

# “The Industry of the Beaver”: Looking at Canadian Participation at the Intercolonial Exhibition, Sydney, New South Wales, 1877

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*Many nineteenth-century Canadians thought that improved transportation systems would better connect the countries coloured “British red” on the world map. Influenced by this world view, 147 Canadian firms exhibited at the Metropolitan Intercolonial Exhibition that opened in April 1877 in Sydney, New South Wales. Unfortunately, Australia was more a potential market for nineteenth-century Canadian exporters than a real one. Investigation of the Canadian presence at the Intercolonial Exhibition in 1877 illuminates how one colonial entity reached out to another in an effort to create a new sub-imperial relationship.*

*Pour bon nombre de Canadiens du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'amélioration des systèmes de transport était censée resserrer les liens entre les pays de l'Empire britannique — ceux en rouge sur la carte. Sous l'influence de cette vision du monde, 147 entreprises canadiennes participèrent à l'Exposition métropolitaine intercoloniale inaugurée en avril 1877 à Sydney (Nouvelle-Galles-du-Sud). Malheureusement, l'Australie était plus un marché en puissance qu'un marché réel pour les exportateurs canadiens de l'époque. L'étude de la présence canadienne à cette exposition jette la lumière sur la façon dont une entité coloniale a établi le contact avec une autre afin de nouer de nouvelles relations à une échelle inférieure à celle de l'Empire.*

AUSTRALIA was a place of great expectations in the minds of many nineteenth-century Canadians. The Canadian Throne Speech of 1877 cited new efforts to promote trading links with the Antipodes, and these initiatives became a campaign issue in the election of 1878.<sup>1</sup> Many parliamentarians and journalists thought that improved transportation and communication systems could now better connect the countries coloured “British red” on the world map and unite them in a more

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<sup>1</sup> “Speech from the Throne,” *Debates of the House of Commons*, February 8, 1877, 40 *Victoria*, vol. 3 (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1877), p. 3; *Address of the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie to the Toronto Workingmen on the “National Policy”* (Toronto: Offices of the Globe Newspaper, 1878), p. 24.

mature trading relationship.<sup>2</sup> Influenced by this world view, 147 Canadian firms exhibited at the Metropolitan Intercolonial Exhibition that opened in April 1877 in Sydney, New South Wales.

It is worth investigating why such Canadian companies chose Australia—described as being of “vast interest”—to launch an attempt to build world markets.<sup>3</sup> The Sydney fair proved to be a disappointment. After the relative failure of this early initiative to make trans-Pacific sales, it was necessary for would-be exporters to recast their trade strategies. Some manufacturers and politicians found no contradiction between efforts to strengthen the internal domestic market within the National Policy while exploiting the completed Canadian Pacific line to create linkages within the Pacific world. By the late 1870s, Sir Charles Tupper, then Minister of Railways and Canals, was responding to after dinner toasts in Ottawa that celebrated “the speedy union of the Atlantic and the Pacific.”<sup>4</sup>

In reality, Australia remained more a potential market for nineteenth-century Canadian exporters than a functioning one. As it was impossible to obtain accurate trade figures owing to transshipment of goods through the United States, *The Dominion Illustrated* described the best estimates of goods shipped as “guesswork.”<sup>5</sup> Despite these obstacles, it is evident that attendance at the Sydney fair in 1877 enabled Canadian exporters to act as a group, to evaluate emerging patterns of trade, and to ponder their nation’s future within a global framework. While selling goods to distant markets might seem straightforward, it exposed decision-makers to a wider world where information closely followed trade and involved the participants in a transoceanic conversation beyond the customary domestic sphere.<sup>6</sup> Investigation of the Canadian presence at the Intercolonial Exhibition in 1877 illuminates how one colonial entity reached out to another in an effort to create a new sub-imperial relationship.

### Anything to Export?

While agriculture may have dominated the mind-set in both Australia and Canada, by the latter portion of the nineteenth century Canadian manufacturing was reasonably well established.<sup>7</sup> Marvin McNis of Queen’s University in a recent essay “Just How Industrialized Was the Canadian Economy in 1890?” insisted that by the early 1890s Canada ranked among the most industrialized nations of the world.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to Australia, Canadian manufacturers and would-be

2 Traditionally map-makers coloured British colonies red or pink.

3 The Toronto Board of Trade placed an advertisement in *The Globe* [Toronto] on September 5, 1876, calling for a meeting of “manufacturers and others interested” in the promotion of direct trade between Canada and Australia.

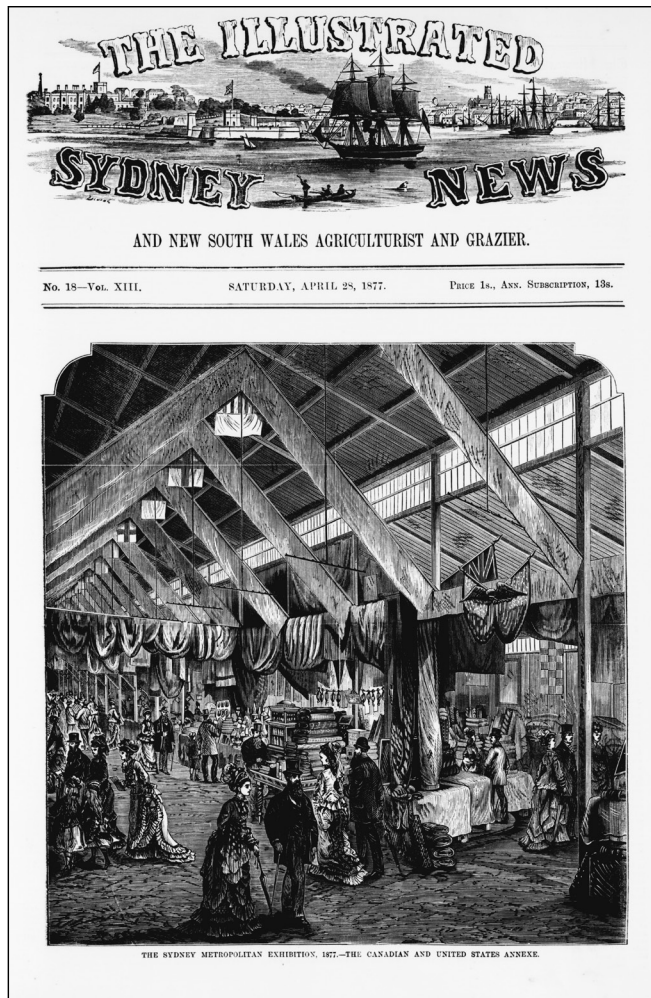
4 E. M. Saunders, *The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Tupper* (London: Cassell, 1916), p. 279.

5 *The Dominion Illustrated*, vol. 3, no. 55 (July 20, 1889), p. 35.

6 The interchange of commodities and intelligence was mooted as earlier as 1849 in a pamphlet by Robert Carmichael-Smyth and entitled *The Employment of the People and the Capital of Great Britain in her own Colonies: at the same time assisting Emigration, Colonization and Penal Arrangements, by Undertaking the Construction of a Great National Railway between the Atlantic and the Pacific from Halifax Harbour, Nova Scotia to Frazer’s River, New Caledonia* (London: W. P. Metchim, 1849), p. 53.

7 Gregory S. Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 3-30.

8 Marvin McNis, “Just How Industrialized Was the Canadian Economy in 1890?” [qed.econ.queensu.ca/](http://qed.econ.queensu.ca/)



**Figure 1:** The Canadian Annexe (1877, April 28), Illustrated Sydney News, p. 1. (Accessed 23 November, 2013). Available from: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article63334288>.

exporters had a well-developed and vocal community in regular contact along the Montreal-Toronto axis and with counterparts in Guelph, Galt and London, Ontario.<sup>9</sup> Many were keen to develop “new outlets” for their products by trading with Australia.<sup>10</sup> The Australian exhibition promoter, Augustus Morris, had no difficulty identifying key business figures to lobby for participation at the Sydney fair. As illustrated by the publication of an Ontario handbook, available at the

faculty/mcinnis/HowIndustrialized.pdf (accessed November 1, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], September 9, 1876; Andrew Dilley, *Finance, Politics, and Imperialism: Australia, Canada and the City of London, 1896-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], August 18, 1876.

1877 fair, Ontario's manufacturers were prepared to function as a collective with the common purpose of expanding their trade.

Canada's and Australia's relationship with the nineteenth-century world was defined by space, geography, and webs of imperial ambition. Life in 1900 was radically different from life in 1800. Much was owed to sweeping innovations in technology that increased human power and speed.<sup>11</sup> The steamboat and the railway had altered daily life, as individuals and goods could cut travel time and costs and achieve more certainty in planning. Sailing ships had greatly improved their time at sea through a better understanding of oceanography and the evolution of stream-lined and heavily canvassed clipper ships.<sup>12</sup> While the transition to the iron and steel cargo steamships was inevitable, sailing vessels were still used for longer voyages as steamships required predictable access to coal bunkering depots.<sup>13</sup> Only after the 1880s, and the adoption of the screw propeller and a subsidized mail run, did steam ships become profitable and begin to carry the majority of emigrants from Britain to Australia.<sup>14</sup> The use of steam vessels reduced travel time from almost three months to less than two months.<sup>15</sup> The steam ship also provided more regularity of service and greater freedom from adverse weather.<sup>16</sup> Cargo was usually shipped from Canada to Australia through New York or Boston, while passengers generally travelled through London and around the Cape of Good Hope. While it took until 1902 to connect Australia and Canada by cable, the struggle for such service had begun in the 1870s and accelerated the global transmission of information that no longer needed physical delivery.<sup>17</sup> Still a growing awareness of a smaller globe, where money could be transferred telegraphically and transatlantic mail had regular schedules, sparked interest in new trade routes and commercial partners.<sup>18</sup> A common British language and heritage, as well as colonial connection, could facilitate business and heighten expectations. Exhibiting at the Sydney fair was a means to test the old barriers to freer trade and shrink the worldwide English-speaking community.

### **The Sydney Exhibition of 1877**

The organization of a significant exhibition attracting international participants was the last in a series of small steps, each reflective of a change in mentality or outlook. The Sydney fair grew out of a general interest in the power of physical display. While the exhibition movement was well developed in both countries,

11 Rebecca Solnit, "The Annihilation of Time and Space," *New England Review*, vol. 24, no. 1 (Winter 2003), pp. 5-19.

12 John Bach, *A Maritime History of Australia* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1976), pp. 95-96.

13 Gerald S. Graham, "The Ascendancy of Sailing Ships, 1850-1885," *Economic History Review*, vol. 9 (1956), pp. 74-78, 81-82.

14 "The Journey by Steam," <http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/websites-mini/journeys-australia/1850s70s/the-journey-by-steam/> (accessed October 7, 2013).

15 Ralph Shlomowitz and John McDonald, "Babies at Risk on Immigrant Voyages to Australia in the Nineteenth Century," *Economic History Review*, vol. 44, no. 1 (1991), pp. 86, 90.

16 Bach, *A Maritime History of Australia*, p. 141.

17 Robert W. D. Boyce, "Imperial Dreams and National Realities: Britain, Canada and the Struggle for a Pacific Telegraph Cable, 1879-1902," *English Historical Review*, vol. 115, no. 460 (February 2000), p. 40.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 2.



**Figure 2:** Exhibition Building, Metropolitan Intercolonial Exhibition, Prince Alfred Park, Sydney, September, 1870. Contributed by the City of Sydney Archives, [026026164] (Accessed 24 November, 2013). Available from: <http://dictionaryofsydney.org/image/47839>.

the Australian colonies seemed to demonstrate a particularly deep-seated passion for this form of cultural and commercial expression.<sup>19</sup> From an early start experimenting with small displays and shows in Mechanics' Institutes, the cities of Sydney and Melbourne each organized a series of well-attended intercolonial exhibitions. These were still local fairs with the emphasis on livestock displays.<sup>20</sup> This considerable activity culminated in upgrading both the Sydney and Melbourne venues into international shows: the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879 and the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880. Sir Redmond Barry, chairman of the fair commissioners for the Melbourne fair of 1875, underlined the importance of exhibitions from a uniquely Australian vantage point, emphasizing the need for residents of the Antipodes to act in unity or, as Barry stated, "to concentrate the united efforts of our fellow-colonists with ours, so as to impart to them the characteristics of a national movement."<sup>21</sup> While the Australian colonies were engaged in this domestic expository zeal, they were often recycling the same display materials assembled for the important nineteenth-century international fairs held in London, Paris, and Philadelphia.

<sup>19</sup> David Headon, *Canberra: Crystal Palace to Golden Trowels* (Canberra: ACT Government, 2009), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 24, 1878.

<sup>21</sup> *The Argus* [Melbourne], September 3, 1875.

Canadian exhibitions also had agricultural roots, emerging out of eighteenth-century interest in farm improvement. Small, mainly local displays became bigger shows, and a regular network of agricultural and industrial exhibitions developed in Central Canada from the mid-nineteenth century onward. As the English-speaking advocates of scientific progress and modernization failed to impress the solidly French-speaking agriculturalists, Ontario had a much greater program of exhibits than Quebec.<sup>22</sup> Elsbeth Heaman, in her book on Canadian exhibitions through the nineteenth century, postulated that the assembly of Canadian objects for display encouraged consideration of Canada as an entity and “helped to create a discourse about Canada” both before and after Confederation.<sup>23</sup>

As New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania were all on the brink of transforming intercolonial shows into international events, efforts to court Canadian manufacturers to display at the then still-local show at Sydney in 1877 may have been viewed as a “dry run” before committing the fair organizers to an expanded event. The mania for exhibition conveyed a broad consensus for progressive ideas and support for cultural institutions and public education in general. The colonies on both sides of the Pacific were making gradual steps to a greater sense of self-respect and identity, and the ability to exhibit was both an act of affirmation and a means of useful instruction.<sup>24</sup> An exhibit illustrated the fruits of science and celebrated the achievements of material civilization for a receptive public. Nineteenth-century audiences viewed the educational public display as a great showplace for improving consumer products and an opportunity for a visual spectacle.<sup>25</sup> It also established the dominance of the eye over the ear for the transmission of information and illustrated the Victorian notion that the skilled artisan could acquire important information by the physical act of looking. It was widely believed that the spectator could reinforce an understanding of the mechanical procedures involved in the production of goods by comparing and classifying the different articles on exhibit.<sup>26</sup>

Touring the international exhibitions that proliferated during the latter part of the nineteenth century, Australian and Canadian fair commissioners carefully considered the displays mounted by their respective societies, testing for what might be shared, learned, and traded. Canada and the Australian colonies were fascinated by each other’s products and development. Canadians compared their respective displays as a means of “appraising the attainments of our sister colonies at the antipodes.”<sup>27</sup> While Canada was the senior dominion of the evolving

22 Elsbeth Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society during the Nineteenth-Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 34, 53; Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 11.

23 Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*, p. 180.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

25 Headon, *Canberra: Crystal Palace to Golden Trowels*, p. 11.

26 Graeme Davison, “Festivals of Nationhood: the International Exhibitions” in Samuel Louis Goldberg and Francis Barrymore Smith, eds., *Australian Cultural History* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 159.

27 James Douglas, “The Philadelphia Exhibition,” *The Canadian Monthly and National Review*, vol. 10, no. 3 (September 1876), p. 239.

British Empire only a few years past Confederation, Australia was edging toward nationhood, still consolidating a new identity free from the criminal stain of transportation. Antipodeans appeared eager to believe that education, advanced ideas, and new technologies would wipe clean their tainted beginnings.<sup>28</sup> Both societies wanted to take an enhanced role on the world stage, and there was a growing sense of common experience, acceptance of some difference, and strong competition for immigrants and investment capital.

Public exhibition at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 heightened a sense of pride and confidence in both the Australian colonies and Canada. The Canadian exhibit at Philadelphia was very successful and viewed as enhancing “the feeling of self-respect and patriotism” of the many Canadians attending the fair. It proved that there was a global appetite for manufactured goods and that “the demand for useful articles is not limited to a single nation [the United States].”<sup>29</sup> If high tariff walls closed the American market, as they had done in 1866, then the Canadian experience at the fair was evidence that markets in other nations were also interested in a higher standard of living through consumption of readily available material goods.<sup>30</sup> Individuals in Australia and Canada believed that both societies gained an enhanced status in the world’s eye at the Philadelphia fair. Certainly it had provided a location for the potential rivals to vie with each other for global attention and the capital for needed infrastructure. The exhibition in Philadelphia also allowed an energetic fair commissioner such as Augustus Morris to cast his eyes north of the border for potential participants for the Sydney event in 1877.

### **Australia, Canada, and Empires of Trade**

Emerging from a colonial outlook, both Australians and Canadians were looking for a new means to frame their respective identities. Canadians used the term “Australia” to describe the diverse British colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, and Western Australia as a distinct and identifiable entity. While each of the six colonies had its own government and laws, issued stamps, and collected tariffs, the New South Wales Commissioner soliciting Canadian support for the Sydney 1877 fair spoke on behalf of “we in Australia.”<sup>31</sup> Australia and Canada shared a world view and cultural framework that went beyond arguments of colonial kinship. Settler societies had offered immigrating Europeans an opportunity to build new communities in unknown continents. Dismissing Aboriginal historic occupation, colonists viewed Australia’s and Canada’s limitless hinterlands rich in resources as blank spaces to be filled by vast farms, humming mills, handsome cities, and busy harbours. Editorial writers admonished readers that development was the natural destiny of white settler

28 Headon, *Canberra: Crystal Palace to Golden Trowels*, p. 5.

29 Charles R Tuttle, *The Comprehensive History of the Dominion of Canada*, vol. II (Montreal: H. B. Bigney, 1879), p. 490.

30 William Leggo, *The History of the Administration of the Right Honorable Frederick Temple, Earl of Dufferin, K.P., G.C.M.G., K.C.B., F.R.S., late Governor General of Canada* (Montreal: Lovell Print and Publishing Co., 1878), pp. 503-504.

31 *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 8, 1876 (abridging from the *Montreal Herald*).

cultures. Many settlers shared a common framework of biblical admonishments to dominate Nature and the sense of a moral imperative “to subdue the land,” “to hew out wealth and independence ... from primaevial wilds,” and to make rich use of the opportunities seemingly bestowed by a benevolent providence.<sup>32</sup> Recognizing technology’s role in providing the comforts of civilization, many also supported exhortations to pursue “opportunities for making discoveries useful to man.”<sup>33</sup>

Professing belief in science and capitalist progress, one Canadian commentator referred to a general understanding of civilization as a moveable scale with clear choices of advancement or regression. This dynamic framework, or the law of human improvement that demanded one incremental step after another, dictated that Canada must become a manufacturing country or be embarrassed among the nations of the world.<sup>34</sup> Theories that promoted the concept of a hierarchy in stages of development also met wide acceptance. Such theories posited that embryonic states moved through progressive stages as infant societies transformed into civilized societies. This process was believed to replicate the evolution of the simple to the complex. A drama in three acts, the various stages of economic maturity were represented first by an initial period of agricultural settlement, followed by some level of commercial activity, and concluding in some capacity in manufacturing as the final developmental achievement.<sup>35</sup>

Canada’s effort to open a better trading relationship with the Australian colonies was an initiative to diversify exports away from a dependency on the American market. While Canadian exports to the United States had boomed during the civil war, after the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty in 1866, tariff walls that ranged upward from 20 per cent sheltered the American market. Canadian advocates of free trade were anxious to find an illustration of how trade liberalization might operate effectively. Australians were also interested in developing business links with the newly confederated Dominion, and their officials had actively solicited Canadian participation at this fair. As an Australian Commissioner at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, Augustus Morris had travelled to Toronto and Montreal to address local Boards of Trade and meet provincial manufacturers to this end. Subsequent to Morris’s visit, and lobbied by spokesmen for the commercial communities of Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal, the parsimonious government of Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie agreed to underwrite most of the cost of this event—which included shipping charges of \$25,000.<sup>36</sup> This decision was facilitated by the practical and cost-saving strategy of moving elements of the Canadian exhibits at the American Centennial Exhibition of 1876 directly from Philadelphia by the port of New York to the Intercolonial Exhibition in Sydney.

32 “A Colonist,” “Protection to Native Industry,” *Canadian Merchants’ Magazine and Commercial Review*, vol. 3, no. 1 (April 1858), p. 71; “The London Times on Canada as represented at Paris,” *Journal of Education in Upper Canada*, vol. 8, no. 12 (December 1855), p. 180.

33 “A Colonist,” “Protection to Native Industry,” p. 71.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

35 C. R. Brooke, “The Financial Crisis of 1857 and 1858,” *Canadian Merchants’ Magazine and Commercial Review*, vol. 3, no. 1 (April 1858), p. 7.

36 *The Montreal Daily Witness*, August 21, 1876.



Both Australian and Canadian efforts to promote trade and manufacturing were logical responses to Britain's embrace of free trade. While Canada and the Australian colonies were integrated into the British imperial system, their respective efforts to establish commercial relations conveyed ambivalence to British dominance. In Australia, a growing national sentiment fanned a desire for greater independence from a colonial past and dissatisfaction with shipping primary products useful to the British trading system, while consuming mostly British manufactures and technology.<sup>37</sup> Australians bridled that, while the newly minted dominion—Canada—had its own representation, including an elegant log building, at the Philadelphia World Fair, Australia was inadequately represented by the British.<sup>38</sup> Effectively the British and Australians were at cross-purposes as to how to depict the antipodean colonies. The Australians wanted to project an image of modernity; the British were happy to portray the continent as an Elysium field of natural riches, awaiting settlers and capital to fill the empty spaces. Emphasizing imperial unity, British organizers orchestrated the displays of the various colonies to underline the overall strength and wonder of the British Empire.<sup>39</sup>

In Canada, dissatisfaction with the ramifications of empire was more qualified, as many citizens preferred the influence of the British to that of a potential American empire.<sup>40</sup> There was a strong push-pull dimension to Canadian opinion on empire; a public intellectual like Goldwin Smith could proclaim that the Canadian manufacturer only saw a rival in the British manufacturer while, in the same period, 900 Orange Lodges in Ontario were pledging loyalty to the British Empire.<sup>41</sup> Between 1868 and 1876 a small group dubbing themselves Canada First tried unsuccessfully to promote a romantic concept of Canadian nationalism within a stronger British alliance; Englishmen were to be treated as brothers or equals.<sup>42</sup> They failed to advance their ideological agenda owing to their own internal contradictions and woolly thinking, but their example conveyed the incongruities among those seeking to secure Canada's place in the British Empire without sacrificing loyalty to Canada as its own entity. Understandably, French Canada remained cool to the promotion of a pan-Anglo-Saxon empire.

While Canada and the Australian colonies were aware of the benefits of the imperial order, they also considered the possible transformation of the British economic hegemony into a fraternal vehicle, where both—one post-colonial and

37 Graham Pont and Peter Proudfoot, "The Technological Movement and the Garden Palace" in Peter Proudfoot, Roslyn Maguire, and Robert Freestone, eds., *Colonial City, Global City: Sydney International Exhibition 1879* (Sydney: Crossing Press, 2000), pp. 239-259.

38 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, August 7, 1876; *Launceston Examiner*, November 7, 1876; *The South Australian Advertiser* [Adelaide], August 1, 1876.

39 Louise Douglas, "Representing Colonial Australia at British, American and European International Exhibitions," p. 28, [http://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol\\_3\\_no\\_1/papers/](http://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol_3_no_1/papers/) (accessed October 25, 2011).

40 Phillip Buckner, "Whatever Happened to the British Empire?" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, vol. 3 (1993), p. 14.

41 Goldwin Smith, "Political Destiny of Canada," *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 21, no. 124 (April 1877), p. 438; Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 254.

42 Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp. 49-56.

the other on the verge of federation—could be stronger players.<sup>43</sup> While small populations hampered both societies in the development of manufacturing, together they might be more than the sum of their parts. Without a more vibrant manufacturing sector, Australian and Canadian policy makers concluded, an effective nation-state was impossible.<sup>44</sup> It is likely that some individuals in the two settler cultures, steeped in colonialism, were anxious to increase bilateral bonds in order to create the pre-conditions for more manufacturing and more trade.

Trade patterns were accelerating forces during the latter half of the nineteenth century. British North Americans adjusting to the impact of the British Navigation Acts in the 1840s had sought continued reciprocity with the United States only to be denied access with the initiation of American protection. Shut out of their richest markets, manufacturers and farmers were desperate for alternatives. From the 1850s there were voices in Canada urging the incorporation of the Canadian west, the completion of the railway to the new province of British Columbia, and active exploration of trade in Asia and the Antipodes. It was a grand and prescient scheme, but it was built on faith more than systematic analysis.

Consideration of export opportunities for Canadian manufacturers forced the Canadian government, Boards of Trade of Toronto and Montreal, and individual businessmen to analyse trade patterns within a new mental framework. While the globe might be contracting, several important unknowns were involved in delivering the product to the customer. The initial view of those exhibiting at the Sydney fair was that, once trade developed, then steamship service between Canada and Australia would follow. After all, several argued, Canada was a significant “shipping nation.”<sup>45</sup> It was believed that, if tea could be imported to Canada on the same terms as to the United States, then goods could be shipped from Montreal to Australia. The carrying vessels in this imagined scenario could replenish needed coal supplies in China and return laden with cargo.<sup>46</sup> None of this worked according to plan, and, when participation in the Sydney exhibition failed to stimulate either sales or a steamship service, it was hoped that completion of the Canadian Pacific railway and regular steamship lines would foster trade with Asia and the Antipodes. Existing Atlantic trade flows could be complemented by busy commercial links with the Pacific world.<sup>47</sup> Perishable goods such as silk and tea that required rapid transit would come from Asia, and Australian wool might be processed in Canadian mills.<sup>48</sup> The development of railways and the institution

43 It is logical that both Canadians and Australians were ambivalent about imperialism; both were dependent on Britain for financing. See Bill Nasson, *Britannia's Empire: Making a British World* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2004), p. 130.

44 Robert Craig Brown, “The Nationalism of the National Policy” in Peter H. Russell, ed., *Nationalism in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 162.

45 *The Globe* [Toronto], September 9, 1876. Actually, Canada was an important shipping nation. By 1880, with 1.3 million tons on its shipping registries, Canada likely had the fourth largest merchant marine in the world. See Eric W. Sager and Gerald E. Panting, *Maritime Capital: The Shipping Industry in Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), p. 4.

46 *The Globe* [Toronto], August 24, 1877. *The Globe* derided the logic of this scheme.

47 *The Globe* [Toronto], November 15, 1878.

48 *The Globe* [Toronto], August 19, 1876.

of regular steamship service did facilitate trade, but they also unleashed many fantasies about what form that trade might take.

Among the items commissioned for the Philadelphia fair and then shipped to the Intercolonial Exhibition in Sydney was an important map of “Canada’s great enterprise,” the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway across the Dominion. This chart, drawn from Sandford Fleming’s survey, depicted “the shortest and best route” from Europe to Japan, China, and the Australian colonies.<sup>49</sup> The Canadian Pacific Railway, on which the Government of Canada had already spent more than \$2.5 million in the 1870s, was to be the conduit for expanding trade in the Pacific.<sup>50</sup> Canadian authorities were adamant that this route would cut 750 miles off the track through the American Rockies and San Francisco and was at a lower elevation than the American passage.<sup>51</sup> The railway’s role was to be strategic, affording goods a route from London to Halifax to Vancouver to Sydney without leaving the British Empire. *The Sydney Mail* described this as a means for “Englishmen to travel in English ships and over English railways all around the globe.”<sup>52</sup> After the fair Fleming’s map was displayed in several prominent Australian cities. While such a link bound Canada to the British Empire, it would also create new opportunities for internal investment and development through international trade and make Canada “one of the great highways of trade.”<sup>53</sup>

The initiative to develop Canadian trade with the Australian colonies was influenced by some key observations. William J. Patterson of the Montreal Board of Trade consulted the Statistical Bureau in Washington, seeking tables of American trade with the Australian colonies and New Zealand. These showed that the United States had a profitable trade with Australia valued by Patterson at US \$3.9 million in 1876.<sup>54</sup> Businessmen in Toronto and Montreal rightly argued that a significant percentage of shipments from New York or Boston had originated in Canada, while classified as American exports.<sup>55</sup> The established wisdom in Canada was that most exports to Australia consisted of agricultural vehicles, agricultural implements, general and farm vehicles, stoves, iron, and woodware goods.<sup>56</sup> It was believed that a considerable proportion of the wood and wooden manufactures exported to Australian ports from the United States and used in the construction industry was of Canadian origin.<sup>57</sup> The wreck in Melbourne harbour of the vessel *William Salthouse*, carrying timber and nails from Montreal in 1841, was evidence of this early trade; such commodities were used in Australian urban

49 John Young, *Report of the Canadian Commission at the Exhibition of Industry held in Sydney, New South Wales, 1877* (Ottawa: Department of Agriculture 1878), p. 66.

50 *The Brisbane Courier*, May 15, 1877.

51 *The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, April 19, 1877; *South Australian Register* [Adelaide], June 14, 1877.

52 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 4, 1877.

53 “Letter to the Editor,” *The Brisbane Courier*, May 11, 1893.

54 William J Patterson, *Two Trade Letters* (Montreal: Lovell Print & Publishing Co., 1876), pp. 5, 25-28.

55 *The New York Times*, June 11, 1877; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 23, 1877. *The Globe* [Toronto], August 28, 1876, also cited Australia and New Zealand as importing \$250 million worth of goods per year and referred to Augustus Morris as the source of this information.

56 *Canadian Monetary Times and Trade Review*, vol. 10, no. 9 (August 25, 1876), p. 215.

57 *Canadian Monetary Times and Trade Review*, vol. 10, no. 15 (October 6, 1876), p. 395. These American shipments were estimated at \$672,000 in value.

housing and port construction until late in the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup> Patterson urged Dominion merchants to examine the patterns of American trade with Australia and identify possible areas where they might be competitive.<sup>59</sup> Owing to its success in the production of wool and gold, Australia was described as “rich” and allegedly imported double the goods per capita of any other country in the world.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, Australia’s per capita income in the latter part of the nineteenth century was higher than that of the United States or the United Kingdom.<sup>61</sup> Producing only a small portion of the commodities required by its population, Australia had many importers who wanted to cut out the American middleman and import goods directly from Canadian manufacturers.<sup>62</sup>

The themes of after-dinner speeches reported in local newspapers suggest that many Canadians and Australians shared a similar world vision, embracing improvement and science. The two countries wanted to be at the forefront of technological change and evolving global trade. If there was a hierarchy in economic activity, there was also a hierarchy in the goods produced, with natural products at the base and manufactured goods at the summit. This concept was sufficiently widespread that, in attempting to find an effective classification system for the Great Exhibition of London in 1851, Prince Albert had divided the products of the world into three tiers: one for raw materials, a second for manufactures made of those raw materials, and a third for goods refined through artistic expression.<sup>63</sup> In Australia and Canada, manufacturers and some politicians sought to move from the mere production of raw materials to achieve an economic maturity beyond London’s hegemonic control.<sup>64</sup> In the Dominion, the development of a manufacturing base was regarded as necessary to stem the departure of skilled labour for the United States in times of recession and to counter worries about declining soil fertility.<sup>65</sup> By 1860 the colony of Victoria urgently sought to provide employment for the thousands of men, many with mechanical skills, who had flooded the colony in search of gold.<sup>66</sup> Much in need of public revenue, Victoria became the first Australian colony to adopt protectionism.<sup>67</sup> In both societies there was new concern about accommodating the better trained and more intelligent

58 Mark Staniforth, “Early Trade between Canada and Australia and the Wreck of the *William Salthouse* (1841),” *Urban History Review*, vol. 28, no. 2 (March 2000), pp. 19-31; Miles Lewis, “Making Do” in Patrick Nicol Troy, ed., *A History of European Housing in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 41.

59 Patterson, *Two Trade Letters*, p. 8.

60 *The Globe* [Toronto], August 18, 1876; C. B. Schedvin, “Staples and Regions of Pax Britannica,” *The Economic History Review*, New Series 43, no. 4 (November 1990), p. 533.

61 Schedvin, “Staples and Regions of Pax Britannica,” p. 533; Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 107.

62 *The Globe* [Toronto], September 9, 1876.

63 John Allwood, “International Exhibitions and the Classification of their Exhibits,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, vol. 128 (June 1980), p. 451.

64 Pont and Proudfoot, “The Technological Movement and the Garden Palace,” pp. 239-259.

65 *The Canadian Merchants’ Magazine and Commercial Review*, vol. 3, no. 6 (October/November/December 1858), p. 408.

66 *The Argus* [Melbourne], November 30, 1861; *The Bendigo Advertiser*, August 12, 1852; Ann Capling and Brian Galligan, *Beyond the Protective State: The Political Economy of Australia’s Manufacturing Industry Policy* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1993), p. 72.

67 G. D. Patterson, *The Tariff in Australian Colonies, 1856-1900* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1968), p. 164.

worker. A common refrain reflected in the Australian press of the period was “what should we do with our boys?”<sup>68</sup> Possibly, an alliance of societies of similar colonial experience and cultural backgrounds—in the words of a New South Wales journalist, the “same kith and kin”—was the key to a new beginning.<sup>69</sup>

Both countries balanced bravado with a colonial insecurity and worked to validate their respective histories. Documents of the period sought to justify colonization, emigration, and subjugation of the land and its Native inhabitants. A favourite theme of Canadian public speakers was the progress from primitive wigwams to prosperous farms and towns. Representative articles and speeches cite “the elegant mansion, instead of the rude and frail wigwam” or “the world’s manhood is better than its childhood.”<sup>70</sup> In Australia the theme was darker, and many of the photos and Native artefacts chosen for international exhibitions such as the Philadelphia exhibition in 1876 were intended to demonstrate the cultural poverty of Aboriginal people as compared to the civilization of the colonizer.<sup>71</sup> While Canadian fair organizers were conflicted and used a splendid Mohawk robe as an important artefact at the Crystal Palace exhibition in 1851, there was frequent criticism that such handicrafts were not the fruits of civilization.<sup>72</sup> The spread of social Darwinism had accentuated this popular interpretation of hierarchical ideas about race and culture.<sup>73</sup> The overall effect was to contrast European “progress” with the stone-age primitivism of the indigenous population and provide a rationale for its displacement.<sup>74</sup> The official Canadian report of the enlarged Sydney International (as opposed to intercolonial) Exhibition of 1879 recorded strong interest in this Australian exhibition, claiming that that country had only recently been “rescued from barbarism.”<sup>75</sup> The international exhibition allowed the visual enjoyment of consumer items now available by means of steam energy and better manufacturing methods. Together, the act of exhibition and the variety of articles on view were linked to notions of social advancement and modernity, and the products of the industrial revolution provided justification for the colonial project so far.

### **Selling Exhibitions and the Exhibition Men**

International fairs provided visual stages to demonstrate many of the cultural concepts then in world-wide circulation. The decision on Australia’s part to seek

68 *South Australian Register* [Adelaide], November 9, 1875.

69 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 5, 1877.

70 *The Toronto Christian Observer*, vol. 3, no. 1 (January 1853), p. 1; *Journal of Education, Province of Ontario*, vol. 23, no. 8 (August 1870), p. 117.

71 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 27, 1876; *The Canadian Monthly and National Review*, vol. 10, no. 3 (September 1876), p. 241.

72 Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*, p. 299.

73 Kate Darian-Smith, “Seize the Day: Exhibiting Australia” in Kate Darian-Smith *et al.*, eds., *Seize the Day: Exhibitions, Australia and the World* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Press, 2008), <http://books.publishing.monash.edu/apps/bookworm/view/SEIZE+THE+DAY/123/xhtml/chapter1.html> (accessed November 17, 2011).

74 Kirsten Orr, “A Force for Federation: International Exhibitions and the Formation of Australian Ethos (1851-1901)” (PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, 2006), p. 143.

75 “Report of the Canadian Commission at the Sydney International Exhibition, 1879,” *Sessional Papers of the Dominion of Canada*, 45 Victoria, vol. 7, no. 11 (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1882), p. 124.



**Figure 3:** ‘Augustus Morris’, Australian Men of Mark, Vol. II, Sydney: Charles F. Maxwell, undated, 304 (Accessed 4 November, 2013). Available from: [ncb.anu.edu.au/sites/.../documents/Australian-Men-of-Mark-Vol.2.pdf](http://ncb.anu.edu.au/sites/.../documents/Australian-Men-of-Mark-Vol.2.pdf)



**Figure 4:** Hon. John Young, Montreal, QC, photograph by William Notman (1826-1891) in 1866. Purchased from Associated Screen News Ltd. I-19623.1 © McCord Museum.

a Canadian presence at the Sydney fair, and Canada’s initiative in paying the charges, were reflective of common beliefs about how life should be ordered. Both societies saw international trade and international exhibitions as building blocks in the advance of civilization.<sup>76</sup> Artisan classes in Australia and Canada had embraced the transnational mechanics’ institute movement, indicating a compelling interest in the arts and sciences. This progressive movement, a grandchild of the Enlightenment and eighteenth-century revolution, was dedicated to the material improvement of both the artisan and society through the better application of the industrial arts. Technical skills, symbolized by the locomotive and the power loom depicted on the Toronto Mechanics’ Institute prize certificate designed by the polymath Sandford Fleming, had global applications; the mythic figure of Atlas carrying the globe was supported by two female classical figures portraying science and art. Such symbolism bound societies as distant as Canada and Australia in a common understanding of self-improvement through technology and industry.<sup>77</sup> Engineering, science, and the useful arts were seen as engines of advancement.<sup>78</sup>

Several flamboyant Victorian personalities stepped up to promote this new trading link. John Young, the Canadian Commissioner at the fair, and his counterpart from New South Wales, Augustus Morris, had much in common. Both had the necessary energy and, in the case of the Australian Morris, a strong streak of nineteenth-century boosterism. Both were ardent supporters of free trade. The son of a convict father, sometime pastoralist, and former politician, Morris was a skilful exhibition man and a full-time promoter. He had long been interested in

<sup>76</sup> Niall Ferguson references Richard Cobden’s view that commerce was the pre-eminent catalyst of human progress. Ferguson quotes Cobden as referring to it as the “grand panacea” (*Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, p. xviii).

<sup>77</sup> Ellen L Ramsay, “Art and Industrial Society: The Role of the Toronto Mechanics’ Institute in the Promotion of Art, 1831-1883,” *Labour / Le Travail*, vol. 43 (Spring 1999), pp. 72-73.

<sup>78</sup> Orr, “A Force for Federation,” p. 9.

developing local export capacity and in the 1860s was instrumental in exploring how Australian meat products could be refrigerated for export. Morris had been the New South Wales Executive Commissioner at Philadelphia in 1876 and was later appointed commissioner at the exhibition in Paris in 1878. As the Australian colonies effectively employed their fair commissioners to gather information and assess useful technology, Morris spent his time in Philadelphia visiting industries and consulting experts potentially useful to New South Wales.<sup>79</sup> To this end, he published papers on the American cultivation of tobacco and on its railway system.<sup>80</sup> Many of his reports were reprinted in the newspapers of all the Australian colonies. An Australian volume of biography called *Australian Men of Mark* related that while in North America Morris, with the “approval” of Professor Goldwin Smith, recommended “the union of all English-speaking races.”<sup>81</sup> This is perhaps a precursor of Smith’s own endorsement of the “moral federation of the whole English-speaking race through the world.”<sup>82</sup> Both Smith and Morris were drawing on a vision of two pan-Pacific settler societies united in Anglo-Saxon solidarity.

In his job as the New South Wales Commissioner at the Philadelphia Fair, Morris was struck by the strong presence of Canadian manufacturers from a country that he had only considered as agricultural.<sup>83</sup> Canadian progress in this area came as a surprise, as the Australians could only field a small number of their own manufacturers—mostly from Melbourne.<sup>84</sup> Manufacturing represented only 5.3 per cent of the GNP of the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria for the period from 1861 to 1865.<sup>85</sup> Morris was convinced that Canada (or at least the areas of central Canada that he visited) offered more scope as a possible Australian trading partner than did the United States, as the Americans had already instituted protectionism. He lauded the excellent quality of various Canadian products and compared them favourably in price with those of the United States.<sup>86</sup> He made particular reference to Canadian agricultural machinery, stating that such equipment combined American ingenuity with English strength and solidity.<sup>87</sup> Determined to further two-way trade and to promote Canadian participation at the upcoming intercolonial show in Sydney, Morris had met with the Toronto Board

79 Judith McKay, *Showing Off: Queensland at World Expositions, 1862 to 1988* (Rockhampton, Queensland: Central Queensland University Press and the Queensland Museum, 2004), pp. 27–28; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 19, 1878.

80 Alan Barnard, “Morris, Augustus (1820–1895),” *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/morris-augustus-4250/text6867> (accessed October 22, 2011); Augustus Morris, *Tobacco: Its Culture and the Curing of its Leaf* (Sydney: Charles Potter, Acting Government Printer, 1877); Augustus Morris, *Observations on Railroads in the United States* (Sydney: Charles Potter, Acting Government Printer, 1877).

81 *Australian Men of Mark*, vol. II (Sydney: Charles F. Maxwell, undated), p. 308, [ncb.anu.edu.au/sites/.../documents/Australian-Men-of-Mark-Vol.2.pdf](http://ncb.anu.edu.au/sites/.../documents/Australian-Men-of-Mark-Vol.2.pdf) (accessed November 4, 2013).

82 Goldwin Smith, *Canada and the Canadian Question* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1890), p. 265.

83 *The Globe* [Toronto], August 24, 1876.

84 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 27, 1876.

85 Peter Cochrane, *Industrialization and Dependence: Australia’s Road to Economic Development, 1870–1939* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1980), p. 1.

86 *The Sydney Mail*, November 11, 1876.

87 *Ibid.*

of Trade and its counterpart in Montreal. He made speeches and gave interviews extolling the commercial opportunities for Canadian manufacturers in Australia.<sup>88</sup> Morris offered specific encouragements; for the benefit of Canadian furniture-makers, he insisted that pine deal sold in Sydney for the same price as walnut in Toronto.<sup>89</sup> To impress his point upon them, Morris toured two furniture factories in Toronto, probably including that of the largest Canadian manufacturer, Robert Hay.<sup>90</sup> Hay later lobbied Ottawa for money to enable Canadian participation at the fair and his own firm exhibited in Sydney, winning a prize for an elaborate cabinet.<sup>91</sup> A Mr. Welch, the Tasmanian Commissioner at the Philadelphia Exhibition who followed on Morris's heels with a visit to Montreal in December 1876, seemed embarrassed by Morris's optimistic description of market prospects in Australia. He recommended suitable caution to would-be Canadian exporters.<sup>92</sup> Morris's visit was of sufficient interest that the humorous Toronto publication *Grip* warned readers about "other markets" in doggerel poetry.

Grip wrote a rhyme the other day, which told his friends around,  
To Mr. Morris' statement not to pin their faith profound,  
When our hospitable boards he told us just before,  
That we could undersell the States, on far Australia's shore.<sup>93</sup>

Morris may have overstated the opportunities for Canadian exporters in Australia; his errors illustrated enthusiasm rather than a desire to deceive. He seemed sincerely impressed by the array of Canadian commercial goods that could outfit agricultural workers cheaply.<sup>94</sup> Morris also distrusted American exporters, condemning them for employing middlemen-brokers who demanded a slice of the profits in any exchange.<sup>95</sup> Characteristically, he conceived a plan allowing some payments for Canadian goods to be offset by Australian shipments, speculating that fine Australian merino wool could be spun into cloth in Canadian factories.<sup>96</sup> Morris was such an effective salesman in extolling the opportunities in Australia that he even convinced Canadian manufacturers to augment the existing Philadelphia displays with additional commercial products loaded in Montreal for Australia.<sup>97</sup>

Morris's hesitations about American suppliers of various manufactured goods may have been perspicacious. During this period the American economic elite were constructing their own empire, now built on commercial expertise. With military precision, American businesses were developing international marketing

<sup>88</sup> *Maitland Mercury*, October 12, 1876.

<sup>89</sup> *Maitland Mercury*, July 11, 1876; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 8, 1876; *The Montreal Daily Witness*, August 21, 1876; *The Globe* [Toronto], August 28, 1876.

<sup>90</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 8, 1876.

<sup>91</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], August 18, 1876; *The Canadian Monthly and National Review*, vol. 11, no. 3 (July 13, 1877), p. 77.

<sup>92</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], December 15, 1876.

<sup>93</sup> *Grip*, vol. 7, no. 18 (September 23, 1876), p. 4.

<sup>94</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], August 18 and 19, 1876.

<sup>95</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], August 19, 1876.

<sup>96</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], August 18 and 19, 1876. Morris also suggested that wine from southern Australia could be an important export to Canada.

<sup>97</sup> *The Monetary and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 10, no. 15 (October 6, 1876), p. 398.



strategies, organizing transport networks, and pioneering advertising campaigns. Skilled at both mass manufacturing and sophisticated sales techniques, they began to ship increasing volumes of consumer goods to markets from Toronto to Moscow. Much of their success was related to a capacity to convince the expanding middle class of the direct relationship between better consumer goods and civilized life.<sup>98</sup> The American trading empire was rising, as Britain's control of the red-coloured portions of the world was becoming problematic. Morris, from his considerable exposure in Philadelphia to American industry, must have been disinclined to exchange one form of economic dominance for another.

To coordinate Canada's role at the Sydney fair, a Canadian Commissioner, John Young, was appointed by the Liberal government of Alexander Mackenzie. For Young this was an excellent opportunity; one step from bankruptcy, he desperately needed the commissioner's job, being reduced to inspecting flour for a living. Briefly Minister of Public Works for the united provinces of Canada East and Canada West, Young had also been a Member of Parliament, representing the riding of Montreal West. He was an interesting man of much experience in life: shipwrecked twice, and the veteran of at least one duel. Young was admirably suited to the position he occupied, having extensive experience promoting canals and railway and telegraphic technology. A strong polemicist, with vigorous views expressed in constant letters to newspaper editors and a prolific writer of pamphlets on issues of national consequence, he maintained his place in the Canadian public's eye. An ardent proponent of free trade, Young had broken with the majority of the Montreal merchant class in 1849 when they proposed annexation of the united provinces of Upper and Lower Canada by the United States.<sup>99</sup> In his report to the Canadian Parliament on Canada's experience at the 1877 Sydney exhibition, Young entertained visions of what Australia might offer in the long term; its progress he reported as among "the wonders of the age."<sup>100</sup>

Young had arranged for the Canadian exhibit at the Sydney Intercolonial Exhibition to be housed in a basic, but specially constructed, annexe on the grounds of Prince Alfred Park. *The Illustrated Sydney News* of April 28, 1877, reported that the chief interest of the 1877 exhibit was the "Canadian Court," containing a large collection of "ingenious and useful articles" related to both the mechanical arts and the consumer sector. The illustration accompanying the news article depicted elegantly dressed men and women sampling the display, arrayed beneath extravagant bunting and flags. In a friendly nod to another settler culture, the article praised the "inventive and constructive abilities" of our "Transpacific friends."<sup>101</sup> It must have been satisfying for the Canadian Court's organizers to have the "industry of the beaver," the animal that illustrated the guide to Canadian participants at the fair, so acknowledged front and centre in local consciousness.

98 Mona Domosh, "Selling Civilization: Toward a Cultural Analysis of America's Economic Empire in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 29, no. 4 (December 2004), pp. 453-467.

99 Gerald Tulchinsky and Brian J. Young, "John Young," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, www.utoronto.ca/dcb-dbc/ (accessed October 12, 2011).

100 Young, *Report of the Canadian Commission*, p. 70.

101 "The Canadian Annexe," *Illustrated Sydney News*, April 27, 1877.

The early Canadian planning for the Sydney exhibition had been professional and involved close analysis of the flows of trade. In its consideration of the exhibition's success, the House of Commons was advised that Canadian officials had carefully studied the manifests for over fifteen months of vessels leaving the ports of Boston and New York for the Australian colonies. They had also investigated the *Table of Imports* for the colonies. John Young and his junior officers did not hide their lack of precise information on the styles and prices current in the local market in choosing the articles for display, although they had sought more detail from the Australian commissioners at the Philadelphia fair.<sup>102</sup>

Despite good early organization, the mounting of the Canadian exhibit in Sydney presented difficulties for Young and his staff. Although transportation had improved, there was still considerable imprecision in the shipping of goods. One of the vessels carrying the Canadian materials was very late, and, despite great effort to arrange and display the goods, many of the exhibits were not ready for the fair's opening day. The roof of the building housing the exhibition materials leaked, and moisture harmed some of the items on display.

Canada's presence at Sydney in 1877 was extensively described in the numerous Australian and Canadian press accounts of the period. Both Australian hosts and Canadian guests were remarkably uninhibited in their written and verbal comments as reported. As Canadian Commissioner at the Sydney Fair, John Young offered his antipodean hosts frank advice in his speeches in New Zealand, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and Queensland. He insisted that the colonies—including New Zealand—should federate, build railways with a single gauge, and keep their harbours well dredged.<sup>103</sup> While Young appeared to toss off these comments, discussion of such topics as free trade and federation inspired considerable passion in nineteenth-century Australia.<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, the Australian hosts replying to Young's speeches often made wildly inappropriate and irrelevant comments on the perils of invading Chinese or the deficiencies of their colonial officials.<sup>105</sup>

Late-nineteenth-century newspaper columns in both Australia and Canada exhibit remarkable ignorance about the true nature of the two countries. As late as 1894 Trade Minister Mackenzie Bowell recounted that prospective Australian clients informed the Massey Harris representative that Canada was frozen for six months of the year and by extension his machinery was either unsatisfactory or could not be shipped.<sup>106</sup> Some Australians freely expressed doubts about priest-ridden French-speaking Canadians, and writers had few hesitations about

102 "Report of the Minister of Agriculture," *Sessional Papers of the Dominion of Canada, 1877*, 40 Victoria, vol. 6 (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1877), p. 8-x.

103 A representative example of John Young's speeches of the period is contained in *The Brisbane Courier*, June 9, 1877.

104 Helen Irving, "Short Entries: Literary and Debating Societies" in Helen Irving, ed., *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 393; Michael Evans, "Dreams They are Living Under: Public Memory and the Commemoration of Eureka, 1884-1917" in K. T. Livingston, Richard Jordan, and Gay Sweely, eds., *Becoming Australians: The Movement Towards Federation in Ballarat* (Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2001), p. 46.

105 *The Brisbane Courier*, June 9, 1877.

106 *The Globe* [Toronto], January 5, 1894.

labelling them as ignorant and drunken—understandable considering “the long cold winters” when the land was “ribbed with snow.”<sup>107</sup> A Canadian visitor to Australia explained that a *London Times* journalist had prepared a series of articles suggesting that many Australians saw Canada as a “hybrid country.”<sup>108</sup> Travellers worried that they would suffer from excessive cold as passengers on the Canadian Pacific Railway.<sup>109</sup> On the Canadian side there was belief that Australians of good Anglo-Saxon stock might go off like milk or flesh in the hot sun of the southern hemisphere.<sup>110</sup> For some Canadians cold was a positive, character-forming virtue, “fitted to develop a manly, hardy, vigorous, intellectual race” and suitable for the Anglo-Saxon “in his own zone,” that Australians failed to appreciate.<sup>111</sup> The stove-maker Edward Gurney rejoiced in the “cool blood of our northern clime.”<sup>112</sup>

Forged in his background in railways, canals, bridges, and harbours, Young’s visual imagination was steeped in the transformative capacity of nineteenth-century technology. Illustrating a considerable prescience, Young speculated that the geographical situation of Australia and its vast mineral and agricultural riches would make it the “ruling power of the Pacific.” He also predicted a great rise in consumer demand in India, China, and Japan as their people felt “the wants which invariably accompany civilization.”<sup>113</sup> Young believed that the demand for consumer goods was inevitable, a necessary result of the advance of civilization. He was not alone in his enthusiasm about Australia’s future. Years earlier an article in *The Globe* (Toronto) of the 1850s was rhapsodic. At the time of heady gold rushes, it forecast that Australia bade fair to become “a stupendous colony and federation which, under the fostering wing of Britain, will go onwards in prosperity, adding to the power of the Empire, and to the wealth, civilization and Christianity of the world.”<sup>114</sup> Young would likely have written a much longer commentary on trade with Australia if declining health—and his subsequent death—had not prevented him. He even cited his physical decline in his report and regretted the shortness of his text.<sup>115</sup> Young was sufficiently prominent in the Montreal commercial community that local businessmen paid for his funerary monument. Through reprints from Reuter’s telegrams and re-cycled articles from the *Montreal Herald*, Young’s death was also widely reported in Australian newspapers.<sup>116</sup>

107 *Morning Bulletin* [Rockhampton, Queensland], February 7, 1887; *The Mercury* [Hobart, Tasmania], January 11, 1865; *The Capricornian* [Rockhampton, Queensland], November 24, 1894.

108 *The Globe* [Toronto], August 11, 1894.

109 *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 6, 1894.

110 *The Globe* [Toronto], September 26, 1885; *The Argus* [Melbourne], February 16, 1883.

111 *The Globe* [Toronto], January 5, 1894; September 26, 1885.

112 *Canadian Manufacturer and Industrial World*, vol. 16, no. 6 (March 15, 1889), p. 183.

113 Young, *Report of the Canadian Commission*, p. 70.

114 *The Journal of Education Upper Canada*, vol. 11, no. 5 (May 1858), p. 69. This publication stated that this comment had been drawn from *The Globe*, but provided no detail.

115 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

116 A representative example was printed in the *Evening News* [Sydney], June 14, 1878.

### Evaluating Canada's Role at the Sydney Fair and Possible Consequences

While powerful personalities might have succeeded in promoting the Sydney fair as a golden opportunity, such salesmanship involved an element of personal magic. Hard realities became more apparent when one evaluates whether the companies participating at Sydney in 1877 sold anything to Australian buyers. Certainly the materials damaged by water from a leaky roof were difficult to unload at the auction organized at the conclusion of the fair. The auction itself was a mixed success and likely reflective of the overall demand for the Canadian products exhibited; much of the Canadian furniture was considered too expensive for the Australian market.<sup>117</sup> Finer items such as the inlaid cabinet produced by Toronto manufacturer Robert Hay could not achieve anything near their invoice prices, and some of the better items, crafted by the prize-winning Upper Canada Furniture Co. of Bowmanville, Ontario, failed to sell. Young dryly noted in his report that “something got up cheap, of good appearance will sell at a profit.”<sup>118</sup>

John Young's summary of the results, however, referenced some successful orders, including those for agricultural reapers, ploughs, sewing machines, and numerous small wares. On the other hand, the very heavy billiard table provided by the Riley and May Company of Toronto was an expensive mistake, as Australian players preferred a different style.<sup>119</sup> The Montreal boot manufacturers had supplied both men's and women's boots with limited success, even though there was later evidence that Canadian boots were being transhipped through London to Australian customers.<sup>120</sup> The machine-made horseshoes failed to find buyers, as Australians wanted handmade ones.<sup>121</sup> The successful iron founder Edward Gurney had shipped stoves for display at the exhibition, and these proved difficult to market as apparently Australians favoured “ranges” for cooking.<sup>122</sup> It is clear that the Canadian farm equipment created considerable interest, drawing a fair crowd. It was extensively reviewed in the Australian press, and a reaper called the “Little Giant” took a prize, but there was no indication of clear or prolonged sales.<sup>123</sup> Later, Canadian agricultural equipment on display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, held in London in 1886, was extensively reviewed. The commenting Australian journalist believed that it was slightly less expensive than comparable American equipment, but that freight charges would eliminate this advantage.<sup>124</sup> The realities of distance meant that the pre-eminent supplier of

117 *The Monetary and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 11, no. 3 (July 13, 1877), p. 77; Young, *Report of the Canadian Commission*, p. 35.

118 Library and Archives Canada, RG 17, vol. 2317-2319, letter no. 148, John Lowe to R. Hay & Co., December 12, 1877; Young, *Report of the Canadian Commission*, p. 70.

119 Heamen, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*, p. 233; *The Monetary and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 11, no. 8 (August 17, 1877), p. 216.

120 Young, *Report of the Canadian Commission*, pp. 30, 37; Alexander Woods, *Trade Letter to the Merchants and Manufacturers of Canada* (Winnipeg: Manitoban Printing Co., 1886), p. 4.

121 *The Monetary and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 11, no. 3 (July 13, 1877), p. 77.

122 *The Globe* [Toronto], June 14, 1877.

123 *Ibid.*; *The Monetary and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 11, no. 19 (November 2, 1877), p. 530.

124 *Western Mail* [Perth], September 11, 1886.

agricultural equipment in the British Empire, the Massey-Harris Company, made no progress in the Australian market until ocean freight rates fell in the 1890s.<sup>125</sup>

Some of the post-exhibition results were just unclear or confusing, and Young was hampered in his effort to provide speedy market intelligence. While he might identify a promising market for sawn timber and building supplies in Melbourne, by the time his report came out nine months later the Canadian publication *Monetary Times* reported that this market had dried up. Apparently prices had fallen owing to American and Baltic dumping and the severe drought of 1877. The Sydney market for sawn timber was no better.<sup>126</sup> Many uncertainties prevailed, and reports in the Canadian newspapers and in House of Commons debates provided conflicting assessments of successful sales to Australian buyers.<sup>127</sup> It is difficult to ascertain the truth, as political partisans actively debated throughout the election campaign of 1878 whether the Canadian participation at Sydney had been productive. Sitting Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie, highlighting Canada's success with pride, stated:

By the exertions of the present Administration we have managed during the last year, by a judicious exhibition of what Canadian industry can do under a revenue tariff, to show to the people of Australasia that we can make better agricultural implements, carriages, edge tools, and other articles, and build better ships than they can; and within the first six months after the Exhibition closed we had exported nearly half a million dollars worth of our products to that region.<sup>128</sup>

It is tempting to regard Mackenzie's estimate of nearly half a million dollars in exports as made up. The reference to shipbuilding also appears fanciful.

In the development of a robust two-way trade, there were structural challenges to overcome. Canadian exports to Australia were generally shipped from Boston or New York. It was difficult finding space for small consignments in vessels, and only a regular steamer service between Canada and Australia made Canadian goods sufficiently cheap to be desirable.<sup>129</sup> In the discussion of developing trade with Australia that took place in Montreal after Morris's visit, there was general recognition that Canadian manufacturers could not rely on the occasional ship to Australia. Without regular steamship service, there could be no real expansion in the trading relationship.<sup>130</sup> While Augustus Morris might have lauded the excellence of Canadian goods, subsequent Australian importers proved critical of the quality.<sup>131</sup> There was also some question whether Australian buyers, often

<sup>125</sup> Richard Pomfret, *Economic Development in Canada* (Toronto: Methuen, 1981), pp. 128-129. Massey Manufacturing merged with the A. Harris, Son & Co. Ltd. to become Massey-Harris Company Limited in 1891.

<sup>126</sup> *The Monetary and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 11, no. 39 (March 22, 1878), p. 1115.

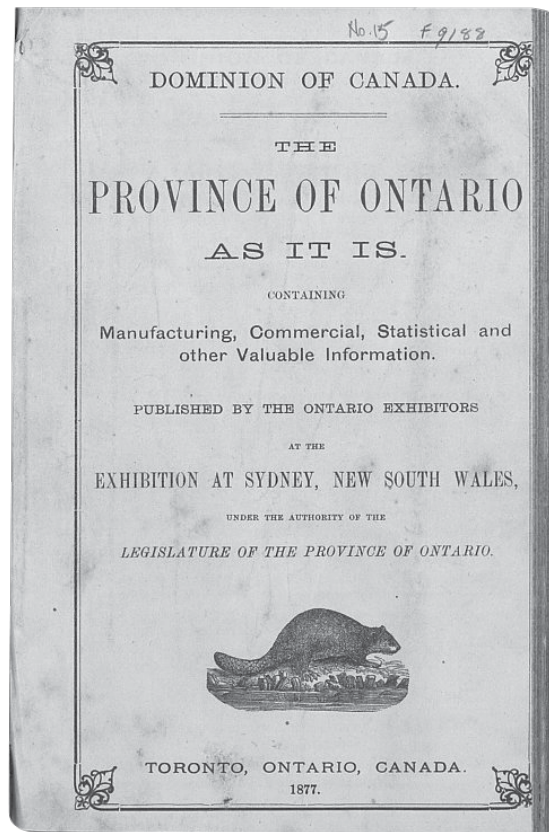
<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* The pro side was represented by "Report of the Minister of Agriculture," *Sessional Papers of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, 1878*, 41 Victoria, 8, no. 9 (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1878), p. 9-ix; the con side was addressed in *Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, 1878*, 41 Victoria, vol. V, second volume of the session, 1878, p. 1837.

<sup>128</sup> *Address of the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie to the Toronto Workmen on the "National Policy,"* p. 24.

<sup>129</sup> Heamen, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*, p. 233.

<sup>130</sup> *The Montreal Daily Witness*, August 21, 1876.

<sup>131</sup> *The Monetary and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 12, no. 27 (December 27, 1878), p. 809.



**Figure 6:** The Province of Ontario, as it is: Containing Manufacturing, Commercial, Statistical and Other Valuable Information, Toronto, Ontario: Legislature of the Province of Ontario 1877. National Library of Australia, cover page.

British immigrants themselves, were “controlled by well established firms in Great Britain” and only considered what was produced in the home country as the accepted standard of excellence.<sup>132</sup> The Canadian press also reported that American suppliers, who had been overproducing behind tariff walls, were dumping goods into the Australian market in what was known in the nineteenth century as a “sacrifice” or “slaughter” market to exclude other suppliers.<sup>133</sup> Several of the industries represented at the Sydney fair, such as the boot and shoe manufacturers, the tool industries and the stove producers, and Robert Hay, all complained of the same practice taking place in Ontario, and John A. Macdonald referenced it in his campaign speeches of 1878.<sup>134</sup>

Participation at the Sydney exhibition in 1877 was not a haphazard affair, but reflected an enhanced sense of determination among Canadian manufacturers. Not

<sup>132</sup> *The Monetary Times and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 11, no. 8 (August 17, 1877), pp. 216-217, and vol. 12, no. 13 (September 20, 1878), p. 371; Patterson, *Two Trade Letters*, p. 5.

<sup>133</sup> *The Monetary Times and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 12, no. 13 (September 20, 1878), p. 371.

<sup>134</sup> *The Montreal Gazette*, September 9, 1878; *The Nation* [Toronto], August 3, 1878.

only had the Canadian government and some suppliers come forward with the funds to ship exhibits, but the Ontario companies (the bulk of the manufacturers present in Sydney) had subsidized a well-illustrated catalogue promoting their firms and the products on display. A copy of this document, preserved in the Australian National Library, contains many detailed copperplate drawings of machinery, furniture, and factories, as well as positive descriptions of the prominent Ontario cities and their amenities in terms of public buildings, churches, educational facilities, and social services. The various companies' advertising stressed any form of innovative edge or recent modifications in their machinery or equipment; many listed awards won at other exhibitions or in different countries. Several prepared descriptions of their brick factories and numerous employees to establish bona fides and to convey substance and seriousness. The selection of the beaver on the cover was not random, as this emblem was widely used in the nineteenth century to represent Canada, and an earlier copy of the *Anglo-American Magazine* noted that "the strength of the Lion inspires and protects the industry of the Beaver."<sup>135</sup>

The active recruitment of Canadian exhibitors for the Sydney Intercolonial Exhibition had been an experiment, an effort to move from a focus on intercolonial trade among the Australian colonies to an international event. Owing to the uncertain success of the 1877 event, the Canadian government had a limited role at the expanded Sydney International Exhibition in 1879 and the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880, to which they sent only commissioners. The most prominent of these, Sir Roderick William Cameron, had long been an advocate of more trade between Canada and Australia and of better shipping routes.<sup>136</sup> A few Canadian companies chose to exhibit at these events in a private capacity. In the long term, however, Canadians did not lose interest in the potential Australian market. In May 1893, the cabinet agreed to subsidize a regular steamship service between Canada and New South Wales. A monthly service was organized between Sydney and Victoria-Vancouver with stops in Brisbane and Honolulu. The first voyage from Sydney to Victoria in May-June 1893 took 21 days.<sup>137</sup> It was reported that, with the installation of this steamship link, a letter travelling by the Canadian route could be received in Britain four days earlier than if sent by the Red Sea route.<sup>138</sup> In September of 1893 Sir Mackenzie Bowell, Minister of Trade and Commerce, led a trade mission to Australia hoping to stimulate trade.<sup>139</sup> Promotion of Canadian exports still proved a challenge. *The Age*, commenting on the Bowell mission, listed the principal Canadian products of interest as canned

<sup>135</sup> *The Province of Ontario, as it is: Containing Manufacturing, Commercial, Statistical and Other Valuable Information* (Toronto: Legislature of the Province of Ontario, 1877); *The Anglo-American Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 1 (July 1852), p. 1.

<sup>136</sup> R. C. MacGillivray, "Sir Robert William Cameron," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, www.utoronto.ca/dcb-dbc/ (accessed October 30, 2011).

<sup>137</sup> E. Mowbray Tate, *Transpacific Steam: The Story of Steam Navigation from the Pacific Coast of North America to the Far East and the Antipodes, 1867-1941* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1986), p. 152.

<sup>138</sup> *The Age* [Melbourne], November 2, 1893.

<sup>139</sup> Macdonald had planned for such a mission to take place at an earlier date as noted in a Minute of Council, dated August 17, 1889. See *Correspondence of Sir John Macdonald; Selections from the Correspondence of the Right Honorable Sir John Alexander Macdonald, first Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada, made by his literary executor Sir Joseph Pope* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1921), p. 454.

fish and timber; the only manufactured items were described as axe picks and handles.<sup>140</sup> The Bowell visit also prompted the Government of Canada to convene a colonial conference in Ottawa in the summer of 1894.<sup>141</sup>

The most lasting effect of seventeen years of some effort and much rhetoric about trade promotion to Australia was, however, to appoint John Short Larke as Canada's very first trade commissioner. Larke arrived in Sydney in January 1895 with a mandate to develop markets for Canadian products in Australia and to report to Ottawa regarding trade opportunities. He was acceptable to the then Conservative government, being a defeated Tory electoral candidate, a believer in trade protection, and—as a newspaper editor—a skilled speaker and commentator on public policy.<sup>142</sup> His speeches in Australia still made ample use of the “kith and kin” refrain.<sup>143</sup> Larke's timing was unfortunate, as not only did the Australian colonies institute extensive trade protection—New South Wales was the last of the colonies to adopt protection, doing so in 1891—but by 1890 Australia was on the edge of the most severe depression in its history as commodity prices plummeted.<sup>144</sup> Larke's appointment may have also been motivated by political contingencies rather than real trade possibilities.

By the late 1880s, John A. Macdonald was pressed to offer new trading prospects to counter the Liberals' espousal of Unrestricted Reciprocity (with the United States). Political necessities were at play, and Macdonald had few options as a high tariff effectively closed the American market. While he also recommended links with the West Indies, he had much more invested in using the Canadian Pacific Railway to ship goods to and from the Pacific.<sup>145</sup> Above all else the railway needed long-distance freight traffic to offset the fixed costs required by its construction and to justify its creation as an instrument of economic development. Macdonald's address to the people of Canada before the 1891 election summarized his vision that would blend two commercial systems: one based on east-west integration of the Canadian economy through the National Policy, and the second based on splicing the domestic Canadian transportation network (in Macdonald's words “a homogeneous whole”) with the broader Pacific world.<sup>146</sup> The CPR's terminus would be the intersection point of these combined systems; the Atlantic trading system could be connected through Canada with a Pacific system by means of “an imperial highway to the east.”<sup>147</sup> *The New York Times* ridiculed Macdonald's

140 *The Age* [Melbourne], November 2, 1893.

141 Ottawa, “Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 28 June – 9 July, 1894,” [www.collectionscanada.gc.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca) (accessed October 24, 2011); Greg Donaghy, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, “Parallel Paths: Canada-Australian Relations since the 1890s,” [www.canadainternational.gc.ca/australia.../parallel\\_paths-voies](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/australia.../parallel_paths-voies) (accessed October 24, 2011).

142 T. E. Kaiser, “Historic Sketches of Oshawa,” [www.archive.org/stream/.../sketcheshoshowa00kaisuoft\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/.../sketcheshoshowa00kaisuoft_djvu.txt) (accessed November 2, 2011).

143 *The Capricornian* [Rockhampton, Queensland], September 16, 1899.

144 Luke Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, Conflict, and Compromise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 111.

145 *St. Andrew's Bay Pilot* [St. Andrew's, NB], August 11, 1887; *The New York Times*, September 17, 1890.

146 “Sir John Macdonald's Last Address to the People of Canada,” contained in John Pope, *Memoirs of the Right Honourable Sir John Alexander Macdonald, first Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada* (Ottawa: J. Durie & Son, 1894), vol. 2, pp. 332-336.

147 “Sir John Macdonald's Last Address,” p. 333.



argument, accusing the Canadian government of being cynical in its promotion of such trading opportunities knowing that such claims were illusionary. *The Times* contented that these new markets would be impossible without substantial investments by a debt-ridden government in enhanced steamship service.<sup>148</sup>

While Macdonald may have cobbled together a trade strategy to offset the costs of the railway construction and Canada's exclusion from much of the American market, he was drawing on ideas that had been in circulation for at least a decade.<sup>149</sup> The British railway magnate Edward Watkin had expressed similar notions: that more railways and more trade made a better world. Watkin's views, however, originated from a deeply imperialist perspective. In a retrospective work on his effort to develop railways in Canada, he had from early in his career urged the necessity of confederation to create a bigger country—a country large enough to breed large ideas and free from sectoral controversies such as those found in Quebec.<sup>150</sup> Watkin believed that bridging the Atlantic trading system with that of the Pacific would create a “great highway for peoples and commerce” that would afford Canada “the commercial sceptre of the world.”<sup>151</sup> While Watkin was single-mindedly serving his Queen and the Empire, in his mind's eye he deeply believed that such a trade highway would liberate the individual from nature's tyranny. The locomotive would free societies from the limitations of the wind, the horse, or humanity's bent back to foster “real liberty and progress.”<sup>152</sup>

Consideration of things both Pacific and Australian was also an opportunity to dissect the utility of free trade versus protection.<sup>153</sup> Such political conversations conveyed the growing impression in the public's mind that economic life in general and trade regimes in particular had a strong impact on daily life. In 1850, while granting responsible government, the British government allowed the Australian colonies to establish their own customs tariffs, excepting those that might discriminate against their neighbours or Britain.<sup>154</sup> At the time of the Sydney fair in 1877, New South Wales was still an open market, while the state of Victoria—the most protected market among the Australian colonies—had erected tariff barriers.<sup>155</sup> One James Douglas, in an article entitled “The Philadelphia Exhibition” appearing in *The Canadian Monthly and National Review*, openly recommended that each colony “should stick to its own thing [tariff imposition]” in the interests of “social science” to determine the success of each regime.<sup>156</sup>

148 *The New York Times*, February 9, 1891. Historian Christopher Pennington's recent book reinforced the *New York Times*' view. Pennington described Macdonald's 1891 campaign promise to provide fast steamship service to the Pacific as potentially costing “millions.” See Christopher J. Pennington, *The Destiny of Canada: Macdonald, Laurier, and the Election of 1891* (Toronto: Allen Lane Canada 2011), p. 199.

149 Edward William Watkin, *Canada and the States, Recollections 1851 to 1886* (London: Ward Lock & Co., 1887).

150 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

151 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

152 *Ibid.*, p. xi.

153 *The Globe* [Toronto], August 28, 1876.

154 Capling and Galligan, *Beyond the Protective State*, p. 72; Douglas Pike, *Australia: The Quiet Continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 122.

155 Capling and Galligan, *Beyond the Protective State*, p. 72.

156 Douglas, “The Philadelphia Exhibition,” p. 245. Douglas referenced *The New York Tribune* for these remarks, but he provided no date.

There was some logic to this approach, as New South Wales and Victoria, having complementary histories and geographies, were ideal to assess the efficacy of free trade versus protection.<sup>157</sup> The debate on this aspect of public policy evoked considerable passion in both Australia and Canada and resembled religious enthusiasm more than economic theory. By the late 1870s the tide was turning in favour of protection.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Canadian business leaders, the owners of mills and factories, began to exert greater authority within the political culture. For reasons of self-interest, they were eager to form lobbying groups such as the Ontario Manufacturers' Association to influence government and public opinion. Among manufacturers there was no topic of greater urgency than the free trade versus protectionism debate, and several, including furniture-maker Robert Hay and wallpaper-producer Hugh Staunton, assumed authority in recommending trade policy. Attracted by their leadership among Toronto's manufacturers, Augustus Morris appears to have visited both in an effort to drum up support for the Sydney fair. Eager for new markets to augment the small home market and to offset the loss of American consumers, many Canadian manufacturers were intrigued by the possibility of increased international trade—and Hay agreed to be part of the committee soliciting Ottawa's support for a Canadian exhibit at the Sydney Intercolonial Exhibition. Although he and his earlier partner John Jacques had supported the Reform Party for decades, by the mid 1870s Hay was increasingly desperate to save his business. His fellow furniture-producer and exhibitor at Sydney, George Moorhead of London, Ontario, went bankrupt. In 1878, and after mixed success at the Sydney exhibit—and possibly other international expositions—Hay must have deemed it too late for Canadian manufacturing in a universe dominated by free trade. Decrying the American dumping of furniture into the Canadian market and the fact that the prominent Hay furniture factory could only operate on a short working-week, he decamped for Conservative Party Leader John A. Macdonald and the National Policy. Enveloped within the National Policy was a kernel of nationalism, a resolution to see the Canadian destiny, underpinned by a solid industrial base and secure markets, consolidated within the arc of the continent.<sup>158</sup> Hay made clear his conversion to protection by standing as a political candidate in the riding of Centre Toronto. He won the seat, and, to prevent any confusion on the position of his company, all its subsequent public advertising in the late 1870s appeared under the banner of the "National Policy."<sup>159</sup>

Hay was not alone in being bruised by the disappointments of the Sydney exhibition. Many other manufacturers took similar paths, a few also offering themselves as political candidates: some, such as W. H. Howland (edge tools) and Edward Gurney (stoves), who had been strong advocates for and exhibitors at the

<sup>157</sup> Edmund Rogers, "Free Trade versus Protectionism: New South Wales, Victoria and the Tariff Debate in Britain, 1881-1900" (Department of History, University of Guelph, edmundrogers.email@gmail.com (accessed October 30, 2011).

<sup>158</sup> Brown, "The Nationalism of the National Policy," pp. 161-162.

<sup>159</sup> A representative example is found in *The Monetary Times and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 12, no. 46 (May 9, 1879), p. 1385.

Sydney fair, eagerly embraced both protectionism and Macdonald.<sup>160</sup> Supported by much of the business community and many working men concerned about their jobs, the Conservative leader then glided to victory in the 1878 election.<sup>161</sup> Gurney had been initially so enthusiastic about Australian prospects that in a planning meeting in early 1876 he had wondered audibly about the prospect of sending 40 tons of stoves to Sydney.<sup>162</sup> He had even accompanied Morris to Ottawa as representative of the Hamilton Board of Trade.<sup>163</sup> Gurney's token shipment of stoves to Australia had failed to sell, and by 1878 he came out publicly in support of protection. Moreover, in an executive role at the Ontario Manufacturers' Association, he recommended to the new Macdonald government the precise tariff levels sought by the association's members.<sup>164</sup> Gurney was in the audience for Mackenzie Bowell's 1894 speech on opportunities for more trade with Australia and must have listened to a specific recommendation on the strong market there for Canadian stoves. Gurney appeared underwhelmed, and his only response to the minister's comments referencing his product was to equate free-traders with anarchists who deserved to be shot.<sup>165</sup>

In contrast to those firms that were largely content to pursue the Canadian market behind tariff walls, the Massey agricultural equipment supplier watched the Australian market carefully, supplying mowing machines, horse rakes, and grain crushers to the Sydney fair in 1877.<sup>166</sup> While mindful of the benefits of the National Policy in protecting the company's domestic trade, owners were also cognizant of the limitation of a small Canadian market.<sup>167</sup> Gratified that their machinery had received a bronze medal at the 1877 fair, the firm's owners were subsequently frustrated that they could make no further market penetration and that a token number of Massey harvesters shipped to an importer in Melbourne in the early 1880s had not been sold.<sup>168</sup> Hart Massey explained that the firm had experienced problems "in getting its goods on the spot in time."<sup>169</sup> Australians had seeming difficulty discerning Massey equipment from that of American competitors and tended to select known products from a familiar source.<sup>170</sup> The company found it had to cope with the perception that Canada was a frigid wasteland with little manufacturing. Marketing staff returning from the Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition in 1889 were livid that Canada

<sup>160</sup> J. J. Benjamin Forster, *A Conjunction of Interests: Business, Politics, and Tariffs 1825-1879* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 171.

<sup>161</sup> Bruce W. Hodgins and Robert C. Edwards, "Politics of Ontario, 1867-80" in W. H. Heick, Bruce W. Hodgins, and Don Wright, eds., *Federalism in Canada and Australia: The Early Years* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1979), p. 94.

<sup>162</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], September 9, 1876.

<sup>163</sup> *The Monetary and Trade Review-Insurance Chronicle*, vol. 10, no. 9 (August 25, 1876).

<sup>164</sup> Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism*, p. 16; *The Globe* [Toronto], September 13, 1878.

<sup>165</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], February 15, 1894.

<sup>166</sup> Young, *Report of the Canadian Commission*, p. 22.

<sup>167</sup> J. Andrew Ross and Andrew D. Smith, *Canada's Entrepreneurs: From the Fur Trade to the 1929 Stock Market* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), pp. 257-258.

<sup>168</sup> *Massey-Harris: An Historical Sketch, 1846-1926* (Toronto: Massey-Harris Co., 1926), p. 25.

<sup>169</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], July 27, 1893.

<sup>170</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], February 15, 1894.

had been poorly represented at the fair, and they regretted being placed adjacent to the representative of a Montreal perfumery dressed in a complete tobogganing suit with his sales booth festooned with snowshoes.<sup>171</sup> With the passage of time and the establishment of a direct steamer service, Massey-Harris's prospects in Australia improved; shipping time fell from four to five months to two to three months.<sup>172</sup> It also helped significantly that orders could be received by cable. By the early part of the twentieth century, the firm had offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Perth, Australia.<sup>173</sup>

### Conclusion

In 1879 the tariffs of the National Policy became a reality, bringing the most sweeping changes to date in Canada's commercial policy. No longer used largely as a source of income for the government, tariffs on imported goods were regulated to protect Canadian industry against the encroachment of foreign imports on the Canadian market. While the National Policy, when capitalized, referred to the protective tariff, in lower case the policy related to an integrated system of economic initiatives, including completion of the transcontinental rail link and development of the Canadian west through increased immigration.<sup>174</sup> The objective was to build a great east-west transcontinental trading system, with the manufacturers of Toronto at its centre supplying the developing agricultural communities of the prairies.<sup>175</sup> This agenda captured a nationalist enthusiasm for broadening the Canadian economy and restoring confidence in Canada's destiny. In Robert Hay's words, "[T]he people of those vast territories will add enormously to the wealth and strength of the Dominion, and it is to the interest of the merchants, manufacturers and mechanics of Old Canada, that the trade policy which gives them control of the expanding markets of the North-west should be maintained and rendered permanent."<sup>176</sup> It was hoped that a completed railway system, linking the various economic elements of Canada, would also enable Canada to achieve its potential as a Pacific trading nation. Australia was of continued interest but, by the time Canada had its first trade commissioner in place, public policy in the southern continent had also changed, and John Short Larke was constrained by an increasingly protectionist Australian press in his activities to promote Canadian

<sup>171</sup> *Massey Illustrated*, vol. 1, no. 8 (July 1889), p. 126.

<sup>172</sup> *The Globe* [Toronto], July 27, 1893.

<sup>173</sup> *Massey-Harris: An Historical Sketch*, p. 24.

<sup>174</sup> Completion of the railway and further immigration would not have been possible without displacement of Canadian Aboriginal people and their settlement in reserves. See James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), pp. 108, 184. Sarah Carter, in her book *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), noted that Aboriginal people did not share in the new prosperity of the developing Canadian west (p. 173).

<sup>175</sup> Hodgins and Edwards, "Politics of Ontario, 1867-80," p. 96; Ben Forster, "The National Policy" in Gerald Hallowell, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004), Oxford Reference Online, Oxford University Press, University of Ottawa, [www.oxfordreference.com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t148.e980](http://www.oxfordreference.com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t148.e980) (accessed November 1, 2013).

<sup>176</sup> Robert Hay, "To the Electors of Centre Toronto," *The Canada Presbyterian*, vol. 10, no. 23 (June 9, 1882), p. 366.

trade. Moreover, as Canadian trade relations with the United States began to show slow evidence of new life, nascent markets in the Antipodes seemed distant.<sup>177</sup>

For more than two decades both Australia and Canada had tried to create a strong trading relationship. Their leaders realized that, despite many deep differences, they shared similar cultural values and analogous political structures. Both countries saw their destinies linked to the development of their promising hinterlands, and leaders were frustrated by the challenge of establishing manufacturing in economies in which staple exports dominated. The two fledgling societies were driven by a need to transform the rich gifts of their respective geographies into more finished goods to obtain a fairer portion “of the lion’s share of the profits.”<sup>178</sup>

Kipling wrote that the deep sea cables of the telegraph had killed “Father Time.” In the latter half of the nineteenth century, there were many romantic notions circulating that posited that evolving technology had overcome the obstacles of time and space.<sup>179</sup> In reality, efforts to promote more trade between Canada and Australia, often based on scanty information, encountered many roadblocks. While technology would inevitably break down most of these barriers, it took time for the Canadian Pacific Railway to be finally completed in 1885, for steamship travel to become the norm, for regular sea connections between Vancouver and Sydney to be subsidized, and for the Pacific cable to become operative. Participation by Canadian manufacturers at the Metropolitan Intercolonial Exhibition in Sydney fostered some understanding of an interconnected world. Would-be exporters required the imagination to understand unfolding Pacific trade patterns, but also the deep pockets and persistence to chase such opportunities. While some such as Hay and Gurney were content to focus on the domestic market sheltered by protection, others such as Massey-Harris pursued both the domestic market and the foreign sales made possible by rail, subsidized steamer, and cable. By the last decade of the century the promotion of trade with Australia served a political end, diverting attention from frustrations over the closed American market. Some imperialists such as Sandford Fleming took up the familiar theme of advocating stronger relationships between the settler-societies, arguing that Canada and Australia had travelled a parallel path in nation-building. Fleming was insistent that a closer relationship was possible and would, in his words, be “a new bond” between “the Queen’s subjects,” however distant.<sup>180</sup> Despite Fleming’s visionary grasp of time and space, market forces prevailed. Commercial realities trumped the rhetoric of empire and race.

<sup>177</sup> Donaghy, “Parallel Paths.”

<sup>178</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 12, 1874.

<sup>179</sup> Rudyard Kipling, “Deep-Sea Cables,” *Rudyard Kipling’s Verse, 1885-1932* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1934), p. 173, referenced in Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 88 and also pp. 76-77.

<sup>180</sup> Lawrence Johnstone Burpee, *Sandford Fleming, Empire Builder* (Toronto, London, & New York: Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 265; Sandford Fleming, “The Establishment of a Great Imperial Intelligence Union as a Means of Promoting the Consolidation of the Empire” (address delivered before the Eighty Club on July 20, 1906, CIHM/ICMH Microfiche series no. 78108).

