

(JOSEPH HOWE AND THE LIBERALS:
HIS CONCEPT OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND PARTY
AND A RE-APPRAISAL OF HIS CONTRIBUTION TO NOVA SCOTIAN
REFORM UP TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE FALKLAND COALITION)

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

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INTRODUCTION

Joseph Howe's portrait is given a place of honour in the foyer of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. Nearby stands the printing press that he used so effectively to develop a political consciousness in Nova Scotians. The impression of repose which emanates from his likeness belies the energy with which he dedicated himself to that task.

Joseph Howe's life and works have been set forth mainly in the historical sense. Literature about him has a tendency to stress the emotional and romantic, to the detriment of his real accomplishments as a political leader, strategist and tactician in an age of political experiment. The need for a fresh appraisal of his political beliefs and contributions is therefore apparent.

This thesis is concerned with Howe in his formative period. It sets him in his proper perspective in the Nova Scotian reform movement, deduces the contemporary influences on his political thought and outlook, and their effects on his development as a politician.

Howe's organization of the Liberal party as a major factor in Nova Scotian politics is then treated, and his abilities as a practical politician are analyzed. The conditions and viewpoints that gave rise to his participation in the Falkland Coalition are examined, and the wisdom of his course of action evaluated in relation to contemporary political circumstances. From this, both his shortcomings and his strengths as a politician in his earlier life are evident.

A good many of Howe's views on colonial administration eventually found their way into the policies of the Colonial office. A knowledge of

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these views therefore constitutes a very desirable background for the study of subsequent British colonial developments.

The Nova Scotian newspapers of the age, the Joseph Howe papers in the Public Archives of Canada, and the George Johnson papers that await cataloguing there, are of prime value in appraising Howe's contribution. The exhaustive work of Dr. D.C. Harvey and Professor J. Murray Beck on this great Nova Scotian are also invaluable to a proper understanding of the man and his contribution. Avenues worthy of further study by the student of Canadian politics are indicated in the re-appraisal of this first true Liberal leader of Nova Scotia.

CHAPTER I

THE GENESIS OF REFORM

Dissatisfaction over prevailing political institutions was the dominant characteristic of the nineteenth century political affairs within Great Britain's North American colonies. The causes of this dissatisfaction varied in relation to the motives and aspirations of the colonial societies concerned, and for this reason no two dissident factions were to seek or to gain solutions to their problems by identical means. Nor were some to view the results as completely satisfactory to their needs.

The North American political controversies in general terms, centred around the forms of government that Great Britain was prepared to bestow on the Colonies. The task of "making those more delicate constitutional adjustments to reconcile local autonomy and centralized control"¹ was the more difficult because of the varied demands of pressure groups, cliques and reformers. The immutable trend, however,

¹ W. Ross Livingston, Responsible Government in Nova Scotia, Iowa City, The University of Iowa, 1930, p. 20.

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was towards responsible government - the basic decision was always "how much - how soon". In Nova Scotia, the trend had started before Quebec² fell to Wolfe .

The older British settlers of Nova Scotia had come from New England, Scotland and Ireland. They were dissenters and pioneers, and³ "strongly democratic and individualistic" in outlook . This rugged outlook was given an intellectual and somewhat cultivated background with the advent of the Loyalists, and the melange produced, within a generation "a finer type of new world democracy, a democracy with greater⁴ intellectual vigour ".

Governor Parr first felt the rumblings of dissatisfaction over the ruling clique. The "cursed factious party spirit which was never known here before the emigration of the Loyalists" with their "levelling⁵ republican Principles ", bedevilled the old soldier in his declining years. However, both new and old inhabitants were too afraid of the

2 The Treaty of Utrecht (1713) had decreed that Acadia would be British. In 1719, Governor Richard Philipps was given a new Commission and set of Instructions which required the calling of an Assembly before laws could be enacted. Edward Cornwallis arrived in 1749 with a Governor's Commission which provided the real origins of the provincial constitution, and resulted in the eventual convening of an elective assembly on October 2, 1758, the first in Canada. Nova Scotia was then British in form of government as well as in name. See J. Murray Beck, The Government of Nova Scotia, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1957, pp. 3-6.

3. W Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 25.

4 Ibid., p. 26.

5 J. Murray Beck, Op. Cit., p. 29.

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charge of disloyalty, and too lacking in political theory, to do more than struggle to control the revenue raised under acts of the legislature. Nevertheless, there had been established a tempered determination for the greater popular control over local affairs, and the assembly, through use of the legislative process embarked on "modifying the power of the executive"⁶ long before the inhabitants of the Canadas were confronted with the problems of the Constitutional Act of 1791. Nova Scotia's struggle for democratic self-government thus started as it was to end, in a peaceful setting. It was Joseph Howe's proud boast that the struggle for responsible government in Nova Scotia had not been marred by violence. In marked contrast were the circumstances in the Canadas, where Durham was to find "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state", and "a struggle, not of principles, but of races"⁷. Indeed, whereas Dr. D.C. Harvey could remark that "one hundred years ago, Nova Scotians had already prepared themselves by intense economic and intellectual activity for the greatest achievement of their history"⁸, in the same period the bitterness and strife in the Canadas were resolving into open rebellion. Like the Canadas, Nova Scotia was governed by a badly organized and inefficient bureaucracy. Political, social and

⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷ Sir C.P. Lucas, Lord Durham's Report on the Affairs of British North America, Volume II, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1912, p. 16.

⁸ D.C. Harvey, The Intellectual Awakening of Nova Scotia, Dalhousie Review, Volume XIII, Halifax, 1933, p. 22.

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economic grievances vexed the pioneer and independent spirit of the majority of her population. Yet love of the mother country, and a passionate belief in the eventual attainment of justice under the British Constitution combined to give the move for responsible political institutions an orderly and evolutionary character.

Nova Scotia's political institutions were cast in the standard British colonial mould. They were characterized by one observer as⁹ "John Bull, a farce in three acts".

The first element was the Lieutenant-Governor who, as Chief Executive, was the centre of power and political authority. The evils of the practice of rewarding friends, military and political servants of the Crown with this office did not escape Nova Scotia, and it was more often the rule than the exception that the incumbent, ill-informed or indifferent, or worse still both, fell under the patronizing influence of the second element, the Executive Council. The Council, composed mainly of the Halifax businessmen and bankers, and the Anglican Bishop and the Chief Justice, was at once the Upper House (Legislative Council) of the Legislature, the principal advisory body to the Governor, and the highest judicial authority. These two elements effectively throttled any illusions of power which the third element, the House of Assembly, might entertain. The Assembly was a genuinely popular body, unlike the British House of Commons of the time, which was in no sense representative

9 W. Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 33.

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of the great mass of the people. In Nova Scotia, the suffrage was exercised by practically every man who had reached his majority¹⁰. This condition holds the key to much of the success of the later practical reformers, for the floor of the House became the sounding board of popular opinion against the political evils of the day, and although of little immediate influence on the government, the debates truly reflected the ever-growing demand for popular representative government and religious toleration. Here the people's representatives opposed the Halifax merchant-oligarchy and the Established Church; the Baptists and Presbyterians expressed the principles of representative government; and the friends of the Roman Catholics opposed a government in which the latter had no voice and which proscribed them severely¹¹.

At the advent of the nineteenth century, Halifax was not only the capital of the Province, it was the Province. The only other port authorized to handle foreign trade was Pictou. A few Halifax merchants

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

¹¹ See J. Murray Beck, Op. Cit., p. 51. The First Assembly had given Catholics the right to possess only those lands conveyed to them by the Crown, and a later Assembly's attempt (1782) to give them the same rights as Protestants was denied in England. As a result, the Legislature could go no further than permit those Catholics to acquire and hold lands without restriction who took oaths which were highly obnoxious to them. This state of affairs continued until the re-annexation of Cape Breton, with its considerable Catholic population, forced a reconsideration of the problem. The Assembly of the day favoured the complete equality of all citizens before the law, and, therefore, it sent further and repealed all the other restrictions on Catholics, including those relating to land holding, in 1784. They could not, however, sit in the House.

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 controlled all commerce . Their children entered the army, navy and civil service, all of which strengthened the conservatism of Halifax society. From this class the Executive Council was recruited, and the leading office holders appointed. "Society" in Halifax meant a distinct class, a charmed circle, the entrance to which was jealously guarded. Thus economic and social causes combined to make the Council strong, and in addition, civil, ecclesiastical and educational forces were all rallied around it. It rarely counted amongst its members anyone outside of Halifax, or of other than Church of England denomination. The only College in the Province was King's College, Windsor, where the statutes forbade the students to "frequent the Romish Mass, or the meeting houses of Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, or the Conventicles of any other dissenters from the Church of England ".

All of these elements combined to build up an aristocracy in Halifax, and in "no other city in British America was there an aristocracy that combined such undoubted power, such refinement of manner, such social prestige, and so much real ability ".

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 The bench and bar, the church, the college, the city, the banking and the mercantile interests, the influences of the army and navy, all contributed to strengthen the edifice, and it was fittingly crowned by the Governor, who, as the direct representative of the Crown, had power unquestioned.

12 G.M. Grant, The Late Honourable Joseph Howe, Canadian Monthly and National Revue, Volume VII, 1875, p. 505.

13 Ibid., p. 506.

14 Loc Cit

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In contrast to the uncompromising attitude of the Halifax oligarchy were the trends towards an enlightened colonial administration emanating from London with the fall of mercantilism and the adoption of free trade. The "raison d'être" for "the old policy of centralized control had disappeared"¹⁵. Economic policies alone, however, were not the sole factors that brought about the great change. The influence of the French Revolution, the change in the Home government as a result of the Great Reform Bill, the rise of the Liberal School and the equalitarian movement and the inevitable development of the party system - all were positive factors that hastened the movement towards responsible institutions. England grew accustomed to reform, and when the clamour from across the sea became more insistent for "a more enlightened system of government,"¹⁶ people turned to Burke for advice¹⁷.

The "Yankee menace" also assisted the cause of North American Colonial reform. If the concession of self-government to the provinces could prevent union with the United States, it had, for the Englishman, much in its favour¹⁷. Moreover, the colonists were acquiring friends who had great influence in both the Colonial office and popular opinion in England. Gladstone, in the outline for his essay "Colonies and

¹⁵ Paul Knaplund, Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy, London, George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1927, p. 10.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

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Colonization", wrote, in 1835, on the benefits of a popular assembly, an independent judiciary, and of provincial, municipal and parochial institutions for the purposes of self-government. He also defended the right of liberty of opinion, of writing and of speech, and of petition-¹⁸ing . Men like Lord Durham and Charles Buller were to do much to present fairly the conditions in the colonies, and administrators like Glenelg were to give the colonists' demands favourable consideration.

The first attempt at reform began in Nova Scotia after the turn of the century, when William Cottnam Tonge led a group of members in the assembly struggling for economic reform and the constitutional rights of that body. In a letter to the Secretary of State dated April 21, 1802, Governor Wentworth attacked Tonge as one:

who led a party to oppose, embarrass and obstruct the measures and the officers of the government with a perseverance worthy of a better cause and with speeches of invective and virulence, tending to excite dissention between the council and representatives and discontent among the people at large¹⁹.

Tonge, however, had disavowed himself with party connections but identified himself with legislative measures beneficial to the agricultural life of the colony. The country members had indeed rallied around this severe but eloquent member of the Assembly, but if we define party as Burke did, namely a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavour the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed, we have not seen the emergence of a party in the true sense of the word. Nor were the Governors to be faced with

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 168-169

¹⁹ Beamish Murdoch, A History of Nova Scotia, Volume 3, Halifax, James Barnes, 1866, p. 223.

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a disciplined and determined body in the Assembly for many years to come. In December 1808, a certain Dr. Croke, a Council member described the Assembly as having no party organization and controlled by the government by "little favours and small patronage":

The lower house is as usual composed principally of farmers who have little leaven of American Democracy amongst them. They are consequently as a body suspicious of government, jealous of their rights and strongly retentive of the public purse. Opposed to them, the Council consisting principally of His Majesty's 20 officers is always disposed to second the views of the government .

The reform movement was given a great impetus by the increase in the number of newspapers and the growth of their circulation. G.E.M.

21
Tratt considers the following table published by the Times in 1840, however incomplete and inexact, as indicative of the number of subscribers:

	22
The Nova Scotian	3,000
The Times	480
Christian Messenger	450
The Journal	350
Mechanic and Farmer	300
Yarmouth Herald	300
Recorder	200
Pictou Observer	200
Cape Breton Advocate	200

20 Ibid., p. 289.

21 G.E.M. Tratt, The Newspapers of Nova Scotia, with special reference to the period before 1867. Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1960.

22 The Nova Scotian, Joseph Howe's paper easily out-distanced all others in demand.

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By the 1820s a new spirit was becoming evident in Nova Scotia, largely due to the activities of the press, which reflected the concern of merchant, farmer, labourer and fisherman alike over the post war depression and the pangs of post war readjustment. During the War of 1812, all had been too busy to give serious concern to political affairs, but the general discouragement over the declining economy brought a re-
²³
 newal of factional and party strife . The dissenters especially wel-
²⁴
 comed the opportunity to attack the mercantile-religious clique .

At first most editors and publishers moved only slowly and with considerable caution toward the vigour and freedom of expression so typical of the mid-century. However, they were spurred on by the intellectual quickening in the province over the Napoleonic Wars, a reaffirmation of the "Yankee Menace", and a large new influx of settlers almost as important as that of the Loyalists of a generation before. The
²⁵
 improvements in communications made possible a rapid diffusion of news and gave it an intimacy that enhanced its interest.

23 Beamish Murdoch, Op. Cit., p. 489.

24 W. Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., Appendix 1, p. 237, gives the following figures as evidence of the dissenter strength in 1827:

Church of England	28,659
Presbyterian	37,225
Roman Catholic	20,410
Baptist	19,790
Methodist	9,408
Other Denominations	8,365

25 By 1829, stage or packet services had been inaugurated to all important towns.

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By 1848, Sir John Harvey could say:

The press of Nova Scotia is as free as that of England, claiming and enjoying in fact the same privileges and restrained by the same laws. It displays a creditable degree of activity and ability ...there are at present thirteen newspapers published in the capital and five in the interior. The circulation of English newspapers has increased an hundred fold since the Establishment of the line of steam packets, and all the leading British and Irish periodicals are looked for with....much eagerness²⁶.

Under these circumstances it was inevitable that some popular and critical attention would focus on the Legislature and the Executive Council. Two significant events in particular brought the machinations of the Council before the public eye. In 1824, Cavanaugh, a Roman Catholic, had been duly elected to represent the new constituency of Cape Breton. The Council refused to remove the clause disabling Roman Catholics, even after the Assembly had voted for its abrogation. Finally, under special permission, he took his seat. The second event involved Barry, the Shelburne member, who was expelled and jailed in 1829 when he refused to apologize for his verbal attacks on the Council. Interestingly enough, a young editor named Joseph Howe upheld the actions of the Council on this occasion. Barry was re-elected and quietly took his seat again.

These cases brought to the fore the problem of whether or not the Council could control membership in the Assembly. Two Halifax editors, Anthony Holland of the Recorder and Edmund Ward of the Free Press were called to account by the Council for questioning its authority to control

26 D.C. Harvey, Newspapers of Nova Scotia, 1840-1867, Canadian Historical Review, Volume XXVI, No. 3, September 1945, pp. 279-301.

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the membership. This attempt to curb the press brought to the assistance of his fellow editors, John Howe (Joseph Howe's father) who as King's Printer could usually be counted on as a government supporter. Clearly newspapers were becoming less non-committal and were beginning to assume a more integral part in the life of Nova Scotia.

It was quite evident, as the 1820s drew to a close that a new, but essentially indigenous, spirit of independence was abroad in the province. The general picture, as depicted by Beck, is that of "Nova Scotians rubbing the sleep out of their eyes after 1812 until by 1835²⁷ they were thoroughly awake ". In the process, the descendants of the early settlers, their outlook determined in part by British and American experience, were producing in a new environment a distinctly Nova Scotian character which was reflected in their becoming "thoroughly aroused to the strength and weakness of their birthright, and eager to²⁸ overhaul the entire ship of state ". Indeed, class government by the Halifax aristocracy was "almost as much out of place in the growing life of Nova Scotia as had been John Locke's Grand Model in the wilderness of²⁹ Old Carolina ".

27 J. Murray Beck, Op. Cit., p. 75.

28 D.C. Harvey, The Intellectual Awakening of Nova Scotia, p. 2.

29 W. Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 36.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY REFORMERS: CAUSES AND EFFECTS
OF THE FAILURE OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL AND
COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

The foregoing chapter, which shows the forces and agencies which had been operating to produce an intellectual awakening, bears out Dr. D. C. Harvey's conclusion that "without minimizing the achievements of Joseph Howe, the reform leader must be regarded more as the embodiment of the spirit of the age than as having sprung Minerva-like from the rocks of the North-West Arm¹. The consensus is one of a maritime and agricultural society developing a growing sense of awareness of its political destiny, from the turn of the century until the advent of Joseph Howe, at which time it was to be given dynamic and successful leadership. Yet before Howe shouldered his way to leadership amongst the reformers, several dedicated Nova Scotians were to both gather and direct the forces advocating change, albeit unsuccessfully. Their outlook and efforts were to have no little influence on the young tribune of the people.

The first determined attack on the Halifax citadel was politico-ecclesiastical in nature, and came from the ruggedly beautiful country of Pictou, which had endeared itself to its hardy Scottish pioneers because of its similarity to their homeland. The attack was led by the Reverend Thomas McCulloch, a Presbyterian clergyman. The best judges agree in

1 J. Murray Beck, The Government of Nova Scotia, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1957, p. 75.

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estimating Thomas McCulloch's abilities and attainment as of the very
²
 highest rank . George Johnson's opinion that McCulloch's work was
 influential far beyond the reaches of Nova Scotia is supported by D.C.
 Harvey's view that McCulloch "made an indelible impression upon the
 cultural outlook of his province, especially through Pictou Academy; and
 through the graduates of that academy, such as Principals Dawson of
 McGill and Ross of Dalhousie, he had no small influence upon the intel-
³
 lectual life of Canada as a whole ".

The hardy Presbyterian Minister's real influence started when he
 succeeded in establishing an Academy in Pictou, despite the determined
 opposition of the Anglican oligarchy. On arrival in Pictou, he had found
 that there was no public provision for elementary education, and but two
 institutions of secondary or higher education, King's College and Academy
 at Windsor and the Halifax Grammar School, both publically subsidized as
 the preserves of the governmental class and the Church of England. Thus,
 "while the prevailing idea was one of monopoly and privilege.....he
 became the champion of educational freedom....and when dissenters were
 denied the right of marriage by license and the incorporation of churches,
 he organized them in a compact group to petition the government until

2 George Johnson, Manuscript Notes on Joseph Howe, George
 Johnson Papers, Public Archives of Canada, unnumbered.

3 D.C. Harvey, Thomas McCulloch, Canadian Portraits, R.G.
 Riddell, Editor, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 22.

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⁴
equal rights were obtained". The leaders of the Anglican Church were determined that Pictou Academy should receive no aid from the Provincial fund, and the "dissenter" was equally determined that his Academy should be recognized. Year after year the struggle was carried on with great virulence, and the Colonial Patriot, the Pictou news organ of the Presbyterians, carried his fight to the people.

It required no small courage to take this stand, when the political atmosphere was charged with suspicion, when memories of the American and French revolutions were still vivid, and when the usual response of the Council was to accuse all critics of disloyalty. He was regarded by Council as a dangerous agitator, but through his numerous editorials and articles against the composition and outlook of that body, he was a constant source of encouragement to the dissenting groups. His spirit of toleration is epitomized in a Pictou editorial of March 11, 1829:

Although we do not live at a period when the fagot and the stake are the tests by which religion is tried, even at the present day, there is too much of the spirit of intolerance existing between religious denominations, and too great an inclination to pervert the sacred subject of religion to the advancement of unhallowed design....It has long been a subject of astonishment to us, that so little activity has been displayed by the friends of toleration in our happy province to procure the removal of these liabilities⁵, under which our Roman Catholic fellow subjects in this, as well as other portions of the British Empire have so long suffered⁶.

⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵ Proscription of Roman Catholics under the Test Acts.

⁶ The Colonial Patriot, March 11, 1829, Pictou, Nova Scotia.

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The spirited Pastor also thundered out at the citadel of privilege in Halifax, denouncing the fact that the leading feature of His Majesty's Council was the claim to legislative and lordly powers. As a Council, and hence the Governor's advisers, its members had been appointed to guard His Majesty's rights. McCulloch asked: "is this constitutional, that the guardians of the Royal Prerogative should claim a legislative control over the liberties of the subject ?"⁷

The Councillors had sought to persuade the public that the House of Lords was their model. McCulloch would have them on a more realistic footing, divested of self-determined prerogatives which were in effect greater than those of the Lords at Westminster, and mindful of the fact that, as Ministers collectively, affecting to legislate for the nation⁸ they were apt to find themselves "a head out of pocket ". McCulloch pointed out that the Councillors could maintain, and the community would accept through lack of resistance, that the sworn servants of the Crown had a right to control the liberty of the subject. The Colonial Patriot pleaded "Have we a single reader who does not perceive that such a combination of office leaves to British liberty neither root nor branch ?"⁹

7 Colonial Patriot, May 15, 1830

8 Loc Cit

9 Loc Cit

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By such stirring revelations, McCulloch and his followers infused Nova Scotians with the unconstitutional nature of the government, and the need for its early remodelling. In arguing that, as a legislative body, the Council ought not to exist, and that, if indeed a Council was required, it should stand on neutral ground between the Crown and the subject, or on a basis equally connected with both, McCulloch was striking at the roots of the colony's political and social ills. His proposals were clear cut planks in any reform party platform. Well might Dr. Harvey say that, when Howe was but a boy of fourteen, the founder of Pictou Academy was formulating the ideals of a province-wide culture as a basis of social and economic welfare, and that, through his writings on social, economic and constitutional reform, he "sowed the seed and prepared the soil for Howe's educational ideals and constitutional reforms".¹⁰

McCulloch, whose clerical and educational prepossessions precluded any practical entry into politics, had cherished the hope for a strong reform by 1830. While constantly engrossed at the Academy, as Howe found him "in his shirt sleeves stooping before the fire boiling a skillet in which is contained the ingredients for a further experiment - another inroad upon the wide dominions of nature"¹¹, he had high hopes that Jotham Blanchard, a member of the Assembly, a graduate of the Academy and the Editor of the Colonial Patriot, would be the party's standard bearer.

¹⁰ D.C. Harvey, Op. Cit., p. 25.

¹¹ George Johnson, Op. Cit., Unnumbered.

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In 1827, while Howe was toiling to succeed in his first newspaper venture The Acadian, and rejoicing that he had added 120 names to his list of subscribers, Jotham Blanchard, then a young man four years older than Howe, established The Colonial Patriot. Under the tutelage of McCulloch, Mr. Blanchard's political views were indeed very far in advance of the day. It has been claimed, and with some justification, that his paper was the first journal published in the maritime provinces to advocate what later on became known as Howe's liberalism. Taking a decided stand in the support of the policies of his Alma Mater, Mr. Blanchard soon drew around him the most able of the Presbyterian and other "dissenting" bodies, and this paved the way for the Pictou Academy question becoming the first battle ground on which the Old Party and the new were to meet.

Blanchard believed that the true means of reverencing the British Constitution lay in advancing the interests of the King's subjects. The influence of the Manchester School is evident in his view that government is "designed for the general good of the people", and that "government deserves most praise, which most effectively succeeds to this object...he who pretends to support the dignity of the government....at the expense of the general happiness, alike commits treason against the king and his subjects - he betrays the people and dishonours their sovereign".

12 The Colonial Patriot, December 7, 1827.

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In advocating the removal of all religious disabilities and tests, the suppression of interests which hampered the public good, and the emancipation of all classes from the strict control of authority, Blanchard could with authority claim in his 1830 nomination speech in¹³ Halifax that his politics were those of Fox. His reference in the same speech to the influence of the First Earl of Chatham (William Pitt) on his outlook marks his discernment that public opinion, though generally slow to form and to act, is in the end the paramount power in the state. The same speech is in fact the nearest approach to a political theory for a reform party, for in it he said:

We come now to a more important question. What are my politics? And I answer, they are of the liberal kind. I have imbibed at the very feet of Gamaliel, for they are the politics of the Whigs of England, the politics of Chatham - of Fox - of Sheridan - of all the great men who in the mother country have contended for civil and religious liberty. I am an advocate for the unbounded freedom of the Press, for that is the great lever by which the world can alone be moved. Recent events show its power in France, where it has overturned the Tyrants and oppressors who sought to crush it to the earth....For these opinions I have been branded as a radical - as a leveller, and I scarcely know what. I confess that I am a leveller, but I would not level by dragging down the high and the virtuous, but by raising the great mass of the community up.

Well might the Pictou radicals look to Blanchard for inspired leadership, yet he who had first conceived of an "organized party against¹⁴ misrule in Nova Scotia " was in the end to fall under the influence and

¹³ Reported in the Nova Scotian, September 16, 1830

¹⁴ Colonial Patriot, February 20, 1830

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patronage of the Executive Council, and his voice gradually quietened as the luxury and affluence of privilege lulled his earlier views. His work for Reform had, however, achieved a positive result. He had kindled the beacon of Pictou's politico-ecclesiastical radicalism, and Howe could remark with justification that the "Pictou Scribblers" had taught him much. Howe, from his early affiliation with the Official Party, had been an antagonist of Blanchard for a time. Through personal communication and exchanges of views in their respective papers, the Editors had gradually approached each other. Thus, among the forces that drew Mr. Howe from his position of neutrality, if not active support of the Tories, was the Pictou influence of Jotham Blanchard, his press, and the Pictou Academy.

As unrest grew in northern Nova Scotia, another potent force for reform was developing in the south. Centred around Yarmouth, its chief advocate was Herbert Huntington, who represented Shelburne in the Assembly from 1830 to 1836, and Yarmouth (when it was established as a separate county) from 1837 to his death in 1851. Nova Scotian scholars regret the paucity of fact extant concerning this formidable and principled politician. Huntington wrote little and was a poor speaker, hence he attracted little acclaim except from those who came in personal contact with him.

Yarmouth had from the outset leaned more to the social democracy of New England than to the citadel of Tory privilege in Halifax. The Yarmouth settlers had brought with them the American Congregationalism,

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and this independent democratic religion shaped the outlook of the new Nova Scotians. They also brought with them their traditional dislike for restrictive practices on trade.

Huntington throughout his political life fought against privilege for any one religious denomination. When the Legislative Council passed a bill to establish a parish of St. Margaret's Bay in 1843, Huntington and Annand rallied the Liberals in the Assembly to defeat it. A second attempt in 1844 to pass a similar bill was defeated with Huntington leading the attack. The bills would have given the Church of England the right to tax members of the new parish unless they were already paying - members of some other congregation. The Tories maintained that the Liberals were concerned for those who had no religion - a subtle insinuation - but Huntington saw the bills as a reaffirmation of the Act of 1759 which established one religious body as the church of the province.

A singular example of Huntington's uncompromising principle occurred in 1838 when the Old Council was separated into Executive and Legislative Councils. Huntington was the one reformer appointed to the Executive Council. However, in that year, because of the crossing of despatches, the Governor was forced to cut down the Council from twelve to nine, and Huntington was one of those dropped. When later instructions permitted the larger council, he refused to take a seat. He wrote that he had concluded:

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that Her Majesty's Ministers had proceeded upon something like the plan adopted at Home when circumstances render a change of Ministry necessary there - that is to select them out of those whose political principles accord nearest with the majority of the House of Commons, or the Great Body of Electors. Under these circumstances I made up my mind to accept the appointment, thinking a majority of the Councils, at least, would be chosen from those who possess what are deemed to be liberal political principles.

Upon my arriving in Halifax to attend the Assembly I felt much disappointed to find, as I judged, and still judge, that on all the great questions that interest the main body of the inhabitants of the province, a majority of the Council would be the same as the former one - and I was gratified when a different arrangement of the Councils afforded an opportunity for those to resign who were desirous of doing so¹⁵.

This was the first great statement, that the democratic government long sought by the people's representatives could be achieved and should be achieved by making the government responsible to the people through the medium of parties.

In 1840, when Sydenham induced Howe to enter the Falkland Coalition, Huntington would not concur in Howe's action. The Reform party was therefore under divided leadership at a time when it needed all its strength united and disciplined. Huntington could not perceive, respecting coalitions, that it was better for two contending armies to shake hands, that they might divide the spoils amongst themselves and their friends. True to his statement in the Nova Scotian of March 10, 1842:

¹⁵ Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Volume 243, Number 120, letter Huntington to George, Yarmouth, September 28, 1838.

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"What is party? A set of men professing particular opinions supposed to be for the good of the country" he felt that, when such a set of men held opinions on the best means of governance, conviction in their efficacy would admit of no compromise of action. Thus Huntington's most important contribution to the political life of the province was the realization that responsible government meant party government and cabinet government. It was this realization that led him to refuse a seat in the Executive Council six times, and caused Chester Martin to call him "The Baldwin of Nova Scotia".¹⁶ Having refused to join a coalition government that blurred party lines, after the dissolution of the coalition, he was the rock on which the disillusioned Howe rebuilt the great Liberal party. Over-shadowed by the flambuoyancy and popular appeal of his younger colleague, Huntington appeared content to imbue the party with the politico-social democracy of Western Nova Scotia and the consistency of approach to the political problem that played no little part in the attainment of the Reform goals.

As Nova Scotia entered the 1830s, the Reform movement appeared headed for better times. In that year an attempt by the Council to prevent an increase of the duty on brandy brought the Council and Assembly into violent conflict. The Assembly, under the leadership of S.G.W. Archibald, held that the regulation of taxes, under British precedent,

¹⁶ Chester Martin, Empire and Commonwealth, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1929, p. 173.

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belonged solely to the representatives of the people. The Council on the other hand catered to the wealthy brandy merchants of Halifax who wished to escape the tax. The controversy led to a general election in which the party of the Assembly won a signal victory, electing all of their candidates with one exception. For the moment it seemed that the Reform Party would be able to control the whole government. Their leader, however, was unequal to the task of pursuing his political advantage, and the Halifax clique continued in power. Clearly, the Reformers lacked decisive leadership. Again in 1834, during the debates on Goderich's suggestion that Nova Scotia, as well as New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, should have separate Executive and Legislative Councils, Huntington, through lack of coordination amongst the reformers, found himself in a hopeless minority, even in the face of the Solicitor-General Fairbanks' admission that "the principles of the British Constitution ought to be in operation here as far as can be introduced...The present system cannot continue ¹⁷". The debate itself consisted of three days of dispassionate discussion, but in the speeches of Stewart, Blanchard and Doyle, as reported in the Nova Scotian by the hand of Joseph Howe himself one detects, at last, a growing consciousness amongst the Reformers that they lacked effectiveness through inability to act in concert.

¹⁷ Chester Martin, Op. Cit., p. 164.

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By 1835, the time was indeed ripe for a strong and consistent reform movement. All that was lacking was a leadership able to blend the several different factions and groups into a common political party organization. Leaders had appeared who for the moment seemed fitted for the task of moulding the Pictou and Yarmouth influences for an all-out assault on the Tory camp. However, Blanchard was becoming suspect and Huntington appeared content to deal with principles. Archibald, Stewart and Doyle had all ranked as possibilities, only to be found wanting in either the ability or the courage and understanding to strike at the heart of the difficulty. But in the wings a young newspaperman was waiting. The restless reporter in the Assembly gallery had seen enough of lack of strategy and opportunism. It takes little imagination to envisage his alert mind engrossed in the problem of sorting out the disorder amongst the liberally-minded of the Assembly.

CHAPTER III

HOWE: HIS ADVENT AND POLITICAL BELIEFS

Joseph Howe was, in a very special sense, at once the child and¹ the father of Nova Scotia . Born on an inlet from the sea hard by Halifax in 1804, he grew up in an atmosphere that inspired a deep love for things Nova Scotian, and the deepest of admiration and respect for his father, John Howe, a high Tory loyalist and a dissenter, who had been appointed King's Printer at Halifax as a reward for his adherence to the Crown.

John Howe's income was barely sufficient to maintain his family, and at age thirteen Joseph was sent to work in the office of the King's Printer as an apprentice. Hence with his "fondness for reading, familiarity with the Bible, and knowledge of old Colonial and American incidents and characteristics "² which he attributed to the influence of his father, the young printer's devil became associated with the profession that was to serve him so effectively in his years of manhood. At the age of twenty-three, as a robust and intense man anxious to ferret-out knowledge wherever it could be found, he bought his first newspaper the Weekly

¹ W.L. Grant, "The Tribune of Nova Scotia", A Chronicle of Joseph Howe, Toronto, Glasgow Brook and Company, 1915, p. 1.

² Ibid., p. 16.

Chronicle in partnership with James Spike. In the following year, 1828, he sold out to Spike in order to purchase the Nova Scotian.

It is quite difficult to discover what Howe did not excel in. Although lacking in formal education, by his early twenties he had developed a commendable style in poetry³ and prose, and a remarkably effective power of oratory. One of his more disparaging critics was forced to remark that "Howe...had an easy command of a graphic, flowing style, both in writing and in speech. A retentive memory for words and facts enabled him to prepare his speeches in an incredibly short time. Even in the excitement and confusion of public discussion, he could collect and marshal his data, give retorts and make replies to opponents with phenomenal success".⁴ W.K. Thomas' Canadian Political Oratory in the Nineteenth Century offers further praise. After examining the speeches of McGee, Blake, Macdonald and Brown, Thomas remarked that "Joseph Howe went beyond even these orators....He was a master of factual detail and its skilful presentation....his astounding ability allowed him to persuade even a greater range and variety of audiences than those won over by the others; and his powerful rhythm could reinforce and make still more effective all his other qualities of persuasion. As a result, in arousing attention no matter where he went, in enforcing his arguments, in

³ During Howe's apprenticeship, many of his poems were published in the Halifax newspapers. His Melville Island was especially well received.

⁴ E.M. Saunders, Three Premiers of Nova Scotia, Toronto, William Briggs, 1909, p. 147.

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stimulating the imagination of his hearers, and in exciting their feelings, Joseph Howe was supremely successful⁵". This great ability, complemented by the mannerisms and attitudes of one who truly belonged to the people, were potent attributes of the young editor and politician.

As Howe walked and rode from one end of Nova Scotia to the other⁶, he was as full of stories and jokes as a pedlar, and had few airs. A brusqueness of manner and coarseness of speech was ingrained in him. His manners never had that finish...and his cultivation of the hail fellow well met style did not tend to produce it, or to give him that refinement⁷ which only fools fancy to be incompatible with strength⁸. Howe would think nothing of throwing his arm around a lady "to whom he had been introduced only that day....it is quite a mistake to fancy that ladies like such rude liberties....Hoydens of course do, and Joe was unable to distinguish between the two classes.

⁵ W.K. Thomas The Order of Excellence: Joseph Howe, Dalhousie Review, Volume 39, Number 3, Dalhousie University, Halifax, 1959, pp. 377-389.

⁶ George Johnson, Manuscript Notes on Joseph Howe, Public Archives of Canada, Unnumbered. In Howe's journeys in connection with his newspaper enterprise he had come in contact with the ordinary folk, and they had come to the conclusion that "Joe Howe was the man of the people". See also Lorenzo Sabine, Loyalists of the American Revolution, p. 133: "It was Joe Howe by day and by night. In the coal mine, in the plaster quarry, in the shipyard, in the forest, on board the fishing smack".

⁷ George Johnson papers, Grant's Lecture on Howe, Public Archives of Canada, p. 7.

⁸ Loc. Cit.

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In his manner there was egotism, and a craving for the roar of
⁹
the multitude . Restlessness or impatience with officialdom there
certainly was, but there was no doubting the sincerity with which he
devoted himself to the common people. At the height of his power, his
perfect openness and unreserve of manner constituted his greatest charm.
As the Honourable Edward Chandler of New Brunswick said in 1851: "We all
feel Mr. Howe's greatness, but what I admire is the simplicity of his
manners, combined with his high intellectual resources, negotiating with
Ministers of State....as beneath the lowly roof of the humblest farmer of
¹⁰
the land, he is ever the same - Joe Howe ". Perhaps the greatest compli-
ment ever paid Howe came from the lips of Sir John A. Macdonald. In
George Johnson's words:

I remember mentioning the circumstances....(of Howe's 1851
statement in Halifax that "many in this room will live to hear
the whistle of the steam engine in the passes of the Rocky
Mountains and to make the journey from Halifax to the Pacific
in five or six days")....to Sir John Macdonald in 1886, as we
were on the cow-catcher of the locomotive carrying us through
the Rockies. His comment was that Mr. Howe, "of all public men
that British North America has produced, had the most seminal
mind. There were more seed-ideas in that man's head - and all
of them important - than in any other man's with whose history
I am familiar¹¹".

⁹ G.M. Grant, The Late Honourable Joseph Howe, Canadian Monthly
and National Review, Volume 7, Number 5, Toronto, Adam Stevenson and
Company, 1875, p. 378.

¹⁰ Loc. Cit.

¹¹ George Johnson, Letter to Principal Grant of Queen's
University, August 29, 1900 Public Archives of Canada, Manuscript Notes
on Joseph Howe, Unnumbered.

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Such were the endowments of the man who was to lead his fellow Nova Scotians in the fight for responsible government.

During his mid-twenties, as Howe reported the debates of the Assembly, he became gradually familiar with the Constitution and its defects. The influence of his father, which had engendered a neutrality¹² of opinion concerning the administration, rendered the first seven years of Howe's editorship barren of serious criticism of its state of affairs. His active mind was not idle, however, for there were men of extraordinary ability to observe in the House. The leaders of the minority had been educated in Windsor, and the leaders of the popular party were all men of university education. The reporters' gallery was therefore one of Howe's colleges. Important questions were discussed in the Assembly. The oaths against Popery that members had to take, foreign trade, free ports, quit rents, the constitutional rights and privileges of the two branches of the Legislature, the defective constitution of the council, all elicited discussions which it was impossible for him to hear without taking sides. The popular appeal of Blanchard's views, and the sincerity of Huntington, gradually drew Howe into the camp of reform.

Joseph Howe was thoroughly familiar with the work and plans of the liberal reformers in England and understood well the constitutional interpretations of the statesmen of the older colonies during the pre-¹³revolutionary period. Both Annand and Chisholm also state that Howe

¹² Chester Martin, Empire and Commonwealth, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1929, p. 168.

¹³ E.M. Saunders, Op. Cit., p. 80.

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became a Free Trader in principle during the time he was reporting the
¹⁴ Assembly debates . Grant considers that he was a Free Trader as a man
 of common sense, "doubly so as the native of a Province whose ships sail
 on every sea, take freights to and from every port and bring home wealth
¹⁵ from every shore ". Yet Howe, who was as close to the people of the
¹⁶ soil as to those of the sea, knew that the agricultural element of
 Nova Scotian society was ill-prepared to cope with the dynamic social
 order inherent in free trade. He realized full well that agricultural
 output could not be adjusted to meet demand in a free market as could
 the output of the factory and the labourer. He also knew that the
 prosperity of his province was inextricably woven into the fortunes of
 the fisherman and farmer who, unlike the labourer, were rooted to their
 homesteads. Under conditions of open competition he feared that tradi-
 tional markets for Nova Scotian produce might disappear to the ruination
 of the communities concerned. He thus was the first to perceive the
 heart of a problem that, to this very day, plagues Nova Scotia, and this
 attitude explains, in part his stand on Confederation.

The first stages of modern liberalism then, at variance with the
 needs of the majority of Nova Scotians, were unpalatable to Mr. Howe.

14 J.A. Chisholm, The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe.
 Volume 1, Halifax, The Chronicle Publishing Company Limited, 1909, p. 4.

15 George Johnson papers, Grant's Lecture on Howe, p. 31.

16 Reference has already been made to Howe's extensive travels
 throughout rural Nova Scotia. For several years he also kept a farm at
 Musquodoboit.

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He turned instinctively to the conservative reactionism of Burke, which could best defend the traditional values of rural life against the encroachments of commercial progress¹⁷.

In arguing that the common people were the real repositories of reason and virtue, and that the cause of rational reform involved placing the largest possible measure of authority in their hands¹⁸, Howe's views were essentially consonant with Jeffersonian democracy. In order to exercise this political authority, Howe devoted himself to the task of ensuring that the common people of Nova Scotia obtained a political education, and from 1830 he dedicated his newspaper to the task. How well

17 See the Nova Scotian, January 2, 1840: In this department we conceive that we see the time....when the burdens of the subject shall be in exact proportions to the benefits he reaps, and not a farthing more; when every class and denomination of man shall enjoy their natural privileges; when worth and talent shall leap up into deserved supremacy, and by the real aristocracy of the land; and when the complicated structure of civilized society shall approach as closely as may be to the spirit of that original compact, which politicians have imagined between the governed and the rulers. See also J.A. Chisholm, Op. Cit., p. 18: I wish to build up agriculture, commerce and manufactures, upon the surest of all foundations, the mental and moral cultivation of the people.

18 See J.A. Chisholm, Op. Cit., p. 18. In Howe's inaugural address to the Mechanics Institute, he said: "if the requisite qualities are cultivated and maintained, we may attain a degree of commercial greatness and prosperity....Let me be not misunderstood. I am neither seeing visions nor dreaming dreams, but reasoning upon facts sanctioned by the experience of ages". See also pp. 547-548, in flaying Mr. Owen, a government supporter in the House: "Why should the farmers and mechanics of Lunenburg, who have enriched the country by their industry, hand over their right of thought and action on their highest earthly interests to the gentlemen who live by the sweat of their brows?"

he succeeded is evident in his remarks to the Tory Owen in 1845: "if the learned gentleman means that farmers and mechanics ought not to interfere in politics, because their intellects are more obtuse than his own, I tell him that I will take a dozen young men from the forges in Halifax, who with a sledge-hammer in one hand and a hot horse-shoe in the other, shall deliver a better speech on responsible government than he can make in a month's preparation ¹⁹".

Beyond this concept of people's authority, however, Howe broke with Jeffersonian tradition. He, like Burke, could perhaps sympathize with those Americans who had believed in the traditional right of Englishmen to enjoy the protection of a parliament of their own choosing, but he could never countenance their rejection of the British Crown as the ultimate source of constitutional authority. He would endorse Constant's argument for a constitutional democracy, and would support concepts of political liberty based on the theory of the separation of powers, but they must be fashioned in the British tradition. Speaking of the 1837 Resolutions, Howe said: "the idea of republicanism, of independence, of severance from the mother country never crossed my mind. I wish ²⁰ to live and die a British subject, but not a Briton only in name".

19 Ibid., p. 548.

20 Ibid., pp. 131-132. On February 11, Howe's fight for a change in the constitution began in earnest, when he introduced in the Assembly his Twelve Resolutions. The central theme was that the people of Nova Scotia were being deprived of the right of self-government, to which as Britishers they were fully entitled. The secret meetings of the Council, the membership of the Chief Justice in that body, the Anglican dominance, and the right of the Assembly to control revenues, were discussed with great boldness and frankness.

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He believed that the American constitutional system was inferior to the British; that the "excellence of the British Constitution" lay not in the mere structure of the various branches of the Government, but in "that all-pervading responsibility to the people which gives life and vigour to the whole". The life of Nova Scotia was fundamentally democratic, and in his great quest for self-government without independence, he was seeking all that Jefferson had advocated prior to the Revolution of 1776. Howe, with an unbounded confidence in the loyalties of the people and a tremendous strength of purpose, appreciated that the task could be accomplished without resorting to secession or to republicanism. Livingston pointed out that "Howe, in seeking to adapt the English system to the conditions of life in the new colonies was in reality propounding the question of colonial responsible government, which was the first step in the transformation of the constitution of the Empire. The cornerstone of the Commonwealth was in the making". In fact, in his reasons for entering the legislature in 1836, Howe said "as respects the general concerns of the Province, we ask for those free institutions which, while they truly reflect the feelings of the people, shall best promote the

21 Loc. Cit.,

22 Loc. Cit.,

23 W. Ross Livingston, Responsible Government in Nova Scotia, Iowa City, University of Iowa, 1930, p. 55.

24 Loc. Cit.,

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happiness and prosperity of the country ". British laws had been modified to suit the conditions of the colonies, and Howe could see no reason why British institutions should not also be modified to colonial circumstances. Howe, therefore, was demanding more than the English constitution. He was in reality seeking the constitution that he believed and understood. He thus was seeking not only responsible government in keeping with the existent provincial constitution, but also colonial self-government in the Empire at large, and in all that he wished to preserve the British connection.

Howe appreciated that developments at home would, in the end, produce the results he sought for. Speaking on February 24, 1837 on the Twelve Resolutions, he reminded the House that, if the colonies had asked for nothing in former times but what they were certain to get, if they had been satisfied with what Lord Bathurst²⁶ had been disposed to give, what situation would they be in at the moment? He appealed to the House to look only to the situation and the wants of their Province, and to ask for what was right and fair, for "the views of the English Government with respect to domestic and colonial policy are every year becoming more liberal, and we have no reason to despair of obtaining any concession calculated to do us good. Colonial ministers and their prejudices pass²⁷ away; the Province still remains ". A few days later he was to say:

25 J.A. Chisholm, Op. Cit., p. 104.

26 Lord Bathurst was Secretary for the Colonies in the Liverpool administration until 1827, and an opponent of Reform.

27 J.A. Chisholm, Op. Cit., pp. 131-132.

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While the Government at home is subjected to constant modifications required by the increased intelligence of the people, is it to be said that ours should remain unimproved - that the reforming ministers of England will deny to the colonists the right to imitate their own examples? Sir, I have often felt, and now in my heart believe, that if the people of England really understood the questions which often agitated the colonies, if the Government was accurately informed, instead of being, as it constantly is, misled by interested parties on this side of the Atlantic, we should rarely have any very irreconcilable differences of opinion²⁸.

These remarks go a long way to explain why Howe could endure the scorn and invective hurled at him by the Tories, and the calm composure with which he accepted rebuff from both the Colonial Office and the Lieutenant-Governors who interpreted the home policy under the influence of the Executive Council.

Under these circumstances, Howe could have no affection at all for the trend of events in the early 1830s in Lower Canada. In replying²⁹ to H.S. Chapman's plea for a strong statement of grievances of the Reformers in Nova Scotia, Howe certainly did not hide his discontent with the "men and measures (of the official faction) that have, in all the British North American Provinces, excited opposition and complaint" but went on to say: "I have for some time shared in some degree the suspicion ...that the party with which you act are determined...at all hazards, to precipitate a contest with the mother country...The people of Nova Scotia are sincerely attached to the mother country...We do not blame upon the people of Britain the various acts of misrule of which we complain,

²⁸ Ibid., p. 134.

²⁹ Published in the Nova Scotian, December 21, 1837.

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because we have seen them struggling against the same enemies that have
³⁰
 usually oppressed us ".

It was Howe's conviction that in the Executive Council lay the chief stumbling block, not only to his aspirations for responsible government, but also to his aim for self-government in internal provincial affairs. It, in turn, recognized him as one who clearly understood the issue involved, and as a spirited leader who could not be compromised by patronage. Howe's Twelve Resolutions were opposed by the best leadership and tactics that could be mustered. Council members advanced the myth that Howe's programme would lead to independence and republicanism, that his proposal would "substitute for the high-minded independence of the Englishman, the low and grovelling subservancy of democracy".³¹ Here at last was a Tory Citadel stung into offensive action - forced to muster its every strength to oppose a thirty-two year old Reformer with less than six months' experience in the House.

It was Howe's conviction in the principles he had advocated that
³²
 led him to write his four letters to Lord John Russell, wherein is contained the essence of his beliefs on colonial administration. Howe

30 J.A. Chisholm, Op. Cit., pp. 86-87.

31 W. Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 55.

32 The weakness of the Melbourne government made the matter of colonial self-government a difficult problem to handle. Lord John Russell spoke in the Commons against the radical changes proposed, and considered the proposal for a responsible Executive Council to be "entirely incompatible with the relations between the mother country and the colony". Hansard, 3rd Series, Volume 36, March 6, 1837, as quoted by W. Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 69.

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alone was undismayed at the adverse turn in the Reform party's fortunes, and the letters, expressive of his confidence in the high ideals of Lord John and an unshaken belief in the English people, are regarded as the colonial counterpart of Durham's Report and Charles Buller's "Responsible Government for Colonies"; Chester Martin concluded that: "Over both of these, however, the letters had one great advantage. Howe's method was empirical, and he wrote with authority from the colonial point of view... The letters were addressed to a British Minister, but the wealth of the imagery, the flexibility of the argument, and the vigour of the language all betrayed an appeal as wide as the political instincts of the race".³³

³⁴
In the letters Howe maintained that Russell's views were based on a lack of full understanding of matters vital to the interest of all the colonies, and that the doctrines which he had advanced in the House could only degrade and humiliate them all:

Whether or not the Anglo-American population, upholding the British flag on this side of the Atlantic shall possess the right to influence through their representatives, the governments under which they live in all matters touching their internal affairs (of which their fellow subjects living elsewhere know nothing, and with which they have no right to interfere) is a question, my Lord, that involves their happiness and freedom. To every Nova Scotian it is no light matter that the country of his birth ...should be free and happy. I share with my countrymen their solicitude on this subject; I and my children will share their deep disgrace if the doctrines recently attributed to your Lordship are to prevail, to the utter exclusion of us all from the blessings and advantages of responsible government, based upon the principles of that constitution which your Lordship's fathers laboured to establish and ours have taught us to revere.

33 Chester Martin, Op. Cit., p. 182.

34 J.A. Chisholm, Op. Cit., pp. 222-259.

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Howe then scored the fact that British subjects at home were permitted to enjoy the blessings of the ancient constitution, whereas those overseas were deprived of it without justification. The argument that British North America must be governed by a minority in order to preserve the imperial connections was specious. The real issue was that a large portion of the British people were being denied their just constitutional rights, even in the face of instructions from the Crown :³⁵

.....but surely none of these distinguished men would wish to deny the constitution itself to large bodies of British subjects on this side of the water...who are anxious to secure its advantages to themselves and their children...who can never be expected to be contented with a system the very reverse of that they admire.

Howe exposed Russell's argument that the Lieutenant-Governor was a responsible official, as a mockery. He pointed out that the Queen's representative was always obliged to seek and follow local advice, and if this were furnished by an irresponsible Council there could be no responsible action. How could the home government permit government in the colonies by small and irresponsible groups, by minority parties, when such a state of affairs would never be tolerated in England? Could anyone believe that a majority party, governing in keeping with the popular

³⁵ See letter, Glenelg to Campbell, October 31, 1837, wherein Campbell had been instructed "to select for the Councils those individuals who would be least open to just exception and which would afford the most satisfactory proof of the desire of Her Majesty to entrust the duties attached to members of the respective councils, to gentlemen entitled to the confidence of the great body of the inhabitants". Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Journal of the Assembly of Nova Scotia, 1838, Appendix 2, p age 6.

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wish, would have any greater feelings of disloyalty than when held under the control of a narrow selfish group?:

Why should we run counter to the whole stream of British experience...The employment of steamers will soon bring Halifax within a ten days' voyage of England. Nova Scotia will then not be more distant from London than the North of Scotland and the West of Ireland were a few years ago. No time should be lost therefore in giving us the rights and guards to which we are entitled, for depend upon it, the nearer we approach the mother country the more we shall admire the excellent constitution and the more intense will be the sorrow and disgust with which we must turn to contemplate our own.

Howe then replied specifically to the arguments advanced by Russell in the House. He denied the view that the Lieutenant-Governor and Her Majesty occupied different positions relative to the administration of the government, as the powers of both were limited by custom and statutory enactment. Howe also refuted Russell's main argument that a governor, administering in accordance with Colonial Office instructions could not, at the same time, follow the advice of Council, by showing that the Governor was always obliged to work with, and through, a Council whose influences were usually greater than those of the Colonial office. The Council moulded his views and guided his acts, in spite of his instructions, and regardless of popular opposition to the Council in the Legislature. If the governor were held responsible for the proper administration of the government he was helpless, for he was entirely in the hands of a group which he was powerless to change. On the other hand, if the Colonial Secretary were held responsible for the Colonial government, he would be totally ignorant of their needs and circumstances. Either position was untenable. The Colonies were not asking

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for anything more than the control of their internal affairs. Foreign relations and international trade were the rightful fields of the home government. Legislative acts could easily create the distinction between the functions of the colonial and those of the imperial government.

Howe concluded his letters with a plan of colonial government in which was defined the place and purpose of every part, from Crown to Assembly. Foreign relations, imperial defence, and international and intercolonial trade were left entirely to imperial control. The Colonial Secretary would exercise supervision over, but would have no power to interfere with local affairs. The Lieutenant-Governor should be entrusted with the responsibility for safeguarding the Crown's prerogative and imperial interests. He should select for his Executive Council those who held the confidence of the people and of their representatives; and the Council alone should be held responsible for the success of the local administration. The Legislative Council should remain as a check upon the Assembly. Under this plan, the Assembly would come into its rightful role as the real organ of power in the province, and the administration of her affairs would be carried on by a majority party, as in England, under the watchful eye of a constitutional opposition.

It is beyond doubt that these letters exercised a far-reaching influence on the policies of the Secretary of State for the colonies. Although for Howe there was "not an over-paid and irresponsible official, from Fundy to the Ottawa, whose inextinguishable hostility I shall not

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have earned for the remainder of my life ", the effect of his letters on British colonial administration was such that "no further narrow enunciations of policy are to be found in despatches from the colonial office... the seeds of sound policy had been sown and taken root....Splendid work Mr. Howe achieved in the enfranchisement of his own province, but when his claim to eminence is put forward, it will rest not alone upon the fruits of his direct political service in his own province, but in the commanding part he played in educating the imperial authorities in true statesmenlike methods .

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36 Chester Martin, Op. Cit., p. 186.

37 Honourable J.W. Longley, Joseph Howe, Toronto, Morang and Company Limited, 1904, pp. 54-55.

CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF HOWE'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

By 1836, Howe was, in the public eye, the epitome of reform against monopoly and privilege. In that year he announced his candidature on the Reform party ticket in the County of Halifax. Yet in a sense he had been the leader and fountain-head of reform since the Brandy Dispute of 1830. He had clearly appreciated that the reform party must be founded on the principle of the majority, and that the majority wish could not be brought to fruition without party organization.

Besides perceiving the lack of leadership and sense of objectivity amongst the Reformers in 1830, Howe, the newspaperman realized that whatever public opinion existed was ill-organized and certainly too poorly expressed to influence the existing government. He realized its potential if properly stirred. Michels has pointed out how the essential characteristic of democracy is found in the readiness with which it succumbs to the magic of words written and spoken, and that in a democratic regime, the born leaders are orators and journalists. How well Howe's leadership fits this observation.

In order to influence the beliefs of his countrymen, Howe decided to enlighten them, at first through the press and later on, on the speaker's rostrum. He thus embarked, through the Nova Scotian, on a highly organized programme of political education to mould public opinion in a manner favourable to the principles of the Reform party. As the Nova Scotian observed in retrospect, on January 2, 1840:

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One of our objects, formed perhaps the earliest, and adhered to with the utmost tenacity, was to excite in the bosoms of the race growing around us, a rational and strong attachment to the soil which gave them birth...while endeavouring to cultivate this feeling, we have laboured to keep it within the bounds of loyalty to the sovereign and rational attachment to our brethren at home.

Howe was indeed successful in developing what Dr. Harvey calls "a healthy tone of public opinion" amongst the general public, and in inculcating Nova Scotians with political knowledge. In the election campaign of 1836, he rejoiced that his efforts had been successful, and that henceforth every candidate had to state his principles and call attention to some matter of importance, rather than his more personal claims, on which the electorate had to decide. In speaking on the Twelve Resolutions, Howe gave thanks that the "alumni of the fields, the workshops and the printing offices" were springing up throughout Nova Scotia to compete with the talented output of King's College, Windsor, who had hitherto tried to monopolize education and public office. Well might James A. Roy observe that "under Howe's guidance, the Nova Scotian became the most influential¹ organ of public opinion in eastern British North America". The masses had caught the inspiration of his zealous appeals, and a new party solidarity and a new party feeling began to gather around his leadership.

¹ James A. Roy, Joseph Howe: A Study in Achievement and Frustration, Toronto, MacMillan Company, 1935, page 24. See also, D.C. Harvey Newspapers of Nova Scotia, CHR, Volume 26, Number 3, 1945. "The Nova Scotian was so popular and so comprehensive in its reviews of local, colonial, American, and British news and opinions that one could almost compile a history of the English-speaking world from its pages between 1830 and 1848...it devoted so much attention to local literature and other cultural activities...that no purely literary newspaper or magazine could compete for any length of time with it."

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With his "stock in trade consisting of a sound constitution, immense vitality, boundless ambition, and wonderful memory, wide knowledge of Nova Scotia, and patriotic fervour", he personified the vigorous and democratic life of the majority. The veneration in which he was held by the common people of Nova Scotia was not without influence on Howe, for his egotism could not be said to have diminished as his fortunes in the Reform party grew.

Livingston has remarked that with Howe's acquittal in the libel case of 1835³, he was in fact politically born, and that "leadership had at last been found which the reforming forces of Nova Scotia were to follow gladly for a generation"⁴. The effect of his acquittal was enormous. That a municipal system that existed for almost a century was struck down by a single speech of an individual, and never recovered from the effect of that incident until superseded by a provincial Act of Incorporation, "whether regarded as an appeal to the passions or to the good sense of the community"⁵ can scarcely be over-estimated. As Chisholm remarked:

2 Ibid., p.7.

3 On January 1, 1835, there appeared in the Nova Scotian a letter signed "The People", written by George Thompson, accusing the Halifax magistrates of misconduct. A prosecution of criminal libel was instituted against Howe. Mr. Howe conducted his own defence and was acquitted after a brilliant speech.

4 W. Ross Livingston, Responsible Government in Nova Scotia, Iowa City, University of Iowa, 1930, p. 49.

5 J.A. Chisholm, The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe, Volume 1, Halifax, The Chronicle Publishing Company Limited, 1909, pp 22-23.

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To deliver such a speech at such a time required some moral courage. Responsible government was then unknown to the institutions of British America. (Cities) were all governed as Halifax was, by magistrates...independent of popular control. Neglect, mismanagement and corruption were perceptible everywhere...immediately after Howe's acquittal, all the magistrates in Halifax resigned⁶.

Mr. Howe's version of his trial preparation is indicative of his supreme confidence in his own abilities:

I went to two or three lawyers...and asked if the case could be successfully defended. The answer was no. I asked them to lend me their books, gathered an armful, threw myself on a sofa, and read libel law for a week. By that time I had convinced myself they were wrong...I only had time to write out and commit to memory the two opening paragraphs of the speech...all the rest was to be improvised as I went along...I became conscious that I was commanding the attention of the court and jury. I was much cheered when I saw the tears rolling down one old gentleman's cheek. I thought he would not convict me if he could help it⁷.

This event marks a change in Howe's approach to the attainment of reform.

By now he had realized that the arena of the newspapers was too confining for him. He understood that the press could not exert the immediate influence which the popular propagandist exercises over his audiences in public meetings and debates. It was all very well to address some three thousand subscribers per week, but a generation might pass before Nova Scotians would be fully awake to the issues through this medium. His ambition was not bounded by the desk and chair of the Editor.

⁶ Loc. Cit.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 23-24.

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He appreciated that his decisive pen was good, but that his remarkable oratorical powers were better. He was now thoroughly alive to the value of his oral powers to persuade and to lead the masses. Could he not further the cause of progress that he had so much at heart, by using his voice as well as his pen? He was tired of listening to Reformers who assailed the strongly entrenched governing body as if they were afraid to handle roughly the "Lord's annointed". There was a battle to be fought. It was no child's play, but a stern and long-continued campaign that had to be conducted with skill, with resolution, with courage, and with wariness, if success was to be obtained. He was terribly in earnest about the matter.

After the libel case, the public also knew that the Editor could speak as well as write. It had already been manifest that he had backbone, and was not afraid to take the unpopular side in his journal - as he had done in the Barry case, when Barry had refused to withdraw words deemed insulting to the House, and Howe had blamed him for the intemperate character of his words, and stood by the Assembly. Through these concurrent circumstances, Nova Scotians had reached the conclusion that Howe was a man of intelligence, that he had a strong will and a fearless disposition, and that his dominant guiding principle was the material development of Nova Scotia through the political and intellectual development of her peoples.

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With this in mind, Howe made known (in a letter to Jotham⁸ Blanchard, dated October 1835) his thoughts about entering practical politics. He also showed that he understood the Tories' strengths and what his own party platform must be, and served notice that he was not content with Blanchard's leadership. After expressing his reservations about relying on the Nova Scotian as his sole means of counteracting "those who have an interest in mismanaging affairs" he wrote: "they have numbers, it is true, both in knowledge and discipline - able leaders. Everything in fact, which ensures success in any struggle they have been in...As regards yourself, I did hope to fight under your banner for many a day - and to have seen you advancing yearly in influence and reputation ...We may have been impatient and unreasonable, and perhaps as I have written the past year, sometimes suspected - the want of health may have deprived you of that energy which the times often called for and which all parties expected you would have displayed...I wish we could get a party in the Assembly strong enough to carry the battle and then reduce the life of the House from seven to four years. An elective council, and the breaking up of the ...influence which the rulers of one church now exercise over the province would follow. But without a majority pledged to the people, and kept in statutory awe of them, in the Assembly we can do nothing - and how to get it is the question".

⁸ Public Archives of Canada, Joseph Howe Papers, Letters from Howe, MG 24 B 29 1835-1851, Volume 6, pp. 2-7.

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T.C. Haliburton (Sam Slick) was one of Howe's friends who remained unconvinced that Howe's active participation in politics would enhance his efforts at reform; writing to Howe, he said:

I see by the papers there will be a new election. What do you do? I can't help repeating what I have said before. I do think you won't advance your own interest or influence by going there. Why does a judge's charge have more influence than an attorney's speech? Because he belongs to no side. I fear your paper (always enough on one side of politics) will be thought, after your election (for that I take foregranted, if you offer) a party paper altogether. I fear you will hurt it and it will hurt you, like a gig that runs over a cow; it kills the animal and breaks the carriage⁹.

That Howe's concept of the role of subordinates in his political aims envisaged that they too must be sacrificed when it was expedient to do so, is evident in his actions in the 1843 elections. Nor had he any qualms about picking them up again when required. In that election, when he was faced with a serious split in the Liberal Party over his participation in the Falkland Coalition, he realized that he would need all the support he could muster. Annand, Howe's colleague in the former assembly, was asked to stand down in favour of Doyle, a Roman Catholic, when the Catholics of Halifax County insisted upon having a candidate of their faith on the Liberal ticket. Howe was not at a loss

⁹ George Johnson, Manuscript Notes on Joseph Howe, George Johnson Papers, Public Archives of Canada, p. 47.

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for words to veil the change in remarkably cordial language¹⁰, and Mr. Annand remained a strong friend.

Despite Howe's pre-occupation with affairs in the House, he was ever-mindful of the need to keep the worker, the farmer and the fisherman abreast of the results of the Reformers in the session, and to systematically propagandize the reform aims. In a series of bulletins entitled Information for the People he paraphrased the results of each session. Howe considered his version of the legislative summary to be "useful to men of all parties, while it shows to the friends and supporters of the present House what has been done, it will show their enemies what has been left undone; that, by just criticism and remonstrance, these may stimulate lagging zeal whenever pressure from without may be considered essential".¹¹

Joseph Howe's concept of leadership also envisaged an unbending support of the Reform platform, even to the point of sacrificing personal safety. His acceptance of a challenge to a duel with John C. Halliburton, is in itself an irrefutable rebuttal to any views that Howe's leadership

¹⁰ See J.A. Chisholm, Op. Cit., p. 439-440. In his speech of November 27, 1843, Howe said "we are divided no longer, the whole force is once more in the field...without referring to the cause of this division, I may be allowed to speak of the gentleman by whose generous resignation our differences have been reconciled...My friend Mr. Annand has thus leaped into the chasm which divided and threatened the security of his party...I regret the loss of a colleague who, next to Mr. Huntington, can the least be spared from the ranks of the party....In parting with Mr. Annand, however, I may say that I rejoice that his place is to be filled...by an old friend and fellow labourer...Doyle."

¹¹ Public Archives of Canada. Pamphlet Number 1580, Q series, Publication Set 13.

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was that of an opportunist and one who was motivated by personal ambition alone. Howe went out, received the fire of his enemy without injury, then fired in the air and left the field. Ever conscious of the role of public opinion in his party's future and with a great play for emotionalism, he handed his second, Mr. Huntington, a letter to the people of Nova Scotia, to be published in the event of his death, in which he said:

During the political struggles in which I have been engaged several attempts have been made to make me pay the penalty of life for the steady maintenance of my opinions...Were my own feelings only to be consulted in the circumstances which may make the publication of this letter necessary, I might and possibly would decline a contest, but well knowing that even a shadow of an imputation upon my moral courage would incapacitate me for serving my country with vigour and success hereafter, I feel that I am bound to hazard my life rather than blight all prospects of being useful. If I fall, cherish the principles I have taught, forgive my errors, protect my children¹².

Howe assumed leadership without the outward signs of struggle between himself and the older leaders, and his powers of leadership guaranteed him the unswerving loyalty of his party until he joined the Executive Council in the fall of 1840. Up to that time he had been in a position to criticize yet not be responsible for any acts of the administration. He now had to assume a new role, and his problems with Governor Falkland were to be many. He was now a responsible minister to a Colonial Governor tolerably ignorant of the principles he was sent out to administer, and surrounded by an Executive not disposed to give him a fair trial. Howe's former position was as a colonial reformer, as a

¹² George Johnson, Op. Cit., p. 75.

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fearless leader of a progressive party doing battle against the government—now he was forced to play a new part, with suddenly changed relations and outwardly civil but inwardly hostile Council colleagues. His difficulties were great. He had to instruct, satisfy, and control within constitutional limits, a nobleman of his own age who was married to a King's daughter. He had to assert and maintain in Council the general principles which he had advocated outside; and he had to satisfy the country he was doing so, and that their interests would not be jeopardized by his acceptance of the seat. But more importantly, he had to hold together a party that was in consternation over his acceptance of an appointment in Council. His enemies said that he had sold his principles for office. It is during this period that Howe's concept of leadership suffered its greatest trial.

When Poulett-Thomson proceeded to Nova Scotia "to inquire into the causes of these lamentable discussions"¹³, "this energetic administrator and political acrobat"¹⁴ was under no illusions as to his course of action. Writing to a friend of a few months previously, he had said: "I am not afraid of the responsible government cry. I have already done

¹³ See Letter Russell to Poulett-Thomson April 30, 1840, Public Archives of Canada, Q 277, No. 127, page 112. The Assembly had petitioned Her Majesty for the recall of Sir Colin Campbell, on the grounds that he was not administering in keeping with the despatches from home.

¹⁴ W. Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 130.

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much to put it down in its inadmissible sense, namely the demand that the council shall be responsible to the Assembly, and that the governor shall seek their advice, and be bound by it ¹⁵ ".

Poulett-Thomson met and talked freely with leaders of all parties. Howe's four letters to Russell were cited to Poulett-Thomson, by the Conservatives, as evidence of the "incorrect and improper views of its ¹⁶ author ". Howe's offer to explain his letters personally to the Governor-General was accepted, and before the conference came to an end the two men seemed to understand and to respect each other. It is more than probable that Poulett-Thomson cultivated in Howe a conception that he agreed with Howe's views to Russell ¹⁷ . The Governor-General's views had in fact remained unchanged.

Howe's appointment to the Executive was received with astonishment by his friends, who warned him of his "mangled reputation amidst ¹⁸ the rank and file of his own party ". Only three months had passed since Huntington had seconded Howe in his duel with Halliburton - now he withdrew his intimacy, thrice declined Howe's adroitest inducements to ¹⁹ take office, and held inflexibly the "good old cause ". Howe realized

¹⁵ N. Bell and W.P. Morrell, Selected Documents on British Foreign Policy, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1928, p. 43.

¹⁶ W. Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 131.

¹⁷ Poulett-Thomson made a very favourable impression on Howe; the latter named his son Sydenham (Poulett-Thomson was created Lord Sydenham on August 19, 1840).

¹⁸ Chester Martin, Empire and Commonwealth, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1929, p. 200.

¹⁹ Loc. Cit.

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full well the danger of his new position to his party leadership, and indeed to the entire cause of the Reformers, yet he stuck resolutely by his course of action, regardless of scorn and recrimination. In accepting the appointment, and far from showing inconsistency of leadership and from being "actuated by petty and personal ambition" as Sydenham informed Russell, Howe was in fact pursuing a course of action most consistent with all he believed in, and with what he had informed the people. He had established the fact that he was an advocate of Reform, even to the point of risking his life. He had spoken and written for more than ten years of his reverence for the British Constitution and his belief in the immutable trend towards responsible government. He was mindful of Lord

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John Russell's most recent despatch which all admitted gave an improved constitution to the province. He believed that the cherished principle of responsibility had been grafted into the constitution, and that it had sufficient vitality to permit him to accept office, because he had, as evident from his letters to Russell, an unshaken belief in that gentleman's integrity. He thus felt justified in committing the Reform party to participation in the administration. Russell's change was not in every respect what Howe wanted it to be, but like the Britisher he was, Howe was willing to give it a trial. Thus, in the struggle within the

20 Russell had advised Campbell that under such "circumstances, Her Majesty's Government is disposed to conclude that a considerable change in the composition of the Executive Council is desirable, and that some of the leading members of the House of Assembly might be advantageously substituted for some of the present members of that Board". Quoted by W. Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 127.

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party leadership, Howe hoped that he could keep with him the popular support of the party rank and file, due to the magnetic power of his leadership; therefore, he was not averse to advancing and insisting that his tactics in dealing with the Tories were correct. A politician of lesser qualities would have been submerged in the hostilities with his erstwhile colleagues.

The wisdom of his course of action was on trial for the duration of his participation in the coalition. Many misgivings and searchings of conscience were to endure before he too was convinced that the experiment was a political failure. During that time, however, he supported Lord Falkland to the very best of his ability. Under Howe's guidance, coalition government was tried and found wanting by the Reformers. He was in the strongest of positions, at the time of its failure, to embark, after 1843, on the final assault for responsible government under a party system. Howe's acceptance of membership in the Coalition Government, therefore, must be regarded as an integral and valid part of his own views of his party's overall campaign, and not as the action of an opportunist. If the Liberals were unconvinced of the effect of Howe's action, at least Campbell realized what had happened. He knew that the public was now aware that changes had been made which would inevitably give the Reform party a larger control in the government, and writing to Russell he said:

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I know Mr. Howe well and I feel it my duty respectfully to express my firm persuasion that no reliance can safely be placed on any protestation which he may have made to the Governor-General...it would be in the highest degree hazardous to place in situations of trust those who for the moment enjoy the confidence and lead the deliberations of the Assembly²¹.

It was too late for official protestations. Howe had breached the Tory Citadel, and was amongst his enemies - privileged to sit in Council with them, and to devote all his political sagacity, as a member of that body, to advance his own concept of his party's cause.

21 Ibid., pp. 126 and 136.

CHAPTER V

HOWE'S CONCEPT OF PARTY

In Nova Scotia, parties were not accepted as essential to responsible government until the Falkland Coalition was tried and proved wanting. Until government by party went into effect in 1848, the oligarchy which had nestled itself in the sympathies of its supporters as the Conservative Party, strove to retain power by preventing government by party. It was only after the collapse of the coalition that Howe appreciated rather belatedly that democratic government would not be assured until party government was an accepted part of the constitution.

Writing to his sister Jane of his position as Reform leader in the House, and of the annoyances he had been subjected to since entering the Assembly in 1837, Howe contrasted his erstwhile position as a political writer with that of party leader. "So long as the party I opposed possessed all the legislative influence, they did not mind my scribbling in the newspaper. When I got into the House they anticipated that a failure there would weaken my influence as a political writer, and believing I would fail, were rather glad than sorry. When, however, they found I not only held my own against the best of them but was fast combining and securing a majority upon principles striking at the root of their monopoly they tried the effect of wheedling and that failing resorted to ¹intimidation". Howe had found little personal difficulty in solving the

¹ George Johnson, Manuscript Notes on Joseph Howe, George Johnson Papers, Public Archives of Canada, p. 59.

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dilemma of how to secure that majority, notwithstanding his previous correspondence with Blanchard.

Howe envisaged his party as one based on great principles of responsibility to the people as expressed in his letters to Lord Russell, rather than on special interests or factious greed. He considered that the party should be the medium through which all men of liberal creed, as a patriotic duty, should be free to express opinion about these principles, for the common good of all. Human advance was the motto, and "do unto others as you would they should do unto you" the philosophic rule.² This was an imaginative political concept for a province enmeshed in colonialism. Unfortunately it overlooked the essential point, that the opinions expressed through the party must be translated into practical actions by virtue of the party attaining power, if the whole concept was to have any meaning and effect.

Party spirit had indeed never run higher. The programme adopted by the Reform party under its new leadership went directly to the heart of the difficulty - the constitution of the province must be transformed.

In advocating as the party platform the attainment of "a system of responsible government...as will give the lower classes the influence in society to which they are entitled", Howe showed that he fully comprehended what his party's leaders of the past had not appreciated as a major factor in their struggle, namely the enticement of the consistent support

² D.C. Harvey, Education for Responsible Government, Commemorative Pamphlet on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the granting of responsible government in Nova Scotia, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1948, p. 350.

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of the agricultural and working classes for a firm and broad party base. His concept of party had as a premise that politics should "moderately influence every British freeman", and that "Nova Scotian Liberalism signifies British freedom". Howe's party maxim was to be "Liberty, Intelligence and Integrity clearly understood, and well established on wise institutions, are the elements of political power and happiness." Despite this maxim, the Reform party was more of a medium for Howe's leadership in engendering popular support for reform rather than as a vehicle seeking power as quickly as possible on behalf of its adherents.

Howe's concept of the role of party was therefore somewhat weak in direct contrast to that held by his chief lieutenant Huntington. Indeed prior to the collapse of the Falkland Coalition, he had never conceived of a majority party assuming complete responsibility for the administration.

In 1840, the Reform party formed a considerable majority in the Assembly. This majority was represented at Council by three members, whereas the Tories held on to six seats. This inequality produced much dissatisfaction among the Liberals, and Howe's leadership had been challenged when he pressed the party to support the administration. It was only by virtue of his tremendous range of personal leadership that he carried the day. Howe had willingly accepted this slender representation, in Council, of the political sentiments and interests of the majority, on the basis of his old argument "Have patience; as opportunities offer, justice will be done". It was only when Falkland offered

3 J.A.Chisholm, The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe, Volume 1, Halifax, The Chronicle Publishing Company, 1909, pp. 447-448.

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a seat in Council to yet another Tory, Mr. Almon, that he finally realized that his concept of representative government, which envisaged a Council embracing all interests, would never be realized under Falkland's administration. He was, therefore, left in the position of either sanctioning a policy by which "a fair representation of (their) political sentiments and interests was to be indefinitely postponed" or seeking his retirement from Council⁴. Quite contrary to the Tory's claim, therefore, it was not through a wish to wrest the prerogative from the Queen's representative that led Howe to resign from the Coalition, it was the natural desire of any political leader on realizing error, to guard against any further loss of confidence and influence without which he would be incapable of continuing to serve his party.

Howe reminded His Lordship, who had accused him of attempting to force a party government, that the Tories had maintained one "in its most offensive form; the minority having all the Executive influence and the entire distribution of patronage, while the great body of the people had nothing but a representation of two to one in the Assembly"⁵. While reiterating that he had "never asked and did not desire a party government formed of but one interest, to the exclusion of others", he marked his transition from that position to one consonant with Huntington's and Young's views by writing that: "it would be better to form a strong government representing different interests and different sections of the

⁴ Loc. Cit.

⁵ Loc. Cit.

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country, agreed upon common principles and a common programme", rather than to attempt "to bind men together who have but few private or public ties, and who can not fail to weaken any government by the absence of that personal influence upon society and public opinion". Too late had Howe come upon the conclusion that the Conservatives had remained in power only because they had prevented government by a popular party. He was now forced to recant in order to retain his party's leadership, and remain its leader he did, while his party remained ideological - he was however to see Uniacke assume the leadership after the party had carried the people to the popular victory for representative government, and had entered into power in 1848.

There is therefore ample justification for doubting Chester Martin's statement that "under Howe, a sound political party after Burke's own heart was already in existence in Nova Scotia by 1840", and "no one man in British America had done more to create a sound political party than Howe". However clearly he understood how to develop a party, Howe's concept of its "raison d'etre" certainly led to confusion amongst its supporters. Surely, if a political party is a group of institutionally united persons in pursuit of political power, then Howe showed inconsistency of approach. Moreover, a lack of perception that the essential element of any party is its element of permanency, is evident in his insistence on adhering to his personal views on the means of obtaining reform, at the expense of party solidarity, for the Reform party was

⁶ Chester Martin, Empire and Commonwealth, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1929, p. 199.

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shaken to its very foundations by his act of entering Falkland's Coalition. It was not until 1843 that he could accept Huntington's view of "a homogeneous Liberal government, and all the revenues of the country under the control of the Assembly"⁷. Had Huntington been of vindictive nature, how difficult it would have been to effect the reorganization of the divided party in 1843, in order to win back its popular position of 1840.

This divided approach to party as a factor in government was no doubt influenced by Howe's understanding of the evolutionary political processes in being within the Empire. His letters to Russell indicate that he appreciated more than Lord John the transformation in political power relationships then in progress. A new imperial order was slowly taking form. Durham's, Buller's, and indeed his own views, were expressive of the trend of the times towards responsible institutions within the colonies. Mindful of the troubles in the Canadas, in asking for the application of parliamentary government to the Colonies, he was undoubtedly trying to be the more British in his wish to work out the application gradually. To a lesser extent, his views were also influenced by a distaste for the idea of party government as a result of his experiences with the Tory brand. He also often remarked "I believe all monopolies are bad".

⁷ Ibid., p. 208

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On November 27, 1843, when he was returned with Doyle for the County of Halifax, Howe remarked "the Tories asked us who were the great Liberal Party?". This remark would indicate that Howe's reformers had ceased to interchange the terms liberal and reform, and had now taken upon themselves the Liberal name for party, to stand in direct and traditional contrast to the Conservatives. This acceptance of the Liberal appellation marks a culmination in the evolution of the party. It marks the emergence of a united, organized and well-disciplined party prepared to do battle in the final stages of the assault for responsible institutions, and quite clear in its thinking that party government, and party government only, was the goal.

Howe, in his address to the Freeholders on May 4, 1847, contrasted the terms Liberal and Tory, and suggested that "Whig, Tory and Compact" were interchangeable, as were "Liberal and Reformer". He generally thought of the parties as Tory and Liberal, the root meaning of the latter being preferable.

In the "Brandy Election" Howe, when asked what party he was for, replied: "I am for the party of Nova Scotia". This provides a key to every decision of Howe's life, and would suggest why he preferred the term Liberal to Reformer, as offering a wider scope. In elaborating on the political conditions of 1837, he specifically states "Howe and the Liberals". In other words, when Howe thought of a tag for his party as distinct from the Nova Scotia party or the party seeking the general good he thought of it as Liberal rather than Reformer, and greater or more than Reformer. Moreover, it was more in line with British terms, and

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less likely to conjure up harmful allusions in the minds of those at home.

CHAPTER VI

LIBERAL PARTY STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Howe had perceived, when he first took a seat in the gallery as a Parliamentary reporter in 1828, that Liberal and Tory elements in effect were in existence in the Assembly, that they "had always existed as they did in every country, but that here they were strangely mixed and jumbled". There was no organized party to seek the general good and to force the popular demands. In contrasting the Liberals and the Tories, Howe pictured the Liberals as "those who were actuated by a sincere desire to promote the general interests", whereas the Tories formed "a well-organized body of office holders who monopolized one branch of the Legislature and alternately wheedled, controlled, or defied the other"¹. He also saw that "the Liberals were without fixed principles or defined views of government"², and that although they "clung to a particular measure with honourable tenacity, as they did to the support of Pictou Academy;.. they were sure to be beaten in the end"³. Howe also saw how demoralized the party was, for there were times when, "rallied under able leaders,

¹ J.A.Chisholm, The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe, Volume 1, Halifax, The Chronicle Publishing Company Limited, 1909, p.646.

² Loc. Cit.

³ Loc. Cit.

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they presented an imposing intellectual front to the enemy, as they did on "the Brandy question....but, though they gained an electoral victory, it brought with it no punishment for past misconduct and no reward for faithful service "⁴.

On assuming party leadership in the House in January 1837, Howe's abilities as a strategist and a tactician were soon very evident. He had learned his lessons well from the press gallery, from the errors after the 1830 Reform victory, and from the dismal display of Reform leadership. The vacillation and confusion shown in previous sessions were not to be a part of his party's fortunes, or so he hoped. All Reformers in the House were to be clearly aware of the goal, and well tutored in the means of obtaining it. In achieving this cohesion of effort, Howe had to measure his every political act in terms of what he believed was the best way of achieving representative institutions at all levels of government. This concentration of effort, the "fiery concentration of mind" of the late Lord Tweedsmuir's description of great leadership, was the very quality needed to spark the party. Regardless of the play of the moment, or the red herrings thrown across the trail by alarmed but cunning adversaries, Howe always kept his great object in mind. A perusal of Howe's speeches and articles reveals a tireless repetition of his aim for responsible government - tireless yet not monotonous, as each is clothed in language appropriate to the occasion.

⁴ Loc. Cit.

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An example of this maintenance of aim is evident in Howe's handling of the Tory attempt to confuse the Reform party's objective in Nova Scotia with those of Papineau in Lower Canada, a move which if successful would have done much to discredit the Reform movement. Speaking on February 24th, 1837, in replying to Lewis M. Wilkins, the Tory member for Windsor, Howe remarked that the Tories would "fain persuade the House that we are acting in concert with that gentleman"⁵. While maintaining that to an extent his views were the same as Papineau's, he differed in many things, and that these differences had elsewhere been strongly expressed; he then said "But I ask gentlemen to confine their attention to our own country.....I am not frightened by references to Canada".

The Reform party from the outset of the 1837 session chose for their attack the line of least expectation. The Tories certainly did not expect an all-out assault by a re-vitalized party on opening day, but routine business was hardly despatched before Lawrence O'Connor Doyle moved a resolution condemning the practice in the Legislative Council of excluding the people from its deliberations. Noting that the custom was not only "at variance with that of the House of Lords in England and that of several of the Legislative Councils in the other British North American colonies, but contrary to the spirit of the British Constitution, and injurious to the interests and liberties of this country"⁶, Howe declared that "It is an insult to the people....Why should the people of

⁵ Ibid., p. 131

⁶ Ibid., p. 107

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Lower Canada enjoy a privilege of which we are deprived? Why should the little island of Prince Edward, and Newfoundland with its newly constructed Legislature, be more favoured than we?".

A bill was then introduced to reduce the duration of parliament from seven years to four. Opposing Howe was Mr. Alexander Stewart, a most able and experienced Tory leader, who hurled mockery and defiance at the fledgling Reform member. Howe was more than equal to the challenge. He arose instantly and hurled back effective argument and equal sarcasm. From that day, February 4th, 1837, Howe's destiny was fixed, and by the close of the session, in the public eye too, "he was the acknowledged leader of the popular party ⁷".

Howe displayed considerable ingenuity in developing popular appeal for his party. It will be recalled that the struggle for colonial self-government was a two-fold movement for local self-government against the Imperial government, and for responsible government against the Halifax clique. In several phases of the struggle for self-government, a number of families, whose descendants later formed the Tory party, had played an active role; it was only after the Tory party had obtained control of the local government that it became a party of imperialism, by seeking to protect its monopoly of power and patronage through exalting the Royal prerogative and the inviolability of the actions of the Council. The Reform party had to respond to the challenge of the Tory claim to monopoly of loyalty, intelligence, experience and superior capacity for government.

⁷ Ibid., p. 109

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To do so, Howe infused his party with a liberal creed which was synonymous with the maintenance of the aggregate rights of the people, and with the idea that neglect of liberal politics would result in "the discouragement of those who labour for the public good, the encouragement of the designing who aim unduly for power and wealth - and the introduction of many tendencies towards tyranny, injustice and degradation".⁸

Howe was also able to infuse his party's following with highly potent myths. In expressing its stand on the meaning of British liberty, the Reform party upheld the view that it implied "freedom of person, property, and opinion, which is consistent with common rights and public benefit. It is the natural right of man, as regards his fellow men". In defining responsible government, it was to adopt the slogan that it "blends the freedom of the people with the dignity of the Sovereign", and to maintain that "elections are solemn expressions of opinion on political principles".⁹ All of which made most self-satisfying reading for the average freeholder, and pretty damaging stuff for the wealthy and influential Tory party.

Howe continued throughout 1837 to offer evidence, through the medium of legislative debate, of who in fact were the real enemies of Reform. It was evident that Glenelg, in spite of Russell's strategy in

⁸ D.C. Harvey, Education for Responsible Government, Commemorative Pamphlet on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the granting of responsible government in Nova Scotia, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1948, p. 337.

⁹ Ibid., p. 349

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Parliament, was not ill-disposed to the Reform party in Nova Scotia¹⁰. The Reform party had developed their cause in a logical and constitutional manner, void of any suggestion of violence. During the debate on the Twelve Resolutions, when faced with the necessity of rescinding the resolution that "members of His Majesty's Council" had "evinced a disposition to protect their own interests and emoluments at the expense of the public", or face the Tory tactic of an indefinite delay in the appropriations for public business, Howe showed his ability as a political strategist by moving that all the resolutions be rescinded. They had done¹¹ their work. They had gone to the country and to England, and Glenelg was to be favourably impressed by them. As Livingston commented: "the very fact that they had to be rescinded in order to carry on the government¹² would show to all the serious defect in the local constitution". Howe quickly followed up his attack with an Address to the Throne, embodying the substance of the Twelve Resolutions. The reply from Glenelg dated July 6, 1837, embodying the Sovereign's assent to the greater part of the measures suggested by the Assembly, was not shown to the Reformers by

¹⁰ See Despatch Glenelg to Campbell, October 31, 1837, Journal of the Assembly of Nova Scotia, 1838, Appendix Number 2, p. 6... (Campbell) should select for the Councils those individuals who "would be least open to just exception and which would afford the most satisfactory proof of the desire of Her Majesty to entrust the duties attached to members of the respective councils, to gentlemen entitled to the confidence of the great body of the inhabitants".

¹¹ Sir Colin Campbell had also transmitted them officially to Glenelg, hoping to discredit Howe.

¹² W. Ross Livingston, Responsible Government in Nova Scotia, Iowa City, University of Iowa, 1930, pp. 56-57.

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Campbell. This provided Howe with the evidence he needed to prove to his party that their real foes were not at Westminster, but in Halifax.

Speaking on April 16, 1838, he said:

The Tory Species, as known in the British Provinces is nearly extinct in Great Britain; an out and out Tory is only to be found in the colonies....Now, it may be said that there are only two parties in that country (England): one which acknowledges that reforms are necessary and should be pressed, and the other, desirous of pushing these reforms too hastily or too far. In the Canadas as in all the other colonies, more or less, there is a party which has been reared into a sort of official aristocracy and which attempts to bully the British Government when they find it inclined to do justice¹³.

By speeches in this vein, Howe kept the Reformers in the House from publically expressing their discouragement - the fatal weakness displayed prior to his leadership. By convincing them that subtle influences outside the administration were working through Council to nullify the majority wish and to perpetuate the old order as a stronghold of vested interest in political office, he in fact hardened their determination to topple the regime. Great was their joy on receipt of Russell's despatch of October 16, 1839, when it appeared that a new constitution had been granted by the Crown to the provinces of British North America¹⁴, and James B. Uniacke, one of the outstanding members of the Tory government, resigned his position in the Executive Council after admitting the justice of the Reform cause. Uniacke then joined forces with Howe and at this

¹³ J.A.Chisholm, Op. Cit., p. 182

¹⁴ Campbell was instructed that the chief officers in his government, the heads of departments and the members of his Executive Council should "be called upon to retire from the public service as often as any sufficient motives of public policy may suggest the expediency of that measure".

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point in the Reform party's fortunes, it appeared that the Reformers were clearly headed for the final victory. However, the Tories were not finished, for Howe's blurred concept of party - clearly a great flaw in his formative years - aided by his colossal egoism, postponed their rout. Ever willing to "give it a try", and flattered by Sydenham's attention, he ceased to insist that his party exploit the line of least resistance by taking advantage of the Colonial Office's fresh viewpoint, and favoured instead participation in the Falkland Coalition.

The sorry plight of the Reformers after the Coalition of 1840 was evident from the kind of opposition too often manifested by Huntington towards Howe. The party ceased to progress as it spent more and more of its time attempting to mend fences. As Stanley Brown observed to Howe on ¹⁵ 12 March 1842, Huntington would persist in declining to co-operate in any way with the experiment. Brown pleaded with Huntington to merely pursue a liberal independent course of action, for as Brown admitted, Huntington could "do little himself without you (Howe), as he never relied much on Young, and therefore....greatly erred in opposing you to the extent he did". Brown however went on to show the real confusion of the Reformers by stating:

At the same time if there really be anything different in Tory and Whig principles, as I believe there are most important differences - though I am not sure that these were involved in the points of issue - then I think Huntington did right so far in protesting against an unqualified amalgamation.

15 Public Archives of Canada, Joseph Howe Papers, letter Stanley Brown to Howe, MG 24 B 29, Volume 1, pp. 69-76.

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This low point in party fortunes was reflected in the disillusionment of many of its supporters. Howe in his Nova Scotian had systematically convinced many Nova Scotians that no one was a patriot who did not oppose the administration. Division and confusion were thus visited on the Reform movement at the very moment when victory seemed assured. Before Nova Scotia was to become Howe's cherished "bright example of constitutional freedom and the normal school for British North America", painful discord was to rack the Reformers and delight the Tories. Howe was supporting Falkland at the very time that the Lieutenant-Governor was warning Russell that the people of Nova Scotia "possessed too great a degree of political power".¹⁶ Despite J.A.Chisholm's and D.C.Harvey's rationale, and admitting Howe's sincerity of purpose and absence of desire for personal aggrandizement, he, with Uniacke and McNab, plainly did the Reform party a grievance by joining the Executive Council. There is no doubt that his presence amongst the Tory rulers was a prime source for their embarrassment, and it cannot be doubted that his position there would be viewed with uneasiness by Falkland. It is also beyond question that Howe would never let Johnston and the Tories control him - but despite this, one cannot blink the fact that, as long as he and his associates remained in the Coalition, effective party opposition to the Tories was impossible, and the Halifax oligarchy could continue in power.

Paradoxically, it was the Tories who hastened Howe's appreciation

16 W. Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 143

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of the unsoundness of his course of action. Coalitions rarely are successful for long periods of time. They last only as long as organized opposition to a major participant's stand does not force a modification of that element's position. The active opposition developed not around Huntington, who was not of the stuff around which politicians would cluster, but in Halifax amongst the members of the merchant oligarchy who had been forced to make way in certain appointed offices to those of the Reformers who would accept such positions. With their friends and the Tory press, they began an opposition to the Coalition in earnest during the spring and summer of 1843.

As a member of the Executive, Howe had in fact worked diligently to infiltrate the administration with influential Reformers. That he could make a judicious selection is evident from Alex McDougall's letter from Antigonish in November 1842¹⁷. McDougall exclaimed that "I am a little excited by your kind note of the 14th inst.,....I know that the appointment which you suggest as probable, would most mightily delight the Catholics of the County, and their Catholic Bishop - aye! and every other sect and creed". Howe also showed that he knew how to provide for his own plans, for his appointment as Collector of Excise for Halifax

¹⁷ Public Archives of Canada, Joseph Howe Papers, Letters to Howe, MG 24 B 29, Volume 1, p. 90. The exact position offered at the time is unknown.

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certainly appeared to be well pre-arranged .

It is to Howe's credit that, throughout the Coalition, and despite the party division, he held all Reformers from any action inconsistent with constitutional procedures. He knew that, practically and financially, many things had not in fact been conceded as he had hoped for. He was adamant that there must be no inclination to exercise coercion, and if the Colonial ministry asserted the right of dictation contrary to Reform views, the only acceptable reply was remonstrance and re-assertion of claims. All that Howe wanted was the support of the people and the Legislature, and even though they were often ill-disposed to sustain him, he would always, in his own way sustain them. He would also support Falkland, who ill-deserved such support, as long as Howe considered that he was sustaining the principles of responsibility that Howe perceived to be in evidence. One thing Howe made very certain to both Tory and Reformer alike - should the Lieutenant-Governor obstruct and endeavour to force measures contrary to the principles Howe had avowed, then he would be bound in consistency to retire from the Executive. He would not however do so merely on the behest of Huntington.

The Coalition floundered, and Howe's "coming of age" as a mature and experienced party leader was hastened by an issue which had produced problems for many an administration. His conception of popular govern-

18 Ibid., p. 84-85. Falkland wrote to Howe: "The first piece of intelligence I received on arrival here (Yarmouth) this morning was that Mr. Binney, the Collector of Excise at Halifax was dead. I am quite sure that my having it in my power to name you as a successor will not give you half the pleasure it has given me. I have sent the necessary instructions to Mr. Whidden and by that you will at once assume the duties of the office."

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ment, like that of Jefferson, included a system of public education.

"Consent of the governed" involved more than a broad but perhaps unenlightened popular control. His views in this regard were primarily motivated by his violent repulsion to the King's College Windsor issue. Moreover there was no college fully equipped as to libraries, laboratories, and faculties open to all regardless of position, race or creed. In February 1843 the Liberals introduced in the Assembly the following resolution:

Resolved that one good college, free from sectarian control and open to all denominations, maintained by a common fund, and rallying around it the affections of the whole people would be adequate to the requirements of a population of three hundred thousand¹⁹.

Howe was now not only at odds with the Anglicans, but also with the Baptists who supported Acadia College. J.W. Johnston, the Tory party's brilliant leader, was a Governor of Acadia. His Baptist friends called upon him to dash Howe to the ground on the issue. Johnston saw the strategy of the opportunity thus presented. In former years the Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist church congregations had supported for the most part the Liberal party and the programme of Joseph Howe. The Educational Bill could cause many of them to move into the Conservative camp. Johnston accepted the opportunity and took the field in open conflict against his colleague in the Executive Council. The coalition was thus "hopelessly divided and rendered useless as a foundation for
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Falkland's administration ".

19 J.A. Chisholm, Op. Cit., pp. 419-422

20 W.Ross Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 159

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What factors decided Johnston to take this course of action? Did he visualize the defeat of the Liberals and the organization of a pure Tory party government, a thing he too had outwardly opposed consistently from the beginning? Or did he have in mind the reorganization of the coalition so as to place Howe and the Reformers in his own present position, with places in the Council but with no power in the Assembly? In either case, the Tories now realized that they might stand a chance of becoming a majority party in the popular branch, a necessary foundation for continuance in power. Johnston was now alive to the fact, as Howe had been for some time, that the will of the people was surely and steadily replacing the fiat of the Colonial Office, and that under the creaking and groaning of Sydenham's concept of coalition, party government was slowly becoming inevitable.

Howe by now was ready to dump any pretensions that his erstwhile position was a valid one from the Reform point of view. He threatened in Council but did not carry out a plan to have the following moved in the House:

Resolved, That the time has now arrived when the gracious intentions of Her Majesty with regard to those colonies should be carried out in Nova Scotia by the formation of a Cabinet composed of heads of Departments united in sentiment upon important public questions, acting in harmony in both branches of the legislature and inspiring by the respect which its members entertain for each other, respect and confidence of this House and throughout the country²¹.

21 Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Letter Book, Falkland to Stanley, March 31, 1843, No. 117, pp. 80-90.

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To the consternation of the Tories and Baptists, Howe appeared to be carrying the country on the college question, and while he was addressing meetings on the issue in Colchester, Pictou and Hants, Johnston succeeded in arranging an immediate dissolution of the session.

Howe's friends urged him to openly challenge Falkland under this affront, but he would not. "The Queen's representative has a right", he said, "to appeal to the country, and although in this case the time was ill-chosen, I cannot resign merely on the grounds that I have been sent
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back to my constituents ". But, within himself, Howe was now weary and heartsick, and an ever-growing consciousness of his offence to the Reform party bestirred his thoughts.

Howe met the situation with outward calm. He offered Falkland a choice of courses - the Reform members of the Executive would quit the government, or form a ministry which would command a majority in the House. Falkland instead requested all members of the Council to stay on until at least the opening of the 1844 sessions. The Reformers agreed on the understanding that no changes should be made until the new House convened and the real strength of the parties was ascertained²³. When, on December 21, 1843, Falkland threw off his mask and appointed Mr. Almon, Mr. Johnston's brother-in-law and an outright Tory to the Executive Council, Howe realized that the game was up. With Uniacke and McNab, he

22 J.A. Chisholm, Op. Cit., p. 438

23 Each party claimed a majority of support. Ibid., p. 444.

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tendered his resignation from the Executive, and resigned his office of Collector of Import and Excise for the District of Halifax.

The constitutional course for Falkland to follow on receipt of these resignations, was to have called upon Johnston to fill up the seats vacated and to go down to the House and there attempt to vindicate what had been done. But Falkland, a vain aristocrat, had trapped himself in his own pride. To fill up the Council with the followers of Johnston would be to construct a party government, and Tory strength was too insecure in the Assembly to permit this precedent, for the Liberals, divided no longer, would be sure to command an overwhelming majority there and in turn demand party government for themselves.

Howe's resignation of an important office and withdrawal from government was the first example of its kind in Nova Scotia. It was again clearly re-affirmed that he was contending for a principle. Once more all Reformers took him seriously.

The fate of the administration should have been settled, and would have been if responsible government had been truly contemplated by Lord Falkland. Instead, it held on to power, and invited Howe, Uniacke and McNab to return to the Executive Council under a compromise, part of which was their admission that the Governor had a right to select men of all shades of opinion for the Executive Council. The offer was respectfully declined. Falkland in wrath then declared it must be "war to the knife". Thus began the final contest, by a unified and mature Liberal party, directed by a well-seasoned leader, for responsible government in Nova Scotia.

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Howe once more took up his Editorship, and Mr. Annand eloquently expresses Howe's zeal for the battle:

Nothing could exceed the buoyant and cheerful spirit with which Mr. Howe applied himself to the task of routing Lord Falkland and his government, horse, foot and artillery at the next election. In the darkest hour he never despaired. He played through labours multifarious and which, to a person of different temperament and training would have been irksome. His arm chair became the rallying point of the whole party. We have often seen him dashing off an Editorial which was to set the whole Province laughing and thinking, surrounded by a mob of friends planning some movement or preparing for some meeting. We have known him to work when he was weary; inspire others with cheerfulness when his heart was sad, and he thought as little of galloping over two or three counties and addressing half a dozen public meetings as others would think of a drive around "The Point"²⁴.

²⁴ G. Johnson, Op. Cit., pp. 82-83.

CHAPTER VII

JOSEPH HOWE: A RE-APPRAISAL

Before proceeding with an appraisal of Howe's contribution to the reform movement in Nova Scotia until the advent of 1844, the hope is expressed that two purposes incidental to the aim of the thesis have been achieved: firstly, the stimulation of opinion that Joseph Howe's life-time career is worthy of more critical analysis than has been given him to date by the students of Canadian politics; and secondly, that Howe is a far more complex person than current popular literature and television offerings would lead us to believe. The current rash of writing and publicity about him has distorted and compressed his political concepts and activities in order to stress the emotional and romantic. The romantic aura must be removed from Howe, and his true greatness as a practical politician, one of Canada's first, revealed.

Joseph Howe was a man of remarkable attributes. Orator, journalist and master of factual detail, he had prepared himself for the struggle on behalf of his country-men from a very early age. He was familiar with the works and plans of the liberal reformers in England. He leaned to the conservative reactionism of Burke. His thoroughly British outlook could never countenance any idea of republicanism. He wanted no part of the radical reformers of Lower and Upper Canada. In seeking to adopt the English system to the conditions of life in Nova Scotia, he was in fact to embark on the transformation of the constitution of the British Empire. His restless, inquiring spirit, the irresistible

yearning to see and know, and once having learned, to express an opinion, beg to be admired. It is true that he could be ingratiating when it suited his own ends, and that he was very egotistical. He did lack refinement, even in the Assembly, and could stoop to vulgarity on occasion. In appraising his political qualities, however, should we be content to apply his own standard of judging a character - by his general tendencies rather than by addition and subtraction of particular instances then he shall measure large in our vision.

Joseph Howe's formative period as a reformer and politician spans some sixteen years. At its end the Liberal Party leader was thirty-nine years of age. The experiences that had been crammed into this early phase of his lifetime were more than are normally experienced by most men of public life in their whole period of service. Yet, where we leave him in this paper, the great Nova Scotian is but on the threshold of his greatest struggle, the five year fight for responsible party government.

Nova Scotia's struggle for democratic self-government which, in its course, became a contest for responsible institutions, spanned a period of eighty-five years from the convening of the first elective Assembly. The struggle was evolutionary and peaceful in character. It produced two political parties, the Conservatives and the Reformers or the Liberals. The Conservative Party found its origins in the mercantile - official oligarchy which was in existence before 1758. This clique had been strengthened by Loyalist blood and was aligned with the Anglican minority. It was respectable and reactionary, bent on keeping

power, and stamped every attempt at reform as seditious or republican. It resorted to every means, including coalition government, to retain its monopoly of power and privilege.

The Liberal Party had its forerunners in such reform movements as Tonge's Country Party, but the Reformers date their activities from the time of the Reverend Thomas McCulloch and Herbert Huntington. The growth in newspaper circulation provided the opportunity to disseminate the great currents of reform generated in Pictou and Yarmouth. McCulloch's development amongst dissenters of a strong but constitutionally impotent pressure group seeking equality of opportunity and treatment, was complemented fittingly by Huntington's pioneer social democracy. Jotham Blanchard, a disciple of McCulloch, enunciated the first clear statement of policy for the Liberal party. Joseph Howe synthesized these developments into an organized Liberal party.

The basic conflict in Nova Scotia was, in fact, one of party. The real issue was the attainment of government by party. The mercantile official group, which had sought to root itself in popular sympathy as the Conservative Party, retained power by preventing government by party. The Liberal Party under Howe taught the people the great principles of responsible government. To Herbert Huntington, however, must go much credit for directing the Liberal Party on the true road to practical success. It was his great contribution that he, first of all Liberals, recognized that responsible government meant party government and refused, unlike Howe, to be seduced into the Falkland Coalition government that blurred party lines. Huntington

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possessed a profounder insight into the relationship between cause and effect which form the framework of popular political life, and the substance of popular psychology. The result was that his conduct was guided by a fineness of perception that the younger Howe had yet to attain. After the dissolution of the Coalition, his convictions provided the foundation upon which the deceived Howe rebuilt the Liberal Party.

Howe did not produce the seeds of reform, nor did he provide any new theory in asking for the application of parliamentary government in the colonies. His was a new application certainly, and Huntington was the more uncompromising in insisting on its application - Howe was merely the more British in trying to work out the application gradually. Wherein then does Howe's claim to distinction in his formative years lie? In essence, it rests chiefly on his mastery of the extra-constitutional legal elements of political power.

Howe was the first to perceive that the real enemies of responsible government were not in England but in Nova Scotia. To topple the Council of Twelve he, first of all, appreciated that it would be necessary to develop a healthy tone of enlightened opinion, and a feeling of solidarity amongst farmers and workers in the common cause. This he did brilliantly by pen and speech, and by the formulation of a vigorous party to advance the cause by legislative assaults on monopoly and privilege.

One of his greatest distinctions is the outstanding way in which he was trusted by the masses. He walked and talked amongst them as though

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he were one of them. For this very fact, Lord Falkland, the ultra in aristocratic connection and outlook, privately abhorred the thought of shaking hands with the forthright and vigorous Executive Councillor who may have been but a few hours ago, arm-in-arm with a cooper or drayman. But Howe was not in fact one of the masses, nor did he regard himself in that position. In sending his pamphlet to Lord John Russell (October 14, 1839) he warned against attempts "to undervalue the humble service from which these letters emanate", by talking of his father's losses of property as a Loyalist, his employment by the Governors of Nova Scotia on secret missions before the War of 1812, and the situations he held as King's Printer and Deputy Postmaster General in Nova Scotia. Later in Joseph Howe's career, at the time of the Election Manifesto of 1847, he pointed out that two offices of emolument were held by his family for life (a sure sign of the oligarchy's blessing as to social standing); these he could also have held for life, if he had not attacked the old system of government and hereditary transmission of public office. All of this would serve to confirm his highest sense of purpose and his genuine devotion, regardless of personal fortune, to the cause of the majority. On this count alone Howe is worthy of any praise that Canadians would offer to his memory.

The technique and methods employed by Howe in the organization of public opinion must surely rank of the highest order - and they were employed only for the highest of purposes. With unmatched parliamentary tactics, oratory and brilliant political pen based on reasoned argument, he campaigned unceasingly. It is due mainly to his efforts in educating

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Nova Scotians on the political facts of life of his time that candidates for office could no longer rest content with emitting mouthfuls of platitudes and good intent. The good-natured yet serious Nova Scotian public meeting henceforth demanded a clear pronouncement of personal political intentions and party campaign platforms. Howe clearly established the principle that the electorate had the right of prior approval of radical constitutional proposals.

It is perfectly safe to say that Howe had no rival in Nova Scotia as a popular leader. He sorted out the confusion, enunciated a party platform and gave the Liberals strong leadership and a sense of purpose in the House. If political power is manifest by the ascendancy of one person over the group, through a capacity to control behaviour and opinion on political issues, then Howe indeed held political power, albeit latent - for how else can his recovery from the Coalition fiasco be explained? Rank and file, often begrudgingly, held with him at the most dismal time in his fortunes. The common folk trusted him because they knew he would, in the end, find a sensible solution. Ever the practical man, he fell in with Burke's view that practical responses to practical problems are the basis of human achievement - empirical experience rather than abstract reason is the instrument of progressive accomplishment. Look as you will in Howe's writings, you will never find a statement in theory that could better be expressed in terms of practical experience.

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In analyzing Howe's motivation at the time of the Falkland Coalition, it is apparent that there was no compromise with his personal convictions in joining the coalition. Howe was sure in his own mind that responsible government, in fact if not in theory, had been granted with the recall of Sir Colin Campbell and the promising beginning of Lord Falkland. There is no reason why the coalition government need have failed if Falkland and the Tories had been sincere. Howe's devotion to duty as a Councillor, in the face of the consternation of his fellow Liberals, certainly exposed his tremendous will and determination. The Letters of a Constitutionalist were Howe's response to Falkland's plea for defence against those of the Tories who had been deposed from the Council to make way for the Liberals; but Falkland, the man of lesser stature as he eventually proved himself to be, did not do penance when his critics had been silenced by Howe. Rather, he intrigued against the man who had come to his rescue.

A spirit of compromise is often to be admired, but it was out of place in the Nova Scotia political climate of the time. It is beyond doubt that Howe permitted himself to indulge in some fanciful thinking in his approach to party. His concept of its role in practical politics was not as perceptive and decisive as that of his chief lieutenant Huntington. Howe would agree with Burke's views that the cause of rational reform involved placing the largest possible measure of authority in the people's hands, yet he refused to demand the implementation of that view through pressing constantly for a Liberal Party government. We can perhaps excuse a sincere, patriotic and impressionable

young politician of thirty-five, one who was raised by, and forever revered, a Loyalist father, and who was deeply conscious of the Mackenzie and Papineau episodes, for erring on the side of compromise in the face of attention and flattery from the persuasive Poulett-Thomson. Nova Scotians can perhaps thank the latter for such a turn of events, for it eventually brought to a head the fundamental problem which Howe had to decide upon - whether or not to campaign for party government. But Nova Scotian Liberals had to wait three years for an answer - three years during which they were subjected to painful disappointment. Fear and doubt nagged them. Howe had criticized rule by the minority - why couldn't he agree with Huntington on the rule by a majority party? Had he not advanced the view, in his letters to Lord Russell, that a majority party, governing in keeping with the popular will, would excite no greater feeling of disloyalty than currently existed? In truth, Huntington's great statement of 1838 on the role of parties in a democratic government had been lost for the time on Howe. He had created a party embracing the popular will, but his own actions, however well motivated had vitiated its power. This great flaw in party strategy denied the opportunity for further effective party opposition to Tories in the House, and the Halifax oligarchy could continue in power.

The charge of being an opportunist, of being motivated by private gain, has been levelled at Howe. It should now be evident that nothing could be farther from the truth. By opposing the Halifax clique he lost all hope for a successful career as a newspaper proprietor, for subscriptions from advertisements, the very stuff of financial success,

were then denied him by the merchants. In fact, he lived almost throughout his life on the edge of bankruptcy. That he accepted a post of emolument from Falkland is no indication of desire for personal gain - the practice was a common one. However, Howe quickly relinquished it when it was clear to him that he no longer held the confidence of the Lieutenant-Governor. The very nature and consistency of his agitations in the cause of Reform also doomed him from preferment in the scheme of colonial appointments. Howe's actions could only result in embarrassment and some enmity in the Colonial office. Later in life, when the restless tribune felt that he had "exhausted the range of ambition" within Nova Scotia, he was to find that the expectations for the twilight of a successful life of the times, such as a Colonial Governorship or similar office of trust in Her Majesty's Colonial Administration, were to be denied him.

The most important question to venture on is whether or not responsible government would have come earlier to Nova Scotia had Howe refused to join the Coalition, and adhered to Huntington's plan of attack. Any answer to this must be pure speculation. There is an inclination to say caveat ipse dixit. The writer's opinion is no better than others, but it is in the negative. For there was some confusion in both the colonies and Great Britain as to what responsible government actually meant. Stanley, the Colonial Secretary and his successors, Gladstone and Earl Grey, all thought that two or three elected members in the Council might do to embody the principle; and it might have done so in the current atmosphere if all had been sincere and prepared to

forego special privileges and monopoly for a career open to talent and the general good. In the over-all analysis, that responsible government did not come before 1848 is of secondary importance. Howe's work in his formative period gave rise to conditions which, when responsible government was finally granted, gave a real victory to the rank and file in the province. To Howe goes the distinction of starting the rout of Halifax oligarchy as the prime influence in Nova Scotian politics. Logically and peacefully he saw his province move towards the attainment of the Liberal goal.

It is fair to say that until the collapse of the Falkland Coalition, the Liberal party had been too much of a "one-man show". Howe's achievements in mastering the extra-constitutional legal elements of political power cannot be over-emphasized as factors in his party's future successes. Yet it must be said that his painful disagreements with the Huntington school left many wounds which complicated his career in ensuing years. Although fences had been outwardly mended, and a properly disciplined Liberal party made its appearance after Falkland's betrayal of Howe, the elite within the party held long memories of Howe's actions in Council, actions which they were not loathe to re-publicize in order to embarrass his position during subsequent disagreements with him.

It is difficult to be dogmatic as to this and that interpretation of every phase of Howe's development and contributions to 1844. One thing is certain, however. One cannot pick up his letters and speeches of the period and not see something new to marvel at, some flash that illuminates, and some phrase that lingers in the memory - not forgetting

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some weaknesses to explain and to endear. His work, literary as well as political, embraces the love of family and home, of nature and all beings and things Nova Scotian. In the more practical sense, it portrays the rise in the power of true political parties in the Nova Scotia of the era. Perhaps Howe's own words, spoken in the House in 1849, more amply express his true position during his early career as a party leader:

My principles and views may have been misunderstood. Struggling for a constitution for our country - for the defences and securities of freedom - without which education, property and even life itself are of little value; engrossed in our object and keeping it steadily in view; turning my face to the enemy whenever he appeared, it was not possible for me to choose my weapons or ground.

A more rigorous intellectual training through formal higher education would have done much to raise Howe to even greater heights, as it would have served to give him a stronger insight into his own strengths and weaknesses. But Howe never "plodded like a man on Sundays", and what he lacked in intellectual training he made up in sheer perception, energy and persistence. Nova Scotia and her peoples were his only concerns, and for them he was prepared to go to any extreme consistent with his personal principles. No wonder he puzzled others, for he had yet to see himself. Early in his life, under the teaching of his father, he had been accustomed to think of the large things of the Empire. By 1844, he was beginning to see the difficulties environing all attempts to bring these visions within the sphere of practical politics. He would, of course, continue to think in terms of a larger purview, but he would concentrate more on making his province

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a model for the other British Colonies to emulate.

Yet in all he did, his great heart and open hand - that milk of kindness in him which no opposition could permanently sour - his poetic nature and his vision and lofty aim, were at the bottom of his statesmanship.

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APPENDIX 1

ABSTRACT OF

Joseph Howe and the Liberals: his concept of political leadership and party and a re-appraisal of his contribution to Nova Scotian reform up to the collapse of the Falkland Coalition

The establishment of Joseph Howe in his proper perspective in the Nova Scotian reform movement, the role he played in developing a political consciousness amongst its peoples, and his real abilities as a political leader, strategist and tactician in his formative period as a politician, are worthy of study by the student of Canadian politics.

Joseph Howe did not sow the seeds of reform, nor was he the first to enunciate the first clear statement of policy for the Liberal Party. He did synthesize the reform currents of Pictou and Yarmouth and the liberalism of Jotham Blanchard into an effective Liberal party. He was the first to perceive that the real enemies of responsible government were not in England but in Nova Scotia. He was a master of the extra-constitutional legal elements of power. He was a politician of great personal principle, whose every motive was based on a will to aid Nova Scotia. He was the prime educator of Nova Scotians in the field of politics.

Despite his brilliance as a party organizer, he failed to comprehend during his formative period as Herbert Huntington had done, the real role of parties in democratic government. He thus vitiated the power of the Liberals at a critical time in their fortunes. It is

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doubtful, however, if responsible government would have come earlier had he agreed with Huntington prior to 1840. By virtue of his sheer political brilliance, the Liberal party was too much of a "one man show" until the collapse of the Falkland Coalition.

Throughout this period, Howe was revered, and with justification, by the common folk of Nova Scotia.

