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The Annexationist Movement in British Columbia

by

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Presented by JUDGE F. W. HOWAY, F.R.S.C.

(Read May Meeting, 1927.)

The annexationist movement in British Columbia can be traced to the influx of American citizens during the gold rush to Fraser River in the spring and early summer of 1858. It seemed as if California were being transplanted bodily to the British colonies on the north west coast. Between the months of April and August from twenty-five to thirty thousand persons left San Francisco for the new El Dorado of the north. Victoria, rudely awakened, was transformed from a peaceful and lethargic British village, clustered around the trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company, to a city of tents filled with Californians eager to follow the elusive "pay streak" along the sand bars of the turbid Fraser.

It was indeed a motley throng which came north from California. Although Judge Begbie, who upheld British justice among the gold seekers on the Fraser, has recorded that "the lives of some of them would not be worth an hour's purchase in any street in San Francisco," the majority was composed of law-abiding citizens, intent upon making their fortunes in the new gold diggings. Many of these Americans remained in Victoria and became the merchants, bankers, professional men, newspaper editors and hotel keepers of that city, imparting a distinctly American tinge to that ultra-British community.

The gold seekers on the Fraser brought with them from California admiration for American institutions and also a tradition of "direct action." In July 1858 a miners' meeting in Yale took upon itself to legislate against the sale of liquor in that vicinity and appointed a committee to see that the resolutions of the meeting were carried into effect. Governor Douglas, however, took charge of the situation, visited the diggings, appointed magistrates, and even commissioned a court to try a certain William King upon a charge of manslaughter. The governor was actually exceeding his powers in the case of William King, since no legal government was as yet established upon the mainland. Nevertheless his action had a tonic effect upon the American gold seekers. It showed clearly that the representative of Queen

Victoria, even though his authority did not then extend to the mainland, was determined to carry on government in the Queen's name. James Douglas did not intend that the incoming Americans should establish *de facto* sovereignty in British Columbia as they had in Oregon and California. The Imperial Government soon intervened, created the Crown Colony of British Columbia and appointed Douglas as governor.

The feuds of California were brought north to the diggings of the Fraser. Judge Howay has proved in his "Early History of the Fraser River Mines" that the so-called "Ned McGowan War" was merely a recrudescence on British territory of the strife between the "Vigilantes" and the "Law and Order" party of San Francisco. Ned McGowan belonged to the latter group, which had obtained control of Hill's Bar, one of the richest diggings on the Fraser. Yale was in the hands of the "Vigilantes." The trouble which occurred during the winter of 1858-59 is to be traced directly to animosities engendered during the stirring days of '56 in California.

The gold rush to the Fraser was, however, a prelude to greater discoveries in Cariboo. From the beginning the express companies, American for the most part, brought down the precious "dust" from the mines to the assay office at New Westminster, or shipped it directly to the mint at San Francisco. For a time the government maintained a gold escort which strove unsuccessfully to compete with the express companies. Although nearly all nations of the earth were represented on the creeks of Cariboo, the Americans were in the majority. During the enforced idleness of the winter months many miners left the diggings and hastened to spend their earnings in Victoria or San Francisco.

California was, thus, the natural outlet for British Columbia. There were regular sailings from Victoria to San Francisco. With few exceptions—the most notable being the "Argonauts of 1862" who came to Cariboo overland from Canada—the men of the pan and the placer, whatever the country of their origin, had called in at the Golden Gate on their way to the British Columbia diggings. For years letters sent from the post offices in Victoria and New Westminster bore United States postage stamps. There was no postal connection between the colonies and the United States, thus letters carried by American vessels or express companies had to be prepaid in cash or to bear United States stamps. Governor Anthony Musgrave in December 1869 when asked by Mr. A. T. Bushby, Postmaster-General, to procure $1,000 worth of United States stamps refused to do so,

remarking that he had "never heard of anything so undignified as importing the stamps of a foreign nation for use in a British Colony".[1] American currency circulated at par, but for years after Confederation the notes of the Bank of Montreal were at a discount in British Columbia. It was not until the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885 that Canadian currency came into common use in the Pacific province.

The national holidays of the United States were regularly observed in Victoria. American flags were freely displayed, and some of the business houses closed in honour of the day. Leading articles dealing with American affairs appeared regularly in the Victoria *British Colonist*. The political situation in the United States was closely followed and quotations from the American newspapers were common. Great Britain was far away and Canada was even more inaccessible. The United States was omnipresent. Washington Territory and Oregon were close at hand and California was only a few days sail. Need one wonder that an annexationist movement took shape in British Columbia?

In addition the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were in economic straits. The net indebtedness of British Columbia in 1866 was over $1,000,000; that of Vancouver Island nearly $300,000. The cost of administration was terrific, approximately $1,000,000 a year for the two governments. At the same time the gold supply of Cariboo, the life blood of the colonies, was decreasing annually. The population of the two colonies was going down each year; in 1866 it was less than ten thousand. By June of that year the exodus from Victoria had reached alarming proportions. The *British Colonist* for June 5 records that the San Francisco steamer was taking away fourteen or fifteen families, a staggering loss to the weakened colony. At the same time taxation was grievously heavy. Imports greatly exceeded exports. There was practically no industry except coal mining upon Vancouver Island. The mainland was dependent upon gold mining, which, in spite of the excitements in the Kootenay, the Big Bend, and Omineca, was rapidly declining. Lumbering had scarcely commenced. Agriculture and fishing were in their infancy.

The British Government in 1866 passed legislation uniting the two

[1]Original letter in the Archives of British Columbia. According to Mr. Stanley Deaville of Victoria, B.C., who is making a special study of the postal history of British Columbia, letters were sent from Victoria to San Francisco at the following tariff: Colonial rate, 3d., American rate, in U.S. stamps, 3 cents, express charge, 7 cents.

colonies. But the forced union did not bring relief. The governorship of Vancouver Island was abolished. Governor Seymour of British Columbia, who was placed in charge of the united colony, was not the type of man to initiate necessary economies in administration. The colony was still taxed to support a host of unnecessary officials whom the weak, but well intentioned governor would not dismiss. Vancouver Island by the terms of the union lost her legislature and her free port, was forced to accept the British Columbian tariff, and, in a word, her identity was merged with that of British Columbia. For a time New Westminster was the capital of the united colony, and it was only after the most strenuous efforts on Victoria's part that the seat of government was transferred in 1866 to the island city. The condition of Vancouver Island under the union was well summed up in the following passage taken from a leading article in the *British Colonist* for March 14, 1867:

"Politically we are tied hand and foot; deprived of an adequate representation, we are the laughing-stock of our neighbours, and the object of contempt of our own countrymen. We have scarcely a voice in our own affairs, and what little we have has been powerless to prevent the voting of a sum of money for the expense of a Government utterly beyond our power to pay."

One is not surprised that under such conditions an annexation party grew up in Victoria. Any relief from the burden of taxation would be welcome, even if it involved breaking the British connection. American influence was very powerful. Under the Stars and Stripes, the annexationists argued, Victoria could regain her lost assembly, obtain free commercial intercourse with the Pacific states and territories, and, greatest boon of all, secure railway communication through the Puget Sound ports with the eastern states. As one poetaster phrased it:

"You want the mail,
You want the rail,
You want the cars to hie on.
Come join us and we'll thread your land
With passage ways of iron."

During the years from 1866 to 1871 the political situation in Victoria was complex. Confederation was supported by a minority of Canadians and Nova Scotians headed by Amor De Cosmos. De Cosmos, who had come up with the Californians in 1858, had chiefly distinguished himself by his opposition to Governor Douglas and by

his advocacy of the union of the colonies. But this group alienated the older British settlers by their importunities and by their demands for responsible government. The men of the old régime, including the government officials, opposed both responsible government and Confederation. Some of the recently arrived settlers from Great Britain favoured union with Canada but objected to responsible government. The annexation group was made up of Americans and of those British subjects who despaired of the continuation of the British connection.

The attitude of the "Little Englanders" in the Mother Country assisted the annexationists. The "period of pessimism" was not yet over, and in the House of Commons and elsewhere the severance of the North American Colonies from the Empire was openly proclaimed to be inevitable. Many Englishmen of the period agreed with Lord Granville when he expressed a wish that the British possessions in North America "would propose to be independent and annex themselves" (*sic*). Granville was at the time Secretary of State for the Colonies in Gladstone's first Cabinet and his statements may be considered as representing the views of his chief.[2] The annexationists very naturally made capital out of such statements and were especially cheered by leading articles in the London "Times" and other newspapers opposing the retention of that unprofitable colony, British Columbia.

The annexation question was brought forward by the notorious Banks' Bill introduced into the American House of Representatives by a certain Major Banks on July 2, 1866. This bill provided for the "admission of the States of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada East, and Canada West, and for the organization of the Territories of Selkirk, Saskatchewan and Columbia." The "Territory of Columbia," to be formed out of the colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island, was to be placed on the same footing as regards representation as Montana. But the Banks' Bill failed to pass and, as has already been recorded, the colonies were united by the fiat of the British Government in November 1866. The Banks' Bill caused some stir in British Columbia and seems to have obtained a little support, but at heart the colony was loyal.

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[2]On this subject *cf.* Lord Newton, *Life of Lord Lyons,* I. 292.; Lord Fitzmaurice, *Life of Lord Granville,* II. 22.; Morley, *Life of Gladstone,* I. 535.; and Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism,* 47. The above quotation is from a letter of Granville to Lyons dated July 1, 1870. The next sentence is even more enlightening: "We cannot throw them off and it is very desirable that we should part as friends."

The Fenian troubles of 1866, culminating in the invasion of Canada and the skirmish at the Ridgeway, found their echo in far-off British Columbia. The Fenian Brotherhood in California had enrolled between forty and fifty thousand members, and an invasion of a few thousand armed Fenians might possibly have resulted in the capture of the colonies. New Westminster took alarm, a new volunteer corps was formed, many ex-Royal Engineers offered their services and soon the mainland capital was guarded by one hundred and eighty of its determined citizens. A British warship cruised around in the waters of the Fraser. Victoria was better defended. The Royal Naval Establishment at Esquimalt had been created the previous year.[3] But the Fenians did not come and the colonists were little the worse for the scare. The defenceless state of the mainland colony had been demonstrated, a fact not liable to be overlooked either by annexationists or confederationists.

In April 1867 the good people of British Columbia were thunderstruck to read in a New York dispatch that negotiations were pending between the United States and Great Britain for the cession of British Columbia, or at least a portion of the colony, to the American Republic as settlement of the Alabama Claims. The dispatch did not contain reliable information and was not a statement of fact. But for a time it was not contradicted and it was taken at its face value in British Columbia.

The excitement was tremendous. John Robson, the able and patriotic editor of the New Westminster *British Columbian,* bitterly attacked the suggested cession, but several of the Victoria papers supported the proposal. *The News,* the leading annexationist organ in that city, after a spirited attack upon the government of the colony, enquired: "Is it any wonder then, in view of such a state of affairs, that the people generally would hail with satisfaction, if not loud demonstrations of joy, such a change as that which would be wrought by a transference from the dominion of Great Britain to that of the United States?" It is not suggested that these views were entertained by many or that the number of their supporters was increased by such articles, but the fact that such statements were printed in the public press and were discussed by prominent men is disconcerting and engenders a fear that the propaganda might eventually be successful. The staid and sober

[3]Major F. V. Longstaff, The Beginning of the Pacific Naval Station and the Esquimalt Royal Naval Establishment in Third Annual Report of the British Columbia Historical Association, Victoria, B.C., 1926, p. 40.

British Colonist which had recently been attacking Leonard McClure as a "traitor," a "Fenian," and a "political Beelzebub" for daring even to discuss the supposed advantages of annexation, now described the colonists as "casting their eyes across the imaginary line that divides them from their Anglo-Saxon brethren, and longing for a closer connection with the children of a Government that does so much to foster and encourage the growth of every section of its vast domain." In justice to the *Colonist* it should be added that when he knew that the dispatch was "bogus" the editor of that paper denounced annexation and proceeded to attack the *News*.

The Nanaimo *Tribune* joined in the annexationist chorus, and represented the British connection as a "fast sinking ship" and the United States as a "gallant new craft, good and strong, close alongside, inviting us to safety and success." Upon all these editors John Robson poured the vials of his wrath. He claimed that the majority of the inhabitants of Victoria and Nanaimo was not in favour of annexation, and that the movement was supported by speculators and political demagogues who would stick at nothing.

But the *News* continued its campaign, advocating the calling of a public meeting to discuss the question and urging a petition for annexation. A petition was prepared and circulated in Victoria, but it obtained very few signatures. It was addressed to Her Majesty's Government, and ran, in part, as follows:

"Either to relieve us immediately of the expense of an excessive staff of officials, assist the establishment of a British line of steamers to Panama so that emigrants from England may reach us, and also assume the debts of the colony, or that Your Majesty will graciously permit the colony to become a portion of the United States. That every feeling of loyalty and cherished sentiments of our hearts prompt us to cling to our present connection with the mother country, and to count as our best inheritance our birthright as Britons; but that all our commercial and business relations are so intimate with the neighbouring American population that we see no other feasible help out of our present difficulties than by being united with them, unless Your Majesty's government will help us as aforesaid."

The subsequent fate of the petition is none too clear. The *News* soon after suspended publication, and its editor who had been the prime mover in the preparation of the petition withdrew to the United States. But the United States Senate apparently obtained a copy of the petition, since its Committee on Pacific Railways quoted from that docu-

ment when making its report in 1869. The committee argued in favour of the construction of a North Pacific railroad on the grounds that it would "seal the destiny of the British possessions west of the 91st meridian."

In 1868 the question of Confederation with Canada was freely debated in British Columbia. The people of the mainland favoured union with the new Dominion, but in Victoria there was strong opposition to the scheme. Governor Frederick Seymour exerted his influence in favour of the anti-Confederationists, and endeavoured in his dispatches to the Colonial Office to belittle the work of the Yale Convention, which in September of that year endorsed Confederation. The government officials in Victoria rallied to the assistance of the governor and were joined by the influential members of the ultra-British group.

At this time the Legislative Council of the united colony was partly elected and partly composed of government officials and magistrates. An election for "popular" members representing Victoria and its vicinity was to be held in November 1868. This gave the governor and his party a chance to overthrow Amor De Cosmos and his supporters. By a proclamation issued on the 17th of October, Andrew Charles Elliott, J.P., High Sheriff of British Columbia, altered the franchise in District Numbers I and 2, embracing Victoria City, Esquimalt, and the suburban districts. Hitherto the voters had been British subjects who possessed a certain property qualification. Now the franchise was thrown open to all residents with the exception of Indians and Chinese. There was no registration; no oaths were administered at the polls. The result was a victory for the government and the anti-Confederationists. The *British Colonist* thus describes the elections, which were held on November 3rd for Victoria City and Esquimalt, and on November 11th for the suburban districts:

"There was a perfect Babel of languages and a world of prejudice called to the polls to dictate to Englishmen how to rule their own country. Among all the aliens, with rare exceptions, the cry was 'No Confederation with Canada,' 'Give us Annexation to the States,' 'We'll never have Annexation if Confederation takes place.' The selection really turned on 'Annexation,' and that makes it the more discreditable to the Government and Governor Seymour. What makes it more censurable is the fact that it is well known that the foreign population are annexationists. But to cap the climax, all the officials voted with the annexationists."

The Legislative Council, under the guidance of Governor Sey-

mour, declared against Confederation, and until the timely death of the governor in June 1869 nothing more could be done officially to secure union with Canada. But events were moving towards Confederation. The Dominion of Canada in 1869 annexed the Hudson's Bay Territories and Sir John A. Macdonald was instrumental in having Anthony Musgrave appointed as successor to Frederick Seymour, Musgrave was in favour of Confederation. A passage from one of Sir John A. Macdonald's letters is illuminating.[4]

"Now that the Hudson's Bay Company has succumbed and it is their interest to make things pleasant with the Canadian Government, they will, I have no doubt, instruct their people to change their anti-Confederate tone. We shall then have to fight only the Yankee adventurers and the annexation party proper, which there will be no difficulty if we have a good man at the helm.

"It has been hinted to me that Mr. Musgrave, whose time is out in Newfoundland, would have no objection to transfer his labours to British Columbia. Such an appointment would be very agreeable to the members of your Government, and to the country generally. Mr. Musgrave has acted with great prudence, discretion and loyalty to the cause of Confederation. He has made himself personally very popular in Newfoundland, and I have no doubt would do so on the Pacific as well, if he had the chance. Almost everything, I may say, depends upon the choice of the Governor, as we found to our cost in New Brunswick where we were thwarted and for a time defeated by the Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Gordon, Lord Aberdeen's son, who took strong grounds at first against us. All his subsequent endeavours on the other side, after receiving instructions from the Colonial Office, were fruitless, as his private opinion was known to every one; hence the necessity of his removal to Trinidad, and the substitution of General Doyle."

Annexation, however, was scotched but not yet killed in British Columbia. It was entering upon its last phase. In the autumn of 1869 a second petition was circulated in Victoria. Once again there were a few signatures, forty to fifty at most, of whom only five were British subjects either by birth or naturalization. This petition was addressed to the President of the United States, requesting him to take steps to "acquire" British Columbia. A certain General Ihrie was entrusted with a copy of the petition. The *British Colonist,* which was not actively championing Confederation, waxed sarcastic and suggested

[4]Sir Joseph Pope, *Life of Sir John A. Macdonald,* II. 143, 144.

that the loyal inhabitants of Victoria prepare a counter petition to Queen Victoria "praying Her Majesty to annex all "the American territory north of Columbia River—our natural boundary."[5] But the annexation petition in due time reached Washington, D.C., and was formally presented to President Grant by a certain Vincent Collyer. Collyer assured the President that this petition was to be followed by another which was "to contain the names of all the British merchants and others at Victoria and Nanaimo and other places in favour of the transfer of British Columbia to the United States."[6]

Early in 1870 the annexation issue was freely debated in Victoria. It was once more rumoured that Great Britain was considering the cession of British Columbia as a settlement of the Alabama Claims. The New York *World* reported that the British Government proposed to transfer to the United States "all that territory lying west of Lake Superior, including British Columbia and all her possessions on the Pacific Coast in consideration of our paying a large sum of money therefrom."[7] Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken, one of the most influential men in the colony, supported annexation. J. Despard Pemberton, ex-Colonial Surveyor of Vancouver Island, wrote three letters to the *British Colonist* in which he discussed separation from the Mother Country.[8]

Pemberton's letters are important as setting forth the views of some of the ultra-British party. They show clearly the effects of the teachings of the Manchester School. The ex-Colonial Surveyor is a true born Briton, he would like to preserve the British connection if it were to the mutual advantage of both Great Britain and British Columbia. But the colony, owing to its remoteness and peculiar geographical position, "is a source of weakness and not of strength to England, commercially unprofitable in peace and undefendable in war." British Ministers of State and Members of Parliament have announced that Britain is desirous of parting with some of her more distant and unprofitable colonies. Therefore, Pemberton argues, it is the patriotic duty of British Columbia to assist the over-burdened British taxpayer by casting herself from the Mother Country.

To Pemberton there is practically no difference between British

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[5]*British Colonist*, November 13, 1869.
[6]*Ibid*, January 13, 1870.
[7]*Ibid*, January 5, 1870.
[8]*Ibid*, January 26, January 29, February 1, 1870.

and American institutions; he has been "educated in the belief that national distinctions are but relics of barbarism." The only dissimilarity to him between Canada and the United States is this: "Canada is an English colony which has obtained its independence by peaceful means, and the States an English colony which has obtained its independence by war forced upon it by tyranny and injustice." Canada, he considers, is too far away, and the railway project is impossible on account of cost. Great Britain will not undertake the financing of a railway across the wilderness, and Canada is too poor to attempt it alone. Without the railways British Columbia "might as well for all practical purposes be confederated with the Pyramids of Egypt."

Even if the colony did federate with Canada, the Dominion would be unable to undertake to defend her Pacific province. In case of war with the United States an American army of 30,000 from San Francisco could be landed three weeks after war was declared. "Would you expect a Canadian Hannibal to lead an army across the mountains to our rescue?", Pemberton sarcastically adds.

Arguments for annexation are not definitely stated in these letters, but may be inferred from their general tenor. An American transcontinental railroad already exists, another is being planned which will give access to Victoria through the Puget Sound ports. He argues that Great Britain has held the colony at a loss for twenty years, that Canada cannot afford to build a railway, that the colony must be annexed to the United States. The *Colonist* complains against American steamboat service against American customs officials and against American miners who take their gold, won from the mines of British Columbia, back to San Francisco. At the same time British Columbia desired Reciprocity with the United States. Surely, Pemberton claims, these constitute arguments for annexation.

But the ex-Colonial Surveyor's trump card was a quotation from the London "Times" to the effect that if the people of British Columbia after due reflection rejected Confederation as impracticable and desired to join the United States the Mother Country would in no way seek to prevent annexation. This statement by the "Times" caused a furore in Victoria. The *British Colonist* devoted two leading articles to the subject attempting to prove that the great London daily did not really voice the sentiments of the British people. But even the *Colonist* had to admit that annexation was rampant in the community. "It no longer lurks in secret places; or shuns publicity; but with firm step, erect mien, and almost defiant air, it walks our streets at noonday. It is to be

seen in the counting-house and the hotel, and may not unlikely strut its hour upon the public platform."[9]

The annexationists were further heartened by the arrival of news early in February 1870 that the United States Senate had on January 10 considered the admission of British Columbia to the Union. Senator Corbett had introduced a resolution favouring annexation on the grounds that a large number of American citizens who were residents of British Columbia desired it. A petition signed by only forty out of a population of say three thousand inhabitants of Victoria was presented to the Senate.[10] This was, apparently, the same petition that Vincent Collyer had delivered to President Grant. The Senate referred the matter to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

But the annexation movement had now run its course. In the controversy provoked by Pemberton's letters and especially by the "Times" leading article the Confederationists headed by Dr. I. W. Powell and Robert Beaven had the better of the argument. Even more important the Legislative Council under the pressure and guidance of Musgrave in March discussed and settled tentative terms of union with Canada. Governor Musgrave had done his work well. Sir John A. Macdonald had not been mistaken in his man. Even Pemberton in his last letter to the *Colonist* written as early as the first of February had stated that the colony "was drifting steadily into unconditional Confederation" and had proposed terms equitable to British Columbia. If Canada were not disposed to accept just and reasonable terms then annexation was possible, Dr. Helmcken in the Confederation Debate prophesied the ultimate annexation of the Dominion of Canada to the United States, but finally accepted Confederation and served on the committee which journeyed to Ottawa to arrange the final terms. British Columbia had made its decision.

The annexation movement in British Columbia had failed. It would have been difficult for it to have succeeded in view of the strong support which the mainland gave to Confederation. But while it lasted it was not entirely negligible. In the first place it was indicative of the American background in British Columbian life. For as has been shown many of the inhabitants of the colony were of American birth, and British Columbia was bound by geographic and economic

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[9] *British Colonist*, January 28, 1870.

[10] *The Canada Year Book*, 1926 ed. p. 119, gives the population of Victoria in 1871 as 3270.

ties to the Pacific states especially California. Americans were more popular than Canadians who were frequently termed "North American Chinamen" on account of their supposed propensity of sending their earnings home to the land of their birth. Then, too, all rapid communication with the outside world was through American territory or by American ships. Until a railway could be built across three thousand miles of wilderness direct intercourse with Canada was utterly impossible.

The annexationists gained strength from the attitude of the governing class of Confederation. Governor Seymour definitely played into their hands when he enlarged the franchise in Victoria in 1868. The men of the old régime did not want union with Canada and some of them were ready to accept annexation. In fact the whole movement gained influence from the prominence of its advocates rather than from the numbers of its supporters. The teachings of the Manchester School and the speeches of public men in Great Britain against the retention of colonies also did much to convert members of the ultra-British party to the inevitability of separation from the Mother Country. If the painter were cut poor little British Columbia would be storm tossed until it reached a safe American harbour.

But the annexation movement could not succeed unless it could convert the people of the mainland. This it could not do. The leading men of the mainland were either from the eastern British North American Provinces or from the British Isles. They would never accept separation from the Empire. Even on Vancouver Island the annexationists were a minority, in fact with a noise out of all proportion to their numbers. Except in the election of 1868 when they were allied with the government faction they never controlled the political situation in Victoria or elsewhere.

It would seem that at best the movement was a counsel of despair. Existing economic conditions were unbearable, Britain could not or would not help. British Columbia was an unprofitable colony and the men of Manchester were opposed to colonial possessions that did not pay. Confederation was a dream which only the construction of a railway could turn into a reality. Annexation appeared to them the only solution. The leaders of the Confederation party in British Columbia and the Canadian Ministers of State in Ottawa were men of vision. They saw the possibility of uniting East and West. British Columbia needed Canada. Canada could not reach the Pacific unless British Columbia entered federation. The builders of the Canadian

Pacific Railway translated the vision of the Fathers of Confederation into fact. At Craigellachie on November 7, 1885, the ghost of the ill-nourished, short-lived annexationist movement in British Columbia was forever laid.