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**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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ENGLISH-SPEAKING LIBERALS IN CANADA-EAST, 1840-1854

by

Michael E. McCulloch

Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Ottawa in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 1985

Michael E. McCulloch, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 1985



Michael E. McCulloch, Toronto, Canada, 1986

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Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	i
Introduction	1
Chapter :	
I The Anglophones of Canada East: The Backdrop	18
II Drawing the Lines	58
III From Spring, 1841 to Fall, 1842	132
IV But Ministers like Gladiators live; 'Tis half their business, Blows to ward, or give The Good their Virtue might effect, or sense, Dies between Exigents, and self defence. . .	176
V "The most obnoxious member of the Opposition" : The Rise of T. C. Aylwin, 1844-1846	228
VI "Decidedly for Mr. Lafontaine, rather than no Government at all, and spoilation." : the fragmentation of the Lower Canadian Conservatives	283
VII The 'Great Ministry' : Consolidation and Division	345
VIII The Annexationists	406
IX The Resurgence of the Liberal Tradition . .	479
X Railways, Religion and Radicalism : The end of the united Liberal party	536
XI The Emergence of the Anglo-Rouges	589
Conclusion	628
Bibliography	638

ABSTRACT

Between 1840 and 1854, the United Province of Canada experienced a fundamental political transformation: the emergence of party-based Responsible Government. During this period, the Liberal party in Canada East took form, achieved power, and disintegrated. Based upon the power of French Canadian nationalism, yet insisting upon British constitutional principles without reference to national origin, it played a key role in persuading the French Canadians to accept the legitimacy of a permanent association with the British Canadians of Upper Canada and a continuing place in the British Empire.

English-speaking Lower Canadians attached to the Liberal party were central to this process. Their participation reconciled the paradox of a nationalistic base for an avowedly non-ethnic organization. Yet their influence within the party, particularly at the leadership level, extended far beyond the merely decorative. Without any broad support from the mass of Lower Canadian anglophones, they played a central part in determining the evolution of both party policy and structure. This thesis examines their activities both within the party and within the social and economic institutions of Canada East.

Drawing upon newspapers, personal papers and government documents, the thesis starts with an examination of the partic-

ipation of anglophone Liberals in the first steps in organizing opposition to Governor-General Charles Poulett Thomson. Popular resistance, both to the Act of Union and the ordinances of the Special Council was directed from Quebec. In this, John Neilson was the central figure, and he in fact acted as the leader of the Lower Canadian parliamentary opposition in the first session of the United Province's legislature. The emergence of Louis-Hyppolite LaFontaine as a political figure marked a shift of power to those committed to Responsible Government. During this period, T. C. Aylwin of Quebec emerged as the party's most visible spokesman, and both his role in organizing the Quebec District for the Liberals in the election of 1844 and his activity as a parliamentary speaker are examined. As the centre of the Liberals' organization moved to Montreal, however, L. T. Drummond, both a representative of the Irish of Canada East and an increasingly influential figure in the Eastern Townships, emerged as an important figure. The political impact of the Free Trade movement brought John Young into prominence as the representative of Montreal's business interests.

The accession to power of a definitely Liberal government in 1848 marked a turning point. Some anglophone Liberals, affected like their Conservative counterparts by the economic depression, turned to annexationism, and were crucial in organizing the Annexation Association as a political movement. As Annexationists, English-speaking Liberals were attacked by the Liberal government, and this caused a rift in the party. The return of

prosperity eliminated annexationism, and Francis Hincks and A.-N. Morin restored much of the party's unity. The final failure, however, of the Liberals to maintain their reforming energies precipitated a final rift, in which John Young joined with the remaining Annexationists to help the rouges become a political force.

This thesis has no particular methodology, and makes only limited use of quantitative techniques. Ideologies are not examined, and it is in fact argued that they had little impact on actual politics. Anglophone Liberals are examined as elements of Lower Canada's elites who found in political activity a means of establishing their social position. Party is treated as an essentially functional organization for securing power, and considerable attention is paid to the techniques used in organizing political structures and giving them a popular base. A central theme in this thesis is the role played by party as a means of integrating much of Lower Canada into a common framework directed from the urban centres. As such, party is seen as an aspect of metropolitanism.

On the most basic level, this thesis provides a range of information about a political group that played an extremely important part in shaping Lower Canada's political response to the Union. A number of factual errors in the secondary material for this period are corrected. On a more conceptual plane, information is given about the nature of party structure and the functioning of the party system in Canada East. Finally,

suggestions are presented about the relationship between class, language and power in mid-Victorian Canada.

Introduction

The Union Act of 1840 was crafted to address the particular problems of Upper and Lower Canada as viewed by the Colonial Office in Britain. The two provinces, racked by political squabbles generated by disintegrating social and economic conditions, had both exploded into insurrection in 1837. In Upper Canada, armed rebellion had been easily put down, and the constitution created in 1791 was permitted, for the time being, to continue its functions. Lower Canada, however, experienced another insurrectionary outbreak in 1838, and its bicameral legislature had been replaced by a nominated Special Council in which all political power was centred. The economic rejuvenation and political stabilization of the colonies were the two interlocking objectives of the Act of Union. The principal mechanism for both was to be the assimilation of the restive, retrograde French Canadians in the east by the loyal, economically progressive Canadians of British stock in the west, a process to be achieved by a legislative union between the two provinces.

Lord Durham's Radical exercise in social engineering was modified by Lord John Russell's Whiggish scruples, and the ruthless determination of the two colonies' joint Governor-

General, Charles Poulett Thomson was checked by the same force. In retrospect, the Colonial Secretary's restraint appears to have made inevitable the final defeat of the assimilation as an objective of the new political order.¹ The principal focus in the writing of the Union's political history has been on the alliances between groups in Upper Canada and Lower Canada that negated Durham's vision. Bilingual and bicephalous, the administrations of the period - LaFontaine-Baldwin, Hincks-Morin, Cartier-Macdonald, to name but a few - mark accords simultaneously regional and racial. Upper Canadian Tories, Reformers and Grits, and Lower Canadian patriotes, bleus and rouges, have all had their historians.

According to the intentions of the Act, the pivotal anomaly of the Union was the anglophone minority of Canada East. This group was to break the deadlock made otherwise inevitable by the grant of equal representation to the united province's elected Assembly. The British Canadians could be trusted to hang together, and thus, their predominance was ensured. Despite the central role designed for them, analyses of the political behaviour of Lower Canada's anglophones have been rare, and have tended to accept the Colonial Office's assumption of the group's basically Tory cast. True, the Montreal mercantile community has attracted special studies, but by and large the Conservative flavouring of the urban trader has been taken for granted.

1. William Ormsby, The Emergence of the Federal Concept in Canada, University of Toronto Press, 1969

Donald Creighton's seminal study of this group equates merchant and Tory. Charles Poulett Thomson's policy was "Montreal's conception of reconstruction,"² and the promise of the St. Lawrence bound the city's commercial interests to an extreme loyalist stance as long as the Imperial system survived.

Thus, the Lower Canadian anglophones who allied themselves with Papineau, LaFontaine or Dorion have been mentioned en passant, treated as eccentric exceptions adopted into the nation canadienne or as political adventurers pursuing their own interests. For Fernand Ouellet, William Henry Scott's activity as a patriote military leader is explained by his marriage to a French Canadian, and Jacob DeWitt's electoral role in 1834, a year of polarization along linguistic lines, was produced "par un vieux fond de libéralisme; mais peut-être davantage par son mécontentement à l'égard de Ellice et de la grande bourgeoisie anglophone."³ Gerald J. J. Tulchinsky, avowedly more concerned with the economic activities of an aspiring metropole than with politics, only mentions the partisanship of such men as John Young to explain their advantageous relations with a Liberal government.⁴ Jacques Morlet's explication of contemporary terms sums up the modern interpretation neatly: "a Tory is an English-speaking person who is neither an Upper Canadian Reformer nor a

2. D. G. Creighton, The Empire of the St. Lawrence, Toronto, 1970, p. 335

3. Fernand Ouellet, Le Bas-Canada, Ottawa, 1980, p. 365; p. 364. For the error in this analysis of Scott's motivation, see Chapter I.

4. Gerald J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, University of Toronto Press, 1977, p. 226

Lower Canadian patriote" and individuals like Wolfred Nelson and John Neilson form part of French Canada, although their "membership may be more legal than physical."⁵ As a result, in a general synthesis of the first sixteen years of the Union, J. M. S. Careless equates "the 'frenchification' of the parliamentary membership" with the disappearance of "English Lower-Canadian Toryism," without suggesting that Lower Canadian Liberal anglophones may have also been affected by the trend.⁶

This neglect of the role of prominent English-speaking Liberals from Canada East is partially explicable in historiographic terms.⁷ French Canadian specialists in this period, where they have concerned themselves with politics, have usually concentrated on the problems posed by the Union for French Canadian nationalism. While T. C. Aylwin and L. T. Drummond are prominent characters in Jacques Monet's The Last Cannon Shot, the work's principal emphasis is on the change in French Canadian political attitudes from revolutionary republicanism to monarchical loyalism. J.-P. Bernard deals with the resurgence of a European-style radicalism in his Les Rouges primarily from the perspective of intellectual history, and the essentially practical roles of Young and Holton in the emergence of this party

5. Jacques Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, University of Toronto Press, 1969, p. 8

6. J. M. S. Careless, The Union of the Canadas, Mclelland and Stewart, 1967, p. 195

7. Much of the historiographic material in this Introduction is drawn from Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History, Oxford University Press, 1976 and Fernad Ouellet, "Essai Bibliographique, Québec 1760-1867," texte photocopié.

are not of great interest to him.

Among English Canadian historians, P. G. Cornell has isolated the anglophone segment of Canada East's parliamentary representation in The Alignment of Political Groups in Canada, 1841-1867. This work, however, is primarily an exercise in identification, and only analyses this group's participation in Canadian politics in sketchy terms. Traditionally, English Canadian political historians have been pre-occupied with the events leading to Confederation, and the Union period is often treated as a prelude to the unification of British North America. The opposition of the anglophone rouges to Confederation has rather prejudiced the assessment of their place in Canadian history. In addition, the strongly biographical orientation of English Canadian political history has militated against an intensive study of this group. Few of the consistent anglophone Liberals have left behind a significant body of personal papers. Only Luther Hamilton Holton has been the subject of a modern monograph, H. C. Klassen's 1970 doctoral thesis.⁸

It may be suggested that the general neglect outlined above, constitutes an indication of the unimportance of English-speaking Liberals from Canada East. They were, after all, a minority within a minority, for it is undeniable that most anglophone Lower Canadians were generally opposed to the Reform party.

8. Henry Cornelius Klassen, "L. H. Holton: Montreal Businessman and Politician," University of Toronto, Ph. D. Thesis, 1970

It is indeed this fact that makes these Liberals of particular interest. Despite a lack of numbers or backing from their own community, they established themselves as important figures in the politics of the Union. Two votes in the Legislative Assembly of the United Province and a political pamphlet from 1855 may be cited as initial indications that their role is worth examining.

On December 1, 1843, a motion approving the resignations of Louis-Hyppolite LaFontaine, Robert Baldwin and all but one of the Executive Council formed under Bagot was introduced. The motion also expressed the House's continuing confidence in the ex-Ministers. The resolution, seconded by Benjamin Holmes of Montreal, a financier, municipal politician and formerly an ardent opponent of the patriotes, was carried by 46 votes to 23. Of the majority, 7 votes, a third of Lower Canadian delegation's share, were cast by anglophones from Canada East. Eight English-speaking Lower Canadians opposed the motion.⁹

Nearly six years later, on March 2, 1849, the crucial second reading of the Rebellion Losses Indemnity Bill was passed. Denounced by the principal English papers of Lower Canada as finalizing the triumph of French rebellion over English loyalty, it was carried by a vote of 64 to 20. Two of the strongest speeches made in favour of the bill were by Holmes, once a key

9. For reasons outlined below, Robert Baldwin, although sitting at the time for Rimouski in Lower Canada, is not included in these totals. Were he to be so included, the Lower Canadian anglophones in the Assembly would have been equally divided.

organizer of opposition to LaFontaine, and Wolfred Nelson, the ex-patriote.¹⁰ Of the thirteen anglophone Lower Canadian members voting on the measure, eight supported the Ministry.

In 1855 'Gaspard LeMage' published La Pléiade Rouge, a vitriolic attack on A.-A. Dorion's parliamentary supporters. Of the thirteen individuals caricatured, three were British Canadians: Jacob DeWitt, L. H. Holton and A. T. Galt, "les Rouges de la finance et les financiers des Rouges."¹¹

On the not unimportant level of parliamentary prominence, then, the British Canadian Liberals from the lower section of the province played a part not less significant than their Tory counterparts. This importance was even more marked on the executive level. In all Liberal Executive Councils anglophone participation was important. In numbers, the English-speaking ministers usually accounted for a third of the Lower Canadian section of the Ministry, and the influence of men like Aylwin, Drummond and Young in the affairs of the party ensured that their official positions were matched by real political power. Indeed it would appear that, just as Liberal anglophone representation in the Assembly was out of proportion to the number of English-speaking Liberal electors in Canada East, so too was the influence of anglophone Ministers in the Executive out of proportion

10. Throughout this thesis, the term patriote will be used of those politicians who supported Louis-Joseph Papineau after the presentation of the Ninety-Two Resolutions, irrespective of their actual participation in the rebellions of 1837 and 1838. Similarly, the term ex-patriote is used of any former member of the parti patriote, regardless of his activities in 1837 and 1838.

11. 'Gaspard LeMage', La Pléiade Rouge, Montreal, 1855, p. 17

to the number of English-speaking members of the Assembly.

This excessive participation on the leadership level by a minority group was not unique to the Union period. Jacob DeWitt seconded the Ninety-Two Resolutions in 1834, and James Leslie, a prominent Scots merchant, was but one of their non-French supporters. It is curious to note such individuals as Wolfred and Robert Nelson, E. B. O'Callaghan and Thomas Storrow Brown as military leaders of the insurrections that brought to an end the old constitution of Lower Canada. The divisiveness of the previous political order, however, only makes the record of the Union period more striking. Members of the anti-patriote organizations in the two cities, the Constitutional Societies of Montreal and Quebec, became some of the most partisan supporters of the Liberals under LaFontaine. Ex-Constitutionalists like Benjamin Holmes, William Bristow and T. C. Aylwin joined former patriotes like Nelson, Scott and Leslie to support LaFontaine as the Liberal party's leader; Montreal Unitarians such as L. H. Holton and John Young joined A. T. Galt, the agent of the traditionally anti-French British American Land Company, in supporting the rouges. It is clear that divergent elements of the dominant British Canadian minority came together in the Union period for the pursuit of political goals. The continuing role of these men in movements traditionally interpreted as vehicles for French Canadian nationalism forms an essential constituent part of Durham's defeat. This is the subject of this thesis.

The artificial prominence of these individuals can only

be explained in terms of their standing in the interlocking middle-class elites, local and provincial, that dominated Lower Canada in the nineteenth century. In a broad sense, this thesis is a study of the operation of portions of these elites on the political level. Accordingly, the non-political activities of the politicians examined are of crucial importance. In the society, only barely democratic if that, of mid-Victorian Canada, wealth, connexions and professional standing, in short, the position occupied in society at large, shaped the participation of politicians in public life. For this reason, a part of this study will concentrate on the prosopography of anglophone Liberals in Canada East. Involvement with trade, industry and finance, landed wealth, family alliances, positions in national and charitable associations and the promotion of cultural and educational facilities all constituted political capital; in turn, activity in politics could serve as a means for generating these sources of social influence. As H. D. Laswell has phrased it, "Most simply the elite are the influential."¹² The interlocking nature of all these activities, private and public, goes far to explain the activities of the figures examined in this study. As F. C. Jaher observes in his discussion of elites and upper classes, "function is the essential measure of leadership: Where, how, and to what degree do groups establish and protect

¹². Harold D. Lasswell and Daniel Lerner, eds., World Revolutionary Elites, The M. I. T. Press, 1966, p. 4

their dominance?"¹³ Precisely because of their unusual position, the English-speaking Liberals of Canada East provide an interesting case for the techniques by which social power translated into political power. This thesis makes little attempt to assess the outlook of the great majority of British Lower Canadians. Instead, it attempts to outline the manner in which men of different economic and cultural interests, but of a common class, united to attain a position of power.

Clearly, party is a central concept in this thesis, for it was the principal means through which this alliance secured its control of political action in the colony. Parties are functional groups rather than ideological movements, framed to secure political power rather than to launch social transformations. It is in the first half of the nineteenth century that they take on their modern form in the English-speaking world. Recent studies such as R. McCormack's The Second American Party System and J. R. Vincent's The Formation of the British Liberal Party have described the transformation of loose groupings of relatively independent elected representatives into more cohesive associations of professional politicians organized for electoral success. In this process, party acquired a force as a cultural factor in its own right. Regional, economic and religious interests reconciled their disagreements within the parliamentary alliance rather than in open conflict on the floor

13. F. C. Jaher, ed., The Rich, the Wellborn, and the Powerful, New Jersey, 1975, p. 2

of the House. Individuals and groups might detach themselves from particular parties, but only to join other factions or to disappear into political irrelevance. Through this means political culture became more centralized, and marginal areas and groups became integrated into the national body.

The relevance of this framework to the Canada of the 1840s and 1850s is manifest. Between 1840 and 1854 the patterns were forged that would dominate the political life of Quebec until 1885. Bleus and big railways, rouges and radical Montreal merchants, the fluctuations of the Eastern Townships and the Irish vote were the substance of Quebec politics until the execution of Louis Riel. The divisions between Montreal and Quebec City, French and English, Catholic and Protestant, among trader, manufacturer and farmer, were not reconciled. Rather, they were coordinated and grouped such that the province, however unharmonious, functioned as an undeniable political whole.

It is exactly this question of integration that makes the leading English-speaking Liberals an interesting collection of individuals. Indeed, it is the very completeness with which they joined themselves to their French Canadian fellow-Liberals that partially explains the extent to which they have been neglected by historians. Of different backgrounds and possessing different sources of influence, rather than coalescing on a linguistic basis and then dealing as a group with the majority, they found, separately or in small groups, their own accommodations with their allies. Behind some stood definite organ-

ized elements of the anglophone community; others brought to the party only their own personal prestige and force of character. Collectively, they illustrate a key facet of partisan organization in a bicultural society, the extent to which class outweighs linguistic division.

Accordingly, in this thesis, party is presented as an essentially operational concept. Indeed, it will be suggested throughout this study that ideology played only a minor part in the creation of partisan structures. General principles were so vague, and their application so flexible, that they had little impact on the day-to-day politics of the colony. The extent to which this period witnessed the creation of a broad consensus among the province's elites prevented any such ideological polarization as Lower Canada had experienced under the constitution of 1791. Precisely because this consensus existed, party and partisan organizations took on a new importance as the fundamental framework for attributing legitimacy to the political system. This was, in effect, the practical significance of Responsible Government; party defined the power of the state.

Vincent Lemieux has proposed a basic catalogue of the attributes of a party in the context of Quebec. Parties

sont des organisations plus ou moins durables, qui regroupent des adhérents dans une arène interne, cherchent par leurs publicitaires des appuis dans l'arène publique et ont des gouvernants dans l'arène gouvernementale.¹⁴

14. Vincent Lemieux, ed., Personnel et partis politiques au Québec, Boréal Express, 1982, p. 12

It is this essentially pragmatic model of party that will be used in this thesis. An individual will be identified as a Liberal if he took an active part in the promotion of the electoral victory of a declared supporter of the Liberal party. Such support might shift from election to election, but efforts have been made to keep track of such shifts.

A final concept, linked closely to that of party, is also central to this thesis: that of metropolitanism. In the work of J. M. S. Careless, the manner in which urban centres in Canada influenced their adjoining hinterlands is one of the central motifs in Canadian history. Party must be considered as one of the key mechanisms through which this influence was exercised. Directed from the urban centres of Montreal and Quebec, and increasingly from the former, the structure of the Liberal party centralized control over the legitimation of power in the hands of the elite of a largely anglophone metropolis. Accordingly, one of the themes of this thesis will be the manner in which local concentrations of social and political power became integrated into a single, province-wide system with a centralized, urban leadership.

This thesis, while it contains certain elements of social analysis, is nonetheless fundamentally a traditional political history. It is this consideration that has determined the period covered within it. Between 1840 and 1854 the Liberal party in Canada East was organized and achieved its full development as a reforming party. At the outset of the Union, Lower

Canadians, of British and French origin, faced a new political framework within which their collective destiny was to evolve. The final split between the bleus and the rouges, between the reforming impulse and the conservative trend in Lower Canada, took its form in 1854 in the alliance between the Tories of Upper Canada under Sir Allan MacNab and the adherents of a moderate liberal philosophy in Lower Canada under A.-N. Morin. In the aftermath of this alliance, a new partisan structure was to take form from the remnants of what had gone before. Other, non-political factors, justify the use of 1854 as a terminal date. The Reciprocity Treaty, while in many ways simply an acknowledgement of developments already under way, marked the end of an epoch in which the primary commercial orientation of the colony had been towards Great Britain. Finally, it is only after 1854 that the railway system of the united colony ceased to be an expression of policy and became an ineluctable fact in both the economic and political life of the colony. Such a division is, to a large extent, arbitrary, but these transformations marked the end of one era in Lower Canadian politics. While many of the politicians of the 1840s and the first half of the following decade continued to be active and play an important role in the events of the 1860s, nonetheless, 1854 marked a watershed in Lower Canadian political history.

In light of the considerations enumerated above, little explanation is needed for the choice of sources for this study. The primary basis for this work is an examination of the news-

papers of Montreal and Quebec, and, where available, the Eastern Townships. The value of newspapers as a source for political history has been long recognized. A criticism that has been presented against them is that the journals of the period reflect only the interests and pre-occupations of the middle-class in Canada. In that this thesis is explicitly a study of the political role of that class, this presents no obstacle. Like Thomas Chapais' Cours d'histoire du Canada,¹⁵ this study concerns itself only with what might be termed the political class of Lower Canada. While not all class distinctions had been subsumed into what Peter Laslett has termed "a one-class society,"¹⁶ there was undeniable a single social group that played a determining role in Lower Canadian politics, the interlocking professional, entrepreneurial and political elites. In that a thorough examination of Lower Canadian English-language newspapers enables the historian to assess clearly the social standing of an individual through his activity in the wide range of organizations reported in the middle-class journals of the period, this source offers the most significant information about the social and political importance of English-speaking Liberals.

For the same reason, the reliance upon the metropolitan press of Montreal and Quebec can be justified. While Lower

15. Thomas Chapais, Cours d'histoire du Canada, Les éditions du boréal express, 1972, t. 1, p. 67

16. Peter Laslett, The World We Have Lost, 2nd ed., Scribners, 1971, pp. 23ff.

Canada was during the first half of the nineteenth century a predominantly rural society, it was in the cities that political structures were generated. Professional men and businessmen from the two urban centres dominated the political and social life of the adjacent districts, and the cities' newspapers circulated in the hinterland well enough to make coverage of the backwoods concerns necessary. Thus, while newspapers from Sherbrooke and Stanstead are used where possible, the journals of Montreal and Quebec form the backbone of this thesis.

Two other sources are used to complement the newspapers of the period, both of which reflect the primarily middle-class focus of this study. The Debates of the Legislative Assembly of the United Province of Canada, edited by Elizabeth Gibbs, are based on the period's papers, and thus reflect the points of view considered by editors to be of interest to the papers' readers. Thus, while such reports may not have necessarily reflected the actual events in the Assembly, they indicate the themes that were considered to be of political significance to those individuals actively involved in shaping partisan structures under the new constitution. In addition, where available, the personal papers of the prominent men of the Union period have been utilized to give an impression of developments behind the public mask. Again, as the communications of members of this political class to each other, these letters also only present the perspective of the professional-political-entrepreneurial elite of the period.

Finally, it may be asked why yet another traditional political study, using traditional sources, of one of the most studied periods in Canadian history is needed. Jacques Le Goff has commented that "political history becomes history in depth by becoming the history of power."¹⁷ The objects of this study exercised a remarkable amount of power without the sort of backing that has, in the traditional view, been the basis of Canadian political importance. While this thesis can pretend only to initiate an examination of these individuals, it can be considered a first step in a reconsideration of the relationship between language, class, politics and power in Canada East during a period that determined much of Canada's subsequent development.

¹⁷Jacques Le Goff, "Is politics Still the Backbone of History?" Daedalus, Winter, 1971. p. 5

Chapter I

The Anglophones of Canada East: The Backdrop

The first census of the United Province of Canada was ordered by the Legislature in 1841, but was not produced until 1844 after the bill calling for it had been significantly amended.¹ Nonetheless, despite an increase in immigration, particularly from Britain, between 1838 and 1842, this census supplies the clearest outline of the demography of Lower Canada in 1840. It reveals that of the 697,084 people living there, 524,307 were of French Canadian origin. If from the remainder those of European birth and aliens not naturalized are deducted, there remains 171,446 English-speaking Lower Canadians, approximately a fifth of the total.

Such a figure is fundamentally misleading. It did in fact mislead the Colonial Office. Durham wrote of the 'English'

1. Census of Lower Canada under 4&5 Victoriae Cap. 42 as revised in 7 Victoriae cap. 24: Recapitulation by Districts and Counties, Montreal, 1846, Stewart Debishire and Georges Desbarats, Printers to Her Most Excellent Majesty. Unless otherwise indicated, population figures in the following material are taken from this source.

as of an essentially homogeneous group, sharing the same attitudes, interests and characteristics. He thereby endorsed the portrait, painted for interested motives by the Montreal Herald and Gazette, of the linguistic basis for political alignment, in the province. This English community did not, in any real sense, exist in Lower Canada. The extremes of the patriotes in the last years under the old constitution had created a polarization that seemed to justify Durham's analysis. A recent study has shown that from 1832 onwards voting patterns followed linguistic lines more and more closely.² With political violence in the air, the overwhelming majority of English-speaking Lower Canadians and the great bulk of the anglophone elite were opposed to the revolutionary outlook of Papineau's supporters. Yet without an atmosphere of crisis, a social basis for this political unity was lacking. The anglophones of Lower Canada were divided by a number of different backgrounds, beliefs and interests.

Of these, one factor of particular importance was nationality. The largest anglophone element was the native British Lower Canadians, numbering 85,660. Probably the greater part of them still felt themselves part of the nationalities from which they had sprung. Of the 'English', only 11, 895 were actually born in England. The American-born were the next smallest group, with 11, 946 members. By the far the largest

2. Fernand Ouellet, Le Bas Canada, University of Ottawa Press, 1980, pp. 387ff.

group of the foreign-born were the Irish. At the time of the census, there were 43,982 Irishmen, Catholic and Protestant, in Canada East.

The Irish community formed a distinct, self-conscious community. The manner in which cultural patterns and a sense of national identity were brought over from Ireland has been examined in a number of studies.³ This did not, of course, produce a homogeneous group. The Irish who established themselves as large merchants, shippers and manufactures were largely Protestant; the retailers, artisans and pre-industrial proletariat in Montreal and Quebec were largely Catholic. The professional class was uneasily divided in its religious allegiance. Those who had established themselves on the land were often in struggling settlements, such as in Megantic, far removed from the St. Lawrence. This combination of religious and class divisions had not yet, however, sundered the essential cohesiveness of the Irish. A number of institutions reinforced and expressed this unity. Foremost among these were the St. Patrick's Societies of Montreal⁴ and Quebec, open to Irishmen of all religions. The executives of these organizations, chosen by

3. such as Kenneth Duncan, "Irish Famine Immigration and the Social Structure of Canada West," CRSA vol. 2, no. 1 (1965); D. S. Shea, "The Irish Catholic Adjustment to Toronto", CCHA Report (1972); John Mannion, Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada, University of Toronto Press, 1974; Murray W. Nicolson, "Irish Catholic Education in Victorian Toronto: An Ethnic Response to Urban Conformity," Histoire Sociale/Social History, XVII (34), 1984

4. G. R. C. Keep, "The Irish Adjustment in Montreal," CHR XXI (1950)

election, were usually drawn from the social and commercial elites of the community, and acted as spokesmen for their co-nationalists. There thus existed a corporate identity through which both government and opposition could make overtures for support.

Such national distinctions were further complicated by an overlay of religious distinctions. Lower Canada's 572,643 Catholics included not only the vast majority of the French Canadians but also a large portion of the Irish, some Scots and a few Englishmen. Of the fourteen other denominations mentioned in the census (apart from 'other'), the most prominent was the United Church of England and Ireland, with 43,527 adherents. The Church of Scotland claimed 26,702; Presbyterians disclaiming connection with the Established Church numbered 5,279. There were 15,624 Methodists divided into four different groups. Smallest of the major denomination were the Baptists and the Anabaptists, who together amounted to 4,063. All of these groups had their own concerns and particular outlooks.

The extent to which the main regions of Lower Canada, primarily for geographic reasons, had developed distinct economic orientations has been well established, notably in the work of Fernand Ouellet.⁵ Montreal's primary interest lay in the Upper Canadian forwarding trade, while Quebec City depended upon the British market for timber and ships. Yet the St. Lawrence River

5. Fernand Ouellet, Le Bas-Canada, Histoire Economique et sociale de Québec

acted at least as a link between their differences, and a shared history, dating from the French regime united the two centres. Lying largely beyond this axis were the St. Francis District and the Gaspé. Both of these areas, containing a number of anglo-phones, had concerns that were quite distinct from those of the two cities. The Eastern Townships were a geographically compact area marked by the characteristics of a frontier settlement. Over 85% of its inhabitants were English-speaking, and many of its problems were similar to those of Upper Canada. Local 'Family Compacts' - a term as current in the District as further West - had been formed by government patronage. Large tracts of land had been granted out to friends and supporters of the government on the 'leader and follower' system that, instead of promoting settlement, left vast tracts of wild lands in the hands of absentee proprietors. In the same way, undeveloped and apparently undevelopable Clergy Reserves acted as a brake on development.⁶

An additional difficulty in the area was the pervasive power of the British American Land Company. In 1833 the company had purchased some 850,000 acres from the government; by 1840 it was on the verge of bankruptcy and unable to pay any further instalments on its debt to the province. Governor-General Charles Poulett Thomson, although an advocate of development, consistently opposed any special arrangements being made to accommodate

6. J. I. Little, "The Peaceable Conquest," Ph.D. Thesis 1977, University of Ottawa, 1977, p. 22

the company. His description of the company's directors as mere "Speculators in Land" who had wasted their capital in purchasing ever more real estate rather than in developing their possessions⁷ was probably accurate. The precarious nature of the company's finances inevitably gave it an active interest in the politics of the province.

Yet, despite all these problems, the District had not by and large acquired the radical propensities of some of the Upper Canadian settlements. Two factors explain this. First, while the government, partly as a result of its preoccupation with the St. Lawrence, had been less than enthusiastic about the funding of roads through the Townships, the opposition in the Assembly had manifested a positive distaste for the expansion of English-speaking settlements on the basis of free and common soccage. While this attitude had moderated by 1830,⁸ when the patriotes began seeking allies in their struggle with the Executive, it nonetheless had already created an attitude of distrust towards the threatening French Canadian majority in the minds of the District's settlers. Secondly, although the early settlement of the Townships had been dominated by Americans, a leaven of Loyalists in such counties as Missisquoi existed as a counter-weight. When organized by those whose prominence depended on governmental favour, this component of the cultural make-up of the region ensured that during times of crisis, such

7. PAC MG 11 Co. O. 42 Q271 pt. 1 pp. 115, C. P. Thomson to Lord John Russell, March 24, 1840

8. J. I. Little, op.cit., p. 74

as the rebellions of 1837 and 1838, a strong pro-British force existed.

Nearly 60% of the Gaspé's fifteen-thousand odd inhabitants were of French Canadian origin. Nonetheless, the District remained an isolated world apart with little communication with the rest of the colony.⁹ A draft of the Union Bill had, in 1839, proposed detaching it from Lower Canada and annexing it to New Brunswick. Petitions, however, from Gaspésians anxious to preserve the "laws, customs and usages" in force in Lower Canada¹⁰ persuaded Governor-General Thomson to recommend against the change. Such as they were, the Governor wrote, the district's social and economic links were with the French province; Quebec was still more accessible than the distant Frederickton. Earlier petitions in favour of the transferral were merely the result of the animosity of the majority in the Assembly.¹¹

In fact, while the region's principal social and political links were with Quebec City, its main commercial connections extended eastward across the Atlantic. The dominant industry was fishing, organized for the export trade by a few large family firms, largely based in the Channel Islands, such as the Robins and the LeBoutilliers. These firms exercised a great deal of control over the fishermen through a system of credit that

9. Jules Bélanger, Marc Desjardins, Yves Frenette, Histoire de la Gaspésie, (Boréal Express, 1981), p.289

10. PAC MG11 Co. O. 42 Q271 pt. 3, p. 100, C. P. Thomson to Lord John Russell (petition of December 12, 1839)

11. PAC MG 11 Co. O. 42 Q270 pt. 1, p. 118

guaranteed their continuing dependence.¹² Thus, despite the Gaspé's predominantly French Canadian population, under the old constitution the district had usually returned opponents of Papineau to the Assembly. Lumbering and ship-building, oriented towards British markets, had begun to develop at Gaspé and New Carlisle during the Napoleonic Wars, but were still of relatively little importance to the majority of the region's inhabitants.¹³ Inevitably, the politics of the Gaspé would reflect this quasi-independence from the rest of Lower Canada, and the district's Atlantic perspective would keep it largely untouched by developments along the St. Lawrence.

These factors, national, religious, geographic and economic, that fragmented Lower Canada's anglophones, were intrinsic to the Canadian context. The force, however, of extrinsic influences must also be considered. English-speaking Canadians were no more immune to la tentation de l'histoire parallèle¹⁴ than their French-speaking fellow colonists. While nearly half the anglophone population was Canadian by birth, all were acutely conscious of developments abroad, and identified closely with them. The newspapers of the era devoted much of their space - at times nearly all of it - to accounts of movements in Britain, the Empire at large, Europe and the United States. Throughout the

12. Jules Bélanger, Marc Desjardins, Yves Frenette, Histoire de la Gaspésie, (Boréal Express, 1981), pp. 192-256

13. Fernand Ouellet, Histoire Economique et Sociale du Québec, pp. 303-6

14. This phrase is taken from Andrée Désilets, Louis-Hector Langevin, (Laval, 1967)

world, the 1830s and 40s were a period of intense and antagonistic division.

Some movements, such as the great Chartist agitation in Britain, provoked little response in Canada; references to that movement primarily attempted to identify its excesses with those of the Canadian rebels of 1837.¹⁵ An agitation based upon the grievances of the rural and urban proletariat in England could have little effect in the colony, where there existed little in the way of politically directed class consciousness and a different set of problems. It was among the middle class, with more clearly defined conduits of information linking it to Britain, that economically-based movements, in particular the Anti-Corn Law agitation, had their most direct effect. As will be shown in this thesis, the challenges posed by the doctrine of Free Trade acted as a fragmenting force among Lower Canadian anglophones members of the middle class. Broader in appeal were such religious and nationalistic developments that found specific echoes in Canadian society: the Irish Repeal movement and the Catholic and Protestant revival of the middle of the decade.

The sense of being a minority, then, was the only unifying force among the different communities that constituted the colony's anglophone element. A feeling of being threatened as a linguistic strengthened this unifying force in 1837 and 1838; a feeling of security might sap it. This goes far to explain the

15. True Britons of the Nineteenth Century, anon., London 1840; Montreal Herald, December 27, 1840

fear-mongering tone of that part of the Canadian press, English and French, that was interested in forging alliances along linguistic lines.

It is accordingly important to emphasize that this minority status varied from region to region and county to county in a way that affected social and political behaviour. Where one language group predominated, an ambitious man could achieve local prominence by articulating the interests of this group, or appeal for support to province-wide structures under the control of the other group. Alternatively, where the two were more closely balanced, he could depend entirely on those of one language, or attempt the difficult task of balancing elements from both in a programme without overt linguistic references. To illustrate the variety and complexity of such local circumstances, it is worthwhile to examine in detail the demographic make-up of some of the electoral districts that will figure prominently in this study.

Most complex was the situation in the two cities. In 1842,¹⁶ Montreal was the larger city, with 40,136 inhabitants; Quebec, with 31,747 residents, was the older and more stable. A major difference between the two cities was that Montreal was a predominantly English-speaking city, as 61% of its residents were anglophones. In Quebec, only 40% were not French Canadians. Despite the fact that Gosse Island, downstream from

16. Census for Montreal and Quebec, printed in the Quebec Mercury, January 3, 1843

the latter, was the principal point of entry for British immigrants, 42% of Quebec's anglophones were native-born, while 32% of Montreal's were. It is worth noting that, as a result of this greater stability and a tradition of interracial marriages, the genuinely bicultural type seems to have been more common in Quebec. The three LeMoine brothers, Benjamin, George and Sir James, sons of a French Canadian father and a Scottish mother, and prominent respectively in finance, religion and literature, are illustrations of this.

Other factors require comment to illustrate the range of cultural forces in play. The volatile Irish community was relatively larger, although absolutely smaller, in Quebec, as the city's 5,032 Irish-born comprised 41% of the 'English' population. In Montreal, however, the 8,390 natives of Ireland constituted only 33% of the city's English-speaking residents. Perhaps most striking difference was in the number of Scottish-born: 2,645 in Montreal and 735 in Quebec. Likewise, the Americans were more numerous in Montreal, 514 in that city and 78 in Quebec. In both cities the English-born figured as between 10% and 12% of the anglophones.

The power of established religion was much stronger in the older community. The Catholic Archbishop exercised its sway over more than 75% of Quebec's population, as compared to the 63% of Montreal's inhabitants that was Roman Catholic. Quebec was also the episcopal seat of the Anglican Church in Lower Canada; this partly explains the fact that 32% of the

city's anglophones belonged to the Church of England and Ireland, while only 24% did so in Montreal. There were, it is true, nearly five times as many members of the Church of Scotland in Montreal than in Quebec (6,371 to 1,174), but this is counter-balanced by the fact that there were 1,068 independent Presbyterians in Montreal and only 70 in Quebec. These figures are not merely a reflection of the former's larger Scottish population, for in addition to the emerging Free Kirk movement, there were in Montreal the American Presbyterian Church and a nascent Unitarian congregation that was more attached to the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster of the Non Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland than to either Scottish or American Presbyterian organizations. Similarly, the Baptists and Anabaptists played a larger role in the religious life of Montreal than in Quebec. Dissent, and dissidence were much stronger in the more dynamic city.

From all these figures, the contrast between the two cities emerges clearly. Institutions guaranteeing ~~social~~ order were more prominent in Quebec. The concentration of economic power in the hands of a relatively small number of timber merchants and ship-builders gave the city's elite a great deal of control over the artisans and labourers dwelling in the swollen suburbs. The dominance of these industries, both seasonal in nature, guaranteed a large pool of indigent city-dwellers. In 1842 there were nearly 500 people listed in the census as subsisting on alms or as paupers. In contrast, this group only numbered 28 in



Montreal. That city, with its more diversified economic base and emerging industries, surrounded by French Canadian communities in the middle of an agricultural crisis while the flow of wheat from Upper Canada acted as its economic foundation, was inevitably more turbulent. It was no coincidence that Montreal, rather than Quebec, had acted as the centre of both British and French Canadian extremism in the 1830s.

While Montreal and Quebec were the principal communities of Lower Canada, the conditions that applied there did not represent the principal patterns of Lower Canadian political life. Four counties may be cited as illustrations of the varying conditions that helped to shape the role of anglophone Liberal politicians in the countryside: Berthier, Megantic, Stanstead and Beauharnois. Berthier represented one extreme. In 1844 it had a resident population of 26,8599, of which 26,035 were of French Canadian origin. Situated on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence, its 640 anglophones constituted an insignificant block, as far as numbers were concerned. Nonetheless, this small group contained a wide range of social conditions. The seigneuries of the county were owned by such men as James Cuthbert, seigneur of Berthier, David Ramsay of de Ramezay, and William Berczy of D'Aillebout. Thus, the censitaires of the riverfront were subject to influence by a small handful of wealthy English-speaking individuals. In contrast, in the townships well back from the river, such as Kildare and Brandon, settled primarily by Irishmen and Scots, intense poverty and insecure tenure of land

created conditions parallel to those on the frontier of Upper Canada.

The situation in Megantic County in the St. Francis District was ~~more~~ complex. Despite the fact that it reached down to the border, few Americans had settled in the county, as it was cut off from the United States by a lack of transportation routes. For the same reason it was sparsely settled; in 1844 there were only 6,749 residents. Of these, 2,565 were French Canadians. The English-speaking population was, however, singularly fractured. The county had been opened by a group of Highlanders from the Isle of Arran, and while by the 1840s the native British Canadians (1,764) were the largest group after the French, Gaelic still lingered on in some areas. A wave of Irish settlers followed, and at the time of the census the Irish-born numbered 1,426. With them they brought the religious tensions of their own island, for they were strongly divided between the Orange and the Green. Megantic, a frontier county, was poor. 816 heads of families were owners of real property, and 474 were not.

This characteristic was common to the Townships, where large blocks of land, held by absentee speculators, were sprinkled with squatters. This was also the case in Stanstead. With a population of 11,964, 1,028 heads of families owned real property and 1,030 did not possess any land. Stanstead, however, differed strongly from Megantic. Bordering on the states of Vermont and New Hampshire, its principal settlers had been

Americans. Only 636 French Canadians lived in the county. While native British Canadians formed the largest group at 7,366, many were but one generation removed from their Yankee origins, and there were 3,288 naturalized Americans living in the area. Only a small number of British immigrants were settled there, 784 in number. These facts are reflected in the religious structure of Stanstead, where Baptist and Anabaptists outnumbered Catholics 692 to 512. The Methodists, in turn, were nearly as numerous as the Catholics.

Beauharnois was the most tensely divided and politically volcanic of all of these counties. 12,364 of its 28,746 residents were French in origin, and 15,180 were of British stock. The county was pulled in different directions by geography. Just south of the Isle de Montréal, it was bounded by New York State, while across Lac St. Francis were Vaudreuil in Lower Canada and Stormont in Upper Canada. The canal works that were to organize the flow of these geographic tensions along an east-west axis introduced a potent source of trouble, not only for Beauharnois but for the whole surrounding area, in the introduction of Irish navvies that made up a large part of the county's 4,000 Irishmen. Also strong was the Scottish community. While there were only 2,802 natives of Scotland in Beauharnois, the fact that there were 7,101 members of the Church of Scotland shows that the Scottish influence was still strong among the county's 8,178 native British Canadians. One additional factor guaranteed that Beauharnois would be closely influenced by developments in

England. The North American Colonial Association of Ireland,¹⁷ also known as the Beauharnois Land Company, held title to the seigneurie of Beauharnois, and its British stockholders were to make themselves felt in the county's affairs through the political activities of their representatives.

Such then, are some of the numerical indices of the experience of the English-speaking minority in Lower Canada. Such a quantitative sketch, however, can only serve as the most initial step in an understanding of the anglophone communities. As important as their minority status was in defining the political options open to members of this group, more important still is the fact that they constituted a minority that exercised a power, social, economic and political, grossly disproportionate to their numbers. The forces that produced this dominance in the years following the Conquest are still the subject of controversy and not germane to this thesis. The fact of this imbalance remains, and in the 1840s was in its full force, colouring nearly every aspect of the relations between French and English along the St. Lawrence.

This power was not, however, evenly distributed. A squatter in Shefford counted for less than a censitaire in Nicolet; the latter, as a proprietor, usually had a vote.¹⁸ The power

17. I would like to thank M. André LaRose for information concerning this county, drawn from his doctoral thesis on the County of Beauharnois, which is now in a state of preparation at the University of Ottawa.

18. For the law concerning the franchise at this period, see John Garner, The Franchise and Politics in British North America, 1755-1867, University of Toronto Press, 1969, pp. 73-117

of the anglophones lay, not in their language; but in their membership in provincial and local elites that exercised their sway over everyone in the province, French and English alike. It is the predominance of English-speaking Canadians in these elites that created the central anomaly of Lower Canadian society. Thus, over the portrait of the province sketched in the census must be superimposed another image : that of power, not of numbers.

Influence is difficult to quantify. In Lower Canada, structures were loose enough to permit social promotion, and for many individuals this was a driving ambition. The doctrine of individual ascent was an important aspect of Victorian convictions, and the combined pursuit of wealth and social respectability inevitably involved a degree of public activity in both economic and social spheres. As mentioned in the Introduction, historians have generally viewed the English-speaking allies of the French Canadian majority as operating outside of the mainstream of British Canadian life. In 1840 this was the view of at least one politically active Lower Canadian anglophone. Christopher Dunkin, a rising young lawyer, informed Francis Hincks, then negotiating an alliance between Lower and Upper Canadian Reformers, that "the national origin question" was too potent a force in Montreal to be overcome easily: When Hincks cited John Neilson and L. T. Drummond, two prominent anglophone Reformers in respectively Quebec City and Montreal, Dunkin declared that they

were "now entirely French & cut by the English."¹⁹

Dunkin, however, was, as Hincks acknowledged in this same letter, an apologist for the actions of Governor-General Thomson, and thus was of necessity a defender of the Governor's racially based policies. Despite Dunkin's statement, men associated with the Liberal party in Lower Canada throughout the 1840s were prominent in a wide range of organizations and activities, social and economic. Indeed, their political prominence was based on the fact that rather than being pariahs and outcasts, they played a prominent part in the activities that conferred prestige and standing in British Lower Canadian life. A quick survey of the non-political activities of a number of English-speaking individuals connected with the Lower Canadian Liberal party follows, both to establish this point and introduce the men who will figure in this thesis.

The two men cited by Hincks, Drummond and Neilson, occupied radically different positions in Lower Canadian society.²⁰ John Neilson of Quebec belonged to neither the professional nor the commercial class; rather, he might be described as a prosperous master artisan. Nonetheless, he was one of the most

19. LaFontaine Papers, Francis Hincks to L.-H. LaFontaine, July 18, 1840

20 It would not be useful to cite every source for the prosopographical information that follows in this chapter and in the rest of this thesis. These range from contemporary newspaper references, personal papers and official documents to secondary sources. All of these are listed in the bibliography. Where a standard biography has been published in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, a reference will be given. Where information is available that contradicts or supplements standard accounts, or is of particular importance, references will be given.

important men in the old capital. Neilson was the head of a family firm of printers, to which both the Quebec Gazette and the Gazette de Québec were attached. His formative experience was in Lower Canada at the peak of its economic prosperity and political viability, and he never lost faith that such conditions could be restored. Neilson's political role before the Union, and in particular his split with Papineau in 1834, are too well known to require recital here; the best expression of this rift was Neilson's membership in the Quebec Constitutional Society in 1837. What should be emphasized is the less well-known range of Neilson's civic activity. There was, quite simply, no movement to promote the interests of Quebec City, Presbyterianism, or the colony in general, in which he did not take an active part. Despite the ardour of Neilson's defence of the rights of French Canadians as British subjects, the editor of the Québec Gazette never lost touch with his own Scots roots. In the very year Dunkin described him as being "cut" by the English, Neilson acted as chairman of a meeting in St. Andrew's Church to discuss the raising of funds for the proposed Presbyterian college in Kingston. He was regularly elected to the executive of the St. Andrew's Society, and in 1840 was its President. He was also Chairman of the committee to organize a Vattermare Institute, designed to promote cultural development in the

colony,²¹ and took an active part in Quebec's Mechanics' Institute. He was involved in this society's revival in 1840, and usually acted as its President. Unlike the Institute's counterpart in Montreal, the Quebec body received considerable support from the upper levels of society, and leading figures like Henry Black sr. and James Gibb, and rising young lawyers like Gustavus W. Wicksteed were members of its executive. Prominent Quebec professional men, like Dr. William Marsden, gave lectures at it. The bulk, however, of the executive appears to have been composed of small retailers like Michael Quigley, a grocer, also involved in the Vattemare proposal, or literarily inclined artisans like William Ruthven, a book-binder. Such men, in constant close contact with the clerks, small artisans and retailers who made up the majority of Quebec's urban electorate, could not but have had considerable importance in the promotion of popular movements, cultural as well as political.

Neilson was also involved in more pragmatic activities. A provisional director of the County of Quebec Mutual Insurance Company, he was also active in the promotion of canals, and headed a committee elected at a public meeting to present a petition in 1840 to the Governor-General that public works be commenced. In the same way, while Neilson was an advocate of the theoretical benefits of Free Trade, he participated in

21. For the extent to which Alexandre Vattemare captured the popular imagination in 1840-1, see Stephen Kenny, "Cultural Patterns in the Union of the Canadas: The First Decade," Doctoral Thesis, 1979, University of Ottawa, pp. 73-85

meetings in favour of the preservation of the Imperial duties that protected the Canadian timber trade,²² and was active at meetings on behalf of unemployed workmen in the timber trade. He was likewise active in the move to create a Quebec-based forwarding company, and took an active part in the Quebec Agricultural Society. Finally, not long before his death in 1848, after he had moved into opposition to the Liberal party, he participated in meetings in Quebec in favour of a railroad link between Quebec and Halifax. Clearly, Neilson, regardless of the political shifts that marked his public career, was always at the center of Quebec's anglophone community.

Lewis Thomas Drummond,²³ in contrast to Neilson, was a man whose entire career was shaped by politics, for in public life he found the avenue to the prominence he so clearly desired. A Catholic, born in the north of Ireland in 1813 to a professional family, he was educated at the Séminaire de Nicolet, and then studied law under Charles D. Day, later Thomson's Solicitor-General for Canada East. Despite this Tory connection, he distinguished himself as a defender of the patriotes at the Courts Martial in 1838. By 1840 he was clearly identified with the Liberal cause. One factor that contributed to his rapid rise

22. Quebec Gazette, July 14, 1841, May 11, 1842

23. J. I. Little, "Drummond, Lewis Thomas," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, University of Toronto Press, 1982, vol. XI, pp. 281-283

in public life was his undeniable charm;²⁴ this secured for him as a wife one of the daughters and heiresses of Pierre-Dominique Debartzch, a seigneur and former legislative and executive Councillor. Despite this alliance, Drummond never became totally identified with the French Canadians. Instead, he acted as a spokesman for the province's Irish Catholics. He was member of a number of societies agitating for the repeal of the Union between Ireland and Great Britain, and in the 1850s served as the President of the St. Patrick's Society. When he shifted his political base from the Montreal Irish community, it was to the English-speaking settlers of the St. Francis District that he turned.

Neilson had broken with Papineau as the French Canadian leader became too radical, and Drummond had been too young to play an active part in politics under the old constitution. Two prominent figures in Montreal's commercial community had, without participating in the events of 1837 and 1838, remained attached to the parti patriote long after Neilson's split with Papineau: James Leslie²⁵ and Jacob DeWitt.²⁶

Dewitt, an American of Dutch descent, had arrived in

24. PAC Monk Papers, vol. 6: Rosalie Caroline Debartzch Monk Correspondence Cordelia ? to Caroline Debartzch Monk. Drummond was described as "really so interesting and ... kind and good."

25. André Garon, "Leslie, James," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. X, p. 440; James Leslie Family Papers, PAC

26. Jean-Claude Robert, "DeWitt, Jacob," I would like to thank Professor Robert for sending me a draft of his biography of DeWitt prior to its publication in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography.

Montreal at the beginning of the nineteenth century and become active in the hardware trade. It was however, as a banker that he made his mark; in 1835 he became with Louis-Michel Viger a founder and principal stock-holder in the Banque du Peuple. In addition, he was a large landholder in Beauharnois, where he was active in the county's development. Even his inveterate enemy, the Montreal Herald, described him as a good landlord.²⁷ By 1851, there was a steamer, the Jacob Dewitt, transporting goods to DeWittville in that county. He also held a fair amount of real estate in urban Montreal. From 1830 to 1838 he represented Beauharnois in the Legislative Assembly, and was a consistent supporter of Papineau.

Despite his politics, DeWitt was too important a man to be blacklisted by Montreal anglophone society. In religion, DeWitt was 'serious,' and was one of the leaders in the Forrest secession from the St. Gabriel Street Church and helped to found the American Presbyterian Church as a refuge for dissident Presbyterians. He was also active in Montreal Auxillary Bible Society and the Montreal Temperance Society. In 1830 he was a governor of the Montreal General Hospital and a director of the Montreal House of Industry. Ten years later, he was elected to the chairmanship of the Montreal Emigrant Committee, and in 1841 served on a committee organized for the relief of the flood victims of that year. Clearly, while his politics were unacceptable to English-speaking Montrealers, his energy and wealth

27. Montreal Herald, November 12, 1840

enabled him to play a continuing part in the institutions of that community.

DeWitt's radicalism can be easily understood as coming from his American background, his evangelical zeal and his conflicts with the Beauharnois Land Company. James Leslie, in contrast, came from an eminently respectable background. The son of a British officer who had served with Wolfe, and a graduate of the University of Aberdeen, he commenced trade in Montreal in 1809. His activity in the mercantile world included involvement in the Committee of Trade, a forerunner of the Montreal Board of Trade, and a role in the founding of the Bank of Montreal. Like Drummond, he became a seigneur through marriage. His wife, however, was not the heiress of a French Canadian patriote but of Colonel Patrick Lanagan of the Royal Artillery, who had acquired portions of the seigneuries of Bourchemin and Ramesay after the Conquest. Unlike DeWitt, Leslie remained loyal to the orthodox Calvinism of the St. Gabriel Street Church. Nonetheless, the Scots merchant was also politically identified with the patriotes, and in particular with Louis-Hyppolite LaFontaine. From 1828 to 1838 he represented the riding of Montreal East; as a representative of this constituency he voted for the Ninety-Two Resolutions, the radical patriotes' manifesto.

In the country-side to the north of Montreal, at least one merchant had taken his participation in the patriote cause further than either DeWitt or Leslie. William Henry Scott, a native of Scotland, had in fact been actively involved in the

rebellion of 1837 and had, at one point, a reward of 500^l. on his head. He spent eight months in jail, but was pardoned twice, once in November, 1837 and once in January, 1838. No doubt his resignation of his rank as a colonel in the revolutionary army and his discouragement of a further recourse to arms after the defeat at St. Charles saved him from an exile in Bermuda. In business and in his social life he was equally fortunate. Arriving in Canada with little capital, he established himself at St. Eustache and rapidly accumulated considerable property. Despite the fact that he was an anglophone and a Protestant, he was popular with his neighbours, and was elected to the Assembly in time to vote for the Ninety-Two Resolutions although still only in his thirties. The standard explanation for his attachment to Papineau's party is that he married a French Canadian, and thus, presumably, became in part assimilated to the majority.²⁸ In fact, it appears that Scott only married the woman with whom he lived on his death bed; he refused to have the children raised as Catholics, and she refused to have them raised as Protestants.²⁹ It is clear that Scott never abandoned his Scots Presbyterian roots.

Another merchant outside Montreal was David Morrison Armstrong. While he had been too young to be active in the politics of the last days of Lower Canada, he was closely bound to members of the French Canadian majority. A resident of

28. Fernand Ouellet, Le Bas-Canada, University of Ottawa Press, 1980, p. 365

29. Jacques Gouin, William-Henry Scott, Hull, 1972, p. 4

Berthier, he was a merchant from a well-established family of steam-ship commanders. His father-in-law, however, was the former patriote member for the county, and his brother James went to Montreal to become LaFontaine's law partner. These family ties alone do not explain his connection with the Liberal party; rather, he was determined opponent of the seigneurial regime, and found in the Reform cause the best vehicle for his attacks on the seigneurs of Berthier.

Such exceptions do little save emphasize that the vast majority of the Lower Canadian British elite were opposed to the republicanism of the majority in the Assembly. This was particularly true in Quebec; there, even many of the French Canadians had been alienated from the Montreal-dominated parti patriote. The British merchants in the capital, dependent on their connection with Britain for the health of the timber trade, manifested a remarkable degree of cohesion. Wholesale merchants, such as David Burnet, the ship-builders and timber magnates such as Henry LeMesurier, Horatio N. Patton and T. C. Lee and financiers like Jeffery Hale, constituted a close-knit group bound by ties of money and blood.

One figure that represented the prominence that could be gained by age, wealth and public spirit was John William Woolsey, the "Nestor of Quebec Merchants."³⁰ Born in Quebec City in 1767, the disruption caused by the American Revolution confirmed him in his loyalty to the Crown, and he took part

30. Quebec Mercury, May 17, 1853 (obituary)

in the War of 1812 under de Salaberry. A reward for this zeal was not lacking, for his firm had considerable dealings in military contracts.³¹ After the war, Woolsey further entrenched his position by a five-year term as President of the Quebec Bank and by taking a leading part in the organization of the Quebec Exchange. His commitment to Quebec's development was manifested by his promotion of a rail link between Pointe Levi and Maine. His prominence received its official sanction with his promotion to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel of the 1st Battalion of the Quebec Militia. Woolsey had profited under the old constitutional system, and in 1822 he had joined John Neilson in opposing a proposed union of the two Canadian provinces. His connections by marriage included the LeMoine family, a prominent French Canadian Quebec clan. Nonetheless, he had no sympathy for Papineau, and 1837 was elected to the Chair of the Esplanade meeting of the Quebec Constitutional Society, one of the city's largest and most heated political meetings in that troubled year.

Activity alone, however, could establish a short space of time a degree of standing in Quebec City. An illustration of this is found in the early career of William Bristow.³² In that he arrived in Quebec in 1836 at the age of twenty-eight, he had no long-established position strengthened by decades and no family connections or wealth to assist in his business

31. Gilles Paquet, Jean-Pierre Wallot, Patronage et Pouvoir dans le Bas-Canada, Presses de l'université du Québec, 1973, p.129, n.67

32. Elizabeth Waterston, "Bristow, William," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. ix, pp. 83-4.

ventures. In compensation, he was involved in a wide range of public activities. In politics he took Sir Andrew Stuart as his patron, and became secretary of the Quebec Constitutional Society. Culture appears to have particularly interested him. In 1840 he was the Recording Secretary of the Literary and Historical Society and served on its Fine Arts Committee. In the following year he too, with Neilson, was on the organizing committee of the Vattemare Institute. He was also active in two of Lower Canada's national societies. In Quebec City, he served on the Committee of the St. George Society; in Montreal, although he was born in Liverpool, he identified himself with the city's Irish, and took part in the Montreal St. Patrick's Society. As a merchant, he was anxious to promote the Quebec version of the Laurentian dream, and in 1841 served on committees to support the completion of the St. Lawrence & Chambly canal and to initiate steam navigation across the Atlantic. Unfortunately, it appears that this frenetic activity did not assist his commercial ventures, and in the mid-forties he moved to Montreal and took up journalism and political agitation as a career.

As influential as the commercial figures were in Quebec, the professional men also played an important part in the life of the city. It is worth noting that while the number of anglophone professionals did not increase as rapidly as that of the francophones, it did mount significantly in the 1820s and

1830s in Lower Canada.³³ The mania for entering professional life was complained of, and its overcrowded condition was commented on in the English newspapers. Nonetheless, for the successful the rewards were considerable and could come relatively quickly. Thomas Cushing Aylwin³⁴ was 34 years old in 1840, and had already been a lawyer for thirteen years. He was a third-generation Quebecker, his grandfather having come to the city from Boston as a merchant in 1774. This background, combined with his membership in the Church of England, gave Aylwin a degree of respectability; however, intemperate in speech and habits, he gravitated towards the rowdier section of the Quebec Constitutional Society in the 1830s, where he distinguished himself by his verbal and physical attacks upon the French Canadians. He is reported to have declared "Lower Canada has been too long a British province in name only. It is time it became a British province in fact."³⁵

It is, however, unwise to assume that Aylwin's prominence in Quebec City was the result of leading rioting Constitutionalists on campaigns of terror. As a lawyer he had few

33. Fernand Ouellet, Histoire Sociale et Economique du Québec, p. 602

34. André Garon, "Aylwin, Thomas Cushing," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. X, p. 24. Aylwin is a figure whose background has created some confusion. Garon states that he entered politics "on the side of the Patriotes," and Jacques Monet describes him as "bicultural" (The Last Cannon Shot, p. 58) and as Irish (p. 232). In fact, as material presented in this thesis shows, Aylwin was a third generation Quebecker of Loyalist stock, a rabid Constitutionalist before the Union who never really mastered French.

35. Quebec Mercury, October 29, 1844 (Joseph-André Taschereau quoting Aylwin)

equals, especially in criminal law. In 1840 he was elected to both the Committee of Management and the Board of Examiners of the Quebec Bar, and was consistently re-elected until his assumption of political office. He was also active in the promotion of organizations intended to serve the public good, such as the Vattemare Institute and the County of Quebec Mutual Assurance Company. In 1839 his activity took on another form when he became editor of the Quebec Canadian Colonist. His personal position acquired extra security with his marriage to Eliza Felton, the daughter of one of the Townships great absentee landowners and a significant proprietor in her own right.

Less is known of Dunbar Ross,³⁶ another Quebec lawyer who figured prominently in the politics of the Union. Nonetheless, he was clearly on the Constitutionalist side in the 1830s, for he served in a Highlands militia unit during the rebellion, and was an active member of the pro-Unionist organization in Quebec City in 1840. A Protestant and a Scot, he served on the Committee of Instalment of the St. Andrew's Society, and served with William Bristow on the Fine Arts Committee of the Literary and Historical Society. His position in his profession was solid, and throughout the decade he occupied positions of responsibility in the Quebec Bar Society, especially on the Board of Audit. His particular forte in law is not known, but he appears to have been particularly active in maritime law. In 1840 he presented a

36. Irene Bilas, "Ross, Dunbar," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. IX, pp. 690-1

petition to the Governor-General for the release of sailors held for deserting their ships, and by 1844 he was a Deputy Judge in the Vice Admiralty Court in Quebec.

As in Quebec, a number of the Liberal party's most influential figures in Montreal had formerly been ardent Constitutionalists. The most significant of these was without any doubt Benjamin Holmes.³⁷ From 1827 to 1846 he was Cashier, in effect the General Manager, of the Bank of Montreal, and thus made many key decisions affecting the careers of the city's businessmen. While of an independent turn of mind, he was clearly associated with the ruling faction in Montreal, and in 1837 as a lieutenant-colonel in the militia played an active part in the suppression of the rebellion.

Holmes' pervasive influence in Montreal was not only the result of his position at the bank and his proven loyalty to the Empire. Born in Ireland in 1784, he was active in the city's Irish community, serving twice as President of the St. Patrick's Society in the 1840s. Probably out of this interest grew his involvement with the Emigrant Committee, of which he was Treasurer in the year that Jacob DeWitt was Chairman. He did not, however, restrict his civic activities to the Irish. From organizing a Temperance Soirée in honour of the birth of the heir to the British throne to establishing a Magdalen Refuge, Holmes, like Neilson in Quebec, took part in almost every public activity

37. Lorne St. Croix, "Holmes, Benjamin," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. IX, pp. 396-7

in the city. He was also active in promoting the city's economic development; he had been involved in the Champlain & St. Lawrence, Montreal's first railway, and, as will be shown below, continued to play a prominent role in the evolution of Lower Canada's railways.

Holmes, although Irish, was not a Catholic. He was in fact a Unitarian, and one of the founders of the Unitarian Church in Montreal.³⁸ In a period when Unitarians were still viewed with suspicion and dislike by many Protestants,³⁹ half of Montreal's anglophone M. P. P.s were Unitarians. Members of this congregation were influential in other fields besides politics. After Holmes, the three most prominent members of the church were three Workman brothers, Benjamin, Thomas and William. Benjamin, the first to arrive in Montreal, taught school, edited the Montreal Canadian Courant, a moderate Tory newspaper, and finally became a doctor. It was however, Thomas, who arrived in 1827, who initiated the family's rise in the Montreal commercial world. With John Frothingham he founded what was to become Montreal's largest hardware outlet. Frothingham was a member of the American Presbyterian Church. When, however, the Unitarians organized their own congregation, he joined his partner. Thomas

38. G. J. J. Tulchinsky identifies Holmes as "an active Anglican Churchman" (The River Barons, p. 150). For Holmes' involvement in the Unitarian congregation during the period covered by this thesis, see Attendance Book and Minutes, Unitarian Church of Montreal, Archives of the Unitarian Church, Montreal, and newspaper references.

39. Henry Cornelius Klassen, "L. H. Holton: Montreal Businessman and Politician," University of Toronto, Ph. D. Thesis. 1970, pp. 34-8

Workman took little interest in politics, concentrating rather on a business career that would lead to a vice-presidency in Molson's Bank and the presidency of the Sun Mutual Life Insurance Company.

It was the third brother, William,⁴⁰ who was to play the most active part in politics, although that primarily from behind the scenes. He joined Thomas in the hardware company and a number of other business ventures. In 1842 he was a director of the Champlain & St. Lawrence and for six years was the president of the Montreal and City District Savings Bank. The bank's directors included fellow Unitarians Francis Hincks and Luther Hamilton Holton. Workman was also active in the St. Patrick's Society, serving on the executive with Holmes.

Another prominent, although intermittent,⁴¹ member of the Unitarian congregation was the Hon. Adam Ferrie.⁴² After reversals in business in Scotland he came to Canada and soon became a prominent commercial and political figure. In Britain he had been an active Whig, but in the colony he participated in the Constitutional Society as a moderating influence. As a result, he was named by Lord Sydenham to both the municipal Council of Montreal and the Legislative Council. Active in the

40. G. Tulchinsky, "Workman, William," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. X, pp. 717-8

41. Ferrie was prominent in the congregation in the 1830s, but only resumed an active part in the church's affairs in the late 1840s and early 1850s. See Minute Book A, June 6, 1842 to January 4, 1856 and New Membership Book, Archives of the Unitarian Church of Montreal.

42. Gerald Tulchinsky, Ferrie, Adam," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. IX, pp. 258-9

St. Andrew's Society, he was also prominent in charitable organizations throughout the 1830s. He too was a supporter of the City and District Bank of Montreal. Also like William Workman, he was a moderate partisan preferring to operate behind the scenes; unlike Workman, he never gained the full trust of Francis Hincks.⁴³

Three younger members of the congregation, however, played a more public rôle in Montreal politics: Luther Holton⁴⁴, John Young⁴⁵ and Theodore Hart.⁴⁶ Holton, a native of Upper Canada, came to Montreal in 1826 and rose to be by 1845, at the age of twenty-eight, the major Montreal partner of Willison and Hooker, a large forwarding firm. By 1841 he had already commenced his activity in Montreal's civic life, joining Jacob DeWitt on the flood committee of that year. The early career of Young was similar, although the Scot was five years the elder. After spending a period of time in Kingston, Young came to Montreal in 1829. His ascent in the Montreal business world was also rapid. He joined the firm of John Torrance, prominent in the grain and forwarding trade and well connected in Tory circles. In 1835 he moved to Québec to help David Torrance in the management of the firm's office in that city. In 1840 Young

43. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, May 5, 1844

44. H. C. Klassen, "Holton, Luther Hamilton," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. X, pp. 354-8

45. G. Tulchinsky and Brian J. Young, "Young, John," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. X, pp. 722-7

46. Carman Miller, "Hart, Theodore," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. XI, pp. 388-9

returned to Montreal and went into partnership with Harrison Stephens, an American merchant, also a Unitarian, already well-established in the wholesale line. While Young does not appear to have taken a part in politics during the 1830s, his association with the Conservative Torrances made him well regarded in Tory circles. Hart, in contrast, had taken the field at the age of 21 as an officer in the militia against the patriotes in 1837. An active merchant and a large proprietor of real estate, Hart was born into Lower Canada's most prominent Jewish family, but joined the Unitarian congregation in the late 1840s. While both his family background and behaviour during the rebellion marked him as a Tory, he had spent an important part of his youth with the Baldwin family in Upper Canada, and always felt a close personal tie with the Toronto Reformer.⁴⁷

G. J. J. Tulchinsky, in addressing the question of the role of ethnic and religious solidarity in Montreal's commercial circles, has concluded that "there was a considerable integration in the realm of business, especially among members of the English-speaking groups."⁴⁸ The Montreal Unitarians provide the clearest illustration of the extent to which denominational associations produced business and political alliances. Thus, the Workmans and Thomas Frothingham worked and prayed together; John Young's first business partner in Montreal was Harrison Stephens, another Unitarian. Benjamin Holmes, after his

47. Baldwin Papers, Theodore Hart to Robert Baldwin, May 17, 1850

48. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 10

departure from the Bank of Montreal, went into business with Young, and Francis Hincks sold the Montreal Pilot to two fellow Unitarians, W. H. Higman and T. J. O'Donoghue. In the 1850s, John Young and Luther Holton were to co-operate as closely in business as in politics, particularly in the promotion of railways. Particularly during the 1840s, the Unitarians provided the backbone of the Montreal Liberal party's leadership. With the radical traditions in Ireland of their sect, they provided much of the leadership of the city's Irish community, and thus, with their business prestige, were ideally placed to give the party a non-Catholic, anglophone and economically progressive image.

The Montreal professional community had been more divided than the one in Quebec. Drs. Wolfred and Robert Nelson had supplied much of the patriotes' military leadership and both were in exile. Wolfred was soon to return, but his brother was never to reappear in Canada. Similarly, Dr. E. B. O'Callaghan settled permanently in New York State, where he acquired a reputation as an antiquarian. Some other professional men had been too discreet to incur exile, although they did not escape the rigour of the law. James Macdonnell, a lawyer who in 1836 had been jeered by a Tory mob, was reported to have concealed Frères Chasseurs in his Montreal home. In May, 1840 he emerged from prison after eighteen months captivity in the company of Denis-Benjamin Viger. Unlike Viger, he had accepted the condition of providing a 2,000^l. bond for his good behaviour.

Another Montreal lawyer, Henry Hague Judah, actively supported the patriotes until the last moment, but affirmed his loyalty at the outbreak of the rebellion. Born in London, Judah was a relation of the Harts by marriage, but acquired his position through his espousal of the daughter of Dr. René-Joseph Kimber, a patriote activist. Judah had in addition the good fortune to possess a considerable amount of landed property.

Again it must be emphasized that such men were exceptions. The great majority of the Montreal professional community had been opposed to the claims of the majority in the Assembly. On such lawyer was William Walker. Born in 1797, and a lawyer since 1819, he had been the parti bureaucrate candidate against Wolfred Nelson in Montreal West in 1834, and the delegate of the Montreal Constitutional Society to England. Another determined enemy of the patriotes was Sydney Bellingham. The son of an Irish baronet and an Anglican, he had vivid recollections of the isolation and pride of a dominant minority in a hostile country. After unsuccessful attempts to settle himself in Upper Canada, he, like so many others mentioned above, acquired security and position by marriage. His wife Arabella, the daughter of William Holmes, brought him the control of 18,000 acres of partially conceded land in Champlain. His family connections were useful, for his father had been a school friend of Lord Gosford, and this secured an nomination to the Commission of the Peace in 1837. He took an active part in the suppression of the rebellions. In the period before the Irish community was

divided along religious lines, he had a great deal of influence with his co-nationalists, and in 1840 was President of the St. Patrick's Society.

Merchants and lawyer-politicians dominate the historiography of Lower Canada. This is to be regretted, in that the province was overwhelmingly agricultural, and land was the basis of much influence and prestige. Even for those who considered the ownership of real estate in the light of speculation or as the basis for industrial development, land or its control was a thing of weight. Thus DeWitt, Leslie, Drummond, Aylwin, Bellingham and Hart all based much of their fortune on land.

In the long-established and densely settled seigneuries, the power of great landholders was on the wane, and their influence had been eclipsed by the rising professional class. Paradoxically, however, in the areas in which English-speaking settlements had been established, where land was still available or new uses had given its control extra value, land was still an important factor in politics. There, politically influential absentee landowners, representatives for speculative British companies and agents for Clergy Reserve and Crown Land could exercise considerable control over squatters or settlers in arrears of payment by threats of eviction or promises of easy dealing. This was most clearly marked in the St. Francis District, where men like W. B. Felton had tied up large amounts of land fraudulently in his own name and in the names of his children. Even bona fide developers, such as P.H. Knowlton in

Brome, R. N. Watts in Drummond and Loop Odell in Huntingdon could exercise a great deal of control over their neighbours. It was, however, the land companies, with their more direct interest in protecting their holdings by political means, which made the most flagrant use of this power. The career in Canada of Edward Gibbon Wakefield on behalf of the Beauharnois Land Company is a clear illustration of this. The most influential land company agent was, however, Alexander Tilloch Galt, the representative of the British American Land Company. Galt arrived in Sherbrooke as the company's agent in 1835. This was not necessarily a popular position; the economic troubles of the late 1830s had left many settlers in debt to the Company, and squatters were not uncommon. It was in 1840, when the proposed new political system seemed to guarantee the Company safety from the hostility of a French majority that Galt set out to collect debts from the St. Francis settlers. For the next three decades he was to be the single most active proponent of development in the region, and established himself as the leading man of the Eastern Townships.

None of these men were insignificant, and all were to play a part in the politics of the Union period. As ambitious and determined individuals, they turned to what ever political alliances best advanced the interests of the communities which they represented and of their own social advancement. Precisely because they were men of wealth and status, they could manifest an indifference to appeals to 'English' unity. That, very often,

they had little in the way of backing from the great mass of Lower Canadian anglophones would in fact increase their political importance; their importance came from their position as members of the province's elites, a position no lack of anglophone support could deny them..

Chapter II

Drawing the Lines

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The last month of 1839 saw the despatch to England of the terms of the Act of Union as approved by the Special Council of Lower Canada and the Legislature of Upper Canada. In the middle of the August of the following year, news of the Act's passage through the Imperial Parliament reached the colony. The intervening eight month's manoeuvrings, some futile, some pregnant with consequence, marked not only the last phase of Lower Canada's independent political life but, also the first steps in the formation of new political arrangements that were to come into play once the Union was an established fact. In the first elections under the new constitutional system, these arrangements faced their first practical test.

Governor-General Charles Poulett Thompson perceived in the Act a structure in which political and economic objectives were combined in a characteristically Victorian style. That the Act's provisions were formally unjust to Lower Canada posed no problem; for Thomson Upper Canada was "the most important"

portion" of the colony, and Montreal existed only by forwarding Upper Canadian's production.¹ Thus, political control had to be vested in those committed to the commercial vision of the upper St. Lawrence. Hence the two most essential aspect of the Act: the equality of representation between the two sections of the province despite Lower Canada's greater population, and the joint responsibility of both sections for a debt contracted principally by Upper Canada in its attempts to ameliorate transportation routes. Thus were civic peace and its concomitant prosperity to be ensured.

In light of this it might have been expected that opposition to the Union itself should find its first and most articulate statement in Quebec City. Two things defined that community, its status as the provincial capital and its role as the centre of the timber trade, the only dynamic element in Lower Canada's otherwise moribund economy. Neither of these were of importance in Thomson's plans. At the behest of a man formerly involved in the rival Baltic timber trade, Quebeckers were to be taxed to help pay for public works that could only further entrench the primacy of Montreal; the reservation to the Crown of the right to designate a new capital threatened the perquisites and profits of the old city. Were Quebec to cease to be the capital, this would but symbolize the shift of political power westward.

1. MG 11 Co. O. 42, Q 272 pt. 1, p. 151, Charles Poulett Thomson to Lord John Russell, May 22, 1840



These elements, although rarely made explicit, must be seen as lying behind the agitation that John Neilson attempted to orchestrate in the Quebec District. As a veteran of the protest against the abortive Union project of 1822, Neilson found the direction of a new wave of popular indignation familiar work. Two things made his assumption of the leadership of the movement inevitable. First and foremost, he controlled the Gazette de Québec and the Quebec Gazette, incomparably the best instruments for reaching the literate and influential in the area. Secondly, he was an anglophone whose credentials for loyalty to the British connection were all but unassailable.

This last was important because it enabled Neilson to present forcefully the fundamental principle of his opposition to the Union. By 1840, the uprisings of 1837 and 1838 had already generated two conflicting historiographies that had profound political implications. The Tory interpretation, reflected in the Durham Report and enshrined in the Union Act, argued that the rebellions proved that the French Canadians as a whole could not be trusted to be loyal British subjects, and the continuation of the Imperial tie depended upon the artificially established dominance of British Canadians. Thus was generated the emotional attraction of the Union. The view of which Neilson was the foremost champion argued the contrary, rejecting any racial basis for politics in Lower Canada. Again and again Neilson emphasized in the Quebec Gazette that the experiences of 1776 and 1812 had shown the loyalty to the Crown of the French Canadians as a

people. Viewed from the perspective of Quebec, the uprisings were marginal events, involving only a tiny minority of the habitants, largely under British Canadian leaders. Beside, the Upper Canadians, all of British stock, had also revolted. Given the peace and harmony that had reigned in the Quebec District, the whole Lower Province, French and British, was being made to suffer for Montreal's aberration. Surely the tradition of clemency for political rebellion characteristic of Britain's history could produce a less punitive resolution.² Consequently, the Union was intrinsically objectionable to Neilson in that it was discriminatory not only against French Canadians but also against all of Lower Canada's inhabitants. The peroration of one of his editorials sums up this indignation:

Is it because the majority of the inhabitants of Lower Canada, happen to have for their forefathers, some eighty years ago, FRENCHMEN, that they are to form an exception to all other British born subjects and be treated with flagrant injustice, in which the other inhabitants of Lower Canada are also to participate? Forbid it decency, forbid it in the name and character of Englishmen!³

A need to present a non-racial and united Lower Canadian front thus shaped Neilson's strategy in 1840. In August of that year, Neilson's principal assistant, Edouard Glackemeyer, a notary of German and Irish ancestry but wholly French in cultural affiliation, wrote a letter to the Quebec Gazette, outlining the initial steps of the anti-Union agitation.⁴ On

2. Quebec Gazette, January 31, February 3, August 26, 1840 (e.g.)

3. Quebec Gazette, March 2, 1840

4. Quebec Gazette, August 7, 1840

January 13, a private meeting took place at the notary's house. Eighty invitations had been sent out, and a particular effort had been made to invite the British Canadians connected with the Constitutional Association. Among the prominent anglophones who had received invitations were the Hon. J. M. Fraser, one of Lord Gosford's nominees to the Legislative Council, David Burnet, a prominent merchant and financier, William Price, the great timber baron, J. B. Forsyth and Peter Langlois, both prominent merchants, and R. H. Gardiner and George Black, important lawyers from well-established families. Together, the invitees formed a cross-section of 'respectable' Quebec.

The results were disappointing. Fifty people came to the meeting, and of the specially invited group, only Burnet, Gardiner and Langlois arrived, and that only to express their disapproval. Nonetheless, the linguistic balance was preserved in the nascent movement's leadership. J. W. Woolsey, an elderly but still prominent merchant and Constitutionalist, presided over the meeting. On the five man committee struck to draft resolutions were not only H.-S. Huot, R.-E. Caron and Glackemeyer, but also Neilson and T. C. Aylwin. Aylwin, once a virulent Constitutionalist, had as editor of the Quebec Colonist attacked Neilson slightly earlier,⁵ but had already made his opinions clear by withdrawing from a convention held in Montreal because

5. [H.] LeMesurier to W. H. Tilstone, January 23, 1840, forwarded by the latter to Lord John Russell, MG 11 Co. O. 42, Q277 pt. 2, p. 473.

of pro-Union sentiments expressed there.⁶ The presence of these anglophones was not merely symbolic, for Neilson was clearly in charge of the committee and in effect drafted the resolutions himself.⁷ These proposals were accepted at a second meeting at Glackemeyer's house on January 17. Placards were then set up announcing a public meeting for January 24 in the Glacis School House.

The meeting of January 17 was the first shot in the last battle over the Union. The petition adopted there denied the existence of racial divisions; only tensions "similar to those which have prevailed in almost every country including the Home Dominions of the Crown" were admitted to exist. The Durham Report was criticized, and the unfairness of the debt allocation, the lack of popular consultation, the equal representation of the two sections, and the Union's violation of the spirit of previous legislation, were all attacked. Vague references were made to "the evils which must inevitably result" if the Act received Imperial sanction.⁸

That the meeting was of province-wide importance is shown by the editorial comment it received from the Montreal Herald. Central to the journalistic debate over the significance of the petition was the extent to which this "hole in the corner"

6. Montreal Herald, February 8, 1840

7. [H.] LeMesurier to W. H. Tilstone, January 23, 1840, forwarded by the latter to Lord John Russell, MG 11 Co. O. 42, Q277 pt. 2, p. 473

8. PAC MG11 Co. O. 42 Q: 277 pt. 2, p. 569, January 18, 1840 (anti-Union petition)

meeting,"⁹ as the Herald deprecatingly dubbed it, reflected English-speaking Lower Canadian opinion. The initial signatories included 33 French Canadians and at least 14 British Canadians.¹⁰ These were Aylwin, whose name stood at the top of the list, J. W. Woolsey, Ronald McDonald, a Prince Edward Islander who edited the Gazette de Québec for Neilson, J. J. Nesbitt, an important ship-builder of Irish descent, James Dinning, a merchant also prominent in the Irish community, Daniel McCallum, a lawyer, Dr. Joseph Morrin, a prominent physician, Neilson himself, Thomas Neilson, J. P., William Wilson, James Kelly, Charles Kelly, Patrick Murphy and William O'Brien.¹¹

With over a third of the signers of the original petition bearing British names, Neilson might have seemed to have rallied a certain amount of interracial consensus. The Herald, which had printed a complete list of names, must have been deliberately lying when it declared in February that "with two or three exceptions this meeting was composed of French Canadians." Likewise, it was less than fair in stating in the same issue that "the Resolutions passed ... are in strict character with the political notions - for principles we can call them - of those who constituted the Assembly" of Lower Canada,¹² for there was nothing in the petition's declarations that a hypothetical anti-

⁹. Montreal Herald, February 22, 1840

¹⁰. Montreal Herald, January 17, 1840, gives these figures. The signatories themselves are listed.

¹¹. The list given here is slightly different from that cited by the Montreal Herald, and is taken from PAC MG 11 Co. O. 42 Q277 pt. 2, p. 469, January 18, 1840

¹². Montreal Herald, February 22, 1840

Union Tory could not have supported. When the meeting of January 24, again with the old Constitutionalist Woolsey in the chair, struck a committee of forty to circulate the petition for signatures and send it to England, the anti-Union agitation might have been presented as having started on the correct bi-racial foot.

This was not the case, and any Lower Canadian, especially one as familiar with the inner structure of Quebec society as John Neilson, must have realized it upon scanning the initial list of names. Missing almost completely were the great personages of the Quebec commercial and professional elites. Woolsey was acting as a figure head, an old man almost retired from business, much honoured but of little power. James Dinning in fact denied signing the petition almost immediately after the meeting.¹³ McCallum had relatively little status in the legal world, at least as reflected in the elections of the Quebec Bar Association, and was soon swallowed up by the affairs of the financially troubled Canada Fire Assurance Co. While Joseph Morrin had been active in Quebec's municipal and social life for some years and was to be Mayor of Quebec in the 1850s,¹⁴ he had not, and never was to establish himself as a major figure. Nesbitt was a saving grace, but like so many of the other names on the list, his reflected a reliance on the Irish, a national group only partially accepted by the city's ruling order. James

¹³. Montreal Herald, February 1, 1840

¹⁴. Charles-Marie Boissonnault, "Morris, Joseph," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. IX, pp. 572-3

Kelly may have been a licensed timber culler. William O'Brien and William Wilson appear on the Commission of the Peace in 1844, so these men may have been of some substance in 1840. Charles Kelly cannot be identified with any semblance of probability.¹⁵ All in all, it was not a particularly impressive showing.

As an attempt to demonstrate unity between the two linguistic groups the anti-Union meetings were worse than failures. They were disastrous, for they provoked a swift reaction. On January 28, the Quebec Mercury, the organ of the commercial class, printed a notice calling a public meeting of those opposed to a return to the old constitution. It was "subscribed by most of the principal Merchants and a number of others," 878 names in all.¹⁶ Held on February 2 at, appropriately, the Albion Hotel, this meeting was explicitly a reaction to Neilson's. Henry LeMesurier, one of the city's most prominent timber merchants, declared from the chair that had the meeting of January 17

been composed exclusively of French Canadians, it was very probable that the present Meeting would not have been called together ... [for] from the circumstance of a number of British names being found among the promoters of the scheme for re-establishing the Constitution of 1791, it might be inferred that the inhabitants of this City of British and Irish origin participated in those views, and it therefore became incumbent on them to express their dissent ... and he was sure he was expressing the opinion of everyone to whom he was

15. These identifications are based on The Quebec Directory, 1844-5. Such identifications can only be tentative. Kelly, O'Brien and Wilson are common names, and the Directory often identifies people by an initial and the family name.

16. Quebec Gazette, January 29, 1840 (quoting the Quebec Mercury)

speaking, in saying that none of them would ever consent to submit again to French domination, (loud cheers).

William Bristow, a young merchant who had been Sir Andrew Stuart's political disciple, asserted that "we would not consent to become slaves in a country bought by the blood and treasure of our countrymen - (cheers)." Peter Langlois denied that the British and Irish had ever approved of the actions of the Legislative Assembly, as most of its English-speaking members had been "as disloyal as the man who sat in the Chair of the House."¹⁷ In this remark lay the central and oft-repeated counter-thrust to Neilson's arguments. Participation by anglophones in the patriote cause proved, not that the movement had been political in nature, but that the British as well as the French had their racial renegades, their vendus. A Committee was struck to petition the Queen and the Houses of Parliament against a return to the old constitution.

The meeting achieved its purpose. In the city whose support for the Union was least to be expected, the upper levels of the anglophone community had declared in favour of it. This enabled the Governor-General to inform Lord John Russell that those connected with the anti-Union Committee were "persons of no public note or influence,"¹⁸ while the supporters of the Union represented the 'respectability' - the wealthy and the loyal - of the province. This war of manifestos could only

17. Quebec Gazette, February 3, 1840

18. MG 11 Co. O. 42, Q 270 pt. 2, p. 487, C. P. Thomson to Lord John Russell, February 12, 1840; also, see the Quebec Gazette, August 7, 1840 for depatches

confirm the Colonial Office in its perception of the racial basis of Lower Canadian politics, in which a solid block of English loyalists confronted a sullen mass of French Canadian rebels.

The following weeks produced few shifts in this alignment. In the week following the meeting at the Albion Hotel, a letter appeared in the Quebec Gazette from Dr. William Marsden, active not only in the medical profession but also in the High Tory St. George's Society. Marsden had taken part in the meeting, and in his letter discussed whether it had been an endorsement of the Union or a protest against some of the statements made at Glackemeyer's house. Marsden stated that he had endorsed the resolutions against the old constitution only because he had been assured by William Bristow that the Union, with its repugnant debt clauses, was not the object of the meeting.¹⁹ Marsden, however, was the only significant defection from the British ranks.

It is worth noting that Neilson's sole public convert was a professional man rather than a merchant. The British commercial community, as reflected in their speeches in the Albion Hotel, had decided that the Act of Union, no matter how it penalized them as Lower Canadians and Quebeckers, was preferable to the danger they saw in a return to the old system. The old quarrel between the Executive and the Assembly would continue to paralyze the economic development of the colony, and should some

19. Quebec Gazette, February 10, 1840

mischance bring the end of the Imperial connection and the establishment of a French republic, the preference their ships and timber enjoyed in English markets would come to an end.

Neilson's agitation did not stop because of this rejection. Agents of the committee struck at the meeting of January 24 swept the surrounding countryside in search of signatures and secured, by the end of April, nearly forty thousand of them. The Quebec Gazette printed the minutes of the Committee of the Anti-Union Petition, attesting to the continued activity of the paper's editor, Glackemeyer, Woolsey and others.²⁰ Most of all, Neilson continued to write editorials, learned to the point of pedantry, in which he delved into the constitutions of the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man to show that cultural and linguistic diversity were not irreconcilable with loyalty. He admitted changes - a civil list - in the old system were necessary, but then, after a cooling-off period, the constitution of 1791 could be restored and made to work.²¹

Yet the end of the old province of Lower Canada was inevitable, and Neilson probably knew it before his petition left the colony for Westminster. At least as early as the beginning of March, he was preparing to open a second front in preparation for the elections that had to come after the Act's proclamation.

Thomson was not the sort of Governor to wait idly for his proposals to receive the sanction of the Home Government. In

20. Quebec Gazette, March 13, 1840

21. Quebec Gazette, March 2, 1840

the Special Council, still the sole legislative body for Lower Canada, he had an instrument through which he could exercise the brisk, untrammelled power that appealed to his businessman's temperament. Fully supporting him were those members of the merchant class anxious to remodel Lower Canada on more commercial lines without waiting for the obstacles that an unpredictable elected Assembly might present. Thus, between April 20, when the Council reconvened after its adjournment of the November the year before, and June 26, the end of its fifth and penultimate session, fifty ordinances were passed. Most of these were of an essentially administrative nature, but were nonetheless intended to have both a symbolic and practical effect on Lower Canadian society. Of these, the following may be cited to illustrate the style of government Thomson preferred.

Two ordinances incorporated Montreal and Quebec City. This was no doubt necessary, for after the lapsing in 1836 of the Assembly's legislation the two cities had been administered by justices of the peace in quarterly sessions. They were occasionally negligent, and unable to minister to the needs of such large communities. The new corporate councils were given extensive powers to borrow money and impose local taxation. The most striking feature of the ordinances, however, was the appointment by the Governor of the first mayors and municipal councils in the two cities. After the first two years, the Corporations were to be elected; nonetheless, for this crucial period, control over the province's largest centres was to be

vested in men hand-picked by Thomson.

Other ordinances established police systems for Montreal, Quebec and Trois Rivières, and then one for the St. Francis District. The seizure of arms was legalized, and certain ordinances originally intended to be temporary, such as one permitting the search of houses, were made permanent. Another ordinance, ostensibly for the protection of the Indians, permitted the expulsion by decree of individuals from reserves; a case in point was a missionary who had been accused of fomenting revolt among the Caughnawanga in 1837. Taverns and tavern keepers were also regulated. The legal system was also restructured through the re-division of judicial districts, including the abolition of the District of Trois Rivières. The government was empowered to appoint, and pay, additional judges, and the proceedings of claim suits was re-organized.

Thomson's concern with transportation was also reflected in the Council's legislation. A Board of Works with the power to raise money was established, and changes were made in the clumsy and ineffective system whereby the roads of the province were maintained. The ordinance that perhaps cause the greatest popular reaction was the 'Sleigh' Ordinance. The cahots of Lower Canada's winter roads were infamous, and blame for them was placed on the low-slung sleighs favoured by the habitants. A different design was not only proposed but made compulsory

on pain of a fine.²²

Thus was a pattern of government set by the Special Council: centralized, authoritarian and, it was anticipated, expensive. From this body Neilson resigned the seat he had accepted under Sir John Colborne. Thus he was free to undertake a campaign focussed, not only on the Union, but also on the ordinances of the Special Council and thus directed against the Governor-General.

It is in this light that some aspects of Neilson's dislike of Responsible Government can be understood. To Neilson and many others, it was this system that Thomson intended to establish. They were confirmed in this opinion by the publication at the beginning of April of the Colonial Secretary's despatch of October 14, 1839 to the Governor. Thomson "must only oppose the wishes of the Assembly where the honour of the Crown, or the interests of the empire" were concerned.²³ Rather than as a promise of popular participation in government, this was taken by Neilson and his allies as a warning of an alliance of a powerful executive with a corruptible lower house for the domination of the province. The editor of the Quebec Gazette was not the only anglophone for whom the eighteenth-century vision of an independent Crown, a free Upper House and popular Assembly composed of members unrestrained by party or office, offered the

22. Stephen Kenny, "'Cahots' and Catcalls: An Episode of Popular Resistance in Lower Canada at the Outset of the Union," CHR, vol. LXV, no. 2 (1984), pp.184-208

23. Montreal Herald, April 2, 1840 (quoting despatch)

greatest guarantee of liberty. The tradition of hostility towards taxation by a central government was also a part of radical English, American and Irish political beliefs. Accordingly, Neilson's repetitive attacks on Responsible Government emphasized the rapacious extravagance of the system. Jacksonian democracy provided an illustration of such a disequilibrium in the balance of power, and the Quebec Gazette used information on the fiscal irresponsibility of American state governments, some of it supplied by Thomas Storrow Brown from his exile in Florida, to warn Canadians of the probable consequences of such a disruption in their own government.²⁴ Thus, when LaFontaine's anti-Union Manifesto was published in Quebec at the beginning of March, Neilson attacked it because it seemed to approve of the principles in Russell's despatch.²⁵ Clearly, the Quebecker had little understanding of the concept of Responsible Government formulated by the Upper Canadian Reformers, but this was of little moment; such attacks enabled Neilson to unite the resistance of the great mass of Lower Canadians, impoverished settlers and French Canadians, to taxation, in an agitation against the Union itself.

Some of the draft ordinances were in circulation even before the Special Council reconvened. It was with the close of the session, however, that Neilson brought ~~to~~ bear on the government the criticisms for which his articles on Responsible Government

24. Québec Gazette, January 29, March 25, 1840 (e. g.)

25. Quebec Gazette, March 9, 1840

had prepared the ground. On July 6, his paper printed a slashing attack on the arbitrary extravagance of Thomson's regime, an extravagance the Quebec Gazette felt was inspired by a mistaken fear of insurrection.²⁶ Attention was paid to expressions of discontent from the predominantly English-speaking Eastern Townships. The Quebec paper expressed approval of a meeting held in Napierville, in Huntingdon County near the American border. There Loop Odell, a militia colonel and local post master, along with other members of his family, demanded the withdrawal of the Stipendiary Magistrate, nominated and paid by the provincial government.²⁷ Later in the month, the proceedings of a larger, more important meeting were printed. Held in Sherbrooke on July 16, it was convoked to consider the needs of the entire St. Francis District. On the committee struck to present demands to the Governor were Captain John Moore, R. N., a former member for Sherbrooke County, and Samuel Brooks, a former ally of Papineau who had left the parti patriote as it became more radical. While the Gazette could not endorse all the committee's claims, such as a call for agricultural protection,²⁸ it supported the meeting's attacks on the Rural Police and Stipendiary Magistrates as part of an arbitrary government's attack on local autonomy.²⁹

The end of July saw the move from journalism to organ-

26. Quebec Gazette, July 6, 1840

27. Quebec Gazette, July 6, 1840

28. Quebec Gazette, July 29, 1840

29. Quebec Gazette, August 12, 1840

ization. On July 30, a large public meeting was held in Quebec to frame resolutions against the thirteen most objectionable ordinances, principally those outlined above. The petitioners explicitly identified themselves with the anti-Union committee. Such an identification was inevitable; those active at the meeting included T. C. Aylwin, John Neilson, J. W. Woolsey, Glackemeyer and many of the French Canadians who had signed the initial protest against the Union. The motions adopted repeated many of the themes Neilson had been promoting over the preceding months: the levying of taxes without the consent of an elected Assembly, and the violations of personal liberty through the excessive powers given to the police. Neilson could have had little hope of swaying the Tory mercantile elite. The Montreal Herald, in its comments on the resolutions, summed up their feelings. While such a system, was despotism, "it was just such a despotism as we admire" and necessary to crush the French.³⁰

This linking up of the intrusive and centralizing ordinances was a key step in broadening the appeal of the anti-Union movement. Stephen Kenny, in a recent article, has commented on the superficially incongruous juxtaposition of the campaign against both the 'Sleigh' Ordinance and the Union Act.³¹ This conjunction was carefully arranged by Neilson and his urban associates in order to generate popular enthusiasm behind the

30. Montreal Herald, August 10, 1840 (proceedings of the meeting and comments)

31. Stephen Kenny, "'Cahots' and Catcalls: An Episode of Popular Resistance in Lower Canada at the Outset of the Union," CHR, vol. LXV, no. 2 (1984), p.184

rather theoretical constitutional principles presented in the Quebec Gazette. By actively identifying the intrusive and expensive legislation with the Union itself, Neilson ensured that a large part of the colony would follow his lead. Thus he took the first steps in forging a political machine to fight the upcoming elections on a broad anti-government basis by appealing to the practical resentment engendered by the Special Council.

The formal organization of an anti-government movement was achieved at a meeting of the Committee of Petitioners against the Re-Union Act, held on August 17, the day on which the final text of the Union Act appeared in the Montreal newspapers. The 25 members of the Committee present, including Neilson, Aylwin, Woolsey and Ronald McDonald, agreed that it was their duty

to call the attention of the electors, without delay, to adopt (sic) such proceedings as may appear the most likely to produce unanimity amongst them, and secure a pure and true representation of the country in the house of Assembly, guarding against all attempts to influence the elections by corrupt or unlawful means, or exciting misunderstandings, jealousies and divisions prejudicial to the interests of the Province and its permanent peace, welfare and good Government.³²

The Act of Union was now the law of the land, and accordingly attention shifted from votes in Westminster to the upcoming electoral fray in Canada. Throughout the rest of August, the twin themes of the iniquity of the Union and the tyranny of the Special Council continued to appear in the Gazette. On August 31, for example, an unduly optimistic letter

32. Quebec Gazette, August 19, 1840

from Trois Rivières predicted that the newly-appointed Attorney-General, C. R. Ogden would lose his election there because of his consent to the abolition of the judicial District of Trois Rivières and his support for the Union.³³ By the end of September, Neilson and his supporters were ready for the final step in organizing a province-wide platform. At a meeting held on September 23, a committee was struck at the Glacis School House, consisting of Neilson, H.-S. Huot, A.-N. Morin, Aylwin and Glackemeyer, to organize a meeting of anti-Union electors for October 14.³⁴ Morin, who had not signed Neilson's petition, was an important addition. Acting on LaFontaine's behalf, he ensured that no steps would be taken in Quebec that would unnecessarily alienate supporters in Montreal.

Attendance was limited at the October 14 meeting because of poor weather. It was an important gathering, nonetheless, because the "Circular to all the Electors throughout the Province" was drafted there. In the chair was Neilson, affirming publicly the leadership that all had previously accepted. Dr. Marsden, quiescent since his letter in February, joined those present. The text adopted maintained somewhat uneasily the balance between the two prongs of the campaign. After declaring that "All agitation of minor questions, which may tend to detach one single individual, who disapproves of the Union Act, ought to be rigidly guarded against, until full justice is rendered to the

33. Quebec Gazette, August 31, 1840

34. Quebec Gazette, October 9, 1840

country," the Circular proceeded to a direct attack on the Special Council's decrees :

NO TAXES levied in the Country and the proceeds applied by any local authority whatsoever, without the consent of the tax-payers or their Representatives.

Repeal or alteration of all laws and Ordinances passed in England or in this Province in violation of these principles ...

THE COUNTRY, OUR DUTY AND JUSTICE.³⁵

The hint that the alteration of the Ordinances, and even the Union Act itself, might be acceptable, was a step taken by the Committee to broaden its support, and one that would take on increasing importance as the election unfolded.

The meeting was adjourned until October 20. At this second meeting, attended by nearly 1,000 people, the extent to which a province-wide campaign was being organized became even more apparent. The Circular was read in French by Morin. Sydney Bellingham, the Protestant Irishman from Montreal who had been active in the suppression of the patriotes, then spoke in English. At the demand of the crowd, Aylwin spoke in French. On a motion by the Quebec anglophone lawyer, seconded by Louis Massue, a retired dry goods merchant, a committee of 39 was struck to circulate the Address throughout the colony. Ten anglophones were on this committee, among whom were Neilson, Aylwin, Marsden and Bellingham, the last no doubt to assist in promoting the Circular in the Montreal region.

35. Quebec Gazette, October 14, 1840

LaFontaine, even if he had not already committed himself to an alliance with the Upper Canadians to secure Responsible Government, could not have followed Neilson's strategy in the first five months of 1840. The whole temper of the situation was radically different in Montreal. The legacy of the event of 1837 and 1838 was much stronger there; while the city itself had been quiet during the rebellion, it had been the centre of the agitation that had lead to the uprisings, and many Montrealers had taken an active part in the revolt. Under the shadow of martial law, divisions were harsher, deeper than in Quebec, and personal taunts and racial slurs more the stuff of political life than reasoned discussion. Nor was there any English-language newspaper through which LaFontaine could have worked to achieve a united front. With the suppression of the Vindicator, Daniel Tracy's old paper, the Tory press had a monopoly of the city's anglophone readers.

 In addition, the Union was popular in English Montreal. After all, it expressed in legislative terms the programme of development to which the city's mercantile leaders had been committed since the Conquest. If in Quebec, so much more disadvantaged by the Act, the merchants had declared for the Union, LaFontaine could have entertained little hope of securing support for criticism of the Union from the traders of Montreal. Accord-

ingly, in his deliberate failure of a petition, so criticized by Neilson, there were no anglophone names on the initial list of signatures.³⁶ Nor was there any English-speaking politicians untainted by rebellion who could lead the attack on the Union. Leslie, DeWitt and Scott had all adhered to Papineau long after Neilson had abandoned him, and so were unacceptable to loyal British Canadians. Thus the Montreal Herald, the organ of the ultra-loyal party, could spend most of the first half of the year in attacks on "John Neilson and the French Party"³⁷ and on "the hallucination respecting 'responsible government' still floating through the brains of the rebels and demi-rebels of Upper Canada."³⁸ By August 16, with the Union all but a fact, the paper could afford the euphoria of victory:

it is not to be concealed that the old landmarks of party will be torn away by the tide of new interests, that will arise from the Union ... We are willing to sink the cry of race which they [the French Canadians] raised in the country, and sounded to the echo amidst fire and blood, if they will come forward honestly and willingly to assist in effecting the good of Canada.³⁹

There were nonetheless undercurrents disturbing this "serene" prospect. After the close of the Special Council's session, the Herald had to condemn "certain political acts" of the Governor, although it praised Thomson's business orientation.⁴⁰ As early, in fact, as April 20, dissatisfaction had started to

36. Quebec Gazette, March 9, 1840 (LaFontaine's anti-Union petition)

37. Montreal Herald, August 12, 1840

38. Montreal Herald, July 31, 1840

39. Montreal Herald, August 16, 1840

40. Montreal Herald, July 3, 1840

appear. A committee of the Montreal Bar Association, presided over by William Walker, an avid Constitutionalist, and composed of such legal figures as LaFontaine and James Smith, presented a report highly critical of the draft judicature ordinance. The Association adopted the report by a vote of 50 to 6.⁴¹

It was, however, the Seminary Ordinance that provoked the greatest disapproval. The whole seigneurie of Montreal had been granted to the Seminaire de St. Sulpice de Paris by the French Crown in order to promote the evangelization of the Indians. After the Conquest, the Sulpicians in Montreal had been severed from the mother house in France, but continued in possession of their considerable estates. A desultory litigation over their rights to do so had been carried on through the intervening eighty years, and attempts to settle the matter by legislation had been unsuccessful. Thomson, with his dislike for loose ends, proposed to confirm the Sulpicians in their seignorial domain, with certain provisions for commutation. The question was potentially extremely divisive; the Governor received petitions bearing 6, 370 signatures for the ordinance and petitions with 2, 119 names against it.⁴²

The obstacles the ordinance posed for speculation in real estate and the problems it presented to raising capital on landed property irritated the Montreal business community, particularly as coming from a man they considered one of their own. In the

41. Quebec Gazette, April 20, 1840

42. MG 11 Co. O. 42, Q 271, pt. 1 pp. 52-4

first four months of 1840, the Montreal Herald published fifteen major articles on the seigneurial system, and on April 7 declared "'Feudal Tenure' will become the watchword of the general elections."⁴³ Nonetheless, the ordinance became law, and in an ironic reversal it was Neilson's Gazette that supported the Governor against the Tory press of Montreal.⁴⁴

By September, however, the Herald, in an overview of Thomson's career, was giving him a firm endorsement.⁴⁵ In the intervening months the possibility of real opposition to the government had materialized. William Walker had declared himself LaFontaine's ally. By July 18, the Canada Times, under the auspices of "Messrs. Walker, LaFontaine & Co., ... truly loyal men and truly British subjects," as the Herald sneered, had published a prospectus, a declaration full of "the leaven of rebellion and democracy."⁴⁶ The paper's first issue did not appear until November 6, but Walker's political intentions were declared. At the end of August, he declared himself a candidate for Montreal on the radical side. After "his barefaced betrayal of the Constitutionals who sent him as their delegate to England," the Herald stated, he could "rely solely upon the wavering and disaffected, the Utopian liberal theorist and the unblushing rebel."⁴⁷ Worse, however, was to follow.

In the Montreal area, public political meetings had been

43. Montreal Herald, April 7, 1840

44. Québec Gazette, March 16, 1840

45. Montreal Herald, September 17, 1840

46. Montreal Herald, July 18, 1840

47. Montreal Herald, August 31, 1840

discredited by the rebellions, with the result that the kind of public organization that Neilson was crafting in Quebec was impractical. Thus, although the election writs could not be issued until after the Union was proclaimed, the last months of 1840 were filled with declarations of candidacy, their withdrawals, and rumours of caballing among various different factions. The issuing of electoral Adresses was so popular that a Mr. Penma issued an advertisement citing his academic credentials, offering to draw up skeleton Adresses to the Electors in English or French for prospective candidates.⁴⁸

Activity of this sort was particularly common in the rural areas outside Montreal, where the dispersion of settlers made mass meetings difficult to organize. Particularly alarming to the Montreal Herald was the report that the inhabitants of Huntingdon were supporting a radical candidate. Among those active were not only W. Hotchkiss, the former member for Laprairie who had voted for the Ninety-Two Resolutions, but also such tried and true loyalists as Col. Loop Odell, who had taken part in the Sherbrooke protest meeting in July. The candidate they were promoting was William Walker, who had quickly realized that his chances in Montreal were slight. Surely, the Herald insisted, these faithful subjects of the Crown had signed Walker's requisition in error, unaware of the change in the lawyer's principles, and would withdraw their support as soon as they knew the truth. A letter to the Montreal Courier, signed by

48. Montreal Herald, September 4, 1840

Loop Odell, Captain Ira Wilson, C. Van Vliet, J. P. and others gave this answer:

We would inform the Editor of the Herald ... that we know of no reaction having taken place in the minds of any of the persons who subscribed the requisition: but quite the reverse ... It would only be such men as Mr. Walker that would meet our approbation (sic), a man that has honesty enough about him to let his real political principles be known, although they differ from the sentiments of what has justly been termed the Family Compact.⁴⁹

Less alarming to Montreal Constitutionals was the rumour towards the end of September that James Smith, another of the lawyers who had protested against the Judicature Ordinance, was to be a candidate in Missisquoi; after all, his political affiliation was still uncertain.⁵⁰ This was certainly not the case with Jacob DeWitt, the veteran patriote. He was seeking election in his pre-Union constituency of Beauharnois.

On the North Shore of the St. Lawrence, similar manoeuvres were under way. William Henry Scott declared his candidacy for Two Mountains at the end of August; the Herald, in reference to his participation in the uprising in St. Eustache, declared "his being a Scotch rebel rendered him ten-fold more guilty in our eyes than a Canadian rebel."⁵¹ His brother James declared himself a candidate in the adjoining constituency of Terrebonne, where he was later to withdraw for LaFontaine.⁵²

Walker's withdrawal left disturbingly open the question

⁴⁹. Quebec Gazette, October 12, 1840, citing the Montreal Courier.

⁵⁰. Quebec Gazette, September 25, 1840

⁵¹. Montreal Herald, August 31, 1840

⁵². Montreal Herald, October 28, 1840

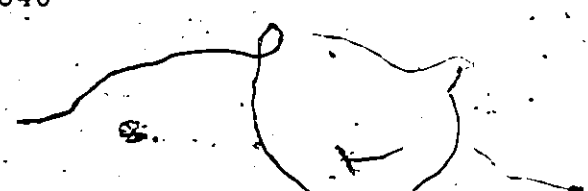
of Montreal's representation. At the end of October, a remarkable rumour was circulation, that William Lunn and David Torrance, two of the most important merchants in the city, along with James Smith, had offered to support the candidacies for the two city seats of James Leslie, another of the original supporters of the Ninety-Two Resolutions, and L.-H. LaFontaine himself. The condition for this support was that they promise to support the repeal of the Seminary Ordinance.⁵³ The Herald had been calling for candidates who would give just such a pledge⁵⁴ but the paper must have been relieved when Lunn, Torrance and Smith wrote to deny the rumour.⁵⁵ The rumour, however, did not die, and on October 27 there appeared in the paper a letter from Thomas McGinn, the City Gaoler and a prominent member of the Irish community of Montreal. McGinn had been invited by Smith to a private meeting where Smith had proposed the possibility of an anti-Seminary Ordinance alliance between "the French Canadians and certain old countrymen, mentioning the names of Lunn and D. Torrance," in order to elect Leslie and LaFontaine.⁵⁶ Finally, a letter from Smith appeared that, while it purported to deny, in fact confirmed much of McGinn's statement. A meeting had been called to bring to an end old antagonisms. Leslie and a French Canadian, evidently Augustin Cuiviller, one of the city's more successful French Canadian traders, were to receive

53. Montreal Herald, October 20, 1840

54. Montreal Herald, September 2, 1840

55. Montreal Herald, October 27, 1840

56. Montreal Herald, October 27, 1840



the support of the British mercantile community.⁵⁷

LaFontaine, of course, would never have been party to this proposal, even if it had been made in all seriousness. To appear as the candidate of the Tory merchant community would have sealed his character as the venu in fieri that the more radical French Canadians were already trying to make him out to be, and to stand on a platform of confiscating the possessions of the influential Seminaire de St. Sulpice would have irrevocably alienated a clergy already too suspicious of him.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, the whole affair was a sign of the uncertainty in the air, particularly among the city's anglophones. When November opened with the rumour that Leslie and Smith were to be the candidates,⁵⁹ it did seem that certain important elements of Montreal's English-speaking elite were hostile to the government, no matter how much they approved of the Union. In the Montreal Courier, for example, Francis G. Johnson, a law partner of the new Solicitor-General Charles Day, was writing articles in favour of Responsible Government and indirectly in favour of Robert Baldwin.⁶⁰ Consequently, the Montreal Herald abandoned the path of conciliation. On October 31, in a belated commentary on LaFontaine's manifesto of February, the paper acknowledged the French Canadian

57. Montreal Herald, October 29, 1840; the identification of Cuiviller as the French Canadian candidate, made difficult by the microfilm of the Herald, is supplied in the Baldwin Papers, Theodore Hart to Robert Baldwin, December 18, 1840.

58. Jacques Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, pp. 59-60.

59. Montreal Herald, November 2, 1840.

60. Baldwin Papers, Theodore Hart to Robert Baldwin, December 18, 1840, January 6, 1841.

lawyer as "the great mouthpiece of the party" and proclaimed, on behalf of the 'British party' that "We did hold out the olive branch of peace, but were not met in a corresponding spirit by the Canadians."⁶¹

Evidently, in both Montreal and Quebec City, there were stirrings of dissatisfaction with the Governor's administration of Canadian affairs. As of yet, however, there was little in the way of centrally directed opposition; the two districts operated in relative isolation from each other. For the opposition in Quebec, the central issue was the Union, while in Montreal LaFontaine, resigned to the Act, was attempting to create a united political force that could co-operate with the Upper Canadian Reformers. Neilson's Circular, although addressed to "all the Electors throughout the province," and endorsed by Morin and Bellingham was but the first step in forging some sort of accord between the two regions. From the fall of 1840 to the spring of 1841, these bridges were multiplied, and, at least along a Montreal-Quebec axis, the basis for a new political machine began to emerge. One of the opposition's most important tactics was the attempt to secure the support of anti-government anglophones of well-established loyalty to the Imperial tie.

One of the most volatile, yet politically useful, communities common to both Montreal and Quebec was the Irish. In the last years under the old constitution, the rift between the French and Irish Canadians had grown as the patriotes became more

⁶¹. Montreal Herald, October 31, 1840

and more militantly anti-immigrant. While by the time of the rebellions, such figures as Dr. Henry Tracy and E. B. O'Callaghan, and some of the residents of St. Columban, still followed Papineau's lead, the most influential Irish figures, men like Benjamin Holmes and Sydney Bellingham, actively supported the government during the insurrections and appear to have kept the bulk of their compatriots at least passively loyal. Such men were still in control of the official organs of the Irish community in 1840. Dominic Daly, the Provincial Secretary for Lower Canada, was President of the Quebec St. Patrick's Society, and his vice-presidents were G. H. Parke, a ship-builder, and Edward Ryan who, with his brother Thomas in Montreal, ran a shipping line. In Montreal, until October at least, the St. Patrick's Society seemed safely loyal under the presidency of Sydney Bellingham.

Nonetheless, through October and November, signs began to multiply that LaFontaine and Neilson might well be able to gain the adhesion of a significant portion of the Irish community. The participation of Irishmen in the first stages of Neilson's anti-Union protest has already been noted; this trend emerged even more clearly with the drafting of the "Circular". While Neilson and Aylwin were the obvious anglophone leaders, of the ten non-French names on the committee to circulate the draft seven were of Irish origin: John Teed, a tailor, M. White, a shoemaker, M. Quigley and M. Connolly, both grocers, another M. Quigley whose occupation is uncertain, and, of course,

Bellingham.⁶² It is again clear that the upper levels of society were not touched by dissent in Quebec. Both Teed and Connolly had been noted for their support of Papineau. As long as the revolt was restricted to small artisans and retail merchants of an already well-established seditious turn of mind, there was hope that the traditional strength of the merchants and ship-builders could maintain the allegiance of the Irish to the pro-government forces in that city.

In Montreal, the position of the Governor was less secure. Even before Bellingham's public adhesion to the anti-Union cause, L. T. Drummond, the rising Irish Catholic lawyer already identified with LaFontaine, had been reported to be a possible anti-government candidate.⁶³ Bellingham himself was anxious to be a candidate for the city as a representative of the Quebec anti-Union movement. While he was also planning to run in Bellechasse as the nominee of the anti-Union committee, this was to give him extra confidence for his contest in Montreal. Bellingham informed Neilson that the Irish were the key to the contest in Montreal, mustering approximately 400 voters. In conclusion, the Montreal Irishman promised the Quebec journalist that he would be "guided by your reply with reference to the contest in this City."⁶⁴ Neilson, while prepared to recommend Bellingham to the voters of Bellechasse, preferred that he run in Montreal; there

⁶². Quebec Gazette, October 21, 1840.

⁶³. Montreal Herald, October 19, 1840.

⁶⁴. Neilson Papers, PAC MG 24 B1, vol. 10, pp.99f, Sydney Bellingham to John Neilson, December 17, 1840

he would be more "valuable."⁶⁵

The defection of the ultra-loyal Bellingham created considerable confusion. Almost immediately after it became known, a meeting of the Irishmen in the city was called to secure unanimity in the upcoming election. That the meeting was called by pro-Unionists concerned over the possible influence of Bellingham's volte-face is indicated by the role of Benjamin Holmes, a determined advocate of the Union, who presided over the meeting. Nonetheless, a motion was passed criticizing seigneurial tenure as an impediment to the development of the country, an apparent attack on the Seminary Ordinance. A committee was struck, on which Holmes sat, to name two candidates who could command the votes of Irish Montrealers.⁶⁶ There is no indication that this committee ever reported. Rumours circulated, among them that James Leslie and James Smith were to be nominated for the Irish vote.⁶⁷ On November 7, however, Holmes' name appeared on a requisition to Attorney-General C. R. Ogden, asking him to stand for Montreal.⁶⁸ Evidently, the committee had failed to reach a consensus.

It was at this time that word reached Lower Canada of a development on the other side of the Atlantic that was to have a profound impact on the political behaviour of the Irish in Canada. On April 15, 1840, Daniel O'Connell, the Irish lawyer

65. Neilson Papers, PAC MG 24 B1, vol. 12, pp. 584ff., John Neilson to Sydney Bellingham, December 23, 1840 (Draft)

66. Montreal Herald, October 28, 1840

67. Montreal Herald, November 2, 1840

68. Montreal Herald, November 7, 1840

who had played such a large part in securing the enfranchisement of Catholics in Great Britain, founded the Loyal National Repeal Association. At first he and his organization attracted little attention. The first meeting, held in Dublin, was attended by a few hundred people. The movement, however, rapidly gathered momentum and a meeting held on October 14 drew a reported 200,000 Irishmen. 'The Great Liberator' was creating a force whose emotional appeal to national pride and political liberty touched Irishmen in Montreal as strongly as in Kilkenny. Given the atmosphere in Lower Canada in the fall of 1840, it was inevitable that both factions would attempt to use the magic power of O'Connell's name. On November 2, a letter signed "O'Connellite" appeared in the Montreal Herald to denounce Leslie and Smith. Warmly seconded by the Herald's editorial comment, the letter denounced the anti-immigration tendencies of the "old faction." None of the patriotes, it was observed, had contributed to the Irish Immigration Fund. Smith was singled out in particular as the nominee of the French.⁶⁹

The advantage, however, in this game lay with the anti-government forces. On November 18 the Quebec Gazette published seven columns reporting a meeting of the Loyal National Repeal Association in Dublin. In an editorial comment Neilson made explicit the parallels between the Irish Act of Union in 1800 that had united Britain and Ireland under one Parliament and the Canadian Act of Union that fused Upper and Lower Canada. The

69. Montreal Herald, November 2, 1840

similarities, at least as painted by the Gazette, were striking. The former had been effected by a corruption so extensive as to obviate the democratic process; the latter had been imposed on Lower Canada by a nominated Special Council. Both had as their central intent the political proscription of a people driven by injustice and abuse to the point of armed rebellion. Finally, both Ireland and Lower Canada were oppressed by a constitution that assigned less representation in the central legislative body than that to which their population entitled them.⁷⁰

The pro-government forces, however, suffered a disadvantage more fundamental than the similarities between the two Union Acts. The 'loyalty cry' had played a central role in giving the Tory faction a popular base, particularly on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence in townships such as Kildare in Berthier, and in the Ottawa Valley.⁷¹ Such new settlements, well back from the largely French Canadian riverfront, as Rawdon in Leinster, Gore in Two Mountains and Brandon in Berthier, had numbers of Irish Protestant and Scottish settlers. For these the Orange Lodges provided a central focus for the emotional and practical needs of immigrants in an essentially foreign country.⁷² To these pioneers, even more than to the Montreal Protestant British,

70. Quebec Gazette, November 18, 1840

71. Cecil J. Houston, William J. Smyth, The Sash Canada Wore, University of Toronto Press, 1980, pp. 53-4. It is possible that these authors understate the significance of the Orange Lodge in these areas. Sydney Bellingham, something of an expert, declared in his Memoirs that there were 16 Orange Lodges in Argenteuil in 1854. (vide "Memoirs of Sydney Bellingham," PAC MG24 B 25, vol. 2, p. 184)

72. Hereward Senior, Orangeism: The Canadian Phase, p. 12

'Repeal' in Ireland, like 'Repeal' in Canada, smacked of treason, a treason as much against the cultural values they had brought with them as against the rule of Great Britain. Thus, while occasional attempts would be made to use O'Connell's name to support the government,⁷³ far more often he was invoked by the opposition.

The Irish were not, however, the only group which had supported the government during the rebellions that LaFontaine and Neilson were trying to influence. There remained the significant bulk of the Constitutionals, many of whom, it was hoped, had become disillusioned with the Governor-General. On November 6, the first issue of the Canada Times appeared in Montreal. Its titular proprietor and publisher was J. J. Willan;⁷⁴ its editor and guiding spirit was William Walker, the ex-Constitutionalist LaFontaine candidate in Huntingdon. With the appearance of this newspaper the network for communicating the views of the LaFontaine-Neilson alliance to Lower Canadian anglophones in the two cities was complete. Indeed, the English wing of LaFontaine's group seemed more solidly established in Montreal than the French, for LaFontaine still lacked an organ that was entirely his own in the latter tongue. L'Aurore des Canadas was under the direction of Denis-Benjamin Viger and La Minerve was not to be re-born until the spring of the following year.

⁷³. Quebec Gazette, February 8, 1840, citing the Quebec Mercury

⁷⁴. Quebec Gazette, November 11, 1840

The appearance of the Times was not an unmixed blessing. Positions had now to be taken publicly that could not but weaken the delicate bonds between the different elements in the anti-government force LaFontaine was trying to build up. For example, the Times attacked John Euston Mills for the policies of the Champlain & St. Lawrence, of which Mills was Chairman.⁷⁵ As Montreal's only railway, the company commanded a great deal of support in the city. Among those involved in it were Peter McGill, the Molson family, William Workman and A. Larocque - the cream of the mercantile elite.⁷⁶ James Leslie and members of his family owned stock in the company later in the decade, but their participation at this period is uncertain.⁷⁷ The paper also rekindled the animosity of the pro-government press. Efforts to link LaFontaine's group with the patriotes redoubled. The Times, the Herald charged, was printed on the presses of Tracy's defunct Vindicator.⁷⁸ The ex-Constitutionalist Walker denied the allegation.⁷⁹ The Herald reminded its readers that Jacob DeWitt, a candidate in Beauharnois, was the same DeWitt who had seconded the Ninety-Two Resolutions.⁸⁰ As such personal accusations became more common, polarization was inevitable.

This approach on the part of the pro-government forces was made necessary by the attempt of LaFontaine to associate

75. Montreal Herald, December 14, 1840, citing the Canada Times.

76. J. J. G. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, pp. 107-126

77. Leslie Family Papers, PAC vol. 3, Estate Papers, Settlements, Stocks, 1848-52

78. Montreal Herald, November 12, 1840

79. Montreal Herald, November 19, 1840

80. Montreal Herald, November 12, 1840

himself with non-patriotes opposed to Thomson. This policy was clearly dangerous, and at least one concerned on-looker wrote to LaFontaine about its possible complications. Francis Hincks, writing from Upper Canada, was confident of victory but concerned about what was to follow. He asked LaFontaine on December 15

If a Reform gov't is formed with really liberal men will not old Neilson oppose it and abuse all who support it. (sic) Is it safe to put such men in Parliament? I have lately heard Mr. Walker spoken of as getting hostile to the rural Canadians, and only playing a game of personal interest. I am unwilling to believe such reports but it is obviously necessary that if you support such men as Walker, Neilson (sic) you ought to know what they will do hereafter.⁸¹

Walker and the Times itself became an increasingly difficult problem. On December 21, the Quebec Gazette reported unspecified changes in the Montreal paper's editorial staff.⁸² This can only refer to the departure of William Walker. Hincks admitted that the Montreal lawyer had been "badly used ... in the Times affair, but it is a pity the matter cannot be accommodated."⁸³ There are no references to Walker's candidacy in Huntingdon after this date, and Augustin Cuiviller, a French Canadian businessman of an independent turn of mind, was left as the only candidate. Walker, during the period of alienation from the Liberals, secured the services of Sydney Bellingham for the Times.⁸⁴ This must have appeared an advantageous change for

81. LaFontaine Papers, Francis Hincks to L. -H. LaFontaine, December 15, 1840

82. Quebec Gazette, December 21, 1840

83. LaFontaine Papers, Francis Hincks to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 29, 1840

84. PAC MG24 B 25, vol. 2, "Memoirs of Sydney Bellingham," p. 125

LaFontaine. Bellingham's credentials as a loyalist were, at least as well established as Walker's, and thus he perpetuated the non-radical image of the opposition. In addition, he also commanded support among the Irish whom Neilson and LaFontaine were attempting to woo. Finally, as an ally of Neilson, he was an expression of the link between the anti-government forces in Montreal and Quebec. Part of the same policy of wooing anti-Thomson loyalists was the acceptance of James Smith as Leslie's running mate in Montreal. Hincks preferred L. T. Drummond,⁸⁵ but it appears that the Irish lawyer through his defence of the patriotes before the Court Martial was too clearly connected with the rebels to secure votes from anti-government anglophones.

In Quebec, things were proceeding more smoothly. With the Gazette under Neilson's control, and the Canadian Colonist edited by T. C. Aylwin, the anti-Union forces were spared some of the internal strife that was rampant in Montreal. Organization was strong enough to follow an orderly nominating procedure, recommended in the "Circular," in which delegates chosen in each parish assembled to choose an anti-Union candidate. Accordingly, Aylwin was nominated in Portneuf and Neilson was chosen as the candidate for Quebec County by a meeting of delegates at Glackemeyer's house. At the end of December a meeting of delegates, acting on advice "from Quebec," chose David Morrison Armstrong as a candidate for Berthier.⁸⁶

⁸⁵. LaFontaine Papers, Francis Hincks to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 29, 1840

⁸⁶. Quebec Gazette, December 30, 1840

Obviously, the delegate system, while overtly democratic, was securely under the control of the "Committee of Electors opposed to the Re-Union Bill."

The selection of candidates for the city itself was a delicate matter, and shows how far Neilson was prepared to go in his effort to secure anti-Union Tory support. On December 9, Neilson's committee met and selected David Burnet and Louis Massue. The latter was eminently respectable and should have been acceptable to those who felt that Quebec as a mercantile city should be represented by a merchant. He was a retired dry-goods dealer, President of the Canada Fire Assurance Company, and one of Sydenham's appointed aldermen. In comparison to Burnet's, however, Massue's qualifications paled into insignificance. An active merchant, a Warden of the Trinity House of Quebec, a Director of the Quebec Branch of the Bank of Montreal and a member of the Committee of Trade, Burnet was described by the Montreal Herald as a Scot, a High Churchman, and "one of the party of which Mr. Chief Justice Robinson of Upper Canada may be considered the leader."⁸⁷ He was in effect exactly the sort of Tory whom Neilson was trying to secure for his anti-Union alliance. On the committee struck to secure the return of Massue and Burnet were Aylwin, Dr. William Marsden, Daniel McCallum - secretary to Massue's insurance company - J. J. Nesbitt the ship-builder and the familiar cluster of Irishmen, small retainers and artisans, including Quigley, Connolly, Teed, W. Ruthven, White,

87. Montreal Herald, December 15, 1840

Miles Kelly, Peter Murphy and William O'Brien. Neilson was of course chairman; equally inevitably, Glackemeyer was secretary.⁸⁸

Burnet's candidacy, then, gave a much needed tone of respectability to the ant-Union committee. So attractive was he in fact that Burnet was approached a week after his nomination by the Committee of pro-Union Electors, who asked if he would give the Union "a fair trial." Burnet's answer shows how far Neilson had modified his position in order to secure a respectable candidate. Burnet stated

however much I disapprove of the Union of the Provinces, I have no wish, now that it is the law, to give it any factious opposition; but I will reserve to myself the right of voting for any amendments that in my opinion may be for the good of the country without reference to party.⁸⁹

This declaration was deemed inadequate by the pro-Union committee, and its members feared that Burnet might have given secret pledges about his future political conduct. This the Quebec Gazette denied. As Neilson reported at the next anti-Union meeting, Burnet could be endorsed despite his preference for an amended Union Act over a return to the old constitution. "That Candidates should so disapprove of the Act as to be of the opinion that it requires to be 'repealed or amended' is all that is insisted upon."⁹⁰ Apart from that, candidates' political principles were of no interest. This catering by Neilson to the Tories concerned the ever-interested Hincks. He wrote to

88. Quebec Gazette, December 11, 1840

89. Quebec Gazette, December 16, 1840

90. Quebec Gazette, December 18, 1840

LaFontaine

I confess I do not see the policy of returning Burnet ... The contest will be between us & the Sydenhamites & Burnet will without any doubt join the latter. Still, if the city is doubtful & that (sic) Burnet will help to bring in Massue & that (sic) the latter is to be relied on it may be well.⁹¹

Despite Hincks' worry, Neilson's anxiety to woo the Tories had sufficiently broadened the base of his political agitation that there no longer existed a flagrant conflict between his organization and LaFontaine's policies. Nonetheless, this policy's very success had stimulated the government's supporters to a renewed determination to keep the line clearly drawn between loyalty and the Union and treason and opposition to Sydenham. Still, on Hincks' note of hope and doubt, the year of 1840 came to its end.

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1841 opened with a lull very much unlike the tumultuous beginning of the preceding year. Doubtless, January was filled with elaborate behind-the-scenes arrangements as the candidates who were soon to present themselves prepared for the election. Despite the calm, however, feelings among the English-speaking Lower Canadians were running high. Dr. William Marsden, an

⁹¹. LaFontaine Papers, Francis Hincks to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 29, 1840

active member of Neilson's committee, was assaulted by C. J. Ford, the foreman of the printers of the Quebec Mercury, a strongly pro-Union newspaper.⁹²

On the fifth of February, the Governor-General, elevated to the peerage under the title of Baron Sydenham, issued a proclamation to the effect that the Union Act would come into force on the 10th of that month. The date, Sydenham commented to the Colonial Secretary, was a propitious one; not only was it the anniversary of the wedding of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, it was also the third anniversary of the suspension by the British Parliament of Lower Canada's constitution, and the seventy-eighth anniversary of the Treaty of Paris. It was also, more practically, the last possible day before a new session of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada would have had to begun.⁹³

On February 15, Sydenham summoned the Assembly of the United Province to meet in Kingston. While the writs proper for the election were not issued until four days later, it was the summons that marked the opening phase of public political activity. On February 16, the Anti-Union Committee in Quebec decided to republish the "Circular" of the preceding fall, not only in the city but throughout the province. It was decided to print the manifesto in the Quebec Gazette, the Gazette de Québec, Le Canadien and the Canadian Colonist, all in Quebec, in L'Aurore

92. Quebec Gazette, January 22, 1841

93. PAC Rg 17 G12 vol. 57, p. 142; Sydenham to Lord John Russell, February 16, 1841

des Canada's, the Canada Times and the Commercial Messenger of Montreal, and, optimistically, in the Sherbrooke Gazette. Discipline and unity, both much needed in the divided opposition camp, were the central themes of the meeting. Candidates were to be obliged, not only to commit themselves to changes in the Union Act, but also to pledge themselves to take their seats at the opening of the session and "not to return home without the consent of the majority of members representing the counties of Lower Canada." The importance of nomination by a convention of delegates was reiterated, and warnings were issued against choosing candidates who might have a personal interest in the Upper Canadian debt.⁹⁴ In response, the pro-Union committee finally chose its own candidates: Henry Black, a prominent and well-connected lawyer, and J. Gibb, a large merchant.

In Montreal as well, the opposition entered the field well in advance of the government. On February 22, Leslie and James Smith, so long named as possible candidates, opened their campaign. Leslie's Address emphasized his adhesion to the province-wide organization, for he promised to join in "every constitutional means that may be proposed to amend" the Act. Smith came out openly for Responsible Government. He supported the Union, but felt it needed modification at the request of the Legislature.⁹⁵

The Herald could scarcely contain its anger. After

94. Quebec Gazette, February 22, 1841

95. Quebec Gazette, February 22, 1841

expressing its surprise that Leslie, a native of Great Britain, could ally himself with the anti-immigration patriotes, it launched into a lyric appeal to violence that bore all the marks of frustrated anger:

The Doric Club, slumbering but not asleep, can again rouse its giant energies to vindicate the honour of the British name, and spread dismay among the ranks of any soi disant pseudo bands of Sons of Liberty ... while the axe handle guards of the Emerald isle, ardent in love as in fight, will show they have not forgotten the insults and injuries which have been heaped upon them by their Canadian enemies.⁹⁶

The need for the support, legal or otherwise, of the Irish community became the dominant concern of the Montreal Tory press. Somewhat more quietly, the pro-government Irish community leaders began to work on LaFontaine's ally, Sydney Bellingham. Bellingham, who had been considering running as an anti-Union candidate, was approached at the end of February by Benjamin Holmes and J. M. Tobin, who asked him stand on a pro-Union platform. The exchange of letters that followed show how the two men undermined the weak link that bound the Irishman to the opposition cause.⁹⁷ On March 2 Bellingham wrote to Holmes to complain that individuals were being given the "character of hostility to the government because they doubt the wisdom evinced in arranging the details of measures which in principle have received their support." Holmes answered with an appeal to racial solidarity: "The whole mass of British electors should go to the poll determined to sustain the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing

96. Montreal Herald, February 22, 1841

97. Montreal Gazette, March 18, 1841 (letters)

but the Bill," for "our adversaries are seeking, as it were by stealth, to sap the foundation of British supremacy by attacking the details of the Bill." Holmes made it very clear that no support could be given to Bellingham unless he pledged himself to maintain the Union. Finally, Bellingham acceded and the editor of LaFontaine's English organ rejoined the Tories. It was becoming quite apparent that the Governor would use all his influence against anyone not prepared to give the Act full and unqualified acceptance.

In the end, it was not Bellingham who entered the lists as Sydenham's candidate in Montreal. The thirty-two year old law student - he was not called to the bar until after the election - was embroiled in a complicated law suit and found the Governor's offer of an immigration commissionership difficult to resist. Not only as the salary a considerable 800l. per annum, but such a position could enable Bellingham to further entrench himself in the immigration-conscious Irish community. Bellingham accordingly retired in favour of Benjamin Holmes. The fact that Bellingham did not finally receive the post may explain yet another later political volte-face.⁹⁸

Very considerable damage was thus done to LaFontaine's organization. While the mercurial William Walker appears to have resumed his role as editor of the Times, seceders from that paper founded the Times and Commercial Advertiser, edited

98. PAC MG 24 B25 vol. 2, Sydney Bellingham, "Memoirs of Sydney Bellingham," p. 125

by Willan Perkins.⁹⁹ The first issue of this new paper appeared on March 6, four months to the day after the first issue of the Canada Times. As the actual election approached, the British wing of the opposition forces in Montreal was in a state of disarray.

Sydenham, no novice in close-fought elections, had another, harsher, blow to deal to the anti-Unionists. On March 4, he issued a proclamation defining the electoral limits of the two cities, Sherbrooke and Trois Rivières. While the separation of the suburbs of Montreal and Quebec from the cities had been rumoured in the fall of the previous year, the extent of the measure was breathtaking. The Governor was aware of how unusual his steps were. To justify himself over a measure he admitted "may be represented to be extremely unjust," he wrote to the Colonial Secretary a long defence of the action. It was of paramount importance that the "commercial interests" be represented; only by excluding the suburbs could he ensure that the anti-commercial French Canadians living around the city would not swamp the true representatives of these mercantile centres.¹⁰⁰ It is worth noting that in Quebec, both anti-government candidates, Burnet and Massue, were merchants, and in Montreal one, Leslie, was a merchant of considerable standing and the other, Smith, an English lawyer. Neilson's and LaFontaine's efforts to

⁹⁹. Quebec Gazette, March 5, 1841

¹⁰⁰. PAC RG7 G12, vol. 57, pp. 168ff, Sydenham to Lord John Russell, February 26, 1841; p. 177, Sydenham to Lord John Russell, March 6, 1841

too moderate anglophones had not convinced the Governor, and Sydenham was quite prepared to impose his preconceptions on the colony.

With victory almost certain, the pro-Union forces in Montreal finally presented their candidates, George Moffatt and Benjamin Holmes. Two stronger candidates would have been difficult to find. The former, apart from his rank as a merchant prince, had been one of the foremost movers of the Constitutional Society; the latter was one of the most influential members of the Irish community as well as the general manager of the Bank of Montreal. Faced with such an opposition and deprived of the support of the suburban French Canadians, Smith's commitment to LaFontaine, never very strong, disintegrated. On March 18 he not only withdrew from the contest but also publicly threw his support behind Moffatt and Holmes.¹⁰¹ Leslie continued on in a loose alliance with an independent Irish candidate, Patrick Brennan, but quickly realized that there was no hope. He withdrew, and was nominated by the delegates of Montreal County.

The Governor-General had succeeded in drawing the broad lines of the election to match his own perceptions. Instead of being a contest between a broad, anti-government alliance and a narrow, reactionary clique, the election was a struggle between loyalty and rebellion with the Union as a central test question. Even LaFontaine's Times listed candidates as pro-

¹⁰¹. Montreal Herald, March 18, 1841

or anti-Union.¹⁰² Only a handful of candidates in the Montreal region, such as LaFontaine in Terrebonne, DeWitt in Beauharnois¹⁰³ and Smith in Montreal had come expressly for Responsible Government. Even on this subject, the vagueness of Lord John Russell's despatch of October 14, 1839 enabled Sydenham to draw support from anglophones who opposed or supported it; thus, the "pretended liberality" of the Governor became to John Neilson simply another way in which the colonists were "to be humbugged."¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the dilution of Neilson's anti-Union stance created uncertainty about the true policy of his faction. Thus, on neither side did there exist a disciplined party outside the two cities. The result was that in many constituencies the election rotated around the balance of local issues and old animosities, given new heat by the emotionalism surrounding the Union.

The election in Berthier is among the most interesting of these contests. In this heavily French Canadian constituency both candidates were anglophones, both were married to French Canadian wives and both were opposed to the Union.¹⁰⁵ David Armstrong declared in his Address to the Electors that, he had been urged by former members for Berthier, including, presumably, his father-in-law, "to continue the support of the liberal

102. Quebec Gazette, March 5, 1841, citing in the Canada Times.

103. Montreal Herald, November 12, 1840

104. Neilson Papers, PAC MG 24 B1, John Neilson to Sydney Bellingham, December 23, 1840 (draft)

105. Quebec Gazette, March 22, 1841 (Berczy's opinion on the Union)

principles of their constituents." He denounced the Special Council's ordinances and opposed the unjust provisions of the Union Act, specifically those relating to the representation of Lower Canada in the Assembly, the provincial debt and the prohibition of the French language in the Legislature. He also called for the reform of the seigneurial system.¹⁰⁶

It was this last element in his platform that distinguished it from the text of the "Circular" and it was on this issue that the election was fought. His opponent was William Berczy, who had gained control of the seigneurie D'Aillebout by marrying one of the daughters of Antoine Panet. Behind him stood David Ramsay, seigneur of part of de Ramsay and probably, but not certainly, John Cuthbert, seigneur of Berthier. In the light of this support, Berczy's anti-Union principles are easily understood. Cuthbert, as a member of the Special Council, had voted with Neilson against the Union bill. The seigneurs supporting Berczy had every reason to be satisfied with the status quo; they drew considerable rents from their lands and could not have been anxious to see increased at their expense the importation of wheat from Upper Canada.

Berczy made clear to his tenants that they would suffer if they supported Armstrong.¹⁰⁷ Recent work has shown the kind of influence control over conceded land gave seigneurs in the

¹⁰⁶. Quebec Gazette, January 6, 1841

¹⁰⁷. Montreal Gazette, April 20, 1841

over-populated French Canadian settlements,¹⁰⁸ and it is evident that Berczy and his supporters used all the influence their position gave them. The long-settled riverfront, however, was more or less immune to such tactics, and the striking force of Berczy's campaign came from the Orange townships of Kildare and Brandon. Berczy was a magistrate in Kildare, and William Morrison, the Crown Lands and Clergy Reserves Agent for the area was Berczy's firm supporter.¹⁰⁹ This gave the seigneur considerable influence over the settlers, many of whom held land the land upon which they voted on a tenure made uncertain by arrears owed to the Crown.

Thus Berczy had the manpower for the violence that was so often decisive in such elections. Inevitably, reports differ as to who initiated it. The Herald reported that 1,000 French Canadians, armed with bludgeons, descended upon thirty or fifty of Berczy's Irish supporters.¹¹⁰ Armstrong's brother Charles, denied this, insisting that it had been Berczy's supporters who had arrived "armed for the fight."¹¹¹ After the first day's poll, which put Armstrong in the lead by 12 votes to 4, the military were called in from Sorel. For the next three days the two sides polled almost vote for vote. Finally, on the fifth day, having exhausted his strength, Berczy resigned.

108. Fernand Ouellet, "Libéré ou Exploité! Le Paysan québécois d'avant 1850," Histoire Sociale/Social History, XIII (26) 1980.

109. Montreal Gazette, April 20, 1841 (letter from D. M. Armstrong)

110. Montreal Herald, March 20, 1841

111. Quebec Gazette, March 22, 1841

Armstrong was then leading by the narrow margin of 559 to 549.¹¹²

It was perhaps in the Montreal District that there is the clearest sign of a centrally-directed organization. The city acted as a source of manpower and direction for the surrounding area. Money was an important factor; the pro-Union faction organized a committee, of which Benjamin Holmes was the treasurer, to raise funds for the elections in Terrebonne, Montreal County and Beauharnois. Nearly a thousand pounds passed through his hands, and he himself admitted that it was only a small portion of the monies expended.¹¹³ Apart from whatever may have been spent directly on bribes, such large sums were necessary to keep open house for government supporters, supplying food, drink and lodgings. Another important expenditure was the hiring of gangs from Glengarry in Upper Canada, Gore, and the road and canal works around Montreal. The Glengarrymen received a dollar a day and all found; the Irish labourers were only paid three shillings a day, and had difficulty in collecting it.¹¹⁴ These gangs were moved from election to election, wherever they were needed.

The most important asset, however, of the pro-Union side was not money, but rather the direct intervention of the Governor-General. Sydenham's role in the election was blatant and

¹¹². Montreal Gazette, March 25, 1841 (Poll results)

¹¹³. Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ 1841, Minutes of Evidence: Benjamin Holmes, ns. 3-5, 13

¹¹⁴. Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ 1841, Minutes of Evidence: Angus Macdonnell, nos. 8-11; E.-M. Leophron, no. 17. One dollar equalled roughly five shillings and a penny.

effective.¹¹⁵ In the Montreal area he appointed Returning Officers who were notorious partisans of the government. He located polls in the back country, near the Scottish, Irish and English settlements, rather than in the densely settled French Canadian riverfront parishes where the vote had been traditionally held. His most interesting contribution to his own victory was the importation of foreign expertise. At a time when the corruption and violence of Irish elections was the subject of light popular literature,¹¹⁶ Sydenham secured the services of Nicholas Fullam, a friend of his legal advisor Edward Dowling. Fullam had "been a very useful man at Elections in Ireland," and as a correspondent of Daniel O'Connell, "possessed great influence over the Irish."¹¹⁷ It appears that his only business in Canada was the election, for he returned to England soon after to pester the Colonial Office for some reward for his efforts.¹¹⁸

Fullam was active in all the elections in the Montreal area in which the Irish played an important role. Beauharnois was one of the most important of these. There, Sydney Bellingham proved his attachment to the government by his activity on behalf of DeWitt's opponent, John William Dunscomb. A number of local

¹¹⁵. Irving Martin Abella, "The 'Sydenham Election' of 1841," CHR XLVII (1966), pp. 327-343

¹¹⁶. e. g. Charles Lever's Charles O'Malley and Samuel Lover's Handy Andy. Both had been published in serial form by 1841 and were extremely popular.

¹¹⁷. Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ 1841, Minutes of Evidence: Samuel Y. Chesley, no. 25; Benjamin Holmes, no. 34

¹¹⁸. C.O. 42, vol. 499, Nicholas Fullam to E. W. Hope, July 19, 1842; Nicholas Fullam to Lord Stanley, July 22, 1842

men, such as R. B. Somerville, had withdrawn from the election to secure unanimity among the British electors.¹¹⁹ Dunscomb, however, was manifestly Sydenham's candidate. His connections with the Montreal mercantile community were strong. His firm was a large wholesale grocery company, and he was editor of the pro-Sydenham Montreal Courier during the election. The Governor had appointed Dunscomb to the Municipal Council of Montreal in 1840, but the merchant resigned almost immediately after. The Montrealer is worth noting as one of the more liberal men the Governor seemed to have preferred over members of the local Tory elites in his attempt to build up a moderate party. The merchant had in fact advanced the very considerable sum of 1,300¹. to H. S. Chapman to support the radical Daily Advertiser in 1833-4.¹²⁰

Dunscomb was a member of the British Reform Club, and this fact enabled Bellingham to promote his candidacy among the Irish. From the hustings Bellingham reminded the electors that O'Connell was a member of the same club and therefore a colleague of the Governor's nominee. Besides, Dunscomb was part Irish by birth. Bellingham proceeded to remind his co-nationalists that DeWitt had voted for a tax on immigration in the old Assembly and was therefore unworthy of Irish support,¹²¹ ignoring the fact that DeWitt had recently been elected Chairman of the Montreal

119. Montreal Herald, December 14, 1840

120. LaFontaine Papers, J. W. Dunscomb to L.-H. LaFontaine, n.d.

121. Montreal Gazette, March 18, 1841

Emigrant Committee.

Violence erupted. While the bulk of Dunscomb's most ferocious partisans were Irish, it is important to note that DeWitt was not without his armed Irish supporters. Sleights full of Irish, English and Scottish supporters of the patriote arrived on the second day of the poll armed with sticks, and among these the Irish were visibly the most active.¹²² Patrick Brennan of Montréal, presumably Leslie's abortive running mate, represented Dewitt on the hustings.¹²³ A letter from "An Irishman" appeared in the Montreal Herald, ~~de~~ saying that "his countrymen had been purchased by a glass of whiskey each" from DeWitt; they had in fact burned him in effigy.¹²⁴ Nonetheless, Dunscomb's forces were stronger and Durham, the location of the poll, was seventeen miles from the St. Lawrence. The final vote, reflecting these distorting factors, was 245 for Dunscomb and 79 for DeWitt, a triumph as much for the antagonisms between the riverfront and the back concessions as for the Union.

The same fate awaited Leslie in Montreal County. Here, the government candidate was A.-M. Delisle, a French Canadian businessman who consented to run as a pro-Unionist out of fear of losing his valuable position as Sheriff of Montreal.¹²⁵ C.-S. Cherrier, Leslie's legal agent in dealing with the mer-

^{122.} Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ 1841, Minutes of Evidence: Charles Larocque, no. 13

^{123.} Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ 1841, Minutes of Evidence: William Bowron, no. 29

^{124.} Montreal Herald, March 16, 1841

^{125.} Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ 1841, Minutes of Evidence: James Brown, no. 2

chant's large seigneurial holdings,¹²⁶ was active in the campaign, for Leslie was not "well acquainted" with French.¹²⁷ The Canada Times and the Montreal Herald¹²⁸ gave different accounts of how the rioting started, but again it is evident that both sides were ready to fight. Leslie's supporters seized the poll after the first day, but Delisle could draw upon reinforcements from Montreal and Terrebonne. An Irish baker was killed in the struggle and this sparked the resentment of the Montreal Irish. Henry Driscoll, Q. C., declared "An Irishman has been killed at the Election ... tomorrow I shall go lead them and we must be not only armed with sticks, but with pistols." Wearing a green ribbon in his hat he was true to his word, and led a detachment of his countrymen out of the city.¹²⁹ Leslie wisely retired from the election.

The election in Terrebonne has become famous as an illustration of Sydenham's tactics. There had been some indications that LaFontaine's moderate stand on the Union and opposition to some of the Governor's actions had gained him a degree of support among English-speaking voters in the county. It was reported that some of the most prominent men in the riding, including the Hon. Roderick M'Kenzie and John Fraser, might support LaFontaine because of the rumoured transfer of the local court from

¹²⁶. Leslie Family Papers, vol. 4, Estate Papers. Land Sales, Rents, Taxes: 1830-1856

¹²⁷. Quebec Gazette, March 26, 1841

¹²⁸. Montreal Herald, March 25, 1841 (also citing the Canada Times)

¹²⁹. Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ 1841, Minutes of Evidence: Deposition of Henry Starnes

Terrebonne to St. Therese.¹³⁰ On March 11, Fraser warned Sydenham in person that Dr. Michael McCulloch, the government's candidate, would not be supported. Sydenham answered that McCulloch would be returned regardless, and added that Fraser "was a young man" and had "better take care" how he voted. In the end, Fraser did vote for McCulloch.¹³¹ Perhaps governmental influence was used so extensively in this election not only to defeat LaFontaine but also, to preserve the apparent solidarity of the pro-Union front.

McCulloch deployed his hired gangs with military precision. As Robert Adamson, one of LaFontaine's most active anglophone supporters, declared, "Never under the canopy of Heaven were assembled such savage Brutes in human form, their yells yet resound in my ears."¹³² The Irish flavour of the contest was noticed by one government partisan, Walter Shanly, a rising engineer, who two years later commented on "the truly Galway-like manner" in which "that famous election" was carried.¹³³ On the other hand, the Montreal lawyer had supporters, some of whom were Irish, who were also prepared for violence. An unsigned letter of March 22 from New Glasgow, the location of the poll, urged LaFontaine on:

¹³⁰. Montreal Herald, March 13, 1841.

¹³¹. Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ 1841, Minutes of Evidence: John Fraser, nos. 4, 7-11.

¹³². LaFontaine Papers, R. Adamson to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 31, 1841.

¹³³. Frank Walker, ed., Daylight Through the Mountain, 1957, The Engineering Institute of Canada, pp. 67-8, Walter Shanly to Frank Shanly, October 28, 1843.

if you can muster 1,000 all will be well, you must arrive prepared/for action as I think you will be attacked at the first don't forget this caution Be of good Cheer I hope all will go well and that you can depend on your old Country British friends here they will stand firm (sic).¹³⁴

In Montreal, L. T. Drummond was trying to use his influence in the Irish community on LaFontaine's behalf.¹³⁵ It was suggested that LaFontaine's Irish supporters were responsible for the trouble. The Returning Officer, John Mackenzie, testified that "there was, and Irish bully at the head of Mr. LaFontaine's supporters, and this bully was the cause of the trouble as he spoke the same language as the other party."¹³⁶ The resources available, however, to the Governor, made any such open battle pointless, and McCulloch was returned.

This was the pattern of elections throughout the District. Such tactics secured the victory of Colonel de Salaberry in Rouville, John Simpson in Vaudreuil, and were employed less successfully on John Yule's behalf against L.-M. Viger in Chambly. In the remote County of Ottawa, for example, the largely English-speaking area to the north of Montreal, Sydenham's Solicitor-General, C. D. Day was elected by 111 votes over Thomas McGoe, a strong partisan of the Reform cause.¹³⁷ Day had the support of the powerful Quebec timber interests who, accor-

¹³⁴. LaFontaine Papers, ? to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 22, 1841

¹³⁵. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 20, 1840

¹³⁶. Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ 1841, Minutes of Evidence: John Mackenzie, no. 88

¹³⁷. Montreal Gazette, March 18, 1841

ding to McGoey some years later, manufactured the requisite number of voters by granting out land.¹³⁸ In all these elections, the frontier communities back from the river, principally settled by Scots and Irishmen, were roused to violence against the French, who were represented as being inimical to the development of new settlements. Indeed, on this more popular level, despite the participation of a few individual anglophones in the opposition's campaign, the election of 1841 in the Montreal area did seem to have turned into a war of race, with the Governor as the British party's commander-in-chief.

It is a clear sign of the priority Sydenham gave to Montreal and the area adjoining Upper Canada that he made no comparable effort to influence the results in the Quebec District,¹³⁹ and consequently matters proceeded much more pacifically there. The Quebec Gazette could cite Aylwin's return by acclamation in Portneuf as proof that, for the French Canadians at least, racial prejudice was not an integral part of the election.¹⁴⁰ Neilson's triumphant acclamation in Quebec County was a matter of course. The election for Quebec City was of particular importance. Here, with Burnet's nomination, Neilson had done his

138. Montreal Pilot, June 14, 1854

139. I. M. Abella, in his article, "The 'Sydenham Election' of 1841," CHR, XLVII (1966), p. 342, states that "The most blatant example of Sydenham's intervention occurred during the Quebec election..." It is difficult, however, to see how the exercise of the government's influence over office-holders in the city - the proof cited of this statement - can be compared with the organized violence and personal interference that took place under Sydenham's aegis in the Montreal District.

140. Quebec Gazette, March 17, 1841

utmost to secure a broad base for his anti-government coalition. Violence played no role in distorting the results, and accordingly it is particularly fortunate that a poll-book has survived for this election.¹⁴¹ Sydenham's exclusion of the largely French-Canadian suburbs was a hard blow to Neilson, but it little affects the value of this document as an index of anglophone voting behaviour in the city.

Neilson continued his arguments in the Gazette along the lines already well-established. Of interest as the only appeal to what might be called a class, rather than a national or political, issue, is a letter that appeared from "A Working Man." Sydenham had curtly dismissed a delegation asking that the seizure of tools for debt be abolished. This proved, the letter declared, that "the working man who is the 'source of all wealth' receives no consideration at Head Quarters." Enfranchised labourers were therefore urged

'Vote not for any Candidate, who would not, under the circumstance of misfortune, hold the tools of the workingman as a sacred as they are held in other countries.'¹⁴²

Neilson, who had been re-elected President of the Mechanics Institute, probably accepted the need to rely on the artisan class for political support. It was doubtless no co-incidence that on the executive of the Mechanics Institute were such partisans as M. Quigley and William Ruthven. Nonetheless, with

¹⁴¹. printed as an appendix to the Report of the Select Committee on the Petition of John William Woolsey and others: Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix NN, A 1841

¹⁴². Quebec Gazette, March 19, 1841

the above-cited exception, no overt appeal to class interest was made during the election. Neilson had, after all, made considerable efforts to gain support among the 'respectable' members of Quebec City's society.¹⁴³

It is interesting that Neilson, so opposed to the introduction of national cries into politics, had no qualms about invoking Irish nationalism in the heat of battle. On March 22, the first day of voting, a letter signed "Fingall" appeared, which exceeded the standards of taste Neilson usually maintained in the Quebec Gazette. Referring to the suicide of the principal architect of the Irish Union, the letter declared prophetically that "The curse of an indigent and plundered people brought the retribution of heaven on Castlereagh; the future historian will record the end of Lord Sydenham." Irishmen were warned against attempting to appease the authorities:

"It will sound well to tell of the active zeal and loyalty of the Irish, and contrast it with the rebellious spirit of the Canadians ... My countrymen, you must not be misled by such calculations ... be true at the poll - Freedom, the Constitution - Canada - O'Connell confide in you - Your victory will gladden your faithful

143. in the Neilson Papers (PAC MG 24 B1, vol.30, p. 000835 n.d.) there is a poem by "A Disenfranchised" asking "Tradesmen" to vote for Massue and Burnet. Three lines read as follows:

Now, becomes your duty to ponder,
Fore making a usurer your choice
And lawyer, as Sydenham's Melander.

This appeal to lower-middle class antipathies against the banking and legal professions was not printed. This may have been because Massue and Burnet, Neilson realized, came from the same economic groups as Black and Gibb; it also may have been because of the execrable quality of the poem.

countrymen.¹⁴⁴

A similar letter, signed "Philo-Fingall," appeared in the Gazette in the middle of the election.¹⁴⁵

The actual process of voting lasted from the 22nd to the 29th of March. On the 25th, Gibb withdrew, thus ensuring that David Burnet would top the poll, although this does not seem to have had any effect on Massue's standing. The results were as follows:

Candidate(s)	No. of Votes	% anglophones
Black & Gibb	338	98
Black	25	92
Gibb	1	100
Gibb & Burnet	10	100
Black & Burnet	126	96
Burnet	2	100
Massue & Burnet	461	35
Black & Massue	4	50
Massue	11	0
Gibb & Massue	2	50

Individual Totals

Burnet	600	28
Black	493	97
Massue	479	37
Gibb	354	97

Total votes cast: anglophone 1288
francophone 635

Note: 58 of Black and Burnet's joint votes were polled after Gibb's retirement. 23 votes were polled for Black alone after Gibb's retirement.

It is evident that Massue brought far more support to Burnet than he received in turn. Sydenham's decree had created a

144. Quebec Gazette, March 22, 1841

145. Quebec Gazette, March 24, 1841

constituency in which anglophones voters were a dominant majority. This artificial majority rallied massively to vote for Black and Gibb, and for Burnet after Gibb's withdrawal. While 35% of the support for the anti-government slate came from English-speaking voters, it also appears that the bulk of this came from the city's Irish. While a full occupational and residential analysis of the poll-books's figures lies outside the scope of this study, the names listed in the poll book make it quite apparent that the upper levels of Quebec's society and the majority of its anglophone inhabitants had endorsed the Governor. Thus, while Sydenham had not secured the same clean sweep as in Montreal, the results could not have been dissatisfying. In addition, Burnet was far from unequivocally opposed to the Union. As noted above, even Francis Hincks expected Burnet to support the Sydenhamite faction in the Assembly.

Two districts of the province, however, lay largely beyond the influence of either Neilson's and LaFontaine's Quebec-Montreal alliance and the Governor's Montreal based policy. The Gaspé and the St. Francis were only partially subject to the cities' sway; as thinly settled frontier communities, their responses to political challenge were conditioned by their own

particular needs.

Throughout the 1830s, Gaspé County had been the political fiefdom of Robert Christie. Christie, a Quebec lawyer and an ardent opponent of the patriotes, had been tireless in the advocacy of the special interests of his constituents. By this advocacy, and an astute alliance with, first the Charles Robin Company,¹⁴⁶ and then with John LeBoutillier & Company,¹⁴⁷ large Jersey firms that played a large central in the economic life of the District, he had become a fixture in the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada. Given the oceanic nature of his constituency and the strong English connections of his patrons, Christie's opposition to Papineau is easily understood. A French republic based on the upper St. Lawrence and looking southward to the United States would have made the Gaspé even more economically and politically marginal. Equally, however, there could have been little in Thomson's grand strategy, with its emphasis on the development of a remote Upper Canada, that could have appealed to Christie, or Gaspé County in general. Although he initially expressed some support for the Union, he finally came out against it.¹⁴⁸ This, combined with his previous strength in the riding, ensured his election by acclamation. Manifestly, however, he continued to be an independent local spokesman, owing nothing to either side.

¹⁴⁶. Jules Bélanger, Marc Desjardins, Yves Frenette, Histoire de la Gaspésie, p. 288

¹⁴⁷. Quebec Gazette, November 19, 1851

¹⁴⁸. Montreal Gazette, March 2, 1841

The region's other electoral district, Bonaventure County, was even more remote, and its internal politics even more unfathomable. John Robinson Hamilton was, like Christie, a lawyer from Quebec City, and had studied law under the arch-Constitutionalists Andrew Stuart and Henry Black. As could be expected, he followed the member for Gaspé in his opposition to Papineau, but his hold on his riding was weaker than that of his older colleague. In 1834 he was defeated by J.-F. Deblois.¹⁴⁹ Nonetheless, he presented himself in 1841 and, again like Christie, came out in opposition to the Union. Despite some violence,¹⁵⁰ he defeated the ministerial candidate, although some office-holders allegedly supported him, knowing that he would ultimately support the government.¹⁵¹

In the same way, the results of the 1841 election in the Eastern Townships reflected a pattern of development largely independent of events in Montreal and Quebec. The Tory hold on the District was not as absolute as has been suggested.¹⁵² The increasing responsiveness of the patriotes to demands for local development in the 1830s had born some fruit. Stanstead was of all the Townships the furthest removed from transportation routes, and contained a French Canadian minority too small to seem threatening. With a large percentage of American-born

¹⁴⁹. F.-J. Audet, "Biographical Notes" PAC MG 30 D1 vol. 15, pp. 66-70.

¹⁵⁰. Irving Martin Abella, "The 'Sydenham Election' of 1841," CHR XLVII (1966), p. 342.

¹⁵¹. Neilson Papers, PAC MG 24 B1 vol. 10, p. 389, "Censor" to the Editor of the Quebec Gazette, June 7, 1842.

¹⁵². J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, p. 74.

residents who might be responsive to democratic rallying-cries, the county was the epicentre of pro-patriote sentiment.¹⁵³ S. H. Dickerson, a native of New Jersey, published the inaptly named British Colonist in Stanstead, where his criticisms of the local authorities resulted in a year in jail. In 1837 as a result of the political climate Dickerson left for the United States, where he stayed for the next decade.¹⁵³ An indication, however, of the Colonist's influence was the election of Marcus Child in 1832. Child, a native of New England who had grown rich in the pharmacy business, voted for the Ninety-Two Resolutions. In 1834 he was defeated by Dr. Moses Colby, a Harvard-educated physician, also a New Englander, but a man with strong links to the local elite. When the rebellion broke out, Colby was active in the militia; Child crossed the border. Unlike Dickerson, however, he returned almost immediately to become a candidate in the election of 1841.

Child's candidacy was not the only indication of discontent in the Townships. As the polarization of the rebellion faded, local leaders became vocal in their representations to the new Governor. Mention has been made above of the district-wide meeting held on July 16th, 1840. One demand made there that was of particular importance was for agricultural protection. Stock breeding was a major activity in the area, for live cattle could be transported on the hoof more easily than grain over the district's rudimentary roads. Since 1833, however, this

153. Montreal Pilot, November 2, 1853 (obituary)

sector of the local economy had been in a decline as the result of American competition.¹⁵⁴ In the depressed economic climate of 1840, the arrest of this erosion was of paramount importance. The Montreal Herald supported the agitation for agricultural protection;¹⁵⁵ the Quebec Gazette opposed it.¹⁵⁶ This division prevented the issue from playing a part in aligning the District with the anti-government forces.

In August, 1840, on his return from the Maritime Provinces, Thomson passed through the St. Francis District. During this tour he received a number of Addresses. As could be expected, the Address from Sherbrooke Town, the district capital and centre of government patronage, was obsequiously loyal in tone. The same can be said of the Address from Melbourne, conveniently located on the St. Francis River. Shefford County, however, presented two Addresses. One, from Waterloo in the heart of the county, simply echoed the sentiments of the others. The second, from Frost Village, somewhat to the east of Waterloo, seized the occasion to advise the Governor of the needs of the area. It made quite clear that with the end of the political crisis improvements in the road system should be forthcoming.

The Address from Stanstead was even more forthright. It looked forward to the time "when we may again be restored to our rights of elective franchise, which, as British subjects

¹⁵⁴. J. I. Little, "The Peaceable Conquest," Ph. D. thesis, 1977, University of Ottawa, p. 44

¹⁵⁵. Montreal Herald, September 28, 1840

¹⁵⁶. Quebec Gazette, July 29, 1840

we have inherited," and spoke of "an evil which cries aloud for redress," the problem of absentee ownership. Also demanded was a railway from St. Jean to Memphrenagog Lake in order to "connect the heart of the Townships with the grand hearts (sic) of the St. Lawrence."¹⁵⁷

The Governor was not very responsive to such demands. He felt very strongly that matters of local development should be taken care of by local authorities, and that the intrusion of such questions into the Legislative Assembly had been a fundamental evil of the old constitution.¹⁵⁸ In fact, Thomson cared little for the whole District, and did not strive to create any sense of personal attachment to himself there as he had done in Upper Canada. To him, Sherbrooke was "a village in the woods,"¹⁵⁹ and while he admitted that "The Eastern Townships, indeed exhibit a healthy & thriving population of British and American settlers," he felt that "the want of Water Communications & the rigour of the climate ... will make their growth slow and set limits to their improvement."¹⁶⁰ Thus, while he counted on the area to return members committed to the Imperial tie,¹⁶¹ he was quite prepared to see the district become a

¹⁵⁷. PAC MG 11 Co. O. 42 Q 273 pt. 2pp. 311ff (forwarded by Thomson to Lord John Russell)

¹⁵⁸. PAC MG 11 Co. O. 42, Q273 pt. 2, p. 277 p. 277, C. P. Thomson to Lord John Russell, September 16, 1840

¹⁵⁹. Paul Knaplund, ed., Letters from Lord Sydenham, Clifton, 1973, p. 74

¹⁶⁰. PAC MG 11, Co. O. 42, Q272 pt. 1, p. 151, C. P. Thomson to Lord John Russell, May 22, 1840

¹⁶¹. PAC RG7 G12 vol. 57, pp. 168f, Sydenham to Lord John Russell, February 26, 1841

backwater in the flow of wheat and timber from Upper Canada.

Accordingly, it needs to be emphasized that if the Townships were impenetrable to LaFontaine's supporters, they were only slightly less opaque to Sydenham. As candidates declared themselves from the September of 1840 onwards, it became apparent that the basic pattern of politics continued to be much the same as under the constitution of 1791. 'Loyalty' and 'Rebellion' played the role of catch-phrases, but the local elites remained in their dominant position. Thus the election of 1841 produced the highest number of resident candidates of any election under the Union.¹⁶²

The elites' continuing strength was most clearly marked in Sherbrooke. In the County, John Moore, a captain in the Royal Navy and a former member, carried his election by acclamation. Edward Hale jr., carried the Town; he also was unopposed. Hale was a resident candidate, but had strong connections with the province-wide elite. His uncle, Jeffery, was a prominent figure in Quebec banking circles, and had been named Receiver-General for Lower Canada by Thomson. A nephew of Lord Amherst, Hale had acted as his private secretary in India.¹⁶³

In Drummond, Robert Nugent Watts presented himself. Watts

¹⁶². R. P. Frye, "Resident Representation," *Memoire*, 1977 M. A., University of Ottawa, pp. 92-3. Frye is incorrect in identifying Daly as a resident candidate. By Daly's own admission, he had been a resident of Quebec City since 1823. see Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1841 Appendix NN: Minutes of Evidence, Dominic Daly, no. 1

¹⁶³. C. O. 42, vol. 492, Sir Charles Bagot to Lord Stanley, April 8, 1842 (description of some of Sydenham's appointments)

was attached to the Civil Secretary's office and thus might have appeared an official government candidate. A more important factor, however, in his success - he too was elected by acclamation - was his position as nephew and heir to Colonel Frederick Heriot, a member of the Special Council, but also one of the largest land-holders in the County.¹⁶⁴ Watts administered the estates of his uncle, then absent in England, and was an extensive resident land owner in his own right. He thus can be considered more a member of the local community than as an officeholder.

Missisquoi produced a more complex situation. James Smith had presented himself as a candidate there but, finding his chances of success slight, had withdrawn. The final contest was between Robert Jones, a former member of the Legislative Council, and Philip H. Moore, a local figure from Phillipsburg in the extreme south-west corner of the county. This contest may have reflected an old division between the two ends of the county, for Thomson received a petition for the transfer of the poll from Frelighsburg, the centre of Loyalist settlement in the riding, to a more central location. Such requests had been made to the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada in 1835. The Assembly had approved the change, but it had been blocked, presumably through Jones' influence, in the Legislative Council.¹⁶⁵ Thomson may have favoured Moore, for when Moore was

¹⁶⁴. Quebec Gazette, September 14, 1840

¹⁶⁵. Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ A 1843
Appendix - Correspondence. petition of February 14, 1841

defeated the Governor almost immediately named him to the Legislative Council, but in the absence of any more specific information this can only be speculation.

The election in Shefford was also carried by acclamation. Here, however, the grasp of the local Family compact appears to have been weaker, for the successful candidate was Stephen Sewell Foster of Frost Village. This was the village that had produced the more aggressive of the two Shefford Addresses mentioned above. There is the same evidence for local polarization in this county as in Missisquoi, petitions for changes in the location of the poll.¹⁶⁶ In his Address to the Electors of Shefford, Foster declared that he was "a Reformer in the truest sense of the word," but also that the Union Act was "the true Reform Bill for the Canadas," and a prelude to all other reforms.¹⁶⁷ He also emphasized the need for an improved road system, echoing Frost Village's Address to the Governor. Foster had arrived in Lower Canada from Massachusettes in 1822 and was one of the first physicians in the area; hence, no doubt, his local influence. His declarations seemed to indicate that, apart from his stance on the Union, he felt no loyalty to the old parti bureaucrate. Accordingly, the Montreal Herald commented hesitantly after his election that "Mr. Foster is said to be a radical."¹⁶⁸

166. Journals of the Legislative Assembly, Appendix JJ A 1843 Appendix - Correspondence

167. Montreal Gazette, November 3, 1840

168. Montreal Herald, April 15, 1841

In Stanstead, the election of 1841 was a repetition of the last election under the old constitution, for Marcus Child and Moses Colby again faced each other in what was to be one of the most heated elections Stanstead had ever seen. When the poll closed, Child had a majority of 42 over Colby after 15 days of polling.¹⁶⁹ At least one bona fide radical had been elected.

Megantic was the exception to the general pattern in the Townships. While most of the other counties had their strongest connections with Montreal, Megantic seems to have been more closely linked to Quebec City. Here, the only candidate was Dominic Daly, the Irish Catholic whom Thomson had appointed Provincial Secretary. One factor made it easy for this resident of Quebec to secure a return by acclamation. While Daly's ability to lobby for roads with the government he represented counted for something, his distinctive role in the Executive Council was as a representative of the colony's Irish Catholics. Nearly a fifth of Megantic's inhabitants were Irish-born; in contrast, they constituted 10% of Sherbrooke County's population and a mere 2% of Stanstead's.¹⁷⁰ Daly, as President of the Quebec City St. Patrick's Society, could draw upon the support of his co-nationalists in Megantic.

Throughout the province as a whole, it is impossible to give any sort of quantitative estimate of what percentage of

¹⁶⁹. Quebec Gazette, April 19, 1842

¹⁷⁰. Census of Lower Canada, Montreal, 1846, Recapitulation by Counties

the English-speaking voters may have supported LaFontaine and Neilson. The number of acclamations, the basis of the franchise, and the distortions introduced by Sydenham's intervention, make any such attempt pointless. The impression given, however, by all accounts is that, on the popular level, the great majority of anglophones supported government candidates. To that extent, Sydenham had succeeded; the linguistic division was the crucial factor in the election.

On the other hand, even as late as March 11, 1841, 11 of the 42 seats allotted to Canada East were being sought by anglophone candidates who either were in agreement with LaFontaine or Neilson, or were unopposed by them because of their general adherence to the joint programme. Of these, seven were elected : Christie, Hamilton, Burnet, Neilson, Aylwin, Armstrong and Child. Only the last represented a predominantly anglophone constituency. If the number of English-speaking members from Canada East was out of proportion to the size of the anglophone minority, even more disproportionate was the number of anti-government anglophone members in relation to the number of anti-government English-speaking electors.

It must yet again be emphasized, however, that on the level of policy, the election of 1841 was fought on the question of the Union. On this issue Sydenham had secured a solid majority. LaFontaine was resigned to the fusion of Upper and Lower Canada, and even Neilson had come to accept that total repeal was unlikely. By April, he was assuring William Hamilton Merritt,

the Upper Canadian entrepreneur-politician, that the adherents to the "Circular" were only bound to ask for amendments to the Union Act "so as to do away with the injustice done to the late Province of Lower Canada."¹⁷¹ No one could predict how the newly-elected members of the United Province would act on the larger and more complex issue of Responsible Government.

¹⁷¹. Neilson Papers, PAC MG 24 B1, vol. 12, p. 591 John Neilson to W. H. Merritt, April 27, 184[1] (Draft)

Chapter III

From Spring, 1841 to Fall, 1842

Sydenham had undoubtedly carried off a considerable victory in the elections. On April 15, the Montreal Herald commented smugly that

The results of the late election must prove to the Canadian leaders that their occupation is gone, and that they must retire into that moral and intellectual insignificance from which extraordinary circumstances alone enabled them to emerge The province is now British in deed as well as in name; and whatever political changes may take place in it, one thing is certain, that it never can again become French.¹

For the opposition forces, no such complacency was possible. The days immediately after the election were spent in cobbling up, as best possible, the alliance between English and French that had been so badly damaged. } The Anti-Union Committee in Quebec passed a motion justifying Massue's resignation and expressing continuing confidence in Burnet. Thanks were particularly given to "the Irish inhabitants and the natives of the United Kingdom, for the honourable stand they have made for the

1. Montreal Herald, April 15, 1841

principles of British freedom and equal rights to all the inhabitants of Canada."2 Massue, in his personal note of thanks, praised his Irish supporters and reiterated the by now familiar comparison between Ireland and Canada East.3

In the Montreal area the opposition's defeat had been almost complete and the divisions between the language groups sharply marked. Nicholas Fullam challenged J.-A. Berthelot, LaFontaine's law partner, to a duel over charges that Fullam had been a paid government agent. The Irish electoral expert's second was Benjamin Holmes; the French Canadian lawyer's was James Smith.4 The duel never took place, as Berthelot apologized, but Smith's part in the affair showed that LaFontaine's supporters were not inclined to hold grudges against those who had defected at the last moment.

With the opening on June 14, 1841 of the first session of the Legislative Assembly, the focus of political action shifted to Kingston. On June 26, Sydenham addressed a long, confidential despatch to Lord John Russell. While distorted by the Governor's irrepressible confidence in himself, this despatch nonetheless gives an interesting perspective on the Assembly.

Party, according to our English sense, can scarcely be said to exist, and the English party names, though adopted here, do not in the slightest degree describe the opinions of those who assume them or to whom they are assigned. They therefore serve only to delude.

The election in Lower Canada of a number of anglophones opposed

2. Quebec Gazette, March 29, 1841

3. Quebec Gazette, March 31, 1841

4. Quebec Gazette, April 12, 1841

to the government had been noticed by Sydenham, but this did not affect his opinions about the basis of politics in the eastern section of the United Province. Racial origin was still the defining principle:

The members returned from Lower Canada may be divided into two Classes - the Canadian and the British - not that either are exclusively composed of one or the other, but from the principles on which they were returned, which, like everything in that Province, was (sic) one of distinction of race. Thus, tho' a person of English origin might be chosen by a purely French constituency, it was because he avowed the most violent exclusively French Canadian principles, and was opposed to the Union.

Not all the 'Canadian' class were irreclaimable extremists, however. While some were members of the old parti patriote, there were those, the Governor felt, who were "not desirous of having those scenes renewed" that had marked the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada. These would "undoubtedly become moderate ... Until however the question of the Union was disposed of, they would remain united with the others."⁵ The first session was accordingly marked by Sydenham's efforts to expand and define his 'moderate' party; consequently, it also made clear the efforts of the opposition to maintain its coherence. These two conflicting strategies helped to define the role of the Lower Canadian anglophone members.

The behaviour of the seven British Canadian oppositionists from Canada East - Neilson, Aylwin, Armstrong, Christie, Hamilton, Burnet and Child - can be examined in the light of

5. PAC RG 7, G12, vol. 57, Sydenham to Lord John Russell, June 26, 1841

Sydenham's analysis. The 'question of the Union' was inevitably one of the first and most important issues to which the Assembly addressed itself. On June 23, Neilson proposed an amendment to the Address in reply to Sydenham's speech opening the session. The motion expressed regret that Lower Canada had not been properly consulted on the Union, and that the Act contained features "which are inconsistent with justice, and common rights of British subjects." This was no clarion call for repeal, and it matched the moderate platform on which the opposition had campaigned. Nonetheless, it was rejected by a vote of 50 to 25.⁶ Only a small knot of Baldwin's supporters, six in number, gave the member for Quebec County any support from Upper Canada: Aylwin, Armstrong, Christie and Hamilton voted with Neilson. Child abstained, and Burnet, as Hincks had anticipated, aligned himself with the government. On two subsequent amendments, proposed by Hincks and Malcolm Cameron, Child voted with the ministerial majority on both, and Hamilton abstained on the first, and voted with the government on the second.

The other major discussion of the Union came near the end of the session. Focussed on the financial details of the Act, the provincial debt and the Civil List, it was a longer and more complex debate than the one in June. On September 7, S. B. Harrison, the Secretary for Canada West, introduced a motion concerning the 1, 500, 000⁰¹. loan for which Sydenham had secured

6. Elizabeth Gibbs, gen. ed., Debates of the Legislative Assembly, (hereafter cited as DLA), vol. 1, p. 117, June 23, 1841

an Imperial guarantee. Neilson, seconded by Aylwin, moved an amendment "to omit any acknowledgement which it may contain of any public debt not contracted by and with the consent of the Representatives of the people of the late Province of Lower Canada."⁷ Armstrong was out of the House for the whole debate, but his absence was compensated for by the return to the opposition fold of Marcus Child. Burnet, consistent with his declarations during the election, supported Neilson on this question of a detail of the Union. Aylwin and Christie, as they had throughout the sitting, supported the opposition side. Much the same division ensued on a subsequent motion by Aylwin, seconded by Neilson, to restrict the proceeds of the loan to the refinancing of the public debt and the improvement of the St. Lawrence system. Coming to the support of the opposition on this vote was George Moffatt, who no doubt feared the waste of this windfall on local works in Upper Canada.

Debate was renewed, later in the day, when a message about the Provincial Estimates was received from the Governor. Neilson seconded by Baldwin, introduced a motion declaring "all aids and supplies granted to Her Majesty are the sole gift of the Assembly,"⁸ thus condemning the Civil List provided for in the Union Act. The Attorney-General for Canada West, William Henry Draper, hoped to bring such delays to an end. He moved in amendment to Neilson's motion that

7. DLA, vol. 1, p. 843, September 7, 1841

8. DLA, vol. 1, p. 849, September 7, 1841

during the first Session of the Parliament of the Province of Canada under the Act of Union, it is not expedient to enter into any discussion of the principles upon which that measure was framed, or to express a premature condemnation of its details.⁹

Child voted with the government; Burnet sided with Aylwin, Christie, and Neilson. Draper's amendment was carried by a vote of 35 to 29. The Attorney-General's strategy was unsuccessful, for Neilson and Baldwin introduced another motion to the same effect. Again, Draper moved an amendment calling for "conclusions which will be based on experience" rather than a priori principles.¹⁰ Moffatt joined the opposition, and as a result of abstentions on the government's side the result of the vote was 29 to 29. Augustin Cuiviller, as Speaker, cast his vote against Draper's amendment, thus defeating it. Neilson's original motion was carried, again by the Speaker's casting vote, by a division of 30 to 30. This was the sole, small victory of the anti-Union forces.

What did all these votes mean? Manifestly, Sydenham had succeeded in securing a working majority of moderates who were prepared to defend the Union. It also clear that the opposition anglophones had failed to maintain their coherence. Aylwin, Armstrong, Christie and Neilson alone were prepared to wage war à l'outrance against the Act; Burnet was prepared to oppose only certain aspects of the Union. Of the original seven anglophone Lower Canadian members, Child and Hamilton sided more

9. DLA, vol. 1, p. 851, September 7, 1841

10. DLA, vol. 1, p. 864, September 8, 1841

or less consistently with the Governor.

Hamilton, in fact, had been early and completely lost to the opposition. While he had supported Neilson's amendment of June 23, 1841, his relations with the other anti-Unionists, and Christie in particular, quickly deteriorated. In July, Christie had presented a ferocious attack on Judge John Gawler Thomson of the Gaspé District, charging him with drunkenness and partiality. This was an old, bitter, local quarrell and it is clear that Hamilton was a partisan of Thomson's faction. The exchange in the House was so heated that Christie challenged Hamilton to a duel.¹² During the session, the Executive was courting this potential dissident. Hamilton was appointed on January 4, 1842 to the wardenship of the municipal district of Bonaventure. He became a consistent ministerialist, but the government did not gain much by this purchase, for Hamilton's attendance in the House became increasingly infrequent.

Child's situation was more complex. Unlike Hamilton, he had had a long experience of opposition's exclusion from patronage. Morin and Viger were more familiar political colleagues than Moffatt and Ogden. Yet on most divisions he supported the Ministry. In a speech on Draper's amendment to Neilson's motion of September 7, he explained his position on the

11. Jules Bélanger, Marc Desjardins, Yves Frenette, Histoire de la Gaspésie, p. 281. In their outline of the 1835 attempt to secure the dismissal of Judge Thompson (sic), these authors identify the judge as a friend of Robert Christie. If this is true, clearly by 1841 Christie had changed sides.

12. Quebec Gazette, July 13, 1841

Union:

I am fully persuaded, Mr. Speaker, that no hon. member in this house, or out of it, will undertake to defend that Act on the grounds of justice - I believe that is impossible. The authors and greatest supporters of it, do not pretend it is, in its details, just ... The hon. member for Port-Neuf (sic) [Aylwin] has stated ... that all Lower Canada opposed the Union. I must correct that statement, as far as the people I have the honor to represent are concerned. They do not oppose the Union - the principle they are willing and prepared to support. They do not agree with some of the provisions of the Union Act ... I do not consider this a proper time to attack the provisions of the Union Act, - the time is not well chosen ... The Union has taken place - the act is not ours; - If it works well the advantages are ours and the honor of its success belong (sic) to its authors, - if it fails, the odium of its failure will belong to its authors ... but we will give it a fair trial and yield a passive assent.¹³

Evidently, the member for Stanstead was one of those who, seeing that for the time being opposition was futile, preferred to co-operate with the Governor.

The Union was not, however, the only issue discussed in the first session of the Assembly. Other questions, unconnected with the Act but nonetheless dangerous to the government, were raised and upon these topics the opposition gained some considerable successes. One that touched the Governor particularly closely was the manner in which the general election had been waged. A very large part of the first half of the session was occupied in considering the details of the numerous contested returns that Sydenham's interference had occasioned in both sections of the Province. Uncertainties about the exact legal form for protests against sitting members, resulting from an

13. DLA, vol. 1, p. 863, September 8, 1841

unclear phrase in the Lower Canadian election law, threatened to bar automatically some of the petitions from Canada East. When it was proposed in the House on July 19 to waive such technicalities, it can be understood that the government would be hostile; the less Sydenham's actions were investigated, the less embarrassing for his Executive Council. Despite the Ministry's concerted opposition, the motion passed by a vote of 32 to 22.¹⁴

Another proposal was introduced that, while it did not criticize the government directly, nonetheless was of use to an opposition badly hurt in the elections by the 'loyalty' cry. On the motion of the ultra-loyal but unpredictable Col. John Prince of Essex, it was resolved to ask the Crown to pardon as many of those who had been involved in the rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada "as may be compatible with the safety of the Crown and this Province." Opposition came from Solicitor-General Day and Attorney-General Ogden, both for Canada East. The motion, however passed. Among the Lower Canadian anglophones voting for it were not only Armstrong, Aylwin, Neilson Christie and Child, but also John Simpson, the Sydenhamite member for Vaudreuil, and the flexible Provincial Secretary, Dominic Daly.¹⁵

Some success was also achieved in amending or repealing some of the ordinances of the penultimate session of the Special Council. In particular, the implementation of the Sleigh Ordinance was delayed in certain regions. However, these

14. DLA, vol. 1, pp. 343-4, July 19, 1841

15. DLA, vol. 1, p. 733, August 30, 1841

changes were achieved without any particular opposition from the government majority.

It appears then that on issues apart from that of the Union itself, the Ministry was neither as united nor as powerful as its numbers in the House might have indicated. There was, however, an issue that, while it did not directly spring from the Province's new constitution, was closely allied to it, and was to have considerable political significance. This was the legislation of the very last sitting of the Special Council of Lower Canada.

The Council rose for the last time on February 9, 1841, the day before the Union Act came into effect; thus its ordinances played only a limited role in the campaign before the general election. One, establishing central offices of record for details of land tenure, was generally popular among anglophones. It facilitated transactions in real estate by ensuring specific knowledge of the burdens that might lie on a particular piece of property. The ordinance was in fact endorsed by two of Neilson's strongest partisans, Daniel McCallum and, somewhat less forcefully, T. C. Aylwin.¹⁶ The ordinance had been attacked in the Canada Times and the Quebec Gazette reprinted the article,¹⁷ but in neither city was the measure as fundamental an issue for the British as it was for the French Canadians, who could see in it an attack on their legal system.

16. Quebec Gazette, April 6, 10, 1840

17. Quebec Gazette, November 25, 1840

The second important piece of legislation, the District Councils Ordinance, was an entirely different matter. Sydenham had wished to include provisions in the Union Act for local government, and was extremely vexed when these were struck out of his draft bill in London. For him, local responsibility for purely local development and education was central to his vision of the new political order for the province.¹⁸ Consequently, he used the Special Council to fill this irritating lacuna. The ordinance reflected the Governor's penchant for centralization. The provincial Executive was empowered to appoint the Districts' Wardens and a number of other local officials. The councillors were to be elected, but if a District delayed unnecessarily in electing its representatives, the government could act unilaterally. Sydenham was conscious of the explosive nature of this kind of measure. He postponed the proclamation of the ordinance and the division of Lower Canada into districts "in order not to interfere with the General Elections."¹⁹ Setting the boundaries of such jurisdictions and choosing their chefs-lieux could not but offend local sensibilities; appointments to the places thus created were an equally delicate problem. The Governor was wise to delay.

The ordinance only covered Lower Canada of course, and Sydenham was anxious to provide Canada West with the same

18. PAC MG 11. C. O. 42 Q273 pt. 2 C. P. Thomson to Lord John Russell, September 16, 1840

19. PAC RG 7 G 12, vol 57, Sydenham to Lord John Russell, March 15, 1841

framework of local government. When legislation to this end was introduced in the Assembly in August, it enabled the Lower Canadian opposition, in alliance with Baldwin's Reformers, to open up debate on the Special Council's measure. A.-N. Morin, seconded by Baldwin, moved that the Committee of the Whole on the Upper Canadian bill be instructed to inquire if it was "expedient to repeal or amend" the Lower Canadian legislation.²⁰ The motion carried by a vote of 46 to 24. Among the 23 members from Canada East in the majority were nine anglophones. The support of Armstrong, Aylwin, Christie and Neilson was to have been expected, and that of Burnet and Child might have been hoped for, but a surprising adhesion came from George Moffatt, John Moore of Sherbrooke Town and John Yule of Chambly, another member whose election had been ensured by Sydenham's interference. It is to be noted that all members of the Executive Council voting opposed the motion.

This signal victory was not followed by any other. Specific amendments to the bill, including some with direct reference to the Lower Canadian situation, were defeated with Aylwin, Neilson, Armstrong and Christie and occasionally Moffatt, the only anglophones in the minority. As will be shown below, however, the whole question was far from settled.

The session closed on September 18. Early in the morning of the next day, Lord Sydenham died. The Governor's fall from his horse did not change the path of Canadian politics - he

20. DLA, vol. 1, p. 516, August 5, 1841.

had already submitted his resignation to the Imperial Government - but nonetheless his death constituted a symbolically appropriate end for the first session of the Assembly he had done so much to shape. Thus it is proper to consider the nature of the first session in so far as it formed a point in the emergence of a political pattern for the United Province and, more particularly, as it affected the role of the anglophone oppositionists from Canada East.

One fact emerges very clearly. Neilson was the undoubted parliamentary leader of the Lower Canadian minority. Closely seconded by T. C. Aylwin, his motions and speeches set the mold for the opposition's strategy. In a letter to Francis Hincks, A.-N. Morin, conceding explicitly the fact of Neilson's leadership, outlined two of the reasons for this. His activities with the Quebec Anti-Union Committee had given him such popular prestige that Morin admitted to Hincks that if LaFontaine's closest allies "were to support a Government ready to do justice to Lower Canada, and he were to oppose it, we could not go on easily." Also, as a result of Sydenham's greater activity in the Montreal area, LaFontaine and such supporters as Leslie were not in the House.²¹ In addition, it must be remembered that as a result of both the Act of Union and Sydenham's electioneering, the language of most common use in the House was English, and

21. A.-N. Morin to Francis Hincks, May 8, 1841, printed in Sir Francis Hincks, Reminiscences of His Public Life, (Montreal, 1884), p. 51

many of the French Canadian members, Morin included,²² were not entirely at home in that language. Thus it was easier for Neilson and his anglophone allies to take a leading part. It must be remembered that while the English-speaking Lower Canadian oppositionists ranged in number from four to seven, depending upon the issue and therefor might seem numerically insignificant, they constituted from a fifth to a third of the entire opposition delegation from Canada East. They were thus proportionately, if not absolutely, important in any plans made about opposition strategy. Most of them were more closely connected with the editor of the Quebec Gazette than with any other leader; Aylwin was Neilson's particular lieutenant, Armstrong had looked more to the Quebec anti-Union Committee during his election than to Montreal, and Christie, a Quebecker and formerly virulently opposed to the patriotes, no doubt felt more at ease with Neilson and Aylwin than with Viger and Morin. Perhaps most important, if least explicit, it was vital for the opposition to demonstrate that at least potentially its Lower Canadian wing was not merely a racial clique, and the prominence of Neilson and Aylwin helped to make this clear.

Neilson's leadership had important consequences for the opposition, for he followed in the House the same strategy he had pursued in the election, that of wooing anti-Union Tories. Thus, while Morin urged Hincks, and through him Baldwin, not

22. A.-N. Morin to Francis Hincks, May 8, 1841, in Sir Francis Hincks, op. cit., p. 50

to rupture the fragile alliance between the Lower Canadian Liberals and the Upper Canadian Reformers,²³ the member for Quebec County also found support for many of his attacks on the Ministry from such Upper Canadian Tories as Sir Allan MacNab. It is to be remembered, too, that George Moffatt, the Montreal Tory, occasionally supported Neilson. What John Steele, the member for Simcoe, wittily described as "a triple, though not a holy alliance,"²⁴ was composed of Upper Canadian Radicals, Tories and French Canadians. Given that Sydenham had secured his majority by turning his back on precisely these groups, Neilson and his supporters were condemned to a futile opposition. Practically minded men, such as Francis Hincks, were affected by the business-like attitude of the Governor. John Ross of Belleville outlined to Baldwin the techniques used by the Lower Canadian Sydenhamites of Montreal to win over a key Reformer, Francis Hincks:

Dunscombe (sic) [of Beauharnois] and Holmes have acquired some influence over Hincks by paying a great deal of deference to his opinions on fiscal matters and are at the same time harping upon the opposition of the French Canadians to his favourite schemes their impracticability (sic) opposition to improvement & all that sort of stuff.²⁵

In the end, this process resulted in the secession of Hincks, albeit only temporarily, from Reform ranks.

On the other hand, it is important to emphasize that Neilson

23. A.-N. Morin to Francis Hincks, in Sir Francis Hincks, op. cit., pp. 51-53

24. DLA, vol. 1, p. 523, August 5, 1841

25. Baldwin Papers, John Ross to Robert Baldwin, August 27, 1841

was not absolutely inflexible on anything apart from changes to the Union Act. He was not, for example, rigid on the question of Responsible Government. At the opening of the session, Sydenham had written to Lord John Russell, saying that there was no fear of any general alliance between the French Canadians and the Reformers of Upper Canada. "The Canadians are opposed to the Union - care nothing about responsible Government which the Upper Canadians are so thankful for having conceded to them to the intent of your Lordship's despatch."²⁶ At first, the proceedings in the Assembly confirmed this view. On June 25, when the formation of a number of Standing Committees was proposed, Attorney-General Ogden opposed the motion. Such committees had been the traditional means by which the House had expressed itself under the old constitution; now that the Administration was responsible to the Assembly, the Executive Council was the proper organ for the formation of policy.²⁷ When the vote was taken, Baldwin and his supporters, as well as Marcus Child, sided with the government. Neilson and his allies, French and English, found themselves in the unfamiliar company of Henry Black, Edward Hale, George Moffatt and John Yule, the crème of the old Tory Lower Canadian élite. Throughout the session, the Quebec Gazette denounced the corruption and autocracy of the government as an illustration of the nature of Responsible Government.

26. PAC RG 7 G12, vol. 57, Sydenham to Lord John Russell, June 26, 1841

27. DLA, vol. 1, p. 149, June 25, 1841

Three months of co-operation with Robert Baldwin, however, surely the best-known advocate of that system, appears to have modified Neilson's point of view. On September 3, the famous Responsible Government resolutions were introduced by Robert Baldwin and D.-B. Viger, with amendments by S. B. Harrison and M.-A. de Salaberry. With one exception, the motions and amendments were adopted unanimously. That exception was the amendment proposed by Harrison that the provincial Administration should be composed of men "possessed of the confidence of the representatives of the people."²⁸ It was carried by a vote of 56 to 7. Burnet, Moffatt and R. N. Watts were the only Lower Canadians in the minority; the majority included not only the entire Ministry and their usual supporters but also Aylwin, Christie, Neilson and all the French Canadians in the House. As later events would make clear, a distinction was emerging in Neilson's mind between Sydenham's 'Responsible Government' and Baldwin's 'Reform' principles. Nor was Neilson as yet anxious to break with LaFontaine. When LaFontaine was elected in the Fourth Riding of York, the Gazette was loud in its acclamations.²⁹

It was apparent that for the foreseeable future, the Assembly would be dominated by the moderate block. With the 'question of the Union' so patently settled and Responsible Government evidently an accepted principle, Sydenham's faction no

28. DLA, vol. 1, p. 791, September 3, 1841

29. Quebec Gazette, September 27, 1841

longer possessed a unifying platform; the Governor's death removed the dominating force of a strong personality. A vacuum thus existed in the leadership of the House. Power would belong to whoever could fill that void.

Political activity outside the Assembly did not wait for the end of the session to commence. In the face of the opposition's failure to weaken the government's position in the Legislature, only by maintaining a popular agitation could the forces opposed to Sydenham hope to maintain their coherence. Indeed, there appears to have been a concerted plan of action between the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition. For example, on July 9, three days before Price introduced his motion calling for a pardon for the rebels of 1837 and 1838, a public meeting was held in Quebec to draft a petition for just such a pardon. The activists were the same men who had played a leading part in the anti-Union campaign, men like Woolsey, Ruthven, Quigley and Teed.³⁰

It was, however, over the District Councils Ordinance and the proposal for a new school law that the most sustained and all-embracing agitation was coordinated. Both measures were

30. Quebec Gazette, June 23, 1841

premised on local taxation as the basis for local institutions. Three characteristics marked the agitation that stretched from August, 1841 to the opening of the second session, late in 1842. It was province-wide; it was openly partisan; and it was carefully bilingual.

The first meeting on the ordinance and the school law was held in St. Sylvestre in Lotbinière. A certain Neil Mulvaney presided over an assembly that denounced the extravagance and patronage inherent in the District Councils Ordinance.³¹ The participation of Irishmen in a meeting so close to the border of Dominic Daly's stronghold in Megantic was an important harbinger. Popular resistance in St. Marie Nouvelle Beauce, also near Megantic, made the role of Irish explicit. Resentment against proposals for local taxation provoked such a heated reaction there that the Quebec Gazette expressed the following hope:

we have no doubt that our Irish friends, should they even (sic) see in Canada what they have seen in Ireland, the poor man's effects sold for cess, rates and claims, levied upon them without the consent of their representatives, that (sic) they will set the example of peaceable submission, recollecting that Justice has rarely been obtained by acts of popular violence.³²

A meeting of landholders in Frampton and Cranbourne observed that the area was settled by Irishmen "who have fled from their native land in consequence of the heavy burden of taxation" and that they would not tolerate a similar oppression in the

31. Quebec Gazette, September 1, 1841

32. Quebec Gazette, December 3, 1841

land of their adoption.³³

Report after report of such meetings appeared. It is interesting to note that the Councils themselves, popularly elected, often served as the mouthpieces of protest against the legislation that had created them. By March of 1842 the Quebec Gazette could list twenty-four District Councils that variously had not reported, had met but refused to do business, or passed resolutions against the Special Council's ordinances. In addition, Sherbrooke and Missisquoi asked not only for amendments to the District Council and School laws, but also passed by-laws taxing wild lands. These taxes were declared illegal by the Crown lawyers.³⁴

Members of the parliamentary opposition played an important role in directing these activities. D. M. Armstrong arranged to be elected to Berthier's Council in order to lead the fight against Berthelemi Joliette, the seigneur-industrialist named to the wardenship.³⁵ Retribution for delinquency in the Assembly was meted out. Anglophones like Hamilton were not the only Lower Canadians who proved susceptible to ministerial influence. Antoine-Charles Taschereau had sided with the government on a number of important votes, among which were those on Neilson's anti-Union resolutions and on the Upper Canadian District Councils Act. T. C. Aylwin and Etienne Parent were invited to a meeting in Taschereau's county of Dorchester. There, the

33. Quebec Gazette, January 12, 1842

34. Quebec Gazette, March 25, 1842

35. Canada Times, December 13, 1841

sitting member was condemned in absentia for a breach of contract with his constituents.³⁶ Similarly, when J.-E. Turcotte's acceptance of office forced him to seek re-election in St. Maurice, a meeting drew a large crowd "in consequence of a rumour that MR. ARMSTRONG, member for Berthier, would appear there against Mr. Turcot's (sic) re-election."³⁷

Such meetings took place throughout Lower Canada. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that one feature of the protest, its strongly bilingual nature, was pre-concerted. At a meeting in Terrebonne, where the District Council had already passed resolutions condemning the ordinance and applauding the Fourth Riding of York for its election of LaFontaine, a public meeting was held at the end of January. Both a French and British Chairman were chosen to preside over "more than one thousand honest and independent British, Irish and Canadian electors." Resolutions, with movers and seconders from the two language groups, were passed in celebration of LaFontaine's election in Upper Canada.³⁸ Similarly, a petition from the Saguenay against the government's choice of a district capital was produced by M.-P. de Salles Laterrière and Paul Kane.³⁹ In L'Islet, Lieut.-Col. Simon Fraser, one of the hundred-odd anglophone residents of the county, presided over a meeting to protest against the by now familiar list of ordinances.⁴⁰

36. Quebec Gazette, January 3, 1842

37. Quebec Gazette, June 8, 1842

38. Quebec Gazette, February 18, 1842, citing the Times.

39. Quebec Gazette, March 4, 1842

40. Quebec Gazette, February 21, 1842

The proceeding in the Gaspé District show in miniature the structure of the agitation. The local elections in the Districts of Gaspé and Bonaventure were held later in the year than elsewhere, as the area had originally been exempted from the application of the ordinance. In settlements such as Paspébiac, New Carlisle, Hope and Hamilton, electors assembled to choose councillors. Men opposed to the ordinance were nominated, and John R. Hamilton was almost invariably attacked for his acceptance of office as Warden of Bonaventure, his failure to oppose the Upper Canadian municipal bill and his general neglect of his constituents interests. David LeBoutillier, a prominent Jersey-born merchant, had been named Warden for Gaspé but, as he opposed the ordinance, he was generally supported. Meetings tended to be predominantly either English or French, but at each assembly motions were adopted endorsing the resolutions presented and candidates chosen at meetings held previously by the other language group.⁴¹ Even in meetings in Bonaventure, Hamilton's county, Robert Christie took an active part in the anti-District Councils agitation. "Censor" admitted to the editor of the Quebec Gazette that Christie's activity may have been motivated by personal considerations, but insisted upon his popularity throughout the entire District.⁴²

Thus, from the eastern extremity of Lower Canada to the

41. Quebec Gazette, March 9, (New Carlisle, Port Daniel, Paspébiac); March 16 (Hope, Hamilton); April 6; 20, 1842

42. Neilson Papers, PAC MG 24 B1, vol. 10, pp. 389ff., "Censor" to the Editor, June 7, 1842

Upper Canadian border, a popular movement under the direction of the parliamentary opposition was under way. If sustained and extended, it would paralyze by passive resistance an important area of government policy. The fear of taxation, as much a characteristic of British pioneer settlements as of the French Canadian seigneuries, made the District Council Ordinance and the proposed school law much more specific and compelling issues than the rather abstract questions of the Union Act or Responsible Government. It was by conjoining such specific grievances with the larger theoretical questions that the editor of Quebec Gazette brought all parts of Canada East within the reach of a common political structure.

Neilson used the same tactics as in the movement against the Sleigh Ordinance to ensure the new agitation was based in Quebec. In October, 1841, a committee was organized in Quebec City to agitate against the taxes about to be imposed by the appointed Municipal Council. Again, the members of the Anti-Union Committee, A.-N. Morin, T. C. Aylwin, J. W. Woolsey and John Teed were prominent.⁴³ Early in the next year, as a number of by-elections approached, the "Circular to the Electors" was reprinted.⁴⁴ This document, however, was now somewhat out of date, and on March 15 yet another meeting was held at the Glacis School House. Called by the Anti-Union Committee of 1840,⁴⁵

43. Quebec Gazette, October 4 (requisition for the meeting); October 8 (proceedings), 1841

44. Quebec Gazette, February 2, 1842

45. Quebec Gazette, March 9, 1842

it attacked all the legislation of the Special Council, including the Registry and District Councils Ordinances. A "Second Letter of the Electors of Quebec to the Electors throughout the Province" was drafted. This circular placed more emphasis on the Special Council's acts and Sydenham's conduct than on the question of the Union. The various ordinances were denounced, and the use of corruption in the general election was outlined. A striking aspect of the letter was its attack on local taxation. Local self-help in education with schools based on voluntary contributions, was urged and the 1824 écoles des fabriques was cited as a model. Furthermore, the extension of the same principle to "all that concerns the common weal" was demanded. Each resolution was introduced by a member of one language group and seconded by a member of the other. Finally, committees were set up to secure signatures for yet more petitions.⁴⁶

A new feature in the agitation, however, was Neilson's use of Responsible Government as a political cry. In the Gazette's attack on J.-E. Turcotte, references were made to the resolutions adopted in the House on September 3, 1841. In consequence of their adoption, while the province lacked many things were "essential to British responsible Government," still, the paper insisted, "we have a right to require that, the gentlemen who profess responsibility, should be held to

46. Quebec Gazette, March 16, 1842

their own voluntary engagements."⁴⁷ In an editorial on the by-elections, Neilson declared that the electors

will probably before long require that their members should insist on a real responsibility of the Provincial Administration to a real representation of the country. Then, and not until then, shall we have responsible Government, which at the present is little better than a mockery.⁴⁸

No doubt "responsible Government" meant something rather different to the editor of the Quebec Gazette than to LaFontaine and Baldwin. Yet a unity, at least of shibboleths, was necessary, and the Gazette was warm in its praise of Robert Baldwin.

Other members of Neilson's personal following were prepared to be even more explicit in their support of Responsible Government. On May 25, 1842, T. C. Aylwin presided over a meeting of delegates from the parishes of Portneuf. Robert Baldwin and the Fourth Riding of York were praised, and the Special Council and direct taxation were attacked. The Administration was described as "dishonest, corrupt, deceitful, and tyrannical" in a way that not even the governance of Ireland could parallel. All of this was more or less a matter of course. What was a departure was the explicit praise given to Lord John Russell's despatch on Responsible Government, even if only as a way of attacking the exclusion of French Canadians from the Executive Council. A resolution declared

That, even after the boon of a truly responsible Executive, harmonizing with the well understood wishes of the majority of the people, held out by the mother

⁴⁷. Quebec Gazette, June 20, 1842

⁴⁸. Quebec Gazette, June 29, 1842

country to this colony, we had reason to expect that at least one Canadian of French origin would have held a seat in the Executive Council.⁴⁹

There were other signs that the Union was being displaced by Responsible Government as the symbolic rallying cry of the opposition, and, in particular, that the Montreal wing of the opposition, the one most committed to that principle, was growing in strength. Among the by-elections held after the end of the session were those in Leinster, Verchères and Rouville. Henri Desrivieres resigned his seat in Verchères, and James Leslie succeeded him by acclamation. In Leinster, Jacob DeWitt replaced J.-M. Raymond with the same smoothness. The election in Rouville was more heated. Col. de Salaberry, who had accepted office, faced William Walker, once again in charge of the Canada Times. While the election at first seemed close,⁵⁰ the opposition candidate carried the riding by 476 votes to 376. All three of the newly-elected members were committed to LaFontaine and Responsible Government, particularly Leslie and Walker. Theodore Hart, writing to Robert Baldwin, cited the election of these two as "a Strong addition."⁵¹

These successes were matched by an increasing militancy in the Montreal area. The Canada Times announced in March that as of the beginning of May, it would publish on a daily basis. As part of this announcement it launched a slashing attack on

49. Quebec Gazette, June 1, 1842

50. Montreal Gazette, July 8, 1842, citing the Canada Times.

51. Baldwin Papers, Theodore Hart to Robert Baldwin, July 27, 1842

the government. The results of the Administration's actions were that

Our commerce has been crippled - our natural relations subverted - our Exchequer exhausted - and taxation, in its most odious form, introduced among the population.

Not even the promised improvements had been produced by the government's obnoxious legislation; despite ~~the~~ Sleigh Ordinance, winter roads were as bad as ever.⁵²

Part of the paper's renewed vigour may have been the result of yet another change in the allegiance of Sydney Bellingham. Walker withdrew ~~from~~ the active direction of the Canada Times, probably as a result of his election.⁵³ The paper went through a period of confusion, and Charles Hooton, a recent arrival in the country, took over the editorial chair. Bellingham was nonetheless acting again with the opposition by contributing articles to the organ before the beginning of the second session.⁵⁴ While the Irishman did not become the paper's official editor, he was soon supplying most of the editorials.⁵⁵

The Irish journalist was no longer the President of the Montreal St. Patrick's Society, having been replaced in March by Benjamin Holmes.⁵⁶ Yet he was a valuable re-acquisition, for since October, 1841, he had been the President of the

52. Quebec Gazette, March 7, 1842, citing the Canada Times.

53. Baldwin Papers, Theodore Hart to Robert Baldwin, July 27, 1842

54. LaFontaine Papers, Theodore Hart to L.-H. LaFontaine, September 16, 1842

55. Baldwin Papers, Theodore Hart to Robert Baldwin, January 31, 1843

56. Montreal Gazette, March 10, 1842

Montreal Loyal Repeal Association. The Address of the new association asserted that its members were to hold themselves apart from local politics, but at the same time a close association with the French Canadians was urged.⁵⁷ With Bellingham as the Association's President and a long-time Liberal, Peter Dunn, as its vice-president, and the well-established parallel between the Union Acts in Canada and Ireland, the partisan flavour of the new organization was clear. This identification was made inevitable as both the Montreal Herald and the Montreal Gazette immediately attacked the Association. The latter in particular printed an extract from the London Morning Herald in which the organization in Montreal was identified with the agitation of Mackenzie and Papineau.⁵⁸

The same development took place in Quebec City. There, in September, 1841, a notice appeared calling for the initial meeting of the Quebec Branch of the National Repeal Association, O'Connell's organization in Ireland. The notice invited "All friends of justice, domestic legislation, equal representation and foes to oppression."⁵⁹ The political nature of the movement was, however, already defined, for in July a meeting had been held to draft a constitution for the Branch. M. Quigley was the Branch's pro. tem. President, and other oppositionists, such as John Teed, John Ryan, Mile Connolly and D. O'Doud filled

57. Montreal Herald, October 25, 1841 (the Association's Address, with strong criticism)

58. Montreal Gazette, January 8, 1842

59. Quebec Gazette, September 10, 1841

the committee to draft a constitution. The partisan nature of the Quebec organization was even more clearly defined than that of the Montreal Association, for Vital Têtu was named to the vice-presidency and F.-X. Méthot was appointed Treasurer.⁶⁰ Both were French Canadian anti-Union activists. Thus, in both cities, the opposition, barred from controlling the traditional organs of the Irish community, created new, more aggressive structures that appealed directly to a re-invigorated Irish nationalism.

Such an accumulation of popular opposition would only have acted as a spur to Sydenham. The new Governor-General, Sir Charles Bagot, arrived in the colony on January 10, 1842. In temperament he was entirely different from his predecessor. Elderly, unhealthy, a diplomat by training and a Conservative by political affiliation, he presented in public a civilized Tory antithesis to Thomson's bustling Whig Utilitarianism.⁶¹ Yet his original intentions, and some of his private opinions, were not that far separated from those of the late Governor-General. It is true that originally he declared that he intended "to know no distinction of race or party in the distribution of the patronage of the Crown," but in this he was planning to do little more than follow the instructions of the new Conservative Colonial Secretary, Stanley to create as many vendus

60. Quebec Gazette, July 2, 1841

61. It is this image of Bagot that is presented in J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, pp. 96-103

as possible.⁶² Indeed, Sydenham had offered the rank of Q. C. to C.-S. Cherrier, an offer repeated more successfully by Bagot.⁶³ In his despatch to Stanley explaining his admission of LaFontaine and Baldwin to the Executive Council, Bagot admitted that despite pressure from his Executive Council, he was reluctant to admit any French Canadians to the Ministry and would have "preferred to pursue the course adopted by Lord Sydenham."⁶⁴ The 'Great Measure' was forced upon him by practical necessity.

It is in Bagot's reaction to the anti-Special Council Ordinances agitation that it is most clearly revealed the extent to which he shared Sydenham's assumptions. Initially, one of his reasons for postponing a new session of the Legislature was to allow the Registry and District Councils Ordinances to be tested by experience.⁶⁵ By March, 1842, however, the third meeting of the Municipal Councils had taken place, and he had lost patience as the evident disinclination of the French Canadians to participate in the system became apparent. Under the leadership of John Neilson, "that lover of all mischief for its own sake,"⁶⁶ the French Canadians had resolved "by pertinacious though passive resistance" to undermine the Union Act by attacking "the subordinate arrangements necessary for carrying it into effect," and

62. cited in J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, p. 103

63. C. O. 42, vol. 489, Sir Charles Bagot to Stanley (confidential), February 23, 1842

64. C. O. 42, vol. 495, Sir Charles Bagot to Stanley, September 26, 1842

65. C. O. 42, vol. 488, Sir Charles Bagot to Stanley, January 18, 1842

66. C. O. 42, vol. 490, Sir Charles Bagot to Stanley, (Private), March 26, 1842

"they attack the Municipal Councils as one of the readiest means of attacking the Union itself." It was the "strong antipathy of the French Canadians to any change, however advantageous and reasonable, and their impatience of direct taxation in whatever shape," that predisposed them to such a course. The only step the Executive Council could take was to favour "the introduction among them of Emigrants from the Mother Country. I shall accordingly do everything I can for that purpose."⁶⁷ The extent to which, in these despatches, Bagot, like Sydenham, saw the whole issue purely in terms of French Canadian resistance to British progressiveness is striking. What Bagot saw in the Lower Canadians response to the District Councils Ordinance was "stubborn ill humour and provoking stupidity." Like his predecessor, he was prepared to ignore the extent to which French Canadians were assisted by British Canadians in the agitation. His only reference to the role of non-French Canadians in the movement, with the exception of his pejorative remarks about Neilson, was a reference to the "co-frondeurs" assisting the French.⁶⁸

In public, however, Bagot's policy of conciliation continued, and he assented the nomination of many French Canadians to offices in the gift of the crown. Anglophones of suspicious backgrounds were also appointed; L. T. Drummond, along

67. C. O. 42, vol. 490, Sir Charles Bagot to Stanley, March 19, 1842

68. C. O. 42, vol. 490, Sir Charles Bagot to Stanley (Private), March 26, 1842

with D.-B. Viger and George Moffatt, was named to the Board of Examiners for Montreal.⁶⁹ On the whole this policy did not excite the rancour of the more reasonable anglophones in Canada East. The Montreal Gazette expressed approval of the restoration to the Commission of the Peace of those justices struck off for their actions in 1837 and 1838. This, the paper felt, would show the Upper Canadians that discrimination was dead.⁷⁰ The Gazette was attacked by the Herald for this stance, but the former felt confident enough in the strength of the Union to endorse the Governor's actions.

We would soothe, and compose and tranquilize, well knowing that a stronger and sterner treatment is within our reach, should dire necessity (which Heaven forbid!) again compel us to employ it.⁷¹

Particular aspects of this policy, such as the promotion over the head of Judge Rolland of Judge R mi Valli res de St. R al to the Chief Justiceship of the Montreal District, promoted quarrels between the Montreal Gazette, which supported Rolland, and the Canada Times, which endorsed Valli res de St. R al,⁷² but on the whole both sides of the anglophone community were waiting for the opening of the second session of the Legislature before assessing the new Governor and his ability to deal with the growing political disorder in Lower Canada.

69. Montreal Gazette, May 17, 1842

70. Montreal Gazette, June 13, 1842

71. Montreal Gazette, June 20, 1842

72. Montreal Gazette, April 23, May 2, 1842

The session opened on September 8, 1842. There can be no greater indication of the fragility of Sydenham's Ministry without Sydenham's strength than the speed with which it dissolved. The Assembly, in its discussion of the Governor's speech opening the session, was confronted with an embarrassing spectacle; W. H. Draper, on behalf of the Ministry, explained that it had always been his desire, despite the late Governor's opposition, to include representatives of the French Canadians in the Executive Council. In fact, the government had threatened Bagot with its resignation if he did not make such an offer. The "High Conservatives" had already made proposals to the French Canadians of an alliance to overturn the Ministry. The Governor, in order to conciliate opposition from different quarters, had named Francis Hincks and Henry Sherwood, an Upper Canadian Tory to the Executive, but this had not sufficed.⁷³ Under this compulsion, the Governor had made his overtures to LaFontaine. The position of Attorney-General for Canada East was offered, with the condition that the incumbent, C. R. Ogden, not be dismissed without some sort of pension. LaFontaine declined to enter the government on any terms save his own: the inclusion of Robert Baldwin in the Administration and the relegation of

⁷³. C. O. 42, vol. 495, Sir Charles Bagot to Stanley, September 26, 1842

Ogden's pension to the status of an open question. While these remarkable revelations were being digested, Robert Baldwin and J.-G. Barthe introduced a motion of non-confidence. It never came to a vote. Bagot's only alternative would have been to turn to John Neilson, whose campaign against the Union and the Special Council's ordinance had not only infuriated the Governor but also threatened the basis of British policy in the colony. Accordingly, Bagot yielded. Somewhat later, Sir Allan MacNab, scarcely an impartial observer, declared that the Ministry would have been in a minority of 15 to 20 had it dared to meet the House.⁷⁴

A new, or rather a remodelled, Executive was in due course announced. The wing representing Canada East contained a number of peculiarities. It consisted of LaFontaine as Attorney-General, Dominic Daly, Sydenham's old ally, as Provincial Secretary, T. C. Aylwin as Solicitor-General, and A.-N. Morin as Commissioner of Crown Lands. Of these four, two were franco-phones, two were anglophones; two were ex-patriotes, two were ex-Constitutionalists. LaFontaine, so intent on the admission of Baldwin to office, did not object to Daly's remaining Secretary, had as early as May, 1841, A.-N. Morin had made it clear to Francis Hincks that there was no objection to the Irish Catholic.⁷⁵ As for the Solicitor-Generalship, it had been made clear by Bagot that the occupant of that office was to be of a

74. DLA, vol 2, p. 67, September 16, 1842

75. A.-N. Morin to Francis Hincks, May 8, 1841, in Sir Francis Hincks, op. cit., p.55

British background.⁷⁶ Thus Aylwin's inclusion was all but inevitable. Not only was he a respectable member of the anglophone professional elite, he was also a figure of importance in Quebec. The traditional antagonisms between the two centres, Quebec City and Montreal, might thus be assuaged.⁷⁷ In addition, as a representative of Neilson's faction, he might help to prevent an open split in the former opposition forces.

LaFontaine and Morin, a Montrealer and a Quebecker, were to guarantee the new ministerial arrangement's acceptability to the French Canadians. A striking fact, however, is that the new Executive Council was also acceptable to the bloc Sydenham had built up with so much effort and so little scruple. On September 19, J. W. Dunscomb, the Sydenhamite elected in Beauharnois, seconded by John Simpson, another candidate elected by gubernatorial interference, moved a resolution to the effect that

this House is persuaded that, in order to place the Government of this Province on a firm and permanent basis, it was absolutely necessary to invite that large portion of our fellow subjects who are of French origin, to share in the Government of this country.⁷⁸

After some amendment, the motion passed by a vote of 55 to 5. The disgruntled minority put on their hats and walked out of the Assembly.

⁷⁶. LaFontaine Papers, Sir Charles Bagot to L.-H. LaFontaine, September 13, 1842

⁷⁷. Sir Charles Bagot to Stanley, September 26, 1842, citing LaFontaine, quoted in J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, pp.105-6

⁷⁸. DLA, vol. 2, p. 100, September 19, 1842

The members that remained were a heterogeneous group. Inevitably they included Leslie and DeWitt; less predictably, Child and Burnet also remained. The support from Henry Black, C. J. Forbes, recently elected in Two Mountains, John R. Hamilton, Stephen S. Foster of Shefford, Edward Hale, John Moore, R. N. Watts, John Yule, J. W. Dunscomb and John Simpson, reflects an amazing combination of old Tory, new progressive and simple opportunist. Benjamin Holmes, the former treasurer of the Sydenhamite forces, was frank. He admitted that he had arrived in the Assembly with strong "prejudice for his guide," but, having found the French Canadians 'liberal,' he expressed confidence in them. John Simpson's defence of the motion he seconded was somewhat simpler: "The first great concession had been made; from this moment every acre of land would become worth four times its present value."⁷⁹ This argument expressed the basic reason for the economically oriented Sydenhamites' support for the new arrangement. It appeared to guarantee the political peace that was so necessary for prosperity.

The behaviour of some of the other members of the former Lower Canadian opposition block is of some interest. D. M. Armstrong and, of course, Aylwin, voted for the motion, thus breaking with Neilson, who, with George Moffatt, represented the only opposition from Lower Canada to the new Ministry. There were also some absentees. Robert Christie was not in the House, and his reaction would be difficult to predict. William Walker

79. DLA, vol. 2, p. 101, September 19, 1842

was also not present. Theodore Hart had written to both Robert Baldwin and LaFontaine to warn them that the Montreal lawyer was not to be trusted. Walker, it appeared, was not committed to supporting a motion of non-confidence.⁸⁰ Hart had never been on good terms with Walker, but it is unlikely that the former editor of the Times, with his sharp sense of self-interest, would have opposed a fait accompli.

Thus, of the 32 votes from Canada East in favour of the resolution, 17 came from anglophones and 15 from French Canadians. LaFontaine's position as the representative of French Canada was thus endorsed by both language groups. It is the fact that LaFontaine was accepted as a representative of French Canada that explains Neilson's hostile vote. After the end of the session in an editorial in the Quebec Gazette, he declared

The late selection of some of the natives of Canada as of 'French origin', to fill offices with seats in the Executive Council, because they were of that national origin, was founded on erroneous views of the head of the Executive: it was virtually acknowledging and in some degree disseminating and perpetuating these distinctions among the people of Canada.⁸¹

It was not, then, the new Administration to which Neilson objected but rather the principle on which it was based, that of racial representation. Accordingly, the member for Quebec County did not move into opposition to the Ministry during the remainder of the second session. When Baldwin, seeking re-election after

80. LaFontaine Papers, Theodore Hart to L.-H. LaFontaine, September 13, 1842; Baldwin Papers, Theodore Hart to Robert Baldwin, September 16, 1842

81. Quebec Gazette, October 24, 1842

his acceptance of office, was defeated in Upper Canada, Neilson took an active part in securing his return for Rimouski, and indeed, according to Edouard Glackemeyer, "managed this affair throughout."⁸²

The remainder of the session was short, lasting only until October 12. Much of the first part of the session was taken up with the change in ministries, and for the latter part, the absence of the new ministers seeking re-election made it unlikely that any bold steps would be taken. The legislative accomplishments of the session reflected LaFontaine's need to secure the continuing support of Sydenham's faction without losing that of his own. The implementation of the Registry Offices Ordinance was postponed; the Judicature and Police Ordinances were repealed. The Sleigh Ordinance, despite resistance from the Legislative Council, was drastically amended, with alterations in the system of harnessing permitted in the Montreal District and postponements of the ordinance's application to the Quebec and Gaspé Districts. It was, Bagot informed Stanley, "a compromise between the parties advocating and opposing the Ordinances of the Special Council upon this subject."⁸³ Sydenham's memory was also attacked by the re-establishment of the old electoral boundaries of Montreal and Quebec, and the introduction of a Freedom of Elections Act that located a poll in each local division. All of

⁸². Baldwin Papers, Edouard Glackemeyer to Robert Baldwin, January 2, 1843

⁸³. C. O. 42, vol. 503, Sir Charles Bagot to Stanley, January 27, 1843

this must have given LaFontaine's supporters considerable satisfaction.

On the other hand, the hard core of the Union's strategy was left unchallenged. LaFontaine, now more than ever, was a declared supporter of the Act, and no attempts were made to change the allocation of much of the resources of the province, including the 1, 500, 000^l. loan, from improvements in communications. It was appropriate that the mover, Dunscomb, and the seconder, Simpson, of the motion of confidence in the new Ministry were both passionately committed to a canal improving the connection between Upper and Lower Canada. They were opposed to each other over the route; Dunscomb was anxious that the canal pass through his riding of Beauharnois while Simpson was equally anxious that it traverse his riding of Vaudreuil.⁸⁴ No better illustration of the new government's commitment to a policy of development, perhaps even more open than that favoured by Sydenham, could be offered than the appearance in public as a partisan of the Ministry of Edward Gibbon Wakefield.

Wakefield was the agent of the North American Colonial Association of Ireland, the proprietors of the seigneurie of Beauharnois. He had advised Durham, but Thomson had been as critical of the Beauharnois Company, as the Association was popularly called, as he had been of the British American Land Company, and for much the same reasons: a lack of capital and

⁸⁴. H. T. Manning, "E. G. Wakefield and the Beauharnois Canal," CHR XLVIII, no. 1 (1967). pp. 10-14

a speculator's approach to colonial development.⁸⁵ Sydenham's former personal staff, including Edward Dowling, his legal advisor, and Dominic Daly, now, however, became enmeshed in the affairs of the Beauharnois Company.

It has been demonstrated that Wakefield did not play the crucial role in Bagot's 'Great Measure' that was once believed.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, it was generally accepted at the time that his influence was large and secretive. When in October J. W. Duncomb resigned his seat, the Montreal Gazette commented that his action was intended "to make way, no doubt, for Mr. E. G. Wakefield who, after having been 'the power behind the throne' for some time, is now desirous of exhibiting some of his statesmanlike qualities."⁸⁷ Wakefield declared his candidacy almost immediately and was fully endorsed by the Canada Times.⁸⁸ As a supporter of Responsible Government he owed his easy election to the support of the French Canadians,⁸⁹ but also, the Montreal Gazette reported, to the activity of local government officials.⁹⁰ The election by such means of an unscrupulous lobbyist notorious for his lack of moral character did little for the tone of the new Ministry, but certainly established its pro-development outlook.

85. PAC MG 11 Co. O: 42 Q 211 pt. 1 March 1840, C. P. Thomson to Lord John Russell, March 11, 1840

86. H. T. Manning, op. cit., pp. 13-20

87. Montreal Gazette, October 11, 1842

88. Montreal Gazette, October 20, 1842, citing the Canada Times.

89. Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, November 9, 1842

90. Montreal Gazette, October 25, 1842

A fortunate set of circumstances enabled the Ministry to conciliate a number of different interests in the House. One very divisive issue in the United Province was tariff policy. While Canada West possessed an expanding wheat economy, the production of grain in Lower Canada had virtually collapsed. The French Canadians had become before the Union aware of stock-raising's possibilities as an alternative to wheat; in the Eastern Townships, cattle-raising had long been established as a major activity. Both groups saw themselves as being threatened by American competition.⁹¹ Such an outlook could challenge the St. Lawrence's future role as a conduit for American produce, the central ambition of the Montréal forwarders. The issue had been discussed during the first session, and a bill for a protective tariff on live and dead stock had in fact been introduced. Nothing much had come of it, however, and when the question of a duty on American grain was introduced in the second session to protect Upper Canadian farmers against American competition, the whole matter was re-opened. Fortunately, the Imperial Government gave the colony to understand that if a duty on wheat were introduced, tariffs on Canadian produce entering Britain would be reduced to virtually nothing.⁹² This would in effect enhance the advantage of the St. Lawrence. Accordingly two measures were introduced. One resolution proposed a duty on

⁹¹. Fernand Ouellet, Histoire Economique et Sociale du Québec, pp.458-461

⁹². G. N. Tucker, The Canadian Commercial Revolution, pp.63-4

American wheat of 3s. per quarter, and a second, that "a duty be imposed upon all agricultural products imported into this Province from the United States of America,"⁹³ Such changes in commercial policy were of course dependent on the approval of the Imperial Government, and the double measure was reserved by the Governor-General. Nonetheless, attention had been paid to the sectors of the province's economy that Sydenham had ignored, the French Canadians and the Eastern Townships, without alienating those attached to the mystique of the St. Lawrence. General satisfaction was thus achieved, although John Neilson with his attachment to the principles of Free Trade, provided they were not applied to the timber industry, attacked the proposal as producing class divisions.⁹⁴

The remarkable extent to which a broad consensus was preserved throughout the session was reflected in a peculiar document, an open letter from the Lower Canadian members of the Assembly to Robert Baldwin and James Small, the new Solicitor-General for Canada West. It thanked them for their solidarity with Canada East in the struggle for "the perpetuation of Nos Institutions, Notre Langue et nos Lois." That it was signed by the overwhelming majority of the French Canadian members was not remarkable. Of the 23 signatures, however, 10 were of anglophones: D. M. Armstrong, Jacob DeWitt, James Leslie, Marcus Child, John Neilson, Robert Christie, John B. Hamilton, John

93. DLA, vol. 2, p. 227, September 30, 1842.

94. Québec Gazette, October 3, 1842

Simpson, John Moore and J. W. Dunscomb.⁹⁵ Neilson here declared his support for the new Ministry's recognition of the bicultural nature of Lower Canada; Leslie, DeWitt, Armstrong and Child had already endorsed the same slogan from the patriotes. Both Dunscomb and Simpson, Sydenhamite moderates, had never been ferociously opposed to the French Canadians, even before the Union. Yet Christie, Hamilton and Moore were members of the old bureaucrate clique and the Montreal Gazette sneered these "newly-enlisted converts to French nationality."⁹⁶ Evidently, they felt that the particular interests of their constituents, and their own personal futures, were best protected by this combination of French Canadian particularism and economic development.

It must be born in mind that, while the Ministry commanded an overwhelming majority of both language groups in the Assembly, this was but a loose, too all-encompassing alliance among the different elites of Lower Canada. It was based on no demonstrated bicultural consensus throughout the country, and had no institutional structure to give it permanence. The extent to which this alliance could be transformed into a durable political force would be determined by LaFontaine's success in using his uncertain tenure of power. The double role of heir to Papineau and executor to Sydenham was a difficult one to sustain. Excessive crudeness or excessive delicacy in the use of politics' accustomed tools would be equally dangerous. The winter of 1842

95. Montreal Gazette, October 10, 1842. (letter dated October 6, 1842)

96. Montreal Gazette, October 10, 1842

and the spring of 1843 were to be the testing period for this combination of disparate elements. Meanwhile, Neilson, ostensibly friendly, potentially hostile, summed up what must have been the view of many in an editorial published after the session ended:

The new system of 'responsible Government' which has been so long talked about, and which assuredly has not been in existence in Canada, seems now to have come into partial operation. It will be tried, as well as the men it has brought into power, 'by its fruits.' If it should result in a mere scramble for emoluments of office ... the disappointment of the friends of the system will be great, and those who reprobate it as leading to the corruption of the representative body and its constituents ... will be shown to have been right.⁹⁷

97. Quebec Gazette, October 17, 1842

Chapter IV

But Ministers like Gladiators live;
'Tis half their business, Blows to ward, or give.
The Good their Virtue might effect, or sense,
Dies between Exigents, and self defence.

Alexander Pope

The new Ministry was supported by a loose coalition, many of whose members had had little to do with the Executive's titular heads. Nonetheless, the apparatus of the state was now at least partially under the control of the Reformers, and this machinery was now used to solidify the position of the Liberals throughout the country. One of the first steps LaFontaine took, now that he had the resources of the state to aid in the building up of a more cohesive and disciplined party, was to redirect government advertising towards the newspapers that were most closely connected with his own cause. This step was of particular importance for his English organ. The Canada Times, in competition with the Conservative papers, never became a paying concern. The Gazette and the Herald were well established as the medium for the commercial community, and thus had a far larger share of the private advertising so necessary for a newspaper's

survival. In discussing the change in the use of advertising as patronage, Sydney Bellingham informed LaFontaine that 400¹ were owed, and a number of printers' bills were outstanding.¹ Substantial sums were also needed to re-establish La Minerve in Montreal and to found Le Journal de Québec, a more docile replacement for the Gazette de Québec, Neilson's expiring French-language paper. In addition, changes in the ownership of the Quebec Daily Mercury, the principal commercial paper in the old capital, opened up the possibility of securing a new ally to counterbalance Neilson's potential hostility. It was thus not entirely coincidental that the Government issued a circular effecting the transfer of advertisements at the beginning of November, the same time that the Mercury changed hands. William Kimlin, the paper's new editor, declined at first to commit his journal to any particular party, but acknowledged that "I may perhaps deem it necessary to adopt a view of a somewhat more liberal character than those (sic) of my predecessor."² There was thus another aspirant for government favour, and the Mercury quickly became a solid supporter of the new Ministry.

This shift in patronage was of considerable significance, for not only did it infuriate the Tory press, it also achieved the final alienation of John Neilson. Up until the very last day of October, the Quebec Gazette was still defending such anglophones as John Moore who had declared their allegiance

1. LaFontaine Papers, Sydney Bellingham to L.-H. LaFontaine, November 29, 1842

2. Quebec Mercury, November 1, 1842

to the new government.³ On November 18, Neilson attacked the patronage circular as a blatant attempt to corrupt the press.⁴ By the end of the month the Gazette was criticizing Responsible Government in the same language it had used to assail Sydenham. The new system lacked the checks and balances necessary for a sound constitution; the concentration of power in the hands of the Executive created almost unlimited possibilities for the corruption of the Assembly.⁵ Neilson, always as much a political moralist as a constitutional theorist, discovered that Responsible Government under LaFontaine amounted to much the same thing as under the late Governor. By "coalescing with a majority of the 'responsibles' for all the misdeeds of the SYDENHAM administration," LaFontaine's party was "passing the sponge (sic) of oblivion and irresponsibility over the whole."⁶

Other steps were being taken to entrench the new Ministry. LaFontaine had discovered in the agitation against the District Councils Ordinance the usefulness of controlling local governments. He was understandably anxious to extend his influence to the Corporations of the two cities. Municipal elections were to be held in Montreal and Quebec on December 1, 1842. The Canada Times suggested that the platform of any successful candidate should include "esteem" for Sir Charles Bagot.⁷ A demonstration of support in the heart of Tory Montreal would be a valuable

3. Quebec Gazette, October 31, 1842

4. Quebec Gazette, November 18, 1842

5. Quebec Gazette, November 23, 1842 (e. g.)

6. Quebec Gazette, July 31, 1844

7. Montreal Gazette, November 29, 1842, citing the Canada Times.

proof to the Imperial Government of the broad-based nature of the new administration. Anxiety to achieve this effect led to major problems. Benjamin Holmes secured without difficulty his election as one of the councillors for the West Ward, but Jacob DeWitt and L. T. Drummond went down to defeat in Queen's Ward and the West Ward respectively. The West Ward, part of the commercial district, was not yet ready to accept a man so closely linked with the patriotes. In the Queen's Ward, where the ethnic and political balances were closer, B.-H. LeMoine, a banking associate of DeWitt, attributed the victory of H. Mathewson to the effectiveness of the "Tory Irish" in preventing the French Canadians from voting.⁸ The Montreal Irish, however, also elected Peter Dunn, a grocer and vice-president of Bellingham's Loyal Repeal Association well known for his connections with the canadiens. The final result on the new Council was "13 Liberals to 6 Torys (sic)."⁹ The practical value of this political flavouring was made manifest when, in the spring of the following year, Corporation advertising was transferred to La Minerve and the Times. In Québec, the conflict was characteristically muted, but among the new Councillors were Miles Connolly and William O'Brien, Irishmen who had been active on the opposition side in the general election of 1841.

In the countryside, the assumption of power by LaFontaine

8. LaFontaine Papers, B.-H. LeMoine to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 4, 1842

9. LaFontaine Papers, B.-H. LeMoine to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 4, 1842

and Baldwin did not mean an end to the grievances that had been so loudly presented, and the legislation of the Assembly's second session did not touch either the School Law or the District Councils Ordinance. In Berthier, at least, nonetheless it was felt that a change had been made. At a Council meeting held on December 5, it was resolved not to meet again because of a lack of confidence in the Warden, one of Sydenham's appointees. Agricultural protection was called for, and the usual list of ordinances was criticized. The Council, however, declined to recommend any specific changes. It expressed complete confidence in the new government's wisdom in making any amendments that it felt wise, and passed a motion in praise of Sir Charles Bagot. Active at this meeting were representatives from Kildare and Brandon, the townships whose Irishmen had supplied William Berczy with his striking force in 1841.¹⁰

One of the problems facing the Administration was the fact that it had been endorsed by many members who had been elected the year before as opponents of French power. One such member who was particularly harshly treated was Captain Moore, the representative of Sherbrooke County. He was one of the signatories to the open letter to Baldwin and Price mentioned above. The Sherbrooke Gazette announced that "Had our Representative subscribed his name to the '92 Resolutions we should

¹⁰. Montreal Times and Daily Commercial Advertiser, December 13, 1842

not have been more surprised."¹¹ A public meeting was held in Sherbrooke, the secretary of which was the young A. T. Galt. Here, Moore was forced to deny that he had affiliated himself with the "Radical party."¹²

Two other members had, in different ways, disappointed their electors. Benjamin Holmes had not joined George Moffatt, his colleague in the representation of Montreal, in opposing the new Ministry, and John Neilson had surprised many of his friends by not supporting it. Thus it was appropriate that both Montreal and Quebec were the scenes of large demonstrations of support for Bagot's 'Great Measure.' Both would be crucial tests of the success of these political apostates in bringing their personal followings with them.

The meeting in Quebec took place on December 23. The signatories on the requisition included such close supporters of Neilson as Edouard Glackemeyer, William Ruthven, W. Burke and John Teed, even though the meeting's intention was to express approval of the Administration.¹³ At the meeting, Edouard Glackemeyer, Neilson's close political confidant, introduced an Address that attacked the basis of Neilson's agitation, for it praised the Ministry for its amendments to the Special Council's legislation. Membership in the committee struck to secure signatures for the Address also showed how little control Neilson

¹¹. Quebec Gazette, October 31, 1842, citing the Sherbrooke Gazette

¹². Quebec Gazette, December 29, 1842

¹³. Quebec Gazette, December 21, 1842 (requisition)

had maintained over his backers. It included, in addition to those named above, J. J. Nesbitt, Miles Connolly and William O'Brien. An important addition to LaFontaine's forces was Dunbar Ross, formerly an activist on the pro-Union side. Nonetheless, the great bulk of the Constitutionalist merchants and bankers still held aloof. It is clear that the Irish, and in particular the leaders of the Repeal Association, were the strongest anglophone backers of the new political arrangement.¹⁴ Perhaps the most promising sign in Quebec for the new Executive Council was the appearance of the name of William Price, presumably the great lumber merchant, on an Address to A.-N. Morin, telling him that he need not come to the Saguenay for his re-election. The Prices were a dominant force in the area, and the Address emphasized the need for more development in the region.¹⁵ Evidently, such large-scale entrepreneurs as the Prices felt the need to support any government, regardless of its composition.

The public assembly in Montreal took place three weeks after the one in Quebec. Here, Benjamin Holmes struck the keynote in a speech emphasizing the need for unanimity. He declared that he would accept the proceedings of the meeting as a vote of confidence in his actions in supporting the new Ministry.¹⁶ Among those active at the meeting were L. T. Drummond and, perhaps more importantly, Drummond's connection by marriage,

14. Quebec Gazette, December 26, 1843 (account of the meeting)

15. Quebec Mercury, December 29, 1842

16. Montreal Gazette, January 14, 1843 (account of the meeting of January 12, 1843)

Samuel Cornwallis Monk, a scion of one of the great Chateau Clique families. Monk it appears also wrote for the Canada Times at around this period.¹⁷ One of the most striking aspects of the assembly was the appearance on the same platform and for the same cause of Sydney Bellingham and Wolfred Nelson, representatives of both sides of the great division of the preceding decade. Nelson had returned to Montreal on June 22, 1841, but had been keeping himself out of the way. His re-appearance in politics was a sign of LaFontaine's need to strengthen his hold on those faithful to the patriotes' memory.

Neither of these meetings can be considered complete successes. While the Montreal Gazette was doubtless partisan in describing the Montreal gathering as composed "principally of labouring men and boys,"¹⁸ in neither city was there an indication that moderate Conservatives were rallying to LaFontaine's cause. With the exception of Ross and Monk, only those already committed stood up to defend the Ministry. The Gazette in Montreal did condemn the Herald's "quasi-approbation of Mr. LAFONTAINE'S political character,"¹⁹ but this marked only a temporary aberration in the ultra-Tory paper's career. James Moir Ferres,²⁰ a young Scottish journalist who had accepted office from Sydenham, resigned his position and in 1842 returned

17. Sydney Bellingham, "Memoirs of Sydney Bellingham," PAC MG 24 B 25, vol. 2, p. 126

18. Montreal Gazette, January 14, 1843

19. Montreal Gazette, October 26, 1842

20. Lorne St. Croix, "Ferres, James Moir," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. IX, pp. 257-8

to the editorship of the Herald that he had abandoned in 1840. His moderate stance, however, so appalled his readers that at the end of a year-long trial period he was replaced by the perpetually intransigent David Kinnear, another young Scot and editor of the Montreal Gazette after David Chisolm.²¹ The Herald then resumed its role as the most rabid of the city's Conservative journals. On the other hand, in neither city did the Tories, in their new-found position as oppositionists, organize public manifestations of disapproval of Bagot's policy. While their newspapers continued to attack the government, the former ruling party was perhaps too shocked by a British governor's admission of rebels into the Executive Council. Such a paralysis could only be temporary.

These slumbering tensions made the use of patronage a delicate task for LaFontaine. The new Attorney-General for Canada East was personally fastidious about the exercise of executive power, but his lieutenants in Montreal and Quebec, Drummond and Aylwin respectively, were not men of delicate scruples. With their advice, as well as that of B.-H. LeMoine, C.-S. Cherrier and George-Etienne Cartier, the task of building up the party proceeded.

It did not, however, always proceed smoothly. Two imperatives shaped appointments to public office. First, LaFontaine was under an obligation to his French Canadian supporters to

²¹ Elizabeth Waterston, "Kinnear, David," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. IX, pp. 429-30

demonstrate that his accession to power did in fact signify the acceptance of their full participation in the administration of the state. Secondly, LaFontaine needed to cement his new allies to the common cause, and secure new anglophone converts. This latter need was not merely the result of the provincial situation, for a demonstration of the new regime's bilingual base might mollify the Imperial Government into supporting fully Bagot's actions. E. G. Wakefield had made this clear to LaFontaine, and cited Holmes, J. W. Dunscomb and Michael McCulloch as particularly worth rewarding.²²

It was fairly easy to take care of Dunscomb. Soon after his resignation from the Assembly, he was appointed to a position in the Montreal Customs, a position for which he was certainly qualified. It does not appear that anything important was done for Dr. McCulloch. LaFontaine's victorious rival in Terrebonne had not, however, voted for the new Ministry, or in any public way manifested his support for it. Thus his claims were limited.

Benjamin Holmes presented an entirely different problem. He possessed considerable personal influence, and had long been a Constitutionalist leader. For a man of his importance and standing, there was little that could be done directly. He had had, for example, little need for French Canadian support to carry the West Ward, heavily British and commercial, in the Montreal municipal elections. Holmes had, however, a brother, James. A reorganization of the Trinity House in Montreal created

22. cited in J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, p. 113

a vacancy, and James Holmes was suggested as a candidate by his brother. This nomination provoked considerable criticism. Theodore Hart, presenting Sydney Bellingham's claims to the position, reminded Baldwin of James' anti-Baldwin writings in the Montreal Messenger.²³ James Holmes was nonetheless named to the post. C.-S. Cherrier informed LaFontaine that despite such opposition, the step was politically justified:

Quant à moi, dans les circonstances où nous nous trouvons, je ne le regrette pas - Elle pourra avoir l'effet d'attacher d'avantage à notre cause Mr. B. Holmes qui pourra lui-même détacher quelques autres du parti Anglais.²⁴

The objections did not die away quickly, and ten days later Cherrier wrote to say the appointment was still causing trouble.²⁵

Local justices of the peace, unpaid government appointees, were responsible for much of local administration. The obligations they undertook were numerous, time-consuming and often thankless. There were never enough of them, but this was the result of the literacy and property requirements, rather than of any lack of interest in the position. To be on the Commission of the Peace was the first step to local prominence; a justice was entitled beyond any doubt to sign himself Esquire, rather than simply Mister. This distinction was still of some impor-

²³. Baldwin Papers, Theodore Hart to Robert Baldwin, January 31, 1843

²⁴. LaFontaine Papers, C.-S. Cherrier to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 3, 1843

²⁵. LaFontaine Papers, C.-S. Cherrier to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 13, 1843

tance in status-conscious Lower Canada, as it guaranteed the rank of a gentleman. Control over these appointments was thus an invaluable asset in building up a political party as it enabled the government to secure the predominance of local factions allied to its larger political interests. A letter to LaFontaine from Owen Quinn of Lachute reflects how ethnic, religious and economic tensions on the local level were coordinated into the provincial framework through control over the magistracy. Major Thomas Barron and Quinn, an Irish Catholic, both commanded militia units during the rebellion of 1837. Barron seized the opportunity to plunder on a large scale. When, through Quinn, he was forced to return 1500l. worth of goods to their original owners, Barron arranged a petition accusing the Catholic of abetting the Irish rebels from St. Columban. He also recruited C. J. Forbes, a local Tory, to assist his attack. Quinn backed Dr. Colin Robertson against Forbes in the election of 1841, and Robertson was successful. Sydenham, who appears to have favoured the Montreal medical man, acquitted Quinn of complicity with the rebels, but Barron had made himself useful to Michael McCulloch in the Terrebonne election by bringing in settlers from Gore, where his position as land agent made him influential. Thus the Major was able not only to protect his position as a justice, but also, Quinn alleged, to secure the appointment of six new magistrates, "five of whom are Scotch, that Barron exercises his might by nationality Secret Service men and Religion to prepossess these men to Harass me in every act of

official duty I perform.(sic)" Quinn accordingly turned to the new government for protection, particularly needed as Forbes, on the death of Robertson, had been elected to the Assembly. The new member supported LaFontaine in the House, and Quinn was no doubt afraid of his influence. Thus Quinn begged LaFontaine to strike Barron from the Commission of the Peace in the name of "Common Justice to me, and to the liberal part of the community." To establish his own bona fides as a Liberal, Quinn referred LaFontaine to Drummond and Dr. Dumouchel as witnesses to the truth of his statements.²⁶

It can be accordingly understood that if LaFontaine was to make full use of such divisions in the local anglophone community, the nomination of friendly magistrates was an essential matter. David Morrison Armstrong described to LaFontaine his successes in building up local influence. He recommended twenty men, including himself, as justices, of whom nine were anglophones. They were the "elite of the County and command influence." Politics could not entirely determine the choice - Armstrong included William Berczy's name with the note "cannot help" - but it was certainly the most important factor. Finding supporters among the English-speaking settlers was difficult, especially where Tory influence was strong. Armstrong commented that in Sorel "I know not one liberal man and I believe Charles my brother is the best among them." Elsewhere, Armstrong was

26. LaFontaine Papers, Owen Quinn to L.-H. LaFontaine, January 23, 1843

more fortunate:

in all this nothing pleases me more than to have our two townships Kildare & Brandon people a peu pres par des Anglais (sic) - it required good management ... I told these cruelly treated people that now is their only chance.²⁷

Armstrong had apparently used the resistance of the desperately impoverished back townships to Sydenham's initiatives for local taxation, as the men from Kildare and Brandon that he recommended as magistrates had been involved in the Berthier meeting, mentioned above, where the School Laws and the District Councils Ordinance had been attacked, and confidence expressed in the Ministry.

This pattern was repeated elsewhere. In the Quebec District, for example, the seceders from Neilson's faction were duly rewarded by inclusion in the Commission: Glackemeyer, William Burke, and William O'Brien, the last over Aylwin's strenuous objections.²⁸ The Liberal party seemed well on its way to establishing a network of influence throughout the local communities of the colony.

All of this depended, however, on the acquiescence of the Governor, and Bagot was now clearly a dying man. A successor to the diplomat was appointed, Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe. A career colonial administrator, Metcalfe had acquired a very considerable reputation in India and Jamaica as a reconciler

27. LaFontaine Ppaers, D. M. Armstrong to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 10, 1842

28. LaFontaine Papers, T. C. Aylwin to L.-H. LaFontaine, January 21, 1843

of different ethnic and religious groups. It was thus not overly optimistic of Wakefield, now in London, to hail him as a "perfect new Governor-General." More demonstrations in favour of Bagot were urged, in order to "satisfy the public of England of the soundness of his policy." To this end Wakefield, wrote not only to LaFontaine but to other Lower Canadian leaders, Dominic Daly, Dunscomb, Holmes, Ovide LeBlanc, D.-B. Viger and B.-H. LeMoine.²⁹

A new wave of public meetings accordingly took place, no doubt with the intention of influencing the new Governor as much as opinion in England. The assembly held in Quebec at the end of March, did not indicate any great changes in the old capital. The requisition for the meeting was signed by 1,332 citizens "anxious to express approbation of the principles which have directed His Excellency in the administration of the government."³⁰ Of the first eighty signatures; those that would guarantee the respectability of the meeting, twenty-five were of anglophones, but these were merely of the men who had already manifested their support for Bagot at the earlier meeting, men like Robert Christie, J. W. Woolsey, William Ruthven, Ronald McDonald and William O'Brien. Again the great commercial names were missing, and the importance of the Repeal Association's members was made even clearer. Neilson's Gazette emphasized

29. LaFontaine Papers, E. G. Wakefield to L.-H. LaFontaine, February 2, 1843

30. Quebec Gazette, March 29, 1843; names in the Quebec Mercury, March 23, 1843

its disapproval of the new government by condemning the pro-Bagot meeting as a "revival of former dissensions (sic),"³¹ despite the participation of both language groups in moving and seconding the resolutions. At a further meeting, held on April 8, Neilson expressed disapproval of the fad for presenting Addresses of Welcome, but at this meeting, organized purely to welcome Metcalfe to the colony, he was prepared to co-operate with persistent Tories like Henry LeMesurier as well as old friend like Woolsey.³²

The Montreal meeting, held on April 11, was a vastly larger and more important affair. Over 3,200 Montrealers signed the requisition for a meeting to endorse Bagot's policy, nearly three times as many as had done so in Quebec. A very secondary intention was to express "to his Excellency Sir CHARLES METCALFE, the high hopes for the future welfare of this country ... which his appointment has inspired."³³ In a city of 40,000, with perhaps 5,000 voters, the number of names attached to the requisition is impressive, although all the men who signed it were certainly not voters. It is also clear that LaFontaine's supporters made every effort to secure as many names as possible, and thus the list represents a fair indication of the support available in Montreal for the Ministry. Accordingly, it is worthwhile to give the requisition some detailed consideration.

31. Quebec Gazette, March 29, 1843

32. Quebec Gazette, April 10, 1843

33. Montreal Times, April 11, 1843. This issue contains the names of the signatories, upon which the following analysis is based.

38% of the names were of anglophones. In a city that was 61% English-speaking, this indicates that linguistic divisions were still a strong factor in politics. Nonetheless, these names represented a segment of society very different from the anglophone names on the Quebec requisition, indeed a segment that could hardly be said to exist in the older city. Some of the names could have been easily predicted. Benjamin Holmes, James Leslie, Sydney Bellingham, Jacob DeWitt, Michael McCulloch, Wolfred Nelson, L. T. Drummond and James Smith reflected the ex-Constitutionalist-patriote-Sydenhamite alliance created in the previous year. There were other names whose presence could not have been surprising, such as Hosea B. Smith, a crockery merchant who had helped DeWitt and L.-M. Viger found the Banque du Peuple, and John Macdonnell, the lawyer imprisoned with D.-B. Viger in 1838. Francis Godschall Johnson, the author of the pro-Responsible Government articles in the Montreal Courier in 1840, manifested his continuing attachment to the Reform forces. An important addition to the Liberal strength was Adam Ferrie, a Legislative Councillor, an important merchant and a Constitutionalist. More surprising was the appearance of such names as James Porteous, Post Master of Montreal, William Ermatinger, J. P., and William Badgley, Commissioner of Bankrupts, old members of the parti bureaucrate.

Business circles were also well represented. J. T. Brondegeest had been recently elected to the presidency of the Montreal Board of Trade. John Young, while still young, was

rapidly rising in the Montreal mercantile community. John Euston Mills, a financier and Chairman of the Champlain & St. Lawrence Railway, indicated his support, as did William Workman, a director of the railway and partner in the city's largest hardware firm. Other hardware manufacturers and dealers on the requisition were Henry Mulholland, Thomas Rodden and Benjamin Brewster; other prominent financiers were Francis Atwater, Caufield Dorwin and J. M. Tobin. The professions were also well represented by men of prestige; Alex Buchanan and Duncan Fisher were both Q. C.'s.

Of course the great names of the old Montreal establishment were missing, such as Peter McGill, George Moffatt and Alexander Gillespie. Given the greater economic dynamism and diversity of Montreal, this was less significant than in Quebec. In summary, it was an impressive array of economic power: the general manager of the country's largest bank, the president and general manager of the next most important bank in the city, the chairman of Montreal's only railroad, the head of the mercantile community's official organization, and a partner in one of the city's largest manufactories. Many of the men who signed the requisition were to play a crucial role in railway development and industrial expansion throughout the 1840s and 1850s. Evidently, the identification of the 'French' party with an economically regressive policy was no longer universally held, despite the insistence of the Montreal Gazette that the 'British' party

was the only progressive force in the colony.³⁴

Economic aspirations were not the only, or even the principal determinants of political behaviour. It is also important to emphasize a number of cultural patterns that appear in the requisition of 1843. Religion was one factor. The Unitarians, a small, unpopular group, were extremely well represented. They included not only Holmes, Young and William Workman, but also P. McGill Desrivieres, the adopted son of Peter McGill, J. H. Atwater, and Adam Ferrie. Evangelical Protestantism, the opposite end of the dissenting spectrum, was also well represented, as Jacob DeWitt, John E. Mills and Horatio Admiral Nelson, a rising young broom manufacturer, were active in the American Presbyterian Church.

Nationality was also a factor. The American community in Montreal seems to have been well-inclined to the new Ministry. In addition to the four men mentioned above as connected with the American Presbyterian Church, men like Charles and Henry Seymour, commission merchants, Caufield Dorwin, William Lyman, the head of a large drug company, Benjamin Brewster, Thomas Hagar and Thomas Rodden were all immigrant from the United States. It may be presumed that their experience with republican institutions made them less susceptible to loyalist arguments. As in Quebec City, the Irish formed a large part of the anglo-phone component of the list, perhaps about 40%. The Repeal Association's executive was represented by its President and

34. Montreal Gazette, September 29, 1842

Vice-President, Sydney Bellingham and Peter Dunn. In Montreal, however, the traditional elite of the Irish community participated in the meeting; Benjamin Holmes, William Workman and John Posonoby Sexton, Clerk to the Municipal Corporation, were on the executive of the St. Patrick's Society. Other important Irishmen on the list included John Tully, who owned a considerable amount of property in Griffintown, J. M. Tobin, the auctioneer and financier who had worked with Holmes in Montreal in the election of 1841, and Daniel O'Connor, a shoe merchant.

A final factor worth comment is the relative youth of many of the signatories. Many of the men listed above were at the commencement of their careers, and were to play a leading part in Montreal's civic, economic and political life for the next forty years. Many of the old Tories were men of a passing generation, whose habits of thought were becoming increasingly out of date.

Thus it can be seen that a large part of the elite of English-speaking Canada's largest city had only been bound to the Chateau Clique by a fear of the economic and cultural intentions of the French Canadian majority, rather than by any fundamental commitment to the parti bureaucrate's Anglican and exclusivist values. Once LaFontaine demonstrated in his alliance with the Sydenhamites that he was 'liberal' in the nineteenth century sense of believing in religious and political freedom coupled with economic development, many who had previously supported the Tories found no difficulty in joining the emergent Liberal

party.

The support shown by anglophones for the Ministry posed a fundamental problem to the Montreal Gazette, still a mouthpiece for those unwilling to countenance the new political arrangement, for it denied the neat division according to race that was the basis of the 'British' party. Thus, in February, 1843, the papers insisted that the so-called Reform party was still basically the party of French Canadian exclusivism.

To this party ... may be added a small and utterly influential fraction of British time-servers, who, being deserters from their country's cause, are in truth equally despised by all parties.³⁵

It was inevitable that T. C. Aylwin would become the principal target for Conservative criticism. His unbridled temper and bluntness of speech made him an easy target, but it was his role as the most important British Lower Canadian in the Executive Council that made it necessary for the Gazette to concentrate on him. Dominic Daly was easily dismissed as a simple mercenary

Who to fulfill his patron's wishes
Could swallow Colborne's Loaves and fishes,
And while Lord Sydenham was in
Could vote for him through thick and thin,
Then, when his Lordship's out, can still
Through Sir Charles his pockets fill.³⁶

Aylwin was of a different stature, and thus the Gazette had to insist that he was "the actual nominee of Mr. LAFONTAINE," and thus his participation was no proof of the bi-racial nature.

35. Montreal Gazette, February 14, 1843

36. Montreal Gazette February 9, 1843

of the Cabinet.³⁷ The Quebec lawyer had been one of the most vitriolic of the Constitutionalists and accordingly represented to the Tories all the defectors from their cause. Aylwin had made a reference in the Assembly to his French grand-mother. This led the Gazette to note that

some British loyalists of former times now repudiate not that proud title alone, but the very name of Britons - expressing their so recently acquired admiration for 'nos institutions, notre langue et nos lois'; and boasting of their title, to take rank as enfants du sol in right of their grandmothers!³⁸

Such attacks could only increase Aylwin's importance in his own party. Perhaps the best indication of his standing is that in a poem in which each minister was the subject of a verse, Aylwin was entitled to two stanzas:

Is there ever a man with letters to write?
Lawyer Aylwin a neat one at once will indite,
Full of fury and passion, and malice, and spite -
But are any man's letters immaculate quite?
Oh no!

You should be slow
To trust any Tory who tells you so.

Is there ever a dunce who has ever denied
That every abuse should be all on one side?
Can he read without profit, and pleasure, and pride
The doctrine of this bold responsible guide?
Oh no

'T might be the death-blow
Of his cozy old grannie, to use him so.³⁹

The Conservatives, divided and leaderless, and without any particular plan of action, could not offer any significant

37. Montreal Gazette, April 22, 1843

38. Montreal Gazette, September 11, 1843

39. Montreal Gazette, February 18, 1843

opposition to LaFontaine's increasingly powerful machine; petty attacks on Aylwin no doubt relieved their frustrating sense of impotence.

On the other hand, it was inevitable that the Liberal party, composed of such disparate elements, should experience a number of internal tensions. Three by-elections that took place during the summer of 1843 reflected some of the problems LaFontaine was facing. Of these, the least important was occasioned by the resignation from the Assembly of William Walker, the troublesome Montreal lawyer. As one of the first of the prominent Constitutionalists to declare himself for LaFontaine, he had expected some reward. At the time of the formation of the Ministry, he had been suggested as a possible Solicitor-General for Canada East.⁴⁰ He had not been particularly active in the Assembly and now abandoned his seat. C.-S. Cherrier dismissed Walker as a "meilleur Avocat qu'il n'est politique consequent."⁴¹ Clearly, LaFontaine had not enough patronage at his disposal to soothe all of his supporters. Timothée Franchère replaced Walker as the member for Rouville without difficulty.

In Quebec City, David Burnet resigned as one of the city's members. Jean Chabot succeeded him by acclamation, but there was an ugly struggle at the meeting to select the official Liberal candidate. Burnet had written to Glackemeyer on August 28, informing him of his intention to resign. Glackemeyer kept

40. Montreal Gazette, September 20, 1842

41. LaFontaine Papers, C.-S. Cherrier to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 13, 1843

this secret, and used the eleven days before the official proclamation of the upcoming election to secure Chabot's nomination. He did a rather poor job, for at the meeting it was proposed to nominate no one other than Louis-Joseph Papineau. This suggestion was withdrawn when it was pointed out that there would be problems with the exile's property qualification. Antoine-Charles Taschereau was then nominated by T. W. Lloyd and a Mr. Motz. Taschereau had been "promised the support of the English party," and among those active at the meeting was William Bristow, formerly such a conspicuous pro-Unionist.⁴² The inclusion in the party of an English-speaking faction only loosely tied to LaFontaine here appears to have provided the basis for a narrowly avoided split.

The third, and most tumultuous, by-election was held in Champlain County, where Dr. René-Joseph Kimber resigned in order to be appointed to the Legislative Council. This election brought to a head the simmering tensions between D.-B. Viger and LaFontaine over whether the Liberals were a national or political party. L'Aurore des Canadas, Viger's organ, recommended a Dr. Trestler as a "bon canadien" despite his having accepted office under Sir John Colborne.⁴³ Kimber recommended his son-in-law, Henry Judah, a British-born lawyer connected by marriage

42. Quebec Mercury, September 19, 1843

43. L'Aurore des Canadas, August 29, 1843

with the Harts.⁴⁴ L'Aurore described the Montreal lawyer as one of those "étrangers qui ne tiennent à rien dans ce pays qu'à leur intérêt personnel."⁴⁵ It was clearly the fact that Judah was not a French Canadian that was the true reason for L'Aurore's antagonism. When the Times proclaimed Judah effectively elected as the official Liberal candidate, Viger's paper expressed its frustration at the importance of anglophones in the party, declaring its shock

que le Times prenne sur lui de déclarer déjà élu un homme ... sans aucune de ces affinités morales, nationales et religieuses qui sont devenus aujourd'hui des conditions essentielles pour s'assurer les suffrages d'un comté canadien. Ce n'est pas la première fois que le Times s'intrigue pour imposer au pays des individus qui loin d'avoir des titres à son confiance ont fait tout ce qu'il fallait pour se déconsidérer à ses yeux.(sic)⁴⁶

Judah's particular failing, it was revealed, was that the lawyer had supported Papineau until 1837, but upon the outbreak of the Rebellion had signed a declaration of loyalty.

The principles presented in L'Aurore would have destroyed LaFontaine's careful compromise. The Times, seconded by La Minerve, responded immediately and angrily that

the Aurore, in seeking to wound Mr. Judah has indulged in language which the English Reformers cannot brook; it has promulgated doctrines which they must resent as wanton and premeditated insult ... As a Liberal

⁴⁴. La Minerve claimed that Judah was "né et élevé dans le pays." (cited in L'Aurore des Canadas, September 2, 1843). For a biography of Judah, stating his birth in London, see Francis-Joseph Audet, Les Députés de la région des Trois-Rivières, Les Editions du Bien-Public, 1934, pp. 66-7

⁴⁵. L'Aurore des Canadas, August 29, 1843

⁴⁶. L'Aurore des Canadas, August 26, 1843 (the date is possibly a typographical error, for this issue appears to come after the one previously cited.)

journal we have resisted what we deemed the unjust attempts of the opposition journals to establish an offensive distinction between the Colonists of Anglo and Franco-Canadian races; and in so doing we have been at times accused of anti-British feelings. Is it to be supposed that we will now surrender an independence and even tacitly sanction a stupid proscription, even when enunciated by those whose cause we advocate.⁴⁷

L'Aurore in response grew even more explicit. The paper had supported Leslie, DeWitt, Aylwin and Walker "parceque quand il y a dans la balance un mauvais Canadien et un libéral d'une autre origine, nous ne hesitons pas à donner notre confiance au dernier." Given, however, that the over-representation of the Eastern Townships and Upper Canada condemned the French Canadians to the status of a perpetual minority, it could not be accepted that "le reste de la branche populaire qui doit être essentiellement canadienne" should be invaded by men whose blood and culture did not guarantee their loyalty to the French Canadian people.⁴⁸

It was a public, very ugly fight. L'Aurore attacked its opponent's editor, Sydney Bellingham, on the basis of the Irishman's Tory past, and taunted the Times by insisting that L'Aurore was a more ardent defender of Irish rights than the paper edited by the President of the Loyal Repeal Association.⁴⁹ The Herald perhaps out of malicious glee endorsed Trestler because of his services to Colborne.⁵⁰ La Minerve declared that the country was now divided between the supporters of LaFontaine

47. Montreal Gazette September 4, 1843, citing the Times

48. L'Aurore des Canadas, September 8, 1843

49. L'Aurore des Canadas, September 8, 1843

50. L'Aurore des Canadas, September 15, 1843

and of Viger. This L'Aurore tried to deny, but the split in the party was too evident.⁵¹ Clearly, Viger's inability to accept the role of anglophones in the party was a fundamental point that divided him, eventually completely, from LaFontaine. In the end, Judah carried the election with 660 votes to 308.⁵²

Other tensions were surfacing as well. The Irish were restive. Riots among the navvies working on the Beauharnois canal were calmed by speeches from Benjamin Holmes and the government's 'moral agent' on the canal, the Rev. Phelan. L. T. Drummond was appointed to the commission to investigate the disturbances. The electoral value of these workers was well known, and the government, now their employer, had every reason to be concerned with their discontent. The appointment of Drummond would ensure that the navvies felt their interests were being looked after by one of their own, and would enable the lawyer to strengthen his influence with his fellow-countrymen. Other, larger issues, however, were in the air, and again the politics of the Irish Canadians were to be affected by events on the other side of the Atlantic.

1843 was the year that saw the emergence of the Young Ireland movement in which Thomas D'Arcy McGee was to distinguish himself. Dissatisfied with Daniel O'Connell's peaceful agitation, this group urged more extreme measures. The British

51. L'Aurore des Canadas, September 23, 1843 (citing in rebuttal La Minerve)

52. L'Aurore des Canadas, September 29, 1843 (poll-by-poll results)

government in turn attempted to proscribe the whole Repeal movement, O'Connell included. LaFontaine and Baldwin, anxious not to alienate the loyalist element among their followers, attempted to restrain those of their papers that had endorsed Repeal too vigorously.⁵³ L. T. Drummond resigned from the executive of the Young Men's Repeal Association, although he later denied that this was the result of the Imperial government's interdict on Repealers holding office.⁵⁴ In Quebec, the situation was further complicated by the fact that the Mercury, in becoming the party's English-language organ, had not moderated its anti-Repeal stance. At meetings held in the city, the government was criticized for muzzling discussion of the issue, and it was resolved to found a new newspaper, the Quebec Herald and Catholic Advocate. It was ominous that the activists at these meetings included such men as Edouard Glackemeyer, John Teed, and Michael Connolly, old Liberals, and William Bristow, a new and dubious convert.⁵⁵

In Montreal, Sydney Bellingham, as always, posed a particular problem. The Canada Times continued to devote a great deal of time to the Repeal question, printing long extracts from O'Connell's speeches. The Montreal Gazette seems to have taken particular pleasure in goading Bellingham with vitriolic attacks on O'Connell and accused the Times of "toadying" to the Irish

53. Quebec Mercury, July 13, 1843.

54. Montreal Gazette, February 15, 17, 1844.

55. Quebec Gazette, September 1, 1843.

population of Montreal with a "lick-spittle ingenuity."⁵⁶ The general behaviour of the Times' editor caused C.-S. Cherrier to write to LaFontaine to warn him of the difficulty.⁵⁷

Thus, while the Conservatives suffered from uncertainty and shock, the Liberals were divided by the results of a too-complete victory. For the time being, these tensions were covered over by the veneer of power. The upcoming session would demonstrate the ability of the Ministry to maintain its hold on both old and new supporters.

The government postponed calling together the Assembly until September 28, two weeks before the end of the maximum delay established by law. At the opening of the session, the Ministry demonstrated the solidity of the new political system. A motion by John Neilson to establish a wide range of Standing Committees, similar to his motion of the preceding year, was introduced. This time, however, his was the only vote cast for the proposal.⁵⁸ The clearest demonstration of the Ministry's skill in conciliating different economic interests was reflected in the final arrangement of a system of agricultural protection, the issue raised in the previous session. The same tensions were still in place. The French Canadian counties and the Eastern Townships were almost unanimous in demanding protection; elements in the commercial community feared that it would

56. Montreal Gazette, October 28, 1843

57. LaFontaine Papers, C.-S. Cherrier to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 13, 1843

58. Montreal Gazette, October 9, 1843

threaten the chances of the St. Lawrence becoming the principal conduit for American trade. In the Gaspé, barely self-sufficient in food, it was felt that such a system would increase the price of food. Once again, John Neilson invoked the principles of Free Trade to oppose the measure.⁵⁹ Clauses were added to the bill, however, that protected certain groups and thus allayed their opposition. Agricultural products imported for use in the fishing industry were exempted from duty, and thus Robert Christie was satisfied. Animals imported under bond for processing and re-export to Britain were likewise exempt, a sop to the merchants and packers. Economic interests were closely mirrored in the voting; the representatives of the St. Francis District voted en masse against the free admission of bonded livestock,⁶⁰ and even such a loyal supporter of the government as James Leslie, voting as a merchant despite the fact that he represented a French Canadian constituency, opposed the whole measure.⁶¹

The representatives of the mercantile community did not, however, have the same unanimity as the members from the Eastern Townships. The Gazette did declare that the passage of the bill showed "the little political influence of the commercial classes, their apathy in the use of such influence as they have, and the want of enlightenment to correct the selfishness of the dominant [rural] class,"⁶² but the Herald, also an organ for the city's

59. Montreal Gazette, October 24, 1843, reporting events of October 20 in the House

60. DLA, vol. 3, pp. 362-70, October 19, 1843

61. DLA, vol. 3, p. 430, October 25, 1843

62. Montreal Gazette, October 14, 1843

traders, endorsed agricultural protection,⁶³ and Benjamin Holmes, a leading mercantile figure, also supported it throughout the debate. It was fortunate for the government that such questions did not yet have the emotional potency they were to acquire after the abolition of the Corn Laws; otherwise, this first clash between the principles of Free Trade and Protectionism might have seriously tested the political strength of the Ministry. As it was, the Imperial Government's Canada Corn Law, lowering duties on Canadian wheat and flour processed in Canada, came into effect on October 11, 1843, and thus helped to defuse the issue. The provincial government's bill was carried by a triumphant 46 to 10. In the minority were James Leslie and John Simpson, usually supporters of the government, as well as Neilson, Henry Black, C. J. Forbes and George Moffatt.

Other measures passed during the session reflected the quarrels of the preceding years. In a vote that overturned the decision of the House in 1841, it was resolved to ask the Imperial Government to alter the provisions in the Act of Union concerning the Civil List. Further amendments were made to the Sleigh Ordinance and the Registry Office Ordinance. All of these measures, modifications of the legacy of Lord Sydenham, were passed by wide margins, and English-speaking Lower Canadians figured in the majorities in numbers ranging from 11 to 15.

The composition of the anglophone contingent from Canada

⁶³. Montreal Gazette, November 2, 1843, citing the Montreal Herald

East had undergone some significant changes between March, 1841 and November 1843. Excluding Robert Baldwin, sitting for Rimouski but still considered as an Upper Canadian, the actual number had declined from 23 to 22. There had been, nonetheless, a number of by-elections. In some of these, members elected through Sydenham's intervention, such as C. D. Day and John Yule, had been replaced by French Canadians, while in others, anglophone Liberals like Leslie, DeWitt and Judah succeeded franco-phone members. In the two cities, George Moffatt was replaced by Pierre Beaubien and David Burnet by Jean Chabot. Elsewhere, men connected with Sydenham were replaced by local Tories, as in Two Mountains, where C. J. Forbes succeeded Dr. Colin Robertson. In Trois Rivières, Edward Grieve, a bureaucrate whose control over the government-owned seigneurie of Lauzon made him powerful, was elected in the place of C. R. Ogden without opposition, although Jacob DeWitt was reported to have offered 350^l. to anyone prepared to contest the election.⁶⁴

There was thus an increasing polarization taking place, in which anglophone members were either dependent on French Canadian votes or representatives of old, entrenched local elites. The broad-based alliance envisioned by the the United Province's first governor gradually dwindled. An ironic illustration of this trend was the election of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, committed

⁶⁴. Montreal Pilot, April 30, 1844, citing the Montreal Gazette

by both public and private pledges to LaFontaine,⁶⁵ in the place of J. W. Dunscomb, a typical Sydenhamite moderate. That Wakefield was elected by French Canadian votes is shown by the poll-by-poll figures, which show that the French Canadian parishes of St. Martine, St. Clement and St. Timothe provided the bulk of Wakefield's 837 vote majority over Col. Scriver, a prominent local Tory.⁶⁶ Wakefield was to show himself later, however, to be much the sort of man that Sydenham would have liked. A parallel sign of this development was the disappearance of the two French Canadians connected with the former Governor, A.-M. Delisle and M.-A. de Salaberry, both replaced by partisans of LaFontaine. Out of the perhaps 11 members who can be considered Sydenhamites only four remained: Daly, Holmes, McCulloch and Simpson. It can be seen that LaFontaine strengthened his control over the coalition effected in 1842 without destroying its bi-cultural appearance. This, however, was only done by increasing the dependence of his anglophone allies on French Canadian electors rather than by any effective widening of his support among British Lower Canadians. The political value to the party of Holmes, DeWitt, Leslie and Aylwin continued to be their role as representatives of elements within the anglophone provincial elite, rather than true spokesmen for the anglophones of Canada East.

65. LaFontaine Papers, Edward Wakefield Gibbon to L.-H. LaFontaine, August 27 [1842]; Montreal Gazette, October 20, 1842, citing the Canada Times.

66. Quebec Mercury, November 12, 1842 (results of the poll)

Indeed, much of the support the Ministry had garnered from British Lower Canadians depended upon the combination of a parliamentary majority and gubernatorial sanction, in short, the effective possession of power. This alone guaranteed the political stability necessary for economic development. The rift between Sir Charles Metcalfe and his Executive Council is a much described event in Canadian history. In his explanations to the House, Robert Baldwin advanced two reasons for the resignation of all of the ministers with the exception of Daly. The right to be consulted, at the very least, on the distribution of patronage was no doubt the more important, and dominated the subsequent political argument. Less important from the point of view of constitutional theory but nonetheless of considerable importance was the Governor's reservation of the Secret Societies Bill. This piece of legislation was aimed principally at the power of the Orange Lodge, a matter of concern to both Catholic and liberal Protestant Irishmen in Canada.⁶⁷ The bill had been passed by a strong majority of 55 to 13, but only after a tumultuous debate that lasted until 3 o'clock in the morning and which led to the expulsion of Sir Allan MacNab and the clearing of the public galleries.⁶⁷ Baldwin in fact spent more time explaining the reservation as a reason for the resignations than in discussing the issue of patronage. The Secret Societies Bill was reserved, Baldwin protested, after being introduced with the Governor's sanction, and no suggestion had been made during

67. DLA, vol. 3, pp. 662-3, November 4, 1843

the debate that Metcalfe might withhold Royal assent. Such a hint should have been given, lest it be felt that the government introduced bills insincerely, relying on the Colonial Office to deal with politically explosive measures.⁶⁸

The Assembly quickly declared its continuing confidence in the ex-Ministers. On December 1st, James Price, former Solicitor-General for Canada West, seconded by Benjamin Holmes, introduced a motion declaring "the deep regret felt by the House at the retirement of certain members of the Provincial Administration." Dominic Daly, the one remaining Minister, was indisposed, so the responsibility for defending the Governor's stand fell upon a willing Denis-Benjamin Viger, making now public the long-simmering tension between himself and LaFontaine. Wakefield and Simpson came to the support of Viger; T. C. Aylwin defended Baldwin. Finally, the resolution was carried by a vote of 46 to 23.⁶⁹ Seven of the twenty Lower Canadians who voted in the majority were anglophones: Armstrong, Leslie, Aylwin, Child, DeWitt, John Moore and Robert Christie. In addition, the support of Holmes for the motion he had seconded, and that of Henry Judah, absent on leave, may be presumed. Thus LaFontaine had behind him two members from the predominantly English-speaking Townships, two urban ex-Constitutionalists, four ex-patriotes, and a representative from the Gaspé, ostensibly at least a cross-section of the English-speaking communities of Lower Canada.

68. DLA, vol. 3, p. 1035, November 29, 1843

69. DLA, vol. 3, p. 1081, December 1, 1843

In contrast, of the ten members from Canada East who endorsed the Governor's position, only two, D.-B. Viger and J.-B. Noel, were French Canadians. The rest included the old Tory block, as represented by Henry Black and Edward Hale, five former supporters of LaFontaine, C. J. Forbes, John Simpson, J. B. Hamilton, E. G. Wakefield and Stephen Foster of Shefford. Neilson was also in the minority. Robert Jones, R. N. Watts, Edward Grieve, Michael McCulloch and Dominic Daly were variously absent or did not vote, but their subsequent actions made clear where their sympathies lay. It is to be noted that the defections from the Liberals included those men who most needed the support of the government, whether as local spokesmen, like Foster, entrepreneurs like Simpson and Wakefield, or political opportunists like Hamilton. With the exception of Holmes, the remnant of the Sydenhamite block - Daly, McCulloch and Simpson - endorsed Metcalfe.

Thus, of the twenty-two anglophone members from Lower Canada, nine remained loyal to LaFontaine and thirteen supported the Governor. It is thus evident that the French Canadian's British allies continued to be an important part of his parliamentary group, again approximately a third. It is also striking that LaFontaine retained the attachment of such a large portion of the Lower Canadian anglophone contingent. Judah, DeWitt, Leslie, Child and Armstrong all might have been expected by their political antecedents to remain with the Liberals, but Holmes, Moore, Christie and Aylwin had all been connected with the

'British' party before the Union. Personal conviction and political calculation may explain the continuing presence of the ex-Constitutionalists in the Liberal camp. Metcalfe himself was at a loss to explain the support given by British ~~Lower~~ Canadians to LaFontaine. He informed Lord Stanley that they "acted under French influence, or, whatever may have been their motive, voted in favor of the Leaders of the late Council."⁷⁰ An extended period in opposition would demonstrate to what extent personal idiosyncrasy could sustain the non-racial image of LaFontaine's party.

Understandably, the session did not continue much longer. It had not been entirely unproductive; sixty-four bills became law. The Governor prorogued the House, anxious to complete new ministerial arrangements, and LaFontaine and Baldwin were no doubt eager to lay their case before the country. Both sides had complementary needs: the Governor, to prove that he could command French support, and LaFontaine, to show that he could secure the loyalty of English-speaking Lower Canadians in opposition to Metcalfe.

The ex-Ministers suffered two major defeats, one at the end of 1843, the other at the beginning of 1844. In Quebec, the Mercury recanted its recently declared allegiance as soon as the resignations became known, and launched into ferocious attacks on "Responsible Government," that bugbear - that

70. C. O. 42, vol. 509, Sir Charles Metcalfe to Stanley, December 11, 1843

stalking-horse for the encroachments of half-blown republicans."⁷¹ In Montreal, towards the end of January in the new year, it became evident that Sydney Bellingham was preparing for yet another turn of his coat, the fourth in four years.

This latter development was of particular importance as Benjamin Holmes, under pressure from the directors of the Bank of Montreal,⁷² had decided to resign from the Assembly. Holmes' resignation did not indicate a withdrawal of support from LaFontaine, for he continued to be active on behalf of the party in such matters as circulating Francis Hincks' pamphlet countering D.-B. Viger's defence of Metcalfe.⁷³ The by-election thus provided an important opportunity for the Liberal party to demonstrate its strength in anglophone Lower Canada. Bellingham was anxious to succeed Holmes. In fact, he seems to have had an almost obsessive desire to represent Montreal in the Assembly, and he had only withdrawn his candidacy in the earlier by-election occasioned by George Moffatt's resignation when it was made clear that Pierre Beaubien would be the official Liberal candidate.⁷⁴

The pretext the Irishman chose for publicly announcing his separation from the party was Metcalfe's response to a loyal Address from the men of Gore. Until that point, he had supported

⁷¹. Quebec Mercury, December 19, 1843

⁷². Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, January 28, 1844

⁷³. LaFontaine Papers, Francis Hincks to L.-H. LaFontaine, February 1, 1844

⁷⁴. Quebec Gazette, November 8, 13, 1843

the ex-Ministers, but then felt that the Governor's reply "embraced every concession which the Liberal party sought - that one more word would be separation" from the Empire.⁷⁵ That this was not his true motive was made clear by the publication of a letter from Bellingham to Henry Judah, written after the Governor's answer to the Address from Gore, offering to run as an ex-Ministerialist.⁷⁶ Undaunted, Bellingham offered himself as a candidate for Montreal as an advocate of Metcalfe's cause.

LaFontaine's candidate was L. T. Drummond. In the end, his opponent was formally not Bellingham, again compelled to withdraw, but William Molson, one of the most important figures in Montreal. Nonetheless, the by-election took on the character of a personal duel between the two lawyers, one Protestant, one Catholic, for the leadership of the Irish community. Upon its allegiance the election turned; as LaFontaine told Baldwin, Drummond's return was certain if Bellingham did not succeed in dividing the Irish.⁷⁷

LaFontaine's first concern was to find a new editor for the Canada Times. Francis Hincks, a Unitarian Irishman, moved to Montreal to take charge. The proprietor of the Times, J. J. Willan, found Hincks too dictatorial about editorial policy and too demanding about money. Refusing to allow his paper to become an "organ of a coterie," he declared his indepen-

⁷⁵. Quebec Gazette, February 16, 1844 (Bellingham's letter)

⁷⁶. Montreal Gazette, March 14, 1844 (Bellingham's denial); Montreal Pilot, March 15, 1844 (assertion)

⁷⁷. Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, January 28, 1844

dence.⁷⁸ Robert Baldwin, remembering Hincks' apostasy of 1842, was unwilling to put money into a new paper,⁷⁹ but an English-language organ for the party in Montreal was essential. On March 5, the first issue of the Montreal Pilot appeared. Printed by Rollo Campbell, a bibulous Scot from Greenock,⁸⁰ its editor and directing genius was Hincks. The paper's declaration of principles was explicit. It called for the "establishment of Responsible Government which necessarily involves the Government of a party." Hincks was not, however, going to rely purely on constitutional principle to attract readers. Although the Pilot was to be an exclusively Canadian paper,

it is impossible that any Irishman can be indifferent to the grievances suffered by his fellow-countrymen ... who are suffering from the very evil which has existed in Canada, viz., the domination of a party hostile to the majority, and practically irresponsible to them.

Religious liberty was also to be a watchword of the Pilot, for in this declaration the paper endorsed the claims of the Scottish Free Church which, in Canada as well as in Scotland, was locked in a struggle with the established Church of Scotland over doctrine and property.⁸¹ The appeal to voluntarism was to be a powerful tool in the hands of the the Liberal party.

Bellingham's hold on his fellow Irish had its institutional

⁷⁸. Quebec Gazette, February 26, 1844 (letter from the proprietor of the Times)

⁷⁹. LaFontaine Papers, Robert Baldwin to L.-H. LaFontaine, January 20, 1844

⁸⁰. Elizabeth Nish, "Campbell, Rollo," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. X, pp.129-130

⁸¹. Montreal Pilot, March 5, 1844

base in his presidency of the Montreal Loyal Repeal Association. This, the Pilot conceded, gave him "an influence with the liberal portion of the Irish electors."⁸² To counterbalance this, Drummond's supporters secured control over other Irish organizations or invented new ones. March was the time for elections in Irish associations, and this made a number of demonstrations of strength possible. Benjamin Holmes declined re-election to the presidency of the St. Patrick's Society, but William Workman, described by Hincks as "one of our moderate friends who is however very firm & true,"⁸³ accepted the office. Partisans of Drummond were also elected to the executive, including J. P. Sexton and John Kelly. Daniel O'Connor, another supporter, was elected President of the Hibernian Benevolent Society. It was he moved a resolution in favour of the ex-Ministers at a meeting of the Montreal Irish held on March 11. At this meeting, Drummond proposed "three cheers for O'Connor for having torn the shoe off the cloven hoof of Bellingham," language which nearly resulted in a duel between the two Irish lawyers.⁸⁴ Drummond himself presided over a meeting of the Friends of Ireland, where Hincks, his Newfoundland-born assistant editor, Matthew Ryan, Kelly, O'Connor and John Tully were all active. Also involved was G.-E. Cartier, who regularly took part in such meetings to affirm French Canadian-Irish solidarity. A number of Repeal

⁸². Montreal Pilot, March 15, 1844

⁸³. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, May 5, 1844

⁸⁴. Montreal Gazette, March 14, 1844

meetings were held at which Drummond and Hincks reaffirmed their commitment to that cause. Molson was certainly a handicap for Bellingham. The Pilot pointed out that the brewer could "hardly pretend he cares as much about Irish affairs as he does about his own brewery."⁸⁵ The Montreal Gazette tried to counter all of this by pointing out that L'Aurore had supported Repeal before Hincks had expressed ~~any~~ views on the subject,⁸⁶ but this could scarcely be a successful tactic on the part of a paper that had distinguished itself by its attacks on Daniel O'Connell. The whole Conservative party was in fact tainted with the anti-Repeal brush. The Pilot printed an extract from the Toronto Patriot, a Tory paper with strong anti-O'Connell feelings, and challenged Irishmen to vote for Molson "if your conscience will allow you."⁸⁷ Bellingham's position weakened considerably, for early in March a meeting of Irishmen previously pledged to support Bellingham's candidacy resolved to take a neutral position in the upcoming election. Matters came to a head at a mass meeting of the city's Irishmen on March 14. Bellingham, no coward, appeared and made a slashing attack on the ex-Ministers. He insisted on the priority for Irishmen of Repeal as an issue above Canadian politics. Notwithstanding this speech, resolutions were passed endorsing Drummond.⁸⁸

The Liberal candidate did not automatically gain the ground

85. Montreal Pilot, March 15, 1844

86. Montreal Gazette, April 13, 1844

87. Montreal Pilot, April 5, 1844

88. Montreal Pilot, March 15, 1844

lost by Bellingham. On March 27, a meeting of unpledged Irishmen called for, among other things, Free Trade and more immigration.⁸⁹ This could not have been a favourable sign for the party that had introduced agricultural protection and still bore the stigma of being opposed to immigration. Drummond must have been concerned, for a similar meeting was disrupted by pro-Drummond labourers.⁹⁰

While the internal politics of the Irish community dominated the campaign, it was not the only element of importance in the election. Indeed, so successful had Hincks been in attracting Irishmen to Drummond's side that he was forced to print the names of some non-Irish anglophone supporters, such as F. G. Johnson and Robert M'Kay, two prominent lawyers. The Jewish community gave Drummond considerable support in the persons of Theodore and Adolphus M. Hart and M. Samuel David, a wealthy lawyer very prominent in the affairs of Montreal's synagogue. This led the Montreal Correspondent of the Quebec Mercury to declare hopefully that this was no sign "that the Jewish population of this city will forget the duty which they have heretofore so well performed."⁹¹ The strong and growing Montreal Temperance movement was not permitted to forget that Molson was a brewer.⁹²

It soon became apparent, as could have been expected, that the majority of the commercial community ranged itself on the

89. Quebec Mercury, April 2, 1844

90. Quebec Gazette, March 20, 1844

91. Quebec Mercury, March 7, 1844

92. Baldwin Papers, S. Derbishire to Robert Baldwin, March 8, 1844

side of the Governor. This enabled the Montreal Gazette to dismiss Drummond's supporters as "principally of the labouring class" and thus not representative of the wealth and respectability of the city.⁹³ It accused the Irish Catholic lawyer of playing on class hostility in order to generate hostility to the "constitutional" party.⁹⁴ Hincks' rebuttal to this was to insist that honest artisans in frieze coats were solidier citizens than bankrupt merchants in broadcloth. So outraged by this was one such merchant, a Mr. Howard, that he attempted to attack Hincks on the street and was only prevented from doing so by Hincks' Irish bodyguard.⁹⁵

No party, however, in mid-Victorian Canada, was anxious to present itself as the spokesman of the labouring class against the well-to-do. In Montreal, politics had yet to be defined by class lines, and the old formulae of nationality, religion and respectability still prevailed. Accordingly, the Pilot produced a list of wealthy Liberals. It included DeWitt, Leslie, Henry Judah, John E. Mills, Henry Jackson, Charles Wilson, Peter Dunn, John Tully and a number of wealthy French Canadians. While this was not as impressive as the list of the preceding year, it still showed that the party commanded a number of anglophone supporters of adequate respectability. When the

93. Montreal Gazette, April 13, 1844

94. Montreal Gazette, April 16, 1844

95. Quebec Gazette, April 19, 1844.

Hon. Adam Ferrie, quietly active on Drummond's side,⁹⁶ Holmes and the Harts are included in the reckoning, it is apparent that LaFontaine still had support from trade, banking, railroad and real estate interests.

With all the tensions of class, religion and nationality brought so bluntly into play, it was inevitable that the election would be neither honest nor peaceable. On the government's side, there was an attempt to name Sydney Bellingham as the Chief Returning Officer. This manoeuvre failed as Bellingham was not a resident of the city proper. On the other side, Irish Catholics were told that the oaths administered at the poll could not be binding as they were sworn on Protestant bibles.⁹⁷ Such illustrations of electioneering soon became trivial, for the by-election was marked by the use of sustained violence. Sporadic incidents took place early in the campaign, charivaris, disruptions of meetings and such like. It was at the nomination meeting that the scope of the imminent armed conflict became apparent. When Drummond made a virulent reply to a speech in French by John Macdonnell, Viger's colleague in prison, violence broke out. Both sides were armed, although even the Montreal Gazette conceded that the Molsonites carried the most clubs.⁹⁸ According to the Pilot, more lethal weapons were being

96. LaFontaine Papers, Robert Baldwin to L.-H. LaFontaine, May 22, 1844; Hincks was less certain of Ferrie as "a recent convert." Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, May 5, 1844

97. Quebec Gazette, April 24, 1844

98. Montreal Gazette, April 13, 1844

manufactured surreptitiously at Molson's foundry, bludgeons

made of iron, and an inch or a little upwards in diameter, with a large knob at the end having some six or eight sharp points. At the other end is a hole for a leather strap for fastening it to the wrist.⁹⁹

On the day of the election, however, Drummond could draw upon a more effective force than Molson. For some time, a committee had existed in Montreal, composed of such partisans as Daniel O'Connor, Peter Dunn, John Tully and John Kelly, to secure the participation of the Lachine canal workers in the election. According to the deposition of John Rogers, a foreman on the canal, Kelly, O'Connor and others were often near the canal,

particularly on the night previous to the Election at 11 o'clock when they required the men to be out for the election, saying that this was the time, and if they did not go into Town that night to take possession of the Poll, they would be of no use in the morning - to excite them further they stated that there were some hundreds of Glengarry men in Montreal, come privately for the purpose of murdering their Countrymen.¹⁰⁰

The government had tried to forestall such activity by opening up a new section of the canal and thus providing extra employment, but a temporary damn was destroyed, leaving some 200 men out of employment and free to participate in the election.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹. Montreal Pilot, April 23, 1844

¹⁰⁰. C. O. 42, vol. 517, Sir Charles Metcalfe to Stanley, May 3, 1844, enclosing Captain G. Wetherall's (Stipendiary Magistrate at Lachine) official report, with deposition of John Rogers, Foreman

¹⁰¹. C. O. 42, vol. 517, Sir Charles Metcalfe to Stanley, May 3, 1844, official report of Captain Wetherall. It is worth noting that Wetherall had been appointed by the LaFontaine-Baldwin government, and there is little evidence that these reports were ever used to political ends.

Between five and six hundred men came from the canals, organized in bands, and were lodged in the city upon their arrival.¹⁰² The Pilot could not deny the canalmen's incursion; rather lamely it insisted that, but for their presence, "the streets of Montreal would have been deluged with blood on the day of the election."¹⁰³ As it happened, blood was shed. One of the reforms instituted by Baldwin and LaFontaine was the replacement of a single poll for an entire electoral unit with a number of polls in subdivisions. Thus the key to the successful use of violence in Montreal lay in gaining control over the polls in wards that neither side could easily dominate. At one such poll, John Dyer, a violent Orangeman, cast his vote for Molson and asked for a protective escort through the crowd of Drummond supporters. John Tully accompanied him, but both were attacked by the mob. The military was called in, and in the ensuing struggle, J.-S. Champeau received a fatal bayonet wound.¹⁰⁴

However tragic their consequences, such tactics ensured a resounding victory for the Liberals. Much to the surprise of Daly and Metcalfe in Kingston,¹⁰⁵ Drummond was elected by a vote of 1383 to 463. The Quebec Gazette printed a ward-by-ward analysis of the vote, based upon a poll book. The results were not of course impartial, for many of Molson's supporters

102. C.O. 42, vol.517, Sir Charles Metcalfe to Stanley, April 24, 1844, enclosing letter from Captain Wetherall.

103. Montreal Pilot, April 23, 1844

104. Montreal Pilot, April 26, 1844 (account of the inquest)

105. LaFontaine Papers, S. Derbishire to L.-H. LaFontaine, April 20, 1844

were prevented from voting. As an indication of Drummond's support in wards little affected by violence, the results are of some interest.¹⁰⁶

Ward	French Canadian		British Origin	
	Drummond	Molson	Drummond	Molson
East	61	1	8	57
West	24	1	27	45
Centre	25	2	17	78
St. Lawrence	240	0	75	67
Queen's	263	2	204	125
St. Mary's	371	9	68	76
Total	984	15	399	448

It is at once clear that Drummond owed his numerical majority to the French Canadians and the Irish of Griffintown. Molson's strong showing in St. Mary's can be explained as the result of the location of his large foundry in that ward. In the small commercial wards at the centre of the city, where violence only played a limited role, Molson easily out-pollled Drummond, although it is interesting to note that in the West Ward, where Benjamin Holmes had been elected to the Corporation, Drummond attracted 37% of the anglophone vote. In the East and Centre Wards respectively, he polled 12% and 17% of the English-speaking voters. In the commercial core of the city, (anglophone Liberals were clearly a small, although possibly influential minority of 22% across the three wards.

The government did their best to minimize this defeat. The Montreal Gazette argued at great length and very weakly that in fact Molson commanded the backing of most of the French

106. Quebec Gazette, May 8, 1844 (poll results)

Canadians.¹⁰⁷ A more valuable gesture was the presentation by Molson, Dr. Trestler and John Macdonnell of a massive Address to the Governor. Signed by 5,152 citizens, it expressed approval of Metcalfe's policy.¹⁰⁸ Vengeance was also taken; Molson was reported to have fired all his Irish Catholic servants who supported Drummond,¹⁰⁹ and the government dismissed all the canal workers who had gone to Montreal.¹¹⁰ Predictably, this latter step resulted in rioting and the military had to be called in.

Such punitive measures, although no doubt satisfying, did little to change the fact that LaFontaine now had the allegiance of the Irish Roman Catholics and a sprinkling of liberal Irish Protestants. The effective use of the Repeal issue, the prominence given by the Liberals to active Irish Canadian politicians and a sense of religious solidarity had overcome the resentment created between the French Canadians and Irish Catholics in the late 1830s over the question of immigration. The failure of Bellingham's effort to re-create a Tory-Irish alliance was symbolized by Drummond's election to the presidency of the Montreal Loyal Repeal Association, founded by Bellingham. Both sides acknowledged the force and importance of the Irish-canadien alliance. The pro-Metcalfe forces realized the necessity of breaking up this, to them, unnatural conjunction. The Montreal Gazette reminded its readers that the Irish and French Canadians

107. Montreal Gazette, May 2, 1844 (e.g.)

108. Quebec Gazette, May 22, 1844

109. Montreal Pilot, April 23, 1844

110. Montreal Gazette, April 23, 1844

were rivals for employment, and that this should bring the Irish Catholics over to the "British" party.¹¹¹ Evidently, the Conservatives were prepared to make appeals to economic interests as well. Political capital was made of the application by a group of Irishmen to D.-B. Viger to secure the appointment of J. P. Sexton, heretofore an ally of Drummond, to the joint Prothonotaryship of Montreal. The Pilot denounced this as giving the impression that "the Irish are mere office-seekers, and that their support would be secured by the appointment of Mr. Sexton."¹¹² Another move the government made was to support the shift of Bernard Devlin, a fiery agitator supposedly connected to Dominic Daly and Bellingham, from Quebec to Montreal. Devlin, who accepted Bellingham's argument about the priority of Repeal over Canadian politics, had been cashiered from the editorship of the Freeman's Journal in Quebec for his attacks on the ex-Ministers and Francis Hincks in particular.¹¹³

To all such steps the Pilot had one resounding answer. The paper's columns were filled with long and savage attacks on the growth and strength of the Orange Lodge. It declared that as Irishmen

we prove our sincerity by using our best endeavours to get rid, in this the land of our adoption, of the direst curse that has afflicted the land of our birth, viz: Orangeism.¹¹⁴

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111. Montreal Gazette, cited in the Montreal Pilot, May 17, 1844
112. Montreal Pilot, June 28, 1844
113. Montreal Pilot, September 11, 1844
114. Montreal Pilot, June 17, 1844

No one would forget that it had been one of the grounds for the ex-Ministers' resignations that the Governor-General had reserved a bill that would have banned the Lodge. The government, in the minds of Catholics, French and Irish alike, and supporters of Repeal of any religion, was allied with the forces of evil.

It is difficult to assess reactions to the new ministerial crisis outside the two cities. John Moore, one of the two Eastern Township members who expressed confidence in the ex-Ministers, denied reports that he was going to resign.¹¹⁵ He was attacked ferociously in local newspapers for his continuing support of LaFontaine. Marcus Child, his fellow Liberal, attempted to justify himself at a public meeting, but his explanations were not well received.¹¹⁶ Not all such meetings, however, were hostile. John Moore attended a public dinner held in his honour. There, a toast to LaFontaine, Baldwin and the rest of the ex-Ministers was drunk. Among the 36 men present was William-Locker Felton, T. C. Aylwin's brother-in-law and the son of one of the greatest bureaucrate landholders in the St. Francis District. As reported by the Sherbrooke Gazette, one of the toasts proposed and drunk expressed the following sentiment:

British constitutional liberty if possible, but national liberty at all events, as the case may be; and in the event of the British government loosing (sic) sight of us, we will become the adopted sons of Uncle Sam, and

115. Quebec Mercury, February 22, 1844

116. Montreal Gazette, January 9, 1844

cheerfully ask them (sic) for a future protection.¹¹⁷

This ominous appeal to annexationism gave some idea of the extremities to which supporters of the ex-Ministers might go.

With such loose ideas floating in the air, and an unsettling absence of political legitimacy, it was manifest to all that only a general election could resolve finally what men best represented the varied communities of Lower Canada: D.-B. Viger or LaFontaine, Benjamin Holmes or E. G. Wakefield, L. T. Drummond or Sydney Bellingham. When Metcalfe had finally arranged his new Executive Council, he dissolved the Assembly on September 23, 1844. The Liberal party went into the election with a massive base of French Canadian support, fortified by the militancy of Irish nationalism, under the rather incongruous banner of fervid loyalty to British constitutional principles. The confusion of the times is reflected in the names given to a set of triplets born in Bytown during the summer of 1844. The two sons were named Louis Joseph Papineau Callaghan and Daniel O'Connell Callaghan. The daughter was named Victoria.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷. Quebec Gazette, March 1, 1844, citing the Sherbrooke Gazette

¹¹⁸. Quebec Gazette, July 26, 1844, citing the Bytown Gazette of July 23, 1844

Chapter V

"The Most Obnoxious Member of the Opposition" : The Rise of T. C. Aylwin, 1844-1846

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When, in the middle of the campaign, James Smith, once LaFontaine's ally and now Metcalfe's Attorney-General for Canada East, demanded that the election be fought on 'measures, not men,' the pilot could only reject his call. Loyalty, the paper claimed, was the pre-eminent political virtue.¹ This disagreement reflected the only central issue on the provincial level in the election. Not only did both sides claim to represent the aspirations of French Canadian nationalism, they both also declared themselves in favour of Responsible Government. Ministerialists such as Eden Colville, the government candidate in Beauharnois, and Stephen Foster, running in Shefford, were as profuse in their declarations of attachment to that system as opposition candidates.² The only question was as to who had violated the spirit of the resolutions of September, 1841: the

1. Montreal Pilot, October 14, 1844

2. Montreal Gazette, October 1, 1844 (Colville's Address to the Electors of Beauharnois); Montreal Gazette, October 14, 1844 (Foster's Address to the Electors of Shefford)

Governor-General or the ex-Ministers. Personal allegiance to the former or the latter was the most important criterion in assessing the politics of most of the candidates.

It was therefore inevitable that the election of 1844, particularly for the Liberals, was to be much more of a party struggle than the confused contest of 1841. Centralized organization played an all-important part in the opposition's strategy. This emphasized the ambiguous position of LaFontaine's English-speaking supporters. While most of the anglophones who had rallied to the Liberals while they enjoyed Bagot's approval and commanded governmental influence transferred their allegiance to Metcalfe's new Council, the prominence of those who remained with LaFontaine if anything increased. The most important illustration of this trend was the role played by Thomas Cushing Aylwin.

Aylwin had always been a difficult colleague. At least once, and probably more often, he had been on the verge of resigning from the Executive Council over disagreements about policy.³ In England, the rumour that the drunkenness of Aylwin and R. B. Sullivan had been one of the reasons for Metcalfe's lack of confidence in his first Ministry reached Thomas Falconer, LaFontaine's most frequent correspondent in Britain. Falconer reminded the French Canadian leader that "Aylwin was certainly forced upon you by the condition of selection imposed by Sir

3. according to Aylwin, in a speech in the Assembly. DLA, vol 4, pt. 2, p. 1457, February 11, 1845

C. Bagot," namely, that the Solicitor-General for Canada East be an anglophone.⁴ Clearly, he felt that, if possible, the Quebec lawyer should be dropped. Nor, despite the occasional letter promising to reform,⁵ had Aylwin proven himself to be tractable in opposition. At the beginning of September, 1844, Baldwin, LaFontaine and Morin resigned their rank as Queen's Councils to protest Metcalfe's veiled charge of treason, made in his reply to a 'loyal Address' from the residents of Drummond. Aylwin refused to follow their example, and suggested that LaFontaine had violated the principles of British constitutional practice:

quant a (sic) votre Resignation, je la crois unprecedented ... Je suis de l'opinion qu'il est absolument necessaire ici (sic), d'avoir des Queen Council (sic) en opposition à l'Administration ... je crois que le Gouvernement responsable nous oblige de ne pas resigner.⁶

In light, then, of both his antecedents as a Constitutional mob leader and his instability of character, it is remarkable that Aylwin emerged during the election and the following parliamentary session as one of the most influential Liberals in Canada East. This is explicable partly in terms of his talent and taste for the more sordid side of practical politics so repugnant to LaFontaine's personal fastidiousness. He also, however, benefitted from the temporary absence of any significant English-speaking rival from the Montreal District,

4. LaFontaine Papers, Thomas Falconer to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 28, 1844

5. LaFontaine Papers, T. C. Aylwin to L.-H. LaFontaine, November 14, 1844 (e. g.)

6. LaFontaine Papers, T. C. Aylwin to L.-H. LaFontaine, September 9, 1844

and, most importantly, from the internal divisions within the Quebec District. There, a split was emerging. On the one side was the older, established figures in the commercial community, largely British, still sympathetic to John Neilson and those French Canadians whose personal prominence predated the Union. On the other side was a younger faction, composed largely of French and Irish professionals, that became known as Jeune Canada.⁷ Among these were such rising partisans as P.-J.-O. Chauveau, John Maguire and, most important of them all, Joseph Cauchon. Aylwin at first intended to run in his old constituency of Portneuf, but this division within the party opened up the possibility of capturing a more prestigious seat in Quebec City.

Henry Black, one of the sitting members, could scarcely have been considered a LaFontaine loyalist. Having defeated Louis Massue in 1841 on the strength of his close affiliation with the old Tory faction, he had voted for the resolutions of September 1841, but opposed Price's motion of confidence in the ex-Ministers on December 1, 1843. Nonetheless, on the strength of his refusal to accept office under Metcalfe, a requisition was presented to him asking that he stand as an opposition candidate. The signatories were predominantly of British origin, and included among them were a number of staunch Constitutionalists, such as Peter Langlois, an important merchant,

7. The term first appears in English, as "Young Canada" in the Quebec Mercury, October 12, 1844. It may have been coined in imitation of the Young Ireland movement, or reflected the popularity of Disraeli's Conningsby.

R. H. Gairdner, a prominent lawyer, George 'Millionaire' Pozer, the great land speculator, and E. L. Montizambert, an old bureaucrate. Also on the list were some of the men that Neilson had attracted to his side at the beginning of the decade, such as Daniel McCallum, the lawyer connected with Massue, M. White, the shoemaker who had been a member of the original Committee of Electors, and James Dinning, the merchant who had withdrawn his name from the first anti-Union petition. Dunbar Ross and Thomas W. Lloyd, respectively a lawyer and a merchant, represented the group that had left the Constitutionals in 1842.⁸ In addition, Black was endorsed by Le Canadien, now edited by another old colleague of Neilson, Ronald MacDonald.⁹

There was of course no direct link to Neilson, whose opposition to LaFontaine was now notorious. Nonetheless, a meeting was held in St. Roch in the first week of October to promote the candidacy of A.-E. Taschereau over that of Black on the grounds that the anglophone was not a strong enough supporter of the ex-Ministers.¹⁰ Fortunately, at least for Aylwin, Black, while expressing hope for the future of Responsible Government, declined to run.¹¹ It was rumoured that the pledges of opposition to the government required were too demanding for Black's taste.¹² Black's refusal became known on October 9, and the

8. Quebec Gazette, October 9, 1844 (the requisition with its signatories)

9. Jacques Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, p. 189

10. Montreal Gazette, October 9, 1844 (Quebec Correspondent)

11. Quebec Gazette, October 9, 1844

12. Montreal Gazette, October 11, 1844

Montreal Gazette's Quebec Correspondent summed up the situation in the following terms:

The moderates are now at a non-plus. They have now no one upon whom they can fix their choice. The Canadian ultras would fain do a seeming justice to the British party by soliciting a man (whose principles are ex-Ministerial) of a British patronymic. Mr. Aylwin is talked of for the city.¹³

The 'ultras' acted quickly, for by the 12th, a day before the official nomination meeting of the city's Reformers, a private requisition had been presented to, and accepted by, T. C. Aylwin. The tactics used by "Young Canada" to ensure an official endorsement for their candidate as Jean Chabot's running mate were outlined by "A Loyalist" in a letter to the Quebec Gazette.

At the preliminary meeting to fix a day for the nomination, the following Sunday was proposed, which was strongly objected to by a number of persons present, because it would have the effect of excluding Europeans who could not conscientiously countenance the desecration of the Sabbath ...; but this was met by a flat refusal, and they were informed very cavalierly that those who did not chose to attend were welcome to remain at home; the nomination consequently took place without their participation. I venture to assert from my own personal observation, that not 20 persons of British origin formed part of that meeting, and the return of these two members may fairly be considered as that of about 600 or 700 Canadians of French origin and none others.¹⁴

The pious moderates were thus debarred from interfering with Aylwin's nomination as the official Liberal candidate.

This Sunday meeting was of particular importance, for in addition to choosing Aylwin and Chabot for the city, it nominated

13. Montreal Gazette, October 11, 1844

14. Quebec Gazette, October 21, 1844

P.-J.-O. Chauveau to run against John Neilson in Quebec County. Neilson's election committee was organized four days later, on October 17, and it became immediately apparent that the most prominent of those who had supported Henry Black's candidacy had swung behind Neilson: Peter Langlois, R. H. Gairdner, William Burke and James Dinning joined such Neilson loyalists as William Ruthven, John Nesbitt and Edouard Glackemeyer, and old Tories like William Patton and Henry LeMesurier. Few French and relatively few Irish Canadians were on the committee.¹⁵

When this group is compared with the large committee organized to secure the return of Aylwin, Chabot and Chauveau, the polarization of the city becomes manifest. Of the 142 members, only a dozen were anglophones.¹⁶ Of these, Dunbar Ross, as Deputy Judge in the Vice-Admiralty Court, was the most prominent. He had signed Black's requisition, as might have been expected of an ex-Constitutionalist, but had also recently produced, under the name "ZENO," a pamphlet called The Crise Metcalfe and the LaFontaine-Baldwin Cabinet Defended. This pamphlet contained profuse praise for Henry Black, but also a strong insistence on the re-election of the ex-Ministers and a rejection of the 'measures, not men' argument of the Ministry.¹⁷ Two municipal politicians, both Repealers, represented the fruits

15. Quebec Gazette, October 18, 1844

16. Le Canadien, October 14, 1844; Quebec Mercury, October 15, 1844 (There are slight discrepancies between the two lists of committee members.)

17. ZENO [Dunbar Ross], The crise Metcalfe and the LaFontaine-Baldwin Cabinet Defended, W. Cowan & Son, Quebec, 1844, pp. 32-5

of the Liberal move into local politics. William O'Brien, Councillor for Champlain Ward had been included in the Commission of the Peace by LaFontaine and had remained loyal to him. John Doran, also a Councillor for Champlain Ward, had been elected in 1843 and joined his colleague on the committee. Another representative of the Irish Repealers was John Maguire, an ambitious lawyer and a former supporter of Papineau who had recently been elected President of the Quebec Branch Repeal Association.¹⁸ He had been making speeches on Responsible Government at meetings and was subject to considerable criticism for his politicization of the Repeal movement. The "Comité de Surveillance of the Quebec Repeal Association" attacked him for making the organization "a Society formed for local political purposes" instead of "instituted to aid our fellow countrymen at home."¹⁹ Maguire had also been a candidate in Champlain Ward in 1843 and had even been suggested as a possible candidate in the general election.²⁰ The other anglophone members of the committee were less impressive; T. McLoughlin was a teacher, C. F. Pratt was a leather merchant, and the occupations of the others cannot be determined. Of some interest are John Teed, an old patriote activist, and J. C. Hart, both recently admitted to the St. Jean Baptiste Society under a section of its constitution that permitted the admission of non-French Canadians.²¹

18. Béatrice Chassé. "Maguire, John," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. X, pp. 487-8

19. Quebec Mercury, October 19, 1844

20. Montreal Gazette, October 10, 1844

21. Quebec Mercury, June 22, 1844

It is immediately apparent that despite the initial promise of support on the part of some members of the mercantile elite for Responsible Government, shown on the Black requisition, the election of 1844 again pitted the 'respectable' minority of ship-builders, timber merchants and bankers against the small merchants, artisans, Irish Catholics, independently minded professionals and French Canadians that formed the majority of the city's population. In this election, because Metcalfe had no wish to revert to Sydenham's policy of flagrant intervention, the suburbs were able to make their weight felt. It is important to note, however, that active English-speaking Liberals were not numerous in the suburbs. Both O'Brien and Doran represented an urban ward, and on the committee, nine of the dozen anglophones were identified as living in the city proper out of the 54 urban committee members, while only three of the 82 suburban representatives were English-speaking. Evidently, anglophone Liberal leaders, like their Tory counterparts, were concentrated in the centre of the city. Nonetheless, the power of the suburbs was sufficient to make it impossible for the Conservatives to present a candidate. A letter-writer in the Gazette could only complain of the effective disenfranchisement of "the mercantile portion of this community,"²² and the Mercury was reduced to reprinting extracts from Aylwin's old speeches in which anglo-patriotes such as James Leslie were denounced as traitors.²³

22. Quebec Gazette, October 25, 1844

23. Quebec Mercury, October 17, 1844

In Quebec County, however, John Neilson, a veteran of fifty years in politics, could have presented a serious obstacle to the election of the virtually unknown Chauveau. Yet the election was a triumph for the twenty-four year old. At the close of the poll, Chauveau had secured 1,545 votes to Neilson's 589.²⁴

Chauveau's supporters were not distributed evenly throughout the county. In fact, one of the characteristics of the vote lay in the lop-sided nature of the voting at the nine polls. The comparison of these figures with the census compiled a year later can only produce vague and uncertain indications of the nature of the support behind the two candidates, and the nature of the franchise makes such an attempt even more dangerous. Given the extreme polarization of the vote, however, some conclusions may be drawn from an examination of the returns from polls swept either by Neilson or Chauveau. Two trends do emerge fairly clearly. Chauveau's principal strength lay in the more urban areas in the county, and the younger candidate commanded considerable strength from English-speaking areas, particularly from those in which the more recently arrived Irish immigrants had settled.

These trends are most marked in the three polls which together provided 82.2% of Chauveau's total vote - the parish of Beauport, and those portions of the parishes of St. Roch and Notre Dame de Québec that lay outside the city proper. Of these,

24. Figures for the following analysis are taken from the Quebec Gazette, October 23, 1844 (poll results) and Census of Lower Canada, Montreal 1846 for the population figures.

St. Roch was the most important, for 34.5% of all the votes cast in the election came from this poll. Of these 738 votes, the French Canadian took 715, 46.2% of his support. In that 48% of that portion of the parish's 1,185 inhabitants were of British stock, a fair number of anglophones must have supported Chauveau. As the Irish-born outnumbered the native British Canadians by 245 to 242, it is possible that this could have been one source of support. Something of the same pattern obtained in Notre Dame, another outlying area of the city. Here the Liberal candidate took the poll by 350 votes to 111. This is all the more striking in that over 70% of the area's residents were of British stock. The Irish-born were again the largest anglophone group, over 30% of the 1,612 inhabitants. Indeed, of these three polls, only Beauport was an overwhelmingly French Canadian community. This poll, which Chauveau won by 206 votes to 5, was in a settlement in which only 6% of the residents were English-speaking.

In the smaller polls that Chauveau took, the same trend emerges. In Ste. Foy, where Neilson garnered only 18% of the 66 votes, 48% of the resident population were English-speaking, although here the native British Canadians slightly outnumbered the Irish. In tiny Ancienne Lorette, where 6% of the 709 inhabitants were anglophones, 87 votes were cast, 4 for Neilson and 83 for Chauveau. Overall, then, of the five polls swept by the Liberals, only two were in areas with insignificant anglophone minorities.

In contrast, only one of the three polls won by Neilson lay in an area that was strongly British. Valcartier, whose 130 votes provided 22% of Neilson's total, only produced 2 votes for the opposition candidate. It contained 1,297 residents, of whom 86% were of British stock. This was an older, more established community, for the native English Canadians formed 56% of the anglophone population. The other two poll were overwhelmingly French. Charlebourg, which gave Neilson 119 of its 188 votes, was 93% French; St. Ambroise, 99% of whose residents were French Canadians, gave Neilson 172 and Chauveau 53 votes. Together, these three poll supplied 71.4% of the older man's total. These parishes were all well-settled. Valcartier had the highest percentage of non-proprietors of real estate, 3.2%, of all the polls taken by Neilson; Charlebourg, the lowest had 1.5%. These figures can be compared with their equivalents for Chauveau's polls. Notre Dame held 16.7% non-proprietors, and Ancienne Lorette had 3.1%, the lowest figure for the parishes taken by the opposition candidate.

This material tends to support the impression that Neilson had the support of the better-established, smaller communities, French and English, while Chauveau's strength lay in the rawer, poorer, more urban areas accessible to his city-based organization. The impression that the Liberal gained some support from the Irish is strengthened by the fact that Chauveau was actively wooing the Irish vote through the Quebec Repeal Association. At one meeting, sponsored by John Maguire the French

Canadian declared himself "An Irishman," much to the disgust of one Repealer who wrote to the Mercury that "on the eve of an election, some candidates will make themselves anything to attain their object."²⁵ With the active support of Maguire, O'Brien and Doran from Quebec, it would be surprising if Chauveau had not received some support from Irishman in areas open to influence from the city.

If the Irish may have played an important role in Chauveau's victory, they should have played an even more obvious part in the one election in the Quebec District lost by the ex-Ministers. Megantic was a frontier community with a large Irish minority, and Dominic Daly, the ministerial candidate, was an Irish Catholic and, as Provincial Secretary, could claim considerable influence with the government over such matters as road-building. Indeed, the matter of roads figured largely in the Address issued by John Greaves Clapham, a notary and brother-in-law of Henry Black.²⁶ A large land holder and merchant, he had carried Megantic for the Constitutionalists before the Union, and now appealed to localism by attacking Daly for sacrificing Megantic's interests in order to stay in office. Yet, although nominated, he effectively withdrew from the campaign. Such Tory notables, unattached to either party, were becoming increasingly irrelevant, and the real contest was between Daly and Thomas W. Lloyd, a Quebec City merchant who had swung over to LaFontaine

25. Quebec Mercury October 15, 1844

26. Quebec Mercury, October 15, 1844 (Clapham's Address)

during Bagot's governorship. Like Dunbar Ross, he had signed Black's requisition, but unlike the lawyer he had not manifested a personal commitment to the ex-Ministers. He had, for example, backed A.-C. Taschereau's abortive bid for the Liberal nomination in the Quebec by-election, and he had not joined the committee to secure the return of Aylwin, Chauveau and Chabot. His Address did not specifically refer to the ex-Ministers, but called for a Council with the confidence of both Parliament and the Governor, adding that "this I need scarcely add is not now the case." More time was spent on calls for economical local self-government, the removal of restrictions on trade and the remission of quit-rents.²⁷ Manifestly, Lloyd, while opposed to the government, belonged to the group in Quebec least committed to LaFontaine's personal leadership.

In this light, his defeat may not have been an unqualified tragedy. Daly carried the election by 480 votes to Lloyd's 363. Four votes were cast for Clapham.²⁸ The election, by Canadian standards, was reasonably peaceful, but a certain amount of corruption was certainly introduced. Lloyd's partisans charged that the Chief Returning Officer, Daniel Burray, had erected polls in two townships where there were no qualified voters. These townships, Forsyth and Lambton, produced 57 votes for Daly, and none for Lloyd. It was also alleged that unqualified voters were brought in to support the ministerial

²⁷. Quebec Mercury, October 15, 1844 (Lloyd's Address to the Electors of Megantic)

²⁸. Quebec Gazette, October 30, 1844 (the poll)

candidate, a vexed issue in any county with a large number of squatters and new settlers.²⁹

Such charges, while doubtless in part justified, were routine, and the resulting petition against Daly's return was rejected. That such tactics were used makes any detailed analysis of the returns pointless, particularly as a number of the polls produced close results. It is interesting to note that the three municipalities with resident populations of more than 1,000 produced more lop-sided results than the polls in the smaller townships. In Leeds, where Daly took 142 votes, nearly 30% of his total, Lloyd received only 48. Here, 93% of the residents were of British stock, with a slightly larger number of native Canadians than of Irish-born. In Inverness, however, where the ethnic composition was almost identical, Lloyd received 138 votes, 38% of his total, and 64 votes went to Daly. Finally, the municipality of Somerset, which was 86% French Canadian and contained 40% of the county's francophones, Daly secured 95 votes to Lloyd's 57. Evidently, in Megantic ethnic factors were less important than entrenched local feuds. The polarization between Inverness and Leeds, for example, predated the Union although in 1834, the former had given 62% of its votes to the Tory Clapham and was now an opposition bastion, while the latter, now Daly's stronghold, had given 81% of its votes to the

29. Petition of Richard Charles Porter and others, freeholders and Electors of the county of Megantic, printed in DLA, vol. 4, pt. 1, pp. 304-307.

patriote Layfield.³⁰ Parochialism appears to have been more constant than political principle. For Daly's claim to represent Irish Catholics, perhaps the most important event was not his return for Megantic, but his reception in Quebec City. There, upon his arrival after the poll, a demonstration of support for the Provincial Secretary was organized by the city's Irishmen. This, according to "Stale Beer" in the Quebec Gazette, disproved the pilot's charges that "Mr. Daly had lost all hold on the confidence and affections of his countrymen in Canada."³¹ Daly's status as an Irish Catholic was evidently of greater significance in the more politicized former capital; in the county, his influence with the government was probably more significant.

These three events - Henry Black's refusal to run, Neilson's defeat and Daly's victory - solidified LaFontaine's control by effectively eliminating the moderate forces among the anglophones in Quebec. Only solid partisans were left, with Aylwin at their head. It is ironic that he, and to a lesser extent Dunbar Ross, both ex-Constitutionalists and neither Irish, emerged as part of a movement based upon the more extreme tendencies of Irish Catholic and French Canadian nationalism. It was in fact upon this anomaly that their position depended, for it enabled even such a fiery nationalist as Joseph Cauchon to claim that the election of Aylwin showed that there was no desire for a "proscription of Englishmen." To this, the Mercury could only

30. Fernand Ouellet, Le Bas Canada, Ottawa, 1980, p. 374.

31. Quebec Gazette, October 28, 1844

repeat the old argument that the lawyer was elected by the French suburbs as the result of his French principles, and thus was no sign of French Canadian tolerance.³²

The same pattern manifested itself throughout the District. Opponents and moderates were displaced or defeated. Undeniably, the most influential figure in the area was Aylwin, who, even his enemies conceded, was the "'Warwick' of the district of Quebec and vicinity."³³ The manner in which he used his power to eliminate lukewarm supporters of independent stature on behalf of firm adherents of LaFontaine was illustrated by his activities in Rimouski, his struggle with J.-A. Taschereau, and his role in his old constituency of Portneuf.

Augustin Cuvillier, the wealthy Montreal merchant who had been Speaker of the Assembly, was defeated in Huntingdon by B.-H. LeMoine, a transplanted Quebecker and a business associate of Jacob DeWitt. Aylwin then gave the Montrealer a "certificate" of approval for his campaign in Rimouski.³⁴ Cuvillier's defeat in the Montreal District had, however, been the result of his lukewarm endorsement of LaFontaine, and when Aylwin became aware of this he withdrew his support.³⁵ Edouard

32. Quebec Mercury, December 3, 1844 (quoting Cauchon in rebuttal)

33. Quebec Mercury, October 26, 1844. The French Canadian press referred to Aylwin as "l'électeur général," quoted in J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, p. 189

34. Quebec Mercury, October 22, 1844

35. according to J.-A. Taschereau in a letter to Le Canadien, October 28, 1844. Cuvillier's Address to the electors of Huntingdon (Montreal Gazette, October 1, 1844) had been very vague.

Glackemeyer then presented himself as a candidate, claiming to be a supporter of LaFontaine despite the assistance he had given to John Neilson in Quebec County. This support, he insisted, was the result of gratitude for past favours, rather than of an agreement about principles.³⁶ Cuvillier then added a paragraph to his Address, drafted by Aylwin, and again received Aylwin's endorsement as a candidate preferable to Glackemeyer.³⁷ Ultimately, a reliable candidate was found, Louis Bertrand, and Cuvillier went down in another defeat.

Joseph-André Taschereau was a member of a powerful, pervasive but divided Quebec clan. Originally, he intended to run in Dorchester, but Aylwin succeeded in making him resign for his brother Elzéar "sans difficultes(sic)."³⁸ André, however, as Aylwin conceded, was making a nuisance of himself, and Aylwin found this particularly irritating as it had been through him that the lucrative position of Police Magistrate in Quebec had been conferred on the trouble-maker.³⁹ André then decided to run in Montmorenci, where Aylwin's chosen candidate was Joseph Cauchon, whose youth led the Mercury to complain that "the nursery" had become "the depot for our candidates."⁴⁰ Aylwin wrote to a supporter, declaring that Taschereau was unacceptable

36. Quebec Gazette, October 23, 1844 (Glackemeyer's Address to the Electors of Rimouski)

37. according to J.-A. Taschereau in a letter to Le Canadien, October 28, 1844

38. LaFontaine Papers, T. C. Aylwin to L.-H. LaFontaine, October 21, 1844

39. T. C. Aylwin, in a letter to Le Canadien, October 28, 1844

40. Quebec Mercury, October 26, 1844

because, like Glackemeyer, he merely pretended to be a supporter of the ex-Ministers.⁴¹ Aylwin then went to Montmorenci to campaign on Cauchon's behalf. The young nationalist was elected, and Taschereau could only publish letters attacking Aylwin for his drunkenness, his dictatorial attitude and his anti-French sentiments before the Union.⁴² This newspaper attack was harmless enough to a man of Aylwin's temperament, but the permanent alienation of the bearer of such a prestigious name was to cause Aylwin considerable difficulty in the following year.

Portneuf, Aylwin could dispose of as if it had been his personal property. When he abandoned it to run in the city, he carefully kept it open by persuading other candidates to withdraw. At first, he held it for LaFontaine, fearing that violence might result in his leader's losing Terrebonne again.⁴³ When this did not happen, the seat was given to L. T. Drummond, who had been defeated in Montreal. Drummond's loss, following so soon after his by-election victory, underlies another factor that contributed to Aylwin's rise: the lack of any influential anglophone rival in the Montreal District. The most prominent leader in that part of the province now sat in Aylwin's pocket borough as Aylwin's personal nominee.

41. T. C. Aylwin to Nazile Larue, October 23, 1844, printed in Le Canadien, October 25, 1844

42. Le Canadien, October 28, 1844

43. Le Canadien, October 25, 1844

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If the Quebec District saw the progressive elimination of those who were the least committed to LaFontaine personally or whose prominence was the result of political struggles before the Union, the Montreal District witnessed the return to public life of two anglophones who had distinguished themselves in 1837 as patriotes: Wolfred Nelson and William Henry Scott.

Nelson's victory in Richelieu was one of LaFontaine's greatest triumphs in the 1844 election. In an overwhelmingly French Canadian riding the English Protestant rebel defeated 'Le Venerable,' D.-B. Viger, the Lower Canadian head of Metcalfe's Ministry. At the end of September, Nelson received a requisition from Richelieu. A very small number, 20, of the hundreds of names attached to it were of anglophones, and of these the great majority were unmistakably of Irish origin, with names like Patrick Tobin, Owen O'Neil and Patrick Quinn.⁴⁴ Less than 2% of the county's residents were born in Ireland, but Nelson, with, perhaps, his eye on the larger provincial strategy, did not ignore this group. After having declared that he regretted above all else that a promise to his father prevented him from becoming a Catholic, he claimed that he "now gloried as a Repealer in his English name," - or at least so it was reported in the Montreal

44. Montreal Pilot, October 11, 1844 (requisition)

Gazette.⁴⁵ Such declarations were unnecessary in Richelieu, for Nelson won the election by 1,053 votes to Viger's 685 and carried all but two polls.⁴⁶ Yet he did not, and perhaps did not want to, rival Aylwin. As a rebel, Nelson could not be usefully cited as proof of loyal, English Canadian support for LaFontaine. As subsequent events would show, the old doctor's greatest contribution would be his right to deny Viger's supporters the exclusive use of the patriote tradition.

It was in fact this that gave Nelson's success particular importance, for his standing with the French Canadians greatly outweighed that of W. H. Scott, elected as a supporter of the Governor in his old county of Two Mountains. Nonetheless, Scott's local influence and past reputation were sufficient to cause one of LaFontaine's partisans to divide his influence. A. Labine of Terrebonne wrote to LaFontaine to complain that the Montrealer's support for Dr. Dumouchel, Scott's opponent

pourrait occasionner qu'un candidat Tory, serait élu en préférence à un candidat libéral (sic)... cela me surprend d'autant plus que vous m'avez dit (sic) que vous reprochez à M. Scott seulement de ne vous avoir prévenu (sic) pour l'élection de Glasgow ... tant qu'à ses principes vous les avez toujours admirés (sic) tant qu'à moi vous aurez ma voix vous l'aurez parce que vos principes sont les miens et même ceux de M. Scott pour laquelle (sic) je travaille au Comte du Lac des Deux Montagnes.⁴⁷

While such theoretical concerns may have perturbed a man important enough to have influence in two counties, the election

45. Montreal Gazette, November 2, 1844

46. Quebec Gazette, October 28, 1844 (poll results)

47. LaFontaine Papers, Auguste Labine to L.-H. LaFontaine, October 11, 1844

in Two Mountains rotated around less abstract matters. Scott later declared with an understandable bitterness that at his election

the chief objection which had been made to him was that he was not French but Scotch - that he was not Catholic but Presbyterian ... Yet in respect to himself, there was no one who had made greater sacrifices for the French Canadians than he had done.⁴⁸

Scott certainly laid himself open to such attacks by having as one of his principal agents the former member of the county, C. J. Forbes,⁴⁹ an old Tory appointed by Sydenham as District Warden. Religion and nationality certainly appeared to have played a large part in the election. Ile Bizard, for example, an exclusively French Canadian parish, gave all of its 75 votes to Dumouchel.⁵⁰ Likewise, the French Canadian gained overwhelming majorities in St. Hermas, St. Benoit, and, to a lesser extent, St. Scholastique. The only anglophone parish to give a majority of its votes to Dumouchel was St. Columban, where Scott received only 3 of the 147 votes cast. This parish, the centre of Irish participation in the rebellion of 1837, was 94% English-speaking but also 97% Catholic. Similarly, Scott took all 31 votes in Gore, where there were only two French Canadians in a population of 1,124, and swept such heavily English-speaking townships as Grenville and St. Andrews. In fact, Dumouchel received over 98% of his votes in areas that were more than 90%

48. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 1, p. 6, November 28, 1844 (Scott)

49. extract from the Canada Times in the Quebec Gazette, October 16, 1844

50. Quebec Mercury, November 9, 1844 (poll)

French Canadian.

On the other hand, it is important to note that Scott gathered 64% of his votes in similar parishes. 52.8% of his total vote came from two parishes: St. Eustache, where Scott lived and which gave him 236 of its 237 votes, and St. Augustin, where Dumouchel received only 4 votes out of 162. It is evident that local influences here played a more important role than Scott's religion or ethnic background. In addition, a part of Forbes' usefulness lay not only in his English background but also in the large property he owned near Carillon.

This material suggests that in Two Mountains, as in Quebec County, but with different results, the balance between urban influence and rural particularism was of considerable importance in a contest where both sides could claim credit as defenders of French Canadian nationalism. One of Labine's complaints to LaFontaine referred to the lawyer having sent an "express de Montreal" to J.-J. Girouard to encourage Girouard to promote Dumouchel's candidacy.⁵¹ The use of national and religious cries was the main mechanism by which the Montreal machine attempted to expand its control of the politics of the hinterland. Again as in Quebec County, the Irish Catholics of St. Columban, with their strong sense of ethnic and confessional solidarity, seem to have been particularly susceptible to the Liberals' influence.

⁵¹. LaFontaine Papers, Auguste Labine to L.-H. LaFontaine, October 11, 1844

Another name that had attained a certain prominence, if not in the rebellion, at least in the parti patriote, was DeWitt. As in 1841, Jacob DeWitt found no difficulty in securing an unopposed return in Leinster, but in this election his acclamation did not follow a defeat in his pre-Union constituency of Beauharnois. Instead, his brother, Charles DeWitt, a steam-boat captain and also a large land-holder in the county, declared himself a candidate. This was not a last minute decision; the DeWitt family had been severally canvassing Beauharnois for some time, and Jacob was to take an active part in the campaign on his brother's behalf.⁵² This was unfortunate, as Ovide LeBlanc, a former patriote and notary warmly attached to LaFontaine's cause, was also anxious to run in the county. Both published Addresses strongly in favour of the ex-Ministers. Charles DeWitt particularly emphasized the importance of the British Connexion, agricultural protection and an end to the seigneurial system.⁵³ This last was of some importance, as the county was dominated by the Beauharnois Land Company's seigneurie, and the anticipated candidate on the ministerial side was the sitting member, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, whose connexion with the land company was no secret. In January, 1844, LaFontaine informed Baldwin that Wakefield was stimulating anti-Liberal sentiment by reminding farmers of the delays they had experienced in receiving compensation for lands appropriated for the Beauharnois canal by the

52. Montreal Gazette, October 24, 1844

53. Montreal Pilot, October 4, 1844 (DeWitt's and LeBlanc's Addresses to the Electors of Beauharnois)

LaFontaine-Baldwin government. Still, LaFontaine felt, "If the Irish electors ... go right, I do not think W. will be returned."⁵⁴

In the end, Wakefield, away in England, did not return to stand. This created a breathing space for the Liberal candidates in which they could arrange their own affairs, and at one point it looked as if such an arrangement had been arrived at, Charles Dewitt was to withdraw. Then Eden Colville came out on the government's side, a man in his own right as dangerous an opponent as Wakefield. Not only was his personal reputation less sullied, but he was also the son of one of the principal proprietors of the seigniory of Beauharnois. Also, unlike Wakefield, he had never publicly committed himself to LaFontaine.

In light of this threat, a continued division among the Liberals in such a linguistically, ethnically, economically and politically polarized riding would have made defeat inevitable. A letter written to LaFontaine by LeBlanc on October 24, scarcely a week before the opening of the poll, reveals the intensity of personal antagonisms between the candidates, and the importance of nationality in political calculations. The notary carefully outlined why he felt he should be the preferred candidate; not only had Dewitt violated his promise to withdraw, he was also using unscrupulous means to ruin LeBlanc's campaign. Hence, "beaucoup d'électeurs préfèrent Mr. (sic)

⁵⁴. Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, January 28, 1844

Colville à Mr. DeWitt si je résigne." The French Canadians were alleged to be particularly hostile to the Captain, and at most two hundred would vote for him. Showing that he too was capable of mud-slinging, LeBlanc made veiled references to a scandal of some years ago to explain why British electors would prefer Colville.⁵⁵

Yet it was LeBlanc in the end who withdrew. No doubt his lack of local standing was one factor; another may have been that it was felt that an English-speaking candidate dedicated to the British connexion but allied to LaFontaine might be more able both to hold on to the French Canadians and woo the British. DeWitt did not succeed in this double object, for Colville carried the election by 992 to 687. These figures are more than usually meaningless. At three of the nine polls, because of irregularities no returns were made.⁵⁶ No pattern emerges in the remaining figures; with the exception of Durham, which gave Colville 300 of its 319 votes, the totals were not excessively lop-sided.

There was little in the Beauharnois election to be compared with the massive violence of the 1841 election. Colville, Edward Dowling - formerly Sydenham's legal advisor but now a trustee for the land company - and John Macdonnell, the ex-patriote lawyer who had swung behind D.-B. Viger, were assaulted by canalliers reportedly stirred up by a speech from L. T. Drum-

55. LaFontaine Papers, Ovide LeBlanc to L.-H. LaFontaine, October 24, 1844

56. Quebec Gazette, November 1, 1844 (poll)

mond.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the Irish navvies played a very limited role in the 1844 election. This change was not simply the result of Metcalfe's refusal to imitate Sydenham's tactics, nor of a failure of the Irish to 'go right'; it was also the result of the tighter security measures set up along the canal. This change was to have its most profound repercussions on the election in Montreal, where the vigilance of Captain G. Wetherall, an Indian officer appointed Lachine Police Magistrate by LaFontaine and Baldwin, prevented the labourers from assisting the Liberals in the city.⁵⁸

On September 26, a meeting of the "Liberal Electors" was held in J. D. Bernard's auction room. With James Leslie in the chair, the sitting members, Drummond and Dr. Pierre Beaubien, were nominated, and a declaration of support, complete with the customary declaration of loyalty to the British connexion, was signed. The anglophone names on the list showed that the Liberals had lost little of their support since the April by-election.⁵⁹ John E. Mills, the banker and railway chairman, and Robert M'Kay and F. G. Johnson, the ex-Tory lawyers, still figured prominently as partisans. An important new activist was L. H. Holton, here making his first public political appearance. A rising forwarder and co-religionist of Benjamin Holmes and

57. Montreal Gazette, October 3, 1844; the Pilot's denial, October 4, 1844

58. C. O. 42 vol. 519, Sir Charles Metcalfe to Lord Stanley, October 28, 1844. Metcalfe gave Wetherall most of the credit for the preservation of order in the election.

59. names given in the Montreal Pilot, September 27, 1844

Francis Hincks, he was to play an important part in Montreal politics for the next forty years. Drummond had also not lost the support of the Irish Repeal activists. John Tully and Peter Dunn, both successful municipal politicians, and the military bootmaker, Daniel O'Connor, continued to support the Montreal Repeal Association's President. The Association's Secretary, Matthew Ryan, had just taken over control of the Pilot during Hincks' absence campaigning in Canada West.⁶⁰ Ryan sent out letters on the Association's stationery, urging Repealers to support the ex-Ministerial candidates.⁶¹ It appeared that the election would follow the same lines as the by-election six months earlier.

Nonetheless, Drummond and Beaubien lost, albeit narrowly, to the Constitutional candidates, George Moffatt and C.-C.-S. de Bleury, the latter a vendu bon vivant lawyer and duellist. This result was of course not a natural one. The following list of each ward's vote highlights the final total's oddity:

Ward	Moffatt	De Bleury	Drummond	Beaubien
East	74	73	95	95
West	129	127	56	55
Centre	119	119	59	59
Queen's	197	196	193	193
St. Lawrence	342	342	335	335
St. Mary's	218	218	215	215
Totals	1079	1075	953	952 ⁶²

60. Montreal Pilot, September 25, 1844

61. extract from the Canada Times in the Quebec Mercury, October 24, 1844

62. poll given in an extract from the Toronto Globe citing the Montreal Herald in the Montreal Pilot, November 4, 1844

Clearly, the tiny differences between the individual figures for the two Liberals and the two ministerialists, at least in the urban wards, suggest that the vote was based on party lines, rather than the merits of the individual candidates, and that there was little plumping. More significant is the difference between the voting patterns in the three small central polls and the three large suburban wards. In the former, the gap between votes of the two sides is considerable. The Liberals took the East Ward, with its large number of French Canadian voters, by a significant margin; in turn, the ministerialists took the West and Centre Wards easily. On the other hand, in the suburbs, the difference in favour of Moffatt and De Bleury is tiny: three in Queen's and St. Mary's, and twelve in the large St. Lawrence Ward. This improbable mathematical nicety was the result of careful organization on the part of the Conservatives, the judicious use of the military as a peace-keeping force, and the calm judgement of the Chief Returning Officer, John Young.

Young took advantage of one of the clauses in Baldwin's election law that had been drafted to limit the amount of violence in such elections by shortening the length of time a poll could remain open. Instead of taking votes until no more voters presented themselves, the returning Officer was to keep the poll open for a maximum of two days. In the relative amity of Wakefield's by-election victory in Beauharnois, the first election under the new law, the polls had remained open until

late at night, but in Montreal Young, following at least one interpretation of the act, ordered that all polls throughout the city be closed at five o'clock. Further more, he instituted a system of alternate voting, a practice sanctioned by British precedent, by which the returning officers were to accept three voters from each camp in turn. Strong barricades were erected to divide the access to the polls, and each party's supporters were ranged on one side or the other to diminish the chance of violent clashes. In the less populous city wards, there was time enough for all the voters to declare their choice; in the swollen suburbs this was impossible.⁶³

This system could not have operated had not the Tories been well organized. Throughout the election, the Montreal Gazette repeatedly urged the importance of ward-by-ward organization, systematic effort and close co-operation.⁶⁴ On the more sinister side, notices appeared in both the Gazette and the Herald of meetings of the "L. P. S."⁶⁵ - Loyal Protective Society, according to the Constitutionals, Low Prowling Scamps, according to the Liberals. Sub-groups of the L. P. S. had such names as Steel-Caps, Cavaliers and Dolphins.⁶⁶ It was in effect a Tory vigilantee movement. With the assistance of two

63. as described in the petition of Peter Dunn and others, electors of the city of Montreal, DLA, vol. 4, pt. 1, pp. 268-271

64. Montreal Gazette, passim, October, 1844

65. reported in the Montreal Pilot, October 18, 1844

66. an election broadside preserved in the James Leslie Family Papers, vol. 4, Miscellaneous Notes and Memorabilia

hundred labourers imported from Quebec,⁶⁷ and a number of men hired in the Orange stronghold of Rawdon, "armed with bludgeons, bowie knives and pistols,"⁶⁸ they maintained a constant pressure on the Liberal electors. In the scuffling, men were assaulted and church windows were broken, but no one was seriously injured.

Nonetheless, it was the use of the military, acting under the orders of the local magistrates, that was the most effective tool in maintaining this delicate balance without recourse to flagrant violence. When, on the first day of the poll, J.-L. Beaudry, deputy returning officer for St. Mary's, attempted to keep his poll open after five o'clock, Henry Corse, J. P., brought in a detachment of troops to enforce Young's orders, and on the second day of voting, a special detachment of the 89th Foot was stationed in the ward. Indeed, few of the polls were without some sort of military guard throughout the election, and a number of pieces of artillery were stationed in the city's public places to overawe any would-be rioters.

In the face of this overwhelming force, there was little Drummond's allies among the Lachine canal workers could do. Captain Wetherall reported to Metcalfe that Drummond's agents told the workers that "The Tories had burned the Recollet (an

67. S. O. 42, vol. 519. Report of Captain G. Wetherall to Sir Charles Metcalfe, forwarded with Metcalfe's despatch of October 24, 1844 to Lord Stanley. Wetherall identified them as "Irish labourers," and it was suggested that they were brought in to help Drummond, according to T. C. Aylwin in DLA, vol. 4, pt. 2, pp. 1458-9, February 11, 1845. Aylwin denied this (ibid), as did the petition of Peter Dunn and others.

68. Petition of Peter Dunn and others, DLA, vol. 4, pt. 1, pp. 268-271

Irish Roman-Catholic church), and that their comrades had been abused and were bleeding in the streets.'" Three or four hundred navvies then marched to the Queen's Ward, but there, with the reading of the Riot Act, the forces already in place dispersed them.⁶⁹ As a recently arrived Scots baker of Conservative tendencies observed, "but for the strong military force, the loyal party could not live here, the Irish are such a blackguard set."⁷⁰ Pierre Beaubien was permitted to retire into private life, but Drummond was too important an expression of the alliance between the French and Irish Catholics to be dropped. Thus, the Pilot hailed his acclamation in Portneuf as being "in compliment to the patriotic Irish of Montreal, whose leader he is, and by whom he is so ardently loved." The Tories were

mortified by the harmony, love and confidence which is (sic) being so happily cultivated between the Canadian and Irish bodies. But this is holy work and must succeed; and the graceless Tory faction will soon feel its importance and quail under its power.⁷¹

With this statement, part prayer, part prophecy, part threat, the Montreal election concluded.

Other elections in the Montreal District proceeded more agreeably for the Liberals. James Leslie took Verchères by acclamation. In Berthier, David Armstrong easily defeated his opponent, William Vondenvelden, a Berthier lawyer,

69. C. O. 42, vol. 519, Report of Captain G. Wetherall to Sir Charles Metcalfe forwarded with Metcalfe's despatch of October 28, 1844 to Lord Stanley.

70. Richard A. Preston, ed., For Friends at Home, McGill-Queens, 1974, James Thomson to his Father, February 14, 184? [5], p. 78

71. Montreal Pilot, October 28, 1844

despite covert support from the local seigneurs for his opponent.⁷² It is interesting to note that Armstrong's Address contained no reference to seigneurial reform, as it had done in the last election; strong attacks on Metcalfe and praise for the ex-Ministers constituted almost all of his platform.⁷³ Thus, while the most potent local issue was still a factor in this election, publicly, the contest was a straightforward clash between the supporters of the Governor and LaFontaine's partisans. This subsumption of local concerns into a provincial framework was the hallmark of an increasingly comprehensive party structure.

In both the Montreal and Quebec Districts, then, the personal control over candidates by LaFontaine and his small circle of agents, with Aylwin, Drummond and Cartier as the most prominent, increased dramatically. This change did not go unnoticed. The Mercury in Quebec complained that

the most unseemly feature in the returns and reports from Lower Canada, is that the representation seems to be at the dictation and under the direction of a few self-nominated Dictators ... Is it not, we ask, 'a baneful domination?' Is it not a burlesque upon representative government ...?⁷⁴

The co-operation between the two districts had improved with the removal of the intractable Neilson. Aylwin, for example, had tried although unsuccessfully to stop the departure from

⁷². Montreal Pilot, November 11, 1844. Armstrong's majority was over 600.

⁷³. Montreal Pilot, October 25, 1844 (Armstrong's Address to the Electors of Berthier)

⁷⁴. Quebec Mercury, October 26, 1844

Quebec of labourers who were to take part in the Montreal election on the Tory side, and warned LaFontaine of the departure of another contingent whose arrest LaFontaine arranged.⁷⁵ The Quebec lawyer was playing not only the role of principal organizer in his own area, but also took on responsibility for communications between the two districts.

The Mercury, however, exaggerated the extent to which the new structure blanketed Canada East, for two districts, the St. Francis and the Gaspé, still lay largely outside the control of the Montreal-Quebec axis. Robert Christie, ex-Tory, ex-anti-Unionist, was acclaimed in Gaspé County. He is an example of those independently minded local figures who, while sympathetic to the opposition, found the new style of politics distasteful. In his letter of thanks to his electors, he declared that he tended towards the ex-Ministers, but was irritated by their arrogance:

They seem to feel the Legislative Assembly their absolute property and stock in trade, and themselves the embodied 'principle' and personification of 'Responsible Government' and that without them it can never exist in Canada - insisting upon an allegiance to themselves, little short of that due to the Crown, - affecting also to dictate to the people whom they are to elect as acceptable to them, or reject as doubtful subjects. They had better have left the people judge for themselves.⁷⁶

In adjoining Bonaventure County, the results were even more ambiguous. There, John B. Hamilton, the variable and venal

⁷⁵. T. C. Aylwin in DLA, vol. 4, pt. 2, pp. 14588-9, February 11, 1845; LaFontaine Papers, T. C. Aylwin to L.-H. LaFontaine, October 21, 1844

⁷⁶. Quebec Gazette, November 6, 1844

sitting member, was narrowly defeated by John LeBoutillier, a French-speaking, English-educated Protestant from Jersey Island and a member of the trading family so influential in the District. He had been Christie's colleague in the representation of Gaspé County before the Union, but apart from that, no one had any indication of what his alignment in the Assembly might be.

The Liberals had made a more concerted effort to gain influence in the St. Francis District. L. T. Drummond had already started to emerge as the Liberal spokesman for the area. His marriage to one of P.-D. Desbartzch's heiresses had given him a territorial base on the outskirts of the Townships, and it may have been around this time that he acquired some saw-mills in the area. On September 23rd, 1844, a meeting was held in Granby, Shefford, where resolutions were passed praising the Irish Catholic for the interest he had taken in the prosperity of that portion of the province. The name of one of the activists at the meeting, Orange Ellis, shows that Drummond had begun to reach beyond the Irish Catholic ghetto.⁷⁷

Drummond's move into the Townships, however, was not to bear fruit until the next election. A number of Montreal Liberals were rumoured to be candidates in the District. John E. Mills was to run in Shefford, and Robert M'Kay in Megantic.⁷⁸ Nothing came of these tentatives. Much more characteristic was the fate of those local candidates who at some time identified

77. Montreal Pilot, October 14, 1844 (account of the meeting)

78. Montreal Pilot, October 2, 1844 (Mills); extract from La Minerve in the Montreal Gazette, October 2, 1844 (M'Kay)

themselves with the Liberals' organization. In Stanstead, Marcus Child, who had voted for the motion of confidence in the ex-Ministers, declared himself a supporter of the Governor. Even so, the opposition to him was so intense that he lost the election to Colonel John M'Connell, a self-educated native of Stanstead who had "always been a Reformer,"⁷⁹ but now supported the Ministry. M'Connell carried the election by a vote of 496 to 356. Child won only two polls in the extreme southeast of the county and even failed to carry his home town of Stanstead.⁸⁰ In Shefford, the sitting member Stephen Sewell Foster, "the uncompromising friend of the British constitution, and of Responsible Government,"⁸¹ retained his seat by defeating Dr. Parmalee, another resident. Parmalee had, at a public meeting some months before, expressed his approval of the ex-Ministers, but, like Child, was forced to declare himself a supporter of the Governor during the election.⁸² In Sherbrooke County, John Moore, the other member from the Townships who had voted for Price's motion, resigned from the contest, allowing Samuel Brooks, another politician who had supported reform until "the struggle became very hot,"⁸³ to win the contest by acclamation. In Sherbrooke Town, Edward Hale, a local Tory with strong connections to the the old bureaucrates, was unopposed.

79. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, November 18, 1844

80. Montreal Gazette, November 12, 1844 (poll)

81. Montreal Gazette, October 14, 1844 (Foster's Address)

82. Montreal Gazette, October 24, 1844

83. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, November 18, 1844

It was only in Missisquoi that a bona fide "ultra-radical"⁸⁴ candidate could be found. This contest is of particular interest, in that here the Ministerial candidate, Attorney-General James Smith was the outsider and the opposition candidate was a local resident. Nonetheless, Smith carried the riding by more than 200 votes over Dr. Leonard Brown. Most of the polls were fairly evenly divided, but Frelighsburch, a traditional Loyalist stronghold, and Phillipsburg, nearby, both with a high number of native British Canadians and members of the Church of England, gave Smith 440 of their 511 votes and thus ensured the Attorney-General's election.⁸⁵ Like Nelson in Richelieu, Smith made a concerted effort to attract Irish support. In his Address, he referred to his activity on behalf of Catholic Emancipation in the past, and attacked those "pseudo-liberals, whose lives can afford not one example of either love or service for Ireland or Irishmen."⁸⁶ As there were relatively few Irish-born residents in the County, and this Address was printed in the Montreal papers, Smith may have been more interested in the effect of such declarations in the city and other parts of Lower Canada than in their impact on the contest in Missisquoi.

In Drummond, however, the government attempted a similar move against a local figure with rather different results. R. N. Watts, the sitting member, was a large proprietor of

84. Montreal Gazette, November 26, 1844

85. Quebec Mercury, October 31, 1844 (poll)

86. Montreal Gazette, October 16, 1844 (Smith's Address to the Electors of Missisquoi)

conservative inclinations but also of independent tendencies, more interested in the benefits of agricultural protection for stock-breeders in his constituency than in a ministerial triumph at the polls.⁸⁷ He found himself opposed by a number of candidates, including Adolphus M. Hart and a Mr. Wadlay (or Wadleigh) who was said to have the French Canadians support.⁸⁸ In the end, Watts' only serious opponent was Christopher Dunkin, the Assistant Provincial Secretary and one of the brightest young legal minds in the province. Watts was victorious, but by a narrow margin of 495 to 456.⁸⁹ Francis Hincks informed Baldwin that

Watts was put in by us to keep out Dunkin. I believe he feels that the Gov. are not his friends. He is bitterly hostile to Daly & Dunkin.⁹⁰

This anger was one of the factors that led him, gradually, to swing his support over to LaFontaine in the ensuing session.⁹¹

Thus Aylwin, with only one declared ministerialist elected in his District, strengthened his position as LaFontaine's single most prominent anglophone supporter, and could be seen as a rival to the less dynamic A.-N. Morin for the position at the right hand of the French Canadian leader. Even in the

87. Watts declared in the Assembly that "if he had a vote in the county for which Mr. Viger was a candidate, he would travel two hundred miles to record his vote against him," because of Viger's opposition to agricultural protection. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 1886, March 3, 1845

88. Le Canadien, October 4, 1844

89. Montreal Gazette, November 12, 1844 (poll)

90. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, November 18, 1844

91. Montreal Gazette, June 26, 1847

French-speaking section of the United Province the position of the chief English-speaking lieutenant was of crucial importance, for in the Lower Canadian delegation to the Assembly, members of British origin, many of them functionally unilingual, constituted a disproportionately large group. In 1844 Canada East elected 19 English-speaking members, including John LeBoutillier, out of a total of 42. When this compared with the 23 anglophones elected in the Sydenham election of 1841, it is apparent that the over-representation of British Lower Canadians in the Union's first Assembly had been only marginally the result of the Governor's interference; much more it was the consequence of the strength of anglophones in the local and provincial elites. This imbalance was of course much more marked on the ministerial side. Of the members who could reasonably be expected to give general support to the government, only two, D.-B. Papineau and C.-C.-S. de Bleury were of French Canadian origin, and neither represented a French Canadian constituency. In contrast, of the 28 members who had to a greater or lesser extent declared for the ex-Ministers, only seven - Armstrong, Aylwin, Christie, DeWitt, Drummond, Nelson and Leslie - were of British origin. It is to be noted that none of these represented a predominantly English-speaking riding, and that only Christie had been elected without an explicit commitment to LaFontaine. The remaining six were largely dependent on their position in the party for their political importance. Yet even in the opposition ranks, the English-speaking members were out of proportion to

their share of the total population of Lower Canada. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that of these seven, Drummond and Nelson were to show themselves among the most prominent spokesmen of the opposition, and Aylwin, as a parliamentary performer, was to dominate the session that followed almost immediately upon the election.⁹²

The first vote in the Assembly, held on November 28, 1844, confirmed the rough balance of power that would obtain for the next three years. By a vote of 36 to 39, the government's candidate, the unilingual Sir Alan MacNab, was elected to the office of Speaker of the Assembly. This showed, as the Pilot put it, that "the miserable stupidity of the Upper Canadian moderates"⁹³ had given the Ministry a delicate majority. Thus the Ministry, under three different Governors, would find itself, as the last of the three, Lord Elgin commented, "struggling for

⁹². Such matters are difficult to evaluate. In the index of the Debates of the Legislative Assembly for these years, Aylwin has more entries than any other member. However, the English newspapers, which tended to report the proceedings of the Assembly in greater detail than the French journals, may have been inclined to give more space to the representatives that spoke in English.

⁹³. Montreal Pilot, November 11, 1844

existence - Catching at straws - living from hand to mouth."⁹⁴ The Executive Council's impotence was due only in part to the slenderness of its hold on the confidence of the House. Metcalfe's illness, Cathcart's diffidence⁹⁵ and Elgin's sense of constitutional propriety deprived the Ministry of the buttress of active gubernatorial support of which they stood in such need. Frequent changes among the Councillors, as much an effect as a cause, also made it difficult for the government to settle upon a decided programme. Most important of all, however, was that there existed no clear line of policy separating the opposition from the Ministry. Most of the government's measures and half-measures were extensions or refinements of policies introduced by LaFontaine and Baldwin: amendments to the Sleigh Ordinance, the Municipal Council Act, and the School Law; the implementation of changes in the Civil List's provisions in the Act of Union; an Address for the deletion of the Act's interdict on the use of French in the Assembly; the establishment of a commission to investigate losses suffered during the rebellions in Lower Canada; and amnesties for exiled patriotes. In the same way, the opposition could not afford to endorse any bold alternative to the government's proposals. Both Ministers and ex-Ministers were bound by a need, on the one hand, to gain or keep control of the 'loose fish' of Canada West, and on the other, to

⁹⁴. A. G. Doughty, ed., The Elgin-Grey Papers, vol. 1, Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, March 2, 1848, p.128

⁹⁵. C. O. 42, vol. 527, as manifested in his despatch (private) to Lord Stanley of December 22, 1845

gain or keep control of the Lower Canadian French. Accordingly, as in the election, the transactions of the Assembly were dominated by party manoeuvres and questions of 'men, not measures.' Humour, invective, passion and prejudice were more useful in preserving the all-important cohesion of party than any innovative policy

In such an atmosphere Drummond, Nelson and Aylwin had a particular advantage over many of the other members. While speeches in French had been tolerated de facto since 1842, the majority of Upper Canadians were ill at ease in French. Even among the opposition members, Liberals like Leslie and Armstrong were not fluently bilingual. Among the French Canadians, full competence in both languages was more marked among the rising generation of young, urban politicians, the sort like Cauchon and Chauveau, to whom Aylwin had allied himself in the Quebec District. The Quebec lawyer, the Irish Catholic, and the old patriote, in contrast, were not only practiced public speakers in both languages, but also were accustomed to extemporaneous speaking. They were among the small minority in the Assembly, a minority which did not include the Speaker, that could not only fully understand everything that was said but also seize upon the passing moment for a well-timed intervention.

It would appear that Aylwin was less correct in his French than either Drummond or Nelson,⁹⁶ but he was a more daring

⁹⁶. at least as reflected in their letters in the LaFontaine Papers.

speaker and very quickly became a proponent of the French language. He was the first member to attack the newly-elected Speaker for his inability to speak French. Aylwin yelled out, "En Francais '(sic), Monsieur, s'il vous plait" and added, in French, "I cannot speak one word of English."⁹⁷ Given Aylwin's antecedents, this was a bold declaration; it was also a dangerous one. D.-B. Papineau, after one of Aylwin's interjections, commented à propos of this remark, that "si c'est le cas, je puis vous dire que vous n'entendiez pas ni l'anglais ni le francais."⁹⁸ Attorney-General Smith reminded Aylwin of how the Quebec lawyer had remarked, when they were both Constitution- alists before the Union, that "We can make nothing of these French Canadians now - we must teach them English before they will learn."⁹⁹ Upon another occasion, Aylwin told Papineau that despite his family name he "held no place in the esteem of the French Canadians, but sitting ignominiously upon those Benches are despised and held in contempt by the." Finally, Aylwin concluded, if Papineau had a fifth of the sentiment that he, Aylwin, felt "comme Canadien," he would resign immediately.¹⁰⁰

De Bleury rose to the Councillor's defence, and declared that

That member had said that the Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands was held in contempt by the French Canadians; - he, the member for Quebec, had uttered that calumny - he who now stood forth as the defender of the French

97. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 1, p. 17, November 29, 1844

98. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 1, p. 142, December 5, 1844,

99. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 1, p. 179, December 6, 1844

100. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 1, pp. 1311-12, February 4, 1845

Canadians -- he had said it, he who was their hangman.¹⁰¹

In the uproar that followed, the members from the Quebec District were particularly vocal in denouncing de Bleury for his attack on Aylwin. The night finally drew to a close when Aylwin shook his fist at James Smith for questioning his right to speak on behalf of a portion of the French Canadians of Lower Canada. At LaFontaine's insistence, the galleries were cleared, the door closed, and order restored. The member for Quebec was quite correct when, speaking of himself, he admitted that in the eyes of the government, he was "the most obnoxious member of the opposition."¹⁰²

Yet it is important to note that Aylwin's performance in the House was not confined to the defence of the French Canadian nationality, nor did it limit itself to crude slander. Otherwise he could not have earned the rather grudging respect that was accorded to him. For example, he and his fellow Quebecker Joseph Cauchon were the only members to vote against a measure to control violence along the canals committed by the Irish navvies; even L. T. Drummond had been satisfied by amendments to the bill accepted by the Ministry.¹⁰³ Seconded by another Quebecker, Robert Christie, Aylwin moved that no clergyman could be Superintendent of Education. This was part of his on-going war with Ogle R. Gowan, M. P. P. for Leeds and Deputy Grand Master of the Orange Lodge. Both accused each other of fomenting religious

101. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 1, p. 1313, February 4, 1845,

102. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 1605, February 18, 1845

103. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 1459 February 11, 1845

dissensions. The exchanges during this debate were so heated that a duel between the ex-Solicitor-General for Canada East and Dominic Daly, the Provincial Secretary, took place. Aylwin also advocated a system for the commutation of land held en censive on terms more favourable to the habitants.

In almost all of these cases, Aylwin was to a large extent in advance of his party. LaFontaine did not endorse all of Aylwin's attacks on D.-B. Papineau,¹⁰⁴ and occasionally acted to curb the member for Quebec in his alcohol-inspired virulence,¹⁰⁵ Nor did he support Aylwin in such matters as the Outrages Act. This did not in itself constitute a sign that Aylwin was on the verge of breaking with his party. As 'Tiger' Dunlop of Huron observed, the Quebecker was "the forlorn hope of his party, the man who was thrust into the gab(sic) upon all occasions to try the temper of the House, and if it would not do, to bear the brunt of it."¹⁰⁶ LaFontaine himself preferred the occasional well-prepared statesman-like speech to the cut and thrust of debate. Thus, the former patriote and near rebel symbolized the opposition's moderation and reasonableness; the ex-Constitutionalist expressed its passion and indignation. This arrangement was far too symmetrical to be purely accidental. Only on one occasion did Aylwin actually vote against his party in an important division. On March 20, 1845, he and Christie

¹⁰⁴. DLA vol. 4, pt. 1, p. 1314, February 4, 1845

¹⁰⁵. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 1, p. 1316, February 4, 1845; vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 1607, February 18, 1845

¹⁰⁶. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 1511, February 13, 1845

voted for the second reading of Draper's University Bill on the principle that some opening up of King's College to non-Anglicans was preferable to a continued deadlock. Fortunately, the Ministry did not dare force a bill upon whose merits there was such controversy even among the Executive Councillors, and Aylwin could return to his attacks on the administration for its lack of courage.¹⁰⁷

There was, however, one political gesture, directed largely by Aylwin, in which the member for Quebec succeeded in carrying the party with him, and led some to consider him as a rival to LaFontaine for the Lower Canadian leadership. On the 25th of February, 1845, Col. John Prince of Essex moved an Address in which the members of the Assembly were to congratulate the Governor on his elevation to the peerage as Baron Metcalfe, and express "their gratitude to their august Sovereign for thus rewarding His Excellency's distinguished merit."¹⁰⁸ The political implications of such a declaration were manifest. When Robert Christie attempted to introduce an amendment that would have effectively removed the reference to gratitude, one of the longest and most ~~agrimonious~~ ^{agrimonious} debates of the session commenced. Aylwin was vitriolic, sustained and personal in his attack on Metcalfe:

God forbid that such a man as he should be again sent out to this country - God forbid that such honours should be again so unworthily bestowed - God forbid that the

¹⁰⁷. Montreal Pilot, March 25, 1845

¹⁰⁸. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 1716, February 25, 1845

Peerage of England should be again so prostituted.¹⁰⁹

Virtually single-handed Aylwin carried the debate on the opposition side. In the end, the Address as originally introduced was carried by a vote of 45 to 25.¹¹⁰ The minority included only five Upper Canadians, Baldwin's firmest supporters, and thus showed that in such extreme opinions the Lower Canadians could not count upon the solid support of their western allies. Two members of the Lower Canadian opposition voted with the government: Robert Christie, whose mollifying amendment had been rejected, and Léon Rousseau, member for Yamaska.

The whole debate had repercussions outside the House. The friends of the Ministry were anxious to take this opportunity to demonstrate the extent of Metcalfe's popularity in the province. Addresses of congratulations were drawn up and presented. In Lower Canada the overwhelming majority of these came from the cities of Montreal and Quebec, and their numbers were artificially multiplied by separate Addresses from the Boards of Trade in both cities and such English-speaking organizations as the Shakespeare Club of Montreal and the Odd Fellows of Quebec. Only in such small communities as the village of Chambly and Rouville Mountain, under the personal influence of French Canadian supporters of the Ministry, could large numbers

¹⁰⁹. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 1725, February 25, 1845, and passim, pp. 1717 to 1741

¹¹⁰. DLA, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 1741, February 25, 1841

of non-British signatures be collected.¹¹¹

Accordingly, it was necessary for the opposition to make some demonstration of dissent, and it was appropriate that this took place in Quebec, as Aylwin had been such a prominent speaker in opposition to the Address of the Assembly. On March 17, the Liberals of the city organized a meeting whose carefully bilingual nature recalled the earlier days of Neilson's anti-Union agitation. Each of the six resolutions was presented by an anglophone and a francophone. In the chair was Edouard Glackemeyer who, after a physical struggle with Joseph L gar , held it and thus publicly affirmed his alliance with the ex-Ministers. The first motion, introduced by Dunbar Ross and J.-B. Frechette, declared the meetings approval of the part taken by Aylwin, Chabot and Chauveau in the peerage debate; the four following motions variously praised Sir Charles Bagot, condemned Metcalfe, and called upon the Governor to restore the ex-Ministers to office on the grounds that Metcalfe had effectively admitted the principles of Responsible Government. A committee, with the usual ward-by-ward structure, was set up to secure signatures. The membership of this committee closely paralleled that created for the election, with such familiar names as William O'Brien, John Doran, John Maguire and John Teed showing the continued importance of the Irish Repealers.¹¹²

¹¹¹. C. O. 42, vol. 524, 526. Metcalfe transmitted copies of these Addresses to Stanley with his despatches of March 17, 1845 and July 24, 1845.

¹¹². Le Castor, March 13, 17, 1845

As a result of his parliamentary activity Aylwin's stature as a major figure in the Lower Canadian party was gaining increasing recognition. After the peerage debate, Aylwin was again denounced in the pages of the Mercury, this time by "Stela," not an objective source to be sure. This letter-writer identified the opposition as the "wreck, the débris" of L.-J. Papineau's party and went on to comment

The lead of this party, and considering the wildness and madness of its former career, it is not surprising, has devolved upon a hot-headed and indiscrete refugee from the ranks of the Constitutional cause in Lower Canada. Mr. Lafontaine having (sic), if not expressly, at least tacitly yielded up the command and fallen into the hands of the second and third class performers in the political drama.¹¹³

Such statements were of course exaggerated; there is no sign that at this time Aylwin was seriously considering an attempt to displace LaFontaine as leader. Acknowledgements of his importance, however, were also forthcoming from his friends. On June 4, 1845, a dinner for the opposition was held in Montreal with James Leslie in the chair. The special guests were Baldwin, LaFontaine, Morin and Aylwin. This demonstration was less flattering than it might have been. Originally only LaFontaine, Baldwin and Morin had been invited, but when Aylwin arrived in the city unexpectedly, last minute arrangements were made to include him.¹¹⁴ Such a contretemps may have been a mere oversight, yet in light of a number of undercurrents within the party and in particular within the Quebec District it was indicative of

¹¹³. Quebec Mercury, March 4, 1845

¹¹⁴. Montreal Pilot, June 6, 1845

the uncertain nature of Aylwin's position.

The concept of Double Majority, whereby the Executive Council would be composed of men commanding the confidence of their respective sections of the United Province, of itself posed no problem for T. C. Aylwin. Indeed, as a Lower Canadian, he had been among the foremost in denouncing the venality of those Upper Canadians who sanctioned the Governor's actions in return for favourable treatment for their own section. In fact, support for this principle seems to have been as general among the English-speaking Liberals of Canada East as among the French Canadians. Hincks, in the Pilot, admitted that the whole problem was particularly difficult for himself as an Upper Canadian who had already been denounced for selling out to Lower Canadian interests.¹¹⁵ After the vote on Draper's University Bill in March, despite its editor's personal opinions the Pilot declared that "the Lower Canadian Liberals are bound, if deserted by the Upper Canadian Reformers, to unite with any party whose motto shall be 'justice for Lower Canada.'"¹¹⁶

As the session proceeded and it became more and more clear that the government could not be forced out of office, the above-mentioned desertion became less a matter of supposition and more of an established fact. In September, the Pilot, while still opposed to the concept, declared resignedly that the Upper Canadians themselves were responsible

¹¹⁵. Montreal Pilot, September 27, 1845

¹¹⁶. Montreal Pilot, March 20, 1845

for the existing state of feeling in Lower Canada, and which is now all but universal in favour of governing by means of the two majorities ... For Mr. LaFontaine, he has always been consistently in favour of this system

...
We had long since therefore been prepared to submit to what we believe inevitable and that is a government consisting of men possessing the confidence of the Parliamentary majority in Lower and Upper Canada respectively.¹¹⁷

Indeed, the Pilot attempted to use the arguments in favour of Double Majority as a support for party unity, in Canada East at least. It pointed out that the Tory papers had come out strongly against the idea,¹¹⁸ and that the true obstacle to its implementation was not such Upper Canadians as Hincks himself, but rather the present government. Draper after all had an Upper Canadian majority, but Daly, Viger and Papineau did not have the support of their section. Hence, the Pilot insisted, the Quebec City papers such as Le Canadien who supported the system should, instead of assisting Metcalfe's attempts to divide the French Canadians, call all the more strongly for the resignation of the entire Lower Canadian wing of the Executive Council.¹¹⁹ In these arguments the Pilot exposed the latent threat in the theoretically acceptable concept of Double Majority: that dissatisfied elements in Quebec, irritated by the continuing predominance of Montreal in politics as well as commerce, might use it to veil an attempt to reconstruct the Lower Canadian opposition along national rather than political

117. Montreal Pilot, September 27, 1845

118. Montreal Pilot, October 28, 1845

119. Montreal Pilot, September 27, 1845

lines as a means of securing entry into the government.¹²⁰ Such a possibility was of particular concern to Aylwin, the English-speaking agent in Quebec of Montreal's political machine.

There were three indications in the second half of 1845 and the beginning of 1846 of the growing force of this "réaction" in the eastern part of Lower Canada. In Trois-Rivières, D.-B. Viger finally regained a seat in the Legislative Assembly by defeating Thomas Burn by a vote of 152 to 100. Burn, a lawyer, declared himself a supporter of the Governor and ran as an anti-party local resident.¹²¹ The Liberal party as such did not get involved in the contest, and the LaFontaine partisan with the greatest personal standing in the area, Theodore Hart, declared that he had not meddled in the contest because he was "politically opposed to both candidates."¹²² According to Metcalfe, "the 'supporters of the Opposition having no Candidate of their own Party, gave their votes for Mr. Viger.'"¹²³ Evidently, the party was too weak to face a confrontation in what was traditionally a government-controlled seat.

In Dorchester, Joseph-André Taschereau, whom Aylwin had alienated during the general election, sought to replace his deceased brother Pierre-Elzéar. The Dorchester by-election was of particular importance; unlike the tiny town of Trois-

¹²⁰. for a full discussion of "La Réaction" see J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, pp. 232-7

¹²¹. Quebec Gazette, July 14, 1845

¹²². Montreal Pilot, July 17, 1845

¹²³. C. O. 42, vol. 526, Lord Metcalfe to Lord Stanley, July 24, 1845

Rivières, the county was large and well-populated and just across the river from Aylwin's constituency in Québec City. In addition, Taschereau had just been appointed Solicitor-General for Canada-East, although without a seat on the Executive Council. Here too, despite Aylwin's and Cauchon's best efforts, no Liberal could be found to run,¹²⁴ and the new Solicitor-General's opponent was H. N. Patton, a resident of Pointe Lévi, a timber merchant and son of the staunch Québec City Tory George Patton. Taschereau, with his combination of family influence and government backing, was irresistible and he defeated Patton with a majority of 1,866.¹²⁵

Finally, right in Québec City itself, Miles Connolly, an old partisan of Neilson, gained a seat on the municipal council for St. Peter's Ward. In the regular elections Connolly had been narrowly defeated in Champlain Ward by John Maguire, Aylwin's firm supporter, but now Connolly carried St. Peter's in a by-election although the Liberals "had been hawking the expected vacancy through every hole and corner of the city". Because Connolly "on former occasions ... would not become a tool in their hands."¹²⁶

Such public defeats were embarrassing, but at least they involved only open and avowed enemies. More ominous, because they involved individuals still ostensibly attached to the party,

¹²⁴. J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, p. 213

¹²⁵. Québec Gazette, September 12, 1845 (poll)

¹²⁶. Québec Mercury, March 10, 1846, letter from "A real Elector of St. Peter's Ward."

were the manoeuvres revealed by the Draper-Caron correspondence of the fall of 1845. R.-E. Caron, the mayor of Quebec, was a respected member of that part of the city's French-Canadian leadership that Aylwin and Jeune Canada had put in the shade. He was thus the natural person for William Draper, the Attorney-General for Canada West, to approach in order to secure French Canadian support for the Ministry. As Metcalfe's successor, Earl Cathcart, made clear, the object of the negotiations was a coalition rather than Double Majority.¹²⁷ Caron, who had never been happy that his district's principal representative among the ex-Councillors was of British origin,¹²⁸ was naturally interested in the national approach to any such ministerial reconstruction. Thus, the future of Daly and Smith, the British Lower Canadians in the Council, was not discussed. If they were to remain in office, the effect would be the automatic exclusion from the Ministry of any English-speaking member of the opposition.¹²⁹ This is perhaps why LaFontaine in his letter of October 20, 1845 made it clear that Aylwin in particular had to be informed of the negotiations:

If you have no objection, I should much (sic) like you to communicate to Mr. Aylwin the nature of this correspondence, at least of my answer. Although I should have nothing to do with the reorganization of the Ministry, if that takes place, yet I think it is right that Mr. Aylwin should know my views on the subject. I assure I should also like to have them communicated to

127. C. O. 42, vol. 531, Earl Cathcart to W. E. Gladstone, April 24, 1846.

128. J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, p. 232

129. as pointed out after the publication of the correspondence in the Montreal Pilot, April 14, 1846

Messrs. Tasché (sic), Chauveau and Cauchon.¹³⁰

LaFontaine, by insisting on the unconditional surrender of the entire Lower Canadian wing of the Council saved the position of English-speaking Liberals in general and Aylwin in particular. Caron, while resentful, stayed for the time being in the party, and La Réaction seemed to have been contained.

By the spring of 1846, Aylwin in fact seemed fairly secure in his position as the House Leader for the opposition. When, at the end of March a new session of the Assembly was convened, it was Aylwin, not LaFontaine, who seconded Baldwin's amendment to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. He was still recognized by both friend and foe as one of the party's most important figures. Events, however, were taking place in Montreal that would undermine his position in the party, and ultimately show that even the young radicals of the Quebec District had little sense of personal loyalty to the middle-aged lawyer.

130. C. O. 42, vol. 531, Correspondence Between the Hon. Mr. Draper & the Hon. R. E. Caron, Montreal, 1846, forwarded by Cathcart with his despatch of April 24, 1846

Chapter VI

"Decidedly for Mr. Lafontaine, rather than no Government at all, and spoilation." : the fragmentation of the Lower Canadian Conservatives

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If, in the aftermath of defeat, the Liberal-Reform party of the United Province faced a number of challenges to its solidarity, the Ministerial party, insecure in its hold on power, contained within itself even more serious divisions. While the Montreal Gazette could gibe at the irony of Robert McKay, a founder of the Doric Club, acting as the partisan of a primarily French Canadian faction,¹ the Pilot could point out with even greater force the confusion caused by the co-operation of professed liberals like D.-B. Viger, Daly and James Smith with the 'old Tory faction' and the Upper Canadian 'loose fish'.² The Ministry's problems were exacerbated by Metcalfe's strategy of trying to secure French Canadian support while maintaining his influence in Canada West. In such a scheme of things, there was no place for the hardened loyalists of Lower Canada, particularly

1. Montreal Gazette, October 2, 1844

2. Montreal Pilot, September 19, 1846

those who lived in the Eastern Townships, isolated from the great conduit of the St. Lawrence. In Montreal, with its greater economic links to Upper Canada the government's policy was more acceptable, but even there any dramatic change in the commercial order could bring to the surface new demands that would destroy the Governor's delicate alliance. Such changes were to be the hallmark of the years following the election of 1844.

The period immediately following the election was a time of re-organization for both parties. Hincks told Robert Baldwin that "What we want above all is party organization - all our disasters are to be laid to that."³ The municipal elections in Montreal, scheduled for the first and second day of December, 1844, provided an occasion for a display of strength by Constitutionalists and Liberals alike. As early as November 11, preparations were being made for a full-scale partisan confrontation. The Pilot endorsed Henry Jackson for St. Mary's Ward, describing him as the "candidate on the Liberal side."⁴ Meetings of "Liberal Elctors(sic)" were held at which Jacob DeWitt, F. G. Johnson and G.-E. Cartier were active in promoting the candidacies of F. Perrin and John E. Mills.⁵ By the middle of November, the familiar L. P. S. announcements had re-appeared in the Gazette.⁶ In turn, the Liberals organized a "Defensive League," placing the blame for such an unfortunate necessity on

3. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, November 18, 1844

4. Montreal Pilot, November 27, 1844

5. Montreal Pilot, November 22, 1844

6. Montreal Gazette, November 28, 1844 (e. q.)

Metcalfe's encouragement of the Orange Lodge.⁷

In this atmosphere, violence was inevitable and the rioting showed the clear transference of Ireland's vicious religious feuds to Montreal. On November 30, James Fennel was killed in preliminary skirmishing, reportedly at the hands of an L. P. S. activist and clerk in a mercantile corporation, John Colborne. Placards appeared in Griffintown, announcing a meeting for the following day :

Murder! Murder!
 Irishmen and Canadians
 Irish blood has been spilt by the
 Orange L. P. S. Assassins
 Meet this evening at 4 o'clock in the
 Hay Market
 to adopt measures for the protection
 of our Lives & Properties.⁸

A riot was anticipated, and B. C. A. Gagy, John Mathewson, both firm Tories, and Captain Wetherall, acting as Justices of the Peace, called in the troops. In face of this resistance the meeting was cancelled. No doubt encouraged by this sign of weakness on the part of their enemies, on the next day Tory mobs swept through St. Mary's and St. Lawrence Wards, forcing the withdrawal of two Liberals, Jackson and Pierre Beaubien respectively, and then moved on to Queen's Ward to ensure the defeat of Mills at the hands of H. L. Routh, the Montreal partner of Quebec's great Constitutionalist lumber merchant, Henry Lemesurier. When the mob reached Griffintown, it attacked the grocery

7. Montreal Pilot, November 15, 1844

8. C. O. 42, vol. 524, Metcalfe to Lord Stanley, January 9, 1845, Report of John Mathewson (enclosed)

and candle shop of Patrick Brennan, an old Liberal activist. As the troops, under the command of Mathewson, arrived shots were heard from the nearby house where John Fennel's body lay. As the mob and the troops attempted to storm the building, the sniper escaped through the window to Brennan's. The shooting was renewed and a man named Johnson fell dead. The Riot Act was read and Brennan's shop was seized just in time to prevent a fire from igniting a cask of gunpowder. Nineteen men were found in the basement and attic, some with firearms. Among those charged with Johnson's murder was Michael Fennel, the brother of the slain Irish Catholic.⁹

The result of these elections was another victory for the Constitutionalists. Of the Liberal candidates, only Perrin, standing for the East Ward, was elected. With these reinforcements the Tories on the Corporation had no difficulty in electing James Ferrier as Mayor by a vote of 10 to 6. In due course all municipal advertising was directed towards ministerial papers. Even the usually pacific Benjamin Holmes was caught up in this increasing polarization and nearly found himself in physical conflict with C.-C.-S. de Bleury when he taunted his fellow-alderman with political inconsistency at a Council meeting.¹⁰

Such naked violence, involving so openly national and religious feuds, produced the inevitable charges and counter-

9. C. O. 42, vol. 524, Report of G. A. Wetherall, Report of John Mathewson, enclosed with Metcalfe's despatch to Lord Stanley, January 9, 1845

10. Quebec Gazette, November 12, 1845 - extract from the Montreal Times describing a November 7 Corporation meeting.

charges about moral responsibility. Both Colborne and Michael Fennel were acquitted, showing that ordinary legal channels were unequipped to deal with political violence. Conservatives could thus justify the L. P. S. as an organization composed of "respectable Constitutionalists" formed to restore the political order disrupted by the "Radicals, with the kind assistance of the visiting brethren from the Lachine and Beauharnois Canals."¹¹ The Pilot denied that any canal workers had participated in the municipal election¹²; the Herald in turn challenged the Pilot's assertion.¹³

One result of the rioting was the renewed importance of the political allegiance of the Irish community in Montreal. As in 1843, the Ministry attempted to secure Irish support by appealing to them as a national group in much the same way it was wooing the French Canadians, and what success it achieved came from much the same causes. Among the Irish there were those irritated by their exclusion from a share in governmental patronage, and those dissatisfied with the dominant and domineering leadership of such Irish Liberals as Francis Hincks. A feature that gave this tension a new edge was the presence in Montreal of Dominic Daly, a result of the transfer of the seat of government to that city in 1844. In Quebec Daly, the Ministry's Irish Catholic spokesman, had secured a following among his

11. Montreal Gazette, January 7, 1845

12. Montreal Pilot, December 30, 1844

13. Quebec Mercury, January 9, 1845 (extract from the Montreal Herald)

countrymen; what was to be determined was whether or not he could do the same thing in the younger city.

The Liberals were the first to attack, in repeating their insinuations of Orange influence in the government, and thereby associating Daly with Orangeism. After the death of Fennel, the Pilot commented on the use of troops to quell Griffintown:

O Dominic Daly, Dominic Daly, you disarm the poor Irish Catholics, and leave them to be murdered with impunity by the Orangemen, Cavaliers and L. P. S.'s.¹⁴

Nor was Daly's responsibility a purely passive one. The Pilot identified as one of the Cavalier's ring-leaders a "Mr. Chapman of the House of Ryan, Chapman & Co. the principal of which is the intimate friend and associate of Mr. Daly."¹⁵

The Repeal issue continued to be the centre of the controversy. L. T. Drummond and Hincks' assistant editor, Matthew Ryan, continued to control the executive of the Montreal Loyal Repeal Association, and the Pilot constantly reiterated the theme that "All sincere Repealers must necessarily be advocates of Colonial Responsible Government."¹⁶ Daly was not, however, without some influence in the Repeal movement. The Constitution, a Montreal-Irish paper, criticized the Association for its lack of activity, and attacked Hincks and Ryan for their manipulation of the Repeal question for their own political ends.¹⁷ Hincks dismissed such remarks as the result of Daly's machinations,

14. Montreal Pilot, December 2, 1844

15. Montreal Pilot, December 2, 1844

16. Montreal Pilot, April 15, 1845

17. Montreal Pilot, April 15, 1845

exercised through Bernard Devlin and Sydney Bellingham. They, the Pilot argued, by insisting on the distinction between Irish and Canadian politics, were simply aiding "Canadian Toryism".¹⁸

The government's manoeuvre produced some results, particularly when conjoined with offers of patronage. B. C. A. Gagy was appointed Adjutant-General of the militia in 1845, and he proceeded to use his control over socially prestigious commissions to assist the Ministry. His ruthless partisanship quickly made him the subject for bitter attacks by the opposition.¹⁹ Such prominent but wavering Irishmen as John P. Sexton, Clerk of the Corporation of Montreal were canvassed by Gagy for the names of Irishmen who might accept appointments.

One of the Ministry's agents was Patrick M'Keon, formerly a clerk in Drummond's law office and an active organizer on the Liberal's behalf during the election campaign. At Daly's instigation, he rather optimistically attempted to detach Drummond from the opposition.²⁰ M'Keon also contacted Michael Fennel while under arrest for Johnson's murder and told him that the Pilot's editor was secretly hostile to the prisoner. Fennel was asked to supply the names of members of the Friendly Society of Erin who might prove grateful to the government. When the Pilot printed a statement of M'Keon's connection with Daly²¹

18. Montreal Pilot, April 15, 1845

19. Montreal Pilot, January 9, 1846; Quebec Mercury, February 7, 1846 (letter from Benjamin Holmes); Quebec Mercury, February 26, 1846 (letter from "One who has seen some service.")

20. Montreal Pilot, January 22, 1846 (speech by L. T. Drummond)

21. Montreal Pilot, January 13, 1846

the accused man assaulted Hincks while the editor was in the Place D'Armes, talking to Luther Holton.

At first it appeared that M'Keon's attack rallied the Irish community in support of the Liberals. The "Friendly Sons of Erin and Shamrock and Maple Leaf Society," claiming to represent the "majority of the Irish population and many French Canadians," passed resolutions attacking Daly and M'Keon and praising Responsible Government.²² This theme of accord between Irish and French Canadians was repeated at a mass meeting of the city's Irishmen, where, "out of respect for our French Canadian friends," Frederick Glackemeyer was called to the chair. M'Keon and Daly were duly denounced and Daniel O'Connor, the boot maker and Liberal activist, publicly apologized for having offered 500^l. bail for M'Keon, under arrest for his attack on Hincks.²³ When Earl Cathcart, as one of his first acts as Governor-General in his own right, suspended militia appointments pending a reorganization of the force, it appeared that the Ministry's attempted subversion of the Irish had been unsuccessful.

That this was not so was made clear in the next municipal elections. A change in the act incorporating the city had increased the number of wards and moved the election date from the beginning of December to the beginning of March. Violence again played an important part. Orangemen from Rawdon were hired by the Tories and the L. P. S. was put on an active footing.

22. Montreal Pilot, January 16, 1846.

23. Montreal Pilot, January 22, 1846.

While both the Pilot and the Gazette repudiated the introduction of partisan politics into municipal affairs and accused each other of fomenting just such an intrusion, that the struggle was along Liberal-Conservative lines was shown by the coverage of the election in the two newspapers.²⁴ The Liberals were more successful than in the last contest; John E. Mills, running in the newly-created ward of St. Antoine, defeated John Macdonnell, Viger's supporter. Yet in St. Lawrence Ward, one of the centres of violence, John Kelly, an Irish Catholic contractor and formerly a Reform partisan, came out against A. Larocque because the French Canadian refused to pledge his vote for Ferrier as mayor.²⁵ One of Kelly's assistants was the same Daniel O'Connor who had pledged his assistance to the Liberals a month earlier. The bootmaker claimed that he had built up the unity of the Irish community, handed it over to Hincks, and then found himself betrayed by the Upper Canadian.²⁶ Kelly's victory over Larocque was of particular importance as Mills was the Liberal candidate for the mayoralty. When the Council came to vote, Mills carried the election by his own vote. Ferrier, who was seeking another term, had abstained, and claimed that another vote was necessary. The result of this round was unacceptable to the Reform councillors, and for nearly a year Montreal had two mayors, each with his own faction.

24. Montreal Gazette, March 4-11, 1846; Montreal Pilot, March 3-6, 1846

25. Montreal Pilot, March 3, 1846

26. Montreal Pilot, March 13, 1846 (letter from Daniel O'Connor)

It appears that an Irish equivalent of La Réaction was under way. In Quebec, 1846 saw not only the election of Miles Connolly to the municipal council but also the desertion from the Liberal party of the Freeman's Journal. This paper had originally received the Pilot's endorsement;²⁷ gradually it had swung more and more towards the government until finally LaFontaine and Drummond publicly cancelled their subscriptions, and the Pilot asserted that the paper's editor was a nephew of Colonel Gagy, and, worse, not even an Irishman although "reputed to be an Orangeman."²⁸ In the same way the Quebec St. Patrick's Society continued to be dominated by the ship-builders and merchants most attached to the Ministry, men like Edward Ryan, the head of Ryan, Chapman & Co., G. H. Parke, a prominent ship-builder, and James Dinning and W. Burke, both supporters of John Neilson.²⁹ In Montreal, however, the Liberals maintained their control over the Irish national society. In 1845, When William Workman declined to stand again for the presidency Francis Hincks was elected, and was subsequently re-elected in 1846 and 1847, usually with such allies as John Tully and L. T. Drummond on the executive.³⁰ Even so, conflict manifested itself. Membership declined so sharply that in 1847 a reorganization of the Society was necessary. Hincks denied that his politicization of the

27. Montreal Pilot, August 18, 1846

28. Montreal Pilot, November 10, 1846

29. Quebec Mercury March 10, 1846, (St. Patrick's Society elections, held on March 6, 1846)

30. Montreal Pilot, March 3, 1846. Matthew Ryan was also elected, to the Society's Committee

organization was the cause; rather, a move to promote Daly as a candidate for the presidency showed that it was the government that was attempting to introduce politics into the national body.³¹ Nonetheless, when a new Irish society was reported to be in the process of forming the Pilot attributed the plan to renegade Liberals and Tories,³² which would seem to indicate that political tensions lay behind the St. Patrick's Society's troubles.

Yet there was one factor that ensured the continuing adhesion of many of the Irish to the Reform cause : religion. The middle of the decade marked the renewal of religious fervour, and hence of intolerance, in England, the United States and Europe.³³ Inevitably, these developments had their repercussions in Canada. Anti-Jesuit literature, such as the English translation of Eugene Sue's The Wandering Jew reached readers in Montreal,³⁴ and even the moderate Gazette could refer to Robert Baldwin as the "Father Rodin" of his party, in reference to the

31. Montreal Pilot, March 9, 1847

32. Montreal Pilot, March 12, 1847

33. Edward R. Norman, Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England, (introduction); David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," in Frank Otto Gatell, ed., Essays on Jacksonian America. This latter is of particular importance, as it explains the popular connection between infidelity, revolution and the Jesuits. The same theme is revealed in William Sewell's Hawkstone, published in 1845, where the Jesuits are identified as the moving force behind Chartism. It was reviewed, rather critically, in the Montreal Gazette.

34. The first English translation of The Wandering Jew was published in 1845; a somewhat similar work, Father Eustace, by the well-known English authores, Frances Trollope, came out in 1847.

book's demonic villain.³⁵ As Evangelical Protestantism took on a more and more militantly anti-Catholic tone, the old Orange-Green quarrels grew into a larger, more threatening Catholic-Protestant struggle. If, late in 1844, LaFontaine rather smugly informed Robert Baldwin that religious divisions played a smaller part in Lower Canadian politics than in Canada West,³⁶ the Liberal party in the eastern section of the united province was to face new challenges in the upcoming year over exactly this issue.

It was in 1845 that this nascent conflict became a major issue in Montreal with the sudden proliferation of Protestant 'street-preachers.' The Pilot denounced "the rage for proselytizing Roman Catholics" which had seized "possession of a considerable portion of the Protestant community."³⁷ When the Rev. Wilkes, a member of the French Canadian Missionary Society, made a number of anti-Catholic remarks at an evangelical meeting in New York, he was savagely attacked in the Pilot.³⁸ Religious violence became more common. At the end of 1844, mass in a church at Pointe-aux-Trembles was disrupted by young hoodlums. The Pilot attributed the disturbance to the L. P. S.;³⁹ in turn, the Quebec Mercury claimed that in fact two of Benjamin Holmes' sons were involved, but was forced to retract the charge.⁴⁰ In 1845, a street-preacher named Burns was threatened with

35. Montreal Gazette, April 9, 1849

36. Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, November 12, 1844

37. Montreal Pilot, June 10, 1845

38. Montreal Pilot, May 20, 1845

39. cited in the Montreal Gazette, December 28, 1844

40. Quebec Mercury, January 11, 1845

violence by Irish Catholics. The following circular, printed in red, was handed out:

L. P. S. — Dolphin!

Sir and Brother: You are requested to attend Divine Services, to be held at the Wharf on Sabbath next, at o'clock, there and then to be prepared to defend your Religion, against the repeated attacks made by a band of low mean canallers.

By Order of the CAPTAIN

[HAND] It will be advisable to keep any weapon of defence you may have concealed, until the signal is given by the captain.⁴¹

Wisely, Burns left the city.

This wave of religious fundamentalism was of particular concern to such Liberal Protestants as Hincks, Holton and Holmes who worshipped in the recently opened Unitarian church in Montreal, for intolerance was increasing not only against Catholics but also against non-Trinitarian Protestants, always a target of animosity.⁴² Attempts were made to exclude Unitarians from the proposed 'distinctly' Protestant House of Industry and the Stranger's Friend United Society.⁴³ The Pilot found itself defending the religion of its editor against the satire of the Toronto Patriot.⁴⁴

At the same time that the congregation containing some of the city's most prominent anglophone Liberals was being attacked, the party's organ was criticized for being pro-Jesuit because of its treatment of the Wilkes affair.⁴⁵ Some of the

41. printed in the Montreal Pilot, September 2, 1845

42. H. C. Klassen, "L. H. Holton: Montreal Businessman and Politician," U of T, Ph.D. Thesis, 1970, pp. 34-8

43. Montreal Gazette, May 4, 1846 (letter from William Workman)

44. Montreal Pilot, November 8, 1845

45. Montreal Pilot, July 8, 31, 1845

Pilot's more extreme statements on the issue were written, not by Hincks, but by Matthew Ryan, during the absence of the paper's principal editor.⁴⁶ As a Newfoundlander, Ryan no doubt found the identification of Liberal with Catholic natural enough,⁴⁷ but the Unitarian was aware of the danger of a narrowly sectarian approach. As the Pilot admitted, anti-Catholicism in Lower Canada had led "to the junction of the Dissenters with the Tory party."⁴⁸ Hincks, however, could not afford to alienate the French and Irish Catholics of Montreal by repudiating Ryan's remarks. The Pilot consistently defended the Catholic Church against charges from the Protestant Community that religious orders like the Sulpicians were failing to use their endowments for social purposes.⁴⁹ As the Reform party in Upper Canada, with its large voluntaryist contingent, was being accused of anti-Catholic tendencies,⁵⁰ the need to present a programme that was acceptable to both evangelicals and papists became more pressing.

Fortunately, a proper British precedent could be found for such a reconciliation. Quoting statements made by Daniel O'Connell and the Archbishop of Tuam in favour of the separation of Church and State, the Pilot could claim that

46. Montreal Pilot, June 14, 1845. Hincks himself was anxious to "handle the Jesuit case very tenderly." Robert Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, July 3, 1845

47. Gertrude E. Gunn, The Political History of Newfoundland, passim, esp. pp. 67-72; Frederick Jones, "Bishops in Politics," CHR LV (1974), pp. 408-9

48. Montreal Pilot, June 26, 1845

49. Montreal Pilot, March 2, 1847

50. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, July 3, 1845, discussing the use made by L'Aurore des Canadas, Viger's paper, of remarks in the the Toronto Examiner.

the principles of Catholics and of Protestant Dissenters as we may term them for the sake of convenience, on the vitally important question of Church and State are identical.⁵¹

This kind of Catholic-Dissenter alliance, modelled on that achieved in England between the Whigs and the O'Connellites in the Lichfield House Compact, was of vital importance in a struggle against a Ministry that the Liberals insisted was simply a continuation of the old Anglican, exclusivist Family Compact. This lay behind the importance in Montreal of the University question, in theory a purely Upper Canadian affair. In July, 1847, a meeting, one of a number, was held in the American Presbyterian Church where the Montreal Unitarians, John Young, Hincks, Holmes and Holton, joined the Roman Catholic Drummond in denouncing yet another attempt on the part of the government to save something of the King's College endowment for the Church of England.⁵² Towards the end of the same year, the Liberals received the benefits of their attack on the established church in an endorsement by the Montreal Register, the organ of the Lower Canadian Baptists, of LaFontaine and Holmes.⁵³ The Register's editor, Dr. J. M. Cramp, also the head of the Baptist College, became one of the party's active supporters and joined the editorial staff of the Pilot by 1849.⁵⁴

The question of religion was one that helped to perpetuate

51. Montreal Pilot, January 29, 1845

52. Montreal Gazette, July 13, 1847; Montreal Pilot, July 15, 1847

53. Montreal Pilot, December 17, 1847 (extract from the Montreal Register)

54. Montreal Herald, May 9, 1849

the traditional rivalry between the Montreal Gazette and the Herald. Robert Abraham, an English lawyer, took over control of the Gazette after David Kinnear moved to the Herald. These changes did little to weaken the antagonism between the two papers; Abraham's rather old fashioned Whiggish moderation clashed repeatedly with Kinnear's Scottish dogmatism. The religiously inspired violence of 1845 and 1846 provided material for such disputes, and the Gazette attacked the Herald for its ultra-protestant remarks,⁵⁵ and accused it of "raising the bigot howl" against the Irish Catholics.⁵⁶ Indeed, in the struggle between Hincks and Daly for the control of the Irish, the Herald was the Liberals' greatest ally. Its continued attacks on the Irish and Daniel O'Connell were frequently reprinted in the Pilot with appropriate comments:

Those Irishmen with whom we act care little for the Herald's impertinence and will of course treat it with contempt. Those of them that act with the opposite party richly deserve what they have got, and we have reason to know, feel it acutely. They however, are many of them beneath contempt. They are mere spaniels.⁵⁷

Disagreement over the role of religious feeling in politics formed only one facet of the clash between the two Conservative papers. Also important was the difference between Kinnear's and Abraham's constitutional theories. The Gazette, despite

55. Montreal Gazette, October 11, 1845

56. Montreal Gazette, October 22, 1845

57. Montreal Pilot, May 8, 1845

its position as the "demi-official organ"⁵⁸ of the Ministry, became increasingly isolated from the rest of the Tory press, and by 1847 was the only Montreal papers still opposing Responsible Government even in the sense defined by the ex-Ministers. The Herald declared that "Right or wrong, the people is (sic) and ought to be the tribunal of last resort," and that if the Imperial Government were to persist in supporting a Governor-General in opposition to the express wishes of the majority, it would make either "separation from the Empire" or the end of Responsible Government inevitable.⁵⁹ Finally, the Pilot printed an extract from the Herald in which the ultra-Tory paper conceded that the Pilot's constitutional theory was "strictly correct."⁶⁰ Other Ministerial papers such as the Times and the Transcript supported the Herald's position.⁶¹ Only the Gazette continued to argue for limited colonial self-government, claiming that the authority of the Colonial Office was a necessary bulwark against "democracy and anarchy."⁶² Thus the Gazette, in opposition to the other Montreal papers, was in agreement with that element of the old parti patriote, represented by Viger, that had never accepted LaFontaine's policy. A frequent contributor to the paper's columns, under the name of

58. Both the Pilot (e. g. May 13, 1845) and the Canadian Economist (cited in the Montreal Gazette, October 8, 1846) insisted that the Gazette was the government's mouthpiece. The Gazette consistently denied this, but unquestionably the paper was the Ministry's most reliable and competent defender.

59. quoted in the Montreal Gazette, January 18, 1847

60. Montreal Pilot, January 26, 1847

61. Montreal Pilot, January 22, 1847

62. Montreal Gazette, January 22, 1847

"Looker On," was 'General' Thomas Storrow Brown, the former rebel commander. The Pilot drew this fact to the attention of Tory loyalists, and congratulated the government on its "latest purchase."⁶³ As the election grew nearer and the Herald's antagonism to the Ministry became more manifest, the Gazette spent more time in attacking that paper than in criticizing the Liberals. By the end of 1847, according to the Gazette, the Herald had "long been 'on the fence,' but now ... has gone over, 'body and bones.' We wish Messrs. LaFontaine and Holmes joy of their new ally."⁶⁴ Kinnear did not of course endorse the Liberal candidates, but his quarrels with the Ministry could not but contribute to their election.

A number of actions on the part of the administration gave substance to these abstract disagreements among the Montreal Ministerialists. One of these was the sudden rift between the Government and the foremost expression of the city's mercantile community, "the mainstay of the commercial interest and a stronghold of British interest," the Bank of Montreal.⁶⁵ The bank's president, Peter McGill, and the majority of its directors were part of the crème of the Tory elite.⁶⁶ The bank's general manager, however, was the foremost Montreal renegade, Benjamin Holmes. Holmes had been the centre of controversy for some time, and had been attacked for his partisanship as an Alderman

⁶³. Montreal Pilot, January 19, 1847

⁶⁴. Montreal Gazette, December 17, 1847

⁶⁵. Montreal Gazette, December 1, 1845

⁶⁶. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, chap. 2, passim

on the Municipal Council.⁶⁷ His response was to cancel publicly the Bank of Montreal's subscription to the Herald.⁶⁸ At the end of November, 1845, just as Baron Metcalfe was leaving Canada for ever, the government withdrew without notice all its deposits from the bank. The pretext for this action was that Holmes had ordered that the Bank of Montreal no longer honour the warrants issued under the signatures of contractors for expenditures on public works. In response to the government's action, the Cashier resigned. At first both the Pilot and the Gazette repudiated the idea that there had been any political issue involved, and formed a common front in asserting the wealth and stability of the bank.⁶⁹ The man most directly involved, however, soon made it clear that he felt that politics had indeed been the root of the controversy. Holmes published a letter, signed by himself and the Assistant Cashier, William Gunn, that declared

measures hostile to the Bank had been [the] subject of discussion in the Executive Council, as the means of bringing the Cashier into collision with the Directors, and thereby effecting his ruin; and that the removal of the Government Deposits and the closing of the accounts were determined upon as best calculated to effect that object.⁷⁰

Holmes had in fact warned McGill of the Council's intentions, but the President was firm in his belief that the government

67. Montreal Pilot, November 8, 1845 (in rebuttal)

68. Quebec Gazette, December 17, 1845 (extract from the Montreal Herald)

69. Montreal Pilot, November 28, December 2, 1845; Montreal Gazette, December 1, 1845

70. printed in the Quebec Mercury, December 9, 1845

would not take "so unjustifiable and disreputable a course."⁷¹ Holmes, however, took precautionary measures and the sudden withdrawals did no damage to the bank.

Charges were levelled on all sides. The Herald claimed that Holmes' political behaviour had damaged the bank's credit;⁷² the Pilot charged that the personal interest of Receiver-General William Morris in other banks lay behind this affront to Montreal.⁷³ The Gazette, rather weakly, tried to shift attention to the Pilot's alleged hostility to the bank's directors.⁷⁴

Holmes' resignation might have been damaging to the Liberals' efforts to present themselves as full partners in Montreal's economic development. Events took place, however, that increased the prominence in the city's financial circle of men identified with the opposition. One was the conversion in late 1845 of Viger, DeWitt & Co., a private banking firm, into a full public bank. The commissioners for the transformation were DeWitt himself, Pierre Beaubien, both very active Liberals, and John Donegani. The name of the new company, the Banque du Peuple,⁷⁵ could not have been a reassurance to the city's Tories; the principal financial institution of the patriotes was now claiming full partnership in the money market. The fate of two other institutions, partially financial, partially charitable, also reflected the growing activity of Montreal Reformers in

71. Quebec Mercury, December 9, 1845

72. Montreal Pilot, February 27, 1846 (in rebuttal)

73. Montreal Pilot, November 28, 1845

74. Montreal Gazette, December 3, 1845

75. as per official notice, Montreal Pilot, September 11, 1845

commercial circles, and the concomitant decline of the claim by the Tories to exclusive commercial expertise.

May 1846 saw the creation of both the Montreal Provident and Savings Bank and the Montreal and City District Savings Bank. Both were intended to encourage thrift among the working class. The former was clearly marked as a Tory institution by its list of directors, which included such names as C.-C.-S. de Bleury, David Kinnear, William Lunn and John Torrance.⁷⁶ The directors of the latter, in contrast, were all prominent Reformers. Among the Honorary Directors were L.-H. LaFontaine, A.-N. Morin, Wolfred Nelson and D. M. Armstrong; the Managing Directors included William Workman as President, John E. Mills, Joseph Bourret, Pierre Beaubien, L. H. Holton, Francis Hincks, L. T. Drummond, Jacob DeWitt, John Tully and Henry Judah. The politico-religious flavour of the new bank was made clear when the Pilot especially recommended it to the Irish and French of the city and it was announced that the Patron was the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montreal.⁷⁷ The partisan dimension of the competition between the two new savings banks did not go unnoticed, for by September the Gazette was speaking of "the animus of a certain party, of which the Pilot is the avowed organ" against the Provident and Savings Bank.⁷⁸ Whether as a result of this animus or not, the Provident was a failure. At the beginning of July, 1848, just as the City and District was

76. Montreal Pilot, May 5, 1846.

77. Montreal Pilot, May 23, 1846.

78. Montreal Gazette, September 18, 1846.

announcing a dividend on deposits of 5%, a run on the rival institution began which ended on July 15 in its collapse. In 1850, the Liberals appointed William Bristow, now working for the Pilot, as a Commissioner to investigate rumoured defalcations in the defunct Provident. The Herald and the Transcript both protested that the step was motivated by partisan feelings.⁷⁹

In the light of such developments, the Gazette's reiterated complaints about the unbusiness-like temperament of the French Canadians and their anglophone allies and their preference for "theoretical nonsense" over common sense⁸⁰ became less and less plausible. Indeed, between 1844 and 1848 the Liberals showed themselves to be among the most committed of commercial Montrealers by their participation in the two most symbolic movements of the era: the struggle over Free Trade and the expansion of the Province's railway system.

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The Montreal Gazette was no doubt correct in saying that, despite all its efforts at education, the "people of Canada, as a whole, are Protectionists."⁸¹ Nonetheless, the Montreal commercial elite was by no means as unanimous in its detestation

79. Montreal Pilot, September 3, 1850 (in rebuttal)

80. Montreal Gazette, February 20, 1845

81. Montreal Gazette, June 12, 1846

of Free Trade as has been suggested. There were those, the true believers in Montreal's destiny, who placed their faith more in the innate promise of the St. Lawrence system than in the framework of Imperial tariffs, and were therefore open to the messianic appeal of total and untrammelled mercantile laissez-faire.

The whole issue was not of course new. As has been pointed out above, John Neilson had invoked Free Trade as a shibboleth without abandoning his practical commitment to the timber duties, and independent Irish electors at meetings in the early 'forties had included the phrase in their resolution, virtually as a national issue. On January 27, 1846, however, Sir Robert Peel made his historic announcement of the prospective end of the Corn Laws, and the question became one of immediate interest in the colonies. Abraham no doubt was reflecting his Whig background in his paper's first, almost casual comment on this 'Commercial Revolution.' After mentioning possible benefits to the Montreal carrying trade, he declared

Protracted abolition will certainly be a boon to us, if accompanied by the concessions we have indicated, but beyond that, we cannot see that the matter is of any great interest to us or the home producer.⁸²

Renewed entrepreneurial aggressiveness and reductions in taxation were the solution to this new challenge, rather than futile meetings demanding the continuation of an out-dated system.⁸³

Bland acceptance was not to be the characteristic reaction

82. Montreal Gazette, March 6, 1846

83. Montreal Gazette, March 23, 1846

to the proposed changes in the Imperial tariffs. On March 22, 1846, the Free Trade Association of Montreal held its first meeting. John Young was elected Chairman, Luther Hamilton Holton was made vice-Chairman, and the executive included such well-known merchants and Conservatives as D. L. Macdougall, D.L. Macpherson, Henry Chapman and Robert Abraham.⁸⁴

The principles of the new organization were announced a week later in the "Address of the Free Trade Association to the Inhabitants of Canada." This declaration expressed an absolute commitment to the virtues of unrestricted commerce, not only for the merchant but also for the manufacturer and the farmer, and issued a call for political activity to secure such benefits:

Believing as we do, that the principle of Free Trade, applied generally to the commerce of a country, is sound, and the wisest, under all circumstances, for a nation to adopt in order to secure the prosperity of all classes; ... but apprehensive at the same time that our Legislature is not yet prepared to give effect to these liberal views, we have deemed it prudent and expedient to form ourselves into an Association for the purpose of collecting into one body all who agree in opinion with us. By this measure we shall extend our influence, consolidate our views and interests, attain unity of purpose and action, and thereby place ourselves in a position to secure the ascendancy of our principles in the Commercial Laws of the Province.

The Associations's targets were clear and comprehensive: the elimination of all Imperial acts with discriminatory or regulatory duties; the abolition of any tariff, Imperial or provincial, on American grain; and the prevention in the future of any new "Protective, Prohibitive, or merely Regulating Duties

84. Montreal Gazette, March 23, 1846

whatever."

Behind this doctrinaire and universal assertion of economic principle lay some specific Montreal concerns. While figures were adduced to show that Free Trade would benefit the agricultural and industrial sectors of the colonial economy, the central theme of the Address was the threat of New York's competition with the St. Lawrence as a channel for staple exports to Great Britain. Thus it was crucial to hasten the completion of Canadian transportation routes because

inactivity at this crisis would be fatal to our hopes; even the very produce of Western Canada may be carried in spite of us, through AMERICAN CHANNELS, unless we immediately carry out the completion of our OWN.

This combination of hope and fear was characteristic of the Association, for it appears that from its inception the movement contained both those who believed whole-heartedly in Free Trade and those who saw it as, faute de mieux, the only alternative to the disappearing protectionist system. Even in the Address, despite its statement that such duties were "detrimental to the general interests of society, and at variance with sound policy, contained a reference to "the favor we have hitherto enjoyed" in the markets of Great Britain.⁸⁵ John Young certainly believed, as subsequent events showed, in Free Trade for its own sake; the most influential figure connected with the Association, George Moffatt, was to declare two years later that he

⁸⁵. "Address of the Free Trade Association to the Inhabitants of Canada," printed in the Montreal Gazette, March 30, 1846.

was not in favour of Free Trade but accepted it as something forced upon the colony.⁸⁶ This statement, made in the middle of an election fought in part over this question, may not accurately reflect his opinion in 1846.

The success of the Anti-Corn Law League in Britain had shown the political effects of such a movement. While Holton was the only declared Liberal on the Association's executive, other prominent Reformers quickly involved themselves in the agitation. The signatories to a requisition for a public meeting on the subject, to take place on April 10, included not only Constitutionlists such as George Moffatt but also Benjamin Holmes, Jacob DeWitt, L. T. Drummond, and the newly returned Louis-Joseph Papineau.⁸⁷

It is impossible to assess what portion of, and to what degree, the Montreal commercial community was attracted by this message of hope. G. J. J. Tulchinsky has described the Association as "tiny," and commented on the short career of the Association's organ, the Canadian Economist.⁸⁸ Nonetheless, the momentum of the movement was such that, in the summer of 1846, it managed to capture the Council of the Board of Trade of Montreal. The Gazette was later to claim that this was the result of the accidental absence of "Conservatives" from the election.⁸⁹ This observation, made in 1849, may or may not reflect what

86. Montreal Pilot, January 7, 1848, in his nomination speech for a Tory candidate in the election.

87. Montreal Pilot, April 7, 1846.

88. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 86.

89. Montreal Gazette, January 3, 1849.

happened three years earlier, but regardless of the cause, the Free Traders were in effective control of the official mouthpiece of the city's merchants. Thus, in August 1846, the Council, under the presidency of George Moffatt, adopted a report produced by a committee of the Board whose Chairman was John Glass, the Free Trade Association's treasurer, and whose members included Young, Holton, Thomas Kay and George Elder, all members of the Association's executive. The report made the following recommendations:

- 1st. The Repeal of the Imperial Differential Duties
- 2nd. The repeal of the 3s. frontier duty on American wheat
- 3rd. Such modification of the British Navigation Laws as will leave us free to employ, at our option, the cheapest vessels we can procure, whether they be British or Foreign.
- And, Lastly, -- The removal of all restriction that now operate against the Free Navigation of the St. Lawrence.⁹⁰

When these demands are compared with the Free Trade Association's Address, and its petition to the Imperial Government requesting an end to duties that protected British manufacturers and other restraints on trade,⁹¹ it is clear that the official policy of Montreal was that of the Association.

The terms of the Free Traders' manifesto, with its attacks on local as well as Imperial tariffs, made the movement innately political, but did not necessarily make it partisan. The

⁹⁰. C. O. 42, vol. 538, "Board of Trade. Montreal, 14 August 1846. Special Meeting of the Council of the Board of Trade, the Hon. George Moffatt, M. P. P., in the Chair."

⁹¹. C. O. 42, vol. 533, Petition of the Free Trade Association of Montreal, forwarded by Lord Cathcart to W. E. Gladstone with a despatch of July 27, 1846.

Liberals, with their established policy of agricultural protectionism were as vulnerable to attack as those Conservatives with firm mercantilist principles. If the Gazette initially supported the Association, the Pilot was at the beginning cool to the point of hostility. "The Free Traders are moving a little too fast," it commented, and the paper also declared that protection was beneficial to colonists and that its abolition should be compensated for by the British government.⁹²

Yet in 1848 John Young, so abused by the Pilot for his conduct in the Montreal election of 1844, nominated L.-H. LaFontaine for one of the city's seats, largely as a result of the Free Trade issue. Between 1846 and the general election, a number of developments took place that ensured that the opposition would gain most of the benefits from the Association's efforts, while at the same time the movement would open up new divisions among the Ministry's supporters.

One such development was the withdrawal by the fall of 1846 from the Free Trade Association of Robert Abraham. Indeed, the Gazette spent much of its time in the latter part of the year in a vitriolic controversy with the Association's Canadian Economist. The key point in the dispute was not the abolition of the Corn Laws but rather the application of Free Trade principles to the Navigation Laws, the original keystone of Britain's mercantilist system. The restriction of British cargoes to British ships was exactly the sort of constraint that

92. Montreal Pilot, April 11, 1846

both fervent and lukewarm Free Traders insisted should be abolished along with the Corn Laws. For the Gazette, however, the Navigation Laws were the key to "the maritime defence of the Empire" and "the most generous and lightest of bonds ... a reciprocity of benefits," and hence worth preserving as Canada's contribution to the Empire.⁹³ The Gazette tried to argue that competition between British shippers would guarantee that freight rates, even under the Navigation Laws, would be as low as possible, and that the Laws were fundamentally linked to the preference afforded to Canadian timber.⁹⁴ Finally, however, Abraham admitted that there was no economic benefit to the colony from this aspect of the Imperial system; its preservation was purely a question of loyalty to England, and therefore the Canadian Economist, with its hints that the continuation of the 17th century code would lead to the disintegration of the Empire, was simply disloyal.⁹⁵

This position, while creditable to Abraham's patriotism, placed the Ministry's most reliable and widely-read journalistic proponent in opposition to a growing sentiment within even those elements of the Montreal commercial community that contained the most committed supporters of the government. Inevitably, the Herald carried on its tradition of disagreement with the Gazette,⁹⁶ and the Montreal Board of Trade was now on record

93. Montreal Gazette, October 22, 1846.

94. Montreal Gazette, October 22, 27, 1846; September 14, 1848

95. Montreal Gazette, November 6, 9, 1846

96. Montreal Gazette, September 12, 1846 (e. g.); September 14, 1848

as desiring an end to that portion of the Imperial system. Even Tory protectionists, such as Peter McGill, were by 1848 convinced that with the end of the Corn Laws the Navigation Laws were intolerable. Thus, "the anti-Navigation Law fervour reached its climax in Montreal."⁹⁷ The prosperity of the carrying trade was crucial to that city, and without the Corn Laws anything that would lessen freight charges was essential. The mercantilist system was a complex of interconnected institutions, and the exact significance of each of its components produced disputes that helped to split the Lower Canadian Ministerialists into a number of camps.

This difficulty was exacerbated by the failure of the Executive Council to provide any solid leadership in the face of the crisis. At the opening of the session of the Legislature, on March 20, 1846, the Governor's speech touched exceedingly lightly on the whole question, and the Address in Reply, moved by John Prince and de Bleury, expressed the vague hope "that when the projected scheme shall be fully developed, it will be found that the claims of this country to a just measure of protection have not been overlooked."⁹⁸ The opposition had no interest in initiating a partisan dispute on this issue, and Baldwin and Aylwin concentrated their attacks on that part of the Address that contained complimentary references to Lord Metcalfe.

In a retrospective despatch, Lord Metcalfe outlined to

97. G. N. Tucker, The Canadian Commercial Revolution, p. 88

98. DLA, vol. 5, pt. 1, p. 22, March 23, 1846

the Colonial Secretary, W. E. Gladstone, the policy pursued throughout the session by his advisors. In order to alleviate the general despair occasioned by Peel's declaration, three measures were taken. First an Address was introduced, asking the Imperial government to remove all duties on colonial grain, and thus afford a small advantage to Canadian producers over foreign corn upon which a revenue tariff remained in effect. Secondly, a new loan was to be negotiated to hasten the completion of the colony's canal system. Finally, the 3s. duty on American wheat was to be removed in order to encourage the flow of western produce through Canadian waters.⁹⁹

While this programme seemed to Cathcart to be solid and comprehensive, a combination of circumstance and weakness on the part of the government's supporters ensured that the Ministry would not gain the credit of having a well thought-out policy. The request for special treatment was quietly rejected by Peel and the other two proposals gave the Lower Canadian opposition an opportunity to renew the charge of sectional discrimination in favour of Upper Canada. In fact, the most far-sighted recommendations presented to the Assembly were, although adopted by the government, formulated by W. H. Merritt, the loosest of the Upper Canadian loose fish. He called for the opening of the St. Lawrence to the ships of all nations, reciprocity with the United States, the abolition of all restrictions on trade, and

⁹⁹. C. O. 42, vol. 532, Lord Cathcart to W. E. Gladstone, (confidential), June 11, 1846

the remittance of all Imperial duties on Canadian goods.¹⁰⁰ It is interesting that W. B. Robinson, in adapting these proposals on behalf of the government, chose to use rhetoric similar to that of the Free Trade Association. The British government was called upon to arrange that "the Trade of Canada should in all respects approach as nearly to perfect freedom as the wishes of its inhabitants and the exigencies of the public revenue may permit." This Address even contained the warning that without some accommodation Canadians "will naturally and of necessity begin to doubt whether remaining a portion of the British Empire will be that paramount advantage which they have hitherto found it to be."¹⁰¹ The Ministry was expressing exactly the same sentiments that the Gazette had considered disloyal in the Canadian Economist.

These resolutions, although prophetic, produced no more tangible results than the earlier Addresses requesting the remission of duties on Canadian products. The abolition of the 3s. duty was, however, within the competence of the provincial Legislature. The debate on this step enabled the opposition to gain a tactical victory over an embarrassed Ministry without committing itself to an alternate policy, and at the same time to reassert its role as the defender of Lower Canadian interests. This double object was achieved by suggesting an adjournment to the debate.

¹⁰⁰. DLA, vol. 5, pt. 2, p. 1106, May 1, 1846

¹⁰¹. C. O. 42, vol. 532, Address of the Assembly, forwarded by Lord Cathcart to W. E. Gladstone

Henry Sherwood, the Solicitor-General for Canada West, attacked the opposition for converting the discussion of an issue of paramount importance into a partisan squabble. While he included Robert Baldwin in his criticisms, his principal opponent was Joseph Cauchon who, in the absence of Aylwin, was the leading spokesman for the Lower Canadians. Both Sherwood and Ogle R. Gowan referred to the member for Montmorenci as "the leader of the opposition."¹⁰² An especial appeal was made to the Lower Canadian members by ministerial speakers in an attempt to present the question as vital not only to Upper Canada but also to the whole province. Unfortunately, Sherwood made it clear that his conception of the eastern section extended only to Montreal and its merchants. He asked the representatives of Lower Canada

if they wished to see the people of Upper Canada buying in the New York market the manufactures they heretofore bought in Montreal, and sending there the produce which formerly found its way down the St. Lawrence. If they desire to see this, let them reject the resolution before the House ... car c'était la seule mesure susceptible de neutraliser les résultats funestes du changement des lois anglaises.¹⁰³

Such language was likely to attract neither the French Canadians nor the representatives of the Eastern Townships.

W. H. Merritt then moved the adjournment and was supported not only by the opposition but also by a number of ministerialists. P.-J.-O. Chauveau's speech is of particular interest, for it charged the government with exciting sectional and

¹⁰². DLA, vol. 5, pt. 1, p. 692, 695, April 17, 1846

¹⁰³. DLA, vol. 5, pt. 1, pp. 692-3 April 17, 1845

political feelings while at the same time it made a blatant appeal to Lower Canada's long-standing grievances. The member for Quebec County declared that before the ministerialist had spoken, "j'avais oublié à quel parti politique j'appartenais ... j'étais sur le point même d'oublier que j'appartenais au Bas-Canada." Chauveau then proceeded to blend together the rhetoric of the Canadian Economist's complaints and the old ant-Union cry. If the "bon côté" of the colony's ties were to be abolished, then the "mauvais côté" had to vanish as well. The canal system in Upper Canada, encouraged by the mercantilist system, might be improved, but this was merely a reminder of the "dettes énormes" imposed on Lower Canada by the Union Act largely to benefit Upper Canada. The amendment to postpone the debate was necessary so that the voice of the whole province, rather than that of a single party, might be heard in Great Britain.¹⁰⁴

Despite the fact that Sherwood had pledged the Ministry's credit on the measure, the adjournment was approved by a vote of 36 to 29. Cathcart's explanation to Gladstone of this defeat highlights its importance as a political manoeuvre. It was not, he insisted, a sign of the measure's unpopularity, but "a mere party measure, in which the opposition were successful thro' a misunderstanding on the part of some of the warmest supporters of the Government."¹⁰⁵ Such mismanagement of a measure of primary importance to Montreal could not but lend

104. DLA, vol. 5, pt. 1, pp. 693-4, April 17, 1846.

105. C. O. 42, vol. 532 Lord Cathcart to W. E. Gladstone, (confidential) June 11, 1846.

substance to the Herald's charges that the Ministry had failed to protect the city's commercial needs.¹⁰⁶

Unfortunately for the Executive Council the beginning of the commercial depression of 1847-9 ensured that temporization could not be a politically practical strategy. In Montreal, the division between the protectionists and the Free Traders acquired a new bitterness in the elections for the Council of the Board of Trade in April, 1847. The Free Trade Association fielded a slate to maintain its control of the Board, but was soundly defeated. Young, Holton and George Elder, the only Free Traders elected, immediately resigned, as did George Moffatt, who had been re-elected President.¹⁰⁷ Over the same issue, L. H. Holton and W. B. Cummings resigned from the Committee of Management of the Exchange and News Room, an organization connected with the Board.¹⁰⁸ Two camps, mutually hostile, had established themselves within the Montreal commercial community.

The Pilot had been fairly quick to change its position in response to this growing tension. On April 21, 1846, ten days after its initial criticism of the Association, the Liberal organ was claiming that reciprocity with the United States, the opening of the St. Lawrence to foreign shipping and the abolition of Imperial duties - much the same proposals as those presented by Merritt to the Assembly a week later - would be

¹⁰⁶. Montreal Gazette, December 23, 1847 (in rebuttal)

¹⁰⁷. Montreal Gazette, April 12, 1847; Montreal Pilot, April 9, 1847

¹⁰⁸. Montreal Gazette, April 16, 1847

more than enough compensation for the changes in Britain's commercial policy.¹⁰⁹ By July 1 the Pilot was rejecting the claims of the Free Traders "to exclusive liberalism in commercial policy,"¹¹⁰ and endorsed the Association's stand on the intrinsic superiority of the St. Lawrence system, presented in its petition to the Imperial government.¹¹¹

The month of July revealed at least one reason for the reversal of the Pilot's editorial views. The Association, dissatisfied with the efforts of its member in the Assembly, George Moffatt, called for Free Trade candidates, independent of any party, to be chosen for the next election. Hincks, with his practical and ideological commitment to party government, insisted that political ties were necessary for the functioning of Responsible Government, and appealed to British precedent by invoking the alliance of John Cobden, the great English apostle of Free Trade, with the Radicals.¹¹² Thus in Montreal the Liberal party was becoming a remarkably close transcript of the Catholic-Dissenter-Free Trade alliance that was transforming the Whigs into the British Liberals. There, the force of character of Sir Robert Peel delayed the consummation of this process until the 1850s. In Canada the Tories had no such figure,¹¹³ and the

109. Montreal Pilot, April 21, 1846

110. cited in the Montreal Gazette, July 1, 1846

111. Montreal Pilot, July 21, 1846

112. Montreal Pilot, July 23, 1846

113. J. M. S. Careless, ed., The Pre-Confederation Premiers, George Metcalf, "William Henry Draper," pp.33-88. Draper was the closest possible candidate for such a position; for his weakness and strenchs as a politician, compared to Peel, see Metcalf, pp. 77-82.

process was near its completion by 1848. As late as the fall of 1846, the Pilot was still insisting that Free Trade was not a party issue;¹¹⁴ by the end of 1847 the principle was well established as a Liberal policy. William Bristow, the Quebec Constitutionalist turned Montreal Liberal activist, wrote in the Pilot articles in favour of Free Trade that were so savage in their attack on Robert Abraham that a duel ensued. The principals exchanged fire twice, and Bristow was hit. John Young, Bristow's second, then secured an end to the exchange.¹¹⁵ The internal conflicts of Montreal's commercial community thus produced one of the bloodiest duels of the decade.

This conversion on the part of the Pilot was in part the result of events outside of Montreal. At the beginning of 1847, the Toronto Globe issued a call for the end of protection.¹¹⁶ That George Brown, the spokesman for Canada West's agrarian resentment of the privileged position of Montreal's carrying trade, shared the same sentiments on commercial policy as John Young, one of the strongest advocates of that city's natural mercantile hegemony, no doubt contributed to the Pilot's complete endorsement of the Globe's declaration in favour of Free Trade.¹¹⁷ In Quebec City, the Comité de la réforme et du Progrès, organized in August, 1847, called for Free Trade, free navigation

114. Montreal Pilot, September 24, 1846

115. John Young Papers, Legal documents II, folder 4, December 26, 1847

116. extract in the Montreal Pilot, January 12, 1847

117. Montreal Pilot, January 12, 1847

of the St. Lawrence and an end to the Navigation Laws.¹¹⁸ This is all the more striking in that the former capital of Lower Canada, with its dependence on the protected timber trade, was one of the centres of protest against the proposed changes in the Imperial system. Even more importantly for the Liberal party, one of the city's members, T. C. Aylwin, was the only Lower Canadian Liberal strongly and publicly committed to the Navigation Laws as a fundamental part of the British Empire.¹¹⁹ Thus Free Trade was, as the election grew nearer, to contribute not only to the emergence of John Young as a Reform leader, but also to the decline of the man who had heretofore been the party's most prominent anglophone.

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The Free Trade Association's faith in the vitality of the St. Lawrence was based on the prospect of a year-round link between the Atlantic and Montreal. Railroads alone made the Free Trade dream plausible, and their importance was explicitly mentioned in the Association's Address.¹²⁰ It was a concern that

¹¹⁸. Manifesto of the Quebec "Constitutional Committee of Reform and Advancement," printed in the Montreal Pilot, July 24, 1847.

¹¹⁹. speech in the Assembly, quoted in the Montreal Pilot, July 24, 1847.

¹²⁰. in the Montreal Gazette, March 30, 1846

cut across party lines; correspondingly, it made more difficult the assertion by Conservative papers of an anti-progressive tendency among the Liberals. This development was not unique to Montreal. The same kind of unity appeared in Quebec City, where railroads opened up the possibility that the older city might recapture some of its former importance from its rival to the west. On October 24, 1845, the Quebec Gazette published an eleven verse poem to mark the opening of this new era. Two verses commented on the city's unanimity:

What's that on which we all agree
 Old Nestor [John Neilson] with the 'Journal' free
 And Cauchon with the Mercury?
 Our Rail-road.

At whose success we'd all be glad
 The Tory, moderate or the rad
 All sects and sorts (except the mad) -
 Our Rail-road¹²¹

Indeed, the nineteenth-century mania for railroads appears to have hit Quebec earlier and harder, at least initially, than in the supposedly more dynamic city of Montreal. The Mercury in particular filled column after column with praises of the proposed line between the old capital and Halifax,¹²² which would give Quebec rather than Montreal first access to the ocean during the winter season. A number of requisitions for meetings to promote the line were published, and their signatories manifested a complete absence of partisan feeling. For example, on October 17, 1845, T. C. Aylwin and Jean Chabot joined such

121. Quebec Gazette, October 24, 1845

122. Quebec Mercury, October-December, 1845, passim

enemies as Horatio N. Patton, Ronald Macdonald, Edward Ryan and John Neilson to support the Quebec-Halifax route. The need for governmental support made it impossible to by-pass the city's elected politicians and thus, when the inevitable committee for the line was struck, all "Members of the Legislature resident in the City and District" were included ex officio.¹²³

By the beginning of 1846, however, the focus of Quebec's railway interest had shifted from Halifax to a more southerly terminus. On January 8, 1846, a meeting was held in Quebec to organize a line from Pointe Levi on the opposite bank of the St. Lawrence to Melbourne on the St. Francis River in the county of Drummond. The committee struck at this meeting included not only Aylwin and other members of the Legislature, but also such prominent and largely Conservative figures in Quebec's financial and commercial circles as Noah Freer, the Cashier of the Quebec Bank, the Hon. Francis Primrose and J. W. Leaycraft. Louis Massue, R.-E. Caron and Vital Têtu were also on the committee.¹²⁴ At a later meeting, R. N. Watts,--as M.P.P. for Drummond, became active in the movement.¹²⁵ This shift is easily explained by the new interest shown in Montreal for a railway linking the Eastern Townships to that city's economic orbit. If Quebec wished to attract, not simply Megantic and a portion of Drummond, but the whole St. Francis District into its sphere of influence, then a rail line was the only means

123. Quebec Mercury, October 25, 1845

124. Quebec Mercury, January 8, 1846

125. Quebec Mercury, February 10, 1846

of doing so.

The Quebec plan was doomed, for the most active figures in the Townships, notably A. T. Galt but also John Moore and Samuel Brooks, were already committed to a Montreal line. At least one observer, Louis Létourneaux of the Revue Canadienne, felt that resentment over Montreal's more successful railway policy lay behind La Réaction.¹²⁶ Montreal's hesitant entry into the railway era has been well described by Tulchinsky.¹²⁷ At this point, it is simply necessary to recapitulate the ambiguity of the original proposals of 1845. That the "initial Canadian impetus" came from the Townships¹²⁸ is made clear by the title of the first serious survey of the route, by William Crocker, C.E., a Report of the Survey of the Projected Line of Railroad from Stanstead to Montreal, published at the beginning of 1845.¹²⁹ Metcalfe, despite a personal preference for a Portland terminus, informed Lord Stanley that

Opinions here appear to be divided between the Boston and Portland Route, but as far as I can learn they predominate in favor of the former, principally, I believe because it is supposed that greater means are available in Boston for completing their line from Concord ... to Stanstead, than there are in Portland.¹³⁰

The Montreal Board of Trade, in a meeting held on February 10,

126. cited in J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, p. 233

127. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, pp. 127-139

128. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 129

129. C. O. 42, vol. 524, forwarded with despatch from Metcalfe to Stanley of February 14, 1845

130. C. O. 42, vol. 524, Metcalfe to Lord Stanley, February 14, 1845

1845, was prepared to endorse either route.¹³¹

The St. Francis District, long alienated by its exclusion from access to the St. Lawrence, was more interested in a connection with any market, be it Portland, Maine or Boston, than in the specific mercantile struggle of Montreal for dominance in the western carrying trade. Thus, the Provisional Committee of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic endorsed a line to Boston.¹³² The Committee was composed primarily of Sherbrooke and Stanstead notables, men like Galt, Edward Hale, Samuel Brooks, John Moore and John M'Connell, rather than of figures from the Montreal commercial elite. The principal promoters of the company's initial corporation included many men whose personal interests might be served by a railway through the Townships, regardless of its final destination. Leaving aside Peter McGill, whose distinctive role Tulchinsky outlines,¹³³ most were involved in iron manufactures, including John Frothingham, of Frothingham and Workman, and Joseph Shuter, or had business connections in New England, as was the case with Harrison Stephens, John Young's partner. More numerous were those who possessed real estate whose value would be favourably affected, men like Louis.-Antoine Dessaulles, heir to the seigneurie of

131. C. O. 42, vol. 524, "Memorial of 10 February, 1845 of the Montreal Board of Trade," forwarded with Metcalfe's despatch to Stanley of February 14, 1845.

132. C. O. 42, vol. 524, Statistical Information relative to the proposed Railroad from Montreal to Boston via the Eastern Townships, attached to Metcalfe's despatch of February 14, 1845.

133. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, pp. 134-5

St. Hyacinthe, P.-D. Desbartzch, séigneur of an adjoining fief, Samuel C. Monk, one of Desbartzch's sons-in-law, Grant of Longeuil, John Felton of the great bureaucrate land-owning family, and A. T. Galt of the British American Land Company. Other local figures of political and commercial importance, such as L.-V. Sicotte and John Moore, were involved.¹³⁴ The group thus constituted, in short, the kind of self-interested politico-entrepreneurial clique characteristic of the railway speculations of the 1850s, rather than the promoters of a great national work.

All of this changed in 1846. Tulchinsky suggests that one factor in the increased commitment of prominent Montrealers to the Portland route lay in the announcement of Britain's intention to abolish the Corn Laws.¹³⁵ This interpretation is made all the more probable by the fact that the Free Trade Association specifically endorsed the Portland terminus,¹³⁶ and by the crucial role played by George Moffatt, the Association's most influential supporter, in kindling Montreal's ardour for the line.¹³⁷

Prominent Liberals were ready to take part in promoting the railway. A.-N. Morin had been involved in the St. Lawrence & Atlantic since its inception, serving on the provisional committee. A public meeting was called in the Champs de Mars for

134. C. O. 42, vol. 524, list attached to the original bill of incorporation of the company forwarded by Metcalfe to Stanley on February 14, 1845

135. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 141

136. in the Montreal Gazette, March 30, 1846

137. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 141

August 10, 1846. The ministerialist George Moffatt was the leading figure, but also involved were L.-H. LaFontaine, Benjamin Holmes, Francis Hincks, L. T. Drummond, G.-E. Cartier, Robert M'Kay and Wolfred Nelson.¹³⁸ L. H. Holton was on the soliciting committee for St. Anne's Ward, and John E. Mills, despite his chairmanship of the Champlain & St. Lawrence, was among those who purchased stock.¹³⁹ Thus was initiated an attempt to involve Montreal as a community in the projected line. The campaign of the summer of 1846 ensured the survival of the company and was in its own right a unique event. New shares were sold "overwhelmingly to the 'lesser people' of Montreal, who had not likely been approached before for any public project, nor ever would be afterwards in quite the same way."¹⁴⁰ To achieve this mass involvement, the participation of the Liberals, with their influence with the French Canadians and Irish of the city's poorer districts, was absolutely essential, and could never afterwards be denied.

If the summer of 1846 forced the Tories to concede to their political opponents the droit de cité in mercantile Montreal, the Liberals' support of the Portland railway was probably of equal significance in establishing their credentials in the Eastern Townships. Not all the residents of the District were enthusiastic about the railroad, and in 1847 A. T. Galt was

138. Montreal Gazette, August 12, 1846

139. Montreal Gazette, August 12, 1846; G. G. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 143

140. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 143

attacked at a public meeting for diverting, by means of his influence with the government, funds from the Main Eastern Townships Road to the St. Lawrence & Atlantic.¹⁴¹ In places like Sherbrooke, however, the administration was criticized for its refusal to help the line, and LaFontaine and his supporters were rumoured to have given "demi-pledges" to assist the company, as well as other projects of interest to the District.¹⁴² Evidently, the Liberals, with Drummond at their head, were becoming accepted as defenders of the predominantly English-speaking settlers. Dissatisfaction with the Ministry's lethargy in promoting communication links was, however, but one part of the general alienation of the Townships from the government they had helped to elect.

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The importance for the preservation of French Canadian society of the legislation passed during D.-B. Viger's period of influence has been duly acknowledged.¹⁴³ For this very reason, however, his school and municipal legislation provoked resentment in the St. Francis District even before large waves

¹⁴¹. Stanstead Journal, July 15, 1847

¹⁴². Stanstead Journal, February 10, 1848. The other projects included a ship canal to Lake Champlain, a new judicature bill, and the incorporation of the Bar of St. Francis.

¹⁴³. J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, pp. 209-10

of French Canadian immigration created an atmosphere of genuine francophobia. Thus, throughout 1845, 1846 and 1847, a series of meetings were held in the Townships, particularly in those closest to the American border, to protest against the Ministry's legislation. On February 18, 1845, for example, a meeting took place in Frampton with delegates from all parts of the District in attendance. Resolutions were passed that declared that the settlers were too poor for the direct taxation proposed in the School Law before the Assembly.¹⁴⁴ No satisfactory changes were made, and a meeting held in Hatley on November 27 declared that "the Inhabitants of this Township are opposed to taxation in every form whatever."¹⁴⁵ Evidently, the guerre des éteignoirs was not a distinctly French Canadian phenomenon; rather, it represented the protest of impoverished rural districts against the norms of social development generated in the cities.

Of course, not all meetings went so far as those at Frampton and Hatley. Those held under the auspices of more 'respectable' figures - that is to say, those more closely connected with the provincial level of society - protested against the centralization of the new system and its failure to take into consideration the distinctive nature of the Townships. John Moore, the county's former representative, presided at a meeting held in Eaton, Stanstead, where the principle of the new municipal law was approved, but more power for the town, as opposed to the

¹⁴⁴. Quebec Gazette, February 26, 1845

¹⁴⁵. Stanstead Journal, December 4, 1845

district, councils was demanded.¹⁴⁶ The overall tone of the protest was probably best defined at a meeting held on January 7, 1846, in Sherbrooke at which both Edward Hale and John M'Connell were active. There it was declared

That the Eastern Townships require a Municipal, School and Road Law, adapted to their particular wants and local situation, without reference to those parts of the Province where lands are held under Seigniorial or Feudal Tenure.¹⁴⁷

Thus, when the Stanstead Journal complained of the neglect by the Legislature of the District,¹⁴⁸ it was voicing a widespread, if not novel, opinion. Nor were the Townships' grievance exclusively economic or administrative. With conditions similar to those on the frontier of Upper Canada, some of the same cultural factors were of importance. A public meeting in Stanstead, where less than 3% of the population was Anglican,¹⁴⁹ found the government's proposed settlement of the Clergy Reserves question offensive to its voluntaryist instincts, and attacked W. H. Draper's attempt to keep a portion of King's College's endowment for the Church of England.¹⁵⁰ In an area where a number of the elected representatives were either but recently or slightly attached to the government,¹⁵¹ such dissatisfaction could have serious political consequences.

This material helps to explain why members from the Eastern

146. Stanstead Journal, November 18, 1847

147. Stanstead Journal, January 22, 1846

148. Stanstead Journal, August 19, 1847

149. Census of Lower Canada . . ., Montreal, 1846

150. Stanstead Journal, April 30, 1846

151. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, November 18, 1844; vide supra, chap. 6

Townships felt not only neglected but also betrayed by a government anxious for French Canadian support. R. N. Watts, the most articulate of the Townships' representatives, made his disgust with the Ministry clear during the debate in 1846 after the publication of the Draper-Caron correspondence. If the letters demonstrated to English-speaking Liberals that LaFontaine was not prepared to abandon his allies, they also made painfully clear to the Lower Canadian British Conservatives that their party was prepared to sacrifice them in order to gain French Canadian converts. On April 19, Watts declared

The ministry were placed in their seats by the votes of the majority of the House, and they, the L. C. section of this majority, had given them a steady and hearty support ... They had, therefore, no right to sell a portion of that majority - to adopt a course that would kick a number of members into the opposition ... and he (Mr. W.) as an independent member of this House, felt it his duty to protest against their being victimized by the Attorney-General of Upper Canada, whose sole object seemed to be to strengthen his own hands at the expense of the British population of Lower Canada.

Watts predicted that Baldwin and LaFontaine would be returned to power in a year, and that the Upper Canadians would support them, just as they supported the current Executive Council.¹⁵²

Watts was not only disgusted with the government for its self-serving manoeuvres; he had been opposed by Christopher Dunkin, a ministerialist candidate, in the last election, and since then it would appear that he had not been consulted about appointments to the Commission of the Peace in his own county.¹⁵³

152. DLA, vol. 5, pt. 1, pp. 436-7, April 7, 1846

153. Quebec Mercury, April 4, 1846

a matter of considerable importance to any member anxious to maintain his own local influence. Thus, the Mercury's Montreal Correspondent was correct when he predicted, even before the revelations about the abortive ministerial re-arrangement, that the government was going to lose Watts' support.¹⁵⁴ After the debate it was reported that

Mr. Watts waited upon Mr. Baldwin with a paper signed by six members of the ministerial benches inclusive of himself, offering to support a vote of want of confidence, if he would bring it forward.¹⁵⁵

Baldwin declined the offer of support, feeling perhaps, as the Mercury suggested, that "the support of these deserters would be too expensive to keep." Unfortunately, it is not known who were the other five ministerial members who had signed the paper. Towards the end of the next year, Aylwin informed LaFontaine that "Brook (sic) est à nous,"¹⁵⁶ referring to Samuel Brooks, the member for Sherbrooke. Thus, he may have been one of the potential rebels. It is unlikely that Watts, with his rather narrow views and local orientation, would have been chosen by a group of Upper Canadians to carry their promise of support. At the very least, the incident indicates that as early as the summer of 1846 dissension among the ministerialists was at the boiling point.

Baldwin's rebuff did not drive Watts back to the government. On May 29, the member for Drummond succeeded in forcing

154. Quebec Mercury, April 4, 1846

155. Quebec Mercury, April 21, 1846

156. LaFontaine Papers, T. C. Aylwin to L.-H. LaFontaine, November 13, 1847

the Ministry to compromise on the terms of a bill exempting from duty cattle imported for the Imperial commissariat, an issue of importance to the representative of a stock-raising area. Watts then proposed an Address to the Queen that asserted agricultural protection was necessary for the prosperity of his District.¹⁵⁷ Watts evidently found such struggles galling. It was rumoured that he was to resign his seat,¹⁵⁸ and even that he had died.¹⁵⁹ Finally, however, in June, 1847, Watts abandoned the ministerial caucus and announced that he was "decidedly for Mr. Lafontaine, rather than no government at all, and spoilation."¹⁶⁰

Watts' case is of particular interest, for it illustrates the mechanism whereby the Liberals' control grew outside the Montreal-Quebec corridor. Watts, although a great landowner and active in the promotion of the welfare of his own region, had, when disgusted with the party with which by background and natural inclination he had the most natural sympathy, no choice but to throw himself into the hands of the opposite faction. In the election of 1847-8, he ran as a thorough oppositionist, and, according the Montreal Gazette, owed his re-election largely to the support of the French Canadians in his riding.¹⁶¹ After the election, he consistently supported the

157. DLA, vol. 5, pt. 2, pp. 1884-6, May 29, 1846; Montreal Pilot, May 30, 1846

158. Quebec Mercury, August 4, 1846

159. Quebec Mercury, August 13, 1846

160. Quebec Mercury, June 12, 1847

161. Montreal Gazette, March 14, 1849

LaFontaine-Baldwin Ministry, even in its most controversial measure, the Rebellion Losses Bill. It was becoming increasingly difficult, it appears, to be a truly 'independent' member. Although this process would not be complete until the 1850s, with the absorption of the isolated Gaspé District into the party system, the election that again brought LaFontaine to power would mark a critical stage in the development of a unified political framework for Canada East.

In the light of the preceding material it is not surprising that the first open split between the Lower Canadian Conservatives and the Ministry took place in a by-election in the Eastern Townships. In April, 1847, James Smith, Attorney-General for Canada East resigned his office and his seat for Missisquoi. His successor in both offices was William Badgley, a judge in the Bankrupt Court, whose last public political act had been to sign the mass requisition for a meeting to approve Bagot's 'Great Measure.' Smith had in fact been a failure as an Executive Councillor. The Pilot was no doubt being partisan in describing him as "picked ... out of the gutter" by Metcalfe, but even the ministerial papers were critical of his performance.¹⁶² Nor did the Pilot let Montreal Tories forget Smith's original support for LaFontaine.¹⁶³ The Attorney-General had also been involved in a minor scandal at the end of 1846, when it was alleged that his family connections with the Torrances had

¹⁶². Montreal Pilot, February 26, 1847; includes an extract from the Montreal Courier.

¹⁶³. Montréal Pilot, September 19, 1846

enabled the forwarding firm to avoid paying duties.¹⁶⁴ No doubt Smith was happy to retire from the bench. Badgley was also not particularly impressive as a political figure in the eyes of the more resolute Tories; the Herald for one refused to see in his Attorney-Generalship proof that the Lower Canadian British were properly represented on the Council.¹⁶⁵ Evidently, the Ministry was still searching for moderates whose adhesion would lend credibility to its claim to be a broadly-based government. The Pilot's metrical summation of the change was correct in the essentials:

As Attorney, they found J*** S*** was all fudge
 So they wisely resolved to make him a judge;
 But as B***, as a judge, had much to learn, he
 Was broke as a judge and made the Attorney.¹⁶⁶

Badgley's opponent in Missisquoi was not a Liberal; rather, it was B. C. A. Gagy. Gagy had been, in effect, dismissed from his position as Adjutant-General of the Militia as a result of the public outcry against his partisanship.¹⁶⁷ His successor was Colonel Plomer Young, a British officer, but more important was the appointment of E.-P. Taché as Deputy Adjutant-General for Lower Canada, part of a plan to re-organize the militia along ethnic lines. These changes led the Mercury to warn of an upcoming proscription of British Canadians as the result of Taché's influence.¹⁶⁸ Inevitably, Gagy became a symbol of

164. Montreal Gazette, November 16, 1846

165. Montreal Gazette, May 27, 1847 (in rebuttal)

166. Montreal Pilot, April 27, 1847

167. The negotiations between Gagy and the Ministry were outlined in the Quebec Mercury, October 15, 1846.

168. Quebec Mercury, September 17, 1846

the government's neglect of old loyalists in its attempts to reconcile the French Canadians. Thus, by the time he ran against Badgley, Gagy himself had become a factor in the fragmentation of the Lower Canadian Conservatives. The ministerial papers divided rancorously among themselves over the merits of his grievance against the administration. The Mercury, for example, ran a series of pro-Gagy editorials towards the end of 1846.¹⁶⁹ J. M. Ferres, Gagy's great personal enemy in Montreal, was still unconnected with any paper, and his return to journalism would open another stormy chapter in Gagy's relationship with both parties. Nonetheless, the Herald continued its tradition of criticism of the ex-Adjutant-General, and in the fall of 1847, after the by-election, Gagy was awarded 250¹. in a libel suit against that paper.¹⁷⁰ The whole issue also set the Herald against the Gazette, much to the delight of the Pilot.¹⁷¹

The role of the Liberals in the by-election is unclear. On May 13, LaFontaine informed Baldwin that

the liberals find it difficult to vote for Gagy. Yet, if they vote and there be but these two candidates, they will vote for Gagy who promises to oppose the present Administration.¹⁷²

In his Address to the Electors of Missisquoi, the lawyer-seigneur declared that "the leaders of the Liberal party ... determined to support me without exacting any pledge." Gagy spurned this

¹⁶⁹. Quebec Mercury, September-December, 1846, passim

¹⁷⁰. Montreal Gazette, September 24, 1847

¹⁷¹. Montreal Pilot, May 25, 1847

¹⁷². Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, May 13, 1847

proffered support, and presented himself as an independent critic of the Administration.¹⁷³ Missisquoi, however, lived up to its reputation as the "loyal" county; both Gagy and Badgley were outsiders, and the latter was returned primarily on the basis of his connection with the government.¹⁷⁴

The Ministry in the face of these divisions had already redoubled its attempts to secure new support in Lower Canada. In late July, 1846, Draper made another attempt to seduce Caron and the leading réactionistes of the Quebec District away from their alliance with LaFontaine. Upon this occasion, the effort nearly succeeded; Morin, called upon to make a decision, summoned a council of leading Liberals: Cartier and Taché representing the French Canadians of Montreal and Quebec respectively, and Drummond, Nelson, Holmes and DeWitt, all English-speaking Montrealers. All were in favour of the proposals, but the last-minute intervention of Francis Hincks settled the matter and the new offer was refused.¹⁷⁵ The pilot did not reveal how close Morin had come to yielding. Instead, it praised him, when the whole matter became public, for "his disclaimer on the subject of taking office as a French Canadian, and without reference to those of a different origin, who have acted consistently with the French Canadians."¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³. Montreal Gazette, May 26, 1847 (Gagy's Address)

¹⁷⁴. Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, May 13, 1847

¹⁷⁵. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, August 16, 1846

¹⁷⁶. Montreal Pilot, September 1, 1846

A final attempt was made by a desperate Ministry in March 1847, after the arrival of Lord Elgin. Once again the offer was refused, and again the Pilot was able to praise LaFontaine's insistence that politics be based on principle rather than on race. If these developments were reassuring to "those consistent advocates of Liberal principles," LaFontaine's anglophone allies,¹⁷⁷ it was infuriating for the British Lower Canadians to discover the continuing determination of the Ministry to abandon them. In the end, the Council could only secure the support, not of a major French Canadian leader like Caron or Morin, but only of J.-E. Turcotte. J.-A. Taschereau had resigned as Solicitor-General for Canada East, and Turcotte took his place. The appointment of a man formerly one of the patriotes' most virulent orators and L. T. Drummond's law partner marked the final phase of the alienation of the more 'ultra' elements within the Lower Canadian Conservative party. The Herald, as might have been expected, was disgusted and after LaFontaine's victory refused "to attribute defeat to ought but the venality and incapacity of the Turcotte Cabinet."¹⁷⁸

The period between the election of 1844 and that of 1848, however, also brought to the fore another factor in the alienation of the men of Montreal and the Eastern Townships from the Executive Council. If they found that they were ignored as anglophones, they also discovered that they were neglected as

177. Montreal Pilot, March 26, 1847.

178. Montreal Herald, January 15, 1848

Lower Canadians. On the eve of the general election, the Herald, reiterating its disgust at Turcotte's appointment, declared that Conservatives should "give their votes to no one, who they do not believe more anxious for their confidence than for that of Upper Canada."¹⁷⁹ While much of the Liberals' journalistic and parliamentary posturing as sectional champions was necessary to preserve the unity of the French Canadian majority of the party, it also had an undeniable effect on those English-speaking Lower Canadians who were resentful of the government's preoccupation with Canada West.

The Council's affront to the Bank of Montreal was not the only issue that aroused sectional tensions. In November, 1845, for example, a new member, an Upper Canadian, was appointed to the Legislative Council. This increased the preponderance of the western section in the Upper House, and the Pilot asked D.-B. Viger and D.-B. Papineau to justify this inequity.¹⁸⁰ The weakness of the Lower Canadian wing of the Ministry, and the resulting neglect of Canada East, was repeated as a theme in the aftermath of the Cayley-Draper negotiations in 1847 with reference to such topics as the proposal to tax public property in Lower Canada.¹⁸¹ At the end of 1847, the Pilot endorsed the call of the Comité de la Réforme et du Progrès for a change in the representation in the Assembly to reflect Lower Canada's greater population. The Pilot asked

179. quoted in the Stanstead Journal, December 23, 1847.

180. Montreal Pilot, November 11, 1845

181. Montreal Pilot, July 3, 1847

Because forsooth in 20 or 30 years the population of Upper Canada may equal the population of Lower Canada, is the latter in the meantime to be doomed to a species of subordination that outrages every principle of right, fairness and justice?¹⁸²

This tactic was made possible by, at least in public, a greater distance between the Reformers of the west and the Liberals of the east. When, in response to attacks from the Globe for its criticisms of the venality of the Upper Canadian members, as manifested in their vote for Draper's 1845 University Bill, the Pilot defended itself vigorously.¹⁸³ Two years later, the Montreal papers forcefully denied that there was any organic link between the two parties:

It is almost needless for us to state that the assertion that Mr. Lafontaine is under any pledge to Mr. Baldwin, expressed or implied, is utterly false.¹⁸⁴

The Lower Canadians were free to believe in the principle of Double Majority without losing the respect of the Upper Canadians, or even their co-operation, until that system was put into effect.¹⁸⁵ Wrangling with the Globe over such details continued, although when the Montreal Gazette dared to comment on the rift, the Pilot was quick to insist upon the fundamental agreement between the two papers on the central issue of Responsible Government.¹⁸⁶

Between 1845 and 1847, however, this split was not simply a question of journalistic rhetoric. While Brown was undeniably

182. Montreal Pilot, December 7, 1847

183. Montreal Pilot, April 1, 1845

184. Montreal Pilot, March 26, 1847

185. Montreal Pilot, April 2, 1847

186. Montreal Pilot, October 19, 1847

jealous of the prominence of the Pilot as the party's organ at the seat of government,¹⁸⁷ there were a number of issues upon which LaFontaine and Baldwin found themselves on different sides. On May 28, 1846, Henry Sherwood proposed that the revenues from the Jesuit Estates be allocated for educational purposes in Lower Canada. Morin, seconded by the Presbyterian Leslie, moved in amendment that the property "ought to be vested in the Catholic Church of Lower Canada for the said educational purposes."¹⁸⁸ The Lower Canadian Protestants, Leslie, DeWitt, Armstrong and Nelson, and the Irish Catholic Drummond, voted for the amendment with all the French Canadians present, with the exception of Viger, Papineau and Taschereau; even de Bleury supported it. Allied with the government were the Upper Canadian ex-Ministers Baldwin and Price. The Morin-Leslie amendment was defeated by a vote of 18 to 29. LaFontaine and Chauveau promptly proposed another, and in the ensuing debate Chauveau made it clear that what was at issue was not so much a religious as a sectional issue. Lower Canada would be despoiled by the original motion of its fair share of the government's educational grants, and the effect of the motion would be to make the proceeds of the Jesuits Estates part of the Consolidated Fund. And

que veut dire le fonds consolidé, c'est la dette du Haut-Canada, c'est le canal Welland, ce sont les améliorations publiques dans le Haut-Canada.¹⁸⁹

187. Baldwin Papers, George Brown to Robert Baldwin, July 10, 1845

188. DLA, vol. 5, pt. 2, p. 1675, May 28, 1846

189. quoted in Roy C. Dalton, The Jesuits' Estates Question, 1760-1888, p. 115

Had this been an isolated disagreement, it might not have meant much. It followed, however, by two weeks one of the most virulent and unpleasant restatements of the old antagonisms between Upper and Lower Canada. William Cayley had moved a resolution that would charge the expenses of the administration of justice in Canada West on the Consolidated Fund. This measure provoked all the familiar charges of the robbery of Lower Canada for the benefit of Upper Canada by the Act of Union. Aylwin, with characteristic exaggeration, declared that "The position of Poland was dreadful, but the spoliation of Lower Canada was infinitely worse."¹⁹⁰ Even LaFontaine rose to attack the Union Act which, he claimed, "had freed Upper Canada from her state of Bankruptcy," only to be attacked in turn by D.-B. Viger for having supported the Act in 1841.¹⁹¹ When the vote was finally taken, Baldwin and his supporters sided with the government against LaFontaine and his partisans. The Pilot did not neglect the issue and stated that

There are no doubt individual exceptions both in and out of the Legislature, but the general rule with Upper Canadians is to get hold of all the money they can ... Were Lower Canada truly represented in the Councils of the Province such a measure ... would never have received the sanction of the government.¹⁹²

It is evident that, whatever the efforts he may have made in private notwithstanding, Hincks in public was prepared to reap all possible benefit from sectional antagonisms.

190. DLA, vol. 5, pt. 2, p. 1299, May 8, 1846

191. DLA, vol. 5, pt. 2, p. 1294, May 8, 1846

192. Montreal Pilot, May 12, 1846

This debate was also important in that it marked the beginning of T. C. Aylwin's political decline. His participation in the discussion was marked by alcoholic hysteria. His constant laughter and incessant interruptions drove LaFontaine out of the House, and moved even the usually silent Armstrong to propose that the galleries be cleared.¹⁹³ A fist fight between the member for Quebec City and de Bleury was barely averted. Evidently, the usefulness of his raucous tactics was beginning to diminish. At the same time LaFontaine was recovering from a prolonged illness that had kept him quiescent during much of the session. When these factors are placed in conjunction with the growing importance of the Free Trade movement in the party, to which Aylwin was opposed, his increasing isolation can be understood. On July 20 Aylwin and an Upper Canadian M. P. P. were the only two representatives to vote against an Address to the Imperial government calling for the repeal of the Navigation Laws,¹⁹⁴ a stand which Aylwin was never to recant.

Toward the end of March, Francis Hincks informed Baldwin that Aylwin had "gone over body & bones to the reactionistes!"¹⁹⁵ Hincks almost immediately retracted this statement,¹⁹⁶ but nonetheless it is clear that Aylwin's position in the party was decaying. On June 5, 1847, Colonel John Prince of Upper Canada

193. DLA, vol. 5, pt. 2, p. 1297, May 8, 1846

194. Montreal Pilot, July 24, 1847

195. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, March 25, 1847

196. Baldwin Papers, Francis Hincks to Robert Baldwin, March 29, 1847

recorded in his diary that he had

sat for an hour with Aylwin & others at Tetu's talking politics and making some arrangement with Aylwin as leader. Home by 1 & went to bed, having drank (sic) rather too much to do good.¹⁹⁷

To make such plans with Prince was odd enough, even over drinks, but two days later the same scene was repeated, and this time Ogle R. Gowan, Aylwin's great enemy of 1845, was included.¹⁹⁸ Drink explains in part this peculiar behaviour; frustrated ambition probably played a larger part.

Nonetheless, Aylwin was nominated as the Liberal candidate for Quebec in 1848, but the organization of the Comité a month later shows that he was no longer trusted with the direction of political affairs in the District. Increasingly, Joseph Cauchon became LaFontaine's principal source of information in the old city.¹⁹⁹ The very structure of the Comité indicated a shift in the balance of power in the former capital; of its six vice-presidents, Dunbar Ross was the only anglophone, and John Maguire was the only British Canadian on the fifty-member Managing Committee.²⁰⁰ It appears that as the party's strength in commercial Montreal grew, there was less need to woo the anglophones of Quebec City. It is significant that Aylwin's successor in the representation of the city was F.-X. Méthot; for the first time in many years both members for the city were

197. R. Alan Douglas, ed., John Prince, 1796-1870, p. 86

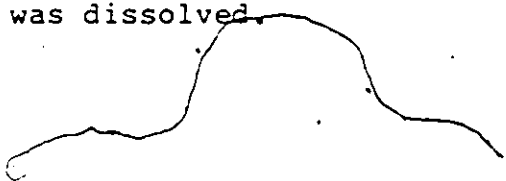
198. R. Alan Douglas, ed., John Prince, 1796-1870, p. 87

199. Cauchon's letters start appearing more and more frequently in LaFontaine's papers as of the end of 1847.

200. Quebec Mercury, August 3, 1847 (list of the members of the Comité)

French Canadians.

Yet LaFontaine was not inclined to break with Aylwin on the eve of an election, and even after the Liberal victory, the Quebec lawyer would spend a brief time in the Executive Council. Such rearrangements could wait until power was definitely restored to the party. On December 6, 1847, the House was dissolved.



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Chapter VII

The 'Great Ministry' : Consolidation and Division

It was in the campaign of 1847-8 that the shift in power from Aylwin to the new organization in the Quebec District became apparent. There, the Comité quickly demonstrated its activity. To eliminate Dominic Daly's stronghold in Megantic was obviously an important objective. Aylwin wrote to LaFontaine that the Provincial Secretary could be defeated "avec de l'argent comme de raison,"¹ but it was Napoléon Aubin, on behalf of the Comité that dealt with the practical side of the election. As two or three men were needed at each poll, to defray their expenses a subscription had been opened in Quebec. Nonetheless

comme cela ne suffira probablement pas le Comité m'a chargé de vous soumettre la chose afin de vous prier de vouloir bien intercèder auprès[s] de vos amis de Montreal.²

At first it appeared that John Maguire, the Repeal activist

1. LaFontaine Papers, T. C. Aylwin to L.-H. LaFontaine, November 13, 1847

2. LaFontaine Papers, Napoléon Aubin to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 15, 1847

connected with the Comité would be the opposition's candidate,³ but finally the man backed by the Comité's money and organization was R. Layfield, an American-born resident of the county who had been the patriote candidate in 1834.⁴ His status as a local candidate did not help. The "battalion of lawyers and notaries, connected with the radicals" that descended upon the county from the city⁵ did not go unnoticed. After Daly had carried his seat by 676 votes to 376, a public meeting was held in Megantic which declared that

the Freeholders of this County have witnessed with indignation the interference with their elective franchise, of a number of individuals residing at Quebec, styling themselves the Committee of Reform and Progress, attempting by the most unjustifiable and disgraceful means, to prevent them electing a member of their own choice.⁶

Daly in fact carried easily some polls, such as Broughton, that Lloyd had won in 1844.⁷ Nor had the Irish Catholic lost all his influence with his compatriots in Quebec City. A victory dinner was organized in the city, where John Doran, formerly an active Liberal, moved one of the resolutions saluting Daly.⁸

Megantic was not the only constituency to resist the Comité. Portneuf was thoroughly disgusted with its sitting member, L. T. Drummond. Cauchon informed LaFontaine that Drummond "n'a aucune chance à Portneuf, vu sa négligence à

3. Montreal Pilot, December 10, 1847

4. Fernand Ouellet, Le Bas-Canada, p. 374. In 1834 Layfield made a point of insisting on the need for resident candidates.

5. Quebec Mercury, December 30, 1847

6. Quebec Mercury, January 4, 1848

7. Quebec Mercury, January 4, 1848 (poll-by-poll results)

8. Quebec Mercury, January 4, 1848

visiter son comté ... un abstention des affaires parlementaires l'ont rendu complètement impopulaire."⁹ This lack of popularity was not of great concern to the Irishman, who was completing his long-planned move to the Eastern Townships, but it doubtless helped to contribute to the defeat of Quebec-based Narcisse-Fortunat Belleau, the Comité's candidate. Antoine Juchereau Duchesnay, of the old seigniorial family, carried the county, although he too was a supporter of the opposition. Belleau's defeat was despite the efforts of canvassers from the city working on his behalf.¹⁰

In the city itself, Aylwin and Chabot had no difficulty in carrying their election by acclamation. The Mercury pointed out the inconsistency between the Comité's declaration in favour of an end to the Navigation Laws and Aylwin's vote on July 30.¹¹ Aylwin's answer, expressed in his Manifesto, was defiant: "I was never ashamed to vote with a majority when I thought it right to do so, nor afraid to vote in a minority even of two."¹² The issue appears to have been important, for two candidates who withdrew from the contest before the nomination made it a point in their Addresses. Neither were ministerialists; G. H. Ryland, of the old bureaucrate family, called for a non-party government, immigration and Free Trade,¹³ and James Dean

9. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, November 13, 1847

10. Quebec Mercury, January 13, 1848

11. Quebec Mercury, November 25, 1847

12. Quebec Mercury, December 11, 1847

13. Quebec Mercury, December 2, 1847

presented himself as a mercantile candidate in favour of Free Trade "generally."¹⁴ It appears that even in Quebec City there were those who saw unlimited commerce as the only solution to the problems posed by the end of the mercantilist system.

The Gaspé District still lay outside the control of both parties. Christie's move from the opposition to the ministerial benches did not interfere with his re-election, although at one point J. R. Hamilton, in a last expression of their old feud, was reported to be a possible opponent for the Quebec lawyer.¹⁵ In Bonaventure, William Cuthbert was elected without difficulty. His victory was an indication of the continuing influence of the ship-building and fishing magnates of the area. Cuthbert had established himself on the Baie des Chaleurs in 1810 and had built up an empire based on naval construction and lumbering. To these activities he added considerable holdings in real estate, the result of his use of the system of advancing credit on land to his employees. Many of his electors were indebted to him,¹⁶ and this in part no doubt was part of the reason for his election. The Pilot listed him as "Doubtful," while the Gazette claimed him as a Conservative.¹⁷ Manifestly, in neither of the two counties to the extreme east of the province had a constituency's representative come to be viewed as

14. Quebec Mercury, December 18, 1847

15. Montreal Gazette, January 19, 1848

16. Jules Bélanger, Marc Desjardins, Yves Frenette, Histoire de la Gaspésie, p. 188

17. Montreal Pilot, January 25, 1848; Montreal Gazette, January 19, 1848

a member of a party rather than as a local spokesman.

This transition from lobbyist to partisan was caught in the middle of its development in a frontier riding at the opposite end of Lower Canada, Ottawa County. A Reform faction had existed there since Thomas McGoey's defeat by C. D. Day in 1841. In October, 1847, a requisition appeared in the Bytown Packet, asking Louis-Joseph Papineau to run. No doubt the ex-Speaker's seigneurial possessions in the area made him a valuable candidate; the declared purpose of the requisition, however, was an assertion of biracial unity within the party:

There can be no doubt but Mr. Papineau could represent any French constituency he wished; but Ottawa is an English constituency - hence we wish that Mr. Papineau would consent to represent it, as by that means another link will be added to the chain which binds the Franco-Liberals of Canada, and whom the common enemies of both are so anxious to divide.¹⁸

Indeed, membership in the Reform Association of Ottawa included a signed oath "Faithfully to promote the Liberal cause throughout the Province."¹⁹ It would appear that the Ottawa was thoroughly integrated into the party's province-wide structure.

Yet the final, successful candidate in the riding was neither Papineau nor the Reform Association's second choice, R. S. M. Bouchette; rather, it was John Egan, an Irishman who was the Ottawa partner of the giant lumbering firm of LeMesurier & Routh, whose Quebec and Montreal heads were both active Constitutionalists. Egan, however, despite this potent source of

¹⁸. Montreal Pilot, October 21, 1847, citing the Bytown Packet

¹⁹. quoted in the Quebec Mercury, March 25, 1848

influence, was not able to secure his election without the support of the county's Reformers. As McGoey reported to LaFontaine, before withdrawing from the contest

Mr. Bouchette ... extorted from his opponent a pledge to vote against the present Ministry, and therefore thought it better to resign rather than to embark into a contest somewhat doubtful.²⁰

Egan, once elected, honoured this pledge, and in fact supported all the major measures of the second LaFontaine-Baldwin government, including the Rebellion Losses Bill.

The other counties surrounding Montreal did not produce such a peaceful reconciliation. In Two Mountains, W. H. Scott ran as an opposition candidate against a Mr. Wainwright. The only French Canadian or Irish Catholic poll that Scott did not take easily was St. Hermas, which had supported Dumouchel in 1844. Here, Wainwright received 85 votes to Scott's 55.²¹ Evidently, the ex-patriote's latest change of party was not enough to overcome local antipathies in this one parish. Correspondingly, Wainwright carried the English-speaking townships overwhelmingly, winning, for example, St. Andrew's by 228 votes to 1, and Grenville by 132 votes to 2. The final tally was 1, 143 votes for Scott and 840 for Wainwright. The entire Scott family was not, however, reconciled to the opposition; James, William's brother, was suggested as a possible opponent to

²⁰. LaFontaine Papers, Thomas McGoey to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 30, 1847

²¹. poll-by-poll results in the Montreal Gazette, January 10, 1848

LaFontaine in Terrebonne,²² and did in fact run against L.-M. Viger in 1848, upon the latter's appointment as Receiver-General.²³

Few difficulties appear to have arisen in the French Canadian ridings represented by Leslie, Armstrong and Nelson. Richelieu elected the old patriote doctor, and Leslie was acclaimed in Verchères. In Berthier, Armstrong faced an opponent, a fellow Liberal. LaFontaine does not appear to have interfered, but he was anxious that the anglophone merchant be returned,²⁴ and Armstrong was in fact elected. Jacob DeWitt was, with some difficulty, prevailed upon by the party to abandon his safe seat in Leinster and return to his old constituency of Beauharnois.²⁵ The first candidate to declare himself there had been Henry Weston, formerly Chief Clerk of the Crown Lands Office of Lower Canada. This ex-civil servant called for "really Responsible Government composed of men like the LaFontaine Ministry."²⁶ Again, while there is no indication that he interfered directly, LaFontaine was anxious for DeWitt's return,²⁷ and Weston withdrew. One other Liberal remained in the race, a Mr. Connolly, and his character as a local candidate is clearly

22. Montreal Gazette, December 8, 1847

23. poll-by-poll results in the Montreal Gazette, April 4, 1848

24. Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, January 16, 1848

25. Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, November 8, 1847

26. Montreal Pilot, December 7, 1847

27. Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, November 8, 1847; January 16, 1848

marked by the fact that of the 199 votes he received, 176 came from the township of Hemmingford.²⁸ DeWitt's only serious opponent was a certain Colonel Campbell Sweeney. Again, violence played an important part in the election, and the absence of some of the poll totals makes a detailed analysis impossible. Even the Pilot, however, conceded that the majority of the centres of British population opposed DeWitt, although it claimed Dundee was an exception.²⁹

With the exception of Megantic, the elections in the Eastern Townships reflected the tensions and divisions of the preceding year. In three of the contests, internal feuds and local interests shaped the results. In Sherbrooke Town, B. C. A. Gagy, as much an opponent of the Ministry as of the opposition, was easily elected. In the county, Samuel Brooks was elected with a majority of 301. His opponent was John Moore, the former member for the county, whom the Pilot identified as the opposition's candidate.³⁰ Aylwin had claimed that Brooks would support the opposition,³¹ but the member for Sherbrooke's actions soon demonstrated that he was indeed an independent member. In Stanstead, John M'Connell was elected by acclamation, although Marcus Child, who, like Moore, had supported the first LaFontaine-Baldwin Ministry, had announced his intention of running and was iden-

28. poll-by-poll results, with exceptions, in the Montreal Gazette, January 26, 1848

29. Montreal Pilot, January 28, 1848

30. Montreal Pilot, December 10, 1847

31. LaFontaine Papers, T. C. Aylwin to L.-H. LaFontaine, November 13, 1847

tified by the Pilot as a supporter of the opposition.³² M'Connell's Address makes it clear that he was primarily a local spokesman. He declared himself against Free Trade, in favour of agricultural protection, and demanded changes in the School and Municipal Acts. He also called for Responsible Government as defined by the 1841 resolution.³³ In none of these contests, evidently, was the struggle between the two groupings in the Assembly a crucial factor.

In three counties, however, partisanship clearly shaped the election. In Missisquoi, William Badgley, the Attorney-General for Canada East, retained his seat, although an attempt was made to bring out a resident candidate to oppose him.³⁴ In Drummond, R. N. Watts faced a Montrealer, F. G. Johnson, the lawyer who had been a Liberal activist since the early 1840s. This did not indicate that Watts was distrusted by the party he had recently joined. The Pilot identified the local resident as the opposition candidate, and denied the Gazette's suggestion that Watts should be considered as "Doubtful."³⁵ Johnson had in fact "ratted" at the last minute to the ministerialists.³⁶ The government was clearly anxious to secure a seat for its new adherent in the Township, for Watts had been offered a seat in

32. Montreal Pilot, December 10, 1847

33. Stanstead Journal, December 23, 1847

34. Baldwin Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine to Robert Baldwin, November 8, 1847

35. Montreal Pilot, January 25, 1848.

36. Montreal Pilot, January 18, 1848

the Legislative Council,³⁷ no doubt to clear the way for Johnson. The member for Drummond refused the offer, and defeated his opponent. One of the last acts of the outgoing Ministry was to reward the lawyer with a Q. C.

Drummond's victory in Shefford is an illustration of how an undeniably partisan candidate needed to adapt his position in order to be accepted as a local representative. His Address included a call for protection for cattle prices against American competition, the encouragement of agriculture and domestic manufactures, and improvements in the Municipal Law to facilitate the taxation of wild lands held by absentee landlords. The Address also concerned itself with larger issues, calling for the end to any sort of discrimination on the basis of nationality, and asserting the indivisibility of King's College's endowment.³⁸ In all of this, there was little to distinguish Drummond from an independent local candidate. Clearly, however, the Montreal lawyer was well known as a committed partisan of the opposition. One of the facts that showed that the contest was part of the larger provincial struggle was the activity of William Badgley and James Moir Ferres on the side of Drummond's opponent. The nomination in Shefford was delayed, and thus Dr. Foster, the sitting member, and his son, Asa B. Foster, were able to withdraw. A Mr. Woods carried on the struggle, but Drummond was duly elected.

37. Montreal Pilot, January 4, 1848 (quoting the Herald in rebuttal of a report that Watts had accepted)

38. Montreal Pilot, December 24, 1847

1848 marked in the District a major shift towards non-resident representation, a fact of some importance for the later political development of the Townships.³⁹ In the election of 1844, five resident and two non-resident candidates had been returned; four year later, only three resident members were elected. This in itself is not a precise measurement of the integration of the Townships into a two-party system. Of the outsiders, Daly and Badgley for the Ministry and Drummond for the opposition, were returned as partisans, but Gugsy's election was a sign of revulsion against both parties. The more important trend was indicated by Watts' return. The inclusion of the District in a province-wide political culture was to be achieved, not by the imposition of candidates from metropolitan centres, but by the co-option of members of the local elites into larger political structures.

In Montreal, the weakness of the Ministry produced results that were clearly to the benefit of the Liberals. The clearest sign of this was the observation by the usually pro-ministerial Gazette that the two candidates it was supporting, J. G. Mackenzie and William Lunn, both well-established Tory merchants, were running on behalf of the Conservative party rather than as ministerialists, and thus were free to disavow any policy or politician of the government.⁴⁰ This permitted a certain superficial restoration of unity among the Conservatives. The

39. Ronald Patrick Frye, "Resident Representation," an unpublished Memoire, University of Ottawa, 1977. (corrected)

40. Montreal Gazette, January 7, 1848

Herald, which had been savageing the government for its betrayal of Lower Canada, the British connexion and the mercantile interest, as well as for incompetence,⁴¹ was welcomed rather sarcastically back into the fold by the Gazette.⁴²

The two Liberal candidates for the city were LaFontaine, who was also running in Terrebonne, and Benjamin Holmes. The latter, despite his resignation from the Bank of Montreal, still commanded considerable respect in commercial circles. He had already become, in partnership with John Young, an active trader, and the Gazette admitted that "whatever have been his political faults," he might still have been worthy of esteem had he not so clearly identified himself with LaFontaine.⁴³

Not all former Tories felt that LaFontaine's candidacy was an insuperable obstacle. In the middle of December, 1847, the Liberals met to officially choose their candidates. The Pilot specifically mentioned three Conservatives who were active at the meeting. These were Hugh Taylor, a lawyer, William Snaith, a merchant, and, most important, John Young, whose speech at the meeting was primarily a declaration in favour of Free Trade and an attack on the Navigation Laws.⁴⁴ Young was in fact appointed to the presidency of the committee organized to secure the return of Holmes and LaFontaine,⁴⁵ and was described by

41. Montreal Gazette, December 23, 1847, citing the Herald

42. Montreal Gazette, January 7, 1848

43. Montreal Gazette, January 5, 1848

44. Montreal Pilot, December 14, 1847

45. LaFontaine Papers, L.-H. LaFontaine, to John Young, January 3, 1848

the Herald as the "facile princeps" supporter of the two opposition candidates.⁴⁶ The importance the Liberal party attached to these converts was made clear at the official nomination, where Hugh Taylor nominated Holmes, and Young, in another speech in favour of Free Trade, nominated LaFontaine, then absent campaigning in Terrebonne. Hincks took advantage of this occasion to retract publicly his criticisms of Young's actions as Returning Officer in 1844. Among those who spoke was William Bristow, formerly of Quebec City, who was now starting his career as an activist in the Montreal Irish community.⁴⁷

The Gazette did its best to revive the cry that the Liberals were unprogressive, and signaled out Jacob DeWitt as a virtual êteignoir.⁴⁸ This the Pilot denied,⁴⁹ and education was identified as an important cause in Holmes' Address.⁵⁰ Nor could it have been forgotten that L. T. Drummond had taken an active part in the prosecution of A.-B. Papineau for his failure to fulfill the requirements of the School Law, and that the defendant was more closely related to leading ministerialists than to members of the opposition. Any attempt to reassert the identification of the British party with progressiveness in economic policy was further hampered by the Gazette's attempt to revive E.-J. Papineau's defence of the seigneurial regime as well adapted

46. Montreal Herald, March 1, 1848

47. Montreal Pilot, January 7, 1848

48. Montreal Gazette, January 3, 1848

49. Montreal Pilot, January 4, 1848

50. Montreal Pilot, December 14, 1847

to a developing country.⁵¹ This may have been part of a last-minute attempt to win over French Canadian support, and perhaps also reflected the attitude of the two ex-patriotes connected with the government, Turcotte and Bruneau. A sign of lack of general support among British Conservatives for this point of view was the fact that the Gazette abandoned it as soon as Abraham was replaced by James Moir Ferres as the paper's editor at the end of 1848.⁵²

The Conservatives were thus compelled to fall back on the old rallying cries of loyalty, nationality and religion. The Gazette, early in the new year, announced that

The mask is thrown off. The real object is now transparent - the extinction of everything British, the abandonment of the control and protection of the parent state.⁵³

The old issue of "French domination" was invoked.⁵⁴ To counter-balance the defection to the Liberal side of the city's Baptists, one of William Lunn's canvassers started denouncing Holmes as an "Infidel," presumably in reference to his Unitarianism, and LaFontaine as either a "Rebel" or a "Papist."⁵⁵ On the Liberal side, the Pilot sneered at the "hypocritical" piety of the Tory Methodists who were prepared to sanction the use of violence

51. Montreal Gazette, November 1, 1847 (e. g.)

52. Montreal Gazette, January 26, 1849

53. Montreal Gazette, January 5, 1848

54. cited in the Montreal Pilot, January 7, 1848

55. Montreal Pilot, January 11, 14, 1848; Montreal Gazette, January 14, 1848. Dr. Campbell, in a letter to the Pilot, admitted to using the term infidel to describe Holmes while canvassing for Lunn, but insisted that he had described LaFontaine as a rebel, not as a papist.

to secure a Conservative victory.⁵⁶

As usual, both sides accused each other of resorting to intimidation. The Pilot accused the Conservatives of bringing in the Rawdon Orangemen;⁵⁷ the Gazette claimed that Hincks had hired bullies at 5s. per diem. While there was some rioting, it does not appear to have affected significantly the overall result. Although even the limited use of violence, and the change in the number of wards in the city, make impossible any direct comparison of the Liberals' support in 1848 throughout the whole city with the results of 1844, a consideration of the figures for the three central wards, those least affected by either violence or subdivision, indicates a marked swing to the Liberals. The East Ward, which Drummond and Beaubien had carried with 56% of the vote, gave 84% of its total to LaFontaine and Holmes. The Liberal vote in the West Ward only rose from 30% to 39%, but in the Centre Ward, which the Tories had taken in 1844 with 67% of the votes, the Liberals received in 1848 51% of the total. It is interesting to note that there were 121 fewer votes cast in the three wards in 1848 than in 1844, but there are other possible explanations for this decrease than the abstention of disaffected Tories.

Another important trend becomes apparent when the ward-by-ward totals for each candidate are considered :

56. Montreal Pilot, January 11, 1848

57. Montreal Pilot, January 14, 1848

Ward	LaFontaine	Holmes	McKenzie	Lunn
East	127	127	24	23
West	58	64	97	92
Centre	82	86	79	80
St. Anne's	255	261	39	35
St. Antoine	273	277	66	67
St. Louis	536	536	58	58
St. Lawrence	253	234	154	153
St. James	322	312	57	52
St. Mary	71	72	105	104

Totals	1977	1969	679	664 ⁵⁸

Only small margins separated LaFontaine from Holmes, and McKenzie and Lunn. Evidently, most voters cast both their votes for both members of a given slate, indicating a fair degree of partisan polarization. A moderate amount of plumping is sufficient to explain these differences. It is also clear that, while LaFontaine topped the poll, he received more votes than Holmes in only two wards, St. Lawrence and St. James. In the East and St. Louis Wards, the two Liberals received the same number of votes. In the remaining wards, the Unitarian merchant out-pollled the French Canadian lawyer. The ethnic composition of the wards does not seem to have been a factor. St. Lawrence, which gave LaFontaine his majority over Holmes was, in 1850, the least French Canadian of the suburbs; in that year 28.3% of its residents were Canadians of French origin.⁵⁹ St. Mary, on the other hand, which gave one more vote to Holmes than to LaFontaine, was 48.2% French Canadian two years after the

58. Montreal Pilot, January 14, 1848

59. ward-by-ward 1850 census figures given in Montreal Pilot, April 18, 1850

election. It was also the most heavily Conservative ward in the suburbs, and it appears that there were Conservatives who could bring themselves to support Holmes, but not LaFontaine. Finally, the most heavily French Canadian ward in the city, St. Louis, gave both candidates the same number of votes. Manifestly, French Canadians supported both Liberal candidates equally; they also clearly gave the Liberals their majority. Nonetheless, Holmes brought to the ticket the connections with prominent anglophone merchants, and thus prevented any too manifest polarization along racial lines.

In the election of 1848, the number of English-speaking members returned for Lower Canada again declined, to 17 from the 19 elected in 1844. Despite this small shift, a major change had taken place. Of the 17, 10, including Egan, can be said to have owed their seats to the support of the Liberal party. In contrast, only two members owed their return to their connection with the government, these being Daly and Badgley; Cuthbert, Christie, Brooks, M'Connell and Gagy were to varying degrees independents, elected on their own merits. When this is contrasted with the results of, for example, the Sydenham election of 1841, it is clear that as of 1848 the Liberal party had become the main factor in the continuing over-representation of anglophones in the Legislature. This was an indication of both the increased strength of the party, and the importance of English-speaking politicians in it. In this sense, the election of 1848 truly marks the triumph of party-based Responsible

Government. Party loyalty, rather than national solidarity, personal standing or gubernatorial favour, was now unquestionably the key to an ambitious man's political success.

*

In Upper as well as in Lower Canada, the Reform party carried a majority of the seats. As soon as the final results of the election were known in Montreal, both the Herald and the Gazette conceded that it would be futile to "deny or palliate" the ministerial defeat.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the Sherwood Ministry did not resign until March 10, and the second LaFontaine-Baldwin government did not take its final form until three months later. Thus, from January to June, discussions both public and private took place about the composition of the new Ministry. This delay reflected the delicacy required to translate into terms of official power the balances that had evolved within the party during the five years spent in opposition. If from 1842 to 1843 LaFontaine and Baldwin had headed a government supported by a loose coalition of independent groups, the 'Great Ministry' was to be the image of the party that sustained it: disciplined and centralized, with the bulk of the power concentrated in the hands

⁶⁰. Montreal Herald, January 15, 1848, quoting in agreement the Montreal Gazette.

of the Montreal leadership. This tightening of control was manifested in the Executive, in the government, and within the parliamentary party.

Towards the end of January, Robert Baldwin sent to LaFontaine a list of nine men who might constitute the "material" for the Lower Canadian section of the cabinet. Of the politicians from Quebec City included on the list, only T. C. Aylwin was an anglophone. The two senior French Canadians from the old capital, A.-N. Morin and Jean Chabot, were both on good terms with the Catholic Church, a sign of the Liberals' increasing rapprochement with the clergy. Despite their relative youth, P.-J.-O. Chauveau and Joseph Cauchon were included, a tribute to Jeune Canada's organizational activity in the District. In contrast, however, all the Montrealers proposed, with the exception of LaFontaine himself, were anglophones, and represented a cross-section of the English-speaking communities that supported the party: James Leslie, the anglo-patriote merchant, Benjamin Holmes, the Unitarian ex-Sydenhamite, and L. T. Drummond, the Irish Catholic lawyer who had taken on responsibility for the Eastern Townships.⁶¹

When this list is compared with the membership of the Executive Council that took office on March 11, it is clear that LaFontaine had chosen those men whose personal loyalty to himself and the party was well established. Of the six Lower Canadian Councillors, two, Aylwin and Leslie, were British Canadians.

⁶¹. LaFontaine Papers, Baldwin to LaFontaine, January 24, 1848

Holmes had expected to take office as a payment for his support,⁶² and it appears that Drummond had also anticipated an appointment to the Executive.⁶³ Neither, however, was named to the Council. Leslie's position, first as President of the Council and then as Provincial Secretary, did not mark a sudden increase in his importance. His close connection with LaFontaine predated the Union, and while he had never before occupied a government office, his experience in business and politics was undeniable. As the Gazette commented, Leslie's appointment as Provincial Secretary was

a concession to the French Canadians ... For, though Mr. Leslie has a British name, his whole feelings (sic) and the whole tenor of his conduct are, and always have been, identified with the LaFontaine party.⁶⁴

That his seat on the Council was the reward for his fidelity was made clear when on May 23, 1848 he was elevated to the Legislative Council and thus removed from electoral politics. This step vacated Verchères for one of LaFontaine most important young allies, George-Etienne Cartier.

The position of T. C. Aylwin, appointed to the office of Solicitor-General for Canada East with a seat on the Executive Council, was considerably more delicate. Aside from his earlier activity in the Constitutional Society and his connection with John Neilson, his stance as a Protectionist in a cabinet ostensibly dedicated to Free Trade enabled Conservative papers to

62. Dictionary of Canadian Biography, v. IX, p.397

63. Montreal Gazette, February 21, 1848

64. Montreal Gazette, September 18, 1848

comment on divisions within Liberal ranks.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, his accumulated prestige made him an inevitable candidate for a position on the Council. As early as the middle of January, two papers from the lawyer's native city, Le Canadien and the Journal de Québec reported that Aylwin was to be made Attorney-General for Canada East, with LaFontaine occupying the position of Provincial Secretary.⁶⁶ Almost immediately, however, rumours began to circulate that the Quebecker would not be included in the cabinet, or, at the very least, would not receive the Attorney-Generalship.⁶⁷ The Pilot repeatedly denied these rumours.⁶⁸ That this was disingenuous on the part of a party organ whose ultimate control still lay in the hands of Francis Hincks⁶⁹ is made clear by the private attempts of the Inspector-General to keep Aylwin out of the Executive Council. The new government, anxious to fulfill its commitment to economy, wished to limit the number of Councillors. If Aylwin were to be re-appointed to his old position, William Blake, Baldwin's nominee for Solicitor-General for Canada West, would also expect a seat in the Cabinet. Despite strong pressures from both Baldwin and

65. Montreal Herald, March 15, 1848

66. quoted in the Quebec Mercury, January 15, 1848

67. Montreal Gazette, February 18, 1848; Quebec Mercury, March 9, 1848

68. Montreal Pilot, February 22, 1848 (e.g.)

69. The Pilot denied that Hincks was still its editor (May 6, 1848), but Hincks' nephew, William Hincks, was the paper's editor, and although the paper was now the property of Higman and Donoghue, Hincks had reserved the right to name its editor. See infra, account of the Gagy-Hincks libel trial

Hincks,⁷⁰ Aylwin insisted on his right to a seat on the Council and was finally included. Thus, the United Province was endowed with twelve Councillors, in the place of the seven that had sufficed under Metcalfe. The Quebec Mercury took an understandable pleasure in pointing out that the French Canadians had proportionately fewer representatives on the Executive under LaFontaine than under Viger.⁷¹

This victory for the spokesman of the anglophones of Quebec City proved ephemeral. Aylwin's loss of influence became evident when a new Liberal organ in the English language, the Spectator, was established in the old capital. Aylwin was not involved; rather, it was Joseph Cauchon and John Maguire, the Irish Repeal activist, who raised the necessary funds. Although subscribers were expected "parmi les Canadiens et parmi les Irlandais et parmi les anglais," the tone of the journal was to be primarily directed towards the Irish supporters of the government. The paper's editor was a Mr. McCoy, whose "éloquence irlandaise" was, according to Cauchon, "sans égale."⁷²

In light of these combined pressures, Aylwin's resignation on April 25, 1848, from the Executive and his subsequent appointment to the bench could not have been surprising. Even in his departure from politics, Aylwin posed problems for his former colleagues. It was widely rumoured that Elzéar Bédard had

⁷⁰. LaFontaine Papers, Baldwin to LaFontaine, April 8, 1848; Hincks to LaFontaine, April 19, 1848

⁷¹. Quebec Mercury, April 20, 1848

⁷². LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L. - H. LaFontaine, April 8, 1848

accepted 2001. per annum for ten years to create a vacancy in the Court of Queen's Bench for the District of Quebec.⁷³ More seriously, Aylwin's elevation indirectly provoked a judicial crisis, for Bédard, in moving to the Montreal District, was assigned precedence over Charles Day and James Smith. This resulted in a judges' strike that was only finally resolved by an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, whose ruling, supporting the government, reached the colony shortly before Bédard's death.⁷⁴ The "Precedence Question" virtually dominated the opposition press for a time,⁷⁵ and thus in a final flurry of personal, professional and political uproar, the member for Quebec ended his career.

Even within the party, Aylwin's appointment to the bench created tensions. There were those like R.-E. Caron and Cauchon who felt that a French Canadian should have been appointed.⁷⁶ More importantly, the British Canadian's resignation created a vacancy in the representation of Quebec City, and the ensuing by-election laid bare some of the divisions that still existed among Quebec Liberals. Aylwin's obvious heir was Dunbar Ross, another Protestant ex-Constitutionalist, who was rumoured to be a candidate for the succession not only to Aylwin's seat but also to his position as Solicitor-General.⁷⁷ Ross, in fact,

73. Montreal Herald, Montreal Gazette, June, July, 1848 passim.

74. Montreal Herald, August 18, 1849

75. For example, on July 15, 1848, the Montreal Gazette printed five columns in the issue.

76. LaFontaine Papers, R.-E. Caron to L.-H. LaFontaine, May 1, 1848; Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, April 24 1848(?)

77. Quebec Mercury, April 20, 1848

had Aylwin's assistance in arranging a requisition that he run.⁷⁸

The Scottish lawyer's Address to the Electors followed roughly the lines of the declaration of the Committee for Reform and Progress, which Ross had helped to organize. He called for a more equitable representation for Lower Canada in the Assembly, although he was rather ambiguous on the question of Free Trade. The most prominent part of the Address concerned itself specifically with questions of importance to the city: a concerted effort to restore Québec's position as the major outlet for Canadian trade and compensation for the city's failure to receive its fair share of government funds.⁷⁹ Ross was clearly presenting himself as as much a Quebecker as a Liberal. Cauchon, however, whose control over the district's party machinery was based on an alliance of French Canadian and Irish Catholics, saw no place for an ex-Constitutionalist member of the city's professional and commercial elite. He declared himself against Ross' candidacy "par ce qu'il ne nous est arrivé que d'hier," while Maguire, in contrast, had always been a Liberal partisan. As late as April 24 Cauchon felt that the choice lay between the two, and informed LaFontaine that the Irish of the city were anxious to see Maguire elected.⁸⁰

In the end, however, the decision was not to be between the Catholic and Protestant British Canadian. Events in Canada

78. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, April 24, 1848

79. Québec Mercury, May 2, 1848 (Ross' Address)

80. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, April 24, 1848

and abroad transformed the contest from one between factions within the Liberal party into a tiny fragment of a great international struggle. Louis-Joseph Papineau had during his long exile in Paris come into contact with such radical French thinkers as Lamartine, and had returned to Canada with his republicanism if anything intensified. In December, 1847, he issued his first Manifesto, which recapitulated all the old grievances against the Act of Union, and declared for an American form of republicanism.⁸¹ In March, 1848, he made public his break with LaFontaine in a speech in the Assembly that bitterly attacked the new government. A new campaign for the repeal of the Union had been launched with the former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada as its self-proclaimed head.

This challenge to LaFontaine's leadership could not be ignored. In the effort to discredit Papineau's claim to the leadership of the French Canadians, Wolfred Nelson played a central role. In a series of public speeches Nelson castigated his former leader for cowardice and indecision during the rebellion of 1837, and the attacks of the British Protestant patriote provoked a vigorous response from L.-A. Dessaulles, Papineau's nephew and a moving spirit among a group of young, radical French Canadians.⁸²

81. J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, p. 291. The "ReEmergence of Papineau" is discussed in pp. 288-300

82. Wolfred Nelson, Wolfred Nelson et Son Temps, 1947, Editions du Flambeau, 1947, pp.132-142; J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, pp.320-325

Indeed, the weight of Papineau's personal appeal was not the only, and perhaps not even the major, cause for concern among the Liberal Party's hierarchy. This new generation of French Canadians for whom the politics of the 1820s and 1830s were barely a memory was closely in tune with contemporary events in Europe. 1848 was a year of revolutions; only England and Russia escaped untransformed. Social and economic differences existed among France, Italy, Ireland, Germany, Poland and Austria, but each experienced an insurrection. The "révolution des clercs" united nationalism, radicalism and young intellectuals throughout the continent.⁸³ In cultural terms Lower Canada was part of Europe, and the young middle-class intellectuals and professionals of French Canada were touched by this international phenomenon. In Montreal, their focus was the Institut Canadien and L'Avenir, and in April of 1848 the newspaper began a series entitled "L'Union Et La Nationalité" which attacked the Union Act in terms of the kind of strident, ethnocentric nationalism that was convulsing Europe.⁸⁴

This line of argument was even more threatening to British Lower Canadian Liberals than either Neilson's anti-Union agitation or the principle of Double Majority, and accordingly the Pilot attacked L'Avenir more strongly than it had Papineau's First Manifesto. On May 2, the paper expressed its indignation

83. Sir Lewis Namier, 1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals, p. 4.

84. For a discussion of L'Avenir and its ideas during this period, see J.-P. Bernard, Les Rouges, pp. 33-102.

at

the course pursued at this time by that section of the Liberal party of which L'Avenir is the organ, in endeavouring to stir up an agitation for a repeal of the union between the two provinces - to raise the war-cry of 'French Canadian nationality' - to keep alive and perpetuate a feeling of ill-will and hostility between the two races that inhabit the colony - and to scatter broadcast through the land the seeds of disunion and dissension.⁸⁵

The Pilot did not go so far as to defend the Union as it stood, but insisted that changes would be made in the objectionable features of the Act, and that the Ministry was pledged to at least readjust the representation of Lower Canada.⁸⁶

Quebec City, the base for Neilson's anti-Union activity, the home of 'La Réaction' and still offended at Aylwin's nomination to the bench, was an obvious testing ground for the appeal of a new movement of dissent within the Liberal party. While there was as yet no equivalent in the former capital of L'Avenir, there nonetheless existed in the city a circle of French Canadians, some young, some not, that acquired the nickname of Jeune Canada,⁸⁷ the same sobriquet that had been given to Cauchon's group in 1846. The by-election of 1848 was accordingly the first open test of strength between LaFontaine's supporters and those of Louis-Joseph Papineau. The superiority of Quebec and its inhabitants over Montreal and its citizens formed a part of Papineau's four-hour long speech at a meeting

85. Montreal Pilot May 2, 1848

86. Montreal Pilot, May 27, 1848

87. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 2, 1849 and in the Montreal Herald, January 19, 1850; also, as "Young Canada," in the Quebec Mercury, January 12, 1850

held on May 11 in Quebec's St. Paul Market.⁸⁸ Formally, party unity was maintained; Jean Chabot occupied the chair, and P.-J.-O. Chauveau took an active part in the proceedings. The convention of biracial sponsors for each motion was preserved. While the Union was attacked, the meeting resolved to concentrate on the issue of Lower Canada's representation in the Assembly, an issue upon which the Liberals were already pledged to act. The Committee of Reform and Progress was called upon to contact "the different branches of our Legislature, to commence the work of Reform so universally desired." The most important resolution, however, saluted "the old champion of popular liberties, the Honourable Louis Joseph Papineau."⁸⁹ From the distance of Montreal, the Pilot made it clear that the meeting was in fact a salute to Papineau's opposition to the government.⁹⁰

The meeting bore fruit in the candidacies of Joseph L gar  fils and Edouard Glackemeyer. The former's Address included praise for the Committee for Reform and Progress, but more for Papineau.⁹¹ Glackemeyer, who could have had little hope of support from the Committee's members, commenced a series of lectures in French and English on the repeal of the Union.⁹² By the third week in May, there were four candidates, Ross, L gar , Glackemeyer and F.-X. M thot, a distinguished French

88. Lord Elgin to Lord Grey, May 18, 1848, in A. G. Doughty, ed., The Elgin-Grey Papers, vol. 1, p. 166

89. Quebec Mercury, May 13, 1848

90. Montreal Pilot, May 16, 1848

91. Quebec Mercury, May 15, 1848 (L gar 's Address)

92. Quebec Mercury, May 19, 1848

Canadian businessman. Maguire's name was still being put forward,⁹³ but Cauchon had decided that Méthot was the candidate with the best chance of defeating Lègaré. The by-election had become an expression of the contest for the leadership of the French Canadians, and the direct participation of an outsider, even a Catholic one, was unwelcome. The campaign became so heated that the Montreal Gazette, after printing some of Ross' and Lègaré's speeches, paid its old enemy a back-handed compliment, remarking that "We little thought ever having to regret Mr. Aylwin, but after this the late member for Quebec seems moderate, just, wise and dignified."⁹⁴ The Mercury, more closely involved in the election's outcome, endorsed Ross despite his "ultra" principles because of his commitment to the city's welfare and in order to preserve the tradition of dividing the city's two seats between its language groups.⁹⁵

The official nomination reduced the number of candidates. Glackemeyer failed to put in an appearance. Ross in a bilingual speech alluded to his participation in the organization of the Committee of Reform and Progress and defended himself from charges of unreliability by insisting that his desertion from the Constitutionals had been motivated by principle. Deploring the possibility of division in the party, the lawyer withdrew. His loyalty was rewarded later in the summer when he was appointed to transact the government's business before the Court

93. Quebec Mercury, May 22, 1848

94. Montreal Gazette, May 18, 1848

95. Quebec Mercury, May 22, 1848

of Queen's Bench in Québec. Thus, only Méthot and Lègaré remained. The support of Cauchon and Maguire for the former was made clear when McCoy, their nominee as editor of the Spectator, spoke in English on behalf of the unilingual businessman, although the Irishman's remarks were not well received by the crowd.⁹⁶ To ensure the adhesion of the Irish community, Maguire was named by the government as the returning officer for the heavily-Irish Champlain Ward.⁹⁷ Faced with a choice between the ministerial Méthot and a supporter of Papineau, even the Mercury endorsed the government's candidate.⁹⁸ Méthot carried the election, comfortably if not overwhelmingly, by a vote of 1,669 to 1,196.⁹⁹

Méthot, by his lack of legal training, was clearly disqualified from replacing Aylwin as Solicitor-General. The man chosen for that office, although without a seat on the Executive Council, was L. T. Drummond, a man, unlike Aylwin, completely bound to LaFontaine. The Irish lawyer's appointment created considerable dissatisfaction in Quebec because it further strengthened the dominance of Montreal.¹⁰⁰ It is possible that Drummond's assumption of office, made public on June 10,¹⁰¹ was

96. Quebec Mercury, May 30, 1848 (account of the official nomination)

97. Quebec Mercury, May 31, 1848

98. Quebec Mercury, June 5, 1848

99. Quebec Mercury, June 8, 1848

100. LaFontaine Papers, R.-E. Caron to L. -H. LaFontaine, May 1, 1848. Caron evidently knew about Drummond's appointment before it was made official, and in the letter suggests delay.

101. Montreal Herald For the Country, June 14, 1848, publishing 'the Official Gazette for June 10, 1848

timed in order to avoid any repercussions on the by-election in Quebec, which ended on June 6.

The increase in Montreal's influence was not merely quantitative; Drummond rapidly became one of LaFontaine's most frequent correspondents. Even before his accession to office, he had acted as an advisor on patronage in the Eastern Townships and as a conduit for information about the attitudes of the Irish in Canada. This influence inevitably grew when he became Solicitor-General. A sign of this was his creation in 1849 of a secret code, known only to LaFontaine and himself, for communication by telegraph.¹⁰² Indeed the authority with which Drummond presented his own views as those of the government quickly alienated Joseph Cauchon. When Drummond, in the name of his colleagues, criticized the French Canadian for his tactics in dealing with Papineau, Cauchon protested very strongly.¹⁰³ Both men were young, and intensely ambitious, and this contretemps helped to render permanent a personal and political rivalry that would shape the future development of the party. Nor was Drummond more delicate in his dealings with those actually in office. When Jean Chabot was named Commissioner for Crown Lands, the Solicitor-General's impatience with delays in Chabot's office led to a serious rift for which the Irishman refused to accept

¹⁰². LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 15, 1849

¹⁰³. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, April 13, 1849

any responsibility.¹⁰⁴ Significantly, it was the French Canadian who resigned after only three and a half months in office, although Chabot's drinking problem was probably the principal cause of his resignation from office.¹⁰⁵

If well-established loyalty shaped LaFontaine's selection of his close associates, it also affected to a lesser degree the lower levels of government. This was of course to be expected, for explicit in the Liberals' definition of Responsible Government was the role of patronage as the cement of party. When the opposition papers invoked the cry of spoilation,¹⁰⁶ the Pilot repeatedly cited the previous administration's use of patronage to justify dismissals on political grounds.¹⁰⁷ Two such dismissals that attracted particular attention were those of Patrick M'Keon, who had assaulted Francis Hincks in 1845, and James Moir Ferres, who had been active against Drummond in the Shefford election. Ferres was thus free to take control of the Montreal Gazette and became one of the most articulate opponents of the 'Great Ministry.' The Pilot defended the government vigorously and repeatedly in these two cases on constitutional grounds,¹⁰⁸ but the most characteristic of the Liberal paper's comments came in response to the Symes case. When the government

104. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, January 20, 1850

105. Quebec Mercury, April 9, 1850

106. Montreal Herald For the Country, February 23, 1848; Quebec Mercury, April 18, 1848

107. Montreal Pilot, May 11, 1848 (e.g.)

108. Montreal Pilot, May 6, May 8, May 30, 1848. Ferres' successor in office was Matthew Ryan, Hincks' assistant editor.

failed to re-appoint Robert Symes, a prominent Tory, as Deputy Immigration Officer, he was cited as an illustration of the spirit of proscription being put into effect by the Administration. The Pilot denied that any such spirit existed, but, inconsistently, concluded

But let the harpies cry out if they will; we fear them not, and we shall not complain if not the smallest office is bestowed upon a Tory as long as the present Administration remains in power. To the victors belong the spoils.¹⁰⁹

The necessary pre-condition for this tightening of control over the machinery of government was a reliable majority in the Legislative Assembly. The hopelessness of the Sherwood Ministry was made clear at the very beginning of the session of 1848 in the vote on the selection of the Speaker. The extent to which the Lower Canadian Conservatives had ceased to have any faith in the government was indicated when, on February 25, Samuel Brooks, Robert Christie, John M'Connell and B. C. A. Gagy gave their support to A.-N. Morin over the ministerial candidate, Sir Allan MacNab.¹¹⁰ This vote in itself did not precipitate the fall of the Ministry, but the fact that of the Lower Canadian members only Dominic Daly and William Badgley voted for the Upper Canadian indicated how little reliable support the government had in Canada East. When the final test of strength came, the vote on Baldwin's and LaFontaine's amendment to the Address in Reply, some of the British Lower

109. Montreal Pilot, May 8, 1848

110. DLA, vol. 7, p. 7, February 25, 1848

Canadians returned to their Conservative allies. Robert Christie, whose opposition to MacNab was consistent with his earlier objections to the idea of a unilingual Speaker, confirmed his dislike of the corrupting element in the Liberals' political philosophy by denouncing "that Golden Calf, Responsible Government" as "the spoil (sic) system of the United States."¹¹¹ John M'Connell also felt the Sherwood Ministry was still worth maintaining in power.¹¹² Samuel Brooks, contradicting Aylwin's prediction, also voted against the opposition's amendment. Despite these defections, however, the majority of the representative of Lower Canada's minority allied itself with the opposition in the final vote on the Address. This included W. H. Scott, R. N. Watts, John Egan and, remarkably, B. C. A. Gagy. The only new adherent the Ministry gained was William Cuthbert of Bonaventure, who took his seat just in time to vote. The final division was carried by the opposition by 53 to 22. Eleven of the seventeen British Lower Canadians voted in the majority.¹¹³

The session of 1848 produced little in the way of controversial legislation that could test the strength of LaFontaine's control over his anglophone allies. As soon as the new Ministry was formed and a vote of supply passed, the House was prorogued. When, on January 18, the session of the following year opened, a number of changes among the anglophone representatives from

111. DLA, vol. 7, p. 178, March 3, 1848

112. DLA, vol. 7, p. 221, March 3, 1848

113. DLA, vol. 7, pp. 248-9, March 6, 1848

Canada East had taken place. Among the Liberals, Leslie had been elevated to the political security of the Upper House, and Aylwin was on the bench. Among the Conservatives, Daly had commenced that withdrawal from Canadian politics that would lead ultimately to a career in the British colonial service and a knighthood. Thus the effective strength of the English-speaking contingent was reduced from 17 to 14 when the most famous test of Responsible Government took place, the passage of LaFontaine's Rebellion Losses resolutions.

These resolutions were not only a test of the relations between the Governor-General and the Executive Council; they also constituted the first real test of unity within the Liberal party since the election. If Baldwin could maintain the adherence of his Upper Canadians to the new government, and LaFontaine secure his connection with at least the majority of the English Canadian members from his own section, the image of the party as a non-racial organization based upon political principle could be sustained, and charges of 'French domination' answered, at least in part. A bill proposing to reimburse Lower Canadians for their losses in 1837-8 by drawing on the joint revenues of the colony could alienate members from Canada West. That the bulk of the monies thus expended would go to French Canadians, many of whom were of dubious loyalty, could not appeal to even those moderate British Canadians who had expressed support for Responsible Government. It can be understood, then, that behind the elaborate debates in newspapers, pamphlets and in

the Assembly over the precise terms and intent of the legislation, lay the intensely emotional question of the distribution of power in the new political system.

In these terms, the passage on March 2 of the resolutions second reading was a moderate triumph for the Liberal party. The reading was carried by a single vote among the Upper Canadians, but by a strong majority among the Lower Canadian members. Five anglophones from Canada East and eighteen members from Canada West voted in the minority; twenty-nine Lower Canadians and nineteen Upper Canadians supported the government. The extent to which LaFontaine kept the support of British Canadians from his own section is striking. Gagy, as might have been expected, opposed the government he had helped to bring to power, but the other former Conservatives, Holmes, Egan and Watts, remained faithful to the Liberals. In total, eight English-speaking Lower Canadians voted for the bill.¹¹⁴ Of equal importance was the fact that the ministerialist anglophones could claim to represent a fair proportion of the British of Lower Canada. Only Nelson and Armstrong represented constituencies that were overwhelmingly French Canadian. Egan and Drummond both represented ridings that were predominantly anglophone, and Scott, Holmes and DeWitt also represented communities that contained large English-speaking minorities or slight majorities. Accordingly, the Pilot could claim that race and language had played no part in the issue.¹¹⁵

114. DLA, vol. 8, pt. 2, p. 1103, March 2, 1849

115. Montreal Pilot, May 31, 1849

These assertions did not of course go unchallenged. The Gazette informed Lord Elgin that "The Anglo-Saxon people do not speak of 'French members', they speak of 'French Domination,'" and the Herald, acknowledging the importance of party discipline, declared

In the House, the question was a mere party one - the British supporters of the Ministry succumbing under the dictation of the French; mainly, if not entirely, with a view to maintaining themselves in office, 'by the grace' of the French Canadian faction.¹¹⁶

Such arguments were not in themselves new, but rather simply re-echoed the charges of racial betrayal levelled at LaFontaine's British Canadian allies since the beginning of the Union. 1849, however, was not only a year of political consolidation; a number of developments had taken place since the election that profoundly affected all English-speaking Lower Canadians, Liberal and Conservative alike, in such a way as to create new lines of alliance. In short, while LaFontaine was centralizing and consolidating his strength in the Executive and the Assembly, important elements among the British Canadian Liberals found themselves alienated from the government. The very rigour with which the French Canadian leader had imposed his view on the party led to a situation in which LaFontaine would find some of his oldest English-speaking allies in opposition to his Ministry. This split was to become manifest with the emergence of the Annexationist movement.

¹¹⁶. Montreal Herald, May 9, 1849

In the middle of 1848, the Pilot declared that the Free Trade Association of Montreal was now vindicated, and that with Henry Labouchere's motion in the British House of Commons for the total repeal of the Navigation Acts, everyone was becoming a Free Trader.¹¹⁷ One illustration of this was the stand taken by David Kinnear in the Montreal Herald. Long a defender of the old preferential system, the paper came out in favour of Free Trade in June.¹¹⁸ On June 13, a public meeting took place in Montreal to urge the Imperial government on against the Navigation Laws. Activists at this meeting came from all political camps, and manifested the unanimity of commercial Montreal. These included Liberals like A.-N. Morin, Drummond, Jacob DeWitt, William Workman and L. H. Holton, Tories like Peter McGill, James Ferrier, George Moffatt and B. C. A. Gagy, and a member of the nascent rouge faction, A.-A. Dorion.¹¹⁹ The Board of Trade expressed similar sentiments,¹²⁰ and another large public meeting held on November 27 with the same politically varied backing praised Labouchere and Lord John Russell. Their proposals, the Montrealers declared, "leave us free to employ

117. Montreal Pilot, June 8, 1848.

118. Montreal Herald, June 14, 1848

119. Montreal Pilot, June 13, 1848

120. Montreal Pilot, June 13, 1848

Foreign or British vessels at our option."¹²¹ Even the Gazette, slightly before Ferres replaced Abraham as its editor, declared in June that the repeal of the Navigation Laws and the opening up of the St. Lawrence would be beneficial to Canada's merchants.¹²²

Despite, however, the Pilot's statement, this common antipathy to the Navigation Laws did not express any unified approval of Free Trade as an economic doctrine. As the depression deepened, a number of different tendencies began to assert themselves within the Montreal business community. There were still many, perhaps a majority, who wished to see some element of the old imperial system preserved. Even at the meeting of November 27, at which prominent members of the Free Trade Association such as John Young, Holton and John Glass had taken a part, resolutions were passed expressing regret at the end of the "Protective Policy" whose advantages the loss of which "cannot be fully compensated (sic), even by a change of the Navigation Laws."¹²³ This tension between mercantilists and Free Traders once again disrupted the Montreal Board of Trade. Towards the end of the year, the Board under the presidency of Peter McGill produced a petition to the Queen calling for a 5s. per quarter duty on non-colonial wheat, as well as the repeal of the Navigation Laws. Included in the petition were threats that without such compensatory protection, the growth of trade with the United States and the withering away of Canadian loyalty to

121. Leslie Papers, vol. 1. Resolutions

122. Montreal Gazette, June 6, 1848

123. Leslie Papers, vol. 1, Resolutions

the Empire would lead to annexation to the American republic.¹²⁴

Reaction followed quickly from the Free Traders, first in the form of a letter from Young, Holton and Glass to Peter McGill,¹²⁵ and finally at the end of the year in the form of a petition from thirteen members of the Board of Trade. This declared that the Board's official petition was only an expression of the views of the Board's Council, as the text had never been submitted to the membership. The counter-petitioners declared that "we trust the loyalty of the Province depends on something loftier than mercenary motive." Dissatisfaction with Great Britain would in fact arise

unless she promptly removes the obstacles and restrictions which we have a right to complain of, and which prevent our acquiring that perfect freedom of Commerce which the essential interests of the colony require.

The signatories to this statement included, in addition to the three members of the Free Trade Association mentioned above, men identified with both political parties : Benjamin Holmes, D. Lorn Macdougall, Charles Wilson, John Esdaile, Austin Cuvillier, Henry Starnes and William Workman.¹²⁶ Of these thirteen men, six, several months later, signed the Annexation Manifesto.

Reaction to this step by the Free Traders came almost immediately, and from two different directions. Early in the new year, a letter to McGill signed by 57 of the Board's 103 members

¹²⁴. in the Montreal Gazette, December 22, 1848

¹²⁵. in the Montreal Pilot, November 4, 1848

¹²⁶. in Montreal Pilot, December 23 (typographical error for December 30 ?); also Leslie Papers, vol. 1

expressed confidence in McGill's leadership and supported the principles of the Board's petition.¹²⁷ Evidently, the Free Trade Association's victory in the elections for the Council in 1846 had not reflected a deep or wide-spread attachment to its principles. More serious, because less expected, was the withdrawal by William Workman of his name from the Free Traders' counter-petition. The manufacturer had published in the Pilot a series a letters, signed "W," which advocated the protection of Canadian industry from outside competition. He, it appeared, had signed the assertion of the principles of unrestricted commerce without fully reading it, and supported only those parts of it that proclaimed the natural superiority of the St. Lawrence system and the inconsistency of asking for a protected market in Britain without accepting the concomitant burden of commercial restriction.¹²⁸ L. H. Holton and John Young explained in a public letter that as their protest dealt only with agricultural produce, they had not hesitated to assure their fellow-Unitarian that it contained nothing inconsistent with his protectionist principles.¹²⁹ Workman's newspaper campaign had in fact initiated an agitation that would pose a far greater threat to the Liberal party than the inevitably futile call of the Tories for a renewal of the old Imperial system.

The movement for the protection of the colony's nascent

¹²⁷. in the Montreal Gazette, January 17, 1849

¹²⁸. letter from William Workman in the Montreal Pilot, January 3, 1849

¹²⁹. published in the Montreal Pilot, January 5, 1849

manufacturing sector developed quite naturally out of the Free Trade movement itself. As mentioned above, complaints against the preference afforded to British manufacturers had formed a large part of the Free Trade Association's attack on the mercantilist system. With that system dissolving, the possibility of Canada's framing an independent economic policy emerged. If this had produced in the Herald a greater support for laissez-faire, it had the opposite effect upon the Montreal Gazette. As soon as James Moir Ferres replaced Robert Abraham as editor, the paper pointed out that the creation of a domestic market for Canada's agricultural produce was a natural part of the colony's evolution, and that England, in commercial terms, must be regarded as a foreign country.¹³⁰

This embryonic 'national policy' had a far wider appeal in Montreal than unrestricted Free Trade, particularly for those manufacturers who had, out of disgust with the predominance of the great Tory commercial magnates, supported the Liberal party. Thus, the Pilot, as the organ of a Free Trade government, was understandably hostile to the first steps towards a protectionist organization. While on January 3, 1849, the paper admitted that among the protectionists there were "some whose political leanings have hitherto been with the Liberal party," the majority were "generally speaking, "Tories." Industrial protection was impossible, the Pilot argued, because Canada was, and would long remain, an agricultural country; protectionism was

130. Montreal Gazette, December 20, 1848

irreconcilable with the Imperial tie supposedly so dear to Tory manufacturers; such a policy would lead to the annexation of the colony to the United States and thereby destroy the French Canadians as a people.¹³¹ This last argument was of particular importance in a number of the Pilot's subsequent editorials, and the Liberal organ, citing anti-French statements made in the past by some of the men connected with the new movement, insisted that the "feeling which activates these men is more an Anti-French Canadian one than a Protective one."¹³² In response to this, the Montreal Gazette pointed out that as a number of French Canadians were involved in the agitation, it could scarcely be dismissed as an expression of racial bigotry.¹³³ Clearly, the Pilot was attempting to portray protectionism as a Tory conspiracy, and the manufacturers were equally anxious to assert the non-partisan, non-racial nature of their programme.

The relative validity of these two perspectives became apparent at two public meetings. The first was held in Bonsecours Market on January 17. The requisition for it had been dominated by Conservative names, with the exception of those of William Workman, Rollo Campbell, the printer of the Pilot in 1844, Benjamin Holmes' partner, Joseph Knapp, and William Snaith, who had joined the Liberals in 1847.¹³⁴ The meeting itself, however, revealed that a number of prominent Liberals

¹³¹. Montreal Pilot, January 3, 1849

¹³². Montreal Pilot, January 8, 1849

¹³³. Montreal Gazette, January 10, 1849

¹³⁴. Montreal Gazette, January 12, 1849

were involved in the movement, most noticeably Wolfred Nelson and Jacob DeWitt, both former patriotes who had been involved in manufacturing before the Union. This meeting nearly resulted in violence when John Young, seconded by John Glass, attempted to introduce a pro-Free Trade resolution. DeWitt refused to allow the two to speak because they had not been involved in organizing the meeting. Wolfred Nelson tried to calm the crowd, and another Free Trader, Benjamin Holmes, proposed that the meeting be adjourned until the policy of the government became known. Order was finally restored and a number of resolutions were passed. A Committee was struck to report to a subsequent meeting, and it included, in addition to DeWitt, Nelson and Workman, other Liberals such as Theodore Hart, B.-H. LeMoine, H. Mulholland and J.-L. Beaudry.¹³⁵

In its description of the Bonsecours meeting the Pilot continued its attempts to dismiss the fledgling organization as a Tory manoeuvre: "Humiliated must Messrs. Workman and DeWitt have felt, to find themselves the leaders of such a party, and the catspaws of the Conservatives."¹³⁶ The Gazette, however, probably expressed the general sentiment of Montrealers facing the economic crisis when it criticized the Liberal paper for attacking members of its own party for not being Free Traders. In the eyes of the Gazette

The Protective movement is an affair of life or death to the Province, not of politics nor party. Questions

¹³⁵. Montreal Gazette, January 19, 1849

¹³⁶. Montreal Pilot, January 19, 1849

of trade have nothing to do with politics. They are raised on common ground, on which all parties can stand.¹³⁷

The extent to which this was true was made clear at the second meeting, held on February 8. Here, a petition in favour of protection bearing between four and five thousand signatures was produced, and the "Association for the Encouragement of Home Manufactures" was formally organized. Its structure was carefully bi-partisan and biracial. William Workman was named President, and DeWitt, Pierre Jodoin and Damasse Masson were elected to the vice-presidency. David Vass was chosen as Secretary, and the large Permanent Committee included B.-H. LeMoine, Theodore Hart and Wolfred Nelson, as well as Tory manufacturers like William Molson and William Lyman. A third expatriote 'General' Thomas Storrow Brown, who had returned to Canada in time to oppose the Liberals in the 1847-8 election was also included.¹³⁸ On April 2, the new Association published the inevitable declaration of its principles in the form of an Address.¹³⁹

Additional proof of the Gazette's opinion that 'questions of trade' were discussed outside of party structures came within a week. It was at the beginning of April that Francis Hincks proposed a revision of the existing tariff schedule. The existing schedule had been established in 1847 under the aegis of William Cayley, and had not then been opposed by the Liberals.

137. Montreal Gazette, January 22, 1849

138. Montreal Gazette, February 9, 1849

139. in the Montreal Gazette, April 2, 1849

While it had afforded some protection to certain branches of manufacturing, its general tendency was towards a lowering of duties, and thus, according to Hincks, "was essentially a free trade tariff."¹⁴⁰ In 1849, however, the government found itself in need of additional revenue, and the Inspector-General took the opportunity to propose an ad valorem system that would diminish the special consideration shown to particular industries. Hincks singled out the "Protectionist party" of Montreal for a prolonged attack. Their proposals for a wide range of increased duties were, he asserted, in contradiction to the basic principles of political economy, oppressive to the poorer classes in that they would increase the costs of necessities, a threat to the Imperial connection, and fundamentally impractical.¹⁴¹ The ensuing debate showed how little consensus existed among Liberals on questions of economic policy. Benjamin Holmes, still a ministerialist, joined Louis-Joseph Papineau, now a declared opponent of the government, in appealing to the sacred principles of Free Trade in defence of Hincks' measure; Cayley and John M'Connell, both Conservatives, seconded the protectionist arguments of the Liberals, DeWitt, Nelson and R. N. Watts.¹⁴²

Of particular interest is the part played in the debate by charges and counter-charges of latent disloyalty to the Empire. The incidental protection inherent in Cayley's 1847

¹⁴⁰. DLA, vol. 8, pt. 2, p. 1746, April 7, 1849

¹⁴¹. Ibid, pp. 1747-9

¹⁴². Ibid pp. 1745-73; April 18, pp. 1940ff.; April 20, pp. 1988ff.; April 24, pp. 2039f.

schedule had provoked protests from British manufacturers, in particular the Glasgow founders. Earl Grey had transmitted these remonstrances to the Canadian government, and Hincks made extensive use of the Colonial Secretary's opinion to defend his proposed changes. He asked the members of the Assembly

to reflect for one moment what interest Great Britain could have in keeping up the connection with this Colony, and protecting this country, if we were to legislate with a view of keeping out her manufactures ... It would be much more candid and straightforward to coldly come forward with a declaration of independence.

Annexation to the United States would then quite probably follow.¹⁴³

The comments of DeWitt and Holmes on this argument are significant in that both, one a Free Trader, the other a Protectionist, signed the Annexation Manifesto some six months later. The Imperial connection was used as a justification for mutually exclusive economic theories. DeWitt declared that the Inspector-General

had been pleased that the opposition to his tariff was a political one, and that it would be far better for them to come out and propose annexion (sic) boldly. All he (MR. D.) would say in reply was that there was never anything brought before Parliament which was so calculated to sever the connexion between the Colony and the Mother Country as the measure of the hon. gentleman.

Because the costs of transportation were included in Hincks' ad valorem calculations, materials imported from Britain along the St. Lawrence would be highly taxed, and the Canadian market

¹⁴³. Ibid, pp. 1748f., April 18, 1849

as a result would be left open to American manufacturers.¹⁴⁴

In answer, Benjamin Holmes insisted that as Great Britain was the world's leading exponent of Free Trade, it was not likely that England "would allow the colony to do anything which would tend to injure her great commercial policy," and that a lowering of the tariffs would ensure the prosperity of the country.¹⁴⁵ Clearly, neither man was contemplating in April a declaration favouring the political union of Canada with The United States.

The collapse of international world markets and the ensuing depression had thus, by April, 1849, produced three responses among Montreal business men: an enduring agricultural protectionism, a diminished but still strident Free Trade minority, and an emerging lobby for industrial protectionism. All were demanding action by the government, and thereby presented challenges to existing political alignments. Different economic strategies, however, were but one of the divisive effects of the turbulent international situation. The young French Canadians of L'Avenir were not the only Lower Canadians affected by radical tendencies. The formerly ultra-Tory Montreal Herald had conceded that the people must be the final arbiter of public decisions and endorsed the Liberals' concept of Responsible Government even before the election; this position, if anything, hardened after the election. Indeed, the Herald went so far as to attack Baldwin and LaFontaine for betraying Responsible Government in not

144. Ibid, pp. 1761f., April 18, 1849

145. Ibid, p. 1766, April 18, 1849

resigning at the very first conflict with Metcalfe.¹⁴⁶ In June, 1848, the paper declared that Canada was not only "emancipated from parental controul(sic)" as far as commercial policy was concerned, but also in "the management of our local government."¹⁴⁷ The Gazette accused its rival of emulating the Pilot as an organ of the new Executive Council.¹⁴⁸ This was to an extent an exaggeration. While Kinnear's paper did praise James Leslie's inclusion in the cabinet,¹⁴⁹ and refused to publish James Moir Ferres continuing complaints about his dismissal from the public service,¹⁵⁰ the bitterness of its attack on Aylwin's elevation to the bench showed that the Herald was no friend to the Ministry. Yet its policy of moderation was enough to concern the Pilot, and the Liberal's official organ criticized members of the party for their tolerance of the Herald, and accused its rival of angling for favours from both sides.¹⁵¹

The Gazette suggested that government money explained the energy with which Kinnear attacked the Navigation Laws,¹⁵² but it appears that the paper's politics were not simply the result of a quest for patronage. When the Gazette attacked the Herald's editor for being "true to no principle; faithful to no party; - compounded, in alternate stratifications of ... fossilated

146. Montreal Herald, March 1, 1848

147. Montreal Herald June 7, 1848

148. Montreal Gazette, April 7, 1848

149. Montreal Herald, March 15, 1848

150. Montreal Herald, August 16, 1848

151. Montreal Pilot, November 11, 1848

152. Montreal Gazette, August 19, 1848

Scotch Toryism and foetid English radicalism,"¹⁵³ only part of the paper's anger came from offended partisanship. In September, the Gazette declared that throughout the world, "we find the flood-tide of democracy running high; and the Herald, which was once one of the staunchest of Conservatives, riding on the top of the wave." Was it not advocating quadrennial parliaments, annual sessions, and other radical measures?¹⁵⁴ The Gazette no doubt exaggerated, but the Herald reprinted these attacks with no attempt to refute them.¹⁵⁵

While Kinnear's move towards a more liberal point of view was a matter of professional concern to its competitor, the Pilot, an increasing sympathy between the government and one of the most influential of Montreal's anglophone papers could not have been a source of unhappiness to the Liberals. Of much greater immediate importance was the growing restlessness of the Irish in Canada East. Ireland, afflicted by both the long-standing grievances of the Protestant Ascendancy and the recent failure of its staple crop, was particularly susceptible to the international current of revolutionary nationalism. In terms of Irish history, the uprising of Young Ireland in 1848 may have been 'a riot in a cabbage patch', but its repercussions on the other side of the Atlantic were of major importance for the Liberal party with its dependence on the support of Irish Catholics in Montreal and Quebec. On the popular level, the

153. Montreal Gazette, August 24, 1848

154. Montreal Gazette, September 8, 1848

155. Montreal Herald, September 13, 1848

sudden influx of the diseased and desperately poor Catholic peasants of the Famine Migration disrupted the balance within the Irish community upon which national cohesion depended; on a higher level, the rising of 1848 supplied with a new, radical model those who would dispute with established political figures the leadership of the Irish Canadians.

The first casualties of these changes were the St. Patrick's Societies in the two cities of Lower Canada. In Montreal, where the Liberals had long been in control of the Irish national society, the organization simply dissolved. . . Hincks' restructuring of 1847 had not resolved political tensions within the Society, and in 1848, after the annual procession in March, it ceased to exist.¹⁵⁶ In Quebec City, where the Society was still under the control of great ship-builders like G. H. Parke and Thomas Ryan and the allies of the now dying John Neilson, such as M. Connolly,¹⁵⁷ political unrest enabled John Maguire to establish a rival institution. On March 18, 1848, the founding meeting of The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick was held with Maguire in the chair. A new, truly national society was declared necessary because

the St. Patrick's Society, notwithstanding its pretended anxiety for the union of all Irishmen, without distinction of religious or political creed, has excluded certain gentlemen from becoming members, purely on account of political opinions.

To demonstrate the greater seriousness of the new society, reso-

¹⁵⁶. Montreal Pilot, April 27, 1848

¹⁵⁷. Quebec Mercury, March 7, 1848 (St. Patrick's Society election results)

lutions were passed condemning the traditional festivities in honour of St. Patrick's day because of the depressed condition of Ireland. The new organization was clearly under Maguire's control. The lawyer was elected President, and McCoy, the editor of the Spectator, was made Secretary.¹⁵⁸ A fair number of French Canadians were present at the meeting, and informal proposals may have been made to admit them to full membership.¹⁵⁹

Such tactics, however, were not a monopoly of the Liberals. On April 11, placards appeared in the city with the heading "repeal of the Union," calling upon Irishmen to provide themselves with muskets and to "remember the famine of 1847."¹⁶⁰ The meeting itself was fairly quiet. In his role as liason between the French and Irish Canadians, P.-J.-O. Chauveau was in attendance, as were Maguire and McCoy. The chair, however, was taken by the Rev P. McMahon, Maguire's rival, and Charles Alleyn, an Irish lawyer,¹⁶¹ John Doran, one of the Irish réactionistes, and Michael Connolly, all at odds with Cauchon's machine, took leading parts in the proceedings. The tone of the assembly was exemplified by a resolution that praised the overthrow of Louis-Philippe.¹⁶² A similar meeting, with Charles Alleyn in the chair, was held on June 22. The object of this meeting was even more explicitly pro-revolutionary, for its

¹⁵⁸. Quebec Mercury, March 18, 1848

¹⁵⁹. Quebec Mercury, March 21; contradicted in a letter in the Mercury, March 23, 1848

¹⁶⁰. Quebec Mercury, April 11, 1848

¹⁶¹. Marcel Plouffe, "Alleyn, Charles Joseph," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. XI, pp. 15-16

¹⁶². Quebec Mercury, April 13, 1848

object was to condemn the conviction of John Mitchell, the Irish rebel. At this meeting Maguire was not in attendance.¹⁶³

Indeed, signs began to multiply that among the Irish, Maguire was beginning to lose his personal influence. In the by-election that chose F.-X. Méthot, the lawyers own ward of Champlain gave the ministerialist candidate 349 of its 356 votes, although in the suburbs, where the poorer French and Irish lived, Lègaré, "cheri des ouvriers,"¹⁶⁴ out-polled his rival.¹⁶⁵ This, however, was before the July uprising in Ireland, and in the municipal elections held at the beginning of 1849, Maguire faced serious difficulties even in the urban wards. In St. Peter's, Hugh Murray, whose candidacy was promoted by John Doran,¹⁶⁶ was acclaimed. In St. Lewis, A. Joseph, who had the public backing of Joseph Lègaré and Charles Alleyn,¹⁶⁷ carried the election by 49 votes. Among Joseph's backers was Dunbar Ross, whom R.-E. Caron later blamed for assisting Charles Alleyn in attempt to oust Maguire from his own seat for Champlain.¹⁶⁸ In this ward, the heart of the city's established Irish community, Maguire gained a majority of only 36 votes, and that in the midst of considerable violence. Order was only restored when the troops were called in.¹⁶⁹

163. Quebec Mercury, June 23, 1848

164. Quebec Mercury, December 28, 1848

165. Quebec Mercury, December 28, June 7, 1848

166. Quebec Mercury, December 28, 1848

167. Quebec Mercury, January 16, 1849

168. LaFontaine Papers, R.-E. Caron to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 20, 1850

169. Quebec Mercury, February 6, 1849 (account of the election and its results)

Throughout the latter half of 1848 there had already been signs that republicanism was growing in the old capital. In June of that year, LaFontaine received a letter from W. H. McCord, the Police Magistrate in Quebec, warning him of a meeting

in one of the most disaffected parts of the town, that is Champlain Street otherwise called Drummond Harbour, where there are such characters who deem it necessary to send to the United States for prayer books because in them their (sic) will not be shocked by seeing prayers for the Queen and the Royal Family.¹⁷⁰

The July Rebellion in Ireland added the element of force to this anti-monarchical piety. While in part farcical, the arrest in August of three Repeal activists for being disorderly had a threatening tone. One was the secretary of the "Quebec Emmett Rifle Club," named after one of the Irish martyrs of 1798, and in the possession of the arrested men were five cannon balls stolen from the officers' guardroom near the Chateau.¹⁷¹

The situation in Montreal was even more serious. There, the conjunction of the dissident Irish and Papineau's supporters was rendered complete and public at a meeting held on May 10, 1848, in the Bonsecours Market. Bernard Devlin, recently called to the bar, attacked the Irishmen in the Liberal party for failing to appear at a meeting called to support Repeal. Their absence, Devlin suggested, was the result of the fact that the elections were now over, and that there was thus no immediate need for Irish votes. In contrast, L.-J. Papineau was cited as a

¹⁷⁰. LaFontaine Papers, W. H. McCord to L.-H. LaFontaine, June 17, 1848

¹⁷¹. Quebec Mercury, August 25, 1848

politician who was prepared to ally himself with a newly invigorated Repeal agitation.¹⁷² L'Avenir printed as a supplement a few days later Papineau's Second Manifesto, in which the ex-Speaker repeated the familiar identification of the Act of Union in Canada and the Union of Ireland and Britain.¹⁷³

The first reaction of the Montreal papers to this new Repeal movement repeated the familiar arguments against its importance. The Herald and the Pilot both dismissed the meeting as an attempt by Devlin to promote his legal career.¹⁷⁴ The Pilot in particular claimed that the whole agitation was a plot by Dominic Daly to undermine the new Ministry by giving the Colonial Office the impression that the Liberal government was unstable.¹⁷⁵ The Gazette, delighted by these divisions within Liberal ranks, printed a letter from Bernard Devlin which had been rejected by the Pilot, in which Hincks and other politicians were accused of using the Repeal issue solely to gain office. The Gazette commented that no doubt the radicalism of both Papineau and Devlin was simply a manoeuvre to gain office.¹⁷⁶

Thus far, the whole matter, with its charges and counter-charges of political venality, was simply a repetition of the controversies of the first part of the decade. The movement of the Irish towards armed insurrection, however, and the support

172. Montreal Herald, May 17, 1848

173. quoted in J. Monet, The Last Cannon Shot, p. 292

174. Montreal Herald, May 17, 1848; Montreal Pilot, May 11, 1848

175. Montreal Pilot, May 18, 20, 1848

176. Montreal Gazette, May 18, 22, 1848

shown by American Irishmen for extreme measures, made the situation much more explosive. The Pilot throughout the spring and summer gave extensive coverage to this aspect of the international situation,¹⁷⁷ and in May the Gazette surveyed the whole question and concluded that a war of race, masquerading as a political struggle, was under way.¹⁷⁸ The alliance between Papineau and Devlin also made the issue more dangerous for the newly installed government. The sections of Papineau's Second Manifesto which endorsed the Irish struggle for liberation and attacked the Ministry for failing to support it appeared in the Pilot,¹⁷⁹ and Wolfred Nelson, as part of his polemical war with the former Speaker, attacked Papineau for invoking the Irish question.¹⁸⁰ Thus, for the first time the Liberals, instead of identifying the struggle for Responsible Government with Repeal, insisted upon a complete separation of Canadian and Irish affairs. In defending Hincks' and Drummond's absence from Devlin's meeting, the Pilot declared that they

are not Irishmen, therefore, who have left forever the land of their birth - who have made Canada their home - equally bound [to consider] the interests of this, the country of their adoption, as of more importance than the welfare of any other part of the world.¹⁸¹

In subsequent editorials, the paper also explicitly denied that a Ministry, elected partially by Irish votes, had any obligation to support Repeal. On principle, in fact, Canadian politicians

177. Montreal Pilot, May, passim, 1848

178. Montreal Gazette, May 5, 1848

179. Montreal Pilot, June 1, 1848

180. Montreal Pilot, May 30, 1848

181. Montreal Pilot, May 13, 1848

were obliged not to interfere in the affairs of any other country.¹⁸² The Liberal organ thereby endorsed a principle that it had scorned when Tory Repealers had invoked it in 1846 and 1847.

The emergence in New York of militant Irish groups and the establishment of a link between Canadian and American radical Irishmen marked the next phase in the increasing seriousness of the situation. In the middle of July, just as the Irish rebellion was approaching its disastrous conclusion, a 'Monster Meeting' was held in Montreal's Haymarket to receive a delegate of the New York Irish Republican League. At the meeting, Sydney Bellingham, making his return to active politics, urged "union and fraternity between the Canadian Irish and French Canadians to secure justice to their respective countries." Leading Irish Liberals again declined to attend the meeting, and Benjamin Holmes wrote a letter to the meeting's organizers to express his conviction that such assemblies could be of no benefit to Ireland and only disrupt Canadian affairs.¹⁸³

While the meeting itself was poorly attended, nonetheless it was a sign of the growing pressure on the Irish leaders of the Liberal party. Their first attempt to reassert their control was a dismal failure. On August 12, a requisition appeared in the Pilot for a meeting of the Friends of Ireland. The Liberal organ endorsed the meeting,¹⁸⁴ and while the meeting's

182. Montreal Pilot, May 18, 1848

183. Montreal Pilot, July 18, 1848

184. Montreal Pilot, August 12, 1848

declared intent was "to take into consideration the state and prospects of cruelly oppressed Ireland," an ancillary purpose was to express confidence in the Ministry.¹⁸⁵ This effort of the moderate Repealers, or, as Lord Elgin described them, "the Irish repealers who are connected with the Gov^t and within reach of its good things,"¹⁸⁶ failed in its effect, for the meeting had to be cancelled when it became apparent that it would be disrupted by extremists.¹⁸⁷ The rumour was even current that, had it not been for Drummond's personal interference, "a certain enlightened Alderman" would have introduced a resolution calling for the annexation of Canada to New York.¹⁸⁸ It was certainly true that Drummond had become alarmed by the influence of the New York movement in Montreal, and at the end of August he wrote to LaFontaine promising to follow the development of the American organization and, if necessary, to take steps to check it.¹⁸⁹ Rumours were in circulation that an American Irish army was being organized for the invasion of the colony, and that their sympathizers were poised to act as a fifth column.¹⁹⁰ Such reports had little basis in fact, but were indicative of the state of unease prevalent in the province.

185. A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit., Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, August 16, 1848, vol. 1, p. 223

186. Ibid

187. Montreal Pilot, August 15, 1848

188. Quebec Mercury, August 14, 1848

189. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, August 27, 1848

190. A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit., vol. 1, W. C. E. Holloway to Sir Benjamin D'Urban, April 22, 1848, pp. 150f.; ibid, Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, July 18, 1848, p. 209

It can be seen that by the fall of 1848, as a result of developments in Ireland and the United States, the Repeal question had become firmly linked in the mind of the government with revolution, republicanism, annexation and French Canadian radicalism. When Sydney Bellingham, replaying his role of 1840, organized the Friends of Ireland, he named Papineau as one of its vice-presidents.¹⁹¹ The creation of this new Repeal organization forced the Irish Liberals to differentiate their agitation in 1844 from that now led by their former ally and enemy. The Loyal Repeal Association of Montreal, the Pilot, insisted, was formed for purposes of constitutional agitation; Bellingham's movement, despite its organizer's loyal antecedents, was treasonable in intent.¹⁹² The Montreal Gazette claimed that the Pilot's attacks on Bellingham and Devlin for inconsistency were unfair. After all, the two Irish lawyers had simply rejoined the party that Hincks, Drummond and Ryan had deserted after securing office, for "the treason of 1848 is the natural consequence of the sedition of 1844."¹⁹³

One effect of these charges and counter-charges of disloyalty was a major change in the role of the Pilot. In New York, a member of the Irish Republican Union named a Colonel Gubee as a staunch supporter. The Pilot identified this figure as B. C. A. Guky, and sneered at this illustration of treason.

191. A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit., vol. 1, Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, August 24, 1848, p. 228

192. Montreal Pilot, August 31, 1848

193. Montreal Gazette, September 6, 1848

among the professedly ultra-loyal.¹⁹⁴ Gagy immediately sued Francis Hincks for libel. For some time the Pilot had denied that the Inspector-General still controlled the paper, although his nephew, William Hincks, was its editor.¹⁹⁵ Gagy also sued William H. Higman and T. J. Donaghue, the current proprietors of the paper. Drummond, acting for the defence, secured an acquittal for Hincks, despite the revelation that in his sale of the paper to these two fellow Unitarians the Upper Canadian had reserved the right to name its editor.¹⁹⁶ Higman and Donaghue, however, were condemned to pay Gagy 500^l. in damages. As a result, the Pilot was put up for sale. The only anglophone Liberal organ in Montreal was rescued when Rollo Campbell purchased it. Campbell's printing shop also published the Montreal Baptist Register. This connection was important, for the Rev. J. M. Cramp, the Register's editor, took over control of the Pilot at about this time. Temperance, rather than Repeal, became a pre-occupation of the Liberal organ, and the journal ceased to be an Irish paper. When Cramp left the Pilot in 1851, he was replaced by William Bristow, who had long been active as an assistant editor.¹⁹⁷ This renewed the paper's connection with the Irish community. Bristow, however, displeased John Young¹⁹⁸ and left the paper after only a few months. When he returned to

194. Montreal Pilot, July 29, 1848

195. Montreal Pilot, May 6, 1848

196. Montreal Pilot, January 31, 1849

197. Montreal Herald, May 3, 1851

198. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, November 5, 1851

its control, it was only to act as a new source of difficulty for the party until his final departure from the Pilot in 1854.

Evidently, within the first year of the 'Great Ministry,' there had already emerged social and economic trends that could threaten the unity of a party forged in opposition. LaFontaine's strong hold on the party had made it clear that extensive dissent within the party was not going to be easily tolerated. The participation of Liberal Protectionists, Free Traders, radicals and militant Irish in the annexationist movement would show the reaction to this control.

Chapter VIII

The Annexationists.

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It is evident from the material above that, well before the agitation over the Rebellion Losses Bill, components of the anglophone minority in Lower Canada were searching for solutions to a number of social and economic problems. To all of these, the annexation of Canada to the United States offered a superficially common answer. Such a constitutional re-arrangement would have, at a single stroke, eliminated the Navigation Laws and opened up the American market, put manufacturers under a protective tariff, abolished the monarchical principle, and enabled Canadian Irishmen to join their brethren under a government that, particularly during election years, seemed disposed to attack British imperialism. Manifestly, a "prédilection pour les remèdes politiques"¹ was not exclusively a characteristic of the French Canadian elites; rather, it was a common disposition of the Victorians both in Britain and in Canada, and in the latter

1. Fernand Quellet, Histoire Economique et Sociale du Québec, p. 445

place shared equally by the French and British Canadians.

Donald Creighton has described the annexationist movement as "the last gesture of revulsion from a system which had been broken into pieces and a plan which had failed," in which the Tory merchants of Montreal "recoiled from the unnatural mother country with a violence" which simply revealed the extent of their dependence and the depth of their loyalty.² Nonetheless, other authors have noted the participation of Liberals, Free Traders and Protectionists in the agitation. The first serious students of annexationism, C. D. Allin and G. M. Jones, commented on the participation of Reformers and Free Trade Liberals in the movement, but dismissed it as merely a sign of the inconsistency engendered by the economic depression.³ More recently, and more seriously, H. C. Klassen, in his study of the career of L. H. Holton, has noted that on the executive of the Annexation Association of Montreal, there were "almost as many Liberals as Tories" but concludes that the Reform element did not play a dominant role. In his view, the Annexation movement in Montreal "was essentially a class movement which appealed primarily to the hard-pressed business leaders of the community."⁴ Almost all authorities on the period accept that the movement was necessarily ephemeral, a result merely of the

2. D. G. Creighton, The Empire of the St. Lawrence, p. 370

3. Cephas D. Allin and George M. Jones, Annexation, Preferential Trade, and Reciprocity, Toronto, p. 117

4. Henry Cornelius Klassen, "L. H. Holton : Montreal Businessman and Politician, 1817-1896," Ph. D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1970, pp. 79-82

economic crisis. It is in the context of these interpretations that a discussion of the Liberal participation in the Annexationist movement must be placed.

Talk of annexation had in fact begun even before the defeat of the Sherwood Ministry was certain. In December, 1847, the Montreal Gazette suggested for British Canadians "a union with the Eastern states as a relief from their present bondage."⁵ Ironically, David Kinnear, later in the Herald the most fervent apostle of annexationism, attacked the Gazette for its disloyalty.⁶ After the election, the Gazette reiterated the principle that.

if traitors and fools by any unhappy complication of events are enabled to force us into revolution, the sympathies of Canadians of British descent will, and must be, with their brethren South of the border line 45° rather than with those who precipitate such a catastrophe out of the pure desire of tyrannising over them.⁷

Such veiled threats, however, had long been a staple of Canadian political rhetoric.⁸ During the Liberals' struggle with Papineau, annexation seemed to the Pilôt to be a primarily French Canadian question. In an editorial condemning the May 11 pro-Papineau meeting in Quebec, the Pilôt insisted that annexation would destroy French Canadian nationality.⁹ In its attacks on the Protectionist movement, the paper accused the agitation's

5. Montreal Gazette, December 20, 1847

6. Montreal Gazette, December 20, 1847 (quoting the Montreal Herald)

7. Montreal Gazette, April 26, 1848

8. as Lord Elgin observed to Earl Grey after the passage of the Rebellion Losses Bill. A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit., Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, March 14, 1849, vol. 1, p. 307

9. Montreal Pilot, May 16, 1848

proponents of covert annexationist sentiments but usually linked these remarks to the anti-French Canadian sentiments of Tory Protectionists. That British Canadians might in all seriousness take up annexation does not seem to have occurred to the Pilot.

The furor over the Assembly's passage of the Rebellion Losses Bill, and over Lord Elgin's subsequent assent to it, has been well and exhaustively described elsewhere. The anger of British Lower Canadian Conservatives is difficult to understate. In February, the Gazette called upon the "VOLUNTEERS OF 1837, '8" to rise and resist LaFontaine and French Domination.¹⁰ The Herald acknowledged to La Minerve that the English paper had abandoned its policy of moderation because the French Canadians had proven themselves immune to it.¹¹ In Montreal and the surrounding area, 6,464 people, "almost every grown-up person, of English origin in the city," signed an anti-Rebellion Losses petition.¹² Criticism was levelled in particular against those anglophone Lower Canadian members who had supported the bill. On April 26, a former Tory, R. N. Watts, was hailed as "Rebel" Watts and nearly beaten on his way into the House.¹³ The riot that ensued that day, after the bill had received Royal Assent, lasted for three days and resulted in at least one death, the destruction of the Parliament buildings and attacks on the houses of prominent Liberals. In response, French Canadians and Irish

10. Montreal Gazette, February 12, 1849

11. Montreal Herald, May 9, 1849

12. Montreal Gazette, February 28, 1849

13. Montreal Gazette, April 27, 1849

Catholics offered to muster volunteer battalions "against the Tory Orange party."¹⁴ Throughout the colony, meetings for and against the bill were held, and petitions were signed.

High Tories were not the only public men offended by the legislation. The Hon. Adam Ferrie who, according to his Memoirs, threw up his allegiance to the Liberals in disgust at the bill and the general conduct of the party since coming into office.¹⁵ This may have been the result in particular of a conversation he had had with James Leslie about the newly-organized Montreal Police, the 'Fortin Dragoons.' The Provincial Secretary, as Ferrie reported it, declared that there would be no peace in the colony "until we get the artillery out with grape, to shoot down a score or so of those rascally British."¹⁶ Ferrie replied with threats that the new police force would be "put down" by force.¹⁷ F. G. Johnson, formerly one of Drummond's partisans and only a recent convert to Conservatism, was particularly active in criticizing the government; the Pilot accused the lawyer of "having forgotten his Radicalism."¹⁸

In light of this political unrest, the continuing economic depression and the recurring outbreaks of cholera,¹⁹ the summer

14. LaFontaine Papers, John (sic) Baptiste Laparte and Frederic King to L.-H. LaFontaine, April 28, 1849

15. Adam Ferrie, Memoirs, n.p., n.d. p. 34

16. quoted by Ferrie in a letter to the Montreal Pilot, June 21, 1849

17. letter by Adam Ferrie to the Montreal Pilot, June 23, 1849

18. Montreal Pilot, February 21, 1849

19. details of this particular outbreak can be found in G. Bilson, A Darkened House, pp. 114-131

of 1849 must have seemed to Lower Canadians an apocalyptic prelude. The Gazette reported at least one outbreak of millennialism:

A crazy woman with a long wand in her hand is at present wandering through the counties of Sherbrooke and Drummond, proclaiming that a dearth may be expected this year and every year that Lord Elgin remains in the land.²⁰

The emergence, however, of a serious annexationist movement must be seen not so much as the product of this sort of hysteria as a response to it. As throughout the summer, as a continuing list of bankruptcies in the Official Gazette attested, the economic situation failed to improve. Annexation, as Lord Elgin realized,²¹ became not so much a political as an economic proposal, and as such seemed an increasingly attractive solution to the chaotic condition of the colony. \$3000¹ was raised to subsidize an annexationist newspaper. Its prospectus did not focus on the political tensions in Lower Canada, but rather was dominated by economic arguments.²² Long letters appeared, pro and con, in the newspapers. Initially, even the Montreal Herald published arguments on both sides.²³ In the Pilot, John Young, under the name "Merchant" insisted that the international economic situation, rather than the end of the mercantilist system was responsible for the depression, and that the abolition

20. Montreal Gazette, July 3, 1849

21. A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit., Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, July 2, 1849, vol. 1, p. 381

22. A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 384-6

23. Montreal Herald, July 21, 1849 (e. g.)

of the Navigation Laws would counterbalance such losses.²⁴ The Pilot also presented long arguments to show that no French Domination existed, and pointed out that even were Canada annexed to the United States, the Rebellion Losses Bill would still have been enacted.²⁵

Indeed, as long as the annexation movement seemed to be primarily a Tory and commercial agitation, the Pilot did not seem particularly concerned about it. It calmly distinguished between the political, essentially Tory element in the proposal, and the economic dimension of primary concern to merchants.²⁶ In fact, the divisions among the different elements within the Conservative party seemed a source of humour. The recommendations of the British American League, a primarily Tory movement meant to take into consideration the political state of the colony, the Annexationists, and the Gazette, which urged the independence of Canada, were all a source of reassurance to the Liberals that no unified opposition existed. The Pilot joked that the "Tory coachmen have thus provided a variety of routes ... and we venture to say to the passerby all alike will be landed in the morass."²⁷ When the Herald quoted a quasi-pro-Annexation article from La Minerve and criticized the Pilot for

24. Montreal Pilot, May 26, July 19, December 20, 1849. Young is identified as "Merchant" by Lord Elgin in his letter to Earl Grey of December 24, 1849. vide A. G. Doughty, op. cit., vol 2, p. 566

25. Montreal Pilot, May 31, June 23, 26, July 3, 1849

26. Montreal Pilot, July 3, 1849

27. Montreal Pilot, July 10, 1849

not attacking its French ally,²⁸ the Pilot declared that

We have always viewed the subject of Annexation as a fair one for discussion. The advocacy of it in any paper, whether Tory or Liberal, has never - though the Herald says it has - 'excited our loyal choler.'²⁹

There were in fact signs that Liberal merchants were immune to the attractions of annexationism. In May, Lord Stanley, in an attack on the proposed abolition of the Navigation Laws, quoted a private letter from the firm of Holmes, Young & Knapp to the effect that annexationism was rampant in the colony. The firm wrote to both the Pilot and to Stanley to repudiate this interpretation of its letter, and pointed out it had been written by Joseph Knapp without the knowledge of the two senior partners, Benjamin Holmes and John Young.³⁰ Young and Holmes were two of the city's most prominent Free Traders, and could not endorse the mercantilist regrets of their partner. The Herald, at the beginning of June still far from committed to a union with the United States, ridiculed Knapp's assertion of the growth of annexationism:

Mr. Knapp, in our humble opinion, has drawn to a cruel extent, upon a somewhat vivid imagination. Nothing short of the abandonment of the Colony by the Mother Country, will ever produce such a state of feelings as he ventures to say existed here in March last.³¹

Yet within a month, the Herald had come out as a supporter of

28. Montreal Herald, July 21, 1849

29. Montreal Pilot, July 19, 1849.

30. Montreal Pilot, May 22, 1849; John Young Papers, Box I, Correspondence I, Holmes, Young & Knapp to Lord Stanley, June 1, 1849. The Pilot made editorial comments on the matter on May 29, 1849

31. Montreal Herald, June 2, 1849

annexation, and within four months Holmes as well as Knapp had signed the Annexation Manifesto.

This sudden change on the part of the Herald is easily explicable as a response to the Imperial Government's refusal to disallow the Rebellion Losses Bill. This became known immediately before the Herald declared itself for annexationism. The Gazette in turn presented Lord Grey's response to the anti-Rebellion Losses petition as its reason for coming out in favour of Canadian independence.³² Evidently, Montreal Conservatives felt that the Mother Country had in fact abandoned the colony. For such political figures as David Kinnear, the political factors were more important than the merely economic ones.

Such an explanation obviously has no force for the Liberals who signed the Annexation Manifesto in October. Benjamin Holmes, Benjamin Workman, L. H. Holton and Robert M'Kay, among others, had signed a pro-Elgin petition.³³ The Annexationists of Montreal were quite self-consciously a coalition of different interests and groups, social as well as economic. Their Manifesto called for "an oblivion of past dissensions, and from all, without distinction of origin, party or creed." One of the declared objectives of the movement was to mollify the political divisions whose bitterness the past year had demonstrated.³⁴ The leadership of the "Annexation Association of Montreal," organized

32. Montreal Gazette, July 9, 1849

33. Montreal Pilot, May 10, 1849 (signatories of an Address to the Governor expressing support for his actions)

34. Manifesto of the Annexation Association of Montreal, p. 10

at a public meeting on November 8, 1849, clearly reflects this desire to appear as a non-partisan organization. Its President was John Redpath, a contractor, shipper and manufacturer involved in railways, particularly the St. Lawrence & Atlantic, and "an extreme Independent, in religion and politically." Of the vice-presidents, the majority were Liberals: Jacob DeWitt and William Workman, both manufacturers, Benjamin Holmes and L. H. Holton, merchants, and Jean Donegani, a large real estate holder. The young French Canadians were represented by D.-B. Papineau. Of the eight vice-presidents, only T. B. Anderson, a forwarder, was a confirmed Tory. To counterbalance this, the Council was predominantly Conservative. William Molson and John Ostell were both heavily engaged in manufacturing, while Harrison Stephens had been a very influential merchant and John Young's partner before the Union. David Kinnear and John Rose represented the Conservative professional men whose alienation from the Empire was primarily political in origin. Here, Joseph Papin and Rodolphe LaFlamme represented L'Avenir group, and John Bell, of whom little is known, was described by the Conservative St. John's News as a Radical. The Treasurer was David Torrance, of the great Tory forwarding family, and the secretaries were A.-A. Dorion, the future parliamentary leader of les rouges, and Robert M'Kay, the ex-Tory lawyer turned Liberal activist. Of the Association's twenty officers, only seven were undeviating

Conservatives.³⁵

The signatories of the Manifesto represent this same diversity of economic and political factions. Creighton's description of the movement as primarily commercial clearly is inadequate. The strongly industrial thrust of the Manifesto has been acknowledged by other historians,³⁶ and the names appended to the Manifesto show a mixture of merchants and industrialists. Thus, while four members of the Torrance family signed the declaration, John Frothingham and his partners in Montreal's largest hardware company, Thomas and William Workman also signed the Manifesto. William Rodden and the four members of the Lyman family were manufacturers; Stanley Bagg and H. L. Routh were engaged in trade. Perhaps the diversity of economic views among the annexationists can best be expressed by the fact that John Glass, D. L. MacDougall and John May, all members of the Free Trade Association's Executive, signed the Manifesto³⁷; so did David Vass, the Secretary of William Workman's Association for the Protection of Home Manufactures, and Joseph Knapp, Holmes' partner who supported the old Imperial system.³⁸

35. This analysis is based in part on the St. John's News, quoted in the Stanstead Journal, December 14, 1849, J. J. G. Tulchinsky's The River Barons, passim, and material presented earlier in this thesis.

36. such as Stanley B. Ryerson, in Unequal Union, p. 234, and H. C. Klassen, op. cit., pp. 79-81

37. H. C. Klassen refers to L. H. Holton, John Glass, Robert M'Kay and Benjamin Holmes as "one-time free-traders" (H. C. Klassen, op. cit., p. 81). This implication that these men had abandoned their Free Trade principles is, at least in the case of Benjamin Holmes, entirely misleading.

38. This analysis is based on the list of signatures appended to the Manifesto, pp. 10-14

Similarly, Klassen's outline of the agitation as a class movement must also be qualified. In that all political activity during this period was dominated by members of the middle class, such a statement, while true, is uninformative. If it is taken to mean that the movement was exclusively directed by business interests, it is misleading.³⁹ That the movement had very strong economic roots is also true; nonetheless, by November, the second phase of the Annexationist agitation had begun, and a number of non-economic aspects of the movement had clearly taken form. Annexationism was not purely the response of hard-headed businessmen to the economic crisis. The collapse of world trade and the transformation of the colony's political structure had created an atmosphere of uncertainty; the choice of annexationism as a solution, rather than, for example, the proposals of the British American League, was conditioned by factors other than careful commercial calculation. As mentioned above, not all the political men disgusted by Rebellion Losses Bill were Conservatives. Some of these, such as Hugh Taylor, the formerly Conservative lawyer who had nominated Benjamin Holmes in 1847, and Robert M'Kay may have been ex-Tories only now realizing the full import of LaFontaine's concept of Responsible Government. Others, such as David Kinnear, may also have been caught up in

39. It is interesting to note that while Klassen acknowledges the role of protectionists in the Association (p. 81), he lists as "the hard-pressed business leaders of the community" that gave the movement its class nature "bankers, forwarders, grain-merchants and real estate agents," (p. 82) a list which does not include the manufacturers, professionals and politicians who played such a prominent role in the movement.

the radicalism of the period.

Other cultural factors, however, were important in determining the Association's membership. G. N. Tucker has observed that "The Irish element was sympathetic to annexationism,"⁴⁰ but this understates the importance of the extreme Repealers in the movement. Sydney Bellingham, although not one of the original signatories of the Manifesto, quickly made public his identification with the Annexationists. Bellingham's political mutability was well known, and since 1843 he had been primarily sympathetic to the Conservatives. Peter Dunn, however, whose activity as a Repealer dated back to 1840, had always been an active Liberal. Nearly a third of the 325 original names are probably of Irish origin. The repetitive nature of Irish family names makes the precise identification of most of the Irishmen who signed the Manifesto difficult. Names like Ryan, O'Connor and Kelly are recurrent throughout the list. Thus John Kelly and Daniel O'Connor, both signatories, may or may not have been the Liberal activists who rallied to the Conservatives in the mid-decade. Also striking is the number of American-born Montrealers who signed the Manifesto. John Young estimated that 73 Americans signed the Address.⁴¹ G. J. J. Tulchinsky has commented on the large role played by Americans in the hardware industry,⁴² and thus it is difficult to distinguish in the cases

40. G. N. Tucker, The Canadian Commercial Revolution, p. 138

41. A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit., John Young to Lord Elgin, October 10, 1849, vol. 2, p. 524

42. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 12

of John Frothingham and Jacob DeWitt between the influence of protectionists principles and an identification with their former homeland. Other such instances, for example those of George Hagar, Edwin Atwater, the six members of the Seymour family and Charles Dorwin, are perhaps as difficult, representing the influence of Americans in Montreal's manufacturing and finance. Also well represented among the Manifesto's signatories was the Unitarian congregation. In addition to Holmes, Holton and the Workmans, John Frothingham and J. H. Atwater were members of this small but influential denomination with its traditional affinities for political radicalism. Evangelical Protestants, many of them American were also well represented on the list; these included not only DeWitt but also the Lyman family.

It can be seen that the Annexationists in Montreal were motivated by a mixture of factors. National origin, political philosophy, partisan indignation and personal interest all affected different individuals to different degrees. Nonetheless, it remains evident that the most important catalyst for the movement was the commercial depression. Young may have been exaggerating when he declared that 20 of the mercantile Annexationist were bankrupts⁴³ - this certainly did not include his partners, Holmes and Knapp - but the fear of economic collapse affected all of Montreal's businessmen. This anxiety is of particular importance in explaining the position of the Free

43. A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit. John Young to Lord Elgin, October 10, 1849, p. 524

Trade Annexationists. They were particularly open to attack, for in June the British Parliament had established January 1, 1850 as the date for the end of the Navigation Laws. The Gazette, anxious no doubt to shift attention away from the Conservatives involved in the agitation, blamed the whole movement on the Free Traders, declaring that

when the very men who have been most vociferous for free trade, see the melancholy condition to which free trade has reduced this Province, they turn round upon England, and without stating this distress, nor the cause of it, nor the remedy, they tell her, after getting from her everything that they have ever asked, that it is the Colonial relation that is the great grievance.⁴⁴

Holmes, after his declaration of loyalty five months earlier, was particularly attacked for his inconsistency. As a supporter of both the Rebellion Losses Bill and Free Trade, he was informed, he had no right to be vexed at Great Britain. By upholding Elgin's policy she had entrenched the former, and by abolishing the Navigation Laws, she had extended the latter.⁴⁵ In answer, Holmes made clear in a number of letters to the Pilot that his support for annexation was essentially economic; he had decided that even without the Navigation Laws, Canada was better off within the American Union. No doubt in this he spoke for a number of his fellow Free Trade Annexationists.

In summary, then, the decision to support annexationism was based on each individual's response to the condition of the colony. In all the groups mentioned above, there were those

44. Montreal-Gazette, October 13, 1849

45. Montréal Pilot, October 16, 1849

who declined to join the Association, and indeed attacked it savagely. Wolfred Nelson was; like DeWitt, an old patriote and a Protectionist but was active in the anti-annexation camp. John Young, a Unitarian and a Free Trader, did not join his co-religionist and partner Holmes in the Annexation Association. Many Irish and American-born Canadians remained loyal to Great Britain, as did many old Tories and mercantilists. The Association was a cross section of the different elements within middle-class Montreal. The Annexationists and their opponents, drawing into two camps the disparate elements in Montreal, created a new basis for polarization out of the confusion that had followed the end of the old Imperial system and the introduction of full Responsible Government.

Not all of the Manifesto's signatories, however, were Montrealers. P. H. Knowlton, the Hon. Robert Jones and Loop Odell were all prominent and wealthy men from the Eastern Townships. Of these men, the first had always been a Tory, the second had played an ambiguous role in the mid-forties,⁴⁶ and the last, although a loyalist commander during the rebellion, had supported LaFontaine's candidate in Huntingdon in 1841. In fact, annexationism seems to have been both more widely spread and more deep-rooted in the St. Francis District than even in Montreal. Just as Creighton's description of the movement as primarily commercial needs to be qualified, so does his assessment of it as

⁴⁶. According to a letter in the Montreal Gazette, November 5, 1844, Jones endorsed the ex-Ministers during the election.

essentially urban.⁴⁷ The Eastern Townships alienation from the Conservative party had not produced a solid commitment to the Liberals, and the legislation of the Great Ministry did little to alleviate the District's long-standing grievances.

Events in 1848 had done more than confirm the Townships' subordinate position. For the first time since the Union, the anglophones of the area could see themselves as the object of a concerted attack by Lower Canada's linguistic majority. The growth of French Canadian emigration to the United States had become a matter of concern to francophone lay and clerical elites. In the spring of 1848 in both Montreal and Quebec associations were formed to promote the colonization of the Townships by French Canadian settlers. The institutionalization of this, the demographic phase of the "Peaceable Conquest"⁴⁸ received the support of LaFontaine and Elgin as part of their struggle with Papineau. This of itself would have been of less importance had the government not also taken steps that were perceived as an attempt to reduce the District's anglophones to political impotence even before they became numerically insignificant.

In March, 1849, while the agitation over the Rebellion Losses Bill was still going on, LaFontaine introduced a bill to increase the size of the Assembly. The proposal was not intrinsically controversial; Lord Elgin felt that such an

⁴⁷ D. G. Creighton, *op. cit.*, pp. 381-2

⁴⁸ J. I. Little, "The Peaceable Conquest," unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1977

increase was one way of overcoming the venality and instability of Canadian politics.⁴⁹ In addition, the principle that both sections of the United Province should have the same number of representatives regardless of population was preserved. Inevitably, however, the exact details of the measure threatened established interests, and in both Montreal and the Townships the bill was denounced as an attempt to establish a permanent French majority in the Assembly.⁵⁰ The Act of Union required a two-thirds majority for any change in the representation, and LaFontaine's bill was defeated by a single vote, that of L.-J. Papineau. This led the Quebec Mercury to declare

This single vote is sufficient to wipe out the many sins of his previous political life - and entitles the ex-orator to the respect and admiration of those who always admire an individuals (sic) acting upon principle and conviction.⁵¹

In the same month, L. T. Drummond, the Townships' representative on the Executive Council, introduced a proposal that would extend certain aspects of French law to lands held in free and common socage. Central to this proposal was a clause that entitled tenants whose leases included a contract for future sale, termed a promesse de vente, to exercise the franchise. No such qualification prevailed in Upper Canada, and again Montrealers and men from the Townships denounced this a corruption of

49. A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit., Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, May 27, 1847, vol. 1, pp. 45-6.

50. Montreal Gazette, March 14, 1849; Stanstead Journal, March 29, 1849 (account of a public meeting at Stanstead, where the connection between the Rebellion Losses Bill and the enlargement of the Assembly was made explicit.)

51. Quebec Mercury, March 27, 1849

the electoral system.⁵²

In this context, the intensity with which the St. Francis District reacted to the Rebellion Losses Bill as the retroactive legitimation of the patriotes exclusivist claims can be easily understood. Meetings were held in Sherbrooke, Stanstead, Missisquoi and Shefford, at which such local notables as Edward Hale, P. H. Knowlton, Dr. M. F. Colby, A. T. Galt, John Henry Pope and J. S. Sanborn, Samuel Brooks' son-in-law, expressed their outrage at the Ministry's bill.⁵³ Nonetheless, the Government did have its supporters in the District. Shefford, for example, no doubt at Drummond's instigation, sent two pro-Elgin Adresses, one with 206 signatures and the other with 1,205. Missisquoi also submitted a pro-Elgin petition, signed by 702 men, and sent a delegation.⁵⁴ Pro-Rebellion Losses meetings were also held, about which the press inevitably took partisan positions. The Pilot dismissed a Missisquoi anti-Elgin meeting as a failure,⁵⁵ while the counter-meetings were described as composed of rebels and Americans by the Gazette.⁵⁶ Letters to the Stanstead Journal attacked Dr. Colby as the spokesman of a "small faction,"⁵⁷ and "a British Subject" defended the bill by suggesting that the doctor had been overpaid for his medical

52. Montreal Gazette, March 12, 1849; Alonzo Wood to Edward Goff Penny, December 21, 1849, in A. G. Penny, "The Annexationist Movement," CHR (1924) p. 249

53. Stanstead Journal March 8, 29, 1849

54. Montreal Pilot, May 26, 1849; Montreal Gazette, May 28, 1849

55. Montreal Pilot, May 31, 1849

56. Montreal Gazette, May 28, 1849

57. Stanstead Journal, June 14, 1849

services in 1837 and 1838.⁵⁸

Grievances in the Townships were not all political in nature. Divorced from the St. Lawrence system, the settlers in the area were but little affected by the end of the mercantilist system, and traditionally their greatest complaint was competition in agricultural products from the United States. As the St. Lawrence & Atlantic opened up the possibility of a link between the Townships and New England, interest grew in opening up a market to the south. A sign of this development was a series of resolutions passed at a county meeting in Stanstead that called for "measures to obtain free trade as being most beneficial, provided it can be mutual with foreign nations," in short, Reciprocity. By a special amendment, agricultural products were included.⁵⁹ The development of such textile towns as Lowell, Massachusetts, also sparked an interest in industrial protection to encourage the development of manufacturing in the area; since 1846 Sherbrooke had been producing cotton cloth.⁶⁰ This development had had its influence on the District's representatives; while neither R. N. Watts nor John M'Connell abandoned discrimination against agricultural imports in the customs debate of 1849, both vehemently declared themselves in favour of industrial protection. This was not simply the result of the influence of the Montreal Association, as is shown by

58. Stanstead Journal, June 7, 1849

59. Stanstead Journal, January 8, 1849

60. Jean Hamelin, Yves Roby, Histoire Economique du Québec,
p. 12

M'Connell assertion of the need "to build up manufacturies in all the villages of the country."⁶¹ The Stanstead Journal, which as early as March 1848 supported annexation as a means of securing industrial protection,⁶² certainly saw the proposed union with the United States as an economic proposal :

And we (like every man of sense)
Will make the question one of pence.
If better off with Uncle Sam,
No man of sense will care a d -
For Lords or Commons long I ween
If worse, why then, 'God Save the Queen!"⁶³

It can thus be seen that some of the factors that contributed to annexationism also existed in the St. Francis District.

One sign of these developments was the election for Sherbrooke County of Alexander Tilloch Galt as the successor of Samuel Brooks, recently deceased. Galt's position as a promoter of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic and as an agent of the British American Land Company gave him a direct interest in the economic development of the area. It was probably no co-incidence that in the same month as Galt's election, the Assembly passed the second reading of a bill "to enable the British American Land Company to promote and establish Manufactories in the Eastern Townships."⁶⁴ Thus, while it has been said that the entrepreneur "began his political career as a free trader,"⁶⁵ he was acclaimed in his

61. DLA, vol. 8., pt. 2, pp. 1772-3, April 7, 1849 (M'Connell); vol. 8, pt. 3, pp. 1817-9, April 10, 1849

62. Stanstead Journal, March 15, 1849

63. Stanstead Journal, January 3, 1850

64. DLA, vol. 8 pt. 2, p. 1795, April 9, 1849

65. A. A. Den Otter, "Alexander Galt, the 1859 Tariff, and Canadian Economic Nationalism," CHR LXIII (2), 1982, p. 152

first election as an advocate of both agricultural and industrial protectionism.⁶⁶

Galt's political position, like that of his predecessor, was somewhat ambiguous. Thus, while declaring himself in favour of a Conservative government, he rejected any "factionous opposition."⁶⁷ Even in the anti-Rebellion Losses Bill agitation, his attitude was sufficiently vague for the ministerial press to claim that he supported Elgin. Galt subsequently clarified his views. What was objectionable in the Governor-General's conduct was not his granting Royal Assent to the bill, but rather in permitting the resolutions to be introduced. Once that was done, Elgin had no choice but to give his approval. If any other principle were applied, "the country would be liable to be convulsed at any moment by a disagreement between the Governor and his Council."⁶⁸ Galt thereby affirmed his opposition to the Rebellion Losses Bill without absolutely identifying himself with the Tory attitude towards it. He turned the ambivalence of his principles to good use when, on November 5, 1849, he endorsed annexationism. As an adherent of neither party, he claimed, he could view the issue objectively, and decide that annexation was for the best.⁶⁹

Galt's declaration was not spontaneous, in that it was in response to a requisition signed by 1,006 self-proclaimed

66. Stanstead Journal, April 26, 1849

67. Montreal Gazette, April 25, 1849 (Galt's election speech)

68. Quebec Mercury, June 21, 1849 (Galt's letter)

69. Montreal Gazette, November 9, 1849

electors of Sherbrooke County.⁷⁰ In nearby Stanstead, the same pressure was applied to John M'Connell. 1,413 names appeared on requisitions favourable to annexation, and at the beginning of 1850 M'Connell came out in its favour.⁷¹ Thus, by the beginning of the new year, two of the District's seven members, at the behest of what appeared to be a popular movement, had supported annexation. The political significance of the movement was in fact first put to test in the Townships, for when A. T. Galt resigned his seat, the by-election between J. S. Sanborn and C. B. Cleveland was fought expressly on the issue. By January of 1850 the annexation movement had forced an almost complete reshaping of the political system in Canada East. For a time, the differences between Liberal and Conservative were forgotten, and political battles, journalistic, municipal and provincial, were fought between the opponents and supporters of annexation.

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It is clear that the bi-partisan nature of the Annexation Association of Montreal was a matter of grave concern to the Liberal party in Canada East. In the Pilot's first major discussion of the Manifesto, this theme dominated the paper's

70. Montreal Gazette, November 9, 1849

71. Stanstead Journal, January 10, 24, 1850



comments:

We know that there are persons who are loud and vehement in their declamations against party government; but all men of sense, and with modest powers of observation, must be aware in all free states government has ever been, and will ever be, conducted by and through parties; and that the cry of no party is used merely as a clap trap, with a view to construct a platform on which to elevate a new party ...

Can any one gravely contemplate an unity of action, on any question affecting popular rights, between such people as have appended their names to this new manifesto. The thing is impossible ... The warp - that which may be said to give shape to the fabric - is high rampant Toryism: the weft - that which forms the pattern and lends ornament and grace - is in fact composed of a few scattered threads of British, Irish, French and American Liberalism.⁷²

Again and again, in editorials and in the letters that it printed, the Pilot attacked the Liberals who had joined themselves to the new movement. The "small number of Liberal gentlemen" involved were reminded of the anti-Elgin and pro-Orange sentiments of their associates.⁷³ "A Reformer" reminded the Liberal Annexationists that for years they "had struggled to emancipate Canada from Tory thralldom," and predicted that if the agitation were successful, it would result in the restoration of the Conservatives to power. Then, "liberalism and annexation would be forgotten together."⁷⁴ General arguments against the plan were multiplied. It would constitute an endorsement of slavery. Its promoters were self-seeking and politically immoral. The depression was coming to an end. The St. Lawrence, without any political change, could overcome its southern

72. Montreal Pilot, October 11, 1849

73. Montreal Pilot, November 15, 1849

74. Montreal Pilot, October 16, 1849

competitor. The cheapness of American forms of government was denied, and Ireland's Repeal agitation was rejected as a parallel.⁷⁵ The Pilot gave notice of the first issue of the New Era, a Reform paper interested in the "Encouragement of Canadian Manufactures,"⁷⁶ the same movement that the Liberal organ had denounced as covert annexationism at the beginning of the year. Faced with an explicitly annexationist movement, the paper was prepared to forget such minor divisions within the party.

These constant attacks irritated those annexationist Liberals who felt that they had not compromised their political principles by discussing a new constitutional arrangement. Ten men, identifying themselves as Liberals and supporters of the Pilot, wrote to protest against this persecution. They constituted a cross-section of the different economic views held by the signatories to the Manifesto: industrial and agricultural protectionists, Free Traders and political radicals. The eight anglophones who signed the letter also represented a cross-section of the British Canadians who had either always supported the Liberal party or who had recently become converts to it: Robert M'Kay, L. H. Holton, William Workman, Jacob DeWitt, Theodore Hart, John Glass, Benjamin Holmes and Joseph Knapp. They demanded that they not be "judged, and condemned, unheard" and that the Pilot at least print the Manifesto with its list of signatures. The paper's response showed how determined it was to

75. Montreal Pilot, October-December, 1849 passim

76. Montreal Pilot, October 16, 1849

impose a partisan interpretation of the movement as a Tory conspiracy:

To each party, we say, its own paper: the Annexationists have chosen their organs - it is true those organs were once Tory - but as the ten Annexationists have 'consented ... to merge in oblivion all past differences ...' they can, even if they have been Liberals, have no objection to promulgating their opinions through Tory channels.⁷⁷

This constituted a marked change from the Pilot's casual dismissal of charges of annexationist tendencies in La Minerve in July.

Obloquy and exclusion were not the only penalties inflicted on the Annexationists. During November, James Leslie as Provincial Secretary wrote to the Manifesto's signatories to determine if their names had been affixed to the document with their consent. On December 1st, 1849, a committee of the Executive Council submitted its report to the Governor-General and the rest of the Council. Some individuals had objected to Leslie's inquiries as a violation of their rights, but the committee rejected this point of view and endorsed immediate action by the Executive. Lord Elgin was informed that when

an Individual arrives at the deliberate conclusion that what he deems the evils under which his Country labours requires not merely a reformation of the Constitution, but its entire overthrow ... such a party should not be permitted to remain in the anomalous position of holding a Commission during the pleasure of a Sovereign power which he desires to subvert.

The committee suggested that not only those who admitted their adherence to annexationist principles should be stripped of

77. Montreal Pilot, October 27, 1849

all positions held at pleasure; even those who had declined to reply to the Provincial Secretary's inquiries should be dismissed. The report was approved by the Governor-General in Council on the day of its submission.⁷⁸

Thus commenced what can only be described as a purge of all the annexationists whose positions made them subject to the will of the Executive. The Official Gazette was filled with removals from the Commission of the Peace, from the militia, and from sundry other governmental bodies such as the Montreal Harbour Commission.⁷⁹ While a letter to the Montreal Gazette complained that the administration was being more lenient in its treatment of annexationist Liberals than of Conservatives,⁸⁰ there is little evidence of this. The government, in accepting silence as an admission of guilt, committed a number of injustices in its anxiety to crush the movement. William Farwell of Compton was dismissed from the militia; in fact, he had been absent from the country at the time, and a friend had added his name to a pro-annexation address.⁸¹ In 1855 John Orr was still protesting that he had never signed the Manifesto.⁸² At least some confusion resulted from the fact that the Annexation Association printed a simple list of names. Joseph S. Lee, who

78. Leslie Papers, vol. 4, "Extract from a Report of a Committee of the Honourable the Executive Council on Matters of State, dated 1 December 1849 - approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council on the same day - "

79. in the Montreal Pilot, December 1849-February, 1850

80. Montreal Gazette, December 17, 1849

81. Militia Records, RG 4 B29 vol. 5 #32, January 19, 1855

82. Ibid, #26 January 17, 1855

had signed an anti-annexation petition, found himself denounced as an Annexationist because a Joseph Lee had signed the original Manifesto.⁸³ Throughout the province, men received form letters announcing that their local offices, sources of prestige and influence in their own communities, had been taken away from them.

In light of the importance, both political and personal, of such offices, the intense bitterness of those dismissed, particularly on the part of those who had heretofore supported the Liberal party, can be easily understood. When at the end of 1854, Lord Elgin left the colony, re-appointment was offered as a gesture of reconciliation to former militia officers. Their answers, even in those cases where they admitted the error of annexationism, showed that their anger at a persecution for political beliefs was still strong.⁸⁴ Many, however, did not wait five years to express their indignation. In the middle of December, 1849, the Annexation Association published its "Circular," which insisted upon the right to freedom of expression.⁸⁵ F. G. Johnson, deprived of his rank of Queen's Counsel, entered into a vitriolic correspondence with James Leslie on the subject.⁸⁶ Even Benjamin Holmes, usually a moderating influence, wrote to the Pilot to protest his dismissal from the

83. Montreal Gazette, October 22, 1849

84. Militia Records, RG 4 B 29 vol. 5. Of particular interest are the responses of William Workman (#67), Thomas McGrath (#30) and L. H. Holton (#54), all Liberals.

85. Circular of the Committee of the Annexation Assoc. of Montreal, Montreal, 1850, p. 12

86. in the Montreal Pilot, December 20, 1849

Commission of the Peace for discussing constitutional changes.

He declared

I cannot but congratulate myself and the signers of the Address to the People of Canada upon the course apparently adopted by 'the Liberal Administration' which now rules the destinies of this Colony, a course which must, of all others, tend to the more speedy acquiescence by the people of Canada in the views, opinions and recommendations set forth in the Address.

In conclusion, he resigned the chairmanship of the Montreal Turnpike Trust, an unpaid position which he had held for nine years.⁸⁷

The dismissals continued well on into 1850 as people declared themselves on one side or the other. There was thus a windfall to the government of offices for distribution to men loyal to the Imperial connection. One individual to benefit from this was John Young, who was appointed to the Harbour Commission vice J. G. Mackenzie, dismissed for annexationism.⁸⁸ The government took every step to ensure that people publicly expressed their views. In Montreal and Quebec City, anti-annexation circulars appeared, and men like Wolfred Nelson, Dunbar Ross and D. M. Armstrong affirmed their loyalty by signing them.⁸⁹ All these steps enabled the Ministry to tighten its control over the province by denying to the Annexationists access to the usual sources of political influence.

In such an atmosphere, so redolent of 1837, it was inevitable that rumours tending to exacerbate such polarization.

87. Montreal Pilot, December 15, 1849

88. Montreal Pilot, December 20, 1849

89. Montreal Pilot, October 16, 20, 1849

would circulate. Religion became an issue when it became clear that the Catholic Church was firmly behind the government. Attempts were made to use this to separate Dissenters from their new alliance with the Ministerial party. The report was current that Elgin had promised to return to the Church the Jesuits' Estates if the bishops would help to quell the Annexationists. Such a proposal was innately incredible, and immediately denied by the Governor-General, yet Holmes and Holton were reported to have claimed to have seen the letter in which the offer was made.⁹⁰ At the same time that the pilot was attempting to identify the Annexationists with the Orangemen, a secret government agent in Montreal, John Matherly, reported that the Lodge could be relied upon to defend the Imperial connection with force, if necessary.⁹¹ Violence was in the air, violence of a rather more serious nature than the traditional electoral riots. Colonel Ermatinger, the Montreal Police Magistrate, informed Drummond that he had heard from reliable sources that were 25,000 rifles hidden in Vermont for use by the Annexationists.⁹²

Matherly reported to Leslie that some Annexationists had arranged with Americans

to have recourse to force ... and should it come to a trial of strength, there is no doubt but the Roman Catholic Irish on both sides of the frontier, would do their utmost in assisting the people of this Province

90. Leslie Papers, vol. 1, John Matherly to James Leslie, November 26, 1849

91. Leslie Papers, vol. 1, John Matherly to James Leslie, January 15, 1850 (?)

92. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, November 28, 1849

to throw off their allegiance to England.⁹³

These reports were doubtless exaggerated. Drummond frankly refused to believe Ermatinger's story,⁹⁴ and Matherly's reports reflected the usual tendency of an irregularly paid amateur spy to increase his value to employers by exaggeration.⁹⁵ Nonetheless, after the rioting earlier in the year, in the middle of a depression and an outbreak of cholera, in a colony with a history of armed insurrection, the government could not completely ignore such rumours.

This may explain, if not justify, the harshness with which the Administration, and in particular Drummond and Leslie, proceeded against the Annexationists. It is easy to understand the special interest of the two anglophone Lower Canadian Executive Councillors in quashing the movement; it was most deeply rooted in the anglophone communities, Montreal, the Townships and the Irish, which they represented. The participation of some of the most prominent anglophone Liberals in these groups in the movement threatened the party's delicate balance between French and English. The purge, by barring Annexationists from the local offices that conferred influence and prestige, could contain the danger. Leslie's activity is partially explicable as a result of his office as Provincial

93. Leslie Papers, vol. 1, John Matherly to James Leslie, November 9, 1849

94. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, November 28, 1849

95. Between May and October, 1849, Matherly received 1601. from Leslie. Leslie Papers, vol. 4 (Government records and Receipts)

Secretary, but there is no disguising the determination with which Drummond pursued the policy of proscription. When local Annexationists, led by Loop Odell and Captain Steele, initiated an agitation in Huntingdon, Drummond urged their immediate dismissals from the militia,⁹⁶ and was vexed that Galt had been given sufficient time to resign his commission, instead of being immediately dismissed.⁹⁷ Drummond also played an active part in organizing resistance to the Annexationists when, at the beginning of 1850, a series of by-elections and the Montreal municipal elections were influenced by the issue.

No doubt partially as a result of having been treated as a political party, the Annexationists began to act as one. By the beginning of 1850, they fulfilled all the conditions prescribed by Vincent Lemieux to qualify as a party, save for that of durability.⁹⁸ The Annexation Association of Montreal was no longer simply a Montreal group interested in constitutional change. In the arène interne, it was soliciting funds from, and sending information to, prominent men from one end of the United Province to the other,⁹⁹ and employed a full time clerk, Edward Goff Penny, a young and brilliant journalist, at a

96. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, January 15, 1850

97. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, February 22, 1850

98. Vincent Lemieux, ed., Personnel et partis politiques au Québec, p. 12.

99. A. G. Penny, "The Annexation Movement, 1849-50," CHR (1924), pp. 239-61

salary of 1501. a year.¹⁰⁰ In the arène publique, the Association supported a number of newspapers, most notably the Herald, and distributed a range of pamphlets. Finally, in the arène gouvernementale, Holmes, DeWitt, Galt and M'Connell formed the nucleus of an annexationist caucus. One sign of this new status was, at the beginning of 1850, the attempt to expand the argument for annexation beyond the purely economic. In the Herald, "Annexationist," a frequent contributor, informed John Young that money was not the only basis for the movement. Freedom from the "insolent dictation of lords and lordlings in the Colonial Office," and access to military and political offices in the United States after being barred from Imperial positions would give independence and equality, "in fine, a nature, a history, a literature!"¹⁰¹ The new party was thus ready to enter directly into electoral politics.

The nomination of Jean Chabot to the Executive Council occasioned a by-election in Quebec City, the third since the general election. Annexationist sentiment was much weaker among British Canadians there than in Montréal, despite the older city's greater dependence on the Imperial system. Quebeckers were well aware of their reliance on English markets for their principal export, timber, and colonial wood continued to enjoy a degree of protection. The suggestion that the United States might offer an alternate market for the city's principal indus-

¹⁰⁰. Leslie Papers, vol. 1, John Matherly to James Leslie, January 15, 1849 (1850?)

¹⁰¹. Montreal Herald January 5, 1850

trial product, ships, was quite correctly rejected.¹⁰² Thus, the great majority of the Tory-mercantile group had signed a protest against the Montreal Manifesto in October, 1849.¹⁰³ Accordingly, when the Quebec Annexation Committee selected Joseph Lègaré fils as its candidate, many British Canadians felt themselves bound by their previous declaration¹⁰⁴ despite their anger at the nomination of Chabot, which left the city's anglo-phones without representation in the Ministry. There were, however, some Quebeckers who supported the annexationist French Canadian. Among these, one of the most important was T. C. Lee, a ship-builder whose docks employed as many as three hundred men. His attachment to the cause was not politically motivated, for he had taken part in a pro-Elgin meeting at the end of April, 1849.¹⁰⁵ His influence with the city's workers may explain why, when Lègaré's allies seized control of a pro-Chabot meeting in the suburb of St. Roch, the ship-builder was placed in the chair.¹⁰⁶ Other British Canadians did feel a politically inspired resentment against the Ministry. The Mercury, for example, endorsed Lègaré, and a number of letters appeared in its columns attacking "Lord Elgin's shabby set of advisers."¹⁰⁷ This did not, however, constitute a genuine annexationist fervour, for

102. proposed by the Montreal Courier, quoted in the Montreal Herald, January 5, 1850; rejected in the Montreal Pilot, January 5, 1850

103. Quebec Mercury, October 30, 1849

104. A. G. Penny, op.cit. p. 257, J. Bouveray to Edward Goff Penny, January 11, 1850

105. Quebec Mercury, May 1, 1849

106. Quebec Mercury, January 10, 1850

107. Quebec Mercury, January 15, 1850

again and again the point was made that the ministerialists were the "real annexationists," and that support for Chabot constituted support for a union with the United States.¹⁰⁸ As "Emancipationist" pointed out, L gar  had declared that annexation could not be submitted to the Assembly until after a general election, and this pledge could "enable the most squeamish to vote for him."¹⁰⁹

Finally, there were signs that annexationism, or at least an aversion to the government, was growing among the city's Irishmen. "An Elector" called upon the Irish to support L gar  in order to punish the Ministry, and particularly L. T. Drummond, for having abandoned Repeal.¹¹⁰ One of the most prominent supporters of the opposition candidate was Charles Alleyn, "an advocate, an Irishman, a Repealer, but, a renegade," as a ministerialist described him.¹¹¹ The son of a naval officer, he had presided over the annexationist meeting in Quebec that had endorsed L gar .¹¹² Alleyn had already established himself as John Maguire's principal rival, and was in fact named as a possible annexationist candidate. Cauchon, in reporting this, assured LaFontaine that Maguire still had the Irish under control.¹¹³

108. Quebec Mercury, January 19, 1850

109. Quebec Mercury, January 22, 1850

110. Quebec Mercury, January 15, 1850

111. Baldwin Papers, D. Maguire to Robert Baldwin, January 21, 1850

112. Montreal Herald, January 5, 1850

113. LaFontaine Papers, J.-E. Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 2, 1849

In June, 1849, Méthot had defeated Lègaré by over 400 votes; in January, 1850, Chabot defeated the annexationist candidate by over 800 votes. This increase in the ministerialist majority is only in part explicable in terms of 347 more votes cast in 1850. The election was hotly contested, and a considerable amount of money was spent. Chabot's partisans alone spent at least 8000.¹¹⁴ The most significant feature, however, of the ward-by-ward returns was not the increase in ministerial support, but the shift in the sources of votes for the two sides.¹¹⁵ In 1849 Lègaré, then running principally as a supporter of Louis-Joseph Papineau and as an advocate of the repeal of the Union, had garnered 96% of his support from the two suburban wards, St. Roch and St. Jean. Of the 358 anglophones who voted in these wards, only 26.5% did so for the Papineauist candidate. In contrast, the overwhelming majority of the urban voters rallied to the ministerialist candidate. This trend was particularly marked among the anglophones. 742 of the urban English-speaking voters supported Méthot; only 8 supported Lègaré. Clearly, in both the city and suburban wards, the great majority of British Canadians had supported the Ministry. The results of 1850 produce an entirely different pattern. Chabot took 77% of

¹¹⁴. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, February 9, 1850

¹¹⁵. The following analysis is based on figures given in the Journal de Québec, February 2, 1850, sent with Elgin's letter to Earl Grey of February 11, 1850, printed in A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit., vol 2, pp. 596-600. While this information is taken from a partisan source, it is clear that the Journal had access to a poll book.

the suburban vote and only out-polled the annexationist in the urban wards by some eighty votes. The reason for this shift was a change in the political behaviour of the anglophone voters. In St. Roch and St. Jean, Lègaré captured 64.7% of the British Canadian votes and 62.2% of the anglophone votes in the centre of the city. In fact, the total of Lègaré's anglophone votes in the urban wards rose from 8 to 322. The most important change had taken place in Champlain Ward, the Irish ward in which Maguire had so narrowly defeated Charles Alleyn in the municipal contest. There, the ministerial vote shrank from 349 to 118, and Lègaré's total rose from 7 to 185. The shift was most clearly marked among the ward's Irish. Méthot had taken all 239 Irish votes, while in 1850 Chabot took only 8 votes out of 230. Evidently, Maguire's influence was shrinking, and this trend was confirmed in the municipal elections of the following month. Violence again broke out, and a Mr. Lampson carried the election by a majority of 3.116

Such a shift on the part of the Irish was a matter of concern to the Cauchon-Maguire alliance. It would not only sap the importance of the Irish lawyer but also increase the influence of the ex-Constitutionalists, so derided by Cauchon. They might exercise a useful influence over their former allies who were now dabbling in annexationism. Just as the threat from Papineau had increased the power of the French Canadians inside the Quebec City Liberal machine, so did the annexationist

movement give greater importance to English-speaking Liberals. One such was William Bristow, who had returned to Quebec at the end of 1849 to take part in the politics of the old city.¹¹⁷ Another such was Dunbar Ross. It was no co-incidence that Cauchon, writing to LaFontaine, repudiated the claims of both to any trust as faithful adherents of the party, and praised the zeal and loyalty of Maguire.¹¹⁸ This rivalry within the party was given immediate focus by the by-election in Megantic, whose representation had been left vacant by the resignation of Dominic Daly. Adherents of both factions within the Liberal party were anxious to establish their relative importance by an election in this riding.

Although the official nomination for Megantic did not take place until April 19, 1850, Ross and Maguire had already commenced their struggle well before the Quebec by-election. On December 9, 1849, Cauchon complained to LaFontaine that nothing yet had been done about Megantic "parce que Ross et Maguire ont été là disant qu'il fallait laisser choisir celui qui avait le plus de chance de succès.(sic)"¹¹⁹ The contest, however, was not limited to the two Quebec lawyers. William Bristow was reported to be a potential candidate,¹²⁰ and T. W. Lloyd, a former supporter of LaFontaine but now a member of the Quebec

117. LaFontaine Papers, William Bristow to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 7, 1850

118. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 9, 1849 (Bristow); February 9, 1850 (Ross)

119. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, December 9, 1849

120. Quebec Mercury, September 20, 1849

British American League, received the endorsement of the Mercury as an independent candidate with large interests in the riding.¹²¹ Another political veteran, R. Layfield, the former patriote who had opposed Daly in 1848, was also a candidate with considerable local standing. E.-L. Pacaud, the young Trois-Rivières lawyer who was to have a long career in Canadian politics, was the Jeune Canada candidate, and Angus McDonald, a manufacturer resident in Quebec, was a non-party candidate. As late as March, 1850, after Lloyd and Bristow had vanished from the contest, there remained no fewer than five political aspirants, representing every nuance in the spectrum. With a certain degree of accuracy, the Mercury declared Megantic to be open to any one who could "afford to lay out £1,200 to £1,500, besides large promises of Ministerial money-grants."¹²²

In such a confused atmosphere, delicate negotiations proved to be more useful than forthright campaigning. Maguire declared himself in his Address to the Electors of Megantic to be an old and faithful adherent of "the liberal party, now represented by the present Ministry," to whom he pledged his loyalty regardless of success or failure in Megantic. Attention to roads and local improvements also figured largely in his Address.¹²³ Ross, however, worked more quietly, and both Cauchon and R.-E. Caron complained of his underhanded manoeuvring.¹²⁴ He secured the

121. Quebec Mercury, September 20, 1849

122. Quebec Mercury, March 12, 1850

123. Quebec Mercury, December 22, 1849

124. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 8, 1850; Edouard Caron to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 20, 1850

support of Le Canadien,¹²⁵ now returned to the ministerial fold, but also that of Charles Alleyne, now a vice-president of the St. Patrick's Society. Alleyne may have been returning the support that Ross gave him in the municipal election of the previous year.¹²⁶ Ross also had the support of local Tories in the County, who proposed to Cauchon that Ross be unopposed in return for a similar accommodation later.¹²⁷ Ross nonetheless retained his position as a ministerial candidate, despite Cauchon's desperate and dishonest attempts to persuade LaFontaine that the British Canadian was both "anti-ministeriel" and "annexioniste."¹²⁸ Ross' success in attracting Tory support without pledging himself to oppose the government enabled him to refuse outside arbiters to compose the quarrel between himself and Maguire, and finally the Irishman was forced to withdraw from the contest. At the official nomination, E.-L Pacaud launched a vitriolic attack on the government; for nearly an hour Ross spoke in the Ministry's defence.¹²⁹ He thus confirmed his position as the ministerialist candidate.

Nonetheless, the election was very close. There remained three other candidates, and at the nomination, despite his failure to make any declaration of principle, Layfield was

^{125.} Quebec Mercury, March 12, 1850 (quoting Le Canadien)

^{126.} LaFontaine Papers, R.-E. Caron to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 20, 1850

^{127.} LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 8, 1850

^{128.} ^s Ibid. Cauchon, for example, incorrectly informed LaFontaine that E.-L Pacaud and Angus McDonald had resigned in Ross' favour, thereby indicating Ross' political tendencies.

^{129.} Quebec Mercury, April 20, 1850

adjudged to have carried the show of hands.¹³⁰ The final results show how suicidal any further splitting of the vote would have been for the Liberals. Ross topped the poll with 299 votes, closely followed by Pacaud with 250. Layfield received 239, and McDonald, far behind, garnered 104. The increase in the number of the polls makes any direct comparison with previous elections difficult, but the pattern of local polarization persists. Accordingly, Ross received nearly a third of his support from one of the nine polls, Lambton, while over half of Layfield's support came from Inverness. McDonald's support was concentrated in Leeds, while smaller townships, such as Halifax, Lambton and Forsyth, where the French Canadians were in a strong majority, supplied over half of Pacaud's total vote.¹³¹ Ross received only 33.5% of the votes cast. Manifestly his victory was the result, not of a firm personal hold on the county, but of the number of candidates, a sign of the political fragmentation of the new decade.

If in the Quebec District the principal effect of the struggle with the annexationists was a shift in power within the Liberal party, more serious changes were taking place in the Montreal area. Since 1842, Montreal municipal elections had been the testing ground for new political alliances. At the beginning of 1850 letters appeared in the Herald asking that voters not pledge themselves "as a thorough Annexationist will shortly

130. Montreal Pilot, April 25, 1850

131. Poll results given in the Montreal Pilot, May 4, 1850

come forward," and calling for annexationist mayors, aldermen and councillors as well as M.P.P.s.¹³² The Pilot showed no sign of departing from its partisan tradition when, at the end of 1849, it commanded "all Liberal Electors to save their votes for "Reform candidates."¹³³ There lay, however, a certain difficulty in determining who in fact were the Reform candidates. The need to create a common front with anti-Annexationist Tories confused traditional party lines. In the predominantly Liberal ward of St. Antoine, for example, the annexationist candidate was J. H. Atwater, a Unitarian Liberal; his opponent was a noted Tory, John Fisher. In the West Ward, Benjamin Holmes faced B. C. A. Gagy. Drummond, for one was concerned with this problem. He informed LaFontaine

Il est malheureux que l'on ait pas (sic) fait choix de deux hommes pour opposer Holmes et Atwater pour lesquels les libéraux opposés à l'annexion auraient pu voter ... Les annexationistes appartenants à notre parti ont réussi à écarter(sic) la question de l'annexion et ils se sont ralliés autour de Holmes et Atwater.

Drummond had tried to find acceptable candidates in the two wards where the Irish were numerous, St. Anne's and St. Antoine's, but found that his friends appeared "très indifferant,"¹³⁴ and in St. Anne's Thomas McGrath, an annexationist Liberal was nominated.

John Matherly's highly coloured reports to Leslie predicted "a struggle between the annexationists and Anti-annexationists"

132. Montreal Herald, January 5, 1850

133. Montreal Pilot, December 25, 1849

134. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, February 7, 1850

that would be marked by a "serious riot" fought by armed bands.¹³⁵ Rioting did break out, and the military were called in to restore order, but, by Montreal standards, the election was not exceptionally violent. Holmes, perhaps assisted by a mob from Griffintown,¹³⁶ defeated Gagy, Atwater defeated Fisher, and McGrath was acclaimed. Later on in the year, in a by-election for St. Anne's, Holton succeeded Tully. Clearly, it was the Liberal Annexationists who were the most active and effective component of their party in municipal politics. The results also show that despite the Pilot's denial, Irish Canadians were prepared to support Annexationists despite the anti-Repeal antecedents of some of the movement's leaders.¹³⁷

This polarization carried on into the selection by the Corporation of the city's mayor. According to Drummond, the contest would be among E.-R. Fabre, the patriote bookseller and incumbent, Joseph Bourret, a Liberal veteran, and Holmes.¹³⁸ On March 11, Fabre, was re-elected, defeating Benjamin Holmes. Drummond chose to consider Fabre's selection as a "triomphe pour les Tories qui savaient apprecier la nullité de M. Fabre," but also as "un défaite pour les annexionistes dont le candidat,

135. Leslie Papers, vol. 1, John Matherly to James Leslie, January 15, 1849 (1850). Matherly's analysis of the election is a clear illustration of his tendency to exaggerate.

136. Montreal Gazette, March 6, 1850

137. Montreal Pilot, March 19, 1850

138. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 10, 1850

Holmes, n'a eu que six voix sur dix neuf."¹³⁹ Nonetheless, there was no concealing the fact the only loyal Liberal of the three, Bourret did not actually enter the contest, and that Fabre was elected with the full support of the Annexationists, Holmes, McGrath, Atwater and Benjamin Lyman. At the very least, on the municipal level, the Executive Council had failed to proscribe successfully the Annexationists, Liberal or Conservative, in such a way as to deprive them of the confidence of their allies of earlier struggles.

The election in Sherbrooke County took place at almost the same time as the Montreal municipal election, and was closely linked to it. Annexationists in Montreal were paying the expenses of their candidate, and Drummond was resolved to do the same for the ministerialist candidate. On both sides, funds were solicited throughout the colony. For Drummond, this election in the political, economic and administrative heart of the St. Francis District was of the highest importance, not merely for the provincial Ministry, but even for the Imperial Government itself.¹⁴⁰

Despite this concerted activity, neither candidate was

¹³⁹. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, March 13, 1850. In fact Holmes received five votes, and 11 votes were cast against him. Fabre was elected on a vote of 10 to 4. Among those opposed to Fabre's election were Bourret and Larocque, two strong Liberals. Votes in Montreal Herald, March 16, 1850. J.-L. Roy, in his Eduard-Raymond Fabre, states that Fabre re-elected "sans opposition dans un appel au peuple." (p.168)

¹⁴⁰. LaFontaine Papers, L. T. Drummond to L.-H. LaFontaine, February 6, 1850

pledged to either the Liberal or Conservative parties. The anti-annexationist candidate, C. B. Cleveland, was endorsed by both the Pilot and the Gazette,¹⁴¹ and in his Address identified himself as unpledged.¹⁴² Both Montreal papers called upon their supporters in the county to give non-partisan support to Cleveland because of his opposition to annexationism.¹⁴³ Similarly, John Sewell Sanborn, apart from his commitment to annexationism, refused to declare what his course in the Assembly would be.¹⁴⁴ Both were definitely local men, but Sanborn was undeniably the more prominent. He had supported Galt earlier, and as the son-in-law of Samuel Brooks commanded a well-established network of influence in the area. Both the British American Land Company and the St. Lawrence & Atlantic were reported to favour Sanborn.¹⁴⁵ Sanborn was in many ways an ideal candidate. Although by marriage he was closely connected with the local elite, he himself was a recent arrival from the United States. A graduate of Dartmouth College, a teacher, a lawyer and a temperance advocate,¹⁴⁶ he represented many of the values of a frontier community with enough additional sophistication to act as an articulate spokesman. He had been selected by a County

141. Montreal Pilot, February 12, 1850; Montreal Gazette, February 13, 1850

142. Montreal Gazette, February 13, 1850 (Cleveland's Address)

143. Montreal Pilot, March 2, 1850, Montreal Gazette, February 13, 1850

144. Montreal Gazette, February 6, 1850

145. A. G. Doughty, op. cit. Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, March 11, 1850, vol. 2, p. 604; March Pilot, March 12, 1850.

146. Gordon O. Rothney, "Sanborn, John Sewell," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. X, pp. 641-3

Convention of delegates from the different townships of Sherbrooke.¹⁴⁷ It is quite possible that even without the issue of annexationism, he might have defeated Cleveland.

As it was, the election was fairly close. Sanborn carried the poll by 741 votes to Cleveland's 707. As in Megantic, the poll-by-poll figures show a high degree of localism in voting patterns. 32.2% of Sanborn's votes came from Compton, one of the county's ten polls, where the annexationist received 239 of the township's 253 votes. Similarly, Cleveland took 152 of Melbourne's 173 votes, and 127 of Bury's 135. Some townships, such as Shipton and Hereford, were more closely divided, but it is clear that in this contest, local ties and local influence were the determining factors in the election.¹⁴⁸

Nonetheless, Sanborn was elected specifically as an Annexationist, and replaced Galt as one of the four Lower Canadian members committed to that policy. Despite their defeats in Quebec and Megantic, the Annexationists had proven that, by a concerted effort, they were capable of winning elections. Like the members of other Canadian parties, they came from different, often antagonistic, backgrounds and interest groups. Social, political and economic factors separated them. The specific policy that acted as a common denominator, annexation, proved ephemeral; more seriously, they were united by a common exclusion from the institutions of power. This was a matter of

¹⁴⁷. Stanstead Journal, February 7, 1850

¹⁴⁸. Poll results given in the Stanstead Journal, March 14, 1850

course for the former Tories who saw in Responsible Government as practiced by LaFontaine the death-knell of their own importance. Rather more complex was the situation of those Annexationists who had actively supported the Liberal party through the years in opposition. Nonetheless, they too were alienated from the governing institutions, for in LaFontaine's centralization they found themselves excluded. The Liberal leader had turned his back on the patriote tradition; he had refused to acknowledge the business interests represented by Holmes and Workman; he had failed to give full support to the grievances of the Irish; and he had failed to respond to the particular needs of the Eastern Townships. For him to have done all these things and at the same time to maintain the unity of the French Canadians would have been impossible, and he cannot be blamed for the choice he made. Yet the central fact is that even before the annexation crisis, these men and the groups they represented found themselves on the outside of the inner circle. Their adoption of annexation gave LaFontaine and Drummond, his agent, the opportunity to exclude them definitively.

The career of the Liberal annexationists was to have a considerable impact on the party that exiled them. With the departure of these, the more radical and dynamic elements of the Liberal party, LaFontaine's supporters made their first step towards an alliance with the remainder of the Tory elite. The attempt to quash annexationism portended the extinction of the reforming energies of the Liberals. Gradually, as the

Great Ministry drew towards its end, some of its supporters, even though they had opposed annexation, began to feel increasingly out of place. Before, however, these developments could manifest themselves, the annexationist party would have to be tested in the Assembly.

In the summer of 1848, there appeared in the Pilot's London Correspondence a long discussion of colonial self-government, the European revolutions, English Chartism, and Louis-Joseph Papineau's agitation in Canada. Part of this exposition was an outline of liberal political philosophy:

Popular government is a means to an end - that end being, not the payment of high wages - not to give employment, for this is no part of the duty of a government - but to secure efficient protection to persons and property - to tax the people for all such measures as private enterprise cannot accomplish, but which promote the general interest - and to expend the products of taxation with economy.¹⁴⁹

This concern of the Pilot over the proper role of government was not merely philosophical speculation; the party of which it was the avowed organ had just formed an administration, and Elgin's acceptance of the Rebellion Losses Bill, a year later, made it evident that the LaFontaine-Baldwin Ministry would continue to govern the country for the foreseeable future.

149. Montreal Pilot, July 13, 1848

Popular government, at least in the form of Responsible Government, was now established, and the Liberals were accordingly obliged to produce those results that would justify the new system.

The great controversies that were to perturb the second LaFontaine-Baldwin Executive Council and its successor, the Hincks-Morin Ministry, all involved these basic principles of government. Different factions pressed their demands. Personal liberty should be ensured by the elimination of unjustified privilege, religious and secular; private property ought to be protected by the curbing of its abuses, and material prosperity must be guaranteed by state assistance to large-scale enterprise. The final defeat of the Tories' old hierarchical concept of the state made it difficult for the Liberal government to reject arguments based upon the very ideals it had championed. Such issues, involving class, religion, and political power, were bound to be contentious as there was no shortage of specific problems for which solutions were demanded. Thus, the Clergy Reserves were to be abolished and the proper distance between Church and State maintained, the system of representation was to be reformed, unfair protection to particular industries was to be wiped away, the seigneurial system was to be eliminated, government expenditure was to be curtailed, and railways were to be encouraged.

Ironically, by the beginning of 1850, it was the last of these, later the source of so much contention, that appeared

to have the most widely established consensus in its favour. On April 12, 1849, Francis Hincks' resolutions providing a provincial guarantee for railway construction were adopted by the Assembly with only four members voting against them.¹⁵⁰ Of these, Louis-Joseph Papineau was the only Lower Canadian. Somewhat more controversial had been the final adoption of Hincks' schedule of Customs Duties. Amendments were presented in succession, but invariably defeated, although sometimes by narrow margins.¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, the government proposals became law, and were unlikely to be immediately again attacked, as both sides were agreed that frequent changes in tariffs were detrimental to commerce. On the other hand, LaFontaine's proposed change in the size of the Assembly had been defeated, albeit by a single vote. No one doubted that a new version of the bill would be presented in following sessions.

The session that opened in Toronto on May 10, 1850, marked, however, a period of relative political calm after the conflicts of the preceding year. No proposal was under consideration that could be compared with the Rebellion Losses Bill in potential for disruption, or in long-range significance with Hincks' Guarantee Act. Thus the session could act as test for the political viability of two groups that had emerged in the wave of radicalism in 1849: the Clear Grits and the Annex-

¹⁵⁰. DLA, vol. 8, pt. 3, p. 1860, April 12, 1849

¹⁵¹. DLA, vol. 8, pt. 3, pp. 1940ff., April 18; pp. 1988ff., April 20, pp. 2039ff., April 24, pp. 2046-7, April 25 (final vote.) In amendments supported by DeWitt, Watts, M'Connell and others, the minority ranged between 19 and 25

ationists. The latter were particularly vulnerable. As prosperity returned, in the absence of any major emotional issue, annexationism as a policy lost its meaning. In June, 1850, the Montreal Herald published a programme for "THE ANNEXATIONIST PARTY IN THE LEGISLATURE" on issues other than the question of annexation. Its basic planks were elective institutions, economy in government, the separation of Church and State, a repeal of the Civil List, and a reduction in the salary of the Governor-General.¹⁵² A practical test of this new party would be its ability to act in a united manner on these key questions.

The debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne reflected the interests of both of the Clear Grits and the Annexationists. Indeed, the drawing of political lines commenced even before the debate when, on May 17, Robert Baldwin introduced a motion not to receive a petition presented by Colonel John Prince of Essex which called for the independence of Canada from Great Britain. The government assumed that Canadian independence was the equivalent of annexation, and upon this basis Prince, earlier in the spring, had been deprived of his rank as a Q. C. and his position on the Commission of the Peace. Baldwin's motion was carried by a vote of 57 to 7. The Lower Canadians formed the larger part of the minority; DeWitt, Holmes, M'Connell, Sanborn and Papineau joined Prince and Malcolm Cameron in opposing the resolution.¹⁵³ The Government's treatment of

152. Montreal Herald, June 5, 1850

153. DLA vol. 9, pt. 1, p. 49, May 17, 1850

this type of political dissent produced a number of consequences in the Assembly. One of the most striking of these was a formal declaration by B.C.A. Gagy that he was now a supporter of the Ministry, and that his decision was largely motivated by the government's treatment of annexationists.¹⁵⁴ Apparently Gagy was not reflecting the opinions of his constituents in this step, for at an Electors' meeting some weeks later in Sherbrooke a vote calling for his resignation was passed by a majority of 14.¹⁵⁵ During the debate two amendments to the Address in reply specifically condemned the Ministry's dismissal of annexationist office-holders. The votes on these amendments potentially were more important than the division on Prince's petition, for they suggested the possibility of a more wide-spread criticism of the Executive Council's actions. The first was defeated by a majority of 46 to 14, and the second by a vote of 45 to 12. The four Lower Canadian Annexationists were joined by Conservatives like Sir Allan MacNab and William Badgley, Clear Grits like H.J. Boulton, the former High Tory who had been elected in Norfolk as a Reformer, the two independents from the opposite ends of the colony, Robert Christie and John Prince, and a Lower Canadian ministerialist, John Egan of Ottawa.¹⁵⁶

There were issues, however, upon which the independents, Annexationists and Clear Grits were prepared to unite that excluded most Conservatives from an alliance. In an amendment to

154. Ibid, p. 143, May 22, 1850

155. Quebec Mercury, June 22, 1850

156. DLA, vol. 9, pt. 1, p. 241 (Prince-DeWitt motion), p. 242 (Boulton-DeWitt motion), May 27, 1850

the Address introduced by H. J. Boulton and another Clear Grit, Caleb Hopkins, a call was made for the introduction of elective institutions. Henry Smith of Frontenac, a High Tory, joined Boulton, his nephew William Boulton of Toronto, Hopkins, Cameron, Prince, Papineau, Christie and the four Lower Canadian annexationists in the minority of 13.¹⁵⁷ Another amendment, introduced by Cameron and seconded by Holmes, expressed regret at the government's failure to deal with the Clergy Reserves and Anglican rectories. This question was not a purely Upper Canadian one, in that Clergy Reserves had been created by the Canada Act of 1791 in those parts of Lower Canada where free hold tenure had been established, and this may explain why John Egan supported the motion. Indeed, of the eight members who expressed dissatisfaction with the government's speed in dealing with the issue, five - DeWitt, Holmes, M'Connell, Egan and Papineau - were from Canada East.¹⁵⁸

The final vote on the Address in Reply shows, in fact, that the two dissident groups were not particularly anxious to overthrow the Ministry; such a move could only bring MacNab, still generally recognized as the Leader of the Opposition,¹⁵⁹ to power, and the Liberal antecedents of at least some of the Annexationists and Clear Grits were still too strong to allow any desire for a Conservative restoration. The Address was carried

157. *Ibid*, pp. 198-9, May 23, 1850

158. *Ibid*, p. 260, May 27, 1850

159. *DLA*, vol. 10, pt. 1, p. 73, May 23, 1851. LaFontaine commented that "the House had always taken the hon. knight for the leader of the Opposition."

by a division of 44 to 14. DeWitt, Holmes, and Malcolm Cameron voted in the majority, and Sanborn, Prince, Hopkins and H. J. Boulton did not vote. Only M'Connell, whose opposition to LaFontaine since 1832 had been consistent, Christie, who thus rejoined his earlier allies, and Papineau, whose hatred for the Ministry was overwhelming, joined MacNab, Badgley and the other Conservatives in opposing the Address.¹⁶⁰

This did not, however, imply that clear-cut party distinctions had already been restored. As the session proceeded, two interrelated issues developed upon which the Annexationists and Clear Grits, often to the exclusion of the remaining Conservatives in the Assembly, were prepared to harass the Administration: democracy and retrenchment. These two principles were, in the light of the tenets of nineteenth-century radicalism, intimately connected. High levels of government expenditure could be used by the Executive to corrupt the popular level of government through the multiplication of unnecessary offices, and, particularly when raised through indirect taxation, constituted a burden to the poorer classes as well as a check on the natural development of trade. In a complementary fashion, popular control over a decentralized government would eliminate extravagance as the result of continuous, self-interested scrutiny on the part of the people's representatives. These views, reflecting a combination of Cobbett's radical Toryism, Hume's and Cobden's Utilitarian Radicalism, and the influence of

160. Ibid, vol. 9, pt. 1, pp. 261-2, May 27, 1850

Jacksonian democracy in the United States, were of course far from new in Lower Canada. It is striking that Sanborn, at 31, was the only Lower Canadian annexationist under 50, and that Christie, Prince, and such Clear Grits as Peter Perry, who took his seat during the session after Hopkins' death, had reached their maturity well before the Act of Union. Clearly, the accomplishment of colonial self-rule, and at least a temporary resolution of the problem of French-English relations, had permitted a long-submerged current of Lower Canadian radicalism to surface among the colony's anglophones. These middle-aged extremists were not, as John Neilson had become, anachronisms, and had no faith in the balanced, tripartite constitution of the eighteenth century; rather, they were advocates of direct popular control over all levels of government.

This connection between restraint in government spending and elective institutions was particularly well-established in the minds of the Lower Canadian Annexationists. As has been pointed out in the preceding chapter, one of the most prominent non-economic arguments presented for annexation had been the comparative frugality of government in the American states, and it had been this argument that the Pilot had taken the greatest pains to refute. During the session, Benjamin Holmes, without renouncing his belief in annexation as a solution for Canada's economic problems, suggested that political reform might diminish the need for a junction with the American Union. On June 3rd, in a debate over a motion by Henry Boulton and Papineau

to make the Legislative Council elective, the Montreal merchant declared

It would be said that those who advocated annexation in the House, advocated elective institutions with a view of forwarding annexation; but he would venture to say that if the elective principle was generally adopted, annexation would go no further. ((It)) would be no longer necessary; we would have nothing to envy in the neighbouring republic as to politics at any rate.¹⁶¹

Of the fourteen members who voted for the motion, seven were Lower Canadians: the four annexationists, Robert Christie, Papineau and Dr. Laterrière.¹⁶²

Thus a whole series of resolutions calling for, among other things, a reduction in the Governor's salary, an increase in the powers of the municipalities, limits on the influence of the Executive on the Assembly, a fixed term and date for sessions of the Legislature, the abolition of the Solicitor-Generalship, the exclusion of the Attornies-General from the Executive Council, and, above all, reductions in government expenditure were introduced throughout the session until its prorogation on August 10. Invariably long speeches were made each time the Ministry proposed the creation of a position in, for example, the educational system or in the Post Office, now under provincial control. Although the Upper Canadians, and in particular Prince and Boulton of Norfolk, took the leading part in both presenting resolutions and in making speeches, the Lower Canadian anglophone annexationists and Christie and Papineau usually tendered their

161. *Ibid*, p. 381, June 3, 1850

162. *Ibid*, p. 383, June 3, 1850

support. Indeed, without their assistance, the Clear Grits would have been an entirely insignificant force.

These tactics did little to diminish the overwhelming majority behind the government, and the minority's resolutions rarely received more than twelve or fourteen votes. Nonetheless, their ability to delay the proceedings of the House, often forcing the Assembly to sit until the early morning, made some sort of response from the government inevitable. D. M. Armstrong of Berthier succeeded in having the House adopt a rule limiting the length of speeches, but this proved ineffective. After all, the Ministry was subject to some embarrassment on these twin themes of democracy and retrenchment. On the Executive Council there were those, such as Leslie and LaFontaine himself, who had supported the call of the 92 Resolutions for such extensions of the elective principle. There were also those ministerialists who had been elected on the basis of the platform of the Comité de la Réforme et du Progrès and were accordingly pledged to support a more equitable system of representation. In the same way, both the speech from the Throne and the declarations of leading members of the government had pledged the Administration to a policy of reducing government expenditure. Consequently, it was necessary for the Ministry to address the two issues, and, while rejecting important constitutional change, to affirm its attachment to reform principles.

On June 24, William Boulton and John Prince moved a set of resolutions calling for elected judicial, legislative, and

executive offices. Boulton had in fact prepared an entire constitution for the colony. Those members of the Assembly who were opposed to significant change took this occasion to attempt to put a final end to such demands, and W. B. Robinson, a scion of the Family Compact, moved an amendment condemning all proposals tending to affect the structure of the government. While the majority of the ministerialists rallied to support the amendment, a number of the government's Lower Canadian supporters voted in the minority of 13. In fact all but three of the members who objected to this rejection of constitutional change were from Canada East. These included Joseph Cauchon, who declared that he rejected Boulton's plans, but not all conceivable change, P.-J.-O. Chauveau, who, like Cauchon, had been active in the Comité de la Reforme et du Progrès, and a number of other French Canadians.¹⁶³ To deal with this situation, a Select Committee on Constitutional change was struck and empowered to prepare an Address to the Queen. Four days later, it presented its draught, a virtual facsimile of the conservative amendment of the 24th:

We beg to assure Your Majesty that we decidedly disapprove of, and condemn all such attempts to disturb the Constitution, as tending to agitate the public mind, and to strengthen the erroneous impression which now exists in Great Britain, that Canada desires to sever its connection with the Empire, thereby preventing the introduction of English capital; and diverting the tide of Emigration from Great Britain to other and more quiet countries.

The Ministry was clearly anxious to have done with the question,

163. Ibid, pp. 773-795, June 24, 1850

and Cauchon and Chauveau were the only government supporters to vote against the report, which was carried by 49 to 11. DeWitt, Holmes, M'Connell, Sanborn, Christie and Papineau were in the minority.¹⁶⁴ Again, it is interesting to note that the majority of those who opposed this combination of self-interest and loyalty against radical reform were Lower Canadians.

The Ministry's support for this Address did not result in an end to interminable discussions of political principle, and Boulton, Perry, Holmes, Christie and Dewitt continued to move and second resolutions calling for change. The administration, attempted to use the same technique, a Select Committee, to deal with the question of retrenchment. A Committee on Public Income and Expenditure was struck by the government to examine ways in which government spending might be reduced and to prepare recommendations for a request to the Imperial Government for changes in the Civil List defined by the Act of Union. Representatives from the different factions were included. On July 9, the Committee presented its first report. While it conceded that "a thorough and searching system of retrenchment was alike demanded by the exigencies of the Province and the wishes of the people,"¹⁶⁵ it at the same time rejected most of the major demands put forward by the advocates of a serious reduction in the Civil List. Thus, while the Committee acknowledged that Lord Elgin's salary of 7,000^l. was "very generally considered

164. DLA, vol. 9, pt. 2, pp. 880-1, June 28, 1850

165. Ibid, p. 1070, July 9, 1850

excessive," it recommended against any request to England that the salary be diminished because "any reduction that would result in the appointment of men having no political character to sustain, would only cause future disappointment."¹⁶⁶ Following the same line of reasoning, the Committee also declined to recommend a request to Britain for changes in the Act of Union that would reduce the salaries of the members of the Executive Council. Suggestion of slight reductions in the salaries of some judges and some of the officers of the Assembly, and an extension of the hours of public offices constituted the only positive portion of the report.¹⁶⁷

This of course was unacceptable to the minority of the Committee that did not support the Ministry, and the dissidents attempted to add their protest as an amendment to the report. Francis Hincks had evidently played an extremely active part in the committee's proceedings, and this the minority felt had destroyed the Committee's independent character. They pointed out that

in a Committee nominated by the Government, any proposition emanating from a leading member of the Executive, of so important a nature as that of reversing the proceedings of the Committee, cannot but be regarded as expressive of the views entertained by that Government, and claiming to be received and treated in that light by their usual supporters.

The Government, the protest concluded, was trying to avoid both serious retrenchment and responsibility for that course.¹⁶⁸

166. Ibid, p. 1071, July 9, 1850

167. Ibid, pp. 1072-3, July 9, 1850

168. Ibid, pp. 1069-70, July 9, 1850

The protest was signed by three Conservatives, William Cayley, Badgley and Henry Sherwood, and Benjamin Holmes, Robert Christie, H. J. Boulton and L.-J. Papineau. Malcolm Cameron was only prevented from adding his name by absence. On an issue like retrenchment, Conservatives, Clear Grits, independents and annexationists could easily combine to embarrass the Administration, and the principle itself was popular enough to attract the support of many ministerialists. Thus, when A.-N. Morin, as Speaker, ruled that the motion to add the protest to the report was out of order, an appeal against this ruling was launched. Morin was sustained, but only narrowly; the House divided 29 to 24, the closest the Ministry had come to a defeat during the Session. It was a warning of things to come that in this case, most of the defectors came from Canada West, and W.H. Scott was the only Lower Canadian supporter of the government to vote in the minority.¹⁶⁹ If democracy was more popular with the members from the eastern section of the colony, economy in government was more popular with the representatives of Upper Canada.

In the end, the Committee on Public Income was no more successful than the Committee on Constitutional Changes, in silencing parliamentary opposition to government actions. Motions were introduced urging the government to postpone a Vote of Supply until the final report of the Committee had been presented, and that a variety of retrenchments be referred to it. These motions too were easily defeated by the Ministry's

169. Ibid, p. 1070, July 9, 1850

solid majority. Indeed, it appears that towards the end of the session, a sense of the futility of their course appeared to affect the Lower Canadian annexationists, and upon occasion, Sanborn, M'Connell and Holmes did not vote in divisions on motions by Boulton and Robert Christie. DeWitt, however, was unfailing in his energy. The returning prosperity, much proclaimed by the Pilot, undercut the principal rationale for annexationism, and the Ministry seemed unshakeably established in power. By the time the House was prorogued, the annexationist-Clear Grit alliance was disintegrating, and appeared to be essentially a loose fringe on the edges of the Liberal and Conservative parties. In November, the Toronto Correspondent of the Montreal Herald dismissed the Clear Grits as a "seedy, unintelligible set of persons."¹⁷⁰

This trend continued during the session of the following year. The session opened on May 20, and the government was clearly anxious that the political calm of 1850 would also continue; the Speech from the Throne and the Address in Reply were so anodyne that the opposition declined to debate the latter.¹⁷¹ The Lower Canadian dissidents played a very limited role in the Assembly. Illness kept DeWitt out of the House for much of the session, and Holmes did not vote on a number of important issues. Indeed, Holmes appeared to be moving back into a closer connection with the Liberal majority and away from his

¹⁷⁰. Montreal Herald, November 9, 1850

¹⁷¹. DLA, vol. 10, pt. 1, pp. 22-29, May 22, 1851

annexationist allies. In July he voted against a proposal introduced by W. H. Merritt and J. S. Sanborn which called for a convention of the British North American colonies "to frame such a Constitution as they may deem best adapted for their future government,"¹⁷² as a way of countering the drain of colonial trade to the United States. Holmes also voted against a proposal by Merritt to introduce agricultural and industrial protection in the face of the failure of the negotiations for Reciprocity. This was of course consistent with the Montreal merchant's commitment to Free Trade; what is interesting is the extent to which, in his arguments against the motion, Holmes all but abandoned his annexationism. He suggested that those truly anxious for protection should advocate a union with the United States as a means of securing the benefits of the American tariff wall. His own solution was a complete elimination of all customs duties in order to attract American trade.¹⁷³ Later in the session, Holmes voted against a proposal to restrict the acceptance of public offices by politicians, a measure supported by both M'Connell and Sanborn.¹⁷⁴ A final illustration of this growing rift was his vote in favour of LaFontaine's 1851 Representation Bill. M'Connell once again denounced the proposal as an attempt to swamp the British influence in the Eastern Townships,¹⁷⁵ while Sanborn, who had voted for the bill in 1849,

¹⁷². DLA, vol. 10, pt. 2, pp. 1059-60, July 28, 1851; vote on p. 1069

¹⁷³. DLA, vol. 10, pt. 1, p. 275, June 6, 1851

¹⁷⁴. Ibid, vol. 10, pt. 2, p. 1265, August 7, 1851

¹⁷⁵. Ibid, p. 1083, July 29, 1851

declared himself against the measure both because of its unpopularity with his constituents and because it appeared to him to be framed in accordance with no fundamental principle.¹⁷⁶ As before, the measure failed to gain the two-thirds majority required by the Act of Union.

On what was arguably the most important motion introduced in the Legislative Assembly of the United Province, Holmes did show some opposition to the government. After protracted negotiations with the Imperial Government and the Lower Provinces, Francis Hincks introduced his resolutions committing the credit of the province to a share in the construction of a trunk railroad from Halifax to Quebec. Great Britain was to guarantee the colonial borrowings, and the United Province, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia apportioned the costs among themselves. The Canadian share was estimated at 4,000,000¹. The Imperial guarantee, however, would not cover a trunk line extending west of Quebec unless surplus funds were available after the construction of the eastern section. To ensure a line running through the length of the province, Hincks proposed an amendment to his 1849 Guarantee Act which would limit its benefits to a trunk line, with reservations made in favour of the Great Western, the St. Lawrence & Atlantic and the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron railroads.

The scale of this proposal, and the massive commitment

¹⁷⁶. Ibid., p. 1089, July 29, 1851. The final vote, of 55 to 18, is recorded on p. 1090.

of the colony's resources that it entailed, were breathtaking, and the extent to which it involved local and regional interests made it inevitable that the discussion would be heated. Henry Sherwood of Toronto in particular attacked the limitation of the Imperial guarantee to the eastern section of the line, claiming that these terms constituted an injustice to Upper Canada.¹⁷⁷ The High Tory was attacked by Francis Hincks for having a limited and sectional perspective,¹⁷⁸ but his amendment that the work be proceeded with only if the guarantee was extended to the western portion of the road was seconded by Benjamin Holmes.

The Montrealer insisted that the issue could not be considered from a narrow or partisan point of view. The Quebec-Halifax line could not pay, and the people of the province would find their credit pledged to an undertaking whose only real justification was military. It is interesting to note that here Holmes invoked the language of loyalty to support Sherwood's amendment. He asked the members of the Assembly

was it probable under such circumstance the people of Canada would feel grateful to the Mother Country for drawing them into an expense of no benefit whatever to the country unless it were combined with other and extensive improvements ...Would that beget a bond of union between the Colony and England.(sic) /

If, however, the Empire supported fully not only the Quebec-Halifax line, but also those developments necessary to make it profitable, England "would awaken a feeling of gratitude

177. Ibid, p. 1336-7, August 12, 1851

178. Ibid, p. 1339, August 12, 1851

in the hearts of the people of Canada, and would do much to perpetuate the connexion."¹⁷⁹ Evidently, for Holmes at least, annexationism had ended with the depression.

The Sherwood-Holmes amendment was defeated by a vote of 44 to 23, and Badgley, Holmes, M'Connell and Sanborn were the only Lower Canadians in the minority.¹⁸⁰ Montreal and the Eastern Townships were after all tied to the fate of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic, and the Quebec-Halifax road could provide dangerous competition for the Montreal-Portland route. Various other amendments, reflecting particular interests, were also presented, and either accepted by the Ministry or defeated. Holmes, however, did not vote on any of the other proposed amendments, nor upon the final question.

Thus it is clear that during the session of 1851, the annexationists were on the verge of disappearance, with Holmes, and possibly DeWitt, rejoining the Liberals, and M'Connell returning to the Conservatives. Only Sanborn might have drifted into a permanent alignment with the Clear Grits, and there was at least one important point upon which the representative of Sherbrooke differed from the Upper Canadian radicals. In July, Henry Boulton and Hopkins introduced a resolution calling for an end to grants of public money to denominational institutions. The proposal was rejected by an overwhelming majority of 48 to 4, and Holmes, Sanborn and M'Connell all voted against the

179. Ibid, pp. 1337-9, August 12, 1851

180. Ibid, p. 1378, August 13, 1851.

motion.¹⁸¹ The member for Montreal had been active in securing the incorporation of religious organizations in Montreal, and both M'Connell and Sanborn were active in promoting Protestant educational institutions in the townships, an activity dependent for its success on government assistance. As members of a religious minority, Lower Canadian Protestants doubtless understood the need felt by Upper Canadian Catholics for support from the provincial government. As the Montreal Herald had declared at the beginning of the year, there could be no benefit for the anglophones of Lower Canada in a Protestant triumph in Canada East if it entailed the destruction of Canada East's minority. Tolerance was accordingly of particular importance in the eastern section of the colony.¹⁸²

If, however, the achievement of Responsible Government had at least temporarily brought to the surface elements of an older radical tradition in the colony, it also marked the end of the careers as reformers of the Liberal party's two leaders, Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hyppolite LaFontaine. This was manifested quite clearly in the government's treatment of two major issues that had survived the Act of Union, the Clergy Reserves and the system of land tenure in Canada East. In both cases, measures were brought forward during the session by members of the government, but in neither were they presented as official ministerial policy.

181. Ibid, p. 846, July 16, 1851

182. Montreal Herald, February 1, 1851

As has been pointed out above, the Clergy Reserves were an issue of interest to Lower Canadians. When, on June 16, William Lyon Mackenzie, recently returned for the county of Haldimand, introduced a motion for a committee to discuss petitions against the Clergy Reserves, DeWitt, M'Connell and W.H. Scott gave it their support, although Sanborn voted in the majority that defeated it.¹⁸³ A week later, William Price, Baldwin's loyal supporter, introduced resolutions for an Address to the Imperial Government that asked for a repeal of the sections of the Canada Act that defined the purposes of the Reserves, thus leaving it to the colonial legislature to settle the apportionment of the funds arising from them. Henry Boulton thereupon moved for an immediate resolution of the issue. Robert Christie, Sanborn and DeWitt all opposed Boulton's measure, and three days later Holmes, W. H. Scott and M'Connell all expressed their support for Price's approach. Evidently, here was yet another issue upon which the Lower Canadians differed with the Clear Grits, although the final vote on the resolutions produced one of the larger minorities of the session when the Assembly adopted them by a vote of 45 to 16.¹⁸⁴

Any solution of that problem would inevitably involve the Imperial Government, and thus a gradual approach was only reasonable. The question of the future of seigneurial tenure, however, lay entirely within the competence of the colonial

183. DLA, vol. 10, pt. 1, p. 410, June 16, 1851

184. Ibid, p. 652, July 1, 1851



government, and was of considerably greater importance than the Clergy Reserves to Lower Canadians. It was almost universally accepted that something had to be done; when in June, 1850, LaFontaine introduced two resolutions addressing the issue, they were carried by a vote of 53 to 1. The first resolution declared that seigneurial tenure was "a matter of public concern ... and that it is therefore important to effect, at as early a period as possible, the conversion of the said Tenure into a free one." The second resolution, however, made clear LaFontaine's attachment to the sacred rights of property:

Resolved, That such Commutation of Tenure can only be effected by securing a fair indemnity to all parties whose just rights it will affect.

A committee of nine, including L. T. Drummond, William Badgley and D. M. Armstrong, was struck.¹⁸⁵ In 1851, B. C. A. Gagy replaced L.-M. Viger, thereby increasing the importance of the Lower Canadian anglophones directly involved in the discussion of the issue.

The question of what constituted "just rights" was, of course central, for there were many, including Armstrong and Drummond, himself a seigneur, who felt the increasing exactions of the seigneurs in the face of Lower Canada's land hunger had put them beyond the legal pale established under French law. In addition, the Assembly was subject to considerable pressure to deal firmly with the issue, as a public agitation in part led by Dr. Pierre Davignon, had produced a large number of

185. DLA, vol. 9, pt. 2, p. 828, June 25, 1850

petitions from censitaires denouncing these abuses. Popular agitation was in fact pushing for an aggressive approach to the problem, and at a meeting of the Montreal-based Seigniorial Tenure Convention, held in February, even Davignon was criticized for not pushing hard enough for basic reforms. Significantly, those active at the meeting included the young rouge, J.-B.-E. Dorion, Jacob DeWitt and L.-V. Sicotte. The last of these was elected President of the Convention for 1851.¹⁸⁶ By 1851, even such a loyal back-bencher as D. M. Armstrong, who had built up his political career as the spokesman of Berthier's habitants, was denouncing LaFontaine for his lukewarm approach to the problem.¹⁸⁷ On August 18, 1851, Drummond, on behalf of a majority of the Committee, was ready with a declaratory act that would define the legal rights of the seigneurs for which they might expect compensation. Again, this was not a government measure, and Drummond was asked by the House to prepare a commutation act that might be discussed pari passu with the declaratory act. Drummond protested that in, light of the limited time available before the end of the session, this would amount to a virtual abandonment of his draught act. Nonetheless, he managed to produce a proposal for a system of commutation. Despite LaFontaine's criticisms of the measure, the Declaratory Act was adopted by a vote of 33 to 3,¹⁸⁸ but both it and the commutation proposals died still-born with the end of the session

186. Montreal Herald, February 22, 1851

187. DLA, vol. 10, pt. 2, p. 1136, July 31, 1851

188. Ibid, p. 1480, August 19, 1851

on August 30, as Drummond had predicted.

By the beginning of August, however, it was already common knowledge that the Assembly was to be dissolved, and candidates had already commenced their canvass in some constituencies. Equally important as the prospect of an election was the announced withdrawal from politics of Baldwin and LaFontaine. On June 26, a motion by Mackenzie to abolish the Court of Chancery, recently reformed by Robert Baldwin, had been narrowly defeated by a vote of 34 to 30. A majority, however, of the Upper Canadian members had supported the motion, along with four English-speaking Lower Canadians, William Badgley, Robert Christie, J. S. Sanborn and W. H. Scott.¹⁸⁹ In the face of this vote and his own ill-health, Baldwin decided to resign. DeWitt, Holmes and M'Connell had not voted on Mackenzie's motion, but when Henry Boulton introduced in July a motion attacking Baldwin for retaining his responsibilities as Attorney-General after his announcement, not only Holmes and M'Connell, but also Sanborn, voted against it.¹⁹⁰ Again it is clear that the Lower Canadians, while prepared to disagree with the Ministry, were not anxious to join the Clear Grits in any step that might precipitate its downfall.

LaFontaine, worn down by the demands of politics and concerned at the militancy of even his own supporters over the issue of the seigneurial system, decided to follow his colleague

189. DLA, vol. 10, pt. 1, p. 569, June 26, 1851

190. Ibid, p. 775, July 10, 1851

into private life. Thus, the oncoming election was to be fought by a remodelled ministry under new leaders: Francis Hincks, as an Upper Canadian, and A.-N. Morin as the leader of Canada East. The selection of two such experienced politicians was natural enough; for the Lower Canadian anglophone Liberals, however, the choice of Hincks was as of as much importance as that of Morin, for the Upper Canadian, during his four years in Montreal, had worked and worshipped with the city's leading reformers. Some of these, such as Holton, Holmes and Workman, had joined the Annexationist movement while others, such as John Young, had taken an active part in opposing it. Thus Hincks was likely to play a larger role in Lower Canadian affairs than another Upper Canadian might have, and Morin was not by character the type to resist firmly any such intrusion. Indeed, Morin later candidly admitted that Hincks had played the larger part in the reconstruction of the Ministry.¹⁹¹ Thus, when Hincks formed an alliance with the Clear Grits and persuaded two of their leaders to join the new Council, it became clear that the Hincks-Morin Ministry was going to attempt to recapture at least the image of reforming zeal that the party had started to lose. It was consequently inevitable that the change in the leadership of the Liberal party was going to have a very considerable impact on the role of Lower Canadian anglophones within it. If Hincks succeeded in thus revitalizing the Liberal party, what remained in the way of justification for the

191. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 1, p. 78, August 25, 1852

dissidence of the Liberal Annexationists would vanish completely. Should, however, that revitalization fail, the ex-annexationist might well form the nucleus of more permanent radical movement.

Chapter IX

The Resurgence of the Liberal Tradition

There were a number of important changes in personnel brought about in the Executive Council by the formation of the new Ministry. One of the most significant was the promotion of L. T. Drummond from the Solicitor-Generalship to the office of Attorney-General, left vacant by LaFontaine, and consequently to a seat on the Council. This promotion was only fair in light of Drummond's contribution to the Administration, but even so, it provoked an outburst on the part of the Irishman's rival in Quebec City, Joseph Cauchon. At the beginning of September, Cauchon wrote to LaFontaine about the French-Canadian leader's selection of Morin as his successor. Morin was to take office as Provincial Secretary; had he been named Attorney-General, Cauchon declared, Drummond would have resigned. That this would have met with the Quebec City lawyer's approbation was clear, as he declared that he would never support a Drummond-based adminis-

tration.¹ When Cauchon refused the position of Assistant Provincial Secretary, he wrote to Hincks to explain his objection to the composition of the Ministry in a correspondence that, when published, filled six columns of the Quebec Gazette: A large part of this centred on Hincks' inclusion of the Clear Grits, Malcolm Cameron and John Rolph, whose socialistic and atheistic principles made them, according to Cauchon at least, unacceptable to Catholic French Canadians. Another important issue, however, was the fact that Cauchon saw the new Ministry as dominated by British Canadians. He rejected any suggestion that Drummond's close ties with the Lower Canadian majority diminished the importance of the number of anglophones in the Executive Council:-

It has been said - "Mr. Drummond is a French Canadian; he is one by alliance, and in his affections and feelings." I contest nothing of this, and I am pleased to see him in the Administration; but I should like to see him in it as representing what he was taken to represent in 1848, when he was appointed Solicitor-General - the British origin. He cannot have the double faculty of representing one origin to-day and another to-morrow.²

Cauchon, finally, did not withdraw his support from the Liberals, but the publicity surrounding this open rift in the party was not without its effect in the city.

Another significant change in the Council was the retirement from politics of James Leslie and his replacement by John Young as the representative in the Ministry of Lower Canadian business

¹. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, September 3, 1851

². Francis Hincks, Reminiscences of His Public Life, pp. 258-263

interests. Like Drummond's promotion, this change constituted an effective increase in the influence within the government of English-speaking Liberals. The retirement of Leslie, at 65, followed logically upon that of LaFontaine, whom he had followed so faithfully for so long. In contrast, Young, still in his early forties, had only joined the party some four years earlier and had no particular ties to Morin. Instead, he much more closely connected in religion and outlook to Francis Hincks. His reputation as a businessman and his activity in the Free Trade Association gave him a fair degree of independence. While he had broken up his partnership with Holmes during the annexationist controversy there is no sign of any personal rupture with his fellow Unitarian and Free Trader. Young was named to the office of Chief Commissioner of Public Works, a position where his interest in the development of Montreal's transportation network could make itself felt. Elgin felt Young to be an important addition to the new Ministry,³ and no doubt others felt that his influence on government policy would be considerable.

It is important to note that these two appointments both constituted a re-affirmation of the reforming principles of the Lower Canadian Liberals. Drummond was well known to be the Ministry's most fervent advocate of the abolition of seigneurial tenure and Young's religious beliefs and economic principles

3. A. G. Doughty, ed., The Elgin-Grey Papers, vol. 3, p. 918, Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, October 17, 1851

placed him closer to the tenets of English radicalism than the patriotes had adopted than to the moderate conservatism of William Badgley. Additionally, P.-J.-O. Chauveau, Drummond's replacement as Solicitor-General for Canada East, was generally thought to have at least some rouge tendencies. Together, these appointments formed part of the same strategy that Hincks was following in Upper Canada with his alliance with the Clear Grits. This policy was not without its risks, for Joseph Cauchon was not the only Lower Canadian who perceived a socialist threat to Canada in the radical tendencies of certain politicians. Dunbar Ross, who had already received LaFontaine's acknowledgement as the Liberal candidate in Megantic,⁴ wrote to the retiring leader at the beginning of October to express the hope that "our friend H. [incks] will be able to reform the Govt. without annexing the Clear Grits should he be called upon."⁵ In the same week, with his eye more on the activities of the rouges, Wolfred Nelson published a farewell to his electors in Richelieu, in which he warned them against

the machinations of socialists and levellers, who respect neither divine nor human laws, but who hope, in the whirlwind and disorder raised by their pernicious doctrines, to establish themselves as despots on the ruins of one of the finest people of the earth.⁶

Such declarations were given additional significance by

4. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, September 3, 1851. Needless to say, Cauchon disapproved of Ross' candidacy.

5. LaFontaine Papers, Dunbar Ross to L.-H. LaFontaine, October 1, 1851

6. letter, dated October 4, 1851, from Wolfred Nelson to the Electors of Richelieu, in Quebec Gazette, October 13, 1851

the renewed calls of the Montreal Gazette for a "real natural union ... between the French and the English Conservatives."⁷ Whatever may be said of Hincks' opportunism, it is perhaps to his credit that rather than anticipating Morin's acceptance of such an alliance three years later, he attempted to reconstruct the party on the basis of genuine reform principles.

Attempts to reunite the party after the divisions of the preceding year were not, however, exclusively ideological. Considerable attention was also paid to the more practical side of party politics. Throughout the year preceding the election a concerted effort had been made to reassert the Liberals' control over local and cultural institutions. Inevitably, the municipal elections in the two cities continued to be events of considerable importance, and the allegiance of the Irish a matter of major concern. In Montreal, the annexationists had established a significant presence on the Corporation, based in part on an alliance with the city's Irish. Thus the two wards, St. Anne's and St. Antoine's, where the majority of the Irish-born lived and which had returned annexationist councillors in 1850, were the centres of the greatest controversy. At first, it appeared that the municipal elections of 1851 would not bring about a repetition of the preceding year's intense struggles. After all, in an earlier by-election in St. Anne, the Pilot had expressed approval of the election by acclamation of Luther

7. Montreal Gazette, August 1, 1851

Hamilton Holton.⁸ The same apparent unity was shown when on February 7, a meeting chaired by Jacob DeWitt nominated Olivier Frechette for St. Antoine's. Both annexationists and ministerialists were active at the meeting,⁹ and the nomination was confirmed at a joint St. Anne's-St. Antoine's meeting. This same meeting, however, also rejected the candidacies for St. Anne's of two annexationists, DeWitt and William Rodden.¹⁰

As always, the Pilot expressed regret at the introduction of partisan politics into municipal affairs;¹¹ equally consistently, it discussed the election almost exclusively in terms of Liberals and Tories.¹² The paper particularly emphasized the renewed unity among the Irish Liberals in the two wards:

There has been some difference of opinion among the Irish electors of these Wards; some of whom were disposed to support candidates who had been identified with Tory principles. A split among the Reformers would have been an unfortunate occurrence. We are glad to learn that the differences have ceased to exist.¹³

DeWitt and other "two-faced men" were attacked in the Pilot and in meetings in the two wards, and the unity between the French Canadians and the Irish was re-affirmed.¹⁴

These tactics, combined with a degree of organized violence, proved quite successful. The opposition papers had attempted to exploit the remaining differences: the Transcript accused

8. Montreal Pilot, June 4, 1850

9. Montreal Pilot, February 8, 1851

10. Montreal Pilot, February 15, 1851

11. Montreal Pilot, February 18, 1851

12. Montreal Pilot, February 27, March 6, 1851.

13. Montreal Pilot, February 15, 1851

14. Montreal Pilot, February 18, February 22, February 27 1851

La Minerve of publishing anti-Irish articles,¹⁵ and "an Irish Catholic" in the Gazette reminded his co-nationalists that Frechette had voted against Thomas McGrath when the Liberal Irishman turned Annexationist had been a candidate for the position of Chief of Police.¹⁶ Nonetheless, in St. Anne's the two official Liberals, Alexander M'Cambridge and Peter Larkin, both Irishmen, easily defeated DeWitt and J. J. Day, a young radical lawyer who had replaced Rodden. The two opposition candidates had withdrawn after rioting and shooting had broken out and the military had been called in. Similarly, Frechette defeated George Robertson,¹⁷ a merchant whose candidacy in St. Antoine's had been supported by the ward's prominent Tories and Annexationists.¹⁸ Charles Wilson, a Reformer well known in Irish circles, received an acclamation under the new system whereby the mayor was directly elected. Only in St. Lawrence, where Rollo Campbell was defeated by J. R. Brondson despite the endorsement of J.-B.- E. Dorion,¹⁹ did the ministerialist party face a significant loss. As might have been expected, L'Avenir and the Gazette accused the Liberals of relying on violence²⁰; the Pilot insisted that Tory rioters were responsible for its

15. Montreal Pilot, February 1, 1851 (the editor of La Minerve wrote to the Pilot to deny the Transcript's charges.)

16. Montreal Gazette, February 28, 1851

17. Montreal Gazette, March 5, 1851

18. Montreal Gazette, February 14, 1851 (requisition to Robertson, signed by inter alios John Frothingham, David Torrance and James Moir Ferres)

19. Montreal Pilot, March 1, 1851

20. Montreal Gazette, March 5, 1851; March 21, 1851 (quoting L'Avenir)

proprietor's defeat.²¹ The municipal election clearly showed that the renewed unity of the Irish community had benefitted the Liberals. The economy had improved, the cholera epidemic had ended, the immigration of famine-struck Irish had diminished, and the insurrection in Ireland was a fading memory. Thus many of the disruptive factors of 1848 and 1849 had vanished. One sign of this was the resurrection of the Montreal St. Patrick's Society. Individuals as politically diverse as William Bristow and Bernard Devlin took part in the Society's banquet in March,²² but in April the organization was restructured, and Drummond was elected to its presidency.²³ Clearly, the Liberals had regained their influence with the Montreal Irish, and correspondingly their control of the city's politics.

Developments in Quebec City followed a somewhat different path, in that divisions became reconciled, but the Liberals did not appear to be the principal beneficiaries. In the former capital, the Annexationists had not succeeded in capturing the municipal government, but John Maguire's influence had visibly diminished. This trend continued. In 1851 Charles Alleyn, Maguire's principal rival, carried Champlain ward by acclamation, and in March was re-elected to a vice-presidency in the city's St. Patrick Society. Other enemies of Maguire, John Doran and M. Connolly, were elected to its Committee of Management. Maguire's dissident organization, the Friendly Sons of St. Pat-

21. Montreal Pilot, March 6, 1851

22. Montreal Pilot, March 22, 1851

23. Montreal Pilot, October 15, 1851

rick, had failed to establish itself as a challenge to the older institution, and on March 17, when the St. Patrick's Society offered easier terms of membership, the two bodies fused.²⁴

Nonetheless, the Ministry did make one major gain in the former capital. Liberals had been without a significant English-language organ in Quebec since the Mercury had abandoned the party in 1843. Late in 1850, however, that paper's principal rival, the Quebec Gazette, declared itself a supporter of the Ministry.²⁵ This change in policy on the part of John Neilson's old paper was in part the result of a change in its ownership. After Neilson's death in 1848, the Gazette had continued to be the property of the partnership of John Neilson and Robert Middleton. The editorship during the following two years is uncertain; it appears that one editor, a Mr. Bonner, was dismissed for annexationist tendencies.²⁶ On November 20, 1850 public notice was given of the dissolution of the partnership, and that the business would be carried on by Middleton.²⁷ Middleton was now not only the proprietor of the Gazette but also its editor. Like Neilson, he was committed to the economic development of Quebec, but his political principles lacked Neilson's broadness and tolerance. A striking illustration of this was Middleton's later activity in the Quebec Orange Lodge;²⁸ a more immediate effect was the slashing, even coarse, style

24. Quebec Gazette March 17, 1851

25. reported in the Quebec Mercury, November 21, 1851

26. Stanstead Journal, February 7, 1850

27. Quebec Gazette, November 20, 1850

28. Quebec Gazette, February 22, 1855

adopted in the Gazette under his editorship. This was manifested in the paper's response to accusations by the Mercury of political inconsistency. This disagreement was of some importance, for at least as early as the beginning of the year, and probably earlier, Robert Christie of Gaspé had replaced William Kimlin as the Mercury's editor. The destruction of the veteran politician's career became a prime concern for Middleton. The Gazette particularly ridiculed the pretensions of "Cod Fish Christie" to be an advocate of retrenchment,²⁹ and accused him of the basest political venality:

But let us ask who it is that thus accuses the Gazette of inconsistency? Why a man whose political virtue is as easy as the morality of a thief, who has been of all opinions and served all administrations, who was only prevented from selling himself to the present ministry, because they would not have him at any price, who for an extra dollar a day of parliamentary allowance, would support a cabinet taken from the kennel or the stews.³⁰

This was of course grossly unfair to Christie, who had certainly manifested a greater consistency of principle than many members of the Executive Council. The party which the Gazette now supported was anxious, however, to re-establish the distinctions between Liberal and Conservative which had been blurred during the annexationist controversy, and to extend its organizational hold to the furthest ends of the province. It is interesting to note that the Essex Advocate, at the extreme west of the province, was attacking the foremost Upper Canadian independent,

29. Quebec Gazette, November 8, 1850

30. Quebec Gazette, November 6, 1850

John Prince, in much the same terms.³¹ That the government was interested in Christie's defeat in the election is suggested by the fact that his opponent was W. Kavanagh, a sub-Collector of Customs in the Gaspé. Despite Christie's objections in the Assembly,³² Kavanagh was permitted to retain his office while engaged in canvassing, an exercise which he commenced at least as early as the first week of August.

The Gaspé, however, was still too independent of the institutions of western Lower Canada for partisanship to displace local interests. On the first day of the election, Kavanagh secured a large lead, principally from Percé.³³ It is to be noted that this was the headquarters of John LeBoutillier & Co., rivals to Christie's patrons, the LeBoutillier Brothers, another, but unrelated, Jersey family.³⁴ Percé was also one of the District's administrative centres, and thus a place where government influence could be important. Support, however, in other parts of the county ensured Christie's re-election, although the contest appears to have been extremely acrimonious. The Returning Officer was forced to make a special return, and it was only after the opening of the session, upon a motion by William Badgley and Hyppolite Dubord, a newly-elected member

31. Sandwich Essex Advocate, November 20, 1851, in R. Alan Douglas, ed., John Prince, p. 115

32. DLA, vol. 10, pt. 2, p. 1305, August 9, 1851

33. Quebec Gazette, January 16, 1852 (the elections in Bonaventure and Gaspé were usually held much later than those in the rest of the province.)

34. Jules Bélanger, Marc Desjardins, Yves Frechette, Histoire de la Gaspésie, p. 210

for Quebec City antagonistic to the government, that Christie was able to take his seat.³⁵ Another sign of the continuing importance of the Jersey-based fishing companies in the area was the election, apparently by acclamation, in Bonaventure of David LeBoutillier, the senior partner in LeBoutillier Brothers, whose activity in the Baie des Chaleurs had grown significantly during the 1840's.³⁶ Once again, the under-developed nature of the region had resulted in the selection of representatives of the large, influential companies as the District's members in the Assembly, members unattached to any political group and whose principal loyalty was to the continuing development of the Gaspé under the supervision of the firms to which they were attached.

In contrast, the election in Quebec City demonstrated another difficulty that the ruling party faced in its attempt to re-establish clear-cut political distinctions. The city's traditional Constitutionals, had, with the establishment of Responsible Government, lost a large part of their raison d'être. The effect of this had already been made clear when, in 1849, the majority of the British merchants had supported F.-X. Méthot. The depression and the agitation over the Rebellion Losses Bill had led some of these to rally to Légaré in 1850, but by the end of 1851 both of these factors were of diminishing importance. This absence of any overwhelming political issue

35. DLA, vol. 11, pt.1, pp. 11-12, August 20, 1852

36. Jules Bélanger, Marc Desjardins, Yves Frechette, Histoire de la Gaspésie, p. 211

should have benefitted the Liberals. The government, after all, was committed to the Quebec-Halifax Railroad, long demanded by the city's mercantile elite as a means of restoring Quebec's former commercial importance in Lower Canada. The French Canadians, on the other hand, while they had supported L gar  as a disciple of Papineau, had also rejected him as an ally of the British Canadian Annexationists. A final factor, of interest to both of the city's linguistic groups was that the Ministry had promised to move the seat of government to Quebec for the next session. Little difficulty could have been expected in once again securing the return of two committed Liberal partisans.

The first phase of the campaign supported this optimistic vision. Letters appeared in the Gazette urging the District to support the new Executive Council to assist the intercolonial railroad and guarantee the return of Quebec's status as the provincial capital.³⁷ At a meeting held at the beginning of November, John O'Farrell, a twenty-five year old lawyer who was to have a stormy career in Canadian politics, declared that the "Irish Reformers" had held meetings and chosen John Maguire as their candidate. He then asked the French Canadians to support this choice, and was answered "by a unanimous cry of - 'Oui!Oui!'"³⁸ That Maguire was very much an Irish Liberal candidate is confirmed by the names attached to his requisition; they were overwhelmingly Irish, with very few French-Canadian

37. letter from "A.B.C." in Quebec Gazette, May 30, 1852

38. Quebec Gazette, November 3, 1851

names included.³⁹ At last it appeared that Maguire was going to have his chance to represent Quebec City, and in the second week of November he was formally accepted as the running mate of F.-X. Méthot, for whom he had withdrawn in 1849. His Address to the Electors once again declared his attachment "to the great liberal party" and called for government support for "our material, moral, and intellectual advancement." An important note of moderation was the Address' demand for an end to the seigneurial system only with due compensation.⁴⁰ As might have been expected, Cauchon's Journal de Québec endorsed the Irishman.⁴¹

The publication, however, of Cauchon's correspondence with Hincks, in November, had already produced the first signs of complications for the Liberals in the election. On November 14, the Gazette condemned Cauchon for asserting that the French Canadians were under-represented in the Lower Canadian section of the cabinet,⁴² and Maguire publicly denied that he shared Cauchon's suspicion of the 'socialist' elements in the Executive Council.⁴³ Indeed, after the election, the Gazette was to attribute the defeat of Méthot and Maguire in part to the fact that they had received Cauchon's endorsement.⁴⁴

An even greater difficulty for the Reformers was occasioned by the declaration on the part of the two candidates who were

39. Quebec Gazette, November 12, 14, 1851

40. Quebec Gazette, November 19, 1851

41. referred in in the Montreal Pilot, November 1, 1851

42. Quebec Gazette, November 14, 1851

43. Quebec Gazette, December 3, 1851

44. Quebec Gazette, December 6, 1851

to carry the election, George Okill Stuart, a well-known and well-connected Tory lawyer, and Hyppolite Dubord, a shipbuilder, that they were prepared to support the principal measures of the Ministry. The Quebec Morning Chronicle went so far as to describe these two candidates as ministerialists.⁴⁵ The Gazette did its best of counteract the effects of this declaration by insisting that it was only an election stratagem. "A Liberal from Conviction" declared that since all candidates were equally 'liberal' in their professed principles, their attitude towards progress must serve as the deciding factor. Progress was clearly defined in terms of support for economic development, for the letter's writer reminded the readers of the Gazette that Maguire was Chairman of the city's Railway Committee, and that Méthot was a shareholder in the Quebec-Richmond railroad.⁴⁶ The Liberal paper's indignation at the continuing refusal of the Chronicle to see any difference between the two slates can be explained as partially the result of fear:

That the enemy - Messrs. Stuart and Dubord - are driven to the necessity of hoisting false colours in order to assist their cause, is a proof only of the weakness of those who resort to so dishonest a stratagem ... He must be a very novice, indeed, in election artifices, who being desirous of sustaining the Hincks-Morin Administration, should hesitate for one instant as to which set of candidates to give his vote.⁴⁷

The final result placed Stuart at the top of the poll,

45. in Quebec Gazette, November 28, December 3, 1851 (in rebuttal)

46. Quebec Gazette, November 21, 1851

47. Quebec Gazette, November 28, 1851

with 1,998 votes, followed by Dubord, who received 1,877. Méthot received only 57 votes fewer than his French-Canadian rival, but Maguire, at 1,639, lagged 359 votes behind Stuart and 181 votes behind his own running mate.⁴⁸ Explanations for these results were not lacking. Joseph Cauchon claimed that there had been a rouge-Tory-Stuart alliance, and attributed the loss to Méthot's laziness, the fact that Stuart could afford to spend 3,200¹ in buying wheat for distribution to voters, and, most significantly, to the collapse of the French-Irish alliance.⁴⁹ The Gazette blamed Cauchon, and Stuart's and Dubord's assurances that they would support the Ministry. The election, the paper claimed, was clearly not a contest based on nationality, as both slates included representatives of the city's two language groups.⁵⁰

These explanations can in part be tested against the ward-by-ward results, although there is no material available for the 1851 election that differentiates between the voting behaviour of French and British Canadians:

<u>Ward</u>	Stuart	Dubord	Méthot	Maguire
St. Lewis	128	100	73	64
Champlain	45	34	436	446
St. Peter	89	66	241	216
Palace	91	65	85	71
St. John	418	372	462	393
St. Roch	1,227	1,240	523	452
<u>Totals</u>	1,998	1,877	1,820	1,639

48. results given in Quebec Gazette, December 6, 1851

49. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, ? December, 1851

50. Quebec Gazette, December 6, 1851

What these figures reveal is a fair degree of political confusion. A number of voters evidently either divided their votes between the two slates or plumped for a particular candidate, as there are considerable differences between the votes cast in each ward for Stuart and for Dubord, as there are between those cast for Maguire and Méthot. As might be expected, Stuart outpolled Dubord in St. Lewis, which, in 1850, was 75% British in origin,⁵¹ while Dubord gathered more votes than his colleague in the overwhelmingly French-Canadian and working-class ward of St. Roch. Similarly, Maguire received more support than Méthot in the traditionally Irish stronghold of Champlain, but less in St. Peter's, where nearly half of the residents were of French Canadian stock. It is interesting to note, however, that Méthot outpolled the Irishman in St. Lewis. It is possible that some of the ward's minority of French-Canadians preferred to cast both their votes for co-nationalists; some what more probably, the strongly mercantile ward may have preferred a French-Canadian merchant to an Irish lawyer. It may be that both factors were involved.

The difference between the votes received by the two members of each slate is, however, of less importance than the support given to the two separate sets of candidates. As the figures show, each ward declared itself distinctly in favour of either the ministerialists or the alternate candidates. Thus Méthot

⁵¹. calculations based on the Census of the City of Quebec, printed in the Quebec Mercury, April 4, 1850

and Maguire captured Champlain Ward by an overwhelming majority, and St. Peter's and St. John's by slighter margins, while Stuart and Dubord took St. Lewis, Palace and St. Roch. It is evident that once again that the massive suburban ward of St. Roch was the key to the election, for both Stuart and Dubord received over sixty per cent of their total vote at this poll, while Maguire and Méthot got less than thirty percent of theirs in that ward. This is explicable as the result of Papineau's intransigent opposition to the government, for, as the by-election in 1849 had shown, the ex-Speaker commanded a large following in the suburb. With the disappearance of the annexation issue, the ward's dissatisfaction with the Liberals could again make itself felt.

Nonetheless, in that neither Stuart nor Dubord had declared themselves in favour of major constitutional changes, some additional explanation is necessary. A part of this explanation is supplied by the fact that Dubord was a ship-builder, and one of the most active supporters of the successful candidates was T.C. Lee.⁵² Thus, considerable influence in the city's major industry could be brought to bear against the ministerial candidates in a ward occupied largely by artisans involved in that industry. It is true that Méthot's partner, G.-H. Simard, also a ship-builder,⁵³ campaigned actively for the ministerialists, he employed nothing like as many hands as Lee. The

52. Quebec Gazette, December 10, 1851

53. Quebec Gazette, November 19, 1851

impoverished ward was susceptible both to Stuart's lavish expenditure and pressure from its employers. Thus, the wealthiest, most predominantly British and Conservative ward supported the same candidates as the poorest, most French-Canadian and radical poll. It is also clear that, contrary to Cauchon's statement, there had been no major collapse of the French-Irish alliance, for Champlain ward rallied unmistakably to the Liberals. Rather, for the first time, there was a clear alliance between the centre of the city and the suburbs. The Conservatives of St. Lewis, angered at the Liberals and perhaps also concerned about the spectre of socialism, found it easy to support Stuart, very much one of their own, and with him Dubord; St. Roch, still influenced by Papineau's opposition to the government and susceptible to bribery and pressure, likewise found it easier to vote for Stuart and Dubord than for the ministerialist candidates. Together, they constituted what Cauchon had described as a Tory-rouge alliance. The absence of policy differences and the confusion caused by four elections in the city in four years, allowed wealth and local prestige to reassert themselves. Thus, for the first time since 1841, the Liberals faced a defeat in Quebec.

This same pattern is also part of the explanation of the defeat in Megantic of Dunbar Ross by John Greaves Clapham. An additional factor of some importance, not only in Megantic but in all the Townships, was the increasing presence of French Canadians in the heretofore unsettled sections of the St.

Francis District.⁵⁴ Ross had certainly done his best, with the assistance of publicity from the Quebec Gazette, to establish himself as a committed supporter of Megantic's development. In May, he had convened a meeting of delegates from the county's different townships to discuss the division of the riding for municipal purposes,⁵⁵ and when the government did not act quickly enough, Ross wrote to Morin demanding an explanation.⁵⁶ He was also a member of a committee of the House struck to prepare a bill to facilitate the settlement of the Townships by applying land taxes to road improvement. When the dissolution of the Assembly brought the committee to a premature end, he joined its chairman, Thomas Fortier of Nicolet, in demanding assurances that the measure would be taken up in the next session.⁵⁷ Both Morin and Hincks had given the required promises,⁵⁸ and thus Ross was able to include in his Address to the Electors of Megantic praise for the remodelled Executive as being responsive to the county's needs.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, both these issues, local government and colonization roads inevitably posed problems in an area where "cultural prejudice reinforced local particularism."⁶⁰

Clapham, like Stuart in Quebec, had a solidly Constitu-

54. see J. I. Little, "The Peaceable Conquest," unpublished Ph. D. thesis, the University of Ottawa, 1977. For developments in Megantic, vide pp. 128-134.

55. Quebec Gazette, May 23, 1851

56. Quebec Gazette, October 31, 1851

57. Quebec Gazette, October 6, 1851

58. Quebec Gazette, October 6, October 31, 1851

59. Quebec Gazette, November 10, 1851

60. J. I. Little, op. cit., p.183 (referring to the whole St. Francis District)

tionalist background, but, also like Stuart, did not declare himself a determined opponent of the Liberal government: "I will support the general measures of the administration, in proportion to the justice which will be done to my constituents and which they may receive."⁶¹ Given that Ross in his Address had attacked "every projected organic change" in the constitution incompatible with the monarchical form of government, and called for a disposition of the Clergy Reserves that did not involve 'spoilation,'⁶² it is clear that no distinct political principles divided the two anglophone candidates. After all, before the Union, Ross had also been an active Constitutionalist.

Clapham carried the election with only 27 more votes than Ross: 565 to 538. Francois-Lemay Poudrier, a land surveyor and, as an inhabitant of Somerset Township, the only resident candidate, received 514 votes. It is clear that his presence was the key factor in Ross' defeat. The Quebec lawyer's share of the total vote had remained almost constant, declining slightly from 33.5% in 1850 to 33.3% in 1851. It is difficult to make comparisons between the results of the by-election and those of the general election. There were fewer candidates in 1851, and the number of votes cast increased from 892 to 1,617.⁶³

61. Quebec Gazette, September 1, 1852, citing Le Canadien

62. Quebec Gazette, November 10, 1851

63. these figures, and much of the following information, are taken from Ross' petition against Clapham, in DLA, vol. 11, pt. 1, 1852, pp. 238-241, September 1, 1852; the petition of André Bezeau, Richard Charles Porter and William Brogan, also against Clapham's return, in Ibid, pp. 262-9, September 3, 1852; the poll results, exclusive of Somerset, in the Quebec Gazette, December 19, 1851

This may have been only in part the result of the natural growth of the county's population, as one reason for which Ross planned to protest Clapham's return was the number of unqualified voters he alleged had supported both the merchant-notary and the land surveyor. In addition, there is no report of the results from Somerset, one of the larger townships, where Poudrier's supporters seized control of the poll. Also the election was quite violent, and at least one man was killed in a riot in Leeds between French and Irish Canadians.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, certain trends are apparent in the poll-by-poll results. Poudrier was clearly a local candidate, for he received only 109 votes outside of his home township of Somerset. It is also manifest that the overwhelmingly French Canadian settlements of Forsyth, Tring, and to a lesser extent, Halifax, which in 1850 had given a significant amount of support to Pacaud, had rallied to Ross rather than to Poudrier. The only exception to this pattern was Wolfestown, where Clapham succeeded Pacaud as the most popular candidate. Evidently, the nationality and religion of the candidates themselves did not determine voting patterns.

Nonetheless, in the contest between the two British Protestants, it is clear that the overlapping of national and local tensions secured Clapham his ~~seat in~~ the Assembly. After the election, a meeting of French Canadians in Tring declared that they refused to accept the elected member as their representative because of his anti-French principles. As proof of these, they

64. Québec Gazette, December 17, December 19, 1851

cited his support for the Craig Road over the Lambton route, allegedly because the former would favour the British residents of Leeds.⁶⁵ This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that while Clapham's support, always with the exception of Wolfestown, came massively from the north-eastern, strongly anglophone townships, Ross received the greater part of his votes in the western, heavily French Canadian areas. Thus Lambton, an almost completely French-Canadian township, gave Ross 144 votes out of its 146, and these constituted 27% of the lawyer's total. In contrast, in Leeds, almost equally completely British Canadian, 164 of 193 votes were cast in favour of Clapham, constituting more than 29% of the notary's total. These two large townships are extreme cases, but in general, nearly 70% of Ross' support came from the townships near Lambton settled by French Canadians, and over 80% of Clapham's votes came from a strip of settlements in the east from Nelson to Broughton. It is interesting to note that the only predominantly English-speaking township to give the bulk of its support to Ross was Ireland, a heavily anglophone township to the west of the county with a significant number of Irish-born residents. Clearly, Clapham, with his long-established local standing was in a better position than Ross to take advantage of the diminishing distinctions between political parties on the provincial level, and to benefit from the return to the sort of national and local tensions that had secured his election for Megantic before the Union. When the role of

65. Quebec Gazette, September 1, 1852, citing Le Canadien

Poudrier in guaranteeing Ross' defeat is considered, it is clear that this resurgence of localism was the most important factor in Clapham's victory.

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In Montreal, ~~the~~ reabsorption of the dissident element of the party and the Liberal's renewed unity found its formal expression on October 1, 1851, in the shape of a public banquet for Louis-Hyppolite LaFontaine. The dinner's organizing committee included representatives of the different groups that had at various times supported the retiring leader: ex-Tories, like John Young and William Bristow, ex-patriotes such as Wolfred Nelson, rising merchants like Henry Starnes, who was soon to become James Leslie's partner, the Irish, represented by John Fitzpatrick and L. J. Harkin, and the Liberal Annexationists in the person of L. H. Holton, who also acted as one of the dinner's stewards. The speeches in reply to the official toasts were not without their ironies. In his response to the toast to the Royal Family, the Governor-General, and Canada, Nelson declared that his father would have approved of the course taken by himself and his brother Robert in 1837 and 1838, and Cartier, another ex-rebel, answered the same toast in French. Benjamin Holmes, the Free Trade merchant, gave the response to a toast that included not only the Commercial, but also the Agricultural

and Manufacturing Interests of Canada. Bristow, in his response to "Our Sister Colonies," admitted that he had no connection at all with the Lower Provinces, and T.-J. Loranger, later to distinguish himself for his disquisitions on constitutional law, gave the response to "Lady Elgin and the Canadian fair." It was quite appropriate, however, that John Young and A.-M. Delisle should reply to the toast to "Canals and Railroads."⁶⁶

Despite this display, however, the divisions of the preceding year were not completely resolved. LaFontaine was retiring, not only from office but also from the representation of Montreal, and competing factions within the Montreal party were anxious to promote their own particular candidates for his place. In addition, both Tory and Liberal Annexationists wanted Benjamin Holmes to run again; others were equally determined that he not be renominated. William Bristow, still editor of the Pilot, was determined to replace Holmes as a leader of the city's Irish. As early as the first week in October, Bristow was publicly seeking a nomination in Montreal. At one meeting of electors, held on October 8, reference was made to an article in the Herald which referred to some of "Billy Bothsides" Bristow's earlier activities on behalf of the Conservatives of Quebec City. The Pilot's editor, seeing in this a move to block his candidacy, used the occasion to attack Holmes by attributing the manoeuvre to

⁶⁶. Members of the committee are listed in the Pilot, September 27, 1851; an account of the dinner is given in the Pilot of October 4, 1851

some two or three gentlemen who deserted the Reform ranks some time since, and are now seeking to reunite themselves to it (sic) for the sole purpose of getting Mr. Holmes - a fit representative of this clique - returned under the auspices of the Liberal party, again to sacrifice, as he did during the present Parliament, the interests of the party who sent him there.

Bristow concluded by declaring that Holmes had lost all support among the Irish.⁶⁷

This attitude was not representative of the views of the entire party. Rumours were current that Holmes would run with A.-N. Morin or G.-E. Cartier, and requisitions to that effect were in circulation.⁶⁸ When a meeting of annexationists, held on October 7, nominated Holmes and L.-J. Papineau, La Minerve accused them of stealing Holmes as a candidate from the "Reformist Ministerialist" party. Bristow, in the Pilot, denied this; Holmes, by his espousal of annexationism, had placed himself beyond the Reform pale.⁶⁹ Finally, on November 1, largely at the instance of John Young, who had been involved in promoting one of the requisitions to Holmes,⁷⁰ Bristow was forced to leave the Pilot.⁷¹ On November 12, a meeting of ward delegates definitively rejected the ex-editor's candidacy, and nominated John Young and J.-L. Beaudry.

This did not, however, settle the question of what Holmes was going to do, for Beaudry declined the nomination. At a

67. Montreal Pilot, October 9, 1851.

68. Montreal Pilot, October 14, 1851.

69. Montreal Pilot, October 11, 1851.

70. Montreal Pilot, November 22, 1851.

71. LaFontaine Papers, Joseph Cauchon to L.-H. LaFontaine, November 5, 1851.

crucial meeting of Liberals was held on November 17 to select a substitute candidate. Beaudry nominated Alfred Larocque, a wealthy rentier whose father had made his fortune in the fur trade. L. H. Holton and Henry Starnes, supported by Damasse Masson, a veteran Liberal and John Ostell, an annexationist manufacturer, then moved in amendment that the nomination be offered to Holmes. Cartier moved the following declaration:

That although the Liberal Electors of Montreal are much indebted to B. Holmes, Esq., for his past services as a member for this City ... yet it is the decided conviction of this meeting, that the circumstances of the Liberal party are such at present as to prevent their nominating him ... and that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to Mr. Holmes..

Larocque's candidacy was carried by a vote of 50 to 2. As a sign of reconciliation, Starnes, Holton and Masson were included on the Young-Larocque campaign committee.⁷²

This did not, of course, prevent Holmes from running as an independent candidate. That same evening, a meeting of British Montrealers, principally Tory Annexationists, nominated Holmes and Papineau,⁷³ and some weeks earlier a meeting of the "red republicans," called by Joseph Doutre and others, had only been prevented from nominating the ex-Speaker and the ex-Constitutionalist by the attack of a number of orthodox Liberals who seized control of the meeting.⁷⁴ Both the Herald and the Gazette

72. Montreal Pilot, November 18, 1851

73. Montreal Gazette, November 19, 1851

74. extract from La Minerve in the Pilot, October 16, 1851

endorsed the Holmes-Papineau slate,⁷⁵ and Holton, despite his membership on the Liberal campaign committee, was still anxious that Holmes stand as a candidate.

With this sort of support, Holmes could have been a dangerous challenge to the official Liberal candidates. There was also at hand an important issue that might unite a large portion of commercial Montreal. During the parliamentary session of 1851, Holmes had attacked the Quebec-Halifax Railroad, and in doing so had spoken for a number of Montrealers who saw in the proposed line a rival to the still incomplete St. Lawrence & Atlantic. Thus Quebec would benefit at the expense of the western city, for the intercolonial line would cause a considerable increase in government expenditures, an increase that would in a large part be born by Montreal's trade. Together the hegemony of Montreal and retrenchment were powerful arguments against the Ministry. A number of Liberals were concerned about the issue. On the day of Young's nomination, several members of the Liberal nominating convention wrote to the merchant to ask about his views on the proposed government railroad. A number of them, such as Holton, Ostell, Starnes and Damasse Masson, were involved in promoting Holmes' candidacy, and so it is clear that at least some Liberals had their doubts about the proposal. Young, himself very active in Montreal's railway development,

⁷⁵. The Herald's endorsement is referred to in the Pilot of November 6, 1851; the Gazette endorsed Holmes and Papineau on November 19, 1851, although it had endorsed Holmes alone as early as October 21.

gave an ambiguous response; while generally in favour of the plan, he advocated further study and retrenchment.⁷⁶ To complicate matters, the Herald printed a letter written during the previous year by Young, and addressed to John A. Poor, the Portland promoter of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic, in which the Montrealer denounced the Quebec-Halifax line as impractical, although this condemnation could only at the time have applied to the northern route established by Major Robinson.⁷⁷ The Gazette cited Holmes' opposition to the intercolonial road as a reason for endorsing him.⁷⁸

The final decision thus rested with Holmes himself. On November 19, Holton and William Workman "on behalf of the signers and promoters of one of the several requisitions addressed to you," asked Holmes to contradict or confirm the rumours that he was not going to run, in order to assist "the efforts of those who desire to see the Representation of this important constituency again entrusted to your able and experienced hands," or to enable his partisans to commit themselves to other candidates. Holmes' reply shows the extent to which he had become reconciled to the Liberal party. First of all, he declared conclusively that "It is not my intention to become a candidate for Parliamentary honours," and proceeded to explain both his decision and the reasons for its delay :

At the close of the last session of Parliament, you

76. Montreal Pilot, November 13, 1851

77. referred to in the Montreal Gazette, November 24, 1851

78. Montreal Gazette, November 19, 1851

are aware I contemplated declining a re-election, should that high honour be again tendered to me; but after my return to this city, it having been represented to me by yourselves, and other esteemed friends, that my nomination, in conjunction with a distinguished French-Canadian gentleman, would ensure a peaceable election ... while such a selection of Candidates would unite every section of the Liberal party - I consented, deeply impressed with the weight of these arguments, to allow my name to be used, and was given to understand that the Hon. Mr. Morin's would be the other name selected.

Morin, however, was not interested in running in Montréal, and informed Holmes of Young's nomination to the Chief Commissionership of Public Works. Holmes was then informed that Young was going to run in Montreal, and this determined his political course:

I hesitated not, though I differed widely from that gentleman on some questions of importance to Montreal, and to the general interest of Canada, at once to make way for him in the Representation of this City; and having come to this conclusion, I could hardly contemplate the possibility that our French Canadian friends, who form so large a portion of the Electors, would adopt two English candidates, to the exclusion of one of their own origin: - I consequently from that moment ceased to consider myself a candidate...⁷⁹

The Pilot applauded the "noble and patriotic course pursued by Mr. Holmes."⁸⁰ Thus concluded Benjamin Holmes' varied political career.

Holmes' self-sacrifice, willing or not, did not result in an acclamation for the Liberal candidates. L.-J. Papineau had decided to contest the election. His Address called for "A perfect Accord and Harmony Between Our Social State And Our

79. both letters were printed in the Montreal Pilot of November 22, 1851.

80. Montreal Pilot, November 25, 1851

Political Institutions," to be achieved by a full range of elective institutions, an extension of the franchise, and a decentralized judicial system. He praised railways in general, but denounced the Quebec-Halifax line as a "monstrosity" that was to be constructed at provincial expense for the benefit of the British military.⁸¹ The traditional Conservatives also found a candidate, William Badgley, the former Attorney-General for Canada East and member for Missisquoi. After Holmes' refusal to run, the Gazette gave its support to Badgley.⁸² In addition, the dissident Irish, led by Bernard Devlin, also had their own candidate, a Peter Devins, the Court Crier, of Montreal.

Thus, by the day of official nomination, there were five candidates for Montreal's two seats. Inevitably, the election was hotly contested. The Municipal Council decided to swear in five companies of special constables, as there were fears that the St. Lawrence & Atlantic would bring in its workers in order to interfere with the city's election. Galt, Casimir Gzowski and John Young all vehemently denied this on behalf of the company. The Corporation did not, however, change its mind, and was denounced for partisanship by the Pilot.⁸³ On the first day of the poll, Young led, followed by Papineau, Larocque, Badgley and Devins.⁸⁴

The final results, however, gave Young, 1,362 votes, and

81. Montreal Gazette, December 3, 1851

82. Montreal Gazette, November 26, 1851

83. Montreal Pilot, December 2, 1851

84. Montreal Pilot, December 4, 1851

Badgley, 1,292. Papineau, facing electoral defeat for the first time in his career, received 1,198, followed by Larocque with 945. The key role belonged to Devins; his 923 votes, otherwise distributed, could have changed fundamentally the outcome of the election.⁸⁵ The distribution of the totals in each ward confirms the hesitant admission on the part of the Pilot that while many French Canadians had supported Young, slightly more had rallied to Papineau. A letter in that paper claimed that 792 French Canadians had voted for the ex-Speaker, while 560 had voted for the Scottish merchant.⁸⁶ Correspondingly, in the two most heavily French-Canadian wards, East Ward (50.8% French Canadian) and St James (69.3% French Canadian), Papineau topped the poll, followed by, in the former, Young, and in the latter, Devins.

The two most striking features of the returns are the votes cast for Badgley and those for Devins. Lord Elgin, writing to Earl Grey, made it clear that the victory of the former Attorney-General was not a sign of the continuing Tory dominance of Montreal; rather, faced with the prospect of seeing Papineau elected, the ministerialists had abandoned Larocque and rallied to Badgley.⁸⁷ This was necessary, for Papineau was polling well, not only in the traditionally radical wards such as St.

85. The following figures are based on the results given in the Montreal Pilot of December 13, 1851, and the census of the City of Montreal, published in the Pilot of April 18, 1850

86. Montreal Pilot, January 6, 1852, letter from "E.M."

87. A. G. Doughty, ed., op. cit., vol. 3, p. 975, Lord Elgin to Earl Grey, December 5, 1851

Antoine's, but also in the more Conservative divisions of the city, such as Centre Ward. Clearly, a Tory-rouge alliance, as in Quebec, was in the making, and the success of Peter Devins in attracting support made the sacrifice of Larocque imperative. Devins' supporters were not simply the Irish of the city. For example, in St. Anne's, the ward with the highest percentage of Irish-born residents, Young received nearly twice as many votes as Devins, and in fact the Irishman was the fourth-place candidate in that ward's polls. On the other hand, Devins received his largest totals in St. James and St. Lawrence, the wards in which respectively Papineau and Badgley led the poll. Evidently, a number of voters were prepared to support any combination of candidates save that sanctioned by the ministerial party. Given Bernard Devlin's role in promoting Devins' candidacy, this is not surprising; behind his candidate both radical Irishmen and Tories could easily ally. This alliance did not of course go unnoticed, and a letter appeared in the Pilot condemning Devlin for allying his candidate with Orangemen and infidels in the name of Irish Catholicism.⁸⁸

The election in Montreal set the tone for the contests in the surrounding area. In Chambly, for example, Mahon Willet's Address to the Electors followed closely the line laid down by Papineau, calling for "Elective Institutions in their fullest sense, for Retrenchment," and for the abandonment of the Quebec-Halifax Railroad. Only in his call for an end to the seigneurial

88. Montreal Pilot, December 2, 1851, from an "Irishman"

system did Willet differ from the ex-Speaker.⁸⁹ Willet, however, was not an impressive candidate, and Dr. Pierre Beaubien, a stalwart Liberal, easily retained his seat. The most significant election in the district was that in Beauharnois, whose sitting member, Jacob DeWitt, was not only an Annexationist and a former patriote, but also a man of considerable local wealth and importance.

The election in Beauharnois shows once again how the earlier splits within the Liberal party resulted in a number of very close contests. The election was carried by Ovide LeBlanc, who had been anxious to be a candidate in 1844, with 1,328 votes. Behind him came Edmund Henry Parsons, a rather unscrupulous contractor and political agent usually active during the 1840s on the Tory side, with a total of 1,161 votes. At the bottom of the poll, was DeWitt, who received 1,125 votes. Clearly, the role played by Parsons in diverting the Conservative vote away from DeWitt was of crucial importance. According to the Gazette, DeWitt had received 400 Conservative votes before Parsons last-minute candidacy drained them away.⁹⁰ It was charged that there had been a covert alliance between Parsons and LeBlanc to ensure DeWitt's defeat, and that clerical influence had been central in intimidating those French Canadians who might have supported the sitting member. DeWitt failed to benefit, however, from the anti-clericalism of the riding's Scots Pres-

89. Montreal Gazette, December 8, 1851

90. Montreal Gazette, December 22, 1851

byterians because, again, Parsons acted as an alternative.⁹¹ The Pilot inevitably denied these reports of priestly machinations and underhanded conspiracies,⁹² but it appears that DeWitt's defeat was the result of both Parsons' candidacy and of all the resources the Ministry could muster on the side of LeBlanc. The French parishes, such as St. Timothée were shaken by violent clashes between DeWitt's supporters and LeBlanc's partisans. Evidently, the ministerialists out-marshalled their opponents, as these French settlements, the same communities that in earlier elections had ensured DeWitt's return, provided LeBlanc with his majority.

The results from the Eastern Townships formed part of this mixed pattern of gains and losses for the Ministry. While annexationism as a serious policy had virtually disappeared, resentment over the government's purge of dissenting office-holders still lingered. In addition, LaFontaine's School and Municipal legislation had not become more popular by becoming law. The latter was particularly unpopular, and at a meeting held in Durham during the summer it was denounced as "being despotic in its nature, inconsistent with justice, and will encroach on the liberty and property of Her Majesty's subjects."⁹³ In light of these enduring angers, perhaps the most striking political development in the St. Francis District was the election of

91. The charges were made by "Scrutator" in the Montreal Pilot, December 26, 1851, and the Montreal Gazette, December 22, 1851

92. Montreal Pilot, December 13, 26, 1851

93. Sherbrooke Gazette, July 26, 1851

Seneca Paige in the traditionally Conservative riding of Missisquoi. Paige, a merchant who had been active in Missisquoi's pro-Elgin agitation, was hailed in the Pilot as a "staunch and uncompromising liberal who has adhered without wavering to the Reform party."⁹⁴ The election of the Liberal resident candidate showed that, in Missisquoi as in Megantic, party and local divisions overlapped, for Paige appears to have been most strongly supported in the northern section of the county, the area where most French Canadians had settled. By 1851, nearly one-fifth of the county's population was of French Canadian origin.⁹⁵ This factor alone, however, was but an additional complication in a long-standing local polarization between the old Loyalist settlements to the south near Frelighsburgh, and the newer communities to the centre and north-west of the riding. As was mentioned above, before the Act of Union, petitions had been presented to the Assembly demanding that the location of the poll be moved from Frelighsburgh, but action had been blocked in the Legislative Council. In 1852, Paige succeeded in having the local Registry Office shifted from that Tory stronghold, where it had been established for the benefit of the local "family compact," to Dunham Flats, a centre of Liberal support.⁹⁶ Evidently, the alienation of new settlement in those parts of

94. in a letter from "Veritas" in the Montreal Pilot of February 19, 1852

95. vide J. I. Little, op. cit., pp. 158-161

96. Montreal Gazette, November 11, 1852 (attacking Paige); a letter from "Missisquoi" in the Montreal Pilot, November 18, 1851 (in Paige's defence)

Missisquoi that had not benefitted from the patronage administered by earlier members, and the desire for development in a settler-community, together produced the election of an adherent of the Ministry.

This hunger for development was not, however, entirely an aid to the election of a Liberal partisan. While William Badgley was still considered a likely candidate in Missisquoi, a convention had been held in Dunham, on September 23, to choose a resident candidate. On the third ballot, A.L. Taylor was chosen, partly as a result of his dedication to a railway to open up the Missisquoi River Valley.⁹⁷ Taylor's Address, however, showed that support for railway development did not necessarily include support for the government's railway policy. Like Papineau, he declared himself opposed to the Quebec-Halifax line as an unnecessary addition to the provincial debt. Styling himself "a Reformer in the most comprehensive sense," Taylor, again like Papineau, called for retrenchment, more elective offices, and a system of representation based on population.⁹⁸ The fact, however, that Paige, unlike Badgley, was a resident candidate, appears to have sapped much of the force of Taylor's candidacy, and there is no evidence that the radical went to the poll.

The Quebec-Halifax railroad also played a role in other elections in the District, which, after all, could not expect

97. Stanstead Journal, October 2, 1851

98. Stanstead Journal, October 16, 1851

much benefit from the intercolonial line. The issue was prominent in the contest in Stanstead, where John M'Connell was retiring from politics. There, the two rival candidates were the political veteran, Marcus Child, and H. B. Terrill, the representative of a locally prominent family. Terrill, unlike his annexationist brother Timothy, had supported C. B. Cleveland in the Sherbrooke by-election of 1850. In the general election, Child displayed none of the ambiguity towards the Liberals that he had manifested in 1846. While he supported revisions in the School and Laws enacted by the LaFontaine-Baldwin government; he strongly endorsed the new Ministry, and praised the Quebec-Halifax road as "a great national work." In contrast, Terrill, without pledging himself to any political party, called for non-coercive school laws, attacked Thomas Fortier's plan for the colonization of the Townships, called for retrenchment in government expenditure, and strongly condemned the intercolonial railroad as too expensive. John M'Connell, as might have been expected, gave his support to Terrill. Child had attacked the county's previous representative for inactivity in the affairs of his constituents, and M'Connell had replied by criticizing Child for exercising an undue influence in the distribution of patronage in the riding through his connections with the government.⁹⁹

Terrill carried the election by the comfortable margin

⁹⁹. account of the nomination meeting in the Stanstead Journal, December 4, 1851

of 743 to 358.¹⁰⁰ Only in one poll, Magog, did Child carry the majority of the votes cast. While Terrill's support was thus clearly well-distributed throughout the riding, it does appear that his position was strongest in the three townships that lay on the American border, Stanstead, Barnston, and Potton. These three poll provided the victorious candidate with 72% of his total support, while only supplying 44% of Child's. It might be expected that those parts of the county closest to the United States were the most militantly in favour of localized, economic government, and least interested in the public financing of railway development that had a strong east-west emphasis.

In other ridings in the Townships, the election results were even less favourable to the Ministry. In Sherbrooke Town, for example, the Liberals' new adherent, B.C.A. Gagy was so unpopular that he did not present himself. The two men who contested the election were both avowedly independent of partisan affiliation, and both opposed to the Fortier colonization plan. Edward Short, a former representative of the town and member par excellence of the old Tory local elite, faced John Griffiths, who distinguished himself principally by his vehement opposition to the intercolonial railroad. Short easily carried the election, out-polling Griffiths by two to one before the latter withdrew.¹⁰¹ In Sherbrooke County, as in the Town, neither of

¹⁰⁰. figures given in the Stanstead Journal, December 18, 1851.

¹⁰¹. Stanstead Journal, December 18, 1851

the two principal candidates were partisans of the Ministry. J. S. Sanborn faced John Henry Pope, a local farmer and budding entrepreneur, who was to play an important part in the politics of the Townships for the next forty years. In this election, however, Sanborn easily defeated Pope by a vote of 1,041 to 717. Once again, the pattern of localization was strongly marked in the poll-by-poll results.¹⁰² Three of the thirteen polls, Compton, Ascot and Shipton, gave Sanborn 59% of his total, but only 17.5% of Pope's; similarly, Pope received 45% of his support from Melbourne and Weedon, where Sanborn garnered only 9% of his total.

There had been two ridings in the Townships that, in 1848, had elected Liberals as their representatives: Drummond and Shefford. In Shefford County, L. T. Drummond, the minister with an especial responsibility for the affairs of the District, faced James O'Halloran, an Irish-born Free Mason with a Master's degree from the University of Vermont. In 1851, O'Halloran was only thirty years old, and would not in fact be called to the bar of Lower Canada until the following year. Thus it is not surprising that Drummond easily defeated him by 1,146 votes to 652.¹⁰³ The Montreal Gazette claimed that O'Halloran had the support of the British Canadians in the riding, while Drummond was backed by the county's French Canadian inhabitants.¹⁰⁴ That this was not entirely is manifest; otherwise

102. figures given in the Stanstead Journal, December 18, 1851

103. figures given in the Montreal Gazette, January 5, 1852

104. Montreal Gazette, December 24, 1851

Drummond could scarcely have carried the riding by such a large majority. Nonetheless, it is clear that, as in Megantic, ethnic and local polarizations overlapped, for the county was clearly divided along a north-east axis. Roxton, Stukely and Ely, all to the north-east, gave 535 of their 582 votes to the ministerialist candidate, providing 46.7% of his support, while Brome and Granby, to the south and south-west respectively, together supplied 43.5% of O'Halloran's total vote, but only 17.8% of Drummond's. The two central townships of Shefford and Farnham divided more closely than the other poll, with slight majorities in Drummond's favour. This pattern matches that of French-Canadian settlement in the county.¹⁰⁵ Roxton had been the centre of the Association des Townships' one successful colonization programme, and both Stukely and Ely had shown large increases in their French Canadian population. Thus, by 1851, Roxton was 83% French Canadian, Stukely 72%, and Ely 57%. Brome and Granby, however, were enduring bastions of English Canadian settlement. This correlation between French Canadian settlement and Liberal support was not absolute; in Shefford township, for example, Drummond received 112 votes while O'Halloran only got 109, despite the fact that only 19% of its residents were of French Canadian origin, while in Granby, which gave 153 of its 264 votes to O'Halloran, 31% of the population was French Canadian. This last is perhaps explicable by the fact that in the established anglophone communities, many French Canadians were merely hired

105. J. I. Little, op.cit., pp. 153-7

hands, and thus not qualified to vote. Nonetheless, while evidently a large number of anglophones supported Drummond, it was the solid block of French Canadian settlers, assisted by the changes that Drummond had made establishing the promesse de devant as a qualification for the franchise, that had made the Liberal's victory a certainty.

The election in Drummond, the most heavily French Canadian of the District's ridings, also produced results favourable to the Liberal party. The sitting member, R. N. Watts, did not present himself, and there are indications that politics was ceasing to be of interest to him.¹⁰⁶ His attendance in the Assembly had become so occasional that arguments about it had resulted in an embarrassing shoving match between Watts and H. J. Boulton.¹⁰⁷ This apathy had not gone unnoticed; at the same meeting in Durham where LaFontaine's School and Municipal Laws had been attacked, Watts was criticized because he, in

absenting himself from the present session of Parliament, when so many measures of importance are before the house, manifests a marked indifference to the interests of his constituents.¹⁰⁸

Watts unpopularity, however, did not prevent the election of John MacDougall, identified by the Pilot as a Liberal, over the Tory candidate, a Mr. Marler, by 1, 479 votes to 504.¹⁰⁹

In other parts of Lower Canada, the elections produced

¹⁰⁶. Leslie Papers, vol. 1, R. N. Watts to Patrick Leslie, November 6, 1851. Watts here congratulates James Leslie, in writing to his son, "on being out of harness."

¹⁰⁷. described in the Montreal Gazette, July 29, 1851

¹⁰⁸. Shérbrooke Gazette, July 26, 1851

¹⁰⁹. Montreal Pilot, December 20, 1851

mixed results for the Ministry's anglophone supporters. In Berthier, David Armstrong, making a temporary withdrawal from politics, was replaced by Joseph-Hilarion Jobin, an aspiring politician with strong rouge connections. In Ottawa County, John Egan, strong in the support of Thomas M'Goey's Reform Association¹¹⁰ and his own prominence in the timber trade, also appears to have secured an unopposed return. Similarly, W. H. Scott, despite his occasional displays of independence in the House, was acclaimed in his old stronghold of Two Mountains. Unfortunately for the Liberals, the Scots merchant died almost immediately after the election, thus necessitating a by-election in 1852.

As in the two previous elections, the general election of 1851 produced a slight decline in the number of anglophones elected in Canada East; fourteen English-speaking members were chosen, a decline of three since 1848. This slight change, however, conceals a number of important shifts in the anglophone representation of Lower Canada. One of these was the virtual disappearance of the old anglo-patriotes from the Assembly. With the retirement of Nelson and Leslie, the defeat of Jacob DeWitt, and the death of W.H. Scott, none of the English-speaking politicians who had supported Papineau after 1832 remained in the Legislature. Thus, the English-speaking Liberals were drawn from those, like Drummond and Paige, whose political careers

¹¹⁰.. McGoey was re-elected to the Association's presidency near the beginning of 1851, as recorded in the Montreal Pilot, February 1, 1851

had commenced with the Union, or from those whose conversion to the Liberal party had taken place in the 1840s, as in the case of Young and Egan. This pattern applies almost equally to the defeated anglophone candidates on the ministerialist side; with the exception of Child, all were either young politicians, like Maguire, or converts from the Constitutionalist cause like Dunbar Ross. Clearly, 1851 marked the end of a political generation among English-speaking Liberals.

This development is paralleled to a remarkable extent by the return to politics, in at least covert opposition to the Ministry, of a number of British Canadians who had distinguished themselves before the Union as members of the parti bureaucrate. Edward Short, J. G. Clapham, and G. Okill Stuart had all been prominent members of the provincial elite in the 1830s. It is important to note that this trend, of itself, did not constitute a resurgence in Canada East of the Conservative party as such. The Montreal Gazette, in endorsing Benjamin Holmes, admitted that the Conservative party was in too ruinous a state to present its own candidates.¹¹¹ Perhaps only William Badgley can be considered as a representative of the party that Metcalfe had tried to create. Despite their backgrounds and the attempts of the Pilot to define the contests in terms of Tory and Reformer, Short, Stuart and Clapham were clearly independents, local representatives. This characteristic was shared by other members. Both Sanborn and Terrill were unpledged as to their

111. Montreal Gazette, October 21, 1851

course in the Assembly. Indeed, the whole election appears to have been marked by a resurgence of localism. In the Eastern Townships, the number of non-resident representatives declined by a half, from four to two.¹¹² In a number of contests independent candidates of local standing, such as Devins of Montreal, Parson in Beauharnois and Poudrier in Megantic, played key roles in determining the final results, even though they themselves were not elected.

This trend was clearly to the detriment of the Liberal party. In 1848, 10 of the 17 Lower Canadian anglophones elected had been Reformers; in 1851 only 6 out of 14 could have been considered committed ministerialists. True, Parsons' candidacy had ensured DeWitt's defeat in Beauharnois, but this cannot outweigh the losses in Megantic, Quebec and Montreal. Manifestly, the attempt by Hincks and Morin to re-unify the party, albeit largely successful among the leadership, had not produced an equal degree of cohesion among the voters, and the party, in 1851 was paying the price of the internal divisions of the preceding year.

Superficially, at least, these divisions had done little to affect the image of the party as a political rather than national organization. Indeed, the suggestion inherent in Cauchon's attacks on the Ministry was that the Liberals in power accept a policy which in opposition they had rejected, that of

¹¹². Ronald Patrick Frye, "Resident Representation," unpublished M.A. paper, University of Ottawa, 1977, p.92. (corrected)

basing the Executive Council on national distinctions. This suggestion Hincks and Morin had spurned. Nonetheless, with the disappearance of the anglo-patriotes, no anglophone represented an overwhelmingly French Canadian constituency; Leslie, Armstrong, Nelson, DeWitt, and, in 1852, Scott, were all replaced by French Canadians. Even more striking was the extent to which anglophone Liberals depended for their seats upon the size and unity of the French Canadians in their riding. This trend was most clearly marked in the Townships, where the growing number of French Canadians promised well for the future of the Liberal party, but also suggested that in the future even Liberal anglophone politicians would be replaced. With the struggle over Responsible Government resolved, one aspect of the party, that of a vehicle for French Canadian nationalism, was acquiring added emphasis. This of course strengthened the position of a party based upon a nationalism defined in the urban centres; the resurgence of the independent, local, anglophone elites can be seen as a response to this trend.

In summation, then, the first phase of the Hincks-Morin Ministry contained both advances and checks for the importance of Lower Canada's English-speaking Liberals. While their influence in the upper levels of the government had been increased by the appointments of Drummond and Young, the election of 1851 made it clear that their significance in the parliamentary party and the countryside was on the decline. Cauchon's criticism of the artificiality of this position was a warning of problems to

come. Nonetheless, the election confirmed the Hincks-Morin Ministry as the government by a strong majority. This success was of course based upon the delicate cobbling together of Clear Grits, ex-annexationists, and increasingly conservative French Catholics in the name of the great Reform tradition. The viability of this pre-eminently political combination would depend on the expertise with which the two new leaders resolved the issues that had been deferred during the last session and their ability to maintain harmony among the different religious, regional, national and economic groups upon whose support they depended.

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The new Assembly was not convened in Quebec until August 19, 1852, nearly a year after the dissolution of the previous legislature. The first eight months of the new year were accordingly filled with uncertain and ambiguous signs as to how far the newly re-forged unity of the party might extend. One such sign was the presence of L. H. Holton at a banquet held in honour of Malcolm Cameron, the Clear Grit President of the Council. In answer to the toast to "Our Brother Reformers of Lower Canada," the Montrealer rejected the suggestion that the Lower Canadians could ever ally themselves with the Upper

Canadian Tories, and praised John Young, the Chief Commissioner of Public Works. Somewhat more ominously, Holton cited the radical tradition of the 92 Resolutions to show the reforming zeal of the Lower Canadians, and explicitly denounced Joseph Cauchon's 'Socialist' slurs on the Clear Grits as the tactic of a disappointed politician.¹¹³ William Bristow returned to the editorial chair of the Pilot, probably at the beginning of May,¹¹⁴ thereby healing one rift in the party, although at the same time creating the possibility of future difficulties with this ambitious and unreliable man.

The municipal elections in both cities went fairly peacefully. In Quebec, John Maguire was acclaimed in Champlain Ward, and the only complication in the capital was the election for St. Roch of T.C. Lee, the annexationist ship-builder.¹¹⁵ The Montreal elections followed the same pattern; in St. Antoine, a former annexationist, Edwin Atwater, defeated Damasse Masson, largely with the support of other signatories of the Annexation Manifesto, such as John Torrance, Holton, Jacob DeWitt and William Workman,¹¹⁶ but in the St. Lawrence Ward, Rollo Campbell was elected, defeating Bernard Devlin. A reliable Reformer, Charles Wilson, was overwhelmingly re-elected as Mayor, and his

¹¹³. Montreal Pilot, March 4, 1852

¹¹⁴. A new editor was announced as starting on May 1 in the Montreal Pilot of April 20, 1852, and in the Pilot of August 23, 1852, Bristow is mentioned as editor.

¹¹⁵. Quebec Gazette, February 4, 1852

¹¹⁶. Montreal Gazette, January 23, 1852. (requisition to Edwin Atwater and N. Valois)

only opponent had been another Liberal, Rollo Campbell.¹¹⁷

Throughout the province, the new Ministry did its best through the use of patronage to maintain its hold on the loyalties of its partisans. Thus, Benjamin Holmes was named as a trustee of the Royal Institute for the Advancement of Learning,¹¹⁸ and Marcus Child was appointed School Inspector for the St. Francis District.¹¹⁹ The position of Police Magistrate in Quebec, with a salary of 300^l. was offered to Dunbar Ross; when he declined the office it was offered to John Maguire, who accepted it.¹²⁰

On the whole, 1852 was a good year for the Irish lawyer, for on March 5, he was elected to the Presidency of the Quebec St. Patrick's Society with his ally, John O'Farrell, as Secretary.¹²¹ In contrast, in Montreal, for the first time in nearly a decade, the Irish national society's presidency went to a man unconnected with the Liberal party when Thomas Ryan, a ship-owner and prominent Conservative, was elected. A partisan of Drummond, Henry Harkin, however was chosen to serve on the Committee of Management.¹²² Before this election, Harkin had acted as Drummond's deputy at the Society's banquet. One toast at the dinner, to which William Bristow gave the reply, called for "a speedy release to William Smith O'Brien and his fellow Exiles," a

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- 117. Montreal Pilot, March 6, 1852 (election results)
 - 118. Montreal Gazette, August 17, 1852
 - 119. Montreal Gazette, April 30, 1852
 - 120. Montreal Pilot, June 23, 1852
 - 121. Quebec Gazette, March 8, 1852
 - 122. Montreal Pilot, April 10, 1852

reference to the Irish rebels who had been sent to Australia after the uprising in 1848.¹²³ The agitation for their release was by that time already well under way. At the end of January, "An Irishman" in the Pilot had urged that the Canadian legislature send a memorial to the Queen on the subject,¹²⁴ and by February petitions to this effect were in circulation in Montreal.¹²⁵ Towards the end of February, the City Council in Quebec did in fact petition the Queen for the release of the exiles.¹²⁶ While in Canada the tradition of clemency for rebels was well established, such an agitation among the Irish could easily recreate some of the divisions the colony had seen in 1848.

There was one development, however, during the summer of 1852 that was clearly unfavourable to the Ministry. Louis-Joseph Papineau decided to contest the vacancy in Two Mountains created by the death of William Henry Scott. Despite the fact that in January L'Avenir, citing financial difficulties, had suspended publication, the rouge faction and its anglophone allies were not prepared to abandon politics. A more moderate paper, Le Pays, was established to carry on the groups' opposition to the government. At the annual meeting of the Corporation of the Montreal Bar, A.-A. Dorion was elected Batonnier, and Robert M'Kay a Syndic. According to the Pilot, these victories

123. Montreal Pilot, March 23, 1852

124. Montreal Pilot, January 31, 1852

125. Montreal Pilot, February 26, 1852

126. Montreal Pilot, March 27, 1852

were not simply the results of the undeniable legal skill of the two men; rather, a rouge caucus had prepared a party ticket for the election.¹²⁷ These events were of some importance in the Two Mountains election, for Papineau was to rely heavily on such Montreal supporters in his campaign.

Indeed, the by-election appears to have been very much a Montreal affair. J. J. C. Abbott, son of the Bursar of McGill, a young Montreal lawyer who had signed the Annexation Manifesto, joined Joseph Papin, a leading rouge, in escorting Papineau to the official nomination meeting.¹²⁸ Both the Herald and the Gazette endorsed Papineau.¹²⁹ The Pilot was particularly active in the campaign. It attacked the "British and other electors" who were prepared to elect an avowed supporter of the seigneurial regime.¹³⁰ This issue was continually re-emphasized in the paper, and the Pilot pointed out that the ministerialist candidate, Dr. Pierre Dumouchel, had come out strongly against that system of land tenure.¹³¹ "C.F." from St. Andrew's wrote to the Liberal organ to denounce "the few Tory Scotch traders and farmers in this village who toss up their caps for Mr. Papineau," pointing out that while the ex-Speaker had built himself a manor house, his censitaires lived in mud hovels.¹³² One such local Tory figure was C. J. Forbes, the Tory militia officer and

127. Montreal Pilot, May 3, 1852

128. Montreal Pilot, July 2, 1852

129. The Herald's endorsement is referred to in the Pilot of July 8, 1852; Montreal Gazette, June 25, 1852

130. Montreal Pilot, June 28, 1852

131. Montreal Pilot, July 8, 1852

132. Montreal Pilot, July 5, 1852

landowner who had supported Scott in 1844. The Pilot also did its best to disassociate the late member from his former leader by insisting that Papineau, unlike Scott, had refused to change with the times.¹³³ Despite the Pilot's attempts to sketch the contest as a struggle between inconsistent Tories motivated by a blind hatred of the government, and progressive-minded French and British Canadian Liberals, it is clear that Papineau's support combined both language and political groups. Dumouchel did not come to the poll, and Papineau received a triumphant acclamation. On August 16, a "Gathering of the Reds" was held in Bonsecours Market to salute Papineau's election. The activity at this meeting of Jacob DeWitt and Theodore Hart shows that not all of the Liberal Annexationists had been reconciled to the party with Holmes and Holton.¹³⁴ The numbers that attended this meeting were hotly disputed. The Herald " and its little friend and fellow-labourer, in what is facetiously called 'la grande et belle cause de la democratie Canadienne,'" Le Pays, set the total at 25,000; the Pilot put it at 500, and the Gazette estimated it at between 1,500 and 2,000.¹³⁵

Upon Papineau's arrival in Quebec to attend the first session of the new Assembly, he was met by a delegation composed of Hyppolite Dubord, one of the new members for the city, Edouard Glackemeyer and T.C. Lee,¹³⁶ a sign that at least some of those

133. Montreal Pilot, July 8, 1852

134. Montreal Pilot, August 17, 1852

135. Montreal Pilot, August 19, 1852, citing different figures

136. Quebec Gazette, August 18, 1852

who had secured Dubord's and Stuart's return were prepared to look to the member for Two Mountains for leadership. Despite this, the first few weeks of the session were remarkable for their calm. One sign of this was the ease with which the government's nominee, John Sandfield Macdonald, was elected to the Speaker's chair. While Badgley, Dubord and Stuart were among the twenty-three members who voted against the member for Glengarry, Sanborn, Terrill and even Papineau were in the majority of fifty-five.¹³⁷

Of itself, the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne was an extremely moderate statement of the government's intentions. A number of cautious reforms were promised. One, of largely practical value, was the introduction of decimal currency. The franchise was to be extended in Upper Canada, and yet another measure to increase the size of the Assembly was to be introduced. The two most important issues left over from the preceding year, the Clergy Reserves and Seigneurial Tenure were mentioned in very guarded terms. The Address expressed deep regret that the Imperial Government had not acted upon the Assembly's request that the matter be left to the colonial legislature, but made no commitment as to how the issue would be resolved once it was within the jurisdiction of the Assembly. The grievances arising from the seigneurial system were acknowledged, but the matter was declared to be "one of great delicacy," and "a scrupulous regard for rights of property which

137. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 1, p. 4, August 19, 1852

have been acquired and exercised in good faith" was promised.¹³⁸

In the ensuing debate, however, members of the government made much stronger statements of their devotion to the principles of reform. Hincks declared unequivocally that secularization was the only way to deal with the Reserves.¹³⁹ Morin referred the House to Drummond for details of the government's plans for the abolition of seigneurial tenure, but insisted on "une solution prompt de cette question irritante."¹⁴⁰ Even more striking was the French Canadian leader's statement that while the matter had not been mentioned in the Speech, the government would introduce proposals changing the nature of the Legislative Council.¹⁴¹ While Morin used extremely veiled language in these comments, this nonetheless constituted a remarkable reversal of the last session's declaration against any constitutional change. Both Hincks and Morin thus made it clear that they did not share their predecessors' hesitancy on these issues.

All but two clauses of the Address were adopted unanimously. As might have been expected in light of the tone taken by the Ministry's two leaders, the two clauses were those that dealt with the Reserves and seigneurial tenure. The clause dealing with the former was carried by a vote of 47 to 16. Four Lower Canadians were in the minority, two Conservatives and two ministerialists. The votes of Badgley and LeBoutillier of

138. *Ibid*, pp. 42-4, August 24, 1852

139. *Ibid*, p. 70, August 24, 1852

140. *Ibid*, p. 81, August 24, 1852

141. *Ibid*, p. 80, August 24, 1852

Bonaventure might have been predicted, but L.-M. Viger was opposed to the alienation of any property dedicated to sacred ends, and John MacDougall of Drummond manifested here what was to be an inveterate objection to the 'spoilation' of the Reserves. It is worth noting that Clapham, Stuart and Sanborn all voted in the majority. The government carried the second clause by a slightly narrower margin, as radical French Canadians and British Tories combined behind a vague amendment. Badgley and LeBoutillier were the only Lower Canadian anglophones to support the amendment. Again, Clapham, Stuart and Sanborn supported the Ministry.¹⁴²

The Hincks-Morin Ministry had to all appearances succeeded in establishing itself as the vehicle of the Reform tradition. Prompt government action had been promised on those issues which the LaFontaine-Baldwin government had refused to act, and the process of constitutional change was to be renewed. A heated debate was provoked in September when Hincks introduced a series of resolutions protesting against the Imperial government's continuing refusal to transfer control over the Clergy Reserves, but all of the resolutions were passed with majorities of least thirty. It was thus something of a political shock when, on September 20, John Young announced to the House that he had resigned from the Executive Council.

Young's resignation was dated 18th of September, and he himself admitted that up to the 13th "the utmost harmony

142. Ibid, pp. 206-7, August 30, 1852

prevailed in the Cabinet, on the various questions of policy submitted."¹⁴³ One such point of agreement had been the principle of removing the restrictions on commerce, and in his speech on the Address, the Inspector-General had re-iterated his attachment to Free Trade principles.¹⁴⁴ Hincks, however, frustrated by the Americans' refusal to concede a reciprocal trading arrangement, had resolved to impose a series of retaliatory measures, such as increasing the tolls on American ships passing through the Welland canal and imposing a series of differential tariffs on goods entering the colony across the Great Lakes, in order to persuade the Americans to change their policy. To Young, the results of Hincks' proposals would be a general redirection of trade away from Canadian canals and railroads towards the American system. The distant possibility of achieving reciprocity could not justify such a violation of the principles of Free Trade. Young, in his letter of resignation, reminded Morin that

I entered the government as an avowed friend of Free Trade. My views have been the result of some years of action and reflection and were well known to my colleagues on entering the ministry. To abandon Free Trade in order to carry out a retaliatory policy, which I am satisfied will in the end be most injurious, is a sacrifice of principle, I am not prepared to make, and a sacrifice which had I supposed it would have been required of me, would, without hesitation, have prevented me becoming (sic) a member of the Government.¹⁴⁵

Young's letter concentrated exclusively on this difference

143. Ibid, p. 586, September 20, 1852.

144. Ibid, p. 73, August 24, 1852.

145. Quebec Gazette, September 24, 1852.

in political economics, as did the comments of the newspapers on his resignation. William Bristow of the Pilot had been involved in the Free Trade Association in 1846, and was no doubt anxious not to alienate Young from the party. Thus the Liberal organ took a fairly mild tone, simply reminding its readers that

Neither Mr. Young nor the extremest Free Trader ever pretended that the foreigner has a right to be placed on an exactly similar footing with the home producer or manufacturer.¹⁴⁶

The Quebec Mercury, in its comments somewhat later, had no reason to spare Young:

The head of the free trade clique in Montreal was Mr. Young, late Commissioner of Public Works, who having read Cobden's speech and Malthus the apologist for child murder, the Penny Magazine and some two-penny tracts and printed lectures on political economy, undertook to play pedagogue to the wondering natives of Canada....¹⁴⁷

Nonetheless, there were other factors that probably played a part in Young's resignation, for the Montreal merchant moved into opposition to the government on a number of issues. It was this that gives his withdrawal from the Executive Council so much importance in the history of English-speaking Liberals in Canada East, for it provided the catalyst that would unite former annexationists and radical Liberals and thus lead to the emergence of the Anglo-rouge.

146. Montreal Pilot, September 22, 1852.

147. Quebec Mercury, May 3, 1853

Chapter X

Railways, Religion and Radicalism : The end of the united Liberal Party

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The involvement of prominent Liberals in Lower Canada's railways had not diminished since 1846. Although during the election campaign of 1847-8 the party had lost its principal connection with the Champlain & St. Lawrence through the death from cholera of the company's chairman, John E. Mills, A.-N. Morin had been elected to the presidency of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic even before the Liberals took office.¹ In the summer of 1849, the Speaker of the Assembly, LaFontaine and other Liberals, including Benjamin Holmes, John Young, Holton, Theodore Hart and Wolfred Nelson had joined Conservatives William Molson and David Torrance in urging the City of Montreal to invest 125,000¹ in the railway company.² The municipal government, dominated by Liberals, endorsed the step,³ a move made legally possible by a bill passed in May, 1849. When this money, and the

1. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 149

2. Montreal Pilot, July 28, August 2, 1849

3. Montreal Pilot, March 7, 1849

investments of the Seminaire de St. Sulpice and the British American Land Company, failed to rescue the railway from its financial difficulties, John Young played a crucial role in raising funds in England.⁴ His success earned him in January, 1850, a public testimonial organized by shareholders in the St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Liberals and Conservatives alike,⁵ and also secured his election to the company's vice-presidency in the same year. Young's activity in this post earned the Scots merchant the thanks of the company's investors at the annual meeting at the beginning of 1851.⁶ Early in the next year, Young resigned his office,⁷ perhaps as the result of his increased involvement in politics. Nonetheless, in the crucial period from 1849 to 1852, he joined A. T. Galt as a key figure in the survival of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic.⁸ Nor was he the only Liberal to take an active part in the company's affairs during these years. G. G. J. Tulchinsky has commented on the changes among the railroad's directors in the first two years of the new decade; additions to the board included not only Young but also Holmes, William Workman, Charles Wilson and Francois-Alfred Larocque, all Liberals.⁹

4. For a general history of this crucial phase in the history of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic, vide Tulchinsky, pp. 148-168. For Young's role in the 1849 crisis, vide especially pp. 162-3

5. Montreal Pilot, January 15, 1850

6. Montreal Pilot, January 18, 1851

7. Stanstead Journal, February 5, 1852 (reference to Young's resignation in a letter from Mr. Edmonstone, attacking Young for the profit he made on the St. Lawrence & Atlantic's bonds)

8. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 163

9. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, pp. 149-152

As of March, 1848, however, the Liberals were no longer dependent on the personal activity of individual partisans to demonstrate their commitment to economic development. The second LaFontaine-Baldwin Ministry quickly showed its responsiveness to the interests of railway developers. Hincks' Guarantee Act of 1849 was of course a major step in the encouragement of railway construction. In the same year in which it was adopted, the Act was amended largely in order to assist Young's activities in England on behalf of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic. The provincial guarantee was extended to the principal as well as the interest of railway bonds. In 1851 the operation of the Act was restricted to the trunk line that was to link Upper and Lower Canada, but the St. Lawrence & Atlantic, as well as some politically important railways in Canada West, were included under the new provisions. The changes could have acted as a check on the expansion of the colony's railway network, but in 1852 Hincks, now the head of the government, introduced two new pieces of legislation. One was the Municipal Loan Fund Act, "that wonderful contrivance which converts beautifully engraved paper into money."¹⁰ This enabled local governments to borrow practically unlimited sums for local developments, principally, railroads, on the strength of the province's credit. The second piece of legislation, complementary to the first, created a general framework for the incorporation of railway companies that made it

¹⁰. T. C. Keefer, "A sequel to the Philosophy of Railroads" in Philosophy of Railroads, ed. by H. V. Nelles, p. 101

easier for them to receive investments from municipal governments. The legislation came into effect in Upper Canada in 1853, and was extended to Lower Canada in 1854. As Albert Faucher has demonstrated this legislative framework was of greater importance to Upper Canada, but his figures also make clear that in Canada East the municipalities that made the most extensive use of the Loan Fund were the two cities, Montreal and Quebec, and such counties as Ottawa and Shefford,¹¹ where anglophones played a predominant part in local affairs. Evidently, Canadians of British origin, settled principally either in aspiring metropolises or on the development-hungry frontier, were more ready to make use of Hincks' policies than the French Canadians in the well-settled seigneuries. This alliance of an essentially English Canadian 'Philosophy of Railroads' with French-Canadian nationalism had formed the core of LaFontaine's political strategy, and Hincks and Morin were clearly committed to following on in this tradition. Only thus could the Liberals' alliance between French and English, both between Upper and Lower Canada and within Canada East, be maintained. While it was the Leader of the Opposition, Sir Allan MacNab, who, in the summer of 1851 made the famous declaration that "all his politics are railroads,"¹² by 1852 the remark was being attributed to Hincks.¹³ The Inspector-

11. Albert Faucher, "Le fonds d'emprunt municipal dans le Haut-Canada, 1852-1867," in Albert Faucher, Histoire économique et unité canadienne, p.p. 90-91

12. quoted in the Quebec Gazette, July 7, 1851 as having been said at the Toronto railway dinner in honour of Joseph Howe.

13. in particular, by J.-E. Turcotte, in a debate in the Assembly. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 1, p. 111, August 26, 1852

General, after all, had by then committed the credit of the province, under an Imperial guarantee, to the most breath-taking project of the decade, the intercolonial railroad.

Albert Faucher has also pointed out that as early as 1849 Hincks intended to create a system that defined two levels of state involvement in the development of the colony's infrastructure. The first entailed the indirect participation of the British government in intercolonial and transcontinental lines that were to remain under public control. The second required the support of the provincial and local governments for private enterprise in the construction of projects of a more limited scope.¹⁴ This approach, Faucher also comments, was a natural if unsystematic development of the ideas of Durham and Sydenham,¹⁵ but a combination of speculative fervour and political necessity were to blur seriously the distinctions between public and private, and local and national, concerns. Such contemporary observers as T. C. Keefer,¹⁶ and historians like Gustav Myers¹⁷ and Stanley Ryerson¹⁸ have bitterly attacked the resulting conflation of political and entrepreneurial interests, arguing that it subordinated the common good to personal profit. Most modern authorities have accepted this interpretation, although they have usually presented it in a less polemical

14. Albert Faucher, op.cit., p. 101

15. Ibid, pp. 93-6

16. T. C. Keefer, "Railways" in The Philosophy of Railroads, ed. by H. V. Nelles, passim

17. Gustav Myers, A History of Canadian Wealth, pp.150-217

18. Stanley Ryerson, Unequal Union, pp. 244-257

style.¹⁹ Recently, however, it has been pointed out that during this initial phase of railway organization, in Montreal at least there is little proof that railway entrepreneurs made excessive profits.²⁰ Accordingly, it is appropriate to discuss the relationship between anglophone Lower Canadian politicians and railway promotion between 1848 and 1854.

During these years a number of different railway companies were projected, ranging from small, development-oriented roads such as the Industry & Rawdon, opened in 1852, and the Stanstead, Shefford & Chambly Railway, organized in 1853, to projects whose scope, at least potentially, was of provincial significance. This latter group included the North Shore Railroad, whose objective from its inception in 1852 was the restoration of Quebec City's status as a major commercial centre,²¹ and a series of proposals for westward extensions of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic, intended to entrench Montreal's status as the metropolis of Upper Canada.²² These two categories were not absolutely distinct. Lines such as the St. Lawrence & Ottawa Grand Junction were presented as both a means of opening up new areas for development and as segments of major provincial routes.²³ Others, like the Montreal & New York Railroad, while in theory simply extensions of existing 'portage' roads, became battle-

19. e.g. J. M. S. Careless, The Union of the Canadas, pp. 139-45

20. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 168

21. Brian J. Young, Promoters and Politicians, pp. 5-7

22. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, pp. 172-3

23. Montreal Gazette, December 13, 1852 (prospectus of the St. Lawrence & Ottawa Grand Junction)

grounds between conflicting groups of businessmen with continental ambitions.²⁴ Railway projects of all sizes filled the newspapers,²⁵ and internal squabbles, laid bare at the annual meetings of the companies involved, were given detailed coverage.²⁶ If in the 1840s the central question had been whether or not a rail line would be built, in the following decade the key issue tended to be which road would be completed. Many companies collapsed before laying a mile of track.

The newspapers, regardless of their political orientation, were strident in their support of these projects. At the celebration to mark the opening of Berthélemi Joliette's Industry and Rawdon line, for example, Browne Chamberlin of the Montreal Gazette, E. G. Penny of the Herald, Robert Abraham of the Montreal Transcript, William Bristow of the Pilot and Joseph Doutre of Le Pays joined in saluting the link between the St. Lawrence River and the manufacturing town developed by Joliette and J. H. Dorwin in Berthier.²⁷ This support was not merely rhetorical on the part of the Montreal journalists. James

24. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, pp.187-200

25. these included the Montreal & Prescott railroad (Montreal Pilot, November 30, 1850), the Montreal & Vermont (Montreal Gazette, April 11, 1851), the Montreal & Bytown (Montreal Gazette, October 26, 1853), the Quebec & Melbourne Railroad (Quebec Mercury, September 3, 1850), the Quebec & Richmond Railway (Quebec Mercury, July 21, 1853), the Missisquoi River Valley route (Stanstead Journal, October 2, 1851), the Passumpsic Railroad (Stanstead Journal January 13, 1853)

26. For example, the struggle over control of the St. Lawrence & Ottawa Grand Junction and the Lachine Railroad figured largely in the Montreal Gazette from February 2, 1853 to June 22, 1853

27. Montreal Gazette, December 8, 1852

Moir Ferres of the Gazette was a director of the Quebec & Richmond line, as well as a railway contractor;²⁸ E. G. Penny was one of the directors of the Industry and Rawdon.²⁹

On the whole, the directorates of railway companies were organized without any reference to political partisanship. Thus, John Young, a fervently anti-Annexationist Liberal, worked closely with A. T. Galt, a leader of that movement, to save the St. Lawrence & Atlantic at the very height of the controversy over annexationism. L. T. Drummond, elected to the presidency of the Stanstead, Shefford and Chambly in 1853,³⁰ worked closely not only with such ex-Annexationists Liberals and Conservatives as William Workman, John Ostell and Benjamin Lyman, directors of the fledgling company, but also with William Badgley, one of the railroad's solicitors.³¹ Perhaps the best illustration of the extent to which railway promotion was divorced from political alignment is found in listing the promoters of different proposals for a link between Montreal and Upper Canada. A company to construct a line between the city and Prescott, C.W., was organized in the winter of 1850; its directors included such politically diverse figures as A. T. Galt, Peter McGill, John Young and William Bristow.³² Two companies that were in direct and bitter competition for access to the

28. Montreal Gazette, November 15, 1853

29. Montreal Gazette, December 8, 1852

30. Stanstead Journal, November 3, 1853. His election took place on October 26. For the preceding four months, John Yule had been provisional president.

31. Montreal Gazette, October 29, 1853 (list of directors)

32. Montreal Pilot, November 30, 1850

Ottawa area, the St. Lawrence & Ottawa Grand Junction and the Montreal & Bytown both had mixed directorates. Peter McGill, William Molson, Charles Wilson, L. H. Holton, Young and John Torrance served on the former's board;³³ while the latter's supporters included Wolfred Nelson, Henry Judah, Sydney Bellingham, Benjamin Holmes and William Workman.³⁴ Clearly, the railway business operated outside the framework of politics.

Nonetheless, this burst of railway activity was not without its effect on party structures in Lower Canada. The proliferation of companies whose lines, if built, could have a profound impact on communities both small and large, the tremendous amount of money and patronage at the disposal of the managers, and the direct involvement in politics entailed by Hincks' legislation, all drastically altered the balance of social and economic power on both the local and provincial level. A whole new source of influence had been added to the system. It was in response to this, as well as from greed, that so many politicians became involved in railway promotion. L. T. Drummond's activity in organizing, and then in becoming president, of the Stanstead, Shefford & Chambly was an extension of his role as the Executive Councillor politically responsible for the Eastern Townships. In Waterloo, at a meeting held in September, 1853, to pass a local by-law to assist the road, Drummond declared that "he was determined to put his heart and soul into the undertaking,"

33. John Young Papers, Box 2, IV, folder 8

34. Montreal Gazette, October 26, 1853

and to demonstrate his determination, announced that he had resigned all his shares in the St. Lawrence & Atlantic.³⁵ His supporters in the District, including the formerly pro-~~annexation~~ editor of the Stanstead Journal, H. L. Robinson, could thus present the Montreal lawyer as committed to the welfare of the region despite his non-resident status.³⁶ This was no doubt the intent of the organizers of the public dinner held at Granby in October, where Drummond was saluted for his activity on behalf of the railway.³⁷ John Egan, the Liberal member for Ottawa County, was personally interested in the expansion of the timber industry in the area, but his public support for the Montreal-Bytown-Kingston line in 1851³⁸ was also probably intended to demonstrate his belief in the economic potential of his county. Joseph Cauchon's tireless promotion of the North Shore Railroad was intimately connected with his political role as the spokesman for Québec City's interests. Politicians of all stripes were anxious to demonstrate that they believed in the interconnection of material and moral progress outlined so fervently by T. C. Keefer. Recent work has suggested that not all levels of society accepted this doctrine as wholeheartedly as the middle class politicians, professionals, journalists and entrepreneurs.

35. Stanstead Journal, September 15, 1853

36. Stanstead Journal, August 10, 1854

37. Montreal Gazette, October 19, 1853

38. Montreal Gazette, March 26, 1851

expected,³⁹ but these elites formed the operative political class of Lower Canada, without whose support no public man could succeed.

The alliance of railways and politics did not, however, simply entrench the influence of political parties by giving their committed partisans new electioneering techniques. Indeed, its effect was often the opposite. Railway promotion also offered a framework through which an individual could establish enough personal prestige to be independent of party discipline. Lucius Seth Huntington first came to prominence in Shefford through his position as Secretary of the Stanstead, Shefford & Chambly. In 1858 he played a part in securing the defeat of L. T. Drummond in that county, despite his sympathy for the Brown-Dorion government, in which Drummond was Attorney-General for Canada East, he felt that electing resident member was more important than party loyalty.⁴⁰ Joseph Cauchon's activity on behalf of the North Shore was one of the factors that enabled him to behave as a political maverick during the better part of the decade, extorting government assistance time and time again for the company in return for his support.⁴¹ Sydney Bellingham's support for the Montreal & Bytown coincided with his return to

39. cf. William A. White, "Toronto's Reluctant Entrance into the Railway Mania of the 1850s," Urban History Review, X 1 (June 1981) and Tulchinsky's analysis of the original hesitancy towards railway development in the 1840s in The River Barons, p. 138

40. J. P. Noyes, Sketches of Some Early Shefford Pioneers, (Waterloo Public Library, 1905), p.20

41. Brian J. Young, Promoters and Politicians, pp. 10-14

politics. In 1854 he was a candidate in a by-election in the newly-created riding of Argenteuil. One argument used against his opponent, Lemuel Cushing, was that for personal reasons the latter supported the railway's rival, which followed a more southerly route, bypassing Argenteuil.⁴² The fervour for railroads thus contributed to the return to public life of perhaps the most politically unreliable man in Lower Canada.

The potential of this type of development-based politics was demonstrated in 1852, shortly after John Young's resignation from the Executive Council. A. T. Galt, Canada East's foremost railway promoter, and also a man with a history of political independence, returned to the Assembly. Initially Galt had considered running in Stanstead,⁴³ vacated by the death from cholera of H. B. Terrill, an independent resident representative. The original plan for the St. Lawrence & Atlantic had suggested a line through the county, and the railway's president could have been a strong candidate. Terrill, after his election in 1851, had continued his activity in railway affairs, and his efforts to persuade the St. Lawrence & Atlantic to commit itself definitely to the line through Stanstead were saluted at a public dinner in February, 1852.⁴⁴

The decision on the part of the railroad, taken shortly before Terrill's death, to skirt the county generated a great

42. "Memoirs of Sydney Bellingham," p. 184; Montreal Gazette, January 10, 1855 (letter from "An Elector")

43. Stanstead Journal, December 16, 1852

44. Stanstead Journal, February 19, 1852

deal of bitterness. Galt was attacked personally both in the Stanstead Journal and at public meetings.⁴⁵ The not implausible suggestion was made that Galt had selected the Sherbrooke route in order to favour the British American Land Company, of which he was still the agent.⁴⁶ H. B. Terrill's successor in the riding's representation, finally, was his brother, T. Lee Terrill. He had been active in municipal politics, and his support in the 1850 Sherbrooke by-election for J. S. Sanborn could not have hurt him in a county where annexationist sentiment had been widespread. Among his supporters was John M'Connell, the former annexationist member for the county. Terrill was in fact elected by acclamation. At his election, he pledged himself to be "independent of party influences," attacked Hincks' retaliatory policy of differential duties, and declared his support for a rail link between Montreal and Stanstead.⁴⁷ In the Assembly, he continued his brother's promotion of railways, sponsoring the bill that incorporated the Stanstead, Shefford & Chambly Railroad Company.⁴⁸

Fortunately for Galt, an opening was created in Sherbrooke Town when Edward Short accepted a position on the bench. The town had benefitted, not only from Galt's promotion of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic, but also from the industrial development that Galt and his employer, the British American Land Company,

45. Stanstead Journal, February 19, 26, April 8, 1852

46. Stanstead Journal, February 26, 1852 (letter from "C")

47. Stanstead Journal, November 25, 1852

48. Stanstead Journal, April 14, 1853 (the bill passed second reading on April 4)

had encouraged there. Galt's platform addressed a number of issues. While the candidate endorsed Reciprocity, he bitterly attacked Hincks' scheme of differential duties, the public cause of Young's resignation. At the same time, he proposed protection for such industries as might develop in Sherbrooke. The cultural concerns of the District were also taken into consideration, in that Galt attacked the government's new proposals for the expansion of the Assembly, and demanded that LaFontaine's municipal legislation be undone. Local government in Lower Canada should be assimilated in form to the more decentralized pattern that obtained in Canada West.⁴⁹

Despite all of Galt's entrepreneurial activity and his responsiveness to the particular interests of the riding's anglo-phones, the Scot, unlike Terrill, was not permitted an easy acclamation. His challenger was William Locker Felton, a lawyer, the son of an absentee bureaucrate landowner and T. C. Aylwin's brother-in-law. Felton was himself a landowner, and had been involved in politics on the Liberal side since the early 1840s. In addition, he was L. T. Drummond's "particular friend,"⁵⁰ that is to say, his political lieutenant in the St. Francis District. Sherbrooke, the administrative and economic heart of the Townships, could not be allowed to go by default. Yet despite Felton's personal prestige and his connections with the government, Galt's standing in the town was overwhelming. Felton

⁴⁹ Stanstead Journal, December 16, 1852

⁵⁰ Drummond, in the Assembly, DLA, vol. 11, pt. 1, p. 231, May 27, 1850

withdrew from the contest before the poll, and was rewarded for his efforts by an appointment as President of the General Sessions of the Peace for the St. Francis District.⁵¹ The continuing prominence of a leading Liberal in the region was thus ensured, despite his political defeat.

The campaign in Sherbrooke lasted from December, 1852 to Galt's official return in March, 1853. It thus took place in the immediate aftermath of the most significant railway controversies of the Union, and it is difficult not to suspect that Galt's reappearance in the Assembly was connected with his role in the dispute. It was in the fall of 1852 that the legislation creating the Grand Trunk Railway Company was introduced in the Assembly, debated, and finally passed.

The intercolonial railroad outlined by Hincks in 1851 was originally intended to be a public work, heavily dependent on the Imperial government's guarantee for its funding. Britain's interest in the line was strategic, rather than economic, and there were disagreements among the colonies involved as to whether the road should follow the northern route established by Major Robinson, or skirt the American border. New Brunswick in particular insisted that the Imperial guarantee also cover the North American & European Railroad, thus connecting the intercolonial directly with railway system of the United States. The Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, had written a despatch outline the British position, but Joseph Howe of Nova Scotia had ebulliently

51. Stanstead Journal, May 12, 1853

misunderstood its terms, thinking that they declared the Imperial government's willingness to accede to New Brunswick's demands. This delayed a realization of the conflict between the different points of view. In the spring of 1852, finally, the difficulty became manifest. Hincks, already in London, accepted the collapse of the intercolonial with suspicious ease, and entered into negotiations with Peto, Brassey, Betts and Jackson, England's foremost railway contractors. By May 21, 1852, an agreement had been reached. A railroad from Montreal to Hamilton was to be built by a private company, supported by the unaided credit of the province.⁵² Hincks returned to Canada, faced with the need to persuade the Assembly to adopt a project based upon an almost complete reversal of his earlier proposals.

This change of government policy was of immediate concern to A. T. Galt because of his involvement with a railway company whose interests were in direct conflict with the nascent Grand Trunk. As the President of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic, he was aware of that railway's need for a western extension into Upper Canada. The first step had been taken towards the organization of the Montreal & Kingston Railroad Company in March, 1851. Active in the initial meeting was the usual array of politicians and entrepreneurs : Galt, L. H. Holton, A.-N. Morin, John Young, David Kinnear, George Moffatt, and G.-E. Cartier.

52. accounts of these developments can be found in Francis Hincks, Reminiscences of His Public Life, pp. 201-251, with copious quotations from contemporary documents, and in Jm. & Edw. Trout, The Railways of Canada (1871) pp. 57-71

A committee was struck to secure the incorporation of the company. The meeting endorsed a route closely parallel to the St. Lawrence, on the grounds that it would be shorter than other lines and would run through a more populated area.⁵³ These steps were important, for supporters of a rival line to Kingston, arcing through the Ottawa District, were also attempting to secure incorporation.

The controversy between the two proposed companies divided Montreal's business community. As usual, the Herald differed from the Gazette; in the former, David Kinnear, one of the project's promoters, endorsed the St. Lawrence route,⁵⁴ while the latter cited the necessity of developing the Ottawa valley.⁵⁵ While the northern route had the support of Benjamin Holmes,⁵⁶ most of its backers were men of lower standing, such as Benjamin Lyman, H. Mulholland and John Egan.⁵⁷ It was thus not surprising that on August 31, the Montreal & Kingston Railroad Company secured its charter. The charter included a clause suspending its operation pending a resolution of the negotiations between the colonial and Imperial governments. Thus, nothing happened for nearly a year, but on August 7, 1852, the charter came into effect after the collapse of the original Quebec-Halifax railroad scheme. With remarkable rapidity the company came to life; by August 23, all the stock was subscribed, 600,000¹. of it, and by

53. Montreal Pilot, March 6, 1851

54. quoted in Montreal Gazette, June 14, 1851

55. Montreal Gazette, June 12, 1851

56. Montreal Gazette, June 12, 1851

57. Montreal Gazette, March 26, 1851

October 11 the necessary 10% of this capital had been paid up. Luther Hamilton Holton became the railroad's President, and A. T. Galt assumed its vice-presidency.⁵⁸ Such a company was obviously irreconcilable with the plans of Hincks, Peto, Brassey, Betts and Jackson. While the bill to incorporate the Grand Trunk was ostensibly not a government measure, it was nonetheless clear that the Ministry was resolved to secure its passage. Thus it was essential for the government, before the Grand Trunk could be incorporated, to procure the surrender of the Montreal & Kingston's charter. This opened up a conflict that, unlike most of the railway developments of the era, had direct political consequences.

Holton and Galt were unwilling to accede to a simple surrender of their charter, and inevitably the struggle acquired partisan overtones. The Ministry's Montreal organ, the Pilot, attacked the Montreal & Kingston, while the Herald and Gazette praised it.⁵⁹ The Liberal paper, in an attempt to minimize the partisan nature of the debate, cited a variety of Reform and Tory journals in which Holton's and Galt's plans were criticized. Significantly, one of the fiercest critics of the Grand Trunk named by the Pilot was the Toronto Globe,⁶⁰ whose editor, George

58. The history of the Montreal & Kingston Railroad was made public in two letters from L. H. Holton and A. T. Galt to Francis Hincks, which appeared in the Montreal Pilot, October 15, 1852

59. Montreal Pilot, August 30, September 4, October 11, 20-22, 1852 (attacks upon Holton and Galt); quotes the opinions of the Herald and Gazette, September 2, 4, 7, 11, 22, 1852; Montreal Gazette, September 3, 1852

60. Montreal Pilot, September 7, 1852

Brown, played a leading part in the parliamentary struggle over the incorporation of the giant company. Nonetheless, widespread disagreement over such an important item of government policy could not be without its effects. Rapidly, the cruxes of the debate became the competence of colonial entrepreneurs to finance and build a work of such magnitude and the enormous power granted to non-resident contractors in the proposed company. In a series of letters to Sir Allan MacNab, the chairman of the Assembly's Railway Committee, Holton insisted not only on the ability of his company to build the road much more cheaply than its rival but also on the "Provincial degradation" inherent in the dictatorial attitude taken by English contractors.⁶¹ He and Galt claimed that they could build a line of the same quality for 6,500^{l.} per mile instead of the nearly 12,000^{l.} suggested by Peto, Betts, Brassey and Jackson.⁶² In answer to the insistence by the government and the Pilot that the co-operation of the British firm, represented in Canada by Jackson, was necessary in order to raise foreign capital, Holton denied that the Montreal & Kingston was opposed to the introduction of foreign funds. He declared that

The question is merely one of instrumentalities. Is the instrumentality of Mr. Jackson and his associates so essential for procuring loans of English capital that they should be paid from 30 to 50 per cent over the cash value of their work merely for the facilities they are supposed to possess as money brokers? Or is it pretended that a little knot of railway jobbers hold

⁶¹. Montreal Pilot, September 2, 1852 (L. H. Holton to Sir Allan MacNab)

⁶². in Montreal Pilot, October 5, 1852

(sic) the key of the great money market of the world?⁶³

In their second-last letter Holton and Galt claimed that as residents of the colony, they had a greater interest in the line than Jackson, who was merely interested in stock speculation, and reiterated their assertion of competence:

In conclusion, we state that we can construct the Railroad in less time, for about one half the declared capital, and with a smaller amount of Provincial aid, than the parties applying for the Provincial charter.⁶⁴

It is difficult to determine how serious Holton and Galt were in their protestations; it is quite possible, as their contemporaries suggested,⁶⁵ that they were themselves only interested in stock manipulation. On a number of occasions, they offered to surrender the charter, but always upon conditions. One was that the provincial government undertake to build the line as a public work;⁶⁶ upon another occasion they stipulated that the Grand Trunk build a bridge across the St. Lawrence near Montreal.⁶⁷ Their last offer was that provincial support to the new company be limited to 3,000l. for each mile.⁶⁸ Upon each occasion they reaffirmed their readiness to build the line if Jackson rejected their conditions.

One point that weighed heavily in the public argument against the Montreal & Kingston was the revelation in September of the details of the company's financing. Seven men, including

63. in Montreal Pilot, September 15, 1852

64. in Montreal Pilot, October 15, 1852

65. for example, in the Quebec Gazette, November 3, 1852

66. Montreal Gazette, September 6, 1852

67. in Montreal Pilot, September 18, 1852

68. in Montreal Pilot, October 5, 1852

such respectable merchants as John Torrance and William Molson, and a prominent lawyer, John Rose, had each subscribed for 20 shares for a total investment of 3,500^l. A. T. Galt put his name down for 7,940 shares for an investment of 198,500^l., while Holton and D. L. Macpherson both pledged 199,000^l. In return for 7,960 shares each. Galt, Holton and Macpherson also agreed that none of them would transfer his shares without the written consent of the others.⁶⁹ The Herald and the Montreal Gazette praised the energy and public spirit of these entrepreneurs in taking up the whole of the company's stock, while the Pilot suggested that profit was a primary motive.⁷⁰ In Quebec, the Gazette, then a ministerial paper, cited Holton and Galt's fictitious investment as proof of the incapacity of their company to raise an adequate amount of capital for the undertaking.⁷¹ While Holton, Galt and Macpherson were all important colonial figures, their ability to raise such enormous sums was dubious.

Whether a serious venture or a stock market bubble, the Montreal & Kingston Railroad Company had little chance against Hincks' determination. The company petitioned the Assembly against the incorporation of the Grand Trunk as a violation of its charter, but the Railroad Committee rejected the petition by a vote of seven to five.⁷² Galt's and Holton's public struggle was not, however, completely futile. Hincks was

69. Quebec Gazette, October 20, 25, 1852

70. Montreal Pilot, September 2, 1852 (quoting the Herald and the Gazette)

71. Quebec Gazette, October 20, 1852

72. Montreal Pilot, October 22, 1852

desperately anxious to secure a speedy passage of his bill, but he faced considerable parliamentary opposition. In addition, the Montreal & Kingston had secured the legal opinions of L.-H. LaFontaine, Henry Black and John Rose, all supporting the legitimacy of the company's rights.⁷³ When, on November 1, the Grand Trunk was finally incorporated, significant modifications had been made in the structure of the company. 3,000^l. per mile was set as the maximum for the provincial guarantee. Even more significantly, provisions were made by which the Grand Trunk could merge with the St. Lawrence & Atlantic.⁷⁴ Thus, Hincks' railway, instead of being a challenge to the survival of the Montreal-based line, became its principal support. The arrangement produced a considerable increase in value for the St. Lawrence & Atlantic's shares, and some made a considerable profit on the final merger in 1854.⁷⁵ As a public sign of this combination of interests, Galt and Holton were named as two of the government's nine nominees to the directorship of the Grand Trunk. The Quebec Gazette cited this as additional proof that the creation of the Montreal & Kingston was simply a manoeuvre to secure a "share in the spoils," for the Montrealers who were so "willing to become particeps criminis in what has been called a deliberate robbery of the money of the Province."⁷⁶

73. L. H. Holton, A. T. Galt, On behalf of the Montreal and Kingston Railroad Company, October 16, 1852, p. 2

74. O. D. Skelton, The Life and Times of Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, p. 95

75. G. J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, p. 168

76. Quebec Gazette, November 3, 1852

It would appear, then, that by his inclusion of the interests involved in the St. Lawrence & Atlantic and the Montreal & Kingston Railway companies, Hincks had conciliated a potentially disruptive faction in Montreal. That this was not so was made clear by the behaviour in the Assembly of the former Commissioner of Public Works, John Young. Young, after all, had been among the first promoters of the Montreal & Kingston, and had played an active part in securing an act of incorporation for the company,⁷⁷ serving as chairman of its provisional board until August 7, 1852.⁷⁸ Feeling the chairmanship inconsistent with this seat on the Executive Council, he resigned his position when the proclamation of that date had activated the company's charter.⁷⁹ This involvement alone does not explain Young's hostility to the Grand Trunk; Cartier had also been active in the Montreal & Kingston, but he emerged as one of the foremost proponents of the new railway company, and in the Assembly bitterly attacked Holton and Galt.⁸⁰ In contrast, Young became, according to Francis Hincks, the member "the most opposed" to the incorporation of the Grand Trunk.⁸¹

Young's stance was made all the more remarkable by the fact that until September he had been a member of the Executive, and the head of the department with the greatest interest in

77. Montreal Gazette, June 3, 1851

78. G.-E. Cartier, in the Assembly, DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, p. 1170, October 21, 1852.

79. John Young in the Assembly, DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, p. 1166, October 21, 1852

80. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, p. 1170, October 21, 1852

81. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, p. 1137, October 20, 1852

railway development. His resignation, in fact, took place just at the outset of the controversy over the Grand Trunk incorporation. As early as the end of August, rumours were current of a difference within the Executive over the line between Montreal and Kingston.⁸² Thus, while Young had insisted that the only reason for his withdrawal from the cabinet had been Hincks' abandonment of Free Trade principles, it is difficult not to suspect that the Inspector-General's determination to entrust the road to William Jackson also played a part. Indeed, just before his resignation, the Chief Commissioner of Public Works had been involved in informal negotiation with Holton. One outcome of this was the offer on the part of the Montreal & Kingston to waive its charter, provided that the Grand Trunk commit itself to building simultaneously both the railway and a bridge over the St. Lawrence at Montreal. Jackson objected to a binding commitment, and this proposal, like the others, fell through.⁸³

After his resignation, Young's opposition to the Grand Trunk became public. In the Assembly, he defended the Montreal & Kingston's directors against Cartier's attacks, insisting on their probity and competence. He also endorsed Holton's claim that the Montreal company could build the road as well, and much more cheaply, than the British contractors.⁸⁴ In the crucial vote in the Railroad Committee of the Assembly, by which

82. Henry Smith in the Assembly, DLA, vol. 11, pt. 1, p. 75, August 25, 1852

83. Montreal Pilot, September 18, 1852

84. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, pp. 788-90, October 1, 1852

the petition of the Montreal & Kingston was rejected, Young voted in the minority, finding himself in the company of two Upper Canadian Tories, John A. Macdonald and W. B. Robinson, a Clear Grit, David Christie of Wentworth, and one other Lower Canadian, the independent member for Quebec City, G. Okill Stuart. In contrast, John Egan, and G.-E. Cartier, both Lower Canadian ministerialists, were in the majority, as was L.-V. Sicotte. Joseph Cauchon, conciliated by Hincks' promises of support for the North Shore also opposed the Montreal & Kingston.⁸⁵

Young's conjunction with the sole Clear Grit was in the end to be of more significance than his alliance with the two Upper Canadian Tories, for in the Assembly, Young had moved into an association with George Brown. Between the Montreal Unitarian and the Toronto Presbyterian lay the connecting link of a firm belief in Free Trade. On September 30, a week after his resignation, Young seconded Brown's motion for the total repeal of the province's laws against usury. Brown's central argument for the repeal was that Free Trade principles should apply as much to credit as to any other commodity.⁸⁶ Hincks himself supported the motion, but the division revealed a distinct split among the ministerialists. Almost all the Lower Canadian anglophone supporters of the Ministry, including Attorney-General Drummond, and J. S. Sanborn voted with Brown and

⁸⁵. Montreal Pilot, October 22, 1852 (vote of the Railroad Committee)

⁸⁶. DLA, vol.XI, pt.2, pp. 757-63, September 30, 1852

Young, but, with one exception, all the French Canadian members sided with the English-speaking opposition members, including William Badgley, Robert Christie and H. B. Terrill.⁸⁷ On October 28, Young and Brown moved into direct opposition to the government's economic policy when they proposed a series of Resolutions on Commercial Policy. The resolutions embodied Young's objections to Hincks' retaliatory tariff policy by proclaiming the need to remove all restrictions on trade "without regard to the policy of other nations," and urged the construction of more canals and the opening of the St. Lawrence to international shipping.⁸⁸

At the beginning of April, 1853, Hincks announced that the government was abandoning its retaliatory trade policy;⁸⁹ the Americans, as a result of British pressure, were becoming less resistant to suggestions of reciprocal trade. This change in policy earned Hincks severe criticism from the Ministry's Montreal organ, the Pilot,⁹⁰ without winning back Young to the ministerial party. Young saluted the announcement, but declared

I do not understand Sir what our commercial Policy is -- God only knows what it is ... We have neither free-trade -- nor protection -- we are laboring under the worst parts of both systems.⁹¹

Brown and Young also collaborated in opposing the incor-

87. DLA, vol. XI, pt. 2, p. 883, October 6, 1852

88. Resolutions on the Commercial Policy of the Country, to be moved in Committee of the Whole by the Hon. Mr. Young, seconded by Mr. Brown, on Wednesday, 20th October, 1852, Quebec, 1852

89. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 3, pp. 2432ff., April 1, 1853

90. Montreal Pilot, April 5, May 9, 1853

91. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 3, p. 2436, April 1, 1853

poration of the Grand Trunk. It is important to note that this opposition continued well after Hincks announced that the Montreal & Kingston was prepared to abandon its charter. Young's speeches made clear that his objections to the Grand Trunk did not lie only in its infringement upon the Montreal & Kingston's charter. Rather, he objected to the fact that the entire railway system was being entrusted to Jackson without any strong public control. He explained that while he was a member of the government he had believed that Hincks' arrangement with Peto, Betts, Brassey and Jackson was limited to guaranteeing the contractors the right to tender in open competition for the construction of the line.⁹²

These criticisms became all the clearer in the debate before the final reading of the incorporation bill. A qualifying clause enabled the Grand Trunk to make such changes in the route "as the said company may deem most advantageous." Young, seconded by George Brown, moved in amendment that the clause read "with due regard to the best grades, and the general interest of the whole Province." This attempt to restrict the independence of the new company was defeated by a vote of 33 to 19.⁹³ Brown and Young also voted for a number of other restrictive amendments, such as that introduced by John A. Macdonald and William Badgley.⁹⁴ On the final reading they also introduced an amendment that would

92. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, pp. 1164f., October 21, 1852

93. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, pp. 1249ff., October 27, 1852

94. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, pp. 1253, 1258, 1259, October 27, 1852

revive the original plan for an intercolonial line provided that the Imperial guarantee cover the whole road from Hamilton to Halifax. This amendment was also defeated by a large majority.⁹⁵ On the motion by George-Etienne Cartier and L.-V. Sicotte, that "the Bill do pass," Brown and Young found themselves in the minority of seven opposed to the incorporation of the Grand Trunk.⁹⁶ Young thus found himself under attack in the ministry's organ in Quebec City, the Gazette, for his alliance with Brown and the Clear Grits on the issue.⁹⁷

It can thus be seen that Hincks' resolve to entrust the colony's most important railway project to a group of businessmen outside the colony was an important factor in rendering permanent the disaffection from the Liberal party of one of Montreal's most prominent spokesmen. The unrestricted power of the Grand Trunk offended Young's sense of propriety, and, as later events would show, made him suspicious of the fiscal probity of the Inspector-General. In addition, while the business interests represented by Luther Hamilton Holton and A. T. Galt had been conciliated, there was no guarantee that these two individuals had been left with warm feelings toward the government, and they in fact declined to serve on the Grand Trunk's board. Thus the controversy over the incorporation of the Grand Trunk brought together, for the first time in a political sphere, three figures who would play a crucial role in the formation

95. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, p. 1359, November 2, 1852

96. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, p. 1360, November 2, 1852

97. Quebec Gazette, November 1, 1852

of the Anglo-Rouges: Young, Holton, and Galt. Finally, the debate helped to strengthen the link between the Upper Canadian radicals under Brown's leadership and this emerging dissident faction within the Lower Canadian party.

There were still, however, significant obstacles to a full alliance between the dissident anglophone Liberals of Lower Canada and the Clear Grits in any attempt to bring down the government. Foremost among these was the issue of religion, for while there was no doubt a great deal of religious division within Lower Canada, sectarian tension had not yet become an important factor in politics. At the same time in Upper Canada the Clear Grits, led by George Brown, had already commenced their crusade against the pretensions of the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, during the 1850s developments were to take place in Lower Canada that directly involved that section of the colony in the international struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism.



Religious tensions, of course, were not new to Lower Canada and their role in the 1840s has been outlined in earlier chapters. No clear-cut polarization, however, had existed in Canada East between Protestant and Catholic. The Liberals, while

in opposition, had invoked the British model of a Catholic-Dissenter alliance against the established Church supported by the Conservatives, and thus managed to contain, if not eliminate, the political dangers of sectarian conflict. By the 1850s, however, the credibility of this approach was starting to fade. The Liberals now formed the government, and were thus no longer able to unite different religious groups by focussing on the Establishment principles of William Henry Draper. The very tentative solutions to such problems as the Clergy Reserves and the University which the LaFontaine-Baldwin Ministry presented, or allowed to be presented, were inevitably unsatisfactory to the more stridently voluntaryist Protestants who formed a large part of the party's Upper Canadian wing.

Events outside the colony also created new potential for division. Until 1848, Pius IX was perceived by British Liberals as a friend to constitutional principles.⁹⁸ After the assassination of Cardinal Antonelli and Mazzini's seizure of Rome, the Pope's attitude towards political liberalism became increasingly critical, until he came to be, in Protestant eyes, the incarnation of international reactionaryism. His reconstitution in 1849 of a regular diocesan structure for Great Britain provoked a hysterical reaction in England to this 'Papal Aggression.' This agitation was fomented principally by English Anglicans, and Dissenters by and large stood a part from it. Nonetheless, the

98. see, for example, Punch, vol. XIII (July-December, 1847), p.135

Liberal government, headed by Lord John Russell, acceded to the popular protest, and introduced the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, which proposed sanctions against British subjects who made use of territorial titles conferred by a foreign power.⁹⁹ Such events were not without their echoes in the colony; in 1851, for example, the British flag was publicly burnt in Montreal when word was received that the Queen had given royal assent to Russell's Bill.¹⁰⁰

The framework for an increasing religious polarization was most clearly marked in Montreal. Since 1846 militant Protestantism in the city had its voice in the Witness, owned and edited by John Dougal, an uncompromising Free Kirk Presbyterian and Temperance advocate. In 1851 this paper endorsed Louis-Joseph Papineau as a candidate for Montreal on the basis of his anti-clericalism.¹⁰¹ In 1850, English-speaking Catholic Montrealers acquired a similar organ with the founding of the True Witness and Catholic Chronicle, a paper established largely by the assistance of Bishop Bourget with the express intention of countering the Witness's attacks on the Church. The new paper's editor was G. E. Clerk, the younger son of a Scots baronet who had been converted to Catholicism as a result of reading Wiseman in an Australian bush hut. Clerk combined the fanaticism of a convert with the reactionary attitudes of an

99. Edward R. Norman, Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England, pp. 52-80

100. Stanstead Journal, September 18, 1851 (quoting the Montreal Gazette)

101. Montreal Pilot, December 13, 1851 (quoting the Witness)

aristocrat, and under his guidance the True Witness played its part in affirming the identity of Catholicism with social conservatism.¹⁰²

Nonetheless, it was not at first as a result of such widening divisions between English-speaking Catholics and Protestants that religion acquired a new force in the political affairs of the colony. In the first two years of the decade, the public struggle lay between the militant Protestantism of Canada West, inspired by an international religious revival, and an equally resolute French-Canadian Catholicism. The conflict rotated around the increasing number of religious organizations in Lower Canada seeking incorporation.

This growing trend was a sign of the increasing importance for French Canadian society of ultramontanist, the tendency of Catholic thought that placed the most emphasis on the power of the Pope within the Church, and the authority of the Church within society. While ultramontanist had established its roots among the French Canadian Catholic clergy well before the Union, the decade of the 1840s is generally considered as the most important period in its institutionalization in the colony. Largely at the behest of Bishop Bourget of Montreal, Lower Canada's leading ultramontanist, a number of European religious orders arrived in Canada during the decade. Most notable among these was the Society of Jesus, the traditional object of

102. Agnes Coffey, "George Edward Clerk, Founder of the True Witness," CCHA, 1934-5

Protestant paranoia, which returned to the colony in 1842. These orders provided an increasingly complete network of social services to Lower Canadians and were thus a factor in the Catholic revival in the colony. This revival gathered momentum from the preaching of French clerics, in particular the Bishop of Nancy, and thus the Church in Canada East acquired a renewed European outlook in doctrine and liturgy.¹⁰³

Initially, this tendency had been useful to the Liberal party. Through the good offices of such devots politicians as A.-N. Morin, Hector Langevin and Joseph Cauchon, LaFontaine had "unwittingly, perhaps, presided over the marriage of ultramontanist with practical politics and the nationalist ideology of his party." The Liberals educational policy established their bona fides with the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and thus the government had been able to invoke the assistance of the Catholic bishops in opposing annexationism.¹⁰⁴ By the 1850s, however, this "marriage" had begun to pose problems of its own. As the religious orders introduced by Bourget became more formally entrenched, more and more of them sought legal incorporation from the Assembly, with the attached right of holding and administering real estate held in perpetuity. In addition, a number of charitable groups, inspired by this Catholic revival, sought a legal basis for their activities.

¹⁰³. An outline of the importance of the 1840s for the evolution of ultramontanist in Lower Canada can be found in Nadia F. Eid, Le clergé et le pouvoir politique au Québec, pp. 28-33

¹⁰⁴. Jacques Monet, "French Canadian Nationalism and the Challenge of Ultramontanist," C.H.A. Annual Report, 1966

George Brown on behalf of the Grits made resistance to the further incorporation of religious bodies a basic principle. Thus such measures as a bill to enable the Catholics in the newly-established diocese of Trois-Rivières to assess themselves to provide funds for a church became major political controversies.¹⁰⁵ This posed a threat to Hincks' alliance with the Clear Grits, for the Upper Canadian members of the government were not anxious to appear to favour the spread of papistry. In contrast, most of the Lower Canadian anglophone members appeared to see the introduction of such private bills as simply part of their responsibilities as members of the Assembly. One of the bitterest religious debates took place over a bill introduced by John Young to incorporate the Collège de Ste. Marie, a Jesuit institution in Montreal. The tension between the Clear Grit representatives in the Ministry and the Executive Council's Lower Canadian members led Joseph Cauchon to assert "that the alliance ... of the two parties, which formed the ministry was unnatural, monstrous, and impossible of endurance."¹⁰⁶ During the session of 1852-53, it is clear that the Lower Canadian anglophones, no more than the annexationists in 1850, were prepared to join in Upper Canada's war against the errors of Rome. Only J. S. Sanborn seems to have developed any affinity for the Clear Grit opposition to the incorporation of religious communities; early in 1853, for example, he was the

105. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 3, p.p. 1680ff., February 23, 1853

106. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, p. 1429, November 5, 1852

only Lower Canadian to support Brown's opposition to the incorporation of the Sisters of Charity of Quebec.¹⁰⁷

These acts of incorporation became so frequently the causes of sectarian bitterness in the Assembly that L. T. Drummond introduced a bill "to provide a uniform mode of incorporating Societies for Charitable and Educational purposes," a bill that proposed a very simple method by which individuals could form a body corporate for purposes which included the construction and maintenance of churches.¹⁰⁸ The bill passed second reading in March, 1853, by a slender majority of 39 to 33.¹⁰⁹ It was assailed, on the one hand, by George Brown who alleged that it laid the basis for clerical domination of real estate in Canada,¹¹⁰ and on the other, by Joseph Cauchon, who accused the Ministry of trying to avoid controversy out of fear of its Clear Grit supporters.¹¹¹ Moderates, like L.-V. Sicotte attacked it for being too comprehensive. The stormy treatment given to Drummond's common-sense proposal, and the diversity of opposition to it, shows how delicate any consideration of religious questions had become. Nonetheless, as long as Lower Canadian Protestants felt confident that their religious liber-

107. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 3, pp. 1773-4, February 28, 1853. Sanborn also joined Brown in opposing incorporation for "the Congregation of the Catholics of Quebec speaking the English language," (DLA vol. 11, pt. 4, p. 3294, June 4, 1853) and the incorporation of the parishioners of St. Hyacinthe (ibid, p. 3328, June 6, 1853)

108. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 3, p. 1925, March 8, 1853

109. Ibid, p. 1995, March 9, 1853

110. Ibid, pp. 1946ff., March 9, 1853

111. Ibid, pp. 1952ff., March 9, 1853

ties would be protected by the government, they had little interest in joining Brown's crusade against French Canadian Catholicism.

In the summer of 1853, that sense of security was considerably diminished, but as a result of friction between anglophone Protestants and Catholics, rather than of conflict between French and English. Again, the Irish, who made up the bulk of Canada East's anglophone Catholic population, provided the initial spark. Militant Irishman in 1852 had been restive as a result of the Ministry's refusal to involve itself in Irish affairs. Towards the end of that year, William Lyon Mackenzie revived the issue when he proposed an Address to the Queen on the part of the Assembly for the pardon of the Irish exiles in Australia.¹¹² William Bristow, ever anxious to secure his own importance among Montreal's Irish, used the Ministry's English-language organ in the city to criticize the government for defeating Mackenzie's motion.¹¹³ In the spring of the following year, Mackenzie again introduced his motion.¹¹⁴ The Herald then criticized Drummond and Hincks for refusing to act on the petitions for an Address to the Queen for a pardon for the Irish rebels when they had supported Repeal earlier in their careers.¹¹⁵ In Quebec City, the St. Patrick's Society formally expressed its thanks to William Lyon Mackenzie for his activity

112. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 2, p. 1398, November 4, 1852

113. Montreal Pilot, November 11, 1852

114. DLA, vol. XI, pt. 4, p. 2749, April 20, 1853

115. quoted in the Quebec Mercury, May 3, 1853

on behalf of William Smith O'Brien and his colleagues.¹¹⁶ The municipal elections of 1853 in the capital marked the continuing determination of the city's Irishmen to make themselves felt. In St. Peter's Ward, William Quinn defeated J. W. Leaycraft, a prominent merchant by two votes, and that only after rioting had broken out and the military had been called in.¹¹⁷ His election was made additionally significant when Quinn was elected to the executive of the St. Patrick's Society just before the vote of thanks to Mackenzie. President of the Society for that year was Charles Alleyn, who had made his sympathy to European revolt public in 1848.¹¹⁸ These rumblings were not of themselves new or important, but in the summer of 1853 they provided the background for an outbreak of violence that convinced many Lower Canadian Protestants that the Ministry was not interested in their protection.

Alessandro Gavazzi was a defrocked Italian priest who in the 1850s made a career of touring Europe and North America, delivering virulently anti-Catholic lectures.¹¹⁹ Gavazzi arrived in Quebec City on June 4, and immediately commenced his polemics. After the first of these, the city's Methodists, fearing violence, refused the Italian the use of their chapel, and the venue for Gavazzi's remaining speeches was shifted to Chalmers' Free Church of Scotland. Forty policemen were in attendance to

116. Quebec Mercury, August 30, 1853

117. Quebec Mercury, February 8, 1853

118. Quebec Mercury, March 15, 1853

119. vide Robert Sylvain, Gavazzi, pp. 344-83 (lectures in Toronto and Quebec); pp. 384-423 (Montreal)

maintain order.

The Quebec Mercury's account of the riot is worth quoting at some length. Initially, order was maintained;

it was not until between nine and ten o'clock that an illusion (sic) of the Padre to the Ribbon system in Ireland induced someone to call out 'that's a lie,' which was followed by loud outcries from several parts of the building, the precursors of a general melee, volleys of stone were simultaneously thrown from without, breaking the iron sashes and stained glass in every window of the Church; in the confusion sticks were shewn, and many Bibles and Testaments, and other books in the pews were flung at the lecturer's head or destroyed. Several gentlemen endeavoured in vain to pacify the multitude; and a rush was made at Gavazzi, who had stood in the pulpit during the preceding scene totally undisturbed. The attack was commenced by a young man who seized him by the collar, the Padre at once knocked him down, and contrived to defend himself, first with a chair, which was speedily broken to pieces, afterwards with a pulpit stool, felling his assailants right and left, and preserved throughout an aspect of the most unperturbed and perfect equanimity.

Gavazzi was seized by the mob, and collapsed on top of the head of the police detachment. He freed himself, and escaped to a room beneath the Church. There he was met by an escort who conducted him to Russell's hotel, where he was guarded by the police throughout the night.¹²⁰ In the morning, he was asked by a delegation of the city's Protestants to continue his lectures, but the Mayor, J.-Ulric Tessier declared that he could not guarantee order.¹²¹ Gavazzi then proceeded on to Montreal.

Reaction to the riot followed quickly. On June 9, there appeared in the Mercury a requisition for a public meeting of Protestants "to consider best means of asserting their civil

¹²⁰. Quebec Mercury, June 7, 1853

¹²¹. Quebec Mercury, June 9, 1853

and religious liberties" against the rioters. The signatories included the cream of the city's mercantile elite. Among the names appended to it were Henry LeMesurier, Jeffery Hale, Angus Macdonald and J. G. Clapham, the member for Megantic.¹²² The meeting, held on June 10, censured John Maguire, the city's Irish Catholic Superintendant of Police, for his inactivity,¹²³ and a "Protestant Committee" was organized with Clapham as its President.¹²⁴ The Mercury announced the establishment of a new paper, the Protestant Times, which was to serve as an organ for Lower Canadian Protestants.¹²⁵

These developments acquired a renewed importance as reports appeared of the results of Gavazzi's lecture in Montreal. There, at the Zion Church, the same sort of rioting broke out, but with much more fatal results. The military were called in, and under mysterious circumstances were given the order to fire on the mob.¹²⁶ By the time the count of fatalities was finished, more than a dozen people had died as a result of the riot.¹²⁷ This alone gave the matter a particular importance; in the worst of the political rioting of the previous decade, no more than a couple of people had been killed. As in Quebec, the reaction was almost immediate, and a Protestant Committee of Vigilance was formed.¹²⁸ At a meeting held almost immediately after the

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- 122. Quebec Mercury, June 9, 1853
 - 123. Quebec Mercury, June 11, 1853
 - 124. Quebec Mercury, August 9, 1853
 - 125. Quebec Mercury, September 22, 1853
 - 126. Montreal Pilot, June 11, 1853
 - 127. Montreal Pilot, July 22, 1853
 - 128. Montreal Pilot, June 14, 1853

riot, James Moir Ferres of the Gazette, Robert Esdaile and William Workman joined Joseph Doutre of the rouges in deploring the violence at Gavazzi's lecture. Doutre pledged that "the French Canadians would aid them [the other speakers] in maintaining equal rights, and the right of free speech at all hazards."¹²⁹

In both cities, English-speaking Catholics reacted to the Protestants' vehemence. In Montreal, a meeting of Irish Catholics, with G. E. Clerk in the chair, disavowed any connection with the rioters. The presence of Bernard Devlin, however, long Drummond's antagonist, ensured that the proceedings would not be pacific. William Brissow, while identifying himself as an Irish Protestant, denounced Gavazzi as a mere adventurer and insisted that the various Protestant meetings were composed of the "scum" of society and were not representative of the Protestants of the colony.¹³⁰ As a result of this, the Montreal Correspondent of the Toronto Globe claimed that editor of the Ministry's organ

has been and is daily 'cut dead' by most of our respectable Protestant citizens ... He comes out in his true colours as a champion for the Jesuits in the columns of the Pilot, and trusts to the immense influence of that subtle body, to enable him to face the storm.¹³¹

In Québec, a meeting was held at which it was reported 3,000 "English Catholics" were in attendance. These included such well known Irish Catholic politicians as Charles Alleyn, John

¹²⁹. Montreal Gazette, June 11, 1853

¹³⁰. Montreal Pilot, June 15, 16, July 11, 1853

¹³¹. quoted in the Montreal Pilot, July 11, 1853

Doran and John O'Farrell. A Vigilance Committee was organized to counteract the activities of the Protestant Committee and to raise funds to ensure a fair trial for those charged in connection with the riot.¹³² Not all of this reaction was kept within legal channels; at the beginning of the fall, an attempt was made to burn down the premises of the new anti-Catholic paper in Quebec, the Protestant Times.¹³³

The divisive effect of these events could have been materially diminished had the government been perceived as acting quickly and effectively to punish the rioters. Unfortunately, the Attorney-General for Lower Canada, the mayors of both cities, and the Police Superintendant of Quebec were all well known as Catholics, and this fact militated against any fair assessment of their actions. As it was, the government's reaction was represented by Protestant Lower Canadian journals as being marked by, at best, incompetence, and at worst by outright malice. In Montreal, attention focussed on who was responsible for giving the troops the fatal order to fire on the mob. At the inquest, where F. G. Johnson and John Rose represented the Protestant Committee of Vigilance and Bernard Devlin acted for one of the Irishmen killed in the riot,¹³⁴ the jury split and produced two reports. Ten jurors declared that the order had been given by a person unknown, but not a military officer, and added that there had been no need to call in the troops. Nine jurors, however,

132. Quebec Mercury, September 27, 1853

133. Quebec Mercury, October 6, 1853

134. Montreal Pilot, June 14, 1853

headed by the foreman, H. Mulholland, a former Liberal and annexationist, concluded that the responsibility lay with Mayor Charles Wilson.¹³⁵ Wilson attempted to resign his office, but was not by law permitted to do so.¹³⁶ Instead, the head of the City Corporation was temporarily arrested,¹³⁷ and in the Council chamber his portrait was vandalized.¹³⁸ Meanwhile, the situation in the capital nearly degenerated into a farce. At the rioters' trial where John O'Farrell and Charles Alleyn were acting for the accused, John Von Exeter, the deputy Sheriff, offered O'Farrell 101. not to protest against errors that Von Exeter had made in empanelling the Grand Jury, errors that could have been, and were, construed as an attempt to produce a biased verdict. O'Farrell accepted the money but quickly returned it.¹³⁹ Nonetheless, the Grand jury brought in a true bill for bribery against both Von Exeter and O'Farrell,¹⁴⁰ and also indicted John Maguire for neglect of duty as Superintendant of Police in dealing with the riot.¹⁴¹

In the end, no one was convicted of responsibility. Those accused were either acquitted or a plea of nolle prosequi was filed by the crown. The Mercury declared that the riots and their aftermath showed that the law did not afford British Canadians "that protection which, as British subjects, they

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- 135. Montreal Pilot, July 12, 1853
 - 136. Montreal Pilot, August 22, 1853
 - 137. Montreal Pilot, August 29, 1853
 - 138. Montreal Gazette, August 3, 1853
 - 139. Quebec Mercury, September 24, 1853
 - 140. Quebec Mercury, September 29, 1853
 - 141. Montreal Pilot, September 26, 1853

always conceived they were entitled to receive,"¹⁴² and sneered at Drummond's denunciation of the rioters to Upper Canadian audiences as hypocritical attempts to veil his moral complicity with the rioters. Hincks, the paper asserted, as a Unitarian had no interest in protecting Trinitarian Protestants.¹⁴³

The general bitterness that came out of these events was unmistakable, and it was an important factor in the defection of the Quebec Gazette from the ministerial side. Middleton's paper, at least as early as the beginning of 1854,¹⁴⁴ was marked by an increasingly virulent anti-Catholicism, and in May of that year it declared that "the present Ministry administer the government by virtue of a joint understanding with the Church of Rome."¹⁴⁵ Inevitably, Drummond, not only as the Executive Council's senior legal authority in Canada East but also as its spokesman for the Irish Catholics, was assigned the largest part of the blame. The Attorney-General appointed Dunbar Ross to investigate the Quebec City riot and Maguire's alleged responsibility for the lack of order, and then, when Ross became Solicitor-General for Canada East, named a commission including his supporter, W. L. Felton. When the report appeared, the Gazette denounced it as a self-contradictory attempt to whitewash Maguire at Drummond's order.¹⁴⁶ The Mercury summed up savagely what many prominent

¹⁴². Quebec Mercury, July 26, 1853

¹⁴³. Quebec Mercury, August 4, 1853

¹⁴⁴. All issues of the Quebec Gazette for 1853 are missing, presumably lost in the fire of that year.

¹⁴⁵. Quebec Gazette, May 2, 1854

¹⁴⁶. Quebec Gazette, July 15, 1854

Lower Canadian Protestants thought. In its "Political Alphabet" of December, 1853, the entry for the fourth letter was as follows:

D defies contradiction, if Drummond it names,
As the man who for Protestant blood bears the
blame.¹⁴⁷

Indeed, the ineffectiveness of the ministerial response to this hysteria requires further explanation. Part of this is provided by the fact that, for a number of different reasons, the Liberals had lost contact with the leaders of Lower Canadian Protestantism. In 1851, the party had lost the support of the man who had brought the Baptists into the party, when the Rev. J. M. Cramp retired from the editorial chair of the Pilot to take charge of Acadia College, a Baptist institution in New Brunswick. His successor, Bristow, was also a Protestant, but, as his behaviour at the Montreal Catholic meeting shows, was more interested in establishing his position with the city's Irish than in speaking for the city's Protestants. At the same time, Jacob DeWitt, prominent not only in the American Presbyterian Church but also a member of the executive of the evangelistic Montreal Auxiliary Bible Society, was a declared enemy of the government. Indeed, given the prominence of many of the city's leading 'serious' religious figures, men like John Redpath and the Lymans, in the Annexation movement, the government's alliance with the Catholic hierarchy to quash the annexationists could not but have left a legacy of tension between zealous

¹⁴⁷. Quebec Mercury, December 6, 1853

Protestants and the Liberal party. Even among the Unitarians, on the opposite end of the Protestant spectrum and long a source of support for the party, the Liberals had lost ground. Holmes, now preoccupied with his responsibilities, first as vice-president of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic, and then as vice-president of the Grand Trunk, had effectively retired from politics. William Workman had left the Unitarian Church to join the Anglicans, and, while reconciled to the Liberal party in 1851, was taking an active part in Protestant protest meetings in 1853. Young and Holton, the two most politically prominent Unitarians left, were in quasi-opposition to the Ministry. It is significant that Young was replaced as Chief Commissioner of Public Works, not by a British Protestant, but by Jean Chabot, the rather unimpressive French Canadian lawyer who had earlier lost his seat on the Executive Council because of his drinking problem. By the summer of 1853, the ministry's Lower Canadian wing had taken on an overwhelmingly Catholic flavour. The appointment in August of that year of Dunbar Ross as Solicitor-General for Canada East, but without a seat on the Executive Council, may have been intended to offset this image by including in the government a prominent anglophone Protestant, but by then the damage had already been done.

The Gavazzi riots of June had thus suddenly made important Lower Canadian Protestants aware of their vulnerability under a Catholic government. This led at least some of them to search for French Canadian allies who were not committed to maintaining

the role of the Catholic Church in secular affairs. The rouges, although they had toned down somewhat the anticlericalism of their L'Avenir days, were still perceived as less ultramontane than many of the ministerialist, and had already, through Joseph Doutre, expressed a willingness to defend civil rights against the obscurantism of Catholic mobs. With an election a possibility in 1854, such an alliance could be of considerable importance.

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A central part of the political strategy of the Hincks-Morin Ministry had been to reassert the reforming character of the Liberal party. Initially, at least as far as the Lower Canadian anglophones were concerned, this had been successful. One of the bases for Hincks alliance with the Clear Grits had been a commitment to an extension of the franchise. This was honoured with little difficulty in the first session under the new Ministry. The new franchise was compulsory only in Canada West, and in Montreal and Quebec, but was left as an option for the rural municipalities in Lower Canada.¹⁴⁸ Morin's complex proposals for making the Legislative Council elective were

¹⁴⁸. John Garner, The Franchise and Politics in British North America, pp. 107-8

criticized even in ministerial papers,¹⁴⁹ but it could not but have helped sustain the reforming image of the government when it was revealed that G.-E. Cartier had refused office. The Ministry had rejected as too high his proposed property qualification of 2,000¹. for candidates to the Upper House.¹⁵⁰ The House endorsed Morin's resolutions by a vote of 44 to 19. In the majority were not only the ministerialists Drummond and Egan, but also the radical Sanborn and the independent T. L. Terrill.¹⁵¹

One important triumph for the new Executive Council was that it finally secured the two-thirds vote necessary for the expansion of the Legislative Assembly. On March 23, 1853, the bill to increase the size of the Assembly from 84 to 130 was passed on third reading by a vote of 61 to 16.¹⁵² Significantly, the principle of an equal division of the seats between the two sections was preserved. On March 2, George Brown had introduced an amendment that would entrench the principle of representation by population. This was defeated by a vote of 15 to 57, and the only Lower Canadian to vote in the minority was Robert Christie of Gaspé.¹⁵³ The explanation for this is not difficult to find; the census of 1851 had been published, and revealed the extent to which the increase in population of Upper Canada had outstripped that in Lower Canada. Brown's elaborate mathematical calculations, based on the census, made clear to the

149. Montreal Pilot, September 30, 1852, May 13, 1853.

150. Montreal Pilot, September 3, 1853.

151. DLA, vol. 11, pt. 4, pp. 3210-222, May 31, 1853.

152. DLA, vol. 10, pt. 3, pp. 2298ff., March 23, 1853.

153. DLA, vol. 10, pt. 3, March 2, 1853, p.1839.

Lower Canadians that the Grit leader's principle would increasingly diminish the political importance of their section. Only for Christie did racial solidarity outweigh sectional loyalty. It was during the debate on the bill that the Quebec Mercury, still under Christie's control, called for both "Universal Suffrage" and representation by population to make the Anglo-Saxon "disenthralled and irresistible on that soil which Wolfe purchased with his life." 154 The debate on the bill was long and detailed, but the bulk of the argument was carried on by the Upper Canadian members; the Lower Canadians were too well aware of the weakness of their position. It was a sign of the success of the Ministry that on the final division on the bill, even the bulk of the most radical members of the House were now prepared to accept this installment on reform. The yeas included Brown, Mackenzie, Christie, Lacoste, Jobin and Sanborn. The greatest part of the minority was composed of the remaining Upper Canadian High Tories, men like MacNab, Henry Smith and W. B. Robinson. These were supported by only two Lower Canadians: William Badgley, who no doubt felt more at home with his fellow Conservatives, and Thomas Marchildon, an intransigent radical and foe of the Union under any form.

It was, however, on the reform issue of the greatest importance to Lower Canadians that the Ministry failed. Drummond's long-matured, essentially moderate proposals for the abolition of seigneurial tenure were presented to the Assembly in

154. Quebec Mercury, March 5, 1853

the fall of 1852.¹⁵⁵ While they by no means met the wishes of those that desired an immediate and complete end to the system, Drummond's combined declaratory and commutation bill was generally accepted as at least a first step. It thus came as a considerable blow, both to Drummond and to the Liberal party, when the Legislative Council rejected the bill in May, 1853.

Reaction on the part of the opponents of the seigneurial regime was swift. On July 12 a meeting was held in Montreal to organize a new Anti-Seigneurial Tenure Convention. There, Jacob DeWitt, returning to political activity, moved a rambling and ungrammatical resolution that contained both an exposition of the radicals' attitude towards Drummond's solution and a new declaration of militancy. While the Attorney-General's proposals had

contained many abuses against the Censitaires, but that (sic), with the desire to regulate this question, the members of the Legislature favourable to the abolition believed they ought to accept it (sic); that the Legislative Council, faithful to its traditions, which renders its abolition imperious and immediate (sic), having placed itself in the position of representatives of the Seigniors 'dissolved the compromise between the two Houses,' and that in consequence the two parties resume their former independant position (sic) and will hereafter have nothing but strict justice, as the principle of reform and abolition.

The groundwork was laid for a well-orchestrated agitation. Branches of the Convention were to be established in Quebec, Trois-Rivières and Montreal, and a Central Committee was to be elected in the fall.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵, DLA, Vol 11, pt. 2, pp. 783-5, October 1, 1852

¹⁵⁶. Montreal Pilot, July 18, 1853

The agitation, in imitation perhaps of the anti-government protests of the early 1840s, was carefully structured on a bilingual basis. In an anti-seigneurial tenure meeting held at the end of August in Beauharnois, where an estimated 2,000 participants listened to Joseph Doutre, each of the 22 resolutions adopted was moved by a member of one language group, and seconded by a representative of the other.¹⁵⁷ In September, when the executive of the Convention was chosen, its President was Jacob DeWitt; the first vice-president was Dr. Bouthillier, and the second vice-president was D. M. Armstrong of Berthier, a veteran opponent of the system.¹⁵⁸ At an anti-seigneurial meeting held at the Institut Canadien, DeWitt and Armstrong were joined by such young rouges as J.-B.-E. Dorion, A.-B. Papineau and Charles Daoust.¹⁵⁹

The presence of Armstrong, a long-time Liberal, indicated the existence of division within the new organization. Not all of the Convention's activists were absolutely opposed to the government. When in November the Permanent Committee presented a report in the form of a detailed plan for abolition with limited compensation, the details were hotly debated.¹⁶⁰ When Drummond produced a proposal that he hoped would prove acceptable to the Legislative Council, a motion was made at the Convention's December meeting to endorse the Attorney-General's

157. Montreal Pilot, August 31, 1853

158. Montreal Gazette, September 13, 1853

159. Montreal Gazette, September 29, 1853

160. Montreal Pilot, November 24, 1853

plan. This motion was defeated, and the original resolutions of the Convention were endorsed,¹⁶¹ but the split continued. On May 15, 1854, a month before what would prove the last session of the Assembly before the election, the Anti-Seigniorial Convention of Montreal produced a set of proposals addressed "TO THE PEOPLE."¹⁶² In its exposition of each article of the model bill, the pamphlet freely admitted that disagreement had existed within the Convention between those who found elements of Drummond's new bill acceptable and those who stood firmly for outright abolition. Of the nine articles, II and IV explicitly adopted Drummond's principles; in VII they were rejected; in III, a compromise between the two was achieved. Its conclusion expressed an ambiguous attitude towards the upcoming elections. On the one hand, the pamphlet declared hopefully that

We have reason to believe that the legislature will endeavour, in the next session of parliament, to forward the sentiments expressed by the Convention, and that it will take into favourable consideration, the propositions which will be duly submitted by this Convention.

Yet the very next paragraph contained the threat that

The parties disposed to accept a compromise based on principles of right and equity, might at a future time become more exacting. How great then the responsibility of the statesmen who, by their want of energy, would have led us to such a result.

The censitaires were asked to "take advantage of the general elections to set aside" members who might either be "influenced by party considerations" or "fear to act, because a ministry

¹⁶¹. Montreal Pilot, December 10, 1853

¹⁶². The Anti-Seigniorial Convention of Montreal To the People of Canada, Montreal, 1854

will not act or might fall" and make the abolition of seigneurial tenure the one important political question.¹⁶³ Clearly, there were those in the Convention who wished primarily to apply pressure to the Liberals to take up more vigorously the whole issue, while others were anxious to see a complete reconstruction of the political system. This impression is confirmed by the deliberation of a Convention meeting held on May 29. The government was roundly attacked for its supineness in dealing with the Legislative Council, but a motion calling for an explicit vote of non-confidence in the ministry was defeated.¹⁶⁴

The agitation directed by the Convention was fairly evidently broadly-based. Since the accession to power of the Liberal party, petitions signed by as many as 200,000 Lower Canadians had been submitted to the Assembly; since the winter of 1853, a series of public meetings particularly in the Montreal District had been held to demand the end of the regime. Nor were all the supporters of the Convention French Canadian habitants. At a meeting in New Glasgow, held on December 19, 1853, all the activists bore British names. The Convention was endorsed, and abolition was demanded without compensation.¹⁶⁵

The extirpation of what was seen as a feudal check on the development of the colony's resources had long been an aspiration of the British faction in Lower Canada. The stance taken by

¹⁶³. Ibid, p. 24

¹⁶⁴. Montreal Gazette, May 30, 1854; Montreal Pilot, May 31, 1854

¹⁶⁵. Montreal Pilot, January 3, 1854

the rouges and their allies opened up the possibility of a new political alliance based upon this old issue. At the same time, it created a popular force outside the control of the Liberal party. The disruptive effect of this development could only be seen in the elections, and after.

Chapter XI

The Emergence of the Anglo-Rouges.

The Assembly met in Quebec City on June 13, 1854. Just before the opening of the session, the Ministry had gained one major advantage. The Reciprocity Treaty with the United States had been signed at last, and thus the possibility of dispute over the colony's commercial policy was eliminated. In addition, the Imperial Government, late in 1853, had finally transferred to the local government the power of deciding the allocation of the Clergy Reserves. With Drummond's new proposals for dealing with the seigneurial system ready for presentation, it would seem that the Ministry was well prepared to deal with at least some of the issues that had provoked so much acrimony in the preceding year.

Many years later, Francis Hincks wrote that it had been the unanimous decision of the Executive Council to appeal to the country and allow the newly-created constituencies to express

themselves before proceeding with any major legislation.¹ Certainly, the Speech from the Throne did not contain any clear statement of government policy on two of the colony's most pressing issues: Seigniorial Tenure and the Clergy Reserves. In the debate on the Address in Reply, a skillfully worded amendment referring to both issues enabled both radical and Conservative opponents of the Ministry to unite and defeat the government by a vote of 42 to 29.² Almost immediately after this vote, amidst protest and confusion, the Assembly was dissolved. The Ministry had one final chance to persuade the colony's voters of its sincerity.

It is interesting to note that of the anglophone Lower Canadians in the majority, only John Young can be considered a bona fide Liberal. The others included such old members of the Tory faction as William Badgley, John Greaves Clapham, and G. Okill Stuart. John MacDougall, elected in Drummond as a Liberal, had consistently opposed the secularization of the Reserves, and his vote for the amendment was not thus surprising. In contrast, the minority supporting Hincks and Morin included not only solid ministerialists like Drummond, John Egan and Seneca Paige, but also John S. Sanborn and A. T. Galt, both pledged to the secularization of the Reserves. Evidently they were still prepared to give the ministers an opportunity to establish their good faith as reformers. The government's defeat

1. Francis Hincks, Reminiscences of His Public Life, (Montreal, 1884), p.315

2. DLA, vol. 13, pt. 1, p. 105, June 20, 1854

was thus a rouge-Clear Grit-Conservative manoeuvre in which the reform-minded English-speaking Lower Canadians, with a solitary exception, continued to support the Liberal party.

The writs of election for the greater part of Canada East were returnable on August 10; the writs from the Gaspé were returnable on September 1st. With the exception of that most eastern District, the contest clearly reflected the divisive effect of the last two year's religious, political, and railway controversies. In the Gaspé region, John Meagher, a well-to-do Irish timber merchant from Carleton, near the mouth of Restigouche Bay, was elected by acclamation in Bonaventure. The Quebec Gazette identified Meagher as an anti-Ministerialist, but this was probably a reflection of Meagher's independence from both political parties, rather than the result of any declaration of hostility to the government on the new member's part.³ In Gaspé County, the most significant development was the defeat of Robert Christie. As in the previous election, the ministerialist candidate was the recipient of governmental patronage, and also as in the previous election, gained an early lead based on votes from Percé, a centre of governmental influence. Nonetheless, Peter Winter, a Percé lawyer and School Inspector, was defeated by John LeBoutillier, the former member for Bonaventure, and the head of one of the District's largest fishing companies. Clearly, while the defeat of the unpredictable Christie removed one of the most independent-minded members of the Assembly, the

3. Quebec Gazette, August 1, 1854

victories of Meagher and LeBoutillier once again demonstrated that the Gaspé still preserved its distinctive political character.

In sharp contrast, the issues raised in the election for Quebec City by the English-language press clearly reflected recent trends. The city now returned three members to the enlarged Legislature. The two sitting members, G. Okill Stuart and Hyppolite Dubord were joined in opposition to the three ministerial candidates by G.-H. Simard, the ship-builder who had earlier supported F.-X. Méthot. One of the government's candidates was of course Jean Chabot, once again a member of the Executive Council. A second was Jean Blanchet, a medical doctor. The third, surprisingly, was Charles Alleyn, long an enemy of John Maguire and the whole Liberal organization in the city. Alleyn had consolidated his position among Quebec's Irish inhabitants earlier in the year with his election as President of the St. Patrick's Society; his standing in the city's elite had been demonstrated by his election as Mayor in February, 1854. Nor was it unimportant that he had been active in the defence of the Gavazzi rioters in the previous year.

Alleyn's popularity in the city was of considerable significance, for the Ministry was without an influential English-language organ in the capital. Both the Mercury and the Gazette were vehemently opposed to the government, and the latter paper in particular marshalled a range of arguments against the ministerialist candidates. The paper declared that a Hincksite

government would be the same thing as the rule of the Grand Trunk and thus would give preferential treatment to Montreal's railway system :

Citizen electors! consider your ways and be wise. Each vote polled by you for a government candidate is a nail in the coffin of the North Shore Railroad.⁴

Charles Alleyne was particularly subject to attack. He was declared to be relying on 'Hurons and Iroquois', a term taken from Elgin's criticism of the 1849 Montreal rioters and applied to the Chalmers' Church rioters.⁵ Religion also played its part in Middleton's attacks, and the Gazette expressed regret that Quebec's Protestants had not united behind Okill Stuart.⁶

The Gazette's attitude towards the election was not, however, exclusively negative, for it saw in the internal divisions within the Liberal party the possibility of new movement for reform. When Le Canadien, in attempt to re-affirm old party distinctions, raised the old anti-Tory cry, the Gazette insisted that intelligent voters could

see it is not a contest between tory and liberal doctrines, not 'strife for the ascendancy of a musty old toryism, over fresh, vigorous, youthful liberalism; they regard it in the light of an operation commanded by the liberal party of Canada to rid that party of leaders who have brought shame and reproach upon reform principles.⁷

The specific agent of this operation in Lower Canada was, according to both the Gazette and the Mercury,⁸ to be the

4. Quebec Gazette, July 15, 1854

5. Quebec Mercury, July 18, 1854

6. Quebec Gazette, July 25, 1854

7. Quebec Gazette, July 18, 1854

8. Quebec Gazette, September 23, 1854 (quoting the Mercury)

rouges. The Gazette praised A.-A. Dorion's Montreal Election Address,⁹ and after the election in Quebec, but before the end of the elections elsewhere, it came out formally in support of "Young Canada." While preserving a tone of condescension towards the bulk of the French Canadians, the paper criticized the ministerial Liberals for their antagonism to the new political group:

So far as we are enabled to judge from repeated declarations on the part of this enlightened section of the Franco-Canadian population, there is nothing more remarkable in the sentiments of the "Rouge party" than there is in those of the Upper Canadian Reformers ... [its] members are young, active, intelligent and energetic; and besides operating a new agency in legislation and in the conduct of public affairs, they will in all probability infuse a little more energy into their fellow countrymen of French origin.¹⁰

Yet despite the opposition of both the Mercury and the Gazette, the three ministerialist were elected by comfortable margins. Blanchet led the poll, with 1,403 votes, followed by Alleyne with 1,378, and Chabot with 1,355. In contrast, Stuart received 945 votes, Simard 942 and Dubord 892.¹¹ The increase in the number of representatives for the city, the changes in the electoral law, and a confusion in the sources¹² all make a direct comparison with the previous election impossible. The government party was reported to have expended a considerable sum of money in the election.¹³ In addition, the

9. Quebec Gazette, July 18, 1854

10. Quebec Gazette, August 3, 1854

11. results taken from Quebec Gazette, July 22, 1854

12. The figures given by the Gazette do not add up correctly, and Champlain ward is omitted.

13. Quebec Gazette, July 25, 1854

number of votes cast declined from 7,334 divided among four candidates to 6,915 divided among six. Certain basic patterns endured. Difference among the ward-by-ward figures persisted among the ministerialist candidates as well as among the ministerialists. Thus, in St. Lewis Ward, the English mercantile stronghold, Alleyn outpolled by a very small margin both Blanchet and Chabot, and Stuart received one and six votes more than Simard and Dubord respectively. These differences however, did not reflect the linguistic make-up of the wards, for in the heavily French Canadian district of St. Roch, Stuart outpolled both his allies, and Alleyn received more votes than Chabot. At the same time the basic polarization of the city between two contending slates continued; in each ward the differences in votes among the candidates on side were considerably less than the numbers separating the two factions. Thus, the ministerialists' highest individual total in St. Lewis was 30, while the oppositionists' lowest figure was 48; in St. Roch the least popular ministerialist, Chabot, received 549 and the most popular oppositionist, Stuart, received 426.

Again, in this election, a key role was played by the densely-populated suburbs of St. Jean and St. Roch. What is striking is that in this election the difference between the percentages of the total votes gained by the two slates in these polls was relatively narrow. The opposition carried the suburban wards, receiving on average slightly over 80% of their total there, while the government's candidates garnered nearly 70% of

their total from the same polls. In St. Roch alone, the difference between the two percentages was reduced to roughly 6%. Even allowing for the changes in the city's electoral map and qualification laws, this is a remarkable shift from the situation in 1851, when Stuart and Dubord gathered 60% of their total vote in St. Roch, and Méthot and Maguire received less than 30% of their total in the same ward.

The success of the government's candidates, not only in St. Roch but in almost all the other wards, can be explained by the fact that in the capital strongly Protestant anglophones prepared to embrace radical principles in a time of prosperity were in a decided minority. In a largely Catholic and French city, with the gold boom in California stimulating the world economy in general, and the Quebec shipping industry in particular,¹⁴ against the background of both the prosperity and the loyalty generated by the onset of the Crimean war, the attraction of ultra-protestantism combined with radical measures was limited. Joseph Cauchon's success in securing promises of governmental support for the North Shore blunted the force of the Gazette's attack on a 'Grand Trunk' government. These influences are clearly reflected in Alleyn's campaign. The Irish lawyer, a former radical, had by his activity in opposing the Protestant Vigilance Committee doubtless gained support from the city's more active Catholics and the militant Irish, particularly when

¹⁴. Quebec Mercury, February 8, 1853. Significantly, in view of his role in the 1854 election, T. C. Lee was cited as a ship-builder who profitted particularly from this boom.

his anglophone opponent, Stuart, was being supported by the strongly anti-Catholic newspapers, the Gazette and the Mercury. In addition, his connexion with the former annexationists in the city was useful. One active campaigner in the city on the behalf of the government was T. C. Lee, the Quebec's largest ship-builder who had, in 1850, supported Lègaré as an annexationist candidate. The Mercury alleged that the reason for Lee's change in politics was the preferential treatment he received from the government in his purchase in May of Crown land at Hare's Point. Whatever Lee's motives may have been, the support of a man of his standing in St. Roch was an valuable help to the Ministry. Alleyn also had the support of G. H. Parke, another important ship-builder influential in the Irish community, who had formerly been an active supporter of John Neilson. With some of the leaders of the city's most important industry and the representatives of the city's largest anglophone cultural group behind them, the government's candidates had little difficulty in overcoming the traditional antipathy of the suburbs.

In the elections in the constituencies dependent on the city, some of them newly created, the political situation was even more confusing as aspiring politicians campaigned with almost no reference to partisan affiliation. The Ministry did secure one clear-cut gain in the election for the new riding of Beauce. There, the Solicitor-General for Lower Canada, Dunbar

Ross, defeated Bélanger by 1,227 votes to 704.¹⁵ The pattern of local polarization in the area continued; Ste. Marie and St. Elzear gave Ross 716 votes, 58% of his total, while Bélanger received in those two parishes only one vote.¹⁶

The victory of another Quebec lawyer, however, indicated the extent to which the political situation had become confused. John O'Farrell, the Irish lawyer long allied to John Maguire, was reported to be the candidate in Megantic who enjoyed the support of the government,¹⁷ but when he did run, in the new riding of Lotbinière, the Ministry gave its support to his opponent.¹⁸ O'Farrell's activity on behalf of the Gavazzi rioters was one factor in the contest. When at a political meeting, two of the rioters whom O'Farrell had defended attacked the candidate verbally, they were carried out of the village in sacks by the inhabitants when O'Farrell made references to his role in their acquittal.¹⁹ The Quebec City lawyer carried the election by some 800 votes.²⁰

In Megantic, where the sitting member, John Greaves Clapham, faced Captain William Rhodes. Rhodes, a wealthy Yorkshireman and agriculturalist had been appointed to the board of the Grand Trunk by the government as a representative of Quebec's interests. The retired military officer had not heretofore taken an

15. results from the Montreal Pilot, August 7, 1854

16. Montreal Pilot, August 7, 1854 (result of the poll)

17. Quebec Mercury, July 13, 1854

18. Quebec Mercury, July 27, 1854

19. Quebec Gazette, July 26, 1854

20. Quebec Mercury, July 27, 1854

active part in politics, and his adherence to the Ministry was probably the result of the government's railway policy. While Rhodes had resigned from his directorship a few days before the poll, the railway company was said to have sent workers from the Quebec & Richmond to line to assist in his election.²¹ The farmer carried the contest by 616 votes to 501 for Clapham.²² As was usual in Megantic, accusations of corruption were levelled against the successful candidate.²³ Again, direct comparisons with previous elections are impossible, but it is clear that Leeds and Inverness continued to be the centre of Clapham's support, for the merchant-notary gained nearly 57% of his support from these two polls. In contrast, Rhodes' majority came largely from Somerset and Halifax. Megantic's tradition of local polarization had survived the rearrangement of the county's boundaries. Also, Clapham's position as President of the Protestant Vigilance Committee may have diminished his support. After the election, in the continuing controversy over Maguire's responsibility at the Chalmers' Church riot, Rhodes supported the Police Magistrate; Clapham then accused the sitting member of trying to appeal to both Protestants and Catholics by varying his religious observances.²⁴

If, in Quebec, the disturbances of the preceding years had resulted in the city's return to the ministerialist fold,

21. Quebec Gazette, August 1, 1854

22. results from the Quebec Gazette, August 3, 1854

23. letter from J. G. Clapham in the Quebec Gazette, August 12, 1854

24. Quebec Gazette, December 16, 1854

the effect in Montreal was the opposite. In that city, the Liberal machine all but collapsed. When the polls closed on July 25, three declared opponents of the government headed the poll: A.-A. Dorion, L. H. Holton and John Young. What is even more striking is the fact that none of the other three candidates - J.-L. Beaudry, William Badgley, and William Bristow - were officially nominees of the ruling party.

Signs had started to emerge of the weakening of the party's organization in the city since the beginning of the year. The mayoralty election of that year had become a test of strength between the ministerialists and the government's critics. Wolfred Nelson candidacy was supported by the Pilot,²⁵ while the Herald²⁶ and Le Pays²⁷ endorsed Edouard-Raymond Fabre. Nelson won the election with 1,482 votes, but Fabre received only 69 fewer votes.²⁸ An examination of the ward-by-ward figures confirms the Pilot's admission that a "large majority of the British party" supported Fabre.²⁹ In the Centre, East and West wards Fabre easily outpolled his rival, most noticeably in the West Ward, which contained the fewest French Canadian residents. Here, Fabre received twice as many votes as Nelson. In contrast, in the suburbs, it was only in St. Antoine, traditionally the most radical of the city's subdivisions, did the French Canadian bookseller out-poll the old patriote doctor. In St. Mary's

25. Montreal Pilot, February 21, 1854

26. referred to in the Montreal Pilot, January 19, 1854

27. referred to in the Montreal Pilot, February 21, 1854

28. figures from Montreal Pilot, March 2, 1854

29. Montreal Pilot, March 2, 1854

however, always the most Conservative of the suburbs, Nelson led Fabre by only five votes, 160 to 155.

The Pilot declared that these results indicated that politics were no longer organized on a Conservative-Reform basis, but rather pitted against each other the annexationists and those attached to the British connection.³⁰ It is fairly clear that this was merely an attempt on the part of the ministerialist organ to revive the loyalty cry used in the municipal election of 1850.³¹ A number of former annexationists, such as J. J. C. Abbott, Sydney Bellingham and Joseph Knapp signed the requisition to Nelson,³² while, if the Pilot's report can be believed, the group backing Fabre had initially asked the Hon. James Leslie to stand as their candidate.³² Nonetheless, it is also evident that much of the organization created by the annexationists, including their newspapers and some of their personnel, had been revived after a period of quiescence in order to support Fabre. Antipathy to the government, rather than to the British connection was now, however, the unifying theme.

This same development became even clearer in the Montreal election of 1854. Holton and Dorion had both been members of the executive of the Annexation Association of Montreal. At the nomination in July, Dorion was seconded by John Redpath, the Association's former president, and Holton's name was presented by David Torrance, also an ex-annexationist, and

30. Montreal Pilot, March 2, 1854

31. Montreal Pilot, January 24, 31, 1854

32. Montreal Pilot, February 7, 1854

seconded by Joseph Papin of the rouges.³³ The erstwhile annexationist organ, the Herald, supported them.³⁴ Their Addresses to the Electors of Montreal, however, addressed the failings of the Hincks-Morin Ministry. Holton declared "I am distinctly opposed to the present Administration," and particularly condemned the sudden dissolution of the Assembly, which had left untouched major progressive measures. Holton called for the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, the ending of seigneurial tenure, and an elective Legislative Council, the traditional measures of the Liberal party. The Unitarian merchant made clear that he saw himself as a spokesman of the true spirit of the party, rather than its opponent:

My sentiments are known to be in unison with those of the more progressive liberal party, which, ignoring all distinctions founded on differences of origin and creed, seeks to ameliorate our institutions, purify our administrative system and diminish the power and patronage of the Executive by the widest application of the elective principle.³⁵

The clearest sign, however, that Holton and Dorion had put behind them their annexationism in their enthusiasm for a rejuvenated liberalism was their alliance with John Young, formerly one of the most vehement opponents of the movement in which they had been involved. Young's Address endorsed the same principles as those of Holton and Dorion. He declared the current Ministry to be "unworthy of public confidence from (sic) having failed to redeem its promises," and called for

33. Montreal Pilot, July 14, 1854

34. referred to in the Montreal Pilot, July 22, 24, 1854

35. Montreal Pilot, July 21, 1854

an end to the Clergy Reserves and seigneurial tenure, and for an elective Legislative Council.³⁶ This alliance, however, was not an informal one based upon co-incident platforms. In a letter written at the end of June, Young had informed Holton that he was "most anxious" to support him, and had so informed the group urging the Scot to run. A condition was attached; Holton must explicitly pledge himself to "oppose the present administration or any administration of which the present Inspector General (sic) was a member." The reason for this particular animosity to Hincks was made clear. The recent revelations of Hincks stock market speculations, both in the bonds of the City of Toronto and in the Grand Trunk, had offended Young's sense of propriety. Hincks' declaration that he was as entitled to buy and sell public securities as any other individual Young found to be a proposition "subversive of everything like morality in public men, and ruinous to the public interest."³⁷ This theme also appeared in Young's Address.

The signatures appended to the requisition addressed to Young show both the extent to which the former annexationists of Montreal were prepared to support their former enemy and Young's continuing popularity among the city's merchants.³⁸ Of the 107 signatures, at least 34 were of original signatories to the Annexation Manifesto, including James and David Torrance,

36. Montreal Pilot, July 21, 1854

37. John Young to L. H. Holton, June 30, 1854, Young Papers, Box 1, Correspondence I

38. Montreal Gazette, July 20, 1854

Theodore and S. J. Lyman and Henry Lemesurier Routh. Given the prevalence of annexationism among Montreal's traders and manufacturers, this also indicated Young's strength in the city's commercial community. While the names of most of the great Conservative magnates of the preceding decade, the Molsons, McGills and Moffatts, were missing, Young's supporters included a large number of the city's rising business figures, many of whom had had no particular connection with the Annexation Association. Since his resignation from the Executive, Young had resumed business as a merchant. In the Montreal Board of Trade elections of 1854, Young had been elected to the vice-presidency. Of the twenty Councillors and members of the Board of Arbitration elected at the same meeting, eight signed the requisition..³⁹ Indeed, when George Moffatt declined the Board of Trade's presidency, Young narrowly lost the by-election, with 43 votes to Hugh Allan's 46. ⁴⁰

The Scot was thus clearly a mercantile as well as anti-administration candidate. The promoters for Young's candidacy in the parliamentary election were "several of my fellow merchants, as well as other parties," as Young informed Holton, who had himself been elected to the Council of the Board of Trade. Young's platform included specific appeals to both the commercial and industrial elements in the city. He stated that the economic development of Lower Canada had been neglected "for the purposes

³⁹. results in the Montreal Pilot, April 6, 1854

⁴⁰. Montreal Pilot, April 18, 1854

of promoting delusive schemes," presumably the Grand Trunk, and called a canal to Lake Champlain, the free admission of raw materials necessary for home manufactures and the opening up of the St. Lawrence. These elements explain why the Montreal Gazette endorsed Holton and Young, as well as William Badgley.⁴¹

Montreal's anglophone Liberals found it difficult to oppose Young and Holton. One difficulty the ministerialists encountered was the resignation from the Pilot's editorship of William Bristow. Bristow had been anxious to secure the party's recognition as a governmental candidate,⁴² but was rejected. He decided to run regardless, and canvassed the city's Irish Catholics on an anti-Administration platform. In particular, he opposed the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, on the argument that it would lead to the spoilation of the Catholic Church's holdings.⁴³ Evidently, Bristow was finally making his attempt to be recognized as the leader of the city's Irish, and its Irish Catholics in particular. Bristow's successor at the Pilot was Dr. J. P. Litchfield, a medical doctor whose special interest in insanity tended to flow over into the newspaper's columns. The new editor made it clear that Bristow's latest change of political faith was not to be accepted as an indication of a change in government policy: "Anything more transparently shameless, in the annals of political profligacy and tergiver-

41. Montreal Gazette, July 20, 1854

42. Montreal Pilot, July 22, 1854

43. Montreal Pilot, July 22, 1854

sation, we have never seen."⁴⁴

In fact, for the Pilot, the secularization of the Clergy Reserves was "the test question for the Election of 1854."⁴⁵ This stance made it difficult for the paper to attack strongly Holton and Young. Holton in particular was praised for his honest declaration against the Reserves, in contrast to Badgley's qualified statements.⁴⁶ A "Communicated" article also defended John Young against the Freeman's revival of charges against his behaviour as Returning Officer in 1844.⁴⁷ The Pilot also denied the Herald's statement that Bristow, Badgley and J.-L. Beaudry were ministerial candidates, because they differed from the government on crucial questions:

We repeat there are no Ministerial candidates in the field for Montreal; but the candidates whose return is most probable, here and elsewhere, are those who will vote for the great measures, which the Administration have made their own.⁴⁸

Immediately after the election, despite Young's open animosity to the Hincks-Morin Ministry, the Pilot called it "a libel on common sense" to suggest that there was any real antagonism between Young and the government.⁴⁹

It is clear, however, that this official tolerance of anti-Administration Liberals did not extend to the rouges. They, the Pilot admitted, advocated an end to the seigneurial system

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- 44. Montreal Pilot, July 22, 1854
 - 45. Montreal Pilot, July 22, 1854
 - 46. Montreal Pilot, July 22, 1854
 - 47. Montreal Pilot, July 22, 1854
 - 48. Montreal Pilot, July 24, 1854
 - 49. Montreal Pilot, July 29, 1854

and the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, all, at least in theory, part of the government's programme. Nonetheless, while Holton's and Young's support for these policies showed the strength of Liberal principles, such declarations on the part of Dorion were "the entering point of the wedge, which is to open the country to the flood of infidelity and licentiousness." The Pilot further declared that no religiously-minded person, Protestant or Catholic, could support a faction so similar to the atheistic socialists of France.⁵⁰ The reason for such an inconsistency was simple; the Pilot feared an alliance between Tories and rouges to overthrow the government, and at the same time hoped that Young and Holton would support the Ministry when it produced the long promised and long delayed measures.

The final results of the vote, held on July 25, showed how Montreal voters reacted to these arguments. A.-A. Dorion, the candidate whom the Pilot had attacked the most severely, topped the poll with 1,975 votes. He was followed by Luther Holton, with 1,571, and Young with 1,551. J.-L. Beaudry was the most popular of the defeated candidates; he received 1,149, 53 votes ahead of William Badgley. Bristow came in last, all though the 944 votes he received could have, if otherwise distributed, changes the results of the election considerably.⁵¹

While the newspaper saluted the "triumph of the Liberal

50. Montreal Pilot, July 4, 1854

51. Montreal Pilot, July 29, 1854 (correction of figures given on July 25, immediately after the close of the poll.)

candidates,"⁵² these results must have been disappointing. Dorion was clearly the beneficiary of not only Tory and rouge support, but also of dissident Liberal voters, French and English. Only thus can his four hundred vote lead over Holton be explained. Holton's lead over Young was slight, but enough to suggest that the former Executive Councillor was not as acceptable to this ex-annexationist-radical-rouge-Tory coalition as his colleagues. Nonetheless, Young was in turn a clear four hundred votes ahead of Beaudry. Montreal had declared itself clearly in favour of liberalism, but against the officially Liberal government.

The ridings surrounding the city to varying degrees also showed the confusion into which political alignments had been thrown by the previous years. In Beauharnois, Jacob DeWitt's activity on behalf of the Anti-Seigneurial Tenure Convention paid off in his election for his old county. Robert Brown Sommerville carried Huntingdon, formed from a portion of Beauharnois. Sommerville, for a long time the "chief organizer and spokesman for the district's 'British party'"⁵³, had taken an active part in raising the militia in the area during the Rebellions, and had withdrawn from the 1841 election in Beauharnois to secure a united British vote. He had taken a prominent position in local politics, and now stood as an independent, pledged only to "the best interests of the constit-

52. Montreal Pilot, July 25, 1854

53. Robert Andrew Hill, "Robert Sellar and the Huntingdon Gleaner", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, McGill, 1970, p.19

uency." He also supported the abolition of seigneurial tenure and an elective Upper House.⁵⁴ His opponent, James Davidson, attempted to gain the support of French and Irish Catholics, but Sommerville's British Protestant support was too strong.⁵⁵ His election was one indication that the enlargement of the Assembly, by giving more room to the old local conflicts of race, religion and small-town rivalry, had effectively undermined party control.

To the north of Montreal, specific policies were endorsed, but open declarations of loyalty to the party in power were rare. In Argenteuil, Duncan Sinclair, announced that he would stand "in the Reform interest," something which, to his supporters, meant the end of the seigneurial system, the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, the maintenance of "civil and religious liberty", and railroads. This platform could have signified an intention to support the current administration, but Sinclair made clear that he would "join any party combination requisite to compel the Ministry of the day to adopt the necessary measures with the least possible delay."⁵⁶ Another candidate in Argenteuil was Sydney Bellingham. He declared himself frankly against the Administration, and termed its retention of power after the defeat in the Assembly "a violation of the principles upon which the representative system is founded." He too endorsed the extension of the railway system,

54. Sommerville's Address to the Electors of the County of Huntingdon, quoted in Hill, op.cit., p.19

55. Ibid

56. Montreal Pilot, July 21, 1854

and called for a written constitution, an enlarged franchise and "a free application of the Elective principle."⁵⁷ Sinclair withdrew from the contest to avoid splitting the Reform interest,⁵⁸ and Bellingham faced Colonel John Simpson, the Sydenhamite who had been elected in Vaudreuil in 1841.

The actual election did not, however, turn upon questions of political principle. In his memoirs, written some forty years later, Bellingham admitted the importance of the 600 members of the 16 Orange Lodges in the county. One of his supporters was the Colonel Joseph Barron who had distinguished himself by his violence and religious intolerance in the late 1830s and early 1840s. The railway question also played a crucial role, enabling Bellingham to play upon the antagonisms of Lachute and St. Andrew's.⁵⁹ The effect of these factors is manifest in the poll-by-poll results.⁶⁰ Lachute, Gore and Grenville gave Bellingham 719 votes, and his opponent, only 44; St. Andrews and the remaining polls supplied Simpson with 524 votes, but only 139 votes were cast for Bellingham. The Irishman's use of violence and corruption was, however, so flagrant that the election was declared null, and in December Bellingham faced Lemuel Cushing, a wealthy entrepreneur involved in steam shipping. Cushing, unlike Simpson, had the full support of the Montreal oppositionists,⁶¹ but was also defeated by

57. Montreal Pilot, July 10, 1854

58. Montreal Pilot, August 3, 1854

59. "Memoirs of Sydney Bellingham," p. 184

60. figures in the Montreal Pilot, August 7, 1854

61. Montreal Gazette, January 10, February 16, 1855

Bellingham's power in Lachute and Gore.⁶² In turn, this election was annulled, and in fact the Montreal lawyer's mastery of corruption and election law kept Argenteuil effectively unrepresented until 1860.⁶³

In Ottawa, Thomas McGoey, the President and founder of the Ottawa Reform Association, was reported to be a candidate.⁶⁴ Letters in the Pilot discussing his career suggest that there was a degree of internal division among Ottawa Reformers,⁶⁵ and in the end McGoey did not secure the nomination. John Egan faced his first challenge from within the Ottawa Reform Association. At an electors meeting, held at the end of May, Alanson Cooke, elected to the Executive of the Association in 1851,⁶⁶ was proposed as a candidate in opposition to Egan. Cooke came from Petite Nation, and his later career suggests that he was influenced by the master of that seigneurie, L.-J. Papineau. At the meeting, Egan was judged to have the majority, but decided to run in the newly created riding of Pontiac, leaving the field open to Cooke in Ottawa. Egan was acclaimed in Pontiac as a Ministerialist,⁶⁷ and Cooke was elected in Ottawa. Yet another sign of the confusion of the times, both were listed by the Quebec

62. figures in the Montreal Pilot, January 4, 1855. Lachute and Gore together gave Bellingham 636 of his 1047 votes, but only 12 to Cushing.

63. Bellingham was finally acclaimed in 1856, only to face J. J. C. Abbot in 1857, whereupon the same routine of nullification and by-election followed until finally, in 1860, Abbot was awarded the seat.

64. Montreal Pilot, June 30, 1854

65. Montreal Pilot, May 11, June 14,

66. Montreal Pilot, February 1, 1851

67. Montreal Pilot, July 26, 1854

Gazette as opponents of the government.⁶⁸

In contrast, ministerial influence played a central role in the elections in the Eastern Townships. This was not the result of a belated increase in attachment to the Liberal party, for few avowed partisans of the government were elected. Rather, the results demonstrated L. T. Drummond's success in using the politics of railways. As H. L. Robinson declared in the Stanstead Journal,

The people of the Eastern Townships have ever found Mr. Drummond an honourable, upright gentleman, ready to forward their local interests to the extent of his power.⁶⁹

Drummond himself had no difficulty in securing an acclamation in Shefford on July 24, and was thus free to exercise his influence on other ridings in the District.

In Stanstead, the value of the Attorney-General's activity on behalf of the Stanstead, Shefford & Chambly Railroad was most apparent in the support given to his candidate by former enemies of the Liberal party. At the nomination meeting, Timothy L. Terrill, the sitting member, and John M'Connell, the former member, were both nominated. Terrill described himself as unpledged, but admitted that he had generally supported the Ministry. It was revealed at the meeting that Terrill had actually received Drummond's endorsement. M'Connell likewise declared himself to be unpledged, but admitted that his former attachment to the Conservatives had cost Stanstead governmental

68. Quebec Gazette, August 10, 1854

69. Stanstead Journal, August 10, 1854

funding. He promised to do his best to secure such monies in the future.

The key question at the nomination was clearly railroads. M'Connell described himself as "a railroad man," and an anti-railroad speaker was hooted down by the crowd with cries of "Railroad! - Railroad!" Charles Colby, formerly an annexationist Tory, supported Terrill, saying that his popularity with the Ministry would enable him to further the interests of the county, and remarkably, praised Drummond. He declared "it was the duty of the people of Stanstead County to aid that Hon. gentleman in carrying out his views." Drummond had supported the extension of the Municipal Loan Fund to Lower Canada.⁷⁰ The only other important issue that might have affected the election was Temperance, for there was a strong anti-drink movement in Stanstead, and M'Connell was the President of the Eastern Townships Prohibitory Liquor Law League.⁷¹ Terrill refused to endorse the Maine Law, a form of total prohibition, but M'Connell also refused to commit himself on the subject.⁷² Within a week, M'Connell withdrew from the contest, and Terrill was returned unopposed. This provoked cries from Drummond's critics, particularly in Missisquoi, that the former annexationist had been 'bought' by the Attorney-General. The Journal defended Drummond.⁷³

70. Stanstead Journal, July 20, 1854 (account of the nomination meeting)
 71. Sherbrooke Gazette, June 3, 1854
 72. Sherbrooke Gazette, July 20, 1854
 73. Stanstead Journal, August 31, September 7, 1854

In Compton, Drummond used this same strategy of supporting an essentially independent candidate who nonetheless might be favourably disposed towards the Ministry. Again, the candidate the Attorney-General supported was a sitting member and a former advocate of annexation. In that riding, created from the southern portion of Sherbrooke, J. S. Sanborn again faced John Henry Pope. Sanborn, in his Address, stated that he would be "free to act as an independent member, or as a partisan" depending upon the behaviour of the different parties in the Assembly.⁷⁴ Sanborn, however, was in need of assistance, for Pope made clear that the campaign would be heated. In his Address, the farmer-entrepreneur attacked "the secret but powerful and unremitting support" which Sanborn received "from the odious corporate monopoly that lies on the Eastern Townships like a night mare(sic)," referring to the support which Sanborn received from the British American Land Company through A. T. Galt.⁷⁵ Sanborn's supporters in turn defended Galt and the British American Land Company, and in particular the achievements of its agent in promoting railways.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the support of Drummond and the friends of the Administration was needed, and was given. Upon his election, Sanborn was listed by the Quebec Gazette as a Ministerialist.⁷⁷ Sanborn later acknowledged Drummond and his friends had given him their support, although he

74. Sherbrooke Gazette, July 22, 1854

75. Sherbrooke Gazette, July 29, 1854 (quoted in a letter from S. A. Hurd)

76. Sherbrooke Gazette, July 29, 1854

77. Quebec Gazette, August 5, 1854

denied that he had been elected as a supporter of the Administration per se.⁷⁸

The final vote in Compton was extremely close. Sanborn's total of 456 gave him a majority of only 6 over Pope.⁷⁹ The poll-by-poll figures show how crucial to Sanborn was his bastion in Compton township. This township gave him 272 votes, but only 49 to Pope. Pope carried all the other polls, sometimes by slight majorities but in most cases by a considerable factor. In Bury, for example, the sitting member received only 32 votes, while his rival received 105. Although Sanborn's nominators included one British Canadian and one French Canadian, and both of Pope's nominators were of British origin,⁸⁰ the "linguistic factor does not appear to have played a central role in explaining the county's polarization. In Compton township, the French Canadians were not only in a numerical minority, but also much less prosperous and worse organized than their anglo-phone neighbors.⁸¹

Proximity to Sherbrooke Town, the local centre of governmental, Grand Trunk and British American Land Company influence, seems to have been the key.⁸² The three polls where Sanborn gained at least half as many votes as Pope, Clifton, Eaton and Newport, formed with Compton a fairly coherent block angled around Sherbrooke Town in the neighbouring county. In contrast, the

78. in the Assembly, on March 20, 1855, quoted in the Montreal Gazette, March 23, 1855

79. figures in the Montreal Pilot, August 7, 1854

80. Sherbrooke Gazette, July 29, 1854

81. J. I. Little, op. cit. p. 288

centres of Pope's support, including Hereford on the American border and the newly-opened settlement of Winslow ⁸², formed the periphery of the riding. Galt and Drummond both had been central to Sanborn's narrow victory.

The elections in Sherbrooke Town and the surrounding United Counties of Sherbrooke and Wolfe also showed the power of the combined influence of the Grand Trunk and the government. In the town, Galt was elected by acclamation. After taking his seat in 1853, he had given qualified support to the Ministry because, as he explained later, he

desired a speedy settlement of the Seigniorial Tenure and Clergy Reserves question, and believed that ministry more likely to settle both questions than any other that could be formed.⁸³

Thus, in contrast to his experience in the by-election of the preceding year, Galt was unopposed. His erstwhile rival, W. L. Felton, ran in Sherbrooke-Wolfe, where he faced William Webb and Udolphus Aylmer. Webb, however, named Coroner by the government, withdrew before the nominations.⁸⁴ In his Address, Aylmer drew attention to his familiarity with agriculture and his "unshaken loyalty to Her Majesty." His stand on the Clergy Reserves revealed his Tory inclinations; he asked that the question be resolved "on just and equitable principles" with due regard "for vested rights in property." In turn, Felton presented as his only claim that he would work hard for his

⁸². J. I Little, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-306

⁸³. quoted in O. D. Skelton, Life and Times of Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, p. 186

⁸⁴. Sherbrooke Gazette, July 22, 1854

constituents.⁸⁵ Felton's connection with Drummond was too well known to need publicizing, and the lawyer carried the election with a majority of 123.⁸⁶

The county of Missisquoi had been divided to form two new ridings, Missisquoi West and Missisquoi East. In the former, two American-born Montrealers, Hannibal H. Whitney and Charles Seymour, both interested in railways, contested the riding with a resident candidate, E. J. Smith of Clarenceville. One fact which may have had some importance was that Whitney, although a Montreal businessman, had been raised in Missisquoi. The transplantation of local figures to the urban centres was yet another means by which local interests became integrated into those of the metropolis. The poll-by-poll results reflect the familiar pattern of localism. 142 of Smith's 277 votes came from his native town, where the other candidate together received 27 votes; in Dunham, Whitney received 324 of his 667 votes, while only 11 voters supported Smith and Seymour. Seymour's centre of support was Stanbridge, where he received 203 of the 282 votes cast. Whitney thus carried the election on the basis of his commanding lead in Dunham. There is little evidence of Drummond's involvement in the contest.

In sharp contrast, it was in Missisquoi East that Drummond involved himself the most publicly, and with results nearly disastrous. At the nomination meeting, the Attorney-General

85. Sherbrooke Gazette, July 22, 1854 (Addresses of Aylmer and Felton)

86. Stanstead Journal, August 10, 1854

spoke on behalf of B. C. A. Gagy, one of the candidates; the other was James Moir Ferres of the Montreal Gazette. The rivalry between the two Montrealers went back to the first days of the Union, when Ferres was connected with the Herald, and the conflict between/then in the election was bitter. Gagy, in characteristically vitriolic tones, summed up the experience:

as in a wreck, the Koh-i-noor might be found in close contiguity with the festering carcase of a drown'd rat, so do I find myself - God help me - in close contact with Mr. Ferres.⁸⁷

Differences of political principle had little to do with the contest. In a letter to Rollo Campbell, the proprietor of the Pilot, Ferres wrote that he was "a Reformer of the first water,"⁸⁸ a position consistent with his paper's support for Young and Holton. After the election, Gagy, with Drummond's consent, was preparing to petition against Ferres' return, but was stopped by the Attorney-General when the editor of the Gazette promised to support the Ministry. Evidently, the electors of Missisquoi East found Ferres and his involvement in railways more appealing than the old-fashioned and unreliable seigneur. In addition, as Gagy himself admitted, the support he had given to the LaFontaine-Baldwin Ministry had alienated many of his former friends. The election contest was expensive, and both Gagy and Drummond were in debt. Even so, Ferres won the riding easily, by 821 votes to 357. There was little polarization within the county; the Montreal editor carried every poll

87. Montreal Pilot, September 4, 1854

88. Montreal Pilot, August 7, 1854

by a strong majority.⁸⁹

This election is of particular interest, because a resulting court-case revealed some of the usually hidden details of mid-nineteenth century campaigning. The case concerned a promissory note for 150^l. given by Gagy to Drummond after the Irish lawyer had run out of money for the campaign. In return, Drummond guaranteed Gagy's return. After his defeat, the seigneur refused payment, claiming that the debt was illegal, in that it had been intended for the illegal purposes of electoral corruption. Felton, on Drummond's behalf, took Gagy to court. The unfolding of the case took over four years, and involved appeals and a challenge to a duel. According to Gagy's account⁹⁰ Drummond had promised him the Commissionership of a police force, modelled after the Irish constabulary, as a reward for his role in maintaining order during the Montreal Gavazzi riots. The police bill was not introduced; instead, the Attorney-General asked Gagy to run against Ferres a few days before the nomination. During the trip to Missisquoi, Gagy accepted Drummond's terms:

In plain English, to use Mr. Drummond's words, I was his nominee . . . This was not pleasant; but it was, I was made to understand, part of the payment in advance of the office which I was to receive.

The election of 1854 thus produced a significant change in the anglophone representation of Lower Canada. The absolute numbers of English-speaking members had in fact risen, from

89. figures in Montreal Pilot, August 3, 1854

90. presented in a letter to the editor, Quebec Gazette, June 12, 1855

14 to 20, but, given the increased the size of the Assembly, this in fact constituted a decline from 33.3% of the membership to 30.7%, a decline smaller in proportion than that evinced in all the elections since the Union. More importantly, relatively few of the British Canadian members were committed partisans of the Liberal administration. In Quebec, Charles Alleyn had indeed been elected as a supporter of the Ministry, but his ties with the part were recent, and he owed his victory more to his personal standing in the city's Irish and Catholic communities than to the support of a party machine. In Montreal, two declared enemies of the Ministry had been elected, and the little hope that the partisan organization in the city had that Holton and Young would not settle into permanent opposition came from their endorsement of political principles not entirely incompatible with those of the more radical wing of the government. Around Montreal, men had been elected on the combined basis of their personal standing, old animosities, and declarations of attachment to specific reforms, rather than to political organizations. While in the Eastern Townships, Drummond had secured a distinct success, this was based more on expectations of government largesse and Drummond's own involvement in the District than the structure of the Liberal party. Of the twenty anglophone members elected, perhaps only Ross, Drummond, Felton and Egan could genuinely be considered as bona fide supporters of the government. Men like Sanborn, Terrill, Alleyn and Galt had been until recently determined enemies of the Liberal party, and their

continuing adhesion to the Hincks-Morin Ministry would depend very much on the policies enacted by the government. In fact, as the Montreal Transcript wryly commented, "Everybody is a 'Reformer,' and everybody is a 'Conservative.'"91 Party alignment appears to have collapsed almost completely. The Montreal Herald went so far as to list L. T. Drummond himself as an Oppositionist.⁹² The new factors introduced into Canadian politics since the beginning of the decade had in effect produced a return to the political style of the first election under the Union. Elections were carried on declarations of principle, personal standing, and mastery of the shadier side of electioneering.⁹³ Until the Assembly was convened, no one could predict the behaviour of the Lower Canadian anglophone members.

The Assembly that convened in Toronto on September 5 was thus one of the most unpredictable of the Union. A very great deal depended on the line taken in the Speech from the Throne. Hincks had commenced his political negotiations well before the commencement of the session, and, through Galt, was trying to win over the English-speaking radicals from Canada East to the Ministry. He insisted that the state of affairs in the

91. quoted in the Stanstead Journal, August 17, 1854

92. quoted in the Sherbrooke Gazette, July 29, 1854

93. The election of 1854 appears to have been marked by an increase in electoral fraud, the result, in part, of the dissolution of the Assembly before the machinery for the new franchise had been completed. In Saguenay, for example, 14319 votes were cast, although the riding contained only 12965 residents; in a parish in Bellechase, 300 votes were cast, although there were only 47 electors. (Stanstead Journal, November 2, 1854)

country showed that "the tendency is to carry us in the direction of a more Liberal party in L. C.," and that Holton was "not really unfriendly to us, although placed at present in a position where to be consistent and to act with friends he may have to appear so."⁹⁴ Clearly, the Inspector-General was still attempting to keep the party united on a reform basis.

In the same letter, Hincks identified the election of the Speaker of the Assembly as a test question. When the vote was taken, a ministerial defeat was only avoided by one of the Inspector-General's political manoeuvres. The government's candidate, G.-E. Cartier was defeated by the combined strength of the rouges, Tories and Clear Grits; Hincks then threw the weight of the government's support behind the rouges' candidate, L.-V. Sicotte, in order to defeat John Sandfield Macdonald, the nominee of the Grits.

Cartier's nomination to the Chair had been defeated by a vote of 59 to 62; the election of Sicotte was carried by a vote of 76 to 41.⁹⁵ The support given by individual anglophone Lower Canadians for the two candidates indicates the considerable flux and confusion that existed in the Assembly. Political calculation grouped together individuals of different points of view. As might have been expected, the five English-speaking members from Canada East who supported both Cartier and Sicotte was formed of the hard core of ministerial supporters: Attorney-

⁹⁴. Fr. Hincks to A.T. Galt, August 13, 1854, quoted in O. D. Skelton, op. cit., p. 187

⁹⁵. DLA, vol. 13, pt. 1, p. 6, September 5, 1854

General Drummond, Solicitor-General Ross, W. L. Felton, Charles Alleyn and William Rhodes. Equally predictably, R. B. Somerville found neither the ex-patriote nor the emergent rouge acceptable, and thus demonstrated a solitary independent consistency. The opposition to the government's candidate and subsequent support for Sicotte of Jacob DeWitt, Holton and Young was a matter of course, and the adhesion of Alanson Cooke of Ottawa to this group was not surprising. These radical reformers, however, were joined by James Moir Ferres and John O'Farrell, the former a perennial advocate of political moderation and the latter a militant Irish Catholic. Most heterogeneous was the group that supported Cartier, but voted against the member for St. Hyacinthe. This included Sydney Bellingham, A. T. Galt, J. S. Sanborn, H. H. Whitney and John Egan and thus covered the entire political spectrum from ministerialist to independent entrepreneur to avowed radical.⁹⁶ While the vote on the Speaker was enough to bring about the resignation of the Upper Canadian wing of the Executive, it evidently did not produce any greater clarity in the confusing political behaviour of Lower Canada's anglophone representatives.

Such a clarification was inevitably produced, however, by the formation of the MacNab-Morin Ministry, presented to the Assembly on September 11. The introduction of a High Tory element, even one that now avowed reform principles, could not

96. John LeBouthillier did not vote; T. L. Terrill and Meagher voted for Cartier on the first division, but abstained on the second division.

but force a division between the radical and moderate elements within the Liberal part of Lower Canada. On September 12 a meeting of the 'Reform' members of the Assembly was held under the chairmanship of W. H. Merritt. The meeting, in calling for the defeat of the new ministers, made clear its revulsion at this combination of different elements in the following resolution:

That the Ministerial Combination recently announced involves an utter abandonment of principle by the parties to it; and, if successful, would bring discredit on our constitutional system and tend seriously to the demoralization of public men ...⁹⁷

This declaration, however, was not a purely Upper Canadian document. Of the 36 names appended to it, 18 were those of Lower Canadians. These were predominantly French Canadian rouges, such as the Dorion brothers, J.-H. Jobin, Charles Daoust and Joseph Papin. Nonetheless, a third of the radicals from Canada East were anglophones. These were L. H. Holton, A. T. Galt, Alanson Cooke, John Young, Jacob DeWitt and J. S. Sanborn. These men formed what the newspapers would later call the "Anglo-Rouges."⁹⁸

This group did not contain all the reform-minded Lower Canadians. Particularly among the anglophone ministerialists, there were those who supported the new Ministry out of a desire to effect the reforms to which it was pledged. Drummond, in the Assembly, described the new combination as "one of the most glorious triumphs of reform principles ever achieved in the history of politics." Rather than the Liberal becoming conser-

⁹⁷. in the Quebec Gazette, September 16, 1854

⁹⁸. the Montreal Pilot used the term at least as early as September 29, 1856, in reference to the Herald and the Montreal Argus.

vative, the Conservatives had become Liberal, for MacNab was pledged to the secularization of the Reserves, the abolition of seigniorial tenure, and an elective Upper House.⁹⁹ W. L. Felton was franker. He admitted "that before the present arrangements had been made, he would have preferred an alliance with gentlemen (sic) opposite (the rouges).". The treacherous behaviour of the Upper Canadian radicals, in contrast to the unity and firmness of principle of the Lower Canadian Liberals made the coalition necessary.¹⁰⁰ It is interesting to note that in less than two years, both Drummond and Felton broke with the Liberal-Conservative alliance, and Drummond accepted in 1858 the office of Attorney-General under Brown and Dorion.

The events of September 11 and 12 thus marked the realignment of political structures and the end of the old Liberal party of Lower Canada. Out of the disaffected, the new radical faction constructed at least the skeleton of a party structure. Newspapers in both the major cities, the Montreal Herald and the Quebec Gazette, supported the new alignment, and money was not lacking. The source of this money was popularly thought to be the rouges' anglophone supporters.¹⁰¹

Consistency of principle did not always play a central part in this process; thus, William Bristow, who had in the summer of 1854 campaigned against the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, issued in the beginning of the fall a prospectus

99. DLA, vol. 13, pt. 1, p. 73, September 11, 1854

100. DLA, vol. 13, pt. 1, p. 65, September 11, 1854

101. 'Gaspard LeMage', La Pléiade Rouge, p. 13, and infra

for a new radical paper, to be named the Argus. This document declared

that so far as Upper Canada is concerned, the Administration is essentially Conservative and the necessary consequence is that no measure of Reform will - except with the utmost reluctance, and under extreme pressure - be conceded,

and called for a more democratic political system.¹⁰² By the next year, the Argus joined the Herald as an organ of what the Pilot called the "Clear-Grit-Annexation-Rouge" party, calling for, among other things, the secularization of the Reserves.¹⁰³ Dunbar Ross, despite his earlier aversion to the Clear Grits, also gravitated towards the rouges; in his case disappointment at being displaced by Charles Alleyn as Solicitor-General probably played a part. By 1859 he was participating in key policy meetings with the rest of that party. For him, as for Bristow, there was no where else to go.

In this lay the central element of the attachment of anglo-phones to the new political party. When they, for different and often divergent reasons, could no longer support the Ministry, they were compelled to either withdraw from politics or ally themselves with the rouges. Fluidity in personnel continued to be a characteristic of the politics of the Union. If the rouges gained Drummond, Bristow and Ross, they lost Galt, and, later, McGee. Nonetheless, they continued to form the only alternative.

102. Sherbrooke Gazette, September 4, 1854

103. Montreal Pilot, February 14, 1854

Indeed, within the parti rouge, the anglophones recreated the role of the English-speaking supporters of LaFontaine. Forming themselves a minority, not only within the party, but also within their own language group, they exercised a disproportionate amount of influence. In 1857, the Montreal Gazette put the following words into the mouth of "one of the City members," either Young or Holton:

Tho' Rouges pine for high estate,
And seek a place in Cabinets,
They shall be sharers of my fate -
With golden rod I'll rule my pets.¹⁰⁴

The history, however, of the Anglo-Rouges lies beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁰⁴. Montreal Gazette, November 25, 1857

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Conclusion

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The material presented in this thesis has established that, between 1840 and 1854, anglophones played a crucial role in the development of the Liberal party in Canada East. Not only did they enable the party to present itself as a non-nationalistic party, despite the fact that the party drew its strength from the combined force of French Canadian and Irish nationalism, the English-speaking Liberals also played a central role in defining the strategies and organization of the entire party. Their influence was pervasive, but concentrated clearly at the top of the decision-making process. Neilson, Aylwin, Drummond and Young, to name only the most influential, were significant figures in the development of the party as a social institution that played a determining role within the political framework of the Union.

Despite the fact that the party to which they were attached was primarily a vehicle for French-Canadian nationalism, and that with the exception of the Irish Catholics, these men failed to rally behind them a significant portion of the English-speaking communities within Lower Canada, their character as anglophones was the key to their disproportionate influence. All of them

were important members of their several communities, and as such were undeniably men of influence. John Neilson and Benjamin Holmes both manifested a strong commitment to the welfare of Quebec City and Montreal respectively, and this dedication was acknowledged despite the unpopular politics these two men adopted. Even such an extremist as Jacob DeWitt never lost his position as a man of standing within Montreal; while his support of, first the patriotes, then the Liberals, and finally the annexationists and rouges, alienated most of his fellow anglophones, his wealth and energy in community affairs guaranteed that he would continue to enjoy a considerable degree of respect. As members of the provincial elite, DeWitt, Leslie, Young, Holmes, Holton, Aylwin, Neilson, Dunbar ~~Cross~~, Drummond, Armstrong, Maguire, W. L. Felton, Scott and Christie could all operate with a degree of independence that could not be matched. A French Canadian, such as LaFontaine or Morin, depended for his position on the extent to which he could mobilize behind him la nation canadienne; their anglophone allies did not need such clearly defined support. By their association with the party, they gave their political friends a respectability in the eyes of the Colonial Office that they could not otherwise gain.

A large part of their status came from the fact that politics in Lower Canada were directed from the two urban centres, Montreal and Quebec. In the former, Canadians of British stock were a majority, not simply in numbers, but also in terms of influence. In the latter, English-speaking Canadians,

although a minority, were vital to the city's dominant economic activities, the timber trade and ship-building. As party became a more and more established concept in the minds of the mass of the Lower Canadians, and as control over the party system became increasingly concentrated in Montreal, the advantage of these urban Liberals became more marked. This centralization was one aspect of the growing role of the urban metropolis within an evermore integrated society; the role of the anglophones within the Liberal party is a useful indicator of this development.

This thesis has also shown that the factors determining the political behaviour of the Lower Canadian British anglophones were not indigenous to the colony. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, British Canadians were not a distinct group but rather part of the general cultural and economic system of Europe and in particular Britain. While the Free Trade movement came out of England's experience of the industrial revolution, its doctrines were so much part of the liberal British Canadian perspective that such individuals as Young, Holton and Holmes were prepared to base their political careers on a policy devised with little specific reference to Canada. Indeed, the Lower Canadian Liberal party became very much the image of the British Liberal party. The Canadian Liberals' emphasis on disestablishmentarianism, popular influence in government and economic development was directly and explicitly borrowed from the British Liberals' development. The power of such catch-phrases acted as a unifying principle even when the realities of the colonial

experience interdicted their full application. Thus, Free Trade, local government, open elections and voluntarism became as much elements of the Canadian political lexicon as of the British experience.

The clearest application of this principle becomes apparent in the Canadian Liberal party's relationship with the Irish, and in particular with the Irish Catholics. This was, after all, the one large group of English-speaking Lower Canadians that did ally itself with the Liberal party. This was again the result, not of any factor inherent in the Canadian situation, but rather of the success of the Liberals in identifying the struggle for colonial Responsible Government with Daniel O'Connell's agitation for the repeal of the union between Britain and Ireland. The struggle between the Canadian Liberal and Tories for the crucial support of this group rotated around not the specific difficulties of the Irish as an immigrant group but on appeals to the increasingly strident Irish Nationalism that had emerged in the nineteenth century. The fact that the early leadership of Canada's Irishmen came from Irish Unitarians rather than Catholics shows how precisely the model of Irish politics had been transferred to the new country. The displacement of such leaders as William Workman, Francis Hincks and Benjamin Holmes by Irish Catholics like L. T. Drummond and John Maguire was, in turn, the reflection of a similar development in Ireland. As religion became more and more a defining feature of Irish nationalism, and more and more of a focal point in the struggle between different points of

view in Europe, social institution in Canada, such as the St. Patrick's Society also became transformed.

In this, the Liberals' relationship with the Irish community is a model for their leaders' dealings with economic classes. While, as is shown by Légaré's popularity with the artisans and workers in the suburbs of Quebec City, there were distinct class interests, both Liberal and Conservative politicians united to keep them from having a direct impact on politics. Only rarely were appeals ever made to the economic concerns of the non-middle class Lower Canadians. Rather, nationalism, local pride and religion were used to generate attachment to the party. Where other issues were involved, as in the popular resistance to the Special Council's ordinances, these were channelled into overtly political causes. In contrast, when the interests of the middle class were involved, as in the promotion of economic development through the creation of a railway system, governmental action was presented as being on behalf of the entire society. The agitation against the seigneurial system, to the middle class an obstacle to greater economic development and to the habitants a personal and direct burden, shows that when the concerns of both classes coincided Victorian politicians were able to co-ordinate large-scale popular protest. This was never, however, taken to the point of threatening the control over society of the professional, political and entrepreneurial elites. A large part of the resistance to the 'socialism' of the rouges can be explained as a result of fear that their activities might disrupt

this control.

The middle-class dominance of Lower Canadian politics lay behind the importance of the English-speaking Liberals within the party. As long as British Canadians dominated the business community, and loomed large in other areas, any political party's leadership would inevitably contain a disproportionate number of anglophones. It was his accommodation to this inescapable fact that constituted LaFontaine's political strength. His linking of French Canadian nationalism with the entrepreneurial outlook of the ~~primarily~~ British Canadian economic elites restored the social cohesion that had been disrupted by the rebellions. In this linking, men like Benjamin Holmes and John Young were vital. Their support for the party could be used to demonstrate that, unlike the patriotes, the Liberals were as fully committed to economic progress as the Conservatives. Indeed, as shown by their railway policies, the Liberals were even more ardent proponents of the doctrine of development than their opponents.

The Liberals success in making French Canadian nationalism a support, rather than an obstacle, to unfettered development was so successful in restoring some degree of unity to Lower Canadian society because it re-established a consensus among the various different elites within the colony. By joining together the two strongest tendencies in Canada East, the Liberals' success effectively removed ideological confrontation from the public arena. This explains the importance of party as the basis for political activity. The elections of the period became, not

struggles between ideas but contests between organizations. In the absence of profound ideological rifts, party acquired an overwhelming importance. The ease and frequency with which individuals changed partisan allegiances does not contradict this. Instead, it shows how little actual difference existed between the different political groups.

It is significant that the English-speaking Liberals helped to create this new consensus principally while the Liberal party was out of power. As long as control over the apparatus of the state, and consequently control over policies supporting development, was vested in the other party, the bulk of the British Lower Canadian elites rejected LaFontaine. This goes a long way in explaining why those prominent anglophones who did support the Liberal party exercised so much influence within the party. The artificiality of their position, however, became more apparent once the Liberals definitely assumed power in 1848. The tension between LaFontaine's intentions and the desires and interests of his anglophone supporters was brought to the breaking point by the economic crisis. The participation of many of LaFontaine's most prominent English-speaking supporters in the annexationist movement shows that the link between the French Canadian leader and these supporters had not survived political success. While annexationism proved short-lived as a policy, the alienation of men like DeWitt and Holton proved more permanent, and the alliances and organization brought together by the annexationists survived the re-unification of the party brought about by Francis

Hincks with sufficient solidity to supply much of the structural base for the rouges.

The final breakdown of the Lower Canadian Liberal party was, in fact, the inevitable consequence of LaFontaine's adoption of a pro-development attitude. Once it had been established the French Canadians could be brought to support developmental policies, the antagonism of the bulk of the British Canadian elite quickly waned. The coalition against the annexationists constituted the first step towards the full alliance between the traditional figures of the 'British' party, the men who dominated trade in the colony. When, with the formation of the MacNab-Morin government, the connection between the French Canadians and the traditional figures of power in the British Canadian community became formalized, the men who had supported the Liberals while in opposition were no longer necessary, and were displaced. In effect, they had outlived their usefulness. This explains why many eventually gravitated towards the rouges; it was only within a new political party that did not have the support of the bulk of the colony that they could re-establish the position they had enjoyed in earlier days.

In the final analysis, the English-speaking Liberals were ambitious men. For some, like L. T. Drummond, this was clearly their principal motivation; others, like Holmes, were less clearly determined to achieve political success. All were, however, seeking to improve their own social standing within the colony. In Canada East, and indeed, in the entire Victorian

community, the search for status was a principal pre-occupation. Status could be gained by wealth, activity within community organizations or inherited prestige. Political prominence, however, offered the quickest, most accessible and most respectable path to social position. Admittedly, political activity also increased the possibility of material success, by increasing both professional and entrepreneurial opportunities, but it appears that many individuals, such as L. H. Holton, re-invested the profits from their entrepreneurial activities in political endeavours. Politics in nineteenth-century Canada was an expensive occupation, and it is clear that as a purely commercial speculation it was financially unrewarding. The determination with which political careers were pursued suggests that the status success therein conferred was an objective in itself, independent of monetary considerations.

In the Introduction to this thesis, it was asked what need there was for another traditional study of the politics of the Union. On a basic level, the thesis supplies a variety of information that has not yet been presented, and corrects certain factual errors that have crept into the secondary literature. On a more conceptual level, it suggests that parties, as social institutions, played a part in establishing the hegemony of urban metropolises, particularly that of Montreal. Finally, it is hoped that the material presented in this text illuminates the underlying nature of Lower Canadian political organization, and gives some insight into the nature of middle-class dominance in the

United Province.

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