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**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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TEMPERANCE EVANGELISM

Drink, Religion and Reform in
the Province of Canada,
1840-1854

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Thesis submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies of the University
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I INTRODUCTION

Between 1840 and 1850 over one-third of the inhabitants of the Province of Canada pledged to abstain from all intoxicating drink. They belonged to a society which drank heavily by today's standards, for alcohol was then generally considered a necessity of life. The rapid growth of temperance support reversed public opinion so completely that by 1855 a bill to ban the production and sale of liquor passed in the Lower House of the Provincial Assembly.¹ The teetotalers of the 1840's also launched one of the most powerful and enduring reform movements in Canadian history.

This thesis will examine the spread of temperance as an evangelical movement in the Province of Canada from 1840 to 1854, a period when temperance sentiment expanded rapidly in both Canada East and Canada West. The study will attempt to explain the popularity of temperance by looking at the conditions which gave rise to the movement, the reforms which supporters envisioned, and the means they used to win and sustain converts. Finally, the thesis will discuss the impact of the movement: its immediate effect on drinking and its broader historical significance.

The major primary sources chosen for the study were two newspapers which together provide an overview of Province-wide temperance activities. The Canada Temperance Advocate (1835 - 1854), the organ of the Montreal Temperance Society, was the leading temperance journal in the Province. The Advocate was the temperance forum of English Canada. It supplied

source material for temperance lecturers, and served as a fund-raising agent. It tabulated membership figures, printed the reports of travelling agents, and publicised the policy decisions of temperance conventions. English-speaking societies throughout the Province sent in reports to the Advocate, and these local reports give a good indication of the strength, concerns and activities of temperance supporters at the community level. In French Canada, where the Catholic Church was the major temperance force, les Mélanges Religieux (1840 - 1851), the Montreal diocesan newspaper, is the best source on the movement. Les Mélanges, while not a temperance journal per se, closely followed the activities of three of the major temperance proselytizers in French Canada, Monseigneur Forbin-Janson, the Oblate missionaries, and Father Charles Chiniquy. The paper printed letters from cures and laymen reporting on the effects of temperance campaigns at the local level. Les Mélanges provides a comprehensive survey of temperance activity in the Montreal diocese, and its reprints from other newspapers give an indication of the campaigns in other dioceses as well. These sources have been supplemented with temperance manuals and tracts, Mandements of the Quebec bishops on the subject, and the Constitutions and Annual Reports of various temperance societies and brotherhoods. The journals of the Legislative Assembly were consulted for official enquiry, debate and legislation on the subject.

Primary sources on the early temperance movement are plentiful, but few historians have mined this rich lode.

Temperance campaigns have been treated as separate entities in French and English Canada; beyond a brief chapter in Ruth Spence's Prohibition in Canada,² no historical study has dealt with the movement in a Province-wide context. The major studies of the movement in Canada East are a thesis by Ghislaine Hildebrand³ examining temperance in Lower Canada before 1840, Marcel Trudel's⁴ full-length biography of Charles Chiniquy, and D. Levack's⁵ shorter study of Bishop Bourget's temperance activities. M.A. Garland and J.J. Talmon⁶ have traced the origins of the movement in Upper Canada. James Clemens⁷ has studied the social assumptions of temperance supporters in Canada West, and Jean Burnet has discussed the growth of the movement in Toronto.⁸ E.H. Elgee⁹ and C.R. Wood¹⁰ have examined the attitudes of various Protestant denominations towards temperance.

Three interpretations of temperance emerge from this handful of studies. Trudel and Levack explain the popularity of temperance in Canada East in terms of the personalities of its preachers. Unravelling the controversy which long surrounded Canada's greatest temperance orator, the Trudel biography indicts Chiniquy as a hypocrite and a liar, and attributes his popularity to the "flatte^{re}rie mielleuse, humilit^e emphatique, emploi de termes excessifs et d'une demonstration surabondante"¹¹ of a clever demagogue. Levack's Bourget is as white as Trudel's Chiniquy is black, and the rays of the Bishop's halo seem to have generated sufficient heat to dry up drunkenness in a twinkling. Garland

and Talmon, taking a broader perspective, apply the frontier thesis to temperance agitation in Upper Canada. They present the temperance movement as a natural response to the excessive drinking of pioneer life. The studies by Hildebrand, Clemens and Burnet use a class analysis. While all three see temperance as a middle class movement, the significance of the term varies with the writers. Hildebrand and Clemens stress the movement's conservative nature. Clemens discusses temperance as an assertion of the middle class values of industry, thrift, and peaceful family life. He sees temperance as an attack on both the upper and lower orders of society, but principally on the lower. Relying heavily on the temperance column of the Christian Guardian, he points out temperance supporters' fear of brutality and their anti-Irish prejudices. Clemens concludes that temperance was a means to "a definitely conservative social order".¹² Hildebrand agrees, seeing temperance as a movement of the bourgeoisie to "create a climate more favourable to production and bring under its control an aspect of popular culture by which it felt threatened".¹³ Burnet, while also declaring temperance as a middle class movement, shifts the emphasis. She pinpoints temperance leaders as those aspiring to a respectability which, due to their American origins, radical politics, or non-conformist religion, eluded them. Focussing on middle class discontent rather than middle class conservatism, she portrays temperance as a dynamic rather than a reactionary movement.

While all these interpretations apply well enough to the

material examined; they all seem inadequate when one examines the movement in a Province-wide context. Personalities were indeed important in the spread of temperance; but linking its popularity too closely to Chiniquy's artful oratory or Bourget's ultramontane vigour obscures broader forces, such as the identification of temperance with survivance and the key role of temperance campaigns in establishing the clergy as national leaders. Relating the movement to its "great men" also fails to account for the movement's popularity in Canada West, where no orators or heroes of comparable stature emerged. The frontier thesis falters too, when one notes the extensive temperance support which developed in Canada East long after the frontier had receded. Moreover, at least by the 1840's temperance was clearly a metropolitan movement shipped to the backwoods by agents from Montreal. The class analysis, beyond the problems of definition, fails to account for the mass support that the temperance movement received in the 1840's; and it takes too lightly the evidence that drunkenness was not mere middle class paranoia but a genuine social problem affecting all classes.

What all the existing interpretations overlook is the essential radicalism of the early temperance movement. Preached as a form of revivalism which advocated a return to a purer Christianity, the movement was closer to the radicalism of religious sects than the conservatism of the established churches. As a social reform movement, the

attempt to enlist mass support for the abolition of drink was closer to the revolutionary spirit of the 1830's than to the conciliation and compromise which characterised the politics of the 1840's. The most telling indication of this is the rejection of moderate drinking and the insistence on total abstinence which emerged as temperance orthodoxy during the 1840's. Moreover, the bulk of temperance supporters in the 1840's were drawn from the working classes; the movement presents the unusual phenomenon of an "upwardly mobile" reform movement which progressed from a popular base to draw in middle class supporters.

This thesis interprets the temperance agitation of 1840 - 1854 as the translation of radical religion into social and political conduct. Beginning as a spiritual revival which mobilised people to reform their own lives, it soon evolved into an emotional and self-confident campaign for social and political reform. At a time when political radicalism was effectively checked, temperance channelled popular discontent into a less direct attack on a reactionary colonial elite and an irresponsible government. As such, it served as a positive or "progressive" force which united a broad segment of the population in an active struggle for reform.

7.

CHAPTER 1 NOTES

- 1 The bill was subsequently rejected by the Upper House. J.Wooley and W.Johnson, Temperance Progress in the Century, Toronto, 1903, p. 252.
- 2 R.Spence, Prohibition in Canada, Toronto, 1919.
- 3 G.Hildebrand, Les Debuts du Mouvement de Temperance dans le Bas-Canada, 1828-1840, Montreal, 1975.
- 4 M.Trudel, Chiniquy, Trois-Rivieres, 1955.
- 5 D.Levack, Un pionnier de l'abstinence totale: Mgr. Ignace Bourget, Montreal, 1945.
- 6 M.A.Garland and J.J.Talmon, "Pioneer Drinking Habits and the Rise of Temperance Agitation in Upper Canada Prior to 1840", in F.H.Armstrong, ed., Aspects of Nineteenth Century Ontario, Toronto, 1974.
- 7 J.Clemens, "Taste not; touch not; handle not; a Study of the Social Assumptions of the Temperance Literature and Temperance Supporters in Canada West between 1839 and 1859", Ontario History, vol. 64, 1972.
- 8 J.Burnet, "The Urban Community and Changing Moral Standards", in M.Horn and R.Sabourin, eds., Studies in Canadian Social History, Toronto, 1974.
- 9 William Elgee devotes chapter six to temperance in The Social Teachings of the Canadian Churches, Toronto, 1964, pp. 135-159.
- 10 C.R.Wood, The Historical Development of the Temperance Movement in Methodism in Canada, Victoria, B.C., 1958.
- 11 Trudel, op.cit., p. 46.
- 12 Clemens, op.cit., p. 159.
- 13 Hildebrand, op.cit., "Precis" on frontispiece of thesis.

II ORIGINS OF THE MOVEMENT

The temperance movement originated in nineteenth century North America in response to drinking that was excessive both by European standards at the time and by North American standards today. The testimony of European travellers and settlers on the cheapness of liquor and its heavy use in North American pioneer communities is extensive.¹ Neither the strength nor the production of alcohol was closely regulated before 1850, but it appears that North American communities in the early nineteenth century consumed some two-and-a-half to five times as much alcohol per annum as the same communities do today.² While Canadians joined whole-heartedly in these bacchanalian habits, they greeted temperance proposals with their more classical reserve. Though Canadian temperance activity began in the early nineteenth century, it remained at a low ebb for several decades.

Accounts of early North American consumption often sound exaggerated today. Drinking is generally considered a leisure activity; and working classes of past eras had less leisure than they do now. Nineteenth century drinking can only be appreciated in the context of the then current belief that liquor was a necessity of life. One of the most telling indications here is the tentative and cautious way in which early temperance supporters approached their goal. The man who founded the first Upper Canadian Temperance Society in 1828 established it as a one-year experiment, "as it was then supposed by many that ardent spirits were as indispensable as

food".³ Over a decade later a Lower Canadian cure founded what was considered a rigorous temperance society on the basis that members would restrict consumption to six small glasses of liquor a day.⁴

Liquor was, simply, a staple of life. It was commonly served at each meal, including breakfast.⁵ A nursing mother believed it her duty to drink spirits, porter or beer to assure her flow of milk.⁶ A traveller knew he was being foolhardy if he did not fortify himself with liquor at his stops along the way.⁷ A farmer did not expect to put in a full day of manual labour without stimulating drink,⁸ and labourers paid their weekly "footing" so that the employer would supply the necessary whiskey on the job site.⁹ In the heat of summer or the cold of winter, one did not expect to stay strong and healthy without resorting to liquor with the same regularity that modern office workers resort to coffee. When health failed, liquor was the most common remedy,¹⁰ serving at least to anaesthetize what it could not cure.

Given the level of science and technology, many of these beliefs were undoubtedly well-founded. Facilities for water purification were primitive. Water was often drawn directly from polluted sources and until one built up immunity, it produced stomach disorders unless doctored with brandy or whiskey.¹¹ Farming and logging, the two leading male occupations, involved long exposure to bitter weather, and a fiery beverage was a more portable heater than a fire. Even technologically advanced projects such as canal building plunged the worker waist-deep into cold water from dawn till

dusk, with only his flask to ward off pneumonia.¹² Doctors had no preventative when cholera and typhus gripped the colony in the 1830's and 1840's;¹³ though teetotallers suggested eating figs or applying mustard and pepper to the stomach,¹⁴ the frightened public was perhaps wise to stay with the traditional brandy.

Daily use of liquor does not necessarily imply excess. Yet drunkenness abounded, particularly among the male half of the population. Revelry was a common sport among gentlemen, who in some cases were unable to perform their duties after a certain hour of the afternoon because of drunkenness.¹⁵ Merchants sealed their bargains "amid the fumes of Jamaica and gin sling",¹⁶ and farmers, labourers and soldiers spent long hours drinking in taverns, which some observers reported to be the sole places of amusement for the lower classes.¹⁷ While admitting no class distinctions, drinking did tend to polarise along sexual lines.¹⁸ Except in the roughest districts of the colonial towns, drunken women were seldom seen.¹⁹ The contrast in male and female drinking customs was nowhere more evident than on the frequent journeys of a rural society to market:

The farmer...had ample opportunity to warm himself whenever he felt inclined, but his wife's part in the meantime was to hold the horses in the cold at the door....It was not until the homeward trip, however, that she was likely to really suffer from the cause. In the evening, when returning, he had money in his pockets and the spirit of jollification properly aroused in his breast; so she often became a most pitiful, shivering, weary wreck, waiting at the door of one of those miserable whiskey selling huts...(until) her husband and his friends finally appeared.

In Upper Canada, classic "frontier" conditions largely explain the free use men made of alcohol. The combination of abundant harvests with primitive facilities for carrying grain to market made alcohol production a cheap and convenient use for surpluses. Liquor was such a vital part of the rural economy that distillers commonly paid farmers for their grain with whiskey instead of cash.²¹ An ample provision of liquor was an understood part of the payment at house-raising and logging bees; many of the "helpers" came only for the drinking.²² On a social level, the predominance of males in frontier settlements, the fact that taverns were often the earliest public buildings and centres of information,²³ and the lack of recreation all tended to increase consumption of alcohol. The absence of law enforcement agencies prevented effective legal controls on drinking.²⁴ Where settlement was sparse and the immigrant population culturally diverse, social controls of close-knit communities were missing as well.

Excessive drinking was not confined, however, to pioneer communities; it also flourished in the long-settled regions of Lower Canada. Here the imperial trade, which promoted exchange of West Indian spirits for Canadian staples, encouraged consumption. West Indian spirits entered Canada under exceptionally low duties in the range of six to ten per cent, the lowest tax paid on liquor "by any civilised nation in the world".²⁵ Used in the fur trade, cheap rum hastened the demoralisation of the Indians which had begun centuries before. Nor was timber, increasingly replacing fur as the great colonial staple in the early nineteenth century, a more

sober business. The loggers, the raftsmen who brought the wood to port, and the sailors who manned the timber ships were all notorious for drunkenness. ²⁶

Even among those who stayed at home and farmed the seigneuries, the cheap rum had its effect. Governor James Murray had recorded in 1762 that

Les Canadiens ne sont pas adonnés à l'ivrognerie bien que les hommes et les femmes boivent une certaine quantité de liqueurs fortes, la rigueur du climat ayant probablement été la cause de l'introduction de cette pratique.

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Customs began to change soon after the Conquest. By the turn of the century, travellers reported that the habitants loved rum and drank much of it. ²⁸ Le Canadien confirmed in 1807 that the taste for West Indian spirits "est fortement répandu en ce pays". ²⁹ Condemnation of drunkenness at parish fêtes and workingmen's celebrations began to appear in Bishops' Mandements. In 1817 Le Canadien campaigned against the unrestricted sale of alcohol in Quebec City, and a correspondent confirmed that abuses also reigned in the countryside, where unlicensed vendors had lately begun to sell outside the church doors on Sundays. ³⁰

As the century progressed, the problem grew. Production of local whiskey increased rapidly in the 1820's; in the Montreal region alone, the number of distilleries climbed from twenty-six to fifty-six in the space of four years. ³¹ According to both clerical and lay observers, ³² intemperance reached its peak in many parishes in the 1830's. Thomas Chapais wrote that:

Les fêtes étaient presque continuelles, il n'y avait pour ainsi dire que dans les saisons des semailles et des récoltes qu'on travaillait. J'ai vu des habitants, pour n'avoir pas réparé les ponts fossés de traverse, dans la morte-saison, jeter dans le fossé le première charge de gerbes, pour passer les gerbes par-dessus. 33

The mother country flooded the colony not only with cheap rum but with a large class of people who appreciated it. The British government maintained a sizable army in the Canadas in order to counter internal uprisings and border attacks. Having a regular income and little inducement to save their pay, soldiers drank heavily, and grog shops sprang up around every military post. 34 The bottle also helped compensate for garrison conditions, so miserable that suicide was nearly endemic. Military drinking habits also spread to farm settlements wherever half-pay officers took up land. 35

Thus, climate, frontier, and Empire all promoted Canadian excess. J.S. Buckingham, an English temperance advocate who travelled through North America taking careful note of drinking conditions, reported in 1840 that the situation was considerably worse in Canada than in the United States:

From the opportunities I had of judging... the people of Upper Canada were much less temperate than the people of the United States. Absolute drunkenness...abounds to a greater extent in Toronto than in any town of the same size in America; and we saw more drunken persons...in our short stay here, than a traveller would meet within a year in the United States. 36

Canadians continued to stagger and reel across the landscape as Buckingham travelled eastward along the Kingston road to

Montreal.³⁷ When he reached Quebec City, his disgust burst all bounds:

We thought that in this comparatively short drive of less than an hour, we saw more of poverty, raggedness, dirty and disorderly dwellings, and taverns and spirit shops with drunken inmates, than we had witnessed in all our three years' journey through the United States.³⁸

The sharp contrast between Canadian drunkenness and American sobriety was largely due to the growth of temperance sentiment in the United States in the early decades of the century. There were fully a million American temperance supporters by 1835,³⁹ and the movement was rapidly winning enthusiastic supporters around the globe.⁴⁰ But in the Canadas, temperance made little headway before 1840.

Temperance societies had originated in the United States shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. The attack on popular beliefs and customs regarding alcohol stemmed from the scientific writings of a respected Philadelphian physician, Dr. Benjamin Rush. Rush challenged the widely-held medical view that liquor was essential to good health, demonstrating that it actually caused or exacerbated a number of physical disorders. Venturing into the little-understood realm of mental disorders, he demonstrated that violent trembling, raving and a number of other characteristics commonly associated with madness were in fact directly attributable to excessive drinking. While upholding the moderate use of fermented beverages such as wine, cider and beer, Rush advocated that the use of distilled, or "ardent" spirits be

discontinued. ⁴¹

In a society which used spirits so extensively, Rush's findings had revolutionary implications. Every community shouldered a burden of disease and depravity, and their ravages were particularly evident among the labouring classes. If many maladies were traceable to a single and hitherto unsuspected source, removing the source could radically alter the lot of the poor. Conditions previously thought to be an immutable part of the divine or the social order might, after all, be changed. People began to look more closely at the appalling social conditions all around them. The New York physician who founded the first American temperance society in 1808 found that Rush's writings had "opened his eyes to circumstances in his own community which had never before received more than a passing notice". ⁴² Excited by the dramatic possibilities for change, New England reformers and philanthropists pledged to avoid ardent spirits and to influence the working classes to do the same. ⁴³

Rush's findings had striking spiritual implications as well. Drink had long been linked with depravity and irreligion, but it generally enjoyed the status of a necessary evil. If, however, drink could safely be eliminated from the daily diet, a mass spiritual awakening might follow. Pastors of New England congregations founded many of the early temperance societies. ⁴⁴ The movement spread rapidly when revivalists preaching in the Western states, identifying frontier drunkenness as the greatest hindrance to the spread of the gospel, ⁴⁵ began to preach temperance as fervently as

they preached Scripture. These revivalists gave the movement a distinctive character associating it with emotional conversion and reunciation of a sinful life. Shades of distinction between moderate drinking and excessive drinking became blurred. In the fundamentalist imagery of the preacher, drink became an absolute evil, total abstinence the only sure sign of salvation. Failure of early "moderation" societies, which banned only ardent spirits, to eradicate drunkenness reinforced this idea, and in 1837 the American Temperance Union officially recommended total abstinence from all intoxicating beverages. ⁴⁶

Itinerant evangelists soon rode northward with the glad tidings of temperance. Canadians were incredulous. A "dry" bee in 1818 to raise a Methodist chapel in York was discussed for miles around as an outstanding innovation. ⁴⁷ When the Methodist itinerant Anson Green used the occasion of a drunkard's funeral in Hallowell in 1825 to urge the living to sobriety it was considered a gaffe on the part of a usually popular minister:

All the tiplers from some distance were at his funeral....The old toppers were not much pleased with my faithful dealing, but said, afterwards, that I should have been dragged from the pulpit....Temperance societies...were not then known. ⁴⁸

Popular scepticism notwithstanding, the Canadian and Episcopal sects of the Methodist Church officially endorsed the temperance movement in the 1820's. The Ryersons lent their influence to the cause, ⁴⁹ and the influential Christian

Guardian, regularly publicised and encouraged temperance activity. By the early 1830's, there were a number of Methodist temperance societies in various districts of Upper Canada.⁵⁰ Other denominations, particularly ones with close American affiliations, also supported the movement. Baptists were active temperance advocates in the Niagara peninsula, and the Western Association of Baptists recommended in 1833 that the churches receive no members who would not agree to temperance principles.⁵¹ Scottish Baptist settlements in Upper Canada also frowned on spirits.⁵² A Presbyterian revival in the 1830's led to the establishment of a number of temperance societies in the Kingston area and on the Niagara peninsula,⁵³ and a Congregational minister was active in early temperance work in the London area.⁵⁴

On the surface temperance seemed to be making considerable headway. Largely due to clerical efforts, some ten thousand Upper Canadians had pledged by 1832 to abstain from ardent spirits and use other alcoholic beverages moderately.⁵⁵ Two years later, Lower Canada reported 4,250 abstainers from ardent spirits, most of them concentrated in the townships where the population was largely American.⁵⁶ However, these early denominational groups had little organisation and no effective means for spreading the movement. While clergymen might influence the pious they did not reach the worst cases of drunkenness. Anson Green reported in the early 1830's that although he frequently addressed audiences on temperance, Upper Canada still presented the sight of "thousands who are not ashamed to brawl in our streets and stagger in the

presence of the sun". 57

Even less successful were the secular temperance groups which philanthropists and reformers organised in some of the larger towns. John Neilson presided over the Quebec society established in 1831; Sir John Caldwell, Dr. James Douglass and W.S. Sewall were officers, and M.P.'s Bédard and Panet, as well as several government officials, were on the Committee. 58

This society published a temperance monthly, the Monitor, in French and English. 59 A number of wealthy merchants funded early temperance work in Montreal, 60 and founded the Canada Temperance Advocate in 1835 to promote the movement. The

prosperous tanner and philanthropist Jesse Ketchum, with the support of fellow reformers John Rolph, Thomas Stoyell and Marshall Spring Bidwell, 61 founded the Toronto Society and funded a newspaper called the Temperance Record in 1836. 62

Despite their supporters, however, these early societies met with scorn on all sides. The differentiation between spirits and fermented beverages left them open to popular attack.

Opponents pointed out that their "moderation" pledges discriminated against the common man who was asked to give up his whiskey or rum mixed with water, while wealthier members quaffed their strong sherries and ports with impunity. 63

"Railleries et sarcasmes" met the work of the Quebec city group; when the cholera epidemic struck the city in 1832, both the paper and the society gave up the ghost. 64

The Montreal Society had to abandon public meetings in the winter of 1836 when great crowds of "the low and characterless" presented boisterous opposition. 65 Temperance

societies also met ridicule in Upper Canada. ⁶⁶

The ruling classes were as hostile as the masses. In the tense climate of the 1830's, the movement's American origins and reform connections aroused suspicions. Major Strickland warned that temperance societies might well become political instruments in the hands of designing men, and Colonel Thomas Talbot accused members of meeting at night to spread seditious schemes. ⁶⁷ The state-endowed churches of England, Scotland and Rome and the town elite shunned any connection with the movement. ⁶⁸

The Rebellions of 1837-38 made it clear just how tenuous temperance support was. As excitement rose to a fever pitch, men flocked to the taverns for hundreds of re-enactments and revisions of the battles of St. Eustache and Yonge Street. A temperance man reported that in Upper Canada

The bar-rooms, grog shops and groceries... are literally thronged with comers and goers, somewhat in the fashion of bee-hives ...and in almost every town and village bruised faces, blackened eyes, reeling steps (are seen)....Multitudes of those who used to be called temperance men have broken their pledge, and the greater part of the drunkards who had been reclaimed by long and earnest temperance efforts...have fallen away. 69

In Lower Canada temperance supporters also watched in horror while the work of a decade was undone:

Wo! wo! wo! The fiend intemperance rides over this devoted country...no sooner was the alarm of war sounded in this province, than trade and commerce ceased, and religion began to decline, while the business of distillers and retailers on

the contrary increased....The increased supply of intoxicating liquors is necessary to serve the purposes of war. Without it the passions of men would not be sufficiently exasperated.

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Particularly in Upper Canada where temperance supporters were closely associated with the Reform camp, the movement was paralysed. Attendance at temperance meetings dwindled and political animosities prevented any effective action.⁷¹ Ketchum's Temperance Record folded immediately after the Rebellion,⁷² and for well over a decade Toronto was unable to sustain another temperance newspaper.

Just as the Rebellions seemed to snuff out temperance sentiment, a group of Montrealers stepped forward and fanned it back to life. A group of pious businessmen from the city's Scottish-born community formed the core of the Montreal Temperance Society,⁷³ the group which would lead English Canadian temperance activity for the next decade. These men were the very embodiment of the Presbyterian ideal which called the laymen to an active ministry both in church affairs and daily life. While the Presbyterian minister William Taylor played a prominent part,⁷⁴ the majority of members of the Society's governing Committee were laymen.

They were not, however, laymen of the ordinary sort. For example, John Dougall, the Society's president, was a self-made man who in his youth had come over from Scotland. Beginning as a travelling salesman, he eventually built up one of the largest wholesale dry goods firms in Canada. Dougall had compensated for a meagre education by extensive reading; but he attributed his success not to self-education but to self-

denial. Convinced that his youthful conversion to temperance lay at the bottom of all his happiness, he spent the rest of his life attempting to convert others by his conversation, writing and example. ⁷⁵ Dougall's fellow Committee member, James Court, a land agent, not only gave over his evenings to temperance meetings but often interrupted his busy office hours to close his door and bow down before God in prayer. ⁷⁶ Prayer and reflection convinced the Presbyterian luminaries of the Montreal Society that, at least in Canada, religious duty summoned the Christian away from sectarian loyalties and on to a broader path. Thus they worked together with ministers and laymen of several denominations on the Committee. ⁷⁷

The Montreal Society Committee members applied their business skills to marketing a millennial dream. Despite their canniness at turning a dollar, these men saw temperance as a sacred goal towering above all worldly considerations. The Society's president was convinced that temperance was the instrument God had chosen to usher in the final Christian age the New Testament promised. Dougall inspired his fellow members with his vision of a great "Temperance Reformation" which would.

cut off at once and forever the greater part of all the evils which now afflict the human race, and prepare the way for the time of universal peace, purity and happiness promised in the Gospel. ⁷⁸

R.D.Wadsworth, one of the few Committee members who was Canadian-born, proclaimed Dougall's dream from the housetops. All during the 1840's he was to be the most indefatigable of

Montreal Society agents, riding through the various districts of both Canadas and preaching temperance wherever he could gather an audience, abandoning this work only at temporary intervals when it was necessary to return to his pharmaceutical business in order to support his family.⁷⁹ Wadsworth was a versatile creature who seemed to be everywhere at once. He typified the blend of practicality and dream that was to make the Montreal Society so successful. Seeing the difficulties early converts faced in a world where everyone drank, he opened a special boarding house for Montreal teetotallers.⁸⁰ When people in remote areas expressed growing interest in promoting temperance, Wadsworth persuaded the Montreal Society to establish a dispensary to supply them with temperance literature, songbooks, medals, and demonstration materials.⁸¹ As Secretary of the Montreal Society, he always kept careful statistics of mounting support, providing hard data with which to impress sceptics, and later in the decade, legislators as well. When he took to the road, Wadsworth packed both religious tracts and scientific temperance literature into his saddlebags, and was equally at home redistilling a gallon of local whiskey to show its impurities⁸² or giving Sunday sermons based on Scripture texts.⁸³ Moving to Hamilton around 1845, he agreed to preach temperance in all the districts of Canada West, west of Niagara.⁸⁴ Indeed he was at heart more an evangelist than a businessman. The desire to transform the lives of men seems never to have left him, for the Hamilton directory records him in 1862 simply as a preacher in Hamilton Market Place.⁸⁵

Radical vision called for radical commitment, and in 1837 the Society endorsed the most rigorous form of temperance - total abstinence.⁸⁶ Though this caused upper class temperance support to dwindle even further,⁸⁷ the Montreal Society welcomed an influx of humbler converts. In Montreal, soldiers, sailors, labourers and mechanics increasingly appeared on public platforms to describe their personal regeneration through teetotalism. This approach found favour with the "low and characterless" who had previously disrupted meetings, and in 1838 the Society was able to hold a large number of public meetings.⁸⁸

Much heartened by the growing popularity of teetotalism in Montreal, the Committee decided that the mighty Reformation was within reach, and that it was up to them to precipitate the bright new day in the Canadas. To influence those who influenced others, the Committee determined to put a free copy of the Advocate in the hands of every Canadian school teacher and clergyman.⁸⁹ This free distribution, and a growing list of subscribers, catapulted the Advocate's monthly circulation from five hundred in 1836⁹⁰ to three thousand in 1839;⁹¹ by 1841 it would soar to eight thousand.⁹² Watching the Advocate roll off the presses, the Committee began to dream of bigger things. By 1840 they had formulated a bold plan. They would not wait for temperance ideas to spread slowly; they would go out and preach the Temperance Reformation directly to the illiterate thousands, sending their agents to every single township in the land.⁹³ The price tag, like the dream, would be monumental. The Advocate eagerly implored all temperance

societies to send in contributions and Committee members had to dig deeply into their own pockets as annual expenditures skyrocketed from \$68 in 1839 to \$1866 in 1842. 94

Meanwhile, the Advocate had begun to flood the towns and farm settlements with a message they had not heard before. In the world of Canadian journalism, the paper stood out as the sole peacemaker in a ring of pugilists. Its columns issued a clarion call for people of all social classes, religions and political parties to join together for the good of the colony. Issues which inflamed other editors scarcely ruffled the Advocate. In a rather novel interpretation of the Lower Canada rebellion the paper scolded the government for issuing liquor to the troops, and fired the rest of its broadside at Tories and patriotes alike:

Reader, cast your thoughts twenty or thirty years back - a few hundred puncheons of rum, principally consumed by soldiers and old country people...is it wonderful that the Canadians of French origin were a contented and peaceable race?

But now....Their habits of sobriety are goneMost of the once-rich farmers have mortgaged their farms to the merchant, and are at his mercy, and the poor ones and labourers are ripe for any work in which or through which they can obtain drink. The unprincipled leaders, with threats and treating...bring up the habitans to their share in the fatal business. Would there have been a battle at St.Charles, if there had not been a distillery at St.Denis?

...they who have imported or manufactured spirituous liquors have been the chief workmen in this business of misery and death. "What!" cries a flaming loyalist, "I incite to rebellion?" Yes, good Sir,

the puncheons of rum you have imported and sent in among the once happy farmers, have done the work more effectually than all Mr. Papineau's speeches.

95

The Advocate's message proved timely. Many people were disillusioned with passionately partisan politics, which had borne bitter and unproductive fruit in the Rebellions. More and more people picked up copies of the paper and liked what they read. Following the Montreal Society's lead, temperance societies formerly aligned with denominational or political groups rewrote their constitutions to welcome everyone "without distinction of sex, religious creed, political party, or condition of life"; ⁹⁶ and the many new societies which appeared after 1840 almost invariably organised on this basis of open membership. Depoliticised, temperance became acceptable editorial matter for papers of varying political hues, and by 1841 temperance activities for the first time received coverage in nearly every newspaper in the Province. ⁹⁷

Temperance also leapt a major religious barrier just after the Rebellions. Though Canadian Catholics had previously dismissed temperance as a Protestant movement, ⁹⁸ several priests began to preach temperance in Lower Canada. The catalyst here was the news of a moral revolution in Ireland. In 1838, Father Theopold Matthew, a Capuchin friar, initiated what turned out to be the most spectacular temperance campaign in history. ⁹⁹ Matthew was, by all accounts, a charismatic figure. Working among the urban poor of Cork, he became convinced that drink accounted for Irish misery and took to

the road to exhort his countrymen to total abstinence. Within a year he converted some 200,000 people.¹⁰⁰ The conversion of Daniel O'Connell, and rumours that Father Matthew could miraculously cure the ill, combined to create tremendous excitement.¹⁰¹ People thronged to take the pledge, and by 1842, there were some 4,647,000 teetotallers in Ireland, their names all carefully recorded in the books kept by Father Matthew's secretaries.¹⁰² Observers at the time, and historians since, have agreed that liquor consumption and crime both dropped dramatically during Matthew's campaign.¹⁰³

Father Matthew's work had major repercussions in Canada. General admiration for his success lent an ecumenical tone to the temperance movement. The Advocate regularly reported his campaigns, and chided Protestant bigots with the story of a traveller who toured Ireland seeing scarcely a drunkard while great hordes of them had staggered past him in English thoroughfares, "in enlightened, Protestant, moderate-drinking England, whilst the other was in Roman Catholic, teetotal, sinking Ireland!"¹⁰⁴

More importantly, Matthew's crusade more than doubled the pool of potential temperance converts in the Province of Canada by establishing that temperance was not only a Protestant but also a Catholic movement.¹⁰⁵ Father Matthew's converts, distinguishable by their sobriety,¹⁰⁶ soon began to arrive in Canada. Father Patrick Phelan, a Montreal Recollet, in 1839 founded a temperance society to perpetuate the reform among his immigrant flock, and soon this society was 1,500 strong.¹⁰⁷ In the same year, Father Pierre Beaumont, after

reading of the Irish crusade, founded the first French Canadian parish temperance society in his St. John Chrysostome parish. When Beaumont first proposed the idea during a Sunday sermon, there seems to have been a rush for the doors:

J'appelle une assemblée après la messe.
Je croyais y voir accourir la paroisse
en masse. . . . Helas! mes espérances furent
déçues. Huit personnes seulement
s'étaient rendues à mon invitation.
Une seule en avait besoin: c'était un
grand ivrogne; les sept autres...
voulaient, par leur sacrifice, soutenir
les faibles... nous fûmes un peu honteux
de nous trouver en si petit nombre. Ces
braves de me dire qu'il valait mieux
abandonner ce projet et ne pas nous
exposer à la risée.

108

Beaumont, however, managed to found a partial abstinence society, and he was soon joined by a colleague who had no trouble convincing audiences that temperance was a deadly serious matter.

Charles Chiniquy was the most remarkable temperance campaigner Canada ever produced. His power lay in a command of words so powerful that "il faisait pleurer à son gré ses auditeurs". ¹⁰⁹ Drink apparently precipitated the early death of Chiniquy's own father, a Kamouraska notary. ¹¹⁰ Entering the seminary, Chiniquy was ordained in 1833, ¹¹¹ and appointed Chaplain of the Quebec Marine Hospital. There the hospital's director, Dr. James Douglas, convinced him that many of the patients owed their maladies directly to drink. ¹¹² In 1839, when Chiniquy found a fellow temperance sympathizer in Father Beaumont, the two of them decided to launch a campaign for sobriety in the riverside parishes near

Quebec. A third priest, Father B. Desrochers of Chateau Richler, soon joined them. ¹¹³ That winter, Chiniquy founded a "moderation" society in his Beauport parish, a place notorious for its heavy drinkers. ¹¹⁴ The society was so successful that within a year many reformed characters eagerly undertook the full rigours of total abstinence. ¹¹⁵ Chiniquy's ability to convert heavy drinkers to teetotalism was so impressive that people soon labelled him "the Canadian Father Matthew". ¹¹⁶

If Chiniquy's eloquence paralleled that of Father Matthew, many felt that French Canada's plight paralleled Ireland's. The Canadiens, who like the Irish had endured a British conquest, had suffered the same ill effects: the land was blighted with rural poverty, the people had taken to drink resulting in a decay of national strength and migration to foreign lands. But Father Matthew had wrought an Irish miracle; now "partout où la tempérance est observée par le peuple, les terres sont parfaitement bien cultivées et les rentes se paient bien exactement". ¹¹⁷ Even more importantly, temperance had forged a new spirit.

Une force invisible, s'affermissant de plus en plus dans l'union de tous ses membres, tendant à un même but et lui offrant cette unanimité de volonté les moyens d'obtenir en son temps tout ce qu'elle exigera. ¹¹⁸

For several years, the detoxification of Ireland continued to amaze the world, and to nurture ideas of applying the same remedy to French Canadian ills.

By 1840 then, the stage was set for a remarkable growth in temperance support. A core group of curés, ministers and laymen had dedicated themselves to spreading the temperance gospel. Montreal exercised a well-funded leadership with a newspaper that had a large mailing list in both provinces, and the English Canadian movement was consolidating around a programme of total abstinence and political non-partisanship. Father Matthew's campaign had established temperance as a Catholic movement as well, and campaigns were underway in the region around Quebec City and among the Irish in Montreal. As the Canadas recovered from the shock of the Rebellions, temperance advocates proposed a mighty moral reconstruction to heal a dissipated people. They promised, with all the faith in the world, that it would rescue both the imperilled soul and the fragmented body politic.

CHAPTER II NOTES

¹ Cf. M. Garland and J.J. Talmon, "Pioneer Drinking Habits and the Rise of Temperance Agitation in Upper Canada Prior to 1840", in F. Armstrong, ed., Aspects of Nineteenth Century Ontario, Toronto, 1974, pp. 171-174; Edwin Guillet, Pioneer Inns and Taverns, Toronto, 1954-1958, Vol. I, pp. 50, 55, Vol. IV, p. 42; G. Hildebrand, Les Débuts du Mouvement de Tempérance dans le Bas-Canada 1828-1840, Montreal, 1975, pp. 14-15, 19.

² J.J. Talmon calculates the 1851 per capita consumption of alcohol in Canada West at five times that of Ontarians one hundred years later in "The Impact of the Railroad on a Pioneer Community", Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1955, p. 2. Canadian consumption has risen rapidly since Talmon's day; cf. J. Moreau and F.F. Jorge, Statistics of Alcohol Use, Alcoholism and Drug Addiction, Toronto, 1968; A.D.A.R.F. Annual Report, Toronto, 1975, pp. 56-57. This partially accounts for Hildebrand's lower estimate, that liquor consumption in Montreal in 1831 was two-and-one-half times Montrealers' per capita intake in 1971 (Hildebrand, op. cit., p. 12). All these gauges are rough ones since there is no official record of domestic production before 1846 and smuggling and illegal domestic production defy calculation even where official data is available. There is also disagreement about whether early nineteenth century whiskey was stronger (Talmon, "The Impact of the Railroad...", p. 2) or weaker (Guillet, Pioneer Inns and Taverns, Vol. II, p. 27) than today's product. Under these circumstances, qualitative evidence (particularly where temperance and non-temperance sources agree), seems more useful than statistical evidence, and qualitative evidence forms the backbone of the discussion of consumption both in this chapter and in chapter six.

³ Canada Temperance Advocate (Report of the Bastard Temperance Society), September 1841. Hereafter the Advocate will be referred to as CTA; when the reference is to the report of a particular temperance society, the society's location will be noted in parentheses.

⁴ Camille Roy, "Panégyrique de M. Edouard Quertier", Les Leçons de Notre Histoire, Quebec 1929, p. 272.

⁵ Garland and Talmon, op. cit., p. 173. Charles Chiniquy, Manuel ou règlement de la Société de Tempérance, Quebec, 1844, p. 75.

6

CTA, 15 June 1842.

7

Even many teetotallers continued this practice on the grounds that it was essential to health. CTA, 15 July 1842.

8

Hildebrand, op.cit., p. 20; Canada Temperance Advocate, 2 October 1844; Les Mélanges Religieux 6 juillet 1849; 8 janvier 1850. Hereafter Les Mélanges Religieux will be referred to as MR.

9

CTA, 1 January 1845.
JLAC (1849), Appx. 222.

10

Liquor was so universally accepted as a remedy that teetotal pledges in the 1840's invariably permitted use of alcohol for this purpose.

11

W.H.Parker, "The Towns of Lower Canada in the 1830's", in R.Beckinsale, ed., Urbanisation and its Problems, New York, 1968, p. 400.

12

MR, 26 mars 1847.

13

CTA, 1 December 1849.

14

MR, 17 nov. 1848; 7 dec. 1848.

15

Garland and Talmon, op.cit., p. 173. Cf. also G. Malchelosse, "Ah! mon grand-père, comme il buvait!" Cahiers des Dix, no.8, 1943, pp. 146-147.

16

Parker, op.cit., p. 396.

17

Garland and Talmon, op.cit., p. 172;
Parker, op.cit., p. 416.

18

E.Guillet, Early Life in Upper Canada, Toronto, 1969, p. 299.

19

Ibid.; Letita Youmans reported that during her childhood in the Coburg area in the 1830's she had never seen or heard of such a thing as a drunken woman. L. Youmans, Campaign Echoes, Toronto, 1893, p. 38. The Catholic hierarchy of Canada East also identified drunkenness as a male vice (MR, 12 mars 1844). Nevertheless, the temperance stories and news items in the Advocate and in the Chiniquy temperance Manuals of the 1840's, even leaving room for some hyperbole, suggest that drunkenness was not confined entirely to disreputable women.

20

Guillet, Pioneer Inns and Taverns, op.cit., Vol.I, p. 43.

21

Garland and Talmon, p. 173.

22

Ibid., p. 175.

23

Ibid., pp. 172-173. Cf. also F.Landon, "The Common Man in the Era of the Rebellion in Upper Canada", in Armstrong, Aspects of Nineteenth Century Ontario, Toronto, 1974, pp. 156-157.

24

Illegal taverns, despite the low cost of tavern licences, were very common. CTA, August 1841. Cf. M.Cross, "The Shiners' War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830's", CHR, 1973 for a particularly glaring example of the lack of law enforcement in an isolated Upper Canadian community.

25

H.A.Innis and A.R.M.Lower, Select Documents in Canadian Economic History, 1783-1855, Toronto, 1933, p. 381. Immigrants from the British Isles found liquor considerably cheaper in Canada than it had been at home. J.S.Buckingham, Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, London, 1843, p. 262; Garland and Talmon, op.cit., p. 173.

26

A.R.M.Lower, Great Britain's Woodyard, Montreal, 1973, pp. 85, 192-193.

27

Cit. G.Malchelosse, op.cit., p. 142.

28

Ibid., p. 151.

29 Le Canadien, 15 aout 1807.

30 Le Canadien, 19 juillet 1817; 26 juillet 1817

31 Hildebrand, op.cit., p. 16, referring to the period 1827-31. The Montreal Gazette in July 1834 noted a great increase in Lower Canadian production of oats and barley in the past ten to twelve years, and also a considerable increase in prices paid for them, due to "the greatly increased demand from the Distilleries"; Innis and Lower, Select Documents, op.cit., Vol. 2, p. 65.

32 H.Lemay, Bibliographie de la Tempérance, Quebec, 1910, p. 25. CTA, December 1838; Innis and Lower, op.cit., p. 256.

33 Levack, op.cit., p. 10.

34 F.Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier, Toronto, 1967, p. 135; CTA, July 1841.

35 Ibid. For the prevalence of military suicides, cf. J.J.Bigsby, The Shoe and the Canoe, London, 1850, p. 33. Buckingham describes the dissipation of military officers at Montreal, in Buckingham, op.cit., p. 151.

36 Ibid., p. 51.

37 Ibid., p. 79.

38 Ibid., p. 231.

39 J.Krout, Origins of Prohibition, New York, 1967, p. 152.

40 Ibid., pp. 178-179; W.Scott, Teetotaler's Handbook, Toronto, n.d., pp. 36-38.

41 Krout, op.cit., pp. 73-74.

42 Ibid., p. 77.

43 Ibid., pp. 84-87, 96-98.

44 Krout, op.cit., p. 82.

45 Ibid., pp. 102-104.

46 Ibid., pp. 105, 159-162.

47 John Carroll, Past and Present, or a Description of Persons and Events Connected with Canadian Methodism, Toronto, 1860, p. 38.

48 A.Green, The Life and Times of the Reverend Anson Green, Toronto, 1877, pp. 61-62.

49 C.R.Wood, "The Historical Development of the Temperance Movement", in Methodism in Canada, B.D.thesis, Victoria, B.C., 1958, pp. 14, 17-18. E.Ryerson, The Story of My Life, Toronto, 1883, p. 93.

50 Wood, op.cit., p. 14.

51 F.Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier, op.cit., p. 137.

52 H.H.Walsh, The Christian Church in Canada, Toronto, 1956, p. 144.

53 W.Elgee discusses Presbyterian attitudes to temperance in The Social Teachings of the Canadian Churches, Toronto, 1964, pp. 148-151.

54 Garland and Talmon, op.cit., pp. 182, 186.

55 R.D.Wadsworth, Temperance Manual, Montreal, 1847, p. 6.

56 Ibid., p. 8. H.Lemay, op.cit., pp. 15-16.

57 A.Green, op.cit., pp. 141, 147.

58 H.Lemay, op.cit., p. 15.

59 Ibid., pp. 14, 16.

60 Hildebrand, op.cit., p. 55.

61 J.Burnet, "The Urban Community and Changing Moral Standards", Studies in Canadian Social History, Toronto, 1974, p. 304.

62 Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 9. Landon, Western Ontario...., p. 137.

63 Hildebrand, p. 25.

64 J.Woolley and W.Johnson, op.cit., p. 249.

65 CTA, May 1836.

66 CTA, April 1838.

67 Burnet, op.cit., p. 303. E.Guillet, Early Life in Upper Canada, Toronto, 1969, p. 132.

68 Elgee, op.cit., p. 148; Buckingham wrote that in Toronto the temperance cause was unpopular with "the heads of office, political, civil, judicial and even ecclesiastical", and noted a similar lack of support in Kingston and Montreal, in Buckingham, op.cit., pp. 51, 79, 156. Cf. also CTA, September 1837; Hildebrand, p. 38.

69 Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 13.

70 CTA, December 1838.

71

CTA, April 1838. Guillet asserts that temperance societies in many districts were "composed largely of the rank and file of the Reform party". Guillet, Early Life in Upper Canada, op.cit., p. 134.

72

Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 9.

73

Buckingham noted that the Montreal Society had the support of "some of the wealthiest merchants of the City", Buckingham, op.cit., p. 148. Cf. R.Campbell, A History of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, St.Gabriel Street, Montreal, Montreal, 1887, pp. 443-451, for background material on Montreal Society members John Dougall, James Court, James Orr and John Redpath; and CTA, 1 December 1843. The officers and committee members of the Montreal Temperance Society in 1838 were: John Dougall, Rev.G.W.Perkins, Rev.Wm.Taylor, John E.Mills, James Orr, James Court, Joseph Fraser, Robert Morton, Jacob DeWitt, Alex Cameron, John Smith, Joseph Horner, William Grafton, James Jackson, J.C.Becket, William Morton, James.Milne and T.Bigelow. CTA, April 1838.

74

Taylor edited the Advocate. Campbell, op.cit., p. 450.

75

This sketch of Dougall drawn from Campbell, p. 443; and from E.H.Cherrington, Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem, Westerville, Ohio, 1924, p. 838.

76

Campbell, op.cit., p. 451.

77

Among the most active were H.Wilkes, a Congregational minister (Campbell, op.cit., p. 322) and John Holland, a Methodist (CTA, 16 August 1844).

78

CTA, April 1838.

79

CTA, 1 September 1849. Hildebrand, op.cit., p. 97.

80

CTA, 1-July 1842.

81

CTA, 1 February, 1844..

82

Wadsworth also gave "scientific" temperance lessons with the aid of anatomy charts illustrating the deterioration of the drunkard's stomach. CTA, February 1842.

83

CTA, 1 January 1844.

84

CTA, 15 January 1845. Wadsworth also established children's "Cold Water Armies" in Canada (W.Scott, Teetotaler's Handbook, Toronto, c.1860, p. 41) and worked for the Rechabite and Sons of Temperance brotherhoods, CTA, 1 June 1849.

85

T.Hutchinson, Hutchinson's Hamilton Directory for 1862-63, Hamilton, 1862, p. 141.

86

Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 12.

87

CTA, April 1838.

88

Ibid.

89

Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 16.

90

CTA, 16 December 1844.

91

Ibid.

92

Ibid. Free distribution to ministers and school teachers was continued until 1844 and accounted for about 1,500 copies per annum (CTA, 15 April 1844).

93

Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 18.

94

CTA, 16 December 1844.

95

CTA, December 1838.

96

Temperance societies at Belleville and Toronto, for example, both made this type of reorganisation in 1839-40.

Toronto Temperance Reformation Society, Eighth Report, 1847, p. v.. CTA (Belleville), 16 April 1849. By the early 1840's the Toronto Society included men of all political parties. CTA, 1 June 1844.

97

The editor of the Advocate noted "with pleasure, that temperance articles are freely inserted by almost every paper in the country. This is a great change...". CTA, May 1841.

98

MR, 19 novembre 1841.

99

Cherrington, op.cit., p. 1728.

100

Levack, op.cit., p. 19.

101

Ibid.; Krout, p. 180.

102

CTA, May 1841; MR, 8 septembre 1843.

103

MR, 12 novembre 1841; Cherrington, p. 1728; E. Norman, A History of Modern Ireland, Middlesex, 1971, p. 75.

104

CTA, 16 May 1844.

105

Krout, op.cit., p. 181.

106

Buckingham, op.cit., p. 261.

107

Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 18.

108

Bulletin des recherches historiques, Vol. 3 (1897), pp. 44-45, note by "Racine".

109

MR, 18 novembre 1842.

110

Trudel, op.cit., pp. 506.

111

Ibid., p. 15.

112

Ibid., pp. 18-20.

113

Bulletin des recherches historiques, Vol. 3 (1897), note by N.J.S., p. 12. Curé Dufrêne of St. Gervais was another early temperance preacher whose work apparently preceded that of Chiniquy and Beaumont (G. Lemoine, Association Catholique de Tempérance de la Paroisse de Beauport, Quebec, 1843, p. 7); but no details of his activities have been found.

114

Lemoine, op.cit., p. 13; Trudel, op.cit., pp. 31-32.

115

Lemoine, op.cit., pp. 13-15.

116

Le Canadien, 7 avril 1841; MR, 8 avril 1842.

117

MR, 8 octobre 1841.

118

MR, 12 novembre 1841.

III THE TEMPERANCE REVIVALS

Temperance seems an unlikely form of ecstasy. In 1840, as today, drinking was often associated with "the out-gushing of generosity, and the expression of the best feelings of our nature", ¹ teetotalism with a stony heart. ² Nevertheless, in the four years at the beginning of the decade thousands came forward to join temperance societies in what appears to have been a great surge of religious emotion. The Catholic hierarchy and the Protestant directors of the Montreal Temperance Society conducted simultaneous campaigns to persuade the population that the abandonment of alcohol would lead to spiritual awakening. This temperance revivalism led to a rapid growth of the movement, for its zealous converts devoted themselves to spreading the new gospel in their own localities. Supporters saw the movement as a way of uniting the community in a noble aim and they celebrated their new commitment by adapting religious sentiments and ceremonies to express their faith in the blessings of temperance.

One of the first indications that temperance would acquire a large following in the 1840's was the assembling of two crowds, just a few blocks apart in Quebec City's Upper Town, on the night of 28 September 1840. In the Quebec House of Assembly, J.S. Buckingham gave a lecture which attracted "one of the most numerous and respectable audiences ever assembled in Quebec". ³ The subject was temperance. Having encountered disdain for the subject during previous addresses to genteel audiences in Kingston and Toronto, Buckingham had decided to

use the tactic of issuing tickets for the lectures and distributing them to high-ranking persons, which caused them to be eagerly sought after. ⁴ When the lecture began, a thousand people were on hand. Buckingham presented up-to-the-minute figures to show that there were approximately 650 taverns and shops in Quebec City where liquor was sold, and that thirty-nine of the city's inhabitants had died a premature death from drunkenness in the past six months. He then read a report from the city gaol which indicated that 1,148 of 1,400 crimes over the past year could be traced to drinking. According to Buckingham this information came as a great surprise to most of the audience

merely because their investigations had never been directed into the channels through which...such information could be obtained, and because their attention had never been drawn to the subject. It is due to their humanity and proper feeling, however, to state, that they appeared to be as much pained as they were surprised to find themselves surrounded with such numerous places for the sale of intoxicating drinks, and to see so clearly so much of the crime, misery and death which occurred in their City was to be traced to this cause. 5

After the meeting, the audience promised to support all temperance efforts, and they contributed liberally to a fund to print and circulate information on the subject. ⁶

Picking up a copy of Le Canadien the morning after the lecture, Buckingham discovered that another temperance gathering had taken place in the city on the same evening, and had drawn a much larger crowd. Monseigneur Forbin-Janson, the Bishop of

the Diocese of Nancy in France, had urged five thousand men gathered at a retreat in the Cathedral to form a Catholic temperance society modelled on those in Ireland.⁷

Buckingham is a figure of only passing significance, for while his demonstration of the social evils of drink was warmly received in Quebec City, he was largely ignored in the rest of the Province. Forbin-Janson, on the other hand, was the initiator of a remarkable religious revival that swept through Catholic parishes from Gaspé to Bytown. In some sixty parishes the French prelate introduced a new form of devotion known as the retreat.⁸ Retreats were the Catholic counterpart of the Protestant revivals which awoke popular fervour in England and North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like the Protestant evangelists, retreat masters were sometimes viewed unfavourably by conservative churchmen, and in France some referred to Mg. Forbin-Janson and his colleagues as "une bande de saltimbanques, menant joyeuse vie au dépens de la crédulité publique".⁹ Retreat masters departed from the formality of the traditional services, passionately exhorting their audiences in continuous religious sessions which might extend from several days to several weeks. They conjured up the fearful consequences of sin or the beauties of divine mercy so vividly that audiences listened with tears streaming down their cheeks.¹⁰ Retreats were a terrifying occasion for sinners, but a time of great joy for repenters. While Protestants saved at a camp meeting found emotional release through writhing, fainting, or loud individual declarations of

salvation, retreatgoers channelled the same emotion into ceremonies of awe-inspiring solemnity. A large number of priests would be on hand to administer the sacraments to the crowd, and after a successful retreat an impressive contingent of these clergymen in their robes of office would march solemnly out of the church. The throng of believers, singing hymns and carrying banners, would follow them to an appointed spot to erect a large cross as a symbol of the parish's return to the faith.¹¹

Both the sudden upsurge of piety and the enthusiasm for temperance as Monseigneur Forbin-Janson toured Canada in 1840-41 astounded contemporary observers. In comparison with what was to follow, Canadian Catholicism in the early decades of the nineteenth century was a weak force. Lukewarm popular attitudes to religion have been variously attributed to the short supply and inadequate training of priests after the Conquest, to the growing influence of European liberal thought, and to opposition to clerical support of the British regime.¹² The revival of faith in 1840 has been seen by some as a turning to religion as a last hope after the Rebellion failed to provide a solution to pressing social and economic problems.¹³

Broader forces undoubtedly prepared the ground for a religious awakening, but it was Monseigneur Forbin-Janson who reaped the harvest. He passed over the land like a divine thunderclap. Some of his evening sessions were so frightening that women and children were not allowed to attend.¹⁴ The men, so densely packed into the darkened churches that it was difficult to breathe, would listen in frightened silence while

la mort a pesé sur l'abîme...l'abîme s'est dilaté, puisqu'il s'est refermé, il appelle l'Eternité, et l'Eternité accourt a sa voix avec toutes les fureurs de l'enfer; c'est alors que s'élevant sur son auditoire avec un oeil étincelant et farouche, avec une voix sourde et sinistre comme le cri de l'hyène ou les échos des cavernes, il déroule devant lui les horreurs de ces gouffres affreux....il fait courir comme les roulements de tonnerre sous les arches multiples du Temple; c'était au milieu de la nuit qu'il faisait [sic] entendre ces paroles de frayeur et d'épouvante, c'était au reflet de quelques pâles flambeaux qu'il ouvrait les cavernes sombres du gouffre infernal, c'était dans le silence des tombeaux qu'il faisait resonner la voix rauque de l'abîme et les désolations de l'éternité. 15

Put thus vividly in mind of the Last Judgement, people rushed to renounce their worldly vices. Cure Baillargeon reported at Quebec that 10,000 people from the town and countryside attended the week-long retreat; so many lined up to confess their sins that thirty-five priests in attendance could not minister to them all. 16 Baillargeon estimated that one thousand of these penitents were returning to the sacraments after a lapse of many years. 17

On the final night of the retreat, Monseigneur Forbin-Janson gave his sermon on temperance. Identifying drunkenness as a prime occasion for scandals, family enmities and violence, he implored his hearers to form a temperance society to safeguard their new piety. Then he gave his final benediction and proceeded to other parishes farther west.

No sooner had he departed than Le Canadien reported "all

the most distinguished citizenry rose up like a single man to work for temperance".¹⁸ Judge Panet of the Court of Queen's Bench headed the committee of notables who organised the society,¹⁹ and the crowds who applied to cure Baillargeon to join were so large that it took several Sundays to enrol them all.²⁰ Both men and women joined the society, and many pledged themselves not only to moderation but to total abstinence.²¹

Forbin-Janson encountered the same enthusiastic crowds as he proceeded from parish to parish. At Sorel, St. Athanase, l'Acadie and Trois-Rivières the sick came to him for faith-healing, and according to reports, many were cured.²² At Trois-Rivières, farmers, Indians and lumberjacks trekked in from miles around, swelling the excited crowd to over ten thousand. After hearing Forbin-Janson preach, six thousand people joined the temperance society.²³ At Montreal, 17,000 received communion during a Christmas retreat, and several thousand men established a temperance society at the preacher's exhortation.²⁴ Though he had preached on three continents, Mgr. Forbin-Janson declared that he had never seen more impressive results than "la conversion de milliers et de milliers d'âmes" on his Canadian tour.²⁵

The Bishop of Nancy forwarded the temperance movement by mobilising massive support for spiritual reform, and establishing temperance as a vital part of that reform. In parishes where temperance societies had been established, fervour continued long after the orator departed; and this convinced the Canadian hierarchy that temperance was a key ingredient in the new

piety. ²⁶ After Forbin-Janson's departure, Archbishop Signay of Quebec and Bishop Bourget of Montreal actively encouraged all the parishes to form temperance societies. ²⁷ Chiniquy and his colleagues who had begun preaching temperance before the réveil now continued their work in a climate more favourable to reform. Chiniquy, after being appointed curé of Kamouraska in 1842, promptly won 1,200 converts in that parish and, at the request of other curés, established temperance societies in twenty additional parishes in the region. ²⁸ A number of other priests began to preach temperance at Sunday sermons and at special temperance retreats: one of these given by Father Aubry of the Quebec seminary attracted even more temperance support in Notre Dame parish than Forbin-Janson's exhortations had done. ²⁹ The movement spread rapidly throughout the Quebec diocese and by 1842 Archbishop Signay was able to congratulate his flock for a marked increase in sobriety. ³⁰

Montrealers were less ardent. Montreal was the provincial brewing and distilling centre, and its population was not noted for tractability to either civil or religious authorities. Though several thousand had joined the society established by Forbin-Janson, the elite did not come forward as they had in Quebec City. ³¹ Those who did join were reluctant to pledge total abstinence, and promised only moderation. ³²

The Bishop of Montreal could not accept this lukewarm attitude. Bishop Bourget, whose diocese in 1841 included not only the Montreal district but also the logging camps of the Ottawa valley, was appalled by his people's drunken profanation

of baptisms, marriages and holy days. He believed drinking had reached such dire proportions that it was no longer one vice among many but the "mal capital de ce pays". ³³

Bourget launched a determined campaign to bring his unruly sheep into the fold. He invited the Oblates, a French order of preaching fathers, to establish themselves in the Montreal diocese and no sooner had the first priests arrived in 1841 than the Bishop commissioned them to establish temperance societies ³⁴ in the various far-flung missions of the diocese. Temperance became regular fare in the diocesan newspaper, Les Mélanges Religieux. Les Mélanges reported and encouraged temperance activity throughout the diocese and ran a column called "Suites Funestes de l'Intempérance". These were obituaries seasoned with editorial comment illustrating how often drink was lethal to body, soul, or both. To insure that the younger generation learned to despise drunkenness, Mgr. Bourget introduced the Chiniquy Manuel de Tempérance, full of dramatic parables on the spiritual and physical dangers of alcohol, as a textbook in the schools. ³⁵

Above all, the movement travelled by word-of-mouth. Its warmest proponents shook the country parishes with fearful descriptions of the torments in-store for the drinker. Prominent among the new breed of temperance revivalists was Reverend Edouard Quertier, who founded the Société de la Croix in his parish of St. Denis in 1842, awarding a small black cross to those who took the pledge. ³⁶ Convinced that drinking and many other popular pastimes were tools of the devil, Quertier

lashed his audiences with sermons "violentes et terribles comme une page d'Isaie", ³⁷ then dealt the final, punishing blow with his own large temperance cross:

M. Quertier parut en chaire, après l'évangile....il explique à ses auditeurs la nécessité du sacrifice pour détruire l'ivrognerie. Et il rappella que la croix seule peut inspirer des résolutions qui aillent jusqu'à la destruction radicale des habitudes, et que la croix seule pouvait vaincre le démon: la croix devant laquelle tout genou fléchit dans le ciel, sur la terre et dans les enfers.

Et alors il prit la croix noire, il l'éleva audessus de sa tête, il la brandit comme un signe de rédemption, et il demanda à son peuple de se prosterner pour la vénérer. Et la foule s'agenouilla; et des prières et des larmes jaillirent de tous les coeurs. ³⁸

Reverend Alexis Mailloux, who soon joined Quertier in championing the Société de la Croix, also thundered against drink, luxury and light-hearted behaviour. ³⁹ Chiniquy's temperance lectures included horror stories of opponents of the movement who had their intestines ripped open or were swallowed up by earthquakes. ⁴⁰ Chiniquy's attack on drink became so excessive that Mgr. Signay ordered him to exercise more restraint. ⁴¹

These fierce evangelists took the rural parishes by storm. People thronged to church to hear Quertier speak, and they attributed miraculous powers to his temperance crosses. ⁴² Chiniquy was even more eagerly sought after. Indeed, it was Chiniquy's strong fire that forged temperance into a campaign for total abstinence. He began to insist on abstinence in

the early 1840's even though his superiors still condoned the use of wine and other fermented beverages. ⁴³ By converting the entire parish of Ste. Famille on the Isle d'Orleans to total abstinence in 1843, he demonstrated that rural audiences were prepared to renounce drink altogether. He won his point, and by mid-decade the hierarchy equated temperance with total abstinence. ⁴⁴

The most dramatic conversions to total abstinence were among groups suffering from extreme poverty or extreme social isolation. Temperance revivalists persuaded those in distress to substitute the consolations of religion for those of drink. When Chiniquy, Mailloux and several other priests conducted a temperance crusade in the remote Madawaska region in the spring of 1844, the entire population enrolled. ⁴⁵ Irish immigrants flocked to join Father Phelan's society in Montreal, which had nearly three thousand members by 1841. ⁴⁶ Phelan also founded a temperance society for soldiers which was credited with bringing many back to sobriety and the sacraments after years of licentious living. ⁴⁷ Even more astonishing was the success of temperance revivals in the northern reaches of the diocese. A retreat for Irish and French Canadian Catholics at Bytown in 1842 established a temperance society there and produced the first quiet and sober St. Patrick's day celebration in the annals of Bytown. ⁴⁸ Encouraged by this event, several Oblate missionaries devoted the next few years to reforming the habits of some six thousand rough inhabitants of logging camps scattered at several hundred isolated sites throughout the Ottawa Valley, while others

induced Indian bands wandering the immense territories between Abitibi and Hudson's Bay to take the pledge. 49

The timber camp conversions astounded everyone. The unexpected appearance of missionaries in the wilderness amazed the lumberjacks, and many were more surprised than pleased. 50 Put in mind of the Last Judgement, however, by a series of logging accidents, many renounced drink and returned to the sacraments. 51 The missionaries sustained their converts by accompanying them down the river to the settlements in the spring. When the raftsmen descended the Chaudière Rapids in early 1845, Point Gatineau residents

ne les reconnaissaient pas....Un respectable curé nous disait qu'il ne les reconnaissait plus. Mon village, disait-il, était, les années précédentes rempli de jeunes gens ivres qui repandaient la terreur dans les rues par leurs cris et leurs blasphèmes qui insultaient tout le monde; on ne voyait que chicanes et batailles. Maintenant tout est paisible. Il allait par plaisir les rencontrer sur leur cages, chantait avec eux, leur faisait la prière.

52

The singing and praying sometimes became less fervent by the time they reached Quebec, where a thousand temptations awaited the logger with his year's wages jingling in his pocket. The Oblate Missionary, Father Durocher managed to shore up waverers with a series of tavern "show-downs":

Les prêtres même de la ville regardaient comme inutiles les peines qu'on se donnait pour les rassembler. Ils furent bien étonnés de me voir aller les chercher

dans leurs auberges, leur ôter le verre qu'ils tenaient en main, le verser par terre et leur dire qu'ils en avaient assez bu; leur commander de venir à l'église et passer à travers les rues suivi d'une centaine de jeunes gens moitié habillés. La curiosité attirait à l'église grand nombre de citoyens. 53

The religious revivals of the early 1840's thus served to introduce temperance societies throughout Canada East. As early as 1842, Mgr. Signay reported that they existed in every parish in the Quebec diocese, where 30,000 people had enrolled. 54 By the following year, the Montreal diocese had established parish societies "à peu près partout". 55 In 1844 Charles Chiniquy's Manuel de Tempérance recorded the remarkable support in the space of five short years. Tallying up the number of members in the various dioceses, he recorded that there were 75,000 Catholic temperance society members in Canada 56 who had promised, through a radical reform of their drinking habits, to carry on the réveil religieux in their daily lives.

During the very months when Mgr. Forbin-Janson was exhorting the Catholic population of Canada East to temperance, another revival was stirring up Protestant communities throughout the Province. It fanned out from Montreal in 1841 and within months spread as far west as the shores of Lake Huron. In hundreds of settlements from the Eastern Townships to the remote Western District, strangers were knocking on doors. They went from house to house asking people to come to an evening gathering in the local church, or at a platform erected beneath the stars. Many agreed to attend.

When people arrived, they often encountered the unusual sight of three or four clergymen of rival denominations assembled together on the platform. One of these clergymen would open the meeting with a prayer. Another would step up to the podium and begin to speak sorrowfully of all the sin and suffering that burdened mankind. Soon he would reveal how much of this evil was totally unnecessary; it came about only because people abandoned both reason and morality by getting drunk. Other speakers would bring the point home by recapitulating stories of recent fights and accidents in that very neighbourhood tracing them back, step-by-step, to the bottle. Presently the stranger who had organised the meeting would rise to speak. As all eyes riveted upon him, he would begin to unfold a beautiful vision. A second great Reformation of Christianity was at hand, and untold blessings would soon flow over the land. They had in fact already begun in other parts of Canada. Just a few miles back down the road in a town he'd left behind, he had seen the dawn breaking. Longtime sinners were finding God and returning to the church.. Husbands and wives were patching up their quarrels, and feuding neighbours were shaking hands. Communities full of strangers were at long last coming together in a spirit of brotherly love. This great Reformation involved no complicated dogmas; it all hinged on making a simple promise to abstain from alcohol. This pledge was for people who wanted to help others as well as themselves. The strong and the weak were going to rise up together, and banish alcohol from the earth. Children would grow up never knowing

the deadly thirst which had corrupted and enslaved their parents, and a great load of misery would drop from the shoulders of mankind.

As the speaker waxed more and more eloquent on the merits of sobriety, he escalated his demands. He was not interested in any passive "sympathisers". The friends of alcohol were high, and mighty, and many; the coming struggle would be fearful and half-hearted people would only weaken the temperance ranks. All supporters must become apostles, praying in private and in public for the spread of abstinence, and agitating the question "in the stage and on the steamboat, in the drawing room and the railroad car, in the workshop and in the field". 57

Then and there, with his fine words still ringing in the air, the speaker called for recruits. He asked all of them to come forward and make a lifelong commitment

that we will not use intoxicating liquors as a beverage, nor traffic in them: that we will not provide them as an article of entertainment, nor for persons in our employment; and that in all suitable ways we will discountenance their use throughout the community. 58

Generally a sizable portion of the audience came forward, and sometimes a local brewer, distiller or tavernkeeper would agree to phase out his business. 59 Then at the preacher's urging, the new pledgetakers would elect officers and plan to meet again to begin spreading the good work. After singing a hymn, the new temperance society would adjourn. 60

The itinerant preachers who appeared on the highways and

back trails of the Province in 1841 were paid agents of the Montreal Temperance Society. Carrying out its resolution to promote temperance throughout the Province, the Society by the autumn of 1841 had six agents in the field. Three laymen had enlisted as full-time agents. William Black went out to convert the Eastern townships. R.D. Wadsworth, Secretary of the Montreal Society, agreed to carry the message to other Protestant communities in Canada East and also to the Ottawa District; James McDonald of Picton rode out the Johnstown, Bathurst, Midland, Victoria and Prince Edward District. ⁶¹ To cover the areas farther west, the Montreal Society had offered to pay the expenses of any clergymen who would undertake a series of two-to-four week tours to preach temperance. ⁶² Several long-time sympathisers came forward. A Presbyterian minister, R.H. Thornton, agreed to tour the Newcastle and Home Districts. William Clerk, a Congregational Minister, promised to carry the message to the Brock and Gore Districts and the Huron Tract; Reverend Richard Saul headed for the pioneer communities of the Western District. ⁶³ The agents were asked to arrange meetings before setting out, and to attempt to secure the co-operation of the local clergy at each settlement they visited. Where there were no local sympathisers, agents would sometimes canvass door-to-door to gather an audience. ⁶⁴

The agents soon began to send in reports of an unexpectedly warm public response. James McDonald, touring the Johnstown District in December 1841 wrote:

I have distributed a large number of Advocates and tracts....The physicians, generally, are not...favourably disposed....(but), the magistrates are not backward; fourteen are enrolled in the society. All the ministers of the three branches of Methodism are giving their influence to the cause. The great majority of Presbyterians are doing the same, so are the Baptist ministers; and I understand that the Catholic priest at Prescott, Mr. Clerk, has lately established a society...I have held 24 meetings...obtained 450 signatures to the pledge: 44 subscribers to the Advocate. 65

Moving on to the Colborne and Newcastle Districts, he reported that the habits of the people were undergoing a remarkable change, and that some fourteen temperance inns had opened along the road between Ottawa and Toronto. 66 Richard Saul reported from the Brock District that many who had come to meetings determined not to join had been converted, and that

much excitement has been produced, and the public mind turned to this important subject. In many places where no temperance exertions had been made the cause is introduced....I met with very little opposition....Many ministers of different denominations, who previously stood aloof, have now united with the different societies, and some of them are very zealous advocates. 67

These temperance agents established a strong network of temperance societies across the Province. The three lay agents alone were credited with enrolling one thousand teetotallers a month. 68 Convinced that moderation pledges which allowed use of wine, beer and cider were a chronic cause of backsliding,

the Montreal agents invariably founded new societies on the basis of total abstinence, and persuaded older societies to switch to this pledge. Agents also persuaded hundreds of societies and individuals to subscribe to the Advocate, establishing a central forum for a previously unco-ordinated movement. They urged societies to keep accurate membership records, removing the names of known pledge-breakers from their lists. They asked all the societies to send these statistics and, if possible, local delegates to yearly temperance conventions held in Montreal.

Under the direction of the Montreal Society, the temperance campaign in English Canada glowed with the same pious fervour which characterised the Réveil in French Canada. Not all temperance supporters were religiously motivated; some argued that the Canadian movement should follow the trend in the United States and Britain of attracting a large public to meetings by using comic songs and theatrical dialogues rather than "repelling them by solemnity and religious exercises".⁶⁹ But the Montreal Temperance Society, while noting the material benefits of temperance, declared that this was a sacred cause. Drink was undeniably a social blight; but even more devastating, it was the straight road to hell:

Were the city of Montreal destroyed by fire, and all its inhabitants destroyed in the flames, only 40,000 would be lost, and many of them would go direct to heaven; but in America, there dies annually 60,000 drunkards, not one of whom shall enter heaven.

The Society's evangelical approach proved very popular. Many people felt that a good strong dose of religion was just what their neighbours needed. Temperance supporters in Canada West often said that their first goal was to stop the Sabbath-breaking that disgraced their settlements. Though the churches wrestled with the taverns for popular allegiance, it was clear that taverns were winning. A delegation appointed by the Free Church to visit all its congregations toured the Province in 1845 and reported that

in almost every instance intemperance was found to be the proximate or direct cause of those sins which rendered the exercise of discipline necessary....O how many young people are corrupted, to their utter ruin, by the vulgar ribaldry and profane scoffs and jests, to be met with daily, and hourly, in the well-known haunts of intemperance.

71

Drunkenness had grown so bold it even dared show its face at religious services themselves. One man was shocked when he

had occasion recently to be in a crowd, where a Minister of the Gospel was preaching in the open air, and whichever way he turned, the smell of intoxicating drinks came from someone near him with nearly as much strength and a vast deal more stench than from the bung-hole of a liquor cask.

72

Given the circumstances, many did not wonder to see the outraged Divinity stooping to intervene on behalf of the great Temperance Reformation, as in Leeds County where a scoffer was struck dead after disrupting a temperance meeting.

73

In places where neither God nor the local clergymen lent any tangible support, scriptural authority often sufficed. The Montreal Society found an eager market in 1841 for a book called Anti-Bacchus, a ponderous scriptural exegesis from the teetotal point of view.⁷⁴ One agent described a meeting in Sydney where

there were a great many questions asked by some friends, respecting those passages of Scripture which appeared to them to countenance the moderate use of "wine and strong drink", especially Deuteronomy, 14th chapter, where it was thought liberty was given for the moderate use of it... (They conceded that the agent's) replies were satisfactory..., after which we passed the pledge.

75

The campaign to preach temperance in every township in the land rapidly exhausted the Montreal Society's fat bankroll. Facing mounting debts, the society was forced to suspend its travelling agents in late 1842.⁷⁶ While never able to repeat the concentrated exertions of 1841-42, it continued to send out agents intermittently throughout the decade whenever finances permitted.

The agents rode homeward in 1842 with glad hearts. They were no longer needed, for they had created a bandwagon able to roll on its own initiative. Wherever the agents had penetrated, bands of zealous disciples arose to forward the cause. The temperance revival continued to spread rapidly for two more years. In Canada West, Toronto emerged as an evangelical centre. The Toronto Temperance Reformation Society and the Catholic, Military, and Juvenile societies had a combined

strength of 2,800 members by 1842,⁷⁷ and activists such as Jesse Ketchum, James Lamb and Rev. J. Roaf frequently rode out to address meetings in the surrounding countryside.⁷⁸ Smaller societies began to pool their efforts to organise temperance gatherings and open temperance inns. By 1844, the Midland, Prince Edward, Newcastle, Home, Gore, Wellington, Niagara, Talbot and Brock districts all had District Temperance Unions,⁷⁹ and other districts soon followed.

These District Unions hired their own full-time temperance agents. The most popular of these was G.W. Bungay, who worked for District Unions in the Niagara, Home, Brock, Wellington, Talbot and London districts between 1840 and 1845.⁸⁰ Bungay held special temperance camp meetings to give his hearers a concentrated dose of inspiration.⁸¹ Bands of musicians would play temperance hymns while Bungay, aided by sympathetic clergymen, would exhort the audience to abandon the bottle and embrace salvation; to "come on board the total abstinence ship, sailing for safety".⁸² Audiences responded warmly to Bungay, who combined a rigid insistence on total abstinence with a mellifluous style that suggested warm love for humanity. He stressed that the temperance advocate, like John Bunyan's pilgrim, must cheerfully endure all sorts of trials in his journey through a world where many lived in darkness. Bungay described his own three arduous years of temperance preaching in the Niagara district in this light:

I have been mobbed, stoned, waylaid,
and stopped on the highway - I have been

hung, burnt, and shot, in effigy - I have, in remote settlements, where I was unknown, frequently eaten but one meal a day, I have lectured by firelight and slept on the soft side of a plank in the schoolhouse - I have lectured by the wayside and slept soundly on a bed of luxuriant grass in the open field - I have forded creeks - waded through swamps - been lost in the pathless forest, where the bounding deer, the hungry wolf, and dangerous reptiles were my companionsI have generally met with a hospitable reception, and have been kindly assisted by ministers of different denominations....I have travelled about ten thousand miles, delivered about one thousand lectures, received about eighteen thousand names to the pledge....

83

Bungay's message and style warmed the hearts of even the "best folk" in farming communities. After a meeting in Newmarket in 1844 Bungay reported that he saw

the largest building in the place filled with intellectual and influential persons, who listened with undivided attention to a speech three hours long. My pilgrimage through this portion of the district was transformed into a triumphal march, for the people followed me in processions from place to place.

84

The proliferation of local temperance agents produced a growing number of communities where the majority of the population were teetotallers. ⁸⁵ Enthusiastic societies began to send out members to canvass whole towns and townships for supporters. They held ward or section meetings to be sure that every member of the population heard, and re-heard, the message. ⁸⁶ Before mid-decade the movement had reached saturation point in areas which had very active societies or popular leaders, or which were heavily travelled by agents.

William Black reported from the townships in 1842 that two societies in Stanstead Township had enrolled nearly all the villages and

thus the high-ways and hedges were all that was left for me to visit; and in some places, many of the names were already enrolled in some society, leaving little for me but the mere gleanings. 87

In Newmarket in the same year there were reported to be 2,500 teetotallers within a twenty-mile radius. 88

By 1844 nearly everyone in the Province had been exposed to the temperance gospel. The degree of support varied from township to township. There were certain temperance strongholds such as Picton, 89 Newmarket, 90 and the Eastern Townships, 91 while places such as Lachine, 92 Port Hope, 93 and Coburg 94 were noted for stout resistance to any temperance efforts. The returns to the Montreal Society convention in 1844 indicated, however, that the movement had spread fairly evenly through the seventeen districts of Canada West. 95

As agents swept over the Province, the number of signatures to the total abstinence pledge steadily mounted. Wadsworth, the Recording Secretary of the Montreal Society, took pains to tally accurately 96 the number of people who took the pledge. Wadsworth recorded a striking growth of support in the first four years of the decade: not less than 30,000 teetotallers in the United Province in 1841; 97 100,000 by 1843, 98 120,000 in early 1844. 99 By October of 1844 the movement reached its peak: there were 150,000 Catholic and Protestant teetotallers in

the Province of Canada, ¹⁰⁰ organised in six hundred societies. Of this number, there were 60,000 male adults, 52,000 female adults, and 38,000 juveniles from 5-16 years of age. ¹⁰¹

The religious revivals that surged across the Province in the early 1840's gave temperance an appeal it had not previously possessed. They wrapped the rather cold, prosaic virtue of sobriety in a blanket of emotionalism and elevated it to the level of the sublime. As thousands converted, temperance began to seem much more than a step to personal salvation - it became a breathtaking leap towards the regeneration of mankind.

This vision was important, for it enabled supporters to weather a storm of opposition. Despite its growing popularity, temperance still had powerful opponents. The preponderance of lower class converts at temperance revivals did little to enhance sobriety's prestige, and teetotalism was often an economic and social liability. Employers refused to exempt non-drinkers from fees for liquor supplied on job-sites; ¹⁰² jeering fellow workers sometimes forced teetotallers to resign and seek other employment. ¹⁰³ Some military officers broke up regimental temperance societies and flatly refused to enlist any man who could not "take his glass". ¹⁰⁴ Gentlemen appeared at temperance gatherings to persuade local people to give up their foolish fanaticism. ¹⁰⁵ Less genteel opponents used stronger tactics such as throwing rocks at agents ¹⁰⁶ or setting fires at temperance meetings. ¹⁰⁷

In English Canada, even clergymen often sniffed at the mighty Temperance Reformation. While the Methodist, Baptist

and Congregational churches supported temperance, ¹⁰⁸ their individual ministers and congregations were not always favourable. ¹⁰⁹ Many Presbyterian, and most Anglican ministers opposed the movement. ¹¹⁰ Many saw abstinence as downright intemperate; others objected to teetotallers' tendency to reduce Christianity to a single moral issue. ¹¹¹ Some accused temperance agents of usurping the clerical role; Sunday temperance meetings which drew people away from church services angered even the usually sympathetic Methodist clergy. ¹¹²

Temperance supporters fought back. While welcoming all clerical support, the Montreal Temperance Society regularly berated the churches for failing to champion the cause. This attack fell on very receptive ears. Many Protestants were disgruntled with the political entanglements and denominational feuding of the churches and also with immigrant clergymen who were often "so dissimilar from their flocks in tastes, habits and prejudices that they might almost come from another planet". ¹¹³ Temperance was a handy lash with which to chastise unpopular clergymen. Angry teetotallers declared that clerical indifference was the greatest obstacle to reform, since the general public could scarcely be expected to adopt higher standards than churchmen did. ¹¹⁴ Undaunted even when their congregations ostracized them for "speaking out somewhat too frankly on certain points", ¹¹⁵ temperance zealots prophesized a coming day of judgement which would reveal the teetotaller, not the clergyman, as the true friend of Jesus. ¹¹⁶ Less pious souls pointed out how frequently clergymen themselves found a

friend in the bottle. ¹¹⁷ The attacks eventually grew so virulent that the Advocate felt the need to restrain temperance societies from "abusing and slandering Christian ministers". ¹¹⁸

Despite these bitter confrontations, sobriety brought joy. Seldom has such a rigid act of self-denial produced such gay abandon. Supporters poured out into the streets, horses prancing, cymbals clashing, choirs singing, banners floating in the breeze. Great crowds of people flocked in from the quiet villages and farms for pageants such as that held on the banks of the Ottawa River near Hawkesbury in 1842:

Notes of music fell upon...[the] ear, and presently the advance guard of a temperance army was seen winding down the hill. No weapon however of hostile import was with them....Banners, great and small, borne by ladies as well as gentlemen, waved in the air. "Union and Temperance", "Temperance will you join us",...and "Happiness" were some of the mottoes they bore. In passing from Hawkesbury to the place of meeting, the procession having between fifty and sixty carriages, and many persons on horseback, presented an imposing appearance.

119

Temperance societies collaborated for huge District celebrations which grouped hundreds and sometimes thousands of people together. Gazing out over the throng of young and old, Catholics and Protestants and multiple nationalities, temperance supporters felt that the movement was truly restoring fragmented Christendom to its original unity. ¹²⁰

Teetotalism was particularly exhilarating when it stood traditional Christian hierarchies on their head. The lower

classes often saw the light in a flash while their superiors groped towards it more slowly. Thus reluctant bishops adopted total abstinence only after Chiniquy had already converted lay audiences. Presbyterian deacons who initially resisted the idea finally joined humbler converts at a temperance revival in Gainsborough; ¹²¹ and three Church of England clergymen skulked into the fold at Port Sarnia to find, belatedly, that temperance

wrought wonders; and doubtless is one cause that we [in Sarnia] hear no strife, no jealousy, no envy or abusing of that church, nor its warring and abusing others.

122

Teetotalism not only reversed the position of clergyman and layman but drew its saints from some unexpected quarters. The Victoria Society for Reformed Drunkards, established in Montreal in 1841, enrolled 180 of the hardest drinkers in the city. ¹²³ For several seasons these reformed characters became the most popular temperance speakers in Montreal. ¹²⁴ Two Victoria Society members went out as missionaries to some hundred settlements and army regiments, inducing some three thousand hard drinkers to take the pledge. ¹²⁵ Reformed soldiers and Indians were also prized temperance speakers. ¹²⁶ Indeed the goal was so high and elusive that any man, woman or child who heard the gospel was qualified to preach, and many did so. ¹²⁷ Abstinence gave people a new courage. Men, silent for years during Masses, suddenly felt no shame in joining the women in fervent song and prayer at temperance gatherings; ¹²⁸ women broke Victorian strictures to parade publicly through the streets

on behalf of temperance; ¹²⁹ laymen knocked on rectory doors to sermonize ministers on their moral duty to abstain. ¹³⁰

In French Canada, the vast hopefulness generated by temperance was associated with the revival of Catholicism. Priests singled out teetotallers as model Catholics, giving them a place of honour in religious processions. ¹³¹ At a time when retreats were very popular, these sessions were sometimes reserved for temperance society members. ¹³² Temperance occasioned some of the most awesome of the new devotions introduced during the réveil. When a temperance column was erected at Beauport in September 1841, several bishops, numerous clergy, twenty-two sections of men led a cavalry, and seven choirs of women marched in procession while ten thousand people sang and cheered. The editor of le Canadien philosophized on the rapturous effect of these ceremonies:

Nous n'avons jamais rien vu de si beau,
de si imposant, de si ravissant que
cette cérémonie. Nous n'avons jamais
vu une multitude aussi immense
rassemblée en même lieu et pour un aussi
noble but....L'homme...en presence de
tant de majesté, se sent....Comme
magnetisé de respect et de crainte,
comme obsédé de la vaste idée de son
avenir que, dans l'illusion d'un
orgueil peu digne de sa noble destinée, ¹³⁴
il a borné au terme de sa vie.

Teetotallers groped for words to describe the joy they felt and a reporter for les Melanges finally put his finger on it. Noting how directly spiritual draughts substituted

for older pleasures, he declared that the masses of new teetotallers had been carried away by "l'ivresse religieuse".¹³⁵

The temperance revivals declined almost as suddenly as they had begun. Ecstatic religion loses its effervescence after a certain period of exposure. Preached as a form of religious revival, temperance won some 150,000 converts in the first four years of the decade. By late 1844 the formula was going flat. Revivals, yielding diminishing returns were held less frequently. Fewer people came out to temperance meetings. There were rumours of widespread defections to the pledge, and even faithful teetotallers showed less zeal in converting others.¹³⁶ The temperance movement did not end however, but began to take a more worldly turn.

CHAPTER 111 NOTES

¹
CTA, 1 May 1844.

²
MR, 3 decembre 1841.

³
Quebec Mercury, 29 September 1840.

⁴
Buckingham, op.cit., p. 254.

⁵
Ibid., pp. 257-258.

⁶
Ibid., p. 258.

⁷
Ibid., p. 260.

⁸
N.E. Dionne, Monseigneur de Forbin-Janson: Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre en Canada, Québec, 1895, pp. 10-12, 112; R.Hardy, Aperçu du rôle social et religieux du curé de Notre-Dame de Québec (1840-1860), Québec, 1968, p. 40.

An earlier form of the retreat had been introduced in Catholic countries during the Catholic Reformation but were discontinued after the Seventeenth Century. G.Carrière, "L'Eglise canadienne vers 1840", RUQ, Vol. 24 (1954), p. 83.

⁹
Dionne, op.cit., p. 11.

¹⁰
MR, 30 mars 1841, "Supplement".

¹¹
Dionne, op.cit., p. 11; the most famous of these ceremonies during Forbin-Janson's tour of Canada East took place before a crowd of 30,000 at St.Hilaire de Rouville. Cf. Dionne, op.cit., p. 114.

¹²
Hardy, Aperçu..., op.cit., p. 1, citing Groulx.

¹³
Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁴ MR, 20 janvier 1841, citing Le Canadien.

¹⁵ MR, 8 janvier 1841 and 20 janvier 1841; Hardy, Apercu..., op.cit., p. 41.

¹⁶ Hardy, Apercu..., op.cit., p. 43.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Le Canadien, 2 decembre 1840.

¹⁹ Buckingham, op.cit., p. 261.

²⁰ Hardy, Apercu..., op.cit., p. 91.

²¹ Ibid; Dionne, op.cit., p. 67. For the rapid growth of temperance societies in the Quebec area after Forbin-Janson's visit, cf. Le Canadien, 25 janvier 1841.

²² Dionne, op.cit., p. 94; MR, 30 mars 1841, "Supplement".

²³ MR, 30 mars 1841, "Supplement". By April, ten thousand people in the Trois-Rivieres district had joined temperance societies. Le Canadien, 9 avril 1841.

²⁴ MR, 22 janvier 1841; Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 23.

²⁵ Dionne, op.cit., p. 72; MR, 19 septembre 1841.

²⁶ Hardy, Apercu..., op.cit., pp. 43-45; Pouliot, Mgr. Bourget et son temps, t.2, Montreal, 1955-72, pp. 157-158. Cf. also Chiniquy's report to the Bishop of Montreal, MR, 19 novembre 1841, "Supplement".

²⁷ Pouliot, op.cit., pp. 158-159; MR, 11 fevrier 1842. Bourget personally founded temperance societies in a number of parishes. See for example: MR (Vercheres), 19 mars 41; (Boucherville), 18 fev. 42; (Burlington), 18 nov. 42; (Sault-au-Recollet), 28 fev. 43. Cf. also Trudel, Chiniquy, op.cit., p. 35; CTA, (Carleton) September 1841.

28
Lemay, op.cit., p. 28.

29
Hardy, Aperçu..., op.cit., citing Curé Baillargeon's Cahier des Prones, the 5 février 1843 entry.

30
Lemay, op.cit., p. 22.

31
MR, 19 janvier 1841; L'Aurore called upon the principal citizens to support the society which was not, as many supposed, only for drunkards (L'Aurore, 8 janvier 1841); but most of the early members were drawn from the lower classes, MR, 18 juillet 1843.

32
L'Aurore, 8 janvier 1841.

33
Pouliot, op.cit., pp. 157-158.

34
Trudel, op.cit., p. 69.

35
Les Mélanges urged use of the Manuel in schools when the first edition appeared in 1844, MR, 7 mai 1844. The 1847 edition became an official school textbook, Trudel, op.cit., p. 77.

36
DCB, Vol. X., p. 605; CTA, 16 July 1849.

37
C.Roy, "Panegyrique de Messire Edouard Quertier", Les Leçons de Notre Histoire, Québec, 1929, p. 266, pp. 274-275.

38
Ibid., p. 276.

39
A.Mailloux, La Société de Tempérance dite Société de la Croix, Québec, 1848, pp. 2-3; DCB, Vol. X, p. 488.

40
Chiniquy, Manuel (1844) op.cit., pp. 36-37.

41
Trudel, op.cit., p. 36.

42
DCB, V. X, p. 605.

43 Trudel, op.cit., pp. 36, 42-43..

44 Chiniquy converted many of the inhabitants to total abstinence at a retreat at St. Jean Isle-d'Orleans in autumn 1842 (MR, 18 novembre 1842). Though Mgr. Bourget had made provisions for both partial and total temperance societies in a Mandement of January 1842, the diocesan paper gave a glowing report of this retreat, commenting, "L'expérience nous prouve que la tempérance parfaite est la seule qui puisse produire un bien durable". (MR, 22 novembre 1842) The following summer Chiniquy convinced the entire parish of Ste. Famille to take the abstinence pledge (MR, 11 août 1843). By the time the Chiniquy Manuel appeared in 1844 insisting on the need for total abstinence, les Mélanges declared that "nous étions déjà convaincu de cette vérité" (MR, 12 avril 1844). During this same month the paper withdrew a long-standing advertisement for partial abstinence pledge-cards and henceforward advertised only total abstinence cards. (Trudel, op.cit., p. 59).

45 MR, 16 août 1844; Trudel, op.cit., p. 63.

46 Hildebrand, op.cit., p. 54. Father Phelan's work was so successful that it served as a model for similar Irish temperance societies later founded in the United States. CTA, 1 December 1842.

47 Some 350 soldiers enrolled in Phelan's society. Cf. MR, 11 mars 1842 and 26 avril 1842.

48 Les Mélanges noted that temperance was making remarkable progress, "surtout dans les paroisses du nord de ce diocèse". MR, 18 juillet 1843. For the Bytown retreat and its effects, cf. MR, 29 novembre 1842; CTA, 1 June 1842; G. Carrière, Histoire documentaire des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'Est du Canada, Ottawa, 1963, t. 2, p. 171.

49 MR, 11 mai 1847. For reports of Oblate temperance work among the Indians, cf. MR, 12 septembre 1847; also Carrière, Histoire documentaire..., op.cit., t. 3, pp. 173, 257.

50 For lumberjacks' reactions to the missionaries, cf. MR, 14 mars 1845, 10 avril 1846 and 11 mai 1847.

51 MR, 10 avril 1846.

52 MR, 21 Octobre 1845.

53 Ibid. Cf. also MR, 11 mai 1847.

54 MR, 14 janvier 1842; Hugolin, op.cit., p. 22.

55 MR, 19 mai 1843.

56 Chiniquy, Manuel (1844), p. 125.

57 From an editorial by J.W. Bungay, one of the leading temperance revivalists, CTA, 15 October 1844. The account of a temperance meeting is drawn from reports submitted to the Advocate by travelling agents and correspondents from local societies.

58 Pledge of the Montreal Temperance Society, printed in each issue of the Advocate.

59 Cf. Ch. 6, note 14.

60 Clemens, op.cit., p. 157.

61 CTA, November 1841.

62 This included paying the salary of a substitute minister to fill the pulpit during the clergyman's absence. Cf. CTA, July 1841.

63 CTA, November 1841.

64 William Black used this tactic in the Townships.

65 CTA, February 1842.

66 CTA, 15 July 1842.

67 CTA, 1 September 1842.

68

CTA, February 1842.

69

CTA, 16 August 1844.

70

CTA, 1 December 1842.

71

CTA, 1 March 1849.

72

CTA, 1 November 1844.

73

Guillet, Pioneer Inns and Taverns, op.cit., V.I, p. 56.

74

The first Canadian edition of two thousand copies was quickly sold. CTA, September 1841.

75

CTA (Sydney), 1 April 1845.

76

CTA, 15 November 1842.

77

CTA, 15 June 1842.

78

CTA (Vaughan), 1 March 1844; CTA, 1 April 1844. Lamb was an official agent of the Toronto Society, CTA (Toronto), 1 January 1845.

79

CTA, 18 June 1844.

80

CTA, 1 February 1845. Other District agents included James De Bois, Būngay's successor in the Niagara District, a Mr. Cleghorn in the Newcastle District, A.G. McKay in the Gore District. Cf. Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 36; CTA, 1 June 1844; also agents W. Allen in the Bathurst District and Rev. J. Wilson in Dalhousie District (CTA, 2 April 1849). There were apparently also "free-lance" agents such as H.H. Davison who reported to the Advocate in 1845 that for some months he had "given the greater share of my time to the cause of total abstinence....My travels and labours have been confined to the ...Victoria, Newcastle and Prince Edward's (Districts). I have given 49 lectures, travelled over 900 miles, and have added to the list of temperance professors over 731 names".

Davison found ample reward in the fact that "many who were hard drinkers of that soul-destroying and body-killing beverage becoming sober, and thereby restoring peace in society, and happiness at home", and looked forward to the day when "the bloated face, the brandy nose and eyes, and red-pimpled appearance, shall no more be worn by human beings". CTA (Sydney), 1 March 1845.

81

CTA (Rose Settlement), 1 August 1842; (Wellington Square), 15 November 1844; (Vannorman's), 1 January 1845; (Galt), 15 February 1845.

82

CTA (Rose Settlement), 1 August 1842.

83

CTA, 1 February 1845.

84

CTA (Newmarket), 1 April 1844.

85

Cf. for example CTA (Stanstead), 1 June 1842 and CTA (Douglstown), 1 November 1842.

86

CTA (Kingston), February 1842; (Whitby), 1 August 1842; (Montreal), 1 December 1842; (Clarence), 1 March 1844; (Coburg), 15 February 1845; (Port Hope), 15 March 1845).

87

CTA (Stanstead Line), 1 June 1842.

88

CTA (Newmarket), 15 June 1842.

89

CTA (Picton), 15 June 1842.

90

CTA (Newmarket), 15 June 1842.

91

CTA (Stanstead Line), 1 June 1842.

92

As late as 1849 Lachine still had no temperance society (CTA, 15 March 1849), though at that point the Rechabite Temperance brotherhood launched an assault on the drunkenness of the "obdurate place".

93

CTA (Port Hope), 15 July 1842 and 15 March 1845.

94

CTA, 15 June 1842.

95

With the exception of Newcastle and Victoria, all Districts fall within the 1-10% range:

<u>District</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Number of Teetotallers</u>	<u>%</u>
Western	21498	950	4.4
London	29657	640	2.2
Huron	6515	307	4.7
Brock	17315	1312	7.6
Talbot	10193	502	4.9
Niagara	34348	1891	5.5
Wellington	11418	370	3.2
Gore	44232	2138	4.8
Home and Simcoe	83294	6088	7.3
Newcastle	30425	4018	13.2
Prince Edward	14369	500	3.5
Victoria	5214	910	17.5
Midland	34438	2425	7.0
Johnstown	31839	2100	6.6
Bathurst	21086	1710	8.1
Eastern	27618	1872	6.8
Ottawa	7368	743	10.0
Dalhousie	15681	150	1.0

The Source for District Population is the 1842 Census (JLAC 1843, Appx. FF); the source for the number of teetotallers is the Convention Report of official returns presented to the Montreal Temperance Society for the year 1843-44 (CTA, 18 June 1844). Not all societies in Canada West presented official returns to the Montreal Society; assuming that roughly one-half of the Province's 150,000 teetotallers (Wadsworth's estimate in 1844) were from Canada West, the official returns account for somewhat less than half of Canada West's teetotallers. Since agents penetrated all the districts, and since the Montreal Society did not single out any particular District as being dilatory in making returns, they are perhaps reasonably representative of the movement's relative strength in the various Districts.

96

For his day, Wadsworth was a fairly cautious statistician who repeatedly urged temperance societies to keep accurate records of the number of current members. He was more inclined to keep his eye on the goal ahead than to exaggerate successes. In estimating 30,000 teetotallers in the Province in 1841, for example, he noted that this was "not so great as Father Matthew

has sometimes received in a single day". (CTA, February 1842.) Wadsworth collected reports of the French Catholic Societies in the newspapers (Wadsworth, op.cit., pp. 20-22) but here his information was considerably less complete than for English-speaking societies (CTA, 18 June 1844). Wadsworth himself noted the impossibility of knowing how many pledgetakers had defected. His figures are probably a reasonable indication of the number of people who actually took the pledge, though they are no indication whatsoever of how many of them took it on a Sunday and broke it the following Saturday night.

97 Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 35.

98 Ibid.

99 CTA, 1 April 1844.

100 CTA, 2 October 1844.

101 CTA, 1 April 1845. Wadsworth estimated that three-quarters of these teetotallers subscribed to the pledge of the Montreal Temperance Society. Most of the remaining 37,500 teetotallers were probably the totaliste contingent of the 75,000 Catholic temperance society members Chiniquy tallied in 1844.

102 CTA, 1 December 1842.

103 Ibid.; cf. also CTA, August 1841. Les Mélanges noted that teetotallers, drawn primarily from the working classes in the early 1840's, braved a torrent of plaisanteries, colonnies, sarcasmes, and quolibets. Cf. MR, 18 juillet 1843.

104 CTA, July 1841.

105 Cf. for example CTA (London), May 1841.

106 CTA, 15 June 1842.

107 CTA (Port Hope), 15 July 1842. It should be added that a certain amount of pressure was exerted the other way. At least one cure made abstinence a condition for receiving

parish charity (Hardy, Aperçu..., op.cit., p. 92). On several public works projects in Canada West and apparently, also in Montreal, job preference was given to teetotallers, leading to a predictable rush of labourers to take the pledge. Cf. CTA, 15 November 1842 and MR, 9 février 1844.

108

CTA, September 1841, 1 April 1844. Garland and Talmon, op.cit., pp. 181-182.

109

CTA (Huntingdon), 16 September 1844; (Lachine), 15 March 1849; Garland and Talmon, op.cit., pp. 181-183; Elgee, op.cit., pp. 145-151.

110

Ibid.

111

CTA, 16 April 1849.

112

Clemens, op.cit., p. 146; CTA, 2 July 1849.

113

This was the opinion of J.J. Bigsby who was himself an Anglican. Bigsby, op.cit., p. 343. Cf. also H.H. Walsh, The Christian Church in Canada, p. 189.

114

CTA, 15 April 1844, 1 June 1844, 1 November 1844.

115

CTA, 15 January 1844.

116

CTA, 1 April 1844.

117

CTA, 2 July 1849.

118

CTA, 1 May 1849.

119

CTA, 15 September 1842.

120

CTA (Cranby), 1 July 1842; (Point Pleasant), 1 October 1842; (Buckingham), 2 October 1844; (Mississauga County), 15 October 1849. The Colborne Society claimed that temperance ended the "Strife, quarrelling, discord and bloodshed" that had plagued public meetings in former years (Clemens, op.cit., p. 153).

121 CTA (Gainsborough), 1 February 1844.

122 CTA (Port Sarnia), 1 June 1842.

123 For reports of the Victoria Society see the September 1841-February 1842 issues of the Advocate.

124 CTA, February 1842, 1 March 1844, 15 April 1844.

125 Woolley and Johnson, op.cit., p. 250. Cf. also CTA, February 1842 and 15 June 1842 for an account of this town.

126 Cf. for example CTA (Chemong), 15 June 1842.

127 Women and children were particularly active in canvassing door-to-door for pledges and for subscribers to the Advocate. CTA (Windham), 1 June 1842; (Madoc), 1 June 1842; (Blenheim), 15 February 1844; (Brockville), 1 April 1844; (Ingersollville), 1 April 1844.

128 MR (St. Edouard), 2 juillet 1844.

129 CTA, 1 September 1842.

130 CTA, 15 October 1849.

131 MR (St. Eustache), 14 octobre 1842; (St. Vincent de Paule), 28 fevrier 1843; MR, 25 juin 1844.

132 MR, 27 decembre 1842, 27 decembre 1844.

133 MR (Beloeil), 21 janvies, 1842.

134 Levy-Beaulieu, op.cit., p. 103. Similarly large and moving temperance ceremonies took place at Montreal, MR, 27 decembre 1844.

135 MR, 28 mars 1848.

136

CTA, 1 March 1844, 15 March 1844, 1 April 1844, 1 April 1845. Despite his earlier glowing reports, R.D. Wadsworth by 1844 was chastising teetotallers for their "shameful neglect" of their promise to work for the conversion of others and reminding them that the pledge was a lifelong commitment binding even those who withdrew their names from temperance societies (CTA, 1 April 1844). In June the Advocate noted declining attendance at meetings (CTA, 18 June 1844) and in November, lamented that liquor consumption was beginning to rise again (CTA, 1 November 1844). MR (St. Jacques de l'Achigan), 3 avril 1846 and 2 mai 1848; and (Rimouski), 19 janvier 1847 noted similar waning of fervour in the middle years of the decade; as do Trudel, op. cit., p. 64 and Hardy, Apercu..., op. cit., pp. 45-46, 93. Wadsworth's estimate of the number of teetotallers in the Province remained static, at 150,000, for three years (CTA, 2 October 1844 and 15 May 1847), while Advocate circulation dropped from 8,000 (CTA, 16 December 1844) to 3,400 in 1847 (Toronto Temperance Reformation Society, Eighth Report, 1847, p. 14).

IV A SOCIAL GOSPEL

The social gospel of temperance was the improbable message that elimination of drinking would cause the greater part of the poverty, violence, crime and disease affecting humanity to disappear. While the revivals had converted many farmers and labourers to temperance as a source of heavenly grace, the social gospel appealed to a broader cross-section of the population who thirsted for better conditions in this world. Economic depression combined with famine immigration which was "the bitterest example of human misery in all Canadian history" ¹ threatened to shipwreck many ambitions. Workingmen watched their companions sinking down into the mire of degraded poverty. Merchants saw their dreams for colonial prosperity badly shaken. Social reformers watched their schemes for a better world sink beneath a rising tide of poverty, vagrancy and crime. These people clamoured for temperance as a liferaft to see them through the storm. They charted the temperance movement on a new course. Shunning the heavenly ports of the temperance revivalists, they steered for a closer, better-mapped haven. They changed temperance from a spiritual movement to a coherent campaign for social and legal reform.

The social and economic context of the 1840's does much to explain the upsurge of temperance support. The temperance press had long linked drink with poverty, crime and social distress but the alarming growth of these problems in the

1840's made Canadians willing to listen. Vast and simple solutions appealed to people facing a crisis they could neither understand nor control. In theory, population growth was the key to colonial prosperity but the staggering rate of growth, which saw the population double within ten years, boded ill for many of the inhabitants. The farmers in Canada East, plagued by bad harvests and mounting debts, could not accommodate their own too-plentiful offspring, and they viewed the influx of immigrants with alarm. In the towns, too, newcomers usurped the jobs of the native-born.² While Canada West still boasted plentiful farmland, many of the settlers who arrived were destitute, fleeing the horrors of the Irish famine. Cholera and typhus dogged the heels of the immigrants, and panic and disease spread with them throughout the colony. Canada was caught in a particularly bad imperial bargain. At the very time Britain was unloading her paupers on the colony, she jeopardised its economy by withdrawing long-standing trade concessions. With the mass influx of unskilled labour onto an uncertain market, unemployment reached critical proportions. The Province could not adequately provide for the growing numbers of redundant hands, diseased bodies and homeless families.

To cope with the situation, the Province's legislators set about erecting orphanages, hospitals, and houses of industry and they established a school system to better the lot of the rising generation. But many people sought faster and more direct ways to lift the population out of distress and turned to the idea of self-help. Self-help would enable

the common man to steer his life clear of shipwreck through hard work, sobriety, thrift and conscious efforts for self-improvement. Often people who had themselves risen above an impoverished background and meagre education, the proponents of self-help set about establishing temperance and agricultural societies, mechanics' institutes, penny savings banks and model farms, substituting lectures for dances ³ as Saturday night entertainment. They advocated cheap postage to spread newspapers and knowledge to sluggish communities where "the people drink, smoke or sleep, while they might be receiving some useful instruction". ⁴

Self-help was the popular expression, the penny catechism, of the great nineteenth century faith in progress. It was an evangelical movement, for some bright vision was needed to inspire people to struggle up out of their indolence. The first emphasis of self-help was on internal change - a change of heart. The temperance movement proved an ideal vehicle for spreading the gospel of self-help, for it combined the evangelical techniques of religion with a promise of material and social betterment. Moreover, temperance crusaders addressed daily problems in a way that people with little education could understand. They repeated, over and over like the points in a child's catechism, at least four immediate benefits sobriety would bring: financial security, health, a progressive outlook and a happy home. For anyone wanting to climb up from servile poverty to sturdy independence, temperance was the first rung on the ladder.

Temperance was presented as the ideal way to keep the

working class family on the safe side of that thin border between subsistence and starvation. Temperance advocates drew up budgets to show that even if the teetotaller had previously spent only 1²d per day for two glasses of spirits, this saving alone would provide his family with the basic items of food or clothing. ⁵ Then too, he could lay the horrible spectre of unemployment to rest by putting his former drink money away for a rainy day in one of a growing number of penny savings banks opened for teetotallers. ⁶ Thrifty teetotallers soon had impressive results to show. Les M^elanges declared in 1844 that temperance programmes had considerably relieved the plight of the Quebec City poor during the winter. ⁷ Father Bhelan exulted that his Irish teetotallers in Montreal

who before had squandered their week's wages in drunkenness and debauchery, on Saturday night and Sunday, abused their wives when they came home, and had been sick all Monday, Tuesday and perhaps Wednesday, were now working diligently from Monday morning till Saturday night, and bringing home their earnings to a happy family; so that comfortable clothing, children going to school, and a good joint of meat on the table could now be seen, where there was nothing but rags, idleness and starvation a short time ago...the men [were] saving money fast. 8

Temperance, its supporters claimed, would also ward off the illness and accidents which so often plunged families into poverty. Drinking, temperance editors noted as they clipped item after item from the weekly papers, was the fastest way to lose limbs, loved ones, life itself. On-the-job

drinking was particularly lethal:

A most horrible accident occurred last week in the County of Two Mountains. A man, while in a state of intoxication, having fallen into a kettle of boiling potash, had been completely dissolved. Search was made for his body, but not the least particle of it could be found. 9
Another awful warning to drunkards.

Obituary after obituary confirmed the monstrous truth. On the river, dozens of drunken raftsmen fell overboard and drowned in the rushing spring torrents. 10 On snowbound farms people drank themselves into oblivion beside a blazing hearth. As the whiskey in the bottle got lower the fire got higher; alerted by the glowing skyline, the neighbours would arrive to find the charred bodies of the family amid smoking ruins of house and barn. 11 In the towns, even women wallowed and died in drink. On freezing Canadian nights, hawkers, prostitutes, even mothers of families, emerged from taverns too addled to find their way home. In the morning the lesson was there for all to see:

A woman, in Broad Lane, in this city (Toronto), having indulged too freely in excessive drinking, lay exposed in the street until she was so badly frozen as to render necessary the amputation of both arms and both legs. Her unfortunate husband has subsequently signed the total abstinence pledge.

Within a day or two of the above, another woman, in March Street, was found dead, having literally drowned herself with whiskey! Three quarts were drawn from her by the stomach pump!

And another!!! On Saturday last, in the lower part of this city, a woman died suddenly. On a post mortem examination, it was found that the inner coats of her stomach were gone! 12 devoured by alcohol!

The black hand of drink lurked behind lace-curtained windows as well as hovel doors. A temperance agent going from door to door in Goderich reported bandaged heads and misery everywhere, people "of mechanical genius and professional skill, prostrated by intoxicating drink". 13 In Montreal a Scottish doctor "of fair education and talents" drank himself to death at Christmastime. 14 A series of these accidents occurring within a short interval created the impression that alcohol was carrying off the population with the force of an epidemic.

The one sure way to avoid the drunkard's fate was to abstain altogether. Temperance advocates struggled manfully to reverse the popular notion that moderate drinking was vital to health. A number of prominent doctors appeared on temperance platforms in order to endorse abstinence; 15 missionaries and other world travellers testified that they had endured arduous journeys in extreme climates, remaining in perfect health without the use of liquor. 16 Chiniquy shocked audiences with eyewitness accounts of the autopsies of drinkers, their organs frightfully decayed. 17 In the towns and in the backwoods 18 Montreal Society agents unfurled mammoth illustrations of the progressively degenerating stomach of the moderate drinker, the drunkard, the drunkard after a debauch, the scirrhus drunkard, and the drunkard after death by

delirium tremens.¹⁹ Lecturers also tried, with some success, to convince people that drinking induced cholera rather than warding it off.²⁰

Supporters went even farther in their claim for abstinence. It created not only healthy bodies but healthy minds. It gave people a progressive outlook on life. Chiniquy reported that since the establishment of a temperance society at Beauport "tout le monde...est devenu plus sérieux, plus réfléchi; on cherche à s'instruire"²¹ both in the new parish library and in the seven new schools, which, the preacher claimed, had replaced Beauport's taverns. St. Polycarpe, and a number of other parishes also reported new schools "bâties sur les ruines de l'ivrognerie".²² Small wonder that the superintendants of the Provincial school systems and other educators endorsed temperance:²³ everywhere, the book replaced the bottle. Teetotal regiments reported that they had set up reading rooms where soldiers profitably passed their leisure hours.²⁴ Proprietors of temperance inns also kept stocks of newspapers on hand, so that patrons could digest the latest intelligence along with their sodas and custards.²⁵

Catholic or Protestant, temperance supporters promoted the work ethic. They presented sobriety as the cornerstone of a whole industrious lifestyle. The Advocate not only preached temperance but added Education and Agriculture sections to its format in 1841 to disseminate knowledge about these reforms as well: it counselled mothers not to let their daughters lie too long abed in the morning reading novels, a

sure path to miserable mésalliance with a "wealthy fop". ²⁶

Rural temperance societies set up parish libraries well-stocked with texts on "les arts utiles, les métiers et surtout l'agriculture". ²⁷ Sober people were to serve as leaven among the non-progressive agricultural population:

Si...dans toutes les paroisses les sociétés de tempérance s'appliquent à améliorer le mode d'agriculture jusqu'ici trop routinièrement suivi; si elles se prennent de zèle pour encourager les établissements Canadiens des townships, on ne peut calculer quelles sources d'honnête aisance et de vrai bonheur vont couler pour toutes les familles. ²⁸

Temperance lecturers played the theme of progress to an audience that was already tapping its feet restlessly. Watching their dreams of a vast commercial empire centring on the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes fade, merchants expressed their dismay by joining the Annexationist movement to unite the colony with the United States; a much larger group, often felt to comprise the most enterprising and industrious inhabitants, simply endorsed annexation with their feet by emigrating. Canadian discomfit was heightened by an acute awareness that others were waltzing to a livelier tune. People who followed the colonial newspapers and attended Saturday night lectures participated vicariously in the sweeping changes of the era--the revolutions in Europe, the great spread of education, the extraordinary speed and efficiency of the steam-driven engines which were transforming the advanced nations. Yet Canada, so rich in resources, so favoured in possession of magnificent waterways, was lagging

behind. Travellers seldom refrained from noting that there was a marked contrast when one passed from the United States into Canada. One of the more tactless of their lot compared the journey to a leap from a vivifying stream into a miry slough. ²⁹

Many diagnosed Canada's problem as a lack of "energy". Some felt an archaic political system stifled her vitality but others began to suspect temperance reformers were right: perhaps the daily tonic most Canadians used was no tonic at all, but a sedative inducing the national torpor. Perhaps drinking was, after all, an old-fashioned, degenerate practice which would not survive "the full blaze of light and truth" of the nineteenth century. ³⁰ Perhaps it was true, as teetotallers claimed, that when people stopped drinking, their minds would be free "to grasp the world, and penetrate worlds unknown". ³¹ The new possibilities, if Canadians were willing to grasp them, were there. In Toronto some declared that total abstinence was intimately connected with the preservation of Canada. ³² In Montreal others believed that only a temperate Canada would become strong and "capable de lutter en science et en industrie avec les nations civilisées". ³³

This would only happen if Canadians stopped squandering their resources on drink. Temperance supporters made elaborate calculations of the number of dollars wasted at taverns and of the value of grain converted into useless liquor. ³⁴ One lecturer said that if the money spent on liquor were put to useful purposes, it would clear all the waste land of Upper and Lower Canada. ³⁵ Another speaker pointed out that

the current progress in developing the Province's transportation system would be meaningless without the spread of temperance, which would enable the traveller to keep to the centre of good roads, cross bridges safely, and "navigate the canals without three sheets to the wind".³⁶ Accident reports of steamboats with intoxicated crews³⁷ confirmed that technology without sobriety only led to bigger and costlier accidents.

Temperance lecturers played the theme of progress in several keys. It was not only a matter of greater efficiency, but also of greater humanity. Publicity about the sufferings of women at the hands of drunken husbands made temperance seem a particularly benevolent reform. Temperance agents canvassing from house to house opened the door on sordid domestic scenes and invited the public to take a look:

...we called at the house of a good mechanic (in Goderich), where fell discord reigns triumphant. The head of the wife was tied up, her husband had laid it open 36 hours before with a stick....They have a family of five children, and the wife acknowledged that her husband never gave her an unkind word except when drunk. "In fact", she said, "drink, drink, is the cause of all our troubles".³⁸

Urging polite female audiences to support their downtrodden sisters, temperance lecturers re-created all the pathos of the Victorian novel:

I could show you a grave where lies a woman, who was one of the best of mothers, one of the most affectionate of wives, who, by hard toil while living, supported two children and her husband; yet she was never without marks of blows or wounds inflicted

by her drunken husband; and at last, when human nature could stand no longer this treatment - when she lay on her deathbed, I requested the husband to keep sober for half a day, but he responded to this request with a demonic laugh, and the words which he used were too brutal to be repeated. And yet her dying words, after entreating me not to notice him, were, "May God forgive you, Henry, as I do".

39

News items attested, however, that the problem itself was not fictional:

Meurtre horrible - Un homme du nom de James Milligan de Fredericksburg dans le Haut-Canada, a tué sa femme le 14 du courant, sous des circonstances d'une brutalité et d'une cruauté inouïes. Cette pauvre femme était en mal d'enfant, sans personne pour l'assister, son mari enivré au lieu de lui porter secours, se jette sur elle, la couvre de blessures et lui arrache son enfant d'une manière revoltante. La malheureuse n'a survécu que deux heures.

40

The plight of battered wives and abandoned children made good copy, and was snapped up by newspapers not specifically devoted to temperance. As L'Aurore noted, children left to beg in winter often had rum mixed in their woeful tales:

Hier, une petite mendiante, se présente pour demander d'un air timide LA CHARITÉ, un sol! l'enfant annonçait tout au plus une dizaine d'années et elle était l'ainée d'une famille de cinq enfans, qui périssaient de misère; une de ses petits frères avait eu même les pieds gelés dans le cours de l'hiver parce qu'un infâme ivrogne, leur père, au lieu d'approvisionner la maison faisait des débauches continuelles! La pauvre infortunée était demi-nue, ayant un pied chaussé d'un vieux soulier et trempé dans l'eau de neige! Voilà qui est criant, direz-vous! Oui, mais depuis une semaine,

nous dit la pauvre petite malheureuse,
papa est parti, et maman ignore où il
est, il faut bien que nous demandions 41
notre pain pour ne pas mourir....

Sentiment and social conscience converged in hymns to a
happier world, and soon mechanics' bands and temperance choirs
were entoning the social gospel across the Province:

A baby was sleeping; its mother was weeping,
For her husband, a drunkard had left her forlorn;
And the tempest was swelling round their woe-stricken dwelling;
And she cried, oh! my Edward, from folly return.
The hours while she numbered, her baby still slumbered,
Unconscious its father was breaking those vows
He made to its mother that he would protect her,
And watch o'er their offspring when wild winter blows.

But while he is straying, God's law disobeying,
And plunging still deeper and deeper in woe,
His wife is yet praying, that he would bethink him,
And turn from those wild drinks that sink him so low.
Ye husbands and fathers, a voice is now sounding -
The "water of life" in the tee-total stream
Is speaking to thousands, with blessing abounding; 42
Then rise! see the truth in its silvery beam.

It was in the colonial towns, where the problems of the
1840's were felt most acutely, that temperance first evolved
from a voluntary religious movement to a demand that the
authorities take action. It was here that immigrants dis-
embarked and impoverished migrants flocked in from the
countryside. Here, no matter how many institutions were
erected to care for them, the poor, the abandoned, the criminal
and the insane seemed to keep coming, as if from some
bottomless pit. Newspaper editors and concerned citizens
called for more working class dwellings, houses of industry
and asylums to shelter the homeless, 43 but neither private
nor government funds could meet the growing crisis. 44 As

immigration broke all records in 1847, poverty paraded the streets. Town councils held urgent meetings to discuss the problem while outside the halls one saw beggars "presqu'à chaque porte et à chaque pas", ⁴⁵ a sight one observer described as the most heart-rending he had ever seen. ⁴⁶

Even the jails had to turn away the desperate who applied there for lodging. As early as 1845, a Montreal police official announced he was besieged by paupers, and that the most distressing cases were generally

wives of intemperate husbands reduced to the most abject misery...with their children literally starving, whose appeal is harrowing to the feelings, yet he can do nothing....there (is)... no fund available to meet such cases. ⁴⁷

Very often the poor and the unemployed ended up in the cheapest shelter available-- taverns of the lowest description, where they rubbed shoulders with prostitutes and thieves, coming under influences "wholly evil". ⁴⁸

For many who had direct dealings with the poor, drink correlated too closely with the growing distress to be ignored. Charles Mondelet, a Montreal circuit court judge and author of an important treatise on educational reform, was the most articulate and influential of a number of magistrates and reformers who identified taverns-- which lined town streets so thickly that visitors sometimes declared every third house sold drink ⁴⁹-- as the very source of the growing pauperism and crime. In a number of well-publicised addresses to Montreal Grand Juries in the second half of the decade, Mondelet

pointed out that the vast number of criminal cases which came before the court were directly attributable to drink. ⁵⁰ Other judges and police officials confirmed the charge. The Quebec City gaoler attributed over two thirds of annual arrests to liquor. ⁵¹ In 1845, Judge McCord of the Montreal Court of Quarter Sessions, citing a steady rise in crime rates over the past decade, announced that seventy per cent of the criminals brought before the court were intoxicated at the time of arrest—even without counting "soldiers, sailors and transient passers through the city". ⁵² Officials and prison chaplains also provided statistics indicating that arrests dropped in response to successful temperance campaigning. ⁵³

In 1847, Judge Mondelet moved to the radical position that taverns must be banned altogether. So long as these institutions served as home and school for so many people, all other reform efforts were futile:

Messieurs, quelque grande que soit l'influence bienfaisante d'une éducation, les efforts les mieux intentionnés et les plus judicieux seront éventuellement nullifiés, si l'on ne détruit pas de suite le mal dans sa racine.... Des philanthropes... s'occupent de fonder les maisons d'industrie, des asiles pour les jeunes délinquants, des prisons et des pénitenciers bien réglés, devienne (sic) en même temps, utile à la société; l'abolition de la peine de mort, et la substitution... des influences morales aux châtimens corporels, fixant l'attention de ces hommes amis de leurs semblables... mais que peut-on faire, avec efficacité, si on laisse subsister... la cause principale....

Il n'y a, Messieurs, qu'un seul moyen de faire face au mal, il ne devrait être permis à aucun aubergiste, de vendre des boissons enivrantes. ⁵⁴

As a call for progress, temperance mustered a wide

variety of supporters. The idea of self-help won ardent supporters in the upper echelon of the working class. Skilled artisans were particularly receptive. Masons, blacksmiths, saddlers, cabinet makers, watchmakers and tailors joined temperance societies in the 1840's and sometimes rose to leadership ranks. ⁵⁵

Thousands of immigrants also joined the movement in the 1840's. The Advocate reported 5,400 Irish Catholic temperance society members in 1843. ⁵⁶ A Catholic Temperance Society founded by Father Kirwin in Toronto in 1847 soon enrolled some two thousand members. ⁵⁷ Father Phelan's Irish teetotallers in Montreal and a group of two thousand Irish Catholic teetotallers in Quebec City, ⁵⁸ were much lauded in the temperance press which, while not devoid of nativism, tended to portray immigrants as hapless victims of greedy tavernkeepers. ⁵⁹

A radical element of Canadian society also warmed to the social gospel of temperance. Sobriety was one of the more practical goals of a working class radicalism based on the rationalist traditions of the Enlightenment. Many Chartists and Owenite socialists in England in the 1840's endorsed teetotalism. ⁶⁰ In Canada too, in a decade of political compromise the uncompromising often turned to social radicalism. Onetime rebel sympathiser Jesse Ketchum presided over the Toronto Temperance Society in the 1840's, ⁶¹ while Wolfred Nelson and T.S. Brown endorsed the movement in Canada East. ⁶² Brown, who had led patriote forces at St. Charles in 1837, became a popular temperance speaker in the Montreal area where he urged audiences to rebel against the

tyranny of drink:

Man is a pugnacious animal - there is no life in him unless he has something to fight; and the more powerful his adversary, the nobler his career... (We are) arrayed in open and undisguised revolt against the most powerful king in the world... who can collect more money from... his subjects than all the kings of the earth can extort by violence... who can name more dirty people to do his dirty work than... all the other kings in the world... the mighty KING ALCOHOL.

63

Judge Mondelet, too, was a free-thinker and a political radical who saw drink as the great oppressor of the poor. 64

In the countryside as well, many erstwhile patriotes rallied to the call. 65 A teetotaler from St. Césaire seemed to envisage a grass roots Utopia whose sober and responsible citizens would be able to dispose of the hated Union government along with their other troubles:

L'Union détruite avec le temps, et
l'ivrognerie disparue, le Bas-Canada
sera à la porte du bonheur, tel que
nous pouvons le désirer ici-bas. 66

Like their Owenite contemporaries in Britain, some supporters envisaged a new social order based on co-operation among the classes and the sexes. Surveying the mixed crowds at temperance gatherings, they invoked a brighter day where "national and party distinctions would die away, and the only ... (question) would be, who should excel in virtuous deeds". 67 This sober and rational community would enable women to cast off artificial barriers and mingle freely with men. At a Temperance Convention in Picton in 1842:

The Convention marched in procession, preceded by the flag, to (a celebration at) the recently opened Temperance House.

At the banquet where Bacchus reigns, it is customary for the cloth and the ladies to be removed together - a tyrannical prerogative which the old "bruiser" has claimed from time immemorial, and which is now likely to die with him...the ladies continued to add their smiles to the rational joys of the festive board late in the afternoon. 68

Temperance also conjured up less radical notions of progress which appealed to the propertied classes. Middle class support for the movement was bound up with wider discontents in a society whose internal boundaries were crumbling. By the 1840's both the prestige and the political hegemony of the Chateau Clique and Family Compact were waning, and even respectable people did not hesitate to express discontent with the apathetic government and wasteful lifestyle of the traditional elite. Indeed, the "rebels" of the 1840's were no longer farmers with pitchforks, but the wealthy merchants of Montreal.

Merchants were particularly active temperance supporters, contributing both leadership and indispensable funding. Often self-made men who had felt the cutting edge of a social system which honoured breeding and education more than industry and wealth, ⁶⁹ they were particularly receptive to the movement's stress on individual effort and achievement. In this category were zealous temperance advocates such as John Dougall and Rowland Burr, a farmer's son, who had built up a fortune of \$70,000 in the Home District through various milling, real

estate and timber enterprises; he attributed his success to temperance, hard work, and the Proverbs of Solomon, and prided himself that he "never saw the Ritious (sic) forsaken or his seed Beging (sic) Bread": 70

With temperance revivalism waning at mid-decade, this middle class support grew stronger. 71 Several leading Annexationist merchants, including John Redpath, 72 Jacob DeWitt, 73 and Benjamin Lyman, 74 were zealous temperance supporters. 75 Temperance was so generally endorsed by the Montreal business community that its Board of Trade in 1845 petitioned the Legislature for heavier taxes on not only foreign but even domestic liquor. 76 Doctors and lawyers, too, increasingly joined temperance societies, though the most general situation appears to have been that reported by the Lancaster Temperance Society, which by 1845 had enrolled "a respectable proportion of persons of high standing in society, yet....not what may be called the leading influences of the town". 77 Heading the urban societies were philanthropists such as Jesse Ketchum of Toronto and Jeffrey Hale of Quebec, who despite their wealth were not quite persons "of the first rank". 78

In rural areas and small towns, middle class people interested in seeing their businesses grow and prosper often made little distinction between the religious and the secular implications of temperance. Material progress and Christianity covered in Port Dover, for example, where:

It is well known by all who have been acquainted with the place that there has been a very great change for the better

in the last six months; [after a temperance society was founded]; the community begins to wear quite a moral aspect; the general feelings are mellowed, and there is forming a cement bordering on brotherly love. Business of every kind is carried on with more life and animation. 79

In the towns, there was less need to clothe temperance in religious garb; efficiency was argument enough. Sober workmen were pure gold to their employers. Father Phelan claimed that the employers of his temperance society members "could now get as much done by seven men as they could before by thirty". 80

Masters who began giving out coffee instead of liquor on the job reported a marked rise in productivity, 81 and they began to apply at temperance reading rooms for sober servants and clerks. 82 Some even began to agitate publicly for temperance.

In 1844, employers' delegations began to call on the Montreal magistrates to suppress illegal taverns. A group of master mechanics claimed that they "were frequently compelled to disappoint their customers on account of being themselves disappointed by intemperant workmen." 83 A delegation of master carters complained that taverns lured the drivers inside to drink, leaving valuable goods standing outside. 84

The temperance brotherhoods, which first appeared in Canada in 1844, tied together the various strands of temperance support. Like religious teetotalers, they wrapped the cause in mystique and ritual, declaring it one of the loftiest causes in history; yet they also catered directly to material needs by offering special insurance benefits for teetotalers. Moreover, they endorsed the radical demands for a more equitable social order along with the considerably less

radical belief in the individual's right to better his lot in life, neatly balancing the two: all temperate men were brothers, and all were on their way up. These brotherhoods gave teetotallers a new solidarity and gave the temperance movement a new, more secular, image.

The Independent Order of Rechabites, an English teetotal brotherhood, was the first of these organizations to win great popularity. The Rechabites apparently numbered less than two thousand members,⁸⁵ concentrated mostly in Montreal and the Townships,⁸⁶ but they were such popular platform speakers that they re-awoke public interest in temperance after the temperance revivals ended.⁸⁷

The Sons of Temperance, an American teetotal organization, soon overshadowed the Rechabites. Particularly in Canada West, the Sons enjoyed a meteoric rise at the end of the decade, with membership rising from one thousand in October 1849 to twelve thousand a year later.⁸⁸ Their popularity can be attributed to low membership fees⁸⁹ and extremely impressive ceremonies⁹⁰ and to the fact that membership was open not only to men but also to women and children who were invited to become "Daughters" or "Cadets" of Temperance.⁹¹

The Sons' blend of practicality and mystique was a self-helper's dream come true. They provided a strong material inducement for abstinence, since any pledgebreaker forfeited his insurance premiums. They also welcomed the teetotaler into a haven where temperance convictions were highly esteemed and humble origins were no stigma. Self-made men knocking against a social system which did not honour their hard-won

achievements could lick their wounds and dream of a better day in the Sons' Division rooms. This brotherhood, unlike other secret societies, had no religious, ethnic or political requirements for membership.⁹² Reformed characters "emerged from the deepest poverty" as well as from the professional classes pledging themselves to brotherhood.⁹³ For those possessing the minimal requirement, some "visible means of support",⁹⁴ the Sons of Temperance held out the prospect of fellowship with all other teetotallers in the community, including their traditional "betters". Once admitted, all members were eligible to rise up through the complicated ranks of the Order, which promised "its benefits and highest distinctions without prejudice, to the humblest as well as the loftiest".⁹⁵ They all worked together to keep the ranks pure, vowing to report any pledgebreaking brethren and forming juries to "try" offenders.⁹⁶ Frequent rotation of officers gave everyone a taste of leadership.⁹⁷

Inspired by this vision of equality and fraternity, teetotallers formed close bonds. They visited one another in time of sickness.⁹⁸ When a brother died they gathered to carry him to his final place of rest,⁹⁹ and they provided for his widow. Meetings behind closed and guarded doors assured that no intruder would spoil the good fellowship;¹⁰⁰ secret passwords gave members free admittance to enclaves of their fellows in other towns.¹⁰¹ Emerging from their secret counsels, the Sons trumpeted forth their solidarity to the world by parading about in elaborate costume.¹⁰²

Unlike the revivalists, these organizations preached

temperance as a means to worldly happiness. Indeed, the temperance brotherhoods saw religion as such a divisive force that they specifically prohibited religious discussion at meetings. ¹⁰³ The teetotal brotherhoods operated on the secular assumption that people would not permanently abandon drink until other forms of pleasure replaced the old camaraderie of the tavern. Rechabite Tents and Sons' Division Halls served as social clubs for non-drinkers. Expanding their activities, and disregarding the raised eyebrows of Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian temperance supporters, they invited the public to teetotal balls and dances. ¹⁰⁴ They made a point of addressing "respectable" audiences to enlist their support. Shunning the Montreal Society's pious approach, they took to the platform to champion the sound instincts of the bon vivant. Jovial Rechabite speakers sent audiences rolling in the aisles. They won over the drinker by telling him they hated his habit but loved his spirit:

It is not the naturally evil who become drunkards but those of the finest feelings and highest talent; those with light hearts, who can sing a good song or tell a good tale; it is they who oftenest, step by step, descend into degradation, till it is said of him, "poor fellow, he sings a good song, he is first-rate company, but he gets drunk too soon; he is not fit to be seen in our company now".

....If you see a mean, skulking fellow, you will be sure he will never be a drunkard. ¹⁰⁵

By associating sobriety with pleasure rather than piety, and by championing social and material progress, the temperance movement drew in a growing number of artisans, merchants and

professional people in the 1840's. By mid-decade, only one group was still conspicuously absent - the people at the top of the social pyramid. Richard Bonnycastle's comment on temperance societies typified the gentry's disdain for the movement:

I am not an advocate of an educated man joining temperance societies....with the uneducated, it is another affair altogether. If an educated man has not sufficient confidence in himself, and wishes to reduce himself to the degraded condition of an habitual drunkard, all the temperance pledges and sanctimonious tea-parties in the world will not prevent him from wallowing in the mire. 106

Resentment of the colonial elite had been simmering for decades; the temperance movement gave the disaffected a politically safe platform for attacking their leadership. Traditionally, the privileged orders buttressed their position at the top of a relatively static class system by alleviating the worst casualties of the system with their charity. The temperance movement challenged this system with "levelling" notions of how to improve social conditions. The poor were no longer to be the passive recipients of noblesse oblige; each individual must play an active role in his own reform. Moreover, the gentry, too, were seen to need reform. Temperance societies, where people of various classes met on an equal footing, countered traditional notions of class segregation to an extent that elicited surprised comment even from sympathizers. 107

With the rapid growth of temperance support in the 1840's, upper class philanthropy became suspect. As massive

pauperisation strained traditional philanthropy to the breaking point, the experts joined in condemning this approach to social welfare. As judges, police and other officials provided statistics directly linking pauperism and crime to drink, upper class opposition to temperance began to appear obsolete and misguided.

With growing confidence, temperance supporters condemned the hypocrisy of merchants of drink who "roll in their carriages and amass wealth year after year, drawn from the very heart's blood of the poor; and yet they think themselves very charitable, if they give a hundred dollars to keep the miserable paupers they have made from absolute starvation";¹⁰⁸ who lament there is no chapel for sailors, but take care to licence establishments to deal out to them the cause of insubordination, desertion and ruin".¹⁰⁹ For some, such as the editor of the St. Catharines' Journal, temperance supplanted philanthropy as the qualification for community leadership:

(We) propose...by the progress of this Society...to change and improve our social condition. Will those men who say they are interested for (sic) the advantage of the community, prove it by signing the temperance pledge, and keeping it? 110

Thus, when reformers such as Judge Mondelet moved in the late 1840's to the position that taverns were so inimical to social progress that they should be banned altogether, a surprisingly wide segment of the public stood behind him. Progressive journals, such as La Revue Canadienne, ringing with alarm over the rising tide of violence, agreed that

drastic action was needed.

En effet, aux grands maux, les grands remèdes....C'est l'intempérance, qui remplit nos rues de mendiants en haillons, nos prisons de voleurs d'estrocs et d'assassins....A bas les licences d'auberges, à bas ces maisons, qui sont la plupart d'infâmes repaires de brigands, de canailles et de gueux; à bas ces lieux inutiles remplis d'oisifs et de fainéants, qui sont la terreur et l'effroi, la honte et le désespoir, des villes et des villages. 111

Soon, a full-scale campaign to "clean up the streets" was underway in towns and villages across the Province.

Delegations went before local authorities demanding action against unlicensed and unruly taverns. Town councils and magistrates in a number of districts met to reduce the number of tavern licences. 112 Magistrates of Toronto and the Home District, for example, voted by a large majority in 1849 to seek tighter controls on licensing; they went on to urge the Legislature to banish taverns altogether as soon as public opinion would permit the measure. 113

The failure of many of these campaigns caused the temperance movement to take a political direction. Religious and secular, urban and rural temperance supporters had different ideas about whether all taverns, or merely the more disreputable ones, must go; but they found one platform on which they all agreed: dislike of a Provincial government that interfered with local reforms. The Montreal Temperance Society had long protested the granting of tavern licences as a form of political patronage; in the late 1840's, with

the tavern war at its height, temperance forces were moved to fury by an unsympathetic government which simply reversed the steps communities took to promote temperance. Tavern-keepers whose licence applications were refused locally would re-apply to more lenient magistrates, to Provincial officials or to the Governor-General—all of whom were empowered to grant licences and who seldom refused appeals. ¹¹⁴ Anti-government feeling was heightened by the fact that there were so few temperance supporters in the provincial parliament. Though a handful of Reform members were active temperance promoters, no party endorsed the issue. ¹¹⁵ Its foremost Parliamentary advocate, Malcolm Cameron, a man of humble birth and an evangelical turn of mind, was a political maverick. A very popular speaker on the temperance circuit, he was coldly received in the legislative chambers, where his attempts to convert his fellow legislators to teetotalism made him a laughing-stock. ¹¹⁶ The tippling of politicians during Parliamentary Sessions did not escape public censure. ¹¹⁷ Numerous petitions began to pour in to Parliament and the Governor-General from all parts of the Province demanding that the government co-operate in temperance reform. ¹¹⁸

By the late 1840's, then, temperance was moving back to the political stance of pre-Rebellion days, as an attack on the social and political establishment. This time, though, there was a difference: the movement had numerous and militant supporters in nearly every community in Canada, including many merchants, doctors, lawyers and magistrates. Invoking the

names of both religion and progress, temperance had emerged as the first reform campaign that was at once popular and respectable.

Preached as a social gospel, the temperance movement acquired prestige and a political clout it had not previously possessed. Where revivalists had stressed drinking as personal sin, secular reformers presented it as a social disaster—the leading source of the appalling misery of the 1840's. Many were convinced. The public demand for temperance reforms grew so strong that Parliament finally, in 1849, appointed a committee to enquire into the effects of intemperance. Relying heavily on the testimony of gaolkeepers, doctors, and directors of asylums, the committee confirmed all the worst charges against drink. Its Report opened with the statement that intemperance did indeed lie at the root of one-half of the crimes annually committed, two-thirds of the cases of insanity, and three-fourths of the pauperism. 119

Few people today would agree with the public and Parliamentary assertions that drink was the main cause of the poverty and crime of the 1840's. In retrospect, it seems obvious that the deeper source was a grossly unfair distribution of wealth both in Canada and in Ireland, from which so many of the paupers came. But at the same time, drinking was more than just a symptom of distress. Contemporary coroners' reports confirmed that excessive drinking was by far the most frequent cause of sudden death, 120 and news reports indicated how often drunkenness did lead to

physical violence. Moreover police records, then and today, indicate that increased drinking does in fact correlate with rising crime rates.¹²¹ But while the attack on alcohol dealt with a genuine problem and cannot be dismissed as nativist paranoia or middle class conspiracy, it created a new problem at the same time that it tackled an old one. Evolving from religious revival to social reform, temperance retained the rigid dogmatism of fundamentalist religion. The narrow focus on drink as the source of all evil deflected attention from other environmental sources of human misery. Temperance reformers, in fact, drew public attention to a whole range of social problems, such as violence against women, neglect of children, and the acute shortage of urban housing;¹²² but temperance convictions tended to preclude a more diversified attack on these problems.

The linking of drink with the social crises of the 1840's did have one clear effect. It mobilized a large segment of the population, composed of the working and the middle classes, women, farmers and church leaders to demand social reform. By associating drink with the most pressing colonial problems, it removed the temperance campaign from the spiritual realm. The issue would be resolved not in the hidden recesses of the soul or beyond the grave; the showdown between "wets" and "drys" would be an historical battle fought in the legislative chambers, town councils and village streets. Temperance had emerged as a major drive for social reform. Within a few years, hundreds of thousands would turn to it as a form of worldly salvation.

CHAPTER IV NOTES

- 1 A.Lower, Colony to Nation, Toronto, 1977, p. 187.
- 2 F.Ouellet, traces the displacement of French Canadians from many trades with rising British immigration in the period 1819-1844. F. Ouellet, Eléments d'histoire sociale du Bas-Canada, pp. 177-202.
- 3 MR, 17 mars 1848.
- 4 CTA, 15 January 1849.
- 5 Cf. CTA, 16 August 1844, 1 March 1849.
- 6 CTA, 15 October 1842; MR (St. Athanase), 14 mars 1843; MR, 16 mai 1843.
- 7 MR, 16 avril 1844.
- 8 Clemens, op.cit., p. 150.
- 9 CTA, September 1841.
- 10 Chiniquy, Manuel (1849), pp. 103-104.
- 11 A sampling of these fire stories can be found in MR, 15 janvier 1847, 9 avril 1847, and 4 mai 1847; CTA, 1 March 1845.
- 12 CTA, May 1841. Cf. also MR, 6 novembre 1846.
- 13 CTA, November 1841.
- 14 CTA, 15 January 1845.
- 15 Chiniquy, Manuel (1844), p. 94. Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Montreal 1849, Appendix 222, cf. also CTA, 15 March 1844.

- 16
CTA, 15 October 1842.
- 17
Chiniquy, Manuel (1844), p. 104.
- 18
CTA, February 1842, 2 September 1844.
- 19
CTA, 1 July 1842.
- 20
CTA, 1 August 1849, 15 August 1849, 1 September 1849, 1 November 1849.
- 21
Lemoine, op.cit., p. 8. MR, 19 novembre 1841.
- 22
MR (St. Polycarpe), 22 avril 1842; 6 septembre 1842; 11 aout 1843; (St. Cesaire), 2 juin 1848; Wadsworth, op.cit., pp. 20-21.
- 23
Egerton Ryerson was a long-time temperance supporter, Burnet, op.cit., p. 302; J-B.Meilleur in 1844 endorsed the movement and recommended use of the Chiniquy temperance Manuel in the schools of Canada East. MR, 3 mai 1844. Educational reformer Charles Mondelet and school promoters Jeffrey Hale and Thaddeus Osgoode also championed temperance. DCB, V.IX, p. 347, V.X, pp. 327-328; CTA, 15 September, 1 November 1849.
- 24
CTA, July 1841, 1 January 1845.
- 25
Le Canadien, 7 avril 1841.
- 26
CTA, 1 January 1849.
- 27
Mailloux, La Croix Presentée aux membres de la Société de Tempérance, Québec, 1850, p. 104.
- 28
MR, 7 juillet 1848.
- 29
Aileen Dunham, Political Unrest in Upper Canada, Toronto, 1963, p. 24.

30
CTA, 2 December 1844. Mgr. Hudon of Montreal presented temperance to the Société St. Jean-Baptiste as "L'oeuvre de notre siècle", MR, 6 juillet 1846.

31
CTA, 15 January 1849.

32
CTA, 1 May 1844, citing James Lamb of the Toronto Society.

33
MR, 9 février 1848.

34
MR, 24 octobre 1848; CTA, 15 January 1849.

35
CTA, 1 March 1849.

36
CTA, 1 June 1844.

37
MR, 15 juin 1847.

38
CTA, November 1841.

39
CTA, 1 January 1849.

40
MR, 2 avril 1847; cf. also MR, 5 novembre 1847.

41
MR, 17 mars 1843.

42
CTA, 16 August 1844.

43
CTA, 1 April 1845; MR, 28 décembre 1847; Toronto Temperance Reformation Society, 1847, op.cit., p. 20.

44
MR, 28 décembre 1847.

45
Ibid.

46
MR, 18 juin 1847.

- 47 CTA, 1 April 1845.
- 48 Toronto Temperance Reformation Society, op.cit., p. 20.
- 49 Guillet, Pioneer Inns and Taverns, op.cit., Vol.I, p. 55, Vol. IV, p. 42.
- 50 Cf. for example MR, 22 octobre 1847, 2 novembre 1847, 24 octobre 1848; CTA, 1 November 1849.
- 51 Chiniquy, Temperance Manual, 1847, p. 108. Cf. also CTA, 1 February 1849 for similar statements by other officials.
- 52 CTA, 1 February 1845.
- 53 Lemoine, op.cit., p. 5; MR, 5 septembre 1848, 12 janvier 1849 and 22 janvier 1850.
- 54 MR, 22 octobre 1847.
- 55 Clemens, op.cit., p. 146. CTA (Durham), 1 June 1849.
- 56 Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 35.
- 57 Burnet, op.cit., p. 303.
- 58 Hardy, Apercu..., op.cit., p. 93. There were also Irish Catholic teetotal groups in Bytown (MR, 21 mars 1843), Kingston (MR, 28 mars 1843) and a probably Irish group under a Father O'Dwyer in London, C.W., (CTA, February 1842).
- 59 Cf. for example the discussion of Irish drunkenness in the St. Catharine's Journal reprinted in CTA, 15 March 1849; also CTA, June 1841, 1 December 1842; Clemens, op.cit., p. 148.
- 60 B.Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, London, 1971, pp. 149, 388-389; J.F.C.Harrison, Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America, London, 1969, pp. 179, 252-253.

61
Clemens, op.cit., p. 145.

62
Nelson was one of the doctors who endorsed total abstinence in the Chiniquy Manuel of 1849. Chiniquy, Manuel (1849), p. 85; T.S. Brown, Speech of T.S. Brown, Esquire, at the Union Tent, I.O. of R. Soiree, Montreal, 1848.

63
Brown, op.cit., p. 3.

64
DCB, Vol. X, pp. 527-528; CTA, 15 May 1849.

65
Chapter 5 of this thesis discusses the nationalistic implications of the Chiniquy campaign.

66
MR (St. Cesaire), 2 juin 1848.

67
CTA, 16 April 1849, quoting Chiniquy.

68
CTA (Picton), 1 June 1842. Cf. CTA, 2 October 1844, for a similar "feast of reason" at Buckingham.

69
R.Saunders identifies the primary qualifications for admission to the Upper Canadian elite as education and "cultivation"; success in business was of little importance. R.Saunders, "What Was the Family Compact?" Ontario History, 1957, pp. 174-178. M.Cross reaches similar conclusions in "The Age of Gentility! The Formation of an Aristocracy in the Ottawa Valley", in J.K. Johnson, ed., Historical Essays on Upper Canada, Toronto, 1975, pp. 229-233.

70
DCB, Vol. IX, pp. 109-110; CTA (Vaughan), 1 March 1844.

71
The Montreal Temperance Society in 1844 responded to requests to change its Convention date to June for the convenience of "many merchants (who) will then be visiting your city from every part of Canada West", CTA, 15 March 1844. For reference to other "respectable" temperance activists, cf. Clemens, op.cit., pp. 145-146; CTA (London), May 1841; (Cornwall), May 1841; (Melbourne), July 1841; (Baltimore), 15 March 1844; (Penetanguishine), 15 March 1845; (Owen Sound), 1 May 1849; (Perth), 15 June 1849. A temperance Committee established in Quebec City in the winter of 1848-49 included

the lawyer J.-U. Tessier (DCB, IX, p. 119), hardware merchants G.H. Simard and F.X. Méthot (DCB, X, p. 654), and the prominent doctor and future mayor, Joseph Morrin (DCB, IX, pp. 572-573), as well as long-time temperance supporter Dr. James Douglas (CTA, 15 March 1849). "M. Dufort, marchand" was a Montreal Temperance leader. Cf. Bourget, Mandements..., op.cit., p. 10; heading the Montreal Rechabite brotherhood was George Muir, a lawyer (Brown, op.cit., p. 8).

72 CTA, 16 August 1844; DCB, Vol. IX, p. 430.

73 Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 2; DCB, Vol. IX, p. 430.

74 DCB, Vol. X, p. 451.

75 The link was so close that at least one Annexationist meeting was held in the Montreal Temperance Hall, J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, Toronto, 1976, p. 344.

76 CTA, 15 February 1845.

77 CTA (Lancaster), 15 January 1845. Cf. also CTA (London), May 1841; (Amherstburg), 1 February 1849.

78 DCB, Vol. IX, p. 347; CTA, 15 March 1849; Burnet, op.cit., p. 301.

79 CTA (Port Dover), 1 August 1842.

80 Clemens, op.cit., p. 150.

81 CTA, November 1841.

82 CTA, 1 June 1842.

83 CTA, 15 February 1844.

84 Ibid. Cf. CTA, 1 February 1844 for a similar petition from a group of Montreal merchants.

85

A Rechabite speaker noted in December 1849 that there were between 1195 and 1400 dues-paying Rechabites. At this time the Order had begun to decline. CTA, 15 December 1849.

86

CTA, 15 December 1849.

87

CTA, 1 March 1845, 1 February 1849. For a fuller explanation of the Rechabite organisation and philosophy, cf. CTA, 1 January 1849.

88

W. Scott, The Teetotaler's Handbook, Toronto, C. 1860, pp. 45-46.

89

CTA, 15 December 1849.

90

CTA, 15 March 1849.

91

Woolley and Johnson, op.cit., p. 250.

92

CTA, 1 December 1849, 15 December 1849.

93

H. Blair, The Temperance Movement, Boston, 1888, p. 493; CTA, 1 December 1849. The Montreal Temperance Society credited the Sons with reclaiming many drunkards, CTA, 1 April 1852; but not all were those in need; the Montreal Society's own veteran (and middle class) temperance workers J.C. Becket and R.D. Wadsworth became leading members of the Order (Scott, op.cit., pp. 43-47), as did the politician Malcolm Cameron (Cherrington, op.cit., p. 486).

94

Krout, op.cit., p. 212.

95

Sons of Temperance of Canada West, Proceedings of the Grand Division of Canada West, Vol. 1, 1849-1856, p. 23.

96

Sons of Temperance of Canada West, Constitution of the National Grand and Subordinate Divisions, 1850, pp. 57-58, 66.

97

Ibid., p. 17.

98 Ibid., p. 79.

99 Ibid., p. 29.

100 Ibid., p. 20.

101 Ibid., pp. 7, 37.

102 Ibid., pp. 27, 29, 50.

103 CTA, 1 May 1849; Sons of Temperance of Canada West, Constitution By-Laws and Rules of Order of the Fountain Section of the Cadets of Temperance, Brockville, 1853, p. 13.

104 The Advocate had spoken against teetotal balls in 1842 since so many supporters of temperance felt dancing was immoral. CTA, 1 August 1842.

105 CTA, 1 January 1849, 1 April 1849.

106 Cited in Hildebrand, op.cit., p. 24.

107 Ibid., citing an article in La Minerve.

108 Hildebrand, op.cit., p. 29, citing an Advocate article of 1836. The Society belaboured the same theme during the following decade. Cf. CTA, 1 January 1849 and J. Dougall's testimony before Parliamentary Committee, JLAC, 1849, Appendix ZZZ.

109 CTA, June 1841.

110 CTA, 15 March 1849.

111 MR, 2 novembre 1847.

112 Cf. for example CTA (Wainfleet and Niagara District), 15 January 1845; (Amherstberg), 1 February 1849; (Owen Sound), 1 May 1849.

113

CTA, 1 February 1849. The attack on taverns threatened to become a middle class vendetta against the lower classes. Tavern closures sat more comfortably with the well-to-do than had the revivalists' naively democratic insistence that everyone, high and low, must take the pledge. Indeed, the Montreal Temperance Society noted in 1847 that while the public was "more alive to the evils of drinking than at any former time...the only efficient remedy--total abstinence--is almost as unpopular as ever". (Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 144.) Moreover, in the towns, the "clean-up" tended to focus only on the dingy, unlicensed taverns frequented by the poor. (Brown, op.cit., pp. 3-5.)

But the temperance movement in the 1840's still breathed the fire of religious and political radicalism, and many would not accept the shabby haunts of the poor as a scapegoat. T.S. Brown called on Montreal audiences to rise above the "contemptible time-serving hypocrisy" of gentlemen who continued to drink themselves while with abhorring the same vice in the poor (Brown, op.cit., pp. 3-4). In smaller communities where class distinctions were less clearly drawn, many supporters insisted right from the beginning that all "sympathizers" take the pledge and that any tavern whatsoever was an offensive blot on the horizon. Temperance forces in Georgetown, for example, saw the question of taverns in black and white terms, transferring the revival mentality to community reform. Taverns were haunts of the "demon-king" and the society sought to eliminate them all (CTA, 16 April 1849). The large contingent of religiously-motivated supporters was apt to be as intolerant of high-placed sinners as of lowly ones. Priestly temperance supporters, more interested in assuring that all Catholics be temperate than in singling out any one class, appealed to Parliament to licence taverns only for bona fide travellers and declare them off-limits for the inhabitants. (JLAC, 1849, Appx. ZZZ, testimony of Charles Chiniquy; CTA (Berthier), 1 March 1849.) The Advocate continually castigated "respectable, moderate drinkers" for perpetuating society's use of alcohol by making drinking seem honorable (CTA, 15 January 1849, 15 March 1849).

True to their view that temperance constituted a religious reformation, the Montreal Society stood by the policy of voluntary conversion. Appearing before a Parliamentary Committee in 1849, representatives of the Society advocated "moral suasion" as more effective than coercive laws (JLAC, 1849, Appendix ZZZ, testimony of John Dougall and James Court). The Montreal Society favoured legislative action to promote temperance, and in fact began to circulate petitions on the subject as early as 1842 demanding a Parliamentary Enquiry into the causes of Intemperance (CTA, February 1842). The Society for many years agitated against the granting licenses as a form of political patronage and the fact that many Magistrates owned distilleries or taverns and thus had a vested interest in granting licences (Buckingham, op.cit., p. 52; CTA,

15 July 1844). But the Society maintained the voluntarist position that the question was primarily one of conscience; it never organised a strong campaign for political action but left the question of petitioning to the discretion of individual societies; cf. CTA (Niagara), 2 September 1844; CTA, 2 December 1844. Dougall's position was that restrictive laws could not be enforced; and restrictions on taverns should be tightened only as the greater enlightenment of public opinion permitted; cf. JLAC 1849, Appx. ZZZ. In its more optimistic moments about the state of public "enlightenment" on this matter the Society at times suggested simply abolishing the Licensing system altogether without adopting the corollary measure of Prohibition. (CTA, 1 April 1844, 1 March 1849.)

To summarise, temperance evangelism differed from the later drive for Prohibition in its stress on voluntarism and on individual conversion of high and low alike. Temperance before 1850 cannot be characterised as a middle class movement.

114

Buckingham, op.cit., p. 52; CTA, February 1842, 2 April 1849; JLAC 1849, Appendix ZZZ, testimony of Dr. Sewall.

115

The Advocate wrote in 1842 that nearly all the province's Legislators opposed temperance (CTA, 15 November 1842), but that by 1844 was "gratified to announce that at least five members of the Lower House, and one of the Legislative Council, are pledged teetotallers, besides several others who act upon the principle" (CTA, 16 December 1844). Among these supporters were Baldwinite Reformers J.W. Powell, J.P. Roblin and J.H. Price (CTA (Windham), 1 June 1842, 16 December 1844; DCB, IX, p. 688; X, pp. 94, 624), and Malcolm Cameron, who is probably best classed as an independent (DCB X, pp. 125-128).

116

Bourass, op.cit., pp. 299-303, 311; Cherrington, op.cit., p. 486.

117

CTA, 15 February 1845.

118

JLAC 1849, Appx. ZZZ; CTA, 1 April 1844; MR, 12 juillet 1850.

119

JLAC 1849, Appx. ZZZ.

120

Guillet, Early Life in Upper Canada, p. 299.

121

See note 53 above; and Globe and Mail, 28 June 1978,

p. 1 for a statement by Ontario Correctional Services Minister Frank Drea that nine out of ten prisoners in Ontario are jailed for alcohol-related offences.

122

The Toronto Temperance Reformation Society typified this situation in a discussion of the housing crisis in 1847. Noting that respectable boarding houses were so scarce that workers could often only find lodging in very disreputable taverns, the Society contented itself with the "hope that this public notice...will induce some seriously to ask themselves if they could not in this way provide for the wants of their poor neighbours"; but the Society directed its own energies towards petitioning City Council to close taverns and towards opening a new Temperance Hall rather than towards providing alternate housing (Toronto Temperance Reformation Society, p. 20).

V PATRIOTIC TEMPERANCE

Nationalism was one of the great secular religions of the nineteenth century.¹ It involved the belief that there was something sacred about a group possessing a common territory, language and culture. In an age when both traditional religions and the old hierarchical social order were subjected to growing criticism, nationalism awoke unquestioning faith in millions of breasts. For this belief statesmen gave their all and armies marched and died. When drink was proposed as a fit sacrifice on the altar of nationalism, the temperance movement acquired an extraordinary vitality. In the 1840's, temperance and nationalism joined hands in French Canada. Clerical leaders persuaded the lay elite that survivance demanded greater sobriety. When Charles Chiniquy initiated a patriotic temperance campaign in 1847 the elite joined the masses in supporting him, and temperance triumphed as a great national crusade.

No similar movement swept through English Canada. Here the absence of "patriotic" temperance is readily explained: no one knew which flag to wave. Occasionally a speaker urged a crowd to abandon the bottle for love of Empire:

May Britain and her dependencies never succumb to the insidious advances of this vice, and be numbered with its victims. May her sons...free her proud escutcheon from the stain of this national disgrace before it is too late.²

Sceptical voices, however, dismissed Britain as a place where

"Egyptian darkness" ³ reigned on the subject of temperance.

The opposition of the British-born colonial elite to the movement also cooled any potential imperial ardour. Some temperance advocates found inspiration in the progressive American states which were passing stringent temperance laws in the 1840's. ⁴ But supporters who admired the American model could scarcely pass for patriots; in fact they had to take care to avoid the charge of disloyalty. A Port Sarnia correspondent to the Advocate described a temperance soirée where

The speakers were partly Canadian and partly American, in compliment to whom...the flags of the two countries were placed supporting right and left the beautiful temperance banner which overhung the platform, and lest any suspicion of disloyalty should attach to such commingling, our own National Anthem was sung as a finale, the whole company standing. ⁵

Indeed, as one perceptive visitor noted, national sentiments were a divisive force in Canada West:

A curious feature...which strikes a stranger very much...is the exceedingly heterogeneous and exotic character of its population: it is much more remarkable here than in the States, because the country has not been settled long enough for a generation born in it to have sprung up to any extent; so that there appears to be no groundwork of native population at all: everybody is a foreigner here; and "home", in their mouths, invariably means another country. ⁶

The Montreal Temperance Society surmounted this situation by presenting temperance as a sacred cause transcending the

bonds of nation and race. As the movement became more secular, temperance groups continued to seek unity by playing down their members' divided loyalties. Indeed, the Sons of Temperance owed much of their popularity to the fact that, unlike other secret societies, they had no ethnic, religious or political requirements for membership.⁷ The Sons took pride in the fact that at meetings members were able to "leave behind them their isms of every kind. Tories and Radicals, Colonists and Annexationists could only be brethren by staying safely clear of any "national" subject. This virtue of toleration spoke to the mind but of necessity cooled the blood; it was not capable of firing the same mass fervour for teetotalism that raged through French Canada in the second half of the decade.

Across the Ottawa, there was little doubt about the "national" identity. In Canada East, the blood ties of a largely homogeneous population had been strengthened by conscious efforts to promote solidarity. French Canadian nationalism had emerged in the early nineteenth century in response to the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of a small British elite.⁸ New political leaders drawn from the professional classes, influenced by the anticlericalism of European nationalists, had attacked the clergy for their support of the British regime. The Rebellion years heightened resentment towards the clergy, but the events of 1837-8 discredited radical nationalism as well. Nationalist ideology soon underwent a marked change of character. When the British Parliament united Upper and Lower Canada in 1841

with the aim of promoting French Canadian assimilation, politicians and clergy united in resisting this goal.

Ideas evolved rapidly and new configurations took shape. The period has been characterized as a time of "révolution psychologique" among the bourgeoisie.⁹ National leaders accepted the idea of co-operation with English Canadian reformers and the old tactic of obstructing commercial, agricultural and educational change gave way to support for these reforms. Once seen as instruments of British hegemony, they became a means of national self-preservation. Only a dynamic Canada East could counterbalance the growing population and commercial strength of Canada West. Yet the masses had experienced no "psychological revolution", and popular indifference to agricultural and educational reform caused growing concern. Increasingly, national leaders turned to the clergy as the group capable of disseminating the new reforms among the people.¹⁰

The clergy owed their rising influence to zeal rather than to numbers. Though several new religious orders were established in Canada East during the 1840's, at mid-century there were still fewer clergymen per capita in this long-settled territory than in the newer society of Canada West.¹¹ But heading the ranks were such outstanding figures as Monseigneur Ignace Bourget who became bishop of Montreal in 1840. Bourget championed an Ultramontane philosophy which sanctioned close ties between civil and religious authorities and an active role for the clergy in political and social

questions. This idea was in direct opposition to "modernism" as defined by either European liberals or American democrats, both of whose credos involved separation of church and state. However, Mgr. Bourget and his clergy worked tirelessly to make their philosophy relevant. Expanding their traditional role as dispensers of poor relief, they led the response to what were seen as the most pressing problems of the day. Priests and nuns led the relief work among the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who entered the colony, and many lost their lives in the cholera epidemic.¹² The Quebec hierarchy also attempted to stem the problem at its source by direct appeals to their Irish colleagues to discourage further immigrants from coming during the epidemic.¹³ On the controversial question of a school system, Mgr. Bourget reached a compromise with the Reform party led by Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine, and the clergy were a leading force in establishing new schools. To counter rising emigration, the clergy organised French Canadian settlement in the Townships.

Though clerical and bourgeois reform policies were converging, it took several years for the two groups to see eye-to-eye on temperance. By 1844, temperance was synonymous with teetotalism; and, as in English Canada, the bourgeoisie often found this practice unpalatable. But the movement had gained a considerable following among the lower classes during the réveil, and it appeared that sobriety might truly provide the inner motivation needed to bring the non-progressive agricultural population into the nineteenth century. Here was

a reform impulse with grass roots and as Vicar General Hudon told an elite audience in Montreal in 1846, it should not be allowed to wither for lack of influential supporters. Hudon also pointed out that sober servants and workmen were a considerable boon to wealthier compatriots who hired them.¹⁴ In the Quebec diocese Archbishop Signay also presented temperance as a matter of noblesse oblige, both religious and social duty.¹⁵

Moreover, the leading colonisation priests claimed that temperance was essential to this patriotic endeavour. The first recruits were an unpromising lot; but the missionary at Kingsley reported in 1847 that, to the great surprise of everyone, the impoverished colonists had finally begun to prosper, "conséquence immédiate de la tempérance".¹⁶ The missionaries suggested that several thousand lumberjacks working in the Ottawa Valley had great potential as settlers. In a capital-scarce rural economy their earnings

tous les ans, apportés par eux au foyer paternel devraient se répandre dans nos campagnes, et y porter: l'abondance avec le goût et les moyens d'entreprendre les améliorations de tout genre.

17

This was only a dream as long as so many continued to drink their wage.

Government officials also confirmed that drink was sapping the strength of French Canada. Judge Mondelet drew public attention to scandals such as the death of the scion of one of the country's finest families. Emerging from a Longueuil tavern, the young gentleman had staggered through the streets, the

laughing stock of the village children; shortly thereafter he died of delirium tremens. This was cited as only one of many similar cases. ¹⁸ A Legislative Committee appointed to enquire into the causes of French Canadian migration also singled out intemperance as a leading cause. Lumberjacks who spent their wages on wild living had no savings when depression hit the timber trade, and figured prominently among the emigrants. Intemperant farmers drank themselves into such heavy debts that they had to sell out and leave. ¹⁹ From the States, missionaries sent back the final chapter of the tragic narrative. The degraded and unwanted migrants could find only the most brutalising employments as domestics, railway and agricultural labourers, or stokers of the furnaces of steamboats. ²⁰

Concern grew and became patriotic consensus. Hector Langevin declared that drunkenness had replaced assimilation as the great national peril:

ce petit peuple a grandi...sa langue et ses mœurs ne périront pas. Mais un danger plus grand le menace; cette fois, il ne s'agit plus de l'anglification; c'est le chancre de l'intempérance qui le dévore...ravissant la dignité de l'homme raisonnable.... ²¹

Nicholas Aubin's Committee for Reform and Progress passed temperance resolutions along with educational and economic ones, ²² and the Institut Canadien chose Chiniquy as the appropriate ²³ authority for a lecture on the subject of "National Industry and Economy". ²³

Although temperance remained an oeuvre religieuse, as it

became more closely associated with national survival, it took on the guise of an oeuvre éminent sociale or patriotique. By 1848, the movement in French Canada had a number of influential supporters and few, if any, public opponents. When the treachery of drink was well-established, the avenging angel swooped down.

Charles Chiniquy had won fame in the early 1840's as a temperance preacher in the diocese of Quebec. With interest in the subject declining, however, Chiniquy received little attention in the press after 1843. Then, because of his infractions of church discipline, he was deprived of his Kamouraska curate by Archbishop Signay in 1846 and dismissed from the diocese. Chiniquy's misdemeanours were not public knowledge, and his decision to enter the Oblate novitiate at Longueuil was supposed to have been a spiritual decision rather than a simple alternative to unemployment. At any rate, Chiniquy disappeared from the public eye for several years.²⁴ Eventually rejected by the Oblates as well, he returned to the profession in which he excelled: preaching temperance. In the spring of 1848, Bishop Bourget assigned him to conduct a temperance campaign in the diocese of Montreal.²⁵ Thus began a crusade which lasted for three years and transformed total abstinence into a great patriotic crusade.

Chiniquy was sensitive enough to adapt the points of his platform to shifting popular sentiment. At the beginning of the Union, in the gloomy aftermath of the Rebellion, people had placed their hopes in religious revival; Chiniquy,

along with other temperance preachers, had emphasized temperance as a form of spiritual regeneration.²⁶ When he reappeared as a temperance preacher in the late 1840's, he had broadened his programme. As political developments of the 1840's revealed that Union was not necessarily inimical to national survival, Chiniquy linked temperance to emerging nationalist hopes. Chiniquy's nationalism was suitable to an era when French and English Reform leaders were working together to secure responsible government and national energies were summoned for construction of schools and internal improvements. The mass support and the money for this ambitious programme would not appear out of thin air; they would arise only when French Canadians rejected those deep-rooted elements of their own culture which were inimical to change. Chiniquy insisted to his audiences that the only way to change the national destiny was for each individual to change his personal habits, and he urged not only temperance but also the development of domestic industries.²⁷

Proclaiming this message, Chiniquy emerged as the great national hero of the 1840's. Indeed, people showered him with the same adulation they had given Papineau ten years earlier. Audiences remarked that he reminded them of the patriotes,²⁸ and he was able to raise popular hopes in a way which no leader since Papineau had done. Chiniquy's crusade became a triumphal march; he was greeted with militia musters and cannonades, flags and marching bands.²⁹ His picture became a household object, and the huge crowds who gathered to hear him

"hung upon his words with breathless attention." ³⁰ A parishioner from St. Lin who was moved by the enthusiastic response of all classes in both town and country to Chiniquy seems to have reflected the popular feeling when he exclaimed that

cet élan de tous à s'enrôler sous la patriotique bannière de la "tempérance" est extraordinaire, incroyable....la tempérance est la digue qui doit enfin, arrêter notre jeune Canada dans le chemin boueux du déshonneur et de la misère....il n'y a, en ces jours, d'espoir, de vie et de gloire nationale que sous le brillant drapeau de la "tempérance".

31

Chiniquy was, above all, a consummate actor performing a timely drama. He had to be seen in person to be appreciated; editors seldom reprinted his speeches, and they did so with apologies for their inability to capture his effect. ³² Chiniquy embodied the weak nation which, through passionate dedication and steely force of will, triumphed over all adversity. He heightened the drama by stage effects: his sudden, unexpected appearances inspired rumours that he arrived by miracle. ³³ He used his small, homely frame to maximum effect. When people first saw him, they tended to conclude that he was much overrated:

L'apôtre de la tempérance ne devait pas être si redoutable, comme on le disait, tant sa physionomie paraissait douce, et présageait une défaite plutôt qu'une victoire....

34

But he began his presentations so solemnly that auditors

suddenly sensed a greater force than his own small person at work:

M. Chiniquy s'agenouille quelques temps, au pied de l'autel; puis, il s'achemine enfin vers la chaire: sa démarche est lente et majestueuse, et d'autant plus solennelle, qu'il porte entre ses mains, appuyé sur sa poitrine, le magnifique crucifix d'or reçu de la cour de Rome.

Que cette apparition fut grande, expressive!...
Une voix celeste cri au fond de son coeur: 35
In hoc signo vinces!

Though his style was artful, his content was straightforward. Indeed, everyone could understand Chiniquy's version of how to save the country. It was simple, colourful, and told with a touch of humourous exaggeration. He described the poor ragged old farmer toiling in a ditch while his daughter passed by dressed in silks and satins, feathers, flowers and gaudy ribbons, and chastised women for shopping their menfolk into debt. He himself "loved to clothe himself with Canadian, home-made cloth", and he urged that:

We ought not to bring from Europe what we can get at home. We have been upwards of two hundred years in Canada and we manufacture nothing, not even a pin or a button. I have been ashamed while travelling in the United States, and seeing their extensive manufactures, to think that we are yet in our cradles. Last year I heard a party of gentlemen on board of a steamboat conversing about some great progress, which turned out to be the establishment of a manufactory of tobacco pipes! We suffer from a want of nationality, 36
a want of union, a want of energy.

Chiniquy did not gloss over popular resentment of the

English but spoke directly to the problem:

Ah! vous vous plaignez tous les jours de l'esprit d'envahissement de ces nouveaux venus; vous vous indignez du souverain mépris avec lequel ils vous traitent.

37

He described what everyone felt and feared. The country was filling up with British and American immigrants. The best urban properties had already fallen into their hands, and seigneurs had been driven from their ancient family lands by the creditor's whip. Chiniquy then told his audiences, quite frankly, that they would be the next to go:

Oui, c'est le coeur plein d'une inexprimable douleur que nous vous l'annonçons: avant peu d'années, si un changement prompt et universel ne s'opère parmi vous, vous serez chassés de vos maisons, et vos enfans y demeureront en qualité de serviteurs et d'esclaves.

38

God had deliberately sent the advancing army of English, Scots, Irish and Americans to punish Canada:

C'est une guerre de destruction qu'ils ont ordre de Dieu de vous faire. Mais c'est une guerre noble et loyale de leur part; car le plus grand nombre n'a d'autres armes que l'industrie, la banque d'épargne, l'amour de travail, la frugalité, la persévérance que surmonte tous les obstacles, mais par-dessus tout l'ardeur pour s'instruire et donner à leurs enfans la meilleure éducation possible.

39

The battle's tragic outcome was a foregone conclusion. The Canadians were in disarray; and the searing indictment was that

this weakness was self-inflicted:

vous succomberez, ... car vous n'aurez à opposer que vos éternelles divisions, vos procès ruineux, votre orgueil, votre luxe insensé, l'état stationnaire de votre agriculture, votre apathie... votre frivolité, votre amour des plaisirs, et par-dessus tout votre penchant pour les boissons fortes qui épuisent tous les ans vos ressources, et vous ôte le tems, la pensée et les moyens de faire aucune amélioration autour de vous.

40

But now, if the people would all join together to throw off this crippling vice, they could save their country. Chiniquy dramatised the struggle before their very eyes, convincing them that they could win it. An onlooker described the preacher's glorious finale before a great throng in the Montreal Cathedral:

Canadians! our great curse has been want of union - unite now in the noble cause of Temperance!

...People of Montreal, you have this day fought Goliath. Satan has an army - the demons of intemperance....Strike, then! Destroy Goliath! Destroy drink, and the tears of wives will no longer flow, and children will all have bread. See the staff of David (raising the crucifix with which he administers the pledge) strike the giant. Leading men! lead in this good work - the people call you. Wives! dry up your tears! Mothers! rejoice! for your sons and husbands are going to strike Goliath. Children! rejoice! for your fathers are not going to labour for taverns, but for you; your fathers are going to strike Goliath. Pastors! rejoice! for Goliath has received the blow.

41

This was perhaps the most spectacular road show ever to tour the quiet parishes of Canada East. Chiniquy opened the campaign in early 1848. In eighteen months he delivered some five hundred sermons in 110 separate localities, persuading 200,000 people to take the pledge of total abstinence.⁴² His frenzied pace was said to be extraordinary; he himself joked to audiences that "Chiniquy est comme le choléra, il va partout", until Mgr. Bourget reminded him that such levity was not suitable to the cause.⁴³ As Chiniquy gained momentum, people began to enroll with incredible speed; in two weeks in June 1849, 11,960 people in the parishes of St. Benoît, St. Hermas, St. Augustin, St. Jérôme, St. Scholastique and St. André took the total abstinence pledge.⁴⁴ Finally he himself succumbed to cholera.⁴⁵ After a month of rest, he swooped down to enroll émigré Canadiens in northern New York.⁴⁶ In the winter of 1850 he again succumbed to serious illness which included inflammation of the lungs and of the brain.⁴⁷ Recovered, he returned in August to preach in the Quebec region where he had originally begun his work.⁴⁸ He was still drawing huge crowds in various parishes almost to the very day in September 1851 when he was placed under interdiction in the Montreal diocese⁴⁹ for a series of sexual misdemeanours which were not known to the public until many years later.

The Chiniquy campaign amazed everyone, even those who had determined to resist his oratory. A parishioner at Côteau du Lac, where 1,700 people enrolled in May of 1849, was astounded by the preacher's power to transform hard hearts:

comment croire...qu'un homme, dans l'espace de deux jours, puisse opérer des faits si extraordinaires, j'ose dire, des miracles....j'ai vu des hommes tellement attachés à leurs petits coups, me protester ne pouvoir rompre leur habitude, j'ai vu de ces hommes dont l'ineptie est invincible, j'ai vu des personnes adonnées à la boisson (il y en a dans toutes les pariosses).....o prodige! J'ai vu, un jour après, ces memes hommes, foudroyés par les raisonnements du R. apôtre, venir s'agenouiller en presence des SS. autels, et sacrifier...leurs habitudes, leurs objections and leurs inclinations. 50

No barrier could stop him. A man from St. Edouard, after watching his entire parish take the pledge, exclaimed that:

il n'y a pas eu moyen d'y résister; les plus obstinés qui, encore la veille, juraient qu'ils n'embrasseraient point la tempérance, qu'ils donneraient quatre arpents de terre, si on les voyait s'approcher de la sainte table, ont été les premiers à faire le sacrifice. Tous nos notaires, nos médecins, nos aubergistes, tout le monde en un mot a embrassé la tempérance. 51

Where temperance in the early 1840's had been a movement of the poor and disinherited, the wealthy and influential now flocked into the fold. They stood first in line to take the pledge, and assemblies including the mayor and local notables met to pass resolutions in support of the cause. ⁵² Chiniquy the mighty, the humble, perhaps (as it seemed at St. Hugues) the heavens themselves:

Un incident assez singulier arriva le second jour des prédications de la tempérance. Un vent furieux s'éleva;

le souffle de Dieu passa, et voilà
qu'une des deux auberges de St. Hugues
est renversée sans dessus dessous. 53

Even more impressive than the enormous number of enrolments was the fact that the people were obviously taking the pledge seriously. A sudden abandonment of the liquor trade by local shop and tavernkeepers became almost a standard feature of the Chiniquy campaign in 1848-49. In many parishes tavernkeepers converted their premises to temperance inns and shipped their liquor back to Montreal: other parishes burned the detested substance in huge bonfires. 54 By the autumn of 1848, taverns were reported closed in forty parishes and townships in the Montreal District and nineteen parishes in the Quebec District. 55 By summer of the next year the number of tavernless parishes had risen to seventy-five, 56 and the number of tavern licences throughout Canada East had dropped by half from the previous year. 57

As temperance triumphed at the end of the decade, Chiniquy was not the only preacher in the field. Alexis Mailloux, aided by Edouard Quartier, devoted several years after 1846 to full-time preaching in the Quebec diocese, 58 and they succeeded in enrolling sixty-three parishes in the Quebec Diocese in the Société de la Croix by 1850. 59 Mailloux, like Chiniquy, was an outstanding orator, and many parishes where he spoke closed down their taverns. 60 Mailloux, however, stressed the sombre side of temperance, as a penitential act of self-denial rather than a path to national glory. Neither his style nor his message had Chiniquy's "irresistibility", and the occasional

parish openly opposed the establishment of the Société de la Croix.⁶¹ A number of less famous preachers also conducted temperance retreats in the various dioceses. When Mgr. Guigues was installed as bishop of the new diocese of Bytown in 1847, he promoted temperance societies in the parishes of that region,⁶² and the Oblate fathers by 1848 were enrolling parishes as far west as Kingston.⁶³ Success was in the air, and these preachers too sometimes persuaded whole parishes to abstain from drink. But Chiniquy generated the excitement that transformed temperance into a mass movement. The Archbishop of Quebec reported in 1850 that there were 400,000 Catholic temperance society members in Canada;⁶⁴ and the majority of these had received the pledge from the great preacher himself.⁶⁵

Chiniquy was, as les Mélanges reported in 1849, the name on every tongue.⁶⁶ The Governor General sent his congratulations.⁶⁷ Parliament with the support of all parties, voted him an honorarium of five hundred pounds for outstanding service to his country.⁶⁸ Judge Mondelet and the Société of St. Jean-Baptiste presented him with accolades and a medal before a crowd of some ten thousand people at Longueuil.⁶⁹ The Advocate covered his triumphs, translated his speeches, and expressed the opinion that while the country generally still would not accept a law to abolish taverns, some of the parishes where Chiniquy had spoken were ready for such a measure.⁷⁰

Even the Daily Witness, inveterate foe of popery, cheered him on. Huge assemblies, with members of Parliament, mayors and other dignitaries and clergy of various denominations on

the platform convened in the towns of Canada East to congratulate Chiniquy and to draft petitions to Parliament for more stringent tavern regulation.⁷¹ At the assembly held in Bonsecours Market in the autumn of 1848 Mgr. Bourget, the Mayor of the City, the colonisation priest Father O'Reilly, and several legislators surrounded Chiniquy on the platform. They looked out upon a dense throng of five thousand people of "all classes and origins... (gathered) to listen to addresses of remarkable pathos and power".⁷² The Presbyterian minister William Taylor, a veteran Montreal Society campaigner, rejoiced that, after many long struggles, temperance had finally won the day:

(Il) a fait allusion à une assemblée de tempérance qui avait eu lieu à Montreal il y a 20 ans. "Tout le monde était alors contre nous... la presse surtout condamnait notre oeuvre, nous dûmes céder. Mais aujourd'hui quel changement! Voilà une immense assemblée, toute la presse est pour nous, le maire est à notre tête; nous voyons ici les ministres de toutes les religions.... C'est une assemblée triomphante; je la prédis, dans 20 ans, tout le Canada sera de la tempérance, et ce grand résultat sera en grande partie du aux labeurs du Rev. M. Chiniquy".

73

Secure in this triumph, French Canadian leaders stretched their own ardently nationalistic movement a bit to extend to all the temperance faithful. Father O'Reilly rose and delivered an address in both languages in which he waved the flag mightily. He rhapsodised that a new star had arisen in the Canadian night; he himself had travelled the extent of the

land, along its great waterways and endless forests,
whereupon:

Mon coeur a battu de joie...à la vue
du spectacle nouveau qui s'est offert
à mes regards étonnés. Là en effet
j'ai vu regner la tempérance, la
prosperité et le bonheur, ou queleques
années avant il n'existait que malheurs,
désolation, misères....

Citoyens de toutes origines, citoyens de
toutes conditions, tous, je vous le
demande, aimez-vous votre pays?....
Décidez lequel des deux aime mieux son
pays; ou de celui qui ruine sa famille,
ruine sa santé et dissipe sa fortune à
boire et s'enivrer; ou de celui qui
vivant dans la sobriété, s'abstient des
boissons, et emploie toute son énergie,
tout son talent, et toutes ses forces à
servir la cause et la patrie. 74

Despite the expansive rhetoric, the Chiniquy crusade was
basically a French Canadian triumph. 75 Here it had a lasting
significance, for it injected an element of passion into the
new clerically-led nationalism. Schools might be more enduring
institutions, agricultural reform a more tangible economic
benefit, but the renunciation of alcohol by approximately one-
half of the population of French Canada was the most dramatic
of all the reforms of the 1840's. Chiniquy was the first great
patriote drawn from priestly ranks. He told his audiences that
he would gladly die for the cause; and his gruelling schedule
in touring the Montreal diocese, which frequently led to
exhaustion, left his martial spirit in little doubt. Unlike
the battles of St. Charles and St. Eustache, the battle on
drink was won, and the mass closure of taverns in 1848-49 was

hailed as a revolution. ⁷⁶ As tavernkeepers converted, fled or went underground, the local cures rushed into the breach. Everywhere they came forward to consolidate the movement which Chiniquy led, founding and presiding over the local temperance societies, setting the rules for the new temperance inns, ⁷⁷ and heading parish assemblies who met to petition the government for laws to promote sobriety. ⁷⁸

The Chiniquy campaign was the first mass movement in which religion and nationalism were indistinguishable. Anti-clerical nationalism, tottering since the Rebellions, was effectively laid to rest. The clergy may not have manned the barricades in 1838, but in 1848 they marched at the head of the fervent legions. In the person of Charles Chiniquy, priest and patriote merged and triumphed. Though the terrain would shift, and other national objectives would later supplant temperance, the flagpole was fixed firmly in the pulpit.

CHAPTER V NOTES

¹ For a discussion of the concept of secular religion, cf. D.G.Charleton, Secular Religions in France, 1815-1870, London, 1963 and R.Richey and D.Jones, eds., American Civil Religion, New York, 1974.

² CTA, 15 January 1844.

³ CTA, 1 August 1844.

⁴ Krout, op.cit., pp. 262-277.

⁵ CTA (Port Sarnia), 15 March 1849.

⁶ J.R.Godley, Letters from America, London, 1844, Vol. 1, p. 200.

⁷ CTA, 1 December 1849.

⁸ Cf.F.Ouellet, "The Historical Background of Separation in Quebec", pp. 49-63 in R.Cook, ed., French Canadian Nationalism, Toronto, 1969, for a discussion of the rise of French Canadian nationalism in the nineteenth century.

⁹ F.Ouellet, Histoire économique et sociale du Quebec, 1760-1850, Montréal, 1971, p. 591.

¹⁰ Etienne Parent was one of the most influential proponents of this new national role for the clergy. Cf. Jean-Charles Farardeau, Etienne Parent, 1802-1874, Montreal, 1975, pp. 201-226.

¹¹ In 1851, the proportion of clergymen to population in Canada East was 1 to 1190; in Canada West, 1 to 870. R.Mackay, Canada Directory, 1851. Montreal: John Lovell, 1851, p. 553. The number of priests in proportion to Catholic population in Canada East was 1 to 1080 (1850). Louis-Edmond Hamelin, "Evolution numerique séculaire du clerge Catholique dans le Quebec", Recherches sociographiques, t. 2, no. 2, (avril-juin 1961), p. 238.

12 MR, 9 juillet and 30 juillet 1847.

13 MR, 23 juillet 1847.

14 MR, 6 juillet 1846. This speech was very favourably reviewed ~~in~~ the Secular press.

15 MR, 11 mai 1847.

16 MR, 24 septembre 1847.

17 MR, 11 mai 1847; 11 decembre 1849.

18 MR, 22 octobre 1847.

19 MR, 4 décembre 1849.

20 MR, 8 fevrier 1848.

21 Chiniquy, Manuel, 1849, p. 8.

22 MR, 12 novembre 1847.

23 Trudel, op.cit., p. 100.

24 Ibid., pp. 64-87.

25 Ibid., p. 87.

26 Note, for example Chiniquy's view of a retreat on the Isle d'Orleans in 1843 as a failure when, despite the fact that "la tempérance y prend solidement", (Trudel, op.cit., p. 55) there was no apparent increase in piety.

27 CTA, 1 May 1849.

28 Chiniquy, Manuel (1849), p. 157. CTA, 1 May 1848.

29 Trudel, op.cit., pp. 95, 136; CTA, 15 January 1849.

30 CTA, 15 May 1849. Trudel, op.cit., p. 136. Chiniquy's Manuel containing his portrait was so popular that even country grocers carried it. A print of the Chiniquy portrait by Hamel was also available separately. Cf. MR, 31 octobre 1848, 8 janvier 1850.

31 MR, 27 octobre 1848.

32 MR, 10 octobre 1848.

33 MR, 30 mars 1849.

34 Trudel, op.cit., p. 94.

35 MR, 30 mars 1849.

36 CTA, 1 May 1849.

37 Chiniquy, Manuel (1849), p. 144.

38 Ibid., p. 143.

39 Ibid., p. 144.

40 Ibid.

41 CTA, 1 May 1849.

42 Trudel, op.cit., p. 96.

43 Ibid., p. 126.

- 44 MR, 26 juin 1849.
- 45 MR (Ste. Martine), 10 aout 1849.
- 46 MR, 26 octobre 1849.
- 47 MR, 15 fevrier 1850.
- 48 Trudel, op.cit., p. 111.
- 49 Ibid., p. 130.
- 50 MR, 11 mai 1849.
- 51 MR, 23 mars 1849.
- 52 MR (Chambly), 26 juin 1848; (St. Paul), 4 juillet 1848, 7 juillet 1848; (Notre Dame de Bonsecours), 22 aout 1848; (Montréal Récollet Church), 5 septembre 1848; (St. Hyacinthe), 22 septembre 1848; (Lacadie), 24 novembre 1848; (St. Jacques le Mineur), 24 novembre 1848; (L'Assomption), 2 fevrier 1849; (St. Edouard), 20 mars 1849. Cf. also CTA, 15 January 1849.
- 53 MR, 20 octobre 1848.
- 54 Cf. for example MR (Pointe-Claire), 6 juin 1848; (St. Paul), 4 juillet 1848; (Rivière du Loup), 13 juillet 1849; Trudel, op.cit., p. 95; CTA, 15 February 1849, 1 June 1849.
- 55 MR, 19 septembre 1848; 26 septembre 1848.
- 56 MR, 1 juin 1849.
- 57 CTA, 15 August 1849.
- 58 DCB, Vol. X, p. 488; MR, 23 fevrier 1849.

59 MR, 1 fevrier 1850.

60 MR, 12 novembre 1847.

61 Le Canadien, 21 fevrier 1849.

62 MR, 11 aout 1848; Carriere, Histoire documentaire..., op.cit., Vol. 2, p. 174.

63 MR (L'Assomption), 14 avril, 1848. Other preachers included Armand de Charbonnel, soon to become bishop of Toronto, and Grand-Vicar Viau. MR (St. Roch), 11 juin 1847; (Pointe aux Trembles), 1 aout 1848.

64 Carriere, "L'eglise canadienne vers 1841", op.cit., p. 72. Cf. also MR, 6 septembre 1850.

65 Apart from the 200,000 pledges Chiniquy secured by August 1849 (Trudel, op.cit., p. 96), he recruited at least 43,442 more pledgetakers in the Montreal region between October 1850 and April 1851 (Trudel, op.cit., p. 121).

66 MR, 16 fevrier 1849.

67 MR, 14 mai 1850.

68 Trudel, op.cit., p. 111.

69 Trudel, op.cit., p. 98; MR, 17 juillet 1849.

70 CTA, 1 March 1849, 1 May 1849.

71 MR, 6 octobre 1848; CTA, 15 March 1849.

72 CTA, 15 February 1849.

73.

MR, 6 octobre 1848.

74

MR, 13 octobre 1848.

75

French sobriety contrasted sharply with English drinking during the Chiniquy campaign, CTA (Milton), 1 April 1849.

76

MR, 28 mars 1848.

77

MR, 8 septembre 1848, 22 septembre 1848; Le Canadien, 23 fevrier 1849.

78

MR, 26 mai 1848, 6 juin 1848, 30 aout 1850. René Hardy discusses the enhancement of clerical prestige through temperance campaigns in Apercu..., op.cit., pp. 94-95.

VI EFFECTS OF THE MOVEMENT

From the initiation of province-wide temperance revivals in 1840 to the end of the Chiniquy campaign in 1851, well over five hundred thousand people took the total abstinence pledge.¹ The foregoing chapters have traced their reasons for doing so, which ranged from religious enthusiasm to secular motives such as social reform, thrift and even patriotism. Here we turn to the question of the movement's impact. The temperance campaigning of the 1840's had three major results. First of all, it led to more moderate use of alcohol. Secondly, it united a broad segment of the population for the first time in the quest for reform. Finally, in rural Canada where the movement was most popular, it established moral reform as an enduring social and political goal.

The most obvious question about the mass campaigns of the 1840's is whether they caused any significant decline in drinking. The answer unfortunately lacks statistical precision, since the extent of contraband is unknown, and even the official records contain important gaps. However, there is much evidence that temperance campaigns did significantly alter drinking habits. Vigorous campaigns caused sharp temporary drops in consumption. Though they were soon reversed, many old drinking customs began to disappear, and heavy drinking became less respectable. Thus temperance campaigning did lead to greater moderation.

Imported liquor definitely lost popularity during the 1840's. Liquor entering the Province at the two major ports

of Montreal and Quebec dropped sharply at the beginning of the decade ² as temperance revivals swept across the Province. Thereafter, although there were some fluctuations, the trend was definitely downward:

Importations, Ports of Montreal and Quebec ³

	Wine	Spirits
1838-42	335,465 gals.	678,113 gals.
1843-47	280,634 gals.	371,365 gals.
1848-52	157,539 gals.	242,180 gals.

Declining imports do not tell the whole story, for domestic production to some extent offset this decrease. Here the gauge is rough, for distillers did not record production until required to do so by law in 1846. ⁴ The era was clearly one of centralisation. Large operations such as Molson's in Montreal and Gooderham's in Toronto expanded their operations, ⁵ while many local operations closed down:

Number of Distilleries

Canada East ⁶		Canada West ⁷	
1831	70	1842	147
1844	36	1851	102
1851	7		

The output of the large distilleries did not expand steadily but fluctuated in response to temperance campaigns.

These fluctuations fall into three periods. Liquor consumption dropped sharply at the beginning of the decade,

when the revivals of 1840-1844 exposed many people to temperance ideas for the first time. Then, in the middle years of the decade, there was less temperance activity. Popular support fell off, and consumption began to rise again throughout the Province. In the final period, 1847-1852 -- for which the fullest documentation is available -- consumption patterns diverged sharply in the two halves of the Province. In Canada West, the movement never regained the popularity of the early 1840's, and consumption remained fairly steady throughout the second half of the decade. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Ottawa, the Chiniquy crusade saw drinking plunge to a fraction of its former extent.

The period 1840-43 exhilarated temperance forces, for they saw sobriety growing everywhere. Temperance societies in town and country claimed great success in changing popular habits. At Douglastown in Gaspé in 1842:

The court was sitting and was surprised to find not an individual was intoxicated, and on enquiring the cause, was informed that a temperance society had been established consisting of nearly every inhabitant of that place.

In Quebec City the vigorous temperance campaigning of 1840-41 caused "a very considerable reduction...in the sale of all kinds of intoxicating drinks", ⁹ and led to a number of innovations:

A large West India House, which used to sell 300 or 400 puncheons of rum through the winter, has only sold two during the winter that is past. A retailer who laid in his usual supply of 30 puncheons has

not yet sold one. And three dealers, viz., T. Bickell, P. Holt, and T. Lavallé (St. Roch) have given up the traffic, and now keep Temperance Groceries. At the public dinner recently given to the newly elected members of Parliament, fifteen gallons of toast water were prepared, placed on the table, and drank (sic) instead of wine.

10

Just as Bishop Signay was congratulating the people of his vast Quebec diocese on their marked increase in sobriety, the Montreal Temperance Society lauded a similar reform in their vicinity.¹¹ This was confirmed by the Montreal tavernkeepers who in 1842 gloomily petitioned City Council for a reduction in the licence fee "on account of the failure of their businesses...(due) to the operation of temperance societies".¹² People travelling through the Home District noted a change in field crops as many temperance converts stopped planting barley and rye for whiskey production.¹³ The closure of local distilleries was widely noted, and the reports indicated that rather than replacing the local product with city-made goods, people were simply doing without. Reports of decreased drinking, closed taverns and distilleries, and reformed drunkards poured into the Advocate from across the Province.¹⁴

The picture was changing by late 1844. Temperance was becoming a movement of the classes rather than the masses.

While businessmen, doctors, lawyers and magistrates increasingly endorsed the movement, reports of growing consumption make it clear that popular support was declining.¹⁵ The mid-decade slump in fervour was particularly serious for

Canada West, where for the rest of the decade the movement never recovered the impetus of the revival years. Societies reporting to the Montreal Temperance Convention fell from 116 in 1844¹⁶ to 34 in 1848¹⁷ and reviving "slumbering" temperance societies became one of the agents' leading activities. Agents sometimes felt they were operating a treadmill as English, Scottish and Irish immigrants with a "tenacity for the old country usages",¹⁸ continued to arrive in great numbers. Distillery statistics for Canada West showed production nearly keeping pace with population growth:

Year	Canada West Distilleries Gallons Produced ¹⁹	Per capita consumption
1847	1,489,335	
1848	1,601,698	2.2 gallons
1849	1,920,088	
1850	1,988,198	
1851	2,033,012	2.1 gallons
1852	2,052,872	

In Canada East, on the other hand, temperance fervour revived dramatically in the final years of the decade. The Chiniquy crusade of 1848-1851 is the success story of the era. By June of 1849, nearly all the distilleries in Canada East had suspended operations,²⁰ and scores of puncheons had been returned by country merchants who had no buyers.²¹ Molson's the largest distillery in the Province, which had weathered earlier temperance campaigns without any serious loss, reported

a loss of \$15,000 in 1849.²² Against a backdrop of declining imports, domestic production also hit bottom when the Chiniquy campaign crested in 1849-50:

Canada East Distilleries - Gallons produced ²³

1847	645,386
1848	317,840
1849	246,920
1850	79,914
1851	266,129
1852	443,111

Thermidor followed swiftly. As the figures indicate, throats began parching in 1851 and tavernkeepers began to set up shop again. In September of that year the Chiniquy crusade came to an abrupt end. Incurring the censure of Monseigneur Bourget for sexual misdemeanours, Chiniquy was placed under interdiction in the Montreal diocese.²⁴ In October he boarded a westbound train, leaving the Province to work as a missionary among Canadian emigrants in Illinois.²⁵ The orator's disgrace was not generally known, but his absence was sufficient cause for a rapid plunge in enthusiasm. By 1852 Bishop Bourget was lamenting that enemies of temperance were attacking "de tous côtés, et avec fureur".²⁶ In 1853, a relieved Thomas Molson wrote to a friend that the temperance movement had relaxed and plans were underway for expansion of liquor production.²⁷ By 1855, domestic production of alcohol in Canada East had returned to the 1847 level.²⁸

The temperance movement did have some lasting effects. While data on pre-1840 liquor production is not available, changes in popular habits make it apparent that drinking never returned to the excessive levels of the 1830's. Temperance campaigning changed public beliefs about the benevolent properties of alcohol and eliminated some of the most excessive and dangerous drinking customs. Teetotalers disproved the notion that alcohol was a necessity of daily life. A growing number of people began to view it in the modern sense, as a leisure commodity. While pushing the general public in the direction of moderation, the movement also carved out deep and lasting pockets of teetotalism in many country districts.

Alcohol began to lose its old role as a staple of diet. Many grocery and dry goods firms ceased to stock it.²⁹ Responding to a growing market for non-alcoholic beverages, the non-licensed restaurant, inn and coffee shop made their first widespread appearance.³⁰ Coffee, tea, fruit juices and carbonated beverages began to appear on dining tables, at picnics³¹ and banquets,³² aboard steamships³³ and in military canteens.³⁴ Even more importantly, towns responded to temperance agitation by taking steps to provide safe drinking water. The Advocate reported in 1841 that:

In the suburbs of Montreal, the inhabitants are often supplied with water taken from the port impregnated with all kinds of filth. As long as people drank chiefly beer or cider, these things were of little consequence; but now that great numbers have become water

drinkers; it is absolutely necessary that arrangements should everywhere be made, for a sufficient supply of wholesome water....We are glad to learn that...the Montreal Water Works Company intend to supply water carts hereafter at convenient stations at the low rate of 2d. a puncheon.

35

As water became more accessible, liquor became less so. The systematic taxation and regulation of distilleries, which began in 1846, caused prices to rise. A gallon of whiskey costing 2s.7d (52¢) in 1840 cost 3s.9d (75¢) in 1851; ³⁶ this was the first step in escalation which was to carry heavy daily drinking out of popular reach, with taxes spiralling towards sixty cents per gallon by Confederation. ³⁷ Retailers, too, passed along rising costs to consumers as the fee for tavern licences more than doubled. ³⁸

Drink was also debunked as a stimulant to hard work. Employers belonging to temperance societies pioneered the use of coffee and other non-alcoholic beverages on job sites. ³⁹ Coffee-drinking raftsmen who made the journey down the Ottawa River to Quebec in half the usual time in 1841 were ridiculed by their fellows, ⁴⁰ but they supplied a salient economic argument for change. Farmers, too, stopped giving liquor to their hands. ⁴¹ The Advocate, taking stock in 1845 of the failures and accomplishments of the temperance movement, cited the removal of liquor from work sites as a major achievement:

Amongst the agricultural population at bees, raisings, haytime, harvest...whiskey used to flow like water, and by lumbermen, boatmen and sailors it was considered as necessary as

flour or pork: nay, in almost every mechanic's shop and on every public work, a system of continual drinking was kept up, by treating on the part of the masters, and fines, footings and subscriptions, on the part of the men. Now all these absurd customs have either passed, or are fast passing away.

42

The new trend received the official stamp when the government banned sale of liquor on public work sites.⁴³ in 1853.

Temperance advocates did not, of course, attain their own radical goal of an abstinent society. The Advocate admitted in 1845 that the attempt to eliminate social drinking had failed, that at "weddings, funerals, markets, public festivities and other social occasions...(liquor) maintains its ground very firmly".⁴⁴ Bishop Bourget, too, singled out Sundays and holidays as the occasions on which teetotalers tended to abandon their resolves.⁴⁵ Though electoral drinking declined somewhat, political life remained bacchanalian as well. Despite the passage of a law in the 1850's forbidding sale of liquor on election days, drink continued to inspire Canadian voters.⁴⁶ Even a cursory examination of Canadian political life makes it clear that our parliamentary luminaries also stoutly resisted temperance for some decades.

One of the most enduring effects of temperance campaigning was the polarisation of attitudes to drink in town and country. Though the campaigns of the 1840's swept out from the towns to the hinterland, it was soon evident that teetotalism thrived best in country air. Throughout the Province temperance revivals enjoyed their greatest success in rural districts,⁴⁷

and here the campaigns to close down taverns were most effective. Here the temperance movement became an institution, weaving itself into the fabric of community life.

Townsmen, despite passing enthusiasm, proved resilient to successive waves of temperance agitation. For some, economic interests were involved; the growth of urban distilleries concentrated liquor jobs and liquor profits in the larger towns. But social factors were probably more important. Towns saw a continual influx of British immigrants, who tended to retain traditional attitudes towards drink.⁴⁸ Then too, town life perhaps bred greater sophistication. Montrealers, for example, greeted the Chiniquy campaign with a grain of salt, reconciling pledge-taking with pleasure by turning to "small beer", a beverage about which the Chiniquy pledge left some ambiguity.⁴⁹ They definitely had reservations about the new Temperance Houses, subscribing to Bishop Bourget's rules, which outlawed singing and rowdy behaviour and summoned patrons to common prayer each evening at nine p.m.⁵⁰ The flock balked, and strayed towards the illegal taverns which mushroomed as licensed ones became scarcer:

Illegal Taverns in Montreal

Year	Estimated Number ⁵¹
1841	100
1844	150
1848	300
1849	400
1853	500

Mass temperance fervour was definitely a transient phenomena in the towns.

In contrast, temperance often became a way of life in the countryside. During the 1840's liquor lost its central role in the rural economy. With better facilities for transport, and increasing taxation and regulation of distilling, farmers found it more profitable to ship all their grain to market than to convert surpluses to whiskey.⁵² Liquor lost its old function as a medium of exchange; its discontinuation as a form of pay at house and barn raisings was one of the most widely cited temperance reforms of the decade.⁵³

Social pressures reinforced economic ones in rural communities. Temperance revivals often converted such a substantial proportion of the population that they were able to influence the habits of members and non-members alike.⁵⁴ These campaigns by no means dried up the entire countryside,⁵⁵ but they did transfer the mantle of respectability from the drinker to the non-drinker - as at Hawkesbury where by 1842 "instead of its being disrespectful to refuse friends' invitations to partake of this hell-creating poison, the blush is on the other cheek".⁵⁶ Then, too, in small communities where people knew one another by name, watchful eyes and raised eyebrows operated to maximum effect to prevent backsliding. Sober recreation, socially approved, was soon institutionalised. Taverns closed during temperance revivals often did not re-open. Local gatherings shifted to the clerically approved temperance houses opened during the Chiniquy crusade or to temperance halls

such as that built in Durham in 1849, specifying rental "for Public, Private and Social Assemblies, Meetings and Entertainments....upon STRICTLY TEMPERANCE PRINCIPLES".⁵⁷ Drinking lost its role as an occasion for fellowship in temperance strongholds such as the counties of Rimouski, Saguenay and Kamouraska which, according to official reports in 1849 had not a single tavern;⁵⁸ or in the St. Clair District, where in the 1850's

there were often open-air assemblies in the woods. Temperance societies with bands of music drew great crowds. Rough boards were provided for seats, and a rough platform did for speeches. All the countryside, young and old, went to them, for most of the people in the country districts were rigid teetotallers.

59

This phenomenon was so widespread that witnesses before Parliamentary enquiries in the 1850's agreed the countryside was prepared to accept Prohibition while the towns were not.⁶⁰ Rural sobriety contrasted with urban drinking well into the twentieth century.⁶¹

The temperance movement also had a political impact. It built a strong reform coalition which attacked a colonial elite unresponsive to popular needs. The power of the movement lay in its ability to consolidate protesting groups in a sweeping campaign for social change. Temperance of course had its mythological aspects but since all societies function by creating some mythological order--be it divine right of kings, democracy, or dictatorship of the proletariat--the movement's vast claims only added to its strength. Unlike their American neighbours,

Canadians did not cast off the belief in representative government for faith in popular sovereignty.⁶² Yet a population so often exposed to American ideas had difficulty contenting itself with the slow evolution of responsible government--as both the rebels of the 1830's and the Annexationists of the 1840's demonstrated. Temperance was a powerful movement in the 1840's because, in addition to attacking a genuine social problem, it proposed a social reconstruction of mythic proportions which appealed to the Province's most dynamic groups--frustrated merchants and farmers, ambitious artisans, ardent nationalists, and a Catholic clergy rapidly growing in power. Abstinence was too simple a solution⁶³ to social problems to long retain the support of the more sophisticated, and after mid-century urban support faded. But the quest for moral reform remained an authentic expression of the simpler faith and simpler class structure of agrarian society. In a Province which in 1851 was ninety per cent rural,⁶³ this had a major political impact. The temperance movement popularised a concept of reform which amalgamated religious and secular goals, and which was to endure throughout the nineteenth century.

The attack on drink was a more effective expression of agrarian and mercantile unrest than was political radicalism. The political demand for democracy, safe enough in the neighbouring states, always seemed to threaten Canada's continuing existence as a political entity.⁶⁴ Political protesters were therefore easily and perennially discredited with the charge of disloyalty. To avoid this stigma, Egerton

Ryerson had withdrawn powerful Methodist support from the Reform camp; an angry Upper Canadian electorate had re-affirmed its allegiance to the government party on the eve of the Rebellion; and the Catholic hierarchy had counselled Lower Canadians against revolt. Protest cloaked in republican garb had never won any broad support; accordingly it fell with a few bangs during the Rebellions, later to expire with a whimper in the Annexationist movement. Few measures were taken, however, in response to popular grievances, and protest re-emerged in the campaign for total abstinence. By substituting social for political radicalism, the movement leapt the major roadblock to change. It transferred the question of reform from the treacherous ground of loyalty versus disloyalty to the safer and higher place of morality versus immorality. Clothed in heavenly garb, temperance reform avoided the taint of Yankeeism. The reconstructed society would simply be a model Christian community. By riding the first wave of a great Catholic revival and the last wave of a great Protestant one, this unearthly republic won the temporary allegiance of about one-third of the colony's population.

This religious ideal set a political process in motion. Once people converted to the idea of temperance, it served to radicalise their position vis-à-vis the social order. Total abstinence was an unrealistic goal, set too high for attainment. But rather than modifying their demands to suit the inclinations of human nature, teetotalers sought to modify the institutions they felt were responsible for their lack of success.

Unsuccessful as a religious movement, it became a drive for social reform; unsuccessful as a social reform movement, it became a demand for political change. It pushed each process to its radical extreme. As religion, temperance called for a purified and relevant Christianity; as social reform it proposed a Utopian reconstruction of the social order; as a political movement, it became a demand for democracy.

As radical religion, temperance followed the classic sectarian pattern.⁶⁵ It drew its converts primarily from the lower classes, it shunned moderation, and viewed compromise with worldly powers as an indication of lack of faith; and it called members to very active participation in the service of their beliefs. It called traditional religious leadership into question. Its strongest leaders emerged from the ranks of the lower clergy, country cures such as Chiniquy and Quertier, and itinerant preachers from the evangelical denominations and from lay ranks. Particularly in Canada West, temperance supplied a weapon against the state-endowed Churches which had long been a source of popular grievance. In both halves of the Province, the movement fired converts with the conviction that morality and religious faith were accessible to every person, that their content was simple, practical and a matter of direct experience. Indeed, the movement called all members to an active ministry, but since the lower classes were first to take the pledge, it was the bottom strata of society which called for reform of a vice prevailing among the humble and the mighty alike. They were able to do so because the movement gave them the self-

confidence characteristic of people who have absolutely no doubt that God is on their side. The religious fanatic, perennially, has a vision which blinds him to the usual codes of propriety and good sense. Angered, he shouts forth the sins of the mighty in the marketplace; attacked, he glories in suffering persecution for his faith. As radical religion, temperance gave people an assertiveness to which by birth, wealth or profession they were not entitled.

As a campaign for social reform, the movement went farther. Having attacked the spiritual leadership of clerical opponents, it went on to challenge the social leadership of the colonial elite. Temperance forces began the decade as "outsiders" whose proposals for social reform, as the Advocate admitted in 1842, were scorned by nearly all influential people:

Fully two-thirds of the ministers of religion throughout Canada are opposed ...to the Total Abstinence principle. A large proportion of the school teachers are...opposed....All our governors, judges, magistrates and legislators, with very few exceptions, give their influence against the Temperance Reformation.

66

Year-after-year, however, temperance forces hammered away at the philanthropy of the elite as inadequate and misguided. Charity was a superficial solution to problems which could be largely eliminated if individuals participated in their own reform. If everyone took the abstinence pledge, the greater part of poverty and social disorder would disappear. The panic accompanying the famine immigration and French Canadian

emigration brought many influential people into temperance ranks, and created widespread public support for temperance claims. This isolated those at the top of the social hierarchy, who remained reluctant to support a movement which not only bore the crude stamp of religious fanaticism but also portrayed them as old-fashioned and misanthropic. They faced a large bloc of working-class self-helpers, discontented merchants, worried nationalists and respected social reformers who united in condemning the elite for their opposition to temperance.

This was by no means the first assault on the Canadian "aristocracy" but it was unprecedented in confidence, size and organization. When two old Family Compact associates, Tiger Dunlop and Colonel Prince, ridiculed a bill introduced in the Legislature in 1845 to licence temperance houses, they touched off a fuse that crackled all the way across the Province:

Last night a Clergyman got up meekly, and without name or comment, calmly read from a newspaper the report of speeches delivered upon Temperance Houses, in the Assembly by Colonel Prince and Dr. Dunlop. You can hardly conceive the strong effect of it - every man, woman and child in the meeting, heard with utter surprise, abhorrence, and contempt, those coarse, selfish, misanthropic sentiments which seem to have met the huzzas and applause of our mis-representatives; it seemed to all present no bad pillory for these gentlemen, that you (the Advocate) recommend these speeches to be in like manner read at the next Temperance Anniversary...of every society from Amherstburgh to Quebec.

67

Temperance became overtly political when people began to demand government action to promote sobriety. Again both the

ideology and the process were radical. The concept of self-government underlay the demand for local option laws.

We (the Advocate) recommend that the power of granting or refusing tavern licenses should be left, as far as possible, in the hands of the people.

...if the matter be left open to the healthy, constitutional action of public opinion, a regard for the public interest will be paramount. Upon this plan, no portion of the public will have it in its power to oppress another....

68

In French Canada, too, government reversals of tavern closures were rebuffed as unwarranted interference with the popular will, "throwing obstacles in the way of the good we ourselves wish to do....a wish to centralise everything, and to refuse to the people the management of their own local affairs". 69

While demanding greater democracy, the movement also schooled its members in the skills of citizenship. A poll taken in 1844 indicated that some eighty-five per cent of supporters were non-voters, 70 but the movement forged them into a massive political pressure group. Temperance societies encouraged members to take turns speaking for five minutes on topics such as "Is War or Intemperance the Greatest Evil?" and also on farming techniques and subjects of general interest. If these sessions produced a richer harvest of bad grammar than of brilliant rhetoric, they were nevertheless adult education of the most basic kind. As it became more political in the late 1840's, the movement politicised its supporters. After 1846, the Advocate began to cover government activities in order,

the editor explained, to instruct the many temperance supporters in the backwoods and the new settlements who had little awareness of political developments.⁷¹ In the same years, the Chiniquy crusade was training the new French Canadian patriots of the bleu variety. Parish assemblies demanding reform of license laws became forums for political discussion--a political baptism for many rural people. Large assemblies such as that meeting at Berthier in 1849 to demand temperance reform passed resolutions in favour of the Rebellion Losses Bill and abolition of Seigniorial tenure as well. L'Echo des Campagnes remarked on the novelty of this

réunion d'hommes de tous les rangs de la société, capables de peser et juger les affaires de leur pays, sans le secours de jeunes citadins qui s'imposent à quelques comtés, comme seuls en état d'entendre les affaires publiques.

72

An even more striking innovation was the participation of women in temperance politics. Sympathisers at first condoned novelties such as parades of temperance women through the streets as simply a more relevant form of traditional female charity.⁷³ The innovations were soon more than ceremonial. By mid-decade some societies reported that women were the most active members;⁷⁴ before the decade ended they were taking officers' positions⁷⁵ and forming delegations to appeal to political authorities for stricter tavern laws.⁷⁶ These were the embryonic beginnings of political activity which some decades later saw temperance women at the forefront of female suffrage campaigns.

This politicisation forged temperance supporters into a pressure group that was too powerful to ignore. Petitions for Parliamentary action to promote temperance grew from a trickle in the early 1840's to an onslaught in the last three years of the decade. In 1850, Parliament received over ninety petitions bearing fifty thousand signatures, of which les Mélanges declared:

Jamais le vœu du peuple sur aucune question ne s'est encore manifesté d'une manière aussi imposante et aussi unanime, car le Haut-Canada n'est pas moins énergétique que le Bas, dans la demande d'une réforme radicale à l'égard du commerce des boissons fortes.

77

Self-righteous and solidly united, temperance forces wrested recognition from a reluctant gentry and a reluctant Parliament. Gentlemen stopped openly defending drunkenness and bowed to the new criteria of respectability; the Legislative Committee investigating intemperance in 1849 noted that

of late, among the educated and elevated classes, intoxication has been so much discountenanced as to be very rare; and drunkenness is not now a gentlemanly vice.

79

Unlike his predecessors, Governor General Elgin catered to popular demands by publicly abstaining and by curtailing the flow of wine at government banquets.⁸⁰ Parliament, while numbering few temperance supporters in its ranks, also found it expedient to respond to the mass petition campaign. Between 1849 and 1851 they passed a series of laws making more stringent requirements for tavernkeeping, even holding tavernkeepers liable for accidents involving people who had become drunk in

their establishments.⁸¹ The law met demands for local control of taverns by removing licensing power from provincial authorities and placing it in the hands of the senior magistrate, churchwarden and militia captain in the parishes of Canada East, and of town and township councils in Canada West.⁸² Thus the temperance movement won legal recognition for popular demands generated outside the party system.

The lasting heritage of temperance agitation was the consolidation of rural support for reform. The temperance campaign forged a reform platform consistent with rural values, as opposed to those generated by political parties which--even with the attainment of responsible government in 1848--continued to be dominated by metropolitan interests.⁸³ Integrating religious and secular values, the concept of moral reform supplied a standard for accepting or rejecting ideas of progress generated in the cities. The temperance movement articulated, and won massive rural support for, the idea that government must be guided by moral laws which were higher than political interests. Temperance supporters were the first important group of reformers to identify

the happiness and prosperity of a country to be much more dependent upon the temperance, intelligence and morality of the people, than upon the success of any political party, and therefore...these interests should be consulted in all cases, in preference to political predilections.

84

They saw their success, in changing law and custom, as the clear triumph (as Judge Mondelet wrote) of "the superior

power...(of) public virtue, public opinion and public energy", winning for the first time the approval of "the largest portion of the community".⁸⁵

The evangelical era of temperance in the Province of Canada thus had three important effects. By challenging traditional beliefs and attitudes about alcohol, it led towards more moderate drinking. By inspiring a large segment of the population with a vision of profound social change, it forged a broad coalition for reform. Finally, in rural districts this coalition continued long after the 1840's to provide a counterweight to secular, metropolitan ideas of progress. Its adherents no longer conceived of society's goals primarily in economic or political terms. With the temperance movement, social change had come to mean transforming both the inner and the outer man. Many no longer saw reform in terms of making society more democratic, more educated or more prosperous. The temperance movement built a large and well-organised following committed to various strategies for advancing morality.

. CHAPTER VI NOTES

¹ This assumes 400,000 Catholic teetotallers and over 100,000 Protestant ones. The figure is based on Archbishop Signay's reference to 400,000 Catholic teetotallers in 1850 (cf. chapter V, note 64) and on R.D. Wadsworth's estimate in 1844 of 150,000 teetotallers (cf. chapter III, note 101), of whom three-quarters (or 112,000) subscribed to the Montreal Society pledge. Since Catholic societies had a slightly different pledge, the vast majority of these 112,000 would have been Protestant--i.e., distinct from the 400,000 Catholics. 500,000 is a conservative estimate since the movement continued to win new Protestant adherents after 1844. At any rate, 500,000 pledgetakers represent about one-half of the 1841 population and one-quarter of the 1851 population.

² Ouellet, Histoire économique et sociale du Québec 1760-1850, op.cit., t. 2, p. 617. The sharper drop in spirits can be attributed to "moderation" pledges which permitted wine and cider but forbade spirits; Catholic societies in the early 1840's commonly adopted this pledge. Imports at Montreal and Quebec can be taken as representative of general import trends, for the vast majority of liquor imported into the Province of Canada entered through these ports: for example, they accounted for over 90% of dutiable liquor in 1843 (JLAC 1846, Appx.GG) and 88% in 1847. Cf. JLAC 1849, Appx.XX.

³ Ouellet, Histoire économique et sociale..., op.cit., t. 2, p. 492.

⁴ Before this time stills were taxed according to their size, with no account taken of how often they actually produced per annum. Cf. M. Denison, The Barley and the Stream: The Molson Story, Toronto, 1955, p. 197.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 119, 180-186; W.F. Rannie, Canadian Whiskey: The Product and the Industry, Lincoln, Ontario, 1976, pp. 31-32.

⁶ Hildebrand, Débuts..., op.cit., p. 16; Census of Canada, 1870-71, V. 4, pp. 158, 218.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 140, 198.

8
CTA (Douglastown), 1 November 1842.

9
CTA (Quebec City), November 1841.

10
CTA (Quebec City), June 1841.

11
Wadsworth, op.cit., pp. 15, 23.

12
CTA, 1 September 1842.

13
CTA, 1 October 1842.

14
CTA (Convention report), August 1841; (Stanstead), November 1841; (Maryville), 1 June 1842; (Port Hope), 15 July 1842; (Stanbridge East), 15 July 1842; (Peterborough), 15 July 1842; (Gainsborough), 1 February 1844; (Cornwall), 1 February 1844; (Rainham), 1 April 1844; (Lloydtown), 1 April 1844; Cf. also MR (St. Athanase), 15 juillet 1842.

15
Cf. chapter III, note 136; also Chiniquy, Manuel (1849), pp. 154-155.

16
CTA, 18 June 1844.

17
CTA, 16 October 1848. The Toronto Society held few meetings by 1847, T.T.R.S., op.cit., p. 21; Cf. also the gloomy Advocate reports (Martintown), 15 February 1849; (Western District), 1 April 1849; (Gore District), 1 June 1849; (Montreal), 1 September 1849 and 15 December 1849.

18
CTA (Georgetown), 1 June 1849.

19
Ouellet, Histoire économique..., op.cit., V. 2, p. 492. Most of the liquor was consumed domestically, liquor exports being negligible in this period. Cf. Denison, op.cit., p. 198; JLAC, 1850, Appx.A.

20
Government inspectors reported in 1849 that they knew of no distilleries still operating in the Districts of Quebec and Trois-Rivières (JLAC 1849, Appx.ZZZ); and most of those in

the Montreal District were also closed. Cf. CTA, 1 January 1849.

²¹ Cf. chapter V, note. 54.

²² Denison, op.cit., pp. 119, 195, 207.

²³ Ouellet, op.cit., t. 2, p. 492.

²⁴ For an unravelling of the controversy surrounding Chiniquy's fall from grace in the Montreal diocese cf. Trudel, op.cit., pp. 126-130.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 135.

²⁶ Bourget, Lettres, Mandements..., op.cit., t. 2 (Circulaire au Clergé 19 mars 1852), p. 243.

²⁷ Denison, op.cit., p. 234.

²⁸ JLAC, 1859, Vol. 17, no. 5, appx.43.

²⁹ Cf. for example CTA (Quebec), Septèmber 1841; (Montreal), 15 June 1842; (Hamilton), 1 March 1844.

³⁰ By 1851 travellers could find "scattered over the Province a number of 'Temperance Houses'...(providing) very good accommodation", William Smith, Canada: Past Present and Future (1851), cit. Guillet, Pioneer Inns and Taverns, Vol. 1, p. 49. Cf. also CTA, 15 August 1849.

³¹ Summer temperance festivals inaugurated these "cold-water" picnics.

³² CTA (Quebec City), June 1841; (Toronto), 1 April 1844; (Amherstberg), 15 August 1849. Water and lemonade supplanted stronger stuff at St. Jean-Baptiste banquets by 1844. MR, 2 juillet 1844, 5 juillet 1844; Chiniquy, Manuel (1844), p. v.

³³ MR, 27 juin 1848.

34 CTA (Toronto, 1 January 1845; (Montreal), 15 December 1849.

35 CTA, June 1841.

36 The Montreal newspapers quoted prices in the 2s.6d - 2s.10d. range in the 1830's, Innis and Lower, Select Documents..., op.cit., pp. 256, 287. Chiniquy noted a similar price in 1843, cf. Chiniquy, Manuel (1849), p. 160. "Cut" varieties of domestic whiskey ran as low as 10 pence (17¢) per gallon in the early 1840's. Craig, Early Travellers in the Canadas, op.cit., p. xxxi. The 1851 price of 3s.9d. is quoted in Denison, op.cit., p. 229.

37 Denison, op.cit., p. 244.

38 ~~2~~ was the price charged for tavern licenses 'in Quebec City in 1841, Le Canadien 13 janvier 1841. Legislation in 1851 raised the fee to ~~2~~5. Statutes of Canada, 14 + 15 Victoriae, Cap. 100, p. 2079.

39 CTA, November 1841; CTA (Buckingham), 2 October 1844.

40 CTA, November 1841.

41 Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 28; CTA, 2 October 1844.

42 CTA, 1 January 1845.

43 Scott, op.cit., p. 25.

44 CTA, 1 January 1845.

45 Bourget, Mandements..., (1851), op.cit., pp. 191, 195.

46 Sober elections during temperance campaigns impressed observers in 1841 (Le Canadien 29 mars 1841) and 1848 (MR, 11 avril 1848, 18 avril 1848; Wadsworth, op.cit., p. 28), but election-day drunkenness long remained customary. Cf. Abbé Beaudry, Le Conseiller du Peuple, 1861, pp. 102-105.

47.

MR, 26 novembre 1841, 19 mai 1843, 23 janvier 1849; CTA, 15 April 1844. Towns still had heavy concentrations of taverns even at the height of the Chiniquy campaign when entire rural counties had closed down all of theirs. Cf. MR, 19 septembre 1848, 26 septembre 1848.

48

CTA (Georgetown), 1 June 1849.

49

"About 1850, beer suddenly acquired a great popularity in Montreal", Denison, op.cit., p. 233. This was no doubt in response to the Chiniquy pledge taken by 18,000 (MR, 17 avril 1849) Catholic Montrealers. While Chiniquy strongly recommended that his followers drink only water, his pledge left some ambiguity about "small beer".

50

MR, 8 septembre 1848.

51

These estimates are found in CTA, August 1841; CTA, 16 October 1841; JLAC 1849, Appx.ZZZ, and Bourget, Mandements..., op.cit., p. 440.

52

Temperance sentiment also hastened the closure of local taverns as at Lloydtown, where during a temperance meeting in 1844 the town miller converted to total abstinence and refused to any longer grind the distiller's grain. Cf. CTA (Lloydtown), 1 April 1844.

53

CTA (Port Sarnia), June 1841; (Murray), February 1842; (Colchester), 1 June 1842; (Burford), 1 July 1842; (Stanbridge East), 15 July 1842; (Milford), 1 August 1842; (Huntingdon), 16 September 1844; (Penetanguishene), 1 February 1849; (Oro), 15 March 1849. For indication of this reform was general across the Province, cf. CTA, 1 January 1845, 1 March 1849.

54

See for example, CTA (Murray), February 1842; (Burford), 1 July 1842; (Stanbridge East), 15 July 1842.

55

This is evident from the absence of any sharp long-term drop in consumption, cf. notes 19 and 28 above. Moreover, witnesses to an 1859 Parliamentary Committee on Prohibition declared that one of the reasons local prohibition laws were ineffective was that dry municipalities were so often surrounded by wet ones. Scott, op.cit., p. 84.

56

CTA (Hawkesbury), 15 June 1842. Cf. also CTA (Embro), 1 April 1845 and A. Mailloux, Essai sur le luxe et la vanité, Québec, 1867, p. 129.

57

CTA, 15 December 1849.

58

CTA, 15 January 1849.

59

Guillet, Pioneer Inns and Taverns, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 57.

60

JLAC 1859, Vol. 17, no. 5, appx.43; cf. also JLAC, 1856, Vol. 14, no. 6, appx.62.

61

Ontario and Dominion Prohibition plebiscites in 1894 and 1898 gave strong support for the measure in rural areas and opposition in the cities, G. Decarie, The Prohibition Movement in Ontario, Kingston, 1967, pp. 90-91, 108. Ben Spence reported in 1917 that "rural Quebec was and is, aridly dry, the City of Montreal was and is soaking, sopping wet". Ben Spence, op.cit., p. 33. Temperance "tea meetings" also continued to be an important feature of rural social life long after they fell into disuse in the cities. C.B. Sissons, Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters, Toronto, 1947, p. 6m.

62

Cf. Clark, op.cit., pp. 9-10, 504-505.

63

The Census of Canada for 1851 recorded the Provincial population at 1,842, 265, of whom 171,034 dwelt in cities and towns. Census of the Canadas, 1851-52. Personal Census, Volume I, Quebec, 1853, n.p.

64

Cf. S.D. Clark, Movements of Political Protest in Canada 1640-1840, Toronto, 1859, pp. 9-10.

65

These characteristics of sects are outlined in B. Wilson, in Patterns of Sectarianism, London, 1967, pp. 23-24 and J. Mecklin, The Story of American Dissent, Port Washington, N.Y., 1970, p. 17.

66

CTA, 15 November 1842.

67 CTA, 1 March 1845. For the offending speech cf. CTA, 15 February 1845.

68 CTA, 2 April 1849.

69 CTA, 15 June 1849, citing a letter in L'Avenir.

70 CTA, 18 June 1844.

71 CTA, 15 June 1847. Cf. also CTA, 15 April 1844.

72 MR, 2 fevrier 1849.

73 CTA (Brockville), 15 August 1849, citing the Brockville Recorder.

74 Cf. chapter III, note 89.

75 CTA (Newmarket), 15 June 1842; (Blenheim), 15 February 1844; (Brock), 15 February 1844; (Durham), 1 June 1849; (Murray), 15 November 1849. Women were less active in Canada East, where the clergy directed the movement. Identifying drunkenness as a male vice, the hierarchy urged women to concentrate their energies on the campaign against luxury in dress, which was seen as the corresponding female vice.

76 Toronto Temperance Reformation Society, op.cit., p. 19.

77 MR, 12 juillet 1850.

78 CTA, 1 July 1844.

79 JLAC 1849, appx.ZZZ; CTA, 1 May 1849.

80 CTA, 1 May 1849, 15 August 1849.

81 13 + 14 Victoria, Cap.27 (10 August 1850), Provincial Statutes of Canada, p. 1198.

82

Ibid., and also 14 and 15 Victoria, Cap.120, p. 2144. These statutes also provided for a more direct form of local option in Lower Canada by ruling that applicants for tavern licenses had to secure the approval of the majority of electors in the Municipality. Cf. also MR, 20 about 1850; and Ruth Spence, op.cit., pp. 32-33.

83

S.D. Clark discusses the subordination of agrarian to metropolitan interests as a general feature of Canadian history, in Movements of Political Protest in Canada, Toronto, 1959, pp. 502-503. J.M.S. Careless demonstrates the extent to which the agrarian Clear Grit party of Canada West was in fact dominated by metropolitan interests in "The Toronto Globe and Agrarian Radicalism", CHR, Vol. XXIX (1948).

84

CTA, 1 March 1844.

85

CTA, 15 May 1849.

VIII THE CLOSE OF THE EVANGELICAL ERA

Shortly after mid-century the quest for moral reform took very different forms in French and English Canada. With the establishment of Catholic nationalism in French Canada, the use of politics as an instrument for shaping a moral society emerged as accepted doctrine. It became part of official ideology supported by politicians, priests and people alike.¹ Wary of modern values, national spokesmen glorified temperance and other "rural" virtues. Thus enshrined, temperance lost its role as a protest movement and became a conservative force. In English Canada on the other hand, the moral values of rural society won no comparable recognition. Agrarian society remained in a state of tension with "official" or metropolitan culture, and the temperance movement continued to generate criticism of the social and political order.

This divergence revealed itself clearly in the evolution of the temperance movement after mid-century. In the 1840's social and religious reformers across the Province had worked for the common goals of voluntary abstinence and community control of taverns. Soon disappointed with the results, temperance leaders began to look back at the era of evangelism as a time of dreams. They had indiscriminately preached temperance as all things to all men. The warmth of the public response had blinded them to the fact that many who were attracted by passionate words and glowing visions were at best weak-willed and at worst insincere. They adopted new strategies based on less optimistic assumptions about human

nature. Turning away from the attempt to convert the masses, they began to concentrate on consolidating a core group of committed teetotallers. Henceforward they would rely less on inspiration and more on organisation. Everywhere this meant channelling the movement along narrower lines. In French Canada abstinence was downplayed as a path to national glory and was increasingly presented as a form of religious asceticism. English Canadian supporters took a different but perhaps even more sombre path by launching a campaign for Prohibition, hoping coercion would succeed where conversion had failed.

The main groups which channelled the temperance movement away from mass evangelism were the Société de la Croix and the Sons of Temperance. Both of these organisations had appeared in the 1840's, but in that decade they were overshadowed by the popularity of temperance evangelists such as Forbin-Janson and Chiniquy, Wadsworth and Bungay. Alexis Mailloux had been able to persuade a great many people in the Québec diocese to take the total abstinence pledge of the Société de la Croix at the time of the Chiniquy campaign; but his campaign, emphasizing temperance as religious virtue rather than patriotic duty, simply had not elicited the mass enthusiasm which Chiniquy aroused. Aware of this fact, Mgr. Bourget continued to present temperance as patriotism after Chiniquy's departure.² The leaders of the Montreal Temperance Society also attempted to keep the old temperance evangelism alive; they resented the tendency of fraternal temperance organisations to reduce apocalyptic vision to insurance schemes and conviviality. But

by 1849, when the Sons of Temperance were expanding rapidly, the Montreal Society was paralysed by debt and was forced to sell the Advocate. When the paper finally folded in 1854, leadership of the temperance movement shifted decisively to the Sons of Temperance, who disseminated information through two new temperance journals published in Toronto.³ In that same year, Mgr. Bourget, too, finally gave up the attempt to rekindle Chiniquy-style evangelism. In a joint Mandement with all the Catholic bishops of Canada, he declared that the Société de la Croix had over the years proved more effective than any other means of combatting intemperance and should be established in Catholic parishes throughout Canada.⁴ The consolidation of temperance leadership in the hands of the Sons of Temperance and the Société de la Croix in 1854 brought the era of temperance evangelism to a close.

These new organisations which acquired leadership of the movement in 1854 established styles of temperance campaigning which were to endure for a century. Both groups reacted to the too-transient "conversions" of the 1840's in similar ways. They set up officers whose effectiveness depended not on charisma but on fulfilment of clearly defined functions. They carefully screened prospective members and provided for immediate expulsion of offenders. Both sought to sustain the teetotaler in his resolves by having him attend frequent meetings, perform regular rituals, and subscribe to insurance benefits which he would lose if he broke the pledge. Indeed, both organisations developed a cradle-to-grave support system

which provided temperance indoctrination for the young, fellowship for adults, insurance for the ill, and special funeral rites to see teetotalers safely off to the next world. Both groups found their strongest support in the countryside.⁵ They differed, however, in one important respect. The Société de la Croix was religious in ideology, organisation and strategy, while the Sons of Temperance were entirely secular.

The Société de la Croix represented the triumph of puritanical Catholic thought over the evangelical social Catholicism of Chiniquy's day. Alexis Mailloux, who was the chief theorist and propagator of the Société de la Croix for some twenty-five years, directed temperance sentiment away from the goal of matching the material success of English Canadians towards an older Catholic tradition of Jansenism--a philosophy which gained a strong influence among the clergy in nineteenth century French Canada.⁶ Mailloux was deeply imbued with the Jansenist fear of God and abhorrence of worldly vanities. The ideal of rigid self-denial permeated all his concerns, which included not only temperance but colonisation, stern child-rearing practices, and frugality in dress.⁷ In economic thought Mailloux and his Jansenist colleagues were arcadian. They rejected Chiniquy's call for dynamic competition with the British and the development of native industries. They concentrated on agriculturalisme, a hard and humble living by "the sweat of one's brow", in the traditional toiling of the soil.

If Chiniquy nationalism was Catholicism at the barricades,

Mailloux's programme represented Catholicism in sackcloth. Members of the Société de la Croix were to pledge themselves, for all time, to a penitential way of life and make this commitment clear by hanging a very large, three-foot black cross on a prominent wall in their homes.⁸ The family recited daily temperance prayers before this cross. They placed it atop the casket of the head of household when he died. If the man's son was deemed worthy, he received the cross from the curé at the funeral and carried it home to perpetuate the family's commitment to total abstinence.⁹ People who lived in the shadow of this cross had a very narrow sphere of legitimate pleasures. They renounced not only alcohol but

au luxe et la vanité...à l'attachement
desordonné aux biens de ce monde...à
tout espèce de sensualité et de
gourmandise, n'allouant à mon corps que
ce qui lui est nécessaire pour le
soutenir dans le travail auquel Dieu
l'a condamné en punition de sa révolte
dans Adam. 10

This was reform seen through a Jansenist lens which blocked out any of the material advantages sobriety and industry might bring. The general view towards the "progress" of the nineteenth century was profound suspicion. Indeed, the Société promised members it would be their refuge

au milieu d'un siècle de révolutions,
d'insubordination, d'orgueil, de luxe,
d'irréligion, de passions desordonnées
pour les plaisirs, les joies et le
bien-être terrestres. 11

The Société de la Croix also stressed submission to duly constituted authority. Its structure reinforced the patriarchal authority of the priest and the pater familias. Leadership was in the hands of the curé, who arranged monthly temperance masses and annual temperance retreats for members and arbitrated questions of admission and expulsion.¹² Women and children were not allowed individually to join the Société, but if the father joined the whole family was automatically enrolled.¹³ Chiniquy had preached a militant temperance nationalism, mobilising parish assemblies to petition Parliament and participating personally in the drafting of legislation;¹⁴ Mailloux specifically counselled his followers against militance. He preached the virtue of turning the other cheek to opponents and praying daily for their conversion. Members were to endure "avec patience et sans murmure, les affronts et les railleries qu'on se permet à son égard;¹⁵ they were to

aimer ses ennemis et leur donner des marques de son amour en leur faisant du bien...être soumis et obéissant à ceux qui lui tiennent ici-bas la place de Dieu, comme, son père et sa mère, son pasteur, son confesseur...être soumis aux lois, aux magistrats et à l'autorité civile dans les choses qui sont de leur ressort. 16

Thus, under the Société de la Croix temperance lost its role as a dynamic social movement. The Chiniquy crusade undermined the appeal of temperance by its very success. Achievement of prohibition provides the surest rebuttal of the more Utopian aspects of temperance doctrine; and even

zealous advocates could see that the mass rejection of alcohol in the late 1840's did not result in any great rise in the national fortunes. This effectively dampened the more extravagant beliefs about the power of total abstinence, and does much to explain French Canada's absenteeism from the Prohibition campaigns that raged in English Canada for the following seven decades. This absenteeism was as much a clerical decision as a popular one. The clergy continued to promote temperance, but they relegated it to a minor role in the broader social programme of agriculturalisme which was the cardinal point of clerical nationalism for much of the nineteenth century. Despite its sombre and conservative tone, the Société de la Croix was the natural product of Chiniquy's success. Chiniquy had done much to promote the clergy as helmsmen of the national destiny. He had proposed the marriage, or rather, ménage à trois, of religion, nationalism and the work ethic. During the latter half of the nineteenth century an increasingly numerous and influential clergy presided over this union. True to their calling they subordinated material to spiritual values. Trained to save souls, they were unimaginative in the economic realm and cautious in the political one. Thrust into a position of national leadership, the clergy promoted sobriety and industry not only as paths to morality but as economic and social policy—hoping they would stem the flow of rural society towards urbanisation and emigration. They continued to exhort against luxury and intemperance while directing increasingly active

efforts (and indeed, another "crusade" modelled on that of Chiniquy) towards colonisation of the rocky terrain of the Canadian shield.

The Sons of Temperance, the group which became the leading temperance group in English Canada after mid-century, contrasted sharply with the Société de la Croix. While the Société established temperance as a religious movement to maintain a pious agricultural population, the Sons forged it into a secular movement committed to social change and political action. The secular direction of the movement in English Canada reflected the anticlericalism that had emerged in the campaigns in the 1840's. In Protestant communities the movement had succeeded precisely by rejecting any particular religious affiliation. Moreover, clergymen had often undermined their stature by opposing what many laymen saw as the most relevant religious reform of modern times. For many, temperance reformers effectively supplanted clergymen as promoters of the community's moral welfare. The secular temperance brotherhoods did not entirely reject clerical supporters. Sympathetic clergymen joined temperance brotherhoods and sometimes rose to leadership ranks; others were hired by the brotherhoods as lecturers.¹⁷ But they were there, as it were, on sufferance, acceptable because they subordinated denominational variations to temperance orthodoxy. The decline in clerical influence was also a matter of financing and organisation. Well-funded by membership dues, the temperance brotherhoods could afford salaried officials and

no longer had to rely on clerical volunteers. The evangelical churches continued in this more structured situation to support the temperance movement, but public campaigning and parliamentary lobbying increasingly passed into the hands of the more single-minded temperance brotherhoods. Declining clerical leadership in the campaign for moral reform meant that this campaign became lay property, or at least public property. This opened the path for future "social gospellers", who would arise primarily from lay ranks.

The Sons also contrasted sharply with the Société de la Croix in their stress in individual activism. They summoned members, both male and female, to social and political action. Cell groups of teetotallers were to be the vanguard of a new social order. In 1854 the Sons of Temperance of Canada West voted to amalgamate meetings of the Sons and Daughters of Temperance, declaring that:

The great object of this Association is to protect the lives and morals of the people of our country, and to effect this grand object...this Division should endeavour to form our subordinate Divisions into social circles on a large scale, to teach what each family should be in miniature.

18

Creating this new society also involved political action. The Sons immediately formed a well-organised lobby for stringent liquor laws. The Grand Division of Canada West, for example, voted funds in 1850 for one of its officers to visit the State of Wisconsin to study the effect of that State's restrictive liquor laws and prepare a brief for the Canadian Parliament. 19

In the same year all higher ranking members of the Order were asked to call on their MP's to seek their support for temperance legislation.²⁰ The American Sons of Temperance declared support for Prohibition in 1849, and in the early 1850's the Canadian Sons adopted the same course.²¹

Thus, as the evangelical era closed, the temperance movement assumed very different positions vis-à-vis the state in French and English Canada. In French Canada the movement took on a humble role as one of many church societies under the curé's leadership with ambitions directed primarily towards the other world. Though some priests did support Prohibition, state intervention was not generally seen as desirable in an area that fell essentially within the curé's sphere of influence. The whole issue was gradually removed from the political realm. Though French Canadians had massively supported the local option campaign in the 1840's, petitions from Canada East diminished in the next decade. A Legislative Committee to discuss Prohibition in 1856 reported that despite strong temperance sentiment in French Canada, fewer than 14,000 people from Canada East had petitioned for Prohibition in contrast to 88,945 petitioners from Canada West.²² Other secular temperance brotherhoods similar to the Sons soon appeared in Canada West, and by 1860 eighty per cent of all petitioners for Prohibition were members of these brotherhoods.²³ The Prohibition campaign raged futilely for many decades. A "classic study in the frustrations of party government",²⁴ it continued

to breed disaffection with the established order and to serve as a training school for social reformers.

Eventually, temperance forces would make important forays into the area of urban reform, health and labour legislation, and female suffrage.²⁵ While agrarian ideals in French Canada preached avoidance of cities, temperance forces in English Canada would make attempts to 'revivify their waste places'.²⁶

CHAPTER VII NOTES

¹ Recent studies of post-Confederation Quebec such as M. Hamelin's Les premières années du parlementarisme (Québec, 1974) and W.F. Ryan's The Clergy and the Economic Growth of Quebec (Quebec, 1966) somewhat revise the traditional view of Quebec as a 'priest-ridden society' warring against progress; and the pre-Confederation period, too, finds such figures as the temperance preacher Father Edouard Quertier heading a parish assembly to petition the authorities for railway development, cf. Le Canadien, 16 mars 1849. Neither the clergy nor laity were immune to railway fever or, as Ryan has documented, for the late nineteenth century, to the advantages of local industrial development. The view of agriculturalisme as an official ideology which is presented in this chapter is based on M. Brunet's statement that all the principal leaders of society, both clerical and lay supported this policy--in contrast to England, English Canada and the U.S., where defenders of agrarian ideals constituted a minority. Cf. M. Brunet, La Presence Anglaise et les Canadiens, Montreal, 1958, pp. 120, 124. While some clergymen may have favoured industrialism and while politicians' support of clerical values no doubt at times involved lip service rather than deep conviction, the contention here is that the Ultramontane and agrarian ideologies were sufficiently powerful and pervasive in Quebec in the second half of the nineteenth century to be considered "official"--which is not to imply that they were unanimously held.

² Bourget founded the Annales de la Tempérance in 1853 to promote the movement. The first issue declared that the sole interest of the enterprise was "Le bien du peuple et la gloire de la patrie...." Annales de la Tempérance, janvier 1854.

³ Sons of Temperance; The Pioneer Abstinence Order of North America, 1842-1942, p. 193.

⁴ Bourget, Mandements, Lettres, Vol. II., p. 460.

⁵ Cf. notes 60 and 61 of Ch. 6. Cf. also A. Mailloux, Essai sur le luxe et la vanité (1867), which credits the success of temperance to "les hommes qui étaient à la tête de notre population Catholique de nos campagnes", p. 133.

⁶ DCB, Vol. X, p. 489.

7
Ibid., p. 489.

8
A.Mailloux, La Croix présentée aux membres de la Société de Tempérance, Quebec, 1850, pp. 93-94.

9
Ibid., pp. 84-85.

10
A.Mailloux, La Société de Tempérance dite Société de la Croix, Quebec, 1848, pp. 2-3.

11
A.Mailloux, La Croix..., op.cit., p. 56.

12
A.Mailloux, La Société de Tempérance..., op.cit., p. 7.

13
Ibid., p. 5.

14
Trudel, op.cit., pp. 109-111.

15
A.Mailloux, La Croix..., op.cit., p. 60.

16
Ibid., pp. 61-62.

17
Bourass, op.cit., p. 234. Reverend J.E.Ryerson was elected head of the Sons of Canada West in 1853. Sons of Temperance, Proceedings of the Grand Division, May 1854, p. 37.

18
Ibid., p. 25.

19
Sons of Temperance, Proceedings of the Grand Division, April 1850, p. 49.

20
Ibid., p. 51.

21
G.Decarie, The Prohibition Movement in Ontario, p. 8. The Sons of Canada West were a particularly dynamic branch of the Order, providing in Edward Carswell the most popular orator in Sons' lodges throughout North America; Canadian Sons of Temperance were also responsible for spreading the Order to England. Decarie, op.cit., p. 9.

22 JLAC (1856), Vol. 15, no. 6, appx.62.

23 JLAC (1860), Vol. 18, appx.3.

24 Decarie, The Prohibition Movement in Ontario, p. 38. Temperance forces saw "Partyism" as a major stumbling block in their quest for Prohibition, Mrs.S.G.E.McKee, Jubilee History of the Ontario Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Whitby, Ontario; 1927, p. 28.

25 Prohibition forces were among the leading Social Gospellers, cf. Decarie, The Prohibition Movement in Ontario, pp. 241-242. The Social Gospellers sought in the 1890's to reconstruct the urban environment. Cf. Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel and the Reform Tradition in Canada, 1890-1928", CHR, 1968, p. 387ff. For a fuller discussion of the varied reform activities of Social Gospellers, cf. Allen's The Social Passion, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1973. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union pressed for appointment of factory and shop inspectors for institutions employing women, more sanitary food preparation and a number of other reforms. Cf. McKee, op.cit., Reports of the 1892 and 1893 Conventions. For involvement of temperance forces in the campaign for female suffrage, cf. McKee, op.cit., pp. 19, 28, 42-43, and Catherine Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, Toronto, 1974, pp. 23-30.

26 This phrase is borrowed from a speech made by Malcolm Cameron in 1866. Cf. Bourass, p. 310.

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