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Joseph Wearing

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PRESSURE GROUP POLITICS IN CANADA WEST BEFORE CONFEDERATION

JOSEPH WEARING
Bishop's University

It would perhaps be rather stylish for me to claim that, as a political scientist, I am going to make a startlingly new analysis of "group dynamics" in the politics of Canada West¹ before Confederation. I make no such claim. In fact, the pressure groups that I am going to talk about are all very old friends—mainly the churches and the Orange Order—and I will attempt to show their place in the political system and their relations with the political parties. It is instructive to look at these institutions as pressure groups, because in many ways they behaved very similarly to contemporary pressure groups.

My attention will, to a certain extent, be centred on pressure group activity during elections. The chief concern was with legislation and government policy, but the degree to which pressure groups became involved with political parties is most readily apparent during elections. The most decisive pressure is usually that which can be wielded at the polls. If a sizeable vote can be delivered as part of a bargain or withheld as a punishment, then the political parties can ill afford to ignore the group's demands. And in the middle of the nineteenth century, when voting was open and there were relatively few electors, it was not difficult to tell which groups really did command the votes of their adherents.

In the quarter-century before Confederation, many of the biggest political issues in Canada West were the direct result of pressure group demands. The controversies dominating the elections of the period were the university question, separate schools, the Clergy Reserves, Representation by Population, retrenchment, and government assistance to railways. The first two issues were the outcome of church demands; the last, obviously, was the result of Grand Trunk solicitations; and the Clergy Reserves, Rep by Pop, and retrenchment issues were partly a reaction against what was felt to be the inordinate success of pressure group requests.

Education and the Clergy Reserves divided Upper Canadians into voluntarists and those who supported the principle of state aid to the churches. The Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Wesleyan Methodists, and the Roman Catholic Church all received govern-

¹ Although, technically, Upper Canada became Canada West in 1841, the older term remained in common usage and has been adopted for this paper.

ment assistance and they also demanded grants for their universities. In addition, Anglicans and Catholics asked for state-supported separate schools. The other smaller sects believed as firmly in the complete separation of church and state. They and their members actively supported moves to secularize the Clergy Reserves and the King's College endowment and they opposed the extension of separate school privileges.

In the years before the Union of Upper and Lower Canada, the Church of England was probably the most active and powerful church pressure group in Upper Canada; it was certainly the most successful, for it was until 1840 the sole beneficiary of the Clergy Reserves and the King's College land grant. Its privileged position was due to the fact that the Family Compact, who were mostly Anglicans, wanted to create a Canadian church establishment like that in England. In this policy they were zealously assisted by Bishop Strachan of Toronto, who was one of the most prominent members of the Executive Council. However, the Family Compact's power was broken after the Union and the Anglican Church lost its exclusive privileges in the Clergy Reserves in 1840 and the King's endowment in 1849.² Anglicans were never given the right to their own separate schools.

Although the Anglican Church, with almost a quarter of the population, was the largest denomination in Upper Canada, its effectiveness as a pressure group steadily declined. Bishop Strachan was a successful politician when he was dealing with the lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, the Colonial Office, and the House of Lords; but when responsibility for internal affairs passed to Canadian politicians, he was out of his environment. The hurly-burly of provincial politics and electioneering were foreign to him and his rearguard battles over the Clergy Reserves, King's College, and Anglican separate schools in the 1840's and 1850's were quite pathetic. The great boon, in the form of commuted clergy salaries, which was given to the Anglican Church in the final 1854 settlement, it won almost in spite of itself.³ As Lord Elgin commented earlier, "The tone adopted by the Church of England here has almost always the effect of driving from her even those who would be most disposed to co-operate with her if she would allow them."⁴

In any case, Strachan was kept fully occupied with the controversy in his own church between tractarians and evangelicals.⁵ After 1854, the Church had nothing to ask of the government. King's College was

² 3 and 4 Vict., c.78 (Imperial Statute); and 12 Vict., c.82.

³ 18 Vict., c.2; and see J. S. Moir, *Church and State in Canada West*, Toronto, 1959, pp. 79n., 207.

⁴ *Elgin-Grey Papers*, Elgin to Grey, 18 March 1851, p. 814.

⁵ H. H. Walsh, *The Christian Church in Canada*, Toronto, 1956, pp. 206-208.

lost, the Clergy Reserves had been definitively settled, and, apart from Strachan, Anglicans showed little interest in separate schools. After their experience with King's, they seem to have become disillusioned with politics⁶ and government assistance. Their new university, Trinity College, was financed privately.

By contrast, the pressure group activities of the Roman Catholic Church were much more fruitful. The Church showed only a moderate interest in the Clergy Reserves or the University question, but after 1850 it made increasingly insistent demands for separate school privileges. To some extent this was initially the result of voluntarist attempts to abolish the modest separate school rights which were given religious minorities in 1841.⁷ But it was also due to the appointment in 1850 of a new Roman Catholic Bishop of Toronto, Armand François Marie de Charbonnel. His predecessor, Michael Power, had been the first chairman of the Council of Public Instruction in Upper Canada and had co-operated admirably with Egerton Ryerson in setting up the common school system.⁸ Charbonnel, however, was a militant Catholic, deeply influenced by Ultramontanism. He would be satisfied with nothing less than full control over the education of Catholic children, *i.e.*, a completely dual system similar to that which existed in Lower Canada and a proportionate share of provincial and municipal grants. Furthermore, he was ready to use his influence to put electoral pressure behind his demands. In a Lenten Pastoral, Charbonnel pointed out that "Catholic electors in this country who do not use *their electoral power in behalf of Separate Schools* are guilty of mortal sin."⁹ The Catholic Church, unlike the Church of England, was increasingly successful in influencing school legislation in 1853, 1855, and 1863.

The Wesleyan Methodists and the Church of Scotland had no interest in separate schools for themselves, but they demanded a share of the Clergy Reserves Fund and the King's College endowment. They, like the Anglicans, snatched victory from defeat when the Reserves were secularized in 1854; but they were less successful in getting government assistance for their universities, Queen's and Victoria. The 1849 University Act provided only two unattractive choices: to become divinity halls of Toronto, giving up all degree powers except in divinity; or to remain independent and unassisted.¹⁰ A change in the legislation in 1853 held out the hope that the denominational universities might receive a share of any surplus which remained from the old King's endowment after the University of Toronto and University College had

⁶ *Leader*, 19 January 1858.

⁷ 4 and 5 Vict., c.18.

⁸ Moir, p. 138.

⁹ C. B. Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson*, Toronto, 1947, II, 330.

¹⁰ 12 Vict., c.82.

received their annual grants.¹¹ However, there never was any surplus. Victoria and Queen's attempted to exert pressure on the government to appoint a royal commission which would investigate Toronto and discover whether it had spent its money wisely.¹²

Wesleyan influence will be dealt with later in more detail; of the Presbyterians it can be said that, though potentially one of the largest denominations in Upper Canada,¹³ they were split in 1844 by the Disruption of the home church in Scotland. Members of the original Church of Scotland were reported to have voted Conservative in 1851 in the hope of protecting their share of the Clergy Reserves,¹⁴ while the Free Church was supposed to have supported Hincks in return for the provincial grant which had been given to Knox, their college in Toronto.¹⁵ However, neither denomination taken separately was very large and the Presbyterians did not take a leading part in the political controversies of the period.

The other sects—and they were numerous—were all convinced voluntarists. They wanted no government aid given to themselves or to any other churches and their schools and universities. But the influence of the sects could never be great. The Episcopalian Methodists, the largest of these sects, comprised only 5% of the population of Upper Canada in 1861. Next were the Baptists with 4½%. By contrast the Churches of England and Scotland, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Wesleyan Church comprised about two-thirds of the population.¹⁶ Many of the sects were divided among themselves and it was unlikely that they would concert their political endeavours. As S. D. Clark has shown, the sects, particularly in the early years, were devoted to other-worldly values.¹⁷ They themselves wanted nothing from the government and this was bound to be the primary consideration which determined any political action they might have taken. There is some evidence, however, which indicates that they supported the Liberals.¹⁸

It is somewhat difficult to decide whether the Orange Lodge was another religious pressure group or whether it was a kind of political machine. It was potentially a very powerful pressure group. From

¹¹ 16 and 17 Vict., c.89.

¹² Sissons, II, 430.

¹³ The Church of Scotland comprised 7¼% of the total population; the Free Church was 10¼% and the United Presbyterians, 3⅜%.

¹⁴ Bathurst *Courier* quoted in the *Examiner*, 17 December 1851.

¹⁵ *Patriot*, 19 December 1851.

¹⁶ *Census of Canada* (1861), I, p. 158.

¹⁷ S. D. Clark, *Church and Sect in Canada*, Toronto, 1948.

¹⁸ In 1858 the *Leader* claimed that the most clerical influence had been used against the Rouges in Lower Canada and in support of the Grits in Upper Canada, 19 January 1858; see also 23 July 1861.

the early 1840's, its membership increased rapidly from 20,000 to between 60,000 and 70,000 in 1854. By about 1860, there were approximately 100,000 Orangemen and 1,000 Orange lodges in Upper Canada.¹⁹ In the legislative assembly, the Order was much stronger than the Catholic Church: there were often as many as ten or twelve Orangemen among the sixty-five MPPs from Upper Canada. (Usually no more than three or four Upper Canadian constituencies were represented by Catholics and two of these, the Macdonald brothers, Sandfield and Donald, were opposed to a close relationship between church and state.) Both the local Orange lodges and branches of the Roman Catholic Institute of laymen questioned parliamentary candidates to determine the acceptability of their views.²⁰ Lodge members were sometimes told by the leadership how they should vote and threatened with expulsion if they disobeyed.²¹ But whereas the Roman Catholic Church knew exactly what it wanted, Orangemen disagreed among themselves on what their political aims should be.

The Order could not decide whether it was primarily a loyalist or an anti-Catholic society. Its original purpose in Ireland was to uphold the supremacy of the conquering Protestants and, when Orangemen moved to Canada, they were just as anxious to protect Protestant rights in their new home as they had been in Ireland. On the other hand, there was always a certain element of toleration in Orangeism; perhaps it would be more accurate to say that there was a tolerant faction and an anti-Catholic faction which struggled for ascendancy within the Order. The tolerant element looked to their foundation in the late eighteenth century as primarily a loyalist, anti-republican group whose aim it was that all loyal subjects should enjoy their constitutional rights, free of any religious persecution.²² This faction even saw possibilities in a political alliance with Roman Catholics in order to safeguard the state privileges of all Christian sects who were faced with the threat of voluntarism.

Ogle R. Gowan, MPP and Grand Master of the Orange Lodge, had long been attracted to the idea of reconciling and uniting all Catholic and Protestant Irishmen in Canada;²³ but the fiercely Protestant element in the Order were not enthusiastic about this plan, particularly when it

¹⁹ W. J. S. Mood, "The Orange Order in Canadian Politics," M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1950, pp. 98, 165.

²⁰ *Leader*, 28 December 1857; 6 January 1858; Public Archives of Ontario (hereafter cited as P.A.O.), Byerly Papers, Election poster announcing support of the Orangemen of Wellington North for James Webster, probably 1857. The Orange Lodge still questions parliamentary candidates in Ontario. See, for example, the *Globe*, 10 July 1963.

²¹ *Globe*, 13 September 1858.

²² P.A.O., Mackenzie-Lindsey Collection, 2132, unnamed clipping, "Orange Soiree at London abridged from the Prototype," 18 June, probably 1858; Mood, pp. 1-9.

²³ Mood, p. 94.

came to supporting Roman Catholic demands for separate schools. They were also unhappy with Gowan's close relations with the Conservative party, because many of them were sympathetic to the Clear Grit cries of "No Popery" and Rep by Pop. In 1853 the Order split when Gowan beat George Benjamin in the election of Grand Master. Most of the breakaway lodges were in the western section of Upper Canada where Rep by Pop had made the most inroads into Conservative strength. The dissidents charged Gowan with using the Lodge for political purposes, but one of the leaders of the Benjamite faction went so far in the other direction as to propose an amalgamation with the Grits.²⁴

Their flirtation with the Grits was of short duration. Though George Brown was as happy to receive the votes of Orangemen as anyone else, he had no sympathy with the Order. In his earlier, more outspoken years, he had attacked the Order as harshly as he had the Roman Catholic Church and had favoured abolishing it.²⁵ In the later 1850's and in the 1860's he tempered his criticisms, but he nevertheless refused to take up the cause of the Order.²⁶

Although the split in the Order was healed in 1856, further divisions arose as a result of the Separate School Bill of 1863. In keeping with the leadership's policy of co-operating with Roman Catholics, all but one of the Orangemen in the Assembly voted for the Bill;²⁷ but Orange voters throughout the Province thought co-operation had been carried too far. The rank and file of a movement are often more extreme in their views than their leadership and the Order was no exception. The lodges raised a storm of protest against Conservatives and Orangemen who had voted for the Act.²⁸ In the general election which took place that spring, Orange anger contributed to the defeat of several fellow Orangemen.²⁹

The only other important pressure groups who made their influence felt at elections were the railways. Local officials of the British American Land Company in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada and the Canada Land Company in Huron County, Upper Canada, did exert some influence in the years immediately following the Union. According to A. T. Galt, this was to be employed in return for "at least justice,"³⁰

²⁴ Public Archives of Canada (hereafter cited as P.A.C.), Brown Papers, George Stevenson to Brown, 1 August 1853; A. Mackenzie to Brown, 29 June 1854; *Leader*, 1 August 1854; P.A.O., Buell Papers, Alex. Cameron to A. N. Buell, 1 August 1854.

²⁵ *Leader*, 3 December 1857.

²⁶ J. M. S. Careless, *Brown of the Globe*, Toronto, 1963, II, 31.

²⁷ Mood, p. 159.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ P.A.C., Macdonald Papers, vol. 338, Scott to Macdonald, 12, 27 June 1863; S. Smith to Macdonald, 18 June 1863; T. M. Daly to Macdonald, 1 July 1863; vol. 189, M. Bowell to Macdonald, 29 May 1863; *Globe*, 24 June 1863.

³⁰ A. T. Galt to G. R. Robinson, 7 December 1843, quoted in O. D. Skelton, *The Life and Times of Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt*, Toronto, 1920, p. 135.

but the Canadian officials of both companies were strongly rebuked by their English directors.³¹ By contrast the railway companies, especially the Grand Trunk and the Great Western, were desperately in need of government assistance and were quite prepared to exert pressure by using their influence in elections. But time does not permit me to go into their activities, so I shall confine myself to the religious pressure groups.

All of these pressure group demands provided the political parties with golden opportunities. In the years immediately following Responsible Government, the Reform party appeared to be on the point of earning the gratitude of a least some of these groups and thereby reaping a decided electoral advantage.

By 1850 a majority of voters in Upper Canada appeared to support secularization of the Clergy Reserves. (Wesleyans, particularly the laity, were divided on the issue as were the Presbyterians. Even some Anglicans felt that the 1840 compromise could not be a lasting solution to the controversy.) The Reform ministry was divided on the question³² and procrastinated; but the addition of two Clear Grit secularizationists in 1851 probably ensured the ministry's victory at the election which followed a few weeks later. The church-state question was described by one newspaper as "the first issue of the election,"³³ but the government continued to delay and thought it should seek another mandate for secularization.³⁴ It was accused of using the issue as a "stalking horse" for winning one more election³⁵ and the legislative assembly became so impatient that the government was defeated in the House and lost the election which followed.³⁶

In a similar way the Reform party, though at first supported by the Catholic hierarchy and probably by the majority of Catholic voters,³⁷ was not able to produce sufficient separate school concessions to be

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 142; P.A.O., Canada Company Papers, Correspondence with Commissioners, Secretary of the Court to T. N. Jones and F. Widder, 27 May 1841; 3 June 1843.

³² *Elgin-Grey Papers*, Elgin to Grey, 28 June 1850, enclosure 3, pp. 691-694; G. E. Wilson, *Robert Baldwin*, Toronto, 1933, p. 277; *Globe*, 16 December 1851; *Patriot*, 19 December 1851; *Examiner*, 10 December 1851.

³³ Dundas *Warder* quoted in the *Globe*, 20 December 1851.

³⁴ *Guelph Advertiser*, 29 June 1854; Public Record Office, Colonial Office Papers (hereafter cited as P.R.O., C.O.) 42/594, Elgin to Newcastle, 22 June 1854.

³⁵ From a speech by A. J. Ferguson reported in the *Guelph Advertiser*, 20 July 1854; and a speech by W. Niles reported in the *Leader*, 7 August 1854.

³⁶ Hincks's moderate Reformers made some gains in the elections and they were in a relatively stronger position in the enlarged Assembly. However, their losses to the Clear Grits during the course of the previous Parliament had fatally damaged the party and they were still out-numbered in Upper Canada by the opposition from the right and the left.

³⁷ The Roman Catholic *Mirror* claimed that the electoral victory of 1847 was due to an alliance between Catholics and Dissenters. Quoted in P.A.O., Mackenzie-Lindsey Collection, 6186, "An effort at Colonial Household Words . . ." 1851.

sure of Catholic loyalty. Once again the party was divided between those who did not want to lose Catholic support and radicals who called for repeal of separate school registration altogether.³⁸ The Ministry equivocated. In the 1851 election, Bishop de Charbonnel reluctantly gave his support to the Hincks-Morin Ministry,³⁹ but he also warned that "Catholics are determined to have their separate schools, even at the expense of breaking up the Reform party".⁴⁰ Even the 1853 concessions to Catholic requests brought little in return to the Ministry. The bishops, who were still not satisfied, demanded even more⁴¹ and the radical Reformers, who were by this time in Opposition to the Ministry, attacked them in the 1854 elections for having "thrown themselves, body and soul, into the hands of the priests"⁴² and for having "sacrificed their principles, both political and religious . . . in order that they might secure this Romish support."⁴³

During the 1854 elections, the *Globe* called for a Protestant front against the encroachments of Popery, but the Conservatives had plans for a new alignment of political forces along other lines. The formation of the Morin-MacNab coalition of Conservatives and Bleus is well known, as is the fact that railway politics provided considerable cement for the construction. But it is also important to realize that this realignment was a response to the pressure group activity which I have been discussing.

Even in the early 1840's, some moderate Conservatives realized that the path to power lay in an alliance with the Lower Canada Reformers;⁴⁴ just as important was the strategy of winning the support of the major religious denominations in Upper Canada—the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Wesleyan Methodists—even if this entailed writing off the smaller sects. The plan was first attempted by John A. Macdonald, when he introduced in 1847 a bill which attempted for the third time to settle the King's endowment controversy. It dropped the previous idea of setting up one central non-denominational university and instead would have divided the endowment among the four denominational universities.⁴⁵ The *Examiner* called the bill "a monster scheme of bribery [by which] they [the Conservatives] hope to corrupt about three-fifths of the population and rob the remainder. Disguise the scheme as they may, the object is

³⁸ *Globe*, 18, 21 October 1851; *Patriot*, 2 December 1851.

³⁹ *British American* quoted in the *Patriot*, 19 December 1851.

⁴⁰ *Mirror*, 31 October 1851 quoted in the *Globe*, 1 November 1851.

⁴¹ F. A. Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Upper Canada*, Toronto, 1955, pp. 141, 151-156.

⁴² *Guelph Advertiser*, 29 June 1854.

⁴³ *Globe*, 22 June 1854.

⁴⁴ P.R.O., C.O. 537/140, R. G. Wakefield to Lord Eliot, 8 August 1842.

⁴⁵ J. G. Hodgins, ed., *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada*, Toronto, 1897, VII, 4-6.

to purchase votes to keep them in power.”⁴⁶ The Wesleyan clergy were most enthusiastic, but Strachan and the other Anglicans at King’s opposed any encroachments on their endowment, thereby ignoring moderate Conservative advice that by conceding nothing they risked losing all in a few years’ time.⁴⁷

In the end the bill had to be withdrawn and Macdonald’s “scheme” failed; but in the election which followed the university question was the biggest issue, even overshadowing Responsible Government. Conservative candidates appealed specifically to Wesleyans and Roman Catholics to support them on their university policy.⁴⁸ Most Wesleyan ministers campaigned for the government and its bill,⁴⁹ while Reform newspapers chided them for “nibbl[ing] at the same hook with the Roman Catholic Priests.”⁵⁰ Reformers protested against Conservative “manœuvres” which had no higher purpose than to control votes: “We have no objection to either party trying its utmost to gain supporters by fair means, but we protest against the ‘immolation of Methodism’ on the altar of either Radicalism or Toryism.”⁵¹

In 1861 the Conservatives attempted another “immolation of Methodism” in response to Wesleyan requests that Victoria receive government aid. Besides appointing a royal commission to investigate Toronto’s expenditures, Macdonald promised Ryerson that an order-in-council would recommend to Parliament a grant for each of the denominational colleges. Macdonald added, “This you can mention in Secret conclave at the Conference, but it is for you to consider well, whether it can be mentioned openly. Would it not look too much like a *Bid* for your support? The clergymen would be informed of it quietly, and might well say on their circuits that it was for the interests of the Church to support the powers that be.”⁵² He suggested that Ryerson might communicate with him secretly by telegraphic code.

Ryerson replied (by letter), “Your report, order in Council, letter and Commission, have given *entire* satisfaction to those Members of the Conference to whom I have shown them It was said on all sides that more could not be expected, or scarcely desired of any Government than you proposed and had done thus far.” Ryerson went on to say that the Wesleyan Conference had been urged

to support the Parliamentary candidates that would do justice to us
& to the country on the question of University reform

⁴⁶ 8 December 1847.

⁴⁷ *Christian Guardian*, 17 November, 8 December 1847; Moir, pp. 99-100; Sissons, II, 142.

⁴⁸ *Guelph and Galt Advertiser*, 31 December 1847.

⁴⁹ G. French, *Parsons and Politics*, Toronto, 1962, p. 261; Sissons, II, 142-144; *Examiner*, 5, 26 January 1848.

⁵⁰ *Examiner*, 1 December 1847.

⁵¹ *Guelph and Galt Advertiser*, 31 December 1847.

⁵² P.A.C., Ryerson Papers, Macdonald to Ryerson, 29 May, 6 June 1861.

The chief regret is that the time is so short. If there were two, or three months, instead of as many weeks, the body could be roused & united on the *right candidates* from one end of the country to the other. But a large proportion of the Preachers take new circuits; & they will hardly be able to get to them & cannot get acquainted with the principal members of their *new* charges, before the elections. But everything will be done by Preachers writing to, & seeing their old acquaintances that can be done.⁵³

Ryerson was apparently ready to do "anything *sub rosa*" (to use Macdonald's phrase⁵⁴) for the Conservative party. He was understandably not prepared to campaign openly for a Conservative candidate, because of his position as a government official;⁵⁵ but Macdonald commended him for the influence he had exercised "during the [1861] general Election, quietly and unobtrusively, but not the less effectual for all that."⁵⁶ Ryerson was on friendly terms with Sandfield Macdonald during his Liberal administration;⁵⁷ but, when the 1863 election came, Ryerson told Macdonald that he had had "conversations with the Editor of the *Guardian*" on the University question and that the *Guardian* would be carrying an editorial "urging every member & friend of the Wesleyan Church and of University reform, to make that a primary question in his vote for or against any candidate at the ensuing elections — the same as was done two years ago."⁵⁸ In most cases this would mean: vote Conservative.

Ryerson was an influential Wesleyan and he may have swung some of the Wesleyan vote to the Conservatives in 1861.⁵⁹ He was sometimes referred to as the "Pope of Methodism,"⁶⁰ but his influence fell considerably short of a Roman Catholic bishop's. His biographer says in connection with the 1844 election, "At no time could it be said of any

⁵³ Macdonald Papers, vol. 337, Ryerson to Macdonald, 11 June 1861.

⁵⁴ Ryerson Papers, Macdonald to Ryerson, 11 April 1862.

⁵⁵ Sissons, II, 462.

⁵⁶ Ryerson Papers, Macdonald to Ryerson, 9 September 1861.

⁵⁷ Sissons, II, 479, 482.

⁵⁸ Macdonald Papers, vol. 338, Ryerson to Macdonald, 23 May 1863.

⁵⁹ To test this and other voting patterns, a test for correlation by constituencies was made between religious denominations (or national origins) as given in the census and the voting returns. The analysis is crude for many reasons. The size of the various denominations (or nationalities) within the total population of a constituency is not necessarily the same as it is in the electorate. Secondly, elections were held between censuses and, for these, neither census would be an accurate description of the constituencies. Furthermore, tables of national origin (as opposed to place of birth) were given for the first time in 1871, so these figures are even more inaccurate when used in connection with elections, for example, in the early 1860's. Nevertheless, the censuses were considered sufficiently applicable that a rank order analysis could be used. The significance of these correlations was tested by means of the "t" test. For Conservatives and Wesleyans in 1861, the correlation was not clear enough to be significant.

⁶⁰ P.A.O., Langton Collection, John Langton to William Langton, 17 April 1856.

person, preacher or layman, that he carried the Methodist vote in his waistcoat pocket." ⁶¹

There was, in fact, considerable disagreement among Wesleyans on the advisability of an alliance with the Conservatives and even on the question of state aid to the denomination and its university. In the early years of the province, the Methodists were largely evangelical, backwoods farmers, and Reformers who were strongly opposed to state aid to religion. However, in the 1830's the Canada Conference came under the influence of the British Wesleyans who were more conservative than the Canadian body and not averse to receiving state aid. At the same time, Egerton Ryerson, one of the leading Canadian Wesleyans, broke with political radicalism.⁶² The British Wesleyans induced the Conference into accepting a government grant; this was too much for some Methodists, who seceded from the main body and formed the voluntarist Methodist Episcopal Church. Support by the Conference for Sir Francis Bond Head and the Tories in the election of 1836 was also a severe shock to many Methodists.⁶³ For a time the Conference attempted to avoid any political entanglements,⁶⁴ but it was seduced by Macdonald's University Bill of 1847. A committee of Conference sent petitions in support of Macdonald's bill to the circuits⁶⁵ and the *Examiner* claimed that "the whole weight and influence of the leaders of the Conference have been employed to secure a majority to the present ministry in the next Parliament." ⁶⁶

Many of the Wesleyan laity, however, objected to seeing their ministers involved in politics and several congregations held meetings to protest. One in Dundas, for example, resolved:

That this meeting [*sic*], being composed of Members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, view with much regret, the interference of the Special Committee [of Conference], in issuing an Address of a political character, — thus identifying the Methodist Ministry with the political parties of the day, — which character we believe to be altogether incompatible with the Spiritual calling of Ministers of the Gospel, and fraught with great danger to the interests of the Methodist Church in particular, and Christianity in general. And we, as Methodists, cannot join in said political strife, and any interference with politics by our ministers, as a Body, or by their Committees, meets with our decided disapprobation.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Sissons, II, 43.

⁶² Walsh, pp. 178-179.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

⁶⁴ French, p. 230.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 260-261.

⁶⁶ 5 January 1848.

⁶⁷ *Dundas Warder Extra* quoted in the *Examiner*, 5 January 1848; see also protests by congregations in the *Examiner*, 12, 26 January 1848; Guelph and Galt *Advertiser*, 31 December 1847.

In 1847-48 the Wesleyans lost 900 members. This was attributed to their disapproving of the Conference's political views.⁶⁸ The attempt to deliver the Wesleyan vote had apparently backfired and, in succeeding elections until 1861, the Conference and the *Guardian* were much more chary of becoming involved.

Of much greater importance to the Conservative party was the potential support of the larger,⁶⁹ and more disciplined Roman Catholic Church. The first temporary alliance in the legislature between French Catholics and Anglican Conservatives took place in 1850 during a school bill debate. At first they agreed to apply concerted pressure in order to get an amendment granting separate schools to Anglicans as well as Catholics in Upper Canada; but the Hincks Ministry was able to induce the Catholics to desert their Anglican allies by offering separate school rights to Catholics alone.⁷⁰

Later, when the Clergy Reserves controversy was at its height, Conservatives warned Lower Canadian Catholics that if they permitted the radical Reformers to assault church rights in Upper Canada, their own church's property and institutions might be attacked next.⁷¹ The Anglican Church Union warned them:

as the designs of our antagonists were developed, it became evident to such their allies [*sic*] that if our Church were despoiled of its slender temporalities the rich endowments of their own would next be assailed, and that the result of the triumph of those "Pharisaical brawlers," as they have been happily termed, must inevitably be *not only the temporary overthrow of all religious principle in the Province, but the spread of the wildest theories of Socialism and Infidelity in its stead.*⁷²

This sort of argument made its point with French Catholics. The Clear Grits made them very nervous⁷³ and Etienne Taché, a member of Hincks's Reform Ministry and later premier of a French-Conservative Ministry, spoke warmly in 1851 of the common ground shared by Catholics and Anglicans.⁷⁴ The Nonconformist newspapers thought that an alliance between "Romanism" and "Puseyism" was proof of the unprincipled "lust for gold" of both Churches,⁷⁵ but the Conservative *Patriot* was glad to see that the Roman Catholic population was "becoming alive to the imperative necessity . . . above all of excluding [from

⁶⁸ French, p. 262.

⁶⁹ 18½% of the population of Upper Canada, *Census of Canada* (1861), I, 158.

⁷⁰ Hodgins, IX, 25.

⁷¹ D. Creighton, *John A. Macdonald*, Toronto, 1956, I, 185.

⁷² Published in the *Church* and quoted in the *Examiner*, 3 December 1851.

⁷³ *Elgin-Grey Papers*, Elgin to Grey, 22 November 1850, p. 746; two letters from Cauchon to Hincks published in the *Globe*, 18 November 1851.

⁷⁴ *Globe*, 4 November 1851.

⁷⁵ *Christian Observer* quoted in the *Globe*, 25 November 1851 and the *Christian Guardian* quoted in the *Examiner*, 26 November 1851.

the legislature] those three socialist worthies, Francis Hincks, Malcolm Cameron, and John Rolph."⁷⁶

When the Hincks-Morin Ministry was defeated following the elections, it was easy for MacNab, Macdonald, Cayley, and two moderate Reformers to replace the Upper Canadian section of the Ministry. The ground had been well prepared beforehand and they were willing to accept the condition imposed upon them by the Lower Canadian section, that "justice" be done to Upper Canadian Catholics on separate schools.⁷⁷

The Catholics got their separate school bill in 1855, but the manner in which the bill was passed almost destroyed the coalition that Macdonald and others had so carefully created. The bill was not introduced until almost the end of the session when most of the Upper Canadian MPPs had left Quebec under the impression that no more major legislation would come up. It was introduced first into the Legislative Council, not the Assembly, and by a French Canadian, Taché, even though it was a school bill for Upper Canada. To make matters worse, this was done without the knowledge of the Superintendent of Education, Ryerson.⁷⁸

As amended, the bill made only two major changes in the separate school law; but there was a great deal of resentment against giving any more rights to Roman Catholic separate schools and, on the third reading of the bill, a majority of the Upper Canadian members who were still in Quebec City voted against it. They were outnumbered, however, and, for the second time, a school bill which pertained only to Upper Canada was passed in the face of Upper Canadian opposition because of Lower Canadian votes.⁷⁹ It appeared that Brown's cry of "French domination" had some truth in it and that his call for Representation by Population was justified.

On the other hand, the Catholic bishops were not happy with the amended version of the Act⁸⁰ and, in his fury, Charbonnel declared four of the Catholic members of the Executive Council unworthy of absolution.⁸¹ Although Charbonnel continued to demand amendments to the Taché Act, the Conservatives were afraid of another furor if any changes were made in the separate school law. Macdonald, who realized how easy it was to upset his appeal to denominations, advised Ryerson in any articles he wrote to say:

1st That the Bill will not injuriously affect the Common School system — This for the people at Large.

⁷⁶ 18 November 1851.

⁷⁷ Vicar General C. F. Cazeau to Charbonnel, 11 September 1854 quoted in Walker, p. 151.

⁷⁸ Sissons, II, 328.

⁷⁹ *Journals of the Legislative Assembly* (1854-55), p. 1287.

⁸⁰ Walker, pp. 172-173, 177.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

2nd That the Bill is a *substantial Boon* to the Roman Catholics —
This to keep the Papists in good humour.⁸²

In spite of Charbonnel's dissatisfaction, the year of the Taché Act provided the first indication that the Roman Catholic hierarchy had rewarded the Conservative party by delivering the votes of Roman Catholic electors.⁸³ In succeeding years at least two of the five Roman Catholic bishops in Upper Canada — Lynch of Toronto and Horan of Kingston — were in close touch with Macdonald and were quite willing to use their influence to elect Conservatives. There was some attempt to conceal this alliance between Conservative and Catholic hierarchies,⁸⁴ but it was no less close for that. In reply to a request for aid in an election, Horan reported to Macdonald that "without loss of time I set about doing all I might in order to forward the views of your friend. I regret exceedingly that Mr. Smith should be favorable to so iniquitous a measure as Representation by Population. However other considerations will, I trust, cause the Catholics to overlook this point which otherwise would work fatally against his interests."⁸⁵ Smith was successful and the bishop modestly acknowledged that he was happy if any exertion of his had contributed to Smith's victory.⁸⁶ On another occasion a candidate who promised to vote for retaining separate schools was told by Macdonald that help from the Roman Catholic authorities in Kingston had been arranged.⁸⁷

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that Catholic votes were responsible for the Conservatives' sweeping gains in the 1861 election.⁸⁸ The next year Bishop Horan considered it was time for Catholics to collect the debt Conservatives owed them.⁸⁹ The Conservative Ministry had tried to stall as diplomatically as possible⁹⁰ for fear that there might be another furor similar to that raised by the Taché Act. On the other hand, it risked antagonizing the Catholics if it delayed too long. In 1862, R. W. Scott, the Conservative MPP for Ottawa and a Catholic, introduced, for the third time, a separate school bill. For the moment, however, the Conservative Ministry was saved from its dilemma by sustaining defeat on another question. The new Liberal government of Sandfield Macdonald and Sicotte reluctantly accepted the bill and it was finally passed in 1863.⁹¹

⁸² Ryerson Papers, Macdonald to Ryerson, 8 June 1855.

⁸³ P.A.C., Sydney Smith Papers, Macdonald to Smith, 5 December 1857.

⁸⁴ Macdonald Papers, vol. 337, Bishop Horan to Macdonald, 23 August 1861.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 6 September 1861.

⁸⁶ Sydney Smith Papers, Macdonald to Smith, 5 December 1857.

⁸⁷ P.A.O., Sir Henry Smith Papers, Macdonald to Smith, 27 January 1855.

⁸⁸ For Conservatives and Roman Catholics (1861), the chance probability "p" is $.005 > p > .001$, which is very significant; in 1863, it is $.10 > p > .05$, which is probably significant. $t = 3.533$ and 1.930 respectively.

⁸⁹ Walker, p. 265.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 251, 267.

⁹¹ 26 Vict., c. 5.

But the Liberal Ministry did not get the credit for it. Almost all of the Liberals from Upper Canada voted against the bill. It passed by gaining the support of Upper Canadian Conservatives and a solid contingent of Lower Canadians.⁹²

The close co-operation between the Catholic bishops and the Conservative leadership continued on after Confederation. In 1867, Lynch told the Vicar-General of Toronto that the great majority of Catholics were Conservatives and that the Government had not yet forfeited the confidence of Catholics. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Lower Canada, Catholics would vote for the Government and Roman Catholics from Upper Canada should do the same in return for having been given separate schools by the Conservatives.⁹³ Several years after Confederation, Lynch asked Macdonald for a piece of minor legislation and in return he assured Macdonald that there would be "no difficulty in keeping the Catholic vote as of old in your interests." The Catholic vote, however, was not to be taken for granted. "As I am frank also, I must urge on you the absolute necessity of shewing to the Catholics that this time there will be no failure." The Bishop wrote, in a warm, friendly manner, of his great esteem for Macdonald and his wife and, in a lighter vein, concluded by saying: "I cannot conceal from you the thought that, (now that I am warmed up about you) I will have you a good Catholic yet."⁹⁴

The most remarkable part of Macdonald's plan for building Conservative support was that it included both Catholics and Orangemen. In view of the antagonisms between them such an alliance may appear to have been preposterous and absurd; it was certainly precarious. That it was successful at all was evidence of John A. Macdonald's consummate skill as a politician. In the election of 1836, Orange and Green had worked together to elect a Conservative Assembly,⁹⁵ but in the 1840's they were once again opposed to each other politically. Through the efforts of Gowan and Macdonald, Orange and Green were reunited in the 1850's and 1860's, and it was Macdonald's resourceful diplomacy that kept these mercurial Irish elements together.

There were numerous references made to Roman Catholics and Orangemen working together at elections and many Conservative victories were attributed to this combination. John Lynch, the Roman Catholic bishop of Toronto, writing to Macdonald, referred to the help he had given the Conservatives in electing J. H. Cameron. That he was Grand Master of the Orange Lodge was certain proof of Catholic sincerity,

⁹² *Journals of the Legislative Assembly* (1863), pp. 129-130.

⁹³ *Parliamentary Debates*, clippings of letters from Roman Catholic bishops on the subject of Confederation, Lynch to Jamot, 8 July 1867. Microfilm.

⁹⁴ Macdonald Papers, vol. 228, Lynch to Macdonald, 9 May 1872.

⁹⁵ W. B. Kerr, "When Orange and Green United 1832-39", *Ontario Historical Society Proceedings and Report*, XXXIV (1942), 34-42.

Lynch pointed out.⁹⁶ John Bowes, an Orangeman from Toronto, gave the Orange-Catholic union the credit for having elected him. The election, he said, showed what could be done when they acted together.⁹⁷

In the election of 1861, Orange and Green seem to have worked closely together both in Toronto and throughout Upper Canada. One report from Norfolk said that almost the entire Orange and Catholic vote had gone Conservative.⁹⁸ Two leading Catholic papers, the *Canadian Freeman* and the *True Witness*, generally supported Conservative candidates; the latter advised its readers that they should prefer not only an Orangeman, but even an Orange leader who would be fair to Catholic demands, to a Clear Grit whose hostility was known. The official Orange journal, the *British Herald*, claimed Catholic support for Orange candidates almost as a matter of right.⁹⁹

Occasionally old animosities threatened to rupture the union. The difficulty lay in the fact that, though both Orangemen and Catholics might prefer to have a Conservative rather than a Grit government, each group was jealous of the other's relationship with the Conservative party. If one appeared to be getting special favours from the party, then the other might threaten to withdraw its support even though the hated Grits were the only alternative.

Bishop Lynch recognized the dilemma of the Conservative leadership, but it did not make him any more willing to compromise. "I am not ignorant of the difficulties the Conservatives have of giving the Catholics justice. If they do they fear the Orange cry It is indeed a dilemma to be placed in,—to lose the Catholic support by heeding the unjust cry of the Orangemen. However it seems to me, if a little courage were displayed, the same Orangemen, I do not use the word respectable would not abandon their old party. But a choice must be made and very soon." "The Catholics indeed have had a good deal of patience, and there is a little time yet left before the election for the Commons, to conciliate them by making amends for the past."¹⁰⁰ This necessitated a certain amount of "secret diplomacy" (as D'Arcy McGee called it¹⁰¹) between the hierarchies of the Conservative party, the Catholic Church, and the Orange Order. McGee, when he was still a Liberal, pointed out that the

⁹⁶ Macdonald Papers, vol. 228, Lynch to Macdonald, 17 September 1861.

⁹⁷ *Leader*, 29 July 1854; also 31 July 1854; *Globe*, 10, 13 July 1854.

⁹⁸ Macdonald Papers, vol. 337, T. W. Walsh to Macdonald, 15 July 1861. For Conservatives and Irish (1861), the chance probability "p" is $.005 > p > .001$, which is very significant; in 1863, it is $.01 > p > .005$, which is significant. $t = 3.060$ and 2.720 respectively.

⁹⁹ *Globe*, 18 July 1861.

¹⁰⁰ Macdonald Papers, vol. 228, Lynch to Senator Frank Smith, 1 February 1872.

¹⁰¹ P.A.O., Colonel Charles Clarke Papers, McGee to Charles Clarke, 10 December 1860.

Conservatives "have as usual made contradictory promises to opposing sections of the population, which it was impossible for the same men to honestly make, and which it is absolutely impossible for them to keep honestly or otherwise. If both parties have believed these new assurances, one or other, must inevitably be deceived [*sic*]. Who is to be sold this time? That is a question both for Orange Ministerialists and those Irish Catholics who coquette with them, to consider in season."¹⁰² It was not long before McGee himself was coquetting with the Conservatives.

If some management of Orange and Catholic leaders was necessary to keep both working for the Conservative cause, the rank and file of both groups had to be handled with even more delicacy. Potentially, Orangemen and Catholics provided the two largest sources of Conservative votes, but one Conservative aptly referred to them as "the usual uncertain elements."¹⁰³ Merely to see the local Catholic vote going *en masse* to the Conservative candidate was enough to raise a No Popery panic amongst Orangemen. If the Grit candidate were prepared to capitalize on the aroused ancient prejudices of Orangemen, he might pick up the local Orange vote, in spite of directions from the Orange hierarchy to vote Conservative.¹⁰⁴ One Conservative candidate had the misfortune not only to see the Catholic vote go against him by two to one in spite of both the priest and the bishop, but in one township he also lost every Orange vote on a "No Popery" cry.¹⁰⁵ Another Conservative candidate, T. N. Daly of Perth County, found an ingenious solution to this difficulty. An Orangeman himself, he arranged for a fellow-Orangeman to run as an anti-government candidate against the official Grit. Daly meanwhile campaigned in the Catholic settlements and when he had secured their support, his Orange friend withdrew and Daly turned his attention to the Orangemen. He promised the Lodge legal recognition in the form of an act of incorporation and a grand caucus of Masters told Orangemen than if they voted against a brother Orangeman, they would perjure themselves.¹⁰⁶ He won the election.

Orange and Green *could* be made to work together, whether knowingly or unknowingly, but, as a correspondent bemoaned to Macdonald, every constituency needed the services of someone who had "influence with the Orange and Green Authorities."¹⁰⁷ What is remarkable is that the Orange and Green combination worked as often as it did.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Macdonald Papers, vol. 247, David Macpherson to Macdonald, 8 June 1864.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 338, R. W. Scott to Macdonald, 30 May, 2, 27 June 1863; James Patton to Macdonald, 10 June 1863.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, S. Smith to Macdonald, 18 June 1863.

¹⁰⁶ *Globe*, 2, 14 January, 1858.

¹⁰⁷ Macdonald Papers, vol. 338, Jas. Patton to Macdonald, 13 June 1863.

At times some of these religious organizations acted less like pressure groups and more like the "influences" which manipulated elections in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England. Or they resembled American-style political machines. In the former category, those who controlled votes were immediately interested not in legislation but in patronage. In the latter category, influence was wielded primarily for party purposes rather than in the interests of the organization itself; but such an organization risked becoming simply the tool of the party.

Influence was sometimes used by Catholic bishops to get patronage appointments for members of their flocks. In some cases the patronage was obviously a *quid pro quo*,¹⁰⁸ but the bishops did not always get what they asked for. Bishop Lynch even went so far as to complain in later years that, although he had urged Catholics to support the Conservatives, they had not received their fair share of government positions. All these jobs went to Masons, Orangemen or Oddfellows — organizations which Catholics could not belong to, he said. If the Government could not do better than this, he, for his part, could not presume to give Catholics any political direction. Somewhat disingenuously, he told a Conservative senator that as leader of the Catholics he directed them only in matters concerning faith and religion and did not "pretend to guide them *ex cathedra* in politics."¹⁰⁹

Orangemen evidently received more patronage from a Conservative government than Catholics, but the Roman Catholic Church always maintained its independence. It was a strong, united organization which never allowed itself to be put into the position of being just a vote-getter for the Conservatives. Furthermore, although it was not as strong in Upper Canada as the Order, its position was immeasurably enhanced by its overwhelming majority in Lower Canada. It was certainly a much more effective pressure group. At the end of the period under study, the Catholic Church had several pieces of separate school legislation to its credit, while the Orange Order could claim to have had little influence on government policy beyond preserving its own legal existence, which had earlier been threatened.¹¹⁰ It was frequently divided and, in its weakened state, it ran the risk of becoming merely the workhorse of the Conservative party. Particularly in the early years, it even descended to the level of providing bullies to carry elections for the Conservatives by force. The party came to expect Orange votes at elections and it ignored the Order the rest of the time.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 337, Horan to Macdonald, 23 August, 6 September 1861; vol. 228, Lynch to Macdonald, 12 July, 16 August, 17 September 1861.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 228, Lynch to Senator Frank Smith, 1 February 1872.

¹¹⁰ The first Reform Ministry after the Union passed legislation restricting party processions (7 Vict., c. 6) and outlawing all secret societies except the Masons. The only other secret society in Canada was the Orange Order; but the latter bill was reserved by the Governor General and Royal Assent refused.

For the Conservatives, the support of the Roman Catholic Church and the Orange Order, along with a good proportion of Wesleyan votes (and perhaps a good share of Anglican and Presbyterian votes as well), was Macdonald's formula for victory. This heavy reliance on other organizations may also have been due to the fact that the Conservatives had almost no separate organization of their own. The Liberals under Brown's direction had taken steps to set up permanent constituency associations with a central committee and held three provincial conventions before Confederation.¹¹¹ Conservatives were prompted to improve their poor organization by following the Grits' example,¹¹² and Macdonald recognized the need for a party organizations,¹¹³ but little was achieved before 1867. There were other reasons for the different approach by the two parties, but one of the most important was that, though the Liberals at times attempted to court the Catholics, the Orangemen, and the railways, their efforts brought them no lasting strength and the party was forced to build its organization from scratch.

The Conservative strategy of appealing to the big pressure groups (and especially the Catholic Church) was fraught with danger — particularly when most of these groups were rival denominations in an era of strong religious feelings. Macdonald's tactics were only moderately successful in Upper Canada, where the Conservatives really won only one election between the winning of Responsible Government and Confederation, that of 1861, by promising separate schools to the Catholics and university reform to the Wesleyans.

The real importance of Macdonald's tactics lay not so much in his appeal to the people, as in the construction of a ministry. For this, Catholic support had an importance which placed it much ahead of the other groups to which Conservatives were allied. Any party in Upper Canada which wanted to form a ministry had to meet Catholic demands in a manner that was acceptable to the politicians and the electors of Lower Canada. This was part of the secret of the Conservatives' success after 1854. Their policy on separate schools, with all its procrastination and amendments, was acceptable to the Bleus of Lower Canada and the bishops of Upper Canada. The Roman Catholics were almost 50% of the total Canadian population and no government could last long unless it could make a working agreement with them. It did not matter that the Conservatives won only one election between 1854 and 1867; they were in power for all but two of those years and George Brown held office for only two days. In the Union Parliament,

¹¹¹ J. M. S. Careless, I, 233-237; E. Jackson, "The Organization of Upper Canadian Reformers, 1818-1867", *Ontario History*, LIII (1962), 110-111.

¹¹² Macdonald Papers, vol. 338, H. W. G. Moylan to Macdonald, 1 June 1863.

¹¹³ P.A.C., Samuel Amsden Papers, Macdonald to Amsden, 25 December 1863.

the French Canadian party held the casting vote and even in 1841 the Conservatives realised that. They set out to capture the French casting vote and finally, in 1854, they got it. Their coalition dominated Canadian politics for the next forty years.