm.⁴⁸

Surely, Chapleau contended, evidence showed that the Chinese were no better nor worse than any other group. Yet despite this appeal against prejudice, Chapleau, as a politician, claimed that no government could ignore the national or provincial feelings that were rising against the Chinese, no matter how wrong or irrational such feelings might be.

Nor was Chapleau sympathetic to the second charge made by white Columbians that the Chinese immigration should be restricted because the Chinese took jobs from white labourers by working for low wages. He noted that the same cries were heard twenty-five years earlier in Illinois against Irish labour. But the fears died when the daughter of the cheap labourer married the son of the American who protested.⁴⁹ Chapleau noted that many of the critics against Chinese labour freely admitted its value in the development of British Columbia. Most important from the Canadian point of view was the building of the C. P. R. The fisheries industry, coal and gold mining could not have been undertaken without the aid of the Chinese. Market gardening was entirely a Chinese creation. In addition, without the efficient Chinese servants

⁴⁸Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) July 2, 1885, p. 3007.

⁴⁹Report on Chinese Immigration, (Chapleau) p. xcvi.

some people could not keep house and would be obliged to leave the country.⁵⁰ However, Chapleau admitted that although the theory of laissez-faire as far as government intervention in the economy to regulate wages might be good political economy, it was "not calculated to commend itself to wage-earners, and is not likely to be acted on by the government of a country where wage-earners have a potent voice in the constitution."⁵¹

Chapleau did not adhere doggedly to the doctrine of laissez-faire which left no place for government action in the economy. He maintained that government had a regulatory role to play in the economy, and therefore, action to prevent the incoming of labourers was not ruled out entirely. But such action hinged on Chapleau's notion that the general wealth of mankind could be increased through production.

Chapleau alleged that a stoppage of production diminished the general wealth of mankind "and in that diminution every man, laborer [sic] as well as capitalist, shares, and the laborers [sic] immediately thrown out of employment lose in addition what they have earned, at current rates, during the time they are out of employment, had they been employed."⁵² Thus, if an industry could be carried on at a profit with Chinese labour which could not be so carried on with white labour, then

⁵⁰ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) July 2, 1885, pp. 3007-3009.

⁵¹ Report on Chinese Immigration, (Chapleau) p. xxvi.

⁵² Ibid., p. xxvi.

Chapleau concluded that it was in the interest of both the working man and the whole community that such an industry should be worked by means of the Chinese. But there were exceptions to this general rule. If for example, in Canadian society, it could be shown that wages were lowered not by "a healthy and fair competition between fellow citizens, but between the citizens of the State and aliens whose standard of comfort is below what the ordinary decencies of life require, who have thrown aside every weight which could impede them in the race of competition," then the government could step in to restore a proper form of competition.⁵³ Also, such action was desirable if labour were truly servile, for slavery might enrich a few individuals "but it infuses a virus into labor [sic] relations and the community generally which no wealth or prosperity can outweigh."⁵⁴ Chapleau believed he had discovered in the case of the Chinese in British Columbia an inhibition to "healthy and fair competition" that made government action acceptable.

Although Chapleau conceded that the government could legislate because of the first two arguments British Columbians used, he did not advocate government action for these reasons. Rather, he stressed the necessity for federal legislation because of the inability of the Chinese to assimilate. Because they could not assimilate to the race born and living on the soil, he affirmed the Chinese tended to create a special

⁵³Ibid., p. xxvi.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. xxvi.

colony governed by foreign customs which posed, if not a danger, at least a problem to Canada. The fact that the Chinese were a non-assimilable race inspired irritation, discontent and resentment amongst white labourers.⁵⁵ Chapleau was certain that race antipathy was at the bottom of British Columbia's cry for restriction, "and though to the philosophers such antipathy may appear narrow, a profounder insight may find in it a natural--perhaps a divinely-implanted--safeguard against great ends."⁵⁶ After a study of some American writers, the best known of whom was Albion Winegar Tourgée, Chapleau asserted that the white, yellow and black--the three grand varieties of human species--could not fuse as the Irish, German, and French could. This inability to assimilate caused antagonism which made legislation necessary.⁵⁷ Restrictive immigration would help to prevent the flow of Chinese to Canada from becoming

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. cxxx. John A. Munro overlooks Chapleau's stress on the inability of the Chinese to assimilate and his call for legislation because of that fact. Consequently, he can state that "Chapleau's position was a reasoned one" while he continually argues against that position throughout his essay. See Munro, "British Columbia and the 'Chinese Evil': Canada's first anti-Asiatic immigration law", JCS, p. 50.

⁵⁶ Report on Chinese Immigration, p. xcvi.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. xcix. Chapleau urged Canadians to read Tourgée's work, An Appeal to Caesar. (See A. W. Tourgée, An Appeal to Caesar, New York: Fords, Howard, & Hulbert, 1884.) Tourgée was a northerner who fought in the American civil war for the north, but who disliked the period of reconstruction. He advocated universal education supported by the federal treasury to reduce difficulties between the black and white races. Although he urged toleration, he did not believe that the black and white races could mix. Chapleau adopted Tourgée's racial notions and applied them to the Canadian Chinese problem.

dangerously large.⁵⁸ According to Chapleau, it was only natural that the white population of the Dominion should desire their country to be spoken of as being inhabited by a vigorous, energetic white race of people. "I say that it would be much more pleasant to have this said of the Province of British Columbia, than to have that Province even if it grew richer than it is, with two-thirds of its population composed of a race which is not similar to ours, and which cannot assimilate with ours."⁵⁹ The government's duty was to make certain Canada remained a white Dominion.

Even though he believed that few Chinese would enter Canada, Chapleau insisted that legislation was necessary. Canada, unlike the United States, was in no danger of being overwhelmed by "hordes of Mongolians" because of "our" race which was superior. He claimed that he "would be ashamed to be a British subject, or to be of the nationality to which I belong, if I believed for a moment that the survival of the fittest would be the survival of the Chinese race on this continent."⁶⁰ Also, Canada's cold climate would deter Chinese immigration. East of the Rockies the climate was too cold for the Chinese since most of those Chinese that emigrated to Canada came from the southern part of China.

⁵⁸Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) May 4, 1885, p. 1590.

⁵⁹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) July 2, 1885, pp. 3009-3010.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 3010.

In British Columbia, where nature had been kinder, "the breeze from the old country comes to them, regenerating their nationality to such a degree that they do not even want to be buried in...." Canada.⁶¹ Legislation was necessary, however, because despite the fact that few would arrive, Chapleau warned that "as a piece of wood in the tissues of the human body, unless it is removed, must cause disease in the places around it, and ultimately to the whole body, so the civilization, must disappear, or it will be a cause of danger to the community."⁶² The Secretary of State's belief in the superiority of the Arian race caused him to exhibit the very prejudice he had condemned.

In the final analysis, it was apparent that Chapleau, who was acting as Macdonald's mouthpiece, could call for legislation of some kind because the C. P. R. was almost complete. With communications established between British Columbia and the rest of Canada so that European people could reach the west coast by railway, Chapleau stated in the spring of 1885 that "the people of British Columbia are right in asking ... that this [Chinese] immigration should be restricted...."⁶³

In his report, John Hamilton Gray was sufficiently ambiguous to leave Macdonald with great leeway in terms of legislation. However, unlike Chapleau, he could and did make specific recommendations which

⁶¹Ibid., p. 3010.

⁶²Ibid., p. 3010.

⁶³Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) May 4, 1885, p. 1590.

were later to form the basis of the government's legislation. In a letter to the Prime Minister the British Columbian judge confided that

If you wish to legislate this Session, it [the report] gives the outlines of a measure of Restriction based on sound principles of Sanitary and Police Regulations which are perfectly consistent with International Law and defensible on principle.

If you think it desirable not to legislate until after the completion of the C. P. R. it affords abundance of facts and reasons to prove the wisdom of delay.⁶⁴

In its wisdom the federal government decided that legislation was necessary in order to prevent disorder in British Columbia. Macdonald had received complete authority in the matter from the Imperial government notwithstanding the commercial treaty between Great Britain and China.⁶⁵ But the Canadian government was conscious that nothing should be done to inhibit commerce with a nation of 350,000,000 people especially since Asiatic trade over the Canadian Pacific Railway would afford great profit to the country. Yet, Chapleau observed, Canada had to protect itself.⁶⁶ Thus, with these considerations carefully weighed, Chapleau introduced a bill to restrict Chinese immigration on April 10, 1885.

The principal features of the bill called for a tax of \$5.00 (Gray had advised \$10.00) for each Chinese who landed. Each ship was allowed to transport one Chinese for every ten tons. Besides these two

⁶⁴PAC, Macdonald Papers, Gray to Macdonald, Montreal, January 14, 1885.

⁶⁵Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) July 2, 1885; p. 3004.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 3011.

main points, there were special regulations for the registry of each immigrant and for the inspection of dwellings.⁶⁷ British Columbia believed the bill would be ineffective and unable to check the influx of Chinese. Such sentiments were expressed at the public meeting of May 2nd in Victoria presided over by British Columbia cabinet ministers, labour leaders and local political officials. Another demonstration and march on May 21st in Victoria made the same point. At this public rally, the speakers who haranged the crowd used all the old clichés: one demonstrator, for example, "compared the Chinese to the Colorado potato bug which would eat the life out of the country."⁶⁸ In the face of this strong criticism from the west coast, Chapleau withdrew the measure and just before the end of the session he introduced another bill. Although he could hardly speak because of gall-bladder trouble, Chapleau managed to deliver a three hour oration when he introduced the new legislation on July 2, 1885.⁶⁹

Under the new bill, each Chinese immigrant was required to pay a tax of \$50.00 upon arrival, except for government representatives, tourists, merchants, students and men of science.⁷⁰ A ship could now

⁶⁷La Presse, mardi le 14 avril 1885.

⁶⁸Daily British Colonist, Friday May 22, 1885.

⁶⁹Montreal Gazette, Saturday October 10, 1885 & La Presse, jeudi le 16 juillet 1885. J. A. Munro fails to take account of the change in Federal legislation between April and July. See Munro, "British Columbia and the 'Chinese Evil': Canada's first anti-Asiatic immigration law", JCS, p. 49.

⁷⁰The province of British Columbia which was to receive one-quarter of that revenue later obtained one-half.

only carry one Chinese for every fifty tons of weight. This legislation, entitled the Chinese Immigration Act, received Royal assent July 20, 1885. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, which petitioned the federal government against the Act,⁷¹ received scant support from the Canadian people who were imbued with notions of racial purity and superiority.

In case the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 failed in its task, Canadians made certain that the Chinese posed no danger to their political life by disenfranchising them under the new Electoral Franchise Act of the same year. Chapleau endorsed the government's decision because he claimed the Chinese did not want the vote and would not exercise it since they generally did not become naturalized British subjects. Furthermore, once armed with the vote, the Chinese would be a threat to Canada's institutions. The Secretary of State based his first argument upon conversations with the Consul General of China of San Francisco, Huang Sing Chen. Huang informed Chapleau that the Chinese went abroad to trade, to engage in mercantile, industrial and mining pursuits. Immigrants from the Middle Kingdom did not ask for the right to vote because such a request would "simply excite the jealousy of foreign Governments, who would fear that on account of our immense population at home, we could furnish so great a number of voters as would constitute in their eyes a danger."⁷² Huang argued that all the Chinese desired was the other

⁷¹PAC, Macdonald Papers, Petition from the Executive Committee of the "Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association."

⁷²Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) May 4, 1885, p. 1590.

privileges of citizenship and to be let alone when they obeyed the laws.

Macdonald, who moved an amendment to the Franchise Bill to prevent Chinese from voting, stressed the second aspect of Chapleau's argument. The Prime Minister noted that the Chinese were "natives of a country where representative institutions are unknown ... [The Chinaman] has no British instincts or British feelings or aspirations, and therefore ought not to have a vote."⁷³ This Act effectively barred any naturalized Chinese or any who were already British subjects, from voting. Thus, those Chinese from Hong Kong or those born in Canada, lost the franchise.⁷⁴ A few voices were raised in the House of Commons against excluding any British subjects from the vote, but in vain.⁷⁵

None of these voices of protest emanated from the francophone element in Quebec since French Canadians generally adopted Chapleau's view that the Chinese should be excluded from Canada because they could not be assimilated to the Canadian way of life.⁷⁶ However, such unanimity

⁷³Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Macdonald) May 4, 1885, p. 1582.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 1582. Only in the 1940's did the Chinese obtain the right to obtain Canadian citizenship and the right to vote in British Columbia.

⁷⁵L. H. Davies of Queen's P. E. I., A. H. Gilmor of Charlotte, P. Mitchell of Northumberland N. B. and H. H. Gault of West Montreal criticized the government for preventing a certain group of British subjects from voting.

⁷⁶La Presse, vendredi le 25 février 1885; La Minerve, jeudi le 26 février 1885 & lundi le 6 juillet 1885; L'Etendard, vendredi le 17 juillet 1885.

of opinion did not prevent Senator Trudel from attempting to embarrass Chapleau on the question of Chinese immigration. For example, in April 1886, Trudel seized an opportunity to scuttle Chapleau's proposed minor amendments to the Chinese Restriction Act of 1885--amendments designed to render the working of the Act "more practicable."⁷⁷ Although the bill was accepted by the Commons, Chapleau's followers claimed that Trudel induced the Senate to kill the proposed legislation.⁷⁸ Trudel was apparently determined to blemish Chapleau's laudable work on the commission in order to attempt to prevent his rehabilitation within Conservative ranks.

Despite Trudel's attempt to stain Chapleau's achievement, Chapleau's popularity in the country was enhanced by his work in the most western province of Canada. Ironically though, just as Chapleau's successful handling of the Chinese issue in British Columbia seemed to indicate that he might at long last attain a greater stature and obtain a key role in Ottawa, another crisis erupted in the West that blocked his rise to a position of dominance within the Conservative party. In 1885, a rebellion led by Louis Riel, the French-speaking métis leader, broke out in the North West. The Canadian government crushed that revolt. Riel surrendered to Canadian authorities and faced trial for his role in the uprising. The courts found him guilty and he was sentenced to

⁷⁷Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) April 16, 1886, p. 746.

⁷⁸La Minerve, lundi le 7 juin 1886.

hang. However, before that event could occur, francophones were aroused and demanded Riel's pardon while anglophones generally advocated his death. Consequently, while both French and English-speaking Canadians were ready to work together to restrict, if not exclude, groups of people from "their" country that did not wish to assimilate, that question caused no difficulty as long as it was directed against groups other than the British and French. However, because of the North West Rebellion, the question of assimilation came not only to dominate Canadian thinking on the Chinese issue in 1885, but threatened to split apart the two founding communities in Canada as the rebel Riel was turned into a symbol by francophones who resisted assimilation to the anglophone community and by anglophones who desired an homogeneous British nation. Chapleau, who advocated a partnership between French and English-speaking Canadians in order to build a strong country in their shared fatherland, faced major political problems in his attempt to reconcile these two groups. These difficulties Chapleau encountered increased and intensified as the date for Riel's execution in the West approached.

CHAPTER V

"TO UPHOLD THE LAW AND THE CROWN"

On Monday, November 16, 1885, Louis Riel was executed at Regina under the supervision of the sheriff, Major S.E. St. Onge Chapleau, brother of the Secretary of State.

Most French Canadians were shocked and saddened when they received the news from the West. Some were angered and dubbed Chapleau's brother as "the hangman of Riel".¹ Others believed the death of the Métis leader to be an attack on French Canada by English-speaking Canadians. Senator F.-X.-A. Trudel and his dissident Conservative cohorts were of this latter view. More than any other person, Trudel, through the pages of L'Etendard blew Riel up into a symbol of French Canada. Chapleau recognized that Trudel was able to capture the imagination of French Canadians with his stress on the humiliations that the minority suffered at the hands of the English-speaking majority because "the inner motor of the outbreak and of the subsequent agitation was the deep feeling ... in the minds of the minority, that the political direction of the North West affairs is entirely foreign to their aspirations and rights."² As an individual, as a human being, the Métis leader

¹PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, October 19, 1887.

²PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, June 4, 1888.

meant nothing to Trudel. He contended that :

La question principale ici n'est pas de savoir si Riel est coupable ou non, aliéné ou non: le point capital, c'est de savoir si notre race va être traitée avec une odieuse distinction d'avec les autres races; c'est de savoir si, auprès des populations de langue anglaise, les Canadiens-Français ne seront désormais que des parias, des victimes de la cruauté féroce d'une secte barbare et sanguinaire [that is the Orange Order].³

Trudel believed that the trouble in the North West was the result of "la déloyauté et la mauvaise foi avec laquelle les hommes d'Etat Anglo-Canadiens ont toujours travaillé à violer le pacte fédéral de façon à ruiner insensiblement notre nationalité...."⁴ Confederation to English-speaking Canadians signified the assimilation of the francophone to the anglophone community. "C'est en vertu de cette lubie, qu'ils [English-speaking Canadians] ont tenté de faire du Nord-Ouest Canadien un pays exclusivement anglais, et que dans ce but ils ont voulu procéder haut la main à l'extermination du groupe français qui les y avait précédés et qui y était maître du sol...."⁵ Trudel became convinced that "les traitements indignes infligés aux Métis français formaient la chaîne d'une odieuse conspiration visant à leur extermination comme peuple et à l'annihilation de toute influence canadienne française dans les vastes territoires du Nord-Ouest."⁶

³ L'Etendard, vendredi le 13 novembre 1885.

⁴ L'Etendard, lundi le 2 novembre 1885.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ L'Etendard, samedi le 13 février 1886. These views are expressed in the pamphlet, La Croisade Anti-française et anti-catholique dirigée par Sir John A. Macdonald, [Montréal]: Imp. de L'Etendard.

Fearful that Riel's execution signalled an attack on the survival of French Canada, Senator Trudel embarked on a campaign to protect his compatriots. He advocated the rupture of the alliance between francophones and anglophones within the Conservative party because, he contended, the hanging of Riel demonstrated Macdonald's betrayal of French Canadians and revealed the Prime Minister's desire of a homogeneous English-speaking country. He also scorned those French Canadians, like Chapleau, who sided with the old chieftain. They desired assimilation, committed "la trahison nationale", and thus, should be rejected.⁷ The only possible solution was to pursue the course Trudel had advocated since his entry into active public life--the union of French Canadians outside of the existing party structures. He suggested the formation of le mouvement national. With specific reference to the Parnellistes in Britain, he asserted that French Canada's hope in the future was "pour les 40 conservateurs français catholiques de Québec, qu'à se tenir en phalange compacte sous le drapeau national, pour rester la grande force à laquelle les honnêtes gens des autres provinces ne peuvent refuser de déférer."⁸ United, these Conservatives, who would form the majority of the opposition to Macdonald, could force the small group of Liberals to abandon their old standard and join them. Conservatives did not have to worry about liberalism, for to "Sacrifier nos causes nationales par peur du libéralisme, c'est, pour nos messieurs de la corde, l'action de

⁷L'Etendard, jeudi le 29 juillet 1886.

⁸L'Etendard, jeudi le 12 avril 1886.

la grenouille qui s'enfonce dans les vases infectes de ces marais croupissants, pour s'y mettre à couvert de la pluie...."⁹

According to Trudel, the Liberal party was not to be feared as much as the Chapleautiste group within the Conservative party. It was more difficult to detect the latter who were hidden in a Conservative cloak, thus they were more dangerous than those politicians within the Liberal party who openly professed the hated doctrine. "Qu'on juge à ses fruits le libéralisme juif gambettiste des Chapleau, des Tarte, des Senécal et cie; que l'on apprécie de même le libéralisme même des Ross, des Flynn des Lynch, etc: il faudra bien reconnaître qu'il est beaucoup plus dangereux que celui des libéraux avancés. Car, outre qu'il est aussi mauvais, c'est un ennemi caché, au lieu d'être un adversaire connu; c'est un serpent caché sous les fleurs."¹⁰ The necessity of the hour was for all French Canadians to join in union under the national banner, regardless of previous political affiliation, for

En choisissant une alliance honorable basée sur les principes de reconnaissance et de conservation de nos droits, ils eussent assuré, n'importe sous quel régime, la conservation de l'influence politique de notre race. Car ils fussent restés ce qu'ils avaient été jusqu'à aujourd'hui, l'immense majorité, la presque totalité de Québec; ils eussent été la nation Canadienne-française. Et ayant le droit de parler comme tels, ils eussent assumé, dans toute leur plénitude, la reconnaissance de nos droits.¹¹

⁹L'Etendard, jeudi le 1er avril 1886.

¹⁰L'Etendard, mercredi le 10 novembre 1886.

¹¹L'Etendard, vendredi le 12 février 1886.

Like all movements, Trudel wrote in L'Etendard, as opposed to political parties, the aim of the French Canadian mouvement national would not be to seek control of political power. The members of the mouvement would form a pool of talent from which the anglophone paternalistic majority would call upon to fill cabinet posts destined for French Canadians. This political association of the minority in Confederation would make legitimate demands upon the majority, which like any good father, could not refuse to accede to the reasonable requests.¹²

Not all French Canadians, especially not all Conservatives, agreed with Trudel's analysis of Riel's death nor with the Senator's idea on the formation of a national movement which was designed to protect French Canada from the consequences of Riel's fate. The Secretary of State, Adolphe Chapleau, was incensed that Trudel should attempt to twist the fate of a criminal into a French Canadian battle cry. He contended that the logical consequence of un mouvement national would be the isolation of French Canadians "créant l'antagonisme de race, provoquant des représailles, des luttes, des désastres."¹³ Because of Chapleau's strong antipathy to the Castors and his determination not to fan the flames of racial hatred, the Secretary of State emerged as the leading spokesman within the Conservative party opposed to the Grand Vicaire's strident wails.

¹²L'Etendard, samedi le 19 décembre 1885.

¹³J.-A. Chapleau, La Question Riel. Lettre de L'Hon. J.-A. Chapleau, [Ottawa: le 28 novembre 1885], p. 4.

Although the majority of Liberals opposed the Conservative government's policy in the sordid affair, neither the provincial nor federal Liberals shared Trudel's opinions. Mercier, the provincial Liberal leader, spoke of un parti national, not un mouvement national. The purpose of the formation of a party that contained Liberals and Conservatives would be to defeat the Conservative Macdonald administration and the provincial Ross government.¹⁴ The Federal Liberals from Quebec under Laurier's guidance were content to express the frustration of the population of the North West in order to embarrass the government and to attempt to reap political benefits from a party ravaged by internal strife. Consequently, the important battle over the significance to French Canada of the Riel affair occurred within the Conservative party itself while the Liberals waited patiently to collect the political spoils that a weakened opposition would be unlikely to glean.

By 1885, the Conservative party was already vulnerable on the hustings because of the struggles between the Castors and the Chapleautistes that had reached a greater level of ferocity since Chapleau's entry into the Macdonald cabinet in 1882. Now, yet another crisis had arisen which brought to the surface all the old antagonisms. In addition, the same arguments that had been employed years before in the attempt to define the nature of French Canada and her role in North America were recited again. Trudel was still obsessed with the fear of assimilation. Chapleau

¹⁴Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, Montréal: éditions Bernard Valiquette, [1942], V, 114.

was not. He spoke of progress, of economic development, of those aspects of life he considered to be far more important to ensure la survivance than any irrational outbursts about a criminal. Of those politicians of Trudel's stamp who raised the racial issue at every turn, Chapleau remarked that railways,

le progrès du comté, sont choses de moindre importance, choses de rien, comparées à la fameuse question Riel. Laissez-les vous chanter ce refrain sur toutes les gammes de leur répertoire; mais restez ce que vous êtes, des hommes sérieux, des hommes pratiques sur qui les hâbleries hypocrites n'ont pas de prise et que ces hâbleries ne sauraient détourner des vraies questions d'intérêt public. Nous, électeurs de Terrebonne, ce que nous cherchons actuellement c'est le progrès, et nous sommes d'avis que la prétendue question nationale au moyen de laquelle on voudrait nous distraire n'est qu'un leurre, qu'une manoeuvre de politiciens sans scruples.¹⁵

Chapleau left no mistake that he was one of those "qui s'efforcent de développer nos ressources, de créer des entreprises...."¹⁶ To take such a stand did not mean that he was a traitor to his fatherland, a "lâche", a "renégat" to his race as Trudel had alleged.¹⁷ He, and not Trudel, espoused true patriotism.¹⁸

As a French Canadian, Chapleau was concerned about the French fact in all parts of Canada. He realized that agitation in the province of Quebec over Riel could cause harm to his French Canadian compatriots

¹⁵La Minerve, samedi 1e 23 janvier 1886. Chapleau spoke at St.-Jérôme on January 20, 1886.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

in Manitoba and the North West. Trudel had forgotten

qu'au Manitoba et dans les Territoires, nous avons des compatriotes disséminés épars au milieu d'une population qui leur est étrangère et que ces braves avant-coureurs de la conquête pacifique que nous rêvons pourraient bien ressentir fatalement le contre-coup de l'agitation de notre province.

Pour Québec, c'est une question de sentiment: pour les habitants du Nord-Ouest, c'est une question de sécurité, une affaire de vie ou de mort.¹⁹

Chapleau not only condemned Trudel for his determination to create a racial issue out of the Riel hanging, but he also scoffed at the solution Trudel proposed for French Canada to escape from the consequences of Riel's death. The Secretary of State was opposed to the union of all French Canadians in a political group distinct and separate from English-speaking Canadians. In a reply to some of his constituents who supported his stand, Chapleau complimented them on the fact that they had been

the first to realize that the exaggeration of a sentiment, noble and grand in itself--that of national pride--might have consequences disastrous to our country, to ourselves, the minority in the confederation, and especially to those who are to follow us, to the future of our race. Your enlightened patriotism comprehends the lessons of our history, and gives me good examples to follow. Lafontaine, [sic] Morin, Cartier, those great citizens, those true patriots had courage enough to allow them to be accused of cowardice, sufficient love of country to allow them to be stigmatized as traitors, when their efforts assured the destinies of the country. It has been my aim to follow in their steps. It was my firm and conscientious belief that the future of our nationality would be endangered if we yielded to the solicitations of those who urged us to break violently with our colleagues. Such a rupture implied the

¹⁹ L'Etendard, samedi le 5 décembre 1885. This is a letter from Chapleau to his electors in Terrebonne.

isolation of our race, isolation would engender antagonism, and, worst of all, the war of race with race. Let others drive you to such excesses, but, for my part, I will never preach to you such dangerous doctrines.²⁰

He realized that under the Parliamentary system it was possible for Macdonald to govern without the support of French Canadians. Chapleau understood

parfaitement que le premier ministre fédéral peut choisir ses collègues où il le veut et gouverner avec eux tant qu'il possède la majorité en Chambre, quelle que soit cette majorité. C'était donc absurde de dire qu'en résignant sur la question Riel, les trois ministres français eussent rendu tout le gouvernement impossible.²¹

Thus, as Chapleau's private secretary, L.-H. Taché, a nephew of the Archbishop of St - Boniface, claimed,

M. Chapleau inclinait pour la clémence, qu'il a fait ce qu'il était humainement possible pour faire commuer la sentence, mais qu'il n'a pas cru devoir exposer l'avenir des canadiens français et leur influence à Ottawa, par une résignation qui n'aurait pas changé le cours des choses et qui nous eût mis en conflit avec les autres provinces.²²

Obviously, Chapleau's position was completely incompatible with that of Trudel.

While the Riel affair served to maintain the gulf that already existed within the Conservative party between the Chapleautistes and the Trudel dissidents, the events of 1885 promoted an uneasy reconciliation

²⁰ Montreal Gazette, Monday November 30, 1885. Chapleau to Messrs. Charles de Martigny, M. D., G.-A. Nantel, M. P. P., A.-N. Lapierre, J. P., and others, electors and citizens of St -Jérôme, Ottawa November 27, 1885.

²¹ La Minerve, samedi le 23 janvier 1886.

²² AASB, L.-H. Taché à Mgr Taché, Ottawa, le 27 janvier 1886.

between Chapleau and the ultramontane Bishop of Trois-Rivières who rejected Senator Trudel's position. Neither of the important ultramontane Bishops of French Canada, Taché of St- Boniface nor Laflèche of Trois-Rivières, could condone Trudel's rejection of the Macdonald Conservative government and his apparent support of insurrection. Both Bishops indicated that the redress of grievances in the North West did not demand an overthrow of the federal government and thus, opposed the Landry motion of regret at Riel's execution since they considered it a motion of non-confidence.²³

Trudel was furious with the Bishop's stand. Once again the Senator, who never ceased to proclaim his submission to the Church, rejected the opinion of the ecclesiastical authorities when their views conflicted with his own. In 1885, unlike previous occasions, Trudel lost even the ultramontane support within the Church. However, such was the dogmatic belief in his own rightness that the opposition of the entire Roman Catholic Church hierarchy did not deter him. He simply dismissed the Church. Trudel claimed that the ecclesiastical authorities could not impose

their views of public questions on those who, by their position, should be best qualified to deal with them--that is, the members of Parliament.... "The encroachment of the church on the state,

²³ On March 2, 1886, Philippe Landry, the Conservative member for Montmagny, introduced a motion which deplored the execution of Riel. Landry was the son of Dr. J.-E. Landry, proprietor of l'asile de Beauport and a member of le Cercle Catholique whose members had subscribed to the Programme Catholique when the group was formed. Landry who opposed Riel's execution did not break with the Conservative party to the chagrin of Trudel. La Minerve, lundi le 24 janvier 1887.

or the action of a church dignitary who would invade the rights of citizens, would be as much opposed to the will of God and in violation of the law, as the encroachment of the state on the church and of the citizen on the rights of the bishop.... The issue at stake is a civil and political one, and evidently the accomplishment of his mandate by a member, as the manner in which he votes in the house, is exclusively within his own domain."²⁴

With equal vigour, Trudel attacked Laflèche for the latter's support of the provincial Conservative Ross government. The disillusioned Senator preached the overthrow of Ross because he believed Chapleau was directing the Premier's actions during the Riel crisis. For example, on February 15, 1886, Ross, with three other leading ministers, Taillon, Blanchet and Flynn, met with Chapleau and his disciple, Joseph Tassé, in Montreal to plot the strategy of the local government. Chapleau persuaded Ross not to call the Quebec Legislature into session until after the Riel question had been debated in the federal Parliament in March. Following a favourable vote in the House of Commons for Macdonald, Chapleau argued, Ross' ability to rally his supporters to prevent the Quebec Assembly from censuring the federal cabinet for Riel's execution would be increased.²⁵ As planned, the Ross government defeated the Garneau motion which expressed regret at Riel's fate after the federal government had received a vote of confidence on a similar motion.²⁶

²⁴ Montreal Gazette, Tuesday January 25, 1887.

²⁵ La Presse, mardi le 16 février 1886.

²⁶ L'Etendard, vendredi le 7 mai 1886 & mardi le 18 mai 1886. Pierre Garneau, deputy for Quebec proposed the motion which another Conservative, Louis Beaubien of Hochelaga seconded.

Because of the provincial government's attitude, Trudel was determined to have the two renegades, Ross and Taillon, removed from office after the provincial general election of October 14, 1886. Much to his annoyance, Laflèche censured him for his stand. In return, a bitter Trudel wrote in anger to the Bishop. He warned that Laflèche's diocese would become the chateau fort of the Orangiste and liberal radical cause of Macdonald and Chapleau. In fact, the Provincial Secretary, Jean Blanchet, and Chapleau "qui ont toujours porté le nom de conservateurs sont peut-être les plus libéraux de tous."²⁷ The disgruntled Senator also noted that Ross was under the corrupt influence of Chapleau and Sénécal while the strongest accusation Trudel could hurl at Mercier, the Liberal leader whom Trudel supported, was that Mercier had accepted "\$5,000 lorsqu'il a retiré la Contestation Mousseau."²⁸ Such tantrums did not endear Trudel to Laflèche. Rather, they revealed Trudel in his true light--a smug dogmatic moralist who submitted to no authority but his own. It was not surprising that after such outbursts, the ultramontanes broke all connections with the dissident Conservatives

²⁷ ASTR, Trudel à Mgr Laflèche, Montréal, le 24 novembre 1886.

²⁸ Ibid. The incident to which Trudel refers, Mercier's \$5,000 job, occurred in 1883. After Chapleau had left provincial politics to enter Macdonald's cabinet, Mousseau became Premier of Quebec and was elected in the riding of Jacques-Cartier. However, his election was contested. Mercier was the counsel for the prosecution. The petitioner was an unknown, someone whom Mercier had brought forward as a figure behind which he could strike at his opponent. The case came to trial, but before it was concluded, Mercier had abandoned it in return for \$5,000 from Mousseau. See, Montreal Gazette, Friday September 24, 1886 and Les Cinq Mille Piastres de M. Mercier, [1886].

and aligned themselves with the majority of the Church hierarchy behind the Chapleautistes.

With the full weight of the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Quebec behind the Conservative administration, Chapleau seized an occasion in October 1885 to confirm the bleu-Church alliance in French Canada. He gracefully accepted a confidential request to obtain the elevation of Archbishop Taschereau of Quebec city to the Cardinalate.²⁹ Sir John Macdonald required little urging from Chapleau to see that the British transmitted to the Holy See the message that Canada would look upon such an appointment with pleasure.³⁰ The Secretary of State was extremely proud of the role he played, for such an event demonstrated "le grand sentiment de bonne entente qui règne dans notre pays, parmi les hommes haut placés de différentes croyances."³¹

While the Riel affair caused a rapprochement between Chapleau and the ultramontane Bishops of French Canada and enabled him to

²⁹ Montreal Gazette, Saturday June 26, 1886. This is a statement made by Vicar-General Maréchal to a Herald reporter. Also see L'Etendard, samedi le 26 juin 1886.

³⁰ Daniel C. Lyne suggests that Macdonald's objective in the matter was to counteract the political effect of the Riel execution among French Canadians. See Daniel C. Lyne, "Sir John A. Macdonald and the Appointment of Canada's first Cardinal", JCS, 2.4 (November 1967), 60.

³¹ J. A. Chapleau, Du Droit International: Discours prononcé à l'université Laval, à Montréal, le 22 juin 1886. Ottawa: Imprimerie du Canada, 1888, p. 2. On June 7, 1886, Archbishop Taschereau received a cablegramme which stated that at a meeting of the Consistory, the Pope had raised him to the dignity of a Cardinal.

strengthen his ties with the Church as a whole, the tragic event also served to open an irreparable breach between Chapleau and Sir Hector Langevin. The regrettable episode of 1885 undermined the Secretary of State's confidence in the leadership ability of Langevin. Langevin remained politically paralysed throughout the affair because he naively continued to believe that just as the Castors could be accommodated within the Conservative party so anglophones would respect French Canada's wishes. Consequently, just as on previous occasions, he refused to oppose or placate the dissidents led by Trudel or abandon trust in Macdonald whom he thought would refuse to hang Riel. Therefore, as French Canada stirred into a maddening fury, Langevin remained silent. Chapleau acted quite differently. During the early summer and later in Europe where he underwent a gall-bladder operation, Chapleau worked tirelessly to present the government's position on the Riel insurrection and to prevent the polarization of the country along racial lines. The Fall River letter affair of June demonstrated Chapleau's efforts to squelch any suggestions that French Canada's interests should become symbolized in Riel.

On May 24, 1885, some French Canadians had gathered at Fall River, Massachusetts and had passed a number of resolutions which condemned the federal government and sympathized with the recently captured Riel and the unfortunate Métis of the North West. A copy of these resolutions had been sent to Chapleau who had hastened to reply to his misguided American friends.

In a carefully worded letter of June 6, Chapleau had contended that he could not accept the condemnation of the Canadian government

because the accusations were unjust, based on misinformation, and condoned murder and other criminal acts. He had placed the blame for the insurrection squarely on Louis Riel.

Louis Riel n'a qu'une excuse pour les crimes auxquels il a donné lieu: c'est la manie dont il est atteint. C'est un crank dangereux, un de ces esprits détraqués pour qui la rébellion et la loi ne sont rien quand leur orgueil est en jeu. Ce qu'il a fait est une folie que la pitié même ne saurait excuser et que la loi doit visiter avec la même sévérité que la préméditation malicieuse.³²

Chapleau had continued that the rebellion had not been justified. This assertion was based on Chapleau's view of the illegitimacy of resistance to authority. The Secretary of State believed that the right of resistance was tolerable only when laws were decreed which were against the principles of justice, honour and morality; when the ruler had forgotten the good of the people and exercised power for his sole satisfaction; when long and personal suffering had been sustained, and prayers, petitions, protests and summonses had been presented to the sovereign; and then only when those who were qualified to advise the people had decided that the rule of the ruler had produced more harm than would a revolution.³³ With this notion of rebellion in mind, Chapleau had explained to his Fall River compatriots that if the Métis had had

³²La Minerve, samedi le 27 juin 1885. Chapleau à A. Plante et L. Charland, Ottawa, le 6 juin 1885.

³³Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) March 24, 1886, p. 348. On the question of law, Chapleau claimed he followed Saint Thomas Aquinas who stated "Rationis ordinatio, ad bonum commune, ab eo qui curam habet communitatis promulgata...." In other words, a law was a decree founded on reason, made for the common good and published by the individual who had charge of the community.

serious griefs against the Canadian administration, they could have petitioned the government like any ordinary citizen. If their petitions had not been heard, they could have charged their friends in Parliament to present their protestations. Neither of those procedures had been followed. "Rien ne fut présenté au Conseil, de leur part, qui ait requis l'action spéciale de leurs amis, et jamais Riel, ni aucun des Métis ne m'ont adressé seulement une requête ou même une simple lettre, demandant de les protéger, de les défendre."³⁴ Instead of an emotional display of sympathy for someone who had committed a heinous crime, Chapleau had counselled his correspondents to aid the poor Métis who were more imprudent than malicious.

The thrust of Chapleau's argument in his Fall River letter had been blunted because of his false statement that the Canadian government had received no petitions from the Métis for redress of grievances. (Chapleau had correctly stated that he had personally never received any letters or requests for aid from the Métis of any kind.) The Secretary of State had made his misleading assertion after he had consulted only with the Department of the Interior on the matter. Sir Donald Macpherson, the Minister, had even made a similar statement in the Senate, but the Minister of the Interior later had admitted the truth under pressure from Trudel.³⁵ By concentrating his attack against Chapleau on the subject

³⁴La Minerve, samedi le 27 juin 1885. Chapleau à A. Plante et L. Charland, Ottawa, le 6 juin 1885.

³⁵La Presse, jeudi le 23 juillet 1885.

of whether or not petitions had been sent to the government, Trudel was partially able to discredit Chapleau's case, without attempting to attack the essential aspect of Chapleau's thesis.³⁶ By the time Chapleau had corrected his error and had claimed that no protest or summons had been sent to the government since the beginning of the Riel agitation, the weakness of his case had been fully exploited by Trudel.³⁷

Despite Chapleau's slip, his position had been clear from the outset--Riel should be regarded like any other individual who had been charged with treason. In France from July 18 until October 9, Chapleau had continued to present the government's case. Both before and after his operation which caused him to lose weight but restored him to health,³⁸ Chapleau had refused to countenance any praise for Louis Riel.

When he had arrived in Paris, Chapleau had found that there was a great deal of sympathy for the rebel. Newspapers, such as the widely read Le Figaro, believed Riel was a Frenchman who had been persecuted by the British government. As a compliment, an acquaintance had sent the ailing Secretary of State a newspaper clipping in which the British government was abused for the acts of the Canadian government. Chapleau's admirer soon understood the truth after the Canadian minister had

³⁶L'Etendard, mardi le 7 juillet 1885, mardi le 4 août 1885 & mercredi le 5 janvier 1887.

³⁷Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) March 24, 1886, p. 348.

³⁸La Presse, vendredi le 9 octobre 1885.

explained that "'The Canadian Government, and not the English Government, has dealt with the rebellion in the Northwest territory of Canada, and if you intend to please me your article is not likely to answer your purpose.'" ³⁹ An American, Dr. G. H. Desjardins of Boston, later claimed that Chapleau had told him in Paris that Riel was a traitor "'et un lâche qui a richement mérité la corde et il ne nous échappera pas cette fois.'" ⁴⁰

While Chapleau had attempted to place what he considered to be the proper perspective on the Riel affair once the rebel had surrendered Langevin did nothing and Caron very little to educate public opinion on the matter. Langevin, who had spoken to citizens in Qu'Appelle in September of 1884 and who had promised to place their reasonable demands before his colleagues, had apparently failed to act. ⁴¹ Again, during the summer of 1885 while Chapleau was out of the country and Trudel whipped French Canadians into a frenzy, Langevin was silent. Chapleau's organ, La Minerve, led a halfhearted attack against Trudel, but with limited success. ⁴² Undoubtedly with Langevin in mind, Chapleau later recalled that "by some strange oversight ... the Government's case

³⁹ Montreal Gazette, Saturday October 10, 1885. This is an interview with Chapleau upon his return from Europe.

⁴⁰ L'Etendard, lundi le 14 décembre 1885.

⁴¹ La Patrie, mercredi le 22 juillet 1885.

⁴² La Patrie, lundi le 12 octobre 1885.

was not placed in the proper light for months before the people, and hence the general excitement otherwise unaccountable."⁴³ In the House of Commons Chapleau admitted that "although we, the Ministers of the Crown, had not failed in our duty towards the Crown, towards our oath of office, towards our country generally, perhaps we were in fault to a certain degree in not having taken more care in the direction of public opinion in the Province of Quebec. The cause, the main cause of the trouble in that Province has been the exaggeration of the Conservative press."⁴⁴ Langevin had not attempted to muzzle L'Etendard, Trudel's mouthpiece, nor even to correct the pro-Riel stance of his own Le Monde, a newspaper he had bought in the fall of 1884 to counter Chapleau's influence through La Minerve in the Montreal district. Chapleau chided his colleague for his negligence in a letter at the end of 1885 in which he stressed that "Avec un peu de sacrifice on aurait épargné l'insurrection du Nord-Ouest avec un peu de travail on aurait prévenu le mouvement qui a suivi la mort de Riel."⁴⁵ In 1888, Chapleau would again stress that "the imprudence or timidity of the Quebec Ministers allowed it [the pro-Riel movement] to spread and overrun the Province and endanger the life of the Government."

⁴³Montreal Gazette, Tuesday April 12, 1887. Chapleau spoke at a banquet in his honour at the Windsor Hotel, April 11, 1887.

⁴⁴Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) March 24, 1886, p. 344.

⁴⁵Chapleau à Langevin, Ottawa, le 17 décembre 1885, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Fernand Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 93.

But, he would make clear that he did not refer to himself in that statement because he would continue in his letter to Macdonald that "It was my misfortune not to be able to tell you what was going on in the Province of Quebec during the summer of 1885. If I had been able to do it, I am satisfied the unfortunate agitation would have been prevented."⁴⁶

Because of Langevin's actions during the Riel episode, Chapleau would never in the future acclaim him chef of French Canada. He immediately asserted his own right to leadership within the Montreal district of the province and demanded complete control of the area. The Riel affair which revealed Langevin's political incompetence by his refusal to act against the national cry precipitated Chapleau's action to demand political power at Langevin's expense in order to save Quebec for the Conservative party and to ensure that French Canadians would obtain justice at the hands of the majority.

Chapleau could make such a demand because he, not Langevin or Caron, had led the resistance to Trudel and the national movement within French Canada. This dominance by Chapleau of the apologist cause which supported the Conservative Macdonald government's actions was the third feature of significance to result from the Riel affair. Chapleau had assumed that leadership role at the very outset with his Fall River letter and continued to be the government's chief defender. He never veered from his initial position, but he did hesitate for one brief

⁴⁶PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, June 4, 1888.

moment to sanction Riel's execution.

On November 11, 1885, the Macdonald cabinet, except Chapleau, had agreed to Riel's death. Chapleau had required a few more hours of reflection before he would concur with the decision of the government. That evening at his home in Ottawa, Chapleau, Alexandre Lacoste, Arthur Dansereau and Joseph-Israël Tarte, had debated the question throughout the night. Their opinions had been divided on what action Chapleau should follow.⁴⁷ Chapleau, the expert politician, had realized that the vast majority of the Quebec population and of Quebec Conservatives did not wish to see Riel hang. Although he had been convinced that Riel had committed a crime, he had believed the Métis leader to be insane. Thus, he had prepared a memorandum of dissent with the Macdonald government decision; in effect, his resignation. However, when he had read his report just as dawn broke on the 12th, he had found that he could not sign it. He had suddenly realized that his resignation would likely hasten a struggle between anglophones and francophones--a conflict he had dedicated his life and political career to avoid.⁴⁸ As he explained to his friend and former provincial cabinet colleague, W. W. Lynch:

I glanced in front of me, in the distance such a sight,
tumult, fighting, bloodshed, misery and prostration; and
a madman looking from the window of a prison and laughing,

⁴⁷ J.-I. Tarte, 1892 Procès Mercier, Montréal: Desaulniers & Cie, 1892, p. 21.

⁴⁸ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, November 12, 1885.

rubbing his hands and shouting incoherent words of malediction. I was horrified.⁴⁹

In his letter which announced his adherence to government policy, Chapleau had affirmed that Riel's "mental delusions would be the only attenuating point against the full application of the law in his case."⁵⁰ Although he had doubts about Riel's mental stability, Chapleau had preferred "giving the benefit of the doubt to the law than to the deluded criminal."⁵¹ He had firmly resolved "to uphold the law and the Crown...." and to weather the storm in order to "rely upon sunshine at another date."⁵²

Chapleau had suffered under no illusions that his task to preserve support in Quebec for the Conservative party would be easy. Yet, he had maintained an optimistic point of view. At the Windsor hotel in Montreal, for example, even before the execution of Riel, Chapleau had met sixteen Conservatives who had indicated that the government's decision was contrary to the opinion and sentiment of the Montreal Conservative deputation. He had informed Langevin that "Le nom des

⁴⁹ PAC, Chapleau Papers, Chapleau to W. W. Lynch, Ottawa, November 21, 1885. This is a copy sent to the Archives by Dr. W. W. Lynch Jr. The originals have not been found.

⁵⁰ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, November 12, 1885.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² PAC, Chapleau Papers, Chapleau to W. W. Lynch, Ottawa, November 12, 1885. (Copy).

députés indique assez l'importance de cette déclaration."⁵³ Despite their rejection of the Macdonald government policy, Chapleau was not unduly disturbed for the delegation had been "calm and dignified and will not be induced to be the tools of opponents."⁵⁴ To Sir Hector Langevin, he had confided that "Ce sera un grand bonheur pour nous, si le calme que la députation montre peut se communiquer au peuple."⁵⁵ However, his hopes had been short-lived. An indication of the difficulties that lay before him was manifest in the popular outburst in Montreal the evening of Riel's execution.

At about eight o'clock November 16th, about six thousand young men, students and other dreamers, apprentices and tradesmen gathered on the Champ de Mars in protest against the fateful event that had occurred in Regina that morning. The demonstrators carried five effigies to represent Macdonald, Langevin, Caron, Chapleau and Colonel J.-A. Ouimet, the Laval member who had left his battalion in the North West campaign because of lack of equipment and who maintained that Riel merited the rope.⁵⁶ Chapleau, well stuffed with straw, was corpulent in appearance

⁵³Chapleau à Langevin, Montréal, le 13 novembre 1885, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, pp. 90-91.

⁵⁴PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, November 13, 1885, (a telegram).

⁵⁵Chapleau à Langevin, Montréal, le 13 novembre 1885, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, pp. 90-91.

⁵⁶La Patrie, mardi le 24 novembre 1885.

while Langevin was as thin as an ascetic monk. Around the neck of each effigy hung a strong rope and the young enthusiasts who in a few instances bled each others' noses for the privilege of holding the effigies, tugged so vigorously at one point that the decapitation of one figure followed. Before the evening's activities had begun the figures got mixed up and there was a great argument which twice led to blows over which was which. Suddenly, Langevin disappeared in a cloud of smoke. The enthused motley gathering then straggled off to Victoria Square where Macdonald was hoisted up on the statue of Queen Victoria and set ablaze. Chapleau's cremation was reserved for Dominion Square where he was duly consumed in flames in the presence of the English-speaking population. The demonstration ended only after Mayor Beaugrand, who attempted to quieten the crowd, was chased, but not apprehended, by the mob.⁵⁷

Such scenes were repeated in several cities. More important, however, were the organized political gatherings. The first of these demonstrations occurred on November 22nd, when thousands of French Canadians gathered on the Champ de Mars to hear politicians of both political parties harangue the crowd from three separate platforms. Of the twenty-nine speakers that day, only Tarte did not explicitly condemn Langevin, Caron, and Chapleau.⁵⁸

Aware, through these various expressions of non-confidence, that

⁵⁷Montreal Gazette, Tuesday November 17, 1885.

⁵⁸Laurier L. LaPierre, Joseph-Israël Tarte: A Dilemma in Canadian Politics 1874-1896, M. A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1957, p. 113.

the overwhelming majority of French Canadians opposed the Conservative government's stand, Chapleau immediately commenced his campaign to explain his position and to rally the province to his standard. Again and again over the next year, Chapleau stressed that French Canada's energies should not be dissipated in a struggle with English-speaking Canada over a criminal. He never ceased to repeat that Riel should not be made a symbol of French Canada. To the Ontario section of le Club LaFontaine on November 25th, he declared "que Riel n'a jamais représenté la cause des Métis, qu'il n'était qu'un égoïste aventurier, qui ne méritait aucune sympathie."⁵⁹ In his letter of December 2nd to his electors of Terrebonne, he was even more emphatic.

In that document which was published in the Conservative newspapers, Chapleau affirmed that in 1885, Riel had committed high treason just as he had done in 1869-1870. After the earlier revolt and the murder of Thomas Scott, Riel had accepted money from the Canadian government on the understanding that he would go into exile and never return. However, scorning this promise, the American citizen had secretly come back to Canada in the autumn of 1884 to prepare another revolt. Chapleau condemned Riel's use of the poor innocent Métis population for his own cruel designs. Riel had first undermined the influence of the priests over the Métis, he affirmed, and once the latter had been blinded, he had pushed them into butchery. After his defeat, he had allowed himself to be taken prisoner in the belief that Quebec would again save him, even

⁵⁹La Presse, jeudi 1e 26 novembre 1885.

after a second revolt! But, Chapleau asserted, he was mistaken for "Couppable de haute trahison pour la seconde fois il n'avait plus de titres à l'indulgence qu'on a l'habitude d'accorder aux accusés politiques."⁶⁰ Chapleau was even more censorious of Riel for his successful attempts to incite the Indians to revolt. To

soulever les Indiens est regardé par tous les gouvernements, qui en ont sous contrôle, comme un crime qui mérite la peine capitale, parce que c'est un crime contre toutes les lois de l'humanité, la guerre des sauvages étant une guerre d'extermination, sans quartier, sans merci pour les personnes sans défense, pour les femmes et les enfants. C'est le plus grand attentat possible contre la civilisation et un crime qui tombe en dehors de la classe des crimes politiques.⁶¹

Ready to ignore Chapleau's concern to promote Quebec's progress and to enhance her status within Confederation, Senator Trudel could not remain quiet as Chapleau dismissed his departed hero as "un conspirateur, un prétendant ambitieux et un rénégat...."⁶² Trudel accused Chapleau of reversing the stand he had taken in 1874 with respect to Riel's activities of 1869-1870. The Senator charged that Chapleau had claimed in 1874 that Riel was not guilty of rebellion nor of murder during the so-called Red River Rebellion. According to Trudel, Chapleau had adhered to that thesis in order to regain the confidence of the Quebec population after he had resigned in disgrace as Solicitor-General due to the Tanneries scandal. In 1885, Trudel exclaimed, Chapleau wished

⁶⁰ L'Etendard, samedi 1e 5 décembre 1885.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² L'Etendard, jeudi 1e 29 juillet 1886.

to curry the favour of the Orangistes, thus Riel suddenly became a traitor, rebel and murderer in both the Red River and North West rebellions.⁶³ Chapleau denied Trudel's accusations and proclaimed that his statements of 1885 were consistent with his words and actions of eleven years earlier when he had defended Ambroise Lépine for the murder of Thomas Scott.

In September 1874, Chapleau had travelled to Winnipeg to defend Ambroise Lépine against the specific charge of murder. At the request of Joseph Royal, the defense lawyer, Chapleau had decided to heed his friend's call to travel west and aid the poor Métis in order to fulfill a double duty, "celui qui s'impose à tout avocat à qui l'on fait appel en faveur d'un malheureux, et celui d'un Canadien-Français sur qui reposent les espérances d'un compatriote."⁶⁴

At that time and later, many French Canadians, such as Senator Trudel, argued that Scott's death could not be considered to be murder. The young English-speaking British subject had been tried and condemned to death by the legitimate government of the North West, the Riel provisional government. This administration had ruled the territory between the end of the Hudson's Bay régime and the assumption of control of the territory by Canada on July 15, 1870.⁶⁵ Despite Trudel's contention to

⁶³ L'Etendard, lundi le 7 décembre 1885.

⁶⁴ La Minerve, vendredi le 20 novembre 1874. Chapleau spoke at the St. Lawrence Hall in Montreal upon his return from the West.

⁶⁵ L'Etendard, mercredi le 9 décembre 1885, jeudi le 10 décembre 1885 & vendredi le 11 décembre 1885.

the contrary, Chapleau had never explicitly accepted such a thesis. In 1874 he had declared that "l'organisation politique [Riel's government] qui prit la place du gouvernement en 1869 était issue du suffrage populaire. Qu'elle ait été entachée d'usurpation ou non, peu nous import [sic]...."⁶⁶ In 1874 the question of the legality of the Riel administration had been irrelevant to the charge of murder against Lépine, as far as Chapleau was concerned, since Chapleau's sole aim had been to attempt to prove that his client "had nothing to do with causing the death of the man who was shot."⁶⁷ During the trial, Chapleau later claimed that he had come to the conclusion that Scott's killing, "That atrocious murder was without the connivance and without the approval of Lépine, but it was the result of the selfish vengeance of the then dictator of the North West--Louis Riel...."⁶⁸ The jury thought otherwise, and found Lépine guilty. Chapleau bowed to the decision.

However, because he believed in his heart that his client was innocent, Chapleau had immediately attempted to obtain a pardon for Lépine.⁶⁹ Two other reasons had also prompted him to act to secure that

⁶⁶La Patrie, lundi le 20 septembre 1886. Chapleau spoke in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec Thursday December 18, 1874.

⁶⁷Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) March 24, 1886, p. 349.

⁶⁸Montreal Gazette, Thursday January 21, 1886. Chapleau spoke at St -Jérôme January 20, 1886.

⁶⁹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) March 24, 1886, p. 349.

end. Even before he had left for Winnipeg, he had argued that the Métis required their leaders.

Vous n'ignorez pas que la malheureuse population métisse voit ses chefs sous le coup d'accusations terribles; qu'elle ne peut compter sur leurs services tant que ces accusations pèseront sur eux; vous savez qu'ils sont exposés à périr tous les jours.⁷⁰

In addition, although Chapleau had been convinced that the execution of Scott, "Cet acte regrettable et que je condamne a été commis par des personnes qui ont cru de bonne foi qu'il était nécessaire à la sûreté de la société et du gouvernement qu'ils jugeraient légal parce qu'il était issu du suffrage populaire...."⁷¹ He had pleaded that "C'est un sujet qu'il importe de laisser dans l'oubli afin de ne pas réveiller les susceptibilités nationales.... Le sang a appelé le sang, et il en a assez de répandu pour satisfaire les deux partis, en admettant--je ne veux pas l'admettre--que les deux nationalités en conflit sur ce point exigent cette barbare réparation."⁷²

Thus, for those three reasons, upon his return from Manitoba, Chapleau had gone directly to Quebec where the Legislature was in session. In the Assembly he had proposed a resolution in which he had asked "grâce et pardon pour une des malheureuses victimes des troubles

⁷⁰La Patrie, samedi le 22 septembre 1888. This is Chapleau's address to his electors of Terrebonne September 25, 1874.

⁷¹La Patrie, lundi le 20 septembre 1886. Chapleau spoke in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec Thursday December 18, 1874.

⁷²Ibid.

du Nord-Ouest...." and had wished "qu'une adresse ou requête soit transmise au Gouverneur lui demandant la grâce de Lépine."⁷³ A pardon for Lépine, Chapleau had been convinced, would be the first step in a general amnesty for the Métis.⁷⁴ Such a happy conclusion to a tragic incident "serait le moyen le plus sûr de reconquérir leur confiance et de les rallier au grand oeuvre de la fondation d'une nationalité durable sur ce continent."⁷⁵

All that Chapleau had done in 1874 was what he did in 1885-- preach conciliation and understanding between the francophone and anglophone communities of the country. At the earlier date, his resolutions and speech presented to the Quebec Assembly were directed exclusively towards the goal of securing an amnesty for Lépine. However, inadvertently, he had also absolved Riel of the crime of murder. In 1874 Chapleau had stated that "On a voulu rejeter sur quelques individus la responsabilité qui doit peser sur tous ceux qui avaient chargé Riel et ses compagnons de les protéger, de les conduire." He had then added that "Il n'est pas juste que l'on punisse quelques individus pour le fait de tous [the population of Red River that had elected the Riel government]...."⁷⁶ Likewise, the resolutions Chapleau had presented,

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵La Minerve, vendredi le 20 novembre 1874. Chapleau spoke at the St. Lawrence Hall in Montreal upon his return from the West.

⁷⁶La Patrie, lundi le 20 septembre 1886. Chapleau spoke in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec Thursday December 18, 1874.

while conceived solely for Lépine, implicitly absolved Riel from the charge of murder.⁷⁷ Yet, after the 1885 rebellion, Chapleau argued that Riel had committed murder in the earlier uprising. He was absolutely rigid in his stand

that in adjudicating the fate of Riel, the Government had a right to enquire into his antecedents, into his previous convictions, and although punishment had not to be inflicted for an act for which he obtained pardon, though he had not performed the conditions of his pardon, yet, we had a right to say that he had been once guilty of rebellion and once guilty of murder, and we could not give him our sympathy to-day as we might have been ready to have given him our sympathy at a previous time....⁷⁸

Thus, although Chapleau's stand on Riel in 1874 and 1885 were apparently contradictory, he had not intentionally reversed his position for personal political gain as Trudel had suggested. Chapleau never admitted that a contradiction existed. His activities of 1874 had been designed exclusively to prevent Lépine's execution and a racial conflict between

⁷⁷L'Etendard, lundi le 7 décembre 1885. The resolution Chapleau presented read in part: "Que les chefs de ce mouvement se constituent alors en gouvernement, et qu'un acte regrettable ... PERPETRE PAR L'AUTORITE DE CE GOUVERNEMENT, a été l'exécution d'un des sujets de sa Majesté; qu'après cette exécution, des représentants de cette population du Nord-Ouest ... furent reçus officiellement par le gouvernement de la Puissance qui négocia avec eux la condition de l'entrée de ce territoire dans l'union du Canada et qu'un acte fédéral sanctionna leur demande; que ... cette population a vu avec surprise et douleur que des poursuites étaient dirigées contre quelques personnes ... impliquées dans ces troubles, leur attribuant une responsabilité personnelle allant jusqu'au crime d'homicide volontaire, POUR DES ACTES PROCEDANT DE L'AUTORITE DU GOUVERNEMENT CREE DANS CE SOULEVEMENT."

⁷⁸Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) March 24, 1886, p. 350.

anglophone and francophone. The thrust of his concern was with Lépine, and only because Riel was one of the Métis leaders did Chapleau let him creep into the picture at all. However, Chapleau's protestations of consistency and his letters of explanation were largely ineffective.

In order to regain the adherence of the Quebec population to the Conservative party, Chapleau realized that letters were not sufficient to explain his position and to answer critics such as Trudel. However, he was reluctant to enter Quebec immediately after the November hanging, and decided to wait until passions had cooled. Thus, it was not until January 1886 that he made his first foray into his beloved province. Chapleau decided to meet his fellow citizens of Terrebonne in person, without any opposition present,⁷⁹ on January 20th at St -Jérôme. Chapleau was apprehensive about his reception and the day before the meeting confided to his friend, Alfred-Duclos DeCelles who had been chief Parliamentary librarian in Ottawa since 1880 that "avec une santé précaire et la faiblesse de la vieillesse arrivée chez moi avant le temps, je déteste ce qui fut la passion de ma jeunesse. Cela m'ennuie, me dégoûte; je donnerais bien \$500 pour rester tranquille chez moi demain."⁸⁰ To add to his misery, Chapleau was forced to hold une assemblée contradictoire with the dissident Conservative, Louis Beaubien, as chief opponent. Angered, but not disheartened, Chapleau explained his

⁷⁹ La Minerve, mercredi le 13 janvier 1886.

⁸⁰ La Presse, samedi le 3 décembre 1921. This article is signed by DeCelles.

stand on the Riel question in the Market Hall that cold January afternoon. However, the major portion of his address concerned his activities since 1867 and his hopes for the future of French Canada and of Terrebonne. On the other hand, Beaubien concentrated on the Riel affair to the exclusion of all other matters. Like his friend Trudel, he claimed that the Bishops of Quebec who asserted that the national movement was revolutionary, did not know what they were talking about. Although he did not approve of Riel's revolt, he condemned the government for not pardoning the guilty Métis leader.⁸¹

After Chapleau and Beaubien had spoken, the new Minister of Justice, John Thompson, explained the legal aspects of the Riel case. Then, other anglophone and francophone Quebec followers of Chapleau as well as those opposed to the Secretary of State delivered addresses. Finally, Chapleau's resolutions in favour of the government were presented to the audience for consideration. Unfortunately, Chapleau had not been able to convince the majority of the 5,000 people of the validity of his case. Thus, the wily Secretary of State was forced to resort to a coup de théâtre to save the day. This masterful stroke was executed at the time the vote was taken on his resolutions. Those in favour were to move to the left of the room and those opposed to the right. As the sea of men parted before him, Chapleau was disturbed to find that the majority appeared to be headed for the right. Immediately, he gave the signal to Joe Vincent, his personal strongman, to take action. With

⁸¹La Minerve, jeudi le 21 janvier 1886.

government employees recruited for the occasion, saloonkeepers and a number of not so respectable citizens, Joe Vincent attempted to form a human barrier in the crowd and push people back from the right to the left of the hall. The operation was not a complete success despite the shouts of victory from the Chapleau supporters. As Chapleau was hoisted up on the shoulders of Vincent and another admirer for the victory parade around the hall, he knew that he would personally have to act to save the day. Suddenly, near the back of the room, Chapleau fell backward, his hair fell over his forehead and as he raised a hand to his face he shouted: "Je suis frappé." This attack, whether feigned or not, caused sympathy to mount in Chapleau's favour. The victim of the brutal assault, which some witnesses claimed never occurred, quickly regained his composure, resumed his position atop Vincent's shoulders, and led a parade out of the Market Hall in triumph. Beaubien remained behind with part of the audience and pondered the coup which saw victory, however ephemeral for Chapleau, snatched from his grasp.⁸²

Chapleau again displayed his mastery of one aspect of the art of politics that he had demonstrated at St -Jérôme when the Riel debate moved into the House of Commons in the spring of 1886. Philippe Landry, the Member of Parliament for Montmagny and President of the Quebec Conservative Association moved a motion in the House of Commons which stated that the House express its regret that Louis Riel was executed. Since Sir Hector Langevin immediately moved the previous question, all

⁸² L'Etendard, vendredi le 22 janvier 1886.

amendments were blocked. Consequently, the Riel debate turned upon whether Riel ought to have been executed or not, and nothing else. Until the last day of debate on the Landry motion Chapleau remained silent and managed only to shake a few clenched fists in the direction of the opposition.⁸³ Then he prepared to deliver his tour de force. He was originally scheduled to speak before the dinner hour on March 24th. However, realizing that the public galleries would be empty at that time, Chapleau claimed he felt ill and could not deliver his oration until "après 'avoir pris des forces' au diner."⁸⁴ Thus it was that Chapleau rose to present his arguments at the beginning of the evening sitting when the galleries overflowed with spectators.

Chapleau began to speak slowly and with great emotion. A great part of his speech was an impassioned declaration, often grand and always impressive. His main theme was the need for anglophones and francophones to work together in order that each community could survive and prosper in Canada. The earnest tribune claimed that during the Riel affair, he had followed the path that was in the best interests of French Canada. He had refused Mercier's offer of the leadership of all French Canadians because the collecting together of francophones in a political association separate from English-speaking Canadians would be "most unpatriotic and disastrous to the French Canadians." Chapleau realized "how difficult it is for a minority, in a conquered country especially,

⁸³La Patrie, mardi le 23 mars 1886.

⁸⁴L'Etendard, vendredi le 26 mars 1886.

to escape encroachments, to escape absorption by the majority, however well disposed the majority may be." However,

In this country, we have prospered, we have grown, we have increased our wealth without any sacrifice of our liberty. We have, even when the cry of race and religion was raised by a part of our population, succeeded in impressing on the majority a system of laws peculiar to ourselves--I speak of the introduction of the civil laws of Lower Canada into the Eastern Townships with the concurrence of the majority. We have achieved more than that. We the minority have secured the good will, the esteem, the respect, the sympathy of the majority in the work of protecting our own peculiar institutions....⁸⁵

Although Chapleau made a good impression on the spectators with those examples of French Canada's success, he spoke for too long--over four hours. His voice partially failed him and the late stage of the debate and the approach of the vote had a bad effect on the attention of the House. Yet the dozens of ladies in full dress who had come to the House from "at homes" or entertainments and the scores of other excited onlookers remained until half past two in the morning when the vote on the Landry motion was taken. With such a large audience, Chapleau was undoubtedly proud that his skillful oratorical performance was crowned with the defeat of the Landry motion.⁸⁶ However, the fact that sixteen Quebec Conservatives broke party ranks and that Quebec was the only province to provide a majority vote in favour of the motion of regret, must have caused Chapleau to pause to ponder his success in his attempt

⁸⁵Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) March 24, 1886, p. 357.

⁸⁶The Regina Leader, Tuesday April 6, 1886.

to swing Quebec opinion behind the government.

That debate in the House of Commons signified a turning point in Chapleau's efforts to secure Quebec for the Conservatives. He now began to attack the Liberal party which he believed was exploiting a problem that could pose serious difficulties for the future of French Canada. Although the Liberals, led federally in Quebec by Laurier, only sought partisan political advantage and did not raise discordant notes for some great national cause as was the case with Trudel, Chapleau believed the effect of both policies was the same. Thus, his speech of March was also an attack on the policy of his major political opponent of the opposition, Wilfrid Laurier. Chapleau was particularly incensed by Laurier's exploitation of western discontent with his suggestion that the rebellion of 1885 was justified. The Secretary of State vehemently denied Laurier's contention. Chapleau asserted:

... people do not go to war for questions of details, for a question of delay; when the principle is admitted, the main point is settled; and they would not have rushed to arms, at the very moment when the announcement came that justice was coming to them, if Riel, rebelling in one breath against Church and State, had not blinded them altogether, in his desire to achieve his own objects.⁸⁷

According to Chapleau, Laurier's statements were inflammatory and could cause harm to French Canada because they could be used by Trudel and others in the national movement for ends that the Liberals themselves rejected.

⁸⁷ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) March 24, 1886, p. 347.

These two politicians confronted one another on the electoral battlefield later in the year during the first federal by-election since November 16, 1885. The contest was scheduled for July 30, 1886, in the constituency of Chambly. Over the opposition of Langevin who did not wish to test Conservative strength so soon after Riel's hanging, the by-election was called. The seat of Chambly was deliberately vacated by the Conservatives for the occasion with the appointment as superintendent of the Chambly Canal of Pierre-Basile Benoit, the sitting member of the constituency. Chapleau, who favoured the test of the government's strength, took charge of the Conservative campaign in which Isaië Jodoin held the banner. Liberal fortunes rested on Raymond Préfontaine. However, the two candidates were mere spectators to the real contest--Chapleau's fight to obtain a vote of confidence from Quebec electors.

In that electoral fight, Chapleau was hindered by Langevin who had a great deal to lose if Chapleau, his rival, succeeded. Dissatisfaction arose in the riding because of a delay in the harbour works which were under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Public Works.⁸⁸ That important case represented only one example of Langevin's refusal to use patronage for the party's advantage in the crucial contest.⁸⁹ Despite the obstacles posed by Langevin and the great odds against him because of the malaise within the party intensified by Riel's execution, Chapleau

⁸⁸ Robert W. Cox, The Quebec Provincial General Election of 1886, M. A. thesis, McGill University, 1948, p. 38.

⁸⁹ PAO, Campbell Papers, Chapleau to Campbell, Montreal, October 8, 1886 & Chapleau to Campbell, Montreal, October 5, 1886.

plunged forward to do battle.

At the nominating meeting at Longueuil on July 23rd which lasted from 2:00 p.m. until 7:00 o'clock in the evening, Laurier and Chapleau were the key speakers. On that day, Chapleau concentrated his attack on Laurier, to the neglect of Trudel and his followers who supported the Liberal cause. During his speech on the balcony overlooking the market, a group of shorthaired rowdy youths recruited by the Liberals for the occasion, jeered and interrupted Chapleau several times. Two bill-boards of Riel were held in front of him and two unsuccessful attempts were made to throw a rope over the Secretary of State's head. Despite those antics, Chapleau remained firm before the ill-mannered cluster of ruffians and refused to humour those agitators in the crowd. After he dismissed Riel as a "renégat" and an "assassin des missionnaires et des religieuses",⁹⁰ he went on to denounce Laurier. Chapleau accused him of committing a crime in raising the cry of race and prejudice. The Secretary of State reminded his audience that in Parliament he had charged that Laurier had transgressed his oath as a Minister of the Crown and had adopted a course bordering on treason because of the Liberal politician's statement on the Champ de Mars. There, in November, Laurier had shouted that if he had been living on the shores of the Saskatchewan, he would have been ready to shoulder his musket against the Government of Her Majesty.⁹¹ Chapleau added that Laurier

⁹⁰La Presse, samedi le 24 juillet 1886.

⁹¹Montreal Gazette, Saturday July 24, 1886.

a fait de ce cri un engin politique. Laissez-moi lui dire qu'un temps viendra où il voudra le voir disparaître et où il ne sera pas en son pouvoir de le faire cesser. La semence qu'il a jetée germera, produira comme ces mauvaises herbes qui font la terreur des cultivateurs et entravera le sain développement de notre race. Lui et ses amis en souffriront. L'arme dont ils se servent se brisera dans leurs mains, les blessera en se brisant, mais, par malheur, je crains qu'elle ne blesse d'abord notre pays.⁹²

Although his performance was superb, Chapleau was somewhat shaken after he had delivered his speech since he had never been booed as much in his twenty-five years in politics. Yet, he remained steadfast before the crowd that rushed the platform on several occasions to try to cut short his oration. He was determined to deliver his message of racial harmony and to denounce those who appeared to jeopardize French Canadian interests.

If the reaction of the crowd on the 23rd was disappointing for Chapleau, the results of the by-election were not more encouraging. The Liberal, Préfontaine, squeaked through to victory by ninety-four votes. Chapleau claimed that the Conservative defeat had nothing to do with Riel nor the difficulties in the North West. He attributed the Liberal victory to Langevin's indifference and to the clergy, notably the local cleric of Longueuil, Father Tassé, who disliked that group within the Church led by Cardinal Taschereau whom the Conservative candidate, Jodoin, upheld.⁹³

Whatever the reason for the Liberal victory, the Conservatives

⁹²La Minerve, lundi le 26 juillet 1886.

⁹³La Presse, mardi le 3 août 1886.

could not now mask the difficulties they faced on the election trail in Quebec. With the defeat of the Landry motion in March, Chapleau had been able to evade the fact that the majority of Quebec politicians had voted against his position during the Riel crisis. Chapleau's sole consolation from the Chambly defeat was that the Conservatives had not been crushed as Trudel had predicted. In fact, it was a tearful Trudel who editorially lamented a pyrrhic victory.

Et lorsque la lutte s'est faite entre l'Orangisme et l'idée nationale Canadienne-française catholique, comment un Canadien français pourrait-il tant se rejouer, lorsque dans un comté de dix-huit cents voteurs canadiens français, il s'est à peine donné assez de votes en faveur de la cause nationale, pour lui assurer une majorité de 94 voix sur la cause de l'Orangisme!...

L'Orangisme est vaincu dans Chambly; oui! La cause nationale y triomphe; c'est vrai! Mais nous est-il possible de perdre de vue que plus des trois quarts des voix données pour consacrer la politique criminelle de sir John au Nord-Ouest, et l'apostasie nationale de M. Chapleau et consorts au milieu de nous, sont des voix canadiennes-françaises catholiques?...⁹⁴

In effect, the Chambly Liberal victory signalled the weakness of the national movement which could only obtain a slim margin of victory over the Conservatives. Préfontaine's success also indicated that Trudel still maintained enough influence to prevent a Conservative victory and demonstrated that Chapleau was not invincible at the polls. In addition, the Liberal success indicated that Langevin had perhaps more political flair than Chapleau. Langevin knew it was better not to contest an election than to be defeated. These lessons were not lost on

⁹⁴L'Etendard, samedi 1e 31 juillet 1886.

the provincial Liberal leader, Honoré Mercier, who used the Trudel forces for his own purposes in the Quebec provincial general election of October 14th.

The provincial contest was the last major political event of 1886 in which the Riel affair was discussed and in which Chapleau played a role. The Trudel-Mercier alliance which opposed the Ross government forces in the October 14th battle, grew out of Chapleau's railway policy and a long-standing ideological and personal enmity between Trudel and Chapleau. That conflict was re-affirmed after November 1885 by the hanging of Riel. In an attempt to destroy the alliance and conciliate Trudel, Ross had established a commission to investigate the sale of the Q. M. O. & O. at the end of 1884. On December 31, 1884, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council had officially nominated Judge Adolphe-Basile Routhier, who had written the famous Programme Catholique of 1871, as the sole Royal Commissioner.

The announcement, intended to dampen Trudel's spirit, had served only to enliven the Senator. He had denounced the whole affair as a sham. Claiming that Routhier had become biased since he had left active political life, Trudel had asserted that one could not ignore "les relations d'amitié et les liens sociaux qui l'unissent à quelques-uns des inculpés; et il est bien connu qu'il ne croit pas à leur culpabilité!"⁹⁵ Because of that mockery, Trudel had turned the full force of his venomous pen upon J. J. Ross.

⁹⁵L'Etendard, jeudi le 26 mars 1885.

Once the Liberal press had begun to echo Trudel's attacks against the Conservative government, the stage had been set for the cementing of the tacit alliance already in existence between Trudel and his followers and the Mercier Liberals. In provincial by-elections since Chapleau's departure from Quebec--in Laval, Vaudreuil, Lévis, Jacques-Cartier--the Trudel clique had preferred nonentities or Liberals to official Conservative candidates.⁹⁶ In each case, Mercier had accepted the Castors' help in electing a Liberal candidate, or Castor candidate, whom Mercier always later had integrated into the Liberal fold.

Because of the Castor-Mercier collaboration, Chapleau had hoped that Routhier's report would be finished before the Quebec provincial election of 1886. He was convinced that the inquiry was "likely to prove a crushing answer to all the slander published by the rouge press during the last four years...."⁹⁷ and such a conclusion would undoubtedly aid the provincial Conservatives in the election. Routhier's exhaustive study, which when published absolved Chapleau of all charges of corruption and of conspiracy to defraud the province, was not to be submitted to the provincial government until June 1887. Thus, the election of 1886 was fought without that document.

In spite of the drawback the lack of the Routhier report caused Chapleau, the Secretary of State was heartened by other more positive

⁹⁶Le Canadien, (G.-A. Nantel) mardi le 9 septembre 1884.

⁹⁷PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Friday May 14, [1886].

factors. For example, by the fall of 1886 many of the important Conservatives who had wavered in their allegiance since November 16, 1885, had returned to the party fold. Among those key renegades was Louis-Adélarde Sénécal who had been cool to the Conservatives ever since Chapleau had been unable to obtain a Senate appointment for him. Another figure was the business entrepreneur, Jean-Baptiste Rolland whose assets included a paper mill in St -Jérôme and whose financial contributions to the party were an important factor in Conservative electoral success in the Montreal district. Just before the election, the important Montreal daily, La Presse, began once again to praise the Conservative party following a period of criticism that had begun at the time of Riel's death. Although the return of these prodigal sons only represented a first wave that was to continue into the early 1890's, their repentance came too late to dramatically affect the election results. That fact did not deter Chapleau who could at last see his efforts to consolidate the party were paying dividends. Consequently, he was spurred to exert greater energy on behalf of Ross without being too obvious about his contribution to the provincial campaign.

In August and September, Chapleau met with Ross and some of the latter's cabinet colleagues to plot campaign strategy.⁹⁸ The Secretary of State tried to ensure that federal patronage aided the provincial Conservative cause and was partially successful since federally subsidized

⁹⁸ L'Etendard, mercredi le 18 août 1886 & La Minerve, vendredi le 3 septembre 1886.

railway schemes mushroomed throughout the province.⁹⁹

In order not to appear in the foreground of Quebec provincial politics and with a desire to ensure federal Conservative support for Ross, Chapleau, in the middle of the provincial general election in Quebec, travelled to western Ontario to support Macdonald, Thompson, White, Tupper and Foster at a political rally in London. In that area of the country, there was no doubt about Chapleau's popularity.

Macdonald's secretary, Sir Joseph Pope wrote in his memoirs that

on one occasion, when the Ministers were getting ready to go somewhere, a big burly fellow in the crowd shouting at the top of his lungs, 'Where's the immortal Chapleau? I don't give a d--n for Thompson or White or Foster. Where's Chapleau?' and in due time Chapleau was produced. As he came forward, a strikingly picturesque figure with his pallid features, intellectual countenance, and long grey hair artistically bestowed, he was received with expressions of welcome which grew into deafening shouts of applause as he thus addressed the crowd: 'You have heard a great deal of late about the habitant from Lower Canada, and no doubt you are curious to see a living specimen of the genus. Well, gentlemen,' advancing to the front of the platform, striking his breast, and assuming that histrionic attitude which he knew so well how to put on-- 'I am the offspring of a habitant. I come among you a farmer's son, one of yourselves, to address to you a few words on the public issues of the day.' It is not too much to say that this completely captured the meeting....¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ L'Etendard, mardi 14 octobre 1886. See also PAO, Campbell Papers, Chapleau to Campbell, Montreal, October 5, 1886 & Chapleau to Campbell, Montreal, October 8, 1886. Chapleau wrote to Macdonald's Minister of Justice, Sir Alexander Campbell to request positions for certain individuals in some constituencies. He compared Langevin unfavourably with Campbell in regard to the distribution of patronage.

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Pope, Public Servant: The Memoirs of Sir Joseph Pope, ed. Maurice Pope, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 64.

After that successful encounter with western Ontario farm voters, Chapleau returned to Quebec to aid his friends, Faucher de St.-Maurice in Bellechasse, Dr. Martel in Chambly, Alfred Charlebois of Laprairie and G.-A. Nantel in Terrebonne. All of those candidates won their seats except Dr. Martel. In the province as a whole, the results were indecisive. Five so-called national Conservatives held the balance of power because both the Liberals and Conservatives won about the same number of seats. That inconclusive election represented another defeat for Chapleau who was unable to deliver the province from the malaise that followed the Riel execution despite his earlier predictions to the contrary.¹⁰¹

Chapleau's refusal to conciliate Conservative dissidents contributed to the disintegration of the Conservative party in Quebec and prevented the Ross government from obtaining a decisive victory.¹⁰² For example, during a by-election in Lévis in April 1885, Chapleau had complained to Macdonald that the Conservative candidate, Isidore Belleau "m'a publiquement diffamé; dans la presse et ailleurs il n'a cessé de m'attaquer violemment dans le but avoué de me perdre dans l'opinion du

¹⁰¹Ten days before the election, Chapleau was confident that the Conservative "party has the advantage". PAQ, Campbell Papers, Chapleau to Campbell, Montreal, October 5, 1886. He assured Macdonald that "Montreal will do its share of good work against powerful odds ..." and added that "I think Quebec will be ahead of us this time." PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, October 7, 1886.

¹⁰²R. W. Cox agrees that the election results were caused not because of Riel but because of Conservative weakness. However, Cox praises Chapleau and places blame on Trudel and the Castors. (Cox, The Quebec Provincial General of 1886, p. 308.)

parti conservateur et de me chasser du poste que j'occupe dans le parti."¹⁰³ In reply, Macdonald had chastised Chapleau for his personal resentments and stated that he accepted Belleau's statement of support of his Ministry. An exasperated Macdonald refused to believe that Chapleau had "played the part of conciliator ad nauseum" and had been constantly "answered by the most aggressive attitude."¹⁰⁴ The bankruptcy of Chapleau's strategy of expulsion of the Castors and the wisdom of Macdonald's political conduct was proved once the outcome of the election was determined in January of 1887.

On January 25th, J.-J. Ross resigned as Premier and was replaced by Taillon who hoped to attract the five national Conservatives back into the Conservative fold. He failed. Two days after assuming office, he was forced to resign once he had lost a vote in the Assembly on the nomination of a Speaker and on a motion to adjourn.

Louis-Olivier Taillon born the same year as Chapleau in Terrebonne and educated with the former Premier at Masson college, a lawyer who had practised with F.-X.-A. Trudel, lost his bid to remain Premier. Taillon failed because Senator Trudel's sympathizers in the Assembly followed their mentor and threw their support behind Mercier. Trudel claimed he was forced to combat Ross and Taillon because they had tried to

¹⁰³ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, April 2, 1885.

¹⁰⁴ PAC, Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, Ottawa, April 3, 1885 & Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, April 4, 1885.

mobilize the forces of the province in Sir John A. Macdonald's favour. If Auguste-Réal Angers, the Superior Court Judge for the district of Montmagny and the former Conservative leader in the Assembly under de Boucherville had become Premier in 1884 instead of Ross, Trudel asserted his action during the election would have been different. On the other hand, while Trudel did not support the Conservatives, he vehemently denied that Mercier was his leader. There was a great deal of difference, he stressed, between refusing to fight a man and accepting that individual as one's leader. Consequently, Trudel always spoke of le mouvement national. However, the unrepentant Senator could not disguise his own weakness and Mercier's strength which the Riel affair signalled.

Because of the Riel controversy, Mercier had been able to become a major political figure in Quebec to the detriment of F.-X.-A. Trudel. The Senator had lost the support of the ecclesiastical authorities. Honoré Mercier's call for a parti national and his subsequent assertion of provincial rights stole Trudel's thunder. The Liberal leader's wise use of the Castors enabled him to dominate Quebec while appearing to work in co-operation with the Castors. Mercier's decision to appoint to his cabinet Georges Duhamel and Pierre Garneau who had the confidence of Trudel, contributed to the success of Mercier's policy of apparent partnership but in reality, Liberal dominance.¹⁰⁵ Trudel, torn between

¹⁰⁵L'Etendard, lundi le 27 avril 1891. This letter of Trudel's was published by his son, Henri, after his father's death. The letter is dated Montréal, le 7 février 1887.

the Conservatives and Liberals, opted for the Liberal camp. Consequently, the Taillon ministry fell and the Lieutenant-Governor, Rodrigue Masson, called on Honoré Mercier to form Quebec's second Liberal government since 1867. That historic event occurred in the midst of a federal general election which, more than the provincial election, was to be a test of Chapleau's stand on the Riel affair and of Conservative party policy in general.

CHAPTER VI

"J'AI PLAIDE, J'AI PRIÉ, J'AI CRIÉ"

The federal general election, set for February 22, 1887, brought out the antagonism that had developed between Chapleau on the one hand, and Langevin and Macdonald on the other. That hostility became conspicuous during the Riel crisis. Because Senator Trudel lost most of his former political strength during the Riel affair--Honoré Mercier had out-manoeuvred him and thereafter had become the French Canadian nationalist darling--Chapleau no longer had to concentrate his efforts in battling the Senator. After 1886, the Trudel-Chapleau enmity based principally on personality and ideology gave way to a Langevin-Chapleau clash centred mainly on patronage. After the Riel affair, Chapleau's concern was to obtain patronage and power, two necessary ingredients for political dominance. Besides the federal election of 1887 which exhibited Chapleau's failure to obtain these quantities, the Secretary of State's involvement in the post election cabinet shuffle, his concern with the civil service and his notion of relations with France also demonstrated his inability to acquire either patronage or power. Sir Hector Langevin, backed by Sir John Macdonald, contributed to Chapleau's failure in his quest--a quest that had been triggered by the Riel uprising.

In compensation for his tremendous efforts to prevent a dangerous split among Conservatives during the Riel affair, Chapleau believed he had earned the right to play a greater leadership role within the

cabinet and within the federal party in French Canada. Chapleau had determined to "réclame ... [sa] part entière dans la direction du parti dans la région qui a coutume d'être dirigée par le Ministre de ce côté-ci [Montréal] de 3 Rivières."¹ Apparently, Macdonald had agreed and had laid down the rule that patronage in the Montreal region should be exercised through Chapleau. However, by February 1886, Langevin had already begun to meddle in what Chapleau considered to be his private domain.² In the general elections of 1878 and 1882, Chapleau had directed Conservative forces in Montreal under the titular leader of that district, Rodrigue Masson. Masson, the federal Member of Parliament for Terrebonne, son of Chapleau's educational benefactor, and major rival of Langevin for the federal Conservative leadership in Quebec, had not actively participated in those campaigns. In 1878 he had been ill and shortly before the 1882 contest he had resigned from the House of Commons for reasons of health. Consequently, on both occasions, Chapleau had exerted great control in Montreal since the chef of Quebec, Sir Hector Langevin, had been occupied in the Quebec district. However, after Masson's demise as a serious contender for his crown as French Canadian federal Conservative leader, Langevin had determined to acquire firm control of both the Quebec and Montreal districts. In 1884 he had successfully established his organization in Montreal with the aid of his

¹ ASTR, Chapleau à de La Bruère, Ottawa, le 23 octobre 1885.

² PAC, Bowell Papers, Chapleau to Bowell, Ottawa, February 17, 1886.

personal newspaper, Le Monde. Thus, the Montreal district had been blessed with two groups centred on two papers, Langevin's la clique du "Monde" which included the official patronage owners and distributors, and Chapleau's financially starved la clique de "La Minerve" which comprised the country members and the real workers of the party.³ By October, Chapleau had resolved that either he would be chef in Montreal or he would leave the government.

In a blunt letter to Macdonald, Chapleau had informed the Prime Minister that if success were to be obtained in the Montreal district, a change was required. Langevin's clique would have to cease its antagonism to the Chapleautistes and "the absolute ruling must be centred in one hand, in my hand...."⁴ He had demanded that there should be no authority over himself, and no interference, except when requested, with his work in the region. Otherwise, "I shall withdraw absolutely from the direction of the election and confine myself to my own constituency."⁵

In an attempt to resolve the difficulties between Langevin and Chapleau, Sir Alexander Campbell, the Postmaster-General, former Justice Minister and close associate of Macdonald, had urged Chapleau to join him in the Senate. Chapleau had refused.⁶ Possibly Chapleau's coolness to

³PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, October 31, 1886.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶PAO, Campbell Papers, Chapleau to Campbell, Montreal, November 21, 1886.

Campbell's suggestion had been based on his belief that Macdonald had accepted his ultimatum. Early in November, the Secretary of State had written a fellow Conservative that "J'ai la tâche ardue de m'occuper de toute la région de Montréal (de Pontiac à 3 Rivières) en vue des élections générales prochaines & je me prends à l'avance pour épargner des embarras au moment de l'action."⁷ Later he had written to Sir Alexander Campbell that

I understand that it is now settled that all questions of patronage concerning the Montreal region, down to Three Rivers, should be referred to me directly when there is need of reference to a colleague-minister. And be sure I will not be the cause of any loss of time in that respect.⁸

Within a short period, Chapleau had realized that what he had believed to be fact, was fiction.

Two incidents which involved Macdonald, Chapleau and Langevin had quickly developed and had demonstrated Chapleau's total impotence in cabinet. The first had concerned the date of the federal general election. Macdonald and Langevin had opted for an election early in 1887. Chapleau, who had feared the Conservatives would fare badly in Quebec, had favoured a later date. To his friend, le curé Labelle, Chapleau had lamented:

J'ai plaidé, j'ai prié, j'ai crié; rien n'a valu! J'ai dit qu'on n'avait pas droit de punir la Province de Québec,

⁷PAC, Chapleau Papers, Chapleau à Amédée [Gaboury], Ottawa, le 10 novembre 1886.

⁸PAO, Campbell Papers, Chapleau to Campbell, Ottawa, November 30, 1886.

qui avait porté tout le poids de la chaleur du jour, pour aider Ontario dont la sotte campagne nous écrasait ici. Rien n'a valu encore! J'ai protesté jusqu'à la dernière limite; j'ai mis mon siège dans le cabinet au jeu--On a laissé porter--⁹

On this issue, Chapleau had retreated in defeat. However, another question arose which caused him to assume a more rigid stance.

The second incident reached a climax in January 1887. A deadlock had developed between Langevin and Chapleau over the nomination of an anglophone to fill the vacancy in the Court of Appeals left by the death of Judge Ramsay. Chapleau had proposed that L. R. Church, "le seul avocat anglais qui n'inspire pas de soupçon parmi les Canadiens-Français...."¹⁰ be appointed. Langevin had desired the position to be filled by someone from Quebec city, namely, George Irvine, an implacable enemy of Chapleau since the Tanneries scandal of 1874. Unlike the many other occasions in which Langevin had kept Chapleau's friends from positions of judge, Senator or deputy minister,¹¹ Chapleau had refused to yield for the sake of his self respect. He had informed Macdonald rather curtly that "if my advice in Council upon this matter is found to be useless, I consider it will be a notification to me that my advice is no more needed there--"¹². Without a positive response from Macdonald,

⁹ ANQ, Papiers Labelle, Chapleau au curé Labelle, Ottawa, le 15 janvier 1887.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ La Patrie, lundi le 21 mars 1887.

¹² PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, January 13, 1887.

Chapleau sent the old chieftain his resignation the day the election was announced.

In his letter to Macdonald written in French, a practise reserved for times of bad humour, Chapleau explained that the main reason for his action was

de ne pas avoir reçu l'appui, et de ne pas avoir eu la part de contrôle, que j'avais le droit d'avoir dans le Conseil Privé--cela étant dû à un antagonisme systématique de la part de mes deux collègues français dans le conseil.¹³

Specifically, Chapleau regretted that his nomination of Church had been refused. He asserted that the elections had been called with unnecessary haste at a time the country suffered from a political upheaval that was dangerous for its welfare and peace. In addition, Chapleau believed that several important questions, such as the organization of the cabinet, the administration of the North West, the privileges of the Canadian Pacific, and commercial relations with foreign powers, should have been regulated before an appeal to the electorate was made.¹⁴

Five days later, in reply to a request by Macdonald, Chapleau outlined six points which required the Prime Minister's assent in writing before he would withdraw his resignation. He demanded:

1. Que j'aurai un contrôle absolu dans la direction du parti, pour ce qui concerne la région politique qui s'étend de Trois-Rivières à Pontiac (les Townships de l'Est et les Comtés anglais exceptés)

¹³ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau à Macdonald, Ottawa, le 15 janvier 1887.

¹⁴ Ibid.

2. Suppression du journal "Le Monde", ainsi que Sir Hector y avait consenti il y a quelques semaines.
3. Le contrôle des nominations aux emplois dans la région indiqué plus haut--
4. Le choix des candidats ministériels aux élections fédérales dans la même région, & le contrôle du fonds électoral nécessaire pour cet objet
5. La nomination immédiate (si je le jugeais nécessaire) du Sénateur vice Masson
6. La mise à la retraite du Sous-Secrétaire d'Etat (ainsi que promis dans votre lettre en 1882) & son remplacement par un candidat de mon choix.

In conclusion, Chapleau added that "La concession de ces points avec l'agrément de mes collègues de la Province de Québec, me démontrerait un désir d'entente cordiale & faciliterait, j'en suis sûr, le règlement des autres questions...."¹⁵

The following day, Macdonald informed the Secretary of State that almost all his desires would be fulfilled. Chapleau would have absolute authority in the district of Montreal and was to be the region's representative in Council. He would have control of patronage, control of election funds and choice of candidates in that area. Chapleau could fill Masson's former seat in the Senate and the Judgeship left vacant by Ramsay's death. Macdonald assured his colleague that he would attempt to obtain financial assistance for the Conservative party organ of Montreal, La Minerve, and try to procure an amalgamation of Le Monde and La Presse.¹⁶

¹⁵PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau à Macdonald, Ottawa, 1e 20 janvier 1887.

¹⁶PAC, Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, January 21, 1887.

Chapleau accepted Macdonald's promise which was never fully respected. He immediately advised the Prime Minister by letter that he desired Church to be appointed Judge and L.-A. Sénécal, Senator. He assured Macdonald "que la région politique de Montréal donnera, au 22 février prochain, un résultat de son action, dont vous aurez à nous féliciter."¹⁷ He then proceeded to Ottawa where he reiterated his acceptance to the Prime Minister in person.

Determined to fulfill his promise to Macdonald, Chapleau returned to Montreal January 25th to commence his campaign. At the railway station he was greeted by over 150 prominent party members who escorted him to the party's committee rooms at the historic Château de Ramezay. There, before an overflow crowd that rose, cheered and waved handkerchiefs upon his arrival, Chapleau outlined his strategy. He announced to his enthusiastic supporters that the election would be fought on two themes--the National Policy and Riel. The National Policy of protective tariffs had revitalized industry which had been dying or at a standstill in 1878. The Canadian Pacific Railway, an integral part of that policy, had given impetus to the development of the country. When he spoke of Riel, Chapleau reaffirmed his position which had been approved by the Church. He respected French Canadians' national sentiment, but he was certain that the spirit which had inspired them since Cartier's time would enable them to lay aside all petty jealousies. The Secretary of

¹⁷PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau à Macdonald, Montréal, 1e 22 janvier 1887.

State terminated his oration with a call for organization, and more organization.¹⁸

That inspiring appeal coupled with Chapleau's work of the past fifteen months in which he had spoken, cajoled and intrigued behind the scenes to maintain Conservative strength enabled the Secretary of State to present Macdonald with a victory in his region. Much to Senator Trudel's dismay, the Conservatives won twenty of the twenty-nine seats in the Montreal district.¹⁹ In spite of Trudel's pronouncement that the election would be a test of Chapleau's stand on the Riel question,²⁰ many Castors remained discreetly silent during the campaign since they feared a Liberal victory. Elsewhere in the province the Conservatives did not fare as well as in Montreal. In the Eastern Townships, the English-speaking Conservatives split the ten seats with the Liberals. And in the Quebec region, Langevin and Caron failed miserably. They only managed to win five of the sixteen seats in the Quebec city area, although they did sweep the five Trois-Rivières constituencies.²¹ Those

¹⁸ Montreal Gazette, Wednesday January 26, 1887; La Minerve, mercredi le 26 janvier 1887; & La Presse, mercredi le 26 janvier 1887.

¹⁹ La Minerve, mardi le 1er mars 1887.

²⁰ L'Etendard, samedi le 4 décembre 1886.

²¹ La Presse, lundi le 28 février 1887. In the election, the Conservatives won thirty-six seats in Quebec and the Liberals captured twenty-nine. 50.6% of the Quebec population voted Conservative and 49.1% voted Liberal. See Ronald I. Cohen, Quebec Votes, Montreal: Saje Publications, Ltd., [1965], p. 24.

results indicated that Chapleau had enabled the Conservatives to emerge from the contest with a bare majority.

Apparently, the Riel affair contributed little to Conservative losses because the Montreal area, the region most determined to symbolize Riel as a French Canadian martyr, returned a Conservative majority to Ottawa. Montreal appeared to be content with Conservative policy which allowed the city to become an increasingly important metropolitan centre due in part to the location of the C. P. R. terminus there. On the other hand, the dispute within the province over the location of the transcontinental railway terminus appeared to carry the seeds of disaster for the Conservatives in the Quebec city region which awaited in vain the arrival of western commerce.

Although the federal Parliament had dictated in an act of 1884 that the Pacific was to acquire the North Shore from the Grand Trunk within a short period of time, or, failing that, was to begin construction of its own line to Quebec city from Montreal, no agreement between the two railways had been reached by 1885, and no new line had been started. The federal government subsidy of 1884 to the C. P. R. for the construction of a short line from Montreal to the Atlantic ports via Sherbrooke and Maine heightened the anger of Quebec city towards the Conservatives. However, by 1885, the Conservatives had believed that they had found a solution to Quebec city's problems. Chapleau had played a major role in the attempt to settle the matter. He had been spurred on by the personal desire to conclude an arrangement that had eluded him while Premier of Quebec, and he had also been motivated by

the political necessity of quelling the discontent of the Quebec city region before the next election. In order to give value to the North Shore railway and to make Quebec city a distribution centre for both the Pacific and Grand Trunk, Chapleau had wanted each railway company to have an equal interest in the North Shore. The union of the two lines would have given the bonds of the North Shore, some of which were held by Sénécal, a reasonable value.²²

That suggestion had been opposed by Trudel. The Senator had desired the Pacific to construct a new line--the Great Northern--between Montreal and Quebec city. That railway would facilitate colonization north of the North Shore Railway and would prevent Sénécal from selling his North Shore bonds to the C. P. R. Langevin had supported the project since it would "assurer la prospérité commerciale de la vieille cité de Champlain."²³ By Trudel's scheme, the Pacific would arrive at Quebec city via a distinct direct route and the Grand Trunk would be allowed to remain on the North Shore, thus preventing the Pacific from acquiring a monopoly of traffic. As a result, the competition that existed between Toronto and Montreal would be extended to Quebec city which would benefit with a triple line joining it to its two rivals.²⁴ Chapleau had been convinced that the proposal for two lines, "one of which had

²²La Presse, lundi 1e 27 janvier 1890.

²³L'Etendard, lundi 1e 18 mai 1885.

²⁴Ibid.

already difficulties to struggle against in obtaining a revenue fair enough to justify the building of that railway, and another company building within probably a distance of from two to ten miles.... was absurd."²⁵ Despite that argument, Trudel had been convinced that Chapleau had not supported the construction of a second line between Montreal and Quebec city in order to force the C. P. R. "pour se rendre à Québec, d'acheter le chemin de fer du Nord à un prix tel que la clique ait son million et quart de profit."²⁶

Some politicians from the Quebec region, who had previously supported Trudel, had differed with him at that point. Isidore and Sir N.-F. Belleau had not been opposed to the sale of the North Shore to the Pacific to obtain the C. P. R. terminus for Quebec city.²⁷ In their minds, narrow regional economic considerations had loomed larger than accusations of intrigue.

Like Trudel, Chapleau had opposed that scheme which had found favour in Quebec city. He had contended that such a policy was "ruinous to the C. P. R. and would be injurious to the Government, as it would raise a loud political outcry, in consequence of the liabilities the government would have to incur in purchasing the road, and the increased

²⁵Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) September 1, 1891, p. 4762.

²⁶L'Etendard, jeudi le 7 mai 1885.

²⁷H. L. Robertson, The Ultramontane Group in French Canada 1867-1886, M. A. thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, 1952, p. 250. Also, L'Etendard, lundi le 2 mars 1885.

assistance it would necessitate for the carrying out of the transaction."²⁸ Chapleau had continued to advocate the joint ownership of the North Shore by the C. P. R. and the G. T. R. Such an arrangement "would be financially beneficial to both companies and would keep the government free from any pretence for criticism."²⁹ However, once Macdonald had determined that the Pacific should purchase the North Shore, Chapleau had given his consent in order "to have peace and union."³⁰ The Secretary of State had been aware that the "pacification of faction feeling in the ranks of the party depends upon the disposal of that 'bone of contention'."³¹

While Chapleau had been absent in Paris to undergo his gall-bladder operation, Langevin, on behalf of the government, had reached a settlement with the Pacific. On September 21, 1885, the government of Canada had acquired the Grand Trunk's rights over the North Shore for \$530,000.³² It also had spent \$970,000 to buy the bonds issued by the North Shore Company--bonds held by the Bank of Montreal in return for advances to the bond holders. Those bonds, whose face value had been

²⁸ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, July 5, 1885.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, June 30, 1885.

³¹ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, On Board "Quebec", July 17-18, 1885.

³² Montreal Gazette, October 27, 1885.

\$1,108,625 had been part of the issue of \$5,000,000 secured by mortgage on the North Shore line, and took rank after the claim of \$3,500,000 due to the province of Quebec on account of the original sale of the road. On the same day that that transaction had occurred, the federal government sold the North Shore to the Pacific.

That arrangement had not only averted Sénécal's ruin,³³ but also had appeared to overcome a difficulty that had plagued Quebec politicians for three years. The Pacific had been able to reach Quebec city over its own line just before the last spike had been driven into the road in British Columbia. The "grand idea" and the "great national enterprise" that Chapleau had described in his famous House of Commons speech of June 16, 1885, had become a reality.³⁴ However, Montreal, not Quebec city, had prospered from the western trade. The Pacific's acquisition of the North Shore in 1885 had not facilitated an economic resurgence of the old capital. Although two years is perhaps not long enough to make such an assessment, Quebec city electors apparently thought that it was, and thus the Conservatives were hurt badly in areas outside of Montreal in the 1887 election.³⁵

³³Trudel charged that the government was forced to buy the North Shore since that was the only way the bonds would rise in value and enable Sénécal to realize his 1½ million dollar profit. (L'Etendard, vendredi le 15 mai 1885.)

³⁴Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) June 16, 1885, p. 2572.

³⁵R. W. Cox noted that the Quebec city complaints against the C. P. R. had its effects on the 1886 provincial general election. (R. W. Cox, The Quebec Provincial General Election of 1886, M. A. thesis, McGill University, 1948, p. 243.)

Sir Hector Langevin, the leading Conservative in the areas where the Conservatives suffered severe losses, assumed a more ferocious stance against Chapleau after the 1887 election. The difficulties within the cabinet Chapleau believed he had overcome in January, reappeared with a renewed intensity. In addition, Macdonald's decided preference for Langevin always loomed in the background as the two French Canadian politicians scrapped.

Macdonald's support of Langevin became apparent once hostilities between Langevin and Chapleau reappeared immediately after the election. The occasion which signalled a resumption of the feud was the victory banquet tendered Chapleau April 11, 1887, by the Conservative Association of Montreal. When the event was announced, Langevin indicated that he would not attend. Macdonald was alarmed since he believed that his Quebec lieutenant's bellicose attitude could only enhance Chapleau's position within the party. Consequently, Macdonald wrote his old friend to reiterate his confidence in Langevin, his dislike of Chapleau and to explain the necessity of Langevin's attendance at the celebration. Macdonald stressed that his sincere friendship for ... "Langevin and his "desire to strengthen ... [Langevin's] hands" induced him to write the Quebec chef "on a subject of great personal and political importance...." The Prime Minister stated bluntly that he thought Langevin was "making a mistake in not going to Chapleau's banquet at Montreal." Macdonald affirmed that Langevin was the "senior minister from the Province of Quebec--not from the Quebec district or that of Three Rivers. By holding back from Montreal ...", Langevin would emphasize and confirm

the general belief that the political relations between Chapleau and himself were the reverse of cordial and hand "over the power and influence of the Government in the district of Montreal, and, in a great degree of the Townships, to him...." Macdonald concluded:

In my opinion you are playing Chapleau's game and strengthening his hands, and I will venture to say, our colleagues generally will incline to the same conclusion. Let me again say that my advice is given with the one object of serving you.³⁶

The Prime Minister's fears about the Secretary of State's position of strength were not unfounded. Upon Chapleau's suggestion, the Conservative organization assembled to fight the election continued to exist as a permanent institution--one that Chapleau could and would control.³⁷ Cognizant of Macdonald's wisdom in affairs political, Langevin heeded the old chieftain's advice and joined his fellow Conservatives at the sumptuous event which "'The bone and sinew of the country....'" attended.³⁸ Of the banquet, Trudel wrote with much amusement that Chapleau delivered "le discours du maître, sinon un discours de maître" while Langevin only made "un maître discours."³⁹

Chapleau undoubtedly hoped that his banquet would herald a period

³⁶Macdonald to Langevin, Ottawa, April 3, 1887 as cited in Sir Joseph Pope, ed., Correspondence of Sir John Macdonald, Toronto: Oxford University Press, [1921], p. 397.

³⁷Montreal Gazette, Friday March 11, 1887 & La Minerve, samedi le 12 mars 1887. Chapleau spoke to Conservatives March 10th at the Château de Ramezay and advocated such action.

³⁸Montreal Gazette, Tuesday April 12, 1887.

³⁹L'Etendard, jeudi le 14 avril 1887.

of harmony in the party and of triumph for himself. He probably believed he would no longer be forced to suffer humiliations at the hands of Langevin and Macdonald. Surely he could soon sit in the first row of desks in the Commons, a position that Langevin had denied him in 1884 during the cabinet reshuffle due to Tupper's absence in London as High Commissioner.⁴⁰ Possibly Chapleau might now receive the knighthood that had escaped him at the time Adolphe Caron had been awarded such an honour for his reorganization of the militia and his activity during the Riel affair.⁴¹ Those illusions were soon dispelled as Chapleau unsuccessfully attempted to obtain patronage and power by his appointment to a key cabinet portfolio.

Chapleau had felt so confident after February 22nd that he had already written Macdonald to demand his share in the direction of public affairs. He had informed the Prime Minister that "the patronage of the House of Commons and Senate should be so divided as to give a chance to the various regions. As it is it seems to be the monopoly of the Speaker and of one or two others."⁴² Chapleau was convinced that patronage was power and thus patronage was required if he were to assert the position and protect the interests of French Canada within the federal

⁴⁰La Patrie, mercredi le 28 janvier 1885.

⁴¹L'Etendard, vendredi le 28 août 1885.

⁴²PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, March 19, 1887.

government.⁴³ With reference to the key question of policy, he had noted that

We are given very few opportunities, we the "Junior Lords of the Treasury" to talk about the policy of the Government, with the exception of voting, unaware and unprepared, for most of the time, in Council; we must, I suppose content ourselves with "keeping a house, making a House, and cheering the Prime Minister."

Well, I confess that I am not young enough, and knowing enough to play that interesting part.⁴⁴

Without a positive reply to his terse haughty letter of March and with no recognition of his worth despite the public praise he had received from his cabinet colleagues at the April 11th banquet in his honour, Chapleau flatly stated to Macdonald that "I am sorry that one of us, Langevin, Caron or I is not forced to go to the Senate...."⁴⁵ Astonished, Chapleau learned that Macdonald decided to expell him from the cabinet! Instead of appointing him to the Senate, Macdonald proposed to banish Chapleau to Spencer Wood. Chapleau quickly managed to muster enough support from Montreal Conservatives to avoid being sent to Spencer Wood by Macdonald when Masson tendered his resignation as Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec in May 1887.⁴⁶ Chapleau indicated that he could not

⁴³Arthur Dansereau, "J.-A. Chapleau", Les Hommes du Jour, ed. L.-H. Taché, Montréal: la compagnie de moulins à papier de Montréal, [1891], p. 59.

⁴⁴PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, March 19, 1887.

⁴⁵PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, April 18, 1887 and Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, May 21, 1887.

⁴⁶La Minerve, samedi le 4 juin 1887. Also, PAC, Macdonald Papers, A.-N. Montpetit, Sec. de l'Ass. Cons. de Montréal à Macdonald, Montréal,

accept the position unless those who had supported him in the past were satisfied with his elevation and gave him "assurances that the party would not suffer by a change of their leader under such circumstances." After making certain his friends asked him "to remain and consolidate the good work of the last electoral campaign...." he refused Macdonald's offer.⁴⁷ After that escape from political exile but not before Macdonald had removed all power he had granted Chapleau before the 1887 election,⁴⁸ a disturbed Secretary of State left Canada July 20th to restore his broken health in Europe.

Chapleau's European excursion did not free him from all anxieties. During the sea crossing, the Secretary of State suffered a severe foot injury which caused him to remain in Le Havre for ten days after debarkation with his foot propped up on a chair.⁴⁹ Later during Chapleau's stay in France, Macdonald again urged him to accept the Lieutenant-Governorship of Quebec. Chapleau refused to consider the proposition.⁵⁰ Even upon

le 1er juin 1887; J.-H. Leclair, Sec. d'une assemblée du Comité Central du P. C. du Comté de Terrebonne à Macdonald; Oscar McDonall à Chapleau, Ottawa, le 8 juin 1887 [McDonall was President of Le Cercle LaFontaine of Ottawa]; Electeurs du paroisse de Saint-Hubert, comté de Chambly à Macdonald, le 4 juin 1887; l'Ass. Cons. du comté d'Assomption à Macdonald, le 8 juin 1887. In the end, Masson's resignation was not accepted until the fall of 1887.

⁴⁷ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, June 20, 1887.

⁴⁸ La Patrie, vendredi 1e 10 juin 1887.

⁴⁹ Montreal Gazette, Monday October 10, 1887.

⁵⁰ PAC, Macdonald Papers, (telegram) Chapleau to Macdonald, Paris, August 22, 1887.

his return to Canada October 8th, Chapleau was not spared torment. He arrived back in Montreal in time to visit his friend, L.-A. Sénécal, an important contributor to the Conservative treasury, just before the Senator's death.⁵¹ Despite those upsets, Chapleau's trip had not been in vain. The Secretary of State returned to Canada with a renewed vigour and determination to impress his demands upon Macdonald. However, the Prime Minister refused to be seduced by Chapleau's pleas for a more important cabinet post which he desired in order to assert the French fact in Canada more forcefully.

Chapleau was determined that French Canadians should play an important role at the federal level. As early as 1878, as opposition leader in the Quebec Assembly, he had written Macdonald to urge him to enhance French Canada's position within the cabinet. He had implored the Prime Minister to

Remember that the strongest and most popular argument against our Rouges here, was their utmost insignificance in the Mackenzie wigwam. Don't you think that the same seats in the cabinet as were assigned to the Province of Quebec Ministers in 1873, should be continued to them (the Receiver-Generalship being exchanged for the State Secretaryship or the Ministry of Inland Revenue)?⁵²

Later, with the announcement that Tupper would replace Galt as High Commissioner in London, Chapleau, who had been convalescing in the United States at the time, had written to Langevin about French Canadian

⁵¹Chapleau visited Sénécal October 9th and Sénécal died October 11th.

⁵²PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, September 19, 1878.

cabinet representation. In the belief that Tupper was to resign from the cabinet, Chapleau had queried if there would be "occasion de réclamer pour notre Province un portefeuille nouveau ou d'empêcher qu'on les diminue, je veux dire en importance?"⁵³ Two years later, Chapleau had again broached the question of French Canadian participation in the cabinet. The rebellion of 1885 had fortified his determination to see French Canadians play a significant role in the development of the North West.⁵⁴ Thus, as Macdonald had commenced a cabinet shuffle in the fall of that year, Chapleau had asked him to "mettre entre les mains d'un Ministre canadien-français l'un des trois portefeuilles qui concernent si largement le Nord-Ouest, savoir les Chemins de Fer, l'Intérieur & l'Agriculture...."⁵⁵ Although Macdonald had offered Chapleau the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries, he had not awaited the Secretary of State's definitive reply before he had awarded the post to George Foster. Understandably, Chapleau had been surprised and hurt at the turn of events.⁵⁶

⁵³ Chapleau à Langevin, New-York, le 6 avril 1883, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Fernand Ouellet, RAPO 1959-60, p. 83.

⁵⁴ J.-A. Chapleau, "Manifeste aux électeurs du comté de Terrebonne à l'ouverture de la campagne électorale terminée le 27 février 1887", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau. Sa biographie.... ed. L.-H. Taché, Montréal: Eusèbe Sénécal & Fils, 1887, pp. 510-511.

⁵⁵ Chapleau à Langevin, Ottawa, le 17 décembre 1885, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPO 1959-60, pp. 92-93.

⁵⁶ Ibid. J. P. Heisler suggests that early in 1885 when Macdonald sought to replace Sir Alexander Campbell in the Justice portfolio, he overlooked Chapleau because he was sickly. (J. P. Heisler, Sir John Thompson 1844-1894, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1955, p. 21.)

Senator Trudel had explained that Chapleau had been snubbed by Macdonald because the Prime Minister feared Chapleau was prone to corruption. The Senator had claimed that in response to solicitations for the advancement of Chapleau by some of the latter's friends, Macdonald had replied:

Je suis plein de bon vouloir pour Chapleau et je veux bien le faire avancer: Mais j'ai en ma possession certains documents qui m'empêchent de confier à Chapleau la direction d'un ministère où l'on dispose de grands intérêts financiers ou de grandes sommes d'argent!⁵⁷

In court, during a libel trial that Chapleau had initiated, Trudel had indicated that the documents to which he had referred were the sale of the North Shore Railway and others he had listed throughout the years in his paper.⁵⁸ Despite Trudel's later retraction of the statement, the sentiments he had attributed to Macdonald did reflect the Prime Minister's thought which he expressed in 1889. During another cabinet shuffle due to the death of the Minister of Railways, John Henry Pope, Macdonald revealed to Lord Lansdowne that Chapleau lacked principles. He wrote that "Chapleau, as ambitious and unscrupulous as ever ... is arousing his countrymen to claim for him poor Pope's succession as Minister of Railways, which I sternly refuse him, as the office would

⁵⁷ L'Etendard, vendredi le 29 janvier 1886.

⁵⁸ La Patrie, vendredi le 25 octobre 1889. Chapleau initiated the libel suit against Trudel for \$20,000. (L'Etendard, vendredi le 5 février 1886). Trudel retracted his accusations, but Chapleau, not satisfied, continued his pursuit against the Senator in Court. (La Minerve, mardi le 9 février 1886 & Montreal Gazette, Wednesday February 10, 1886.)

give him unlimited opportunities to job which he would eagerly avail himself of, and he will be discontented and intriguing."⁵⁹ At that time, Macdonald also indicated what he considered to be another characteristic of Chapleau. In reply to his secretary's query of what Chapleau would do if he did not obtain the Railway Department, "the old man's eyes flashed" and Macdonald replied: "'Do?... He'll follow like a dog, that's what he'll do.'"⁶⁰

Macdonald was partially correct in attributing Chapleau's concern for another more important portfolio to a grasp for patronage. The Secretary of State realized that under the Canadian constitutional system "le patronage est aussi nécessaire à la popularité que l'air est essentiel aux poumons...." and that generally "un ministre est aimé selon les services ou les faveurs qu'il peut distribuer."⁶¹ But, contrary to Macdonald's belief, Chapleau was also genuinely interested in French Canada's interests. Chapleau reasoned that if he were powerful, French Canada would be protected. When his fellow French Canadians were

⁵⁹ Lansdowne Papers, Macdonald to Lansdowne, May 14, 1889, as cited in Donald Creighton, John A. Macdonald: The Old Chieftain, Toronto: Macmillan, [1966], p. 523. Lovell Clark terms Chapleau "an ambitious intriguer". That judgement, entertained by many of Chapleau's English-speaking colleagues during his life time, is harsh and fails to take into consideration the motivation of Chapleau's actions. (Lovell C. Clark, A History of the Conservative Administrations 1891 to 1896, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1968, p. 2.)

⁶⁰ Joseph Pope, Public Servant: The Memoires of Sir Joseph Pope, ed. Maurice Pope, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 49.

⁶¹ Dansereau, "J.-A. Chapleau", Les Hommes du Jour, ed. Taché, p. 59.

unjustly treated, Chapleau invariably defended them with vigour. For example, despite his differences with Langevin, he had asserted that his Quebec colleague should administer Railways in addition to Public Works, as Langevin had done before 1879.⁶² Chapleau had contended that when Macdonald had split the Public Works portfolio, he had unjustly reduced Langevin's, and thus French Canada's, influence in the government. However, it was not Chapleau's real intentions, but Macdonald's view of his Secretary of State that affected their relationship.

Undoubtedly, it was because of Macdonald's wariness of Chapleau that instead of promoting him to the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries in 1885 he had rather decided to increase the Secretary of State's duties. Such a step would tend to enhance the status of a department which bestowed the Minister in charge with little patronage and offered him scant possibility to shape government policy. Macdonald had believed that the creation of a National Printing Bureau under the Secretary of State's control would satisfy Chapleau's desire for more influence. The National Printing Bureau would provide some scope for patronage that a department concerned exclusively with the functions of record keeping, registration and correspondence did not provide. The new Bureau could be justified for reasons of economy and efficiency. Also, without the necessity to contract the printing of secret documents to private firms, the government could better hide them from public view.⁶³ However, even

⁶²Chapleau à Langevin, 1e 13 septembre [1886], "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, p. 96.

⁶³Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) May 26, 1886, p. 1517.

in an apparent generous mood, Macdonald had proved to be miserly towards Chapleau in 1886 when the new Bureau had been established. The Secretary of State had been forced to write his leader in 1887, for Macdonald had appeared "to have forgotten the Bill to add the Patents & Copyright to the Department of the Secretary of State." Chapleau had taken the liberty of reminding Macdonald of the matter in case the Prime Minister answered as he had done "last Session: 'The Session is nearing its end & it is too late'--"⁶⁴ The goal of Chapleau's provocative note had not been attained. Thus, when Chapleau had left for France in the summer of 1887, he had departed a broken and defeated politician. However, upon his return, he was well rested and prepared to renew his fight to obtain justice for French Canadians within the councils of power.

In response to a warm welcome by the Conservative Association at the Château de Ramezay on October 10th, Chapleau preached union within the party. But, alluding to opposition claims of dissention within Conservative ranks, Chapleau warned that "Il faut des actes publics qui démontrent la fausseté de toutes les rumeurs qui circulent et qui prouvent que le parti conservateur suit la maxime de sir George Etienne Cartier 'Franc et sans dol.'"⁶⁵ After a delicate meeting with Macdonald at Earnscliffe, the Prime Minister's Ottawa residence,⁶⁶ the Conservative

⁶⁴PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, May 7, 1887.

⁶⁵La Minerve, mardi le 10 octobre 1887.

⁶⁶La Minerve, jeudi le 13 octobre 1887 & La Patrie, mercredi le 12 octobre 1887.

leader appeared to respond positively to Chapleau's challenge. Upon the death of Senator L.-A. Sénécal, Macdonald accepted Chapleau's advice to secure the appointment to the Senate of his friend J.-B. Rolland. That gesture by Macdonald appeared as a public acknowledgement of Chapleau's dominance of the Montreal district.

Sir Hector Langevin seemed to concur in Chapleau's control of the Montreal area through his entry into the district only after he had been invited by the Chapleau-dominated Conservative organization. Langevin attended the reception presented in his honour by the Association of Montreal, November 22nd. In his welcome, Chapleau clearly indicated who was chef of the district. Speaking directly to Langevin, he asserted that

En venant ici, vous avez prouvé que vous comptez sur notre association et que vous voulez travailler avec elle, de même que nous, nous voulons travailler avec vous, au succès de la grande cause conservatrice, qui est la cause nationale.⁶⁷

With Chapleau's position apparently established in the province of Quebec, the government sailed through the Parliamentary session of 1888 without difficulty. However, as summer approached, Chapleau was presented with yet another blow from Macdonald and Langevin.

At the end of May 1888, the Prime Minister remade his cabinet. The death of the Minister of the Interior, Thomas White and the departure from the cabinet of the Minister of Finance, Sir Charles Tupper, prompted Macdonald to promote George Foster, the austere and serious New Brunswicker, from the Marine and Fisheries portfolio to that of

⁶⁷La Minerve, mercredi 1e 23 novembre 1887.

Finance and bring in Charles Hibbert Tupper to fill Foster's old post. Edgar Dewdney, former Indian Commissioner and Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Territories from 1881-1888, became Minister of the Interior. Arthur Dansereau was the first Chapleautiste to react in a negative manner to the changes. He claimed that Foster's move to the Ministry of Finance and the nomination of Charles H. Tupper to Marine and Fisheries were a humiliation for French Canada. Chapleau was senior to them both. Tupper had still been en robe when Chapleau had toured the province of Quebec to defend Confederation. Chapleau had much administrative ability since he had been Minister of Public Works, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Railways and Prime Minister of Quebec. Dansereau was equally furious at the appointment of the inept Edgar Dewdney as Minister of the Interior. It was "le département le plus difficile à administrer et le plus important à notre point de vue, si nous voulons sauver une bribe de notre influence dans le Nord-Ouest."⁶⁸ The La Presse editorialist blamed Langevin for his failure to safeguard French Canada's interests in the cabinet. He warned that "Sir Hector perd ses droits au titre de chef du Bas-Canada, qu'il aime tant à se faire donner, s'il ne peut pas mieux sauvegarder les intérêts de notre province dans l'administration."⁶⁹

Chapleau also reacted quickly to the Prime Minister's actions. He informed Macdonald that as a French Canadian leader, he desired a key

⁶⁸ La Presse, vendredi le 1er juin 1888.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

policy portfolio concerned with the future development of the country.

He wrote:

It is admitted that three or four portfolios resume the political progress of the country. The financial and fiscal Department, the Department of Agriculture, immigration and statistics, the Department of the Interior, and in a smaller measure, Marine and Fisheries, are the four tracting engines carrying the country to its future destinies. The Militia, Post-Office, Inland Revenue, Justice, Secretaryship, and even Public Works (when Canals and Railways are excluded) are merely local administrative posts, without any leading power in the direction of the country's future.

I assure you that the people of the Province of Quebec are keenly feeling that its representatives in the Council are excluded from the former and politically more important offices.⁷⁰

Chapleau intimated that he and not Langevin should receive one of the important posts because of the latter's mishandling of the Riel affair. He also warned Macdonald that the North West was not yet quiet and the feeling continued to exist "in the minds of the minority, that the political direction of the North West affairs is entirely foreign to their aspirations and rights."⁷¹ If he were promoted, Chapleau intimated that he would be able to alleviate and eradicate "the painful and dangerous sentiment which prevails."⁷²

In his reply, Macdonald was blunt and callous. He questioned Chapleau's abilities. After stating that "The time has come, I think

⁷⁰ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, June 4, 1888.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

when we must choose men, for their qualifications rather than for their locality...."⁷³ he went on to discuss the North West. He could see

no special reason why a French Canadian should be preferred for office in the West.

The people of Quebec will not migrate in that direction--They wisely I think desire to settle the lands yet unoccupied in their Province and to add to their influence in Eastern Ontario. The consequence is that Manitoba and the N. W. T. are becoming what British Columbia, now is, wholly English--with English laws or rather British immigration, and I may add English prejudices.

The North West will have a French Governor, and a French Assistant Com. of Indian affairs--

The Half Breeds whether French or English are a diminishing quantity and need not be taken into consideration as a political force. And as to their rights they have been more than recognized.⁷⁴

Undoubtedly, realizing that his desire would not be granted, Chapleau had already modified his request before he received Macdonald's reply and had informed the Prime Minister that he would be willing to retain the Secretaryship with Patents added.⁷⁵ Thus, in 1888, the promise Macdonald had made to Chapleau in 1886 was finally fulfilled and Patents and Copyright were removed from the Department of Agriculture and lodged with the Secretary of State's department. Gradually Chapleau was establishing his Ministry of the Secretary of State as an important cabinet portfolio with increased patronage and influence.

⁷³PAC, Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, June 6, 1888.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, June 5, 1888.

With greater responsibility and wounds healed, Chapleau prepared to embark on the picnic circuit, which was designed in the summer of 1888 in Quebec, to "battre en brèche le gouvernement Mercier."⁷⁶ Ironically, Chapleau began his summer outings by winning a portrait of Mercier in a lottery held at the Kermesse of Montreal.⁷⁷ Notwithstanding that common Liberal enemy, the Premier of Quebec, Conservatives could not forget old feuds. The conflict between Chapleau and Langevin presented itself at the very first political demonstration of the season in the Montreal district. In preparation of the Joliette meeting of August 7th, placards and cards were printed to announce a picnic and banquet in honour of the Conservative chef Sir Hector Langevin and his colleagues. Once Chapleau heard the news, he dispatched a delegation to the town with orders to make a change in the publicity to announce a picnic and banquet "en l'honneur de nos chefs."⁷⁸ At the dinner held in the evening at Joliette, Chapleau managed to slight Langevin by not referring to him as chef. Rather, he slyly proclaimed that "Avant tous les chefs politiques, il en est un qu'il nous faut consulter par-dessus tout, c'est l'électorat, c'est le peuple."⁷⁹ The group of Montreal Conservatives Chapleau brought along pour faire la claque, burst into applause after Chapleau's statement.

⁷⁶L'Etendard, jeudi le 3 mai 1888.

⁷⁷L'Etendard, lundi le 18 juin 1888.

⁷⁸La Patrie, vendredi le 10 août 1888.

⁷⁹La Minerve, vendredi le 10 août 1888.

Langevin was not amused! Despite their proclamations of unity and personal public appearances together at Laprairie and Sorel, the activities of the summer of 1888 appeared to indicate that Langevin and Chapleau were drifting further apart and that Chapleau was as far away as ever from the power and patronage he desired.

I

While Macdonald and Langevin could agree that Chapleau should not receive an important cabinet post because both desired to maintain Langevin's position as chef of French Canada, there was one reason, Chapleautistes' claimed, peculiar to Macdonald and his anglophone followers, which caused the Prime Minister to hold Chapleau in a state of bondage within the cabinet. According to Chapleau's followers, English-speaking Canadians disliked the Secretary of State because he continually asserted French Canadian rights. As Israël Tarte stated: "Qui ne sait que M. Chapleau était devenu la bête noire du cabinet conservateur-- purement parce qu'il s'efforçait, en toutes occasions, d'obtenir justice égale pour les nôtres."⁸⁰ Chapleau's actions, which, Tarte claimed, anglophones attempted to block, were designed to ensure a French Canadian way of life that flourished in partnership with an equally vigorous anglophone community. The Secretary of State's scheme embodied two aspects. The first was to claim French Canada's proper place in Confederation. The second was to develop a relationship with France

⁸⁰La Presse, mercredi 1e 19 février 1902.

that was not based solely on sentiment. In order to ensure that the anglophone community respected French Canadian interests in these two fields, Chapleau believed he required patronage and power. Again, he asserted, his power would be used for these essential projects that had evolved from his view of Canada.

As a Canadian, Chapleau believed in a unified country based on the 1867 constitution. He wished all provinces to possess the same status. La Minerve reported that in a speech in Toronto as part of the Conservative pre-election tournées politiques, the ever popular Chapleau observed that "On a prétendu qu'une certaine partie du Canada, la province de Québec, devait être gouvernée différemment des autres provinces, et que la voix et la volonté de la majorité devaient être méconnues, pour des préférences différentes de celles de cette même majorité." In response to that pretention, he affirmed "Comme homme public, comme membre du Conseil Privé de Sa Majesté au Canada, je répudie une pareille prétention...."⁸¹ Chapleau had always contended that "les autres provinces ont autant de droit que la sienne à la protection du pouvoir central."⁸² Yet, Chapleau opposed a legislative union which the British North America Act itself denied.

Chapleau had always been an active and loyal advocate of Confederation which granted autonomy to the provinces. However, he

⁸¹La Minerve, jeudi 1e 23 décembre 1886.

⁸²Canada, Chambre des Communes, Débats, (Chapleau) 1e 12 avril 1884, p. 1626.

warned that "When we speak of autonomy we must not speak as separatists...."⁸³ He asserted that if one claimed that provincial rights meant "the absolute and independent action of the Provinces...." one was disloyal to the federal constitution. Canadians could "never build up a great country, if such an exaggeration of provincial rights is to prevail."⁸⁴ He was satisfied that the rights and powers given to the provinces by the Pacte Fédéral were sufficient to secure to Quebec the autonomy which French Canadians jealously desired. Chapleau was emphatic that "The federal Union of Canada, unlike that of the American Republic, has had, for its principle and basis, the distribution of certain defined powers given to the Provinces, and not a voluntary cession of a portion of their powers, by the Provinces, to a central authority and government."⁸⁵ Canada's motto was not "E Pluribus Unum", but rather "Ex Una Plures". Consequently, Chapleau argued, while such a basis supported the theory that all powers not specifically given the Provinces rightly appertained to the federal government, the federal authority could not assume or curtail the rights and legislative domain granted to the provinces. In other words, what rights were given to the provinces "were fully given, with all their consequences, and notwithstanding any inconvenience which

⁸³Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) April 17, 1885, p. 1173.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵PAC, Thompson Papers, Chapleau to Thompson, Cannes [France], March 5, 1885 [sic 1888].

might afterwards accrue to the central power."⁸⁶ For example, the administration of justice was one power specifically given to the Provinces. Chapleau noted that it was not with a view of limiting the power given to the provinces to "constitute, maintain and organize" Provincial courts "both of civil and criminal jurisdiction" that the appointment, tenure of office, salaries and pensions of judges were assumed by Ottawa. He believed that "It must have been mutually understood that the independence and prestige of those courts would be heightened if their titulars received their authority from the 'Fountain of honour, power and justice', the Queen, the first branch of our Parliament. But it was very explicitly worded, otherwise the power of appointing the officers presiding over the courts would clearly have remained with the provincial authority."⁸⁷ Chapleau desired a true federation which would allow Canadians to form a great nation, one in which "les provinces restent différentes dans leur esprit, leur caractère, leurs mœurs, leurs institutions propres et leurs tendances...."⁸⁸ For that reason he opposed Mercier's constitutional conference of 1887, because "Une fois que vous aurez ouvert la porte aux innovations, vous aurez créé un précédent dont on se servira contre vous."⁸⁹ He contended that

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ La Minerve, lundi le 22 octobre 1883. Chapleau spoke at a banquet for Sir Hector Langevin October 20, 1883.

⁸⁹ J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé, le 11 avril 1887, à l'Hôtel Windsor, à Montréal, lors du banquet qui fut offert à l'Hon.

Quebec benefited from Confederation and that there was no need for major change.

A strong advocate of the 1867 settlement, Chapleau also believed that French and English-speaking Canadians should possess equal rights under the constitution. He opposed the notion that French Canadians enjoyed minority rights.

Dans un pays constitué comme le nôtre, les minorités méritent des égards, des ménagements. Elles n'ont pas d'autres droits que la majorité. Nous sommes la minorité dans la Confédération. Ce serait une exagération de réclamer pour nous des droits spéciaux. Quand on s'affirme comme minorité on gravite insensiblement vers l'état de faction qui est funeste pour les minorités, car les factions ne vivent que de faveurs ou d'exactions. Non, ce que nous devons réclamer ce sont les droits acquis, à titre égal, à tous les citoyens d'un grand pays, à tous les membres d'un même peuple. Sur ce terrain nous sommes forts et nous ne devons rien à la faveur, ni à la pitié.⁹⁰

Thus, although Chapleau wished to see

ce vaste continent devenir une grande puissance anglaise ... les Canadiens-français devront avoir le droit de parler leur langue, de pratiquer leur religion, d'adorer leur Dieu à l'autel de leur choix et de maintenir les institutions que le peuple de la province de Québec s'est données, du consentement et avec la sanction de la couronne anglaise.⁹¹

Because of this belief, Chapleau was ready at every opportunity to

J.-A. Chapleau par l'association Conservatrice de Montréal", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, pp. 523-524.

⁹⁰J.-A. Chapleau, Retour d'Europe, Montréal, le 24 avril 1889, p. 8.

⁹¹La Minerve, jeudi le 23 décembre 1886. Chapleau spoke in Toronto December 21, 1886.

invoke and defend "le droit des Canadiens-français aux privilèges dont ils jouissent en vertu de la constitution...."⁹² Thus, Chapleau had demanded a key cabinet post for a French Canadian. For the same reason, he desired to obtain just representation for his compatriots within the Civil Service.

Chapleau had been determined to increase French Canadian representation within the civil service from the moment of his arrival in Ottawa. He had earlier followed a similar path in Quebec. Determined that English-speaking Canadians should not obtain a greater share of the civil service posts than their numbers warranted, in 1876 Chapleau had written to Mathias Desnoyers to encourage him to accept the offer of the post of Magistrate of Police in Montreal. He had warned Desnoyers that "Il y a deux english-speaking gentlemen prêts à remplir ce poste si j'éprouve un refus de toi. Ainsi, mon cher Mathias, tu vois, c'est un mot résolu qu'il me faut."⁹³ Chapleau had carried his desire to secure justice for his compatriots to Ottawa. At the federal level he had made clear his position to Langevin immediately upon his assumption of the post of Secretary of State.⁹⁴ In January 1884, Chapleau's political

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Fonds Bruchési, Chapleau à Mathias C. Desnoyers, Québec, 1e 2 mai, 1876.

⁹⁴Chapleau à Langevin, Los Angeles, 1e 2 février, 1883, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 81. Chapleau implied such a plan in this letter to Langevin.

organ, La Minerve, had published a series of articles which showed that French Canadians were not represented in the public service in proportion to their total percentage of the population of the country.⁹⁵ In December 1885, Chapleau had broached the question of French Canadian Deputy Ministers, with Langevin. He had admitted that "Baillargé, Trudeau Panet & Taché sont bien là, mais a-t-on bien pensé à leurs successeurs. Je n'en vois guère qu'à votre département, qui puissent y songer parmi les [comme] employés secondaires...."⁹⁶ In the same letter Chapleau had mentioned two other specific positions. He had questioned:

ne croyez-vous pas qu'on nous fera des reproches d'avoir remplacé Laperrière, à la Bibliothèque, par un autre que par un canadien?

Et l'Exposition de Londres? a-t-on pensé au moins à y introduire un Canadien-français, soit Fabre, soit quelqu'un d'ici...."⁹⁷

Because Chapleau allowed few occasions to pass without raising the question of granting francophones their proper share of jobs, by the time he left federal politics in 1892, his department of Secretary of State contained a fair French Canadian representation--30% of the total of

⁹⁵La Minerve, jeudi le 17 janvier 1884. This article is a résumé of the other articles on the subject--La Minerve, mardi le 8 janvier 1884; mercredi le 9 janvier 1884; jeudi le 10 janvier 1884; lundi le 14 janvier 1884; & mercredi le 16 janvier 1884. See also, La Patrie, mercredi le 24 avril 1889 for complaints of under-representation of French Canadians in the Civil Service. The author also complains about the employment of unqualified English-speaking Canadians.

⁹⁶Chapleau à Langevin, Ottawa, le 17 décembre 1885, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1895)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 93.

⁹⁷Ibid.

employees. Only in Langevin's department of Public Works were franco-phones equally well represented.⁹⁸

Chapleau not only desired to obtain fair representation for French Canadians within the civil service, but he also wished them to feel at home as employees of the federal government. Such a situation could develop only if bilingualism were practiced. He believed that "L'usage des deux langues, anglaise et française, devrait être à la mode dans notre pays...."⁹⁹ To further his plan, Chapleau took the first timid steps towards the implementation of a policy of bilingualism in his department in 1888. Word spread that the foremen and deputy foremen of the new government printing bureau should be able to speak French and English fluently. Because of the negative reaction of anglophone Tory papers, such as the Toronto Empire, and the Toronto Trades and Labour Council, Chapleau rescinded the order and admitted that "les imprimeurs préfèrent que les ordres soient donnés en anglais."¹⁰⁰

Besides his concern about the civil service, Chapleau was also anxious that French Canadians outside of Quebec should receive their share of the political plums. In 1887, he fought for and secured the nomination of Charles Casgrain from Windsor, to the Senate. He was the

⁹⁸ La Patrie, vendredi le 27 janvier 1893 & La Minerve, mardi le 8 janvier 1884. In 1884, 23% of the employees in the Department of the Secretary of State were French Canadians.

⁹⁹ La Presse, mardi le 22 mai 1894. Chapleau spoke at a High School for girls in Montreal.

¹⁰⁰ La Patrie, mardi le 6 mars 1888 & Montreal Gazette, Tuesday March 6, 1888.

first French Canadian Senator to be appointed from Ontario.¹⁰¹ In the same year, the death of Judge Daniel from Eastern Ontario presented Chapleau with an occasion to press for the appointment of a Roman Catholic francophone to replace him.¹⁰²

Chapleau's stress of the French fact probably often proved politically embarrassing for Macdonald and the Secretary of State's determination to renew French Canada's contacts with the francophone world undoubtedly piqued Imperialists in the anglophone community and ultramontanes in French Canada. Chapleau appeared to recognize Macdonald's dilemma, and sought to calm English-speaking Canada as well as allay anti-republican ultramontane fears about his decided resolve to strengthen ties with France. He never referred to France without mentioning Britain. Always, he underlined that "l'attachement au souvenir de notre ancienne mère-patrie n'est égalé que par sa loyauté inébranlable à la couronne britannique et par son amour pour les libres institutions sous lesquelles nous vivons."¹⁰³ The nationality of French Canadians was French, "but as patriots they looked to Great Britain and the great Empire of which she formed a part. They were proud to be

¹⁰¹La Minerve, jeudi le 2 février 1893.

¹⁰²Chapleau à Langevin, Ottawa, le 1er juin 1887, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, pp. 100-101.

¹⁰³La Presse, mardi le 25 juin 1895. Chapleau spoke at the unveiling of a statue of the Count of Lévis near the Legislative Buildings of Quebec June 24, 1895. The Count of Lévis had commanded the French army which had defeated the English force at Sainte-Foy in the spring of 1760.

subjects of Her Majesty, whose reign had been blessed with so much liberty for them."¹⁰⁴ In a speech honouring Sir Charles Tupper before he left Canada to become High Commissioner in Britain in the spring of 1884, Chapleau had brought the banquet hall to its feet with his rather pompous exclamation: "Go, Sir Charles, to the Mother Country and tell our beloved Queen that our loyalty to her Crown is only equalled by our admiration for her virtues and our affection for her royal person.... Go, Sir Charles...."¹⁰⁵ To an American audience, Chapleau told the story about "a people abandoned by their natural parents, who found in the British Crown, though alien in race, in language and religion, a friend and protector when their need was sorest, and under whose sway they enjoyed ... liberty of the soul."¹⁰⁶ Chapleau, ever ready to strike an emotional cord, had reached his greatest height at Sir John A. Macdonald's 40th anniversary banquet in Montreal in 1885. There, he had not been content to repeat Sir Etienne-Pascal Taché's famous dictum that the last cannon shot fired for the defense of the British flag in Canada would be by a French Canadian. In an outpouring of emotion at the end of a rousing speech, Chapleau had proclaimed "que les Canadiens-français seront

¹⁰⁴ Montreal Gazette, Monday October 27, 1890. Chapleau spoke in reply to a toast given by the Comte de Paris at the banquet held at the Windsor in honour of the exiled guest & Orlean family on October 25, 1890.

¹⁰⁵ Montreal Gazette, Friday May 16, 1884.

¹⁰⁶ J.-A. Chapleau, Canada as it is! an address delivered November 28, 1891 before the Commercial Club of Providence, R. I., Providence, R. I.: December, 1891, p. 8.

les derniers à chanter sur le continent l'hymne glorieux 'Dieu sauve la Reine.'"¹⁰⁷ Ironically, because of his loyalty towards Britain, Chapleau opposed Imperial Federation.

Imperial Federation had been seriously considered in Canada since Edward Blake's Aurora speech of 1874 in which the Liberal politician had embraced the idea. In the 1880's, Canadian Imperial Federation Leagues had arisen in the country to agitate for the adoption of the concept. Under the scheme, Canada would join with Britain and the Empire in an alliance that involved political, economic and military ties. With each of these bonds, Chapleau found fault.

Chapleau warned Canadians not to be carried away by an exaggerated sentiment of loyalty nor to precipitously conclude that the disintegration of the Empire was imminent unless a new mode of union was found. Imperial Federation would only cause the unfortunate idea of the absolute independence of Canada to reign supreme. That deplorable situation would develop from the notion that "Cette alliance, pour être effective, doit se faire entre des corps indépendants et possédants des pouvoirs égaux."¹⁰⁸ Chapleau contended that the building of the Canadian nation was a sufficiently large task to employ the energy of his generation.

Second, Chapleau noted that Imperial Federation implied that a

¹⁰⁷ J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé à Montréal, le 14 janvier 1885, au banquet donné à Sir John A. Macdonald lors de la célébration du 40^{ème} anniversaire de son entrée dans la politique", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, p. 393.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 391.

free trade area would be established within the Empire with a wall of protection erected against the rest of the world. The Secretary of State warned that "Les liens de famille les plus forts ont souvent été brisés par l'introduction indiscrete, quoique bien intentionnée, de questions pécuniaires entre les membres de la famille."¹⁰⁹ In addition, such a policy was not in Canada's interests since "Vous verriez le Canada transformé en marché de sacrifice pour les fabricants anglais, jusqu'à ce que nos industries fussent détruites. Alors, nous aurions le grand avantage d'être consommateurs au profit des producteurs d'Angleterre."¹¹⁰

Third, Chapleau questioned the military aspect of Imperial Federation. Canadians would be able to participate in British battles and Britain would protect Canada against foreign aggression. To the former point, Chapleau refused to believe that Britain had arrived at a period of decadence in which she required aid from the colonies to prevent a fall.

Non, je puis me compter parmi un million de Français enthousiastes qui croient à la force, à la vigueur, à la grande superiorité de l'Angleterre, qui croient qu'elle est la première des nations du globe. Je crois que l'Angleterre peut résister victorieusement à toutes les attaques que l'avenir lui réserve, comme elle a résisté dans le passé.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé à Toronto, le 20 décembre 1884, lors de la célébration du 40e anniversaire de l'entrée de sir John A. Macdonald dans la politique", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché p. 379.

¹¹⁰ Chapleau, "Discours prononcé à Montréal le 11 avril 1887, à l'Hôtel Windsor....", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, p. 528.

¹¹¹ Chapleau, "Discours prononcé à Montréal, le 14 janvier 1885,

As for British protection, Chapleau claimed that Canadians

ne demandent pas à l'Angleterre cette protection paternelle due à l'enfant; ils lui demandent seulement une part de l'influence bienfaisante du grand soleil politique que je puis appeler la constitution anglaise, afin de vivre comme des citoyens libres et comme des alliés dans leur propre patrie.... Le Canada demande seulement qu'on lui accorde la liberté de défendre l'empire, si l'empire était attaqué, et d'être défendu par l'empire s'il était lui-même attaqué. Ce n'est pas du tout l'enfant qui veut se réfugier sous le toit paternel. Le Canada pourra nourrir toute la population de l'Empire entière dès que son grand Nord-Ouest sera colonisé, grâce à la protection de l'Angleterre. Nous voulons être les représentants de l'idée conservatrice, de l'idée monarchique sur ce continent.¹¹²

As a complement to his sincere loyalty to Britain and his wish to maintain ties with English-speaking Canada's mother country, Chapleau desired to strengthen Canada's bonds with France. Canada had always been joined to France, if at times only by sentiment, but Chapleau was determined that concrete economic attachments should underscore the more ethereal knots. Primarily, he was concerned about three areas of activity--investment, trade and a direct communication link between the two countries. Chapleau had undertaken the first steps to further his plan in each of those fields while he had been Premier of Quebec.

When he was Premier, Chapleau had first attacked investment. In order to proceed with the construction of the provincial railways and to

au banquet donné à sir John A. Macdonald....", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, p. 392.

¹¹²J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé le 8 janvier 1880, [sic 1881] au banquet donné à l'honorable J.-A. Chapleau, par le 'Junior Conservative Club' de Montréal", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, p. 176.

renew the obligations of the province, Chapleau had decided to try to negotiate a long term loan of \$4,000,000 on the Paris market instead of that of London or New York. J.-S.-C. Wurtele, the Yamaska deputy, successfully concluded an agreement with financiers who controlled La Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas. The loan had not only provided Quebec with needed money, but had also opened a new market for the province's operations.¹¹³

Chapleau had also been instrumental in the establishment of a Crédit Foncier in which French and Canadian capital would be invested. The principal task of the institution had been to aid colonization and provide an avenue for French investment by directing capital towards the development of the agricultural sector of the economy of the province. However, rural development was not to be the Crédit Foncier Franco-Canadien's exclusive concern, for the institution could lend

sur hypothèque ou sur la garantie des créances hypothécaires.... avec ou sans hypothèque, aux corporations municipales et scolaires, aux fabriques et aux syndics pour la construction ou la réparation des églises; acheter les bons ou débentures émis par les Compagnies incorporées; faire des prêts au gouvernement de la province de Québec; acheter les effets publics et les revendre.¹¹⁴

By 1887, loans of an urban nature, especially those in the Montreal area, had outstripped those from rural regions.

The day Chapleau had announced the establishment of the Crédit

¹¹³Magella Quinn, "Les capitaux français et le Québec, 1855-1900", RHAF, 24.4 (mars 1971), 552.

¹¹⁴La Presse, samedi le 4 juillet 1891.

Foncier, L'Electeur, a Liberal paper, had revealed a scandal that Senator Trudel had quickly tried to exploit.¹¹⁵ While the Liberals had broached the issue in order to try to destroy the former Liberal, Etienne-Théodore Pâquet, Trudel had attempted to turn the supposed scandal against Chapleau. With information culled from the columns of L'Electeur, Trudel had declared that Chapleau, Wurtele and Pâquet had each received \$14,000 from the "syndicat-action des juifs du crédit foncier.... en récompense de privilèges exorbitants arrachés à l'Etat...."¹¹⁶ Trudel had been particularly incensed that the province had accorded the Crédit Foncier a monopoly over all investment which flowed into Quebec from Europe. Because other financial institutions had by-passed that monopoly by obtaining a federal charter, the Crédit Foncier had renounced its advantageous position by 1883.¹¹⁷ Despite that fact, Trudel had continued his vendetta against Chapleau. In reply to the Senator's charges, Pâquet had admitted that he had received the money "non comme homme politique, mais professionnellement en organisant le Crédit Foncier."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Magella Quinn postulates that the scandal was raised because opposition "proviennent surtout de rivaux politiques et de sociétés à capitaux anglais installées au Canada depuis déjà plusieurs années et intéressées à se partager entre elles seules le gâteau québécois." (Magella Quinn, Les capitaux français et le Québec 1855-1900, Le Diplôme d'études supérieures, Université Laval, 1968, p. 66.)

¹¹⁶ L'Etendard, samedi le 7 février 1885.

¹¹⁷ La Patrie, mercredi le 28 février 1883 & La Minerve, vendredi le 16 mars 1883.

¹¹⁸ L'Etendard, samedi le 7 février 1885.

In the Legislative Assembly, Chapleau had similarly denied that "Ni moi ni aucun de mes collègues n'ont rien reçu ni directement, ni indirectement aucun argent du crédit foncier; IL N'Y A PAS EU DE DEPOTS DE FAITS POUR CETTE INSTITUTION DANS AUCUNE BANQUE DU PAYS' pour les fins mentionnées...."¹¹⁹ Wurtele too denied the charge of corruption. This non-scandal had not shaken public confidence in the important institution in which such notable French Canadians as Chapleau, Edouard-Julien Barbeau, administrator of the City and District Savings Bank of Montreal and Receiver-General of Canada at Montreal, Joseph-Alderic Ouimet and Alphonse Desjardins played major roles. These men realized the importance to French Canada of an institution which promoted foreign investment in Canada.

In a period in which immigration from France was disappointingly low, the Crédit Foncier Franco-Canadien provided a means by which French financiers could transfer capital from Europe to Canada. As Chapleau had stated in 1885: "There will be no immigration in the sense of poor people coming here to work in the country. But what is better, influential men of means will invest their money here. The French people are not an immigrating people."¹²⁰ Again in 1887 Chapleau had reiterated his earlier belief that there would not be "a very numerous immigration from France, but I can say, that we will have an influential and important

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Montreal Gazette, Saturday October 10, 1885.

immigration, inasmuch as wealthy Frenchmen will sink their fortunes in this country...."¹²¹

Although the first aspect of his plan to strengthen ties with France had been realized, Chapleau had known that his efforts might end in failure if Frenchmen lacked information about Quebec and Canada. Thus, he had proposed that the province establish a permanent agent in Paris. Since such a post would have been financially prohibitive for the province, he had attempted to induce the federal government to subsidize the agency. In a letter to Langevin in 1882, he had queried:

Et la question de subvention d'un Agent à Paris? Vos nombreuses occupations vous ont-elles fait perdre de vue notre demande? Vous ne vous faites pas une idée du mauvais effet que cette absence de toute source de renseignements produit à Paris.¹²²

By July, Chapleau had succeeded in persuading the federal government that Hector Fabre, Cartier's brother-in-law and a former Liberal, could act on behalf of both the provincial and federal governments in the French capital. Fabre would represent Quebec to promote its financial, commercial and other interests, and also Canada to "call the attention of intending emigrants, capitalists and others to the superior advantages

¹²¹Montreal Gazette, Monday October 10, 1887. Both the loan of \$4,000,000 and the Crédit Foncier's foundation broke new ground on what was to prove to be a successful beginning for investors in Canada and for French Canada which received the capital. See Quinn, "Les Capitaux français et le Québec, 1855-1900", RHAF, pp. 555-557.

¹²²Chapleau à Langevin, Québec, le 16 janvier 1882, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 76.

offered by Canada."¹²³ Chapleau's choice of Fabre had proved to be wise. Within eighteen months of his arrival in Paris, Fabre had delivered numerous lectures on Canada, established a library of reference on the country and founded a newspaper, Le Paris-Canada, which was devoted to Canadian affairs. He had provided valuable information to both the Canadian and Quebec governments and had promoted the two other aspects of Chapleau's policy of closer economic co-operation between France and Canada.

With respect to Chapleau's hopes for Franco-Canadian relations, Fabre had initially been optimistic. In 1884 he had written the Secretary of State:

It appeared to you that the establishment of a direct line of steamers between the two countries and the concluding of a treaty of commerce must follow closely upon the establishment of the Crédit Foncier. This indeed will yet be the two-fold result destined to reward your efforts.¹²⁴

¹²³Return (150) To an address of the House of Commons, dated 8th April, 1885; --For all papers concerning the appointment, instructions and salary of Mr. Fabre as Canadian Agent at Paris (France), and the Reports from that gentleman to the Government since his appointment, 3rd Session, 5th Parliament, 48 Victoria 1885. Ottawa: McLean Roger & Co., 1885, p. 1. A Frenchman, Guénard-Hodent, wrote of the Canadian Commissariat in Paris: "C'est une création qui, comme bien l'on pense, ne pouvait pas aller sans critique. De fait l'institution est battu en brèche. Par bonheur Lord Lytton est ambassadeur de Grande-Bretagne à Paris et daigne écouter la Princesse Louise, fille de la Reine Victoria, qui lui parle favorablement de l'Hon. Hector Fabre. Le commissariat est maintenu. Il devra faire face à une tâche assez complexe." (Maurice Guénard-Hodent, La tradition renouée, Paris: éditions de Paris-Canada, 1930, pp. 6-7.)

¹²⁴Return (150) To an address of the House of Commons ... For all papers concerning ... Mr. Fabre as Canadian Agent in Paris.... (Fabre to Chapleau, Paris, March 12, 1884, p. 13).

However, those two unfulfilled facets of Chapleau's program proved far less successful than his attraction of French investment.

As Premier of Quebec, Chapleau had attempted to establish a direct communication link between France and Canada through the initiation of a steamer service. He claimed that "you cannot have trade relations, unless you have means of communication between these two countries."¹²⁵ A direct steamship line would facilitate the entry of Canadian goods into France which were subjected to a surtaxe d'entrepot, equivalent to a prohibitive tariff, if they passed through an English port on their journey from Canada to France.¹²⁶ Macdonald had agreed to grant Chapleau's request for a federal subsidy for such a line, but Chapleau had been unable to realize his project while Premier of Quebec.¹²⁷ Hopes had brightened in the spring of 1885 with the arrival in Halifax of a ship of La compagnie de navigation à vapeur d'Halifax.¹²⁸ Unfortunately, service had to be discontinued the

¹²⁵Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) June 7, 1887, p. 821.

¹²⁶La Presse, lundi le 12 janvier 1885.

¹²⁷PAC, Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, Ottawa, November 22, 1880 & Macdonald to Chapleau, Ottawa, November 8, 1881. During Chapleau's Premiership, the possibility that phosphates would provide a certain cargo, a necessity for a direct line with France, appeared certain. However, that prospect did not materialize. (See Quinn, Les capitaux français et le Québec, p. 92.)

¹²⁸La Minerve, mercredi le 15 avril 1885.

same year for lack of profit.¹²⁹ In 1887, La Ligne Bossière had proposed to establish service between Le Havre and Montreal if the company received a federal grant. Chapleau had supported such a step, for as he explained to Macdonald,

we need inter-trade with France. It is absurd to refuse such a chance if we can get it; we have been unsuccessful in getting it with our missions to France until now; and we shall never get it except with the creation of a line which will give us the assistance necessary to move the French government in the proper direction.¹³⁰

Macdonald had agreed. \$50,000 had been granted the company and service had commenced in 1887.¹³¹ Again, disappointment had reigned as difficulties had arisen within a year. A sub-committee of the Privy Council on Mail Steamers' Subsidies had recommended the cancellation of the contract with La Ligne Bossière on the ground of irregularities in the service in violation of the terms of the Orders-in-Council which had granted the company the subsidy. Chapleau had informed Macdonald that "The main reason of this decision is the alleged failure of the company to create trade relations between France and Canada."¹³² Chapleau had opposed the sub-committee's stand and had

asked that the company be heard before passing judgement upon them in a manner which appears to mean a preconceived

¹²⁹La Minerve, mercredi le 10 février 1886.

¹³⁰PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, April 7, 1887.

¹³¹La Presse, mercredi le 13 juin 1888.

¹³²PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, October 14, 1888.

determination on the part of the Canadian Government to discourage all efforts in the direction of an interchange of relations between a great continental nation and Canada. At least it will be so interpreted in France and in the Province of Quebec.¹³³

Chapleau's pleas had gone unheeded, and the line had folded when the government had withdrawn its subsidy.¹³⁴ Although many other attempts were made to join Canada and France via a steamship line, Chapleau never lived to see the realization of the project on a permanent basis.

The third aspect of Chapleau's plan, the development of trade, was only slightly more fruitful than the complete failure of the direct communications link. While Premier, Chapleau had laid the groundwork for an increase of trade with France. He had hoped that Fabre would be able to aid the Canadian High Commissioner in London in his work with British Ministers in any negotiations for commercial treaties.¹³⁵ In 1884 the trade negotiations the High Commissioner, Sir Charles Tupper, had had with the French, had been interrupted. Chapleau later claimed that some of the difficulty in securing a trade treaty with France had been caused by an interruption in French policy due to the rapidity with which French governments succeeded one another during the early 1880's.¹³⁶ However,

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ L'Etendard, mardi le 26 février 1889.

¹³⁵ PAC, Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, Ottawa, November 8, 1881.

¹³⁶ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) June 7, 1887, p. 821.

the Secretary of State believed that the major part of the blame for failure to open the French market to Canadian goods rested upon the Canadian government. In 1888, Chapleau had expressed that view to Macdonald. He had explained that

In 1884 Sir Charles had the most positive assurances from the French government, and the permission of the Home authorities, in favor of a commercial convention. The negotiations were interrupted by the recall of Sir Charles to Canada, and no further effort was made on our part to reopen them. My firm opinion is that such a convention is still possible if the proper steps were taken to obtain it.¹³⁷

Another possibly more realistic reason for Canada's failure, had been expressed by the French economist, Gustave de Molinari, who had written that

au moment même où on travaille au Canada à faciliter les échanges avec la France, on travaille en France à les rendre plus difficiles, en taxant les blés, les farines, le bétail, qui sont, avec les bois de construction, les seules articles importants que ce pays puisse nous fournir....¹³⁸

The chronicler in L'Etendard who used the pseudonym Jourdain, had adopted de Molinari's interpretation.¹³⁹ However, Chapleau and his followers had based their opinions on the views of Hector Fabre.

In 1885, Fabre had viewed the French market as an inviting area for Canadian products. To Chapleau, Fabre had confided that

¹³⁷PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, October 14, 1888.

¹³⁸La Minerve, jeudi le 16 avril 1885.

¹³⁹L'Etendard, mardi le 24 mai 1887.

The French market is the most accessible to our trade; our farm products, lumber, minerals, fresh and preserved fish, and even some of our manufactured articles, are more likely to be well received and largely consumed there. The state of the Customs tariff of that country renders it possible to secure a highly advantageous position for Canada; the concessions to be made by us would leave unimpaired the system of protection we have adopted and only imperceptibly affect the public revenue.¹⁴⁰

In reference to Fabre's report, Chapleau had written to Langevin since he alone could persuade Macdonald to consent to act upon Fabre's optimistic suggestions of reopening negotiations.¹⁴¹ Likewise, in 1887, Dansereau had adopted the same stand in his declaration that France "nous offre un marché sûr pour un grand nombre de nos produits bruts et ouvrés...."¹⁴² Despite the Chapleautiste's favourable view of the French government position and their continual pressure on Ottawa for negotiations, no treaty was signed between the two countries until 1893.¹⁴³

Despite the many difficulties that blocked his path to strengthen Franco-Canadian co-operation, Chapleau never lost faith in his goal. In such a state of mind, Chapleau approached the exciting event in France

¹⁴⁰Return (150) To an address of the House of Commons ... For all papers concerning ... Mr. Fabre as Canadian Agent at Paris.... (Fabre to Chapleau, Paris, February 26, 1885, p. 17.)

¹⁴¹Chapleau à Langevin, Ottawa, le 17 décembre 1885, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 93.

¹⁴²La Presse, mercredi le 18 mai 1887.

¹⁴³La Minerve, mercredi le 8 mars 1893. R. A. Shields outlines problems inherent in treaty negotiations between a sovereign country and a self-governing colony and demonstrates the divergence of views between free trade Britain and Canada which favoured colonial preference. (R. A. Shields, "Sir Charles Tupper and the Franco-Canadian Treaty of 1895: A Study of Imperial Relations", CHR, 49.1 (March 1968), 1-23.)

at the end of the 1880's. The great Paris Exhibition of 1889 appeared to present him with a unique opportunity to sell to Frenchmen his plan of co-operation with France. Unfortunately, since Britain and other European countries were cool to the idea of an exhibition to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution, Canada decided not to participate in any official capacity.¹⁴⁴ As might be expected, the Castor press was jubilant that Canada was not to be officially represented at Paris.¹⁴⁵ However, Chapleau refused to allow such an occasion to pass without an attempt to inform the French public about the opportunities for investment in Canada. While in Paris for health reasons from December 8, 1888 until April 24, 1889, Chapleau sent a stream of letters to Canada to urge the government to encourage Canadians to participate on a private basis. He hoped that "private interests and more especially the C. P. R. will find their way to that great fair of the Continent."¹⁴⁶ Chapleau was convinced that Canada would soon attract investors from the continent especially if the C. P. R. were active in an attempt to secure such capital. To Macdonald he reported that

Millions and millions are pouring from here towards South American republics, when Canada could so effectually utilize them! A propos, I doubt whether we have been very wise in

¹⁴⁴La Minerve, mardi le 26 mai 1887.

¹⁴⁵L'Etendard, mardi le 12 juin 1888.

¹⁴⁶PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Paris, December 22, 1888.

doing nothing in connection with the Paris Exhibition, at least in encouraging private exhibitors.¹⁴⁷

Chapleau urged the government to support a private display he hoped the C. P. R. would erect in order to answer "the necessarily numerous inquiries about that 'great North American kingdom.'"¹⁴⁸ In his capacity as Secretary of State, Chapleau had Jules Helbronner, the La Presse newspaper columnist who was concerned with social and labour questions, prepare a report on the Exhibition for the government.¹⁴⁹ If Canada did not contribute much to the Exhibition, Chapleau was determined that she would learn from the great event!

The Paris exhibition demonstrated Chapleau's insistence that Canada must reflect and aid the development of the French Canadian, as well as the anglophone community. He stressed the French fact in Canada through his continuous demands for justice for his compatriots. That stance was one aspect of Chapleau's policy which brought the Secretary of State into conflict with Macdonald and Langevin. Chapleau, who believed he incarnated the true aspirations of French Canada, demanded the

¹⁴⁷ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Paris, January 31, 1889.

¹⁴⁸ PAC, Tupper Papers, Chapleau to Tupper, Paris, February 22, 1889.

¹⁴⁹ La Presse, samedi le 27 septembre 1890. Helbronner made his report as a member of the Royal Commission on the relations of Labour and Capital in Canada and thus his report on the Exhibition was later submitted as an appendix to the Labour Commission report. (Report on the Social Economy Section of the Universal International Exhibition of 1889 at Paris, prepared by Jules Helbronner: Requested by the Honorable Secretary of State, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1890.)

leadership of his province and thus, patronage and power. Macdonald and Langevin both refused to countenance any such aspirations of Chapleau. The tensions the refusal to cater to Chapleau's desires caused coupled with the Secretary of State's espousal of the French fact, threw Chapleau into centre stage as racial tension began to mount in the country at the end of the 1880's.

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1823/2

THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

THE POLITICAL CAREER OF SIR JOSEPH-ADOLPHE CHAPLEAU

by

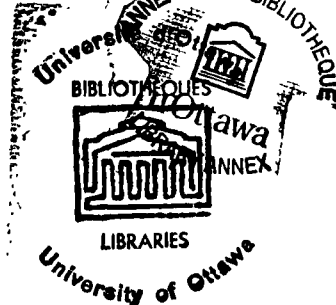
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CHAPTER VII

PYRRHIC VICTORY

During the two years that preceded the last Conservative victory of the century, three issues which tended to divide the francophone and anglophone communities blew over the Canadian political stage. The Jesuits' Estates controversy and the status of the francophones in the North West and in Manitoba each carried the seeds of division. As a leading French Canadian politician, Chapleau was forced to meet the challenge those questions posed for the country and to neutralize their effects in time for the election in March 1891.

In the political contest, the Conservatives grasped the initiative from the outset. Macdonald pushed racial tensions out of view and charged the Liberals with disloyalty in their determined pursuit of unrestricted reciprocity with the United States. Chapleau adopted Macdonald's tactic, but also discussed the economic consequences of the Liberal policy to Canada, and in particular, to the labouring class. That appeal to the workers proved beneficial to the Conservative cause in the electoral battle.

During the 1891 election Chapleau again rose to prominence as he led the Conservative forces in the Montreal district and overpowered the Liberals while the Quebec region fell before the opposition onslaught. However, the Secretary of State's lack of generosity towards the Castors turned a moderate triumph into a personal defeat, into a pyrrhic victory. Chapleau's refusal to conciliate his persistent foes within the Conservative

party boded ill for his political future despite his obvious importance to the party during elections and his concerted attempts to calm racial passions.

The relations between Canada's two major communities were first strained to an alarming extent with the eruption in Ottawa during the 1889 session of Parliament of a dispute which concerned the Jesuits' Estates. Chapleau was away in France during the discussion of that inflammable topic, but watched developments closely. Near the end of November 1888, he had suffered a terrible fever which shook "tortured and crushed, by seven attacks of chills...." his poor body within a two week period.¹ Because of his condition, the Secretary of State had been forced to leave Canada December 6, 1888, for Paris, in order to undergo yet another operation. When he had arrived in the French capital, problems had persisted because "Il faisait un froid de loup...."² Since his "poêle à charbon ne veut plus s'éteindre et chauffe à cuire le pain sur notre table...."³ Chapleau had spent an exorbitant amount on a Canadian type heating unit only to be blessed with a warm spell after his purchase. In spite of the troublesome weather, Chapleau had been able to regain enough strength in order to undergo a successful operation on an

¹PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, November 29, 1888.

²La Patrie, vendredi le 4 janvier 1889. This data is contained in extracts from a letter Chapleau wrote to a friend in Montreal, December 21, 1888.

³Ibid.

"internal diseased organ"⁴ early in January. During his convalescence, Chapleau had suffered excruciating pain for approximately one month.⁵ Fortunately, his doctor had correctly predicted that "the pain would gradually disappear" when his treatment which consisted of "a painful probing and washing of the internal diseased organ" terminated.⁶ While Chapleau had submitted to that process of "tunnelling", his main diversion had consisted of dinner, breakfast or an occasional visit to the opera with friends and "the cream of the different political factions of France...." such as the Marquis Bassanos, Roland-Bonaparte, the General de Charette--all former visitors to Canada.⁷ Just as he had recovered from his operation, Chapleau's old enemy, his bronchitis had returned to delay his recovery and prevent an early embarkation for Canada. "Les pastilles, les sirops, les sinapismes" had all been ineffective and the parisian weather--"Un soleil brillant pendant quelques heures, puis un tempête de neige, puis une brise violente, suivie de pluie ou d'humidité pénétrante"--had only exacerbated his condition.⁸

⁴PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Paris, February 8, 1889.

⁵PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Paris, December 22, 1888.

⁶PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Paris, February 8, 1889.

⁷Ibid.

⁸La Presse, mercredi 1e 27 février 1889. La Presse printed extracts of a letter from Chapleau to G.-A. Nantel.

Despite the discomforts of Paris, Chapleau had liked the city. In a letter to Macdonald he had mused that "When I am old, and Fabre gone, and Canada independent, I shall choose Paris for an embassy and a pension de retraite, not to say when I shall feel the want of having 'peace with honor.'"⁹ However, unable to suffer the Parisian winter, Chapleau had left for the Midi in mid-February in the hope of ensuring a speedy recovery.

Chapleau had regretted that he could not take charge of his department and become involved with political matters when Parliament opened at the end of January. However, he had resigned himself to the fact that he would not return to Canada until he was completely and sufficiently well to undertake "la rude besogne."¹⁰ Not until April 24th was Chapleau able to return to Montreal. What a welcome he received from his followers and the citizens of the city that evening! Long before Chapleau's train from New York was due, Bonaventure station was crowded with people, including many of the most prominent citizens of Montreal and district. When the Secretary of State and his wife arrived and stepped from the parlour car, the crowd sent up three rousing cheers. Those personally acquainted with Chapleau pressed forward to congratulate him on his safe return. Then Chapleau's party slowly made its way to the outside of the station where a procession of carriages formed to escort

⁹ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Paris, February 8, 1889.

¹⁰ La Presse, mercredi 1e 27 février 1889. La Presse printed extracts of a letter from Chapleau to G.-A. Nantel.

Chapleau to the St. Lawrence Hall. There, Madame Chapleau was presented with a bouquet of flowers and Chapleau delivered a stimulating speech on the necessity of racial harmony.¹¹

The following day, the Chapleaus left for Ottawa where Members of Parliament, Senators, and many personal friends welcomed the couple at the Ottawa railway station. In the afternoon, the Secretary of State was again saluted by the warm applause of both sides of the House of Commons when he entered the Chamber to resume his duties. Chapleau arrived to sit in the last week of a session that had strained relations between Canada's anglophone and francophone communities. He realized that such wounds, unless healed, could bring misfortune to the Conservative in the next federal election.

Those injuries had occurred while Chapleau had recovered from his operation in France. An anglophone, W. E. O'Brien, had moved a resolution in the House on March 23rd, to ask for disallowance of the Jesuits' Estates Act of Quebec. Such provincial legislation had resulted from the attempt to regulate a problem that had dated from the dissolution of the Jesuit Order by the Pope in 1773. After the death of the last Jesuit in British North America in 1800, the Jesuits' lands had been escheated to the Crown. The property had then been granted to Lower Canada in 1831 to endow public education. By the time the province of Quebec had acquired the lands in 1867, the Jesuit Order had been restored

¹¹ J.-A. Chapleau, Retour d'Europe. Demonstration enthousiaste. Adresse de bienvenue. Discours en réponse. Avant tout soyons canadiens! Notre position. Nos devoirs. Montréal: le 24 avril 1889, pp. 1-2.

and had demanded the return of its former property. The Roman Catholic Church, through the bishops, had also laid claims against the Estates. This conflict for control of the valuable property had prevented any sale of the land. In order to settle the difficulty, the Quebec Legislature had passed the Jesuits' Estates Act in 1888. According to the Act, the Mercier government had agreed to pay the Roman Catholic Church \$400,000 and the Protestant Council of Public Instruction \$60,000. The Pope was to distribute the Church's money to the various religious bodies that claimed a portion of that organization's award.

Many Protestants in Ontario had reacted violently to the endowment of a religious organization with public funds and to the arbitration by the Pope. That anglophone reaction had partly been conditioned by the fear that French Canadian migration into eastern Ontario was a threat to English-speaking Canada's future and by the failure to secure the incorporation of the Orange Order in 1884. The Toronto Daily Mail had adopted the cause of the indignant Ontario fanatics and had presented their case in the press. O'Brien had been only one politician who had led the attack against French Canadians in the House of Commons. To the relief of many, reason and justice had prevailed for O'Brien's resolution had been soundly defeated by the majority of Members of Parliament from all political parties who had wished to maintain racial harmony and who had desired to guard provincial rights. When Chapleau returned to Canada April 24th, he termed Parliament's action "a stirring episode in our history" in which the two political parties united "without previous understanding in order to prevent a conflict which would have been of

evil omen for the nation."¹²

However, before the dust had settled on the Jesuits' Estates controversy, the Equal Rights Association was founded in Toronto in June 1889. The most vigorous spokesman of the new organization, D'Alton McCarthy, the Barrie representative, proclaimed the desire for anglophone supremacy in Canada and ridiculed the notion that francophones should enjoy equal rights with English-speaking Canadians. During the summer of 1889, Chapleau could not ignore the escalation in racial tension that threatened the very existence of the Canada he envisaged, the unity of the Conservative party he cherished, and the electoral future of the government he supported.

Chapleau discussed the matter of the Jesuits' Estates during his tour of the 1889 picnic circuit. On September 5th at St-Hilaire, he criticized members of both language groups who appeared determined to provoke and inflame their fellow Canadians of the other nationality. He reiterated his views expressed upon his return from Europe in April that francophones should have the same rights as anglophones. He admitted that French Canadians

are a minority in the Confederation, but we ought not to pose as a minority; we ought not to consider ourselves a race apart, or as if we were entitled to favors. We only want our rights and not favor; we only desire to live happy in the Confederation. All races should consider themselves as merged into one great Canadian nationality, and lose sight of all racial differences. As French-Canadians and Roman Catholics we have no more

¹² Montreal Gazette, Thursday May 2, 1889. Chapleau spoke at the St. Lawrence Hall, April 24, 1889.

nor less rights than our English-speaking or Protestant compatriots.¹³

With such a view of the nature of Canadian society, Chapleau naturally believed an association for equal rights to be an anomaly.

The Secretary of State was later to deny McCarthy's contention that language determined nationality. He scoffed at the conviction that a man who spoke French as his mother tongue, even if he knew and could speak English, could not be really and truly a British subject. To such an assertion, Chapleau simply replied that "we claim to be Canadians, and although we may speak in French or English we are really not English or French, but we are truly Canadians, and we intend to remain such."¹⁴ To Chapleau, "The utopia of the Equal Rights party, to impose only one language upon the people of Canada and to forcibly unify the different national elements of the Dominion, is as absurd as would be the idea of forcing the different elements of nature, which in due time unite together and create the various products of the earth. Time is the only agent, and forced processes only prevent and retard what time will ultimately accomplish."¹⁵

At St -Hilaire, Chapleau condemned the Equal Righters who preached that there was a connection between loyalty and language. He scorned

¹³Montreal Gazette, Saturday September 7, 1889.

¹⁴Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) February 18, 1890, p. 837.

¹⁵Montreal Gazette, Friday January 17, 1890. The Gazette published an interview the New York World had had with Chapleau.

those who pretended that French Canadians were a danger to British institutions, a menace to the rights of the Crown because they did not speak English. To such unfounded accusations he noted, with some exaggeration, that French Canadians had saved British North America from the American armies in 1775 and in 1812.¹⁶ The Secretary of State then reminded English-speaking Canadians of Lord Elgin's warning that it was foolish to attempt to destroy the French Canadian nationality, because such action would only have the opposite effect.¹⁷

Chapleau congratulated English-speaking citizens of Quebec for their acceptance of Mercier's Jesuits' Estates legislation. However, he did ponder why elsewhere one heard "ce cri d'extermination lancé contre les Canadiens-français, que l'on a comparés à des parasites nuisibles à la constitution anglaise?"¹⁸ Chapleau's question was rhetorical since he had already answered it that spring in his statement that the agitation arose "out of the mere unskilful drafting of a law, otherwise desirable...."¹⁹ However, while Chapleau asserted that Mercier had acted in a manner calculated to provoke a dangerous irritation,²⁰ he

¹⁶La Minerve, samedi le 7 septembre 1889. Also see La Minerve, lundi le 9 février 1891. Chapleau repeated his claims before an audience at Queen's University on January 22, 1891.

¹⁷La Minerve, mardi le 7 septembre 1889.

¹⁸La Presse, samedi le 28 décembre 1889. Chapleau spoke at St.-Hilaire.

¹⁹Montreal Gazette, Thursday May 2, 1889. Chapleau spoke at the St. Lawrence Hall April 24, 1889.

²⁰La Presse, samedi le 28 décembre 1889. Chapleau spoke at St -Hilaire.

maintained that "entre une maladresse et une injustice il y a tout un monde, et le parlement qui a le pouvoir de commettre une injustice a certes bien le droit de faire une faute de convenance. Il n'y a dans cette législation aucune question de principes qui puisse justifier les attaques dont elle a été l'objet...."²¹ With reference to the Castors and the Equal Righters, Chapleau emphasized that he had no confidence "en ceux qui, sous prétexte de patriotisme ou de justice, ou d'accomplissement d'une grande obligation morale, cherchent à semer la haine et la discorde. Je n'ai pas foi en ceux qui sont plus catholiques que le Pape, pas plus que je l'ai en ceux qui, posant en champions des droits égaux, sont plus loyaux et meilleurs protestants que la Reine elle-même."²²

Chapleau believed that the Equal Rights Association appeared in reaction to Mercier's attempts to convert the agitation in Quebec to obtain an amnesty for Riel into a French Canadian party--le parti nationard.²³ The Equal Righters were anti-French, in the sense that in their eyes, the English-speaking minority in Quebec did not receive full justice from the Mercier government. On the other hand, the Mercier led nationards were anti-anglais in the sense that according to them,

²¹La Minerve, samedi le 7 septembre 1889. Chapleau spoke at St -Hilaire.

²²La Presse, samedi le 28 décembre 1889. Chapleau spoke at St -Hilaire.

²³La Minerve, vendredi le 17 janvier 1890. Chapleau was interviewed by the New York World on January 14, 1890. Bishop Laflèche also shared Chapleau's opinion, but placed the blame on Tardivel and Trudel. AASB, Laflèche à Taché, Québec, le 19 mai 1890.

the French and Catholic minority in Canada were not treated with justice by the English-speaking and Protestant majority.²⁴

Because Chapleau contended that Mercier was largely responsible for the tensions which resulted from the Jesuits' Estates Act between the two communities in Canada, he attacked the Quebec Premier. He underlined his belief that Mercier's legislation was "maladroite et malheureuse par les conséquences qu'elle a entraînées dans la domaine de la politique et dans les relations naguère si cordiales entre les deux nationalités et les croyances des populations de notre pays."²⁵ However, Chapleau was not totally negative. He affirmed that a settlement of the question could have been found in a manner that was satisfactory to both anglophones and francophones. He had almost reached a final solution which would have fulfilled that condition before he left the Premiership of Quebec.

To those citizens gathered at St -Hilaire, Chapleau briefly sketched the path he had followed as Quebec Premier. During his visit to Rome in 1881, he had broached the subject of the Jesuits' Estates with the Prefect of the Propaganda, Cardinal Simioni. The Prefect had agreed with Chapleau that the Jesuit Order had no right to any compensation because, according to ecclesiastical law, their property had reverted to the Church upon the Order's abolition. Since the British had never accepted the Church's claim and because he knew non-Roman Catholics would

²⁴La Minerve, vendredi le 17 janvier 1890. La Minerve published an interview between Chapleau and the New York World.

²⁵La Minerve, samedi le 7 septembre 1889. Chapleau spoke at St -Hilaire.

not desire the Church to acquire compensation for the former Jesuit lands, Chapleau had proposed that a monetary compensation in lieu of the lands be made in the form of increased grants in favour of education. The lands had originally been given specifically for educational purposes and since education in Quebec was largely Roman Catholic in nature, Chapleau had hoped Rome would consider subsidies to higher education as a means of balancing the Church's claims. Chapleau had returned to Canada in the belief that Cardinal Simioni had been satisfied with his suggestion. To his colleagues in government, Chapleau had also emphasized that necessity and justice demanded that a fair and proportionate compensation to Protestant education be made in the shape of a proportionate increase in grants to non-Catholics.²⁶ He had decided to capitalize the Jesuits' Estates at \$500,000. \$25,000 annually (5%) was to be appropriated for the purposes of Roman Catholic higher education and \$4,000 yearly was to be apportioned to the Protestant section of the Council of Public Instruction to be disposed of in the manner selected by them. The settlement was to receive the approval of Archbishop Taschereau, who held a power of attorney from Rome to treat with the government on the subject, and through the Archbishop to be ratified by the Pope.²⁷

The very essence of Chapleau's plan had been to maintain harmony

²⁶ Montreal Gazette, Wednesday November 27, 1889.

²⁷ Montreal Gazette, Monday December 23, 1889. Roy C. Dalton also devotes two paragraphs to Chapleau's role while Premier of Quebec. (Roy C. Dalton, The Jesuits' Estates Question 1760-1888: A Study of the Background for the Agitation of 1889, [Toronto]: University of Toronto Press, [1968], p. 139.)

between the two communities of the country and to award justice to an injured party--the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, Mercier had inflamed anglophone passions. He had substituted the Jesuits for Cardinal Taschereau; introduced the Pope as a party to the transaction in a way that irritated non-Catholics; and awarded \$400,000 not solely for educational purposes, but for the free and absolute disposal of the Pope. Mercier's actions had also compromised the position of French Canadians outside of Quebec.

Chapleau did not touch upon that matter at St.-Hilaire, but he did discuss that point by the end of 1889. He was furious that Mercier cared so little for French Canadians beyond the borders of Quebec. In a letter to the Quebec Premier which the Gazette published in English, Chapleau castigated Mercier and bluntly informed him that his

legislation, while wishing to accomplish a praiseworthy object, from my point of view, was made by you deliberately in a clumsy, boastful, provocative, and I may now say disastrous manner. It is true your vanity cares little for the deplorable fate which you have brought about for our co-religionists in the Northwest, Manitoba and Ontario; you have bravado which you, perhaps, think sufficient to prevent the calamity befalling them, but you forget that threats to the Protestant minority of Lower Canada recoil in oppression upon the French minority of the other provinces --that is to say, on all the French Catholics in the Confederation.²⁸

By the end of the year the matter of the Jesuits' Estates was almost dead in Quebec, but Chapleau's analysis of Mercier's actions proved correct and memories of the dispute did not fade in other areas of Canada.

²⁸Montreal Gazette, Saturday December 21, 1889. Chapleau to Mercier, Ottawa, December 15, 1889.

The reaction of the Jesuits' Estates issue confirmed that the question of the French fact in the North West continued unanswered. As the 1880's drew to a close, the hopes expressed by the Cartier-Chapleautiste school for a strong francophone influence in that region had shattered. By 1890, the North West was an anglophone territory in which 13% of the population was French-speaking. Chapleau publicly refused to blame the Conservative government for the lack of French Canada's influence. He believed the cause of anglophone dominance lay in the lack of French Canadian settlement and investment. In 1887 he had affirmed that slow French immigration had resulted from the discouragement of emigration from Quebec through fear of the depopulation of dioceses in that province. French Canadians might not have invested their small amounts of capital in that region because of the failure of the first efforts made by foreign capitalists.²⁹

Whatever the reasons for their minority position in the North West, francophones of the Chapleautiste school considered that the territory belonged to them as much as to English-speaking Canadians and that they should exert an influence upon its development. (Chapleau's demands for an important cabinet post which would be concerned with the North West's future were, in part, based on that premise.) Consequently, French Canadians were shocked with McCarthy's proposal in the House of Commons in January 1890 of an amendment to the Northwest Territories Act

²⁹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) June 7, 1887, p. 821.

which would remove the right to use the French language in the debates of the North West Assembly, in the journals and ordinances of the Assembly and in the proceedings before the courts. Again, an issue that divided Canada's anglophone and francophone communities arose that could have hindered the Conservative party's ability to win the next federal election.

In the debate on the Beausoleil amendment to McCarthy's bill, an amendment designed to maintain French Canadian rights as they existed in 1890, Chapleau attacked the anglophone extremist, McCarthy, for his injustice to French Canadians. He expressed the wish that "members had equal powers in the House so that he would not have to advance in bad English what he thought were pretty good arguments...."³⁰ He warned McCarthy that if he did "not respect the covenants which have been entered into between the two important races in the Dominion, to the extent of permitting the laws of the land to be published in the language of the minority ... [he was] committing a cruel injustice...."³¹ Chapleau turned to Quebec as an appropriate model for the North West to follow. In that province, English-speaking Canadians made up only 1/6 of the population but they were allowed to use their mother tongue before the courts and in the political institutions of the province.³² In addition,

³⁰Montreal Gazette, Wednesday February 19, 1890.

³¹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) February 18, 1890, p. 830.

³²Ibid., p. 828.

the Secretary of State attacked McCarthy for his disguised attempt to prevent French Canadian immigration to the North West through the prevention of the promulgation and publication of the laws and ordinances of the territory in French.³³ Despite Chapleau's worry about the end result of McCarthy's actions, he did not fear the loss of the liberty to use the French language in Canada because of the protection afforded French Canadians by the Crown. Speaking of McCarthy, Chapleau informed the Commons:

If he wants to destroy French I answer him, in company with all my fellow-countrymen and all true British subjects in this Dominion: Sir, you shall not touch that language; you cannot efface it. We keep it with our religion, as a gift we owe to Divine Providence and to the kind liberality of our beloved Sovereign. And whenever it is attempted to deprive us of that sacred deposit, we shall not despair as long as we read on the Royal Arms of England: "Dieu et mon Droit."34

When Chapleau addressed himself directly to the Beausoleil amendment, he explained that he could not vote for it. The Secretary of State did not announce his reason in the debate. However, La Presse later informed the public that before Chapleau spoke, an arrangement had already been agreed upon in cabinet whereby John Thompson would present an amendment to McCarthy's bill and would be seconded by a French Canadian Minister. The cabinet decision had followed a Conservative party vote in caucus of 44 to 40 against the Beausoleil amendment. The Liberals might have tipped the balance in the vote in favour of the French

³³Ibid., p. 830.

³⁴Ibid., p. 838.

Canadians. However, Blake's speech had indicated that such action was not contemplated by the opposition. Fearful of a split along racial lines on the McCarthy bill, Chapleau had attempted to convince his colleagues to compromise, rather than allow the defeat of the Beausoleil amendment and the passage of McCarthy's bill. Chapleau, the only French Canadian to vote against the Beausoleil amendment, did so in order to gain sympathy from anglophones for Thompson's compromise amendment.³⁵

Thompson's amendment reflected Chapleau's views on the maximum concessions French Canadians could make.³⁶ According to that proposal, the Legislature of the North West would be allowed to decide the language of its deliberations and of its published proceedings following the next elections in the territories. Ordinances were to be published in English and French and the courts were to continue to reflect the bilingual character of the country.³⁷ This amendment passed as an open question, on February 21st. From that dismal affair, French Canadians salvaged all that was possible. As Tarte commented:

Battus sur la question de principe même, nos amis ont adopté la tactique qui s'impose dans les circonstances: essayer de sauver le plus possible, par une concession qui n'affecte pas le principe en jeu, et ne compromet rien pour l'avenir dans les autres provinces, où nous sommes en

³⁵La Presse, vendredi le 21 février 1890. The Beausoleil amendment was defeated 117 to 63.

³⁶Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) February 18, 1890, p. 836.

³⁷L'Etendard, jeudi le 20 février 1890.

minorité.... Ils ne cèderont que quand ils n'auront plus
un pouce de terrain pour y combattre.³⁸

Although French Canadians suffered somewhat, the Conservatives developed a compromise solution that maintained the delicate harmony between French and English-speaking Canadians and removed this matter from the federal political arena before it could be used in the next electoral battle.

However, as Parliament emerged from the painful debate, Chapleau was not optimistic about the future. He suspected that McCarthy's activity of 1890 was just "the first practical step in the hostile movement directed against a people whose loyalty to the Crown and British institutions is above suspicion." He cautioned Canadians to be vigilant and to "expect blows to be directed at the Catholic minority of Ontario, of Manitoba, of the North-West Territories; it is hoped for that the day will soon come when the Catholics and the French, if they wish to have schools of their own, will have to support them and also the public schools of those portions of the country."³⁹ Chapleau's warnings resulted from the agitation for an abolition of the dual school system and French as an official language in Manitoba in 1889. His predictions were realized in 1890 when the Manitoba Legislature abolished the official use of French early in the year and established by April 1st, a public, non-denominational school system, with religious exercises permitted.

Chapleau was horrified. A third affair now appeared to threaten

³⁸La Presse, vendredi le 21 février 1890.

³⁹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) February 18, 1890, p. 817.

Canadian unity and Conservative electoral hopes. Such legislation ran counter to the bilingual and bicultural aspect of the country that Confederation had confirmed. The pact of Confederation which guaranteed the present and future rights of the minorities, had been sanctioned by the Manitoba Act. Thus, "La question n'est pas de savoir si cette législation doit être tolérée; tout le monde est, je crois, d'opinion qu'elle ne peut et ne doit pas l'être. Il s'agit de savoir quel est le mode le plus efficace et le moins irritant à adopter pour empêcher l'imposition de cette loi à nos compatriotes et co-religionnaires de là-bas."⁴⁰

Unlike Bishop Laflèche who wanted the federal government to disallow the Manitoba Acts,⁴¹ Chapleau followed Macdonald's lead and opted for a resort to the courts.⁴² The Secretary of State believed that "Les cours de justice, si elles rendaient un arrêt décrétant l'illégalité de cette mesure, mettraient fin à cette question sans donner lieu à une agitation politique que l'acte officiel du gouvernement fédéral ne

⁴⁰ AASB, Chapleau à Laflèche, Ottawa, le 23 mai 1890. [Copy.]

⁴¹ Laflèche à Chapleau, Evêché des Trois-Rivières, le 12 mai 1890. This letter is quoted in La Minerve, samedi le 20 juin 1891.

⁴² In the House of Commons, Macdonald explained that he favoured a resort to the courts. However, he added that "The executive is not relieved from any responsibility because of any answer given by the tribunal ... the answer of the tribunal will simply be for the information of the Government. The Government may dissent from the decision, and it may be their duty to do so if they differ from the conclusion to which the court has come." Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Macdonald) April 29, 1890, p. 4094 as quoted by R. E. Clague, The Political Aspects of the Manitoba School Question 1890-96, M. A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1939, p. 13.

manquerait pas de soulever."⁴³ He feared that the use of the veto would cause the Manitoba government to call an election which it would win by stirring up dissention. The new legislature would then pass the same law. If the veto were again employed, the popular will would finally impose itself upon the Imperial authorities and the B. N. A. Act would be modified to suit the wishes of the anglophones. On the other hand, a judicial decision would not provoke popular agitation. "Confirmé par les autorités légales de l'empire, elle s'imposerait même aux plus remuants, la passion politique ne pouvant y trouver prise."⁴⁴

Almost a year later, in February 1891, Chapleau assured Bishop Taché, who was convalescing at the Grey Nun's Hospital in Montreal, that he would do all in his power to render justice to the francophones of Manitoba. He informed the Bishop that he accepted Laflèche's position that the Manitoba case was the New Brunswick question in reverse.⁴⁵ In the early 1870's,

nous avons été obligés de laisser maltraiter des catholiques pour garder la constitution intacte, aujourd'hui le gouvernement d'Ottawa est tenu de protéger la minorité contre les actes de la législature de Manitoba, au sujet des Ecoles séparées et de la langue française, également s'il tient à conserver intact l'Acte de la Confédération. Il doit trouver dans les pouvoirs que lui donne la constitution, un remède efficace contre le mal dont la minorité se plaint à juste droit. Car

⁴³AASB, Chapleau à Laflèche, Ottawa, le 23 mai 1890. [Copy.]

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Laflèche à Chapleau, Evêché des Trois-Rivières, le 12 mai 1890. This letter is quoted in La Minerve, samedi le 20 juin 1891.

c'est en vertu de l'Acte de la Confédération que nous avons admis Manitoba, et parmi les conditions acceptées, stipulées et sanctionnées, l'usage de la langue française et les Ecoles séparées dans Manitoba sont spécialement autorisés.⁴⁶

Although Chapleau stressed that he was not the Prime Minister, he indicated that his analysis of the Manitoba question represented the government's view of the issue. In addition to informing the Bishop of the government's general policy, Chapleau also explained his personal position and made a formal commitment to Bishop Taché. In non-equivocal language, Chapleau wrote his promise:

Jamais je ne consentirai à laisser la Minorité, dans la province de Manitoba, dépouillée de ses droits et privilèges en matière de langue et d'éducation, -- pas plus que je ne consentirais à enlever à la Minorité de la Province de Québec ses droits et privilèges en pareille matière. Tous les ministres catholiques dans le cabinet, j'en suis sûr, me soutiendront chaleureusement et énergiquement sur cette question. Et je vous livre ce mot qui renferme tout mon avenir politique: Si, malgré mes protestations, le pouvoir fédéral, gardien naturel des droits des minorités dans les provinces, et le gardien spécialement indiqué en ce qui regarde les droits et privilèges de la minorité dans Manitoba, n'apportait pas de remède efficace contre cette législation injuste, je sortirais sans hésiter du Cabinet avec la mission de faire redresser, par mon travail en dehors, une injustice aussi criante et une inconstitutionnalité aussi évidente.⁴⁷

Undoubtedly reassured by Chapleau's letter, the Roman Catholic bishops dropped the notion of disallowance by April 6, 1891. With some relief, Chapleau wrote Alphonse Desjardins that "Il n'y aura pas de désaveu; les évêques ne le demandent pas dans leur Petition au Gouvernement (reçue il y a une douzaine de jours) mais nous avons

⁴⁶AASB, Chapleau à Taché, Montréal, le 14 février 1891.

⁴⁷Ibid.

insisté sur des mesures de remédiation & je dois nous féliciter sur le bon esprit qui a paru animer tous nos collègues--⁴⁸ Hopefully, the question had been settled. The Church could rely on the promises of a high ranking government cabinet minister; the Conservatives could wait for justice to take its course; and Chapleau could remain confident because he believed the final decision of the courts would favour the francophone cause in Manitoba.⁴⁹ Another francophone grievance was apparently rectified and Chapleau and the Conservatives could now ask the Canadian public for a renewal of their mandate to govern without having to worry about a confrontation during any campaign between French and English-speaking Canadians.

I

As racial tensions ripped through the Canadian political and social fabric, Macdonald was not idle and attempted to strengthen his party in preparation for the next general election. During the summer of 1890, the Prime Minister asked Chapleau to whip the Montreal district into shape. Before he accepted the challenge, Chapleau stressed the enormity of the task by his outline to Macdonald of the sad state of the disorganized and discouraged Conservative party in Quebec.

The first difficulty Chapleau noted was the division in

⁴⁸ASJCF, Fonds Desjardins, Chapleau à Desjardins, Ottawa, le 6 avril 1891.

⁴⁹AASB, Chapleau à Laflèche, Ottawa, le 23 mai 1890. [Copy.]

Conservative ranks. In Montreal, there were three groups which contended for domination of the party. English-speaking Conservatives, disgusted with the dissension, had formed their own circle to concentrate on the anglophone dominated constituencies in Montreal and the Eastern Townships. The great Conservative Association that had won the election of 1887 had been killed by the contending factions of Le Monde and La Minerve. All efforts to reorganize another had met with failure. Chapleau had forewarned his fellow Conservatives of the deplorable situation as early as May 1889. After a successful banquet held in honor of the provincial Conservative chef, Louis-Olivier Taillon, Chapleau had noted the decline of castorism but warned that "Il est fâcheux que ce résultat considérable menace d'être neutralisé par l'état déplorable de la presse conservatrice à Montréal. Si rien n'est fait de ce côté-là, nous avons bonne chance de nous trouver, un de ces matins, aussi désorganisés que la congrégation Mercier."⁵⁰

Second, Chapleau observed that Mercier's victory in the provincial general elections of June 1890 had accentuated the powerless situation of the Conservative party. In addition, "the apparent indifference of the Federal Government in those elections has created a bitter feeling which intensifies the existing divisions between the different groups of conservatives."⁵¹ That indifference had undoubtedly been caused by

⁵⁰ASTR, Chapleau à de La Bruère, Ottawa, le 7 juin 1889.

⁵¹PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, "The Oceanic" Isles of Shoals, New Hampshire, August 11, 1890. See also, PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, June 13, 1890.

Langevin who had been piqued that Taillon regarded Chapleau as his political patron. In 1889, the Liberal paper, L'Electeur, had reported that Langevin had even gone so far as to say that it was "Inutile de battre la grosse caisse, M. Mercier roulera M. Taillon autant que ça lui plaira."⁵² Chapleau had been reluctant to take part in the provincial contest because of the federal government's failure to settle the North Shore Railway question.⁵³ In addition, Chapleau had realized that the

⁵² L'Etendard, mercredi le 12 juin 1889 as quoted from L'Electeur.

⁵³ Apparently, the government of Canada had not carried out the full intent of the railway statutes of 1884 and 1885 largely because of the manner in which it had sold the North Shore to the Pacific. In 1885 the government had retained a lien on the North Shore which had amounted to \$970,000 in bonds. The interest on the bonds was to be paid to the government by the C. P. R. out of the excess of the net receipts after working expenses and other claims, such as the interest on the \$3,500,000 first mortgage bonds had been paid. A clause prevented the company from charging any new construction or any improvements on the road as working expenses without first fulfilling those obligations. Thus all improvements of the line would only serve to augment the federal government's treasury. The Liberal mayor of Quebec city, François Langelier, had claimed that the Pacific had refused to improve the North Shore for that reason. This difficulty could have been avoided if the Pacific had been able to obtain the consent of the Minister of Railways to allow improvements as part of the working expenses of the line. However, the government had refused its consent. The Minister of Justice, Sir John Thompson had argued that until Parliament recast the terms of the agreement, the government was not entitled to waive the promises of any security taken in favour of the Crown. Yet, the government could not hope to obtain interest on the bonds as long as the line continued to deteriorate. Chapleau, who had realized that the Conservative party had suffered in elections since 1886 in the Quebec city region because of the federal government's inaction, had urged the cabinet to redress Quebec city's grievances. Only in 1891 did the federal government decide to abolish its fictitious claim on the North Shore in return for specific improvements on the line. The bonds were cancelled in order to allow the C. P. R. to raise the \$700,000 required for improvements. See La Presse, lundi le 27 janvier 1890; Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Thompson) September 1, 1891, p. 4751 & Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) September 1, 1891, pp. 4763-4764.

campaign would be tough since the Grand Trunk Railway had refused to aid the Conservatives and the Montreal business community, whom Macdonald had believed would favour the Conservatives because of Mercier's poor record on financial matters, had remained tied to the Liberal Provincial Premier.⁵⁴ However, out of a desire to retain the sympathy of a few friends for the next federal election, he had aided some candidates, such as Hippolyte Cornellier in Soulanges. Olivier-Maurice Augé in Montreal East and the Montreal alderman, Hormisdas Jeannotte.⁵⁵

Chapleau had not lost his old flare to spark enthusiasm. He had been the main attraction of the great Conservative rally June 16th, the day before the vote. Speaking on a balcony at the St. James market before 10,000 people, Chapleau's very appearance had caused the crowd to cheer again and again. Although his physician had forbidden him to speak, the Secretary of State had not been able to resist the opportunity to rally his sympathizers. After a scathing attack on Mercier's fiscal muddle and scandal prone administration, punctuated with glowing references to Montreal's Conservative candidates, he had ended with a rousing appeal for a Conservative majority.⁵⁶ That call for victory had not been sufficient to ensure a triumph nor to produce unity and the problems

⁵⁴J. R. Miller, The Impact of the Jesuits' Estates Act on Canadian Politics 1888-1891, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1972, pp. 356 & 369.

⁵⁵La Patrie, lundi le 23 juin 1890.

⁵⁶Montreal Gazette, Tuesday June 17, 1890.

of the party had become apparent again once the result of the June vote had become known. Cornellier, Augé and Jeannotte had lost. Important Conservatives, such as Georges Desjardins, Faucher de Saint-Maurice and the leader, L.-O. Taillon, had gone down to defeat. However, other candidates whom Chapleau had supported, such as G.-A. Nantel in Terrebonne, Pierre-Evariste Leblanc in Laval, and Joseph-Octave Villeneuve in Hochelaga, had been successful. By his intervention in the campaign, Chapleau had saved the party from a rout in the Montreal district.⁵⁷

Despite his failure to carry the Montreal area for the Conservatives in the provincial contest and the difficulties that continued to rack the party in the Montreal district, Chapleau informed Macdonald from the United States that he was willing to undertake the job of preparation for the next election if he were given entire liberty of action. The Secretary of State postulated that fear of defeat could force sense to prevail as in 1887, but he cautioned that at that time "the Liberals of Quebec were not organized; they were not in power. Now they are both, and they are defiant while our friends are discouraged when not disgusted."⁵⁸ As a parting note to his chief, Chapleau confessed that he was "not an optimist nor a fatalist submitting stolidly to threatening reverse. I

⁵⁷ In the Montreal district the Conservatives won 21 seats, the Liberals 23, and one independent was elected.

⁵⁸ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, "The Oceanic" Isles of Shoals, New Hampshire, August 11, 1890. Chapleau was incorrect in his reference because Mercier had assumed power at the end of January and the Federal election was held in February 1887.

fear a calamity but you may be sure, and, d....n it! it won't be my fault--"⁵⁹ Macdonald apparently accepted Chapleau's terms and thus, the Secretary of State became the acknowledged leader of the Montreal district as the Conservatives prepared for the approaching federal general elections.

Upon his return to Canada in September 1890 from his New Hampshire convalescence and holiday, Chapleau set to work. He was well rested after almost a month and a half of "splendid fishing", "a very good table", "a most uniform temperature, cool and bracing" and association with "very sensible people" who rose and retired early every day.⁶⁰ By September Chapleau was ready to begin his arduous task and follow his strategy for victory he had outlined to Macdonald a month earlier. He was prepared to act in a dictatorial fashion in order to rally Conservative forces. Racial matters that divided anglophones and francophones were to be forgotten and the future campaign was to be centred on the Liberal panacea of unrestricted reciprocity with the Americans. The Mercier Liberals who could provide valuable aid to Laurier were not to be spared a federal Conservative assault. Chapleau was determined to scrutinize the Civil Service carefully for he realized that worshippers of the rising sun, Wilfrid Laurier, were numerous in the Montreal region. He informed Conservative friends to choose all officers to be employed in the next census with great care since they could be precious

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

instruments of information for the local party organization. The Secretary of State sought money from Macdonald to secure the necessary legal assistance required to revise the voters' lists, a task that would prove to be a key factor in the elections. Finally, Chapleau hoped to persuade the bishops of the province to control the lower clergy who had abandoned the Conservative cause to a greater extent, he argued, than many in the party realized.⁶¹

The first test of Conservative strength in the Montreal district after Chapleau's return as chef of the region in September, 1890, occurred during a by-election in Napierville, December 9th of the same year. Chapleau hastened to the aid of the Conservative standard bearer, François-Xavier Paradis, and the Secretary of State spoke on the candidate's behalf at the nominating meeting December 2nd. Before a large boisterous gathering of electors, Chapleau confessed that "je ne puis faire comme les prédicateurs qui vous souhaitent le paradis à la fin de vos jours, mais je vous assure que vous aurez Paradis à la fin de huit jours."⁶² Chapleau's prediction proved correct and Paradis defeated the Liberal Dominique Monet in a riding that had elected a Liberal candidate in 1887. With an outburst of enthusiasm, the Conservative press proclaimed the victory as "le gage de bien d'autres succès pour nous aux prochaines élections générales.... C'est à ce titre surtout qu'elle vaudra à l'honorable M. Chapleau les acclamations

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² La Presse, mercredi le 3 décembre 1890.

de toute la province."⁶³

With this Conservative victory as a base, Chapleau was prepared for a fight when Macdonald decided to dissolve the House and call a general election for March 5, 1891. Unlike Macdonald who stressed the loyalty cry,⁶⁴ Chapleau concentrated on Conservative economic policy in general. He criticized the defects of the Liberal economic platform and extolled the virtues of the Conservative brand of reciprocity and of the National Policy with its corollary of aid to labour. However he did not forget the question of Canadian survival. In his opening speech of the campaign on February 10th at the St. Lawrence Hall in Montreal, Chapleau announced that a key issue in the campaign was that of the national existence.⁶⁵ He argued that unrestricted reciprocity, the Liberal remedy for Canada's economic ills, would lead to the country's annexation to the United States. The Liberal policy meant that everything Canada produced would be admitted free into the United States, and vice versa. With unrestricted reciprocity, annexation would arrive, but only after Canada had lost her self-respect and had her economy ravaged by the American giant. Under such a policy, Chapleau contended, imports from

⁶³La Minerve, mercredi le 10 décembre 1890.

⁶⁴P. B. Waite, Canada 1874-1896: Arduous Destiny, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1971], pp. 224-225.

⁶⁵J.-A. Chapleau, Canada as it is! an address delivered November 28, 1891 before the Commercial Club of Providence R. I., Providence R. I.: December 1891, pp. 8-9. During this speech, Chapleau claimed that national existence was the key issue of the 1891 campaign.

Britain and France would rapidly diminish and Canadian manufactures would be destroyed by a much stronger American industrial sector. "Then after ten or twelve years.... We should be told that we ought not to expect the advantages of free trade with the United States unless we are prepared to share all the burdens of citizens. Then with our manufactures ruined and our self-respect gone we should be compelled to sneak by a back way into the American Union, instead of entering it like free men by free men's votes."⁶⁶

The Secretary of State affirmed that unrestricted reciprocity was simply a variation of the earlier policy of commercial union which had mesmerized Liberals from 1885 to 1887. Under that scheme Canada and the United States would have one tariff structure in common against the outside world, with all customs lines between themselves obliterated. The revenue thus derived would be shared on some proportionate basis. In 1887, Chapleau had spoken out against commercial union "because it would destroy ... our Canadian nationality."⁶⁷ He felt certain that nobody in the United States would embrace the notion unless he thought that it meant political union. When the Liberals had dropped commercial union from their political catechism and had embraced unrestricted reciprocity instead, Chapleau had accused them of "forgetting their national pride, forgetting the main interests of the people they are

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶⁷ Montreal Gazette, Tuesday October 11, 1887. Chapleau spoke at the Château de Ramezay October 10th upon his return from Europe.

representing, and inducing the people to look across the frontier for assistance, in order to barter the interests and destinies of the nation against the possibilities and chances of a Ministerial defeat."⁶⁸

Chapleau warned that "Notwithstanding what may be said of it, and whatever its appearances may be, the party of Papineau, Doutre, Dessaulles, Dorion, those fathers of annexation, is not dead. Its spirit dominates their successors [the Liberals] and, if they had the courage, they would boldly hoist the American flag."⁶⁹

Chapleau was opposed to annexation with the United States for several reasons. First, "Such political union would wipe out for ever all the hopes and aspirations of the people for a Canadian nationality, and would deprive them of the inestimable blessings which they now enjoy...."⁷⁰ The converse side of Chapleau's pro-Canadianism was his dislike of the United States. He found the nation without a soul or heart.⁷¹

⁶⁸Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) April 5, 1888, p. 568. Such a stance did not prevent Chapleau from accepting money from New York based companies that dealt with the Government Printing Bureau, in order to finance his 1891 election campaign. Arthur Dansereau revealed before the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts later in 1891 that "Yankee Boodle" had been accepted by the Conservative Association in Montreal. (Canada, Journals of the House of Commons, XXV, Appendix No. 2, 139-140.) This information can also be found in La Patrie, samedi le 27 février 1892.

⁶⁹Montreal Gazette, Friday February 13, 1891. Chapleau spoke at the Château de Ramezay Tuesday February 10, 1891.

⁷⁰Montreal Gazette, Tuesday October 11, 1887. Chapleau spoke at the Château de Ramezay October 10th upon his return from Europe.

⁷¹Chapleau à Langevin, Los Angeles, le 2 février 1883, "Lettres de Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (1870-1896)", ed. Fernand Ouellet, RAPQ 1959-60, p. 81.

To Macdonald, Chapleau had confessed during one of his periods of convalescence in the republic that America was "an object of amazement, and of contempt at the same time. The nation is rotten to the core; (I mean the high morality of a people) and were it not for the wonderful and unceasing development of its natural wealth, that exuberant vitality which makes it absorb, without apparent decay, the filthy and poisonous atmosphere that pervades it, it would have already crumbled to pieces."⁷² With great emotion he had ended: "Thank God! I have never been more proud than I am here, of My Queen, My Country and My leader!--"⁷³

Second, annexation would hinder French Canada's development. Union with the United States would cost French Canada her fifty years of struggles and sacrifices--her system of education, the support of the clergy, her institutions in general.⁷⁴ In 1888, Chapleau had noted that some of French Canada's severest critics, such as Goldwin Smith, had supported Laurier's policy of unrestricted reciprocity, because they believed it would lead to annexation and the annihilation of the French language and Catholic religion.⁷⁵

Finally, from the point of view of material interests, Canada's

⁷²PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, [Los Angeles], January 26, 1883.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Montreal Gazette, Friday February 13, 1891. Chapleau spoke at the Château de Ramezay Tuesday February 10, 1891.

⁷⁵Montreal Gazette, Friday September 14, 1888. Chapleau spoke at the Laprairie picnic September 12, 1888.

benefits of union would be problematical. Canada's voice in the councils of the nation would be insignificant because of her small population. State governments received no generous subsidies from the American federal authorities. In addition, American capital would not flow to Canada more freely since capital had no prejudices or prepossessions.⁷⁶

Even discounting the prospect of annexation, Chapleau argued that unrestricted reciprocity was sentimentally unsettling and economically unsound. Such a policy would strike a blow at Canada's self-respect.⁷⁷ At the end of 1891, Chapleau would argue that "to permit Congress to close our ports against Great Britain, by means of the McKinley tariff or any such Chinese legislation as it may adopt, is not a declaration of independence ... but a renunciation of independence and a declaration of abject dependence which would stagger the self-respect of the smallest Central American republic."⁷⁸ Three days before the election, at the Drill Hall in Montreal, Chapleau exhorted Canadians to stand up and face the American threat. If Canadians wished to repulse the American fiscal assault of high tariffs, "they should maintain a manly position...." and denounce the "weak-kneed brethren within our own

⁷⁶Montreal Gazette, Friday February 13, 1891. Chapleau spoke at the Château de Ramezay Tuesday February 10, 1891.

⁷⁷Chapleau, Retour d'Europe, pp. 12-13. Chapleau argued in that vein during this speech.

⁷⁸Chapleau, Canada as it is!, p. 9. The McKinley tariff of October 6, 1890, to which Chapleau refers, incorporated protection for American farm products.

camp."⁷⁹ Chapleau then piqued the crowd with his question: "Citizens of Montreal, this great metropolis of Canada, will you sell yourselves?" The firm response from the patriotic Conservative audience crackled through the Drill Hall like a bolt of lightning: "No! No!"⁸⁰

Besides his appeal to sentiment, Chapleau also based his criticism of unrestricted reciprocity on sound economic logic. As early as 1888 he had warned that under such a policy, "the American manufactures could make this country a slaughter market and kill off our nascent manufactures...."⁸¹ Again in 1891 he argued that if unrestricted reciprocity were adopted, "We shall see in less than six months the ruin of most of our manufactures, for the Americans, who are richer than ourselves, will flood our markets with their merchandise at ruinous prices, for some time, with the view of ultimately getting control of the Canadian market, after which they will return to ordinary prices."⁸² Chapleau also realized that the Liberal argument that a market of sixty millions of people would be opened if their scheme were effected was misleading. At the end of 1891 he warned that Canada would find in that expanded market, only competitors, since Canadian products were not

⁷⁹Montreal Gazette, Tuesday March 3, 1891. Chapleau spoke at a Conservative rally for A.-T. Lépine in the Drill Hall Monday March 2, 1891.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) April 5, 1888, p. 569.

⁸²Montreal Gazette, Friday February 13, 1891. Chapleau spoke at the Château de Ramezay Tuesday February 10, 1891.

complementary but competitive with those of the United States.⁸³ The Secretary of State also cautioned that the crippling of Canada's manufacturing industry would be particularly harmful for French Canadians. In 1888 he had noted that French Canadians emigrated to the United States, not as agriculturalists, but as factory workers. Since most French Canadians desired to increase their population to offset the anglophone majority in the country, manufactures were to be encouraged, because, Chapleau had contended, "if our manufactures were better developed in this country ... emigration would almost cease."⁸⁴

Besides impairing the industrial sector of the Canadian economy, Chapleau claimed direct taxation would be the necessary and inevitable complement of unrestricted reciprocity. Such a result would follow from the loss, which he calculated to be \$14,000,000 in custom duty revenues.⁸⁵

Although the Conservatives denounced the Liberal scheme of unrestricted reciprocity, they made clear in the 1891 campaign that they too wished to conclude a trade agreement with the United States. They proposed reciprocity in natural products with their southern neighbours. In 1888, Chapleau had revealed to the House of Commons that "what the Government of the day desires, and what the people desire, is to have reciprocity with our neighbours in the natural products of the sea, the

⁸³Chapleau, Canada as it is!, p. 15.

⁸⁴Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) April 5, 1888, p. 5 .

⁸⁵Montreal Gazette, Friday February 13, 1891. Chapleau spoke at the Château de Ramezay Tuesday February 10, 1891.

farm, the mine and the forest. This is the broad reciprocity which we, on this side, have always advocated."⁸⁶ Macdonald had assured Chapleau in 1890 that Conservative policy had always been in favour of protection on the basis of the old reciprocity treaty of 1854.⁸⁷ In the same year, Chapleau had explained to a Toronto Empire reporter that Canada had made attempts to secure reciprocity in natural products with the Americans. During Cleveland's administration, the Canadian Conservative government had offered the Americans reciprocity in agricultural, mineral, forest and fish products.⁸⁸ No concrete results had been forthcoming from those negotiations of 1887 since the American Senate had refused to ratify the Treaty that had ended the discussions. In his opening speech of the election at the Château de Ramezay, Chapleau revealed that the Conservatives still continued to hope for a reciprocity agreement with the United States.⁸⁹

Always hopeful that they could secure reciprocity in natural products with the United States, the Conservative government could not allow Canada's economic policy to rely on the whims of a foreign government. Macdonald required an alternative to the Liberal's scheme of

⁸⁶Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) April 5, 1888, p. 567.

⁸⁷PAC, Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, December 4, 1890.

⁸⁸La Presse, mercredi 1e 17 décembre 1890.

⁸⁹Montreal Gazette, Friday February 13, 1891. Chapleau spoke at the Château de Ramezay Tuesday February 10, 1891.

unrestricted reciprocity. His answer to Canada's economic needs was the National Policy which had proved effective since its inception in 1879.⁹⁰ Chapleau agreed and proclaimed that all Canadians benefitted under the Conservative policy. With a tariff wall around the country, the industrial sector prospered and jobs were created. Consequently, the urban areas enjoyed an increase in wealth and the products of farmers sold more readily in the cities.⁹¹

In the 1891 election, Chapleau was particularly concerned with one of those groups within the economy that the National Policy aided, the workers. He had begun to cultivate the workers' votes in the mid-1880's. His efforts had become public knowledge at the time of a by-election in Montreal East due to the death of Joseph Coursol. Against the wishes of Sir Hector Langevin, Chapleau had been determined that the Conservatives support the labour candidate, A.-T. Lépine,⁹² a self-taught individual who owned, edited and helped print the labour newspaper,

⁹⁰R. Craig Brown claims that the tariff policy of the Conservative government was a positive reply to the Liberal's scheme of unrestricted reciprocity. He also makes the point that the Conservatives desired reciprocity in natural products but also determined to protect native industry. (R. C. Brown, Canada's National Policy 1883-1900: A Study in Canadian-American Relations, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964, pp. 171-172 & 9-10.)

⁹¹Montreal Gazette, Friday February 13, 1891. Chapleau spoke at the Château de Ramezay Tuesday February 10, 1891.

⁹²L'Etendard, jeudi 1e 30 août 1888 & mercredi 1e 19 septembre 1888.

Le Trait d'Union.⁹³ Chapleau had realized that the Conservatives had lacked organization, finances and the aid of the provincial Conservative leader, L.-O. Taillon. Therefore, he had reasoned that "il vaut mieux aider le candidat ouvrier & tâcher d'obtenir une défaite, comme résultat, contre nos adversaires, si nous ne pouvons nous assurer une victoire absolue avec un candidat ministériel."⁹⁴ Chapleau could also accept Lépine since the Secretary of State was a true conservative who viewed society as a composition of various groups which had definite roles to play in the proper functioning of society. At an election rally for Lépine at the Cavallo Hall in Montreal he had proclaimed that "Le gouvernement ne patronne pas une Union ouvrière plus qu'une autre; il les protège toutes. Il veut que les ouvriers puissent se faire entendre dans les conseils de la nation...."⁹⁵ In return for Chapleau's aid in securing his election, Lépine had not forgotten the Secretary of State. At the victory celebrations at la place Jacques-Cartier, Lépine had praised Chapleau and had reminded his supporters that "les ouvriers de Montréal lui devront une reconnaissance éternelle!"⁹⁶

In a conscious effort to maintain his labour support, Chapleau stressed the relationship between tariffs and employment in his 1891

⁹³La Presse, jeudi le 27 septembre 1888.

⁹⁴ANQ, Collection Chapais, Chapleau à Langevin, Ottawa, le 24 août 1888.

⁹⁵La Minerve, jeudi le 20 septembre 1888.

⁹⁶La Presse, vendredi le 28 septembre 1888.

election campaign.⁹⁷ He admitted that free trade was beneficial for a country once the manufacturing sector of a nation had been developed. However, in order to build an industrial sector, tariffs were required. Thus, Chapleau professed that he was "protectionniste au Canada dans un sens modéré, parce que j'ai l'ambition de voir nos manufactures plus développées et plus solidement assises...."⁹⁸ Chapleau realized that "s'il y a des manufactures, il y a de l'ouvrage, et que s'il y a de l'ouvrage, les familles ouvrières en bénéficient."⁹⁹ A government's duty was to create jobs since "L'ouvrier ne craint pas les rudes labeurs, mais il craint de rester à ne rien faire."¹⁰⁰ The stress of employment was not out of place for the 1880's were marked by long periods of unemployment. That factor was caused by industrial difficulties due to over-expansion which resulted from a too optimistic interpretation of tariff protection and western booms.¹⁰¹ Chapleau recognized that problem

⁹⁷ Montreal Gazette, Friday February 13, 1891. Chapleau spoke at the Château de Ramezay on Tuesday February 10, 1891.

⁹⁸ La Presse, mercredi le 17 décembre 1890. La Presse printed an interview between Chapleau and the Toronto Empire.

⁹⁹ La Minerve, vendredi le 14 septembre 1888. Chapleau spoke at the picnic at Laprairie September 12, 1888.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ D. R. Kennedy, The Knights of Labor in Canada, London, Ontario: University of Western Ontario, 1956, p. 33. Also see, O. D. Skelton, General Economic History of the Dominion 1867-1912, [Reprinted from Canada and its Provinces], Toronto: The Publishers' Association of Canada Ltd., 1913, pp. 148-191.

and tried to find a solution. His response demonstrated that he differed philosophically from the Liberal leaders, who, "en vertu de leur principe du libre échange, estiment que les classes ouvrières, comme les industriels et les fabricants, peuvent se suffire à elles-mêmes, qu'elles ne demandent pas l'intervention du gouvernement, et que si elles sont laissés à leurs propres ressources, elles trouveront assez promptement les moyens d'améliorer leur sort."¹⁰²

Although Chapleau stressed that the National Policy of the federal Conservative government was an admirable instrument to use to decrease unemployment, he realized that provincial governments had their assigned role under the constitution to facilitate full employment. In 1889, he had advocated more practical education for children in Quebec to prepare them for the new industrial jobs that were being created. As Premier of Quebec, he had thought of creating des bourses publiques to send at least one student from each electoral division to the Ecole Polytechnique of the province. Chapleau had also encouraged provincial authorities to exploit the natural resources of the province, especially the mining sector.¹⁰³

Although the question of employment was important in 1891, Chapleau recognized that a greater problem had arisen which concerned

¹⁰² J.-A. Chapleau, Discours prononcé par l'Hon. J.-A. Chapleau au Banquet des Ouvriers à Ottawa le 18 octobre 1888, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰³ La Minerve, jeudi le 12 septembre 1889. Chapleau spoke at the picnic at St -Hilaire September 5, 1889.

labour, but which the National Policy could not solve. During his opening speech in the election contest at the Château de Ramezay in February 1891, Chapleau touched on these issues that were important to workers. He apparently believed that his audience was aware of his own, and the Conservatives' actions in the labour field for he only touched on the government's record briefly. Undoubtedly his listeners realized that during the 1880's, the issue of the relation between capital and labour had begun to attract the attention of society. In 1887, Chapleau had proclaimed that "Les justes, les équitables rapports qui doivent exister entre le capital et le travail: voilà le grand problème qu'aura à résoudre le siècle prochain...."¹⁰⁴ Chapleau had stressed that capitalist employers had a paternalistic role to play in society. Those who had amassed millions by the work of others ought to possess, he had argued, the sentiments of humanity, believe in Christian fraternity, aid the destitute, console the afflicted and offer educational opportunity to those without sufficient funds for that purpose. In the belief that Sir George Stephens and Sir Donald Smith possessed those qualities and oblivious of the wretched conditions endured by railway workers under their charge, Chapleau had contended that if there were a few more Canadians like them "il y aurait moins de socialisme dans le monde."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé, le 11 avril 1887, à l'Hôtel Windsor, à Montréal, lors du banquet qui fut offert à l'Hon. J.-A. Chapleau par l'Association Conservatrice de Montréal", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau. Sa biographie.... ed. L.-H. Taché, Montréal: Eusèbe Sénécal & Fils, 1887, p. 531.

¹⁰⁵Chapleau, Discours prononcé ... au banquet des ouvriers à Ottawa, p. 11. Gustavus Myers, in the American muck-raking tradition,

He had noted that the political leaders of Canada had likewise assumed their responsibility with the appointment of the Royal Commission on the relations of Labour and Capital in Canada. Chapleau's choice of Jules Helbronner as French Canada's representative for the inquiry had been accepted by the cabinet. Although Helbronner had been officially recommended to the government by the Conseil Central des Métiers et du Travail de Montréal, the opposition press in Montreal had buzzed with assurance that his nomination to the commission had been secured by Dansereau and Chapleau. Chapleau was partial to Helbronner who wrote a column on labour in La Presse entitled "Chronique Ouvrière" under the pseudonym Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit, because Helbronner had aided the Secretary of State alienate the Knights of Labour from the Liberal party.¹⁰⁶

Apparently, Chapleau's thought on the subject of the relationship between capital and labour was influenced by Helbronner whom he had known since 1877¹⁰⁷ and by the Knights of Labour. Chapleau believed that the

wrote in a very depreciating manner about conditions of work on the C. P. R. with which Stephens and Smith were associated and also about the two men themselves. (G. Myers, History of Canadian Wealth, Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1914, pp. 270-271, 254-255, 257-261.)

¹⁰⁶PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, October 17, 1886.

¹⁰⁷La Presse, vendredi le 23 décembre 1898. This point is confusing because of a misprint. La Presse states that Helbronner claimed that "je me suis importé tout seul, sans l'aide de qui que ce soit, en 1873, et que ce n'est qu'en 1877, après quatorze ans de séjour au Canada, que j'eus l'honneur d'être présenté à l'honorable M. Chapleau...."

attempt to try to resolve the differences between capital and labour could not be accomplished by organizations composed of those interested in raising feelings of jealousy and enmity between different classes of the community. Thus, he did not favour trade unions which were concerned solely with the economic advancement of their members through negotiations and the power of the strike, and which were oblivious to the needs of the unskilled workers that the Knights of Labour organized. Like the Knights of Labour, Chapleau did not think strikes were good for the protection of labourers. The task of reconciling labour and capital, Chapleau had preached in 1885, belongs

to those who teach the virtues that make good Christians and good citizens; it belongs to those who teach the virtues of obedience and contentment, in whatever calling in life; to those who will say, and who will be understood in saying, that the laborer [sic] in his quiet labor [sic], or amongst his family after his day's work, has perhaps more real comfort and happiness in life than the man who is engaged in the legislation of his country, or the great statesman who reaches the height of honor [sic] and power, who knows little of the comfort, pleasure and real happiness which a good, kind, peaceable, and peaceful laborer [sic] enjoys in his home.¹⁰⁸

Chapleau did not suggest that workmen should not agitate for their rights, but he urged that such demands be made peacefully.¹⁰⁹ He feared the arrival in Canada of the anarchists and socialists who had left Europe and had rooted themselves in the United States. He had been willing to

¹⁰⁸Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) July 2, 1885, p. 3010.

¹⁰⁹Montreal Gazette, Tuesday August 24, 1897. Chapleau replied to an address by the directors of the Montreal Exposition Company on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee Exposition.

accept the entry into Canada of the Knights of Labour,¹¹⁰ but he had implored Canadians in 1888 to limit "nos importations de ce pays [the United States] aux chevaliers du travail dont l'organisation est appelée à faire du bien tant que, s'occupant seulement des avantages qu'ils désirent s'assurer, ils respecteront les droits des autres classes de la société."¹¹¹ Chapleau could support the Knights of Labour because their purpose was not to set capital against labour. In their electoral statement prepared for the 1886 Quebec provincial contest, two Knights of Labour, William Keys and Adélard Gravel, had claimed that they would try to advance the interests of the working class "en proposant des mesures qui seront en harmonie avec les intérêts de toutes les classes de la société et qui seront calculés pour protéger les droits des patrons tout autant que ceux des ouvriers."¹¹²

Chapleau disliked strikes because they caused disruptions within society. The best remedy against strikes, according to Chapleau, was to reinforce the workers' interests in the small amount of capital they

¹¹⁰On the basis of a recommendation of the fearful Catholic hierarchy of Quebec, the Holy See had condemned the Knights of Labour in September 1884. After pressure from American Bishops, the Pope removed the ban July 26, 1887. (D. R. Kennedy, Knights of Labor in Canada, pp. 84-97.)

¹¹¹Chapleau, Discours prononcé ... au banquet des ouvriers à Ottawa, p. 5.

¹¹²Victor O. Chan, Canadian Knights of Labor with special reference to the 1880's, M. A. thesis, McGill University, 1949, pp. 36-37. Also see Judith Burtt and Jacques Rouillard, "Le mouvement ouvrier 1850-1896", unpublished article, November 1969, Institut d'histoire, Université Laval, p. 22.

were able to accumulate through their energy and economy. He had proposed that Canadian companies should follow the example of several European enterprises and make contributions to a worker's savings bank in the same proportion as the worker.¹¹³

Chapleau, like the Conservative government as a whole, spoke a great deal about labour, but had failed to act with any determination on labour's behalf.¹¹⁴ He had claimed that the provincial governments had caused the federal government to desist from enacting legislation for the protection of Labour.¹¹⁵ Consequently, he had attacked Mercier's inter-provincial conference for not discussing the problem.¹¹⁶ However, once the Royal Commission on Labour had reported in 1889, the Secretary of State had become directly involved in the preparation of labour legislation. Through the leak of a cabinet document, the country had been informed that Chapleau was preparing legislation to abolish two prevalent practices that related to workers. These proposals had been based on the Commission's Report and had not diverged from the basic philosophy

¹¹³Chapleau, Discours prononcé ... au banquet des ouvriers à Ottawa, p. 8.

¹¹⁴B. Ostry, "Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour in the 1880's", CJEPS, 27.2 (May 1961), 159. Also see Eugene Forsey, "A Note on the Dominion Factory Bills of the Eighteen-Eighties", CJEPS, 13 (1947), 580-583.

¹¹⁵Montreal Gazette, Thursday September 20, 1888. Chapleau spoke at the Dominion Skating Rink in Montreal September 19, 1888 in favour of Lépine.

¹¹⁶Chapleau, Discours prononcé ... au banquet des ouvriers à Ottawa, pp. 9-10.

or goals of the Knights of Labour. One matter had concerned the truck system whereby employers forced the employees to buy essential goods at the factory store. In other words, payment was made in kind, not money. The second question had involved the objectionable stipulation imposed by some employers in labour contracts to the effect that the employees could not become members of a labour organization, and if they already belonged to a union, that they should withdraw from the association. The proposed bill had not reflected the opinion of the Toronto Trades and Labour Council which wished to refuse to the employer the right to hire non-union labourers. According to Chapleau, "a contract for labor [sic] between employer and employees should not be hampered by conditions other than the immediate object of the contract, viz., the work to be given and the wages to be received...."¹¹⁷ In addition to those pieces of legislation, rumours that circulated in Montreal had indicated that Chapleau was prepared to introduce a gigantic scheme of co-operative insurance. Under the plan, persons covered by the insurance would receive a pension at a certain age. In case of sickness, money would be paid before the age in question. To subscribe to the scheme, an individual would pay an insignificant amount into the program each year.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷Toronto Empire, Thursday March 13, 1890. This article is an interview with Chapleau.

¹¹⁸La Minerve, vendredi le 18 avril 1890. Both the Royal Commission and the Knights of Labour denounced the truck system and abuses of labour contracts. Both groups also called for some form of insurance, either for accident compensation, annuities or some other protection against accidents and old age. (Report of the Royal Commission on the

In the end, the only concrete act to emerge from all the speculation of March and April of 1890 had been Chapleau's announcement in May of the establishment of a Bureau of Labour Statistics. The Toronto Trades Assembly had urged the creation of a similar institution since 1873, the Knights of Labour had advocated such an organization from their inception, Macdonald had promised such a Bureau during the elections of 1887 and the Royal Commission on Labour had endorsed the idea.¹¹⁹ At the same time that he had made the announcement about the creation of the Bureau, Chapleau had admitted that he had prepared an insurance measure for working men and legislation to protect workers against the truck system, but that he had been asked to postpone both measures for further consideration.¹²⁰ Therefore, the Labour Bureau had been considered to be only the preparation for the study of all labour questions in the country.¹²¹ The Bureau was to be attached to the Department of Agriculture. The Minister, who would also become the Commissioner of Labour Statistics, would be charged with the accumulation of statistics

relations of Labour and Capital in Canada, Vol. I, Ottawa: 1889, pp. 11, 13 & 14.) Also see Denis Héroux et al., Le Travailleur québécois et le Syndicalisme, Montréal: éditions de Sainte-Marie (No. 2) [1966], p. 55.

¹¹⁹ Kennedy, Knights of Labor in Canada, pp. 31 & 52. Also see Fred Landon, "The Canadian Scene 1880-1890", CHAR, 1942, p. 9; Héroux et al., Le Travailleur, p. 55; and Report of the Royal Commission on ... Labour, p. 14.

¹²⁰ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) May 13, 1890, pp. 4842-4843.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 4843.

of various workers' associations in the country.¹²² Although legislation for the establishment of the Bureau of Labour Statistics had been passed in 1890, no further action had been taken by the government.¹²³

It was to this personal record of concern for labourers and to Conservative government action on behalf of workers that Chapleau drew attention in his campaign speech at the Château de Ramezay. In addition, he unveiled future government plans and referred to a proposed board which would be charged with inquiry into the complaints of workmen and would be required to intervene in any difficulties that might occur between them and their employers. The purpose of the organism would be to peaceably settle disputes and thus prevent strikes that caused losses to both parties.¹²⁴ Since disputes generally did not revolve about wages,

¹²²Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) May 5, 1890, pp. 4398-4399, & La Minerve, mardi le 6 mai 1890.

¹²³By the time Chapleau left federal politics in 1892, no attempt had been made to make use of the Bureau of Labour Statistics' legislation. A.-T. Lépine supported the Liberals in the federal election of 1900. He claimed that he had been tricked by the Conservatives who had passed a bill creating the Labour Bureau in 1890 but had refused to bring the legislation into force. (La Patrie, le 25 octobre 1900.)

¹²⁴Montreal Gazette, Friday February 13, 1891. The board of which Chapleau talked was modelled after the French institution--the conseil des prud'hommes. The Conseil was both a board of conciliation and a compulsory court of arbitration, composed of an equal number of employers and employees, respectively elected by the classes to which they belonged. That institution enabled workmen to bring abuses of authority to their peers without having to go on strike to protect themselves en masse against consequences of these abuses. See Robert W. Cox, The Quebec Provincial General Election of 1886, M. A. thesis, University of McGill, 1948, pp. 207-208. The Knights of Labour felt that the use of compulsory arbitration, based on tribunals composed of employees and employers, and

but rather abuses of unjust laws or employer's or union's regulations, such a board proved to be popular in principle to all segments of society.

Armed with such promises, Chapleau heaped praise upon himself and the Conservative party as the champions of labour during the election campaign of 1891. As that contest drew to a close, Chapleau's pessimism of the early stages of the contest dissipated. The English-speaking and French-speaking sections of the party were working harmoniously together.¹²⁵ Trefflé Berthiaume, the proprietor of La Minerve, had rejected a Liberal offer of \$600 per day during the duration of the election campaign if the paper would reject the Conservatives and support the Liberals.¹²⁶ Charles de Boucherville, who had been alienated from Chapleau since 1879 when Chapleau replaced him as Conservative leader, and the Castors with Beaubien and L'Etendard en tête, joined Chapleau in his denunciations of the Liberal policy of unrestricted reciprocity.¹²⁷ However, not all was well since Chapleau was unable to gain the adherence of the Grand Trunk Railway to the Conservative cause.¹²⁸ Consequently,

the installation of co-operatives would reduce tensions and eliminate the necessity of strikes. (Burt and Rouillard, "Le mouvement ouvrier 1850-1896", p. 28.) The Royal Commission Report on Labour also recommended the use of arbitration procedures. (Report of the Royal Commission on ... Labour, p. 11.)

¹²⁵ FAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, February 18, 1891.

¹²⁶ La Patrie, vendredi le 3 juillet 1891.

¹²⁷ Montreal Gazette, Thursday February 19, 1891.

¹²⁸ La Patrie, mercredi le 29 avril 1891.

Chapleau was forced to remain, with some considerable difficulty, as sober as Foster and as cool as Haggart.¹²⁹ Because of his energy, preoccupation with detail and excellent organizational ability, Chapleau's hard work paid great dividends.

In the election of March 5th, Chapleau lost four constituencies in the Montreal district to the Liberals, but still emerged with an overall majority of three seats.¹³⁰ Again Chapleau proved that he was the "homme d'élections."¹³¹ Unfortunately, because Langevin and Caron fared worse than in 1887, the Liberals captured a majority of the seats in Quebec. Thus, Chapleau emerged as the hero of the victorious battle, for as the Conservative press remarked: "C'est grâce à son habilité, à son éloquence et à sa ténacité que le gouvernement doit de n'avoir pas éprouvé plus de revers dans la province."¹³²

However, Chapleau could not sustain the Conservative enthusiasm in the Montreal district, and within a month after the election, he created and exacerbated internal dissensions within the party. A

¹²⁹ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, February 18, 1891.

¹³⁰ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, (telegram) Montreal, March 5, 1891.

¹³¹ A. Dansereau, "Hon. Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau", Les Hommes du Jour, ed. L.-H. Taché, [Montréal]: [1891], p. 60.

¹³² La Minerve, samedi le 7 mars 1891 & La Presse, samedi le 7 mars 1891. In the province of Quebec, the Conservatives won a total of 29 seats, the Liberals captured 34 and 2 seats were taken by "others". (Ronald I. Cohen, Quebec Votes, Montreal: Saje Publications, Ltd., [1965], p. 24.)

distraught, but very wise and experienced Macdonald, advised Chapleau to bind as many groups and sections of the French Canadians to him as possible. To begin with, he suggested that de Boucherville should be made Speaker of the Senate in place of Alexandre Lacoste who could receive an appointment to the bench.¹³³ Chapleau disagreed. He could not see that the progress made since he had begun in earnest to reconcile the dissidents in 1888 "would justify the granting of such a high regard as the Senate Speakership to the exclusion of old tried friends."¹³⁴ Chapleau failed to realize the seriousness of Conservative losses in Quebec and to appreciate the fact that the issues of reciprocity and loyalty had helped to foster unity during the election. In the provincial arena in Quebec, Chapleau believed that former Conservatives would soon return to the party fold since Mercier had awarded patronage almost without exception to old Liberals to the exclusion of those Conservatives who had supported him in 1886 and 1890. Thus, Chapleau contended, concession should not be contemplated since such action would only promote arrogance and a greater demand for favour among the Castors without any benefit accruing to the consistently faithful party adherents.¹³⁵ Undoubtedly, Chapleau's stance was based on the premise

¹³³ PAC, Macdonald Letterbook, Macdonald to Chapleau, April 21, 1891.

¹³⁴ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Ottawa, April 24, 1891. Lacoste remained Speaker until September 15, 1891. J.-J. Ross then succeeded him.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

that the Castors were a dying force in Quebec. By 1891 there was no leader around whom dissident Conservatives could rally. Senator Trudel, the former Castor chef had died in January 1890 after a prolonged illness. Trudel had never been able to seriously threaten Chapleau's position within the Conservative party after the Riel affair and he left no heir who could command enough influence to assume his leadership role. His son Henri accepted the editorship of L'Etendard, but because he lacked his father's administrative and political sagesse, the paper floundered and would finally die in March 1893. However, many Conservatives who either adhered to Trudel's ideas or who simply opposed the Chapleautistes continued to exist in Quebec. These politicians were the party members Chapleau refused to placate.

That arrogance displayed by Chapleau in his reply to Macdonald's counsel after the 1891 election destroyed the unity which a common Liberal foe had forged among Conservatives and turned a Conservative triumph in the Montreal area into a shattering defeat. The party had weathered the racial storms that the Jesuits' Estates issue had caused. The dreaded Liberal panacea of unrestricted reciprocity had conveniently erased memories of the heated discussion on language in the North West and had shoved the unresolved Manitoba School Question from the political stage. Promises about future labour legislation--an aspect of Conservative doctrine that partly flowed from the National Policy--bound many workers to the government. However, once the Liberals had been defeated, Chapleau's refusal to reward the Castors for their help in the 1891 election spurred a reactivation of old Conservative conflicts. Chapleau,

who only barely won the Montreal region, could ill afford to alienate any support. Nevertheless, he persisted in spurning Castor requests for patronage. When the Castors realized they would not reap any benefits from Chapleau's success, they quickly turned against their Montreal leader. Consequently, Chapleau's triumph of March rapidly turned into a pyrrhic victory and the party began to disintegrate around him. In addition, the death of the old chieftain, Sir John A. Macdonald, in June 1891 encouraged the internal dissensions of the party to reappear. Yet, undaunted by the atmosphere of mistrust and bitterness caused by those disputes, Chapleau, the one French Canadian leader who had grasped victory in the March election, attempted to become the leading French Canadian politician of the country as unseemly revelations of scandal rocked the Ottawa scene.

CHAPTER VIII

FIGHT FOR LEADERSHIP

The years 1891 and 1892 were to be fateful for Chapleau who desperately attempted to dominate the Conservative party in Quebec. To attain the goal that he craved, Chapleau faced two obstacles. English-speaking Canada reacted harshly to his endeavour to fulfil his political aspirations because anglophones feared the Secretary of State posed a threat to their interests and because he was entangled in the scandals that rocked the end of the Macdonald era. On the other hand, Chapleau faced his greatest challenge to survival in French Canada itself. With solid support from Quebec, Chapleau could force himself upon English-speaking Canadians. However, because of the disintegration of the federal party in Quebec caused largely by his own actions, the Secretary of State wrestled against high odds in his fight for leadership. That struggle began at the death of Sir John A. Macdonald, June 6, 1891.

The demise of the old chieftain caused great consternation within Conservative ranks over the choice of his successor. Although Sir Charles Tupper, Sir Hector Langevin and Sir John Thompson were all serious contenders for the office, the honour of becoming the Queen's First Minister fell upon a Senator from Montreal, John Abbott. However, before Abbott was to form a permanent Ministry, over six months were to pass. During that period, there were three distinct phases of activity which finally terminated in the swearing in ceremony of Abbott's cabinet in January 1892. As a leading French Canadian politician, it was

inevitable that Chapleau should figure prominently in those three stages and in the search for stability within the Conservative party in the latter half of 1891.

The first step in the formation of a new cabinet followed immediately after Macdonald's funeral on June 12th. At that time, Chapleau's ability to influence the composition of the Ministry was hampered by an accident he suffered in Montreal. After a conversation about the position he should assume in the Abbott Ministry with one of his friends, he sprained his ankle as he left the Beaver Hall on one of Montreal's poorly maintained sidewalks.¹ Despite his inability to walk, Chapleau was determined to return to Ottawa to be close to the frenzied activity of the party. To his dismay, he was forced to remain confined to his home until July 3rd. In the meantime, Abbott had decided to work with Macdonald's old cabinet until the end of the session of Parliament that was in progress.

Chapleau was disappointed with the turn of events. He and his followers, such as Joseph-Israël Tarte and Michael Joseph Francis Quinn, the defeated Conservative candidate in Chateauguay in 1887, favoured Sir John Thompson for the position of Prime Minister with Chapleau as his chief lieutenant and leader of French Canada.² Quinn pointed out that Abbott's Premiership posed a direct threat to French Canada. With an anglophone Prime Minister from Quebec, the province would be deprived

¹La Patrie, lundi le 15 juin 1891.

²La Presse, lundi le 1er juin 1891.

of first class representation of its own choosing. Protestant Ontario would expect second place in the cabinet, the Maritimes would be entitled to third and French Canadians would be relegated to fourth place.³

Chapleau was frustrated in his attempt to secure the Ministry of Railways and Canals. Although, through the intermediary of his friend, Senator George A. Drummond, he had extracted from Abbott the promise that he would be given the portfolio after the session--a promise confirmed in a personal visit from the new Prime Minister to his home in Ottawa--Abbott appears to have denied that such an entente had been reached.⁴ In reply to a question in the Senate, he stated "that the Cabinet have determined upon no special advice with respect to any Minister, to be given to His Excellency on any future occasion."⁵ If such a promise was made, Chapleau's enthusiasm about it faded as the session lingered on throughout the hot Ottawa summer. Little did he realize that the activity of Parliament during those three months following Macdonald's death was to exert a decisive influence on his future political career.

First, Chapleau's main rival for the leadership of French Canada, Sir Hector Langevin, was eliminated because of the inquiry into his activities and those of his brother-in-law, Thomas McGreevy, in the Public Works Department. On May 11, 1891, Tarte had risen in the House

³PAC, Tarte Papers, M. J. F. Quinn to Chapleau, St- Anne de Bellevue, October 14, 1891.

⁴La Presse, jeudi le 18 juin 1891.

⁵Canada, Senate, Debates, (Abbott) June 17, 1891, p. 90.

of Commons to present accusations of corruption against Thomas McGreevy and to question the integrity of Sir Hector Langevin. Tarte's charges had been based on a dossier of correspondence he had obtained and had progressively revealed in a series of articles that had begun in Le Canadien in April 1890. According to Tarte, Thomas and Robert McGreevy had been able to secure, by dubious means, lucrative government contracts for a firm with which they were associated--Larkin, Connolly and Company. In return, Thomas McGreevy and Langevin had received campaign contributions and other gratuities. Apparently, Tarte was determined to discredit McGreevy because he operated within the Conservative party--he was party treasurer for the Quebec district--for the benefit of the Liberal Mercier government in Quebec. Since 1887, while closely allied with the federal Conservatives as the Member of Parliament for Quebec West, McGreevy had courted Mercier's favour. McGreevy had hoped to obtain over \$1,000,000 from the province for his construction of the Q. M. O. & O. railway between Montreal and Quebec city--a claim that successive Conservative governments had denied him.⁶

⁶La Presse, samedi le 19 avril 1890. Proof of collusion between Mercier and McGreevy is to be found in a letter Mercier wrote to Laurier March 29, 1890 that is cited in Laurier L. LaPierre, Joseph - Israël Tarte. A Dilemma in Canadian Politics 1874-1896, M. A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1957, p. 150. McGreevy's alienation from the provincial Conservatives began during the Chapleau administration when an arbitration board awarded him \$150,000 as outstanding for his work in the construction of that portion of the Q. M. O. & O. railway which joined Montreal to Quebec city. The Mousseau and Ross Conservative governments refused to reconsider McGreevy's claim of over \$1,000,000. In 1890 Tarte revealed that Mercier was prepared to grant McGreevy \$400,000. (La Patrie, lundi le 21 avril 1890.)

Conservative resentment against McGreevy had intensified when McGreevy's newspaper, the Chronicle, had attacked L.-O. Taillon in January 1890 and when McGreevy had announced that there would be no federal assistance for the provincial Conservatives in the 1890 election.⁷ Tarte claimed that Thomas McGreevy's "grande intimité avec sir Hector Langevin et l'influence qu'il en tirait auprès du public, imposèrent le silence à grand nombre de conservateurs, pendant que ses alliances dans le parti libéral lui donnaient le bénéfice d'une discrétion profitable."⁸ The political director of Le Canadien asserted that the party suffered in the Quebec city region because of McGreevéisme by which federal influence and patronage were employed against the party and even the Ministers!⁹

In an attempt to drive a wedge between Chapleau and the majority of Conservatives, the Liberal party press linked Chapleau to Tarte's accusations against the two Conservative Quebec Members of Parliament. Tarte emphatically denied that there was any collusion between himself and Chapleau for the purpose of reducing Langevin's influence in the government. He affirmed that the Toronto Globe "se trompe quand il affirme que le secrétaire d'Etat m'a aidé dans la préparation de ma déclaration dans la chambre des communes. J'étais résolu de faire cette

⁷Laurier L. LaPierre, Politics, Race, and Religion in French Canada: Joseph-Israël Tarte, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1962 (micro.), p. 204.

⁸La Presse, lundi le 5 mai 1890.

⁹La Presse, lundi le 7 juillet 1890, (du Canadien).

démarche politique, et personne n'eût pu m'en détourner. Ma détermination n'était un secret pour personne, et M. Chapleau la connaissait naturellement."¹⁰ He added that several times Chapleau had asked him not to introduce the name of Sir Hector Langevin in his motion to the House of Commons, but that other advice had prevailed.¹¹ Likewise, Chapleau discredited the stories. He stated publicly that he regretted Tarte's violent language, but that without approving of his course, he "had to give him the credit of having gone frankly into his new departure, and of having taken measures to prevent either the sale of the documents he had in his hands or any compromise whatever which Mr. McGreevy might have been tempted to negotiate."¹² The Secretary of State suggested that Sir Adolphe Caron was the driving force behind Tarte's accusations

¹⁰La Presse, lundi 1e 26 octobre 1891.

¹¹Laurier LaPierre states that there is no proof to support the suggestion made by the opposition that the McGreevy-Langevin scandal was part of a conspiracy between Chapleau and Tarte which aimed to replace Langevin by Chapleau. LaPierre affirms that "Certainly Chapleau would never have considered such a tactic. He was no doubt kept informed, as Caron and others were, of what Tarte was doing, but there is no evidence that he encouraged Tarte. From his correspondence it is evident that he advised that Langevin's name be omitted from any of Tarte's articles." (L. LaPierre, Politics, Race and Religion, p. 223.) Also see Fonds Dansereau, Chapleau à Dansereau, le 2 février 1890 as cited in LaPierre, Politics, Race and Religion, p. 214. Other historians have accepted the Liberal party's interpretation. H. L. Robertson, John P. Heisler, and Lovell C. Clark all suggest that Chapleau was Tarte's accomplice. (H. L. Robertson, The Ultramontane Group in French Canada 1867-1886, M. A. thesis, Queen's University, 1852, p. 131; J. P. Heisler, Sir John Thompson, 1844-1894, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1955, pp. 263-264; Lovell C. Clark, A History of the Conservative Administrations, 1891 to 1896, Ph.D. University of Toronto, 1968, p. 7.)

¹²Montreal Gazette, Wednesday February 18, 1891.

against Langevin and McGreevy. To a reporter for the Toronto Mail, Chapleau professed that Caron "était dans les confidences de M. Tarte avant moi et était plus actif contre sir Hector; cependant il échappe au blâme qui semble être réservé pour moi seul."¹³

The accusations Tarte had laid before the House had been referred to the Select Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for investigation. In September, the inquiry was completed. The committee found that a conspiracy to rob the government in connection with the Quebec harbour and Esquimalt dock works existed. Public Works employees participated in or assisted in the illegal transactions in which Thomas McGreevy was a principal party. The report of the committee found no proof to indicate that Sir Hector Langevin had any knowledge of those activities.¹⁴ However, Langevin's career as a Minister ended. Because of pressure from Abbott and Thompson who feared Langevin's continued presence in the Ministry might destroy the government, Langevin submitted his resignation August 11th. With the acceptance of his resignation September 7th, Langevin ceased to be a Minister and a serious threat to Chapleau's dominance of French Canada. Although Langevin continued to sit in the House of Commons, he was politically powerless without the patronage a cabinet portfolio provides. The second of Chapleau's great rivals--the late Senator Trudel had been the first--was swept aside.

¹³La Presse, lundi 12 octobre 1891.

¹⁴Canada, Journals of the House of Commons, XXV, Appendix No. 1, ivnn.

With the disappearance of these formidable opponents, surely the Secretary of State could dominate Quebec! Unfortunately for him, the contrary was true. Now that Trudel and Langevin had left centre stage, Chapleau was to face difficulties from his ambitious former adherent, Joseph-Aldéric Ouimet, Sir Adolphe Caron and brightened Conservative opposition in Ontario. These factors, coupled with his perennial enemy ill health, would eventually lead to his retirement.

While Langevin's political demise may have allowed Chapleau to fill a political vacuum in French Canada, an event occurred during the 1891 Parliamentary session that operated to his disadvantage in his relations with the anglophone community in Canada. On August 7, 1891, the Liberal Member of Parliament for West Lambton, James F. Lister, raised a question of impropriety against Chapleau in the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons. Lister charged that the Secretary of State had knowledge of an alleged corrupt transaction concerning the Montreal daily La Presse, the New England Paper Company and the Government Printing Bureau. In addition, Lister claimed that Chapleau connived at the corrupt actions of two Printing Bureau employees, André Sénécal, Superintendent of the Printing Bureau and H. J. Bronskill, Superintendent of Stationery.

In the case of the former accusation, Lister stated that Trefflé Berthiaume, one of the principal proprietors of La Presse, was indebted to the New England Paper Company for \$10,000 for newsprint supplied to La Presse. An agreement had been concluded by which the paper company accepted \$2,000 in cash and \$8,000 in promissory notes from Berthiaume,

endorsed by Chapleau, on the understanding that if any paper were sold by the company to the Government Printing Bureau, one-half of the profits from the sale would go to reduce the notes.

At the outset, Chapleau explained that only once, and then by accident and without his knowledge, had some paper been purchased from the New England Paper Company. Despite the repeated attempts of the company to secure further sales, he, as head of the department, had refused their offers because the paper was not of the quality desired. He vowed that he had no knowledge of the particular agreement before the inquiry began. Indeed, his law firm of Chapleau, Hall and Brown, were counsel for the New England Paper Company in its court battle against Berthiaume in a suit that resulted from Berthiaume's refusal to pay his debt to the American company.¹⁵

The committee discovered Chapleau's defense to be sound. Trefflé Berthiaume was the lessee of La Presse. The proprietor was the Montreal Publication Company of which Chapleau was the principal shareholder and Joseph-Aldéric Ouimet the Vice-President. Upon acquisition of La Presse, the Montreal Publication Company had also inherited a debt of \$10,000 to the New England Paper Company that a former owner of the paper, Wurtele and Company, had incurred. When Berthiaume had leased the proprietorship of the newspaper, he had assumed that debt. To cover the sum, Berthiaume paid \$2,000 in cash and \$8,000 in notes endorsed by himself and Chapleau in order that he alone would not be responsible for the liabilities of

¹⁵Montreal Gazette, Saturday August 8, 1891.

the company.¹⁶ Although Berthiaume admitted that the controversial clause existed in the agreement, he denied that Chapleau knew of its existence before the controversy on the subject erupted.¹⁷ J.-A. Ouimet explained that Chapleau was never a party to the transaction. He stated that he had represented Chapleau when the agreement was entered into, October 15, 1889, because the Secretary of State was in Europe. The notes, signed by Chapleau, had been signed in blank before the Secretary of State had left the country.¹⁸

Although Lister's attempts to discredit Chapleau through the La Presse affair failed, he was more successful on the subject of the Printing Bureau. The committee discovered that in 1890 Mackenzie Bowell had informed Macdonald about rumours of scandal in Chapleau's department. The Prime Minister had suggested that Chapleau investigate as Langevin had done when similar stories of impropriety about Public Works had circulated. Piqued at Macdonald's apparent eulogy of Chapleau's chief cabinet rival, the Secretary of State had replied that he would do what was required in that respect "without taking precedents as a rule...."¹⁹ He had not been able to resist the opportunity to direct some thinly

¹⁶ Montreal Gazette, Wednesday September 16, 1891.

¹⁷ Canada, Journals of the House of Commons, XXV, Appendix No. 2, Report 34, 177.

¹⁸ Montreal Gazette, Saturday August 8, 1891.

¹⁹ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, December 28, 1890.

disguised barbs in the direction of Langevin and Macdonald's informer; thus, he had added:

Please remember that I have never been seriously contested in my elections, and I have not had, at anytime, to be afraid of Parliamentary enquiries. I give, in advance, the cabinet full liberty to grant committees on the administration of my Department; I shall not need Ministerial "water" to wash my hands--I am now making a thorough investigation about the "boodling" which you told me was done in my Department, and if [I] don't advise anybody to do the same in the great "boodling Departments" as the public calls them, it is because I have full confidence in my colleagues.²⁰

Brown Chamberlin, the Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, who had investigated the rumours of bribes for Chapleau, swore before the committee that both the government officials and the private firms denied all complicity or share in such transactions. Although nothing irregular had been discovered, Chapleau had taken the precaution to warn dealers with the Printing Bureau against the offer of commissions to any person or upon any pretext. Despite a lack of incriminating evidence against employees by Chapleau's own inquiry, the Public Accounts Committee discovered that irregularities had occurred.

The committee learned that André Sénécal and H. J. Bronskill had both accepted commissions, which Sénécal claimed to be loans, from companies that had sold equipment to the government Printing Bureau and paper to the Stationery Department. Sénécal had wrung loans from companies with which he dealt after the goods had been supplied and paid for. The loans were generally for 10% of the price of the goods and were

²⁰Ibid.

never repaid. Bronskill admitted that he had received \$4,000 in the form of loans, never repaid, from Barber and Ellis Paper Company, a firm that supplied the government with paper. Such transactions were technically legal but ethically questionable. On the other hand, Bronskill's acceptance of a commission of \$75 on a purchase from McFarlane, Austin and Company was clearly illegal.²¹ Because Bronskill's action controvened the Civil Service Act which forbade government employees from receiving gifts from persons dealing with the government, he was fired on August 19th. Sénécal was suspended at the same time pending further investigation of his case since he had apparently committed no offense. However, he quickly tendered his resignation once he realized which way the wind was blowing.²² Although he never appeared before the committee, Sénécal sent a letter to Clarke Wallace, the chairman, in which he asserted that "all contracts were honestly and scrupulously made and that no commission or advantage for myself or for others was stipulated for or taken into consideration in any of them." He also claimed that the Civil Service Act did not forbid "testimonials of esteem and of cordial relations from friend to friend...."²³ The government thought otherwise and

²¹La Presse, mercredi 1e 19 août 1891 and Canada, Journals of the House of Commons, XXV, Appendix No. 2, 32.

²²La Presse, mercredi 1e 19 août 1891; La Presse, lundi 1e 24 août 1891 and Canada, Journals of the House of Commons, XXV, Appendix No. 2, Report 34, 53.

²³A. Sénécal to Clark Wallace, Ottawa August 24, 1891 as quoted in Canada, Journals of the House of Commons, XXV, Appendix No. 2, Report 34, 53.

instituted court proceedings against the two former employees.

Despite their questionable methods, both Sénécal and Bronskill had obtained the best prices possible for the goods they had purchased. The State had suffered no loss in money or in service.²⁴ Consequently, Chapleau was cleared of any charge of wrongdoing or incompetence. Unlike Langevin's case, the principle of ministerial responsibility was not involved since no money was lost in the Printing Bureau. Thompson, the Minister of Justice, informed Members of Parliament that no rule existed to hold a Minister responsible for the private follies of an employee of his Department.²⁵ Chapleau naturally concurred with Thompson's statement and declared that "Si l'on peut prouver que le gouvernement a perdu un seul dollar par les tripotages de Sénécal, je donne immédiatement ma démission de membre du cabinet."²⁶

When the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts finally submitted its report on the Government Printing Bureau to the House, September 29th, Chapleau emerged unscathed by the evidence. Therefore, at the termination of the session of Parliament the following day, he was prepared to demand the fulfilment of Abbott's promise to give him the Railways and Canals portfolio. Thus began the second step in Abbott's attempt to form a viable cohesive Ministry and Chapleau's efforts to obtain recognition from Abbott as Quebec chef.

²⁴La Minerve, vendredi le 21 août 1891.

²⁵Heisler, Sir John Thompson, pp. 268-269.

²⁶La Patrie, vendredi le 23 octobre 1891.

Before Chapleau left for a routine political visit to Montreal October 3rd in the wake of the session of scandals, he sought an interview with the Prime Minister in order to clarify his position within the cabinet. Apparently, Abbott reaffirmed his intention to grant Chapleau the Railways portfolio and to accept him as the chief French Canadian spokesman. Such status also indicated that French Canada was to exercise her just share of power within government circles. Consequently, when Chapleau arrived at the Bonaventure railway station that Saturday morning to a tumultuous welcome by his friends, he was in good trim and great humour. In reply to a warm address by Damien Rolland, a Montreal city councillor and eldest son of Jean-Baptiste Rolland, Chapleau proclaimed that although "il avait souffert pendant quelque temps de deux entorses, celle du Beaver Hall et celle du département de l'Imprimerie Nationale ... il était maintenant parfaitement guéri, fort et vigoureux, prêt à la lutte et surtout décidé de conduire ses fidèles soldats à la défense de la forteresse d'Ottawa et même lorsqu'il en sera temps à la prise de celle de Québec."²⁷

On Monday evening, October 5th, before over 3,000 enthusiastic supporters at the St. Lawrence Hall, Chapleau left no doubt about what his future would be in the Conservative party. He first proclaimed the strength and purity of the party and of himself. There had been no whitewashing during the session of scandals that had just ended, and the Liberals had slinked away from Ottawa disappointed that their plot

²⁷La Presse, samedi 1e 3 octobre 1891.

to overthrow the government had not succeeded. "The outcome of the committees of enquiry showed that the Conservative party had done its duty impartially, that it had asked that the light should be thrown everywhere and upon every one; that justice should be done, no matter who the accused might be or what office he held.... History would bear witness to this fact, that those who had been found guilty had been punished, no matter who they were."²⁸ With reference to those who had attacked him, Chapleau announced their complete failure. They had sought to injure those who lead the Conservative party in Quebec. Although they had driven Langevin from the cabinet, Chapleau remained. "It was not the first time that the serpent had worn its teeth on the file."²⁹

Once Chapleau had discussed the resilience of the Conservative party, he turned, with great emotion, to ponder his own role in that organization. Chapleau called for unity and proclaimed that "cette soirée est un cri de ralliement autour de celui qui portera le drapeau. (Appl. prolongés). Si vous avez confiance en moi, je serai cet homme. (Horrahs frénétiques.)"³⁰ There was no doubt that the Conservative faithful at the St. Lawrence Hall accepted Chapleau as chef of Quebec!

However, Chapleau's brief moment of euphoria ended abruptly three days later in Ottawa. At a tempestuous cabinet meeting, Abbott announced

²⁸Montreal Gazette, Tuesday October 6, 1891. The Gazette translated and printed Chapleau's remarks made before a crowd of Conservative faithful at the St. Lawrence Hall October 5th.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰La Presse, mardi le 6 octobre 1891.

that Chapleau would not receive the Railways portfolio he coveted. Ontario Tories simply refused to accord that key department to a French Canadian, especially to Chapleau.³¹ Because of Lister's charges, many anglophone Conservatives questioned Chapleau's administrative ability and feared his supposed intrigues. Sir John Thompson was informed by James Colebrooke Patterson, President of the Liberal-Conservative Union of Ontario, that "Some of our most stalwart conservatives think he [Chapleau] should retire from the Cabinet and there is not one in favor of his promotion from his present portfolio. This feeling is universal...."³² The Managing Director of the Gazette of Montreal, Richard S. White, wrote Thompson in the same vein. He affirmed that the pledge made to Chapleau in June 1891--the promise that he would receive the Railway Department--"has been dissolved by the disclosures before the Public Accounts Committee & cannot now be exacted." The Montreal Conservative believed English-speaking friends of the party had lost confidence in Chapleau because of the intrigues and scandals of the Secretary of State. White stressed the need for men of "character" and advised that "If Mr. Abbott cannot get a Ministry of all the talents, at least he may strive for one of all the virtues...."³³

³¹La Presse, vendredi 1e 9 octobre 1891.

³²PAC, Thompson Papers, J. C. Patterson to Thompson, Queen's Hotel, Toronto, October 14, 1891.

³³PAC, Thompson Papers, R. S. White to Thompson, Montreal, October 18, 1891. Other anglophones disliked Chapleau because he was intriguing. William Meredith, the Ontario Conservative leader expressed

This fear by English-speaking Conservatives of what Macdonald had once termed Chapleau's "fondness for intrigue" would have been relatively harmless except for the Liberals' exploitation of Chapleau's link with corruption for electoral advantage. Hoping to cash in on the cloud of suspicion that hung over Chapleau's head during the Printing Bureau inquiry, Liberals attempted to dredge up from the past any scandal with which Chapleau had ever been associated. For example, in September, the Liberal Member of Parliament for Queen's in Nova Scotia, F. G. Forbes, had raised the question of the Smith and Ripley affair which had been aired and buried in 1886-1887. In 1886, the Liberal party press had accused Chapleau and members of his family of having received over \$8,000 from the construction firm of Smith and Ripley for services rendered by Chapleau as a Minister of the Crown in the settlement of a claim the company had lodged against the federal government. The suit had been instituted in 1878 in order to obtain compensation for work once the government had decided to abandon construction of the Canadian Pacific's Georgian Bay branch line which Smith and Ripley were building. Chapleau had acted as the counsel for the entrepreneurs. However, the moment he became a Minister of the Crown in 1879, he had ceased his relations with the firm. Smith and Ripley had paid him a counsel fee

such sentiments. (Whitney Papers, Meredith to Whitney, October 31, 1891 as cited in Heisler, Sir John Thompson, p. 284.) Sir Joseph Pope complained of Chapleau's demands for a more important cabinet post and stated that "there was no real question of principle involved; it was always a sordid demand for more influence or patronage or material advantage...." (Sir Joseph Pope, Public Servant: The Memoires of Sir Joseph Pope, ed. Maurice Pope, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 49.)

of \$1,000, but beyond that he had never sought nor received any money. William McDougall who had acted for the company between 1879 and 1884, had originally raised the issue because he believed he had not been paid fully by Smith and Ripley due to the exorbitant sum Chapleau had supposedly received for his use of ministerial influence. In a public letter, Smith and Ripley had denied that they had ever paid Chapleau, or any one for him, any monies other than the \$1,000 counsel fee. On the day the Forbes' question was raised verbally in the House of Commons, September 14, 1891, Chapleau had read a letter from McDougall who considered the case to be closed since he had long before accepted Smith and Ripley's interpretation of events.³⁴

The Liberal party press refused to be outdone by Members of Parliament in the campaign to discredit Chapleau. The Globe and the Mail of Toronto, and La Patrie of Montreal linked Chapleau's name with scandal at every turn. Old exhausted affairs were dropped before the public in a most tedious fashion. The sale of the Provincial railway in 1882, an old stand-by, was paraded in print once again. The Tanneries affair, another favourite, was revived.³⁵

³⁴Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Chapleau) Monday September 14, 1891, pp. 5403-5405. McDougall's original letter is also to be found in La Patrie, lundi le 25 octobre 1886; the reply of Smith and Ripley is in the Montreal Gazette, Wednesday February 27, 1887; and events of 1891 are printed in the Montreal Gazette, Tuesday September 15, 1891.

³⁵La Presse, mardi le 13 octobre 1891. Also see the Toronto Mail, Tuesday October 13, 1891; Thursday October 15, 1891; Tuesday October 27, 1891; Thursday October 29, 1891; & Friday October 30, 1891.

Some Conservative newspapers, such as John Charles Rykert's St. Catherine's Standard, rejected the Liberal insults and supported Chapleau wholeheartedly.³⁶ Rykert was an Ontario Orangeman who had voted against O'Brien's Jesuits' Estates resolution in 1889 and had resigned his seat in the House of Commons in 1890 after a scandal which centred on him had broken out. Other Conservative directed newspapers, such as the Toronto Empire, at first defended the Secretary of State and termed the Mail's denigration of Quebec politicians as pure insanity.³⁷ However, by the end of October, the Empire joined the ranks of the Conservative Montreal Gazette and Hamilton Spectator and suggested that Chapleau should relieve Abbott of his promise. La Presse reported that the Spectator stressed "'que la situation était grave, que chacun devait faire sa part de sacrifice pour le bien commun et que ce sacrifice était d'autant plus méritoire que ses droits étaient les mieux acquis et les plus reconnus'; bref, que lui, le Secrétaire d'Etat devait s'effacer ou du moins donner préséance à d'autres, 'dans l'intérêt bien entendu du parti conservateur.'" ³⁸ The Star and La Presse of Montreal, Le Canada of Ottawa, and Le Canadien and L'Événement of Quebec city, wondered if the attacks made by some Conservative papers against Chapleau were not

³⁶ La Patrie, samedi le 7 novembre 1891.

³⁷ La Presse, mardi le 13 octobre 1891.

³⁸ La Presse, mercredi le 28 octobre 1891. Also see Montreal Gazette, Wednesday October 28, 1891.

a result of the underhanded work of Sir Hector Langevin.³⁹

In addition to Chapleau's supposed ties with corruption that the Liberals exploited and Conservatives feared, other reasons prompted anglophones to intimate that Chapleau should not receive the Railways portfolio. Orangemen from Ontario who disliked Chapleau's determination to champion the French fact were opposed to any promotion for the Secretary of State. The powerful Canadian Pacific Railway regarded Chapleau as a "Grand Trunk man" and consequently did not encourage Chapleau's appointment as Minister of Railways and Canals.⁴⁰ Many English-speaking Conservatives were not prepared to accept the Secretary of State as chef of French Canada which the fulfilment of Abbott's promise would imply, because of their belief in Chapleau's lack of influence in the province of Quebec and his apparent disloyalty to the party. The Manitoba Senator, Charles Arkoll Boulton, denied Chapleau represented the majority of Quebec "so that he does not bring that political strength from his Province which his apparent demands would warrant, quite apart from the weakness he brings upon the Government by the disclosures in his department."⁴¹ Many anglophones thought Chapleau capable of anything, even disloyalty. Sir Joseph Pope, Macdonald's private secretary, lamented Chapleau's "innate

³⁹La Patrie, mardi le 29 octobre 1891 & mercredi le 4 novembre 1891.

⁴⁰Heisler, Sir John Thompson, pp. 283-284.

⁴¹PAC, Thompson Papers, Senator Boulton to Thompson, Shellmouth, October 29, 1891.

want of loyalty."⁴² The Hamilton Spectator accused the Secretary of State of flirting with the Liberals and of fomenting treason in Conservative ranks. To those slanderous charges, Chapleau could not remain silent. In a letter to the Ontario newspaper that was published in La Presse, Chapleau expressed his disbelief,

Comme si, après trente ans de luttes, de labeurs et de dévouement à une cause que j'ai défendue avec amour comme une cause sacrée, je pouvais me sentir disposé à m'unir à ceux qui n'ont eu pour moi que des violences, des insultes et des calomnies. Comme si après avoir proclamé et assuré le triomphe de ces grands principes que j'ai toujours tenus et que je tiens encore pour être la base de notre prospérité, j'y pouvais renoncer pour devenir l'apôtre de tout ce que j'ai combattu comme contraire aux intérêts de la nation depuis mon premier pas dans la vie publique.⁴³

He emphasized that "C'est précisément parce que je crois en la politique conservatrice que je ne me suis jamais prêté et que je ne me prêterai jamais à une ligne de conduite qui, dans mon opinion, serait fatale au parti."⁴⁴

In the same open letter, Chapleau rebuked those anglophones who rejected him as French Canadian leader because they considered him to be intriguing and personally ambitious. The Secretary of State denied that he asked for anything of a strictly personal nature. All his requests were in the interest of his province. However, he quickly added that he always took into consideration "les besoins, les exigences des autres

⁴² Sir Joseph Pope, Public Servant, p. 48.

⁴³ La Presse, mercredi 1e 11 novembre 1891.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

provinces, afin de n'être pas injuste à leur égard avant de demander quelque chose pour celle de Québec." Therefore, he questioned: "Pourquoi semble-t-on enclin en certain quartier à méconnaître ma libéralité, et pourquoi essaie-t-on de me dépouiller d'une influence que je n'ai exercée que pour le bénéfice du parti?"⁴⁵ He stressed that Quebec required an important cabinet position in order to maintain French Canada's allegiance to the party--in order to reaffirm the French and English-speaking alliance that was the basis of the Liberal-Conservative party.

He underlined

le besoin urgent d'obtenir pour la province de Québec une représentation dans le cabinet qui nous donnât à mes collègues Canadiens-français et à moi-même, cette augmentation d'influence devenu indispensable si nous voulons reprendre le terrain perdu des années passées.

Voilà ce que bon nombre de conservateurs d'Ontario n'ont pas voulu comprendre. Dans tous les cas où ils m'ont attribué des motifs d'intérêt personnel, ils n'auraient dû voir qu'un désir, de ma part d'augmenter une influence qui est à leur service autant qu'à celui de la province de Québec. La section française du parti conservateur est aussi indispensable au parti que la section tory d'Ontario, que les passions, les préjugés, les ambitions provinciales ou individuelles soient mises de côté, de façon à donner aux chefs conservateurs qui représentent réellement l'électorat dans les différentes régions du Canada, tout le prestige et toute l'influence que le gouvernement est en mesure de mettre à leur disposition.⁴⁶

Other Chapleautistes, such as G.-A. Nantel, echoed Chapleau's statement that Quebec did not wish to be told by Ontario who its leaders were to be.⁴⁷ He explained that "Nous n'avons aucune objection à ce que

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Many Ontario politicians favoured Auguste-Réal Angers, the

le premier-ministre choisisse dans Ontario les collègues qui lui conviendront. Avec sa garantie, nous les acceptons, quels qu'ils soient. Mais nous ne voulons pas que la province d'Ontario fasse le choix des ministres de la province de Québec; ce ne serait plus la Confédération, mais l'union législative."⁴⁸ Nantel urged Chapleau to remain firm and demand the fulfilment of Abbott's promise. Otherwise, "il [Chapleau] se rendrait indigne de la confiance de ses compatriotes et il continuerait à perpétuer le régime de concessions et d'abandons malheureux dont nous avons eu à souffrir depuis un certain nombre d'années."⁴⁹

Despite Ontario's coolness to his leadership, Chapleau intended to accept Nantel's advice. He felt confident of victory. He believed Ontario to be bluffing because "ils ont trop besoin du Gouvernement pour risquer de le briser."⁵⁰ However, Chapleau's ability to call Ontario's bluff depended upon his capacity to maintain a cohesive, disciplined Quebec delegation of Members of Parliament behind him. Fortunately for Chapleau, that unity of purpose among French Canadian politicians appeared

Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, for the post of Quebec chef since he had appeared forceful by his refusal to allow Honoré Mercier, the Quebec Premier whom many anglophones hated, to bury the Baie des Chaleurs scandal with which his provincial government was implicated. (La Presse, vendredi le 18 janvier 1895.) Richard White favoured Angers as Quebec leader. PAC, Thompson Papers, White to Thompson, Montreal, October 18, 1891.)

⁴⁸La Presse, mercredi le 28 octobre 1891.

⁴⁹La Presse, mardi le 3 novembre 1891.

⁵⁰ASJCF, Desjardins Papers, Chapleau à Desjardins, Ottawa, le 30 octobre 1891.

as an impervious wall during the first few weeks of October. After Abbott denied Chapleau his cherished portfolio, the Secretary of State, Joseph-Aldéric Ouimet, Désiré Girouard and a few other key Quebec Members of Parliament agreed that they would not accept to be a part of the Abbott government unless it was understood that Quebec would be better treated in the distribution of portfolios. Even Angers had promised not to aid Abbott in the event of a rupture between Chapleau and the Prime Minister.⁵¹ Anglophones realized the difficulties involved if they wished to weaken Chapleau. Thus, they immediately attempted to detach Ouimet, a weak link in the chain, from the solid flank of pro-Chapleau partisans.

On October 3rd, the Montreal Gazette had touted Ouimet as Langevin's successor. A Chapleau stalwart, Michael Joseph Francis Quinn, warned the Secretary of State that Ouimet would be satisfied with a fourth place position in the cabinet.⁵² However, Chapleau was not worried. He could report to Alphonse Desjardins at the end of the month that Ouimet had been tempted with an offer of a portfolio of great responsibility, but had repulsed the proposition.⁵³ In spite of his satisfaction at Joseph-Aldéric Ouimet's action, a note of uneasiness crept into Chapleau's letter to Desjardins. He explained that he had gone "aux limites extrêmes du sacrifice pour sauver le parti et sauver ma dignité. On

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² PAC, Tarte Papers, M. J. F. Quinn to Chapleau, St -Anne de Bellevue, October 4, 1891.

⁵³ ASJCF, Desjardins Papers, Chapleau à Desjardins, Ottawa, le 30 octobre 1891.

refuse tout, pensant que l'un de nous fléchira au dernier moment. On ne s'occupe pas de l'infamie qui retomberait sur celui d'entre nous qui manquerait à sa promesse. Mais au point où en sont les choses une reculade de l'un de nous serait plus qu'une lâcheté ce serait l'anéantissement politique."⁵⁴ Unfortunately for Chapleau, the unthinkable occurred.

While at the St. Lawrence Hall in the early days of November, some of Chapleau's friends arrived to announce that Ouimet had accepted an invitation to join Abbott's cabinet. Unable to believe his informers, Chapleau sent for Ouimet, who sheepishly confirmed the news. Chapleau had failed! The Secretary of State had not only lost the confidence of the anglophones, but also of his French Canadian compatriots. The province of Quebec must be content in the future, according to Chapleau, to see French Canadians play a secondary role in Confederation. The contemplation of such thoughts made Chapleau livid. His temper flared and he lashed at his Quebec colleague in a virulent rage. The reporter from Le Canada wisely, but slyly, was content to remark that

Il s'en suivit pendant plusieurs minutes, une conversation plus qu'animée au cours de laquelle il s'est dit des choses très piquantes, que nous n'aimons pas à répéter, parce qu'après tout, ces choses là n'ont pas été dites pour la presse....⁵⁵

After this animated discussion with Ouimet, the Secretary of State realized he was the victim of intrigue and jealousy by both his English and French-speaking colleagues. Aware of that fact, all his

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵La Patrie, jeudi le 4 mai 1893, (cited from Le Canada).

friends, aides and advisers urged him to resign. "'Démissionner', répondait Chapleau, 'je n'y aurais pas la moindre objection; mais à quoi bon? Je serai remplacé par un homme inférieur'...."⁵⁶ Chapleau believed that only he could still prevent the emasculation of French Canada's influence in the party and in the Abbott government. Thus, he immediately left Montreal for Ottawa to present his case to the Prime Minister.

The results of that conversation left Chapleau in no doubt about his inferior position within the federal administration. On the day following the meeting, November 4th, all Ministers handed their resignations to Abbott "so as to leave his hands perfectly free as to choice of those who are to assist him in the various departments when the reorganization [of the cabinet] takes place."⁵⁷ However, all cabinet members were to continue to hold their respective portfolios until the Prime Minister finally succeeded in the formation of a viable cabinet. To preserve Conservative party unity, the Secretary of State concurred with a public statement Abbott issued to clarify the situation. In his press release, the Prime Minister informed Canadians that Chapleau realized that his transfer at that time to the Department of Railways and Canals would be attended with some difficulty to the government. Therefore, he "decided to relieve the Premier from all such embarrassment and to state that he would not press any claim which he might have to

⁵⁶La Patrie, 1e 24 juillet 1903. Tarte wrote this article.

⁵⁷Montreal Gazette, Friday November 6, 1891. This is a statement issued by Abbott with the concurrence of Chapleau.

the portfolio of Railways and Canals."⁵⁸ After gracefully accepting his own abdication of a position of significance, Chapleau pressed for the recognition of French Canada's rightful place in the federal government. He made certain that Abbott's statement clearly indicated that Chapleau "was naturally anxious that the province of Quebec should not be in a less advantageous position in the re-organization of the Government than if he had received the portfolio...."⁵⁹ Since the Prime Minister claimed that it had been his "intention from the first that the Railways or Public Works should go to one of the Quebec ministers, there was no longer any difficulty on that point."⁶⁰

The day after Abbott's announcement, the second phase of the construction of his cabinet ended. On the afternoon of November 6th, Joseph-Aldéric Ouimet, representative for Laval, was sworn in as Minister of Public Works.⁶¹ Quebec's representation in that august body was back to full strength. But the country still awaited Abbott's definitive Ministry.

Those events of the early days of November 1891 confirmed the disruption of the old Liberal-Conservative party. A key Quebec Conservative and personal friend of Chapleau, Joseph-Israël Tarte, continued

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Montreal Gazette, Saturday November 7, 1891.

his trek towards the Liberals that had begun with Macdonald's death.⁶² This journey was of great significance. Tarte, the man who had worked for Langevin's electoral victories in the 1870's and his disgrace in the 1890's, who had opposed Chapleau as Premier of Quebec and supported him as Secretary of State in Ottawa, who had contributed to Laurier's defeat in the 1877 Drummond-Arthabaska by-election and now wished to secure his victory in the next federal election--Tarte, the journalist, back-room boy and politician, would become in the 1890's the engineer of the moderate Conservatives' march into the Liberal party. Immediately after his break with the Conservatives, Tarte attempted to entice Chapleau and his followers into the Liberal fold through articles in the press. The Montreal Gazette quoted Le Canadien in which Tarte warned that "If Mr. Chapleau has pushed patience to such a limit as to bring him within a step of his ruin, he has committed the error of yielding for years and years back. People must not expect that his false moderation will serve as an example for everybody. The moment for resistance has arrived."⁶³ Abbott was afraid, Tarte asserted, to keep his promise

⁶²In June 1891, Tarte had advocated that Chapleau break with the old Liberal-Conservative party and treat with Blake in order to secure an English-speaking ally. Tarte saw no hope after Macdonald's death that the Tories of Ontario whom Macdonald had held in check and whose tendencies were hostile to French Canadians and Catholics, could be held in check. (Montreal Gazette, Friday November 13, 1891.) After the Jesuits' Estates affair Chapleau had also expressed the view that Macdonald alone could quieten anti-French Canadian and Catholic sentiment which emanated from Ontario. (Fonds Guin, DeCelles à Chapleau, Ottawa, juillet 1895.)

⁶³Montreal Gazette, Friday November 13, 1891.

to Chapleau because of the Ontario Conservatives. Their spirit of domination, of exclusion and of prejudice was a bad omen for the future of the country. "To tolerate it in silence would be a fault. It would be treason."⁶⁴ With calculated dexterity, Tarte failed to make mention of Chapleau's inability to dominate Quebec Conservative Members of Parliament.

The Conservative party in Quebec was possibly spared any convulsion despite the dissatisfaction that Chapleautistes, such as Tarte, expressed, because of the disgrace of the Liberal party over the Baie des Chaleurs affair. That scandal was exposed in the Senate through an inquiry by the Upper Houses' Railway Committee. The contractor of the railway, C. N. Armstrong, had bought off the government with \$100,000 of the government's \$175,000 subsidy to the company in order to win a dispute with a sub-contractor. Some Liberals had used the money for election purposes. Once the Senate Committee had revealed damaging evidence against the Mercier government, the Lieutenant-Governor, A.-R. Angers, ordered a Royal Commission to investigate the matter. Although the preliminary report of the Commission acquitted Mercier of direct connivance, Angers believed he possessed sufficient grounds to dismiss the Liberal government December 16, 1891. After Mercier's removal from office, Angers called upon the former Conservative Premier, Charles de Boucherville, to form a new administration.

With the sting of impunity deadened by the revelations of the corruption of Mercier's regime, in January 1892, Abbott finally announced

⁶⁴Montreal Gazette, Tuesday November 17, 1891.

his cabinet which Tarte claimed, had been dictated by the Canadian Pacific Railway.⁶⁵ Joseph-Aldéric Ouimet was confirmed in his post of Public Works and Sir Adolphe Caron obtained the Post Office, a portfolio with little influence on policy. The anglophone Postmaster-General, John Graham Haggart, who had been involved in a scandal during the summer of 1891,⁶⁶ received Chapleau's desired portfolio of Railways and Canals. Chapleau, still Secretary of State after ten years of service at the federal level and now prepared to make a final effort to obtain an influential position in cabinet and thus acceptance as chef of Quebec, demanded to be Minister of the Interior, Agriculture or nothing.⁶⁷ When Abbott rejected his appeals, Dansereau asserted in La Presse that Chapleau reluctantly accepted the secondary Ministry of Customs and prepared for his retirement from the federal scene.⁶⁸

Abbott's refusal, supported by Sir John Thompson,⁶⁹ to comply

⁶⁵La Patrie, lundi le 11 janvier 1892.

⁶⁶La Patrie, jeudi le 5 octobre 1893 & Canada, Journals of the House of Commons, XXV, Appendix No. 2, 1891. (Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts Report and Minutes of evidence respecting certain payments made by the Post Office Department for Extra Services.)

⁶⁷ASJCF, Desjardins Papers, Chapleau à Desjardins, Ottawa, le 13 janvier 1892.

⁶⁸La Presse, lundi le 13 juin 1898. Dansereau wrote this article.

⁶⁹Tarte wrote that Sir John Thompson, Senator G. A. Drummond and Richard White "se portèrent tous trois garants solidaires et conjoints de l'accomplissement des promesses faites par M. Abbott...." to Chapleau. La Patrie, jeudi le 25 mai 1893. After the session when Abbott hesitated to execute his promise, Chapleau called upon Thompson for support. However,

with Chapleau's request for a key portfolio, confirmed Chapleau's untenable position within the cabinet. Joseph-Israél Tarte explained that Chapleau had become "la bête noire du cabinet conservateur--purement parce qu'il s'efforçait en toutes occasions, d'obtenir justice égale pour les nôtres."

His anglophone cabinet colleagues realized that the French Canadian contingent would not follow him to the end in the basic goals of which he was merely the interpreter, in the interests and for the honour of his race. "La question de patronage, le soin des choses personnelles, l'esprit de parti poussé à l'extrême, la jalousie: tout cela était escompté par les alliés anglais du parti conservateur dans Québec."⁷⁰

Chapleau had failed to secure a fair share in the distribution of patronage.⁷¹ Because he believed that "On mesure la force d'une province, dans le mouvement politique de la Puissance, par l'importance des portefeuilles qu'elle se réserve dans le ministère fédéral...."⁷² he felt he occupied "une fausse position" and decided to leave the government "quand l'occasion

Thompson replied "que certainement une promotion avait été promise à M. Chapleau, mais, qu'après l'enquête qui avait eu lieu à propos de l'imprimerie nationale, la promotion de M. Chapleau blesserait l'élément tory devenu tout d'un coup d'un scrupule incroyable et presque admirable." La Patrie, jeudi le 5 octobre 1893.

⁷⁰La Patrie, le 8 février 1902.

⁷¹La Patrie, mercredi le 4 janvier 1893. This article was undoubtedly written by Tarte.

⁷²J.-A. Chapleau, Le Parti Conservateur et la Province de Québec: Discours de l'Hon. M. Chapleau à l'assemblée de Ste -Croix le 6 juin 1875, Montréal: 1875, p. 5.

se présente d'abandonner sans danger pour le parti...."⁷³ While he awaited that propitious occasion, Chapleau's position within the party deteriorated further and another issue arose which served to confirm his desire to retire with honour.

Due to a forced absence in the United States from the end of January 1892 until March 18th because of illness, Chapleau's strength within the Conservative party in Quebec weakened. Because a cold he had developed at Christmas in 1891 had turned into pneumonia in January, Chapleau accepted his doctor's advice and travelled to Florida to convalesce. There, in the country of oranges, alligators and hotels constructed by northern capitalists, he hunted a little, fished a great deal and basked in the warm sun.⁷⁴ While the new Minister of Customs restored his strength, speculation about his retirement to Spencer Wood occurred and increased in intensity after de Boucherville's decisive victory over Mercier in the provincial general election of March 8th. The press did not fail to observe that the provincial Conservative triumph occurred without aid from Chapleau whom Macdonald, among others, had considered to be essential for Conservative success at election time.⁷⁵ Chapleau had made one speech in favour of G.-A. Nantel at Ste -Thérèse January 2nd. His doctor had permitted him to travel from

⁷³La Presse, lundi le 13 juin 1898. Dansereau wrote this article.

⁷⁴La Minerve, samedi le 19 mars 1892.

⁷⁵La Patrie, vendredi le 14 octobre 1891.

Sherbrooke where he had spent Christmas with his wife's family, on the condition that he not speak. However, Chapleau had not been able to resist offering a few words of advice to Terrebonne electors and had rationalized that "une bonne petite causerie sans façon ne peut pas me faire du mal."⁷⁶ Again on the 4th he had delivered an address at Sorel. However, his activity had brought on another attack of the grippe complicated with pneumonia. After a short period of rest in Montreal, he had left for the southern United States and thus forced the provincial party to fight the election without his presence. Because of the Conservative triumph in March, Chapleau appeared to be quite dispensable! Disquieted by the rumours that he was no longer required, Chapleau returned to Montreal March 18th against doctor's orders, and promptly fell violently ill once more.

While Chapleau remained confined to his room at his house on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal, unsubstantiated reports concerning his political future continued to circulate. Some accounts suggested that the de Boucherville government would be happy to hear of his retirement.⁷⁷ Other newspaper articles indicated that Caron favoured Chapleau's demise. To obtain the truth, the Minister of Customs had to rely on trusted friends, such as Alfred DeCelles. In a letter of March 28th, DeCelles informed Chapleau that he could find no foundation to the rumours. He had spoken with Senator J.-J. Ross who claimed there was nothing to the

⁷⁶La Minerve, lundi le 4 janvier 1892.

⁷⁷La Patrie, mardi le 22 mars 1896, (cited from the Free Press).

reports. DeCelles wrote that "Caron est venu me voir deux trois fois, pour me donner sa parole qu'il n'avait pas remué une parble [sic] contre toi; sa parole ne vaut pas cher peut-être, mais il y a plus; aurait-il les projets qu'on lui prête, qu'il se heurterait à la résistance des députés qui n'entendent pas qu'on agisse sans les consulter. C'est C. qui a fait écrire la note dans la Minerve démentant les bruits."⁷⁸ To demonstrate the exaggerated nature of some of the stories, DeCelles told Chapleau to see his sister-in-law. "Elle a rencontré ma femme l'autre jour. Elle voit des choses surprenantes. Even M. DeCelles his best friend is against Adolphe a-t-elle dit à ma femme! Si elle n'avait pas le don de m'agacer et, de m'exaspérer j'aimerais à l'entendre causer sur ce sujet."⁷⁹

As Chapleau's health improved, comments about his departure from the Ottawa scene faded. However, once he was able to return to work April 18th, Chapleau's difficulties did not cease. Although he had regained his health, he was unable to recover his political strength. His second-class status within the cabinet continued to be symbolized by his seat in the second row of cabinet benches in the House of Commons.⁸⁰ His relations with important Ministers only served to entrench Chapleau in his inferior position.

⁷⁸Fonds Gouin, DeCelles à Chapleau, Ottawa, le 28 mars 1892.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Montreal Gazette, Wednesday April 20, 1892.

By July, Chapleau found himself at odds with many of his anglo-phone colleagues. The Montreal Star asserted that Mackenzie Bowell disliked Chapleau's proposed reforms of the Ministry of Customs, the department formerly administered by Bowell. Chapleau felt slighted because Abbott had not named him as one of the Canadian delegates to Washington in the latest round of discussions with the American government.⁸¹ Chapleau had desired to go to Washington in February, but Abbott had refused to accommodate him. The Prime Minister had reasoned that Chapleau was in Florida where he "professes to be too ill to attend business" in Ottawa, that he appeared to be "shirking the by-elections", that "he knows nothing of the subject" under discussion and would be "very expensive".⁸² More serious still was Chapleau's confirmation to the press that there was a divergence of opinion between himself and his colleagues with respect to Canadian-American commercial relations.⁸³ That problem involved the American's discriminatory toll of twenty cents on the Sault Ste. Marie Canal.

During the 1880's, the Canadian government had attempted to induce both Canadian and American vessels to use the St. Lawrence canal system through to Montreal. With a greater volume of transatlantic freight passing through Montreal, Canadians had believed there was more

⁸¹La Patrie, samedi le 16 juillet 1892.

⁸²PAC, Thompson Papers, Abbott to Thompson, February 8, 1892 [Memorandum].

⁸³La Minerve, vendredi le 22 juillet 1892.

likelihood of the appearance of abundant and regular ocean transport and of the reduction of ocean rates to a level that would allow Montreal to better compete with New York. To promote the St. Lawrence route and Montreal's position as a metropolitan centre, the Abbott government had allowed a rebate of eighteen cents a ton on grain which passed through the Welland Canal, provided the grain was shipped to Montreal. Grain destined for an American port or grain headed for Montreal which had been transhipped at an American port received no rebate. In retaliation, the United States President sent a message to Congress in the summer of 1892 in which he stated that he considered the Canadian Canal tolls to be discriminatory and a violation of the 1871 Treaty of Washington. The President sought powers to protect the interests of American citizens and the Congress agreed to a toll on the tonnage of Canadian vessels passing through the American canal at Sault Ste. Marie (the Canadian Canal at Sault Ste. Marie had not yet been built) and advised the President accordingly. Consequently, the United States President issued a proclamation which instituted tolls on the tonnage of any Canadian bound ship that passed through the canal at Sault Ste. Marie.⁸⁴

Mackenzie Bowell, John Haggart, George Foster and John Thompson denounced the Americans and urged that the government stand firm in the

⁸⁴Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Transmitted to Congress, with the Annual Message of the President, December 5, 1892, preceded by a list of Papers, with an analysis of their contents, and followed by an alphabetical index of subjects, New York: Kraus reprint Corporation, 1868, pp. 250-340.

face of the United States' action. On the other hand, Bowell claimed Chapleau "was vehement in his declaration that the Yankees were right, and that we ought to repeal the Canal Regulations, so far as they related to reshipment of grain at American ports."⁸⁵

As relations between Chapleau and his cabinet colleagues worsened and became public knowledge and as Chapleau became dissatisfied with performing the dull routine duties of the Minister of Customs, he sought retirement with honour. By September, Chapleau expressed his impatience to Abbott and his desire to go to Spencer Wood, his generally acknowledged destination, without delay. Chapleau was irritated that Abbott refused to accept his resignation since he believed the Premier's action was "hurtful to the party & likely to produce complications...." Chapleau's old complaint that he had "neither the influence nor position in the Ministry his services & ability entitle him to...." remained valid. Rather than continue to be muzzled, he preferred to recuperate his powers in the repose of the Lieutenant-Governorship of Quebec.⁸⁶ However,

⁸⁵At a cabinet meeting on August 13th in Montreal, the government decided to terminate the rebate system at the close of the 1892 shipping season. Nevertheless, despite the Canadian government's assurances, the United States imposed a toll of twenty cents a ton, effective September 1, 1892, on all freight passing through the St. Mary's Falls Canal in transit to Canadian ports, whether carried in Canadian or American vessels. The dispute was only settled in 1893. The regulations providing for a rebate on Welland Canal tolls were allowed to expire by the Canadian government December 31, 1892, and the U. S. A. administration was aware of that fact. In return, the American government removed the retaliatory tolls at the Sault Canal. (See Clark, A History of the Conservative Administrations, pp. 108-113.)

⁸⁶PAC, Thompson Papers, R. S. White to Thompson, Montreal, September 19, 1892.

Abbott continued to dally and Chapleau continued to suffer indignities. In October, Chapleau was pleased that Alphonse Desjardins was appointed to the Senate and J.-S.-C. Wurtele promoted to become a judge of the Court of Queen's Bench. But, at the same time, he was angered that Abbott did not consult him about Wurtele's replacement on the Superior Court bench. Chapleau complained to the Minister of Justice, Sir John Thompson, that he disliked "the Premier's decided objection to Mr Taillon's nomination, before consulting with his colleagues from the Province of Quebec, who have the responsibility of securing support to the Government in that Province."⁸⁷

While Chapleau's lack of power and influence within the cabinet caused him to desire retirement, the Manitoba School Question arose again by the fall of 1892 and strengthened his determination to leave federal politics. That unresolved problem, coupled with Abbott's departure from the government, provoked Chapleau to escape his ignoble captivity within the federal cabinet. In September 1892, with great perception, Chapleau noted the relationship of those two events. To his Quebec colleague, Adolphe Caron, Chapleau wrote that "La question des écoles du Manitoba va se compliquer de la question d'un changement de chef du cabinet."⁸⁸

During the autumn of 1892 the Manitoba School Question came to

⁸⁷ PAC, Thompson Papers, Chapleau to Thompson, Ottawa, October 11, 1892.

⁸⁸ PAC, Caron Papers, Chapleau à Caron, Ottawa, le 3 septembre 1892.

dominate Chapleau's thought. The Minister of Customs insisted that a solution be found to that difficulty. He reminded Abbott in September that "le règlement de la question des écoles nous fait un devoir de ménager autant que possible."⁸⁹ Although anxious for a settlement and disillusioned with anglophone ill-will in the matter, Chapleau did not criticize English-speaking Canadians alone. To his friend, the Speaker of the Quebec Legislative Council and cousin of Archbishop Taché, Pierre Boucher de La Bruère, Chapleau confided that he had "une grande sympathie pour les Métis du Nord-Ouest; mais je t'avoue que cette sympathie n'irait pas jusqu'à risquer les destinées de la Confédération pour un brin de persécution dont ils pourraient se plaindre. Après tout, c'est un peu leur faute. Pourquoi [sic] ont-ils non seulement jaloué, mais presque chassé les Canadiens-français de leurs territoires, avant que les jours de difficultés ne soient arrivés?" However, that said, Chapleau affirmed that "Cela n'empêche pas que je passerais volontiers mon portefeuille de Ministre à un autre, si l'on n'apporte pas quelque remède à la position difficile faite aux catholiques du Manitoba, par la sottise loi de M. Greenway...."⁹⁰

La Presse contended that when the reluctance of the English-speaking members of the cabinet to intervene politically in the Manitoba

⁸⁹PAC, Abbott Papers, Chapleau à Abbott, Ottawa, le 23 septembre 1892.

⁹⁰PAC, Collection Baby, Chapleau à de La Bruère, Ottawa, le 23 septembre 1892, [copy].

School Question became apparent to Chapleau by mid-October,⁹¹ the Minister of Customs decided to prepare for his succession within the Conservative party in Quebec in anticipation of his impending withdrawal from federal politics. An opportunity to designate an heir occurred at the nominating meeting for the by-election at Hochelaga to fill the vacancy left by Alphonse Desjardins' appointment to the Senate. Speaking before the church on behalf of the Conservative candidate, Dr. S. Lachapelle, Chapleau implored the Liberal nominee to follow the example of all good Christians and "'bow before' La chapelle."⁹² Then, after J.-A. Ouimet expressed the wish to see another Cartier who would group all French Canadians around him and who would obtain justice for them from English-speaking Canadians, Chapleau rose to speak a second time. To a thunderous ovation he cried: "S'il ne suffit pas d'un seul homme pour remplacer Cartier, nous nous mettrons deux, M. Ouimet et moi, pour défendre les droits des nôtres." Following those remarks he added that "Il est probable que l'honorable M. Ouimet deviendra un jour le premier ministre du district de Montréal."⁹³ Four days later in an interview with the Gazette, Chapleau admitted that his health was so very poor that he might have to retire from the cabinet at any time. In that event, whether his absence be permanent or temporary, the people of Montreal were to look

⁹¹La Presse, samedi le 15 octobre 1892.

⁹²Montreal Gazette, Saturday October 22, 1892.

⁹³La Presse, samedi le 22 octobre 1892. Chapleau spoke at Hochelaga.

to Joseph-Aldéric Ouimet as their leader.⁹⁴

Besides designating his successor at Hochelaga on October 21st, Chapleau also spoke of the government's determination to secure justice for the francophone minority in Manitoba. With great candour, Chapleau admitted that he could not say what the government would do in order to settle that question which was more irritating than difficult. However, he did say that the government desires "to follow up those splendid traditions of conciliation and cordial understanding which have given to our country such a great measure of success, progress and tranquility." Chapleau then warned that

if the Government is not met in Parliament with that spirit of tolerance which the church of to-day recognizes in all forms of Christianity, if the old provinces which created the confederation refuse to be inspired from those healthy sources which gave them existence and stability, if in the name of 'equal rights' equal justice and liberty of conscience are refused to those who claim it, then it would be better to discuss the terms of union anew, for a great nation cannot be created with the heterogeneous elements of our provinces unless the rights, privileges and immunities are guaranteed to the minorities and without which they would never have accepted the pact which constituted the Canadian Confederation.⁹⁵

Apparently, that statement by Chapleau on the 21st infuriated several English-speaking cabinet members who were not prepared to guarantee justice to the minority in Manitoba by political means if the courts failed to perform that task.⁹⁶ At a cabinet meeting that followed

⁹⁴Montreal Gazette, Tuesday October 25, 1892.

⁹⁵Montreal Gazette, Saturday October 22, 1892.

⁹⁶La Patrie, mercredi le 10 mai 1893, (cited from Le Canada).

Chapleau's declaration, Thompson, acting Prime Minister in Abbott's absence in England in search of treatment for a weak heart and poor circulation, reprimanded Chapleau for his Hochelaga pronouncement. Sir John Thompson declared that the government was in no way committed to regulate the Manitoba School Question and Ministers who expressed an opinion favourable to ministerial intervention compromised the party's position. Oscar McDermill of Le Canada reconstructed the historic and tragic exchange that he contended followed.

"Mais, répond M. Chapleau, nous nous sommes engagés solennellement à intervenir.

"M. Bowell.--Nothing of the kind.

"M. Chapleau.--Mgr Taché n'a-t-il pas ma promesse appuyée d'un document officiel?

"M. Bowell.--We know nothing about that.

"Sir John Thompson.--Quite so.

"M. Chapleau.--Est-ce que le premier ministre n'a pas l'intention de racheter la promesse que j'ai été autorisé de faire à Mgr Taché au nom du cabinet.

"Sir John Thompson.--We have made no promise to the good Archbishop, therefore we are not bound to anything, and we don't want to hurt the feelings of our kind friends from Ontario. It would be absurd.

"M. Bowell.--Certainly.

"M. Chapleau--Dans ce cas-là je ne crois pas que les ministres français puissent rester dans le cabinet.

"Sir A.-P. Caron (Posant son lorgnon à la hâte). Will the honorable gentleman please explain.

"M. Chapleau--It is plain enough.

"M. Ouimet--J'ai attendu pendant quinze ans l'occasion d'accepter un portefeuille de ministre, je ne suis pas disposé à trahir mon parti quasiment en entrant. I am not that kind of a kicker gentleman.

"M. Chapleau--You bet your life.

"Sir John Thompson--Je m'aperçois que M. Chapleau n'est pas appuyé par ses collègues de Québec, qui font preuve, dans cette circonstance, d'une grande sagesse et d'un grand sens politique.

"M. Chapleau se mit à caresser sa moustache et ne dit rien."⁹⁷

A month later Chapleau was gracefully able to escape his wretched

⁹⁷La Patrie, mercredi le 10 mai 1893, (as cited in Le Canada).

position of isolation from both his English-speaking and French-speaking cabinet colleagues. On November 25th, an ailing Abbott sent Governor-General Lord Stanley a cablegram from London England to announce his resignation as Prime Minister of Canada. The same day, the Governor-General called upon Sir John Thompson to form a cabinet. As a matter of courtesy, Thompson asked Chapleau to join his team, but the Quebec politician, without influence in government and assurance of a political settlement of the Manitoba School Question, abandoned by even his French Canadian colleagues and disillusioned with Thompson,⁹⁸ declined. He did however, gratefully grasp Thompson's offer of the Lieutenant-Governorship of Quebec.

Once Chapleau had recognized that he would be unable to overcome his impotence in 1892 within the federal government, he decided to retire for a short period. A brief sojourn at Spencer Wood would allow him to

⁹⁸ Joseph-Israël Tarte and Oscar McDonell both claimed that Chapleau was not in accord with Thompson. (La Patrie, mercredi le 4 janvier 1893; jeudi le 25 mai 1893 & jeudi le 5 octobre 1893.) Alfred DeCelles explained McDonell's thesis of Chapleau's withdrawal from politics at the federal level to Chapleau in this manner: "M. Chapleau s'était engagé, en son nom et en celui de ses collègues, à rendre justice aux catholiques du Manitoba. Mgr Taché a sa promesse. Ses collègues, les 2 sir John et Thompson ayant refusé de tenir leur parole, il s'en est allé." (Fonds Guin, DeCelles à Chapleau Ottawa le 14 mai 1893.) L. C. Clark asserted that there was no proof to indicate that Chapleau went to Spencer Wood in 1892 because of a difference of principle with Thompson over the Manitoba School Question. (Clark, A History of the Conservative Administrations, p. 543.) However, unlike Drs. Neatby and Saywell and Dr. Crunican, Dr. Clark overlooks Chapleau's public and private pronouncements on that subject. (H. Blair Neatby and John T. Saywell, "Chapleau and the Conservative party in Quebec", CHR, 37 (1956), 16-17; and P. E. Crunican, The Manitoba Schools Question and Canadian Federal Politics 1890-1896: A Study in Church-State relations, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1968, pp. 90-91.)

recuperate his power within Quebec and then return to Ottawa and force anglophone Conservatives to accept him as Quebec spokesman within the cabinet. An appointment to the Bench would have ended his political career and a seat in the Senate would have continued his muzzled position in Ottawa. Consequently, Chapleau was "willing even anxious to go to Spencer Wood...."⁹⁹ from where he would be able to assert his political will in Quebec. However, because he did not wish to injure the party which he later hoped to dominate, Chapleau waited patiently for a propitious moment to resign. Thompson's formation of a new government offered him that opportunity. In addition, the desire of many anglophones to see the Quebec Lieutenant-Governor, Auguste-Réal Angers, enter the federal ministry,¹⁰⁰ facilitated the Chapleau-Angers shuffle that saw Chapleau become Quebec Lieutenant-Governor and Angers a federal cabinet minister.

Chapleau's retreat to Spencer Wood in December 1892 represented a crushing personal defeat for the aspirant to Cartier's mantle as chef in French Canada. The rejection of Chapleau by English-speaking Conservatives undermined his political position. Ontario's veto of Chapleau's assumption of a key policy portfolio in the Abbott cabinet was due to his determination to ensure that "the minorities be accorded and guaranteed those rights, privileges and immunities without which the compact that

⁹⁹ PAC, Thompson Papers, R. S. White to Thompson, September 19, 1892.

¹⁰⁰ PAC, Thompson Papers, R. S. White to Thompson, Montreal, October 18, 1891.

is the basis of Confederation would never have been accepted...."¹⁰¹

More important still to anglophone Conservatives was Chapleau's continuous involvement in unsavoury scandals. Throughout his entire political career Chapleau was linked in one way or another with political wrongdoing. He was in the forefront of several major scandals that either destroyed or shook Conservative administrations to their very foundations. His defense of the federal government during the Pacific Scandal and the provincial Conservatives over the Tanneries Affair did not prevent Macdonald or Gédéon Ouimet from losing office. Chapleau's own Premiership of Quebec was rocked with improprieties connected with the establishment of the Crédit Foncier Franco-Canadien and the sale of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental railway. Less than ten years later at Ottawa he was implicated in the Printing Bureau Scandal. However, these matters were only the great affairs of a very turbulent career that was marked by numerous lesser intrigues. From the Smith and Ripley affair to the 1884 Quebec blackmail on the federal government, from the sale of the St.-Lin and St.-Eustache branch lines to the "\$3,880 job" of 1882, Chapleau wallowed in political mire. These were the episodes that had caused Macdonald to be vitriolic about Chapleau's person, Abbott to refuse to promote him and the anglophone Conservatives to shun him. These were the events that hampered Chapleau in his attempt to gain the confidence of the anglophone community.

¹⁰¹ Montreal Gazette, Thursday December 8, 1892. This quotation is taken from a letter of adieu, written by Chapleau to his electors of Terrebonne on December 6, 1892.

Those factors coupled with the jealousies he inspired within French Canada which anglophones exploited through the nomination of accommodating French Canadians to prominent posts in the government, made possible the refusal of French Canadian Conservatives to follow Chapleau to the end in his endeavour to secure for French Canadians their proper influence within the cabinet and their just rights in Manitoba. By 1892, an outcast and powerless, Chapleau decided to retire to Spencer Wood. Abbott's resignation in November provided the Minister of Customs with a propitious occasion to leave the federal scene with honour and to await a plea to return from the Conservative party which he still desired to dominate at the federal level in French Canada.

CHAPTER IX

A LIBERAL FLIRTATION

The period from December 1892 until June 1898 was one of great consequence for the Conservative party and Adolphe Chapleau. Chapleau's belief that the unresolved Manitoba School Question signified the breakdown of the understanding of mutual respect between the francophone and anglophone communities which Confederation embodied drove him to attempt to effect his old policy of conciliation between moderate Liberals and Conservatives. Attempts by Chapleau to promote that scheme whose purpose was to create a politically united Quebec in order to better obtain concessions for French Canadians from English-speaking Canadians had failed in the past. Again in his final effort to further French Canada's welfare, Chapleau's policy proved to be disastrous. Because of his naive trust in the Machiavellian Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal leader's clever lieutenant, Joseph-Israël Tarte, Chapleau caused the disruption of the Conservative party and the destruction of his own political career. Laurier and Tarte outflanked Chapleau and became the architects of a Liberal party in the LaFontaine-Baldwin tradition, a party based on an alliance between moderates in French and English-speaking Canada. This was the party to which Chapleautistes would gravitate after the death of their mentor.

Those tragic and lamentable events were not envisaged the day Adolphe Chapleau took the oath of office as Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Quebec. On that afternoon of December 7, 1892, when Chapleau

was handed his commission in the Governor General's office on Parliament Hill, efforts appeared to have been made by Sir John Thompson to begin to repair the dislocation of the Conservative party. The large sheet of parchment presented to Chapleau symbolized that desire for the document was artistically engrossed in French, the first such commission ever issued to a Lieutenant-Governor in that language.¹ In addition to that gesture of good will by his former English-speaking colleagues in the cabinet, Chapleau realized that he maintained a great deal of support within French Canada. In Montreal, on his way to the old capital of Quebec, Chapleau was dined and wined by his friends at the St. Lawrence Hall. Later, he attended a tea in his honour at Judge Wurtele's and a dinner at Sir Alexander Lacoste's.² On Monday, December 12th, he boarded the private railway car of Thomas George Shaughnessy, who became President of the C. P. R. in 1898, and proceeded on a triumphant passage by rail down to Quebec city. All along the route there were demonstrations of a most flattering nature in his favour. In the afternoon, Chapleau and his party arrived in Quebec. After greetings and pleasantries were exchanged with officials and ordinary citizens, Chapleau entered a carriage with his aide-de-camp, Major Sheppard and his Premier, Charles de Boucherville, for a drive to the Legislature. The new Lieutenant-Governor was escorted by a detachment of the Battery, preceded by a

¹La Minerve, vendredi 1e 9 décembre 1892; La Presse, vendredi 1e 9 décembre 1892; Montreal Gazette, Thursday December 8, 1892.

²Montreal Gazette, Monday December 12, 1892.

musical corps and followed by a procession of carriages filled with cabinet ministers, deputies, councillors and other notables. Upon his arrival at the Legislative Buildings, Chapleau, in stately fashion, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber. There, before an approving assembly of dignitaries, he solemnly mounted the throne.

In Quebec, most people believed that the role of Lieutenant-Governor suited Chapleau admirably. Despite his self-deprecating protest of "ma gaucherie naturelle et mon peu de savoir-faire....",³ Quebecers argued that he was "né là dedans" and that he enjoyed "tout ce respect d'étalage, cette tenue de convenance, ces galons, ce sabre, ce chapeau!"⁴ To Alfred DeCelles, his friend in the federal Parliamentary Library, Chapleau wrote: "Parole d'honneur, je me rappelle ces jolis vaudevilles où des reines d'occasion jettent aux quatre vents tous leurs oripeaux de parade pour 'se ballader tout à leur aise'--". Tongue in cheek, he lamented that "Moi qui déteste l'officiel et la parade, et je suis contraint à faire de la pose à coeur de jour. 'Passez ici, ne passez pas là, la coutume jusqu'à présent a été ainsi; mais Excellence, vous avez le droit de faire des précédents.... C'est à rager, et je ne puis pas rager; 'ça n'est pas porté.'" ⁵ However, Chapleau's true taste for ostentation was evident at the opening of the Legislative Session in

³PAC, Aberdeen Papers, Chapleau à Son Excellence, La Comtesse d'Aberdeen, Spencer Wood, le 22 janvier 1898.

⁴ASTR, Chapleau à DeCelles, Spencer Wood, le 23 janvier 1893.

⁵Ibid.

January 1893. The correspondent for La Minerve wrote that Quebec city had never experienced such an imposing and pompous display. "Nous nous serions cru à Westminster."⁶

From the outset of his stay at Spencer Wood, Chapleau confessed that he was "le plus heureux des mortels...." in his retirement⁷ and that Spencer Wood was "not so 'blue' as ... [he] had imagined it was."⁸ However, there were burdens the Lieutenant-Governor was forced to assume that Chapleau disliked. During the brief period that Sir John Thompson was Prime Minister of Canada, Chapleau attempted to lighten the heavy financial obligations imposed upon him. He claimed compensation for extra expenses incurred for the entertainment of distinguished visitors and naval officers who came to Quebec city. Since those expenditures resulted from "'international' courtesies to foreign or official personages coming from abroad", he believed payments should be made by the federal government.⁹ For over a year he requested exemption from custom duties on all articles consumed at Government House. Without a positive reply from Thompson to his four letters and innumerable private conversations on the subject, Chapleau insisted "que Sa Majesté, représentée dans

⁶La Minerve, lundi le 16 janvier 1893.

⁷ASTR, Chapleau à DeCelles, Spencer Wood, le 23 janvier 1893.

⁸PAC, Thompson Papers, Chapleau to Thompson, Spencer Wood, December 14, 1892.

⁹PAC, Thompson Papers, Chapleau to Thompson, Paris, August 2, 1893.

les divers gouvernements des provinces, doit avoir partout le même privilège de ne pas payer à elle-même les droits du fisc."¹⁰ To this exasperated demand written in French, a certain expression of the Lieutenant-Governor's anger, Thompson remained indifferent.

Despite the onerousness of some duties, there were other obligations of office that Chapleau performed willingly and graciously. In 1895, Chapleau bowed to a request of the Public Works commissioner to cede Chapleau island to a hunting and fishing club. The property, located in Lake Chapleau, had been acquired by the Lieutenant-Governor in 1882. The club was to be established to protect the wildlife of the locality and to build a model farm on the 280 acres of the island. The farm and the transportation of Montreal's élite to the region via le chemin du nord were designed to promote the colonization of the area.¹¹ Besides that worthwhile project, the donation of trophies for sporting events¹² and medallions for meritorious students¹³ were responsibilities of office that Chapleau enjoyed. Although Chapleau performed with dignity countless other official tasks such as visits to schools and hospitals and the unveiling of numerous statues, he never lost his sense of humour. For example, on July 1, 1895, Chapleau unveiled a statue of Paul

¹⁰ PAC, Thompson Papers, Chapleau à Thompson, Québec, le 24 mai 1894.

¹¹ La Presse, samedi le 28 septembre 1895.

¹² La Presse, samedi le 31 août 1895.

¹³ La Presse, mercredi le 16 janvier 1895.

de Chomedey de Maisonneuve in Montreal. When he returned to his seat of honour after pulling the cord to reveal Montreal's founder to a cheering crowd, Chapleau whispered to a reporter that that was the best piece of wire-pulling he had ever accomplished!¹⁴

On the occasion of those many public functions, Chapleau often spoke in a philosophic vein about the nature of man. Through the years, his faith on that subject had become firm. He had always been an orthodox Roman Catholic, but as the years went by, he had become absolutely convinced of the existence of a Personal Force behind the surface of life that could console and encourage him. From this transcendental force, man had received his nature.¹⁵ Human nature consisted in part of reason, but while that light of truth lodged in man would suffice in his research and studies, other aspects of human nature, prejudices and passions often prevented man from exercising his reason.¹⁶ Other qualities mixed in that aspect of man consisted of sentiments such as pride and weaknesses like laziness, indolence and an idea to put off until tomorrow what one could do today.¹⁷ The challenge faced by man was to overcome his faults because the glory of a man was not to be exempt, but to know

¹⁴Montreal Gazette, Tuesday July 2, 1895.

¹⁵La Presse, samedi le 29 juin 1895. Chapleau spoke at the Jubilee celebration of Lennoxville college June 27, 1895.

¹⁶J.-A. Chapleau, Du Droit International: Discours prononcé à l'université Laval, à Montréal, le 22 juin, 1886, Ottawa: 1888, p. 3.

¹⁷La Presse, mercredi le 13 mai 1896. Chapleau spoke at Mount St. Louis college in Montreal on May 12th.

how to triumph over obstacles.¹⁸ Curiosity, a law of nature and the condition of all progress and intelligence aided man to perform the tasks that he undertook.¹⁹ The seed for the tendency for universal order was also contained in man's nature.²⁰

Evidently, in Chapleau's mind, man was a very complex being. Because man was the incomprehensible union of matter and spirit,²¹ Chapleau opposed the conception very widespread at the end of the nineteenth century, of man as a machine. The key of that idea was involved in the notion of work. "Les écoles modernes d'économie politique, imprégnées d'athéisme, considèrent le travail comme la fin suprême de l'homme; l'homme, pour ces écoles n'est plus qu'une machine plus ou moins productive, et n'a de valeur que par sa force que les autres exploiteront...."²² Man, stripped down to matter alone, caused the life of the spirit to sleep and the goal of the creation no longer existed. The conception of man as king, the master of the world, the adoptive son of God and

¹⁸La Presse, jeudi le 6 juin 1895. Chapleau spoke at the inauguration of a monument erected in memory of Sir John A. Macdonald on Dominion Square in Montreal June 6, 1895.

¹⁹La Minerve, mercredi le 16 janvier 1895. Chapleau spoke at the Convent of Ville-Marie in Montreal January 15, 1895.

²⁰Chapleau, Du Droit International, p. 6.

²¹La Minerve, lundi le 9 février 1891. Chapleau spoke at Queen's University at Kingston January 22, 1891.

²²J.-A. Chapleau, Discours prononcé par l'Hon. J.-A. Chapleau au Banquet des Ouvriers à Ottawa le 18 octobre 1888, p. 12.

the inheritor of the kingdom of heaven was lost, and passions and instincts were all that was left to him. Chapleau wondered if those creators of a new civilization, men without belief and without God, were not retrograde! Chapleau contended that his notion of human nature allowed man to comprehend the everyday world instead of embarking on a fruitless search for utopias. This understanding of man also influenced Chapleau's views on society.

Chapleau was convinced that man was a social animal who formed social groups by voluntarily relinquishing some of his independence. Likeminded men, who wished the well-being of the species, consented to cede a part of their independence in the interest of the greater welfare of the social collectivity. The groups chose a leader to whom submission was promised and decided to accept and observe those laws that were reasonable and in the common interest. "Et sous l'autorité de ce chef, sous la sauvegarde et dans les limites de ces lois, le domaine de l'univers est livré à l'activité humaine comme champ d'opérations."²³

To guide society, Chapleau was convinced that there was an objective morality which was derived from God.²⁴ Contrary to the thought of some of his contemporaries, Chapleau was convinced that science revealed no truths that concerned the ultimate problems of humanity. In

²³La Presse, jeudi 1e 31 janvier 1895. Chapleau spoke to the cercle Ville-Marie January 30, 1895.

²⁴J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours sur la Papauté à l'occasion du départ des Zouaves Pontificaux pour Rome, en février 1868", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau. Sa biographie.... ed. L.-H. Taché, Montréal: Eusèbe Sénécal & Fils, 1887, pp. 15-17.

his actions, searches, inventions and deference to materialism, man "ne pourra jamais savoir le dernier mot de rien, dans l'ordre moral s'il ne s'inspire des principes que l'éternel Créateur ou Rédempteur a fait connaître au monde par ceux qu'il a choisis pour ses interprètes."²⁵ Man learned the notions of justice and truth through his own conscience²⁶ and revelation. Revelation which was interpreted for man by the Pope and the Church admitted neither deviation nor compromise.²⁷

Besides presenting these ideas at public functions, Chapleau undoubtedly introduced these aspects of his thought into conversations at reunions of le Cercle des X. This group of more than ten members, composed of the cream of Quebec city's society, met for social purposes to discuss topics of historical or Canadian literary interest. Each gathering was held alternately at each member's home at which time one gentleman would introduce a subject for general discussion. After views had been exchanged on the matter, the host would preside over a dinner. One of the Lieutenant-Governor's greatest pleasures was to host le Cercle des X. At Spencer Wood, Chapleau encouraged rather solemn

²⁵Chapleau, Du Droit International, p. 3.

²⁶La Presse, mercredi le 9 octobre 1895. Chapleau spoke at the official inauguration of a new building of the Laval University in Montreal on October 8, 1895.

²⁷Chapleau, "Discours sur la Papauté...", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, pp. 15-17; and J.-A. Chapleau, Léon XIII Homme d'Etat: discours prononcé le 11 janvier 1888 lors de la célébration du jubilé pontifical de Léon XIII à l'université Laval à Montréal, Montréal: 1888, p. 7.

and somewhat constrained meetings. True to his pompous, vain and pretentious character, Chapleau directed those sessions with the dignity of a pontiff.²⁸ However, such an attitude complemented Chapleau's idea of leadership. He believed in an élite which should guide others and set an example for the whole of society to follow.²⁹ Consequently, as Lieutenant-Governor, he reasoned that he had to maintain a sense of dignity, even at an intimate reunion of acquaintances.

To aid him in fulfilling that onerous role of leadership, Chapleau was helped by his wife. Despite the fact that she was shy and nervous, Mary Chapleau's grace and charm won her the respect of all Quebec society. Although an anglophone, she spoke French very well and loved the company of French Canadians, particularly after her education at the Ursuline convent in Quebec.³¹ Chapleau was extremely proud of his wife and sometimes used his marriage as a symbol of Canada. Upon his return from Europe in 1889, he expressed his belief that his marriage demonstrated "qu'en Canada les deux nations réunies pouvaient, quand elles le voulaient constituer une communauté tout à fait habitable."³²

²⁸La Patrie, samedi le 29 mars 1902. A former member of le Cercle des X, Judge F.-A. Lemieux, talked about Chapleau and le Cercle des X in a speech at Laval University in Quebec city.

²⁹Chapleau, Léon XIII Homme d'Etat, pp. 4-5.

³⁰John T. Saywell, ed., The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen 1893-1898, Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960, p. 70.

³¹La Minerve, vendredi le 9 décembre 1892.

³²J.-A. Chapleau, Retour d'Europe. Demonstration enthousiaste.

However, while Lady Chapleau aided her husband to fulfil the dignified side of his role, she remained discreetly in the background while he performed his numerous political tasks.

In spite of early indications for the possible resolution of the difficulties that had forced Chapleau from Ottawa, those illusions were dashed within days of Chapleau's assumption of his new office. One such political problem which boded ill for Chapleau's leadership pretensions within the Conservative party was the Lieutenant-Governor's encounter upon his arrival at Spencer Wood of the resignation of his Premier, Charles de Boucherville. Such precipitous action on the part of de Boucherville underlined the fact that Chapleau had been unable to unite the Quebec Conservative party behind his leadership in the past and indicated that he might not be able to consolidate his position in the party in Quebec in the future. When Mercier was removed from office by A.-R. Angers in December 1891, de Boucherville apparently agreed to accept the Premiership on the understanding that Chapleau would not succeed Angers as Lieutenant-Governor of the province.³³ Chapleau suggested that de Boucherville's action was based on self-pride.³⁴ Angers denied that de Boucherville's decision was a question of pride or rancour,

Adresse de bienvenue. Discours en réponse. Avant tout soyons Canadiens! Notre Position. Nos Devoirs, Montréal: le 24 avril 1889, p. 17.

³³PAC, Thompson Papers, [no signature] to Thompson, December 2, 1892.

³⁴PAC, Thompson Papers, Chapleau to Thompson, Spencer Wood, December 14, 1892.

but rather "one of want of confidence."³⁵ Masson claimed Chapleau's attempts to try to prevent de Boucherville from being called to form an administration in 1891 forced the Premier's resignation.³⁶ Clearly, de Boucherville's decision was based on personal feelings of dislike for a fellow Conservative with whom he had quarrelled in the past.³⁷ Such bitterness among Conservatives provided an evil portent for a party that was encountering a decisive decade. With some difficulty, Chapleau managed to find a replacement, L.-O. Taillon, who united Castor and Chapleautiste in an uneasy alliance as de Boucherville had done.

Although Chapleau emerged from that ticklish provincial problem with a solution, he was unable to obtain similar results with the more critical question that rocked the Conservative party and shook Confederation. Even as Lieutenant-Governor, Chapleau could not, nor would he allow himself, to evade the thorny Manitoba School issue. In 1893, his involvement in that matter stemmed directly from his membership in a sub-committee of the Privy Council that had been appointed two months before he left federal politics. The sub-committee's task had been to consider an appeal for the redress of grievances of the Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba. Before the sub-committee could advise cabinet,

³⁵PAC, Thompson Papers, Angers to Thompson, Quebec, October 20, 1892.

³⁶PAC, Thompson Papers, Masson to Thompson, Terrebonne, December 5, 1892.

³⁷Montreal Gazette, Saturday December 3, 1892.

Chapleau had left the Ministry. However, because of the importance of the decision which he wished to obtain quickly, the new Prime Minister, Sir John Thompson, sent Chapleau the completed report in December of 1892 and asked him to sign it. Chapleau refused.

Chapleau discovered to his horror that the sub-committee had decided to evade political responsibility and had treated the question as a judicial problem. The cabinet document appeared to close the door to all subsequent vindication of the minority's position if the courts should dismiss the legal pretensions of the petitioners. Thus, Chapleau proposed some slight amendments to the report which would safeguard the right to a political settlement, if required, in the future.³⁸ In reply, Sir John Thompson claimed that Chapleau's attitude could only delay a resolution of the affair and serve as a pretext for recrimination on the part of some federal Conservatives who were already ill-disposed. Chapleau persisted in his course. He reiterated his particularly delicate position in the dispute to Thompson.

I was allowed by Sir John A. Macdonald to make known to certain parties his views upon that question as he made them known himself to other parties. I was allowed to pledge myself to a certain course of action, consistent with his own views. I have made declarations to that effect, and I must say that my declarations were too much in accordance with my deep-rooted convictions, and an equally deep sense of justice and tolerance, to allow them to be branded today as mere political devices, or election promises. I feel that I would be missing to my duty if I were to sign any document which

³⁸ PAC, Thompson Papers, Chapleau to Thompson, Montreal, December 22, 1892.

would in any way affect my freedom of action in that great and delicate question.³⁹

He stated categorically that he "would not consent to shelter the final responsibility of the Council behind a mere judicial interpretation of a statute. The different Acts that have built Confederation are in the nature of Treaties the execution of which rests with those that made them. The fourth paragraph of the ninety-third Section of the British North America Act plainly shows it."⁴⁰ Because of Chapleau's insistence, Thompson did accept Chapleau's amendment in order to save the Lieutenant-Governor from the veiled reproach of obstructing the action of the federal government.⁴¹ However, Thompson's reluctance to accept Chapleau's minimum demands denoted a lack of generosity by English-speaking Canadians towards French Canada in 1893.

The Thompson-Chapleau disagreement and the de Boucherville resignation indicated that the tensions between English and French-speaking Conservatives and the division between the Castors and Chapleautistes were deep and that their presence continued to revolve about Chapleau.

³⁹ PAC, Thompson Papers, Chapleau to Thompson, Sherbrooke, December 29, 1892.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ La Presse, jeudi le 24 février 1898. Chapleau wrote an open letter to an ex-Member of Parliament in which he discussed his actions in 1893 concerning the sub-committee report. For the English version of the letter see Montreal Gazette, Friday February 25, 1898. The amended report read that the application of the petitioners "was not to be dealt with at this moment as a matter of political character...." The underlined section consisted of Chapleau's amendment to the original text.

Joseph-Israel Tarte, who became a Liberal officially in 1893, observed Conservative difficulties and Chapleau's symbolic significance. To further the Liberal party cause, the former Conservative began a campaign to create the impression that the Church had been duped by the Conservatives, that the Lieutenant-Governor had been rejected by the Conservative party and that Chapleau sympathized with Laurier. Tarte was convinced his tactic of defamation would undermine the influential French Canadian politician, his party and the Church in one blow. Chapleau, who never underestimated Tarte's political acumen, confessed to a friend after Tarte's election as a Liberal in L'Islet on January 7, 1893 that if he were Caron, "je sais bien ce que j'aurais fait pour ne pas permettre à cet homme-là d'entrer au Parlement."⁴² However, Chapleau was not Caron and the Lieutenant-Governor's absence from the country in 1893, between March 22nd and August 29th, while he underwent yet another operation in Paris, allowed Tarte to develop his thesis without a great deal of opposition.

In order to detach Chapleau from the Conservative party, Tarte laid bare his views on the Manitoba School Question in a speech before the House of Commons on March 6, 1893. In his oration Tarte implied that Archbishop Taché, through his silence before the 1891 federal general election, had sacrificed the Roman Catholic Schools of Manitoba in order to save the Macdonald government from defeat.⁴³ Second, Tarte

⁴²ASJCF, Chapleau à Desjardins, Québec, le 14 janvier 1893.

⁴³Canada, House of Commons, Debates, (Tarte) March 6, 1893, pp. 1757, 1758 & 1769.

asserted that Chapleau, on behalf of the administration of which he was a member, had gone to visit Archbishop Taché and solemnly had promised that "the Government admitted fully and formally the right of the Catholic minority to remedial legislation should not the judicial proceedings then pending be decided according to the views of the minority."⁴⁴ By May, Oscar McDonnell of Le Canada had adopted Tarte's thesis and embodied it in a series of articles.⁴⁵

Because of the wide publicity Tarte's charges received, Archbishop Taché replied to him in an open letter. The ecclesiastical leader denied that there had been any negotiations whatever between himself and the Macdonald government. In unequivocal terms he stated that "Ni Chapleau, ni qui que ce soit n'est entré en négociations avec moi, au nom du gouvernement fédéral, au sujet des écoles de Manitoba; et veuillez bien le remarquer, mon affirmation est explicite."⁴⁶ Taché also denied McDonnell's accusations in Le Canada that the Bishops had intended to publish a pastoral letter to support only those candidates who favoured disallowance of the Manitoba School legislation. However, according to McDonnell, Chapleau had dissuaded him from such action by his famous promise.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 1760-1761.

⁴⁵La Patrie, jeudi le 4 mai 1893, (as cited from Le Canada).

⁴⁶La Minerve, samedi le 1er juillet 1893 & samedi le 8 juillet 1893.

⁴⁷Montreal Gazette, Wednesday July 19, 1893.

By the time Tarte began to tour the picnic circuit in August, he neglected the Archbishop whose image was well tarnished and concentrated upon Conservative negligence and Chapleau's apparent sympathy for Laurier. At Ste -Scholastique, Tarte explained how Chapleau had been chased from the government because of his call for justice for the franco-phone minority in Manitoba. Thus, Quebec voters had the choice between Laurier on the one hand, and on the other, J.-A. Ouimet who had betrayed the enlightened Lieutenant-Governor in 1891.⁴⁸ At Côteau Station the next month, Tarte lamented that "le parti conservateur aujourd'hui n'est plus tel que M. Chapleau le comprenait et le VOULAIT."⁴⁹ With much emotion Tarte blurted out that he knew "une heure où M. Chapleau était disposé à faire ce que j'ai fait. Mais, malheureusement, il a reculé...."⁵⁰

Tarte's comments about Chapleau received the aura of credibility because of the actions of the Lieutenant-Governor himself. Although Chapleau did not wish to offer Tarte verification of his statement about Chapleau's thoughts on the Conservative party, the Lieutenant-Governor's attempt to gain the sympathy of moderate Liberals appeared to substantiate Tarte's revelations. Chapleau's courtship and reconciliation with Honoré Mercier in an effort to build a united Quebec based on Chapleau's old policy of conciliation and under his leadership immediately followed the

⁴⁸La Patrie, mardi le 8 août 1893.

⁴⁹La Patrie, lundi le 13 novembre 1893.

⁵⁰Ibid.

Lieutenant-Governor's return from his convalescence in Europe. On October 27th at ceremonies to inaugurate a new section of the Montreal and Occidental Railway from Saint-Agathe to La Chute aux Iroquois, the Lieutenant-Governor praised Mercier. Chapleau eulogized Mercier's efforts towards the realization of the line. The Liberal journal, L'Electeur, claimed Chapleau went on to say that Mercier "a peut-être fait plus que tous nous autres pour l'avancement de cette belle contrée et pour la belle voie ferrée qui sillonne aujourd'hui les belles montagnes et les fertiles vallées du Nord."⁵¹

Those words of gratitude in praise of Mercier's efforts to encourage the economic development of Quebec paved the way for the pathetic personal encounter between Chapleau and Mercier the following year. Upon hearing that Mercier's death was expected shortly, Chapleau requested a meeting with him. The dying politician welcomed the reunion. Consequently, on Monday, September 24, 1894, the Lieutenant-Governor, accompanied by Arthur Dansereau, called at Mercier's Montreal residence. Upon entering his host's bedroom, Chapleau walked directly over to the large armchair where the ill Mercier was resting and shook the Liberal politician's hands with effusion. Filled with emotion, the Lieutenant-Governor searched in vain for words. After a moment of silence, he greeted his political rival in a voice choked with tears and expressed the wish to see Mercier recover his strength. Mercier thanked Chapleau for his sympathetic concern but said he accepted and awaited death

⁵¹La Minerve, vendredi le 24 novembre 1893. See also Fonds Gouin, DeCelles à Chapleau, Ottawa, le 20 février 1895.

without fear. The Lieutenant-Governor, worried he was tiring the patient, prepared to leave. Mercier, however, begged him to stay. Chapleau consented graciously. For about twenty minutes the two adversaries talked about political events of the past. When they turned to discuss the future, Mercier began to cry openly. Both Chapleau and Dansereau were so overcome with emotion that tears began to flow from their eyes too. At the moment of departure, the Lieutenant-Governor and the former Premier embraced. "Nous avons, a dit M. Chapleau, fait bien des luttes; nous nous sommes portés mutuellement des coups bien rudes et parfois bien injustes. Mais, si j'ai frappé aussi fort que toi, tu as été moins injuste à mon égard que je l'ai été pour toi. Avant de te voir mourir, j'ai voulu venir te demander pardon!" Upon hearing those sentiments, Mercier could not control his feelings. Words failed him. With calmness, Chapleau then took the feeble hand of his former adversary and pressed it in his as he softly uttered "Adieu!"⁵²

Although the reconciliation between Chapleau and Mercier did not further Chapleau's aim of obtaining a position of dominance in Quebec through the leadership of all moderate politicians, the Mercier-Chapleau embrace encouraged Israël Tarte who had deserted the Conservatives in 1891, to bring Chapleau into the Liberal fold. In the early months of 1895, Tarte burst forth with more public pronouncements which were intended to further his goal. At the Parc Sohmer in the presence of Laurier, he declared that the Liberal party now expressed the LaFontaine-Baldwin

⁵²La Presse, mardi le 25 septembre 1894. Mercier died October 30, 1894.

tradition of an alliance between francophone and anglophone within a political party for common goals. He explained that "Un changement se fait dans le peuple; il y a un temps où le chef des libéraux à Ottawa a attaqué le peuple de Québec et la discorde s'en est suivie mais maintenant l'union est rendue, l'alliance Baldwin-Lafontaine [sic] est renouvelée, et j'espère que l'homme éminent que nous avons devant nous va être à la tête du gouvernement ayant toute la province derrière lui."⁵³ Without any evidence, he asserted that "Chapleau serait avec nous s'il le pouvait et que son coeur est avec nous."⁵⁴ Chapleau's only defense against such affirmations was through the press. The Montreal Gazette rose to the occasion. Richard White termed Tarte's claims cowardly because the Member of Parliament knew Chapleau occupied a position that removed him from the pale of party politics and sealed his lips upon issues that divided the electorate. Chapleau's "whole political life, as his present opinions, are the best contradiction to the assertions of Mr. Tarte, made in the hope of propping up a weak cause with a popular and honored name."⁵⁵ Because of the Gazette's rebuttal, Tarte was forced to qualify his remarks substantially. In La Patrie he admitted that his comments about Chapleau's relationship with Laurier represented a wish rather than reality. "Depuis plusieurs années, j'ai caressé l'espérance

⁵³La Patrie, mardi 19 février 1895.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Montreal Gazette, Monday February 25, 1895.

de voir M. Chapleau et M. Laurier marcher ensemble. Cet espoir ne s'est point réalisé. Je le regrette vivement, car ils sont tous deux des hommes de haute valeur et ils possèdent un grand prestige."⁵⁶

Tarte's remarks near the end of February of 1895 about the Chapleau-Laurier relationship were possibly encouraged by speculation about the unsuccessful attempts made by Bowell, the new Canadian Prime Minister who had assumed office upon Thompson's death December 12, 1894, to attract Chapleau back into federal politics.⁵⁷ Chapleau indicated that he was willing to return to active politics if the Conservatives granted justice to the Manitoba francophone minority.⁵⁸ In addition, he desired the unity of Quebec Conservatives under his leadership.⁵⁹ Apparently confident Bowell would aid the Manitoba minority and confident of his own power in Quebec, Chapleau, after a rest in Atlantic City in the United States during most of April, returned to Canada to pursue a heavy schedule of official functions that would keep him in public view in anticipation of a return to Ottawa. In June and July, he concentrated his energies upon Quebec. In August, he moved into Ontario and the next month, the Lieutenant-Governor and his wife made a return trip to Victoria over the Canadian Pacific railway. In the autumn, the

⁵⁶ La Patrie, vendredi le 8 mars 1895.

⁵⁷ La Patrie, lundi le 4 février 1895 & La Presse, mercredi le 6 février 1895.

⁵⁸ Fonds Gouin, DeCelles à Chapleau, Ottawa, le 24 janvier 1895.

⁵⁹ Fonds Gouin, DeCelles à Chapleau, Ottawa, le 20 février 1895.

Liberal press did not fail to comment upon Chapleau's rigorous pace. With considerable bias, La Patrie noted:

Il a bien un peu préparé son retour depuis quelque temps; on l'a vu promener sa chevelure argentée et sa vibrante éloquence dans tous les séminaires, dans la paix mystique des vieux couvents et jusques en l'ombre des instituts judaïques; on l'a vu, missionnaire improvisé, aller rappeler lui-même son nom et son souvenir déjà légèrement poudreux et porter des paroles de consolations et d'espoir, là-bas, dans les Prairies, plus loin même, dans le mélancolisant Septentrion; on l'a vu faire une cour frénétique à certaines castes, certaines gens et certaines choses; on l'a vu, pèlerin recueilli et discret, s'acheminer tantôt vers la grotte fédérale, tantôt vers le Windsor, tantôt vers le sanctuaire de Winnipeg pour y prier Mackenzie Bowell, le thaumaturge de la politique canadienne.⁶⁰

During his summer of exposure at ceremonial functions, Lieutenant-Governor Chapleau did not hesitate to refer to the erosion of liberty by the provincial government of Manitoba. As a representative of the Crown, Chapleau had no judgement "à porter sur les méthodes que les partis politiques qui se disputent le pouvoir pouvaient prendre pour protéger, en même temps, la bonne éducation et la liberté sacrée de la conscience, mais que le droit du père de famille chrétien à l'enseignement chrétien de ses enfants, suivant les croyances religieuses dans lesquelles il les avait élevés, était un droit imprescriptible, et que la violation de ce droit était une iniquité morale, en même temps qu'une grande faute politique."⁶¹ Because a moral issue was at stake, Chapleau did not feel

⁶⁰ La Patrie, lundi le 11 novembre 1895.

⁶¹ La Presse, mercredi le 2 octobre 1895. An interview with Chapleau was printed in La Presse after Chapleau's return from western Canada.

obliged to remain silent. He stressed that "Ce n'est ni par fantaisie, ni par caprice, ni par orgueil, que la minorité catholique du Manitoba demande la religion et la liberté de religion dans ses écoles; c'est la revendication spontanée, juste et, en dernier ressort, irrésistible du plus beau principe du christianisme; l'inviolabilité de la conscience humaine."⁶²

Earlier in the year at Trois-Rivières, Chapleau had spoken of the Canadian nationality that the inhabitants of British North America were called upon to establish.

Oui, nous pouvons dire que cette nation formée de couleurs différentes, d'instincts différents, de coutumes différentes, s'en va charroyant le progrès et la foi dans le monde, comme un seul et grand peuple, le peuple canadien.

But, the Lieutenant-Governor had reminded his audience that a quality necessary to make a nation strong and powerful, "c'est la liberté, mais la liberté pour tous et la liberté partout; liberté dans la province de Québec, liberté dans la province d'Ontario et liberté dans le Manitoba." In particular, Chapleau had emphasized liberty of conscience and of education. Consequently,

En quelle partie du pays que ce soit et sous quelle forme que cela se pratique, si l'une des parties intégrantes de la confédération veut enlever à l'autre l'une de ses plus chères libertés, on peut répéter sans faire de politique et ne pas craindre de répéter ce que je disais quelques jours avant d'être nommé au poste important que j'occupe aujourd'hui: qu'il valait autant mettre la question de la confédération de côté et perdre à jamais notre constitution et y renoncer que de vouloir dire qu'une partie du pays pourra asservir

⁶² Ibid.

l'autre dans ses croyances religieuses et sa liberté d'enseignement.⁶³

Despite the difficulties in Manitoba which were merely a symptom of the uneasiness of the partnership of equality between the anglophone and francophone communities in Canada, Chapleau remained optimistic. He was convinced that "Malgré certains souffles d'impatience qui, comme ces gaz dangereux des marais, s'élevaient parfois sur ce continent contre le contact français, je ne perds pas l'espoir qu'un jour l'harmonie la plus complète règnera parmi tous les citoyens du Canada."⁶⁴ However, Chapleau was also realistic. He recognized, like DeCelles, that more French Canadians would have to go to the West if their rights were to be maintained in that area of the country. In March of 1895, Alfred DeCelles had informed Chapleau that "Il me semble que nos gens de là-bas n'obtiendront justice que lorsqu'ils seront assez nombreux, assez unis pour faire sentir leur influence là-bas dans les élections locales, à moins que Laurier arrivant au pouvoir n'obtienne des concessions de Greenway, à titre gracieux."⁶⁵ Consequently, it was not surprising that upon his arrival from the West in October of that year, Chapleau should attempt to encourage francophone immigration in that direction and praise the efforts of governments and the Catholic Church to hasten the arrival in

⁶³La Presse, lundi le 24 juin 1895.

⁶⁴La Presse, samedi le 29 juin 1895. Chapleau spoke at the jubilee celebrations of the college of Lennoxville on June 27th.

⁶⁵Ponds Gouin, DeCelles à Chapleau, Ottawa, le 20 mars 1895.

Manitoba, the North West Territories, and British Columbia "d'une immigration plus nombreuse et aussi saine que celle qui y est déjà."⁶⁶ With a greater French Canadian presence in the West, Chapleau realized that francophone rights would be respected.

In addition to his concern for the minority in Manitoba, Chapleau's summer of activity was also designed to promote his dominance in Quebec. His frankness with respect to the Manitoba School Question and his popularity with the population were bound to increase his prestige within the Conservative party in Quebec. However, no real test of his strength occurred in Quebec because by the end of 1895, Chapleau became aware that anglophones were not yet willing to grant French Canada justice. When the Lieutenant-Governor returned from his trans-Canadian rail voyage, speculation about his possible entry into the Bowell government began to mount. A Quebec minister was required to fill the vacancy created by the departure of Auguste-Réal Angers in July. He had left the cabinet when it had become obvious that Bowell did not intend to introduce a remedial bill during 1895. Despite that apparent rejection of French Canada's wishes in the summer, by autumn the climate of opinion appeared to be changing. The Conservative Toronto World called upon Chapleau to save the party in Quebec. In a spirit of generosity, La Presse claimed the World editor admitted that "M. Chapleau sait ce que Québec devrait concéder et où Ontario doit se montrer généreux."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ La Presse, mercredi le 2 octobre 1895. Chapleau was interviewed by La Presse.

⁶⁷ La Presse, jeudi le 31 octobre 1895.

The Mail and Empire and the Hamilton Spectator also extolled Chapleau's virtues. However, other journals, such as the Kingston News could not forgive the Lieutenant-Governor for his tenuous connection with the Printing Bureau scandal of 1891.⁶⁸ In that atmosphere of conflicting anglophone views and uncertain Quebec support, Chapleau spent several hours in conversation with John Haggart and J.-A. Ouimet at the Windsor Hotel in Montreal. Because agreement could not be reached on several unspecified points, the Lieutenant-Governor declined Bowell's invitation, transmitted via Haggart, to join the government.⁶⁹

After the failure of Bowell and Chapleau to reach an entente by the end of 1895, the Chapleautistes cried out in sorrow. Alfred DeCelles' earlier affirmation that "l'heure de la rupture est arrivée, irrévocablement...."⁷⁰ obtained support from other Chapleautistes. The defeat of Sir William Hales Hingston by the Liberal, James McShane, in the Montreal-Centre by-election appeared to confirm DeCelles' sentiment. Hingston was an Irish Catholic and had been mayor of Montreal at the time of the Guibord affair. Although he was surgeon of the "Victoria School" --the darling of the Jesuits and ultramontane Bishops of the province--

⁶⁸La Patrie, mercredi le 13 novembre 1895.

⁶⁹La Patrie, vendredi le 29 novembre 1895 & La Presse, vendredi le 29 novembre 1895.

⁷⁰Fonds Gouin, DeCelles à Chapleau, [?] juillet 1895.

he was nevertheless "conservateur sans fanatisme".⁷¹ McShane had been a member of Mercier's government and also a former mayor of Montreal. According to La Presse, McShane's victory signified that even the English-speaking protestant commercial class had turned against the Bowell administration. That realization spurred Arthur Dansereau to lament the existence of the two sources of Chapleau's political weakness. In La Presse Dansereau mourned that "l'ancienne unité du parti libéral-conservateur, fondée par Cartier et Macdonald, n'existe plus. Les 'Castors' lui ont fait une première fêlure; les protestants intransigeants, ces 'Castors' anglais ont fait l'autre; le temps n'a pas fait de soudure, et la fissure s'est toujours élargie."⁷²

The confusion that reigned within the Conservative party, in particular, the tumult caused by Bowell's inability to find a replacement for Angers and the Prime Minister's determination to press remedial legislation through Parliament, almost toppled the shaky Conservative government and did eventually lead to a change of leadership. Such events were precipitated by the resignation of seven Ministers--George Foster, Charles Hibbert Tupper, Arthur Dicky, W. B. Ives, John Wood, John Haggart, and W. H. Montague--within twenty-four hours of the opening of Parliament on January 2, 1896. Despite Charles Hibbert Tupper's affirmations to the contrary, Lady Aberdeen believed that the retiring ministers

⁷¹Robert Rumilly, Histoire de Montréal, Montréal: Fides, [1972], III, 61.

⁷²La Presse, samedi le 28 décembre 1895.

who desired to replace Bowell by Sir Charles Tupper, intended to drop remedial legislation.⁷³ Chapleau accepted that version of events. He supported Mackenzie Bowell, but he refused to enter the cabinet.⁷⁴ In the end, Bowell's determination to hold power, his ability to attract Alphonse Desjardins into the cabinet, and his willingness to allow Sir Charles Tupper to assume the Premiership once the session was over, resolved the conflict.⁷⁵

Chapleau continued to remain aloof from the Ottawa scene partly because he was not convinced that the Conservative anglophones were firmly persuaded of the necessity for remedial legislation, of the need to grant justice to Franco-Manitobans. In a letter to the new Minister of Defense and Militia, Alphonse Desjardins, Chapleau admitted that the Remedial Bill, to be introduced the following day, did not lack clarity with respect to the intentions of the government. However, he pointed to one major weakness. No provision was made for the bill's implementation "au cas prévu et certain de refus de la part du Gouvernement de Manitoba...."⁷⁶ The Lieutenant-Governor wondered if that omission had been dictated by the Conservatives from Ontario. Chapleau advised that

⁷³Saywell, ed., The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, pp. 306-307 & 301.

⁷⁴La Minerve, jeudi le 9 janvier 1896.

⁷⁵La Patrie, mercredi le 8 janvier 1896.

⁷⁶ASJCF, Desjardins Papers, Chapleau à Desjardins, Québec, le 10 février 1896.

Si vous êtes sûrs de leur loyauté à donner main-forte à l'acte de justice réparatrice que votre loi prescrit, très bien!; si vous avez raison de croire que votre législation ne leur impose qu'une trêve jusqu'aux élections, avec le droit de recommencer les hostilités après la session ou après les élections, alors vous n'avez qu'à répéter le mot de Napoléon à Metternich: 'Des traités comme ceux-là, ne sont bon qu'à déchirer.' Si 'l'intérêt est la mesure des actions' vos amis d'Ontario seront solides; s'ils mettent leurs préjugés avant notre alliance, vous serez les dupes.⁷⁷

Because Chapleau suspected that the interests of the anglophones might not dominate their prejudices, he explained that "je suis dans la Réserve, et je vous verrai triompher de loin. Je confesse être un peu comme les Marseillais de Déroulède.

"Montrons-nous de loin, comme l'Espérance,
"Et pour rester forts...., gardons-nous vivants!"⁷⁸

Because Chapleau had the inside track "où l'on voulait mener la question des écoles...." and because he feared "comme d'habitude, ce soient les moins honnêtes qui soient les plus adroits...."⁷⁹ the Lieutenant-Governor was reluctant to promise Sir Charles Tupper that he would enter the ministry Tupper was to form after the 1896 spring session. In an interview with Tupper in February, Chapleau told the dauphin of the

⁷⁷ Ibid. This letter was not sent by Chapleau to advise Desjardins about entry into Bowell's cabinet as is suggested by P. E. Crunican, because Desjardins was already a Minister when Chapleau wrote the letter. See P. E. Crunican, The Manitoba School Question and Canadian Federal Politics, 1890-1896: A Study in Church-State relations, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1968, p. 344.

⁷⁸ ASJCF, Desjardins Papers, Chapleau à Desjardins, Québec, le 10 février 1896.

⁷⁹ ASTR, Chapleau à DeCelles, Québec, le 26 février 1896.

Conservative party that Tupper was the victim of an illusion and that his Remedial Bill would certainly flounder. However, Chapleau later revealed that he had promised that if the measure passed, he would join Tupper and "would make a supreme effort to gain for him in the province of Quebec a contingent which would compensate the losses which the success of the bill would cause him elsewhere."⁸⁰ After that conversation with Tupper, a La Presse reporter asked Chapleau if there was any truth to the rumour "que vous seriez sur le point d'entrer de nouveau dans l'arène?" With his usual quick wit Chapleau shot back! "Dans l'arène? Mais je suis moi-même 'La Reine' de Québec."⁸¹

Within two months of his talks with Tupper, Chapleau was asked by the old Nova Scotian Conservative to fulfil his promise. By April 27th, the Remedial Bill had been shelved, Parliament had been dissolved, Bowell had resigned and Tupper had begun to attempt to form a government. The new Prime Minister sent Chapleau, who was convalescing in Atlantic City, a telegram to ask for his support.⁸² He also dispatched two personal envoys, G.-A. Nantel and J.-G.-H. Bergeron to reinforce his request.⁸³

⁸⁰ Montreal Gazette, Friday February 25, 1898. An open letter Chapleau had written an ex-Member of Parliament and dated February 18, 1898, was translated and published by the Gazette.

⁸¹ La Presse, lundi le 2 mars 1896.

⁸² PAC, Tupper Papers, Tupper to Chapleau, [Ottawa], April 28, 1896 [telegram].

⁸³ La Minerve, mercredi le 29 avril 1896; La Presse, jeudi le 30 avril 1896; & La Patrie, lundi le 27 avril 1896.

In addition, Bishop Laflèche of Trois-Rivières and Archbishop Adélard Langevin of St -Boniface seconded Tupper's request with letters.⁸⁴ These gestures proved ineffective for, in terse language, the Lieutenant-Governor replied to Tupper that "The grave reasons which induced me to quit active political life are still sufficient to keep me away from it now."⁸⁵ One of those reasons was Chapleau's delicate health--bronchitis and "une névralgie enragée qui me fait, dans la tête, un charivari que je ne souhaite pas à mon plus grand ennemi."⁸⁶

Besides his poor health, Chapleautistes claimed there were two main reasons for Chapleau's refusal to join Tupper in Ottawa. First, Chapleau suspected that the majority of anglophone Conservatives no longer desired the partnership with francophones that had been the strength of the Liberal-Conservative party. That factor was evident from the fact that the condition which Chapleau had named for his entry into the Ministry, the passage of the Remedial Bill, had not been fulfilled.⁸⁷ The Lieutenant-Governor stressed that point when he confided to Mackenzie Bowell:

⁸⁴AASB, Langevin Collection, Chapleau to Langevin, [telegram] Atlantic City, May 1, 1896 & ASTR, Chapleau à Laflèche, Montréal, le 6 mai 1896.

⁸⁵PAC, Tupper Papers, Chapleau to Tupper, [telegram] Atlantic City, N. J., April 29, 1896.

⁸⁶ASTR, Chapleau à de La Bruère, Atlantic City, le 29 avril 1896.

⁸⁷Montreal Gazette, Friday February 25, 1898. Chapleau stated this reason in his open letter to an ex-Member of Parliament.

You must not have been so surprised as others pretend to have been, at my refusing to enter the new administration. You knew as those others did, that the passing of the Remedial Bill was a sine qua non condition of my reentering the federal Cabinet, and the dark conspiracy which prevented you from passing that measure, was alone sufficient to deter me from joining the conspirators, even if my health had allowed me to enter the field.⁸⁸

In a letter to Arthur Dansereau, Chapleau claimed he had informed Tupper in April that his deception of 1887 and 1891 and "les trahisons qui s'ourdissaient en ce moment, dans le sein même du cabinet...." prevented him from assuring Tupper of his support after the session.⁸⁹

Second, Chapleau realized that Quebec Conservatives were not all united behind him. The Liberal press claimed that since Tupper refused to grant him complete control of French Canada in the style of Cartier and to term the administration the Tupper-Chapleau Ministry to signify

⁸⁸ PAC, Bowell Papers, Chapleau to Bowell, Spencer Wood, May 9, 1896.

⁸⁹ Fonds Dansereau, Chapleau à Dansereau, le 18 avril 1896 as quoted in Crunican, The Manitoba School Question, p. 494. Lovell Clark's comments concerning the Manitoba School Question and Remedial Legislation are perceptive. Clark notes with respect to Chapleau's private pledge to Archbishop Taché: "Chapleau construed the pledge, which he made when a Cabinet Minister, to mean that he could not 'in honour' re-enter the Cabinet in 1896; but it seems clear, on the face of it, that the pledge could equally well make it incumbent upon him 'in honour' to enter and support an Administration which had committed itself to remedial legislation. His interpretation of the pledge thus appears to be conveniently elastic. It must be stated in Chapleau's defense, however, that there remains the other possibility, to which he alluded, that he so questioned the sincerity of certain members of the Cabinet as to regard the promise of remedial legislation as valueless. In that event, this should have been the ground of his refusal rather than the one he gave." (Lovell C. Clark, A History of the Conservative Administrations, 1891 to 1896, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1968, pp. 492-493.)

his status,⁹⁰ Chapleau knew his position would always be precarious. However, that assertion was contradicted by Hector Fabre, Canada's representative in Paris and a personal friend of Chapleau, who stated in the newspaper Paris-Canada that "sir Charles a voulu ... partager le pouvoir avec M. Chapleau; mais il était trop tard...."⁹¹ Chapleau believed that the key problem was that ambitious French Canadian Conservatives would always be ready to side with English-speaking Canadians at critical points as in 1891 and to assassinate him. He claimed that he "knew by experience that I would be exposed to shots in the rear the moment I would be a prisoner in the Cabinet."⁹² After Chapleau's death, Arthur Dansereau and Guillaume-Alphonse Nantel both underlined this second major reason that caused Chapleau to reject Sir Charles Tupper's call. Dansereau claimed that Chapleau refused to go to Ottawa in 1896 because "ce grand Canadien avait bien mesuré certains de ces compagnons d'armes et la situation. Il avait compris que le chef d'une maison

⁹⁰La Patrie, vendredi le 1er mai 1896.

⁹¹La Presse, mercredi le 15 juillet 1896. H. Blair Neatby and John T. Saywell point out that "Tupper did offer Chapleau the leadership of Quebec and was even prepared to let him select his own colleagues." (H. Blair Neatby and John T. Saywell, "Chapleau and the Conservative party in Quebec", CHR, 37.1 (March 1956), 20.) E. M. Saunders supports this viewpoint. Saunders writes that "The Hon. J. A. Chapleau, upon whom Sir Charles had confidently relied as the French leader, declined to accept this position." (E. M. Saunders, ed., The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Tupper, Toronto: Cassell and Co., 1916, II, 200.

⁹²Montreal Gazette, Friday February 25, 1898.

divisée était condamné à l'impuissance...."⁹³ Nantel made the same point when he wrote that Chapleau rejected Tupper's offer because "ses ennemis jurés, de tout temps, depuis 1882, ne voulaient, à ses yeux, qu'utiliser son travail, exploiter son génie pour continuer, la victoire gagnée, à lui tirer dans le dos, à le faire mourir à petit feu."⁹⁴

Conscious of the havoc the Castors still caused within the party and aware of "les défiances de l'électorat de Québec à l'endroit des promesses les plus accentuées du ministère...."⁹⁵ with respect to remedial legislation, Chapleau confessed to Dansereau that he had "ni le goût, ni la confiance nécessaire pour aller me jeter dans cette galère. Il n'y a pas d'éléments de cohésion dans le parti. Si le Cabinet reste ce qu'il est, avec un autre premier, ça ne marchera pas. S'il y a beaucoup de changements, les coups dans le dos seront sérieux."⁹⁶ However, with reference to the Remedial Bill, Chapleau affirmed that "Si la mesure avait passé, je me serais cru engagé en honneur d'aller la soutenir

⁹³La Presse, samedi le 30 novembre 1901.

⁹⁴La Presse, samedi le 14 décembre 1901. It must be emphasized that Dansereau and Nantel stressed both reasons mentioned above for Chapleau's refusal to join Tupper's Ministry. These reasons were raised again after Chapleau's death because of the fight between the Chapleau-tistes and Castors for control of the Conservative party after Laurier's second electoral victory.

⁹⁵Fonds Dansereau, Chapleau à Dansereau, le 18 avril 1896 as quoted in Crunican, The Manitoba School Question, p. 494.

⁹⁶Fonds Dansereau, Chapleau à Dansereau, le 22 avril 1896 as quoted in Laurier L. 'LaPierre, Politics, Race, and Religion in French Canada: Joseph-Israël Tarte, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1962, p. 293.

devant l'électorat pour lui assurer une efficacité que lui manquait...."⁹⁷

Since the bill did not pass, the Lieutenant-Governor did not believe "qu'un parti aussi divisé, un état-major en partie hostile et une opinion publique aussi irritée, offrassent des garanties suffissantes pour le rachat...." of his promise to Tupper.⁹⁸

Before the controversy about his negative response to Tupper died, Chapleau was pleased to learn that he was to become a Knight of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George on the occasion of the Queen's birthday.⁹⁹ Sir Charles Tupper himself informed the Lieutenant-Governor by letter May 5th that he expected "'the list of Birthday honours will include a well deserved title which you ought to have received long ago."¹⁰⁰ When Chapleau later received official confirmation of his reward, he chose

⁹⁷ Fonds Dansereau, Chapleau à Dansereau, le 22 avril 1896 as quoted in Crunican, The Manitoba School Question, p. 494.

⁹⁸ La Presse, mardi le 8 février 1898. Chapleau was interviewed by La Presse.

⁹⁹ La Minerve, samedi le 23 mai 1896. The Order of St. Michael and St. George was founded in 1818 as a diplomatic and colonial Order. There were three classes: Knights, Knight Commanders, and Grand Commanders. Chapleau received the lowest rank. In contrast, the following year, Laurier was awarded the highest rank, which consisted of only fifty members. (La Patrie, samedi le 28 août 1897.) Although it is understandable that Laurier, the Prime Minister of Canada and friend of Governor-General Aberdeen, received a greater honour than Chapleau, only the Lieutenant-Governor of a province within the Dominion, this granting of a superior rank to Laurier can be seen as yet another example of Chapleau being downgraded.

¹⁰⁰ PAC, Bowell Papers, Chapleau to Bowell, Spencer Wood, May 9, 1896.

Adolphe to be used with his title since that was the name his mother had always called him and the one his friends knew best.¹⁰¹ Flattered that he should at long last receive the knighthood he had desired for so many years, the Lieutenant-Governor wrote to a friend and announced "que cet honneur me soit arrivé, sans que les plus malveillants puissent dire c'est un marché politique qui me l'a valu."¹⁰² In contradiction to Chapleau's belief, Israël Tarte asserted that the knighthood was a favour granted in order to induce Chapleau to re-enter federal politics.¹⁰³

If Tarte's views were correct, the Conservative plan failed. Sir Adolphe Chapleau watched in a self-imposed silence as Tupper and Laurier fought one another for the honour of the Prime Minister's office. To confirm his neutrality in the election, Chapleau went on a fishing excursion to a lake named in his honour north of Montreal. There he netted only mosquito bites, but otherwise returned to Montreal in perfect health in time to observe the Liberal party trounce Tupper's Conservatives in Quebec on June 23rd.

On the one hand, the Liberal victory represented a defeat for Chapleau and the Conservative party. Chapleau had failed to realize his hopes that all moderate Liberals and Conservatives would rally to his standard long before the federal general election. The Lieutenant-Governor's abstention from the 1896 contest caused French Canadians to

¹⁰¹La Presse, jeudi le 21 mai 1896.

¹⁰²ASTR, Chapleau à de La Bruère, [Sherbrooke], le 25 mai 1896.

¹⁰³La Patrie, vendredi le 1er mai 1896.

lose control of the federal wing of the party. Hugh Graham, the owner of the Montreal Star and an English-speaking Canadian who was not altogether sympathetic to French Canada, assumed the leadership of the party in the Montreal district.¹⁰⁴ Those active French Canadian members of the party who had lost their autonomy to the dominant anglophone section, huddled about the group of Conservatives whom Chapleau had fought since 1871.¹⁰⁵ Chapleau's attempts to reaffirm the francophone-anglophone alliance within the Conservative party which a political settlement of the Manitoba School Question would represent, proved equally disastrous. On the other hand, the Liberal triumph signified a personal conquest for Israël Tarte and Wilfrid Laurier. Tarte's ability to neutralize Chapleau whom many believed to be the key to a Conservative victory in Quebec, through the promise of a second term at Spencer Wood,¹⁰⁶ marked a turning point in Liberal party fortunes.

Despite the disastrous defeat of the federal Conservatives, the party remained alive in Quebec and clung desperately to power in the province. However, Edmund-James Flynn, the former Liberal whom Chapleau had wooed to the Conservative fold in 1879 and whom he had accepted as

¹⁰⁴La Patrie, vendredi le 2 novembre 1900.

¹⁰⁵La Presse, lundi le 16 décembre 1901. Nantel wrote this article.

¹⁰⁶Tupper believed that Tarte had promised Chapleau a second term at Spencer Wood and that Chapleau's inaction had caused the Conservative defeat in Quebec. (Saunders, ed., Life and Letter of Sir Charles Tupper, II, 200. Also, Charles Hibbert Tupper, Supplement to the Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., K. C. M. G., Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1926, p. 136.)

his First Minister after L.-O. Taillon's resignation in May to join the ill-fated Tupper crew, barely managed to hold the Nantel (Chapleautiste) and "La Petite Chapelle" (Castor) forces together. Chapleau revealed the intricacies of that Conservative malaise to Laurier. In November 1896, Chapleau informed the Liberal Prime Minister that there was a serious conflict within Conservative ranks. The former Premier, Louis-Olivier Taillon was angered because he had not been named to the Legislative Council while two Chapleautistes, Trefflé Berthiaume of La Presse and Damien Rolland, had secured refuge in that sanctuary.¹⁰⁷ The Lieutenant-Governor also advised Wilfrid Laurier not to worry "si le Gouvernement que dirige mon Premier Ministre se maintient. Je crois qu'il sera pour vous, à Ottawa, une garantie de paix, ou de neutralité tout-à-fait désarmée."¹⁰⁸

Chapleau's frankness with Laurier stemmed from the Lieutenant-Governor's desire to obtain at the provincial level, the great conciliation of moderate Liberals and Conservatives that had previously eluded him. If Liberal-Conservatives were to retain power, Chapleau reasoned that a bold new strategy for the election to be held in 1897 would have to be devised. Never inactive and especially when faced with a possible Chapleautiste Conservative defeat, Chapleau "tenait à sauver de l'effondrement, au moins le parti conservateur de Québec...."¹⁰⁹ and

¹⁰⁷ PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Québec, le 16 novembre 1896.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ La Presse, samedi le 14 décembre 1901.

resolved to "parer le coup, au point de vue de ses aviseurs futurs."¹¹⁰

Sir Adolphe Chapleau's grand design for victory involved two cardinal points. First, the election must be centred on matters that were exclusively provincial in scope. Second, an attempt should be made to concentrate all Liberal-Conservative forces in the province.¹¹¹

Chapleau believed that if the Conservatives were to emerge victorious from the provincial election, they would have to detach some of those voters who had voted for Laurier in 1896, away from the Liberal standard. To accomplish such a feat, only local Quebec problems could be discussed and no attack could be made on Laurier directly. Hopefully, Laurier would remain neutral or lend his support to the party of conciliation that was to be formed. Dansereau asserted that

Chapleau savait que pour détacher une partie des électeurs qui avaient, dans la province de Québec, donné une si forte majorité à Sir Wilfrid Laurier, il fallait naturellement, leur fournir d'autres prétextes ou d'autres raisons que celles d'une lutte à leur propre gouvernement. Identifier les intérêts provinciaux avec les intérêts fédéraux, c'était créer une lutte générale où le pot de terre se serait vite brisé contre le pot de fer.¹¹²

In other words, Sir Adolphe Chapleau would attempt to follow the tactics of Oliver Mowat and Sir John A. Macdonald. Both leaders had been able to win in Ontario in their respective fields because they had never

¹¹⁰La Presse, lundi le 2 décembre 1901.

¹¹¹La Presse, jeudi le 24 février 1898. This information is contained in Chapleau's open letter to an ex-Member of Parliament. Also see PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Québec, le 15 mai 1897.

¹¹²La Presse, samedi le 14 décembre 1901.

confronted one another directly on the electoral battlefield.¹¹³ In practice, the result of this aspect of Chapleau's strategy would effectively muffle any discussion of the Manitoba School Question during the election.¹¹⁴ Consequently, Chapleau confided to Laurier,

la question des Ecoles du Manitoba deviendra bientôt, au point de vue politique, une question du passé, que la modération, la tolérance et la libéralité de vos amis du Manitoba pourraient faire oublier avant que le peuple soit appelé à se choisir de nouveaux représentants à la Chambre des Communes. On a vu beaucoup de ces questions brûlantes se refroidir et se régler par la seule action du temps et par l'oubli que la rapidité du mouvement moderne jette sur toute question et sur toute chose.¹¹⁵

The second aspect of Chapleau's grand plan for victory involved the conciliation of all Liberal-Conservative forces under one banner. Chapleau's bitter hatred of the Castors who had prevented him from dominating the Conservative party in Quebec caused him to view the Flynn government as an unstable temporary administration. With three prominent Castors--Louis Beaubien, L.-P. Pelletier and Thomas Chapais--in the Quebec cabinet, Chapleau claimed that the government would have to be altered or disappear after the next election even if Flynn emerged victorious without moderate Liberal support.¹¹⁶ The Lieutenant-Governor

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Montreal, le 21 février 1897.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Québec, le 15 mai 1897 & La Presse, samedi le 14 décembre 1901. See also PAC, Tarte Papers, Dansereau à Tarte, Montréal, le 28 mai 1897. In that letter

believed there was little alternative because "La cohésion, c'est la condition 'sine qua non' d'un ministère.... [Avec] l'intrigue, les petits complots, les crocs-en-jambe, tout cet ensemble de misères qui neutralisent l'action commune, il n'y a plus de cabinet et c'est le devoir d'un chef d'exécutif d'en procurer un, constitutionnellement, au pays."¹¹⁷ In La Presse, G.-A. Nantel wrote that

La réunion des diverses aspirations politiques en un groupement de forces nationales qui auraient travaillé uniquement à faire sortir la province de ses embarras, était une grande idée patriotique, sans compter que d'une situation perdue on faisait revivre le maintien de l'élément conservateur à la tête des affaires provinciales, avec une complète indépendance de l'influence fédérale.¹¹⁸

The Premier of Quebec, Flynn, accepted the first aspect, but rejected the second part of Chapleau's suggestion.¹¹⁹ Consequently, Chapleau was not surprised that in the election of May 11th, the ill-prepared, disorganized and disheartened Conservative party was routed. To Laurier, Chapleau complained that Flynn "s'est laissé convaincre par les Castors que leur appui le rendait invincible. Les exigences de ces rongeurs, ont provoqué deux ou trois crises, depuis six mois, me donnant

Dansereau writes: "Tous les Castors vont y passer: Ross, de Boucherville, Angers, Pelletier, Beaubien, Chapais. Bref, c'est la rupture.... Le fond de la chose est que nous allons laisser de côté cet élément aussi accapareur que cassant, en préparant les vrais conservateurs à se rallier à vous autres d'Ottawa."

¹¹⁷ La Presse, samedi le 14 décembre 1901.

¹¹⁸ La Presse, lundi le 2 décembre 1901.

¹¹⁹ PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Québec, le 15 mai 1897.

l'espoir d'une rupture désirée, et à chaque fois, le premier-ministre s'est contenté d'une gémuflexion pour réintégrer dans ses bonnes grâces ces Borgia encapuchonnés."¹²⁰ Because of Flynn's failure to exile the Castors, Chapleau wrote that "Il est bien complet l'effondrement de l'ancien parti conservateur!"¹²¹ In a letter to Tarte, Chapleau confessed that "Le raz de mer qui a passé, détruisant ce qui restait de la vieille construction du parti conservateur, m'a surpris par sa violence et son étendu; mais rien ne m'étonne plus, en ce qui regarde la dislocation complète du vieux parti qui fut le vôtre et le mien, et que Cartier avait pourtant bâti avec des éléments et sur des bases bien solides."¹²² To Dansereau, Chapleau exclaimed that "Décidément le parti conservateur est allé où vont les vieilles lunes!!"¹²³ In disgust the Lieutenant-Governor referred to the two sources of difficulty for his leadership when he gibed that

Les assassins de Bowell lui font apothéose et se croient déjà hissés au pinacle ... sur mon dos!! Jusqu'où peut donc aller l'aveuglement des hommes!

Il ne manque plus que Landry pour me tresser une couronne (sauf à m'étrangler ensuite) et Dupont pour me canoniser!!¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² PAC, Tarte Papers, Chapleau à Tarte, Montréal, le 17 mai 1897.

¹²³ PAC, Tarte Papers, Chapleau à Dansereau, Québec, le 27 juin 1897.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

The two Castors, Senator Philippe Landry and Flavien Dupont, Member of Parliament for Bagot, were fortunate that they suffered only a verbal slap from the Lieutenant-Governor. Louis Beaubien, the former Quebec Minister of Agriculture and Colonization under Flynn, endured worse. Chapleau refused to appoint him to the Legislative Council.¹²⁵ With great trust in the Liberal Prime Minister and with a desire to please, Chapleau revealed to Laurier that "On me supplie de donner trois sièges de la Chambre Haute à des hommes qui m'auraient assassiné hier, qui m'assassineraient demain, s'ils en avaient la chance!" The Lieutenant-Governor quickly added that it was "Inutile de te dire que je reste froidement constitutionnel, et que les journaux à scandales n'auront pas de plaisir à mes dépens."¹²⁶

Chapleau's refusal to acquiesce in the Castor demands for appointments before Flynn handed power over to a Liberal Premier substantiated the Lieutenant-Governor's statement that "C'est à ces heures-là que les caractères se photographient malgré eux."¹²⁷ Chapleau was willing to destroy the Conservative party rather than reach an accommodation with the Castors. After the reduction to insignificance of the federal French Canadian wing of the party in Quebec due to his own inaction in 1896, the provincial organization which was closely aligned with the

¹²⁵ La Patrie, 1e 28 mai 1897.

¹²⁶ PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Québec, 1e 15 mai 1897.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

federal party could not sustain an autonomous existence for any length of time. Instead of bolstering the relations between federal and provincial Conservatives, Chapleau turned to the Liberals for sustenance. The Lieutenant-Governor held to his idea of a politically united Quebec behind one leader with dogged determination. He assured the Liberal Minister of Public Works, Israël Tarte that "l'idée d'une Province de Québec unie et forte a pénétré partout, et c'est peut-être, dans une grande mesure, parce qu'on a voulu que l'Angleterre reçût, comme son hôte venant du Canada, [for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations] un homme dont l'autorité et le prestige fussent sans mélange et sans partage, que le dernier boulevard du conservatisme en Canada a disparu."¹²⁸ Despite repeated failures to realize his plan to unite moderates in Quebec under his tutelage, Chapleau refused to abandon his "rêve d'une Province unie et forte." He admitted that "Je ne vois guère plus le moyen de le réaliser" and thus handed the task over to Laurier.¹²⁹ Chapleau promised his support to the Prime Minister "pour tout ce qui pourra profiter au bien de la Province, et à l'apaisement de la fièvre de combat qui doit sévir encore dans le corps électoral et dans l'âme des élus." He confessed to Laurier that "Je compte beaucoup sur toi pour cette oeuvre de pacification, dans laquelle je suis sûr d'être secondé par

¹²⁸ PAC, Tarte Papers, Chapleau à Tarte, Montréal, le 17 mai 1897.

¹²⁹ PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Québec, le 15 mai 1897.

les meilleurs de mes ministres sortants."¹³⁰

Because Chapleau believed that Laurier sincerely favoured Chapleau's idea of a reconciliation of moderate Liberals and Conservatives in the province, he expected to receive his second term as Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Quebec. However, Sir Adolphe Chapleau was aware that "les vieux de la vieille.... souche rouge, ne désarment pas!" For that reason, on June 27, 1897, Chapleau instructed Arthur Dansereau to reach a firm agreement with the Liberals on three points--Chapleau's second term, the Liberal's proposed treatment of Chapleautistes and the Manitoba School Question.¹³¹

Due to the extreme importance of the Manitoba School Question for the country, Chapleau was willing to work with the Liberal government in Ottawa which was charged with the task of resolving the question after June 1896. The Lieutenant-Governor's aid in securing a settlement of the issue would also confirm Chapleau's trust in Laurier and encourage the Prime Minister to be generous with his allotment of patronage to Chapleautistes. Always hoping to prove to Laurier that he earned a second term at Spencer Wood, Chapleau informed Laurier that "si mon témoignage pouvait servir la cause de la conciliation auprès de l'Ablégat, je me ferai un devoir de le lui donner."¹³² Laurier accepted Chapleau's

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ PAC, Tarte Papers, Chapleau à Dansereau, Québec, le 27 juin 1897.

¹³² PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Atlantic City, N. J., le 2 avril 1897.

offer and in the fall of 1897, Chapleau met the Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor Merry del Val, and discussed the Laurier-Greenway settlement of 1896 for two and one-half hours.¹³³

The settlement of 1896 precariously established the right of Catholic teaching and to teaching in the French language. Because Greenway's concessions were minimal compared with the rights that had been wrenched from the Roman Catholics, Rome had received much advice to condemn the agreement. The French Canadian Bishops led by the new Archbishop of St -Boniface, Adélard Langevin, had opposed the settlement and had urged the Pope to condemn it outright. In order to contradict Langevin's claims, the Liberals again called upon Chapleau for support in December 1897. Very obliging, the Lieutenant-Governor wrote to Rome in favour of the compromise the Liberal governments had established.¹³⁴

Chapleau's support of the Laurier-Greenway settlement and his letters to Rome in favour of the provincial Liberal government's bill to re-establish a department of education in 1897¹³⁵ proved insufficient to

¹³³ PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Québec, le 25 septembre 1897.

¹³⁴ Montreal Gazette, Monday December 27, 1897. Jean Bruchési, nephew of the Archbishop of Montreal, Louis-Joseph-Napoléon Bruchési, claims that his uncle acted as a mediator between Archbishop Langevin and Laurier on this issue. (Jean Bruchési, m. s. r. c., Sir Wilfrid Laurier et Monseigneur Bruchési, Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Third Series, XL (1946), Section I, 10, 16-17.)

¹³⁵ Louis-Philippe Audet, "Le projet de Ministère de l'Instruction publique en 1897", in Marcel Lajeunesse, ed., L'Education au Québec (19e-20e siècles), [Trois-Rivières]: Les éditions du Boréal Express, [1971], pp. 77-113.

allow Chapleau to remain at Spencer Wood after the expiration of his term December 7, 1897.

In July 1896, Laurier and Chapleau had discussed the possibility of a second term for the former Conservative Premier of Quebec.¹³⁶ Apparently, Laurier's intimation that he would renew Chapleau's term of office was in reciprocation for Chapleau's silence during the 1896 federal election.¹³⁷ Le Soleil reported that "Les amis de M. Tarte nient que l'abstention de M. Chapleau dans cette circonstance mémorable entraîne en échange de bons procédés."¹³⁸ However, rumours spread that Chapleau would remain at Spencer Wood and some Liberal politicians reacted violently.

One Liberal who was incensed at the thought of the renewal of Chapleau's term of office was François Langelier, the Liberal who, by winning the mayoral race in Quebec city in 1882, broke the Conservative stranglehold on that city's government. Langelier, who had also served in Joly de Lotbinière's cabinet, claimed that at the time of the formation of the Liberal Ministry in 1896, Laurier wrote to him to state he would not receive a cabinet post. However, the Prime Minister promised that there was a seat reserved for him on the Bench and that if at the end of Chapleau's term of office he was not already a judge, he would succeed

¹³⁶ PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Québec, le 15 mai 1897.

¹³⁷ Saunders, ed., Life and Letters of Sir Charles Tupper, II, 200.

¹³⁸ La Minerve, lundi le 11 octobre 1897, (cited from Le Soleil).

Sir Adolphe Chapleau as Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec.¹³⁹ Many Liberals sent petitions to Laurier in the first week of October in support of their colleague, Langelier, who was not yet a judge.¹⁴⁰ The Castor Rouges, that is les vieux libéraux,¹⁴¹ indicated that the issue at stake was "simply whether the affairs of the Liberal party shall be controlled and its course directed by certain men who not long ago were Conservatives, and who seem to aim at strengthening themselves by an alliance with their old friends, or whether they shall be guided and shaped by those who have earned the right to direct the party counsels by long and faithful adhesion to the party cause."¹⁴² Specifically, François Langelier disliked the affairs of the Liberal party to be conducted by former Conservatives such as Tarte, Dansereau and Chapleau.¹⁴³

Because of the burning opposition to Chapleau within the Liberal party, Laurier called at Spencer Wood and asked Sir Adolphe Chapleau to relieve him of any obligation he might have to renew the Lieutenant-Governor's term. Without any real choice, Chapleau agreed and accepted

¹³⁹La Presse, samedi le 2 octobre 1897 & Montreal Gazette, Monday October 18, 1897.

¹⁴⁰PAC, Laurier Papers, Pétitionnaires de Québec Est à Laurier, le 5 octobre 1897; 10 libéraux à Laurier, Québec, le 4 octobre 1897; Chouinard à Laurier, Québec, le 6 octobre 1897.

¹⁴¹La Presse, mercredi le 22 décembre 1897. Tarte wrote that "Son Honneur appelle les vieux libéraux les 'Castor rouges'".

¹⁴²Montreal Gazette, Tuesday December 14, 1897.

¹⁴³La Minerve, vendredi le 10 décembre 1897.

Laurier's offer to become a member of the "International Commission."¹⁴⁴ After that point was settled, Chapleau did not allow Laurier to leave before he had related a story whose significance he hoped Laurier would ponder. Chapleau was certain the Prime Minister had "heard of the son of Marseilles who was caught at sea by a terrific storm. In his terror he swore to the Blessed Virgin that if he reached port safely he would offer a candle as big as his arm to her. Upon reaching port, however, he found excellent arguments to satisfy himself that such a big candle would be a cause of scandal in the church and he gave only an ordinary candle." The Lieutenant-Governor exclaimed: "Well, Sir Wilfrid, you deserve to have been born at Marseilles."¹⁴⁵

Despite Laurier's betrayal of Chapleau's trust and the Lieutenant-Governor's profound regret at his forced ejection from his beloved Spencer Wood, Chapleau continued to believe that Laurier's intentions had been good. Amidst packing crates and the confusion of preparations for departure, Chapleau wrote a letter of forgiveness to the cunning

¹⁴⁴Saywell, ed., Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, p. 457. Lady Aberdeen is probably referring to the International Boundary Commission which was established in 1892 in order to determine certain disputed points along the Canadian-American boundary. Laurier also referred to Chapleau's appointment. He stated that "Si notre pauvre ami Chapleau avait vécu et avait eu la santé, c'est lui qui aurait représenté le Canada français sur cette commission; c'était entendu et, en partant pour Atlantic City, il avait apporté des liasses de documents pour l'étude des questions dont la commission aura à s'occuper. Lui disparu, j'ai dû prendre la place que le gouvernement lui avait destinée." (Fonds Bruchési, Laurier à Mgr. Bruchési, Arthabaska, le 21 août, 1898, as cited by Bruchési, "Sir Wilfrid Laurier et Monseigneur Bruchési", Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, pp. 15-16.

¹⁴⁵Montreal Gazette, Thursday January 6, 1898.

Liberal Prime Minister. The Lieutenant-Governor explained that he understood

que les ennuis qui t'ont forcé à ne pas donner suite à l'offre gracieuse que tu m'avais faite de continuer, pendant une année ou deux, mon séjour officiel dans l'ermitage de Spencer Wood, qui convenait si bien à mes goûts et à mes habitudes, que ces ennuis, dis-je, n'altéreront en aucune façon nos bonnes relations personnelles, et ne compteront même pour rien dans mes rapports avec le Gouvernement dont tu es le chef, si ma présente détermination, de rester pour quelque temps encore étranger à tout mouvement de politique militante, venait à changer.¹⁴⁶

Chapleau's letter to Laurier implied a reaffirmation of his confession made three months earlier to his friend, the Ottawa Parliamentary Librarian, Alfred DeCelles. In November 1897, Chapleau wrote to DeCelles: "J'ai caressé le rêve de rallier autour de lui [Laurier] d'intelligentes bonnes volontés et de précieux auxiliaires pour une grande oeuvre d'unification nationale, dont je croyais qu'il s'était chargé."¹⁴⁷

Chapleau could not have been more explicit in stating that he would do his utmost to aid Laurier in uniting Quebec under his wing. Previously, Chapleautistes had questioned Laurier's generalship "car il s'est trop affaibli dans la province de Québec...."¹⁴⁸ According to Lady Aberdeen, the proud Lieutenant-Governor's reluctance to accept subordination to

¹⁴⁶ PAC, Laurier Papers, Chapleau à Laurier, Québec, le 21 janvier 1898.

¹⁴⁷ Chapleau à DeCelles, Quebec, le 3 novembre 1897, "Lettre de l'hon. J.-A. Chapleau à A.-D. DeCelles", BRH, 69.4 (octobre 1967), 158.

¹⁴⁸ Fonds Guin, DeCelles à Chapleau, le 27 février 1896.

Laurier had prevented Chapleau from joining the Liberal Prime Minister sooner.¹⁴⁹ However, after the election of June 1896, the situation had changed completely.

With his reconciliation to Laurier complete, Chapleau was now ready to leave the office he had desired to retain. On the evening of February 1, 1898, Sir Adolphe Chapleau, slowly, solemnly and with great dignity, silently stepped down from the throne in the Legislative Council Chamber in Quebec. Immediately, his successor, Louis-Amable Jetté, was led to that seat of honour.

Within six months of that event, Chapleau was dead of Bright's disease.¹⁵⁰ After a trip to the United States during the spring in the hope of recovery, Chapleau returned to Montreal and died on June 13, 1898 at the Windsor Hotel. His body, clothed in the Windsor uniform he wore as Lieutenant-Governor, was exposed at Laval University in Montreal before his funeral at Notre-Dame and his burial at the Côte-des-Neiges cemetery. Laurier's presence at the massive funeral as a pallbearer

¹⁴⁹ Saywell, ed., Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, p. 457.

¹⁵⁰ Arthur Beauchesne, "Adolphe Chapleau", in La revue moderne, le 15 mars, 1921, p. 20. Beauchesne was Chapleau's last private secretary. When Chapleau arrived in Ottawa, L.-H. Taché filled that post. Taché resigned as Chapleau's private secretary in December 1891. (La Minerve, mercredi le 9 décembre 1891.) After Taché's departure, Chapleau acquired the services of Monsieur Delanaudière. (La Minerve, lundi le 18 janvier 1892.) However, Chapleau soon replaced him by Alexandre Clément. (La Patrie, mardi le 18 octobre 1892.) Because of poor health, Clément resigned in 1895 and Chapleau appointed Monsieur Delpit, nephew of the French romantic writer of the same name, as his private secretary. (La Presse, mercredi le 18 septembre 1895.) Delpit resigned that position at the end of 1897 and Arthur Beauchesne took over these duties.

signified the new relationship that had been forged between Sir Adolphe Chapleau and Sir Wilfrid Laurier. To the very end, Chapleau affirmed his allegiance to the Liberal-Conservative party which he affectionately termed to be "chez moi".¹⁵¹ However, Chapleau regarded Wilfrid Laurier and not Charles Tupper as Macdonald's rightful heir. Chapleau had helped to destroy the Conservatives in Quebec through his silence in the 1896 federal election and by his awkward attempts to crush the Castors in the provincial field in 1897. Although the Manitoba School Question's presence at the time of the 1896 election indicated the failure of the entente between anglophone and francophone within the Conservative party, the key reason for Chapleau's refusal to aid the Conservatives in 1896 and for his own failure as a politician was his inability to dominate Quebec. The Castors which Chapleau steadfastly refused to conciliate caused his downfall. He crushed the party rather than reach an understanding with them. After inadvertently aiding the Liberals to victory, Chapleau lost the Lieutenant-Governorship of Quebec because his usefulness to Laurier had ceased. Rejected by both the Conservative and Liberal parties, Chapleau died without realizing his great scheme of conciliation which he believed would ensure for French Canadians their proper place of equality with English-speaking Canadians in Confederation.

¹⁵¹La Presse, mardi le 8 février 1898. La Presse published an interview with Chapleau.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

Until his death in 1898, Sir Adolphe Chapleau held firmly to his goal of becoming chef in French Canada. Although that position of leadership became more elusive after Wilfrid Laurier's election victory in 1896, many Conservative francophones continued to believe that Chapleau alone could restore their party's health in Quebec. Chapleau appeared to possess those qualities necessary to lead French-speaking Canadians and to obtain justice for them within Confederation. However, his political career demonstrated that he could not accomplish those ends. In line with this fact then, it is the purpose of this dissertation to explain why he failed. His failure did not result from a character flaw as some observers have contended, but rather from his poor health and political ineptness. This conclusion underlines one important dimension to Chapleau's life. In addition, although this work adds a great deal of detail about Chapleau's career and demonstrates that he failed in almost everything he touched, it is significant because it places the "old" Chapleau in better focus and shows that the study of his career is more than just an examination of political failure.

Many contemporaries and later historical observers of Chapleau believed that he was blessed with qualities that contribute to success in politics.¹ Chapleau was handsome and radiated charm. He was an

¹Chapleau's contemporary, L.-O. David, wondered "qui parmi les Canadiens-français a reçu autant que Chapleau, les dons de la nature,

individual in whose presence one always said: "voici quelqu'un!"² A great orator who was not surpassed by anyone of his own generation,³ Chapleau was also a delightful conversationalist who easily seduced those who approached him.⁴ Gifted with a lively and brilliant intelligence, he could quickly perceive the essence of a problem and had a great capacity to assimilate much data.⁵ Such abilities allowed him to participate fully and mix freely with all classes in French Canadian society--an attribute essential for any politician. In addition, such capabilities enabled him to analyse and grasp the needs of his community.

As an intellectual who wrote and read extensively,⁶ Chapleau

les faveurs de la providence?" (La Patrie, lundi le 13 juin 1898.) Robert Rumilly notes that Chapleau possessed important political attributes at the outset of his career. (Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, Montréal: Fides, [1971], I, 112.) H. Blair Neatby and John T. Saywell confirm these two views. (H. Blair Neatby and John T. Saywell, "Chapleau and the Conservative Party in Quebec", CHR, 37.1 (March 1956), 3.) Jacques Gouin reached the same conclusion after a study of the DeCelles-Chapleau correspondence. (Jacques Gouin, "Histoire d'une amitié: Correspondance intime entre Chapleau et DeCelles (1876-1898)", RHAF, 18 (1964-1965), 564.)

²La Patrie, vendredi le 17 juin 1898, (du Courrier du Canada).

³La Patrie, vendredi le 17 juin 1898, (du Soleil).

⁴La Patrie, vendredi le 17 juin 1898, (du Courrier du Canada).

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid. Also, La Patrie, mardi le 14 juin 1898. Tarte wrote and signed this article. In his will, Chapleau left his library to Laval University in Montreal which has since become the Université de Montréal. There are two lists in the archives of the University of Montreal Library (le dossier 9.37) which indicate the 4,340 volumes that Chapleau left the library. There is no indication whether Chapleau ever read all of

moved without difficulty in the dynamic artistic circles of French Canada. He appreciated the greatness of Quebec's leading poet, Louis Fréchette, the sculptor, Philippe Hébert, and Emma Lajeunesse of Chambly, known to the world of opera as Madame Albani. Chapleau encountered the genius of Fréchette through the poet's more partisan verses in the Liberal press and Hébert's brilliance through his work, particularly his statue of Maisonneuve in Montreal that Chapleau had the pleasure of unveiling on July 1, 1895.⁷ Although he observed the enthusiastic praise Madame Albani received during her periodic sojourns in Canada, Chapleau had the added pleasure of witnessing Europe's affection for her at a reception given by the British Ambassador to Paris in 1893.⁸

While Chapleau enjoyed attending such gatherings, plays and concerts, he also relished more popular activities. He enjoyed the annual fairs, winter carnivals and Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations in the province. He liked sports and as Lieutenant-Governor, he donated trophies to two of the more popular recreational activities of Quebec--

the books listed. The authors included Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Goethe, Leo Tolstoi, Balzac, Hugo, Anatole France, L. Veuillot, G. de Maupassant, Lacordaire, J. de Maistre, Jules Simon, Gladstone, Lamennais, Stendhal, Bossuet, Thiers, Milton, Rossetti, Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott, Swift, Thackeray, Mark Twain, and H. B. Stowe. Several copies of the Bible are also included in the collection.

⁷Montreal Gazette, Tuesday July 2, 1895.

⁸Maurice Guénard-Hodent, La tradition renouée. Les relations entre la France et le Canada depuis soixante années, Paris: éditions de Paris-Canada, 1930, p. 11.

lacrosse and bowling.⁹ His own favourite pastime was fishing. Therefore, when the wealthy of Montreal escaped the filth from the factories, stench of horse manure and ugliness of overhead wiring by retreating from the city to summer houses at Cacouna or LaMalbaie, Chapleau travelled to the lakes of the Laurentian area. There he could relax, ponder some of the major questions that faced the francophone community in the twilight of the Victorian years and develop remedies for these afflictions.

Some of the problems Chapleau's society faced during that period included the increasing population imbalance between French and English-speaking Canadians within Confederation, the factional religious strife that shattered French Canadian unity and the disproportionate amount of influence at the federal level that the industrialization of the country granted Ontario. For these difficulties, Chapleau sought solutions. To attain a net increase of francophones in Canada through the discouragement of emigration to the United States, Chapleau seconded and promoted curé Labelle's colonization schemes. In his attempt to unify French Canadians, Chapleau made little progress until the Riel affair. That event in 1885 forced ultramontane clerics like Bishop Laflèche of Trois-Rivières and liberal Catholics like Chapleau together since both groups condemned any revolt against constituted authority. However, unity eluded Chapleau since some Liberals and dissident Conservatives appeared to

⁹ La Presse, samedi le 31 août 1895 & le 7 septembre 1897; Montreal Gazette, January 30, 1896; and La Minerve, vendredi le 31 janvier 1896.

condone rebellion. Nevertheless, Chapleau continued to preach reconciliation and to proceed to attack what he believed to be the greatest challenge francophones faced--industrialization. He strove to turn the economic question of material progress to French Canada's advantage within Confederation and to the benefit of the Conservative party in Quebec.

The industrial boom, aided by the National Policy of the Macdonald government, was centred upon Ontario and Quebec. Consequently, Chapleau espoused measures that were designed to ensure that the largely French-speaking province of Quebec kept pace of Ontario with its anglophone majority. Through the economic development of Quebec, Chapleau was convinced that in Confederation, French Canadians would be able to maintain their proper share of influence.¹⁰ Like many of his compatriots, he recognized that Quebec possessed two of the four ingredients necessary for development--resources and manpower. His task was to provide the other two elements. Although capital flowed into the province from London and New York, Chapleau sought more investment sources and thus created the Crédit Foncier Franco-Canadien. To obtain a wider market for Quebec's products, he promoted the establishment of a direct shipping route between Canada and France, the negotiation of a trade treaty with France and the completion of the C. P. R. with its terminal at Montreal.

Besides the need to make certain that the modernization of the

¹⁰ J.-A. Chapleau, "Discours prononcé au concert du Club Cartier, à Montréal, le 3 décembre 1880", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau. Sa biographie...., ed. L.-H. Taché, Montréal: Eusèbe Senécal & Fils, 1887, pp. 158-159.

province continued unabated, Chapleau was forced to contend with the problems that economic development posed. In the latter half of the century, Montreal surpassed Quebec city in economic importance. With the workshops of the Grand Trunk and C. P. R., textile, shoe and other forms of manufacturing as a base, Montreal rose to become a great financial and manufacturing centre. It also was established as the most important port in Canada.¹¹ As Montreal grew, rural families moved into the city to search for employment in the burgeoning industries. Since these French Canadians had few skills for factory work, they found themselves toiling long hours in poor conditions for a minimum salary.¹² To better equip the francophone population for the industrial age, Chapleau recognized that more technical schools were required. Possibly he became imbued with this idea during his years at Masson College, an institution originally designed to provide a practical education.¹³ At the picnic of Saint-Hilaire in 1889 Chapleau adopted that theme and called upon the provincial government to encourage students to attend the Polytechnical School. Although Chapleau had thought of creating a scholarship to send two students from each electoral district for technical training, this project to develop a corps of industrial workers failed to

¹¹ Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, Histoire économique du Québec 1851-1896, Montréal: Fides, [1971], pp. 373 and 297.

¹² Ibid., p. 306.

¹³ La Minerve, lundi le 17 juin 1867; lundi le 24 juin 1867; & vendredi le 23 août 1871.

materialize.¹⁴ However, one matter involving unskilled labourers that Chapleau successfully resolved related to their integration into the Conservative fold. Once the Conservative party's hegemony in the Montreal district appeared threatened by the Liberal's courting of the worker's vote, he moved quickly to remove the Liberal challenge. In the 1888 by-election of Montreal East, Chapleau embraced the independent labour candidate, A.-T. Lépine, rather than suffer a Conservative defeat.¹⁵ Shortly after Lépine's victory, Chapleau enticed him into his party, and labour support for the Conservatives was henceforth assured.

Besides his attempt to rally workers under his banner, Chapleau tried to capture the support of another group who profited from industrialization--the French Canadian entrepreneurs and financiers. He attracted two of the wealthiest francophones to his standard--L.-J. Forget and L.-A. Sénécal. The Rolland family whose power was based on their pulp and paper interest in St -Jérôme supported Chapleau. Other influential financiers who aided the Conservatives were Edmond-Julien Barbeau, administrator of La Banque d'Epargne de la Cité et du District de Montréal and administrator of the Crédit Foncier Franco-Canadien; Alfred Larocque, a founder of La Banque d'Epargne de Montréal; and Alphonse Desjardins, some of whose administrative positions included the presidency of La Banque Jacques-Cartier and La Compagnie Montréal

¹⁴La Minerve, jeudi le 12 septembre 1889.

¹⁵ANQ, Collection Chapais, Chapleau à Langevin, Ottawa, le 24 août 1888.

Terra Cotta. Consequently, with the financial support these gentlemen and others provided, Chapleau was able to enjoy a great degree of independence from the wealthy and influential anglophones in his direction of the Central Committee of the Conservative party for Montreal. However, he realized that money alone could not win elections or enable him to obtain power. He was aware that a successful politician was required to work hard and distribute patronage judiciously.

Like his colleagues, Chapleau knew that to be triumphant at the polls he must secure public exposure. Besides picnics, banquets furnished publicity. These grand occasions were generally held to celebrate the victory of a party leader. While Chapleau was honoured only once in this manner after he moved to Ottawa, he shone forth as a speaker when he proposed toasts at dinners for Macdonald, Langevin and Taillon among others. In addition to these purely political affairs, other social gatherings such as christenings, weddings and funerals allowed politicians to meet the party faithful and general public. The 1890's were exceptional because of the number of funerals held for prominent citizens. Although these Victorian spectacles generally dampened the spirits of participants, politicians were not prevented from discussing matters of state in an atmosphere deadened by yards of black drapery. Chapleau attended Monseigneur Labelle's funeral in January 1891 and Monseigneur Fabre's in January 1897. His absence from Senator Trudel's funeral in January 1890 and his expression of sympathy at the time of Honoré Mercier's death in 1894 and Cardinal Taschereau's in April 1898 gained him widespread publicity in the press. Chapleau's own funeral preceded

that of Bishop Laflèche, one of the last of the elaborate Victorian obsequies, by only one month.

Whereas these solemn religious celebrations provided occasions for friends and partisans of the deceased to gather while French Canadian society looked on, politicians also applied their art in more intimate surroundings. Gossip and political banter were an integral part of the regular menu for Chapleau and his friends during meals that consisted of good food and much wine. When in Montreal, Chapleau usually lunched at Victor's or at a restaurant operated by Madame Duperrouzel, popularly known as Madame Poivre-et-sel.¹⁶ In the evening, dinner parties were the custom. The Chapleaus often invited thirteen guests since Chapleau considered that the number thirteen brought him luck.¹⁷

These social activities provided politicians like Chapleau with opportunities to meet and talk with many influential members of the francophone community and with friends. These guests not only provided valuable information about the political scene, but also demanded various patronage positions for themselves or their friends. This delicate form of lobbying was accepted by Chapleau who was conscious of the need to distribute patronage effectively to his political followers and to prevent opponents sharing any political sweets. When he apportioned jobs, Chapleau gave top priority to his closest personal advisors such as

¹⁶Robert Rumilly, Histoire de Montréal, Montréal: Fides, [1972], III, 130.

¹⁷La Presse, mercredi le 2 octobre 1895.

Arthur Dansereau. So close was their relationship that Dansereau was repeatedly accused of writing Chapleau's speeches. After that accusation had been levelled following Chapleau's oration on the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, the Dansereau-Chapleau connection became clearer. Dansereau wrote to the editor of La Minerve to explain his contribution to that wildly applauded discourse. He claimed:

J'ai certainement analysé pour M. Chapleau de nombreux documents et des masses de chiffres qu'il m'a fournis. Peu de discours se font en Chambre sans cette partie toute matérielle de la collaboration. Mais il en a fait l'agencement à son tour, avec la ligne d'argumentation qu'il s'est choisie lui-même et avec l'inépuisable ressource d'esprit et de talent qu'on lui connaît.¹⁸

For this faithful and close collaborator, Chapleau found Dansereau a position as court clerk in the Montreal district in 1880. However, when Dansereau, who could drink two bottles of cognac a day without noticeable effect¹⁹ desired a more lucrative post ten years later, Chapleau attempted to secure him a seat in the Senate. Failing in that effort, he obtained Dansereau's appointment as Postmaster of Montreal.²⁰

Besides finding profitable jobs for his friends, Chapleau had to contend with demands from his family. Fortunately, he had only three brothers to please. Samuel St-Onge Chapleau had entered the Canadian Civil Service in 1873 as a secretary in the Department of Public Works.

¹⁸La Minerve, samedi le 20 juin 1885.

¹⁹Rumilly, Histoire de Québec, III, 58.

²⁰PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, December 28, 1890.

When it was revealed that Samuel had sold some departmental secrets to a railway entrepreneur, he resigned and Adolphe was forced to acquiesce in his brother's transfer to the North West as sheriff. Two years after he had presided over Louis Riel's hanging in Regina, Samuel was back in Ottawa as Clerk of the Crown of Chancery.²¹ Adolphe brought Dr. Ephrem Chapleau to Ottawa as a translator of the Journals of the House of Commons.²² After his third brother, Pierre, had translated the report of the Chinese Commission, Adolphe procured his appointment as a translator for the House of Commons.²³

While generous and attentive to requests for employment from family and friends, Chapleau was ruthless in his handling of political foes. On Chapleau's demand, the Speaker of the House of Commons dismissed three translators of the debates--A.-E. Poirier, Rémi and Ernest Tremblay. These Liberals had denounced Chapleau and his party as "de chevaliers du noeud coulant" during the 1887 federal election because of the Conservative refusal to prevent Riel's death.²⁴ Other translators who actively supported the Conservatives--Lucien Lasalle, the Secretary of the Central Committee in Montreal; Sévère Gélinas, a party worker in Chambly; J.-B. Vanasse, a campaigner from the Richelieu region and

²¹L'Etendard, vendredi le 30 mai 1890, (du National).

²²La Patrie, lundi le 22 février 1886.

²³La Patrie, mardi le 1er juin 1886, (de l'Electeur).

²⁴L'Etendard, lundi le 14 mars 1887.

Joseph Bouchard from Quebec city--were left unscathed in the Chapleau purge.²⁵

Despite his ability to frustrate the opposition and please his supporters, despite his capacity to move in all stratas of Quebec society and to grasp the needs of the francophone community, despite his oratorical gifts and penchant for hard work, Chapleau failed as a politician. He never succeeded in dominating the Conservative party in Quebec or in effecting the changes which would allow French Canadians to play their proper role on a basis of equality with English-speaking Canadians within Confederation. Some observers have claimed that Chapleau failed because of certain character defects. For example, Jacques Gouin noted that Chapleau lacked tenacity, the ability to work with energy and drive towards a goal over a long period of time.²⁶ Le comte de Turenne d'Aynac, the French Consul in Quebec from 1890 to 1894 wrote that Chapleau was afflicted by a "défaut qui l'a toujours empêché d'arriver à la situation prépondérante à laquelle son talent d'orateur et ses qualités brillantes le désignaient: celui d'être un esprit sans consistance et un caractère mobile."²⁷ However, an examination of Chapleau's character and thought does not sustain either argument.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Gouin, "Histoire d'une amitié: correspondance intime entre Chapleau et DeCelles (1876-1898)", RHAF, p. 562.

²⁷ Pierre Savard, Le Consulat Général de France à Québec et à Montréal de 1859 à 1914, Québec: Les presses de l'université Laval, 1970, p. 48.

In the Canadian political arena, Chapleau held and consistently expressed definite ideas about his view of Canada and the changes required to reinforce the Confederation settlement of 1867. His whole political career was an attempt to realize these goals. Sir Adolphe Chapleau adhered to the outward looking LaFontaine tradition which saw French Canada's interests linked with those of English-speaking Canada. Consequently, he minimized the French Canadian distinctiveness in language and religion from the English-speaking majority and emphasized those institutions and aspirations both communities held in common. With the realization that "freedom wears a Crown", Chapleau praised the British constitution which granted liberty, espoused toleration and guaranteed French Canada's language, institutions and laws.²⁸ Because of a desire to preserve co-operation between anglophones and francophones within a common political tradition, he refused to accept Honoré Mercier's offer of the leadership of the French Canadian mouvement national in 1885. Not only would an affirmative answer to Mercier have caused a confrontation between the anglophone and francophone communities, but such a response would have implied the sanction of rebellion and destruction of the country's political institutions. Chapleau's conservative outlook caused him to recoil in abhorrence from any action that might encourage those results.

Besides a desire to protect and reinforce shared institutions,

²⁸ J.-A. Chapleau, Canada as it is! an address delivered November 28, 1891, before the Commercial Club of Providence, R. I., Providence, K. I.: December 1891, p. 8.

Chapleau believed that French Canada's homeland extended throughout the whole of Canada. His ready acceptance of the chairmanship of a commission to inquire into Chinese immigration in the province of British Columbia in 1884 and his encouragement of francophone immigration to all provinces underlined that conception. To ensure that Canada reflected the francophone community, Chapleau insisted that French Canadians obtain their fair share of federal public service jobs and that closer ties be established with France without undermining Canadian-British links. Chapleau acknowledged that French Canada's interest extended throughout the whole of the country because he embraced the notion that French Canada could best grow and prosper by accepting the geographic fact of the economic unity of British North America based on the Empire of the St. Lawrence.

He promoted the Pacific railway project since that scheme represented a logical outgrowth of the Empire of the St. Lawrence. For Chapleau, that band of steel across Canada became a symbol of Confederation and a witness to the ability of French and English-speaking Canadians to work together for common goals. The return trip he and his wife took from Montreal to the Pacific coast on the transcontinental railway in the fall of 1895 confirmed that belief. These were the consistent ideas for which a determined Chapleau worked tenaciously throughout his life. However, in the pursuit of these noble ideals, he failed.

One reason for Chapleau's lack of success in federal politics can be attributed to his poor health. Although he suffered from a respiratory ailment that plagued him all his life and although he faced

kidney problems during his adult years, Chapleau refused to take care of his physical well-being. His unwillingness or inability to obtain sufficient rest or to dress properly on winter campaign tours caused him to suffer from la grippe many weeks of the year. His love of liquor and his failure to abstain from drinking until the last few months of his life²⁹ aggravated his kidney difficulties. Because of his arduous toil during elections, Chapleau's health would invariably collapse completely. Consequently, he would be forced to absent himself from the political arena for weeks, if not months, at a time. Similar breakdowns occurred during periods of great crisis, such as the 1874 Tanneries affair, the Riel upheaval of 1885 and the Jesuits' Estates debate in 1889. On these latter occasions, Chapleau was not only politically inactive while convalescing, but he was also out of the country. Each of those events produced political turbulence which weakened the government of which Chapleau was a member and lead to a deterioration of his own position within those administrations. On other occasions, Chapleau's need to seek seclusion to restore his strength allowed his Conservative opponents to undermine his career. For example, Senator F.-X.-A. Trudel reserved his most venomous attacks for Chapleau's periods of convalescence. While Chapleau remained at home to nurse a sprained ankle in 1891 just after Macdonald's death, the Secretary of State's opponents persuaded Abbott not to grant him the Railways and Canals portfolio immediately. During the spring of 1892 while Chapleau rested in the United States, not only did Abbott

²⁹Fonds Guin, DeCelles à Chapleau, Ottawa, le 12 février 1898.

refuse to entertain Chapleau's desire to increase his prestige by representing Canada in negotiations with the Americans but also Chapleau's jealous Conservative opponents undermined his support within party ranks.

While Chapleau's poor health contributed to his political demise, the second and most important reason for his failure stemmed from his lack of political sagacity. In his relationship with other anglophone and francophone members of the Conservative party, Chapleau stumbled badly over several issues. Because of a series of unfortunate political decisions, Sir Adolphe Chapleau failed to gain the confidence of his English-speaking colleagues--a necessity if he was to become a key figure in an anglophone-francophone political alliance. Many English-speaking Conservatives believed that Chapleau had "an illimitable capacity for intrigue"³⁰ and was prone to corruption. The National Printing Bureau scandal of 1891 coupled with the numerous other odious scandals that entwined Chapleau's entire political career caused anglophones to distrust the magnetic French Canadian. Because of his arrogant denunciation of those who suggested he might be involved in questionable dealings, Chapleau was never able to remove that sentiment of suspicion from anglophone minds. He termed Sir John A. Macdonald's concern over the political implications of corruption charges as "antiquated".³¹ In addition, in reply to the anglophone press that condemned his involvement

³⁰ Sir Joseph Pope, Public Servant: The Memoires of Sir Joseph Pope, ed. Maurice Pope, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960, pp. 48-49.

³¹ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Chapleau to Macdonald, Montreal, December 28, 1890.

in the Printing Bureau scandal Chapleau publicly stated that he "always had a serious contempt for those preachers of propriety who scorn a soldier because his tunic is torn and his face cut, regardless of the fact that he was in the bloody fray for his party while they were gossiping slander at their friends...."³² These statements served to confirm anglophone suspicions that the Secretary of State was corrupt. Chapleau's attitude continued an unwise trend he had begun in the past with his demand in 1883 that L.-A. Sénécal, suspected of improper dealing relating to the sale of the Q. M. O. & O., be nominated to the Senate!

The majority of English-speaking Conservatives also suspected the motives of Chapleau's desire to administer "a large department with plenty of patronage at his disposal...." In his demands, many argued, "there was no real question of principle involved; it was always a sordid demand for more influence or patronage or material advantage of one kind or another."³³ In reply to such charges, Chapleau explained that he coveted a patronage-laden portfolio in order "to afford the Province of Quebec the means of developing its immense resources as rapidly as possible under the impulse of a powerful current of French influence."³⁴ After Chapleau's death, some of his followers charged

³²Montreal Gazette, Monday October 19, 1891.

³³Sir Joseph Pope, Public Servant, pp. 48-49.

³⁴Montreal Gazette, Wednesday December 2, 1885. Chapleau wrote this letter to his electors in Terrebonne in order to explain his stand on the Riel issue.

that Macdonald, fearing Chapleau's success in that domain, had enticed him into the federal cabinet. There, Chapleau could accomplish less for the material advancement and moral prestige of Quebec in Confederation. As a captive of the Prime Minister, Chapleau remained powerless.³⁵

Other English-speaking Canadians also felt threatened by Chapleau's use of patronage to stress the French fact in spite of Chapleau's affirmation that he "did not attack the interests of ... [his] fellow-citizens of British origin."³⁶ For example, the English-speaking Attorney General in Gédéon Ouimet's government, George Irvine, complained that Chapleau was instrumental in neglecting to compensate anglophone speculators in the Tanneries affair.³⁷ J. G. Robertson, Treasurer in Chapleau's government in Quebec, resigned when L.-A. Sénécal's French Canadian dominated syndicate received the Montreal-Quebec city section of the Q. M. O. & O. in 1882 from Chapleau. Rumours that Chapleau was behind Quebec's blackmail attempts of 1884 to secure better financial terms and other concessions for French Canada, tended to strengthen English-speaking fears that Chapleau harboured an anti-anglophone bias.

These cries by anglophones against Chapleau's demands for greater French Canadian influence within the federal government beginning with

³⁵La Presse, lundi le 14 janvier 1907.

³⁶Montreal Gazette, Wednesday December 2, 1885. Chapleau wrote this letter to his electors in Terrebonne to explain his stand on the Riel issue.

³⁷P. B. Waite, Canada 1874-1896: Arduous Destiny, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1971], p. 49.

his own promotion became more strident as the population of the majority anglophone community increased in relation to that of the minority francophone community. English-speaking sentiment during the Riel crisis, the Jesuits' Estates affair and the Manitoba School Question attested to that fact. The efforts of the Conservative party leadership, including Chapleau, to reduce tensions within the party by an attack on the Liberal party's economic policy of unrestricted reciprocity proved relatively successful until the Conservative electoral victory of 1891. After the apparent rejection of the Liberal's trade policy by the Canadian voters, the Manitoba School Question arose again to the fore and forced all Conservatives to define a clear position with respect to the French fact. Since many Conservatives refused to express confidence in the French and English-speaking alliance that a political settlement of the Manitoba problem and the promotion of Chapleau in the cabinet would signify, Chapleau was forced to leave Ottawa. Chapleau might have avoided that fate if he had worked more closely with Langevin. In addition, if Chapleau had followed the Quebec leader's more subtle and quiet approach in his attempt to provide francophones with employment in the federal civil service, he might have escaped much anglophone antagonism.

Not only did English-speaking Conservatives hinder Chapleau's political advancement because of his involvement in scandals and his appetite for patronage, but also many anglophones thwarted his climb to power because they suspected he possessed an "innate want of loyalty"

towards the Conservative party.³⁸ That complaint was intimately connected with what was probably the most important reason for Chapleau's political failure--his inability to dominate French Canada.

Undoubtedly Sir Adolphe Chapleau's achilles' heel in politics revolved around his notion of the necessity for Quebec to remain united politically in order to maintain her position in Confederation. Chapleau stressed that French Canadians must be united because "nous avons besoin de toutes nos forces pour prendre dans la Confédération le rang et l'importance que nous devons avoir et pour appliquer notre énergie au développement des ressources nationales, qui sont immenses."³⁹ He deplored the fact that the Conservative party was divided against itself into Chapleautiste and Castor factions and that the Liberal party was similarly rent with dissension. In order to produce a greater unanimity of purpose in French Canada, Chapleau proposed his idea of conciliation. That policy which would establish a political party based on moderate Liberals and Conservatives with the expulsion of the minority extremist groups of both parties--the Castors and Castor Rouges--brought Chapleau into conflict with fellow Conservatives, namely Sir Hector Langevin and the Castors.

The Castors were a small amorphous group of dissidents within the Conservative party and were nominally led by Senator F.-X.-A. Trudel.

³⁸ Sir Joseph Pope, Public Servant, p. 48.

³⁹ Chapleau, "Discours prononcé au concert du Club Cartier, à Montréal, le 3 décembre 1880", L'Honorable J.-A. Chapleau, ed. Taché, pp. 158-160.

Although the Castor opposition to Chapleau was primarily ideological, their strength did not stem from their ideology, their numbers or organization, but rather from their ability to exploit specific political issues. For example, Senator Trudel's attack against Chapleau for the sale of the Q. M. O. & O. on the moral ground of corruption⁴⁰ did not cause Chapleau or the Conservative party major problems. However, because Trudel and his Castor followers managed to become the symbols of dissent for other groups within French Canada who opposed the sale for more utilitarian reasons, such as Quebec city which lost the C. P. R. terminus to Montreal as a result of the sale, the Castors were able to cause Chapleau great difficulty within the party.

Instead of attempting to reach a reconciliation with the Castors, Chapleau favoured their expulsion from the Conservative party. However, because moderate Conservatives did not possess enough electoral strength to govern alone, Chapleau realized support from some other source was required if the Conservative party was to remain in power. Therefore, he decided to embrace moderate Liberals to replace the Castors he hoped to expel. Such a scheme puzzled anglophones and was opposed by the chef of French Canada, Sir Hector Langevin.

Although Chapleau's ambition to replace Langevin as chef of French Canada contributed to their quarrel, the conflict between the two politicians primarily resulted from their respective attitudes

⁴⁰L'Etendard, lundi le 31 mars 1884; mercredi le 21 juin 1885 & samedi le 6 juin 1885.

towards the Castors. Their differences originated, not in any ideological divergence, but rather in a dispute over practical political policy.⁴¹

Langevin desired to unite as many groups in Quebec as possible to his standard through a judicious use of patronage, regardless of any group's ideological leanings. On the other hand, Chapleau insisted that only loyal friends who had proved their allegiance in the past should receive patronage.⁴² Consequently, despite the supplication of Castors for favours, Chapleau continually rejected their pleas. In the 1870's, Chapleau refused to aid Trudel in his search for a position in order to provide funds to pay his creditors; after the election of 1891, Chapleau insisted that a Castor, J.-J. Ross, not replace a Chapleautiste as Speaker of the Senate; and he scoffed at Beaubien's cry for appointment to the Quebec Legislative Council following the Conservative's defeat in the Quebec election of 1897. Chapleau remained rigid in his opposition to the Castors in spite of his realization that they could be reconciled to the party through a wise distribution of patronage. He witnessed Langevin's success in attracting Castor support through such a policy and acknowledged the positive effect for the party of the rejection of

⁴¹This analysis agrees with L. C. Clark's claim, based on work done by Barbara Fraser, that ideology did not divide Chapleau and Langevin. He rejects Neatby and Saywell's implied assertion that Langevin was an ultramontane who quarrelled with the liberal Catholic Chapleau. See L. C. Clark, A History of the Conservative Administrations 1891 to 1896, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1968, pp. 540-543. Also see Barbara Fraser, "The Political Career of Sir Hector Louis Langevin", CHR, 42.2 (June 1961), 131.

⁴²PAC, Tarte Papers, Chapleau à Tarte, Ottawa, le 4 mars 1887.

Trudel by Siméon Pagnuelo, a former Programmist, after his appointment to the Bench.⁴³ Yet, Chapleau rejected Langevin's system and continued to attempt to form an alliance with moderate Liberals. Most English-speaking Conservatives and Langevin's French Canadian followers not surprisingly regarded that policy as treason.

Although the conclusion that Chapleau failed because of poor health and political ineptness does not represent any startling new revelation about French Canada's last great Conservative, three important areas concerning Chapleau's career have been illuminated in this study. First, more detail than ever before is presented about Chapleau. While Marcel Hamelin pointed out that French Canadian politicians were pre-occupied with the problems that surrounded the industrialization of Quebec,⁴⁴ Chapleau's views and actions in that field are now more apparent, particularly his concern about railways. Andrée Désilets mentioned the Chapleau-Langevin quarrel⁴⁵ and Neatby and Saywell wrote about the Chapleau-Castor dispute.⁴⁶ However, more information is now available with respect to this triangular relationship between these three French-speaking Conservative groups. In addition, this analysis supplements

⁴³ASTR, Chapleau à de La Bruère, Ottawa, le 7 juin 1889.

⁴⁴Marcel Hamelin, La Chambre d'Assemblée du Québec de 1867-1878, D. ès L., l'université Laval, 1972, pp. 231-233 & 273.

⁴⁵Andrée Désilets, Hector-Louis Langevin: Un père de la Confédération canadienne 1826-1906, Québec: Les presses de l'université Laval, 1969, pp. 362, 363, 367.

⁴⁶Neatby and Saywell, "Chapleau and the Conservative party in Quebec", CHR, pp. 1-22.

Robert Rumilly's discussion of Chapleau's connection with provincial politics, particularly his move from Quebec to Ottawa in 1882 and his stand during the Riel affair.⁴⁷ Finally, additional knowledge clarifies Chapleau's role on the Chinese Commission of 1884, his interest in labour, his flirtation with the Liberals and his character.

Besides amassing a great amount of detail, this thesis demonstrates that Chapleau was a failure in almost everything he did. His arrival in Ottawa at the end of July 1882 was not the great victory for which he yearned. Not only was he relegated to the second row of benches in the House of Commons, but his health was broken and reputation soiled by the Q. M. O. & O. Railway scandal. His inability to crush the Castors and establish a conciliation with moderate Liberals became clear by the end of 1883 when he was compelled to force the removal of his staunch supporter and friend, Joseph-Alfred Mousseau, from the Premiership of Quebec. Although he managed to obtain some satisfaction from his successful handling of the Chinese question, Chapleau could not escape the fact that he had been sent to British Columbia to study the question as punishment for his support of the unsuccessful attempt by the Quebec government to blackmail Ottawa for more money in 1884. Upon his return from the west coast, Chapleau faced defeat in the Riel affair. With Quebec ablaze because of Riel's death, Chapleau's attempts to prevent the defeat of Conservative candidates in a federal by-election and a provincial general election proved ineffective. He avoided the collapse

⁴⁷Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, Montréal: 1940-1942.

of the Conservative party in the 1887 federal election only to be confirmed in his subordinate position within the cabinet and within French Canada. His labour legislation fell into oblivion about the same time that he was politically weakened by the National Printing Bureau scandal. Chapleau's efforts to maintain harmony between anglophones and francophones within the Conservative party and Confederation shattered as his attempts to secure justice for French Canadians at the time of the Manitoba School Question failed. His career and life ended with his inability to procure a second term as Lieutenant-Governor of his beloved province. These events highlight only a few of Chapleau's better known failures!

The importance of this dissertation is not only its outline of Chapleau's failure or its addition of detail. It also shows that there is much to be gained from a separate study of Chapleau, while keeping his entire career in focus. It is a career that culminates in his arrival at Ottawa with the intention of asserting French Canada's place within Confederation. To accomplish that task, he believed he required the leadership of francophone Conservatives and the support of anglophones. In an attempt to acquire both objectives, Chapleau met with defeat. Within French Canada, Chapleau was embroiled in an ideological battle with the Castors that plagued his career to the end. Second, he challenged the political competence of the chef of French Canada, Sir Hector Langevin. One important political clash involved Chapleau's objection to Langevin's demand that the alliance with the Castors continue. He opposed Chapleau's scheme of expelling them and forming a coalition with moderate Liberals. A series of such incidents arose and intensified with

Langevin's loss of the Quebec region to the Liberals in the 1887 general election--a defeat sustained because of the economic distress in that area and not because of the Riel affair. Finally, Chapleau believed he might replace Langevin as chef once Langevin was forced to retire from the cabinet in 1891 because of the Langevin-McGreevy scandal. But Chapleau's dreams were finally crushed by the Printing Bureau scandal which seriously undermined his position in French Canada and jeopardized his relationship with his anglophone colleagues.

English-speaking Canadians had always been sceptical of Chapleau's assertion of French rights and his suspicious proximity to scandal. They did recognize his ability to win elections, but by 1892 found that his liabilities outweighed his usefulness. Consequently, Chapleau was permitted to retire and become Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec. At Spencer Wood, Chapleau awaited a call for his return to Ottawa. When an appeal for his aid did arrive in 1896, he found that he still did not have complete support from French Canadians or from the anglophone community. Therefore, he declined the invitation and remained silent as the Conservatives lost the 1896 election to the Liberals under the leadership of Wilfrid Laurier.

Chapleau's flirtation with Wilfrid Laurier after the election signified a recognition of his own failure to become the undisputed chef of French Canada and the tacit acceptance of Laurier as the new French Canadian strongman. Chapleau's actions led to a weakening of the Conservative party by paving the way for the departure of moderate francophones from the Conservative fold and their assimilation into

Liberal ranks. However, Chapleau was not perturbed because he realized that although he failed in politics, his ideas would triumph. He was convinced at the time of his death that English and French-speaking Canadians could work together in harmony and that the principle of equal justice and equal rights "will prevail in the end; the passions and the false calculations of politics may retard its triumphs, but justice and truth have inalienable rights, and, though they advance slowly, none the less do they arrive at their destination."⁴⁸ That expression of optimism is the legacy a defeated and dying Chapleau left Canadians.

⁴⁸Montreal Gazette, Wednesday February 9, 1898. These words are culled from Chapleau's last interview with the press, four months before he died.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the federal political career of Sir Adolphe Chapleau--a career centred on the belief that la survivance and l'épanouissement of French Canada could best be ensured by French-speaking Canadians maintaining a political alliance with English-speaking Canadians. Chapleau's views which saw Canada as a partnership between anglophones and francophones in a common fatherland, caused him to stress the similarities between both communities and to promote projects such as the transcontinental railway. Chapleau also realized that this doctrine demanded that a French Canadian political leader possess the confidence of his francophone and anglophone colleagues if he wished to prosper in the political arena. For lack of that essential ingredient, success eluded Chapleau.

Initially, Chapleau faced opposition within French Canada from a group of particularist Conservatives unofficially led by Senator F.-X.-A. Trudel. These inward looking francophones wished to underline religious and linguistic differences between francophones and anglophones. The dispute between the Chapleautistes and Trudel's followers, or Castors, reached a climax during the controversy that erupted over the hanging of Louis Riel in 1885. Although that event appeared to signal Trudel's triumph, the Senator lost his political clout as the Quebec Liberal leader, Honoré Mercier, usurped the French particularist cry.

Although the ideological threat to Chapleau's position within the Conservative party diminished after the Riel affair, that quarrel had already given way to a political dispute of more significance between

Chapleau and the Conservative chef of Quebec, Sir Hector Langevin. While both politicians agreed on the nature of Confederation, they disagreed on other important matters. When Chapleau entered federal politics in 1882 Langevin denounced his plan of conciliation, a scheme to expel the Castors from the Conservative party and to unite with moderate Liberals. In 1884 they argued over Chapleau's encouragement of the Quebec government's blackmail attempt on Ottawa. Although passions cooled while Chapleau studied the problem of Chinese immigration, the dispute erupted again when Chapleau disapproved of Langevin's handling of the Riel affair. After that conflict, Chapleau refused to consider Langevin as chef, yet Chapleau was never able to usurp the title for himself because of his policy of conciliation.

Unable to dominate French Canada, Chapleau also failed to gain the confidence of English-speaking Canadians. Despite Macdonald's admiration of his ability to win elections and Chapleau's voice of reason during the Jesuits' Estates controversy, the North West language issue and the Manitoba School Question, Chapleau failed to inspire his anglo-phone colleagues for three reasons. He appeared to commit party treason by his policy of conciliation, he had a ravenous appetite for patronage and he was tarnished with the brush of scandal.

Rejected by many within his own party, ill and powerless, Chapleau retired from federal politics in 1892 to become Quebec Lieutenant-Governor. As Lieutenant-Governor he watched the Liberal-Conservative party disintegrate beyond repair. Consequently, after 1896 he turned to Laurier whom Chapleau regarded as the natural heir of Macdonald. Although

that action signified personal political defeat, it also indicated that Chapleau still considered his vision of Canada to be viable.