

THE ELECTION OF 1861 IN CANADA WEST

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EMANUEL TANCHAK

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## THE ELECTION OF 1861 IN CANADA WEST

### ABSTRACT

Prior to dissolution in 1861, the Conservative ministry was a minority government insofar as Canada West was concerned. The election campaign that followed was a bitter, hard-fought affair that gave the government a small majority in the West. This majority was obtained only through the support of candidates who contested their ridings as Coalition Reformers, as Independent candidates, or as Conservatives advocating a number of Liberal policies. These members were not always reliable. Indecisive and humiliating as it turned out to be, the election helped point out the need for some very serious co-operation between the province's political leaders, if the crisis that developed during the early 1860's were to be overcome.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

On Saturday, the eighteenth day of May 1861, the last session of Canada's sixth parliament was prorogued.<sup>1</sup> The politically-minded press of Canada West, as the former province of Upper Canada was sometimes referred to, had already been speculating as to a likely date of prorogation and the probability of a dissolution and an election. "It is announced, but not officially, that Parliament will be prorogued on Wednesday next," wrote the St. Catharines Journal on May 16.<sup>2</sup> The Toronto Daily Leader and the Carleton Place Herald were more accurate, both choosing the eighteenth as the date.<sup>3</sup> On May 23 the Toronto Globe warned its readers of an impending dissolution followed by an election.<sup>4</sup> The London Free Press hoped that there would be no summer election. Because of the "backwardness of the season," it felt that it was best that the "husbandman devote every hour to his agricultural tasks."<sup>5</sup> It was not till the twelfth of June that the Leader was able to publish the official proclamation.<sup>6</sup> Then, finally, the word was out, dissolution on the tenth, elections before the twelfth of July, and the writs back by the fifteenth.

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<sup>1</sup>P.A.C., The Daily Leader, 20 May, 1861. Henceforth Daily Leader will be cited only as Leader.

<sup>2</sup>P.A.C., The St. Catharines Journal, 16 May, 1861.

<sup>3</sup>Leader, 17 May, 1861.  
P.A.O., The Carleton Place Herald, 16 May, 1861.

<sup>4</sup>P.A.C., The Globe, 23 May, 1861.

<sup>5</sup>P.A.O., The London Free Press, 30 May, 1861.

<sup>6</sup>Leader, 12 June, 1861.

It is this much anticipated election that will be discussed in the pages to follow. Developments in Canada West only will be the concern in this study although from time to time it might be necessary to refer to proceedings in Canada East. An attempt will be made to outline the political situation as it developed in the years prior to the election. This will be followed by an account of the election campaign and that in turn by the election itself, its outcome, and some of its effects.

The political situation of 1861 had its beginnings in the previous decade. As early as 1850 it was becoming evident that the Reform party of Baldwin and La Fontaine was experiencing stress from within. The achievement of responsible government in 1849 had removed the one great goal that had held the party's ranks together.<sup>1</sup> Almost immediately it became apparent that there was, within the party, a group of ultra-reformers to whom responsible government and the British parliamentary system were not satisfactory. This group, dubbed the "Clear Grits" by George Brown, worked for a restriction of ministerial powers, and demanded that the legislative council and the judiciary be made elective, in fact advocated a system of government similar to that of the United States of America. They pressed also for the secularization of the Clergy Reserves and the establishment of a non-sectarian school system.<sup>2</sup> Eventually, and especially after the party leadership had passed into the hands of Francis Hincks, there emerged from within its ranks another

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<sup>1</sup>Skelton, O.D., The Life and Times of A. T. Galt.  
(Toronto, 1920), p. 165.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 165.



faction, this one led by George Brown. The Brownites stood somewhere between the conservatism of the majority in the party that still supported the Hincks-Morin ministry, and the radicalism of the Grits, supporting the latter in issues involving the Clergy Reserves and education but opposing the demand for an elected judiciary and legislative council.<sup>1</sup>

The official opposition in the early 1850's was the Conservative party or the Tories, the successors to the Family Compact group that had so rigidly stood in opposition to responsible government and, later, to the secularization of the Clergy Reserves. The party, like that of the Reformers, was also undergoing change and division. Many of its younger members had changed their views on the issues of responsible government and the Clergy Reserves.<sup>2</sup> By 1854 even some of the "Grit" proposals no longer sounded as sacrilegious and objectionable as they did a few years earlier. Thus, there were in the party the rigid rightest elements as well as the more realistic, more moderate and adaptable members who were as much reform minded as the government was.

The year 1854 marks what has been said to be a "well-recognized watershed in the alignment of political groups in this era."<sup>3</sup> Discontent within the Reform party had so eroded it that the Hincks-Morin ministry was obliged to resign in June of that year. Then came a rather astounding coalition of former opponents to form the Liberal-Conservative party which held almost uninterrupted office until 1862.

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<sup>1</sup>J.M.S. Careless, Brown of the Globe, Vol. I, (Toronto, 1963), pp. 111 and 161.

<sup>2</sup>Skelton, op. cit., p. 163.

<sup>3</sup>Paul G. Cornell, The Alignment of Political Groups in Canada, 1841-1867 (Toronto, 1962), p. 36.

The press of the era often referred to the group by that name, but just as often they were called the Ministerial party, the government party, or just the Conservatives and even the Tories.

Although the coalition dismayed some people, it was not really an unnatural one. MacNab, one of the old guard Tories, was asked to form the new ministry. The assignment apparently was not a difficult one for within three days the personnel of the new government was announced.<sup>1</sup> MacNab had not only won over the French Reformers or Blues, but had also got the support of the followers of Hincks, retaining John Ross in the cabinet and bringing in Robert Spence, another of their members. The Conservative ministers were Allan MacNab, John A. Macdonald, and William Cayley. Together with Spence these were the only new members in the council for the Lower Canada segment remained unchanged.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the new Liberal-Conservative ministry was actually three-fifths the old Hincks-Morin ministry.

The three groups party to the coalition had much in common. MacNab, the Tory; Ross, the Hincksite; and Cartier, the French Blue, were each deeply involved in the railroad industry.<sup>3</sup> The Tories, as previously stated, had already become less reactionary and were thus more compatible with the Hincks-Morin people who, if anything, were tending to become quite static in recent years. Then, too, each group had reason to fear the ministry falling into the hands of the Grits or

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<sup>1</sup>Careless, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>2</sup>J. O. Coté, Political Appointments and Elections in the Province of Canada from 1841 to 1865, (Ottawa, 1865), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Careless, op. cit., p. 194.

the Brownites, some of whom were radically republican in their views, while others were strongly anti-clerical and others still quite outspokenly anti-French.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime the groups that had fallen into the opposition were drawing together in Upper Canada. The main difference between the Grits and the Brownites was the latter's objection to elective institutions other than the Assembly. However, the question almost ceased to be an issue in 1856 with the passage of a bill establishing the principle of an elected Legislative Council. On the other hand there were issues that bound the two groups. One of these was their mutual struggle against the bill authorizing the setting up of state-supported sectarian schools in Upper Canada.<sup>2</sup> The rapprochement was further strengthened by their joint objection to government grants in aid to the Grand Trunk Railroad.<sup>3</sup>

The great force that tended to unify the opposition factions was George Brown. Through his newspaper, the Toronto Globe, which had already absorbed such Grit publications as the North American, and The Examiner<sup>4</sup>, Brown was able to wield considerable influence in the province, especially amongst the western farmers. Already he had persuaded them to accept the principle of Representation by Population as the solution to their grievances which had flared up in angered reaction to the passage of the schools bill to the point of their demanding

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<sup>1</sup>R.S. Longley, Sir Francis Hincks, (Toronto, 1943), pp. 306-7.

<sup>2</sup>Careless, op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 201.

a disruption of the union<sup>1</sup>, In 1857 Brown effectively used the Globe to organize a convention of the Brownites and the Grits. This resulted in the organization of the Reform Alliance embracing almost all the opposition members of Upper Canada.<sup>2</sup>

The results of Brown's efforts were becoming evident in the election of 1857 in which the opposition Reformers, or Liberals, as the press was beginning to call them,<sup>3</sup> gained a majority of the seats in Upper Canada, defeating three ministers in the process.<sup>4</sup> The campaign was for the most part a two party affair, the contests being largely two-way fights as described in the following passage from Cornell:

The contests in both sections of the province were for the most part two-sided fights between a candidate who supported or would support the ministry and a partisan of the left. But there remained traces of the older affiliations. Generally the Conservatives and the Coalition Reformers of Canada West agreed on a single candidate and avoided dividing the ministerial vote.<sup>5</sup>

It might be concluded that there was a two party system in the years just prior to the election of 1861. It is true that these parties were in some respects rather nebulous, that they lacked strong organization or even well-established leadership, and, in their day, had no definite and universally accepted name. Yet there was a remarkable consistency and stability about their policies, their members and their supporters.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.206.

<sup>2</sup>Careless, op. cit., p. 227.

<sup>3</sup>Cornell, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>4</sup>Donald Creighton, John A. Macdonald, The Young Politician, (Toronto, 1952), p. 257.

<sup>5</sup>Cornell, op. cit., p. 44.

A study of the results of the eight elections held during the Union period shows that almost a third of the ridings hardly changed their affiliation at all. In many cases the change was gradual. A formerly Reform riding if it did swing to the Conservative camp did so by first supporting a Coalition Reformer in 1854, gradually to drift with him to the Conservative side. In the period 1854 to 1863, which includes four elections, about two dozen ridings remained constant in their party support, and nearly forty backed the same party in at least three of the elections.<sup>1</sup> The elected members themselves for the greater part were quite consistent. "Loose fish" were neither as numerous nor as loose as is often supposed.

Ambitious or unusually independent men did "cross the House" from time to time, but the cases of a second crossing to return to the original loyalty are very few in number. The term "loose fish" was most useful in political journalism in the heat of election campaigns but does not appear as a pattern of behaviour for any noticeable number of members.<sup>2</sup>

Most consistently Liberal were the counties in the west bordering on the lakes and stretching back of Hamilton and Toronto. In the east the party drew support from the counties of Glengarry, Stormont and Prescott. Conservative strength lay in the ridings along the Ottawa River, along the Rideau Canal as far as Kingston, and in the larger urban ridings.<sup>3</sup>

So there they were, two parties that were not yet certain what

<sup>1</sup>This information based on data obtained from Cornell, op. cit., figure VI.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

they would adopt as their party names, but both "largely consistent in membership, viewpoint and policy."<sup>1</sup> There were the Liberals, mostly farm people and Anglo-Saxon, proud, prudent and Protestant, incensed by the Conservatives who, in order to stay in power, allowed the French to dictate to them, appalled by what they felt to be the extravagance of the government in its support of the railroads, and insulted by the Separate Schools Act which forced Catholic schools in their midst, and, above all, resentful of the injustice that limited their parliamentary representation to that of Canada East although their population, they had no doubt, was much greater. These were issues that prodded deeply, that rankled constantly and just could not allow them to change their party loyalty.

On the other side were the Conservatives, also Anglo-Saxon and also Protestant, but more conciliatory than the Liberals, also more enterprising in a business sense, and more zealous in their attachment to the British tradition which they were ready to protect even at the cost of having to accommodate the French, but which they were not prepared to jeopardize by entrusting the country to the Liberals with their radical views, with their outrageously intemperate leader, and their supposed talk of union with the United States.

It was this rigidity, this stability in party affiliation that was in part responsible for the political instability of the pre-confederation period. If the voter did not shift his support and the politician

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

remained constant, it was impossible for an election to produce a great enough swing in strength to give one group a comfortable working majority.

## CHAPTER II

## EARLY PREPARATIONS

Preparations by both sides were under way quite some time before the actual announcement of the election. Back in 1859 the Opposition members of the Legislature met to discuss revision of the Liberal platform.

The upshot of this meeting was a general Reform convention, held 9 November, at St. Lawrence Hall, Toronto. "The Union in its present form," the convention resolved, "can no longer be continued with advantage to the people." The principle of "Double Majority" was also rejected as a permanent solution. Limiting the powers of the Executive and legislative councils to borrow funds was not considered a sufficient remedy for the country's ills. On the other hand, Representation by Population was deemed necessary. Also deemed necessary was a constitutional change providing for "two or more local governments for local affairs and some joint authority charged with such matters as are necessarily common to both sections of the province." Accounts of these proceedings the convention published on huge broadsheets in the form of an "Address of the Reform Association to the People of Upper Canada." John A. Macdonald, who was a collector of all and any material that might be used to win elections, carefully folded up a copy and put it away amongst his papers for future use if the need should arise.<sup>1</sup>

The Liberals did not stop with the convention. In September of next year their leader, George Brown, embarked on a speaking tour com-

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<sup>1</sup>P.A.C. John A. Macdonald Papers, V.2.



mencing with a flag-bedecked affair at Galt. He then moved east to Napanee and, in November, even invaded Macdonald's stronghold of Kingston. Grit activities for the year ended in Norfolk County on Lake Erie with a large rally designed to repair any damage that might have been done to the cause by Macdonald who himself had just concluded a circuit of the West.<sup>1</sup>

In the winter of 1861, Brown was forced to give up most of his political activities. Illness compelled his absence from the parliamentary session, and for a while he had left Toronto to recuperate at a health resort.<sup>2</sup> But, even in poor health, he still kept in touch with the party leaders and, by correspondence, helped plan strategy for a by-election in which J. C. Morrison, a newly appointed minister, sought election. The following extracts from a letter written to Brown would indicate that the struggle against the ministry was unceasing:

I received yours this morning to the effect that Gowan has no chance in Grey — that Purdy is the only man that can defeat Morrison and that he needs help from the party to enable him to do it — I have just received one from Gowan in answer to one I wrote him strongly advising his taking whatever course would secure Morrison's defeat.

.....  
I learn that he [Gowan] is going to get the almost undivided support of the Orange body - but the accounts are so conflicting about his and Purdy's chances that I have determined to take a run up to the Sound tomorrow and see for myself.<sup>3</sup>

Brown's assessment of the situation in Grey County was correct.

Purdy did defeat Morrison, winning the seat for the Liberals and making

<sup>1</sup>Careless, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>P.A.C., George Brown Papers, V.4, p. 581, Boulton to Brown, Feb. 13, 1861.

it possible for them to accuse Macdonald of unconstitutional procedure in maintaining a seatless minister in the executive.<sup>1</sup>

Macdonald's speaking tour, referred to earlier, was an unusual campaign practice as far as the Conservatives were concerned. Speaking tours "they had previously regarded as rather low and Liberal, if not downright radical and republican."<sup>2</sup> The Tory leader's itinerary took him first to Brantford on Friday, November 9, followed by dinners and addresses at St. Thomas, London, and Guelph, the very heart of Gritland. That done, Macdonald then ventured into Toronto, Brown's riding.<sup>3</sup>

As co-premier, Macdonald did not have to speculate as to the date of the election. As early as May 24, he was able to divulge it to Ryerson. "The elections will come off in June, so no time is to be lost in rousing the Wesleyan in our favour."<sup>4</sup> By the end of May he was already fighting the election that was not yet proclaimed. "Get your voter's list ready as soon as possible and begin your canvass," he wrote to a supporter. "Act as if the polling was to come next week. Keep all this dark."<sup>5</sup> On the first day of June he was more explicit:

For your private information I desire to inform you that the Writs for the General Election will be issued on the 10th instant and returnable on the 14th July. I need not say that

<sup>1</sup>See Chapter IV, "Issues".

<sup>2</sup>Dale C. Thomson, Alexander Mackenzie, Clear Grit, (Toronto, 1960), p. 32

<sup>3</sup>Creighton, op. cit., p. 305-6.

<sup>4</sup>P.A.C., Ryerson Papers, M.G.24, K.15, Macdonald to Ryerson, May 27, 1861.

<sup>5</sup>P.A.C., Amsden Papers, M.G.24, B.65, Macdonald to Samuel Amsden, May 31, 1861.

this early intimation is to be acted on, but not mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

The newspapers, of course, were constantly campaigning. According to Macdonald's count there were 134 of them in Upper Canada in this period. Macdonald had prepared detailed lists of them, naming the county in which each was published, giving the name of the sitting member in the ridings, and indicating the political affiliation of each publication. He counted sixty-one ministerial papers and sixty-two that supported the opposition. There were ten independent papers and one French language journal whose affiliation was not given.<sup>2</sup>

There was some doubt as to the independence of the "independent" papers. An editorial in the Hamilton Times refers to a newly founded newspaper named The Wentworth Times, originally independent but now ministerial. The editorial claims that it was just an old ministerial trick to give the impression of "gaining converts." "Have we not already shown that your 'no party', 'independent', 'neutral', politicians always leaned against those who had pence and patronage to dispense?"<sup>3</sup>

Macdonald's list was not very complete. Neither of the above-mentioned publications is included. Of course, a complete list was rather impossible when newspapers appeared with such ease and frequency. For example, The Press, a tri-weekly, founded in Kingston to support Oliver Mowat, Macdonald's opponent in the election, is not in the list having been founded too late to appear in it.<sup>4</sup> Kingston, by the way,

<sup>1</sup>Idem, Macdonald to Amsden, June 1, 1861.

<sup>2</sup>John A. Macdonald Papers, V. 298, p.136552.

<sup>3</sup>P.A.O., Hamilton Times, May 30, 1861.

<sup>4</sup>Globe, June 4 and 11, 1861.

had four newspapers placed in Macdonald's list. London had three, Toronto and Ottawa had six each. There were two German papers in the list, both in Waterloo North, and both Liberal.

Compared to those of a century later, the newspapers of 1861 were relatively simple and inexpensive to publish. Most of the editions were four-page efforts, done on a single sheet the size of a table top. This, folded down, provided four pages. The first page contained advertising occupying well over half the space. There were usually two or three columns along the right side given to reporting of foreign news or proceedings in the Legislative Assembly if it were in session. Page two featured editorial comment plus local news. The third page contained more foreign news, together with a considerable area of advertising. Advertising also occupied the last page. In that page the arrivals and departures of ocean vessels were announced; there also the professional people and craftsmen advertised their services, the merchants their goods, the hawksters their patent medicines or trinkets, the institutions their meetings and other functions. The publications were quite dull in appearance. There were no photographs, no large headlines, and whatever illustrations appeared were very small pen and ink designs, reinforcing ads such as those vending cephalic pills or the ubiquitous sarsaparilla.

The news reported ranged from the trivial to the catastrophic. The readers were informed that at Queen's, students fired two Russian guns in the park "after having passed their examinations for degrees."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Globe, April 26, 1861.

Near Hamilton a little girl fell off a rock sixty feet high while watching a balloon ascent by a Professor Lowe.<sup>1</sup> In Haldimand, oil was discovered<sup>2</sup> and, somewhat earlier, Montreal was inconvenienced by a flood, the "Great Inundation" producing the spectacle of "boats navigating St. Paul Street."<sup>3</sup> In the west the Red River, not to be outdone by the St. Lawrence, also spread over its banks.<sup>4</sup> Of considerable interest was the appearance of a comet, the second in three years.<sup>5</sup> It was reported as early as June 30 and was still visible July 13,<sup>6</sup> showing "a little north of the upper star in Ursa Major."<sup>7</sup>

Amongst the more serious news was a murder trial. The victim was a member of the Legislative Assembly. He was robbed in Toronto and his body was flung into a creek.<sup>8</sup> It was his decease that necessitated the Grey County by-election in which Purdy defeated Morrison. Of great interest, also, was the wreck of the S.S. Canadian due to ice off Belle Isle, with the loss of nine of its 181 occupants.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>P.A.O., Hamilton Times, May 30, 1861.

<sup>2</sup>P.A.O., London Free Press, June 11, 1861.

<sup>3</sup>P.A.C., Montreal Witness, April 17, 1861.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., June 15, 1861.

<sup>5</sup>P.A.O., Sarnia Observer, July 12, 1861.

<sup>6</sup>Globe, June 30 and July 13, 1861.

<sup>7</sup>P.A.O., Gunn Diary, July 9, 1861.

<sup>8</sup>Sarnia Observer, August 2, 1861.

<sup>9</sup>Hamilton Times, June 17, 1861.

There was of course great preoccupation with the American Civil War. The action at Sumpter, Harper's Ferry, and on the Potomac was covered in much detail.<sup>1</sup> The reaction of some Canadian citizens was given space as witness the following: "Some of the young men of Galt have gone to fight Jefferson Davies <sup>[sic]</sup> and his Friends."<sup>2</sup> There was considerable attention given to the death of Count Cavour of Italy. Some papers merely reported the statesman's death objectively,<sup>3</sup> others extolled his achievements,<sup>4</sup> and some actually appeared to rejoice in the man's death.<sup>5</sup>

The newspapers thrived on politics. When parliament was in session they published detailed accounts of proceedings. At all times, be it before, during, or after elections, they were actively campaigning. As early as March 22 the Chatham Planet,<sup>Δ</sup> tri-weekly ministerial paper in the County of Kent, warned a certain Mr. Dougall not to oppose Sir Allan MacNab who was certain to get elected "by over 100 votes."<sup>6</sup> The warning must have been heeded for there is no record of the gentleman opposing the knight that year. Nor is there record of MacNab standing for election.

The strongest press ally that the Conservatives had was the Daily Leader. It liked to deal with the "disloyalty" charge against the

<sup>1</sup>Globe, May 15, 1861.

<sup>2</sup>Globe, May 13, 1861.

<sup>3</sup>Sarnia Observer, August 2, 1861.

<sup>4</sup>Hamilton Times, June 17, 1861.

<sup>5</sup>P.A.O., True Witness and Catholic Chronicle, July 12, 1861.

<sup>6</sup>P.A.C., Chatham Planet, March 22, 1861.

Liberals, a charge about which more will be said in a future chapter.<sup>1</sup> It also liked to point out that the opposition groups were completely disunited, and accused them of being "reduced to demoralization", of having no cohesion or recognized leader, of lacking principles, and of being riddled by desertions.<sup>2</sup> Disunity between the opposition forces of Upper Canada and those of Lower Canada was just as great. "It is not on one question merely that the Rouges and the Grits are on opposite sides", the Leader argued. "On all vital questions, social and political, they take different sides, hold different views, and aim at different ends."<sup>3</sup>

Later in May the Leader was at it again. This time it took pleasure in ridiculing a Liberal nomination meeting. Apparently only six electors and fifteen or sixteen boys were present. The secretary, it turned out, had forgotten to bring pen and ink.<sup>4</sup>

The Toronto Globe was equally active for the opposition party. Speaking of the riding of Toronto East, it wrote, in April, "Mr. Brown can get elected for this constituency without difficulty. Mr. John Crawford and Mr. Manning are mentioned as his opponents."<sup>5</sup> As it turned out, Brown had considerable difficulty in Toronto East and went down to defeat. Many of the Globe announcements were merely hopeful conjectures.

<sup>1</sup>Leader, May 10, 1861.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., May 17, 1861.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., May 22, 1861.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., May 24, 1861.

<sup>5</sup>Globe, April 25, 1861.

In the same issue, it carried the following notices: "Kingston.... John A. Macdonald may retire from politics before the election", and later in the issue, "Hamilton.... It is supposed that Mr. Buchanan will not candidate again". Both of these gentlemen stood for election and both were returned by goodly majorities.<sup>1</sup>

The newspapers were not always wrong in their prognostications. The Globe, for instance, correctly predicted the defeat of Mr. Cayley in Huron and Bruce County.<sup>2</sup> The St. Catharines Journal was quite right when it published the following on May 16: "Our little M.P.P. will come back to us O.K., and will probably be sent back, as he has been a pretty good boy, and redeemed his promises."<sup>3</sup> The Journal was equally correct on May 16 in its prediction concerning another candidate. "We have little, if any, confidence in Mr. Rykert, but we feel persuaded (sic) that there is not a man in Lincoln that can defeat him."<sup>4</sup>

At times, instead of making bold predictions, the papers came forth with some fairly sound advice, such as the following: ".... it is useless for us to say more than merely to urge Reformers to sign no documents or give pledges to anyone."<sup>5</sup> Even more pertinent to the occasion was the following: "We cannot afford division. We must have no divi-

<sup>1</sup>All statistical detail regarding election results is taken from the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada. See Photostats in appendix.

<sup>2</sup>Globe, May 31, 1861.

<sup>3</sup>St. Catharines Journal, May 16, 1861.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., June 15, 1861.

<sup>5</sup>P.A.O., The Newmarket Era, May 31, 1861.



in our ranks - no secession from the Reform standard. Come what will, by one candidate we must stand or fall."<sup>1</sup>

Thus even before the old parliament was dissolved, and in some cases even before the commencement of its last session, the two parties were busy with their conventions, their speaking tours, their nomination meetings and their private correspondence, both planning and actually fighting the battle for the control of the new parliament. Some of the more general practices and regulations that accompanied the campaign and the election itself will be treated in the next chapter.

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<sup>1</sup>Globe, May 20, 1861. Quoted from Elora Observer.

CHAPTER III  
CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION PRACTICES

The first tangible evidence of candidature for election was usually the appearance in a number of newspapers of a "requisition" asking a designated person to stand for election. The requisition would extoll the person's virtues and list his accomplishments. It would end with long columns of names of persons endorsing or making the requisition. John A. Macdonald's requisition contained 150 names, including those of nine aldermen and four councillors.<sup>1</sup> Name lists supporting a requisition were not always to be relied upon. The requisition of candidate McConkey in South Simcoe was bolstered by some 900 names<sup>2</sup> but in the actual election he polled only 750 votes. It would appear that some of the names were fictitious or that their owners had changed their minds during the campaign or else were not consulted when the list was drawn up.

The requisition procedure was not always followed. In North York, for example, a certain N. Y. Beachall declared on nomination day that he had no idea of becoming a candidate till he arrived at the place of nominations.<sup>3</sup>

The appearance of a requisition was followed by the candidate publishing an address of acceptance. This was done in the form of a notice

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<sup>1</sup>Queen's University Library, The British Whig, June 11, 1861.

<sup>2</sup>P.A.O., The Northern Advance, June 5, 1861.

<sup>3</sup>Newmarket Era, July 5, 1861.

to the electors of the riding as can be seen from the reproduction of such an address on page twenty-two.<sup>1</sup> With an attempt at modesty and some indication of reluctance the politician announced acceptance of the call to serve and went on to outline his views on the various issues of the day.

Dates of official nomination days varied from riding to riding. Some came as early as June 21<sup>2</sup> and others as late as July 2.<sup>3</sup> It was permissible for a candidate to stand for election in more than one riding and a number did so. Oliver Mowat, for instance, campaigned in both Ontario South and Kingston. Since the selection of nomination and election dates was determined by the ministry, its candidates enjoyed an advantage here. Thus the following complaint in the Globe: "With their usual meanness the ministry had fixed the same day for the nominations in Kingston and Ontario South."<sup>4</sup> Although he was nominated in both constituencies, it was impossible for Mowat to be present and make addresses at both nomination gatherings.

Nomination activities were usually held outdoors and were attended by large numbers of people as each candidate tried to have as many supporters as possible present on the occasion. At the Welland nominations there were 1400 people attending, over fifty percent as many as were listed for voting purposes.<sup>5</sup> After each nominee had delivered his

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<sup>1</sup>The print from which the reproduction was obtained can be found in the Public Archives of Canada.

<sup>2</sup>Hamilton Times, June 21, 1861.

<sup>3</sup>Leader, June 27, 1861.

<sup>4</sup>Globe, June 24, 1861.

<sup>5</sup>Leader, June 29, 1861.