

An Irish-Canadian Journalist-Politician and Catholicism: Timothy Anglin of the Saint John Freeman

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Timothy Warren Anglin is not a well-known figure in Canadian History. Yet he made an important contribution to the development of Canada in the second half of the nineteenth century. Like so many of his countrymen, Anglin found his future prospects bleak after the Great Irish Famine of the 1840's and he resolved to leave the Emerald Isle. In 1849 he arrived in Saint John, New Brunswick, and founded a newspaper – the *Freeman* – which remained under his editorship until 1883. It was not particularly surprising that journalism led Anglin into politics. From 1861 to 1866 he was a New Brunswick Assemblyman and from 1867 to 1882 he was a member of the House of Commons. Throughout his career in North America, therefore, he was both a journalist and a politician.¹

In studying Anglin's life, however, one constantly is forced to recognize that he was not merely a journalist and politician, he was an *Irish Catholic* journalist and politician. On numerous occasions he wrote, spoke, acted and saw himself as an Irish Catholic representative and spokesman. It is possible, however, without too much artificiality, to distinguish between Anglin as an Irish spokesman and Anglin as a lay Catholic leader. It is the latter subject to which this paper is addressed.

One could justify such a study on the grounds that it is, I trust, a contribution to our knowledge of the history of the English-speaking Catholic

¹ For further information on Anglin's career see W.M. BAKER, *Timothy Warren Anglin, 1822-96: Irish Catholic Canadian* (Toronto, 1977). (I am grateful to the University of Toronto Press for permission to reprint passages appearing in this work.) The *Freeman* maintained an almost continuous existence from 1849 to 1884 in a variety of forms (weekly, tri-weekly, daily). Its circulation seems to have been broad in terms of geographical distribution but was restricted in terms of numbers. Average sale of the *Freeman* was probably in the neighbourhood of 1000 copies. Further information on the *Freeman* may be found in BAKER, *Anglin. A Catholic journal, the New Freeman*, named after Anglin's paper, was established in Saint John in 1900 and has been published to this day.

Church in Canada, a knowledge which, according to Prof J.S. Moir, “resembles Canada’s vast forested terrain where only a few isolated clearings have been made by the hands of pioneers.”² My interest in the subject, however, has become aroused by a much more circuitous route. What fascinates me is the acculturation, or ‘fitting in’, of the Famine Irish into Canadian society in the second half of the nineteenth century. At mid-century what one has is a group of poverty-stricken, disease-ridden immigrants different in language from one segment of the population of British North America and different in religion from the other segment. The socio-political experiences of these people in the homeland had promoted disrespect for the law and for the authorities administering the law. In the British North America of mid-nineteenth century, they were a detached element of society, diverging in attitudes and status from the rest of the community. By the end of the century Irish Catholics were becoming adjusted to Canadian society. They were much more fully integrated into that society and retained little cultural distinctiveness from the English-speaking Canadian community except that of their religion. This acculturation was the result of numerous factors such as the increased wealth of Irish Catholics and the re-emigration of those Irish Catholics hostile to the colonial community in which they resided. But what about the role played by Irish Catholic leaders? They were the ones who provided the direction and, to a considerable extent, the goals of the group. They were also the ones who related to and negotiated with the established authorities of the society.³ In explaining the acculturation of Irish Catholics in Canada in the second half of the nineteenth century, therefore, the beliefs and actions of Irish Catholic leaders are of great significance.

For Irish Catholics, there were two sorts of leaders – laymen and clerics. While the two types performed different functions, there were areas of overlap. Not only did priests give political advice to parishioners but also laymen made public pronouncements on Catholic doctrines and beliefs. Thus the relationship between the two types of leaders was important, if for no other reason than the fact that receiving conflicting advice from their leaders would have been disconcerting for the Irish. But if Bishop and politician were in

² J.S. MOIR, “The Problems of a Double Minority: Some Reflections on the Development of the English-speaking Catholic Church in Canada in the Nineteenth Century,” *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, No. 7 (April, 1971), 53.

³ While ‘elite accommodation’ obviously relates to a broader sphere than simply the political, it has long been a feature of Canadian politics and has recently been isolated for examination as a particular phenomenon by Canadian political scientists [see, for example, S.J.R. NOEL, “Consociational Democracy and Canadian Federalism,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, IV, (1971), 15-18; and R. PRESTHUS, *Elite Accommodation in Canadian Politics* (Toronto, 1973)].

agreement on fundamentals the way was paved for an alliance of talents which could provide effective leadership for Irish Catholics not simply in defending their particular interests but also in assisting their adjustment into the larger society. In other words, the relationship between an Irish Catholic political leader such as Anglin and his Church was of fundamental importance not only for himself as an Irish Catholic spokesman but also for the Irish Catholic community he purported to represent and, of course, for the Church.

In examining the subject of Anglin and Catholicism there are several themes which should be discussed. It is necessary to take a cursory look at Anglin's religious beliefs and his multifarious activities on behalf of Catholic organizations and agencies. Secondly, Anglin's relations with the clergy will be examined. Finally, an analysis of Anglin's perspective, style and activities as a Catholic lay spokesman will be presented.

I

In examining Anglin's religious activities and beliefs it quickly becomes apparent that Anglin was an involved member of his Church. In many mundane but not inconsequential ways he demonstrated his willingness to work with and for the Church. As well as regular attendance at devotional services Anglin participated in a number of specifically Catholic organizations and functions including the Saint John Roman Catholic Total Abstinence Relief Society, committees created to build the Cathedral in Saint John and to prepare addresses to welcome or bid farewell to clerical leaders of the diocese, graduation exercises at Catholic schools, corner-stone laying ceremonies for Catholic buildings, and banquets honouring high-ranking clergymen.⁴ Of course, such activities might have been a mere 'show' of religion or, as Anglin's *Freeman* once put it, "a Sunday go-to-meeting coat to be put on with a long face on special occasions ..."⁵ Yet when one examines his philosophy of life one becomes impressed that for Anglin Catholic Christianity was more than mere form; it was a faith to live by.

The stance of the Church in the second half of the nineteenth century was primarily of a conservative and defensive nature in an age of 'progress', materialism and science. Catholics throughout the world were caught up in

⁴ To footnote all instances when Anglin was involved in such occasions would be pedantic.

⁵ *Freeman*, March 16, 1869.

this struggle in some shape or form.⁶ For his part, Anglin encountered little difficulty in aligning himself with the Church. No doubt partly because Anglin was a member in good standing of the middle class his ideology was thoroughly conservative even though he called himself a Liberal or Reformer. He agreed that the great struggle of the age “in which nearly the whole world is engaged, is the contest between Christianity and Infidelity.”⁷ There was no doubt which side Anglin favoured for he considered that religion ought to be

the great vital principle that should ever guide, govern, actuate and controul [sic] man in his family, in the workshop, the marketplace, the court of justice, the public meeting, and the place of amusement ... causing him to refer every thought, word and deed of his whole life to God ...⁸

Without the application of Christian principles, Anglin believed, no society could operate adequately, for as the Freeman enunciated on June 9, 1863,

no agencies or means merely human can controul [sic] or subdue, much less quite extinguish the evil tendencies the corrupt inclinations of human nature ... To controul [sic] human nature is a supernatural work which can only be accomplished by supernatural means.

Equally, Anglin was convinced that religion was “the only effectual means of eradicating all evil which exists at all ...”⁹ Anglin’s argument was circular but clearly had a religious orientation. So too did his denunciations of the many nineteenth century ‘isms’ which the Church confronted, such as communism and scientific rationalism.¹⁰ It is not surprising therefore, that in general Anglin’s relations with the clerical leaders of the Church were cordial.

⁶ Quebec Catholics certainly were (see A.I. SILVER, “Some Quebec Attitudes in an Age of Imperialism and Ideological Conflict,” *Canadian Historical Review*, LVII (1976), 440-460.

⁷ *Freeman*, January 23, 1877.

⁸ *Ibid.*, March 16, 1869.

⁹ *Ibid.*, June 8, 1878.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, November 12, 1870 ; June 1, 1871 ; December 16, 1875 ; October 6, 1876 ; October 13 and December 11, 1877 ; and April 30, June 8 and August 22, 1878.

II

With one outstanding exception, Anglin got along with Catholic clergymen very well indeed. In part, this was a result of Anglin's religious orientation which led him to respect men of the cloth. But the usual coincidence of the views of the hierarchy and Anglin on public issues can also be explained by the similarity in social status of Anglin and the hierarchy. Anglin was a member of the Catholic social elite both in Saint John and later, in Toronto. The tentacles of family connection and social relationship were intricate but gripping, particularly, as shall be seen, in the case of Bishop Sweeny. The association between leading laymen and the hierarchy went much beyond city or even diocesan boundaries. In 1870, for example, a priest from Cork, Anglin's home county, was on a fundraising tour of North America. When this priest had sojourned at the summer house of Archbishop Thomas Connolly while in Nova Scotia, he had shared it with a recently married young couple who were renting the Archbishop's "magnificent mansion" for the summer. The bride was none other than Anglin's sister in law.¹¹

Anglin's intimate relationship with the clergy is exemplified by many things. One might point out, for example, his attendance at dinners for leading clerics,¹² his successful effort to obtain payment of an insurance claim made by Father Varily,¹³ his authorship of the article on Archbishop John Joseph Lynch in the *Jubilee Volume* for the Archdiocese of Toronto,¹⁴ or perhaps the efforts of various clergymen to further Anglin's career.¹⁵ In general, then, the features of Anglin's relationship with clergymen are those of closeness and mutual support. This was particularly true of Anglin's

¹¹ Rev. M.B. BUCKLEY, *Diary of a Tour in America* (Dublin, 1886), p. 101.

¹² University of New Brunswick Archives, Bishop James Rogers Papers, Anglin to Rogers, February 26, 1883; *Catholic Weekly Review* (Toronto), April 18, 1891, and February 27, 1892.

¹³ Rogers Papers, Anglin to Rogers, November 26, 1880.

¹⁴ T.W. ANGLIN, "The Life and Times of the Most Rev. John Joseph Lynch, Archbishop of Toronto," *Jubilee Volume: The Archdiocese of Toronto and Archbishop Walsh 1842-1892*, ed. Rev. J.R. TEEFY (Toronto, 1892), pp. 169-196.

¹⁵ See, for example Rogers Papers, Anglin to Rogers, September 2, 1877 and Roman Catholic Diocese of Saint John Archives, Bishop John Sweeny Papers, Anglin to Sweeny, May 10, 1887. These letters indicate that Archbishops Connolly and Lynch, respectively, were taking an interest in Anglin's career.

association with John Sweeny, Bishop of Saint John from 1860 to 1901.

Anglin's connections with Bishop Sweeny were numerous and varied. Anglin lived but a few doors away from the Cathedral and Bishop's residence¹⁶ and was one of the Bishop's most prominent parishioners, as witnessed by the fact that the Bishop, assisted by two priests, officiated at Anglin's marriage to Ellen McTavish in 1862 in the presence of a large crowd at the Cathedral.¹⁷ Sweeny's sister was the wife of Anglin's very close friend Dr. Boyle Travers.¹⁸ One cannot doubt that Anglin and Sweeny were in virtually constant communication with each other but the evidence for such an interpretation is largely circumstantial prior to 1883. The explanation for the lack of documentation is probably that Anglin and Sweeny were located in such close proximity to each other that their communication normally would have been verbal rather than written. Nevertheless there are some interesting indications of the nature of their relationship. In the first place, in few instances that I have uncovered were the publicly expressed views of the two men in disagreement even on occasions of controversy such as the Confederation debate. Anglin promoted the endeavours of the Bishop such as his colonization or settlement schemes,¹⁹ to say nothing of more obvious issues which concerned Sweeny such as the New Brunswick schools question.²⁰ For his part the Bishop encouraged his parishioners to support Anglin's *Freeman*²¹ and probably attempted to promote Anglin's political career.²² These matters are all very serious and important. But perhaps a better insight into the relationship is the fact that Anglin advised the Bishop to wear

¹⁶ *McAlpine's Saint John Directory, for 1874-75* (Saint John, [1874], p. 43.

¹⁷ *News* (Saint John), September 26, 1862 ; and *Freeman*, September 27, 1862.

¹⁸ J.T. SAYWELL (ed.), *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen 1893-1898* (Toronto, 1960), p. 108.

¹⁹ *Freeman*, January 21, February 2, 16 and 23, June 7 and August 2, 1860; July 25, 1861; September 9, 1862; October 17, 1867; October 7, 1869; July 5, 1870; October 21, 1871.

²⁰ The schools question emerged in 1871 when the New Brunswick legislature passed a school act which levied taxes for the purpose of supporting common schools. Catholics had to pay these taxes even though they objected to common schools and wished to use their money to support Catholic schools. New Brunswick Catholics fought in vain against the legislation both within the province and in the federal parliament for five years. See BAKER, *Anglin*, pp. 146-163 and 174-181; and P. TONER, "The New Brunswick Schools Question," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Study Sessions*, 1970, pp. 85-96.

²¹ *Freeman*, February 8, 1879.

²² See, for example, Sweeney Papers, Rogers to Sweeny, October 30, 1860.

his robes of office rather than a black coat on the occasion of the visit to Saint John of Lord Lorne, the Governor General, and his wife, the Princess Louise. The Bishop followed the advice, just as Anglin had adopted Sweeny's advice to accept the Speakership of the House of Commons some years earlier.²³

It was not until Anglin moved to Toronto in 1883 that the documents reveal the intimacy of Anglin's relationship with Bishop Sweeny. Their closeness is seen in the letters that Anglin wrote to the Bishop on a fairly regular basis during the following decade. It is seen in the familiar tone with which Anglin told Sweeny about his political views and his social and family life in those letters. It is seen as well in the fact that the Anglin household was Sweeny's place of residence during his 1884 visit to Toronto to celebrate Archbishop Lynch's jubilee.²⁴ But the most striking evidence of Anglin's closeness to Sweeny is found in the first sentence of Anglin's first Toronto letter to the Bishop of Saint John. "I should have sent you as I promised," he wrote, "a note stating that you were kind enough to lend me eleven hundred dollars (\$1100)... but I somehow deferred writing from day to day until I could tell you how matters look in Toronto."²⁵ To be sure, Sweeny had security in the form of debentures to cover the loan and was getting six percent interest, but the magnitude of the loan, Sweeny's accession to Anglin's request to use the interest coupons on the debentures for other purposes, and the length of time before the loan was fully repaid all indicate that the loan was an act of great consideration, an act of one towards an old and trusted friend.²⁶ Even after the loan had been repaid the Bishop looked after Anglin's debentures and twice a year sent along the interest coupons even as late as 1892. By that time, however, the two men had been separated for so long that they were losing contact with each other. "But for this . . ." Anglin wrote in thanking the Bishop for sending along a draft of money in June, 1892, "I am afraid our correspondence would die out forever."²⁷ Such drifting apart, however, seems to be a contrast to an apparent norm of harmony and intimacy between Anglin and Sweeny throughout much of their careers.

²³ Rogers Papers, Anglin to Rogers, August 28, 1879, and March 6, 1874.

²⁴ *Globe* (Toronto), December 11, 1884.

²⁵ Sweeny Papers, Anglin to Sweeny, November 22, 1883.

²⁶ The details of the loan and Anglin's finances may be traced in *ibid.*, Anglin to Sweeny, November 22, 1883; April 24, May 3 and November 4, 1884; April 16, 1885; May 28, June 7 and November 15, 1886; and May 10, 1887. In May of 1887, some four years after the loan was originally made, Anglin made a final calculation of interest owed on the loan and presumably paid it off.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Anglin to Sweeny, June 9, 1892.

'Harmonious' would be an imperfect term to describe Anglin's relationship with James Rogers, Bishop of Chatham. There were many occasions, of course, on which these two men worked in cooperation. In several instances Rogers attempted to assist Anglin's political career.²⁸ For his part Anglin worked along with Rogers on the schools question and other matters concerning the Church. He visited the Bishop on almost every occasion he passed through Chatham and in one letter was consoling about the Bishop's rheumatism²⁹ In short, the story of the Anglin-Rogers association is not an unbroken tale of conflict and antagonism.

Nevertheless, in 1866 a controversy between the two broke out, a dispute which coloured their relationship from that point on. The problem was that they disagreed on the question of Confederation. Anglin opposed it while Rogers favoured it and during the 1866 New Brunswick election campaign they became embroiled in a war of words. From Anglin's perspective it was disconcerting to see Bishop Rogers supporting Confederation at the very time that the pro-Confederates were mounting an anti-Catholic campaign in the Saint John valley in aid of the Confederation cause.³⁰ To Anglin such clerical support for Confederation must have seemed a betrayal and his strong responses to Rogers, Thomas Connolly, Archbishop of Halifax, and Colin F. MacKinnon, Bishop of Arichat, were undoubtedly coloured by irritation. MacKinnon's open letter to his flock, for example, was insultingly dismissed by Anglin's *Freeman*: "you will find that the arguments and reasons which influenced the Bishop would not mislead a boy of fifteen of ordinary intelligence."³¹ Such newspaper writing was not abnormal in the period and was acceptable enough provided the dispute remained confined to political matters. But the controversy with Bishop Rogers in May and June of 1866 went beyond the political to have both personal and religious overtones. It began in mid-May when Rogers publicized his support for the Confederates and their cause.³² Anglin published Rogers' letters but found them unimpressive: "The Bishop's reasons are not the most cogent or convincing in the world, and we doubt much that they will influence many of those who

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Rogers to Sweeny, October 30, 1860; and Rogers Papers, Rogers to K. F. Burns, May 9, 1872, Rogers to Rev. T.F. Barry, May 15, 1872, and Rogers to J. Sivewright, January 27, 1874.

²⁹ Rogers Papers, Anglin to Rogers, February 21, 1882.

³⁰ See W.M. BAKER, "Squelching the Disloyal, Fenian-Sympathizing Brood: T.W. Anglin and Confederation in New Brunswick, 1865-6," *Canadian Historical Review*, LV (1974), 141-158.

³¹ *Freeman*, April 24, 1866.

³² *Ibid.*, May 22 and 26, 1866.

wish to take them for what they are.”³³ What particularly irked Bishop Rogers, however, was the direct involvement of Anglin in Chatham – Newcastle politics, for as a leading anti-Confederate Anglin had visited those North Shore communities in May just after the Bishop had made his views known publicly.³⁴ Rogers claimed that Anglin’s ‘interference’ threatened to disturb the peace in a volatile situation.³⁵ Anglin dismissed Rogers’ concern as the irrational invention of a politically partisan mind.³⁶ The excitement of the moment caused both men to speak strongly: Rogers accusing Anglin of misleading the Catholic community, of fomenting strife and sectarian animosity and of maliciousness, sneering and hypocrisy in his dealings with the Bishop on the Confederation issue; Anglin arguing that Rogers was guilty of repeating “gross and villainous falsehoods” about him, of misusing his powers as Bishop, of attempting to stifle political liberty and of insulting the Catholics of New Brunswick by intimating that Catholics had no opinion on public issues but had to “obey the will of their spiritual guides in all things.”³⁷ The animosity developed during the controversy is evidenced in an exchange of letters late in May. In the first, Rogers wrote to Anglin:

Your complimentary comment on my letter to Mr. Williston, published in your paper of the 22nd inst., for the sake of “truth” which you are “bound to speak”, precludes the necessity of offering any apology for the few words of the same community in reference to yourself, contained in my letter to Mr. Sutton ...³⁸

Anglin’s response was little different in tone:

I am sorry to find in your short note to me the bitter, cynical spirit of which you so unjustly accuse me ... I do not complain of the course you have chosen to take. It is not I, my Lord, who have anything to fear from a prolongation of the controversy you have forced upon me, or from any truths you or any one else may choose to state, or even from the wretched calumnies which your Lordship is so willing to borrow from the armory

³³ *Ibid.*, May 22, 1866.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, May 26, 1866.

³⁵ Rogers to Anglin, May 28, 1866, printed in *Freeman*, June 9, 1866.

³⁶ See, for example, *Freeman*, May 29, 1866.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Rogers to Anglin, May 24, 1866, printed in *ibid.*, May 31, 1866,

of the most unprincipled enemies of Catholics and Catholicity.³⁹

The breach opened between the two was never fully closed. Anglin was fortunate during the 1867 election when he ran for the North Shore constituency of Gloucester that Rogers was in Rome for the Bishop would have opposed Anglin's candidacy.⁴⁰ Yet the Bishop somewhat grudgingly gave his support to Anglin during the 1872 election in recognition of Anglin's diligent efforts related to the schools question. By 1877 Rogers could even write:

... I need not say to you how sincerely and earnestly I wish you well, success and benediction in your career as a Journalist, a Statesman, and a clear-sighted, learned and conscientious Catholic Layman, able [.] willing and successful in defending and elucidating Catholic principles in whatsoever department the occasion for doing so may present itself

Anglin's response was little different in tone:

Both in the press and in Parliament your ability and success in this respect, since your election for Gloucester, has been a subject of congratulation – nay of honorable pride and satisfaction to all Catholics generally throughout the Dominion – especially Irish Catholics. Then in your private life, blameless, edifying and in every way correct, a regular, pious, practical Catholic you confirm and enhance the honor of your public career.⁴¹

Nevertheless, Rogers and Anglin remained in opposite political camps, Rogers siding with Sir John A. Macdonald's party,⁴² Anglin gravitating to Reform ranks. As Rogers wrote, his "friendship" for Anglin was "on account of your personal merits of every kind, not on account of, but in spite of the

³⁹ Anglin to Rogers, May 29, 1866, printed in *Freeman*, May 31, 1866.

⁴⁰ Rogers Papers, Rogers to Burns, May 9, 1872.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Rogers to Anglin, May 8, 1877.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Rogers to Anglin, May 8, 1877, and September 27, 1878; and Rogers to John Costigan, May 23, 1882, printed in the *Sun* (Saint John), June 7, 1882.

side of political questions and parties you advocated.”⁴³ And so Rogers was reluctant to say much in support of Anglin’s political ambitions after his usefulness on the schools question had come to an end. It is interesting nevertheless, that Anglin was one of those to whom Rogers wished to be remembered when he wrote to Archbishop Lynch of Toronto as late as 1887.⁴⁴

There are two points to be noted in connection with the Anglin-Rogers relationship. In the first place it is significant that the 1866 dispute with Rogers was Anglin’s only serious conflict with an important Catholic clergyman – the exception that proved the rule. But the conflict showed Anglin’s unwillingness to ‘cow-tow’ even to a Bishop. The fact then, that there were no other significant disagreements between Anglin and leading clerics, suggests that their views were in natural harmony, for Anglin demonstrated in 1866 that he would not shy away from a fight. It is also noteworthy that Anglin was able, by dint of arduous and effective labour, to regain Rogers’ esteem and approbation. One can see in this development evidence of Anglin’s upright character as well as a desire amongst leading Catholic laymen and clergymen to avoid conflict.

III

One of the reasons why Rogers had become involved in the 1866 controversy with Anglin was that the Bishop recognized Anglin’s influence with Catholics and believed that it could be counteracted only by extraordinary means.⁴⁵ In other words Bishop Rogers knew that Anglin was seen as a lay spokesman for the Catholic community. Rogers was correct. Anglin was indeed a lay leader of Catholics although he was not in favour of bloc politics in spite of all the anti-Catholicism he saw about him. In politics, he said, Catholics and Protestants should base their decisions on a principled judgment of what was best for the country.

Catholics should feel a pride in being able to say that, however others have bartered and sold their influence at elections, they at all events

⁴³ Rogers Papers, September 27, 1878.

⁴⁴ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto Archives, Archbishop John Joseph Lynch Papers, Rogers to Lynch, February 4, 1887.

⁴⁵ Rogers to L.P.W. DesBrisay, May 17, 1866, printed in *Freeman*, May 26, 1866.

have been actuated rather by a regard for the general interests than by any desire to exalt themselves individually or collectively, or to degrade any others.⁴⁶

Besides, Anglin pointed out, a combination of Catholics would likely encourage counter-combinations amongst Protestants and Protestants were, after all, in the majority.

One should also note in connection with his role as Catholic leader that Anglin considered his *Freeman* to be a secular paper. It did not, Anglin proclaimed, represent the views of the Bishop nor did it discuss doctrinal questions. “The *Freeman*, we trust, is not an irreligious paper,” Anglin wrote, “but everyone who reads it knows that it is not ‘a religious paper,’ in the ordinary acceptance of that term.”⁴⁷ Yet it is also true that Anglin defended and explained the position of the Church on such diverse matters as the schools question, divorce and papal authority to name but a few. The *Freeman* also published numerous letters written and speeches spoken by clerics. Bishop Rogers was correct, therefore, when he asserted that while the *Freeman* was not a Catholic paper as such it had “come to be very generally regarded as the exponent of the feeling of the Catholic body, both lay and clerical, of this Province.”⁴⁸

As a Catholic spokesman Anglin believed that while bloc politics should be avoided Catholics should not hide in the corner meekly accepting an inferior position in society. He wished to allay sectarian strife, he said, but

not indeed by asking that Catholics should cower and tremble before every squall evil-minded men may raise; not by abandoning one jot or tittle of their right to perfect and complete equality with their fellow subjects ... but by defending them when they were right and censuring any individual amongst them who did wrong; by explaining their real position, their true motives and principles ...⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Freeman*, January 9, 1864. Other occasions on which the *Freeman* discussed this issue were January 20, May 3 and June 2, 1866; July 13, 1867; January 17, 1880; and July 15, 1882.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, May 20, 1861. See also *ibid.*, January 31, 1863.

⁴⁸ Rogers to DesBrisay, May 17, 1866, printed in *ibid.*, May 26, 1866.

⁴⁹ *Freeman*, May 29, 1866.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Anglin's activities as a Catholic lay leader were both numerous and varied.

Indeed, Anglin's role as a lay Catholic leader often took him well outside the political arena. One of the more interesting examples of this kind of involvement occurred in 1858-59 when Anglin became embroiled in a controversy with Judge Lemuel A. Wilmot.⁵⁰ Wilmot, the former leader of the 'Reformers', was a Wesleyan Methodist of great fervency whose zeal sometimes clouded his discretion and common-sense. The particular conflict between Wilmot and Anglin had its origin in a speech made by the Judge before the Bible Society in Saint John. During the course of his dissertation he told a story of a Catholic boy residing in Miramichi who had been caught reading a Bible. According to the story, the boy's father had remonstrated with him and when he refused to cease his reading, a priest had been summoned. The latter had also failed to convince the boy and eventually the lad had been tied to a tree and whipped until the priest became exhausted. Despite this punishment, the boy had stuck to his decision that he would read the Bible; all the priest could say was that it was mighty difficult to beat the Protestant out of him. The boy had then escaped, come to Fredericton, become a devout Methodist, and told the Judge and others his story. This, briefly, was the tale that Wilmot related to his audience.⁵¹

It was almost by accident that things went further than this. Early in July, 1858, while combatting a slanderous report about some Pennsylvania priest, the *Freeman* mentioned the Judge's story. Shortly thereafter Father Egan, a Catholic clergyman in Miramichi, wrote to the *Freeman* referring to its comment, and called upon the Judge to give names, dates and other details relating to the case. "[T]hat a Judge should forget his exalted position, and bear false witness against his neighbour," the priest wrote, "is not to be tamely endured."⁵² The *Freeman* added that if Wilmot failed to produce names, dates and proofs, he would stand guilty of slander or worse.⁵³ The *Freeman* waited more than a month and then gave a devastating critique of Wilmot's behavior. "For a man holding the position of Judge to tell such a story," the *Freeman* claimed, "... and then, when challenged to the proof, to pretend any discussion of the subject as below his dignity, is the very acme

⁵⁰ New Brunswick Museum Archives, C. WARD, "Old Times in Saint John," pp. 161-6 (Ward's account is based on the *Freeman*). There is no record of this specific incident in J. LATHERN, *The Hon. Judge Wilmot A Biographical Sketch* (Toronto, 1881), but there is some evidence of Wilmot's Protestant outspokenness in the period (see *ibid.*, pp. 74-82).

⁵¹ *Freeman*, August 10 and September 16, 1858.

⁵² Rev. Michael EGAN to Editor, July 14, 1858, in *ibid.*, August 10, 1858.

⁵³ *Freeman*, August 10, 1858.

of the ridiculous.” Given the ample time which Wilmot had had to substantiate his story, the *Freeman* argued, his silence was proof that the story was an insidious lie.

A lie more injurious to the character of a clergyman may easily be invented; but this lie was used to beget in his audience a hatred of Priests, as a set of brutal tyrants; a contempt for all Catholics, as grovelling slaves; and a hostility to Catholicity, as a debasing, degrading, enslaving system ... It is almost impossible to conceive with what feelings those who believed this story must have regarded Catholics. Certainly they could not regard them as a people entitled to equal rights and privileges with themselves; or as a people capable of being free.

Perhaps the only good thing about the whole affair, the *Freeman* concluded, was that those who had believed the story the Judge told might in future be less credulous of tales told them on no authority whatever.⁵⁴

The issue did not end at this point. Although Wilmot himself never attempted to verify his story, some of the newspapers defended him by saying that Wilmot had told the story, perhaps with a little colour added, as the boy had told it, but that now the boy had emigrated to Canada and had come under the control of the priests once again. To the *Freeman* this demonstrated either the stupidity of the Judge or his willingness to repeat something which, given his legal experience, he ought to have questioned and thereby discovered its falsity.⁵⁵ Finally, before the Bible Society on January 13, 1859, Wilmot took the floor. Everyone expected him to vindicate himself, or at least make the attempt, and, acting on this presumption, Anglin sought and received the permission of Thomas Connolly, at that time Bishop of Saint John but soon to become Archbishop of Halifax, to attend the meeting. Wilmot made a fiery speech but it was a distinct failure.

The utmost he could say was to appeal to God he had never spoken what he did not believe to be true ... He did not dare to assert that the story was true, or to attempt to prove it true by giving what any one would

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, September 16, 1858.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, October 19 and December 11, 1858. The identity of the boy remained shadowy at best.

receive as proof... [N]either did he act as a Christian gentleman would act under such circumstances, and having failed to obtain during the long twelve-months proof of the truth of the story; having indeed, as was to be inferred from the way he put it, become satisfied that it was not true, retract the story and apologise for having been betrayed into such an error.⁵⁶

The incident demonstrates several things about Anglin's role as a Catholic lay leader. In the first place it indicates the anti-Catholicism prevalent in New Brunswick at the time. This was the atmosphere in which Anglin had to operate. As the controversy shows, he was not averse to being aggressive on behalf of Catholic interests. Finally, the dispute not only suggests close co-operation between Anglin and his Bishop but also gives evidence of the very significant role Anglin played both in person and through his newspaper in defending and representing Catholics and the Church.

In his position as a Catholic spokesman Anglin was involved, of course, in important public issues such as the reformatory question of the 1860's⁵⁷ and the New Brunswick schools question of the 1870's.⁵⁸ Anglin participated in the running debate in the House of Commons in the 1860's and 1870's about divorce, a question which revealed the divergence of Catholic and Protestant views on marriage.⁵⁹ Yet another example of Anglin's involvement in public issues of particular concern to Catholics was the debate on the Deceased Wife's Sister Marriage Bill in the early 1880's. On this subject Anglin maintained close liaison with the New Brunswick Bishops while the Bill was being debated and was happy to find his activities in accord with

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, January 15, 1859. Wilmot's comments at this meeting and in a lecture given shortly thereafter caused Bishop Connolly to write two extremely long letters in rebuttal. These letters were published in the *Freeman*, January 22 and 29, 1859.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, June 1, 3 and 13, 1865, December 22, 1866, January 12, 15, 17, 19 and 22, 1867, April 17, 1869, and December 12, 1874; *New Brunswick: House of Assembly, Debates, 1866*, pp. 85-86 (May 22); Rogers Papers, Anglin to Rogers, April 24, 1879; and Sweeney Papers, Anglin to Sweeney, March 26, 1893.

⁵⁸ See BAKER, Anglin, pp. 146-163 and 174-181.

⁵⁹ *Freeman*, May 16 ("T.W.A.," May 7) and November 3, 1868, April 2 ("T.W.A.," March 24), 1870, January 13 and 25, 1877, and May 10 ("Parliamentary Summary," May 2), 1879; and J.E. COLLINS, *Canada Under the Administration of Lord Lorne* (Toronto, 1884), pp. 120-121.

their wishes.⁶⁰

Perhaps the most contentious of the issues which tended to divide Catholic and Protestant in this era was the matter of the proper role of clerics in political life, often known as the clerical influence question. Anglin's perspective on the subject was shaped by his belief that western society was suffering from increased immorality, materialism and irreligion. Consequently he rejected anything which threatened to weaken even further the role of religion in society. Given this view, his close relationship with the clergy, and the fact that clerics had assisted his political career, Anglin's position on the role of 'priests in politics' is hardly surprising.

Anglin had indicated at the time of the Confederation struggles that clergymen, whether Catholic or Protestant, ought to have as much right as anyone else to discuss political questions, to express their views and to vote.⁶¹ Yet in politics they were just as other men no more, no less.⁶² One was certainly free to disagree with Bishops and priests on political matters while still feeling great respect for them personally, reverence for their sacred office, and esteem for their zeal and devotion.⁶³ Anglin dismissed the Protestant fear that priests used the threat of refusing religious ordinances to those who voted against their wishes,⁶⁴ but he also maintained that Catholics "hold themselves absolutely bound by the decision of the Pope in all matters of doctrine and Church discipline, and obey his decrees in all such matters faithfully."⁶⁵ Unfortunately, the line between religious and political matters became blurred in the decade following Confederation. The emphasis, but not the actual content, of Anglin's argument began to shift from the right of Catholics to disagree with their priests on political questions to the right of clerics to participate in political matters. Thus when the *Saint John Globe*, in what it undoubtedly felt was in the interests of the Liberals, strenuously criticized the supposed action of the Catholic clergy of Quebec during the 1874 election, the *Freeman* took issue.

The *Freeman* recognized that many clergymen in Quebec had indeed

⁶⁰ Rogers Papers, Anglin to Rogers, February 28, March 6, 15 and 19, April 1 and May 4, 1880; and February 21, 1882. See also COLLINS, *Canada Under Lorne*, pp. 153-154; *Freeman*, March 6 (including "Dominion Parliament," February 27), and 13 ("Dominion Parliament," March 4), 1880; and *Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1880*, pp. 303-305 (February 27).

⁶¹ *Freeman*, June 19, 1866.

⁶² *Ibid.*, February 9, 1865; and June 19, 1866.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, November 15, 1866.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, March 25, 1865.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, July 30, 1868.

supported the Conservatives. The *Freeman* believed that in taking this stand they were mistaken “and that they now appear to the rest of the Dominion as supporters of a set of men who have notoriously been guilty of the most gross and flagrant corruption . . .” Yet their reasons for so doing, though greatly mistaken, had been honourable. And surely it was no crime for priests to express their opinion. No, concluded the *Freeman*, it was not by attempting to restrict the rights of priests that the Liberals would win the support of the people of Quebec.

They must prove by their acts and language that they are just, honest, upright, fearless and truly Liberal in the best sense of the word, and that they have no sympathy with the infidel party who in Europe disgrace the name of Liberal by warring bitterly against all true liberty, against society and against God.⁶⁶

One of the real difficulties in the whole question, Anglin complained, was that there was a great deal of misunderstanding among Catholics as well as Protestants concerning the relationship between Catholics and their ecclesiastical superiors.⁶⁷ The relationship was not so unusual, according to the *Freeman*.

In religious matters they owe and pay them due obedience. In all matters they owe and pay them reverence and respect. In what are ordinarily called political questions they are as free to think, judge and act for themselves as Protestants should be. In political contests, as in all the affairs of life, men are bound to do what is right, to act in conformity with the will of God and to observe his law. This applies to Protestants as to Catholics, and within this, which must be for all the limit of liberty – beyond which all is license – the Catholic is quite as free to think and judge for himself as others are.⁶⁸

Obviously, however, this was too simplistic an explanation, for even the *Freeman* realized that religious matters did not always stay outside the political arena. Yet despite this flaw and the fact that adjustments would have

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, July 27, 1875.

⁶⁷ Lynch Papers, Anglin to Lynch, May 6, 1878.

⁶⁸ *Freeman*, March 28, 1876. See also *ibid.*, November 15, 1877.

to be made in practice, the statement was essentially valid and worth stating and following.

Throughout the entire discussion of the matter of clerical influence Anglin was in favour of allowing the priest the right to express his own opinions. He rejected any attempt to limit this freedom:

Surely if a priest thinks that to vote for a particular candidate is to vote against religion and society, and therefore is a sin, he should be at liberty to say so, precisely as a Free Trader or Protectionist is at liberty to say, that the man who votes for a candidate holding Protectionist or Free Trade principles will do injury to the country and to himself.⁶⁹

The clergyman had a right and a duty to identify and condemn what was unlawful and sinful, Anglin claimed.⁷⁰ To allow the state to say when the refusal of sacraments was acceptable and when it was not, was inadmissible. “[T]he refusal of sacraments,” the *Freeman* informed those readers who did not know, “is a penalty imposed not by the caprice of a priest, but by law – the law of the church . . .”⁷¹

In conclusion one can see that the role Anglin played as a lay Catholic spokesman brought both advantages and disadvantages to the Church and to Anglin himself. On the one hand Anglin obtained political assistance from priests and Bishops at various times. He also received some printing jobs and general support for the *Freeman* from the same source.⁷² But his political career suffered at times precisely because he was a Catholic spokesman. When the Alexander Mackenzie administration was being formed in 1873, for example, Anglin was excluded primarily because of the outspoken position he had taken on the New Brunswick schools questions.⁷³ Moreover, one suspects that the Catholic orientation of the *Freeman* restricted its circulation among Protestants. As far as the Church was concerned there were times when it was disadvantageous to have Anglin as a lay Catholic spokesman. He did not have a particularly attractive personality and made enemies because of his sharp tongue and vitriolic pen. This, combined with the fact that he was

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, March 17, 1877. See also *ibid.*, November 30, 1876.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, September 4, 1877.

⁷¹ March 6, 1877. See also *ibid.*, February 10 and March 8, 1877.

⁷² See, for example, Rogers Papers, Anglin to Rogers, September 13, 1872, and February 26, 1883; and *Sun*, January 29, 1879.

⁷³ BAKER, *Anglin*, pp. 164-165.

embroiled in partisan politics sometimes created difficulties for the Church. Much of the hostility to the act for the creation of a Catholic reform school, for instance, must be attributed to the fact it was Anglin's bill.⁷⁴ Indeed, part of Bishop Rogers' complaint in 1866 was that Anglin was not repressing sectarian animosity but was unintentionally creating it.⁷⁵ Nevertheless Anglin was, by and large, a faithful and articulate spokesman of Catholic interests. He could be trusted to present the Catholic point of view on questions affecting the Church. He could be counted on to seek the advice of the New Brunswick Bishops on important matters. Anglin's role was of considerable benefit to Church leaders for it enabled them to have a voice in public affairs while remaining largely detached from the hurly burly of politics. In short, had Anglin not existed, the Church would have been to invent him.

⁷⁴ *Freeman*, June 1, 3 and 13, 1865; December 22, 1866; and January 12, 19 and 22, 1867.

⁷⁵ Rogers to DesBrisay, May 17, 1866, printed in *Freeman*, May 26, 1866.