

Irish-French Relations in Lower Canada

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Movements for political reform were a world-wide phenomenon in the 1820's. On both sides of the Atlantic two British territories, Ireland and Lower Canada, fought the established political order in an effort to gain control of their own affairs. An ever-increasing number of Irish arrived in Quebec and Montreal during this period as a result of Britain's policy of resettling her surplus population in her North American colonies. It did not take long for some of the Irish immigrants and the French Canadians to realize that a political affiliation could be mutually beneficial.

The relationship was based primarily on both groups being Catholic and sharing a history of conquest by England. Catholics in Lower Canada had enjoyed relative religious freedom since 1763 as well as exemption from the penal restrictions that affected Irish Catholics, but both groups felt that their religion and nationality militated against them in the selection of government offices and appointment to positions of power. English domination of the Irish was centuries old. More than three-quarters of the Irish population was Catholic, yet, unlike Catholics in Lower Canada, the mere fact of being Catholic made them ineligible to sit in Parliament or hold any government office.

Essential also was the contemporary British movement for internal constitutional reform, especially that of Catholic Emancipation. Daniel O'Connell, the Irishman in Westminster responsible for securing this victory in 1829, added the cause of oppressed Catholics in Lower Canada to his continued struggle for parliamentary reform. He became a symbol of hope for the French Canadians. Had these movements for constitutional reform not been contemporary, the shared identification of the Irish and Canadians might have had little significance, but the confluence of issues and timing created a climate for sympathy.

The development of the political relationship can be followed through the careers of three Irish journalists who were also identifiable as the leaders of the Irish community in Lower Canada. Jocelyn Waller directed the Irish from 1822 to 1828. Daniel Tracey succeeded him till 1832, and Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan assumed leadership from 1833 till 1837. This paper will

examine the evolution of the Irish affiliation with the French Canadians, as cultivated by these journalists, and trace its ultimate demise.

Foundations for the coalition were laid by Jocelyn Waller, an Irish Protestant of aristocratic background. He was a vehement spokesman against oppression, whether by the provincial government in Lower Canada or by the English government's perpetuation of civil and religious injustice in Ireland. He started as a journalist in 1822 and became editor of the *Montreal Canadian Spectator* between 1825 and 1828. His articles were widely read in North America and England, and were recognized as having been influential in preventing passage of the Union Bill of 1822.¹ This proposed the unification of Upper and Lower Canada and had as its goals the subordination of the French to the English elements in the colony, with the extinction of the Lower Canadian Assembly.

Waller shared his printing press with Ludger Duvernay, editor of *La Minerve*, a French newspaper established in 1826 at Montreal to further the aims of the *Parti Canadien*. Duvernay was equally committed to fostering reform in the province, so both newspapers developed a sympathy for the oppressed Catholics in Ireland and called for justice and equality for all.

Under Daniel Tracey's guidance the Irish-Canadian partnership was at its strongest. In the fall of 1828 he actively solicited support for Catholic Emancipation through the Friends of Ireland Societies. He also founded the *Montreal Irish Vindicator* in December of that year, for the dual purpose of advancing Emancipation and promoting the reform movement in Lower Canada. However, by 1830 the massive immigration from Ireland was causing many Canadians to feel socially and politically threatened and to feel that they would be outnumbered by the newcomers. Open resentment of the Irish gradually replaced the bond of Catholicism. This demonstrates the temporal nature of the association, which was based as much on convenience as on ideology.

Anti-British sentiment of the French surfaced in 1832 and served to develop incipient cultural ties between Irish and English. During a Montreal by-election in May, three French Canadians were killed when British troops fired on a mob during a riot. Later that summer a cholera epidemic brought by Irish immigrant ships killed thousands in the province. Tracey barely defeated the English party's candidate, but died before taking his seat in the Assembly. His death left the Irish leaderless at a time when Canadian hostility toward them was intensifying.

¹ André Beaulieu and Jean Hamelin, *La Presse Québécoise* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1973), p. 31.

His replacement was Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, the careful choice of both the Irish and the *patriote* leaders. In May 1833, when O'Callaghan assumed editorship of the *Vindicator* and also became director of the Irish community, the alliance was declining rapidly. *Parti patriote* philosophy had altered from its earlier reliance on redressing grievances and achieving justice through British constitutional principles and was being replaced by radical French-Canadian nationalism. This change in direction gradually alienated many English and French moderate reformers, including most of the Irish. Despite O'Callaghan's attempts to keep them loyal to the *patriote* cause, many Irish eventually joined Constitutional Associations where they could pursue reform measures through legitimate channels.

British perception of the Irish also altered as the increasingly radical Assembly strengthened its hold on the province. The Irish then were seen not only as numbers to offset the preponderance of French Canadians, but as potential voters who could help ensure an English-speaking presence in the Assembly. The change in outlook was reciprocal. Though the Irish had been accepted by the French initially, despite language differences, they felt rejected as the immigration problem magnified and finally realized that there was more to be gained by allying themselves with the English.

Lower Canada's Irish until the 1820's were generally genteel and self-supporting. However, in the wake of agricultural crises in Ireland at that time, British authorities recommended emigration to North America. This means of relief was seen as a viable alternative to relocating large numbers of Irish in England where they would have undermined the peasantry and the working class. Additionally, resettlement was viewed as a measure to counteract the number of French Canadians while also supplying labour needed to develop the colonies, thereby thwarting the expansionist ambitions of the United States. These immigrants, usually unskilled Catholics, soon greatly outnumbered their Protestant countrymen. They travelled as fare-paying ballast in returning timber ships and were landed in Quebec or Montreal, the cheapest ports of entry to North America. While a good proportion moved on to Upper Canada or the United States, where opportunities were more plentiful, many were too poor to travel farther and stayed in the province. They worked as labourers in construction, on public works, the docks and in lumberyards, gradually improving their financial and social position. Some eventually saved enough to buy land, but the majority remained in the cities.

Waller, like Tracey and O'Callaghan, hated the injustice of the British system which had caused so much misery in Ireland. He constantly informed his readers of the efforts of the Irish Catholics to attain political equality, to realize their full constitutional rights as British subjects. His editorials claimed that the Irish were demanding nothing more than justice and he

continually reprinted relevant articles from leading foreign newspapers. Central to all reports concerning attempts to reason with Westminster for Catholic Emancipation was Daniel O'Connell.

O'Connell was the major figure in Irish politics in the 1820's. In 1823 he launched the Catholic Association and by setting the subscription at only a penny a month, a sum affordable by everyone, he involved the masses. Within three years this powerful political machine had elected Protestants sympathetic to the Catholic cause to sit in Westminster.

Events leading to this success had not gone unnoticed in Lower Canada. While Waller published pertinent speeches and debates in the *Canadian Spectator*, Ludger Duvernay of *La Minerve* was educating Canadians about the degradation of their Catholic brethren elsewhere in the British Empire. He even queried the possibility of similar treatment occurring in Lower Canada.² Evidently his strategy was to arouse and encourage better relations between his readership, a conquered Catholic people, and the only English-speaking group likely to object to the colonial administration and agitate for constitutional reform. After all, the Irish had had experience of British misrule and would therefore be willing to cooperate with the Canadians in seeking a solution to the oppression of an English and Protestant Ascendancy.

During this period also, conflict raged between the administration of the colony and the Assembly concerning control of the revenue. By the turn of 1827 Constitutional Committees had been established throughout the province to voice the general dissatisfaction against the government. In December and January, large meetings were held across the province and signatures were collected for a petition of grievances to be sent to London.³ The government objected to alleged derogatory remarks made about it by Waller and Duvernay. On December 19 it was reported that they had been arrested for libel.⁴ Though the cases were eventually dropped,⁴ the official legal response had unwittingly strengthened the liaison between French and Irish reformers.

The 1827 elections proved that the bond forged between Irish and Canadians was not merely emotional. Louis-Joseph Papineau, reelected in Montreal's West Ward, where there was a growing number of Irish, stated

² *La Minerve*, April 23, 1827.

³ Perhaps these were inspired by the continuing success of the Catholic Association's mass meetings in Ireland.

⁴ Robert Christie, *A History of the Late Province of Quebec*, Volume 3, (Montreal, 1866), pp. 168-9.

that their support reflected a firm attachment to reform constitutionalist principles as well as shared religious convictions.⁵

A few months later Daniel O’Connell defended Canadian grievances in a public speech in Dublin.⁶ To have someone of such rank sympathetically publicizing their cause was most edifying for French Canadian reformers. When O’Connell was actually elected to Westminster in July, 1828 the *patriote* leaders were further impressed. But the Catholic Irishman was unable to take his seat in Parliament. Even though the House of Commons had mustered sufficient support to pass a bill in favour of Emancipation, the House of Lords and the King refused their consent. So the struggle for Catholic equality in Britain was not yet over. In Lower Canada this cause found another Irish champion in Doctor Daniel Tracey, a recent immigrant. Upon Waller’s death in December of that year he became leader of the province’s Irish and editor of the English reform newspaper, the *Vindicator*.

Unlike Waller, Tracey was a Catholic. He was born in Tipperary of respectable and affluent parents, and had received his medical training in Dublin. He arrived in Montreal in 1825, having left Ireland because she was “the victim of religious exclusion, and the martyr of English despotism.”⁷

When news of O’Connell’s electoral victory arrived in Lower Canada in September, 1828 Tracey organized the province’s first Friends of Ireland Society to offer Catholic Ireland financial and moral support in the ongoing battle for political equality.⁸ Membership was open to anyone who believed “in the noble cause of civil and religious liberty,” and the payment of a small subscription was required. Many Canadians, several of them noteworthy, had joined the Montreal branch before the end of October.⁹ It appears that the Canadians, whether of their own accord or at the prompting of Tracey, realized that there were benefits to be gained by cooperating in this attempt to alter British policy. Additionally, were O’Connell permitted to sit in Parliament he could also act as their spokesman, representing their interests, as his earlier speech had indicated.

⁵ *La Minerve*, August 23, 1827.

⁶ *Canadian Spectator*, March 5, 1828; *La Minerve*, March 6, 1828.

⁷ Emmett J. Mullally, “Dr. Daniel Tracey – A Pioneer Worker for Responsible Government in Canada,” *CCHA Report*, 1934-35, p. 37.

⁸ *Canadian Spectator*, Sept. 21, 1828. First meeting held Sept. 7. *La Minerve*, Oct. 2, 1828. Similar societies had existed in the U.S. since 1825. *Canadian Spectator*, Aug. 22, 1825, and Sept. 10 and 17, 1828

⁹ Among them were Pierre Debartzch, Jacques Viger, S. de Bleury and L. Viger. *Canadian Spectator*, October 8 and 18, 1828.

A branch was formed in Quebec, too, and the societies quickly became a controversial issue. The *Quebec Star*'s editor thought the societies "may do harm and cannot do good."¹⁰ Dr. J. C. Fisher, editor of the *Official Gazette*, was strongly opposed to the societies.¹¹ He suggested "that the money collected for the rent might be more charitably and judiciously disposed of in providing necessary comforts for the poor of that country, many of whom wander through our streets ... without any protection against a Canadian climate."¹² Obviously the government was uneasy about the possible emergence of a political association.

Rebuttal of such remarks was swift, of course. The most eloquent came from the Quebec society's Vice-President, J.R. Vallières de St-Real, also a member of the Assembly. In French he addressed the *Quebec Gazette*'s editor, defending the Irish for having united to aid their unfortunate countrymen, who shared all the burdens of State but were denied their rights as citizens.

And we Canadians, shall we be indifferent to the evils that press heavily upon Catholic Ireland?... What assurance have you that your religion, persecuted in Ireland, will not be proscribed in Canada? Is the Treaty of Paris more sacred than that of Limerick, and cannot the same means be tried in Canada?... So long as the Irish Catholics are persecuted on account of their religion, there will be no security for Catholics in any part of the Empire... Their efforts to free themselves... and that of their enemies to keep them under the yoke, divide and weaken the British Empire.¹³

Two more letters in a similar vein appeared in the following two weeks.¹⁴ Either stirred by desire to aid the Irish on the grounds of a shared religion or because Vallières had aroused the fear of a comparable state of affairs occurring in Lower Canada, dozens of Canadians joined the Society, among them prominent members of the Constitutional Committees.¹⁵ These

¹⁰ Public Archives of Canada (PAC), Kenney Collection, C176, File 58, p. 5; October 21, 1828.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 7; October 23, 1828.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 15; October 30, 1828.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 7-11. Reprinted from the *Quebec Gazette*, October 27, 1828. By the Treaty of Limerick of October, 1691 Catholics were given the same rights of worship they had enjoyed in Charles II's reign. Severe penal laws were soon imposed, however, and the Protestant Ascendancy became firmly entrenched.

¹⁴ Kenney Collection, C176, File 58, pp. 16-17, 84-92.

¹⁵ Elzéar Bédard and Étienne Parent. *Ibid*, pp. 13, 20. An Assembly representative, the Vicar-General and two priests also subscribed to the rent.

Committees, it will be remembered, were responsible for organizing petitions to send to London a year earlier. The recommendations returned by a select Committee of the House of Commons had not been favourable to the English party. Bearing in mind that Ireland had a history of sedition and that the Irish immigrants had helped defeat the English party's candidate in the previous year's elections, it was not surprising that the government was suspicious of the societies.

The Friends of Ireland Society in Three Rivers was established a little later, in January, 1829. It attracted leading Assembly reformers such as Étienne Parent and Wolfred Nelson.¹⁶ The Society's leaders made use of the network that had been formed to collect signatures for the Constitutional Committee to recruit subscriptions in the parish.¹⁷

An examination of the minutes of some of the societies' meetings reveals no link between the Constitutional Committees and the Friends of Ireland. Nothing to indicate any larger, common, political design was ever discussed. Canadians' motivation for membership seemed to be based on a sincere interest in alleviating oppression in Catholic Ireland, but was also a show of solidarity against the injustice of British administration. Moreover, the records of eminent *patriotes* do not divulge any sophisticated plan for the manipulation of the Irish associations.¹⁸ Doubtless the opportunity would not have been overlooked had an election been imminent!

Since November 24, 1828 the Montreal Society had been collecting signatures to accompany a petition to the King and Imperial Parliament. The *Irish Vindicator*, with Daniel Tracey as editor, was fortuitously ready for publication, and its offices became the headquarters of the campaign.¹⁹ This new journal was more than just a biweekly publishing Irish news; it replaced the *Canadian Spectator*, and so incorporated Irish readership with the promotion of political reform.²⁰

Petitions and signatures from the three societies were sent separately to the King, in the hope of making more of an impact. They requested that His Most Excellent Majesty extend to his Catholic Irish subjects the same religious freedom and equality enjoyed by his loyal Canadian subjects. They

¹⁶ PAC, Charles Mondelet Correspondence, MG 24, B27, Vol. 2, pp. 280-2, 293.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 289. *Canadian Spectator*, December 29, 1827.

¹⁸ Records checked: C-S. Cherrier, E-R. Fabre, N. Morin. D-B. Viger, E.B. O'Callaghan, C.O. Perrault.

¹⁹ *La Minerve*, January 6, 1829.

²⁰ It became the *Vindicator* in July, 1829, indicating that other English-speaking reformers were readers.

also reminded him that the peace and tranquillity which would surely follow Emancipation would greatly benefit the Empire.²¹

Conditions in Ireland and increasing pressure from the House of Commons eventually convinced the House of Lords and a reluctant King to consent to Emancipation. Accordingly, in April 1829 legislation was passed and Catholics were finally allowed to sit in Parliament, be judges, and hold any but the highest positions in the civil service, army or navy. Once their goal had been achieved, the societies in Lower Canada held final meetings and were dissolved in May 1829.

By this time the Irish were feeling a little more secure in their adopted country. They belonged to an accepted majority and were removed from overt religious intolerance, restricted only by language. Because of their lowly origin and religion they had been scorned by the ruling party, but led by skillful, influential Irish journalists they had embraced the reform movement. In turn, the Canadians had helped them by enrolling in the Friends of Ireland Societies.

This amicable relationship faded, however. *Parti Canadien* leaders, elatedly anticipating support from O'Connell in Westminster, had overestimated his ability and influence in British politics. Disaffection set in, both at their level and that of the majority of Canadians. As Britain continued to solve her surplus population problem by resettling thousands of immigrants (mostly Irish) annually in Lower Canada, the newcomers presented competition for employment in a time of growing economic and agricultural crisis. They were rivals for the dwindling acres of accessible, arable land, and reduced job opportunities for the French. Even though much of the emigration was transient, sheer numbers proved to be an enormous drain on public charity and patience. Being largely English-speaking, they were also viewed as a cultural threat. Even in Church matters the Irish encountered antagonism. By early 1831 their figures had increased so alarmingly as to prompt Canadians in the *Fabrique* to deliberately hinder construction of an Irish church, the rationale being that the Irish would assume leadership of the Church.²²

As hope that the Canada Committee's promises to effect reform dimmed, Tracey and Duvernay attacked the government. So disparaging were their remarks during the 1831-32 session that the Legislative Council had them imprisoned for thirty-four days. Both journalists became political

²¹ PAC, Mondelet File; pp. 284-287. Several members of the Legislative Council, and a very large number of Assembly members, plus Catholic and Church of Scotland clergy had signed the petition by January 29, 1829. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

²² PAC, Kenney Collection, C176, Volume 2, File 57, pp. 5-38.

heroes. Again unintentionally the government had solidified the liaison between the Irish and the French. Making the most of Tracey's gain in popularity, strategists in the reform party nominated him, rather than Duvernay, as their candidate in a by-election in Montreal's West Ward.²³

From the outset disturbances between adherents of opposing factions were numerous, but on the last voting day, May 21, after the polls closed violence heightened. Following a skirmish the troops were called in, the riot act was read, and shots were fired to prevent further disorder. In the resulting confusion, three Canadians were killed. Tracey ultimately won the election, but only by a margin of four votes. Neither the Irish nor Canadian vote was unanimous,²⁴ yet the victory reinforced the notion that the Irish-French alliance was healthy.

Had this by-election been held two months later, Tracey would certainly not have been nominated, for early in June 1832 Irish immigrant ships brought a devastating epidemic of cholera to the province. So great was the death toll that Canadian sympathy for the Irish was practically eliminated. In Montreal four thousand died,²⁵ about one-seventh of the population, and in Quebec the number of deaths totalled more than twenty-two hundred.²⁶

By 1831 this plague of cholera, which had started in Asia, had spread through Europe to England and Ireland. Knowing that immigration would continue, the Imperial authorities had warned Canada to take measures to prevent the disease spreading. The impending epidemic forced the enactment of public health legislation and regulations. Some precautions were taken, yet the British allowed immigrant vessels to sail from infected ports. This exhibition of British negligence exacerbated an already tense situation. Nationalist feelings, which had been ignited by the 'massacre' in May, now provoked indignation meetings across the province. The nationalistic tone introduced by the extremists evoked a split in the *Parti Canadien* ranks, alienating many moderate French and eventually almost all of the Irish.

In the interests of preserving an alliance which had proved so useful at the polls, Canadian leaders undoubtedly tried to confine the animosity engendered by the cholera epidemic to the British and their colonial policies.

²³ Fernand Ouellet, *Lower Canada 1791-1840: Social Change and Nationalism* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980), p. 225.

²⁴ France Galarneau, "'L'Élection dans le Quartier-Ouest de Montréal en 1832: Analyse Politico-Sociale'" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Université de Montréal, Sept. 1977), p. 52. Source: Jacques Viger, *Statistique de l'élection*, ASQ, fonds Viger-Verreau, no. 124, p. 31.

²⁵ J.J. Heagerty, *Four Centuries of Medical History in Canada*, Volume I (Toronto: Macmillan, 1928), p. 187.

²⁶ PAC, Kenney Collection, Volume 2, File 57, p. 45.

They also sought a successor for Tracey, a victim of the epidemic, so they could maintain ties with both the English-speaking reformers and the Irish. After 1831, when John Neilson, editor of The English reform *Quebec Gazette*, had defected in response to Papineau's extremism, the *Vindicator* was the only English reform organ in the province. It took until May 1833, when O'Callaghan was installed, for the Irish to be satisfied with the *Parti Canadien's* choice of editor for their journal. His appointment therefore was a calculated attempt by the French reformers both to win back the disaffected Irish and to unify Irishmen in Quebec and Montreal by furnishing them with a leader.

In a further effort to consolidate the fragile Irish-French relationship, Papineau made O'Callaghan assistant leader of the *patriotes*.²⁷ Both were fervent O'Connellites. O'Connell, though he was only one of a small group of reformers in Westminster, remained visible proof that abuses in Parliament and, therefore, in Lower Canada could be redressed. Tracey had likened Papineau to O'Connell²⁸ and Papineau himself declared, "O'Connell is my model, and like him I will employ for the attainment of my ends those peaceful means which the English constitution places at my disposal."²⁹ O'Callaghan also presented Papineau as O'Connell's Canadian equivalent: "God has marked this man to be a Political Chief, the regenerator of a nation."³⁰

Outright division in the Irish ranks occurred in 1834, despite clever manipulation of O'Connell's name and image by the reformers. In February the Ninety-two Resolutions, which demanded drastic changes in colonial policy, were passed 56-24 in the Assembly. Generally conservative, the Church disapproved of the revolutionary ideas expressed in the resolutions. Any sympathy it had entertained for the *patriote* movement had dissolved early in 1832 when the Assembly passed the decidedly anticlerical *La Loi des Fabriques*, which would have placed all the Church's material possessions under the control of elected parish councils. Though it was rejected by the Legislative Council, it showed the way in which the *patriotes* were headed.³¹ This position provided the Irish, who were traditionally respectful of the clergy, with further reason to rethink their political affiliation with the French reformers.

²⁷ Ouellet, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

²⁸ Robert Rumilly, *Papineau et son Temps* (Montreal: Fides, 1977), p. 2.

²⁹ A.D. Decelles, *Papineau and Cartier: The Makers of Canada Series* (Toronto: Morang, 1904), p. 143.

³⁰ *Vindicator*, May 24, 1834.

³¹ Helen Manning, *The Revolt of French Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1962), pp. 330-343.

The Tories in Quebec already had the support of the parish priest, Father McMahon, and had held it for considerable time. He believed that his Irish flock, sincere as they were in their democratic ideas and desire for the redress of grievances, had very little to gain and all to lose by allying themselves politically with the Canadians. It was the English who controlled the port of Quebec and provided work for so many Irish. Canadians could not offer employment because they were not involved in commerce at that time. In March 1834, when he denounced supporters of the *patriotes* from the pulpit, he persuaded many of his parishioners to desert.³²

The Ninety-two Resolutions drew negligible reaction from London, but became the platform of the *parti patriote* in the late fall elections of 1834. The reformers won an overwhelming majority, securing 77 of 88 seats, yet their virulent campaign tactics and excessive nationalism estranged many French as well as most English supporters.

Both reformers and Tories had zealously pursued the Irish vote. Because Irish immigrants had brought another cholera epidemic in the spring of that year, ensuing Canadian hostility had driven away many Irish advocates of the reform cause. Moreover, Tory Constitutionalists had skillfully used the antagonism to draw Irish support to themselves and turn the Irish against the *patriotes*. Even Papineau was uneasy running against an Irishman, John Donnellan, sponsored by the Tories. Though Papineau defeated him, 480 to 426, it is interesting to note that he took the precaution of standing for election in a semirural Montreal riding as well as in the West Ward.³³ O'Callaghan, Papineau's second in command, defeated the government's French Canadian candidate in Yamaska, however, the habitants voting for his principles rather than his origins.³⁴

The Irish realized by this time that the moderate constitutional reform programme they had initially endorsed had become increasingly confused with ideas borrowed from the French revolution of 1830 and the American republic. Papineau's nationalist radicals controlled the Assembly, and they knew that their interests, particularly those concerning continued immigration, would receive very little consideration. There was nothing to be acquired by maintaining cooperation with reformers, so in growing numbers they withdrew their support, and the tenuous Irish-French alliance that had floundered for the previous couple years, but had been kept alive largely by O'Callaghan's persuasive editorials and oratory, collapsed.

³² For a lengthy and detailed account of division among the Irish, see File 57 in the Kenney Collection, PAC.

³³ Ouellet, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

³⁴ *Vindicator*, November 8, 1834.

The Constitutional Association of Quebec was formed to assert the rights of the British and Irish populations shortly after the 1834 elections.³⁵ Naturally the *Vindicator* attacked this poaching of what it considered its domain and exhorted all Irishmen to remain true to their reform principles, but O'Callaghan fought a losing battle. A second Irish newspaper, the *Irish Advocate*, was established under the auspices of the Tories in May 1835. O'Callaghan could no longer claim to speak for the Irish. Appeals based on Papineau's similarity to O'Connell were ignored, as was the use of O'Connell's portrait on the \$2 bill³⁶ issued in the summer of 1836 when an attempt was made to boycott English goods and establish an independent French Canadian economy. Such action illustrates the continued trust of the Assembly in Daniel O'Connell, however. When the rebellion broke out in November 1837 the majority of the Irish, like the rest of the population, remained neutral. The Church, of course, denounced the insurgence, but even so the Irish had already decided that while the struggle for reform within the constitutional framework was legitimate, armed resistance was not. Those who did take up arms fought for the government, the only notable Irishman among the insurgents being O'Callaghan.

For a brief period, then, the Irish in Lower Canada had worked with the French in fighting for reform in government. Rejected by the British minority, the Irish looked to the French for political and social acceptance. Both groups, led by shrewd and versatile journalists, appreciated that they shared democratic principles and anti-British sentiment. Parallels could aptly be drawn between inequalities and injustices in both Ireland and Lower Canada.

Irish identification with the reform cause was first noticeable in the 1827 elections. French Canadians joined Friends of Ireland Societies in the following two years on behalf of their coreligionists in Ireland and because they feared a similar fate for Lower Canada. O'Connell's success in organizing public opinion prompted Canadians to emulate his political techniques for the purpose of reforming administration in the province. The alliance that had developed during Waller's years culminated in 1829, by which time the Irish felt part of the majority and the Canadians stood to gain political support in Westminster with O'Connell espousing their cause.

Daniel Tracey inherited leadership of the Irish before the agricultural crisis and urban economic tribulations had intensified. French attitudes changed, however, as the Irish community constantly expanded as a result of Britain's emigration policy. The 1832 by-election providentially preceded

³⁵ PAC, H.S. Chapman Papers, MG 24, Volume 2.

³⁶ Rumilly, *op. cit.*, p. 401.

the calamitous cholera epidemic, the first precipitant of confrontation between the allies.

O'Callaghan was carefully selected by the *patriotes* to maintain the delicate Irish-French affiliation and to direct English-speaking reformers, but by the time he took office in May 1833 defections had already begun. His efforts proved ineffectual. A united Irish front no longer existed. The extremist behaviour of the Canadians and the conservative stand of the clergy, in addition to their own realization that they no longer needed the French as a crutch in society, drew the Irish majority into the Tory camp, into associations where they could pursue legitimate constitutional reform. Ultimately, the alteration in desired ends caused the Irish to sever their relationship with the French and to shift their allegiance to the Anglo-Saxon community, a more suitable partner for their social and political ambitions.

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