

# Report of the Annual Meeting

## Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada

Report of the Annual Meeting

### History and French-Canadian Survival

R. M. Saunders

Volume 22, numéro 1, 1943

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/300242ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/300242ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0317-0594 (imprimé)

1712-9095 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Saunders, R. M. (1943). History and French-Canadian Survival. *Report of the Annual Meeting / Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada*, 22(1), 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.7202/300242ar>

All rights reserved © The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada, 1943

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

**é**rudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

## HISTORY AND FRENCH-CANADIAN SURVIVAL

By R. M. SAUNDERS  
*The University of Toronto*

THE writing of history in French Canada has been an instrument of French action, and a very important one in this country, on this continent. The French-Canadian historian has written to preach national survival to his compatriots, to inspire them with self-respect and pride, to gain a higher place for French Canada in this North American world. Mgr Emile Chartier has expressed this attitude recently in these words, written in 1941: "He [the French Canadian] undertook to relate his history that he might win respect for himself. This was the task, especially after 1840."<sup>1</sup> To increase his prestige, and to win in Canada a place of equality with his English-Canadian rivals, was, indeed, the task he set himself.

The man who envisaged the aim best, and who set his poetic pen to the work of achieving it, was François-Xavier Garneau. Classicist in style, yet stirred by the pulsating emotionalism of the Romantic mid-nineteenth century, disciple of Michelet and Augustin Thierry, Garneau approached the task; conceiving of the history of the French-Canadian people as the story of a passionate struggle for existence, comparable to the stirring strife of the Poles against their Russian masters, of the Irish against England. The unhappy ending of the Rebellion of 1837, and the imposing of the Act of Union in 1840 had darkened the outlook of all French-Canadians, so that a general air of depression and hopelessness prevailed amongst them. Against this Garneau reacted strongly, as he did, it seems, against the taunts of his English-speaking associates. He would bring his people to a true measure of themselves, give them hope and pride, answer the enemy's quips. In those days, France and all Europe were throbbing with the upsurge of adolescent nationalism. Nations, large and small, were reaching for unity, independence, power, a place in the sun. Why should there not be a French nation in Canada? Let the French Canadians strive to save themselves, to fulfil their mission in America. Under the impact of such impulses Garneau sat down to write.

His great work, the *Histoire du Canada*, published in three editions during his lifetime (1843, 1848, 1852) and in three editions since his death (1882, 1913, 1920), laid down a pattern of life for the French Canadians, a philosophy born of Garneau's emotions. From first to last this little people had had to fight for its existence, and it had made a dogged fight. So Garneau filled the pages of his book with a glorification of the French triumph over the Iroquois; of French successes against the Americans, of French-Canadian victories in the conflict for survival with the English; this last conflict, still in progress, had seen them in mortal peril; but because of this they must not sink into hopelessness and defeat. Let them remember their glorious past, and the proud record of ancient triumphs would inspire them to future victories. Let them be what they had been and they would win in the end. This philosophy of stubborn survival in the face of an unfriendly environment is summed up in the conclusion of Garneau's work thus:

---

<sup>1</sup>Emile Chartier, *La Vie de l'esprit au Canada français, 1760-1925* (Montreal, 1941), 250.

This people, without the help of outsiders, has grown in religious faith and in national feeling. For one hundred and fifty years it struggled against the English colonies, thirty or forty times more populous, and its history tells us how it fulfilled its duty on the field of battle.

Though lacking in wealth and little favoured it has shown that it retains something from the noble nation whence its origin stems. Since the conquest, without letting itself be led astray by the theories of the Philosophes or by the declamations of rhetoricians on the rights of man, it has directed all its policy to its own conservation. It was too few in numbers to pretend to cut a new swath among societies, or to put itself at the head of any worldwide movement. It withdrew into itself; it rallied all its children around it; and despite the sarcasms of its neighbours constantly feared to lose one custom, one thought, one prejudice of its forefathers. Thus has it kept its religion and its language to this day, and by the same means a foothold for England in North America in the years 1775 and 1812. . . .

The French Canadians are a people of farmers, living in a hard, severe climate. In this capacity they have not the elegant and stately manners of southern peoples; but they do have gravity, character and perseverance. They have given proofs of these ever since they have been in America, and we are convinced that those who will read their history in good faith will recognize that they have shown themselves to be worthy of the two great nations to whose destinies their fate has been or is now linked. . . .

Let Canadians be true to themselves. May they be wise and persevering. Let them not allow themselves to be seduced by the glitter of social and political novelties! They are not strong enough to launch out upon such a career. It is up to the great peoples to test out new theories for in their spacious orbits they can give themselves full leeway. For us, a part of our strength comes from our traditions; let us not quit them or change them save gradually. In the history of our metropolis itself we shall find good examples to follow. If England is great today she has had to endure terrible storms, overcome foreign conquest, master religious wars and many other misfortunes. Though we have no desire to aim at so high a destiny our wisdom and our firm union will soften our difficulties, and, by exciting their interest, will make our course more sacred in the eyes of the nations.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, victory in the future by looking to the past, and by the cultivation of a granitic determination to be, and to remain themselves was the heart of Garneau's programme for the French Canadians. M. Lanctot's comment upon Garneau is pertinent here. He says: "Garneau's patriotism is such that it impregnates his whole work with a special character, for it may be said that he was a patriot before being an historian, and, perhaps, that he became an historian because he was a patriot."<sup>3</sup> Once crystallized and proclaimed in Garneau's resonant pages this philosophy of life, the quintessence of French Canada's natural impulses, became the basic pattern

<sup>2</sup>François-Xavier Garneau, *Histoire du Canada*, 5th ed. (Paris, 1920), II, 715-18.

<sup>3</sup>Gustave Lanctot, *François Xavier Garneau*, in "Makers of Canadian Literature" series (Toronto, 1926), 152.

for historians, poets, and other writers; and from it there has been no fundamental divergence to this day.

Garneau was hailed as a hero by his compatriots as a wave of public gratification arose in response to his defiant glorification of the French-Canadian nation. Crémazie, Fréchette, and the whole school of patriot poets followed the historian to the well of national pride for inspiration. There was one aspect, however, of the picture which Garneau had drawn that did not strike a responsive chord in the hearts of many, perhaps most. The role of the church had been neglected; the policies of the church, and of the government in behalf of the church had been criticized, as had the attitudes of certain ecclesiastical dignitaries such as Bishop Laval. Consequently, despite his stand that the preservation of the faith was a basic part of French-Canadian survival, and his counsel to the people to avoid social and political novelties, Garneau was accused of Gallicanism and anti-clericalism, of Voltairianism and revolutionary ideas. This note was sounded as recently as 1930 by Mgr Camille Roy in these words: "His [Garneau's] admiration for Voltaire and Michelet prepared him ill to understand the religious questions which arise in every page of Canadian history. The seductive theories of Gallicanism and liberalism have more than once inspired and falsified his judgments."<sup>4</sup> The strength of such criticism was great enough in his lifetime to force Garneau to remove certain passages from his book in its third edition, though the original text was restored in later editions by the author's grandson.

Such feelings led the Abbé J. B. A. Ferland, Professor of History at Laval University, to take up afresh the task of writing French-Canadian history. There is no doubt that Ferland's heart, like those of his friends Crémazie and Fréchette, beat in tune to Garneau's patriotism. But the balance must be restored so far as the church was concerned, and its true place in the history of French Canada clearly delineated. Garneau's theme of survival through conflict is reflected in the conclusion of a little book published by the Abbé Ferland in 1854, where he states: ". . . So! Despite the illwill of several governors and the favorites of power; in spite of the calumnies, injustices and insults which it has been made to swallow the French-Canadian population has sustained itself, has multiplied, and has taken its share of material progress while carefully preserving its faith, its language, and its institutions. . . ."<sup>5</sup> When the first edition of Ferland's *Cours d'histoire du Canada* appeared in 1861 it was clear that the purpose of the author was not to deny the validity of Garneau's main theme, but to retouch the picture so as to give the church the paramount place. This aim the author reveals in his introduction where he asserts:

Faith and honour! such was the gauge of union and love which France gave to her children whom she sent to create a new country in the west, on the banks of the great rivers of America. And, history teaches us, her children have respected the teachings of their mother.

If we find in the annals of Europe so many pages worthy of our attention, what interest must not the history of our own Country inspire in us, since it includes the lively picture of the trials, the sufferings, the successes of our ancestors; since it retraces for us the

<sup>4</sup>Camille Roy, *Histoire de la littérature canadienne* (Quebec, 1930), 57.

<sup>5</sup>J. B. A. Ferland, *Notes sur les régîtres de Notre-Dame de Québec* (Quebec, 1854), 74.

means which they used to found a Catholic colony on the banks of the St. Lawrence, and shows us at the same time the way which Canadians must follow in order to keep intact the faith, the language and the institutions of their fathers.

. . . religion exercised a powerful and salutary influence upon the organization of the French colony in Canada. It took the diverse elements, come from all the different provinces of France and fused them together. Out of them it formed a united and vigorous people which will continue to increase, as long as it remains faithful to the traditions of its fathers.<sup>6</sup>

The Abbé Ferland was lukewarm in his praise of Garneau, speaking of him as "a man of distinguished talent . . . who has consecrated a part of his life to the writing of a history of Canada which is well thought of in France as well as in our own country."<sup>7</sup> Yet, save for the difference in emphasis Ferland and Garneau had the same end in view, the national survival of the French Canadians. It was this fact that Crémazie had in mind when he wrote in 1866 to the Abbé H. R. Casgrain, "Messieurs Garneau and Ferland have already . . . laid a foundation of granite for our literary edifice."<sup>8</sup>

The Garneau tradition as modified by the Abbé Ferland found at once a host of advocates, a chorus in every field to sing its harmonies. Gradually two groups of writers began to form around two variant expressions of the tradition. In the field of historical writing the spiritual leaders of the two groups are men whose names are well known in French-Canadian historiography, the Hon. Thomas Chapais and the Abbé Lionel Groulx.

Like his predecessor, Abbé Ferland, Thomas Chapais was Professor of History at Laval University, and it was in his courses of lectures at that university that he developed his interpretation of the Garneau tradition. Garneau's patriotic mission Chapais accepted wholeheartedly. Indeed he rose in public forum to counter possible criticism of Garneau on that score saying,

The rigorous upholders of the new critical school of history will, perhaps, blame his [Garneau's] work for that quality which constitutes one of its most potent charms among the author's compatriots. They will accuse it of being above all a patriotic history, and according to them, patriotism has no place in history since history is a science, nothing else. . . . Yet . . . the historian has a heart and no law obliges him to stop his heart from beating. He has a country; under what head would anyone forbid him to love it with all the force of his soul? Doubtless patriotism must not suborn judgment, nor falsify equity, nor suppress impartiality in the writer of history. Justice and truth must be his inflexible law. But are they incompatible with love of race and country? We can admit no such thing.<sup>9</sup>

That Garneau's patriotism had sometimes led his judgment astray Chapais was prepared to admit but he was not ready, as he says, "to take the

<sup>6</sup>Ferland, *Cours d'histoire du Canada*, 2nd ed. (Quebec, 1882), iii-x.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, vii.

<sup>8</sup>Cited in Ian Forbes Fraser, *The Spirit of French Canada* (New York, 1939), 26.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas Chapais, "L'Histoire de Garneau" in *Semaine d'histoire du Canada: Compte rendu et mémoires* (Montreal, 1926), 29.

patriot-historian too much to task" for it, since it was "this love of country which brought his book to birth . . . which has made M. Garneau one of the noblest figures of our national Panthéon."<sup>10</sup>

Garneau's attitude toward the church Chapais was less willing to accept or to pass over. In this respect he aligns himself with the Abbé Ferland, the Abbé Casgrain and the other critics; with, that is, the Ferland modification of the Garneau tradition. Chapais agrees with the criticism that Garneau did not bring out clearly "the providential mission of French Canada"; and that though Garneau was a respectful son of the church he did not possess "that intimate fusion" of love of church and country which is "the very essence of Canadian patriotism." He finds it hard to explain why Garneau never saw that "religious unity is the greatest force and benefit which any nation can enjoy since it unites our souls in an unbreakable bond."<sup>11</sup>

Despite flaws of judgment, for his day and age and *milieu*, Garneau had given a remarkable example of historical scholarship. Upon this aspect of Garneau's work Chapais seized with avidity. During the period from 1890 to 1930 when Chapais was doing the bulk of his writing, the idea that history is a science was dominant in the historical fraternity. That Chapais was sensitive to the demands of "scientific history" is evident from the passage concerning patriotism quoted above. That he should understand such demands better than Garneau is easily comprehended from the chronological development of such ideas; that he abided by the rules of "scientific history" so fully is very much to Mr. Chapais' credit. With impartiality as a weapon, Chapais battled many misinterpretations, legends, and biases which had arisen in the previous writing of French-Canadian history. One passage from his *Cours d'histoire du Canada* will give convincing evidence of this fact. Speaking of the church during the troubled period after the Conquest he says:

Yes, if our Church got through the torment of 1763 and the following years without perishing it is to him [Mgr Briand], to his firmness, his loyalty, his prudence, his calm that we owe it. Honour to his pure and noble memory! Honour also to his devoted associates, to Montgolfier, La Corne, L'Isle-Dieu, Etienne Charest. And why should we not add?—Justice is the supreme law of history—honour to those enlightened Englishmen, to those British governors, officials and statesmen, Murray, Cramahé, Carleton, Burke, Rockingham whose uprightness and political sense made them second our leaders' efforts! All of them, though in varying degrees and for different reasons, have a right to our imperishable gratitude for having shared in the saving of that great national institution, the Canadian Church.<sup>12</sup>

It so happens that such a treatment of history fitted not only the requirements of scientific history, and a sense of fair play and justice, but also met the needs of French-Canadian action as conceived by M. Chapais. Garneau, living in a generation when fear was the predominant mood, always thought of the French Canadians as a *petit peuple*—a little people—whose hope of persistence lay in a policy of withdrawal, of

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 22-3.

<sup>12</sup>Chapais, *Cours d'histoire du Canada* (Quebec, 1919), I, 60.

avoidance of the rest of the world. True, he saw with intellectual if not emotional conviction that French Canadians must remain on good terms with Great Britain for in the British connection lay the chief hope of French-Canadian survival, and conversely Canada would remain British only if Quebec remained French.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless the main impression given by Garneau's book is that the French Canadians are a little people whose main task is to survive, and whose chief ambition must be to survive by and through themselves. With the insistence on the need of survival Chapais had no quarrel, but of the best method of survival he had different ideas. Clearly he was stirred less, if at all, by the fears of Garneau's generation. His hopes of French-Canadian survival were pinned on the policies of statesmen like Sir George Etienne Cartier, Sir Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, finding in wholehearted co-operation with English Canadians a larger sphere for French-Canadian influence and a surer guarantee of survival for French Canada than that given by any programme of survival by withdrawal. Without doubt M. Chapais' historical works have contributed, and have been meant to contribute to the spreading of belief in such policies as these among his compatriots. Like Garneau's work, they have been books of action, and to such a programme the rules of scientific history, the tenets of justice and fair play, obviously have been of considerable aid. Yet, in order that it may be seen that M. Chapais' views are no divergence from the Garneau tradition but a broadening of it in new circumstances, let us close our remarks about M. Chapais by citing his fervent approval of Garneau's advice, "Let Canadians be true to themselves!", in these words:

. . . may this greatest of all pleas prolong its echos in our hearts! Above all may it ever remain the sacred watchword of our youth! Let Canadians be true to themselves! Let them be true to their great and holy origins; let them be true to the faith of their forefathers; let them be true to the ancestral traditions; let them be true to their tongue and their religion; let them be true to the glorious mission which Providence has called them to carry out in the North American continent! And the future, which doubtless still holds trials and struggles for them, will see, of this we have a firm hope, not only the survival [of this people], but the ever greater increase and expansion of their national life!<sup>14</sup>

In marked contrast to the stand taken by Senator Chapais is the attitude of the Abbé Lionel Groulx, Professor of the History of Canada at the University of Montreal. If Chapais sees the survival of the French-Canadian people ensured by closer and closer co-operation with English Canadians in the development of a greater Canadian state, an essential component of a strong British Empire, the Abbé Groulx finds salvation and survival for the French Canadian to lie along the path of survival through withdrawal, of particularism defined through conflict.

The fears which tolled their dirges to the ears of Garneau's generation still ring their solemn peals for the Abbé Groulx. "We [the French Canadians]," he says, "belong to that little group of peoples . . . destined on earth for a special role, the tragic role. Their anxiety is not the question whether they will be prosperous or unfortunate tomorrow, great

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Lanctôt, *Garneau*, 150.

<sup>14</sup>Chapais, *L'Histoire de Garneau*, 31.

or small; but whether or not they will be at all, whether they will rise to salute the day or retire into nothingness."<sup>15</sup>

To combat fear was perhaps Garneau's chief reason for writing the *Histoire du Canada*. To overcome such fears he stressed continuously the successes of the French-Canadians in their endless conflict for survival. From past successes the people should take hope for the future, continuing the conflict with the same obdurate determination. His was a combative theme.

From Garneau's flame Groulx has lighted his torch. The conflict, however, which Garneau saw as an unhappy fact that had to be endured with stubborn hope became for the Abbé Groulx a necessary means to an end, a virtue. In *La Naissance d'une race*, Groulx cites with approval Joseph de Maistre's dictum: ". . . it is very essential to observe that, over and beyond the element of attraction which creates national unity and which is the result of a community of language, character, etc., this unity is also prodigiously reinforced by the element of repulsion which separates the different nations. In effect, it is a disagreeable truth, but none the less a truth: Nations do not love each other."<sup>16</sup> From beginning to end in his writings, Groulx has acted upon this view that the active cultivation of dislike and antipathy is an essential part of nation-building, and, in the case of the French Canadian, of survival. Readers of *La Naissance d'une race*, *Vers l'Émancipation*, and *Notre Maître, le passé*, are well aware of this.<sup>17</sup> The idea has been, apparently, that in learning to dislike Englishmen and Americans, the French Canadians would become surer of themselves, and so of survival. Such a view contemplates not an end to conflict but the perpetuation of conflict for the benefits it brings in the building of a French-Canadian nation. It is Garneau's negative combativeness transformed into a positive good.

In order to win in the eternal conflict, in order to conquer fear, French Canadians must above all, according to the Abbé Groulx, have pride in themselves, in their past, in all that they stand for. In 1924, he wrote:

Pride was one of the virtues, which in the recent past we most lacked, though little was as necessary to us as that. A people weak in numbers can, if need be, do without wealth and even without art but certainly not without pride. To live it is first necessary to convince oneself that life is worth the trouble. . . . [But] to be proud our youth has need only to know whom they are. It does not suit the sons of the great Frenchmen who built that masterpiece of history, New France, to seek elsewhere than at home the reasons for their dignity.<sup>18</sup>

The Abbé Groulx has bent all his energies in teaching and writing to the end that French Canadians might achieve this pride of nation, and that they might, one and all, work for the "common task," the future preservation for and by this people of "a Latin Christian culture, of the vocation of an apostolic race."<sup>19</sup> For this purpose he has written history

<sup>15</sup>Lionel Groulx, *Directives* (Montreal, 1937), 10.

<sup>16</sup>Groulx, *La Naissance d'une race* (Montreal, 1919), 86-7.

<sup>17</sup>Groulx, *Vers l'Émancipation* (Montreal, 1921); *Notre Maître, le passé*, 1ère série (Montreal, 1924); *Notre Maître, le passé*, 2ème série (Montreal, 1936).

<sup>18</sup>Groulx, *Notre Maître*, 1ère série, 9.

<sup>19</sup>Groulx, *ibid.*, 10.



as "a Catholic and a French Canadian";<sup>20</sup> has regarded the subject of history as "neither a speculative science, nor as a dilettante's discipline" but rather as an "essentially dynamic [subject] which cannot evade the obligation of inspiring, if not of formulating, disciplines of action."<sup>21</sup>

To the labours of inspiration the Abbé Groulx has brought a poet's temperament and a poetic pen. His books are filled with flashing colour, high imagination, and passionate feeling. Mgr Chartier has quite aptly called him "our poet-historian."<sup>22</sup> Only such a poet-historian could have penned the passage which closes *La Naissance d'une race*. It reads:

The little Canadian people of 1760 possessed all the elements of nationhood. It had a land of its own, it had ethnic unity, linguistic unity, it had a history and traditions. But above all it had religious unity, the unity of the true faith, and with it social balance and the assurance of the future. Legatee of the highest French civilization it strengthened its youth with all the forces of order and spirit. But when a people has on its side the truth and morality of Catholicism, the perfect essence of that Christianity which Taine called "the best auxiliary of the social instinct"; when the generous will of a long series of ancestors has made of the highest Christian virtues and ethnic tradition, a spirited heritage transmitted with life itself; when this same people further possesses, through its faith and from its ancestors the sovereign law of hierarchic progress; when the dignity of morals, respect for the laws of life, the peace of families and classes, the cult of justice, prayer and the spirit are placed above all material grandeurs; when this people possesses an immense, fruitful and lovely land, immense and fruitful in the amplitude of its horizons and its riches, in the promises it offers to labour; lovely in its material countenance and in the form of its soul, in its historic patrimony which sanctions every pride of blood: such a people, invested with all these titles and guardian of all these hopes may appear the last and the least in the eyes of materialist policy. None the less it bears on its forehead the seal of the predestined, for it is of that number through whom divine deeds will yet be accomplished.<sup>23</sup>

The conquest of fear, the enhancement of antagonisms, the cult of pride, as understood by the Abbé Groulx can and must have in his eyes but one ending, the crystallization of a French-Canadian nation. We have already seen in the passage quoted above his conviction that French Canada had all the elements of nationhood in 1760. This idea he condensed into the title of the book from which the citation comes, *La Naissance d'une race*. The concept has been repeated in more explicit language in the title, *La Naissance d'une nation*, given to a book published in 1937 which was written by Gérard Filteau, a disciple of the Abbé Groulx. That the formation of a "race" or nation is a slow process, Groulx is ready to admit. "God," he says, "cannot form a race as he does an individual." Such creation is a matter of a gradual accumulation of energies, "the slow blossoming of an ideal."<sup>24</sup> That the realization of this ideal would mean

<sup>20</sup>Groulx, *Vers l'Emancipation*, 8.

<sup>21</sup>Groulx, *Directives*, 9.

<sup>22</sup>Chartier, *La Vie de l'esprit*, 251.

<sup>23</sup>Groulx, *La Naissance d'une race*, 293-4.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 180.

the creation of a separate French state in America he denies. This "French state" will remain within the Canadian confederation but on the basis of a greater autonomy than French Canada now enjoys. The conclusion at which he aims would appear to be a state within a state. To those of his compatriots who in 1937 thought this an idle dream the Abbé Groulx hurled defiance in these words:

Too late? But do you not see, do you not hear what is coming? The breath of greatness is beginning to stir a generation. Our youth, intelligent, bustling, resolute, carry our dawning future in their eyes. That is why I belong to those who hope. Because there is God; because there is our history, I hope. I hope with all our ancestors who have hoped; I hope with all those who hope today; I hope above my time, above all the discouraged. Whether they wish our French state or not, we shall have it; we shall have it young, strong, radiant and beautiful, the spiritual home, the dynamic pole of all French America. We shall have a French country too, a country which will carry its soul in its countenance. Snobs, *bonne-ententistes*, defeatists can shout at us as much as they like: "You are the last generation of French Canadians." I reply to them along with all our youth: "We are the living generation. You are the last generation of the dead."<sup>25</sup>

During the last thirty or forty years French-Canadian historians have divided according to their preference for the attitude of Thomas Chapais or for the views of the Abbé Groulx. Undoubtedly the majority have chosen to follow Chapais' lead. But the Abbé Groulx has raised about him an ardent, very vocal, and very loyal minority group. At heart the two groups have but one objective, the preservation of the French-Canadian people. Consequently, their differences, sharp and bitter as they have often been, are the result of divergent opinions as to the best method of achieving the goal, rather than a dispute about the goal to be achieved. A contemporary French-Canadian historian has written of Garneau's *Histoire* that it was "an act of faith and hope in national survival. Through the voice of the historian, it was the cry of a whole race refusing to give in, refusing to die"<sup>26</sup> For a hundred years and more the goal of national survival has been kept unswervingly in view in French Canada. For the attainment of this goal the voice of the historian has been raised in an act of faith and hope. Thus has French-Canadian historiography been a work of action.

#### DISCUSSION

*Professor New* said that Garneau made two errors: first in speaking of a conflict against the British government since the real enemy was the local oligarchy and the British government almost always interfered in favour of the French Canadians; secondly in speaking of the conflict as being strong in the early days of the legislature since the only example of bad feeling in the first legislature was the struggle over the selection of a Speaker. Only later when social and economic strife occurred did feelings become very strained. There was never any serious religious clash, the religious clash being not one of Catholic and Protestant but one between

<sup>25</sup>Groulx, *Directives*, 241-2.

<sup>26</sup>Lancot, *Garneau*, 172.

the Catholic tradition and the Papineau (French Revolutionary and Philosophe) tradition.

*Professor Lower* said there was no religious trouble until the Irish immigrants brought their religious quarrels with them.

*Professor Trotter* stated that we are now having to "think through" once more some of the problems which faced the men of the 1860's. There is a fresh realization of the vitality and sure permanence of the French-Canadian tradition. French Canadians are passing through a phase of re-accepting some things previously accepted. They have found their Chinese wall not as effective as they hoped it would be and readjustments which they do not like are needed.

*Professor Brown* said that English Canadians have had a problem of survival too. Is it recognized by the French Canadians?

*M. Marion* stated that Professors Saunders and Rothney go to the root of the question, and that their papers should be mimeographed and distributed widely. With reference to Professor Brown's question he said that next year's programme should concern itself with English-Canadian nationalism. French Canadians have no monopoly of nationalism; and there is no conflict between French-Canadian nationalism and the nationalism of Canada.

*Father Maheux* recommended that English Canadians accept more of the French language as a barrier against the United States.