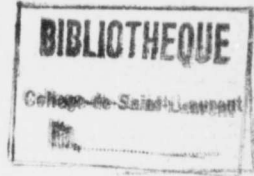


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HENRI BOURASSA



THE  
SPECTRE OF  
ANNEXATION

AND

THE REAL DANGER OF  
NATIONAL DISINTEGRATION

*WITH TWO LETTERS FROM*

*C. H. CAHAN, K. C.*

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1912

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## A word of explanation

*The following is a translation of two series of articles which appeared in "Le Devoir", from July the 16th to the 26th... with but one excision from the first article of the second series on "National Disintegration", published on the 21st of July; the part omitted,—a reply to the Montreal Star,—being of merely casual interest.*

*Of all the systematic attempts to paint the Nationalist movement under false colours, none has yet approached the brazen calumny which transformed those articles, written with the avowed object of pointing out the real danger of the absorption of Canada by the United States, "the most permanent of all perils that threaten the permanency of the Canadian confederation", (1) into a plea for the annexation of Canada to the United States!*

*In spite of other similar experiences, I had never realised how easy it is, for a few unscrupulous politicians and journalists, to trade upon the deplorable ignorance of the French language, which is the misfortune of the vast majority of English-speaking Canadians. A bunch of clippings from British and American, as well as English-Canadian papers, convinced me of the possible success of a propaganda of that kind.*

*The object of this one is clearly apparent. Urged by the money and influence of the enormous interests involved in the building of warships and the manufacture of weapons, both in Germany and Great Britain, the jingo and yellow journals of Canada are cooperating in increasing the competition in armaments, by dragging Canada and the other British colonies in the deadly game of Europe.*

*In the province of Quebec, naturally less moved than the rest of Canada by appeals to Anglo-Saxon racial feelings, they see the main obstacle to their end; and they look upon the Nationalist movement, which first broke the spell of Laurierism in Quebec and now offers a resistance to tory subjugation, as the real impediment in their path. Therefore, it must be annihilated. By means of exalted pro-French articles, first pu-*

(1) See page 7.

blished in "La Patrie", and reproduced, through advertising agencies, by various country papers, they have endeavoured to make the Nationalists appear, in the eyes of French-Canadians, as "renegades" untrue to France, "our first motherland." In English-speaking Canada, we are denounced as "advocates of annexation."

Personally, I can well afford to laugh at both of these calumnies. They both bring undeniable testimony to the strength of our work. But many of my English-speaking friends assure me that I cannot really conceive the degree of prejudice existing in English Canada with regard to the Nationalist movement in general, and to my humble self in particular. I suppose that it is very difficult for any one, who has some knowledge of both languages, and of British and Canadian history, to understand the circumscribed point of view and the honest prejudices of that large number of English Canadians, who practically view all national problems from their purely Ang'o-Saxon standard, limited as it is by the sole possession of one language, one literature, one history—and not even a very profound view of British and Canadian history.

Anyhow, I have allowed myself to be convinced that some of those prejudices might be alleviated by a faithful translation of what I really wrote on that occasion.

From past experience, I must say, however, that, almost certainly, not one out of fifty English-Canadian newspaper editors, to whom this will be sent personally, and who published broadcast so-called reports of my "plea for annexation", will honestly reproduce anything from this pamphlet proving that that charge was false. And so is public opinion "enlightened" in this "free British country of ours."

For my justification, I have inserted a letter from my excellent friend, Mr. C. H. CAHAN, K.C., suggesting the publication of this pamphlet; also an extract from a communication sent by him to the Montreal Gazette, in August last, when the original articles appeared in French in "Le Devoir."

HENRI BOURASSA.

Montreal, Sept. 12th, 1912.

*Letter from Mr C. H. Caban, K.C.*

Montreal, Sept. 6th 1912.

Dear Mr. Bourassa:—

*The vitality of our national life in Canada very largely depends upon the more complete understanding and harmonious co-operation of the several elements which now compose our population.*

*There is an estrangement between the Eastern and the Central Western Provinces which can only be dissipated by a more intelligent study of Eastern and Western conditions and difficulties, and by a determined effort on the part of the whole people to promote the general welfare, even at a partial sacrifice of local or sectional interests.*

*There is also the problem of reconciling racial and religious differences arising out of the fact that one-third of our people are of French descent, having distinctive temperaments and traditions, all adherents of the Roman Catholic faith, a large majority of whom are resident in this single Province of Quebec.*

*The journals of the French press of Canada are as intelligently conducted, and even more widely circulated and frequently more carefully read than journals of the English press of the same relative standing; and yet, by reason of the fact that they are published in a language absolutely unknown to English-speaking Canadians, those journals, which are published in the French language, have absolutely no influence in moulding the thought of the majority of Canadian citizens.*

*On the other hand, English journals are widely read by the Canadians of French descent, of whom a majority are bilingual; but, unfortunately, the English journalists are so utterly wanting in precise knowledge of political and social conditions in Quebec, and, therefore, so lacking in intelligent insight into and kindly sympathy with these conditions that, even though actuated by the best of goodwill, they are continually, by their ill-informed and ill-advised comments and criticisms, creating irritation and resentment in the minds of our French-speaking citizens.*

*The people of Quebec believe that their political ideals and their most cherished sentiments, are almost always misrepresented to their fellow-Canadians of French descent, and,*

*in consequence, they are often disposed to be distrustful and discouraged.*

*Every intelligent reader of your recent articles in "Le Devoir" knows that therein you were giving correct expression to the prevalent views of the people of Quebec, and that you were not, directly nor indirectly, advocating the annexation of Canada to the United States. Nevertheless, with few commendable exceptions, your English journalistic critics covertly avoided courteous consideration of Quebec opinion by falsely alleging that "Bourassa is advocating annexation." The unjustifiable resentment aroused in the minds of English readers beclouded the real issues which you have presented.*

*I wou'd like to suggest that you should publish in pamphlet form a translation into English of your recent editorials, in "Le Devoir", dealing with those prevalent political, moral and commercial tendencies which, in your opinion, make for the assimilation of Canadian life, thought, morals and manners to those which are characteristic of the United States of America.*

*I do not profess to approve in their entirety of the arguments which you have presented, nor of the conclusions which you derive therefrom; but I do sincerely believe that there is an ever-increasing number of your Canadian fellow-citizens of English descent, who desire concord and union in Canada, and who, to attain that end, are predisposed to deal frankly and fairly with issues arising out of differences of races, religions, languages and localities. To the earnest student of the conditions now existing in Canada, such a translation will be sincerely welcome.*

*I can only regret that a verbal translation will necessarily convey to your English readers so imperfect an idea of the clear and precise diction, the frequently facetious and sometimes sarcastic expressions, and, in fact, of the altogether excellent style which is so distinctively characteristic of your use of the French language in your public writings and speeches.*

*Yours very truly,*

C. H. CAHAN.

Henri Bourassa, Esq.,

Montreal, P.Q.

Extract from Mr. Cahan's letter to the Montreal  
 "Gazette", published August 3rd, 1912

The people of Quebec are as strongly opposed to annexation to the United States as are the people of the other provinces of Canada, and for exactly the same conclusive reasons; though, it is doubtless true that the majority in this province enjoy few, if any, special rights or privileges in this province which they would likely lose by annexation. As a matter of fact, it is the English-speaking and Protestant minority in the province of Quebec, who enjoy special rights and privileges in this province, which are now never invaded, but which might not be so effectually retained if Quebec should ever become a state of the American Union. Nevertheless, who would ever be so silly as to appeal to the Protestant minority of Quebec to oppose annexation to the United States on the plea that, if Quebec should become a state of the American Union, our separate Protestant schools would certainly be abolished?

Surely we may discuss these matters intelligently and dispassionately among ourselves, without being subject to gross misrepresentation and personal vilification. And yet, when recently Mr. Bourassa, in "Le Devoir", expressed a mild, though unaffected and justifiable resentment against those who, assuming that the majority in Quebec are steeped in ignorance and superstition, attempt to frighten them, as if they were infants or imbeciles, by dangling before them such political "bug-a-boos" as the prospective loss, by annexation to the United States, of their natural right to speak their own language and to worship God in accordance with the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, the English press of Canada, with a few commendable exceptions, brazenly accused him—one of the most intelligently loyal and disinterestedly patriotic of Canadians—of covertly advocating annexation to the United States! I read his articles on this subject in "Le Devoir" carefully, as they were published from day to day, and also many of the alleged translations and criticisms of them which subsequently appeared in the English press of Canada; and, despite some similarly disagreeable experiences in partisan warfare, in my earlier years, I must confess that I never before read such mendacious misrepresentations of the views of a public man as those which are attributed to Mr. Bourassa by some of his English translators and critics.

It is to me inconceivable that any intelligent and unbiassed reader of Mr. Bourassa's recent articles upon "annexation"



could have discovered in them any covert effort to advocate the annexation of Canada to the United States. Those articles merely gave expression to Mr. Bourassa's wellreasoned opinions, in which his readers may or may not fully concur, that there are in Canada certain prevalent political tendencies which make for the assimilation of Canadian thought, life, morals and manners to those which are characteristic of the United States, and that these tendencies, if persisted in, may ultimately endanger Canada's political independence of the United States.

It was, therefore, certainly shocking to one's sense of political honesty and public decency that Mr. Bourassa, who is thoroughly Canadian and British in sentiment, and who, of all Canadians, is most antagonistic to those regrettable tendencies which so frequently find expression in the social, political and commercial life of the United States, and who has merely directed public attention to similar tendencies in Canada, in the hope that once being recognized and understood they may thereafter be avoided—that he, who so frankly expounds and so fearlessly condemns all tendencies which might possibly lead to annexation, should be so falsely and flagrantly represented and so boldly and even brutally censured as an alleged advocate of annexation to the United States.

.....

G. H. CAHAN.

Montreal, August 1, 1912.

## The Spectre of Annexation

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The Montreal *Star* is suffering from a fresh and accute attack of yellow fever. In the nightmare of "German menace", it has reached the point where, to quote the picturesque phrase of the Montreal *Gazette*, it sees a torpedo in every Frankfürst sausage.

Some days ago, outdoing a lugubrious Oxford professor, it predicted the dispersion of the British fleet, the triumph of Germany, the utter destruction of the British Empire, then, in a last spasm, and with accents imitated from Homer and Ezekiel, it evoked the vision of the calamities "which are certain to flow in Canada from the passing of Neptune's trident from British to German hands". Here is the expression of its wailings:

### IS THERE A GERMAN MENACE?

The British Empire will be broken to pieces.

France will be forced to take her marching orders from Berlin.

Europe will have an overlord.

The United States will find the Monroe Doctrine and the control of the Panama Canal threatened by a Power which can command all the armies of Europe and can match the American Navy by three Dreadnoughts to one.

The Americans will have no such "hostage" as Canada to compel the world's greatest naval power to respect its wishes.

Canada will be flung upon her own resources.

British capital will be dissipated and will cease to finance our undertakings so generously.

If we remain independent, it will be on the same terms that Cuba enjoys.

If we do not govern ourselves as Washington thinks we should, we will be benevolently assimilated by the American Union.

We will then contribute more to the American Navy than—if contributed now to the British Navy—would suffice to save us.

We will lose our flag, our institutions, our system of Government, our judiciary, our power to shelter the French lan-

guage and the Roman Catholic religion, our industries, our independent development, our name, our place in history. (1)

Don't you feel your hair bristling, your flesh shudder, your spirit sink, as on the eve of torture? Are you not pierced with something akin to the anguish that must have terrorised the Titanic's passengers, when they saw the last boat leaving the ship, the leviathan sinking in the abyss, the icy water ready to grasp them in its inexorable embrace?

To undertake a discussion with the *Star* would be time lost. Seers, real or pretended, and hysterical maniacs, will have nothing to do with cold logic: they dream or they rave; they neither listen nor reason. But the most demented may have fits of lucidity, even periods of remarkable clear-sightedness.

Hence, that indirect avowal that Canada is, in the hands of the United States, a "hostage" which the American Government can use at will to impose its wishes upon Great Britain. Evidence for that opinion is in the whole history of Anglo-American relations and their consequences to Canada,—from the abandonment of Maine to the sacrifice of the Alaska boundaries, to say nothing of the free use of the St. Lawrence and the free access to our coast fisheries in the Atlantic, handed over by Great Britain to the Americans. This history is, or should be, well known to all Canadians. But, to find the perception of its teachings in the *Montreal Star*, at the very moment that gambodge journal frantically entreats the people of Canada to bleed themselves to strengthen the naval power of Britain, is curious and interesting.

To what purpose such sacrifices, if the British navy is impotent to protect us against the domination of the Americans? Such domination is always presented to us by the jingo-imperialistic school as the dreadful necessary consequence of the downfall of Britain and the victory of Germany. The *Montreal Star* itself, in its

(1) *Montreal Star*, Tuesday, July 9th, 1912.

acutest crises, when it sees the German fleet mistress of all oceans and grabbing from the United States the control of the Panama Canal, has not yet raved to the point of visioning Germany in the act of conquering Canadian territory, even should her fleet be trebly superior to the American navy.

Evidently, the bug-bear of Annexation will be again resorted to by way of frightening the babes of Canada to throw them shuddering into the grip of extreme Imperialism. It may, therefore, be of some use to pause and try, before too late, to reason, not with people already sick with fright, nor with ranters and practical jokers who are starting the panic, but with people still possessed of common sense and not yet delirious with fever.

\* \* \* \*

Every country has "national bugbears" which never lose their effect, if exploited at the proper time. Remember France, under the July Monarchy: how many cabinets were thrown down by unceasing tirades against "la perfide Albion"? The spectre of anti-clericalism, imposed by Bismarck upon the Third Republic, was used for forty years, nor has it yet gone out of fashion. It has done more harm to France and more good to Germany than the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and the payment of the Five Billions.

In Great Britain, the fear of a French invasion lasted seventy years after the disappearance of the Boulogne Camp, after Trafalgar, after Waterloo. It largely affected the attitude of the British Government at the time of the Franco-Prussian War. Dread of a Russian invasion in India is the sole explanation of the diplomatic blunders of Great Britain in Asia, and especially of the worst of them all, the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

The awakening of Asia and the predominancy of Germany in Europe are the two direst threats against Britain today. Both were systematically and patiently

prepared, long in advance, by Great Britain herself, hypnotised as she was for a century by the *French Scare* and the *Russian Scare*. Now that the results are manifest, Britain is seized with a third attack of the same trouble under a new form. The *German Scare* is a direct offspring of the two other scares. The whole thing is Britain's own creation. Those who have worked most arduously to create and develop the real German menace, are now busy in fostering the panic for the benefit of their party, or still worse, to serve their own sordid interests.

That the German Scare would not be sufficient in Canada to serve the purpose of our own jingoes they well understood. Now they couple it with the "necessity of saving France". But even if handled in a more respectable shop than of poor *La Patrie*, this grotesque attempt to exploit racial prejudices could have no effect. Unless swaddled in the treble ignorance of some unfortunate people, in remote corners of Ontario, who are obsessed by the most ludicrous misconceptions about the people in Quebec, no sensible Canadian can doubt that French-Canadians, in respect of national or international policy, are separated from France as wholly and thoroughly as their English-speaking fellow-citizens may be from Germany or the United States.

The money spent on this foolish propaganda is as utterly lost as the million dollars used in purchasing the *Niobe*;—which truth will be soon learned by the purveyors of this foolish brand of patriotism. To bring the Canadian people to the required degree of panic and folly, they must exhibit once more our familiar demon, our national bugaboo, the ever successful American Ogre. It worked wonders against the *Rouges* of 1854; it helped tremendously the Confederation plan; it ruined the campaign for Commercial Union; and lastly, it produced its full effect in the late fight against Reciprocity. It has worked for both good and evil in Canada; because, like most causes of national panics,

it operates on the instinctive fear of a real and permanent danger. Used timely by true statesmen, such as Macdonald and Blake, in 1891, it has turned the people from dangerous experiments. Exploited beyond reason by demagogues, as last year, against reciprocity, and this year, in favour of a "Big Navy" and militarism, it may eventually produce effects contrary to those intended.

\* \* \* \*

If preservation of Canada from absorption by the United States be sincerely desired, elementary precautions should be taken: the danger should not be exaggerated; its real and permanent causes should be investigated, instead of imaginary ones being invented; and efficient means of averting the peril should be thoughtfully sought.

In their fight against reciprocity, the Jingoës did the very opposite; and they are now preparing to repeat their mistake in hope to rush Canada into naval contributions.

Against reciprocity, threats of political annexation were resorted to beyond all sense; the causes and consequences of the measure were painted falsely. That those efforts were successful appears to nullify my contention. Yes, apparently. But certain victories have to bear the test of time before their true significance can be determined. The unexpected strength of undercurrents has already been demonstrated in the provincial elections in Quebec, and still more so in Saskatchewan.

In the confused scuffle of a general election, after fifteen years of administration by one party and one group of men, the causes of reversal in public sentiment are manifold. Even were the reciprocity proposals really a main cause of the defeat of the Liberal party, that implies in no way that the people of Canada, or even the people of Ontario, voted against the reciprocity pact *because* of the danger of political absorption.

Especially it does not imply that the electorate was swayed by the panic which Tory politicians and publicists endeavoured to create and keep at a high pitch. The clumsiness and lack of judgment evidenced by the Laurier Administration in their negotiations with the American government;—the stroke of madness which befell the Liberals after their defeat in Drummond-Arthabaska;—the revival of ardour and hope in the Conservatives, awakened from their long slumbers by the Nationalist campaign and victory;—the violence of appetites raised, by the hope of triumph and booty, in so many stomachs reduced for fifteen years to the meagre diet of opposition;—lastly, and perhaps more than anything else, the formidable coalition of pecuniary interests, which were, or imagined them to be, threatened by the reciprocity pact;—such were causes that helped in the victory of the Conservative party, —not to speak of the scandals in administration with which any moribund government is always honey-combed,—as much, at least, as flag worship and fear of American absorption.

In a campaign for a “Big Navy” and military Imperialism, most of the causes that militated against reciprocity and the Laurier government would fail, or even turn against the Conservative ministry.

No calculation has yet been made of the votes lost to the Conservatives, in 1911, by the grotesque and sickening exploitation of the British flag, no attempt to analyse the sentiments and disgust generated by frantic appeals to the religious faith and racial feelings of the French-Canadians against the “spectre of annexation”. In our own province, as I know pertinently, adverse votes, abstentions and disgust were numerous. Today, they would be manifold. Should the Conservative ministers and members of parliament from Quebec, most of them elected thanks to their sincere or insincere professions of nationalism, accept parts in the melodramatic play organised by the *Star* and *La Pa-*

*trie*;—should these ministers and members of parliament attempt to exploit, in favour of a Canadian Navy, or a military or naval contribution, the anti-American arguments of the *Star* or the ultra-French appeals of *La Patrie*,—the loathing would be intense.

Whether it would result to the advantage or detriment of either party, of either one or the other group of political speculators who revile each other alternately for the same misdeeds, who appeal in turn to the same passions, the same prejudices, the same cupidities, but who, in the bottom, are hand in glove, except as regards the enjoyment of spoils, which each party wants all for itself,—we, Nationalists, care very little.

Precisely because we remain utterly indifferent to party success, and irrevocably attached to the defense of our ideals, we see in the possibility of the absorption of Canada by the United States a real danger, the most permanent of all perils that threaten the permanency of the Canadian Confederation. Hence we look upon any false or exaggerated appeal to yankeephobia as an increase in the danger.

By way of throwing light on that very point, for the benefit of all, Imperialists or others, who wish as sincerely as we do to preserve the British connection and the unity of Canada, although they may favour methods and policies less efficacious, in our eyes at least, than our own, it seems to me most opportune to analyse with the utmost frankness the marked evolution that has taken place in the mind of the French-Canadian, on the question of Annexation.

## II

### WHY ANNEXATION IS NO MORE DREADED BY FRENCH-CANADIANS

In this short study, I do not intend to express mere Nationalist thoughts or feelings, but to define as impartially as possible the various opinions that are beginning to shape themselves in many French-Canadian



minds, their growing instincts and tendencies, and the results that may accrue therefrom.

French-Canadians have been the staunchest and most constant opponents of annexation to the United States. This is now a truism in history. At a time when they held in their hands the fate of the Colony, they refused to join hands with the rebels in the English colonies; they resisted the appeals of Lafayette and of France herself; they shed their blood for the defence of the British flag and institutions. Later on, they persistently opposed all annexationist movements and every fiscal or administrative policy capable of strengthening the centripetal force of the great American Republic. But they are beginning to doubt the utility of their efforts. Especially they ask themselves what they have gained by their constant loyalty to the British Crown and their unswerving devotion to the unity of Canada. In vain they look for evidences of gratitude on the part of their fellow-citizens of British origin, who have worked neither as long nor as hard as they for the building up of the common country, in the benefits of which Anglo-Canadians seem now to claim the larger share.

To take the French Canadian people for an ignorant and simple-minded population, easily led by sentiment or prejudice, is a common and deep delusion in Imperialistic circles, and even in English-speaking Canada at large. Easy to govern the French Canadians certainly are,—too much so perhaps. But like all meek people, when they get out of temper, they have a reserve power of anger which it is more difficult to appease than to prevent. Their faculty of observation is very keen. Their mind is more open and cultured than that of their English-speaking compatriots. For many generations, they have lived in Canada and America. Above all, they possess over nearly all Anglo-Canadians the enormous advantage of both languages. Hence they know what is going on beyond the bounda-

ries of their province, far more accurately than English-speaking Canadians,—even those who live in Montreal or Quebec,—know the real conditions, sentiments and thoughts of the French-Canadian people.

Gifted with a large measure of good humour and common sense, French Canadians simply shrug their shoulders when they read the common trash daily retailed against them in so many papers in Canada, in Parliaments, in some synods and pulpits, in Orange Lodges, and even on the back of old, dirty white-haired nags used every year to celebrate the glory of William of Orange and the Battle of the Boyne, a sovereign and an event so completely foreign to Canada, and her history, constitution, and actual needs and aspirations. But if the French-Canadian laughs at words, he attaches importance to laws and governmental actions, and especially to the general scope of facts, usages and customs that are pressed upon him.

Where does he find himself one hundred and forty years after his defense of Quebec against Arnold and Montgomery, one hundred years after the Battle of Chateauguay, seventy years after the unjust provisions of the Union Act of 1841? Above all, where is he forty-five years after the birth of the Federal régime, offered to him as a remedy to all his grievances and the solution of the racial problem,—that régime which, after twenty five years of existence, was defined by its principle framer, Sir John A. Macdonald, as having established “absolute equality of rights” between both races, in matters “of language and religion, of property and of persons”?

It has all ended in his being told that, in law and in fact, his rights are confined to the Province of Quebec, as those of the Indians to their reserves. His language, one of the two official idioms of the country, is excluded from teaching in nearly all the public schools for the support of which he pays his taxes. He is now threatened with a still closer restriction of the very meagre

place given to the French language in his own separate and bi-lingual schools in Ontario. The extraordinary efforts to which he is forced, in order to secure a partial usage of that same language in all the public utilities organised by the various legislatures of his country, and subsidised from the public chest in which his share of contribution falls constantly, are qualified and denounced as rebellious and demagogic.

One must hold strange delusions on the gullibility of the French Canadians, to dare put into print, in the year of grace 1912, what the *Star* published, a few days ago: "Assimilated by the American Union... we will lose... our power to shelter the French language and the Roman Catholic religion".

That nonsensical argument has been made frequently, in varying terms and on many occasions. It was resorted to in the fight against reciprocity. French Canadians do not bite at that bait; and it is high time this should be known. What is going on in English-speaking Canada they follow attentively. They know equally well the conditions under which their migrated compatriots live in the United States.

That their language, their faith, or rather their church organisation, and their national traditions, were better guarded in Canada than in the United States, they believed for a long time. But that belief is vanishing rapidly.

The hostility, ill-will or contempt heretofore manifested against them by the Americans, decrease in about the same proportion as the same disagreeable feelings grow in English-speaking Canada.

What difference, with regard to the religious situation of Roman Catholics, exists between American laws and constitution, and the constitution and laws of the English provinces of Canada? In social relations, through the newspapers, in the general habits of life, Roman Catholics are no less respected in the United States than in the most enlightened provinces of Con-

federation. In no State of the Union are they ever subject to aspersion, to ridiculous insults, to odious calumnies, yearly thrown on their heads by decrepit pontiffs of Canadian Orangeism. Nowhere, in the United States, do the French Canadians perpetually hear of their being a pack of ignorant half-breeds, or a "priest-ridden population". They are not periodically accused of conspiring with "the Hierarchy and the Pope of Rome" to put shackles on "the civil liberties" of American citizens, and "to break or undermine the laws and constitution" of the United States. Yet American Roman Catholic bishops and laity have never rendered to the Republic the immeasurable services given to Great Britain and the Canadian Confederation by the French Canadian episcopate and people.

Of course, in certain dioceses of New England especially, Franco-Americans have had to stand some stiff opposition, and their troubles are not ended. But those are problems of the internal government of the Church: they have no relation to the constitution, the flag or the nationality of the country. In proof of this, one could quote the examples of the Acadians in the Maritime Provinces, and of the French Canadians in certain Ontario dioceses, who have both known, and are still subjected to, the same troubles and difficulties.

However, a distinction must be made between the two cases. In the United States, the Protestant population and public powers remain indifferent to those quarrels, and leave the Catholic bishops and laity to settle those difficulties among themselves. In Canada, Orange Lodges and demagogic politicians come to the rescue of anglicising bishops, and help them in their measures of persecution and vexation.

\* \* \* \*

What about public education, religious teaching at school, or separate schools? In what respect, on these grounds, does the situation of French Canadians and Roman Catholics, in the United States, differ from that

of French Canadians and Roman Catholics in those English provinces of Canada where separate schools do not exist or have been abolished? In this only, that in the United States, French Canadians and Roman Catholics never had any special rights, whilst, in a large portion of Canada, they have been robbed of what they possessed. Yet those rights had been guaranteed in law and by the most solemn pledges of Canadian statesmen, and, what should have been still more binding, by the debt of gratitude toward them incurred by the British Crown and English-speaking Canada.

In Ontario, the only province where, because only of insuperable legal obstacles, the constitutional basis of Catholic education has not yet been destroyed, the French Canadian minority, and all other Roman Catholics, had to endure violent and repeated attacks against their denominational schools. Now they are threatened, as regards the teaching of their maternal language, by an odious régime, the like of which could be found only in Prussian Poland.

That brings us to the language question. To speak today of the "shelter" given in Canada to the French idiom, and certain to be lost by annexation to the United States, is but the raillery of ignorance or bad taste. The legal use of the French language once existed in Manitoba and in the North West Territories. It has been suppressed with the complicity of the Parliament of Canada. In none of the English provinces does the French language hold today the slightest legal privilege, or find any broader or more hospitable "shelter" than in the American Republic. In several of these provinces, and notably in the most important, Ontario, use of that language,—most perfect of modern times, vernacular of diplomacy and science, knowledge of which is necessary to any cultured man,—is opposed by an odious and grotesque coalition of prejudice, hatred, hostility and ignorance, the like of which could not be found in the wildest States of the American Republic, where

brigandage and Lynch Laws are supreme. The silly trash printed in some of the Ontario daily papers would put to shame the weekly editors of New Mexico and Oklahoma.

\* \* \* \*

“But”, it may be replied, “for all that, the French language remains official in the Federal Parliament. That privilege would never be preserved under the American constitution”. Does anyone really believe that such a privilege will long be prized by the French Canadians, if reduced to a literal translation of ill-worded laws, official reports, and parliamentary rantings?

Thanks to the incredible ignorance of English-speaking statesmen, magistrates, barristers, civil servants,—with the exception of some of those who live in the Province of Quebec,—the use of the French language has almost totally disappeared from parliamentary debates, as from proceedings and pleas before the Supreme Court, the Exchequer Court, and the Railway Commission.

But what is still more characteristic, is the hostility or indifference shown by most English-speaking Canadians of all classes, toward the maternal language of one-fourth of their fellow-citizens, who constitute the most ancient group of the population of Canada,—that group which has undergone the heaviest sacrifices for the maintenance of Canadian unity and the preservation of the rights of the British Crown in America.

The sole University of Harvard, in the United States, does more for high French culture than all of the English-speaking universities of Canada, with the exception of McGill. French is more frequently heard, and better spoken, in well educated circles in Boston, New York or Washington, than in Toronto, or even in the English-speaking sets of Montreal, in population the fifth French centre of the world, in the very heart of this province of Quebec, where the Anglo-Protestant

minority enjoys the most privileged situation ever granted to a religious or national minority.

This leads us to a study of the particular position of Quebec, the "reserve" where the French Canadians live as freely as the Iroquois at St. Régis or Caughnawaga.

### III

#### *THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC AND ITS "PRIVILEGES"*

In its constitutional position, Quebec differs in no way from the other provinces of Confederation. Its autonomy, the authority of its legislature, the jurisdiction of its tribunals, are exactly similar to those of the other provinces in Eastern Canada, and of British Columbia,—with this difference, that the Anglo-Protestant minority in Quebec is possessed of some additional privileges of which the French minority, in the other provinces, is deprived or has been dispossessed. Such are the clauses in the Constitution relating to the use of the English language in the legislature, in legal proceedings, etc. The same rights were once enjoyed by the French minority in Manitoba and in the North West Territories; but they have been either suppressed by the Parliament of Canada, or with its tacit consent, under the pretence that French Canadians are now less numerous there than Mormons or Galicians. What would happen, I wonder, if, on some future day when Jews have become more numerous in Quebec than Anglo-Saxons—by no means an impossible contingency—the legislature of Quebec should substitute Yiddish for English, as the second official language of the Province? Such also is another clause of the Constitution, under which the legislature of Quebec is forbidden to modify at will the boundaries or the number of the twelve electoral divisions commonly called "English Counties".

In those texts of law, the French majority might legitimately read the traces of an insulting distrust, and

find it the more unjustifiable since they alone, in all Confederation, have never attempted to encroach in the slightest degree upon the rights and privileges of the English-speaking minority. But precisely because the French Canadians have never thought of treating others with no shorter measure of justice than that which they expect for themselves, they have raised no objection against those special guarantees. That on no occasion whatever, the Anglo-Protestant minority of Quebec has been called upon to appeal, for its protection, either to the courts of justice or to the supreme tribunal of public opinion, is, indeed, in their estimation, their proudest claim on national recognition.

\* \* \* \*

Let us now consider the peculiar situation of the French Canadians in the Quebec "reserve". Traders in loyalty and preachers of imperialism never fail to remind us, with more insistence than courtesy or historical accuracy, of the "extraordinary privileges" enjoyed by the French Canadians. They seem to forget that those privileges were obtained only after a century of persistent struggle, and deserved by constant faithfulness to Great Britain. It is mainly when they speak of our privileges in Quebec, that the exhibitors of the spectre of annexation never fail to shout: "Think of all you would lose, if Great Britain were defeated by Germany, and Canada, in consequence, devoured by the American ogre".

As to the "certain", or merely probable, victory of Germany, and the consequential annexation of Canada to the United States, I need not argue at present. Let us take for granted, for a moment, the ill-omened prophecies of the creators of phantoms. Have they ever thought of answering this simple question?

*If Canada were annexed to the American Republic, and the province of Quebec became one of the United States, which of the rights, usages, customs, laws, codes,*



*or charters, existing today in this province, would be abrogated, curtailed or modified in any way, shape or form?*

That far-reaching question the French Canadians never thought of putting to themselves so long as they had no reason to doubt that Canada as a whole was their Country, to which they owed all their devotion and in which they could claim their proportionate share of national advantages. But for some years, a new brand of patriotism is offered to them, a newly invented national worship is tentatively imposed upon them. Tremendous efforts are exerted to compel their consent to extraordinary sacrifices on behalf of the Empire, and to entangle them in an immense combination of naval and military forces, the political and strategical control of which would remain perforce in the hands of a government and parliament submitted to the sole will of the people of the United Kingdom.

On the other hand, they have been brought, through a long succession of checks and humiliations, whose end is not yet in sight, to realise that outside their Quebec "reserve", they possess no more and no fewer privileges than they would enjoy in the United States; and that they are treated, by their English-speaking Canadian brothers, with infinitely less regard than are their compatriots in the United States by the descendants of the "*Bostonnais*"—the traditional enemy against whom they defended, for a century, the integrity of the Canadian territory, and later on the honour of the British flag.

They hear proclaimed in various tones: "Shed your blood for the Empire and pour your money into the imperial chest; help us in defending the neutrality of Belgium, in saving France and crushing Germany. Endure silently all humiliations in Ontario and the West,—they are but the moderate price you pay for the extraordinary "privileges" you enjoy, and especially for the most glorious of all, that of being citizens of a

vaster empire than has been, and upon which the sun never sets. Should you refuse to worship our Gods, you will fall into the abominable American Republic, the Gehenna where there can be for you but tears and gnashing of teeth.”

To changes of religion or of party the French Canadian is not predisposed. A strict religionist, he is not at all superstitious, and not easily frightened by ghost stories. When he hears some uproarious hubbub near his house, he unchains the watchdog, and runs to the poultry and the milkhouse rather than resort to exorcisms.

Of Norman descent, he rarely closes a bargain without ascertaining beforehand what he must give and what he will receive. By the fine phrases of horse-dealers and traders in tinsel he is not easily deceived.

This perpetual vaunting of the British Empire and unceasing denunciation of the “iniquitous” American Republic have brought him to closer comparisons. In the process of observation, he gradually gives himself to that inborn instinct which leads all independent minds to resist the imposition of admiration and worship, and to look with growing interest upon persons or objects continually offered to his execration.

To the mind of the French Canadian, the question above put to enthusiastic Imperialists comes naturally every time a new assault is made against the exclusiveness of his Canadian patriotism. In the double sphere of law and fact he looks for an answer; and what does he find?

In one single clause of the American constitution reference is made to what he regards as his natural inheritance. It is in the first of the Additional Articles, which bears that “*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof*”.

In this he finds nothing to make him shudder; first, because the Catholic Church is not “established” in Que-

bec, at least in the sense meant by the framers of the American constitution; and second, that clause touches only on the powers of Congress, and interferes in no way with State jurisdiction.

As to the teaching of any religion or language at school, as to school laws in general, or the use of languages in legislatures or State courts, there is no reference whatever in the American constitution. Therefore, all those questions remain, in virtue of the Xth Additional Article, within the exclusive jurisdiction of States.

As a matter of fact, under that Article X, the Province of Quebec and its legislature would enjoy a much larger measure of autonomy in the American Union than under the constitution of Canada.

\* \* \* \*

Let us summarise.

The traditional horror of the French Canadian for Annexation has almost totally disappeared: he has ceased to look upon it as the worst danger to his creed and nationality. He has found out that the pledges of equality of rights, of an equitable allotment of privileges and burdens, given to him by the Fathers of Confederation, have hardly been kept up. Above all, he is forced to acknowledge that his English-speaking fellow-citizens do not entertain ardent feelings of gratitude toward him, nor even a simple spirit of justice. Finally, he is beginning to ask himself if he was not duped into the bargain.

“But”, it may be objected, “this is a regular plea in favour of annexation—or at least a theory to demonstrate that the French Canadians are prepared to accept annexation”.

It is neither one nor the other.

First, my personal sentiments I leave out of this study. For various motives, I am still more British and less American than the majority of my fellow-citizens, either of British or of French origin. What I

have endeavoured to do is simply to bring into synthetic form, scattered opinions, accidental observations, intermittent impressions, which I have gathered, these late years, in most diverse circles. The sentiments growing therefrom are still incoherent. They have not yet coalesced into the form of a constant mentality or a continuous current of opinion. But they are gradually coordinated in that direction. As the atoms of a gaseous substance are solidified under high pressure, so the separatist feelings of the French Canadians may grow, thanks to ultra-imperialist appeals, the repeated kicks they receive in several of the English provinces, and the stupid efforts made to keep them enclosed in their Quebec "reserve". Whether that deep and still unperceived evolution shall be accelerated, retarded or stopped, depends entirely upon the foresight and goodwill of the English-speaking majority in Canada. What would happen in case those who wish to assimilate the French Canadian, either in Church or State matters, should succeed in their efforts, is almost needless to say.

In 1848, Lord Elgin thus wrote to Lord Grey, then Colonial Secretary:

"I for one am deeply convinced of the impolicy of such attempts to denationalise the French. Generally speaking they produce the opposite effect from that intended, causing the flame of national prejudice and animosity to burn more fiercely. But suppose them to be successful, what would be the result? You may perhaps *Americanise*, but, depend upon it, by methods of this description you will never *Anglicise* the French inhabitants of the province. Let them feel, on the other hand, that their religion, their habits, their prepossessions, their prejudices if you will, are more considered here than in other portions of this vast continent, who will venture to say that the last hand which waves the British flag on American ground may not be that of a French Canadian?" (1)

Those words of the most eminent of all the Governors of Canada, previous to Confederation, remain true forever. Truer perhaps they are today than forty

(1) "Letters and Journals of James, Eighth Earl of Elgin," edited by Theodore Waldron, C. B.; London, John Murray, 1873, page 54.

years ago; just as this reply of a Montreal Scotch tory to Lord Durham:—"Canada must be English even if it should cease to be British"—remains the most candid expression of the opinions of that class of English-speaking Canadians, in whom patriotism and devotion to the flag, the Constitution and the Crown, are swayed by racial bigotry and exclusiveness.

In what measure and under what form the real danger of American absorption exists, and how it can be efficiently avoided, remains to be considered.

#### IV

#### *THE REAL DANGER: THE MORAL AMERICANISATION OF ANGLO-CANADIANS*

Whatever the near or distant future of Canada may be, the French Canadian is still essentially Canadian. Profoundly British he also remains,—by habit, instinct or reason, if not by a warmer sentiment which his partner of British origin has not cared much to cultivate. From that double point of view, Canadian and British, the French Canadian is prepared to make new sacrifices in order to maintain the unity and independence of Canada and its connection with Great Britain, and consequently to avert any danger of the absorption of Canada by the United States. But before he makes those sacrifices, he puts two conditions, equally essential in his mind to the object desired. First, the welfare of Canada should predominate over that of Britain herself, if necessary. Second, English-speaking Canadians should also make their share of sacrifice, cease to consider the French as the outcasts of Confederation, and make up their minds to treat them as co-workers, partners and brothers.

Really, the French Canadian is amazed at the attitude of his English-speaking fellow citizens. Of the sincerity of their patriotism and the genuineness of their love for the motherland, he, at times, doubts se-

riously. Their thunderous asseverations of loyalty he cannot reconcile with their stupefying blindness in the face of the real dangers that threaten the unity of Confederation, and still less with their persistency in letting the peril grow, and even in accelerating its progress.

He finds it difficult to admit that the most efficient contribution to the grandeur and safety of the Empire should be to wage war on all the seas of the globe, before the most elementary precautions have been taken to organise the defense of Canadian territory ;—especially when he reads upon every page of history, and even in the avowals of Imperialists, the glaring evidence that the British fleet is impotent to protect Canada against the United States, the only nation really capable of conquering its territory.

That Canada can and must “save” Britain and France, preserve the neutrality of Belgium, sink the German fleet in the Northern Sea, keep Austria and Italy at bay in the Mediterranean, seems absurd to him when he has still so much to do to put his own house in order; when years of intense effort and fabulous sums of money are still required to build up, on Canadian territory, these essential works with which Great Britain has been amply supplied for centuries.

His opinions on these matters he does not pretend to impose; but he thinks he has the right to express them and to urge them, on this as on every other question of interest to Canada, without being taxed with disloyalty, he, the oldest and most thoroughly tested of all Canadians. He still believes in a policy that has been considered for a century, by British statesmen, as the most efficient to maintain the political unity of the Empire and assure its material safety. To that policy he thinks he can remain faithful without being constantly accused of cowardice, rebellion and ingratitude by people who have done less than he himself has done to preserve Canada as a British possession.

But his perception of the striking contrast between the Imperialists' professions of faith, and their attitude on questions of vital interest to Canada, astonishes him above all and leads him seriously to doubt the sincerity of most of those Canadians who make such a display of frantic loyalty and exalted imperialism.

*"Let the flag and constitution be saved"*, shout the jingoes.

"All right", replies the French Canadian; "but, before defending the flag and the constitution against enemies without, that have not yet attacked them, is it not more pressing to preserve them from enemies within, who tear down the flag of national unity and break the constitution?"

To worship the flag and constitution is quite proper; but it is better still to respect the principles, the traditions and the right, of which flag is but the emblem and constitution the formula.

The flag the French Canadian has ever respected; by the Constitution he always stood. Can they say as much, those who are making of the flag—the symbol of harmony—an object of national dissension, the signal of the assault of might against right, the standard of brutal domination by the majority over the minority? Can they testify the same of themselves, those who never cease to distort and restrict the letter of the Law in order to more effectually violate its spirit?

*"Let Canada be saved from American conquest, the consequence of German supremacy"*.

Why do you not seek first to guard yourselves against the universal contagion of American ideals, morals and mentality, with which your family life, your intellectual and social atmosphere are already permeated? This moral absorption, the prelude of political domination, is more to be dreaded than the catastrophes predicted by the howling dervishes of Imperialism.

Just test yourselves!

Americans you already are by your language, your nasal accent, your common slang, your dress, your daily habits; by the Yankee literature with which your homes and clubs are flooded; by your yellow journals and their rantings; by your loud and intolerant patriotism; by your worship of gold, snobbery and titles.

Americans you are precisely by what constitutes the deepest line of cleavage between both our races: your system of so called "national schools", a servile copy of the American model, under which your children's mind, passing through the same intellectual roller, is formed or rather deformed to the perfect imitation of little Yankees—whilst we have remained faithful to the old British principle of respect to the liberty of conscience of both father and child.

In all those spheres, French Canadians have been better preserved from American contagion, thanks to their language, their French speech, to Canada the safest of national preservatives, which some of you so foolishly endeavour to eradicate from our country.

Unfortunately, in the sphere of public life, where we live side by side with you, but where you dominate by your numbers and language, you are americanising us as thoroughly as yourselves.

V

THE AMERICANISATION OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE  
—THE IMMIGRATION PERIL—EAST  
VERSUS WEST

*"Let British institutions be saved"*, say you.

Granted; but so much is worth the spirit, so much the letter, so much the soul, so much the body. The spirit that gives life to national institutions and determines their character is to be found in public morals, in the mentality of statesmen, politicians and publicists. These are the sources from which the national spirit springs and in which it takes its nature and tendencies.



In their external fabric, Canadian institutions are but partially British. Our federal régime is largely imitated from the American constitution. Moreover, the inner soul of our national life has passed through a period of deep evolution, and so becomes more and more every day a simple replica of American civilisation,—with this difference, that in the United States, public morals and administration have made marked progress in reform, whilst in Canada their degradation is still increasing.

Americans we are by the despotism of party machines, by the abominable abuse of patronage, by the sway of corporations and bosses, by the venality of our politicians, by the pest of log-rolling and lobbying in our parliaments, by the boodling with which our public bodies, federal, provincial or municipal, are infested, by the quick disappearance of the laws of honour from finance, from trade transactions, and even from the practice of liberal professions.

A few years ago, in a private conversation, a high official of one of the most important Canadian railway companies stated that the parliament at Ottawa was the most "costly" of all the legislatures with which he had to deal in America. That prices have gone down since I doubt very much.

We are fast approaching the day when, as fifteen or twenty years ago in the United States, it will be forbidden to any man careful of his honour and reputation to aspire to representative functions. No one, unless possessed of ample wealth, will be able to satisfy the mob's cupidity without accepting dishonourable help; and how can the honourable wish to associate with a pack of crooked politicians?

\* \* \* \*

In the social and economical order, where do we stand in Canada? Canadian labour organisation is practically in the hands of American Unions. American capital is invading our industries, and grasping our

forests, water powers and public lands. Speculation in the American stock-exchange is fed by the savings of our banks, to the deep detriment, in times of crisis, of Canadian trade. A large portion of our means of transportation are but the "adjuncts" of American railways.

To radically stop that process of economical penetration may be impossible. That Canada finds in it considerable material advantage nobody denies. But in our eyes, national safety is more than material wealth; and some effort should be made to diminish at least the direst consequences of that economical conquest.

On several instances, nationalist "demagogues" have called the attention of public powers to that menace. Statesmen laughed and shrugged their shoulders. Some of the stoutest patriots of today even struck very nice bargains with the invaders. Countless are those staunch loyalists, who dream of nothing but war and slaughter on behalf of Britain, but who are always ready to sell any part of the national patrimony, provided they get their commission.

When they writhe with anguish at the sole thought of the danger to be incurred by Canada in case we sold a few bales of hay to the Americans,—or when they entreat us to go help and sink German ships in order to "save our institutions",—it is our turn to shrug our shoulders and laugh at the comedians.

\* \* \* \*

*"Let our national character be preserved".*

Very well, but how can we believe in the sincerity or lucidity of those who see nothing but threats in the Black Sea, the Mediterranean or the North Sea, but who obstinately shut their eyes on a peril growing in the midst of Canada, from Lake Superior to the Rockies.

The same people who wish now to entangle us in all imperial wars and difficulties, have either favoured or tacitly accepted a criminal immigration policy, thanks to which Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan

are fast becoming foreign to the older provinces in population, habits, traditions, aspirations, requirements, and social and political ideals. This means that the formidable influence of heterogeneous human forces deepens still further the line of cleavage between East and West, already so profoundly marked by differences in climate, soil and production. In order to check the force of segregation and help in the work of unification, we French Canadians have offered our aid in endeavouring to plant through those immense territories outposts from the old population of Quebec, so as to reproduce there, as far as possible, the traditional and basic conditions of Confederation, and oppose to the invasion of American language, morals and traditions, the bulwark of French language, morals and traditions.

How were such efforts and attempts received?

All sorts of obstacles and vexations were raised against us. The importation of Galicians, Doukobors, Scandinavians, Mormons, or Americans of all races, was more encouraged than the settlement of French Canadians or the immigration of French-speaking Europeans, whom we could have easily assimilated. To preserve Canada from the danger of being "Frenchified", as he boldly stated, a deputy-minister of the Interior was allowed, without the slightest blame, to claim from England the "graduates" of jails and workhouses, and proffer a helping hand to the human derelicts gathered up by the Salvation Army and the Church Army. Steamship and railway companies, subsidised by the Federal exchequer, which receives contributions from French Canadian as well as from other rate-payers, bring immigrants from the slums of Liverpool to Winnipeg, at a lesser cost than the hardy sons of Quebec and other eastern farmers must pay for transportation to Manitoba.

Within a few years, French Canadians in the West were deprived of their schools, of the official recogni-

tion of their language, and of all that could have contributed in attracting them to the settlement of that national domain, one third of it paid for by their money. When, standing on the constitution of Canada and the solemn pledges of the most eminent statesmen who made Confederation, they demanded justice, this was the brutal rebuff: "You are less numerous than we are in the West; you are there outnumbered by the Mormons. Besides, this is an English country. If you are not satisfied, then stay in your "reserve", or get out of the Dominion".

In Ontario, their increase is denounced as a national peril. "Ontario does not want a France of Louis the Fourteenth", wrote not long ago a missionary in the columns of the *Toronto Globe*. Presumably, Sicilians with their knives, Polish Jews and Syrians are nearer to the heart of that apostle.

After all that, can anyone wonder if the French Canadian no more feel the thrill of joy or pride when he hears of "Canadian unity", "British institutions", or "flag worship"?

\* \* \* \*

In the true interest of their cause, the champions of the imperialistic crusade have but one thing to do :— to organise a set campaign for the purpose of bringing Confederation back to its former basis, to restore to French-Canadians possession of those rights of which they have been deprived in half the provinces of Canada, to uproot that idiotic hatred which designs their reduction to the legal situation of Red Skins, and above all to fight strenuously that microbe of Americanism which is infesting Canada as a whole, and English-speaking Canada in particular.

That would be the real test of their sincerity and the only means of their obtaining tangible and enduring results. Should they fail to make the attempt, those stout champions of Imperialism will bring cool-headed people to the conclusion that some of them are

purely led by the thirst of decorations or the snobbishness of titled parvenus, and that the rest, animated by still more sordid motives, are under the sway of secret donations, or interested, like some members of the Admiralty Board, in the making of warships and weapons.

\* \* \* \*

In the above pages, it may be found that I have rather severely brought to task our English-speaking fellow-citizens, or rather a certain class of their public men and journalists. In justice, the share which we, French-Canadians, have contributed to national degradation must be shown.

# *National Disintegration*

## *Responsibility of French Canadians*

### I

#### *POLITICIANS*

In the process of national disintegration just described,—violation of the federal pact and degradation of the public mind—what share of responsibility rests on us, French Canadians?

On the former point, we have sinned, and grievously sinned, by complicity and by omission:—active complicity of politicians and journalists, passive complicity of the people; omission by both of proper resistance, of positive duty, of disinterested effort. The complicity of our representatives and publicists is to be found in every one of the national crimes that I have denounced, in every spoliation perpetrated in the English provinces against the Catholic or French-speaking minority. What is still worse, the multiplied betrayals of the leaders have been benignly absolved by the mass of the people, either by apathy, timidity or, more frequently, by a foolish party blindness.

These faults have not been committed merely under the dissolvent effect of government favours, which reach but a very limited number of individuals. We have not failed under exceptional circumstances only, or under any particular régime, or when seduced by one man's personal charm, prestige or eloquence.

These faults we have committed and repeated constantly, for the last thirty years, under all régimes, to the benefit of all parties, under the guidance of all leaders. Party blindness is the main cause of our weakness. To this fact, we have clear evidence in what

has happened after the fall of every government. Then, the men in power are violently charged with cowardice, prevarication and betrayal, by the French Canadian representatives in opposition. Then, the turn of these having come for office, they accomplish identical deeds, or help in their perpetration. The only justification of any set of ministers is to recall the misdeeds of their opponents, who, either by necessity or by tactics, become, in their turn, the hypocritical denouncers of the vices they practised yesterday and are prepared to practise tomorrow. It is no more a struggle between good and evil, not even a reaction against downward progression. It is but the ignoble dispute of equally vile passions on the same level of cynical cowardice. They are all splashing about in the same cesspool.

“We have stolen, we have lied, we have betrayed, true: but you also, have betrayed, lied and stolen, and more often and more deeply. And the day you have your chance, you will do it again”.

What is more disgusting still, is that in every one of the attacks carried against the strategical points of our national situation, the road was shown to the enemy, treason and defeat were glorified and even prepared, by the most conspicuous representatives of the French Canadian people

According to Drumont and the anti-Semites, in order to understand the auto-da-fes of Jews in Spain, one must read the history of the wars waged against the Moors. In each besieged town, do they claim, some Jew was always to be found ready to open the postern to the Saracen army.

Unfortunately, to explain our defeats, our national pride has not the chance of finding some personage akin to the historical or legendary Jew. In every place, abandoned or surrendered, the betrayal was consummated by one of ours, the capitulation signed by our own leaders, and, alas! almost invariably accepted without protest by the political army and the people. To public

honours the road of national dishonour has led most of the cowards and renegades; whilst those who have endeavoured to persevere in the path of duty, and remain faithful to the flag, have reaped but insults and coldness.

This odious part has come to look so natural that in every period of crisis and struggle, French Canadian politicians are found to accept, nay, to offer themselves to party leaders for the accomplishment of that disgracing work.

In the course of the twelve years that I passed in Parliament, at Ottawa, I can remember but one sitting during which the debate was conducted entirely by French Canadian members. The smoking room, the bar and the gambling dens had been deserted by the representatives and natural "champions" of the French Canadian people; they had gathered in the House of Commons to listen and applaud their colleagues. This was the day when the last vestige of the legal rights of the French language in the West was abolished. Most of the French Canadian representatives, who addressed the House that day, spoke in defense of the spoliation. The heartiest and most numerous applause that saluted the betrayal, worse than defeat, were given by French hands. It was a French Canadian who invoked against his own compatriots the brutal maxim which Bismarck applied solely to the enemies of his country. Without the slightest blush, he asserted that the French Canadians had lost their rights west of Lake Superior, because forsooth they had been outnumbered by Mormons and Galicians! This was applauded like the rest, and more perhaps than aught else. He who uttered it has become a national leader, and most of those who spoke in the same vein have succeeded in raising themselves to important positions in public life or on the bench.



I need not go into more particulars, nor give any other example; this study is not meant to put any individual on trial, nor to raise a party quarrel. But let one read over again our political annals for the last thirty years, and give special attention to those periods and circumstances under which the Federal compact was put again in question, when the principle of equal rights for both races was assailed, and the position of Catholic and French minorities hampered. It will be found, that under all régimes and with both parties in turn, those ignominious manifestations of national degradation, that same alacrity in betrayal and cowardice, invariably showed themselves.

In order to justify their lowliness, our modern politicians have gone to the point of falsifying history and distorting the thought, work and tactics of Canada's greatest men in the past. Papineau's memory, with his proud and noble hatred of covert "deals", weighed heavily on their shoulders; so they set themselves to soil his name and make slight of his work. Then, under the name and remembrance of his two great successors they dared, with a sacrilegious audacity, look for a shelter,—as if there could be any similarity in origin or nature between their cowardice and Lafontaine's unwavering firmness, between their weakness and Cartier's combativeness, whatever his moral inferiority to Lafontaine.

I do not wish to throw cold water on the enthusiasm of those who have undertaken to raise a monument to the memory of that great statesman; but at times, I feel like telling them: Before you get Cartier's physical features to be moulded in bronze on a stone pedestal,—a commemoration of a dead man by inanimate materials,—why not try first to revive his indefatigable energy and splendid spirit in the soul of the nation and of its leaders?

II

*THE PEOPLE*

Had the politicians and journalists alone degenerated, the evil would be but half disquieting. Those morbid crises are felt in the political life of any country, at intervals more or less frequent, and for a longer or shorter time. But in becoming corrupt, our politicians and parties have polluted the nation itself.

To the low level of their representatives and political educators, the vast majority of French Canadians, I know, have not yet gone down. But nations have the rulers they deserve. To explain some of their complications, the French Canadians may undoubtedly plead the excuse of having been deceived in good faith, with several extenuating circumstances as well. Most of the time, they had no other alternative but to choose between two sets of humbug politicians, who differed only in their party shibboleths, and who deceived, stole and derided them in turn. This is undoubtedly the best excuse of our people.

*"They are all chips of the same block".—"Dog-bitten or bitch-bitten is all alike to us":* — Such are the disenchanting formulas with which are ended most of the popular disputes on the respective merits of politicians and parties. If those words were uttered in a tone of anger, indicating that the people's energy is awakening and getting ready to chastise all culprits ! If hope was given to those who endeavour to raise the moral level of our public life, that their efforts will receive from the people a constant help, and not a mere accidental push ! But no, those axioms of the popular common sense seem to be merely dictated by a kind of practical, half-humorous philosophy, a mixture of ill-meant Christian resignation and Mohammedan fatalism, without the Turk's energy.

May I be permitted a realistic comparison ? The attitude of our people towards their politicians reminds

one of those handsome Neapolitan beggars, intelligent, sound of body and mind, frugal, who slumber in the sun on the enchanted shores of Sorrento, Amalfi or Castellamare. Once in a while, when bitten too hard, they plunge their hand in their red shirt, and squeeze with their thumb and finger the most voracious of their parasites. But of cleaning themselves thoroughly they would never think; and with a fierce side-glance they would look upon the well-meaning intruder who would dare advise them to change their shirt.

Then, it must be admitted that some of the conquered peoples' characteristics show themselves in our national temperament and through our public life. It is verily born of conquest, that facility with which our people take the lesson of subserviency taught to them by politicians interested in making them share the responsibility of their betrayals. Another result of conquest is that disposition to submit without protest, and especially without resistance, to all insults and encroachments. A third is that childish revenge of empty words spent on denouncing the Jews, swearing at the Irish, and depicting the whole of the English-speaking people as coalesced against the French, instead of winning the respect of all races by struggling for our rights and showing respect for ourselves. A fourth is that tribal or parochial selfishness that has brought the people of Quebec to lose all active interest in the fate and grievances of the various French groups in the other provinces.

\* \* \* \*

That the people and politicians of the other provinces have frequently failed in the accomplishment of their national duty, I have proven, I think, conclusively. Against their pledged word and the Federal compact they have sinned heavily and frequently. Shall I be counted among those whose aggrieved conscience tells them that they have abandoned the field of resistance and kept for St. Jean Baptiste orations the flames of

their indignant patriotism? In the necessity of telling the truth, the whole truth, to our English-speaking fellow-citizens I believe unreservedly. But I believe also in the duty of confessing courageously our own faults.

I have endeavoured to summarise the list of the most grievous wrongs perpetrated in English Canada against our French-speaking fellow citizens. Should I fail to state that the people of Quebec have been, by their weakness and the blind favour given to traitors and renegades of their own blood, accomplices in the perpetration of those wrongs, I would be remiss in my most essential duty.

On English-speaking statesmen and journalists undoubtedly rests an obligation to respect the terms of the Federal pact, either in the government of the nation or in the administration of each and every one of the English provinces, no matter what be the attitude of the people and politicians in Quebec, or the numerical strength of the French minority in the other provinces. Similarly in Quebec, we have and we practise the duty of respecting the rights of the Anglo-Protestant minority, in spite of any unjust treatment that may be meted out to French Canadians elsewhere. But after all, account must be taken of the mentality, temperament and instincts, good or bad, of the people with whom one lives or deals.

I have accused our English-speaking fellow-citizens, and rightly, I think, of ill-knowing us, and even of making no effort to understand us. We know them better, but we act as if we did not understand them. Forgetting that a Britisher generally ends in raising to the highest degree of his estimation those against whom he grumbles most, we seem to rather beg their favour at the risk of deserving their contempt.

We should never forget that splendid lesson of energy which was given to us by Mr. Cahan, when the rights of the Keewatin minority were wiped off. Rough

it looked to many: roughly true it was, and above all richly deserved.

I will not go the length of saying that we could, if we would, rule Confederation, or that if we could we should.

But our right of partnership in the great national association we can and we must exercise in its entirety. Our privileges we can and must claim. Our obligations we can and must execute to the last. This, I state most emphatically and unreservedly.

To make of the province of Quebec, of its political, intellectual and social influence, the pivot of our action in Confederation and the rallying centre of all the French groups in Canada, is one of our first duties and most essential obligations. In the degree in which we fail in that work and deprive of our protection the feeble outshoots detached from the trunk, we fail in all our duties:—Duty to God who gave us intelligence of our national situation and the means of preserving it; duty to our transplanted fellow-citizens, who look to the province of Quebec as the source of their inspiration and moral comfort; duty to ourselves, in being true to the most sublime and fruitful of all callings, that of champion of right and justice, which was the secret of the power and greatness of France.

Above all, we fail in our duty to the British Crown and the noblest portion of the British people, who once thought us high-minded and strong enough, morally, to share with them in the work of national construction, and whom we are seemingly endeavouring to convince that we would rather fall back to the rank and station of well-fed slaves.

### III

#### *THE DEGRADATION OF PUBLIC SPIRIT*

On that point, I have confessed from the start that we are no less infected than our English-speaking

fellow citizens. That we are worse is perhaps truer. At least, the symptoms of the disease are more numerous and frequent. It seems as if, with us, the whole organism was more affected and weakened. Of political thieves we have, on the whole, no more than they have. The like of some of their pirates of the highest grade we have not yet produced; but of the small brand we have more than enough. To the various public bodies of the country, we have, I am afraid, supplied more than our share of petty pilferers.

English-speaking boodlers divide on the basis of partnership with charters and conscience purchasers, with dealers in parliamentary votes and subsidies, with traders in high offices of state, with tenderers for public contracts and suppliers of electoral funds. Ours accept more willingly to lick the plates and take their share in the garbage baskets and swill-pails. This is another effect of conquest.

In the results of those operations the same difference is to be found. After he has "delivered the goods", the English boodler generally recovers all his liberty on such public questions upon which he has sold neither his vote nor his influence. Some of them even, after they have built a large fortune, become stout champions of the national welfare. This is most natural to them, since their personal gains, disguisedly derived from the public chest, represent no small proportion of the wealth of the country.

For a much lesser pittance, the French Canadian boodler sells himself soul and body. He becomes the thing of his purchaser. I have known, in Ottawa, a band of members of parliament, from our province, who had constituted themselves a solid phalanx at the back of a powerful railway company. They had sold themselves for their upkeep. A few dozens of bottles of wine, whiskey and mineral water—not to mention the cigars,—was the only price paid by the company for their services and their votes. There was no appar-

tionment between themselves. One of the gang, who watered all with moderation and equity, had the keeping of the victuals. It was *en masse*, as a herd, not as individuals, that they had sold themselves.

Indeed, it is worthwhile noticing the difference in attitude of the lobbyists and log-rollers, when they deal with one kind or the other. With the English hoodlers they act seriously, quite business-like. Vendors' and purchasers' eyes meet with metallic glitterings. They know and understand each other. They transact on a footing of equality, and strike a business bargain.

For our own small pilferers, legislation brokers feel a kind of despising pity easily detected. True, they have for them a certain liking, and very naturally, for they get them cheap. To the votes in committee or in the house they lead them, as cattle drovers bring their herd to the water trough, which literally happens frequently, before or after the vote.

Practices in electoral corruption are marked with the same shades of difference. Bold acts of brigandage, as have been revealed in judicial or parliamentary inquiries (such as the "*Minnie M*" epopee), are more frequent in the English provinces, and gin and white-whiskey feastings in Quebec.

The same characteristic differences are to be found in another source of public abuses and depravation, I mean the famous institution known as "patronage". Whilst French Canadians quarrel on bones, English Canadians snatch the fat pieces, in which they prove very practical. Unreasonable and extravagant in their exigencies they show themselves just as much as our people. Like us, they but too often subordinate national interests to local ambitions, to the cupidity of one province, county or town. The modification of the tariff or of any general policy they at times demand and exact, at the expense of the economical balance of the country, for the sake of private or local exigencies; but they do not go as far as we do in keeping up a ridicu-

lous parochial spirit, or the constant preoccupation of scattering public subsidies over a multitude of small enterprises, which, being used as baiting by obscure and worthless politicians, empty the treasury without producing any general good or results for the nation, nor helping in the creation or the betterment of public services or large industries.

The same inquiry could be pursued in finding out the motives which lead the press of Canada; and the same differences would be found.

Heavy money deals would be discovered at the back of "campaigns of education" carried on by some English-Canadian journals in favour of this enterprise, or that change in the tariff, or even contributions to the Imperial Navy. But with us alone, I think, journals are to be found accepting, with a cash or cheque payment, all-made arguments, ill-translated from the English, with special arguments for "pea-soup eaters" and Dr. Drummond's "habitants".

\* \* \* \*

To discover the source of the evil is what matters most. Here again, as with the decrease in national pride, corruption started at the head, and even before the other disease. As far back as 1851, Sir Louis Hippolyte Lafontaine abandoned public life, in the prime of age, disgusted as he was by the first symptoms of the corrupt tendencies. He who had passed, with calm energy, through the period of constitutional agitation, insurrection, the unjust dispositions of the Union, the painful beginnings of representative government, the days of tory rebellion, and even the first dissensions among French Canadians, he could not resist the disgust he felt when he saw his compatriots rushing to the spoils. In one of his letters, he notes with bitterness that there were many more representatives of his province to compete for his succession than there were to insist on keeping him there.



The evil has grown ever since. It threatens to poison all classes. In all social spheres, indifference, nay, indulgence is common as regards the general depravation of our public life. Of its most apparent form,—the purchase of votes in election time,—our Bishops have shown that they are rightly alarmed. That is naturally the most outward manifestation of public corruption: it comes to the direct knowledge of the priest. Among the poor devils who sell their vote there are still many conscientious enough to go and confess it. This is gangrene in the limbs. But how and when is corruption in the head or in the heart, reached by the Church or civil authorities, or by society itself?

What difference, from a conscientious view-point, between the poor devil who sells his vote for a bottle of whiskey or five dollars, and the city councillor, the member of parliament, senator or minister of the crown, who first corrupts the voters, then sells his own vote and influence, then, through his vote and influence, helps in squandering the public treasury, and still worse, in sacrificing national interests? In the price alone,—a sum of money, companies' shares or debentures, state office or judge's cap—the material difference lies. But the moral difference is enormous, and all to the excuse of the poor devil, who has neither the enlightenment of the public man, nor his responsibilities and public duty.

Yet, what treatment is meted out to the corrupt public man, twice guilty,—first of his own corruption, and second of the guilt of the poor man, whom he has contaminated by his example and by the covetousness which he has developed in him in order to purchase his vote? Of legal sanctions I need not speak. How could penal laws be applied against the very men who have made them, by judges, a majority of whom have earned their ermine—o! emblem of immaculate justice!—by practising the same acts of corruption, or at least by fraternising with the perpetrators?

But what moral sanction is given in our society, otherwise so christian, to the protests of public conscience against the dirty practices of politicians? None. Is the boodler, the crooked business man, the unfaithful trustee, discredited to any degree? Never—unless he is stupid enough to be caught. Oh! then he is struck with the utmost rigour, probably because he has begun to expiate. But if he is shrewd enough to pull through—and this is the case with most of them—if he is strong and clever enough to succeed in snapping a big lump, in getting the three-cornered hat, or whatever is the object of his cupidity and the price of his venality or of his betrayals, then he is raised to the pinnacle of social consideration. All doors open to him, including that of the church-wardens' pew. He sits in the councils of charitable works; he administers the people's savings; he teaches in the university; and to the youth of the land he is offered as an example, as the very model of the peaceful citizen, honoured father of family, unimpeachable magistrate, wise, practical and moderate public man.

There lies the source of all degradation of public morals.

\* \* \* \*

For a christian society, it does not suffice to have the external practice of religion, good theoretical principles, and a sane morality for the guidance of individuals. Religious principles and morals are just as applicable to the actions of public life as to the direction of private conduct;—I would be tempted to say: to public even more so than to private life. That is what we have yet to learn, or have but too forgotten. In spite of the harsh and humiliating lessons which our history has often taught us, we have still to learn these further truisms: The purification of our public life is the only means of raising and strengthening our national situation. The energies of patriotism cannot be bathed in the filthy waters of small and corrupt politics, deprived

of all morality and idealism. A band of crooked and short-sighted politicians cannot be transformed in a day into an army of champions of national causes.

The remedy for the evil cannot be found unless the public spirit and conscience of our people, of our leading classes especially, are renovated in their root. To succeed, the work should start at home, be followed up through college and university life, and kept alive by an energetic popular preaching.

One of the most remarkable writers of our time, Mr. Maurice Barrès, has given to three of his books this common undertitle: "*Romance of National Energy*". In them he has transcribed the psychological synthesis of several of the most degrading episodes of French politics, and also the tendencies threatening to drag the country of our origin towards national disintegration; but the dawn of a near awakening he lets break as well.

Is it not high time that some honest and disinterested mind should do us the same service, and help us in making a thorough cleaning of our national conscience? Above all, is it not urgent that the gospel of national energy should be preached everywhere, and French Canadians be taught the catechism of public duty, so that our people may learn again how to practise its maxims?





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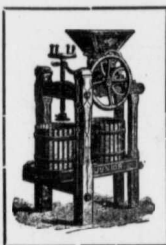
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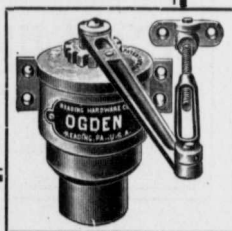
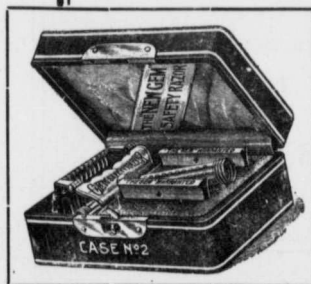
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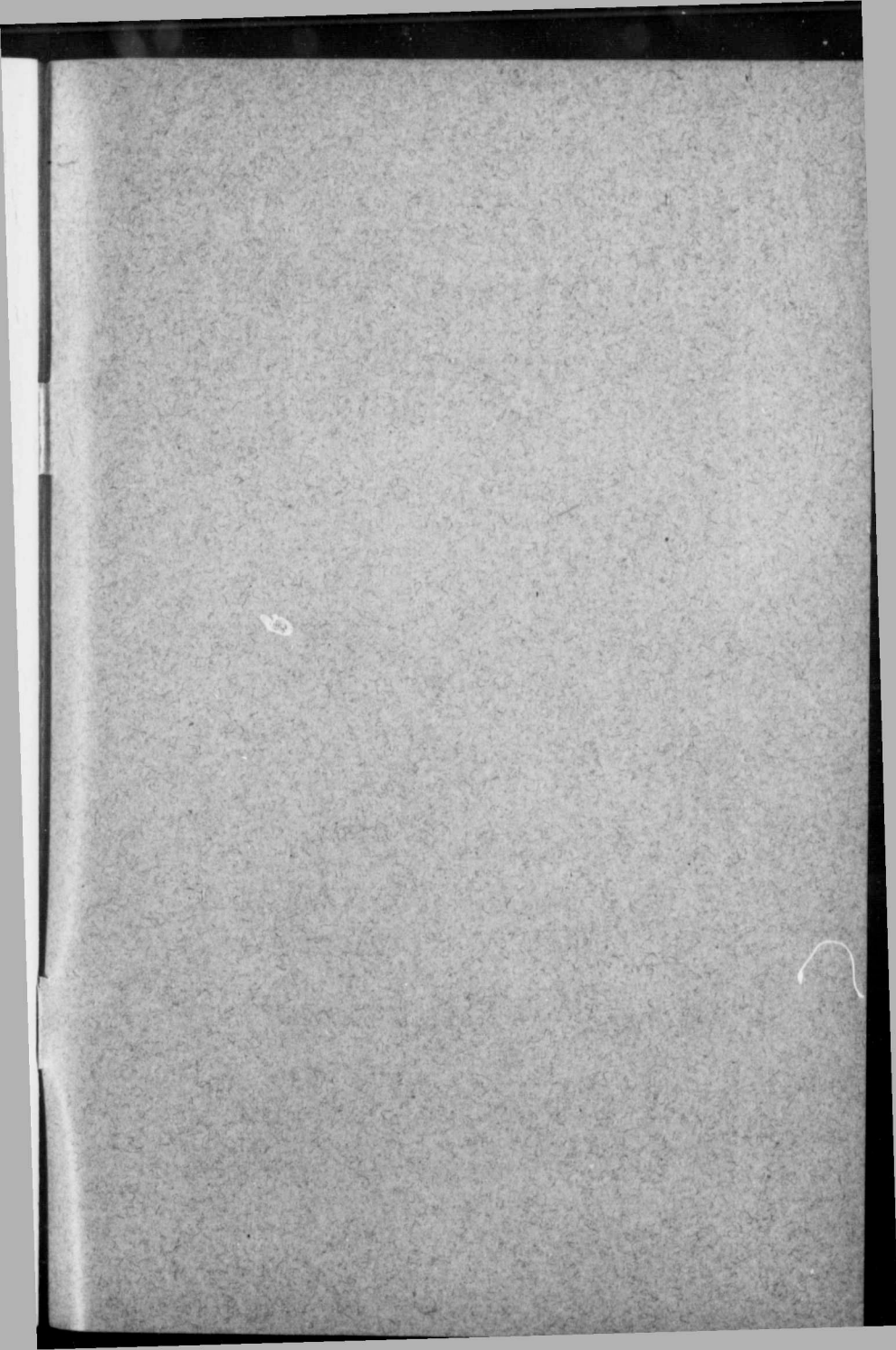
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