

years, before Confederation gave the people of British North America an impetus towards united development, the feeling of loyalty to the Sovereign, and a desire to maintain British institutions—incomplete as they then were—constituted a chief bond of connection between the scattered Provinces, and afforded a powerful protection against the assimilating influences of the preponderating mass of population to the south.

It was fortunate that some such influence permeated Canadian thought in the stormy days when the Queen came to the throne, and during the period in 1849 when a genuine annexation cloud floated over the country. The French-Canadian is naturally monarchical in principle. He is the French peasant of days long prior to the Revolution, transported to Canadian soil and imbedded in the midst of a British community. So, also, in what was then called Upper Canada, the governing classes and a large part of the population were immediate descendants of United Empire Loyalists—men who had lost all for King and country during the revolt of the thirteen colonies. The rebellion of 1837 was therefore a fiasco, so far as it was directed against the Sovereign and in favour of a republic. The mass of the people would have nothing to do with it, even though there were admitted abuses to be rectified and admittedly justifiable demands for self-government still ungranted. And both the omissions of Downing Street and the somewhat high-handed conduct of local governments were remedied or reformed within the following decade under the quiet action of constitutional authority and legal procedure.

The general feeling of sympathetic allegiance to the Crown does not seem to have been obliterated by the continued opposition of the Governors to popular reform and responsible government, although the general discontent had culminated in a restricted rebellion. Canadians as a rule laid the blame where it was due. Ignorance of local conditions amongst politicians at home, coupled with com-