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Sommario/riassunto	Pierre-Étienne Fortin led a life and plied a career at the heart of Canada's early history. He was an adventurer, an amateur scientist, an early (if ambiguous) conservationist and a Conservative politician from 1867 to 1888. He was a doctor on Grosse-Île amid the horrors of the 1847 typhus epidemic, led a mounted police troop during the infamous Montreal riots of 1849 and, as commander of the armed schooner La Canadienne, policed the Gulf of St. Lawrence from 1852 to 1867, when thousands of New Englanders and Nova Scotians swarmed over the fishing grounds. His official life as magistrate and mid-level bureaucrat often exemplified tensions of early nationhood: those between elites and colonists; and those arising from the nationalistic impulse to impose law and order on the wilderness. The interests, issues and

sympathies at work on Fortin in the founding period remain compelling today: job creation versus environmental protection, free trade with the U.S., the exploitation of Canadian fisheries, relations with aboriginal peoples, and the political status of Quebec within confederation.
