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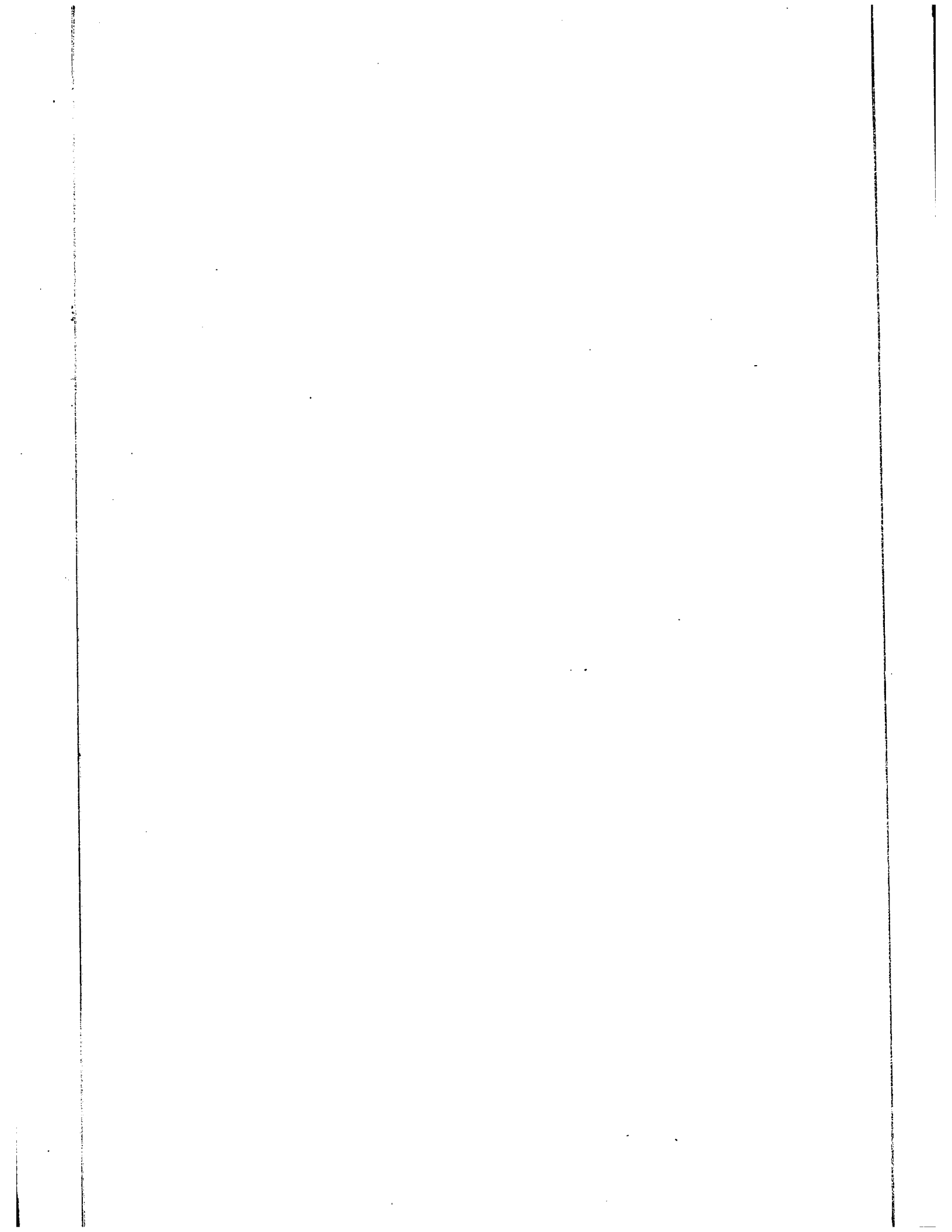
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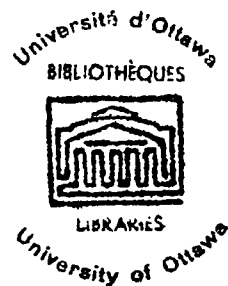
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CULTURAL PATTERNS IN THE UNION OF THE CANADAS:
THE FIRST DECADE

by Stephen Kenny



Thesis presented to the School of
Graduate Studies and Research of
the University of Ottawa in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in History

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ABSTRACT

CULTURAL PATTERNS IN THE UNION OF THE CANADAS: THE FIRST DECADE

This thesis is a history of cultural patterns which existed in Canada during the 1840s. In examining the numerous attitudes, values and sentiments shared by Canadians, I have attempted to provide firstly, an overall description of the cultural condition of the colony and, secondly, a clearer understanding of the nature of the relationship of French and English speaking Canadians. They were very different from each other, divided by characteristics as fundamental as religion, language, and place of origin, and separated by other important impediments like climate and geography.

While not denying their distinctions, this dissertation stresses their similarities. It illustrates the cultural community of Canadians by studying their attitudes towards the age in which they lived. For example, they were committed to progress and improvement. Moreover, they were enchanted with technological advances like the railroad and telegraph and they were convinced that a modern and practical education was a good way to change society for the better. Common values of Canadians are demonstrated by observing how they reacted to the difficulties and trials of everyday life, such as fire, sickness and violence. While they endured and responded to these phenomena in a similar fashion, they also fell upon the same solutions to their problems, one of the most interesting being temperance. Further shared cultural patterns are found

in their opinions on crime and mental illness. Finally, common sentiments are demonstrated by their ideas regarding religion, the artistic and literary condition of the colony, and the place of women, children and native people in the community.

To investigate the cultural patterns of Canadians and to study their shared attitudes, I have used the most obvious printed sources in both French and English, such as newspapers, government documents, official correspondence, sessional papers, committee reports, parliamentary debates, public inquiries, contemporary books, travel guides, pamphlets, magazines, reviews and some selected manuscript sources. Extensive examination of this material leads me to the conclusion that while culturally Canadians were far from sophisticated or advanced in these years, they shared a great deal. While it cannot be claimed that they were the same, their resemblance to each other was often uncanny.

The agreement of Canadians on so many matters and the similarity of their cultural attitudes, values and sentiments balances more traditional perceptions of them as being basically antagonistic towards each other. Perhaps the shared cultural patterns illustrated here partly explain why and how Canadians managed to live together fairly reasonably and peacefully during the first decade of the Union. Their positive experiences together is one of the least studied elements of their relationship in this period. Hopefully, this thesis will be regarded as an initial effort in correcting that situation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This is an investigation of cultural patterns which existed in Canada during the 1840s. Such an examination of the rough hewn and rather unsophisticated society as was the province of the Canadas presents difficulties to the historian. Not the least of these is a definition of culture. To some the word evokes the arts, literature and the finer things of life and to others it represents the entire gamut of elements which characterize the given community. Here, a middle ground is sought between the realm of letters and the arts and more universal perceptions of society in general. For the purpose of this thesis, culture is that collection of attitudes, values and sentiments which enable the observer to delineate particular and separate communities. If this research was limited to the artistic and literary interests of Canadians, the conclusions could be written upon a single page, for the arts and interest in them were nearly non-existent in Canada. A more universal approach, reflecting upon the entirety of the human community, would make it extremely difficult to explain the different points of view and distinct attitudes of the component parts of Canadian society.

I hope that an exploration of patterns of culture in Canada will contribute to a clearer understanding of the

nature of the relationship of French and English speaking Canadians. The manner in which they succeeded in sharing the same historical experience has been, is and will continue to be a central consideration of historians. Until our own day, two recognizable themes, one of confrontation and the other of co-operation, have presented the student of Canadian society with a contradiction, being the sincerely held belief that Canadians of French and English origin cannot act in concert and the opposite but equally strong conviction that the relationship itself is what distinguishes Canada's history from others and may perhaps be its very foundation. The political rhetoric of the 1970s is evidence of the consistency and continuity of this contradiction. Recently, colourful allusions to the relationship of Canadians have likened their situation to two scorpions in one bottle.¹ Those who reject such comparisons point to the equally significant reality of more than two hundred years of living together.² It is hoped that a search for the

¹ René Lévesque, "For an Independent Quebec," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 54, No. 4 (July, 1976), 742.

² Globe and Mail, Thursday, November 25, 1976. See excerpts of the text of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's address to the nation, delivered Wednesday, November 24, 1976. For an interesting and more academic treatment of the positive results stemming from the shared history of Canadians, see Kenneth McRae, Consociational Democracy: Political Accommodation in Segmented Societies, Carleton Library, No. 79 (Toronto, 1974). McRae perceives Canada as a consociational democracy like Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland where linguistic and religious diversity have elicited a creative spirit of accommodation and cooperation, p. 259.

community of culture which existed between French and English Canadians during the 1840s might offer some clues as to the nature of society as well as indications of the social concerns of those who comprised it. Throughout the country, many Canadians did share certain attitudes, values and sentiments. The question is whether their similarities might offer a partial explanation of why they stayed together.

Certainly, the first decade of the Union furnishes the historian with a particularly intriguing and important episode of an oft repeated theme in Canadian history, the simultaneous resistance and reconciliation of two identifiably different cultural groups. These years offer numerous examples of tension and conflict, but they also demonstrate a spirit of accommodation and compromise. While the more lamentable and negative aspects of the period are immediately apparent in the history books, less energy has been expended upon considerations of its more positive features. Personally, I have no desire to dismiss or discount the importance of the difficulties and problems caused by the interactions of Canadians. However, I do not believe that excuses are needed to defend a search for the positive elements resulting from their partnership. In identifying what was good, a more balanced perception of these years may be achieved.

Though this research concentrates upon a period

frequently treated before, its approach will vary in two ways from preceding studies. Firstly, it will attempt to offer an overall assessment of the cultural condition of the colony. Secondly, it will treat the peoples who inhabited the province of the Canadas together. Such a method raises numerous questions and demands as many answers. How exactly did Canadians relate? How did they perceive each other? What were their aspirations? Did they share the same ideas? Did they cherish similar values?

While the political features of the 1840s have been treated by many historians and there appears to be a growing interest in the history of economic development, considerations of general cultural conditions hardly exist.³ Politically, the Union of the Canadas has often been looked upon as a time of heightened strain between French and English speaking Canadians, an experiment in government which failed and ultimately demanded a basic revision of the constitutional structure established in 1841.⁴ However, some political studies have seen the Union in another light: as an experience in realism and pragmatism when Canadian

³ For example: Fernand Ouellet, Histoire Economique et Sociale du Québec, 1760-1850 (Montréal, 1966) and Gerald J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons: Montreal Businessmen and the Growth of Industry and Transportation (Toronto, 1977).

⁴ See A. R. M. Lower, Colony to Nation: A History of Canada (Toronto, 1946). W. L. Morton, The Critical Years: The Union of British North America, 1857-1873 (Toronto, 1964). See also Kenneth McRae, op. cit., p. 256.

leaders came to terms with each other.⁵ Perhaps this latter view is best illustrated by the series of political alliances which occurred. There were numerous examples of co-operation between French and English-Canadian politicians.

The partnership of LaFontaine and Baldwin is well remembered, but even their opponents from both sections of the province recognized the need to work together. Less often recalled is the alliance between William Henry Draper and Denis-Benjamin Viger. A cousin of Louis-Joseph Papineau and a "patriote" of the old school, Viger was much vilified by his French Canadian Reform opponents for his collusion with Governor-General Metcalfe and the Upper Canadian conservatives. And yet he acted no differently from his adversaries. In the government, Viger filled the vacuum for the French Canadians which was created by LaFontaine's resignation from office in 1843. He realized that his compatriots could no longer afford to place themselves beyond the realm of power and influence. Important decisions must not be made without them. True to his words written long before he entered the Canadian ministry, Viger declared:

⁵ See William Ormsby, The Emergence of the Federal Concept in Canada, 1839-1845 (Toronto, 1969). The creative results of political coalescence are amply illustrated by J. M. S. Careless, The Union of the Canadas: The Growth of Canadian Institutions, 1841-1857 (Toronto, 1967), and Jacques Monet, The Last Cannon Shot: A Study of French Canadian Nationalism, 1837-1850 (Toronto, 1969).

Quels sont ceux qui revêtus d'une puissance dont eux seuls règlent l'usage, se renfermeraient en l'exerçant dans les bornes assignées par la raison et par l'équité? Ce phénomène est encore à trouver. Si l'on rencontre par fois [sic] dans l'histoire de l'homme et de la société de ces traits qui sembleraient d'abord en prouver la possibilité, ce sont de ces faits isolés qui sortant de l'ordre ordinaire et connu forment de ces exceptions qui loin de militer contre la règle laissent à découvert cette triste vérité de tous les tems [sic] et de tous les lieux, que le pouvoir sans antrepoids [sic] et la tyrannie sont inséparables.⁶

Co-operation was imperative. Those who refused to work within the structure knowingly divested themselves of control over their own destiny.

If they were willing to coalesce in the political sphere, Canadians were equally apt to do so on other levels. By studying the cultural condition of the country during the 1840s, this thesis will question whether increasing tension was indeed the only reality. Of course, to deny the strains which divided society would be foolish. In fact, few Canadians looked upon the Union of 1841 as a solution to their problems, political, economic or social. Many vehemently opposed it. And yet this new political experiment provided one opportunity for the development and growth of greater mutual understanding and awareness, a situation which raises several questions. Was not the

⁶ Denis-Benjamin Viger, Considérations Relatives à la Dernière Révolution de la Belgique (Réimprimé d'après la publication faite de cet ouvrage en mai 1831) (Montréal, 1842), p. 15.

period often marked by harmony, calm and generosity? How willing were Canadians to co-operate and compromise? Can positive common experiences modify our perception of these years as ones of failure and bad feelings?

Divisions among Canadians were apparent, and at the beginning the development of many and serious problems seemed quite possible. French and English were clearly distinguishable from each other. They spoke different languages, belonged to diverse religious denominations, possessed varying traditions, and most importantly perceived themselves as dissimilar. However, despite significant diversity, they had many similarities. They shared common political institutions. They amused and instructed themselves in a similar fashion. They were moved by the current nineteenth century notions of society and morality. They faced the same trials and hardships of everyday life. Across the colony, they were served by the same sorts of public institutions, such as prisons, hospitals and asylums. Their perspectives upon the state of the community in which they lived and of the men, women and children who composed it were uncannily alike. Because of these striking similarities, I believe a general treatment of their cultural condition is necessary and that examining them together as one community is justified.

An investigation into the patterns of culture in Canada in the 1840s raises three serious questions.

Firstly, who are the purveyors of culture? Simply put, whose attitudes, whose values, whose sentiments were they? Secondly, what is the significance of their cultural ideas and how representative are their views of the whole society? For example, can one presume that ideas shared by a very small number of people reflect those of the majority? What difference does it make if one editor, writer or clergyman thinks in a certain way? Thirdly, how does the historian reconcile patterns of culture, which emerge from an investigation of the sources used here, with the fact that Canadians were rarely concerned with cultural matters and even less frequently conscious of the similarity of their cultural values?

In answer to the first question, it should be admitted from the outset that few people in the colony wrote of their current cultural attitudes. However, it is from these that this research will attempt to sketch the general cultural condition of the colony. I believe there is ample reason for proceeding in such a manner. Those Canadians who did reflect upon cultural conditions, whether directly or indirectly, have left significant traces of how people thought about society and its problems. Since their views have not yet been thoroughly explored, they merit consideration.

Certainly, I am keenly sensitive to the limitations of such an approach. There is no doubt that newspaper

editors and authors of pamphlets, politicians and civil servants, professionals and clergymen, lecturers and novelists, and all of those who have left records of nineteenth century cultural notions, comprised an elite. However, these are the people who wrote of their opinions, sentiments and feelings on numerous cultural concerns, such as the improvement of society, the place of women in the community, the importance of language, or the possibility of curing the insane. Indeed, the very fact that they thought about these and other such matters set them apart from the majority.

Undoubtedly, the cultural condition of the majority is worthy of consideration. However, it is beyond the scope and methodology of this thesis and would require a completely different study. The ideas of the Upper Canadian farmer, the French Canadian logger, the recently arrived day labourer or domestic servant, or of the Irish navy, rarely emerge from the sources investigated here. That is not to say that the majority had no opinions. Sentiments of the general population are clearly discernible, often illustrated at times of tragedy or violence. One such prevailing feeling was the climate of resistance and antagonism on the part of French Canadians. If Lord Sydenham had his ways with the Special Council in Lower Canada, he did not have it in the villages and countryside. For example, the people refused to build sleighs according

to the specifications of his ordinance. During the 1840s they would resist schools imposed upon them by the Union government. So too, they would object to being counted in censuses.⁷ Such general attitudes are frequently apparent. The Irish were no more docile than the French Canadians. Their story too carries traces of violence, anger and lawlessness.

The views of this great mass of ordinary citizens are important but they would have to be approached differently. The effort of this thesis is limited to considerations on those reflections and observations, which are readily available, numerous in quantity and not yet studied closely by historians. Every community in every

⁷ Examples of the generalized spirit of resistance and antagonism of the French Canadians abound. For instance, see RG7 G18 Vol. 18. People derided and laughed at the new compulsory sleigh regulations. Model sleighs were toured around the countryside but few people expressed any interest in them. In one village, Ste. Thérèse de Blainville, the inhabitants broke the model into pieces and deposited portions of it on the doorsteps of British residents.

See also, Thomas Chapais, "La guerre des éteignoirs," in Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada. 3d. Series. Vol. XXII. (May, 1928). Section One. pp. 1-6. The author describes popular alienation in the countryside and resistance to the imposition of schools supported by direct taxation.

In addition, see RG1 E13 Blue Books. L843. An Act providing for a census to be taken every five years was passed in 1841. The first census was taken in 1842 but in the following year statistics were still not available from Canada East because of the refusal of many French Canadians to be counted.

As for the Irish, newspapers and official documents, throughout the 1840s, refer to numerous episodes of violence and lawlessness in which they were involved.

age has its elites to express its ideas regarding morality, society and taste. It is to these sources that this investigation will go for its understanding of cultural attitudes in Canada during the 1840s.

Whatever the means at one's disposal, no single historian or group of them, can ever claim to come to a complete understanding of the ideas of a whole community. This investigation represents one step in that direction but it certainly does not claim that the purveyors of culture which it studies are the only, or even the most important ones. It hopes to contribute to a fuller awareness of the cultural condition of Canada while at the same time recognizing that the field remains open to any number of approaches, be it that of the folklorist, ethnologist, anthropologist or of the quantitative or local historian. For example, if data are available, the quantitative historian may come to more precise conclusions about the cultural sentiments of a larger segment of society, or at least of those who fit in the framework of the given controlled model. For his part, the local historian in focusing upon a more rigorously defined region can also make important contributions to the understanding of cultural life. However, these more controlled quantitative and regional studies of Canadian culture patterns have yet to be undertaken.

This thesis takes a different approach from the above.

It is my intention to concentrate upon the cultural ideas of Canadians as illustrated by the printed sources of the period. In order to do so, limitation to a closely defined geographical region is not acceptable. So, too, such a course demands as wide as possible a treatment of the views of Canadians, not limited by considerations of their class or social status or by their differences of language and religion. Anyone who has left opinions of the cultural condition of Canada in the 1840s is susceptible to investigation here. Along with particular studies which must surely be undertaken, a reasonably general account of cultural patterns must first be attempted.

The second question relates to the importance of the views of the elite and how representative are such views. For example, if it were the conviction of one editor of one newspaper that it was absolutely essential for French Canadians to learn English, can it be presumed that the majority of his compatriots shared the same conviction? If one author of one pamphlet believed criminals to be reformable, does that mean the entire society believed it? If one civil servant in one report concluded that education was the best means to create a moral and orderly society, did everyone come to a similar conclusion? Of course, the response to all of these questions is no. Taken singly and separately, the ideas of any particular individual do not necessarily reflect

those of the community in which he lives. However, when such ideas are taken from as many sources as possible, in both French and English, they begin to illustrate patterns of attitude which underline the shared community of culture in Canada. The more apparent the pattern, the greater the likelihood it represents a more generalized sentiment. Hopefully, these discernible patterns of attitude will enable the historian to create a more authentic perception of the cultural condition of the colony.

And yet, even the importance of the patterns can also be questioned. Just how representative are the cultural attitudes drawn from the mentality of a few? One might object and claim that this dissertation merely demonstrates the commonly shared ideas of one and the same group in Canadian society, the bourgeoisie, the professionals and the classes of ease. Perhaps the very similarity of ideas and attitudes of this group proves the basic sameness of the people who comprised it. Further, it might well be observed that the Canadian elite, with its views regarding contemporary mores and society, was not distinguishable from similar ones, be they in North America, Europe or elsewhere.

To claim that the French and English Canadians who comprised the elite were the same, would be an exaggeration. This research will attempt to illustrate their many shared common cultural values. It does not aspire to erase their

differences. One of the traditional themes of the political history of Canada has been the evolving relationship of these two communities. This study hopes to examine that relationship upon a cultural level. In the 1840s, Canadians were thrown together into a unitary political system. They shared the same assembly and governmental institutions. How did this new situation effect their relationship? As they were required to work more closely together politically, did they come to understand each other better? So far, no historian has concluded that during the first decade of the Union the political position of Canadians became the same. Culturally as well, this dissertation will attempt to illustrate their shared and similar views upon society in those years. It will not try to prove that the two communities became the same.

Culturally, as politically, Canada became no less complicated in 1841 than it had been before. True, the French Canadians comprised a noticeably homogeneous community, most of them living within the confines of Canada East and bound together by their religion, their language and their long presence in North America, but the perception of a simple dual society, the French balanced by the English, each living within a recognizable area, must be qualified. While united by language, English-speaking Canadians were divided among themselves in nearly every other way, by different religious denominations, diverse

countries of origin and varying lengths of time in Canada. Because of the yearly arrival of immigrants and the undeveloped state of the country, their community was constantly in flux. Consequently, they were much less unified than French Canadians, and as we shall see, less attached to Canada as their home. Moreover, while the great majority of English-speaking Canadians lived in Canada West, many thousands resided in Montreal, Quebec City and the Eastern Townships. Therefore, even in terms of regional identity, there was no clear or simple duality. Moreover, French and English Canadians emphasized over and over again how different they were from each other. No matter how many times similarity of attitude can be demonstrated, those deep and conscious differences must be kept in mind.

Particularly intriguing is the question whether the Canadian elite differed from that of England, the United States or any other country. Were they not all young Victorians? Did they not all share the same mid-nineteenth century outlook? Probably the response to these questions is yes. Quite likely, the Montreal businessman who reflected upon the positive advantages of railroads had his counterpart in London, New York or elsewhere. The views of the Canadian prison reformer would certainly have been common to those in other countries. A study of the similarity of the cultural ideas of the Canadian elite to

other comparable social groups would be a worthy enterprise. Unfortunately, such an undertaking lies beyond the scope of this work whose major focus is cultural conditions within Canada.

The observable patterns of culture in Canada in the 1840s are important. I am the first to acknowledge that they stem from a restricted segment of society. However, in studying them, the researcher is better able to understand the nature of the relationship of French and English Canadians. How representative are the views of such an elite? They are limited, but such views are among the only ones actually available to the scrutiny of the historian. It is time they were considered.

The third serious question arising from an investigation of patterns of culture is evoked by the fact that Canadians paid slight attention to cultural matters and hardly realized that others shared similar attitudes. How does the historian grasp this unconscious condition of culture? It seems much easier to explain their mutual ignorance. They made little effort to come to a deeper or extended understanding of each other. Rarely did they reflect upon the positive consequences which might have resulted from coming to know each other better. Obstructions like environment and weather kept them apart. They travelled infrequently and so had little idea of what lay beyond their own region.

In order to investigate the cultural conditions of Canadians, I have depended upon the most obvious and immediate printed sources in both French and English. I have read newspapers of the 1840s from most of the major cities and many of the lesser places of the colony. I have referred to government documents, official correspondence, sessional papers, committee reports, parliamentary debates, public inquiries and the like, insofar as they indicate cultural attitudes. I have also studied contemporary books, travel guides, pamphlets, magazines and reviews, all of which richly illustrate the attitudes, values and sentiments of Canadians.

Such sources must be used with caution, for their value as illustrators of patterns of culture is restricted. These materials must be approached indirectly. Unfortunately, the historian of this period will find few episodes or series of events which exemplify conscious cultural concerns. It should be remembered that the primary purpose of newspapers, government documents, and books was not the expression of the cultural condition of Canadians. For example, while newspapers are an important source for political history, they have to be read widely before any cultural patterns begin to emerge. This same sort of difficulty is applicable to the other sources used to create this thesis. The clergyman who attacked the abuse of alcohol did so because of his concern for the evil

consequences of intemperance, not to leave an idea of his mid-nineteenth century values for posterity. The travel guide was generally written as a handbook for prospective and arriving immigrants, not as a sketch of the cultural conditions of the colony.

However, the cultural situation of Canadians is in fact refracted indirectly through these sources. Therefore they demand as thorough an investigation as possible. The researcher must seize upon the numerous expressions of attitudes, sentiments and values, direct or indirect, in order to determine how people thought and what were their ideas. It is in observing how Canadians reflected upon their quality of life and the condition of their community that this investigation will attempt to illustrate the patterns of culture shared by them.

The sources examined here will show what Canadians thought about contemporary questions, and more importantly, that many, both French and English, had similar ideas. During the 1840s, most people did not spend a great deal of time or waste a lot of ink in consciously recording their cultural values. However, by a lengthy and extensive study of printed materials in both languages, as undertaken in this thesis, the historian does have the means to come to a more complete understanding of the cultural community of Canadians. It is in an indirect manner, by sifting and examining the cultural condition, somewhat circuitously

illustrated by newspapers, books, pamphlets and documents, that I will attempt to sketch patterns of culture in the first decade of the Union.

In this search for their shared cultural attitudes the following six chapters will endeavour to offer an overview and tableau of the cultural condition of Canadians. The approach is thematic rather than chronological. The first chapter describes the impact of the new Union of the Canadas created in 1841 and the perceptions Canadians had of each other. Illustrations are given of both the real tensions that existed between them and the spirit of co-operation possible of development in the succeeding years. The second chapter addresses itself to the impediments which divided them, such as difficulties of travel and the harshness of climate. At the same time, it describes where and how Canadians lived, in what manner they amused and diverted themselves, and how they attempted to expand their cultural horizons. Reflections upon the attitudes of Canadians towards the modern world, to the notion of progress and to the means of improving society are contained in the third chapter. The fourth describes the difficulties and hardships of everyday life faced by all Canadians. The real menaces to health and happiness, such as sickness, fire and unlawful and unruly mobs are considered. Some of the solutions to their problems are also discussed. The

institutional condition of the colony, as well as attitudes towards the most abandoned elements of society such as criminals, the insane and sick, are dealt with in chapter five. The final chapter addresses itself to feelings regarding religion and morality, while at the same time treating the attitudes of Canadians towards the component parts of their community, such as women, children and native people. Diverse and diffuse as all of these subjects may seem, they have been chosen in the hope that they will more fully illustrate the true nature of the cultural condition of Canadians.

In the following pages, I will attempt to deal with material that is interesting and intriguing, but my purpose is not simply to describe the mid-nineteenth century values, attitudes and sentiments of Canadians. Despite their differences of language, religion and origin, my objective is to look for what they may have had in common.

CHAPTER ONE

THE NEW COMMUNITY

The Union of the Canadas

The Union of the Canadas was proclaimed on Wednesday, 10 February 1841, three years to the day after civil government in Lower Canada had been suspended. The day was greeted in Montreal with the appropriate official pomp. At noon an artillery salvo was fired at the Champ de Mars. At 1:15 in the afternoon, Lord Sydenham, the Governor General, took his oath of office and at two o'clock he greeted three hundred of Montreal's more important citizens at an official levee. To cap the celebrations, that evening a brilliant ball was held at the Chateau de Ramezay. While officialdom rejoiced the day was not particularly auspicious for most Canadians.¹

The basic principle of the new political community was to render Canada a British colony, in fact as well as name. Many English speaking people did not relish being thrown together with the "traitorous" French Canadians. For its part, the majority of the population of Lower Canada was also opposed to the new political structure. French and English speaking Canadians did not know each other very well but what little they did know, they did not

¹ Le Vrai Canadien. vendredi, 12 février 1841.

consider very appealing.

The 1840s would witness the successful conclusion of the quest for responsible government. A significant change in the colony's commercial life would occur. So too would Canada's French and English speaking population come into closer and more intimate contact. Historians have treated the political and economic developments of the period but less energy has been expended upon its social and cultural history. LaFontaine and Baldwin, politicians each with a different background, religion and language, would work together in order to revise a constitution which was unacceptable to both. Great Britain, a growing commercial and economic power, would alter trade patterns created in 1815 by declaring the end of preferential treatment for her colonies and leave them to fend for themselves.

It would be untrue to claim that French and English speaking Canadians liked and trusted each other in the 1840s. The decade would be a severe testing ground for the community. The historian can point to any year, to any parliamentary session, to any newspaper, in order to demonstrate a very active hostility and an acute degree of mistrust. The very nature of the Union, even the bias and the prejudice of the act which created it, was not conceived to calm fears. The decision on the seat of government, the prohibition of the official use of French, the construction of public works, the conduct of elections,

religious and linguistic differences, these and many more were all fertile fields for the cultivation of hostility.

On the other hand, it would be unreasonable to believe that mistrust and hostility were insuperable difficulties which ultimately poisoned the period. While it cannot be said that French and English speaking Canadians were the same, there was a great deal of similarity between them. After February 1841, Canadian development, political economic and social was to be faced by them together whether they liked it or not. In the process of confronting the same difficulties and sharing the same hopes they would unite to a significant degree. They would arrive at an understanding of each other, which if not totally positive was not entirely negative.

The growth of such understanding would not be easy. For the great majority, life was severely circumscribed. The climate was harsh. Travel was difficult. Most Canadians knew little of the country beyond their immediate vicinity and knew even less about the rest of their fellow citizens. It made little difference if they were born here or newly arrived. Immigrants, as they travelled through the country to their settlements, caught a bird's eye but not very informative view of their adopted land. Those who were born here saw even less of the country. Only a very small number of Canadians, such as politicians, businessmen, entrepreneurs and travellers, acquired a deeper knowledge of their neighbours.

Colonial Office Policy and Reaction in Canada

Not the least of the impediments to the growth and development of mutual understanding and sympathy among Canadians was the official policy of the Colonial Office towards Canada at the outset of the Union. Quite simply, the basic premise which underlay the Union was punitive, particularly in regards to the French Canadians. It threatened their survival. However, they were not alone in their objections, for many English-speaking Canadians, with a variety of reasons, objected also.

Shortly after the opening of the first legislative session of the Union parliament in 1841, Lord Sydenham wrote to Lord John Russell, the Colonial Secretary, saying that the assemblymen coming from the two sections of the province knew so little about each other that they might just as well have been separated by the Atlantic ocean.² Perhaps that fact would simplify the achievement of the objectives of Sydenham and his superiors in London. Their purpose was clear and simple. In a confidential despatch sent by Sydenham to Russell in early March of 1840, the Governor General wrote that it was his aim

. . . to make the province essentially British for unless that be done it will be impossible to cultivate its natural resources, to improve

² RG7 G12 Vol. 57. Sydenham to Russell (Confidential) Kingston. June 26, 1841.

the conditions of its inhabitants, or to secure its permanent connexion with the mother country.³

He went on to explain that the task would not be easy for in French Canada the Roman Catholic clergy, while loyal to the British crown, dreaded the mixture of French and English speaking Canadians. The Governor General also claimed that French Canadian politicians hated anything British-- constitution, language and race.⁴ Not surprisingly, Lord John Russell held the same opinion as the governor. The Colonial Secretary was convinced that Canada must be bound to Britain in loyalty. One way of doing so would be by actively increasing the British population in the colony.⁵

Another way was by mixing French and English Canadians together. In official reports and correspondence between officials in the colony and the mother country, this mixture was frankly referred to as amalgamation. This policy entailed the assimilation of the French-speaking Canadians. The policy of amalgamation was no secret in Canada. It was discussed openly, mentioned in correspondence and petitions from the colonists, spoken of in the Canadian assembly and even considered in newspapers and periodicals. For example, the ultimate impact of the Union was discussed in June 1841, in an article which appeared in the Toronto Monthly Review,

³ Ibid., Vol. 54. Sydenham to Russell (Confidential) Montreal. March 9, 1840.

⁴ Ibid., March 9, 1840.

⁵ RG7 G1. Vol. 97. Russell to Sydenham. May 3, 1841.

a short-lived magazine. The new political union meant the end of the preservation of the French language in Canada. The author of the article did not find this to be objectionable, for he wondered why the French Canadians would want to maintain their language. After all, it made them foreigners in their own land. It was responsible for their inferiority to their English-speaking neighbours. In fact, the pre-eminent place of the British language was the Union's greatest positive aspect and would certainly be "a boon to French Canadians."⁶

Likewise, a number of inhabitants of the city of Toronto understood the goals of the Union. They objected only to the method. The choice of Kingston as the new capital of Canada had been one way of accelerating the desired fusion. However, Torontonians believed that an alternating capital between Quebec and their city would be a more effective means of bringing about the desired amalgamation. In an address sent to Lord Sydenham in August 1841, a group of citizens from Toronto claimed they were deeply grieved at the loss of their city's prominence as a capital. They understood that during discussions prior to the Union, only Quebec or Toronto were liable to be

⁶ Monthly Review, Vol. 1, No. 1. June 1841. A short lived political periodical edited by John Waudby and published in Toronto at the British Colonist. In 1841, the Literary Garland announced its commencement and demise. See the Literary Garland, Vol. 111, No. 2. February 1841 and Vol. 111, No. 8. July 1841.

chosen as the new capital. Kingston would never do. In their opinion, the most effective means of mixing the people of Canada, "gradually to assimilate their laws and customs, their hopes and interests," would be to alternate the capital between the two sections of the province.⁷ Clearly, the Torontonians were fully aware of the goals of the British government. They couched their arguments in terms of such objectives. They claimed that theirs would be a gentler means of bringing about the blending of Canadians.

The amalgamation policy of the colonial office was also mentioned in the legislature. Many English-speaking Canadians objected to the selection of Kingston as capital, but they couched their complaints in terms likely to win favour with the British government. For example, in 1841 a petition drawn up by the assembly was almost identical in wording to the earlier address from the citizens of Toronto. The assemblymen declared:

The great object of the Union is to amalgamate as soon as possible, into one people the population of both provinces; gradually but gently to assimilate their laws and customs, their hopes and interests.⁸

R. D. Jackson, the administrator of the province after the death of Lord Sydenham in September 1841, reported upon the discussion in the Canadian assembly. He believed that the

⁷ RG7 G20. No. 555. August 19/21 1841.

⁸ RG7 G12 Vol. 59. Jackson to Stanley, Kingston, September 28, 1841.

politicians who came from the larger and more important places in the colony were not so much concerned about melding people as they were about the loss of influence and prestige of their respective cities.⁹ However, in pursuing their own interests, both Torontonians and assemblymen from all over the province, acknowledged the official objective of the British government.

Amalgamation was another word for assimilation. It is not surprising that such a policy would be adopted. In 1838, Lord Durham had attributed the problems in Canada to racial hostility. If one side were to disappear, the problem would be solved. If the colonists understood the objectives of the British government, colonial officials pursued it with vigour.

Lord Sydenham laboured under prejudices similar to those of Lord Durham. His arbitrary methods in Lower Canada, as exemplified by his use of the powers of the Special Council and his series of ordinances, contrasted dramatically to his role as competent administrator and gentle and generous persuader in Upper Canada. The Governor General believed that treason and treasonable practices, in the clothes of a Canadian Frenchman, must be once and forever eradicated. Sydenham was convinced that only the consciousness of their own weakness and the very real power of the Executive in Lower Canada kept the French Canadians

⁹ Ibid., September 28, 1841.

in line.¹⁰ Until the proclamation of the Union, he governed the colony according to that mistaken insight. A cursory reading of the Union Act of 1841 clearly demonstrates that it would be a continuation, the official application of a policy pursued since the troubles of 1837.

Sydenham believed that putting the French Canadian members of the Assembly into an English-speaking milieu, like that of Kingston, would facilitate the spread of British sentiment and remove them from the nefarious influence of the host of lawyers, notaries and doctors who swarmed the countryside.¹¹ His successor, Sir Charles Bagot, agreed and hoped that meeting at Kingston would have the desired effect.¹²

The policy of assimilation would not lightly be put aside. For example, when Bagot began to favour moving the capital to Montreal, the response from the Colonial Secretary was extremely cautious.¹³ Acknowledging that Montreal would be acceptable as the capital, Lord Stanley also believed that no immediate action should be taken before the French and English became more fused and the effect of the Union of 1841

¹⁰ RG7 G12 Vol. 54. Sydenham to Russell, October 31, 1839.

¹¹ RG7 G12 Vol. 60. Sydenham to Russell, May 22, 1840.

¹² Ibid., Vol. 61. Bagot to Stanley, January 19, 1842.

¹³ Ibid., January 19, 1842.

more solidified.¹⁴ Needless to say, Stanley was deeply disturbed by Bagot's invitation to the French Canadians, in September 1842, to participate in the Executive Council. The Colonial Secretary's distress was clearly registered in his despatch to Bagot on November 1, 1842.¹⁵ In a secret and confidential despatch a few days later, Stanley acknowledged that the French Canadians had to be accepted into the Executive Council and that Bagot had realistically faced the problem, but in so doing it appeared that the Governor General was inviting men of "treasonable practices" into the government.¹⁶

Stanley took the same tact with Bagot's successor. When Sir Charles Metcalfe wrote to the Colonial Secretary expressing the opinion that the prohibitory language clause of the Union Act (Article 41) should be withdrawn, the response from London was categorical. In Stanley's opinion such a withdrawal would mean the abandonment of the policy of amalgamation to which the British government was committed. Stanley wrote:

The avowed purpose of the Enactment was to promote the amalgamation of the French and English Races. Its repeal therefore, would I think, be viewed in no other light, than as an abandonment of that purpose, and would I apprehend be so considered by the British

¹⁴ RG7 G1 Vol. 100. Stanley to Bagot, March 25, 1842.

¹⁵ Ibid., Vol. 103. Stanley to Bagot, November 1, 1842.

¹⁶ RG7 G3 Vol. 1(1). Stanley to Bagot, November 9, 1842.

population. Her Majesty's government are unfeignedly anxious to preserve all their rights and privileges to the French population of the Canadas; and to avoid any measure which may shock their prejudices, or abruptly violate their feelings of nationality; but they do not attempt to conceal their opinion that, so far as it can be accomplished consistently with these views, it is of great importance that Canada should gradually become an essentially British Province; and well knowing the effect which language must have upon such a result, they would under any circumstances, be unwilling to take a course which could be understood as affirming an opinion on their part that such an amalgamation could not be hoped for.¹⁷

The purpose of the Union of 1841 was clear and those who introduced it to the colony tried seriously to attain it.

Not surprisingly, French Canadians were opposed to the objective of the Union. It is conceivable that they might have been willing to work with their English-speaking colleagues within the new political structure offered them in 1841. What choice did they have? It is totally unimaginable that they would ever accept the principle upon which the Union was predicated. Never would they accept the ultimate fate of assimilation.

The reaction of Etienne Parent illustrates the critical situation which confronted French Canadians. Parent, a figure of great importance in French Canada, was editor of the Quebec City newspaper, Le Canadien. Thinker, lecturer and reformer, he gave a guarded and cautious acceptance to the possibility of the Union in late 1839. In

¹⁷ Ibid., Stanley to Metcalfe (Confidential), August 18, 1843.

his opinion, this union, like others suggested before it, represented a serious threat to the continued survival of French Canada.¹⁸ Sensitive to the dangers and fully aware of the intentions of the British government to assimilate his people, yet he realized it would be folly to resist. He seized upon the notion of responsible government and hoped that French Canadians' attachment to this constitutional principle would be the key to escape the threat which menaced them.¹⁹ Whatever acceptance French Canadians could give to the Union would be done so under duress. Parent believed that the new political structure overturned the traditional "arrangements sociaux" created by the Quebec Act in 1774, but no matter how odious, French Canadians were in no position to make suggestions or offer alternatives.²⁰ Union was the least of all evils, but far from acceptable.²¹

As the menace to French Canadian institutions became increasingly apparent, even Parent's cautious and grudging acceptance of the Union bill was withdrawn. By February 1840, having had time to see how Lord Sydenham operated and having followed the debates in the Upper Canadian assembly, the editor concluded that the Union, whatever it meant for English-speaking Canadians, had absolutely no saving graces

¹⁸ Le Canadien, lundi, 4 novembre 1839.

¹⁹ Ibid., mercredi, 23 octobre 1839.

²⁰ Ibid., lundi, 23 décembre 1839.

²¹ Ibid., lundi, 23 décembre 1839.

for French Canadians. It was full of disadvantages with no corresponding compensations.²² Parent's growing personal bitterness was illustrated by his nasty and mean comments upon the Governor General's health. The gout it seems, reported the editor of Le Canadien, affected the governor just at the moment when despatches arrived from England and there was work to be done.²³ His newspaper's cursory announcement of the death of Sydenham the anglifier, was mute but eloquent testimony of the attitude of Parent and other French Canadians.²⁴ So widespread was the hostility to Sydenham that his brother and biographer, G. Poulett Scrope, could find no death notice in the French Canadian press worthy of reprinting.²⁵ During his administration, Lord Sydenham came to believe that everything in French Canada was inferior and bad, its people, its soil, even its climate.²⁶ Understandably, French Canadians did not hold this governor in any higher esteem.

On the political hustings instead of on the editorial page, Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine offered views similar to those of Parent. LaFontaine was a young lawyer and

²² Ibid., lundi, 3 février 1840.

²³ Ibid., vendredi, 13 mai 1841.

²⁴ Ibid., mercredi, 22 septembre 1841.

²⁵ G. Poulett Scrope, Esq., Memoir of the Life of the Rt. Hon. Charles Lord Sydenham with a narrative of his administration in Canada. London, 1843.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 322.

politician, who would eventually lead the French Canadians in the Union Assembly and would ally himself with Robert Baldwin. Together they would achieve responsible government. In an address to the electors of Terrebonne county, LaFontaine made it clear that his participation in the Union did not mean acceptance of its goals. He believed it better to attempt to save the situation from within the system than from without. Most influential Lower Canadians disagreed with his position. Acceptance of the Union was politically hazardous and LaFontaine's early willingness to participate was as close as any of them came to it. He also pinned his hopes upon the eventual achievement of responsible government.²⁷ In proceeding as he did, LaFontaine, like Parent, was in no way accepting the basic principle of the Union.

That he would never accept the assimilation of French Canada is dramatically illustrated by LaFontaine's first speech in the Union assembly. He spoke in his own and the proscribed language. He was interrupted by John Henry Dunn of Toronto who said that since LaFontaine knew perfectly well how to speak English, there was no excuse for him to do so in French. LaFontaine replied that even if he knew English as well as French, he would speak in his own language as a protest to those parts of the Act of Union which so unjustly prohibited the language spoken by half the

²⁷ Le Canadien, lundi, 31 août 1840.

population of Canada.²⁸ If his own words were not enough, the opinions of his strongest newspaper ally, La Minerve of Montreal, would clearly indicate where the French Canadian politician stood. From the recommencement of its publication in the autumn of 1842, the newspaper would vilify the Union. How, it would ask, could such a parliament, created by violence, fraud, favouritism and corruption, demand any respect?²⁹

English-speaking Lower Canadians also objected to the new union. John Neilson, editor of the Quebec Gazette, railed against it. Neilson, old friend and ally to the cause of reform, argued consistently and continually that the Constitution of 1791 was the best for Canada and had it been properly applied, all Canadians would have lived happily together. Neilson was supported by eminent French Canadian politicians like Denis-Benjamin Viger and Augustin-Norbert Morin in an enthusiastic anti-Union movement in Quebec City. For Neilson the Union of 1841 was unjust and humiliating, its iniquity surpassed only by its absurdity. Like Parent and LaFontaine, the Quebec City editor realized that it was an outright and apparent effort to change the "laws, language, manner and usages" of one half of the Canadian population. He warned that such a

²⁸ Debates of the Legislative Assembly. Tuesday, September 13, 1842.

²⁹ La Minerve, mercredi, 14 septembre 1842.

system would not work. Never would the persecuted embrace the persecutor. The Union, he claimed, had been created upon false principles and conceived to do away with the "irreconcilable hatreds" of English and French speaking Canadians. Neilson denied the existence of such hatred. He denied that it had been the fundamental cause of the rebellions. In his opinion, there had been reasons and local causes enough to foment rebellion.³⁰ The idea of a basic hatred of races was too convenient a cause for past troubles, too facile an excuse for present problems.

In Upper Canada objections to the new Union were not so fundamental and widespread as they were in Lower. English-speaking Canadians harboured deep-seated prejudices towards their French-speaking counterparts. For that reason, they hesitated before the prospect of the Union. Such attitudes appeared even in Canada's purely apolitical and seemingly disinterested review, the Literary Garland, a monthly magazine which appeared throughout the 1840s. It suggested that English business methods and agricultural practices be introduced into Lower Canada as quickly as possible and that the English-speaking population be increased. Such changes would "greatly assist" what the Literary Garland bluntly and ingenuously called the policy

³⁰ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, August 26, 1840.

of anglicization.³¹ Negative sentiment towards French Canadians was clearly tangible in the years prior to the Union. However, English Canadians, unlike their French counterparts, were not to labour under a law which would prohibit their language, and stack the representational system against them. Whatever it meant, the new Union did not mean a change in the English way of life in Canada.

The consequences of the Union did not spell disaster for English-speaking Canadians. In fact, many in Upper Canada considered it to their advantage. Once certain conditions were accepted, opposition to the Union dissipated. The only problem that remained was one of taste. For many, close political and social ties with French Canadians were simply not to their liking. Unlike the French, the English Canadians could hardly claim their survival as a people was being menaced.

Indeed there were political objections in Upper Canada. Like the attitude of the Roman Catholic clergy in Lower Canada, the members of the influential group which had long governed in the upper colony feared the possible alliance of French and English reformers. They believed such an alliance would undermine their own position. Such political considerations, coupled with the more general cultural distaste, are exemplified by the arguments of John Beverly Robinson in his treatise Canada and the Canada

³¹ Literary Garland, Vol. 1, No. 3, February 1839.

Bill. The chief justice of Upper Canada and an important member of the ruling elite, Robinson made several points against the Union. He most feared co-operation between Upper and Lower Canadian reformers. He believed French Canadians to be treacherous, an inferior people with a different religion, who were outrightly hostile towards English-speaking Canadians. The possibility of such people allying with any group of Upper Canadian politicians was terrible to consider.³²

These views were seconded by those of Sir Francis Bond Head, hero of the Family Compact and formerly Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. He claimed that the Union was being forced upon the Upper Canadians and Lord Sydenham's arbitrary methods were the proof. Of Sydenham, Bond Head wrote:

With his blunderbuss in his hand, primed, loaded and cocked, Mr. Thomson did not deem it prudent to level directly at the head of any particular individual; he merely played with the trigger.³³

³² The Hon. John Beverly Robinson, Chief Justice of Upper Canada, Canada and the Canada Bill: being an examination of the proposed measure for the future government of Canada with an Introductory Chapter containing some general views respecting the British Provinces in North America. London: published by J. Hatchard and Son, 187; Picadilly, 1840, p. 122.

³³ Sir Francis Bond Head, Bart. An Address to the House of Lords against the Bill before Parliament for the Union of the Canadas and Disclosing the Means by which the consent of the legislature of the Upper Province has been obtained to the measure. London: John Murray, Albemarle St., 1840, p. 24.

Bond Head believed that Sydenham had used any and all means to twist and compel acceptance from Upper Canada and in so doing forced it, much against its will, to join four hundred and fifty thousand traitorous French Canadians, who were being prevented from further rebellion only by military force.³⁴ Like Bond Head, the Toronto Patriot, that city's Tory newspaper, claimed Upper Canadians had no choice but to acquiesce.³⁵ The Union was a very bad bargain and their only hope as true British subjects, was to accept reality, clutch tightly to their loyalty, and hope for the best.³⁶

The tone of the debates regarding the Union, which occurred in the Upper Canadian Assembly in early 1840, illustrates this unrealistic fear of French Canadian domination. The Toronto Examiner, the reform paper of that city then edited by Francis Hincks, regretted the stridency of the debates for they elicited a growing anti-Union sentiment in Lower Canada.³⁷ Fear fed upon fear. The Upper Canadian assemblymen eventually accepted the Union but only on certain conditions, all at the expense of the French Canadians. The conditions were that the capital remain in Upper Canada, that English be the only language of the

³⁴ Ibid., p. 37.

³⁵ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, September 5, 1840.

³⁶ Ibid., Friday, February 26, 1841.

³⁷ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, February 5, 1840.

legislature, that immigration from Great Britain be increased, and that property qualifications for members of the assembly be raised.³⁸

As though it were not enough that the British government frankly intended to make Canada "an essentially British province," the Upper Canadian assembly was going to make doubly sure. Created upon false principles and for nefarious ends, opposed by the great majority of French speaking Canadians and by the Tories of Upper Canada, dreaded and feared for its consequences by both, it is not surprising that the atmosphere for positive cultural interchange in Canada was unpromising.³⁹ The official policy of the Union was itself an important impediment to the development of sympathy and understanding among Canadians.

Mutual Perceptions

Given the difficult circumstances at the beginning of the Union, the question may well be asked how exactly did French and English Canadians perceive each other? How did they think about one another? Scant knowledge it seems, did

³⁸ Ibid., Wednesday, January 21, 1840.

³⁹ In his essay upon Victorian England, Portrait of An Age, 2nd ed. (London 1961), G. M. Young mentions atmosphere noting that it can be created by any number of causes, be they sentiments, perceptions, ideas, prejudices or beliefs, p. 1. While extremely difficult to assess and impossible to measure or gauge, the tone of life in any society must not be neglected. Certainly, the atmosphere generated by the whole conjuncture of causes at the outset of the new Union of Canada was not conducive to positive community.

not prevent slanted, ill-informed and incorrect ideas. Fortunately for the historian, an examination of how they looked at each other often tells as much about the observer as the observed. Did not the French Canadian admiration of the business prowess of the English reflect upon their own backwardness? Did not the English Canadian fear of French Canadian solidarity reflect upon their own weakness as a community?

Sensing themselves to be superior, English-speaking Canadians smugly believed the French to be backward and inferior. The French Canadians, it was claimed, were much less politically sophisticated. It would be perfectly absurd to discuss "civil liberty" with them for they did not know what it was.⁴⁰ The views of Sir Richard Bonnycastle, a military engineer, amateur historian and observer of the Canadian scene, illustrate some current opinions about the French Canadians. He noted that they were slow moving and generally unenthusiastic. Apart from a few doctors and lawyers, there was little energy among them. Bonnycastle's hopes for the future of Canada were placed upon continuing immigration from Great Britain. Soon the English speakers would outnumber the French and the success of the colony would be assured.⁴¹ The streets

⁴⁰ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, September 15, 1840.

⁴¹ Sir Richard Bonnycastle, Canada and the Canadians in 1846, 2 vols., London, 1846, Vol. 1, p. 74.

of Montreal were described by Bonnycastle in the following manner:

In this city (Montreal), one is amused by seeing the never-changing lineaments, the long queue, the bonnet-rouge and the incessant garrulity of Jean Baptiste, mingling with the sober demeanour, the equally unchanging feature, and the national plaid of the highlander; whilst the untutored sons of labour, from the green isle of the ocean, are here as thoughtless, as ragged and as numerous as at Quebec. Amongst all these, the shrewd and calculating citizen from the neighbouring republic drives his hard bargains with all his wonted zeal and industry, amid the fumes of Jamaica and gin sling.⁴²

But the colour applied only to the streets and not to the counting houses.⁴³ There reigned another race, unbonneted and little given to loquaciousness.

The sense of superiority was also illustrated by a letter which appeared in the Quebec Gazette in late 1838. "W," the young letter writer waxed eloquent upon the future possibilities of Canada. It had been madness for the Canadians to rebel against the British government, in "W's" opinion, the best that existed anywhere. Now the French and English in Canada would have to be fused together. Were not the Saxons and the Normans amalgamated? So, too, such a melding of English and French-speaking Canadians would result in one great and undivided people.

The possibilities were positively lyrical. "W" wrote:

⁴² Sir Richard Bonnycastle, The Canadas in 1841, 2 vols., London, 1841. Vol. 1, pp. 76-77.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 77.

. . . suppose for instance, the gallant, gay, generous Irishman; the steady, stayed, prudent, unflinching Scot; the honest, liberal, brave, Englishman united to the gay, lively, buoyant, and graceful Canadian, not only physically but personally, what a splendid race. The ruddy, healthy muscular frame of the British amalgamated with the glowing sparkling black eyes, the raven locks, the suavity and politeness of the Canadian brunette.⁴⁴

"W" was quick to note that he did not intend French Canadian men to take British wives. Such an idea was beyond consideration since everyone knew that the men were treacherous. Beautiful French Canadian women would be the means of assimilation. Once that was achieved, the potential for Canadian development was limitless. The country would become a truly great northern empire. With its wonderful and varied climate, its rich natural resources and its already existent system of inland waterways, all that was needed now was a fusion of dynamic British manhood with French Canadian womanhood.⁴⁵

However preposterous or quaint the idea of "W," John Neilson, the editor of the Quebec Gazette, was not charmed by the letter, nor moved by the greatness that amalgamation promised. He was particularly disturbed by the suggestion of a great Canadian empire. Canada already belonged to that of the British, the most wonderful in the world. Why dream about future and improbable empires, when

⁴⁴ Quebec Gazette, Friday, December 28, 1838.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Friday, December 28, 1838.

the colony was already attached to one greater than it could ever become?⁴⁶ Neilson seized upon the letter to take up his theme that British forms of government in Canada were the best. What was needed was to let them function as they should. More importantly, Neilson rejected completely differences in race, irreconcilable hatred and fundamental hostility. Apart from a few Indians and Blacks, there was only one race in Canada. Canadians had different religions and languages but they were essentially the same.⁴⁷

English-speaking Canadians' sense of superiority was also illustrated by their attitudes towards the French language in Canada. The attitude can only be described as patronizing. There was no hostility to the French language as such. English Canadians were concerned with the backwardness and isolation which resulted from its continued use. One English Canadian author put it succinctly when he wrote that he hoped French Canadians and their language would never disappear. And yet as long as they maintained their old ways and language they would remain hopelessly backward and they would never improve.⁴⁸

Assimilation, for English Canadians, was really a favour to the French Canadians which would free them from their

⁴⁶ Ibid., Friday, December 28, 1838.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Friday, December 28, 1838.

⁴⁸ Major John Richardson, Eight Years in Canada, Montreal: published by H. H. Cunningham, 1847, p. 102.

inferior position and bring them into the mainstream of the nineteenth century.

This same sort of patronizing attitude is discernible in English Canadians' attitude towards the Catholicism of the French. During the 1840s, there was surprisingly little religious friction, at least between French-speaking Catholics and English-speaking Protestants. Efforts to convert the French to protestantism were as rare as they were ineffective. Conversion away from Rome was seen as another service to French Canadians, freeing them from the bondage and superstition of a religion which doomed them to an inferior position.⁴⁹ Infrequent as the attempts were, the willingness to convert the French was a kindly and paternalistic exercise of the English-speaking Canadians, born of their basic sense of superiority.

However, those subjected to these kindly efforts did not appreciate them. They resisted such a fate. And yet French Canadians considered themselves inferior to the English in certain ways and recognized the virtues of dynamism and business prowess which they themselves lacked. Many French Canadians believed it essential to learn English, not for the language itself or for any of its inherent cultural values, but as a means to become more competitive and to enter into the realms of commerce.

⁴⁹ Eighth Annual Report of the French Canadian Missionary Society, Montreal, 1847, p. 8.

At the beginning of the Union all sorts of efforts were made to expand English. For example, in 1839, Etienne Parent complimented the Seminary of Quebec for its progress in the instruction of the language. English was indispensable for French Canadians if they were to protect themselves and preserve their culture.⁵⁰ During the 1840s, a number of colleges in Lower Canada introduced English courses and Parent continued to editorialize and to encourage such efforts. For all practical purposes, modernization of their curriculum meant the introduction of English. In some colleges, whole new English sections were begun. For example, the Collège Ste. Anne at LaPocatière announced in 1840 that its curriculum was to be more practically oriented⁵¹ and that English and Industrial education would be introduced.⁵² The Governor General, Lord Sydenham, donated \$50 to the new English wing.⁵³ Construction began in June 1841⁵⁴ and the new courses started in the autumn of 1842.⁵⁵ Other schools, among them, le Collège de Chambly,⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Le Canadien, mercredi, 12 août 1839.

⁵¹ Gazette de Québec, samedi, 22 août 1840.

⁵² Le Canadien, vendredi, 21 août 1840.

⁵³ Quebec Gazette, Friday, November 6, 1840.

⁵⁴ Le Canadien, vendredi, 18 juin 1841.

⁵⁵ Quebec Gazette, Friday, September 23, 1842.

⁵⁶ Le Canadien, vendredi, 17 juillet 1840.

le séminaire de Nicolet⁵⁷ and le collège de l'Assomption⁵⁸ also announced plans to introduce English courses. The importance of English instruction was illustrated by Nicolet's new fee schedule. The English course cost £ 20 per session while the classical course was reduced to £16.⁵⁹

Editors and letter writers urged on these developments. In the autumn of 1840, in a letter of nearly three and a half columns, published in the Gazette de Quebec and signed "un Canadien," the author discussed the real and present dangers with which the new political situation confronted French Canadians. He was pleased that the different colleges were introducing new courses and he stressed how important it was that practical education be introduced into French Canada. He believed French Canadians must be educated to the same level of resourcefulness and industry as the English. He betrayed no sentiment of positive appreciation of a foreign culture. French Canadians were inferior to their English Canadian counterparts and must educate themselves to equality or disappear.⁶⁰

The danger of the expansion of the English language in Lower Canada was apparent to many French Canadians. Their desire to learn it was not born of any love for the English

⁵⁷ Ibid., lundi, 31 août 1840.

⁵⁸ Gazette de Québec (between 8 & 19 Sept.), 1840.

⁵⁹ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, September 30, 1840.

⁶⁰ Gazette de Québec, samedi, 10 Octobre 1840.

or their ways. For example, as the years passed, one Quebec City newspaper would disgustedly note a phenomenon which it denominated as "anglomanie." It complained that so many of the signs of the different stores and merchants of Quebec were in English that the Frenchness of the city was hardly noticeable. It mocked the current and quite fashionable manner in which the French Canadian ladies spiced their conversations with such English exclamations as "Dear me," "O Lord" and "Good gracious," and it detested their seeking out of English male company.⁶¹

Shortly after the official proclamation of the Union in February 1841, a letter to Le Canadien signed "F.X.G.," presumably Francois Xavier Garneau, declared that with the reunion of the two Canadas, the political program for the abolition of the French language had begun in earnest.⁶² The French Canadians were well aware of their threatened position. As Napoleon Aubin, editor of the satiric newspaper, Le Fantasque, somewhat facetiously but truly put it:

Nous aimons nos chers frères d'en haut et ils nous aiment tant qu'ils voudraient nous manger.⁶³

⁶¹ Le Fantasque, samedi, 18 novembre 1848. See also J. M. S. Careless, The Union of the Canadas: The Growth of Canadian Institutions (Toronto, 1967). The author estimates the English-speaking population of Quebec City to be more than one third, p. 24.

⁶² Le Canadien, lundi, 22 février 1841.

⁶³ Quoted in the Gazette de Québec, mardi, 25 janvier 1842.

Liked us so much they could eat us! In order to avoid being consumed by the wolf, French Canadians would have to learn the ways of the English and their language. The remarks upon education of one Montreal newspaper, La Minerve, illustrate the French Canadian sense of their own backwardness and the imperative need to alter the situation. The newspaper believed that education eradicated ignorance and prejudice and that it created moral and useful citizens. Moreover, the still traditional education offered in several colleges in French Canada was worthless. Unless the curriculum changed, they would remain totally unfit to educate the new commercial and industrial classes which were so necessary for the future preservation of French Canada.⁶⁴

Clearly, the improvements had to be made and French Canadians acknowledged frankly that in certain areas they were inferior to the English. Some suggested extreme solutions. For example, had the desires of Charles Mondelet been fulfilled, the results would have been at the expense of French Canada and its language. In a series of letters published in 1840, Mondelet outlined a system of elementary education which he hoped would do away with "odious national distinctions" and induce "a better state of feeling" in Canada.⁶⁵ He believed that both French and English schools should be constructed in each locality and that eventually

⁶⁴ La Minerve, jeudi, 13 octobre 1842.

⁶⁵ Charles Mondelet, Lettres sur l'Education Élémentaire et Pratique. Montréal: Imprimées par John James and Williams, 1841, p. 9.

the French would go to the English schools and the English to the French. Such developments would mean that mistrust and hostility would give way to mutual trust. However optimistic, the price of Mondelet's scheme was high and he himself admitted that with such a system, English would eventually become the universal language in Canada. Naturally, once everyone knew how to speak the one language, national distinctions would disappear. Mondelet could only hope in a vague way that somehow French could be preserved.⁶⁶

French Canadians' desire to learn English and to improve was due to their own sense of inferiority. They were astonished at the ways of the English, particularly in business and commerce. Several examples of this attitude can be found. For example, Léon Ducharme, exiled to Australia in 1838 for his participation in the rebellions, wrote recollections of his experiences and the days spent there. The incredible ways of the English were illustrated in his amazed and astonished description of the city of London, the capital of the world of commerce and finance through which he passed on his way back to Canada.⁶⁷

Another example of this wide-eyed admiration is found in a rather unlikely source, a work upon elementary education. In his book on primary-level instruction, the author,

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

⁶⁷ Léon Ducharme, Journal d'un exilé politique aux Terres Australes. Montréal: imprimé par M. F. Cinq-Mars, 1845, p. 90.

Amable Berthelot, suggested that English be taught to French Canadians for very apparent reasons.

J'aurais voulu démontrer que sous le point de vue des intérêts pécuniaires, les anglais ont sur nous un avantage qui résulte de ce que leur langue est beaucoup plus facile que la nôtre, et aussi de ce que leur éducation tend plus vers le positif et l'utilité pratique que la nôtre.⁶⁸

The study of Latin, Greek, History and other such subjects tended, in Berthelot's opinion, to create a quieter and more reflective society than that of the English.⁶⁹

Even the thoughts of so sophisticated an observer as Etienne Parent illustrated the French Canadian admiration of English virtues. In a series of lectures, delivered to l'Institut Canadien during the winter of 1846, he would complain that French Canadians were still reading too many novels and that the continued movement of French Canadian youth towards the liberal professions was absolutely shocking. He would declare that Anglo-Saxon industriousness and energy were not to be envied, rather they should be acknowledged and emulated.⁷⁰ He would warn that if the movement towards the professions remained apace, French Canadian society,

⁶⁸ Amable Berthelot, Dissertation sur l'Instruction Primaire (lue à la Société de Discussion de Québec), 12 mai 1845, Québec: Imprimée par Augustin Côté et Cie, 1845, p. 9.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁰ Lecture prononcé par Etienne Parent devant l'Institut Canadien, jeudi, 19 novembre 1846. Montréal: Imprimerie de la Revue Canadienne, 1846, pp. 16-17.

its political and national existence would be correspondingly weakened and menaced.⁷¹ Clearly, salvation was not in maintaining differences, not in being unable to communicate with the antagonist, rather it lay in becoming better than the enemy, in leaving behind backwardness and inferiority, and in becoming more dynamic and energetic. No love, no appreciation of a foreign culture, simply the voice of necessity dictated such an approach. This attitude is perfectly illustrated by a newspaper dispute in 1843. La Minerve took issue with the Montreal Gazette, arguing that the fusion of the races was not inevitable. The French journal denied that the French Canadians would ultimately lose out to the English. Perhaps the Anglo-Saxon race in Canada was more active and did better business, but for La Minerve such superiority was neither intrinsic nor innate. It was attributable to a more banal reality. The English had better connections with the mother country.⁷² Clearly, French Canadians, despite their sense of inferiority, believed they could improve.

Much less apparent was the English-speaking Canadians' sense of inferiority. Unlike the French, English Canadians had a far less developed sense of identity and unity. Of course, during this period there were few attempts to learn French. There was no question as to the superiority of their

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁷² La Minerve, jeudi, 4 avril 1843.

language. As the Toronto Patriot assuredly put it:

As rapidly as civilization advances does the language of the Anglo-Saxon spread throughout the earth.⁷³

English was bound to predominate for as everyone knew it was the language of the economically and commercially dynamic.⁷⁴

Most English-speaking Canadians belonged somewhere else. As inhabitants of North America, they could say little for themselves of their country. For many, it was British laws, the British connection, and the very use of the English language which gave them the meagre sense of identity they had. Compared to the French Canadians, they were a group of very divided people calling some other country, home. Notions of Canada and Canadians were things for the very distant future. In Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada, Anna Jameson described that sense.

Canada is a colony, not a country; it is not yet identified with the dearest affections and associations, remembrances and hopes of its inhabitants: it is to them an adopted not a real mother.⁷⁵

⁷³ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, April 27, 1841.

⁷⁴ Ibid., Tuesday, April 27, 1841.

⁷⁵ Quoted by G. M. Craig, ed., Early Travellers in the Canadas, 1791-1867, Toronto 1955, p. 123. See also Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 8, August 1844. The sense of displacement and alienation of those newly arrived in Canada is illustrated in a poem entitled "The Emigrant: written on seeing an engraving of an emigrant family resting at noon in the depths of the western forest." While no literary masterpiece, it did poignantly describe the attitudes of immigrants towards their new home. In the words of the poet:

Wearied they are and worn with journeying
Through these pathless wilds;--sad too their hearts
With thronging thoughts of home--that pleasant home
Which they have left for aye--left in its beauty
For the vallies [sic] wide of the Far West.

Such views were seconded by one Governor General, Sir Charles Metcalfe. Reporting confidentially upon the condition of the colony, he concluded that Canadians were not very sophisticated or advanced. There were few subjects in the colony who merited a knighthood. Apart from the clergy, a few judges, lawyers and government officials, the only important part of educated society was the merchants. And according to the Governor, these last all wanted to get rich and retire to England.⁷⁶

The political climate in the colony illustrates this sense of inferiority. Much of the opposition to a more independent approach in the colony, to ideas like responsible government and to reformers like LaFontaine and Baldwin arose from a sense of impropriety, that colonies should not be so forward as to contradict the wisdom of the mother country. Many feared the situation in Canada had gone too far. Describing the colony in 1843, one such colonist, John Langton, looked back to the times when governors were respected and colonial politicians subservient to the authority of Her Majesty's representative. Langton expressed the fear that if colonial politicians commanded the governor, soon Canada would be an independent country.⁷⁷

The particular sense of English Canadian inferiority

⁷⁶ RG7 G3, Vol. 1(2), Metcalfe to Stanley (Confidential), n.d.

⁷⁷ Quoted in M. H. Langton, A Gentlewoman in Upper Canada: The Journals of Anne Langton, Toronto 1964. John Langton to William Langton, December 1843.

is well and often illustrated by several editorial comments which appeared from time to time in the Literary Garland. The magazine, which first appeared in December 1838 and lasted until the end of 1851, never ceased to be astounded that it actually succeeded to appear. Its first edition contained several remarks upon the state and condition of the colony. Its editors considered Canada to be in its infancy, politically, economically and socially, and even more so, literarily. They were keenly aware that many Canadians believed that such a magazine was doomed to failure because the poverty of Canadian literature and folklore could never sustain such a production.⁷⁸ At the completion of the first year of publication, the editors of the Garland were ecstatic and in their year-end review, delighted in putting the doubters in their place. Despite the fact that many believed in Canada "to attempt the publication of aught else than political journals was akin to madness," the Garland had demonstrated that there existed a readership for its type of production.⁷⁹ But the battle was not won and those who created the magazine were always aware of the unsophisticated state of the colony. Even reflections upon patriotism illustrate the sense of inferiority. The Garland believed that "the love of country is one of the most godlike sentiments which elevate and enoble the human heart

⁷⁸ Literary Garland, Vol. I, No. 1, December 1838.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Vol. II, NO. 1, December 1839.

. . ." But in Canada such sentiments were for the future since everybody came from somewhere else.⁸⁰ The success of the magazine, however, never lessened its editors' conviction that Canada was in its infancy.⁸¹

Another example of this sense of immaturity and lack of sophistication is provided by the observations of Major John Richardson. Soldier, novelist, editor, gadfly and by his own somewhat inflated estimation, "the only author this country has produced,"⁸² Richardson complained that Canada did not pay enough attention to its writers, primarily because most Canadians did not read. In what clearly sounds like a fit of pique, Richardson wrote in his book, Eight Years in Canada:

As this is the last time I shall ever allude to the humiliating subject, I cannot deny myself the gratification of the expression of a hope, that should a more refined and cultivated taste ever be introduced into the matter-of-fact country in which I have derived my being, its people will decline to do me the honour of placing my name in the list of their "Authors." I certainly have no particular ambition to rank among their future "men of genius" or to share in any posthumous honour they may be disposed to confer upon them.⁸³

Wounded by a lack of popular acknowledgement, the author felt like the prophet unhonoured in his own land.

⁸⁰ Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 12, December 1846.

⁸¹ Ibid., Vol. I, No. 5, April 1839.

⁸² RG7 G20, Vol. 4, July 20, 1841.

⁸³ Major John Richardson, op. cit., p. 95.

His wish to be spared from belated fame has been fulfilled. Whether this was due to the lack of literary refinement in the colony or to Richardson's talent is another question. He constantly pestered for official support, but was never satisfied. Indeed he believed himself hard done by and finally despaired of success in Canada.⁸⁴

Those colonial governors who did not support his efforts were subjected to the author's inky lance. He delighted in recounting to his supposedly circumscribed readership the weakness and peccadilloes of the governors, of Durham's arrogance and Sydenham's sensualism. Richardson believed that Durham exaggerated the pursuit of his personal comfort. When on one occasion the Governor General visited Kingston he had his hotel cleared of cigar smokers except of course for the obtuse ". . . Father of

⁸⁴ For example, in 1841, Richardson petitioned twice for a pension. First he claimed to be the only author in the colony, alone in his attempts to instill a literary spirit into the country. As proof he referred to his two historical novels Wacousta and The Canadian Brothers. To strengthen his case he also mentioned his military service during the War of 1812, not forgetting to mention that his brother died in service. With no results, he took another tack, informing the governor that he had started a periodical the New Era in Brockville. Although he claimed it was purely literary, he said it supported the present administration, thereby hoping to strengthen his request for official assistance. See RG7 G20 Vol. 4, July 21, 1841. In 1842, Richardson petitioned again, this time referring to his new History of the War of 1812. Again he mentioned the great literary service he provided the colony and asked that the book be distributed in the schools of the province. RG7 G20 Vols. 16 & 17, September 21, 1842. This time his prayers were answered and he received \$250 to assist in its publication. RG1 E2, October 14, 1842.

smokers, as he reputedly is of the Canadian press, the Hon. John Neilson."⁸⁵ Richardson enthusiastically recounted Sydenham's womanizing at Aylwington House and across the province. It was well known, the author reported, that the governor kept a mistress at home and energetically pursued Canadian beauty, whether the lady be married or not, English or French, in Kingston, Montreal or Toronto. Of course such pursuits wasted Sydenham's energy, fed his gout and finally rendered him incapable of recovering from his fateful fall.⁸⁶

Whether it be one writer's despair, one colonist's sense of impropriety, or the truly unsophisticated situation of the colony, English Canadians did share a sense of inferiority, although this seems not to have been detected by French-speaking Canadians. Compared to themselves who were a hodge podge of Irish, Scots and English, the French Canadians seemed very unified. Perhaps this sense of inadequacy explains the opposition of English-speaking Canadians to the new Union and their fear of the French. Perhaps their weakness explains the strenuous objections and numerous conditions. Here then is an explanation of John Beverly Robinson's pleas for more British immigrants to overwhelm the French Canadians. Clearly Robinson argued from weakness when he wrote.

⁸⁵ Major John Richardson, op. cit., p. 42.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 186.

Some thousands of industrious and loyal emigrants, from Ireland and from the Highlands of Scotland, would check such absurd ideas of nationality as effectively as a military force; and humanity and sound policy seem to invite loudly to the measure.⁸⁷

Such fear of the French Canadians is understandable, for they did indeed have their strengths. If they acknowledged virtues of other Canadians and made efforts to learn English, they neither abandoned nor became disinterested in their own language. In fact, they defended French more vigourously than ever. Concern for the quality and correctness of the French spoken in Canada increased. The interest was dramatically illustrated by LaFontaine's first intervention in the Canadian parliament. Etienne Parent, as member of the assembly for Saguenay, sponsored an Act passed by the first session of the Union parliament which provided for the translation of laws into French.⁸⁸ It is in reflecting upon the attitude towards their own language, that one discovers French Canadians harbored no sense of inadequacy or inferiority compared to others.

They realized they must learn English but that did not mean forgetting French. Their language was a superior one and that conviction is illustrated over and over. One example is provided by the editorial remarks made by

⁸⁷ The Hon. John Beverly Robinson, op. cit., p. 27.

⁸⁸ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, September 1, 1841.
See also Statutes of Canada, 4 & 5 Victoria, Cap. 51.

La Minerve in the spring of 1843. The Montreal newspaper claimed that French could not be compared to the Scots and Irish languages, in its opinion "idiomes barbares" which were rightly being abandoned for a more beautiful language, English. What was to be done? The answer was simple. Rather than attempt to overwhelm the other, the two national communities, the French and English speaking, should profit from each other's richness.⁸⁹ Such ideas were objected to by the Irish Montreal Times which jumped to the defence of Gaelic. This language was not barbarian. Moreover the Times considered such remarks insulting, for it claimed that Gaelic was still spoken by seventy-five per cent of the Irish in Canada.⁹⁰

Insulting or not, such opinions demonstrate that French Canadians did not consider themselves linguistically inferior to the English, much less to the Scots or Irish. When La Revue Canadienne, a short-lived literary newspaper, appeared in 1845, further examples of this attitude can be demonstrated. Its editor, Louis O. LeTourneux would write in the first edition that all Canadians could live together happily and peacefully. Hostility and national rivalry could be set aside. The means, readily stated but not so easily accomplished, was for each section to guard and cherish its own language and customs, while at the same

⁸⁹ Le Minerve, jeudi, 27 avril, 1843.

⁹⁰ Ibid., lundi, 1 mai, 1843.

time respecting those of the other.⁹¹ Similar sentiments would also be expressed in a speech upon elementary education delivered by Augustin-Norbert Morin to l'Institut Canadien in 1845. Morin, member of the assembly for Quebec City, important reformer and future premier, placed English and French upon an equal standing.

Dans un pays comme celui-ci, où deux langues sont d'une égale nécessité, les enfants pourront avec avantage fréquenter une école mixte, surtout pour habituer leurs organes aux sons particuliers de la langue qui leur est la moine familière.⁹²

When it came to language, French Canadians would never betray a sense of inferiority. Never would they accept the future outlined for them in the columns of the Toronto Patriot which wrote:

The sonorous tongue of the Spaniard of Florida has been lost in the busy hum of the active American; the voice of the French colonist has yielded in Louisiana, to the same progressing "dialect"; and the patois of the Lower Canadian habitant will as certainly become as rare and useless in legislative proceedings, as the half forgotten gutturals of the Huron & the Pottawatamie.⁹³

The Union Act itself represented a serious legal threat to the French language. The enthusiasm and vigor which the French Canadians demonstrated in protecting it at the beginning of this period was no coincidence. In the

⁹¹ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 4 janvier 1845.

⁹² La Minerve, jeudi, 1 janvier 1846.

⁹³ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, April 27, 1841.

first years of the Union, their language was argued about, reflected upon, discussed and dissected. Several new grammars were published. Even English sources remarked upon these developments. Twice, once in September 1841 and again in June 1842, the Literary Garland noted the publication of J. B. Meilleur's A Treatise on the Pronunciation of the French Language. The magazine found it to be a very worthwhile book. claiming it would help those who desired to learn "the elegant language of which it treats,"⁹⁴ and praising it as a competent study of the French language "which in this country is not only desirable but necessary."⁹⁵

Not only did discussions of their language and the appearance of new grammars illustrate French Canadians' concern to protect their language, they also demonstrated care for the quality of their speech in Canada. For example, in 1841, Le Canadien welcomed the publication of Le Manuel des difficultés de la langue française adapté au jeune age et suivi d'un Recueil de Locutions vicieuses. The author of Le Manuel discussed the anglicisms that were creeping into French in Canada, as well as neologisms which did not seem to be in keeping with the language spoken elsewhere.⁹⁶ In the mid-nineteenth century, when French

⁹⁴ Literary Garland, Vol. III, No. 19, September 1841.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 7, June 1842.

⁹⁶ Le Canadien, mercredi, 3 novembre 1841.

Canadians discussed their language, they often referred to pronunciation and usage in France.⁹⁷

The appearance of Le Manuel caused quite a little tempest in an inkpot. Etienne Parent, editor of Le Canadien, praised the book, while he did not agree totally with the contents. Parent was happy to see such a study because he realized that even in the highest echelons of French Canadian society, the quality of the language was deteriorating. The bar, the bench and the press were not exempt. Convinced that French was a superior language, Parent worried about its condition in Canada. In the critique of Le Manuel, he wrote:

L'auteur fait main basse sur ces locutions barbares, grossières, ridicules, absurdes, qui défigurent la plus polie comme la plus pure des langues modernes. Nous ne parlerons pas des locutions en usage parmi les classes illettrées mais de celles que l'on entend tous les jours dans la bonne société.⁹⁸

The purest, the most polite of languages, was being corrupted. French Canadians were using "office" rather than "bureau," "des argents," instead of "de l'argent" because of the English word monies. What could be more hideous to the sensitive ear than to hear of someone going to buy some "crackers chez le Groceur ou à la Grossery."⁹⁹ While Parent

⁹⁷ G. Tougas, "Quelques aspects peu étudiés du français canadien" dans la Revue de l'Association Canadienne de linguistique, Vol. 2, No. 2, octobre 1956, p. 60.

⁹⁸ Le Canadien, mercredi, 3 novembre 1841.

⁹⁹ Ibid., mercredi, 3 novembre 1841.

agreed with the author of Le Manuel about the most apparent misusages, he did not go to the extremes of Le Manuel which rejected use of such words as "patate," "poudrerie," "trainne" and others. Parent noted that some of these words were used in France and that others had a perfectly acceptable Canadian context and connotation.¹⁰⁰

From April until July 1842, there appeared in the Gazette du Québec a series of articles, entitled Questions Grammaticales, which attacked point by point the theories expounded by the author of Le Manuel. The first shots of the grammatical dispute were fired in a letter to the editor of Le Canadien, on April 13, 1842. The correspondent who signed himself "ABC" remarked that Parent in an earlier description of the Literary Exercises at the Ursuline Convent in Quebec neglected to mention the rather affected pronunciation of the diphthong "oi." The young ladies of the convent, in their presentation of the tragedy, "Esther," pronounced "moi" and "toi" as "moa" and "toa" rather than in the accustomed Canadian manner of "moé" and "toé."¹⁰¹ "ABC" did not elicit a sympathetic response from the editor of Le Canadien who wrote:

Ces vices de notre prononciation sont si patents, que l'on reconnait partout un Canadien. C'est là ce nous semble une distinction qui n'est pas à envier

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., mercredi, 3 novembre 1841.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., samedi, 13 avril 1842.

puisqu'elle dénote une mauvaise education: . . .¹⁰²

It is not surprising that the students at the Ursuline convent were in the eye of the storm for correct pronunciation, since their chaplain, l'abbé Thomas Maguire, was the author of Le Manuel.¹⁰³ Maguire had long been interested in education and similar matters having been the director of the Collège de Ste. Hyacinthe. "ABC" and the author of the series of unsigned articles attacking Le Manuel, was l'abbé Jerome Demers, himself an educator, director of the petit Séminaire du Québec.¹⁰⁴ Back and forth they wrote, the one attacking, the other defending. They discussed detailed grammatical problems, whether the article or the proposition ought to be placed before such names as Trois Pistoles or Trois Rivieres.¹⁰⁵ Should it be "aux Trois Rivieres," rather than "à Trois Rivieres"? Should it be "Les Trois Pistoles," rather than the simple "Trois Pistoles" which had come into popular usage? Demers took particular umbrage at Maguire's pronunciation of "oi." He claimed that the Canadian pronunciation "oé" was quite acceptable and was even heard in the streets of Paris.¹⁰⁶ Naturally,

¹⁰² Ibid., samedi, 13 avril 1842.

¹⁰³ N. E. Dionne, Une Dispute Grammaticale en 1842
Le G. V. Demers vs. le V.-G. Maguire. Galérie Historique
VII. Québec: Typ. Laflamme et Proulx, 1912, p. 92.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰⁵ Gazette de Quebec, samedi, 21 mai 1842.

¹⁰⁶ Dionne, op. cit., p. 8.

neologisms and Canadian usages were discussed.¹⁰⁷

This dispute was only one of a number of examples of French Canadian concern for the quality of their language. Still another grammar appeared in 1842 which was reviewed by "F.X.G." in Le Canadien. The Essai de Grammaire Française suivant les principes de l'Abbé Girard was written by Amable Berthelot, member of the assembly for Kamouraska and father-in-law of Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine. "F.X.G." while praising the author's energy, found the book a bit complicated and too advanced to be used in elementary schools.¹⁰⁸ In the same year, the appointment of Dr. Jean-Baptiste Meilleur, as assistant superintendent of Education for Canada East, must have been a great comfort to French Canadians.¹⁰⁹ Meilleur, a medical doctor, had been professor of French at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, author of a chemistry textbook and an English grammar for French-speaking children, in addition to his work upon the pronunciation of French.¹¹⁰ In the following year, Le Canadien would announce the publication of still another book entitled A Theoretical and Practical Grammar of the French Language by M. de Levignac. Not only would they protect and preserve their language, they would teach it to others. The newspaper noted that this book

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰⁸ Le Canadien, vendredi, 3 juin 1842.

¹⁰⁹ Gazette de Québec, mardi, 17 mai 1842.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., samedi, 21 mai 1842.

would be very welcome for every Englishman in the city of Quebec would surely want to learn French.¹¹¹ Indeed, French Canadians were proud of their language, cherished it and wished it to be spread. Politicians defended it, writers produced grammars, and there was always time to discuss it, even the most picayune of points.

The very quantity of discussion and concern about their language illustrates the strength of the French Canadians. Despite the formal proscription of the language in the Act of Union, the situation was not entirely black. The whole community spoke the language and many of its leaders were keen to protect and improve it. The prophecy of the Toronto Patriot would not be fulfilled.

What can be concluded about the mutual perceptions of Canadians? Often the French saw their English-speaking counterparts as more dynamic and energetic, superior to themselves in the realm of business and commerce. Acknowledging the inadequacy, many suggested the acquisition of the means, particularly the English language, which would enable them to compete with the superior English. Incidentally, such a competitive position would also enable them to preserve their own culture. While French-speaking Canadians were aware of their weaknesses, they did not consider themselves linguistically inferior. Examination of their attitudes regarding their language illustrates strength.

¹¹¹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 7 juin 1843.

For their part, many English-speaking Canadians considered themselves superior. The conviction that the French were backward and slow moving only enhanced that sentiment. Kindly if patronizingly, some were even willing to convert the French to their ways. On the other hand, the sources illustrate that English Canadians also sensed a certain collective inferiority. The unsophisticated and backward condition of the colony and their sentiment that home was somewhere else, illustrate that attitude. Their sense of inadequacy was unconscious and unacknowledged but perhaps it explains their very real fear of the French Canadians, who unlike themselves seemed unified, homogeneous and attached to the country in which they lived.

Two parallel themes are discernible in the mutual perceptions of English and French speaking Canadians, one a sense of inferiority and the other superiority. This duality of perception explains much of the seemingly complicated developments of the years of the Union. Inferiority elicited a reaction of mistrust, fear and hostility, while superiority resulted in generosity and openness, however patronizing it might have been. During the first decade of the Union, as a result of their shared experience, Canadians would continue to harbour both negative and positive ideas about each other. Never is this duality, this contradiction, so totally apparent as at the beginning of the Union.

An Episode of Mistrust: An Occasion for Cooperation

The climate in Canada just before the Union was generally negative. The difficult days of the rebellions and the Durham inquiry, gave way to the cavalier methods of Sydenham. Passions were intense and fears alive at the terrible prospect of being thrown together. Despite the fact that they were being quite arbitrarily saddled with a new constitution and despite their mutual fears, there was some attempt among Canadians to come together in friendship and understanding. The dawn of the Union would provide examples of mistrust and opportunities for co-operation. Two completely disparate and distinct events, one the sinking of a steamship in the spring of 1839, the other the arrival in the winter of 1840 of a prophet of the nineteenth-century values of progress and knowledge, illustrate two main themes which dominated the press during the period. While fearful and mistrustful of each other, Canadians, whether French or English speaking, could not be indefinitely sustained by such negative attitudes.

One would hardly expect that such an innocent but sad event as the sinking of a steamboat would be the occasion of increased tension among Canadians. Yet the story of the John Bull which was destroyed with much loss of life, in the spring of 1839 showed their fear. Catastrophic in itself, the event was even more tragic because of the fear and hatred revealed by the newspaper commentaries on the accident.

On the night of Monday, June 10, 1839, during a regular trip from Quebec to Montreal, the John Bull caught fire.¹¹² The loss of the ship was one of the worst calamities in the history of the navigation of the St. Lawrence to that time.¹¹³ Of about sixty passengers, twenty died.¹¹⁴ The ship was considered to be one of the most beautiful and luxurious of the steamboats that plied the river, perhaps the most impressive in all of North America.¹¹⁵ It burned and finally sank close to the village of Lanoraie.¹¹⁶ The vessel had taken fire so quickly, the captain decided to try to ground it and the passengers were obliged to flee in their nightclothes.¹¹⁷

The Montreal papers, the Herald and the Gazette, reported the event. The Gazette reported that it was more in sorrow than in anger it was obliged to mention the barbarous and savage reaction of the local French Canadian inhabitants.¹¹⁸ A horrifying picture was painted of the people in the region who offered no aid or comfort to the victims. The newspapers reported that Canadian canoemen

¹¹² Le Canadien, mercredi, 12 juin 1839.

¹¹³ Montreal Gazette, Tuesday, June 11, 1839.

¹¹⁴ Le Canadien, mercredi, 12 juin 1839.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., mercredi, 12 juin 1839.

¹⁶ Ibid., mercredi, 12 juin 1839.

¹⁷ Ibid., mercredi, 12 juin 1839.

¹⁸ Montreal Gazette, Tuesday, June 11, 1839.

came up to the burning ship but refused assistance unless the terrified passengers were first willing to pay ten dollars. While those same canoemen refused to help, they went about scavenging valuables that had been thrown overboard.¹¹⁹ People who pleaded for water were told by them that there was plenty of it in the river.¹²⁰ Worse, the French Canadians were accused of snatching belongings from cadavers. The final indignity was their refusal to provide coffins for the dead before being assured of payment.¹²¹

Le Canadien reacted to these reports with shock. Like the other newspapers, it did not have a complete picture but it had heard reports of the terrible reaction of the local inhabitants. Interestingly, Le Canadien very nearly offered a defence of such treatment. It had seen the grisly reports of the English press, and claimed to be surprised that they would be so stunned and disturbed by the reaction of the people around Lanoraie. If they reacted brutally, Le Canadien reminded its readers that they too had been brutalized not so long ago. Who could forget the burning and the pillaging to the North of Montreal in 1837 and to the South in 1838.¹²² This retort was a first

¹¹⁹ Ibid., mercredi, 12 juin 1839.

¹²⁰ Gazette de Québec, jeudi, 13 juin 1839.

¹²¹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 12 juin 1839.

¹²² Le Canadien, vendredi, 14 juin 1839.

visceral reaction of defence.

As soon as the real truth began to sift through, Le Canadien offered explanations for all the accusations thrown against the inhabitants. It had been physically impossible for the Canadian canoes to approach the blazing steamboat because of the intense heat.¹²³ Valuables had not been picked off the remains of the dead. This story arose from the twisted reporting of one incident. Miss Ross, daughter of the Deputy Assistant Commissioner General and a passenger on the John Bull, was carried still alive to the home of a Mme. Lafontaine of Lanoraie where she eventually died. Mme. Lafontaine, realizing that Miss Ross came from a substantial family, removed her earrings for safekeeping so that they could be returned to her family. In fact, several of the passengers testified that the inhabitants of the region had done everything possible to assist them.¹²⁴

Clearly the Herald and the Gazette had exaggerated. From the reports of barbarity and savagery, they went on to question the basic values of the French Canadians as a people. They wondered what had happened to make such a happy race so completely vile. Despite evidence to the contrary, the Gazette refused to change its attitude and stuck to its original story.¹²⁵ Within the week, the

¹²³ Ibid., lundi, 17 juin 1839.

¹²⁴ Ibid., vendredi, 14 juin 1839.

¹²⁵ Montreal Gazette, Saturday, June 15, 1839.

Herald began to retract its initial report, admitting that its remarks had been based upon very questionable information.¹²⁶

Le Canadien did not attempt to dismiss the fact that some French Canadians had scavenged among the things thrown overboard, but explained that whatever the nature of the tragedy, there are always such examples of inhumanity.

Le Canadien was more shocked by the brutality of the English press.

Voilà l'affaire, et c'est une remarque sortie de la bouche de la personne à qui nous devons nos renseignements: les enragés de Montréal ont profité des circonstances de cet accident, les ont amplifiées, grossies, ont même inventé, tout cela pour exciter leurs partisans; d'une affaire bien ordinaire dans ses détails, ils ont fait une affaire politique.¹²⁷

Indeed, the tragic accident of the John Bull and its fiery end demonstrated an even greater inferno which existed in the hearts of Canadians, fed by distorted passions and irrational fears.

The second event which elicited a totally different, but this time positive reaction, was the visit of Alexandre Vattemare. His tour in Canada was the occasion for the appearance of co-operation among Canadians. As the finishing touches were being applied to the Union, just prior to its official proclamation, this French philanthropist, showman and ventriloquist electrified the

¹²⁶ Le Canadien, mercredi, 19 juin 1839.

¹²⁷ Ibid., lundi, 17 juin 1839.

people of the cities of Montreal and Quebec. He brought not only his performances but also rather novel ideas about cultural co-operation and interchange. During the winter of 1840-1841, the newspapers seemed to be discussing two things: the coming Union and the visit of Vattemare, the latter event being considered the more positive and promising item. The political union of Canada was of doubtful value, whereas the ideas discussed by Vattemare, such as the exchange of cultural treasures, the foundation of learned institutes and libraries, and the progress of knowledge, were far more attractive propositions in which all Canadians could take an interest.

Some historians consider Vattemare's visit insignificant while others attach more importance to it. Generally, the episode is viewed from a French Canadian perspective. The subtitle of Elizabeth Revai's biography of Vattemare illustrates that fact, Le Québec et les Etats Unis à l'aube de leurs relations culturelles avec la France. Revai attributes the foundation of l'Institut Canadien and French Canadians' growing awareness of the value of international exchange of, ideas and books and instruments directly to the visit.¹²⁸ Others liken the visit to "neige au printemps" or "un feu de paille," which blazed brightly

¹²⁸ Elizabeth Revai, Alexandre Vattemare: Trait d'Union entre Deux Mondes: le Québec et les Etats Unis à l'aube de leurs relations culturelles avec la France au XIX^{ème} siècle. Montreal, 1975.

as long as Vattemare was in Canada to excite imaginations but which quickly died when the famous ventriloquist left Canada.¹²⁹ Marcel Trudel noted that none of the cultural exchange that had been expected came to pass; there were no institutes, no books, and no long-term enthusiasm.¹³⁰

Only one historian addressed himself to the temporary rapprochement of French and English-speaking Canadians, which was surely the most significant result of the visit.¹³¹ Lasting or not, Vattemare's tour had positive, immediate and tangible results. In the few months he spent in Canada, an amazing amount of hope, energy and goodwill was generated among Canadians.

Every printed source, both French and English, praised Vattemare and his works. The Literary Garland rhapsodized;¹³² Le Canadien described his ideas and projects as sublime.¹³³ Even the Montreal Herald expressed pleasure with the success of Vattemare in that city.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 44.

¹³⁰ Marcel Trudel, L'Influence de Voltaire au Canada, T.I. 1760-1850. Montréal, 1945, p. 213.

¹³¹ Claude Galarneau, "Le Philanthrope Vattemare, le Rapprochement des "Races" et des Classes au Canada: 1840-1855," in W. L. Morton, ed., The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age. Toronto, 1968, p. 106. Galarneau alone treats of the impact on both English and French of the Vattemare visit and concludes that the Frenchman awakened the populations of Montreal and Quebec and contributed to the rapprochement of the antagonistic groups of which they were comprised.

¹³² Literary Garland, Vol. III, No. 2, January 1841.

¹³³ Le Canadien, mercredi, 17 mars 1841.

¹³⁴ Montreal Herald, Thursday, December 10, 1840.

It was as though a veritable saviour had descended upon the valley of the St. Lawrence. Mr. Vattermare came to Canada preaching fine ideas of cooperation, of learned institutes and of mutual exchange of books and cultural treasures among nations. His ideas were well received in Canada. Never before had there been such clearly and publicly expressed union of sentiment as that created by Vattermare. In a tone which can only be described as thrilled and breathless, "A.B." wrote in the Literary Garland:

Mr. Vattermare appears exalted above the feelings of humanity, a beneficent visitor from a purer region, a star like that which shone upon the shepherds of old, when the voices of innumerable angels chanted in the mid-heaven: "Peace on earth, good will to men."¹³⁵

All of educated society welcomed him. It was if he were a release for the tension that existed in the colony. Difficult days had just been passed and more were beginning, all of this being complicated by strong feelings of mutual resentment. Decent Canadians, whether French or English speaking, could not be sustained forever by the negative sense of fear and mistrust. There was a vacuum. There was a need for finer purposes and nobler ideals. Vattermare, with just such objectives and aspirations, was embraced by Canadians wherever he went. Unfortunately, he did not visit upper Canada but his travels were reported by the Toronto Examiner.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Literary Garland, Vol. III, NO. 2, January 1841.

¹³⁶ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, December 3, 1840.

The Montreal Morning Courier reported that Mr. Vattemare and his ideas were being accepted by everyone in the city and that his presence might well be the occasion for the setting aside of all personal and political enmities, once and for all.¹³⁷ Napoleon Aubin, editor of the satirical Le Fantasque, moving force of the local Quebec City theatrical company Les Amateurs Typographes, president or secretary of nearly every public meeting held in the old capital, and defuser of tension by the use of a somewhat acid if not equally ridiculous pen, phrased most clearly the hope and optimism which had been elicited by Vattemare. Aubin reported that the French philanthropist joined the two populations of Montreal together and hoped he would do as much for Quebec.

Le Canada demande véritablement une régénération; les querelles et les jalousies de races ne sont plus de notre siècle; nos hommes politiques ont besoin d'apprendre qu'ils peuvent différer d'opinion et n'être point ennemis pour cela. Eh bien, c'est à la science qu'il appartient de nous présenter cette nouvelle vie.¹³⁸

At a meeting of the Montreal Mechanics' Institute, convened to discuss the proposals of Mr. Vattemare, it was resolved that English and French Canadians should work together to achieve the goals outlined by him. Benjamin Holmes, of the Bank of Montreal, pleaded that dissension be put aside and that Canadians not only enter into a

¹³⁷ Montreal Morning Courier, Friday, November 13, 1840.

¹³⁸ Le Fantasque, jeudi, 4 fevrier 1841.

political union but into a real social union where the hearts of men are united regardless of their national origins.¹³⁹

Vattemare not only released the finer instincts of French and English Canadians, he also motivated a practical desire to integrate all existing literary and learned societies, both in Montreal and Quebec. In Canada, as he did on the rest of his North American tour, Vattemare suggested the establishment of libraries and the international exchange of books, documents and cultural and artistic treasures. While at Montreal in the autumn of 1840, he received widespread publicity in the newspapers and support in the form of public letters from social, religious and political figures like Charles Mondelet, Monseigneur Ignace Bourget, Denis-Benjamin Viger,¹⁴⁰ and Lord Sydenham himself.¹⁴¹

The literary and learned societies rallied to his cause. Described by the Montreal Gazette as "one of the greatest literary philanthropists and cosmopolites that perhaps has ever existed,"¹⁴² Vattemare wanted to create a program of exchange whereby governments and literary and learned societies would exchange their treasures among

¹³⁹ Le Vrai Canadien, mardi, 26 janvier 1841.

¹⁴⁰ L'Aurore des Canadas, mardi, 15 décembre 1840.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., vendredi, 18 décembre 1840.

¹⁴² Montreal Gazette, Saturday, November 7, 1840.

themselves.¹⁴³ Cities that lacked them should create libraries or institutes which could become centres of knowledge and education. A place not only for books but a total educational institution which would provide meeting rooms and an area for the display of art, architecture, antiquities and the like.¹⁴⁴ For Montreal and Quebec, the first step would be to establish such a "Vattemare Institute," as the concept came to be called in the newspapers. The Literary Garland, consistent in its attitude, pointed out that Montreal was not yet in any condition to make fully operative the "magnificent plan" of Mr. Vattemare, for Montreal in particular and Canada in general, did not have much to exchange. However, the initial steps towards the establishment of an Institute could be taken by uniting all of Montreal learned societies.¹⁴⁵

Vattemare soon met with the Montreal Natural History Society which set up a committee to consider his proposals and to initiate communications with the other societies of the city.¹⁴⁶ On January 21, 1841, the Montreal Mechanics' Institute gave its support to the Vattemare proposals and among other things, gave three cheers for the French Canadians. On the following day, lacking any formal

¹⁴³ Ibid., Saturday, November 7, 1840.

¹⁴⁴ Montreal Morning Courier, Friday, November 13, 1840.

¹⁴⁵ Literary Garland, Vol. III, NO. 1, December 1840.

¹⁴⁶ Montreal Gazette, Saturday, November 14, 1840.

association of their own, several of Montreal's leading French-Canadian citizens presided by Charles Mondelet met at John Donegani's house. They too accepted the Vattemare proposals and reciprocated compliments by giving three cheers for the "Canadiens d'origine britannique."¹⁴⁷ At the same meeting, it was announced that a Mass would be celebrated for the success of the Vattemare proposals. Such a suggestion did not disturb the English newspapers or slow the progress of the latest developments.

Even the Governor General was interested in the Vattemare plan, letting it be known that he was disposed to ask the Special Council to pass a law supportive of the construction of a "Vattemare Institute."¹⁴⁸ The corporation of the city of Montreal, at the request of a petition made by the Montreal Board of Trade and several other citizens, established a special committee to consider the possibility of constructing a large building which would house the City Hall, the Merchants' Exchange, the Post Office, the Trinity Hall and the Vattemare Institute.¹⁴⁹

By the time Vattemare left for Quebec City in February of 1841, he had mobilized the French and English speaking population of Montreal to work together to further the goals of his plan. The three learned societies--the

¹⁴⁷ Le Vrai Canadien, mardi, 26 janvier 1841.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., vendredi, 29 janvier 1841.

¹⁴⁹ Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Advertiser, Thursday, January 28, 1841.

Montreal Natural History Society, the Montreal Mechanics' Institute and the Montreal Library Association--had taken the first steps towards amalgamation.¹⁵⁰ In two short months, reported the Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Advertiser, Mr. Vattemare had achieved a moral triumph.

. . . the bare mention of which was laughed to scorn on his arrival, and his scheme for uniting the two great parties here on mutual and mutually beneficial grounds considered the dream of a visionary enthusiast, the vagary of a refined and erratic intellect.¹⁵¹

The people of Quebec City heard of Vattemare, for his project and progress were well reported in their newspapers. Once again Vattemare was welcomed with open arms. His success in Montreal raised the hopes of the citizens of Quebec.¹⁵² There was a desire in Quebec as in Montreal to operate according to finer lights and a belief that bitterness could not indefinitely continue. Despite the welcome and the hopes, Vattemare met with less apparent success in Quebec. The Quebec Literary and Historical Society considered the plan favourably¹⁵³ but did not wish to relinquish control of its library, finances and internal regulations,¹⁵⁴ a fact which greatly disappointed Etienne

¹⁵⁰ Literary Garland, Vol. III, No. 1, December 1840.

¹⁵¹ Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Advertiser, Thursday, January 28, 1841.

¹⁵² Le Fantasque, samedi, 6 février 1841.

¹⁵³ Gazette de Quebec, mardi, 9 février 1841.

¹⁵⁴ Quebec Mercury, Saturday, February 13, 1841.

Parent who feared such hesitations would obstruct the ultimate success of the Vattemare plan.¹⁵⁵ So too at the annual meeting of the Quebec Mechanics' Institute, the association agreed to cooperate with the Literary and Historical Society and the Quebec Library but wished to retain internal control.¹⁵⁶

Despite the hesitation of the different Quebec societies, they did sympathize with Vattemare's goals. As in Montreal, so too in Quebec, there were meetings to discuss the system of international exchange. On Friday, February 26, 1841, there was a preliminary meeting, presided by Napoleon Aubin, and attended by fifteen hundred people, to discuss the Vattemare project.¹⁵⁷ The hope was expressed that Quebec's three societies would unite and the whole community, even the ladies for whom special places would be reserved, were invited to attend another meeting the following week.¹⁵⁸ At the next meeting, Le Canadien reported that never had there been such enthusiasm and unanimity in the population of Quebec. Everyone who was anyone was present, among them John Neilson, Etienne Parent, and Augustin Norbert Morin.¹⁵⁹ For the next three issues

¹⁵⁵ Le Canadien, lundi, 15 février 1841.

¹⁵⁶ Quebec Mercury, Saturday, February 20, 1841.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., Saturday, February 27, 1841.

¹⁵⁸ Gazette de Québec, samedi, 27 février 1841.

¹⁵⁹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 3 mars 1841.

Parent's paper published minute reports of all that was said and resolved at the meeting.¹⁶⁰ Subsequent meetings were also held.¹⁶¹ As in Montreal, so too in Quebec, the Corporation of the city met to consider the Vattemare plan.¹⁶² The testimonial letters which had appeared in the Montreal newspapers reappeared in those of Quebec.¹⁶³

Vattemare surely enlivened the winter of 1840-1841. He brought his considerable skills as a ventriloquist to the stages of Montreal and Quebec, greatly pleasing his audiences. Advertisements appeared in the newspapers under the title Monsieur Alexandre announcing performances which would be given in English and French.¹⁶⁴ His performances were heartily appreciated for apparently he rarely appeared in America.¹⁶⁵ The Montreal Gazette reported that it was "to the infinite delight and unspeakable entertainment" of his audiences. Strange and wonderful were his performances with astounding "vocal illusions and transformations of figure and countenance."¹⁶⁶ One of his performances required

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., mercredi, 3 mars; vendredi, 5 mars; lundi, 8 mars, 1841.

¹⁶¹ Quebec Gazette, Monday, March 15, 1841.

¹⁶² Ibid., Wednesday, March 3, 1841.

¹⁶³ Le Canadien, mercredi, 23 decembre 1840.

¹⁶⁴ Le Vrai Canadien, vendredi, 15 janvier 1841.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., mardi, 15 decembre 1840.

¹⁶⁶ Montreal Gazette, Tuesday, December 22, 1840.

seven changes of costume.¹⁶⁷ His three presentations, "les Ruses de Nicholas,"¹⁶⁸ "L'aubergiste de Calais," and "Le Diable Boiteux,"¹⁶⁹ amused and delighted the spectators as much or more as the several meetings dealing with his plans of institutes and exchanges fired them with enthusiasm for knowledge and cooperation. If Montreal adored his shows and embraced his project, Quebec City was only slightly less enthusiastic. Its societies were less inclined to unite, although they all praised the aims of Vattemare's grand design. The Quebec Mercury was impressed with "The Rogueries of Nicholas" with all the changes of costume and the use of several different voices, but the paper also noted a discernible French accent and was certain that Vattemare would be far better in a French performance.¹⁷⁰

Despite the enchantment of Montreal and the somewhat slighter enthusiasm of Quebec City, Vattemare's project came to very little in Canada. No buildings were constructed, the learned societies did not unite, there was no exchange of books and artifacts. However, the immediate and amazing response elicited from Canadians in that dark winter of 1840-41 was important. From the rebellions until the official proclamation of the Union, the country had been

167 Le Vrai Canadien, jeudi, 24 decembre 1840.

168 Ibid., jeudi, 24 december 1840.

169 Ibid., vendredi, 15 janvier 1841.

170 Quebec Mercury, Tuesday, February 16, 1841.

politically traumatized. Tension and hostility rose to such heights that even the innocent event of a sinking steamboat heated men's temperatures to boiling. Fear and uncertainty were not firm underpinnings for the experience of close and integrated participation which faced French and English Canadians. Vattemare with his wonderful ideas and noble goals demonstrated that they aimed at higher ideals and goals and that they were capable of much more than antagonism.

Alexandre Vattemare unleashed an enthusiastic undercurrent in the thinking of Canadians, the desire to get along together. That there existed a deeply imbued willingness to cooperate does not deny that there was fear and mistrust. For a short moment at the eve of the Union, amidst all the gloom of the political news of electioneering and gerrymandering, of injustice and the uncertain future, Canadians demonstrated a basic decency and a fundamental community of values. They too were committed to cooperation, enchanted by science and convinced of the efficacy of the spread of knowledge. While the subsequent years would be filled with difficulties and hostility, there also existed this positive side of the balance.

Conclusion

In 1841, Canadians entered into a new political community given to, not chosen by them. The Union of the Canadas would be an occasion for the development of closer contact and increased awareness. The intentions of the

British government were clear, to make Canada an essentially British colony. For many Canadians, this was an acceptable and worthy goal. For those who spoke French, such an objective was unacceptable. The policy of amalgamation impeded the development of sympathy and understanding among them. And yet, despite this serious obstruction, Canadians did come to know and understand each other better. Such consciousness and understanding was at times negative, at others, positive. But even at the beginning of the Union, in Lower Canada where they had an opportunity to interact, these contradictory sentiments are apparent. At one and the same time, Canadians were moved by fear of each other and hope for co-operation.

CHAPTER TWO

THE QUALITY OF LIFE

The atmosphere at the beginning of the Union, the policy of the Colonial Office, as well as the fears and misperceptions of Canadians, only partly explain why they knew each other so little. Many other obvious factors, like differences of religion, politics, origin and language, obstructed the development of closer relationships. One of the most important of these impediments was the simple fact that most Canadians were attached to the region in which they lived and the extremes of weather and difficulties of travel discouraged movement from place to place.

Society, however simple and unsophisticated, was experienced to a great degree in the city, town or village close by. In the countryside where the land was being cleared or the soil tilled, the majority of Canadians was even further removed than the city dweller from many of the most recent and modern developments of mid-nineteenth century life. It was the substantial citizen, the prosperous farmer, the clergyman, the newspaper editor and the politician who were to leave to posterity their views of Canadian society and culture. The record of the community of culture is drawn from this segment of society, which was wealthy enough to travel, to pay the price of a parliamentary session, or to invest in steamboats and railroads. A proof

that Canadians were closely attached to their regions is the perennial question of the seat of government. They could never decide where to place the capital. One wonders whether the supporters of a city were concerned with the prestige and influence of their metropolis or simply trying to avoid having to travel to another place. At any rate, the capital was first in Kingston but moved to Montreal in 1844. After the burning of the parliament buildings and the indignities to the Governor General in 1849, Montreal lost the honour. The assemblymen then decided to alternate the capital between Quebec City and Toronto. The situation became so absurd that one wag would suggest putting the capital on a steamship.¹

Difficulties of Travel

Fortunately for the historian, the perambulating capital elicited numerous complaints from the politicians who were obliged to follow it. Their grumblings illustrate just how difficult travel was considered. Newspapermen, who were also required to present themselves in the colonial capital, often alluded to the problems posed by the trip. The members of the assembly argued constantly that it ought to be moved to their city or region. Were not such complaints motivated by the desire to avoid the awful journey to the seat of government for the annual session once and for all? For example, it is not surprising that Quebecers were

¹ La Minerve, jeudi, 8 juin 1853.

unhappy with Kingston, the first choice of capital. In 1841, the correspondent of the Gazette de Québec, reporting on the opening of the first Union parliament, stated flatly that Kingston was at least a week's travelling from Montreal.² In 1843, when the Executive Council concluded that Montreal was a more logical choice for the capital, since it was the commercial and geographical centre of the colony, it would be the turn of the Upper Canadians to complain. William Boulton, the member of the assembly for Niagara, opposed the selection of the Lower Canadian city. He claimed that Montrealers could be in Kingston at forty-eight hours notice. On the other hand, he exaggeratedly declared that members from the Huron and Western districts would require forty-eight days to reach Montreal.³ In Canada, distances were long enough and the journeys sufficiently painful, but in the minds of many Canadians those distances and that pain were even longer and greater. Better the Lower Canadians suffer the trip to Kingston than the Upper Canadians to Montreal. Naturally the former would willingly forego the trip to Kingston.

Travel in Canada was a bruising, bone-breaking proposition. Canadians simply did not do it. What kind of unity could be hoped for? What cultural consensus could be achieved in a country which, for all effects and purposes,

² Gazette de Québec, mardi, 15 juin 1841.

³ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Thursday, November 2, 1843.

closed down for half the year? Geography and weather, particularly freezing winters and mucky springs, obstructed any sort of interchange, much less cultural. Illustration of this reality is presented in the preface of the Canadian Gazetteer, a collection of statistics, and information upon the towns, townships and sites of Canada West. The author claimed to have been motivated to publish the work by the great ignorance of Canadians, both newcomers and those born there, of their own country.⁴ If they knew little of their own region, it is not surprising that they knew even less of others.

The only exception to the general unwillingness to travel was when it could be done upon a comfortable steamship and during the summer. And even that was often hazardous. Masters of these vessels were sometimes given to racing, a practice which sometimes resulted in accidents and death. For example, in 1846, excessive speed caused the explosion of the boiler of the Lord Sydenham. Three passengers died and forty others were injured as a result.⁵ If the ships did not explode, run aground, or collide with another, travel upon them could be agreeable. When cities or regions were connected by good water communications, the trip could even be rapid. For example, it took twelve hours

⁴ W. H. Smith, Smith's Canadian Gazetteer, Toronto: H. & W. Rousell, 1846, p. 1.

⁵ La Revue Canadienne, vendredi, 16 octobre, 1846 and La Minerve, lundi, 19 octobre 1846.

to travel from Montreal to Quebec. The fare cost between two and four dollars and deck passage was as low as twenty-five cents.⁶ Sir Richard Bonnycastle noted that the steamer, the Transit, which plied between Toronto and Niagara, offered quite luxurious accommodation, even boasting its own service of plate and china.⁷ A cabin between Kingston and Toronto cost five dollars and the deck was available at two. Cabin passage included breakfast, dinner and tea, served with much civility and attentiveness by waiters who were usually black. Berths and linen were clean and boots polished during the night if left outside the door. The only extra costs were for liquor, wine and lunch, if breakfast, tea and dinner had not sufficed.⁸ A dollar added to the fare would pay for a stateroom in which there was a good bed, a mirror, washing stand and towels and if the passenger wished, a reading lamp.⁹ Needless to say the sensibilities of the female passenger were duly attended to. In his description, Bonnycastle wrote:

The ladies' cabin has generally a large cheval glass and a piano, with a white lady to wait,

⁶ Robert W. S. Mackay, The Travellers Guide to the River St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario. Montreal: Lovell and Gibson Printers, 1845, p. 6.

⁷ Sir Richard Henry Bonnycastle, The Canadas in 1841, 2 Vols. London: Henry Colburn Publishers, 1841, Vol. 1, p. 138.

⁸ Ibid., p. 136.

⁹ Sir Richard Henry Bonnycastle, Canada and the Canadians in 1846, 2 Vols. London: Henry Colburn Publishers, Vol. 1, p. 96.

who is always decked out in flounces and furbelows and usually good looking.¹⁰

Under these circumstances it would not be difficult to imagine a calm moonlit night's passage from Kingston to Toronto as quite pleasant, even with possibilities romantic, had not the members of the fairer sex retired early or withdrawn themselves to the gentle protective civility of the ladies' cabin.

Even in season, cities not naturally linked by water were difficult to travel between. For example, the journey from Kingston to Montreal could easily take twice the time of the trip from Montreal to Quebec. In the best conditions, the quickest way to get to Kingston from Montreal was to take the stage that left every morning from McGill street at ten-thirty as far as Lachine, and from there by steamer to the Cascades. Here the rapids had to be portaged, travelling by coach over a plank road¹¹ which Sir Richard Bonnycastle described as being "as smooth as a billiard table."¹² Having reached Coteau du Lac, the trip was reasonably comfortable as far as Kingston, travelling through the Cornwall Canal and the somewhat treacherous waterways of the Thousand Islands by daylight.¹³ The entire trip took

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 96-97.

¹¹ Mackay, op. cit., p. 13.

¹² Bonnycastle, Canada and the Canadians in 1846, op. cit., p. 91.

¹³ Mackay, op. cit., p. 13.

from twenty-four¹⁴ to twenty-six hours and if sufficient stamina and courage still remained, connections could be made with steamboats going on to Toronto.¹⁵ The traveller was obliged to pay three dollars more to endure the passage from Montreal to Kingston, than that from Kingston to Toronto.¹⁶ Passage between Montreal and Kingston was slightly simplified by the inauguration of rail service between Montreal and Lachine in late 1847.¹⁷ Even disembarking was sometimes perilous for often passengers had to walk upon rickety and dangerous wharves which were a mad scene of rude carters and the pushy representatives of the different hotels trying to drum up business for their respective establishments.¹⁸

Not everyone could afford first class. In 1847, the stories are cruel and numerous of poor immigrants being attached to open barges dragged by steamboats, facing the weather and left to fend for themselves as best they could.¹⁹ For example, the worst problem facing the thousands of Irish immigrants who came to Canada in that year, perhaps

¹⁴ Bonnycastle, Canada and the Canadians in 1846, op. cit., p. 91.

¹⁵ Mackay, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁷ La Minerve, lundi, 22 novembre 1847.

¹⁸ Bonnycastle, The Canadas in 1841, op. cit., p. 146.

¹⁹ RG7 G20 Civil Secretary's Correspondence, Vol. 12, No. 107.

more serious than any difficulty experienced since their departure, was the trip upcountry.²⁰ To get beyond Montreal was sheer horror. Ships were always overcrowded and the trip to Toronto took at least forty-eight hours. Sick and healthy, men, women and children, were all thrown together in the most terrible of circumstances.

. . . the dead and the living huddled together. Sometimes the crowds were stowed in open barges, and towed after the steamer like Pigs upon the deck of a Cork and Bristol steamer.²¹

Certainly, these unfortunate travellers were unconcerned with the beauty of the Canadian scenery and not interested in learning about the country through which they passed. They thought only of arriving at their destinations safe and sound. Ordinary travel in Canada during the 1840s lay somewhere between first and immigrant class, but it was surely not the majority who travelled like a Bonnycastle.²²

A journey in the colony was not always quite as pleasant nor quite as terrible as the above extremes. Most would have done well to take the advice of guides and gazetteers which appeared at the time. Immigrants were

²⁰ RG1 E4 Colonial Office Despatches referred by him to Executive Council, Vol. 4, Pt. 1, 1848. A letter from Mr. Stephen Devere to T. F. Elliott giving an eyewitness account of the transatlantic voyage of Irish Emigrants.

²¹ Ibid., Vol. 5, Pt. 1, 1848.

²² RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1852. While 1847 was an extraordinary year, the average annual number of immigrants arriving in Canada between 1841 and 1852 was estimated to be 39,176.

recommended to arrive early in the colony, to get upcountry as quickly as possible, and to avoid tarrying about the cities and towns.²³ Such delay and the luxuries available in populated places might soften their will for the hard test of pioneering which faced them.²⁴

If travel was difficult in summer and fall during the navigation season, it was doubly hard in winter and virtually impossible in spring. In the bad season, journeys took longer, though records of sorts were set occasionally. In February 1840, the Governor General, Lord Sydenham, veritably flew across the province, sleighing from Toronto to Montreal in only thirty-six hours, almost equalling the speed of a steamboat.²⁵ In September, Jean-Baptiste Frechette, a Lower Canadian member of the assembly, travelled from Kingston to Quebec in thirty-eight hours, at the wonderful speed of eleven miles per hour.²⁶ Not all were such speed demons as these and, in fact, most Canadians were positively intimidated by the prospect of travel.

To journey overland was a miserable prospect. While

²³ A Statement of the Satisfactory Results which have attended Emigration to Upper Canada from the Establishment of the Canada Company until the present period: compiled for the Guidance of Emigrants, 5th ed. London: Smith and Elder and Co., 1846, p. 109.

²⁴ Smith, op. cit., p. 252.

²⁵ Sir Richard Henry Bonnycastle, Canada as it Was and May Be, 2 Vols. London: Colburn and Co., Publishers, 1852, Vol. 2, p. 212.

²⁶ Gazette de Québec, jeudi, 2 septembre 1841.

spared the possibility of an accident upon a steamboat, the traveller ran the risk of falling from his wagon or sleigh trying to negotiate bad roads, enormous potholes or the frozen ridges and bumps left in the winter roads by the various sledges and sleighs that passed over them. Winter sleigh companies which charged ten dollars, claimed that the trip between Kingston and Montreal could be made in two days, travelling all night.²⁷ Of course that was under the best conditions, with clear cold weather and a good layer of snow. The possibility of thaws, snowstorms and snowdrifts made it another and sometimes dangerous proposition. In his book, Eight Years in Canada, Major John Richardson has left a rare and detailed description of overland travel in Canada during the winter. Richardson left Rasco's Hotel in Montreal in February 1840²⁸ and did not arrive in Windsor, Canada West, until late April.²⁹ In no particular hurry, he visited friends along the way³⁰ and a good thing, for he was required to nurse injuries caused by twice falling from

²⁷ Mackay, op. cit., p. 21. In Le Fantasque, mercredi, 7 décembre 1842, two sleigh companies "Ligne de Voitures Rouges" and "ligne de Voitures Vertes," advertised trips between Quebec and Montreal which took two days.

²⁸ Major John Richardson, Eight Years in Canada. Montreal: H. H. Cunningham, 1847, p. 110.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 132.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 122.

his wagon.³¹ Accommodation provided travellers along the way were not very inviting and the impeccable service of the steamers contrasted dramatically with the shoddiness of Canadian inns. In these establishments, guests complained that beds were often placed in a draught³² and "Fleas and bugs and "such small deer," you must expect in every inn you stop at, even in the cities."³³ If bed was bad, board was even worse, at least according to Major Richardson. His complaints about lodging and food were graphic!

. . . sour, home made bread, tea which resembles, in flavour a decoction of hay, and sweetened with what I never could endure, the maple sugar of the country--a rasher of bacon or ham exceedingly salt, and oftener rancid than sweet and as thick as a beef steak ought to be but never is in this country--potatoes infamously cooked--eggs fried and overdone in grease--a saucer or two embrowned in the same eternal maple sugar--a few other fruits such as raspberries or currants spoiled in the same manner--a couple of large plates of potted butter, with huge particles of salt oozing from them like drops of hoar frost from a damp well--cheese resembling hard prepared bees' wax, and tasteless and tough as leather--let the stranger I repeat imagine this galimatias of eatables (he must not forget to add huge slices not of crisp, but sodden toast), and he will know what sort of a breakfast or supper he may expect to find in Canada should he ever be induced to travel through it.³⁴

At least the traveller would not have gone to his cold

³¹ Ibid., p. 124.

³² Bonnycastle, Canada and the Canadians in 1846,
op. cit., p. 104.

³³ Ibid., p. 105.

³⁴ Richardson, op. cit., pp. 121-122.

bed hungry. But for those of a more refined taste, having endured the dangers of the road and suffered the Canadian menu, the final indignity was ruined sleep caused by the general carousing and dissolute atmosphere of the country inns.³⁵ Clearly, the idea of travelling during winter or spring must have entered the minds of only the most adventurous. The joys of hearth and home must surely have tended to keep Canadians where they were.

The Similarity of Their Situation I

Cities and Towns

If the difficulties of travel kept them apart, the similarity of their situation in the different cities and towns made Canadians appear uncommonly the same. Culturally and socially the condition of the Union of the Canadas might well be paralleled to Charles Dicken's description of its capital, Kingston. "Indeed it may be said of Kingston, that one half of it appears to be burnt down and the other half not to be built up."³⁶ However rough at the edges society was, Canadians pursued cultural activities, entertainment and education in the local town or city. There was the theatre, club, diversions and hotel. There were published the newspapers and the rare literary efforts.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 117.

³⁶ Charles Dickens, American Notes for General Circulation. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1842, p. 76.

There were the institutions, the hospitals, asylums and prisons. It was the city's wharves which first received the news from beyond and the newcomer. There were the garrisons and servant girls, the artisans and artists.

What were they like, these populated places of Canada? Although a fairly reasonable idea of their comparative size and importance can be drawn from the statistics and estimates available in newspapers, travel guides and official documents, no categorical conclusions can be made. The difficulty of arriving at exact figures is complicated by dramatic increases in population due to immigration during the period and by somewhat faulty methods of conducting censuses. For example, an act passed in 1841, providing for a census every five years, was not immediately implemented in Canada East.³⁷ In 1843, the total population of Lower Canada was between 650,000 and 700,000,³⁸ that of Upper Canada being nearly half a million.³⁹ In his Travellers' Guide to the River St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario, Robert Mackay gave rounded and slightly inflated figures for the colony's major cities: Montreal, 50,000;⁴⁰ Quebec City, 40,000;⁴¹ and Toronto, 20,000.⁴² Mackay was evidently attempting to put as

³⁷ RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1843.

³⁸ RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1844.

³⁹ RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1844.

⁴⁰ Mackay, op. cit., p. 5.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 10.

⁴² Ibid., p. 17.

positive a light as possible on the colony. But as late as 1852, after the population of Lower Canada had jumped to 890,000 and Upper Canada to 952,000, official statistics put the population of the three cities at 57,000, 42,000 and 30,000, respectively.⁴³ Smaller places like Kingston,⁴⁴ Hamilton⁴⁵ and Bytown,⁴⁶ all varied between 6-7,000 inhabitants. In Canada East, Trois Rivières had a population of 4,000⁴⁷ and Sherbrooke only 1,050.⁴⁸

What is apparent from these figures is that the majority of Canadians lived and settled outside of towns. However, a great deal of civilized activity, and much that was not, occurred in the towns. The cultural condition of townspeople is much easier to grasp because of the immediacy of sources, like newspapers, lectures, reports of literary clubs and the like. If Canadian urban places were not as lawless as the stereotypical American frontier town, they were certainly boisterous and full of life. They were far from dull. In Montreal, it was unsafe to cross the street because of speeding horses which caused so many accidents.⁴⁹

⁴³ RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1852.

⁴⁴ Smith, op. cit., p. 93.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 85.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

⁴⁷ Robert W. S. Mackay, The Canada Directory.
Montreal: John Lovell, 1851, p. 408.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 353.

⁴⁹ La Minerve, lundi, 28 decembre 1846.

Wild indeed must have been the Saturday nights when closing hour came round. The 7,000 inhabitants of Bytown had fifty-nine drinking places at their disposal, thirty-five of the thirty-nine taverns and all twenty of the alehouses being in the lower town.⁵⁰ Kingston was reported to have ninety-four saloons.⁵¹ With a population of 13,000 in 1841, Toronto contained one hundred and nineteen taverns and twenty-one beer houses. 799 arrests were made that year, reflecting the impact of the pubs in the city.⁵²

When one thinks of the united Canadas during the 1840s, four places come immediately to mind: Kingston, Montreal, Quebec and Toronto. They were important in themselves and they were all capitals. For these reasons, politicians, newspapermen and visitors were more familiar with them than other places. Descriptions and allusions to these towns were more frequent than to places like Hamilton, Bytown or Trois Rivières.

Kingston was the Union's first capital and if Charles Dickens had been distinctly unimpressed, other Canadians were positively disgusted. It was terribly difficult to reach and not much was there to begin with. By the time one arrived, one surely must have wondered why one had come in the first place. Few are the positive descriptions of

⁵⁰ Smith, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 93.

⁵² Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1841, Appendix S.

Kingston during the 1840s.

Two governors, Lord Sydenham and Sir Charles Bagot, resided there. In a despatch to the Colonial Secretary upon possible capitals for the colony, Sydenham quickly dismissed Bytown, Quebec and Toronto, but even he could not bring himself to declare that Kingston was superior to Montreal. The only reason why he favoured the former was because of his hope that there the French Canadian assemblymen would be free of bad influences which would surround them in Montreal.⁵³ For his part, Sir Charles Bagot frankly admitted the inadequacy of Kingston as a capital. Like Sydenham, Bagot was prepared to accept it because he too hoped that French Canadians would be free of nefarious influences, but as for the place itself, he wrote, "The town is small and poor and the country around it unproductive."⁵⁴

Clearly, neither governor accepted Kingston for any of its inherent qualities as a great city. From a sense of duty they may have been willing to endure it, but the inhabitants of other Canadian cities were not. Rarely did Canadian newspapers agree but they were as one in their conviction upon the inferiority of Kingston.⁵⁵ The Tory newspaper, the Toronto Patriot, agreed with the reform

⁵³ RG7 G12, Vol. 60, Sydenham to Russell, May 22, 1840.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Vol. 61, Bagot to Stanley, January 19, 1842.

⁵⁵ Toronto Patriot, Saturday, June 4, 1841 and Gazette de Québec, mardi, 1 juin 1841.

journal, the Toronto Examiner, that Kingston was unfit as capital and they went so far as to agree that if Toronto could not be the capital Montreal should be.⁵⁶ Critical descriptions of Kingston contrasted the glowing and favourable reports on Montreal in the Examiner.⁵⁷ Napoleon Aubin wrote of Kingston in Le Fantasque, "Elle est petite, malpropre et n'a rien de remarquable." There was not even a theatre or an auditorium. Aubin, in a mortified tone, complained that one performer, whom he described as a "jeune et brillant rossignol," was obliged to give her concert in the court house.⁵⁸

Kingstonians defended their town. John Solomon Cartwright, member of the assembly for Lennox-Addington, noted what wonderful progress it was making since it became capital. He claimed that the population had grown from 6,000 in 1841 to 14,000 in 1843. He also noted that since 1841, 490 houses were built, failing to mention that many of them were replacing houses destroyed in the fire of 1840.⁵⁹ As feeling against the town increased and it became more likely that the town would lose its position as capital, and the consequent prestige, one local bard was moved to pen the emotional but far from exquisite lines:

⁵⁶ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, September 6, 1843.

⁵⁷ Ibid., Wednesday, October 25, 1843.

⁵⁸ Le Fantasque, jeudi, 23 juin 1842.

⁵⁹ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Friday, November 3, 1843.

"Of course" as mindful Sydenham wrote,
 The Upper Province doth denote,
 The portion of Canada where
 The capital her sons should seat:
 And now tis placed within their power
 "The Patriot" would the standard lower,
 And just because it cannot have,
 What Victoria to fair Kingston gave;
 T'would fix it in the midst of those
 Who once proclaimed themselves our foes.⁶⁰

Despite the objections of Kingstonians, Montreal became the capital in 1844. It was by far the most important and the largest city in Canada, the commercial and transportation focus of the entire colony. Prior to the Union, Sydenham had objected to it, stressing the French Canadian nature of the city and particularly of the countryside around it, which he perceived as being filled with the pests professionals and backward peasants farming the land in a most ineffective manner.⁶¹ By 1843, the fear of these negative influences had sufficiently dissipated to permit serious consideration of it becoming the seat of government. Not everyone agreed with Sydenham's assessment of Montreal and area. Charles Dickens had been positively enchanted with the countryside, describing it as peopled by priests, nuns, and red-sashed peasants, every hilltop crowned with a cross.⁶² A similar and enthusiastic impression of the region appeared in the Canada Guidebook.

⁶⁰ RG14 Vol. 11, Miscellaneous. Alexander Scougall, "Kingston the Seat of Government: A Poetical Effusion (with Notes), dedicated to the MPs of CW, 1843."

⁶¹ RG7 G12, Vol. 60, Sydenham to Russell, May 22, 1840.

⁶² Dickens, op. cit., p. 77.

The country between Montreal and Quebec was described as "an uninterrupted succession of neat whitewashed cottages and thriving villages, in which handsome churches with tin covered spires are conspicuous."⁶³

In a report submitted to Governor Charles Metcalfe in 1843 by the Executive Council, then led by Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine and Robert Baldwin, it was noted that Canada was in the process of evolving "a national point of view." The report also declared that Canada was a colony composed of scattered population differing in language, laws and local interests, and that the city most fit to be its capital was Montreal.⁶⁴ Clearly for these Executive Councillors, the new evolving nationality was better reflected by Montreal than Kingston.

Its own inhabitants did not doubt Montreal's qualities as a city. Such civic pride is illustrated by an article appearing in the Literary Garland in January 1844. The noble proportions of the city were described, its large buildings, towering spires and magnificent harbour. Montreal contained all the requisites to become a great commercial city, excellent natural position, easy and rapid communication with the interior and most important a wealthy, enlightened and enterprising population.⁶⁵ It was, in the

⁶³ The Canada Guidebook with a Map of the Province. Montreal: Armour and Ramsay, 1849, p. 42.

⁶⁴ RG1 E1, State Books, Microfilm C110, Vol. 13.

⁶⁵ Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 1, January 1844.

opinion of the Garland, a most fitting place for the Canadian seat of government. Of course it all depended on one's perspective and in a short story, "Augustus O'Flinn: A Tale of Canada," by Quiz, in the April issue of the Garland, Montreal provided the setting for a florid and romantic story of elopement in a sleigh. Compared to Dublin, the city was described as a nasty, miserable, mercantile village, its streets a set of crooked little lanes.⁶⁶

There was always room for improvement and La Minerve dutifully reported aspersions cast upon the city by Napoleon Aubin. He described the violence and the partisanship of the Montreal newspapers and claimed that the inhabitants of the city were engaged in a mad ceaseless quest for wealth and luxury. In his opinion, Montreal was indeed "l'enfant prodigue de la famille canadienne."⁶⁷ In 1845, La Minerve published an interesting series of articles entitled "Chronique Canadienne" which gave wonderful descriptions of the streets, squares and churches of the city but which also criticized. The author of the "Chronique" complained there were not enough parks in the city and that the number should be increased. Sufficient parkland would reward Montreal with healthy and rosy cheeked children.⁶⁸ The "Chronique" described the city hall as "cette vilaine

⁶⁶ Ibid., Vol. II, No. 4, April 1844.

⁶⁷ La Minerve, lundi, 29 juillet, 1844.

⁶⁸ Ibid., lundi, 3 novembre 1845.

maison de briques jaunes dans la rue Notre Dame," followed by a satiric description of the council meetings held there.⁶⁹

But the city did have its points and if La Minerve carried critical articles, it also printed favourable ones. It reprinted an article which appeared in an American newspaper, The Argus. Montreal was described as no ordinary city and only a visit of some weeks would do it complete justice. Its fifty thousand people were an amazing collection of French Canadians, Irish, English, Scots and Americans. It had more public buildings than any American city five times its size. There was a wonderful cathedral and a recently built church for the Irish. Its promenades, the mountain and the harbour provided amusing diversions. The Hotel Donegana, The Argus noted, merited more than just a passing mention. One particularly interesting amusement was a ride out to the Lachine Canal only nine miles away.⁷⁰

While Niagara Falls remained the pre-eminent tourist attraction in Canada, each summer hundreds of American visitors came to Montreal.⁷¹ They stayed in impressive sounding hotels which offered all sorts of luxurious amenities. For example, Donegana's Hotel in rue Notre Dame, once the home of Governors General Durham and Sydenham, boasted a wonderful view, an excellent restaurant, a billiard

⁶⁹ Ibid., jeudi, 13 novembre, 1845.

⁷⁰ Ibid., lundi, 21 septembre 1846.

⁷¹ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 9 août 1845.

room and six bathrooms, along with very modest prices and coach service between the hotel and departing steamers. Rasco's Hotel offered excellent accommodation, good food and wine, waiters from New York and omnibus service to the steamers.⁷² There were some restaurants of note, including Dolly's Chop House and Shakespeare's Inn, this last offering fresh lobsters and oysters delivered weekly from New York. Of course, there was always fine wine, good liquor and cigars.⁷³

Smaller and of declining importance in comparison to Montreal, Quebec remained the second largest city in the colony. Its physical features were by far the most impressive of all the colony's major places. Charles Dickens was as much impressed by Quebec as he was unimpressed by Kingston. Of the old capital he wrote:

It is not a place to be forgotten or mixed up in the mind with other places, or altered for a moment in the crowd of scenes a traveller can recall.⁷⁴

Quebec's population, like that of Montreal, was varied and the Quebec Gazette estimated it to be equal parts English and French speaking, with the suburbs being generally French.⁷⁵ The city suffered a pair of disastrous fires in May and June of 1845 but demonstrated a great resilience. In June of

⁷² La Minerve, lundi, 6 juillet 1846.

⁷³ Mackay, The Canada Directory, op. cit., p. 192.

⁷⁴ Dickens, op. cit., p. 77.

⁷⁵ Quebec Gazette, Friday, May 27, 1842.

1846, Montreal's Revue Canadienne published an article describing the industriousness of its inhabitants and the great material progress being made there.⁷⁶ Sydenham had believed its greatest disadvantage to be long distance from everything and its lack of centrality.⁷⁷ The Executive Council in its report on the Seat of Government in 1843, recognized the advantages Quebec offered, fine fortifications, a thriving timber trade and excellent buildings but it believed the city too far away to be the capital of the Union and noted its very slight commercial relationship with Upper Canada.⁷⁸

Sydenham had believed that Toronto suffered from the same disadvantage of distance from the rest of the colony. What is more, the place was totally indefensible.⁷⁹ In 1843, the executive council repeated these same criticisms but also noted that Toronto was flourishing and full of promise for the future.⁸⁰ Like the city of Quebec, which had little relationship to Upper Canada, Toronto had slight contact with Lower Canada. In 1850, when the city finally became one of the alternating capitals, Lord Elgin, the Governor General, was quite pleased. What is more,

⁷⁶ La Revue Canadienne, mardi, 2 juin 1846.

⁷⁷ RG7 G12, Vol. 60, Sydenham to Russell, May 22, 1840.

⁷⁸ RG1 E1, State Books, Microfilm C110, Vol. 13.

⁷⁹ RG7 G12, Vol. 60, Sydenham to Russell, May 22, 1840.

⁸⁰ RG1 E1, State Books, Microfilm C110, Vol. 13.

Elgin need not have feared a loss of support from French Canadians because of the removal from Montreal. Ironically, Elgin believed like preceding Governors, that placing the capital in Toronto, an Upper Canadian and English-speaking city, would free French Canadian assemblymen from evil influences. Only this time, these influences were not their compatriots. They were the English-speaking anti-French fanatics of Montreal. Elgin wrote:

Bringing the French Canadians to this fine progressive well formed country, and placing them for a time in the midst of a British population who though they may have some John Bullish prejudices, do not cherish towards them, the jealous antipathies of Montreal, gives in my opinion a chance to the Province and to the Union which nothing else good have given.⁸¹

In 1841, Kingston had been chosen the capital in order to assimilate the French Canadians. In 1851, Toronto was chosen to protect them from the insult of the English speaking Montrealers.

While in Elgin's opinion, Toronto and countryside would have a most agreeable effect upon Canadian politics, the correspondent of Le Canadien was far from enchanted. He found the city to be quite uninteresting. There were only three days in the year worth being there, the twelfth of July, the fifth of November, and the twenty-fifth of December, and even on those days, good times were spoiled by too much drinking. The reporter complained that apart from

⁸¹ Sir Arthur G. Doughty, ed., The Elgin-Grey Papers, 1848-1852 (Ottawa, 1937), Elgin to Grey, May 31, 1851.

going to church on Sunday, Torontonians did very little and were extremely dull. He found the city very boring with its twenty churches all opening and closing at the same time. The only relief from Sunday was Monday, which the correspondent was happy to see arrive.⁸²

Canada's cities were pretty much the same, small and unsophisticated. None stood out as clearly superior to the others. Some were more beautiful and impressive because of their natural surroundings. All of the colony's four major places had their chance for glory, in becoming the capital of the Union.

The Similarity of their Situation II

Amusements, Entertainments and Diversions

Not only was the situation of Canadians similar in the different towns and villages across the colony, so too were their interests. While separated by distance and difficulty of travel, Canadians often did exactly the same things. They were titilated by the same diversions, enraptured by the same concerts and performers and excited by the same events. The manner in which they attempted to educate and inform themselves by mutual self-help was the same in all of the societies and institutes across the land.

What exactly were these common diversions and interests? What did Canadians, whether French or English,

⁸² Le Canadien, lundi, 31 mars 1851.

do to entertain or inform themselves? Certainly one of the major pastimes was the reading of newspapers. They abounded in every town and city in the colony, reflecting as many political points of view as existed in the colony. Despite their differences of opinion and allegiance, they were all amazingly similar in format and content. The material which they covered reflected the similarity of taste among readers in all of Canada. The stories may have been different from place to place and the details tailored to the interests of the particular region, but the intent was always the same, to entertain and relieve the reader from the drudgery and ordinariness of everyday life. That the papers were meant to amuse and titillate is quite clear, for once past the requisite political coverage which quite filled their columns, particularly during the parliamentary session, one could read of calamities, accidents and all sorts of bizarre phenomena. Extra space was filled with stale news from abroad taken from foreign newspapers. Excerpts of modern novels and current works also appeared. In the advertisements one could read all sorts of interesting tidbits, of goods and services, of miraculous medicinal remedies which cured numberless maladies, or perhaps of the arrival in town of a fencing or Italian master.

Weird stories were the common fare of all newspapers throughout the colony. They seized upon anything that sounded strange or out of the ordinary and lovingly elaborated upon the slightest detail. Fires were particularly

popular as well as tragedies. All the news that was fit to print, and some that was not, was published. In one short-lived satirical newspaper, there appeared a facetious want ad calling for a "shocking accident" writer who must at the same time be willing to apply his talents to "dreadful events," "dire mishaps" and other such melancholy matters.⁸³ All of this and more was graphically described in the press and what the papers lost in the lack of their visual impact they gained by their florid and fantastic literary style. For example, La Minerve announced the birth of Siamese twins at Sorel. The father, hoping to profit from the situation, announced his intention of bringing them into Montreal for the purpose of exhibition, despite the fact that they had died ten minutes after birth.⁸⁴ Le Canadien reported the birth of a strange turtle-like baby at St. Timothée.⁸⁵ Many a newspaper column was filled with reports on the dramatic story of Dr. Webster from Boston. The tale was of particular interest because of Webster's fantastic murder of a colleague, Dr. Parkman, the parts of whose body were found all about the medical college. The transcripts of the trial were printed in March 1850 and on July 4, rather poignantly, Webster's unsuccessful appeal to the Governor of Massachusetts was noted.⁸⁶

⁸³ Montreal Tattler, Vol. 1, No. 6, Thursday, September 12, 1844.

⁸⁴ La Minerve, lundi, 2 mars 1846.

⁸⁵ Le Canadien, vendredi, 15 février 1850.

⁸⁶ La Minerve, jeudi, 4 juillet 1850.

Newspapers were widely available in Canada. For example, while he may have exaggerated, Napoleon Aubin claimed that one thousand copies of Le Fantasque were printed but that as many as seven or eight thousand people read it.⁸⁷ Those who produced the newspapers consciously geared their contents to maximum effect in their own locality. The author of one article entitled, "The Press and the Union," claimed that the perspective of Canadian newspapers was exceedingly narrow and provincial because they confined themselves to the interests of their immediate region.⁸⁸ Despite their lack of scope and their exaggerated enthusiasm, the newspapers, a large sheet folded making four pages of densely printed type filled with everything from A to Z, surely amused and diverted thousands of Canadians with their cornucopia of subjects.

However, newspaper reading was not the only pursuit of Canadians. The papers were in fact a source of information giving the colonist ideas about other things to do. There was announced the most recent concert or lecture, diorama or visiting circus, play or club meeting. Entertainers of all sorts: singers, actors, ventriloquists and exhibitors, often visited all the major cities in Canada. For example, Torontonians, as well as Quebecers, had the opportunity to see the performances of Signor Blitz,

⁸⁷ Le Fantasque, lundi, 20 avril 1840.

⁸⁸ Monthly Review, Vol. 1, No. 3, March 1841.

ventriloquist and prestidigitator, or wonder at the glories of a South African giraffe and gazelle which toured the entire colony.

During the summer of 1841, many were the bated breaths and great was the anticipation of those who awaited upon the giraffe and gazelle.⁸⁹ In July the animals were exhibited in Toronto and from there they were taken all over the colony. They amazed the people who came to see them but one could rightly wonder at the condition of the animals. Sad announcements of the giraffe's demise at St. Jean in September coincided with descriptions of Lord Sydenham's funeral.⁹⁰

Indeed there were many such public amusements. In the autumn of 1840, Montrealers welcomed the quiet of the coming winter for the season had been interesting but frenetic, what with the visit of the group of gymnasts "les frères Ravel," Signor Blitz the magician, daguerrotype demonstrations and Mister Capps and Willoughby who exhibited their collection of birds and serpents.⁹¹ The situation was similar in other places. In the summer of 1841, Quebecers had been delighted with the wonderful vocal concerts given by little seven year old Miss Adelaide Philipps, and those of Mr. Love, billed as a celebrated polyphonist. The

⁸⁹ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, July 20, 1841.

⁹⁰ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, September 29, 1841.

⁹¹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 28 octobre 1840.

entertainment season was capped by the visit of the well-known giraffe.⁹²

One of the most intriguing attractions to Canadians in the 1840s was a fellow by the name of General Tom Thumb better known in French Canada as Général Tom Pouce. As in Europe and the United States, Tom Thumb was a stunning success in Canada. Canadians hoped that Thumb would not end his days like another famous midget, Mathias Gillia, who after magnificent receptions in the salons of Paris and even at the Tuileries, ended his career by working as a humble waiter. Of course it was Tom Thumb's size that astonished and the statistics varied, but for him at least the smaller the better seemed the best proposition. He was described as an enchanting well-proportioned midget with a largish head, blonde hair, weighing about twenty pounds and twenty-five inches tall. Born in Bridgeport, Connecticut in 1831, he became the toast of Europe and North America. When he left New York to visit England, there to be received by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, ten thousand people gathered to see him off. Strange indeed must have been the prospect of Tom Thumb of Bridgeport, lionized across Europe, visiting palaces and royal families, accompanied by his "précepteur, interprète, valet de chambre, et pianiste."⁹³

⁹² Quebec Gazette, Friday, September 10, 1841.

⁹³ Le Revue Canadienne, samedi, 3 mai 1845. See also, Le Canadien, vendredi, 21 juillet, 1848.

He visited Canada numerous times and interest in him revived on each occasion. In August 1841, it was announced that the General would receive in the salon of Quebec City's Albion Hotel. One wonders whose visit overshadowed whose, for Thumb's presence in the city coincided with the first official visit of the new Governor General, Sir Charles Metcalfe.⁹⁴ When this "vrai bijou de nain s'il en fut jamais" returned to Canada once again in 1848, he was again received enthusiastically. French Canadians were pleased to learn that he had spent ten months in Paris where he learned to speak French. Each time he returned, new allusions were made to his diminutive size and his European successes.

Mais, ce qui est encore plus curieux à voir c'est l'équipage liliputien dont la Reine Victoria lui a fait cadeau, un élégant carrosse fermé, avec deux petits chevaux, cocher, laquais à grande livrée etc.⁹⁵

Receiving at levees, doing his imitations of Napoleon, Nicholas the Great and other notables, Tom Thumb met with great success all across the colony in Toronto,⁹⁶ Montreal⁹⁷ and Quebec.⁹⁸ The novelty of his size, worn a bit thin perhaps, he would return again to Canada in 1852, his

⁹⁴ Quebec Gazette, Monday, August 21, 1843/Friday, August 25, 1843.

⁹⁵ Le Canadien, vendredi, 21 juillet 1848.

⁹⁶ Toronto Patriot, Friday, June 23, 1848.

⁹⁷ La Minerve, samedi 29 juillet 1848.

⁹⁸ Quebec Gazette, Friday, July 21, 1848.

greatness somewhat diminished and in company with P. T. Barnum's Musée et Ménagerie, sharing the billing with S. K. G. Nellis,⁹⁹ another familiar visitor to Canada and whose claim to fame was to have been born without arms.¹⁰⁰

One performer of international stature, who was the sweetheart of thousands of Canadians across the colony, was Jenny Lind, "the Swedish Nightingale." In October, 1851, when she came to sing at the St. Lawrence Hall in Toronto, the people of that city were delighted that she deigned even to come there and they were as much impressed with her generous charity as with her singing.¹⁰¹ Jenny Lind was all the rage. Stories of her largesse, beauty and success circulated throughout Canada. It was reported that some of her American concerts cleared as much as \$9,000. It was said that a house maid at the Irving Hotel, where Lind stayed in New York, sold locks of the singer's hair to the "young bloods" hanging longingly about at as much as \$6 per strand.¹⁰²

Torontonians were no less enthusiastic. There appeared only one advertisement for her concert, but she did not even need that.¹⁰³ No advance billing was necessary.

⁹⁹ La Minerve, samedi, 15 mai 1852.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., jeudi, 18 septembre 1845.

¹⁰¹ Toronto Globe, Thursday, October 23, 1851.

¹⁰² Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, October 9, 1850.

¹⁰³ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, October 15, 1851.

On the morning of the day of her concert, Mr. Nordheimer's Music Establishment was deluged and within an hour and a half every ticket had been sold. A constable was called into service to prevent the crowd from pushing too much. Scalpers had no difficulty either. Tickets which sold for three or four dollars in the box office, fetched as much as ten or twelve on the street.

Many an unfortunate hunter after tickets had reason to complain of bruised arms, crushed sides and all but broken ribs. In fact the Lindmania is just as intense here, on a small scale, as it was at New York or anywhere else.¹⁰⁴

Reviews of her Toronto concert astoundedly noted Miss Lind's benevolence, all of the proceeds of her concert going to charity. But it was the power of trilling her particular trademark, called the "trillor" or the "shake," which conquered audiences. She enraptured more than one thousand Torontonians when she sang the ballads and songs, like "John Anderson my Jo," "Comin' Through the Rye," and her famous "Bird Song."¹⁰⁵ Enviously and disappointed no doubt, Quebecers learned that Toronto was upon Miss Lind's itinerary of several mid-western American cities, such as Niagara Falls, Cleveland, Cincinnati and Columbus. Detroit, Milwaukee and Chicago, like Montreal and Quebec, were not to be granted the pleasure of one of her concerts.¹⁰⁶ They

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Wednesday, October 22, 1851.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Wednesday, October 22, 1851.

¹⁰⁶ Quebec Gazette, Friday, October 24, 1851.

would have to make do with reports in newspapers. So enthusiastic were Canadians for Jenny Lind that they would travel great distances to hear her. In 1850, in both Quebec and Montreal, excursion trip deals to Boston were offered, which included the price of travel, lodging, and a ticket to Miss Lind's concert there.¹⁰⁷

All across the colony the response to the visiting performers was invariably the same. Rarely was there a negative or critical word and generally the sentiment seemed to be one of gratitude. In Canadian newspapers, reviews of their spectacles were generally superlative in tone. That artists or performers would even bother to come to Canada in the first place was already a point in their favour. Certainly it would have been impolite to criticize negatively.

For example, in 1841 Napoleon Aubin raved about a concert given by Mlle. Euphrasie Borghese. The sense of gratitude is clearly apparent in Aubin's somewhat incredulous and enthusiastic review of the concert. He wondered, "Comment ce jeune rossignol des cieux chauds a pu s'égarer jusques dans nos forêts sombres et ignorés."¹⁰⁸ Mlle. Borghese also visited Montreal several times and the reviews of her concerts were similar to those of Aubin. The setting and description of a concert given by her in that city, in the

¹⁰⁷ La Minerve, lundi, 7 octobre 1850 and Quebec Gazette, Wednesday and Friday, October 4 and 6, 1850.

¹⁰⁸ La Fantasque, lundi, 23 août, 1841.

summer of 1850, was exquisite. In the sylvan verdure of Monklands, formerly the home of the Governor General and now become the Hotel Compain, Mlle. Borghese sang her programme, accompanied by the orchestra of the Twentieth Regiment, and read a little bit of heart-rending poetry. The recitation of "La mère et l'enfant," a little story about a mother who witnessed her child die of hunger, was particularly poignant. Mlle. Olivier, a child of seven years old who toured with Mlle. Borghese, performed upon the concertina, all to vociferous bravos and enthusiastic applause.¹⁰⁹ Another example was the Toronto Patriot's ingenuous astonishment with the wonderful performances of Senor de Begnis, an opera singer who sang excerpts from "Figaro."¹¹⁰ When he sang in Quebec City, he was greeted by similar rave reviews.¹¹¹ Concerts given at Rasco's Hotel in Montreal, by a company calling itself "l'Opéra français" and by M. Max Boeher, a violinist, were reviewed in the same enthusiastic manner.¹¹²

Rare indeed was a negative word cast upon entertainers who came to Canada and seldom were they unwelcome. One of the few examples of this was Quebecers' hesitation to

¹⁰⁹ La Minerve, lundi, 5 août 1850.

¹¹⁰ Toronto Patriot, Friday, September 8, 1843.

¹¹¹ Le Canadien, jeudi, 4 septembre 1845.

¹¹² La Minerve, lundi, 14 août 1843.

welcome the circus in the summer of 1845. The reluctance was occasioned by the fact that in the spring, the city had almost been totally destroyed by a pair of fires and it would have been quite inappropriate for anything as flippant as a circus to come to town at that moment.¹¹³ In another rare case of negative criticism, the author of La Minerve's "Chronique Canadienne" laid into "Le Cirque Great Western" complaining about its asthmatic horses and its weak and ridiculous gymnastics performances, but even at that, the circus was not a total loss for its rubber man was truly "formidable."¹¹⁴

Perhaps the consistent enthusiastic and positive reviews which appeared throughout the colony whenever anyone performed, partly illustrates the belief of many Canadians that they lived in a very unsophisticated and unelegant society. Comments in newspapers about Canadian audiences bear out the truth of the fact. The tone was one of embarrassment. For example, at one concert in Quebec City, it was noted how the spectators committed that universal and ever-continuing gaucherie of applauding at the wrong time or before the piece was finished.¹¹⁵ What is more, Canadian audiences were not always completely sober and at the end of a performance, their departure could be

¹¹³ Le Canadien, vendredi, 1 août 1845.

¹¹⁴ La Minerve, jeudi, 23 octobre 1845.

¹¹⁵ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, August 25, 1841.

quite boisterous and noisy.¹¹⁶ It is left to the imagination to wonder what the performers thought of them.

Besides the amusement offered by visiting performers, another pastime was a particular genre of travel, popular across Canada during the summer. Referred to as "Voyages of Pleasure" or "Pleasure Trips," places like the Saguenay, Cacouna, Rivière-du-Loup, Kamouraska and Caledonia Springs, attracted the traveller of ease. The pleasure of the cruise, salt-water bathing, or the curative powers of natural springs motivated such trips.¹¹⁷ So popular was this type of journey that one commentator in the Literary Garland chided Canadians, claiming that pleasure trips and public amusements were the means to satiate their appetite for luxury and idleness and had become major preoccupations.¹¹⁸ In fact, Canadians loved to travel in season when it could be done commodiously and in good company.

For all practical purposes, comfortable travel occurred only during July and August upon a well-equipped steamship. Summer travellers rarely had such an intriguing excuse as the thousand passengers who boarded the two steamers, Quebec and Sydenham, in order to view the ravages caused by the great fires in Quebec City during the spring of 1845. The trip which originated in Montreal was billed

¹¹⁶ Gazette de Québec, mardi, 29 octobre 1839.

¹¹⁷ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 9 août 1845.

¹¹⁸ Literary Garland, Vol. VIII, No. 3, March 1850.

as a weekend excursion.¹¹⁹ More often such tours were motivated by a simpler desire to go somewhere different and see something new. Hundreds of Canadians made these voyages every summer.¹²⁰

A description of one of these pleasure trips, in the summer of 1848, appeared in Le Canadien. The steamer, Alliance, left Quebec with its eighty passengers for a trip to the Saguenay. They were quite a mixed lot, some to educate themselves by seeing new vistas, others moved by simple curiosity, all searching something picturesque, magnificent and unspoiled. The trip certainly provided all of that. Descending the St. Lawrence, its south shore full of neat little farms worked by industrious and happy "habitants," the north more forbidding and spectacular with its imposing mountains and sparse population. Some passengers disembarked at Malbaie or at Rivière-du-Loup for salt-water bathing. For those who continued on, there was the marvelous sight of the valley of the Saguenay, stops at St. Louis de Ha Ha and Chicoutimi and an unexpected wait at Tadoussac because of fog which gave the travellers an opportunity to visit its tiny chapel. For a bit, the travellers were joined by a Roman Catholic bishop who was making a diocesan tour.¹²¹ His presence no doubt added to

¹¹⁹ La Minerve, lundi, 5 juillet 1845.

¹²⁰ See Le Canadien, mercredi, 31 aout 1842, La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 9 aout 1845, et La Minerve, jeudi, 26 septembre 1850.

¹²¹ Le Canadien, lundi, 24 juillet 1848.

the prestige of those name droppers who certainly recounted their voyage many times in the coming winter months.

Closer to home, there were the local watering places where one could nurse an arthritic or rheumatic condition or just relax. At Kingston, there were baths and mineral springs just beyond the penitentiary close to the lake where a saloon and bath house had been built, "and which have been much frequented by health and pleasure seekers."¹²² There were spots in Canada East like Varennes, fifteen miles from Montreal,¹²³ and further afield "les sources de St. Léon," about four miles from Rivière-du-Loup.¹²⁴

Belgium may have had its Spa and England its Bath, but Canada had the Caledonia Springs. They were by far the most attractive mineral source in the colony. William Parker, proprietor of the springs, took the liberty to send the Governor General, Sir Charles Metcalfe, a sample of the waters, hoping for official patronage and remarking at the same time that as many as a thousand visitors came to his establishment each year.¹²⁵ Such an estimate was not exaggerated, for the springs were a popular place and only

¹²² Smith, op. cit., p. 92.

¹²³ La Minerve, lundi, 1 juin 1846.

¹²⁴ Mackay, The Canada Directory, op. cit., p. 393.

¹²⁵ RG7 G14 Vol. 10, Miscellaneous, May 1843.

a day's travel from Montreal.¹²⁶

They provided the setting for an intriguing article entitled "Recollections of Caledonia Springs," written by "A Visitor," which appeared in two segments of the Literary Garland in May and June 1843. "Visitor" described the ambiance of the place and the people who came to it. Here was a healthful and salubrious retreat in the very heart of the North American forest, peopled with all sorts of wonderful and interesting visitors who had come to take the water of the four different springs,¹²⁷ breathe the good fresh air and enjoy the cultivated company.

There in the depths of the Canadian woods, the presence of a woman calling herself Madame la Marquise de Lisle, who had come to the springs to paint the flowers, motivated "Visitor" to soar into literary flights, describing Paris, its salons and revolutions, but at the same time, giving a detailed description of the springs. What a wonderful experience to spend three weeks at such a place. In addition to the fine weather and the beautiful ladies, one of the major pastimes was to observe the comings and goings of the different guests, to meet new faces, to see new fashions and participate in different amusements. There was so much to do, promenades, excursions, riding, sitting on the verandah, bowling in the nine-pin alley and

¹²⁶ La Minerve, lundi, 1 juin 1846.

¹²⁷ Smith, op. cit., p. 26.

even a ride on the little railroad of the Springs,¹²⁸ a circular affair built on the grounds "for the amusement of invalids."¹²⁹ "Visitor" wrote in the Garland:

I have almost convinced myself that the atmosphere possesses some active principle, as favourable to the healthful powers of the mind, and inimical to its distemper, as the waters are to the disorders of the physical frame.¹³⁰

Situated close to l'Orignal, about five miles from the Ottawa River, Caledonia Springs offered all sorts of comforts to the visitor. Apart from the mineral sources themselves, there was a bath house and a hotel large enough to accommodate one hundred and fifty guests. In town, there were two churches, stores, taverns, a post office, a doctor and even a weekly newspaper, Life at the Springs.¹³¹ Even if the visitor did not seek a cure for one of the mid-nineteenth century's popular illnesses, the prospects of a stay at the Springs were far from disagreeable.

Canadians did not only seek light-hearted amusements such as those offered by travelling performers and summer voyages. Even their more serious pursuits, like reading rooms and lectures, were similar all across the colony. From Gaspé to Sandwich, in most towns of any importance, there existed institutes, societies or associations, which, despite their different names and patrons, were all amazingly

¹²⁸ Literary Garland, Vol. 1, No. 5, May 1843.

¹²⁹ Smith, op. cit., p. 26.

¹³⁰ Literary Garland, Vol. 1, No. 6, June, 1843, p. 247.

¹³¹ Smith, op. cit., p. 26.

the same in their dedication to learning, progress and fraternity. There were different sorts of groups, benevolent and fraternal in orientation, which were referred to as the "National Societies." Celebrating the nameday of their country's patron saint, the English St. George's Society on April 23, the Scot's St. Andrew's Society on November 30, the Irish St. Patrick's Society on March 17, and The French Canadian St. Jean Baptiste Society on June 24, these groups provided a focus for the different ethnic communities which composed the Canadian population.

At times their festivities were quite splendid. For example, St. George's Day at Toronto in 1842 was of particular note for it coincided with the official visit of the Governor General, come to Toronto for the placing of the foundation stone of King's College. There was an impressive procession of dignitaries from the government, the city, the university and the church, all in their colourful robes. Sir Charles Bagot demonstrated his erudition by a discourse delivered in Latin. The event was accompanied by an official ball, in the opinion of the Toronto Patriot "the most brilliant revel ever witnessed in the city of Toronto; we might perhaps add in Canada."¹³² The governor made his entrance to the ball at ten in the evening and supper was served at one o'clock. Dancing continued til dawn.¹³³

¹³² Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, April 26, 1842.

¹³³ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, April 27, 1842.

More often, however, the festivities were quieter-- a church service, a banquet at a local hotel with endless speeches and equally innumerable toasts, to the Queen, to the fairer sex, to the old country, to the brother national societies, and to anything else worthy of lifting the elbow. An example of such celebrations were those held in Montreal in 1846 upon St. Patrick's Day. After they had assisted at mass and paraded through the city streets, one hundred and twenty banqueters, of all political and religious persuasions, sat down to dinner at Rasco's Hotel. Peter McGill was present in his official capacity as President of the Montreal St. Andrew's Society.¹³⁴ In the same year, the feast of St. Jean-Baptiste was another glorious affair. It was estimated that six thousand participated in the parade. There was a banquet as usual and the Institut Canadien sponsored a soirée under the official patronage of "les Dames Canadiennes," among whom the names of the wives of many prominent Montrealers appeared, such as Mmes. Vallière St. Réal, LaFontaine, Bourret and Drummond. It was a day of particular note since it was the first time the ladies had participated in such celebrations.¹³⁵ The evening held at the Marché Bonsecours was a great success and more than eight hundred people attended.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ La Minerve, jeudi, 19 mars 1846.

¹³⁵ Ibid., jeudi, 25 juin 1846.

¹³⁶ La Revue Canadienne, vendredi, 25 juin 1846.

Degrees of fraternity varied from place to place and from year to year. In 1842, the Quebec St. Jean-Baptiste Society celebrated with a temperance banquet, but the English-speaking community was not pleased with the flying of the French tricolor.¹³⁷ The Quebec Gazette faithfully reported the festivities of that city's different national societies and took great pleasure in noting how all the societies were represented at each other's services and celebrations. The members of the different national societies took great pleasure in celebrating the feast day of their country's patron saint, but they also did good works. They provided a means to solicit contributions and organize funds for the use of destitute immigrants of their national origin. In 1847, the annual report of the Toronto St. Patrick's society dealt mainly with problems anticipated by the coming of so many Irish at that time.¹³⁸ One of the goals of the Quebec City St. George's Society was to assist deserving persons of English origin, such as widows and poor. At their annual celebrations in April 1848, it was noted that \$26 9¹ 4¹ were collected for the charitable purposes of the society.¹³⁹

In addition to the national societies, there were also many groups whose main aim was to provide self-education

¹³⁷ Le Canadien, lundi, 27 juin 1842.

¹³⁸ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, March 9, 1847.

¹³⁹ St. George's Society Quebec, founded MDCCCXXVI.
Quebec: Printed by Gilbert Stanley, Ste. Anne Street, 1849.

and to support the advance of culture. The Mechanics' Institutes which existed in nearly all of the important and many of the lesser places are the most immediately recognizable. Here men gathered in the reading rooms to peruse the newspapers, which came from all over Canada and the United States and even from Europe, or to borrow a book from the ever-increasing library. There were meeting rooms where the members--the doctor, notary, lawyer, editor or clergyman--could hold forth on any given subject of his choice. Sometimes there were even collection rooms or museums containing maps or scientific equipment and the like. These Mechanics' Institutes and similar societies, throughout the colony, were committed to the principle of mutual advancement.

The Rules and Regulations of the Hamilton and Gore Mechanics' Institute were published in a booklet printed in 1844. Its object was the diffusion of scientific and literary knowledge. The means were its library, its museum, and classes and conversation. The advance and education of men's minds was not to be sullied by fractious discussions of political or religious matters.¹⁴⁰ The rules and regulations of the Montreal Mechanics' Institute demonstrated that the goal of "mutual improvement in the Arts and Sciences" would be achieved in the same manner.¹⁴¹ At Amherstburgh, at

¹⁴⁰ The Laws and Regulations of the Hamilton and Gore Mechanics' Institute, established 1839. Hamilton, printed at the Journal and Express Office, 1844.

¹⁴¹ By-Laws of the Mechanics' Institute of Montreal. Montreal: Donoghue and Manly, 1847.

the western extreme of Canada, the President of the Western District Literary, Philosophical and Agricultural Association, explained some of the objects of the newly established society in that region. Intellectual activities, he explained, were not among the primary preoccupations of Canadians. Nevertheless, in nearly every town or city there existed some sort of literary, historical or scientific society. The literature of Canada, far from vast, did at least contain the treasures of Susannah Moodie and Major Richardson. He believed it was necessary for the influential citizens of every community to cultivate the taste for literature and knowledge, and in that way,

. . . not only would the lamp of education and the torch of knowledge be ere long found shedding their genial light over every populous town and thriving village, but penetrating into every sequestered shanty in the lonely wilderness.¹⁴²

The desire for education and self-improvement existed across Canada and the very small spark was being kindled by just such organizations as existed in Amherstburgh and elsewhere.

In the larger centres, there were more prominent and imposing societies. In Montreal, the Natural History Society was established under the patronage of the Earl of Dalhousie in 1827 and provided an important centre of

¹⁴² By-Laws of the Western District Literary, Philosophical and Agricultural Association, as sanctioned at a General Meeting Held at Amherstburgh September 23, 1842: together with a discourse delivered by the President on the occasion, Elucidative of the object of the Association. Sandwich: Henry C. Grant, 1842.

civilization and learning in the city since that time.¹⁴³ Its members were the first to suggest that a geological survey be conducted in Canada.¹⁴⁴ They also attempted to amalgamate with the other scientific and literary societies in 1841 and 1848 but failed.¹⁴⁵ In a speech delivered to the Natural History Society, Major R. Lachlan outlined its history and regretted that union with the other societies had not been achieved. His speech underlined the unwillingness of Canadians to come together, even at this level, despite the fact that they shared the same goals and values. What a wonderful and noble thing it would have been, Lachlan believed, had all the societies French and English come together. They would surely have enriched each other and struck a decisive blow at the "narrow and sectional feelings and prejudices" which divided them.¹⁴⁶

Only a year after its foundation in 1844, l'Institut Canadien of Montreal boasted more than four hundred and fifty members, mostly from the professional and commercial classes. Thirty lectures were delivered and its library of some four hundred books, circulated thirteen hundred

¹⁴³ Major R. Lachlan. A Retrospective Glance at the Progressive State of the Natural History Society of Montreal. Montreal: printed by J. C. Beckett, 1852, 24 pp.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 11, 13.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

volumes.¹⁴⁷ Like other such Canadian societies, l'Institut Canadien was a meeting place for lectures, reading and conversation. While the Quebec City Mechanics' Institute had been dormant during the late 1830s, it revived again in 1840. Its library contained about eight hundred volumes and several lectures were delivered in 1840.¹⁴⁸ Having progressed to such a wonderful degree, in the spring of 1843, the Quebec Mechanics' Institute sponsored a Festival at the Theatre Royal where several speeches were delivered in both English and French and at which there were close to nine hundred visitors.¹⁴⁹ The Toronto Literary Society held its first meeting in January of 1843 and claimed an initial membership of more than one hundred, with W. H. Draper as its president and among its vice presidents, Rev. John McCaul,¹⁵⁰ professor of Classical Literature, Belles Lettres, Rhetoric and Logic at the University of King's College.¹⁵¹

The breadth and variety of the lectures delivered at the different institutes and societies across the Province are interesting and illustrate the catholicity of Canadians'

¹⁴⁷ La Minerve, mercredi, 24 décembre 1845 et La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 27 décembre 1845.

¹⁴⁸ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, June 3, 1840.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., Friday, April 21, 1843.

¹⁵⁰ Toronto Patriot, Friday, January 13, 1843.

¹⁵¹ Proceedings of the Ceremony of the Laying of the Foundation Stone, April 23, 1842, and at the Opening of the University, June 8, 1843. Toronto: H. & W. Russell, 1843.

interests. In 1840 at Quebec City, Mr. Weston spoke on "The Great Value of Mechanics' Institutes,"¹⁵² and Dr. Dill delivered a lecture on "Physiology,"¹⁵³ while Dr. Marsden illuminated an audience with his subject, "The Brain and its Appendages."¹⁵⁴ Dr. Painchaud delivered a lecture on "Digestion and Temperature." The ladies were invited to this talk and were assured that nothing would be discussed to prevent their attendance.¹⁵⁵ P. J. O. Chauveau spoke on "French Literature since 1789."¹⁵⁶ During the winter of 1848-49, Quebec City's Institut Canadien offered several topics in its lecture series, among them, "le Choléra Asiatique," "Saint Thomas," "Phénomènes Météorologiques," "Création et Existence de Dieu," "l'Histoire du Tabac," "La Femme et son influence," "Histoire du Québec sous les Français," "Lumière," and "La Conquête Normande."¹⁵⁷ Here was variety to satisfy any number of tastes. There was even a lecture upon "Les Sciences du Hachisch et l'Aliénation Mentale."¹⁵⁸ All across Canada similar series of lectures

152 Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, June 3, 1840.

153 Ibid., Friday, June 19, 1840.

154 Ibid., Wednesday, July 29, 1840.

155 Ibid., Wednesday, March 26, 1845.

156 Le Canadien, mercredi, 19 juin 1844.

157 Ibid., vendredi, 19 janvier 1849.

158 Ibid., vendredi, 3 mai 1849.

were delivered.¹⁵⁹

If the activities of the different institutes and literary societies were not enough, there always seemed to be visiting lecturers in town speaking in churches and the salons of hotels upon the latest marvels and ideas of the age--Phrenology, Magnetism, Daguerrotype, and the like. For instance, in the fall of 1848, a Mr. P. Miles, Esquire, held forth at Quebec City's St. George Hotel in a series of six lectures upon the amazing and novel subject, Mnemotechny, the art of improving the memory.¹⁶⁰ In the spring and fall of 1850, a Mr. Brownson, a Protestant converted to Catholicism, caused quite a little stir in Montreal with his talks on religion, education and socialism, in which he attacked Protestants and defended the Catholic Church.¹⁶¹

Oftentimes in winter when there were fewer visiting entertainers and companies and no thought of travel, Canadians made their own entertainment. The coming of the cold tended to dampen the spirits and in an article which appeared in early November 1845, La Revue Canadienne described the sentiment exactly.

C'en est fait! Nos beaux jours sont passés;
le vieux mois de novembre avec sa voix
gémissante et lugubre, ses vents criards

¹⁵⁹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, February 14, 1844 and Wednesday, December 13, 1848; Toronto Patriot, Friday, January 15, 1847.

¹⁶⁰ Quebec Gazette, Tuesday, October 10, 1848.

¹⁶¹ La Minerve, avril et novembre 1850.

et tristes, ses pluies glacées et monotones,
 ses humeurs noires, et ses diables bleus,
 nous est venu. . . .¹⁶²

Fortunately there were individuals about with a surfeit of enthusiasm and a willingness to participate, like Napoleon Aubin of Quebec or Rev. John McCaul of Toronto. Aubin, in addition to editing newspapers, seemed to be everywhere at once whenever Quebecers met together. Once, in a series of chemistry lectures, he demonstrated the properties and effects of "le gaz hilariant."¹⁶³ He lectured at the Mechanics' Institute.¹⁶⁴ He attended concerts and plays and was an important presence at the Vattemare meetings. Aubin was the founder of Quebec City's amateur theatrical group, "Les Amateurs Typographes,"¹⁶⁵ In the columns of Le Fantasque, he lovingly and in great detail recounted the latest presentation of the group. In June 1839, at Le Théâtre Royal, "La Mort de César," by Voltaire and "Le Financier," by de Saintfoix, were presented.¹⁶⁶ "Les Amateurs Typographes" were back on the boards at the end of October with the same plays. The Gazette de Québec did not have much to criticize in their performance but did note

¹⁶² La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 8 novembre 1845.

¹⁶³ Gazette de Québec, jeudi, 18 avril 1839.

¹⁶⁴ Quebec Gazette, Friday, April 21, 1843.

¹⁶⁵ J. P. Tremblay, A la recherche de Napoleon Aubin. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1969, p. 132.

¹⁶⁶ Gazette de Québec, jeudi, 6 juin 1839.

that they finished rather late, around two o'clock in the morning, followed in the streets by "des altercations de gens ivres."¹⁶⁷ Despite the raucousness, Aubin's players were much appreciated. In January 1841, they presented "La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV" and "Le Sourd ou l'Auberge Pleine"¹⁶⁸ and returned in the following October, much to the delight of Canadian audiences. Le Canadien hoped they would perform again during the long winter months to come.¹⁶⁹

In Toronto, the Reverend Dr. John McCaul, Professor and vice-president of the University of King's College, was a force in the literary and musical pursuits of the city. In addition to being a vice-president of the Toronto Literary Society, for a few years he edited The Maple Leaf or Canadian Annual, a yearly literary publication and he was also president of the Toronto Philharmonic Society.¹⁷⁰ On Boxing Day 1845, the society gave a concert of the works of Beethoven¹⁷¹ and in March 1846, it presented the "Qui Tollis" from Haydn's Mass No. 2.¹⁷² There were also plays at the Toronto Lyceum Theatre where, in January 1846, the Toronto

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., mardi, 29 octobre 1839.

¹⁶⁸ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, January 20, 1841.

¹⁶⁹ Le Canadien, vendredi, 29 octobre 1841.

¹⁷⁰ Samuel Thompson, Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer for the Last Eighty Years: An Autobiography. Toronto: Hunter and Rose and Company, 1884, p. 217.

¹⁷¹ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, January 6, 1846.

¹⁷² Ibid., Thursday, March 26, 1846.

Amateur Theatrical Society presented "The School for Scandal and High Life Below Stairs."¹⁷³ In the following winter, the Amateur Theatrical Society was assisted in their presentations by the officers of the Garrison.¹⁷⁴

Conclusion

And so life went. Canadians were restricted to the areas in which they lived by a harsh climate and difficulties of travel. And yet they passed very similar sorts of lives. They inhabited places which were alike in many ways and which offered them the same type of amusements, entertainments and diversions. Should it be surprising that the "Swedish Nightingale," the rage in Europe and the United States, trilled her way into the hearts of Canadians? Should it be surprising that the reading rooms of the different institutes were filled with men with the same sorts of interests, whether French or English speaking? Canadians were divided by environment and geography, language and religion. Should it be surprising that they were united by the similarity of their situation and by the oneness of their interests?

¹⁷³ Ibid., Tuesday, January 6, 1846.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., Friday, January 15, 1847.

CHAPTER THREE

. . . THE RINGING GROOVES OF CHANGE¹

The Spirit of Improvement

The mid-nineteenth century was a time of dramatic change. French and English Canadians shared the excitement and enthusiasm of the age. As has been illustrated, they had certain sentiments of inadequacy and backwardness, but that would not prevent them from committing themselves to progress. Canadians were enchanted by its symbol, the railroad, and were concerned to improve society. Many believed that education was the means. Throughout the colony, in the columns of its newspapers, in articles, and upon the lips of numerous lecturers, there was expressed wonderful praise of the times. It was believed that Canada was on the verge of great technological advance, particularly in transportation and communications. Canadians would not be exempt from the astonishing and extraordinary age of progress through which the world was passing.

The 1840s witnessed the completion of the canal

¹ Railways were one of the great symbols of modern progress in the nineteenth century. After his first train ride, Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote, "Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change." His poetical enthusiasm was not matched by his powers of observation for he believed that the wheels of the locomotive ran in grooves. See David Thomson, England in the Nineteenth Century, 1815-1914. Hammondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1969, p. 103.

system. This finished, thoughts gave way to the dreams of railroads. The first burst of important construction in Canada occurred in the 1850s, but the preceding decade was the period of optimism and imagination, the eve of the first Canadian railway age when the minds of men were exercised by the wonderful possibilities and the great potential riches of the new age of progress and industry. Imaginations untrammelled by restraints, like financing and construction, many believed that railroads and telegraphs would unite Canadians in a manner quicker and closer than ever before. Industry would enrich them. The colony seemed about to enter into a new stage of industrial advance. For English speaking Canadians, this evolution seemed natural and normal. Many French-speaking Canadians believed that the new age might finally provide them with the protection they had so long sought for their nation.

Not only technological change was promised. Man and society itself, if not perfect, could be improved. Improvement was the dictate of the age. In 1848, in the inaugural address to the newly established Institut Canadien of Quebec, its president, Aurele Plamondon, outlined the means to improvement. They were religion, education and legislation. He believed religion established order and stability in society. Good legislation maintained it. With these conditions, culture would be sustained and nourished by education.² The sentiments of Plamondon were mirrored

² Le Canadien, vendredi, 25 février 1848.

by the comments of an English-speaking contributor to the Literary Garland, who claimed that the nineteenth century was to be the age of the victory of learning and intelligence over superstition and barbarity.³

For French Canadians, the imperative to improve was clear and immediate. In the eloquent and forceful words of one member of the Legislative Assembly, Dr. Charles Taché, it was a matter of life or death of the nation. He explained:

Bordés comme [sic] nous le sommes par les Etats-Unis, contenant une population instruite, submergés par une emigration également instruite, que nous reste-t-il à faire? Nous instruire comme eux, en intelligence et industrie, et par là conserver notre indépendance comme individus, et notre dignité comme peuple; ou bien, nous familiariser à l'idée affreuse et déchirante de voir nos descendants jouer dans la société le rôle servile et dégradant de manoeuvres, de valets, et de charoyeurs d'eau.⁴

French Canadians could no longer afford to maintain old ways. They had to enter into the mid-stream of the nineteenth century.

For another French Canadian, P. J. O. Chauveau, member of the assembly for Quebec county and eventually superintendent of education for Canada East and the first premier of the Province of Quebec, the need to improve was equally pressing. In his own words, the "Canadiens" had been separated from France, the home of enlightenment and

³ Literary Garland, Vol. VII, No. 2, February 1849.

⁴ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Thursday, November 23, 1843.

progress, and subjected continuously to serious threats to their race. Now menaced by thousands of immigrants more numerous than the waves of the ocean and surrounded by a mosaic of populations different in origin, language, tradition and religion, Chauveau believed, French Canada

. . . pour se maintenir au milieu de tout cela a besoin de se rendre, non pas égale, je crois qu'elle est déjà; mais supérieure à tout ce qui l'entourne.⁵

So too, for Etienne Parent, the need for French Canadians to improve was crucial. While he was keenly aware of the threat of exterior forces, Parent also realized the importance of internal factors which undermined the continued existence of the French Canadian collectivity. French Canadians need not look to the Union or to the thousands of English-speaking people that surrounded them. They needed only to look at the weaknesses of their own community and to do something about them. In a series of lectures delivered to the Institut Canadien of Montreal in 1846 and 1847, Parent outlined the direction in which he believed French Canada should move; namely, towards industrialization and modernization. The challenge was direct and immediate.

If his advice was not always accepted, Parent was highly respected and his words were listened to closely.⁶

⁵ Ibid., Thursday, May 7, 1846.

⁶ Marcel Trudel, l'Influence de Voltaire au Canada. T.1. Montréal, 1945, p. 200. In reference to Parent, Marcel Trudel claims that the impact of his lectures were equally if not more important than the impact of the articles in his newspaper, Le Canadien.

Commenting upon an address delivered on January 22, 1846, La Minerve declared the lecture to have been the most important event of the week in Montreal.⁷ Entitled "l'Industrie comme moyen de conserver notre nationalité,"⁸ Parent took up a theme which he and others would repeat often, "que la seule ancre de salut est l'industrie." His only regret was that the leaders of French Canada did not act quickly enough to attempt to improve and change society.⁹

In the following November, Parent lectured once again to Montreal's Institut Canadien, this time upon "l'Importance de l'étude de l'Economie politique."¹⁰ He praised and cajoled. He considered it particularly encouraging that La Revue Canadienne published articles by political economists and learned commentators and regretted that the other French Canadian newspapers did not follow suit. The latter were filled with novels and news which he believed were idle relaxation and a waste of time. It would have

⁷ Parent was not alone in his allusions to "la seule ancre de salut." P. J. O. Chauveau used the same turn of phrase in the Canadian assembly. See Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Thursday, May 7, 1846. See also La Minerve, lundi, 26 janvier 1846. One writer to the editor used the same phrasing as that of Parent's lectures. See Le Canadien, mercredi, 10 juin 1846. Allusion to education as salvation was also made by another lecturer, Monsieur Valade. See La Minerve, jeudi, 5 février 1846.

⁸ Le Canadien, vendredi, 23 janvier 1846.

⁹ La Minerve, lundi, 26 janvier 1846.

¹⁰ Le Canadien, lundi, 23 novembre 1846.

been far more profitable to read authors like Smith, Say and Quesnay.¹¹ In his own words:

Une pareille matière, à mon humble avis, vaudrait bien les romans et nouvelles, plus ou moins frivoles, qu'ils nous débitent à la brasse dans chacune de leurs feuilles.¹²

But his distaste for too much reading of novels paled before his fears of the future of French Canadian youth. He despised backwardness and believed

. . . la malheureuse manie qui, parmi nous pousse la jeunesse instruite presque en masse vers les professions dites libérales, était une cause d'affaiblissement pour nous, et un juste sujet d'alarme pour notre existence politique et nationale en ce que toute l'énergie intellectuelle de notre race allait s'épuisant de génération en génération dans les luttes ingrates d'une carrière encombrée.¹³

Again and again Parent spoke of the need to improve. In a lecture entitled, "Du travail chez l'homme," delivered in October 1847, he complained that French Canadians simply were not willing to work hard enough.¹⁴ In early 1848, he spoke of the need of extending education to all French Canadians and warned of the dire consequences of the absence of education.¹⁵

¹¹ Ibid., vendredi, 27 novembre 1846.

¹² Lecture prononcé par Etienne Parent devant l'Institut Canadien, jeudi, 19 novembre 1846. Montréal: Imprimerie de la Revue Canadienne, 1846.

¹³ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁴ Le Canadien, mercredi, 6 octobre 1847.

¹⁵ Ibid., lundi, 28 février 1848.

Like Taché and Chauveau, Parent considered the need to improve pressing and crucial, indeed a question of national survival. French Canada was obliged to enter into the mainstream of modern nineteenth-century advance. Education, modernization, industrialization, good hard work; in a phrase, all the qualities of an improving society were the solution to the problem of survival in North America.

English-speaking Canadians too were convinced of the need to improve. By their very movement, the thousands of immigrants who came to Canada in the 1840s were a witness to the desire for improvement. Things could hardly be worse than what they left. Hopefully they would be better. The history of Upper Canada, prior to the Union, unlike that of Lower, was one of improvement. In fact, part of the acceptance of the Union by Upper Canadians derived from their hope that increased public revenues would further the advance and modernization that had already been undertaken there.

The modernization and progress of the nineteenth century was eagerly welcomed. Such enthusiasm was exemplified by a number of rather exaggerated comments which appeared in 1840 in an article written by Andrew Robertson, a regular contributor to the Literary Garland. Reflecting upon the wonders of the age, Robertson's opinions illustrated the wonder for things new and the commitment to improvement and progress. He contrasted the present, the

age of modern enlightenment, with the past, that of ancient barbarism. How wonderful was Providence, Robertson declared, to permit men to live in the nineteenth century. How the accomplishments of Greece and Rome paled before the modern inventions of railroads, steamboats and printing presses. The author was hard put to imagine life without the newspapers, encyclopedias and penny magazines of modern times. He compared the modern instruments of war-- twenty-four pounders and howitzers, with the battering rams and long toms of ages passed. New sciences, like that of phrenology, and new medical remedies, like Brandrethian pills, nine million boxes already sold to heal and palliate, indicated society's progress. "Who cares for anything that is not new? What did the ancients know of magnetism and electricity?" Robertson asked.¹⁶ The nineteenth century was the age of progress and improvement, a time when the rights of human beings would finally be respected and when the horizons of science and medicine would be limitless.

There was little doubt and even less skepticism in the different articles and commentaries which appeared upon the marvels of the age. "Nothing will astonish us in this age of Steam, Chloroform and Electricity," wrote the Toronto Examiner.¹⁷ Only the slightest touch of melancholy

¹⁶ "Modern Enlightenment contrasted with Ancient Barbarism," by A.R. in Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 9, August 1840.

¹⁷ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, November 8, 1848.

and nostalgia with the passing of old ways could be detected. For example, one writer complained that once the world was tied together by railways and magnetic telegraphs, there would be no more room for romance and imagination. How could there be any sad separation of lovers when the progress of the age made distance and travel unimportant?¹⁸

A few English Canadians realized that the path to progress was not to be easy. In an article entitled, "Why Canada lags behind in the Career of Improvement," the author outlined several impediments to advance. Profligate government expenditure, as demonstrated by an enormous civil list, and public support of sectarian colleges, was part of the reason. In addition, domination by priests and the nefarious effects of waves of poor emigrants along with extreme political partisanship, all strained the easy path to progress. Canadians, the writer claimed, were a "law ridden, priest ridden, precedent ridden people," a situation which was worsened by a ridiculous and absurd electoral system.¹⁹

In the same vein, the 1851 New Year's edition of the Toronto Examiner looked back at the first half of the nineteenth century and declared it a veritable age of progress. And yet, all of Canada, both East and West, was still cursed by bad government, clerical rapacity and land

¹⁸ Odd Fellows' Record, Montreal, Vol. II, No. 1, January 1847.

¹⁹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, September 5, 1849.

monopolies.²⁰ In the following year the same newspaper, its masthead now sporting a steaming locomotive, commented upon the new age of Railways and Telegraphs and wondered rhetorically whether there would be a corresponding moral and religious improvement.²¹

The Symbols of Progress

During the 1840s, Canadians both French and English often had cause for celebration, be it the completion of a new canal,²² a new market,²³ or a new theatre.²⁴ The novelty of the new gadgets of the age was the source of much pleasure. For example, in the 1849 annual report of the Quebec City St. George's Society, it was noted with evident satisfaction that fraternal greetings of the Quebec and Montreal societies had been exchanged by means of the telegraph service which had been initiated that year.²⁵ Canadians were also proud of the role they played in support of modern improvements. Such pride was exemplified by the fact that The Natural History Society of Montreal counted

²⁰ Ibid., Wednesday, January 1, 1851.

²¹ Ibid., Wednesday, July 14, 1852.

²² La Minerve, jeudi, 16 octobre 1845.

²³ Ibid., lundi, 5 janvier 1846.

²⁴ Ibid., jeudi, 2 juillet 1846.

²⁵ St. George's Society, Quebec, found MDCCCXXXV Officers and Members with Reports ending 5th January 1849. Quebec: Printed by Gilbert and Stanley, St. Anne Street, 1849, p. 5.

it a great honour to have been the first association to strive for the establishment of a geological survey of the colony.²⁶ The survey began in a small way but became increasingly important. In 1841 the provincial legislature set aside £1,500²⁷ to finance a study to determine the extent of Canada's mineral resources and the feasibility of their development; in addition, to contribute to the store of geological knowledge of North America.²⁸ In 1844 an act was passed providing for a permanent survey. Henceforward, the survey was to receive £2,000 annually and would also be required to submit a yearly report of its activities.²⁹ Commenting upon these developments, the Literary Garland, ordinarily more devoted to literature than science, noted with satisfaction the support which had been granted the support which had been granted the Geological Survey by the Canadian government. Finally, in the opinion of the Garland, the country's mineral resources would receive the attention they required.³⁰

For the Canadians across the province, the greatest and most apparent symbol of progress was the railroad.

²⁶ Major R. Lachlan, A Retrospective Glance at the Progressive State of the Natural History Society of Montreal etc. Montreal: Printed by J. C. Beckett, No. 22 Great St. James Street, 1852, p. 10.

²⁷ RG7 G12 Vol. 62, Bagot to Stanley. No. 35 Kingston, February 18, 1842.

²⁸ RG7 G20 Vol. 10, 2 and 21 February 1842.

²⁹ Statutes of Canada, 8 Victoria Cap. 16.

³⁰ Literary Garland, Vol. III, No. 2, February 1845.

Steamships may have been improved, canals dug, buildings built and telegraphs sent, but nothing could compare to the potential improvement of society which Canadians believed would be achieved by the coming of the locomotive. Not only would railways link Canadians together in a real physical sense but also the hope attached to this new invention demonstrated a fundamental community of attitude between French and English Canadians which transcended the distinctions that divided them, be it language, religion or politics. It is impossible to measure hope, and even more difficult to assess its importance, but the enchantment, the total belief that the railroad would improve the social, economic and even the moral fabric of society was a basic belief in the Canadas of the 1840s.

In all sorts of domains and from all corners progress was sought and supported. At the outset of the Union in 1841, Canada received a grant of £1,500,000 from the British government for improvements and public works, to finance canals, waterways, harbours, lighthouses, roads and the creation of a Board of Works.³¹ Despite the importance of all of these different improvements, however, the most valuable advance was the railroad. Newspapers wrote about them, businessmen invested in them, legislators incorporated them and Canadians dreamed of them. Canada was upon the eve of its first frenzy of railroad construction. In the 1840s the optimism and enthusiasm was far removed from the

³¹ Statutes of Canada, 2 and 5 Victoria, Cap. 28.

disappointment and bankruptcy which would come in the 1860s.

The total conviction about the possibilities of railways is perfectly illustrated by the pamphlet entitled, The Philosophy of Railroads, written by Thomas C. Keefer, a Canadian civil engineer and railway promoter. Keefer described all the wonderful and incredible benefits which would come to Canada once railroads covered the land. He compared the situation of the Canadas, without railroads, with that of their neighbour to the south. Here there was but apathy and indifference where all commerce stopped. In the United States there was constant activity for the railroad had conquered winter.³² Here were only "dreary and inhospitable wastes," frozen rivers, deserted wharves and warehouses and silenced steamers. The only discernible movement was the lumbering stagecoach struggling over nearly impassable Canadian winter roads.³³ The railroad, Keefer was convinced, would change all that. Under a series of headings entitled Speed, Economy, Regularity, Safety and Convenience, the author minutely described all the improvements to come with locomotives. Not only would the

³² Thomas C. Keefer, Philosophy of Railroads, published at the request of the Directors of the Montreal and Lachine Railroad, 3d ed. Montreal: Armour and Ramsay, St. F. X. st., 1850, p. 3. In his introduction to the reprint of this pamphlet, H. V. Nelles wrote, "T. C. Keefer was not so much a prophet of progress as one of its hot gossellers." See Philosophy of Railroads and Other Essays by T. C. Keefer, with an introduction by H. V. Nelles, ed. The Social History of Canada Series, Toronto, 1972, p. XXXIX.

³³ Ibid., p. 3.

railroad overcome distance, geography and climate, not only would it invigorate the commercial life of the colony, it would also civilize, pacify and sustain peaceful society. What is more, the railroad would rid the colony of poverty, indifference, bigotry, local dissensions and even political demagoguism.³⁴

It calls for no co-operation. It waits for no convenient season, but with a restless, rushing, roaring assiduity, it keeps up a constant and unavoidable spirit of enquiry or comparison; and while ministering to the material wants, and appealing to the covetousness of the multitude, it unconsciously, irresistibly impels them to a more intimate union with their fellow men.³⁵

Clearly the railroad was a panacea, the solution to present and future problems, the unifier of society, the vehicle of interchange.

Numerous lines were incorporated in the 1840s: the St. Lawrence and Atlantic,³⁶ the Montreal-Kingston line,³⁷ the Wolfe Island, Kingston and Toronto Railroads,³⁸ the St. Lawrence and Village of Industry Railroad,³⁹ and others. Several existing companies amended their charters. The government lent its support with Francis Hincks' well-known

³⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁶ Statutes of Canada, 8 Victoria Cap. 25.

³⁷ Ibid., 10 Victoria Cap. 107.

³⁸ Ibid., 10 Victoria Cap. 108.

³⁹ Ibid., 10 and 11 Victoria Cap. 64.

Guarantee Act in 1849 which was predicated upon the notion that for Canada to develop properly, railway construction was imperative. The government gave weight to the construction and guaranteed the interest of companies that had lines of not less than seventy-five miles, on the condition that half the line was already built and that interest did not exceed six per cent.⁴⁰ Such an act covered a multitude of lines. Though parliament itself may burn the blazing zeal for railways was not to be quenched.

Interest in railroads was a totally new phenomenon in Canada. Railwaymen and their supporters preached the gospel of improvement and progress. For example, the civil engineer who studied the projected Canadian line of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad painted a rosy picture of the future of places such as Sherbrooke, St. Hyacinthe and Longueuil.⁴¹ One of the more grandiose projects was the line to connect Quebec and Halifax.⁴² A report on this route veritably glowed. Such a line would be excellent for defence since it would facilitate the movement of troops. The mail would be accelerated and the parallel telegraph

⁴⁰ Ibid., 12 Victoria, Cap. 29. This act was passed during the parliamentary session of 1849 which was marred by the April riots in Montreal and the destruction of the Parliament buildings.

⁴¹ Report of the Survey of the Projected Line of Railroad from Stanstead to Montreal via Sherbrooke and St. Hyacinthe. Wm. P. Crocker, Civil Engineer. Montreal: printed by Lovell & Gibson, St. Nicholas St., 1845.

⁴² Statutes of Canada, 10 and 11 Victoria Cap. 122.

lines would be of inestimable value for business.⁴³ More importantly, the line would unite all of the inhabitants of the British North American colonies and open new markets to farmers thus increasing the value of their farms. The construction of the railroad would provide employment for the immigrants coming from the British Isles.⁴⁴ What is more, the colonies would become even more closely united with the mother country and all of the inhabitants of the empire with "their community of tastes, affections and habits" will become as one mighty people.⁴⁵ The faith in the progress and technological advance which the railway represented was total and is clearly demonstrated in the conclusion of the report upon the Quebec-Halifax line.

When we see what modern science has already achieved, why need we distrust the practicability of schemes that but a few years ago would have been condemned as extravagant and chimerical.⁴⁶

At the end of 1850, the Quebec Gazette reported that the country was "alive" with railroad projects.⁴⁷ Le Canadien remarked that railroads were now the major, very

⁴³ Report of the Provisional Committee of the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad. Halifax, N.S.: printed by Gossip and Coade, 1845, p. 6.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

⁴⁷ Quebec Gazette, Friday, December 20, 1850.

nearly the only, preoccupation of Upper Canadians.⁴⁸ Rarely was there criticism for such enthusiasm, but the Toronto Examiner did wonder whether two railroads, the Great Western and the Toronto and Lake Huron, could be supported by the trade of the same region and thought it would be better if the two companies joined and pooled their resources.⁴⁹ But the taste for railroads had been recently acquired and would not easily be sated. Everywhere lines were projected--to Portland, to Halifax, to Sarnia.⁵⁰

The conviction that the railroad meant moral improvement and commercial advantage drowned the odd doubt or touch of skepticism. Wordsworthian regret at the destruction of a simpler, more innocent way of life was not shared in Canada.⁵¹ The opposition of the young Turks at Montreal's L'Avenir stressed that the singular French Canadian way of life would be undermined, its agricultural base ruined and its population brought into ever closer contact with the English-speaking neighbours.⁵² Such complaints were not heeded. Enthusiasm was not dampened. For those who opposed the railroads, "la seule ancre de salut," the only means of preserving the nation was the preservation

⁴⁸ Le Canadien, vendredi, 14 février 1851.

⁴⁹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, October 29, 1845.

⁵⁰ La Minerve, lundi, 18 août 1845.

⁵¹ Literary Garland, Vol. IV, No. 3, March 1846.

⁵² Le Canadien, vendredi, 1 août 1851.

of the soil, and that by democracy and education, not railroads, not progress.⁵³ Le Canadien responded to and refuted such arguments.⁵⁴

The wonderful speed, the improvement of communications, the strengthening of the moral fabric of society and the possibility of profits which the railways promised brought French and English Canadians together. They may have spoken different languages and preached different politics but the charms of the railways were strong. French Canadians, themselves, were not above the occasional rhetorical flight of fancy. Trains were described by one Montreal newspaper in the following poetic and enthusiastic manner:

Voyez les longs convois trainés par un
charriot de feu, passant à travers les
campagnes avec la rapidité de l'éclair et le
bruit du tonnerre.⁵⁵

What is more, John Neilson, editor of the Quebec Gazette, obstinate and consistent opponent to the political union of the Canadas, enthusiastically supported railways in Canada knowing full well that they would entail closer communication and union of Canadians at the commercial and social level.⁵⁶ Neilson cooperated with other prominent citizens of Quebec, like René-Edouard Caron and François-Xavier Garneau, to

⁵³ Manifeste du Club National Démocratique. Montréal: des Presses de l'Avenir, 1849, p. 28.

⁵⁴ Le Canadien, mercredi, 6 août 1851.

⁵⁵ La Minerve, vendredi, 30 mai 1851.

⁵⁶ Quebec Gazette, Friday, December 26, 1845.

promote railway development in Canada East.⁵⁷ All sorts of people came together because of railroads. At one Quebec City gathering in 1846, to discuss a line linking that city with Halifax, Le Canadien reported that, "on y voyait l'élite de nos citoyens de toute origine . . ." and hoped that the meeting represented the beginning of a new era of cooperation and good feeling.⁵⁸

Likewise, Montrealers of different origins and languages came together to promote railroads. In 1845, George Moffatt, M.P.P. for Montreal, President of that city's chamber of commerce and of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad, went to Portland, Maine, with Augustin-Norbert Morin, French Canadian reformer and ally of LaFontaine, along with a group of other business men to discuss a railroad between Montreal and Portland.⁵⁹ Another railway meeting in Montreal in August 1845 brought a cross section of the city's population together. Such meetings were not surprising; in fact, they were essential, for as La Minerve reported, the recent commercial changes in Great Britain, namely the termination of protective tariffs for Canadian goods, made railways in Canada no longer simply an object of utility, but an indispensable necessity. Names like LaFontaine, Galt, Holmes, Hincks, Drummond, Beaubien and

⁵⁷ Le Canadien, vendredi, 24 octobre 1845.

⁵⁸ Ibid., vendredi, 24 octobre 1845.

⁵⁹ La Minerve, jeudi, 4 septembre 1845.

Cartier figured among those in attendance.⁶⁰

Another example of the unifying force of railways was a meeting held in Montreal in 1849. With the Rebellions Losses Bill and the initiation of free trade of the mother country, the political rhetoric of that year's parliamentary session was heated. The tension finally resulted in the burning of the parliament buildings and rioting in the streets of Montreal in the spring. Yet individuals representing varied political options from all across the province, such as Augustin-Norbert Morin, Sir Allan MacNab, Henry Sherwood, P. J. Egan, P. J. O. Chauveau, John A. Macdonald and others, calmly met at Donegana's Hotel in February 1849 to encourage railroad construction in Canada.⁶¹ Despite their politics, Canadians agreed upon the necessity of railroads and hoped that they would be the means to carry the colony into the age of progress.

The enchantment with railways in Canada is illustrated by the fact that the openings of new lines were often the most dazzling affairs. Canadians even celebrated American railways. At the opening of the American section of the Montreal-Portland in 1846, many Canadians attended the festivities. The route to Portland was lined with bonfires and church bells greeted the passing train. At the banquet there were sixteen tables, each one hundred feet long,

⁶⁰ Ibid., jeudi, 13 août 1846.

⁶¹ Ibid., jeudi, 22 février 1849.

providing plenty of places for the celebrants. This particular occasion was an edifying temperance affair, the principal beverage being ice water.⁶²

What a wonderful day it was when the Montreal-Lachine railroad opened in November 1847. The locomotive sped over the eight miles in only twenty-one minutes. Everyone who was anyone was there and the correspondent for La Minerve, who reported upon the occasion, reflected in wonder on the amazing scene at the canal. Steamboats, trains, telegraph lines, all converged to create a tableau of glorious activity. Canadians, he believed, possessed the genius to enter fully into modern times. Development was the key word and Canadians were capable of it. The group of dignitaries at the occasion was headed by the newly arrived Governor General, Lord Elgin. After the return trip to the Lachine Canal, a banquet was held at Donegana's Hotel. The Governor General, in a very convivial mood, addressed the gathering, expressing the hope that this line would be the first of many to be constructed in Canada. Elgin spoke of what he referred to as this "age of marvels," of telegraphs, daguerrotypes, steamboats and railroads, concluding that Canada had now truly entered into it.⁶³

Lord Elgin, along with several other Canadian notables, attended railroad festivities at Boston in 1851.⁶⁴

⁶² Ibid., lundi, 13 juillet 1846.

⁶³ Ibid., lundi, 22 novembre 1847.

⁶⁴ Ibid., mardi, 23 septembre 1851.

Held to celebrate the initiation of a line between Boston and Ogdensburg, the meeting was one to be remembered. Three thousand people attended the banquet and though it was a temperance meal, three Toronto alderman managed to get themselves locked up for drunkenness.⁶⁵ On the way back from Boston, Lord Elgin seized upon the spirit of optimism and joy to visit Montreal for the first time since the difficult days of the spring of 1849.⁶⁶ Railroads and such celebrations brought different people together and soothed many tensions.

To Canadians everywhere, French and English, railways were the wonder of the mid-nineteenth century. Torontonians read how good was fate to have permitted men to live in such an incredible time. Reflecting upon railroads, progress and the art of invention, the Toronto Examiner wrote:

The inexplicable coincidences presented in the progress of modern science, may be regarded as forming the most startling phenomena with which the present age is astounded and bewildered.⁶⁷

Montrealers were urged to take a good hard look at their dynamic American neighbours and to acknowledge the need to participate fully in this age of progress and advance.⁶⁸

When in 1851, Joseph Howe, the great Nova Scotian reformer,

⁶⁵ Samuel Thompson, Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer for the Last Fifty Years: An Autobiography. Toronto: Hunter, Rose and Company, 1884, pp. 351-355.

⁶⁶ La Minerve, mardi, 23 septembre 1851.

⁶⁷ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, March 31, 1847.

⁶⁸ La Minerve, lundi, 20 août 1849.

came to the Canadas to promote an intercolonial railroad, he was feted across the province.⁶⁹ The visit of Howe gave rise once again to the themes always attached to railways. Reflecting upon this most impressive project, the Quebec Gazette dealt not only upon the possibilities of commercial profit but also upon the social ties which would flow from the economic links such a line would create. The railroad, as it had often been described, would be the agent of commerce, society and civilization.⁷⁰

Railways provided the stuff of dreams in the 1840s. More banal considerations, like financing and difficulties of construction, were not considered. Problems would be for another time. Irresponsible competition, over investment and finally bankruptcy, would come later. Politicians and businessmen met together in the salons of hotels of Canadian cities across the province to encourage and initiate the construction of railroads. Editors and lecturers waxed eloquent upon the future which locomotives guaranteed to Canada. The spirit of hope and cooperation engendered by this symbol of the age pervaded the entire colony and illustrated a community of attitude in exactly the same way throughout the Canadas.

Better Farming

While the railroad symbolized the very latest in

⁶⁹ Ibid., mardi et jeudi, 8 et 10 juillet 1851.

⁷⁰ Quebec Gazette, Friday, March 12, 1852.

technological advance and augured a glorious future for the province, the spirit of improvement touched other domains as well. During the 1840s, concern for the amelioration of agricultural methods and farming was discernible everywhere. Both French and English Canadians realized the fundamental importance of farming in the colony. For example, Malcom Cameron, reform member of the Canadian assembly for Lanark County, Canada West, referred to farming as "the only support of this country" and complained that agriculture, so important a pursuit, was only rarely discussed in the Canadian legislature.⁷¹ Dr. Willian Dunlop, member for Huron County, Canada West, repeated the same sentiments, claiming that Canada was a purely agricultural country and yet the farmers were supposed to be content with the humblest rank in society.⁷² Likewise in Canada East, La Revue Canadienne concluded that agriculture was the only real source of wealth for French Canada. Of the three industries, commerce, manufacturing and farming, the last was the most important, "l'ancre de miséricorde" of Canadians.⁷³

While concern was general, the needs for the agricultural sector in the two parts of the province differed. In Canada East the condition of farming was

⁷¹ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Thursday, January 9, 1845.

⁷² Ibid., Thursday, January 9, 1845.

⁷³ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 12 avril 1845.

deteriorating. The flight of thousands of young French Canadians away from the land to the industrial towns of New England, reflected the seriousness of the situation. In Canada West, on the other hand, rural life was marked by freshness and vigour. Here at least, despite the problems of getting established and clearing a farm, the dream of owning one's land and working it profitably was clearly possible of fulfillment. Such promise is clearly illustrated by a handbook and practical guide for emigrants first published in 1841. Its author painted a very rosy picture. Claiming that hardly a bare subsistence could be eked out at home, Canada offered much more to the prospective newcomer. According to the guide book, a piece of land could be acquired easily enough and, by bent of honest hard work, a good and prosperous life could be made.⁷⁴ Despite the different sets of problems farming presented in Canada East and Canada West, the suggested solutions were the same across the province. Once again, in their views towards the improvement of farming, French and English Canadians were as one. The answers were: greater support of agricultural societies, creation of larger province-wide associations and the establishment of annual farm fairs and exhibitions. Education, by means of the societies, shows, model farms and agricultural schools, was the ultimate answer for the improvement of farming.

⁷⁴ Joseph Abbott, The Emigrant to North America, 3d ed. Edinburgh and London, 1844, p. 25.

While the great majority of the province of Canada lived close to the land and depended upon it for sustenance, the eastern section always suffered in comparison to the western. In his work, Canada and the Canada Bill, John Beverly Robinson expressed his opinion that French Canadians were hopelessly backward and not in the least development oriented.⁷⁵ He believed as a people they were not improving by nature and that they were satisfied with their fate, whatever and however miserable it may have been. Such opinions are clearly demonstrated by his remarks upon their methods of farming. Robinson wrote that French Canadians were

. . . content likewise to raise their oats, and their potatoes, among grass and thistles all growing together in such equal quantities that it might be difficult to determine which is entitled to be regarded as the crop.⁷⁶

Robinson was not alone with his negative perceptions of conditions in Canada East. Lord Sydenham also noted the backwardness of French-Canadian agricultural methods and believed the real thrust of farm development should be in Canada West, where the soil was more fertile, there was more room for emigrants and improvement would be easier.⁷⁷ So, too, Sir Richard Bonnycastle, in his book Canada and the Canadians, perceived the French Canadians to be lagging far

⁷⁵ The Hon. John Beverly Robinson, Canada and the Canada Bill, London, 1840, p. 54.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 54.

⁷⁷ RG7 G12 Vol. 60, Thomson to Russell, Montreal, May 22, 1840.

behind their English Canadian counterparts.⁷⁸ The best thing to do for the new arrival to Canada was to strike out into the wilderness, to work as mightily as possible, and to avoid the double danger of whiskey and rattlesnakes.⁷⁹

Whether it be a question of creating a new farm in Canada West or improving one that already existed in Canada East, the attitude to agriculture as a whole was common across the colony. The imperative was to improve. To counter the deteriorating situation in Canada East, Le Canadien suggested the creation of model farms and agricultural colleges.⁸⁰ The newspapers welcomed the first French language issue of William Evan's Journal d'Agriculture in March 1844.⁸¹ As a solution to agricultural problems, La Minerve suggested education of the farmer.⁸² Pamphlets appeared dealing with subjects such as crop rotation, weeding, agricultural implements and the care of animals. One such pamphlet described all sorts of bad farming techniques used in Canada East and suggested varying crops, rotation and fertilization as means of countering soil exhaustion. It ridiculed old and questionable methods, such

⁷⁸ Sir Richard Henry Bonnycastle, Canada and the Canadians in 1846, 2 vols. London, 1846, Vol. 1, p. 74.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 62.

⁸⁰ Le Canadien, vendredi, 2 juin 1843.

⁸¹ Ibid., vendredi, 29 mars 1844.

⁸² La Minerve, jeudi, 1 juillet 1847.

as letting young colts suffer a bit from lack of care and feeding for a couple of years in order to make them vigorous and healthy. Young horses, the pamphlet noted, should be properly fed.⁸³

During the 1840s, the Canadian Assembly passed several laws supportive of the improvement of agriculture. In both Canada East and West there existed several local agricultural associations. In 1845, the assembly voted annual grants to these groups, the money being distributed as prizes at their annual exhibitions.⁸⁴ In 1847, the Lower Canadian Agricultural Society⁸⁵ and the Agricultural Association of Upper Canada were both incorporated.⁸⁶ These larger organizations were created to support improvement in agriculture by means of collection of statistical information, publication of journals and the patronage of agricultural shows. They were also supposed to promote the establishment of model farms and an agricultural college.⁸⁷

Henceforward, yearly agricultural exhibitions were

⁸³ Traité sur la tenue générale d'une terre dans le Bas Canada, démontrant comment un sol usé peut être des plus fertiles sans capitale. Publié par l'ordre de son Excellence le Gouverneur Général et présenté et recommandé par elle aux cultivateurs du Bas Canada, 1851.

⁸⁴ Statutes of Canada, 8 Victoria Cap. 53 and 54.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 10 and 11 Victoria Cap. 60.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 10 and 11 Victoria Cap. 61.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 10 and 11 Victoria Cap. 61.

held but their contribution to improvement of farming can be questioned. The inaugural meeting of the Agricultural Association of Upper Canada was held at Hamilton in August 1846.⁸⁸ In the following year, the first annual exhibition was held at the same place. Like many a public gathering in Canada in those days, it proved to be a rather boisterous affair, a political rather than a farmers' meeting. The Governor General, Lord Elgin and Robert Baldwin addressed the meeting as did Egerton Ryerson. There were cheers for Elgin and Baldwin; hisses and groans, in the rhetoric of the Toronto Examiner, for "the prostitute Doctor, Minister of Public Instruction." Even the presence of Lady Elgin did not pacify the rowdies, and Ryerson, generally quite loquacious, promised not to talk for more than five minutes.⁸⁹ Annual exhibitions were held across Canada West, at places like Coburg,⁹⁰ Kingston,⁹¹ and Niagara Falls.⁹² In addition to judging the merits of livestock and crops, cheese and manufactures, the provincial agricultural exhibition even had a fine arts section.⁹³

In French Canada, improvements of farming methods

⁸⁸ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, August 25, 1846.

⁸⁹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, October 12, 1847.

⁹⁰ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, October 10, 1848.

⁹¹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, September 12, 1849.

⁹² Ibid., Wednesday, September 18, 1850.

⁹³ Ibid., Wednesday, September 18, 1850.

were impeded by the fact that many local agricultural societies were English-speaking enclaves. Few French Canadian names figured in the lists of prize winners.⁹⁴ While concern was often expressed about agriculture in Canada, the suggested solutions were rather unrelated to the immediate needs of Canadian farmers. The officers of the Lower Canadian Agricultural Society were mostly members of the Assembly, its secretary being William Evans, editor of the Agricultural Journal (Journal d'Agriculture). Their approach was rather like that of the many mutual education societies which existed in Canada. Education was the ultimate solution to agricultural problems and the means was the establishment of a museum and library. The society also recognized the need for an agricultural college and wished to establish communications with local associations in order to collect statistics and information.⁹⁵

In 1850, La Minerve indignantly noted a story run by the Montreal Herald concerning the inferiority of Lower Canadian agriculture. The French Canadian newspaper attributed the situation to the fact that Lower Canada had been exploited by Upper Canada.⁹⁶ A special committee of the legislative assembly recognized the deficiency of Canada East but did not attribute it to exploitation by Canada West.

⁹⁴ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1844-5, Appendix V.

⁹⁵ La Minerve, lundi, 11 octobre 1847.

⁹⁶ Ibid., lundi, 30 septembre 1850.

In fact, its members found the soil and climate of Canada East very good. The real problem of French Canadian farming lay in poor techniques, particularly in the realm of fertilization, rotation and livestock breeding. The solutions they suggested were hardly more practical. Once again, education was the answer. Although the committee realized that farmers needed more immediate help, it did not believe the local societies were doing the job. Despite its findings, the committee fell back upon old and inadequate solutions, such as the creation of model farms and agricultural colleges.⁹⁷

The improvement of farming was a concern to all Canadians, French and English. The solutions, inadequate and impractical though they may have been, were exactly the same in all of Canada. Again the spirit of improvement, this time in the agricultural domain, pervaded the minds of Canadians everywhere and illustrated a community of attitudes which transcended any of their distinctions.

Education: The Means to Advance

Interestingly enough, education of the farmer was seen as one of the means to improvement. In fact, education in all areas of human endeavour was believed to be the most effective way to improve. Differences of politics and religion have left a tradition of serious educational disputes during the union. Common school bills regularly

⁹⁷ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1850,
Appendix TT.

introduced and amended by the assembly were often the occasion of bitter debates. Liberals clashed with conservatives. Churchmen opposed the establishment of a system of non-denominational schools. As separate schools became more ensconced, fears of French Canadians and the influence of Roman Catholic bishops increased. The university question pitted liberal against conservative, populist against elitist, anti-clerical against churchmen.

But apart from the political and religious elements of educational disputes, when education was considered for its own sake, most Canadians, be they French or English, believed it was the means to improvement. For example, in 1841 the Literary Garland was quick to notice Charles Mondelet's "Letters on Elementary and Practical Education" and to praise their goal, namely to break down the unnatural barriers which separated the different races who inhabited the province.⁹⁸ Anything said or done to further education was worthy of praise. The Common School Act passed by the first union assembly was noticed across the province. Both the Toronto Patriot⁹⁹ and Toronto Examiner¹⁰⁰ praised the act as a great step forward. The bill which provided for the establishment and maintenance of schools throughout

⁹⁸ Literary Garland, Vol. 111, No. 8, July 1841. See also Charles Mondelet, Letters on Elementary and Practical Education. Montreal: printed by John James Williams, 1841, p. 8.

⁹⁹ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, October 26, 1841.

¹⁰⁰ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, September 22, 1841.

Canada, allowed an annual subsidy of £50,000 and the creation of district school councils. The law also contained a minority clause to protect the rights of religious dissenters. Despite the praise, the Toronto Examiner warned that it would be religious differences that would finally hamper the creation of a single school system in Canada.¹⁰¹ The truth of the newspaper's warning was illustrated by the objections raised by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec, Joseph Signay. Careful not to present himself as opposed to education as such, the bishop expressed the opinion that the new law would be prejudicial to proper education. For him, schooling was a moral and religious matter and the new act did not give enough place to the clergy. Signay wrote:

Nous sommes bien décidément d'opinion que le projet proposé ne saurait atteindre le but pour lequel il a été dressé et qu'il suscitera, s'il devient loi un mécontentement général au grand préjudice de l'éducation.¹⁰²

For Signay the law gave too much power to secular authority, particularly to the proposed superintendent of education who was to choose all regional examiners, select texts and decide upon curriculum.¹⁰³

Another education act was passed in 1844 which the Literary Garland considered one of the most important measures since the Union was proclaimed.¹⁰⁴ When on

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Wednesday, January 12, 1842.

¹⁰² RG7 G20 Vol. 5, 17 and 21 August, 1841.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 17 and 20 August, 1841.

¹⁰⁴ Literary Garland, Vol. 11, No. 6, June 1844.

occasion some people opposed education, the attitude was one of shock and chagrin. In the mid-1840s, significant opposition to the operation of the different school bills developed in Lower Canada. Those who opposed the application of the education laws came to be known as "les éteignoirs", opponents called enemies of their country.¹⁰⁵ While they claimed not to be opposed to education, "les éteignoirs" objected to the manner in which direct local taxes were levied for the construction of schools.¹⁰⁶ Such an attitude earned them accusations of being reactionary and evil. La Minerve wrote darkly of the goals of those who opposed the school laws.

Que nos compatriotes soient les scieurs de bois et les valets des étrangers. Voilà à quoi tendent leurs machinations diaboliques.¹⁰⁷

The newspaper even claimed to be scandalized that the Quebec Gazette and l'Aurore des Canadas stooped to accept letters from them.¹⁰⁸ Considerable surprise was expressed when Etienne Parent declared publicly that he too shared the sentiments of these opponents of the school laws because he, like them, was opposed to the method of direct local

¹⁰⁵ La Minerve, jeudi, 22 octobre 1846. See also Thomas Chapais, "La guerre des éteignoirs," in Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Series 3, Vol. 22, Sect. 1 (May 1928), pp. 1-6.

¹⁰⁶ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Thursday, May 7, 1846.

¹⁰⁷ La Minerve, lundi, 28 septembre 1846.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., jeudi, 29 octobre 1846.

taxation. While Parent could not be considered an opponent of education, he too earned the epithet of "éteignoir."¹⁰⁹

Despite opposition in Lower Canada, the conviction that schooling was the means to improve society was illustrated again and again. In an article over four columns long, La Minerve expressed its belief that education destroyed ignorance and prejudice while at the same time it created moral and useful citizens. It was for that reason that the paper criticized the classical colleges in Lower Canada as being elitist and not at all adapted to educating and improving the lot of the commercial and industrial classes.¹¹⁰ When the colleges did attempt to reform or change their methods and curriculum, as did the Collège de Chambly in 1844, it was an occasion for congratulations.¹¹¹ La Minerve remained constant to its conviction that education should be for everyone. In 1847, it took up this theme declaring that farmers and workers should be schooled for they were all at the same time men, citizens and Christians, with a multiplicity of responsibilities and obligations toward society.¹¹² It was not alone with its concern for education. So, too, La Revue Canadienne pointed to the English-speaking

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., vendredi, 16 mars 1848.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., jeudi, 13 octobre 1842.

¹¹¹ Ibid., jeudi, 5 septembre 1844.

¹¹² Ibid., jeudi, 1 juillet 1847.

neighbours surrounding French Canada, foreign in customs and language, enlightened, instructed and industrious. To countervail this strength, the only means was education. It also criticized the classical orientation of education offered in Canada East, and suggested more money be spent and more practical subjects taught. Its forthright message was to forget the "icing," Latin, piano and music, and get down to basics.¹¹³ The "glacage," appropriately enough, was left to the ladies. In a description of the material offered by Les Dames de Sacré Coeur de Montréal, the basics were fairly well avoided for the more classical subjects.¹¹⁴

All sorts of suggestions were made to improve the quality of education. In a speech upon elementary education in Lower Canada delivered to the Institut Canadien of Montreal, Augustin-Norbert Morin spoke of the methods of the "Frères des Ecoles Chretiennes." He found their instruction to be the most organized and rational, with a practical curriculum and students divided into classes. Indeed, Morin suggested that their system be extended to all of Canada East. In addition, he recommended the establishment of model schools in every county, a library in each parish, the introduction of uniform texts, and better paid and organized teachers.¹¹⁵ The same kind

¹¹³ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 18 janvier 1845.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., samedi, 1 mars 1845.

¹¹⁵ La Minerve, jeudi, 1 janvier 1846.

of ideas were treated by Amable Berthelot in a speech delivered to the "Association des Instituteurs du District du Québec." He believed that in a country like Canada, basic subjects like reading, writing and arithmetic, along with a bit of grammar and measuring, should be stressed. In more civilized and advanced countries, like France, other subjects could be offered.¹¹⁶ One lecturer, expressing similar thoughts, told a group of Montreal teachers that education was truly the means to improve society. It developed the intellect, was the foundation of moral society, united nations, assured abundance and maintained order.¹¹⁷ Clearly, the theme of education as salvation, as the keystone of improvement, was apparent in the thoughts of French Canadians.

Societies and groups which seemed to espouse the advance of education were praised. For example in 1844, the creation of the l'Institut Canadien was welcomed by the press¹¹⁸ and supported by the patronage and presence of many of Montreal's important citizens.¹¹⁹ Concern for the advance

¹¹⁶ Discours de M. Berthelot devant une assemblée de l'Association des Instituteurs du District de Québec, 10 janvier 1846.

¹¹⁷ La Minerve, jeudi, 5 février 1846.

¹¹⁸ La Minerve, jeudi, 19 décembre 1844 et La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 4 janvier 1845.

¹¹⁹ La Minerve, lundi, 10 mai 1847. For example, M. de Charbonnel delivered a lecture entitled "Caractères de la Société Chrétienne," in the series of Institut Canadien lectures to an audience of approximately seven to eight hundred people at St. Jacques Church. See La Minerve, jeudi, 29 avril 1847.

of education permitted even of praise for the English in Canada. For example, in 1847, one lecturer, Antoine Gerin-Lajoie, noted that the English-speaking population of Montreal had several libraries and reading rooms, among them, the Mercantile Library and Newsroom for the merchant class, the reading room of the Mechanics' Institute, and the collection of the Natural History Society. For the French Canadians there was only "La Bibliothèque des Bons Livres," a commendable collection of spiritual and pious titles supported by the clergy of Montreal, but which unfortunately did not have a wide appeal.¹²⁰

Literary reviews which espoused the cause of education were warmly welcomed. La Revue Canadienne, Journal Scientifique et Littéraire et Recueil de Nouvelles, Légendes, Anecdotes, Episodes et Récits Instructifs et Amusants, appeared in 1845 and declared itself neutral in politics. The magazine claimed that it was interested primarily in the disappearance of national and religious rivalries in Canada. Time and education, it was convinced, would be the means.¹²¹ It believed French Canadians lacked education, science, energy and industry.¹²² Despite this situation, La Revue Canadienne was convinced that society

¹²⁰ La Minerve, vendredi, 14 mai 1847.

¹²¹ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 4 janvier 1845.

¹²² Ibid., samedi, 4 janvier 1845. These ideas also appeared in the prospectus of La Revue Canadienne which appeared in several Canadian newspapers in December 1844.

could be improved and set itself the task to promote that cause. It urged French Canadians to read the Literary Garland, not only as an excellent means to become attuned to the most recent developments in English Canadian literature¹²³ but also as an effective way to learn the English language.¹²⁴ For its part, the Literary Garland welcomed the appearance of the French magazine and returned the compliment by wishing it every success.¹²⁵ Like so many French Canadians, the creators of the French magazine pointed to the dynamism of American society¹²⁶ and noted admiringly the societies and institutes which existed among the English-speaking population of Canada.¹²⁷ They believed French Canadians should do as much.

English Canadians were equally convinced of the goodness of education. For them as well, the issue was somewhat clouded by politics and religion. Reflections upon education as such were rare. This can partly be explained by the political and denominational conflict raised by education. For example, unlike Jean-Baptiste Meilleur who was the superintendent of Education for Canada East, Egerton Ryerson, who filled the same function in

123 Ibid., samedi, 11 janvier 1845.

124 Ibid., samedi, 15 mars 1845.

125 Literary Garland, Vol. III, No. 3, March 1845.

126 La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 4 janvier 1845.

127 Ibid., samedi, 8 février 1845.

Canada West, was a highly partisan personality who figured in many political and religious disputes from the beginning of his career. As the young editor of the Christian Guardian, he challenged John Strachan and the predominance of the Church of England in Upper Canada. After he became superintendent, Ryerson elicited much bad feelings from the reformers of Canada West because of his public defence of Sir Charles Metcalfe, the foe of responsible government. Ryerson accused the Toronto Reform Association to be Canada's version of the "Committee of Public Safety." Its president, R. B. Sullivan, who had written several articles critical of the Metcalfe administration, the superintendent called, an "unscrupulous calumniator," a "sneering assailant" and a "downright falsifier and truthless vituperator."¹²⁸ The Toronto reform press replied in kind characterizing Ryerson as the knight errant to the Governor General¹²⁹ and accusing him of being a tool of the administration.¹³⁰ Frequently and readily embroiled in this kind of dispute, it is hardly surprising that Ryerson's role as superintendent of education was sometimes forgotten. In 1844 it was simply too much for the Toronto Examiner to

¹²⁸ Egerton Ryerson, The Honourable R. B. Sullivan's attacks upon Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe refuted by Egerton Ryerson; being a reply to the Letters of Legion. Toronto: British Colonist, 137 King St., 1844, p. 5.

¹²⁹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, June 5, 1844.

¹³⁰ Ibid., Wednesday, September 18, 1844.

stand, when it learned Ryerson was to make a grand European tour to study the different school systems there. What was worse, the trip was at public expense.¹³¹

Such rhetoric was typical of the entire period and discussion of education in Canada West, instead of being an objective reflection upon its values, raised passionate, political and partisan response. Even if Ryerson had a good idea or a reasonable suggestion for the school system in Canada West, it is unlikely that his oponents would have admitted it. The Toronto Examiner pursued him relentlessly accusing him of trying to introduce the "Prussian system" into Canada,¹³² and declaring the superintendent totally incapable of his task.¹³³ Articles were sensationally headlined as "Education: Is the German System Suited to Canada?"¹³⁴ Later on Ryerson was "unmasked" as the author of the Draper government's 1847 University Bill.¹³⁵ When finally the reformers came into government in 1848, one of the first things to be done, the Toronto Examiner fervently hoped, would be the removal of the superintendent.¹³⁶

Despite the political partisanship, Ryerson did

¹³¹ Ibid., Wednesday, September 18, 1844.

¹³² Ibid., Wednesday, November 18, 1845.

¹³³ Ibid., Wednesday, December 6, 1846.

¹³⁴ Ibid., Wednesday, December 30, 1846.

¹³⁵ Ibid., Wednesday, December 8, 1847.

¹³⁶ Ibid., Wednesday, May 3, 1848.

express some rather advanced ideas about education and the Report he wrote based on his tour of Europe was not all that bad. He observed school systems in Great Britain, Prussia, Switzerland and the United States and his suggestions were based upon what he considered to be the best features of all of these schools.¹³⁷ Although he did not visit Canada East, his report sounded similar to the views of French Canadians upon education.¹³⁸ A system of general education in Upper Canada would be extremely beneficial since instruction prevented poverty, the companion of misery and crime.¹³⁹ Once again in his report the theme of education as the basis of moral and orderly society appeared. Like so many commentators in French Canada, Ryerson also stressed that it be available to all and that it be practical.¹⁴⁰ Useful subjects like reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic were to be the important offerings of the schools. More advanced matter like grammar, geography, bookkeeping, algebra, geometry and history could come later.¹⁴¹

137 Egerton Ryerson, Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada. Printed by order of the Legislative Assembly. Montreal: Lovell and Gibson, 1847, p. 10.

138 For a similarity of views, see the opinions of Amable Berthelot in his Dissertation sur l'Instruction Primaire. Lue à la société de discussion du Québec, lundi, 12 mai 1845. Québec: Imprimée par Augustin Côté et Cie, 1845.

139 Egerton Ryerson, Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, op. cit., p. 10.

140 Ibid., p. 20.

141 Ibid., p. 63.

Ryerson also argued for the organization and rationalization of the school system from top down, with normal schools, trained teachers, classification of schools and the regulation and uniformity of texts.¹⁴² The superintendent also considered the religious and moral value of education to be important. He believed that instruction in Canada West should be Christian in foundation, principles and spirit, and presumed that bible instruction would be offered¹⁴³ within the framework of a mixed non-sectarian system open and acceptable to all denominations.¹⁴⁴ He particularly admired the Irish National Board of Education which was composed of individuals from different religions.¹⁴⁵ The same sort of board was created in Canada West and even Michael Power, the first Roman Catholic Bishop of Toronto was a member.¹⁴⁶ At the opening of the Normal School in Toronto in 1847, Ryerson made a particular point to eulogize Power who died as a result of his ministrations to the Irish immigrants.¹⁴⁷ Despite his efforts to promote cooperation and community in the approach to schools in Canada West, such

¹⁴² Egerton Ryerson, Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁴⁶ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, July 7, 1846.

¹⁴⁷ Toronto Patriot, Friday, October and Tuesday, November 2, 1847.

a spirit of good feeling was not to endure. M. de Charbonnel, the next Roman Catholic Bishop of Toronto, was to become a great champion of separate schools.

Political and religious divisions hid the fact that English-speaking Canadians, too, were interested in education. In Canada West, as in Canada East, there existed the same societies and groups dedicated to mutual improvement. Anything to promote education was commented upon. Ryerson's report was clearly progressive and when he undertook to publish a Journal of Education, it was welcomed by the Toronto press.¹⁴⁸

Putting aside religion and politics, a common attitude toward education shared by Canadians is clearly discernible. They believed education should be available to all because it created and sustained moral and orderly society. They believed education combatted poverty and contributed to the well being of the entire community. In a phrase, education was the means to improvement. What differences towards education that existed between French and English Canadians, derived from their particular religious and political divisions, and not from any fundamental difference of views. Schooling was absolutely necessary for an improving society.

Celebrating the Modern Age

Enchanted with the age, convinced of the possibilities

¹⁴⁸ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, May 9, 1848.

of improving and with the means at hand, there existed in Canada, during the first decade of the Union, a tangible spirit of optimism. French Canadians realized they must enter into the spirit of the age in order to protect themselves as a nation and for their part, English-speaking Canadians were also committed to improvement. This spirit engendered a great deal of cooperation, community of interest and hope. In September 1846, La Minerve referred to an article which appeared in the Montreal Economist about the possibilities of Canada becoming an industrial and manufacturing country.¹⁴⁹ Already there were cotton factories at Sherbrooke and Chambly, woolen mills at Sherbrooke, Coburg and Newcastle. Montreal was the centre of activity with all sorts of factories and tanneries. Glass was produced at St. Jean and there were steel mills at St. Maurice. Paper mills proliferated in both Canada East and West.¹⁵⁰ In October 1849, the Quebec Gazette began publishing a series of articles on Canadian industry, first describing the paper mill of Macdonald and Logan at Portneuf,¹⁵¹ later describing foundries,¹⁵² a starch factory, a steam sawing mill and a nail factory.¹⁵³

149 La Minerve, jeudi, 24 septembre 1846.

150 Ibid., jeudi, 24 septembre 1846.

151 Quebec Gazette, Monday, October 1, 1849.

152 Ibid., Saturday, January 5, 1850.

153 Ibid., Saturday, January 26, 1850.

One of the most astounding manifestations of the community of spirit that existed was the response of Canadians to the announcement of a great industrial exposition to be held in London in the spring of 1851. Several newspapers commented upon it¹⁵⁴ and Lord Elgin, in his speech to the opening of the legislature in Toronto in 1850, officially announced it.¹⁵⁵ It was to be an "Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations."¹⁵⁶ Plans for Canadian participation were considered almost immediately.¹⁵⁷ A parliamentary committee was created to decide upon the nature and manner of the Canadian presence at London.¹⁵⁸

Local industrial exhibitions were held all over the country and it was decided to hold a provincial exposition at Montreal where Canadian goods and displays would be chosen for the London fair. At the annual Canada West agricultural exposition held at Niagara Falls, in addition to the usual displays of livestock, crops, cheese, fine arts,

¹⁵⁴ Quebec Gazette, Tuesday, April 23, 1850, La Minerve, lundi, 18 février 1850, and Le Canadien, mercredi 3 avril 1850.

¹⁵⁵ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, May 15, 1850.

¹⁵⁶ RG1 E4 Vol. 6, Pt. 1, Circular, Grey to Elgin, January 31, 1851 and Vol. 6, Pt. 1, Grey to Elgin, April 3, 1850.

¹⁵⁷ La Minerve, lundi, 10 février 1850.

¹⁵⁸ Quebec Gazette, Friday, July 5, 1850.

etc., there were displays of manufactures.¹⁵⁹ In early October 1850, Quebec City held its own industrial exhibition with displays of nearly everything imaginable-- agricultural implements, hats, bonnets, musical instruments, clocks, paper, firearms, minerals, fine arts,¹⁶⁰ boots, shoes, fire pumps, cloth, furs and furniture.¹⁶¹ Articles covering industrial exhibitions, printing prize lists and describing displays, appeared in newspapers across the province.

The province-wide exhibition was held at Montreal¹⁶² in the latter part of October at the Bonsecours market. There was a bit of bad feeling from Quebec City which did not like Montreal's prominence. Le Canadien complained that the prize list had been printed in English only¹⁶³ and that the exposition seemed to be an English and Montreal event, particularly since none of the commissioners charged with responsibility for organization of the event came from Quebec City.¹⁶⁴ The Montreal Pilot, on the other hand, accused the French Canadians of not taking enough interest.¹⁶⁵ The Montreal Exposition began on the seventeenth of October

¹⁵⁹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, September 18, 1850.

¹⁶⁰ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, October 9, 1850.

¹⁶¹ Le Canadien, vendredi, 18 octobre 1850.

¹⁶² Ibid., lundi 21 octobre 1850.

¹⁶³ Ibid., mercredi, 4 septembre 1850.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., lundi, 9 septembre 1850.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., mercredi, 23 octobre 1850.

gloriously celebrated,¹⁶⁶ with displays of the products of Canada divided into four general areas: raw materials, machinery, handicrafts and fine arts.¹⁶⁷ The newspapers covered the show in detail, publishing prize lists and remarking upon the considerable degree of friendship between English and French which the exhibition engendered.¹⁶⁸ In a speech delivered at the official opening banquet, the Honourable Charles D. Day, a Montreal judge, spoke of the wonderful spirit of cooperation and good feeling.¹⁶⁹ Day declared,

. . . that here we meet in peace and genial brotherhood, rejoicing in the interchange of sympathies which belong to our common humanity, and safe and sheltered beneath that broad and tranquil spirit from all the agitation of the storms without.¹⁷⁰

All of the exhibitions and all of the good spirit served as preparation for the Canadian participation at the Great Exhibition in London for which Canada received eight thousand square feet of display space at the Crystal Palace.¹⁷¹ The opening of this great world fair occurred May 1, 1851, and the Times of London reported ecstatically upon the event and the hall, declaring that

¹⁶⁶ La Minerve, jeudi, 17 octobre 1850.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., lundi, 18 mars 1850.

¹⁶⁸ Quebec Gazette, Monday, October 21, 1850.

¹⁶⁹ Hon. Charles D. Day, Address delivered at the Provincial Industrial Exhibition. Montreal: printed by Rollo Campbell, 1850, p. 5.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

¹⁷¹ RG7 G1, Vol. 124, Grey to Elgin, April 18, 1850.

. . . all contributed to an effect so grand and yet so natural, that it hardly seemed to be put together by design, or to be the work of human artificers.¹⁷²

The inauguration of the great exhibition of 1851 marked the zenith of the mid-Victorian age, an age noted for its increasing material prosperity and advance.¹⁷³ Canadians, too, shared this enthusiasm and were present at this first and most auspicious celebration of the modern industrial world.

All of the Canadian newspapers reported upon the great universal exposition, particularly of Canadian participation. With considerable pride, it was noted that even before the official opening, Queen Victoria paid a visit to the Canadian display, and what is more, liked what she saw.¹⁷⁴ Victoria, Albert, their children and entourage visited one morning in May. The Queen was particularly impressed by the Canadian sleighs and by the fire pumps which Prince Albert wished to see in actual operation.¹⁷⁵

Most visitors to the Canadian exhibit were delighted and felt that it did the mother country proud. Even the popular belief that Canadians lived in wigwams was finally

¹⁷² Quoted by David Thomson in England in the Nineteenth Century, 1815-1914. Hammondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1969, p. 99.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁷⁴ Quebec Gazette, Monday, May 19, 1851 and Le Canadien, vendredi, 30 mai 1851.

¹⁷⁵ Le Canadien, vendredi, 30 mai 1851.

being put to the lie by the excellent Canadian presence.

De fait, vous seriez surpris devoir [sic] et d'entendre quel intérêt les produits naturels du Canada excitent dans l'esprit du peuple et combien nos produits manufacturés l'étonnent. Il semble avoir cru que nous habitons des "wigwams" (cabanes sauvages), que nous vivons de noix, et que nous chantions des bacaroles canadiennes dans des canots d'écorce tout le long du jour, sans avoir autre chose pour vivre ou pour naviguer.¹⁷⁶

Machines, textiles, minerals, wood, furniture, seeds, even Canadian ham and cheese, were on display.¹⁷⁷ In La Minerve there appeared a report by a French journalist, who, once again, found the sleighs and fire pumps, as well as a birch bark canoe, particularly interesting.¹⁷⁸ On the fifteenth of October 1851, the Great Exhibition closed. From its opening to the closing, there appeared countless articles describing the exhibits, listing prizes and generally praising the Canadian effort in London.

Conclusion

1851 represented a height of sorts for Canadians. Much seemed right with the world and Canadians sensed themselves a part of that spirit. In reviewing events, La Minerve found that year to have been a very good one, and hoped the next year would be its equal, that the tranquility, prosperity and harmony of Canada's population would not be disturbed. The spirit of progress and enterprise was

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., vendredi, 30 mai 1851.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., vendredi, 30 mai 1851.

¹⁷⁸ La Minerve, mercredi, 18 juin 1851.

particularly noteworthy, what with the great Boston railroad celebrations, the glorious return and reception of the Governor General in Montreal, and "sans contredit l'événement de l'année le plus remarquable du monde entier," the Universal Exposition.¹⁷⁹

In a primarily political study, Stephen Leacock remarked upon these years as ones of great advance. Railroads and telegraphs united Canada, "Sandwich and Gaspé no longer appeared at opposite ends of the earth."¹⁸⁰ Canadians were on the move. Whether French or English, they shared an astonishingly similar set of values in terms of progress, material advance and technological change. At least for one letter writer to Le Canadien, the conservation of the French Canadian nation was one in the same with the conservation of religion, soil and institutions, and the means of conserving that nationality was education.¹⁸¹ English Canadians, as diverse and heterogeneous a society as they comprised, were equally committed to progress and advance.

La Revue Canadienne noted that success could be achieved by personal merit and that everyone shared the fundamental rights in order to achieve that goal.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., mercredi, 31 décembre 1851.

¹⁸⁰ Stephen Leacock, Mackenzie, Baldwin, Lafontaine, Hincks, Papineau, Cartier. The Makers of Canada Series. London, 1926, p. 306.

¹⁸¹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 20 février 1850.

¹⁸² La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 1 mars 1845.

Whether it be in Canada East or West, the prospect of the steaming locomotive, the merits of general education, the advance of agriculture and industry represented the same thing. That similarity underlined a greater community of spirit and a deeper unity of approach by all Canadians than is readily discernible in the political or economic history of the period. Consciously, they may actually have disliked each other, but the society in which they lived and the hopes they shared rendered cultural patterns clearly and readily apparent.

CHAPTER FOUR

HARDSHIPS AND TIMES OF TRIAL

During the 1840s, optimism and enthusiasm suffused reports, articles and speeches regarding the potential of Canada. As has been seen, the notion of progress and the promise of the future, united Canadians in a community of cultural attitudes. However, the future was not their only thought. They were required to live in the present and face the truth of everyday life. Culture, that collection of attitudes, values and sentiments which gives shape and form to the community can be examined in more than one way. This chapter will attempt to illustrate the shared cultural condition of Canadians by observing how they endured and reacted to some of the important problems of daily life. Canadians shared more than ideas. The misery and difficulties of their immediate situation also bound them together.

Surely, endurance is the word most appropriate for understanding Canadians' everyday life. Tranquility and safety were disturbed and threatened by numerous menaces, such as fire, sickness and violence. Some of these had wider and more important consequences than others. For example, fires were distinct and isolated events, usually quick and disastrous. Many cities and towns across the colony suffered serious and damaging conflagrations. Fear of

disease, particularly cholera and typhus, was very real. 1847, the year of the Irish famine immigration, witnessed the most devastating epidemic of the period.

Violence is harder to explain, for it was not a natural calamity, like fire or disease, and yet it pervaded everyday life. Violence frequently erupted for a number of reasons, for example, at the raising of the orange and green, at the call of politicians, or as a result of labourers' resentment at working conditions.

Canadians, French and English, faced the same menaces and responded to them in a similar manner. One particularly noticeable, if somewhat fanciful, reaction to the evil of everyday life was temperance. It was clearly a panacea. Many Canadians believed that alcohol was the fundamental cause of evil in the community. To abandon liquor was to take the first step towards the creation of a healthy and prosperous life. Temperance meant not only the renunciation of drink, it promised the achievement of a civilized and wholesome society. This crusade was the most apparent solution of Canadians during the 1840s. However, it was not their only response, for in hardship and times of trial, they often reacted in a similar manner. At times they were sympathetic. On other occasions they were afraid. Their reaction to different situations may be contradictory. When fire struck, they were often generous and brave. When sickness arrived, many closed their door. Despite this contrast, what is interesting to note is that the reaction was

often the same. The endurance of a similarly difficult everyday existence demonstrates their oneness of cultural attitude.

Fire

In surveying these years, it is quite astonishing to note the number and gravity of fires in the colony. Many cities and towns suffered serious damage. Kingston,¹ Quebec,² Montreal,³ Toronto⁴ and smaller places like Boucherville⁵ and London were all affected. London suffered a series of fires in the 1840s, the most destructive in April 1845 when more than one hundred and fifty buildings were destroyed. Despite the extent of the damage, the resilience of the townspeople, numbering about 5000, was demonstrated by their efforts to rebuild the town. Such energy elicited admiring comments and the town was described as rising phoenix-like from the ashes.⁶

¹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, April 22, 1840. See also Charles Dickens, American Notes for General Circulation (New York, 1842), p. 76.

² Le Canadien, lundi, 30 juin 1845.

³ RG7 G20, Vol. 38, October 8, 1845. Thirty-six houses were destroyed in Griffintown, leaving 109 families homeless. In 1852, there was less displacement of people when the city suffered a serious fire in the commercial centre. La Minerve, mardi, 8 juin 1852.

⁴ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, April 11, 1849.

⁵ La Minerve, jeudi, 22 juin 1843.

⁶ W. H. Smith, Canada: Past, Present and Future, being a Historical, Geographical, Ecological and Statistical Account of Canada West. Toronto: Thomas Maclear, n.d., p. 91.

More than the Londoners would be required to have courage. The worst fires occurred in Quebec, Toronto and Montreal. The larger the city, the greater was the likelihood of extensive damage. With their narrow streets and connected wooden buildings, there was more to burn. For example, of all of the cities in Canada, Quebec was the most ravaged. Two fires in the spring of 1845, one on the twenty-eighth of May and the other exactly a month later, totally destroyed entire neighbourhoods. Newspapers across Canada reported the tragedy. One Toronto journal stated that it would take years for the city to regain its former prominence.⁷ Perhaps the best description of the event appeared in the report of the military commander of the city, Major-General James Hope, who wrote:

A great part of the St. Louis suburbs, the whole of the St. John's suburbs, with very few exceptions, five-sixths of the suburbs of St. Roch, the streets extending along the foot of the rock to the point where the fire was stopped on the former occasion, present one scene of continuous ruins, having deprived at least 22,000 persons of their houses and homes.⁸

Numerous factors contributed to the seriousness of the fire. Houses built of wood, their yards full of kindling, burned easily. Gale winds and a strange apathy among the inhabitants who refused to help the soldiers contain the blaze only added

⁷ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, July 18, 1845.

⁸ RG7 G20, Vol. 37, No. 4132, Major-General James Hope, Commander at Quebec, reports on the fires in that city.

to the situation.⁹ The containment of the flames was nearly as devastating as the fire itself. Indeed, the remedy could have been worse than the problem. Major-General Hope's troops were obliged to destroy whole groups of houses in order to isolate and prevent the spread of the flames. In reporting on the fire, Hope claimed to be not in the least surprised. He wondered only why it had not happened earlier. In the future, he recommended that houses be built of stone with metal rooves.¹⁰

In response to the tragedy, relief societies were quickly established and collections to aid the victims were taken all over the colony. Naturally, the citizens of Quebec themselves were the first to meet in order to raise money,¹¹ but Montrealers and Torontonians also assisted,¹² the former contributing £9,000 and the latter nearly £2,000.¹³ Even the Governor-General, Sir Charles Metcalfe, contributed £500.¹⁴

⁹ The refusal to assist was not uncommon. Major General Hope remarked upon it at Quebec City. During the Montreal (Griffintown) fire, the inhabitants stood idly by letting the soldiers do the work. In an article on a Toronto fire, "The First Great Fire of Toronto, 1849," in Ontario History: Papers & Records, Vol. LIII, No. 3, September 1961, Frederick Armstrong remarked upon the same phenomenon.

¹⁰ RG7 G20, Vol. 37, No. 4132, op. cit.

¹¹ Quebec Gazette and Le Canadien, Friday, May 30, 1845.

¹² Le Canadien, mercredi, 25 juin, 1845.

¹³ Le Canadien, vendredi, 20 juin 1845, and Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, July 8, 1845.

¹⁴ Le Canadien, lundi, 2 juin 1845.

In the following year, Quebec City suffered another tragic fire. Only one building burned, the St. Louis Theatre, but there was a terrible loss of life.¹⁵ Luckily nearly two-thirds of the audience at a diorama exposition had already left the building. Unfortunately, sixty or seventy stayed back to sing God Save the Queen.¹⁶ Forty-four of these died. Once again the city was saddened and dismayed by fire. The scene at the ruined building was poignantly described. Numerous carts and hearses took away the dead, while crowds of people attempted to identify friends and relatives.¹⁷ So sad was the event, the city cancelled the proposed celebrations of the annual St. Jean-Baptiste holiday.¹⁸ One Montreal newspaper, which reported the fire, warned its readers that the same thing could happen there. It noticed, menacingly, that Montreal's theatre, like Quebec's, had far too few exits.¹⁹

In the spring of 1849, it was Toronto's turn. The city suffered extensive damage. Generally restricted to the commercial areas, several businesses, newspaper offices, the

¹⁵ On the day following the fire, the Quebec Gazette reported seventeen bodies had been found in the debris. Friday, May 30, 1845. The Toronto Patriot put the death toll at fifty, noting that loss of life was greater than during the conflagrations of 1845. Wednesday, June 17, 1846, Le Canadien estimated 44 dead. lundi, 15 juin 1846.

¹⁶ La Revue Canadienne, mardi, 16 juin, 1846.

¹⁷ MG24 B17, reel A305, McNab Papers.

¹⁸ Le Canadien, mercredi, 24 juin 1846.

¹⁹ La Minerve, lundi, 27 juin 1846.

market and St. James Cathedral were destroyed. As in Quebec so too in Toronto, strong winds and wooden buildings added to the damage. Fortunately, only one death was reported.²⁰ On this occasion, there were no reports of relief committees being established. This is probably explained by the fact that no residential districts were affected. Consequently, there was no displacement of people as had been the case for Quebec. Lack of coverage in the newspapers might also have been due to the intensity of political affairs of that year. Montreal, then the capital, was gripped in the antagonisms elicited by the debate on the Rebellions Losses Bill, which ultimately resulted in the outbreak of riot and arson.

Montreal too would suffer a serious fire in 1852. This time the blaze spread into inhabited areas. It was reported that 1,112 houses and buildings were destroyed and nearly ten thousand people were left homeless.²¹ Again, as in Toronto and Quebec City, wooden houses, connected buildings and narrow streets explained the easy spread of the flames. Once more, many Canadians from scattered corners of the colony would contribute money to assist the victims of the tragedy. Montrealers themselves formed a

²⁰ La Minerve, lundi, 9 avril 1849. See also Samuel Thompson, Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer for the Last Fifty Years: An Autobiography (Toronto 1884), pp. 189-190.

²¹ Quebec Gazette, Friday, July 9, 1852, and La Minerve, samedi, 10 juillet 1852.

relief committee.²² Even more interesting was the fact that Upper Canadians donated nearly \$2000. The money came from the cities of Toronto²³ and Hamilton.²⁴

Fire was an immediate present danger to Canadians throughout the colony. As has been seen, in all of the major conflagrations, the physical aspects of the cities, wooden construction, street formation and even weather conditions, contributed to the damage caused by the flames. The blazes were swift and destructive and very little could be done to stop them. During this period, many Canadians, all of those living in Kingston, Quebec, Montreal, Toronto and lesser places, had an immediate and first-hand experience of fire. Though no concrete conclusions can be made regarding the reaction of people to such disasters, it is interesting to note that in the two most serious fires, where many people were forced to flee their homes, many other Canadians in far off towns made a generous response to assist them in their plight. To endure or survive a fire was a common experience to many.

Sickness

The spread of disease was a deadlier threat than fire.

²² Procédés du Comité Général de Secours, nommé par les citoyens de Montréal pour venir en aide aux victimes du grand incendie les, 8 & 9 juillet 1852. Montréal: Imprimé par John Lovell, rue St. Nicholas, 1853.

²³ La Minerve, mardi, 27 juillet 1852.

²⁴ Ibid., mardi, 20 juillet 1852.

No Canadians were free of this menace and when epidemics occurred, they swept through cities and countryside unabated. The helplessness before the threat of sickness was illustrated by the number of remedies and medicines advertised in the newspapers and which claimed powers to cure almost any kind of disease. One example of the fantastic claims of patent medicines was Sand's Sasparilla. Not only did it purify the blood, it also cured scrofula, rheumatism, stubborn ulcers, dyspepsia, salt rheum, fever sores, liver complaints, loss of appetite, debility, erysipelas, bronchitis, consumption, female complaints, pimples, biles, mercurial disease, cutaneous eruption and several other maladies.²⁵ Undoubtedly, the ineffectiveness of such remedies was in direct relation to their inflated promises. Even during epidemics of cholera and typhus, magical medicines would appear.²⁶

In fact, many Canadians believed that the most effective impediment to serious illness was a regular and moral life. For example, the Literary Garland assured its readers, in an article upon the rules of health, that if they kept the head cool, the feet warm and the bowels open, they would be able to laugh at physicians.²⁷ In another

²⁵ This advertisement for Sand's Sasparilla appeared frequently during the 1840s in both French and English newspapers in Canada.

²⁶ Le Canadien, mercredi, 4 juillet 1849.

²⁷ Literary Garland, Vol. 1, No. 6, May 1839.

article on good health, a Toronto newspaper remarked, "Next to politics, the rapid onward march of the cholera forms the most anxious subject of contemplation." Not only were proper ventilation, pure air, suitable clothing and nourishing food essential to good health, so too sobriety of life and steady occupations preserved the individual from illness.²⁸

Not surprisingly, remedies and solutions such as these were ineffective. The colony was periodically subjected to killing waves of disease. All Canadians were obliged to endure them and their reaction was the same across the colony, fear and flight. One cause of the spread of disease during the 1840s was the arrival of destitute and sick immigrants who carried sickness with them wherever they went. 1847, the year of the tragic Irish famine was to be an incredible trial for the colony. It affords to historians the most remarkable example of the spread of disease in Canada during the 1840s. Sometimes it is difficult to sort out the reactions of Canadians to this event. Not only did the episode illustrate generalized revulsion to the immigrants, it also exemplified the attitudes of Canadians regarding the threat of sickness. Their antagonism towards the Irish was most certainly aggravated by their fear of infection.

Even in the best of times, immigrants to Canada

²⁸ Toronto Patriot, Monday, October 22, 1848.

suffered terribly but in 1847 their problems were magnified. Thousands of Irish fled the famine but did not find better conditions in Canada. Nearly three times the ordinary number of newcomers came to the colony. Already debilitated by the poor conditions of the ships and the spread of disease, the colony was totally unprepared to care for them. Soon Canadians from one end of the country to the other would express their alarm. They would lash out at the British government which they held responsible. In the summer of 1847, the colony was a very unhealthy place. It was probably no coincidence that Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine vacationed at Newport on Rhode Island and Robert Baldwin in New Brunswick,²⁹ or that Alexandre Vattemare, who returned to America in 1847, did not include Canada in his itinerary.³⁰

By the end of the navigation season of that year, the results would be grim. Official statistical estimates were prefaced by cursory remarks which noted that unprecedented numbers of immigrants had arrived who were totally useless to the colony. 98,106 people came to Canada in that year. 89,738 were Irish who had left from ports either in Ireland or England. 5,293 died en route, the deaths coldly and peremptorily attributed to several factors such as poverty, sickness among the passengers before embarking and poor

²⁹ La Minerve, jeudi, 12 août 1847.

³⁰ Ibid., lundi, 4 juillet 1847.

conditions upon the ships. The report also mentioned the filthy and indolent habits of the Irish which it believed increased the death rate. Fully one-third of the immigrants who came to Canada in 1847, required some kind of medical treatment.³¹ The final estimate of the total which reached Canada West was 76,380. Only 15,000 actually received medical assistance and nearly 3,000 died.³²

Canadians had had little warning of the impending tragedy. The St. Patrick's Day festivities of 1847 were of particular note. They illustrated that the Irish community in Canada was prospering and getting ahead. The celebrations in Montreal were highlighted by the consecration of the magnificent new St. Patrick's Church, large enough to accommodate a congregation of four to five thousand.³³ In Toronto, the celebrations were notable for their great degree of fraternity. The city's two Irish societies, one Tory and the other Reform, marched together in the annual parade.³⁴ Little did they realize how soon the Irish would be cursed in Canada.

From the autumn of 1845, reports of bad crops and potato blight in Ireland and other European countries began

³¹ RG1 E7, Vol. 23, December 8, 1847.

³² RG1 E13, Blue Books. 1847.

³³ La Minerve, jeudi, 18 mars 1847.

³⁴ Toronto Patriot, Friday, March 19, 1849.

to appear.³⁵ In Canada, the initial response to the plight of Ireland was generous. In early 1847, public meetings were held in Quebec,³⁶ Montreal³⁷ and Toronto,³⁸ where subscription campaigns were begun for the relief of the hungry in Ireland. Quebecers raised \$1,602,³⁹ while the Toronto Irish Relief Committee collected \$1,300.⁴⁰ The Governor General, Lord Elgin, reported that from all across Canada, \$20,000 had been contributed for those stricken by the famine.⁴¹ Incredibly, as late as May 1847, one Quebec City newspaper editorialized that there was plenty of room for the Irish in Canada.⁴² Before Irish immigrants began to arrive in the colony, Alexander Buchanan, an immigrant agent, reported that all was in readiness for their arrival.

³⁵ Reports of ruined potato crops in Belgium and other European countries appeared in Canadian newspapers as early as 1845. See Le Canadien, mercredi, 26 septembre 1845. In November 1845, a circular from the Colonial Office was sent to all governors noting that the Irish potato crop had been attacked by blight and demanding information whether any similar disease had been experienced in the colony. See RG7 G1, Vol. 110, Circular, November 26, 1845. The blight continued in Ireland and the same sad stories of crop failures were repeated in the Canadian newspapers. See Quebec Gazette, Friday, December 18, 1846; Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, November 25, 1846, and Toronto Patriot, Friday, November 13, 1846.

³⁶ Quebec Gazette, Monday, February 15, 1847.

³⁷ Le Canadien, lundi, 15 fevrier 1847.

³⁸ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, March 9, 1847.

³⁹ Quebec Gazette, Monday, March 29, 1847.

⁴⁰ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, March 9, 1847.

⁴¹ RG7 G12, Vol. 65, Elgin to Grey, May 28, 1847.

⁴² Quebec Gazette, Monday, May 10, 1847.

So little did he appreciate the scope of the impending disaster, he believed the construction of a few more sheds at Quebec and Montreal would meet the needs of the anticipated increase in numbers.⁴³ By the middle of May, Canadians would begin to experience the impact of the immigrants. Dr. Douglas, the medical officer at the quarantine station at Grosse Ile would describe the situation as "the present emergency"⁴⁴ and request fifty soldiers⁴⁵ to keep order among the 12,000 people already detained there.⁴⁶ Reports from the island would become increasingly grim. By early June, 800 had already died and 1,100 were seriously sick.⁴⁷ In one two-day period, two hundred deaths were reported.⁴⁸

When the threat of the Irish arrivals became apparent, Canadians' generosity gave way to apprehension. Everywhere in the colony the reaction was the same. A letter in Le Canadien signed "Un citoyen" chided that as usual, the colonists were so busy discussing politics, they forgot about the danger. Soon, the letter warned, Canadians would witness dying immigrants upon the quays and streets

⁴³ RG7 G20, Vol. 42, March 18, 1847.

⁴⁴ RG1 E8, Vol. 19, May 24, 1847.

⁴⁵ Ibid., May 27, 1847.

⁴⁶ Ibid., May 31, 1847.

⁴⁷ Le Canadien, vendredi, 4 juin 1847.

⁴⁸ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1847,
Appendix L.

of their cities.⁴⁹ In fact, by early May, a generalized fear of the spread of disease was noticeable all across the colony.⁵⁰

Everywhere arguments and objections were raised, complaining about the immigration. For example, when Robert Baldwin Sullivan, the conservative politician, addressed the Toronto Mechanics' Institute, he claimed that the British government should make a greater effort to assist the immigrants while they travelled and to provide land for them once they arrived in the colony. He warned that too many would reduce wages in Canada.⁵¹ Some arguments were more plaintive in tone, like those of the Toronto Examiner. In an article entitled, "Is Emigration the Proper Remedy for Irish Distress?" the newspaper quickly concluded that it was not. Whatever the cause of the Irish tragedy, in the newspaper's opinion, Canada was not the solution.⁵² A public meeting at Quebec demonstrated the nature of the objections of Canadians. A memorial drawn up by the gathering expressed the alarm felt by the citizens at the prospect

. . . of persons flying from famine and destitution and casting themselves upon this community without the means of present

⁴⁹ Le Canadien, vendredi, 23 avril 1847.

⁵⁰ Sir Arthur G. Doughty, ed., The Elgin-Grey Papers, 1848-1852 (Ottawa 1937). Elsin to Grey, May 7, 1847.

⁵¹ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, March 30, 1847.

⁵² Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, April 21, 1847.

support, unable to procure employment, and too probably bringing with them actual or latent disease.⁵³

Several resolutions were drawn up by the meeting: one, demanding that the Imperial government come to the direct aid of the immigrants, and another, suggesting that the Irish be settled close to the proposed Quebec-Halifax railway line. Anywhere but not in Quebec City!

Likewise, Napoleon Aubin, editor of Le Canadien, attacked the immigration. His opinions reflect perfectly the frustration and anger of Canadians who were required to endure such a terrible trial. Aubin noted that Canadian newspapers everywhere, whether English or French, opposed the arrival of so many destitute Irish. The whole colony was alarmed. Under ideal conditions, a new arrival to Canada needed enough capital to carry him through at least one year. None of the Irish could fulfill that requirement. What good were they to the colony anyway, Aubin asked? The injustice of the situation was overwhelming. Canada would bear the brunt of the reception of these thousands of unfortunates who would then leave for the United States. Desperately, and contradicting himself at the same time, Aubin suggested that young French Canadians take their own occupied lands before the Irish got to them. Any argument served to object to the immigration of 1847. He even

⁵³ RG7 G20, Vol. 42, March 23, 1847.

suggested they go to Texas. Anywhere but Quebec!⁵⁴

In a later article entitled, "Emigration, Agriculture, Occupations des Terres," Aubin took the same line. Take the land before the Irish get it, he pleaded.⁵⁵ His message fell on fertile ground and was reprinted in Montreal's La Minerve.⁵⁶ The corporation of that city sent an Address to the Queen expressing arguments, similar to those heard all across the colony, stating

. . . que cette colonie serait heureuse de recevoir dans son sein des hommes de capitaux, ou capable de travailler mais qu'au contraire elle regarde comme un fardeau pèsant cette émigration éffroyable [sic] de pauvres, de mendiants, d'infirmes.⁵⁷

The attitude common to all Canadians, to avoid infection and to blame the British government, may seem inhumane and ungenerous, but as sickness and death spread at an accelerating pace, it is hardly surprising. The colony simply could not contain the spread of disease. Its quarantine station and emigrant hospitals were ill-prepared for the onslaught of 1847. The extent of sickness is best demonstrated by the mortality rates upon particular ships. The "Sir Henry Pattinson" from Cork, carrying 399 passengers

⁵⁴ Le Canadien, lundi, 10 mai 1847. Aubin claimed that most of the Irish went to the United States and those who stayed in the colony, went to Upper Canada where they rarely remained longer than a year.

⁵⁵ Ibid., lundi, 24 mai 1847.

⁵⁶ La Minerve, lundi, 31 mai 1847.

⁵⁷ Ibid., jeudi, 1 juillet 1847.

in steerage, arrived with 98 dead and 100 sick. The "Virginus" from Liverpool, with 476 passengers, registered 158 dead and 106 sick.⁵⁸ Both Dr. George M. Douglas, the medical superintendent at Grosse Ile, and Alexander Buchanan, the immigrant agent at Quebec City, quickly realized the danger. Overwhelmed by what he faced at Grosse Ile, Dr. Douglas wrote,

I never saw people so indifferent to life, they would continue in the same berth with a dead person until the seaman or captain dragged out the corpse with boathooks.

Good God, what evils will befall the city wherever they alight! Hot weather will increase the evil.⁵⁹

Buchanan noted the incidence of sickness on ships from Cork at 31% and the death rate at 12%, those from Liverpool 22% and 8%, respectively. Underlining the inefficacy of the quarantine station and the enormity of his own task, Buchanan declared himself totally incapable of estimating sickness and mortality rates of the immigrants upon Grosse Ile or after they left it.⁶⁰ If they survived the ocean voyage, Dr. Douglas was far from sure the immigrants would endure their arrival. On one occasion, the medical superintendent reported that nearly 5000 had left the quarantine post but he believed that nearly half of them

⁵⁸ RG1 E8, Vol. 23, December 8, 1847.

⁵⁹ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1847, Appendix R.

⁶⁰ RG7 G20, Vol. 43, June 23, 1847.

would eventually fall ill.⁶¹ Sick and destitute already, the trip upcountry would weaken them even more. For the forty-eight hour trip between Montreal and Toronto, they were often loaded onto the open decks of steamers or uncovered barges, left on their own to fend as best they could.⁶²

As typhus spread, so too did fear.⁶³ The Solicitor-General, Malcom Cameron inspected the island in July and reported it to be well managed,⁶⁴ but Le Canadien ridiculed the minister's visit, claiming that he spent most of his time at Douglas' home on the island sipping well-chilled champagne, and visiting the tents and sheds from a safe distance, never descending from his carriage.⁶⁵ Conditions at the island were in fact terrible. Only the most deprived or desperate individuals could be hired to care for the sick, stories of poor treatment and robbed corpses being common. Conditions in Quebec City at the Marine and Emigrant Hospital were no better.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1847, Appendix R.

⁶² RG1 E4, Vol. 4, Pt. 1, November 30, 1847.

⁶³ Le Canadien, vendredi, 16 juillet 1847 and Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, August 11, 1847.

⁶⁴ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Monday, July 14, 1847. See also RG1 E8, Vol. 20, July 14, 1847.

⁶⁵ Le Canadien, vendredi, 23 juillet 1847.

⁶⁶ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1847, Appendix R₃. A special committee of the legislative assembly described a sorry picture of the reception of immigrants at Grosse Ile and Quebec City.

At Montreal, T. L. Brown, the secretary of the Board of Health, complained of the sick and indigent arriving unassisted and unattended. On one occasion the Board, along with several doctors, the mayor and the chief of police, visited the docks. Neither the medical officer, Dr. Bowie, nor the immigrant agent, Mr. Allison, were present.⁶⁷

Allison's arguments defending his absence illustrated the impossibility of his task. He claimed to work diligently seventeen hours a day, with only four to six hours sleep and no regular meals. Even unable to go to church on Sunday morning, Allison wrote, "I am worn down with fatigue and sometimes fear I will sink under the weight of my duties." On the day he wrote those words, he also reported the arrival of 1,289 immigrants in Montreal.⁶⁸

All across the colony, Boards of Health were established to counter the effects of the immigration. More sheds were built, physicians appointed and the rations of the destitute increased, but nothing worked.⁶⁹ Quite extreme and fanciful solutions were attempted. The British government financed the voyage to Canada of a certain Mr. LeDoyen and his assistant Colonel Calvert.⁷⁰ LeDoyen had recently invented what he called a disinfecting fluid which he claimed would check the typhus. Tests were made at

⁶⁷ RG7 G20, Vol. 43, June 27, 1847.

⁶⁸ Ibid., July 1, 1847.

⁶⁹ RG1 E8, Vol. 19, June 1847 and Vol. 20, July 1847.

⁷⁰ RG7 G12, Vol. 65, Elgin to Grey, December 8, 1847.

Grosse Ile,⁷¹ Quebec⁷² and Montreal,⁷³ the fluid being found useless. Dr. Douglas was particularly fierce in his criticism claiming that it removed odours but had no disinfectant powers. He believed no chemical could substitute for proper ventilation.⁷⁴ The ineffectiveness of the fluid was best demonstrated by the fact that Colonel Calvert contracted typhus and died while conducting tests.⁷⁵

There was no protection from the disease which spread through the colony that summer. Lord Elgin, the Governor General, called the immigration of that year "a frightful scourge,"⁷⁶ and in his reports to the Colonial Office noted a number of important citizens who died of the fever brought to Canada.⁷⁷ The Roman Catholic Bishop of Toronto, Michael Power,⁷⁸ as well as the Mayor of Montreal, John Easton Mills,⁷⁹ succumbed to the typhus which raged across the country. Both Monseigneur Bourget,⁸⁰ Bishop of Montreal,

⁷¹ RG7 G20, Vol. 44, December 8, 1847.

⁷² Ibid., November 25, 1847.

⁷³ Ibid., October 30, 1847.

⁷⁴ Ibid., December 8, 1847.

⁷⁵ Ibid., November 25, 1847.

⁷⁶ Doughty, ed., op. cit., Elgin to Grey, July 13, 1847.

⁷⁷ Ibid., November 12, 1847.

⁷⁸ Toronto Patriot, Friday, October 8, 1847.

⁷⁹ La Minerve, lundi, 15 novembre 1847.

⁸⁰ Ibid., jeudi, 12 août 1847.

and his coadjutor bishop, Monseigneur Prince, also fell seriously ill but survived.⁸¹

Everywhere in the colony Canadians began to suggest alternative arrangements for the reception of the immigrants, new plans which invariably meant removal of the danger as far away as possible from their region. For example, the people of St. Roch, a suburb of Quebec City, objected to the construction of more immigrant sheds near the Marine and Emigrant hospital in their neighbourhood. They suggested the sheds be built in Levis, across the river and a safe distance from Quebec.⁸² In the same vein, Mr. George Moffatt, a member of the legislative assembly for Montreal, reported a recent public meeting of more than three thousand people there, which requested that the immigrant sheds be removed from their present location in Point St. Charles at the mouth of the Lachine Canal. Despite the fact that no other area was mentioned, the hope was that new sheds would be built far from Montreal so that the city would be bypassed completely by the immigrants.⁸³

The sentiment of the Montrealers was not surprising. People were reported to be leaving the city in droves. In the words of one observer, the exodus was due to the fact ". . . that Montreal was only an extensive lazaretto, and that

⁸¹ Ibid., lundi, 18 octobre 1847.

⁸² RG1 E8 Vol. 19, June 17, 1847.

⁸³ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Monday, July 19, 1847.

no person could come to the city with safety."⁸⁴ Fear of contagion was acute. For example, La Minerve reported that many of the "soeurs Grises" who ministered to the immigrants fell sick themselves. The journal recommended the nuns be prohibited from working among the Irish. The newspaper was not concerned for the welfare of the sisters, rather it feared they would carry the infection back from the sheds to the city. The imperial government sent the immigrants, La Minerve declared, and the government could take care of them. Let the nuns care for their own sick and indigent of Montreal.⁸⁵

Once Toronto and places further west began to experience the consequences of the immigration, cries for help and requests for assistance began to be heard. The mayors of Toronto⁸⁶ and Hamilton⁸⁷ asked for financial relief but were given short shrift. Resentment and fear grew.

⁸⁴ Ibid., July 19, 1847.

⁸⁵ La Minerve, lundi, 4 juillet 1847. In fact, the danger of contagion was acute. Many died in ministering to the sick. One author has estimated that twenty-six Roman Catholic priests, including Bishop Power, and eighteen nuns died as a result of ministering to the immigrants. See J. A. Jordan, The Grosse Ile Tragedy and the Monument to the Irish Fever Victims. Quebec: The Telegraph Printing Company, 1909, p. 58.

⁸⁶ RG1 E8, Vol. 19, May 25, 1847.

⁸⁷ Ibid., June 1, 1847.

Hostility to the immigrants and the sickness they carried increased. Like the Montrealers, those Torontonians who could, fled the city. The Toronto Examiner complained bitterly of the consequences. It described the streets of the city in that sombre August of 1847 as deserted and devoid of activity. The policy of permitting eighty to one hundred thousand poor and famished Irish to enter Canada was nothing less than barbarous.⁸⁸ The entire province, the newspaper declared, had been transformed into one great "lazar house and hospital for the benefit of the Irish landlords."⁸⁹

There was no solution to the problem. No one offered any effective remedy. No one accepted responsibility. Indeed, if the attitude of the Colonial Secretary was any indication, the British government was completely blind to the real impact of the arrival of the Irish. Memorials, addresses, reports at public meetings and the correspondence between the Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, and the Governor General, Lord Elgin, were filled with bitter complaints from all across Canada, similarly begging for aid and condemning the immigration.⁹⁰ Grey acknowledged the season as a calamity for the colony but was not prepared to accept any

⁸⁸ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, August 18, 1847.

⁸⁹ Ibid., Wednesday, October 27, 1848.

⁹⁰ See RG1 E8, Vol. 22, October 11, 1847. Also, A Letter to the Right Hon. Earl Grey Embracing a Statement of Facts in Relation to Emigration to Canada during the summer of 1847 (Montreal, 1847). Toronto Patriot, Friday, February 4, 1848. RG7 G20, Vol. 45, February 1848. A Memorial on Emigration from the Citizens of Toronto.

responsibility. No one could blame the British government he believed. Since his government consistently refused to help the Irish leave the country, Grey reasoned, it lessened the scope of the tragedy in Canada. On the other hand, the government could hardly presume to prohibit the departure of any citizen who wished and believed himself able to leave.⁹¹ Astonishingly, Grey claimed, that in the long run, the 1847 immigration would benefit Canada. In mid-summer, as a sop to Canadian complaints, the Colonial Secretary informed Lord Elgin that the British government would grant extra money to aid the immigrants, but lest Canada forget, Grey wrote

. . . it must be borne in mind that when the immediate difficulties are surmounted the settlement of these Emigrants is calculated greatly to add to the wealth of the Province and to improve its Revenue . . .⁹²

If the experience of 1847 did not alter Grey's simplistic belief, that all and any immigration to Canada was beneficial to the colony, nothing would.

As the season proceeded and the winter approached, the bitterness of Canadians grew. Incredulous that the British government would permit such a tragedy, they began to wonder what would happen to the immigrants once the cold weather came. At Quebec City, the immigrants were still arriving in late October. The fault was placed upon the British government which was accused of negligence.⁹³ So

⁹¹ RG7 G1, Vol. 116, Grey to Elgin, June 18, 1847.

⁹² RG7 G1, Vol. 117, Grey to Elgin, July 19, 1847.

⁹³ La Canadien, mercredi, 3 novembre 1847.

too, in Montreal, the Irish continued to reach the city in the autumn. In September, one Montreal newspaper reported that the city could expect 3,000 more by mid-October, in addition to the 85,000 it believed had already passed through.⁹⁴ The great question was how were they to be lodged and fed during the winter? In late October, the immigrant sheds at Toronto were described as in terrible condition. They had already been declared a public nuisance.⁹⁵ Now people began to demand that the immigration be stopped. A public meeting was held in the city to complain about the sheds and to express the resentment at the sending of so many sick and indigent.⁹⁶ In December, the Toronto Examiner reported 1,500 poor in Toronto facing the coming winter. The newspaper appealed to the generosity of the citizens of the city to provide for them.⁹⁷ Lord Elgin, the Governor General, reporting on the situation in the colony that autumn, informed the Colonial Secretary that he had travelled all across the colony, visiting places like Quebec, Toronto, Hamilton, St. Catharine's, Niagara and Brockville. Everywhere he stopped, Elgin wrote, the people wished only to speak and

⁹⁴ La Minerve, jeudi, 9 septembre 1847.

⁹⁵ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, October 27, 1847. Reports upon the condition of the immigrants appeared throughout the season in Toronto newspapers but they got worse as time passed and their numbers grew. See Toronto Patriot, Friday, July 16, 1847 and Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, June 2, 1847.

⁹⁶ RG1 E8, Vol. 22, October 11, 1847.

⁹⁷ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, December 1, 1847.

complain about the immigration.⁹⁸ Clearly, Canadians everywhere were animated by the same attitudes, fear of sickness, hostility for the Irish, resentment for the British government, and frustration that nothing was being done.

The desperation of the Canadians is evident in their conclusions about the whole episode. One colonial report, emanating from Montreal, rather exaggeratedly estimated that 50,000 of the total who left Ireland in the first place were destitute before leaving Britain. It claimed that more than 25,000 died.⁹⁹ But not only did the Irish suffer, for it noted that many of Canada's best citizens lost their lives as a result of their attempts to help the immigrants. In its conclusion, the report firmly hoped that the British government had learned something from the tragedy of 1847.¹⁰⁰ In February 1848, the conclusions of a public meeting held in Toronto, regarding the immigration, illustrate the desperation of many people there. The streets of the city were described as being filled with disease, wretched and poor. Death was at every doorstep.¹⁰¹ The memorial drawn up at the meeting and addressed to the Colonial Secretary claimed that the city had received more than 40,000 of the

⁹⁸ RG7 G12, Vol. 65, Elgin to Grey, October 29, 1847.

⁹⁹ A Letter to the Right Hon. Earl Grey . . . etc., op. cit., pp. 4-7.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁰¹ Toronto Patriot, Friday, February 4, 1848.

total 100,000 Irish who came to Canada. "A large mendicant population--once unknown to our towns--has rapidly sprung into existence," it remarked. In fact the entire season was concluded to have been nothing other than a total tragedy. Henceforth, the immigration must be regulated and measures taken to prevent the disaster of 1847. The words of the memorial itself are eloquent:

Most respectfully but firmly do the inhabitants of Toronto protest through your Excellency against their hitherto healthy and prosperous country being made the receptacle for the cast off pauperism and disease of another hemisphere.¹⁰²

Canadians, French and English had no wish to redress the tragedy of the mother country. In terms of the spread of disease and sickness, 1847 was the most horrifying experience of the entire decade. All across the colony, the suffering and the sorrow were the same. All across the colony the reaction was the same. Called to endure a terrible trial, neither English nor French Canadians were particularly kind or generous. Unlike fires, isolated and swift events, which elicited bravery and a sympathetic response, the typhus spread by the Irish struck fear into the hearts of men. The very magnitude of the epidemic of 1847 and their very helplessness before its advance prevented Canadians from helping. Each and every individual who came into contact with any poor Irish immigrant endangered his life. The fear and frustration expressed by Canadians

¹⁰² RG7 G20, Vol. 45, February 1848, A Memorial on Emigration from the Citizens of Toronto.

everywhere was, if not admirable, perfectly understandable.

So great was the tragedy of 1847, other episodes pale into insignificance. Certainly, material and documentation regarding the events of that year is abundant. Luckily for the historian such sources enable him to observe the reaction of Canadians to sickness. There are hints that such attitudes are consistent throughout the period. For example, while 1847 was the most important instance of disease, cholera was reported across the colony in 1849. Again the reaction was one of fear. Outbreaks were reported in Kingston,¹⁰³ Montreal¹⁰⁴ and Quebec.¹⁰⁵ Grim mortality statistics were published by the newspapers. In Montreal, during a thirty-day period, 483 deaths were attributed to cholera.¹⁰⁶ In Quebec City, 338 deaths were reported between the fourth and twenty-second of July.¹⁰⁷ During the entire summer, there were 1,034 deaths in the city.¹⁰⁸ Obituaries of prominent citizens increased.¹⁰⁹ The deaths of

¹⁰³ La Canadien, vendredi, 1 juin 1849.

¹⁰⁴ La Minerve, lundi, 6 août 1849.

¹⁰⁵ Le Canadien, mercredi, 11 juillet 1849. One Toronto newspaper reported on the outbreak in Quebec City and remedies for the onslaught of the disease appeared in the advertisement section. See Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, July 11, 1849.

¹⁰⁶ Le Canadien, lundi, 13 août 1849.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., lundi, 23 juillet 1849.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., mercredi, 26 septembre 1849.

¹⁰⁹ For example, both La Minerve, lundi, 13 août, 1849 and Le Canadien, vendredi, 17 août 1849, reported the death of Judge Elzéar Bédard. The death of the merchant and politician, Austin Cuvillier, was reported by La Minerve, lundi, 16 juillet 1849.

the infant children of Napoleon Audin and Jean-Baptiste Meilleur were reported in the newspapers.¹¹⁰ Some people panicked. Riots occurred in Quebec City. Inhabitants of the Champlain District objected to the use of the old customs shed as a cholera hospital, fearing the disease would spread throughout their neighbourhood. So incensed were they, the Emigrant Hospital itself was attacked.¹¹¹

Disease was an immediate menace to the life and well being of Canadians. They were helpless to do anything about it. The weakness of their remedies was almost laughable compared to the potency of epidemics to which they were subjected. Any Canadian who experienced the summer of 1847 must not have quickly forgotten it. The Irish spread across the colony, from Quebec City to the ends of Canada West, and with them their sickness. While some idea of the suffering and fatalities of the immigrants is known, how many Canadians died is unknown. The experience was shared by all. Their reaction to it was the same everywhere. At this fundamental level of human existence, before the threat of typhus and cholera, Canadians were bound together in a community of attitude.

Violence

Violence too was another hardship and trial shared by all Canadians in the 1840s. It was endemic to the life of

¹¹⁰ Le Canadien, lundi, 6 août 1849.

¹¹¹ La Minerve, jeudi, 12 juillet 1849.

the colony, spilling over in religion, politics and on the worksite. Few Canadians remained untouched or unthreatened by it. Many of them actually resorted to it in order to express a particular point of view or to defend an interest.

Unlike fire or sickness, violence was not a natural calamity. God or the imperial government could not be blamed for its outbreak. The question to resolve is why was it so common an experience? There are any number of reasons--religious hostility, political antagonisms and simple frustrations of workmen who considered themselves to be exploited by their bosses. In addition to these causes, there are further explanations for the intensity and frequency of violent outbursts. The Irish who worked on the canals and public works were an obstreperous and irascible group who not only reacted to their working conditions, they also fought among themselves. What is more, the situation on the worksites throughout the colony were breeding grounds for rage and anger. Throughout the colony there were hundreds of unattached men working enormous amounts and lengthy hours for little compensation, unrestrained by family, religion or the constraints of a civilized and orderly community.

To put it quite simply, the possibility of the outbreak of violence was significantly enhanced by all of these men who worked from Quebec City to Amherstburgh. Every year, thousands of them arrived in Canada seeking jobs. For example, in 1842, official estimates claimed that 40,000

people had arrived in Canada West by way of Quebec City. That did not include the uncounted thousands more who came from the United States.¹¹² Men were everywhere, at its roads, canals and public works, at the shipyards and in the forests. For example, in 1845, the yards at Quebec employed 2,300 labourers.¹¹³ 218 men worked on the Chatham-Amherstburgh road, 115 at Port Dover, 1,791 at the Welland Canal, and hundreds more at the several canal sites upon the St. Lawrence River above Montreal.¹¹⁴ In 1848, 1,500 men laboured along the line of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad between Montreal and St. Hyacinthe.¹¹⁵ In the same year, an official report on shipping and seamen estimated that Quebec City had been visited by more than 15,000 sailors of whom nearly ten per cent deserted in Canada.¹¹⁶ The very number of men and the development of grievances or resentment among them constituted a threat to the peace and tranquility of the colony.

The intensity and the possibility of violence was increased by the fact that there was little to stop it. Violence was sometimes effective and men resorted to it to achieve their purposes. Efforts to control and contain

¹¹² Toronto Patriot, Friday, August 18, 1842.

¹¹³ Le Canadien, mercredi, 12 février 1845.

¹¹⁴ Journals of the Legislative Assembly 1844-5,
Appendix Y.

¹¹⁵ La Minerve, lundi, 12 juin 1848.

¹¹⁶ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849,
Appendix R₄.

disorders were often brutal, sometimes fanciful, but rarely effective. Troops were frequently the answer and when they clashed with workers or mobs, the results were generally tragic. Another solution was a chaplain. Since most of the canal workers were Irish and Catholic, whenever there was trouble, or the hint of it, a priest would be sent. For example, a clergyman having been effective earlier at Beauharnois, the same expedient was adopted at the Welland Canal in 1842. A certain Father W. V. McDonough was appointed to the site at a salary of £200 per year.¹¹⁷ When trouble at the Lachine site erupted in 1843, the first suggestion was to send a priest along with the troops.¹¹⁸ The primary purpose of the appointment of a chaplain was to keep order, not to provide spiritual solace. For example, in the summer of 1844 when a Church of England clergyman applied for such a position at the Beauharnois Canal, the request was rejected and he was curtly informed that a Catholic priest was there

. . . as a measure of police and for the preservation thro' his influence of peace and order on the line of this canal, not for the purposes of furnishing religious instruction to the labourers.¹¹⁹

Disorders and riots were not uncommon experiences. Many Canadians, both French and English, had first-hand

¹¹⁷ RG1 E7, Vol. 5, December 28, 1842.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., Vol. 6, February 2, 1843. See also RG1 E5 Vol. 1, Pt. 2, January 31, 1843.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., Vol. 7, August 1844.

experience. Violence was not restricted to the worksites. It spread into neighbouring communities and cities. Workers at the Lachine canal were as likely to let off steam in Montreal as at the workplace. Politicians would call for the support of men at the neighbouring public works during election campaigns. They would gather at the polls to support the candidate of their choice. The impact and frequency of violent outbursts was important. Not only city dwellers but even farmers and villagers experienced the anger of local labourers. For example, in 1844 people from Williamsburg and Osnabruck complained of broken fences and stolen crops.¹²⁰ The reaction of Canadians to violence and their willingness to participate in it, illustrates another pattern of cultural attitudes.

Religious Violence I

Whatever the measures adopted, violence was rarely contained, least of all that which occurred on March 17 and July 12. The St. Patrick's Day festivities and the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne were not only days of rejoicing, they often degenerated into days of hard drinking, head breaking and bloody confrontations. Annually, riotous clashes between Catholics and Protestants were reported.¹²¹ One argument for Torontonians who desired a

¹²⁰ Journals of Legislative Assembly, 1844-5, Appendix Y.

¹²¹ For example, La Minerve, lundi, juillet 17 1843; Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, July 18, 1843; and Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, July 19, 1843, all reported Orange riots in Kingston that year.

police force was the evil influence of organizations like the Orange Lodges. They claimed, "The existence of Orangeism in this province is a great and growing evil and should be repressed." They believed the evil to be all-pervasive, contributing to the growth of political feuds and religious prejudice.¹²² The parades and processions of such groups were restricted by a law passed in 1843. The justification for such legislation was the belief that such demonstrations served only to create conflict and perpetuate animosity, thereby menacing peace and order.¹²³

The parades continued and so did the riots. In 1844, troops were called to the Niagara district to suppress mobs on the rampage on July twelfth.¹²⁴ Bytown was regularly burdened with outbreaks of this nature. The Orange celebrations of 1846 were the occasion of three days of rioting.¹²⁵ The Orange and the Green clashed again in 1849. In September, a meeting convoked to present a loyal address to Lord Elgin, the Governor General, then visiting Bytown, was disrupted by elements referred to as Orangemen and

¹²² Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1841, Appendix S.

¹²³ Statutes of Canada, 7 Victoria Cap. 6.

¹²⁴ RG7 G20, Vol. 33, No. 3704, July 26, 1844.

¹²⁵ See La Minerve, lundi, 20 juillet 1846 and Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, July 21, 1846. Characteristically, the Montreal newspaper reported on the doings of the Orangemen, referring to them as a "secte infernale." The Toronto Patriot claimed it was the fault of the Irish who interfered with the Orange procession.

Leaguers. Tension grew and a couple of days later the town resembled a state of siege. Five to six hundred Orangemen, half of them armed, came in from the countryside and surrounding district. Troops were stationed at the Sappers' Bridge in order to keep the forces of the Upper and Lower town apart. The Irishmen were described as being in a fierce mood.

There were more in Lower Town armed with muskets and bayonets than all the soldiers, and fierce resolute devils they were and chafing like chained tigers to get at their enemies.¹²⁶

Likewise, the Orange celebrations at St. Catharine's in 1849 were the occasion for a murderous confrontation. Three hundred boisterous Irishmen marched into town from the Welland Canal. The efforts of the local priests to turn them around failed and after three cheers for the Queen, the Governor and the Pope, they went on to break a few heads. Before the day was done, soldiers were called to the region. In the ensuing melee, two people were killed and four wounded.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ See MG24 B55, Bytown (Robert to Jessie) 18 & 20 September 1849; also La Minerve, lundi, 24 septembre 1849. The possibility of serious bloodshed was underlined by the mysterious acquisition of the rioters of two pieces of ordnance and sixty stand of arms from the local militia, RG7 G20, Vol. 48, No. 5223, Military Secretary, October 12, 1849. See also, Doughty, ed., op. cit., pp. 504-5, copy of an article upon Lord Elgin's visit in Ottawa Advocate, September 19, 1849.

¹²⁷ MG24 E10, Killally Papers, 1848-50.

Political Violence II

If religious attitudes were sufficient to emote violent reactions such as those illustrated by the activities of Orangemen and Irishmen, so could politics. Many politicians did not hesitate to resort to violent means. Elections often turned into days of drunken riot. The candidate who could command the greatest number of brave hearts and stout lads usually emerged victorious. At election time, it was accepted practice to employ the Irish navvies to threaten and menace electors at the polling places.¹²⁸ The Canadian Reformers were most guilty of this sin because the Irish and Catholic canal labourers sympathized with them rather than their opponents. For example, in the voting for the first Union legislative assembly in 1841, Robert Baldwin was accused of hiring shanty men, ruffians and bullies to drive away the supporters of his opponent in the county of Hastings.¹²⁹ When he lost a byelection there in 1842, Baldwin's defeat was attributed to the violent methods of his Conservative opponents.¹³⁰ Baldwin's experience was not an isolated

¹²⁸ Sir Richard Henry Bonnycastle, Canada and the Canadians in 1846, Vol. I (London 1846), p. 39.

¹²⁹ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1841, Contested Elections. A bit later, in elections in 1843, one candidate in the county of Vaudreuil enlisted the support of one hundred and fifty Glengarry men who came in thirty sleighs. See Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1843, Appendix JJ.

¹³⁰ La Minerve, lundi, 17 octobre 1847.

example. Everywhere from Kent to Niagara, from Beauharnois to St. Maurice, the defeated would accuse the victor of rowdiness and intimidation.¹³¹

A Montreal byelection in the spring of 1844 provides a good example of the use of violence and mobs to pursue political interests. A section of the Lachine canal was damaged causing a dam to burst and the work to stop, enabling five to six hundred workers to go into town. Efficiently organized into parties of fifty to a hundred men, they literally took over the polling places. Not only did troops have to deal with them in town, soldiers also had to be sent to the canal to protect it from further damage.¹³² The Governor General, Sir Charles Metcalfe, lay the blame upon the shoulders of Francis Hincks and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine. He believed it was they who drew the labourers to town and since the Irishmen could not vote, it was clear their real value was as a mob. Metcalfe was sure the Reformers would win the election by violence and strategem.¹³³ Not only were they content to employ the navvies, they went to the extreme of stirring up the Irish Roman Catholics of

¹³¹ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1841, Contested Elections. See also Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, March 23, 1841.

¹³² RG7 G20, Vol. 30-31, No. 3486. Capt. Wetherall to Provincial Secretary Dominick Daly, April 21, 1844. See also, RG7 G12, Vol. 64, Metcalfe to Stanley, April 22, 1844.

¹³³ RG7 G12, Vol. 64, Metcalfe to Stanley, March 26, 1844. See also, RG7 G12, Vol. 64, Metcalfe to Stanley, April 13, 1844.

the city itself. A large public meeting was convened, presided by Francis Hincks, at which the reformers declared themselves in favour of the Repeal of the Union, not that of Canada, but of England and Ireland. Incredulous, Metcalfe wrote:

Nothing can be more reckless than to stir up the passions of the Irish Roman Catholics of Canada on the question of Repeal. Such electioneering shows the mischievous disposition of my opponents.¹³⁴

Ultimately riot and mob activity resulted in one death, that of a young man by the name of Julian Champeaux who was killed in a charge of British soldiers.¹³⁵ Despite the fact that a coroner's inquest judged the fatality to be accidental, the Reformers transformed the funeral into a great partisan procession. Led by Francis Hincks, Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine and Augustin-Norbert Morin, two thousand mourners assisted at the rites.¹³⁶

Not only were the Reformers guilty of the use of violence, so were their opponents. The riots and the burning of the parliament buildings in Montreal on April 25, 1849, resulted from the rage and frustration of the Canadian Tories. The passage of the Rebellion Losses Bill which compensated French Canadians for losses suffered in 1837 and 1838, was too much for the Tories to accept. Now

¹³⁴ Ibid., Metcalfe to Stanley, April 13, 1844.

¹³⁵ La Minerve, lundi, 22 avril 1844.

¹³⁶ Ibid., jeudi, 25 avril 1844.

it was the turn of the Reformers to look down their noses. The Toronto Examiner reported on the "disgraceful" riot and arson in Montreal.¹³⁷ The Governor General, now Lord Elgin, reported on the attitude of the Canadian Tories, writing:

. . . but the body politic and social is so thoroughly diseased, more especially in Montreal, that a cure is not to be looked for,--commercial distress, religious bigotry and national hatred have driven a certain portion of the population here mad.¹³⁸

The city remained in a highly disturbed state for several days after April 25. On the twenty-sixth, when arrests of the mob leaders began to be made, several hundred angry men gathered and marched to government house. In response, troops were placed there, as well as at the jail, the court house and the Bonsecours market, the new temporary meeting place of the assembly. The anger of the crowd was then focussed on the homes of the reform leaders. Attacks were made upon the homes of both Francis Hincks and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine. Official military reports claimed that "some directing power exists" and estimated at least 3,000 influential, thoroughly organized and armed men roaming the city.¹³⁹ Disturbances continued throughout the summer. In mid-August, when the authorities undertook further arrests of the participants of the April riots, LaFontaine's house was attacked again. This time he and several friends were

¹³⁷ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, May 2, 1849.

¹³⁸ Doughty, ed., op. cit., Elgin to Grey, May 28, 1849.

¹³⁹ RG4 B25, Vol. 1, Montreal Riot Papers, 1849.

armed and prepared to defend it. In the resulting disturbance, six of the mob were wounded and one man was killed.¹⁴⁰ So enraged were the rioters than when the coroner's inquest was held, the hotel in which it was meeting was burned down.¹⁴¹

The use of violence was a method available to politicians of every persuasion. Frequently, unhesitatingly and enthusiastically, rowdiness, intimidation and mobs were thrown into the political balance. Elections or periods of political crisis were often times when the peace and order of the community were set aside.

Labour Violence III

Life on the worksites of the colony was dangerous and miserable, filled with accidents, strikes and work stoppages. Workers were abused by the contractors and dare they band together to demand higher salaries, or even to refuse wage cuts, they were mercilessly suppressed. Sympathy for their conditions did not exist. On the contrary, Etienne Parent, remarking upon a strike in the Quebec City shipyards in 1840, wrote an article which reflected upon the eternal truths regarding workingmen. In Parent's opinion, it was useless for them to strike or combine, for the laws of the labour force were clear. When there were more workers than

¹⁴⁰ See La Minerve and Le Canadien, jeudi, 16 août, 1849.

¹⁴¹ La Minerve, lundi, 20 août 1849.

necessary, wages fell. When there were too few labourers, salaries would increase.¹⁴² A decade later, Parent's ideas would not have changed. Delivering a lecture upon the working classes, he concluded it to be totally futile for them to unite to demand higher wages. Labour, he believed, was regulated by competition, not by strikes or demonstrations. The only solution for the worker was foresight, to try to prepare for bad days which would inevitably come.¹⁴³

Unfortunately, the virtue of prudence was more appropriate to editorial offices and lecture halls, for the very condition of the workers was inimical to it.¹⁴⁴ They lived in shanties. They were paid in scrip, accepted only by company stores which charged inflated prices. The pattern of falling deeper and deeper into debt was a common feature of the system. As grievances increased and resentment grew, violence often resulted. Not the least of its causes were the Irishmen themselves. Their own internal rivalries resulted in disturbances on the public

¹⁴² Le Canadien, vendredi, 4 décembre 1840.

¹⁴³ Considérations sur le sort des classes ouvrières, discours prononcé par Etienne Parent devant la chambre de lecture de St. Roch. le 15 avril 1852. Québec: Imprimerie de E. R. Frechette, 1852.

¹⁴⁴ See H. C. Pentland, "The Lachine Strike of 1843," in Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXIX, No. 3 (September 1948). In the author's words, the story of canal construction in Canada was ". . . the history of a long series of strikes, which in bitterness, or even in terms of the number of men involved, have scarcely been equalled in Canadian history," p. 255.

works. For example, hostility between those from the counties of Cork and Connaught led to altercations and was partly responsible for difficulties at the Lachine site in 1843. Sometimes, when the labourers had an edge on a contractor who was committed to a tight completion schedule, they would strike for higher wages. Unfortunately, there would always be extra men around willing to take the jobs of the strikers. The result would be the spectacle of the Irish battling among themselves.¹⁴⁵ The baneful influence of Irishmen bringing their old hostilities to the colony was a source of real regret for Canadians.¹⁴⁶ One official report described the Irish labourers as a violent and uncontrollable force, filled with bitterness and resentment which derived from their old country feuds. Roaming from worksite to worksite trying to get employment as best they could, they composed a footloose, irregular and brawling group of men who ". . . were little accustomed to legal restraint, and had but slight respect for the laws."¹⁴⁷

Apart from their own inherent divisions, the navvies had serious grievances, such as long hours, low wages and the system of "truck payment." They oftentimes worked as many as twelve hours for three shillings per day. Rarely

¹⁴⁵ La Minerve, lundi, 6 mars 1843. See also Journal of the Legislative Assembly, 1843, Appendix T.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., jeudi, 30 mars 1843.

¹⁴⁷ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1843. Appendix 2.

could they expect to work more than twenty days in a month because of work suspensions due to accidents or bad weather. During idle times, they had to remain on the site for they never knew when the work would start again. All the while they were obliged to feed and lodge themselves.¹⁴⁸

The "truck system" was particularly odious. It was originally introduced to enable the men to purchase goods and food at reasonable prices and to rid the worksites of the hucksters who swarmed about charging outrageous prices.¹⁴⁹ However, the contractors' stores were no improvement. Generally, the workers did not have enough money, so they were forced to trade their labour for goods. Instead of essentials like meal, potatoes, milk and eggs, the stores stocked luxury items like tea, bread, butter, coffee and sugar, thus assuring the indebtedness of their customers. The contractors also provided shanties or huts as lodgings and charged expensive rents.¹⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, when trouble did break out, the contractors were often the object of the workers' wrath.

1843 was a particularly bad year with serious outbreaks of violence at the Lachine and Beauharnois canals. In March, troops were sent to the Lachine site which was plagued by violence and riots. The commanding officer was

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 1843, Appendix T.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 1843, Appendix 2.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 1843, Appendix T.

ordered to disarm the men, and to take any measures necessary to restore order. In addition, he was required to provide descriptions of the ringleaders to prevent them from getting work anywhere else in the colony.¹⁵¹ The area was not effectively pacified until the middle of May. When the work stopped and the men dispersed, the problem solved itself.¹⁵²

Disturbances at the Beauharnois canal during the same year were far more serious. The events here were reported all across the colony. Work stopped at the end of May when the labourers refused to work longer hours for lower wages.¹⁵³ There were believed to be about three thousand at the site. Despite the fact that the stores were closed, the situation remained calm for several days. On June 10, soldiers, eventually numbering eighty men and three officers, began to arrive. The workers became increasingly hostile and began to attack the contractors' houses. One such house, protected by thirty soldiers, was surrounded by a mob of angry labourers. The riot act was read but no clash occurred for the soldiers were hopelessly outnumbered. On the same day, another group of Irishmen, bent on sabotaging the canal to insure that work would not be recommenced until their demands were accepted, confronted an armed force protecting

¹⁵¹ RG7 G20, Vols. 20-21, No. 2469, 8 & 11 March, 1843.

¹⁵² Ibid., Vols. 22-23, No. 2617, 15 & 18 May, 1843.

¹⁵³ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1843, Appendix T.

the site. This time the clash was tragic. When the navvies refused to desist, the troops fired upon them and then charged with drawn swords. Official reports claimed six killed, one drowned and several wounded.¹⁵⁴

Solution to the violence and strikes seemed beyond the capacity of the colonial government. An official inquiry into the events at Beauharnois made several recommendations, that regular bodies of mounted police be stationed at the site, that some workers, to be called "select men," should be chosen as constables, that salaries be paid regularly every two weeks at rates established by the Board of Works and that the "truck" or company store system be abolished.¹⁵⁵ These recommendations were no answer. Fundamentally it was believed the situation at the public works would not change. The annual report of the Board of Works for 1843 expressed the sentiment that the navvies were beyond any sort of regulation or control. Once men began to work at the sites, they were rendered shiftless and unruly:

¹⁵⁴ For accounts of the situation at Beauharnois, see La Minerve, lundi, 19 juin 1843; Le Canadien, mercredi, 14 juin 1843; RG7 G12, Vol. 63, Metcalfe to Stanley, June 24, 1843; Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1843, Appendix T. Le Canadien reported seven dead and twelve wounded; Governor Metcalfe reported eight dead.

¹⁵⁵ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1843, Appendix T.

. . . they became a class of workers, neither valuable as settlers, nor disposed to fix themselves as such.¹⁵⁶

In fact, the violence of wandering workers continued to plague the colony throughout the 1840s, not only at the sites themselves, but in the surrounding districts and countryside. For example, in the summer of 1844, the emigrant agent at Montreal reported not only the visits at the immigrant sheds of sailors and dissolute women whose intentions were obvious, but also the presence of bullies from the canals come to disurb the peace.¹⁵⁷

In 1845, the assembly passed a law for the preservation of peace and the prevention of riots at the public works sites and in the surrounding districts. It required licenses for the possession of firearms, provided for searches of weapons and created a mounted police force of one hundred men at the disposal of the entire province.¹⁵⁸ Recent disturbances at the Welland Canal had been sited as a perfect reason for such a law.¹⁵⁹ Despite the legislation, lawlessness and disorder continued. Local officials would constantly complain of their inability to deal with the situation. When the canals were completed, the railroad construction sites would provide a new occasion for violence.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 1843, Appendix 2.

¹⁵⁷ RG7 G20, Vol. 30, No. 3739, August 9, 1844.

¹⁵⁸ Statutes of Canada, 8 Victoria, Cap. 6.

¹⁵⁹ RG1 E8, Vol. 8, January 1845.

For example, as early as 1851, Hamilton officials requested protection from the violence of the workers along the line of the Great Western Railroad.¹⁶⁰

As has been seen, the 1840s were turbulent years. Outbursts of anger and frustration were experienced in every corner of the colony. Violence was resorted to by many people and threatened even more. When individuals opted for it, be they zealots, politicians or workers, the pattern was generally the same. The forces of order were rarely able to contain it and so the rage had to spend itself, often with sad results. Worksites were sabotaged, voters threatened, buildings burned, fences broken and even some lives lost. A careful examination of these years illustrates that violence lay just below the surface of calm, ready to erupt at any moment, for numerous reasons. It was an experience common and immediate to most Canadians. Their reaction and use of it exemplify still another pattern of culture shared throughout the colony.

A Solution

Temperance I

If the times were difficult, one solution to the everyday hardships seized upon by Canadians seemed easy. For many, both French and English goodness was equated with temperance and evil with the lack of it. It was believed

¹⁶⁰ RG1 E8, Vol. 39, February 17, 1851.

that abuse of alcohol was the cause of most misery. One French Canadian newspaper made the argument that sobriety was the first link in the chain which led to national greatness. The reasoning was as follows:

La sobriété laissons aux pères de familles d'amples moyens de faire instruire les enfants, l'instruction enfantera l'industrie, l'industrie le bien être, la bien être rehaussera les sentiments d'un peuple et lui inspirera des idées de liberté, qui jointes à une intelligence cultivée feront un peuple grand, prospère, libre et respecté.

Il n'y a certes là aucune exagération et nous n'avons fait que donner un léger aperçu [sic] que peuvent procurer les sociétés de tempérance.¹⁶¹

If temperance led to greatness, drunkenness resulted in disaster. In a later and ingenious article in the same newspaper, one hundred and twenty-nine evils of drink were listed alphabetically. Although the author's imagination failed him for the letters, K, L, Q, U, W and X, the catalogue was impressive. Some examples were "Accessoire au crime, Aime sensualité, Baïse comme Judas, cause Contention, Charme les fous, Corrompt la jeunesse, Dérange le système, Elargit l'enfer, Fatigue, se Glorifie dans sa honte, Huile la machine de la méchanceté, Incite la révolte, Justifie le méchant, Pourpre le visage et le nez."¹⁶²

Canadians were convinced of the goodness of a sober life. Reports of temperance societies and meetings were

¹⁶¹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 12 août 1840.

¹⁶² Ibid., mercredi, 1 mars 1843.

regularly printed in the newspapers.¹⁶³ Rarely was there any criticism of the cause. No one could oppose moderation. The closest thing to an objection was the declaration of the Toronto Patriot that while a friend of "legitimate temperance," it could not support the cause completely. The righteousness and fanaticism of those who proposed total abstinence was too unnerving. It disliked the growing sentiment that only teetotalers could be truly virtuous. It found the hypocritical cant of temperance leaders obnoxious and feared the zeal and enthusiasm being stirred even in the hearts of women and children.¹⁶⁴

In fact, the exaggerated convictions of both French and English proponents of temperance sometimes led to strange conclusions and silly opinions. For example, one temperance preacher, the Reverend James Byrne, found causes for drunkenness everywhere. He concluded that governments promoted intemperance by permitting the sale of liquor and doctors did more harm than good by prescribing it. Holidays, and the accompanying indolence, were particularly dangerous occasions of temptation.¹⁶⁵ Another example of

¹⁶³ See Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, July 24, 1844; Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, October 20, 1850; La Minerve, lundi, 2 octobre 1848.

¹⁶⁴ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, May 22, 1842.

¹⁶⁵ Rev. James T. Byrne, The Claims of Temperance Societies, A Lecture delivered to the Young Men's Literary Society at l'Original, and subsequently to respectable audiences at Montreal, St. Andrew's & Quebec, Montreal, 1841.

misdirected zeal was Father Charles Chiniquy's battle against luxury. Chiniquy, a French Canadian priest and by far the greatest and most effective temperance preacher of the 1840s, focussed upon a second evil he believed destructive of virtue, namely, "le luxe." According to at least one country curé, it was "cette seconde plaie du Canada." The ladies of the parish of Longueuil created the "Société de Jésus couronné d'Epines" and set out to extirpate extravagance and ease.¹⁶⁶ Punch in Canada delighted in caricaturing the ladies and described their leader as:

The excellent Father Chiniquy, or as some of my countrymen call him Sneaky, wages war against Geneva both spiritually and spiritously . . .¹⁶⁷

The Root of All Evil II

While zeal sometimes led to extremes, consumption of alcohol did cause serious problems. The conviction that the abuse of liquor was one basic cause of evil was noticeable all across the colony. For example, the 1844 annual report of the Montreal Temperance Society complained that there were at least 296 licensed establishments in the city. Since it believed that human misery and crime were in direct proportion to the amount of alcohol consumed, the availability of liquor was too great. The society claimed that half the people in the poor house were there because of drunkenness. It demanded in the name of all who were

¹⁶⁶ La Minerve, jeudi, 5 mars 1849.

¹⁶⁷ Punch, Vol. 1, nos. 2 & 3, February and March, 1849.

miserable--orphans, widows, criminals, prostitutes, the sick and the insane--that the number of licenses be cut.¹⁶⁸ The situation did not improve. In 1846, one Montreal judge despaired at the criminal condition of the city.¹⁶⁹

In 1849, a parliamentary committee, appointed to inquire into the evils of intemperance, arrived at the same sad conclusions. The committee heard testimony from witnesses like Charles Chiniquy, John Dougall, the President of the Montreal Temperance Society, Captain Wiley, the Chief of Police, and Thomas McGinn, the Montreal jailer. Drunkenness, the parliamentarians concluded, caused one half of all crime, two-thirds of insanity and three-quarters of poverty. Fifty-three deaths, fully one-tenth of mortality in Montreal in 1849, were directly attributed to intemperance. It was estimated that the city had 300 licensed taverns, but what was worse was that the number of unlicensed places was unknown and beyond control.¹⁷⁰ The situation in Toronto was no better. Intemperance, license, poverty and crime were all reported to be increasing.¹⁷¹ In 1851, it was estimated that there were 152 taverns and

¹⁶⁸ La Minerve, lundi, 22 janvier 1844. The Canada Temperance Advocate, Thursday, September 1, 1842 claimed that at the races in Montreal, four hundred and fifty people were drunk, twenty of them women.

¹⁶⁹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, November 4, 1846.

¹⁷⁰ La Minerve, mardi, 2 janvier 1844.

¹⁷¹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, August 4, 1848.

206 beershops there, a drinking place for each fifteen houses and for every seventy people.¹⁷²

All across the colony, in articles, tracts and books, the evils of intemperance were fully discussed. Oftentimes little object lessons demonstrating the fearful consequences of drunkenness appeared in the newspapers. One example was the story of a Quebec City woman of disreputable character who was seen drunk and in the company of several soldiers equally inebriated. What happened during the night was left to the imagination, but she was found dead in the street the next morning, an example of the dangers lurking in the use of alcohol.¹⁷³ Among her many contributions to the Literary Garland was Susannah Moodie's uplifting poem entitled, The Drunkard's Return: A Tale for Teetotallers, showing the goodness of abstinence.¹⁷⁴ One of the great publishing successes of the 1840s was Charles Chiniquy's Temperance Manual, one hundred and thirteen pages of florid poetry, horror stories, scriptural admonitions and testimonials to the author and his cause.¹⁷⁵ The Quebec Gazette believed it was a pity that such a manual did not exist in English and suggested that if a friend of temperance would translate it,

¹⁷² Le Canadien, lundi, 10 mars 1851.

¹⁷³ Quebec Mercury, Saturday, January 30, 1841.

¹⁷⁴ Literary Garland, Vol. V, No. 2, February 1847.

¹⁷⁵ Rev. Fr. Charles Chiniquy, Manual of the Temperance Society: dedicated to the Youth of Canada, 1st English ed., Montreal 1847.

the newspaper would print a few hundred copies.¹⁷⁶ The book went through three printings¹⁷⁷ and was well received in the English and French press.¹⁷⁸ The enthusiastic welcome given Chiniquy's work is one striking indication that the crusade for temperance transcended linguistic and religious differences.

Popular Response to Intemperance III

The response to the evils of drunkenness was enthusiastic and similar throughout Canada. Societies were established everywhere, from small towns to large cities, such as l'Association Catholique de Tempérance de la Paroisse de Beauport, the Temperance Society of Montreal, the Temperance Reformation Society of the City of Toronto, and the Quebec Total Abstinence Society: Vast public meetings were held for the promotion of the cause. In the summer of 1840, as many as two hundred and fifty people of the parish at Beauport were fired up to take the pledge against liquor.¹⁷⁹ In the fall of 1842, thousands of people attended a temperance picnic in Montreal. Numerous youths were reported there, carrying banners with slogans such as

¹⁷⁶ Quebec Gazette, Monday, January 11, 1847.

¹⁷⁷ Le Canadien, lundi, 21 janvier 1850.

¹⁷⁸ See reviews of Chiniquy's Manual in Le Canadien, vendredi, 6 mars 1846; Quebec Gazette, Monday, January 11, 1847; and Literary Garland, Vol. V, No. 10, October 1847.

¹⁷⁹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 12 août 1840.

"Cold Water For Ever."¹⁸⁰ Father Charles Chiniquy preached all over Canada East, at places like Beauport,¹⁸¹ Kamouraska,¹⁸² Sorel,¹⁸³ St. Mathias¹⁸⁴ and Montreal.¹⁸⁵

In 1848 and 1849, Chiniquy's work was particularly successful and he was popularly acclaimed by enormous crowds. After three days of preaching at the Montreal parish of Notre Dame de Bonsecours, it was claimed that 4,808 people took the pledge.¹⁸⁶ A record-breaking crowd attended a public meeting at the Bonsecours market in October of the same year. Ten to twelve thousand people gathered together in a most orderly manner to hear Chiniquy, who was to deliver the principal address. The Mayor of Montreal, Bishop Bourget and several others spoke. The meeting was non-denominational and bilingual. The Reverend Mr. Taylor spoke in English and Father O'Reilly, a great advocate of the development of the Eastern Townships, spoke in both English and French. He aimed his comments particularly at the Irish, claiming that the real cause for their misery was intemperance. O'Reilly's address was described as eloquent and sublime. Malcom Cameron, one of the key leaders of the

¹⁸⁰ Canada Temperance Advocate, Saturday, October 1, 1842.

¹⁸¹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 12 août 1840.

¹⁸² La Minerve, lundi, 20 novembre 1842.

¹⁸³ Ibid., jeudi, 24 août 1848.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., jeudi, 1 août 1848.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., lundi, 21 août 1848.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., lundi, 21 août 1848.

Temperance movement in Canada West, also addressed the meeting.¹⁸⁷ Many of the speeches were reprinted in the newspapers.¹⁸⁸

When Chiniquy preached in Montreal in the following spring, it was reported that:

Plus de 16,000 personnes de Montréal ont fait abjuration au pied du Christ à la suite des sermons prêchés par M. Chiniquy durant les quatre derniers jours.¹⁸⁹

So much had he entered into the esteem of his listeners, an official portrait, painted by Théophile Hamel, was given him as a gift. Later it was lithographed in New York so that it could be distributed to the thousands who came to hear him.¹⁹⁰ In early 1849, a large public meeting was held expressly to offer thanks for the great work of Chiniquy¹⁹¹ and an official delegation visited him in Longueuil to present a medal cast in his honour.¹⁹² The temperance crusader was also the keynote speaker at the Montreal St. Jean-Baptiste festivities of that year.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ La Minerve, lundi, 9 octobre 1848. The temperance meeting outnumbered by four or five thousand people the record-breaking crowd which met in the spring regarding the development of the townships. See La Minerve, jeudi, 6 avril 1848.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., lundi, 16 octobre 1848.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., jeudi, 5 avril 1849.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., jeudi, 26 octobre 1848.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., lundi, 16 avril 1849.

¹⁹² Ibid., lundi, 16 juillet 1849.

¹⁹³ Ibid., lundi, 26 juin 1849.

Other temperance speakers of lesser stature also travelled across the colony promoting the cause.¹⁹⁴ One result of such public meetings and organizations was legislation. The first annual celebrations of the Sons of Temperance was held in Toronto in July 1850 to correspond with the passage of a new temperance law.¹⁹⁵ There was a parade comprised of more than 1,500 people, with bands and banners which proclaimed virtues such as LOVE, PURITY, and FIDELITY. The evening events were attended by six hundred people who listened to several speeches which gave the same message, that liquor was the root of all evil.¹⁹⁶

The new Act which they celebrated, had been sponsored by Malcom Cameron. It provided for a more effective licensing system for taverns.¹⁹⁷ In the following year, the legislature incorporated The Order of the Sons of Temperance and The Temperance Reformation Society of Toronto.¹⁹⁸ An Act similar to the one passed in 1850 for Canada West, was legislated for Canada East, instituting a

¹⁹⁴ For example, Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, October 2, 1850. The newspaper announced that Mr. J. B. Gough would be lecturing upon temperance in Quebec City and that he had already met with great success in Montreal. Le Canadien reported that Dr. Douglas was to speak upon the evil effects of liquor, mercredi, 15 mars 1848.

¹⁹⁵ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, July 24, 1850.

¹⁹⁶ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, July 31, 1850.

¹⁹⁷ Statutes of Canada, 13&14 Victoria, Cap. 27. See also Le Canadien, mercredi, 24 juillet 1850.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 14 & 15 Victoria, Caps. 159 & 160.

system of licenses and permits for taverns.¹⁹⁹ Father Chiniquy had visited Toronto in March 1851 to press for the passage of the bill. His efforts were rewarded by the new law and a grant of \$500 to support and advance his own temperance work.²⁰⁰

Everywhere in Canada people believed drunkenness to be a fundamental cause of evil. Whether French or English, they banded together in societies, they promised to drink no more, and they pushed for the passage of new laws which would suppress the consequences of intemperance. The 1840s witnessed the beginnings of the temperance movement, a crusade which transcended differences between Canadians. The going was slow everywhere. The Toronto Temperance Reformation Society encouraged its members and reported the cause moving ahead, slowly but surely.²⁰¹ The Quebec Total Abstinence Society, established in February of 1847,²⁰² complained, only a month later, of the enormous public apathy towards the cause.²⁰³ Despite Chiniquy's apparent success in 1849, many of the thousands who had taken the pledge seemed to be weakening. One French Canadian newspaper could not resist noting that most of those who

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 14 & 15 Victoria, Cap. 100.

²⁰⁰ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1851, Appendix B.

²⁰¹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, July 24, 1844.

²⁰² Quebec Gazette, Friday, February 18, 1847.

²⁰³ Ibid., Wednesday, March 7, 1847.

broke their promise were not French Canadians. Of forty-three people arrested for drunkenness during one week in November, only eight were French Canadian.²⁰⁴

Clearly, the battle was only beginning. What is apparent is that the pursuit of virtue, particularly in the form of temperance, was a concern in all of the colony shared by Canadians everywhere.

Conclusion

Because there were no solutions to the hardships they faced, Canadians seemed astonishingly alike. There was no protection from fire, no remedy for sickness, no means to contain violence. Everywhere they were obliged to endure the trials of daily life as best they could and in exactly the same manner. They were generous towards the victims of fire. They feared the spread of disease. In 1847, from Quebec to Hamilton, wherever the Irish arrived, Canadians raised their voices to heaven and the local authorities to spare them this plague. There was no prevention of bullying, riots and strikes, wherever such violence was experienced, be it in St. Catharine's or Beauharnois. The fact that so many believed the basic cause of misery to be the abuse of liquor illustrated the inability to come to grips with their problems. More importantly, the general conviction of the goodness of a temperate life, shared by Canadians despite their differences of language, religion

²⁰⁴ La Minerve, jeudi, 6 décembre 1849.

and place, illustrated their similarity of attitude. Their trials and hardships were the same and the endurance of them demonstrated that Canadians shared many of the same cultural values.

CHAPTER FIVE

DARK AND OMINOUS PLACES

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONDITION OF THE COLONY

Canadians everywhere believed it was a wise and intelligent age in which they lived. The superstition and barbarity of the past were giving way to the force of learning and intelligence.¹ Even such an innocent and simple activity like reading a useful book contributed to the betterment of mankind.² But if the general moral and social condition of society could be improved, there remained a problem. What was to be done with the misfits, with those who deviated from the norm of health, intelligence and capacity to function reasonably? Canada, like any other place, had its share of lunatics and criminals, handicapped and poor.

By describing the institutional condition of the colony; that is, its prisons and insane asylums, and by discussing the nature of their administration and treatment, what becomes immediately apparent is that attitudes towards crime and mental aberration were shared across the colony, as were the ideas regarding the treatment of inmates and patients. It made little difference if one spoke French or

¹ Literary Garland, Vol. VII, No. 2, February, 1849.

² Ibid., Vol. VII, No. 8, August, 1849.

English, or if one came from Quebec City or Toronto. Crime and insanity were the same everywhere and the basic conviction was that criminals could be reformed and the insane cured.

One thing is certain. In terms of the institutions available for the criminal and the insane, the colony was in its infancy during the 1840s. Many of the institutions available to these unfortunates were new and untried. At this time, Canada was really only beginning to develop a consciousness of society's obligation to their inmates. Because of that lack of sophistication and development, lunatics and criminals were often mistreated and suffered terrible confinements. Much of the rationale of the prisons and hospitals which existed, was to withdraw and isolate the prisoners and patients from society. They were believed to be a real threat to the community at large. As for the blind, the deaf, the mute, orphans and poor, assistance was rarely offered.

A study of the treatment and attitudes towards these most abandoned elements of society indicate the degree of humanity and generosity of the community in which they live. What is more, in the Canadian experience, no discernible difference of attitude or treatment among French and English-speaking Canadians is found. Most Canadians knew little of what went on within the walls of their jails and asylums and cared less. Horrifying examples of abuse never elicited popular indignation or concern. Only a few were

interested in improving the lot of those who were found in the colony's public institutions. Such credit as there is, for reform, improvements and progressive ideas, goes to those few officials, administrators, newspapermen and politicians across the province, who isolated problems and attempted to resolve them.

Improvements were sorely needed. Observation of the administration and care provided by many of Canada's jails and asylums illustrates that there was much to be done. Abuse of inmates and patients, petty thievery and drunkenness, and nepotism and dishonesty were not uncommon. During the 1840s, several parliamentary commissions and committees were appointed to investigate these places and invariably they found much room for improvement. These institutions were not pretty places and often the programs and policies of those who administered them seemed completely inimical to the purpose of their existence.

Attitudes towards Prisons and Prisoners

Of all the public institutions in the colony, the penitentiary at Kingston was the largest and most important, often the focus of concern and disgust. The prison opened in 1835 and a few years later nearly three hundred prisoners had already passed in and out of its gates.³ The chaplain of the penitentiary, the Reverend W. M. Herchmer, despaired

³ Report of the Board of Inspectors of the Provincial Penitentiary for 1838. Printed by order of the House of Assembly. Commercial Herald Office (Kingston 1839).

of its programs of reform. He noted a high degree of recidivism attributing it to too short sentences and to the fact that many prisoners, once released, loitered about Kingston waiting for friends to finish their time. The ill effects of continued bad acquaintances were evident.

Herchmer believed that

In the majority of cases the commission of crime is to be assumed to be the want of religious instruction in childhood; in very many instances evil habits have been strengthened by the immoral conduct of parents and guardians.

The love of change, the encouragement of seditious meetings, and the attempt to revolutionize have increased the number of penitents.⁴

Drunkenness was also considered to be another serious cause of crime. In the views of one assemblyman, lawlessness was due to the intemperance and the lack of early moral education.⁵ A parliamentary committee studying the ill effects of intemperance concluded that it was the cause of one-half of crime in Canada.⁶

⁴ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

⁵ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Friday, October 20, 1843.

⁶ Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly appointed to inquire whether any and what measures can be adopted to repress the Evils of Intemperance. Published by order of the Legislative Assembly. Montreal: Lovell and Gibson, St. Nicholas Street, 1849, p. 3. See also RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1852. The annual report on the Kingston penitentiary noted that lack of moral character was due to the failure of parents to properly educate their children. It was observed that prisoners' knowledge of God and the basic tenets of Christianity was minimal. Many of them were hopeless drunks, gamblers and swearers.

Reflections upon crime and its cause were rare. Canada, it seemed, was too good a country and opportunity for advance open to everyone. Why people would break the law was quite beyond comprehension. One observer remarked:

In this country where honest exertion is sure of meeting its reward and where no line of industry is adequately filled the inducements to petty crimes are few, and their occurrence should be visited with a comparatively heavy sentence.⁷

And if they were to be so foolish, in the opinion of La Minerve of Montreal, there was no country better equipped than Canada to deal with criminals in the excellent prison at Kingston.⁸ Indeed, there can be no doubt that crime was severely punished at Kingston.

The penitentiary was just beyond town, surrounded by a stone wall with observation towers at each corner. Inside, the inmates were occupied as carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers and tailors. Some even made rope. The cells were arranged so that the keepers could look in without being seen by the prisoners.⁹ From all appearances, it seemed an effective and reasonable jail. The building was one of Kingston's most notable landmarks, described and remarked upon in guidebooks and by visitors to the colony. During his North American tour, Charles Dickens toured the jail and compared it favourably to prisons he had seen in

⁷ RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1849.

⁸ La Minerve, lundi, 11 septembre 1848.

⁹ Smith's Canadian Gazeteer. Toronto: H. & W. Rousell, 1846.

the United States, concluding it to be an admirable institution, well and wisely run.¹⁰

In his speech from the throne in September 1843, the Governor General, Sir Charles Metcalfe, noted the great advances made in the treatment of criminals in the colony. He described the penitentiary as "an Institution very creditable to the country" and he praised the efforts being made to build new local jails throughout Canada. Of course all was not perfect. The governor was convinced that criminals could be reformed and he stressed the need for reasonable and just treatment of prisoners.

The justice due even to criminals requires that they should not be subjected to greater punishment than [sic] what is designed by their sentence, and that disease or death from foul air and want of exercise, should not be superadded to imprisonment. It is likewise due to untried Prisoners, who may be innocent, that they should not be confined in the same cell with convicted criminals. A classification and separation of the latter is also requisite. Decency and morality demand the same with regard to the sexes; and Debtors and criminals ought not to be confined together.¹¹

In the address, Metcalfe also made it clear that it was imperative the colony determine the deficiencies of its prison system and correct them immediately.

During the 1840s, serious efforts were made to improve the lot of prisoners and to reform abuses that

¹⁰ See The Canadian Guidebook: with a Map of the Province. Montreal: Armour and Ramsay, 1849 and Charles Dickens, American Notes for General Circulation. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1842.

¹¹ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Thursday, September 28, 1843.

developed in the jails. The belief was that prisons were not only places of punishment but opportunities for reform. The assembly passed several laws regarding the penitentiary. It had become the prison for all of Canada, east and west, in 1841.¹² In 1842, an act was passed whose purpose was to proportion punishment to offences. Kingston was reserved for only the most serious of criminals, those serving terms of three or more years.¹³ Imprisonment for debt was abolished in 1843.¹⁴ In 1846, provision was made for the appointment of a board of inspectors and very detailed regulations for the conduct of the prison were outlined. Even the quality of the food and the coarseness of the clothing and bedding of the prisoners was considered. The fact that a bible was provided to each prisoner, the consumption of alcohol was prohibited and reception of letters forbidden, indicate concerns for reform rather than punishment alone.¹⁵

Annual reports upon the conduct and operation of the prison were published. The Board of Inspectors, along with the warden, surgeon and chaplain, submitted their observations. The number of prisoners, their place of origin and the length of their sentence were all submitted,

¹² Statutes of Canada, 5 Victoria, Cap. 69.

¹³ Ibid., 6 Victoria, Cap. 5.

¹⁴ Ibid., 7 Victoria, Cap. 31.

¹⁵ Ibid., 9 Victoria, Cap. 4.

along with statistics on the nature of crime. There was also an annual financial statement covering the expenses of the prison. The great majority of the prison population during the 1840s was between the age of twenty-one and thirty and religious affiliation was fairly evenly split between Catholics and Protestants.¹⁶ The largest national grouping were the Irish. In 1848, of 456 convicts, 138 were born in Ireland. More than fifty were born in the United States and there were even four Swiss.¹⁷ When the prison began to serve the whole territory of the Canadas after the Union, prisoners from Lower Canada started coming. Twenty of the ninety-three convicts admitted in 1842 were Lower Canadians. In the following year, fifty-five were admitted from that section of the colony. Sensitive to its new and enlarged role, a Roman Catholic chapel was prepared in the prison in 1843.¹⁸

The annual reports demonstrated certain problems at the prison. For example, the British military establishment had no place to incarcerate miscreant soldiers, so they were sent to Kingston. Most were required to serve sentences of only a few months for slight military infractions. They could hardly be considered hardened criminals but their presence placed a burden on the expenses of the prison and

¹⁶ RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1849.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1848.

¹⁸ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1843, Appendix GG.

was often a cause for complaint. In 1843, fully 129 of the total population of 256 were soldiers.¹⁹ Indeed, their imprisonment in the penitentiary was an injustice to them. In the annual report for 1844-1845, the prison chaplain took up their point of view and declared that they should not be admitted to Kingston.²⁰ In the following year, both the Roman Catholic and the Anglican chaplain complained again and warned of the danger of corrupting these men by throwing them in with hardened criminals.²¹

The corruption of youths sent to the prison was also of great concern. In 1842 there were 164 convicts, 122 of them under the age of thirty.²² In the following year, the population rose to 256, of whom 190 were under thirty.²³ By 1845, there were 384 prisoners with 267 under thirty years. Forty-seven were between the ages of fifteen and nineteen and three under fifteen years old.²⁴ By 1846, there were 15 prisoners under sixteen years old.²⁵ The matter was taken up in the assembly as early as 1843 which adopted a resolution declaring that the province's jails and prison were unfit for the young and created a committee to

¹⁹ Ibid., Appendix GG, 1843.

²⁰ Ibid., Appendix M, 1844-5.

²¹ Ibid., Appendix G, 1846.

²² Ibid., Appendix GG, 1843.

²³ Ibid., Appendix GG, 1843.

²⁴ Ibid., Appendix M, 1844-5.

²⁵ Ibid., Appendix G, 1846.

consider the possibility of establishing a separate institution.²⁶ At least one member of the Assembly, the outspoken Dr. Dunlop from Huron, warned his colleagues not to get carried away with maudlin concerns for young criminals. Juvenile rascals, he believed, should be tied up and given a good thrashing. Punishment was the purpose, not reform.²⁷

Despite such folksy sentiments, the presence of children in the prison was considered a real problem. Young people were being corrupted by the influence of hardened criminals. In the annual report of 1845, the chaplain suggested that at the very least youths should be separated from the adult prisoners. The warden believed that they should not be admitted to Kingston at all and that alternative arrangements be made for them.²⁸ In 1846, the prison's board of inspectors noted the same problem and by 1848 recommended that no one under the age of fifteen be placed in the penitentiary.²⁹ Even though most of those who were familiar with the prison system acknowledged a serious problem, nothing was done about it. Interestingly, no one expressed any concern about the treatment of these youngsters by the prison administration. They were subject to the same

²⁶ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Friday, October 20, 1843.

²⁷ Ibid., Friday, October 20, 1843.

²⁸ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1844-5, Appendix M.

²⁹ Ibid., 1848, Appendix S.

discipline as everyone else and the fate of Peter Charbonneau, a boy ten years old confined in the prison, was not uncommon. On one occasion he received twelve lashes and a diet reduced to bread and water for speaking French and on another, he was thrown into solitary confinement for twenty-four hours for singing.³⁰

While those Canadians who concerned themselves with prisons and crime believed that convicts could be reformed and that the penitentiary was the place to do it, the reality was quite different. One serious problem was the administration of the institution. Discipline was faulty, punishments were extreme, and favouritism rife. This situation was due to the dishonesty and inadequacy of the people who ran the prison. Henry Smith, the warden of the penitentiary since it opened in 1835³¹ until his suspension in 1848, had made it his personal domain, an occasion and an opportunity for the advance of his own prosperity and prestige. Crime may have been caused by bad friends, lack of moral education and intemperance, but it was reinforced at Kingston.

The programme of confinement used there was the same as that of the New York State penitentiary at Auburn, described by one French-speaking Montreal newspaper as a regimen of perfect silence, detention in single cells during

³⁰ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849, Appendix B₅.

³¹ Report of the Board of Inspectors of the Provincial Penitentiary, op. cit., p. 7.

hours of quiet, work in groups and meals taken in a common dining room.³² There were several other approaches to prison discipline which were all theoretically designed to create an atmosphere conducive to reform. Some prisons favoured the separation system, being the total isolation of individual prisoners. The cost of such a programme would have been prohibitive to Canada. Another system, based upon the classification of prisoners according to their age and the nature of their crime, was often remarked upon by assemblymen and prison officials, but never implemented. The silent or Auburn system seemed to have been best suited to Canadian conditions. The hope was that silence would prevent the contamination inherent in communication with the other prisoners. The major difficulty was that it required constant vigilance and prisoners subjected to continual restraint would undoubtedly become highly irritated by the strictures that it imposed. On the other hand, it was believed that once the point of irritation and rebellion was passed, the prisoner would become quiet and submissive, entering into a mental state which would allow him to reflect upon his evil ways and thus reform himself.³³

To the modern mind, the weaknesses of such systems are apparent but in the nineteenth century, they were not conceived only as punishment. They were meant to induce reform. While these programmes were neat and reasonable,

³² La Minerve, lundi, 11 septembre 1848.

³³ RG7 G1, Vol. 118, Circular, March 13, 1848.

they did not achieve their purpose. The extreme discipline and absolute authority required to enforce the silent system were the inherent reasons for its failure. Prison officials, free of restraint, abused their power over the convicts and the men, subjected to such abuse, did not become docile and repentant; they became enraged.

Terrible stories of maltreatment and abuse reached the newspapers. Adjectives like "disgusting" and "brutal" were used in the description of reports from Kingston, but they were not strong enough. The Toronto Examiner was horrified by reports of the flogging of naked women, although the editor seemed less concerned with the punishment than the state of undress of the female prisoners.³⁴ Other stories of gross mismanagement of the prison, extreme punishment and mistreatment appeared in the newspapers. Prisoners, it was claimed, often went hungry and were left to wear flannel shirts and drawers for as long as six months without a change. One report stated that a maniac confined at the penitentiary regularly received a hundred and fifty lashes a week. Youngsters, some as young as twelve years old, were brutally flogged and at least one boy, unable to endure such suffering, was removed from the prison a raving lunatic. The newspapers reported these matters as representatives of what went on in the prison and were astounded that the warden,

³⁴ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, September 30, 1846.

Henry Smith, would contenance such activity.³⁵

In 1846, an inquiry into the conduct of the prison was demanded.³⁶ The Executive Council expressed concern at the seriousness of the corporal punishment being meted out in the jail.³⁷ Sensitive to the growing discontent focussed upon the prison, the Councillors reiterated their conviction that moral reform was the most important goal of penitentiary discipline.³⁸ As a result, measures were taken to repress extreme corporal punishment but flogging continued. For what it was worth, the number of lashes at any one setting was limited to thirty-six and henceforth, both the warden and the prison surgeon were required to attend such punishments.³⁹ In 1847, flogging was temporarily suspended and replaced by solitary confinement and reduced diet.⁴⁰ Other forms of punishment were introduced like the use of the "box."⁴¹ Prisoners claimed to prefer the cat-o-nine tails or the rawhide to this last punishment.⁴²

In the annual report of 1847, Warden Henry Smith

³⁵ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, December 8, 1846.

³⁶ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, September 30, 1846.

³⁷ RG1 E8, Vol. 15, September 30, 1846.

³⁸ Ibid., Vol. 16, December 27, 1846.

³⁹ Ibid., Vol. 16, November 25, 1846.

⁴⁰ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1847, Appendix H.

⁴¹ RG1 E8, Vol. 19, May 18, 1847.

⁴² Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849, Appendix B5.

described his situation and took particular umbrage at all the critical reports upon the prison which appeared in the newspapers. He complained that he was being criticized and undermined from within and without. That year, the prisoners attempted to burn the building down.⁴³ In the following year, however, the Board of Inspectors claimed that the penitentiary was being reasonably administered.⁴⁴ Despite the warden's protestations to the contrary and the assurance of the Inspectors, the situation at the prison was out of hand. Punishments were extreme and ineffective. Moral reform was the last thing being accomplished. The place was becoming a breeding ground of crime. Illustration of that fact was contained in a report which described the prisoners as leading enjoyable lives, talking among themselves, and playing cards and dice. It was believed such a situation reinforced evil ways rather than promoting reform.⁴⁵

Newspaper concern about the prison is not surprising, since it was the colony's largest institution, receiving by far the greatest amount of public money. For example, by the late 1840s, its annual grant hovered about £15,000. This was more than received by all of the other public institutions in the province, such as hospitals and

43 Ibid., 1847, Appendix N.

44 Ibid., 1848, Appendix S.

45 RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1849.

orphanages.⁴⁶ The amount of the grants were public knowledge,⁴⁷ so any hint of financial dishonesty on the part of administrators was likely to raise eyebrows.

In May 1848, a commission of inquiry was appointed by the colonial assembly to investigate the conduct, discipline and management of the provincial penitentiary. The commission was composed of French and English-speaking members from Canada East and West: the Hon. Adam Ferguson, a Legislative Councillor from Woodhill; Narcisse Amiot, a judge in the district of Montreal; William Bristow from the same city; and Edward Cartwright Thomas, a sheriff in the Hamilton district. The final commissioner, George Brown, editor of the Toronto Globe and member of the assembly, served as the secretary.⁴⁸ Their investigation was guided by two major considerations: first, to see whether or not the penitentiary achieved its goal of moral reform, and secondly, to assure that the institution was being honestly and efficiently administered.⁴⁹ They began work in June of 1848 and when they finished in the following spring,⁵⁰ more

⁴⁶ Yearly Statements of the Revenue and Expenses of the colony, found in the Blue Books, contain the amount of money granted to the prison. Also of interest is the Report of the Prison inquiry in the Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849, Appendix B₅.

⁴⁷ La Minerve, lundi, 11 septembre 1848.

⁴⁸ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849, Appendix B₅.

⁴⁹ RG1 E8, Vol. 36, April 2, 1850.

⁵⁰ RG1 E8, Vol. 38, 1850.

than three hundred and thirty pages in quarto, of accusations, investigations, recommendations and conclusions regarding the penitentiary were submitted. The report was divided into two parts, the first dealing with the abuses at Kingston, and the second outlining the Commissioners' visits to other prisons in the United States, and their recommendations for the improvement and restructuring of the administration at the Canadian institution.

The most serious accusations were directed at the warden, Henry Smith, and his son Francis, the kitchen keeper. Both he and his son were accused of cruelty, peculation and conduct subversive to the rules and order of the prison. Henry Smith was accused of gross delinquency of duty and lack of sufficient attention to the administration of the prison. He was reported to have been in constant conflict with the staff of the prison and the deputy wardens. What is more, he helped himself to prison stores, used the labour of the convicts for his own purposes and even had his carriage refitted within the prison walls.⁵¹ While the warden may have been negligent and attempted to profit from his situation, his son was a positive menace to the prisoners. Francis Smith, with a particularly sadistic bent of personality, was accused of serious maltreatment of the convicts, shooting arrows at them, once blinding a man in the eye, throwing water and potatoes at them, sticking

⁵¹ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849,
Appendix B5.

pins into them, knocking their heads together and cruel practices while they were confined in the box.⁵² So seriously did they regard the maladministration at the prison, the Commission temporarily suspended the warden in November 1848.⁵³

Naturally, the inmates did not dare to retaliate, for in doing so they risked serious and brutal punishment. They were flogged for the slightest infringement of rules such as: staring, talking, laughing or disrespect. With such wide latitude for the enforcement of discipline, prison officials could punish anyone, whenever they wished. The truth of this is demonstrated by the fact that some prisoners were driven completely insane by the severity of punishment. They were beaten repeatedly, the wounds of one lashing not yet healed before they received another. The cat-o-nine tails and the rawhide were applied liberally to their backs, the latter leaving welts while "the cat lacerates the back and breast, the blood flows and the skin becomes black."⁵⁴

While disclosing serious abuses, the investigation of the prison also brought to the surface the bickering and strife which ran rife among its officials. Francis Smith, in attempting to defend himself, accused the prison surgeon, Dr. Sampson, of drunkenness and undue familiarity with women

⁵² Ibid., 1849, Appendix B₅.

⁵³ RG1 E8, Vol. 43, 1852.

⁵⁴ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849, Appendix B₅.

inmates. Smith's mother corroborated these accusations. Their testimony appeared in the report of the commissioners, in graphic detail. Undoubtedly the kitchen keeper hoped accusations of sexual depravity and intemperance would offset his own sadistic abuse of prisoners. Fortunately for Sampson, during many years a doctor of good professional reputation and social standing in the Kingston region, the commissioners were not impressed by such lies. He was soon cleared and the charges dismissed.⁵⁵

The second part of the report dealt with the recommendations for reform. Despite the discovery of abuse and maltreatment, the commissioners believed that the situation at Kingston was far from hopeless. William Bristow and George Brown toured several American prisons in a number of American states, among them Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and the District of Columboa. In particular, they visited Sing Sing, the Mount Pleasant State Pirson in New York and the Cherry Hill Penitentiary close to Philadelphia. In this last place the "separate system" was practised, that is the confinement of prisoners in small individual cells with only one hour of exercise per day. Both Brown and Bristow found this discipline too severe and noted that it induced insanity. They believed that such isolation over-extended periods of

⁵⁵ RG1, E8, Vol. 32, 1849.

time was inhumane.⁵⁶ As for the situation in Canada, the commissioners mentioned serious problems. For example, they disliked the confinement of convicts and untried prisoners in local country jails. They were disturbed by the confinement of lunatics in prisons and believed, at the very least, that these should be separated from the rest of the prison population. Sensitive to the strong possibility of corrupting the young, the commissioners were also particularly concerned for the fate of juvenile offenders.⁵⁷

Several recommendations were made to reform the conditions at the penitentiary in Kingston. To restore discipline, the commissioners suggested a combination of the "separate" and "congregate" system. For the first six months, all prisoners entering the penitentiary would be confined to individual cells, in order to induce within them the proper submissive and reflective frame of mind. Having reached that point, they could then join the others in work gangs and the dining room, all the while maintaining complete silence. Punishments were severely curtailed, the box and the rawhide being abolished.

The duties of the prison officials: the warden, his assistants, the chaplain, the surgeon, down to the turnkeys, were minutely detailed and investigated. The commissioners recommended that prison inspectors, with real authority, be

⁵⁶ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849,
Appendix B₅.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1849, Appendix B₅.

appointed to prevent future abuses and difficulties. They also noted that if prison administrators themselves were thieves, it was unlikely that criminals in their charge would be reformed. One of their most important recommendations was that prison authorities be worthy and capable of their tasks. As a result, Henry Smith and his son were permanently removed, and a new warden, D. E. Macdonnell was appointed. On the other hand, the prison surgeon, who had been temporarily suspended during the inquiry, was restored to his duties.⁵⁸

Generally, the commission cleared the air and some practical reforms were effected. It motivated the Canadian parliament to action and during the session of 1851, a new law was passed providing for the better management of the provincial penitentiary. The act reiterated the generally held principle that the prison was a place for the confinement and reformation of criminals. In order that they receive the proper care and treatment so that the desired transformation would be achieved, the legislation defined the most minute of matters. For example, the law described the sort of clothing to be worn, that it be of coarse but comfortable material. It insisted that prisoners receive sufficient quantities of wholesome food. Provision was made for the appointment of permanent inspectors. Inmates would henceforth be allowed to receive letters but no visitors. They were also still liable to such punishments

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1849, Appendix B5.

as the lash and solitary confinement.⁵⁹

Unfortunately, the prison inquiry and this legislation did not initiate effective and positive treatment of prisoners in Canada. As early as 1843, the Governor General, Sir Charles Metcalfe, had called for the correction of deficiencies in Canada's jails and prisons. The result had been a commission of inquiry and new laws. But the problems were not solved. Dr. Wolfred Nelson, in his Revue Générale de l'Economie des Prisons, published in 1853, would describe many of the same problems and make many of the same suggestions which had been heard in the preceding ten years.⁶⁰

For example, as a result of a tour of jails in Canada East he made, Nelson noticed serious and continuing problems. He claimed that the administration of the Montreal jail was much too expensive. He noted that security at the Quebec City jail was hardly existent. Its cells gave on to the sidewalk and prisoners could speak to the people in the street. Bottles of rum were passed through the windows in exchange for jail blankets. But worse than these problems, was Nelson's conviction that the mix of all sorts of different degrees of prisoners was a terrible evil. Like Metcalfe and the Commission of Inquiry, Nelson would recommend that prisoners be classified and categorized, and

⁵⁹ Statutes of Canada, 14 & 15 Victoria, Cap. 2.

⁶⁰ Ibid., jeudi, 22 septembre 1853.

that the young and infants receive separate accommodation. In this vein, he suggested that local and city jails should house only short-term prisoners.⁶¹ Like others, he believed that prisoners could be reformed, given the proper conditions. He wrote:

Dans la grande majorité des cas la réforme du criminel sera assurément la conséquence du bon traitement des prisonniers, par ce moyen ceux dont on désespère le plus seront amenées à des meilleurs sentiments.⁶²

Sounding much like those who preceded him, Nelson claimed that what was required to reform prisoners was an honest and decent administration,⁶³ cleanliness and a good diet for the prisoners,⁶⁴ regular and firm discipline, in addition to physical exercise and the constant occupation of the idle moments of the inmates.⁶⁵

Travellers' guides and descriptions of Canada noted the penitentiary at Kingston with pride. And yet within the walls, it was clearly a dark and ominous place. Canada had one large prison and many local jails and they were far from ideal institutions. While it is true that corruption and brutality had been allowed to remain unchecked for a time, it is equally important to note that Canadian reformers

⁶¹ Ibid., jeudi, 22 septembre 1853.

⁶² La Minerve, jeudi, 29 septembre 1853.

⁶³ Ibid., samedi, 24 septembre 1853.

⁶⁴ Ibid., mardi, 27 septembre 1853.

⁶⁵ Ibid., jeudi, 29 septembre 1853.

attempted to correct the abuses. The improvements they suggested were based upon a shared conviction, however idealistic, that jails were not places of punishment, rather they were opportunities for reform. Everyone who was concerned with prison reform, from the Governor to politicians, to newspapermen, all over the colony, whether French or English-speaking, shared the same sentiments in regards to the treatment of prisoners. Although the gap between the ideal and the reality was sometimes great, Canadians approached the matter in exactly the same way. Admittedly, very few people thought or reflected upon the conditions in prisons. However, the evidence illustrates that when they did, their reaction and solutions were generally the same.

Attitudes Towards Asylums and the Insane

If there was hope for the eventual reformation of the criminal in Canada, there was an equally discernible conviction that the insane could be cured. There were fewer lunatics than criminals and so the institutions which housed them were less imposing and raised even less public consideration than did the penitentiary and local jails. As with prisons, so too with asylums, the colony was only at the beginning of providing any sort of rational structure for the treatment of the insane. This fact is illustrated by comments made by John Beverly Robinson, the Chief Justice. Speaking in 1846 on the occasion of the opening of

a new asylum in Toronto, Robinson claimed that until that time society offered two solutions to the insane. They could be imprisoned, or if they had better luck, cared for at home.⁶⁶ In fact, things were changing. A new asylum opened in Canada East at Beauport in 1845. After years of temporary and quite unsuitable accommodation, the new Toronto asylum finally opened its doors in 1850. All across Canada, East and West, interest and concern for the insane was noticeable.

Interest in madness and the treatment of lunatics inspired at least one tract upon insanity, An Essay on Madness: Containing the Outline of a New Theory. Hoping for official patronage, its author, Robert Spear, sent a complimentary copy to Captain Higginson, the secretary to the Governor General.⁶⁷ The Literary Garland, mentioning a new periodical, The British American Journal of Medical and Physical Sciences, remarked that it was full of interesting articles, among them one upon "Insanity in Canada."⁶⁸ Le Canadien published a series of articles entitled, "Maladies de l'Esprit," which dealt with the treatment and care of the mentally ill.⁶⁹

Canadians were uncertain as to the cause of insanity.

⁶⁶ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, August 25, 1846.

⁶⁷ Robert Spear, An Essay on Madness, Containing the Outline of a new Theory. Toronto: H. & W. Rousell, 1844.

⁶⁸ Literary Garland, Vol. 111, No. 6, June 1845.

⁶⁹ Le Canadien, lundi, 30 octobre 1848.

One parliamentary committee appointed to study the evils of intemperance, attributed two-thirds of mental illness to the immoderate use of alcohol.⁷⁰ Activities like masturbation and immoral sexual behaviour were also believed to be causes.⁷¹ If they were unsure as to why, Canadians did not consider mental illness to be irreparable or irrevocable. There was no discernible despair or conviction that lunatics were doomed to spend their lives in a state of mental imbalance. Canadians of the 1840s were convinced that given the proper conditions; namely, wholesome country air, good food, enlightened treatment and distance from cares and pressure of everyday life, the insane would likely be cured. Proof of this is illustrated by one report submitted to the Governor General in 1844. The number of lunatics treated in Canada between November 1, 1839 and July 31, 1844 was put at 196. Of these, 84 were women. There were 84 Irish, 46 French Canadians, 44 Scotsmen, 20 English and 2 Americans. Of the total, the report claimed that 98 had been cured and 25 improved. The number who died was 30 and 43 remained in the same condition. Nearly half had been cured completely and hope was not lost for those who remained.⁷² Another example of this belief that the

⁷⁰ Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly on Intemperance, op. cit., p. 3.

⁷¹ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1850, Appendix C.

⁷² RG4 B65, Lunatic Asylum, 1844. Letter to Governor Metcalfe containing a statement of numbers and origins of patients admitted from November 1, 1839 to July 31, 1844.

insane could be cured was the claim by one Toronto paper that 92% of patients could hope to restore their health.⁷³ However, the situation was not totally positive. Later statistics from individual asylums hint at a sadder reality. For example, between September 1845 and January 1847, the Beauport asylum treated 151 patients. Of the total, 21 died, 15 were cured and 2 were withdrawn by their family.⁷⁴ Another example which tempers the positive, were reports from the Toronto Temporary Asylum in 1849. It contained 199 patients--114 men and 85 women. In one month during that year, 9 were discharged as cured, but eight died.⁷⁵

Despite the interest and hope that insanity could be cured, mental illness was not taken lightly. For French and English Canadians, it was one of the most terrible crosses that could burden an individual. For example, when the Beauport Asylum opened in 1845, Le Canadien welcomed it enthusiastically.⁷⁶ Finally there was a decent place for those suffering "la plus grande infortune dont l'humanité puisse être atteinte."⁷⁷ A year later, at the ceremonies in honour of the commencement of the new asylum in Toronto, John Beverly Robinson expressed his hope for the future,

⁷³ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, August 25, 1846.

⁷⁴ Le Canadien, vendredi, 15 janvier 1847.

⁷⁵ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, April 18, 1849.

⁷⁶ Le Canadien, mercredi, 17 septembre 1845.

⁷⁷ Ibid., vendredi, 17 mai 1850.

that once the building was completed, Upper Canada would at last be able to provide relief "for one of the worst ills that afflict humanity."⁷⁸ Ordinarily public comment upon the committal of individual patients to asylums was not made. However, when such an important person as Mr. John Wetenhall, the recently appointed Commissioner of Public Works, was confined, Canadian newspapers mentioned the matter. Their reports illustrate how seriously mental illness was regarded. Wetenhall, member of parliament for Halton County and President of the Provincial Agricultural Association, suffered a nervous breakdown shortly after an energetic byelection campaign in 1850.⁷⁹ La Minerve commented sympathetically upon his plight, noting that:

Nulle calamité dont la nature humaine puisse être visitée demande plus de commisération de notre part que la déposition de la raison.⁸⁰

While Canadians took mental illness very seriously, they were convinced it could be cured. Despite that conviction, all was not well within the institutions which cared for the insane. Like prisons, they too were dark and ominous places. They were also dangerous. Perhaps the best illustration of this is provided by the ultimate fate of John Wetenhall. Only a few months after his committal, he

⁷⁸ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, August 25, 1846.

⁷⁹ BG7 G12, Vol. 65, No. 148, Elgin to Grey, Wednesday, July 17, 1850.

⁸⁰ La Minerve, lundi, 25 mars 1850.

was stabbed to death by a fellow patient.⁸¹ As early as 1843, public concern regarding the confinement and treatment of the insane was expressed by the Governor General, Sir Charles Metcalfe. As he was interested in the fate of convicts, so too was he moved by the treatment of lunatics. The Governor General told the assembly in his speech from the throne in 1843 that:

The establishment of a lunatic asylum in Lower Canada is much required; those who are visited with this affliction of mental aberration being now confined in the common Prison, or in some of the Religious and Charitable Institutions which do honour to that portion of the Province. Measures are in progress for the permanent location of the Asylum now existing under a temporary arrangement in Upper Canada, and for the completion of the arrangements of that institution.⁸²

That his interest was sustained is demonstrated by Metcalfe's bitter complaints, a year later, about the continuing lack of action in the area of care for the insane. He described the situation in Lower Canada as notorious. The purpose of another official remark was to convince the Executive Council to lend support to Drs. Badgley and Sutherland who proposed to establish an asylum near Montreal, where the insane would have "the benefit of pure country air and cheerful and agreeable premises." Metcalfe supported their project, writing:

⁸¹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, July 17, 1850.

⁸² Debates of the Legislative Assembly, September 28, 1843.

The subject has been continually in my thoughts and an opportunity now presents itself for obtaining the object desired; that is the proper care of insane persons with a view to their cure.⁸³

The Governor General pointed to Lower Canada but the situation there was no worse than in Upper Canada. All across the colony, care for the insane was abysmal.

In 1834, the Upper Canadian assembly had passed a bill which provided for the construction of an asylum, but nothing was ever built.⁸⁴ Later in 1839, another bill was passed imposing a tax which would eventually create a fund to finance the construction of a permanent asylum.⁸⁵ In the meantime, the insane were confined in jail, a situation which was described as "extremely inconvenient,"⁸⁶ and was in fact quite inhumane. For a time after a new jail was built in 1840, the lunatics were left in the old Home district jail, and in 1846 many of them were moved to the East wing of the former parliament buildings in Toronto.⁸⁷ Accommodations here were slightly better but no money was granted to furnish or renovate the building for its new purpose.⁸⁸

⁸³ RG7 G17A, Vol. 2, August 19, 1844. Minute of the Governor General to the Executive Council.

⁸⁴ RG1 E8, April 11, 1842.

⁸⁵ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, August 25, 1842.

⁸⁶ RG1 E8, April 11, 1842.

⁸⁷ RG1 E8, Vol. 13, March 1846.

⁸⁸ Ibid., March 1846.

Upper Canadians were committed in principle to enlightened methods of care for the insane. Brilliant soirées and functions were held at the lunatic asylum. In the summer of 1846, the laying of the cornerstone for the new permanent asylum was such an affair. It was a beautiful sunny summer day and a great parade marched through the streets, comprised of Toronto's important citizens, the national societies, and even a hook and ladder company.⁸⁹ Speeches were made and lip service paid to notions about the community's moral and religious obligation to provide for the welfare of the less fortunate members of society and the curative power of the new asylum once it was completed.⁹⁰ In the winter of 1847, a "Lunatic Ball" was held in Toronto, and the newspapers, a bit stupefied, reported:

Of all strange sounding things few are more so than the singular combination of these two words.⁹¹

The ball, held at the old Parliament buildings for fifty lunatics, was attended by members of the press, the learned professions and Toronto's social elite. Citizens and patients danced and conversed together, apparently in the most civilized and rational manner.⁹²

Despite lunatic balls, newspaper reports, enlightened principles and convictions that insanity could be cured,

⁸⁹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, August 26, 1846.

⁹⁰ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, August 25, 1846.

⁹¹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, January 13, 1847.

⁹² Ibid., Wednesday, January 13, 1847.

provision for the accommodation and treatment of the insane remained inadequate. Even the move from the old jail to the former parliament buildings was not much of an improvement. The building was unfit for such a role. The isolation and calm, believed necessary to restore disturbed minds to a state of balance, was not to be had. The patients were not secure there and often fled the place. One Sunday afternoon pastime of crowds of Torontonians was to gather at the north fence, to look at, to talk with and to tease the patients.⁹³

In addition, the Temporary Lunatic Asylum, whether housed in the jail or the parliament buildings, was plagued by poor administration, a difficult, ill-educated and obstreperous staff, and hostility between the medical superintendent and the commissioners appointed to inspect the place.⁹⁴ During the 1840s, the asylum at Toronto had five medical superintendents: Doctors Rees, Tefler, Park, Primrose and Scott. The first three were removed for various reasons, while Primrose was a temporary appointment and Scott initiated a totally new programme once the permanent asylum was constructed.

Under these succeeding superintendents, the care and treatment of patients slowly improved. Dr. Rees was in charge for five years, from September 1840 until September

⁹³ Toronto Patriot, Monday, November 13, 1848.

⁹⁴ George H. Park, Narrative of the Recent Difficulties in the Provincial Lunatic Asylum in Canada West. Dedicated to the Christian Community and the Presiding Officers of Lunatic Asylums in Europe and America. Toronto: Printed at the Office of the Examiner, 1849, p. 4.

1845, when he was fired.⁹⁵ During his superintendency, reports reached the public that the asylum was being poorly administered. As a result, a Board of Commissioners was appointed to watch over the institution. Rees resented the inspectors and continued on as always. Treatment was still very bad. Accommodations were totally inadequate and there was not even a resident medical officer.⁹⁶ In the summer of 1844, regulations were tightened providing for stricter supervision and widening the authority of the inspectors. Dr. Rees' resentment increased correspondingly, particularly since he was now required to furnish a quarterly report upon the progress and condition of each patient to the Board of Commissioners. To soothe his injured feelings, the superintendent's salary was increased. The commissioners were themselves unpaid.⁹⁷ The real difficulty during this period was the growing hostility between Rees and the Board, the authority of neither being clearly defined, and the superintendent's anger increasing with each imagined impingement upon his control of the institution.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ RG1 E8, Vol. 21, August 5, 1847.

⁹⁶ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, August 21, 1844.

⁹⁷ RG1 E8, Vol. 7, July 5, 1844.

⁹⁸ See the Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849, Appendix F₃. Correspondence between the Commissioners of the Toronto Temporary Lunatic Asylum and the Government re: the superintendence of Dr. Rees. Also Appendix M, 1849, correspondence between the Commissioners of the Toronto Temporary Lunatic Asylum and the Provincial Secretary re: Dr. Park, superintendent.

Dr. Tefler, who replaced Rees in the fall of 1845, faced different problems. Dr. Tefler drank too much. He was reported to have appeared completely drunk while on the premises of the asylum. What is more, his treatment of the patients seemed arbitrary, unjust and downright brutal. For instance, Tefler confined one harmless old patient who had the audacity to speak back to him. He was also accused of using the medicine of the asylum for his own private practice, of taking the food and provisions of the institution for his own purposes, and of inviting his friends in to drink the wine of the establishment.⁹⁹ The whole situation was further complicated by political considerations. The Toronto Patriot claimed that the government wanted to replace Tefler with one of their own reform partisans. The Toronto Examiner retorted by accusing Tefler of having fabricated the stories about Dr. Rees which ultimately resulted in his removal.¹⁰⁰

Tefler was finally replaced by Dr. George Park in June 1848.¹⁰¹ By December, Park himself would be obliged to resign.¹⁰² His problem, like that of Rees, centered upon his relationship with the commissioners. He was soon accused of inadequate administration and the situation

⁹⁹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, July 26, 1848.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., Wednesday, August 9, 1848.

¹⁰¹ George H. Park, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 52.

between himself and the board became increasingly tense.¹⁰³
In his own defence, Park published a narrative of his administration of the asylum, leaving historians an account of his own difficulties and also a rare and minute description of the quality of care offered the insane at Toronto.

Undoubtedly the views and opinions expressed by Dr. Park were highly coloured by his own particular difficulties, but if the depth of degradation was only half as bad as that described by him, then it can be concluded that the gap between enlightened theory regarding the cure of the insane and the actual treatment they received in Toronto was tragically wide. Those who entered beyond the gates of the asylum did so at the risk of their lives. Patients were thrown together with no regards to the degree or nature of their illness. The unrestrained and violent sometimes attacked the more peaceful patients and the staff.¹⁰⁴

Park described the asylum as a scene of unmitigated and terrible suffering. Its financial affairs were poorly managed. Not surprisingly, discipline was non-existent. Members of the staff argued among themselves, accused each other of dereliction of duty, drank on the premises and were generally insubordinate towards their superiors. As to

¹⁰³ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, November 29, and Wednesday, December 13, 1848.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Wednesday, July 17, 1850, and Toronto Patriot, Monday, November 13, 1848.

the physical condition of the asylum, the superintendent claimed that it was filthy and improperly ventilated and that it actually endangered its occupants with the spread of disease.¹⁰⁵

But above all, Dr. Park claimed that his worst problem was meddling commissioners, who undermined his position and who were not in the least concerned for the welfare of the patients. No doubt to enhance his own position, Park described the visit of one of the commissioners.

Perhaps the first offence I gave in the asylum, arose from my wish to press forward the Rev. Commissioner Grasset into the attic upon a visitatorial tour. The Rev. gentleman had ascended the floor when the effluvia from the room seemed to arrest his humane purpose. Some importunity induced him somewhat further to advance, when the olfactory impression dissipated his resolution and he retreated with an agility I did not attempt to follow. In the very room from which the noisome emanations proceeded, were seventy of my fellow creatures, who lived there night and day unpitied and unknown: some were naked, sleeping upon straw thrown coarsely on the ground: others less benighted in their immortal part occupied cells so small and so close and so foul, as to impair their health, retard their recovery and aggravate their doom. Away from their friends, whose tenderness nature has [by a law Divine] made to enlarge with their afflictions, they suffered without sympathy and were wronged without redress.¹⁰⁶

As for prisoners in Canada, so too for lunatics, the danger of disease and death was added to the burden of their confinement. Here then was drawn a picture of sadness and

¹⁰⁵ George H. Park, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

distress in which unfortunate patients, ill-fed and ill-clothed, subject to the whims of cruel keepers, lived in an atmosphere inimical to the restoration of mental health and positively dangerous to their physical health. This reality jarred badly, with the popular notions, that clean air, a healthy environment and a good diet, would work wonders to cure the insane.

Park, like his predecessors, was obliged to resign and it was the commissioners who prevailed.¹⁰⁷ The provincial government had its fill of personal fiefdoms in its public institutions. The difficulties with Henry Smith, the warden of the penitentiary at Kingston, coincided with Dr. Park's dispute with the commissioners. In the opinion of the Executive Council, it was the commissioners, not the medical superintendent, who were to have ultimate authority.¹⁰⁸ For a time Dr. Primrose became superintendent,¹⁰⁹ until a permanent replacement, Dr. John Scott of Edinburgh, came to Canada to direct the recently completed permanent asylum in 1850.¹¹⁰

Only with the new building could there be even the semblance of proper treatment coupled with current popular notions regarding the insane. The new asylum opened in

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰⁸ RG1 E8, Vol. 29, October 14, 1848, and Vol. 30, December 20, 1848.

¹⁰⁹ RG1 E8, Vol. 31, May 14, 1849.

¹¹⁰ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1851, Appendix C.

January of 1850 and seemed to harbinger a new era of enlightened and improved care. After so many years of temporary and unsatisfactory accommodation, Toronto finally had a building removed from the centre of town and dedicated to the care of the insane.¹¹¹ Large enough to accommodate two hundred and fifty patients, the building cost £57,000 to construct and was built of white brick and cut stone, with cornices and dressings about the doors and windows. One of its most distinguishing characteristics was its own water reservoir in the great centre dome, which contained a huge wrought iron tank with a capacity to hold 11,000 gallons of water. Instead of worrying about cleanliness and curious crowds, the medical superintendent could now afford the luxury of complaining about the quality of care. Patients now had to be certified insane by at least three doctors.¹¹² Dr. Scott remarked upon the difficulty of throwing all patients into the same batch, without regard for the type or degree of illness,¹¹³ while only a few years before the common fate for the insane was the local jail or prison.

In Lower Canada, the situation was not significantly different from that of Upper Canada. If they could not be managed at home, lunatics were often imprisoned. Some were

¹¹¹ W. H. Smith, Canada Past, Present and Future: being a Historical, Geographical, Ecological and Statistical Account of Canada West, 2 Vols. Toronto: Thomas Maclear, n.d., Vol. II, p. 6.

¹¹² Ibid., Vol. II, p. 11.

¹¹³ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1851, Appendix C.

hospitalized and there did exist a few private asylums like that of Dr. Mount at Pointe Claire and of Doctors Badgley and Sutherland in Montreal. The most important asylum in this section of Canada was at Beauport. Operated by Doctors Douglas, Morrin and Freemont of Quebec, it opened in September of 1845.¹¹⁴ The removal of the lunatics from the General Hospital to the new buildings was reported in the Quebec newspapers.¹¹⁵

The setting at Beauport was altogether more agreeable. The asylum seemed calculated to create an atmosphere conducive to health. One hundred and fifty patients could be accommodated there. They were reported to be in good physical health and none were closely confined. There were recreation rooms and a common dining room where the patients ate together in groups. Generally they were quite free and could participate in all sorts of activities, assisting the upkeep of the asylum at the same time. Some worked in the fields, and women patients sewed, helped in the kitchen or did other household chores. The patients at the asylum seemed to get on very well together and the scene at Beauport was described as one of cheerfulness and contentment.¹¹⁶ It was believed that this kind of environment and treatment, far removed "from the exciting causes and scenes of their

¹¹⁴ RG1 E8, Vol. 8, September 1845.

¹¹⁵ Le Canadien, mercredi, 17 septembre 1845.

¹¹⁶ Quebec Gazette, Monday, October 20, 1845.

original afflictions" would restore the patients to health.

Unlike the asylum in Toronto, Beauport was reported to be well and efficiently administered. One observer remarked:

It is pleasing to see the present instance of real reform in Canada and on a plan which it is hardly possible that there can be any jobbing or abuse, the expenses being at a fixed price for each patient, and the management subject to the superintendence of commissioners entirely disinterested.¹¹⁷

No report of abuse or mistreatment ever came to light at Beauport and the only serious event was the collapse of part of the roof due to heavy snow in February of 1850. Fortunately no one was hurt.¹¹⁸

As in Toronto, so too at Beauport, soirées and parties were held at the asylum. The completion of a new building at Beauport in May 1850 was the occasion for "une fête extraordinaire." On Tuesday, May 14, 1850, four hundred of Quebec City's social elite spent the evening at the asylum. One newspaper reported that instead of hearing the savage cries they expected, the guests were greeted by music and dancing and well-behaved patients. The new building was a marvel, clean and well-ventilated, with a source of pure and clean water, everything, in a word, to create a wholesome atmosphere. At ten o'clock in the evening, the patients retired but the party continued on for several hours, some guests staying as late as two or three o'clock in the

¹¹⁷ Ibid., Monday, October 20, 1845.

¹¹⁸ Le Canadien, mercredi, 13 février 1850.

morning.¹¹⁹

Clearly, rational and organized confinement and treatment of prisoners and the insane in Canada was in its initial stages. However, across the colony, in Canada East and West, the perception and understanding of the criminal and the lunatic was the same. They could be reformed. They could be cured. There was no perceptible difference between French and English Canadians. The pattern was similar in all of the colony, lip service to liberal notions of reform and cure, generalized apathy to the real fate of those who inhabited the colony's public institutions. The advanced ideas were expressed by colonial officials, politicians, doctors, clergymen and newspapermen, the educated elite of Canadian society. It was these people who suggested reforms when they became conscious of problems. The abuse and maltreatment that occurred demonstrates a generalized apathy on the part of most Canadians. This indifference is undoubtedly due to the condition of Canadian society. Lunatics and criminals were better put away, for they threatened peaceful citizens. While Canadians believed in the possibilities of reform and cure, they also believed that lunacy and criminality was self-induced. Intemperance, sexual immoderation and want of good Christian virtue were the causes of deviant behaviour.¹²⁰ Those who suffered had

¹¹⁹ Ibid., vendredi, 17 mai 1850.

¹²⁰ See Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Friday, October 20, 1843; also The Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly on Intemperance, op. cit., 1849; see also, RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1852.

made their own bed. Now they could lay in it. The fault was their own. Perhaps this explains the curious ambivalence between often-mentioned enlightened and advanced principles and the very bad treatment these people frequently received.

Other Needs

Because of their numbers and their threat to society, lunatics and criminals were provided for, but other deprived elements of society--the poor, the orphans, the deaf, the mute and the blind--received slight assistance. The little help there was came from generous and philanthropic individuals and groups, who were noble-minded perhaps but unable to care for them in an organized or effective fashion. Certainly the existence of the most abandoned elements of society was acknowledged. For example, in the colonial Blue Books of 1849, there appeared a comparative and statistical analysis between Lower and Upper Canada, which attempted to calculate the number of deaf, mute, blind, idiot, lunatic and poor. The accuracy of the figures were questionable.¹²¹ Grants to hospitals, orphanages and charitable institutions were meagre, far smaller than the amounts given to the asylums and penitentiary.¹²²

¹²¹ RG1 E13, Blue Books, 1849.

¹²² Grants of money were voted annually for hospitals, orphanages and charitable institutions: \$12,600 in 1845 (Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1846, Appendix C); \$13,319 in 1846 (Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1847, Appendix A); \$14,807 in 1847 (Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1847, Appendix CC); \$10,547 in 1848 (Journals of

Requests for support were considered bothersome by those who held the purse strings. For instance, in March 1845, the Executive Council complained of the ever-increasing number of institutions and groups asking for money for their good works. As often as not, the requests were denied. For example, the Montreal Magdeleine Asylum, a home for wayward girls;¹²³ the Quebec Firewood Society, a group of young men who collected firewood in the summer for distribution among the poor during the winter;¹²⁴ and the Montreal Eye and Ear Institute, were all refused aid.¹²⁵

More and more of these societies were established to do charitable works. Almost yearly, some religious community, a group of important citizens or a circle of ladies would organize.¹²⁶ Despite their noble motives, these groups could not expect public assistance. The scope of their projects was limited to their own means and

the Legislative Assembly, 1849, Appendix A). Annually the penitentiary alone received more than these sums (Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849, Appendix B5), and the two asylums at Beauport and Toronto, nearly as much. For example, in 1849 Beauport received \$5,000 and Toronto \$4,000 (Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849, Appendix V3). In 1850, each asylum received \$5,000; hospitals, charitable institutions and orphanages received \$14,400 (Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1850, Appendix C).

¹²³ RG1 E8, Vol. 9, March 1845.

¹²⁴ Ibid., Vol. 13, April 1846.

¹²⁵ Ibid., Vol. 19, May 1847.

¹²⁶ Statutes of Canada, 5 Victoria, Caps. 62, 64, 67; 6 Victoria, Cap. 24; 7 Victoria, Cap. 52, 53; 9 Victoria, Caps. 90, 91.

willingness to participate. For example, the Montreal Protestant Orphan Asylum, founded in 1822 and incorporated in 1843, managed to build a new orphanage in 1849. Since its foundation, it received more than five hundred orphans, averaging only about seventeen or eighteen per year. The reception of thirty-two in 1848, as a result of the previous immigration season, was considered a remarkable achievement.¹²⁷

Likewise, a new school for the deaf and mute was hampered by lack of public support and was dependent upon its own resources and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Montreal. In 1848, Ronald Macdonald, during his career the editor of several Canadian newspapers, like the Gazette de Quebec, the Quebec Gazette and Le Canadien, welcomed the new school enthusiastically. He himself had been educated in the United States as a teacher for the deaf and mute and came to Canada with the hope of opening a school. He did so in Quebec City in 1830 but in less than a year was obliged to close it. In 1835, a parliamentary inquiry to consider the needs of the deaf and mute in Lower Canada was conducted but nothing was done. Macdonald estimated that in Canada there were as many as seven hundred deaf and mute in the eastern section and twice as many more in the western section. He calculated that each year there were at least fifty of these children who came of school age and were in need of some

¹²⁷ Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Annual Report of the Montreal Protestant Orphan Asylum, 1848-1849: With Statements of the Building Fund, etc., etc., etc. Montreal: Lovell and Gibson, St. Nicholas St., 1850.

sort of education.¹²⁸ Perhaps their hearing and speaking could not be given back to them but it was believed they would be able to get along and succeed in life if they were properly educated. L'abbé Charles Lagorce, the director of the new school in Montreal, believed that without education, they would ultimately be condemned to a fate of immorality, selfishness and cruelty.¹²⁹ The school, which opened in the summer of 1850, was large enough to accommodate eighty students.¹³⁰ But even before the institution was built, it was realized that one such place could not hope to fill the needs of the entire population. In the spring of 1850, the Bishop of Montreal, Ignace Bourget, published a pastoral letter which solicited public support for the education of the deaf and mute.¹³¹ Both he and Lagorce were of the same mind. The latter took to the newspapers claiming that Lower Canada alone had at least eight hundred deaf and mute and that his new school could only take a tenth of that number. He complained that the government had done absolutely nothing. He wrote to Le Canadien and his letters were reprinted in La Minerve.¹³² While the need was apparent, resolution of the problem would not be swift.

¹²⁸ Quebec Gazette, Tuesday, September 26, 1848.

¹²⁹ Le Canadien, vendredi, 20 août 1850.

¹³⁰ Ibid., mercredi, 28 août 1850.

¹³¹ La Minerve, jeudi, 2 mai 1850.

¹³² Le Canadien, mercredi, 28 août 1850 et La Minerve, lundi, 2 septembre 1850.

For the poor, there was little concern and even less sense of responsibility. From time to time, someone suggested that a work house or a "maison d'industrie" be built. One such place opened in Montreal in January 1843. Its thirty-five inhabitants, nineteen men, ten women and six children were occupied in breaking stones and making rope. This particular workhouse had been created by a group of charitable and philanthropic persons. In addition to its own residents, as many as four hundred people were fed daily. Even this effort was not enough for a city of forty thousand people. One newspaper wrote that the city should make a greater effort to provide decent accommodations for the poor. This would be to its own interest for poverty was the source of much crime and vice.¹³³

The poor were not accommodated because of a noticeable sympathy for their condition, rather they were seen as a threat to peace and order. For example, in 1845 this attitude is well-illustrated by comments made during a debate in the legislative assembly concerning the acquisition of an industrial farm for the city of Toronto. Its purpose was twofold: to remove poverty from sight and to minimize the possibility of crime in the streets. In the words of W. H. Boulton, the member of the assembly for Toronto, undesirable elements of the population could be sent to the farm

¹³³ La Minerve, jeudi, 16 février 1843.

. . . to work instead of filling up the streets as at present begging and [to use it as] a means of reclaiming persons of an immoral character, especially children.¹³⁴

Children might profit from two or three hours of instruction per day.¹³⁵ Not only would the inhabitants be fed, but with such a farm, they would also be ingrained with steady and regular work habits.¹³⁶ In 1847, when Montrealers considered the construction of still another "maison d'industrie," the mayor objected, claiming that only the lazy and good-for-nothings would take advantage of it.¹³⁷ Clearly, Canadians perceived the poor as shiftless and irresponsible. In the work houses that did exist, it seemed they were being punished for their poverty.

Medical care in Canada was available to those who could pay for it. Popular remedies for illnesses often appeared in the advertisements of newspapers. There were doctors, medical schools, regulatory bodies and even hospitals.¹³⁸ The Quebec Marine and Emigrant Hospital contained two hundred and fifty beds, admitting more than fifteen hundred patients yearly, nearly a third of them surgical patients.¹³⁹ The Hotel Dieu of the same city could

¹³⁴ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Tuesday, January 7, 1845.

¹³⁵ Ibid., Tuesday, January 7, 1845.

¹³⁶ Statutes of Canada, 14 & 15 Victoria, Cap. 35.

¹³⁷ La Minerve, jeudi, 18 mars 1847.

¹³⁸ Statutes of Canada, 8 Victoria, Caps. 80, 81; 10 & 11 Victoria, Cap. 26.

¹³⁹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 6 novembre 1850.

accommodate forty or fifty patients, admitting annually about seven hundred.¹⁴⁰ However, they were not places for self-respecting citizens. Entrance into a hospital was the last step for only the most desperately ill and poor. A person of small means could not afford doctors, and

. . . d'un autre côté il n'ose souvent avoir recours à l'hôpital soit par orgueil, soit par respect pour lui-même.¹⁴¹

A medical dispensary designed to serve the working class and charge lower prices for medicine, opened in Montreal in 1850. La Minerve welcomed it with enthusiasm. Undoubtedly, it was an improvement and a slight protection from having to turn to the hospital.¹⁴²

Conclusion

Such were the institutions that existed and the attitudes that prevailed in Canada in the mid-nineteenth century. Prisoners and insane were dealt with because they had to be. Others needful of support, received little. In the prisons and asylums, treatment was far from perfect and serious abuses existed. It is to the credit of a very small group of individuals, like Sir Charles Metcalfe, George Brown, John Beverly Robinson, Bishop Ignace Bourget, Ronald Macdonald and l'abbé Charles Lagorce, to those few

¹⁴⁰ Almanach Métropolitain de Québec pour 1849, contenant la liste du clergé et de tous les diocèses de l'Amérique britannique du Nord, avec divers détails sur leurs établissements religieux. Québec: l'imprimerie d'Augustin Côté et Cie, 1848, p. 47.

¹⁴¹ La Minerve, jeudi, 21 février 1850.

¹⁴² Ibid., jeudi, 21 février 1850.

politicians, newspapermen, officials and interested citizens, that abuses were acknowledged and efforts were made to correct the situation and provide for the most abandoned elements of society. However small their number, Canadians everywhere, French and English-speaking, were moved by similar concerns and values. One guiding principle is discernible. While they believed that crime, insanity and poverty were somehow the fault of the criminals, the insane and the poor, Canadians were also convinced that given the proper conditions, adequate care and healthy environment, the lot of these unfortunates could be improved. Clearly, as a society in the 1840s, Canada was only beginning to define its responsibility. The institutional condition of the colony was unsophisticated. And yet it is in reflecting upon how Canadians thought of their institutions and the people who housed them that the historian can once again recognize an apparent community of culture.

CHAPTER SIX

OF HIGHER THINGS: RELIGION, THE ARTS AND PLACE IN SOCIETY

In the 1840s, Canadians, both French and English speaking, shared definite ideas and similar values. Most were religious. They were not terribly sophisticated. They knew their place in society. There were numerous denominations in the colony and people worshipped in a variety of ways. In fact, so religious were Canadians, one newspaper could report that in the city of Montreal, there were only two non-believers.¹ During the 1840s, Canadian newspapers, French and English, contained countless reports of church openings, parish events and religious processions. While they differed, according to sect, they were all the same in their attachment to religion. On the other hand, art and literature were pursuits of less importance. The fine arts in the colony were undeveloped. Artists and writers were rare. Such a condition is not surprising since Canadian society was still in a pioneer stage in many ways; its cities were small and concerns were directed to more fundamental matters, like cultivating the land or working and providing for one's family. In some ways, life was uncomplicated, for Canadians knew their place. Not only were their religious beliefs clear and simple, people

¹ La Minerve, vendredi, 2 avril 1852.

understood their role in the community. Hopefully, an examination of Canadians' religious interests, the artistic achievements of the colony and their notions about one's place in society, will illustrate a similarity of attitudes and values. It often seems that French and English Canadians were the same in many ways. Was this a society sentimentally and attitudinally more integrated than at first seems apparent?

Religion

Religious prejudices ran deep in Canada during the 1840s but they were not yet so profound or clearly enunciated to be a serious impediment to cooperation among Canadians. Attitudes towards religious matters cannot be disregarded for they illustrate important differences of perspective. As has been seen earlier, religion was one cause of violent outbursts in Canada. Protestants battled Catholics from time to time, most frequently on days like March seventeenth and July twelfth. That there were not more such outbursts during the 1840s is quite surprising. Of any force in society at this time, religion seemed the most potentially divisive. In fact, by 1850, the lines of religious antagonism would be drawn sharply. In his editorials in the Toronto Globe, George Brown would rage against Catholic domination. As early as 1853, Alessandro Gavazzi, an apostate Roman Catholic priest, would elicit violent reactions in Canada. He spoke first in Toronto

and then went to Montreal and Quebec where riots and death followed. The Commissioners who investigated the violence in Quebec City claimed to be astounded at the degree of the reaction to Gavazzi. While finding his oratory to be offensive and provocative, they wrote:

The consequent excitement was of an intensity and extent unprecedented in the city of Quebec, which has hitherto been honourably distinguished by mutual forbearance and tolerance among its citizens of opposite political and religious opinions; . . .²

Despite the claim that Canadians were tolerant, they never got on very well when it came to religion. During the 1840s, all that can be claimed is that their antagonism was somewhat contained. Most people in the colony were believers. French-speaking Canadians, the majority being Roman Catholic, were amazingly public in their proclamation of religion. The more they demonstrated it, the greater the reaction they elicited from non-Catholics. While their mutual hostility was apparent, Protestants and Catholics generally managed to avoid serious friction. Unlike later periods, religion did not become a serious focus of hostility during the 1840s. Protestants and Catholics did not like each other, nor could they abide the other's ways, but they rarely came to blows, although this did seem very possible at times.

² Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Conduct of the Police Authorities on the Occasion of the Riot of Chalmer's Church on the 6th of June 1853. Quebec City, 1853, p. 11.

Increased popular demonstrations of religion on the part of Lower Canadian Catholics was noticeable in the 1840s. The renewal of public piety was greatly influenced by Ignace Bourget when he became Bishop of Montreal in 1840. Retreats were preached, crosses placed upon hilltops and new churches blessed. In fact, to inaugurate his reign in proper style, Bourget invited Monseigneur Forbin-Janson to preach in the Montreal diocese. The French bishop of Nancy, who had been forced to flee his country as a result of the revolution in France in 1830,³ spoke to thousands of French Canadians, instilling into them strengthened piety and fervour.⁴ Other public religious events were also successful. For example, when a cross was placed upon a hill at St. Hilaire de Rouville, between twenty-five and thirty thousand people assisted.⁵ The laying of the cornerstone of a new church could attract as many as seven or eight thousand people.⁶ In 1841, the consecration of the newly completed tower of the church of Notre Dame de Montréal, blessed by the Bishop of Nancy, was the focus of a great public demonstration of faith and piety.⁷ Some years later

³ Gazette de Québec, mardi, 12 novembre 1839. See also, Jacques Monet, The Last Cannon Shot (Toronto, 1969), p. 129.

⁴ Quebec Gazette, Friday, September 25, 1840 and Le Canadien, lundi, 28 septembre 1840.

⁵ Gazette de Québec, jeudi, 7 octobre 1840 and Le Canadien, mercredi, 13 octobre 1841.

⁶ La Minerve, mardi, 1 juillet, 1851.

⁷ Le Canadien, lundi, 8 novembre 1841.

the blessing and raising of a new bell, fondly known as "le gros bourdon Jean-Baptiste,"⁸ into the tower of Notre Dame de Montréal was still another example of a large public meeting. The English press perceived the enthusiasm about the bell as perfectly ridiculous and did not fail to point out that instead of being 29,400 pounds as claimed, it weighed only 24,780 pounds.⁹

While these events sometimes irritated the sensibilities of the non-Catholic community, they did not cause any significant degree of hostility or conflict, and certainly no violence. For example, non-Catholics living in Canada East found June a particularly hard month to endure. Both the processions and festivities of Fête Dieu (Corpus Christi) and the celebrations surrounding St. Jean-Baptiste Day took place in that month. The Montreal Fête Dieu procession of 1843 was reported as having been a great success despite pamphlets circulated against it by the Protestant "Société des missions franco-canadiennes."¹⁰ In the following year, the Montreal Protestant clergy wrote to Bishop Bourget and his clergy, asking that the procession be stopped. In their opinion it was ". . . un grief que la population protestante a depuis longtemps souffert avec patience et en silence." They particularly objected to the

⁸ La Minerve, jeudi, 23 septembre 1847.

⁹ Ibid., vendredi, 23 juin 1848.

¹⁰ Ibid., vendredi, 16 juin et lundi, 19 juin 1843.

presence of British soldiers in the procession.¹¹ In the same year, The Berean, a Protestant newspaper in Quebec City, complained about the Corpus Christi procession there.¹²

Fête Dieu completed, organization would begin for the masses and parades and banquets in honour of St. Jean-Baptiste. Even Toronto was not spared from these festivities and French Canadian preachers were on hand to deliver sermons in praise of the saint.¹³

Another example of the growing vigour of the Roman Catholic church was Monseigneur Bourget's policy to introduce new orders into Canada. Eager to strengthen the position of the church, he invited several new religious communities into his diocese, among them the Sisters of Charity,¹⁴ the Oblates of Mary Immaculate¹⁵ and the Brothers of the Christian Schools.¹⁶ This last community also went to Quebec where its members began teaching in 1843.¹⁷ By

¹¹ Ibid., lundi, 3 juin 1844.

¹² Le Canadien, mercredi, 3 juillet 1844.

¹³ La Minerve, jeudi, 27 juin 1840 et mardi, 15 juillet 1851. Father Charles Chiniquy was the principal preacher at the Toronto St. Jean-Baptiste celebrations in 1850. In the following year, Father Tellier gave the address.

¹⁴ Gazette de Québec, samedi, 20 novembre 1841.

¹⁵ Ibid., mardi, 2 novembre 1841.

¹⁶ Ibid., samedi, 16 avril 1842.

¹⁷ l'Almanach Métropolitain de Québec pour 1849, contenant la liste du clergé de tous les diocèses de l'Amérique britannique du Nord, avec divers détails sur leurs établissements religieux. Québec: de l'imprimerie d'Augustin Côté et Cie, 1848. Almost yearly some new religious community was incorporated by the Canadian

1850 they were well established and operating a successful school with more than nine hundred students. Non-Catholics were irritated by these developments as well. One Toronto newspaper labelled as assassins all Jesuits, Oblates and Brothers of the Christian Schools. Naturally Quebec City newspapers, both French and English, found the word much too strong.¹⁸

While there was some concern about the growing militancy of Catholicism in Canada, the reaction of Protestants could not be described as completely resentful or hostile. Some preferred conversion to coercion. The French Canadians were seen as a mission field liable to be drawn to Protestantism. However, such efforts were not welcome and Protestant missionaries and bible societies were invited to take their tracts elsewhere.¹⁹ The very strength of the Catholic church prevented the success of the Protestant proselytizers.

legislature. See the Statutes of Canada. For example, Les Dames Religieuses du Sacré Coeur de Jésus, 7 Victoria, Cap. 54. La Communauté des Soeurs des Saints Noms de Jésus et Marie, de Longueuil; 8 Victoria, Cap. 101. La Communauté des Filles de la Charité, de St. Hyacinthe, 9 Victoria, Cap. 99. Les Soeurs de la Charité de Bytown, 12 Victoria, Cap. 103. Les Soeurs de Ste. Croix de Montréal, 12 Victoria, Cap. 137. Les Soeurs de la Miséricorde pour la régie de l'hospice de la maternité de Montréal, 12 Victoria, Cap. 138. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 12 Victoria, Cap. 143. Les Clercs de St. Viateur, 12 Victoria, Cap. 144.

¹⁸ Le Canadien, vendredi, 4 juillet 1845. The Quebec Freeman's Journal and L'Aurore des Canadas also complained about the bigotry of the Toronto press.

¹⁹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 26 janvier et mercredi, 23 février 1842.

Acknowledgement of this fact is illustrated by the comments of the "Société des missions franco-canadiennes," an association created in 1839 and devoted to the conversion of French Canadians to Protestantism. The opinions of the Society demonstrate sadness and a somewhat patronizing attitude toward those whom they tried to attract. In 1847 the annual report remarked:

That the greatly increased efforts of the Church of Rome to extend her yoke over the world, which have characterized the last few years, call imperatively for at least a corresponding increase in activity on the part of Evangelical Protestants to counteract her machinations, and more especially for united efforts to extend the kingdom of Christ among her own deluded followers.²⁰

It was estimated that more than a half million French Canadians were "living under the thick darkness of popery."²¹ As a people, they were amiable, polite, social, naturally apt and intelligent and yet they lived in the bondage and superstition of the "Romish religion." What is more, their lack of education and backwardness, even their language, tied them more strongly to the Catholic church. As in the rest of the world:

The marked features in the revival of Romanism, the almost exclusive worship paid to Mary, the traffic in beads, medals, scapularies, bones and bodies of saints are seen also in Lower Canada.²²

²⁰ Eighth Annual Report of the French Canadian Missionary Society at their Annual Meeting at Montreal, Tuesday, January 26, 1847. Montreal: John C. Beckett, St. Paul St., 1847, p. vii.

²¹ Ibid., p. 9.

²² Ibid., p. 8.

Everywhere, complained the "Société des missions franco-canadiennes," there were huge crosses, imposing processions, gorgeous ceremonies, protracted meetings, novenas and arch-confreries.²³

To these Protestants, the only encouraging sign was that some Catholics supported temperance.²⁴ Everything else was quite disturbing. Unfortunately, it was observed, some Protestant parents were actually sending their children to Catholic schools and colleges. This was a particularly sad development because, unlike their Protestant brethren, French Canadians were pictured as disrespectful of the Sabbath, given over to pursuits like hunting, dancing and drinking. What is worse, their priests spent the day at the whist table. French Canadians did not read the bible and even their prayers were perverted by the attachment of indulgences.²⁵

Against all of this darkness, the Missionary Society took measures. It maintained a school for boys at Pointe-aux-Trembles and an institute for girls in Montreal but the numbers were very small: forty-one boys and only nineteen girls. The gospel was preached in French by several ministers attached to the Society, one of them being a former priest.²⁶ Succeeding reports demonstrated the

²³ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

²⁶ Eighth Annual Report of the French Canadian Missionary Society, op. cit., p. 14.

failure to convert French Canadians. In 1850, the Society reported 600,000 French Canadians, intelligent and amiable though they may be, were sunk in ignorance and superstition. "Romanism has here full sway." The Canadian Catholic clergy was wealthy and numerous, its influence unbounded. Nuns, brothers and priests controlled the schools "Where their pernicious principles may be infused into the minds of the rising generations." Despite its schools, preachers and twelve years of effort, the French Canadian Missionary Society could claim only sixty converts to Protestantism.²⁷

While religious differences caused only minor problems in the 1840s, there was a fear that more serious difficulties could develop. This concern is illustrated by succeeding Canadian governors who were afraid of conflict and violence. They were particularly disturbed the growing influence of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. For example, in the spring of 1841, Lord Sydenham explained to the Colonial Secretary that the purpose of Bishop Bourget's visit to London and Rome in that year was to establish an archbishopric in Canada and create a new diocese in Canada West. Sydenham noted and warned of the enormous influence of the Roman Catholic clergy in Canada, not only in French Canada but also among the Scots and Irish of Upper Canada. Nor was the governor impressed with the quality of the Roman Catholic bishops as churchmen. Ignace Bourget and Remi Gaulin, the

²⁷ French Canadian Missionary Society: Appeal to the Evangelical Churches of Great Britain, 1850.

Bishop of Kingston, he described as "Lower Canadian priests of little ability, imbued with all the little provincial feelings and prejudices of their countrymen." He particularly regretted Gaulin, believing that with a French Canadian bishop, all the feelings and prejudices of the Lower Canadian church would be transferred to Upper Canada. In the opinion of the Governor Bishop, one bishop in all of Canada would have been sufficient. However, while he opposed an archbishopric, Sydenham did agree that it would be wise to establish another diocese in Canada West. Perhaps an English-speaking bishop could be appointed to the new diocese to offset the influence of the French Canadians.²⁸

In 1842, in a confidential communication to the Colonial Secretary, Sir Charles Bagot referred to Sydenham's earlier despatch agreeing completely with its reasoning. Like his predecessor, Bagot hoped that the creation of another new diocese in Upper Canada would offset Gaulin's influence.²⁹ Later, in 1848, Lord Elgin, commenting upon the creation of still another diocese at Bytown, acknowledged the enormous influence of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Canada. He wrote that the British government could not expect to exercise any direct influence upon the bishops. In Elgin's opinion their views were becoming even more difficult to assess "as the Roman Catholic clergy become

²⁸ RG7 G12, Vol. 60, Sydenham to Russell, May 22, 1841.

²⁹ Ibid., Vol. 63, Bagot to Stanley (Confidential), July 8, 1842.

more ultramontane in their sentiments and more recluse and ascetic in their habits." The most reasonable approach would be to attempt to assure them that British government in Canada was not contrary to their interests and did not impinge upon their moral influences.³⁰

Latent religious fears, illustrated by the concerns of the different governors in Canada, became apparent by 1850. In the preceding ten years, the Roman Catholic church in Canada had become stronger. Protestants began to fear its increasing strength and began to react strenuously. In that year, antagonisms crystallized as a result of the Papal Aggression crisis. The re-establishment of Roman Catholic dioceses in England by Pope Pius IX, reverberated in Canada and unleashed a wave of hostility. Canadians expressed sentiments similar to those of the British Prime Minister, Lord John Russell. In a public letter to the Bishop of Durham, Russell had been highly critical of the Pope's intervention in England.³¹ The question was taken up throughout Canada.³²

English and French-speaking newspapers in Canada East

³⁰ Ibid., Vol. 65, Elgin to Grey (Confidential), August 23, 1848.

³¹ Le Canadien, vendredi, 29 novembre 1850.

³² La Minerve, lundi, 18 novembre et lundi, 12 décembre, 1850; Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, November 27 and Wednesday, December 16, 1850; Le Canadien, mercredi, 27 novembre et vendredi, 29 novembre, 1850; Quebec Gazette, Monday, November 25 and Friday, December 13, 1850.

were chagrined by what they considered the exaggerated reaction in Canada West. The Quebec Gazette claimed to be less surprised than other journals, for it realized that a depth of bigotry existed in the hearts of Canadians which could easily be stirred.³³ On the other hand, Le Canadien was shocked by the hostility and anger caused by the Pope's recent action.³⁴ It claimed that until now, Canadians, Catholic and Protestant, have lived together as brothers, and wondered whether this community and cooperation would be ruined by the "fanatisme politico-religieux d'outre mer"? Particularly distressing was the fact that English-Canadian reform newspapers which traditionally supported the reform ministry, itself an example of the developing French-English friendship in Canada, now took a vicious anti-Catholic line.³⁵

Clearly, no love was lost between Protestants and Catholics in Canada. In October 1850, this was well illustrated by an article which appeared in the Literary Garland. Entitled "The Pope and the Beggar," the soul of beggar went directly to heaven and that of the Pope straight to hell.³⁶ Other examples of mutual resentment abound. For example, Toronto had its own experience of papal aggression

³³ Quebec Gazette, Monday, November 25, 1850.

³⁴ Le Canadien, vendredi, 29 novembre 1850.

³⁵ Ibid., vendredi, 20 décembre 1850.

³⁶ Literary Garland, Vol. VIII, No. 10, October 1850.

when the French and conservative cleric, Count Armand de Charbonnel, was appointed bishop in the spring of 1850.³⁷ By the autumn of 1851, religious hostility had become increasingly apparent. For instance, Lord Elgin reported that George Brown, the editor of the Toronto Globe and long a reform supporter, had stirred himself into a fine fury and had flown off on an extreme, anti-prelatic, anti-Catholic, anti-Church-State programme.³⁸ During the first decade of the Union, religion was important for all Canadians. What is surprising is that it did not cause more serious problems. It was not until 1850 that religious animosity caused serious problems.

The Arts

Religious Canadians may have been; cultivated they were not. The artistic condition of the colony was undeveloped.³⁹ Indeed, there were novelists, short story

³⁷ RG7 G12, Vol. 65, Elgin to Grey, May 24, 1850.

³⁸ Sir Arthur G. Doughty, The Elgin-Grey Papers, 1848-1852 (Ottawa, 1937); Elgin to Grey, November 28, 1851.

³⁹ The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age, W. L. Morton, ed. (Toronto, 1968), contains two essays which deal with the condition of Canadian culture. In "Victorian Canada," W. L. Morton claimed that religion was the chief preoccupation of Canadians. Significant cultural development required a more sophisticated and advanced society than that which existed in mid-nineteenth century Canada. Goldwin French, in "The Evangelical Creed in Canada," remarked how little developed the arts and literature were at this time.

writers, painters, even sculptors, but they received little attention in Canada. If not completely unknown, their work was considered unimportant. French or English, their fate in Canada was far from certain, success elusive. Often their choice was limited: remain in the colony, unknown and unloved, or go to the United States. For example, Susannah Moodie contributed a sonnet to the Literary Garland in February 1846. It was dedicated to Dr. James Hoskins, in her opinion a genius and artist who lived and died here unappreciated.⁴⁰ Likewise, Le Canadien announced the death of M. Dulongpré, a French immigrant who first taught music and then turned to painting. He was reported to have painted as many as 4,200 portraits.⁴¹

After one of his periodic trips to Europe, Mgr. Bourget brought Hector Vaces "un jeune statuaire" to Canada, but the young man died a few months later.⁴² Charles Bullet, another young French sculptor, patronized by Bourget, had a happier fate. He finished a bust of the Bishop in August 1849⁴³ and also did a statue of St. Jean-Baptiste.⁴⁴ So successful was his work that he received tempting offers from the United States which he finally accepted at the end

⁴⁰ Literary Garland, Vol. IV, No. 2, February 1846.

⁴¹ Le Canadien, vendredi, 14 mai 1843.

⁴² La Minerve, jeudi, 27 mai et lundi, 11 octobre, 1847.

⁴³ Ibid., lundi, 3 septembre 1849.

⁴⁴ Ibid., jeudi, 13 décembre 1849.

of 1850.⁴⁵ Still another example was the gadfly, Major John Richardson, sometime journalist, magistrate, novelist and raconteur who finally quit the inhospitable forests of Canada for the United States where he fared no better, dying penniless and forgotten.⁴⁶

Not only the difficulties of artists give some hint as to the condition of the colony, its backwardness is also shown by the fact that the publication of books were occasions of little importance in Canada. For example, in 1840, the Literary Garland welcomed Major John Richardson's novel, "The Canadian Brothers," sadly noting that anywhere else in the world such a book would be greeted enthusiastically.⁴⁷ Similarly, in 1845, "Y," the reviewer for Le Canadien of Francois-Xavier Garneau's Histoire du Canada, prefaced his comments by noting that in any other country, the publication of such a history would be considered a great event. "Y" then proceeded to describe how poor the book really was.⁴⁸

It is apparent that the development of art and literature in Canada was not of great interest to Canadians.

⁴⁵ Ibid., lundi, 14 octobre et jeudi, 28 novembre, 1850.

⁴⁶ See Archibald McMurchy, Handbook of Canadian Literature (English), (Toronto, 1906) and Henry J. Morgan, Sketches of Celebrated Canadians (Quebec, 1862).

⁴⁷ Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 3, February 1840.

⁴⁸ Le Canadien, vendredi, 12 décembre 1845. The newspaper also announced the forthcoming publication of Garneau's history twice during the summer, vendredi, 1 août et vendredi, 29 août 1845.

Ironically, it was in this area that English and French Canadians, or at least the elite who had the time for such pursuits, were most aware of each other. They followed the other's progress, wished each other well and sometimes even offered criticism. For example, when the Literary Garland began publication in 1838, it was greeted by both the English and French press.⁴⁹ Its articles were quoted and commented upon. Le Canadien welcomed the "Litterary Garland" (sic) as a significant contribution to "nos richesses littéraires."⁵⁰ One French Canadian letter writer found it strange that such a periodical had not been preceded by one published in French and suggested that a similar French magazine be initiated as soon as possible.

Le plan adopté par la Guirlande Littéraire pour propager la littérature dans un idiome étranger en Canada est un heureux exemple à imiter.⁵¹

The Garland was often praised by the French-Canadian press.⁵² La Minerve found the magazine comparable to any American or European journal and recommended it to anyone interested in following English literature.⁵³ La Revue Canadienne praised it too, claiming that it was the focus of recent developments

⁴⁹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, August 17, 1842; Toronto Patriot, Friday, September 25, 1846.

⁵⁰ Le Canadien, mercredi, 4 juillet 1838.

⁵¹ Ibid., samedi, 2 octobre 1839.

⁵² La Minerve, jeudi, 28 décembre 1843.

⁵³ Ibid., jeudi, 9 février 1843.

in English-Canadian literature.⁵⁴ La Minerve even offered some critical advice remarking that much of the material treated by the Garland was flowery and romantic, and dealt with knights and damsels, kings and queens. Indeed, the criticism was reasonable, for while much of its prose and poetry did in fact derive from the Canadian experience, the Garland had a strong bent for fairy tales and the exotic. Kings and queens were of great interest.⁵⁵ La Minerve qualified its criticism and at the same time unintentionally illustrated French-Canadian perceptions of English-Canadians by the following remarks:

. . . le peuple du Canada aimerait peut-être mieux d'autres récits que des histoires de ducs et duchesses, de comtes and de comtesses, de marquis et de marquises et de toutes les autres dénominations de nobles, tant bien dites qu'elles puissent être, et quelque pure qu'en soit la morale- Peut-être . . . la plupart des lecteurs anglais qui ne sont pas nés en Amérique préfèrent ces esquisses de mœurs Européenes qui leurs rappellent des souvenirs chers.⁵⁶

The Literary Garland was the most successful and

⁵⁴ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 11 janvier 1845.

⁵⁵ For example, an article upon democracy and monarchy came down heavily for the latter system, Literary Garland, Vol. 1, No. 3, February 1839. Contributions like Agnes Strickland's anecdotal articles upon the lives of the queens of England were not uncommon, Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 10, September 1840. As an illustration of the varied and rather exotic types of articles which appeared in the magazine, one need only look at the February 1844 issue. Topics such as Madawaksa Pirates, Valentines: Amatory and Sarcastic, The Story of a Maniac, and An Evening Repast in a Harem, found room in its pages, Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 2, February 1844.

⁵⁶ La Minerve, jeudi, 15 mai 1851.

long-lived of several such periodicals which appeared in the 1840s in Canada in both French and English. Le Journal des Familles, a religious, scientific and literary journal, announced its intention to publish in late 1840.⁵⁷ Michel Bibaud, historian of Lower Canada, initiated a literary magazine, l'Encyclopedie Canadienne, in 1842.⁵⁸ Le Ménestrel: Journal Littéraire et Musicale appeared in Quebec City in 1844.⁵⁹ La Revue Canadienne, edited by Louis O. LeTourneux and with the same publishers as the Literary Garland, was welcomed onto the literary scene in 1845.⁶⁰ Mr. and Mrs. Moodie began the Victoria Magazine in 1847. Susannah Moodie informed her readers that she intended to continue contributing to the Literary Garland but that her magazine would be cheaper and aimed at a more general audience.⁶¹ Dr. John McCaul, president of the University of Toronto, edited a yearly publication, The Maple Leaf or Canadian Annual devoted to poetry and literature, in 1846, 1847 and 1848.⁶² Many were the efforts but small the success. Some

⁵⁷ Le Canadien, lundi, 26 octobre 1840.

⁵⁸ Literary Garland, Vol. IV, No. 6, May 1842.

⁵⁹ Le Canadien, vendredi, 23 février 1844; La Minerve, jeudi, 26 décembre 1844.

⁶⁰ La Minerve, lundi, 6 janvier 1845; Literary Garland, Vol. III, No. 3, March 1845.

⁶¹ Literary Garland, Vol. V, No. 10, October 1847; Victoria Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, September 1847.

⁶² Samuel Thompson, Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer for the Last Fifty Years, 1833-1883 (Toronto, 1884), p. 155. See also, Literary Garland, Vol. V, No. 2, February 1847.

of the periodicals were published only a few times and others lasted two or three years.

Sometimes it seemed as though nature itself and unruly mobs designed against books. Libraries burned and lecturers attacked light reading and even those who called themselves authors did not actually write. They simply lifted works. Although small, the literary community in Canada did not appreciate copying. In April 1844, Susannah Moodie claimed that a serialized story entitled "Christina Steinfort," appearing in the Literary Garland and supposedly translated from French by Edmund Hugomont, was in fact her work entitled, "The Disappointed Politician," which had appeared in a London literary magazine in 1832. Hugomont apologised but did not clarify the matter, claiming that the story he translated entitled, "Un Soufflet," was taken from the French magazine, La Tribune Littéraire.⁶³ In a similar episode, the author of a series of articles entitled "Trifles," dealing with literature and literary men in Canada, proceeded to dismiss all French literature in Canada. Jacques Cartier's Narratives he declared grossly ignorant,⁶⁴ the works of Recollet and Jesuit missionaries in Canada were untrustworthy for their prejudices had rendered them at best mediocre observers,⁶⁵ and Charlevoix's letters he

⁶³ Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 4, April 1844.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Vol. II, No. 2, January 1840.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Vol. II, No. 3, February 1840.

described as minute, egotistical, tiresome and flat.⁶⁶ It was all too much for the letter writer, "Jonathan Crib," who took the author of "Trifles" to task, accusing him of plagiarism and to make matters worse claiming that many of his comments on French literature in Canada came from a French-Canadian source, Georges Faribault's Catalogue d'ouvrages sur l'histoire de l'Amérique.⁶⁷

Authors soon realized they were in a literary wasteland, fiction in particular being little valued. Few Canadians agreed with Susannah Moodie that "Every good work of fiction is a step towards the mental improvement of mankind . . ."⁶⁸ Novels were a waste of time; their effect "funeste."⁶⁹ All light reading, whether it be novels or newspapers, was in the mind of one French-Canadian lecturer frivolous and wasteful.⁷⁰ Only serious books were worth reading. The Quebec Mercantile Library felt compelled to defend its collection claiming that it was not composed of novels alone, but was in fact a very creditable holding of six thousand volumes of various subjects in both French and

⁶⁶ Ibid., Vol. II, No. 5, April 1840.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Vol. II, No. 9, August 1840.

⁶⁸ Susannah Moodie, "A Word for Novel Writers," in Literary Garland, Vol. IX, No. 8, August 1851.

⁶⁹ Gazette de Québec, jeudi, 28 octobre 1841.

⁷⁰ Lecture prononcé par Etienne Parent devant l'Institut Canadien, l'Importance de l'Etude de l'Economie politique, jeudi, 19 novembre 1846. Montréal: Imprimerie de la Revue Canadienne, 1846.

English.⁷¹ In 1850, a special committee of Montreal's Institut Canadien, considering the future policy of its library, suggested that only serious books, not novels, be added to the collection for, "un roman une fois lu devient une lettre morte, une propriété stérile."⁷² On the other hand, the works of authors such as Bentham, Guizot, Thiers, Blanc, Laménais, Tocqueville, Franklin and Paine were considered real and worthwhile reading.⁷³

The Literary Garland declared bluntly that as the country prospered, so too would its literature.

There cannot exist a doubt that with the advancement of the country in political and social worth--in moral and physical wealth--its literary and intellectual riches will be equally developed.⁷⁴

Each year of publication in Canada was a source of wonder and amazement for the Garland. Having survived four years, the magazine felt confident enough to chastize the doubters and claim that interest in literature was growing in Canada.⁷⁵

Is it not a truism in everybody's mouth that this colony is in its infancy as regards its political, fiscal, commercial and agricultural resources, and is it less so in its literary character and existence.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, May 12, 1841.

⁷² J.-B. E. Dorion, l'Institut Canadien en 1852.
Montreal: Imprimé par W. H. Rowen, 1852, p. 59.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 60.

⁷⁴ Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 12, November 1840.

⁷⁵ Ibid., Vol. I, No. 1, January 1843.

⁷⁶ Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 12, December 1846.

All that was needed was time, for the Literary Garland was convinced that love of literature would grow with the advance of society.

Despite this optimism, Canadians simply did not read and those who wrote had little impact. Eventually, even the Garland had to admit defeat. Its small Canadian market was undermined by foreign periodicals such as the American Harper's New Monthly Magazine which first appeared in 1850.⁷⁷ By the end of 1851, the Canadian magazine was forced to cease publication and while hoping that in the future Canada would be able to support many literary periodicals, it declared that the abundance and cheapness of foreign publications made competition impossible.⁷⁸ The Garland had always led a precarious existence. For example, in 1844, its publishers asked for an exemption from recent postal regulations in the colony. American newspapers were obliged to pay double the postage required by Canadian ones, but magazines were left on par, leaving the Garland at a distinct disadvantage.⁷⁹ As it was, the publishers printed it free of charge on a non-profit basis. The editor worked without payment and it was only in 1843, after six years of publication, that the contributors received any payment for their articles. Despite its weak competitive position, the Post Office did

⁷⁷ Ibid., Vol. VIII, No. 7, July 1850.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Vol. XII, No. 12, December 1851.

⁷⁹ RG7 G20, Vol. 26, No. 3068, January 18 & 20, 1844.

not deem to grant the magazine an exemption.⁸⁰

It seemed that even nature conspired against books in Canada. Fire was as significant a menace to libraries in the colony as it was to cities. For instance, in 1850, the entire collection of Montreal's Institut Canadien, nearly 1,500 books, was destroyed. Only the fifty-one volumes in circulation were saved.⁸¹ The Institut immediately attempted to restore the library and by the end of the year it contained 689 books,⁸² and by the end of 1851, there were again approximately 1,500 volumes.⁸³ Surely the most impressive library was that of the Legislative Assembly which itself was destroyed as a result of the mob which set fire to the Canadian parliament in Montreal in 1849.

Not only fires, but moving, bad environment and the general disregard for books threatened the collection of the Legislative Assembly. Generally there was an annual report submitted upon the condition of the library but given the particular situation in Canada, there was no report between 1837 and 1842. In the former year, the number of books in the collection was put at 6,385 and by 1842 had increased only to 6,634. Many of the books had been damaged in the

⁸⁰ RG7 G20, Vol. 27, No. 3103, January 27, 1844.

⁸¹ J. B. E. Dorion, op. cit., p. 34.

⁸² Ibid., p. 51.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 141.

move of the capital to Kingston.⁸⁴ After 1842, a more regular program of addition to the library was undertaken. By 1843, the collection had risen to 7,009 books. In that year, the Canadian government spent £500 to purchase Audubon's four-volume ornithological study, in addition to such works as Major Richardson's History of the War of 1812 and Jacques Crémazie's Lois Criminelles du Bas Canada.⁸⁵ By 1845, there were 8,232 volumes in the assembly library.⁸⁶

The archives and documents possessed by the Canadian government were in pitiful condition. In 1844, Georges Faribault, the librarian and archivist, as well as the president, of the Quebec Literary and Historical Society, complained that the valuable collection of historical documents dating from the French regime in Canada was stored in the damp basements of the Evêché and the Assembly building.⁸⁷ In 1849, Faribault reported in despair upon the

⁸⁴ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1842, Appendix B.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1843, Appendix C. See also G. R. Faribault, Notice sur la destruction des archives et Bibliothèques des deux chambres législatives du Canada lors de l'émeute qui a eu lieu à Montréal le 25 avril 1849. Québec: Imprimerie du Canadien, No. 9, rue de la Montagne, 1849.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 1844-5, Appendix C.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 1844-5, Appendix HH. Robert Christie, later to publish A History of the Late Province of Lower Canada, 1791-1841, chaired a committee of the legislative assembly to consider the condition of the archives. Despite its inquiry and discovery of the bad environment of documents and papers, nothing was done to improve the situation.

effects of the fire in that year. All of the archives and many thousands of books were lost, including the collection on the history of North America upon which he had been working for the past eighteen years.⁸⁸ In all, 13,902 books were destroyed.⁸⁹ The Tory press of Montreal claimed that the library could be easily replaced and in response Faribault lashed out,

. . . il faut bien qu'ils aient recours a de pareils moyens afin de jeter un voile, s'il est possible, sur un acte de vandalisme qui déshonorera à jamais les auteurs et les fauteurs d'un acte aussi atroce.⁹⁰

Even the physical condition and treatment of books and archives in Canada illustrate a fundamental lack of concern for the cultural development of the colony.

If books were not cherished in Canada, the products of Canadian artists were completely disregarded. There was nothing in Canada of any artistic value, one observer noted. He pointed to Montreal, the metropolis and centre of the colony, to illustrate his opinion. It was sufficient to look around and inside the city's buildings to see how utterly poverty-stricken the colony was artistically. Canadian artists had produced and would produce nothing of value, for to be bona fide art, it had to come from Europe or at least be copied there. In Canada there was nothing

⁸⁸ G. R. Faribault, op. cit., pp. 7-9.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 6. See also Le Canadien, vendredi, 25 mai 1849.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

really beautiful, monumental or artistic except for a few good paintings brought from Europe. There existed only miserable wood sculptures "si bâtarde de style, qu'on n'y retrouve pas un seul échantillon du style grec, du moyen age, ni de Louis XIV ou de Louis XV."⁹¹ Canadian lithographs and statuary were no better.

Voilà à peu près la revue exacte de ce que nous possédons, hors le chef d'oeuvre d'architecture de la Banque de Montréal et quatre bas reliefs de la Banque du Peuple exécutés à Londres sans oublier la fontaine devant l'église paroissiale à peine digne du petit jardin d'un petit bourgeois.⁹²

The solution to the colony's supposed artistic poverty also illustrates that Canadians believed their artists to be inferior. The way to overcome backwardness was to send promising talents to Europe where they could learn real art.⁹³ One observer believed the government should provide the money to send artists to the continent. Another suggestion was to create an academy of fine arts where young people could first be trained in the basics and then be sent to Europe, in order to copy the masterpieces there. No value was attached to indigenous production and while it was believed there existed a lot of good native talent, it had to be developed beyond the colony.⁹⁴

To succeed as a painter in Canada, travel to Europe

⁹¹ La Minerve, lundi, 17 décembre 1849.

⁹² Ibid., lundi, 17 décembre 1849.

⁹³ Le Canadien, lundi, 11 octobre 1847.

⁹⁴ La Minerve, lundi, 17 décembre 1849.

was absolutely necessary. Those few Canadian artists who did achieve public acclaim had all toured overseas. For instance, in 1846, Le Canadien welcomed the return of Théophile Hamel, a Canadian artist and portraitist, who had spent the past three years on the continent. The newspaper described his voyage to such centres of art and culture as Florence and Rome and declared how profitable it had been in terms of the development of the artist. In the same article, Le Canadien pointedly remarked upon the forthcoming departure of another young Canadian artist, Chevalier Falardeau. The young man was to travel by sailing ship rather than steamer due to lack of financial means.⁹⁵ Falardeau finally did reach Florence but never returned to Canada.⁹⁶

Painters, like authors, led a precarious and lonely existence in Canada. Only three artists of the period, Chevalier Falardeau, Paul Kane and Théophile Hamel were described in Henry Morgan's Sketches of Celebrated Canadians, a book published in 1862. In his thumbnail sketch of Hamel, Morgan wrote

Indeed with the exception of Falardeau, Kane, Plamondon, and Thieckle, we can hardly boast of having produced any artists who have distinguished themselves as painters.⁹⁷

Despite his having found them worthy, the latter two

⁹⁵ Le Canadien, lundi, 16 novembre 1845.

⁹⁶ Henry J. Morgan, op. cit., p. 711.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 762.

individuals still did not merit more than a mention in Morgan's collection.

Most Canadian painters did in fact produce portraits, religious works or copies of masters. Antoine Plamondon's studio at Quebec was full of works such as Raphael's Virgin and Guerin's Despair of Cain.⁹⁸ Plamondon's Passion, or Stations of the Cross, fourteen tableaux, each eight by five feet, upon which he worked for three years, were one of his greatest accomplishments, exhibited at the cloakroom of the Assembly building. In the opinion of Le Canadien, the series was the seal of his reputation.⁹⁹ Théophile Hamel's studio was filled with portraits and copies of Italian and Flemish masters.¹⁰⁰ He was sought after as a portraitist and painted such diverse subjects as Mr. Lee, the founder of the Montreal Shakespeare Club,¹⁰¹ Father Charles Chiniquy, the famous temperance advocate,¹⁰² Mayor Wilson of Montreal¹⁰³ and Lord Elgin, the Governor General.¹⁰⁴ One of his most ambitious projects would be the National Portrait Gallery, a series of portraits of the speakers of the legislative

⁹⁸ La Fantasque, samedi, 28 juillet 1838.

⁹⁹ Le Canadien, mercredi, 27 novembre 1839.

¹⁰⁰ La Minerve, jeudi, 29 juillet 1848.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., jeudi, 2 novembre 1848. Hamel's portrait of Jacques Cartier was noted in the Literary Garland, Vol. VI, No. 4, April 1848.

¹⁰² Literary Garland, Vol. VI, No. 11, November 1848.

¹⁰³ Quebec Gazette, Friday, January 30, 1852.

¹⁰⁴ Literary Garland, Vol. VIII, No. 3, March 1850.

councils and legislative assemblies before and after the Union.¹⁰⁵

Like his French-Canadian counterparts, Paul Kane, a young Toronto artist, also made a European tour, visiting Rome, Genoa, Naples, Florence, Venice and Bologna. He travelled for nearly nine years in the United States and on the continent.¹⁰⁶ No sooner had he returned to Canada than he was off to visit the Western plains. He returned to Toronto in the autumn of 1848 and announced that he would soon exhibit his collection of Indian artifacts and costumes, and his portraits and paintings of the Indian people.¹⁰⁷ He was reported to have had

. . . one of the largest collections of aboriginal curiosities ever made on the continent, together with nearly four hundred sketches, illustrative of the manners, customs, and peculiarities of about sixty different Indian tribes.¹⁰⁸

Canadian artists exhibited when and where they could, in the rooms of a Mechanics' Institute or at an agricultural fair. For example, two Quebec City artists, Plamondon and Légaré, showed their work at that city's Mechanics' Institute in the spring of 1845.¹⁰⁹ In 1847, the Toronto Society of the Arts sponsored what it called the first exhibition of

¹⁰⁵ Morgan, op. cit., p. 762.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 732.

¹⁰⁷ Toronto Patriot, Monday, October 26, 1848 and Monday, November 13, 1848.

¹⁰⁸ Morgan, op. cit., p. 732.

¹⁰⁹ Quebec Gazette, Friday, May 2, 1845.

modern artists at the old city hall¹¹⁰ where the paintings, engravings and sculptures of the city's artistic community were displayed from dawn to dusk for ten days in April 1847.¹¹¹ From time to time, the Toronto Mechanics' Institute exposed "works of art and mechanism, ladies' work, antiquities, curiosities, etc."¹¹² In 1850, Paul Kane won the first and second prize in the arts section at the annual agricultural fair in Niagara Falls. Along with prizes for manufactures, livestock, crops and cheese, there was a fine arts section at the fair:

. . . which included a tolerable number of paintings, as good as could be expected but nothing very striking or remarkable.¹¹³

Not until 1868 would the Toronto Mechanics' Institute sponsor what it styled "an exclusively fine arts exhibition," in which hundreds of paintings were shown, most of them still copies of European masters.¹¹⁴

Certainly the works of Canadian artists were generally very little valued. For example, in 1844 the Canadian government commissioned two tableaux for the legislative assembly, one to represent "Commerce," the other "Agriculture." No competition of Canadian artists was

¹¹⁰ Toronto Patriot, Friday, January 29, 1847.

¹¹¹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, April 14, 1847.

¹¹² Thompson, op. cit., p. 274.

¹¹³ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, September 18, 1850.

¹¹⁴ Thompson, op. cit., p. 274.

conducted or even suggested.¹¹⁵ In 1846, an article upon the "Beaux Arts" appeared in Le Canadien, suggesting that painting in Canada was finally coming of age, what with the works of artists like Plamondon, Hamel and Légaré.¹¹⁶ But the truth was more pertinently put a year later when the same newspaper complained bitterly about Canada's wasted and sleeping talent. The occasion for the despair was a recent visit to Antoine Plamondon's studio which was filled with paintings unsold and likely never to be purchased.¹¹⁷

Place in Society: Women, Children and Native Peoples

If the general disregard for the arts in Canada illustrates a shared community of values, so too does Canadians' understanding of their place in society. Considerations of this uniformity of spirit shows how similar they really were. Study of notions regarding the place of women, children and native people demonstrates values and sentiments which make Canadians appear to be the same. Life in mid-nineteenth century Canada was reasonably well ordered and well defined. Adults and children filled their roles and were expected to respect that of the other. The husband provided for his family. The wife, the focus of domestic life, lived in respectful deference as a virtuous and gentle helpmate. Children were

¹¹⁵ Le Canadien, lundi, 2 septembre 1844.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., lundi, 16 novembre 1846.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., vendredi, 15 octobre 1847.

to be a delight to their parents who nourished and educated them.

Women I

The role of men in society was rarely commented upon for their function as provider and protector of the family was self-evident. On the other hand, the place of women was often considered by lecturers, and in the newspapers and magazines. French and English-speaking Canadians thought exactly the same way. There was no doubt that women were to be the aid and comforter to their husbands. They were the most important agent in the early education of children. In addition, slight changes in the attitudes towards women were noticeable throughout the colony. Their position was improving slowly. This is illustrated by the fact that women all over Canada were beginning to participate more fully in society, particularly in the realm of good works and moral improvement.

However, women were definitely in an inferior position to men. They played no role in politics. Rarely did they give a public address, the contemporary and most important means of expressing current ideas. Women were to be seen, not heard. Indeed, they were to hear only things which men considered fit subjects for the gentler sex. In Canada, there was a certain gentility towards women, protective of imagined sensibilities and oppressive of full participation in society. In public places and conveyances, there was usually some quiet area reserved for the ladies

and removed from the din and crudity of everyday life. Places were reserved for them upon steamboats¹¹⁸ and in hotels and restaurants. Montreal's Café-Restaurant de l'Univers boasted that "un passage privé communiquant aux salons supérieurs, a été ouvert pour la commodité des dames."¹¹⁹

Perhaps the only important exception to this imposed privacy was the fact that women were increasingly welcomed at public events. For example, at the Vattermare meetings in Quebec City in early 1841, a special invitation was extended. "On desire beaucoup la présence des dames à l'assemblée de lundi; les banquettes sont réservées pour elles."¹²⁰ In the spring of 1845, a local Quebec doctor announced a couple of lectures to be delivered, one on indigestion and the other on animal magnetism. The ladies were especially invited and assured that nothing would be introduced to offend them.¹²¹ It was a great source of pride that women participated for the first time at the St. Jean-Baptiste celebrations in Montreal in 1846. "Les dames canadiennes"

¹¹⁸ Sir Richard Henry Bonnycastle, Canada and the Canadians in 1846, Vol. 1. London: Henry Colburn, publisher, 1846, p. 96.

¹¹⁹ La Minerve, lundi, 14 décembre 1846.

¹²⁰ Gazette de Quebec, samedi, 27 février 1841.

¹²¹ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, March 22, 1845 and Friday, May 2, 1845.

were the patrons of the soirée that year.¹²²

While invited to public meetings, to be present if not to participate, women were more often the subject of lectures and discussion. A talk entitled, "La femme et son influence," was sandwiched between "l'Histoire du Tabac" and "La création et existence de Dieu" in the 1849 winter series of lectures presented at l'Institut Canadien at Quebec City.¹²³ Both English and French newspapers and magazines also frequently commented on woman and her place in contemporary society.

From sources such as these, one can come to an understanding of the situation of women. Essentially, they were baubles and adornments, who were not expected to play any important role in society apart from the education of children and the support of husbands. Illustrations of this attitude abound. In an article which appeared in La Revue Canadienne, the author compared the condition of women of the fourteenth century with those of the 1840s. As in the past, women still knew how to sew, knit and cook, but modern women were far ahead of medieval times since they were morally virtuous.¹²⁴ Another example is the "Lecture

¹²² La Minerve, lundi, 27 juin 1846. Eight hundred people were reported to have attended the evening at the Marché Bonsecours. Among the patronesses were Mesdames Lafontaine, Bourret, Drummond and Vallières St. Real. See also La Revue Canadienne, vendredi, 26 juin 1846.

¹²³ Le Canadien, vendredi, 12 janvier 1849.

¹²⁴ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 12 août 1845.

Publique sur la position de la Femme en Canada," delivered in 1847 to the Institut Canadien by Charles Mondelet, a Montreal judge. The speech was reprinted and dealt with woman's influence and place in the family and society. Women were to be the support of men and should be educated properly to be good wives and mothers. Some fitting subjects of instruction were music, sketching and dance.¹²⁵

Women were solidly locked into their place in society and were not tolerated beyond. One commentator, treating of the relationship of husband and wife, declared that:

Une femme doit tacher de plaire à son mari et de s'en faire aimer; mais surtout de se concilier son estime et sa reconnaissance.¹²⁶

The notion of servitude was quite apparent in these sentiments. The means to the achievement of the goals of docility and subservience, constant good conduct and assiduous attention to the happiness and contentment of one's husband,¹²⁷ were easier said than done. One speaker, estimating the role of women in Canadian history, prefaced his remarks by saying that French Canadian women were by far the most beautiful upon the continent and:

¹²⁵ l'Album Littéraire et Musicale de la Revue Canadienne, Vol. II, 1847.

¹²⁶ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 19 avril 1845. These comments and others like them were delivered in a lecture upon women to the Société des Amis de Montreal in April 1845 and gained even a wider audience in the newspaper.

¹²⁷ Ibid., samedi, 19 avril 1845.

Du reste bonnes épouses, mères tendres, ménagères soigneuses, elle sont représentées comme faisant la félicité de leurs familles.¹²⁸

Even in fiction the secondary role of women was very clear. Lurid and romantic short stories and poetry which appeared in the prints of the day leave an unmistakable impression of woman's place. La Revue Canadienne, published an article entitled, "Dévouement d'une femme," which recounted the difficulties of the wife of a man who was imprisoned and exiled in 1839. All of the popular notions of woman as the faithful, meek and longsuffering helpmate were reinforced. The enormity of the injustice done the husband, apparently sent into exile for stealing half a dollar, underlined and magnified the heroism of the loving wife.¹²⁹ So too, the role of Millicent, the central character in a serialized story entitled, "The Affianced: A Canadian Tale," which appeared in the Literary Garland in 1850, also demonstrates attitudes toward women. The virtuous and heroic Millicent first lost her father, the "patriote" seigneur Monsieur de St. Vallery, whom she found dead on the battlefield of St. Charles. Then with her fiance Léon, she travelled by caleche to St. Eustache where she joined the other women making flags and cartridges. The closing scenes depict Léon and Millicent in each other's arms dying courageously in the burning church surrounded

¹²⁸ La Minerve, mercredi, 30 mai 1851.

¹²⁹ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 19 avril 1845.

by the British enemy.¹³⁰ What greater faithfulness could there be than to follow one's beloved even to death?

Despite popular views, attitudes towards women in Canada were in fact changing. One Toronto lecturer speaking of the fairer sex, claimed that women were indeed equal to men. Their real problem was that they were maltreated and poorly educated.¹³¹ DeTocqueville's observations upon American women were duly noted in Canada. The French observer remarked their role was primarily domestic but noted that they also exercised a very strong moral influence.¹³² In fact there was just the slightest hint that in terms of intellectual development, women could equal if not surpass "the lords of creation."¹³³

Napoleon Aubin remarked in his newspaper, Le Fantasque, that as soon as one suggests the full intellectual freedom of women, all sorts of objections are made. "C'est-a-dire que l'on veut voir subsister une caste où l'on tient renfermée la moitié du genre humain." Liberal as his views may seem, Aubin supported "l'affranchissement intellectuel de la femme,"

¹³⁰ Literary Garland, Vol. VIII, No. 6, June 1850. On the other hand, to spurn men was to take a terrible chance. One fictional character of the 1840s, "Deaf Molly," hated men. To her ". . . the lordly parts of creation were objects of utter abhorrence." Her fate was worse than death. She finished her days destitute in the almshouse, sick and deaf. Literary Garland, Vol. VI, No. 4, April 1848.

¹³¹ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, August 27, 1845.

¹³² Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 9, August 1840.

¹³³ Ibid., Vol. II, No. 11, October 1840.

not for its own sake but because of the importance of the role of women in society. That importance derived not from the simple fact that women comprised half the human race, rather it stemmed from her place as mother and educator of children and as worker and helpmate to her husband.¹³⁴

Another example of this growing sense that women could at least be the intellectual equals of men is found in the Literary Garland's critique of Anna Jameson's Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada. The reviewer took the occasion to reflect upon the influence of women. He believed not only did she "enoble" and "adorn" society, but in modern times she exercised a heretofore unknown intellectual influence. Were not the writings of Mrs. Moodie and Mrs. Jameson perfect examples of that influence? Being educated and erudite, these women had the resources of a library and intellect to combat the ennui of the monotonous Canadian winter.¹³⁵ So too, the reviewer of a recently published entitled, Woman and Her Master, a traditional treatment of the role of women, took particular umbrage at the reactionary views of its author. Woman, contrary to the views expressed in the book, was not merely subservient to man. She was also his friend and counsellor, his equal in excellence,

¹³⁴ La Fantasque, lundi, 19 juillet 1841. Even a conservative religious newspaper like Mélanges Religieux claimed it was more important to educate girls than boys. The rationale was that girls eventually became mothers and would be the ones to teach children their prayers and catechism. See La Minerve, jeudi, 27 mai 1847.

¹³⁵ Literary Garland, Vol. I, No. 8, July 1839.

virtue and piety, sometimes his superior in intellectual prowess while admittedly inferior to him in physical attributes.¹³⁶

These advanced views, moderate as they were, seemed wildly radical placed in the context of the general perception of the place of woman in society. Her ultimate goal was to be a good wife and mother. "Qu'est ce que c'est la femme?" was the question posed by one Quebec City lecturer. The response was immediate and clear. She was "la source féconde et sacrée de la vie."¹³⁷ One lecturer to another audience repeated the commonly held view that

. . . la destinée de la femme n'est point de commander ou de se faire redouter, mais d'aimer et de plaire.¹³⁸

Man was the superior side of the balance. Women were attributed the traditional characteristics of frailty¹³⁹ and intuition.¹⁴⁰ They were described as an ornament and a balm to beautify society and to ease the tension of the world-weary and wise husband.¹⁴¹ Men were concerned with important questions like philosophical disputes and political matters, while women were left to music, dancing and

¹³⁶ Ibid., Vol. II, No. 8, July 1840.

¹³⁷ From a lecture of Dr. P. M. Bardy to the Quebec City Institut Canadien reprinted in Le Canadien, vendredi, 19 janvier et lundi, 22 janvier 1849.

¹³⁸ La Minerve, jeudi, 1 juin 1854.

¹³⁹ Literary Garland, Vol. IV, No. 3, February 1842.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., Vol. I, No. 9, September 1843.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., Vol. VI, No. 8, August 1848.

"causeries enfantines."¹⁴² Simply put, Canadians believed that woman's place in society was secondary and subservient to man.

While she was considered inferior to men, the value placed upon the virtue and good conduct of woman was enormous. There was nothing quite so terrible as her corruption. The dangers were countless, particularly in the cities. The path to perdition was an easy one. Such was the belief of one contributor to the Literary Garland who wrote that "pleasure is to women what the sun is to flowers; moderately used it beautifies, refreshes and improves; immoderately, it withers, destroys and deteriorates."¹⁴³ Modern immorality and corruption were often commented upon in the newspapers. Ironically, the Toronto Examiner found the opinions of a Montreal judge, upon the condition of that city, worthy of note. For the coming quarter sessions in Montreal, there were twenty indictments for the keeping of houses of ill fame. Despite society's progress in the realm of education and temperance, crime and disorder were on the increase.¹⁴⁴ The situation in Toronto was no better where it seemed that intemperance, licence, poverty and crime were all growing. The Toronto Examiner was particularly concerned with the collusion of the city's prostitutes and cabbies who

¹⁴² Album Littéraire et Musicale de la Revue Canadienne, Vol. 1, 1846.

¹⁴³ Literary Garland, Vol. I, No. 6, May 1839.

¹⁴⁴ Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, November 4, 1846.

were managing to drum up quite a bit of business together.¹⁴⁵

Reflecting upon these same sorts of problems, La Minerve editorialized that "Nous progressons, mais nous l'avons déjà dit, nous progressons en arrière."¹⁴⁶

Part of the danger to women arose from the fact that cities contained many unattached men. It was estimated that Quebec City alone was visited by 15,000 sailors, 150 of whom deserted, during the navigation season of 1848.¹⁴⁷ Not of negligible influence was the presence of British garrisons in populated areas. Major Richardson commented upon the evil ways of the soldiers and the threat they represented.

In almost every town in which they are quartered the utmost difficulty exists in the management of female servants, who caught as well as their mistresses, by the glittering bait of a scarlet coat fall victims to their seducers and neglect their duties for the pleasures of criminal indulgence. I have heard it stated by several heads of families in Toronto that while the 93rd Regiment was quartered there, the impression created by their sinewy and kilted limbs, when in full dress, and the graceful bonnet surmounting their stalwart frames, was such that there was not a single servant maid or woman who had not been debauched by them. As far as my own experience and observation enabled me to judge, this systematic ruin of servants is one of the most abominable nuisances in Canada.¹⁴⁸

The above comments must be placed in the context of the exaggerations of a prude. Richardson's discourse upon the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Wednesday, August 9, 1848.

¹⁴⁶ La Minerve, jeudi, 20 novembre 1845.

¹⁴⁷ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1849, Appendix R4. Special Committee on Shipping and Seamen.

¹⁴⁸ Major John Richardson, Eight Years in Canada. Montreal: published by H. H. Cunningham, 1847, pp. 181-2.

virtue, or lack of it, of Toronto servant girls arose almost offhandedly from a preceding declaration of his disgust at the widespread custom of rural people, mostly young boys, who bathed in the nude at the local swimming hole.¹⁴⁹

On the other hand, immorality and corruption of the innocent could not be completely dismissed. It seemed that ingenuous immigrant females were particularly susceptible to the path of dalliance. Not only were they corrupted by soldiers and sailors, but also by their own masters and unscrupulous madams. In 1848, one hundred and fifty-seven prostitutes were jailed in Montreal. How many avoided incarceration was unknown.¹⁵⁰ The superintendent of the Montreal jail, Thomas McGinn, reported that many young immigrant and country girls seeking positions as domestics were unknowingly hired by mistresses of brothels. Once introduced into such places, they were drugged or physically forced to remain. He also claimed that many of the city's prostitutes began their careers as servants in respectable service, who, bribed and seduced by their own masters, soon found themselves in the streets.¹⁵¹ McGinn's remarks about the importance of virtuous women expressed currently held views. He said:

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 181.

¹⁵⁰ Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly appointed to Inquire Whether any and What Measures can be adopted to repress the Evils of Intemperance. Montreal: printed by order of the Legislative Assembly, 1849, p. 23.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 27.

As the purity of the female character is of the highest importance to society, lying as it does at the very foundation of the moral and social system; so do I conceive that our laws should guard with jealous care a treasure, which, if lost, cannot be compensated and may never be restored.¹⁵²

In both Montreal and Quebec City, there were homes for wayward girls, appropriately called Magdeleine Asylums, but they were small and hardly the solution to an important social problem. In Quebec City the house, established in early 1850 and sponsored by the local St. Vincent de Paul society, had within a year taken in twenty-two girls, eleven French Canadians, ten Irish and one American, none of whom, it was happily reported, had weakened in their resolution to reform.¹⁵³

If virtue could be lost easily, it could not be readily restored. This conviction is illustrated by numerous accounts of seduction and ruination of innocent women which appeared in the newspapers. Undoubtedly, these stories were meant as object lessons to warn of the many dangers and the terrible consequences of abandoning a moral life. The author of "La Chronique Canadienne," in La Minerve, told of the sad fate and tragic death of Maria Nash. She was described as a sweet and innocent, twenty-one year old immigrant girl, who had been led to ruin. Delicately sparing his readers the intimate details, the reporter told of how Maria, just

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁵³ Le Canadien, vendredi, 25 octobre 1850. See also RGL E8, Vol. 9, March 1845.

recently arrived in Canada with her younger brother, had been attracted by a group of young men who filled her with liquor, used her as they wished and then left her to die at the Emigrant Hospital. As if this story were not enough, in the same column the readers were also informed of the terrible fate of another young emigrant, Bridget Doone. Hired as a domestic servant and seduced by her master, she became pregnant and gave birth to a baby which she proceeded to smother and hide in a trunk.¹⁵⁴ The ruination of female virtue was considered a terrible thing. In the mid 1840s, one Toronto newspaper claimed that the situation was even worse than popularly presumed and suggested that crimes of seduction and adultery be punished by terms in the penitentiary.¹⁵⁵

Insofar as the perceptions of women in Canada existed, there seemed to be two roles, either a virtuous and gentle wife or a guileless and ruined prostitute. There seemed to be little middle ground. Despite popular attitudes, women did in fact do more than add colour to public meetings with their dresses and bonnets. Much of contemporary English Canadian literature was written by women. Many of the contributors to the Literary Garland were women, among the most valued, Susannah Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill.¹⁵⁶

154 La Minerve, jeudi, 20 novembre 1845.

155 Toronto Examiner, Wednesday, July 8, 1846.

156 For a discussion of the contributors to this magazine, see Mary Markham Brown, An Index to the Literary Garland (Montreal 1838-1851). Toronto: Bibliographical Society of Canada, 1962.

The Snow Drop, a magazine for Canadian youth, was started by Mrs. Cheney and Mrs. Cushing.¹⁵⁷ The History of Canada for the Use of Schools and Families, published in 1847, was written by Mrs. Jennett Roy.¹⁵⁸ The review of the book illustrated attitudes about women. The reviewer found the work excellent for its intended readers but also mentioned that a good history of the colony remained to be written.¹⁵⁹ In addition, at least one newspaper in the province was owned and operated by a woman. Sophia Dalton published the Toronto Patriot from the death of her husband in 1840 until she sold it in 1848.¹⁶⁰

While French Canadian women did not make a similar contribution to literature, they played a particular and important role in society as well. The newspapers of Canada East reported regularly upon the work and the establishments of different women's religious communities. For instance, in the autumn of 1841, it was noted that Sisters St. Edouard and St. Alexandre of the Congregation of Notre Dame had gone to Kingston to open a school which would offer classes in French and English. Nuns from Montreal's Hôtel Dieu intended to follow them soon in order to open a hospital in the new capital.¹⁶¹ They did not finally go to Kingston until 1845.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ Literary Garland, Vol. V, No. 4, April 1847; La Minerve, jeudi, 4 juillet, 1850.

¹⁵⁸ Quebec Gazette, Wednesday, May 19, 1847.

¹⁵⁹ Literary Garland, Vol. V, No. 8, August 1847.

¹⁶⁰ Toronto Patriot, Tuesday, October 10, 1848.

¹⁶¹ Gazette de Quebec, mardi, 23 novembre 1841.

¹⁶² Le Canadien, mercredi, 3 septembre 1845

The arrival of a new community, Les Dames du Sacré Coeur, was reported in Montreal. They opened a school for young ladies with a wide and varied curriculum, offering courses such as reading, writing, French, English, grammar, arithmetic, history, mythology, chronology, logic, rhetoric, geography, science and the more traditional subjects like home economics, sewing and embroidery. German, Italian, music, design and painting were also offered but apart from the regular programme.¹⁶³ The Grey Sisters were reported to have opened a school in Ottawa in the same year, in the spring of 1845.¹⁶⁴

During the 1840s, numerous of these religious communities were incorporated, as were groups of laywomen involved in a variety of charitable works. Examples of such incorporations were Les Dames Religieuses du Sacré Coeur du Jésus¹⁶⁵ and Les Soeurs des Saints Noms de Jésus et Marie de Longueuil.¹⁶⁶ Both of these communities were teaching orders. Les Dames Religieuses de Notre Dame de Charité du Bon Pasteur dedicated their lives to the care and reformation of women penitents.¹⁶⁷ Other groups like hospitallers and those who cared for orphans were also

¹⁶³ La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 1 mars 1845.

¹⁶⁴ Le Canadien, jundi, 7 avril 1845.

¹⁶⁵ Statutes of Canada, 7 Victoria, Cap. 54.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., Victoria, Cap. 101.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 9 Victoria, Cap. 91

incorporated.¹⁶⁸ Not only Roman Catholic religious communities, but ladies from all across Canada and of all denominations, grouped together to form societies or institutions for benevolent purposes. The ladies of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum of Montreal were incorporated in 1841¹⁶⁹ as was the Ladies Benevolent Society of the same city.¹⁷⁰ The Charitable Association of Roman Catholic Ladies of Quebec, dedicated to the care of orphans, was created in 1842.¹⁷¹ In the following year, a group of Protestant Montreal women got together to support an orphan asylum.¹⁷² Still another group sponsored the creation of a lying-in hospital in Montreal which served French and English, Catholic and Protestant.¹⁷³ In 1848, it served 129 women, 59 Protestant and 70 Catholic.¹⁷⁴ Names like Mmes. LaFontaine, Arnoldi, Sutherland, Nelson and Vallières de St. Réal, figured in its committee of management.¹⁷⁵ Mrs. Strachan and Mrs. Boulton were among the patronesses of the Society for the Relief of the Indigent Sick in the city of Toronto.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 9 Victoria, Cap. 99 and 12 Victoria, Cap. 107.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 5 Victoria, Cap. 62.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 5 Victoria, Cap. 66.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 6 Victoria, Cap. 24.

¹⁷² Ibid., 7 Victoria, Cap. 52.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 7 Victoria, Cap. 53.

¹⁷⁴ La Minerve, lundi, 30 octobre 1848.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., jeudi, 12 février 1846.

¹⁷⁶ Toronto Patriot, Friday, January 6, 1843.

Clearly the contribution of women to life in Canada was not negligible. All over the province of the Canadas, whether French or English-speaking, they strove for the moral improvement of society. They did so within the bounds of a religious community or a group of charitable laywomen. They attended the great temperance meetings of the period,¹⁷⁷ if at first they did not play an important directing or administrative role. What is more, women were perceived in the same manner by men all across the province. The reality of their contribution and the nature of the attitudes towards them sometimes jarred. It is in studying the perceptions of women and what they actually did that one sees another example of the cultural community which existed in Canada during the 1840s.

Children II

Despite all of the activities and interests of women and the awakening notions of their intellectual equality, the role of woman as mother and educator of her children was the most important. And yet, children of themselves were rarely considered or reflected upon. When they were, whether it be a French or English source, the attitude towards them was essentially the same. An article upon their importance to society was published in the Literary Garland in 1840. It reflected two notions attached to children in mid-nineteenth century Canada; firstly, that

¹⁷⁷ La Minerve, lundi, 9 octobre 1848.

they were innocent and good, and secondly, that the influence exercised upon them was of fundamental importance. The article claimed that God did not send children merely to keep up the human race, rather they were gifts given to parents for more important reasons. Agents of goodness, the presence of children enlarged hearts, rendering parents unselfish and causing them to be kind and affectionate.¹⁷⁸ Not surprisingly then, women had to remain virtuous and pure since they were the first influence upon infants.

The proper way to educate the young was to reinforce and fortify their basic goodness and innocence, rather than to transform or undermine. Because of that conviction, when Canadians thought about the education of children, they constantly stressed the importance of positive influences. In the opinion of the Chaplain of the penitentiary at Kingston, the lack of proper childhood training was at the root of criminal behaviour. He declared:

In the majority of cases the commission of crime is to be assigned to the want of religious instruction in childhood: in very many instances evil habits have been strengthened by the immoral conduct of parents and guardians.¹⁷⁹

The rare public lectures dealing with children also treated

¹⁷⁸ Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 9, August 1840.

¹⁷⁹ Report of the Board of Inspectors of the Provincial Penitentiary for 1838. Printed by order of the House of Assembly. Kingston: Commercial Herald Office, 1839, p. 16.

of the importance of good example.¹⁸⁰ In an article upon infant training which appeared in the Literary Garland in 1846, the central Christian principle, to love your neighbour, was focussed upon. How to bring man to love his neighbour was the central lesson to be learnt by the child, and the earlier the better.¹⁸¹ One Toronto newspaper, commenting upon the above article, warned that the older the child became, the more difficult it was to teach the lesson.¹⁸² A series of articles which appeared in La Canadien, also dealt with the importance of good influence and the seriousness of evil ones.¹⁸³

More practically, the actual instruction of children was best accomplished in a clear and straightforward manner. Reflecting their own particular interests, those concerned with the education of children, whether from French or English Canada, subscribed to a common sense approach. A report of an association of Quebec City teachers was concerned with the quality of language instruction offered children, and noted that "il est certain que la pensée ne se traduit à la fois dans l'esprit que dans une seule langue." Convinced that French was already badly spoken in Canada,

¹⁸⁰ Judge Charles Mondelet delivered a lecture to the Montreal Mercantile Library Association dealing with the importance of the moral and religious education of children. La Revue Canadienne, samedi, 15 février 1845.

¹⁸¹ Literary Garland, Vol. IV, No. 8, August 1846.

¹⁸² Toronto Patriot, Friday, September 25, 1846.

¹⁸³ Le Canadien, lundi, 3 février 1851.

they believed that to teach two languages at the same time invited disaster. French Canadians would finally end up speaking a "pathos" or "patois," a bastard mix of English and French.¹⁸⁴ It is possible that these remarks illustrated hostility towards the English language but they also show an example of the belief that a simple and uncomplicated approach to the instruction of children was the best.

This belief in the ultimate value of simplicity and straightforwardness is also demonstrated in English-speaking sources. One example is Cobb's Juvenile Reader, published in 1844 and intended for use in Canadian schools. The subjects of its readings were solid, upright and uncomplicated, at the same time underlining the importance of the idea of positive influences. The reader contained stories about the true friend, a dying father, temperance, the golden rule, forces of conscience, filial affection, liberty of the press, and more banal but not unexpected subjects, such as animals, spices, vegetables, fruits and minerals. In its preface, the author expressed some current attitudes regarding the instruction of children. He rejected fairy tales and anthropomorphization, somewhat righteously remarking that such tales and talking animals never did and never will occur. In Cobb's opinion, works destined for children should be within their range of experience, pleasing to the imagination, chaste and progressive in style and matter.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., mercredi, 22 mai 1850.

¹⁸⁵ Lyman Cobb, Cobb's Juvenile Reader. Brockville: William Buell, 1844.

Rare indeed were the direct allusions to children and their condition in society during the 1840s. However, when they were referred to, whether in French or English printed sources, the attitudes concerning them are the same. Essentially, children were seen as innocent and ingenuous, matter which could be transformed and rendered good.

Native People III

Native people were perceived in the same manner as were children. As for children, so too for Indians; they were matter to be changed and educated. Canadian perceptions of them and their place in society were the same across the colony. While rare, they too illustrate the fundamental community of prejudice which transcended any difference between French and English. Notions regarding the native people demonstrate a set of values, superior and patronizing, which can also be noticed in the attitudes toward women and children and their place in society. Like these, Indians were not of any consuming interest to the general population. Unlike other periods in Canada's history, when they served important functions in commercial or military activities, the native people proved to be a bit of a bother during the 1840s.

The few observers who did reflect upon their fate believed in the necessity of civilizing and educating them in the manners and ways of the white man. The difficulty was how to assimilate them, some suggesting total and immediate integration into white society, others complete

segregation in order to protect them from its evil influence. Succeeding Canadian governors addressed themselves to this problem. The effects of the contact with the white man always proved disastrous. Lord Sydenham believed the Indians to be increasingly worse off. He believed they had become totally debauched and immoral. He wrote, "It has been a great mistake to attempt to settle or Christianize them." It seemed they would have been better off in a completely savage state than only half civilized.¹⁸⁶ And yet, Sydenham suggested no solution. Referring to an earlier proposal to remove all Upper Canadian Indians to Manitoulin Island made by a former governor of Upper Canada, Sir Francis Bond Head, Sydenham disagreed with such segregation claiming it would only perpetuate Indian ways which made them unfit for civilized life.¹⁸⁷ One way or the other, it seemed there was no solution to the problems facing Canadian Indians.

In late 1842, Sydenham's successor, Sir Charles Bagot, appointed three commissioners to inquire fully into the situation of the Canadian Indian. Their report, finally published in two parts in 1845 and 1847, noted a marked difference between the Indians of Canada East and Canada West, the former being more docile and settled, probably due to the

¹⁸⁶ G. Poulett Scrope, Esq. M.B., ed. Memoir of the Life of the Rt. Hon. Charles Lord Sydenham G.C.B. with a Narrative of his Administration in Canada. London: John Murray, Albemarle St., 1843, p. 324.

¹⁸⁷ RG7 G12, Vol. 47, Sydenham to Russell, March 26, 1841.

fact that they had embraced Catholicism.¹⁸⁸ Commenting upon the report, La Minerve noted rather smugly that the "sauvages" in Canada East were more civilized than those in the Western section, and then promptly forgot the matter.¹⁸⁹ If they were less civilized, the Indians in Canada West impressed the commissioners as being more active and intelligent. They were more numerous as well, numbering about 15,000 as compared to 4,000 in Canada East. The commissioners also believed that the Indian way of life had been undermined by alcohol, scarcity of game, and disease, all of these coming in the wake of the arrival of the white man.¹⁹⁰ What is more, even the colonial bureaucracy that existed to deal with the native people, the Indian Department, was accused of inefficiency and extravagance. Like so many other Canadians who reflected upon the Indians, the commissioners concluded that they must be assimilated as soon as possible and anything calculated to maintain their traditional ways must be stopped.¹⁹¹

Like his predecessors and the commissioners, Lord Elgin had definite views about Indians. Submitting the annual estimates of the Indian Department to the Colonial Secretary

¹⁸⁸ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1844-5, Appendix EEE. Report on the Affairs of the Indians in Canada. Rawson William Rawson, John Davidson and William Hepburn, Commissioners.

¹⁸⁹ La Minerve, jeudi, 24 juillet 1845.

¹⁹⁰ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1844-5, Appendix EEE.

¹⁹¹ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1847, Appendix T. Report on the affairs of the Indians in Canada.

in 1849, Elgin took the occasion to express his conviction that the British government should ultimately aim at withdrawing any assistance to the Indians which perpetuated their nomadic and uncivilized way of life. He suggested that roads be built on reserves and that Indian families be assigned to different lots on the reserves. He believed one of the best things to do would be to initiate industrial boarding schools for boys and girls. He wrote:

Unless the young are trained at an early age to habits of industry and withdrawn from the semi-barbarous influences of the domestic circle, but little success can be expected to attend educational efforts among the Indians.¹⁹²

The governor's visit to the Six Nations Reserve in the following year confirmed his conviction that such schools prepared the Indians for white society and spared them ruin and degradation when they would finally be obliged to confront it.¹⁹³

In September 1841, one Canadian member of the assembly had noted how well Indians were treated in Canada as in contrast to the United States.¹⁹⁴ The remark can well be wondered at, for whenever and wherever Canadian Indians were mentioned in the 1840s, it was to record incursions upon their property or to report upon their squalid and deteriorating quality of life. Only fictional accounts, which appeared from time to time in magazines such as the Literary Garland,

¹⁹² RG7 G12, Vol. 65, Elgin to Grey, January 30, 1845.

¹⁹³ Ibid., Elgin to Grey, February 25, 1850.

¹⁹⁴ Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Saturday, September 11, 1841.

and which were completely unrealistic and highly romanticized versions of the Indian way of life, offered an alternative view. Such stories reflected more upon the florid and imaginative minds of their authors than upon the real situation of Canadian Indians.¹⁹⁵

There are several more realistic references to the actual condition of the native people in Canada. One sympathetic pamphlet, published in 1839, reported how they were being slowly but surely dispossessed of their land.¹⁹⁶ In 1844, this development was also noted by a Brantford clergyman who wrote that much Indian land was being taken illegally by whites and that enormous amounts of timber was being cut without permission or compensation. He wrote that during the winter 1843-1844, many Indians died of hunger and that health and morals were steadily declining.¹⁹⁷ Even among thieves, there was no honour, for it was reported that Indians in the Kingston penitentiary were most harshly

¹⁹⁵ Examples of this sort abound. "The Pride of Lorette: A Tale Founded in Fact," a romantic story dealing with White-Indian love appeared in the Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 8, July 1840. "Virginia Dare or the Lost Colony" is the story of a young girl left in the wilderness with the Indians. When she finally did return to civilized society, she seemed none the worse for her experience. Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 7, June 1840.

¹⁹⁶ Facts Relative to the Canadian Indians. Published by Direction of the Aborigines' Committee of the Meeting for Sufferings. London: Harvey and Darton, Gracechurch St., 1839.

¹⁹⁷ RG7 G1, Vol. 108, no. 260. A letter from Rev. W. H. Landon to Rev. J. Angers. Tuscarora near Brantford, June 1844.

treated by their fellow prisoners.¹⁹⁸ When interest in the mineral resources of the eastern shore of Lake Superior was heightened in the late 1840s, the white miners and explorers who went to the region immediately came into conflict with the native people. The Indians complained of these latest incursions and violence was reported. One Montreal newspaper reported that the "sauvages" were attacking the miners and it was understood they were taking scalps.¹⁹⁹ The situation did in fact become so critical that troops were sent to keep peace in the region in 1849.²⁰⁰

Despite their serious problems, the fate of Indians in Canada never became a concern in the 1840s. Indifference was generalized. The attitude of officials appointed to deal with them was at best one of benign neglect, at worst abuse. Officials and Indians alike complained about Colonel Samuel P. Jarvis, the Chief Superintendent of the Indian Department. The Indians accused him of arrogance and discourtesy, claiming that he was completely out of touch for he never got beyond his office.²⁰¹ Not only did he disregard his constituency, Jarvis also helped himself to the funds of his department. A deficiency of more than \$6,000

¹⁹⁸ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1848,
Appendix T₄. Annual Penitentiary Report for 1848.

¹⁹⁹ La Minerve, jeudi, 22 novembre 1849.

²⁰⁰ RG7 G12, Vol. 65, Elgin to Grey, November 23, 1849.

²⁰¹ RG7 G12, Vol. 65, Cathcart to Gladstone, March 19, 1846.

was reported in his accounts.²⁰² More than one Canadian governor reported upon the irregular and negligent work patterns of the Chief Superintendent.²⁰³ With such virtues attributed to him, it is hardly surprising to discover that Jarvis had the time and wherewithal to be one of Toronto's social lions, one of the city's most generous entertainers.²⁰⁴

Unconsidered by most Canadians, neglected or abused by the Indian department, Canadian Indians did not lead pleasant lives in the 1840s. One author suggested that they had long been objects of curiosity but nothing had ever been done for them.²⁰⁵ He believed the greatest service to them would be to destroy the traditional Indian way of life and that they should become farmers, and educated to the idea of private property.²⁰⁶ In a word, the greatest service would be to assimilate them. Assimilated or segregated, one thing was clear--the result of their contact with the white men did

²⁰² RG7 G12, Vol. 65, Cathcart to Gladstone, March, 19, 1846.

²⁰³ Ibid., Cathcart to Gladstone, March 19, 1846. See also RG7 G1, Vol. 109, Stanley to Metcalfe, January 30, 1845. When the Colonial Secretary became aware of mismanagement in the Indian department, Jarvis' days as chief superintendent became numbered. See also, Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1843, Appendix MM. Mr. Lewis Burwell of the Provincial Surveyor's Office claimed that Mr. Jarvis and his agents were involved in shady deals in Indian lands in the Niagara and Gore Districts.

²⁰⁴ Major John Richardson, op. cit., p. 172.

²⁰⁵ Benjamin Slight, Indian Researches or Facts Concerning the North American Indians. Montreal: J. E. C. Miller, 1844, p. 36.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 127.

them no good. Indians inhabited the periphery of a society which was totally unconcerned with their fate and which at the same time contained the seeds for the disintegration of their way of life. Be they French or English, Canadians were uninterested and unmoved. Their attitudes were similar. Indians, like women and children, would have their place in the community, once they were assimilated.

Conclusion

As a society, Canada was far from perfect. Canadians obviously disagreed with each other on matters of religion but they were all religious. The intensity of developing antagonism was one important example of how seriously they took denominational differences. Perhaps religion provided them with focus or purpose in life for when Canadians looked beyond the comforts of religion, there was little in the colony to sustain whatever spiritual or intellectual concerns they may have had. Authors and artists struggled to produce but they and their work were not taken seriously. The true masters were somewhere beyond the borders of the colony. Real artistic sense had to be acquired elsewhere. Many Canadians agreed that the fine arts were something yet to be developed. Canadians also shared similar cultural attitudes when they regarded some of the component parts of their society. Although their numbers were few, when Canadians, French or English, thought about women, children and native people, they generally entertained the same notions.

In reviewing their attitudes upon religion, the arts, women, children and Indians, patterns of shared cultural attitudes are once more apparent.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages, I set out to show patterns of cultural attitudes observable during the first decade of the Union of the Canadas. This search has not focussed on particular areas or closely defined issues, rather I have attempted to examine several diffuse and seemingly unrelated phenomena. The difficulty of such an approach is apparent. What theme can be drawn from matters so radically unconnected, as attitudes towards prison reform and popular commitment to progress, or the difficulties of travel and the condition of women in society? In and of themselves, none of these things have anything to do with each other.

What can be concluded about the demonstrable patterns of culture which existed in Canada at this time? In discovering how Canadians reacted and thought about the above and the many other issues treated in this thesis, the similarity of their cultural attitudes is illustrated. Whether French or English, Catholic or Protestant, from Quebec City or Kingston, whatever their numerous differences, many Canadians often shared common attitudes, feelings and sentiments. By this research, I have attempted a twofold task, firstly, to offer an overall survey of the cultural condition of the colony and, secondly, to take all Canadians together as one community. Politically and economically, they shared similar experiences. It seems to me that upon a cultural level, their life was similar as well.

The breadth of the sources studied here, while not exhaustive, has resulted in the accumulation of a great amount of detail. I am the first to acknowledge that the sources have not yet been totally or completely delved. Moreover, my task was not made easier by the very real scarcity of studies devoted to the investigation of the cultural attitudes of Canadians during these years. With these reservations in mind, I believe this thesis can be considered as an initial and admittedly tentative step towards a fuller understanding of the cultural condition of Canadians during the 1840s.

One is immediately struck by the community of cultural values shared by Canadians when one realizes how attached all of them were to religion, whether it be Catholic or Protestant, or how general was their disregard for the arts, or how similar were their attitudes towards women, children and even native peoples. It was a believing and ordered society in which everyone's place was well-defined and understood. There were only the slightest hints of change. One illustration was the hesitant new ideas regarding women. What is interesting is that however meagre and tentative were new opinions about women, they were noticeable throughout the colony, a concrete example of shared attitudes.

In fact, all Canadians partook of the spirit of the mid-nineteenth century. As has been seen, the notion of improvement was very important for them. One of the most concrete symbols of the advance of society was the railroad.

All over the colony, people reflected upon this new technological advance as the vehicle for the amelioration of the community. Education was also believed to be one of the most important means to progress. Canadians were all affected by the currents of the age. Whatever their distinctions and differences, they also shared in their response to the times in which they lived.

One example of their shared response derives from reflection upon the institutional condition of the colony. Its prisons and asylums were far from perfect. They were just as likely to be terrible places, dishonestly administered and ineffectually regulated. Such conditions gave rise to the desire to reform and correct abuses. Those who sought improvements were only a minority but they were found in all sections of the colony. Their zeal was a result of their shared belief that if criminals or lunatics were given a decent chance, a healthy physical environment and reasonable living conditions, their life could be altered and corrected.

All Canadians faced the same hardships and trials. They endured fire, sickness and violence, which touched every level of society. Working conditions, politics and even religion easily evoked riots and brutality. And when they sought solace from the difficulties of everyday life, Canadians often fell upon the same solutions. One remarkable example was the widespread belief in the positive effects of temperance, which was perceived as a panacea for the declining moral condition of society.

It is normal that the cultural attitudes of Canadians were similar. The similarity was a result of their common experience. They lived in the same kind of towns. The opportunities to participate in social events were alike. Despite the fact that they reacted enthusiastically to novelty and took advantage of the few occasions offered them, the kind and quality of theatre, concerts and lectures illustrates how small were the opportunities to expand their minds and be transported by music and finer things. Rooted to the regions they inhabited and limited by restraints such as climate and environment, it is not surprising to discover that Canadians led very similar kinds of lives.

Again and again, clear patterns of attitudes, values and sentiments are illustrated by reflections upon the similar conditions in which all Canadians lived. Accidental, unconscious or fortuitous, important and obvious shared patterns of culture are apparent during the first decade of the Union.

What are the answers to the questions posed at the beginning of this thesis and which arise from the study of this community of culture? How did Canadians relate? The response is, very sparingly. Given the obstructions of geography and environment, the diversity of language and religion, it is amazing they related at all. How did they perceive each other? Their perceptions were often negative but equally apt to be positive. Such ambivalence is not astonishing since the circumstances in which they were thrown

together in 1841 were not calculated to calm their mutual fears. Despite this negative conjuncture, when they found themselves together, they managed to live reasonably peacefully. Contact did not necessarily create conflict. Such harmony that existed can be attributed, partly at least, to the growing mutual awareness and cultural understanding which developed during the 1840s. What were their aspirations in regard to one another? In the initial stages of the Union they wished only to protect their own positions but as time passed, this reflex of protection gave way to the possibility of community. Did they share similar ideas and values? The answer is yes.

Important as the existence of similar cultural patterns is, a conclusion regarding the impact of the shared community of Canadians must be made. As was noted in the Introduction, there are important factors which limit the capacity of the historian to make general conclusions regarding the common cultural condition of Canadians during the 1840s. To begin with, only a slight minority of the inhabitants of the colony, comprised of editors, writers, artists, poets, clergymen, professors and politicians, consciously reflected upon cultural matters, whether in the area of popular attitudes and mores, or in the more restricted sense, in the realm of letters and the arts. Moreover, the primary interests of these people were not focussed upon the cultural condition of the colony, nor were any of them particularly concerned with the achievement of a greater

understanding of those who were different from themselves. There are few indications that French and English Canadians ever considered the positive possibilities of coming to know one another better.

What then can be the significance of this clearly circumscribed and almost unconscious sharing of attitudes, sentiments and values? The importance of this community of culture is that it demonstrates to the historian something about the nature of the relationship of Canadians, something that transcends all of their differences, distinctions and dissimilarities. As the nature of their relationship becomes clearer, one can begin to understand the continuing ambivalence of their attitudes towards one another. One can begin to grasp why at times they were hostile towards each other and, on different occasions, prepared to cooperate and reconcile their problems. While all students of the period know that the Union of the Canadas ultimately resulted in intense political antagonism and conflict which required an important revision of the constitutional system created in 1841, the inevitability of this development was not established in the 1840s. For as this research has illustrated, those years were ones of relative harmony, filled with numerous examples of the similarity of their points of view. While not denying the tension and conflict that existed, the growth and acceleration of such a climate was not automatic or a matter of course. In fact, these years also illustrate the real possibility of the creation of a spirit

of compromise and cooperation. This is by far the most important lesson of the study of the first decade of the Union.

The value of studying the community of culture of Canadians and of striving to understand the nature of their relationship has not been lost to observers of contemporary Canadian society. The significance of their mutual ideas of one another was underlined by the recent remarks of Ralph Heintzman in regards to the present relationship of French and English Canadians. They do possess perceptions of one another, and whether or not they are realistic and valid, these mutual images may well determine the future of Confederation. In the words of this historian:

The ideas which one society entertains about the other colour its interpretation of the origin of the contemporary Canadian crisis and of the possibilities for the future. Each community's vision of the other one determines the share of blame they may assign to each other and the degree of enthusiasm for common or separate careers.¹

During the 1840s, Canadians had a vague image of each other, often unrealistic and invalid, which coloured their relationship to the point that they often despised and distrusted each other. Fortunately they had more than images of each other, for they actually shared all kinds of common values, attitudes and sentiments. The patterns of shared cultural attitudes are demonstrated again and again by the similarity of their reaction to the numerous unrelated

¹ Ralph Heintzman, "Image and Consequence," The Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'Etudes Canadiennes, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer, 1978), p. 1.

phenomena considered here. Be it sublime or ridiculous, their ideas regarding progress or their attachment to religion, their delighted response to a touring giraffe or a Swedish trillor, they shared a great deal.

That they shared common cultural attitudes does not mean they were the same. No one, much less the historian, need seek out in the ethereal pages of doctoral dissertations the reality and continuity of the present and historical diversity of Canadians. It is all too apparent. To deny it would be absurd. What will be found here, as a result of this research, is a treatment of the lesser understood nature of their relationship, that side of the question which illustrates their ability to cooperate.

Anyone studying Canadian history must sooner or later confront its two contradictory and confusing realities. The first dictates that Canadians, divided by language, origins and tradition, cannot and will never agree, and offers the allusion to two scorpions in one bottle. The other reality illustrates the capacity of Canadians to work together and reconcile their differences. This observable positive capacity results in praise and celebration of their very diversity.

The problem is that these two points of view are both equally historically demonstrable. The enigma of Canadian history lies in the diversity of its people and a very conscious will on their part not to meld together. Differences, as everyone knows, can create hostility or elicit cooperation.

During the 1840s, that most important first decade of the Union, Canadians were exceedingly different. However, the period is full of examples of political compromise, and while Canadians were not economically integrated, there are hints that many, both French and English, were coming to an overall and common perception of the commercial possibilities of the country.

So too, at the cultural level, almost unknowingly, Canadians came together but they did not become the same. On the contrary, the present dilemma of Confederation is positive proof of their historic desire to preserve and cherish their differences. If they did not become the same in the 1840s, it is far from surprising. However, they did cooperate, they did come to a deeper understanding of each other, and in so doing, historians can discover a remarkable community of cultural attitudes. Despite their many differences, my purpose has been to look for what they shared. Inspired by the age in which they lived, by the beliefs they held dear and their common aspirations, Canadians often looked remarkably the same. Perhaps that similarity is part of the reason for their continued existence together? Perhaps their shared patterns of attitude is part of the explanation of that positive reality in Canadian history, the one that celebrates their diversity?

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Appendix S. Information on Arrests and Prosecutions in Toronto and Montreal.

Appendix FF. Annual Penitentiary Report.

JLA Appendices 1842

Appendix B. Report of the Librarian of the Legislative Assembly.

Appendix S. Information on Liquor and Beer Licenses in Toronto.

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JLA Appendices 1843

Appendix C. Report of the Librarian of the Legislative Assembly.

Appendix Q. Annual Report of the Board of Works.

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Appendix FF. Upper Canada Census Statistics.

Appendix GG. Annual Penitentiary Report.

Appendix JJ. Select Committee on Election Violence at Terrebonne, Montreal, Vaudreuil, Beauharnois, Chambly, and Rouville.

Appendix MM. Report of Granting of Indian Lands in Gore and Niagara Districts.

Appendix PP. Select Committee to inquire into the effects of the English Copyright Act.

JLA Appendices 1844-45

Appendix C. Report of the Librarian of the Legislative Assembly.

Appendix M. Annual Penitentiary Report.

Appendix V. Information on Agricultural Societies in Canada East.

Appendix Y. Report on Outrages at the Public Works.

Appendix AA. Annual Report of the Board of Works.

Appendix HH. Select Committee to inquire into the State of Archives in Canada.

Appendix EEE. Report on the Affairs of the Indians in Canada.

JLA Appendices 1846

Appendix C. Information on Hospitals and Orphanages in Canada.

Appendix D. Lower Canada Census Statistics.

Appendix F. Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Affairs of the Post Office in British North America.

Appendix G. Annual Penitentiary Report.

Appendix J. Annual Reports of Canadian Agricultural Societies.

Appendix P. Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, Egerton, Ryerson, and for Lower Canada, Jean-Baptiste Meilleur.

JLA Appendices 1847

Appendix A. Information on Hospitals and Orphanages in Canada.

- Appendix L. Correspondence concerning the reception of immigrants at Grosse Ile.
- Appendix N. Annual Penitentiary Report.
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- Appendix BBBB. Report of the Commissioners appointed to
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- Appendix C. First Annual Report of the Directors of the
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