

Frederick Seymour, The Forgotten Governor*

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The fourth and youngest son of Henry Augustus Seymour (1771-1847) (also known as Henry Augustus Harvey of Belfast) and Margaret, daughter of Reverend William Williams of Cromlach, Anglesey, Frederick Seymour was born at Belfast in 1820.¹ His father, Henry Augustus Seymour, the natural son of Francis Seymour, 2nd Marquis of Hertford, was educated at Harrow, Pembroke College, Cambridge, and the Inns of Court, and provided with family properties in Ireland, a private income and a position in the customs service. These favours ceased on the succession of the 3rd Marquis of Hertford in 1822 when Henry Seymour was forced to take his family to Brussels to reside.²

The most distinguished of Henry's eight children was Frederick's eldest brother Francis (later General Sir Francis Seymour, 1st Bart., K.C.B.). Francis Seymour had a highly distinguished military career, and because of a friendship made with Prince Albert in 1838, developed a close relationship with the Palace. Appointed groom-in-waiting to the Prince Consort in 1840, he became groom-in-waiting to Queen Victoria in 1861 and her Master of Ceremonies in 1876. At the time of his death in 1890 he was residing at Kensington Palace.³

Frederick Seymour was still an infant when his father's fortunes failed, and unlike his three brothers, he was given neither a good education nor an inheritance. Prince Albert intervened on his behalf in 1842 to obtain a

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¹ Sir Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Peerage and Baronetage* . . . , II, 1738-39 (London, 1913), under entry "Sir Albert Victor Francis Seymour, 2nd Bart."

² C. R. Maier, "Frederick Seymour in Nevis, 1854-57; the Introduction of Free Trade," unpublished M.A. thesis, King's College, London, 1970, 2.

³ Burke's *Peerage*, 1913, II, 1738-39. Also, Edward Walton, *The County Families of the United Kingdom* . . . (London, 1889), 945-46, under entry "Sir Francis Seymour, 1st. Bart, K.C.B."; and *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. by Sidney Lee (London, 1909), 1257-58, under entry "Sir Francis Seymour."

junior appointment in the Colonial Service.⁴ This appointment as Assistant Colonial Secretary of Van Deiman's Land marked the beginning of a lifetime spent in colonies which were all in a transitional stage of development and which were all torn by political strife and encumbered with serious economic problems. When upheaval in Van Deiman's Land followed the termination of the convict system certain offices, including Frederick's own, were abolished. In 1848 he was appointed Special Magistrate at Antigua in the Leeward Islands. There he encountered labour problems arising out of the abolition of slavery and difficulties with the sugar-planting interests over trade policies. As President of Nevis in 1853, he supported free trade, tenaciously defending his views in the face of opposition from the powerful families.⁵ He was rewarded for good service in 1857 when he was made Superintendent of British Honduras and Lieutenant-Governor of the Bay Islands, and in 1862 he was given the title of Lieutenant-Governor of Honduras.

Early in 1863 Seymour spent some time in England probably recuperating from "Panama Fever" which he had contracted in Honduras. On his return to Belize he received a private letter from the Duke of Newcastle, then Colonial Secretary, offering him promotion to the governorship of British Columbia.⁶ A fortnight before the despatch of this letter, Newcastle had written to inform Sir James Douglas that he had already recommended Frederick Seymour to the Queen as "a man of much ability and energy who has shown considerable aptitude for the management of savage tribes."⁷

Pleased at the prospect of translation from the tropics to a more moderate climate, Seymour accepted Newcastle's offer with alacrity. "It is highly gratifying to me," he wrote, "to accept this important trust from the Secretary of State to whom I owe my introduction to the Colonial

⁴ Maier, 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

⁶ Duke of Newcastle to Frederick Seymour, private, August 14, 1863. Newcastle Papers, microfilm, Public Archives of Canada, Reel 307, vol. 5. On August 21, 1863 Bishop George Hills called on Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton at Knebworth. Hills' entry in his diary for that date states that Lytton "thought Seymour of the Honduras would be our Governor. He had left a strong recommendation of him at the office for the Duke. He was a highly cultivated and decided man, but quiet and retired, distinguished at Oxford." Bishop Hills Diary, 1863, Archives of the Vancouver School of Theology. There is no evidence, however, that Seymour attended Oxford. In its obituary of June 19, 1869, the *Cariboo Sentinel* stated that Seymour completed his education at the University of Bonn. This statement, however, seems to be without foundation.

⁷ Newcastle to Sir James Douglas, private, July 31, 1863, Newcastle Papers, microfilm, Reel 307, vol. 4.

Service. The prospect of a change from the swamps of Honduras to a fine country is inexpressibly attractive to me, and I trust, in the bracing air of North America to prove myself worthy of your Grace's confidence and kindness."⁸ He returned to England for a brief visit, and while there he may have obtained a promise to return home again after a short residence at his new posting. Whether it was for this reason, or because of anxiety over the state of his health, he was accompanied to British Columbia by Arthur Nonus Birch, a junior clerk in the Colonial Office, who was to remain in the colony for two, or possibly three years, and act as colonial secretary.

Newcastle had hoped to create a maritime regional union similar to that being planned on the Atlantic seaboard on the retirement of Sir James Douglas as Governor of Vancouver Island and Governor of British Columbia in 1864. But so intense was the rivalry between the two colonies that he set up separate establishments, appointing Captain Arthur Edward Kennedy, former Governor of Western Australia, as Governor of Vancouver Island on December 11, 1863, and Seymour as Governor of the mainland colony on January 11, 1864. Vancouver Island retained its House of Assembly and a Legislative Council was organized in the gold colony. The provision of a separate administration for the mainland colony involved additional expense, but it had always been understood at Whitehall that British Columbia, because of its great potential wealth, should be self-supporting and in 1863 the reports of gold production were encouraging. To Douglas' amazement, Newcastle promised Seymour a salary of £3000 and the provision of a government house to be built at the colony's expense.⁹

Since the agitation for a separate administration on the mainland had been intense in New Westminster, the citizens planned a warm welcome for "our first governor" though little was known about Frederick Seymour apart from rumours that he had influential connections "at home" and long experience in the colonial service. For his swearing in on April 21, 1864, the little capital was *en fête*.¹⁰

The enthusiasm of the colonists offset any dismay that Seymour felt on first seeing New Westminster. Ambitious plans for a capital city had been drawn up by Colonel R. C. Moody, in charge of the corps of Royal

⁸ Seymour to Newcastle, September 14, 1863. Public Record Office, microfilm, CO 60, Reel 14.

⁹ Newcastle to Seymour, private, August 14, 1863, Newcastle Papers, microfilm, Reel 307, vol. 5.

¹⁰ New Westminster *British Columbian*, April 20, 1864.

Engineers sent from England to assist Douglas during the first gold rush, but the clearing of the steep and heavily-timbered hillside on the north bank of the Fraser River had proved a formidable task, and only a few streets had been laid out when the Royal Engineers departed in November 1863. "I had not seen even in the West Indies so melancholy a picture of disappointed hopes as New Westminster presented on my arrival," Seymour later reported to Lord Cardwell, Newcastle's successor. "Here, however, there was a display of energy wanting in the tropics, and thousands of trees of the largest dimension had been felled to make way for the great city expected to rise on the magnificent site selected for it. But the blight had come early. Many of the best houses were untenanted. The largest hotel was to let, decay appeared on all sides, and the stumps and logs of the fallen trees blocked up most of the streets. [New] Westminster appeared, to use the miners' expression, 'played out'."¹¹

To convene the first session of the colony's Legislative Council in January 1864, Douglas made use of the Royal Engineers' barracks at Sapperton on the outskirts of the city. At this site stood Colonel Moody's house, which Seymour, like Douglas before him, decided to use as his official residence. In the West Indies Seymour had learned how social occasions could be used for political ends so he immediately planned an addition to Government House of "an extensive suite of rooms including a spacious and handsome ballroom, capable of accommodating two hundred dancers, . . . supperrooms, elegantly and substantially furnished apartments."¹²

From the first the new Governor had cordial relations with his colonists, and he soon found congenial companions among his officials. His enthusiasm for his new office and his affection for New Westminster grew with each passing week. He quickly absorbed the local prejudice against Victoria. It did not take him long to decide that Douglas's policies had been devised to concentrate control of the Cariboo trade in the hands of the merchants, bankers and speculators of Vancouver Island. "The merchants & owners of Town lots in Victoria in the comparatively unimportant Colony of V.I. have drawn nearly all the share in the profits of the gold discoveries in this Colony which have not been absorbed by California," he reported in 1865.¹³ By 1866 he was convinced that the interests of the

¹¹ Seymour to Edward Cardwell, March 21, 1865. Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Governors Douglas and Seymour, Despatches to London, 1863-1867.

¹² New Westminster *North Pacific Times*, November 12, 1864.

¹³ Seymour to Cardwell, May 2, 1865. PABC, Governors Douglas and Seymour, Despatches.

mainland colony had been neglected from the beginning, "it was only a Colony in name. There was a gold mine at one end of a line of road; a seaport town (under a different Government) at the opposite terminus."¹⁴

Anxious to be accommodating, he assured the Legislative Council, which was in session when he arrived, that he would complete Douglas's great highway to the interior mines. The 120-mile section of the Cariboo Road from Alexandria to Williams Creek was still to be surveyed; by the end of 1864 the survey of this extension was completed and one-third of its length constructed.

The colony's finances, however, were in poor shape. The sum of £10,000 was still owing contractors for work done on the Cariboo Road in 1863, and the loans of £100,000 which Douglas had authorized in 1862 and 1863, were expended. Before Seymour's arrival, Douglas had authorized a further loan of £100,000. There was to be delay in raising the third loan, and from its proceeds the Imperial government deducted the cost of "some useless military huts." Vigorously Seymour protested this decision: "I have seen in the West Indies the Imperial Troops marched out of magnificent barracks which were at once handed over to the Colonial authorities without charge. The military stores were sold with the buildings for the benefit of the Colony. If we could become possessors of Buildings like those at the Ridge Antigua, or on Brimstone Hill, St. Kitts, I would most willingly pay double the amount claimed for the perishable huts on the Fraser."¹⁵ This protest was of no avail and his colony's financial problems were further increased by his incurring a cost of £18,000 to put down an Indian insurrection.

Seymour had seen the military garrisons withdrawn from the Leeward Islands, but he was incredulous when he discovered that the Imperial government intended to leave British Columbia, "this large and important province," with its mobile mining population and its much larger Indian population, defenceless. The Royal Navy, which was stationed at Esquimalt, had co-operated with Douglas in restoring order among the Indians on the seacoast, but on the mainland Douglas had relied largely on the presence of the Royal Engineers, the Gold Commissioners, and Judge Matthew Baillie Begbie. When, within a fortnight of Seymour's arrival trouble occurred at Bute Inlet, within his territory, Governor Kennedy, who first heard the news, was slow in informing him, and the chief naval

¹⁴ Seymour to Cardwell, February 17, 1866. Great Britain, Parliament. *Papers Relative to the Proposed Union of British Columbia and Vancouver Island*. London, 1866. (CMD 3667, 1st series), 35.

¹⁵ Seymour to Cardwell, October 8, 1864. PABC, Governors Douglas and Seymour, Despatches.

officer at Esquimalt was hesitant to provide assistance unless he had the consent of the Governor of Vancouver Island.

Kennedy was told on May 11 that Indians had massacred a ferryman and a road party employed by Alfred Waddington to build a route from Bute Inlet to the Cariboo mines which would have the effect of diverting the trade with the upper country from New Westminster to Victoria. Great excitement prevailed in Victoria where prominent business men had invested in a townsite at Bute Inlet, the western terminus of the proposed road. In New Westminster the fear of a general uprising spread when it became known that Indians had murdered 18 men and attacked a pack train.¹⁶

Seymour, in contrast to Kennedy, acted with despatch. Avoiding declaring martial law, he immediately ordered Gold Commissioner W. G. Cox to proceed westward from Cariboo with a volunteer force. On May 15 Chartres Brew, Chief Inspector of Police, left New Westminster by ship with a similar force of 28 men.

Meanwhile, the Governor went ahead with his plan to have the Fraser River Indians gather at New Westminster for the celebration of the Queen's birthday. The Indians, travelling great distances down the Fraser River, assembled to the number of 3500 for a week-long celebration. At the end of that time Seymour felt that he had established with them some of the same *rapport* that Douglas, their "Great Chief," had previously enjoyed.¹⁷

Hardly had this gathering dispersed than Brew returned to New Westminster to report his failure to penetrate inland from the coast, and to request reinforcements. Seymour assisted Brew in raising the men, permitted him to hire Indian mercenaries, and decided to accompany him in the hope of reaching the Chilcotin country from Bentinck Arm. "My great object in joining the expedition was to obtain moderation from the white men in the treatment of Indians," he later reported; "I was determined to show what had not been seen in this part of the world a govt. calm & just under circumstances calculated to create exasperation."¹⁸

Every difficulty was experienced by Brew's expedition. Seymour was astounded by the forbidding nature of the coastal range: "The mountains in many places rise at right angles to the plains, glaciers are poised over narrow valleys of almost tropical heat & the cascades fall from the summit

¹⁶ Seymour to Newcastle, May 20, 1864, and Seymour to Cardwell, September 9, 1864. *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Seymour to Cardwell, August 31, 1864. *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Seymour to Cardwell, September 9, 1864. *Ibid.*

of the precipices scarcely wetting the perpendicular wall of rock."¹⁹ At high elevations on the interior plateau where there was only stunted vegetation many of the men became ill with dysentery from their diet of fish and green gooseberries. Brew's health, Seymour later reported, was permanently damaged by the rigours he experienced; probably the effects of the 250-mile march overland were equally deleterious for Seymour's. But there were exhilarating moments such as those when he and nine other men held a wooden fortress while search parties pursued the murderers in unexplored territory, and when Alexis, one of the most powerful Chilcotin chiefs, presented himself and was persuaded by the Governor to assist in the hunt. "That Europeans should thus run down wild Indians, and drive them to suicide or surrender in their own hunting grounds in the fruit and fish season appears to me I confess a little short of marvellous," Seymour exclaimed.²⁰ Some of the leaders of the insurrection eventually surrendered to Cox, who, by extending a promise of amnesty without authority, prevailed on others to give themselves up. The Governor found this unorthodox action hard to forgive, but took personal satisfaction from the fact that he had assisted in bringing eight Indian prisoners to trial.

On emerging at Alexandria from the Chilcotin country, Seymour decided to inspect the Cariboo mines. The miners at William Creek and Richfield received him so warmly that he was able on his return to New Westminster to pen an "unavoidably egotistical despatch" describing "the manifestations of loyalty which were bestowed on me as the representative of the Imperial Government. . . ." ²¹ On his trip down the Cariboo Road, the Indians were equally friendly: "If the white people were loyal in their demonstrations H.M.'s Indian subjects were by no means behind them. The salmon season had attracted thousands of them to the Fraser, but the fishing was neglected for the opportunity of making acquaintance with, or seeing again the Supreme Chief."²²

These adventures in the interior of British Columbia had occupied three vital months when there were pressing problems awaiting the Governor's attention at his headquarters. Standing orders had to be drawn up for the session of the Council to commence in December, arrangements made with the Collins Overland Telegraph Company which was planning to construct a line through British Columbia connecting

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

American and Russian territory, and consideration given to a proposal emanating from the Assembly of Vancouver Island, which was concerned about heavy governmental costs, for the creation of a federal union of the two colonies under a single administration. Reports of a new gold discovery on the Kootenay River, 500 miles east of New Westminster, necessitated sending Birch to investigate their validity and to report on the condition of the Dewdney Trail. As it became increasingly clear that only £60,000 would be realized from the 1864 loan after the colony had paid for the military huts and the cost of suppressing the insurrection, Seymour recommended to his Council the imposition in 1865 of a gold export tax and the raising of the level of customs duties to 12½ per cent.²³

Though the Governor's faith in the prosperity of the colony had been reinforced by his visit to the Cariboo, news of the failure in November 1864 of a private bank doing business at the mines gave cause for worry. But it was not until the spring of 1865 when the usual rush of miners from San Francisco failed to materialize that there were doubts about the colony's prospects. Even so, Seymour permitted the extension and the improvement of both the Cariboo and Dewdney Roads, and when a new mining area opened on the Big Bend of the Columbia River, he consented to the building of a road along the Thompson River to Kamloops and the provision of steam navigation on both Kamloops and Shuswap Lakes. These works involved an expenditure of \$1,342,000.

Throughout 1865 business in Victoria, where large supplies of goods had been stored in anticipation of a miners' rush, faltered. In the small communities on the upper Fraser River business was also slow. These reverses focussed attention on the need for retrenchment. In Victoria, where Governor Kennedy was at loggerheads with his Assembly, the agitation for the amalgamation of the two colonies developed strength. The Colonial Office required first-hand information about conditions on the Pacific seaboard; this it looked forward to obtaining from Seymour who left New Westminster for England in September 1865.

In his despatches Seymour had deplored "the extreme inconvenience to myself of the position of two Governors of equal authority close to each other yet far from home,"²⁴ but stoutly opposed either the federation or the legislative union of the colonies,²⁵ the recommendation of both Gover-

²³ Speech of Governor Seymour at the opening of the Legislative Council, January 12, 1865. PABC. Archives Envelope, ES 351.

²⁴ Seymour to Cardwell, April 29, 1865. PRO, CO 60, microfilm, Reel 14.

²⁵ Seymour to Cardwell, March 29, 1865. *Ibid.*

nor Kennedy and the Assembly of Vancouver Island. No benefit would accrue to prosperous British Columbia, Seymour claimed, from its union "with the powerful yet artificially created Community on the other side of the Gulf of Georgia."²⁶ In London, however, he discovered that military and naval men favoured the consolidation of the colonies. In addition, a well organized lobby, the "London Committee for Watching the Affairs of British Columbia," representing the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company, the Bank of British Columbia and investors in British Columbia bonds, was pressing hard to have the mainland colony absorbed into the colony of Vancouver Island. When the Colonial Office, the Treasury, the Foreign Office and the Admiralty all recommended union, Seymour yielded to the inevitable. But at interviews at the Colonial Office and in his rooms, he insisted that British Columbia be dominant.

These important discussions were interrupted by Seymour's wedding on January 27, 1866 to Florence Marie, daughter of the Honourable and Reverend Sir Francis Stapleton, 7th Bart., formerly of the Leeward Islands.

A few days after his marriage the Governor sent a jubilant note to his attorney general: "We should both, I think, be able to save our tariff acts. . . . We shall be in a position to dictate our own terms. The constitution will be that of British Columbia — with some alterations . . . Capital N. Westminster."²⁷ On February 17 he further interrupted his honeymoon to compose in Paris a long despatch to Lord Cardwell, explaining the unalterable opposition of his Legislative Council to union, the necessity of obtaining its consent, the importance of having the act of union proclaimed by the Governor of British Columbia, and recommending the location of the capital at New Westminster, the modelling of the new governmental system on the constitution of British Columbia but with the infusion of a larger popular element, and the retention of British Columbia's tariff acts. "Whether the arrangements I now suggest could be acceptable to the Colonists I am much inclined to doubt," he admitted. "Victoria would probably expect better terms, and British Columbia only wishes to be left alone."²⁸

Most of Seymour's suggestions were accepted, and the act of union was

²⁶ Seymour to Cardwell, April 29, 1865. *Ibid.*

²⁷ Seymour to H. P. P. Crease, February 1, 1866. PABC. Sir H. P. P. Crease, Correspondence Inward, 1864-69.

²⁸ Seymour to Cardwell, February 17, 1866 (Paris despatch). *Papers Relative to the Proposed Union of British Columbia and Vancouver Island*, 34ff.

rushed through parliament at the end of the session of 1866.²⁹ He remained at hand until Royal Assent on August 6. He then had a private interview with Lord Carnarvon, now Colonial Secretary, who cancelled Kennedy's appointment, and who agreed to grant Seymour a salary of £4000 as Governor of the united colony.³⁰

On the eve of his departure, he sent an urgent enquiry from Ostend to the Colonial Office: "Ought not something to be said in my instructions about the seat of the government being at New Westminster?"³¹ Immediately he received reassurance: "It is understood that New Westminster should be the Capital, and that you should visit Victoria when you think it necessary. But if you wish for definite orders you will do best to ask for them in a formal letter to the Secretary of State."³²

It was an ailing Seymour who arrived in Victoria on November 7, 1866. There he was received coldly. His reception in New Westminster, however, was gratifying. In Victoria he had observed "a look of extreme depression upon the town and its inhabitants";³³ in New Westminster he publicly admitted that during his absence he had probably been misled by "the somewhat oversanguine expectations of some of my correspondents," and begged all the colonists from Victoria to Cariboo to grant him "a lenient and indulgent consideration of my earlier acts."³⁴ On November 19, 1866 at New Westminster and Victoria, he issued simultaneously the proclamation of the union of the colonies.³⁴ "There was no enthusiasm or excitement shown in either town," he admitted to Lord Carnarvon.³⁵

To allay the ire of the Victoria politicians at the abolition of their Legislative Assembly and the anger of the Victoria merchants at the loss of their free port, Seymour paid a month's visit to the island city. While there, counting on his personal charm and his social grace to win him as many friends as on the mainland, he entertained at three balls. From the good attendance he inferred that not "a single person declined to come for political reasons."³⁶ "Matters are settling down," he wrote to Arthur

²⁹ An Act for the Union of the Colony of Vancouver Island with the Colony of British Columbia, 29 and 30 Victoria, 1866. Reprinted in *Journals of the Legislative Council of British Columbia*, 1867, 1-2.

³⁰ Minute. PRO. CO 60, vol. 28, 90.

³¹ Seymour to Arthur Blackwood, September 7, 1866. CO 60, vol. 25.

³² Blackwood to Seymour, September 8, 1866. *Ibid.*

³³ Seymour to the Earl of Carnarvon, November 20, 1866. *Papers on Union*, 1.

³⁴ Victoria *British Colonist*, November 9, 1866.

³⁵ Seymour to Carnarvon, November 21, 1866. *Papers on Union*, 1.

³⁶ Seymour to Carnarvon, January 11, 1867, *Ibid.*

Blackwood at the Colonial Office. “. . . I believe that personally I am not extremely unpopular.”³⁷ But he deluded himself: “If he only knew the general opinion,” wrote Dr. J. S. Helmcken, “he would blush.”³⁸

Depression was upon the whole country when the enlarged Legislative Council convened at New Westminster in January 1867. During 1866 a sad change had come over the goldfields and there was now an exodus of miners from the country. The abandonment of the Collins Telegraph line had thrown 500 men out of employment. Seymour had delayed the fusion of the public offices until the beginning of the year, but now he was faced with reducing the size of the administration to effect the saving of \$88,000. Revenues had fallen off; the gold export tax yielded a disappointingly small sum, and there was an unexpected deficit in the customs receipts caused by the Victoria merchants importing \$1,000,000 worth of tobacco and liquor before the extension of the mainland tariff. The united colony, with a population of 15,000, had a debt of \$1,300,000. So serious was the crisis that the Governor allowed his Council to spend two months discussing financial and related measures. Not until March 27 did he raise the bitterly contentious issue of the location of the capital and lay before his Council petitions from Victoria and the interior requesting the placing of the seat of government at Victoria, the centre of population.

The decision on the capital could have been his alone. But the initiative taken in his Paris despatch had aroused resentment in both sections of the colony, and since he was opposed to “any appearance of straining the vast power which the Governor possesses,”³⁹ he was disinclined to exert executive authority. His dilatoriness, combined with his decision to seek advice, proved disastrous for his personal preference for the choice of “the manly, respectable, loyal and enterprising community established on the Banks of the Fraser.”⁴⁰ By a vote of 13 to 8 the Council on March 29 recommended Victoria. Dismayed at this threat to “the legitimate expectations of the people of New Westminster,” the Governor wrote to the Colonial Office to determine whether Douglas’s 1859 proclamation had permanently fixed the capital of British Columbia at New Westminster. The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, who became Colonial Secretary in

³⁷ Seymour to Arthur Blackwood, December 19, 1866. CO 60, vol. 15.

³⁸ Helmcken to Crease (undated, received March 5, 1867). Crease Papers, Correspondence Inward, 1867.

³⁹ Seymour to Cardwell, March 15, 1865. Governors Douglas and Seymour, Despatches.

⁴⁰ Seymour to the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, April 29, 1868. PABC. Governors Seymour and Hankin, Despatches to London, 1868-1869.

March 1867, felt that no enduring pledge had been made, and influenced by two memorials recommending the selection of Victoria drawn up by the "London Committee for Watching the Affairs of British Columbia," informed Seymour that if he selected Victoria he would have the support of the Home Government.⁴¹

In July 1867 Birch, who had not too economically administered the mainland colony during Seymour's fourteen-month absence, returned, as instructed, to London. Though there was no other official with Birch's judgment and experience, Seymour turned over affairs to his assistants and embarked on a northern voyage to investigate Indian disturbances. In August he travelled to Grouse Creek in Cariboo to intervene in a dispute between two mining companies culminating, he said, in an "incipient rebellion."⁴² "Who on earth advised the Governor to go up!"⁴³ exclaimed Birch. In September the Governor returned to the northern coast to visit William Duncan's Indian community at Metlakatla. The Colonial Office heard only spasmodically from him during these months. Then in December he telegraphed requesting a loan for \$50,000 and wrote describing the now critical financial position of his government. Birch was questioned in London about affairs in British Columbia. At Buckingham's request he prepared a minute for the cabinet. In his statement Birch argued that union "had for a time unsettled everything, that the people of the 'Main' were happy & contented & only rowdies lived on the opposite Island, that the Home Govt. having joined them must assist in paying old scores of V.I. & military expenditure (unasked) in B.C."⁴⁴ "What in the world," he enquired of an official in British Columbia in February 1868, "has become of you all? Neither have I or the C.O. had a line for more than two months! I am savage but the C.O. is 'angry' *not* hurt."⁴⁵

"The situation here is not improved — trade is dull, people are gradually dropping off — property and rents are low, the Revenue far short of expenditures, public salaries in arrears — and things generally are looking dismal and gloomy; except the gold returns from Cariboo which are larger than ever this year," Douglas confided to A. G. Dallas. "The whole

⁴¹ Buckingham and Chandos to Seymour, October 1, 1867. PABC. F23 — England CO.

⁴² Seymour to Buckingham, January 11, 1868. Seymour and Hankin, Despatches.

⁴³ A. N. Birch to Crease, November 10, 1867. PABC. Crease Papers, Correspondence Inward, 1867.

⁴⁴ Birch to Crease, January 31, 1868. Crease Papers, Correspondence Inward, 1868.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

machine is in a strange incomprehensible muddle — wanting a firm and experienced hand to bring it into good working order.”⁴⁶

If the Governor had proved irresolute in selecting the colonial capital, he created in a still more vital matter the even worse impression of being negligent of his duty.

The possibility of securing relief from the colony’s financial plight through entry into the proposed Canadian federation, rather than by annexation to the United States as some citizens of Victoria advocated, had led Amor De Cosmos, one of the elected members of the Legislative Council, to raise the matter of union with Canada on March 10, 1867. Seymour received a delegation from the Council the following day and obligingly agreed to send a telegram to London to enquire if provision could be made in the bill then before parliament for the ultimate admission of the colony into confederation.⁴⁷ After the Council unanimously recorded its approval of the principle of union on March 18, he promised to communicate with the Colonial Secretary, the Governor of Canada and the Governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company. But receiving no reply to his telegram, and knowing that Canada still had to acquire possession of the territory intervening between the Dominion and the seaboard colony, he apparently concluded that a further overture would be premature. Six months elapsed before he forwarded the union resolution to the Colonial Office. It had been accepted unanimously, he reported on September 24, 1867, though little warmth was felt in its favour. Many of the colonists, however, and he himself, would favour fusion. “It is thought by many of those who had made this their home that the only chance of its being prosperous while a dependency of a very distant country, which helps more by advice than by substantial aid which a young and struggling community requires,” he informed Buckingham with some asperity, “is a union with the more developed and apparently more prosperous colonies

⁴⁶ Douglas to A. G. Dallas, November 8, 1867. PABC. Sir James Douglas, Private Letterbook.

⁴⁷ Seymour to the Earl of Carnarvon, March 11, 1867. *Papers on Union*, 11. Dr. Helmcken’s memory in 1892 of these events is as follows: “Towards the end of this Session Amor De Cosmos brought up a resolution — in re confederation with Canada. The Union of the provinces on the other side of the mountains was about taking place and De Cosmos wanted British Columbia put in. No one knew much of this subject save De Cosmos and Robson, so the debate was not very lively. In the end a resolution was agreed to — amendment proposed by Pemberton — that a place should be left in the articles of confederation allowing British Columbia to enter, when and if she found it convenient. . . . Somehow there was a general feeling in the Council that the Union had to be sooner or later — this was the official view — but the officers did not like it — what was to become of them! Governor Seymour thought the action a little premature, at all events.” Dr. J. S. Helmcken, *Reminiscences*, MS, vol. 5. PABC.

on the Atlantic. . . . It rests with Your Grace to see if that wish can be carried out."⁴⁸

The arrival of this despatch on November 4 caused a flurry of excitement at the Colonial Office, where the March telegram had been set aside during the Duke's first days in office. The British North America Act had subsequently received assent and the Canadian federation come into existence. Sir Frederic Rogers expressed exasperation with Seymour: "it appears that on March 28 last the Council passed a Resolution in favour of admission which however Gov. Seymour only now sends though in his March telegram he said he would write."⁴⁹ Arthur Blackwood tendered his opinion that it was quite useless to think of the question until the Hudson's Bay Company territory was in Canada's possession: "at present I do not see what possible purpose could be assured by enabling the Ottawa Parl. to legislate for British Columbia." The Colonial Secretary concurred with Blackwood's view.⁵⁰ On November 19 he informed Seymour that consideration of the question would have to wait for the present.⁵¹

There the matter might have rested had not a telegram been received in Victoria from the Hon. S. L. Tilley revealing that no approach had been made by Seymour to the Canadian government.⁵² At a large public meeting called by the Mayor, De Cosmos charged the Governor with bad faith. Two days later, on February 1, 1868 a memorial was sent from Victoria to the Governor General asking that immediate steps be taken to bring the colony into confederation and tentatively suggesting terms of union.⁵³ Monck made known the contents of this memorial, and on March 7 forwarded to London an order-in-council passed by the Canadian cabinet advocating British Columbia's admission.⁵⁴

The new session of the Legislative Council opened at New Westminster on March 13, 1868. In his address, Seymour rather tepidly supported the

⁴⁸ Seymour to Buckingham, September 24, 1867. *Papers on Union*, 11.

⁴⁹ Minute by Frederic Rogers on Seymour to Buckingham, September 24, 1867. CO 60, vol. 29.

⁵⁰ Minute by Blackwood, November 6, 1867. *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Buckingham to Seymour, November 19, 1867. Great Britain, Colonial Office. *Miscellaneous Papers relating to British Columbia, 1859-1869.*

⁵² *British Colonist*, January 31, 1868.

⁵³ The text of this memorial is printed in Appendix B, H. Robert Kendrick, "Amor De Cosmos and Confederation," in *British Columbia & Confederation*, ed. by W. George Shelton, Victoria, 1967, 92-94.

⁵⁴ Viscount Monck to Buckingham and Chandos, March 7, 1868. *Papers on the Union of British Columbia and Canada*, Great Britain, Parliament. London, 1869 (PP. 390), 5.

1867 union resolution, which he described as “the expression of a disheartened community, longing for a change of any kind,” and used the precise words of Buckingham to define his own attitude.⁵⁵ When, however, a second telegram arrived in Victoria on March 22 from Tilley, this one urging the preparation of an address to the Queen, De Cosmos demanded that the Governor’s correspondence, “if any,” be brought down.⁵⁶ For the moment Seymour was saved from the embarrassment of refusal by the Council taking under consideration Buckingham’s October despatch on the capital situation.

“The feeling existing in both New Westminster and Victoria is so strong on the subject of the seat of Government,” the Governor later explained, “that I felt it necessary when acting in the matter to invoke the assistance of a stronger power than my own in order to prevent disturbance.”⁵⁷ On April 2 the Council reaffirmed its choice of the previous year. “I well know that I have secured but present tranquillity,” Seymour admitted.

The decision, and the naming of May 25, 1868 as the date of the removal of the capital to Victoria, did, in fact cause despair in New Westminster. The preparation there of a memorial advocating union with Canada, a step for which there had previously been little support in the mainland capital, so encouraged De Cosmos that on April 24 he moved in the Council for the preparation of an address to the Queen. Official and unofficial members of the Council combined to oppose precipitate action.⁵⁸

“The capital question has finally been settled, the Governor and archives brought to Victoria, the former most unwillingly,” Sir James Douglas reported on May 29, 1868.⁵⁹ But still there was no improvement in economic conditions. In June, though discouraged by his failure to persuade the Imperial government to advance another loan, by the fact that his salary was in arrears and by the fall of property values in New Westminster, Seymour felt that some general improvement was discernible. Not so Douglas — “We are drifting in a helpless condition,” he wrote in July, “nobody seeming to know what to do, and people are asking why have we a gover[n]ment? I am sorry for Governor Seymour, as he is really a nice fellow, exceedingly clever but irresolute. With more

⁵⁵ *Journals of the Legislative Council of British Columbia*, March 21 to May 1, 1868, 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵⁷ Seymour to Buckingham, April 29, 1868. Seymour and Hankin, Despatches.

⁵⁸ Seymour to Buckingham, April 30, 1868, *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Douglas to Jane Dallas, May 29, 1868. Douglas, Private Letterbook.

nerve he would be perfect as a Colonial ruler.”⁶⁰ As Douglas saw it “The Governor’s influence, however valuable, within the sphere of his Government, is altogether powerless beyond it.”⁶¹

With the passing months, the Governor’s health had steadily deteriorated.⁶² He was ill in December 1867 and was slow in recovering his strength during the cold winter months. Yet, in the interval before the meeting of the Legislative Council, he felt it incumbent on him to entertain the citizens of New Westminster as he had the people of Victoria.

⁶⁰ Douglas to Jane Dallas, July 13, 1868, *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Douglas to Arthur Bushby, March 7, 1868, *Ibid.*

⁶² There are a number of indications that Seymour, who does not seem to have had professional medical advice, was a very sick man from November 1867 until his death in June 1869. A clergyman by the name of Hayman, who may have been a member of his suite when he returned from England, seems to have ministered to his physical, as well as his spiritual, needs. After Seymour’s death, Hayman and his wife accompanied Mrs. Seymour to England.

Rev. George Hills, Bishop of Columbia, who was inclined to be censorious as far as the Governor was concerned, attributed Seymour’s increasing debility to intemperance. Hills was far from favourably impressed with the Governor when he attended a dinner party at Government House, New Westminster. “Afterwards,” he wrote, “all were invited by the Host into the Billiard Room where smoking was indulged in by the men. . . . It is a pity that the standard of some should thus be lowered in the highest circle of the colony.” Bishop Hills’ Diary, 1867, May 14, 1867. On November 23, 1867 Hills recorded that Captain Price of the *Scout*, a recent guest at Government House, had informed him that Seymour was intoxicated one night before sitting down to dinner, and that “Before Mr. Birch, the Colonial Sec., went away he said to Mr. Hayman ‘In a short time you will have to give Mr. Seymour a medical certificate that he may be invalidated if these cocktails all day go on as now.’” “How sorely,” added the Bishop, “does this test the loyalty of the well affected part of our population, and into what contempt is the British Government thrown before the aliens.” On November 28, 1867, hearing from Rear Admiral G. F. Hastings that Seymour had been taken ill at the dinner table and had “twice to go out to retch,” Hills attributed the illness to “the effect of his constant application all day to stimulants.”

In his *Reminiscences* Dr. J. S. Helmcken notes that “The Governor liked his whiskey too, not too wisely but too well occasionally.” Helmcken recalls that “I once called in at Westminster to see Governor Seymour for some acquired illness, but on subsequently calling I found the Church of England Minister had supplanted me — used to doctor and take care of the Governor.” Dr. J. S. Helmcken, *Reminiscences*, vol. 5.

According to G. M. Sproat, an ardent critic of Seymour’s affection for the Mainland, “In manner Mr. Seymour was attractive, though, perhaps lacking ease; as a companion he had some fine personal qualities, and he entertained his friends lavishly — at any rate in British Columbia where his pay was very high. This hospitable habit, though pleasing to the guest and a break in a semi-secluded life, was unfortunate because the Governor’s physique was delicate, and . . . his health had failed though he was only in early middle life when he left the West Indies.” G. M. Sproat, *History of British Columbia*, typescript. PABC.

I have been unable to find any reference to intemperance on the Governor’s part in the Crease Letters. My own view is that the physical deterioration was primarily the result of yellow fever. Mr. Charles Maier has suggested to me the possibility that laudanum may have been an ingredient in Seymour’s medicines.

Then there had been the strain of the legislative session and of the removal of the government offices to Victoria. In his new capital he grieved over his "melancholy duty"⁶³ to make additional dismissals and over his inability to persuade the Imperial authorities to indemnify the mainland officials for removal expenses and losses sustained by the abandonment of their New Westminster property. Though "many are the families I have reduced to destitution," he informed Buckingham, a "fury of retrenchment" raged in Victoria. In November 1868 he was too ill to attend to business and a petition was got up in Victoria to ask for his recall and the appointment of Douglas as administrator. He rallied his strength to protest violently when Buckingham appointed as colonial secretary Lieutenant Philip J. Hankin, R.N., who had held offices under Kennedy and been dismissed by Seymour in 1866. Depressed by the charged atmosphere that prevailed in Victoria on the eve of another legislative session and by Buckingham's inopportune action, more in despair than in jest Seymour appealed to the Colonial Secretary, "If Your Grace has anything good to give away (which nobody else will take!!) pray think of me. I have been working for the last ten years in the most sensational Colonies under Your Grace's sway, & confess to feeling rather worn out."⁶⁴

What the colony needed, said De Cosmos, was not a change of Governor, but a change of government.⁶⁵ Constitutional reform had been Seymour's aim from the beginning, but other matters had got in its way. He had always regarded Newcastle's modelling of the constitution of the mainland colony on the constitution of Ceylon as a mistake, and from the first he had treated the Legislative Council as if it had been a Legislative Assembly.⁶⁶ Considering the circumstances under which union had been effected, Seymour was surprised at how well the first legislative session after union had gone: the journals of that session, he told Buckingham, might be of interest "as exhibiting the manner in which two colonies, whose antagonism heretofore was a public scandal along this coast, have conducted business since their Union. In another respect also, they may be worthy of notice as showing the working of the novel experiment of an almost despotic government over an Anglo-Saxon community which is

⁶³ Seymour to Buckingham, June 8, 1868. Seymour and Hankin, Despatches.

⁶⁴ Seymour to Buckingham, November 16, 1868. PABC. F1588.

⁶⁵ A similar sentiment was expressed by the editor of the *Cariboo Sentinel* on the occasion of Seymour's death: "No Governor had probably met with more undeserved opprobrium than the late Governor. The man was too much identified with the office. It should have been the office & not the man against which popular discontent ought to have been directed." *Cariboo Sentinel*, June 19, 1869.

⁶⁶ Seymour to Buckingham, August 6, 1868. Seymour and Hankin, Despatches.

possessed at the same time of an exuberantly free press.⁶⁷ In preparation for the election of members of a new council in 1868, he liberalized the franchise on Vancouver Island, and before calling the session into being, he included in the magisterial positions two elected members. But to former members of the House of Assembly of Vancouver Island, these changes were far too modest.

The Confederation movement, which garnered strength during the year, drew some of its support from the desire for constitutional reform. A league of over 100 confederationists had been formed in Victoria in May 1868 to agitate for the colony's immediate admission into the Canadian federation on equitable terms, and the granting of representative and responsible government. Feeling that the overtaxed people were "in a wavering state,"⁶⁸ Seymour informed his superiors that "confederation would . . . probably attract greater attention to this Colony than it now receives in England."⁶⁹ In forwarding the recommendations of the Yale Convention of 26 confederationists held on September 14 he wrote that he did not suppose "that there is an Englishman who would not desire to see one unbroken Dominion under his flag extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific," and that since the Colony appeared to "possess so little interest for the people of England . . . perhaps any change which would call attention to its really wonderful resources would do good."⁷⁰ But since he was given no instructions in the matter, and the negotiations over the Hudson's Bay territory were still under way, he informed the Legislative Council, when it met in Victoria on December 17, 1868 that the question of union must await the settlement of the Hudson's Bay Company's claims, and "the decision of those who have a wider range of vision than we can possess and without whose material assistance our efforts would be but in vain."⁷¹ Acting on this advice, the Council, though it contained four ardent confederationists elected on the mainland, voted on February 17, 1869 to postpone consideration of the matter.⁷²

On hearing of this disappointing development, Sir John A. Macdonald felt that no time should be lost in putting the screws on Vancouver Island, "and the first thing to be done will be to recall Governor Seymour if his

⁶⁷ Seymour to Buckingham, August 6, 1868. Seymour and Hankin, Despatches.

⁶⁸ Seymour to Buckingham, August 18, 1868. *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Seymour to Buckingham, July 28, 1868. *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Seymour to Buckingham, November 20, 1868. *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *British Columbian*, May 2, 1868.

⁷² *Ibid.*, February 20, 1869.

time is not run out."⁷³ Concurrently he wrote to Anthony Musgrave, whose term as Governor of Newfoundland was nearly ended, stating that Seymour should be recalled "as being perfectly unfit for his present position, under present circumstances. From all I hear he was never fit for it."⁷⁴ In London it was presumed that Seymour's term of office would expire in 1869, and Seymour himself was not greatly surprised to receive a letter from Musgrave, who had served as colonial secretary in Antigua and as President of Nevis, enquiring about the furnishings in Government House.

His colonists and their representatives were in a better temper in 1869 than Seymour had seen them for some time. During the legislative session lasting four months, he had found the Council "in an obliging, conciliatory humor, while disposed to take more initiative than usual . . . I am, I believe, on very good terms with the members of the Legislative Council. At all events, if disapproving of my rule, they make no sign."⁷⁵

At the beginning of the session there had been some excitement when the official members defeated Dr. Helmcken's attempts to make the council two-thirds elective and to admit non-official members to the Executive Council, and when the same members also defeated Helmcken's effort to put Crown salaries directly under the control of the Legislative Council, but everyone had then settled down to consider 28 measures recommended by Seymour as essential to the needs of a more stable society. A public school system was established, the system of courts improved, public health regulations drawn up, the mining of silver, lead, copper and coal regulated, and a commission established to examine the Indian reserve system.

In public finance the corner had been turned. Seymour had recently reduced the debt and made the final payment for military expenses incurred in Douglas's day. He had adamantly refused Buckingham's advice to increase taxation, and his original revenue measures were now yielding sufficient returns for him to improve the road system and order the preparation of a report on an extension to Red River. And he was able to announce that the Admiralty had been persuaded to loan money to an English company for the construction of a graving dock at Esquimalt.

In the interior, settlement was superceding gold-mining and farming

⁷³ Sir John A. Macdonald to Sir John Young, May 25, 1869. PAC. Macdonald Papers, Letterbook 12, 972.

⁷⁴ Macdonald to Anthony Musgrave, May 25, 1869. *Ibid.*, 874.

⁷⁵ Seymour to Lord Granville, March 17, 1869. Seymour and Hankin, Despatches.

was becoming established. The Cariboo mining town of Barkerville, which had been completely destroyed by fire in the autumn of 1868, was rising from the ashes. But New Westminster, deserted by its governor and his officials, wore a haggard air.

The end of this productive legislative session found Seymour suffering from extreme debility. He set to work to put his private and public affairs in order. On April 3, 1869 he signed his will. It made provision for funds to enable his secretary to accompany Mrs. Seymour to England should the Governor die in British Columbia.⁷⁶ Five days later he at last swore in Hankin,⁷⁷ to whom Buckingham had taken such a liking as to later make him his private secretary.

These matters settled, Seymour prepared to sail to the northern coast, where a prolonged, murderous quarrel between the Nass and the Tsimpean tribes was interfering with the spring fishery on the Nass River.

The welfare of the Indians had always been of major concern to Frederick Seymour, and he had been successful in establishing good relations with the Indian tribes. On his voyage to Bentinck Arm in 1864, and on his visits to the northern coastal villages and to the Indian community at Metlakatla in 1867, he had become aware of the presence on the seacoast of "whiskey sellers" and the need for naval assistance to suppress the liquor traffic. In 1868, when murders occurred after a drunken orgy at a marriage feast given by a Nass Indian, formerly a member of the Metlakatla community where liquor was banned, H.M.S. *Sparrowhawk* was twice sent to the northern coast. Nothing had been accomplished by

⁷⁶ Copy of will in PABC, EB Se 89. Seymour, Frederick, 1820-1869, Miscellaneous Papers relating to.

⁷⁷ Bishop Hills, who called on Seymour on April 15, 1869, found the Governor's health "much impaired & his utterance . . . affected." Seymour was looking forward to retirement. "I observed," Hills recorded, "he could hardly leave so inexperienced a Col. Secy. as Mr. Hankin in charge & he said no, the thing was absurd, but that he was only half & half Secy. as yet for he had not sworn him in to the Executive Council, as for Mr. Young he said he never could trust him, as he was so mixed up with the Hudson's Bay Company & other local interests that he was not a reliable officer for the Government to have in a high post." Bishop Hills Diary, 1869, April 15, 1869.

Possibly Seymour's opinion of Young was influenced by the views of Attorney General H. P. P. Crease. "I took care to let Mr. Seymour know a little of W. A. G. Youngs history & repeated what *Helmcken* and *de Cosmos* sd to him in the House last Session 'That if he (Young) were to be Col. Sec. he wd make Mr. Seymour's Administration as unpopular as he had made Gov. Douglas.'" Crease to Birch, January 27, 1868. H. P. P. Crease — Private — Miscellaneous Letters from January 1, 1868 to October 8, 1869; and "There is lots of Sinanagin going on here. W. A. G. coquetting & something more with Sir J. [Douglas] & the Malcontents. Nobody believes him. He told a . . . right before the Governor and I just as straight shewed it up on the spot." Crease to Birch, [Victoria], August 9, 1868, Crease Papers, Outward Correspondence, 1868.

Rear Admiral Hastings on these occasions, Seymour reported, and the missionary Duncan was too much of a fanatic to be able to settle an inter-tribal war.

When the *Sparrowhawk* returned in May 1869 from Nootka Sound, where Seymour had sent his attorney-general and a police magistrate to investigate the Indian murder of a ship's crew, he again commandeered the gunboat. He had just received from Lord Granville, colonial secretary in Gladstone's first administration, a sharp reprimand for his "unsatisfactory" report on the northern disturbances.⁷⁸ Accompanied by Joseph Trutch, Commissioner of Lands and Works, and by his private secretary, Seymour boarded the vessel at Esquimalt on May 17. En route to the Nass River he called at Metlakatla to pick up Duncan to serve as his interpreter. On the *Sparrowhawk's* reaching the mainland, Trutch and Duncan disembarked at the mouth of the Nass River and rowed a cutter up-river to visit the Indian villages and invite the chiefs to accompany the Governor to Fort Simpson. With the Nass chieftains on board, the *Sparrowhawk* then proceeded to Fort Simpson where an invitation was extended to the Tsimpean chiefs. On June 2, presiding at a parley, the Governor adopted "a persuasive and firm course." He reached agreement with the warring chiefs on the amount of compensation to be paid each tribe, induced them to sign a peace treaty, and put them under the operation of the law. Then, at the feast given by him for over 100 Indians taken on board, "the previously hostile tribes . . . mixed together with the greatest cordiality." The ending of the inter-tribal war, Trutch reported, was "fully and satisfactorily accomplished," and this, the Governor's last official act, was "creditable to his Administrative ability . . . and entirely in consonance with the kindness of heart which was his peculiar characteristic."⁷⁹

The *Sparrowhawk*, with a captured whiskey-laden schooner in tow, conveyed Duncan to Metlakatla. Then Seymour ordered a return to the mainland where he intended to investigate complaints of white settlers about the Indians. On the crossing, he became ill with dysentery; after the gunboat dropped anchor at Bella Coola, his condition became serious. On the morning of June 10, at Bella Coola, he died. His body was taken to Esquimalt. There, on June 16, with full honours, and with

⁷⁸ Receipt of Granville's letter acknowledged in Seymour to Granville May 17, 1869. Seymour and Hankin, Despatches.

⁷⁹ Report of Hon. J. W. Trutch, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, respecting the last Official Action of Governor Frederick Seymour in bringing Peace to Two Warring Tribes, June 22, 1869. UBC Library, Special Collections, Trutch Papers.

Sir James Douglas as pall-bearer, he was buried in the little naval cemetery.

The Victoria *British Colonist*, which had castigated his administration as energetically as earlier under De Cosmos' editorship it had condemned Douglas's, conceded that Governor Seymour's faults were atoned for by his evident desire to conciliate everyone and that his kindly nature was "ill-adapted perhaps to the rough spirits with whom he was brought in contact as the Governor of a new colony, and this place above all."⁸⁰

To govern the gold colony with its motley mining population, and its still larger and apprehensive Indian population, Newcastle, probably because of royal intervention, had chosen a man with a frail constitution who lacked the strength of character and the impressive mien of his predecessor. Yet, Frederick Seymour, by his initiative and his display of great physical courage, had won in his first eighteen months in office the respect and liking of the whole mainland population. His administration had inherited a large public debt, and after the gold receipts fell off, the Imperial authorities were indisposed to show "a little favour" to the colony. When depression set in, they were far from indulgent.

In London, Newcastle, Cardwell and Carnarvon were satisfied with his performance. It was after the Derby government took office in 1866 that difficulties developed. Seymour's advice that the mainland colony's consent to the union of the colonies be obtained was retracted. After the recall of Birch, who as administrator of British Columbia had been given a taste of power at the age of twenty-eight, a growing chilliness developed in the despatches sent from London. Seymour's neglect of his correspondence during his frequent absences from his capital, as well as his timidity in the capital question, damaged his reputation at the Colonial Office.

On the Pacific seaboard, the intensity of rivalry between the island and the mainland was an established fact, and anger was bound to be vented on the man who permitted union of the seaboard colonies to take effect. In addition, the "exuberantly free press" had long cultivated a tradition of political agitation. As the mouthpiece of the small professional and mercantile class which sought preferment over the English officials, the press yielded no quarter in battle. Already it had emblazoned on its banner two victories over colonial governors; a third was within its grasp.

Though he once admitted that much of the odium attached to Governor Seymour's administration of the united colony was "a natural consequence of the acts of omission and commission of the administration of

⁸⁰ *British Colonist*, June 15, 1869.

Sir James Douglas," Amor De Cosmos could not forgive Seymour for not seizing the initiative in the Confederation movement. Condemned by De Cosmos and by the Canadian editors of the popular press, Seymour's reputation did not outlive this charge. Yet the man was discerning enough to know that as yet union with Canada was desired only by a vocal minority, hoping to achieve economic relief and governmental reform. These aims, which were very much his own, were not likely to be achieved under the present Imperial auspices.

It would take a change of government at home and the transfer to Canada of the territorial claims of the Hudson's Bay Company before a governor of the restless colony would receive the nod. When these changes occurred and the nod was given to Anthony Musgrave, Frederick Seymour, despite his accomplishment, passed into history as British Columbia's forgotten governor.