

Nationalism in the Canadian Churches

NEIL GREGOR SMITH

IN VIEW OF THE APPROACH of the centennial of Confederation in Canada it is appropriate that some consideration should be given to the appearance of nationalism in the Canadian churches and to the role which nationalism has played in their development. It has been claimed that the central thread in Canadian history has been the development of a Canadian national feeling.¹ As the small and isolated colonies of British North America grew in population and joined together in a federal union which ambitiously expanded over half a continent there developed in them an awareness of national identity. This sometimes expressed itself negatively as anti-Americanism or anti-colonialism. It was sometimes awkwardly self-conscious, and sometimes it displayed the hypersensitivity of the insecure. With growth from colonial status to nationhood there grew a nationalistic sentiment.

Just a hundred years ago, in July, 1862, Lord Acton published his essay on "Nationality," in which he argued that whereas in the ancient world nationhood had been the product of physical and material forces it was now the product of moral and political activity. A nation was no longer what it had been in the ancient world, the progeny of a common ancestor, or the aboriginal product of a particular region, but the creation of peoples who have been able, in political maturity, to rise above the selfishness of sectional and regional interests to participate in common action for the common good. "A state may in the course of time," he said, "produce a nationality: but that a nationality should constitute a state is contrary to the nature of modern civilization." He claimed that the coexistence of several nations under the same state "is as necessary a condition of civilized life as the combination of men in society."² In many respects Canada has been a testing ground for this concept of nationality. Confederation was an attempt to create a nation through a political union of peoples of varied racial backgrounds and traditions, and of varied regional interests. The obstacles to the formation of a Canadian nation were formidable. Joseph Howe scoffed at the possibility of the British provinces with their unpeopled territories, their conflicting races, and their long, defenceless frontiers, achieving a national unity. The Canadian politicians who dreamed of creating a Canadian nation out of such discordant elements and under such unpropitious circumstances

1. This theme is dealt with in W. Stewart Wallace, *The Growth of Canadian National Feeling* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1927).

2. Lord Acton, "Nationality," in *The History of Freedom and other Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1907), p. 291. The essay was originally published in *The Home and Foreign Review*, July, 1862.

were, he suggested, only a little more ambitious than the builders of the tower of Babel. Yet the daring experiment was tried, and to some extent at least it has succeeded. The type of national unity sought by the framers of Confederation was described by George Etienne Cartier as a unity in diversity:

If we unite [he said] we will form a political nationality independent of the national origin and religion of individuals. . . . As to the objection that we cannot form a great nation because Lower Canada is chiefly French and Catholic, Upper Canada English and Protestant, and the Maritime provinces mixed, it is completely futile. . . . In our confederation there will be Catholics and Protestants, English and French, Irish and Scotch, and each by its efforts and success will add to the prosperity, the might, and to the glory of the new federation.³

In this type of national unity there has been no great pressure towards conformity. At Confederation Canada deliberately turned its back upon the philosophy of the "melting pot" in which racial distinctions would be fused and blended. The type of unity sought was one in which it would be possible for various traditions to be perpetuated.

In this broadly tolerant form of nationalism which developed in Canada all the major religious denominations have been involved. While numerous studies have been made of the growth of Canada from colonial status to nationhood little attention has been paid to the part played by the churches in this development. Some historians have given the impression that, with the notable exception of the Methodists, the Canadian churches had little to do with the development of a national feeling or a national point of view in Canada. Some, indeed, have suggested that the churches have been anti-national in their influence. A. R. M. Lower, for instance, asserts that Anglicanism has been "by its very nature, an anti-national force in Canadian life," that Canada has been to many of its members and probably to most of its clergy "a kind of never never land in which they simply happened to live," and that the Church of England in Canada has been little different from the Church of England in India.⁴ Some have looked upon the Presbyterian Church as a Scottish church, endeavouring to perpetuate a Scottish tradition in Canadian society, and in the attempt trying to be more Scottish than Scotland. Many English-speaking Canadians have looked upon French Roman Catholicism as a divisive, anti-national force. In 1944 C. E. Silcox was writing about the French and English peoples in Canada as incompatible partners in an unhappy union, joined together, not by God, but by the British North America Act of 1867. "The Anglo-Canadian," he said, "thinks of Quebec as the cross he is called upon to bear, as a family skeleton in the closet, not to be mentioned in the presence of guests."⁵

3. George Etienne Cartier, in *Parliamentary Debates on the Subject of the Confederation of the British North American Provinces* (Quebec: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1865), p. 60.

4. A. R. M. Lower, *Canada, Nation and Neighbour* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1952), p. 109.

5. C. E. Silcox, *Must Canada Split?* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1944), p. 8.

This subject is one that merits closer investigation. Have the Canadian churches exerted an anti-national force in Canadian affairs? Have they served as bastions of colonialism? Have they tended to be a divisive element in the midst of forces working towards the development of Canadian unity? Are there instances in which the growth of a national feeling may be discerned in the activities of the churches themselves? Did they contribute in any degree towards the growth of national feeling in Canada, or did they retard and hinder it?

In a paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association in 1938 Professor George W. Brown outlined the growth of a Canadian point of view in the early Methodist Church in Canada.⁶ He pointed out that in reaction to American and British influences the early Methodist Church developed a point of view which was neither American nor British, but Canadian. In many respects this process may be observed in the history of the other British Protestant churches at work in Canada. At the risk of oversimplification, and in full awareness that we are observing an area of activity where there were bewildering currents, counter-currents, and cross-currents, it may be suggested that, in the period prior to Confederation, the Canadian Protestant churches passed through three stages which prepared the way for the appearance in them of a Canadian point of view. In some respects these processes appear to the observer as negative in character. Yet in the particular situation in which the Canadian churches had to work it is difficult to see how they could have developed anything approaching a national feeling without passing through these negative processes on the way.

I

In the first stage we see a deliberate attempt on the part of the Protestant churches at work in Canada to sever their ties with the churches of the United States and to strengthen their ties with the churches of Great Britain. At the time of the War of 1812 it is estimated that eight out of twelve of the residents of what is now the province of Ontario were of American origin. For several decades after the loyalists settled in the British provinces the church groups most active among them were of American origin. There were American Presbyterians at work in the Niagara peninsula, Dutch Reformed on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, Baptists in several areas, and (most successful of all) Methodists working under the Genesee Conference. Neither the Church of England nor the Church of Scotland displayed much enthusiasm for the evangelization of the frontier. Their clergy, accustomed to state support, men of good family and liberal education, were understandably reluctant to give up the prospect of parishes in England or Scotland to face the rigours of pioneer life in backwoods settlements. By the time the settlements could support a clergyman of the Church of Eng-

6. George W. Brown, "The Early Methodist Church and the Canadian Point of View," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1938* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1938), pp. 79-96.

land or the Church of Scotland in anything like the manner to which he had been accustomed, the townships were already dotted with Baptist and Methodist congregations, built up by the labours of itinerant preachers or lay preachers who shared the privations of those to whom they ministered.

The facts of geography, plus the difficulties of travel and transportation before the age of steam, isolated the colonies from one another and from the churches of Great Britain. It is startling to realize that when William Fraser went from Pictou, Nova Scotia, to London, Upper Canada, in 1834, his journey took nearly a month and a half.⁷ The colonies were isolated from one another and from Great Britain, but they were set in close proximity to the United States, and the first Protestant churches at work in the colonies were virtually extensions of the American churches.

The War of 1812 disrupted this process of extension. Some of the American missionaries went back to the United States. American Presbyterians did not resume work in the Niagara area until about 1830. When the Genesee Conference of the Methodists resumed work in Canada after the war there was a strong anti-American feeling among the colonists. The Methodists were careful in their choice of preachers, selecting men of British origin wherever possible, and cautioning them not to engage in political controversy. In the wake of the patriotic fervour stirred by the war, however, and because of the influx of British immigrants after the war, the Methodists found their ties with the American church a source of embarrassment. The colonial administration suspected that a religious body under American control would be an agency for undermining loyalty to British institutions. Agitation began for the setting up of a Canadian conference free of American control. It should be noted that this movement towards the severing of ties with the American church was not prompted so much by any resentment on the part of Canadian Methodists towards the American Conference, as by the desire to improve the position of the Methodist Church in Canada in appealing for public support. The formal request for separation was made in 1824, and was cheerfully granted in 1828 "to remove the objection to a foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction."

Similar action was taken by the Baptist churches. While these continued to receive aid from American Baptist missionary societies for many years, they were, from about 1820, virtually self-governing associations. Nearly all the congregations established by American Presbyterian and Reformed churches were eventually absorbed in the Presbyteries and Synods later established by Scottish and Irish Presbyterians.

In the Maritime provinces the break with the American churches came a little earlier. American Methodist preachers were withdrawn from these provinces in 1799. In the same year an appeal was made to the British Wesleyans for assistance. From this point the Methodist Church in the Maritimes was, for several decades, dominated by the British Methodists. About the same time the Baptists formed the Nova Scotian Baptist Asso-

7. Cf. "Diary of William Fraser, 1834-1835," in *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Historical Society*, Part XIV (1930), pp. 84-94.

ciation. It may be said that from about 1800 the formal ties between the Baptist and Methodist churches in the Maritime provinces, and the American societies with which they had been associated, had been broken.

This anti-American phase in the development of the Canadian churches was almost entirely a consequence of political events. It resulted in the orientation of the Canadian churches towards the churches of Great Britain. It deflected the Canadian churches into a different pattern of growth from that followed by the churches in the United States.

Nationalism in the United States was strong and exuberant from the time of the Revolution. The revolting colonies were united from the beginning in a common cause and were bound together in a common loyalty. In nationalistic enthusiasm the United States turned its back upon Europe across the wide Atlantic to develop its own institutions. There can be little doubt that the exuberant nationalism which sprang up so quickly in the United States had a considerable impact upon the American churches. A feature of American religious life has been what someone has called its "historylessness."⁸ This is seen particularly in the development of sects and cults which assumed that it should be possible to leap from the apostolic church of the New Testament to the contemporary American scene, regarding all intervening history as a series of unfortunate mistakes. It is seen also in the development of the historic churches, in their eagerness to experiment with new methods and new techniques, and in their willingness to modify their inherited traditions. Will Herberg has noted that Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Judaism, as they developed in the United States, became Americanized. Hans Kohn, in his study of American nationalism, has stated that specific religious groups have done less to impregnate the national character in the United States than perhaps anywhere else:

Here, on the contrary, the American national character has impregnated the various manifestations of religious life. . . . In the United States all religions represented have become to a large extent "Americanized." This has been true of the various Protestant sects as of Roman Catholicism and Judaism. The American idea has shaped their attitudes so that they differ fundamentally from those which prevail among people professing the same faith in other countries, not only in Europe, but also in Latin America.⁹

For various reasons, principally, perhaps, because of the different form which Canadian nationalism assumed, and the different process through which it developed, this tendency has not been as conspicuous among the religious groups of Canada.

Instead of turning its back upon Europe Canada played the role of a Mr. Facing-two-ways. Ties with the British Isles were valued, but they were valued partly because they served as a protection against absorption and assimilation by the United States. The original antipathy of the loyalists to

8. Cf. Sidney Mead, "Denominationalism: the Shape of Protestantism in America," in *Church History*, 23 (1954), 291-320.

9. Hans Kohn, *American Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 16.

American republicanism was reinforced by the War of 1812, by the widely publicized annexationist ambitions of American politicians, and by the strained relations which developed during the American Civil War. The threat of absorption by the United States was one of the factors which impelled the northern provinces to unite. As Hugh MacLennan put it in his essay on "The Canadian Character," the United States, without meaning to do so, "brought about the establishment of a nation composed of peoples who had no desire to unite, but who—true to the lessons their respective pasts had taught them—chose union with each other in preference to absorption by another state which would care nothing for the respective heritages they cherished."¹⁰

While assuming a defensive attitude towards the possibility of political absorption by the United States, and while strengthening British ties as a protection against such absorption, Canada has been exposed through all her history to American cultural influences. A certain amount of mingling and mixing of the two peoples has always been going on. The success of American religious groups in meeting similar situations on both sides of the border encouraged the imitation or adaptation, on the part of the Canadian churches, of various features of American church life. The camp meeting, developed as a technique of evangelism on the American frontier, was taken over, in the early days of settlement, by the Methodists in Canada. The Anglican Church, looked upon by so many as a solid bastion of colonialism, adopted or adapted innovations developed in the Episcopal Church in the United States. In this connection C. E. Vernon wrote in 1929:

In the main the Church of England in Canada has followed the trail bravely and wisely blazed by the American branch of the Anglican communion. With, of course, variations, our Diocesan and General Synods are modelled on American Diocesan and General Conventions, our Missionary Society, our Board of Religious Education, our Council for Social Service, our Women's Auxiliary . . . our apportionment and budget systems on similar organizations and plans first tried out in the American church.¹¹

The American churches, with their larger resources in manpower and money, have been able to experiment and plan new approaches to various problems of church life to a greater extent than the churches of Canada. The Canadian churches, more cautious and conservative, and clinging more closely to the European traditions they have cherished, have frequently made use of the fruits of American experimentations. To the outside observer even the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec displays some evidences of Americanization. In having to face two ways the Canadian churches bear the marks both of cherished European traditions and of cultural influences emanating from the United States.

10. Hugh MacLennan, "The Canadian Character," in *Cross-Country* (Toronto: Collins, 1949), p. 15.

11. C. E. Vernon, *The Old Church in the New Dominion* (London: S.P.C.K., 1929), p. 171.

II

The early orientation of the Canadian churches to the churches of Great Britain led directly to the next stage of their development, marked by a growing resentment against colonial status in church affairs, irritations arising from a clash of viewpoints between Canadian and British churchmen, and growing spirit of independence in the Canadian churches.

The rising tide of immigration to the British provinces after the War of 1812, and the increased activity of British missionary societies, greatly strengthened the Protestant churches in British North America. The Methodist churches in Canada had to pass through a painful period of adjustment. Even after their formal separation from the Genesee Conference the taint of American origins was represented as still clinging to the Canadian Methodists, and the British Wesleyans began to invade their circuits. In the eyes of John Strachan there was a great gulf fixed between English Methodists and the Canadian Methodists who displayed "rancour against the Church of England, and all Colonial institutions, and all persons in authority."¹² The Canadian Methodists hotly resented the charges of disloyalty hurled against them. They asserted that their labours were associated with the earliest recollections of the earliest settlers in the province and that they had given ample proof of their loyalty. To avoid unseemly rivalry between two branches of the same denomination an agreement was worked out in 1833 whereby the British Wesleyans were to confine their efforts to Lower Canada, and the Canadian conference was to maintain its work in the upper province. Both were to co-operate in the Indian missions. A member of the British Conference, however, was to preside over the Canadian Conference, and the Canadian Missionary Society was to be an auxiliary of the British society. This compromise was not altogether successful. After the rebellion of 1837 renewed representations were made to the British society that the Canadian preachers were agitators, enemies of British institutions, eager to lead the upper province into the waiting arms of the United States. The British Wesleyans repudiated their former agreement and began sending their missionaries again into the upper province. The Canadian Conference complained that of twenty missionaries sent into their territory fifteen were labouring within the bounds of their regular circuits, "dividing neighbourhoods, societies, and families, and producing all the evils of schism, strife, and division."¹³ The Canadian Conference protested vigorously against this invasion of their territory, against the assumption on the part of the British Conference of the right of "efficient direction" of the Canadian church, and announced their determination to prevent their work from being swept away by English resolutions. "You may retard," they said to the British Conference, "you may vex, trouble, and agitate, but you cannot annihilate."

12. John Strachan, December 13, 1831. Quoted in S. D. Clark, *Church and Sect in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), p. 222.

13. *Reply of the Canadian Wesleyan Conference, June, 1841, to the Proceedings of the English Wesleyan Conference, August and September, 1840* (London, 1841), p. 34.

The British Wesleyans did vex, trouble, and agitate the Canadian Methodist work until a reunion was effected in 1848. In the process the Methodist churches were brought to a realization that their best interests were not necessarily served through decisions made in the London headquarters of the British Wesleyans.

In the Maritimes the British society held a tighter control over the activities of the Methodist churches than they had been able to impose upon the churches of the upper province. The close supervision exercised by the British society led to numerous clashes of viewpoints. One point of friction was the reluctance of the British society to permit the publication of Methodist periodicals. In 1832 the preachers of two districts combined their efforts to produce a quarterly journal, *The Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*. The officials of the British society, perhaps fearing the effects of competition with English publications, perhaps being afraid of involvement in financial loss, ruled that the action of the brethren in publishing the journal was unconstitutional, and ordered its immediate suspension. Several other attempts and proposals for the establishment of periodicals were discouraged, and it was not until 1849 that the Maritime Methodists obtained official sanction for a publication of their own.

A second source of friction was the regulation of the British committee that candidates for the ministry in overseas territories should serve for a period with the status of "assistant missionary," with restrictions on their freedom to administer the sacraments, and at a lower rate of salary. In one of his letters Robert Alder indicated that in the minds of the British committee the economic factor in this arrangement was particularly appealing. Instead of supporting labourers in the provinces on the English scale of allowances the committee could conserve its funds by employing "agents raised upon the spot who . . . will be able to live with great comfort and at much less expense than persons from this country can."¹⁴ It did not appear so obvious to the Canadian probationers that they could live in great comfort at less expense than their English brethren. This system of employing "assistant missionaries" might do well enough, complained William Temple in 1838, in India or Africa, where the natives accorded a measure of deference to Europeans. He asserted that it was inappropriate and mischievous "in this country where the natives apprehend no such superiority, and where a general wish prevails to foster native talent, supposed to be fully equal to any importation."¹⁵ These and similar sources of friction were the results of differences in viewpoint between the Methodists of the Maritimes and officials of the society in London, endeavouring to govern by remote control. This period of dependence came to an end, with relief to both sides, with the formation in 1855 of the Eastern British American Conference.

The Presbyterians in the British provinces were not troubled particularly by attempts on the part of the parent churches to supervise their affairs. The

14. Robert Alder, letter quoted in T. W. Smith, *History of the Methodist Church in Eastern British America* (2 vols., Halifax: Methodist Book Room, 1877-90), vol. II, p. 434.

15. Quoted in T. W. Smith, *History*, vol. II, p. 438.

Presbyterian system of church government did not lend itself to the exercise of strict control over the activities of distant sessions, presbyteries, and synods. The colonial churches had no formal representation in the courts of the parent churches and did not consider themselves as being bound to accept their decisions. There was, however, increasing impatience with attempts to perpetuate in Canada the internal divisions of Scottish Presbyterianism. Here Burgher and Anti-Burgher were seen to be as Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Scottish churchmen who were eager to encourage the Canadian churches to advance the cause of the Scottish Secession churches were told plainly by William Proudfoot that it was useless to try to carry such divisions to Canada:

It may be of some use to the deputation to be told that it will be impossible to transfer to this side of the Atlantic the feelings which deeply agitate the Secession in Scotland. The controversy which almost rent the Secession in two, on old view and new views, produced no impression in Canada—not the least—not because they were indifferent to the truth, but because they regarded it as a foreign affair—an evidence, I judge, that they consider themselves Canadians. Think of this fact. There are volumes in it.¹⁶

He noted that the Scottish ties of Canadian Presbyterianism were something of a hindrance as well as a help:

It has been a great hindrance to our success that we have kept up the Scotch character. We are too Scotch—our habits, our brogue, our mode of sermonizing are all too Scotch. The thistle is everywhere seen: we have effected no lodgment in the public mind. . . . As at present constituted our mission is a foreign affair. And it will be so until we employ the country-born, divest it of its Scotch character, and make it Canadian.¹⁷

In view of all that has been said and written since about the Canadian character and a Canadian nationality it is interesting to observe that he thought there was a Canadian character discernible in 1846:

A person who associated with Scotchmen only will never understand the Canadian character, and will not be able to assimilate himself to Canadians. I should not be surprised if you returned home without knowing that Canadians have a national character of their own. England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, and France, the United States, have each contributed a portion of its own national character to the Canadian, and the compound made of these elements is unlike them all.¹⁸

A few years later, in 1857, the writer of an editorial in *The Canadian Presbyterian* was noting that it was not necessary for Canadian Presbyterians to reproduce in Canada every detail of British churchmanship. He stated that while colonial churches might be mentioned in the Old Country with an air of patronage and condescension, as poor and dependent relations, they actually enjoyed a number of advantages. Among these was the possibility of revising the usages of the church in worship and discipline. "It is a

16. William Proudfoot to David Anderson, 1846.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

grave error," he said, "to magnify all the present Presbyterian usages of Scotland and Ireland as if they possessed a sacred value, had descended from the Apostles, and were suitable and needful for all lands and all times."¹⁹ Canadian Presbyterians, he said, should learn "not to follow in a slavish spirit the forms and customs of older churches." They should learn to shun the pedantry which mistakes form for essence and is "mighty in the quotation of inapplicable precedents."

When a decision of one of the Kirk presbyteries was being widely discussed shortly before Confederation the action of the presbytery was defended on the grounds that there were precedents for its action in the usage of the Canadian church. A precedent in the colonial church, it was stated, "is of more value *for us* than a precedent in the Church of Scotland, as we follow the practice of the church at home only in those things for which we have no rules or precedents of our own."²⁰ The Church of Scotland was still referred to as "the church at home," but it was recognized that the church in Canada was a Canadian church, free to follow its own course.

The Church of England, in so many ways the embodiment of the spirit of colonialism, discovered that the colonial churches were not always eager to model themselves precisely on English patterns. The first Bishop of Nova Scotia was disturbed to find that the congregation of St. Paul's, Halifax, wanted to choose their own rector. They not only wanted to, but insisted that they had the right to do so. In many details of church administration he had to contend with a spirit of independence on the part of laymen who were not content to leave the administration of the church in the hands of the Bishop and the Governor. With the withdrawal of state aid, and the acceptance of voluntary support as the only means of maintaining the church, increasing deference to lay opinion became all the more necessary.

At least as early as 1832 John Strachan saw the advantage enjoyed by the Episcopal Church in the United States through holding convocations in which clergy and laity participated. "To such assemblies," he said, "the Episcopal Church in the United States owes almost everything; and from the want of public meetings of the Clergy and Laity the Church of England is losing weight with the people and influence with the Government."²¹ It was not until nearly twenty years later, at a meeting of the Bishops of British North America, that a formal recommendation was made for the holding of such synods on a diocesan and provincial level. There was no legal provision for the holding of such synodical meetings, but Strachan, so long an upholder of the letter of the law, solved the problem by turning his annual visitations into Diocesan synods. In 1857 these synods were given legal recognition. In 1859 the synods of three dioceses petitioned the Queen to appoint one of the Canadian bishops as metropolitan of a province of

19. *The Canadian Presbyterian*, February, 1857, pp. 33-36.

20. *The Presbyterian*, October, 1867, p. 292.

21. A. N. Bethune, *Memoir of the Right Reverend John Strachan* (Toronto: Henry Rowsell, 1870), p. 250.

Canada. When this step was taken the following year the Church of England in Canada had officially attained a status of autonomy.

In this second stage of development it may be noted that the Canadian churches, motivated in some instances by resentment over British control, in some instances by the realization of the inapplicability of British precedents to Canadian situations, and in some instances simply by the desire for greater efficiency and effectiveness in their work, attained an autonomous status. They no longer thought of themselves as outposts or extensions of British churches, but as Canadian churches.

III

Closely connected with the rise of an anti-colonial spirit in the churches of British origin at work in Canada, and the development of autonomy in them, was an erosion of the provincialism of the British churches. The churchmen involved would probably resent having their attitude labelled as provincial, but the term seems an appropriate one for the attitude which assumed that church and state in the colonies should be exact replicas of church and state in the British Isles. Both the Church of England and the Church of Scotland began their work in British North America with attitudes which may be described as narrowly provincial. Both were accustomed to a privileged position of state support, and both assumed that they should enjoy the same privileges on this side of the Atlantic. Both had a horror of American republicanism, and both hoped to reproduce here a replica of British society.

Their provincialism is apparent in their unrealistic attitude towards French Roman Catholicism in Quebec. They assumed that the only possible solution to the problem presented by the existence of two racial groups was for the French to be Anglicized. The first Anglican Bishop of Quebec was always irritated at the thought of Roman Catholicism receiving state support, and carried on a long campaign to prevent the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec from being officially styled as a Bishop. To have two bishops of the same diocese of different religious persuasions was, he considered, an unparalleled solecism in ecclesiastical polity. The Church of England was disposed to look upon all other religious bodies at work in the provinces precisely as it looked upon dissenters in England. The original regulations of King's College in Nova Scotia stipulated that no members of the university should attend "the Romish mass, or the meeting houses of Presbyterians, Baptists, or Methodists, or the conventicles or places of worship of any other dissenters from the Church of England, or where divine service shall not be performed according to the liturgy of the Church of England, or shall be present at any seditious or rebellious meetings."²² Two points call for comment here. One is that it is implied that attendance at religious services of dissenters is to be equated with attendance at seditious

22. Quoted in George Patterson, *History of the County of Pictou* (Montreal: Dawson Bros., 1877), p. 324.

and rebellious gatherings. The other is that a group which could claim the allegiance of only one-fifth of the population expected to receive state support for an institution of learning which could be attended only by members of its own group. Maintaining this unrealistic attitude, they resented the fact that a grant of four hundred pounds per annum was given to the Pictou Academy of the Presbyterians.

It is probable that the more liberal views of Anglican laymen, less insulated from currents of public opinion, contributed to the breaking down of the provincialism which assumed that the Church of England in the colonies should be as the Church of England in England. Anglican laymen in the legislative council in Nova Scotia who were in favour of assisting Pictou Academy stated that they considered that "the best interests of that Church will be consulted by manifesting a spirit of liberality to our fellow Christians who dissent from us—that even polity, independent of higher motives, dictates to us as a minority, the advantage of conciliating the dissenters."²³ A new attitude is indicated in a statement in the *Church Herald*, which is quoted with approval in William A. Foster's *Canada First*:

Let the Church in Canada keep the most grateful recognition of her origin, and cherish her spiritual connection with the Church of the Mother Country. But she must remember that she is herself the Church, not of England, but of Canada, and that she will have to draw her life from the soil in which she is planted, and adapt herself to the circumstances and exigencies of her actual position.²⁴

This is a far cry from the original position of many of the first representatives of the Church of England in the Canadian provinces. It reflects a change which had come about through the development of a more realistic attitude towards the situation in which that church had to work in Canada.

A similar erosion of provincial angularities had taken place in the Church of Scotland and among the other Presbyterian groups at work in Canada. A minister of the Kirk synod, when arguing in 1867 for practice of private communion services, noted that many modifications of Scottish practices had already been made in the Canadian church. He pointed out that in 1862 the Canadian synod had taken a step in advance of every Presbyterian church in the empire in permitting congregations to use instrumental music in services of public worship. It had departed from Scottish precedents, too, in providing religious services at the burial of the dead: "It is a rule of our church . . . that at the burial of the dead no prayers shall be offered at the place of interment. The law works well enough in Scotland where it is universally observed. . . . But does the Law work well in the Colony? It works so ill that in many places it is utterly disregarded."²⁵ He realized that the Presbyterian churches here were working in a new situation where they enjoyed no monopolies, and in which it was "hurtful for a single church to go in the teeth of the Christian sentiments of all others."

23. *Ibid.*, p. 336.

24. Note in *Canada First: A Memorial to the Late William A. Foster* (Toronto: Hunter Rose & Co., 1890), p. 40.

25. Letter of John Hay, in *The Presbyterian*, November, 1867, p. 330.

IV

In these negative processes we may see the beginnings of a spirit of nationalism in the Canadian churches. Through these negative processes the churches of British origin were prepared for the stage in which they could become national churches. The development in them of a Canadian point of view was aided by the heroic efforts of the churches to raise up and train a native ministry, and by their equally heroic efforts to maintain a periodical press to give information concerning their work and to give expression to a Canadian viewpoint on problems where their interests were involved. Through these periodicals the Canadian churches not only had instruments for self-expression, but organs through which they exerted a considerable influence on the shaping of Canadian public opinion. It may be noted in passing that the first efforts to maintain periodical publications met with a good deal of indifference, and that the first efforts to train a native ministry met, in some instances, with actual hostility.

With the exception of the Secession churches of the Maritimes the Presbyterians made a slow beginning in recruiting and training men for the ministry. The ministers of the Kirk in Nova Scotia looked with disdain upon the graduates of Pictou Academy. They came, said George Patterson, "with that contempt which it was customary then, and long after for old country people to entertain of everything colonial." "The idea of training some of the natives of the backwoods for ministers seemed to them supremely ridiculous, and when they commenced preaching they decried them in the strongest terms."²⁶ They maintained what was called "The Young Men's Scheme" in which funds were raised to send candidates for the ministry to be trained in Scottish universities. Even after the founding of Queen's, when provision was grudgingly made for the application of funds raised in this way for candidates to take their training in Kingston, the majority of candidates were persuaded to take their training in Scotland.

When deputies of the Scottish Secession visited Upper Canada in 1846 they gave the impression that they looked sceptically upon the attempt to train men for the ministry in the recently founded Academy at London. They gave the impression that the Canadian church would be much better advised to exert its energies in attempting to recruit ministers in Scotland. William Proudfoot, in a letter addressed to the deputies, stated that it was simply impossible to expect that the Canadian church should receive an adequate supply of ministers from Scotland. Even if sufficient numbers could be obtained they would not serve the church here as effectively as men reared and trained in the Canadian church. Men trained here, he pointed out, "have more of the native character than imported preachers, and their habits are more Canadian." Aware that the deputies may have questioned his competence to teach all the subjects of the theological curriculum, as well as being minister of a church, managing a farm, and editing a magazine, he

26. G. Patterson, *History of the County of Pictou*, p. 343.

pointed out that even the Scottish system of training men for the ministry left much to be desired:

But I may enquire, is the whole cumbrous machinery of a Scotch college the only thing by which men may be educated? Must a six months course of lectures, heard only once, and half of them not worth hearing, form the only means by which Philosophy, Logic, or anything else must be taught? Is it not a fact that the grand point displayed in these lectures is the talent displayed by the Professor? It is a matter of moonshine whether the students understand it or not. No man will get anything more from these lectures than the merest smattering.²⁷

After describing caustically his own experience in attending the lectures of Dugald Stewart, and his course in the Divinity Hall which began with sanctification and ended he knew not where, he concluded that this mode of education could be improved on in Canada, "or anywhere from Nootka Sound to Terra del Fuego." The London Academy was permitted to continue its work. Through this, and other seminaries established by the Protestant denominations, men were trained for the building up of Canadian churches.

Through these processes, some negative, and some positive in their character, the Protestant churches at work in Canada put down their roots and developed a national character. By the time Confederation of the provinces was effected they had achieved an autonomy which permitted them to adapt themselves to the Canadian situation. They were in a position to unify their denominational organizations on a national basis corresponding to the political unity achieved in the new Dominion. They were able to cope imaginatively and effectively with the new problems by an expanding frontier in the west and north. The Canadian churches were eventually able to say, like the Canadian citizen:

My roots are in this soil.

Whatever good or bad, what vain hope or mighty triumph lies in you,
That good or bad, that destiny is in me. . . .

In all your folly and your strength I share,
And all your beauty is my heritage.

27. William Proudfoot to David Anderson, 1846.