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## Saint John Boosters and the Railroads in Mid-Nineteenth Century

In the middle decades of the nineteenth century Saint John, New Brunswick, was one of the most prominent cities in British North America. Only Montreal and Quebec City had a larger population than the 31,174 in Saint John and Portland in 1851, and the growth rate between 1841 and 1861 averaged 635 or 2.5% per year, a considerable increase of one-quarter per decade.<sup>1</sup> The shipbuilders of Saint John, especially the Wrights, were the most dynamic in British North America, and its merchants envisioned themselves at the hub of a global trading empire. Despite the occasional setback, the Saint John business community was optimistic about the future. In the twentieth century this enthusiasm degenerated into a humiliating wail for federal subsidies to maintain the city, not as a leading metropolis, but as a waystation for freight and mail on its way into and out of Canada. A dozen other cities, some non-existent at Confederation, surged into primacy, leaving Saint John with its withered dreams and empty wharves. The historians have concluded that the demise was unavoidable and often detect its origins in the 1840s and 1850s, but the Saint John boosters who built and schemed during these years had no premonition of future decline. They gloried in ever bigger ships, larger markets, new manufacturies and increased population.

The symbol of this confidence was not the ships which left with the tides but the towering suspension bridge one hundred feet above the reversing rapids at the narrow mouth of the St. John River. Forming an essential link with the west bank, it was opened with great fanfare in 1853 and was considered an engineering marvel during its day, attracting numerous visitors. The movement of people and materials west to Charlotte County and north to Fredericton was eased considerably by the bridge, and Carleton, or West Saint John, finally acquired a land connection by way of Portland to the core of the city on the main peninsula. If tangible evidence of progress were

1 Portland, on Saint John's northern boundary, was a separate corporate entity until 1889 but was virtually indistinguishable from Saint John. For population statistics see *A Census of the Population of the Province of New Brunswick in the year 1840* (n.p., n.d.), p. 3; New Brunswick, House of Assembly, *Journals* [hereafter *Journals*], 1852, Appendix, Population Returns, p. xxii, and 1862, Appendix, *Census of the Province of New Brunswick*, pp. 94, 100; Canada, Department of Agriculture, *Census of Canada, 1870-71*, vol. I, pp. 66-67.

necessary, the suspension bridge stood resolute and imposing, and it was the rare promotional scheme over the next half century that did not include an illustration of the bridge from one angle or another.<sup>2</sup> The opening of the bridge was not the only significant event of 1853. On September 4 Lady Edmund Head, the wife of New Brunswick's Lieutenant Governor, turned the first sod for the European and North American Railway, which was to connect Saint John with the Gulf of St. Lawrence at Shediac. This dawning of the industrial era was celebrated with a mammoth parade and accompanying festivities without parallel in the city's past.<sup>3</sup> No doubt it was a coincidence, but William and Richard Wright launched that year the *Star of the East*, a commanding clipper ship considered the most costly as well as the "finest New Brunswick ship of the year 1853, and for a good many before and after."<sup>4</sup> The next year they built the *White Star*, at 2339 tons the largest ship built in British North America until they constructed the *Morning Light* at 2377 tons in 1855. Innovations were incorporated immediately in the various ship yards, but they were not limited to shipbuilding. In 1847, for example, a "Magnetic Telegraph between Saint John and Fredericton" with "spruce trees serving as posts", easily among the first lines in operation in British North America, was installed expressly for George Fenety, the proprietor of the Saint John *Morning News*, itself among the first penny newspapers in the British Empire.<sup>5</sup> Saint John was a prominent city and considered itself important. This confidence appeared to generate its own energy, spurring the community to act expansively, despite a number of disadvantages.

Unlike Halifax, Saint John was not a provincial capital, and while there was, of necessity, a military detachment at the Saint John Barracks, Fredericton was the centre of the military, the educational and the religious establishments in New Brunswick and received its distinctive tone from possessing them as well as the preferential treatment invariably lavished on capitals. Tractarian Bishop John Medley had built his gothic Cathedral in Fredericton and staged his war on the Saint John centred "low Church", only to find his

- 2 For a typical example, see the 1866 bird's eye view recently reproduced in R. Cole Harris and John Warkentin, *Canada Before Confederation* (New York, 1974), p. 217.
- 3 See *Morning News* (Saint John), 16 September 1853, or John Willet, "How Saint John Celebrated in the Good Old Times," *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society*, No. 11 (1927), pp. 238-276.
- 4 Frederick William Wallace, *Wooden Ships and Iron Men* (1924, reprinted London, 1973), p. 62. See also Richard Rice, "The Wrights of Saint John: A Study of Shipbuilding and Shipowning in the Maritimes, 1839-1855," in Davis S. Macmillan, *Canadian Business History: Selected Studies, 1497-1971* (Toronto, 1972), pp. 317-37, and Esther Clark Wright, *Saint John Ships and Their Builders* (Wolfville, 1976), pp. 90-95.
- 5 *Morning News*, 26 February 1847.

enemy so deeply entrenched that he was forced to withdraw.<sup>6</sup> The Methodists and Presbyterians of the province had their headquarters in Saint John, which reinforced the tendency to oppose the Fredericton privileged. Not surprisingly the creation of a new Roman Catholic Bishopric in 1845 saw Saint John selected as the site, both because of the growing Catholic population in that city and the apparent need for a see separate from the Church of England. Even with these distinguished officers in their city, Saint Johners recognized as if by intuition what their city was: an aggressive commercial city that took pride in being anti-establishment. Rare was the traveller who did not remark upon the lack of a "courtly air" in Saint John, to say nothing of the disdain for it.<sup>7</sup> "Perhaps the people there are too much given to cynicism," suggested a reporter for the Halifax *British Colonist* after a visit in 1864, "but they certainly do not have the veneration for dignity and exalted stations which we find among us. The St. Johnian sneers at the Government House, the Legislature, and all the other powers that collect at Fredericton." Sour grapes this may have been, but it did reflect a different centre of gravity. The Halifax observer had more to say:

Both cities engage largely in commerce, but in our city it holds a secondary place, in the other it is everything. The Halifax merchant is often indolent, always easy; the Saint Johnian is eager, ardent, and untiring. He gives all his life up to business. He opens his shop or his office at an early hour, he risks more, speculates more, loses more, makes more; he fails in business oftener, but after failure he always manages to rise again and make another fortune . . . . In St. John there is no leisurely class. Everybody is hard at work. It is a city without loungers.<sup>8</sup>

Commerce, industry, capacity and capabilities were the features paraded before visitors, not institutions, conventions and scenery. The Canadians who visited the Maritimes in August, 1964, were treated to bacchanalian revelry in Halifax; in Saint John pleasure was secondary to a viewing of the city's "true resources and commercial activity."<sup>9</sup> Unable to compete with other cities in beauty and grace, Saint John made a virtue of its lack of those frivolous luxuries.

Whatever else may be said of Saint John, it was an entrepot with metropolitan aspirations. In no undertaking was this more obvious than in the pur-

6 See Lyman N. Harding, "John, By Divine Permission. John Medley and the Church in New Brunswick," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, vol. VIII (1966), pp. 76-87. The fight with Saint John is presented in the *Weekly Observer* (Saint John), 7 December 1852.

7 Quoted from the Toronto *Leader* in the *Morning Telegraph*, 1 September 1864.

8 Quoted in the *Daily Morning Telegraph* (Saint John), 16 January 1865.

9 Quoted from the Toronto *Leader* in the *Daily Evening Globe* (Saint John), 31 August 1864.

suit of railroads, which came to be viewed as essential to the future prosperity of the city. The London Board of Trade in 1845 observed what became the guiding principle for Saint John: "The possession of good railway communications has now become almost as much a matter of necessity as the adoption of the most improved machinery to enable a manufacturing community to contend on equal terms with its rivals and to maintain its equal footing."<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, a city is people, and for the purposes of this paper eight men whose careers were interwoven in a variety of ways, especially in their concern for railroads, have been chosen to illustrate a facet of Saint John's personality. Two of the group, William J. Ritchie (1813-1892), a Nova Scotian educated at Pictou Academy and called to the New Brunswick bar in 1838, and John Hamilton Gray (1814-89), an immigrant from Bermuda educated at King's College, Windsor, and admitted to the New Brunswick bar in 1837, were lawyers. Two others were businessmen. Leonard Tilley (1818-96) moved from Gagetown to Saint John in 1831 to become a druggist's apprentice and owner of his own drugstore in the city from 1838 to 1860. His close friend John Boyd (1826-93) was an Irishman who came to Saint John in 1831 where he was employed by Holdsworth & Daniel, importers of drygoods, until he became a partner in the firm in 1854. Robert Jardine (1812-66), a Scot who moved to Saint John in the early 1830s to work for an exporting firm which he and his brother Alexander eventually took over, and John Robertson (1799-1876), another Scot who arrived in Saint John in 1817 to become one of the city's leading businessmen and its Mayor in 1836, were entrepreneurs. William Wright (c.1800-78) emigrated from the British Isles and formed with brother Richard a shipbuilding company in 1830, which made them the leading shipbuilders in British North America in the 1850s. George E. Fenety (1812-98) was a Nova Scotian who had served his printer's apprenticeship under Joseph Howe before going to work in the United States in 1835 as a newspaperman. In 1838 he moved to Saint John and started the *Morning News*.<sup>11</sup>

Any selection such as this might easily be expanded to include others, and strong claims could be made for Richard Wright, Alexander Jardine, William Parks, Edward Allison, F. A. Wiggins, Thomas McAvity, John Cudlip, Robert Hazen and R. Duncan Wilmot, to name the most obvious. At one time or another all were involved in the activities of the group selected. Richard Wright (c. 1816-74) and John Cudlip (c. 1816-1885), both Saint John

10 Quoted in John R. Kellett, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* (London, 1969), p. 9.

11 The biographical material for most of the men can be found in W. S. Wallace, ed., *The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto, 1963). The exceptions are Richard Rice, "William Wright," pp. 718-719, and C. M. Wallace, "John Robertson," pp. 620-621, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. X (Toronto, 1972), and C. M. Wallace, "Robert Jardine," in *ibid.*, vol. IX (Toronto, 1976).

businessmen who sat in the provincial Assembly in the 1850s and 1860s, would top the list of those who served at the secondary level. Robert Hazen (1808-74) was a Saint John stalwart throughout his long career in the Assembly from 1837 to 1848 and the Legislative Council from 1848 to 1867, but after his appointment to the Legislative Council he followed a passive bordering on a lazy role. Duncan Wilmot (1808-91) sat in the Assembly from 1846 to 1861 and again from 1865 to 1867 and should be included until 1851. After that he pursued what appears to have been an intensely personal and sometimes antagonistic course. Of old Tory stock, he sought prestigious and lucrative positions and was a Governor's man. The interests of Saint John, as a consequence, were not always served. He was, in addition, thoroughly disliked and never really trusted by the eight selected for this study.<sup>12</sup>

The average age of the members of that group in 1850 was about thirty-four, and all had succeeded in their careers. Robertson was the oldest and easily the most reputable while Boyd, the youngest, was just coming into his own. None had been born to wealth although Robertson, Gray and Ritchie did receive some benefits of education and substantial support from their families. Politically the majority aligned themselves with the Reformers or Liberals, a party that was largely dominated by the Saint John interests. Robertson moved easily from Conservative when it became appropriate while Gray dodged back and forth like a weathercock. In religion they were either Presbyterian or Low Church Anglican, having much to agree upon, including the vague notion of moral stewardship then in vogue. The Anglicans in the group — Fenety, Gray, Ritchie and Tilley — though belonging to different congregations, were conspicuous among those who forced Bishop Medley to curtail his High Church activities in the early 1850s. Having Loyalist blood was, for the most part, irrelevant, although Tilley and Gray were both from Loyalist families. By the mid-nineteenth century new leadership had displaced whatever was left of the Loyalists who had acquired the city, and even among the social elite, where such distinctions usually are emphasized, there was a tendency to ignore that particular ornamentation. By 1862, according to Fenety, even the keeping of the anniversary of the landing appeared "to be dying out."<sup>13</sup> Despite the claims of those who resurrected the Loyalist cult about the time of the centenary of the landing in 1883 and those since who have rewritten the Loyalist image into the city's past, Saint John in the mid-nineteenth century was known as "The Liverpool of America"

12 For Wilmot and Hazen see Wallace, *Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. For Richard Wright see Rice, fn. 11, and for Cudlip, see C. M. Wallace, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. XI, forthcoming.

13 *Morning News*, 21 May 1862.

not as "The Loyalist City".<sup>14</sup> That, at least, was the disposition of the eight men selected for this study.

One other characteristic united all. Not one of them had been born in Saint John and only Tilley was a native of New Brunswick. All chose to make their careers in the city and, if Boyd be excepted, all had become secure enough to survive the economic buffeting of the 1840s and 1850s with little difficulty. Among them they were to have representation of one kind or another in practically every important venture or business undertaking from government and railroads to banking, manufacturing and even cemeteries. Ritchie was the solicitor for the company that built the suspension bridge. Robertson had been president of an earlier company that had tried to build the bridge. In 1851 Wright was president of the Saint John Hotel Company, Jardine was president of the Saint John Gas Light Company, Gray was a director of the New Brunswick Benefit Building Society and Saving's Fund, and Tilley was a director of the Saint John Mutual Insurance Company.<sup>15</sup> A complete list of their multiple offices would be both extensive and impressive. They did not belong to a club in a formal sense nor did they consider themselves to be an umbrella group, yet they usually turned up at crucial times, working together to further the interests of their city.

Representation in Fredericton was essential, since the aspirations of Saint John were not always in tune with those of the rest of the province. John Robertson, the most respected of the group and a Legislative Councillor from 1836 until 1867, kept a sharp eye on all Saint John matters. In 1858, for example, he chaired a Commission of Enquiry into the removal of the capital from Fredericton to Saint John and came to the conclusion that it was an eminently logical proposal, although the Legislature did not act upon his recommendation.<sup>16</sup> Robertson endlessly put pressure on the government to maintain services in Saint John, such as harbour dredging.<sup>17</sup> Service to Saint John he considered as a contribution to the province. He agreed to be an honorary director of the Atlantic Telegraph Company in 1858 because he did not want the line to bypass New Brunswick, a circumstance he "would consider a great pity."<sup>18</sup> He never ceased to trumpet the advantages of Saint

14 See, for example, J. R. Hamilton, *Saint John and the Province of New Brunswick for Travellers, Tourists, and Business Men* (Saint John, 1883 ed.), p. 33. Murray Barkley, "The Loyalist Tradition in New Brunswick: the Growth and Evolution of an Historical Myth, 1825-1914," *Acadiensis*, IV (Spring, 1975), pp. 3-45, generally emphasizes this drift in the Loyalist myth, although he tries very hard to find a Loyalist strain in the 1840s to 1870s.

15 See the *New Brunswick Almanac and Register* (Saint John, 1851), *passim*.

16 *Report of the Commission Enquiring into the Removal of the Seat of Government from Fredericton to Saint John*, 1859, New Brunswick Museum [hereafter NBM], Saint John.

17 See Robertson to Tilley, 21 November 1859, Sir L. Tilley Papers, NBM.

18 Robertson to Tilley, 5 February 1858, *ibid*.

John, either as President of the Chamber of Commerce or through his business and official connections. In the fall of 1861, when the British government was planning to transport troops to Canada in the wake of the Trent affair, Robertson and Tilley were both in London and offered their services to the War Office, including the advice to use the port of Saint John as the logical point for disembarking the troops on their way to Canada in January of 1862. The British did choose Saint John, which served admirably, and enjoyed the excitement of participating in an international incident.<sup>19</sup> In this case the interests of both Saint John and New Brunswick were advanced but it was a balance not always achieved.

In the political sphere Ritchie, Gray and Tilley all occupied central roles. Tilley was in politics almost continuously after 1850. He served as Provincial Secretary from 1854 to 1856, 1857 to 1865 and 1866 to 1867, and was the dominant political figure in New Brunswick after 1860. Ritchie was elected to the Assembly in 1847 and became leader of the opposition in 1848. He resigned his seat in 1851 but was re-elected in 1854 and fought the Saint John battles valiantly before abdicating for the bench in 1855. Gray, a brilliant speaker and consistent Saint John advocate, was a member of the Executive Council from 1851 to 1854 and 1856 to 1857, but never quite lived up to his apparent potential. Among the businessmen Robertson was undoubtedly the most influential and as a local director of the Bank of British North America, which had its head office in London, he had extensive dealings in both London and Liverpool. Wright had similar international financial and commercial connections but was limited more to ships and shipping. Considered by some to be the most innovative of the group, Jardine was the leading railway proponent in the province in the 1850s and 1860s in addition to being a formidable businessman.<sup>20</sup> Boyd, "the most popular lecturer the province has ever produced," used that skill in praise of Saint John, Tilley and the railroads.<sup>21</sup> A successful businessman and manager, he was the chief organizer of the Reform party in Saint John. Fenety, an independent and honest journalist who slammed even Tilley if he thought it necessary, built his *Morning News* into the largest paper in the province. From the beginning he encouraged Saint Johners to think positively about their city and he advanced numerous suggestions for its improvement. He was one of the first to link the commercial future of Saint John to the railroad.

19 See Lord DeGray to Tilley, private, 3 December 1861 and Robertson to Tilley, 5 December 1861, Sir L. Tilley Papers, Public Archives of Canada [hereafter PAC].

20 See *Saint John Globe*, 15 February 1881.

21 W. G. MacFarlane, *New Brunswick Bibliography and Books and Writers of the Province* (Saint John, 1895), p. 12.



Since the railway was the major technological innovation of the age, its potential was recognized early. On 1 February 1836 two separate schemes were before the New Brunswick legislature, one for the Saint John and Quebec Joint Stock Steam Boat and Rail Road Company and the other for the Shediac Rail Road Company, shortly to be changed to the Saint John and Shediac Rail Road Company.<sup>22</sup> Both projects would have connected Saint John to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, eliminating the dangerous and costly ocean trip around Nova Scotia. Not a foot of track had been laid when, nine years later, The Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Canada Railway and Land Company issued a prospectus that anticipated the Intercolonial from Halifax to Quebec, bypassing Saint John.<sup>23</sup> Within a month the New Brunswick Railway Company circulated its own prospectus on a line from Saint John to Quebec, and in mid-October President John Robertson of the Saint John Chamber of Commerce issued a report comparing the advantages of Halifax with those of "the thriving Commercial City of Saint John with its commodious Harbour, accessible at all seasons of the year."<sup>24</sup> Metropolitan leadership of the east was at stake, as Robertson and the Chamber realized, and might be grasped by energetic venturers. The dream of their port as the dominant entrepot of the north eastern seaboard nourished the Saint John boosters through the bad days and gave them stamina to face their opposition, whether it was the competition of Halifax, the hindrance of Fredericton, or the indifference of London. Railways were recognized as the key and lines were projected to the east, the west and the north, all converging on Saint John. When Major Robinson's report in favour of an Imperial line direct from Halifax to Quebec was released on 31 August 1848, the railroad from Saint John to Shediac, which would intercept the proposed Imperial line at the Bend (Moncton) and divert it to Saint John, became a matter of survival. "The time has arrived for something more than - - - words," thumped Fenety in his *Morning News*. "GIVE US RAILROADS! . . . Give the people employment. Open up the resources of the country. Introduce capital. GIVE US RAILROADS!"<sup>25</sup> An attempt was made in the Assembly to pass enabling legislation, but as W. S. MacNutt so aptly put it, "sectional interests came to the

22 *Journals*, 1836, pp. 36-39, 90. For the early railways see A. W. Bailey, "Railways in New Brunswick, 1827-1867" (unpublished M.A. thesis, U.N.B., 1955).

23 *New Brunswick Courier* (Saint John), 18 August 1845.

24 Quoted in *ibid.*

25 *Morning News*, 9 March 1849. For Major Robinson's report see "Report of the Proposed Trunk Line from an Eastern Port in Nova Scotia, through New Brunswick, to Quebec," *British Parliamentary Papers, Colonies: Canada* (Shannon, 1969), No. 18, 1849, pp. 13ff. The best survey of the railway situation in 1849 is in W. S. MacNutt, *New Brunswick: A History, 1784-1867* (Toronto, 1963), pp. 325ff.

fore and pandemonium resulted." The bill was defeated on a standing vote in the House.<sup>26</sup>

A "Revolution in St. John" was the immediate response. "Never since the day when the tea was thrown overboard in Boston harbour," warned Fenety, "has there been such a sensation created in any community."<sup>27</sup> At a public meeting on April 2 the Saint John Rail-Way League was formed, having a very specific premise: "Whoever labours for the introduction of Railways has, therefore, more than ordinary rewards for exertion. He is working for humanity — for progress — and for the highest good of his race."<sup>28</sup> The Rail-Way League proved to be an effective pressure group. It organized petitions and demonstrations in Saint John and sent deputations to Fredericton. The politicians were impressed. The exact reasons for the change of opinion are not known, but when William Ritchie introduced another facility bill on April 10, it was approved by a vote of nineteen to twelve. "Had the gold of California, by the magic of an Alladin lamp, been thrown into our city," declared Fenety in the *Morning News* on 13 April 1849, "it could not have produced a greater effect." The Legislative Council subsequently rejected the legislation and again dampened spirits. "Saint John is *not* the Province," the *New Brunswick Reporter* of Fredericton had protested on 6 April 1849 when the pressure for the railway was mounting, but to the Saint John leaders the railway had stood for more than a little empire: it represented progress. Clearly, an organization to achieve that end was required. Since Ritchie had proved himself "a thorough *representative for the people*" in the session just ended, at least that section of it prepared to follow a Saint John lead, it was hoped that he might yet come to control the Assembly.<sup>29</sup>

Over the summer of 1849 the Rail-Way League provided the base for a Saint John movement. A "spirited and enthusiastic" meeting was held on July 24 with most of the "leading merchants and active business people" present.<sup>30</sup> On the following Saturday, July 28, the League was converted into the New Brunswick Colonial Association which called for new economic and political initiatives such as reciprocity with the United States, a federal union of British North America, and constitutional changes including the vote by ballot and voter registration. The "squandering" of public moneys at Fredericton, with its "system of jobbing, gross corruption, electioneering and treachery," was soundly condemned: "The whole system is rotten and teem-

26 MacNutt, *New Brunswick*, p. 328. See *Morning News*, 29 March 1849 for the convoluted debate on the bill.

27 *Morning News*, 30 March 1849.

28 Quoted in the *Morning News*, 11 April 1849.

29 *Morning News*, 28 March 1849.

30 *Ibid.*, 27 July 1849.

ing with corruption.”<sup>31</sup> In the election of 1850 the Association ran a slate of candidates in Saint John dedicated to a change in the system. The railroad to Shediac, of course, was a first priority, although it was not included among the principles of the Association which were approved as a platform for the election on June 3.<sup>32</sup> Ritchie, Gray, Tilley and three others sponsored by the Association won seats in that election, while Robertson, Jardine and Wright, as members of the Association, lent their influence throughout. Fenety made the *Morning News* the mouthpiece for their activities, encouraging them when spirits flagged and reminding them of the benefits being reaped from the railroads by American cities.<sup>33</sup>

John A. Poor’s call for a convention at Portland, Maine, to discuss the European and North American Railway from Halifax to Boston in the summer of 1850 provided a useful adjunct to the Saint John railway boosters. Robertson chaired a meeting in early July called by the Chamber of Commerce to consider the proposal. Jardine acted as Secretary. Ritchie assisted on the petition committee. Jardine later became chairman of the railway sub-committee and at a public meeting on July 18 received permission to support the project, while Wright, Gray, Tilley and Ritchie moved or seconded resolutions.<sup>34</sup> Fenety publicized the activities throughout, and informed his readers that such newspapers as the *New York Herald* and *Portland Advertiser* had reprinted articles from the *Morning News*.<sup>35</sup> Jardine and Gray were among the official delegates to the convention and both returned full of confidence.<sup>36</sup> Fenety continued to preach the railway gospel. “Nothing has caused the advance of the principal Cities of the United States, so rapidly as rail-road communications,” he declared on August 7. “No city in the union has so many conduits [railroads] of this kind as Boston — they radiate from almost every point . . . the ‘cradle of liberty’ has made more rapid strides in wealth and population than any other city of the New England States.” He then challenged Saint John to act like a great city.<sup>37</sup>

The Saint John phalanx of elected members headed for the opening of the legislature on 6 February 1851, determined to overthrow the unsympathetic

31 *Ibid.*, 10 November 1849.

32 *Ibid.*, 5 June 1850.

33 Jardine, Robertson and Wright all served on committees of the Association at one time or another. Wright was President in 1850. See *New Brunswick Courier*, 18 August, 10 November 1849 and 8 June 1850.

34 *Morning News*, 8, 19, 26 July 1850.

35 *Ibid.*, 26 July 1850.

36 See the reports at the public meeting held in Saint John on August 15 in the *Morning News*, 16, 19 August 1850.

37 *Morning News*, 7 August 1850.

"compact" government and to get approval for the European and North American Railway (E&NA), as the Saint John to Shediac line came to be called. Twenty-three new members were joining the eighteen returning from the old House in the election of 1850. Ritchie, the unquestioned leader of the ill-defined opposition, moved a motion of want of confidence in the government on February 6 with some hope of success, but when the vote was taken four days later, twenty-two stood with the government and only fifteen with Ritchie. Of that fifteen, twelve came from the southern and eastern sections of the province, the area most likely to benefit from E&NA.<sup>38</sup> Toward the end of April Ritchie tried again with a group of resolutions criticizing the government for its management of affairs. While Ritchie had broadened his base somewhat, especially in York County, through a series of four votes the government held twenty-one members and the opposition nineteen.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, during the session the Assembly did support three separate bills to incorporate, to facilitate the construction of, and to support financially the E&NA.<sup>40</sup> Votes were recorded only on the bill to grant £250,000 annually to assist in the construction and all were close, seventeen to fifteen on the second reading, eighteen to fifteen on the third reading. The supporters in both votes came from the Charlotte to Northumberland crescent that had most to gain from the road.<sup>41</sup>

Lieutenant Governor Edmund Walker Head unfortunately wanted the Imperial or Intercolonial line constructed, as did Colonial Secretary Earl Grey. Since both were hostile to a line that leaned toward integration with the United States rather than cooperation with the other British North American colonies, approval for the E&NA was delayed.<sup>42</sup> The Saint John boosters saw no conflict between the Intercolonial and the E&NA because, in their view, the Intercolonial would run from Halifax to the Bend where it would join the E&NA to run to Saint John and then head north along the St. John river to Quebec. When Grey had still not approved the legislation by mid-July, tempers in Saint John became frayed. The angry subscribers of the E&NA met at the Commercial Bank on July 14 and decided to petition the Queen. Prepared by Jardine, the petition was left for signing at Tilley's Drug Store and H. Chubb & Co., and was soon on its way to England.<sup>43</sup> Head, who

38 *Journals*, 10 February 1851, p. 15.

39 *Ibid.*, 28 April 1851, pp. 272-274.

40 *Ibid.*, 19, 22 February, 22 March, 23 April 1851.

41 *Ibid.*, 26 April 1851, pp. 364-365.

42 See MacNutt, *New Brunswick*, pp. 335ff, and D. G. G. Kerr, *Sir Edmund Head, A Scholarly Governor* (Toronto, 1954), pp. 86ff.

43 *Weekly Observer*, 15, 29 July 1851.

was alarmed by the turn of events in Saint John as well as the prospect of a Ritchie dominated Executive Council, attempted to break the Saint John front by inviting Duncan Wilmot and J. H. Gray into his Council. Both accepted. Wilmot, who took the office of Surveyor General, had no qualms about deserting his colleagues. Gray, who was without portfolio, made the construction of the E&NA a condition upon which he would agree to join Head's Council. "It being distinctly understood," he informed his constituents in a public letter, "that the Government will accept no proposal for building the Grand Trunk [Intercolonial] which shall not embrace in an equally favourable and explicit manner the European and North American Railway."<sup>44</sup> After Wilmot accepted office, Ritchie and Tilley declared publicly that his reelection would imply "a direct censure of our past conduct, and a disapproval of the opinions unflinchingly expressed during the last session."<sup>45</sup> When the Saint John electorate sustained Wilmot in a by-election, they resigned from the Assembly in disgust.

Despite this setback, on 20 September 1851 the subscribers to the railway, including the members of the group selected for this paper, met at the Commercial Bank in Saint John to plan a course of unremittent pressure in all directions.<sup>46</sup> The Intercolonial remained the great stumbling block because of the Imperial position and its offer to support financially the Robinson line. During the legislative session of 1852 the New Brunswick Assembly agreed to accept the Intercolonial if it followed a route on the western side of the province, a proposition totally unacceptable to the Colonial Office. Further obstruction to the E&NA legislation, which asked only for assent and not support, became difficult, and on September 29 a contract was signed at Saint John for its construction by the British contractor Messrs Peto, Brassey, Betts, Jackson and Company.<sup>47</sup> A year later Lady Head turned the first sod. By then Robert Jardine was President of the Company, Ritchie was its solicitor, Robertson, Tilley and Gray were prominent among its Directors, while Wright was a subscriber.<sup>48</sup> Young John Boyd was just becoming interested, and George Fenety, in a fit of enthusiasm, changed the name of his paper to *The Morning News and Railway Advocate*. The E&NA was just the beginning, he remarked. They must press on with "branch railroads to connect with the main trunk, so that ere a very distant day, every town and village in the Province, as in other countries, may be interlaced with iron bands, and

44 Quoted in the *New Brunswick Courier*, 2 August 1851.

45 *Ibid.*, 9 August 1851.

46 *Weekly Observer*, 23 September 1851.

47 *Ibid.*, 28 September 1852.

48 See *Morning News*, 14 September 1853.

brought, in point of time, within a few hours of the commercial emporium.”<sup>49</sup>

Over the next seven years the E&NA was a dominant factor in New Brunswick politics. Before it was completed there were numerous changes of government, a continuous witch hunt, three official enquiries and a near bankruptcy. Nevertheless, the Saint John group remained consistent in its determination to have it built and succeeded in imposing its policy on New Brunswick. In the elections of 1854 all six Saint John candidates supported the E&NA although J. H. Gray, Duncan Wilmot and J. R. Partelow were members of the provincial Executive Council, while Ritchie, Tilley and James A. Harding supported the opposition. When the House met in October, the opposition, comprised largely of anti-establishment members from the Bay of Fundy and North Shore areas, combined under the titular leadership of Charles Fisher to overthrow the government and to form New Brunswick's first Reform administration. Tilley assumed the influential office of Provincial Secretary, with responsibility for railways, while Ritchie was on the Council without office.

The contractors of the E&NA, for reasons unconnected with the New Brunswick project, failed to resume construction in the spring of 1855. The Directors sent Ritchie to England to determine the nature of the problem and to see if work might not be continued. The financial difficulties of the contractors precluded their completion of the work, and when Ritchie returned to New Brunswick empty handed, the Directors demanded “immediate action . . . to protect the interests of the Province.”<sup>50</sup> The “Great Bubble Railway,” as its enemies in Fredericton called it, was about to burst, scuttling Saint John in the process.<sup>51</sup> That could not be permitted to happen. On October 25 at a memorable Executive Council meeting the proposition of the Directors of the E&NA that the government “obtain possession of the road with a view to its prosecution” was approved.<sup>52</sup> Only the decision was announced, but Tilley, as both a Director of the Company and a member of the Council, surely played a central role. Attorney General Fisher and John Robertson, who had numerous financial and business contacts in England, left for England to settle with the contractors and to seek backing for a nationalized E&NA.<sup>53</sup> Despite the opposition of Lieutenant Governor

49 *Morning News*, 4 October 1852. The “And Railway Advocate” was in small print and of relatively short duration on the masthead.

50 Resolution of the Directors, 12 July 1855 in “European and North American Railway” documents, *Journals*, 1856, p. 80.

51 *Head Quarters* (Fredericton), 18 July 1855.

52 New Brunswick Executive Council Minutes, 25 October 1855, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick [hereafter PANB].

53 See “Railway Papers: Report of the Attorney General,” *Journals*, 1856, p. 102.

Manners-Sutton and the scepticism of others, Fisher and Robertson were successful beyond all expectations.<sup>54</sup> Baring Brothers agreed to supply the required money, a significant vote of confidence in New Brunswick and one that must have owed much to the presence of John Robertson.

The government presented its railway project to the Assembly as a province-wide scheme to include construction of roads in all directions and on 11 March 1856 Fisher introduced four separate bills to this end. One assumed provincial control over the E&NA; a second provided for the extension of the line from Saint John to Woodstock and eventually to Canada, and envisioned lines into the North Shore and west from Saint John to Calais (Western Extension); a third provided for the acquisition of funds through Barings; and a fourth raised the general tariff two and one-half per cent to meet the interest on the loan. As a project this undertaking may well deserve to be ranked with the other great railway schemes of the era. It was gigantic, almost impossible to comprehend, and it did "excite great expectations" throughout the whole province.<sup>55</sup> No section was to be without railways. Saint John, it was equally obvious, was to become the centre of this railway empire. To the cynical, who realized that only the line to Shediac would be built immediately, the whole plan was a political smokescreen to disguise the dominance of Saint John over the government and the province. Tilley was delighted with the result and argued that he had not "looked at the scheme in a sectional point of view."<sup>56</sup> Despite Tilley's protestations, the railway policy adopted by the government was a clear indication that the interests of Saint John and the influence of Tilley were dominant in the Council. Attorney General Fisher "sits at Council as quiet as a sucking turtle," complained the Fredericton *Head Quarters* bitterly on 12 December 1855, "and suffers himself to be snubbed, and dictated to, by the man of pestles, and mortars and one idea!"

Construction of the E&NA as a government railway started in June 1856 and was completed by August 1860. During a series of political crises and government changes, the Saint John group remained in control. Although the Reformers were thrown out of office by Manners-Sutton over the liquor Law in May 1856,<sup>57</sup> J. H. Gray along with Duncan Wilmot formed the new govern-

54 *Ibid.*, pp. 102-106 and Manners-Sutton to Grey, 1 December 1855 with enclosures, CO 188/125, PAC (microfilm).

55 See G. E. Fenety, "Political Notes," vol. II, No. 10, Scrapbook, PAC, and *Journals*, 11 March 1856.

56 Quoted in *Morning News*, 26 March 1856.

57 P. B. Waite, "The Fall and Rise of the Smashers, 1856-1857: Some Private Letters of Manners-Sutton," *Acadiensis*, II (Autumn, 1972), pp. 65-70, presents some evidence to indicate that Manners-Sutton was also concerned about the alarming rise in the provincial debt because of the railways. Manners-Sutton had earlier done everything in his power to prevent the project from going ahead. See New Brunswick Executive Council Minutes, 25 October 1855 and 29 November 1855, PANB, as well as Manners-Sutton to Grey, 1 December 1855 with enclosures, CO 188/125, PAC (microfilm).

ment and pressed on with the railway. The return of the Reformers to power a year later barely changed the pattern. Tilley selected Jardine, the former president of the E&NA, to be the Chief Commissioner of Railways for the province, with overall responsibility for the construction of the E&NA. Together, Tilley and Jardine represented the front rank of the railway boosters, and they pressed ahead for an early completion. The whole 108 mile long line was open by August 1860, a respectable achievement. In keeping with the times, there were mountains of invective directed at the railway builders. The appointment of Jardine and Robert Reed as railway commissioners, both defeated Liberal candidates in 1856, was controversial. Those displaced and their friends naturally charged the government with corruption and incompetence. There were fights among the workers, strikes and accidents. There were problems over expropriations. Above all, there was the spiraling of the construction costs. The original estimates had been for about £4000 to £6000 per mile, but by 1859 the Chief Engineer was projecting a cost of £8499, 10s, 2p per mile.<sup>58</sup> All the while the provincial debt was climbing at a phenomenal rate and taxes were increased. In 1858 a select committee of the House under Chairman J. H. Gray investigated the project and reported just before the House closed. Though generally favourable, the report did point to some irregularities in accounting and in the awarding of contracts. Throughout the report, according to Fenety's *Morning News*, there was a "disposition running through it to censure the present railway management."<sup>59</sup> This was a dig against Tilley and Jardine, both of whom rejected the criticism and blamed all irregularities on the previous administration and on the former Chief Commissioner, W. H. Scovil.

That set the stage for the second and the third enquiries into the construction of the E&NA. Duncan Wilmot naturally had criticized the activities of Tilley and Jardine, although not the E&NA itself, but the major attack came from Joseph Lawrence and Timothy Warren Anglin, both of Saint John. Once Tilley's best friend, Lawrence had split with him in 1851 when Wilmot joined Head's Council. In 1858 Lawrence won a by-election, vowing to "shake and shatter the Government to its foundation" over the mishandling of the E&NA.<sup>60</sup> Anglin was a mercurial Irish Roman Catholic newspaperman who had originally supported the Reformers in the pages of his *Morning Freeman*. He broke with them over Tilley's prohibitory bill and because the Reformers

58 "European and North American Railway" in Appendix, *Journals*, 1859, p. cccxxxiii.

59 *Morning News*, 31 May 1858, and "Schedule of Papers Connected with the European and North American Railway," *Journals*, 1858, pp. 152-153, 217-219.

60 Quoted in *Morning News*, 16 July 1858. The depression, higher taxes, an inconsequential opponent and a strange Roman Catholic-Orange alliance all combined to give Lawrence his victory.



had "given no proof of any disposition to treat the Catholics of this County, or of the Province, more fairly or with less injustice than their predecessors had done."<sup>61</sup> Lawrence in the Assembly and Anglin in the *Morning Freeman* together conducted a witch hunt not unlike that undertaken by George Brown and the *Globe* against the Grand Trunk in Canada. Throughout November and December of 1858 the *Freeman* mounted its attack with ever increasing virulence. Corruption, extravagance, stupidity, incompetence, lying, cheating — no charge was left out of the sins compiled against the E&NA.

The publication of the correspondence between Tilley and the deposed Chief Commissioner, W. H. Scovil, over Tilley's charge that Scovil was responsible for the mismanagement, precipitated the second enquiry.<sup>62</sup> The select committee, with Gray again chairman and Lawrence prominent among its members, met from March 17 to April 9, and reported to the House on April 12. While "leaving their investigation incomplete," they concluded that the E&NA "will be a first class Road, of superior description, well and solidly built." There was praise for the engineering and for the accounting, but it could not be determined whether "the Road might or might not have been built cheaper."<sup>63</sup> Jardine, subjected to insults and degradation, publicly resigned.<sup>64</sup> When the resignation was not accepted, the *Morning Freeman* intensified its attack on "Mr. Tilley and Mr. Jardine and the Smasher Junta," and called Tilley a "hypocrit and a liar."<sup>65</sup> Before the mover of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne could get to his feet on 9 February 1860, Lawrence demanded another enquiry into the mismanagement of the E&NA. A nasty, personal debate followed, with J. H. Gray eventually selected as chairman of the Committee. After weeks of hearings, a majority and minority report were submitted, the former full of praise for the whole E&NA operation, the latter a critique in extreme.<sup>66</sup> Gray, disgusted with this petty third enquiry, declared the E&NA a "thoroughly constructed road," questioned Lawrence's motives, and from that session on disassociated himself from the opposition and supported Tilley as an independent.<sup>67</sup>

61 Quoted from the *Morning Freeman* in the *Morning News*, 21 September 1855.

62 See the *Morning Freeman*, 18 January 1859.

63 *Journals*, 1859, p. 245, and "Evidence Taken before Select Committee" with Appendix, cccclxix-Dxxxiv, and "Reports and Accounts of Railway Commission" for 1858, cccxxviii-cccclxviii.

64 Jardine to Tilley, 17 May 1859, Sir L. Tilley Papers, PAC.

65 *Morning Freeman*, 12, 22 November 1859.

66 *Journals*, 5 April 1860, p. 175. See also "Evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Assembly, appointed on the 22nd day February 1860," pp. 181-222.

67 See *Morning Freeman*, 14, 16 February 1860.

Throughout those years Fenety railed against the opponents of the E&NA and called for the completion of the "Great American Railroad . . . from Saint John to the Western coast of America." He denounced those critics who accused him of "trespassing" upon "the borders of dreamland, in our anticipation of the future greatness of our rising City."<sup>68</sup> John Boyd had also begun to cast his spell over audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. He embellished Saint John with an aura of buoyancy that matched all of Fenety's trespassing. Especially close to Tilley, Boyd filled the newspapers with letters under various names, either to expose an enemy or set matters right, whatever Tilley thought necessary.<sup>69</sup> During the 1858 by-election in which Lawrence attacked the government railway policy, Boyd rushed to the defence with a rousing speech to the Saint John Chamber of Commerce on "New Brunswick Railways" which the Chamber published immediately and distributed widely.<sup>70</sup>

With the completion of the E&NA in 1860 the sense of accomplishment in Saint John was at its height. "As I passed over the line," observed John Livingston, a rising young journalist, "I felt that a new era had opened upon my native country."<sup>71</sup> That theme was echoed widely. Almost as if by providence, the visit of Edward, Prince of Wales, to British North America that summer included two stops in Saint John. It is doubtful if the city would ever appear to better advantage or would be more self-confident. The Royal ship *Styx* arrived on August 2, and the next day the Prince and the Duke of Newcastle were escorted through the city to the railway station. There a gleaming E&NA train waited to take them on a nine mile trip to Rothesay where they would take the boat to Fredericton. Two days later they were back in Saint John for another procession during which, according to Newcastle, "enthusiasm rose to such a height as to make its expression by word and gesture insufficient for the wishes and the feelings of the crowds." Even after the *Styx* got underway, "the still ringing cheers from the shores could be heard in the intervals of salutes from all points fired by volunteer artillerymen." Newcastle wrote to Queen Victoria "that this last demonstration has been the proudest and most gratifying of all that have yet taken place."<sup>72</sup> Though

68 *Morning News*, 4 October 1858.

69 John Boyd to Tilley, 3 December 1858, Sir L. Tilley Papers, PAC, in which Boyd discusses letters he has written for the *Colonial Presbyterian* as \*\*\* and for the *Morning News* as "A Merchant".

70 John Boyd, *A Report on New Brunswick Railways to the Chamber of Commerce, Saint John, New Brunswick* (Saint John, 1858).

71 Livingstone to Tilley, 21 July 1860, Sir L. Tilley Papers, NBM.

72 Newcastle to Victoria R, [August 1860], "Letter Book. The Prince of Wales Tour of Canada, 1860," Newcastle Papers, PAC (microfilm).

Newcastle's eulogy was not made public, there was a realization in Saint John that they had been extraordinarily successful. George Fenety knew it. Perhaps now, he crowed, people would know "where Canada *begins* and where it *ends*."<sup>73</sup>

The accession of Leonard Tilley to the premiership of New Brunswick in 1861 appeared to make the influence of Saint John paramount. "His political views have been too much limited by his sphere," suggested P. Stevens Hamilton, an early advocate of Confederation. "That has been St. John; and, generally speaking, Saint John is to one of the John Saints, *the Universe*." Hamilton later had a better opinion of Tilley, apparently being influenced by J. H. Gray, who was all but united with Tilley politically.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps because of his vacillations, Gray was defeated in the 1861 general election, but Tilley carried the province easily. Lawrence was defeated, although Anglin, who was elected, more than made up for that defeat. Anglin found much to attack in the 1860s. The American Civil War disrupted New Brunswick affairs in numerous ways and, according to Tilley, contributed to the large provincial debt in 1862.<sup>75</sup> This resulted in increased taxation. What was worse, the E&NA did not generate enough income to pay the interest on its debt, much less the principal, just as opponents of the road and Saint John's expansionism had predicted back in 1849. The solution proposed by spokesmen in Saint John was the completion of the railroad network promised in the 1856 legislation. Robert Jardine, writing as Chief Commissioner, urged Tilley in the fall of 1860 to press on with the "line from Saint John to the State of Maine . . . <sup>56</sup>*immediately*", but Tilley, especially after he became Premier, had to reconcile the desires of Saint John with those of the rest of the Province.<sup>76</sup> His own railway policy was for an Intercolonial route through Saint John and up the river to Quebec, with a branch line to Maine, and he fought for it until 1868.<sup>77</sup>

Tilley's major problem was the Imperial preference for Major Robinson's North Shore route, a road that was considered a dangerous threat in Saint John. "After all — it is — to many persons very problematical whether a Railroad, striking the Shediac line 50 to 70 miles east of St. John will be a benefit to the Commercial capital or otherwise," wrote C. H. Fairweather, a prominent Saint John businessman in 1864. "Will it not carry trade *through*

73 *Morning News*, 6 August 1860.

74 Hamilton to Charles Lindsey, [Fall 1860] and 13 February 1861, Mackenzie-Lindsey Correspondence, Public Archives of Ontario.

75 New Brunswick, House of Assembly, *Debates* [hereafter *Debates*], 26 March 1862, pp. 70-73.

76 Jardine to Tilley, 20 December 1860, Sir L. Tilley Papers, PAC.

77 See Tilley to Joseph Howe, 17 November 1860, Howe Papers, PAC.

& past to Halifax?"<sup>78</sup> During the negotiations with Canada and Britain over the construction of the Intercolonial in 1862 and 1863, that question was asked over and over again in Saint John. Men like John Cudlip withdrew their support from the Tilley government and a critical by-election in Saint John in 1863 centred on the Intercolonial issue and its potential impact on Saint John.<sup>79</sup> The government candidate was J. H. Gray, the much travelled former leader of the opposition but consistent supporter of Saint John interests, and he won handily. A letter from John Boyd to Tilley on 19 March 1863 gives a revealing picture of the activities of the remnant of the group of eight boosters followed in this paper. "Your offer of money was kind," Boyd informed Tilley, "but I am determined that this Election, shall not cost either you or Gray, one Penny. Jardine, Wm. Wright and myself have subscribed each of us in proportion \$220, which is our share of the *Expense*. We bought no votes, our expenses are for house hire, printing, rooms for meetings &c. I opposed at the outset all open houses, and all temptation to drunkenness, and Gray seconded me. We have succeeded honourably, and Gray goes to you with a clean skirt and in an honourable manner."<sup>80</sup>

The perfidity of the Canadians in 1862 and 1863 eventually discredited the Intercolonial and shelved the project. Fear of its resurrection to the advantage of Halifax and the need for economic stimulation forced a Saint John initiative. Practically every Saint John businessman signed a giant petition in favour of the Western Extension of the E&NA in February 1864 and forwarded it to Fredericton, placing Tilley in a very awkward situation. "The country will soon recognize but two parties," warned the Saint John *Daily Evening Globe* on February 13, "a Railway and anti-Railway party, and the most powerful must lead."<sup>81</sup> Tilley's solution was a "Bill in aid of the construction of Railways," otherwise known as the Railway Facility or Lobster Bill because it provided for a government subsidy of \$10,000 per mile on specified lines.<sup>82</sup> Had the lines been built, few in New Brunswick would have been beyond the sound of train whistles, and it was readily supported in the House. Western Extension was obviously a first priority, but before any track was laid on that line, New Brunswick became embroiled in the Confederation affair, and in an 1865 election the Tilley government was badly

78 Fairweather to Tilley, 12 March 1864, Sir L. Tilley Papers, PAC.

79 See Cudlip to Tilley, 31 January 1863, *ibid*.

80 Boyd to Tilley, 19 March 1863, Sir L. Tilley Papers, PAC. For the election see *Morning Freeman*, 17 March 1863, and the *Weekly Telegraph* (Saint John), 20 March 1863. Of the original eight, Ritchie had been on the Bench since 1855 and Fenety became Queen's Printer in 1863, thus removed from politics. Only John Robertson was missing in 1863 and it is possible that he was out of the province.

81 See also John Boyd to Tilley, 10 March 1864, Sir L. Tilley Papers, PAC.

82 *Journals*, 26 March 1864, p. 163.

defeated. Their opponents in Saint John had used the fear of the Intercolonial and the lack of Western Extension very effectively, capturing all six seats, including Tilley's.<sup>83</sup> Subsequent victory of the Confederation forces ultimately led to the completion of the railroad. One of Tilley's final actions as Premier was to guide enabling legislation through the House in June 1867. The government took \$300,000 in stock in the company and granted \$10,000 per mile towards its construction.<sup>84</sup> In October 1871 Western extension was completed and Saint John had rail connections with the United States and Canada, by way of Bangor, Maine. A year later, on 24 October 1872, rail connections with Halifax were opened. The Intercolonial, in the meantime, was under construction along the North Shore, and Saint John was poised to exploit its potential as the railway centre and commercial metropolis of the Maritimes.

During the summer of 1872 the editor of the *Boston Gazette* visited Saint John for a holiday and he had a keen eye. He found it "a place of much enterprise and wealth" with excellent shopping and "low prices." The suspension bridge remained the major attraction, but he was more impressed by the recently opened Victoria Hotel which "combines the comforts and arrangement of the Continental in Philadelphia with the table and cooking of the Revere in Boston." Except for the design of that Hotel he was not much impressed with the local architecture, but "their arrangements and convenience illustrate the character of the people, dignified without pretense and substantial without pride or show."<sup>85</sup> The Victoria Hotel had been built on the grand scale, in anticipation of the extensive traffic to be generated by the railroads and related business. A glance over the list of company directors indicates that not one of the eight men selected for this study was involved. A survey of the officers of other companies reveals that only Boyd and Robertson appear in their lists. New men like A. Chipman Smith, Thomas McAvity, W. H. Tuck and C. N. Skinner had taken their place and had their own visions for Saint John.<sup>86</sup>

Saint John had been well served by Robertson, Fenety, Wright and the others. It would be claiming too much for them to suggest that they determined its character, but they did give it vitality. By Confederation most of them had given their best. Ritchie had been on the Bench since 1855 and from

83 Confederation has been examined in detail in numerous studies, but of special relevance for New Brunswick see MacNutt, *New Brunswick*; P. B. Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation, 1864-1867* (Toronto, 1962), and A. G. Bailey, "Railways and the Confederation Issue in New Brunswick," *Canadian Historical Review*, XXI (1940), pp. 367-383.

84 See *Debates*, 6 June 1867, pp. 139ff.

85 Quoted in the *Daily Telegraph* (Saint John), 1 August 1872.

86 See *Saint John Directory* (Saint John, 1872), *passim*.

1879 to 1892 was to serve as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. Fenety had moved to Fredericton when Tilley had him appointed Queen's Printer in 1863, a post he held until 1895. Jardine had died in 1866. Wright remained active in shipping but was in the process of retiring to Britain. Robertson was appointed to the Canadian Senate in 1867, and would soon retire to Britain. Gray served as a Member of Parliament from 1867 to 1872 when he was appointed a puisne judge of the British Columbia Supreme Court. Tilley had a distinguished federal career ahead of him, especially in the office of Minister of Finance in 1873 and from 1878 to 1885. Boyd, in the prime of life, served both Tilley and Saint John for another quarter of a century, becoming a member of the Canadian Senate in 1880 and Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick in 1893. Yet by the end of the 1870s it was already recognized that Saint John would not be a great metropolis. The census of 1881 confirmed a trend forewarned in 1871; the population of Saint John had ceased to grow and had, in fact, declined.<sup>87</sup> The vaunted railroad network had not provided the benefits promised. The boosters of the middle decades, it was easy to conclude, had failed or were false prophets. As Saint John prepared to celebrate the Centennial of the landing of the Loyalists in 1883, it distinguished in those founders the authentic character of the city.

87 Canada, Department of Agriculture, *Census of Canada*, 1880-1881, vol. 1, p. 17.