

L20071

MARCH 10 1833

*Documents connected with the Suspension of the Very Rev. Wm. J. O'Grady.*

At a Meeting of the Roman Catholics of the Parish of York, U. C. held in the Chapel of Ease, on Sunday the 10th February, 1833, the Hon'ble Alexander McDonell was called to the Chair, and John King, Esq. M. D. appointed Secretary when the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

1. Resolved—That this Meeting views with sorrow and regret the contumacious conduct of the late incumbent of this Parish, which seems to be the cause of the extensive schism that now exists in the Congregation, to the scandal of our holy religion, and the disgrace of Christianity.

2. Resolved—That obedience to the Episcopal authority is indispensable in church discipline, and that any resistance to it is contrary to the usage of the Roman Catholic Church, and never allowable under any circumstances.

3. Resolved—That a clergyman resisting such authority is unworthy the confidence and respect of a Catholic congregation.

4. Resolved—That it is the opinion of this Meeting that the late incumbent had forfeited the entire confidence of the most respectable portion of the congregation of York, previous to his suspension, inasmuch that they declined attending the Parish Church when he officiated.

5. Resolved—That the following document from the hand of our late incumbent, attempting to invest the "Ecclesiastical Supremacy" of the Roman Catholic Church of Upper Canada in the Protestant Representative of the King in this Province, is sufficient evidence of his denial of the "Ecclesiastical Supremacy" of the Pope, and of his resistance to the authority of the Church:—

"To His Excellency Sir John Colborne, K. C. B. Lt. Governor of the Province of Upper Canada, & Major Gen'l commanding His Majesty's Forces therein, &c. &c. &c.

"The Petition of Wm. J. O'Grady, B. D. Rector of York, Humbly sheweth,

"That your Petitioner aware of the many weighty and important concerns that press upon your Excellency's time and attention, would not willingly bring under your consideration, the subject of this Petition, had he not failed in his repeated efforts to induce his Lordship, Bishop McDonell to submit the unhappy differences now pending between them to the decision of the head of the Catholic Church, or to the adjudication of three Clergymen impartially selected from the Sulpician Seminary of Montreal.

"That his Lordship having declined to accede to a Proposition so reasonable your Petitioner has no other alternative left him to preserve his character from obliquity, and to defend himself against the most flagrant injustice, than an appeal to your Excellency, as the representative of his Majesty the King.

"That this appeal is made to your Excellency under the authority of the fourteenth and thirty first of George III, and coming from one of his Majesty's Lige subjects, will it is hoped receive mature deliberation and impartial Consideration.

"Your Petitioner humbly conceives that the right of appeal is also guaranteed to him by the Treaty of Quebec in as much as His Majesty the King of France when these Provinces were under the French Dynasty always had and exercised over them ECCLESIASTICAL SUPREMACY, and in as much as this SUPREMACY was transferred at the period of the capitulation to our most gracious Sovereign and in as much as his Majesty the King continues to exercise the right of Supremacy so transferred in nominating a Bishop to the see of Quebec [the only one in British America] whenever that Diocese becomes vacant.

"That if his Majesty, the King have not hitherto exercised his right of Supremacy beyond the nomination of Bishops, it is not because the right became extinct, the Royal Prerogative not being liable to extinction by disuse.

"That his Majesty of France enacted a Law in May 1679 declaring that Curets are no longer moveable at the will or caprice of a Bishop, but on the contrary that they cannot be deprived by them of their benefices, the observance of this Law is one of the privileges, which your Petitioner claims under the 14th of George III.

"That his Majesty of France also reserved to himself, by special Law, the exclusive Right of adjusting Ecclesiastical differences in these Provinces, without reference to any other Court, or tribunal whatever, and that he repeatedly exercised this right without any reclamation being made against it, and this too your Petitioner conceives is another of the privileges secured to his Majesty's faithful subjects, of the Roman Catholic Religion in Canada under George III.

"That under these circumstances your Petitioner respectfully submits, that he is possessed of the right of appeal to his Majesty against Ecclesiastical usurpation, and for the correction of Ecclesiastical abuses in as full and ample a manner as it was held and received under the French Dynasty.

"Your Petitioner humbly prays that your Excellency will be graciously pleased to take the Premises into your earliest consideration, and to communicate to your Petitioner such answer as to your Excellency's wisdom and impartiality may seem fit.

And your Petitioner will ever pray.

(Signed)

W. J. O'GRADY,  
R. C. Rector of York."

York, 4th January, 1833.

6. Resolved—That the pretended Church-wardens, who have surreptitiously obtained the Keys of the Parish Church in this town, and who retain forcible possession of the same, depriving the Bishop of the Diocese and the respectable parishioners who erected the edifice, of their proper and legitimate accommodations for Divine Worship, are, in our opinion, guilty of a sacrilegious act of injustice in open violation of the common principles of Christianity.

7. Resolved—That in suspending the late incumbent, and interdicting the Church, under such circumstances, Bishop McDonnell has shewn a sincere disposition to uphold, at any risk, the authority and discipline of the Roman Catholic Church, which entitles him to the respect and gratitude of every real member of our communion, and claims for him the sincere thanks of this meeting.

8. Resolved—That an Address be presented to His Lordship upon the present melancholy occasion, and that Doctor King, and Messrs. Alex. E. McDonell and Francis Collins, be a committee to draft and present the same.

9. Resolved—That these our resolutions together with the Address, be recorded in the Church Book by the Secretary, & published in the Canadian Freeman, the Patriot and Courier.

**BISHOP M'DONNELL'S REPLY TO Mr. O'GRADY'S PETITION.**

York, 8th January, 1833.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 5th inst. accompanying a Petition of the Rev. W. J. O'Grady to his Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, requesting my observations on the subject matter of that Petition.

I have to thank his Excellency for thus affording me an opportunity of answering to the grievances complained of by Mr. O'Grady in his Petition.