

time and only four people were present when the system was formed. Writing of this period, a contemporary biographer has said: "The change in public feeling as to educational advantages then and now is well instanced by the fact that, besides Mr. Young, only four persons were present at the meeting when this society was commenced. In 1844 party spirit ran high and serious trouble was expected at the general election. Secret societies were in existence, and political associations formed everywhere for the purpose, as was avowed, of gaining by force what could not be secured otherwise. At such a time the post of returning officer was difficult and dangerous, and though the selection of a man to fill it might be esteemed a high compliment to his personal character, it involved also a personal risk which required the utmost coolness, determination, tact and courage in the recipient. Lord Metcalfe's advisers selected John Young as the man for the emergency. The result soon showed that their confidence had been well placed. Mr. Young seems to have realized to the utmost the necessities and perils of the office. Fearlessly, openly and with the utmost judgment, he laid his plans so well and used the powers of his position to such effect that, contrary to all expectation, the election passed off without any breach of the peace. He seized arms and other illegal weapons wherever they could be found, and without regard to threats. When the secret societies became openly defiant he called out the troops, who were ably managed by him, and overawed the disorderly and turbulent so effectually that no rioting took place. Mr. Young's services were so highly appreciated by Lord Metcalfe that they were mentioned in the despatches sent to the Colonial office and were the subject of special acknowledgment by the secretary of state for the colonies. They were also warmly testified to by Sir James Hope, who was then commander in chief at Montreal."

Another important phase in Canadian life that called forth the attention and the cooperation of Mr. Young was the principle of free trade. He was one of its most stalwart champions, and upon the organization of the Free Trade Association in this city he became its president. He was a frequent contributor of articles upon the subject to the *Economist* and to other papers and also wrote pamphlets which had an important effect upon public thought and action. He believed that the adoption of free trade measures would constitute the most effective force in making Canada a great commercial and business center. At times in his life his ideas were ridiculed as those of a dreamer, but the years proved the soundness of his vision and men came to rely upon his opinion.

His connection with the harbor work and the improvement of the channel between Montreal and Quebec began in 1846 and later occupied much of his time and attention. He was active, too, with those who were foremost in furthering the railroad built, and he was one of the organizers of the Montreal & Portland Railway Company and also active in promoting the line from Montreal to Toronto, as president of the company having that in charge. The work was of a most difficult nature, for the promoters had to solve at least in part the great engineering problems of railroad building and not merely finance the project. It was Mr. Young who proposed the building of a bridge across the St. Lawrence. Again well known business men scoffed at the plan but the Victoria bridge stands as a monument to his public spirit and his enterprise, and has converted Montreal from a fifth rate harbor into a first class port at a