extreme section of the party. The tone of the Clear Grit press gradually veered round from an ultra-friendly to a more critical attitude towards the United States, and, in the end, to a loyal support of the British connection. The gradual revival of trade, the untoward turn of American affairs, and the more favourable prospect of provincial reforms, all contributed to allay the spirit of disaffection among the Clear Grits.

CHAPTER VI

THE DECLINE OF THE MOVEMENT

Cobden's Bradford speech encourages Annexationists—Earl Grey, Secretary for the Colonies—Despatch condemning annexation —Criticism of annexation papers—Approval of loyalist press —The French-Canadian papers—Embarrassment of the Annexationists—The Executive Council of the Association—The Third Address—Criticism of Address—Speech of Lord John Russell—Pronouncement of Lord Elgin on imperial relations —Municipal elections in Montreal—Success of annexation —Municipal elections in Montreal—Success of annexation candidates—Waning interest of the Association—Protectionist sentiment of business community—Character of movement in Montreal—Election in Sherbrooke County—Annexation the issue—Nomination day—Victory of Mr. Sanborn—Opinion of Lord Elgin regarding the victory of the Annexationists—Reaction in the Eastern Townships—Attitude of the French-Canadians—Hostility of clergy to annexation—Annexation and the Seigneurial system—Failure of movement among French-Canadians—Agitation of French-Canadians in United States for annexation—The New York Association—Address to French-Canadians—Organization of American Associations —Influence on movement in Canada—Political feeling in Upper Canada—Election in London—Speech of Hon. F. Hincks —Address of Judge Draper to Grand Jury—Criticism of Earl Grey's despatch—The Annexation Association of Toronto—Address of the Association—Disappointment of the Annexationists—Manifesto of Colonel Prince in favour of independence —Petition for independence—Suspension of *The Independent*—Results of the movement.

THE hopes of the Montreal Annexationists were greatly stimulated by the favourable tone of some of the leading English papers, especially those of the Manchester School. *The Morning Advertiser* went so far as to declare that the Government had come to the conclusion that the severance of the imperial tie, in the case of Canada, would be bene-

ficial to the mother country, and that it would lay proposals to that effect before Parliament at the coming session. The Radical pronouncement of Mr. Cobden at Bradford afforded special encouragement to the Montreal Association. In this celebrated speech, he distinctly advocated the extension of the largest measure of self-government to the colonies with a view to their ultimate independence at the earliest possible moment. He called for the immediate withdrawal of any further military or ecclesiastical aid to the colonies, by which simple economy an annual sum of £15,000,000 would be saved to the imperial treasury. "I want to see this country abandon the mere political connection between the colonies and herself, and trust to our common literature, our common language, which will give to the Saxon race unity throughout the world if they do nothing now to prevent that understanding."

In the colonies, the views of Cobden carried scarcely less weight than in England. In Canada, he was justly looked upon as one of the most influential leaders in English political life. By the Reformers, in particular, he was held in the highest honour for his liberal and enlightened statesmanship. His views in respect to the colonies were admittedly Radical, but it was confidently believed by many of the colonists that they would be accepted by the Whig Government in due course of time. If Cobden had been in Canada, *The Courier* triumphantly declared, he and his friends would have signed the manifesto. What Canada wanted was not so much retrenchment or elective institutions as freedom of trade with the United States, which could only be secured by annexation. The colonial system might, it concluded, be bolstered up for a time, but annexation would come at last.

But the roseate hopes of the Annexationists in respect to the attitude of the British Government were doomed to disappointment. In matters of colonial policy, Cobden did not voice the opinion of the English Government or nation. A man of different calibre and

different principles was at the head of the colonial office. Earl Grey, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, was a Liberal Imperialist. He favoured the extension of the principles of self-government to the colonies, but was firmly convinced of the paramount necessity of maintaining the integrity of the empire. A man of strong and imperious will, though of liberal sentiments, he did not hesitate in his administration of colonial affairs to play at times the part of a just but benevolent dictator. The didactic despatches which he was accustomed to address to the colonies were a true reflection of his firm political convictions in matters of colonial policy.

The Colonial Secretary had been following the despatches of Lord Elgin with a keen and critical interest. The growth of the annexation movement afforded him an excellent opportunity of intervening in Canadian affairs ; and on this occasion he intervened with more than his accustomed force and authority. In a despatch to the Governor-General of January 9, 1850, he clearly and decisively set forth the determination of the English Government to oppose the annexation movement with all the forces at its command. After acknowledging the receipt of many loyal addresses from various colonial bodies, His Lordship declared :

" With regard to the Address to the people of Canada in favour of severing the province from the British Dominions, for the purpose of annexing it to the United States, which forms the subject of the 3rd of these despatches, I have to inform you that Her Majesty approves of your having dismissed from her service those who have signed a document which is scarcely short of treasonable in its character. Her Majesty confidently relies on the loyalty of the great majority of her Canadian subjects, and she is therefore determined to exert all the authority which belongs to her, for the purpose of maintaining the connection of Canada with this country, being persuaded that the

permanence of that connection is highly advantageous to both.

" Your Lordship will, therefore, understand that you are commanded by Her Majesty to resist, to the utmost of your power, any attempt which may be made to bring about the separation of Canada from the British Dominions, and to mark in the strongest manner Her Majesty's displeasure with all those who may directly or indirectly encourage such a design.

" And if any attempt of this kind should take such a form that those who are guilty of it may, according to such advice as you may receive from your law advisers, be made responsible for their conduct in a court of justice, you will not fail to take the necessary measures for bringing them to account."

The despatch of Earl Grey aroused the keenest interest among the Canadian public, as the first official expression of the policy of the home Government towards the annexation movement. It was severely condemned, and in turn as warmly commended, according to the political views of the critics. Some of the annexation journals vented their spleen upon the Colonial Secretary in a most offensive manner. They indignantly repudiated the veiled accusation of treason, flaunted his mild menaces of coercion, and flung back at his lordship the charge of seeking to stifle freedom of thought by the employment of dictatorial methods. *L'Avenir* and *The Herald* were especially outspoken in their criticism of the tone and subject-matter of the despatch. The former professed to see in the despatch a mere reflex of the false representations of the Governor-General to the effect that he had crushed the annexation movement.

The Annexationists were not surprised at the reply since they had no expectation of a favourable opinion from the English Government, until the provincial legislation should adopt resolutions in favour of a union with the United States. It expressed the conviction that the Canadian people would not meekly

submit to the dictation of Downing Street, as recommended by the ministerial press.[1] *The Herald* sarcastically remarked: "We may surely be permitted to say that it is not for England, and far less for Lord Grey to tell us that the permanence of the connection is highly advantageous to us, but to convince us that it is so." It practically denied the right of the motherland to a voice in the determination of the future of the colony. "The Annexationists," it concluded, "are not children to be bullied by misrepresentation and falsehood."

The remaining annexation journals were much more discreet in their utterances. The criticism of *The Courier* was couched in moderate language. "Lord Grey's opinion is good so far as it goes; it is the opinion of an individual—nay, for argument's sake, we will grant that it is the opinion of the Imperial Ministry; but neither Lord Grey, nor the administration of which he is a member, are the Parliament or people of England, and it is to them that the people of Canada must look for a decision in this matter."

But the despatch of the Colonial Secretary had gravely shaken the overweening confidence of *The Courier* in the inevitableness of annexation. "We do not say," it continued, "that a contingency may not arise which will prevent, or rather render unnecessary, any further agitation for Canadian independence and its consequence—annexation. If our commercial affairs be set right—by the passage of a Reciprocity Act in the Legislature of the United States, and under the recent alterations in the Navigation Laws; if England consents to surrender the Civil List, and to allow us to reduce the salary of the Governor-General to something like an American standard, or if not, to defray his salary herself, as is demanded by the people of Jamaica; if she allows us to make other reductions which are necessary; if she grants us an entirely elective Legis-

[1] *L'Avenir*, February 15, 1850.

lature, and consents to a general expansion of the elective principle, and, in fact, gives us entirely the management of our internal affairs; why then, it is possible that we may find it to our advantage to cease the present agitation." The great majority of the Annexationists, it concluded, were as loyal as their pro-British opponents, and more so than the Government which had driven them into the advocacy of a political union with their neighbours.[1]

The criticism of *The Witness* was even more interesting. It deplored the tone and style of his lordship's despatch, as unworthy of a British minister. The people of Canada were as capable of judging their own interests as the gentlemen of Downing Street, and they strongly resented the language of menace and the threats of coercion which had been addressed to them. There was, it asserted, "a splendid opportunity to evince the sincerity of men's professions." The Annexationists had professed their adherence to the principle of peace, and, however much their views might be misrepresented, they ought not to resort to menaces in return. "Rather let there be a public and renewed adhesion to the amicable and peaceful principles they have already announced," and a disclaimer of all attempts to accomplish their ends by means of violence. "If," it concluded in a sanctimonious strain, "Annexationists calmly and patiently commit their cause to Him who ruleth all things, and doeth all things well, He will, if He sees fit, easily bring it about with the consent and goodwill of all parties, for He has the hearts of all men in His hands; and if He does not see meet to bring it about thus, surely no one should attempt to bring it about otherwise."

On the other hand, the loyalist press received the despatch with the heartiest commendations. The Annexationists, *The Gazette* declared, had been entirely mistaken as to the state of English opinion. The agitation, it admitted in a conciliatory tone, had done

[1] Quoted from *The Pilot*, February 7, 1850.

much good within certain limits, especially in revealing to the public the dangerous situation of the country's affairs. But unfortunately some of the annexation leaders and papers had gone too far in attacking the English Government. Now that the attention of the British authorities had been attracted to colonial affairs, it behoved the Annexationists to unite with the League to secure the necessary reforms in colonial government. The despatch, *The Pilot* gleefully declared, placed the Annexationists in a bad fix. The leaders of that party, especially Messrs. Rose and Johnston, would now have an opportunity of putting into effect their open declarations that they would acquiesce in the decision of the English Government. The despatch should give a *coup de grâce* to the annexation cause. The manifesto, it concluded, could not now secure one-half the signatures which were originally obtained.[1]

The French ministerial press very cleverly attempted to interpret the despatch as an expression of the personal will of the sovereign. *La Minerve* discussed the despatch under the caption, "La Reine contre l'annexion." *Le Canadien* warned its readers that the Annexationists had carried their agitation too far to be stopped by the refusal of the English Government to accede to their demand for separation. "Pas de duperie dans une affaire aussi sérieux; que chacun sache, et soit bien averti que, si nous demandons l'indépendence, il faudra que nous l'ayons bon gré, mal gré, et au prix d'une guerre avec le métropole, si elle rejecte notre demande." A similar opinion was reechoed in *Le Journal de Québec*. "To convince two million people that their happiness, moral and material, can only be obtained by independence, to impress this strongly on their convictions, and then to pretend that they will stop peaceably and resignedly before a refusal, is to give the lie to history and to one's own conscience." The religious papers were quick to use

[1] *The Pilot*, February 5, 1850.

the despatch as a fitting text with which to admonish the faithful to remember their true allegiance to the Crown. *Les Mélanges Religieux* voiced the opinion that the Annexationists should now drop their agitation in deference to the wishes of the Queen ; any further agitation would give the appearance of open disloyalty and rebellion.

The despatch of the Colonial Secretary had a very clarifying effect ; it swept away many of the obscurities and misconceptions under cover of which the Annexationists had sheltered themselves, and successfully carried on their propaganda. The language of the despatch was too plain-spoken to be misinterpreted ; henceforth the Annexationists could not pretend that the English Government was either favourable or indifferent to the separation of the colonies. The despatch brought the affairs of the party to a crisis. Should they, according to their open professions, acquiesce in the decision of the Colonial Secretary, or should they turn revolutionaries ? This was the vital issue which they were called upon to decide. Some of the members of the party were admittedly Simon Pure republicans, others were personally hostile to Great Britain, but the great majority of the party still retained the kindliest feelings towards the motherland, and were strongly averse to any form or even the appearance of revolutionary activity.

The despatch afforded the moderate element of the party a favourable opportunity of withdrawing from the association, on reasonable grounds, and with a good grace. In view of the unexpected turn of affairs, quite a number of the members saw fit quietly to drop out of the ranks. But the leaders of the party were strong-minded men. Having set their hands to the plough, they were not inclined to turn back at the appearance of new obstacles. Some of them had borne the censure and penalties of the Governor-General, and all of them had stood the personal criticisms of their fellow countrymen without flinching ; they were not now to be

intimidated by the disapproval or menaces of the Secretary of State.

For some time past the direction of the affairs of the association had fallen into the hands of the Executive Council. On this occasion, they did not even trouble to call a meeting of the members to discuss the new situation, but determined to act for themselves, in the name of the association.[1] A bold but somewhat laboured manifesto was the result. *The Council* went even farther than *The Herald* in affecting to treat his lordship's opinion as a mere personal whim without the sanction of the British nation; they adroitly maintained that it would be a dangerous principle to permit the use of the Queen's name to suppress the lawful discussions of any public question in the colony; and they demanded, in effect, that the English Government should stand aside, and permit them to carry on their propaganda without official opposition. This interesting document ran as follows:

TO THE PEOPLE OF CANADA

The Annexation Association of Montreal feel it incumbent on them to address you in reference to the following despatch from Earl Grey, purporting to contain the views of Her Most Gracious Majesty on the question of the peaceable separation of Canada from Great Britain and its Annexation to the United States. [Here follows Earl Grey's despatch.]

The Association have carefully reconsidered their two addresses, and they do not find in them the language of menace or sedition; but a calm, dispassionate statement of social evils under which Canada suffers, and a remedy, by constitutional means, suggested for consideration. It is to the people of Canada that these statements have been made, and it is for you to decide whether the remedy proposed is one that is advantageous or worthy of being referred to the

[1] *The Gazette* insinuated they feared to convene the association because so many of the members disapproved of their policy.

British nation for their assent. It is impossible for this Association to regard the expression of Earl Grey's opinion as conveying the decision of the British nation. Even should the British Parliament support his lordship, we conceive that their action will be premature, until the question has been constitutionally brought before them as approved by a majority of the representatives of the Canadian people. The Association deny the right of the Colonial Secretary to offer, by anticipation, the decision of the British Government on a question that is not constitutionally before them; and they further desire to point out the danger that may hereafter arise, if the principle be once admitted that the Queen's name and authority can be introduced to suppress the lawful discussion of any political question in the colony. The British people have a proper and constitutional opportunity of expressing their assent or dissent to any colonial measures, and it is a subject of painful surprise to this Association, that Earl Grey should have encroached on the rights of Her Majesty's Canadian subjects, in venturing to decide that any question was unfit to be brought by them before their representatives. The Association are necessarily ignorant of the terms in which the Governor-General brought their address under the notice of the Colonial Secretary, and how far those terms justify his lordship in giving a character to their proceedings which they have distinctly denied from the outset. The Association now reiterate that they seek the attainment of their object only with the free and willing consent of Great Britain, that they never will urge the subject by other than calm appeals to the reason and intelligence of their fellow subjects—first in Canada, afterwards in England—and that they have no sympathy with any who hold other sentiments than these.

While reasserting the position the Association have assumed, they feel that the language of the Colonial Secretary requires from them the discharge of a further

and a higher duty, in denying all right, on his part, to attempt to punish men for the assertion of opinion.

The free discussion of all subjects is a right inherent in every man under a free form of Government, and the power to advocate, by constitutional means and moderate counsels, changes of any description is the great safeguard against violence and rebellion. The moment an attempt is made to coerce the free expression of public opinion, the most sacred right of the people is attacked, and the groundwork laid for any and every stretch of despotic power. The Association ask their fellow citizens whether, in all they have suggested or done, they have not most carefully avoided advocating aught that could in the slightest degree infringe the laws, or warrant the interference of Executive Authority. And, feeling that their course has been temperate and legal, they deny the right of Earl Grey to use towards them the language of his despatch, or to interfere in their discussions of any subject affecting the interests of Canada. The Association, therefore, intreat their fellow subjects not to allow any feeling of hostility to the policy of those who now address them, to blind them to the consequences of admitting the position assumed by Lord Grey ; but to look only at the great principle involved.

Let the people of Canada, to whom the Association addressed themselves, decide whether the course of Earl Grey is in accordance with the constitution granted to them, and whether his approval or disapproval ought to affect the legal discussion of any subject intended to be brought before the Legislature of this country.

Let them say whether Responsible Government is only a name, or is intended to assume that freedom of opinion, dear to every British subject. To you, then, the people of Canada, we appeal ; and we ask whether we shall be compelled to brood in silence over the evils this country labours under, or whether we have the right temperately to discuss those evils and their cure, free from the threat of punishment, and independent

alike of the interference and control of any others than those who are constitutionally responsible to you. In conclusion, the Association would remark, that the subject of discussion has been obscured by the mode adopted for checking the expression of public opinion, and this Association in the broad assertion of an undeniable right, maintain that they will not be diverted from the legal and constitutional course which they have adopted, in full reliance that whenever the question is brought before Great Britain, by our responsible ministers, their application will be treated with that respect and consideration which its magnitude and importance demand. In the deliberate adoption of this course, the Association conceive that they are defending one of the greatest bulwarks of their country's liberties, and they claim the support of all true friends of Canada, whatever be their views of the policy the Association seek to promote.

JOHN REDPATH, President.
R. MCKAY
A. A. DORION } Secretaries.

The patent weakness of the manifesto exposed the Annexationists to the open attacks of the loyalist press of the city. The latter did not fail to point out, with manifest glee, that the much-advertised great popular movement had become a mere cabal. "This comedy," *Le Canadien* declared, "which has lasted for some time, has degenerated into a miserable farce, and does not now well possess the merit of exciting a laugh." The address had been concocted in "a hole and corner," where the officers of the association, a mere fraction of the original sixty, "met in solemn conclave to decide upon the destinies of Canada." The pro-British papers pointed out with telling force the flagrant inconsistency of the original submissive professions of the association and their subsequent defiant attitude towards the English Government.[1]

[1] *The Pilot*, February 9, 1850.

The quibbling arguments of the manifesto were assailed with gentle ridicule.[1] Must the English Government wait, *The Gazette* inquired, until the Annexationists had convinced the people of Canada of their policy, before venturing to express an opinion on a matter which was vital to an empire? To question the official character of his lordship's despatch was in effect to attack the fundamental principle of responsible government. "We are of the opinion," *The Gazette* concluded, "that many persons will pause before taking the ticklish path," which the association are now treading. *The Pilot* charged the Annexationists with knowing full well that the despatch of the Colonial Secretary truly reflected the mind of Parliament, and that the House of Commons would heartily support the efforts of the Government to suppress the spirit of restlessness in the colonies. Notwithstanding the specious appeal of the manifesto to the inalienable right of liberty of thought, there could be no question, it declared, of the undoubted authority of the Crown to punish its colonial subjects for seditious utterances, or overt acts of treason. To these deep home-thrusts the Annexationists could only reply by reasserting the purity of their motives, and the strictly constitutional character of their agitation. The public, however, were inclined to look to their recent proceedings, rather than to their professions, for evidence of their motives and policy.

Just at this moment there appeared the authoritative declaration of Lord John Russell in the House of Commons, in partial confirmation of the despatch of the Colonial Secretary. In the course of an able exposition of the colonial policy of the Government, the Premier reviewed the situation of Canadian affairs with special reference to the disturbances over the Rebellion Losses Bill, and the more recent political discontent. After a vigorous defence of the conduct of Lord Elgin, he turned to the consideration of the annexation

[1] *The Gazette*, February 11, 1850.

movement. "I have, however, seen bitter complaints on this subject, and I have seen that some persons have even gone the length of proposing that, instead of remaining subjects of Her Majesty, the Province of Canada should be annexed to the United States. To that proposal, of course, the Crown could give nothing but a decided negative; and I trust that although such a suggestion has been made, that from the character of several of the gentlemen who are members of the association, it is not their intention to push their project of joining a neighbouring state to the ultimate result of endeavouring by force of arms to effect a separation from Great Britain; but that, knowing the determined will of the Sovereign of this country, and of her advisers, not to permit that project to be carried into effect, they will acquiesce in the decision of the Crown. I wonder at the same time that any persons who profess loyalty to the Sovereign should have entertained a project which, if unfortunately any international difference occurred between this country and the United States of America, might have placed them in the position of raising their arms against British authority, and of fighting against the British flag."[1]

But notwithstanding the firmness of this declaration, the principles of the Manchester School still dominated the mind of the Premier; for, in concluding his speech, one of the most powerful of his long political career, he frankly acknowledged that he looked forward to the day when the great self-governing colonies should assert their independence. "I anticipate indeed with others, that some of the colonies may so grow in population and wealth that they may say: 'Our strength is sufficient to enable us to be independent of England. The link is now become onerous to us, the time is come when we think we can, in amity and alliance with England, maintain our independence.' I do not think that that time is yet approaching. But let us make

[1] *Hansard*, 1850, vol. 108, p. 551.

them as far as possible fit to govern themselves—let us give them, as far as we can, the capacity of ruling their own affairs—let them increase in wealth and population; and, whatever may happen, we of this great empire shall have the consolation of saying that we have contributed to the happiness of the world."[1]

The speech of Lord John Russell awakened an interest in Canada second only to the recent despatch of his Colonial Secretary. The royalist press drove home with telling force his stern rebuke of the Annexationists, while the latter appealed with equal confidence to the concluding paragraph of the Premier's speech, as affording the most complete justification of their conduct. Each party, in fact, selected so much of the speech as it found to its satisfaction, and used that as a text for its polemics.

To the Governor-General, the speech of the Prime Minister brought the gravest anxiety. In a despatch to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Elgin subjected the speech of the Premier to the keenest political analysis. This despatch alone, we feel safe in saying, would entitle His Excellency to a place in the list of great imperial statesmen. In no other document do we find set forth more clearly the liberal principles upon which he hoped to build up the empire.

"Lord John's speech on the colonies seems to have been eminently successful at home. It is calculated too, I think, to do good in the colonies; but for one sentence, the introduction of which I deeply deplore—the sting in the tail. Alas for that sting in the tail! I much fear that when the liberal and enlightened sentiments, the enunciation of which by one so high in authority is so well calculated to make the colonists sensible of the advantages which they derive from their connection with Great Britain, shall have passed away from their memories, there will not be wanting those who will remind them that, on this solemn occasion, the Prime Minister of England, amid the plaudits of a full

[1] *Hansard*, vol. 108, p. 567.

senate, declared that he looked forward to the day when the ties which he was endeavouring to render so easy and mutually advantageous would be severed. And wherefore this foreboding? or, perhaps, I ought not to use the term foreboding, for really, to judge by the comments of the press on this declaration of Lord John's, I should be led to imagine that the prospect of these sucking democracies, after they have drained their old mother's life-blood, leaving her in the lurch, and setting up as rivals, just at the time when their increasing strength might render them a support instead of a burden, is one of the most cheering which has of late presented itself to the English imagination.

"But wherefore, then, this anticipation—if foreboding be not the correct term? Because Lord John and the people of England persist in assuming that the colonial relation is incompatible with maturity and full development. And is this really so incontestable a truth that it is a duty not only to hold but to proclaim it? Consider for a moment what is the effect of proclaiming it in our case. We have on this continent two great empires in presence, or rather, I should say, two great imperial systems. In many respects there is much similarity between them. In so far as powers of self-government are concerned it is certain that our colonists in America have no reason to envy the citizens of any state in the Union. The forms differ, but it may be shown that practically the inhabitants of Canada have a greater power in controlling their own destiny than those of Michigan or New York, who must tolerate a tariff imposed by twenty other states, and pay the expenses of war undertaken for objects which they profess to abhor. And yet there is a difference between the two cases; a difference, in my humble judgment, of sentiment rather than substance, which renders the one a system of life and strength, and the other a system of death and decay. No matter how raw and rude a territory may be when it is admitted as a state into the Union of the United States, it is at once, by the

popular belief, invested with all the dignity of manhood, and introduced into a system which, despite the combativeness of certain ardent spirits from the South, every American believes and maintains to be immortal.

"But how does the case stand with us? No matter how great the advance of a British colony in wealth and civilization; no matter how absolute the power of self-government conceded to it, it is still taught to believe that it is in a condition of pupilage from which it must pass before it can attain maturity. For one I have never been able to comprehend why, elastic as our constitutional system is, we should not be able, now more especially when we have ceased to control the trade of our colonies, to render the links which bind them to the British Crown at least as lasting as those which unite the component parts of the Union. . . . One thing is, however, indispensable to the success of this or any other system of Colonial Government. You must renounce the habit of telling the colonies that the colonial is a provisional existence. You must allow them to believe that, without severing the bonds which unite them to Great Britain, they may attain the degree of perfection, and of social and political development, to which organized communities of free men have a right to aspire.

"Since I began this letter I have, I regret to say, confirmatory evidence of the justice of the anticipations I had formed of the probable effect of Lord John's declaration. I enclose extracts from two newspapers, an annexationist, *The Herald* of Montreal, and a quasi-annexationist, *The Mirror* of Toronto. You will note the use they make of it. I was more annoyed, however, I confess, by what occurred yesterday in council. We had to determine whether or not to dismiss from his office a gentleman who is both M.P.P., Q.C., and J.P., and who has issued a flaming manifesto in favour, not of annexation, but of an immediate declaration of independence as a step to it. I will not say anything of my own opinion on the case, but it was generally contended

by the members of the Board that it would be impossible to maintain that persons who had declared their intention to throw off their allegiance to the Queen, with a view to annexation, were unfit to retain offices granted during pleasure, if persons who made a similar declaration with a view to independence were to be differently dealt with.

"Baldwin had Lord John's speech in his hand. He is a man of singularly placid demeanour, but he has been seriously ill, so possibly his nerves are shaken—at any rate I never saw him so much moved. 'Have you read the latter part of Lord J. Russell's speech?' he said to me. I nodded assent. 'For myself,' he added, 'if the anticipations therein expressed prove to be well founded, my interest in public affairs is gone for ever. But is it not hard upon us while we are labouring, through good and evil report, to thwart the designs of those who would dismember the empire, that our adversaries should be informed that the difference between them and the Prime Minister of England is only one of time? If the British Government has really come to the conclusion that we are a burden, to be cast off whenever a favourable opportunity offers, surely we ought to be warned.'

"I replied that while I regretted as much as he could do the paragraph to which he referred, I thought he somewhat mistook its import: that I believed no man living was more opposed to the dismemberment of the empire than Lord J. Russell: that I did not conceive that he had any intention of deserting the colonies, or of inviting them to separate from England; but that he had in the sentence in question given utterance to a purely speculative, and in my judgment most fallacious opinion, which was shared, I feared, by very many persons both in England and the colonies: that I held it to be a perfectly unsound and most dangerous theory, that British colonies could not attain maturity without separation, and that my interest in labouring with them to bring into full play the principles of Constitu-

tional Government in Canada would entirely cease if I could be persuaded to adopt it. I said all this, I must confess, however, not without misgiving, for I could not but be sensible that, in spite of all my allegations to the contrary, my audience was disposed to regard a prediction of this nature, proceeding from a Prime Minister, less as a speculative abstraction than as one of that class of prophecies which work their own fulfilment.

"I left the Council Chamber disheartened, with the feeling that Lord J. Russell's reference to the manhood of colonies was more likely to be followed by practical consequences than Lamartine's famous 'quand l'heure aura sonne' invocation to oppressed nationalities. It is possible, indeed, that I exaggerate to myself the probable effects of this declaration. Politicians of the Baldwin stamp, with distinct views and aims, who having struggled to obtain a Government on British principles, desire to preserve it, are not, I fear, very numerous in Canada; the great mass move on with very indefinite purposes, and not much inquiring whither they are going. Of one thing, however, I am confident: there cannot be any peace, contentment, progress, or credit in this colony while the idea obtains that the connection with England is a millstone about its neck which should be cast off as soon as it can be conveniently managed. What man in his senses would invest his money in the public securities of a country where questions affecting the very foundations on which public credit rests are in perpetual agitation; or would settle in it at all if he could find for his foot a more stable resting-place elsewhere? I may, perhaps, be expressing myself too unreservedly with reference to opinions emanating from a source which I am no less disposed than bound to respect. As I have the means, however, of feeling the pulse of the colonists in this most feverish region, I consider it to be always my duty to furnish you with as faithful a record as possible of our diagnostics.

"And, after all, may I not with all submission ask, is not the question at issue a most momentous one? What is it indeed but this: Is the Queen of England to be the Sovereign of an Empire, growing, expanding, strengthening itself from age to age, striking its roots deep into fresh earth and drawing new supplies of vitality from virgin soils? Or is she to be, for all essential purposes of might and power, Monarch of Great Britain and Ireland merely—her place and that of her line in the world's history determined by the productiveness of 12,000 square miles of a coal formation, which is being rapidly exhausted, and the duration of the social and political organization over which she presides dependent on the annual expatriation, with a view to its eventual alienization, of the surplus swarms of her born subjects?

"If Lord J. Russell, instead of concluding his excellent speech with a declaration of opinion which, as I read it, and as I fear others read it, seems to make it a point of honour with the colonists to prepare for separation, had contented himself with resuming the statements already made in its course, with showing that neither the Government nor Parliament could have any object in view in their colonial policy but the good of the colonies, and the establishment of the relation between them and the mother country on the basis of mutual affection; that, as the idea of maintaining a Colonial Empire for the purpose of exercising dominion or dispensing patronage had been for some time abandoned, and that of regarding it as a hot-bed for forcing commerce and manufactures more recently renounced, a greater amount of free action and self-government might be conceded to British colonies without any breach of Imperial Unity, or the violation of any principle of Imperial Policy, than had under any scheme yet devised fallen to the lot of the component parts of any federal or imperial system; if he had left these great truths to work their effect without hazarding a conjecture which will, I fear, be received as a

suggestion with respect to the course which certain wayward members of the imperial family may be expected to take in a contingency still confessedly remote, it would, I venture with great deference to submit, in so far at least as public feeling in the colonies is concerned, have been safer and better.

"You draw, I know, a distinction between separation with a view to annexation and separation with a view to independence. You say the former is an act of treason, the latter a natural and legitimate step in progress. There is much plausibility doubtless in this position, but independently of the fact that no one advocates independence in these colonies except as a means to the end, annexation, is it really tenable? If you take your stand on the hypothesis that the colonial existence is one with which the colonists ought to rest satisfied, then, I think, you are entitled to denounce, without reserve or measure, those who propose for some secondary object to substitute the Stars and Stripes for the Union Jack. But if, on the contrary, you assume that it is a provisional state, which admits of but a stunted and partial growth, and out of which all communities ought in the course of nature to strive to pass, how can you refuse to permit your colonies here, when they have arrived at the proper stage in their existence, to place themselves in a condition which is at once most favourable to their security and to their perfect natural development? What reasons can you assign for the refusal, except such as are founded on selfishness, and are, therefore, morally worthless? If you say that your great lubberly boy is too big for the nursery, and that you have no other room for him in your house, how can you decline to allow him to lodge with his elder brethren over the way, when the attempt to keep up an establishment for himself would seriously embarrass him?"

In pursuance of their policy of carrying on an active propaganda, the Annexationists interjected that issue into the municipal elections at Montreal. In the West

and St. Antoine wards, Messrs. Holmes and Atwater were nominated as straight annexation candidates, while in some of the other wards individuals were placed in nomination who, although not avowedly Annexationists or committed to that policy, were known or supposed to be friendly to annexation. The Annexationists, it was evident, were desirous of capturing the Council, and choosing the chief magistrate for the city. The raising of the annexation issue in municipal affairs was much resented by the loyalists. *The Gazette* and *The Pilot* agreed in condemning the folly of such a policy ; but, as the issue was forced upon them, they resolved to fight to the bitter end the efforts of the Annexationists to capture the city. In both the West and St. Antoine wards, the British connectionists placed loyalist candidates in the field.

For a time the old party lines of Tories and Reformers were superseded by the new alignment of Annexationists and Loyalists.[1] After an exceedingly close contest, marked by riotous scenes on the part of some Irish Annexationists, Mr. Holmes was elected by the narrow majority of ten, over Colonel Gugy, the former Councillor.[2] In St. Antoine ward, Mr. Fisher, the Loyalist candidate, withdrew, when it became evident that Mr. Atwater would be returned by a large majority. The personal popularity of the two annexation candidates contributed largely to their success at the polls. This was particularly the case in St. Antoine ward, where Mr. Atwater received the large proportion of the French-Canadian votes. His views on the subject of annexation, according to *La Minerve*, which supported his candidature, had nothing to do with municipal affairs, and accordingly could be safely disregarded by the French electorate. In St. Ann's ward (Griffith Town), the home of the Irish population, Mr. McGrath received the support of the Annexationists, and was duly elected. In the remaining wards of the

[1] *The Gazette*, January 10, 1850.

[2] The electors of the west ward were almost all English-speaking.

city, the annexation candidates, including the editor of *The Herald*, retired before the opening of the polls.[1] In the Centre ward, Mr. Hull, a strong pro-Britisher, was elected. In brief, in three wards of the city Annexationists were returned, but in the remaining six, annexation was not made an issue.

The result of the elections was heralded as a great triumph by the annexationist press, which boasted that the party was successful in every ward of the city in which it had made a fight. The Annexationists, however, were far from controlling the city Council. In the choice of the mayor a few days later, their candidate, Mr. Holmes, was beaten by eleven votes to five.[2] With this defeat, the question of annexation was quietly dropped out of municipal politics.

The partial success of the Annexationists in the municipal election did not succeed, as was expected, in infusing new life into the party in Montreal. The movement in fact was slowly dying out. The opposition of the Provincial and Imperial Governments, the unresponsive attitude of the United States, and the improvement in trade, all contributed to dampen the ardour of the zealots and to quiet the unrest of the public. After having been for some months the first question in Canadian politics, the annexation issue gradually disappeared from the arena of polemical journalism, and was relegated to the category of special correspondence and abstract discussion of the future of the colony.

The direction of affairs had fallen into the hands of a small Junta, made up, according to *The Gazette*, of the extreme elements of the party. This small council of eighteen arrogated all the powers of the association, and carried on its business in secret. The more moderate members of the association quietly dropped out, when the leaders of the party resolved to continue the agitation in spite of the opposition of the British Govern-

[1] *The Gazette*, March 8, 1850.
[2] *La Minerve*, March 14, 1850.

ment. This defection ruined the prospects of the Annexationists. An occasional speech was still made, or a pamphlet issued by some private member of the party,[1] but the active campaign of the association was over. It became the fashion on the street to speak of the movement as a harmless fad to be taken up or laid down at pleasure. Many of the signers of the manifesto were now free to admit that they had taken up the agitation for the purpose of procuring the recall of Lord Elgin, or as a means of coercing England into the restoration of a preferential tariff.

The passing of *The Toronto Independent* was, *The Gazette* declared, no blow to the cause of annexation in Montreal, since but few still adhered to that political persuasion. The extreme character of the views of the Annexationists, together with the vacillating record of the chief organ of the party in Montreal, had brought discredit on the movement, and produced a popular reaction. The agitation, however, in the judgment of *The Gazette*, had served a good purpose in awakening the English and Canadian people to a sense of the evils from which the country was suffering, though it would have been much better for the province if the Annexationists had adhered to the British American League, instead of organizing an independent party.[2]

Meantime *The Courier* and *The Herald* were gradually modifying the tone of their utterances. The former now admitted that some other remedy than annexation might possibly be found for the ills of the province, while the editorials of the latter were assuming a more patriotic and even distinctly nationalist character. Though still professing to support the principle of annexation, *The Herald* tended more and more to substitute the policy of protection for that of a political union with the United States. The changing attitude

[1] *De l'annexation de Canada aux États-Unis. Considérations préliminaires. Lecture faite devant l'Institut par L. A. Dessaules*, April 23, 1850.

[2] *The Gazette*, April 22, 1850.

of the two leading annexation organs faithfully reflected the shifting opinion of the mercantile community of the city. So striking indeed was the transition, that one is almost tempted to speak of the annexation origin of the protective policy in Montreal. Within the short space of four years, the fiscal views of the business men of the city were apparently revolutionized. The commercial interests, as we have seen, set out by opposing most vigorously any change in the fiscal policy of the motherland; after the loss of the imperial preference, they ardently turned to the United States for relief.

Undoubtedly some of the members of the association were genuine Annexationists, and many more hoped to secure in a union with the United States the benefits of a protective policy which were denied to them under the Union Jack, but it is safe to say that a still larger number of the business men were merely using the cry of annexation as a false alarm with which to frighten England into the restoration of protective duties. They were not Annexationists in reality, but out-and-out protectionists. When an entrance to the American market was denied to them by Congress, they instinctively fell back upon the policy of provincial protection. The history of the protective policy in Canada dates from the adoption of the free-trade policy in England. The annexation movement was one of the passing phases of the struggle of the business interests for fiscal favours.

Notwithstanding the repeated appeals of the loyalist press to the Annexationists to drop their agitation, in view of the emphatic pronouncements of Lord John Russell against a voluntary surrender of the colony to the United States, the Annexationists resolved to keep up the fight. They had survived the attacks of the Governor-General and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and they were not now prepared to hoist the white flag on the summons of the head of the Whig administration. They had been greatly encouraged by the success of their campaign in the Eastern Town-

ships; and now, just at the critical moment, a splendid opportunity had arisen of demonstrating to the English Government and the people of Upper Canada the real strength of annexation sentiment in Lower Canada.

The resignation of Mr. Galt, owing to the removal of the seat of Government to Toronto, brought on a bye-election in Sherbrooke County. An effort was made by some of the members of the Montreal association to secure the nomination of Mr. Rose of that city as annexationist candidate for the Riding; but, owing to the preference for a local representative as against a comparative stranger, Mr. Sanborn, a young American lawyer who had taken up his residence in Canada a few years previously, was chosen by the nominating convention as the standard-bearer of the party. In his election address, Mr. Sanborn, who professed to run as an independent candidate, stated: "With reference to the separation of Canada from the Government of Great Britain, and her annexation on favourable terms to the States of the American Union, if peaceably obtained, and with the consent of the British Government, it is unnecessary that I should enlarge. It is sufficient that I have the honour to have my name associated with a large proportion of yours, as appended to the requisition lately presented to A. T. Galt, Esq." Although the question of annexation was admittedly one of primary importance to the province, he did not think, however, that it would be raised as a direct issue at the coming session of Parliament.[1]

Notwithstanding the fact that there seemed at first but a small prospect of carrying the seat, the loyalists determined to put a candidate in the field, if only to call foolish the boast of their opponents, that they did not dare to contest the Riding. A satisfactory standard-bearer was found in the person of Mr. Cleveland, a prominent Tory and long-established farmer of the county. A careful canvass of the constituency showed

[1] *The Montreal Gazette*, February 6, 1850.

that there was a good fighting chance of his election, especially in view of the well-known predilection of the agriculturists for one of their own class. The old party lines were eliminated ; the struggle resolved itself into a battle royal between the loyalists and the Annexationists. There was little to choose between the two candidates. Both were men of intelligence and acknowledged probity. Mr. Sanborn had the advantage over his opponent of being first in the field, and of having a strong organization behind him ; on the other hand, he was somewhat handicapped, in the eyes of the farmers at least, by his youth, his profession, and his brief residence in the district.

The importance and critical character of the struggle were quickly realized by the whole province. The Annexationists succeeded in making the election a test of their political influence, and in focussing the attention of the public upon the contest.[1] The Montreal association threw the whole of its strength into the Riding by supplying not only speakers, but funds with which to carry on the battle. The Montreal loyalists were not to be outdone. A private meeting was called of some of the leading British connectionists to determine the best means of promoting the election of Mr. Cleveland. The majority of those present were Conservatives, but it was thoroughly understood that all party politics were to be set aside for the time being, with a view to strengthening the forces which were fighting for the imperial connection. A week before the election, it was considered advisable to send a representative to Sherbrooke to see how the election was progressing. Mr. Ferris of *The Gazette* was duly chosen to undertake the mission ; but as it was feared by some of the members that the selection of such a prominent Tory might arouse a certain amount of suspicion among the Liberals of the Riding, it was determined that Mr. Bristow of *The Pilot* should accompany him.

For the moment party and newspaper rivalries were

[1] *The Montreal Gazette*, February 25, 1850.

forgotten; and, much to the amusement and scandal of the annexationist press, the two representatives travelled down to Sherbrooke together. *The Pilot*[1] assisted in the work of harmonizing the loyalists of the two parties, by strongly urging all Reformers to support Mr. Cleveland, notwithstanding his former Conservative affiliations. On the other hand, the annexation journals professed a righteous indignation at seeing the editor of the leading Tory paper join hands with his former political opponents, to defeat a candidate who was running in opposition to the Government. *The Herald* came out with the foolish accusation that Mr. Ferris had been bought up by the Ministry, and that the political pilgrimage to Sherbrooke was part of the terms of the unholy compact. The charge was immediately denied by all the parties concerned, but nevertheless continued to do service along the side lines throughout the election.

The election had lost its local character, and had assumed an almost provincial aspect. On both sides, the battle was directed from headquarters at Montreal; loyalists and Annexationists alike threw all their energies and resources into the struggle. The Annexationists had a decided advantage in the district by reason of their superior organization, and their control over the leading local papers. *The Sherbrooke Gazette* was rabidly annexationist in its policy, and even refused to publish the election notices of Mr. Cleveland. *The Stanstead Journal* had also gone over to the Annexationists, and *The Missisquoi News* threw its columns open to the free discussion of the question. The loyalist party and papers of Montreal were forced to intervene in the contest to strengthen the weak hands of their friends in the Riding. *The Pilot*, in particular, waged a fierce and merciless battle against the Annexationists, as a band of dangerous conspirators against the Reform Party. It charged them with hypocrisy, with flagrantly violating their professions

[1] *The Pilot*, February 12, 1850.

of affectionate regard and consideration for the wishes of the motherland, and with making desperate efforts to convince the electorate that a slave republic was preferable to a free monarchy, that it was better to pay higher taxes to Washington than to spend the revenues of the province at home, and that it was more honourable to be an insignificant state of an overgrown confederation than a free and independent member of the world's greatest empire. Now that the British Government had spoken, all further agitation, it maintained, was treasonable, and should cease. *The Gazette*, in like manner, attacked the personal qualifications of Mr. Sanborn, and called upon all British connectionists, irrespective of party, to use all proper means to accomplish his defeat.[1]

The proceedings on nomination day were marked by unusual bitterness of feeling. In his election address, Mr. Cleveland had omitted all reference to the question of separation; but, on this occasion, he emphatically condemned the policy of annexation, as unwarranted by the past generous conduct of the motherland, and as likely to prove injurious to the best interests of Canada. Mr. Sanborn declared that the primary issue before the electorate was annexation, and he had no doubt of the result. When the question of annexation should be properly brought before the English people on petition of the Colonial Legislature, he believed that they would readily grant the demands of the colony for separation. If, however, their decision should be averse to the aspirations of the Canadian public, the Annexationists would rest content with British rule; and, in case of danger of attack, the motherland would find no more gallant defenders than they. With most of the Annexationists, he confessed, it was not the love of republican institutions which led to the demand for separation, but rather a dominant self-interest which resulted from their close geographical and commercial connection with the United States. Moreover, the racial

[1] *The Montreal Gazette*, February 13, 1850.

antipathies of the English and French inhabitants of the province would never be overcome, so long as they retained their colonial status. As American citizens, they would take on a higher national existence. The policy of the Annexationists in Parliament, he concluded, would be to support liberal measures from whatever quarter they might be proposed.

An objection was entered by some of the electors to the legal qualifications of Mr. Sanborn, on the ground that he was not a British subject; but the protest was rejected by the returning officer. Mr. Ferris of Montreal was refused a hearing by the Annexationists, but no opposition was offered to any of the other supporters of Mr. Cleveland. The loyalist speakers made the most of the decision of the English Government. They charged the Annexationists with insincerity in their peaceful professions, and with a design of stirring up a revolt among the people. The agitation, it was contended, had now passed beyond the stage of constitutional discussion into an open defiance of the Crown; it had reached the bounds where any further opposition to the royal will would be unjustifiable and seditious.

In the United States, both Webster and Clay had declared that a Congressman could not make a motion for the dissolution of the Union without committing the crime of perjury. A similar obligation of allegiance rested upon the members of the local legislature, an obligation which Mr. Sanborn refused to recognize. It was contended by Mr. Pope that the ills from which the province was suffering could be cured by local legislation. Canada had control over her own expenditures and fiscal policy; she could reduce the salaries of her officials, and frame a tariff so as to promote home industries. The policy of protection would, he maintained, be of the highest economic value to the producers of the country, whereas a union with the United States would expose them to a competition with their more powerful neighbours.

Mr. Tyrrel appealed to the American settlers of the district to remember their past loyalty to the Crown. He reminded them that Papineau, who was now the leader of the Annexationists, had formerly aspersed their honour by the statement that they had left the land of their fathers for personal profit, and would sell the land of their adoption for dollars. They had repudiated that base calumny in the past, but some of them apparently were now resolved to demonstrate its truth. Would the Canadian people, he asked, adopt the almighty dollar as their coat-of-arms, and exchange their birthright as British subjects for a mess of pottage? Mr. Shortt rebuked the presumptuous folly of some Americans in declaring that the British colonists could leave the province, as they had left the American colonies on a past occasion, if they did not like the Stars and Stripes in Canada. He challenged the British citizenship of Mr. Sanborn, and his qualification to sit as a member of the Legislature. It was, indeed, most fitting, he declared, that an alien candidate should be chosen to represent the Annexationists. In conclusion, he appealed to the farmers of the county not to be led astray by a revolutionary movement which, if successful, would only result in a heavier burden of taxation, the proceeds of which would be spent outside of their own country.[1]

The election was closely and bitterly contested. At the close of the polls, Mr. Sanborn was declared elected by a majority of 34.[2] Charges and counter-charges were made by both parties, as to the conduct of the election. On the part of the loyalists, it was alleged that some of the officials of the British American Land Company had unduly interfered in the contest by bringing pressure to bear upon their tenants, and that the polls were not properly conducted by certain of the annexation deputy returning officers; the Annexa-

[1] *The Pilot*, March 2, 1850.

[2] Mr. Sanborn's victory was due to the large majority he received in Compton.

tionists replied with the charges that the loyalists had polled squatter votes, and were guilty of the liberal distribution of liquor to influence the electors. In thanking the electors for their hearty support, Mr. Cleveland declared that, if he had been earlier in the field, and if all the pro-British vote had been polled, he would have been duly elected, for the majority of the electors of the county were undoubtedly against annexation. It was later decided to contest the election on the ground of numerous irregularities on the part of the agents of Mr. Sanborn.

By the annexation press the election was heralded as a great triumph over the combined forces of the Government and the opposition; the loyalist papers, on the other hand, endeavoured to explain the defeat as due to the peculiar social and economic conditions of the constituency, in particular to the influence of the Land Company and the large body of American settlers.[1] The great majority of the Americans and of the ultra-Tories voted for Mr. Sanborn, while the most of the English-born settlers, and the bulk of the Reformers, supported his opponent. The most of the French-Canadians, according to *La Minerve*, voted for Cleveland, and practically all would have done so, but for the deceit of some of the annexation agents in representing Sanborn as the candidate of the Government.

The result of the contest was well summed up by *The Examiner*: "It is an extraordinary fact that these ultra-loyal counties are the first in Lower Canada to elect an Annexationist. It shows a great change of feeling on their part. Whatever the French population may do, it is beyond all question that the English population generally favour the annexation movement." It was not a change in the Constitution, or the measures of the Government, that provoked this transformation, but a conviction, "whether well or ill founded, that the country would be more prosperous, if united to the States, than under its connection with England. Com-

[1] *The Montreal Gazette*, March 15, 1850.

mercial considerations with them override political." The mass of the people did not prefer a republic to a monarchy; they had no feelings against England; "the question, as they insist on putting it, is between prosperity and ruin and decay."

The official opinion of Lord Elgin was expressed in a letter[1] to the Colonial Secretary, notifying him of the election of Mr. Sanborn, "the first instance in which a person avowing these sentiments has been elected to the Canadian Parliament."

"The constituency of the County of Sherbrooke comprises a considerable number of settlers from the United States. Mr. Sanborn belongs, I understand, to this class of settlers, and has only lately established himself in the province. That the first individual returned to the local Parliament on annexation principles should be himself a settler from the United States, and that he should represent a constituency in which this element enters so largely is, without doubt, a significant fact, and throws light on the origin and character of the present movement.

"Another circumstance affecting this particular constituency cannot be passed over without notice in a review of the causes which have contributed to the result of the recent election. The British American Land Company are owners of a large tract of land in the county. Mr. Galt, the late member, is chief agent of the company. . . . I am not able to inform your Lordship to what extent the direct influence of the company, which is considerable, may have been used in this election, as on this head contradictory statements are made by the opposing parties; but, that the moral of the course taken by Mr. Galt in reference to this subject must have been great is, however, unquestionable. It has been throughout the policy of the Annexationists to pretend that the British public is favourable to their view, and that the opposition made to them by the local and imperial Governments is inter-

[1] March 23, 1850.

ested or affected. The emphatic and formal advocacy of annexation by the agent of a body of absentee English proprietors has given, without doubt, some colour to this representation, and could hardly fail to tell with particular force in a constituency such as that of Sherbrooke.[1]

" My opinion is that, had these anomalous influences been wanting, the issue of the election would have been different, and that no inference can, therefore, be drawn from it with respect to the real sentiments of Her Majesty's Canadian subjects."

Notwithstanding the victory of the Annexationists, the outlook of the party in the Eastern Townships was far from encouraging. The movement had attained its greatest popularity, and was now on the wane. Over 1,200 persons had signed the requisitions to Mr. Galt in favour of annexation, yet five months later the strength of the party was so diminished, that it could scarcely carry the seat. The constituency was admittedly the most favourable to annexation of all the Ridings in the district. The Annexationists had expected to win it by acclamation, yet they were all but defeated by a commonplace candidate. After the election, interest in the question of annexation rapidly diminished. The popular campaign of the Annexationists was practically discontinued. Only a few of the local associations, such as that at Durham, gave evidence of an active existence. The majority of them were quiescent ; and, with the opening up of spring, all further activities throughout the various branches were suspended. An unmistakable evidence of the gradual change in public opinion was found in the establishment of a new paper, *The St. Francis Telegraph,* of pronounced pro-British opinions.

Notwithstanding the active campaign of the Rouge Party and press, the spread of annexation sentiment among the French population was exceedingly slow.

[1] The Brooks's family influence was also thrown in favour of annexation.

The habitants lived up to their traditions as good churchmen in preferring the counsels of their priests to the harangues of the politicians.[1] The quiet but effective opposition of the clergy to the movement aroused the bitter animosity of the Papineau Party. *L'Avenir* came out with the accusation that Lord Elgin had addressed a letter to the Catholic bishops in which he promised to restore the Jesuit estates, and to remove the capital to Lower Canada, if they would stifle the annexation agitation among their fellow countrymen.[2] Although the allegation was flatly denied by the hierarchy, *L'Avenir* refused to accept the denial on the ground that the statement of the bishops was disingenuous and unsatisfactory. In the bye-election in Quebec, the clergy were again accused of exerting an undue influence over the faithful. At the opening of the contest, according to *L'Avenir*, the head of the Seminary in that city entertained at dinner the editors of the three leading French-Canadian journals, with the result that all three papers at once threw the whole of their influence against the annexation candidate. However this may be, the Government succeeded admirably in identifying, in the minds of the habitants, the annexation movement with the most dangerous doctrines of anti-clericalism.

An interesting attempt was made by the Rouge Party to connect the annexation movement with the growing agitation against the seignorial system. At several meetings which were called to discuss the latter topic, an effort was made by some of the speakers to raise the question of annexation. A few of these attempts to gain a fortuitous hearing for the annexation

[1] Some of the early attempts of the Annexationists to obtain a hearing resulted in failure. A meeting at St. François, Yamaska, which was regularly called by the local magistrate at the instance of the Annexationists, unanimously adopted a resolution, " that this parish deems it its duty to declare publicly its determination to aid in maintaining the connection with Great Britain " (November 25, 1849).

[2] *L'Avenir*, November 24, 1849.

cause were successful; but, in other instances, the electorate objected to the interjection of an extraneous issue. At St. Jacques d'Achigan, for example, a seignorial meeting adopted a resolution in favour of annexation, but at a similar gathering, some time later, in the parish of St. Zotigue, at which Mr. J. E. Dorion introduced the question of annexation, the audience declined to express an opinion upon the matter.[1] In truth, the question of seignorial tenure was not strictly a party issue, since many of the ministerialists, including several members of the Legislature, were as heartily in favour of the abolition of the seignorial system as the leaders of the Rouge Party.

The French Annexationists were fighting against heavy odds. They were especially handicapped by the lack of newspaper organs. *L'Indépendent Canadien*, the sole organ of the party in the Quebec District, was forced to suspend publication, after a brief existence, for the want of financial support. *L'Echo des Campagnes*, which for a time was friendly to the Annexationists, changed hands, and, at the same time, its policy in regard to annexation. In his opening announcement, the new editor stated that he had received many letters protesting against the past attitude of the paper, and that, for the future, the editorial page would be conducted in conformity with the general pro-British sentiment of the country at large. The desire for annexation, he concluded, sprang from spite, a reverse of fortune and hatred of the Reform Party. *L'Avenir* and *Le Moniteur* were left practically alone to fight the battle of the French Annexationists against the united strength of the religious and ministerial press.

In the Eastern Townships, the opposition of the clergy was more openly pronounced. The influence of the Church was unmistakably felt on behalf of Mr. Cleveland in the Sherbrooke election. In the adjoining County of Huntingdon, some of the priests preached

[1] *L'Avenir*, February 8, 1849.

against annexation, and warned their congregations to have nothing to do with the movement, on pain of suffering the unfortuate consequences of the revolt of 1837. The decisive stand of the clergy stopped the spread of annexation sentiment among the French-Canadians in the border district. In the bye-election in Megantic shortly after, the question of annexation was not even raised on the hustings.[1]

In the meantime, the question had been taken up by some of the French-Canadians in the United States. For some time past they had been closely following the course of Canadian events, and at last the moment seemed opportune for them to intervene on behalf of their compatriots at home. At a meeting in New York, in December, an association was formed to promote a political union of Canada with the United States. The object of the meeting was clearly set forth in the opening remarks of the chairman, Mr. G. Franchère, an influential member of the French-Canadian colony. The unhappy condition of Canada, as compared with the great Republic, was due, he declared, to the institutions of the colonial régime. Under these circumstances, annexation was the only recourse of their fellow countrymen. It was their duty to assist by all legal means to make Canada a member of the Union. A resolution, approving of the Montreal manifesto, was unanimously adopted. A permanent committee was appointed, with instructions to draw up a constitution for the local association to enter into relations with the Montreal Annexationists, and to invite their compatriots in the United States to form similar associations to be affiliated with the central body at New York. An address was accordingly prepared, to which the names of 69 persons were appended, calling upon their compatriots in Lower Canada to embrace the cause of annexation. The address read as follows:[2]

[1] *L'Avenir*, May 8, 1849.
[2] *Ibid.*, January 11, 1850.

Extrait de L'Avenir *du* 11 *janvier* 1850

ANNEXION[1]

Adresse des Canadiens de New-York et des environs, à leurs compatriotes du Canada

Les canadiens domiciliés dans la cité de New-York et ses environs saisissent la première occasion qui se présente de délibérer sur leurs communs intérêts, pour renvoyer, de l'autre côté de la frontière, l'écho des sympathies éveillées chez eux par le manifeste annexioniste, promulgué à Montréal dans le cours du mois dernier.

Tous les organes de la publicité, dans les deux mondes, se sont plus à reconnaître l'habilité et le tact qui ont présidé à la rédaction de ce document : ce concert d'éloges nous dispense à propos, d'un panégyrique qui n'ajouterait pas un iota à la force incontrovertible des arguments développés par le manifeste, ni un trait de plus au désolant tableau des calamités que chaque ligne y énumère.

Compatriotes du Bas-Canada ! en essayant de dissiper aujourd'hui les préjugés qu'une propagande contraire s'efforce de semer à l'endroit des institutions et des ressources de l'Union américaine nous pensons remplir un devoir de reconnaissance envers le pays qui nous accueille avec tant de bienveillance et qui nous traite à l'égal de ses propres enfants.

Témoins journaliers d'un mouvement commercial hors de comparaison, spectateurs intéressés d'une organisation politique sans parallèle, nous nous flattons que nos appréciations, prises sur place au foyer le plus vaste de la civilisation américaine, auront l'effet de confirmer, en ce qui concerne les Etats-Unis, les espérances mises en avant par le manifeste, et de justifier les conclusions auxquelles les griefs du présent et l'instinct de l'avenir nous ont irrésistiblement amenés.

[1] For translation see Appendix, p. 385.

Nous allons exposer d'une manière concise les bienfaits pratiques et autres qui découleraient, selon nous, de l'alliance proposée entre les deux peuples.

Le système du gouvernement responsable dans les complications duquel se débattent les Canadas, fut taillé à l'image du gouvernement de la métropole. Misérable copie ! maladroits copistes ! On a voulu transposer à mille lieues de distance, sur les rives de l'Amérique, l'œuvre accumulée de plusieurs siècles de privilèges aristocratiques. Aussi ce système a-t-il déjoué les projets de ceux qui nous l'avaient bâclé, aussi est-il sorti plus informe que jamais des replâtrages tentés pour lui rendre la vitalité qui se retire incessamment de lui.

Qu'on lise l'acte de 1840 qui réunit les deux Canadas, que l'on pèse les maux que cette constitution a prévenus ou allégés et les avantages éclos sous ses auspices, l'on se convaincra facilement que la seule ancre de salut qui reste à notre pays, c'est l'annexion en perspective, avec la plénitude des bénéfices et l'éclat des splendeurs que le drapeau étoilé renferme dans ses plis.

L'acte d'Union n'a-t-il pas inventé une liste civile disproportionnée aux ressources du pays ?

Pourvu à la couteuse subvention d'une armée de fonctionnaires ?

Soumis la franchise élective et l'éligibilité à certaines conditions de propriété qui rendent inaccessible à la masse des gouvernés la plus chère de leurs prérogatives ?

Érigé le gouvernement impérial en maître absolu qui règle nos affaires à sa guise et, en vertu d'un droit qu'il ne s'était pas arrogé dans ses anciennes possessions de l'Amérique du Nord, qui nomme nos gouverneurs ballottés entre la responsabilité qu'ils doivent à l'empire et celle que le cabinet provincial exige d'eux ?

N'a-t-il pas étouffé, au milieu de ces conflits, toutes les velléités réformatrices de l'administration pro-

vinciale vivant au jour le jour de cette existence rapetissée ?

N'a-t-il pas imposé un conseil législatif dont l'influence, s'il en a aucune, est subordonnée aux changements ministériels ?

Comparez maintenant les deux systèmes, et jugez.

Aux Etats-Unis, la machine gouvernementale est d'un jeu si simple et si régulier qu'un enfant peut en compter les pulsations.

La mer du suffrage universel porte sur ses flots tous les aspirants de la candidature populaire.

La représentation est basée sur le thermomètre seul vrai et juste de l'opinion publique : sur la population.

Les états particuliers, souverains dans leurs limites respectives, délèguent au congrès fédéral leur part mesurée de souveraineté et d'influence.

Le sénat, renouvellé à période fixe, jouit de certaines attributions exécutives qui ravivent son autorité et relèvent sa valeur.

Tous les pouvoirs, le pouvoir exécutif, le pouvoir législatif, le pouvoir judiciaire, depuis le Président jusqu'à l'agent de police, depuis le membre du congrès jusqu'à l'alderman, depuis le président de la cour suprême jusqu'au juge des cours sommaires, grâce à cette perpétuelle votation élective, montent au peuple et en redescendent.

Tous les mandats que produit la boîte électorale sont de courte durée, afin de se retremper, par ce baptême démocratique, l'ardeur qui pourrait se relentir, afin de ravir aux gouvernements surtout le tems (*sic*), s'ils en avaient l'envie, de se laisser corrompre ou de se faire corrupteurs !

Le citoyen américain, sur la foi de sa conscience, marche à son vote paisiblement, le secret du scrutin pour toute nationalité, sans redouter l'or, les intrigues et les vengeances ministériels, aussi bien que l'ire collective de partis l'un pour l'autre animés de sentiments hostiles invétérés.

De là contentement chez tout le monde,—de là stabilité au dedans,—de là sécurité au dehors.

Si nous passons de l'organization politique aux considérations purement matérielles qui se rattachent au commerce, à l'industrie, à tout ce qui compose enfin le tissu de la prospérité nationale, nous trouvont la différence encore plus tranchée sans doute parce-qu'elle est plus ostensible et plus palpable.

En Canada, les intérêts du gouvernement et des particuliers éprouvent une égale souffrance ; le St.-Laurent est désert ; nos canaux d'une magnificence impériale, loin de plier sous le poid des vaisseaux, attendent pour se rouvrir les bras de la navigation libre ; nos cours d'eau et nos chûtes coulent dans leur pittoresque inutilité ; à peine avons-nous quelques milles de chemin de fer ; un simple réseau télégraphique suffit à l'activité peu électrique de nos affaires ; nous hébergeons l'émigration la plus dénuée de moyens ultérieurs de subsister, qui délaisse les rivages de la malheureuse Irlande.

Voilà, en résumé, les progrès que nous avons faits depuis un demi-siècle sous l'empire du régime colonial.

Eh bien ! les Etats-Unis, durant la même période ont marché comme un géant d'un bout du continent à l'autre. Le soleil échauffe les climats les plus opposés et vivifie toutes les variétés de productions. Une émigration entreprenante s'est dirigée vers les nouveaux Etats. La finance, effrayée par le dernier tremblement de trônes européens, accourt chercher ici un terrain plus solide pour y établir ses opérations. Les communications intérieures par eau sont encombrées. Les télégraphes multipliés sur tous les points. Les chemins de fer sillonnent le pays de leurs veines d'acier. On sera bientôt en train de relier, par l'acoustique de Morse, San-Francisco et New-York, comme un chemin de fer gigantesque mettra les océans porte à porte.

L'américain, tout en demeurant chez lui, peut se nourrir, s'habiller, produire, vendre, à l'abri des

tiraillements extérieurs, tandis que, faute de ressources, le jeune canadien abandonne son pays, trop incertain s'il ira coucher, au retour de l'exil, ses restes éternels près des os bénis de ses aïeux—et que sommes-nous, en effet, sinon de pauvres exilés que la patrie renvoie en pleurant à la grâce de Dieu ?

Ces antithèses historiques et statistiques à la main, nous vous le demandons : Un pays pauvre, vivotant sous la tutelle coloniale, a-t-il à perdre ou à gagner à l'union intime que nous lui proposons de consommer avec une contrée à la fois riche, contente et libre ?

Les considérations que nous avons fait valoir jusqu'ici forment les éléments vitaux de l'existence des peuples, mais elles n'en sont pas l'âme.

Quand le pont-lévis des frontières s'abaissera devant les marchandises comme devant les idées américaines, nous secouerons deux siècles de servitude pour entrer, grâce à l'annexion, dans la famille des peuples ; nous reparaîtrons au firmament de la liberté universelle où la domination prolongée de la France et de l'Angleterre nous avait éclipsés.

Elargissons donc, sans rien abjurer de ce que le patriotisme a de plus cher, et les convictions de plus sacré, ô canadiens, agrandissons la patrie aux proportions de l'hémisphère tout entier, rattachons nous à la vie sociale par ce glorieux lien ; rendons une patrie aux exilés qui seront fiers d'un pareil acte de naturalisation : et nous verrons l'aigle américain dont les ailes trempent déjà dans les deux océans, embrasser le continent jusqu'au pôle, et emporter au plus haut des cieux la charte de l'Amérique du Nord émancipée !

Habitants du Bas-Canada (nous nous adressons à vous de préférence, car nous vous connaissons mieux), croyez-en ceux de vos frères qui, du milieu de leurs peines commes au sein de leurs jouissances, ne vous perdent pas de vue un moment ; on a défiguré, pour vous les tenir en horreur, les grandes qualités qui

ont élevé au premier rang des nations ce peuple grandi si vite à vos côtés.

Non ! il n'y a rien à craindre pour votre religion protégée par la liberté des cultes, inscrite au frontispice de la constitution, et incrustés plus avant encore au for de toutes les intelligences.

Non ! il n'y a pas de danger pour votre langue sauvegardée par l'omnipotence du suffrage universel et invoquant, en cas d'exclusion, les sympathies et le respect traditionnel que tout descendant de Washington entretient pour ceux qui balbutient la langue de Rochambeau et de Lafayette !

Vous puiserez à cette alliance, nous vous le promettons, cet esprit d'ordre et de sagesse qui fait jaillir, des poudres d'or de la Califournie, un état là même où d'autres peuples ne surent fonder que des mines.

Vous vous remettrez en communion nationale avec ceux de vos frères qui gagnent à pleins railroads les prairies du Far Ouest. En croirez-vous ces pionniers, monuments vivants et irréfragables de l'appauvrissement graduel du pays ?

Annexionistes du Bas- et du Haut-Canada réunis, nous vous disons : Du courage, du courage, encore du courage ; les grandes causes ne triomphent qu'à cette condition. La persécution, qu'elle vienne du gouvernement ou de ses affidés, est le premier symptôme du succès définitif qui doit couronner les révolutions sociales.

VIVE L'ANNEXION !

Vive l'Amérique, une par sa grandeur nationale, indivisible dans sa foi républicaine !

The movement spread to other American cities in which there was a considerable French population. At a public meeting at Troy, New York, resolutions were adopted declaring : (1) that the colonial status of Canada was responsible for the economic stagnation of the province, and the involuntary exile of so many

of her citizens, (2) that it was the duty of all Canadians to join in the Montreal manifesto, (3) that they should do all in their power to induce England to agree to annexation, (4) that a political union with the United States would restore the prosperity of the province, and (5) that a manifesto in favour of annexation should be issued to the Canadian people. The thanks of the gathering were extended to *L'Avenir*, *Le Moniteur*, *The Herald*, and *The Courier* of Montreal, for their splendid services on behalf of democracy and annexation. An address to the Canadian people, signed by over 400 of the French-Canadian residents of Troy and the surrounding district, was duly prepared, and forwarded to Montreal for publication.[1] So far as the subject-matter was concerned, the address was a practical reproduction of the resolutions of the meeting. Shortly afterwards, another assembly was held at Cahoes, in the same state, at which resolutions of similar import were adopted. To these resolutions, there were appended the signatures of over two hundred persons.[2]

At a meeting of the New York association in April 1850, the permanent committee presented an interesting report, reviewing at length the course of the annexation movement and the existing conditions of affairs. The recent despatch of Earl Grey, in the opinion of the committee, closed the first stage of the annexation movement. The refusal of the English Government to agree to separation brought them face to face with unexpected difficulties which must needs be overcome before any substantial progress could be made towards annexation. The report strongly urged that the press and young men of the party should put forth still more vigorous efforts to convert their compatriots to the new political faith.[3] At a subsequent meeting of the association, Mr. J. E. Dorion of Montreal addressed the members, and was accorded a splendid reception.[4]

[1] *L'Avenir*, January 8, 1850.
[2] *Ibid.*, May 25, 1850.
[3] *Ibid.*, January 4, 1850.
[4] May 9, 1850.

Somewhat later another branch association was formed at Cooperville, New York, thanks to the zeal of Dr. Dorion of Rouse's Point. On the Fourth of July a grand celebration took place at which Mr. Dorion of Montreal was the principal speaker, and resolutions of the usual order were adopted in favour of annexation.[1]

These demonstrations in the United States were welcomed most heartily by the annexation press of Canada. The manifesto of the New York Association was accepted as the most convincing evidence of the social and economic advantages of annexation.[2] The appeal of the exiles would, it was hoped, awaken a responsive chord in French-Canadian hearts, and arouse a more independent and democratic spirit among the habitants. The addresses of the American associations were most freely used by the annexation speakers in their campaign in the Eastern Townships. But, apparently, the efforts of the American societies counted for little in Canadian politics. The counsel of the local priest was much more authoritative than the distant voice of a few Americanized compatriots. The habitants were entirely out of touch with the democratic thought and life of the American people; and, in truth, were inclined to look upon all forms of social and intellectual progress with a certain amount of suspicion.

The advent of the New Year brought little change in the political situation in Upper Canada. On account of a change in his political opinions, Mr. John Wilson, the member for London, severed his connection with the Conservative Party. In justice to his constituents he resigned his seat, and stood for re-election in the Reform interests. In his election address, he strongly censured the Tory Party for espousing the cause of peaceful annexation. The proposal, he declared, was altogether too specious to extend far beyond the region

[1] *L'Avenir*, July 12, 1850.
[2] *Ibid.*, January 22, 1850.

of the originators.[1] But the question of annexation was in no way at stake in the election, for the Conservative candidate, Mr. Dixon, was a staunch supporter of the British connection. The subject was only incidentally raised by the Reform speakers in the hope of discrediting the Tory Party. The tactics of the Liberals in this regard justly met with the severest condemnation of the local Tory organ. After a bitter struggle, Mr. Wilson was again returned by a small majority.

In a speech to his constituents at Woodstock, the Hon. F. Hincks made a bitter attack upon the loyalty of the opposition. "Politics," he declared, "are in a most extraordinary state in Canada." The Conservative Party was completely disorganized. "There is, however, a political organization in the country known as the British American League, which is in fact a political society, and which, if established ten or twelve years ago, would have subjected its members to trial for high treason. . . . Its members are divided amongst themselves, and differ from each other in their opinions. One portion goes for annexation to the United States as the great remedy for existing evils. These cannot be considered as Conservatives, yet they are men who formerly belonged to the old Tory Party in Upper Canada. They are men who were disappointed in their expectations, and who, when they see no prospects of the revival of Toryism, are ready to support any party which may spring up for the purpose of embarrassing the Government. Another section of the League go for elective institutions."[2]

To this partisan attack, *The Patriot* made the spirited reply that, although in Montreal the senseless cry for annexation had been raised by a group of sordid men, some of whom were formerly allied with the Conservative Party, nevertheless the fact was notorious

[1] *The Globe*, December 15, 1849.
[2] *The Examiner*, January 9, 1850.

that, "in the country parts of Lower Canada, and through the greater part of Upper Canada, the Tory Party were thoroughly loyal, and that the strength of the Annexation Party consisted of disappointed Radicals." [1]

Speaking at Woodstock a few days later, Mr. Van Sittart, a prominent member of the League, distinctly repudiated on behalf of that body the charge of annexation tendencies, and advocated a confederation of the provinces as a strong barrier against a political union with the United States.[2]

At the opening of the York assizes at Toronto, Judge Draper took occasion to address the Grand Jury on the dangerous nature of the annexation movement.[3] He severely arraigned the specious arguments of the Annexationists in favour of a legal right to advocate annexation. "But the liberty of discussion, as of action, ought to have, in every society enjoying a constitution and governed by law, some limits which it would be criminal to exceed. To plead in favour of an object towards which one cannot take a single step without a crime, ought to be in itself something criminal; and to speak of attaining such an object by some indefinite way by which one would adroitly avoid the danger to which one would expose himself by open acts of treason or sedition, is a sophism which ought not to deceive either those who make use of it, or those to whom it is addressed."

In their reply, the Grand Jury dealt with the delicate situation with tact and sound judgment. Although they disapproved of the propaganda of the Annexationists, they hesitated to recommend any action which might restrict the full liberty of speech. "And they do confidently believe that the good sense of the people, the surest safeguard in extremity, will operate as a sufficient restraint upon the exuberance of visionary

[1] *The Patriot*, January 12, 1850.
[2] *Ibid.*, January 16, 1850.
[3] January 7, 1850.

theorists, and resist all vague attempts of selfish political speculators." [1]

The despatch of the Colonial Secretary to Lord Elgin was heartily welcomed by the loyalist press of Upper Canada. Its views were well expressed in an editorial of *The Kingston Herald*. "We hope Annexationists will acquiesce in that decision, and that we shall see no more addresses to the country. Annexation is morally, politically and physically too, condemned by the great majority of this country, and distinctly negatived by the Imperial Government. Why, then, will men be so insane as to further protract excitement, and hold out hopes which they must be persuaded cannot be realized?" [2] Of a similar tenor was the declaration of *The Dundas Warder*. "For our part we have ever regarded the peaceful separation hobby as a humbug." The despatch of Earl Grey, it continued, was well timed, and likely to prove beneficial by convincing the public that England would not consent to separation. Under these circumstances, it was the duty of every citizen to stop agitating, and to devote himself to such practical measures as would promote the well-being of the country.[3]

In some quarters, however, the despatch of Earl Grey was ungraciously received, while in others it was misunderstood or treated with suspicion. According to *The Colonist*, it was really surprising, in view of the fatuous policy of the Colonial Secretary, that annexation sentiment was not more prevalent throughout the country.[4] *The Examiner* sarcastically remarked that his lordship had made a great discovery in regard to the loyalty of the Canadian people, in believing that their patriotism would stand the buffeting of the United States tariff. The Annexationists, it contended, had stopped short of any treasonable acts; and so long as

[1] *The Pilot*, January 24, 1850.
[2] *The Kingston Herald*, March 13, 1850.
[3] Quoted from *The Mirror*, February 15, 1850.
[4] *The Colonist*, February 5, 1850.

they limited themselves to strictly peaceful agitation, they were entitled freely to discuss the question of annexation with their fellow countrymen, and the despatch of the Colonial Secretary would not prevent it. The only way to annexation, it concluded, lay through independence.[1]

The beginning of the New Year witnessed the organization of an annexation association in Toronto. Although regular meetings were held, little was known by the outside public in regard to the membership or proceedings of that body. It was presently learned, however, that the association was preparing an address to the people of Upper Canada. The wisdom of this action was severely assailed by *The Mirror* in an editorial entitled, "More Gizards than Brains." Annexation, it maintained, was a thing of time, and it was by no means desirable that it should be born before its time. The majority of the people were not yet qualified to enjoy the advantages of political union, for the vassalage of colonization was still upon them. The issuance of a manifesto was not calculated to promote the object in view, but rather to snuff it out.

The manifesto, which soon after made its appearance, was moderate and dignified in expression; it consisted mainly of a restatement of the arguments of the editorial pages of *The Independent*. Strange to say, the address omitted any reference to the recent despatch of Earl Grey. The document read as follows:

ADDRESS OF THE TORONTO ANNEXATION SOCIETY TO THE PEOPLE OF CANADA

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN:

The natural advancement of this province towards a state of national maturity, accelerated by the occurrence of unforeseen events, having brought us to that critical period in our history when in our opinion the mutual benefits of our connection with

[1] *The Examiner*, February 6, 1850.

England no longer exist, it becomes our duty as a people to exercise a prudential forecast in providing for the exigencies of our altered condition, and the necessities of the future. In no spirit of hostility to the parent state, nor with any contemplated defiance of existing authority, municipal or metropolitan, do we address you. A candid statement of the actual condition of the country will sufficiently show the necessity of providing for its pressing and paramount want.

The geographical position of Canada—its extent—its elements of future greatness—its distance from the parent state—the impatience of external restraint, which grows up as an instinct with the progress of young communities—all forbid the hope that any commutual interests can for ever bind up our fortunes with those of the mother country. That the separation, when it does come, as come it must eventually, may be the voluntary exercise of the free will of parent and offspring, must be the desire of every true patriot and sincere friend of humanity. It would argue a false delicacy, and discover a mistaken prudence, were we to look on in silence while political society is outgrowing its institutions, in the vain hope that they can long survive not only the necessities, the conditions, and the wants which called them into being, but also the affections which supported their existence.

The pressing necessities of the manufacturing population of England, which operated as the motive for effecting a change in her commercial policy, subjecting the Canadian farmer to the disadvantages of independence, without its countervailing benefits, may also be a justification of the measure. If the people of the United Kingdom, having in view the general interest of the empire and without giving undue weight to the claims of any locality, near or distant, deliberately resolved upon a commercial policy, which, upon the whole, they believed would prove most conducive to the general interests, the Canadian people cannot urge their just complaints of the sacrifice of their special

interests as an adequate reason for condemning the national policy, and seeking its reversal. Were the question of free trade in England not yet decided, Canada might claim, as a right, to have her voice heard in the decision.

The acquiescence of all interests, colonial and metropolitan, should have been secured by every reasonable concession in the adjustment of such a question. But the decision of the Imperial Legislature, a decision in which we had no voice, and which, if we had, the suffrage of Canada could not have affected, may be looked upon as beyond the hope of reversal. But even though the reactionary agitation of English agriculturists should, for the moment, cause the opinions of that class to prevail in the national Councils, a counter agitation would in turn bring matters back to their present position; while Canada, tantalized by false hopes and dreamy illusions, would realize nothing but constant buffetings amid the violent oscillations from a free trade to a protection policy. Already has the unfixedness in the commercial policy of the mother country seriously augmented the difficulties of this province, and extinguished the hope of any permanent relief from Imperial Legislation to our depressed agricultural and commercial interests.

Compelled to encounter all the difficulties of foreign competition in the English market, and deprived of that complete control over foreign commerce which independent states enjoy, we have to sustain the burdens without enjoying the advantages of independence. It is of this we conceive we have a right to complain; and not of the national policy, which the suffrage of Canada, if permitted to be exercised, would be insufficient to change.

Thus circumstanced with regard to the mother country, our commercial relations with the only foreign nation with whom our trade is considerable are not on a more satisfactory footing. For several years we have sought in vain the establishment of a treaty of

commerce based upon principles of a mutual exchange of the products of the soil. At this moment, there are in progress to secure this object the same movements which have previously, on several successive occasions, raised the hopes of the province only to add the poignancy of disappointment to the disadvantages of our position. Without speculating on the present chances of success in the pursuit of an object, which has hitherto eluded our grasp, we cannot affect to be insensible that, were there no barrier to the immediate success of this measure, it would not place our commerce with the United States upon the best and most desirable footing. In its present shape, the measure now before the American Congress would cover but a limited portion of those articles of commerce which are daily exchanged by the two countries.

In a province thus circumstanced, it would be little short of a miracle, if the great interests of industry could be buoyed up above the accumulated weight of depression. General languor, and the absence of that bold spirit of enterprise which so pre-eminently characterizes our American neighbours, are the natural consequence. Emigration and capital shun our shores. With rivers that supply the finest hydraulic power in the world, manufacturers have not taken root amongst us. A chain of almost uninterrupted water communication, in the very heart of the country, lies surrounded by forests, and but partially explored, for want of capital and enterprise to turn it to account.

The almost illimitable sources of wealth, in soil, timber, water, and ores of various metals, in which the provinces abound, place in striking contrast the rich profusion of the Creator with the inactivity of man; and this inertness, which chills and freezes every industrial interest, stands in still more striking and humiliating contrast with the general activity and uniform progress of American states, whose settlement dates much later than the settlement of Canada.

Of the numerous colonies of England, Canada is

perhaps the one whose political institutions European capitalists regard as the most unstable. Among the many causes that have contributed to produce this impression are: the vicissitudes that have marked our political history; our proximity to a country whose maxims of government are supposed to possess a peculiarly contagious influence; the popular belief that we have reached that state of national manhood when colonial dependence is morally, and must soon be practically, superseded; the apprehension that we are on the verge of a revolution in which popular violence may seek to cancel the public engagements; the unsettled state of our political institutions. Vague ideas of this nature, floating in the popular mind of England, deter the capitalist from risking a farthing upon the most feasible projects for constructing railways or other works of provincial utility. Thus, by a natural and necessary process, is the state of political transition made also one of commercial stagnation and industrial inactivity.

Could we even secure abroad that general confidence in the stability of our political institutions, for which it were vain and delusive to hope, there would still remain the numerous disadvantages of a mere political connection, which on the one hand implies the right of restraint, and, on the other, the necessity of submission. In the appointment of the person administering the Government, the province has no voice; and, however the received theory of our scheme of government may define the limits of his authority, repeated facts in our history show how fallacious is the assumption that there exists any adequate safeguard against the stretching of his power beyond the range of its theoretical limits. Armed with secret instructions from England and the potent prerogative of dissolving the Provincial Parliament, a skilful or unscrupulous exercise of the functions with which he is invested, and the influence he can wield, enables the Governor of the day to change at pleasure the entire aspect and ten-

dency of our politics. The discretionary power in the Governor to reserve, for Imperial assent or abrogation, measures which have received the sanction of the Canadian Legislature, gives rise to the most inconvenient delays, and places our interests in constant danger of being made subservient to the exigencies of Imperial Legislation.

Denied that complete freedom of action over our political and commercial interests which is the attribute and prerogative of independent states, when the countervailing benefits of the parental connection have been withdrawn, we are naturally led to seek a change in our external relations that will relieve us from the burdens of a condition prolific of evils and sterile of benefits.

From a dispassionate and candid consideration of the case, we have deliberately formed the opinion that the only remedy that can relieve us from the commercial and political disadvantages imposed upon us by the nature and circumstances of our present position, is to be found in a friendly separation of this province from England, and its annexation to the United States. Our sole object in thus appealing to the intelligence of the Canadian people is to counsel them to take preliminary steps for obtaining the assent of the executive and legislative authorities of England to this proposed measure.

Various alternatives to avert this inevitable result have been suggested, discussed, and abandoned. Of these the most prominent are: colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament, and an independent federal union of the British-American Provinces.

The first of these schemes, often broached, but never cordially supported by the public voice of either the province or the mother country, has ceased to have advocates in any section of our community whose numbers and intelligence entitle them to consideration. Besides that the right of representation in the Imperial Parliament would bring with it an additional burthen

of taxation, from which we have hitherto been exempt, the practical benefits of the arrangement would be of a questionable character. The presence of our representatives might indeed serve constantly to remind the British Parliament of the political existence of Canada; but the delegated suffrage of the province would not be felt in the scales of national legislation.

The scheme of an independent federal union of the provinces would impose upon the federation all the burthens of a national existence; while our weakness would render us a prey to the cupidity or ambition of any powerful maritime or neighbouring nation. The means of naval protection from foreign aggression would be a necessary condition of national independence; but the cost of creating a navy, and the burthen of its support, would far exceed our available resources. To this would be added the cost of a consular system, internal fortifications, and a standing army.

Annexation to the United States would secure to Canada all the advantages of unrestricted free trade with the other members of the confederacy. Our interests and sympathies would necessarily be fused together; and the enterprise, so conspicuous everywhere throughout the Union, could not fail to find its way and extend itself very soon over the whole face of the province. To our statesmen and great men it would open a wide field of honourable ambition. It would raise our credit abroad, and cause foreign capital to flow into the country. Manufacturers—for which the country is so admirably adapted from its geographical position, climate, cheapness of motive power and labour, and from the abundant supply of raw material in which it abounds—would flourish to an extent unsurpassed in many of the older states. An extended system of railways would soon be carried into practical operation. These and other inducements would divert to our shores a portion of the better description of immigration, which at present sets in, in an almost uninterrupted stream, to the Western States.

A patriotic spirit of common nationality would displace the jealousies and the feuds which have so long embittered social intercourse, and a noble feeling of self-reliance would produce a general social elevation amongst all classes of our community.

In thus stating the broad grounds on which we conceive the cause of annexation should be prosecuted, it is of importance to observe that no steps should be recommended which shall not be in accordance with a friendly separation, in the first instance, from Great Britain. All constitutional means must, however, be employed to obtain the sense of the people, and through them to influence the Legislature. An extensive organization, through local societies to be linked together by a chain of correspondence, is recommended. The necessity for the adoption of this course is perhaps greater in Upper Canada than in the other section of the province—in many parts of which public sentiment has become so united on this subject as not to require the formation of societies. In Western Canada, however, where the most extraordinary efforts have been made by interested politicians to mislead and intimidate the people, organization has become indispensable as a means for the dissemination of truth, as well as for securing combined action. Already such information has been received of the state of public feeling on this great question throughout Western Canada, as to warrant the belief that there are but few localities where societies may not be immediately formed. When we see whole counties in Lower Canada coming boldly forward, and avowing their sentiments in favour of annexation, it is time that those who entertain similar views in this part of the province should at once cast their weight into the scale in favour of the movement.

The endeavours of those whose individual interests are not identified with the community at large, to retard the early consummation of this great and glorious object, must be firmly met by a manly determination to overcome every obstacle. Let it be borne in mind,

on all occasions, that the connection of these colonies with the mother country is no longer regarded by any class of politicians, either in England or Canada, as a thing of permanence. The course of action recommended is merely to accelerate inevitable events, and shorten a state of transition which, whilst it lasts, must retard that rapid advance to prosperity and happiness that will speedily follow the attainment of a position amongst the independent nations of the earth.

Fellow Countrymen :—Having thus in general terms expressed our views on this momentous question, we commend the cause to the good sense and zeal of our friends in every part of Canada ; and trust that every true Canadian, every lover of really responsible and free government, who entertains a noble ambition to see his country advance in prosperity and wealth, will on this occasion manfully perform his duty.

By order of the Association,
RICHARD KNEESHAW,
Recording Secretary.
H. B. WILLSON,
Corresponding Secretary.

The manifesto, which was doubtless the work of Mr. Willson, was sarcastically likened by *The Montreal Gazette* to the famous address of the three tailors of Tooley Street. It was indeed a significant circumstance that the officers and members of the association did not follow the example of their fellow Annexationists in Montreal in appending their names to the address. The manifesto fell flat ; its appearance awakened scarcely any interest among the general body of citizens. This indifference was due, according to *The Examiner*, to the lack of novelty of the subject. One year ago, a large proportion of the people "would have been petrified by such a document," but now it did not shock the nerves of even the most sensitive. It was difficult, in fact, to gauge what was the real state of

public opinion on annexation. Public sentiment had been materially altered, in the opinion of *The Examiner*, by the removal of the seat of Government to Toronto. Both pro- and anti-Annexationists were alike influenced by selfish considerations. The choice of Toronto as the temporary capital had made many converts to the British connection in the city, and the removal of the seat of Government might occasion a similar reaction of feeling. The natural decadence of loyalty, it concluded, had been accelerated by the course of English legislation and by the apparent antagonism of interest between the colony and the parent state.[1]

The spirits of the Annexationists were somewhat raised by several favourable editorials in *The Oshawa Reformer*, and by the appearance of a new paper, *The Whitby Freeman*—a half Tory, half Annexationist sheet. It was hoped that the seed which had been sown in the Perry election was about to bring forth its first fruits. But the hopes of the Annexationists were quickly extinguished, for the paper soon after fell into the hands of the Reformers, and changed its political principles. Throughout the Midland District, the annexation movement was distinctly losing ground. In speaking of the Sherbrooke election, *The Peterborough Dispatch* declared: "We believe that the people here have no wish for a change . . . and that an earnest and timely effort on the part of the imperial power to remove from among us any cause for complaint would go far to re-establish confidence and good feeling." As a means to the betterment of conditions, it advocated a retrenchment in public expenditure, the popular election of officials, and an extension of the franchise.[2]

The views of *The Kingston Whig* were even more outspoken. "However much the annexation movement may expand itself and its principles in the midst of populous cities and large towns, it certainly is not progressing in country places. The rural population

[1] *The Examiner*, February 20, 1850.
[2] Quoted from *The Mirror*, March 22, 1850.

of the Midland and Victoria Districts to a man seems to be dead against annexation, or any intimate connection with the adjoining Republic. A good deal of this repulsion is probably spurious, the combined effect of the Liberal Party's being in power, and the dread of want of sincerity in the profession of those Annexationists who belong to the defunct Conservative Party."

Nevertheless the various local correspondents of *The Independent* regularly informed its readers of the growth of annexation sentiment in their respective parts of the province. In the County of Norfolk, it was alleged that two-thirds of the inhabitants were Annexationists at heart. Encouraged by these reports, Mr. Willson resolved to make a tour of the Western peninsula in the interest of his paper and of the annexation cause. But on attempting to hold a meeting at Port Rowan, he was treated with such indignity that he thought it advisable to leave the district, and discontinue his campaign.

A more encouraging prospect for the Annexationists was presented in the counties along the Detroit and St. Clair rivers, where the growing spirit of discontent at last found expression. The proximity of the district to the American border brought home most forcibly to the Canadian farmers and traders the striking contrast between their condition and that of their neighbours across the river. The proof of their economic inferiority lay before their eyes, and they could not fail to see it. They were as moral, industrious, and intelligent as their American cousins, yet they did not reap the same reward for their labours. The conviction was forced upon them that the colonial status was responsible for their ills.

The rising feeling of disaffection was voiced in an open letter of Colonel Prince, the local Tory member and one of the Vice-Presidents of the League, in which he came out boldly for Canadian independence. As the policy of annexation was by no means popular, he endeavoured to give a new direction to the spirit of

unrest, by advocating a union of the British-American provinces and their erection into an independent state. Personally, he declared, he was opposed to annexation. "The people would degrade themselves, if they did not make independence, not annexation, the test at the next general election." They should approach the Queen by petition to grant them independence. The voluntary grant of this boon would not compromise the honour of England, nor tarnish the reputation of Canada. The dominion of Great Britain, he concluded, was baneful to Canada; the colonial status was commercially ruinous, and politically injurious and humiliating.[1] The opinion of the gallant colonel was based on his own business experience, to which he appealed with convincing force. He had invested a large proportion of his capital in a local brewery which, owing to the closing of the American market, had turned out to be a dead loss.

The suggestion was promptly taken up by some of the local inhabitants. A petition to the Legislature was drawn up by Colonel Prince, and signed by many of the "most respected citizens" of the united counties of Essex, Kent, and Lambton, praying for an address to the Queen in favour of independence. The petitioners alleged that they were driven to make this request by the unfortunate policy of England in withdrawing the colonial preference, and by other acts prejudicial to the interests of the province. Nevertheless, the petitioners concluded, they would remain loyal subjects of Great Britain until Her Majesty should see fit to release the colony from the status of a dependency.[2]

This outburst of discontent proved only a flash in the pan; it was the last bright flare of a flickering flame. Annexation sentiment was gradually dying out throughout Upper Canada. Before the close of the month *The Toronto Independent* was forced to announce its approaching demise. The paper had been ably

[1] *Amherstburg Courier*, February 23, 1850.
[2] *The Colonist*, April 5, 1850.

edited by Mr. Willson. In three short months it had increased its circulation from seven to fourteen hundred, but it could not command sufficient support to keep it going. Annexation sentiment in Upper Canada was not sufficiently developed to maintain an independent organ. In the dying confession of *The Independent*, the editor declared that he had been induced by the pressure of his Montreal friends to make *The Independent* an annexation paper. From the outset he had not been sanguine of success in taking such an advanced position. The turn of affairs in Upper Canada and the course of political parties had shown that his original intention of advocating independence only, leaving the question of annexation for future settlement, would have been more consonant with the sentiments of the Canadian public.

In agitating for an ultimate end, instead of a proximate step, the separationists had placed themselves in a false position in Upper Canada, where as yet no leading politician had come out in favour of annexation. In the light of these conditions, further agitation for annexation should be abandoned for a time. Annexation, he believed, could be peacefully and constitutionally obtained only through the winning of elective institutions, and it behoved the Annexationists to join hands with their fellow countrymen in the struggle for popular democracy. "It would be folly," he concluded, "for us to continue single-handed and alone in all this western section of the province to agitate a question, when the first step towards its attainment has got to be taken." In speaking of the disappearance of *The Independent*, *The Montreal Herald* sardonically remarked that an annexation paper could not hope to succeed in Toronto, where there was too much flunkeyism fomented by the presence of the Governor-General. But, it contended, the principles for which *The Independent* stood had not ceased to exist, as was evident from the recent conversion of Colonel Prince, and the progress of the movement in New Brunswick.

A survey of the state of political feeling throughout the province revealed the fact that the annexation campaign had been a complete failure. Outside of Montreal and Quebec, and the border districts in the eastern and western extremes of the province, the movement had not obtained a firm hold upon any considerable portion of the population. The number of signatures to the various manifestos did not amount to 5,000, an insignificant fraction of the total population. The bulk of the English inhabitants of Upper Canada, and of the French in Lower, were avowedly hostile to annexation. "As a popular movement," declared *The Globe* in language somewhat overdrawn, "the whole thing has been an entire failure; it has not found a resting-place in any section of the country, nor with any political party." [1]

[1] *The Globe*, March 5, 1850.

CHAPTER VII

THE COLLAPSE OF THE MOVEMENT

Renewal of negociations for reciprocity—Efforts of H. Merritt—Views of Lord Elgin—Mission of Hon. M. Cameron—Opposition of the Annexationists—Reciprocity in Congress—Failure of measures—Meeting of Legislature—Tactics of the Annexationists—Speech of Governor-General—Resolution of loyalty in Legislative Council—The Legislative Assembly—Rejection of petition for independence—Attitude of the Ministry—Elective Legislative Council—Debate on annexation—Attitude of the Conservative leaders—Views of the Annexationists—Debate on dismissal of annexation officials—Onslaught of the Annexationists—Divided counsels of the Tories—Attitude of Sir Allan MacNab—Conduct of the Clear Grits—Defence of the Ministry—Victory of the Government—Defeat of the Boulton amendment—Course of the several parties—Annexation dropped—Reasons for failure of movement—Revival of trade—Influence of Lord Elgin—Divisions among the Annexationists—Loyalty of French-Canadians—Influence of clergy—Annexation sentiment among Clear Grits—Lack of political organization—Unfavourable conditions in the United States—The slavery issue—Canadian hostility to slavery—Opposition of English Government and nation—Disappearance of local associations—Collapse of the movement.

IN the meantime, the Government was making another serious effort to secure an entrance into the American market for Canadian products. Although Lord Elgin was greatly disappointed at the failure of the Dix Bill, he had not given up hope of securing a reciprocity agreement from the President or Congress. The seriousness of the local situation convinced the Ministry of the necessity of immediate action, if the colony was not to be lost to the empire. Mr. Hamilton Merritt was sent on a special mission to Washington, with a view to winning over the American Government to a more favourable attitude towards

reciprocity. Negociations for an international agreement were set on foot by Mr. Crampton, the British Ambassador, but broke down owing to the opposition of the President, who maintained that the proper mode of procedure was by legislation, and not by executive action.[1]

Although the mission was a failure, Mr. Merritt returned with the conviction that a favourable reciprocity arrangement might yet be wrung from the United States. But he was as strongly opposed to annexation as ever. In a speech to his constituents a few months later, he declared that on general principles he was in favour of free trade between England and Canada, with discriminating duties against the United States. But, since England had reversed her former policy to the disadvantage of the colonies, Canada must needs seek admission for her products into the American market. He did not believe that the policy of reciprocity would estrange the province from Great Britain, but that, on the contrary, the continued closure of the United States market would inevitably produce an ever-increasing demand for separation. He was convinced that they would soon gain reciprocity either by coercion or without, possibly within a few months, but at any rate ultimately. Annexation was a question to be seriously considered and not laughed at, as was the vogue in some of the newspapers.

He did not think that if Canada were annexed to the United States, it would receive any benefits whatever. It would have to assume a heavy federal tax, and to levy duties on all but American goods. Free trade would certainly be secured on this continent, but it would be lost with the rest of the world. He was convinced, however, that the only thing to stop annexation was to remove the high custom duties which tended to drive men into seeking it and desiring it.

A portion of the commercial community heartily

[1] *U.S. Ex. Doc.* No. 64, 1st Sess. 31st Cong.

supported the efforts of the Government to secure reciprocity. A group of public-spirited business men united to send a petition to the British Government by the hands of Mr. Henry Moyle, requesting it to use its influence and good offices with the American Executive, to secure on mutual conditions the free access of Canadian grains to the United States market, and, failing in this, to retaliate upon the Americans by imposing on their produce a duty equal to that which the United States tariff levied on the products of Canada. Through the columns of *The St. Catherine's Journal*, Mr. Merritt kept up an active agitation for reciprocity. One of the advantages of that policy would be, *The Journal* declared, " to remove the uncertainty " which now existed in the minds of men as to the future relations of the colony to the mother country and the United States. " Make Canada prosperous, and nothing more would be heard about annexation." But prosperity, it concluded, could only be attained by a bold comprehensive scheme of reciprocity.[1]

The cry was heartily taken up by the majority of the Reform papers, as the best antidote to the clamour of annexation. *The Examiner* voiced the feelings of many of the party in declaring that, if reciprocity were refused, Canadians would be driven to some other remedy to extricate themselves from the disadvantageous position in which they were placed.[2] It expressed grave doubts as to the wisdom of resorting to retaliatory measures against the United States, even though England should consent to adopt such tactics, which, however, was most improbable. Reciprocity as an antidote for annexation was, under existing circumstances, not a very hopeful policy. It was ready to admit, however, that the passage of a Reciprocity Bill in Congress would put the question of annexation in abeyance for the time being, though it was extremely doubtful if such a measure would extinguish all future

[1] *The Journal and Express*, November 1, 1849
[2] *The Examiner*, September 5, 1849.

agitation.[1] In their exasperation against the selfish policy of the United States, some of the Reformers went so far as to join with the Conservative Party in advocating the imposition of retaliatory protective duties on American products, in case the United States would not agree to reciprocity.[2]

The Governor-General continued to urge upon the Secretary for the Colonies the imperative necessity of securing a market for Canadian products in the United States. The prices of all natural products were, he pointed out, considerably lower in Canada than across the border. "So long as this state of things continues, there will be discontent in this country; deep growing discontent. You will not, I trust, accuse me of having deceived you on this point. I have always said that I am prepared to assume the responsibility of keeping Canada quiet with a much smaller garrison than we have now, and without any tax on the British consumer in the shape of protection to Canadian products, if you put our trade on as good a footing as that of our American neighbours; but, if things remain on their present footing in this respect, there is nothing before us but violent agitation, ending in convulsion or annexation. It is better that I should worry you with my importunity, than that I should be chargeable with having neglected to give you due warning. You have a great opportunity before you—obtain reciprocity for us, and I venture to predict that you will be able shortly to point to this hitherto turbulent colony with satisfaction, in illustration of the tendency of self-government and freedom of trade to beget contentment and material progress. Canada will remain attached to England, though tied to her neither by the golden links of protection, nor by the meshes of old-fashioned Colonial Office jobbing and chicane. But, if you allow the Americans to withhold the boon, which you have

[1] *The Examiner*, February 20, 1850.

[2] See resolution of the Reformers in Lough, *The Examiner*, February 13, 1850.

the means of extorting, if you will, I much fear that the closing period of the connection between Great Britain and Canada will be marked by incidents which will damp the ardour of those who desire to promote human happiness by striking shackles either off commerce or off men." [1]

The introduction of two Reciprocity Bills into Congress revived the hopes of the Canadian people. A group of Toronto business men resolved to send the Hon. M. Cameron to Washington to cultivate the acquaintance of Congressmen, and to promote as far as possible the passage of a satisfactory Bill. Although of a private nature, this mission was undertaken with the approval and sanction of the local Government. A treacherous attempt was made by some of the Annexationists to defeat the object of the mission. In Toronto, an effort was made to persuade the mercantile community that the real purpose of Cameron was " to frustrate reciprocity and promote annexation." [2] The two annexation organs in Montreal did not hesitate to call upon Congress to defeat any reciprocity measures, for fear that the enactment of such a Bill might stifle the demand for annexation in Canada.[3] So far did they carry their opposition, that they endeavoured to prejudice the Southern Congressmen against Cameron by pointing out that he was a strong opponent of slavery. They preferred, according to *The Kingston News,* " to see reciprocity in human chattels rather than in trade." [4]

After the failure of the Dix Bill, the agents of the British Government at Washington resolved to adopt somewhat different tactics in order to overcome the

[1] November 8, 1849 (*Letters and Journals of Lord Elgin*, p. 102).
[2] *The Examiner*, February 13, 1850.
[3] *The New York Herald* maintained, on the contrary, that the closer the commercial relations of the two countries, the nearer they would be drawn together politically. It disapproved of both the tactics and the arguments of *The Montreal Courier* upon this phase of the question.
[4] Quoted from *The Colonist*, March 5, 1850.

opposition of the Congressmen from the South. The latter, as we have seen, were inclined to look upon reciprocity as a disguised scheme of annexation, to which they were resolutely opposed. A strong effort was made to remove this erroneous impression, and to present the question of reciprocity in relation to annexation in its true light. Representations were accordingly made to the Southern members to the effect that the heart of the Canadian demand for annexation was not the desire to become Americans, but rather the desire, amounting almost to a necessity, of securing an entrance into the United States market. It followed, as a natural consequence, that the best and simplest way of defeating all projects for a political union would be to satisfy the Canadian demand for reciprocity.[1] Mr. Cameron was likewise advised, prior to his departure, to make similar representations to the Southern Congressmen.[2]

But the combined efforts of the English and Canadian Governments again failed to move Congress. At first the prospects seemed favourable. On January 29, a Reciprocity Bill was reported in the House of Representatives by Mr. McLean, from the Committee of Commerce, and after the first and second readings was referred to the Committee of the Whole.[3] A few days later Senator Douglas presented a Billin the Upper House providing for the free navigation of the St. Lawrence and the reciprocal free exchange of certain products of the respective countries. But both measures were subsequently lost in committee. The hostility of the Southern members and the opposition of the Northern protectionists again proved too strong for the supporters of reciprocity. *The New York Tribune*,[4] the leading protectionist organ of the country, came out flatly against any commercial arrangement

[1] *The New York Herald*, quoted in *The Colonist*, October 9, 1849.
[2] *The Mirror*, February 15, 1850.
[3] *J. H. R.*, 1849–50, p. 428.
[4] February 11, 1850.

with Canada, unless accompanied by annexation. In the face of all these hostile influences, the diplomacy of the Canadian authorities was of little avail. Congress was not yet ready to consider the question of reciprocity upon its merits. Reciprocity was not a subject "about which any national or even party feeling could be aroused. It was one which required much study to understand its bearings, and which would affect different interests in the country in different ways. It stood, therefore, especially in need of the aid of professional organizers; a kind of aid of which it was of course impossible that either the British or the Canadian Government should avail itself." [1]

The approaching session of Parliament promised to be unusually interesting, owing to the peculiar position and uncertain relationships of the various party groups in the Assembly. Nominally the Ministry had a large majority in the House, but in fact the Reform Party was rent in twain. The possible organization of a separate annexationist group further complicated the situation. The standing of the several parties was approximately: Reformers 34; Clear Grits 22; Conservatives 20; Annexationists 7. In the last-mentioned group were reckoned DeWitt, Holmes, McConnell, Egan, Papineau, Sanborn, and Prince. The keenest speculation was rife as to the attitude of the Clear Grits towards the Government, and as to the policy of the Annexationists.

The question as to whether the annexation members should form a separate party or not had already been discussed at length by some of the annexation journals. *The Toronto Independent* did not think that the group was strong enough as yet to organize an independent party; nor did it approve of the several members of the group retaining their former political affiliations for general party purposes; it recommended, on the contrary, an opportunist policy of friendly co-operation with the Clear Grit members. It laid down the

[1] *Letters and Journals of Lord Elgin*, p. 107.

dictum that every measure should be considered in reference to its effect upon annexation. "As elective institutions from the Governor downwards would be one of the most striking changes which would accompany the admission of Canada as a sovereign state into the American Union," the annexation members would be expected "to take every opportunity of urging the adoption of elective institutions, not as an end, but as an instalment of the reforms they seek, and as a preparation for it."[1] For similar reasons, added *The Montreal Herald*, the annexation group would naturally support the principle of religious equality, the curtailment of the civil list, and all such measures and reforms as were calculated to prepare the way for union with the United States.[2]

At the opening of the session, a clever appeal was made by *The Montreal Courier* to the Clear Grit Party to assume the leadership of the progressive forces in opposition to the Government. "With such pilots at the helm, we shall have some hope for the advancement and prosperity of our common country, besides the assurance that we shall then have made one capital move in the right direction for independence."[3] But the Clear Grit Party was not in a position to lead, even had it so desired; it was sadly in want of responsible leaders, and by no means certain of its own policy and political principles.

The speech of the Governor-General, in opening Parliament, referred to the annexation movement in the following terms:

"I have deemed it my duty in the exercise of the prerogative . . . to mark Her Majesty's disapprobation of the course taken by persons holding commissions at the pleasure of the Crown, who have formally avowed the desire to bring about the separation of this province from the empire. . . .

[1] Quoted from *The Hamilton Spectator*, January 5, 1850.
[2] Quoted from *The Toronto Mirror*, January 18, 1850.
[3] Quoted from *The Globe*, May 14, 1850.

"The views put forward by these persons, and by those who act with them, do not, I have reason to believe, find favour with any considerable portion of Her Majesty's subjects.

"The great majority of the people of the province have given at this juncture proofs not to be mistaken of loyalty to the Queen and attachment to the connection with Great Britain.

"They look to their own Parliament for the redress of grievances which may be proved to exist, and for the adoption of such measures of improvement as may be calculated to promote their happiness and prosperity."

In the Legislative Council, the Hon. P. B. De Blaquière moved an ultra-patriotic address to the Queen expressive of the devoted loyalty of the Upper Chamber to the mother country. It was highly important, in his judgment, that the Council should pronounce its opinion on the subject of annexation, since the views of various irresponsible bodies had been freely expressed throughout the province, and had created a false impression in England as to the state of Canadian feeling. The motion was supported by the Hon. A. Ferguson, on the ground that "it would have the effect of attracting a large number of immigrants to Canada." On both sides of the House there was general condemnation of annexation. The motion was carried unanimously.

In the Legislative Assembly, the question of separation was raised at the very outset by Colonel Prince in presenting the petition of his constituents for independence. He took occasion to deny the allegation that the petition was signed by Americans; it was, in truth, a Canadian document, to which were appended the names of many of the most respected residents of the district. He was proud to introduce "the first petition ever presented to a British Parliament for separation from the British nation." At this point the Speaker intervened to call the attention of the House to the singular character of the subject-matter of the petition;

whereupon Mr. Baldwin moved that the petition be not received.

The motion of the Attorney-General brought on a brief but animated discussion. It was contended by Colonel Prince that all British subjects had a constitutional right to present their petitions to Parliament, and that it was a tyrannical exercise of authority to dispose of the matter in so cursory a fashion. Other petitions of a similar character would soon be forthcoming. There was a time, he claimed, when Baldwin would have signed the petition ; but the truth of the statement was immediately challenged by the Attorney-General. Mr. Papineau came to the support of his colleague. The House, he maintained, had no constitutional right to stand between the petitioners and the Throne. He charged the Government with pursuing a deliberate policy of endeavouring to suppress freedom of thought and speech, outside the House as well as within. There was not, he concluded, an English statesman who did not admit the incapacity of England to administer the colonies.

Colonel Gugy stirred up the feelings of the members by making a slashing attack on the principle of independence. Canada, he asserted, was incapable of sustaining at present an independent status. Under such a régime " the country would be overrun and destroyed by loafers." Malcolm Cameron calmed the rising temper of the House by a dispassionate discussion of the legal aspects of the question. He was afraid that his conduct in supporting the member for Kent might be misunderstood ; for, although he did not share the opinions of the petitioners, he was compelled on constitutional grounds to vindicate their right of petition. He did not think that there were more than thirty persons in favour of independence in all the Western District. Canada, he believed, was much better off as a colony than she would be if annexed to the United States. He urged that the petition be referred to a committee where it could be more effectually repudiated,

than by summarily refusing to accept it. Notwithstanding this able plea for due consideration of the petition, the motion of the Attorney-General was adopted by the overwhelming vote of 57 Ayes to 7 Nays, the latter consisting of Messrs. Cameron, De Witt, Holmes, McConnell, Papineau, Prince, and Sanborn.

The summary action of the Assembly in throwing out the petition was intended to show to the country at large that the popular chamber had no sympathy whatever with any schemes of disloyalty, and would refuse to entertain any such proposals. The decisive action of the Ministry in moving the rejection of the petition won the general commendation of the Reformers throughout the province, but was severely criticized by the annexation organs and by a few of the Tory papers, in particular by *The Montreal Gazette*.[1]

In the debate on the address but little attention was paid to the question of annexation. The mover of the address merely referred to the general satisfaction of the public at the dismissal of the objectionable officials, while the seconder failed to notice the topic. Several members of the opposition, however, took occasion to censure the Government for arbitrarily interfering with the liberty of its servants, and for misrepresenting the condition of the country in the speech of the Governor-General. In reply to these criticisms, the Inspector-General, the Hon. Francis Hincks, briefly stated that there was the greater reason in this case for prompt and decisive action on the part of the Ministry in making the dismissals in question, since some of the members of the Government had been wrongfully suspected of disloyalty. Under these circumstances, a mere passive attitude, or a failure to act, would almost certainly have been construed by the country at large as a tacit approval of the treasonable activities of some of the servants of the State. The Government was in honour bound to vindicate its own loyalty, as well as to maintain the supremacy of the Crown.

[1] *The Gazette*, May 21, 1850.

The question of annexation came up for a lively discussion, upon an amendment to the address in favour of household suffrage and an elective Legislative Council, which was introduced by Mr. Boulton of Norfolk, at the instance of the Radical section of the Clear Grit Party. The Ministers found themselves attacked on all sides by the different party groups. The annexation members joined with the Tories in making a vigorous assault upon the general policy of the Government, while the Clear Grits added their quota of criticism in respect to certain features of the administration. But little attempt was made to confine the discussion to the specific amendment before the House.

On the Tory side, the principal speakers were Sir Allan MacNab, Colonel Gugy, and Mr. Badgley. The disorganization of the party was revealed most clearly in the divergent opinions of the party leaders upon the question. Some of the members of the party condemned the action of the Executive on general party principles, while others supported the Government on patriotic grounds. To the first of these classes belonged Sir Allan MacNab, who made an ill-advised effort to justify the Tory Annexationists of Montreal. The annexation movement was occasioned, in his judgment, by the Rebellion Losses Bill. " He believed that there was not a more loyal body of men in the world " than the self-same Montreal Annexationists.

But the attitude of the Conservative leader did not commend itself to some of his colleagues, who were not yet ready to justify, let alone commend, the treasonable conduct of their fellow partisans. The gallant knight was severely taken to task by Colonel Gugy for his cordial tone towards the Annexationists. On this question, the latter declared, he was forced to part company with his political friends, and impelled to support the policy of the Government. He warned the leaders of the party, that, even though an alliance were made with the republican members of the House, for the

overthrow of the Government, it would still be impossible to form a Coalition Ministry out of such discordant elements. The result of the annexation movement "had been the complete disruption of the Conservative Party. They had now no party to fall back on." The Annexationists had appealed to the selfish interests of the public, and had sought to deceive the people by glowing prospects of prosperity. But the effect of the investment of American capital would not, as represented, redound to the advantage of Canada; on the contrary, it would serve to "create a moneyed aristocracy of foreigners," and reduce the native population to the European level of dependents upon their wealthier neighbours.

In the heat of his temper, the gallant Colonel allowed his tongue to run away with his judgment, and most brutally assailed the character of the Annexationists in coarse and vulgar language, unbecoming a gentleman, and unworthy of a member of the Chamber. Some of the leaders of that party were accused of speculating in flour; "and the vice of avarice was common to them all." Mr. Redpath was aptly described as an ambitious tradesman who had amassed a fortune, and wished to heap up more. In conclusion, the honourable member most heartily commended the course of the Government in dismissing those officials who were basely using an influence derived from the Crown for the overthrow of the institutions they had sworn to maintain.

A much more liberal view of the conduct of the Annexationists was taken by Mr. Badgley, who contended that, if the manifesto was treasonable, there was an excellent precedent for it in the memorial of the Montreal Board of Trade. Moreover, the question of separation had been freely discussed in England without public criticism or suspicion of seditious proceedings. Twenty years before, Canning had stated that he was bringing up the Canadas with a view to handing them over to the United States. The fact that

annexation was not making progress throughout the province afforded the best of reasons for declining to dismiss the Annexationists. As it was, the arbitrary action of the Government had occasioned much bitterness of feeling, whereas an effort should have been made to win the wayward officials back to a sense of their duty to the Crown and country.

The annexation members, as was to be expected, took a prominent part in the discussion. The slanderous attack of Colonel Gugy upon the morality of the members of the party naturally aroused the ire of the annexation group, and fortunately afforded them a distinct point of advantage in the ensuing debate, of which they made good use. They did not fail to point out that this sweeping indictment would include a majority of the Colonel's fellow partisans of Montreal, and a large proportion of estimable citizens throughout the province. The members of the group carefully avoided, throughout their speeches, any political appeal to either of the old-line parties. The purity of their motives, the evils of the colonial régime, the natural advantages of separation, and the commercial benefits of annexation were the recurrent themes of all their arguments.

Mr. Sanborn, against whom the brunt of the loyalist attack was directed, acquitted himself well under the circumstances. He professed to enjoy a privileged position in the House, as an independent member free from all party restrictions and control. He took exception to the assertion of the leader of the Opposition that the Rebellion Losses Bill was the occasion of the annexation movement. There was, in his opinion, far more sympathy in the Legislature with the cause of annexation than appeared on the surface, since many of the members did not think the moment as yet opportune to express their true feelings upon the question. The Executive, he asserted, had exercised the power of dismissal in an arbitrary manner. Some of the victims of the Government's

displeasure were "notoriously the best men in the country."

Upon Mr. Holmes devolved the task of developing the chief constructive argument for the Annexationists. His speech on this occasion was delivered with more than ordinary force and persuasiveness. He prefaced his argument by a roseate picture of the progress of annexation sentiment throughout the province, and by a tribute to the respectability of the adherents of that faith. "In Lower Canada, and especially in the district of Montreal, a large proportion of the people were in favour of annexation." They might be slightly in advance of the time, "but the day was not far distant when the farmers, merchants, and people of Upper Canada would also see that their best interests would be promoted by annexation."

Turning then to the consideration of Canada's relation to the mother country, he maintained that the public had a right freely to discuss the subject of annexation, provided they did so peaceably, and with due respect to the wishes of Great Britain in the matter. He did not think that the despatch of Earl Grey had had the anticipated effect of checking the annexation movement. The Colonial Secretary, he averred, would never have dared to address such minatory language to the people of England, though many of the latter had publicly expressed more decided opinions on the advantages of colonial independence than were to be found in the Montreal manifesto. The despatch of his lordship was, in fact, characteristic of the ignorance and superciliousness of Downing Street officials, which rendered a further continuance of the imperial régime injurious to the interests of Canada, if not politically impossible. Strikingly different, however, was the situation of the United States. "He believed that the United States possessed more freedom than any other nation, that they had more energy and less poverty, and that education and the elements of happiness were more generally diffused than among

any other people, and he hoped that Canada would one day be joined to that nation, and he was not ashamed nor afraid to express that opinion. He was ready, as he had been before, to sacrifice his life in defence of Britain, so long as we remained connected with her, both for the interests of Canada and the mother country; but, for the interests of himself and his family, he desired to see annexation effected with the consent of both parties."

The speech of the member for Kent was much more defiant in tone, but proportionally less substantial in subject matter, than that of his colleague. Notwithstanding his professed opposition to annexation, Colonel Prince was always found co-operating most heartily with the annexation members, and was regarded by the House at large as a regular member of that group. With him, in truth, independence was only a means to an end, and that end was annexation. He boldly defied the Colonial Secretary to prosecute him for advocating independence, or to punish the Annexationists for their political acts. The annexation movement, he averred, had taken a firm hold on all sections of the community, as was evinced by the representative character of the annexation members of the House: Mr. Holmes was a representative of the commercial, De Witt of the banking, and Sanborn of the agricultural interests of the country. In reply to an inquiry of some of his constituents, he had offered to resign if 150 of the electors should express their dissatisfaction with his advocacy of independence; but in the face of that offer, no steps whatever had been taken to unseat him. The people along the frontier, he claimed, were intimidated at present by the tyrannical action of the Government, but the result of the next election would unmistakably prove that the country was ripe for separation. He did not favour a revolt, nor would he raise an arm against the Queen, but he did demand the right to petition Parliament for the redress of grievances. He denied the accusation of *The Montreal*

Pilot that he had induced one of his French-Canadian constituents to canvass the French members of the House in favour of annexation.

Mr. McConnell declared that he was an out-and-out Annexationist. He did not believe that the sentiment of the Eastern Townships was more pronouncedly for annexation than that of other parts of the country. The withdrawal of the English preference had been ruinous to the business interests of Lower Canada. Grass was growing in the streets of Montreal; their sons were leaving for the United States, and their daughters were following after. There was no local market in Lower Canada, and but a limited one in Canada West; and at the American border their products were met by a 20-per-cent. duty. Under such circumstances, he concluded, annexation was imperative.

Papineau was the only French-Canadian speaker to support the amendment. Taking his cue from his fellow Annexationists, he wisely avoided all reference to recent racial issues, and confined his remarks to the consideration of the commercial advantages of a political union with the Republic. "Prosperity," he declared, "would coincide with their annexation to the United States."

On the ministerial side of the House, participation in the debate was confined to the back benchers. It was very interesting to see Dr. Wolfred Nelson, the former lieutenant of Papineau, now fighting on the pro-British side against his old leader. Into the political arena he carried the same courage and high-mindedness he had previously shown on the battlefield. He was quick to resent the taunts of some of the Tory members that the Reformers of 1837 were rebels, and that the object of that revolt was to throw off the British yoke. The so-called rebels of that day had been the truer patriots, for they had struggled to secure for their fellow citizens those liberal principles of the British Constitution which they were now enjoying.

Very different, he contended, in origin and character was the present annexation cry, which had been worked up by a few disappointed Tory politicians who found they could no longer rule the Colonial Office by back-stairs influence.

Mr. Ross, the newly elected member for Megantic, severely rebuked the member for Sherbrooke for venturing to advocate annexation in the House, after having so recently sworn allegiance to the Sovereign on taking his seat in the Chamber. Mr. Couchon voiced the sentiments of the French-Canadian supporters of the Government in condemning the agitation of Papineau in favour of annexation. The latter, he claimed, had not only signally failed in his propaganda among his fellow countrymen, but could no longer be considered as truly representing the views of his own constituency.

Upon division, the amendment was defeated by 51 to 13. The majority of the Government was unexpectedly large, owing to the defection of a number of Clear Grits, who, notwithstanding their approval of the amendment, refused to assist the Opposition in an adroit attempt to turn out the Government on a specious issue. In accordance with their political programme, the annexation members supported the amendment in a body.

The annexation issue was fought over again on an amendment of Colonel Prince condemning the Government for the annexation dismissals : " That this House regrets that the policy of Great Britain towards this colony, and the conduct of the Government here, should have been such as to give cause to many of the most loyal and upright men in the country to seek for a remedy to the evils they complain of, in a change of our institutions ; and this House cannot admit that the declaration of political sentiments, not coupled with any hostile intent against the Crown and Sovereignty of Great Britain, is sufficient to warrant the Executive in dismissing persons from offices of honour,

and that such a proceeding is, in the opinion of this House, calculated to increase the prevailing discontent."

The speech of the member for Kent, in support of the motion, was largely a repetition of his former utterances. He triumphantly referred to the fact that no petition against annexation had been presented to the House, as an evidence of widespread sympathy with that cause. It was useless for the public, he contended, to look to Parliament for relief, since the local Legislature was powerless to obtain reciprocity or independence, the two chief boons which the country desired. Mr. Holmes was again the chief spokesman of the Annexationists. He developed at length his previous argument as to the respective advantages and disadvantages of the imperial connection and of a union with the United States. A peaceful separation with the consent of Great Britain would, he maintained, be mutually beneficial to the motherland and Canada; but, without such consent, the Annexationists would consider it "neither practicable nor desirable." As a part of the United States, Canada would share in the large investments of English capital which now went to the United States in preference to the colonies. Nothing, he concluded, could stop the progress of the annexation movement. Instead of 7, there would soon be 70 members of the Legislature signing petitions to the Crown for independence.

The remaining annexationist speakers did not contribute anything new or valuable to the discussion. Mr. Sanborn, however, got in one good home-thrust at the weakness of the Ministry. The Government, he bitingly remarked, could not be as strongly supported on this question as they pretended to be, or else they would not require the valiant assistance of Colonel Gugy.

The views of the Tory speakers were again at sixes and sevens, varying all the way from an attempted justification of the propaganda of the Annexationists, to the severest condemnation of their proceedings.

Sir Allan MacNab insinuated that some of the members of the Cabinet were favourable to annexation. An alleged confession of *La Minerve* afforded evidence of the complicity of the Government in the movement. Unfortunately for the honourable member, he was unable to substantiate his charge when its truth was called in question by Mr. Hincks. With singular inconsistency, he subsequently accused the Government of making use of the columns of *La Minerve* to give currency to their opposition to annexation.

Of the other Conservative speakers, Messrs. Cayley and Robinson were principally concerned in an attempt to make political capital out of the situation. The former assumed the diplomatic position of declining on general principles to censure the dismissal of the annexation officials; but, at the same time, he condemned in this instance "the unscrupulous exercise of the prerogative for party advantage." His colleague, Mr. Robinson, went one stage further in criticism of the Government. The Annexationists, he contended, ought not to have been dismissed, since they did not intend to take any decisive action without the previous consent of the Crown. He accused the Ministry of unjust discrimination in the infliction of penalties. Why, he demanded, had they punished the signers of the manifesto, while they permitted the publication of annexation papers to proceed untouched? The Government were responsible for the existing spirit of discontent, which, unless soon checked, would sweep the whole population into the annexation movement.

On the other hand, a few Tory members rallied patriotically to the support of the Executive. Mr. Sherwood of Toronto expressed the strongest disapproval of the actions of the Nationalists and Annexationists alike. No Government which was worthy of the name could supinely permit its servants to attempt its own overthrow; from its very nature, a Government was bound to suppress with all its authority all acts "of constructive treason." The extenuating pleas of Mac-

Nab and Robinson for the Annexationists again called forth a fiery protest from Colonel Gugy. The signers of the manifesto, he maintained, had forfeited their right to object to the proceedings of the Executive, as had also their defenders in the House. Some of the Annexationists, it was evident, were determined to effect their object by force if necessary, but he warned the plotters that, should such an attempt be made, two or three hundred thousand men would be ready to attest their loyalty to the Crown and country. Whatever might be the political differences of the two sides of the House on matters of general policy, both Reformers and Conservatives would unite to uphold the British Constitution. He derided the specious professions of loyalty on the part of the Annexationists. "Were he to set up his previous loyalty as giving him the right to overthrow the institutions of the country, he should expose himself to condemnation." He believed that the attention of the country should be directed to the impolicy of extending political privileges to persons of Sanborn's class, who came into the province with Yankee prejudices, and with the intent to overthrow, if possible, English institutions. In conclusion, he made an embittered attack upon the capacity and character of the member for Sherbrooke, whose defeat he regarded as certain at the next election.

Of the Clear Grit members of the House, Messrs. Cameron and Lyon heartily commended the action of the Government in making the dismissals. They likewise shared the opinion that annexation would not improve the condition of Canada. The latter further maintained that the political institutions of the colony were freer than those of the United States. By annexation, Canada would lose control over her own administration, and subject herself to the will of her more powerful neighbour. Mr. Cameron approved of the strongest repressive measures against the Annexationists. The signers of the manifesto should, in his opinion, have been immediately dismissed from office

without the formality of an investigation. Notwithstanding the vain boastings of Colonel Prince, as to the strength of annexation sentiment in the west, he was prepared to certify to the loyalty of the great majority of the people of Kent.

Mr. H. J. Boulton, on the other hand, contended that it was folly to suppose that the Canadian public would remain loyal to the British connection in the face of the growing distress of the country. He was not an Annexationist, but an advocate of unrestricted reciprocity. There was nothing illegal, he maintained, in the conduct of the signers of the manifesto, many of whom, in fact, were as loyal as himself. The action of the Ministry in making the dismissals was in this case the more reprehensible, since, according to the admission of the Inspector-General, the Government was obliged to punish its servants, in order to remove suspicion from some of its own members.

On the Government side of the House, two members of the Ministry participated briefly in the debate. In reply to Mr. Robinson's criticism of the immunity from prosecution of the annexation journals, the Hon. F. Hincks pointed out that there was a fundamental difference between the status of a servant of the Crown and that of a mere private citizen, a difference which placed upon the former a distinct responsibility for his political acts, to which the ordinary member of society was not subject. He challenged the member for Sherbrooke to compare, in his own case, the freedom of parliamentary discussion in the Canadian House with that in Congress. Would the latter, he demanded, permit one of its members freely to advocate the dismemberment of the Union? He believed not. Yet Mr. Sanborn was claiming and exercising as a British subject a right which he would not enjoy as an American citizen.

Mr. Drummond, the Solicitor-General, refuted the contention of the Annexationists that the Eastern Townships were favourable to annexation. Outside the

County of Sherbrooke, he was convinced, a majority of the inhabitants were against it. He denied that *La Minerve* was the organ of the Government, or that the Ministry was in any way responsible for its utterances. True, a determined effort had been made to win *La Minerve* over to the side of the Annexationists, but the editor had nobly resisted all such pressure, and stood staunchly by the British connection.

After an all-day debate, a division was taken which resulted in a crushing defeat of the amendment by a majority of over 30.[1] The vote was a splendid vindication of the decisive policy of the Executive in dealing with the Annexationists. The division list revealed the fact that the whole body of the Reformers, together with a few Clear Grits and Tories, rallied to the support of the Government. The majority of the Clear Grit members, including Perry and Hopkins, did not vote; only two of the party voted for the amendment. The Tory Party also was sadly divided. A small minority threw aside their party prejudices, and loyally supported the Ministry in the division lobby; a considerable number failed to vote; while a small group of irreconcilables joined with the Annexationists in supporting the amendment.

A second division was taken upon Mr. Boulton's amendment for the expunging of the last three paragraphs of the address, and the insertion of the following paragraphs:

"That, while this House deeply regrets that the altered policy which the parent state has felt it necessary to adopt for her own advantage, and quite irrespective of colonial interests, has led many loyal men in this province to consider whether they might not with equal right review their positions as Canadians, thus substantially changed to their detriment, yet this House is not prepared to concur with Your Excellency

[1] Ayes, 14; Noes, 46. Ayes, Badgley, Boulton (Norfolk), Boulton (Toronto), Christie, De Witt, Egan, Holmes, MacNab, McConnell, McLean, Papineau, Prince, Robinson, and Sanborn.

in the opinion that persons, many of whom have heretofore perilled their lives and fortunes, and sacrificed their property in defence of the unity of the empire, should, while suffering under the adverse circumstances which have since befallen them, and which they believe are the result of that change of policy which they could neither avert nor control, and without any misconduct of their own, be now dealt with as persons innately disloyal, and scarcely less than traitors, and unworthy of being longer retained in Her Majesty's service, because they ventured in calm and temperate language to discuss the cause of their misfortune, and to submit for the consideration of the parent state the unreasonableness of her placing them upon the footing of foreigners with regard to her markets, while their colonial dependence forbids them availing themselves of those advantages in foreign markets which a really national character would not prevent them from acquiring.

"That this House is firmly convinced that the great body of the people of this province will yield to no other portion of Her Majesty's subjects in loyalty to Her Majesty, and attachment to the parent state; but they would fail in their duty to Her Majesty, were they to abstain from expressing a strong opinion to Your Excellency that it is not by distrusting some and punishing others, and stifling discussion through fear of official displeasure, that erroneous opinions either of duty or interest are to be eradicated, but by upholding and maintaining that greater guarantee of national freedom, the right of public discussion."

This amendment was likewise defeated on a similar division list, by 44 votes to 12.

The conduct of some of the Tory and Clear Grit members in supporting these amendments was undoubtedly open to question, but a considerable portion of the responsibility must be credited to the faulty tactics of Sir Allan MacNab, and to the general demoralization of parties in the House, which, for a time,

weakened the sense of political responsibility. The majority of the Tory members were unquestionably loyal at heart, but some of them could not resist the chance of embarrassing the Government by a temporary misalliance with the Annexationists. A few of the Clear Grits, likewise, were tempted to vote against the Government by a feeling of political disappointment, rather than by any settled conviction in favour of annexation. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the patriotic stand of a small minority of the Tory and Clear Grit members materially assisted the Government at a truly critical moment.

This series of rebuffs apparently convinced the Annexationists of the hopelessness of again raising the question of annexation in the House, for the subject was allowed to drop for the remainder of the session. The cause did not make any converts in either chamber. A few of the Tory and Clear Grit members were inclined to sympathize with the Annexationists, partly on economic, and partly on political, grounds, but their sympathies were not sufficiently developed to commit them to the policy of separation. They preferred to stand aside from the agitation, and await the course of events. With the gradual return of prosperity, and the raising of new political issues, the question of annexation fell completely into the background in Parliament. The speech of the Governor-General in proroguing the Legislature fittingly contained a reference to the loyal addresses of the two Houses, which expressed " the sentiments of the great body of the Canadian people as truly as those of Parliament.". The Government, in fact, heartily congratulated itself and the country at large upon the collapse of an agitation which was dangerous alike to the Crown and the political institutions of the province.

Thanks to a bountiful harvest in the Fall of 1849, economic conditions in Upper Canada began slowly to improve. American buyers invaded the Western District, and carried away the surplus products of the

Canadian farmers.[1] The upward tendency of trade was revealed in an increase of customs receipts, an easier money market, and a slight improvement in industrial conditions. The merchants of the country began to take heart. The Council of the Board of Trade of Toronto, in their annual report,[2] declared that it looked forward with confidence to the increasing prosperity " which the liberality of the motherland in altering the Navigation Laws could not fail of producing." This confidence was not misplaced. The commercial prospects of the country were, according to *The Globe*,[3] never more auspicious. With the opening up of navigation, the ships of all nations sought out the ports of the St. Lawrence for ocean cargoes. The business instincts of the Montreal tradesmen were again aroused. They were, after all, primarily domestic economists, and not politicians; only the force of circumstances had turned their minds towards political agitations.

The revival of business dealt a crushing blow to the cause of annexation. The rapid spread of the agitation had been largely due, as we have seen, to the belief that the imperial connection was responsible for the depression of the colony. The gradual return of prosperity destroyed this fundamental tenet of the Annexationists. The mercantile community recognized the mistake they had made, and were glad to return to their former political allegiance. The annexation movement was in reality but a passing phase of the economic history of the colony; it was essentially the product of adversity and resentment against the English Government, and it could not thrive during a period of returning prosperity. The history of Canada shows that, at each recurrent cycle of commercial depression, the thoughts of a section of the public as naturally turns to the United States as the

[1] *The Globe*, November 20, 1849.
[2] January 19, 1850.
[3] *The Globe*, March 14, 1850.

minds of the Western American farmers to fiat money. Depression and annexation on the one hand, contentment and loyalty on the other, have been, and perhaps may still be, correlative terms in the records of the country.

Among the various factors which contributed to the failure of the annexation movement should be mentioned the sound political tactics of the Governor-General and his advisers. The presence of Lord Elgin undoubtedly had an unfavourable influence on many of the members of the Tory Party, and, to some extent, justified the boast of the Annexationists that every day of such a Governor "adds to the unpopularity of the connection of a country which saddles us with such a man"; but, at the same time, it brought even greater compensating advantages, for his far-seeing statesmanship had disarmed the hostility of the French and English Reformers, and had bound up their interests with the maintenance of the British connection. He had established the most cordial relations with Lafontaine and his friends; and, by his liberal sympathies with the aspirations of the French, had succeeded in winning over the bulk of the French-Canadian population to the support of the policy of the administration. By the Reformers of Upper Canada he was held in the highest honour. As a strictly constitutional Governor, he was able to exercise a much greater influence than any of his Tory predecessors.

One of the most manifest weaknesses of the Annexation Party, which foredoomed it to dissolution, was the almost total absence of unity or harmony among the members. The discordant elements of the party had never been properly united. The original alliance of the ultra-Tories and French Radicals had been irksome and unnatural for both parties, and entirely lacking in the elements of cohesion and stability. The Tory members of the Bund were glad to withdraw from such an impolitic association. On the other hand, the decision of the British Ministry exercised

little influence on the "Young Canada Party." They did not, like their allies, profess any attachment to the mother country, nor derive their political principles from her; they were, on the contrary, by tradition and policy the bitter critics and foes of the administration of the Colonial Office. Save for the question of annexation, and a feeling of resentment against the Provincial and Imperial Governments, they had nothing in common with their Tory allies, while, on the other hand, they were seriously embarrassed in their democratic propaganda by their compact with their former foes. They were exposed to the merciless criticism of betraying their nationality, for which they professed most ardently to stand.

To the land speculators and mercantile community, as we have seen, the question of annexation was essentially an economic, and not a political, issue. Patriotism, with them, was a mere matter of book-keeping—a question of dollars and cents. They had little political sympathy with their partisan fellow members, whose bitter struggles had intensified the distress of the province. Least of all had they any fellowship with the French Radicals, whose political dogmas were anathema to them. With all these groups, in fact, a temporary policy of opportunism was the only bond of union. For the time being, their common commercial interests were sufficiently powerful to produce a semblance of co-operation; but, with the revival of trade, the old underlying social and political differences among the members soon cropped out again to disintegrate the local associations.

Among the chief factors in defeating the annexation movement in Lower Canada was the loyalty of the bulk of the French population. Lord Elgin had keenly realized the importance of cultivating the friendship of the French-Canadians. In an early letter to the Colonial Secretary, he expressed the opinion that "the sentiment of French-Canadian nationality, which Papineau endeavours to pervert to purposes of faction,

may yet perhaps, if properly improved, furnish the best remaining security against annexation to the United States." To this end, he deliberately set to work to cultivate the most friendly relations with the French-Canadian bishops and clergy, as the most important factor in the life of the French population. This skilful diplomacy was rewarded with success. At the time the annexation agitation was rampant in Montreal and the Eastern Townships, the mass of the French-Canadians remained calm and unconcerned. With but few exceptions, their ears were closed to the popular appeals of the revolutionaries. The spiritual and political leaders of the people were shrewd enough to see that the preservation of their special religious and political privileges was bound up in the maintenance of the British connection, and that annexation would almost necessarily involve the loss of constitutional guarantees of their distinct nationality.

At the critical moment in the struggle, the clergy and seigneurs joined hands with the Government to defeat the policy of the Annexationists. They were loyal, not so much because they preferred to remain British subjects rather than to become American citizens, but because they desired to retain unimpaired their own language, religion, and nationality. They were passive rather than active loyalists, but their loyalty was based upon the strongest sentimental considerations. Against the united forces of Church and State, the Rouge Party could make little progress. The loyalty of the Catholic clergy, and the devotion of their simple parishioners, saved the day for the British connection; for, had the French population been swayed by the same political and commercial considerations which appealed to their English fellow citizens, the Annexationists would almost certainly have swept the lower half of the province into the arms of the United States. The racial conservatism of the French habitants, by checking the rapid speed of annexation sentiment, afforded to the English

population an opportunity of more carefully reviewing the situation of affairs; and, on sober second thought, many of the latter were inclined to regret the hastiness with which they had joined in the agitation for separation. The cautious conduct of the French-Canadians not only furnished a striking object-lesson to the English inhabitants of Lower Canada, but exercised a determinative influence upon the course of events in British North America.

The annexation movement among the Clear Grits of Upper Canada was quite distinct in origin and character from that on the Lower St. Lawrence. It was undoubtedly greatly stimulated by the agitation in Montreal; but, in reality, the Radicals of Upper Canada had but little social or political sympathy with the leaders of the movement in Lower Canada. The restlessness of the Clear Grits was due primarily to the existence of legitimate grievances which ought, long before, to have been rectified. There was little or no prospect of the redress of these grievances by an alliance with the Annexationists of Montreal, since the aims of the latter were directed to the attainment of different objects. For this reason, no intimate relationship was ever established between the scattered Annexationists among the Clear Grits and the various associations in Lower Canada.

Matters might have been somewhat different with the Annexationists if they had succeeded in connecting the isolated movements in the various parts of the province. In Lower Canada, an effort was made to develop a provincial organization by affiliating the various local associations with the central body at Montreal. But the campaign in Upper Canada signally failed; only two local associations were formed, and both of them were exceedingly weak. There was not even the semblance of a political organization. Under these circumstances, it was folly to think of calling a provincial convention, as had been the original intention of the Montreal association. In truth, the

motley and discordant elements of which the annexation party was composed were incapable of forming a provincial association, after the model of the League; and, without some such organization, the movement could not make headway in the outlying districts against the overwhelming strength of the loyalists.

Among the contributing causes of the failure of the movement should be included the unfavourable condition of affairs in the United States. The Canadian Annexationists were greatly disappointed at not receiving a heartier response to their overtures from their American cousins. They had expected that their movement would be supported by the full force of American public opinion, and that they might count upon their American friends for financial backing and moral support. But discouragement met them on every hand. No assistance or encouragement whatever was forthcoming from the Government at Washington; and the public at large, except in a few neighbouring states, turned out to be indifferent or hostile. To make matters worse, the slavery issue was daily becoming more acute. The Republic was divided against itself, and already a war cloud was looming up on the horizon.

The Canadian people were not blind to these dangerous portents. From the very beginning of their constitutional history, they had been opposed to the curse of slavery, and had driven it out of the country. At the prospect of annexation, the Reform press flew to arms to defend the free soil of Canada against the threatening danger of slavery. The Annexationists found themselves in an embarrassing position. Few of them ventured in any way to defend slavery; they preferred, on the contrary, to disregard the issue entirely; when driven to bay, they endeavoured to argue that by a political union with the United States, the people of Canada would aid in the extinction of slavery throughout the Republic. But the Canadian public could not be deceived by any such specious claim. They refused to have any connection with the accursed thing. The

bitter struggles in Congress and the angry threats of secession amply proved that all was not peace and contentment in the great Republic, and served to warn the colonists of the danger of sacrificing their autonomy at such a moment. "It would," said *The Montreal Gazette*, "be a sorry instance of our wisdom to make a present of our country to a foreigner, and buy a civil war at the same time. We would have less reluctance to annex to the disunited states than to the present United States. People who may be hanging towards annexation had better hang on, than run the great risk of doing much worse."

The enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law outraged the sensibilities of even the most ardent Annexationists. With few exceptions, they declined to commit the province to the maintenance of the slave trade, as was demanded by that infamous act. The highly sensitive conscience of *The Witness* could stand it no longer. "We have hitherto advocated annexation," it declared, "provided certain preparations were made on both sides; but, rather than consent to the annexation of Canada to the United States, while this slave-catching law remains in force, rather than the free soil of Canada should be made a hunting-ground for the slaveholder and his infamous agents, rather than the fugitive African should be deprived of his last refuge on this continent, we would be willing not only to forgo all the advantages of annexation, but to see Canada ten times poorer and worse governed than she is; and we have no doubt this feeling is shared by Annexationists whose objects were higher than mere pecuniary interests."[1] The slavery issue hung as a millstone around the necks of the Annexationists, and dragged them down to defeat. The moral conscience of the people could not be bribed by material considerations into consenting to an extension of the territory within which the traffic in the bodies and souls of their fellow men would be legally recognized.

[1] Quoted from *The Colonist*, October 25, 1850.

The last material factor in discrediting the annexation movement was the unexpected hostility of the English Government and nation. At the outset of their propaganda, the annexationist leaders had realized that the province was altogether too loyal at heart to think of rebellion. They had sought, accordingly, to disarm the opposition of the loyalists by expressions of the highest regard for the motherland, and by professing their readiness to accept the judgment of the British Government upon the policy of separation. In their political strategy, they had rashly counted upon the neutral attitude of the Whig Ministry, and the hearty support of the Radical Party in Parliament. But in both of these anticipations, they were sorely disappointed. They found themselves exposed to the public as false prophets, as blind leaders of the blind. From the day of the receipt of Earl Grey's despatch, the struggle went steadily against the Annexationists. The loyalists quickly rallied to the appeal of the Colonial Secretary, and carried the war into the territory of the enemy. In the face of his lordship's despatch it was no longer possible for the Tory members of the party to keep up the pretence of loyalty to Great Britain. The Annexationists found their own weapons turned against themselves. They had either to drop their agitation, or choose the pathway of revolution. To many of the party, discretion seemed the better part of valour; and the remainder were not sufficiently strong in numbers and influence to persevere for any length of time in a hopeless struggle against the combined forces of the Government and public opinion in both England and Canada. The local associations were not formally dissolved; but, here and there throughout the province, they quietly disappeared through lack of interest and the falling off of membership. So rapid was the process of disintegration, that, by the end of the year, all semblance of a party organization had vanished. The appeal of the Colonial Secretary to the loyalty of the Canadian people was splendidly vindicated.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MOVEMENT IN THE MARITIME PROVINCES

The struggle for responsible government—Chagrin of the Tories—Economic distress—Annexation movement among commercial class—Similarity of movement to that in Canada—Failure of the agitation.

THE course of events in Canada was reproduced, to a large extent, in the Maritime Provinces. The question of responsible government had been bitterly fought out between the Reform and Tory parties in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The victory of the Reformers in both provinces filled the Tories with bitter exasperation against the English Government which found vent in loud mutterings of discontent, and in some cases in open declarations of disloyalty. *The Halifax Colonist* expressed the opinion that the connection with Great Britain was seriously endangered by the policy of the Whig Ministry. "The best way," it declared, "to recall us to our former affection would be to hang Earl Grey, whose vile misconduct will be the principal cause of the loss of these colonies."

At the same time, the cry for annexation had arisen among a section of the mercantile community. The repeal of the English preferential duty on lumber had inflicted a staggering blow on the principal industry of New Brunswick. As the economic life of the province was almost entirely dependent upon that industry, the outlook of the colonists for a time was exceedingly dubious. Many of the traders and lumbermen lost faith in the future of the province, and cried out for a

political union with the United States. In the city of St. John and in the Northern counties, an active movement in favour of annexation was set on foot. *The New Brunswicker* [1] and *The Miramichi Gleaner* espoused the new political tenets, primarily on commercial grounds, as a means of restoring the prosperity of the province. A similar agitation broke out in Nova Scotia. There was in the Maritime Provinces, declared *The Nova Scotian*, a set of men who traced all their political grievances to the fact that they were colonists and not American citizens. So long as England was willing to tax herself for the corn growers and lumbermen of this country, nothing could exceed their loyalty to the Crown ; but, with a change in England's fiscal policy, loyalty was at a discount at St. John, as well as in Canada.[2]

The similarity of the annexation movement in the Maritime Provinces to that in Canada was, indeed, most striking. The political discontent of the Conservatives merged into the commercial distress of the people. Out of the fusion of these two elements there emerged the same republican theories and annexation tendencies as developed in Canada. The Conservative Party by the sea took up the demand of the Radicals for a change in the status of the Governor, and the adoption of elective institutions. But the Reform Government in both provinces resisted the clamours of the discontented, and stood fast by the British connection.

The satisfactory working of the principle of responsible government killed the agitation of the Conservatives. With the settlement of the constitutional issue, " the silly fever of annexation " which had prevailed for a time " amongst a disappointed clique, quickly subsided, for the colonists had no liking for American slavery." [3] The Tory recalcitrants soon realized the

[1] *The New Brunswicker*, February 8, 1850.
[2] Quoted from *The Toronto Globe*, October 4, 1849.
[3] *The New Brunswick Reporter*, quoted from *The Toronto Globe*, September 27, 1849.

mistake they had made ; they cast down the false idols they had set up in a moment of chagrin, and returned with renewed zeal to the first principle of the party : loyalty to the Crown and the British connection. The business interests of the provinces gradually adjusted themselves to the new economic conditions. With the return of more prosperous times, the commercial community dropped its agitation, and turned to the more congenial task of making money. The annexation movement sprang up quickly under the most favourable conditions, a fortuitous combination of economic adversity and political discontent ; but it as quickly died away because of the revival of prosperity and the prospect of office under the British flag.

CHAPTER IX

THE ATTITUDE OF GREAT BRITAIN

Interesting colonial questions—*The Times*—Attitude of the Whig press—Views of the Radical organs—Attitude of the Tory press—Imperial ideals of the parties—Subordination of imperial interests to English party politics.

IN England, the course of Canadian events had attracted a larger amount of public interest than was usually bestowed upon colonial matters. But just at this moment, colonial questions were playing a large part in English politics. The Colonial Secretary, as we have seen, had taken a deep personal interest in the annexation movement, and had intervened in Canadian affairs in his usual decisive fashion. Parliament, on the other hand, was too much immersed in the discussion of the fiscal policy of the United Kingdom, and the framework of the Australian Colonies Bill, to devote much attention to the question of annexation. But the unusual interest of the press in Canadian affairs offset, to a large extent, the indifference of Parliament. Almost without exception, the English journals recognized the seriousness of the situation in Canada, though they differed widely in their opinions as to the origin and significance of the discontent of the colony, and as to the ultimate outcome of the annexation movement. Happily, the discussions of the press did not display any coercive disposition towards the colonies. Some of the chief party papers could not refrain, however, from interjecting a certain amount of political animus into their leading articles.

The Times, the chief organ of the Government, discussed the question of separation in a calm and reasonable manner, and with a due sense of imperial responsibility. It duly acknowledged the importance of the manifesto, and the skill and moderation of the presentation of the case for annexation. "It is neither inspired by vindictiveness nor fraught with violence. It is earnest in its tone, but its earnestness partakes of the character of deliberateness; it reasons, even though it may reason wrongly, and proceed from incorrect premises to erroneous deductions. It is on this account that the Montreal address is entitled to a patient, we were almost saying a respectful, attention at our hands. It breathes no hostility against the British Crown and people; on the contrary, it emphatically records the kindly feelings of the Canadian people to both; it makes no vehement protestations of affection for a republican form of government; but simply rests its preference of republican institutions upon local and peculiar conditions; it advises separation from England, as it suggests annexation to the United States, from the motives by which communities not less than individuals are impelled—motives of self-interest and self-advancement." *The Times* went on to declare that, although there was a time when such a manifesto would have been considered treasonable, England would not now think of going to war for "the sterile honour of maintaining a reluctant colony in galling subjection."

But, in a later editorial, it assumed a distinctly unfavourable attitude towards the separation of Canada. It expressed grave doubt as to whether the address correctly expressed the sentiments even of a majority of the inhabitants of Montreal. But, however this might be, it was convinced that the feeling in that city could not be held truly to reflect "the general state of Canadian parties and politics." Montreal for many years had been distinguished by its turbulence; racial animosities, religious differences, and

party antipathies had stirred up a spirit of unrest and discontent among the citizens. Recently the city had suffered a severe economic setback; the colonial preference had been withdrawn, and it was proposed to remove the seat of Government. It was little wonder, under the circumstances, that Montreal was disaffected. The men who were loudest for annexation would be most reluctant to realize their own menaces; for, as it sarcastically explained, with two or three exceptions, they would be less considerable persons as American citizens than they were as British subjects. Notwithstanding their roseate pictures of the economic advantages of a union with the United States, the annexation leaders would find it as impossible for a republican, as for a monarchical, Government to force prosperity upon the province; they would sink back into the unendurable position of legislators without influence, and speculators without capital. Some of the Canadian statesmen clearly saw the sorry predicament into which annexation would lead the colony, and were doing everything in their power to ward off the danger.

It was difficult to see of what elements the Annexation Party would be permanently composed. A political union with the United States would swamp the French population in the mass of Anglo-Saxon republicans; the eastern Canadians had not suffered much from the change of fiscal policy, and would not be greatly benefited by annexation; while the ultra-loyalists and Orangemen of the Western District, although irritated at the action of the English Government, could scarcely agree to accept republican institutions. "But, if under the pressure of temporary adversity, or from an undue estimate of the benefits of republican institutions, the Canadian people deliberately propose to exchange the freest policy that any colony ever enjoyed, for the ambiguous honour of forming a small part of an unwieldy confederation, then let them understand that the conduct of the

people of England will be directed by motives of prudence and interest alone. If they think that they can do without Canada, then, and then only, will they give up Canada. But in surrendering Canada, they will take care not to surrender one jot of sea or land the possession of which effectively concerns the maritime and commercial importance of Great Britain. They will not cede Nova Scotia, they will not cede Cape Breton; they will not cede the seaboard and those harbours which must ever command the mouth of the St. Lawrence and protect the trade of the Atlantic. In parting from England Canada will lose the name of a dependent province, to be brought more nearly in view of the force which might have perpetuated her dependence; in losing her hold on Canada England will take care to lose only the responsibilities and the expense of her retention. But we apprehend that the destined future of Canada, and the disposition of her people, make all such anticipations as these wholly superfluous." [1]

Although *The Morning Chronicle* lightly dismissed the danger of a rebellion in Canada, it expressed the fear that "an inveterate and chronic disaffection, fostered by perpetual comparisons of the most damaging sort, between the rapid and prosperous development of a United States territory and the industrial and social stagnation of a British colony," might take possession of the Canadian people, and gradually estrange them from their allegiance. But notwithstanding this danger, it refused to surrender willingly the North American provinces. The Annexationists, it asserted, had worked themselves into the belief that England was favourable to the dissolution of the empire, because she had made no fuss or outcry against the Montreal manifesto. But, in truth, the English public had not as yet given serious thought to the question. "The loss of Canada would, under any circumstances, be to the last degree distasteful to

[1] *The Times*, November 2, 1849.

Great Britain; and, under no circumstances, would this country voluntarily hand over to a rival any single port, harbour, city, or fortified place, which she deems useful, either for the protection of her commerce in peace, or for the assertion of her rights in war." [1]

The Glasgow Daily News emphatically declared that any ministerial proposal to consent to the annexation of Canada to the United States would seal the fate of the Government making it.[2] *The London Globe*, reputed to be the private property of Lord Palmerston, combated the views of the Annexationists on economic grounds; while *The Economist*, the leading organ of the financial world, advocated the adoption of a reciprocity agreement with the United States, as likely to prove more advantageous to Canada than annexation.

There was a decided inclination on the part of some of the ministerial organs to treat the annexation movement as a purely partisan manœuvre to secure the restoration of protective duties in England. "It is not," said *The North British Mail*, "the tyranny of the Colonial Office, the partisanship of Lord Elgin, the predominance of the French race, the inconveniences of monarchy, or the superior advantages of republicanism which form the impelling force of the Canadian Annexationists, but the loss of protection previously afforded to Canadian products. The loyalty of these gentlemen begins and ends with a discriminating duty in favour of their wheat and butter. Give the merchants of Montreal a monopoly of the British markets, and they are red-hot Britons; place them on a fair equality with the merchants of the world, and they become true-blue Americans. The abolition is the one and only grievance of which they complain; and in order to recline once more under its darling shade, they throw off their allegiance like an old worn-out coat, renounce all their past principles, scrape up

[1] *The Morning Chronicle*, January 5, 1850.
[2] *The Glasgow Daily News*, November 2, 1849.

acquaintanceships with revolutionists and Yankees, and proceed, in this motley companionship, to rend asunder the very empire to which they vowed a thousand times their indissoluble attachment." It ridiculed the pretension—"the truly Jesuitic proviso"—that annexation would be brought about only with the consent of Great Britain. "By this salvo, the Annexationists expect to secure the signatures of the loyal and peaceful part of the population, till they have committed them so far to their treasonable purposes that they cannot turn back."

Some of the journals of the Manchester School were much more sympathetic towards the Canadian Annexationists. *The London Examiner* spoke of the ultimate separation of the colonies in a tone of quiet assurance. "That the colonies of any nation will continue colonies for ever is a notion that revolts common sense, and could be seriously entertained by none but idiots. The very notion of the colonial condition precludes the idea of permanency. The latent instinct of national pride never fails to develop itself, when a community possesses the capacity and the elements of individual existence." Annexation, it prophesied, might "come at last"; but, in the meantime, no one of the parties interested in the question (England, United States, and Canada) was ripe for it. The pride and prejudice of the English nation were unquestionably against it.[1] *The Examiner* much preferred a union of the British-American colonies and their erection into a sovereign state. "Social necessities and the healthy progress of mankind require two independent states in North America."[2] Should annexation, however, be the choice of the Canadian people, it must be brought about peaceably, by means of friendly negociations between the three countries. England, it concluded, would undoubtedly be the greatest gainer by annexa-

[1] This view was strongly emphasized by the London correspondent of *The New York Tribune*.

[2] Quoted from *The Colonist*, November 2, 1849.

tion, since she would be relieved of the heavy responsibility of administering a distant territory.

The London Morning Advertiser joyfully announced that the Cabinet had concluded that the maintenance of British authority in Canada was unprofitable and burdensome to the mother country. "The result of a careful examination of the Canadian connection, in all its aspects, is that so far from England being a sufferer from the renunciation of their allegiance to the British Crown on the part of the Canadians, she would be an actual gainer. It is a well-ascertained fact that the expenses of the connection have more than counterbalanced its advantages. The maintenance of that part of our colonial possessions subjects us to a yearly expenditure of more than £800,000 in hard cash. Will any one tell us that the Canadas confer on us benefits at all equivalent to this? It may, indeed, be debated whether our exports to the Canadas would not be as great as they have been at any former period. At any rate, we speak advisedly when we say that this country will be no loser by the secession of the Canadas. That is certainly the conclusion to which the ministers have arrived, after the most able and careful deliberation."

The Liverpool Mercury had a very poor opinion of the loyalty of the Canadian Tories. The clamour for annexation, it was convinced, was a mere party manœuvre and not a national movement. Nevertheless, it confessed its inability to share the moral indignation with which some of its contemporaries regarded the speculations of the United States press on the probable incorporation of Canada with the American Union. So far as England was concerned, it concluded, it would be perfectly "fair and legitimate for Canada to annex herself to the United States according to her own free will and pleasure."

Some of the Tory protectionist papers were inclined to make party capital out of the discontent of the colonies—the existence of which was charged to the

fiscal policy of the Government. "Now," said *The London Morning Post*, "that the question is thus broadly put to Her Majesty's ministers, and to the public of this United Kingdom, whether free trade is to be abandoned, or Canada is to be abandoned, there cannot be other than one choice, to revive protection; and it must be revived at this coming session. Canadians of all parties, take from us these words of comfort: You have despaired too soon. You shall have back protection. Your position as British subjects shall not go for nothing in British markets. Your labour and capital shall be secured their due return, and the flow of wealth from England in payment for your productions shall not be stopped or transferred to your neighbour."[1] *The London Morning Herald* severely arraigned the policy of *The Times* in complacently accepting the ultimate separation of the colonies as the natural destiny of the empire. "If," it declared, "Canada should depart, she will go, leaving the brand of shame upon the cheek of Great Britain; she asked for justice in her commercial dealings, and we denied it; she prayed for equal rights on Canadian ground for every subject of the Crown, and we declared in the face of the world that there are rights which the rebel in arms may claim, but in which the defender of the Throne must not hope to participate."

The attitude of the several parties towards the annexation movement was in fact truly expressive of their general political conceptions of colonial politics and imperial relationships. Both the Whig and Tory press were inclined to view Canadian affairs from the standpoint of the primary interests of the motherland. Neither the Government nor the Opposition could be justly charged with a neglect of imperial responsibilities, but they were equally prone to identify the interests of the colonies with their own political and commercial policies. Generally speaking, the Whigs were of the opinion that the interests of the empire would

[1] *The London Morning Post*, November 1, 1849.

be best promoted by devolving upon the colonies the responsibility of their own administration; each one of the self-governing units of the empire, it was believed, should be left free to frame its policy in conformity with its own peculiar needs. They claimed for England the same rights in this respect as they granted to the colonies. The latter, they maintained, were not entitled to demand sacrifices from the motherland at the expense of her own population. The Whig ministers were ready to lend an attentive ear to the prayers of the colonies, they even sympathized with them in their distress, but they refused to abandon a fiscal policy which they were firmly convinced would prove in the long run as advantageous to the colonists as to the citizens of Great Britain. For this reason, they declined to be frightened or stampeded by the cry of annexation, but preferred to leave the determination of the future of the North American Provinces to time and the good judgment of the Canadian people.

The Tories, on the contrary, believed that the unity and permanence of the empire could only be assured by binding the colonies to the motherland by the closest ties of constitutional obligation and material interest. They placed little reliance upon purely sentimental consideration or the spiritual factors of society as a basis of imperial relationship; they preferred to place their trust in an economic organization of the empire on the basis of mutual interest and reciprocal advantage. Upon this solid foundation, it was believed, a strong political organization could be erected. Throughout the Canadian crisis, the Tory Party stood forth as the special champion of colonial and imperial interests. But it must be admitted that when the interests of the colonies conflicted with the interests of the motherland, as in the case of the repeal of the Navigation Acts, the Tories were the smallest of "Little Englanders." True, they supported the claims of the Canadian protectionists and malcontents for a colonial preference, but they did so in the hope of

securing the restoration of protective duties in England, rather than from any high imperial motives. Imperialism was the cloak under which the principles of protection was masquerading; the cloak was quickly discarded when the Canadian Parliament demanded the right of free navigation, which was incompatible with the monopoly of English shippers.

The Radicals, as was to be expected, were much more favourable to the development of a spirit of colonial nationalism, than either of the historic parties. But, in favouring the independence of the colonies, the Manchester Schoolmen were as deeply concerned in promoting the welfare of the colonies and the interests of the empire at large, as the most liberal Whig or the staunchest Tory imperialist. In some instances, as we have seen, they proved themselves the truest imperialists, by vindicating the rights of the colonies against the selfish pretensions of their fellow countrymen.

But, it must be confessed, Whigs, Tories, and Radicals alike subordinated the interests of the colonies to their own distinctive domestic policies. Whatever their political professions, they were all prone to look at colonial questions from an English, rather than from an imperial point of view. It was indeed but natural that they should do so.

CHAPTER X

THE ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES

American expansion—Declaration of General Scott in favour of annexation—Annexation sentiment in Vermont—Resolution of the Legislature—Resolutions of New York Assembly—Attitude of Congress—Hostility of Democratic Party to annexation—Influence of the slavery issue—Views of the Whig and Free Soil Democratic press—Opinion of the West—Principle of non-intervention—Absorption in domestic questions.

IN the United States, the course of Canadian events had aroused a larger amount of interest than was usually devoted to external affairs. The country was passing through a period of rapid territorial expansion. Texas, Oregon, California, and a large slice of Mexico had been incorporated in the Union within a short space of time, yet the desire for further aggrandizement was not yet satisfied. Visions of the Stars and Stripes flying over the whole of the North American continent and the Isles of the Caribbean Sea were floating through the intoxicated minds of many of the people. In the hope of diverting attention from the approaching domestic crisis, some of the politicians at Washington were not averse to promoting a vigorous foreign policy. But the adoption of such a policy was seriously complicated by the growing antagonism of the Northern and Southern States over the question of slavery. The policy of annexation became inextricably bound up with the fundamental issue of free or slave territory. The Canadian annexation movement appeared, therefore, at a critical moment. The two great political parties in the Republic were almost

equally balanced in strength. Economic and political considerations combined to foster throughout the Northern States a friendly feeling towards the Montreal Annexationists. The New York and New England merchants were especially interested in the development of Canadian trade. The abolitionists and many of the supporters of Van Buren and Seward were naturally favourable to the acquisition of more free states. But the Southern people were strongly opposed to any disturbance of the balance of power within the Union by the annexation of Canada.

For the moment, it appeared as if the Whig Party might take up the question of a northern extension of territory as a campaign issue. General Winfield Scott, a leading candidate of the party for the Presidency, came out with an open letter in favour of the annexation of the British-American Provinces. The policy of the English Government would, he believed, increase the discontent in Canada, and bring about a separation in a few years' time. The interests of both Canada and the United States would be promoted by annexation, and in all probability the people of Canada would prefer a union with the States to national independence. Annexation would be especially beneficial in doing away with border customs duties. Fully two-thirds of the American nation would rejoice in the consummation of such a union, and the remaining third would soon see the great benefits of it. But, he concluded, no underhand measures should be taken against Great Britain, since the retention of her goodwill was second only in importance to that of winning the favour of the colonists themselves.[1] The views of General Scott appeared to find a certain amount of support in Washington. A rumour was abroad that,

[1] This letter first appeared in *The Saratoga Whig*. *The Examiner*, July 18, 1849. *L'Avenir*, July 24, 1849, warmly welcomed the letter of General Scott. The General, it asserted, was especially friendly towards Canadians, and in 1837 had supported the proposed intervention of the United States Government on behalf of the Canadian insurgents.

for some months past, the Cabinet of President Taylor had been considering the advisability of taking up the question of annexation of Canada and Cuba as a popular campaign issue for the coming election. It was believed in some quarters that the early declaration of General Scott was designed to anticipate any such action on the part of the President.

Some of the Northern Democrat papers were afraid that the Whig Party might gain credit for the policy of annexation. That policy, it was claimed, was the distinctive property of the Democrats. "Both Cuba and the British colonies," said *The Washington Union*, "at the proper time and in the proper manner will ultimately be annexed to the American Union. But these great measures will be effected by the Democratic Party and a Democratic administration, and not by the Whigs. It will, however, be done at the proper time, when it can be accomplished with honour and without violating either the rights of Great Britain or Spain. When Canada and her sister colonies shall have secured their independence, and when Cuba shall have done the same, then will it be time enough for us to seriously discuss and finally decide on these questions." Although many of the Northern Democrats were favourable to the annexation of Canada, the implacable hostility of the Southern Democrats, who controlled the policy of the party, effectually prevented any steps being taken in that direction.

Along the northern boundary, especially in Vermont, there was a general feeling of sympathy with the annexation movement. For some time past, an effort had been made to develop a closer commercial connection between the St. Lawrence and Lake George. The merchants of Montreal had met in conference with their confrères of Burlington for the promotion of improved means of communication. An imaginary boundary line divided the allegiance, but did not sunder the social and commercial relationships of the citizens of Vermont and their neighbours in the Eastern

Townships. The appearance of the Montreal manifesto furnished a sufficient occasion for intervening in Canadian affairs.

At the Democratic State Convention at Montpelier, a grandiloquent resolution was adopted: "That, in the true spirit of democracy, deeply sympathizing with the downtrodden, oppressed, and over-restricted of every clime and country, we hail with joy the rising spirit of liberty in the provinces of Canada, as expressed recently in the published opinions of its citizens upon the subject of annexation; that we appreciate the efforts and emulate the movements of the friends of republicanism in Canada, and that we cordially extend to them the hand of friendship, fellowship, and brotherly love; that we will use all peaceable means in our power to further their object in becoming members of this our glorious union of free, independent, and sovereign states."[1] The Whig State Convention likewise adopted a resolution of somewhat similar import in favour of annexation.[2] No reference was made to the question at the convention of the Free Democratic Party, an omission, however, which, according to *The Burlington Courier*, was purely accidental.

The leading organs of all three parties were enthusiastically in favour of annexation. *The Brattleborough Whig* announced that the Whig Party proposed to try its hand at annexation, but was going to make the attempt by peaceful means, without a thought of resorting to war. *The Burlington Sentinel*, the most influential Democratic paper of the state, declared: "Woe be to that party which in Vermont shall in any manner oppose the accomplishment of this popular and desirable event. . . . To those living along the lines, it is the dictate of patriotism, as well as of interest, to hasten the day of annexation by every means in their power. If it be unnecessary, or impolitic, to bring physical means to bear, we have moral means

[1] *The Burlington Daily Sentinel*, October 22, 1849.
[2] *Ibid.*, October 31, 1849.

against the use of which there is no law and no rules of propriety. By expressions of sympathy in our conventions, legislatures, and presses, by private and public means, we may encourage those enlisted in the cause beyond the lines, and lend an important aid in securing the final success of the magnificent enterprise, which promises so splendid an acquisition to our commercial wealth and national glory."[1] It was even ready to resort to force, if the liberation of the colonies from the Crown could not be secured by any other means "after a fair trial."[2] *The Burlington Courier*, the principal organ of the Free Democrats, urged upon the members of the party in the Legislature to take an early occasion to show "that the free democracy of Vermont will be among the first to welcome to the blessings of the Union a neighbouring nation, whose accession, instead of adding to the slavery side of the balance, will permanently strengthen the interests of freedom."

At the meeting of the Legislature shortly after, a resolution was introduced in the Senate by Mr. Weston sympathizing with the people of Canada in their desire for freedom, and favouring the annexation of the province to the United States. An amendment was moved by Mr. Thomas, to instruct the Senators and Representatives of the State in Congress to use a proper means to bring about peaceful annexation. Mr. Thomas subsequently withdrew his amendment, upon the motion of Mr. Weston to amend his resolution by the omission of all invidious references to the state of Canada. The resolutions as amended were unanimously adopted by the Senate, with the concurrence of the House.[3]

Similar action was taken by the Legislative Assembly of New York early in 1850. A series of resolutions was

[1] *The Burlington Daily Sentinel*, October 31, 1849.
[2] *Ibid.*, November 6, 1849.
[3] The text of these resolutions will be found in the second Montreal manifesto, pp. 170, 171.

introduced by Mr. Wheeler, expressing the pleasure of the Legislature at the evident desire of the people of Canada to join the Union, and instructing the congressmen of the state to co-operate in any measures of the federal Government to promote the annexation of the British provinces. The resolutions were opposed by Mr. Munroe, but they were subsequently adopted by the decisive vote of 76 to 28.[1] The preamble and the first of the resolutions were practically identical in phraseology with the resolutions of the Vermont Legislature. The last two resolutions ran as follows:

> "Resolved (if the Senate concur) that the annexation of Canada and other provinces of Great Britain in North America, effected by negotiation with the British Government, and with the voluntary consent of the people of the said provinces, upon equitable and honourable terms, is an object of incalculable importance to the people of the United States. It would reunite into one family, and make citizens of a brave, industrious, and intelligent people who are now our brethren in interest and language. It would save this country the expense of maintaining a line of customs houses and fortifications 3,500 miles in extent, and give to the whole continent the blessing of free and unmolested trade. It would secure the preponderance of free institutions in this Union, and it would unite under one republican Government all the people and all the territory between the Atlantic and the Pacific, and the Gulf of Mexico and the Arctic Ocean.
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> "Resolved (if the Senate concur) that our Senators and Representatives in Congress be requested to co-operate in any measures which the general administration may adopt to promote the peaceful annexation of the British North American Provinces to this country."

[1] New York, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, 1850, pp. 206–7.

The conduct of the Government at Washington was strictly proper. No neutral power in time of war could have observed a more scrupulous impartiality. Throughout the course of the annexation movement President Taylor carefully refrained from even an appearance of desiring to meddle in Canadian affairs. Neither by word nor action did he lend the slightest encouragement to the Canadian Annexationists. It would have been easy for him greatly to embarrass the Canadian Government in its efforts to relieve the distress of the province. The question of reciprocal trade was the crux of the Canadian situation, yet he endeavoured to assist the Canadian authorities in securing the passage of a Reciprocity Bill through Congress. The attitude of Congress was equally impartial, even though not as friendly to Canada. Undoubtedly some of the Northern Congressmen would have welcomed any overtures from Canada for annexation, but the hostility of the Southern members effectually prevented any expression of opinion, or overt action, looking to the addition of more free territory. The temptation to intervene in Canadian affairs was undoubtedly great, but the danger of Southern secession was sufficiently imminent to absorb the attention and energies of the Government and Congress at home.

The views of the press were largely coloured by political and sectional considerations. Slavery was the all-absorbing issue which entered into the determination of every question, whether of foreign or domestic politics. The majority of the Southern papers were favourable to the acquisition of Cuba as a slave state, but strongly opposed to the incorporation of any more free states in the Union ; the Democrat journals of the North were divided upon the question. The pro-slavery organs of the party masked their hostility to annexation under cover of the unfitness of the Canadian people to share in the blessings of republican institutions. " But," said *The Oswego Commercial Times*, " before so multiplying the number of states of our Union, as is

proposed, consisting in so large a proportion of people who are strangers to our institutions, and to the qualifications which enable our citizens to support them, it will be well to inquire what proportion of these states can be regarded as competent to carry on the government of the United States on the principles which have preserved this Union."

In some cases, the language of the editorials was most offensive to the self-respect of the Canadian people, who were represented as hopelessly committed to the accursed " bane of aristocracy," as sunk in ignorance and stupidity, and as harbouring dark designs against the democracy of the United States. " For ourselves," said *The New York Courier and Inquirer*, " we are not anxious to see any more annexations either at North or South. The Republic is already large enough, and Canada has too long been attached to monarchical forms, to relish plain republicanism." *The Steubenville Herald* warned its readers that the Canadian Tories had spent their lives in vilifying republicanism, and that their sudden conversion, owing to the loss of their aristocratic privileges, was accompanied by many suspicious circumstances. " They should now be watched, lest they are asking to be joined to us in order that they may essay to live as they have lived before."

On the other hand, many of the Whig, and a few of the Free Soil Democratic papers, were favourably inclined towards annexation, partly on political and partly on social and economic grounds. Some of these journals were inclined to look upon the British-American provinces in a patronizing way, to commiserate the colonists on their unhappy lot as British subjects, and glowingly to portray the blessings of freedom which were in store for them on their incorporation in the American Union. By annexation, it was predicted, the colonists would secure the benefits " resulting from the wholesome laws of the Republic, and partake of the comforts which freedom offered to all." They would

share in the superior economic facilities, and the rising prosperity of the American nation. Peace and harmony would reign in place of racial discord and social anarchy, and " the influence of republican institutions would soon make them a contented and prosperous people." Among the Free Soil papers, there was a decided tendency to favour the annexation of the British-American provinces, in order to strengthen the anti-slavery forces in the Union.

Several of the leading Western papers came out enthusiastically for annexation. The prospect of the free navigation of the St. Lawrence especially appealed to the commercial interests of the West. The people of the West had a glorious vision of the great imperial possibilities of such a Union. " Let Canada be annexed," declared one of the Chicago papers,[1] " not because our country is not large enough for Yankee enterprise and skill, but because her people, our brethren, wish it, because nature has so designed it by the formation of the two countries, because it aids and assists a neighbouring people in gaining their proper level, and because it unites two great portions of America which never should be severed, and prevents discord and war upon our northern boundary."

A few of the metropolitan journals of the East were equally zealous for Annexation. *The Brooklyn Star* expressed the opinion that the Government should stand ready to assist Canada in her efforts to secure separation, by opening up timely negociations with the motherland ; while *The Philadelphia Ledger* coolly proceeded to determine the conditions of union and arrange the representation which the colonies should enjoy in Congress. But the more conservative journals of the North preferred to await the course of events, rather than to push forward any schemes of territorial aggrandizement. They did not wish to involve the nation in either domestic or international complications. The annexation of the North American provinces, it

[1] *The Dollar Newspaper.*

was realized, might drive the Southern states into secession, and occasion an unfortunate embroglio in England. "For our part," said *The Buffalo Commercial Advertiser*, "we do not desire to annex the Canadian provinces at the expense of the indignation of the Southern states. We trust that the contest between the North and South may first be terminated, so that annexation may take place with the consent of all Americans." But in any case, the question of annexation was one which the Canadians must first settle for themselves, and then arrange with England, before the United States should think of intervening. "It is very certain," to quote *The New York Herald*, "that the United States will never solicit the Canadians to annex themselves to this Republic, under any circumstances whatever. But while we assert this, we are willing, on the other hand, to say that, if the Canadians will at some future time procure the consent of Great Britain to be annexed to the United States, we will, when that consent shall have been obtained, and on their solicitation and earnest request, take the question into consideration; and, if we can adjust some preliminary arrangements concerning our domestic relations, satisfactorily to the varied interests of this country, we will allow them to come in and partake of the great political blessings which we in the United States enjoy. The first thing for the people of Canada to do, however, is to obtain England's consent to dispose of themselves as they think proper."

But notwithstanding the sympathy of many of the American people with the annexation movement in Canada, no political party, or section of the Union, showed the slightest desire to interfere in the domestic concerns of the Canadian provinces. Even those Legislatures which rashly ventured to proffer welcome to the Canadian people in advance were careful to qualify their action by protestations against any intended violation of the imperial rights of Great Britain. *The New York Herald* distinctly warned the Canadian

Annexationists that, if they resorted to force in order to sever the imperial tie, they need not expect to receive any material assistance from the United States, as they did in the revolt of 1837. There was, however, a general conviction throughout the Northern states that, in the course of Providence, Canada would inevitably become a part of the great Republic, and that the United States could well afford to await the inexorable decrees of time and fate. "The true policy of the Government," said *The Toledo Blade*, "is that of passiveness. It behoves us to keep a watch upon ourselves in this regard, while tempted so strongly by our Northern neighbours to depart from it. There is no cause for our becoming anxious or excited upon the subject—when the fruit is fully ripe it will fall into our lap without any exertion on our part."

The question of annexation never became a vital political issue in the United States. The American public were too deeply concerned with domestic matters to give due consideration to the agitation of their Northern neighbours. No political party was ready to take up a question of such doubtful political expediency. The South was overwhelmingly hostile to annexation; the North, for the most part, was lukewarm and indifferent, and at best took but an academic interest in the subject. With the cessation of the annexation campaign in Canada, the interest of the American public in the political relations of the two countries soon died out. The nation had more important matters to discuss and determine at home.

APPENDIX

ANNEXATION

An Address from the Canadians of New York and the Surrounding Districts to their Compatriots in Canada [1]

THE Canadians resident in New York and the surrounding district grasp the first opportunity which presents itself for deliberating upon their common interests, to send from the other side of the frontier an expression of the sympathies awakened among them by the Annexation Manifesto published in Montreal in the course of the last month.

The entire press of Europe and America has been pleased to recognize the cleverness and tact which have been shown in the preparation of this document: this chorus of praise frees us from the necessity of uttering a panegyric which would not add one iota to the incontrovertible force of the arguments developed in the Manifesto, nor one more feature to the distressing picture of calamities which each line there enumerates.

Compatriots of Lower Canada! In attempting to scatter to-day the prejudices which a contrary propaganda is endeavouring to sow against the institutions and resources of the American Union, we believe we are paying a debt of gratitude towards the country which welcomes us with so much kindness, and which treats us on an equality with its own children.

Daily witnesses of an incomparable commercial activity and interested spectators of an unparalleled political organization, we flatter ourselves that our estimates formed on the spot, in the vastest centre of American civilization,

[1] Translated from *L'Avenir* of January 11, 1850. See p. 303.

will have the effect of confirming, as far as the United States are concerned, the hopes roused by the Manifesto, and of justifying the conclusions to which the ills of the present and the forebodings of the future have irresistibly led us.

We are going to state concisely the benefits, practical and of other kinds, which would arise, in our opinion, from the proposed union between the two nations.

The system of responsible government, in whose complications the Canadas are struggling, was fashioned after the pattern of the government of the mother country. Wretched copy! Awkward copyists! They wished to transfer to a distance of a thousand leagues, to the shores of America, the accumulated work of several centuries of aristocratic privilege. Hence this system has thwarted the plans of those who forced it upon us, and has become more indefinite than ever because of the reforms attempted in order to restore to it the vitality which it constantly loses.

Let us read the Act of 1840 which unites the two Canadas: let us weigh the evils which that constitution has prevented or lightened, and the advantages born under its auspices: we shall easily convince ourselves that the only anchor of safety which remains to our country is the annexation in view, which will bring with it the abundance of advantages and the brilliancy of the splendours which the star-spangled banner encloses within its folds.

Has not the Union Act created a civil list disproportionate to the revenue of the country?

Provided for the costly maintenance of an army of officials?

Made the right to vote and eligibility for office dependent upon certain property qualifications which render the dearest of their prerogatives inaccessible to the mass of the people?

Set up the Imperial Government as an absolute master who rules our affairs according to his pleasure, and who, by virtue of a right which he had not claimed for himself in his former possessions in North America, appoints our Governors, who are torn between the responsibility which they owe to the Empire and that which the Provincial Cabinet exacts from them?

Has it not, in the midst of these conflicts, stifled all the reforming impulses of the Provincial Administration, which leads a hand-to-mouth, enfeebled existence?

Has it not imposed a Legislative Council, whose influence, if it has any, is dependent upon changes in the Ministry ?

Compare now the two systems and judge.

In the United States the governmental machine works so simply and so regularly that a child can count its pulsations.

The sea of universal suffrage bears upon its waves all candidates for popular election.

Representation is based upon the only true and just register of public opinion, on population.

The individual states, supreme within their respective boundaries, delegate to the Federal Congress their apportioned share of power and influence.

The Senate, renewed at fixed intervals, enjoys certain executive powers which revive its authority, and heighten its value.

All the powers, the executive power, the legislative power, the judicial power, from the President to the police agent, from the member of Congress to the alderman, from the President of the Supreme Court to the judge of the Court of Summons, thanks to this perpetual elective voting, rise from the people, and descend to them again.

All powers which the ballot box confers are of short duration, in order to renew by this democratic baptism the ardour which might relax, in order especially to snatch from the Governments the time, if they had the desire, to allow themselves to become corrupted, or to become corrupters.

The American citizen, at the dictate of his conscience, goes to his vote peaceably, the secrecy of the ballot having been secured for every nationality, without fearing gold intrigues and ministerial vengeance, or the collective wrath of parties animated by feelings towards one another of inveterate hatred.

Thence contentment for everybody; thence stability within; thence security without.

If we pass from political organization to the purely material considerations which relate to commerce, to industry, in short to all that composes national prosperity, we find the difference still more marked, doubtless because it is more apparent and more palpable.

In Canada the interests of the Government and of the citizens experience a like suffering: the St. Lawrence is

deserted: our canals of imperial magnificence, far from bending under the weight of vessels, are waiting for the arms of free navigation to reopen: our watercourses and our falls flow in their picturesque uselessness: we have barely a few miles of railway: one simple telegraphic system suffices for the faintly electric activity of our business: we receive from unhappy Ireland those immigrants who are most destitute of the means necessary for ultimate success.

That, in brief, is the progress which we have made in a half-century under the government of the colonial régime.

Well, the United States during the same period have advanced like a giant from one end of the continent to the other. The sun heats the most varied climates, and vivifies all varieties of products. A stream of enterprising immigrants has turned towards the new states. Finance, terrified by the last trembling of European thrones, hastens to find here more solid ground upon which to establish her operations. Interior lines of communication by water are crowded. Telegraph lines have been multiplied in all directions. Railroads cover the country with their veins of steel. We shall soon be able, thanks to the discovery of Morse, to link together San Francisco and New York, while at the same time an immense railroad will put the two oceans side by side.

The American, while living at home, can feed himself, dress himself, buy and sell, protected from foreign dangers, while, because of poverty, the young Canadian abandons his native land, only too uncertain whether, on his return from exile, he will be able to lay his mortal remains beside the sacred bones of his ancestors. And what are we, in reality, if not poor exiles, whom our native land sends sorrowfully away, and commends to the mercy of God?

With these historical and statistical contrasts before us, we ask you: Has a poor country, just managing to exist under colonial government, something to lose, or something to gain by the close union which we propose for it with a country rich, contented, and free?

The considerations that we have thus far urged are the vital elements in the life of nations, but they are not the soul.

When the drawbridge of the frontiers shall have been lowered to admit American goods and American ideas, we

shall shake off two centuries of servitude, to enter, thanks to annexation, into the great family of nations: we shall reappear in the firmament of universal liberty, where the prolonged domination of France and England have eclipsed us.

Let us, therefore, without abjuring anything that patriotism holds dear, or our most sacred convictions, enlarge our native land to the proportions of the whole continent: let us once more attach ourselves to the life of the world by this glorious bond: let us restore a native land to exiles who will be proud of such a kind of naturalization; and we shall see the American eagle, whose wings already dip into the two oceans, cover the continent to the pole, and carry to the highest sky the charter of an emancipated North America.

Inhabitants of Lower Canada (we address you in preference, because we know you better), believe in those of your brothers who in the midst of their sorrows and their joys do not lose sight of you for a moment: the great qualities which have raised to the front rank of nations this people which has grown great so quickly beside you, have been misrepresented, in order to keep you in terror of them.

No; you have nothing to fear for your religion, protected, as it will be, by our freedom of worship, which is inscribed on the frontispiece of our Constitution, and is engraven even more deeply upon the consciences of all intelligent people.

No; there is no danger for your language, safeguarded by the omnipotence of universal suffrage, and, in case of any attempt at suppression, calling forth the sympathy and traditional respect which every descendant of Washington entertains for those who stammer the language of Rochambeau and Lafayette.

You will draw from this alliance, we promise you, that spirit of order and wisdom which made a state rise from the golden sands of California, where other people were able only to establish mines.

We shall put you in national communion with those of your brothers who conquer, with the aid of abundant railroads, the prairies of the far west. Will you believe those pioneers, living and unimpeachable monuments to the gradual impoverishment of the country?

Annexationists of both Lower and Upper Canada, we

say to you : Courage, courage, and again courage ; great causes triumph only on this condition. Persecution, whether it comes from the Government or its agents, is the first symptom of that sure success which must crown social revolutions.

Long live annexation !

Long live America, one in its national grandeur, indivisible in its republican faith !

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