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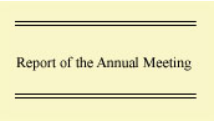

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THE CANADIAN SCENE, 1880-1890

Presidential Address by FRED LANDON
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THE general pattern of Canadian affairs during the 1880's is familiar to every student of Canadian history. At the opening of the decade there were visible signs of recovery from the depression which had come down upon the continent during the seventies. The return of the Liberal-Conservative party to power in 1878 had assured the completion of the transcontinental railroad promised to British Columbia and had made equally certain the adoption of a changed national trade policy. The new trade policy was in force by 1879 and in September, 1880, a contract was signed with private capitalists to complete the railroad project. These two developments provided the major federal issues of the early 1880's and for a brief period brought some measure of prosperity. In 1885 came the uprising in the West under Louis Riel. His trial and subsequent execution unloosed a train of racial and creed disputes that plagued the country for a decade and diverted energies sadly needed for other activities. Contemporary with these later events a new trade issue arose which was still a matter of controversy when the period closed with business depression, a lag in population growth and annexationist sentiment in the air. To many Canadians in 1890 the high promise of Confederation must have seemed to be but a mirage.

This pattern, however, like many other accepted patterns in history is incomplete. It is that which chiefly impressed those who were contemporary with the events, and it is the picture which has been brought to us in the more familiar memoirs of the times. Unfortunately these memoirs are chiefly political in character and show little interest in other phases of the national life. The period was one of great controversy and the controversy overshadowed and still overshadows much that was an essential part of Canadian life. It is in part the purpose of this paper to fix attention upon some other of the activities and interests of the Canadian people during the decade and to suggest that such activities and interests merit more attention than they have hitherto received. At the outset, however, some notice may properly be taken of the political figures who in the ten years after 1880 were most in the public eye. As a group they still challenge our attention. Moreover, in the eighties, and even beyond that period, it was the political figures to whom attention was chiefly directed. The decade produced a remarkable group of railroad builders but it was at a later date rather than in the period of their constructive activity that their achievements received adequate recognition. Industrial development had not yet proceeded sufficiently far to bring the business man as such into first-rate prominence, nor had public attention yet been turned to mining magnates, promoters of power development, owners of metropolitan newspapers, or university professors. Canadians as individuals still loved and hated, with about equal measure of intensity, the leaders of their own and the opposite party.

At the head of the federal government during the whole decade was Sir John Macdonald, now grown old and tired but with a hold on his party which was unshaken. Shrewd in judgment and magnetic in personality, he had become a sort of national institution, so much so that

his political opponents came to despair of success until he should pass off the scene. In November, 1884, Macdonald celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his entry into public life, the occasion being marked by a great banquet at Toronto. Two months later, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, Montreal rivalled Toronto in the tribute paid by the party stalwarts to their leader. "There has never been anything of the kind approaching it in magnificence or significance," Macdonald wrote to Tupper after the Toronto dinner, while of the Montreal demonstration he remarked: "Of a different character but equally satisfactory. French and English vied with each other. Two miles of torches on a dark soft night, with the air filled with fireworks wherever we went. The whole people of the city in the streets. . . . The banquet a marvel of skill and decoration."[1]

But the editor of the *Week*, at Toronto, was inclined to be cynical over the carefully arranged fireworks, both chemical and oratorical.

> Not even the speakers themselves [he wrote] can imagine that their hyperbolic tirades have any relation to the facts, or that their presentation of political history will ever be deemed worthy of notice by the historian. As to answering the statements or the arguments, a man of sense would as soon think of answering a bagpipe. Yet all is not laughable in these orgies of partisanship. The banquetters go away drunk with a wine even more deadly than the sherry. They are more than ever inflamed with party passion. They have learned more than ever to put party above their country, to regard half their fellow-citizens as their enemies, and to believe that everything is moral in politics which can put power and patronage into the hands of the Conquering Hero or the Beloved Chief.[2]

Looking back at the period under consideration we can see that there was some similarity between the Liberal-Conservative party in the later 1880's and the old Whig party of the forties in the United States. For years the Whig cause consisted in the adulation of its leaders, Clay and Webster, rather than in support of well-established political principles. Thus when Clay and Webster passed off the scene in 1852 the party rapidly disintegrated. Liberal-Conservatism had not reached that point in 1885 but dependence was being placed more and more in the name and fame of Macdonald so that after his death in 1891 it was but a matter of time until the party would go down to defeat. "The idolatry of the heathen is not greater than the idolatry of party politics today," Principal Grant, of Queen's, declared in 1884. It was an unhealthy spirit which extended even to ordinary social intercourse. In contrast to the freer atmosphere of Mackenzie's day, Lady Macdonald in her social entertainment drew the political line as sharply as the colour line in the Southern States. No Liberal or any member of his family was ever invited to Earnscliffe. Nor was this unwholesome political ex-

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[1]Sir Joseph Pope (ed.), *Correspondence of Sir John Macdonald* (Toronto, n.d.), 328, 331-2.

[2]The *Week*, Jan. 22, 1885, 114.

clusiveness confined to Lady Macdonald. It had become the rule rather than the exception.[3]

Opposing Macdonald from 1880 until after the election of 1887 was Edward Blake, great in intellect and powerful in debate but lacking that something which wins elections. He has been compared with Lord Rosebery both in the matter of his political qualities and in his political fortunes. Had he faced any other opponent than Macdonald he would probably have been victorious. That veteran Canadian parliamentarian, R. S. White, has said of the series of speeches which Blake delivered in the election of 1882 that the reading of them "makes one marvel that he did not sweep the country, so logical and convincing and destructive of the policy of his political opponents were they."[4] Unfortunately, such qualities in political debate do not necessarily win elections whether the year be 1882 or 1942. But if Blake failed to attain office himself, he at least nominated successors in both the provincial and federal fields whose tenure was not easily shaken. When he retired after the defeat of 1887 his mantle fell upon his young French-Canadian lieutenant from Quebec, Wilfrid Laurier. Laurier's commission came from party leaders who were none too sure of the wisdom of their choice, while he himself was equally hesitant about accepting the responsibility. He formally accepted the leadership on June 23, 1887, and it was on June 23, 1896, nine years later to a day, that the Liberal party came to power.

One who looked down from the gallery of the House of Commons in 1880 upon the floor beneath would have found a remarkable number of men whose names are still remembered. On the ministerial side were Sir Charles Tupper, Sir Leonard Tilley, Hector Langevin, John Henry Pope, and Mackenzie Bowell. Both Tupper and Bowell were to be successors of Macdonald in the office of Prime Minister. Seated behind and about Macdonald were J. J. C. Abbott, another future Prime Minister, and A. P. Caron, John Haggart, Thomas White, John Costigan, and John Carling, all future members of the Cabinet. D'Alton McCarthy was there, chief lieutenant of the Ontario Conservative group but destined to break with his party and leader before the decade was out. There too was Donald Smith, who seven years before had helped to send Macdonald into opposition but was now again reconciled with leader and party.

Blake's followers in 1880 numbered only half that of the government side of the house but the group did not lack distinction. Richard Cartwright, William McDougall, John Charlton, Malcolm Cameron, and David Mills were men who would not be overlooked in any Canadian Parliament. Alexander Mackenzie was there too, Prime Minister from 1873 to 1878, but his voice was now stilled and his active career at an end. A visitor might have noticed Frederick Borden who in later years would be a Minister of Militia, and if he did not see he would probably hear William Paterson, of stentorian voice, a later Minister of Customs

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[3]"Ottawa is not as gay as it was in Mr. Mackenzie's time and the earlier days of the present government. . . . In the days of Reform rule the wife of the Prime Minister entertained the Tories as well as Grits, and other ladies followed her example. There are a few houses in which members of the opposing factions still meet under the same roof, and at the dinners at Rideau Hall, and at those given by the Speaker of each branch of the Legislature the wolf lies down with the lamb. But, as a rule, the cleavage of politics regulates the social cleavage" (The *Week*, April 10, 1884).

[4]*Dalhousie Review*, XVI, 1936-7, 9.

under Laurier. But the man who was to be most conspicuous of all in the days ahead was as yet not so recognized. Laurier, quiet and studious, of somewhat indifferent health and seldom heard in the House, had not yet revealed the abilities that would make him leader of his party. It remained for the tragic events of 1885 to show forth his powers.

These then were the men most prominent at Ottawa in 1880. But in the provincial fields were others whose influence upon Canadian affairs was to be large. Oliver Mowat remained Premier of the Province of Ontario during the whole of the 1880's. Chapleau, Premier of Quebec in 1880, soon left that field for Ottawa. In Nova Scotia in 1880 John S. D. Thompson was Attorney-General. He was to come to Ottawa in 1885 as Minister of Justice and to become Prime Minister of Canada in 1892. Others who would later come to Ottawa from provincial legislatures in which they were then sitting were A. G. Blair from New Brunswick and William S. Fielding from Nova Scotia. George Eulas Foster had not in 1880 appeared upon the political scene but five years later he was to be also a member of Macdonald's Cabinet.

* * *

Social movements and changes in the United States during the period under review had important repercussions in Canada. One such movement was the struggle of labour for a larger share in the profits of industry and for a greater measure of security against unemployment and poverty. The panic of 1873 had been followed by the most serious and extensive conflicts of capital and labour that the country had ever known. In the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania during the later 1870's a veritable reign of terror was inaugurated, partly industrial strife and partly private revenge, "a phase of a raw and unrelieved war over the distribution of wealth." Railroad strikes which followed the mining troubles paralysed nearly all the lines east of the Mississippi. Pitched battles were fought in several cities between strikers and militiamen called out to enforce order, while losses of property ran into the millions. Other strikes in the early eighties gave every evidence of a grave economic warfare. Finally in 1886 came the tragic Haymarket Riot in Chicago with its subsequent arrest, trial, and execution of a group of anarchists no one of whom was proven to have been even near the scene of the outrage. All of these developments in the United States were followed with interest in Canada where American labour organization, notably the Knights of Labor, was rapidly spreading its influence. The first Canadian local assembly of the Knights of Labor had been established in Hamilton in 1881. Four years later, when the General Assembly for the United States and Canada met at Hamilton, there were forty-four Canadian locals, thirty-eight of these being in Ontario. Two years later there were 174 Canadian locals, having a membership of 12,553, the high-water mark for Canadian membership. That year saw a general election in Canada and though other issues held the front page of the newspapers both political parties gave an attention to labour issues that has not been paralleled since. Speeches upon labour topics which were prepared for Macdonald's use may be found among his papers in the Public Archives. Blake's labour policies may be read in the collected volume of his speeches which was issued by the Provincial

Reform Association at Toronto.[5] At Toronto, Welland, Belleville, Desoronto, and Hamilton labour was the chief theme of his addresses and the index to the collected speeches has more entries under the word "labour" than under any other heading, not excepting "North-west troubles" and "Canadian Pacific Railway." At Welland Blake's speech was a reply to an address presented to him by the Knights of Labor of that place. Macdonald's speech to the Workingmen's Liberal-Conservative Association and Le Cercle Lafontaine, delivered in Ottawa in October, 1886, and dealing with labour matters, was printed and used as a campaign document. The notes prepared for his speeches include references to the legalization of trades unions, abolition of unwholesome convict labour, and the checking of imported Chinese labour. There was promise also of a bureau of labour statistics. Two labour candidates appeared in Toronto in the election of 1887 but neither was successful.

It is reasonable to conclude that the sudden party interest in labour matters in 1887 was influenced by the peak which labour activity had reached in the United States in 1886. The "Great Upheaval," as it has been termed, was regarded in many quarters as revolutionary in character and in Canada newspaper articles reflected the public interest in American developments. This was particularly true of the *Globe*. In its issue of May 1, 1887, it devoted a whole page to the history of the movement for the eight-hour day, and in the same issue had a lengthy article from the pen of T. V. Powderley, Master Workman of the Knights of Labor. Three weeks later there appeared a symposium on labour problems running to two full pages and similar contributions were printed a week later. A series of five sermons by the Rev. T. de Witt Talmage, the eminent American pulpit orator, on labour issues was a further contribution to the discussion. Henry George visited Canada at the end of 1886 and was heard in the eastern cities, while a year later Canadians in common with Americans turned from the popular writers of the day to Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, of which a Canadian edition soon appeared. There were social stirrings in Canada in 1886 and 1887, though Friedrich Engels when he visited the Dominion in 1888 has recorded that "at first he thought he was back in Europe, but later that he had entered a decaying and retrogressive country . . . ripe for annexation by the United States."[6]

The 1887 election promises of legislation to improve conditions of labour were not new. Factory legislation had been announced in both the sessions of 1883 and 1884, presumably upon the basis of the report made by the Royal Commission on Mills and Factories which had made its investigations during 1881.[7] Shocking conditions had been revealed. The Commissioners experienced considerable difficulty in securing information, in some cases being refused admittance to factories and in other cases being informed by employers "that they knew their own business and that government should not dictate whom they should employ, or interfere in matters of trade." Child labour was found to be extensive and on the increase, the supply being unequal to the de-

[5] *Dominion Election. Campaign of 1887. Speeches of Hon. Edward Blake on the Political Questions of the Day* . . . (Toronto, 1887).

[6] Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels, a biography* . . . (New York, 1936), 294-5.

[7] "Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Working of Mills and Factories in the Dominion, and the Labor Employed Therein" (*Canada, Sessional Papers*, 1882, IX, no. 42).

mand. Hours for children were usually the same as for adults while enforced overtime without extra pay added to the strain. Use of child labour was defended on the ground of competition; since some employers used child labour all had to do so or be forced to go out of business. Opposition was also shown to a shorter working day on Saturday on the grounds that it would reduce production and that the workers would use it for dissipation.

Conditions in certain industries were found to be revolting, particularly in the clothing trade where workers were often herded in the lofts of buildings or in low, damp basements with artificial light in use during the whole day. Dangerous machinery was unprotected and steam engines and boilers were found in charge of boys, sometimes only thirteen or fourteen years of age. Ventilation was generally unknown and in some factories closets were used promiscuously by both sexes. Conditions in canning and packing factories were described as, in some cases, "nauseating in the extreme." On the other hand, some of the larger factories and mills were reported to be properly conducted, with attention to the convenience and health of employees.

The Commission in its report commented upon the handicap to their education which resulted from employment of children at a tender age. In Ontario an Act of the Legislature passed in 1874 had provided that every child between the ages of seven and twelve should attend school during four months of the year and had provided penalties for parents or guardians who ignored this regulation. "We were unable to find any place in which this Act is enforced," was the statement of the Commissioners. Other provinces appear to have had no legislation on this matter. Illiteracy was found to be common among adult workers. "In some parts of the country," said the report, "a large proportion are to be found who can neither read nor write."

Five years went by and no action was taken upon this report. Then a new Royal Commission was set to work, its inquiry being more prolonged so that its findings were not received until 1889.[8] Thirty-six places in the four Eastern Provinces were visited and about 1,800 witnesses examined. Child labour was once again found to be widespread and abuses which had not been shown in the earlier report were now laid bare. Instances were discovered of whipping and confinement of child employees while the long hours and unhealthful conditions were seriously affecting the health of juvenile workers. Conditions in the cigar and tobacco factories, which were the larger employers of child labour, were described as of a painful character: "Boys and girls, not more than ten years of age, were found in these places in considerable numbers, and some witnesses not older than fourteen had finished their apprenticeship at cigarmaking and were working as journeymen. The evil in these instances was accentuated by the evident fact that the tobacco had stunted the growth of the witnesses and poisoned their blood. They were under-sized, sallow and listless, wholly without the bright vivacity and rosy hue of health which should animate and adorn children."[9]

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[8] *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital in Canada* (6 vols., Ottawa, 1889).

[9] *Ibid.*, Appendix E, 36.

At one place in Ontario children were found employed around dangerous machinery. Some of these were working for forty-five cents a day from six o'clock in the morning to six o'clock in the evening with less than half an hour for dinner; others worked from seven in the evening until six in the morning. At Montreal young boys were found working all night in a glass works. In the cotton factories, where many children were employed, the hours were from 6.30 A.M. till noon and from 12.45 to 6.15 P.M.—this for five days in the week; on Saturdays the cotton mills closed at noon.

The revelations made by the Royal Commission do not appear to have attracted much public attention, but the government announced at the opening of the session of 1890 that amendments to the labour laws within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada would be submitted. On April 21, the Hon. Thomas White, member for Cardwell, inquired if the promised measures would be introduced during the session then under way and was assured by the Hon. Adolphe Chapleau that the promise of the government would be fulfilled. But the session closed with no such legislation before the House. In the next election loyalty rather than labour was the issue.

* * *

Expansion of missionary enterprise by the larger religious bodies quickly followed the acquisition and opening up of the North-West. This activity formed one of the important religious developments of the period under review. The missionary followed the C.P.R. into the new western settlements, and churches sprang up in the towns that now came into existence. While Presbyterianism, for example, had entered the West as early as 1851, when John Black arrived at Kildonan, it was not until the eighties that Presbyterian missions in Western Canada really got under way. A. B. Baird went overland "with horse and buck board" from Winnipeg to Edmonton in 1881. Angus Robertson reached Calgary with the C.P.R. in 1883. Missions begun at Battleford in 1884, at Medicine Hat in 1885, and at Lethbridge in 1886 marked the further advance of the church. Before the decade ended, Presbyterian missionaries were at all the principal points of settlements in Manitoba and the North-West.[10] Like energy and activity were shown by other church bodies, both Protestant and Catholic, in meeting the challenge of the West, and the publicity which was given to this missionary activity contributed much to making known the resources of the new country. In 1881 the Rev. Alexander Sutherland, of the Methodist Church, made a journey of 6,000 miles overland from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains, on horseback, in wagons, by open boat, and on foot. His narrative was published under the title *A Summer in Prairie Land*. "The most magnificent expanse of virgin soil that remains unsubdued on the face of the earth," was his opinion of the western plains.

Movements directed towards greater unity and more effective consolidation of religious effort also appeared at this time. The Church of England in Canada was moving rapidly during the later eighties towards the National Synod which was established in 1893. It had been impressed upon clergy and laity alike that consolidation of the machinery

[10]J. T. McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875-1925* (Toronto, 1925), 102.

of the whole church would alone supply the authority, direction, massed effort, and proper apprehension of the general wants of the church and the larger statesmanship required for its missionary work, both at home and abroad. In January, 1887, there was organized at London, Ontario, the Canadian Church Union, designed to promote this ideal, and at a subsequent meeting in April the project was further developed. At Winnipeg in August, 1890, a conference of representatives of the dioceses declared for a general union of the various branches of the Church of England in British North America under a general synod but with the retention of the provinces, and this was brought about three years later.

Methodism, which had achieved a partial union of its several branches in 1874, extended the union in 1883 when practically all Methodist groups in Canada became one.[11] The constituent bodies uniting in 1883 were the Methodist Church of Canada (itself the product of the movement of 1874), the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Primitive Methodist Church, and the Bible Christian Church. Presbyterianism had already achieved union of its several branches by a number of unions during the sixties and by a larger movement in 1875.

Revivalism, which had been such a potent force in Methodism in its pioneer days in Canada, still continued to be the chief agency for adding to the number of adherents. Indeed, in one form or another, revivalism was an agency of all the evangelical Protestant bodies. Dwight L. Moody repeatedly visited Canada during the 1880's and drew great crowds who neither saw nor heard anything of a sensational character but were moved by the same quiet message that had stirred England in 1875 and that had stirred American cities as they had never before been moved by any religious leader. In Canada the Methodist Church had Crossley and Hunter as its most effective revivalist preachers. No less a personage than Sir John Macdonald was a frequent attendant at their meetings in Ottawa during the early months of 1888 and participated with apparent earnestness in the religious exercises. None of Sir John's biographers has mentioned this fact, though the press, particularly the opposition press, gave it plenty of publicity at the time.[12]

The spirit of revivalism even invaded the quiet of Quakerism in Canada and was one of the factors bringing about the split in this body between conservative and more liberal elements. The impact of revivalism in this instance came from two chief sources, from the evangelism of the Society of Friends in the American Middle West, chiefly Indiana, and from Methodism in Canada. The Indiana Friends were frequent visitors to Quaker meetings in Canada and their leanings towards music and singing in the services with other departures from the traditional silence and meditation had far-reaching effect. But the Quakers in Canada faced the ever-present Methodist influence as well

[11]The union of 1874 brought together the Conference of the Maritime Provinces, the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Ontario and Quebec, and the New Connexion Conference to form the new Methodist Church of Canada.

[12]"As to Sir John Macdonald himself, his very hearty and sincere interest in the proceedings is easily evident to any one who watches his face as he sings through with genuine zest such stirring and popular sacred melodies as 'The Lily of the Valley' or 'The Handwriting on the Wall.' It is also true that he has availed himself of the usual opportunities offered for the public manifestation of personal concern, all of which will naturally tend to make the most interesting figure in the recent history of Canada more interesting still in his direction of her business" (The *Week*, March 1, 1888).

and in such localities as Prince Edward County, in Ontario, the Methodist influence unwittingly promoted the unhappy division.[13]

This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the Salvation Army's first operations in Canada. The work was begun unofficially by members arriving from England, but by 1884 regularly organized corps were to be found in the leading eastern cities. The unusual methods of the Army aroused violent antagonism in some places and an intolerance that is unpleasant to recall. In one city members of the Army were jailed on the charge of disturbing the peace. But persecution brought defenders and critics were gradually won over to become supporters. Goldwin Smith came to the defence of the Army in 1886 in answer to an editorial in the *Week* of which he was a financial supporter. In Quebec City also, when there was marked intolerance shown towards the Salvation Army, Ernest Pacaud, editor of *L'Electeur*, protested vigorously in his newspaper and was warmly commended by Wilfrid Laurier, who wrote: "I congratulate you on your article relative to the Salvation Army. The repeated attacks of a liberal population against this body are unworthy of Quebec City. It is not sufficient that the rioters should be punished; it is necessary that the processions of the Army, ridiculous as they may appear to some, must have full liberty of progress; and if need be I am prepared to march at their head to protect them."[14] The attacks upon the Army brought the reaction which might be expected. Whereas there were no Salvationists recorded in the census of 1881, that of 1891 showed approximately 14,000 adherents. In the succeeding ten years when the Army came to be regarded as "respectable" its numbers fell to 10,300.

These are examples of more visible aspects of religious life in Canada in the 1880's. But more elusive are those movements of thought which, somewhat delayed, affected the theological teaching and preaching of the Protestant bodies. The period was one of revolt against tradition and a time of special activity in Biblical study in America as well as in Europe. The revised version of the *New Testament* and the Westcott and Hort *Greek Testament* were both published in 1881 while work on the revised version of the *Old Testament* was moving forward to its publication in 1885. The *Hebrew Student* first appeared in April, 1882, under the editorship of William Rainey Harper, of the University of Chicago, and more and more critical methods were applied to the study of the Bible. We may, therefore, properly date from 1881 the modern period of Biblical scholarship in America with the historical being substituted for the dogmatic point of view. Von Harnack's monumental *History of Dogma* appeared between 1885 and 1890, stressing the influence of Greek thought on the evolution of Christianity. Von Harnack and other writers had widespread influence upon theological thought at this time, while Mrs. Humphrey Ward brought a new point of view on Christianity to the man in the street in her novel *Robert Elsmere*.

Men of thought within the Canadian churches could not ignore these issues and though some fought vigorously against any departure from the traditional, leaders arose to guide the churches through the trouble-

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[13]See A. G. Dorland, *A History of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada* (Toronto, 1927), chaps. XII and XIII.

[14]Lucien Pacaud (ed.), *Sir Wilfrid Laurier: Letters to My Father and Mother* (Toronto, 1935), 28.

some currents. Recent tribute has been paid to Dr. William George Jordan, of Queen's University, as one of those who led "in the struggle to bring the Canadian Church into the strong fresh currents of contemporary thought."[15] It is true that Jordan did not join the Queen's faculty until 1899, a date far beyond the field of this discussion, but his influence upon thought in the churches dated from his arrival in Canada in the late eighties. For many years before he went to Queen's, Jordan had been a frequent visitor at the synods and conferences of his own and other denominations, giving fresh and vigorous Bible teaching. Dr. Nathaniel Micklem has suggested that Jordan more than any other man in Canada "helped to bridge the gulf between the old and the new." But he was not the only one who had made such a contribution. A yet earlier figure was Professor J. F. McCurdy, who became Professor of Oriental Studies in the University of Toronto in 1886, and though unconnected with any theological faculty presented the new views to those students who came under him in their Arts work. The close association of university departments of science with the affiliated Protestant theological colleges in Eastern Canada aided in the harmonizing of new lines of scientific thought and traditional creeds. Such men as Burwash and Coleman in Victoria University made a noteworthy contribution at this time and there were men of their type in the other universities as well.

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Whatever measure or standard may be applied to other aspects of Canadian life during the eighties it will be agreed that in the realm of letters, and in lesser degree, of the arts, this period saw an out-flowering beyond anything previously known. A ten-year period that saw the advent of Roberts, Lampman, Carman, William Wilfred Campbell, Frederick George Scott, Duncan Campbell Scott, and Pauline Johnson must retain for long a distinction in our literary annals. In an instructive essay on this group of writers,[16] J. D. Logan refers to them as the most significant group which has appeared in Canadian literature. They were, he points out, born, bred, and educated in the four provinces which formed the original Dominion. They were the first native-born writers to undertake a systematic literary career. They were also the first Canadian writers to gain recognition both in the United States and in England. It is a happy circumstance that at this time we still have three of this group with us, and that from time to time they express for us the deep emotion of our own days. It is sixty-two years since Sir Charles G. D. Roberts published his *Orion and Other Poems*. In the writer's own copy Sir Charles wrote some years ago: "This my first book, most of which was written when I was about eighteen years of age, has importance in my eyes because Matthew Arnold wrote to me very kindly about it." To Roberts we owe a lasting debt of gratitude because he was privileged to be the literary sponsor of both Lampman and Carman, first introducing them to a Canadian reading public.

The appearance in December, 1883, of the *Week* was a notable event in Canadian literary history. As a journal of comment and criticism

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[15]W. T. McCree, "William George Jordan" (*Some Great Men of Queen's*, ed. by R. C. Wallace, Toronto, 1941, chap. v). See also Nathaniel Micklem's tribute to Jordan in *Queen's University, a Centenary Volume, 1841-1941* (Toronto, 1941), 105.

[16]*Canadian Magazine*, 1911, 555-63.

we might well be proud were it with us today. It was edited during its first few months by Charles G. D. Roberts, who severed his connection after a prolonged disagreement with Goldwin Smith over the question of annexation to the United States, which Smith favoured. When Roberts retired, the name of C. Blackett Robinson, a part owner and the printer, appeared as editor, but Goldwin Smith exercised some control over policies. The importance of the *Week* lies in the fact that under both Roberts and his successor it introduced to Canadian readers the work of the most outstanding group of writers that we have yet produced. In the first issue, that of December 6, 1883, there was printed a poem by Archibald Lampman, "A Monition," the first product of his pen to appear outside college circles. Three other poems by Lampman were printed during 1884. In December, 1888, the *Week* reviewed Lampman's first volume, *Among the Millet and Other Poems*, according to it high praise and stressing particularly the beauty of the sonnets, "the ripest fruit of Mr. Lampman's talent."

Bliss Carman's work also first appeared in the *Week*, three poems being published before Roberts left the editor's chair. A sketch of Carman was printed in October, 1888, bearing the title "A New Canadian Poet." By this time his work had been accepted by the *Atlantic Monthly*, then under Aldrich, two of his poems having appeared in that magazine, "Low Tide on Grand Pré" and "Carnations in Winter."

During the eighties the *Week* continued to introduce the new group of Canadian poets to its readers by printing examples of their verse and by giving serious reviews to the collected volumes as they appeared. Poems by Duncan Campbell Scott and William Wilfred Campbell were printed in 1889. Scott's first contribution to the *Week* bore the interesting title "Written in a Copy of Archibald Lampman's Poems." By the end of the decade Canadian poets were receiving recognition in the United States and in England. William Sharpe, writing in the *National Review* in 1889 on the sonnet in America, included the work of both Lampman and Roberts in his review.

No important work of imaginative prose literature appeared in Canada during the 1880's but there was a considerable volume of historical writing. John Charles Dent's *The Last Forty Years* was published in 1881 and *The Story of the Canadian Rebellion* in 1885. A reviewer said of the first of these two titles: "It is an evidence that the pulse of national life beats more and more strongly among us, that so many books by Canadian authors on Canadian subjects, and especially upon Canadian history, are finding publishers and readers."[17] This feeling of achievement was also expressed by Sir John Bourinot in his essay on "The Intellectual Development of the Canadian People" which appeared first in the *Canadian Monthly*. Egerton Ryerson's extensive work on the Loyalists was published in 1880 while Kingsford's history of Canada began to appear in the later eighties. Other historical publications of the period were Francis Hincks's *Reminiscences* (1884), Canniff Haight's *Country Life in Canada Fifty Years Ago* (1885), and George Bryce's *History of the Canadian People* (1887). *Picturesque Canada*, which was edited by Principal Grant, dates from 1884. Although begun before the 1880's the continuation of *The Dominion Annual Register* for several years after that date is worthy of record.

[17] *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, XIV, 1881, 191.

Growth of interest in the history of the country was shown also by the publication of such works as Cornish's *Cyclopaedia of Methodism* (1881) and Gregg's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (1885). In Quebec during this period Benjamin Sulte published in six volumes his *Histoire des Canadiens-Français*, a mine of information despite its faulty editing and lack of orderly arrangement. Antoine Gérin-Lajoie's *Dix Ans au Canada, de 1840 à 1850*, was published posthumously in 1888. It has been described by Camille Roy as the best French-Canadian study of the period that witnessed the establishment of responsible government, its information being abundant and accurate and its style temperate and easy. The Abbé Casgrain was also active during this period, his *Pélerinage au pays d'Evangeline* being crowned by the Académie Français in 1888.

In the field of poetry Louis Fréchette was at the height of his power during the eighties. His poetry is chiefly lyrical. Friendship, the family ties, and nature in its varied moods provide the themes of his verse but like his master Crémazie he was also a patriotic poet. In *La Légende d'un peuple* "he set himself to relate the epic of French Canada—to write in elegant strophes the history of his race." As early as 1880 he was acknowledged by French-Canadians to be their greatest poet and his fame continued to be enhanced thereafter. Other writers whose verse continued to appear during this period were Pamphile Lemay and William Chapman. Like Fréchette Lemay penetrated deeply into the humbler life of his province and he has left unforgettable pictures of the customs and home life of the habitant. Chapman's verse has been described as less sincere and more grandiloquent than that of the writers already mentioned. "What he lacks," says Camille Roy, "is a more constant inspiration, a more fully fledged thought, a less flagging and less wordy versification."

Such progress in music as was recorded during the eighties may chiefly be credited to the churches. Organists, some of them from England, contributed to the elevation of musical taste and in the cities introduced audiences to the works of great composers. Even the annual choir concert in a small town usually brought a special singer or performer to augment the interest of the occasion. In Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, London, Ottawa, Halifax, and Saint John choral societies were to be found during the eighties whose performances were of no mean standard.[18] Dr. F. H. Torrington, of Toronto, was one of the pioneers in this field and in his career of nearly forty years did much to awaken an appreciation of the best in music. Oratorios were the favourite undertakings of the choral societies.

The founding in 1880 of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts was an indication of the developing consciousness of Canadian achievement. It was modelled upon the Royal Academy of Great Britain and owed much to the support and patronage of the Marquis of Lorne and the Princess Louise. The charter members whose names were approved by the Governor-General numbered thirteen painters and five architects. They were entitled to bear after their names the letters R.C.A. Among the earliest announced objectives of the Academy was the establishment

[18]A review of music in Canada in the *Week* of May 6, 1886, listed the choral societies in Eastern Canada and enumerated the more important works which they had recently performed.

of a national gallery and some steps were taken in this direction as early as 1882. Though it was long after that the idea was carried out we can give due credit to the men who gave it birth.

There was already a notable group of painters in Eastern Canada by 1880, and others whose names are familiar today came to public notice in the next few years. Records of exhibitions and of the activities of art societies make mention of the work of Homer Watson, Horatio Walker, J. W. Morrice, Paul Peel, G. A. Reid, Lucius R. O'Brien, Robert Harris, O. R. Jacobi, F. A. Verner, and William Brymner. In 1886 a collection of Canadian pictures was sent to London and was exhibited at South Kensington. George A. Reid was awarded a medal at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in that year and Daniel Fowler received a medal and diploma for his work. Although Fowler was born in England he lived during much of his life on Amherst Island near Kingston and his work has been described as having a brilliancy equal to the finest drawings of the best of the modern painters in Europe.

There was more money in circulation in the early eighties than before, enabling people to buy pictures. Hence we find the beginning of some of the important private collections, particularly in Montreal. It was probably in this period that Sir William Van Horne was putting together the nucleus of his famous collection. He was strongly attracted by the newer French school of painting. Other notable private collections in Montreal were beginning to take form in this same period. The Montreal Art Association held annual exhibitions from its formation in 1870 and was building up its own collection during the eighties. A catalogue of its exhibition for 1884 lists the work of such Canadian painters as Brymner, Peel, O'Brien, Verner, Harris, Henry Sandham, and F. M. Bell Smith. Paul Peel had three pictures in this exhibition, one being the familiar "The Young Mother."

Though not founded until 1910 the idea of an Art Museum in Toronto was being discussed as early as 1887. Lucius R. O'Brien announced in February of that year that the Council of the Royal Canadian Academy had granted $3,000 towards the purchase of a site for a gallery and that a group of artists would contribute a like amount. But the times did not prove favourable to the carrying through of the plan. The Ontario Society of Artists was active, however, and its annual exhibitions from the time of its founding in 1872 did much to stimulate an interest in art in Toronto. Of those working in black and white during the eighties the most conspicuous were J. W. Bengough, cartoonist on the well-known former publication *Grip*, and Henri Julien on whose work Marius Barbeau has recently published a monograph. Julien possessed extraordinary ability and his work has a vitality that has perhaps not since been equalled.

Closely related to the development in the arts was the founding in 1881 of the Royal Society of Canada. This, like the Royal Canadian Academy, owed much in its beginnings to the interest of the Marquis of Lorne. It was intended to promote literature and the sciences throughout the Dominion. Its first volume of *Proceedings* and *Transactions* appeared in 1882.

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The conclusions to be drawn from this paper are few and need be but briefly mentioned. It has not been in any sense a survey of the 1880's

but rather a sampling of a few topics selected from the period, suggesting that midway between Confederation and the turn of the century there lies a period of noticeable transition. Some phases of the transition have been carefully examined by historians—the development of transportation and western land settlement, for example. But we know much less about what might be called the transit of civilization into that western area—the setting up, sometimes under eastern auspices (as in the case of religion), of those institutions which influence, govern, or regulate human relations. We know all too little also of the reaction of this western settlement upon Eastern Canada.

The 1880's witnessed the decline of a great historic party and the gropings of a rival party for policies which would be acceptable to the majority of the people of Canada. What were the actual forces which were producing this disintegration after 1884? Certain familiar explanations have been handed down to us, but are they valid? Furthermore, how much do we actually know about the internal divisions in the Liberalism of the period, how much about the Canada First movement, the Equal Rights Association, D'Alton McCarthy's Third Party, the nationalist movement in Quebec, or the Imperial Federation Movement which for a time found ardent supporters.

The record of the 1880's and what we might term its adjoining decades is not purely contemporary history but it is vitally related to much of our contemporary scene. One of Lord Acton's judgments was that the value of modern history lay in its being "a narrative told of ourselves, the record of a life which is our own, of efforts not yet abandoned to repose, of problems that still entangle the feet and vex the hearts of men." These characteristics may be properly applied to the period which has been dealt with in this paper.