"Canadien *Emigrant Elites, the* Rouges, *and Confederation*"

by J. G. SNELL *

In the immediate post-Civil War period a considerable number of French Canadians emigrated to the United States. Drawn largely by what they considered to be better economic opportunities, the French Canadians settled mostly in the northeastern States, but also in Michigan and other mid-western States. [1] In the decade 1861-1871, one authority has estimated that 125,000 *Canadiens* went to the United States, bringing the total number there to 300,000. More recently, Professors Hamelin and Roby conclude that 199,302 *Canadiens* moved to the Republic between 1862 and 1871 and that by 1870 the total number there was 510,000. [2] Not unnaturally, once in this new, predominantly English-speaking environment, some of these French-Canadian immigrants began to draw together. There is, in the period 1864-1867, evidence of the beginnings of both local and national organizations of French Canadians resident in the United States. Although the desire to draw together protectively in the midst of a foreign society was undoubtedly of considerable importance in this movement, also influential were the political developments occurring in British North America and the attitudes to these events on the part of French Canadians in the States. The organizational movement amongst emigrant *Canadiens* expressed itself in a variety of political and cultural thrusts across the breadth of the Republic. Though these developments were geographically diverse, they were ideologically relatively homogeneous. These Franco-Americans held in common a desire for unity and influence, unity in order to protect their cultural identity in an alien land, and influence in order to help to shape the destiny of the French-Canadian people in North America.

A study of the activities and ideas of these *Canadiens* is of value as an examination of the impact of emigration and of a new social and cultural environment. What happened to French Canadians once in the United States? What did they do? What influences did these immigrants have in

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1 There is an extensive amount of research available on the topic of French-Canadian emigration to the United States. Amongst the more useful works are: M. L. HANSEN, *The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples* (New Haven, 1940); F. HAMON, *Les Canadiens français de la Nouvelle-Angleterre* (Quebec, 1891); G. LANCTOT, ed., *Les Canadiens français et leurs Voisins du Sud* (Montreal, 1941); R. D. VICERO, "Immigration of French Canadians to New England, 1840-1900: A Geographical Analysis," Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968; A. FAUCHER, "L'émigration des Canadiens français au XIX[e] siècle: position du problème et perspectives," *Recherches sociographiques*, V, 3 (Sept.-Dec., 1964), pp. 277-317; G. PAQUET, "L'émigration des Canadiens français vers la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1870-1910: prises de vue quantitatives," *ibid.*, pp. 319-370; J. HAMELIN and Y. ROBY, *Histoire économique du Québec, 1851-1896* (Montreal, 1971), pp. 51-74 and *passim*.

2 LANCTOT, *op. cit.*, p. 295; HAMELIN and ROBY, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68. According to the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* (Apr. 18, 1867), one French-Canadian leader in the United States estimated the number to be 500,000.

the United States and in Canada? For the *Canadiens* in the Republic were, of course, not ordinary immigrants. They alone amongst "new Americans" could maintain close contact with their mother land. They could conveniently "go home" if they wished; news of activities there was readily available; communications amongst groups and individuals was particularly easy. In fact, at times one wonders to what extent these *Canadiens* had really broken away from Canada. The contacts and concern regarding their native land were certainly extensive, undoubtedly much more so than was true of other immigrant groups in the United States. Perhaps for this reason a study of French-Canadian immigrants in the mid-1860's is even more interesting. Not only were they interacting with their new social and cultural environment, but also they continued to react to domestic events in the Provinces. Their ideas contain perspectives of the societies of both the United States and British North America.

On June 24, 1864, the feast day of St. Jean Baptiste, the patron saint of French Canada, a meeting was organized in Sewell House, New York City by the local St. Jean Baptiste Society. About forty or fifty gentlemen ("*L'élite de la population canadienne de New-York*") [3] attended what was apparently a happy and enjoyable gathering, accompanied by toasts and a banquet. George Batchelor, the principal speaker for the evening, offered a series of toasts praising the occasion, the Society, the French-Canadian war effort and their adopted country. But the central thrust of Batchelor's address was contained in his references to Canada:

> *Au Canada. — Notre pays est comme un enfant qui tâche de se débarrasser de ses langes. Seule l'indépendance, ô Canada, te donnera la virilité, la grandeur et la prospérité dont jouissent les peuples faits.*

The Provinces still suffered from the same old problems. Catholicism protested against the encroachments of Protestantism; English Canadians dominated French Canadians; Canada amounted to an unnatural union of religious, national, and commercial elements which pulled in opposite directions. The entire Canadian environment was repressive.

> *L'anarchie qui domine tous les idées, l'indécision qui plane sur toutes les mesures, le manque de confiance qui règne dans les partis, la fuite précipitée des avocats parlementaires au sein d'une magistrature inamovible, la démonétisation successive de toutes les réputations nationales au combat du pouvoir, tous ces divers symptômes de malaise social concordent à nous prouver que le Canada est en train de passer par une pénible transition qui neutralise les meilleures volontés et tracasse les plus fermes intelligences.* [4]

The answer to such problems could be found in democracy, the American example, and independence, Batchelor concluded, to the applause of his audience.

But this meeting had a more central purpose than merely describing the Canadian scene or lamenting the fate of French Canada. It was the

[3] New York *Courrier des Etats-Unis*, June 27, 1864.
[4] Montreal *Le Pays*, July 12, 1864.

first, early step in a drive by leading French Canadians in the United States to join together in the mid-1860's. Those *Canadiens* present were encouraged to work for the union of all Franco-Americans within one organization. In an attempt to gain publicity and support for their ideas and for the movement, several representatives of the New York City press were invited to the banquet. [5] As a publicity effort, however, the meeting failed to gain much coverage in the United States. As a means of bringing together the French Canadians in the United States, the banquet had little or no result. The dinner speeches are noteworthy only as an early indication of French-Canadian attitudes and ideas at this time in the United States.

Prior to this there had been some attempts at bringing coherence and meaning to the French-Canadian immigrants in the Republic. Institutions had been transplanted from their native Province. St. Jean Baptiste societies were founded in such centres as Malone, N.Y. (1848), New York City (1850), Burlington, Vt., Detroit, and Pittsfield, Mass. (1864). Parishes were established in several areas, and attempts had been made to publish a newspaper. [6] But it was the *Canadiens* in the Manhattan region who had early taken the lead in the movement to unite their compatriots in the United States. As residents in the largest urban centre in the country they perhaps felt sooner than other Franco-Americans the extensive impact of American society, the "shock" of the new and alien culture. As early as February, 1861 a convention of local French Canadians had met in New York City under the auspices of the St. Jean Baptiste Society, and this gathering had resulted in increased interest in that Society. [7] The Civil War, however, apparently dampened any enthusiasm, and it was not until 1864 that another such meeting was held.

In the fall of 1865 the French-Canadian organizational movement in the Republic began to develop some momentum. At that time the St. Jean Baptiste Society of New York City decided to summon a national convention of French Canadians in the United States. An organizing committee was struck, and an address was issued announcing the event. Two aims were enunciated: 1) to consider the condition and interests of French Canadians residing in the country, and 2) "... *relever quelques appréciations erronées dont ils sont parfois l'objet de la part d'une certaine portion de public canadien qui, mieux éclairée, les jugerait sans doute avec plus d'impartialité.*" *Canadiens* in each area of the many States were asked to meet and to nominate at least one delegate to the convention. [8] The two dominant

[5] *Ibid.*; New York *Courrier des Etats-Unis*, June 27, 1864; *New York Herald*, June 25, 1864.

[6] F. GATINEAU, comp., *Historique des Conventions générales des Canadiens français aux Etats-Unis, 1865-1901* (Woonsocket, R.I., 1927), pp. 10-11; R. RUMILLY, *Histoire des Franco-Américains* (Montreal, 1958), p. 43.

[7] T. ST-PIERRE, *Histoire des Canadiens du Michigan et du Comté d'Essex, Ontario* (Montreal, 1895), pp. 226 n, 323.

[8] RUMILLY, *op. cit.*, p. 43; Montreal *Le Pays*, Oct. 28, 1865. The organizing committee consisted of George Batchelor (Chairman), François Boucher, Charles Boucher, J. B. Bédard, F. Cloutier, A. L. Durochet, G. Dillon, P. A. Guy, B. Giroux, J. B. Ledous, P. M. Leprohon, Frédéric Moreau, E. Moussette, A. Normandeau, J. O. Poitras, J. Robideux, F. Robitaille, S. Viau, and E. Welling.

characteristics of the French-Canadian organizational movement in the United States in the mid-60's were thus present from the beginning. Leading *Canadiens* were attempting to come together, to give some order and security to their lives in the Republic. At the same time their preoccupation with the Canadian scene stands out. This latter aspect was emphasized in a resolution passed at a meeting in Elmira, N.Y., called to select a delegate to the convention:

> That we tender our hands and hearts in sympathy with our compatriots suffering in Canada; that we bid them courage, to not forget the deeds of the noble Chenier and Delarimier; that the Papineaus, the Dessaules [*sic*], and the Dorions, are becoming numerous in Canada; to remember that the tens of thousands of French Canadians who are breathing the free air of the American republic, will ever be ready to give them support, money, hands and heart, when they wish it; to remember that the days of darkness are fast disappearing, that the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the fundamental doctrines of true Democracy, are marching around the world, and that the despots and monarchical nations will be compelled to kneel down at its passage.[9]

The resolution embodied much of the tone and spirit of the convention itself.

On the evening of Wednesday, November 15, 1865 some 300-400 French Canadians gathered at the St. Charles Hotel on Broadway. After an executive had been elected for the convention,[10] George Batchelor presented the assembly with a series of twelve resolutions prepared in advance. He was shortly interrupted by a group of some thirty English Canadians who rose to enquire whether the meeting was exclusively for French Canadians and whether it would continue to be conducted entirely in the French language. After some debate, a positive answer was given to both questions, whereupon the English Canadians left. Having established the French-Canadian nature of the convention, the attitudes of the participants began to reveal themselves. Speeches by several leaders disclosed an awareness of the benefits derived from emigration to the United States, benefits both material and political. There were frequent references to the false attacks being conducted in the Conservative press in Canada on emigration and on emigrants. Attachment to their adopted country was apparent in allusions to *Canadien* participation in the Civil War. But there was also evident an appreciation of the difficulties that such a foreign element faced in the United States. The delegates were urged to educate their children so that they would not forget their mother tongue; membership in the St. Jean Baptiste Society of New York City was promoted, as was the formation of similar societies elsewhere.

[9] Toronto *Globe*, Nov. 15, 1865. For a more complete version of the resolution see Elmira *Gazette*, Nov. 9, 1865, reprinted in *New York Herald*, Nov. 16, 1865.

[10] The executive consisted of the following: *president* — Frédéric Moreau (New York City); *vice-presidents* — Dr. J. N. Cadieux (Elmira), Joseph LeBœuf (Albany), M. Manegay (Oswego), A. Rodier (New Jersey); *secretaries* — B. Giroux (Brooklyn), M. Couture (Philadelphia), F. Cloutier (New York City). Montreal *Le Pays*, Dec. 5, 1865. Cf. *New York Herald*, Nov. 16, 1865.

Canada was the focus of most of the speeches at the convention. This was, of course, one means of drawing the delegates together, since the Quebec background was something that they all had in common. As well, the perspective on Canada had been apparent as an interest of the Franco-Americans from the very beginning of the movement to organize themselves. England and English Canadians were attacked for their oppressive, illiberal policies. French Canadians were regarded as having been forced by such policies to emigrate to the Republic, where the *Canadiens* nevertheless remained true to their homeland. The concern expressed for their compatriots in Canada East and for the political system which was seen to exist in British North America was a striking characteristic of the speeches. A resolution was passed expressing confidence "that the Canadian people will sooner or later be possessed of a country to be truly their own".[11] But it was not clear that the members of the convention thought of themselves as potential citizens of this envisioned nation, for they remained particularly concerned as to their future position within the United States. Unity and coordination were stressed, as in this address:

> Canadians, we have still a great question to discuss and a great suit to gain in the presence of the American people. We must decide whether or not French nationality will find favor in their eyes, as was the case with the nationalities of Europe, or whether we are to be pitilessly crushed by the Anglo-Saxon element. To attain the latter [former ?] result we require all our strength. Shall we be wise enough to remain united, or are we to be so excited by party spirit as to prove opponents to each other. Friends, what will be your answer ? (Prolonged applause.)[12]

The answer was to adopt a resolution calling for a national body of French Canadians resident in the States and to elect an executive committee as a means of providing a permanent organizational basis.[13]

The two-day assembly broke up full of hope and enthusiasm, but this did not last for long. The aspirations for a unified, national body emerging from the convention were not to be realized. While the New York-centred group aimed at independence for Canada through peaceful means, a more radical group in Elmira began to advocate the use of force to achieve the same end. Led by J. N. Cadieux, a local physician who had played a prominent role in the New York meeting, French Canadians in the Elmira area met several times in the late fall and early winter of 1865. Prior to the national convention Cadieux had given some indication of his attitude when he declared:

> Our compatriots are suffering in Canada, pining away under hard labor, which, under despots, never rewards. Let us seize the first opportunity not only to refute the black calumnies of the Canadian tories, but let us watch the progressive events which are passing before us, and, at the first

[11] *New York Herald,* Nov. 16, 1865.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.*; Montreal *Le Pays,* Dec. 2, 5, 1865; Toronto *Globe,* Nov. 18, 1865. The members of the executive committee were B. Giroux (Chairman), George Batchelor, Dr. J. N. Cadieux, Joseph LeBœuf, Frédéric Boucher, M. Manegay, and R. Willing.

> rallying cry, let us give our support to our compatriots in the neighboring provinces and help them break their shackles. Let us not be deceived. The hour of deliverance for Canada, like that of Ireland, will soon strike. [14]

This concept of using force to compel Britain to relinquish Canada carried over to a second meeting later in November. Reports of the New York City convention were received enthusiastically particularly those regarding the exclusion of English Canadians from the assembly. The decisions of the convention were somewhat twisted to suit Cadieux' own views, as when he informed his followers:

> *La convention a fermement persuadé les Canadiens-Français disséminés sur toute l'étendue des États-Unis, de l'importance de former aussitôt que possible des associations propres à réunir leurs forces et à les préparer à frapper un grand coup, si l'Angleterre n'abandonne pas bientôt le Canada, soit en y formant un gouvernement indépendant, soit plutôt en l'annexant aux États-Unis qui possèdent le meilleur gouvernement sur terre. (Applaudissements.)* [15]

Accepting such ideas and Cadieux' exhortation to organize themselves in some permanent manner, the local *Canadiens* established a society "*qui prit le nom significatif de Fils de la Liberté.*" The title, "Sons of Liberty," had been used by revolutionary groups in the period immediately prior to the American Revolution and in the 1837-1838 border clashes between the United States and the Canadas. More recently, however, the name had acquired a less glorious reputation, as it had been used by a prominent Copperhead organization in the latter years of the Civil War. The French Canadians in Elmira, however, likely chose the title because of its Canadian connections rather than its American heritage. There had been established in Canada East by this time a society, called *Fils de Liberté,* with the purpose of resisting Confederation, by force if necessary. French Canadians in the United States were apparently in touch with this new group, and some were prepared to cooperate with it. [16]

The *Fils de la Liberté* organization served to split the ranks of French Canadians in the United States. Moderates, whose ideas were represented at the New York national convention, drew back from the advocacy of physical force. Soon a public quarrel broke out between Dr. Cadieux, the aggressive leader of the radicals, and B. Giroux, chairman of the New York executive committee and one of the spokesmen for the more moderate point of view. The exchange brought out further differences between the two groups. While the *Fils de la Liberté* favoured an independent Canadian

[14] Elmira *Gazette*, Nov. 9, 1865, reprinted in *New York Herald*, Nov. 16, 1865. See also, Montreal *Le Pays*, Nov. 28, 1865.

[15] Montreal *Le Pays*, Dec. 2, 1865.

[16] W. L. MORTON, *The Critical Years: The Union of British North America, 1857-1873* (Toronto, 1964), p. 195; Toronto *Globe*, Jan. 5, 1866; Montreal *Le Pays*, Dec. 2, 1865. The executive of the *Fils de la Liberté* was: *président* — Dr. J. N. Cadieux; *vice-président* — Charles Christin; *secrétaire* — Joseph Rivet; *trésorier* — François Foret; *commis-ordon.* — M. Souve; *Comité de Régie* — Avila Archambault, Alfred Archambault, Gaspard Piché, and Louis Morin.

republic, the moderates, despite the general tenor and the resolution of the National Convention, appeared to support annexation. The New York executive committee was reported as having raised a fund to establish in New York City an annexation journal which was to be widely circulated throughout Canada. Giroux declared himself to favour annexation. Canada was not oppressed, as was Ireland, he announced. Rather it had a responsible and relatively liberal form of government. Nevertheless, annexation was endorsed as offering the most promising future for Canada and for French Canadians. [17]

Despite the apparent setback, the moderates continued to put forward their ideas. A second annual convention was arranged for New York City on December 1-2, 1866. Once again the tone of the national assembly was set in a prior meeting to elect delegates, this time in Cohoes, N.Y. There the local French Canadians unanimously adopted a preamble and resolutions concerning the Confederation scheme:

> *Vû que le projet de confédération des Canadas aux provinces anglaises du Gulfe St. Laurent sacrifie les intérêts politiques et nationaux des canadiens du race française, et que cette nouvelle forme de gouvernement engloutiroit pour toujours le population d'origine française, œuvre si long-temps préméditée et tant de fois tentée depuis la conquête, et la mettrait à la merci de la population anglo-saxonne;*
>
> *Vû que le seul moyen, pour le Bas-Canada, de conserver se religion, sa nationalité, ses institutions et ses lois, et de sortir de l'inaction, de la pauvreté et de l'indigence où le joug de fier lion étranger l'a jusqu'à présent maintenu, est son annextion aux États-Unis....*

The resolutions promoted annexation, protested against Confederation, and hinted at various forms of resistance to the imposition of such unjust and tyrannical schemes as provincial union. [18] Again events in Canada were providing one of the major *foci* of interest for Franco-Americans.

The convention itself resembled that of 1865 in many ways. French Canadians throughout the States were urged to join together in St. Jean Baptiste societies, societies "*de secours mutuels et de bienfaisance*" which would produce "*les résultats les plus féconds*". The need for a French-Canadian newspaper centred in New York was again a point of agreement. The next convention was discussed and arranged for Troy, N.Y. Loyalty to the Republic was expressed; the American press, especially the *New York Herald* which gave the French Canadians in the United States more publicity than any other major American newspaper, was praised. But there were differences between this meeting and the previous one. The ideas of the convention concerning the future of Canada and of all *Canadiens* were clearer. The reaction to specific issues in the United States and British North America was more distinct. General Banks, for example, was thanked in one resolution for his annexation bill presented to Congress in July, 1866.

[17] Toronto *Globe*, Jan. 5, 1866; *New York Herald*, Jan. 3, 1866; *Montreal Gazette*, Jan. 5, 1866; *Detroit Free Press*. Dec. 12, 1866.
[18] Montreal *Le Pays*, Dec. 4, 1866.

The death of J. B. E. Dorion was noticed in a lengthy resolution. Most extensive, as suggested by the Cohoes meeting, was the response to the political changes being proposed for the union of the Provinces. The Confederation scheme was:

> *une mesure nationicide qui irait engloutir au found du gulfe cet heritage sacré de nos ancêtres qui a affronté tant d'orages sans le laisser submerger. Nous ne saurions exhorter trop fortement nos compatriotes du Canada à combattre de toutes leurs forces ce projet qui ne fait présager que dissessions religieuses, qu'antipathies nationales, que conflits de pouvoirs, que dépenses énormes pour des armements qui provoqueront à des hostilites avec les États-Unis.*

The fears expressed regarding Confederation were reflective not just of these French Canadians in the United States but of many Americans. The scheme was spoken of as the erection of a new and hostile monarchy, as the result of a European attempt on the part of England, France, and Spain to impose a balance of power on the Americas, as an armed camp threatening the well-being of the Republic. All of these images of Confederation were frequently expressed throughout the States, and the Franco-Americans were thus not only making plain their own views but were also absorbing and manifesting attitudes common to many Americans. The convention felt strongly enough about the issue of Confederation to direct its newly elected executive committee to draw up a memorial protesting the developments in the Provinces. [19] The delegates, complained the Toronto *Leader* of December 19, 1866, gave the appearance of being more American than the Americans.

The executive committee soon met to begin its task of effecting a protest against Confederation. The secretary of the committee was dispatched to Washington to confer with N. P. Banks and other members of Congress who tended to support annexation. [20] By February 6, 1867, the memorial was ready for distribution. It was apparently aimed at stimulating American public opinion against the Confederation movement. Copies were sent to the various State and federal governmental bodies. [21] Rather than discussing the probable fate of French Canadians under the new arrangement, the memorial emphasized the anti-American features of Confederation. The scheme was pictured as aiming at the creation of a North American power to rival the United States and at preventing the latter's territorial and

[19] *Ibid.*, Dec. 15, 1866. See also: Toronto *Leader*, Dec. 19, 1866; Ohio, *Journal of the Senate*, 1867, appendix, pp. 267-268. The members of the new executive committee were: *chairman* — Joseph LeBœuf (Cohoes, N.Y.); *vice-chairman* — Cyprien Chabot (Philadelphia); *secretary* — George Batchelor (New York City); *treasurer* — Charles Moussette (New York City); *members* — François Boucher (New York City), L. H. Fréchette (Chicago), A. Rodier (New Jersey).

[20] New York *Courrier des Etats-Unis*, Dec. 15, 1866.

[21] *New York Herald*, Feb. 25, 1867; United States, Department of State (U.S.N.A.), RG 59, M 179, "A Memorial from the French Canadians of the United States . . .", Feb. 6, 1867; Ohio, *Journal of the Senate*, 1867, appendix, pp. 267-277; Ohio, *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1867, p. 184; New York, *Journal of the Senate*, 1867, p. 239; New York, *Journal of the Assembly*, 1867, p. 381; N. P. Banks Papers, L.C., G. Batchelor to N. P. Banks, New York City, Feb. 9, 1867.

ideological expansion. Confederation, it was pointed out, sought to take advantage of the domestic problems of the United States. The Provinces were strengthening their fortifications and increasing their armed forces in order to give Britain the upper hand in controversies with the States. Many, if not most, British North Americans opposed the monarchical and anti-American features of the scheme. Therefore, the petition concluded:

> ... your memorialists pray the United States will not see with an indifferent eye the establishment, on their Northern frontiers, of a Confederation, which in the opinion of its promoters, both in Great Britain and in the colonies, is designed to subserve objects hostile to the prosperity and peaceful pursuits of American citizens, and therefore they beg your enlightened body to adopt such measures as in your wisdom will be calculated to arrest the accomplishment of said Confederation ...

In support of such allegations, the memorial contained a nine-page appendix consisting of speeches and articles in evidence of the anti-American characteristics of Confederation. To this end, speeches of John A. Macdonald, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, and Charles Tupper were particularly useful. [22]

The mainspring amongst these moderate Franco-Americans and the drive to organize and express their views was George Batchelor. This *Canadien* had been born in Montreal in 1824 and in his early adult years had been involved in Canada East with the *Rouges* and such nationalists as F. X. Garneau. He had been one of the central members of the *Institut Canadien,* and was on that organization's Comité de Correspondance in the mid-forties. In 1847 Batchelor had led a group of *Rouges* in the founding of *L'Avenir,* acting as editor until he emigrated to New York City in the winter of 1847-8. [23] There is no direct evidence available as to the factors which persuaded him to emigrate. One might suggest such standard forces as disillusionment, economic opportunity, or the more attractive political and social environment. Professor Monet suggests in *The Last Canon Shot* that Batchelor was a relatively conservative influence on *L'Avenir,* supporting L. H. LaFontaine, and that the newspaper moved to more extreme policies only after the editorship had changed. [24] If so, it may be that Batchelor was, in effect, ousted from his position, an event which would have made fields elsewhere appear even greener. In any case, the conservative, moderating role within the *Rouges* fits in with Batchelor's conduct in the States in the 1860's. After he had settled down in New York City, the emigrant *Canadien* apparently became a teacher of the French language, at one time returning to Quebec City to give a demonstration of his teaching method, "Practical French Instruction." [25]

[22] Ohio, *Journal of the Senate,* 1867, appendix, pp. 267-277.

[23] J. MONET, *The Last Canon Shot: A Study of French-Canadian Nationalism, 1837-1850* (Toronto, 1969), pp. 285-6; J. Monet to author, Ottawa, Sept. 16, 1971; Montreal *Le Pays,* May 5, 1866; J. P. BERNARD, *Les Rouges: Libéralisme, Nationalisme et Anticléricalisme au milieu du XIX^e siècle* (Montreal, 1971), p. 30; J. P. MONTMINY, "*L'Avenir,* 1847-1852," *Recherches sociographiques,* X, 2-3 (May-December, 1969), p. 323.

[24] MONET, *The Last Canon Shot,* p. 287.

[25] Montreal *Le Pays,* May 5, 1866; A. FITZPATRICK, *Hier et Aujourd'hui* (New

As in Montreal in the 1840's, Batchelor placed considerable emphasis in the United States on the need for French Canadians to organize and to coordinate their policies and demands. As he had been in Canada, he was one of the early leaders in the Republic in a movement to achieve these ends.

> *Un peu massif, sa corrpulence le faisait paraître plus petit qu'il n'était réellement; l'œil vif, le geste énergique, toujours en action, present à toutes les séances, M. Bachelor* [sic] *a exercé une influence considérable sur les destinées de la Société [Saint-Jean-Baptiste de New York] et, à ce titre, mérite une mention speciale.* [26]

One of the founders of the St. Jean Baptiste Society in New York City in 1850, Batchelor in his capacity as secretary of the organization had arranged the New York City banquets of both 1861 and 1864. In 1865 he was elected president of the local Society. [27] In that same year he coordinated the first national convention, and in both 1865 and 1866 was a member of the executive committee elected by the convention to implement its resolutions. In the latter year Batchelor acted as secretary of the committee and in that capacity likely assumed much of the responsibility for producing the 1867 memorial. Certainly it was this man who in 1866 travelled to Washington on behalf of the committee to confer with leading annexationists.

It is through George Batchelor that one further expression is heard of the attitudes of the moderate *Canadiens* in the United States in the mid-sixties. In 1867 he published a pamphlet, *The Unification of North America,* which is of considerable interest. "All ends in Unity", the tract began. [28] In the history of North America, Spain, France, and England had struggled for control of the entire continent; each had failed. The United States had assumed the task of unifying North America, a task left half completed by England and France. Having expanded across the continent to the Pacific, uniting the continent on a transcontinental basis, it was not logical that the process should stop before it had spread both north and south.

> To-day, the United States stand geographically acephalous and limbless. They resemble their own charicatures of John Bull with his obese belly flabbing down. Shall they suffer themselves to stay thus cramped and incomplete, when the separate parts of the Continent, bleeding from anarchy and discontent, demand their political connection with the main trunk? The duties of the United States augment in direct ratio of their massive size and of their irresistible prestige. Let them finish promptly the work of unifying North America. [29]

Unification was to extend from the Arctic Ocean and Greenland to the West Indian islands and Central American states, inclusive. Acquisition was to

York, 1925), p. 28; J. P. Baker (New York Public Library) to author, New York City, Nov. 7, 1969.

[26] FITZPATRICK, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[27] *New York Herald,* June 25, 1864; ST-PIERRE, *op. cit.*, p. 323; FITZPATRICK, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 28-9; Montreal *Le Pays,* Jan. 13, 1866.

[28] G. BATCHELOR, *Unification of North America: A law, a business, a duty, a plan of continental construction* (New York, 1867), p. 2. A copy of the pamphlet, without its title page, can be found in the Public Archives of Canada. The pamphlet is listed in, and the complete reference taken from J. WICKERSHAM, comp., *Bibliography of Alaskan Literature, 1724-1924* (Fairbanks, 1927), p. 381.

[29] BATCHELOR, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

be achieved by negotiation and purchase. Conquest was repudiated, and referenda were advocated seeking the inhabitants' approval of annexation. Batchelor suggested a massive propaganda programme in the States in support of continentalism. [30] The pamphlet thus presents a point of view radically different from that evident in 1864. Gone is any apparent awareness by the author of his French-Canadian background and heritage. Gone is any attachment to Canada and to its independence. Instead, the United States, its way of life, institutions, and principles, offer the only answer to North American problems. Expansionism was justified by history and grounded in a belief in the concepts of geographical predestination and the extension of the area of freedom.

The moderate French Canadians in the northern States appear to have been firmly committed to such expansionism. It is therefore not surprising that this group showed evidence of connections with the *Rouges* of Canada East. Several of the leaders had been associated with the *Rouge* journals. [31] When speaking of French Canada, the moderates referred to such *Rouge* leaders as A. A. Dorion, J. B. E. Dorion, L. A. Dessaulles, and others. The *Rouges,* declared one moderate in New York City, had gradually increased "in number and in importance, till this day the party is the anchor on which our hopes are centred. It is through it, and co-operation with it, that we mean to win Canada over to the United States." [32] With such connections, the moderate French Canadians in America naturally reflected many of the ideas of the *Rouges* regarding Canada and annexation. Both groups spoke of the repression of the *Canadiens* within the omnipresent British imperial system, the domineering nature of English Canadians, the lack of economic and political freedom. To both, the American Republic represented material progress and prosperity, political liberty and equalitarian democracy. Both attacked the same political élites in British North America, men such as A. T. Galt and G. E. Cartier, as symbols of a system which was unacceptable and must change. The attitudes of the moderate Franco-Americans closely paralleled those of the *Rouges* in the late 1840's and 1850's. The more temperate attitudes of that party in the sixties, particularly regarding Confederation, were not generally found amongst this group of moderate French Canadians in the United States. The latter had not been forced to work within the Canadian political system, in the later years of the Union and had thus escaped a vital influence felt by the *Rouges.* [33] By moving to the United States, the *Canadiens* there placed themselves in somewhat of a vacuum regarding Canada. There were no longer any direct pressures on their attitudes towards Canada. Their views tended to harden and their images of Canada became stereotyped. They were, in fact, in at least some respects following the classic pattern of Louis Hartz' social

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-16.
[31] *Montreal Gazette,* Nov. 21, 1865.
[32] *New York Herald,* Jan. 3, 1866.
[33] P. B. WAITE, *The Life and Times of Confederation, 1864-1867* (Toronto, 1962), pp. 147-149.

"fragment". For them, the solution to the problems of Canada in the 1860's, as they saw them, was the same solution offered in the 1840's — union with the United States. [34]

In the meantime, while the moderate group of French Canadians busied themselves in New York City with conventions and memorials, emigrant *Canadiens* were busy elsewhere. In some cases their activities differed little from those found in Manhattan. In San Francisco, for example, French Canadians from the surrounding area gathered together in 1865 to form the "*Société de Saint-Jean-Baptiste, de Bienfaisance et de Secours mutuels de San Francisco et du Pacifique*" and established an elaborate organization involving initiation fees, annual membership fees, a waiting period for benefits, representation of *Canadiens* in the interior and in Oregon, an office, an executive, and a library. Their efforts were an obvious imitation of their moderate compatriots in the East. Certainly this was the case in February, 1866 when a convention was held explicitly in support of the resolutions of the 1865 first national convention in New York City. [35] But in other cases French Canadians in the United States differed from the moderates and had little or no connection with them.

The *Fils de la Liberté* was the most prominent organization apart from the moderates. When the Elmira French Canadians joined together under their revolutionary banner in December, 1865, they elected an executive to run the group, but Dr. J. N. Cadieux remained in effective control of the association. Of Cadieux' past, little is known. He helped to raise a volunteer regiment for the Northern Army in 1861, and when that effort was stopped by the War Department he enlisted as a private. He was soon promoted to assistant surgeon and served in various camps and hospitals in North Carolina, Virginia, and New York. A graduate of the Metropolitan Medical College of New York City, Cadieux had a reasonably prosperous practice in the Elmira region. But he was a restless individual, never really at ease or at peace in the post-War environment of the northern States. His residence changed frequently — Elmira (1865-6), Detroit (1867), Syracuse (1869-71). [36] He was clearly dissatisfied with the existing situation wherever he turned.

As the leader of the *Fils de la Liberté,* Cadieux' great talent was his effective use of publicity. At the organizational meeting in December, 1865,

[34] S. F. WISE and R. C. BROWN, *Canada Views the United States: Nineteenth-Century Political Attitudes* (Toronto, 1967), pp. 60-68; J. MONET, "French Canada and the Annexation Crisis, 1848-1850," *Canadian Historical Review,* XLVII, 3 (September, 1966), pp. 249-264.

[35] Montreal *Le Pays,* Oct. 31, Dec. 27, 1865, March 15, April 5, 1866. Leading individuals in the west coast group were Dr. J. Perrault, R. D'Estimauville, Ed. Bosqui, Joseph Couture, M. Mercier, F. Cypriot, E. F. Gravelle, S. Gadouas, P. N. Rémillard, Pierre Larseneur, and P. Quintal.

[36] B. F. Butler Papers, Library of Congress, Box 37, "A Few Testimonials to Dr. Cadieux . . .;" Montreal *Le Pays,* April 17, 1866; G. J. Parsons (Syracuse Public Library) to author, Syracuse, N.Y., June 1, 1972; A. C. Dalligan (Detroit Public Library) to author, Detroit, May 24, 1972.

he had proposed to hold a public festival in Elmira that winter. Whether or not this actually took place, it was an early indication that the Doctor was well aware of the value of placing himself and the group before the public in an attractive manner. There was soon talk of founding a newspaper to "promote and defend us in our march of progress". And to this end a public lecture was given by Cadieux in order to raise money for the journal; the topic of the address, "The French Canadians and Fenianism", was designed to attract a large English-speaking audience, particularly Irish Americans who were specifically encouraged to attend.[37] Probably feeling that his base of support and publicity in Elmira was somewhat narrow, Cadieux began to attempt to broaden his appeal in the United States. Addresses and broadsheets were mailed to leading figures in the Republic. Later in 1866 a manifesto was drawn up and addressed to Benjamin F. Butler, a member of Congress with a reputation for supporting expansion and for attacking Great Britain. Copies were distributed throughout the northern States.[38] To further extend the scope of his audience Cadieux undertook an extensive speaking tour in the North, talking, for example, to a "small but respectable audience" in Detroit early in January, 1867.[39]

When it was first established, the *Fils de la Liberté* appeared to be a much more aggressive group than were those *Canadiens* centred in New York City. There had been talk of armed assistance for the French Canadians at home; Cadieux spoke of striking a blow at the British hold on the Provinces. As time passed, however, the association's attitude towards the use of force became somewhat ambivalent. Though the Fenians were invited to work with the society, invasion of the Canadas was denounced: "We do not seek for vengeance for past sufferings; we do not wish for bloodshed: our revolutionary movements are conducted with the strong arm of logic."[40] Increasingly the means of effecting the policies desired was through such avenues as lobbying and propagandizing. In addition to attracting the interest and support of Americans, the Elmira organization paternalistically sought to raise Lower Canadians from their level of ignorance:

> To arrive at this happy event [annexation], we must rise them from the apathy in which they have so long remained. We must help the generous and devoted patriots of Canada; we must propagate the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, *without which no man can be happy in this world.*[41]

The aims of the *Fils de la Liberté* also underwent some change. Confederation continued to be the central focus of their attacks. As with other Franco-

[37] Montreal *Le Pays*, Dec. 2, 1865; B. F. Butler Papers, L.C., Box 37, "Lecture for the benefit of *Les fils de la Liberté* [*sic*] d'Elmira."

[38] B. F. Butler Papers, L.C., Box 39, "The Franco-Canadian Annexationists of Elmira, N.Y., to Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, on Canado-American Annexation;" *Detroit Free Press*, Dec. 12, 1866.

[39] *Detroit Free Press*, Dec. 27, 1866, Jan. 5, 1867. See also: Montreal *Le Pays*, March 27, 1866.

[40] B. F. Butler Papers, L.C., Box 37, "Lecture for the Benefit...;" *Montreal Gazette*, April 6, 1866.

[41] B. F. Butler Papers, L.C., Box 37, "Lecture for the Benefit...."

American groups, the scheme was considered to be oppressive, a "criminal" measure forcefully imposed on the French-Canadian people and designed to deprive them of all liberty. But during 1866 the support for an independent *Canadien* republic diminished, and annexation to the United States became the central theme. In their address to Congressman Butler, the name of the group was even changed; there is no reference to the *Fils de la Liberté,* but rather to "The Franco-Canadian Annexationists of Elmira." On the other hand, in a letter to Congressman N. P. Banks supporting his anti-Confederation resolution of March 27, 1867, Cadieux encouraged such official American actions and again spoke of the violent overthrow of the existing regime:

> I hope for Canada. The monarchical confederation may take place but its life will be short. There is profound thought in our writers, great inspiration in our poets. There is a serious and generous generation now rising in Canada. Those phalanxes of young men are full of souvenirs and hopes. They will not base their existence upon morning sand. They will repudiate the heritage of death of 1837-8; and should the home traitors persist in their mad career, then they must not be astonished to hear some fine morning the crack of a revolutionary rifle on the St. Lawrence.... Let those Canadian geeslers take warning, they are making their beds on dormant volcanoes, sooner or later they will awake amidst a terrible irruption. [42]

The speeches and missives of the *Fils de la Liberté* were teeming with such classic American expansionist ideas as natural right, geographical predestination, extension of the area of freedom, and inevitable destiny. The association played on American fears prevalent at that time. The threat that British North America was felt to pose to peace and security in the Republic was emphasized:

> As long as Canada will be an English Colony, there will exist an incessant cause of war between us and England. The larger the population of Canada become[s], the more arrogant and menacing will England be. The tory faction menaces to raise, by means of confederation, a hostile power, a permanent Army which will be a permanent occasion for hostility and war.

The Confederation scheme was portrayed as a means of thwarting the natural extension of American democracy and liberty to the Provinces; Americans were warned that a monarchy was being established on their borders and that a king would soon be crowned. [43] By appealing to American fears, to popular expansionist concepts, and to common images held regarding the Canadians, the Elmira Annexationists were able to present an effective case for the early absorption of British North America.

Apart from the two major groups of emigrant French Canadians led by Batchelor and Cadieux, there were other, apparently more transitory

[42] *Ibid.*; *ibid.*, Box 39, "The Franco-Canadian Annexationists...;" *Montreal Gazette,* April 5, 1866; *Detroit Free Press,* Dec. 12, 1866; N. P. Banks Papers, L.C., J. N. Cadieux to N. P. Banks, Detroit, March 28, 1867.

[43] B. F. Butler Papers, L.C., Box 39, "The Franco-American Annexationists...."

organizations of similar Franco-Americans in the mid-sixties. On April 10, 1866 a public meeting was held for *Canadiens* resident in New York City. Summoned by a large Committee of Organization, composed of many who had connections with the *Rouges* in Canada East, [44] the assembly sought to form a club whose sole object was to agitate in favour of the annexation of British North America. It was felt that the problems of the Provinces resulting from the Fenian threats offered a favourable opportunity to press the question of annexation. Though British North America was believed to be ready for union with the States, it was argued that the lead in such a movement had to be given by Canadians living in the United States, since they were the best judges of the relative superiority of American institutions. It was felt that the use of force to achieve their ends might be justified. The editor of the New York *Le Messager Franco-Américain,* L. Cortambert, advised:

> *Une révolution est toujours une chose extrêmement grave. Mais quand un peuple est enfermé dans une impasse, quand il lui est impossible de développer sa puissance et d'accomplir sa destinée, il doit certainement s'efforcer d'améliorer son sort et d'abaisser la barrière qui l'empêche d'entrer dans la voie du progrès. Le Canada est une colonie, une province, quand il pourrait... entrer dans la grande fédération républicaine de l'Amérique du Nord.* [45]

But other, more moderate modes of action were also suggested at the meeting. Those French Canadians in the United States who supported annexation were urged to aid the movement first by becoming naturalized citizens and then by exerting their political influence. Resolutions were passed attacking Confederation and recommending American institutions and annexation:

> ...we maintain, in conclusion, that the form of government in Canada warrants no prosperity or security to its inhabitants; and that by annexation to the United States of America our native country would forever secure to itself all the beneficial advantages resulting from the constitution of these States, and could at the same time insure, by local laws, the perpetuation of its native language and of all the institutions which are endeared to its population. [46]

Another resolution called for the establishment of a permanent annexation society in New York City, with branches in other centres. There was also appointed a committee to write a political manifesto to the French Canadians in the Provinces pointing out the disadvantages of the Canadian governmental system and of Confederation and the advantages of annexation. [47]

[44] *New York Herald,* Apr. 11, 1866; Montreal *Le Pays,* April 21, 1866. The Committee of Organization consisted of L. P. Fontaine, Napoleon Thompson, C. C. E. Bouthillier, Elie Bonin, Michel Boyce, Charles A. Drolet, P. E. Ste. Marie, Joseph A. Pratt, Joseph Majeau, F. Moreau, Casimir E. Thompson, A. E. Moreau, Ed. Marcotte, J. W. Aubut, Jean Hutin, David Fiset, Joseph d'Avignon, J. B. E. Beaubien, and F. X. Cloutier.

[45] Montreal *Le Pays,* April 21, 1866.

[46] *New York Herald,* April 11, 1866.

[47] *Ibid.*; Montreal *Le Pays,* April 24, 1866. The manifesto committee was made up of L. P. Fontaine, Napoleon Thompson, Casimir E. Thompson, J. B. E. Beaubien, Michel Boyce, F. X. Cloutier, and C. C. E. Bouthillier.

This New York annexation group gave no indication of being connected with the other local organization led by George Batchelor. Although both associations had similar ideas and policies, there was no apparent overlapping of personnel. But other active *Canadiens* in the Republic did have links with either Batchelor or Cadieux. In the town of Cohoes, just north of Albany, a number of French Canadians were active supporters of the national conventions of "Professor" Batchelor. Their leader, Joseph LeBœuf, had been a member of the executive of the first two conventions, and played an important role in organizing and running the third national convention in nearby Troy in 1867. A young, energetic, and ambitious lawyer, LeBœuf had been described by a correspondent of *Le Pays*: "*Voilà un homme comme les Canadiens devraient être : voilà un modèle de patriotisme et de dévouement; voilà enfin le canadien dans toute sa splendeur.*" [48] In March, 1867, under the leadership of LeBœuf and in response to the growing popular opposition in the Republic to Confederation, emigrant *Canadiens* in the Cohoes region met and passed anti-Confederate resolutions directed at the State Legislature and at Congress. [49]

Meanwhile in the mid-West French Canadians were summoned to a meeting in Detroit on April 26-27, 1867. Organized by E. N. Lacroix and an extensive committee, the assembly had connections in personnel with both of the major *Canadien* groups. L. H. Fréchette of Chicago was a member of the executive of the second national convention in New York City and played an important role in Detroit. Lacroix had been a supporter of the *Fils de la Liberté* in 1865, and Dr. Cadieux himself was active at the Detroit meeting. The long lists of names of participants at Detroit reveal no other overlapping of membership amongst organizations. [50] There were voiced what were by now becoming standard references to liberty and prosperity in the Republic and tyranny and repression in the Provinces. Annexation was the hope of those gathered in Detroit, and publicity and political pressure (even to the election of Franco-American representatives to Congress) were supported as techniques. What was just as basic to the movement amongst French Canadians in the United States at this time was the resolution:

> *Que nous exhortons tous les français de ce pays à cultiver la belle langue de leurs ancêtres, et à encourager les journaux français qui défendent leur nationalité et leurs droits . . . .* [51]

The period 1864-1867 was one in which French Canadian leaders in the United States were impressively active. One cannot help but be struck by the extent and number of efforts on the part of these emigrant *Canadiens* to make their voices heard. From San Francisco to New York City, in

[48] Montreal *Le Pays*, June 14, 1866. See also, *ibid.*, Dec. 4, 1866.
[49] *Ibid.*, March 12, 1867.
[50] *Ibid.*, April 20, May 11, May 16, 1867. Some sixty-one different individuals are mentioned as speakers and members of committees.
[51] Montreal *Le Pays*, May 11, 1867. See also: *Cleveland Daily Plain Dealer*, March 25, May 2, 1867; Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, April 18, 1867; New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, March 29, 1867.

large urban centres and small towns, many of these people began to organize themselves and to draw together. And yet for all the geographical diversity of the movement, New England, the region which contained the greatest concentration of French Canadians, was apparently unrepresented in any of the newly-established organizations.[52] Perhaps the numbers and density of *Canadiens* in that region tended to retard the impact of American culture and thus weakened, in relative terms, the need to unite. Missing also from the organizational movement in the mid-sixties was the Church. There are no indications of clerical representatives, influence, or even interest in any of these associations formed by French Canadians across the Republic. This would tend to lend some support for an analysis of anti-clericalism amongst the leadership élite of the organizational movement, for nowhere are there to be found requests for the support of the Church or for the establishment of French-language parishes. On the other hand such requests were emanating from New England at this time, and the Church in Canada East was loathe to answer. In short, the Church had not yet begun to send priests down to the United States or to establish parishes for the *Canadiens*.[53] In most regions there were no priests available to participate in the new associations.

Though New England and the Church were absent, much was present in the French-Canadian organizational movement in the United States. Each group appears to have been dominated by one man who assumed most of the leadership functions. And yet the number of individuals involved in the various associations, meetings and conventions is impressive. Though the leadership was restricted to a small number, active participation involved an extensive number of individuals, so much so, that this organization movement was obviously fulfilling both group and individual needs amongst many emigrant *Canadiens*. It is difficult to determine the type of individuals who joined these new groups. George Batchelor was a newspaperman and a teacher; L. H. Fréchette was a lawyer, a poet and a newspaperman, Charles Moussette an architect, Joseph LeBœuf a lawyer, J. N. Cadieux a doctor; and there were two other doctors and one military officer at the convention in Detroit. One might suggest, therefore, that members of the movement tended to be involved in intellectual and professional occupations. But the evidence along these lines is scanty and far from conclusive.

Despite the number and diffusion of French-Canadian associations in the Republic in this period, there was a remarkable similarity in their ideas

[52] See, for example, footnotes 8 and 17. The data for this conclusion is somewhat weak, but it is important that the legislatures, many leading politicians, and the major newspapers of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine all ignored the various developments outlined in this article.

[53] M. WADE, "The French Parish and *Survivance* in Nineteenth-Century New England," *Catholic Historical Review*, XXXVI, 2 (July, 1950), pp. 163-175. Nevertheless, studies of American immigrant groups frequently emphasize the social role of the Church, and its absence from the French-Canadian organizational movement is thus even more striking. See, for example: W. L. WARNER and L. SROLE, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, 1945), pp. 156-219; O. HANDLIN, *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp. 127-132.

and policies. All groups sought to unite *Canadien* emigrants, to promote the use and teaching of the French language, to encourage the establishment and support of French-language newspapers and societies, and to help their members to retain their cultural identity. Talk was common of spreading the benefits and ideas of the movement to all French Canadians in the United States. Yet despite the implications that there was danger in the Republic for the *Canadien* life-style, spokesmen were unanimous in their praise of the country and in their professions of loyalty. Participation in the Northern armies was emphasized; support for various politicians was frequent. All the members of the associations seemed to adhere strongly to prevalent American concepts such as democracy, republicanism, equaltarianism, and liberty. Faith in the economic future and prosperity of the United States was widespread. Indeed, French-Canadian spokesmen continued publicly to regard their new land, not as a country where their culture was threatened, but rather as a place where they could develop fully as a people.

These *Canadiens* in the United States saw British North America as a hostile environment. Controlled by an arrogant and aggressive foreign empire, the only hope for the Provinces was to break away from the grasp of Great Britain and to escape the stultifying, enervating effects of British imperialism. Independence from the mother country was a prime necessity for British North America. Even within the Provinces the existing situation was unacceptable. The "Tories", Anglo-Saxon to a man, and their few French-Canadian supporters dominated the existing institutions and structures, to the exclusion of most *Canadiens*. The latter, in such an illiberal, repressive atmosphere, were unable to advance or to develop themselves. The Confederation scheme was seen to be the symbol of all that was wrong with British North America. Aristocratic, undemocratic, monarchical, and repressive in nature, the plan to unite the Provinces was being imposed on the colonies as a means of entrenching further the power and position of the Empire and the Tories. The coercive means by which the scheme was being forced on the people, the lack of popular approval of the Act, and the failure to gain any meaningful independence from Great Britain were attacked vociferously by French-Canadian emigrants. Their solution to the problems of French Canada wavered between annexation and independence, and continued to do so after 1867. [54] The means of implementing the solution varied amongst force, propaganda, and political pressure. But generally there was agreement in the different associations that annexation was the most desirable end and that propaganda and political pressure were the most acceptable means of accomplishing the same.

There is little evidence that the organizational movement amongst French Canadians in the United States had any appreciable impact or influences on the great mass of Americans or their leaders. A few newspapers in a scattered number of issues carried some information, but by and large the

[54] ST-PIERRE, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-234; A. BELISLE, *Histoire de la Presse Franco-Américaine* (Worcester, Mass., 1911), p. 68.

American press ignored the *Canadiens*. The papers of leading politicians contain a few copies of some of the French-Canadian manifestoes, but there are few letters or references in speeches to indicate any personal contact or awareness of the views being so vigorously propagandized by Batchelor, Cadieux and others. And yet some aspects of common American images of Canada and Confederation were strikingly similar to those held by the *Canadien* emigrants. It is likely that the meagre influence of the ideas of the latter served largely to confirm or strengthen in American minds opinions already arrived at through other means. Indeed, Benjamin Butler's reply to one annexationist manifesto seems to underline this point: "*Elle n'a fait que confirmer une opinion déjà arrêtée et exprimée que l'annexion ou l'absorption des Canadas est à la fois necessaire et inevitable pour le bien-être future des Etats-Unis.*" [55] Beyond such political ideas, the common American image of British North American society as aristocratic, autocratic, illiberal, and repressive certainly coincided with, and may have been strengthened by these French-Canadian immigrants.

The impact of the *Canadien* organizational movement was greater on the Provinces than on the United States. In Canada East an extensive debate was being conducted regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the Confederation scheme. The speeches and addresses of emigrant French Canadians provided some additional substance to the anti-Confederate attacks being conducted in that Province. At least as important to the future of French Canada at this time was the issue of emigration to the United States, and a widespread discussion was taking place in the press and elsewhere over this question. *Canadiens* in the Republic were, in part, stirred up and encouraged in their broadsides against British North America by the comments in *Bleu* newspapers concerning the type of people who would leave their homeland and describing the fate awaiting them in the United States. Certainly the actions and expressions of French Canadians in the Republic provided valuable ammunition for *Rouge* counterattacks. After a visit to Elmira, one C. T. Tessier of Port Jervis, N.Y. informed the readers of *Le Pays*:

> *Je pense aller m'établir moi-même à Elmira. Cette ville est democratique, dans la vrai sens du mot. Le monopole n'y existe point. Le pauvre y vit comme le riche, avec bonheur.*
>
> *J'étais peiné de quitter Elmira, de braves compatriotes et les amis que je venais de faire, mais il me fallait revenir à Port Jervis, où j'arrivai après six jours d'une heureuse absence.*
>
> *En insérant ces lignes dans les colones du* Pays, *vous contribuerez, M. le Redacteur, à repousser les calumnies et les insultes honteuses de la presse tory du Canada....* [56]

Yet there is another side to the issue of population flow to the United States; and Tessier's letter serves as one example. It has been argued that

[55] B. F. Butler to J. N. Cadieux, Lowell, Mass., Dec. 13, 1866, reprinted and translated in Montreal *Le Pays*, Jan. 17, 1867.
[56] Montreal *Le Pays*, April 17, 1866.

the flow of information from recent immigrants back to the point of emigration is a particularly important influence on emigration patterns. [57] The attitudes and views of *Canadiens* in the United States, directed as they so often were towards Canada, must therefore be considered in any study of French-Canadian emigration. In contrasting the United States and British North America, the emigrant *Canadiens* presented a somewhat vague, but definitely favourable picture of the Republic. In these years, considered by Professor R. D. Vicero to be "the key period" in French-Canadian emigration, [58] this view of the United States must have been attractive to those in Canada East. Such an image may well have been an important influence in drawing French Canadians to the northern States, particularly in view of Vicero's conclusion that "pull" factors in the Republic had more effect on such emigration than did "push" factors in French Canada. [59]

One final conclusion regarding the importance for Canada of the Franco-American organizational movement is somewhat speculative. *Canadiens* active in the Republic indicated sympathy and support for the *parti Rouge* and other opponents of the *Bleus* and held similar views as these opponents regarding the existing situation in British North America. There is also evidence that those active in the United States had, before leaving Canada, often been associated with the *Rouges*. Could it be that we have here one reason for the relative weakness in the 1860's and 1870's of the *Rouges* and any other antagonists of the *Bleus*? Such men as Batchelor, Cadieux and Fréchette showed considerable ability and talent of a political nature. At various times skills were demonstrated in the fields of organization, publicity, oratory, and propaganda. It is true that the organizational movement was not cohesive and was ineffective in gaining much public support in the United States itself; in these respects the leadership was weak. But when one takes into account that the attempts to unite French-Canadian emigrants were starting from a weak base (and in some cases there was no local basis at all) the achievements and drive of the leaders become at least somewhat impressive. The conclusion seems inescapable that the *Rouges* and any other adversaries of the dominant *Bleus* in French Canada had suffered at least partial decapitation. This is not to impugn the abilities of such men as the Dorions or L. A. Dessaulles. It is simply to say that the skills of such men alone were clearly insufficient to achieve political success in French Canada. The abilities and talents shown by *Canadiens* in the United States would surely have been useful, even on a secondary level, in the various political associations in Canada East opposed to the *Bleus*. Men who would likely have strengthened the "internal élite" within French-Canadian society had been lost to that society and its various institutions. [60]

[57] VICERO, *op. cit.*, pp. 395, 414; HAMELIN and ROBY, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[58] VICERO, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 393.

[60] J. C. FALARDEAU, "Des Elites Traditionnelles aux Elites Nouvelles", *Recherches sociographiques*, VII, 1-2 (Jan.-August, 1966), pp. 131-145.

Recent studies have emphasized that Canadian images of the United States are structured not by an objective perception of reality, but rather by internal needs.[61] A study of *Canadien* attitudes in the Republic regarding the British Provinces indicates that this same characteristic is present, at least for the mid-1860's. Indeed, the same could be said in general for American images of British North America. Of course, this is not very surprising. Attitudes and images by their very nature reflect reality only partially but the inner needs of the perceiver always.

The organizational movement amongst French-Canadian leaders in the American Republic in the period 1864-1867 had two major purposes. The first was to give expression to their political views concerning developments in British North America. No less important was the social and cultural motivation. The lack of unity and cooperation amongst *Canadien* organizations in the United States and the partial vacillation in their political policies may well indicate that the political reasons for these activities were not as significant as the social impulses. Certainly the latter were a vital element in the movement. The problems of British North America provided a useful excuse for French Canadians in the Republic to gather together. Their political views were put forward so frequently, forcefully, and vigorously that one cannot doubt that the political motivation itself was present. But the means by which this was fulfilled, and particularly the tendency to summon a meeting over relatively minor incidents such as the deaths of F. X. Garneau and J. B. E. Dorion, tended to underline the social impetus that was also present. The *Canadiens* in the United States were again a people under attack. The alien American culture threatened the identity of emigrant French Canadians. In common with most emigrant groups they sought stability and security by emphasizing their ties to the homeland as they sought to accommodate themselves in a new society. *La survivance* was an implicit ideal for French Canadians in the United States as well as in British North America. The support offered to the French language and newspapers and to various clubs and associations emphasized this point. Wrote one commentator: the national conventions of 1865-1867 "*avaient plutôt le caractère d'une réunion d'amis que d'un congrès. Cependent ceux qui s'y rendirent revinrent fortement convaincus de la nécessité d'une union plus intime entre les sociétés* [*St-Jean-Baptiste*], *dont le nombre commençait à s'accroitre rapidement.*" Robert Rumilly has agreed: "*Ces premières conventions sont des réunions amicales, plutôt que des congrès en règle. Mais elles donnent l'élan.*"[62] What was true for the conventions led by George Batchelor was also valid for all of the various associations established at this time. French Canadians, in a foreign environment, were coming together in an attempt to maintain their identity. Canada and its problems offered a useful focus for their activities. In addition, the Canadian heritage

[61] R. W. WINKS, *Canada Views the United States: The Civil War Years* (Baltimore, 1960); WISE and BROWN, *op. cit.*

[62] ST-PIERRE, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-324; RUMILLY, *op. cit.*, p. 43. See also: GATINEAU, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

was something which they all had in common. The organizational movement amongst French Canadians in the United States in the mid-1860's was clearly an attempt on the part of these emigrants to maintain their cultural identity.

What was true for *Canadien* emigrants in general was particularly true for leading French Canadians moving to the United States. The organizational movement of French Canadians across the Republic was clearly an élitist movement. The numbers involved were very small, relative to the total numbers of *Canadien* emigrants; the type of person participating would seem to represent the professional classes and the *intelligentia.* Clearly the new social environment, in which these leaders found themselves, threatened the position (and their conception of the position) which they had held in society. The drive to create social and political institutions for French Canadians in the United States was a means by which these élites could maintain (or regain) the status and position within society for which they felt a need. They emphasized *Canadien* culture because the basis of their élitist position, at least for the moment, was the French-Canadian nature of the defined social group which they dominated. Canadian issues and rhetoric were employed not only because they were familiar, but also because they had in the past been an effective means of establishing the leaders' position within the group. Here too is a possible explanation for the lack of clerical participation in the movement. No requests for aid or support were sent to the Church because any clergy would, by their very presence, have infringed upon the influence and undermined the dominance of the élites. On the other hand, the cooperation of the movement with existing American politicians seems perfectly natural. Such outsiders did not appear to threaten the status of the *Canadien* leaders, but rather enhanced and strengthened their position. The organizational movement amongst French Canadians in the United States in the mid-1860's was clearly an attempt on the part of some leading *Canadiens* to maintain their social position.

And these efforts at the maintenance of cultural identity and social position bore fruit. Beginning in 1865, some twenty-three national conventions were held down to 1901 for French Canadians in the Republic. Numerous local associations and societies were formed. Answering the call heard frequently at meetings in the mid-sixties, French-language newspapers appealing to *Canadien* emigrants were founded in a number of centres. Throughout the States there was a concentration amongst leading French Canadians on establishing familiar institutions capable of entrenching the cultural identity and social status of local *Canadiens.*[63] In these years following 1867 many of the same individuals maintained their active involvement

[63] VICERO, *op. cit.*, p. 406. The French Canadians follow the same standard pattern of reaction and accommodation to the American social environment as did most other immigrant groups in the United States. See, for example: HANDLIN, *op. cit.*; WARNER and SROLE, *op. cit.*; O. HANDLIN, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People* (Boston, 1951); M. L. HANSEN, *The Immigrant in American History* (New York, 1940); L. G. BROWN, *Immigration: Cultural Conflicts and Social Adjustments* (New York, 1933); C. F. MARDEN, *Minorities in American Society* (New York, 1952).

in such developments. At the same time as this institutional and organizational movement was taking place, also apparent was the Americanization of these emigrants. Over the years 1864-1867 the French Canadians publicly active in the United States gradually moderated their tactics and shaped their policies to accord with the American environment. Talk of independence for French Canada declined, and annexation was increasingly promoted. The emigrant *Canadiens* ceased to work outside the existing political system and began to work within it, acting much like any other pressure group in the Republic. Pamphlets were written; petitions and memoranda were drawn up and despatched to politicians and to legislatures; agents travelled to Congress for confidential talks with Representatives; and attempts were made to influence the local and national press. While attempting to preserve their own identity as distinct from that of English-speaking Americans, these Franco-Americans began to accept the American system and to make use of it.

There was thus a fundamental dichotomy within the French-Canadian organizational movement in the United States, 1864-1867. They fought strenuously to protect their cultural identity and in doing so fell back on the traditional problems which had long occupied them in British North America. But in attempting to solve those problems, these emigrant *Canadiens* increasingly adopted the ideas and techniques of the United States. Though Americanization was clearly taking place, Franco-Americans were successfully establishing their own cultural institutions within an alien society. Still their leaders' political efforts to structure the course of developments in the Provinces drew these immigrants more fully into the political life of their new land and thus both strengthened and weakened their attempts at cultural defense.