

**Under Which Flag? The Union Jack or Stars and Stripes:
Reciprocity in the 1911 Election in British Columbia**

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The Dutch may have their Holland, the Spaniard have his Spain,
 The Yankee to the south of us must south of us remain;
 For not a man dare lift a hand against the men who brag
 That they were born in Canada beneath the British flag.

-Pauline Johnson, half Mohawk, half English poet born in Brantford, Ontario

The 1911 election is one of the most studied political campaigns in Canadian history. It ended Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier's fifteen years of government and was fought largely over the reciprocity issue. On 26 January 1911, Laurier's Finance Minister, William Fielding presented the Reciprocity Agreement to a stunned House of Commons: Canada and the United States "have arranged that there shall be a large free list," he announced, and "we have agreed upon a schedule containing a large number of articles which are to be reciprocally free. These are chiefly what are called natural products,"¹ he claimed, and the list "swelled and swelled and swelled".² The details of the agreement were kept secret during the negotiations. Fielding, the key person responsible for the negotiation, Laurier, the Cabinet, and only a few others knew about it.³ Every Canadian government had sought free trade ever since the United States revoked the Reciprocity Agreement of 1854 in 1866. Laurier was finally successful, yet he was defeated in the election for that very reason. What began as a simple economic policy soon turned into a political and emotional battlefield. The Conservatives, with their superior organization and well-spoken candidates, were successful in diverting attention from the rational economic advantages of reciprocity and directing it to the national, imperial, and political consequences. Reciprocity was discussed in terms of its political and cultural implications, heavily intertwined with issues of nationalism and loyalty to the British Empire.

¹ House of Commons, *Debates* (hereafter HCD), 26 January 1911, 2448.

² *Montreal Herald*, as quoted in *Canadian Annual Review, 1911* (Toronto: Annual Review Publishing Company, 1912), 30.

³ Canadian journalist John Dafoe later wrote that Laurier "was somewhat addicted to the habit of confronting his followers with the accomplished fact." As quoted in Patrice Dutil and David MacKenzie, *Canada 1911: The Decisive Election that Shaped the Country* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2011), 94.

The Conservatives were speechless upon hearing the news that the Liberals had sealed a reciprocity agreement. The initial response to reciprocity was positive, and Fielding worried that it was perhaps so favourable to Canada that the Americans might veto it. Borden had very little to say when he rose from his seat to respond. He asked about the duration of the pact and questioned its impact on the Anglo-Canadian trade relations and the British connection. Future Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, the Minister of Labour at the time, wrote that the Liberals "most heartily" received the news, while the opposition was "visibly non-plussed."⁵ The next day, when the Conservatives reconvened, Borden described the atmosphere as one of "deepest dejection," and wrote, "many of our members were confident that the government's proposals would appeal to the country and give the Liberals another term in office."⁶ James Bryce, the British ambassador in Washington, who sat through the negotiations to offer aid if necessary and watch over British economic interests, noted that reciprocity would be beneficial for both countries and would pose no threat to Canada's political allegiance to Britain:

The arrangement still rests in reality on the growing realization of the fact that a high tariff wall between contiguous countries whose products are economically interchangeable is an injury to both, and opposed to sound fiscal principles. No more in Canada than in the republics of Latin America to which the United States Government has sought to extend its Pan-American propaganda, does there seem like a likelihood that a freer interchange of commodities is likely to lead to closer relations of a political kind."⁷

All signs were pointing favourably to the Liberal party and it looked as if there was little chance for Borden to compete against it in any upcoming election.

However, the Conservative's feeling of hopelessness was ephemeral. Opposition grew quickly within the Liberal and the Conservative caucuses, with the most influential voice coming

⁵ William Lyon Mackenzie King, as quoted in Dutil and MacKenzie, *Canada 1911*, 95.

⁶ Henry Borden, ed., *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs*, Vol. 1 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1938), 303.

⁷ Bryce to Edward Grey, 22 January 1911. As quoted in Dutil and MacKenzie, *Canada 1911*, 90.

from a group of eighteen business, financial, and manufacturing leaders based in Toronto. It was led by Zebulon Lash, a leading Toronto lawyer, and Sir Edmund Walker, president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. On February 20, the Toronto Eighteen, as they came to be known, published a manifesto urging Canadians to oppose reciprocity. They claimed that reciprocity would destroy the Canadian economy and its east-west trade routes, wasting "the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars upon railways, canals, steamships, and other means of transportation;" threaten Canada's sovereignty, and weaken its imperial tie because reciprocity would "make it more difficult to avert political union with the United States."⁸ From here on, these business elites formally defected from the Liberal party and allied with the Conservatives.

Borden wrote to Ontario Premier James Whitney that he saw an opportunity in gathering "men who can exercise powerful influence over public opinion."⁹ He said, "if the business interests of the country believe that this crisis can be met by a few casual meetings and an occasional vigorous [*sic*] protest, they are living in a fool's paradise... We have got to fight and fight hard."¹⁰ After examining the Liberal and Conservative party organization in Ontario, Canadian business historian, Robert Cuff, concluded that the Conservative's superior organization and candidates enabled them to win the election.¹¹ In April, the Conservative organizers for Ontario gathered in Toronto to assess the condition of each constituency in the province and devise a plan of attack. A comparison of their predictions with the election results

⁸ *The Mail and Empire*, 20 February 1911; signed by B.E. Walker, John L. Blaikie, W.D. Mathews, W.K. George, Z.A. Lash, W.T. White, G.T. Somers, Robt. S. Gourlay, Wm. Mortimer Clark, R.J. Christie, H. Blain, H.S. Strathy, L. Goldman, Geo. A. Somerville, W. Francis, James D. Allan, E.R. Wood, and Jn. C. Eaton.

⁹ Borden to Whitney, 14 February 1911, as quoted in Dutil and MacKenzie, 108.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 108-109.

¹¹ Robert Cuff, "The Conservative Party Machine and the Election of 1911 in Ontario." In *The 1911 General Election: A Study in Canadian Politics*, ed. Paul Stevens (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970), 210.

showed that they were almost entirely accurate, demonstrating that the Conservatives were well aware of the political realities.¹² Moreover, the Toronto Eighteen was ready to supply advertising assistance and substantial corporate donations to the Conservative campaign across the country. By the end of March, journalist Frederick Hamilton reported he had heard rumours that the Canadian National League, an organization that worked with the Tories to defeat reciprocity, had raised up to \$500,000, even though he thought this figure was exaggerated.¹³ More significantly, Liberal journalist and civil servant W.T.R. Preston recounted that railway promoter and businessman, Sir William Mackenzie, who had connections with the members of the Toronto Eighteen, had written a blank cheque guaranteed by the Bank of Commerce, which was then filled in for \$2,000,000 for the Conservative cause.¹⁴ With the combined efforts of a well-organized party and a surplus of money, the Conservatives were becoming a formidable opposition party. While the Conservative campaign chest was swelling up, many historians believe that the Liberal party was disorganized, slow to begin their campaign and lacked the funding, especially in Ontario with Liberal leader Allen Aylesworth.¹⁵

After estimating that British immigrants numbered about a quarter-million, half of whom had come to Canada since the 1908 election, Arthur Hawkes, an established journalist and public relations expert, circulated a pamphlet called *An Appeal to the British-Born*.¹⁶ It included John A. Macdonald's famous "a British subject I was born, a British subject I will die" statement and

¹² Ibid., 207.

¹³ Dutil and MacKenzie, *Canada 1911*, 119.

¹⁴ Ibid., 120.

¹⁵ Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1974), 183-184; for an indepth look into Allen Aylesworth, look at Paul Stevens, "Laurier, Aylesworth, and the Decline of the Liberal Party in Ontario." In *The 1911 General Election: A Study in Canadian Politics*, ed. Paul Stevens (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970), 211-219.

¹⁶ L. Ethan Ellis, *Reciprocity 1911: A Study in Canadian-American Relations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), 156.

called on all those of British background to save Canada from American annexation and stay within the Empire because the American path "is not our way—it is neither Canadian nor British."¹⁷ Another pamphlet, *Under Which Flag?* compared the gradual evolution of British institutions with the revolutionary United States, and argued that reciprocity would rob Canadians of "the chance that we will become the chief state in the British Empire and the most powerful and prosperous nation in the world."¹⁸ Another widely distributed pamphlet claimed that reciprocity would weaken the east-west link and harm the Canadian-British trade relations.¹⁹ In short, the propaganda was an attempt to win the support of British loyalists and Canadian nationalists alike and to show that reciprocity would threaten Canada's autonomy. By August, the Canadian Home Market Association, another anti-reciprocity propaganda organization backed by the Conservatives, had distributed over nine million copies of material at a rate of 20,000 pieces per day.²⁰ In light of these campaigns, it is not surprising the electoral districts that supported Borden had the highest proportion of British-born immigrants.²¹

The principle aim of the anti-reciprocity campaign was to divert attention from the rational economic advantages and direct it to the national, imperial, and political consequences. Free trade was discussed in terms of its political and cultural implications and intertwined with issues of nationalism and loyalty to the British Empire. The Conservatives received unexpected help from several key American politicians' lack of discretion. U.S. President William Howard Taft's repeated use of the idea that Canada was at "the parting of the ways" with Britain and that

¹⁷ Ellis, *Reciprocity 1911*, 156; J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Limited, 1996), 60.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Dutil and MacKenzie, *Canada 1911*, 118-119.

²¹ Edelgard E. Mahant, *Free Trade in American-Canadian Relations* (Malabar: Krieger Publishing Company, 1993), 26.

“they must soon decide whether they are to regard themselves as isolated permanently from our markets by a perpetual wall or whether we are to be commercial friends” hurt the pro-reciprocity campaign.²² For Canadians, “the parting of the ways” phrase meant that with reciprocity, they were expected to sever their ties with the Empire and become an extension of the United States.²³ Throughout the election, Taft’s statement appeared across Conservative newspapers and rallies.

During a debate, a less apologetic Champ Clark, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, openly declared that he supported reciprocity because he hoped to see the day “when the American flag will float over every square foot of the British North American possessions clear to the North Pole!”²⁴ A congressman, wanting to clarify Clark’s position, responded, that free trade would “have a tendency in the end to bring Canada into the union.” To that, Clark answered, “Yes sir, [I] have no doubt about that.”²⁵ Shortly after this statement, the House approved reciprocity; annexationist remarks did not seem to bother the Americans.

But the speech outraged Canadians and confirmed the Americans as expansionists. Clark’s speech was received with indignation and furnished ideal propaganda material for the Conservatives’ campaign denouncing reciprocity. Shortly after these statements were released, Laurier decried the speech:

It has been said that this agreement will lead to annexation. President Taft has said several times that there was no such intention on the part of the framers of the agreement for the United States, but if he had meant it I would say to him, sir make no mistake. We want to sell you our horse and hogs, and all our produce, but if you don’t want to buy

²² Lawrence Martin, *The Presidents and the Prime Ministers: Washington and Ottawa Face to Face: The Myth of Bilateral Bliss, 1867-1982* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1982), 71.

²³ Gordon Stewart, *The American Response to Canada Since 1776* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992), 114.

²⁴ Charles C. Tansill, *Canadian-American Relations, 1875-1911* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), 463.

²⁵ Martin, *Presidents and Prime Ministers*, 73.

them, and think that we will sell our nationality, you are wrong. We want to widen our trade with the United States as much as possible, but we will not sell our birthright.²⁶

The *Chicago Record-Herald* reassured Canadians that “any kind of coercion is out of the question.”²⁷ Again, Taft issued a statement repudiating Clark and assuring Canadians they had nothing to worry about: “No thought of future political annexation or union was in the minds of the negotiators on either side. Canada is now and will remain a political unit.”²⁸ Still feeling that this was not enough, Taft arranged for Secretary of State Philander Knox to offer further reassurances in a landmark speech on Canadian-American relations in Chicago: “The United States recognizes with satisfaction that the Dominion of Canada is a permanent North American political unit and that her autonomy is secure.”²⁹ This was the first official statement on Canadian autonomy from Washington in 44 years.³⁰ But the damage was irreversible. Regardless of Taft’s promise that the Americans were not interested in absorbing Canada, his and Clark’s annexationist remarks always received more attention. When Laurier and his cabinet ministers met after the electoral defeat on September 26, they concluded that anti-Americanism, inspired by Taft’s “the parting of the ways” speech and Clark’s ruminations, was one of the main causes of their fate.³¹

When Laurier announced his decision to adopt unrestricted reciprocity, he intended to “narrow the issue to the mere commercial aspect of the question” and “keep it strictly on that

²⁶ *Vancouver Province*, 8 Sept 1911, 16.

²⁷ Kendrick A. Clements, “Manifest Destiny and Canadian Reciprocity in 1911,” *Pacific Historical Review* 42, no.1 (Feb 1973): 40.

²⁸ Martin, *Presidents and Prime Ministers*, 73.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Library and Archives Canada* (hereafter LAC), Diaries of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, 26 September 1911, 2.

line."³² The exact opposite happened. Laurier's presentation of statistical data and pro-free trade reasoning were swept aside by anti-Americanism. As the season for the Coronation and subsequent Imperial Conference was approaching in May, Laurier took the advice of his cabinet, adjourned the parliament for two months until July, and headed off to London. In contrast, while parliament was in recess, Borden used his time wisely, going on a western tour and building the Conservative machine. As support for Borden began to grow, Laurier remained over-confident that he would win the election once more. When Laurier returned from his two-month trip to London, England, and arrived in Montreal on July 11, a welcoming crowd of an estimated 150,000 people and a wild display of fireworks greeted him.³³ The *Toronto Globe* reported, "no public man in Canada was ever accorded such a hearty and tumultuous welcome as that given Sir Wilfrid Laurier tonight."³⁴ The enthusiastic reception Laurier received helps explain why he was so confident in his party.

Furthermore, back in February, Laurier started receiving news of the defection of Liberals and Liberal sympathizers who chose principle over party. He was puzzled: "I am at a loss," he wrote, "to understand why our friends in Toronto should be driven from their moorings on a question which has been the policy of the party for forty years."³⁵ He added, "they are sensible men, and would not be so foolish as to arouse opposition to that measure."³⁶ To another colleague, he said, "I am not at all surprised at the opposition which is offered to our policy. We have been very familiar with it all through our life. It seems to me perfectly evident that those

³² Wilfrid Laurier, as quoted in, Tansill, *Canadian-American Relations*, 412.

³³ Dutil and MacKenzie, *Canada 1911*, 153.

³⁴ As quoted in *ibid.*, 154.

³⁵ As quoted in *ibid.*, 108.

³⁶ As quoted in *ibid.*, 154.

shrieks are falling very flat and that the country is decidedly with us."³⁷ Perhaps serving as the Prime Minister for fifteen years had numbed him to opposition and he had grown accustomed to it. He brushed off these defections as normal and failed to see the impact it would have on the election. Laurier even reacted with nonchalance to the previous Minister of the Interior Clifford Sifton's key role in the anti-reciprocity campaign. While Sifton's colleagues labelled him as "a complete moral degenerate without a redeeming trait in his character," Laurier was more forgiving, calling Sifton's resignation "a loss," and that "he will do himself more harm than to his former friends."³⁸ Laurier's observations differed from the others and he maintained his optimism throughout campaign.

Throughout all of this, Canadian writer Andrew Macphail found "something noble" in the rise of Canadianism during the election, "something praiseworthy in this spectacle of a whole people swept by a wave of emotion and sentiment. In all sincerity many good and loyal souls were seized by a genuine alarm that their nationality was in danger. They were terrified."³⁹ The upsurge of Canadian nationalism was, in a way, a product of the Conservatives anti-reciprocity campaign that sought to divert attention from the rational economic aspects and direct it to the emotional, national, imperial sentiments. Literary genius Rudyard Kipling, an ardent imperialist, joined the Conservative platform when the Montreal *Star* requested his opinion on the matter.

Kipling declared:

It is her own soul that Canada risks today. Once that soul is pawned for any consideration Canada must inevitably conform to the commercial, legal, financial, social and ethical standards which will be imposed upon her by the sheer admitted weight of the United States.⁴⁰

³⁷ As quoted in *ibid.*, 108.

³⁸ As quoted in *ibid.*, 130.

³⁹ Granatstein, *Yankee*, 64-65.

⁴⁰ *Province*, 8 Sept 1911, 1.

Canadians either truly believed in reciprocity or feared it. Canada was emotionally invested in the debate and it was discussed as a life or death issue.

But reciprocity received less attention in Quebec. Laurier and the Liberals fought the Conservative-Nationalists led by Henri Bourassa and Frederick Monk who were determined not to let the reciprocity debate derail Laurier's controversial 1910 Naval Service Bill. As Raoul Dandurand, the Speaker of the Senate from 1905-1909, explained to Laurier, "reciprocity disturbs them because it diverts attention from the Navy."⁴¹ In Quebec, British imperialism and Canadian independence was of much greater concern than American annexation. Bourassa vehemently opposed the naval bill because he believed the British navy was of no concern to Canada since the British maintained a great navy to defend its own global commercial interests rather than to protect Canada. He also feared that this would ultimately lead to conscription.⁴² Since 1906, Bourassa had maintained that reciprocity with the United States was desirable; but with an election imminent, he suddenly denounced reciprocity and more importantly declared that the question of reciprocity was insignificant compared to the paramount issue of Canadian autonomy enshrined in the naval bill.⁴³ He criticized Laurier claiming that the naval issue had to be settled before starting a debate about a new policy like reciprocity. This only exasperated the English-French divide because for the rest of Canada, reciprocity and American annexation was the primary concern. The two groups prioritized different issues and had opposing visions of Canada's future.

⁴¹ Dandurand to Wilfred Laurier, 1 June 1911. As quoted in Blair H. Neatby, *Laurier and a Liberal Quebec: A Study in Political Management* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1973), 200.

⁴² Paul Stevens, *The 1911 General Election*, 121.

⁴³ *Le Devoir*, 2 Aug 1911.

Caught between the French and English divide, Laurier expressed his frustration as he addressed a crowd in Saint John, "I am branded in Quebec as a traitor to the French and in Ontario as a traitor to the English. In Quebec I am branded as a jingo and in Ontario as a separatist. In Quebec I am attacked as an imperialist and in Ontario as an anti-imperialist. I am neither. I am a Canadian."⁴⁴ The election transpired differently in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. Throughout the election, the primary issue in Quebec was the navy and the Conservative-Nationalists charged Laurier for being too susceptible to imperialist blandishments. Back in Ottawa, the debate on the reciprocity issue had been fomenting for several months and the Conservatives were filibustering the House debates. Then on July 29, Laurier finally dissolved the parliament, ostensibly to settle the reciprocity question, and called a general election in September. According to Fielding, this issue was "to fight upon, to win upon, and even to fall upon."⁴⁵

Finally, on 21 September 1911, Canadian men aged twenty-one and over went to the polls. Out of a population of 7,204,527, there were 1,820,742 Canadians on the voters list and 1,307,550 people cast their votes that day. This election had the highest voter turnout in Canadian history until that time.⁴⁶ The overall vote was close: 666,074 for the Conservatives and 623,554 for the Liberals. But that mattered little. It ultimately came down to the number of seats each party held, and on that basis, the Conservatives won a substantial victory with 134 seats compared to 87 for the Liberals, enough to form a majority government.⁴⁷ The Liberals won in Quebec, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, split evenly in Nova Scotia and Prince

⁴⁴ Wilfrid Laurier, as quoted in Barbara Robertson, *Wilfrid Laurier: The Great Conciliator* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1971), 126.

⁴⁵ William Fielding at the last Liberal caucus meeting, as quoted in Joseph Schull, *Laurier: The First Canadian* (Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1965), 530.

⁴⁶ Dutil and MacKenzie, *Canada 1911*, 246.

⁴⁷ Brown and Cook, *Canada 1896-1921*, 185.

Edward Island, but the Conservatives won a landslide victory in Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia. Although Laurier won the election in Quebec, the "solid Quebec" had finally broken; of the 65 seats available there, the Liberals won only 37. This was a disappointing result for Laurier since Quebec had been his main support base throughout his premiership and thus he expected better results. But the Liberal loss should not be overexaggerated because Quebec remained predominantly Liberal rather than Conservative. Most of the constituencies lost by the Liberals had been replaced by the *Autonomiste* rather than the Conservative candidates. Historian H. Blair Neatby argued that the election revealed a new Quebec that was ready to support a third party because the two national parties were insensitive to provincial interests.⁴⁸ In the end, it was Ontario that made the difference: 73 seats went to the Conservatives and only 13 seats to the Liberals. After the election, Laurier said "it was the province of Ontario which has defeated us...Ontario went solid against us."⁴⁹ The 1911 election campaign revolved predominantly around the reciprocity issue and with that came an incredible upsurge in Canadian nationalism and emotionalism that was intertwined with loyalty to the British Empire and anti-Americanism. Free trade was seen as a step towards breaking Canada's ties with the Empire in favour of a political union with its neighbour to the south. Reciprocity was thus not just another economic opportunity, but was also linked to the larger issues of political and cultural independence. The election also showed the growing English-French divide. While English Canadians sought to maintain their allegiance to Britain, French Canadians were trying to end it.

Historians have interpreted the events of the 1911 election as a turning point in Canadian history for various reasons. It marked the end of the Laurier Liberal era; the English-French were divided; Canada rejected an economic policy the government had sought for the last forty years;

⁴⁸ Brown and Cook, *The Canadians, 1867-1967*, 170.

⁴⁹ Barbara Robertson, *Wilfrid Laurier*, 127.

and as Macphail noted, there was "something noble" in the rise of Canadian nationalism. Naturally, historians have looked at the election to explore the cause of Laurier's defeat, including examining Canadian nationalism, Canadian-American relations, and the role of political organization. While doing so, many historians have attributed the election results to reciprocity. The first to do this was O.D. Skelton, a professor at Queen's University and supporter of reciprocity, who published an article a month after the election claiming, "it was undoubtedly the reciprocity issue that decided the election. It is further beyond doubt that it was the political rather than the economic aspect of the case that carried most weight."⁵⁰ Canadian historian Paul Stevens later wrote in 1970 that Skelton's article set the tone for much of the writing on 1911; and a generation of historians produced variations on the topic using the same framework based on reciprocity.⁵¹

There are two competing narratives on this topic. The first narrative views the 1911 election as the reciprocity election while the other one contends reciprocity had little to do with Laurier's defeat. In addition to Skelton, a long list of scholars including L. Ethan Ellis, Edelgard E. Mahant, W.M. Baker, J.L. Granatstein, and Lawrence Martin have analyzed the election centered on the reciprocity question. Building on Skelton's argument, in *Canada's Rejection of Reciprocity in 1911* (1939) and *Reciprocity 1911: A Study in Canadian-American Relations* (1939), Ellis looked at the role of the business and financial interest groups that used propaganda to instil in Canadians American annexationist fears. He emphasized that the explanation that Canadians opposed reciprocity due to the annexation-loyalty cries is too simplistic and misses the point. Instead, he argued that these fears were "assiduously cultivated, if not implanted, by

⁵⁰ O.D. Skelton, "Canada's Rejection of Reciprocity," *Journal of Political Economy* 19, no.9 (Nov 1911): 727.

⁵¹ Stevens, *The 1911 General Election*, 181-182.

interests motivated by a common fear" of tariff reductions.⁵² Moreover, he contributed to the studies on tariff history and more generally Canadian-American relations, by setting up the whole story as evidence that the undefended frontier was in reality defended by something much larger. But Canadian political scientist, Edelgard E. Mahant, was careful not to give too much emphasis to the role of Canadian manufacturers and transportation interests:

the money from the Canadian manufacturers and railway interests which financed the Conservative campaign helped, but the appeal to British imperial sentiment and thus the fear of American influence if not outright annexation were probably the most important factors.⁵³

Put differently, the annexationist-loyalty cry was a genuine concern and it resonated with the public.

Historians W.M. Baker and J.L. Granatstein have both examined the extent of anti-American sentiment. Baker felt the need to use anti-Americanism as a category of analysis because it is a recurring theme in Canadian history and "it is one of the solid legs on which that elusive animal, the Canadian identity, stands."⁵⁴ He argued that during this period, anti-Americanism included three components: (1) fear of Americanization and annexation; (2) a desire to remain independent of the United States in favour of imperial ties; and (3) great faith in Canada's future in which the Americans were to play no part. Baker's emphasis on the moderateness of anti-Americanism is significant because it situates the term not as an intensely antagonistic attitude Canadians possessed towards their neighbours, but more simply as an expression of Canada's desire to remain independent of the United States and strengthen

⁵² L. Ethan Ellis, "Canada's Rejection of Reciprocity," *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 18, no.1, (1939), 101-102; Ellis, *Reciprocity 1911*, 196

⁵³ Mahant, *Free Trade in American-Canadian Relations*, 25.

⁵⁴ W.M. Baker, "A Case Study of Anti-Americanism in English-Speaking Canada: The Election Campaign of 1911," *The Canadian Historical Review* 51, no.4 (Dec 1970), 426.

imperial ties.⁵⁵ However, the idea of a temperate anti-Americanism can be problematic because it downplays the hostilities that existed between Canada and the United States and Canada's growing frustration with the Britain. For example, Baker writes that Canadian irritation towards Britain resulting from the Alaska Boundary Dispute was only "a momentary reaction" that passed quickly.⁵⁶

In *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (1996), Granatstein argued that Canadian political and economic elites have almost always used anti-Americanism to preserve or enhance their power, which was especially true for the 1911 election.⁵⁷ He called Borden and his business and finance allies "manipulators of Canadian opinion" and the anti-American propaganda "a wondrously effective propaganda tool" which "they had exploited to the full" by playing on the imperialism and nationalism theme.⁵⁸ Moreover, both Granatstein and Baker emphasized that imperial sentiment and annexationist fears predated 1911.⁵⁹ By 1910, the imperial question had been a popular topic raised by Laurier's legislation to build a Canadian navy. This is a significant point because it shows that the Conservatives were tapping into a surviving emotion, instead of creating a new one.

In another important study, *Globe and Mail* columnist Lawrence Martin retold the election in the context of Canadian and American leaders, focusing more on their personalities rather than the issues. Geared towards the general public, *The Presidents and the Prime Ministers: Washington and Ottawa Face to Face: The Myth of Bilateral Bliss, 1867-1982* (1982), does not offer a comprehensive study of bilateral relations but nonetheless illustrates the

⁵⁵ Ibid., 438.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 428.

⁵⁷ Granatstein, *Yankee*, x.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 64 and 66.

⁵⁹ Baker, "A Case Study," 429; Granatstein, *Yankee*, 49.

influence an individual can make. He looks at Taft's role in spurring Canadian nationalism due to his annexationist remarks and how it damaged Canadian-American relations and the Liberal agenda.⁶⁰

The second narrative refutes the standard interpretation of the 1911 election as a reciprocity contest. In *Laurier: A Study in Canadian Politics* (1922), J.W. Dafoe argued that Laurier lost the election "not so much from the assaults of its [the Liberals'] enemies as from hardening of its arteries and from old age. Its hour had struck in keeping with the law of political change."⁶¹ According to Dafoe, Laurier's defeat was a part of a natural political process in which "people by a sure instinct compel a change in administration every now and then."⁶² This view situates the Liberal's loss as inevitable and certainly not a turning point. Likewise, in *Canada: A Story of Challenge* (1963), J.M.S. Careless wrote:

by 1911 reciprocity had been a dead issue in Canada for almost twenty years, and she was prospering nicely without it. The sudden revival of the old theme did not raise a very deep response. The east-west system seemed to be working effectively and questions of north-south trade were not pressing.⁶³

Writing in 1970, Paul Stevens expressed his discontent with way the election was being studied. He criticized historians for the lack of diversity in their analytical methods; claiming that by concentrating mainly on reciprocity, the naval controversy and loyalty cry, they had largely overlooked other factors such as the role of party organization. The exception was Robert Cuff, who viewed reciprocity as a minor issue and the Conservative party's success lay in its efficient organization and cooperation.⁶⁴ In *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed*, Robert Craig

⁶⁰ Martin, *Presidents and Prime Ministers*, chapter 5, 68-81.

⁶¹ J.M. Dafoe, *Laurier: A Study in Canadian Politics* (Toronto: Thomas Allen Publisher, 1922), 52.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 51.

⁶³ J.M.S. Careless, *Canada: A Story of Challenge* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1963), 323.

⁶⁴ Cuff, "Conservative Party Machine," 210.

Brown and Ramsay Cook also wrote that local organization was key to Borden's success "because of close cooperation between federal Conservatives and the ruling provincial parties."⁶⁵ But Cuff goes as far as to argue, "no matter what public issue emerged in 1911, given the existing state of party machinery, the electoral results in Ontario would have remained substantially the same."⁶⁶ In contrast to the deplorable state of the Liberal party organization in which the provincial Liberal parties were disorganized and weak, the Conservative provincial-federal co-operation was "quite amazing."⁶⁷ Admitting the inadequacy of historians' tools of electoral analysis, Baker too claimed that an examination of party organization was equally important as anti-Americanism.⁶⁸ However, historian John English pointed out that Cuff and Baker's statements are misleading because Ontario Premier Whitney was motivated to support the federal party because he was outraged by the naval debate and the reciprocity proposal; and Baker suggests that there were two separate federal and provincial organizations when in reality, there was only one organization dominated by provincial politicians.⁶⁹ Moreover, English noted the lack of primary sources on political organization has prevented historians from being able to write about it. The one exception was the province of Ontario.⁷⁰

Interdisciplinary in their approach, political scientist Richard Johnston and economist Michael B. Percy observed that there has been an absence of an econometric examination of the election.⁷¹ They also claim that the role of imperial sentiment was not as great as most historians

⁶⁵ Brown and Cook, *The Canadians, 1867-1967*, 183.

⁶⁶ Cuff, "Conservative Party Machine," 210.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 445-446.

⁶⁸ Baker, "A Case Study," 443.

⁶⁹ John English, *The Decline of Politics: The Conservatives and the Party System, 1901-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 61-62.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷¹ Richard Johnston and Michael Percy, "Reciprocity, Imperial Sentiment, and Party Politics in the 1911 Election," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 13, no.4 (Dec 1980): 712.

suggest.⁷² Using quantitative data, they show that voting shifts were modest, especially outside of Quebec, suggesting that the Liberals were already on their way out and that reciprocity may have actually helped win votes.⁷³ They also found that current sociological interpretations of the election treat ethnicity as the main category of analysis: French versus the English. However, "religion warrants examination in its own right" because it has the power to influence political attitudes and party preference.⁷⁴ Religion can affect partisanship through face-to-face contact and personal influence.⁷⁵ Through statistical data, they found that at least in the Maritimes, religion greatly influenced voting behaviour.⁷⁶

In another article, Johnston, Percy, and K.H. Norrie justified their quantitative methods by arguing that the voters at the time were rational decision makers who were able to accurately calculate the economic benefits and losses from reciprocity.⁷⁷ This led them to conclude that a considerable degree of economic rationality lay behind the election. But whether quantitative methods can really capture voting behaviour remains uncertain, especially in an election where the Conservatives' strategy was to turn reciprocity into an emotional issue in which the annexationist and loyalty cry dominated the reciprocity question.

In the most recent work on the 1911 election, Patrice Dutil and David Mackenzie adhere to the reciprocity election narrative. They call the election "Canada's first great modern contest"

⁷² Ibid., 712.

⁷³ For a summary of recent evidence, Johnston and Percy recommends reading Harold D. Clarke, Jane Jensen, Lawrence Le Duc and Jon H. Pammett, *Political Choice in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979), chap. 4. See also William P. Irvine, "Explaining the Religious Basics of Canadian Partisan Identity: Success on the Third Try," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 7 (1974): 560-63.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 719.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 727.

⁷⁷ Richard Johnston, Michael Percy, and K.H. Norrie, "Reciprocity and the Canadian General Election of 1911," *Economic History* 19, no.4 (Oct 1982): 411.

and incorporate a variety of the broader and narrower categories of analysis to show that this event was a pivotal moment in Canadian history that continues to affect Canada today. They re-examine this momentous event by looking at great personalities, important issues, regional tensions and passionate arguments. Their work is essentially an accumulation and incorporation of the multivariate analytical categories historians have used. Celebratory in tone, they argue that Laurier was still a popular and charismatic leader of a divided Liberal party. But Borden ultimately won because he was more in tune with Canada's changing landscape with modernization and industrialization, the exhaustive campaigning was effective, and the Conservative organization was stronger. They also highlight the regional differences in the Maritimes and Quebec, but most importantly, point out that it was the way that nationalism, loyalty, country, and Empire were discussed that mattered.⁷⁸

While a great deal has been written about the 1911 election, there is hardly any literature on how the election took shape in British Columbia. For an election that Dutil and MacKenzie regarded as "the decisive election that shaped the country,"⁷⁹ to ignore British Columbia is an inexcusable oversight. Current scholarship on this subject is based almost entirely every province but British Columbia and as English mentioned, this has to do partly with the lack of primary sources.⁸¹ Additionally, work on British Columbia's history either briefly mentions or altogether

⁷⁸ Dutil and Mackenzie, *Canada 1911*, 12.

⁷⁹ The subtitle of their book.

⁸¹ Dutil and Mackenzie, *Canada 1911*. In their book, on the subject, they cover BC in about three pages; Paul Stevens, "The 1911 General Election", he points out that a more detailed analysis of how the election took shape in Quebec is needed, yet none of the articles in the book deal with BC; Also look at Donald Creighton, *Canada's First Century, 1867-1967* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970); Dafoe, *Laurier: A Study*; W.M. Baker, "A Case Study"; Careless, *A Story of Challenge*.

skips the 1911 election.⁸² There is one study that examines the election in a British Columbia context: a masters thesis from Queen's University by Brian R.D. Smith, entitled *Sir Richard McBride: A Study in the Conservative Party of British Columbia*. He argues that it took several months for public reaction to crystalize against reciprocity throughout the country, but public opinion in British Columbia reacted faster than in any other region.⁸³ However, he had little to say about premier of British Columbia McBride's role in the campaign. Instead, Smith discussed McBride's candidacy to replace Borden as the leader of the Conservative party and how he flirted with the idea of entering federal politics but ultimately rejected the offer.

In order to address the missing information on the election in British Columbia, this paper will use a collection of British Columbia newspapers and McBride's election correspondence to examine the role that nationalist rhetoric played in the province and consider whether or not the province conforms to or refutes the standard explanation of the election.⁸⁴ But as Dutil and Mackenzie stated, the way in which reciprocity was packaged and sold to Canadians

⁸² In Jean Barman's 400 page go-to book on BC history, there is nothing on the 1911 election: *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1911). In Margaret A. Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History* (Vancouver: Macmillan of Canada, 1964), the 1911 election is briefly mentioned in a paragraph about how premier of British Columbia McBride turned down Borden's offer to join federal politics. In *British Columbia: A History of the Province* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990), George Woodcock does not mention Richard McBride's role in the 1911 election. Edith Dobie, "Party History in BC, 1903-1933," in *Historical Essays on British Columbia*, eds. J. Friesen and H.K. Ralston (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976), 70-91, does not talk about the 1911 election. Similarly, in William Rayner, *British Columbia's Premiers in Profile: The Good, The Bad and the Transient* (Surrey: Heritage House Publishing Company Limited, 2000), the chapter on McBride does not mention the election.

⁸³ Brian R.D. Smith, "Sir Richard McBride: A Study in the Conservative Party of British Columbia, 1903-1916," (MA thesis, Queen's University, 1959), 159.

⁸⁴ Unfortunately, the election correspondence were primarily made up of letters from individuals unaffiliated with the Conservative party thus could not provide an insight into the political organization here. In another file that contained correspondence between McBride, Borden, and the cabinet, the letters were either encrypted or dealt with McBride's entry into federal politics, a topic that goes beyond the scope of this paper.

was important. Thus, this essay will examine the political and economic elements of the reciprocity question and comment on how it evolved throughout the campaign.

The 1911 election in British Columbia conforms to the national narrative on how the election took place. The politicians campaigned mainly on reciprocity, and on the question of national independence and British connection. The Conservatives put forward the economic argument that under reciprocity, competition from the American market would destroy Canadian lumber, fishing, fruit, coal, and mining industries; reverse the east-west trade line to a north-south model; and ultimately encumber the province's future development. Politically, reciprocity threatened Canada's national independence, and would sever ties with the British Empire. Anti-American sentiment was used to instill fear about the encroaching American "menace". While issues pertaining to Asian immigration, the naval bill, and the Liberal party's corruption scandals were also discussed, the campaign remained predominantly about reciprocity and its economic and political repercussions. Moreover, reciprocity was presented to Canadians as a life-changing decision between continentalism and imperialism. In retrospect, the threat of American annexation may seem fatuous; at least that is how many Liberal candidates reacted to the annexationist cry, calling it "bogus," "childish," and "absurd."⁸⁵ However, as Granatstein points out, anti-Americanism "was largely the Tory way of keeping pro-British attitudes uppermost in the Canadian psyche."⁸⁶ While this is true to an extent, the incessant reference to the annexationist-loyalty sentiment in private letters written to McBride demonstrates that these were legitimate concerns, and more importantly, resonated with the Canadian public.

British Columbians opposed reciprocity immediately after Fielding's presentation and the initial arguments against the pact were economically driven. In the parliament that day,

⁸⁵ *Province*, 5 Sept 1911, 18; *Alberni Pioneer News*, 16 Sept 1911, 2.

⁸⁶ Granatstein, *Yankee*, x.

Vancouver Conservative member George Cowan stated that the agreement "will mean a staggering if not knockout blow" to British Columbia industries, especially fruit and lumber.⁸⁷ On January 28, McBride issued a statement to the effect that the fruit and agriculture businesses would suffer, and that the pact would inflict "a most serious blow to our lumber industry throwing the markets of the prairies largely into the hands of the Americans, and lessening the trade of the Canadian transportation lines."⁸⁸ W.C. Nichols, the publisher of the Conservative newspaper Vancouver *Daily Province* argued that reciprocity made no fiscal sense because it would "destroy the efforts of nearly two generations" and waste millions of dollars spent in developing the interprovincial trade model.⁸⁹ He also reported that the fruit growers spoke unanimously against reciprocity because it would "not only enable the producers of Oregon and Washington to capture our own provincial market, but that it will enable them practically to monopolize the market of the Canadian Middle West and as a result kill the industry in British Columbia."⁹⁰ Along the same lines, speaking to the Provincial House, William H. Hayward of Cowichan opposed the pact owing to the vulnerability of British Columbia's infant industries:

we have in this province, an absolutely infant industry. It is true we are creeping up year by year, but at the same time it is true that many of our orchards have hardly yet come into bearing, and our picking, packing and shipping arrangements are as yet in very crude shape. But on the other side you will find their orchards in full bearing and their machinery exceedingly well organized for packing, shipping and selling their fruit. Another fact is that in Washington and Oregon being to the south of us, their fruit ripens earlier than ours, and they are able to glut our markets when we are shipping our first fruit.⁹¹

According to Hayward, fruit growers in British Columbia were presented with three major obstacles: the Americans had more favourable harvesting seasons, advanced technology, and

⁸⁷ *Victoria Colonist*, 27 January 1911.

⁸⁸ *Colonist*, 28 January 1911.

⁸⁹ *Province*, 28 Jan 1911, 6.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 28 Jan 1911, 6.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 4 Feb 1911, 7.

better organization. Not only was the Canadian fruit grower unable to compete with the Americans, but Hayward was also convinced that the Americans "intend to exploit our forests and our resources for the sake of preserving their own."⁹² From the moment reciprocity was proposed, British Columbians were quick to publically speak out against it and their primary concern was economic. Together, the idea of the vulnerable Canadian industry, competition from the Americans, their strategy to exploit Canada's vast resources and the destruction of the east-west transportation line was fully developed within the first week of February. The Conservative candidates and propaganda simply borrowed these concepts, with little revision, and used them as a platform against reciprocity. The role of the propaganda machine was therefore one of repetition and distribution as opposed to inventive.

The Conservatives in British Columbia utilized the same propaganda tactics that the propaganda genius G. Yarwood devised to use Conservative newspapers across Canada to push against reciprocity. A few days after Laurier dissolved the parliament in July, Yarwood wrote to McBride summarizing the mood of the country and his strategy:

A great many people are quite quite [*sic*] at sea on the question of reciprocity, and open to conviction. Many people will also not attend political meetings, nor read any long newspaper articles. A few short pithy paragraphs to the point printed in large type right across the front pages of conservative newspapers from the Pacific to the Atlantic would have the attention of the public.⁹³

Some headlines read as such: "Reciprocity Pact Suicidal Policy, Says Stevens";⁹⁴ "Long Repentance for a Small Advantage";⁹⁵ and drawing on Rudyard Kipling, "Canada Risking her

⁹² *Ibid.*, 4 Feb 1911, 7.

⁹³ Yarwood to McBride, *Public Archives of British Columbia* (hereafter PBC), GR-441, Box 145, file 1, Election Correspondence, 31 July 1911.

⁹⁴ *Province*, 6 Sept 1911.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8 Sept 1911.

Very Soul in the Agreement with the United States.”⁹⁶ As these titles suggest, reciprocity was the primary issue. Fearing that the Canadian industries were not prepared to compete with the Americans, the Conservatives argued that such an attempt would bring commercial absorption followed by political absorption. On August 14, a confident McBride wrote to C.A. Magrath, the former mayor of Lethbridge, Alberta, that, “we are determined to win all seven seats in our province.”⁹⁷

In British Columbia as well as the rest of Canada, reciprocity was the main issue in the election campaign. Writer R.F. Blandy, the columnist for Alberni *Pioneer News*, in a series of articles titled “Reciprocity From Liberal Point of View,” featured weekly updates on the election outlining the Liberal position. He reported from the onset: “the great issue in this campaign is Reciprocity with a big R. The election is virtually a referendum on this one subject, and all other issues, however important, sink into the shade. On September 21 Canada will decide either for or against Reciprocity.”⁹⁸ Likewise, “during the past ten days,” the Abbotsford *Post* reported, “the question of reciprocity appears to be the main topic of discussion,” and while there have been talks of scandals in the Liberal party, “the question is reciprocity, pure and simple.”⁹⁹

According to the Conservatives, reciprocity was disadvantageous to the Canadian economy because the pact would end British Columbia’s prosperity and development by destroying Canada’s infant fishing, lumber, fruit, and mining industries, and the great east-west model, thereby ending interprovincial trade and wasting all the time and money that was put into building the railway. The Conservative leaders were concerned that the “progress of Vancouver

⁹⁶ Ibid., 8 Sept 1911.

⁹⁷ McBride to Magrath, *PBC*, GR-441, Box 145, file 2, Election Correspondence, 14 August 1911.

⁹⁸ *Alberni Pioneer*, 19 Aug 1911, 2.

⁹⁹ *The Abbotsford Post*, 25 Aug 1911, 2.

would be retarded by reciprocity.”¹⁰⁰ After having prospered so greatly under the protectionist National Policy, the priority lay in maintaining the status quo. Alexander Macgowan, the Conservative candidate for Vancouver reasoned, “Canada’s been growing in prosperity year by year,” and so he “could see no great reason for a change.”¹⁰¹ To others, reciprocity was a direct threat to prosperity. After Mayor Lee of Westminster quoted an American poem about the ripple effects of dropping a pebble in the water, he asked, amid a burst of cheers, whether British Columbians were “going to drop in that stone to disturb the mighty river of prosperity we enjoy today.”¹⁰² Likewise, Alderman Stevens, the Conservative candidate running for Vancouver declared, “we are facing now an effort to undermine the prosperity that has been built up in Canada. I say let us maintain the present foundation.”¹⁰³ After experiencing exponential growth in population and capital, British Columbians increasingly came to see themselves as a major province within the Dominion and thus felt neglected when the figures showed that they were not receiving their fair share. For many British Columbians, reciprocity threatened prosperity and so the name of the game was to avoid any risks and maintain the National Policy.

As a province that depends on the extraction of natural resources for capital, British Columbians were worried about the impact of reciprocity on the fruit, lumber and fishing industries. Intimidated by the Americans’ advanced industries and larger population, the Conservatives feared that the Americans would absorb Canada’s infant industries. The best policy, the Conservatives advised, was to reserve Canadian resources for Canadians.¹⁰⁴ A man, who wished to remain anonymous but who worked for one of the largest lumber interests in

¹⁰⁰ *Province*, 2 Sept 1911, 23.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 6 Sept 1911, 12.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 8 Sept 1911, 2.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 14 Sept 1911, 28.

¹⁰⁴ *Alberni Pioneer*, 2 Sept 1911, 2.

America, recommended that Canada preserve "all you can. Replant all you can, but carefully and not recklessly."¹⁰⁵ In other words, Canadians should preserve Canada's own resources for its own use. The same concern was made regarding the fisheries. Additionally, due to the fisheries' growing dependence on Asian immigrants as cheap sources of labour, the industry apparently faced a double "danger." The fisheries were one of the most important industries in the country, "yet it was entirely in the hands of the Japanese, whereas thousands of the best men on the coast should be engaged in it."¹⁰⁶ Stevens also advocated the protection of the horticulturalists of the Okanagan because he believed they were not in a position to compete with the American fruit growers owing to the fact that the orchards of the former are not as advanced in development as the latter.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, the fruit growers in British Columbia felt neglected by Ottawa compared to the manufacturers in the east. "The farmer has been made the lamb of sacrifice to propitiate the god of commerce," the *Kelowna Courier and Okanagan Orchardist* complained, "why has not the manufacturer, fattened by years of protection, been selected as the victim in preference to the fruit-grower whose profits are not large enough to stand wholesale reduction and competition?"¹⁰⁸ Discontented with the federal government, the fruit growers demanded better terms and asserted that the duty of the government was to have "no pets, but all classes of industry should receive exactly similar treatment."¹⁰⁹ Placing a moral claim, the newspaper continued to say that the "fruit grower is a manufacturer, using the tool of God's sunshine and

¹⁰⁵ *Province*, 1 Sept 1911, 6.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 14 Sept 1911, 28.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 1 Sept 1911, 22.

¹⁰⁸ *Kelowna Courier and Okanagan Orchardist*, 16 Feb 1911, 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 16 Feb 1911, 2.

fertile soil, aided by hard work and years of experience in battling with pests to produce good invaluable fruit to the health and well-being of the people.”¹¹⁰

The Liberals responded to these claims, saying reciprocity would be advantageous to the industries in British Columbia by expanding the market from 9 million to 99 million for which to sell lumber, fish and fruit.¹¹¹ Not only will reciprocity open up the American market, but it will eliminate the heavy cost of duty. In 1910, British Columbia paid \$1,117,000 in duty on fish alone.¹¹² Furthermore, Blandy pointed out that the Conservatives have contradicted themselves by previously having said that, “British Columbia is the finest apple country on earth,” but now claiming, “we never meant that at all; Oregon and Washington can beat British Columbia hollow at apple growing.”¹¹³ Instead, Blandy argued that British Columbian apples are acquiring a stronghold in the American and British market and remains as one of the world’s best apples, and concluded by saying that the assertion that British Columbia’s apples are inferior to the Americans “is only based on political panic and is absolutely untrue.”¹¹⁴ Whether it was with apples or reciprocity, the Liberals accused the Conservatives of changing their minds due to political motivations instead of having the country’s interest at heart by pointing out the logical fallacies in their arguments.

Another element to the Conservatives’ economic platform lay in the fear that a north-south trade route would replace the current east-west model, wasting all the time and money that was spent on building a national transportation network. “Canada has spent over \$500,000,000 in

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16 Feb 1911, 2.

¹¹¹ *Alberni Pioneer*, 9 Sept 1911, 1.

¹¹² *Province*, 12 Sept 1911, 9.

¹¹³ *Alberni Pioneer*, 9 Sept 1911, 1.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9 Sept 1911, 1.

the construction of canals and transportation lines," Stevens declared, "an expenditure that will be rendered useless by the turning of the lines north and south, instead of east and west."¹¹⁵

Now that British Columbia had finally solidified trade with Canada, their priority lay in keeping these ties vibrant. In this way, reciprocity was depicted as the reversal of the National Policy's goal to encourage interprovincial trade. Once the east-west lines would be crippled, the argument went, future "revisions of the tariff would be subject to the sayso of Washington."¹¹⁶ Stevens reminded Canadians not to "forget that our home market is the best...Let us develop them in that order; Canadian resources for Canadian people first, the Motherland next, and then perhaps foreign nations."¹¹⁷

To many Canadians, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was a source of Canadian pride for playing a crucial role in the development of the country. In early September, the *Province* featured an article from *London Statist*, a financial paper in England, entitled "The Canadian Pacific Railway; It's [*sic*] Great Strength." It reported "there can be no doubt that Canada primarily owes its great expansion in recent years to the men of enterprise who built the Canadian Pacific."¹¹⁸ At the end of the day, British Columbians wanted to maintain its position. It seemed impractical to waste all the time and energy spent on building the east-west line; British Columbia had prospered under protectionism and reciprocity seemed like a big risk. These three arguments are exactly the same as the concerns that were put forth in January and February. This shows that there was no gradual evolution of the economic reasons for opposing reciprocity but that it was a matter of repetition.

¹¹⁵ *Province*, 2 Sept 1911, 23.

¹¹⁶ *Kelowna Courier*, 14 Sept 1911, 2.

¹¹⁷ *Province*, 8 Sept 1911, 8.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 8 Sept 1911, 15.

The political argument against reciprocity had three components: Canadian nationalism, loyalty to the Empire and anti-Americanism. The idea of national independence and British loyalty was sold as one package because early twentieth century English-Canadian nationalism derived its identity from its status as an independent nation *within* the British Empire. Stevens concluded at the much-anticipated Conservative meeting at the Oddfellows' Hall in Eburne, Point Grey:

I believe in Caanda [*sic*] for the Canadians, and Canadian raw material for Canadian industries. I believe the time has arrived when we should go further than have sentimental ties with the Empire, but that we should promote crystalized ties with the Empire. But if we do not do that, I believe that it must inevitably follow that we shall in a few years have the American flag floating over the whole continent.¹¹⁹

Conservative candidates also argued that reciprocity threatened Canada's political independence since political absorption would inevitably follow commercial absorption. A concerned Ernst McGraffer, secretary of the Vancouver Development League, wrote a four-paged letter to McBride regarding the reciprocity question, which he hoped would be published anonymously as anti-reciprocity propaganda material:

You will never dodge the issue that reciprocity is indirect annexation. Once gained, closely fastened. And once securely fastened, and assured by the strength of American-Canadian votes, and Canada's vision of greatness and glory in the British Empire will be, as John James Ingalls said of purity in American politics, 'an iridescent dream.'¹²⁰

McGraffer explained in the letter that he was a Liberal American who was planning to become a Canadian citizen and a member of the Conservative party in the following year of April. As an American citizen living in British Columbia, he believed that he was entitled to have a say on the reciprocity question. "The legend of after-days will read, so far as Canada is concerned, 'consideration, amalgamation, absorption,'" he concluded, "reciprocity is not at all a commercial

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 14 Sept 1911, 28.

¹²⁰ Ernst to McBride written from Mission, *PBC*, GR-441, box 145, file 1, Election Correspondence, 4 Sept 1911.

problem. It is a case of principles, not potatoes."¹²¹ As expressed by McGraffer, Canada's tariff history is riddled with the presumption that Canada's political autonomy would suffer as a result of closer commercial integration with the United States. In other words, reciprocity was a political policy as much as it was an economic policy.

The logic behind commercial absorption equals political disintegration is that commercial intimacy is the first step towards the political union with the United States. As Nichol explained, "our political sympathies will follow our commercial interests; and conditions which make for intimate trade relations with the United States rather than with Eastern Canada and Great Britain will make for annexation."¹²² The cause of apprehension felt by Canadians can be attributed to America's long history of territorial expansion. J. Herrick McGregor, Alberni's surveyor and staunch supporter of Laurier spoke against reciprocity, expressing his fear that it would inevitably lead to Americanization: "If we lead them [Americans] to believe that they are not unwelcome suitors-no power on earth can prevent them, can prevent the natural progress of events from bringing us into partnership with them."¹²³ After listing Hawaii, Cuba, Panama, South Carolina, Texas, California and Maine as proof, he urged the Canadian government to take a strong stance against the Americans:

We must today let our good friend Mr. Taft understand that we are British, British, British; otherwise, American business interest will move naturally, swiftly and conclusively to our absorption. I like the Americans well. But I know them only as an outsider can, and I know that they will Americanize us without firing a single shot unless we now show them that we are not drifting—but fighting.¹²⁴

McGregor's conviction that the Americans were not British while Canadians were is self-evident. He is also a great example of Baker's argument that English Canadian anti-Americanism

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² *Province*, 28 Jan 1911, 6.

¹²³ *Alberni Pioneer*, 16 Sept 1911, 5.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

was characterized by the fear of Americanization and desire to remain British. Like so many Liberals, he disagreed with Laurier on the reciprocity question, thinking it would do more harm than good.

While Canadians and Americans certainly have their differences, it can also be argued that the two countries resemble each other more closely than any other nation. M.S. Jackson, a Liberal candidate, refusing to buy the argument that Canadians were intrinsically different from the Americans, emphasized the similarities shared by the two countries:

Did it not appear to be an anomaly that two people like those of the United States and Canada, of the same blood, the same language, and same religion, acknowledging the same traditions, having the same laws and institutions, separated by an imaginary line of 3,000 miles in length, should be divided by hostile tariffs, countries which Providence and geography had intended to be friends, but separated by man's doing along? It was a shame, a disgrace upon civilization that such things were possible today.¹²⁵

While Jackson's emphasis on the similarity of Canadians and Americans based on common roots, values, and political systems was his way of reassuring Canadians did not have to worry about political and cultural independence, this could have actually lost him some votes. By stressing the sameness between the two countries, he was giving out the message that he was not acknowledging the perceived danger of Americanization. Rather, bound by geography, in which the two countries share the world's longest undefended border, his vision of Canada's future was one of closer integration. As Ellis pointed out earlier, the undefended border was actually protected by a larger ideological force: one that sought to stay autonomous from Americanization. Despite the commonalities between Canada and the United States, English Canada's identity was grounded in her Britishness, and thus in difference from the Americans.

The Liberal candidates were baffled by the annexationist cry, arguing instead that reciprocity was purely an economic policy. "All the talk about annexation was a political dodge,"

¹²⁵ *Victoria Daily Times*, 1 Sept 1911, 11.

Liberal candidate A.B. Clayton declared at a Liberal meeting in Cedar Cove, "it was absurd to suppose that a country of 90,000,000 was going to absorb the British Empire."¹²⁶ According to Clayton, in the same way the Conservatives conceptualized Canadian identity as a nation within the British crown, the idea of political absorption was inconceivable because the British would support Canada *if* the Americans dared to pull such a move, even though history suggested otherwise.¹²⁷ Likewise, J.H. Senkler, the Liberal candidate for Vancouver asserted, "the cry of annexation was simply ridiculous."¹²⁸ The Liberals maintained the position that reciprocity was strictly an economic policy and that it would have one effect: to create "two markets instead of one—the Americans as well as its home market."¹²⁹ Therefore, to those in favour of reciprocity, the idea of American annexation was completely ludicrous.

The Liberals also accused the Conservatives for their inconsistent free trade policies, claiming that the shift in attitude had to do with political reasons; they too once believed in reciprocity. At a Liberal meeting on September 15, Professor MacDonald reminded the crowd, "the Conservatives had always been in favour of reciprocity in the past, and of eleven pilgrimages to Washington, nine had been made by them."¹³⁰ Liberal R.J. Deachman accused the Conservatives of being "political puppets," ridiculing them for changing their minds on the reciprocity question, "because they heard their master's voice which belonged to the corporate interests and the men of money who manipulate politics for their own selfish interests."¹³¹

Although Deachman does not specifically say who these men are, he is clearly referring to the

¹²⁶ *Province*, 2 Sept 1911, 32.

¹²⁷ The final resolution of the Alaska Boundary Dispute arbitrarily ended in 1903 with Britain favouring the American side, causing Canadians to feel resentment and anger towards Britain for betraying Canadian interests in pursuit of a friendlier relationship with the United States.

¹²⁸ *Province*, 5 Sept 1911, 18.

¹²⁹ *Kelowna Courier*, 7 Sept 1911, 2.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 21 Sept 1911, 1.

¹³¹ *Province*, 20 Sept 1911, 17.

Toronto Eighteen and other capitalists. The Conservatives likewise criticized the Liberal party for going against their own policies. Giving the example of the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway, attorney general Roy Maitland claimed, the "line was for the upbuilding of interprovincial trade, but now they [Laurier and Fielding] advocate that the trade should run north and south."¹³²

The Conservatives defended their new policy by claiming that circumstances have improved and the province now enjoys prosperity whereas back then, the future was uncertain. Thus, the primary concern lay in sustaining the status quo. Moreover, "whatever Sir John's opinions in youth," J.A. MacKelvie, editor of *Vernon News* explained, "he grew in later life to like reciprocity less and less, recognising the danger of political union involved in commercial union," and then quoted the leader's famous statement that he will die as a British subject.¹³³ Convinced that reciprocity would end British Columbia's progress, the Conservative leaders vigorously denounced the pact while claiming anti-reciprocity was the continuation of Macdonald's policy even though he clearly stated that he desired reciprocity. But perhaps if Macdonald were alive, he might have changed his mind on reciprocity because British Columbia underwent dramatic changes within the first decade of the twentieth century. By 1911, the population of British Columbia had more than doubled in ten years since the last census, to a total of 392,480, making it the sixth largest province in Canada.¹³⁴

As British Columbia experienced a population explosion, its discontent towards Ottawa deepened. Stevens specifically campaigned on this platform, claiming that Vancouver was now an important revenue producer for the Dominion, yet she gives far more than she receives. At the

¹³² *Ibid.*, 5 Sept 1911, 20.

¹³³ *Kelowna Courier*, 14 Sept 1911, 1.

¹³⁴ *Statistics Canada* (hereafter SC), Census of Population, 1851 to 2006. Table. Last modified 22 Sept 2009. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo62k-eng.htm>.

Odd Fellows' Hall on a September evening, Stevens gave a long list of the grievances against the federal government:

In ten years we have received practically nothing. Our great natural harbour has been absolutely neglected...Vancouver is one of the biggest revenue producing ports in the Dominion. Our customs receipts are between \$600,000 to \$700,000 a month...yet we have received nothing in the way of government help for improving our harbour.¹³⁵

That source of discontent lay in the belief that even though British Columbia had grown exponentially in its population size and capital, the federal government was unaccommodating to these new realities. This added to British Columbia's growing frustration with the federal government.

Despite all the changes that took place in British Columbia, loyalty to the Empire remained as strong as ever. Wrapped in emotional rhetoric, Alexander McNeil, a former member of parliament and one of the original promoters of imperial federation in Canada, predicted, "Canadians, saturated as they are with affection for the land of their forefathers and loyalty to the common empire, would deeply deplore the rejection of a great imperial policy and of the incalculable trading advantages which must then pass into the hands of astute commercial rivals." Like McNeil, the loyalty cry was characterized by emotive language and the idea that Britain was Canada's natural market. At a Conservative rally on Abbott Street in Vancouver, Stevens condemned Laurier's policy, showed how the Dominion prospered under the protection of the British Empire and characterized the turning down of the Mother Country, the best customer, "a crime."¹³⁶ Conservative candidate Martin Burrell, too, called reciprocity a "great injustice" and "national suicide."¹³⁷ Canada was truly at "the parting of the ways"; and the choice was between continentalism and imperialism. As early as March, A.R. Lord at the Vancouver

¹³⁵ *Province*, 8 Sept 1911, 8.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 5 Sept 1911, 20.

¹³⁷ *Kelowna Courier*, 16 Feb 1911, 2; *ibid.*, 14 Sept 1911, 2.

Opera House said reciprocity was "inopportune, unnecessary, and injurious."¹³⁸ Similarly, H.S. Clements, the Conservative candidate for Comox-Atlin, argued, "the mother country is our natural market."¹³⁹ At another Conservative rally, British Columbians were asked to cast their ballots in support of the Conservative party so that the ties which bound Canada to the empire "would not be lessened or loosened."¹⁴⁰ According to the Conservatives, reciprocity was injurious because it would lead to a gradual commercial union with the Americans instead of Britain.

The Liberals reacted similarly to the loyalty cry as they did for the annexationist remarks. Once again, Professor MacDonald declared that the loyalty case was "an insult to Canadian nationality. Because Canadians' choice to buy or sell in the best market could have no effect on Canadian citizenship."¹⁴¹ Duncan Ross, the Liberal candidate running for Comox-Atlin, sarcastically referenced McBride whom he said had brought back from the Coronation in London with him a heavy load of loyalty. He poked fun at McBride's loyalty and asked:

If Mr. McBride was so anxious as he pretended to be to save this country from the Americans, and for Canadians, why did he not change the laws so as to stop the American speculator from grabbing all the best of the Crown lands in the province?¹⁴²

The Liberals also drew on the loyalty question to appeal to the voters albeit in a different way.

Blandy argued that closer ties with the United States would be beneficial to the British Empire:

Greater wealth and prosperity for Canada must surely be an advantage to the Empire, of which Canada is a part... With Canada becoming more and more prosperous as a result of reciprocity she will attract an ever increasing stream of settlers from Britain, Ireland, the United States and Northern Europe. In this way reciprocity will assist indirectly in building up the country and in increasing the population and manpower of the Empire.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Ibid., 23 Mar 1911, 3.

¹³⁹ *Alberni Pioneer News*, 26 Aug 1911, 4.

¹⁴⁰ *Province*, 14 Sept 1911, 19.

¹⁴¹ *Kelowna Courier*, 21 Sept 1911, 1.

¹⁴² *Alberni Pioneer*, 19 Aug 1911, 2.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 16 Sept 1911, 2.

The Conservatives and Liberals alike used the loyalty issue to further their cause. While the Conservatives argued that reciprocity would sever Canada's ties with the Empire, the Liberals proposed that the pact would only enhance the relationship. Once again, Blandy summed up both sides of the argument and asked the residents of Comox-Atlin to choose wisely: "A vote for Ross and reciprocity is a vote for cheaper food, more sawmills, more fisheries, more prosperity. A vote for Clements is a vote for taxation on food, and sleepy satisfaction with stagnation."¹⁴⁴ They chose Clements. In fact, all seven ridings in British Columbia voted for the Conservative party.

As it did in the rest of Canada, President Taft's "the parting of the ways" speech played an important role in confirming the Americans as annexationists. Conservative candidates referred to Taft's speech on numerous occasions. Macgowan at Kitsilano Presbyterian Church declared: "We are members of the greatest Empire in the world and there is no doubt that President Taft would like to see the Stars and Stripes float a little father north."¹⁴⁵ "They ask for one flag, one country, one continent," W. J. Bowser stated, but "we Conservatives use the same phrase. It was to be one flag but that flag must be the grand old flag of Britain."¹⁴⁶ One newspaper article claimed that Taft's speech revealed his true intention to bring Canada under Washington's orbit:

Judge for yourself if the words are the words of a humourist. Do they look like the words of a humourist? They look like the words of a man in true earnest. Had they been the expression of some silly or humorous speech, would President Taft have been making so much fuss about denying the speech as expressive of the hidden meaning underlying the reciprocity agreement. If the speech had not been a dead give away he would have let them go for what they are worth.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Province*, 6 Sept 1911, 12.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 8 Sept 1911, 9.

¹⁴⁷ *Abbotsford*, 11 Feb 1911, 2.

The Liberals decried Taft's statement which Blandy described as "one of those delightfully ambiguous phrases which may mean so much or so little."¹⁴⁸ Regardless of Taft's true intentions, his speech only fostered the fear Canadians already had towards the Americans.

Throughout the election campaign, the Conservatives used anti-American sentiment to appeal to British Columbia's loyalists. The image of the "good-willed" and "honest" Conservatives was contrasted with the apparently "evil" Americans. The battle against reciprocity was portrayed as an epic fight that could change the course of Canadian history. One headline read: "Conservative Party Today is Great Fighting Force;" and claimed that, "they are business men of high character...Mr. Borden has chosen men like himself. All the new officers are men of irreproachable character, both in their public and private life. They are born fighters."¹⁴⁹ This antagonistic image refutes Baker's narrow conception of anti-Americanism as an expression of Canada's desire to remain autonomous. In fact, Canada's claim to moral superiority formed another element of anti-American sentiment. Louis R.L. Oliver, a resident of British Columbia who claims to have authority over this matter because he lived in the United States for a while, wrote that the "shrewd" Americans tricked Laurier into thinking reciprocity was advantageous to Canadian farmers.¹⁵⁰ Laurier was thus seen in a positive light; at worst, a victim taken for a fool. He then likened reciprocity with Virgil's tale of the Trojan War. He compared the Greek's wooden horse that was used to enter the gates of Troy with the American reciprocity as their horse upon which they would use to absorb Canada.¹⁵¹ At a Conservative rally, Stevens declared that Canada, "a land abounding in rich resources, should not squander her

¹⁴⁸ *Alberni Pioneer*, 16 Sept 1911, 2.

¹⁴⁹ *Province*, 28 Jan 1911, 1.

¹⁵⁰ Oliver to McBride, *PBC*, GR-441, box 145, file 1, Election Correspondence, no date.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

wealth but, on the other hand should do all in her power to develop and upbuild the country."¹⁵²

After sketching out the condition in the United States, he concluded, "because the natural resources of that nation were either exhausted or dissipated, the capitalists and manufacturers of the United States now wished to take the natural resources of Canada and exploit them to their own advantage."¹⁵³ But above all, Ernst McGraffer had the most cynical view towards his fellow American citizens although he himself probably would have identified himself as more of a Canadian by now. In the same four-paged letter, he wrote:

the craze of the American people for money has grown to an absorbing mania; which has been responsible not only for mental and physical deterioration, but for a cynical and indifferent moral fibre, which more than anything else has cursed the Americans of the past three generations. Craft, greed, and dishonesty have permeated every avenue of activity in the States.¹⁵⁴

According to these politicians and residents of British Columbia, Americans were "evil", "greedy" and "untrustworthy" people who were only interested in money. The Americans were labelled as villains who wanted to exploit Canadian resources and ultimately absorb Canada into a satellite state of the United States. Some people argued that due to their "greediness," they have already exhausted their resources and were thus looking for an alternative option. Others argued that the Americans were trying to gain access to Canada's resources in order to preserve their own supply of abundant resources. Either way, both arguments pointed to the level of distrust Canadians felt towards the Americans due to their character flaws. In contrast, the Conservatives were depicted as the resilient and morally pure party that was born ready to fight against the American "menace." As these findings suggest, anti-Americanism is a recurring theme in

¹⁵² *Province*, 5 Sept 1911, 20.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ McGraffer to McBride, *PBC*, GR-441, box 145, file 1, Election Correspondence, 7 Aug 1911, 2.

Canadian history and it is a multi-faceted concept. While fear was certainly an element of anti-Americanism, so was morality.

At the first cabinet meeting after the defeat on September 26, the Liberals discussed the causes of defeat. Young Mackenzie King noted in his diary: "The moral, is to make no appeal in good times for something better. It is only when people are hard up that they see the advantage of change."¹⁵⁵ British Columbia went solidly against reciprocity; each of the seven seats returned Conservative members by large majorities. The result was a Conservative gain of two seats in Nanaimo and Comox-Atlin. Stevens of Vancouver returned the largest election majority yet recorded in Canada receiving over 3000 votes over Senkler. Stevens interpreted his win as proof "that the great issue of reciprocity was keenly appreciated by the people who have declared with no uncertain voice that they want none of it."¹⁵⁶ In an interview the day after the election, McBride also regarded the Conservative victory as Canada's expression that she "is forever done with reciprocity, and that she is more than ever prepared to continue along the line of cultivating the home and Imperial markets, first, last and all the time."¹⁵⁷ G.T. Somers, a member of the Toronto Eighteen, wrote to McBride thanking and congratulating him for the sweeping Conservative victory in British Columbia:

Yours is the only Province in the unique position of having made the matter unanimous, and those of us who belong to the eighteen former friends of the previous Government, and who took such an active part against reciprocity, are particularly pleased with your work in British Columbia in opposition to the pact.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ LAC, Diaries of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, 26 September 1911, 2.

¹⁵⁶ *Province*, 22 Sept 1911, 27.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 22 Sept 1911, 40.

¹⁵⁸ Somers to McBride, PBC, GR-441, box 145, file 1, Election Correspondence, 25 Sept 1911.

Replying back to another congratulatory letter, McBride wrote: "The death of the reciprocity pact will undoubtedly prove beneficial to Canada and to the Empire at large."¹⁵⁹ Once again, Canada was seen as an extension of Britain. Finally at ease, a long time resident of British Columbia expressed his relief at the defeat of reciprocity to McBride: "it was with great relief that I learned the result of the elections—a struggle which seemed to me to be a matter of life and death for my much-loved native country."¹⁶⁰

As much as Canadians denied President Taft's "the parting of the ways" statement, it was an accurate assessment of Canada. Canadians were asked to either choose continentalism or imperialism and it was on this issue that so many liberal members defected from the Liberal party to join the anti-reciprocity campaign. Reciprocity was a life or death issue, to the extent that it had the power to break party politics. The election campaign in British Columbia mirrored the national narrative in several ways. Canadian nationalism was expressed in terms of her position as a sovereign state *within* the British Empire. Thus, Canadian independence and loyalty to the crown were interchangeable ideas. Also, President Taft and Clark's utterances played an important role by confirming that the Americans' ulterior motive to commercially then politically annex Canada was real. All these similarities between the national narrative and British Columbia refutes the theory of British Columbia exceptionalism. At least during the 1911 election, English Canada acted as one entity.

There were, of course, elements that were unique to British Columbia. Its strained relationship with the federal government was becoming worse under the context of rapid industrialization, modernization, and Asian immigration. As a resource-based economy, the

¹⁵⁹ McBride to C.H. Unversagst, *PBC*, GR-441, box 145, file 2, Election Correspondence, 12 Oct 1911.

¹⁶⁰ Alfred E. Alston to McBride, *PBC*, GR-441, box 145, file 2, 25 Sept 1911.

lumber, fishing, fruit, and mining industries were of a special concern. In British Columbia, the Conservatives urged voters to oppose reciprocity because it was injurious to the economy for three reasons: it would cripple the province's infant lumber, fishing, fruit, and mining industries; destroy interprovincial trade; and thwart British Columbia's prosperity and future developments. Politically, there were also dangers. Reciprocity would threaten Canada's national independence, sever ties with the British Empire, and open the gate to an exploitation of Canada's vast resources. Lastly, anti-Americanism found its way into the debate.

Moreover, the way that reciprocity was discussed reveals much about British Columbia. The emphasis on the economic disadvantages of the pact shows that money was an important factor in the 1911 election. It was not just about the desire to keep closer ties with the British Empire or remain as a politically independent nation. As King noted in his diary, reciprocity was rejected because during times of prosperity, people are not receptive to change. The concern about the disappearance of east-west trade demonstrates that despite British Columbia's long history of demanding better terms from Ottawa, the province wanted a better deal *within* Canada. Furthermore, the emphasis on the railway was an expression of technological nationalism, illustrating the argument that the technology of transportation and communication made Canada possible. But Canadian nationalism was still defined by its British connection. The Conservatives talked about reciprocity as political suicide because it would undermine the country's sovereignty and end its special relationship with the Empire. Thus, in 1911, Canadians still had not figured out what it meant to be truly "Canadian". Finally, Canadians claimed moral superiority over the Americans. Canadians feared the Americans for their advanced technologies and significantly larger population size, but Canadians also believed that they were better than the Americans in other ways. Thus, Canadian anti-Americanism is a complex concept. It is

neither just a tool that political and business elites use to further their own interests nor an expression of fear or the desire for Canadian autonomy. In sum, the 1911 election brought ideas about Canadian identity to the surface through the lens of reciprocity, which was seen as a direct threat to Canadian nationalism and interests.

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