

# Metropolitanism and Toronto Re-Examined, 1825-1850<sup>1</sup>

F. H. Armstrong

Volume 1, Number 1, 1966

Sherbrooke 1966

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/030650ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/030650ar>

[See table of contents](#)

---

## Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

## ISSN

0068-8878 (print)

1712-9109 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

---

## Cite this article

Armstrong, F. H. (1966). Metropolitanism and Toronto Re-Examined, 1825-1850<sup>1</sup>. *Historical Papers / Communications historiques*, 1(1), 29-40.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/030650ar>

---

All rights reserved © The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada, 1966

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

# METROPOLITANISM AND TORONTO RE-EXAMINED, 1825-1850<sup>1</sup>

F. H. ARMSTRONG

*University of Western Ontario*

## I

In recent years Canadian historiography has concentrated upon the influence of the metropolis rather than the frontier, upon the spread of civilization and commerce from the centres along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. Innis, Creighton and Careless have laid the basis of what has generally come to be called the Laurentian School of Canadian historiography. In spite of this interest in metropolitanism, however, there has been very little work done on the actual growth of the metropolitan centres themselves; as is typified by the fact that there is still no detailed scholarly history of either Toronto or Montreal, although for Toronto Masters and Firth have studied parts of the last century and Kerr and Spelt have written a geographic survey. Most of the writing on civic history has been done by amateurs; some of it has reached a very high level, but it is antiquarian rather than historical in nature.

If, as the supporters of the Laurentian school claim, the cities have played such a dominant role in our development, organizing the frontier, rather than being organized by it, civic history is of the utmost importance; without studies of metropolitan development many questions on broader subjects must remain only partly answered. As the second metropolis of the nation — and the greatest city of English-speaking Canada — Toronto has a key role in the national history. But so little accurate work has been done on its evolution that it is difficult to even state which eras were crucial in the city's development.

A complete history of the city is well in the future; for the present the historian must concentrate on detailed studies of short segments of the city's past. In this way the most important developments can probably be pinpointed, and the major trends arranged in connected sequence. For the earliest periods of Toronto's history some of this work has already been done. The late Percy J. Robinson examined the French Régime in his detailed study that was published in 1933, and Edith Firth is now writing the history of the Town of York that Simcoe established in 1793.

<sup>1</sup> The writer would like to thank Professor J. M. S. Careless, Chairman of the Department of History, University of Toronto, Miss Edith G. Firth, of the Toronto Public Libraries, and his colleague at Middlesex College, Professor A. M. J. Hyatt, who have all read the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions.

It is to the next major period in the history of the city that this paper is directed; the few years after 1825 which saw the village of York turn into the city of Toronto. This metamorphosis, which resulted from the great influx of population from the British Isles that began in the mid-1820's, was a sudden one. Within a decade the population of the city increased from 1,500 to 10,000 and the nature of the town changed in all its aspects: political, administrative, social, and economic.

The change is most strikingly symbolized by the incorporation of York as a city in 1834, with the concurrent return to the original name of Toronto, but it is the economic readjustment that concerns us here; there is no time to examine the social and political aspects in a paper of this length. Economically Toronto in 1825 was a village; ten years later it was well on the way to becoming an important metropolis. This development has been little examined by historians. Canon Henry Scadding in his monumental *Toronto of Old*, published in 1873, was chiefly interested in the earlier period; D. C. Masters in his *Rise of Toronto 1850-1890*, which appeared in 1947, begins just before the railway boom, and believes that the city was none too well developed before the early's 1850's. Certainly, Toronto did not attain a very large population until a later date, but the entire province was thinly populated, and the city, in spite of its small size, was assuming the appearance of a fledgling metropolis by the time of the Rebellion. It is, then, the contention of this paper that the date for the emergence of Toronto as an important economic centre should be moved from after 1850 to the 1830 period. A great economic boom unquestionably followed the opening of the railways in 1853-55; but it should be regarded as the second great economic upswing rather than the beginning of Toronto's metropolitan economy. In the years between the beginnings of the British immigration and the panic of 1837 the city underwent its first great period of expansion, and the date 1825 is a better starting point for a study of Toronto's metropolitan growth than the year 1850.

The economic events that took place in what might be called Mackenzie's Toronto — though many leading citizens of the era would shiver in their graves at the thought — have been overshadowed by the political ones. Mackenzie and the events of the Rebellion are colourful topics for discussion, routine details of commerce are not. Because of these political events, however, Toronto is usually seen as a provincial capital rather than an economic centre and an important aspect of its development has been obscured. The fact that almost from the first Toronto was the provincial capital naturally had an effect on its development, but this effect can easily be exaggerated after 1825. Certainly being the capital meant that many provincial activities were focussed in the city, and that the organizations inherent in a

capital would locate themselves in York. Such institutions as the provincial courts, centres of church administration, and land companies, each in their way helped to centre economic as well as political concentration on the capital. This factor became less important, however, as Toronto grew in size and its hinterland developed — in the end, losing the seat of government in 1841 had little adverse effect on the city.

Possibly another factor that may have tended to lessen the attention on Toronto's early economic development has been the fairly rigid application of N.S.B. Gras's metropolitan thesis to the city. This thesis, based on the growth of London, England, which he presented in his *Introduction to Economic History* in 1922, divides metropolitan evolution into four phases: first there is a concentration of commercial facilities, then the development of manufacturing, thirdly the evolution of transportation, and finally the achievement of financial maturity. The strict application of this thesis to North American metropolitan centres, as Gras notes himself, should be undertaken with a certain amount of caution. There are differences in marketing conditions between London and the North American cities, but these do not affect the first phase of development too greatly as it is really based on the extension of existing village facilities — such as the enlargement of markets — rather than on new technological developments. The real divergence takes place between the second and third stages as they evolved in England and on this continent. Both these phases are based on changes in an expanding technology, and in England where manufacturing systems preceded communication improvements, these stages followed each other to a large extent. In London metropolitan communications could not be improved until McAdam had perfected his road surfacing methods and Symington his steamboat; in North America this was simply not the case. Once macadamization had been developed a macadamized road could be built through a wilderness; the same applied to other manufacturing and communication developments. Since many of these advances preceded the opening up of the interior of North America they could naturally be applied immediately to newly opened areas. Further, new ideas and processes were constantly being adopted while the cities grew. Gras notes an example of the resulting duality of development in the evolution of Minneapolis-St. Paul — the centre that he examined in the most detail — where he decided the second and third phases appeared together in the years 1870-1900. He concluded:

While in older districts, for instance, in England and the Atlantic states of America, the Industrial Revolution preceded the revolution in transportation, in the American Northwest these two movements were synchronous.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> N. S. B. Gras, *An Introduction to Economic History* (New York, 1922), p. 402.

Unfortunately Gras did not elaborate upon this point — nor does Masters examine it — but specifically it meant that there was a very different course of evolution in the metropolitan areas of North America; a difference which became more and more apparent as civilization moved west. One other variation should also be noted, and it is a most important one. In many North American regions not only do the second and third stages come together, but they also tend to infringe on the first stage, for manufacturing and communications appear before the phase of market evolution is complete.

The development of young York-Toronto, therefore, did not follow the same basic pattern as that of the great European metropolitan cities such as London. The first stage was still under way in 1830, however, at that time the second and third stages had begun and were reaching a fair level of advancement by the time of the Rebellion, although they were not to come into full blossom until after the railways were completed in the mid-1850's. Gras's model should thus be used with care in discussing the development of Toronto. At the same time, however, it provides a convenient basis for examination of the economic growth of the city, and thus will be used to set the form in the following discussion.

## II

The first stage of metropolitan economy, characterized by the appearance of all the institutions necessary to service a large agglomeration of people — wholesalers, specialist merchants, warehousing, extended civic facilities — was well advanced in York by the early 1830's. The growing commercial importance of the town was particularly characterized by the appearance of several new wholesale firms, some established by local residents, others branches opened by mercantile houses in Montreal or Kingston. Although the development of branches of Montreal firms in the city might be taken as evidence of the continuing domination of that centre, it can also be seen as an indication that the trade of Toronto could no longer be obtained by merely waiting for the city's merchants to place orders in Montreal. Also the selection of Toronto as a branch office site by Montreal firms was a confirmation of that city's growing place in the western Upper Canadian economy. That the citizens of Toronto regarded these new wholesalers as evidence of emancipation from Montreal can be seen from an editorial which appeared in the *Courier of Upper Canada* on October 20, 1832. The editor announced that there were now four Montreal wholesalers in the city as well as five local wholesale firms and added "with all these numerous and extensive concerns, it will be obvious that Country merchants need no longer think of going to Montreal, since every article of Merchandise can be obtained at York, in equal abundance and variety,

and upon Montreal terms." Further evidences of the fact that Toronto was attempting to break away from Montreal control are the advertisements of such merchants as George Monro and Isaac Buchanan, who boasted that they had established direct connections with the Old Country, and the many signs that a large volume of trade was being carried on with the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Paralleling the growth of the wholesalers was an equally rapid expansion of specialist firms. Various merchants had claimed to be specialist dealers in the earlier years of the town, but by 1830 large, sound businesses were making their appearance such as Watkins & Harris hardware, and the printing and publishing firm operated by Henry Rowsell. There were also a great variety of minor concerns: silversmiths, book stores, druggists, hatters, even a cigar store and a used clothes shop. Many of these businesses, of course, were ephemeral, but others were to grow and play a leading role in the city for decades.

Whether the new stores were wholesale or retail, Montreal-controlled or Toronto-owned, they all had one thing in common: the desire to develop business both in the city itself and in its hinterland. Their advertisements frequently contained instructions for local papers in other parts of the province to copy them, and by studying these we can gain a good idea of the extent of the commercial influence of Toronto of the period. Most of the places where Toronto merchants solicited business were in the western part of the province, or in the Niagara peninsula; such centres as Hamilton, London, St. Thomas, Niagara (-on-the-Lake), and St. Catharines. In addition the names of central Lake Ontario villages, such as Cobourg, were to be found on occasion. That there were also Toronto trade connections to Lake Simcoe in the north is shown by the fact that as early as 1832 the firm of Murray, Newbigging & Company were operating a wagon route to that area<sup>4</sup> and had at least three co-partnerships there located at Holland Landing, Newmarket, and the Narrows of the Lake (Orillia).

The counterpart of this expansion of inbound trade, the place of Toronto as a port of export for its hinterland, is more difficult to establish. The only merchant's correspondence that survives from the period, the letters from J. S. Baldwin to his partner Jules Quesnel in Montreal, are quite fragmentary, but still show that shipments of wheat and potash played a major role in business. This evidence is corroborated by the fact that the farmers of the Home District founded their own co-operative store on the Ontario lakefront as early as 1824 as a centre for both exporting from and trade in the town of York, and operated it successfully for some years.

<sup>3</sup> The Macaulay Papers in the Ontario Archives provide many interesting examples of this trade.

<sup>4</sup> *Courier of Upper Canada*, September 29, 1832.

Another aspect of Toronto's commercial development was the flourishing newspaper enterprise that had grown up in the city; an activity that was particularly important in spreading the capital's influence throughout the hinterland. York had had a newspaper since the official *Upper Canada Gazette* had moved from Niagara in 1798, but the *Gazette* remained the only paper in the town until 1820. After that date new sheets began to appear rapidly, and, though many of them failed, by the early 1830's there were usually about six papers being published in the town. Beginning with the *Courier of Upper Canada* in 1829, these tended to become semi-weekly, and the *Royal Standard* that flourished briefly in 1836-37 was the first daily in the province.

Newspapers were particularly important to the growth of the city's influence for most papers of province-wide interest tended to locate in Toronto. The *Gazette*, not surprisingly, had followed the capital from Niagara: Mackenzie's *Colonial Advocate* came from Queenston in 1824; Thomas Dalton's *Patriot* from Kingston in 1832; and George Gurnett moved his operations to York from Ancaster in 1829. Of the two denominational papers, the Methodist *Christian Guardian* settled in Toronto and the Anglican *Church* was sometimes published there.

The circulation range of these papers is difficult to establish. Mackenzie, whose paper must have been one of the most influential in the province, once published a list of 52 agents scattered over a very wide area,<sup>5</sup> but the fact that he had appointed an agent for a particular village does not necessarily mean that he had subscribers living there. Another paper with a wide circulation was the *Christian Guardian*, for every travelling circuit rider of the faith was automatically an agent. On a more limited basis the *Courier* had subscribers in the Gore, London, and Western Districts — almost the exact area where the commercial houses of the provincial capital circulated their advertisements — and this may well represent the limit of influence of most Toronto journals.

In addition to this development of commercial enterprises there is another aspect of Gras's first stage of development, which he touches upon but does not elaborate, that is the organization of public services to handle the needs of the growing population. This can also be seen in the city of the period. The very reason for incorporation was the inability of the appointed magistrates who governed the Home District — which included Toronto — to deal with the problems posed by the continuing waves of immigration. The preamble to the city's Act of Incorporation of 1834 stated the problem clearly: "whereas from the rapid increase of the Population, Commerce and Wealth, of the Town of York, a more efficient system of Police and Municipal Government has

<sup>5</sup> *Constitution*, November 7, 1836.

become obviously necessary.”<sup>6</sup> In the years before incorporation the local magistrates had made valiant, but unsuccessful, efforts to expand municipal services to meet the growing demands of the population. Two wells for town water supply were dug in 1823, a volunteer fire service was organized in 1826, and a new court house and jail opened in 1827. The inadequacies of these last buildings demonstrate the problem facing the government authorities. When they were first planned in 1820 the population of the Home District was 13,000; when they were finished seven years later it was 21,000, and by 1835 there were 57,000 inhabitants, 9,250 of them in Toronto.<sup>7</sup> By the mid-1830's new buildings were under consideration and a new jail was opened in the city in 1841.

In spite of the financial load imposed by the court house and jail, and a taxation system that was far from adequate, the district magistrates were next forced to build a new market for the city to replace the old one which had become hopelessly overcrowded. This was done in 1830-32, but the costs involved — over £9,000 — were the final difficulty that brought on incorporation for Toronto because some new system of governing and financing simply had to be found. The provincial government also attempted to aid the fast-growing city, and Governor Colborne was largely responsible for the opening of the first hospital there in 1829.

William Lyon Mackenzie, as first Mayor in 1834, proved to be singularly ineffective in alleviating the problems facing the new city of Toronto, partly because the Tories and Reformers on the City Council were more interested in battling each other than undertaking constructive measures, but mainly because of his own incompetence as an organizer, administrator and leader. After Mackenzie and his Reformers were decisively defeated in the election of 1835, however, civic government took a decided turn for the better. Robert Baldwin Sullivan, the Tory second mayor, began an organized municipal financial system, appointed an Inspector of Nuisances to clean up the streets,<sup>8</sup> and, most important, started the construction of a sewer system. The Reformers returned to power the next year under a new leader, Dr. Thomas D. Morrison, and began the macadamization of the city streets. At the very end of his term, in January, 1837, Morrison also played a part in the establishment of the first House of Industry in the city.

In the years that followed the city's sewers and paved roads were gradually extended, and a gas supply and water supply system were begun in the early 1840's, though neither worked very well for some years. Thus by the mid-1830's the basic civic services of the period

<sup>6</sup> 4 William IV, c. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the Quarter Sessions of the Peace of the Home District, March 26, 1936.

<sup>8</sup> Toronto City Council Papers, May 6, 1835 (Ontario Archives).



had made their appearance in Toronto, and in municipal organization also, the city was thus well advanced in the first stage of metropolitan development.

### III

The second stage of metropolitan evolution Gras dubbed simply "Industrial Development." Masters in discussing Toronto in 1850 noted that, though the city had made considerable progress, it had not as yet reached the stage where it could be called a manufacturing centre.<sup>9</sup> The same statement might well be applied to the mid-1830's. Though Toronto was not to become an important manufacturing city until after the railway boom of the mid-1850's, enough progress had been made by the time of incorporation that it seems safe to say that the city had already entered this early into the second phase of metropolitan development. Some of the local manufactories were located in the centre of Toronto's downtown area, but others, including many varieties of mills, spread along the Don and Humber Rivers. One of the most important of these was the mill complex developed at Todmorden on the Don by the Helliwell, Eastwood, and Skinner families.

In the central area there were a wide variety of enterprises by the 1830's: Jesse Ketchum's tannery; Peter Freeland's soap factory, one of the main landmarks on the shoreline for many years; the famous furniture manufactory of Jacques & Hay; and various brick-makers, breweries and distilleries. These last categories provided some of the most stable firms in the city including Copland's brewery, founded in 1830 and sold to Labatt's of London in 1946, and Gooderham & Worts, which was established in 1832. Heavier industry was also beginning to make its appearance and the largest manufacturing operation in Toronto was probably the foundry of Sheldon, Dutcher & Company which was employing eighty men by 1833.<sup>10</sup> Thus the manufacturing stage, though still in its beginning, was plainly in evidence in Toronto before the "market" stage was completed.<sup>11</sup>

With regard to Gras's third phase, the development of transportation, Toronto was also making definite steps forward in the same period of the 1830's. We have seen how the roads were being improved within the city. By 1833 similar macadamization projects were being undertaken in the surrounding townships, and stretches of macadamized highway were gradually being extended along Yonge and Dundas Streets and Kingston Road. Vehicles for the transportation of both goods and

<sup>9</sup> D. C. Masters, *The Rise of Toronto 1850-1890* (Toronto, 1947), p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Courier of Upper Canada*, April 27, 1833.

<sup>11</sup> John E. MacNab examined the manufacturing growth of Toronto in "Toronto's industrial growth to 1891," *Ontario History*, Vol. XLVII (1955), p. 59-80, coming to much the same conclusions for this period.

people were also making their appearance. In the city carters were available, and the first cab was built in 1837.<sup>12</sup> For travel beyond the city scheduled stagecoach itineraries had been established as early as 1816, and by 1833 there were regular runs of coaches from Toronto to all the main neighbouring centres. In the winter almost daily connections were available west to Hamilton, via both the Lakeshore Road and Dundas Street, east to the Bay of Quinte and Montreal, and north to Holland Landing on Lake Simcoe. Toronto was thus developing an effective system of communication with its agricultural hinterland.

The main lines of transportation outside the city were, however, by boat whenever the seasons permitted. Water connections had developed rather earlier than land transportation and by 1826 one newspaper had been able to report that there were no less than five steamboats on the lake and "the routes of each are so arranged that almost every day of the week the traveller may find opportunities of being conveyed from one extremity of the Lake to the other in a few hours."<sup>13</sup> In 1834 there were seven boats running from Toronto, five making a full circuit of the lake — which usually took a week — and two more providing more localized connections: the one with Niagara (-on-the-Lake), the other with Rochester. Between them these boats connected Toronto with the major stage routes leading onward to Montreal and major American cities, as well with transit routes along the Rideau Canal in one direction and to the Upper Great Lakes in the other.

The focal position of Toronto in water transportation in the years that followed incorporation is well shown by the number of piers built in its harbour. The 1833 *Directory* showed only the government dock, two small piers, and a third commercial wharf which was still under construction. By 1842 when James Cane engraved the Sir Charles Bagot Plan of the city there were no less than four new private wharfs. Nearly all of these, including the three that were the main commercial piers of the city, were in use by the time of the 1837 Rebellion.

Although Toronto was thus a major shipping centre it was never the scene of much shipbuilding. Its merchants were, however, shareholders in many of the ships built around the lake, and Torontonians such as Hugh Richardson and the Macintosh brothers commanded many of the most notable vessels. The merchants and leading citizens were also interested in any canal building measures that would expand the commerce of the capital. The connection between the Family Compact and the Welland Canal Company is well known, and many leading Torontonians, including William Lyon Mackenzie who is not often thought of as a capitalist, were involved with the Desjardins Canal venture.

<sup>12</sup> J. R. Robertson, *Landmarks of Toronto* (6 vols., Toronto, 1894-1914), Vol. II, p. 677.

<sup>13</sup> Henry Scadding, *Toronto of Old* (Toronto, 1873), p. 548.

Not satisfied with their steamer and stage connections, in the years 1834-38 the merchants of the city made their first attempt to improve communications with the city's hinterland to the north and north-west of the city by planning a railway. The surveys originally called for a line to Lake Simcoe, but later this was altered so that it would have run to Lake Huron, and so to the American west beyond. The idea failed to materialize because of the depression of 1837, but it was to be revised when times had improved in 1844, and would eventually become the Northern Railway.

In general, then, it could be said that Toronto had established quite adequate connections with a considerable hinterland region — considering the level of technology of the period — about the time of its incorporation. Moreover, the merchants of the city were already looking ahead to any new means, such as railways or canals, to spread its sphere of influence farther. In fact, Toronto's development in communications was if anything ahead of its advance in manufacturing. Thus even though it had not quite completed phase one of its metropolitan development it was entering phases two and three simultaneously to become both a centre of manufacturing and a hub of communications.

#### IV

Toronto was still far from the fourth stage of metropolitan development in the years we are discussing; but, as Gras noted, financial evolution of a rudimentary sort takes place during the earlier phases, and such changes can be seen in Toronto at the incorporation period. Like the city's other activities, the financial advance was accelerated considerably by the growth of population and commerce.

The merchants of the city had always been alive to investment possibilities and, though there was as yet no stock market, a considerable trade in stock had developed by the early 1830's. This was carried on partly by opening books for subscription to new enterprises, partly by banks handling stock transactions, and partly by various dealers in a variety of businesses also selling stock. The city was also a centre for the sale of land both within its limits and in its hinterland. As the seat of government it was the location of the Crown Lands office. It was also a centre of control of the powerful Canada Land Company, and of various independent land agents, one of whom, Joseph Talbot, even published a weekly newspaper devoted almost exclusively to land sales in 1834-35.<sup>14</sup>

Banking in Toronto also underwent a major boom period in the years preceding the panic of 1837. For a decade the government-allied

<sup>14</sup> *The Upper Canada Land, Mercantile and General Advertiser*, published June, 1834 — August, 1835.

Bank of Upper Canada was the only bank in the city. Its first real rival was the Commercial Bank of the Midland District, founded at Kingston in 1832 and partly controlled by Toronto interests, which soon opened an office in Toronto.<sup>15</sup> Because, like the Bank of Upper Canada, it was a Tory organization, it did not stop Reform demand for an independent bank. As the Reformers soon quarreled among themselves, however, they ended up with two new banks in Toronto, not one: the Farmers' Joint Stock & Banking Company, established in May, 1835, and the Bank of the People, established in November of the same year. The latter was run by a somewhat more radical group than the former. Meanwhile two English financiers had also chosen Toronto as the site for a banking operation and opened the Agricultural Bank there in the spring of 1834. This institution was rather more enterprising in its policy than the banks dominated by the Reformers. It was the only one willing to underwrite the first Toronto loan, and the first to pay interest (three percent) on deposits.<sup>16</sup> It was also the only bank to go under in the panic of 1837. Before the depression temporarily put a stop to banking expansion, there also appeared the English-directed Bank of British North America which chose Toronto as the site of its first office in June, 1837. Except for the Upper Canada and Commercial, all these banks were partnerships rather than chartered companies.

That the Toronto banks were able to survive the troubles of the later 1830's showed that the financial expansion of the city was not premature. From this time on Toronto was unquestionably the financial centre of the province, and was recognized as such even beyond the provincial boundaries. The collapse of the Agricultural Bank, moreover, was brought on in 1837 by overexpansion in New York State, and not because of its Toronto banking operations.

Another facet of Toronto's contemporary financial growth was the appearance of local insurance companies. Prior to this the insurance business in the city had been handled by agents of English and American firms; but in 1832-34 a group of prominent citizens founded the British America Fire & Life Assurance Company, which still continues in business today. Although there were members of the Reform party in this group other leading Reformers in the city decided to found a second company, and the Home District Mutual Fire Insurance Company was accordingly set up in 1837.

A final aspect of Toronto's metropolitan growth, perhaps, was the beginning of labour troubles there — though these were of a very minor nature. The printers established a union in 1832, and in October of 1836 staged an unsuccessful strike, calling down upon themselves the

<sup>15</sup> *Patriot*, February 1, 1833.

<sup>16</sup> *Advocate*, June 26, 1834.

wrath of Mackenzie, who uttered statements worthy of the most unreconstructed tycoon when faced with a strike himself. The printers' strike was followed almost immediately by an equally unsuccessful tailors' strike. Although organized labour made little progress during the period the apprentices in the stores had some success, for the merchants agreed to an 8 p.m. closing in August, 1836,<sup>17</sup> and a 7 p.m. closing in November 1840.<sup>18</sup> Saturdays were of course excepted.

## V

Thus by the 1830's Toronto, in spite of its small population and the lack of developmental funds, was on the way to becoming much more than a market centre. If we accept Gras's terminology, the city had gone beyond the first stage and entered phases two and three of metropolitan economic growth, even though the great boom in both these stages would not come until the railways were completed in the mid-1850's. The city was also the centre of a growing hinterland which extended throughout most of the settled areas of the province to the north and west, and financially, to an extent, as far as Kingston in the east.

In any case leaving Gras's terminology aside, we may say that by 1834 Toronto was already much more to Upper Canada than simply the political capital and the focus of provincial society; it was also becoming the prime focus of its business. Some of this business activity was admittedly concentrating there because Toronto was the seat of government, but by this very concentration the city was developing into something more than an administrative centre — and losing its dependence on being such a centre at the same time. In fact, Toronto had grown beyond the stage of dependence on the government and become a substantially powerful economic community on its own with a growing hinterland. This transition had manifestly taken place between the late 1820's and the Rebellion. Thus, in the economic as well as the political sense, these years were ones of critical transition, when the Town of York became the City of Toronto, and its village economy began to assume a metropolitan character.

<sup>17</sup> *Patriot*, August 9, 1836.

<sup>18</sup> *Mirror*, November 20, 1840.