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THE IRISH QUESTION IN CANADA:
IRELAND, THE IRISH AND CANADIAN POLITICS,
1880-1922

by

DAVID SHANAHAN, M.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
March 15, 1989
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ABSTRACT

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Irish were the largest ethnic group in Ontario, the second largest, after the French Canadians, in Quebec, and were recognised at Government level as being a major political and social force in the Dominion of Canada. Yet by the turn of the century, the Irish appear to have been subsumed in an Anglo-Saxon Canada which exhibited little recognition of an Irish presence in the social and cultural make-up of the country. The absence of a distinct Irish-Canadian segment in modern Canadian society, in contrast to the Irish-Americans to the south, evidences an undeniable process of assimilation which affected the Irish in Canada. Assimilation, however, is not a process that readily lends itself to historical analysis, since it is primarily a socio-psychological phenomenon which affects people individually.

It is the purpose of this thesis, accordingly, to trace this process as it is displayed in the involvement of the Irish in Canada with the question of Irish Home Rule from 1880 to 1922. The starting point was chosen as it marked the visit to Canada of Charles Stewart Parnell, a visit which galvanised the Irish population of Canada to become involved in the Irish Question. In 1922 the Irish Free State was established, thereby providing, to a certain extent, an answer to the Irish Question. By that time, the Irish in Canada had found themselves isolated from events in Ireland, events which redefined what it meant to be Irish in Ireland itself. It is the conclusion of this writer that the

decline in Irish Canadian involvement in the Irish Question between the mid-1890's and 1922 reflected a parallel decline in the degree to which the Irish in Canada identified with Ireland and Irish issues. The level of commitment to the Irish Question in Canada, and the nature of that commitment, changed with the effectiveness of the assimilation process itself, and can therefore be used to provide glimpses into that process in Canada during this period.

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My interest in history was inspired in the very beginning by the knowledge and library of my grandfather, whose memory I value: John Hamilton.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: TERMS OF IDENTITY

The social scientist today, when examining social history, must not only consider the history of the politically successful and hence dominant groups, or to consider stability as the norm of society but must also consider the position of minorities and their influence in the processes of conflict and accommodation at work in changing societies.(1)

It is a truism that history is written by the victors, the dominant group in a given society. The voices of the minorities are often lost to history because traditionally history has only been concerned with those who were perceived to be the decision makers, the power brokers, the ones responsible for the official records of society.

Like the social scientist, the social historian must beware of the pitfalls involved in trying to examine a society without taking into account the influence and role of the minority group or groups in that society. The other danger in examining the history of a society, as George De Vos has pointed out, is that one can treat the subject in a false context. Any society is in a constant state of change over time, and any attempt to examine it

(1) George De Vos, "Ethnic Pluralism: Conflict and Accommodation", in George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross, eds., Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change. [Palo Alto, Mayfield, 1975], p. 7.

in a given period of its development must recognise that fact. As De Vos says, conflict, and accommodation to change and new factors, are the norm in society. Stability is incompatible with a living, evolving society. Therefore, the social historian has a responsibility to study the role and influence of minority groups in society, in the context of change and conflict, in order to achieve a more comprehensive picture of that society.

In this regard it is instructive to examine the Irish Catholic population of Canada in the period 1880-1922. Irish immigration into British North America only started after 1815. Between 1828 and 1848, more than 440,000 people went from Ireland to the North American Colonies.(1) The Great Famine of 1845-8 led to a huge influx of Irish immigrants in Canada and the United States. Between 1845 and 1855, over two million people arrived in North America from Ireland.(2) By 1880, out of a total Canadian population of almost four-and-a-half million, those of Irish origin numbered one million, with 185,526 of Irish birth included in that figure.(3) The Irish were the largest ethnic group in every city in Canada, with the exception of Montreal and Quebec,

(1) W.F. Adams, Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World from 1815 to the Famine, [New York, 1967], p. 413-4. Data derived from charts.

(2) F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, [London, 1971], p. 32.

(3) Census of Canada, 1880-1, Vol. IV, p. 11.

where they were outnumbered only by the French-Canadians.(1) In spite of their apparent strength of numbers, the Irish were nowhere the dominant group in Canadian society. Indeed, by the end of the nineteenth century, the predominant ideology in Canada held that the Dominion was an Anglo-Saxon nation with Anglo-Saxon institutions, traditions and structures to which new arrivals were expected to conform.(2) Thus, the idea of Anglo-conformity, which held sway in Canada at the end of the nineteenth century, and is often accepted today, seemed completely to ignore the Irish "fact" of Canadian society. Well has one historian asked "whatever happened to the Irish?".(3)

Part of the reason for the disappearance of the Irish has to do with their division along religious lines. Irish Protestants, in general, already saw themselves as being different from their Catholic compatriots. They were British rather than Celtic. The religious label symbolised much more than religious differences. The Irish Catholics were a community quite distinct from Irish Protestants, or the "Scots-Irish", as they preferred to call themselves.

This thesis will examine the ethnic characteristics of the Irish in Canada and the way in which these characteristics

(1) Ibid., p. 14.

(2) Howard Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century", in R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith, eds., Readings in Canadian History: Post-Confederation, [Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1982], p. 125-6.

(3) Donald Akenson, The Irish In Ontario, [Toronto. 1984], p. 3.

changed over time as reflected by Irish involvement with the Irish Question in Canada. To do so, it is important to define the characteristics of ethnicity and see how they apply to the Irish in Canada. Sociologists have found it impossible to agree on a definition of ethnicity, but De Vos comes close when he says that:

An ethnic group is a self-perceived group who hold in common a set of traditions not shared by others with whom they are in contact. Such traditions typically include "folk" religious beliefs and practices, language, a sense of historical continuity, and a common ancestry or place of origin. The group's actual history often trails off into legend or mythology, which includes some concept of an unbroken biological-genetic generational continuity, sometimes regarded as giving special characteristics to the group.(1)

This is a remarkably accurate description of Irish Catholics at the end of the nineteenth century. Their religion, which differed in many ways from orthodox Roman Catholicism, was a curious blend of "folk" religion and superstition closely linked in their thinking with their past, their language and traditions. Their history was intimately tied to the island of Ireland and went back into the dim mists of time to the myths of the Red Branch Knights, Cuchulainn and the Fianna. In short, the Irish Catholics saw themselves as being quite distinct from Irish Protestants, who were perceived as being 'foreign' in fundamental ways. In De Vos' definition, they were a distinct ethnic group.

The same cannot be said of Irish Protestants. Their ethnic

(1) De Vos, p. 9.

identity was neither as clear nor as homogeneous as that of the Catholics. Under the terms of De Vos' definition, Irish Protestants were divided in their religious traditions and practices, sense of historical continuity, ancestry and place of origin. Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians were often as antagonistic towards one another as they were towards Catholics. Their histories were different and often marked by interdenominational conflict. Anglicans were often of Anglo-Irish ancestry, Presbyterians traced their roots back to Scotland via Ulster. Within these denominational lines, Irish Protestants may be considered as part of wider groups defined along religious lines, but they had no ethnic integrity.

While this sense of ethnicity was true of Irish Catholics in Ireland, it became even more pronounced among the Irish Catholics abroad. Kirby Miller has written on the importance of the concept of exile among the Irish and of the impact this concept had on Irish emigrants in the United States.(1) Miller explains that, for the Irish, leaving Ireland was equated with exile. Being away from home was to be an exile, uprooted and dispossessed. Whether one left Ireland as a political refugee, through eviction, or simply to find a better life elsewhere, the emigrant was an exile. The concept was even ensconced in the Irish language, where there was no word for "traveller", he could only

(1) Kirby Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, [Chicago, 1984]. See also Miller, David Doyle and Bruce Bolling, "Emigrants and Exiles: Irish cultures and Irish emigration to North America, 1790-1922", Irish Historical Studies, Vol. 22, 1980, pp. 97-125.

be described as "dibeartach", "direabhach", or "deorai", which meant respectively "one who is banished", "one who is homeless", and "an exile". For the Irish emigrant, emigration was an evil, a compulsive thing.(1)

The experience of emigration was further complicated for the Irish Catholics who came to North America. When examining this experience "the crucial question is the priority given to competing loyalties, for, depending on that priority, a person's social relationships will tend to be quite different".(2) Such was the case for those Irish who went to either the United States or Canada. For the Irish Catholics in America, there was the experience of nativism and discrimination. They were forced to turn in on themselves for mutual support and protection in the face of "Know-Nothing" opposition. Thus, their sense of "Irishness" was strengthened and their hatred for the perceived cause of their plight was hardened. Since they were exiles because, as they saw it, of the results of English conquest of their homeland, the target of their anger was the British Empire in all its forms.(3) In addition, they were made to feel that they deserved such discrimination as they experienced since they had failed to free their country from the British conqueror, as

(1) Miller, Doyle and Bolling, p. 103.

(2) De Vos, p. 11.

(3) For a discussion of Irish-American nationalism, see Thomas Brown, Irish-American Nationalism, 1870-1890, [Philadelphia and New York, 1966], and William D'Arcy, The Fenian Movement in the United States, [Washington, 1947].

the Americans had. Americans considered that this failure displayed a racial weakness, a Celtic failing which in turn became a rationale for anti-Irish activity. Nativists did not want Irish Catholic weakness to undermine the robust energies of the great Republic.

The social relationships of Irish-Americans, therefore, tended to be centred on their Irishness, rather than on their new nationality as Americans. Hence the evolution of the Irish-American community of the nineteenth century. It was difficult for the Irish in the United States to give their primary loyalty to that country in the face of discrimination. This strengthened, and distorted, their loyalty to Ireland.

For the Irish in Canada, however, things were different. The level of discrimination experienced in Canada was neither as violent, nor as pervasive, as that found south of the border. The Irish in Canada found themselves living under the British Crown, within the British Empire, yet without the penalties and burdens they had known in Ireland. In British North America, the Irish discovered that loyalty to the British Crown need not be incompatible with their ethnic identity. The experience of the Fenian years, from 1865 until 1870, forced the Irish to find a solution to the "crucial question" of "the priority given to conflicting loyalties". Were they to be Irish first, and support the Fenians against the British Crown in Canada? Or were they to accept that their primary loyalty was to Canada? The choice was forced on them by the Fenian invasions of 1866 and 1870, and

their choice was to defend Canada. By doing so, their path of evolution as an ethnic group grew even further away from that of the Irish in the United States.(1)

However, this choice made under duress between 1866 and 1870, and in many ways confirmed by the killing of Thomas D'Arcy McGee by Fenians in 1868, was only the beginning of a long road for the Irish Catholics of Canada. Being Irish, they were still very aware of their past and their roots, even in the context of the New Nationality. As De Vos says, "ethnicity...is, in its narrowest sense a feeling of continuity with the past, a feeling that is maintained as an essential part of one's self-definition".(2) The primary loyalty of the Irish in Canada may have been to Canada, but their interest in Ireland had not disappeared. It remained an essential part of who they perceived themselves to be; and this became apparent in 1880 when the Irish Question entered into Canadian political calculations.

The importance of the Irish Question in the development of Canadian political and consitutional life stems from this sense of continuity with the past, in conjunction with the numerical strength of the Irish Catholics of Canada. George De Vos defines the main orientations that can be taken by an individual's sense of belonging.

In his primary sense of belonging, an individual can lean toward one of three

(1) David Shanahan, "Irish Catholic Journalists and the New Nationality in Canada, 1858-1870", unpublished M.A. thesis, Lakehead University, 1984, Chapters 5-6.

(2) De Vos, p. 17.

orientations: (1) a present-oriented concept of membership as citizens in a particular state or as a member of a specific occupational group; (2) a future-oriented membership in a transcendent, universal religious or political sense; or (3) a past-oriented concept of the self as defined by one's ethnic identity, that is, based on ancestry and origin. It is our contention that the maintenance of this latter form of identity is as powerful as class conflict in the shaping of human social history.(1)

In 1880 the Irish in Canada were in a confused state. Their primary sense of belonging, as defined by De Vos, was, in fact, leaning toward all three orientations. They were growing into their membership as citizens of a new nation, a membership for which they had put aside much that was precious to them of their former allegiance to Ireland. Yet they also retained a past-oriented concept defined by their ethnic origin. They were still very consciously Irish, an identity that was recognised by Canadian society at large as well as in the political sharing of power. It was understood that there always be an Irish Catholic representative in the Canadian Cabinet during the late-nineteenth century.(2) And in their shared Catholicism, which was itself a powerful force in the definition and maintenance of their ethnic identity, the Irish Catholics enjoyed a future-oriented membership in an organization which had both a religious and political nature.

(1) Ibid., p. 8.

(2) National Archives of Canada (henceforward NAC), John A. Macdonald Papers, Macdonald to John O'Connor, Dec. 26, 1870; Macdonald to James G. Moylan, Feb. 16, 1871.

Today, the Irish Catholics of Canada have ceased to be an identifiable ethnic group under these definitions. There is no Irish Catholic political organization; no closely-linked Irish Catholic social grouping; no need for an Irish Catholic political representative among the political parties. In answer to the historian who asked, "whatever happened to the Irish?", this thesis would say that the process of assimilation and accommodation was completed decades ago. As the Irish Catholics in Canada became more and more involved with the Irish Question from 1880-1922, they grew slowly into a present-oriented view of themselves as members of the Canadian nation. They gradually left behind the past-oriented concept of being members of the nation of Ireland through and because of their involvement with the Home Rule movement of those decades. Since a "feeling of continuity with the past" is "an essential part of one's [ethnic] self-definition", then the growing divergence between the evolution of Irish independence and the development of Canadian independence gradually diluted the ethnic self-consciousness of the Irish in Canada.

This thesis will trace the rise and fall of the Home Rule movement in Canada and describe the changes which accompanied these events in the nature of Irish identity in Canada, the United States and Ireland itself. As De Vos states, stability is not the norm for societies. Conflict and accommodation are the life-blood of any society. The demand for Home Rule for Ireland created conflict in all three countries, and affected the

development of their societies. Each changed in its own unique way, and this Irish North Atlantic Triangle is at the centre of this analysis of the evolution of ethnic identity over time.

The Context:

In order to examine the effects of the Home Rule movement in Canada in the last decades of the nineteenth century, we must begin by painting in the background to the events of 1880. In that year, many strands of Irish political life came together for the first time in a way that was to dictate the direction of the Irish Question for the next thirty-six years, until a short-lived rising in Dublin at Easter in 1916 forced another sharp change of direction. First of all, we will examine the situation among the Irish in the United States, where the initiative for a "New Departure" had its beginnings.

Irish-American nationalism, from 1858 until the late 1860's had centred on the Fenian Brotherhood. This, the first Irish-American republican organization, had split in 1865 over strategy. One section wished to ship men and arms to Ireland to lead an uprising there; the other wanted to invade Canada to force Britain to negotiate with them over Ireland. It was this latter group that caused the Irish in Canada such heart-searching from 1865-70. The initial split, however, was simply the first of a continuous catalogue of divisions and scandals which rendered the Fenians almost completely ineffective even before

their last farcical attempt on Canada in 1870.(1) In 1867 another Irish-American organization was founded in New York in an attempt to circumvent the splintering tendencies of Fenianism. Clan Na Gael was to have a lasting impact on Irish nationalism until after Irish independence in 1922. It was designed to be less easily penetrated by spies than the Fenians (which had British spies in the highest decision-making ranks). The organization was dedicated to the overthrow of British rule in Ireland.

The Clan's business was to keep a firm grip on Irish-American opinion, to keep it "right" on the national issue, to organise anti-English American opinion, and unceasingly to combat the proposals, appearing frequently in the press, for an Anglo-American rapprochement.(2)

In January 1871 the ranks of the Clan were immensely strengthened by the arrival in the United States of a number of Fenians released from British prisons by an amnesty. These men had been sentenced for their role in the Fenian rising of 1867 in Ireland. They included John Devoy, who became the most influential leader in the ranks of the Irish in America. In April 1876 the Clan arranged the dramatic rescue of six imprisoned Fenians in Freemantle, Australia, thus cementing their position and efficiency in the eyes of their fellow-countrymen in the United States. By 1879 John Devoy and Clan na Gael were the

(1) D'Arcy, Chapter 6.

(2) P.S. O'Hegarty, "Introduction" to William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan, eds., Devoy's Post Bag, 1871-1928, Vol. 1, [Dublin, Fallon, 1948], p. xxxi.

undisputed leaders of Irish-American nationalists and a potential store of funds for an Irish movement.(1)

Signs of the rise of such a movement in Ireland were few and far between in the 1870's. After the failure of the 1867 rebellion, which was not much more than a minor scuffle one wet night, the leadership of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), as the Irish branch of the Fenians were known, were almost all arrested and imprisoned. Upon release in 1871, as we have seen, most of these men went into exile in the United States and it seemed that militant republicanism in Ireland was dead.

In fact, the most active group of Irishmen in the 1870's were to be found, not in the basements plotting rebellion, but in the British House of Commons plotting obstruction. Ever since the Act of Union of 1801, there had been Members of Parliament sitting at Westminster for Irish constituencies. However, these were far from being sympathisers of Fenianism and were generally content to follow the habits of British members and ally themselves with other members on the basis of mutual interests, rather than along national lines. British parliamentary evolution, however, was to have its effect on the Irish members. With Catholic Emancipation in 1829, the way was open for the majority of the Irish people to play a political role once the franchise was widened sufficiently. With the Great Reform Act of 1832 and later similar changes, the potential existed for a revolution in Irish representation at Westminster. The great

(1) Brown, p. 65.

impetus for this revolution was given, albeit unwittingly, by Isaac Butt in 1871.(1)

Faced with the economic collapse of Ireland since the Act of Union, Butt had come to the conclusion that the only future for Ireland lay with a local legislature. Home Rule for Ireland became a slogan which summed up the answer to the Irish Question for many in Ireland and Britain. Butt was no revolutionary; although he organised a loose association among a number of Irish members, his method of gaining justice for Ireland was to impress the British Government with the good behaviour and gentlemanly bearing of Irish members. Others believed in different methods. Joseph Biggar, a member for Belfast, was a rough merchant with little time for the niceties of British Parliamentary procedures. He decided that the only way to get the attention of the British Government was to make it impossible for them to ignore the Irish members.(2) He began a policy of obstruction at Westminster which often brought the House of Commons to a standstill, as Biggar and a few supporters used the rules of the House to slow down and draw out debates on every imaginable topic. Their record was keeping the House in continuous session for forty-one hours in an attempt to prevent the passing of a Coercion Bill for Ireland, before the Speaker broke with venerated tradition and

(1) David Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, [London, 1964] is a fine account of the rise of the Home Rule Party at Westminster.

(2) T.W.Moody, Davitt and the Irish Revolution: 1846-1882, [Oxford, 1981], p. 129.

introduced Closure to the Commons of the United Kingdom.(1)

But it was neither Butt nor Biggar who eventually gathered this loose association and forged it into a powerful political weapon and the first modern political party in British history. That role fell to a quiet-spoken, Protestant landlord from Wicklow who had allied himself with Biggar and who finally took over the leadership of the Irish members on Butt's death in 1880. Charles Stewart Parnell was to change the nature of the Irish Question and bring it into the centre of Canadian public life.

While Parnell was working his way into the leadership of the Irish Party at Westminster, another Irishman was organising in a completely different milieu. Michael Davitt had been imprisoned for Fenian activities and was released in 1877, rejoining the secret IRB soon after.(2) During a tour of the United States in 1878, Davitt had long talks with the Clan leader, John Devoy, in which they discussed the possibility of co-operating with the Irish members at Westminster. This was a huge departure from the traditional methods of republican nationalists. The basic ideology of the Fenians, the IRB and Clan na Gael was diametrically opposed to the very existence of Irish representatives in the British Parliament. But this "New Departure", as it came to be known, was no sudden experiment. It had been considered for a number of years before Davitt's talks

(1) Robert Kee, The Green Flag, [London, 1972], p. 378.

(2) T.W. Moody, Davitt and the Irish Revolution: 1846-1882, [Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981], is an excellent account of Michael Davitt and the rise of the Land League.

with Devoy, and the plight of the people of Ireland in 1878 made some new approach to the Irish question essential.

The leaders of Clan na Gael had been watching developments at Westminster closely, and they were impressed by Parnell and his supporters. Parnell had actually met with a number of Clan leaders since 1877 and both sides felt they could work together.(1) Devoy was open to such an arrangement by then, since he had been forced to recognise the low status of the IRB-Clan element in Ireland through a talk he had had with the Russian Ambassador to the United States. The Clan had been hoping that tensions between Russia and Britain over the Balkans between 1875 and 1878 would lead to open hostilities. He had approached the Russian Ambassador in Washington to seek aid from Russia for an IRB campaign against Britain in support of Russia. He was turned down bluntly by the Ambassador, who informed him that the IRB did not have the support of the Irish people to warrant Russian aid.(2) This assessment was supported by events in Ireland, where the Home Rule movement had almost destroyed the IRB. In 1873 the IRB decided to give Butt five year's trial, to see if he could achieve anything in Parliament. Many ex-Fenians joined the Home Rule cause and a number were elected as M.P.'s, in particular John O'Connor Power and Frank Hugh O'Donnell, both

(1) Moody, p. 139.

(2) Moody, p. 137; Devoy's Post Bag, Vol. 1, p. 209; Brown, p. 66-7.

of whom were on the IRB Supreme Council.(1) Extremists in the IRB were always uneasy with such an arrangement, however, and they succeeded in getting the IRB to reject the Home Rule party in 1876. Unfortunately for them, Home Rule had by then gained popularity in Ireland and among most of the ex-Fenian M.P.'s, and the IRB was split over the issue. The division within their ranks, and the failure to recognise the popular nature of Home Rule, made the IRB practically irrelevant in Ireland by the time Davitt met Devoy.(2)

Parnell, on his part, was an extremely astute politician. Some have held that he was, in fact, an indispensable figure at this point in Irish history, and that without him the New Departure and all that flowed from it would have been unthinkable.(3) He had already seen the importance of the organising capabilities of the ex-Fenians and the IRB. He clearly recognised the potential support available through Clan na Gael in the United States. Most importantly, he was able to give all sides the impression that he was in basic agreement with whatever they believed. It seems clear that Devoy and the Clan hoped to use Parnell for their ends; it is equally clear that Parnell

(1) Moody, p. 131; Kee, p. 367.

(2) Moody, p. 133-4.

(3) Kee, p. 364-5; Conor Cruise O'Brien, Parnell and His Party, [Oxford, 1957] and F.S.L. Lyons, The Irish Parliamentary Party, 1890-1910, [London, 1951] are the authoritative works on Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party.

never allowed himself to be used.(1)

The sequence of events which finally brought Parnell, Davitt and Devoy together in a formal alliance was the drift to catastrophe in Irish agriculture from 1877-1879. Climate and economic conditions combined to produce the spectre of another Great Famine in Ireland. After a prosperous decade, during which rents remained steady and evictions slowed, Ireland was once more faced with disaster, hunger and large-scale evictions of impoverished tenants unable to pay climbing rents on sinking incomes.(2) Short-term solutions were possible, but longer-term answers were essential. In 1870 Gladstone had introduced a Land Act in order to help change the archaic and feudal Irish land system. It had obviously been inadequate; but what it had done was open the way for further government intervention against the rights of landlords and property. Michael Davitt and John Devoy had recognised by the late 1870's that mass support for Irish nationalism in Ireland would only come about when the mass of Irish people believed that nationalists had something to offer them. And what they needed was drastic changes in the land holding system in Ireland. In 1879 Davitt returned to his home county of Mayo and began to organise the tenants there.(3) Organising to resist increases in rents, the people of Mayo achieved a number of victories. Davitt called public meetings in

(1) Moody, p. 325-6.

(2) Moody, p. 328-332; Kee, p. 366, 371.

(3) Moody, p. 271-327.

the county at which Parnell agreed to speak. The leader of the Home Rule party at Westminster spoke in Westport in June, 1879, in spite of the public opposition of the Catholic hierarchy:

You must show them that you intend to hold a firm grip of your homesteads and lands. You must not allow yourselves to be dispossessed as your fathers were dispossessed in 1847....I hope...that on those properties where the rents are out of all proportion to the times a reduction may be made and that immediately. If not, you must help yourselves, and the public opinion of the world will stand by you and support you in your struggle to defend your homesteads.(1)

In the years from 1879 to 1883, when the Irish Question centred on the land situation, the Irish tenants put into practice the advice they were given. Whereas in 1878 the number of agrarian outrages in Ireland totalled 301, this figure leaped incredibly to 863 in 1879, 2,585 in 1880, 4,439 in 1881 and 3,433 in 1882.(2) This was by far the most serious outbreak of violence in Ireland since the Famine, and, at its height, accounted for over half of all crimes committed in the country. This level of crime reflected the increase in evictions taking place in those years. As distress spread, rents went unpaid and the number of evictions increased the general distress of the people. Evictions in the late 1860's and early 1870's had been numbered in the hundreds per year. In 1878 980 took place. But that number rose to 1,238 in 1879, and never fell below 3,000 per

(1) Kee, p. 372.

(2) Joseph V. O'Brien, William O'Brien and the Course of Irish Politics, 1881-1918, [Los Angeles, 1976], Appendix A, p. 250.

year from 1881 until 1888. The worst year was 1882 when 5,201 families were evicted from their homes.(1) Such distress galvanised the tenants and support for the new Land League was strong and committed.

The agitation in Mayo was so effective that in October 1879 the National Land League of Ireland was founded in Dublin. Charles Stewart Parnell was elected President, Michael Davitt and Joseph Biggar were officers of the League. One of the resolutions passed at the founding convention asked Parnell to travel to North America to request assistance from "our exiled countrymen and other sympathisers".(2)

The Irish National Land League was a joint effort of constitutional and militant nationalism. Parnell had gathered under his leadership the Home Rule movement, ex-Fenians and Clan na Gael, all united on placing the land issue at the forefront of the Irish Question. In the short term, the Land War, which was "fought" between August 1880 and February 1881,(3) consolidated this union of divergent strands of Irish opinion. In the longer term, however, the Irish Question was broadened to include definitions of what an independent, or autonomous, Ireland would be. As the Irish came closer to self-rule, they had to consider what exactly being "Irish" meant.

But it was the British General Election of 1874 that really

(1) Ibid., Appendix B, p. 253.

(2) Kee, p. 373; Moody, p. 334-6.

(3) Moody, Chapter XI.

brought Home Rule to the notice of the Irish in Canada. This election was the first held since the introduction of the secret ballot in 1872, and it proved a huge success for Isaac Butt and his Home Rulers. They elected sixty of Ireland's 103 members; and, although not all sixty were sincerely committed to Home Rule, the election meant the end of the Liberal Party in Ireland.(1) For the first time since the Union, the majority of Ireland's representatives at Westminster were there as Irishmen seeking an Irish Legislature, and not merely members of a British political organisation. In August, 1875, the Secretary of the Home Rule Confederation in Ireland, M.W. Kirwan, was sent to Canada to organise support for, and branches of, the Home Rule League.(2)

With the founding of the National Land League in 1879, branches were also organised in Canadian cities to raise funds for the tenants' organisation in Ireland. By 1880, there were at least two Land League branches in the Montreal area(3) as well as a number in Toronto. These were the two cities where Parnell spoke on his visit in 1880. Irish Canadian involvement with Home Rule and the Land League had already begun by 1880; but the arrival of Charles Stewart Parnell in March of that year would serve as a focus for a resurgence in ethnic consciousness for

(1) Thornley, p. 179.

(2) Moody, p. 127.

(3) National Library of Ireland, Irish National Land League Papers, MSS. 8291.

Irish Catholics in the Dominion.

CHAPTER TWO

UNITED IRISHMEN

Montreal had seldom seen the like of it before. Twenty thousand people watched the procession as sixteen Irish societies of the city, most with their own band playing loudly as they marched, paraded through the streets. Six thousand men escorted a sleigh drawn by six white horses from the railway station to a local hotel.(1) The centre of such unusual activity was a tall, handsome man who had only that year attained to the leadership of the Home Rule party in Ireland. Charles Stewart Parnell was at the beginning of a decade of power such as no Irish leader had ever known. He was already the symbol of Irish nationalism for the Irish Catholics of Canada, a remarkable feat for a Protestant landlord from Wicklow. He had come to Montreal from Toronto where he had spoken to a large and enthusiastic meeting. Parnell had stirred the fires of Irish emotions with his speech:

I hold that every nation is able to govern itself and that although the English people may be able to govern themselves, they have conclusively proved by the experience of the last seven centuries that they were not able to govern any other nation (applause); so you see we have acted upon English public opinion in some very unusual way to direct attention to the Irish question.(2)

(1) The information on Parnell's visit to Montreal comes from the Montreal Gazette, March 9 and 10, 1880.

(2) Irish Canadian (Toronto), March 10, 1880.

This kind of talk was perfectly designed to appeal to Irish Canadians. It let them indulge in some harmless merriment at the expense of the English, and gave them a sense of pride and renewed interest in their native land. Harmless it was, in the sense that it was non-violent and not likely to lead to violence: a welcome aspect indeed. Parnell's "very unusual way" of attracting attention to the Irish question was through obstructing the House of Commons.

Parnell's visit to Canada was cut short when word arrived that Gladstone had dissolved the English Parliament and an election had been called. The 1880 election was to be a major turning point in Parnell's career, and in fact in the history of the Irish Question itself. He would re-enter the House of Commons with eighty members dedicated to the campaign for Home Rule, committed to the leadership of Parnell, and bound by oath to vote and act as a unit. It was the birth of Britain's first modern political party, a party that would dominate Irish political life for thirty-eight years.

Much came from Parnell's visit to Canada in March of 1880. For Parnell himself, and for Ireland, came one highly important, albeit symbolic event. In Montreal Tim Healy, Parnell's secretary for the tour, rose to introduce his leader, and moved by the reception Parnell had received in the city, used a phrase that would echo through the years and become the acknowledged title of Charles Stewart Parnell: he called him "the Uncrowned

King of Ireland".(1) The title summed up Parnell's stature in the hearts of Irish Catholics, and gave him tremendous authority in Ireland which would be essential in the years ahead.

Parnell's visit to Canada, brief as it was, came as the climax to a fund-raising campaign for the relief of Irish distress; and by linking such relief to the Irish Question it gave the campaign a political aspect that was important to the future of the issue in Canada. The Irish Question had slipped into Canadian life under cover of the land problem in Ireland; which was, of course, what the New Departure was all about. Irish Catholics all over the Dominion organised resolutions and, more to the point, collections in aid of relief of distress in Ireland. In Montreal, over \$6,0000 was raised in January 1879 alone, mostly through Church collections.(2) Altogether, more than \$200,000 was raised in Canada for the relief of distress in Ireland.(3) Significantly, \$100,000 of this came in the form of a grant from the Government of Canada, voted for the purpose in February 1880.(4) This was significant because it was the first time the Canadian Government had expressed itself in any official way on the Irish Question. Significant also because it reflected

(1) R. Barry O'Brien, The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, [New York, 1898], 2 vols, vol. 1, p. 206.

(2) Irish Canadian, January 23 and 28, 1879.

(3) D.C. Lyne, "Irish-Canadian Financial Contributions to the Home Rule Movement in the 1890's", Studia Hibernica, 7, 1967, p. 183.

(4) Lorne Papers, Vol. 1, pp.113-6.

the ability of Irish Catholics in the Dominion to influence the Government to such an extent. But, in fact, this was the first time they had actually successfully organised a political action as a political pressure group since the Dominion was founded. Although their numbers made them a potentially powerful lobby in Canadian political life, especially in the vital province of Ontario, by 1880 the Irish Catholic community had no recognised leader, no clear identification with either of the two political parties, and were apparently helpless in the face of political events.

In the 1860's, Thomas D'Arcy McGee was recognised as the leading Irish Catholic political figure in the country. In collaboration with John A. Macdonald, and using the mouthpiece of the Canadian Freeman, a Toronto newspaper he had helped found, McGee rallied the Irish of British North America against the threat of Fenianism.(1) Irish Catholics in British North America had never before been so clearly identified as a specific voting power as they were after McGee's arrival in Canada in 1857. He raised the consciousness of that community to a new plane as he strove to involve the Irish in the new nation he envisaged. Above all, he wanted to separate them from their compatriots in the United States along with their Fenian organisation. This he saw as essential to the future safety and wellbeing of the Irish

(1) For a detailed discussion of this period see David Shanahan, "Irish Catholic Journalists and the New Nationality in Canada; 1858-1870", unpublished M.A. thesis, Lakehead University, 1984.

Catholics of the British colonies in North America.(1) However, not every Irish Catholic in Canada considered the Fenians to be such a terrible thing, and opposition to McGee centred on the Irish Canadian, a rival Toronto-based newspaper edited by Patrick Boyle, and on Timothy Warren Anglin, a New Brunswick editor and political power. Because of his identification with the New Nation in the North, however, opposition to McGee was easily seen as disloyalty to the new Dominion, and it was only after McGee's murder in 1868 that his opponents could safely bid for the support of the Irish Catholic community. McGee's stand against Fenianism had split the Irish Catholic community deeply, and since McGee had been so closely associated with John A. Macdonald, those who opposed him, such as Timothy Warren Anglin of New Brunswick and Bernard Devlin of Montreal, tended to align themselves with Macdonald's opponents.(2)

As the Liberal and Conservative parties took shape in the 1870's, attempts were made to organise the Catholic vote on both sides. As early as 1867 a Convention had been called in Toronto to organise a Catholic League in an effort to unite the Catholic vote. James Moylan, McGee's choice as editor of the Canadian Freeman, showed this to be a Liberal plot to garner the Irish vote. The leaders of the conspiracy were Frank Smith, mayor of London, and John O'Donohoe, a barrister and clerk in the

(1) Ibid., p. 124.

(2) Anglin sat as a Liberal M.P. after 1867 and became Speaker of the House of Commons from 1874 to 1878; Devlin also sat as a Liberal M.P. from 1875-1878.

Immigration Department. Frank Smith of London was a successful businessman with large railway interests in the province.(1) O'Donohoe's problem was twofold. First, the Catholic League was too closely identified with the Liberal Party. The main figures in the League were Liberals, such as O'Donohoe, John O'Hanly and Bernard Devlin, and the League was supported openly by such major Liberals as George Brown and Alexander Mackenzie. The second problem for the League was that it appeared to be an attempt to push the Catholic hierarchy out of the leadership of the Catholics of Ontario and replace them with the laymen of the League. This did not meet with the approval of Archbishop Lynch and his colleagues.(2) Nothing daunted, O'Donohoe and Smith, with the support of the Irish Canadian, tried again in 1870, this time being careful to seek the leadership of Archbishop Lynch of Toronto. In the face of this threat, Macdonald turned once again to the old rallying cry of loyalty. Associating the Catholic League with both Fenianism and the anti-Catholicism of George Brown and the Globe, Macdonald wrote to John O'Connor, a prominent Irish Catholic:

I was spoken to while in Toronto two or three times about Mackenzie and Brown's bid for the Catholic support. My reply was simply that the Globe had already indicated unmistakably that the Grits had chosen as their Irish Roman Catholic Representative man T.W. Anglin

(1) Canadian Freeman, 4 and 11 July, 1867. For a detailed analysis of the Catholic League, see Nicholson, Murray W., "The Irish Vote and the Catholic League: Early Ethnic Politics in Victorian Toronto", unpublished paper, 1982.

(2) Nicholson, p. 16-18.

of New Brunswick; and I was quite sure that [the Catholics] would not choose a man like him who is disloyal to the core, who refused to drink the Queen's health or to stand up while "God Save the Queen" was sung; and who is known to be an annexationist at heart. I said that I would not insult them by supposing that they would serve under such a man.(1)

It was a clever line to take. The Catholic League was already uncomfortable with the links many of its leaders had with Fenianism. The Irish Canadian had been identified with that organization since at least 1864; the League's Montreal leader, Bernard Devlin, had opposed D'Arcy McGee in the 1867 election; and Anglin had been badly hurt by allegations of having Fenian sympathies ever since his rivalry with McGee over Confederation.

The other target for Macdonald was Patrick Boyle, editor of the Irish Canadian of Toronto. Boyle had been an opponent of McGee before Confederation, and his support for the Fenians had led to his imprisonment after McGee's murder. However, he had lost favour with the Fenians by the end of 1869 because of his honest reporting of the reasonable treatment accorded to Fenian prisoners in Canadian prisons.(2)

Showing his consummate political skills, Macdonald moved quickly to neutralise the League by sowing disunity among its leadership. In February 1871, he was able to report to James Moylan of the Canadian Freeman:

(1) NAC, John O'Connor Papers, Macdonald to O'Connor, December 26, 1870.

(2) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Letter Book 13, 743, Macdonald to Moylan, December 15, 1869.

We have made Frank Smith a Senator as a sort of Irish Catholic representative in that Branch of the Legislature and John O'Connor acts in the House of Commons.(1)

This double defection to the Conservatives destroyed the credibility of the Catholic League and John O'Donohoe and Boyle of the Irish Canadian were left fuming. The attempt by the Liberals to gain the Irish Catholic vote had failed miserably. By the end of 1872, Macdonald felt secure enough to cut off Government support for Moylan's newspaper, which promptly folded. Moylan was given a job as Governor of Kingston Penitentiary.(2) After O'Donohoe failed to revive the League in 1877, Macdonald made overtures to him, seeking his advice and generally seducing him away from the Liberals. By October 1879, O'Donohoe was suggesting that Boyle might be won over through Government patronage for his newspaper. Frank Smith agreed that "if you could give Boyle the work it would stop thair (sic) opposition".(3) Continuing to woo O'Donohoe, Macdonald wrote in November 1879: I did all I could to help Boyle and the I.C. but the figures were too strong for us. How can I give it a lift? - Would you like a silk gown?(4)

(1) Macdonald to Moylan, 16 February, 1871. J.J. Kenny Papers, Vol. 8, File 7.

(2) Macdonald to Moylan, September 12, 1872. Kenney Papers, Vol. 8, File 7.

(3) O'Donohoe to Macdonald, October 20, 1879, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 255, p. 115389; Smith to Macdonald, Ibid., Vol. 266, p. 120637.

(4) Macdonald to O'Donohoe, November 12, 1879. O'Donohoe Papers, p. 27.

The ease with which Macdonald managed to neutralise O'Donohoe and Smith was remarkable. From being a major threat to his hold on the Irish Catholic vote, they were reduced to the ranks of Macdonald's courted dupes. John O'Donohoe continued to be a power in the Irish Catholic community. When Charles Stewart Parnell appeared in Toronto in 1880, it was O'Donohoe who presided at his meeting, read the letter of welcome and accompanied the "uncrowned King of Ireland" everywhere. There was no doubt in the mind of John A. Macdonald that O'Donohoe was a man to cultivate.(1) In a matter of a few years Macdonald had made followers of the would-be leaders of the Irish Catholic community.

By the beginning of 1880, then, John A. Macdonald could look with some pleasure on his relations with the Irish Catholics of Canada. His grant of money to alleviate Irish distress only served to add to his position. As Moylan had pointed out to him, "it is an ill wind that blows no-one some good". Moylan also noted that Canada would be able to recoup the \$100,000 through sales of wheat to Ireland!(2)

Boyle, however, resisted the charms of Macdonald, using his paper to condemn the Tories for their neglect of Irish Catholics in matters of patronage. He pointed to situations such as that in Kingston, where the Irish Catholics accounted for one-third of

(1) Irish Canadian, March 10, 1880.

(2) Moylan to Macdonald, December 29, 1879. Macdonald Papers, Vol. 363, p. 168535-8.

the population, but held only two of fifteen local appointments.(1) Such statistics made an impression on Boyle's readers and encouraged them to look elsewhere for support. Although the Liberals had gained little from the Catholic League, there were those in the Irish Catholic community who identified their interests with the Grits. One of the founders of the League, J.L.P. O'Hanly of Ottawa, wrote a pamphlet in 1871 asserting that Irish Catholics were by nature Liberals and ought to recognise where their true interests lay. He exposed the hypocrisy of Tories who mouthed platitudes and refused to appoint Irish Catholics to vacant positions in government and judiciary.(2)

O'Hanly's book contained numerous tables indicating the extent to which Irish Catholics were under-represented in Federal and Local appointments. He showed that of 466 appointments made at the Federal level, only 49 positions went to Irish Catholics. Both French Canadian Catholics and Protestants generally held an equal share of the remainder, proving, to O'Hanly, that it was their ethnicity and not their religion that was the cause of discrimination against Irish Catholics.(3)

The Liberal party appear to have financed O'Hanly's work, although they were none too pleased with his verbosity. Mackenzie

(1) Irish Canadian, December 31, 1879.

(2) O'Hanly, J.L.P., The Political Standing of Irish Catholics in Canada A Critical Analysis of its Causes, with Suggestions for its Amelioration. [Ottawa, 1872]

(3) Ibid., p. 24-25.

wrote to him in July, 1872: "The fact is that it was double the size you contemplated and more than double the cost".(1)

O'Hanly was a fierce opponent of the Conservatives. Born in Waterford, Ireland, in 1829, he had come to Canada in 1854 and worked as a civil engineer. He had been President of the St. Patrick's Society of Ottawa in 1867-8, a period when that organization was strongly suspected of having Fenian sympathies.(2) He was a close colleague of John O'Donohoe, to whom he dedicated his pamphlet. His attitude to the Tories was summed up in this passage from that work:

I am not of those who believe that to be a Conservative is to be corrupt, reckless and insensible to the public interest....They honestly believe that Irish Catholics are disloyal, unfaithful and cannot be trusted....This is the reason why they tried with main and might to resist our right to the franchise and every other privilege which we today enjoy.(3)

O'Hanly and Boyle were not alone in condemning the Conservatives for their neglect of Irish Catholic interests. The involvement of the Catholic hierarchy in the Catholic League in 1870 was an indication that they, too, were unhappy with Macdonald's treatment of their flock. However, the Liberals failed to take advantage of this, mostly because their house was not really in

(1) NAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 1, File 1, Mackenzie to O'Hanly, July 25, 1872.

(2) Biographical material on O'Hanly is gleaned from obituary notices and a brief biography by his son, all found in O'Hanly Papers, NAC, MG 29 B11.

(3) O'Hanly, The Political Standing, p. 51.

order either. Irish Catholics in Canada were not easily going to forget that the founder of the Liberal Party, and still a major power therein, was the notorious George Brown of the Toronto Globe. The Tories could point to dozens of editorials in that paper over many years excoriating Catholicism, the Papacy, the hierarchy and everything Catholics held dear. Nor was it felt that such bigotry was confined to Brown himself. The Globe spoke for Liberals in Ontario, and the party was tainted by the reams of abuse coming from the Toronto paper. The Liberal Party was not helped by the rivalry which developed between the Catholic hierarchy and the Catholic League. The developing competition between the secular Catholic leaders among the Irish in Ontario and the ultramontane clergy, especially Archbishop Lynch, has been chronicled by Gerald Stortz and Murray Nicholson.⁽¹⁾ Reflecting the general conflict between liberalism and ultramontaniam of the late nineteenth century, Lynch and his colleagues fought against the encroachments being made by secular political liberals like O'Donohoe and O'Hanly on their traditional power base. John O'Hanly made a clear distinction between the separate spheres in which Catholics operated. In the religious arena, the clergy were authoritative and supreme. However, in politics, they possessed no more insight or wisdom than the average voter, nor should they be encouraged to think

(1) Murray W. Nicholson, "The Catholic Church and the Irish in Victorian Toronto", unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Guelph, 1980. Gerald Stortz, "John Joseph Lynch, Archbishop of Toronto", unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Guelph, 1982, Chapter 4.

otherwise.

[Daniel] O'Connell affected to be Catholic first, Irish after. No intelligent Irishman can subscribe to this debasing doctrine....The Irish race owe little of love or gratitude to Rome.(1)

This attitude obviously made the Catholic clergy uncomfortable, since they prided themselves on their relations with Irish Catholics, which they based on the constant support given by the Catholic Church to the Irish people through all their sufferings. Men like O'Hanly passed this off as a carefully nurtured myth by which the clergy justified their domination of the Irish people.(2)

The Liberals had no better luck winning over Irish Catholics in Quebec, where the second largest concentration of Irish immigrants were found. There, too, the Liberals faced the strong opposition of the ultramontane Catholic hierarchy. From Confederation until the end of the 1880's, Liberals in Quebec fought to dissociate themselves from European liberalism, the pronounced enemy of the Catholic Church according to the Syllabus of Errors published by the Papacy in 1864. Although the Irish Catholics did not always enjoy the best relations with the French Canadian Catholic community, the general atmosphere in Quebec made it difficult for the Liberals to win support in a province tightly controlled by the Conservative party of John A.

(1) NAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 16, File 1. Undated draft letter by O'Hanly.

(2) Ibid.

Macdonald.

The Irish Catholic vote had the potential to be decisive, especially in Ontario. George Brown himself considered that their vote was crucial in at least four constituencies there.(1) Although Macdonald always had an "Irish Catholic Representative man" in the Cabinet, the cynical way in which he chose Frank Smith and John O'Connor to fill the position of spokesmen for that community indicates how little he feared losing their vote to the opposition. Parnell's visit, and the fund-raising campaign in 1880, changed this. An issue had emerged, the Irish Question, which had the power to unite Irish Catholics throughout Canada, and which could transcend normal party allegiances. As it happened, this coincided with attempts Macdonald was making to attract Irish immigrants to Canada as part of his new National Policy on which he had won the general election of 1878.

It was imperative that the Irish Catholics of Canada be controlled, preferably by the Conservative Party. To gain that control, it was necessary for Macdonald to win over both the religious and the political leaders of that community. Since almost two-thirds of the Irish Catholics in Canada lived in Ontario, this made their control by the Conservatives even more vital. The undisputed religious leader of the Catholics of Ontario was Archbishop John Joseph Lynch of Toronto. Not only was he first within the Catholic hierarchy, he was also the man who

(1) NAC, O'Donohoe Papers, George Brown to O'Donohoe, March 1, 1871.

could make or break politicians, as he had demonstrated to the Catholic League. Macdonald considered him the "only one of the R.C. Hierarchy with Fenian tendencies".(1) This made it absolutely essential to get Lynch "on side". Macdonald's plan to woo Lynch was very typical of the man. He attempted to involve Lynch in a scheme to colonize the North West, a basic plank of the National Policy. Macdonald had sent Alexander Galt to England after returning to power in 1878 to convince the Imperial authorities to finance a scheme of emigration to the Canadian North West. As early as November 1880, Galt and Macdonald were linking their immigration scheme with a possible solution to Britain's problems in Ireland. Fewer Irish Catholics in Ireland would mean less agitation there against Britain.(2)

When, in January 1881, Lynch wrote to Macdonald to discuss a colonization scheme he had developed with Bishop Tache of Manitoba, Macdonald saw an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. Macdonald wanted Lynch to arrange to bring Irish Catholics to Canada. Lynch objected, on the grounds that depopulating Ireland of her Catholics would only serve Britain's interests and not those of Ireland. But he did not break off talks. As he smugly wrote to Macdonald in May, 1881: "You are a great politician and I am a great churchman, and you know we

(1) NAC, Lorne Papers, Macdonald to Lorne, July 28, 1882. p. 276-9.

(2) Ibid. Galt to Macdonald, November 18, 1880. p. 183-4.

cannot always agree on every question".(1)

The following month, Macdonald was in England where he had talks with Cardinal Manning, the leading English Catholic ecclesiastic, who agreed with his scheme for Irish emigration to Canada.(2) Lorne had suggested that a Canadian clergyman could be sent to Ireland to gain the cooperation of the Catholic hierarchy there, and Manning agreed with this proposal also. In the light of Lynch's fears on the issue, it is interesting to note that Macdonald and Galt met with leading landlords while in England, attending gatherings at Lord Lansdowne's London home "to discuss the issue".(3) Back in Canada, Lynch and Macdonald continued discussions on the Colonization issue. Macdonald raised the vision of a "New Ireland in the West" before Lynch, and suggested that this new colony could be made up of more than just the Irish, once they at least retained control over the scheme. In a most uncharacteristic argument, probably used only for Lynch's benefit, Macdonald held up the New Ireland colony as a bulwark of Christianity against "the present torrent of infidelity and atheism that threatens to drown out Christianity..."(4)

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 228, 98028, Lynch to Macdonald, May 11, 1881.

(2) NAC, Lorne Papers, p. 215-6, Macdonald to Lorne, June 20, 1881.

(3) Ibid.

(4) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Letter Book 21, 560, Macdonald to Lynch, December 9, 1881.

By the beginning of 1882, after Macdonald had decided to call an election that year, Lynch finally succumbed to the Prime Minister's vision - and it was clear who was the controlling influence. Lynch received permission from Rome to go ahead with the scheme, and planned a trip to Ireland to organise the immigrants. He wrote to Macdonald in terms which revealed their respective roles in the matter. "My dear Sir John, I have just received the permission to visit Europe, and will be happy to receive your commands".(1)

The "Fenian" Archbishop was reduced to acting as a tool of the Prime Minister of Canada, even though this meant deceiving the Irish nationalist community.

The report has gone abroad that I go to Rome. This I am glad of for if it were known that I go principally to Ireland for emigration purposes, I would be a 'suspect' in the Irish Camp, and would run risks of being 'boycotted'. I must act with all prudence possible.(2)

Lynch had good reason to be prudent. Feelings in Ireland against organised emigration, especially involving Irish Catholic peasants, was running high. In addition to the traditional dislike of emigration common to the Irish, there now existed a belief that emigration only played into the hands of the landlords and the English. With the rise of the Land League and the merging of the Irish Question with the Land Question,

(1) Ibid., Vol. 228, 98044, Lynch to Macdonald, February 20, 1882.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 228, 98047-8, Lynch to Macdonald, March 3, 1882.

nationalist Ireland depended on the small farmers as the foot soldiers of the New Departure. The sharp rise in evictions after 1878, coupled as usual with a corresponding rise in agrarian outrages, had made the whole topic of emigration a delicate one. Lynch himself had raised the objection when Macdonald first approached him on the topic, claiming that the loss of Irish Catholic peasants from Ireland would only improve the position of the Protestants. He believed the clergy, "the true patriots", would be against an Emigration Scheme.(1) This was precisely why Macdonald needed Lynch's support for his scheme. The leadership of the Catholic clergy, as Macdonald explained to Lorne,

...will prevent the cry being got up by Parnell & Co. that the whole thing is a conspiracy of the Government and Landlords to force the Irish into exile.(2)

It is obvious, therefore, that Lynch would have lost credibility in the Irish Camp if the true nature of his mission had been known. Macdonald's success in getting Lynch's support in the matter is very impressive. It is significant, in this context, to realise that the "Fenian" Archbishop was prepared to put the future wellbeing of Canada before that of Ireland. Of course, he considered that what he was doing was creating a "New Ireland in the West"; but to gain that goal, he was prepared to turn his back on the Old Ireland in the East. Lynch objected to

(1) Macdonald Papers, Vol. 228, 98026-8, Lynch to Macdonald, May 11, 1881.

(2) Lorne Papers, Vol. 1, 215-9, Macdonald to Lorne, June 20, 1881.

sending out Irish paupers to Canada, since "of course Ireland would be the gainer by this, but would Canada?"(1) It is clear that for some Irish Catholics at least, the focus of their loyalty was shifting to the New Nation.

That, however, was not the way it seemed to Macdonald. Ever since the Fenian raids of 1866 and 1870, Macdonald was deeply suspicious of the Irish Catholic population of Canada. The murder of D'Arcy McGee had shaken him profoundly and it may be said that he was determined to exact vengeance for the deed. He went to the unusual lengths of personally attending the trial of Patrick Whelan, the man charged with McGee's murder, going so far as to sit on the platform beside the presiding judge.(2) In addition to hanging Whelan, the Government had arrested and imprisoned numerous suspected Fenians and Fenian sympathisers, including Patrick Boyle of the Irish Canadian.(3) A decade after the last Fenian raid on Canada, Macdonald was still fearful of another incursion and was in constant touch with spies and informers. His correspondence with Lord Lorne, the Governor General who had arrived in 1878, was full of references to the Fenians. In January 1881, rumours from Iowa of a possible invasion were, he claimed, "...in accordance with other

(1) Macdonald Papers, Vol. 228, 98052-5, Lynch to Macdonald, April 12, 1882.

(2) Slattey, T.P., They Got To Find Me Guilty Yet, [Toronto, Doubleday, 1972], p. 216.

(3) Ibid., 55.

information conveyed to me".(1) Three weeks later, as events in Ireland grew more tense, he prophesied to Lorne that "if an insurrection takes place in Ireland, we shall have a Fenian Raid in the Spring".(2) Lorne was obviously in sympathy with Macdonald's fears, for he in turn passed on a report to the Prime Minister concerning suspected depots of arms in Ottawa itself, and naming the supposed conspirators. Macdonald put his Irish Catholic Representative man to work.

I have got the Hon. John O'Connor to make enquiries through an Irish Roman Catholic in whom he has confidence as to the people named in Your Excellency's memo as to depots of arms in Ottawa. I send you his note, which please destroy as it might put O'Connor in danger. Unless an affidavit of these arms being considered for a criminal purpose, we cannot get a Search Warrant or seize the arms - but it is well to know that the men mentioned in the information from Washington are really where they were described to be.(3)

Whatever the danger to O'Connor, Lorne did not destroy his letter, in which he mentions two men, Patrick Shehan of Old Chelsea and John Toole of the "Shanties", whom he describes as "rabid patriots". He also believed the information "somewhat strangely corroborative of the information received by His Excellency the Governor General".(4)

The following month, Macdonald, reacting to rumours from San

(1) Lorne Papers, I, 191-4, Macdonald to Lorne, January 6, 1881.

(2) Ibid., I, 197, Macdonald to Lorne, January 25, 1881.

(3) Ibid., I, 200, Macdonald to Lorne, January 26, 1881.

(4) Ibid., I, 202-3, O'Connor to Macdonald, n.d., 1881.

Francisco concerning Fenian designs on Vancouver, recommended to Lorne that the British Pacific Fleet be moved to its summer station at Esquimault earlier than planned.(1)

What is revealing about this correspondence is the degree to which Macdonald was in constant apprehension concerning Fenianism. He feared it in the United States, from where it might erupt at any moment in violent incursions into Canadian territory as it had done before. But he was also aware of the danger it seemed to pose in Canada itself, as witness his concern for O'Connor's safety and the reported arms caches in Ottawa. His attitude to the Irish Catholic population was inevitably influenced by his belief that the Fenians, as he put it, "swarm in our cities".(2)

He also had reason to believe that the Fenian Irish in Canada could be equated with the Liberal Irish. After all, the main Irish Catholic figures in the Liberal ranks were men with known or suspected sympathies for Fenianism. Timothy Warren Anglin, perhaps the leading Irish Catholic of the Liberal Party in the 1870's, had not only opposed Confederation, he was actually a close relation of a leader of the Fenian raid on New Brunswick in 1866. The charge of Fenianism had been used tellingly against him in the 1865 election in New Brunswick.(3)

(1) Ibid., I, 207-8, Macdonald to Lorne, February 26, 1881.

(2) Ibid., Reel A-716, 838-9, Macdonald to Lorne, June 9, 1883.

(3) Shanahan, New Nationality, p. 134-45; Baker, William, Timothy Warren Anglin, {Toronto, 1982}, pp. 110-115.

Yet this man was welcomed by the "rabid patriots" of the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal in 1867 shortly after they had expelled McGee from their ranks for condemning the Fenians. The Liberal Party had even made him Speaker of the House of Commons during Mackenzie's time in office. Nor was Anglin the only one. The President of the St. Patrick's Society in Montreal in 1867 had been Bernard Devlin, who later unsuccessfully opposed McGee in the 1867 election. Finally elected to the House of Commons in 1875, Devlin had sat as a Liberal. Macdonald said of him, "I have caught some queer fish in my time, but I am afraid that [Devlin]...is too loose a fish for me ever to catch".(1) The man ultimately executed for McGee's death worked for P.A. Eagleson and lodged with Michael Starrs, both of whom, along with O'Hanly were members of the Ottawa Reform Association from 1873.(2)

Devlin had been a founder of the Catholic League along with O'Donohoe, O'Hanly and Boyle. Of the three, Boyle's pro-Fenian sympathies had been an open secret since 1865; O'Hanly's pamphlet of 1872 was a major attempt to win over the Irish Catholics to the Liberal Party. He had been President of the Ottawa St. Patrick's Society in 1867-8 and was then known as another of the "rabid patriots". For Macdonald, the links between Fenianism and the Irish Catholics in the Liberal Party made it absolutely essential that the Irish Catholic community be separated from

(1) Canada. House of Commons Debates, 1876, p. 340.

(2) Slattery, p. 18-20; NAC, Ottawa Reform Association Papers, 1873-1886.

this leadership and brought under the control of the Conservatives. There is no doubt that Macdonald identified the best interests of Canada with his own Party, if not his own person. Donald Creighton's biography, as well as his own correspondence, make that clear. Liberalism, whether in Canada or Britain, was an enemy to Confederation. With regard to the Gladstone version,

He felt he could expect little good from the Liberals; he sometimes thought despairingly that all that was possible was to prevent them from doing Canada positive harm.(1)

It is vital to an understanding of the events of the period 1880-1883 that Macdonald's approach to the Irish is understood. It serves to put into perspective the significance of his attempts to win O'Donohoe and Boyle over to the Conservative camp. If Macdonald identified his interests with those of Canada, it must be admitted that his aim was the creation of a stable and prosperous nation, independent of the threat of American annexation, independent even of the changing moods of the Imperial Parliament. He believed that it was up to him to carry on to completion the work he had helped begin in 1867. The defeat of 1874 had been a traumatic experience which had nearly ended his political career. Even the victorious return of 1878 was overshadowed by the ominous fact that he had, for the first time in thirty-four years, lost his seat in Kingston. Tory Kingston, one-time capital of Tory Upper Canada, had rejected him. This

(1) Creighton, Donald, John A. Macdonald: The Old Chieftain, [Toronto, 1965], p. 327.

meant that Ontario itself was not to be taken for granted in his plans. The rule of Oliver Mowat and the grits in Toronto meant that his own province was to be the main battle ground for the future of his party. As he wrote to his old colleague, J.A. Macdonnell, in 1878, "If we fail in Ontario in the next election, then 'good-bye' to all hopes for the Conservative party. I, for one, shall give up the fight in despair."(1)

In 1881 he wrote to Charles Tupper about his main plan for the future: "As to myself, my remaining ambition is to see that our policy is not reversed and that the National Policy and the CPR are safe from 1883 to 1888".(2) With this object in mind, John A. Macdonald turned his considerable powers to the goal of winning the support of the Irish Catholic voters of Ontario.

Macdonald was not the only one plotting to secure Irish Catholic political action. J.L.P. O'Hanly, undaunted by the failure of the Catholic League, determined to find a leader behind whom the Irish Catholics of Canada could unite. His choice fell on John Costigan, a Conservative member from New Brunswick. It may seem strange that the die-hard Liberal should look to a Tory in such an important matter, but O'Hanly knew his business. Timothy Anglin had been the leading Irish Catholic in the Liberal Party since 1867, but his position was undermined to a large extent by the arrival of Edward Blake as leader of the party in

(1) Ibid., p. 240.

(2) Ibid.

1880. Blake, though a Protestant, had unimpeachable credentials as an Irish nationalist. Not only had he met and advised Parnell and other Irish nationalists in Ireland, he had spoken out strongly on the Irish Question in the House of Commons during the land crisis of 1880, when he had expressed the wish that some measure of Home Rule might be granted to Ireland.(1) Parnell himself was proof that Protestants of the landlord class could be as nationalist as any Catholic. What's more, Blake was the party leader. Anglin could never hope to compete with him as the chief Liberal spokesman on Irish affairs; neither could any other Liberal. Costigan, on the other hand, was 'the other' Irish Catholic member from New Brunswick and was ambitious; the kind of man O'Hanly could use. He had sought an appointment to the Cabinet in late 1879 and was refused.(2) He was, in fact, a latecomer to the Irish cause. In 1880 a banquet was given in his honour in New Brunswick at which he gave a speech which contained not a single reference to either the land crisis in Ireland nor to Home Rule.(3) He seems to have been almost completely unaware of the rise of Land League Branches in Ontario and Quebec. In a letter to Parnell in 1886, Costigan states that the first Land League branch in Canada was founded in Quebec City in 1881, at which point he became the first M.P. to speak in favour of Home

(1) Canada. House of Commons Debates, 1880.

(2) Irish Canadian, January 28, 1880.

(3) Ibid.

Rule for Ireland.(1) In fact, Land League branches existed in Montreal and Toronto at least two years before this, and, as we have noted, Edward Blake was talking about Home Rule in the House of Commons in 1880. This did not stop Costigan from claiming credit for the 1880 grant towards Irish Relief voted by the Canadian Parliament.(2) (The letter to Parnell is marked "No reply received". Either Parnell was unimpressed by Costigan's claims, or he was too busy to write back).

Nevertheless, O'Hanly had been seriously considering a working arrangement with Costigan from at least the beginning of 1881. He discussed the idea with O'Donohoe, who was unenthusiastic (3) O'Hanly's scheme was at the very least visionary. His aim was to unite the Irish Catholics of Canada, regardless of party affiliation, behind a strong leader who himself would be independent of both Liberal and Conservative ties. In that sense it was an apolitical scheme.

It is [our] wish...to divest it of all political significance, and disavow any party leanings...to place it on a higher plane, a broader foundation - a national basis - far above and beyond party politics. Indeed one of its chief aims is to place Mr. Costigan in a position independent of parties and governments.(4)

(1) NAC, Costigan Papers, Vol. 1, 150-170, Costigan to Parnell, June 18, 1886.

(2) Ibid, 166-170.

(3) NAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 1, File 1, O'Hanly to O'Donohoe, January 26, 1881.

(4) Ibid., Vol. 1, File 2, Memorandum by O'Hanly, May 1, 1882.

In other words, O'Hanly wanted a Canadian Parnell who would play the same role in Canadian politics that the Uncrowned King of Ireland was playing at Westminster. In effect, this would heal the split caused by D'Arcy McGee's opposition to the Fenians and would unite both Fenian sympathisers and McGee supporters in a union aimed at using the potential political power of the Irish Catholic community in Canada. It was a vision as broad as McGee's and it produced the most spectacular coup ever achieved by the Irish cause in Canada, and made the Irish Question a major issue in Canadian domestic and foreign political affairs. He would accomplish what Blake, Anglin and the 'professionals' could never repeat.

O'Hanly was a mass of contradictions. He was an Irish Catholic who had very unorthodox views of the role of Catholicism; an Irish nationalist who condemned British monarchical values, but who publicly praised Lady Aberdeen as "first of her sex, great among the greatest of her race...How great and all-pervading is the influence of goodness and virtue. In elevated stations, it is a morning star, harbinger of the god of day".(1) O'Hanly was the perfect example of the type described by George De Vos when he examines "the psycho-cultural viewpoint of what occurs within the individual when he is confronted with the necessity of changing his allegiance to a new master...in order to participate in a dominant political society

(1) Ibid., Vol. 16, File 2, from an article by O'Hanly dated March 23, 1898.

that is ethnically alien".(1) Trying to follow the orthodox Irish nationalist ideology, O'Hanly found himself totally confused in the Canadian context. There, the British Empire was not the oppressive, hateful enemy of Irish Catholic rights and privileges he believed it to be. Although he could point to the under-representation of the Irish in public life and government service, he himself had worked for the Dominion Government and was completely free to voice his criticisms as he saw fit. Having chosen Canada as his home since 1854, O'Hanly could write to the American Secretary of State, James G. Blaine, in 1889: "I am desirous for the spread of democracy to see the annexation of Canada, as much for the sake of Canadians as of Americans".(2)

Two years later he was writing to President Harrison about Canadian attitudes to the United States:

I feel how difficult it is for the American citizen, whose life is one continuous sunshine, who harbours no ill will to any of God's creatures, to believe the possibility of another people whom he has never injured, entertaining the most deadly envy, hatred and enmity towards him.(3)

It is fascinating to ponder on the workings of the man's mind, and one would give much to know President Harrison's reactions to this amazing correspondence! It is even more wondrous to realise

(1) "Ethnic Pluralism: Conflict and Accommodation", George De Vos, in De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross, eds., Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change, [Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1975], p. 7.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 1, File 1, O'Hanly to Blaine, March 12, 1889.

(3) Ibid., O'Hanly to Harrison, April 13, 1891.

that only a matter of weeks before he wrote that letter, he had written to John A. Macdonald asking for government work; and two weeks after he was approaching Oliver Mowat, Premier of Ontario, for the same reason.(1) The verdict of the Ottawa Tribune is understandable then: "politically, Mr. H - (sic) may be an honest man, he may be a clever man; but a great many people think he is not".(2)

The man who could say "without egotism that my whole life has been one long example of unselfishness and self-denial"(3) could also be a brave and principled man who was prepared to sever the closest ties to preserve his integrity, according to his own lights. As with his 1872 pamphlet which Mackenzie found too long, O'Hanly was long-winded, romantic and, above all, direct. At the age of 73 he had a proposed article returned by the Montreal Witness "partly because of its length and discursiveness, and partly because it is libellous".(4)

Quite simply, O'Hanly was caught in a limbo between Ireland and Canada. The old war-cries and verities of the Irish nationalist creed did not really fit the Canadian context. He was forced to work within a system while still holding negative attitudes concerning that same system. In this, he was typical of

(1) Ibid., O'Hanly to Macdonald, February 16, 1891; O'Hanly to Mowat, April 27, 1891.

(2) Tribune (Ottawa), June 8, 1877.

(3) O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 1, File 1, O'Hanly to O'Donoghue, May 30, 1882.

(4) Ibid., Witness to O'Hanly, November 27, 1902.

one section of the Irish Catholic population who formed, as it were, a link between the immigrant and the assimilated Irish Canadian. Belonging to the immediate post-Famine era of immigration, and never having personally experienced life in the United States, O'Hanly was almost a caricature of the Irish nationalists involved with the Fenian movement in that country. His attitude to the United States is revealing:

...the Irish race are under special obligations to the United States...But for the care of succour of the United States in Ireland's hour of extreme peril, there would today be no Irish question to trouble John Bull's digestion....Undying hatred of England is a distinguishing characteristic of Irish national sentiment....The mission, the craving, the gnawing ambition of the Irish race is not merely to achieve the independence of their country, but to pull down and humble the oppressor. Every concession wrung from the unwilling grasp of this implacable and unrelenting foe is but a means to an end....What a goal to spur up patriotic ambition would this be - North America under one flag from the Gulf of Mexico to the North Pole!(1)

O'Hanly signed this statement "A Poor Exile of Erin". At that time, he was sixty-eight years old and had been living in Canada for forty-three years! What appeared to the outsider as simple dishonesty, or disloyalty, can in fact be traced to that confusion and inner conflict of the immigrant trying to cope with new realities in an alien society. D'Arcy McGee had preached that a process of Canadianisation was essential for Irish Catholics in order to create a new nationality in North America. O'Hanly is

(1) NAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 16, File 2, manuscript article by O'Hanly, October, 1897.

an example of the confusion suffered by those who fought that process over many years, becoming, ultimately, an irrelevance in the new nation.

None of this should take away from the fact that J.L.P. O'Hanly was a power in the Irish Catholic community in Ontario. During the Liberal period in office, that community became unhappy with the lack of representation in Cabinet. O'Hanly, along with the usual group of O'Donohoe, Boyle and Bernard Devlin, organised a meeting in Toronto at which resolutions, written by O'Hanly, were passed demanding proper representation. After an interview with Mackenzie, at which they received no satisfaction, the group withdrew their support from the Liberal Government. Within a year the Liberals were out of office and O'Hanly was gloating that "it is a satisfaction to know that Irish Liberals made Mackenzie bite the dust".(1) Whatever the validity of his claim, there is no doubt that O'Hanly and his colleagues were a force to be reckoned with. How much more might they achieve united across party lines under a strong Parnell-like leader? It was O'Hanly's vision which set events in train in early 1882 which would bring the Irish Question very much to the centre of the Canadian stage.

(1) Ibid., Vol. 16, File 2, undated account of Toronto meeting of May 24, 1875 and meeting with Mackenzie, March 12, 1877, prepared by O'Hanly.

CHAPTER THREE

HOME RULE RESOLUTIONS

John O'Hanly's determination to unite the Irish Catholics of Canada under a strong leader was strengthened by events in Ireland. After Parnell's triumphant tour of North America in 1880, he returned to a spectacular victory in the British general election held that Spring. The events of the Land campaign, and the popular rise of Parnell, created a unique movement in Irish society. As an eminent Irish historian of the period has written, "many of the Home Rule members of parliament, their constituents, and the newspapers which spoke for them, were all swept up in what was fast becoming a genuinely national movement." (1)

Parnell's strong position in parliament soon resulted in a Land Act in the summer of 1880, in which Gladstone sought to win compensation for evicted tenants. When the bill was rejected by the Lords, a serious rise in the number of outrages took place in Ireland and money poured in to the Irish Parliamentary Party coffers from the American Land League. (2) In response to the outrages, Gladstone introduced two Coercion Acts in late 1880.

(1) Lyons, F.S.L., Ireland Since the Famine, [London, 1973], p. 169. For material on this period see also, Lyons, Charles Stewart Parnell [London, 1980], C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, [London, 1958], and Robert Kee, The Green Flag, [London, 1972].

(2) Ibid.

Parnell and his followers kept the House sitting for a record forty-one hours trying to delay passage of the bills, forcing the Speaker to introduce closure in that assembly for the first time in its history. The following day the government announced that Michael Davitt had been arrested and, after creating an uproar, Parnell and thirty-five supporters were ejected from the Commons chamber.(1) For a while it was thought that Parnell might return to Ireland and call a secessionist assembly in Dublin. Tension ran high in the two islands during the early months of 1881. Ireland, aside from the landlord class, was solidly united behind Parnell, although his main lieutenants were unsure which direction they should now take. Parnell decided to stay at Westminster. It was a significant decision.

The New Departure was a constant balancing act between the Fenian, nationalist element and the tenant, Land League group. Parnell was trying to use the latter to strengthen his position in order to bring about legislative independence for Ireland, which would go far to satisfy the former. But he needed both. In the summer of 1881 Gladstone introduced a Land Act which was a tremendous step forward in satisfying the demands of the Land League. It provided security of tenure for tenants, as well as compensation for improvements made by tenants to their holdings.(2) This created a dilemma for Parnell. If he welcomed the Act on behalf of the tenants, he would alienate the

(1) Ibid., p. 171.

(2) Ibid., p. 173-4.

nationalist extremists. On the other hand, the Act was a huge gain for the tenants, and could hardly be rejected without alienating that section of his support. The answer to this dilemma was perhaps suggested by the young M.P. John Dillon. In May, 1881, Dillon was jailed for seditious language. Parnell first made sure that the Land Act would pass the Commons, then he announced that the Act should be put on trial by the Land League through a number of test cases in the courts. Having satisfied the tenants, he proceeded to launch a virulent campaign against the Liberal government, using very strong and provocative language. In October he was lodged in Kilmainham Jail in Dublin on the same charge as Dillon.(1)

On October 19, 1881, Parnell and his main supporters, also residing in Kilmainham, issued a No Rent Manifesto, calling on all tenants to refuse to pay rent until the Land Act was tested. The campaign fell flat, but agrarian disturbances multiplied alarmingly. Ultimately, Gladstone negotiated an agreement with Parnell in which the Home Rulers were released from prison in return for calming the agitation in Ireland and supporting the Liberals in Westminster. The Treaty of Kilmainham was signed and Parnell released on May 2, 1882. Although Parnell had managed to please both sections of his supporters, he had, in fact, lost that phase of the Land War. The Land League was outlawed while Parnell was in jail, and the organisation which replaced it, the Irish National League, was a very different creature. Gladstone's

(1) Ibid.

Land Act, although not the final answer to the land question, shifted the general emphasis to the Irish Question. As Lyons said: "The Land Act had beaten the Land League and...there was no future for a predominantly agrarian agitation." (1) By undermining the New Departure, the Land Act forced Parnell to concentrate his efforts on a parliamentary struggle for Home Rule without having the option of rousing the tenants in their own self-interest. Without the emotional draw of massive evictions and agrarian unrest, the main emphasis of the Irish Parliamentary Party became centred on their real aim, the gaining of legislative Home Rule for Ireland in a constitutional forum.

The struggle of the years 1880 to 1882 had produced much fruit, however. The election of 1880 had strengthened the middle-class nature of the parliamentary party, making its members more dependent on the party coffers for maintenance. These were not wealthy men and were not paid as members of parliament. The money which flowed in from the American Land League was vital in keeping these men at Westminster. (2) Between 1879 and 1882 practically all the Land League's money came from North America, almost 250,000 pounds in all. With the move to constitutionalism, this money stopped coming. The American Irish were still Fenian in tactics. (3)

The drama of these years was keenly felt by the Irish

(1) Ibid., p. 174.

(2) C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and His Party, chapter 4.

(3) Lyons, p. 178.

Catholics of Canada. Branches of the Land League continued to organise and raise funds, but John O'Hanly believed that something more impressive was called for. It was the perfect moment for the Irish of Canada to unite and impose their will on the Macdonald government.

I knew that we were on the eve of a general election. Hence the moment to strike was exceedingly opportune....I wished to thoroughly frighten the man at the helm whose inordinate love of power I had learned to know so well.(1)

In February 1882, O'Hanly invited Costigan to his home, where they met with Michael Starrs [a business associate of O'Hanly and President of the St. Patrick's Society of Ottawa] and Martin O'Gara the leading Irish Catholic in Ottawa's legal community. He explained his scheme to these three men and showed them a set of draft resolutions which he wanted Costigan to introduce in the House of Commons. According to his own account of the meeting, the others accepted his plan and his resolutions without change, much to his gratification."I conceived the design, prepared the plans, drew the specifications; and handed them over complete to the artificers ready for execution."(2) On March 6, Costigan wrote to Macdonald informing him of his intention to introduce Resolutions asking for a measure of Home Rule for Ireland. This was, he claimed, "in response to the expressed wishes of several influential Irish Citizens of the

(1) NAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol.18, File 10. Draft letter by O'Hanly, May 29, 1892".

(2) Ibid.

Dominion".(1)

On April 18, Costigan introduced the Resolutions in the House. On April 27, the St. Patrick's Society in Ottawa held a meeting to express their support of Costigan's actions and to arrange a Testimonial to the Irish Catholic leader. They further called on other Irish Catholic organisations throughout Canada to pass similar votes of confidence in Costigan and his Resolutions.(2) In all of this, O'Hanly was once more the principal agent. He had tracked down the names and addresses of every Irish Catholic association he could find in the Dominion. If no organisation existed in a particular town, he either settled on the local priest, or a prominent citizen with an Irish name. His list was used to gather support for the Costigan Testimonial. In keeping with his aim of making Costigan a Canadian Parnell, O'Hanly endeavoured to unite as many Irish Canadians as possible behind the Testimonial. At the Ottawa meeting on April 27, chaired by Michael Starrs, an attempt was made to have both Liberal and Conservative supporters present. To that end, James Moylan, Macdonald's associate and one-time colleague of D'Arcy McGee, attended along with Liberals such as Daniel O'Connor and Patrick Baskerville. P. A. Eagleson, who had been arrested in the aftermath of the McGee assassination, attended along with Martin O'Gara, the magistrate who had ordered

(1) NAC. Costigan Papers, Vol. 1, p. 102; Macdonald Papers, Vol. 206, 87618, Costigan to Macdonald, March 6, 1882.

(2) LAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 18, File 10.

his arrest.(1) It was not enough to have the support of even "several Irish Citizens of the Dominion", O'Hanly wanted as much pressure as possible to be brought to ensure the success of the Testimonial. In the covering letter which he sent to the various Irish associations, O'Hanly made it clear that "one of its chief aims is to place Mr. Costigan in a position independent of parties and governments".(2)

The Resolutions must have been something of a rude shock to Sir John A. Macdonald. As O'Hanly had seen, the timing of the Resolutions was critical. Macdonald was determined to see the National Policy through and preside over the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. To that end, he wanted to face the electorate in as strong a position as possible. By early 1882 he thought the opportunity at hand.

Proudly and enthusiastically the Canadians had accepted the continental nation which Macdonald was bringing into being with a few triumphant passes of his enchanter's wand. He was at the height of his success. The time for him to dissolve was now.(3)

Whether his success was due to his magical powers or not, Macdonald was taking no chances with this election. It had been clear from the Throne Speech in February 1882 that an election was coming later that year, and it was generally considered that

(1) Ibid., Vol. 1, File 2.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Donald Creighton, John A. Macdonald: The Old Chieftain, [Toronto, 1955], p. 333.

"Ontario was the key province" for him.(1) However, Macdonald's campaign to impose the Federal Government's primacy over provincial rights had centred on Ontario. Three issues in particular had shaped Ontario's attitude to the Macdonald government: the Ontario-Manitoba Boundary, the disallowance of the Rivers and Streams Act, and the Representation Bill of 1882.(2) By trying to deprive Ontario of thousands of square miles of territory, bullying the provincial government and then redrawing its electoral boundaries in an obviously partisan fashion, the Conservatives had made themselves extremely unpopular in the "key" province. The Representation Bill, introduced at the end of the 1882 session, was a clear indication that Macdonald feared major losses to the Liberals in Ontario. While it ensured that the Liberals would not have an easy time winning seats in the province, the Bill could not entirely "hive the Grits". More had to be done to actively encourage support for the Conservatives from the various sections of the Ontario population.

It was for this very reason that Macdonald had been working with Archbishop Lynch on the "New Ireland" scheme for the North-West. When the Costigan Resolutions were introduced in the House, Lynch was still in Ireland working for Macdonald and trying to wring grants and subsidies out of the British Government. In this regard also the timing of the Resolutions

(1) Joseph Schull, Edward Blake, Vol. 2, p. ?

(2) P.B. Waite, Canada: Arduous Destiny, [Toronto, 1979], p. ?

suitied O'Hanly perfectly, since the absense of Lynch gave the Ontario lay leaders an opportunity to operate away from the shadow of the ultramontanist Archbishop.

When Costigan introduced the Resolutions in the Commons, Macdonald had already decided on dissolution and a June election. One of the factors which may have influenced his decision was a letter from James Moylan on January 26 in which Moylan reported the rumour that Oliver Mowat was thinking of running as a candidate in the federal election in order to garner the Catholic vote in Ontario.(1) At the time, it was thought that the federal contest would take place in 1883, after the provincial elections due that year. Moylan suggested that the way to spike Mowat's guns was to hold the federal election early to prevent a bandwagon effect should Mowat sweep Ontario for the Liberals. A summer election in 1882 suited Macdonald perfectly. Then came the Costigan Resolutions. The Irish Catholic vote throughout the Dominion seemed to hang in the balance once more.

Following O'Hanly's format, Costigan had called a meeting of all Irish Catholic members of Parliament, regardless of party, to discuss the Resolutions before bringing them to the House. Although only two Liberals attended this caucus, the invitation reflected the desire to unite the Irish Catholic members as a

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 380, 177956-7, Moylan to Macdonald, January 26, 1882.

bloc on this issue.(1) Significantly, Costigan's main rival among the New Brunswick Irish, Timothy Warren Anglin, although invited to attend, went to none of the caucus meetings.(2) His biographer ascribes this absense as "politic", though not "very heroic". It would be better simply to say that Anglin was unwilling to support the scheme initiated by his rival, regardless of the importance of the issue. This left Costigan free to claim the leadership of the Irish Catholic community in the political arena, as O'Hanly planned.

Macdonald was now in a real quandary. The Costigan Resolutions, as they became known, were a political embarrassment just before an election. To refuse to support them after they had been obviously put on a non-partisan basis would have alienated the Irish Catholic community, as well as the Irish members of his own party, who were closely identified with them. On the other hand, the text of the Resolutions, reflecting as they did the thinking of John O'Hanly, were far from moderate. They called in no uncertain terms for the granting of Home Rule to Ireland and the immediate release of all "political prisoners" held in Ireland. This was an obvious reference to Parnell and his colleagues, still at this time lodged in Kilmainham Jail. There

(1) NAC, Costigan Papers, Vol. 1, p. 155-6, Costigan to Parnell, June 18, 1886, refers to two Liberals attending, though without identifying them. William Baker, Timothy Warren Anglin, [Toronto, 1977], fn.40, p.312, claims that only Senator Power attended the meetings throughout for the Liberals.

(2) Ibid., p. 222-3.

were two distinct problems for Macdonald here. First, the Resolutions would place the Canadian Government clearly on the side of the Irish Nationalists at Westminster and against the Gladstone Government. This would not only be a dreadful insult to Her Majesty's Government at Westminster, but would most certainly alienate a great number of the supporters of Her Majesty's Government in Ottawa immediately before an election. Second, passing the Resolutions as they stood could be seen in Britain as being linked to attempts by the Liberal Party to affirm Canada's right to negotiate commercial treaties independent of London. Such an amendment had been moved by Edward Blake that very month.⁽¹⁾ The last thing Macdonald wanted to do at this juncture was to antagonise William Gladstone. His immigration plan which he was organising via Lynch, as well as the funding of the railway scheme, could be put in jeopardy. These two planks of the National Policy could not be endangered over Irish Home Rule. It was a problem.

Home Rule for Ireland was not in itself a new issue for Macdonald. In the early years of the Home Rule movement in Ireland, when Isaac Butt was slowly raising devolution as a focus for Irish aspirations, Macdonald had discussed the Irish Question with interested parties, including James Moylan and the Governor General of the day. Moylan had, in fact, passed on to Butt some correspondence from the Canadian Prime Minister. It would seem that as early as 1872 Macdonald already had what Moylan referred

(1) House of Commons Debates, 1882, 1068-1075.

to as "your programme of Home Rule which you asked me to mention to Mr. Isaac Butt".(1) The nature of Macdonald's "programme" may be gleaned from his correspondence on the subject with Lord Lisgar in May, 1871. Lisgar, then Governor General, was interested in hearing Macdonald's opinion in the light of the Canadian experience of Confederation. Macdonald replied that, in his opinion, any return to the situation as it had existed before the Act of Union of 1800 was "entirely out of the question", since it would merely be the first step towards independence for Ireland. However, granting Ireland provincial status, as in Canada, would be even worse! Any form of Irish assembly or parliament, in fact, was unwelcome to the Father of Confederation. What he wanted was simply a separate local government for each of Ireland's four provinces, dealing only with immediate, local issues. The need for four rather than one body was on the "divide and rule" principle, since a single administrative body might grow too powerful. The day after writing this letter, Macdonald had second thoughts and decided that perhaps four bodies would be too many; on the other hand, two would be too powerful. And rather than meet in Ireland, perhaps it would be best if the assemblies (whatever the number) met at Westminster, where they could be more easily supervised!(2) It is clear that Macdonald's

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 429, 210358-60, Moylan to Macdonald, September 22, 1886. The reference was to an event in March, 1872.

(2) Ibid., Letter Book 15, p. 30172-83, Macdonald to Lisgar, May 11 and 12, 1871.

"programme" would have resulted in little more than an Irish caucus meeting in Westminster to discuss Irish affairs, a arrangement already existing in 1871. There is no record of any reply from Isaac Butt to John A. Macdonald's "programme for Home Rule". Certainly, Macdonald could not be expected to welcome the kind of Resolutions on the subject which had now surfaced to trouble him.

The answer which Macdonald found to the problem was remarkably simple. He entered into discussions with Costigan to tone down the Resolutions. Explaining his actions to the Governor General, Macdonald reassured him that "As finally adopted they are perfectly harmless and are the result of a Compromise".(1) Edward Blake went even further in his assessment when the Resolutions came up for debate. In his view, Macdonald had "emasculated" the Resolutions.(2) Between the time Costigan had first introduced the Resolutions on April 5 and the start of debate on April 20, the Costigan Resolutions had completely changed. The amended Resolutions contained six paragraphs, one of which dealt with Home Rule, one with the prisoners in Kilmainham and two with the need for more Irish emigration to Canada. The latter clauses clearly reflected Macdonald's desire to populate the North-West. The Home Rule clause was weak and remarkably vague. Whereas the original draft had called for

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 206, 87629, Macdonald to Lorne, May 2, 1882.

(2) Debates, 1882, 1043.

immediate moves on the issue of Home Rule for Ireland, the amended clause merely ventured

...to express a hope that, if consistent with the integrity and well-being of the Empire, and if the rights and status of the minority are fully protected and secured, some means may be found of meeting the expressed desire of so many of your Irish subjects in that regard [ie., self-government].(1)

Thus hedged about with qualifying phrases, and with no sense of urgency, the call for Home Rule was rather muted. It was much the same with the clause dealing with the prisoners in Kilmainham. The original resolutions had called for the immediate release of men jailed without charge and without trial after the suspension of Habeus Corpus in late 1881. The amended clause was utterly different in tone and intent.

We would further express a hope that the time has come when Your Majesty's clemency may, without injury to the interests of the United Kingdom, be extended to those persons who are now imprisoned in Ireland charged with political offenses only, and the inestimable blessing of personal liberty restored to them.(2)

It is difficult to know how these amended Resolutions fitted into O'Hanly's plans for Costigan and the Irish. It may be that he expected Macdonald to reject the original resolutions out of hand, in which case Costigan might have rallied the Irish Catholic community under his leadership against the Government. However, the revised resolutions rendered that option redundant,

(1) Debates, 1882, 1042.

(2) Ibid.

and a decision had to be made as to how to respond to the amendments. Costigan claimed that, until the Government introduced the amended resolutions, only one or two Irish Catholic Conservatives supported him against Macdonald. Once the amended clauses were accepted by Costigan, these members supported the passage of the Resolutions.(1) Costigan received a copy of the Government amendments late at night, with a demand that he either accept them in place of his own before the House rose that night, or else face the opposition of the Government. He rushed to O'Hanly's house at 11p.m. to consult with the prime mover of the scheme.(2) According to O'Hanly's account, Costigan was in favour of breaking with Macdonald, but he was convinced by O'Hanly's argument that a unanimous vote in favour of any Home Rule Resolutions was better than a divisive debate on the issue which might destroy the hopes of a united Irish Catholic bloc. In any event, the amended Resolutions were accepted and formally debated in the House on Thursday, April 20. When the Resolutions were finally voted on early the following morning, they were passed unanimously and forwarded to the Senate for their endorsement. O'Hanly continued his campaign of gathering support from Canada's Irish Catholic community for the Costigan Testimonial. Almost in response, it seemed, to the Resolutions, it was learned that Parnell and colleagues had been released from

(1) NAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 18, File 10.

(2) Ibid.

jail on May 2. Of course there was no connection with the events in Ottawa, but it was a major encouragement to all involved. Macdonald, also, was feeling encouraged that day. He had survived a very delicate situation remarkably well. Writing to the Governor General, Lord Lorne, on May 2, he explained his support of the Resolutions by claiming that unless Costigan's had gone ahead, other, more radical resolutions would have been moved by Timothy Warren Anglin, Costigan's New Brunswick rival.(1) He downplayed the importance of the resolutions and emphasised the loyalty they professed on the part of the Irish in Canada. Further, he claimed that they were necessary as a counterbalance to Fenian propaganda. Feeling quite satisfied with himself, he believed the Resolutions to be "perfectly harmless" and the result of a "Compromise".(2) Macdonald considered he had reason to be pleased. John Costigan, also, was pleased, since the compromise involved his entry into the Cabinet. On May 23, it was announced that John Costigan had become the Minister of Internal Revenue in the Conservative Government. In one step, Macdonald had neutralised O'Hanly's scheme for an Parnell-like leader and had won over whatever public support Costigan commanded. And all this in time for the election which was called for June 20.

O'Hanly was caught flat-footed. His protege had settled for a more immediately satisfactory, though less glorious role than

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 206, 87626. Macdonald to Lorne, May 2, 1882.

(2) Ibid.

O'Hanly had planned. Always one to put the best face on his own achievements, O'Hanly took what credit he could from the events.

[The 1882 Resolutions] required a mixture of boldness and strategy seldom found combined in one individual, to accomplish it. Yet so well was the design conceived, planned, contrived, that not a detail miscarried, not a link cinched.(1)

To put it mildly, this is an optimistic account of one of John A. Macdonald's most successful ploys. To sharpen the point, O'Hanly received a letter from a prominent Conservative in London, Ontario who wished to contribute to the Costigan Testimonial. This Tory reported with great delight that Costigan's entry to the Cabinet was causing major headaches for the Liberals in his constituency as the election campaign progressed. O'Hanly, the staunch Grit, frostily reiterated that the Testimonial was a strictly non-partisan affair.(2)

With the addition of Costigan to the Cabinet, Macdonald also gained the support of Bishop Rogers of Chatham, New Brunswick. The Bishop had hoped that Costigan would enter the Government as early as 1878, since he had been so prominent in the New Brunswick Schools controversy during the Liberal regime.(3) The day Costigan became a Government minister, Rogers wrote to him promising the Bishop's support for the Macdonald

(1) NAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 16, File 3. Memo to J.D. Grace, March 28, 1912.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 1, File 2. J.P. Byrne to O'Hanly, May 29, 1882.

(3) NAC, Costigan Papers, Vol. 1. Bishop Rogers to Costigan, September 29, 1878.

Government.(1) Macdonald was well positioned to garner the Irish Catholic vote in the forthcoming election. Lynch was working away in Ireland on the immigration scheme; the Canadian Parnell was now a Tory minister; Macdonald could claim the credit for the unanimous vote for Irish Home Rule. It was at this happy moment, however, that the Ontario trio of O'Donohoe, Boyle and Smith re-entered the picture. Frank Smith had been in the Senate for over a decade and wanted a more active role in political life. Negotiations with Patrick Boyle over support for his newspaper had yet to reach any conclusion; and John O'Donohoe resented the spectacular rise of John Costigan as titular leader of the Irish Catholics of Canada. Two days after Costigan joined the Government, he was sent off to Toronto by Macdonald to talk with the three men. His report disturbed the Prime Minister, now only three weeks from election day.

Mr. O'Donohoe is certainly out of humour. Boyle has not met me in as warm a manner as I expected. Hon. Frank Smith appears to be more dispirited than either of the former. Boyle wants a Catholic Representative in the Cabinet for Ontario in the person of O'Donohoe. The Hon. Frank Smith wants Foy to be nominated for some constituency.(2)

Macdonald moved fast to quell the potential revolt in the all-important province of Ontario. He immediately offered O'Donohoe a place in the Cabinet, and assured Boyle of Government support for the publication of a daily edition of the Irish

(1) Ibid., Rogers to Costigan, May 23, 1882.

(2) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 206, 87643. Costigan to Macdonald, May 25, 1882.

Canadian. In return, they would openly support the Conservatives in the Ontario ridings. Macdonald wrote to Lorne to arrange things. His letter in many ways reflects his general attitude to the Irish Catholics in Canada:

I find some dissatisfaction existing among the Irish Catholics at their want of position in Ontario - indeed in Canada generally. It is important that that element should be kept right and not look to the United States as is too much their wont....I think it is of importance to 'placate' (pardon the Americanism) these people.(1)

He suggested that O'Donohoe be given a place in the Senate and the Privy Council. Lorne agreed to this request; but opposition arose from other quarters. In June, during the election campaign, Macdonald informed O'Donohoe that their arrangement would have to be altered owing to strong opposition. This came, he said, not only from the Orange element in Ontario, but from the Irish Catholic community as well. In fact, on the very day Macdonald had written to Lorne about O'Donohoe's elevation, John O'Hanly, that man of wrath, had written to O'Donohoe severing all political links with his long-time colleague because of the arrangement with Macdonald. Although they would remain friends, O'Hanly could not accept O'Donohoe's alliance with the Conservatives. Clearly he viewed his own alliance with Costigan in a different light, since Costigan was to have become independent of both parties. His experience of the Home Rule Resolutions had sobered him somewhat, and he warned O'Donohoe

(1) NAC, Lorne Papers, Vol. 1, p. 261. Macdonald to Lorne, May 30, 1882.

that neither he nor Costigan could expect to gain anything for Irish Catholics out of the Macdonald government. O'Hanly had, at least, one consolation:

In this sad hour I assure you that it is no small cause of thanks to think that I have been in the slightest degree instrumental in making the government swallow such disagreeable pills as yourself and Costigan.(1)

Nevertheless, Macdonald admitted that O'Donohoe would not enter the Cabinet as arranged because his "views are extreme as to the Irish Question. This might destroy his future".(2)

Once again Macdonald was in a dilemma over the Irish Catholics. The opposition he faced to O'Donohoe joining the Cabinet threatened to destroy the fragile agreement he had reached with the Ontario trio. His solution was, as always, cunning and complex. It was arranged that O'Donohoe would go to the Senate and Smith would take his place in Cabinet. (Smith, a Tory Senator since 1870, was more palatable to the Orange element than the Catholic League founder). Then, "at an opportune time", Smith would resign his Cabinet seat in favour of O'Donohoe. This seemed a workable deal, however O'Donohoe was getting to Macdonald and demanded that the entire agreement be put in writing. Macdonald was to write letters to the four Catholic bishops of Ontario, detailing the arrangement as a guarantee that it would be put

(1) NAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 1, File 1. O'Hanly to O'Donohoe, May 30, 1882.

(2) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 255, 115530. Macdonald to Bishop O'Mahony, June 5, 1882.

into operation at the "opportune time".(1) In addition, Macdonald showed O'Donohoe a telegram, purporting to come from Lorne, stating that O'Donohoe had been named a member of the Privy Council. O'Donohoe and Smith were happy with the arrangement, and Patrick Boyle looked forward to starting his Daily Canadian. Thus did Macdonald save yet another dangerous situation in the middle of the election campaign. He had managed to placate both Irish Catholics and Orangemen at the same time with a wave of his "enchanter's wand".

When the results of the election came in, Macdonald had won every province but Manitoba. Although he lost some seats in Ontario, the Conservatives elected seven Irish Catholics in the province; the Grits elected none.(2) The "key province" had been held after all. Macdonald acknowledged the role played by O'Donohoe in the contest.

Our Toronto arrangement was made too late to do as much good as it ought. I am afraid that we didn't carry the Catholic vote as a whole. Still, wherever you went, we won. So will it be in the local contest.(3)

Already he was thinking about the provincial election which was due within a year. The Irish Catholic alliance was going to be useful for the Conservatives.

Macdonald, to give him his due, had more on his mind than merely the future of the Conservative party. His tendency to

(1) Ibid.

(2) Schull, p. 25.

(3) NAC, O'Donohoe Papers, Macdonald to O'Donohoe, July 4, 1882.

associate the party with the needs of the country did not blind him to the external threats which Canada faced. The presence of a large and influential Irish community in the United States was a constant source of concern to him. As he pointed out to Lord Lorne, Canada had suffered before from Fenian activity and had come to fear the power of the Irish American extremists.(1) The need to "placate" the Irish in Canada was not only in order to win their electoral support for the Conservatives, but also to weaken the influence of the Fenians in Canada. With the Irish alliance of 1882, Macdonald felt he had accomplished that goal. Shortly after the election he wrote to Lorne giving his own gloss on the arrangement with O'Donohoe.

As some "unpleasantness" arose among the Irish and others about O'Donohoe's double promotion he disinterestedly made way for the Hon. F. Smith.... With Archbishop Lynch - (the only one of the R.C. Hierarchy with Fenian tendencies) - enlisted in the Cause of immigration - and the appointments of Costigan, F. Smith and O'Donohoe, we need have no fear, whatever may happen in Ireland, that the Irish Americans will get any material countenance from their countrymen in Canada.(2)

From Macdonald's point of view at least, the alliance with the Irish Catholics of Ontario had produced good fruit. He had won a renewed mandate for the National Policy, assured the support of the Catholic clergy, and effectively disarmed the Liberal-dominated political leadership of the Irish community.

(1) NAC, Lorne Papers, Vol. 1, p. 261. Macdonald to Lorne, May 30, 1882.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 276. Macdonald to Lorne, July 28, 1882.

No doubt Macdonald felt that he had earned the support of the Irish Catholics. However "emasculated" the Costigan Resolutions had been, they had at least been introduced in the House and passed unanimously by the Canadian Parliament. For Macdonald, moreover, there had been a price to pay. Although he had played down the importance of the Resolutions in his letter to Lorne, their timing had been, to say the least, unfortunate. Just hours before the Resolutions arrived in England, Irish extremists in Dublin had brutally murdered the new Chief Secretary to Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and his principal secretary. Parnell was sufficiently shaken by the event to proffer his resignation as leader of the Irish Party should Gladstone consider it necessary. Such was the atmosphere in London when Macdonald's "perfectly harmless" Resolutions arrived. The response was sharp. The Colonial Secretary, Lord Kimberley, wrote to Lord Lorne:

The resolutions of the Canadian Parliament about Ireland have caused annoyance here. They could not have been worse timed, and the dreadful tragedy at Dublin makes the thing worse still. I shall endeavour to make the answer to the Address as mild as possible, but it must contain a pretty plain intimation to the Canadians to mind their own business. The people of this country have shown wonderful calmness under immense provocation, but they are not in a temper to be trifled with by anglers for Irish votes at elections for colonial Legislatures.(1)

To a man with Macdonald's sense of position, that personal rebuke

(1) NAC, Lorne Papers, Reel A-716, 180. Kimberley to Lorne, May 11, 1882.

must have smarted. He realised that the Irish Question could cause him to lose the good-will of the Gladstone government (never sure at the best of times), and put at risk his plans for financially sponsored immigration to Canada.

Archbishop Lynch had already reported that the British Government were only willing to lend money to a strong commercial company for Canadian immigration schemes.(1) Alexander Galt, Canadian Commissioner in London, dampened Lynch's enthusiasm somewhat in June by refusing to discuss starting a Colonisation Society until the following year. Neither could he help with fund-raising in the middle of an election campaign.(2) Lynch was prepared to wait. He had no doubts that Macdonald was as committed to the New Ireland in the West as he himself was, and the passing of the Home Rule Resolutions encouraged him in that belief.

Your address to the Queen...delighted the Irish people and raised Canada above the atmosphere of false prejudice. Home Rule for Ireland, as in Canada, will be the cry, when the difficulties of Landlordism will have been settled. The English Government is prepared to grant it, if the Irish would accept a mere provincial government. I have done a good deal in its favour. The Bishops and clergy would ask no more.(3)

Unfortunately for Lynch, the Irish Question was not one the Bishops and clergy could answer unilaterally.

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 228, 98057-8. Lynch to Macdonald, April 1882.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 228, 98060. Galt to Lynch, June 2, 1882.

(3) Ibid., 98065. Lynch to Macdonald, June 27, 1882.

Macdonald turned his attention to the forthcoming election in Ontario. His feelings on the issue were strong, to say the least. For him, Oliver Mowat and his government were a direct and immediate threat to the very fabric of Confederation. Writing to John O'Donohoe, Macdonald identified the problem:

[Mowat's] strength has hitherto been Fraser - the Archbishop and the Catholic vote...we must capture that vote in some way....if we wish to preserve Confederation we must upset him. The interests of the country demand it. He has preached secession and resistance by armed force to the law.

Since Macdonald already had the support of the Archbishop, it was up to O'Donohoe to repeat his work in the federal election and get out the Catholic vote for the Conservatives. Macdonald was full of suggestions:

The first thing to do is to get an efficient RC to act with Mr. Meredith and let it be understood that he is to be in the Conservative Cabinet - Who is the man? - Foy - Murphy - Dr. Bergin has been suggested.(1)

O'Donohoe recommended a journalist friend of his from Montreal for the position, Michael Kerwin. Macdonald accepted the suggestion and sent Smith and Costigan to Toronto to discuss the campaign with O'Donohoe.(2) Near the end of August, Costigan reported to Macdonald that plans for a Daily Canadian under

(1) NAC, O'Donohoe Papers, pp. 44-45. Macdonald to O'Donohoe, July 4, 1882.

(2) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 255, 115475. O'Donohoe to Macdonald, July 24, 1882. O'Donohoe Papers, p.48. Macdonald to O'Donohoe, August 9, 1882.

Patrick Boyle were well in hand.(1) However, things began to go astray near the end of September. Macdonald wrote to O'Donohoe that "entre nous, some of our Catholic friends doubt the expediency of employing Kerwin". In the context, "employ" was the correct verb, since it had been found necessary to pay Kerwin to run in the election.(2) In October, O'Donohoe and Frank Smith issued a joint statement addressed to the Catholic hierarchy of Ontario, calling on them to support the Conservative Party in the election. The statement was published as a pamphlet and was widely distributed in the province.

...it is from this party only that the Catholic people have received fair representation in the Cabinet and in the Senate, a fair distribution of the public patronage, and a fair support at all times for Catholic candidates at the polls.(3)

It was all to no avail. When the election came, Mowat and the Liberals were returned yet again. The phenomenon of a province voting for one party at the federal level and another party at the local level had made its appearance in Canadian politics. The results were a disaster for Macdonald's Irish alliance.

Macdonald saw that he had a comfortable majority in Ontario

(1) Ibid., 115491. Costigan to Macdonald, August 20, 1882.

(2) NAC, O'Donohoe Papers, p. 52. Macdonald to O'Donohoe, September 20, 1882; p. 48, Macdonald to O'Donohoe, August 9, 1882.

(3) John O'Donohoe & Frank Smith, A Memorandum to the Archbishop and Bishops of Ontario, [Toronto, 1882], cited in Canada, Debates, 1886, Vol. 2, 1379-80.

even without the alliance. In the federal election, it had not brought him the whole Catholic vote; and in the provincial election it had failed to stop the return of Mowat. His interest in the alliance died. It is instructive to trace the careers of the main Irish Catholic participants in the alliance after 1882.

The great scheme for a "New Ireland in the West" came to nothing. After the uproar which followed the Costigan Resolutions, the British Government were in no mood to help with the scheme, especially since the Canadians refused to accept Irish paupers as immigrants. Whether Macdonald was ever really serious about the Colonisation scheme is questionable. In spite of his desire to populate the North West, he did not consider it Canada's "business to relieve the Congested Districts of Ireland".(1) His main argument was that if the Canadian Government subsidised Irish Catholic immigration, they would have to do the same for the English and Scots. This it could not afford to do, even though the latter were "much more desirable".(2) In January 1883, it became clear that the Gladstone government would not pay the costs of a colonisation scheme. Macdonald was not terribly upset.

I am not very sorry for this. At present the rage of the Irish Americans is at its height....and a large Irish Emigration into the N. West might be a source of political trouble next summer.(3)

(1) NAC, Lorne Papers, Vol. 1, p. 325. Macdonald to Lorne, June 26, 1883.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., p. 303. Macdonald to Lorne, January 7, 1883.

In the light of events in the North West during the following summers, this comment has a wonderful irony to it.

Archbishop Lynch would have been rather taken aback by Macdonald's attitude to the failure of their scheme. However, Macdonald could truthfully blame that failure on the British Government's niggardly approach to Canadian immigration, or to the stir caused by the Home Rule Resolutions, which Lynch had so welcomed. Either way, Macdonald was free of responsibility in the matter and could continue to claim Lynch's support, as he did before the Ontario election.

I think I have earned Your Grace's best advice and assistance during [the next] five years - John Costigan has succeeded John O'Connor in the Cabinet with a portfolio and Frank Smith is also in the Cabinet without a portfolio - John O'Donohoe is a Senator and we returned seven Catholic Conservatives from Ontario - the Grits did not secure the election of one.(1)

Macdonald continued to enjoy the support of the Catholic hierarchy even after the failure of the New Ireland scheme. This was due to a combination of Catholic suspicion of Liberalism, which was a major impediment to the Liberal Party in Quebec also, and a reciprocal awareness that the Liberal Party contained strong anti-Catholic elements. Lynch lost his New Ireland, but he at least retained his political power base. The same could not be said for the other leading Irish Catholics who had become involved with John A. Macdonald.

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 228, 98075. Macdonald to Lynch, August 3, 1883.

Patrick Boyle began publishing his daily edition of the Irish Canadian in October 1882. The promised support from Macdonald never materialised and the paper ceased publication in March of the following year. It had barely lasted beyond the Ontario provincial election.(1) Boyle carried on with his weekly Irish Canadian though with increasing difficulty. In April 1884 O'Donohoe wrote to Macdonald asking for help for the paper. Macdonald replied that he would talk to Frank Smith about it.(2) In July of that year Smith was writing to Macdonald seeking the help for Boyle which Macdonald had "promised".(3) The support never arrived. In 1893, after almost thirty years of publishing, Boyle's paper was bought out by the Conservatives and merged with a Catholic paper to form the Catholic Register. Boyle tried briefly in 1900 to restart the Irish Canadian, but without success.(4)

Long before that, John O'Donohoe had learned the hard way that people rarely outwitted John A. Macdonald. Over a year after his secret deal with Macdonald, O'Donohoe began to wonder when the "opportune time" would come for his entry into the Cabinet. When he asked Frank Smith when he would be retiring from the

(1) Canadian Newspapers on Microfilm, [Ottawa, 1980], Part 1, ONT-45.

(2) NAC, O'Donohoe Papers, p. 68. Macdonald to O'Donohoe, April 12, 1884.

(3) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 266, 120697. Smith to Macdonald, July 24, 1884.

(4) Canadian Newspapers, Part 1, ONT-45.

Cabinet in accordance with the agreement, Smith claimed complete ignorance of any "deal". O'Donohoe immediately wrote off to Macdonald for clarification.(1) This was the first of many similar letters he was to write to the Prime Minister over the following three years. Macdonald's tone throughout can be seen in a letter to O'Donohoe in September 1884:

I agree with you that the patronage of the Government should not be used as a blind reward for political service. The first consideration should be, the efficiency of the object of such patronage and second, the strengthening the party [sic] by its exercise.

With respect to the R.C.'s we endeavour to give them their share and I think if the list of appointments since '78 is carefully examined it will be found that your co-religionists have been taken care of.(2)

A short translation of this passage would read, "I have nothing to gain by granting your request. You are no longer a political asset." Finally, in 1886, O'Donohoe went to the press with his story. His old friend Michael Kerwin published the details of the so-called "Chestnut Park Agreement" in February.(3) The matter was raised in the House of Commons the following month. Macdonald merely denied outright that there had ever been an arrangement whereby O'Donohoe would enter the Cabinet. No Bishop came forward to support O'Donohoe. The Senator was a spent force politically as soon as the Ontario election was lost to Oliver Mowat.

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 255, 115528-9. O'Donohoe to Macdonald, July 14, 1883.

(2) NAC, O'Donohoe Papers, p. 70. Macdonald to O'Donohoe, September 12, 1884.

(3) Ottawa Free Press, February 15, 1886.

Frank Smith fared little better. It will be recalled that in 1882 he had wanted his friend Foy nominated for a constituency. That was not done. In 1884 Smith recommended Foy be made an Ontario judge. Macdonald appointed another. Smith wrote bitterly to the Prime Minister. "I have not pressed for many favours, and if I did, I fear, I would be met with a plausible answer. I am sorry for having put you to any trouble." (1) His attempts to get government support for Boyle were also fruitless. In 1887, Smith again tried to get a position for Foy and was again ignored. He wrote a blistering letter to Macdonald claiming that Catholics were being passed over for patronage positions, whatever Macdonald might say to the contrary. The fact that the successful recipient of the job he sought for Foy was supported by two Catholic Bishops was an added insult. Surely, he said, he was the Irish Catholic Representative in Cabinet, not the bishops! Smith strongly resented being a "figurehead" in the Cabinet. (2) In December 1887 Smith resigned from the Cabinet; but by February of 1888 he was back following negotiations with Macdonald, content, perhaps, to be a figurehead at least. (3)

Boyle, O'Donohoe and Smith all had good reason to regret

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 266, 120687. Smith to Macdonald, April 23, 1884.

(2) Ibid., 120800. Smith to Macdonald, November 11, 1887.

(3) Ibid., 120804, 120814. Smith to Macdonald, December 2, 1887, February 11, 1888.

their involvement with Macdonald over the Irish Question. It appeared, as John O'Hanly predicted, that becoming too involved with Macdonald would gain nothing for Ireland. O'Hanly himself became increasingly isolated from the levers of power after 1882. He could rightly claim that "It is perfectly safe and well within the realm of truth and fact to affirm that but for my initiative there would be no Home Rule resolutions in 1882, perhaps never".(1) Disillusioned by the failure of Costigan to become a Canadian Parnell, as well as by O'Donohoe's entry into the Government, O'Hanly became bitter and angry. In 1892, commenting on the events of a decade earlier, he wrote that "the originals [Resolutions] were so emasculated by the government of the day, that the parent would scarcely recognise its own bantling...In truth and in fact,...the triumph was more like a defeat than a victory".(2)

O'Hanly, however, continued to fight for Ireland in Canada. Not for him the easy option of a government sinecure, though he was not beyond asking John A. Macdonald for government work. Instead, he came to symbolise a section of Irish Catholic opinion which developed after 1882, and which paralleled the Clann na Gael element of the Irish Question. The other section was led by a man who was to be an essential part of the Irish Question in Canada for the rest of the century and who challenged John Costigan for leadership of the Irish Catholic community in

(1) NAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 18, File 10. May 29, 1902.

(2) Ottawa Free Press, June 9, 1892.

Canada. Ironically for the Parnell of Canada, his rival was, like the real Parnell, an Irish Protestant of Landlord stock. Edward Blake, in the debate on the Costigan Resolutions of 1882, also set the parameters for discussing the Irish Question in Canada.

CHAPTER FOUR

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Mr. Blake is the greatest lawyer in Canada, high-minded, and with far loftier aspirations than most of our ordinary politicians, but he is so thin-skinned, unconciliatory, and impatient of contradiction, that his political career has been far from satisfactory.(1)

This description of Edward Blake is an early example of the attempts which have been made to understand a most complex and frustrating individual. Blake, the high-minded intellectual, recognised by his contemporaries as one of the greatest minds in Canada, could also be exasperating, stultifyingly boring in his speeches, wavering and procrastinating in his decision making. His integrity was unquestioned and he demonstrably cared little for the opinion of others. At the same time, he could agonise over actions he knew to be unpopular and shirked from taking on any responsibility for any length of time. He became known for achieving wonderful successes in his political career, quickly followed by a precipitous resignation from whatever office he had

(1) NAC, Lorne Papers, Reel A-716. Dufferin to Lorne, August 22, 1878.

so marvellously attained.(1)

There was little in Edward Blake's background to indicate that he would become a vital part of the Home Rule movement. His father had been an Irish Protestant landlord who had emigrated to Canada in 1832. Edward was born the following year, and after a brilliant academic career, had been a notable success in the law courts of Upper Canada. Entering the first Dominion Parliament in 1867, he had quickly made his mark in the Liberal ranks. Having become leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, Blake resigned the job within months in order to concentrate on federal politics. Offered the leadership of the federal party, he beat his customary retreat and Alexander Mackenzie took the job. In 1874 Mackenzie became the first Liberal Prime Minister of Canada. Blake had to be talked into taking a Cabinet position, but refused a portfolio. Even that limited part he shortly resigned. He became Justice Minister later in the term and, after the Liberal defeat in 1878, was again touted as a leadership candidate. When Mackenzie finally retired in 1880, Blake took over the position.(2)

In all of this, however, there was no sign of any interest on Blake's part in Irish affairs. He was, naturally, acquainted

(1) For an interesting discussion of possible sources for Blake's behaviour see J.D. Livermore, "The Personal Agonies of Edward Blake", in Canadian Historical Review, 56, March 1975, pp. 45-58.

(2) Biographical information of Edward Blake can be found in Joseph Schull, Edward Blake, 2 Vols. [Toronto, 1980], and in Margaret Banks, Edward Blake: Irish Nationalist, [Toronto, 1957].

with events in Ireland and was very conscious of his Irish heritage. The first indication of a growing involvement in Irish nationalist activities came in 1880, when, during the debate on the Throne Speech, Blake expressed his hope that the coming to power of the Liberal Party in England under William Gladstone would result in some measure of Home Rule for Ireland.(1) But it was not until the debate on the 1882 Costigan Resolutions that Edward Blake set himself in the forefront of the Canadian response to the Irish Question. Although O'Hanly had tried to make Costigan a Canadian Parnell, it was Blake who most closely fitted the role. Like Parnell, an Irish Anglican of the landlord class, committed to parliamentary activity, Blake brought to the Irish Question in Canada an intellectual ability that was badly needed after 1882.

In the debates on the Costigan Resolutions, Blake gave the first detailed expression of his views on the Irish Question. The lines of division exposed at that time were to hold with remarkably little change for the rest of the century. Costigan introduced his "compromise" resolutions on April 20, 1882 shortly after 3 p.m. The debate went on until after 2 a.m. the next morning. After acknowledging that changes had been made to the original resolutions, Costigan gave a very cautious speech referring to Ireland's state of crisis and the responsibility of the maladministration of successive British Governments for the current state of affairs. He denied that Home Rule would result

(1) Canada. House of Commons Debates, 1882, 1345.

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in the persecution of the Protestant minority, or that it would mean a decrease in the prosperity of the island. These were issues which he claimed had been raised most often in opposition to Home Rule.

Clearly unaware of the alliance between Macdonald and Archbishop Lynch, Costigan condemned the use of Irish emigration as an answer to the Irish question.

If there is any people on the face of the earth who love their own land, who are attached to the soil on which they were born and brought up, it is the Irish people; and to tell them that their liberties are to be fettered, that their system of government is more stringent and oppressive than any other system of government in the world, and still tell them that the only hope for them is to pull up stakes and come to our North-West...is to add insult to injury.(1)

This reference to the Irish love of their homeland indicates an interesting attitude of Costigan's. In the first place, the "Irish people" are, apparently, the Irish Catholic people. Secondly, the ties to the soil are considered almost sacrosanct, an illustration of De Vos's definition of ethnicity.

Costigan next introduced an aspect of the Irish Question which was to become a major point in all future discussions of the issue. He held that the experience of the Canadians themselves was a fit model for Ireland. The federal system, which had worked so well in Canada, could be equally beneficial to the British Empire. If Ireland, and later Scotland at least, were given "provincial status", it would ease the burden of

(1) Ibid., 1032.

administration placed on the Westminster government and allow that body to concentrate on Imperial concerns without having to worry about the petty details of Irish local government.(1) Pointing, perhaps optimistically, to the improvement in relations between Great Britain and Canada following Confederation, Costigan emphasised that a similar improvement could be expected in Anglo-Irish relations following the granting of Home Rule to that island.

Nothing has tended to strengthen that feeling of loyalty and attachment to the Mother Country now prevailing than the fact that she was willing to extend to this country those liberties which every free man has a right to expect. The same results would follow concessions to Ireland. You can make Ireland faithful.(2)

Finally, once again referring to the facts of Irish distress in the form of evictions and general suffering, Costigan formally moved the resolutions.

It was, perhaps, surprising, that Edward Blake rose to reply to Costigan. Timothy Warren Anglin may have been expected to speak for the Liberals on the Irish Question, especially when it was his New Brunswick rival who introduced the motion. Blake's assumption of the role indicated that Anglin was being eclipsed and his base in the party eroded by his leader. It was, in fact, the beginning of the end for Anglin as a political force.

Blake had a reputation for verbosity, and on this occasion

(1) Ibid. 1032-33.

(2) Ibid.

he spoke for a few hours, more than twice as long as Costigan in fact. As usual, his speech was peppered with quotes, references, statistics and facts, all designed to prove his point that Home Rule was an urgent necessity for Ireland. After giving a relatively brief history of Ireland since the Union of 1801, Blake underlined the fact that the grievances of Ireland, real and "not of a sentimental character", were easily remedied by legislation, legislation which the British government was too preoccupied or apathetic to supply.(1) Whatever his previous interest had been in Ireland, it was clear by this speech that Edward Blake was now an expert on the minutiae of Irish history and current affairs. His statistics were extensive and convincing and he more than proved his point that Ireland was a problem desperately in need of a solution.(2) He addressed the question of whether Canada had a right to even comment on the Irish Question in the first place. Was this not a local issue, outside the mandate of the colonial legislature? The answer, Blake maintained, was that Canadians have a vested interest in the wellbeing of the Empire.

I say we have an interest, as a part of the great Empire - as sharers in its prosperity, as sharers in its shame; we have an interest

(1) Ibid., 1035.

(2) Blake's speech can be found in full in Ibid., 1034-1044. From 1034 to 1039 he outlined the history of the crisis; from 1039 to 1041 he shows how even Gladstone accepted that some measure of local government was necessary for Ireland, even though he himself was not prepared to grant it; from 1341-1344, he debates the rights of the Canadian Parliament to interfere in the Irish Question as an Imperial concern.

in everything which will tend to develop the strength and the unity of that Empire....as a part of the Empire largely peopled by old country men - by Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotchmen - we have a deep interest in a question which must materially affect the prosperity and happiness of our countrymen in the old land.(1)

This was an extension of Blake's oft-stated belief that Canada, as a part of the Empire, was growing into a new role as an independent nation. That role was leading to Canada's assumption of responsibility within the Empire as a partner with Britain. In that context, it was natural that Canada should speak out on an issue which fundamentally affected the nature and stability of the Empire as a whole. Another aspect of that issue was the effect of Home Rule for Ireland on Canada's relations with the United States. Blake pointed out that the majority of Irish Catholic emigrants traditionally went to the U.S., carrying with them a bitterness, even hatred, toward all things British. A statement by Canada in favour of Home Rule for Ireland would do much to improve Canada's image among the Irish. {This is, in fact, what Archbishop Lynch discovered took place later that year}.

We and our neighbours have a common frontier of 3,000 miles long. That country is, and must always be, a country in our cordial and friendly relations with which, must lie a great part of our own prosperity; and no man can doubt that the existence of the Irish question is a main feature of the difficulties between the United Kingdom and the United States, and cannot but react most

(1) Ibid., 1042.

unfavourably upon us.(1)

Blake recalled the Fenian raids as a concrete example of how Anglo-American relations, influenced by the Irish Question, could have a direct impact on Canada. Citing the number of Irish living in Massachusetts, Blake linked the role of immigration with the Irish Question.

Of that immigration we want a share for ourselves and we want still more earnestly that those who choose the Republic instead of the Dominion, shall not choose the Republic with feelings of animosity and disaffection towards the Empire of which we form a part, but with those friendly feelings which animate the Englishmen and Scotchmen who also happen to prefer, for material reasons, the republic to the Dominion.(2)

Blake picked up Costigan's point about the beneficial nature of Home Rule in Canada, pointing out that the Canadians, of all peoples in the Empire, were best qualified to speak on the advantages of self-government. But he went further than Costigan had, explaining that, as a descendant of a landlord family from Ireland, whose ancestors had suffered at the hands of Irish rebels, he recognised that the freedoms existing in Canada had saved him from falling into the prejudices and bigotry which might have been his inheritance in Ireland. Surely his experience was an example of what Ireland could hope for under Home Rule? The minority would suffer no persecution because the oppression

(1) Debates, 1882, 1042.

(2) Ibid., 1043.

which spurred such actions would have been dealt with.(1) He was, he said, not happy with the way in which the original resolutions had been "emasculated", but he was prepared to vote for them as "the best resolution we can get". Pointing to the twin deficiencies he found in the Costigan Resolutions - - the lack of a clear, unambiguous call for Home Rule, and the implications involved in asking for clemency for innocent men - - Blake made the point that

We have a right respectfully to approach our Sovereign and strengthen the hands of her Prime Minister whose sentiments are not hostile to reform. We have a right to give the influence of 4,000,000 of British subjects to the redress of grievances too long maintained, to attainment of rights too long denied, and so to enlarge the strength and increase the unity of the mighty Empire of which we form a part.(2)

John A. Macdonald rose after Blake and spoke briefly in praise of Costigan's behaviour during the entire affair. "His tone and manner were unexceptionable".(3) He then launched into a vicious attack on Blake, claiming that his motives in speaking on the resolutions were partisan and mean, unlike those of the gallant Costigan. "What does [Blake] care wheter Home Rule is carried in Ireland or not? What does he care whether the suspects are kept in gaol for this, or next, or for many years?"(4) The

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., 1044.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid.

attack, quite out of keeping with the general tone of the debate, never addressed the issue of Home Rule directly. Instead, he lavished praise on Costigan, clearly attempting to raise him up as the Irish Catholic leader in Canada. Referring to Costigan's status as an Irish Catholic, Macdonald cited the concern for minorities expressed in the resolutions. In a phrase which probably amazed even Costigan himself, Macdonald said: "This is the language of a man rising above everything like a demi-god". It is doubtful if the object of such veneration had ever heard the like before, or after. Macdonald claimed he would vote for the resolutions "with every pleasure", since "I have Celtic blood running in my veins. I have always had great sympathy with the people of Ireland who have suffered from the centuries of misrule inflicted upon them".(1)

Other speakers, representing various sections of Canadian society, repeated many of the same arguments raised by Blake and Costigan. James Patterson, Irish Protestant and Conservative member for Essex, spoke sincerely in favour of the Resolutions as a step towards the amelioration of conditions in "my unfortunate country". He expressed his faith in the goodwill of the Irish Catholic people in their dealings with their Protestant fellow-countrymen.(2) Charles Joseph Coursol, a French Canadian Conservative representing Montreal East, compared the lot of

(1) Ibid., 1046.

(2) Ibid., 1056.

Ireland with that of French Canada. If, he said, the British Government were prepared to spend large sums of money to bring an end to the seignorial system in Quebec, why could they not do the same to end landlordism in Ireland? Quebecers well knew that coercion was no solution to differences of race and religion. Enlightened legislation was required.(1) Frederick Brecken of Prince Edward Island commented that his province was well acquainted with the scourge of absentee landlords, and saw Home Rule as a solution to the land question in Ireland. Timothy Anglin was one of the last to speak on the question. Attempting to save face after being usurped by his own leader, Anglin explained that his reason for waiting so long to speak was that he wanted to be in a position to correct any member who fell into error regarding Irish history and the current situation. However, "[the] errors have been so few that it is hardly worth while to take any notice of them".(2) Anglin added nothing new to the debate, repeating the point that Canada was an example of what a federal structure could accomplish for the Empire. "We have all declared that we believe Home Rule should be extended to Ireland, and that such extension is not unpatriotic with the safety of the Empire."(3) He strongly objected to the wording of the revised resolutions, believing that they cast doubt on the loyalty and

(1) Ibid., 1050-1.

(2) Ibid., 1060.

(3) Ibid., 1063.

integrity of Irish Catholics. He resented the implication that guarantees for the Protestant minority were required. Similarly, he felt the clause asking for clemency for Parnell and his colleagues implied guilt where no guilt had been proven. "...I do not believe in asking for clemency for these men, because I do not wish to ask for clemency for men who have been convicted of no offense".(1)

The resolutions were agreed to early in the morning. However, the record of a unanimous vote in favour of Home Rule for Ireland is somewhat deceptive. The following afternoon in the House of Commons, Nathaniel Wallace, member for West York, rose to correct what he thought was an error in the recordings of the previous day's proceedings. He believed that the Irish resolutions had been passed on a division, and not unanimously as recorded. Wallace, John White of East Hastings, and R. Tyrwhitt of Simcoe South all thought the same and objected to the record since "We desire to have it understood that we did not approve of all that has been said in the debate on the motion".(2) To their chagrin, the Speaker would not allow their claim and the record stood. The fact remains, that there did exist in the House doubts about the resolutions themselves, and the record of a unanimous vote was a fortuitous gain for Costigan and the nationalist cause.

White and Wallace had both taken part in the debate on the

(1) Ibid., 1065.

(2) Ibid., 1067.

resolutions, and each had raised an important issue. White questioned the right of the Canadian Parliament to interfere in the internal affairs of the Westminster government. His position was not, however, simply one of subservience to the Imperial Parliament, but one of concern for the implications for Canada's own legislative autonomy. He considered both legislatures to have equal status.

Why should we interfere and petition the Home Government as to how to govern Ireland? Do they not know better than we? How should we like their passing resolutions that we should impose a duty on this or that article or to manage in this and that way the different Provinces of the Dominion? We would deliberately tell them to mind their own business - that we could manage our own affairs.(1)

White's point was one which the Gladstone government would use when telling Canada to "mind your own business", and would remain a strong argument against the intrusion of the Irish Question in Canadian politics until Gladstone himself changed his attitude on that issue.

Nathaniel Wallace, however, raised a more important point which was fundamental to the entire issue. He indicated a problem which had been passed over in silence by Blake, Costigan and Anglin:

I have listened with great interest to the remarks of...members who have spoken in favour of Home Rule in Ireland, and I have still to learn definitely what these hon. gentlemen mean by Home Rule for Ireland. Are powers to be granted similar to those given

(1) Ibid., 1065.

to the Provinces of the Dominion?(1)

This was indeed the question: what was Home Rule? A clear definition of the term had been neither attempted nor desired by Parnell before 1882. The nature of the New Departure, with its alliance of parliamentary and revolutionary elements of Irish nationalism, depended to a large extent on both sides believing that each shared the other's ultimate objective for Ireland. A forthright definition of what Home Rule would entail would only bring into focus the sharply differing aims of the partners in the alliance. Clan na Gael were prepared to give Parnell a chance to win freedom for Ireland at Westminster through implicit intimidation. Parnell would be able to point to the violence that would be unleashed unless he were given what Ireland demanded. This extra-parliamentary force was thought to be vital to Parnell's arguments in the House of Commons. Rather than lose that support, Parnell was content to agitate for Home Rule without ever clearly defining what that meant. It is possible also, of course, that he himself had no clear idea of what was meant by the term, and was content to wait and see what Gladstone had to offer.

The English Prime Minister, being rather more astute than the Irish members thought, requested instead that the Home Rulers provide Her Majesty's Government with a proposal detailing their ideas on Home Rule. Following the lead of Parnell, the Irish Canadians loudly proclaimed that it was the responsibility of the

(1) Ibid., 1066.

Government to produce policy, not the opposition. They continued to demand a Home Rule bill without ever stating the nature of what they demanded.(1) The Kilmainham Treaty and the Coercion Bill of 1882 provided both Gladstone and Parnell with a welcome breathing space. The Land League days of agitation ceased, despite an increase in the number of evictions in Ireland. Parnell chose instead to concentrate on building up the new Irish National League through which the Irish Parliamentary Party developed a nation-wide organisational structure.(2) The Kilmainham Treaty placed a great strain on the New Departure. The land issue, which had been the primary concern of Michael Davitt, was relegated to a position of secondary importance. Home Rule, whatever that meant, was also allowed to slide as an issue in favour of organising the Irish National League (I.N.L.). For Clan na Gael in the United States, it seemed as though their trust in Parnell's methods had been misplaced, and new leaders in 1882 began to look again at employing more traditional means of fighting for Ireland. The Irish-American nationalists had already split in 1880 over the New Departure. Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa had led a splinter group who believed only in violent measures as a way to win Irish independence. He had raised money to launch a dynamite campaign in Great Britain, which had fizzled somewhat

(1) Ibid. This stance was taken by Blake and Costigan in their speeches in 1882.

(2) Joseph V. O'Brien, William O'Brien and the Course of Irish Politics, 1881-1918, [California, 1976], p. 23.

during 1882. After the Kilmainham Treaty, Clan na Gael began to organise their own terrorist cells to bring about a bombing campaign in England. During the period from 1883 until 1887, England and Scotland were faced with the uncertainty and terror of random bombings of public buildings, bridges and railways.(1)

Gladstone, who had politely told the Irish Canadians to mind their own business in April 1882, had changed his attitude within a year. Whether this was linked with the dynamite war, or was merely a development of his own views on Home Rule is unclear. For whatever reason, he wrote to Lord Lorne early in 1883 asking him to obtain the thoughts of Canadian public men on the Irish Question. Lorne approached Costigan, Anglin and Macdonald. Blake, too, was approached, but never got around to putting his thoughts in writing, in spite of repeated requests by Lorne. As he explained to the Governor General, "The more I think of it, the more difficult it seems".(2)

Anglin and Costigan appear to have had no difficulty in stating their positions. Anglin repeated his basic attitudes as expressed in the 1882 debate. He continued to see Home Rule for Ireland in the Imperial context, and denied that it would merely be the first step towards Ireland's total separation from the Empire. He again pointed out that Home Rule, by producing a

(1) For a study of this campaign, see K.R.M. Short, The Dynamite War: Irish-American Bombers in Victorian Britain, [Dublin, 1979].

(2) NAC, Lorne Papers, Vol. 4, p. 92, Blake to Lorne, August 22, 1883.

satisfied Irish people, would only serve to strengthen the Imperial structure. But a satisfactory alteration in the constitutional relations between Ireland and the Empire "must as far as possible be made in accordance with Irish wishes".(1) Anglin's views had changed remarkably little since his days as a Young Irelander forty years before. He still looked for the simple repeal of the Act of Union, as his hero Daniel O'Connell had done. By 1883 he was prepared to see the rights of property guaranteed, as a nod towards the Protestant minority, but he had no wish to make an issue of religious differences.

John Costigan considered that there were three problems which had to be resolved to make Home Rule acceptable generally: the fears of large landowners that they would be dispossessed by an Irish Government; the fear that Home Rule would lead to the disintegration of the Empire; and the problem of religious minority rights. His answer to the land issue was to deal with it before Home Rule was granted. Allow landlords to sell out if they wished, and reserve a veto in London over any legislation designed to dispossess those who refused to sell. As for the Empire, Costigan agreed with Anglin: "Home Rule would, beyond the possibility of a doubt, consolidate and not weaken the Empire".(2) His reasoning was that as long as Ireland was left discontented, the Irish-American extremists would have a cause around which to rally opposition to the Empire. Costigan raised

(1) *Ibid.*, A-716, p.865-9, Anglin to Lorne, June 12, 1883.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 879-82, Costigan to Lorne, June 18, 1883.

the spectre of a Fenian-dominated Democratic Party taking control of the American Congress and Presidency in order to involve the United States in a war with Great Britain. That possibility would be neutralised by the granting of Home Rule to Ireland. The self-governing Irish would become "as loyal as the Irish in Canada", grateful to a gracious monarchy and content within the Empire.(1) The veto power held at Westminster, he believed, would also be a sufficient guarantee of fair play for the Protestant minority in Ireland.

The significant aspect to Costigan's and Anglin's views on Home Rule is that both men envisaged it taking place within the context of the Empire. Neither they, nor presumably the people they represented, were separatists. The American republican model did not attract them, rather it was used as an example of what Home Rule would avoid. Although Blake did not expand on his speech of 1882 for Gladstone's benefit, he had already made it clear in the House of Commons in Ottawa that he, too, saw Home Rule as a means by which Ireland's role in the Empire might be consolidated and the Empire strengthened thereby. Costigan's moderate stance on the Irish Question was emphasised by the fact that he had sought Macdonald's approval of his memorandum on Home Rule before forwarding it to Lord Lorne.(2) The political leadership of the Irish in Canada, then, were neither separatist nor republican in sympathies, but supported Home Rule as the best

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

structure within which the Irish Question could be answered in an Imperial context. The source for their shared approach lay in their Canadian experience. Each of the three used the experience of the Irish Catholics in Canada, and of the Canadian federal system itself, as a basis for their views on Home Rule. Home Rule had worked wonders for Canadian loyalty to the Empire; Home Rule in Canada, in the form of the provincial system, had defused much of the regional antagonisms existing in British North America before Confederation. The Irish Catholics in Canada, having experienced the benefits of self-government, religious freedom and equality of opportunity, had proved their loyalty to the Crown by rejecting Fenianism. As Costigan said, Home Rule "would make the Irish at home as loyal as the Irish in Canada".(1) The Canadian experience was the standard by which they judged.

This raises an interesting question: to what extent were Blake, Costigan and Anglin representative of the Irish in Canada in these attitudes? John A. Macdonald had his doubts. He too had been asked by Lorne to forward his views on the Irish Question to Gladstone, and in October 1883 he complied.(2) Macdonald had no very high opinion of the Irish Catholic. He believed them to be fundamentally disloyal and factious, and he was in constant fear over possible Fenian invasions from the United States. The dynamite war in Britain which had peaked during 1883 made him

(1) Ibid.

(2) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 83, p.32593-8, Macdonald to Lorne, October 2, 1883.

doubly anxious about the Irish in Canada. During the summer of 1883, a number of terrorists were arrested in Britain and charged with bombing and explosives offences. These men were working for both Clan na Gael and O'Donovan Rossa.(1) In June, Lorne and Macdonald were writing to each other about rumours originating in New York that Princess Louise, Lorne's wife and Queen Victoria's youngest daughter, was to be kidnapped in exchange for the release of the suspects in England.(2) After the suspects had been tried and sentenced by Chief Justice Coleridge, his Lordship took a trip to the United States. The Colonial Secretary, Lord Granville, wrote to the British Consul General in New York with regard to a possible visit by Coleridge to Canada:

Tell the Chief Justice we are of opinion that he should avoid if possible going to Canada...if there is any risk we think it greater there than in the United States.(3)

On the face of it, such a fear appears ridiculous, considering that New York was the headquarters of Irish-American terrorism against Britain. However, the main source of intelligence on Fenian activity in Canada upon which the British relied was Prime Minister Macdonald.(4) By March 1884, Macdonald was still worried about a Fenian raid against Manitoba, and had apparently

(1) Short, The Dynamite War, Chapter 5.

(2) NAC, Lorne Papers, A-716, p. 1557, Lorne to Macdonald, June 21, 1883.

(3) Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 67, Telegram, Granville to Booker, August 22, 1883.

(4) Short, p. 86.

some concrete reasons for distrusting the Canadian Irish.

Several discoveries of dynamite have been made at Niagara and Montreal, but we keep them quiet, and we have tolerably good sources of information as to the movements of these fiends.(1)

Affected as he undoubtedly was by these rumours and threats, Macdonald had little to say in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. Considering the apparently close links between Parnell and Clan na Gael, Macdonald could not believe that simple Home Rule would answer the Irish Question:

Ireland will not be satisfied with a Parliament having any less powers than those conceded to her on the pressure of Grattan and the Volunteers of '89....Ireland would only use any less extensive powers than those asked for by her as a leverage to grant all she demands.(2)

Macdonald considered Home Rule as a first step to separation of Ireland from the Empire. It would appear that Lorne agreed with him; Macdonald went on that: "If Home Rule were granted to Ireland its effects would be (as pointed out by Your Excellency) a disintegrating one". Unlike Costigan and Blake, Macdonald did not see the Canadian experience as an argument for Ireland; instead he took an almost racist attitude. "The Celtic races have never taken to self or Representative Govt. Canada has a mixed people and has always learned the lessson of compromise, that Ireland never will." This sounds strange coming from a Celt who

(1) NAC, Lorne Papers, Vol. 1, p. 367, Macdonald to Lorne, March 26, 1884.

(2) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 83, p. 32593, Macdonald to Lorne, October 2, 1883.

had succeeded in arranging "harmless" compromises with Costigan and numerous other Celts in the past. It is, however, a fascinating insight into the mind of the political mastermind of Canada. Within months of writing this memorandum, Macdonald was faced with the resignation of John Costigan from the Cabinet. Costigan had come to the realisation that Irish Catholics in Canada were not being treated equally in patronage matters, and rather than remain as a "nominal symbol" in the Cabinet as an Irish Catholic representative, he preferred to resign and make a point. As with Frank Smith's later resignation, Macdonald was able to convince Costigan to stay on in the Government where he remained until after Macdonald's death.(1)

The treatment meted out to the Irish Catholic leaders by John A. Macdonald indicated the low opinion he had of them and, by extension, of the people they represented. It is clear that he considered the Irish Catholic population to be basically an homogeneous group, a voting bloc, with a common set of attitudes and beliefs. His attempts to win over the Irish Catholic vote in Ontario illustrate this clearly. He saw the Irish Catholic population as a single voting bloc which could be won "as a whole" for the Conservatives. The failure to do so in 1882 was blamed on the lack of time available for his alliance with O'Donohoe to bear fruit. In the same way, it appears that John O'Hanly believed in an homogeneous Irish Catholic bloc which

(1) NAC, Costigan Papers, Vol. 1, p. 127-9, Costigan to Macdonald, February 18, 1884.

could be united behind a single leader. John Costigan, in his pained letter of resignation, assumed that he, too, represented a single Irish Catholic constituency in Canada, as did Frank Smith and Archbishop Lynch. Each believed that their status and influence rested on the existence of a single, unified, homogeneous community whose united power could upset governments. This was clearly a generally accepted assumption. But was it true?

In the debate on the Costigan Resolutions, and again in the memoranda to Gladstone on Home Rule, the Irish leaders in Canada asserted over and over the loyalty and contentedness of the Irish Catholics in Canada. They used this happy condition as an argument in favour of Home Rule for Ireland which, they claimed, would produce an equally loyal and contented Irish population within the Empire, where they belonged. John A. Macdonald, on the other hand, considered the Irish in Canada to be fundamentally disloyal to the Empire, incapable of self-government and eager for separation from Britain by violent means. Given an homogeneous Irish Catholic community in Canada, one or other of these assessments have to be wrong. In fact, both were relatively accurate.

Before the Fenian scares of the 1860's, the Irish Catholics of Canada had never been faced with the necessity of defining their attitude towards living under the British Crown in a predominantly Protestant country. The Fenian invasion of 1866 and the campaign of Thomas D'Arcy McGee changed that. McGee forced

the Irish Catholic community to choose between supporting the Fenians and, by extension the traditional anti-British attitudes of Irish history, or opposing Fenianism in Canada and so embrace a new nationality which would be neither Irish nor English, but Canadian.(1) In fact, the choice was not as simple as McGee believed. There were those who rejected Fenianism, but only in a limited way. While they would reject any Fenian attempts to use Canada as a means of attacking Britain, they nevertheless fully supported the ideology of Fenianism and welcomed direct attacks on Britain or on British rule in Ireland. Thus, although McGee appeared to have garnered Irish Catholic support for Canada, that support did not necessarily extend to the British Empire as an institution. Even the "Imperialist" Irish leaders like Costigan and Anglin still believed that the British presence in Ireland had produced nothing but harm for Ireland and her people. They supported Home Rule because they were Irish nationalists, something which they believed was in no way incompatible with loyalty to the British Crown or the integrity of the Empire. In this regard, they may be compared to the Canada First movement, who also claimed to have been inspired by McGee. Therefore, the Irish Catholic community in Canada was not united in their attitudes to the Irish Question. There were those who saw the answer to Ireland's grievances lying in Home Rule, meaning the granting of an Irish legislature to deal with purely Irish concerns under the wing of the Westminster Parliament in the

(1) Shanahan, chapter 4.

context of the British Empire. But there were others who defined Home Rule in a very different way indeed. The supporters of Clan na Gael and other revolutionary nationalist organisations believed in winning for Ireland a totally independent Parliament, completely separate from the Imperial assembly in London. For the former group, loyalty to Ireland and allegiance to the Empire were perfectly compatible, perhaps even synonymous. For a contented Ireland was a strong addition to the Empire, whereas a restless Ireland could only be a source of weakness and disunity.

It was this double loyalty that Macdonald found hard to grasp, and which convinced him that Home Rule was a separatist plot in disguise. Nor was he alone in this. In England itself, much of the opposition to Home Rule in Parliament centred on this same scepticism. When Gladstone introduced a very weak Home Rule Bill in Westminster in 1886, according to one authority:

Much of the Unionist criticism of the bill was in fact based on the argument that it was so inadequate a fulfillment of Irish national demands that Irishmen could not possibly accept it as a final settlement....And yet Irishman after Irishman got up in the House of Commons and solemnly declared that subject to...minor modifications...he did accept this bill in principle as a final settlement.(1)

The moderate Irish nationalists in Canada, therefore, were simply reflecting the ideology of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster. Parnell was their hero and model and his methods and aims were followed closely by his Irish supporters in Canada.

This was the community which Costigan et al believed they

(1) Robert Kee, The Green Flag, [London, 1972], p. 388-9.

represented. Macdonald was suspicious because he had insights into a very different Irish Catholic community in Canada, co-existing with, and sometimes even overlapping with, the moderates. He had access to the reports of spies and informers recounting the various schemes and activities of the Fenian Brotherhood, both in the United States and Canada. Because the many splinter groups of the Fenians, including Clan na Gael and O'Donovan Rossa's groups, were secret, oath-bound societies, it is extremely difficult to discover the true extent of Irish Canadian involvement in them. Even at the time, the authorities had to depend almost entirely on spies and paid informers for their information. There was no organised department of government or police trained and equipped for such intelligence gathering work. In fact, it was the Dynamite War of the 1880's that inspired the first tentative steps towards the setting up of a national detective force in England.(1) In Canada, all such intelligence reports were directed to Macdonald's desk, and it was through these that he shaped his attitudes concerning the Irish Catholics in Canada. Given the nature of his sources, it is not surprising that he would have developed a rather negative view of that community. For indeed there is evidence pointing to the existence of a number of Fenian cells in Canada throughout the 1880's. The size and level of activity of these groups remains largely hidden behind the mist of rumour, fear and

(1) Short, The Dynamite War, Chapter 5.

secretiveness surrounding extreme Irish nationalism in Canada.(1)

At the time of McGee's murder, it was thought that Fenian activity in Canada centred on the many Irish Benevolent Societies, especially in Toronto, Montreal and Quebec City. Following the mass arrests and the miserable failure of an attempted invasion in 1870, interest in Fenianism in Canada slackened. Patrick Boyle of the Irish Canadian is an example of a Fenian supporter in the 1860's, imprisoned as a Fenian in 1868, slowly coming to terms with Canada and constitutionalism in the 1870's without losing his deep commitment to Irish freedom. Other former foes of McGee, however, remained closely tied to militant nationalism. F.B. McNamee of Montreal had been a bitter enemy of McGee and his new nationality. In 1876 he started a newspaper in Montreal directed to Fenian supporters. The Montreal St. Patrick's Society, of which McNamee was President, voted \$1,000 to help set up the newspaper.(2) Interest in Fenianism generally increased in the late 1870's as the extent of the agricultural crisis in Ireland became clear. In 1877, it is estimated, there were only about 50 "card-carrying" Fenians in Canada, with about \$110 in funds. In March, 1878 O'Donovan Rossa arrived in Toronto to give a St. Patrick's Day speech. He was met by Orange riots.

(1) The study which most directly relates to Canada is Peter M. Toner and D.C. Lyne, "Fenianism in Canada, 1874-1884", in Studia Hibernica, 12, 1972, pp.27-75. Other works on this topic are, W. D'Arcy, The Fenian Movement in the United States, [Washington, 1947]; Thomas N. Brown, Irish-American Nationalism, [New York, 1966]; and D. Ryan and W.O'Brien, Devoy's Post Bag, 2 vols., [Dublin, 1948].

(2) Irish Canadian, January 12, May 10, 1876.

Nevertheless, by June of 1879, Clan na Gael alone had almost 100 members in Canada.(1)

This is by no means a significant proportion of the Irish Catholic population of Canada. Although the level of support enjoyed by a secret revolutionary organisation is normally much greater than its membership rolls would suggest, all available evidence indicates that Fenian activity in Canada was confined to Montreal and Quebec City, with sympathisers to be found throughout the Dominion. Clan na Gael claimed to have six groups organised in Canada in 1883, three of whom together raised a total of \$137.16 in the year ending in August 1883 to support the dynamite campaign in England.(2) Once again, this is hardly a sizeable sum of money to raise between three groups, two of which were located in Toronto and Quebec City. When one considers that more than \$84,000 had been raised in a single year for the relief of Irish distress, not counting Government grants, it would appear that the level of support for terrorist actions was not very great among the Canadian Irish.(3) It has been estimated that there was a total of 143 members of Clan na Gael in Canada in September 1883, but only 116 by June of the following year.(4)

It would appear, then, that the actual number of Irish Canadians actively engaged in secret revolutionary organisations

(1) Toner and Lyne, "Fenianism in Canada", p. 43-5.

(2) Ibid., p. 59-60.

(3) Ibid., p. 62.

(4) Ibid., p. 63.

was very small. The rise and subsequent decline in the level of involvement also appears to parallel the years of the New Departure, which might indicate that the Parnell-Clan na Gael alliance may have given some legitimacy to the latter organisation among the Irish Catholics of Canada. This is not to say, however, that there was little sympathy for Clan na Gael, or for the Rossa faction for that matter. The Irish in Canada had by no means lost interest in the Irish Question. That was amply demonstrated by the large sums of money raised by that community to relieve distress in Ireland; by the public support which was shown for the Costigan Resolutions; by the response to Parnell's visit in 1880. Whether moderate or radical, the Irish in Canada were still involved in the Irish Question, the differences arose in trying to find an answer.

There is, of course, nothing surprising in the discovery that the Irish Catholic community in Canada was divided ideologically in their approach to the Irish Question. Rather, it is amazing that so many believed that the entire Irish population could have a common response to any issue, let alone one that was so emotionally charged. Nor was this division simply a matter of the "constitutionalists" versus the "revolutionaries"; these were but the ends of a wide spectrum of opinion. Hence, a moderate like Costigan could condemn wholeheartedly English rule in Ireland in very forceful language; in that regard he was merely echoing Parnell. At the other end of the spectrum, McNamee of Montreal came under suspicion of having informed on the Fenians

in Montreal to the Canadian government. Protesting his innocence, McNamee asked John Devoy of Clan na Gael to send an investigating committee from the United States to clear his name. At the same time, he wrote to Macdonald asking him to state publicly that the authorities had never employed McNamee as an informer.(1) It is indicative of the confused nature of Irish Canadian ideology that McNamee would write both letters, appealing to both the revolutionary and the constitutionalist for legitimacy.

During the era of the New Departure, this confusion of varying degrees of constitutionalism and revolutionary activity was somewhat understandable. The alliance was itself unique and united all the divergent strands of Irish nationalism towards a single aim. That objective, called "Home Rule", was never defined for the very good reason that a commonly acceptable definition was impossible, and any attempt at definition would destroy the alliance. By the time of the Kilmainham Treaty in May 1882, Parnell's leadership was unquestioned and he could afford to shift his focus from the Land issue to building up a national organisation upon which to base future campaigns for Home Rule. That process took nearly three years to complete, during which time the revolutionary wing in the United States moved back towards an armed struggle, without breaking its ties with Parnell. In fact, the American branches of the Irish National League were often officered by Clan na Gael members, so that the

(1) Ryan and O'Brien, Devoy's Post Bag, Vol. 2, p. 158, McNamee to Devoy, November 8, 1882; NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 379, 177496-7, McNamee to Macdonald, December 28, 1881.

two organisations were virtually the same.(1)

This tremendous confusion of attitudes and approaches to the Irish Question was particularly evident in Canada. Whereas the Irish-Americans could adopt constitutional forms over, as it were, their militant answer to the Irish Question, the two approaches were incompatible in Canada. The Irish-American could remain loyal both to Ireland and his new homeland as a member of Clan na Gael. The Irish in Canada could not, and this faced them with a difficult dilemma. Loyalty to both Ireland and Canada meant that, legally at least, a revolutionary answer to the Irish Question was closed to them. Yet there were those whose sympathies were firmly with Clan na Gael, or the Rossa dynamiters. Even the most moderate Irish nationalist in Canada would find it hard to condemn militant action in the face of large-scale evictions or coercion in Ireland. The resolution of this dilemma played a large role in the Canadianisation of the Irish in Canada.

The Irish crisis of 1879-80 had mobilised the Irish Catholics in Canada and gave them an awareness of their potential for involvement in the Irish Question. Parnell's visit in 1880 focused that awareness on the issue of Home Rule as an answer to Ireland's ills. The activism of the Irish Catholic population inspired O'Hanly to attempt creating a Canadian version of Parnell, not only to co-ordinate Canadian action on the Irish Question, but to mobilise the Irish Canadian community in its own

(1) Brown, p. 135-6; Ryan and O'Brien, Vol. 2, p. 192-5.

interests in the Canadian context. The Costigan Resolutions of 1882 were a pivotal point in Canadian affairs. Because of the debates in Parliament on the Irish Question, a new leadership for the Irish in Canada appeared in the persons of John Costigan and Edward Blake, men who would continue to be in the forefront of the Canadian response to the Irish Question for the next thirty years. Through the resolutions, the Canadian Parliament had expressed its right to speak to the Imperial Assembly on matters of interest to the Empire as a whole; and while it had been snubbed for its efforts, Gladstone had been alerted to the existence of an important source of support and influence beyond the walls of Westminster. When he began to rethink his views on Home Rule in 1883, he turned to Canadians for ideas and advice. Canada itself had become a model for what Ireland might achieve through Home Rule. The comparison between Ireland and Canada, raised by Costigan and Blake in 1882, was to continue to shape attitudes in both Great Britain and Ireland until the winning of Irish independence in 1922, when Ireland was given Dominion status in the Empire on the Canadian model.

These links between Canada, Ireland and Great Britain on the issue of the Irish Question were further strengthened after 1885. As Parnell concentrated on building up the Irish National League in Ireland, branches were organised throughout Canada, and the land once more became a source of crisis and conflict between the Irish and the Empire, circumstances were shaping themselves to bring about a fundamental change in British political affairs.

The Irish Parliamentary Party were about to reach the pinnacle of influence at precisely the moment that William Ewart Gladstone "converted" to Home Rule.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEFINE AND FALL

Following the Treaty of Kilmainham and the Phoenix Park murders of Lord Frederick Cavendish and his secretary, the British Parliament became very reluctant to discuss Irish affairs. It was thought best to "let sleeping dogs lie", and the Imperial Parliament spent the years from 1882 until 1884 engaged in foreign pursuits in the Sudan, and drawing up an act to extend the franchise in the United Kingdom. By early 1884 a general election was no more than a year away, an election that would be contested under the reformed franchise. This, it was believed, would ensure an increase in the number of members elected by the Irish Parliamentary Party, as well as giving greater influence to the Irish vote in British constituencies. Both the Liberals and Conservatives would have to come to terms with the Irish Question before the election was called. Parnell, who had built up a well-organised political machine in Ireland under the aegis of the Irish National League, opened 1885 with speeches in Ireland calling for Home Rule. As before, he remained ambiguous about the precise nature of Home Rule, unwilling either to alienate his extremist allies in the United States, whose financial help was essential to the Parliamentary Party, nor to scare off possible advances by the British political parties. In March 1883, he had

said that, in a Home Rule parliament, "We would not cease to be subjects of the Queen. The Queen would be our Queen. She would be the link which would attach Ireland to Great Britain".(1) This statement would be perfectly in accord with the views of Blake and Costigan in Canada, and would disarm British critics at Westminster. However, Parnell was also quite fond of using far more radical language, as he did in a speech in Cork in January 1885, clearly with the coming election in mind. In words which have ever after been associated with Parnell as "the uncrowned King of Ireland", Parnell said:

We cannot ask for less than the restitution of Grattan's parliament...We cannot under the British constitution ask for more than the restitution of Grattan's parliament, but no man has the right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation. No man has a right to say to his country, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further", and we have never attempted to fix the ne plus ultra to the progress of Ireland's nationhood, and we never shall.(2)

This was classic "New Departure" language, designed to be interpreted according to the attitude of the listener, acceptable alike to both constitutionalist and revolutionary nationalist.

During the early months of 1885 it appears that Parnell began to enter into discussions with both Liberals and Tories on the Irish Question. The Radicals in the Liberal Party, notably Joseph Chamberlain, were prepared to discuss a form of local government for Ireland. There were hints that some Conservatives

(1) Cited in F.S.L. Lyons, Charles Stewart Parnell, [London, 1977], p.260.

(2) Ibid., p. 260-1.

might be willing to go even further. Parnell's position was a happy one indeed. In June 1885, he combined with the Tories to defeat the Gladstone government on a confidence measure, a move which was possibly orchestrated by a divided Liberal cabinet. Whatever the inspiration, the result was a Conservative minority government headed by Lord Salisbury. Parnell used the period of minority government to sound out the Tories on what they had to offer on Home Rule.(1) Although Gladstone, also, was willing to discuss Home Rule in general with Parnell, it was felt that the Conservatives were in a better position to get a Home Rule bill through the House of Lords. Gladstone hoped the Tories would introduce such a bill, which could then be treated as a national, and not a party issue.(2) In any event, Parnell advised his supporters to vote for the Conservatives in the general election of 1885. The result was that the Irish Parliamentary Party found itself holding the balance of power with 86 members, to 335 Liberals and 249 Conservatives.(3)

By January 1886, it was clear that the opposition to Home Rule in the Tory Cabinet made any Home Rule bill impossible. The I.P.P. joined with the Liberals to oust the Tory government on January 27. Gladstone once more formed the administration and on April 8, 1886 introduced the Government of Ireland bill in the

(1) For details on this period, see Lyons, Parnell, pp.260-292;

(2) John Morley, Life of Gladstone, Vol. 3, pp. 357-360.

(3) Kee, The Green Flag, p. 385.

House of Commons.(1) This was the bill which Parnell claimed to accept as a "final settlement" of the Irish Question, and as such it was welcomed warmly by the Irish at home and abroad. In fact, the terms of the act fell far short of restoring Grattan's Parliament, Parnell's oft-stated target. But what was important to the Irish was the fact that a British Prime Minister and a major British political party had gone so far in accepting the validity of the Irish demand for self-government. Here again, appearances were deceptive. More than fifty Liberal members decided to vote against the Bill, thereby ensuring its defeat in the Commons on June 8, 1886. Their motives were as much based on Liberal party divisions as on any opposition to Home Rule in principle. Nevertheless, they helped defeat the bill and their own government. The ensuing election gave the Conservatives and break-away Liberals, known as Liberal Unionists, a majority in Parliament. Home Rule as a practical proposition was dead for years to come.

The reaction to these events in North America hardly seemed in keeping with such a massive defeat. The very existence of a Home Rule bill was enough to encourage the Irish to believe that an Irish Parliament was only a matter of time. Parnell had established himself as the very symbol of Irish nationalism, and his relations with Gladstone were seen to be the key to further success for the Irish cause. The Irish-Americans were in need of encouragement in 1886. The nationalists in the United States had

(1) Lyons, Parnell, p.344.

suffered numerous splits since the New Departure, and the Irish National League, over which Clan na Gael had been so careful to take control, had failed to unify the nationalist cause.(1) Aside from the competition between Clan na Gael and the Rossa faction which had divided the militant nationalists, American domestic politics had further splintered the Irish-American community. The activists under the leadership of John Devoy and the Clan tended to support the Republican party, whereas the moderates supported the Democrats, the traditional recipients of Irish-American loyalties.(2) The process of assimilation into American society was affecting Irish-American nationalists. In 1884, the Irish National League worked for James G. Blaine in his bid for the American Presidency, and the League's President and active Clan leader, Alexander Sullivan, resigned from the League to work full-time for Blaine. It had been Sullivan who had organised the Clan's return to violent action in Britain through the dynamite campaign, and his resignation indicates the powerful attractions of American politics for even the most ardent Irish-American nationalist.

The 1880's were a time of disintegration for the Irish-American revolutionaries. By 1886 the dynamite war had resulted in the imprisonment of the more active terrorists and the Clan had failed to establish the Irish Government in exile which they had hoped the I.N.L. would become. John Devoy had

(1) Brown, p. 157.

(2) Ibid., p. 135.

hoped that the Irish in the United States could reach a point where they would hold the balance of power in American political life, and thus be able to dictate to Parnell, whose reliability he had begun to doubt from the time of the Kilmainham Treaty.(1) Instead, by 1886 it was Parnell who held the balance of power in Britain and the I.N.L., as a tool of Clan na Gael, was practically useless except as a source of funds for Parnell. Even in this area, however, the League suffered from the changing focus of the Irish-American people. Between 1883 and 1890, the League raised \$635,873 for the Irish Parliamentary Party. In the latter year, the Ancient Order of Hibernians alone had a treasury of one-and-a-half million dollars.(2) Between 1848 and 1900 an average of one million pounds per year was sent by the Irish community in North America to Ireland in the form of remittances to finance emigration. Ninety per cent of that money came from the United States.(3) It would appear that the Irish in the United States, while responding emotionally to the Home Rule cause, used their prosperity in getting more Irish people out of Ireland rather than in financing an Irish Parliament. It is fair to assume that they saw emigration, rather than Home Rule or separatism, as the answer to the Irish Question. As the years went by, it became clear that the real power in the

(1) Ibid., p. 135-6.

(2) Ibid., p. 161.

(3) Kerby Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, [New York, 1984], p. 357.

Irish-American community lay with the politicians and not with the nationalists. As Thomas Brown has argued, the local politician, with his control of jobs and patronage positions, exercised far greater influence than the leaders of Clan na Gael, with their focus on perpetuating the hatred and wars of the country most Irish-Americans were quite happy to leave behind.(1)

The result of this process in the United States was to confirm Parnell's status as the living symbol of Irish nationalism. His success in winning a Home Rule bill from the Liberal Party, in spite of its defeat in the Commons, contrasted sharply with the squabbles and pettiness of Irish-American nationalists like Rossa and Devoy. With the revolutionary organisations in the United States divided and reduced to raising money and setting bombs in Britain, (in neither of which they lived up to their potential), Parnell's achievements were encouraging. Home Rule appeared to be within his grasp, and contributions to the Irish Parliamentary Party increased in 1885-6 while Parnell held the balance of power at Westminster. The fact remained nevertheless, that the Irish Question in the U.S. was quite divorced from the domestic political milieu. The Irish-American nationalist leaders, such as Devoy and Sullivan, were in competition with Irish-American politicians for the dollars and energies of their fellow-countrymen. It was a test which the politicians were easily winning by 1886. The attempts by Clan na Gael to influence domestic politics in the U.S. led to

(1) Brown, Chapter 8.

the disintegration of the Irish National League. Its association with the Republican Party forced Parnell and his lieutenants to use other organisations as sponsors of their tours of the United States.(1) The heirs of the Fenians were becoming redundant to the Irish Question.

This is not how it appeared to the Canadian and British authorities. However much of a failure the dynamite war may have been to its generals, it succeeded admirably in keeping alive the fiction of a powerful, ever-threatening terrorist organisation with limitless funds and manpower, able at any time they chose to launch attacks on British or Canadian targets. Sir John A. Macdonald, already convinced of Irish-American power, continued to read with anxiety reports of spies and letters of warning from helpful correspondents in Canada and the United States. In 1883 a new Governor-General arrived in Canada to replace Lord Lorne and Princess Louise. Lord Lansdowne introduced another aspect of the Irish Question to Canada. He was a major Irish landlord, with large estates in Queen's County, and had been involved with Macdonald's attempted immigration schemes in 1880-2. Even before he arrived, Lansdowne was causing headaches for Macdonald, who feared that Lansdowne's presence in Canada would provoke Fenian attacks. (Macdonald used the term "Fenian" as a generic term for all Irish revolutionary organisations without distinction). Just before Lansdowne's arrival in Canada, Macdonald expressed his fears to Lorne:

(1) Ibid., Chapters 8 and 9.

There is just a possibility that as shooting Landlords is not a safe game in Ireland now, the Irish American Ruffians might try it on here, trusting to our unfortunate proximity to the United States for a chance of escape.(1)

Affected by the dynamite attacks in England, Macdonald sent a telegram to the British Columbian authorities in 1884 advising them to watch all public buildings on St. Patrick's Day for dynamiters. Other reports warned him of Fenian plans to invade Canada with one hundred thousand men, who would cross the border at various points simultaneously, and so quickly that the American authorities would be unable to prevent them. How such a mob would be able to gather and arm secretly and achieve an element of surprise was not disclosed.(2) In the same month, Macdonald heard from London that reports had appeared in the newspapers there that the Fenians were inciting secession in Manitoba, and encouraging the province to seek annexation by the U.S. Asked whether official notice should be taken of the reports, Macdonald telegraphed ruefully: "Irish doubtless intriguing everywhere - useless to notice".(3) Lansdowne and Macdonald clearly took these reports seriously, for on that St. Patrick's Day they received a long report from one of Lansdowne's aides, Lord Melgund, (later to return as Governor

(1) NAC, Lorne Papers, A-716, p.838-9, Macdonald to Lorne, June 9, 1883.

(2) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 62, 25377, Telegram from Macdonald, February 27, 1884.

(3) Ibid., 25379-81, Rose to Macdonald, February 14, 1884; 25383, Macdonald to Rose, February 27, 1884.

General himself under the title Lord Minto), on possible Fenian invasion routes, tactics, and Canadian readiness to repel such attacks.(1) Macdonald continued to consider the possibility of Fenian invasions long after the organisation of that name had ceased to exist, and when the "Irish American Ruffians" were so divided as to make any such event impossible. The leaders of Clan na Gael must have dreamed of being able to put 100,000 men in the field. Macdonald was informed in February 1886 that "The Fenians do not want to spend any more money on Canadian plots", though the same informant later reported Fenian plans to smuggle arms to the Metis as an alternative to taking direct action themselves.(2)

Fenian links with the Metis had been a source of concern for Macdonald for some time. The North West rebellion of 1885 raised fears among Canadians that the Fenians would ally themselves with the Metis, leading to the loss of the North West to the United States. Lord Lansdowne wrote to Macdonald to discuss the possibility of Fenian assistance to Riel in April of 1885.(3) Nor were the fears totally groundless. John Devoy, the leading Irish nationalist in the United States, had already met with Riel to discuss their common interests.(4) Lansdowne and Macdonald, therefore, considered the Fenian threat to be real and serious.

(1) Ibid., 25407-17, Report by Lord Melgund dated March 17, 1884.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 213, 90582-4, J. Clinton Collins to Mackenzie Bowell, February 9, 1886; 90588-9, Collins to Bowell, February 23, 1886.

(3) Ibid., Vol. 85, 33028, Lansdowne to Macdonald, April 1, 1885.

(4) Devoy's Post Bag, Vol. 2, p. 378-9.

There had been, as we have seen, many threats against Lord Lorne and Princess Louise during their tour of duty in Canada; but Macdonald's fears for Lansdowne's safety seemed to be justified by the discovery of a bomb hidden in a parcel addressed to the Governor General at his official residence. The bomb failed to explode, but it clearly added to Macdonald's fears of Fenianism.(1)

Faced with the threat of Fenian aggression in some form, Macdonald and Lansdowne looked with some misgiving at events in Britain after the general election there in 1885. Lansdowne considered Gladstone's defeat a major victory for Parnell, as it was, but he imagined that Parnell would use his new power to neutralise the influence of the Orange Order with a view to "crowning" the Radicals under Chamberlain when they were ready to pass a Home Rule bill.(2) Neither Macdonald nor Lansdowne felt happy about the Irish holding the balance of power at Westminster. Macdonald's views on the political capacity of the Irish have already been noted. Lansdowne thought, if anything, even less of the Irish Parliamentary Party than did Macdonald. As a major Irish landlord, Lansdowne disliked and distrusted the members of the I.P.P., whom he referred to as "the Irish

(1) NAC, Lansdowne Papers, Reel A-623, Lansdowne to West, January 30, 1884. For an account of Lansdowne's impact on the constitutional evolution of Canada see John Lee Gordon, "Lord Lansdowne in Canada, 1883-1888", unpublished PhD thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1972.

(2) *Ibid.*, Vol. 85, 33298, Lansdowne to Macdonald, December 2, 1885.

savages".(1) Lansdowne had, in fact, been a member of Gladstone's Cabinet, but had resigned in 1880 in protest over the Prime Minister's Irish policy.(2) Lansdowne owned the second-largest estates in Ireland and was marked by the Land League as a target for their Land War. In the later 1880's, Lansdowne's Irish links would provide another reason for the intrusion of the Irish Question in Canadian affairs.

The Canadian people followed events in Britain closely as Lord Salisbury suffered in his turn from the power of the Irish members and gave way once more to Gladstone. The debate on the Government of Ireland Act was reported almost verbatim by the Canadian press, and its final defeat and the split in the Liberal Party were warmly welcomed by Macdonald and Lansdowne, who considered the defeat of the bill "a great triumph".(3) However, though Home Rule had been defeated at Westminster, the Gladstone bill had once more made the Irish Question a live issue in Canada. It was not that the Canadian Irish had ignored the Irish Question after the election of 1882, far from it. Organisations like the St. Patrick's Society of Ottawa, once used by John O'Hanly to gather support for Costigan's Resolutions, continued to be involved in Irish affairs. In 1883, they held a testimonial dinner for Parnell, raising money for the Irish Parliamentary

(1) Lord Newton, Lord Lansdowne, a Biography, [London, 1929], p. 22.

(2) Ibid., p. 18-9.

(3) Ibid., 33597, Lansdowne to Macdonald, June 8, 1886.

Party.(1) The following year the organisation asked Edward Blake to address them for their annual St. Patrick's Day dinner, an indication of Blake's position as leader of the Irish community, and of the Liberal dominance of the Ottawa society.(2) At the 1885 St. Patrick's Day celebration the toasts were "Ireland Our Motherland", followed by "Canada Our Home", again, an interesting insight into the perspective of the Ottawa Irish and the respective places of Ireland and Canada in their consciousness.(3) This attitude was precisely what Macdonald believed lay behind the Fenian threat in Canada. In a clash of loyalties, he believed, the Irish Catholics in Canada would support Ireland over Canada. He was determined to allow nothing to precipitate such a clash in the hearts of the Canadian Irish. To that end, and in spite of calls by Gladstone himself for resolutions of support for his Home Rule bill from all interested parties, the Canadian Government remained silent on the issue through the early stages of the summer of 1886.

There was much about the Canadian situation to make Macdonald shy about more talk of Home Rule in the Commons chamber. The Roman Catholics of Canada were restless, and prudence demanded that Macdonald steer clear of anything which might alienate their support for the Conservative party. Already

(1) NAC, F.R. Latchford Papers, Vol. 2, File 2, notice of dinner on May 8, 1883.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 12, File 2.

(3) Ibid.

the Tory newspaper in Toronto, the Mail, had seriously damaged the party in the eyes of the Ontario Catholics. From late in 1882, the paper had carried on a violent, derogatory attack on Archbishop Lynch of Toronto. It claimed that Lynch ran the Liberal party for Catholic purposes, pointing to the fact that the editor of Lynch's mouthpiece in Toronto journalism, the Tribune, was none other than Timothy Warren Anglin, well-known alike for his Grit affiliations as for his religious associations.(1) The attacks on Lynch had included a written complaint which was sent to the Vatican in late 1882, protesting the Archbishop's intrusions into the political life of the province. The complaint was signed by John O'Donohoe and Frank Smith.(2)

Lynch had weathered that storm easily, and the attempt by Macdonald to use the divisions in the Ontario Catholic community for his own ends came to nought. The resentment of the secular Catholic leaders against the ultramontanist proclivities of Lynch was submerged in the tidal wave of Mail editorial diatribes. The anti-Catholic campaign continued up to the beginning of 1886, by which time Catholic Conservatives were becoming upset by the failure of the Prime Minister to curtail the attacks of the Mail. In February 1886, Macdonald heard from T.H. McGuire of Kingston. McGuire had been elected President of the Conservative Catholic

(1) Gerald Stortz, "John Joseph Lynch, Archbishop of Toronto", unpublished PhD thesis, University of Guelph, 1982, p. 148-153; Baker, Anglin, p.235-6.

(2) Stortz, p. 148.

Association. an organisation formed in response to the Mail's campaign. McGuire assured Macdonald that the Association had complete faith in their leader's support for Catholic Conservatives, laying the blame for the Mail's abusive behaviour at the door of the Orangmen in the Cabinet. McGuire asked that Macdonald put in a word with "Brother Bowell", referring to Mackenzie Bowell, Cabinet Minister, future Prime Minister, and Grand Master of the Orange Order in Canada.(1) Macdonald was warned by Conservatives from all over Canada of the damage being done by the Mail. The newspaper's course was seen as an "irreparable mistake", likely to result in the loss of the Irish Catholic vote.(2) Macdonald wrote to C.W. Bunting, Managing director of the Mail, explaining the problem Bunting's editor, Edward Farrer, was causing the Tory party.

It is certain...that we get a strong support from the Catholics as a whole in the Dominion...I enclose to you for your perusal a private paper signed by Conservative Catholics from Quebec, Nova Scotia, P.E. Island and New Brunswick, remonstrating against the course of your paper. Our Conservative Catholic friends in Ontario are greatly distressed....Pray consider this well.(3)

In all of this, Macdonald maintained the personal support

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 256, 119515, McGuire to Macdonald, February 26, 1886.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 255, 115572-5, P. Mungovan to Macdonald, March 2, 1886; Vol. 426, 208053-4, Smyth to Macdonald, May 27, 1886; 208167-9, Thomas Robertson to Macdonald, May 31, 1886; Vol. 427, 208618-21, John Redmond to Macdonald, June 16, 1886.

(3) Joseph Pope, Correspondance of Sir John Macdonald, [Toronto, 1921], p.380.

of his Catholic followers, who were convinced that the Prime Minister totally disapproved of the Mail's course. In November 1886, McGuire of the Conservative Catholic Association wrote again to beg Macdonald to do something about the paper, reasserting his faith in Macdonald himself. McGuire went so far as to ask Macdonald for advice on running the Association.(1) In fact, Macdonald was so favoured by the Catholic community that W.H. Barry of Ottawa wrote to him in June of 1886 asking for a subscription from the Prime Minister to the Home Rule Fund that had been set up in the city, "well knowing that your sympathy and efforts have always been favourable to the cause".(2) Considering Macdonald's true feelings about Home Rule, as expressed in his memo to Lorne in 1882, and the cynical manner in which he dealt with both Costigan and his resolutions, this continued faith in the Prime Minister on the part of the Irish Catholics is remarkable. Even more so, in the light of revelations by M. Kirwand, who, in a pamphlet published in 1889, appeared to show that Macdonald himself had helped write an anti-Lynch tract in 1883.(3) Nevertheless, John A. Macdonald was walking a very fine line in these years, attempting to retain Catholic support for his Government in the face of major

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 421, 211575, McGuire to Macdonald, November 2, 1886.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 427, 208918, W.H. Barry to Macdonald, June 29, 1886.

(3) M. Kirwand, The Tory Manifesto of 1883, [Toronto, 1889].

challenges, not only to his leadership, but even to the continued existence of the Dominion of Canada.

In the summer of 1885 the Canadian North-West, which Macdonald had thought to keep calm by excluding the wild Irish, exploded in rebellion. On September 15, 1885, a judge in Regina sentenced the leader of the uprising to death by hanging, with a recommendation of clemency. Louis Riel, after causing anxiety and fear in Macdonald in his living, was to cause him anguish and conflict in his death. The circumstances surrounding Riel's eventual hanging are not immediately relevant here. However, Macdonald's final decision to allow the execution to go ahead was, to a large extent, based on political considerations. In the face of Ontario Orange demands, the strident appeals for mercy from Quebec Catholics failed to alter the decision. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the situation, Macdonald would now have to watch Quebec carefully. Other parts of the country were also threatening Macdonald's calm. Nova Scotia was restless under the confines of Confederation. After intense maneuvering, Macdonald had managed to tone down Nova Scotia's initial dislike of the federal structure in 1868. But a new Liberal Premier, W. S. Fielding, was using the grievances of the Province as a stick with which to beat the federal government. Talk of secession was in the air in 1886.

On May 7, 1886 the Provincial Assembly of Nova Scotia passed a resolution in favour of secession from Confederation by

a vote of 15-7.(1) The issue had only been raised that summer, but had proved to be a popular one among Nova Scotians, tired of Ottawa's indifference to their concerns. It was a promising topic on which to fight an election, due in Nova Scotia before the end of June, and one which was particularly embarrassing for the federal government. In England, Gladstone was fighting a general election on the Home Rule issue, and, as Macdonald knew:

Gladstone, in his infatuation with Home Rule, might give serious consideration to the Nova Scotian demands. And if so, nobody could tell what might happen to Confederation.(2)

To emphasise the significance of the secession resolutions, three days later the Nova Scotia Assembly unanimously passed resolutions in favour of Home Rule for Ireland.(3) The point could not have been more plain: the Irish Question had become a factor in Canadian federal-provincial affairs. In London, it was thought that some link existed between secession and Home Rule, and John Rose wrote to Macdonald about it: "Are Nova Scotia resolutions serious? Have they been influenced by Home Rule views here?" Macdonald, determined to prevent any further use of the Irish Question by Fielding, replied:

No connections between Irish Home Rule and resolutions. Province applying for better terms. Looks like Blackmail. General election imminent.(4)

(1) Waite, Arduous Destiny, p. 186.

(2) Creighton, Macdonald, Vol.2, p.456.

(3) Horrall, "Canadian Response", p.75-6.

(4) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 259, 118035, Rose to Macdonald, May 10, 1886; 118038, Macdonald to Rose, May 12, 1886.

Fielding went on to win a sweeping victory in a provincial election in June. Quebec would be a problem after the Riel affair, and Ontario was always a thorn in Macdonald's flesh, something the activities of the Mail only exacerbated. It was in this context that Macdonald once again found himself confronted by the Irish Question. Gladstone's adoption of Home Rule for Ireland provided a source of support for those Canadians who disputed Macdonald's interpretation of Confederation. His strongly centrist conception of Canada was being increasingly opposed by Oliver Mowat in Ontario, and now by Fielding in Nova Scotia. As P.B. Waite puts it, "it was a debate about what Canada ought or ought not to be....It was too naive, in 1886, to identify Canada with the Dominion government".(1)

The Irish Question may have seemed irrelevant to that debate over Canada, but in fact it reached to the core of the Canadian Question. If Ireland was ready for Home Rule within the Empire, then were not the Canadian provinces ready to govern themselves in the context of the British North America Act? Macdonald, identifying Canada with the Dominion government, was astute enough to recognise how arguments in favour of Home Rule for Ireland could be applied to the Canadian situation to support the constitutional rights of the provinces over those of the federal government. Arguments for devolved powers for Ireland within the Empire also buttressed demands for giving those same powers to

(1) Waite, p. 175.

the various provinces of the Dominion. Therefore, Macdonald was determined not to allow any public debate on the Irish Question in the Canadian Parliament. In 1882, Canada had been used as a model for what Ireland might receive from Home Rule. In the atmosphere of 1886, however, with restless and aggressive Liberals anxious to challenge Macdonald's idea of Confederation, Ireland might well be seen as a model for the future of Canadian federal-provincial relations. As Lord Lansdowne wrote to Macdonald, "this secessionist demonstration [in Nova Scotia] is a curious illustration of the dangers which attend Home Rule even in such a peaceful and orderly family as our's".(1)

In late April 1886, John Costigan was approached once again by the St. Patrick's Society of Ottawa with a request that he introduce new resolutions in the House of Commons in favour of Home Rule for Ireland.(2) The request placed Costigan in a quandary. There is no doubt that Macdonald did not favour such a move; and John Costigan's position in government depended on John Macdonald. In addition, recent events made it inadvisable for Costigan and Macdonald to work with the Irish Catholic organisations. Macdonald's agreement with John O'Donohoe in 1882 had been exposed by O'Donohoe in February. O'Donohoe, tired of waiting to take his promised seat in the cabinet, had gone to the press with the story of how his support had been bought before

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 86, 33744-51, Lansdowne to Macdonald, July 5, 1886.

(2) NAC, Costigan Papers, Vol. 1, 159, Costigan to Parnell, June 18, 1886.

the 1882 election.(1) He wrote of a meeting in Chestnut Park, Toronto, the home of David McPherson, Speaker of the Senate. There, Macdonald had shown him a telegram from Lord Lorne confirming O'Donohoe's appointment to the Privy Council. He told of Macdonald's letters to the Catholic bishops of Ontario detailing the arrangement by which Frank Smith would resign from the cabinet in favour of O'Donohoe at an opportune time, until which time O'Donohoe would sit in the Senate and work for the government among the Irish Catholics in Ontario. Although Macdonald had managed to talk his way out of the potentially damaging situation, he had first to face awkward questions in the Commons, and loudly righteous denunciations in the Liberal press. Edward Blake wanted to know if there was any truth to O'Donohoe's claim to have been made a Privy Counsellor. Macdonald admitted that O'Donohoe's entry into the Cabinet had been discussed, but denied that it had ever got any further. He refused to discuss the Chestnut Park Arrangement at all.(2) There is no doubt that Macdonald did recommend O'Donohoe for the Privy Council, or that Lorne approved the move the following day; however, as Joseph Pope noted on the document in question, "this was suppressed and never acted on. O'Donohoe never took the oath, nor signed the

(1) Ottawa Free Press, February 15, 1886.

(2) Debates, 1886, Vol. 1, 51, 60.

rolls, and is not a Privy Counsellor".(1) Whatever O'Donohoe's interpretation of the Arrangement, there is no question that Pope's reading of the legalities is correct. O'Donohoe had no legal claim on Macdonald, and claims of morality were wasted on the man. Lord Lorne was not about to take O'Donohoe's side against Macdonald; as Pope said, Lorne's speedy approval of Macdonald's recommendation "is a proof of the great confidence and intimacy between L. Lorne and Sir John", as indeed was Lorne's silence in the face of O'Donohoe's allegations.(2) The Catholic hierarchy were equally unwilling to come to the aid of the secularist O'Donohoe, particularly after his letter to the Vatican complaining about Archbishop Lynch.(3)

Macdonald moved quickly to limit the damage being caused by O'Donohoe's revelations. Anxious to neutralise Patrick Boyle and the Irish Canadian, still the leading Irish Catholic paper in Ontario, he had Frank Smith supply him with information on the board of directors of the newspaper, one of whom was Smith's friend J.J. Foy. Smith recommended that Macdonald write to Foy to see if there was a way to Boyle.(4) It transpired that Foy and his fellow directors owed a large sum of money to Boyle, without

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, vol. 39, 15299-15300, Macdonald to Lorne, May 30, 1882, noted "app'd" by Lorne, May 31, 1882. Comments by Pope, undated on the reverse.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., vol. 255, 115576-9, Moylan to Macdonald, March 9, 1886.

(4) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 266, p. 120718-9, Smith to Macdonald, February 19, 1886.

which the newspaper could not continue. Foy assured Macdonald of their "desire...to assist the administration", and that they would use their leverage over Boyle to prevent him from using the paper to support O'Donohoe.(1) It is not at all unlikely that Foy hoped his cooperation in the matter might ease his path to the judgeship he and Smith had so long sought from the Prime Minister.

O'Donohoe, determined to create as much embarrassment as possible for Macdonald, announced that he would reveal the full story of the Chestnut Park Arrangement in a speech in the Senate. In the event, the speech, delivered on May 14, after the Home Rule debate in the Commons, was O'Donohoe's last hurrah in politics. A typical response to the speech can be found in a letter to Macdonald written the day after:

I can only say a greater Fenian never stood in shoe leather...He is a Home Ruler at heart as well as a Rebel of the darkest dye...He will be another acquisition to Blake and his followers. They are welcome to him.(2)

Unfortunately for O'Donohoe, his revelations did nothing to mend the bitter division which had developed between himself and his former Liberal colleagues. He had burned his bridges in 1882 and there was now no going back. Discredited among the Liberals, anathema among Tories, and disgraced among the Irish Catholic electorate who were outraged by his own revelations of his

(1) Ibid., Vol. 424, p. 206447-9, J.J. Foy to Macdonald, March 15, 1886.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 426, p. 207670, Donaldson to Macdonald, May 15, 1886.

dealings with Macdonald, John O'Donohoe was a spent political force; a rather common fate of those who attempted to outsmart John A. Macdonald.

Nevertheless, the revelations concerning the "Chestnut Park Arrangement" made both Costigan and Macdonald very wary of involving themselves too closely with an organisation they considered was run by Liberals.(1) Pressure was mounting for something to be done, however. The Assembly in Quebec passed resolutions in favour of Home Rule on April 16. Although some Conservative members of the Assembly had opposed them, the resolutions had been initially introduced by Felix Carbray, an Irish Conservative member for Quebec City, and the President of the St. Patrick's Literary Institute there. A meeting with the Liberal leader, Honore Mercier, produced resolutions acceptable to both sides and which congratulated Gladstone on introducing Home Rule legislation in Britain.(2) Interestingly, the Quebec resolutions, probably raised to win Irish Catholic support in provincial politics, stated the satisfaction of the members that Gladstone's bill attempted to solve the Irish Question "without the disintegration of the Empire".(3) In a move which reflected the changed circumstances governing the Irish Question in 1886

(1) NAC, Costigan Papers, Vol. 1, 159, Costigan to Parnell, June 18, 1886.

(2) Horrall, "Canadian Response to Home Rule", p. 44-6.

(3) Ibid., Appendix Two, p. 157.

from those of 1882, Gladstone immediately dispatched a telegram to the Quebec Assembly welcoming their support. This was read in the House on April 20, with a more formal letter of thanks being recorded on May 4.(1)

Gladstone's response was a bombshell for Macdonald and Costigan. After the humiliating reception given their resolutions in 1882, they were quite averse to exposing themselves in like manner a second time. Costigan had already refused the request of the Ottawa St. Patrick's Society to introduce Home Rule resolutions in the House of Commons. He later explained to Parnell that

I didn't think it prudent to raise the question again,
as it was impossible to obtain a stronger expression of
opinion.(2)

Whether this prudence was encouraged by Macdonald or not, it became essential that the Government do something to forestall accusations of apathy or even antagonism to the Irish Question. Costigan gathered a number of Irish Catholic Conservative members and drafted a telegram of support which was sent to Parnell on May 3.(3) The Irish National League had organised meetings in support of Home Rule in Toronto and Ottawa, and the response to Costigan's telegram was sharply critical of the "Canadian Parnell". More importantly, with Costigan and the Conservatives

(1) Ibid., p. 48.

(2) NAC, Costigan Papers, Vol. 1, p. 159, Costigan to Parnell, June 18, 1886.

(3) Ibid., p. 160.

committed to one course of action, the way was left clear for the Liberals to make a move. The day after Costigan sent his telegram to Parnell, Edward Blake rose in the House of Commons to introduce resolutions in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. As the debate progressed in Ottawa, the Nova Scotian Assembly was passing resolutions favouring Home Rule for Nova Scotia. On May 10, it unanimously supported the concept of Home Rule for Ireland. It seemed that the Irish Question was once again dominating Canadian political life. However, the importance of the Irish Question for Canada went far beyond an academic discussion of Home Rule for Ireland. It exposed the fundamental differences which underlay the conflicting interpretations of Confederation itself. The debate on the Irish Question in Canada, both within and outside the House of Commons, was the clearest examination of the ideological divisions governing Canadian political affairs.

CHAPTER SIX

A LIBERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE IRISH QUESTION

It was perhaps inevitable that Edward Blake would be accused of using the Irish Question for partisan political gain when he introduced resolutions in favour of Home Rule for Ireland in 1886. After all, as leader of the Opposition, he no doubt would use whatever weapon came to hand to bring about the downfall of the Government. One could easily imagine John A. Macdonald doing something similar, and indeed his actions in 1882 on the same issue were purely partisan, given his own personal attitude to Home Rule. Nevertheless, Edward Blake was a far different political creature than Macdonald. His basic attitude to the Irish Question has been mentioned in Chapter 4; but it is important to examine the underlying philosophy which motivated Blake, not only in this issue, but throughout his political and professional career. For aside from the very deep and bitter antagonism that existed between Blake and Macdonald on a personal level, there was a fundamental difference of political philosophy, or ideology, dividing the two party leaders; a difference which was expressed in opposing attitudes to the nature of Canada itself.

Edward Blake was a liberal. In many ways, that sums up the entire issue. He came from a family steeped in English Liberal

traditions, his father had been a leading reformer in Upper Canada in the first half of the century. This tradition gave Blake an ideology and a sense of duty. Not only did it guide and direct his political attitudes, it also engrained in him a sense of responsibility to put his talents and position at the service of his fellow man, especially the more disadvantaged among them. It was this form of liberalism which motivated men like William Ewart Gladstone in England and William Hume Blake in Canada. Edward inherited this ideology of social responsibility and classical liberalism from the Reformers of Upper Canada, who in turn received it from its English roots. It was shared by many in the Liberal party, including Oliver Mowat, Premier of Ontario and Blake's successor in that position.

Blake and Mowat...were in their temperament, their legal training and their favourite reading, English Liberal Whigs rather than North American radical democrats. They were on the popular side, but didn't quite consider themselves as belonging to the populace.(1)

Blake exhibited certain definite opinions characteristic of such liberalism. After Confederation he constantly supported what might be termed "provincial rights" in opposition to the claims of the federal government. He believed firmly that people had the right to govern themselves according to their own wishes and needs, on as local a level as practicable. This worked on a number of levels. Provinces ought to be allowed govern freely on

(1) Frank Underhill, "Edward Blake", in (ed), Our Living Tradition, [Toronto, 1956], p. 11.

matters of provincial interest without interference by the federal government. Similarly, the Canadian Government ought to be allowed govern Canada freely on matters of Canadian interest without interference by the Imperial Government. This freedom, he believed, would strengthen both Canada as a nation, and the Empire as a whole, since the people would be content, well-governed and saved from the evils which neglect by the higher authority would bring. Such neglect was inevitable if, for example, the federal government tried to legislate for all the provinces as well as for the nation at large.

In this regard, Edward Blake was a true follower of an earlier Irish Canadian leader. Thomas D'Arcy McGee had preached the need for a New Nationality in North America as a basis for Confederation, a nationality which would subsume the ethnic divisions existing among the inhabitants of the new nation and produce a new nationality - the Canadian. This idea was taken up by a group calling itself "Canada First" in the late 1860's and early 1870's.

"Canada First" called on Canadians to emancipate themselves from the old feuds and jealousies of the days before 1867 and to start the new era with an invigorating devotion to the new nationality - Canada First as against the old sectional and provincial loyalties, Canada First as against the old Macdonald-Brown strife, Canada First as against the old subordination to Britain..."Canada First" looked to Edward Blake, that uneasy Grit, as the possible leader of a new political movement.(1)

(1) Ibid., p. 10.

Blake was indeed an "uneasy Grit". The Liberal Party, as it developed after 1867, was still dominated by George Brown and the "old Macdonald-Brown strife" continued into the new Dominion. Blake was unhappy with the party, and this partly explains his famous reluctance to accept high office with the party on a long-term basis before he became leader in 1880. Brown and Macdonald were basically carrying on their old political ways in a new, wider context. As we have seen, Macdonald's approach to the new nation was to try and arrange political alliances based on patronage and a little subterfuge, in order to build a power base in the nation. This was merely an extension of the required procedure of the United Canadas before Confederation, when governing depended on building and keeping together loose alliances of disparate elements in the Assembly. After Confederation, Macdonald depended on patronage appointments to exercise control over the Tory party, over ethnic groups like the Irish, and even over entire Provinces, as he did in Quebec.(1)

Such an approach was repugnant to the beliefs of Canada First and a section of the Liberal Party. Playing off one group against another, as Macdonald did, served only to perpetuate the differences between Canadians, whereas the New Nationality aimed to overcome those differences by creating a national spirit in Canada which would make such divisions redundant. In 1874 Edward

(1) Gordon Stewart, "Political Patronage under Macdonald and Laurier", American Review of Canadian Studies, X, 1980, pp. 3-26.

Blake gave a speech at Aurora, Ontario, in which he gave the clearest exposition of his views on Canada and liberalism he was ever to attempt. He was quite definite about what was and was not required to form a new nationality:

We are engaged in a very difficult task - the task of wielding together seven provinces which have been accustomed to regard themselves as isolated from each other.... How are we to effect a real union between these provinces? Can we do it by giving a sop now to one, now to another, in the manner of the late government?... Do you hope to create or preserve harmony and good feeling upon such a false and sordid and mercenary basis as that? Not so!... We must find some other and truer ground on which to unite, some common aspiration to be shared, and I think it can be found alone in the cultivation of that national spirit to which I have referred.(1)

One way of encouraging this national spirit was to strive to make Canada as autonomous as possible, free to make her own laws and treaties in her own interests, without the supervision of the Imperial Parliament.

In your foreign affairs, your relations with other countries, whether peaceful or warlike, commercial or financial, or otherwise, you may have no more voice than the people of Japan.... To-morrow, by the policy of England, in which you have no voice or control, this country might be plunged into the horrors of a war.(2)

This is, of course, precisely what happened to Canada in 1914. However in 1874 it was not at all a popular view to hold. In spite of Blake's claim that without autonomy or some say in the

(1) Edward Blake, A National Sentiment!, (Ottawa, 1874), p. 10.

(2) Ibid., p. 9.

affairs of the Empire Canadians were "four millions of Britons who are not free", (1) Blake's speech met with strong opposition, not least from within his own party. The Brown faction of the party persisted in seeing Canada in terms of the old United Provinces, with its bitter ethnic, religious and political divisions. Rather than seek ways to overcome these, the old Grits, like Macdonald's Tories, attempted to exploit the divisions for narrow party political gain.

Rather than ally himself with the Canada First group, Blake continued to work through the Liberal party to achieve his goals. During the Liberal administration of 1874-78, the Supreme Court of Canada was set up, although appeals to the Privy Council in England were still allowed. Blake worked to abolish this appeal for the rest of his life. (2) He believed, as Frank Underhill put it, that

Difficulties between the two Governments [in London and Ottawa] must henceforth be settled by discussion and conference, not by the exercise of any overriding authority in London. (3)

Such a relationship would be impossible, however, as long as Britain refused Canada the right to have an independent foreign policy, or exercised a veto on Supreme Court of Canada decisions.

(1) Ibid.

(2) Frank Underhill, "Edward Blake, the Supreme Court Act, and the Appeal to the Privy Council, 1875-6", Canadian Historical Review, September, 1938.

(3) Frank Underhill, "Edward Blake and Liberal Nationalism", in R. Flenley (ed), Essays in Canadian History, (Toronto, Macmillan), 1939, 134.

In 1882, Blake had moved in the House of Commons a motion to allow Canada to make foreign commercial treaties. His speech could almost have been delivered on behalf of Ireland:

England in her commercial treaties has not - speaking in the large - helped us. She has, as a rule, regarded in the making of these treaties her own trade only, her own interests....The history of the diplomatic service of England, so far as Canada is concerned, has been a history of error, blunder, wrong, and concession.(1)

The motion was voted down and Macdonald used the debate to engage in rhetorical professions of loyalty, seeing in Blake's motion, not an attempt to further Canadian nationality, but a thinly disguised move toward separatism:

Disguise it as you will, this means separation and independence....This is a commercial movement; by-and-by we shall have something else; until at last we take a step for political independence.... A British subject I was born, and a British subject I hope to die.(2)

To which one might almost hear Blake reply that "no man has the right to set a limit to the march of a nation".

In the light of this insight into Edward Blake's liberalism, it becomes easier to understand his interest in the Irish Question, quite apart from his own Irish roots. In the debate on Home Rule in 1886, it was clear that Blake argued on the Irish Question as one of real and immediate concern to Canadians, rather than as a topic of interest only to the Irish

(1) Canada, House of Commons Debates, 1882, 1071, 1074.

(2) Ibid., 1882, 1078.

themselves. For at issue in the Irish Question was the very philosophy of government which he believed was required in Canada in order to produce a true Canadian nation. To have Home Rule denied to Ireland would be a blow against true Home Rule in Canada also. The 1886 Home Rule debate exhibited all the internal divisions existing within Canadian society itself regarding the nature and future of the Canadian nation.

Blake rose on May 4, 1886 to move a resolution on the Irish Question:

An humble address...to Her Majesty to respectfully assure Her Majesty that the interest and concern felt by the Commons of Canada, and the people whom they represent, in the condition of Ireland, and their desire that some means may be found of meeting the expressed wishes of so many of Her Majesty's Irish subjects for the grant to Ireland of a measure of local self-government still continues as warm and earnest as in the year 1882, when they were humbly signified to Her Majesty by an address in terms to which this House affirms its abiding adhesion.

Humbly to inform Her Majesty that this House hails with joy the submission by Her Majesty's Government to the Parliament of the United Kingdom of a measure recognising the principle of local self-government for Ireland.

And humbly to express to Her Majesty the earnest hope of this House that the principle of the said measure may be affirmed, and that it may form the basis for such a settlement of this great question as shall conduce to the peace, happiness and prosperity of the Empire. (1)

The wording of the resolution was moderate and submissive, perhaps even more conservative than the successful resolutions of

(1) Ibid., 1886, 1024.

1882 had been. Blake had made a generous reference to the earlier resolutions moved by Costigan and merely stated that the Canadian Commons remained committed to their spirit. The remainder of the resolution was a statement of support for Her Majesty's Government in what they were attempting to do in the Imperial Parliament. There was certainly nothing remotely disloyal or critical in them. In his introductory remarks, Blake deliberately stated that he was not discussing the specific terms of the Gladstone Bill; "I do not, myself, admire all those details", (1) rather he wished to support the general principle involved, local self-government. Nor was he interfering in an uncalled-for manner with the affairs of the Mother Country. Unlike the circumstances of 1882, Gladstone had actually invited support for his Bill from outside agencies. He had welcomed similar resolutions to Blake's not only from the Quebec Assembly, but even from the City of Boston. If Americans were welcome to speak in support of Home Rule, surely Canada, loyal member of the Imperial family, had a positive duty to do so? Blake wished to make this a non-party question. Having waited for the Government to move, he had only introduced his resolution after Costigan's telegram to Parnell had shown that nothing more could be expected from the Conservatives. This, he said, was an issue for Canadians; they had a duty to speak out on a question of interest to the Empire and to Canada herself.

What is required is the assurance, not of one, but of all classes; not of a section,

(1) Ibid., 1023.

but of the people; not of a Minister of the Crown, but of the Commons of Canada; not of the Irish Catholic members, but of the French and English, Scotch, Irish and German, of all creeds and of all nationalities....I therefore speak, not as a Reformer, or as a party leader; I speak as a Canadian and citizen of the Empire to brother Canadians and fellow-citizens of the Empire. This is not a Protestant or a Catholic question; they are enemies of their country who would make it so.(1)

Indeed, in the Irish Question Edward Blake had found an issue which combined all of the main aspects of his political liberalism. It was an issue of interest to the Empire; therefore Canada should assert her right to speak on it. It involved local self-government, thereby supporting Blake's conception of Confederation and the rights of the Canadian Provinces against the intrusion of the federal Government. It was an issue which concerned all classes, all sections of society, and could thus be a focus for unity and amity. Home Rule for Ireland involved all the issues which Blake believed could contribute to the strengthening of the Dominion of Canada as he envisioned it.

Blake's view of Federal-Provincial relations fitted in perfectly with the realities of the Irish Question.

But to Blake and his Liberal contemporaries it seemed self-evident that the different provinces were distinct societies, each with its own characteristic life, and that the provincial governments were in the nature of things closer to their people than the federal government and therefore in the truest sense more popular.(2)

(1) Ibid., 1024.

(2) Underhill, "Edward Blake and Liberal Nationalism", p. 139.

In the same way, an Irish assembly meeting in Dublin would be more 'popular' and responsive to the needs of Irish people than the London Parliament. Ergo, Home Rule for Ireland was a good thing. As for its impact on the stability of the Empire, Blake believed Home Rule would ensure that by making the Irish content by giving them what he believed Canada also was aiming for, "an independent, but not separatist, national sovereignty".(1) This lay at the foundation of Blake's disagreements with Macdonald. Macdonald, as we have seen, believed that "independent" and "separatist" were practically synonymous terms; that one would lead inevitably to the other, not only in Ireland, but in Canada too. Hence, he could refer to Oliver Mowat's campaign for provincial rights, claiming that Mowat had "preached secession" and was a mortal threat to Confederation itself.(2) When it came to the Irish Question in Canada, Macdonald saw a double danger. Not only was he opposed to autonomy for the Irish, both for imperial and anti-Irish reasons, he was also very much aware of how arguments in favour of Home Rule could be applied to Canada. When Blake finished proposing his resolution in the Commons, Macdonald was immediately on his feet.

With typical sarcasm, Macdonald caustically rejected Blake's claim to treat the matter in a non-partisan fashion. Surely, Macdonald said, if he was sincere, Blake could have given warning

(1) Underhill, "Edward Blake", p. 12.

(2) NAC, John O'Donohoe Papers, Vol. 1, p. 44, Macdonald to O'Donohoe, July 4, 1882.

of his resolutions to enable the members to consider them before debate. Macdonald suggested putting aside a day for that purpose.(1) John Costigan quickly followed his leader. He once more rehearsed his role in 1882 when he, unlike Blake on this occasion, had the courtesy to consult with the Irish members of both Houses before moving his resolutions. He welcomed Macdonald's suggestion of delay in order to consult with Blake on the motion. Blake, who had tried to speak before Costigan, accepted the suggestion of the Prime Minister, although, as he said, "it might have been made in a better spirit".(2) He noted that he had used the same procedure adopted by Costigan in 1882 to introduce his motion, so the Government could hardly call it an unfair surprise. Costigan argued that he had first distributed his resolutions, and members had at least an opportunity to study them before debate; to which Blake replied that the resolutions distributed and those introduced by Costigan were quite different. The argument between Blake on the one side and Macdonald and Costigan on the other went on for some time after Blake had accepted the delay. The Conservatives appeared eager to bring a partisan and rather unpleasant tone into the debate from the beginning, and it is not hard to see why. Macdonald did not want a debate at all, and if he had to have one, he did not want a unanimous resolution going to London

(1) Canada, Debates, 1886, 1024.

(2) Ibid., 1026.

again. Not only was he opposed to Home Rule, he did not wish to give Gladstone another opportunity to rebuke him. Unfortunately for him, he could not openly oppose the debate without losing his already precarious support among the Irish Catholics of Canada. Blake was obviously disgusted with Costigan's attacks: whatever the Tory said, Blake responded "hear, hear", whether the comment was in order or not. The effect in the House must have been quite humorous.(1)

John Costigan was in an awkward position. His leadership of the Irish Catholics of Canada had been founded on the 1882 resolutions. No similar motions were possible in 1886 owing to the antipathy of John A. Macdonald. When Blake moved his motion on the Irish Question, it was a direct challenge to Costigan's position in the Irish community, and he had to fight back. Clearly, he could not oppose the resolutions outright. Instead he tried two lines of attack. He claimed that no better result could be achieved in 1886 than was won in 1882, therefore it was better not to do anything to weaken that result. Secondly, he claimed that the Liberals were using this issue to try to discredit him personally.(2)

If they were trying to ease gracefully out of the situation in which Blake's motion had placed them. Costigan and Macdonald's manner betrayed them. George Elliott Casey, Liberal member for Elgin West, rose to challenge them both. Turning first to the

(1) Ibid., 1026-7.

(2) Ibid., 1027.

Prime Minister, Casey reprimanded him for his attitude to Blake:

I am sorry to find that, on this occasion as on others, the Premier appears to consider the sneering and flippant tone which he used towards the leader of the Opposition the proper tone and the proper manner in which to discuss great and important questions....For, if anything could injure the prospects that this resolution, or some similar resolution, would be unanimously adopted by the House, it was the tone and the substance of those remarks.(1)

Casey proceeded to categorically refute Costigan's claim that he consulted with members before introducing the 1882 resolutions. Csaey showed, by quoting the documents, that the resolutions discussed with the Irish members were quite different from those introduced in the House. He then raised an issue which was central to the entire affair, and that was that John Costigan did not really see the Irish Question as a Canadian issue at all, but as one of interest only to the Irish, and on which only the Irish had the right to speak and act.

This is not a party question, it is not a national question; it is a question just as vital to the people of Canada, just as germane to their interests as to those of the people of Ireland, and it is just as natural for a motion in regard to it to come from a Canadian as from an Irishman. It is not an Irish motion. The Minister for Inland Revenue [Costigan] has tried to make it an Irish motion, and has endeavoured to constitute himself the head and front of the movement in favour of Home Rule in Ireland, and he considers it should be necessarily conducted and supported by Irishmen. It is a Canadian national movement; it is just as much a Canadian movement as an Irish movement....I notice a few hon. members on the other side of the House make remarks suggesting dissent

(1) Ibid., 1027.

from what I say. If they wish to say they are not in favour of Home Rule, I deny their right to call themselves loyal Canadians. I deny the right of any man in Canada who is not in favour of Home Rule to call himself a loyal Canadian.(1)

This was a very strong statement, but one which accurately reflected the Liberal view of Home Rule. It was a clear statement, which laid out the basic Liberal attitude to Home Rule and the nature of the Canadian Confederation. Naturally, it was diametrically opposed to everything Macdonald believed in. Not only did it contradict his idea of a strongly centralised Dominion with weak residual powers left to the provinces, it directly attacked the very method by which he was attempting to bring that vision to pass. For in attacking John Costigan's position and by denying that the Home Rule question was the preserve only of Irishmen, Casey was undermining the "divide and rule" system of patronage which Macdonald had so successfully constructed.

As we have seen, the traditional approach in Canadian politics had been to see society as consisting of various distinct groups, divided along either ethnic, religious or regional lines. In this perspective, the Irish had been treated as a major element in Canadian society, an element that commanded attention and patronage. John O'Hanly and John Costigan were typical of those in the Irish community who accepted this interpretation and who worked hard to unify their own bloc in an

(1) Ibid., 1029.

attempt to improve their political position vis-a-vis other groups. All of the competition within the Irish Catholic community which we have examined so far was based on this approach to Canadian political life, and the disagreements between the O'Donohoe's, O'Hanly's, Boyles and Costigans were about tactics and methods, not about the basic system itself. This is where the opposition experienced by Thomas D'Arcy McGee becomes important. O'Donohoe, O'Hanly and Boyle, among others, had considered McGee a traitor. They had come to hate him because of his opposition to Fenianism within Canada. The core of that opposition lay, not with McGee's actions, but with his motives. McGee had preached a new nationality, a subsuming of the Irish ethnic identity into a broader Canadian nationality. This is what Canada First had taken from McGee, and it was central to Edward Blake's approach to Canadian politics. By unifying the Irish community for political gain, Costigan and his colleagues were in fact perpetuating the divisions within Canadian society and preventing the new nationality from developing. In addition, they were playing John A. Macdonald's game. In order for his political system to work successfully, it was important for Macdonald to have distinct groups within society to play against each other. Patronage was the weapon by which he formed alliances with certain blocs against other blocs. It was politics as he had learned to play the game in the old Province of Canada before Confederation, before McGee, before the new nationality. A challenge to John Costigan by Casey was different from one by

John O'Donohoe or Timothy Warren Anglin, because neither Casey or Blake wanted simply to replace Costigan as leader of the Irish bloc in Canadian politics, they wanted to break up the entire bloc itself.

Casey accused Costigan of failing to consult with all the Irish members, as he had claimed to have done, before sending the telegram to Parnell. Costigan replied that he had "presumed to act on the authority of every Irishman".(1) That, said Casey, was precisely the point:

The hon. gentleman had no right to presume to act for any Irishman he had not consulted....I dispute the right of any hon. gentleman to speak for all Irishmen as to the terms in which a message of that kind is conveyed until the hon. gentleman has consulted those members.(2)

Casey concluded by repeating something Blake had said earlier; that haste was necessary in this matter in order to have any motion delivered to London before the Imperial Parliament voted on Gladstone's bill. Macdonald offered to allow Blake to move the paragraphs as a substantive motion if he would wait a day or two. Blake agreed once more and the delay was moved, though not before Macdonald had fired another shot at Blake, saying quite simply:

I am glad the hon. gentleman has taken my advice in the matter, and has agreed to withdraw his motion. But I do not like the hon. gentleman.(3)

(1) Ibid., 1029.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., 1030.

There was definitely no love lost between the two men, and the stage was set for an acrimonious debate on the Irish Question, set for May 6.

That evening, Blake rose and again moved his resolution on Home Rule. Costigan spoke immediately afterwards and repeated the same tactic used in 1882. After once again defending his actions in not initiating Home Rule resolutions before Blake, he instead moved an amendment to Blake's motion. This came as quite a surprise to the Liberals who had expected, from what he had said on May 4, that Costigan would consult with Blake about the original motion and come to a workable compromise with him.(1) This he had failed to do, deciding instead to bring in his own amendment which totally changed the tenor of the debate. The text of the amendment merely retold the story of the 1882 resolutions and concluded that, in the light of the official British response to those resolutions,

this House...does not deem it expedient again to address Her Majesty on the subject, but earnestly hopes that such a measure or such measures may be adopted by the Imperial Parliament as will, while preserving the integrity and well-being of the Empire and the rights and status of the minority, be satisfactory to the people of Ireland, and permanently remove the discontent so long unhappily prevailing in that country.(2)

Not only did this amendment completely ignore Gladstone's bill then being debated in London, it implied that the required

(1) Ibid., 1098.

(2) Ibid., 1097.

measures for Ireland had not yet been found. This was of no help whatever to Gladstone, if it was not a positive hindrance, and it was far weaker than even Blake's moderate motion. Costigan moved the amendment as being "a repetition of the sentiments expressed" in 1882. He was determined that Blake would not undermine his position in the Irish camp.

Casey replied to Costigan, first by noting his failure to consult on the matter, and then pointed out that the 1882 resolution was simply not enough in the changed circumstances of the day. Nor did he think that Costigan was sincere when he said he wished for a unanimous vote, hence the amendment.

...he must have seen that the way to secure unanimity, was not to bring in an amendment of which no notice has been given to this side of the House, at this period of the discussion, but to consult with the leader of the Opposition, who had introduced the original motion.(1)

Worse still, the amendment actually implied that the snub given the Commons in 1882 by the Imperial authorities was being accepted now, since the amendment admitted that fresh resolutions were inexpedient. Yet Gladstone's speech's, his welcome to the Quebec and Boston communications, all indicated that there would be no such snub given this time, so Costigan need have no fear of that. In truth, said Casey, Costigan was simply throwing cold water on the motion for his own reasons.

Casey once again detailed the parallels between the Canadian experience of Home Rule and Ireland, parallels which Macdonald

(1) Ibid., 1098.

would rather not have had discussed at all.

But for the last nineteen years we have been living under an enlarged system of Home Rule - Federal Home Rule, under which each Province has the right to manage its own affairs. Now having once expressed our approval of that principle, it would ill become us now to do other than unanimously reassert that approval. The right of these Provinces and of this Dominion to do what they like within their own constitutional bounds, is an axiom in the constitutional theory of Canada.(1)

This was, of course, a very liberal interpretation of the constitutional theory of Canada, and Macdonald, faced with secessionist resolutions in Nova Scotia, could not have welcomed such a clear statement of Provincial rights in the House of Commons. Casey's speech is a fine example of the use made by Canadian liberals of the Irish Question to further their interpretation of Canadian political structures. Having fully expounded on the Irish Question vis-a-vis federal-provincial relations, Casey ended with a reference to the wider scene and confessed the real motive for his interest in the topic:

I hope the result of this discussion will be to adopt some resolution that will materially advance the prospects of Home Rule, and affirm in a dignified manner the right of the Canadian Parliament to approach and address the Crown.(2)

The position of the Conservative Irish members was repeated by J.J. Curran of Montreal, a man who was deeply involved in Irish Catholic affairs in that city. He resented the fact that

(1) Ibid., 1100.

(2) Ibid., 1101.

Blake had introduced the motion without first consulting with the Irish in the House of Commons. Curran, like Costigan, still saw the political future of the Irish in Canada in terms of developing their power as a bloc within society, rather than as part of the general Canadian nation. He had completely ignored, or misunderstood, what Blake and Casey had tried to say in their speeches.(1)

Casey and Curran represented two opposing views of the place of the Irish Question in Canada. There were many others to be found somewhere between these two extremes. For example, James McMullen, Liberal member for Wellington North, raised another aspect of the debate when he spoke for a section of the Irish Protestant population in Canada. Declaring stoutly that he was "just as true an Irishman as any who sits in this Chamber", McMullen challenged Curran's statement that the Irish members of the Commons had met and talked over the Irish Question before sending the telegram to Parnell. "Well, Sir, I claim to be an Irishman, and I was not there".(2) Curran lamely responded that he had meant to say all Irish Catholic members had been present, to which McMullen angrily retorted: "It is a Catholic question, is it?" McMullen then moved an amendment to Costigan's amendment, striking out the latter's words and instead adding to Blake's motion a paragraph stating explicitly that the House supported Home Rule for Ireland as a means of strengthening the

(1) Ibid., 1101.

(2) Ibid., 1104.

Empire.(1) Another Liberal, William Paterson of Brant South, added another aspect to the Liberal interpretation of the Irish Question when he rose to speak on the issue. McMullen had rejected the idea that Home Rule was an Irish Catholic issue; Paterson refused to see it as primarily an Irish issue at all.

...I, who cannot claim to be either Irish by birth, or Irish by descent, recognize the fact, and at the same time venture to claim that I am in a position in which I may be permitted to say a few words on this question. I conceive this to be a question that is more than an Irish question. These resolutions are introduced into the Canadian Parliament, and as a Canadian, and as a representative in the Canadian Parliament. I feel I am at liberty to express my views in regard to the substance of them, and to intimate what my views are in that direction. I think it is eminently proper that in the Canadian Parliament, composed of the representatives of various Provinces, which enjoy to the full the privilege of local self-government, such resolutions should be introduced.(2)

It was late at night when Edward Blake stood up to sum up the debate for the Liberals. It was clear already that his party had quite a different approach to the Irish Question than the Conservatives. The Tories obviously wanted to limit the issue and confine debate to within the Irish Catholic community. Blake's resolutions had forced an open debate, and the Tories had been very explicit that only the Irish members had the right to discuss the matter at all. The party was divided between those who took this position on the issue, and those who completely

(1) Ibid., 1108.

(2) Ibid., 1128.

opposed Home Rule for Ireland under any conditions. (The nature and source of the opposition to the Irish Question in Canada will be discussed in the following chapter).

The Liberals, on the other hand, took a much broader approach to the question. There were those who believed that the issue was one of importance to all Irishmen, Catholic and Protestant; and others, like Blake, who believed that all Canadians had the right to speak on the issue. In his speech on May 6, Blake first of all took Costigan to task for not consulting with him on the motion, as Costigan had declared his intention of doing. Bringing in his own motion, Costigan had referred to fears that Blake's resolution would meet with three or four opponents in the House, thereby diluting the effect of the motion. Blake ridiculed the idea, taking note that all opponents to Home Rule for Ireland were to be found in Costigan's own party.(1) Next, he attacked Costigan's approach to the Irish Question, accusing him of trying to make it the sole domain of "the Irish Tory Catholic clique" whose attitude was that they "alone are to decide whether a resolution is safe, or prudent, or advantageous to be introduced into the House".(2) Where they would make it an Irish issue, Blake reiterated that Home Rule was, in fact, a Canadian issue; and rather than allow Kimberley's comments in 1882 to deter them, the Canadian Parliament ought to

(1) Ibid., 1120.

(2) Ibid.

speaking clearly once more on the question so that there would be no implied acceptance of the earlier snub. Not to speak would "be agreeing and in a formal manner assenting to the view of the Earl of Kimberley; we shall be acting upon that view, we shall be declaring he is right and we are wrong, and in thus agreeing we will close the door upon ourselves by our own resolution, from, at any future time, venturing a humble address to the Queen upon an Imperial question".(1)

Blake revealed that he had, in fact, been approached by the St. Patrick's Literary Society of Ottawa, after they had been rebuffed by Costigan, who asked him to introduce resolutions of Irish Home Rule. He had also refused their invitation, since he did not believe this was a question which should be linked to one particular ethnic or social group.

I said that it was as Canadians, as persons interested, from their experience of its blessings, in the principle of Home Rule...as free men, interested in the propagation of the cause of freedom, that we should act....The Irish Catholic members in this House and in the other Chamber, and particularly the Tory Irish Catholic members, have no special part in this question - none whatever, and their cause suffers when they attempt to assume such a position. It is as Canadians they are to speak; it is as one whole body; with the exception of three or four individuals who have frightened [Costigan].(2)

This was a perfectly clear expression of Blake's approach to the Irish Question in Canada. It dealt with Home Rule as a matter of

(1) Ibid., 1121.

(2) Ibid., 1123.

Imperial concern, in which Canadians had a right, and a duty to involve themselves. Home Rule was right for Ireland because people had a right to govern themselves according to their own interests and needs. Home Rule was a matter on which Canadians had become experienced and therefore could offer informed comment.

In the end, McMullen's amendment was voted down 118-60, and Costigan's was accepted by 117-61. The only member to vote against both amendments was White of Hastings, who was vehemently opposed to Home Rule of any kind.(1) The debate, however, had not yet ended. Macdonald had not wanted any resolutions at all; now he attempted to block even the weak Costigan motion from being sent to Gladstone. When Blake moved that the resolution be forwarded to the British Prime Minister, Macdonald objected on the strange grounds that such an act would make the motion an address, and thus contradict the spirit of the motion.(2)

The Liberals reacted angrily. David Mills was very clear about Macdonald's motives: "It is well known that the hon. leader of the Government has again and again declared himself against the principle of federation, against the principle of local self-government, and in favor of a legislative union. But those hon. gentlemen have not the courage of their convictions. While they profess to favor Home Rule, they propose a resolution that

(1) Ibid., 1135-6.

(2) Ibid., 1136.

is addressed to nobody". For the Liberals, at least, it was understood that debating Home Rule meant debating Canadian political structures, and Tory opposition to Home Rule had strong domestic roots. Sir Richard Cartwright, another Liberal well-known for his plain speaking, repeated Mills' accusations:

I think it is well that the First Minister, at any rate, has thrown off the mask, and has shown us clearly and distinctly what all of us who know him know, that he has no sympathy for Ireland, and no more more sympathy for Home Rule in Ireland than he has for Home Rule in Canada. The hon. gentleman has been plotting, since the time he was sworn in as First Minister of Canada, against the Local Governments of this country.(1)

George Casey pointed out another possible reason for Macdonald's reluctance to have the resolutions sent to Gladstone. He believed it was motivated by "a petty jealousy" of Gladstone from which Macdonald had suffered since the 1882 snub.(2) Macdonald next suggested sending the motion to the Speaker of the Imperial Parliament; however this would have meant that it would not have been passed on to the Commons. As David Mills pointed out, it seemed that the Tories "do not want to communicate this resolution to anyone".(3) The House finally agreed to send the resolution to Charles Tupper, Canadian High Commissioner in London. By the time this was wearily assented to, it was 4.30a.m.

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., 1138.

(3) Ibid., 1139.

and the House adjourned.(1)

It is difficult to know what effects the Home Rule debate had in Canada. On the one hand, John Costigan was moved to write a long letter to Parnell explaining in detail his actions in favour of Home Rule in 1882 and the reasons why he had apparently backtracked on his commitment four years later. His plea that "I didn't think it prudent to raise the question again, as it was impossible to obtain a stronger expression of opinion" than that given in 1882,(2) apparently went unheeded. Although Costigan asked Parnell for an early reply to the letter, Parnell never answered him at all.(3) It was the beginning of a period for Costigan when he became totally overshadowed by Blake as the mediator between the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Irish community in Canada. When Justin McCarthy, one of Parnell's leading associates, visited Toronto later in 1886, it was Blake who acted as his host. In May of the following year, Blake was in London, where he was the guest of Parnell at a dinner at the Liberal 80 Club.(4) Clearly, Blake's liberalism met with a better response from the Irish Nationalists than did Costigan's narrower approach to the Irish Question in Canada.

The reception Blake received in Canada itself, however, was

(1) Ibid., 1143.

(2) NAC, Costigan Papers, Vol. 1, p.159, Costigan to Parnell, June 18, 1886.

(3) Ibid., p. 170.

(4) Margaret Banks, Edward Blake, Irish Nationalist, [Toronto, 1957], p. 12.

not as warm and complete. John A. Macdonald began to receive reports from supporters indicating that Blake may have paid a high price for his liberal sympathies for Home Rule.

The same Mr. Edward had entirely alienated any support he may have had with Irish Protestants, the most liberal of them cannot swallow his Home Rule and Riel support.(1)

Blake does not appear to have made much out of his Home Rule resolutions. His sympathy and support of the riel faction and his admiration for Home Rule will, or I am mistaken, diminish his following in Ontario. He will make no gain now on the line he is taking.(2)

Since [Blake] brought forward the question of Home Rule in the House the whole Presbyterian Body are down upon him.(3)

On the face of it, then, it would appear that Macdonald had little to fear from the Irish Question in 1886. He had managed to dilute the Blake motion until it said nothing; and he even prevented that mild message from being transmitted officially to the Imperial Government. But he had failed in one crucial area: the Irish Question had been raised in Canada once again, and Home Rule was once more a major issue in Canadian politics, whether Home Rule for Ireland, or for the Canadian Provinces made little difference. Macdonald began to hear this too from his contacts

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 427, 208228, Thomas Moody to Macdonald, June 2, 1886.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 113, 45872-3, J.C. Aikens to Macdonald, May 7, 1886.

(3) Ibid., Vol. 426, 207548-50, J.A. Donaldson to Macdonald, May 10, 1886.

around the country. John Redmond of Prince Edward Island wrote that "at the present time, all other political questions sink into insignificance when compared with home rule for the Irish nation".(1) Nor was the opposition to Blake among the Ontario Protestants as solid as his correspondents thought. In 1886 a book was published in Canada on Gladstone - Parnell, and the Great Irish Struggle. It had been written by T.P. O'Connor and R.M. Wade, two active supporters of Parnell, and the Canadian Introduction was supplied by A. Burns, President of the Presbyterian Wesleyan Female College in Hamilton, Ontario. Burns obviously completely agreed with Blake's approach to the Irish Question. In his Introduction he claimed to "see in Home Rule...not merely harmony and prosperity to Ireland, but an immeasurably brighter future and a more permanent stability to the British Empire".(2) Macdonald himself agreed that Home Rule was one of the major issues which could badly hurt Tory chances in the forthcoming general election.(3)

To add to his problems, the Home Rule debate had not noticeably helped his standing in the Irish Catholic community in Ontario, the province he still considered crucial to his electoral plans. Although he had been assured at the end of 1885

(1) Ibid., Vol. 427, 208618-21, John Redmond to Macdonald, June 16, 1886.

(2) A. Burns, Introduction to T.P. O'Conner and R.M. Wade, Gladstone-Parnell and the Great Irish Struggle, [Toronto, 1886], p. 14.

(3) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 284, p. 130145, Macdonald to Charles Tupper, May 15, 1886.

that the Catholic hierarchy in the Province were "all fast friends", (1) the anti-Catholic campaign of the Toronto Mail had changed that. In September 1886, James Moylan wrote to Macdonald with a number of headaches for the Prime Minister. Bishop Walsh of Toronto was angry over the Mail and the Irish Catholic vote in Ontario was in danger. Moylan himself wanted into the Senate, but another Irishman Macdonald had appointed to the Senate was causing trouble too. Frank Smith, according to Moylan, was tired of the Senate. It kept him from his business interests and had not given him the political influence he had hoped for. Smith had been a source of irritation to Macdonald in June 1886 also. The Knights of Labour were involved in a bitter strike in Toronto with the owners of the street car company, of which Smith was President. Macdonald was told that the Knights were concentrating on the street car company because of Smith. As a member of the Government, Smith was being victimized by "a Grit ring" within the Knights who were attempting "to stampede the workingmen into the Grit party". (2)

Macdonald had good reason to be concerned going into the general election, which was called for February 22, 1887. On October 14, 1886 the Tories had been defeated in Quebec for the first time since Confederation. On December 9, Tory Premier Norquay of Manitoba had barely survived a provincial election;

(1) Ibid., Vol. 421, 204815, J.G. Moylan to Macdonald, December 18, 1885.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 427, 208448-50, A.W. Wright to Macdonald, June 9, 1886.

while on December 28 in Ontario, Oliver Mowat had doubled his majority in the local assembly. Added to the defeat of the Conservatives in Nova Scotia earlier in the year, this string of Liberal victories boded ill for Macdonald. As Donald Creighton wrote: "he knew that he was losing Irish Roman Catholic votes in Ontario".(1) Macdonald set Moylan to work on the Catholic hierarchy there, and by mid-December his agent could report that Bishop Cleary had instructed his priests to support the Conservatives in the federal election, although they would throw their weight behind Mowat in the local contest.(2) In the event, Macdonald was returned on February 22, with Tory majorities in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba. Once again, Blake was shut out of power.

It is difficult to pin down the precise reasons for Macdonald's success in the face of so much opposition on the provincial level. Part of it, clearly, can be credited to his command of a highly efficient patronage system which reached to the lowest offices in the country. But a significant part must have been played by what might be termed practical politics. As Frank Underhill points out:

The man who was to make the really effective appeal to the incipient national sentiment was not Blake but John A. Macdonald; the Macdonald tariff and railway policies were to canalize Canadian national aspirations along economic lines rather than along the

(1) Creighton, John A. Macdonald, Vol. 2, p. 463.

(2) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 432, 212671, Moylan to Macdonald, December 14, 1886.

political lines that interested Blake.(1)

Edward Blake appealed to principles and a liberal idea of what was the right thing to do. It was a moral and high-minded approach to politics and nation-building. Macdonald, never a man to be accused of being high-minded, was pragmatic and appealed to emotions and self-interest. The coalition he organised, upon which he based his nation-building activities, was a diverse and, in many ways, an unnatural one. French Canadian nationalists, Ontario Orange bigots, and Irish Catholic bishops, all were part of the Macdonald machine without ever ceasing to suspect or hate each other. Macdonald was the corner-stone of this strange edifice and it crumbled into disorder and disintegration on his death.

Edward Blake also headed a form of coalition: an alliance of liberals of various shapes who grew further apart ideologically as the years of his leadership progressed. Many of the older Grits of the George Brown school were horrified by his stand on both the Riel and Home Rule issues, stuck as they were in a pre-Confederation political mold. Blake had not the personality or desire to engage in the soft-talking and outright duplicity required to keep all sides in line, something at which Macdonald, and later Laurier, was an expert. Even within the Irish community there was no single policy on Home Rule for Ireland. As we have seen in the 1886 debates, a split existed within the Irish Protestant community on the Irish Question. In the Catholic

(1) Underhill, "Edward Blake", p. 12-3.

section there were those like Casey who followed Blake's lead faithfully, who shared his vision of a new nationality for Canada and fair play for Ireland within the Empire. But there were other Irish Catholic Liberals who were deeply at odds with his attitudes. John O'Hanly, for example, who had been so important in the 1882 Home Rule campaign, had no time for such an "un-Irish" position.

I confess if the ultimate object of our seven centuries of struggle was merely to obtain "Home Rule" and reconciliation with the Saxon, I for one would have none of it.... Our mission...is not limited to the liberation of Ireland. It will only be complete with the annihilation of the cursed British Empire.(1)

This was a genuine sentiment shared by an unknown number of Irish Catholics in Canada and the United States. It reflected the old Fenian, Clan na Gael republicanism which had been overtaken by the constitutional activity of Parnell and his party. This ideology was not merely anti-English, it also had little time for Protestantism. Once again, it was O'Hanly who, in discussing the horrors of war, pointed out that "[War] is peculiarly the heritage, the heir-loom, of Protestantism".(2)

Blake simply had no large constituency for his views on the Irish Question. The Irish were divided on religious grounds; they were split between the Liberal and Conservative parties; and the Liberal Irish were divided on the question of the place of

(1) NAC, O'Hanly Papers, Vol. 1, File 1, draft letter by O'Hanly, September 1, 1889.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 19, File 3.

Ireland vis-a-vis the British Empire. In the face of Blake's constitutional and moral arguments, Macdonald's practical policies had much greater appeal to the electorate. After the 1887 defeat, Blake obviously began to understand his position. There was talk of his retirement from the leadership of the Liberal Party, rumours Macdonald hoped were unfounded: "I hope he won't resign. We could not have a weaker opponent than he".(1)

In fact, Edward Blake was to resign the leadership of his party in June 1887, tired of the incessant upsets of Canadian political life, wanting to rest at last from the burdens of leadership. But before he went, there was to be one more campaign in the House of Commons on the Irish Question, and Blake was needed in the front ranks as usual. And even when the retreat came, it would not be to the peaceful retirement he had hoped for, but to a new and even more active career in the service of his liberal principles. In 1892, Edward Blake would leave Canada to serve as a member of the Imperial Parliament at Westminster representing the Irish Parliamentary Party in the struggle for Irish Home Rule.

(1) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 440, 217515-9, Macdonald to Blackstock, March 18, 1887.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CANADA AND THE IRISH QUESTION

With hindsight, it is possible to see that the defeat of the First Home Rule Bill in the summer of 1886 marked a watershed in the history of the Irish Question. The split in the Liberal Party was the beginning of the end for the great British institution. The Liberal defeat in the subsequent general election of that year began a six-year period of Conservative Rule which brought renewed upheaval to Ireland's rural areas and the imposition of a harsh Coercion Act for that country. By the time Gladstone returned to power in 1892, Parnell was dead and disgraced and his powerful party bitterly divided and impotent.

Nevertheless, none of this was foreseen in 1886, and the dominant mood in both the Liberal and Irish Parties was one of expectancy and optimism. The Liberal Party under Gladstone was actually relieved to see the back of Chamberlain and the radical wing of their party. The radicals had been a constant thorn in the side of the mainstream Liberals for years, and differing priorities and strategies had caused the party confusion and discension. Their departure over the Irish Question was welcomed by many leading Liberals, such as the future Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman who was grateful to the Irish "for having invented an Ireland and an Irish Question, which had been a

source of so much good and so much strength to the Liberal party". The split had left the party "eager and united, better and stronger for its recent purge".(1) Not only was the party stronger for the split, but the actual cost in electoral support was not nearly as high as the election results indicated. Although the Liberals now only held 196 seats compared to 235 before the election, while the Tories had risen from 251 to 316, the rebel Liberals had lost 19 seats. When the actual number of votes cast for each group was counted, moreover, it was found that the Liberals were only 76,000 votes behind the Tories and rebel Liberals combined, out of a total electorate of almost three million.(2) Gladstone himself, far from being discouraged over the Irish Question, appeared to believe in its imminent solution. Writing to Lord Acton in January 1887, he declared that only the Irish Question kept him from immediately retiring from politics, something he was eager to do.(3) As late as December 1889, shortly before the catastrophic events surrounding Parnell's fall and death, he and Gladstone were discussing the details of a possible Home Rule arrangement.(4) This was hardly the behaviour of defeated or discouraged men.

(1) D.A. Hamer, "The Irish Question and Liberal Politics, 1886-1894", in Reactions to Irish Nationalism, [London, Hambledon Press, 1987], p. 247.

(2) John Morley, Life of Gladstone, [London, Macmillan, 1904], Vol. III, p. 345-6.

(3) Ibid., p. 355.

(4) Conor Cruise O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, [Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957], p. 235.

Parnell himself, of course, had little reason to be upset by the events of 1885-6. Although the Bill was lost, the very fact that it was introduced in the British Parliament at all was enough to consolidate his dominant position at the head of the Irish people. He maintained his party intact after the general election, and looked forward to an early victory over the Tories. First, though, would come a Conservative administration in London. This was expected to result in some measure of coercion for Ireland, and it was evident that the focus of the Irish Question was once again shifting from the political to the agrarian scene.

The Plan of Campaign was initiated in October 1886 as an attempt to deal with the rising rate of evictions in Ireland. Organised by members of the Irish Party, particularly John Dillon and William O'Brien, the Plan called for the organising of the tenants on selected estates in Ireland to withhold rents until the landlord agreed to new rates with his tenants. Among the first estates targeted by the Plan was Luggacurran in Queen's County, home of Lord Lansdowne, Her Majesty's Governor General in Canada.(1)

William O'Brien, the fiery leader of the Plan of Campaign, spoke to Lansdowne's tenants in January 1887, and threatened to travel to Canada to confront the Governor General with his responsibilities to his Irish rent-payers. In his speech he

(1) Joseph V. O'Brien, William O'Brien and the Course of Irish Politics, 1881-1918, [California, University of California Press, 1976], p. 39.

referred to Lansdowne as the "exterminator of his tenants in Ireland".(1) In May that year, O'Brien made good on his threats and arrived in Canada for a speaking tour to publicise both the Plan of Campaign and Lansdowne's involuntary role in it. The Nationalist press left no doubt at all in the minds of its readers of the awful heartlessness of the Queen's representative. One piece of poetry reached a wide audience in Canada, "The Lament of Luggacurran", the final stanza of which read:

For thousands on thousands of brave sons and daughters
Old Ireland can claim in that far land of snow.
They'll welcome that ship and that tyrant they'll face him,
And with Luggacurran's foul shame they'll disgrace him,
Within Fame's black ward with his ancestor place him,
Until his dishonour all mankind shall know.
(2)

That Lansdowne was in fact guilty of mass evictions was not in doubt. By 1888 his entire estate had been cleared of tenants, one of the biggest failures of the entire Plan of Campaign.(3) The efforts of the evicted tenants to regain their holdings and reach an equitable settlement with Lansdowne was still going on as late as May 1891.(4) Lansdowne himself was suffering from the Campaign. In 1887 he complained: "The Queen's County estate has a rental of about L10,000. The usual income was L6,000 in good years and L5,000 in ordinary years. Last year I

(1) Ibid., p. 41.

(2) NAC, FinBar Hays Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2637.

(3) O'Brien, p. 49.

(4) Ibid., p. 84.

received L2,500 and this year nothing!"(1) This is eloquent testimony to the unity of the tenants under the Plan of Campaign. In fact, one of the wealthier tenants, Dennis Kilbride, who paid the very large rent of L750 annually, voluntarily joined his fellow-tenants in refusing to pay rents and was subsequently evicted. He then travelled to Canada with William O'Brien with the intention of embarrassing Lansdowne. As O'Brien put it:

It was resolved that the evicted tenant and myself should carry the war...and at Lord Lansdowne's palace gates challenge him to trial before the freeborn democracy under his rule, for the wrong done in the distant Irish valley.(2)

Even allowing for O'Brien's obvious ignorance of Lansdowne's position in Canada, his rhetoric is typical of the speeches he made once he arrived in Canada.

O'Brien arrived in Montreal, the first stop on his Canadian tour, on May 11, 1887. His reception was quiet and orderly, though not as many came to hear him as had been expected. In his speech, he claimed that Lansdowne made L20,000 annually from his Luggacurran estate, a much higher figure than Lansdowne claimed, and accused the Governor General of attempting to "exterminate" his tenants.(3) The Toronto Globe, which had been against O'Brien's visit, reported that threats had been made against O'Brien in Kingston by the local Orange Order, who warned the

(1) Newton, Lord Lansdowne, p. 46, Lord Lansdowne to his mother, July 31, 1887.

(2) Id., Appendix One, p. 499.

(3) Globe, (Toronto), May 12, 1887.

Irish politician not to speak in their city, known as "the Derry of Canada", because of its extreme Protestant bigotry. It was there, as we have noted, that the Catholic Conservative Association was set up to counter the anti-Catholic activities of local Tories. Kingston was also the home riding of the Prime Minister. A letter written by the head of the Kingston Orange Order ended with the sinister words: "We want to live in peace, but peace with honour. God save the Queen."(1)

Trouble was brewing for William O'Brien elsewhere in Ontario. Attempts to hire halls for his Toronto visit ran into obstruction from local opponents, and the Mayor of Toronto called a meeting to protest against the proposed visit as being offensive. Mayor Howland considered it wrong for O'Brien to attack the Governor General of Canada, whatever his record as an Irish landlord. Even so, Howland believed that Lansdowne was an exemplary landlord who was loved by his people.(2) At this time, hundreds of Lansdowne's tenants were being forcibly evicted from Luggacurran with the help of large numbers of Irish policemen. On one day of evictions there were 206 police officers at Luggacurran to enforce the wishes of this "exemplary" landlord.(3) O'Brien wrote to Mayor Howland, asking to be allowed to speak at the protest meeting to explain his visit, but

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., May 13, 1887.

(3) O'Brien, p. 43, 51.

Howland did not reply. Meanwhile, O'Brien had spoken in Quebec, again without incident, and was preparing to arrive in Toronto on May 17.(1)

Lansdowne's response to O'Brien's tour was cautious. He believed that if the visitor was ignored, the visit would fizzle. He had been offered the services of a counter-speaker by the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, an organisation set up in Ireland to combat the propaganda of the Plan of Campaign, but had refused.(2) On May 15, Lansdowne assured the Prime Minister that "up to the present time, he has done me more good than harm".(3) Unfortunately for the Governor General, his own friends were about to reverse that happy state of affairs. The Globe, in an editorial three days before O'Brien's arrival in the city, warned the Orangemen that their opposition was going to backfire on them. Claiming the support of Lansdowne himself for its views, the paper appealed for freedom of speech for all, even for Irish nationalist orators with bad manners. The editorial believed that the Orangemen were merely playing into O'Brien's hands by being so fanatically antagonistic to the very idea of his visit.

On May 15, Mayor Howland held his protest meeting in Toronto. About 7,000 people attended and heard a series of protestant clergymen condemn O'Brien and all he stood for. There

(1) Globe, May 13, 1887.

(2) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 87, 34064. Lansdowne to Macdonald, April 30, 1887.

(3) Ibid., 34084, Lansdowne to Macdonald, May 15, 1887.

was a general agreement that Lansdowne ought to be left alone in Canada and that it was bad form to attack him when he could not defend himself. Once again, there were declarations of support for the Governor General as a good landlord and a good Unionist, and denials that the Irish Question had anything to do with Canada or with Canadians. This was a repetition of statements that had been made in the Commons by opponents of the Home Rule resolutions the previous year. With fervent declarations of loyalty to the Crown, the meeting passed resolutions against the visit and against the idea of Home Rule, which, as far as the Globe was concerned, was going a little too far. In an editorial the following day, the paper declared that the Irish Question itself was not really relevant to the issue, which was merely the visit by O'Brien only, nothing else.(1)

William O'Brien arrived in Toronto on May 17 and was met at the train station by a deputation from the Irish National League of that city, including Patrick Boyle of the Irish Canadian.(2) The actual meeting was attended by about 4,000 people, but by no means all of them were O'Brien supporters. In fact, both the introductions and O'Brien's speech itself were completely drowned out by hisses and groans from a large section of Orangemen in the crowd. But in spite of the sharply divided crowd, there was no real upset, generally thanks to the immediate and vigorous

(1) Globe, May 16, 1887.

(2) Ibid., May 18, 1887. The following account of the visit is based on the reports in this issue.

actions of the local police force which removed potential agitators as soon as they began to operate. But O'Brien had been silenced, for the day at least. The editorial in the Globe, however, was not sanguine. It again claimed that the disruptive actions of the Orangemen debased the right of free speech in Canada and was only making O'Brien a martyr. The Orange belief that the Irish Question was of no importance to Canadians was wrong, said the Globe, as long as there was a threat of invasion by Irish-American nationalists. The matter was still relatively minor, however, until that evening, when O'Brien's martyrdom almost became more than theoretical.

As William O'Brien and some friends left their Toronto hotel for a visit to a local Irish family, they were followed and heckled by a growing mob. As the mob grew, jeers and catcalls were replaced by stones and bricks thrown by an increasingly angry crowd. Finally, O'Brien was forced to run for his life as his friends fell under the blows of the bricks. Sheltered for a few hours in a local store, he later attempted to return to his hotel, but was again trapped in an alley with only a single police officer to protect him. As the mob closed in, he escaped by being helped over a ten foot-high wall and finally made it back to his rooms. In the opinion of the police officer, William O'Brien had had a narrow escape from death; later that evening, O'Brien told a Globe reporter that a deliberate attempt had been made to murder him.(1) The newspaper printed a report of the

(1) Ibid., May 19, 1887.

event under the heading "A Disgrace to Toronto", and utterly condemned the attack. It had made O'Brien a living symbol of free speech, and the right to walk freely in a free society. For the following week, the paper continued to discuss the events of that night in a shocked and outraged tone. Wil'iam O'Brien, meanwhile, had been very happy to leave Toronto and travel on to Ottawa, where he was met by another deputation of local Irish leaders, including the ever-present John O'Hanly and John O'Donohoe. The meeting there was well-attended and the events in Toronto had obviously helped to give O'Brien's visit a certain cachet.(1)

On May 20, O'Brien spoke in Kingston, the "Derry of Canada", where he was warmly received by the Irish Catholic community. The local Orangemen gathered outside the hall where he was speaking and when he left they attempted another attack like the one in Toronto. For a short while, O'Brien had to run a gauntlet of stones and jeers, but the local police had him well surrounded and no harm came to him. There is no doubt that William O'Brien was a brave man; he had often proved the fact in Ireland, and was to do so again through a number of jail terms during the Plan of Campaign. But the events in Canada must have worried him, nevertheless. Even more so when he was actually fired upon in Hamilton on May 23 as he left his last Canadian meeting. The shots missed their target, but a local cab driver

(1) Ibid.

was shot in the hand.(1) His visit to Canada had certainly made the headlines, which was partly its purpose, and the Irish Question was once more brought forcibly to the notice of the Canadian people. The level of interest or support, however, may be grasped when one reads that on May 26, just a few days after O'Brien left Canada, Lord Lansdowne, on returning to Ottawa from travel elsewhere in Ontario, was met by a crowd of almost 30,000 cheering Canadians. This may be compared to the paltry few thousand that had greeted O'Brien.(2)

In fact, William O'Brien's visit exposed a number of interesting new aspects of the Irish Question in Canada. In the first place, the opposition to Home Rule (what might be termed the "Orange" element of Canadian society) made its appearance on the streets of Toronto and Hamilton. The anti-O'Brien meetings and the riots occasioned by his visit demonstrated the depth of feeling and strength of numbers of the anti-Home Rule faction. In the same way, the size of the welcome given to Lansdowne in Ottawa indicated the desire of many Canadians to separate the Canadian and Irish situations, to keep the Irish Question from interfering in Canadian life. On the other hand, the relatively small numbers who attended the O'Brien meetings do not reflect the full extent of the support enjoyed by the Irish Question in Canada. None of the political figures who had been involved in the various resolutions on the subject in 1882 or 1886 attended

(1) Ibid., May 21 and 24, 1887.

(2) Ibid., May 27, 1887.

the meetings. Although Edward Blake and John Costigan had close ties to the Irish Party and were acquainted with Dillon, Parnell and others, they did not appear with O'Brien. It would appear that there was a division in the nationalist camp on tactics and methods; O'Brien's actions in coming to Canada to embarrass Lansdowne as Governor General did not meet with the approval of the Canadian politicians who favoured Home Rule. This is an early indication of a split which was to have a major impact on the Irish Question in Canada: the Irish Canadian nationalists were not prepared to allow the Irish Question to subvert Canadian society or structures. As the Globe had said, whatever Lansdowne's record as a landlord in Ireland, he was still entitled to respect as the Governor General of Canada, representative of Her Majesty the Queen.

As proof that their absence from O'Brien's meetings did not betoken any lessening of their commitment to the Irish Question, Blake and Costigan spent the months of April and May discussing the Crimes Bill, which had been introduced in the Imperial Parliament as a coercive measure for Ireland. They and the other Canadian supporters of Home Rule for Ireland strongly opposed the bill and prepared to launch an attack on it in the Canadian Parliament.

The Crimes Bill was introduced in Westminster on March 28, 1887 and its main force was to make the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland responsible for deciding what was and was not a crime in Ireland. There was no longer a fixed list of criminal acts,

instead the Lord Lieutenant could arbitrarily decide when an action was criminal and liable to prosecution. In addition, the bill was to be a permanent part of the legal system in Ireland, unlike all previous coercion acts, which had been passed as temporary measures.(1) Canadian reaction to the proposed bill preceded O'Brien's visit in May. In April the Quebec Assembly passed resolutions condemning the bill and calling for Home Rule for Ireland on April 18, 1887, and once amended slightly by the Council, were finally passed on May 3.(2) These resolutions, however, were not sent to Her Majesty's Government in London, but only to Gladstone, Parnell and Lord Salisbury. No official reply was sent.

In April, the Ontario Assembly also passed resolutions condemning the Crimes Bill and calling for a measure of Home Rule for Ireland. Unlike the Quebec vote, which was unanimous, the Ontario legislature voted along purely party lines, with the Liberal Government under Mowat, who personally introduced the resolutions, voting in favour. The Conservatives voted solidly against the motion. It may well be that Mowat drew up the resolutions as a reward for the general support he had received from the Irish Catholic electorate in the recent election. Mowat's resolutions spoke in favour of Home Rule for Ireland in keeping with the integrity of the Empire, so that Irishmen at

(1) Morley, Gladstone, Vol. III, p. 376; Cruise O'Brien, Parnell and His Party, p. 207.

(2) Horrall, p. 82-3.

home might have the same freedoms and privileges as their compatriots in Ontario. Copies of the resolutions were to be sent by the Ontario Speaker to Gladstone and Parnell.(1) The Orange organ, the Sentinel, as well as the Toronto Mail, strongly opposed the resolutions and the editor of the Sentinel, Edward Clarke, an Orangeman from County Cavan, Ireland, was the main spokesman in the Assembly for the Conservatives on the issue. He believed that Home Rule would lead to separatism in Ireland and the destruction of the Empire. Both he and Meredith, leader of the Ontario Opposition, saw the hand of the "Fenian" Archbishop Lynch of Toronto in the wording of the resolutions.(2) Their anger and frustration over the resolutions goes far to explain the violent reception they gave to William O'Brien when he arrived in Toronto just a few weeks after the vote.

The Dominion Parliament itself was not to be outdone by the provincial Assemblies in the matter of the Crimes Bill. In the face of Macdonald's opposition, J.J. Curran, Conservative member for Montreal Centre, introduced resolutions against the Crimes Bill and in favour of Home Rule for Ireland on April 21, 1887.(3) There followed almost three days of debate, the longest discussion of the Irish Question the Canadian Parliament ever held. Many of the arguments were repetitions of what had been

(1) Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, 1887, p. 151.

(2) Mail (Toronto), April 23, 1887; Globe, April 25, 1887.

(3) Canada. Debates, 1887, 133.

said in 1882 and again in 1886. Canada, said the opponents, had no right to interfere in an internal matter concerning the Imperial Government. Canada had not been asked for its advice. Would Canadians appreciate the Imperial Parliament rapping the collective knuckles of the Canadian Commons over their handling of, say, the Incorporation of the Jesuits?(1) In the event, the House voted for the resolutions by 135 votes to 47.(2) The entire Liberal caucus voted for the resolutions, as did every French Canadian member of the House. Of the 47 opponents, 38 were English-speaking Ontario Protestants, the remainder were English-speaking Protestants from other regions. The obvious divisions within the Conservative party, and the clear support shown by the Liberal Party for Irish Home Rule, moved John Costigan to resign from the Government, though he was once again convinced to stay on by Macdonald.(3)

There is no doubt that, by the end of 1887, it appeared that the Irish Question in Canada continued to grow in importance and was gaining momentum. The Liberal Party, under the leadership of Edward Blake, appeared to be committed, like its counterpart in Britain, to Irish Home Rule. The Conservative Party was badly divided on the issue, with a strong contingent of Irish members determined to move their party in support of

(1) Ibid., 58.

(2) Ibid., 138.

(3) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 206, Costigan to Macdonald, May 9, 1887.

Parnell. The series of debates in the Canadian Parliament grew increasingly longer and involved more members each time. The resolutions passed by the House were increasingly critical of the British Government and its policies. On the negative side, however, it was also clear that the opposition to Home Rule was becoming more vocal. The Orange Order, in league with a large section of the Conservative Party, had shown its strength and anger during William O'Brien's visit. The Prime Minister himself, Sir John A. Macdonald, was a firm opponent of Home Rule anywhere in the Empire and especially in Canada. He was determined not to allow the Irish Question to affect Canadian political and constitutional development, and was convinced that the Irish in Canada and the United States were fundamentally opposed to the integrity of the British Empire, and there were many Irishmen in both countries who could prove him right. Whether Macdonald liked it or not, however, it appeared by the end of 1887 that events in Britain, under the influence of Parnell and Gladstone, would continue to intrude in Canadian affairs. And with an able champion like Edward Blake at the head of the Liberal Party, it seemed that the Irish Question had the potential to seriously divide Canadian society.(1)

The next few years in Canada did indeed witness tremendous and historic changes; but not at all those that might have been expected. The Crimes Bill passed in July, 1887, and the Conservatives in Britain managed to contain the Plan of Campaign

(1) Creighton, Macdonald, Vol. 2, p. 456-7.

effectively. In 1887, Edward Blake, for reasons basically unconnected with the Irish Question, resigned as Leader of the Liberal Party, to be replaced by Wilfrid Laurier. Blake had wanted to resign for years. He was emotionally unsuited to the demands of leading a political party and could never bring himself to believe that he was wanted or needed as leader of the Liberal Party. In addition, he had been under pressure from his party for some time to change his economic policies, especially those dealing with trade with the United States, in order to win more electoral support. Such a compromise was not something Blake could ever bring himself to do. He believed he was right, and preferred to resign and leave it to others to, as he saw it, ruin the Party. Blake deeply feared the effect of any reciprocal trade arrangement with the United States and warned Laurier against such a scheme.(1)

In 1890, Charles Stewart Parnell was involved in a divorce case in Britain, was cut adrift by Gladstone's Liberals, then by the Irish Catholic Clergy, and finally by his own Party in an incredibly bitter dispute which split the Irish nationalist movement for a decade. To cap an amazing period, in 1891 both John A. Macdonald and Charles Stewart Parnell died suddenly, unexpectedly, leaving huge vacuums in their respective countries. By the end of 1891, the entire scene had been transformed out of all recognition.

Blake's resignation, coming just a few months after his

(1) Banks, p. 15-6.

second loss in a general election, was not really unexpected within the party. Blake's penchant for resigning positions of influence and authority was well known and the electoral defeat presented him with an opportunity that he was very willing to take. Even before the election of February, 1887, he had been talking of leaving the leadership of the Liberals to another, but he had been persuaded to stay on at least until after the contest.(1) After his victory, John A. Macdonald also heard the rumours of Blake's resignation and commented with typical Macdonald sensitivity: "I hope he won't resign. We could not have a weaker opponent than he."(2) Finally, however, Blake was to have his way, and on June 7, 1887, a new Liberal leader was named. Wilfrid Laurier was the personal choice of Blake, practically forced on a wary and dubious party. Many hoped the loss of Blake would be temporary, and that Laurier would only serve as an interim leader, but Blake, for one, was already thinking of something radically different for the future. In November that year, he travelled to Ireland, where he walked and observed and wrote of the dreadful condition of the country people. He had a number of meetings with members of the Irish Parliamentary Party and rumours began to circulate that he was about to be put forward for an Irish seat in the Imperial Parliament. The publicity, however, seemed to put an end to

(1) Schull, Blake, Vol. 2, p. 80-1.

(2) NAC, Macdonald Papers, Macdonald to Blackstock, March 29, 1887.

whatever negotiations may have been taking place.(1)

However, the call did finally come early in the summer of 1892, as the Imperial Parliament prepared for a general election. Blake was asked by the anti-Parnellite group to stand for a safe seat in Longford, which he agreed to do after much advice from friends in Canada. He was, in fact, facing a delicate situation in Ireland. After Parnell's rejection by Gladstone in 1890, the Irish Parliamentary Party had split between those who stood with the "Uncrowned King", and those who were prepared to sacrifice him for the sake of the Liberal alliance. The clear majority rejected Parnell's leadership, though there were hopes that he might yet be persuaded to retire temporarily until the situation calmed somewhat. Parnell, proud man that he was, refused such a move and the division in the party grew ever more acrimonious. The final gall of the split came with Parnell's sudden death at the end of 1891, after a hard electoral campaign during which he had been booed by Irish crowds and had lime thrown in his face. His death was called murder by the Parnellites who charged the anti-Parnellite faction with causing the Chieftain's death for the sake of the Liberal Party of England. The latter group, under the leadership of Justin MacCarthy, set up a rival organization to the Irish National League, calling it the Irish National Federation. During 1892 it became clear that this faction held the allegiance of the vast majority of the Irish nationalists at home and abroad. Before the split, the Irish National League had

(1) Schull, p. 94.

138,061 members; by December 1891 that figure had dropped to 13,108, while the rival Federation claimed 82,9.3 members.(1)

Edward Blake supported the anti-Parnellites. Justin MacCarthy and John Dillon, the leading men of that faction, were long-time friends; and his basic philosophy on the Irish Question led him to support the Liberal alliance as the main hope for Home Rule. Although the invitation to stand for an Irish seat left him little time for reflection, it was never seriously in doubt that he would accept. Margaret Banks asserts that Blake considered his usefulness in Canadian political life to have ended, whereas Ireland offered him new vistas and opportunities for service in a cause to which he was already committed.(2) This is a very plausible analysis of his position in 1892. Laurier was clearly leading the Liberal party of Canada in directions, especially on trade matters, with which Blake strongly disagreed. Macdonald had died the previous year after defeating Laurier in his last general election, and it seemed that the Tories were destined to rule Canada forever. In spite of the financial and personal loss involved in the move, Blake seemed happy to turn to new pastures. Many of his former colleagues fully expected that Blake would take over the leadership of the anti-Parnellites from MacCarthy, might indeed heal the split and lead a reunited Irish Parliamentary Party.(3) Certainly there was reason to believe

(1) O'Brien, fn.28, p. 98.

(2) Banks, Chapter 2.

(3) Ibid.

that he was capable of doing so, but a number of factors militated against him. First of all, it would have been difficult for Blake to arrive from Canada and simply assume the mantle of leadership in the face of the years of service given to the cause by men like John Dillon, John Redmond or Tim Healy. More importantly, Blake had just recently retired from leading a political party in Canada, one which was in far less need of strong handling than the Irish Party would require; and there was nothing in Blake's character to make him want such an onerous position again. For all the great expectations surrounding his arrival in Ireland, Blake was quite sincere when he referred to himself as merely a foot-soldier in the Irish cause.

In the event, Edward Blake became a major force in the Irish Party, but not for the reasons one might have expected. He was seen as an expert on constitutional devolution and so a very important part of any Home Rule design. On his arrival, indeed, he was involved in drawing up the Second Home Rule Bill of 1893, which Gladstone introduced on returning to power.(1) This Bill, unlike its predecessor, passed the Commons, but was rejected by the Lords. Shortly after, Gladstone resigned and his successor, Lord Rosebery had no intention of risking Liberal fortunes by getting too close to the Irish Question again. The Liberal Alliance, while not dead, was certainly moribund for the next twenty years.

This left the constitutional expert somewhat redundant.

(1) Banks, p. 44-49.

There were, however, other services which Blake was in a unique position to offer the Irish cause, and these he performed admirably. Parnell's fall not only split the Irish Party, it seemed to totally demoralise the Irish people. The failure of the 1893 Bill simply added to an already obvious apathy which seemed to take over the political arena after Parnell's death. By December 1893 the Irish National League had dropped in numbers to only 6,514. This was not offset by any gains by the National League, which by that date only numbered 47,080.(1) In just four years, membership in the Irish political organizations fell from 160,966 in 1889 to only 53,594 in December 1893. Parnell's death was not the only cause of this decline. Although not as dramatic as the events of 1890-91, another more important reason for this fall-off in support for the political program was the continuing attempts of the Conservative Party to "kill Home Rule with kindness". Recognising the source of the influence exercised by the Irish Party in its campaign for Home Rule, the Tories worked to ameliorate the conditions of the rural peasant of Ireland by restraining landlords and introducing schemes of land purchase. The Land Act of 1891 was the start of more than a decade of activity designed to take away the grievances of the Irish peasants who had been the backbone of the New Departure and the Plan of Campaign. The Congested Districts Board was set up to supervise this work, and prominent Irish nationalists were invited to sit on the Board to ensure its impartiality. It was a

(1) O'Brien, fn.28, p. 98.

spectacularly successful operation.

This left the Irish parties in an unenviable position. During the 1890's there was no movement whatsoever on the political front towards Home Rule. The Congested Districts Board made the politicians appear completely irrelevant to the Irish people, and yet, if Home Rule were to ever come about, the Irish parties had to survive and organise. At a time when Members of Parliament were not paid this huge drop in support endangered the very existence of the parties. The rivalry between the League and the Federation for the funds that were available only exacerbated the situation. To continue as a viable political force, the Irish in Westminster badly needed to find alternate sources of funds outside Ireland. As they looked across the Atlantic, Edward Blake found himself a new job. For the next decade, Blake and the Irish of Canada were to play a major, if not the major role in keeping the Irish Parliamentary Party in existence while they waited for the return of the spirit of Gladstone to a ruling Liberal Party. By the time that would happen, everything about the Irish Question would have changed, and "changed utterly".

The Liberal Party in Britain held on to office until the General Election of 1895, at which point they gave way to a decade of Conservative rule. In response, the Liberals quickly pushed their commitment to Home Rule (which had ever primarily been Gladstone's commitment), into the background as they faced the challenge of a rising Labour Party at home. Between the time

of Parnell's fall in 1890 and the election of 1910, the Irish Party at Westminster were in a sorry state. Divided until 1900 over the Parnell issue, and impotent to effect the granting of Home Rule to Ireland for that entire period, they faced a growing apathy among their supporters and a corresponding decrease in the revenues which were essential to their survival. It was during this period that the Irish in Canada played their most important role in the entire history of the Irish Question. Under the leadership of Edward Blake, they were to ensure the continuation of Irish Nationalist representation in the Imperial Parliament until the return of the balmy days they had known under Parnell, when the Irish had held the balance of power at Westminster and the great English Parties had vied for their favour.

The Irish Question in Canada had not completely disappeared following the 1887 resolutions in the Commons. Newspaper articles and editorials continued to comment on Irish affairs and the various branches of the Irish National League continued to raise money for the Irish Party. However the excitement and activity associated with the passage of the Resolutions on Home Rule inevitably gave way to a more monotonous series of meetings and speech-making as attempts were made to hold the interest of the Irish in Canada. On an official level, a meeting was held in October, 1891, in Winnipeg between two members of the Congested Districts Board of Ireland and officials of the Manitoba Government to discuss a scheme of Irish migration to Manitoba. This meeting, which strangely echoed Archbishop Lynch's

colonization scheme of 1880-82, demonstrated clearly the mutual ignorance which existed on each side of the Atlantic regarding conditions and attitudes on the other. The Congested Districts Board was represented by the Earl of Fingal, a reform-minded Irish landlord, and the Hon. Horace Plunkett, a founder and the guiding spirit of the Board. The Canadians involved were H.H. Smith, A.W. Ross and Hugh John Macdonald (Sir John's son), all connected with the Conservative Party in Manitoba, and A.F. Eden, Land Commissioner for the Manitoba and North West Railway Company. Smith sent a report of the meeting to the new Canadian Prime Minister Abbott.(1)

The Irish delegates were informed that Irish paupers would not be welcome in Canada, nor would those who would be a charge on the country. It was hoped, in fact, that the British Government would consider a system of assisted passages for those willing to migrate to Manitoba. Ross, who was a Member of Parliament for Manitoba, wondered if the Irish would even be prepared to settle in areas in which alcohol was prohibited. Eden believed that the Irish immigrants would not improve the value of the lands on which they settled, and doubted whether Canadians would agree to settle on land adjacent to those held by Irish immigrants.(2) Plunkett, in turn, spoke of Irish ignorance of conditions in Manitoba, which "was looked upon by them as an

(1) NAC, Abbott Papers, MG26 C, Vol. 2, pp. 392-427. Smith to Abbott, October 20, 1891.

(2) Ibid., p. 419-420.

arctic region unfit for human habitation, and occupied only by polar bears and wolves...This is not looked upon as a land flowing with milk and honey: one would have to substitute the inducement of ice-cream!".(1) Plunkett believed that the best approach was to emphasize the religious aspect of the scheme. Once again echoing Lynch, he spoke of an Irish Catholic community in Manitoba, and suggested that Catholic priests be found who would help promote the scheme among their parishoners.(2)

Thus, in spite of the widespread publicity given to the debate over the Irish Question in Canada both in Irish and Canadian newspapers, there still existed a mutual ignorance of the real conditions existing among the Irish in Canada and in Ireland. This demonstrates the growing communications gap which was developing between the average Irish immigrant and his homeland. Nothing came of the Winnipeg meeting and no Irish settlement was established in Manitoba. Within weeks of the meeting, Parnell had died and the Home Rule movement was deeply divided and impotent. Aside from an abortive attempt by a young Irish Catholic Member of Parliament to introduce new resolutions on Home Rule in the Canadian Commons in 1892, the pro-Home Rule forces in Canada went on the defensive. The attempt at introducing resolutions was made by C.R. Devlin, the Member for Ottawa County. Just weeks before the British general election which was to restore Gladstone to power for the last time, Devlin

(1) Ibid., p.424.

(2) Ibid., p. 425.

wished the House to state that they looked forward to such a victory, to be followed quickly by Home Rule legislation. Lacking the support of other Irish Catholic members such as Costigan and Curran, Devlin's motion was allowed to die after a recess of the House. It was, however, important as an indicator of the changing nature of the Irish Question in Canada.(1)

Until 1891, the pro-Home Rule forces in Canada had been the initiators of resolutions, meetings and various activities designed to publicise and popularise the idea of Home Rule for Ireland. Under the leadership of Parnell, the Irish throughout the world had been organised to the same end in a quite unique way. Both the constitutional and the traditionally militant factions among the Irish at home and abroad had united behind the Chief, helping to bring about for many a consciousness of being part of what became known as "the Irish Race", an international body of people sharing the same history and traditions; a distinct ethnic group with power to wield on a national and international level. This was a new experience for a people used to being treated as an inferior, conquered and unwholesome race. Under Parnell the Irish grew in confidence and self-worth; with his fall and death, and the subsequent bitter divisions within the organisation he created, a period of doubt and uncertainty ensued. Coupled with the defeat of the 1893 Home Rule Bill and the postponement of all hopes for another bill in the foreseeable future, the "Irish Race" reverted to what it had been before; a

(1) For details on this affair, see Horralls, Chap. 5.

divided and insecure people. There would not be again the same united force under a unified command with that sense of confidence and power known and enjoyed under Parnell.

Running parallel with the decline of the fortunes of the "Irish Race", was the growth in power and confidence of their opposites: the Unionists, dominated by the Orange Order. Robert Kee notes that the definition of Irish nationality given by the Home Rulers dominated the Irish Question until 1916.⁽¹⁾ This defined the Irish, in the words of Thomas Esmonde, a leading Home Ruler, as "a distinct though not a separate nationality". This was illustrated, as we have observed, in the debates on Home Rule carried on in the Canadian Parliament in 1882 and 1887. Then, the Home Rulers insisted that what they wanted was not independence for Ireland and a concomitant weakening of the Empire, but a level of autonomy which recognised that the Irish people had their own distinct right to manage their local affairs. It was repeatedly pointed out that granting such autonomy would satisfy the Irish people and strengthen the bonds of Empire generally. This, indeed, was the prevailing definition of nationality in Ireland between 1880 and 1916. The Irish Catholic population formed the overwhelming majority of the police and army forces "holding" Ireland for the Empire; and the speed with which the Irish rushed to enlist in the British army during the Boer and First World Wars was a practical expression of their identity with the interests of the Empire.

(1) Kee, The Green Flag, p. 391.

At the same time, as Kee again points out, this definition of Irish nationality excluded two groups within Irish society: the militant republicans who looked to the Fenians for inspiration and to the gun and bomb for tools, and the Ulster Protestants, backbone of the Orange Order, with a history and identity quite their own. As a permanent minority in Ireland, the Ulster Protestants had a much closer and dependent relationship with the Empire than had the Irish Catholics (or indeed most English of any religion). From the time of the Reformation the dominant ruling elite in Ireland, both politically and economically, the Irish Protestants had given up their own Parliament in Dublin at the Act of Union in 1801 rather than have it invaded by a newly-enfranchised Catholic population. With the coming of Catholic Emancipation and Gladstone's bills dealing with the position of the Anglican Church and land holdings in Ireland, this minority saw their position in Ireland being gradually undermined by an antagonistic Liberal regime in London. The growing industrial strength of Ulster in the nineteenth century was another factor tying that part of Ireland to the Empire. As the only truly industrial part of the island, Ulster needed British markets in order to survive and saw nothing attractive at all in Home Rule, which threatened to cast the Protestants of Ulster adrift in a Romish backwater of cultural, spiritual and economic darkness. The Orange Order, always a force in Ulster counties, grew in importance and size following the founding of the Land League and the rise of the Home Rule

movement after 1879. It became the centre around which Ulster opposition to Home Rule grew. Uttering threats of armed insurrection to oppose any Home Rule scheme, the Orange Order caught the attention of the British Conservative Party during the 1885 election. Deciding to play the "Orange Card", the English Tories began an unholy alliance with the Orangemen which often came to the point of encouraging open rebellion against the Crown. As Randolph Churchill so eloquently threatened: "Ulster would fight, and Ulster would be right".(1)

The Orange Order had had a long history in Canada by the 1880's. Founded sometime during the 1830's, the Order had its ups and downs in the intervening years.(2) By the 1880's it included in its ranks such luminaries as John A. Macdonald and a number of M.P.s in the federal Parliament. The Grand Master of the Orange Order in Canada in 1886 was N.C. Wallace M.P., who was one of the few to vote against the 1887 resolutions on Home Rule and who later became the Comptroller of Customs in the Abbott Government. Prime Minister Abbott himself had at least strong sympathies with the Order, and a later Prime Minister, Mackenzie Bowell was himself a former Grand Master of the Orange Order in Canada. The

(1) Cited in Kee, p. 401.

(2) For material on the Orange Order in Canada, see the following: C.J. Houston and W.J. Smyth, The Sash Canada Wore, [Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980]; Hereward Senior, Orangeism: the Canadian Phase, [Toronto, 1972]; and C.J. Houston, "The Orange Order in Nineteenth Century Ontario: A Study in Institutional Cultural Transfer", Department of Geography, University of Toronto, Discussion Paper No. 22, 1977.

rise in influence of the Order in British political affairs, coupled with the high positions held by Orangmen in Canadian political circles, explains a great deal about the sharp decline in political success enjoyed by the Home Rule movement in Canada after 1887. The death of Parnell only confirmed a process which had already taken place in Canadian political life, and aside from the short-lived attempt by Devlin in 1892, there would be no more discussion of Irish Home Rule in the Canadian Parliament after the qualified success of 1887.

Because of the changing political climate, the Irish Question in Canada after 1887 had to be seen in a different context than before. With the rise of the Orange Order, and more particularly, the organising of Canadian Imperialism in the Imperial Federation League, opposition to Home Rule for Ireland found a focus. In the heady days of the 1882 Costigan Resolutions, Home Rule was an emotional issue for Irish Canadians, an idea which appealed to liberal sentiments and even to a form of Canadian nationalism. Again and again in the debates of 1882 and 1887 we have observed the argument being used that Home Rule for Ireland was desirable because of the marvellous results of Home Rule in Canada. Canada was seen as a model for what local government could do for fractious Ireland. The main objection to the Home Rule resolutions had been that Canada had no right to interfere in the internal issues of the Imperial Parliament, although, obviously, there were also those, like Macdonald, who opposed the idea of Home Rule for other reasons.

But the context in which the Irish Question was discussed after 1887 was quite different. The Conservative Party was to remain in power in Britain from the late 1880's until the early twentieth century, apart from a short period of Liberal rule under Gladstone and Rosebury. Gladstone's last ministry witnessed the defeat of the 1893 Home Rule Bill by the Lords, which both dashed the hopes of Home Rulers for the foreseeable future and convinced the Liberals that Home Rule was not a desirable plank on which to fight elections. There was, therefore, little point in having resolutions in favour of Irish Home Rule passed in the Canadian Parliament when there was no-one in Britain interested in receiving them. This demanded a change of tactics on the part of the Irish in Canada. The campaign would have to take into account the growing opposition of Imperialists and the Orange Order within Canada itself to what was still perceived to be an attempt to fragment the Empire.

This leads to yet another problem raised by the Irish Question in Canada after 1887. Canada itself was changing rapidly as the century neared its end. It was no longer the same society that had produced the John O'Hanly's and John O'Donohoe's of the previous decades; Canada was becoming a far more complex society. The rise of Imperialism was one indication of this; the rise of the forces of labour was another. Both challenged the very basis on which the Irish Question in Canada had been addressed.

In the same year that Home Rule was debated in the Canadian Parliament for the last time, the Imperial Federation League

arrived in Canada. The League had been founded in England in 1884 in order to promote the interests of the Empire by working for colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament, and colonial contribution to Imperial defense.(1) In 1887, the League opened branches in Canada, and organised an Imperial Conference in London, the first real expression of the deep Imperialist sentiment which was to surge through Britain, Canada and the colonies for the next thirty years. Carl Berger asserts that Canadian Imperialists were, in general, simply another kind of Canadian nationalist, in that they perceived that Canada's best chance of achieving its full potential as a nation was within the context of the greatest Empire the world had yet known.(2) A hybrid of nationalism and racism, imperialism in Canada partook of a sense of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority, religious duty to educate and guide the "lesser races", and a belief that Canada's future greatness depended on her achieving an homogeneity in its social and cultural structures. Thus, linguistic and ethnic differences in Canada had to be overcome in order to unify and strengthen the Canadian identity within the Empire. This, in turn, necessitated that the imperialists oppose the extension of French Canadian language rights, sectarian education, and anything which tended to the disintegration of the Empire. Naturally, Home Rule for Ireland was high on their lists of

(1) Waite, Arduous Destiny, p. 201.

(2) Carl Berger, The Sense of Power, [Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1973], p. 9.

dangers to the integrity of the Empire. The Imperial Federation League broke up in 1893 over tariff issues, but the forces of imperialism in Canada were not contained by the League, and its demise did not extinguish the ideology upon which it was based.

This ideology found support in the Orange Order, which also placed great emphasis on loyalty to the Imperial Crown and on racial superiority. Although the League had sought to remain nonpartisan in political terms, its ideology was shared by others who were far less inclined to be so tolerant. D'Alton McCarthy, who was leader of the League in Canada in the late 1880's, also headed the Equal Rights Association, a Protestant Loyalist organisation which sought to combat what they saw as undue Papal influence in Canadian political affairs. N.C. Wallace, Grand Master of the Orange Order in Canada, believed that French language rights had to be restricted and a sense of British nationalism had to be fostered, otherwise "the only choice Canada had was to become an independent nation within the Empire with one law, one language, and no privileged race or religion".(1) Ironically, of course, this is precisely what the Irish Party was looking for at Westminster, believing as it did that Britain's pathetic handling of Irish affairs required that Ireland achieve that very independence within the Empire that Wallace wanted for Canada.

The rise of imperialist ideas in Canada, through these various organisations, encouraged by issues such as the Jesuit

(1) Berger, p. 135.

Estates Act and the Manitoba Separate Schools question, helped to form a widespread acceptance of what were considered Anglo-Saxon structures and traditions. Canada was an Anglo-Saxon country, aside from a regrettable and hopefully temporary aberration in Quebec. A pride in being part of the Empire was a feature of this ideology and ultimately culminated in Canada's participation in the Boer War. Imperialism in Canada benefitted greatly from another ideology which surfaced at the same time, but which was completely opposed to imperialist aims.

There were those in Canada who looked for Canada's future not to the link with Empire, but to its position in North America. They believed that the best context for fulfilling Canada's destiny was that of an alliance between the Anglo-Saxon people of the North American continent. Imperialists in Britain paid much lip service to the hope that the divided Anglo-Saxon races of the United States and the British Empire might one day be reunited, but that idea enjoyed much less acceptance in Canada, where the Americans were seen as a source of competition and potential annexation. However, there were Canadians who believed annexation, or something close to it, would only enhance Canada's economic situation. Commercial Union was the creed they preached, a single economic bloc formed by Canada and the United States for the purposes of trade and commerce. Others feared such an arrangement would only be the first step to a political union and this was naturally repugnant to the imperialist school of thought. Commercial Union received some impetus with the work

of the Joint High Commission of 1887, formed to negotiate American fishing rights in Canada's Maritime fishing grounds. The results of the Commission were far short of what had been hoped for in Canada, and in some quarters this led to a disillusionment with the willingness or ability of the Imperial Government to care for Canada's interests. A form of Commercial Union, Unrestricted Reciprocity, was adopted by the Liberal Party of Canada as a party policy in 1889 and the Liberals fought the election of 1891 on that issue. This was the policy Blake had rejected as Leader, and the Canadian people rejected it in the election. Macdonald was returned once more after a campaign which emphasised the nationalist sentiment inspired by imperialism: the old flag, the old leader and the old policy.

It is clear that from at least 1887 Canada was examining its own sense of identity. The relationship with the Empire and the United States came in for close evaluation, and the main result was that Canadians began to see themselves as a distinct nation, whatever context they wished to place themselves within. Increasingly, new loyalties were being forged in Canadian society, transcending the old ethnic traditions with which Canadians had heretofore identified. On the national level, the debate raged over Canada's primary identity as a North American or British Imperial nation. On the domestic level, the debate was over different issues.

In the decades after 1887, Canada experienced a huge increase in the number of immigrants arriving in the country.

This was to produce another factor in the redefinition of Canada taking place in these years, because the new immigrants were not like the old. These were no longer Irish, English or Scots coming to add to the already strong Anglo-Saxon character of Canada; they were from Asia, central and southern Europe. Non-Anglo-Saxon, without the traditional political and cultural roots of the host community; they would serve to accentuate the similarities of the Irish and the English in the face of the Ukrainian and Chinese. The increase in immigration in these years only reinforced the shared interests of the Canadians from the British Isles, and made it easier to smooth over the differences between Anglo-Saxon and Celt.

This was a gradual change which only slowly worked its effects on Canadian society. As imperialist ideology laid claim to the loyalties of Canadians of all backgrounds in the 1890's, the growing awareness of the changing nature of the Canadian ethnic mosaic led to a closing of the ranks against the newcomers, the foreigners. Imperialists had a racially-based attitude to the duties and dangers of the new immigrant groups:

According to this view, Canadians were British in their historical associations, political ideals, their preference for law and order, and their capacity for self-government. They were, French and English alike, a tough and masterful people.(1)

By the end of the century, Anglo-conformity was in vogue: the belief that Canada was an Anglo-Saxon nation with distinctly

(1) Berger, p. 152.

Anglo-Saxon traditions and political structures; and that all newcomers ought to adapt themselves to that fact. Canada was demanding that the new immigrants leave behind their ethnic, cultural traditions and languages and become "Canadians". Somewhere in the process, the Irish in Canada became identified as part of the Anglo-Saxon community, included in the group that were capable of self-government: the days of Macdonald's anti-Celtic bigotry were over, overtaken by a much wider and glorious imperial racism.(1) What developed in Canada during the first great influx of immigrants from outside the British Isles (roughly from 1896 to 1914), was that the host community closed ranks against the newcomers in a display of nativist defensiveness. Commercial Unionists and Imperial Federationists united in looking askance at the "great unwashed" who, they believed, were incapable of democratic government and posed a threat to the very fabric of Canadian life.

At the very time, therefore, that proponents of the Irish Question in Canada lost their most public forum for discussing their policy (ie., the House of Commons), the ideologies of imperialism and commercial union threw up competing claims for the loyalties of the Irish in Canada. Indeed, these ideologies challenged the very sense of identity which lay behind the involvement of the Irish in Canada in the Irish Question. Simultaneously, the Tory Government in Britain was attempting to

(1) For more on the development of the idea of Anglo-conformity, see: Howard Palmer (ed), Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism, [Toronto, Copp Clark, 1975].

"kill Home Rule with kindness" by relieving many of the grievances motivating the Irish during the Land War and the Plan of Campaign. Home Rule for Ireland was quickly becoming, for the Irish in Canada, a secondary issue. As if that were not enough, the years following 1887 saw the rise of yet another movement which claimed the loyalties of sections of the Irish community in Canada, and which ultimately distracted them from the Irish Question to another, more immediate one: the question of the rights of labour in Canada.

In the decades following Confederation, Canada had become ever more urbanised as the rise of industrialisation, particularly in Ontario and Quebec, was encouraged through the sheltering terms of the National Policy. With industrialisation came the growth of an urban proletariat tied to the factory and workshop, eeking out an often precarious and seasonal existence in the growing slum areas of Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa. Combinations among working people were attempted with little success in the 1870's, but it was with the emergence of the Knights of Labour in the early 1880's that the labour movement in Canada and the United States joined forces. A more inclusive organisation, the Trades and Labour Congress, was started in 1886 from an earlier Toronto organisation.⁽¹⁾ The Irish were prominent in the labour movement from the beginning. Indeed, they had often shown themselves quite capable of

(1) Waite, p. 179; Gregory Kealey and Bryan Palmer, Dreaming of What Might Be, The Knights of Labour in Ontario, 1880-1900, [Toronto, New Hogtown Press, 1987].

concerted and effective action against employers on canal works and in shanties even before the rise of the urban proletariat.(1)

The experience of common action against an entrenched privileged group, whether employers or governments, had been a common feature of Irish life from the days of O'Connell in the 1820's right through to the Plan of Campaign in the 1880's. The Irish in Canada imported a willingness, indeed eagerness, to organise on their arrival in North America. Gregory Kealey and Bryan Palmer, in their book on the Knights of Labour, claim that involvement in the labour movement tended to transcend the traditional barriers existing between Irish Catholics and Protestants, and that the Home Rule movement in Canada was aided by the organisation of the labour movement, so that meetings for one were often followed immediately by meetings for the other. Kealey and Palmer note the disproportionate number of Irish immigrants in positions of leadership in the labour movement in Canada as a significant feature of the rise of the working classes in this country.(2) However, their enthusiasm for the egalitarian qualities of the working class have encouraged Kealey and Palmer to place too much emphasis on the inter-relationship between the labour movement and the Irish Question in Canada. It is too simplistic to state that the Irish Question was supported

(1) For example, see Michael Cross, "The Shiners' War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830's", Canadian Historical Review, 54. 1973, pp. 1-26.

(2) Kealey and Palmer, Dreaming of What Might Be, 45, 52, 313-316.

by the labour movement, or that the labour movement united Irish workers of all creeds in overcoming sectarian divisions. The two sides were by no means clearly drawn.

For example, the first major test of the power of the Knights of Labour came in a conflict with the Toronto Street Railway in 1886. In a long and very bitter dispute, the TSR refused to employ union members and the resulting strike finally left the Knights exhausted and, to all intents and purposes, defeated. The owner of the TSR was Senator Frank Smith, that staunch campaigner for Irish Home Rule in 1882, and the man who was to organise fund raising for the Irish Party in Toronto throughout the 1890's.(1) There were those who claimed that the Knight's actions against the TSR were merely a Liberal attempt to use the labour movement to discredit the Macdonald government, of which Smith was a member.(2) It is certain that the Knights of Labour were closely allied with the Liberal Party in Canada, which may partly explain its support for Irish Home Rule, given the role Edward Blake played in that campaign. But at the same time, the Knights had fully supported the election of William Howland as Mayor of Toronto in 1886. This was the same Mayor Howland who we have noted in a previous chapter refusing to rent a hall for William O'Brien's meetings in Toronto in 1887, and organising the huge counter meeting after which O'Brien was so

(1) Dreaming, p. 116.

(2) World, [Toronto], 21 May, 1886, cited in Kealey and Palmer, p. 126.

roughly handled. This ally of the Knights was hardly a Home Ruler! It is clear, then, that a direct association of the Canadian labour movement and the Irish Question in Canada is not an accurate assessment of the position in the 1880's.

Having said this, it is still true, as Kealey and Palmer indicate, that the Irish Question did gain the sympathy of many of the leaders of the labour movement in Canada. The quasi-Marxist philosophy of Michael Davitt and the Land War in Ireland was attractive to many of the Irish labour leaders in Canada, and indeed involvement in the Land issue in Ireland may have led some of them into labour activities. What can be said about the links between the labour movement and the Irish Question in Canada may be summarised as follows. The working class Irish interested in labour affairs were brought into alliance with Orange elements opposed to Home Rule in Ireland. It may be that their common allegiance to the labour movement, working class solidarity, may have weakened the interest and the commitment of the Irish working class in Canada to the concept of Irish Home Rule.(1) As immediate labour goals occupied their time, thoughts and finances, this segment of the Irish in Canada found little to hold its attention in the Irish Question. In time, it may be that an occasional financial contribution, or attendance at a public meeting, may have been the limit of its involvement with the Home Rule movement. Kealey and Palmer suggest that, under the influence of the labour movement in

(1) Kealey and Palmer, p. 314-6.

Canada,

The major ethnic cleavage within the English-speaking working-class would not disappear, of course, but a gap had been bridged and a division materially reduced. Irishness, once a force tearing apart the class, had become a source buttressing a more general radical social critique premised on an understanding of the need for unity.(1)

Encouraging the Irish in this process was the fact of large-scale immigration which we have mentioned earlier. The influx of unskilled labour was a direct threat to the interests of the trade unions in which the Irish were so involved, and this threat was a strong motive in overcoming ethnic differences among the working class of the host community in the name of class unity. In yet another way, the new immigrant groups encouraged Irish compliance in the promotion of Anglo-conformity as the dominant ideology defining Canadian identity in the 1890's.

The extent to which the Irish working class had become disinterested in the Irish Question in Canada may be seen in the role they played in fundraising for the Irish Party in the 1890's, an activity vital to the continued existence of Irish Nationalist representation at Westminster. One Irish historian, discussing the tribulations of the Irish Party in that decade, refers to "The continuing deterioration in party finances, now almost wholly maintained by the herculean fund-raising efforts in his native Canada of Edward Blake".(2) In what has to date been

(1) Kealey and Palmer, p. 316.

(2) R. O'Brien in William O'Brien, p. 104.

the only published work on Canadian financial contributions to Irish Home Rule, D.C. Lyne concludes that:

In at least two critical years, 1893-4 and 1897-8, it was the Canadian contributions which kept alive the party to which Blake belonged. What would have been the ultimate outcome of the land struggle in Ireland, or how the Home Rule contest would have been effected by the financial collapse of the majority wing of the Irish Parliamentary Party, we cannot now determine. But we can conclude that how these things did turn out was influenced significantly by Edward Blake, and by the Irish-Canadian reaction to his self-sacrificing response to a call from Ireland.(1)

Between 1891 and 1898, the Irish in Canada contributed more than \$36,000 to the Home Rule cause in Ireland, most of this going directly to the coffers of the Irish Party, and some to the support of the evicted tenants of the Plan of Campaign.(2) This figure is in sharp contrast to the amount raised among the Irish in the United States, where the American branch of the Irish National Federation constantly bemoaned the lack of support among the Irish. After the Parnell split in 1891, the Irish in the United States had taken the anti-Parnellite side and began to organise a collection for the Irish Party.(3) Even before the Irish split, it had not been easy to raise money among the

(1) D.C. Lyne, "Irish-Canadian Financial Contributions to the Home Rule Movement in the 1890's", in Studia Hibernica, No. 7, 1967, p. 206.

(2) Ibid., calculations based on statistics throughout the article.

(3) NAC, FinBar Hays Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2659, The National Federation of America, Presidential Address, June 9, 1891.

Irish-Americans for the Home Rule movement. In 1887, the President of the Irish National League of America had written that the wealthy Irish-Americans were not supporting the cause, and that the poor among them were already bowed down with other commitments:

I recognized their burthens; the depression of business, the inclemency of the weather, the great rise in the cost of fuel; the constant demands in support of churches and schools, and their surroundings; the draw upon their resources for friends in Ireland; all of which weigh heavily upon the majority of our people.(1)

It would appear that the Irish-Americans were more interested in helping their relatives in Ireland to emigrate than to support the Home Rule cause. Between 1848 and 1900 the Irish in North America sent an average of one million dollars a year back to Ireland in the form of remittances to finance emigration. Ninety per cent of that money came from the U.S.(2) The fall-off in political activity in Ireland following the failure of the Home Rule bill in 1893 further weakened Irish-American support for the constitutional movement in Ireland as Clan Na Gael renewed their activities. And as John Fitzgerald noted in his letter in 1887, the simple demands of daily life as an American drew the Irish-American community, except for a minority, further away from the concerns of the Irish Question.

Nor was it much different among other Irish communities

(1) Ibid., p. 2694, John Fitzgerald to FinBar Hays, February 16, 1887.

(2) Kirby Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, [New York, 1984], p. 357.

abroad. As late as 1897, when the Irish Party was in dire need of funds, Michael Davitt complained to Blake: "I got a solitary L50 from the Melbourne Committee! In the same letter Winter told me they had collected L500 with which to prosecute some Orangemen for daring to have a procession in the streets!!".(1)

Clearly, the money raised by Blake among the Irish in Canada was vital to the continuation of the Home Rule movement in Ireland during the 1890's. It reflected an on-going commitment to the Irish Question in Canada, in contrast to that displayed by the Irish elsewhere. It must be asked, then: how does this fit in with what has been said of growing Irish Canadian identification with Canadian society, the progressive assimilation of the Irish into an Anglo-Saxon definition of Canada? To answer that, it is important to analyse the source of the funds raised in Canada, and the nature of the Home Rule movement there after 1891. This will be done through a general examination of Home Rule finances in Canada, and a more detailed study of the matter in one Canadian city.

(1) NAC, Edward Blake Papers, Reel 263, Davitt Correspondance, Letter 26, Davitt to Blake, November 20, 1897.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOME RULE FINANCES IN CANADA, 1892-1900

In spite of the important contribution made by Edward Blake in raising funds for the Irish Party, it was not a role he relished playing. The Irish Party in the 1890's was not just split between pro- and anti-Parnellites. Even the majority section, with which Blake was associated, was itself bitterly divided. Tim Healy, who had played a somewhat ignoble role in the deposition of Parnell, had ambitions and plans for the Party which were at sharp variance with those of the leading figures, such as John Dillon and Justin McCarthy. These, in turn, were often at loggerheads with Thomas Sexton, another long-time member of the Party's ruling elite. The Liberal Alliance and Irish Party tactics employed in the Plan of Campaign, as well as in the House of Commons, tended to foster disagreements and pettiness among the Irish Members at Westminster. Healy sought to make the Party more responsible to the local constituencies, much to the displeasure of Dillon. It was this divisiveness that led to speculation in 1892 that Blake's arrival in Ireland would shortly result in his assuming the leadership of a reunited Party. It was felt that only a newcomer with his prestige would be an acceptable leader for the bickering parliamentarians. This type of speculation, however, overlooked Blake's strong dislike of

political squabbling which had led to his resignation from leadership of the Canadian Liberals. As soon as he reached Ireland, he was co-opted on to the Steering Committee of the Party in preparation for the election campaign of that year. By August he was writing to a friend in Ottawa: "It is impossible to describe the squalid and disgusting 'political' complications of our 'party'. I have tried to get out of the Committee, but so far without success, and I suppose I shall have to hang on for a while".(1) The following year, the situation was as bad as ever. William O'Brien noted Blake's distaste of the bickering: "You can imagine how disgusted poor Blake sometimes is to find what...squabbles he has to take part in".(2) Trying to raise money in such an atmosphere was a delicate operation, since publicity concerning the divisions in the Party made the Irish Question even less attractive to potential donors. As O'Brien wrote in 1893 in a letter marked "Private and Confidential":

Our greatest worry is that it is impossible to give the people the least hint of what we have to endure without causing a further scandal that might be fatal to our movement. ...[Blake] really deserves every compliment we could possibly pay him.(3)

Another Irish member, not knowing of O'Brien's letter, wrote to the same Canadian later that year that "...our friends abroad must not take for true the sensational rumours appearing in the

(1) Hayes Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2794, Blake to Hayes, August 11, 1892.

(2) Ibid., p. 2612, O'Brien to Hayes, June 26, 1893.

(3) Ibid., p. 2616, O'Brien to Hayes, August 16, 1893.

newspapers. The movement at home is perfectly sound. The cause is perfectly safe..."(1) Nevertheless, Blake himself freely confessed just over a week later that "...our unhappy wranglings are interposing the greatest obstacle to the raising of funds [in Canada]; but of course it does not do to state this publicly in Ireland".(2)

The raising of funds was of the greatest importance to the Irish Party from the time Blake left Canada to contest the 1892 election. Even before he left Toronto, Blake had been worried about money for the Party, and this continued after the election was over.(3) In launching a fund-raising campaign in Canada in 1893, Blake was quite desperate about the need for a successful appeal: "If that appeal fails, we see no prospect of continuing the struggle for many weeks". Two months later, he admitted that "this is a very anxious time for all of us". Even a donation of \$2000 from New York later that same week "leaves us still without funds whereby to avert a disaster of great magnitude which I am unable at this moment to communicate". By the end of the month, he claimed that "we are at present in the last extremity...God knows the issue."(4) In the event, Blake's

(1) Ibid., p. 2690, Sir Thomas Esmonde to Hayes, October 10, 1893.

(2) NAC, John Dillon Papers, Letter 23, Blake to Dillon, October 19, 1893.

(3) Hayes Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2801, Blake to Hayes, May 22, 1892; p.2794, Blake to Hayes, August 11, 1892.

(4) Ibid., pp. 2804, 2807, 2809, 2813; Blake to Hayes, February 23, April 7, 15. and 28, 1893.

correspondence with FinBar Hayes of Ottawa, quoted above, produced the desired results, and about \$6000 was sent to Blake in 1893, almost entirely through the work of Hayes.(1) Realising early on that financial support from North America would be crucial, the Irish Party arranged for regular contact with Irish sympathisers there in order to encourage fund-raising efforts. After the 1892 election, Blake wrote to John Dillon to organise the letter-writing campaign: "Now I would suggest a rough plan of action, to secure that no long interval shall elapse without me or either of us writing to the other side. It is an onerous business; but seems essential to keep them in good humour and at work. If you like I will take the chief part in this as to Canada".(2) Blake later sent Dillon a list of useful contacts in Canada, including Senator Edward Murphy, Charles Fitzpatrick and J.J. Curran for Quebec; and from Toronto, Patrick Boyle, Frank Smith and Hugh Ryan. His Ottawa contacts were FinBar Hayes and Darby Bergin, M.P. He also included the names of the bishops of Toronto and Kingston. All had been active on the Irish Question in Canada for a number of years, and Smith, Curran, Boyle and John Costigan we have met before in prominent roles. Costigan was the only contact from outside Ontario or Quebec, and his main qualification was as a Government Minister, rather than a

(1) D.C. Lyne, "Irish-Canadian Financial Contributions to the Home Rule Movement in the 1890's", Studia Hibernica, 7, 1967, p. 188.

(2) Dillon Papers, Blake to Dillon, November 26, 1892.

representative of New Brunswick.(1)

These men would continue to be the key fund-raisers in Canada for the rest of the decade. D.C. Lyne points out that Canadian fund-raising basically died with them. The two bishops died in 1898, Hugh Ryan the following year, and Frank Smith in 1901.(2) Not all of them had disinterested motives for what they did. Frank Smith was constantly complaining about making contributions, and finally refused to do any more after 1896. Perhaps to encourage him, it was even suggested in 1894 that perhaps he could be put up as a candidate for an Irish constituency in a general election, following in Blake's footsteps. In the event, it never happened, Smith losing interest before the next election arrived.(3) Smith was not the only one losing interest in giving money to the Irish Party by the end of the decade. Blake made his last appeal to the Irish in Canada in 1897. In October of that year he wrote to Davitt in rather plain terms about the situation:

We have pretty well cleaned out the mine; and I should be much gratified if I am able (with much pains and labour) to extract \$2,500 more from the whole country. However, this...will render it possible to keep things together for next session.

I have written Dillon to say that next year Ireland, Australia, Africa and the United States must do the work. I have pretty well

(1) Blake Papers, Dillon Correspondance, Letter 31, Blake to Dillon, December 22, 1892.

(2) Lyne, p. 203.

(3) Hayes Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2626, William O'Brien to Hayes, June 13, 1894.

cleaned the goose that lays the golden egg in Canada this year, and it is almost exclusively on personal grounds and as a last contribution that I am succeeding.(1)

The goose was not quite dead yet; rather than the \$2,500 he had hoped for, Blake actually raised \$7,669 in Canada in 1897. But it was the last major contribution from there.

The amount of money raised in Canada by Edward Blake between 1892 and 1898, therefore, was crucial to the continued existence of the Irish Party. The Irish Question in Canada had moved from the House of Commons to the cities of Ontario, for very little money, as we shall see, was collected elsewhere in Canada. It is important to discover exactly where this money came from, in order to understand the nature and location of Irish Canadian support for the Irish Question. Blake himself identified the general area of support in a letter to James Bryce, a leading British politician, in October, 1892. Blake noted that support for Irish Home Rule in Canada was great. "This is due", he wrote to James Bryce, "to the almost undivided support given to Home Rule by the French Roman Catholics. Our extreme Protestant, whether in or out of the Orange Order, are, unfortunately, very weak in the faith".(2)

Protestants in Canada were, according to Blake, in general disagreement with Home Rule, and could not be expected to support

(1) Blake Papers, Davitt Letters, Blake to Davitt, October 29, 30, 1897.

(2) Blake Papers, Bryce Letters, Blake to James Bryce, October 24, 1892.

the Irish Party, financially or otherwise. There were exceptions to this, of course. "An Irish-Canadian Protestant Friend" in Toronto gave a contribution of \$200 annually to the Irish Party, (1) and as late as August, 1900 "some Protestant friends" helped contribute £30 through J.W. Fitzgerald of Peterborough. (2) Blake also mistook French Canadian parliamentary support for specific endorsement of Irish Home Rule. In fact, their support was mainly for Home Rule in principle, and against the Conservatives in particular. As D.C. Lyne shows, it soon became apparent that French Canadian Catholics had no interest whatsoever in making financial contributions to the Irish Party. This left the Irish Canadian Catholics as the major source of support for Irish Home Rule.

Once again, though, this is too general. We have seen from Kealey and Palmer that the Irish Catholic working class was being seduced away from the Irish Question by the Class Question in Canada. Did this interfere with their involvement in Blake's fund-raising in the 1890's, the very period when Kealey and Palmer claim they were organising in the Knights of Labour and other unions? In truth, when the accounts of the money raised by the Irish in Canada are examined, certain facts become very clear. The most important to this study is that the greatest amount of money was raised in the major cities of Ontario, and

(1) National Library of Ireland (NLI), Ms.9236, J.F.X. O'Brien Papers, Irish National Fund, Cash Book, 1896-8, p. 37, Accounts for December 9, 1897.

(2) Ibid., Ms. 13,418, Letters, Account Books, etc., 1879-1917.

came from a very small group of people. When Blake first made an appeal for funds, in 1892, about \$7,000 was raised. Of this, \$2,000 came from Kingston and \$4,000 from Toronto. This last amount was raised from just four sources, each contributing \$1,000. The four included Senator Frank Smith and Blake's own law firm.(1) The total raised in 1893 was \$6,000, which came entirely from the Ottawa area and went to meet the expenses of the Irish Party.(2) Blake's second major appeal came in 1894, when over \$15,000 was raised in Canada. A little less than half of this came from Toronto, one-third from just a few men there. The balance came from Kingston, Ottawa and Montreal. The situation had been so drastic early in the year that Blake had to take out a personal loan of \$7,500 on the strength of the hoped-for collection in Canada.(3) This was the largest amount raised in the decade. In 1895 the total was down to only \$2,000, all of which came from Montreal, Ottawa and Kingston.(4) D.C. Lyne claims that, because of the divisions within the Irish Party in Ireland, the amount raised in Canada in 1896 was "practically non-existent".(5) However, Blake did forward \$1,000 collected

(1) Lyne, p. 187.

(2) Ibid., p. 188.

(3) Ibid., p. 194.

(4) Ibid., p. 195.

(5) Ibid.

towards the end of the year, part of a contribution of \$2,500 which he sent to Ireland between October, 1896 and February, 1897.(1) In 1897, during which year Blake made his last appeal to the Irish in Canada, the total amount raised to finance the Irish Party through the 1897-98 session was just over \$7,600. Most of this came from Toronto, once again in large contributions from a very select group in the city. Blake himself, as well as Frank Smith and Hugh Ryan, gave \$1,000 each to the fund. A prominent businessman, Eugene O'Keefe of the famous brewing family, gave \$500, and Archbishop Walsh gave \$200, the same as the "Irish-Canadian Protestant Friend"'s annual contribution.(2) The balance of the year's collection came mainly from Ottawa, which contributed almost \$1,000, the rest coming in small amounts from Montreal (\$200), St. Catherine's (\$100) and Bishop Sweeny of New Brunswick (\$100). The Bishop of St. John's, Newfoundland, also had a collection which raised \$30, of which he himself gave \$10.(3) Another \$2,000 arrived from Canada through Blake in 1898, but that was the last major organised contribution to the Home Rule Party from Canada.(4)

Altogether, then, Edward Blake was the medium for over \$37,700 in donations to the Irish Party from the Irish in Canada from 1892-1898. This appears rather insignificant in comparison

(1) NLI, Ms. 9236, p. 3, 8, 14 and 16.

(2) Ibid., p. 36-7.

(3) Ibid., p. 26, 36-7.

(4) Ibid., p. 44.

with the \$1m per annum being sent to Ireland from North America to finance emigration, and indeed it is. However, we have seen how vital it yet was to the continuation of the Home Rule movement in Ireland during that decade. For example, a small gift of \$50 from Ottawa on January 19, 1895 was the only contribution reaching the Irish Party that week from anywhere in North America. Many of the contributors were unhappy with the rifts in the Irish movement, and were not slow to mention the fact in their correspondence.(1) Much of what was contributed was a personal tribute to Blake, rather than an expression of commitment to Home Rule per se, a fact Blake himself understood. It was only loyalty to Blake that convinced Frank Smith and others to make a contribution to the Irish Party in 1897, which Smith made clear, vowing never to give another cent to the Party afterwards. These factors need to be taken into account when judging the importance of the fund-raising in Canada during the 1890's as a reflection of Irish-Canadian involvement in the Irish Question. If it had not been for Blake and his wealthy Toronto friends, would there have been an Irish Question in Canada after 1891? Was there, in fact, any real interest among the Irish community in Canada in events in Ireland during this period? To answer that question, it is necessary to take a closer look at one centre of Irish activity in Canada during the 1890's and

(1) See, for example, Blake Papers, Dillon Letters, No. 42 and 45, from October, 1894, in which the Archbishop of Toronto and the leading Irish leader in Peterborough discuss the issue with Edward Blake.

analyse the motives and organisation of those involved in raising funds for Home Rule for Ireland.

Ottawa is a very useful community to examine on the issue of Irish Canadian involvement with the Irish Question. It contained a large Irish population, yet that group did not suffer the same sense of persecution experienced by their colleagues in Kingston, for example, where a strong Orange population had organised large anti-Irish and anti-Catholic meetings and activities during the heyday of the Equal Rights Association. This may easily have influenced the support enjoyed by Home Rule in that city. Ottawa suits our needs better than Toronto, although that city also had a large Irish population, because it is difficult to know how much of Irish involvement in the Home Rule movement in Toronto was, in fact, primarily an act of loyalty to Edward Blake, rather than an expression of solidarity with the Irish Party. Further, Ottawa appears in almost every list of major contributions to the Irish Party throughout the 1890's, and was often the chief source of the funds raised for the Home Rule party during that decade. Finally, Ottawa was the federal capital, the centre of government, where the Irish representatives from all over the Dominion acted and organised on behalf of Irish Home Rule. It was in this city that the Home Rule resolutions of 1882 and 1887 originated. Ottawa, then, will be examined to ascertain the source and nature of Irish support for Home Rule during the last years of the nineteenth century.

As we have seen earlier, it was through the Irish

organisations in Ottawa that John O'Hanly worked in 1882 to introduce the Home Rule resolutions in the House of Commons. The Irish community in the Ottawa area had always been in the forefront of the Irish Question in Canada. It was there that D'Arcy McGee was shot, where the man accused of his murder was tried and hanged; where hundreds of Irish men were detained without trial or charge for months after McGee's death. The Irish and the French Canadians were the largest ethnic groups in the area, and were a force to be reckoned with in local politics. From the time of the Shiners in the 1830's, to the dangerous days of the Fenians and Macdonald's obsession with dynamite plots, the Ottawa Irish were seen as a particularly nationalist, activist lot. One might assume, therefore, that the Irish involvement in the Home Rule movement in Ottawa was widespread and enthusiastic. In fact, the evidence does not seem to support such a view. Rather, it appears that the Irish Question in Ottawa was a subject of interest primarily to a relatively small group of people, generally professionals, who had immigrated to Canada quite some time before the 1880's. They were middle-class and of an average age of between 50 and 60 years. This small elite within the Irish community, like the few wealthy contributors to Home Rule in Toronto, was to be found in the leadership of every Irish nationalist organisation in the city. Some of them can even be traced back to the events surrounding D'Arcy McGee's death in 1868.

These men, for there were no women among this elite

leadership, reflected very accurately the ideology being expressed by the Irish Party at Westminster with regard to the concept of Home Rule within the Empire, and their views were clearly represented during the debates on Home Rule in the Canadian Parliament which we have examined earlier. In 1888, they established a newspaper to propagate the Home Rule cause in Canada. Titled United Canada, after the United Ireland of the Irish Party, the paper's motto was "Pro Deo et Pro Patria". There was a certain ambivalence about exactly which "patria" was represented here, Ireland or Canada. While the paper was unabashedly Irish in tone, and while its entire raison d'etre was the Irish Question, the editorial line of United Canada was, in fact, very concerned with promoting what McGee once called a "new nationality". "It is our intention", declared the first editorial, "...to foster a healthful feeling of Canadian Nationality".(1) The Irish in Canada, said the editorial, were not at all hesitant to declare that they were proud to be Canadians. Railing against the new wave of immigration then beginning to hit Canada, the paper was quite explicit: they were firmly opposed to making Canada "a dumping ground for European refuse".(2) The newspaper, which was published weekly, apparently continued until around 1930, but no issue dated after 1893 survives. The editorial leadership for the paper was

(1) United Canada, (Ottawa), November 24, 1888, p. 4.

(2) Ibid.

supplied by John D. Grace, a local businessman, and Rev. John Coffey, who acted as editor, while Grace took care of the business side. Coffey had been the editor of the Catholic Record in London, Ontario, for nine years, and had been Editor-in-Chief of the Kingston Canadian Freeman, the newspaper founded by D'Arcy McGee and J.G. Moylan in 1859.

This was itself significant, for the one thing upon which the United Canada was not in the least ambivalent was the fact that it was, as it freely admitted, "A Catholic newspaper".(1) In spite of an early article praising the great work done by Irish Protestant friends of Home Rule, the paper quite clearly identified Irish nationalism with Roman Catholicism. This appears to have been true of this elite group in Ottawa as a whole. Not having an Edward Blake locally, they tended to emphasise their Catholicism more than might be true of Toronto. For example, in the 1890's they organised among the Irish working on Parliament Hill an "Association of Prayer in Honour of the Saints of Ireland". In what must be one of the more unusual set of rules to appear on House of Commons stationery, the Association declared that:

Every member will say the Hail Mary three times each day in honour of the Saints and Martyrs of Ireland, for the preservation of the faith of our people, and for an early and happy ending to all the sorrows of our country.(2)

(1) Ibid.

(2) Hayes Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2936.

Once again, one must wonder at the term "our country", and the ambivalence it indicates about the identification these people felt with Ireland and Canada.

The links with the Catholic Church were very important for the Home Rule Irish in Ottawa, and indeed in Canada generally, during the 1890's. When Blake made his appeals for funds in Canada, it was generally to the Catholic Bishops that the appeal first went. John Costigan, now almost entirely eclipsed by Blake, wrote in 1893 that the Irish in Canada "are all agreed that to obtain any reasonable success the influence of the Venerable Hierarchy and their Clergy is absolutely necessary".(1) In most parts of Canada, it was the local Irish Catholic Bishop who organised collections for the Irish Party and forwarded the funds to Blake or direct to Ireland. When Blake was organising fund-raising in 1894, he first held a meeting with John Costigan, Archbishop Walsh of Toronto, and Bishop Cleary of Kingston.(2) In 1892, Bishop Cleary had arranged that the Irish in Kingston would cooperate with the Ottawa Irish in collecting for the Irish Party "for moral and political effects".(3) On every local committee and every subscription list throughout the 1890's, the name of the local Bishop or a prominent priest is to be found.

(1) NAC, John Costigan Papers, Vol. 1, p. 196-7. Costigan to Archbishop Taschereau, December 8, 1893.

(2) Banks, Edward Blake, p. 79.

(3) NAC, Hayes Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2635. Cleary to Darby Bergin, July 5, 1892.

The Irish Party were very aware of the influence of these clerics on the Irish Question in Canada. When Archbishop Lynch of Toronto died in 1888, the Party sent one of their leading figures, Sir Thomas Esmonde, to the funeral.(1)

The Home Rulers in Ottawa were in an unusual position vis-a-vis the Catholic Hierarchy. The majority of Ottawa Catholics were French Canadians, and the local Bishop represented that section of his flock. The leading Irish Catholic cleric in the capital was Rev. M.J. Whelan, parish priest of the most Irish church in Ottawa, St. Patrick's on Kent Street. Whelan was parish priest there from 1881 until his death in 1915, and throughout the period was a leading figure in the Irish nationalist community. When a more exalted Catholic cleric was required by the Home Rule forces, they turned to Bishop Cleary of Kingston, who worked closely with them until his death.

It was noted that the crowds who gathered in Ottawa to welcome William O'Brien in 1887 were greatly outnumbered by those who turned out for Lord Lansdowne a few days afterwards. It is surprising, then, that the Irish Question in Ottawa created such a stir; that, as Edward Blake wrote in 1893, Ottawa played "such a leading part in the work".(2) During most of the decade of the 1890's, Ottawa was in the forefront of the fund-raising efforts of the Home Rule movement in Canada. It is interesting to

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 2669. Esmonde to Hayes, May 13, 1888.

(2) Hayes Papers, Vol 9, p. 2821. Blake to FinBar Hayes, May 20, 1893.

discover where this money came from.

In fact, it is somewhat misleading to speak of Ottawa as such, since the city was the focus for Irish nationalist activities throughout what is now the National Capital Region. There was a large Irish Catholic population in the surrounding townships of Nepean and Gloucester, as well as throughout the Ottawa Valley area and even to a lesser extent on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River. Funds from these communities were funnelled through the Ottawa branch of the Irish National League. The Irish in these areas were not, as has traditionally been thought, either poor farm labourers, or unskilled mechanics. Many of them had been settled on the farms of these townships for at least two or three generations, and there were many wealthy merchants and large farmers among them. Although they had their share of unemployed, or unskilled farm labourers, the Irish Catholic community were more like their fellow citizens than has been generally admitted.(1)

For example, in the Township of Nepean, which in 1891 contained much of what is now the City of Ottawa west of the Rideau River, there was a large rural Irish Catholic population.

(1) The debate about whether the Irish in Canada were predominantly rural or urban can best be seen in Kenneth Duncan's "Irish Famine Immigration and the Social Structure of Canada West", in Michael Horn (ed.), Studies in Canadian Social History, (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1974), pp.140-163, in which Duncan refers to the Irish being "urban by compulsion"; and the works of Donald H. Akenson, especially The Irish in Ontario, (McGill-Queen Press, 1984), where he exhaustively and exhaustingly refutes Duncan to show that the Irish were not confined either to the land, nor to urban slums.

Although the total number of Irish Catholic households in the Township comprised only 17.5% of the total, in the most agricultural division of the township that figure reached 49% (or 120 out of 245 households).(1) In this part of the township, Irish Catholics were overwhelmingly involved in farming; some were, in fact, very wealthy indeed. The Troy family, for example, lived in a two-story brick building consisting of nine rooms. This compares with the more common wooden homes occupied by residents of the township at the time. Thomas Troy's parents were of Irish birth, and his success in Canada was matched by many others in Nepean. Troy's son was a medical doctor, another sign of the family's rising status and fortunes. The Township was divided into electoral divisions and the Census information was gathered at this level. Those Irish in Division 1 who were not farmers, were involved in professions such as merchant, butcher, store keeper and hotel keeper.

Irish Catholic representation elsewhere in the township ranged from 22% to as low as 8.6% of the population. The latter area was a prosperous section of the city of Ottawa, where a large number of young Irish immigrant girls worked as maid servants. The Irish-born in Division 7 generally worked at

(1) Statistics in this section are gathered from material in the manuscript Census of 1891 in the National Archives. An "Irish-born" household is one where the head of the household was born in Ireland; an "Irish-origin" household is one where the parents of the head of the household were born in Ireland. Since this cannot take into account those households of earlier Irish origin, due to the limits of the Census information, the figures used in this section very likely underestimate the Irish presence in Nepean in 1891.

lower-status jobs such as railway workers or cab drivers; though the sons of immigrants had already risen to become newspaper printers and Government printers, as well as labourers and carpenters. What is clear from the statistics is that the Irish Catholics in Nepean, including that part of the city of Ottawa, shared the same jobs and status as was the norm for their neighbourhood. In those areas of Ottawa for which we have unemployment figures, the Irish do not fare much worse than other groups in their society. In Division 3 of the township, a working-class section of Ottawa, the overall unemployment rate was 37.7%, identical to the rate for Irish Catholics as a whole. The Irish-born rate was higher (42.8%) than that of Irish Protestants (24.5%), but most of these unemployed worked in seasonal areas, such as mill and lumber work, and might be expected to be out of work during the summer months when the Census was taken. In Division 8, the largest in the township and another working-class area, the unemployment rate among the Irish, who numbered 10.6% of the population, was only 20%. The overall rate for that Division was 27%.

What we find in Nepean, therefore, is an Irish population which fairly reflects the township in general. They are to be found at all levels of society, in every manner of job. They are not congregated into any one part of the township, there are no Irish ghettos, but are spread out among the rural and urban parts of the township in no obvious pattern. With this in mind, we now turn to an analysis of those Irish Catholics involved in the Home

Rule issue in Ottawa in the 1890's to see how fairly they reflect the Irish Catholic presence in the city.

What strikes one immediately on examining the personnel of the Home Rule movement in Ottawa is its consistency over time. The same relatively small group of men turn up as Chairmen, Treasurers or mere footsoldiers in the campaign from 1880 through the 1890's. The same men it is, too, for not a single woman appears as officer or speaker at any Home Rule event recorded in the many sources at hand. The Irish Question in Ottawa at least was debated solely by men. It is possible that some wives or daughters attended meetings, or made the tea and sandwiches, but they were destined to do so anonymously, invisible to history. The fathers and husbands, however, were certainly deeply involved in whatever form the Irish Question happened to take at any point in those decades. Chart 1 shows the occupation and addresses of the men appearing on Committees and meetings in Ottawa during the 1890's, indicating the level of their involvement in the Home Rule movement. Some, like Michael Starrs or P.A. Eagleson, had been active in Irish Canadian circles since the 1850's. In fact, both men had opposed D'Arcy McGee, and Eagleson had employed the man eventually hanged for McGee's murder. These two were still active in the mid-1890's, Eagleson serving on the Ottawa Home Rule Committee as late as 1895. All of the men on the list were either middle class professionals and merchants, or politicians. A few, such as John Heney, scion of the wealthy Ottawa family, were independently wealthy men. An unusually large percentage

NAME	OCCUPATION	ADDRESS
Patrick Baskerville	Grocer: P. Baskerville & Bros.	236 Stewart 43-5, 58 George
Martin Battle	Collector Inland Revenue	302 Besserer
James Bennett	Contractor	55 Sweetland
George Brophy	Superintending Engineer: Ottawa River Works Office	52 Theodore
J.L. Dowlin	Barrister	25 Sparks
P.A. Egleson	Merchant Tailor	563 Sussex
George Goodwin	Contractor	66 Stewart
M.J. Gorman	Barrister: Gorman & Fripp	25 Russell 74 Sparks
J.D. Grace	Proprietor: United Canada	578 Sussex
FinBar Hayes	Chief English Translator, House of Commons of Canada	354 Sussex
John Heney	Merchant and ship-owner	66 Daly
C.J. Higgins	Post Office Dept.	365 Daly
F.R. Latchford	Barrister: Latchford & Murphy	371 Waverley 19 Elgin
John Lyons	Contractor	195 Clarence
J.A. McCabe	Principal, Ottawa Normal and Model Schools	443 Somerset
A.F. McIntyre	Barrister: McIntyre, Code & Orde	The Bodega 74 Sparks
M.J. Mahon	Post Office Dept.	375 King
Charles Murphy	Barrister: Latchford & Murphy	620 Wellington 19 Elgin
J.L.P. O'Hanly	Chief Engineer	352 Daly
J.H. Parnell	Dentist	9 Mosgrove 103½ Rideau
R.W. Scott	Barrister: Scott & Scott	274 Daly
Michael Starrs	Wholesale Grocer	59 Clarence 56 York

SOURCE: The City of Ottawa Directory,
1893 and 1894.

were solicitors or barristers, often of high standing in their profession. A.F. McIntyre, for example, was the solicitor for the Bank of Montreal; and F.R. Latchford later became the Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Appeal. They were, almost to a man, Liberals, though Darby Bergin sat as a Conservative M.P. for Cornwall-Stormont for twenty years, holding the seat from 1872 until he died in 1896, losing only once in the Liberal victory of 1874.(1) Socially, these men had much in common. Almost to a man, they lived in the fashionable centre of Ottawa in the area around Daly Street and Sussex Drive. Latchford and Charles Murphy were in partnership in a law firm which shared the same business address as law firms in which M.J. Gorman and A.F. McIntyre were senior partners. Both M.J. Mahon and C.J. Higgins worked for the Post Office.

Another common denominator among this elite group was their age. Although the birth date is only known for a few of them, what is significant is that all but a few were dead by 1900. From around that time an entirely new group of names appears as officers of the United Irish League in Ottawa. Even more significantly, the League itself ceased to operate shortly afterwards. It would appear that these men not only represented the Irish cause in Ottawa, to a great extent they were that cause. When they died, the main energy of the cause died too. It is clear, then, that the Irish Question in Ottawa was one which

(1) The statistical information used in these paragraphs is gleaned from the Ottawa City Directory, [Toronto, Murray Printing Co., 1893-4 and 1894-5].

attracted the attention of only a small group of relatively wealthy men. Like the Toronto example, the main burden of the fight was carried by these men, rather than by a broad-based alliance of Irishmen transcending social divisions. This was clearly an elite group of men. They were predominantly middle-class professionals, living in the city centre area and generally in their late 50's and 60's. They were able to finance a newspaper reflecting their ideology, which was overwhelmingly Liberal in direction. In contrast to the 25 and 50 cent donations given in the rare collections made outside Ottawa city, this elite donated \$5, \$10, \$25, often \$100, sometimes even as much as \$200 each at every collection.(1) These men were by no means representative of the Irish population of Ottawa and the capital region.(2)

The real importance of this elite is understood when one examines the financial contributions to the Home Rule cause made by the Irish in Ottawa. In spite of what we have seen of the Irish presence in the Ottawa region in the 1890's, it was this same small elite which carried the financial burden of the Home Rule cause there, and not the farmers or the urban working class. As in Toronto, the few wealthy professionals were responsible for

(1) These figures are taken from the records of the Treasurer of the I.N.L. in Ottawa in the 1890's, FinBar Hayes. The accounts are found in volume 9 and 10 of the Hayes Papers at the National Archives of Canada.

(2) The information on these men is gleaned almost entirely from either the pages of the United Canada, for November 24, 1888, or from various pamphlets or notices of meetings recorded in the FinBar Hayes Papers at the National Archives.

Ottawa playing, in Blake's words, "such a leading part in the work".(1) FinBar Hayes was the major figure in fund-raising for the Ottawa area. A member of a leading Ottawa business family who were heavily involved in ship-building, FinBar worked as a translator in the House of Commons. This did not mean that he was outside the ranks of the social elite in Ottawa, however. He was a correspondent of Lord and Lady Aberdeen's both during and after their term as Governor General of Canada. Lady Aberdeen relied on Hayes for guidance regarding a song which was to be sung at a St. Patrick's Day event in 1895. The song, "God Save Ireland", was written to commemorate three men who had been executed following the Fenian rising of 1867, and was the unofficial national anthem of the Home Rule movement in the 1890's. The lyrics said, in part:

High upon the gallows tree
 Stood the noble-hearted three,
 By the vengeful tyrant stricken in their bloom.
 But they met him face to face
 With the courage of their race,
 And they went with souls undaunted to their doom.

"God save Ireland!", said the heroes,
 "God save Ireland!" said they all.
 Whether on the scaffold high,
 Or the battlefield we die,
 O what matter, when for Erin dear we fall!(2)

This incident is very revealing of the evolution of the Irish Question in Canada at this time. The song, lauding the republican

(1) NAC, Hayes Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2821, Blake to FinBar Hayes, May 20, 1893.

(2) Stephen J. Brown (ed.), Poetry of Irish History, [Dublin, Talbot Press, 1927], p. 298.

violence of the Fenians, was the anthem of the Home Rule movement at home and abroad and was used at almost every Home Rule meeting until 1916.(1) This odd fellowship was underlined by the use of the song in the presence of Lord Aberdeen by people whose loyalty to the Crown was unimpeachable. Hayes, who was so central to the Home Rule cause in Ottawa, continued to correspond with Lord Aberdeen and "Ishbel" until he died.(2)

Hayes is a perfect example of the assimilation process at work. Born in Ireland in 1830, Hayes came to Canada with his father and brothers at the age of twelve. Of a wealthy family, he published pamphlets in support of William O'Brien as early as 1886 and continued to be a friend of O'Brien for the next twenty years. In 1887, Hayes gave \$1,000 to the Irish National League of America, and had sent money and a letter of encouragement to O'Brien during his imprisonment that year. The letter went via Archbishop Walsh of Dublin.(3) Hayes continued to give money to the Irish Party and to correspond with leaders such as Davitt, Esmonde, Blake and O'Connor. O'Brien wrote of him, following the latter's exciting visit to Canada in 1887: "Of all the brave friends who rallied to my side in those hours of trial I don't know of any other figure oftener coming to my recollection than

(1) Peter Alter, "Symbols of Irish Nationalism", in Reactions to Irish Nationalism, [Hambleton Press, London, 1987], p. 6-8.

(2) Hayes Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2586, Aberdeen to Hayes, January 29, 1909.

(3) Ibid., p. 2694, I.N.L.A. to Hayes, February 16, 1887; p. 2706, Harrington to Hayes, December 11, 1887.

your own".

O'Brien referred to Hayes' "almost too great generosity" to the cause.(1)

It was to Hayes that Blake often confided his fears and disillusionment on his arrival in Irish political circles, and it was through Hayes that most of the money raised in the Ottawa area passed on its way to Ireland. D.C. Lyne points out that Hayes was responsible for raising almost all the money raised in Canada for the Irish Party in 1893.(2) Hayes was one of those Irish-born Canadians who, though completely committed to Canada and to the British structures of the Dominion, both in his work and in his social circle, nevertheless remained strongly aware of his roots. Willing to pour large amounts of money, and to spend large amounts of time on the Irish Question, he was responsible for the "Association of Prayer in honour of the Saints of Ireland".(3) He was of the same generation as John Costigan, John O'Hanly, Edward Blake, Frank Smith and the rest of those who energised the Irish Question in Canada between 1880 and the early 1900's. He was typical of those who formed, as it were, a bridge between those Irish in Canada who continued to see Ireland as their homeland and Canada as their place of exile, and those

(1) Ibid., O'Brien to Hayes, March 1, 1888.

(2) D.C. Lyne, "Irish-Canadian Financial Contributions to the Home Rule Movement in the 1890's", in Studia Hibernica, No. 7, 1967, p. 188.

(3) Hayes Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2936.

Canadians who took pride in their Irish heritage.

Aside from a few minor contributions from outside the city of Ottawa, these friends of Hayes' contributed all the money raised in the Ottawa area for the Irish Party. Like Smith, Blake and Ryan in Toronto, Hayes, Baskerville, Heney and their circle continued to promote the Irish Question in Canada long after it would appear the majority of the Irish in the Dominion had turned to other causes. Even so, because of their social and economic position, these were the men who could influence events in Canada; they were able to make the Irish Question one to which Canadians generally had to pay attention. During the Macdonald era, they had helped to focus attention on Ireland by using the House of Commons. After Macdonald's death, and partly because of the political situation in Ireland itself, parliamentary activities languished. The decade of the 1890's was to be the decade of the fund-raiser, the desperate collection of money to keep the Irish Party in existence during its dark night of the soul. Nor were Macdonald's Conservative successors any more eager than he to see the Irish Question disturb the already muddy waters of Canadian politics. Neither Abbott nor Bowell had any sympathy whatsoever with Irish Home Rule, good Orangemen that they were.(1) Thompson was busy with other things, and would perhaps not have appreciated dealing with a topic which might have left him open to sectarian attack. Tupper had neither the

(1) P.B. Waite, The Man from Halifax, [Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1985], p. 182.

inclination nor the time to do anything at all. But with the election of Wilfrid Laurier in 1896, the Irish Question in Canada was given new life. As we have seen, most of those involved in the Irish Question were Liberals themselves, and looked to a Liberal Prime Minister for a sympathetic hearing. Laurier, as Blake's successor to the leadership of the Liberal Party, was perceived as sharing Blake's views on Imperial relations and the need for Home Rule. The Irish in Canada looked with anticipation as the Laurier years began.

Wilfrid Laurier, while yet an ordinary member of the Commons of Canada, had made an eloquent speech in favour of Home Rule for Ireland during the debate in the House in 1886. In an able comparison of the plight of Ireland in 1886 with that of French Canada at the time of the 1837 Rebellion, Laurier brought his liberal principles to bear on the Irish Question.(1) Rejecting the Tory opinion that the Canadian Parliament had no business speaking out on an internal Imperial topic, Laurier believed that the Canadian experience actually laid a responsibility on the Canadian Parliament to encourage Gladstone in what he was attempting to do for Ireland.

...not only does it behoove us, but it seems to me it is our bounden duty, as members of this great Empire, to strain every nerve in order to strengthen the hands of those

(1) Laurier's 1886 speech is reprinted in Ulric Barthe, Wilfrid Laurier on the Platform, [Quebec, 1890]; further discussions of Laurier's Liberalism, in relation to the Empire and Federalism, can be found in Joseph Schull, Laurier, [Toronto, Macmillan, 1965], and Jane E. Harrison, "Wilfrid Laurier's views on Canadian Federalism", unpublished M.A. thesis, Carleton University, 1985.

struggling in the cause of Ireland, and to show by our living experience that in order to make the government of Ireland strong, it is necessary simply to make it free.(1)

Clearly, this was man who would be expected to do great things for the Irish cause as Prime Minister of Canada. He was, however, in the Liberal tradition in other ways also. Like Blake, and in fact like the members of the Irish Party itself, Laurier never really questioned the Imperial context in which he operated and in which he envisioned the growth of colonial autonomy. As he said in 1890, "The future of Canada is this: that it must be British".(2) He spoke these words during the debate on D'Alton McCarthy's Dual Languages Bill, which was, in effect, an attempt to deny the use of the French language in official Canadian business. Laurier wanted to make clear that being British did not have to mean using only the English language, or keeping only to Anglo-Saxon structures and traditions. Like the Irish Party, and unlike the Unionists and Imperial Federationists, Laurier believed local ethnic cultures could co-exist with British political structures in a united British Empire. In this speech, too, he compared French Canada to Ireland, claiming that England had been trying to make both British in the same way, by denying their native cultures and attempting to enforce an homogeneity that was destructive of French-Canadian and Irish ethnicity. For that very reason, he

(1) Barthe, p. 351.

(2) Ibid., p. 596.

favoured Home Rule for Ireland, so that the Irish could defend themselves against such a negative form of Imperialism. Laurier went so far as to quote from a speech given by John Dillon, the Irish Party leader, which showed Dillon's positively changed attitude to Britain due to the kindnesses he had been shown by various English people.(1) In 1886, Laurier had used Canadian experience to draw lessons for Ireland. Now, in 1890, he was using Irish experience to show the way for Canadian growth.

Laurier's expressed sympathies for Irish Home Rule, as well as his long relations with Edward Blake, led to hopes that he would work actively on behalf of the Irish Question in Canada in his role of Prime Minister after the 1896 election. The question remained, nevertheless, what exactly was it that Laurier could do regarding Irish Home Rule? Although he played off the forces of Imperialism and Nationalism in Canada very adroitly, it is certain that he had no intention of getting too close to the Tory Government in London, and especially to its Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain. Laurier wished to have Canada play an active role in Imperial affairs, but he was wary of being drawn into too close a working relationship with the Mother Country for fear of what it would mean for Canada's growing autonomy. Irish Home Rule was, on the one hand, too sensitive an issue among ex-Liberals like Chamberlain.

On the other hand, Home Rule was hardly an issue at all during the 1890's, as we have seen. With no prospect of

(1) Ibid., p. 603-4.

legislation, and a bitterly divided Irish Party, there was really nothing to get involved in, so far as the Irish Question was concerned. The Irish in Canada had played a role in convening an Irish Race Convention in Dublin in 1896, called together in the hopes of reuniting the Irish Party. The idea had come from Archbishop Walsh of Toronto, in a letter to Edward Blake in 1895.(1) Reflecting the growing importance of extra-parliamentary movements in Irish affairs, delegates from the Gaelic Athletic Association, the National Literary Society and the Young Ireland Society were also asked to the conference. Canadians from Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Quebec City, St. John and Halifax attended the three-day event in September 1896. Far from reuniting the Party, the conference only served to alienate many of the wealthy Canadian supporters of the Party, including Hugh Ryan and Frank Smith of Toronto, who swore they would never again give money to the Irish Party, which they felt was far too petty and childish in its behaviour, and too much dominated by the Irish Catholic Hierarchy.(2) It was to be another four years before the party of Parnell was once again united under a single leader.

Not having anything immediate upon which to focus their activities, Irish Canadian Home Rulers lost much of their energies during the 1890's. Aside from the issue of fund-raising, which, though vital to the Irish Party, was rather unexciting to

(1) Banks, Blake, p. 165.

(2) Ibid., p. 167.

the Irish in Canada, there was little to hold their attention on the Irish Question. Instead, as we have seen, the majority of the Irish in Canada turned their attention to more immediate issues, issues of domestic Canadian concern, such as Trade Unions and national politics. It becomes clear during these years that another group of Irish Canadians began to vie for the attention of the Liberal government of Laurier. These were men who were more concerned with gaining political power in Canada than with winning Home Rule for Ireland. Those at the forefront of this group are not found in any of the lists of contributors to the Irish Party; they are not found speaking at I.N.L. meetings. Instead, they revert in many ways to the methods and aims of earlier Irish Canadian politicians like John O'Hanly and John O'Donohoe. Seeking to win friends and influence governments, they attempted to put themselves at the head of a solid voting bloc of Irishmen. Soon, the Home Rulers, like C.R. Devlin and Fr. Coffey of the United Canada found that another Irish group was undermining their position as representatives of the Irish in Canada to the Government.

There had, of course, always been feuds among Irish Canadians. In 1896, John O'Hanly was writing to Laurier to condemn James Moylan as a "spy" and "infamous". The older characters had not yet all passed away. Coffey and Devlin also fought viciously before the amused gaze of the Prime Minister. Laurier intended to send a Canadian representative to Ireland to encourage emigration to Canada. Both Coffey and Devlin wanted the

position and advised Laurier against the other, Coffey actually identifying Devlin, Frank Latchford and Charles Murphy as "dynamiters", and "members of Secret Irish Societies pledged to use dynamite and murder against British rule".(1) Eager to promote his own candidacy, Coffey provided Laurier with statistics showing that the Irish Catholic population in Canada was virtually at a standstill. Having proved his expertise on the issue, Coffey then explained that every article in every Irish Canadian newspaper supporting the Prime Minister on the Schools Question had been written or inspired by the Rev. Father Coffey himself.(2) Coffey perhaps overplayed his hand; Devlin got the job and enjoyed great success in Dublin at promoting Canadian immigration and himself. He later sat as Nationalist M.P. for Galway.

Coffey remained close to Laurier, however, and served as one of the Prime Minister's main contacts with the Irish Canadian Home Rule faction throughout his premiership. However, the eyes of the Prime Minister were more often fixed on the representatives of that other Irish Canadian group which had appeared on the Canadian political scene. The leader of this group was Peter Ryan of Toronto, one-time owner of the Irish Canadian during the editorship of Patrick Boyle. Ryan wanted to carry on the work begun by John O'Hanly in 1882. His aim was to

(1) NAC, Laurier Papers, p. 12931, Fr. Coffey to Laurier, March 15, 1897.

(2) Ibid., p. 11017, Coffey to Laurier, January 14, 1897.

unite the Irish Catholic vote in federal politics in order to use it as a powerful lobbying group. In July, 1896, he had written to Laurier, warning him not to take the Irish Catholic vote for granted, in spite of Laurier's recent electoral victory.

Pray don't make the mistake of imagining that the I.C.'s are altogether with us; far from it for in many places the defection was very severe - we can and must get them back otherwise our difficulties will be much increased...This is our weak spot just now and it behoves you to have the pass guarded.(1)

Laurier already had reliable contacts in the Irish community. The older leaders, such as Frank Latchford and Senator Scott continued to enjoy Laurier's favour. Ryan attempted to form a Catholic Liberal Executive in 1899, which he hoped would become a focus for Irish Catholic Liberals in Ontario. The Executive wanted to have a say in the choosing of Liberal candidates in the Province, as well as holding an advisory role on Irish Canadian matters with the Government. Laurier initially dismissed the Executive as "too much of an Irish bull for a Frenchman", (2) and, in spite of repeated demands by the Executive that they be given six of the twenty-four seats on the Liberal Executive Committee of Ontario, Laurier continued to recognise Latchford as his liason with the Irish community.(3)

(1) Laurier Papers, pp. 5643-6, Ryan to Laurier, July 15, 1896.

(2) Ibid., p. 33046, Laurier to Ryan, April 29, 1899.

(3) For C.L.E. demands, see Ibid., p. 46311, Thomas Mulvey to Laurier, June 9, 1900; for Laurier's response, p. 46314, Laurier to Mulvey, June 11, 1900; and p. 44781, Laurier to Mulvey, April 11, 1900.

This contest between the Catholic Liberal Executive and the traditional Irish representatives went on for some time, but Ryan failed to usurp the role played by Latchford, Scott and their colleagues. The contest itself is, nevertheless, highly significant. It demonstrates a growing maturity among the Irish Catholic voters in Canada. There was not only competition for leadership of the Irish community based on differing attitudes to the role of that community in Canada; there was also a growing tendency among Irish Catholics to vote along personal rather than ethnic lines. Regarding the former point, Ryan and his Executive viewed the role of the Irish in Canada purely in the context of Canadian domestic politics. There is nothing in their writings concerning Ireland or the Irish Question, their sole aim was to increase the power of the Irish community in Canada, more particularly, in Ontario. In an angry letter to Laurier in September, 1900, Ryan claimed that there was an anti-Irish bias among powerful Liberals in Ontario: "Nowhere is there such a spirit of suppressed aversion to Catholics as in the Reform ranks of Ontario".(1) He noted that between 1867 and 1896, only three Irish Catholics had been elected by the Ontario Liberals, one of whom never took his seat, the other two only sitting as Liberals for one session. In the general election of 1891, according to Ryan, "not one Irish Catholic was nominated by the Liberals of

(1) Ibid., p. 49185, Ryan to Laurier, September 17, 1900.

this Province".(1) This letter marked the end of the correspondence between Ryan and the Prime Minister, the end of Ryan's attempts to become what John O'Hanly had once hoped John Costigan could be: the leader of a united Irish Catholic voting bloc, the Parnell of Canada. Ironically, at the same time, John Costigan was leaving the Conservative Party, where he had served as a Cabinet Minister from 1882 until 1896, and joining Laurier's Liberal Party instead. His stated motives were disillusionment with the Tory Party's policy on the School's Question. Much had changed since the 1882 Resolutions on Irish Home Rule.

Costigan's removal to the Government benches may have been seen as an attempt by Laurier to shore up the Irish Catholic vote. For Ryan was by no means exaggerating the desertion of the Liberals by the Irish. Fr. Coffey warned Laurier before the 1900 election that, unless the Ontario Irish were given good patronage positions, they would flee the party, and he was surprised after the election that there had not been a greater haemorrhage of votes.(2) Laurier's problem was that he had no Irish Catholic representative in Ontario since the departure of Latchford to the Bench. Senator Scott was by then over 75 years old, and a younger man was obviously required. Coffey warned Laurier that Costigan would not be accepted by Ontario Liberals, but Laurier was still "living in hope that someone will make his mark and assert his

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., p. 43380, Coffey to Laurier, March 15, 1900; p. 51451, Coffey to Laurier, December 5, 1900.

leadership".(1) Clearly, the Prime Minister was still thinking in the same terms as Macdonald had done regarding the Irish vote. He was looking for a representative Irish Catholic, in the fine tradition of J.J. Curran and John Costigan, to act as a liason between his government and the Irish Catholic community. And, also like Macdonald, he was eager to court the Irish vote, as long as it could be done without alienating other important blocs, such as the Ontario Protestants. The main difference between the two Premiers was that Laurier was genuinely concerned with the Irish Question in Canada from conviction rather than necessity. Laurier visited Ireland in 1897 and was, through his relations with Blake, in close touch with the thinking and aspirations of the Irish Party there. As he grew more confident in his political position, Laurier became more openly sympathetic to the Irish Party's aims. When John Redmond visited Ottawa in 1901 to speak on the Irish Question, Laurier attended the meeting, much to the horror of the Unionists in Britain, who had come to know him as a staunch Imperialist. Interestingly, his response to the "towering rage" expressed in the Unionist newspapers in Britain and Ireland indicated that he believed his action had not been so controversial in Canada:

I have incurred the distemper of some ultra loyal men in Great Britain, but I am not much concerned, let me tell you. The attitude which they have taken is simply senseless, and no fuss has been created in this country.(2)

(1) Ibid., p. 51451, Coffey to Laurier, December 5, 1900; p. 51454, Laurier to Coffey, December 7, 1900.

(2) Ibid., p. 61052, Laurier to C.R. Devlin, December 10, 1901.

In fact, the Orange Order had a lot to say about his attendance, and the following February he was forced to defend himself to a prominent Orangeman thus: "...[I] paid my ticket like everyone else", adding that Redmond had assured him that the Irish Party were not separatists.(1) Even so, Laurier not only attended another Home Rule meeting in Ottawa in 1906, he spoke warmly at the meeting in favour of Home Rule and gave a large subscription to the Irish Party funds.(2) Laurier went even further at that time, by writing to Lord Aberdeen on the topic:

Ireland is peaceful now as it never was before and from all accounts, her prosperity is materially increasing. Should not these two facts open the eyes of those who up to the present time have adhered to the policy of violence and force to carry on the Government?(3)

This was indeed a far cry from the position long held by John A. Macdonald, that the Canadian Parliament had no right to interfere in the affairs of the Imperial Parliament. Reflecting, as it does, Laurier's very different ideas of Imperial relations and of Canada's role in the Empire, this letter indicates the Prime Minister's confidence regarding the effect of the Irish Question in Canada. Long gone were the doubts held by Macdonald regarding the loyalty of the Irish Catholics of the Dominion. Laurier eagerly encouraged the Irish to come to Canada as immigrants,

(1) Ibid., p. 63240, Laurier to Clinie, February 26, 1902.

(2) Ibid., p. 115628, John Redmond to Laurier, November 15, 1906.

(3) Ibid., p. 115445, Laurier to Aberdeen, November 9, 1906.

whether Catholic or Protestant made no difference to him: "Send us some strong, good, healthy Catholics or Orangemen, but send them anyway".(1)

The man to whom these words were addressed, Canada's Immigration Officer in Ireland, C.R. Devlin, was also allowed to make speeches on the Irish Question which firmly endorsed the Irish Party. These speeches would obviously carry the authority of the Canadian Government, since Laurier did nothing at all to disown them. In 1901, Devlin wrote an article on Home Rule for the Dublin Freeman's Journal, which explicitly linked the Irish Question with the Canadian experience, as Blake and Costigan had done in the Canadian Parliament years before:

May I add that perhaps no country in the world is better qualified than Canada to speak on the subject of the evils which afflict Ireland? Canada is a country of different races, different forms of religion, difference of language. And yet we have found a solution for such difficulties....Every difficulty which confronts Ireland has been met in Canada and solved...We know what is profitable to our country, and, enjoying Home Rule, we apply it. Here you have the secret of success..(2)

There followed a statement which would have deeply troubled Macdonald:

John Redmond speaks for Ireland, not for a faction. not for a minority, but for the overwhelming majority of the people; he is...the legitimate head of political

(1) Ibid., p. 26124, Laurier to Devlin, September 13, 1898.

(2) Ibid., p. 61054, C.R. Devlin, article in the Freeman's Journal (Dublin), December 20, 1901.

Ireland.(1)

To what extent such support of the Irish Party was politically motivated is hard to say. Laurier definitely favoured Home Rule for Ireland and was prepared to say so, both in public and in private. Nevertheless, such support did not hurt him with the Irish Catholic voters, and by 1904 his new Irish Catholic representative, Charles Fitzpatrick, was able to report that "insofar as the Irish Roman Catholics are concerned, we are on fairly safe ground".(2) Fitzpatrick reported that the Liberals now controlled the entire Irish Catholic press in Ontario, and were on the point of achieving the same feat in Quebec. Does this imply that, politically, things had not changed very much since Macdonald's day?

In at least one aspect, the situation had changed dramatically. It may be that both Macdonald and Laurier considered that there was a monolithic Irish Catholic vote available for the winning, however accurate such a belief may have been. However, Macdonald, partly because of the Fenian raids, believed the Irish Catholics to be disloyal and unassimilated. Hence, it was vital to control them through controlling their leaders. To that extent, he was willing to indulge the Irish Question in Canada at least until it threatened his relations with the Imperial Government. Laurier, on the other hand, had a completely different approach to Imperial relations

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., p. 89419, Fitzpatrick to Laurier, September 7, 1904.

and to the Irish in Canada. Believing in Home Rule for Ireland, as Macdonald most certainly did not, and accepting that the Irish in Canada were loyal Canadians and well on their way to being assimilated into the Anglo-Saxon Canadian Dominion, Laurier acted from a position of strength which Macdonald had never enjoyed. After the apathy afflicting the Irish Question in the 1890's, the Irish in Canada never regained the same level of excitement on the issue, even after the reunion of the Irish Party under Redmond in 1900. This was primarily because they had switched their main interest to their position in Canada. They had come to identify with English Canada as against French Canada and the "foreign" immigrant hordes. The Irish in Canada were now more concerned with domestic Canadian matters, such as trade unions and nation-building, than with the affairs of the Irish Party in Ireland.

Many of the Irish Catholic leaders in Canada had become rather arrogant and smug in regard to the Irish Question. Based on their success in Canada, they came to have an almost patronising attitude to the Irish at home. FinBar Hayes received a letter from a friend of his who was visiting Ireland in 1892. The writer, C.J. Higgins, had been very active in the Home Rule movement in Canada, and had developed a very condescending attitude towards anyone in Ireland who did not agree with him: "Here I am in old tumble down Killarney in the very hot bed of Anty(sic) O'Brien and anty National sentiment. They are very good and very kind people, but blinded beyond all chance of redemption

in their ideas of politics, so I keep very quiet on the question of Home Rule".(1) Such was Higgins' respect for Ireland and the Irish that he collected stones from the ruins of some ancient Irish monasteries to set into the walls of an Ottawa church, never imagining that this showed him to be more of a tourist in Ireland as a returning emigrant.(2)

The same kind of attitude showed itself in Senator Scott's son, D'Arcy. Although born and raised in Canada, he was very aware of his duties to Ireland. Writing to Laurier in 1902, Scott, jr. apologised for bothering the Prime Minister with his views on Ireland. "...but my Canadian education and my political leanings...point out to me so clearly the wrongs in Ireland that I cannot help striving with my humble might to have them rectified, and I feel that much can be done to accomplish this end by a suggestion from the Canadian House of Commons".(3)

The Irish Catholic leaders in Canada, even the younger generation like Scott, who still showed an interest in the Irish Question, continued to look to the Irish Party at Westminster as the medium by which Home Rule for Ireland could be attained. They had no other route to hand. Scott's suggestion of more Resolutions in the Canadian Parliament, although attempted vainly

(1) NAC, Hayes Papers, Vol. 9, p. 2709, Higgins to FinBar Hayes, July 24, 1892.

(2) Ibid., Higgins to Fr. Pallier, P.P., St. Joseph's, Ottawa, May 8, 1893.

(3) NAC, Laurier Papers, p. 68538, Scott to Laurier, December 8, 1902.

by Redmond in 1903, was the only way in which they could see Canada playing a role in the process (except, of course, for the matter of fund-raising). There was, in short, a total commitment to the constitutional answer to the Irish Question in the context of the British Empire and on the Canadian Dominion model. Any question of separatist, or republican, sympathies, which had dogged the actions of O'Donohoe and O'Hanly, were anathema to these men. That this was true of the Irish Catholics of Canada in general was shown in 1900, when the resurgent Clan na Gael in the United States sponsored an attempt to blow-up the locks of the Welland Canal.

The would-be dynamiters, one of whom had been active in the Dynamite War of the 1880's, were caught, tried and imprisoned for life. The evidence against one of the men, Luke Dillon, was very weak. He had been successful in planting explosives at Westminster and Scotland Yard in 1885 and had escaped to the United States afterwards. Laurier appeared determined to make an example of Dillon. In spite of the weakness of the evidence, Dillon was to spend fourteen years in Kingston Penitentiary before being released at the age of 66.(1) Laurier's attitude in this affair is fascinating. To the Irish-Americans, Laurier claimed that it was not his, but the British Government's fault

(1) Devoy's Post Bag, ed. William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan, [Fallon, Dublin], n.d., Vol. 2, p. 354-5.

that Dillon was not being released from prison.(1) He was more honest with Edward Blake and C.R. Devlin, who were also campaigning for Dillon's release. Although Blake had been assured that "there is no danger of any re-occurrence of such idiotic attempts", Laurier replied that "I very much fear that mercy to these men would be the reverse of mercy to Canada".(2)

It would appear that Laurier felt he could imprison Dillon without alienating the Irish Catholics of Canada, although Clan na Gael had to be dissuaded from taking revenge on the Dominion, but worried that an early release of the terrorists would cause internal disension. It is important to both grasp the significance of this, and to put it into context. In 1867, when Fenian raids were expected daily, Macdonald received evidence of treachery on the part of a leading Irish Canadian, Michael Murphy. Rather than risk public reaction by arresting him, Macdonald allowed Murphy to escape to the border. When the fugitive was picked up by police before crossing into the United States, Macdonald's government had to connive at his escape from their own law officials, in order to avoid an Irish Catholic backlash in support of the Fenians.(3) By 1900, Laurier was so sure of Irish

(1) Ibid., p. 421-2, Francis Healy to Daniel Cohalan, January 18, 1914.

(2) NAC, Laurier Papers, p. 94242, Blake to Laurier, January 30, 1905; p. 94244, Pat O'Brien to Blake, September 30, 1903; p. 11421, Devlin to Laurier, June 20, 1906; p. 11426, Laurier to Devlin, June 30, 1906.

(3) For a fuller discussion of this event, see C.P. Stacey, "A Fenian Interlude: the Story of Michael Murphy", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 15, 1934, pp. 133-154.

Catholic loyalty, that he was able to arrest, try and imprison the Clan na Gael men without fear of Irish Catholic opposition.

Rather, it was the imperialist groups whom he wished to placate. For this incident took place during the Boer War, at a time when Canada was undergoing a national transformation. For the first time, Canadian troops were being sent abroad to fight an Imperial war in South Africa. This was a triumph for the growing forces of Imperialism in Canada which we have discussed in a previous chapter; but it was also a difficult time for the Irish of the Dominion. Tied, as they were, to the new nation, and increasingly identifying themselves with English Canada, the Irish Catholics of Canada were also closely linked with the Irish Party in Ireland in the campaign for Irish Home Rule. Causing a strain in this regard was the fact that the Irish Party was deeply opposed to the Boer War, and public meetings in support of the Boers were being held in Ireland and supported by Irish leaders such as John Dillon.(1) To further emphasise the division, the meetings in Ireland were addressed by Henri Bourassa, the French Canadian leader who had publicly split with Laurier in protest over Canadian involvement in the war.(2)

Significantly, when faced with the choice of supporting the Canadian Government's policy on South Africa, or joining their traditional allies in the Irish Party, the Irish Catholic

(1) J.L.S. Lyons, John Dillon, p. 216-9.

(2) NAC, Laurier Papers, p. 57891, Devlin to Laurier, August 3, 1901.

representatives in Canada identified first with the Dominion. All the Irish Catholic politicians in the House of Commons joined in a unanimous Resolution of loyalty passed in the Commons on July 31, 1899.(1) The importance of this division is underlined when one recognises that both the Irish Party and the Irish Canadian politicians took their stand based on their interpretation of the role of the Empire in the affairs of member nations. The Irish in Canada specifically agreed in the Resolution of Support that their resolve was based on their experience as "a people which has largely succeeded, by the adoption of the principle of conceding equal political rights to every portion of the population, in harmonizing estrangements and in producing general content with the existing system of government."(2) The Irish at home, however, had a different approach to the subject. As C.R. Devlin, writing from Dublin, informed Laurier, "the Irish Catholic, accustomed to prison and persecution, because of their strict adherence to faith and nationality, have no love for England".(3) The Irish in Ireland could easily identify with the Boers as a people of distinct language and tradition who were being bullied into obedience by the weight of the British Empire.

(1) Norman Penlington, Canada and Imperialism, 1896-1899, [Toronto, University of Toronto Press], 1965, p. 222. The text of the Resolution is found on p. 268.

(2) Ibid., p. 268.

(3) NAC, Laurier Papers, p. 57891, Devlin to Laurier, August 3, 1901.

The Irish had known the same force for long years and naturally supported the Boers in their fight for freedom. That the Irish in Canada could not so identify with the Boers was a significant indication of how far they had grown from their ethnic roots. Their primary identity had become Canadians within the British Empire.

Although relations between the Irish Party and the Irish Canadian community remained strong, even after the Boer War was over, it had become clear that there was a growing cleavage between the Irish on either side of the ocean. This would become even greater in the years ahead as the Irish Party, still the closest in ideology to the Irish Canadians, came under attack from within Ireland itself from another brand of Irish nationalism. The Irish Question was about to be rephrased.

CHAPTER NINE

NOT FREE MERELY, BUT GAELIC AS WELL

As the Irish in Canada paid the bills of the Irish Parliamentary Party in Ireland, that organization itself was gradually becoming divorced from the vital centre of Irish nationalist thought. Committed to the constitutional process and engrossed in British Parliamentary affairs, the Irish Party at Westminster was dedicated to winning Home Rule for Ireland along the lines of Gladstone's two schemes of 1886 and 1893. John Redmond and John Dillon had followed differing paths during the 1890's, but after the reunion of the Party they joined forces in an attempt to regain the balance of power at Westminster once enjoyed by the Party under Parnell. However Ireland was not the same as in those halcyon days of the "Uncrowned King". The political atrophy which had characterized so much of the decade following Parnell's death had loosened the ties binding the people of Ireland to the Party, and in the wake of the disillusionment of the Leader's fall and death the traditional supporters of the Party he created began to look at other ways of achieving their ends. More important for the Irish Party, they began to question many of the attitudes and beliefs fundamental to the existence of the Party itself.

The decade of the 1890's witnessed the rise of what might be

called "Gaelic consciousness" in Ireland. Organizations like the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Gaelic League and the Irish National Literary Society both reflected and encouraged the changing self-consciousness of much of the Irish population. It is central to this study to examine this change, since it was something not shared to any great extent by the Irish in Canada, and was thus very important in separating the two groups of Celts from each other, especially during the period following the dramatic events of Easter 1916. For not only was there a gradual process of adaptation taking place among the Irish in Canada, but in Ireland, too, the people were gradually experiencing a crisis of ethnic identity. The varying paths taken by the Irish in each country can only be fully understood by analysing these processes during the period from 1890 to 1922.(1)

The Celtic Revival which gripped Ireland from the mid-1890's until the Revolution of 1916-1922 was made up of several disparate elements. Beginning with an academic revival of interest in the Irish language, which led to the creation of the Gaelic League in 1893, the growth of gaelic consciousness led to a new awareness of the stories of Celtic mythology which infused

(1) The material for this section is a synthesis of material gathered from many sources, the major ones being: W.I. Thompson, The Imagination of an Insurrection, [New York, Oxford University Press, 1967]; F.X. Martin, "1916 - Myth, Fact and Mystery", Studia Hibernica, 1967; Ruth Dudley Edwards, Patrick Pearse: The Triumph of Failure, [London, Victor Gollancz, 1977]; F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, [London, Collins, 1981], part II, chapter 5; and David George Boyce, Nationalism in Ireland, [Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1982].

the thinking of those who were to supercede the Irish Parliamentary Party. Taking inspiration from the mythological heroes of the Celtic past, those disillusioned with the mundane ploddings of Parnell's successors dreamed of a new Ireland that would be, in the words of their most visionary and important leader, "not free only, but Gaelic as well: not Gaelic only, but free as well".(1)

A resurgence of interest in the Irish language among academics in the late-nineteenth century, led to a new appreciation for the rich literary and cultural heritage of Celtic Ireland. The stories unearthed and translated by the academics introduced poets, dramatists and assorted Nationalists to an Ireland untouched by defeat and conquest, where the heroes and heroines of mythology supplied modern Ireland with role models and examples of all that was strong and virtuous and, above all, Celtic. This literary rediscovery of Ireland's past combined with another prevalent interest of the 1890's, a quasi-Darwinian preoccupation with race. Just as British Imperialism became intertwined with Anglo-Saxon racism, and German nationalism became obsessed with Teutonic mythology a la the Niebulung, so in Ireland the young generation of Irish nationalists turned to the newly revealed Celtic mythology to offset the wearying drabness of the constitutional movement. As

(1) Lyons, pp. 247-259; Dorothy Macardle, "James Connolly and Patrick Pearse", in Conor Cruise O'Brien ed., The Shaping of Modern Ireland, [Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1960], p. 188.

they "adopted" such heroes as Fionn and the Fianna, and most especially the character of Chuchulainn, Irish nationalists used the ideas of race purity and racial characteristics gleaned from popular forms of Darwinism to forge a new Gaelic identity for the Irish. This new identity sought to free the Irish from the traditional defeatist mentality which had characterised Irish nationalism from the time of the Penal Laws. The Irish "slave mentality" so hated by Daniel O'Connell and perpetuated by the experience of the Famine, was to be thrown off in favour of an identity which linked the Irish with the mythological supermen of the Celtic past. The forming of this new identity was a gradual affair, and involved a drastic rethinking of exactly what made one Irish. Ultimately, the result was a relatively conscious acceptance that to be Irish was to be Catholic and Nationalist, leaving out of the "race" the Protestant and the Unionist, often, though not always, synonymous terms.(1)

This result was ironic considering the process which produced it. The original sponsors of the Celtic Revival were generally Anglo-Irish Protestants, men like Standish O'Grady, a Protestant Unionist who was firmly opposed even to a moderate form of Home Rule. The main mediators of the Celtic mythological pantheon to the average Irishmen were also generally Anglo-Irish Protestants. People like Lady Gregory and Douglas Hyde, founder of the Gaelic League, were essential in the publication of the

(1) Boyce, "The Battle of Three Civilizations", in Nationalism, pp. 242-246.

traditional Celtic stories and poems containing Chuchulainn and Fionn. Indeed, possibly the most influential person in bringing together Celtic mythology and Irish nationalism was the Anglo-Irish Protestant, W.B. Yeats, whose plays and poetry were at the centre of the Celtic Revival, and who personally encouraged other major writers such as J.M. Synge. The potent combination of heroic myth, nationalist fervour, race consciousness and openness to alternative forms of political action ultimately produced a political revolution in Ireland which ended not only the dominance of the Irish Parliamentary Party, but of British rule in Ireland.

This result was at least partially foreseen by one of the original students of Celtic mythology. The Conservative Unionist Standish O'Grady wrote in 1899: "We now have a literary movement, it is not very important; it will be followed by a political movement, that will not be very important; then must come a military movement, that will be important indeed".(1)

They were prophetic words. The same year they were written by O'Grady, the political movement he envisioned was formed by a young Dublin journalist called Arthur Griffith. He called his new organization Sinn Fein, significantly an Irish title which roughly translates as "Ourselves Alone", signifying self-reliance and autonomy. This was basically what the platform of the movement called for: political autonomy for Ireland, though not

(1) Cited in W.B. Yeats, Autobiographies, [London, 1961], p. 42^A.

necessarily separation from Britain. Griffith continued for some years to support the idea of a dual monarchy with England, though this scheme was overtaken by events. The original founders of Sinn Fein were also instrumental in founding the Celtic Literary Society which also included among its members Yeats and the leading Labour theorist\activist in Ireland, James Connolly. The Celtic Revival was bringing some very different people together in a sharing of ideas and tactics which revolutionised the various factions in Irish Nationalist circles.(1) The writings of people like Yeats turned deliberately to the cultivation of a new Irish nationalism, an attempt to revive the glories of the Celtic past when men were virtuous and strong and Ireland was a free land of wise and holy warriors. As Yeats came under the influence and patronage of John O'Leary, the old Fenian leader from the 1860's, he was encouraged to bring to the Nationalist cause all his poetic genius. For the ultimate motivation for the work of the Celtic Revival, the Irish-Ireland movement as it is known, was the redemption of the Irish race from the thralls of slavery, a slavery that was much more than political. In the loss of the Gaelic language was mirrored the loss of the Gaelic identity that people like Yeats and Griffith believed had been destroyed by English conquest. Any attempt to reverse the decline of the Gaelic people of Ireland was lauded, even if, as in the past, it had involved an appeal to arms:

(1) A very full and learned discussion of this period and process is to be found in Thompson's, The Imagination of an Insurrection.

Was it for this the wild geese spread
 The grey wing upon every tide;
 For this that all that blood was shed,
 For this Edward Fitzgerald died,
 And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone,
 All that delirium of the brave?
 Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
 It's with O'Leary in the grave.

(1)

It would be wrong, however, to imagine either the literary or the political movements in question as being at all homogeneous or unified. There were strongly diverging ideas about how a free and Gaelic Ireland might be created. Griffith, with his dual monarchy concept, was basically pacifist, capitalist and constitutionalist in ideology. Yeats, although he wrote strongly, was not as committed to traditional nationalist ideas as his connection with O'Leary might suggest. After the 1916 Rebellion, he was to remember the dead revolutionaries with some shame in his poem Easter 1916:

I have met them at close of day
 Coming with vivid faces
 From counter or desk among grey
 Eighteenth-century houses.
 I have passed with a nod of the head
 Or polite meaningless words,
 Or have lingered awhile and said
 Polite meaningless words,
 And thought before I had done
 Of a mocking tale or a gibe
 To please a companion
 Around the fire at the club,
 Being certain that they and I
 But lived where motley is worn

(2)

(1) W.B. Yeats, "September 1913", in Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats, [London, Macmillan, 1971], p. 120.

(2) Yeats, p. 202-3.

Others, like Douglas Hyde of the Gaelic League, worked for a cultural rather than a political revival. He wanted to see the Irish language take its place instead of English as the national language of Ireland. Yeats and his anglophone approach to nationalism was not in sympathy with such ideas. James Connolly fought for a Workers' Republic and feared a revolution which would only replace English capitalist conquerors with Irish capitalist oppressors. But the very diverse groups influenced by the Celtic Revival in Ireland meant that the process of creating a new identity for Irish people was spread throughout Irish society at all levels, from Connolly's trade unions to Lady Gregory's salons. This amazing ferment went on in Ireland through the opening decade of the twentieth century, almost completely bypassing the Irish abroad.

Ireland experienced a literary and cultural renaissance in the years between the death of Parnell and the First World War unmatched in her history. The Gaelic League had 58 branches in 1898, and by 1906 had grown to 900 branches with over 100,000 members.(1) But behind the scenes the military movement prophesied by Standish O'Grady in 1899 was taking shape; the final ingredient in the rich mixture being brewed in Ireland. The Irish Republican Brotherhood, the domestic arm of the Fenian movement and Clan na Gael, had become practically moribund during the era of Parnell. Having gained their support for his campaign

(1) Cited in Kee, p. 431.

to win Home Rule, the I.R.B. had lost its raison d'etre, which was the winning of an Irish Republic by armed struggle. During the Dynamite War, discussed earlier, the IRB had lost most of its activist element to English prisons and exile and it was generally believed by the authorities that it had ceased to exist. In fact, the Celtic Revival also saw the revival in the fortunes of the IRB. Organizing in great secrecy, the movement had gained the support of most of the leading members of the literary and political movements in Ireland by 1910. Griffith was a member, as was Yeats himself, though the commitment of these men was quite different, and Yeats drifted away from the organisation very quickly. Others were more serious, however, attracted to the IRB through their acquaintance with the mythology of the Celtic past. The desire to see Ireland strike a blow for freedom and dignity was strong in these men and women, who resolved to take advantage of any opportunity to hit at England. The lines of communication with the Irish-Americans in Clan na Gael were re-established. The IRB infiltrated the Gaelic League, the Gaelic Athletic Association and other cultural groups, as well as setting up youth organisations through the work of Countess Markievicz, an English Protestant aristocrat who had been converted to nationalism, feminism and socialism at the ripe age of forty.(1)

The work of the Countess was aided by another Gaelic

(1) Diana Norman, Terrible Beauty: A Life of Constance Markievicz, 1868-1927, [London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1987].

Leaguer who was totally infatuated with the Celtic past. Patrick Pearse, a schoolmaster in Dublin, put the ancient mythological character of Chuchulainn at the centre of his school and of his own life. He saw himself as a modern hero who would also sacrifice himself for the Celtic people of Ireland. Pearse, more than any of the others, would create a modern Irish myth and give it breath. Seeing himself to be a type of Christ figure, as he believed Chuchulainn to have been, Pearse came to the conclusion that the Irish race could only be redeemed from its spiritual death by the shedding of blood, preferably his own. Not coincidentally, the realisation of his dream came about at Easter time in 1916, of which more later.(1)

At this time in Canada there was nothing to parallel what was happening in Ireland. The Irish Canadians were totally concerned with Canadian affairs. Their main object as Irish people in Canada was to ensure their fair share of the patronage and bounty flowing from Ottawa and the Provinces. Unlike Ireland, there was nothing in Canada to encourage the self-examination taking place there, the re-evaluation of what exactly it meant to be Irish (or Gaelic). That process, perhaps, had already taken place in Canada, where the Irish immigrants had been constantly making such evaluations ever since they had first started to arrive in the years preceeding the Great Famine. It is the nature of immigrants to identify themselves in relation to the place they came from, and the place they have come to; and as the

(1) Dudley Edwards, Patrick Pearse, passim; Lyons, pp.334-339.

former is something which ever after remains either fixed in their minds, or else grows less real, it is the new surroundings that are central to their existence. The Irish in Canada did not need to ask themselves what it meant to be Irish - they knew already. Ireland was the past, the homeland, unchanging and distant. It was Canada which challenged them to rethink their identities in the context of its demands and environment. As the Irish in Ireland were becoming preoccupied with making their present live up to their past, their co-patriots in Canada were busy trying to escape the past and look to the future in the new land.

It was clear from the financial support given by the Irish in Canada to the Irish Party during the 1890's that a tremendous amount of sympathy for the Irish Question existed in the New World. But while the Gaelic Leaguers debated whether Protestants were truly "Gaelic", or whether one could only be really Gaelic if one's first language was Irish, the Irish in Canada could not be expected to understand such arcane discussion. Not only was there no possibility of them using Irish as a first language, but the leadership of men like Edward Blake made any attempt to dismiss Protestants as non-Irish was manifest nonsense. The disagreements between the Irish in Canada and the Irish Party at Westminster over the Boer War had strained relations somewhat; but there was still a far stronger link between the nationalism of the Irish Party and the Irish in Canada, than could be expected to exist with Sinn Fein, for example. The Celtic

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Revival was introverted and almost antagonistic to other influences. (The Gaelic Athletic Association actually forbade its members to play "foreign" sports like rugby and cricket). "Ourselves Alone" was an impossible ideology for a people who were inextricably bound up with the life of a nation like Canada, based as it was on the coexistence of diverse cultures and traditions. As long as the Irish Party represented Irish nationalism, then the Irish in Canada had something to relate to and with which they could sympathise. But were the ideology of Sinn Fein to take hold in Ireland, then the cleft between the homeland and the diaspora would be wide indeed. This was the significance of the events which took place between 1910 and 1916 in Ireland.

In 1910 it appeared that the Irish Party was entering another golden age; the reunification of the party in 1900 under the leadership of John Redmond had done much to restore the morale and purpose of the constitutionalists. In spite of their years in the doldrums, and the growth of the Gaelic renaissance forces in Ireland, the Irish Party was still the only viable political force in the country. The two general elections of 1910 seemed to restore the party to the position of power once enjoyed by Parnell himself, since the Irish members held the balance of power in an evenly divided House of Commons. And so it was, that in 1910 John Redmond was able to win the assurance of Liberal support for a Home Rule Bill in return for supporting the English Liberals in taking away the veto powers of the Lords. The quid

pro quo, a Home Rule Bill, was introduced in the Commons in 1912: it appeared the Liberal alliance had finally borne fruit for the Irish Party.

In fact, it was the beginning of the end for the constitutionalists. After the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, the gun returned to Irish politics, and remained for years after. Ironically, it was the Unionists who initiated events by forming the Ulster Volunteers, an armed force of Unionists who threatened to prove their loyalty to His Majesty by armed resistance to His Majesty's Government. Determined to fight to prevent a Home Rule Parliament in Dublin, the Ulster Volunteers smuggled in arms from Germany and drilled openly. Their cause was supported by the Conservative Party under the leadership of the Canadian-born Andrew Bonar Law, who publicly advocated armed resistance to the forces of law should Home Rule pass. The period from 1912 to 1914 saw the rise of a fascist-like organization in Ulster and Britain, dedicated to subverting the law by armed might. When officers of the British Army stationed in Ireland were questioned about being moved to Ulster to enforce Home Rule, they bluntly informed the Government that they would not. Neither the Generals nor the Tories suffered so much as a reprimand for their actions.(1) In answer to the Ulster Volunteers, Nationalists created their own armed force, the Irish Volunteers, who were designed, not to battle the Unionists as such, but to

(1) This period is covered expertly in George Dangerfield, The Damnable Question, (Toronto, Little, Brown & Co., 1976), and Robert Kee, The Green Flag, (London, Macmillan, 1972).

defend any future Home Rule Parliament in Ireland. Between 1912 and 1914, the Liberal Government of Herbert Asquith tried desperately to arrive at a solution acceptable to all.

In the meantime, the Irish Volunteers had been successfully infiltrated by the Irish Republican Brotherhood, which just a few years earlier had been practically dead in Ireland. But with the return to Ireland of Thomas Clarke, one of the dynamiters imprisoned in the 1880's during the Dynamite War, the organization was resuscitated and quickly spread throughout the island. By 1913 the Irish Volunteers and most of the Gaelic organizations were led in secret by IRB men. Everything was coming rapidly to a climax in Ireland: Home Rule was in sight once more, but this time it was being met with the threat of civil war; the only obvious solution was a compromise involving a partition of Ireland where Home Rule would not be applied to all or part of Ulster. This met with the fury of the IRB, who controlled the Irish Volunteers, as well as the opposition of many members of the Irish Party itself. The Party was paying the price of having the perfect compromise leader. John Redmond was a good parliamentarian, but what Ireland needed was a leader. It has been said by one who played a role in those times that:

Ireland must in ages gone have been guilty of abominable crimes or she could not at this juncture have been afflicted with a John Redmond.(1)

So far was Redmond removed from the realities of Irish life that

(1) James Stephens, Insurrection in Dublin, (Dublin, 1916), p. 67.

he imagined the partition of Ireland in return for Home Rule as a positive achievement, although admittedly he did believe that it was a temporary measure. Instead, the events of 1912-1914 served to unite many of the Home Rulers with the more radical and republican elements in the Irish Volunteers. The ideas and movements flowering in Ireland at this time can be seen in the fact that, when the Volunteers finally managed to smuggle arms into Ireland to counter the Ulster Volunteers, the work was performed by "Anglo-Irish, Liberals, Protestants, Home Rulers, and...the upper and professional classes".(1) The years between 1912 and 1916 saw the arming of Ireland in a way that had never been seen before. But this was not just the work of the IRB elements. F.X. Martin points out that as late as 1916 there were only about 2,000 IRB members in the country.(2) Nor should it be thought that this arming was an expression of Sinn Fein success. The majority of the Irish Volunteers were not republican separatists, as can be seen from the fact that the coming of the First World War saw the majority of them joining the British Army to fight for the Empire. When the 1916 Rebellion broke out, there were over 265,000 Irishmen serving in the British Army.(3)

What is significant, however, is that there was a new atmosphere surrounding the Irish Question in Ireland in these

(1) F.X. Martin, "1916-Myth, Fact and Mystery", in Studia Hibernica, 7, 1967, p. 53.

(2) Ibid., p. 69.

(3) Ibid., p. 68.

years, an atmosphere of violence, resistance and growing divisions. As the Ulster Volunteers drilled to defend their definition of Ireland, the Irish Volunteers prepared to impose their own definition on the country. Redmond and the Irish Party, though they quickly took over the nominal leadership of the Irish Volunteers, yet tried to maintain a dialogue on a constitutional level with the British Government in an effort to bring Home Rule finally to Ireland. It was the onset of World War in August, 1914, which seemed to solve the problem, at least temporarily. The Ulster Volunteers immediately joined the British Army, were given status as a separate Regiment, and were subsequently decimated in France. Although John Redmond took it on himself to place the Irish Volunteers at the disposal of the British, they were refused separate status and were only allowed join as individuals. A minority split away from Redmond's volunteers, keeping the name Irish Volunteers, and determined to defend Ireland against any attempt by the British to impose conscription on their country. As we have seen from the figures cited above, conscription did not seem necessary in Ireland.

The Home Rule Bill became law in August, 1914, but was shelved until the end of the War. It may have sufficed a decade before, but the introduction of the gun into Irish politics, allied with the ideas of the Celtic Renaissance and Sinn Fein, had given rise to a renewal of the Fenian ideals of a free Irish Republic to be won by force of arms. As the old saying went, "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity". The IRB,

encouraged by Clan Na Gael in the United States, and firmly in control of the Irish Volunteers, determined to launch an insurrection before the end of the war.

The Easter Week Rebellion of 1916 changed the Irish Question forever. Before the events of that week, the Irish Question was still predominantly one of Home Rule for Ireland, as it had been since 1877 and the New Departure. Afterwards, Home Rule was a totally inadequate answer to a far more bloody question. The Rising itself was very unpopular in Dublin, where the people reacted angrily to having their city shelled and destroyed through the actions of the "Sinn Feiners". The defeated rebels, after fighting for almost a week, were harangued and scorned as they were led through the streets to imprisonment and court martial. But it was the British themselves who, typically if rather ironically, rescued the rebel leaders from humiliation by dragging out the executions of the sixteen men eventually killed by firing squad for over two weeks. The Irish came to resent such treatment of men who had, after all, held out against the British Army in the face of overwhelming odds. Even John Dillon, the Irish Party leader, stood up in the House of Commons to condemn the executions. Dillon, more than all the other parliamentarians, understood that the tide was in danger of turning against the Irish Party. He was the only M.P. to have spent the Easter week in Dublin, just a few hundred yards away from Pearse in the rebel Headquarters. He had watched the mood of the people of Dublin grow increasingly angry as the executions dragged out, putting at

risk all Dillon and his colleagues had striven for for so many years. Even so, he was moved to admire the courage of the rebels, moved by that very Irish emotional response that Pearse had clearly recognised and counted on to bring about his life's dream. In the Imperial House of Commons, Dillon said:

I declare most solemnly, and I am not ashamed to say it in the House of Commons, that I am proud of these men. They were foolish, they were misled....and if you were not so dense or stupid, as some of you English people are, you could have had these men fighting for you, and they are men worth having....But it is not murderers who are being executed; it is insurgents who have fought a clean fight, a brave fight, however misguided, and it would have been a damned good thing for you if your soldiers were able to put up as good a fight as did these men in Dublin - three thousand men against twenty thousand with machine-guns and artillery.(1)

If the Rising could so affect a man like Dillon, it was not surprising that it would also create a sensation among the people in Ireland who, weeks after the events of Easter Week, were still subject to search and seizure under martial law.

Slowly the feelings of the Irish turned in favour of the dead rebels, and their writings, particularly those of Pearse, were read with renewed interest. This is where a major dividing point comes in the history of the Irish Question in Canada. The reception which Pearse's writings received had been made possible by the years of activity by groups like the Gaelic League and Sinn Fein. His blending of traditional Irish Catholicism with

(1) Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 5th. Series, Vol. 82, 935-51.

Celtic mythology was a powerful force in defining the self-image of the new nation state which was to be born in 1921. Uniting in action his favourite Celtic hero, Chuchulainn, with Catholic piety, he led his men forth on Easter determined that his blood would be shed to renew Ireland, just as Christ had died at Easter to redeem the world. As one writer has put it:

[Pearse's] ideal Irishman, who he thought might be a living reality in our day, was a Chuchulainn baptised.(1)

William Thompson, in a major work on the use of myth in the Easter Rising, says that: "I see the Rising as a movement led by myth-possessed men who willingly perish into images, 'that yet/Fresh images beget'".(2) We have noted in Chapter One the importance of myth and tradition in defining an ethnic group. A shared historical experience, based on such a mythological base determines many of the characteristics which distinguish one ethnic group from another. What was happening in Ireland in the first two decades of this century was that certain men, pre-eminently Patrick Pearse, but with the conscious assistance of others such as Yeats, Douglas Hyde and Lady Gregory, were determined to re-create what they perceived as the true Gaelic race in Ireland. Convinced of the need to expunge every Anglo-Saxon trait which had insinuated itself into the Irish

(1) Stephen McKenna, Memories of the Dead, [Dublin, n.d.], p. 17. Cited in William Irvine Thompson, The Imagination of an Insurrection: Dublin, Easter 1916, [New York, Oxford University Press, 1967], p. 76-7.

(2) Thompson, p. x.

consciousness, they deliberately worked towards changing the self-image of the Irish people. They were spectacularly successful. The events of 1916 totally destroyed the position of the Irish Party as a political force in Ireland. At the General Election of 1918, the Party was completely overwhelmed, leaving Sinn Fein to take its place, establish an illegal Irish Parliament in Dublin, and organise their forces in a war of independence from Britain. Finally, in 1921, the British Government negotiated a Treaty with the illegal Irish Parliament (Dail Eireann), leading to the establishment of the Irish Free State, the constitutional position of which, vis a vis the Empire, was to be modeled on that of Canada. The new nation, divided as it was, was designed to approximate as closely as possible, to Pearse's ideal: not free merely, but Gaelic as well; not Gaelic merely, but free as well. The Irish language became the first official language of the state, compulsory in schools, universities and the Civil Service. Catholicism was recognised as holding a special status among the Irish people, and the Catholic Hierarchy were accorded special influence and honour. Significantly, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising, in 1966, a statue of Chuchulainn was unveiled in the General Post Office in Dublin, the building which had been Pearse's headquarters during the rebellion, and from where he had proclaimed the Irish Republic.

It is vitally important to be aware of these events in Ireland between 1910 and 1922, because they totally changed the

self-image of the Irish people in Ireland. The link with Britain became unacceptable to them; their Celtic heritage became central to their national identity, as did their Catholicism and Gaelic traditions. This revolution, symbolised by the utter rejection of the Irish Party and all it stood for as a constitutional movement dedicated to working within the British Parliamentary system for Home Rule within the British Empire, created an enormous rift with the Irish of Canada. The pivotal experience shaping the new Irish nation was not shared by the Irish Canadians. Further, its roots and precedings had no parallel in Canada, nor had they any chance of blooming there. Those Irish Canadians who were still involved in the Irish Question in 1916 identified with the Irish Party. Their ties were with an Ireland associated with Parnell, John Dillon, William O'Brien and John Redmond, all of whom were superceded, if not politically and emotionally exiled from the new Ireland.

This, perhaps, ought not to have been a sudden or unexpected thing. There were, of course, those who were blind to what was happening in Ireland in those years before the cataclysm. The problem was that the various factors taking shape in Ireland which were to culminate in the Irish Revolution of 1916-1922 were being forged in a world almost completely unknown to the Irish in Canada. Senator Charles Murphy was in regular contact with John Redmond and others in Ireland. In 1913, Murphy wrote in favour of a form of partition as a solution to Ireland's difficulties in a letter to T.P. O'Connor. Emphasising, once again, the Canadian

experience of federalism, he completely underestimated the depth of feeling which existed in Ireland concerning partition:

All the friends of Home Rule in Canada hope that the Ulster difficulty will be overcome in some such way as you suggest....That ought surely to meet the views of any person who is honestly desirous of putting an end to the evils of centuries.(1)

Another of Murphy's correspondents in Ireland tried to warn him that political ideas in Ireland were changing, and that the Imperial context was not the only one being considered when the future of Ireland was discussed.(2) But even a few months before the Rising, John Redmond was reassuring Murphy, noting that "I need not say how much I value the good work you are doing for Ireland, or how much we reckon on the goodwill of Canada and the Oversea Dominions."(3) Clearly, even Redmond had no idea of the forces being organised against him. This was also true of his lieutenants. When World War one broke out, John Redmond volunteered the Volunteers for service in defence of the Empire. T.P. O'Connor was in ecstasy over the impact of Redmond's speech in a letter to Murphy:

Redmond's speech absolutely transformed the whole Home Rule situation, and now the great majority of the English Tories are ready to give Ireland Home Rule. Ireland is standing splendidly and unanimously with Redmond in support of the Empire in fighting the present

(1) NAC, Charles Murphy Papers, Vol. 22, p. 9872, Murphy to O'Connor, November 8, 1913.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 1622-3, Rev. E. Cahill, S.J. to Murphy, November 9, 1915.

(3) Ibid., Vol. 25, p. 10831, John Redmond to Murphy, January 3, 1916.

struggle, which, in my opinion, is one for Liberty, the principle of Nationality, and a lifting from the back of Europe of the menace and the horror of a Military Autocracy in Germany....The Home Rule Bill will be on the Statute Book in a few weeks from now.(1)

There is so much that is startling in this letter. O'Connor appears to be completely ignorant of the large group of Irish Party members who profoundly disagreed with Redmond's stand. The influence of Sinn Fein and the Gaelic movements is also ignored, and O'Connor sounds more like an English Liberal than a fellow national of Pearse and Connolly. His belief, especially, that the Tories were now in favour of Home Rule is astounding. But it was letters like this which reached Canada and from which the Irish Canadians learned of events in political circles there. Unfortunately, very often those at the centre of the circles had no real grasp of what was gradually taking root in their own country. O'Connor was later to write about Sinn Fein: "These wretched Sinn Fein organs, and every other lunatic and traitor, have unfortunately the whole world as their publicity agents....They are not of the least importance".(2) It was unfortunate for men like O'Connor that those he called lunatics and traitors were, within six years, to be the legally elected Government of an Irish Free State.

Those at the forefront of the Irish Question in Canada had little reason to think that the Irish Party were any less

(1) Ibid., Vol. 22, p. 9876, O'Connor to Murphy, August 11, 1914.

(2) Ibid., Vol. 22, p. 9880, O'Connor to Murphy, February 5, 1915.

representative than they had ever been of Irish public opinion. Indeed, it may well be that they were uninterested in public opinion, believing instead that it was the actions of the parliamentary elite which were crucial to the resolution of the Irish Question. It is not to be wondered at, then, that the Irish in Canada were caught off guard when the people of Ireland suddenly decided to change the nature of the Question. John Costigan even wrote to Redmond in 1914 to congratulate him on "your willingness to make reasonable concessions to Ulsterites".(1) The links between the Irish in Canada and the events in Ireland were becoming more tenuous. In the 1890's, it was mostly the wealthy middle-class Irish Canadians who were actively involved in the Irish Question in Canada. As that generation died off, those who remained became more focussed on Canadian affairs primarily. The disagreement with the Irish Party over the Boer War strained the connections, and as the Irish Party itself began to lose touch with the underlying pulse of the rapidly changing Irish nation, so the understanding of Irish Canadians grew more unsure and suspect. Edward Blake's retirement and subsequent death ended a close working relationship between the Party and the Irish Canadians which had produced much benefit to Ireland. It was never really restored. Put simply, those Irish Canadians who maintained an interest in the Irish Question backed the losing horse in Ireland. They

(1) NAC, Costigan Papers, Vol. 1, p. 362, Costigan to Redmond, March 8, 1914.

identified with that section of Irish society which was destined to be superceded. Men like Redmond and O'Connor from Ireland and O'Hanly and Murphy in Canada had developed friendships which effectively blinded the Irish Canadians to the rapidly deteriorating position of the Irish Party. Fr. Cahill in Milltown Park might warn Murphy of the changing mood in Ireland, but as long as their insight into the Irish Question was governed by the Irish Party, the Irish Canadians could not appreciate the damage Sinn Fein and the Gaelic League had inflicted on the Irish Party.(1) And with the party went that particular formulation of the Irish Question which saw things in terms of Ireland's rightful place within the Empire based on the federal model supplied by Canada.

Although there was a growing horror experienced in Canada over the events of the Easter Rising in Dublin, compounded by the long drawn-out series of executions which followed in its wake, it is significant to note that this revulsion, while shared by the Irish Canadian community, was not confined to that section of society. A perusal of the newspapers of that time shows that Canadians generally reacted negatively to the executions, even when they also condemned the Rising itself.(2) The angry response to the executions was only to be expected from the Irish in Canada, but they, like their fellow Canadians, soon calmed

(1) NAC, Murphy Papers, Vol. 5, p. 1622-3, Rev. E. Cahill to Murphy, November 9, 1915.

(2) See Toronto Globe and Ottawa Citizen, for April and May, 1916.

down and resumed their daily lives without further political activity. Events in Ireland continued in their revolutionary path without Irish Canadian involvement. After the electoral revolution of 1918, which itself was only a part of a social, cultural and political revolution affecting Ireland from 1910 to 1922, the Irish in Canada had nothing to offer Ireland, had nothing with which to identify with the new Free State in any meaningful way. Of course, Canada could still be seen as the constitutional model for the Free State's position in relation to the Empire and the Crown, but there was nothing unique that Irish Canadians could offer in that regard. The shared history and experience, the common world view and self-image which had united men like Edward Blake, John O'Hanly and John Costigan with John Redmond, William O'Brien and Michael Davitt was broken.

In the 1840's, Canada had been a place of refuge for thousands of Irish people fleeing the Great Famine. In return they helped build the canals, cut down the forests, lay the railways. In the 1860's the Irish in Canada experienced a traumatic crisis of loyalties, in which they were faced with the choice of standing with their fellow Irishmen in the Fenian movement against their traditional foe, or turning their backs on all that Fenianism represented and offering their loyalty, however passively, to their new nation. McGee's role in forcing that choice on them, as well as the violent nature of his death, accelerated the assimilation of the Irish in Canada. After 1868, there was a limit to their involvement in the Irish Question.

That involvement grew even less in the 1870's, being fanned to life again only by the visit of Parnell at the end of the decade. Public meetings, resolutions in Parliament and organised fund raising on a large scale in the 1880's gave way in the following ten years to a more low-keyed approach to the Irish Question in Canada. By then, it was mostly a wealthy elite who busied themselves raising money for Edward Blake in the name of the Irish Party at Westminster. There was little for the average Irish person in Canada to interest himself in in Ireland. Instead, he was busy building Canada: creating its trade unions, building its commerce and industry, legislating and enforcing its laws, growing its food. Canada's contribution to the Irish Question after 1900 is ironic. First of all, it provided a leading politician. But unlike Edward Blake, Andrew Bonar Law was no Home Ruler. Rather, he led the Tory Party to the very brink of treason, (some would say even further), in an attempt to force the Liberal government to give up on the Irish Question. Canada's next involvement came in 1916, when, during the Easter Rising, Canadian troops en route to the trenches in France helped the British Army against the rebels. Canadians billeted in Trinity College, Dublin, fired against the rebels holding the city centre area during that week. Finally, it was Canada which provided the model for the new Irish Free State's relations with the Empire. Ironically, after all the efforts by Irish Canadian politicians to convince the British Government to learn from the Canadian constitutional experience, it was only after the bloody

events of 1919-1921 that the British and Irish leaders agreed to use the Dominion model for structuring Anglo-Irish relations. During the 1920's, Canada and the Free State worked closely together to define the post-war Imperial relations which eventually led to the creation of the Commonwealth.

All this was, of course, a far cry from what Irish Canadians had been campaigning for through the decades. Irish "Home Rule" was finally achieved through armed insurrection, not British fair play. It was won by that section of the Irish people against whom the Irish in Canada had effectively turned their backs after 1868. Furthermore, the Irish leaders of the War of Independence transformed Ireland politically and culturally, in many ways creating an Ireland in their own image and likeness. It was no longer the Ireland of O'Hanly or Costigan; it was not even the Ireland of McGee. In one sense, the Irish in Ireland had become a different people. And the Irish in Canada had become Canadians.

CONCLUSION:

All's changed, changed utterly,
A terrible beauty is born.

There is no adequate way to describe the process of assimilation. It would be immensely difficult, if not impossible, for the historian, the sociologist or the psychologist to

properly put into words the myriad factors which go into changing a person's primary focus of identity from one nation state to another; from being Irish to becoming Canadian. Perhaps part of the difficulty arises from the fact that the process is never fully completed, not even to the third and fourth generation. However Canadianised one might become, or one's children or grandchildren, there is always a moment when one remembers the Irish roots of the family tree. Then it is brought out that, yes, the grandmother, or the wife's great-grandmother, or perhaps a distant relative of the married cousin was born in Ireland...somewhere. The remaining definition of one's Irish roots may be somewhat vague, or even grossly distorted, as in: "I'm Irish, therefore I tend to exaggerate (ie., lie)".

To try and trace the historical evolution of such a process, therefore, requires that one concentrates on events and words, (speeches, writings, etc.), to see how they reflect the process of assimilation taking place inside the actor or speaker. The process may often be unconscious, yet the use of a word may speak volumes; referring to "our country", for example: does it mean Ireland or Canada? When one examines the history of the Irish Question in Canada, one is struck by the changes which take place over those few decades from the Parnell visit in 1880 to the first expression of Irish sovereignty, the Civil War of 1922-23. At the start of the period, the Irish in Canada are already divided between the Irish Protestant community, which has for long considered itself British first, and therefore more easily

Canadianised; and the Irish Catholics who were still suffering from the Fenian label and a somewhat dubious loyalty in the minds of the Canadian mainstream. By 1922, both Irish groups have gone far on the path of assimilation, firmly ensconced in the fabric of the emerging Canadian nation state and unquestioned in their right and desire to play a full role as Canadian citizens.

The process of assimilation, therefore, may best be examined through the historical events and activities which the immigrant community choose to involve themselves. Between 1880 and 1922, the Irish in Canada went from a committed involvement in the Home Rule movement under Parnell, through a growing sense of alienation from events in Ireland, to a happy adaptation to a rapidly growing Canadian nation. In the end, the Irish in Canada were left somewhat bewildered by the new Ireland of Pearse and De Valera, and the sudden disappearance of the Irish Parliamentary Party broke many of the ties they had to the Ireland of their roots. Furthermore, the process of assimilation experienced by the Irish Catholics of Canada was in many ways abnormal for immigrant groups. Essentially, the average immigrant experiences assimilation as a gradual distancing of himself and his descendants, both geographically and psychologically, from the homeland. The often total separation of his two worlds, the old and the new, means that he can carry on with the business of settling down in a new life, with all its daily adaptations and changes, while still holding on to his memories of 'home'. Over time, these memories become either distorted or fixed, and the

mental chasm between the new and old worlds becomes wider, often unbridgeable.

The Irish Catholics in Canada experienced something quite different. For them, the gap between old and new worlds was never very wide. In both worlds they lived under the same flag, a fact which demanded adjustments for people who associated that same flag with misery, tyranny and the cause of their exile. In addition, new immigrants throughout the nineteenth century maintained strong links between the Irish on either side of the Atlantic, and so the memories and connections remained relatively fresh and clear. This forced the Irish in Canada to constantly choose between identities; were they Irish first, or Canadian? Would they permit old world feuds and politics to dictate their behaviour and loyalties in the new? The regular visits by people like William O'Brien, John Redmond and Edward Blake, as well as the extensive coverage of Irish affairs in Canadian newspapers, meant that the Irish Question was one which found an interested and informed audience in Canada. Thus, the Home Rule issue repeatedly caused public and political upsets in Canadian society, not only from 1880, but from the time of the earliest Irish immigration to British North America.

However, the period under discussion in this work was a particularly important one in this regard. For even though the level of awareness of Irish affairs in Canada remained fairly constant throughout the nineteenth century, the level of emotional involvement did not. Here the great factor of Time

played the pivotal role. Quite simply, the Irish immigrants in Canada with a direct experience of Ireland, and therefore with the strongest commitment to the Irish Question, gradually grew older and died. The major figures involved with the Irish Question in Canada were mostly dead by the beginning of the Great War. They had failed to pass on to their children and grandchildren the same level of interest in what happened in Ireland. The republican Fenian sympathisers of the 1860's and 70's gave way to later generations of supporters of the Irish Parliamentary Party and a partitioned Ireland. Time wore away the fervour of the John O'Hanlys of Canada and instead produced a race of John Costigans.

As time went by, the Irish in Canada became more involved in the future of their new homeland. Over time, they moved up the social and economic ladder and their stake in the well-being of the new nation grew. As Thomas D'Arcy McGee had foreseen, the development of a new nationality was a product of the new nation he had helped to create, and in which he wanted the Irish to have a part. As the early generation of immigrants grew old, their children, as well as those newcomers from Ireland who benefitted from the labour of those who had come before them, became more involved in the life of Canada. Bringing with them many of the lessons in popular political and social action learned during the Land War and the Plan of Campaign, the Irish in Canada were heavily involved in the growth of the new trade unions. Responding gratefully to the opportunities in Canada which had

been denied them in Ireland, the Irish immigrants threw themselves into every facet of the Canadian national life, from politics to education, from trade unionism to the legal profession. By the end of the century, the Irish were to be found at all levels of Canadian life, throughout the political and social spectrum. They were no longer an identifiable group living clustered together for security and reassurance. Now they were self-confident and free, part of the new nation.

This was also helped, as we have seen, by the growing numbers of immigrants from outside the British Isles which flooded into Canada after 1880. Faced with the apparent hordes of "foreigners" from Eastern and Southern Europe, as well as from Asia, the Irish and English in Canada recognised how much they shared in terms of a common background and culture. There was little to separate the Irish Celt and the Anglo-Saxon English when compared to the Slavs, the Chinese or the Ukrainian. They shared a language, a political system and a common, albeit troubled, history. This realisation, allied to the growing importance of the British Empire in world affairs, an importance eagerly shared by both English and Irish in Canada, went far to create a new sense of identity among both ethnic groups. Being Canadian became a meaningful thing in these years. The closing years of the nineteenth century, therefore, saw the Irish in Canada lose much of their ethnic identity, as they closed ranks against the incoming foreigners in defense of their Canadian nationality.

To complicate matters further, it has been noted that it was not only the Irish in Canada who experienced a crisis of identity in these years. In Ireland, too, it became of burning importance to try to define exactly what it meant to be Irish. Were only the Gaels true Irishmen? Who were the Gaels anyway? Were they only speakers of the Irish language, those acquainted with Celtic traditions and 'history'? Between the late 1890's and the cataclysmic events of Easter Week, 1916, the Irish people looked beyond the immediate issue of Home Rule and debated on what kind of nation it was they would once again be. It has often been said, not always facetiously, that whenever the English came close to solving the Irish Question, the Irish changed the Question. That, simply put, is what happened in these years. While John Redmond and Herbert Asquith laboured to find a satisfactory answer to the old Irish Question of Home Rule, the Irish nation in embryo began to meditate on a new Question, a cultural-national question rather than a purely political-national one. The tragedy for the future of Ireland is that the events of the 1916 Rising abruptly aborted this debate and left Ireland with a vague and half-formed concept of what it ought to be, hardened into dogmatic formulae by the bloody martyrdom of Pearse and his colleagues.

This revolution in Irish affairs left the Irish in Canada behind. There was no opportunity for them to share in the Celtic Revival in any meaningful way, since the Irish language was completely irrelevant to them in their new world context. The

writers and shapers of Irish identity in Ireland wrote out of a society which had no equivalent in Canada, and from which the Irish in Canada were very far removed, geographically, culturally and chronologically. It was the issues lying behind the Irish Revolution of 1916-1922 which dictated the subsequent history of Ireland (to the present day); it was these very issues which the Irish in Canada found alien and with which they could never relate. The conditions which facilitated Irish Canadian involvement in the Irish Question between 1880 and 1916 no longer existed after that date, and they were left instead to follow the more normal path of assimilation enjoyed by the majority of other immigrant groups in Canada. Being Irish in Canada no longer carried with it political and social overtones. It was no longer necessary for a 'true Irishman' in Canada to juggle his loyalties or to give priority to either of his identities, he could be an Irish Canadian with no strings, and no hyphen. This involved an emotional and cultural struggle which the Irish-American was spared.

It has been said of the Irish that they think of everything in relation to themselves. The Irish groups in the United States had that attitude about Ireland. The main preoccupation of the Irish societies in America during the nineteenth century was with the state of Ireland and her 'slavery'. The problem was that, with time, their concept of Ireland diverged from that of the Irish in Ireland itself; it was as though time had stood still. The idea of Ireland as being oppressed and in chains, her people

eager to fight back given arms and opportunity, was enshrined in Irish-American thinking. It is significant that the Fenians were started in the U.S. and saw almost all their action in Canada. Their attempted rebellion in Ireland was farcical and unpopular, as were all revolutionary movements until 1916. Under Parnell's leadership, the Irish had turned to constitutional methods to gain a measure of freedom: the Irish Republic so longed for in the U.S. did not have a wide following in Ireland at all. As the Irish-Americans turned more towards domestic political concerns after 1880, their distorted view of Ireland became ever more pronounced. There was nothing in their daily experience in the United States to make them question, or even closely examine, their traditional perspective on the Irish Question. The two worlds, Old and New, which in Canada came into real conflict for so many, were allowed to happily coexist for the Irish-American. Living under the British flag, adapting to a British-dominated society and deciding one's loyalties in that context was something Irish-Americans were spared (or denied), and so they could maintain their somewhat unreal attachment to "the Old Sod" as a quite distinct aspect of their society in the New World.

The irony of all this, of course, was that the eventual leaders of an Independent Ireland found much of their inspiration from that same distorted Irish-American approach to Irish history. It was to America and Clan na Gael that Patrick Pearse and Eamon De Valera looked for vision and assistance. It was, to a great extent, partly an Irish-American Ireland that inspired

the revolutionaries of 1916; an Ireland, not so much founded on what the Irish wanted or were, but on what dreamers thought they ought to be, or would be, if the dreamers had their way. The Celtic twilight in which Pearse and the Irish-Irelanders operated fitted in perfectly with the Irish-American tradition of republican activism. George Bernard Shaw, through the lips of a character in his play, John Bull's Other Island, puts perfectly into words the attitude of the Patrick Pearse Irishman, a specimen found also in the cities of the Eastern seaboard of the United States:

An Irishman's imagination never lets him alone, never convinces him, never satisfies him; but it makes him that he can't face reality nor deal with it nor handle it nor conquer it....He can't be intelligently political: he dreams of what the Shan Van Vocht said in ninety-eight. If you want to interest him in Ireland you've got to call that unfortunate island Kathleen Ni Houlahan and pretend she's a little old woman. It saves thinking.(1)

Joe Garrity was the symbol of the Irish-American patriot: a leader of Clan na Gael from the 1880's to the 1940's, who influenced Pearse toward rebellion, convinced De Valera to focus on nothing short of a Republic, thereby hastening the Irish Civil War and inspiring at least two generations of terrorists. Even after his death, the IRA in Ireland issued statements over his signature as a mark of his authority and influence.

Nothing of this can be found in Irish Canadian society (it

(1) George Bernard Shaw, John Bull's Other Island, [London, Constable & Co., 1964], p. 84-5.

is not even proper, I believe, to hyphenate the term). In Canada, the Irish Question was not one which could be kept separate from the daily life of Irish society. It was a question full of political and social import for the Dominion, as we have seen. It helped shape government policies, and influenced Canadian relations with both the United States and Great Britain. Thomas D'Arcy McGee looked forward to the day when people in Canada would identify first of all with their new nation, and not be looking ever backwards to the old feuds and loyalties. He recognised the vital importance, both for the new Dominion and the Irish themselves, of a firm commitment to the new land, to a working together of all Canadians from wherever they came, for the benefit of creating a new nationality in North America. But his own generation was too closely tied, emotionally and physically, to Ireland for this to happen easily. They were too close to events in Ireland, too intimately involved in the Irish Question in Canada, to be able to view such things dispassionately. McGee's own death helped to prolong the process which he so much hoped to encourage by reopening healing wounds and renewing old suspicions and antagonisms in Canadian society. It was not until his generation of Irish Canadians had faded away, a process which coincided with the winning of Irish freedom and the evolution of a new Ireland, that the Irish in Canada were themselves free to explore their celtic roots, secure in their new identity as Canadians in the Canadian nation. To a very large extent, the Irish Question in Canada was one to which there was

no answer. Instead, it gradually faded away with the generation that asked it, as so many had so often wished it would.

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