



The first railway in Upper Canada in 1839 started with horse-drawn carriages. In the 1850s steam engines were rolling along the railway lines. This painting shows part of the Canada Southern Railway near Niagara Falls in the 1860s. The railway boom was in full swing.

5. Changing British Attitudes

Britain's free trade policy in 1846 was a crushing blow to the economy of the colonies. To raise money for canals and roads, Canadians decided to place tariffs on all goods coming into the colonies. British manufacturers were furious. Tariffs would raise the cost of British goods in the colonies.

Support for the colonies was weakening in Britain. A small but vocal group called the **Little Englanders** believed that the colonies were a great burden to Britain. They said it was time the colonies began to pay their own way. John Bright expressed these views in the British Parliament with the following speech:

I think it is natural and reasonable to hope that there is in the North American provinces a very strong attachment to

Britain. But if they are to be constantly applying to us for guarantees for railways, and for grants for fortresses, and for works of defence, then I think it would be far better for them and us—cheaper for us—that they should become independent. They could maintain their own fortresses, fight their own cause, and build up their own future without relying on us. . . . I say the time has come when it ought to be clearly understood that the taxes of England are no longer to go across the ocean to pay expenses of any kind.

Many people in Britain agreed with the Little Englanders. This was bad news for the colonies. It came at the very time that the Fenians were raiding their borders and the Americans were threatening to expand into the West.