Defending the Established Order and the Welfare of French Canadians from Two Different Perspectives: The *Quebec Gazette* and the *Gazette de Québec*, 1836-1840.

by

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Abstract

In the late 1830s, colonial newspapers such as the *Quebec Gazette* and the *Gazette de Québec,* assiduously reported on the tumultuous events that shook the political foundations of Lower Canada. Contrary to what historians have assumed, however, the *Gazette de Québec* was not a translation of the *Quebec Gazette*. If both defended the established order and promoted the welfare of French Canadians from 1836 to 1840, they did so from different perspectives. At the *Quebec Gazette*, John Neilson articulated a political rhetoric based on individual rights of liberty, property, and security, influenced by the ideas of British constitutionalism. Conversely, Ronald Macdonald of the *Gazette de Québec* used the religious rhetoric of French traditionalism, which defended the rights of social and political groups. By comparing their distinct ideological positioning this thesis highlights the diversity of arguments used to argue for greater political stability in a time of rebellion and uncertainty.

Keywords: *Gazette de Québec*; *Quebec Gazette*; John Neilson; Ronald Macdonald; British Constitutionalism; French Traditionalism

Pour Mamie-Cécile, ton courage et ta détermination
m'inspire à toujours accéder encore plus haut…

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Introduction

In the spring of 1836, an exhausted and ailing Samuel Neilson, editor of two newspapers, the *Quebec Gazette* and the *Gazette de Québec*, sailed from Quebec City to the Mediterranean, confident that the warm climate and rest would soon bring back his vigour. Prior to his departure, Neilson appointed his father, John Neilson, as editor of the *Quebec Gazette,* and Ronald Macdonald, as editor of the *Gazette de Québec*. This temporary arrangement became permanent when Samuel died in June 1837.[1] During the late 1830s, the two *Gazettes* would take distinct stances on the tumultuous events that shook the political foundations of Lower Canada. As this thesis will show, a comparison of their respective ideological positioning reveals both the specificities of the two publications, while at the same time shedding light on the diversity of arguments that were used to argue for greater political stability in a time of rebellion and uncertainty. In the present introduction, I begin by explaining the specific contexts in which these newspapers operated, before developing the argumentation that underlies my analysis.

The *Quebec Gazette* and the *Gazette de Québec* have been associated with the Neilson family since the end of the 18th century. The *Quebec Gazette/Gazette de Québec* was founded in 1764 by William Brown and Thomas Gilmore, originally from Philadelphia. This bilingual newspaper was the first weekly newspaper established in the province of Quebec. Initially, it consisted mostly of news from overseas, and the local news it reported did not include editorial commentary. When Gilmore died in 1774,

[1] In the spring of 1836, Samuel Neilson arranged for both newspapers to be transferred to his brother William and appointed John Neilson (father) as his administrator. At that time, it was decided that Ronald Macdonald would take over "la feuille française." In 1837, his last will and testament bequeathed the newspapers to his brothers and sisters: William, Isobel, Margaret, and John Jr. However, John Neilson was left in charge of editing the *Quebec Gazette* – a position he kept until his death in 1848. Macdonald was left in charge of the *Gazette de Québec* – a position he held until the demise of the newspaper in October, 1842. See Claude Galarneau, "Samuel Neilson (1800-1837)," *Les Cahiers des dix*, no. 50 (1995): 106, 115-116; *Le Canadien*, 25-May-1836, 4-Nov-1842; *Gazette de Québec*, 24-May-1836, 9-Jul-1836, 28-Feb-1837; *Quebec Gazette*, 24-July-1837.

Brown purchased all of the newspaper's shares from Gilmore's beneficiaries and became the sole proprietor. Upon Brown's death in 1789, the newspaper was bequeathed to his nephews, Samuel Neilson and the minor John Neilson, and was managed by Samuel until his own death four years later, in 1793. From that time until John Neilson attained adulthood in 1796, the newspaper was managed by his tutor, Dr. Sparks.[2]

For a number of years after John Neilson took over the newspaper in 1796, he proceeded in much the same way his uncle, brother and tutor had. Thus, he did not participate in the political debates that were prevalent in other newspapers such as the *Quebec Mercury* (est. 1805) or *Le Canadien* (est. 1806). This changed during the War of 1812 when Neilson's editorial shift from a previously neutral political position evidenced his growing interest in Lower Canadian politics. So much so, that he eventually threw his hat in the political ring, was elected as a reformer to the Legislative Assembly in 1818, and became a key player in Lower Canadian politics during the 1820s and 1830s as one of the leaders of the *Parti canadien* in the Assembly. As his political role grew, the conflict of interest between his political endeavours and editing a newspaper that held a government contract to print ordinances and other official papers could no longer be ignored.[3] Hence, the *Quebec Gazette/Gazette de Québec*, now a twice-weekly newspaper, was transferred to his oldest son Samuel in 1822.[4]

[2] André Beaulieu and Jean Hamelin, *La presse québécoise: des origines à nos jours*, Tome premier: 1764-1859 (Québec: Presses de l'université de Laval, 1973), 1-3. Patricia Lockhart Fleming, Gilles Gallichan and Yvan Lamonde, *Histoire du livre et de l'imprimé au Canada*, Volume 1: Des débuts à 1840 (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2004), 68.

[3] The *Quebec Gazette* held the "brevet d'imprimeur du roi" until 9-Oct-1823. Gov. Dalhousie transferred the patent to John Charlton Fisher who began printing *The Quebec Gazette*, *Published by Authority* in Oct-1823. This official *Gazette* was unrelated to the Neilson's *Gazette*. See Beaulieu et al., *La presse québécoise*, 3.

[4] Beaulieu et al., *La presse québécoise*, 2-3; Fleming et al., *Histoire du livre*, 80; Elzéar Gérin, *La presse canadienne: La Gazette de Québec*, (Québec: J.-N. Duquet et Cie, 1864), 41-63; John Hare and Jean-Pierre Wallot, "Les entreprises d'imprimerie et d'édition en Amérique du Nord britannique, 1751-1840," *Mens : revue d'histoire intellectuelle de l'Amérique française* 5, no. 2 (2005), 307-344.

Under Samuel's guidance, the *Quebec Gazette/Gazette de Québec* was subject to many changes. In 1825, Samuel hired Étienne Parent as editor of the French section.[5] Parent remained until 1831, when a rejected demand for a salary increase precipitated his search for investors with the goal to re-open the then-defunct *Le Canadien*. In 1832, to compete with the newly re-established *Le Canadien*, Samuel augmented the French section of the *Quebec Gazette/Gazette de Québec* by making it separate from its English counterpart. Samuel thus expanded the bilingual twice-weekly edition in existence since 1764 to two distinct thrice-weekly editions—the English-language *Quebec Gazette* and the French-language *Gazette de Québec*.[6] Not only did this expansion increase circulation from three to six days a week, but the editions were no longer exact replicas of each other. Each newspaper printed distinct international, colonial and local news. Still, despite these differences, all editorial commentary continued to appear in both *Gazettes* and they were clearly under Samuel's guidance. The similarities would become even fewer, however, after Samuel's departure in 1836.

If John Neilson's association with the *Quebec Gazette* is well-known, Ronald Macdonald's role as editor of the *Gazette de Québec* has been mostly forgotten. Elzéar Gérin states that Macdonald worked on and off as a translator for the *Quebec Gazette/Gazette de Québec* from 1819 onwards. He also claims that it was only in 1842 and under Macdonald's editorship that "la *Gazette de Québec* cessa d'être une traduction du *Québec Gazette*, et devint une publication tout à fait distincte."[7] Based on Gérin's statements, some historians claim Macdonald was the editor of the *Gazette de Québec* for a period of six months only: from May to October 1842.[8] If other historians acknowledge Macdonald's years at the helm of the newspaper, they diminished his role

[5] Jean-Charles Falardeau, "Parent, Étienne," Dictionary of Canadian Biography online, accessed August 23, 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/parent_etienne_10E.html; Louis Nourry, "L'idée de fédération chez Étienne Parent, 1831-1852," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 26, no. 4 (1973), 535.

[6] Beaulieu et al., *La presse québécoise*, 3; Gérin, *La Gazette de Québec,* 53.

[7] Gérin, *La Gazette de Québec*, 60-61.

[8] Beaulieu et al., *La presse québécoise*, 3; Gérin, *La Gazette de Québec*, 64; Jocelyn Saint-Pierre, "Ronald Macdonald," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography online,* accessed August 18, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/macdonald_ronald_1797_1854_8E.html.

by placing him under the supervision of John Neilson.[9] Others still do not acknowledge Macdonald's editorship at all.[10] These interpretations go against the fact that John Neilson himself mentioned in 1837 that "the newspapers were conducted by two persons, who never interfere[d] with each other, and whose opinions [were] not always the same."[11] This arrangement lasted for many years since Macdonald was editor of the *Gazette de Québec* from June 1836 to October 1842.[12]

Neilson and Macdonald assumed the direction of these two distinct newspapers in a turbulent period of Lower Canada's history. Although reformers had been active in Lower Canadian politics since 1806, they became more intransigent in the 1830s, a time when Neilson disassociated himself from the *Parti patriote* (formally known as the *Parti canadien*). The *Patriotes* had a majority in the Legislative Assembly and directly challenged British authority during this decade. They detailed their grievances concerning the colony's governance and demanded reforms in the "Ninety-Two Resolutions" adopted by the Assembly in 1834. The most important demand made by the *Parti patriote* in these Resolutions was to render the Legislative Council elective. In order to put pressure on the British authorities, the *Patriote*-led Assembly refused to pass any budget bills until the British Parliament had met all of their demands. Their contestation eventually led to two rebellions in 1837 and 1838, and ended with the union of Upper and Lower Canada in February 1841. In this context, Lower Canadian newspapers, including the two *Gazettes* were busy supplying news as well as assiduous analyses of all of the political proceedings that were occurring in the colonies and in Great Britain.

The opposing political factions during this tumultuous period consisted of Lower Canadian subjects who wanted political reforms and rallied around the *Parti patriote,* and those who promoted constitutional institutions and were called Tories, *bureaucrates*, or

[9] Jacques Monet, *The Last Cannon Shot, A Study of French-Canadian Nationalism 1837-1850* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 16.

[10] Fleming et al., 67-69, 76, 80, 83, 84, 105, 117, 142, 144, 248, 249, 250, 251, 306, 310, 312, 313, 328, 332-333, 340, 345, 368, 410, 416, 419-420.

[11] *Quebec Gazette*, 6-Sep-1837.

[12] *Le Canadien*, 25-May-1836, 4-Nov-1842; *Gazette de Québec*, 24-May-1836, 9-Jul-1836, 28-Feb-1837; *Quebec Gazette*, 24-Jul-1837.

constitutionalists. The promoters of constitutional institutions were mostly large landowners, businessmen and merchants, and members of the judiciary, such as John Molson, Peter McGill, George Moffatt, and Jonathan Sewell, who sat in the Legislative or Executive Councils. Conversely, the elite of the *Parti patriote* were mostly members of the French-Canadian professional middle-class, composed of notaries, lawyers and doctors, such as Louis-Joseph Papineau, Louis Bourdages, and Denis-Benjamin Viger. The party also included English-speaking Lower Canadians, such as Edmund O'Callaghan, and Robert and Wolfred Nelson.

Historians have analysed the *Patriotes*' ideology from mainly four perspectives. They have presented it as either conservative, nationalist, liberal, or republican, or a combination of those. Some historians from an older generation argued the *Patriotes'* ideology was a conservative form of nationalism. For instance, in his *Histoire économique et sociale*, Fernand Ouellet argues that the *Patriotes* hid their conservative aspirations of establishing on the banks of the Saint-Lawrence an *ancien régime* society under a liberal democratic discourse.[13] Many scholars have contested this interpretation reminiscent of Lord Durham's interpretation. In his *Histoire sociale des idées*, Yvan Lamonde disputes this analysis and argues that the *Patriotes* articulated a liberal discourse combined with an element of nationalism.[14] He explains that until the 1830s the *Parti canadien* advocated "le libéralisme réformiste anglais" by defending the recognition of their right, as British subjects, to govern themselves as freely as could be permitted under the authority of the British Parliament.[15] In the 1830s, however, the *Patriotes'* liberal discourse became more nationalistic and valued the American republican model over that of the British parliamentary system.[16] Conversely, Marcel Bellavance explains the turmoil of the 1830s through the prism of an ethno-cultural nationalism that converged with elements of liberalism. He argues that the *Patriotes'*

[13] Fernand Ouellet, *Histoire économique et sociale du Québec, 1760-1850 : structures et conjoncture* (Montréal: Fides, 1966), 433-35. See also Donald Creighton *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence, 1760-1850* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937), 227.

[14] Yvan Lamonde, *Histoire sociale des idées au Québec: 1760-1896* (Saint-Laurent: Fides, 2000), 97, 237. See also Peter Burroughs, *The Canadian Crisis and British Colonial Policy, 1828-1841* (London: Edward Arnold, 1972), 95-96.

[15] Lamonde, *Histoire sociale*, 119.

[16] Lamonde, *Histoire sociale*, 122-125.

desire for republican institutions was based on their understanding of French-Canadians as an ethno-cultural community dependent on a "puissance étrangère" that did not share the same cultural customs and traditions as the British.[17] Finally, Louis-Georges Harvey and Michel Ducharme contest Lamonde and Bellavance's interpretations by attributing the agitation of the 1830s to the *Patriotes'* republicanism.[18] On the one hand, in *Le Printemps de l'Amérique française*, Harvey argues that the *Patriotes* were inspired to break the ties of colonialism by the discourse of revolutionaries in the United States and Europe. He contends that the *Patriotes'* condemnation of merchant capitalism along with the gradual change in their discourse from 1805 to 1837 illustrates that they were supporters of a republican form of governance based on participatory rights and the values of equality and community.[19] On the other, Ducharme argues in *The Idea of Liberty* that in the years up to 1828 all Lower Canadian political groups supported modern liberty founded on individual rights and associated with the values of property and security. However, from 1828 onwards the *Patriotes* advocated republican liberty while the constitutionalists (tories and reformers/liberals) continued to support modern liberty.[20]

Similarly, historians have interpreted the *Patriotes'* ideological opponents from different perspectives. Fernand Ouellet, André Lefebvre and Johanne Muzzo view the promoters of constitutional institutions as a conservative group. Ouellet argues that this group was composed of different elements which were politically conservative and

[17] Marcel Bellavance, *Le Québec au siècle des nationalités (1791–1918): Essai d'histoire comparée* (Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 2004), 10-29. See also, Phillip Goldring, "British Colonists and Imperial Interests in Lower Canada, 1820 to 1841" (PhD diss., University of London, 1978), 105, 150, 261. Gilles Laporte, *Patriotes et loyaux: leadership régional et mobilisation politique en 1837 et 1838* (Sillery, QC: Septentrion, 2004), 384 – note that Laporte argues that nationalism was present in the regions outside of Montreal and Quebec City, but that a republican discourse was more prevalent in the urban areas.

[18] See also, Allan Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 120–52, 219–57; Gérald Bernier and Daniel Salée, "Les patriotes, la question nationale et les rébellions de 1837-1838 au Bas-Canada," in *Les nationalismes au Québec du XIXe au XXIe siècle*, edited by Michel Sarra-Bournet (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001), 25-36.

[19] Louis-Georges Harvey, *Le printemps de l'Amérique française: Américanité, anticolonialisme et républicanisme dans le discours politique québécois, 1805-1837* (Montréal: Boréal, 2005).

[20] Michel Ducharme, *The Idea of Liberty During the Age of Atlantic Revolutions*, trans. by Peter Feldstein (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

economically liberal. On the one hand were the functionaries, large landowners and holders of economic power who were deeply attached to imperial institutions and ardently defended monarchy, aristocracy and an Anglican ascendency (Toryism). On the other, were the English bourgeoisie who were primarily concerned with developing an economic strategy based on forestry resources that would entail immigration and investment, as well as the construction of canals and roads (economic liberalism). Ouellet argues that these disparate groups came together in the 1830s and articulated a conservative discourse that advocated for the preservation of British values to fight the nationalist character of the *Patriotes.*[21] Lefebvre highlights the Francophobic nature of the conservatives by studying their anti-nationalist discourse in the *Montreal Gazette* from 1835 to 1842.[22] As for Muzzo, her study of the rise of reformist and constitutionalist movements in Montreal uses Ouellet's definition of conservatism to frame her perspective of promoters of constitutional institutions.[23]

This conservative expression has been contested over the last decades by historians who have described the group's discourse as Whiggish. Michael McCulloch argues that constitutionalists used a Whiggish outlook by defending late-eighteenth century social and political values. The constitutionalists validated their rejection of the constitutional legitimacy of the *Patriotes'* majority in the Legislative Assembly, for example, by grounding their defense on a representation of interest rather than of individuals.[24] Michel Ducharme agrees with McCulloch's assessment but his focus, on constitutionalists for whom an individual's allegiance to the British Crown was commensurate on an acceptance of British culture and customs, paints the British

[21] Fernand Ouellet, *Le Bas-Canada 1791-1840 : changements structuraux et crise* (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1980), 387-420.

[22] André Lefebvre, *La* Montreal Gazette *et le nationalisme canadien (1835-1842)* (Montréal: Guérin, 1970), ix-xii.

[23] Johanne Muzzo, "Les mouvements réformiste et constitutionnel à Montréal, 1834-1837" (MA thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1990), 11.

[24] Michael McCulloch, "The Death of Whiggery: Lower-Canadian British Constitutionalism and the *tentation de l'histoire parallèle*," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 2, no. 1 (1991): 195-213. Although he does acknowledge that the articles of the Quebec [City] Constitutional Association discouraged any changes that would infringe on rights, laws, institutions, privileges and immunities that had been granted to French Canadians.

constitutionalist discourse of this period as xenophobic.[25] While McCulloch and Ducharme consider the conservatives as one monolithic group, François Deschamps separates them into two groups. On the one hand, there is a group that was more liberal and resembles McCulloch's Whiggism and Ducharme's constitutionalism. On the other, was an ultra-Tory group whose ideology was centred on ethnicity. Thus, Deschamps' study of the *Montreal Herald* adds yet another perspective to the conservative discourse by bringing to light the ultra-Tories, who did not agree with the British Parliament and Governor Gosford's conciliatory approach towards the *Patriotes,* and who were ready to split from the United Kingdom and join the United States rather than cede any ground to the *Patriotes*.[26]

This historiographical survey highlights three characteristics of the scholarly works concerning the 1830s in Lower Canada. First, historians have spent more time studying the *Patriotes* than their opponents. Second, while the historians who studied the latter recognize that constitutionalists were not a monolithic group, most have focussed their research on only one group: the constitutionalists from the Montreal region. They have therefore projected Montreal constitutionalists' xenophobic bias on constitutionalists from other regions.[27] This focus on Montreal Tories is certainly understandable, since many Montreal constitutionalists, such as Peter McGill and John Molson, were members of the Legislative Council and thereby held a lot of sway in obstructing the *Patriotes'* aspirations for more control in political institutions. Furthermore, the Montreal constitutionalist press was more incendiary than its Quebec City counterpart. Newspapers such as the *Montreal Herald* and the *Montreal Gazette* used provocative rhetoric in their description of French-Canadian nationalists as

[25] Ducharme, *Idea of Liberty*, 128-159.

[26] François Deschamps, *La « rébellion de 1837 » à travers le prisme du* Montreal Herald*, La refondation par les armes des institutions politiques canadiennes* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2015).

[27] For instance, Lefebvre does an in-depth analysis of the *Montreal Gazette'*s editorials about French-Canadian nationalism from 1835 to 1842. Muzzo concentrates on the reformist (*patriote*) and constitutional movements in Montreal from 1834 to 1837. McCulloch addresses the constitutionals through their actions within the Constitutional Associations of Montreal and Quebec, but his examples and references are taken from Montreal newspapers. Ducharme also relies on Montreal newspapers to buttress his argument that two types of liberties (republican and modern) were circulating in Lower Canada during this period.

opposed to the subtler putdowns of the Quebec City constitutionalist press. Consequently, Montreal constitutionalists make a convenient foil to studies of the *Patriotes*. However, our understanding of Lower Canadian constitutionalism would be enhanced with a more nuanced analysis of the movement since the focus on Montreal constitutionalists tends to mask the fundamental differences amongst constitutionalists in this period. Although all constitutionalists believed in the ideological principles of liberty, property, and security, they did not understand these words in the same way and did not hope to achieve the same things within the colonial institutions. For example: Montreal constitutionalists were Francophobic, Quebec constitutionalists were not; Montreal constitutionalists advocated for the union of the Canadas, Quebec constitutionalists did not.

Third, not all promoters of constitutional institutions were adherents to the principles of British constitutionalism: some defenders of the established constitutional order articulated a political discourse that was resolutely not based on British constitutional principles. The colonial Roman Catholic press, for example, accepted the goals of constitutionalists but its ideological underpinning was altogether different. Inspired by the counter-revolutionary ideology of French traditionalism, these newspaper editors developed a defense of the Lower Canadian constitution based on Gallican principles, which supported a strong church buttressed by a powerful Crown that imposed peace, order, and good government.[28] The newspaper *L'Ami du Peuple,* secretly sponsored by the Gallican Joseph-Vincent Quiblier, superior of the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice of Montreal, was of this ideological current.[29] As we shall see, it was not the only one.

This study analyses how the two *Gazettes* fit into the intellectual history of the period by looking at how Neilson and Macdonald interpreted the events of the tumultuous years between June 1836 (when they took over the two *Gazettes*) and July

[28] Terence J. Fay, A History of Canadian Catholics: Gallicanism, Romanism and Canadianism (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 44.

[29] Beaulieu et al., La presse québécoise, 73-74. Louis Rousseau, "Quiblier, Joseph-Vincent," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography online, accessed May 18, 2016, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/quiblier_joseph_vincent_8E.html.

1840 (when the Act of Union was passed). Its approach is resolutely intellectual as it studies the ideologies developed in the two *Gazettes*. According to the political scientist Charles Jones, an ideology can be defined as any "comprehensive and mutually consistent set of ideas by which a social group makes sense of the world." He lists Catholicism, Islam, Liberalism, and Marxism as examples.[30] He further notes that an ideology has four components: It "needs to provide some explanation of how things have come to be as they are, some indication of where they are heading …, criteria for distinguishing truth from falsehood and valid arguments from invalid, and some overriding belief, whether in God, Providence, or History, to which adherents may make a final appeal when challenged."[31] Inspired by Jones's definition, this study defines ideology as a set of ideas, beliefs, and values that allows an individual to face the world and give it meaning; to defend, change, or criticize the social organization of a society; and to justify his/her political actions.

More specifically, this study seeks to comprehend how the ideologies permeated in the two *Gazettes* were at times similar, at times not, than the ideologies circulating in Lower Canada in this period. The sociologist Jean Baechler proposes that an ideology is expressed by a discourse that emanates from "des états de conscience" tied to political action. He explains that this discourse can come in many forms: most often, a word (liberty) or a set of words (liberty, equality, fraternity), but it can also be an image or object (New York's Statue of Liberty) or a song (a national anthem).[32] This study seeks to shed light on the ideologies articulated in the two *Gazettes* by focussing on the news reproduced, the editorials published, and other material included in each newspaper. It pays attention to the principles defended, the vocabulary used, and the sources of inspiration of each editor. The study disentangles the ideologies defended in Neilson's *Quebec Gazette* and Macdonald's *Gazette de Québec* by analysing the similarities and differences (of each other and of others) in their respective discourses. Ultimately, the study highlights how each editor interpreted events through their distinct overriding belief (Neilson in the Constitution, Macdonald in God), which uniquely framed their outlook of

[30] Charles Jones, "Ideology," in Iain McLean and Alistair McMillan, eds., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), 627.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Jean Baechler, *Qu'est-ce que l'idéologie?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 21-22.

how things came to be, where they were heading, as well as their criteria to judge valid from invalid arguments.

While some historians have studied some Lower Canadian newspapers,[33] they have paid scant attention to the *Quebec Gazette* and the *Gazette de Québec*. Elzéar Gérin does not address the topic at all, although he does describe Neilson's break from Papineau and the *Parti Patriote* in 1834 as the time when "la *Gazette* brisa définitivement tous les liens qui l'avaient attachée au parti libéral."[34] Beaulieu and Hamelin say the *Gazettes* are "conservateur-indépendant," but do not explain what they mean by this expression.[35] If Lockhart, Gallichan and Lamonde acknowledge the rise of newspaper editorials in the 1830s, a rise where "[l]es principales figures du journalisme de cette époque y ont forgé leur renommée, tels John Neilson…"[36], they do not inform us on the ideological content of these editorials.

The perspective of the two *Gazettes* was guided by their two editors, John Neilson and Ronald Macdonald. If Macdonald's ideological perspective has been entirely forgotten, that of Neilson's has been analysed by a number of historians. In his study of British colonists in Lower Canada, Philip Goldring positions Neilson as politically liberal and socially conservative. He further argues that Neilson's political career was marked by his "steadfast refusal to admit that there were contradictions in the two roles" despite the fact, to take one example, that he supported the "status and moral authority of the clergy" while promoting secular education.[37] John Gilbert Neilson's study of Neilson's political career from 1818 to 1848 argues that his social and economic beliefs paralleled those of the British gentry. His views of constitutional change in Lower Canada were based on reform policies in the manner of British Whigs, "most notably Edmund

[33] See for example, Nadia Fahmy-Eid, "*Les mélanges religieux* et la révolution romaine de 1848," *Recherches sociographiques* 10, no 2-3 (1969): 237-260; Lefebvre, *Montreal Gazette*; Philippe Reid, "L'émergence du nationalisme canadien-français : l'idéologie du *Canadien* (1806-1842)," *Recherches sociographiques* 21, no 1-2 (1980): 11-53.

[34] Gérin, *La Gazette de Québec*, 56.

[35] Beaulieu et al., *La presse québécoise,* 2.

[36] Fleming et al., *Histoire du livre*, 251.

[37] Goldring, "British Colonists," 206-208.

Burke."[38] Yet another perspective comes from Bruce Curtis' study of the development of Lower Canada/Quebec's educational system. In this study, he examines Neilson's role as a member of the Quebec School Society (from 1814), of the Legislative Assembly and as Chair of the Assembly's Permanent Committee on Education from 1831 to 1834.[39] By studying Neilson in this specific context, Curtis argues that Neilson was a liberal by providing evidence that he pushed for the rational distribution of schools within defined catchment areas, the feminization of teaching, student classification, and a common pedagogy.[40] Finally, many historians, describe Neilson as a "moderate" constitutionalist, thus implying there is an extreme version, but they do not study how his ideological perspective differs from others.[41]

In this context, this study argues that from June 1836 to the passing of the Act of Union in July 1840, the *Quebec Gazette* and the *Gazette de Québec* were two distinct newspapers. If both defended the established social and political order and promoted the existing constitutional institutions as the best means to govern Lower Canada and ensure its prosperity, they did so from two very different perspectives. On the one hand, John Neilson, influenced by the ideas developed by John Locke, William Blackstone, Jean-Louis De Lolme and Edmund Burke, among others, articulated a political rhetoric based on individual rights of liberty, property, and security in the *Quebec Gazette*. He argued that the Lower Canadian mixed government was the only way to guarantee

[38] John Gilbert Neilson, "Constitutionalism and Nationalism in Lower Canada" (MA thesis, Acadia University, 1982), Abstract. Although J.G. Neilson may be related to John Neilson I have found no such evidence. For a general discussion of Whiggism in Lower Canada, see Michael McCulloch, "The Death of Whiggery." For discussions on British Whiggism, see for example, Reed Browning, *Political and constitutional ideas of the court Whigs* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); Kathryn Chittick, *The language of Whiggism: liberty and patriotism, 1802-1830* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010); Austin Vernon Mitchell, *The Whigs in Opposition, 1815-1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); L.G. Mitchell, *The Whig World: 1760-1837* (London, New York: Hambledon, 2005); Annabel M. Patterson, *Nobody's Perfect: A New Whig Interpretation of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

[39] Bruce Curtis, *Ruling by Schooling Quebec: Conquest to Liberal Governmentality – a Historical Sociology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 92, 111, 214.

[40] Curtis, *Ruling by Schooling*, 92, 109-112, 111, 214, 218.

[41] See McCulloch, "The Death of Whiggery;" Steven Watt, "Authoritarianism, Constitutionalism and the Special Council of Lower Canada, 1838-1841" (MA thesis, McGill University, 1997); Ducharme, *The Idea of Liberty*; Maxime Dagenais, ""Le Conseil Spécial est mort, Vive le Conseil Spécial!" The Special Councils of Lower Canada, 1838-1841" (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 2011).

these individual rights and that the continuance of this form of government did not require the assimilation of French Canadians to the English language, religion and customs since they had already proven their loyalty to the British Crown. On the other hand, Ronald Macdonald, inspired by the intellectual tradition developed by the Vicomte Louis Gabriel Ambroise de Bonald, Jean-Baptiste Duvoisin, and the Comte Denis Luc de Frayssinous, promoted the preservation of the established order in the *Gazette de Québec* by using the religious rhetoric of French traditionalism, which defended the rights of social and political groups rather than those of individuals. Accordingly, while *La Gazette de Québec* was not officially a religious newspaper, it articulated its defence of the Lower Canadian constitution, based on British principles, around a rhetoric inspired by a French Counter-Revolutionary Roman Catholic ideology (as far as it was possible to do so within the colonial context).

A number of steps were taken to reconstitute the ideological foundation of the two *Gazettes*. After consulting the historiography on the period,[42] the microfilmed newspapers were digitized and each *Gazette* was divided into monthly stacks that were read in alternation (first the *Quebec Gazette* for June 1836, then *Gazette de Québec* for June 1836, etc.). The newspapers each produced three weekly editions. Hence, spanning the four-year period, approximately twelve hundred editions were read. Datasets were populated with a spreadsheet that kept track of articles addressing political matters, editorials, reactions to events mentioned in secondary sources, and anything else that seemed pertinent. Each item was assigned a number, to which corresponded the date it appeared and a brief summary of its topic. The initial round of reading found 630 items of possible interest for the *Quebec Gazette*, 490 for the *Gazette de Québec*. The ideological differences between the two *Gazettes* became apparent during this stage of the research, which necessitated a split in research tasks. One task was to continue reconstructing the *Quebec Gazette's* constitutionalism, the other was to identify the ideological tenets and language mobilised in the *Gazette de Québec*.

[42] Important works dealing with the political and ideological context of Lower Canada in the 1830s include, Ouellet, *Le Bas-Canada*; Greer, *The Patriots and the People*; Ducharme, *Idea of Liberty*.

To understand Macdonald's worldview, further research into his background was required. First, Claude Galarneau's works on the *Séminaire de Québec's* curriculum were read.[43] The curriculum pointed to the philosophy textbook used during Macdonald's time at the *Séminaire*.[44] This textbook consisted of texts written mainly by French authors de Bonald, Duvoisin and de Frayssinous. Further research found that these thinkers were known for the counter-revolutionary ideology called French traditionalism. Their published works were then read, along with secondary literature that address French traditionalism.[45] The final step then consisted of rereading the *Gazette de Québec* with a view of comparing and contrasting the articles used by Macdonald in the newspaper with the writings of French traditionalism.

This assessment of the ideological foundation of two *Gazettes'* thus rests upon a close reading of all published editions from June 1836 until the passing of the Act of Union in July 1840. The change in editorship from Samuel Neilson to John Neilson and Ronald Macdonald in June 1836 marks the starting point at which the ideological foundation of the two *Gazettes* diverged. It is also during this period that the two *Gazettes* articulated a strong defence of the established constitutional order, defined by the terms of the Constitutional Act of 1791. Any possibility to reinstate the Act of 1791

[43] Claude Galarneau, *Les collèges classiques au Canada français (1620-1970)*, (Montréal: Fides, 1978); Claude Galarneau, "Un souffle nouveau dans l'enseignement : l'époque de Jérôme Demers et Jean Holmes," *Cap-aux-Diamants : la revue d'histoire du Québec* 4, 1 (1988).

[44] Jérôme Demers, *Institutiones philosophicae ad usum studiosae juventutis* (Quebec: Tho. Cary & Soc., 1835).

[45] Robert A. Nisbet, "The French Revolution and the Rise of Sociology in France," *American Journal of Sociology* 49, no. 2 (Sept. 1943): 156-164; Robert A. Nisbet, "De Bonald and the Concept of the Social Group," *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 5, no. 3 (June 1944): 315-331; Alexandre Koyré and Leonora Cohen-Rosenfield, "Louis de Bonald," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 7, no. 1 (January, 1946): 56-73; Louise Marcil Lacoste, "La défense de l'immuable dans son rapport avec le changeant: Beattie et Frayssinous," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (June 1976): 229-249; W. Jay Reedy, "Burke and Bonald: Paradigms of Late Eighteenth-Century Conservatism," *Historical Reflections* 8, no. 2 (1981): 69-93; W. Jay Reedy, "Language, Counter-Revolution and the 'Two Cultures': Bonald's Traditionalist Scientism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44, no. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1983): 579-597; W. Jay Reedy, "The Historical Imaginary of Social Science in post-Revolutionary France: Bonald, Saint-Simon, Comte," *History of the Human Sciences* 7, no. 1 (1996): 1-26; Pierre Glaudes, "Joseph de Maistre Essayiste," *Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Études Françaises* 52, no. 1 (2000): 117-132; Jean-Yves Pranchère, "The Social Bond According to the Catholic Counter-Revolution: Maistre and Bonald," in *Joseph de Maistre's Life, Thought, and Influence*, Selected Studies, 190-219, edited by Richard A. Lebrun (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

was definitely put to rest by the British Parliament when it passed the Act of Union in July 1840, which would henceforth govern the Province of Canada. The passing of the Act of Union also changed the focus of the two *Gazette's* political discourse. From having defended the established order, the two publications shifted their concentration to demands for repealing the Act of Union.

This thesis reconstructs the ideologies of Neilson and Macdonald. It examines the ideas, beliefs, and values presented and how these were structured in the two *Gazettes*. By analysing how they defended or criticized the political and religious organisations, and by comparing what they said and how they said it, this thesis reveals how they faced the world and gave it meaning, each from a distinct ideological perspective. Since this thesis is a study of ideologies, both newspapers were studied independently. This ideological distinctiveness is also what guided the thesis into discrete chapters. The first chapter analyses the constitutionalist discourse of Neilson's *Quebec Gazette*, while the second chapter analyses the traditionalist discourse of Macdonald's *Gazette de Québec* and compares it to the discourse developed in the *Quebec Gazette*.

The reliance on Montreal newspapers to study Lower Canada's tumultuous 1830s has left a gap in our understanding of the intellectual effervescence of the period. This thesis contributes to filling this gap by analysing how political events were viewed in Quebec City. It complicates our understanding of Lower Canadian promoters of constitutional institutions by adding a new interpretative layer to our knowledge about the *Patriotes'* opponents. On the one hand, the analysis of the *Quebec Gazette* brings back John Neilson, who had been mostly forgotten in this period, to the forefront. It also nuances our understanding of British constitutionalism. On the other hand, the study of the *Gazette de Québec*, brings to light how a traditionalist discourse borrowed from a foreign country could be used to defend the British established order, and uncovers the presence of Ronald Macdonald as editor. Overall, the study of the *Quebec Gazette* and the *Gazette de Québec*, two newspapers who were erroneously thought to be exact replicas of each other, evidences that the intellectual history of Lower Canada was more complex than previously presented. It thus highlights the intellectual diversity among the defenders of the constitution in Lower Canada.

Chapter 1.
Quebec Gazette, 1836-1840

When John Neilson returned to the helm of the *Quebec Gazette,* it was with much life experience under his belt. While there exist many studies of Neilson,[1] none have made an exhaustive analysis of the *Quebec Gazette* in the crucial years between 1836 and 1840, when the political institutions of Lower Canada were destabilized by successive political events such as the *Patriotes* demands for greater democracy, the Rebellions of 1837-38, the suspension of the Constitutional Act of 1791, and the British Parliament's passing of the Union of the Canadas in 1840.

This chapter focuses on how the *Quebec Gazette* interpreted these political events. It argues that the *Quebec Gazette*, under Neilson's guidance, consistently defended the colonial constitution, and the principles upon which it rested, within the context of British constitutionalism. It also sheds light on the distinctiveness of Neilson's constitutional position in comparison to positions taken by other constitutionalists. First, unlike other constitutionalists such as some members of the Montreal Constitutional Association, Neilson never questioned (even implicitly) the imperial connection between Lower Canada and the United Kingdom. In this sense, he was much more attached to the United Kingdom than those who blamed the political crisis, in part, on the Home

[1]See for example, Nora Bateson, "John Neilson of Lower Canada, 1818-1828" (MA thesis, McGill University, 1933); Bruce Curtis, *Ruling by Schooling Quebec: Conquest to Liberal Governmentality – a Historical Sociology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Maxime Dagenais, ""Le Conseil Spécial est mort, Vive le Conseil Spécial!" The Special Councils of Lower Canada, 1838-1841" (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 2011); Marion Hagerman, "John Neilson: His Political Activities in Lower Canada, 1818-1834" (MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1937); John Gilbert Neilson, "Constitutionalism and Nationalism in Lower Canada" (MA thesis, Acadia University, 1982); Steven Watt, "Authoritarianism, Constitutionalism and the Special Council of Lower Canada, 1838-1841" (MA thesis, McGill University, 1997).

Government's conciliatory measures towards the *Patriotes*.[2] Second, Neilson was not a Francophobe and his political discourse was never anti-French Canadian.[3]

I. John Neilson and the Constitutional Act of 1791

Neilson was born on 17 July 1776 in Dornell,[4] in the parish of Balmaghie, Scotland, and was educated in a parish school until the age of fourteen.[5] The curriculum was designed to "foster the virtuous education and godly upbringing of the youth of this realm."[6] Parish schools taught children reading, writing, arithmetic, and Latin, to the age of fourteen.[7] Scotland achieved a higher ratio of university places to population than any other European nations because parish and burgh schools functioned as "feeders for higher education."[8] Other than Latin, universities had no entrance qualifications and their close connections to the parish school system made it easy for students between the ages of fourteen and sixteen to attend.[9] Consequently, Neilson was likely qualified to enter university when he chose to sail from Scotland to Quebec City in 1791 to help his brother Samuel run the publishing firm Brown and Gilmore. The firm, which owned and

[2] François Deschamps, *La « rébellion de 1837 » à travers le prisme du* Montreal Herald (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2015), 142. Montreal constitutionalists included Adam Thom of the *Montreal Herald*, David Chisholme of the *Montreal Gazette*, as well as members of the Constitutional Association of Montreal who also served on the Special Council such as Robert Hardwood, Peter McGill, George Moffatt, John Molson, and William Walker.

[3] On the francophobia of Montreal constitutionalists see for example, Ged Martin, "The influence of the Durham Report," in *Reappraisals in British Imperial History*, edited by Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin (London: Macmillan, 1975); Watt, "Authoritarianism;" Michel Ducharme, *The Idea of Liberty During the Age of Atlantic Revolutions*, trans. by Peter Feldstein (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), Deschamps, *La « rébellion de 1837 »*.

[4] The *Dictionary of Canadian Biography online* and other historiography that refers to Neilson's place of birth call it Dornald but my research found no such place. There was, however, a Dornell located in the Balmaghie Parish. See: "Named Places in Balmaghie Parish" on http://www.kirkcudbright.co/places.asp?ID=24, accessed 25 May 2015.

[5] Hagerman, "John Neilson," 4; Henry J. Morgan, *Sketches of Celebrated Canadians and Persons Connected with Canada from the Earliest Period Down to the Present Time* (Province of Canada: 1862), 297.

[6] T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000* (London: Penguin, 2006), 143.

[7] Devine, *Scottish Nation,* 148.

[8] Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 125.

[9] Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 149-153.

operated the *Quebec Gazette*, had been bequeathed to the two brothers by their uncle William Brown.[10]

Neilson spent the last decade of the eighteenth-century learning the printing business and settling down into adulthood. He apprenticed alongside Samuel, until his brother's untimely death in 1793, then under Dr. Sparks, his tutor, until he reached adulthood in 1796.[11] In 1797, he married Marie-Ursule Hubert, a prosperous *Canadienne* and niece of the Catholic bishop of Quebec, Mgr. Jean-François Hubert. John and Marie-Ursule signed a marriage contract in which they agreed to have community of property administered according to the *Coutume de Paris*. Neilson later explained to his mother that this was done because he thought highly of his wife and had also wished to "symbolize his permanent establishment in Canada and to help lessen the baneful prejudices with which Canadians and British immigrants regarded each other."[12] The marriage was a happy one and, according to Philip Goldring, was partly the reason why Neilson had a high regard for French Canadians.[13] The union brought forth ten children some of whom died in infancy. The boys were brought up in the Presbyterian faith, the girls Catholic.[14]

Neilson was fluent in English and in French, and an inventory of his home in 1817, including book titles from his personal library, gives an indication of his varied interests. It reveals that he enjoyed literary works by Shakespeare, Milton, Plutarch, Crébillon, Racine, Corneille and Molière, along with poetry by James Thomson and Nicolas Boileau. Neilson also owned Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XV* and B.C. Walpole's biography of the British Whig Charles James Fox. The inventory also displays his

[10] Sonia Chassé, Rita Girard-Wallot, and Jean-Pierre Wallot, "Neilson, John," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography online*, accessed 17 August, 2013, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/neilson_john_7E.html.

[11] André Beaulieu and Jean Hamelin, *La presse québécoise: des origines à nos jours*, Tome premier: 1764-1859 (Québec: Presses de l'université de Laval, 1973), 1-3.

[12] Chassé et al., "Neilson, John."

[13] Phillip Goldring, "British Colonists and Imperial Interests in Lower Canada, 1820 to 1841" (PhD diss., University of London, 1978), 208.

[14] Chassé et al., "Neilson, John."

interest in history through books such as *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*,[15] William Robertson's *History of America*, and David Hume's *History of England.* Neilson's personal library also contained Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* as well as works by Malthus. Finally, Neilson's interest in the rule of law can be seen through his copies of Sir James Burrow's *Reports of cases argued and adjudged in the Court of King's Bench*, the *Laws of Lower Canada* 1759-1814, and Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*.[16]

Neilson's educational background, life experiences, and readings informed his views as editor of the *Quebec Gazette* and, later on, as a politician. In these two roles, he regularly defended the political institutions, created in the colony by the Constitutional Act of 1791, as the best means to govern Lower Canada. The Act of 1791 was modeled on the British constitution. It emulated the metropolitan mixed system of government with its division of powers between the Monarch, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons; it divided the powers in the colony between the Governor (assisted by Executive Councillors), the Legislative Council, and the Legislative Assembly. Jeffrey McNairn explains that the model had its roots in classical Greece and Rome where classical authors believed that a balance of powers between stakeholders avoided a slide towards tyranny. Hence, they determined that a constitution should be divided into rule by the one (monarchy), the few (aristocracy), and the many (democracy). The British believed they had achieved this balance in the seventeenth century through the division of King, Lords, and Commons in the Parliament. The replication of these institutions in Lower Canada, however, institutionalized the opposition between English merchants, who eventually came to control both Councils, and French Canadians *habitants*, whose representatives dominated the Assembly. This division of powers enacted through the Act thus set the stage for multiple debates and confrontations between the elected members of the Assembly, the appointed governor, and the legislative and executive councillors. Still, despite the difficulties it engendered in the colonies, the promoters of the colonial constitution persistently held on to the notion that

[15] The inventory does not specify the author of *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*. Two possible series could be Marc L'Escarbot's published in 1617 or P. de Charlevoix's published in 1744.

[16] Estate Records, MG 24 B1, vol. 41, 1595-1598, Fonds Neilson, Library and Archives Canada.

mixed government as established by the Act of 1791 was key to good governance.[17] Neilson was one of these promoters.

Not satisfied with defending the constitution in his newspaper, Neilson ran for office and was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1818.[18] In the Assembly, he supported the *Parti canadien*. Created in 1806, this political group regularly asked the Home Government to reform the Act of 1791. They did not question, however, the principles at the basis of the colonial constitution or Lower Canada's colonial relationship to Great Britain. Neilson quickly became a leading figure of the party alongside its main leader, Louis-Joseph Papineau. His status in the *Parti* was confirmed in the 1820s when he was sent twice by the Legislative Assembly to London to defend Lower Canadian interests. First, Neilson was sent with Papineau to fight against the union of Upper and Lower Canada as proposed by the Tory-led British Parliament in 1822.[19] Neilson also testified before the House of Commons' Select Committee on Canadian Affairs in 1828 set up to look into the ongoing struggle between the Governor and the Assembly over the arbitrary actions of the Governor, over the Assembly's powerlessness to remove corrupt officials, and over the Assembly's refusal to approve payment of civil list expenditures unless it controlled crown revenues. Although the Select Committee's recommendations were favourable to the reformers, little change was made to the

[17] Jeffrey L. McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791-1854* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 23-62. See also for example, Phillip Buckner, *The Transition to Responsible Government: British Policy in British North America, 1815-1850* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 47-91.

[18] The *Parti canadien* was formed by Pierre-Stanislas Bédard, Denis-Benjamin Viger and Joseph Papineau in 1806. See Fernand Ouellet, "Bédard, Pierre-Stanislas," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography online, accessed 14 January 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bedard_pierre_stanislas_6E.html.*

[19] Chassé et al., "John Neilson."; Donald Creighton, *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence, 1760-1850* (Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1937), 217; Neilson, "Constitutionalism," 124. The Union Bill was introduced in the House of Commons in the summer of 1822 by Wilmot Horton, the under-secretary for the colonies. The bill was sent to committee after its second reading on 18 July 1822 (*Hansard*, vol. 7, 1715). The petitions against the union began circulating in the colonies in the fall of 1822 and Papineau and Neilson left for London in January 1823. However, the bill never returned to Parliament. See Ducharme, *Idea of Liberty*, 2014),72-74; Goldring, "British Colonists," 51-54; Helen Taft Manning, *The Revolt of French Canada, 1800-1835* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1962), 151-154.

administrative workings of the Act of 1791.[20] The lack of changes encouraged a radicalisation of the *Parti canadien* at the end of the 1820s and beginning of the 1830s, leading to Neilson's gradual departure from the party.

Neilson broke away from the *Parti canadien* in the early 1830s. Neilson's and Papineau's surviving correspondence show how Neilson repeatedly urged an increasingly frustrated Papineau to be patient concerning the implementation of the 1828 recommendations.[21] As the stance of Papineau and the *Parti canadien,* now called *Parti patriote*, became more radical however, the two went their separate ways. By 1832, all correspondence between them ceased, never to be re-established.

Neilson was still in the Legislative Assembly in February 1834, when the *Parti patriote*-led Assembly adopted the "Ninety-Two Resolutions." Thirty-four of these resolutions addressed grievances about the Legislative Council's composition and utility.[22] They demanded for the election of Legislative Councillors rather than appointment by the Crown. In order to put pressure on the British authorities, the *Patriote*-led Assembly refused to pass any budget bills until the British Parliament had met all of their demands. Neilson emphatically disagreed with these resolutions, and campaigned against them in the November 1834 election. He lost his Assembly seat. Undaunted, he chose another venue to voice his political views by establishing the Constitutional Association of Quebec in November 1834.[23] The Association's main objective reflected Neilson’s political principles which had barely changed since he was first elected in 1818. Like Neilson, the Association aimed to obtain for people of "British and Irish origin, and others" political rights commensurate with being subjects of the British Empire, while ensuring the preservation of any "rights, laws, institutions,

[20] Chassé et al., "John Neilson"; Peter Burroughs, *The Canadian Crisis and British Colonial Policy, 1828-1841* (London: Edward Arnold, 1972), 28-43.

[21] MG24-B1, Fonds Neilson, Library and Archives Canada; Louis-Joseph Papineau, (1786-1871), *Lettres à divers correspondants, Tome 1: 1810-1845,* Text prep. and annot. by George Aubin and Renée Blanchet, intro. by Yvan Lamonde, (Montreal: Varia, 2006).

[22] Resolution numbers 9 to 40, 51 and 54 in *Statutes, Treaties and Documents of the Canadian Constitution 1713 -1929*, edited by W.P.M. Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 270-290.

[23] *Declaration of the causes which led to the formation of the Constitutional Association of Quebec, and of the objects for which it has been formed*, Quebec: 1834.

privileges and immunities" that had been afforded to the French-speaking majority.[24] The Quebec group was thus more moderate than the Constitutional Association of Montreal, established in January 1835, which advocated for the eventual assimilation of French Canadians.[25]

While Neilson was busy within the Constitutional Association of Quebec, Lower Canada was also experiencing social unrest caused partly by the economic hardships resulting from repeated wheat crop failures, and partly by French-Canadian nationalism, which had been intensified by the *Patriotes'* campaign.[26] In the meantime, the British government took another stab at resolving the political crisis. In July 1835, it appointed Lord Gosford as Governor and instructed him to appease the *Patriotes*.[27] These measures angered the Montreal constitutionals, who viewed the appointment and mission as pandering to the *Patriotes* demands. These constitutionals now blamed London for the misfortunes that fell upon the colony and began planning for the use of violence to defend their rights against French Canadians and the colonial authorities.[28] Ultimately, the conciliatory mission failed when the *Patriotes* discovered that Lord Gosford had received strict instructions that he should under no circumstance address their demands for changing the colonial institutions.[29] Infuriated, the *Patriotes* resumed their obstructionist tactics.

[24] *Declaration, Constitutional Association of Quebec,* 3.

[25] The Constitutional Association of Montreal was formed in January 1835. Johanne Muzzo, "Les mouvements réformiste et constitutionnel à Montréal, 1834-1837" (MA thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1990), 79.

[26] See for example Creighton, *Commercial Empire*; Allan Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Fernand Ouellet, *Le Bas-Canada 1791-1840: changements structuraux et crise*, (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1980). For a definition of French-Canadian nationalism see Fernand Ouellet, *Histoire économique et sociale du Québec, 1760-1850* (Montréal: Fides, 1971), 1:196-212.

[27] The Earl of Gosford was also commissioned, along with Charles Grey, and George Gipps to report on the reforms implemented as a result of the 1828 recommendations. See Ouellet, *Le Bas-Canada*, 418-420.

[28] Deschamps, *La « rébellion de 1837 »*, 141-146.

[29] The newly appointed Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, Sir Francis Bond Head, had disclosed Lord Gosford's instructions to the Upper Canadian Assembly. Kennedy, *Statutes, Treaties*, 428-430.

Consequently, by the time Neilson resumed the editorship of the *Quebec Gazette* in June 1836, the province was in full political crisis. Gosford's peacemaking efforts had led nowhere, and the Home Government's long-awaited response to the *Patriotes* Ninety-two Resolutions was close at hand. In March 1837, Britain's Home Secretary, Lord John Russell, issued a resounding "no" to all of the Ninety-two Resolutions and produced ten resolutions of his own, which authorized the colonial Governor to spend public revenue without the Assembly's authorization. Russell's Ten Resolutions were tabled in the House of Commons in March 1837. Although the resolutions never became law (the King died in June, and Parliament was dissolved), the *Patriotes* continued to protest the proposal by organizing popular assemblies in the summer and fall of 1837.[30]

Revolutionary talk ensued and, fearing the worst, Gosford issued twenty-six arrest warrants in November 1837 to apprehend the *Patriote* leaders, including Louis-Joseph Papineau. The *Patriotes* chose to resist arrest and the insurrection began. The *Patriotes* won the first battle at Saint-Denis in the Richelieu valley on November 23, 1837. The next two battles, however, at nearby Saint-Charles on November 25, 1837 and at Saint-Eustache in the Deux-Montagnes region in December 14, 1837, were easily won by British troops. Following the insurrection, the constitution was suspended in February 1838 and the legislative bodies were replaced by an appointed Special Council. At about the same time, Lord Durham was mandated by the British Crown to investigate the root causes of the Rebellions, and report back with his recommendations. In the meantime, those *Patriotes* who had managed to escape to the United States were planning another insurrection, which took place in Lower Canada in November 1838 and failed.[31] Finally, Lord Durham's *Report on the Affairs of North America* set the stage for the union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841 and for the advent of responsible government. Hence, Neilson was at the helm of the *Quebec Gazette* during a very tumultuous period of Canada's history. While upset by the insurrection and some metropolitan decisions, he remained faithful to his principles during this difficult period.

[30] Ducharme, *Idea of Liberty*, 179-181.

[31] For broader discussions of this period of Lower Canada's history see for example Burroughs, *Canadian Crisis*; Creighton, *Commercial Empire*; Goldring, "British Colonists"; Greer, *Patriots and the People*; Ouellet, *Le Bas-Canada*; and Taft Manning, *The Revolt*.

While reporting on all of these events, he consistently defended the institutions created by the Constitutional Act of 1791 as the best means to govern Lower Canada.

II. Defense of Constitutionalist Principles

Neilson defended the colonial constitution by using political rhetoric developed from his understanding of British constitutionalism. In the context of this thesis, constitutionalism is understood as a belief in the values of liberty, property and security buttressed by an unwavering conviction that remaining a colony of Great Britain was the only means of preserving a way of life which guaranteed these values. Hence, any governance model that differed from mixed government or that ended or threatened the connection with the mother country was viewed as a threat to the fundamental values of constitutionalism. Constitutionalists believed in the concept of equality before the law, and that personal liberty existed where all members of society obeyed reasonable laws that did not violate anyone's autonomy. Yet, constitutionalism supported a hierarchical social order that was either based on rank or social status, or on a meritocracy based on financial success. The constitutionalists' understanding of the inviolable right of private property was based on an ethic of accumulation that was seen as virtuous and went hand in hand with a commitment to trade and commerce. Constitutionalists also supported the inviolable right to personal security and the right of political participation (but always within a mixed government) that operated on a system of participatory exclusion based on reason and property (and, eventually, gender). Finally, constitutionalists believed in an impartial judiciary that conformed to the rule of law and provided for judicial independence and trials by jury.[32]

Neilson's attachment to the British constitution came from his profound belief that it was best able to protect the liberties enjoyed by Lower Canadians as British subjects. In his *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780) proposed that British liberties could be "reduced to three principal or primary articles; the

[32] Ducharme, *Idea of Liberty*, 131-140.

right of personal security, the right of personal liberty, and the right of private property."[33] Although the rights of security, liberty and property were not explicitly mentioned in the Constitutional Act of 1791 they were at the very core of the British constitution, and colonial constitutionalists understood this.[34] For example, the founding papers of the Constitutional Association of Quebec stated that the common rights of British subjects included the "enjoyment of equal rights with our fellow subjects, and…permanent peace, security and freedom for our persons, opinions, property and industry."[35] Neilson agreed with these principles and valued the British constitution for its protection of British liberties. In an August 1836 article, for example, he stated

> the British Parliament and Government is bound to give us a local Government under the King, sufficiently powerful to afford us that protection which he owes to all his subjects, in the free enjoyment of their liberties, their persons and properties; we know that they are bound to give us an enlightened, independent, and impartial administration of justice, and we are entitled by the Constitutional Act, to a fair representation in the Provincial Assembly, by means of which representation, the wants and wishes of the subject may be made known to the King, and all our rights and interests be submitted to the umpirage [sic] of reason and equity, and honestly and justly regulated for the common advantage. Such we conceive to be, and *have been* the *expressed* views of the great majority of the Constitutionalists throughout the Province.[36]

Neilson, through the *Quebec Gazette*, consistently defended these ideas by objecting to any demands made by the *Patriotes* (and later by the constitutionalists) that would change the Act of 1791. In the period from June 1836 to September 1837, for example, several articles opposed the actions of the *Patriotes* by emphasizing that if the "supreme authority of the Empire" was not to govern the Provinces as decreed in the Act of 1791, these would be "lost."[37] Consequently, Neilson's attachment to the British constitution was amply illustrated in the pages of the *Quebec Gazette*.

[33] Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England,* 1765-1769 (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott, 1893), vol.1, book 1, 128.

[34] Ducharme, *Idea of Liberty,* 134.

[35] *Declaration,* Constitutional Association of Quebec*,* 3.

[36] *Quebec Gazette*, 29-Aug-1836.

[37] *Quebec Gazette*, 18-Jun-1836. See also, for example, *Quebec Gazette*, 8-Jun-1836, 10-Jun-1836, 17-Apr-1837, 20-Sep-1837.

Neilson often used principles guaranteed by the British constitution to promote his view of political events. The *Quebec Gazette* addressed, for example, the principle of equality before the law in December 1836. Neilson believed that the right of equality was before the law only. He wrote that equality for a man "born and educated in Great Britain or Ireland, or in the Colonies" meant that the "law made no distinction in his favour, nor any against him." A British subject was "entitled to perfect equality of right in the Colony where he resides, and nothing more or less." Moreover, "whatever may be the laws…he is entitled to their protection, and they are entitled to his obedience and support." There could be "no well-founded distinctions; and those who endeavour[ed] to introduce them" were not only attempting to "usurp a superiority which [did] not belong to them," they were thereby weakening "the common ties which connect[ed] the inhabitants of the greatest and most extended Empire in the world."[38] Yet, Neilson never questioned the colonial social hierarchy or inequalities in his newspaper. Rather, he consistently promoted the principle that all subjects were equal before the law. Of course, this right was intertwined with a subject's obligation of duty and responsibility towards the British Government.

Neilson indirectly showcased his faith in the Home Government's protection of the rule of law in November 1837 with comments concerning the right to an impartial judiciary and the imposition of martial law in the Montreal region after the insurrection.[39] The *Quebec Gazette* explained that as the Governor derived his authority over Lower Canada from the British Crown, the people would not be subject to "the abuses with which it [martial law] is accompanied in independent States; the South American Republics for example." By contrast, the Governor of Lower Canada was accountable "in the Courts of law in England, *where justice has been longer administered with purity and impartiality than in any other country*, and where the highest of the King's subjects are

[38] *Quebec Gazette,* 19-Dec-1836. See also, for example, *Quebec Gazette,* 16-Dec-1840.

[39] The suspension of ordinary civil law, esp. for the purpose of maintaining order in times of war or civil unrest and when ordinary authority is deemed unable to function. "martial law, n.". *OED Online*. June 2016. Oxford University Press, accessed 30 June 2016, http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/Entry/247568?redirectedFrom=martial+law.

liable to impeachment and *trial before an independent and enlightened tribunal*."[40] In other words, Neilson believed that because the United Kingdom was governed under the rule of law, it would not abuse its powers even in times when the recourse to martial law temporarily rescinded civil liberties. Moreover, even the Governor was entitled to a trial before an impartial judiciary.

Protecting the rule of law was certainly uppermost on Neilson's mind after the November 1838 rebellion. The *Quebec Gazette* criticized *Le Canadien's* editor, Étienne Parent, for suggesting that the British government grant amnesty to the *Patriote* leaders. Parent reasoned that enforcing the current laws was expensive and could have the adverse effect of strengthening the "revolution" and increasing the population's sympathy for the rebels, ultimately making the "Colony not worth holding. " Neilson did not agree. Amnesty was, in the eyes of Neilson, tantamount to disregarding the rule of law resulting in a "Government without authority; the public peace no longer respected; [and] the duty of allegiance, a nullity." Moreover, Neilson equated his rival's reasoning to making rebellion "*decorate[d] with the name revolution*…recognized as a right. " Neilson found this proposal preposterous and offensive, because a rebel could then "exercise at pleasure…the murder of his unoffending neighbour," seize and use his "property" or "imprison him with impunity," thereby infringing on the inviolable rights of personal security, private property and personal liberty. Parent's suggestion was thus "a more monstrous doctrine [than that] of a Parisian mob, in the reign of anarchy and terror." It would be "much better that England should not hold a foot of land in America, than that she should hold it with dishonour."[41] On the surface, Neilson's diatribe was simply pointing to what he thought was a deficiency in his rival's argument. After all, the rebellions had been roundly defeated and there was no incentive for the Home government to negotiate. Furthermore, Durham's leniency in June 1838 had not prevented the second rebellion. Besides, if "conciliatory measures" had not worked in the past, the chances that they would now were next to nil. The article, however, goes deeper than that. By proposing amnesty, Parent had stepped on the very core of

[40] *Quebec Gazette*, 4-Dec-1837. Italics my own. For other examples of the right to an impartial judiciary see *Quebec Gazette* 29-Aug-1836, 15-Feb-1837, 7-Aug-1839. For examples of the right to a trial by jury, see *Quebec Gazette* 8-Aug-1836, 23-Apr-1838.

[41] *Quebec Gazette,* 17-Dec-1838.

Neilson's beliefs. Neilson may have wanted peace, harmony and prosperity restored, but not at any price. The mere suggestion that the British government could disregard the rule of law was not only unconscionable to Neilson but it was also opening the door to possibly more insurrections.

III. Defense of Mixed Government

Neilson not only defended the principles of constitutionalism but he also defended the institutions created by the Act of 1791. His fear that ceding to the *Patriotes'* demand for an elected Legislative Council would disrupt the institution of mixed government and lead to mob tyranny is amply illustrated in the *Quebec Gazette*. In a July 1836 article, Neilson accused newspapers that were sympathetic to the *Patriotes* of misleading their readers by interpreting the declarations of Ministers in a recent House of Commons debate as "affording a hope that they will concede" to their demands for an elective Council. Neilson posited that if the Ministers were to do so, it would be a "violation of the principles of the British Constitution. " Doing so would establish "the most odious tyranny, (that of a blind and prejudiced majority), over a portion of the community."[42] Thus, preserving the institutions of mixed government was a safeguard against mob tyranny.

In February 1837, the *Quebec Gazette* expanded even more on its opposition to the *Patriotes'* demands. Because an elected Legislative Council meant that the people would control two branches of the tripartite system, Neilson argued that this would eliminate the check naturally in place when the three branches were evenly balanced and make the system vulnerable to an arbitrary abuse of power. Neilson questioned:

> Where…would be the check, which constitutionally…ought to form over…public expenditure…public taxation, and abuse of power … if [the representative body] made and unmade all laws?; raised money as it pleased by taxes?; [and] disposed of it in favor of itself and its friends and supporters? What was this but the establishment of the most odious kind of arbitrary power?

[42] *Quebec Gazette*, 1-Jul-1836.

The "natural result" of ceding to the *Patriotes'* demands would be "to place the whole power of the government, legislative, administrative and judiciary, in the hands of [its] leaders. " The article then blamed the "vanity, ambition, or selfish interest" of the *Patriote* leaders for not perceiving "the natural consequences of their project… [that] of subverting the established Constitution. " In doing so, the *Patriotes* had "sacrificed the quiet and happiness of the inhabitants…wasted the public resources, and…retarded the public prosperity" of the colony.[43]

Then, in a rather obvious reference to the French Revolution, Neilson, on the eve of the November 1837 rebellion, also likened the *Patriotes*' desire to establish an "odious tyranny" to the actions of those Frenchmen "who [had] done so much mischief in their own country" and "whose aspiration for freedom [was] the power of tyrannising over others. " The *Quebec Gazette* affirmed that the "greatest safety of the public, in all well-regulated Constitutions of Government, is the existence of *independent* branches of the Legislature, however constituted."[44] Thus, contrary to the *Patriotes,* Neilson believed that the legitimacy of government institutions was based on the coexistence of three independent branches, and not on whether these were elected or appointed bodies. Moreover, it was the independence of the three branches that warded off mob tyranny. Hence, in Neilson's eyes mixed government was much more than just an institution.

Yet, the dependent nature of Lower Canada's colonial relationship with Great Britain meant that the institutions of mixed government could not be precisely replicated. First, the Governor was a representative of the Crown and not an independent ruler. Second, the Legislative Council was composed of officers appointed by the Crown and not an aristocracy of independent means who were endowed with hereditary privileges such as in the House of Lords. Third, the availability of cheap land meant that a greater portion of individuals were enfranchised in comparison to the population of England whose Commons was composed of wealthy landholders and sons of Lords. Fourth, any law passed by the colonial legislature could be overturned by the British government. Lastly, the British Parliament could adopt resolutions and legislation for the colony.

[43] *Quebec Gazette*, 15-Feb-1837.
[44] *Quebec Gazette,* 16-Nov-1837, 22-Nov-1837.

Neilson understood these differences and accepted them. In April 1837, he wrote that the colonial legislature was "modelled on that of the metropolitan kingdoms [sic], in so far as circumstances would permit. " Neilson also made his views in this regard very explicit when discussing Lord Russell's ten proposed resolutions, submitted to the House of Commons the previous month, that would have allowed the governor to pay arrears owed to civil servants through the colonial treasury, thus usurping the Assembly's authority over the treasury.[45] Neilson fully agreed with this decision, even if he did say that it was "humiliating to find the affairs of the Province decided upon by men over whom we can have no control". In any case, he blamed the *Patriote*-led House of Assembly for this decision since it had used its powers to "further individual ambitions, destroy the Government, and subvert the established Constitution."[46]

The importance of keeping Lower Canada's connection with Great Britain was further showcased in October 1837, when the *Quebec Gazette* reproduced an account of a meeting of Montreal citizens who were opposed to the *Patriotes,* first published in the *Montreal Herald*. Although the *Montreal Herald's* account caused the *Quebec Gazette* to conclude that "the system of conciliation which [had] so long been followed, by the Home and Colonial Governments" had failed, it still promoted the connection with Great Britain and the British constitution. Neilson mused that he could not predict "what course the British Government and Parliament" could adopt but he was sure that the "Government of the country [could] not be carried on without further interference of the Imperial Parliament. " Moreover, even if "preparations for rebellion [were being] made […] and the country [was] placed on the verge of ruin," the newspaper was sure that "the Sovereign authority will provide against…a state of things so unfortunate." The impending "rebellion must be put down,– person and property protected,– and all who [were] faithful to their oaths and their allegiance must be ready…to obey the calls of the lawful authority."[47] Neilson was thus linking the importance of preserving the British constitution to guarantee the preservation of basic rights. Good government included the

[45] Phillip Buckner, "Acheson, Archibald, 2nd Earl of Gosford," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed 30 June 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/acheson_archibald_7E.html. For a fuller discussion of supply bills see Taft Manning, *The Revolt,* 339-343.

[46] *Quebec Gazette,* 17-Apr-1837.

[47] *Quebec Gazette*, 30-Oct-1837.

guarantee of certain basic rights and if the local authority was not up to the task of protecting person and property, then British subjects could rely on the Home Government to defend the British constitution as enacted in the Act of 1791.

Neilson's defense of the colonial status continued after the November 1837 rebellion. In February 1838, the British Government and Parliament suspended the Act of 1791 in Lower Canada, and replaced the legislative bodies with an appointed Special Council, that was charged with assisting the Governor (or administrator of the province) in administering the province, while they looked for a long-term solution.[48] Neilson, along with Montreal constitutionalists such as Peter McGill, John Molson, James Stuart, and William Walker, became one of the appointed councillors to Governor John Colborne's Special Council. In the meantime, Lord Durham, who accepted the appointment of Governor-General and High Commissioner of British North America in January 1838, was tasked with the preparation of a report on the circumstances surrounding the rebellions. Leaving England on 24 April 1838, he arrived in Quebec City in May. He took over the administration of the colony from Colborne when he formally became Governor-General on 29 May 1838.[49]

The most urgent problem Durham faced on his arrival to the colony was to decide the fate of 161 rebel prisoners who were awaiting trial in jail. Except for eight prisoners who admitted their guilt and were to be transported to Bermuda, Durham granted amnesty to all. At the same time, Durham ordered that any *Patriote* leader who had escaped to the United States, including Papineau, and returned to Lower Canada, was to be executed. Once these pressing matters were taken care of, Durham then established several commissions to inquire into such matters as immigration, education, municipal institutions, the seigneurial regime, registry offices, police and the judicial system. Durham's productive stay was short-lived, however. Due to the Home

[48] The law, passed on 10 February 1838, suspended the Constitutional Act of 1791 in Lower Canada but left it operational in Upper Canada. See Burroughs, *Canadian Crisis,* 98; Ducharme, *Idea of Liberty*, 181; Greer, *Patriots and the People*, 332.

[49] Lord John George Lambton Durham, *Report on the Affairs of British North America*, February 1839, edited by Sir Charles Lucas, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 1:2.

government's refusal to support his banishment of political prisoners to Bermuda, he resigned his post and sailed back to England on 1 November 1838.[50]

Durham's resignation provided an occasion for Neilson to promote his attachment to Great Britain. Although the *Quebec Gazette* expressed disappointment with the "interference by Members, in either House of Parliament, with Lord Durham," the newspaper also impressed upon its readers that it was not "disposed on account of what [it] conceive[d] to be the misconduct of even the supreme authority, to give up our veneration for the British Constitution, or to engage in any contest with the British Ministry or Government. " After all, "during nearly 150 years they [Great Britain] managed to exist without revolution, and […] brought the nation to an extraordinary pitch of prosperity and grandeur."[51]

The *Quebec Gazette* again pointed to the benefits of remaining within the British constitutional framework after the 10 November 1838 rebellion. Referring to the suspension of the constitution the previous February, and to the temporary institution of an appointed Special Council, the newspaper opined that it was indispensable "for the success of any Government in Lower Canada at present" that the "*civil and military authority be confided to the same person* [the Governor]*.* " The fact that Neilson supported this premise is not too surprising considering that he was one of the appointed Special Councillors.[52] Still, what is interesting is Neilson's "trust that if [Lower Canada were] to have a strong Government, without those local checks usual in British Colonies, it will at least be a just one, subject, as it must be, to the controul [sic] of the British

[50] Fernand Ouellet, "Lambton, John George, 1st Earl of Durham," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed 30 June 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lambton_john_george_7E.html.

[51] *Quebec Gazette*, 21-Sep-1838, 10-Oct-1838.

[52] From April 1838 to February 1841, a total of four Special Councils under three separate Governors operated during the suspension of the Act of 1791 (when the Act was replaced with the Union Act). Lord Colborne was Governor of the first (April to June 1838) and third council (November 1838 to April 1839). Lord Durham was Governor of the second council (June to November 1838). C.P. Thomson was governor of the fourth council which sat in two sessions (1st session: October 1839 to November 1839; 2nd session: April 1840 to February 1841). John Neilson was a member of the first, third, as well as during the 1st session of the fourth council. See Dagenais, ""Le Conseil Spécial"".

Government and Parliament."[53] In other words, Neilson thought that in the short-term it was acceptable for Lower Canada to live under an autocratic regime, as long as it was under the control of the British constitutional framework.

One major difference between the workings of the British constitution in Great Britain as opposed to the colonies was the existence of a British Cabinet. Blackstone explains that in Britain's constitutional monarchy, the monarch was not personally held accountable to the people for executive actions as this would "totally destroy the constitutional independence of the crown, which [was] necessary for the balance of power in [a] free and active…constitution."[54] For this reason, all executive actions were the responsibility of the ministers who advised the Monarch. The Monarch formed a government by selecting a cabinet composed of ministers from the representatives of the people, the House of Commons, or Lords. For the Monarch's government to stay in power, however, it needed the confidence of the House of Commons. If the government lost the confidence of the Commons, it stepped down and the Monarch could either appoint new advisors or call new elections. This measure protected an individual's British liberties as the ministers chosen from the House of Commons, were the representatives of the people. This ensured that the Crown and Lords could not overrun the will of the people.

As we have seen, the Constitutional Act of 1791 replicated the British constitution through the legislative institutions of Governor, Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly but it did not replicate the cabinet. Although Executive Councillors did assist the Governor in his functions, they did not need the confidence of the Legislative Assembly, nor were they responsible for their recommendations. There had been no need to create a responsible Executive Council as the Governor was an official, appointed by the Colonial Office, who was personally responsible for his actions to the Home Government. If his actions were deemed unacceptable to the Crown, the Colonial Office could simply remove him from office. There were no procedures in place,

[53] *Quebec Gazette*, 31-Oct-1838, 2-Jan-1839.
[54] Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England,* vol.1, book 1, 246.

however, to ensure that a Governor (or his Executive Council) had the confidence of the Legislative Assembly.

According to Durham, this was a problem. His solution to it was to reform the Executive Council by implementing responsible government.[55] His report advanced that

> The Governor, as the representative of the Crown, should be instructed that he must carry on his government by heads of departments, in whom the United Legislature shall repose confidence and that he must look for no support from home in any contest with the Legislature, except on points involving strictly Imperial interests.[56]

In other words, the Governor would ideally select his Executive Council advisers amongst the influential deputies of the Assembly who could maintain the support of their colleagues. The Governor could have his "official acts…countersigned" by a senior official or an officer of the crown who, in turn, would bear personal responsibility for the decision in the Assembly.[57] In this manner, the Executive Council could resolve any differences between the Legislative Assembly on the one side and the Governor on the other, without causing constitutional gridlock.[58] Of course, this model presumes that the Legislative Council, made up of good British subjects was always on side with the Governor.

[55] For studies of responsible government see for example, J. M. S. Careless, *The Union of the Canadas: the Growth of Canadian Institutions, 1841-1857,* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967); Ged Martin, *The Durham Report and British Policy: a Critical Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Ged Martin, "The influence of the Durham Report," 75-87; Buckner, *Transition to Responsible Government*; Michael McCulloch, "English-Speaking Liberals in Canada East, 1840-1854" (Ph.D. diss., University of Ottawa, 1986); Gordon T. Stewart, *The Origins of Canadian Politics : A Comparative Approach* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986); Ian Radforth, "Sydenham and Utilitarian Reform," in *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-nineteenth-century Canada,* edited by Allan Greer and Ian Radforth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 64-102.

[56] Durham, *Report*, 327.

[57] Durham, *Report*, 280.

[58] Although Durham's notion of responsible government was not officially implemented by the Act of Union 1841, it was so in practice. The Province of Canada's first Governor General, C.P. Thomson (Lord Sydenham), assisted by Lord Russell in England, did ensure that his Executive Council, as officers of the Crown, were also, for the most part, members of the Legislative Assembly. Thus, in practice a form of responsible government existed in the Province of Canada as early as 1841. See Michel Ducharme, "Aux fondements de l'état canadien: La liberté au Canada de 1776 à 1841" (PhD diss., McGill University, 2005), 410-416; Radforth, "Sydenham" 72-75.

The idea of responsible government, that is "the political responsibility of individual ministers or the cabinet to the elected house," was first articulated in Lower Canada by Pierre-Stanislas Bédard in 1807.[59] This idea might have appealed to some reformers in the 1830s, such as Étienne Parent in Lower Canada and William Warren and Robert Baldwin in Upper Canada,[60] but not Neilson, as he believed the rule of law made responsible government in the colony unnecessary. In June 1836, for example, the *Quebec Gazette* argued that there was no need for the creation of a colonial cabinet (responsible government) as the rule of law under the British constitution provided sufficient safeguards to assure the civil and political rights of all. The article explained that "governors and persons in authority [were] subject to the law, and must be judged by it, and punished for its infraction."[61] In other words, not only was the Governor responsible for his decisions to the British Cabinet, he could also be tried before a court of law if his actions were unlawful.

It is no surprise then that Neilson was adamantly opposed to responsible government as presented in Durham's *Report*. In a July 1839 article the *Quebec Gazette* commented that the implementation of responsible government would break the connection with Great Britain and introduce self-rule, "for, from the moment the remedy [responsible government] is applied the separation [with Great Britain] will have been effected, and democratic principles established; established much more extensively and with less control, than in the adjoining States." The newspaper predicted that if the Home Government were to proceed with this notion

> [t]he Governor's "brains" if he should happen to have any, "will not be racked in fruitless attempts to obey the instructions of the minister in Downing Street," for he will have no instructions to receive, no orders to obey, but those of the majority of the people; and having nothing to do

[59] Ducharme, Idea of Liberty, 61-63; Janet Ajzenstat, "Canada's First Constitution: Pierre Bédard on Tolerance and Dissent," Canadian Journal of Political Science 23, no. 1 (Mar-1990): 43-49.

[60] W. W. Baldwin to Duke of Wellington, 3-Jan-1829, in *Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1819-1828*, edited by A. Doughty and N. Story (Ottawa: Patenaude, 1935), 482; R. Baldwin to Glenelg, 13-Jul-1836, R. Baldwin to Durham, 23-Aug-1838, in *Statutes, Treaties and Documents of the Canadian Constitution 1713 -1929*, edited by W.P.M. Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 335, 367; In the case of Étienne Parent see for example *Le Canadien*, 25-Jul-1835, 12-Feb-1836, 2-May-1836, 23-May-1836.

[61] *Quebec Gazette,* 29-Jun-1836.

> with them, or they with him, but changing the servants which their representatives may place about him, whenever a change pleases them, he will be sure of their "enthusiastic affections![62]

Clearly, Neilson was not a fan of Durham's proposal. Given his experience with party politics, however, his opposition to responsible government was likely caused by his fear that it would strengthen the party system and eventually lead to the province's independence from Great Britain.[63] However, Neilson's familiarity with the workings of the British constitution would have made clear that Durham was not proposing that an Executive Council be responsible to the Assembly in the same manner that the British cabinet was collectively responsible to the Commons for their conduct of the government.

Still, Neilson continued to oppose responsible government in this manner. In May 1839, for example, the *Quebec Gazette* began publishing a series titled "United States, Responsible Government." Although the series did not at any time compare Durham's proposal to the republican model of American governance, its title did invite readers to associate the two models. Each article of the series re-published stories from American newspapers that described instances of government corruption and fraud but did not, as was its custom, provide additional commentary.[64] Readers had to wait five months, until November 1839, for a *Quebec Gazette* editorial to finally expose Neilson's thinking around the publishing of this series. He stated that "United States, Responsible Government," was pertinent to constitutionalists because Durham had proposed the

> "same system" […] a Government in all its branches, within the Colonies, responsible to the majorities at the elections, and changing as they change. If we are no longer to have, within the Colonies, the steady authority emanating from a Government of King, Lords and Commons, no longer any "Downing Street Government," […] we would prefer having the "real thing" at once; the American system complete: and we might perhaps manage it, in time, according to established precedent: whereas,

[62] *Quebec Gazette*, 15-Jul-1839.

[63] Which, over time, is what happened. As responsible government developed further during the 1840s, colonial autonomy became more real while the mixed government three-part division of powers less so.

[64] *Quebec Gazette*, 27-May-1839. More examples of the series are located in editions from May to December 1839.

> with the *disguise* proposed, we should wander without chart or compass, and get into a ruinous state of confusion and violence.[65]

Neilson was thus opposed to Durham's responsible government proposal for the same reasons he had been opposed to the *Patriotes'* demands for an elected Legislative Council; he believed responsible government would upset the balance of powers in the institutions of mixed government by giving too much power to the democratic branch, a notion that went against his defense for the institutions of mixed government as enacted in the Act of 1791.

In March 1840, the *Quebec Gazette* commented on yet another political article copied from an American newspaper. This time, however, he used the article to argue that "responsible government" would lead to the deadly consequences brought on in France by the French Revolution. Neilson opined that responsible government was equivalent to the "'liberty, equality and fraternity' of the French Revolution," a rallying cry that gathered those "who were anxious for upsetting the existing authority […] as well as those who could be duped by fine words. " He warned that "those who [had] survived the horrors, the robberies and murders…as well as their offspring, now live[d] under heavier burthens than ever was borne before in the country they inhabit. " Fifty years hence, the survivors and their offspring still had to look for evidence of "that liberty, equality and fraternity" which had been the declared objectives of the rebels.[66] In tying to the French Revolution the rallying cry for "liberty," one that had been used during the American War of Independence and by the rebels in Lower Canada, the *Quebec Gazette* was effectively implying that should responsible government be adopted, *la terreur* which had horrified the Western world would also occur in Canada.

Neilson's opposition to responsible government was thus amply demonstrated in the pages of the *Quebec Gazette*. He feared it would lead to the province's independence from Great Britain and to mob tyranny. Neilson believed that mixed government and the rule of law provided sufficient protection against any "irresponsible" acts that could be perpetrated by the Governor or either of the two Houses because of

[65] *Quebec Gazette*, 22-Nov-1839.
[66] *Quebec Gazette,* 25-Mar-1840.

the province's attachment to the Mother country. In other words, any wrong perpetrated in the province would eventually be corrected (although sometimes very slowly) through the province's connection to the Home Government.

III Defense of French Canadians' Rights

As previously stated, Neilson's life experiences had produced great affection and high esteem for French Canadians. To wit, when Alexis de Tocqueville asked Neilson's opinion of French Canadians in 1831, he responded:

> C'est à mon avis une race admirable. Le paysan canadien est simple dans ses goûts, très tendre dans ses affections de famille, très pur dans ses mœurs, remarquablement *sociable, poli* dans ses manières ; avec cela très propre à résister à l'oppression, indépendant et guerrier, nourri dans l'esprit d'égalité.[67]

He also asserted to de Tocqueville his belief that the two ethno-cultural groups could live and prosper in Lower Canada:

> Je crois que les deux races vivront et se mêleront sur le même sol et que l'anglais restera la langue officielle des affaires. L'Amérique du Nord sera anglaise, la fortune a prononcé. Mais la race française du Canada ne disparaîtra pas.[68]

Hence, contrary to the most vocal Montreal constitutionalists, who believed French Canadians were indolent, barbaric, and ignorant,[69] Neilson's affection and admiration for French Canadians resulted in a political discourse that was never francophobic or anti-French Canadian. He was adamant that French Canadians be treated as British subjects with all of the privileges this entailed. He did not believe that the French Canadians' desire to keep their customs, culture and religion was a mark of disloyalty to the British Crown. This was markedly different from Montreal constitutionalists, who understood

[67] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Tocqueville au Bas-Canada, écrits datant de 1831 à 1859, datant de son voyage en Amérique et après son retour en Europe* (Montréal: Éditions du Jour, 1973), 65.

[68] Tocqueville, *Tocqueville au Bas-Canada,* 65.

[69] Adam Thom, *Anti-Gallic Letters Addressed to his Excellency, the Earl of Gosford, Governor in Chief of the Canadas by Camillus* (Montreal: *Montreal Herald* Office, 1836), 18.

loyalty, as an "allegiance to the British culture, language, religion, customs, civil laws, and social institutions," which justified their desire to exclude French Canadians from political participation in government institutions.[70]

Neilson often pointed to instances of the French Canadians' loyalty to the British Empire since the time of the Conquest. In articles appearing prior to the November 1837 rebellion Neilson was insistent that the "descendants of the early French settlers" were the "victims…made to bear the sins of the majority of the elective Assembly." Accordingly, they were "about as guilty…as [were] the majority of the population of every country of the faults of those who [were] entrusted with its public concerns. " Although they had the vote "in the choice of their rulers, they [were] rarely in a condition to decide correctly on contentions which arose among these rulers. " It would be "unfortunate" if the people of Lower Canada were to be made "responsible for the conduct of their representatives" because in the words of the "first British Governor," General Murray, French Canadians were "'a strong, healthy race, plain in their dress, virtuous in their morals, and temperate in their living,' and [had] proved themselves 'faithful and good subjects of His Majesty.'" In Neilson's opinion, French Canadians were "the same as they were at the breaking out of the American Revolution, the same as in 1812, 1813, and 1814," and "ought to consider themselves, as they really [were], British subjects, as much as if they, and their forefathers from time immemorial had been born in the British Isles." Despite the work of the "revolutionary agitators," Neilson believed that "the people of Lower Canada [would] be neither traitors nor rebels." They would "let their politicians play their antics […] but when the day of trial comes, they will be, as they have always been, true to the British Government."[71] Thus contrary to Montreal constitutionalists, Neilson, prior to the outbreak of rebellions, believed that French Canadians, despite their differences in culture and customs, were loyal to the British Empire and would remain so.

The *Quebec Gazette* also warned other constitutionalist newspapers, prior to the November 1837 rebellion, that their "great political object" for a legislative re-union with

[70] Ducharme, *Idea of Liberty,* 152-159.
[71] *Quebec Gazette*, 5-May-1837, 19-May-1837, 29-May-1837.

Upper Canada as a means of destroying "the political power of the French Canadians" would backfire. Consistent with Neilson's opposition to a union with Upper Canada in 1822, the *Quebec Gazette* argued that such a union would strengthen rather than weaken the cause of the *Patriotes*. While "everything that concerns their peculiarities of laws, language and institutions, would no doubt be diminished or destroyed by the union," they would, nevertheless, "continue to exist."[72]

As the agitation grew and revolutionary talk began circulating, however, Neilson expressed his frustration with the French Canadian's support of the *Patriotes'* inaction in the Legislative Assembly. In September and October 1837 articles Neilson presented the Assembly's inability to produce results "in its eight days sitting, from the 18th to the 26th August" as an example of how the *Patriote*-led body had left "the country, during three years out of four, without any beneficial local legislation." He blamed, in part, the "constituents" who supported "such conduct in their representatives" because the "mass of the electors [were] deficient in information" and had "very little desire of the aids of legislation or government." Neilson contrasted their attitude with that of the "better informed and more active portion of the inhabitants of other national origins… [who] contribute[d] the most to the public revenue, and suffer[ed] in their enterprise, their property, and their feelings, from the want of proper legislative enactments."[73] Plainly, Neilson was irritated by the French Canadians' lack of interest in the workings of the British constitution and in this instance at least, shared the opinion of Montreal constitutionalists.

Still, Neilson was hopeful. In an article praising the nomination of Lord Durham as the new Governor, the *Quebec Gazette* was sure that Durham would "endeavour to *Anglify* the country as it ought to be *Anglified,*" affording the colony with "perfect security for person and property, [as well as] establish[ing] schools and institutions of learning" and providing solutions to all of the economic woes it faced. Neilson's understanding of "anglifying," however, was different than that of Durham, who believed in assimilation so that Lower Canada's "national character" would become the same as that of the "British

[72] *Quebec Gazette*, 14-Dec-1836.
[73] *Quebec Gazette,* 4-Sep-1837, 22-Sep-1837, 2-Oct-1837.

Empire [and] that of the majority of British America."[74] In contrast, Neilson's understanding of "anglifying" the country was more about educating French Canadians so they could comprehend, and demand to be governed under, the British constitution that had protected their British liberties; the very liberties that had allowed them, through the Quebec Act of 1774 and the Act of 1791, to preserve their customs, culture, and religion. Hence, for Neilson there was no need for assimilation. Rather, he was confident that the "increase of knowledge, security and wealth" occasioned by Durham's impeccable reasoning would lay the "foundations of free and good Government, and general prosperity," making everyone in the colony strive towards the same ends.[75]

Contrary to Neilson, Lord Durham was convinced, much like the francophobic Montreal constitutionalists,[76] that the complications that led to the insurrections in Lower Canada were primarily caused by the disparities in customs and culture between French and English Canadians. Lord Durham's *Report on the Affairs of North America* was presented to the British Parliament in February 1839 and argued that the constitutional gridlock had been caused by "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state…a struggle, not of principles, but of races."[77] He reported that in this struggle French Canadians were backward and "obviously inferior" to English Canadians.[78] French Canadians had inherited their customs and values from France's *ancien régime*, a system that was repressive to "intelligence and freedom."[79] They were a "race of men habituated to the incessant labour of a rude and unskilled agriculture" who "clung to ancient prejudices, ancient customs and ancient laws, not from any strong sense of their beneficial effects, but with the unreasoning tenacity of an uneducated and unprogressive

[74] Durham's *Report*, 2:288.

[75] *Quebec Gazett*e, 23-Mar-1838, 25-Mar-1838.

[76] The Montreal constitutionalists included Adam Thom of the *Montreal Herald*, David Chisholme of the *Montreal Gazette*, as well as members of the Constitutional Association of Montreal who also served on the Special Council such as Robert Hardwood, Peter McGill, George Moffatt, John Molson, and William Walker. On their francophobia see for example, Ducharme, *Idea of Liberty*; Martin, "The influence of the Durham Report"; Watt, "Authoritarianism, Constitutionalism".

[77] Durham, *Report*, 16

[78] Durham, *Report*, 46.

[79] Durham, *Report*, 27.

people."[80] Consequently, they remained "the same uninstructed, inactive… old and stationary society, in a now and progressive world."[81] Conversely, English Canadians had "superior political and practical intelligence."[82] Their "politics had always been most liberal" and their decisions were always the "most just and sensible."[83] Consequently, Durham's *Report* blamed French Canadians for the "existence of dissensions yet deeper and more formidable than any which arose from simply political causes."[84]

As would be expected, Neilson rejected outright Durham's interpretation of the colonial problems. In April 1839, the *Quebec Gazette* crammed a condensed version of the Lower Canada section of Durham's *Report* into five consecutive newspaper editions.[85] Neilson's subsequent editorial, when it came, was almost as long as the condensed version of the report he had published. Neilson believed that Durham's *Report* was a public relations disaster. He assured "his Lordship that whenever we want a caricatured picture of our condition we can draw it ourselves, or find it ready pencilled for us by some of our colonial factionists." As far as Neilson was concerned, the only "grand discovery" Lord Durham had ostensibly made was of "the existence of *two races* of men in Lower Canada, and their hostility and irreconcilable hatred of each other." In Neilson's opinion, however, this "discovery was not very philosophical, or at least not very accurately expressed [because] the French and the English are of the *same race*, the *Caucasian* [race]." Neilson further argued that even in the midst of the rebellions there had been no "irreconcilable hatred" amongst the inhabitants of different origin, even if he did concede that many French Canadians were sympathetic to those who had engaged in the rebellion. However, he reminded his readers that only one-half of the male population "fit to bear arms" in the counties which had rebelled in 1837 had taken an active part and many of those who did "were forced into the service."[86] Neilson was

[80] Durham, *Report*, 28, 30
[81] Durham, *Report*, 28, 31
[82] Durham, *Report*, 46
[83] Durham, *Report*, 20
[84] Durham, *Report*, 15.
[85] *Quebec Gazette*, 3, 5, 8, 10 and 12-Apr-1839.
[86] *Quebec Gazette*, 29-Apr-1839.

thus heartily condemning Durham's *Report* for its conclusion that the troubles had been caused by the differences in customs and culture of the two "races."

For Durham, however, the dissensions had caused the suspension of the constitution in the province and his dilemma was to find a way to restore representative institutions in the colony while lessening the influence of French Canadians in the elected branch. Durham believed that the simplest and quickest way to lessen the influence of French Canadians in the Legislative Assembly was to establish the legislative union of Upper and Lower Canada. He argued his position from the premise that Lower Canada's population could be thought of as two ethno-cultural groups who had different interests to protect. One of these groups was made up of 150,000 English Canadians and the other consisted of 450,000 French Canadians.[87] According to Durham, it was then a simple matter of uniting Upper Canada's population of 400,000 to that of Lower Canada thereby consolidating the representation of English-Canadians of the two Canadas into one Legislative Assembly.[88] Not only would an English-Canadian majority be achieved in a united legislature, but he also noted that this could be achieved without altering the principle of representation by population.[89]

In June 1839, the Home Government tabled "A Bill for Re-uniting the provinces of Upper Canada and Lower Canada, and for the government of the united province."[90]

[87] There are no estimates for the population of Lower Canada between 1831 (553,134) and 1844 (697,084). The population of Upper Canada in 1840 was 432,159. See Statistics Canada*, The 1800s (1806 to 1871)*, accessed 24 August 2015, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4064809-eng.htm.

[88] Durham was overstating the homogeneity of interests within the two main ethno-cultural groups. An example of an underrepresented English-Canadian group was the American-origin settlers of the Eastern Townships. See J.I. Little, *Loyalties in Conflict: A Canadian Borderland in War and Rebellion, 1812-1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

[89] Durham, *Report*, 307-308. While the Home Government did unite the Canadas in 1841, it did not follow Durham's recommendation concerning representation by population. Michel Ducharme explains that the Home Government provided for equal representation to the two colonies and for the consolidation of the public debt in order to get the support of Upper Canada. See Ducharme, "Aux fondements," 372-73.

[90] "A Bill for Re-uniting the provinces of Upper Canada and Lower Canada, and for the government of the united province, 20 June 1839," *19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers*, 1839, Bills, 341, Volume I.329, accessed 22 November 2015, http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpp-us&rft_dat=xri:hcpp:rec:1839-018061.

The Bill, however, was put on hold in September when Parliament commissioned Charles Poulett Thomson with the task of gaining the provinces' approval of the Union Bill and appointed him Captain General and Governor in Chief of Upper and Lower Canada.[91] The Union Bill included two provisions that were beneficial to Upper Canada who had a lesser population and a higher public debt. First, the united Assembly would be formed "as to render the number of Electoral Divisions…in Lower Canada as nearly as may be equal to the number of such Electoral Divisions in the Province of Upper Canada." Second, all duties and revenues, over which the respective legislatures had any power of appropriation, would become a "Consolidated Fund" and that the amount of Debt chargeable on either province would be charged against this fund.[92] From an Imperial perspective uniting the two legislatures into one unit, dividing representation equally between the two former units, and financial consolidation might seem practical and reasonable. From a colonial perspective, the advantages were one-sided in favour of Upper Canada. Consequently, the clauses inserted into the Home Government's Union Bill negatively impacted Lower Canadians in general and French Canadians in particular.

Neilson opposed the Union Bill's apportionment of representative seats because it was unfair to the French Canadian population. He believed that the Home Government's failure to provide Lower Canada with representation that was commensurate with its population was a "departure from the acts and proceedings […] concerning Canada, since it capitulated to the British arms, a period of eighty years [ago]." He explained that even if the "proposed Bill" preserved the Lower Canadian civil laws, its implementation would place Lower Canada [French Canadians] in a minority in the Legislature "with those of a different language, and possessing a different system of laws," and would inevitably result in a "continued disturbance of the public peace."[93] While Neilson's opposition to the union of the Canadas was about safeguarding the interests of Lower Canadians as a whole, his argument is advocating that French

[91] "Copy of the Royal Instructions to the Right Hon. C. Poulett Thomson when appointed Governor General of Canada," London, 1840, *Early Canadiana Online*, accessed 16 December 2015, http://eco.canadiana.ca.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/oocihm.9_01287.

[92] Union Bill, 20 June 1839, 3, 16.

[93] *Quebec Gazette*, 9-Aug-1839.

Canadians be allowed to resume the same level of influence in the institutions of governance that they had enjoyed before the rebellions. Failure to do so would be a breach to their British liberties.[94]

The lack of consultation of the Lower Canadian constituency on the terms of the union was also an ongoing concern for Neilson. While Upper Canada had representation in its institutions of governance, this had not been the case in Lower Canada since February 1838 when the suspension of the Act of 1791 eradicated the Legislative Assembly. Neilson voiced his concern over this matter in August 1839 when he reported that the House of Lords had suspended its debates on the Union Bill because of "doubts being entertained of the opinion of Upper Canada on that measure," thus allowing more time to consult that province. This consultation came about through a full debate in the Upper Canadian Legislative Assembly. The opportunity for a debate in a representative assembly was not available to the constituents of Lower Canada. The *Quebec Gazette* accused Durham's *Report* and "revolutionary journals"[95] that had propagated the falsehood that "the majority of the population of Lower Canada [were] irreconcilable rebels," and for convincing the British Parliament that consultation was both unnecessary and ill-advised. He reminded "these noblemen" that "only *nine* counties, out of *forty-six*, were involved in the late rebellions." In Neilson's words,

> who had ever heard of a whole country being put under interdict, on account of a partial rebellion…? Was Scotland placed under interdict for the two rebellions of 1715 and 1745? Was Ireland…in 1798?" Surely, these had been more serious and more extensively spread than the Lower Canada rebellion… [Was] it because two-thirds or three fourths of the inhabitants of Lower Canada [were] called *French*, that they [were] to be treated differently…?" This "may be a sufficient reason in the eyes of vulgar prejudice…or ill-governed passion; but it ought to have no weight with British statesmen…no man of correct moral feeling will consent that the innocent, whether they be few or many, shall suffer for the guilty.[96]

[94] *Quebec Gazette*, 9-Aug-1839. Neilson regularly returned to the "breach of right to British liberties argument." See for example the *Quebec Gazette* editions of 31-Jan-1840, 26-Aug-1840, 28-Aug-1840, and 4-Sep-1840.

[95] In this editorial Neilson is referring to newspapers such as *La Minerve* and the *Vindicator* that supported the *Patriotes'* position.

[96] *Quebec Gazette*, 28-Aug-1839.

In short, not only was Neilson very concerned by the introduction of the Union Bill at a time when representative institutions had been suspended in the province but he was also alluding that those who approved of such actions were francophobic. His cries fell on deaf ears, however. In mid-November 1839, Governor Thomson convened the appointed Special Council (stacked with Montreal constitutionalists) and "allowed them merely two days to debate the question of union."[97] Neilson, who was also a member of the Special Council at the time, voted no to the Union and stepped down from the Council.[98]

As the "Canada Re-Union Bill" slowly progressed through the British Parliament, Neilson continued to warn readers of the negative consequences that could result from denying French Canadians the political rights afforded to all British subjects in North America. In a June 1840 editorial, he expressed doubt that a "new constitution," formulated on "*hearsay* acquaintance" of the state and circumstances prevailing the provinces, would produce the intended peace and harmony. Not only did Neilson believe that without the people's consent the imposition of a new constitution was doomed to failure, but it also went against the principles of "natural justice." Far from producing the "intended results," the enactment of the Union Bill would produce "nothing but mischief."[99] Consequently, the Union Bill would delay, rather than advance, the wellbeing and prosperity of the colonies aspired to by the Home Government as well as by colonial constitutionalists of all stripes.

Neilson also expressed doubt that the Union Bill would achieve the "anglification" of French Canadians recommended by Lord Durham and desired by Montreal constitutionalists. In a July 1840 editorial, Neilson remarked that their expectation of a future French-Canadian population "speaking the English language, living under English laws, and with English manners, customs and *feelings*" was not realistic. At best, due to the "geographical and social position" of Canada, only an "*approximation* of anglification"

[97] Phillip Buckner, "Thomson, Charles Edward Poulett, 1st Baron Sydenham," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed 30 June 30, 2016, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/thomson_charles_edward_poulett_7E.html.

[98] *Quebec Gazette*, 9-Oct-1839. Neilson stepped down from the Special Council on 14-Nov-1839. See Dagenais, "Conseil Spécial est mort," 128.

[99] *Quebec Gazette*, 26-Jun-1840.

could be achieved. In other words, French Canadians were "English" by virtue of being British subjects whose rights to preserve their customs and culture were protected. If these rights were no longer protected then their distinct customs and culture would eventually merge with those surrounding them, resulting in a hybrid "Canadian" culture that could only approximate that of the English (British). Neilson estimated that when the "work" was done, French Canadians would likely "be *less English than they are at present*."[100] French Canadians had become British subjects the day France ceded its North American colonies to the British in 1763. Their loyalty had been assured, however, by the passing of the Quebec Act of 1774, re-affirmed with the Act of 1791, which had allowed French Canadians their civil laws and religion.

The announcement that the Union Bill received royal assent on July 23, 1840 was published in the *Quebec Gazette* in August.[101] Although it was a *fait accompli,* the newspaper continued its opposition concerning how the Act of Union had developed and how it would disadvantage Lower Canadians, particularly French Canadians.[102] These efforts were roundly criticized by Montreal newspapers such as the *Montreal Herald,* which stated that Neilson was needlessly "excit[ing] the people against the operation of the Union Act." Dauntless, Neilson published their comments, then fought back by accusing them of "insulting the good sense and taste of the electors by attempts at deception, notorious falsehoods, vulgar braggadocio and abuse, and appeals to prejudices of national origin."[103] Clearly, Neilson was not giving up. Still, the battle was no longer about preserving the constitutional institutions of the Constitutional Act of 1791. Nevertheless, Neilson adapted to the new reality and continued to defend his principles. In October 1840, the *Quebec Gazette* reported on a meeting that elected a committee, of thirty individuals that included Neilson and Étienne Parent, to actively promote the election of individuals, who were against the Act of Union and would work for its repeal in the new Legislative Assembly. Neilson was elected on this platform and

[100] *Quebec Gazette*, 10-Jul-1840.

[101] *Quebec Gazette*, 14-Aug-1840; "An Act to re-unite the Provinces of *Upper* and *Lower Canada*, and for the Government of *Canada*: 23d July 1840," Kennedy*, Statutes, Treaties,* 433-444.

[102] See for example, *Quebec Gazette* 26-Aug-1840, 4-Sep-1840.

[103] *Quebec Gazette*, 31-Aug-1840.

represented the Quebec County in the First Parliament of the Province of Canada, and served in its Legislative Assembly from 8 April 1841 to 23 September 1844.[104]

Conclusion

In this chapter we demonstrated that John Neilson was imbued by British constitutionalism and consistently defended its principles and institutions in the *Quebec Gazette*. First, he defended the individual's right to liberty, property and security. Second, he promoted the institutions of mixed government and of the rule of law as established by the constitution. Third, he consistently defended the French Canadians' right to their distinct culture and customs. As we shall see in the next chapter, although Ronald Macdonald also defended the established order and the welfare of French Canadians, he did so from an entirely different perspective. This discussion will raise the issue of diversity of thought among the promoters of the colonial constitution.

[104] J.O. Côté, *Political Appointments and Elections in the Province of Canada from 1841 to 1860* (Quebec: St-Michel & Daveau, 1860), 38.

Chapter 2.
Gazette de Québec, 1836-1840

> **** À dater du 1er juin, la Gazette de Québec (feuille française) sera dirigée par M. Ronald Macdonald.*[1]

At the same time John Neilson was disseminating his understanding of constitutionalism in the *Quebec Gazette,* Ronald Macdonald was nudging the *Gazette de Québec* in another direction. Taking over the *Gazette de Québec* had not been Ronald Macdonald's first professional choice in life. At different times, he had studied law, and worked as a translator and a teacher. Neither did any of his professional choices shape his ideological outlook. His outlook had been shaped during the years he spent training to become a Catholic priest. During that time, he learned the religious tenets of French traditionalism that would most profoundly shape his vision of the world, and consequently, shape the manner in which Lower Canadian political events, during the tumultuous period that included the Rebellions of 1837-1838, were imparted in the *Gazette de Québec*. This chapter will examine Macdonald's attempts to influence public opinion during a critical period of Lower Canada's history that included the Rebellions of 1837-38 and the march towards the union of the Canadas. Paying attention to a newspaper that has received scant attention by historians will nuance our understanding of the diversity of arguments used to promote the established order and the welfare of French Canadians in the 1830s.

This chapter focuses on how the *Gazette de Québec* reacted to the political events from June 1836 to July 1840. It argues that under Ronald Macdonald's guidance, the *Gazette de Québec* primarily and consistently focused its attention on the rights of Lower Canada's Catholic Church and defended the established political order by using the tenets of traditionalism. It also sheds light on the distinctiveness of Macdonald's

[1] *Gazette de Québec*, 24-May-1836.

Gazette de Québec in comparison to Neilson's *Quebec Gazette*: Whereas Neilson believed in the precepts of British constitutionalism, Macdonald believed in those of French traditionalism; whereas Neilson believed in the rights of individuals, Macdonald believed in the rights of social groups; whereas Neilson made explicit political arguments, Macdonald reproduced religious texts to make implicit political ones; and whereas Neilson promoted the institution of mixed government, Macdonald defended the established order without mentioning the colonial mixed government explicitly.

I. Ronald Macdonald's life trajectory

Macdonald was born into an Anglo-Catholic family of modest means in Priest Pond, Prince Edward Island in February 1797. In 1812, he was selected, along with other youths from that colony, to fulfill Monseigneur Plessis' goal of increasing the ranks of the Catholic clergy in the Maritimes. Macdonald was sent to study at the French-speaking *Séminaire de Québec* at the expense of clerical authorities. He attended the *Séminaire* until the age of twenty-one, at which time he abandoned the priestly trajectory laid out for him.

Not much is known about Macdonald's personal life. He seems to have adapted quite well to the cultural change brought about by his move away from his English-speaking family to the French-speaking environment of the *Séminaire*. Jocelyn Saint-Pierre, for example, reports that Macdonald married *une Canadienne*, Louise Lavallée, in 1822 and that the union brought forth four children, three boys (who all died in infancy) and one girl.[2] Two separate editions of *Le Canadien*, however, confirm the existence of two daughters: Eugénie, who along with her mother, tragically died on 12 June 1846 in the fire that destroyed Quebec's Théâtre Saint-Louis, and Marie Adeline who married the postmaster of Paincourtville, Louisiana on 9 August 1847.[3]

[2] Jocelyn Saint-Pierre, "Ronald Macdonald," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography online,* accessed 18 Aug. 2015.

[3] *Le Canadien*, 15-Jun-1846, 11-Aug-1847.

After a brief stint studying law, Macdonald became a teacher at an English Catholic School in the Quebec parish of Saint-Roch and supplemented his income with translation work.[4] In 1830, he was selected by the House of Assembly's Committee of Education and Schools to look into the feasibility of "procuring a Master or Preceptor to instruct the Deaf and Dumb" of the Province.[5] Macdonald travelled to New York and Philadelphia, to attend their institution's conferences of teachers and other members. He then went to Hartford Connecticut, "the seat of the first and most celebrated Institution of the kind in *America*," where, on the condition that he remain in Connecticut for at least a year, he was allowed to attend daily exercises and private lessons that would prepare him for the duties of "Instructor of the Deaf and Dumb."[6] Upon his return to Quebec City, Macdonald opened a temporary school and began providing instruction to ten pupils. He also submitted a proposal to the Committee of Education and Schools for a permanent facility for the instruction of "sixty Pupils, to be furnished by the different Counties throughout the Province, out of the 408 Deaf and Dumb enumerated in the Census."[7] The proposed facility would enable its pupils to acquire a trade as well as teach them the basic skills of writing, reading, and arithmetic. The Committee, however, did not believe that the "state of the public funds" could support such an endeavour. Nevertheless, it did continue to approve the yearly appropriation of funds for Macdonald's salary along with a small sum for books for the ten pupils already enrolled. Although Macdonald reported some results, the Committee decided in 1835 that it could no longer justify the public expense.[8]

Macdonald's career as a newspaper editor began shortly thereafter, when he came to the attention of the owner and editor of the *Gazette de Québec*, Samuel Neilson. The ailing Samuel, who was preparing to sail to the Mediterranean, had been looking for someone to take over the newspaper in his absence. He was likely introduced to Macdonald by his father, John Neilson, who happened to be on the

[4] Saint-Pierre, "Macdonald, Ronald."

[5] *Journals of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada,* 22-Jan-1830 to 26-Mar 1830, 238.

[6] *JHALC*, 24-Jan-1831 to 31-Mar-1831, 305-306.

[7] "Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Education and Schools", in *JHALC*, Appendix to the XLIst Volume, 15-Nov-1831 to 25-Feb-1832.

[8] "Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Education and Schools, 9-Mar-1835," in *JHALC*, Continuation of the Appendix to the XLVth Volume.

Assembly's Committee of Education and Schools when Macdonald was selected by the Committee to teach the deaf and dumb of the province. Although several studies acknowledge Macdonald's presence at the *Gazette de Québec,* most state that it was only for brief periods of time—depending on the source, either in 1836 only, or in two separate periods, the first being in 1836 and the second in 1842.[9] The one exception is Jacques Monet's *Last Cannon Shot*. Still, although Monet recognizes Macdonald's years of service, he diminishes the importance of his role by placing him under the supervision of John Neilson.[10] A closer inspection of the *Gazette de Québec* and *Le Canadien*, however, confirms that Samuel Neilson entrusted Macdonald with the full responsibility of the newspaper starting in June 1836—an arrangement that was continued by Samuel's successors when Samuel died the following year.[11] Consequently, Macdonald was left at the helm of the *Gazette de Québec* at a critical period of Lower Canada's history and remained in this position until the newspaper folded in October 1842.

Macdonald was then hired at *Le Canadien*, to replace Étienne Parent (who had been appointed clerk to the Executive Council).[12] He stayed there until May 1847.[13] He then temporarily took over the reins of the *Quebec Gazette* when John Neilson died in February 1848. Then, when Neilson's successors found a full-time replacement (Robert Middleton) in 1849, Macdonald returned to *Le Canadien* where he remained until his death in 1854.[14] Upon his death, *Le Canadien* published the following tribute:

> Nous ne saurions exagérer le sentiment pénible qu'inspire généralement cette perte, en disant qu'elle est partout profondément sentie. Cette mort

[9] From May 1842 to October 1842 in André Beaulieu and Jean Hamelin, *La presse québécoise: des origines à nos jours*, Tome premier: 1764-1859 (Québec: Presses de l'université de Laval, 1973), 2; and in Elzéar Gérin, *La presse canadienne: La Gazette de Québec* (Québec: J.-N. Duquet et Cie, 1864), 60. For two periods – in 1836 until October of that same year, and from May to October 1842 – in Saint-Pierre, "Ronald Macdonald."

[10] Jacques Monet, *The Last Cannon Shot, A Study of French-Canadian Nationalism 1837-1850* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 59, 123, 124.

[11] Ronald Macdonald was editor of the *Gazette de Québec* from June 1836 (*Gazette de Québec*, 24-May-1836*, Le Canadien*, 25-May-1836) to its last edition on 29 October 1842 (*Le Canadien*, 4-Nov-1842). Samuel Neilson bequeathed the *Gazette de Québec* (and the *Quebec Gazette)* to his brothers and sisters, William, Isobel, Margaret, and John Jr.

[12] Monet, *Last Cannon Shot*, 280.

[13] Beaulieu and Hamelin, *La presse québécoise,* 17; Saint-Pierre, "Macdonald, Ronald."

[14] Beaulieu and Hamelin, *La presse québécoise,* 17; Saint-Pierre, "Macdonald, Ronald."

> prive la société d'un membre en qui le savoir profond s'alliait à la droiture et aux qualités du cœur ; la presse, d'un auxiliaire habile autant que modeste ; les lettres canadiennes enfin, d'une plume-modèle en fait de diction et de goût.[15]

Macdonald's professional life after he left the *Séminaire* had shifted many times. The youth from Prince Edward Island may not have joined the priesthood but along his journey as an educator and a newspaper editor, he never abandoned his religious principles. He also gained and sustained the respect of his colleagues along the way.

Macdonald's belief in the principles of traditionalism stemmed from his education at the *Séminaire de Québec* where he was influenced by the writings of the counter-revolutionary French traditionalists. Under the guidance of Jérôme Demers, the *Séminaire's* head of philosophy from 1800 to 1834, Macdonald learned the creed of traditionalism, which defended the rights of social groups, rather than those of individuals. Although we do not know what year Demers wrote the *Séminaire's* philosophy course plan *Institutiones philosophicae ad usum studiosae juventutis,* we do know that it was revised in 1808 and 1818, and a final edition was published in 1835, thus making it the first philosophy textbook published in Quebec.[16] Written in Latin and French, *Institutiones* refuted the idea that Enlightenment philosophy could replace religion. To do so, it used the writings of French traditionalists such as Vicomte Louis Gabriel Ambroise de Bonald (1754-1840), Jean-Baptiste Duvoisin (1744-1813), and the Comte Denis Antoine Luc de Frayssinous (1765-1841).[17] These traditionalists believed that because the Enlightenment *philosophes* had promoted the rejection of God, the

[15] *Le Canadien, 16-Oct-54.*

[16] Jérôme Demers, *Institutiones philosophicae ad usum studiosae juventutis* (Quebec: Tho. Cary & Soc., 1835); Claude Galarneau, "Un souffle nouveau dans l'enseignement : l'époque de Jérôme Demers et Jean Holmes," *Cap-aux-Diamants : la revue d'histoire du Québec* 4, 1 (1988), 11; Yvan Lamonde, "Demers, Jérôme (1774-1853)," *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* edited by William Toye and Eugene Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[17] Claude Galarneau, "Demers, Jérôme," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography online, accessed 14 Nov. 2014,* http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/demers_jerome_8E.html; Yvan Lamonde, "Demers, Jérôme." For information about the *Séminaire's* curriculum see Claude Galarneau, *Les collèges classiques au Canada français (1620-1970)*, (Montréal: Fides, 1978).

people had eventually "revolt[ed] against their legitimate masters."[18] Works on this matter, such as Duvoisin's *Défense de l'ordre social contre les principes de la Révolution française* (1801), de Bonald's *Législation primitive considérée dans les derniers temps par les seules lumières de la raison* (1802), and de Frayssinous' *Défense du Christianisme ou conférences sur la religion* (1803-1809), were extensively cited in Demers' *Institutiones*.[19]

By attending Demers' lectures, discussing with him or reading his textbook, Macdonald certainly learned of de Bonald's theory of the "principle of mediation."[20] According to de Bonald,

> [e]very society is composed of three distinct persons that may be termed social persons—power, minister, subject. They receive different names depending on the different levels of society: father, mother, children in domestic society; God, priests, the faithful in religious society; Kings or supreme leaders, nobles or public functionaries, vassals or the people in political society.[21]

Each social group was thus conceptualized as a separate entity each with its own authority structure. In a domestic society, for example, the mother mediated between the father who was the power, or authority, and the children who were the subjects. As well, societal groups did not interfere with each other's authority but instead, supported each other. Thus, a religious society was supportive of the father's authority within his domestic sphere. Together, these societies, or hierarchic trinities, were considered to be the "perfect and constituted societies" of a civilized state.[22] Moreover, the principle of mediation that operated within each society was "at the basis of cohesion and order, the

[18] Alexandre Koyré and Leonora Cohen-Rosenfield, "Louis de Bonald," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 7, no. 1 (January, 1946): 57.

[19] See, for example, Demers, *Institutiones philosophicae*, 316-319, 329, 330, 333 (Duvoisin); 5, 11-12, 114-118 (de Bonald); 72-74, 86-88, 93, 113, 122 (de Frayssinous).

[20] Koyré and Cohen-Rosenfield, "Louis de Bonald," 61.

[21] Louis Gabriel Ambroise de Bonald, *"Discours préliminaire," Essai Analytique sur les Lois Naturelles de l'Ordre Social,* 1, in *Œuvre complètes* 2: 434, as quoted in Koyré and Cohen-Rosenfield, "Louis de Bonald," 62.

[22] Louis Gabriel Ambroise de Bonald, *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux* (Paris: 1796) 2:6:2, in *Œuvres complètes* 14: 438, as quoted in Koyré and Cohen-Rosenfield, "Louis de Bonald," 62.

hierarchic order that alone [brought] about perfection and guarantee[d] stability."[23] As an ardent and faithful Catholic, de Bonald viewed the French Revolution as upsetting the divinely-ordained order. *La terreur* had therefore been a "necessary consequence of the democratic idea of the rights of man, which [had] proclaim[ed] the equality of liberties and the sovereignty of the people."[24]

Of course, French traditionalism was used to defend absolutist monarchies, which had not existed in Lower Canada since the time of the Conquest. Still, the notion of hierarchic societies, or social groups, who did not interfere but supported each other was ideally suited to the *Séminaire de Québec* which was favourable to the long-established collaboration between the Throne and the Altar inherent to Gallicanism.[25] Even if Joseph Lecler, a Jesuit and historian of the Church, traced the roots of Gallicanism to the eleventh century, he acknowledged that it was developed in the early-sixteenth century. At that point, the principles of Gallican liberties were used by the French king to limit papal authority and powers in France. In 1516, for example, the Concordat of Bologna, an agreement between Pope Leo X and Francis I of France, gave the King of France the right to nominate ecclesiastics, who were then to be confirmed by the Pope.[26] In 1594, the publication of Pierre Pithou's compendium, *Libertés de l'Église gallicane,* assisted in the dissemination of Gallicanism by explaining the liberties of the Gallican Church through eighty-three articles divided under two fundamental Gallican principles: The King's independence in temporal matters, and the limitation of papal authority by the canons of councils.[27]

[23] Koyré and Cohen-Rosenfield, "Louis de Bonald," 61-62.

[24] Jean-Yves Pranchère, "The Social Bond According to the Catholic Counter-Revolution: Maistre and Bonald," in *Joseph de Maistre's Life, Thought, and Influence*, Selected Studies, 190-219, edited by Richard A. Lebrun (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 198.

[25] Terence J. Fay, *A history of Canadian Catholics: Gallicanism, Romanism and Canadianism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 29-47.

[26] "Bologna, Concordat of," in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by E.A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), accessed 3 Aug. 2016, http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/10.1093/acref/9780199659623.001.0001/acref-9780199659623-e-750.

[27] Joseph Lecler, "Qu'est-ce que les libertés de l'Église gallicane?" Part I, II, III, in *Recherches de Science Religieuse* vol. 23, no. 1 (Feb. 1933), 388, 546.

Gallicanism was formally implanted in New France after a long and protracted battle that pitted the Holy See against the King of France over the King's demand that the see of Quebec be subordinated to the Archbishopric of Rouen. The bulls establishing the bishopric of Quebec were sent only after the King withdrew his demand in October 1674. The new Bishop of Quebec, Mgr. François de Laval, took the oath of loyalty to the king, and set sail for Canada shortly thereafter.[28]

Gallicanism morphed, however, after the British Conquest of the colony in 1759. The Protestant British Crown and Parliament did not, and would not, observe France's religious legislations, or allow nominations of ecclesiastics by France or Rome. However, the colonial catholic ecclesiastical authorities were able to adapt very quickly to the new regime. Very soon after the military conquest, they seamlessly transferred their allegiance from the Catholic King of France to the Protestant King of Britain. For instance, Jean-Olivier Briand, the vicar-general of the Quebec region and soon to be the acknowledged leader of the colonial Catholic Church, went out of his way to gain favour with the British regime. In February 1762, he ordered that a *Te Deum* be sung in all Quebec churches blessing the marriage of King George III to Princess Charlotte Mecklembourg Strelitz.[29] On several occasions he also, in the name of the congregation, expressed his gratitude towards the British Crown. In a petition written in June 1762, for example, he wrote:

> J'espère donc que votre Excellence [Governor Murray] voudra bien rendre compte à Sa Majesté Britannique des sentiments de reconnaissance, de respect et de soumission dont est pénétré tout le Clergé, du gouvernement de Québec, et des vœux qu'il forme pour la santé de son Roi.[30]

[28] André Vachon, "Laval, François de" in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography online*, accessed 15 Aug. 2016, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/laval_francois_de_2E.html.

[29] Chan. Vic. Gl. Jean-Olivier Briand, "Mandement pour faire chanter un Te Deum en action de grâce du mariage du Roi George III – 14-Feb-1762," in Mgr. H. Têtu and Abbé C.-O. Gagnon, ed., *Mandements, Lettres Pastorales et Circulaires des Évêques de Québec*, vol. 2 (Québec: A. Côté et cie, 1888), 160-162.

[30] Chan. Vic. Gl. Jean-Olivier Briand, "Supplique très humble du vicaire général, du gouvernement de Québec au nom du chapitre et du clergé séculier et régulier, à son Excellence le Gouverneur Général Murray – 7-Jun-1762," in Têtu and Gagnon, *Mandements*, 162-163.

Not only do these official communiqués illustrate how Briand was building a foundation of good will, respect and submission towards the British monarchy and its governor, but they also demonstrate the compatibility of Gallicanism, as practiced in the Quebec region, with the new British regime.

Briand's general attitude toward the British authorities as well as his excellent personal relationship with James Murray, Quebec military governor from 1759 to 1763 and then first governor of the Province of Quebec in 1763, encouraged the British authorities not to interfere too much in the internal affairs of the colonial Church, which quickly became a pillar of the new regime. British statesmen even closed their eyes on Jean-Olivier Briand's consecration as a bishop in France and recognized him as the superintendent of the Catholic Church in Canada in 1766.[31] Less than a decade later, the British Parliament adopted the Quebec Act by which it granted religious freedom to its colonial subjects. By then, the collaboration between the Throne and the Altar had been somewhat re-established in the colony.

The renewed collaboration between the Catholic Church and the Protestant colonial state was compatible with the principle of counter-revolutionary traditionalism whereby religious and political societies do not interfere in the other's affairs but support each other. The principles of this morphed Gallicanism was observed by all leaders of the Quebec Church and of the *Séminaire de Québec*: Mgr. Briand from 1760 to 1784, Mgr. d'Esgly (1784-1788), Mgr. Hubert (1788-1797), Mgr. Denaut (1797-1806), Mgr. Plessis (1806-1825),[32] Mgr. Panet (1825-1833) and Mgr. Signay (1833-1850).[33] Macdonald, as a pupil of the *Séminaire de Québec* from 1812 to 1821, dutifully learned these principles and years later, would defend them in the *Gazette de Québec*.

[31] André Vachon, "Briand, Jean-Olivier," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography online*, accessed 15 Aug. 2016, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/briand_jean_olivier_4E.html. On the more difficult relationship between Anglo-Protestants and the Catholic Church in Lower Canada at the beginning of the 19th century, see Jean-Pierre Wallot, "Religion and French Canadian Mores in the Early XIXth Century," *The Canadian Historical Review*, 52 (1971): 51-94.

[32] Fay, *History of Canadian Catholics,* 37-45. Although the 1987 entry for Mgr. Plessis in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography online* states that some of his views were ultramontane, I have based my assertion on Fay's writing, that clearly demonstrates Plessis' Gallicanism. See James H. Lambert, "Plessis, Joseph-Octave," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, accessed 15 Aug. 2016, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/plessis_joseph_octave_6E.html.

[33] Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics,* Part One: Gallicanism, 5-65.

II. The *Gazette de Québec*

When Ronald Macdonald took over the operations of the *Gazette de Québec* in June 1836, a typical edition was two pages in length, and consisted of ten columns spread over two 36" x 25" sheets printed on both sides. Seven columns consisted of news, correspondence from readers and editorial (albeit very limited) commentary. The remaining three were dedicated to advertisements and public notices.

Like the *Quebec Gazette*, the *Gazette de Québec* reproduced articles concerning a variety of international affairs. The typical layout began with news from France, followed by news of other European countries, and the United States. The *Gazette de Québec* reproduced articles from a variety of international newspapers such as the *Gazette de France*, the *Courrier Allemand*, the *Gazette de Madrid*, the *New York Daily Express*, the *New York Gazette*, and the *Albany Evening Journal*. Although, like the *Quebec Gazette*, the *Gazette de Québec*'s international news section reported on news of general interest, its section was supplemented by affairs of the Church found in newspapers such as the *Catholic Almanac de Baltimore*, *L'Ami de la religion*, *L'Univers religieux*, the *Réparateur religieux*, and the *Diario de Rome.* For example, while the *Quebec Gazette* of 31 August 1836 reported on a new law concerning the conveyance of newspapers in Great Britain, the *Gazette de Québec* chose to report on how His Holiness the Pope was re-establishing ecclesiastical authority in the regions of Bologna, Ferrara, Ravenne, and Forli.[34]

Occasionally, the newspaper also provided news from the United Kingdom, Upper Canada, and the Maritimes. Like the *Quebec Gazette*, the *Gazette de Québec* reproduced debates and reports of the Imperial Parliament that concerned Lower Canadian affairs. Unlike its English counterpart, however, the *Gazette de Québec* did not add editorial commentary on these political matters. As well, contrary to the *Quebec Gazette*, the *Gazette de Québec* hardly ever reported news from the other British colonies. Thus, contrary to the *Quebec Gazette*, news from Lower Canada and Quebec City mostly followed the international section.

[34] *Quebec Gazette*, 31-Aug-1836, *Gazette de Québec*, 1-Sep-1836.

Except for news of Quebec City, both *Gazettes* reported on Lower Canadian news using reprints from other newspapers. However, although the *Gazette de Québe*c did use articles from newspapers such as the *Montreal Herald* or *Le Canadien*, it more often relied on the religiously inclined *L'Ami du peuple*, which was under the unofficial guidance of Joseph-Vincent Quiblier, Superior of the *Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice* in Montreal.[35] There was therefore a noticeable difference in the type of Lower Canadian news reported with more attention given to local religious concerns.

Almost immediately upon his takeover of the newspaper in June 1836, for example, Macdonald published a new column named "Nouvelles ecclésiastiques," which addressed international and local news of interest to followers of the Catholic faith, and henceforth appeared in the newspaper from time to time. In its first iteration, "Nouvelles ecclésiastiques" gave notice that the Bishop of Nancy[36] had dedicated a mass, at the Église des Missions Étrangères in Paris, to the missionaries whose works had propagated the Catholic faith.[37] Not only did this mark a contrast from previous editions of the *Gazette de Québec* but it also marked the beginning of a new trajectory that was distinct from the *Quebec Gazette*.

Finally, like its English counterpart, the *Gazette de Québec* also nestled its editorial commentary in between the Quebec City news and Letters to the Editor. Contrary to the *Quebec Gazette*, however, on the rare occasions the *Gazette de Québec* did editorialize, the arguments were on religious, rather than political, concerns. In January 1838, for example, Étienne Parent of *Le Canadien* argued that Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*, which posited that the only justified authority is one that is generated out of agreements, could legitimize rebellion if the agreement was broken.[38] Both *Gazettes* took umbrage with this argument, but while the *Quebec Gazette* used a

[35] Beaulieu and Hamelin, *La presse québécoise,* 73-74. Louis Rousseau, "Quiblier, Joseph-Vincent," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed 3 Aug, 2016, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/quiblier_joseph_vincent_8E.html.

[36] Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson spent time in Canada East (Lower Canada) in 1840-1841. See Nive Voisine, ed., *Histoire du catholicisme Québécois* (Montreal: Boréal, 1984), 125, 303, 313.

[37] *Gazette de Québec*, 7-Jun-1836.

[38] *Le Canadien,* 10-Jan-1838.

Burkean position by arguing that there existed no "page" in the history of England that authorized rebellions, the *Gazette de Québec* pushed back against *Le Canadien's* position by arguing that it went against the teachings of the Church, which condemned anyone who did not submit to the legitimate civil authority.[39]

In order to position the *Gazette de Québec* in relation to the other newspapers published in the colony between June 1836 and July 1840, it is necessary to first acknowledge what it was not. As mentioned, it was not a translation of the *Quebec Gazette* as many historians have assumed. Nor was it a constitutional newspaper such as the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Montreal Herald,* or the *Quebec Gazette,* which all based their defense of constitutionalism on certain individual rights or, in the case of the *Quebec Gazette* on the ideal of mixed government. It was not a nationalist newspaper as *Le Canadien* either, as it never presented itself as the defender of French Canadians' collective rights.[40] In fact, it never explicitly defended French Canadians' rights at all, whether individual or collective. This lack of engagement of the *Gazette de Québec* with the question of French Canadians' rights was certainly one of the marked differences with the *Quebec Gazette.* While the latter consistently defended the Lower Canadians' rights to liberty, property and security and acknowledged the French Canadians' right to exist as a distinct group with its customs, civil laws, or social institutions, the former mainly defended the rights of the religious society.

Even Durham's *Report*, whose assessment of French Canadians had inflamed Neilson, did not cause much of a stir for Macdonald. Though the *Gazette de Québec* did relay some portions of the report, the newspaper stayed away from highlighting the most controversial parts. This was quite contrary to the *Quebec Gazette,* which had excerpted long sections of the report from the *London Spectator*, and followed it up with a long editorial that took serious offence in how Durham's *Report* had portrayed the "battle" as one between "two races." Neilson had clearly been upset by Lord Durham's "caricatured picture" of the state of affairs in Lower Canada and by the report's racist remarks

[39] *Quebec Gazette*, 12-Jan-1838, *Gazette de Québec* 18-Jan-1838.

[40] For an analysis of *Le Canadien's* nationalism see, for example, Philippe Reid, *Le regard de l'autre : la naissance du nationalisme au Québec* (Québec : Instant même, 2008).

concerning French Canadians.[41] By contrast, Macdonald's reaction to the report was tepid and never focused on Durham's opinions about French Canadians. At first, Macdonald tried to avoid the topic as much as it was possible. He mentioned the report for the first time on 4 April 1839 when he informed his readers of its length, "110 pages in-folio, petit-texte," and opined that to present even an abridged version of the report, such as in the *Quebec Gazette,* would take up 40 columns. He reasoned that going ahead with a translation of the *Quebec Gazette's* condensed version would mean that

> avant qu'elle pût être terminée, nous aurions à communiquer à nos lecteurs les débats sur le projet ministériel, qui seront d'une toute autre importance pour eux, que les opinions individuelles de Lord Durham.[42]

In other words, Macdonald was dismissing the importance of the report while not addressing the national issue raised by Durham. So rather than translating the *Quebec Gazette's* article, Macdonald chose instead to only translate the highlights as reported in New York's *Daily Express,* hence the *Gazette de Québec's* article on Durham's *Report* took up less than one column of the newspaper. Presumably, this did not satisfy his readers because nine days later the *Gazette de Québec* finally published a bit more information on the report. The note accompanying the five column article was telling of Macdonald's attitude, however:

> Rapport de Lord Durham. Ce rapport est publié tout au long, en Anglais par le *Mercury*, et en français par le *Canadien*, au bureau duquel on pourra se le procurer en forme de pamphlet. La *Gazette* anglaise en a aussi publié l'abrégé, en 40 colonnes, donné par le *London Spectato*r. C'est bien de l'huile jetée sur le feu. Nous pensons que l'extrait suivant de la traduction du *Canadien* suffira pour en rassasier la plupart de nos lecteurs.[43]

Macdonald's limited interest in the report may be explained in part by the fact that his defense of the established order had never focused on protecting French Canadians' rights. His comments were therefore displaying his concern that Durham's *Report* could upset the status quo. The *Gazette de Québec*'s silence on political opinions and matters

[41] *Quebec Gazette*, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 29-Apr-1839.
[42] *Gazette de Québec*, 4-Apr-1839.
[43] *Gazette de Québec* 13-Apr-1839.

that could have influenced French Canadians away from British rule is significant in that it showcases that Macdonald believed that to undermine the established order would weaken, rather than strengthen, the well-being of French Canadians, whose ultimate contentment was, in any event, bound to the religious society.

Another marked difference between the two *Gazettes* was the manner in which they defended British rule. For instance, the *Quebec Gazette* often commended British rule of law for protecting British subjects from arbitrary power. By contrast, Macdonald never addressed the issue outright. The only time he addressed it, he did it implicitly. In January 1838, shortly after the Lower Canadian Rebellion of 1837, he published a text which described the French revolutionaries' rule of law, by publishing "Procès révolutionnaire," a three-part series which recounted the trial of the seventy-five-year-old Jacques Cazotte in the French Republic. Cazotte was a French author and royalist who dabbled in mysticism and opposed the French Revolution. His correspondence with "Poutau, secrétaire de la liste civile," in which he planned mystical ways in which Louis XVI could be freed from his imprisonment at the Tuilleries, was seized in August 1792. Cazotte was then quickly brought before the revolutionary tribunal, which found him guilty of treason and had him guillotined a month later.[44] No doubt, the author of "Procès révolutionnaire" was not enchanted with the mode in which the tribunal has gained and used its powers:

> Ce ne fut qu'après la journée du 10 août 1792 que la révolution, victorieuse et puissante, osa diriger contre ses ennemis l'action régulière des tribunaux qu'elle institua, et tenta de les abattre, en les frappant avec la main de la justice. […] Le lendemain de ce jour, la révolution était devenue pouvoir ; […] sa violence resta la même, mais elle se soumit aux règles d'une impitoyable légalité. […] À Paris, tout est criminel, depuis le salarié du manége [sic] à 18 livres, jusqu'au rentier qui touche froidement ses rentes, tandis que son roi, torturé de mille manières, sert d'otage à la ville et de gage de fidélité aux engagements publics.[45]

Given Macdonald's inclination, as we shall see, to publish articles that defended the established order and opposed revolution without commenting on them, the publication of "Procès révolutionnaire" was surely an implicit reminder to French Canadians that

[44] *Gazette de Québec*, 9-Jan-1838, 18-Jan-1838, 20-Jan-1838.
[45] *Gazette de Québec*, 9-Jan-1838.

they should be grateful to be British subjects living in a British colony rather than citizens living in a republic with a revolutionary understanding of the rule of law.[46] It might also have been a warning of the possible consequences should they continue to pursue independence from the political society of "civilized" British rule.

III. Ronald Macdonald's traditionalist principles

Neither a constitutionalist nor a nationalist newspaper, the *Gazette de Québec* under Macdonald's editorship became a traditionalist newspaper. Like French traditionalists, Macdonald defended the rights of social groups; particularly that of the Catholic Church which he saw as a pillar of social order and political stability. It is in this context in which the *Gazette de Québec* wanted to promote the respect of the established order that we can appreciate its opposition to the *Patriotes'* republican ideas, political programme, and rebellious endeavours. Inspired by French traditionalist thinkers and influenced by Church doctrine, Macdonald contested the enlightened and republican discourse which opposed reason to religion. He contested the idea that reason was on the side of the revolutionaries while superstition was on the side of the promoters of the established order.

In December 1836, as the *Quebec Gazette* was publishing articles that warned those constitutionalists, who desired the re-unification of Upper and Lower Canada, that the union would strengthen rather than weaken the cause of the *Patriotes*,[47] the *Gazette de Québec* chose to give over its feature column, "Philosophie religieuse," to a review of a book by Eugène de Genoude published in France's *L'Université catholique*. The review explained that *La Raison du Christianisme, ou Preuves de la vérité de la Religion* was contesting the argument made by "les philosophes des Lumières" that the Christian faithful were ignorant and feeble minded. *La Raison* refuted this assertion through the study of texts by 176 authors who had "reçu de leurs contemporains et de la postérité les titres de savants et de penseurs." *La Raison* concluded that for the likes of "Bacon,

[46] Georges, Décote, *L'itinéraire de Jacques Cazotte (1719-1792): de la fiction littéraire au mysticisme politique* (Genève: Droz, 1984).

[47] *Quebec Gazette*, 14-Dec-1836.

Descartes, Newton, Leibnitz, Clarke, Pascal, Bossuet, et Fénélon," the natural sciences had not weakened their faith but rather furnished new arguments to strengthen it.[48] De Genoude's argument was very similar to de Frayssinous or of de Bonald, who believed that reason and religion were compatible as long as reason was subservient to religion.[49] Macdonald, as a student of Demers was familiar with this defense of Christianity in general and of Catholicism in particular. Through the publication of this article, he was doing more than just displaying that he believed in the traditionalist creed which emphasized the compatibility of reason and religion. He was also suggesting that the *Patriotes*, the revolutionaries who were advising people to ignore the Church's edicts and follow them instead, were false prophets.

Macdonald's faith did not preclude reason. In May 1837 when the republican fervour expressed in public meetings was spreading in the region surrounding Montreal, Macdonald began publishing a recurring column entitled "Académie des sciences." This was in line with his education and knowledge of Demers' *Institutiones philosophicae* which highlighted the works of traditionalists on reason.[50] Demers, for example, introduced De Frayssinous, who argued that "la raison elle-même nous conduit à la foi. C'est elle qui nous ouvre les portes du divin Sanctuaire ; là elle nous remet dans les bras de la religion et nous laisse sous son empire."[51] "Académie des sciences," which appeared many times in the *Gazette* over the years, presented the latest advances in a variety of fields such as physics, mechanical chemistry, meteorology, and biology.[52] The recurring publication of this column demonstrates that Macdonald was not adverse to science. In fact, Macdonald believed that mankind's advances, in understanding how the

[48] *Gazette de Québec*, 24-Dec-1836.

[49] For an in-depth analysis of de Bonald's thoughts on religion and reason see Louis de Bonald, "De la liberté de l'homme, et de l'accord de son libre arbitre avec la volonté de Dieu" in *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux dans la société civile, démontrée par le raisonnement et par l'Histoire* (Paris: 1796), vol. 2, book 6, chap. 6, 378-398.

[50] See, for example, Demers, *Institutiones philosophicae,* 93-94, 122-123.

[51] Denis Antoine Luc de Frayssinous, *Défense du Christianisme ou conférences sur la religion, Prêchées à la jeunesse française, dans l'église de Saint-Sulpice, Paris, de 1803 à 1809 et de 1811 à 1822* (Paris: 1889), as quoted in Demers, *Institutiones philosophicae,* 93.

[52] See, for example, *Gazette de Québec* 18-May-1837, 6-Jul-1837, 27-Jan-1838, 12-Jun-1838, 2-May-1839, 28-Sep-1839, 18-Feb-1840, 21-May-1840.

world functioned, served to illustrate the religious teachings of the almighty power of God rather than undermine it.

IV. Defense of the Lower Canadian Catholic Church

Although Macdonald's career choices confirm that he was conversant in English and French, the manner in which he edited the *Gazette de Québec* highlights the fact that he never characterized himself, or others, in terms of language. At his core, Macdonald was a religious man who believed that the betterment of man depended on the preservation of rights of the Lower Canadian Roman Catholic Church, and not on the observation of individual political rights in the manner observed by Neilson or even collective rights based on language and ethnicity. As a Lower Canadian Roman Catholic subject, he always focused his interest on his own religious community. Thus, he never addressed or promoted religious groups other than Roman Catholics. Finally, his education and professional activities brought him in close contact to the colonial French-speaking community. Although he might have entertained relations with Quebec City's Anglo-Celtic English-speaking community, there is no evidence of such a relationship in the *Gazette de Québec*.

Rather than focusing on the intellectual underpinnings of the colonial political debates before the Rebellions, hence giving credence to the *Patriotes'* demands, Macdonald chose to concentrate almost exclusively on what he considered to be the real source of well-being for Lower Canadians: the Catholic Church. He deeply believed that it was essential to preserve the Catholic Church in Lower Canada. The Church was the foundation of society, guided its flock spiritually, and provided charitable, health, and education services. Hence, similar to de Bonald, Duvoisin and de Frayssinous' world view, Macdonald believed that Christianity was best suited to the advancement and fulfilment of a society.

While Neilson was defending how the institutions of the Constitutional Act of 1791 were best suited for the "peace, good government and public prosperity" of the colony, Macdonald chose instead to focus on what really mattered for him, and what he believed should matter to Lower Canadians: the essential social role played by the

Catholic Church in ameliorating the lives of its flock. In July 1836, the *Gazette de Québec* published a review of the *Essai historique et statistique sur les institutions de charité publique à Rome,* by Cardinal Charles-Louis Morichini. The original review came from the Paris publication, *L'Ami de la religion et du roi.* It explained that *Essai historique* was arguing that while the treaties, annals and newspapers of the era rightly commended the efforts of philanthropic and political organizations towards the relief and amelioration of the poor, they altogether ignored the contributions of the Catholic Church's charitable institutions. To make its point, *Essai historique* mentioned institutions such as Pope Innocent's "Hospice des Enfans-Trouvés" established in 1198, the "Hospice des convalescens" established in 1551, and Pope Clement XI's founding of a "prison correctionnelle spéciale pour les enfans coupables de quelque délit" in 1703 – all of which were later emulated in France, England, and the Americas.[53] By reproducing the review of *Essai historique,* Macdonald reminded his readers more or less explicitly that political institutions (or political society) were not the only institutions that mattered in their lives. He was implying that political reforms were not the only way to improve their lots. After all, Lower Canadians should not forget the role played by the Catholic Church in bettering their fate, as well as their faith. Religious organizations in Lower Canada, for example, had a long tradition of providing essential services. Many of these colonial religious institutions had been established in the seventeenth-century: Nuns of the Augustine order had founded the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital in Quebec City,[54] Bishop Laval had founded the *Petit Séminaire de Québec*, which educated young boys,[55] and the nuns of the Ursuline and of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame orders founded establishments that schooled young girls, just to name a few.[56] In the context of the intense political debates playing out in the colony between the constitutionalists and the *Patriotes*, the primacy given to the defense of the Catholic Church in the *Gazette de Québec* was not an accident.

[53] *Gazette de Québec*, 7-Jul-1836.

[54] Martin Sainte-Jeanne-de-Chantal, o.s.a., "Guenet, Marie, dite de Saint-Ignace," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed 28 July 2016, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/guenet_marie_1E.html.

[55] Vachon, "Laval, François de."

[56] Allan Greer, *The People of New France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 66.

In May 1837, shortly after the tabling of Russell's Resolutions in the House of Commons had caused an intensification of the *Patriotes'* revolutionary discourse, Neilson's *Quebec Gazette* was attempting to calm its readers by reminding them of the French Canadians' loyalty in the British battles against the American Revolution and the War of 1812.[57] The *Gazette de Québec*, instead, returned to the importance of the Catholic Church in Lower Canada. This time, Macdonald chose to publish an article written in 1761 which described the painstaking efforts made by the Church to establish a foothold in New France. The long excerpt, *Fixation des Curés du Bas-Canada,* was spread over five columns in two editions of the newspaper. Taken from the *Mémoires sur la vie de M. de Laval, premier évêque de Québec*, "sans nom d'auteur," it explained the spiritual and educational endeavours of the Catholic Church in its efforts to convert "les indigènes" and educate "les colons." The excerpt also explained how, in the years *Fixation* covered, from 1669 to 1730, the Church of New France had to rely on the financial aid of the King of France for its survival.[58] Hence it was the mutual support of the religious and political societies that had enabled the establishment of the Catholic Church in the colony, and consequently, the betterment of the lives of colonials. The publication of this seventy-six-year-old excerpt, at a time when revolutionary talk was escalating all around, was Macdonald's way of warning his readers of what was at stake, should they take up and put into action the discourse that threatened the established order of the political and religious societies of Lower Canada.

Shortly thereafter, the *Gazette de Québec* again exposed Macdonald's traditionalism with an excerpt from the 1834 novel *Arthur, ou Religion et solitude* by the French poet and novelist Ulric Guttinguer (1785-1866).[59] In one of the few commentaries included with his reprints, Macdonald stated that Guttinguer's *Arthur* was an important work and one where "le but de l'auteur est celui de saint Augustin ramené à la religion par l'angoisse et le néant des passions." He made good use of Guttinguer's *Arthur* by choosing to excerpt a passage that addressed the hero's experiences as a child during *la terreur*. The passage recalled when

[57] *Quebec Gazette*, 5-May-1837, 19-May-1837, 29-May-1837.
[58] *Gazette de Québec*, 2-May-1837, 6-May-1837.
[59] Ulric Guttinguer, *Arthur, ou Religion et solitude* (Rouen: Nicetas Periaux, 1834).

> Les villages et les bourgs semblaient dépeuplés.
> Je chantais des airs patriotiques appris à l'école primaire,
> où il fallait que les enfants allassent sous peine de mort pour les parents.
> Ô liberté ! Ô patrie !
> Ma mère ne m'arrêtait qu'à l'ignoble *Carmagnole* et au terrible *Cà-ira* [sic].
> […]
> Tous les soirs des voitures venaient chercher la substance des tribunaux révolutionnaires, et le pain quotidien de la guillotine.

Young Arthur was terrified by the anger, rage, and menace in the voices of the "citoyens" and would later recall how, as the events went from bad to worse, it made his young soul turn towards the comfort of prayer.[60] That Macdonald would use the effects of the French Revolution as a way to pre-empt such an occurrence in Lower Canada is, in itself, not surprising. After all, the Reign of Terror had had horrific consequences and was used by constitutionalist papers, including the *Quebec Gazette*, to illustrate the ramifications of revolution on a country's prosperity.[61] Contrary to the *Quebec Gazette* that was saying that revolution would affect the country's prosperity, however, the *Gazette de Québec* was using a religious argument. Macdonald was displaying his belief that to succumb to revolutionary fervour could only lead to the same spiritual void felt by Saint Augustin and young Arthur. Better to avoid it altogether and remain faithful to the religion of their fathers.

V. Defense of the established order

Macdonald believed that religion was essential to the foundation of the social order, the stability of the political order, and the survival of empires. His preoccupation with the defense of religion, however, did not mean that he altogether abandoned the defense of the established political order, far from it. We should not forget that traditionalists believed in a symbiotic relationship of church and state where the church defended the power of the state, and the state defended the power of the church.[62] They

[60] *Gazette de Québe*c, 3-Aug-1837.

[61] See for example, *Quebec Gazette*, 11-Jul-1836, 20-Sep-1837, 4-Oct-1837, 12-Jan-1838.

[62] Louis de Bonald, *Législation primitive considérée dans les derniers temps par les seules lumières de la raison* (Paris: 1802), 127-129.

argued that as religion was necessary to the people's happiness, it was the political authority's duty to respect this religion; besides "si le magistrat aime à trouver dans la religion des peuples le garant de leur soumission, les peuples à leur tour aiment à trouver dans la religion du magistrat le garant de sa justice et de son dévouement à la chose publique."[63] In other words, the symbiotic relationship of church and state was beneficial to both institutions. Traditionalists believed that in a constituted state, subjects obeyed the Sovereign power, which found its limits in the laws of nature and of religion, as well as in the civil laws and the fundamental laws of the state. If a king ordered something that was contrary to the natural or divine laws, he was acting without authority.[64] Still, traditionalists were not advocating that the king's subjects disobey or ignore an order that went against natural or divine laws. They turned to "la nature du contrat social" to explain

> l'État acquiert sur nous, et sur toutes nos actions, un droit éminent de direction, autant qu'il est nécessaire au maintien de la tranquillité public. L'État peut donc exiger de chacun de ses membres qu'il renonce au droit de résistance que donne la nature ; et l'on ne peut douter qu'il ne l'exige en effet, quand on considère que ce droit de résistance est incompatible avec la paix et le bon ordre de la société."[65]

Given Macdonald's support of the traditionalist view of the "perfect" civilized state, it is not surprising that he would also defend the established order. If he valued the role of the Church as essential to the people's well-being, he also understood the importance of a stable state to safeguard the Church's endeavours. He therefore hinted at how the bond between the hierarchic religious and political societies of Lower Canada was both necessary and beneficial to its inhabitants. Contrary to the *Quebec Gazette* that consistently promoted the institutions of constitutionalism, Macdonald never openly demonstrated any concern about the manner in which civil governance was organized. While he dutifully published the debates and reports that touched Lower Canadian governance, he never commented on them directly, nor did he ever add articles that would display his preference. However, it is clear that during this period of political

[63] De Frayssinous, *Défense du Christianisme*, 229.

[64] Jean-Baptiste Duvoisin, *Défense de l'ordre social contre les principes de la Révolution française* (Leipsick, 1801), 130.

[65] Duvoisin, *Défense de l'ordre social*, 130-131.

effervescence, Macdonald believed in the principle of a strong Church buttressed by a powerful Crown which was, in the colonial context, integrated in a mixed government. He considered that any democratic revolution that usurped the Crown was ultimately caused by people who had abandoned "civilized" religion. Macdonald's beliefs were steeped in the ideas of traditionalism he had learned as a young man.

In May 1837 the *Gazette de Québec* defended this idea by publishing an excerpt of Alexis Dumesnil's recently published *Recettes Politiques*.[66] In the excerpt, Dumesnil argued that religion was what had previously assured the survival of the empires and guaranteed sensible politics. Religion, however, had been rejected only to be replaced by false doctrines. Dumesnil blamed teachings that encouraged a "religion" that did not come from God and whose aim was neither seeking peace, nor ameliorating the human condition. Of course, the absence of "sensible politics" was caused by the false teachings of the "illustres docteurs, brevetés, payés et rémunérés pour former le goût et perfectionner la raison."[67] Hence, Dumesnil was blaming the ideas of the Enlightenment, which had turned people against religion, for the French Revolution. By arguing that religion had assured the sensible politics of the past, Dumesnil was in essence preaching for the collaboration of the hierarchic religious and political societies within a "civilized" state.

In Lower Canada, the collaboration of church and state had endured despite the Conquest. Not only had the Constitutional Act of 1791 preserved the Catholic Church's ascendency in the colony but in 1817, the Archbishop of Quebec, Mgr. Plessis, was appointed to the Legislative Council, hence, recognized at the same rank than his Anglican counterpart, the Lord Bishop of Quebec, Rev. Jacob Mountain.[68] Macdonald, who had consistently advocated for institutions of the Church as an essential component of society, was displaying his belief that the *Patriotes'* revolutionary rhetoric was a danger, not only to the Church, but also to the peace, order and good government of

[66] Alexis Dumesnil, *Recettes politiques* (Paris: Librairie de H. Fournier Jeune, 1837).

[67] *Gazette de Québec*, 2-May-1837.

[68] Mountain from July 1793 to July 1825, Plessis from April 1817 to December 1825. See Joseph Desjardins, *Guide parlementaire de la province de Québec, 1792 à 1902* (Québec: Bibliothèque de la législature de Québec, 1902), 56, 58.

Lower Canada. As Macdonald furthered his defense of the established order by using local *mandements,* as well as theoretical and practical historical sources, his traditionalist view permeated the pages of the *Gazette de Québec*,

In August 1837, upon receiving the news of King William IV's death the preceding June, both *Gazettes* made space to mourn the King and express their loyalty to the new Queen Victoria. They did so in very dissimilar ways, however. While the *Quebec Gazette* published an address made by "a committee of inhabitants of Quebec City" to Lord Gosford, the Queen's representative in the colony,[69] the *Gazette de Québec* chose to publish a *mandement* from Mgr. Signay, Archbishop of Quebec. The *mandement* was beseeching the Catholic flock to justly mourn the death of "Guillaume IV, […] cet illustre monarque, qui, pendant tout son règne, n'a cessé de travailler au bonheur du puissant empire à la tête duquel la divine providence l'avait placé, et de donner à cette province en particulier des marques visibles de sa protection royale." The *mandement* also implored the flock to pray to God, "celui par qui règnent les rois, qu'il digne répandre sur elle [Victoria] ses bénédictions les plus abondantes." Hence, Archbishop Signay, by following the tradition first established by Mgr. Briand at the time of the Conquest, was displaying the Archdiocese of Quebec's submission to the British throne and to the established order. Moreover, this established order was not contested by the *Gazette de Québec* as it was "avec Plaisir que nous nous voyons en état de satisfaire au désir qui nous a été témoigné par plusieurs personnes de voir inséré dans notre feuille le mandement de Mgr. l'évêque de Québec."[70]

Macdonald's defense of the established order continued after the 1837 Rebellions. In December 1837, the *Quebec Gazette* published "Late Intelligence from Sir John Colborne: – Destruction of St. Eustache," as well as Lord Gosford's response to a letter he had received from Montreal French Canadians expressing their loyalty to the British Empire.[71] Although Macdonald did include an article titled "La prise et destruction de Saint-Eustache par Sir John Colborne,"[72] he chose not to publish Lord Gosford's

[69] *Quebec Gazette*, 7-Aug-1837.
[70] *Gazette de Québec*, 10-Aug-1837.
[71] *Quebec Gazette*, 18-Dec-1837, 22-Dec-1837.
[72] *Gazette de Québec,* 16-Dec-1837.

response to loyal French Canadian citizens. Instead, he published another *mandement* by Archbishop Signay. This one reminded the faithful that "*tous doivent être soumis aux puissances supérieurs* qui les régissent civilement." Although Mgr. Signay stated that he believed it was unnecessary "d'entrer ici dans un long détail des autorités sur lesquelles est fondée cette soumission que tout fidèle doit à la puissance établie," he went ahead and did just that:

> Qu'il vous suffise de savoir, N.T.C.F. [nos très chers frères (my dear brethren)], que l'église, conduite par l'Esprit Saint, et s'appuyant des leçons aussi bien des exemples de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ et de ses apôtres, n'a cessé d'enseigner à ses enfants *qu'il faut rendre à César ce qui est à César* (Marc, XII: 17.) […] Que, par des voies légales et constitutionnelles, on cherche à remédier aux abus dont on croit avoir raison de se plaindre, c'est un droit que nous ne prétendons contester à personne ; mais que pour y parvenir l'on air recours à l'insurrection, c'est employer un moyen, nous de ne disons pas seulement inefficace, imprudent, funeste à ceux mêmes qui en font usage, mais encore criminel aux yeux de Dieu et de notre sainte religion.[73]

The publication of these words in the *Gazette de Québec* at a time when the *Quebec Gazett*e chose, instead, to publish political articles clearly illustrates how Macdonald defended the established order by using religious, rather than political, arguments.

Although Macdonald mostly used practical rhetoric to make his point, he also sometimes published more theoretical texts. For instance, he did so when reporting of the "Great Loyal Meeting" of 31 July 1837. The meeting took place in Quebec City shortly after the news began circulating in the colony that the British Parliament had rejected the *Patriotes'* Ninety-two resolutions. It reunited all groups loyal to the Crown. The *Quebec Gazette's* reporting of this meeting was extensive and emphasized the participants' demonstration of loyalty to the "Queen and constitution" as well as to "Old England, the land consecrated by the genius of universal freedom."[74] While the *Gazette de Québec* also reported on the meeting, it took an entirely different approach. Rather than the extensive reporting of its English-speaking counterpart, the newspaper chose to

[73] *Gazette de Québec*, 19-Dec-1837.
[74] *Quebec Gazette*, 2-Aug-1837, 4-Aug-1837.

only publish the resolutions that were taken at the meeting and opted to include instead an excerpt from "De l'obéissance due à l'autorité légitime." Written in the late 1790s and early 1800s by Mgr. Jean-René Asseline (1742-1813), the Gallican Bishop of Boulogne, the excerpt was spread over two columns and consisted of the first twenty of forty-two verses of a monitory.[75] The excerpt traced the lineage that proved that a sovereign's right to command obedience came directly from God starting with Jesus, and followed by the apostles St-Peter and St-Paul, the fourth (in 633), sixth (in 636), and seventh (in 644) councils of Toledo, the council of Lorris (in 643) and, finally, the council of Oxford (in 1222). No doubt, this information lent much authority to the excerpt warning Catholics that they had to "honorez le roi [parce que] c'est Dieu [qui] a consacré les droits de la puissance temporelle. […] Personne ne peut […] priver [le roi] de l'administration du royaume, [ou] s'ingérer à gouverner l'état." Moreover, failure to ignore this warning by challenging the legitimate authority of the land was tantamount to disobeying God, and anyone who dared to do so was to be ex-communicated.[76] The *Gazette de Québec's* reprint of the monitory at a time when the rhetoric of both the *Patriotes* and the constitutionalists was reaching a fevered pitch was a political act on the part of the *Gazette de Québec,* one that illustrates a perspective that was firmly rooted in the religious theory of traditionalism. Thus, while the two *Gazettes* agreed that the legitimate authority over Lower Canada belonged to the British Crown, they did not argue it from the same foundation. Whereas, the *Quebec Gazette* argued that this authority rested on the premise of a political arrangement that had evolved over several centuries, the *Gazette de Québec* believed that the Crown's authority emanated from God.

Still, in February 1838, the *Gazette de Québec* returned to its tactic of publishing Church edicts that defended the established order against revolutionary endeavours. This time, however, Macdonald combined older edicts which had been published during the Irish Revolt, the American Revolutionary War, and the French Revolution to the ones published by Mgr. Lartigue of Montreal and Mgr. Signay of Quebec on the Lower

[75] Mgr Jean-René Asseline, *Œuvres choisies de Mgr Asseline, docteur de la Maison et Société de Sorbonne, professeur d'hébreu, et dernier évêque de Boulogne*, vol. 4 (Paris: Potey, 1823); Monitory, n. and adj., A letter containing an admonition or warning, *esp.* one issued by a bishop or pope, *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed 18 Sept. 2015.

[76] *Gazette de Québec*, 1-Aug-1837.

Canadian Rebellions. The series, titled "Doctrine de l'église [sic] catholique d'Irlande et de celle du Canada, sur la révolte," consisted of no less than eighteen articles divided into two parts and spread over twelve editions: The first part reprinted a total of twelve pastoral edicts that were issued during the Irish Rebellion of 1798 by the Archbishop of Dublin and the bishops of Cloyne, Cork, Kildare, Kilmacduagh, Limerick, Munster and Waterford. The second part of the series contained edicts issued during the American Revolutionary War that were written by the Quebec Bishops Briand in 1775. These were followed by that of Mgr. Hubert in 1793, who in agreement with Lord Dorchester, was warning his flock against siding with France concerning a "flotte française partie des côtes des États-Unis d'Amérique" that was possibly attempting to conquer Lower Canada.[77] These past edicts were then followed by those of issued over the current Rebellions. What is of particular interest in this series is that Macdonald was expanding his religious argument by using edicts from the Irish and Canadian Catholic clergy that were acquiescing with Anglican British rule.[78] While the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and the Lower Canadian Rebellions of 1837-38 were not fought over the same reasons, they did share some similarities: Both rebellions pitted a majority of Catholics against Protestants, fought against measures taken by the British Crown and Parliament, and planted the seeds of future nationalism.[79]

The series "Doctrine de l'église [sic] catholique" was also one of the few instances where Macdonald addressed his readers directly. He introduced the series by explaining:

> Les déplorables événements dont le Canada vient d'être le théâtre ont ouvert des plaies qui se cicatriseront, il faut l'espérer, mais à la guérison desquelles les amis de l'ordre et du bonheur de leurs concitoyens doivent se faire un devoir de contribuer. Une de ces plaies, et la plus apparente, sans contredit, est la démoralisation du peuple auquel ceux qui l'ont voulu conduire jusqu'à la révolte ouverte, se sont efforcé de faire croire que dès que le clergé ouvrait la bouche pour lui enseigner ses devoirs envers la puissance civile, par là même il sortait des bornes du ministère sacré qui

[77] *Gazette de Québec*, 22-Feb-1838.

[78] *Gazette de Québec*, 1-Feb-1838 to 17-Feb-1838, 20-Feb-1838 to 27-Feb-1838.

[79] For a comparison of Irish and Quebec politics, see for example, Garth Stevenson, *Parallel Paths: The Development of Nationalism in Ireland and Quebec* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006)

> lui est confié et, sous ce rapport, il ne devait pas être écouté. C'était là le moyen le plus efficace de rendre le peuple canadien sourd à une voix qu'il n'avait encore jamais méconnue, de lui faire perdre de vue les principes d'une religion qu'il avait toujours respectée, et de le conduire enfin jusqu'au mépris de toute autorité.[80]

Macdonald's statement illustrates his belief that the rejection of religious authority was a step towards the rejection of all authority. In like manner, by blaming the rebellions on people who had ignored the clergy's warnings concerning their duty towards the legitimate authority, the statement also illustrates his acceptance that the Church had a right to advise its flock on political matters, thereby supporting the political society.

One week after the last uprising in November 1838, both *Gazettes* assiduously reported on the arrests made and the effects of the latest rebellion on certain communities. In addition to these reports, Macdonald chose to publish an article written by de Bonald on the importance of religious society within a civilized state. "Religion et civilisation," [date unknown] referred to the events of the *règne de la terreur,* which, no doubt for traditionalists, had been orchestrated by an "imperfect" political society. The text warned against the crumbling of the very foundations of society. "Religion et civilisation" argued that out of the litter of Huns, Goths, Visigoths, and countless other "sauvages," Christianity had created order in Europe. Still, despite the advancement brought about by Christianity, "la barbarie est toujours aux portes de la société." Moreover, France's *règne de la terreur* was a "barbarie légale" of the worse kind, as it had robbed churches and families of their security and property. Such acts were deemed a barbarian invasion "à belles manières et à beau langage" the aim of which had been to destroy "les fondements mêmes de la société." Of one thing de Bonald was certain, it was not the *philosophes des lumières* who were going to save the fabric of society.[81] Traditionalists, as we have seen, believe that it was the combination of the hierarchic religious and political societies that made for a civilized state. The replacement in France of the "perfect" political society, of King, nobles and the people, by a democratic republic had occurred because of the erosion of the religious society. By choosing to publish "Religion et civilisation," Macdonald was again warning his readers about the possible

[80] *Gazette de Québec*, 1-Feb-1838.
[81] *Gazette de Québec*, 10-Nov-1838.

repercussions of following the *Patriotes* in their desire to overthrow the established order. Thus, at a time when many had their property destroyed and perhaps even a loved one imprisoned or killed, Macdonald was displaying his belief that religion was at the core of the civilized state, and the people's ultimate salvation.

In the end, Macdonald never subscribed to the idea that life under a good and free government could only be achieved under republicanism institutions. Quite the contrary. Macdonald believed that liberty could be enjoyed even under an authoritarian system. In August 1838, the *Quebec Gazette* was reporting on, and admonishing, sympathisers of *Patriote* sympathisers for holding public meetings in the Quebec suburb of St-Roch, as well as in Saint-Hyacinthe.[82] Instead, the *Gazette de Québec,* which made no mention of these meetings, chose to publish "Rome pendant un conclave" written by the "historien légitimiste et anti-révolutionnaire" Jacques Crétineau-Joly.[83] The article described all of the pomp and circumstance surrounding the conclave of 1823, when cardinals from all over the world had congregated in Rome and chosen Pope Leo XII to lead the Catholic Church. "Rome pendant un conclave" was more than the ceremonial changing of the guard, however, for it provided Macdonald with the opportunity to contrast an established mode of governance against the newer democratic form, which he felt was not all it was touted to be:

> À Rome, le peuple n'a pas un gouvernement de son choix. Il ne dit pas qu'il l'a extrait des pavés d'une émeute, il ne l'oblige pas à subir telle ou telle condition d'existence, mais s'il faut tout dire, le peuple a mieux que cela. Sa liberté est moins restreinte que celle de certaines nations, et cependant il ne s'est pas donné la peine de bouleverser toutes ses antiques lois pour conquérir des droits souvent chimériques et que des ministres jaugent avec parcimonie ou pèsent dans une balance quelquefois arbitraire.[84]

Thus, rather than attacking any readers who may have, rightly or wrongly, felt some sympathy towards the *Patriotes* after their crushing defeat at the first wave of rebellion, the *Gazette de Québec* simply reminded them of the Catholic Church's

[82] *Quebec Gazette*, 13-Aug-1838.

[83] Crétineau-Joly, Jacques-Augustin-Marie, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, Catégorie générale, accessed 23 Sept. 2015, http://catalogue.bnf.fr.

[84] *Gazette de Québec*, 11-Aug-1838.

centuries-old traditions and of Rome's mode of governance. We find in these words the seeds of Macdonald's traditionalist perspective. If Rome was a better place for the aspirants of liberty than that sought by the proponents to the French Revolution, or even by those such as Neilson who sought it through mixed government, then surely submission to the established order, however it was defined under British rule, was better for Lower Canadians as well.

Macdonald's defense of the established order mostly stopped after the November 1838 Rebellion was brutally squashed by the British army. Still, he continued to use unrelated texts to express his views. At the start of 1839, for example, the *Gazette de Québec* published *Adresse du Petit Gazettier à ses patrons,* which was mostly an ode to the quick passing of time and advice at the dawn of the new year. *Adresse*, however, also implicitly reiterated Macdonald's defense of the established order:

> Toi, Peuple Canadien, aujourd'hui malheureux,
> Qui pleures sur la terre où riaient tes ayeux [sic],
> Dont le frère est chassé d'où l'enfanta sa mère,
> Plus souffrant que l'esclave où fut si bien ton père,
> De ta condition je connais la rigueur ;
> Moi-même de ton sort je partage l'aigreur.
> Tu souffres, mais n'importe ; obéis à ta Reine :
> Comme elle a Dieu pour Roi, tu l'as pour Souveraine ;
> Le seul maître des Cieux l'a faite ce qu'elle est,
> Et tu lui dois amour, fidélité, respect.[85]

The publication of the poem did, once more, implicitly advocate Macdonald's belief in the established order and its relation to the Church as understood by French traditionalists. There is no doubt that had the revolutionary rhetoric continued, the *Gazette de Québec* would have carried on publishing articles that implicitly rejected its propositions and done so through the religious tenets of French traditionalism. As the revolutionary discourse had disappeared, however, so did the need to repudiate it.

[85] *Gazette de Quebec*, 3-Jan-1839; The actual title of poem, author unknown, is "1839. Rapidité du temps," in *Le Répertoire national ou Recueil de littérature canadienne*, vol. II, compiled by J. Huston (Montreal: Lovell and Gibson, 1848), 93-96.

Conclusion

In this chapter we demonstrated that from 1836 to 1840, the *Gazette de Québec* was a distinct publication and not a translation of the *Quebec Gazette*. We also revealed that Ronald Macdonald's thought rested on the values of French traditionalism. Rather than promoting individual rights as John Neilson did, Macdonald articulated a counter-revolutionary ideology which defended the rights of hierarchic religious, social, and political communities. He consistently promoted these principles, at times explicitly, at others implicitly, in the *Gazette de Québec*. He did so by defending the rights of the colonial Catholic Church and by promoting the established order.

Conclusion

In the 1830s, Lower Canada was at a crossroads politically. On the one hand, the *Patriotes* wanted more political autonomy than the constitutional institutions could provide and would eventually come to favour leaving the British Empire. On the other hand, the promoters of these institutions wanted to preserve the connection with the Empire. John Neilson and Ronald Macdonald belonged to the latter camp and, from 1836 to 1840, defended the established social and political order through their respective newspapers, the *Quebec Gazette* and the *Gazette de Québec*. Yet, although they defended the established order, they do not fit squarely into the historiography. First, even if Neilson, the founder of the Constitutional Association of Quebec in 1834, was a constitutionalist, his discourse was distinct from the ones articulated by many of his counterparts in Montreal. As for Macdonald, he defended the constitution from an altogether different perspective. Thus, the comparison of the two *Gazettes* nuances our understanding of those opposed to the revolutionary *Patriotes* during the turbulent 1830s.

Neilson's *Quebec Gazette* articulated a political rhetoric based on individual rights of liberty, property, and security at the core of British constitutionalism. While he believed in all of the principles of constitutionalism, none were as important to him as the rule of law. Here, his position was very different than some Montreal constitutionalists who, at one point, were ready to bear arms against the colonial authorities.[1] Politically, he believed in the mixed government embodied in the Constitutional Act of 1791, which he saw as the best means to govern Lower Canada. This position was also different from Montreal constitutionalists who at one point contemplated joining the United States

[1] François Deschamps, *La « rébellion de 1837 » à travers le prisme du* Montreal Herald (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2015), 141-146.

rather than ceding to the *Patriotes*.[2] Finally, though Neilson could, at times, show impatience concerning the actions (or inactions) of French Canadians, he never wavered in his profound belief that they were fully entitled to British liberties and that any attempt to assimilate them or take away their rights to different customs, language, culture or religion was fundamentally wrong. Here again, Neilson's position was different than his Montreal counterparts. Neilson condemned his fellow constitutionalists' approval of the Canadas' legislative union because he believed they had "deliver[ed] one portion of the population [French Canadians] to the Government of *that portion to which they belong* [English Canadians], taking care to insure, by a new Constitutional Act, nearly all power *to themselves.*"[3]

Contrary to what is generally held, Macdonald's *Gazette de Québec* was not a translation nor an adaptation of the English version. It was not even a constitutionalist newspaper like the *Quebec Gazette*. Rather than defending the rights of individuals, or the institutions of mixed government, the *Gazette de Québec* used religious rhetoric based on French traditionalism, which defended the rights of social and political groups. Accordingly, Macdonald believed that the well-being of French Canadians, who he defined first and foremost as Roman Catholics, was dependant on the survival of the Catholic Church. It is from this perspective that he opposed the *Patriotes'* ideas, political programme, and rebellions. At the intellectual level, he tried to undermine the *Patriotes* by mainly contesting the idea that religion was not compatible with reason, as if reason was on the side of the revolutionary *Patriotes*, and superstition was on the side of the promoters of the established order. However, rather than focusing on the colonial political debates before the rebellions, Macdonald focused almost exclusively on what he considered the real source of well-being for French Canadians: the role and importance of the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, despite this focus, Macdonald also advocated the necessity to submit to the legitimate established order at a political level, by promoting the mutual support of the Crown and church versus a democratic ethos. To that end, Macdonald used edicts from the local Church, as well as theoretical and practical historical sources to defend this idea. Like traditionalists, Macdonald did not believe that

[2] Deschamps, *La « rébellion de 1837 »*, 141-146.
[3] *Quebec Gazette*, 1-Feb-1841.

republicanism was the key to good and free government. His defense of the established order was thus completely in line with his understanding of French traditionalism.

This thesis complicates the historiography concerning Lower Canada in the 1830s. First, it shows that the Manichean approach to the political debate, which opposed the *Patriotes* and the promoters of constitutional institutions, does not accurately represent the diversity of opinion in the colony. By focusing on the promoters of the constitutional institutions in the region of Quebec, rather than Montreal, it draws out these tensions and dissipates the premise that constitutionalists were a monolithic group. By studying two Quebec newspapers the study demonstrates that the established order could be defended from very different perspectives: some inspired by British values and principles, while others reconfigured foreign ideologies and effectively used them in a British colony.

Second, it nuances the historiography, which presents Anglophones as viewing French Canadians solely from an ethnic perspective. This thesis demonstrates that it was not the case. Some, like John Neilson, may have viewed them as British subjects who were fully entitled to all the rights and privileges guaranteed by the British constitution. Others, like Ronald Macdonald, may have defined French Canadians by characteristics other than their language or culture. Macdonald himself viewed French Canadians first and foremost (if not only) as the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church, an essential component of the hierarchic trilogy of the religious group made up of God, priests, and the faithful. Hence, this thesis questions some assumptions historians have made about how people in the 1830s defined their communities or collectivities.

In sum, this thesis demonstrates the need to re-evaluate the nature and dissemination of conservative political ideas in Canada during the first-half of the nineteenth century. Were there other variations or nuances yet to be discovered under the umbrellas of the main ideologies? Did the region of Quebec continue to differ from Montreal in its ideological outlook in the 1840s? How did the rise of ultramontanism in the Montreal region affect outlying regions? More specifically, did the ideas of traditionalism persist in the region of Quebec? Did the traditionalist ethos go beyond the Quebec region? By studying these questions, among others, scholars could enhance our understanding of the intellectual diversity and effervescence of the period.

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