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Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

DIOCESE OF MONTREAL.

A meeting of the Clergy of the Diocese of Montreal, and of Lay Delegates from the several congregations, called by circular from the Lord Bishop, to take into consideration the necessity or propriety of establishing a Diocesan Synod for this Diocese, was held in the City of Montreal on Wednesday, the 16th of January, 1856.

Divine Service was celebrated in the Cathedral at half-past ten o'clock A. M.; Morning Prayers were said by the Rev. Canons Gilson and Bancroft, the Lessons were read by the Rev. Canon Townsend, and the Ante-Communion Service by the Dean, Archdeacon Lower taking the Epistle. A Sermon appropriate to the occasion was preached by the Lord Bishop, after which the Holy Communion was administered.

At one o'clock the Clergy and Lay Delegates assembled at the National Schoolhouse, under the presidency of the Bishop.

Rev. E. J. Rogers was appointed Clerical Secretary, and J. Armstrong, Esq., Lay Sec.

The names of the Clergy having been called, and the certificates of Delegates having been presented, the following lists were drawn up: those in italics were absent:—

Abbotsford—Rev F Robinson, J. Drake, S Bachelder; Aylmer—Rev J. Johnston, G. J. Marston; Berthier—J. Armstrong, J. Bortwick, Bromé—Rev R. Lindsay, I. M. Knowlton, H. S. Forster, Chambly—Col. Aus^r, Major Campbell, C. H. Christler—Rev J. A. McLeod, W. McManis, Hon. R. Jones; Clarenceville—Rev. Canon M. Townsend, A. H. Vaughan, D. Derrick, Clarendon—Rev. J. S. Sykes; Cowansville—Rev. J. C. Davidson, Côteau du Lac—Rev. J. Mountain, A. Ferry; Dunham—Rev. Jos. Scott, B. Baker, *Theo. Selby*; Edwardstown—Rev. E. G. Sutton, J. Charters; Farnham—Rev. W. Jones, Geo. Adams, Frost Village—Rev. D. Lindsay, Asa Forster, Granby—Rev. T. Nachin, Dr. Abbott; Greenville—Rev. C. Forster; Hemmingford—Rev. T. Mussen, F. D. Fulford, G. N. Johnson; Huntington—Rev. F. S. Neve, J. Morrison, A. Cunningham; Henryville—Rev. E. DuVernet, H. Martin, Lachine—Rev. J. Flanagan, Col. Wilgress, Mr. Newman; Lacolle—Rev. J. Coranall, W. Bowman, Col. Hoyle; Laprairie—Rev. R. Lonsdell; Mascouche—Rev. G. O'Grady, Hon. J. Pangman, E. Hanson, Milton—Rev. G. Slack, C. Gillespie, Montreal. Cathedral—Revs. Dean Bethune and Arch. Lower, Hon. G. Moffatt, Hon. Judge McCord; St. George's Church—Revs. W. T. Leach and W. B. Bond, J. Crawford, I. J. Gibb; Trinity Church—Rev. A. D. Campbell, J. Campbell, Geo. Melroe, St. Stephen's Church—Rev. R. R. Burage, J. Knox, Mr. Gough; St. Luke's Church—Rev. Canon Gilson, Hon. Judge Aylwin, J. M. Ferris, M. P. P., New Glasgow—Rev. A. Lockhart; Ormstown—Rev. W. Brethour, A. H. Campbell, A. N. Rennie; Rawdon—Rev. C. Rollit, Jas. Swift; Russelltown—Rev. J. Fulton, Wm. Barret; Sabrevois—Vacant; St. Andrew's—Rev. W. Abbott, H. Schneider, J. Walnwright, Jr., St. Armand, East—D. Westover, St. Armand, West—Revs. C. Wetherall and R. Whitwell, W. Roberts, Hon. P. Moore; St. John's—Rev. Canon Bancroft, St. Montzambert, I. Coote; St. Martin—Rev. T. A. Young, Dr. Smallwood, G. H. Monk, Shefford—R. A. Ellis, Sherrington—Vacant; Vaudeville—Rev. Jas. Pyke, R. Shepherd, Garrison Chaplain—Rev. E. J. Rogers, St. Hyacinthe—Rev. J. Golden.

After prayers had been said by His Lordship, the Right Rev. Prelate proceeded to state the objects of the meeting. He said they were met to deliberate on serious and solemn matters affecting not only themselves, but others: they were met to take measures for the improvement of the position of the Church, and they must not

forget they were before God and man. His Lordship said he was glad to see so many of the Clergy and Laity present. It was true there were some who were absent; but, considering the present state of the weather, he was glad to see so many come together. It was a pleasing evidence of the great interest taken in the question before them by the members of the Church in this Diocese. They had already had the matter under discussion on two previous occasions, and he trusted that their present proceeding would result in some benefit to the body of which they were members.

Hitherto the Church in this Diocese had been strictly a Missionary Church, presided over by a Bishop paid by a Society in England. But that stage of its existence was passing away, the funds provided from home were being withdrawn, and new rules became necessary in order that the Church might carry on her work. Still the Church in this Diocese was truly part and parcel of the Church of England, tied to that latter Church by the vows of the Bishop and Clergy, and by the Liturgy and Services which were used, and acknowledging the Queen's supremacy and the spiritual superiority of the Archbishop of Canterbury. But in England the Church had a system of discipline, &c., which was wanting here, where at present everything depended on the will of the Bishop, and his ability to carry out that will, subject to appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury. In this position application had been made to the British Parliament to pass such laws as would enable the Church in the Colony to provide what was wanting. That request was immediately assented to by the Church and the Government, therefore, he presumed, by the Queen. A bill to that effect was passed through the House of Lords, but was stopped in the House of Commons, because if the act had passed, it was said, it would have created a regular church establishment, with the authority of an imperial law overriding the law of the colony, and placing the Church of England in a position superior to that of any other church. A modified bill was again introduced in order to relieve the Church in Canada from the effect of the Act 25th Henry VIII; but this was also thrown out on grounds similar to those upon which the other bill had been rejected. Then came the question, what was to be done? In 1853, in the debate on the latter of these "Colonial Church Bills," the attorney-general (Sir F. Thesiger) had stated, in his place in parliament, "that the Church of England in the Colonies was in a most disadvantageous position, deprived of privileges and freedom of action possessed by other denominations and by the Mother Church. This arose from the Colonies not having the ecclesiastical rights which exist in England, especially the jurisdiction of spiritual courts; in consequence of which the Colonial Bishop had an arbitrary and irresponsible power. But, as in his opinion, the act of submission (25 Henry VIII) did not apply to the Colonies, it was not necessary to permit the clergy and laity there to assemble and make

regulations, since no law forbade it; therefore the bill must be intended to give a legal sanction to something not now sanctioned by law." Subsequently the present solicitor-general (Bethell), Sir Fitzroy Kelly, Mr. Napier, and Mr. Stephens, on special application from the Bishop of Adelaide, gave the following opinion:—

"We are of opinion that the Act of Submission (25 Henry VIII. c. 19) does not extend to prohibit or render illegal the holding of Diocesan Synods within the Diocese of Adelaide."
(Signed) "RICHARD BETHELL,
"FITZROY KELLY,
"JOSEPH NAPIER,
"A. J. STEPHENS."

And if Synods are not illegal in the Colony of Adelaide, we may conclude not in the Colony of Canada.

The object sought was merely to regulate the discipline and temporalities of the Church, without interfering with any not in her pale. It is said that diocesan synods in the Church of England had not been held since the Reformation, and, therefore, should not be held now. That was a mistake. They were held in the Diocese of Norwich until down to the great rebellion; in St. Asaph, and also in Kilmore by Bishop Bedell in 1628,* when Canons were passed, Lord Stratford being then Lord Deputy of Ireland, and not having any legal power to prevent it. And very recently a Synod had been held in the Diocese of Exeter. It is true that the Church in England being the established Church, if she wanted a church discipline act, or church building act, she applied to Parliament through her Bishops and got it, so that diocesan synods fell into disuse. Still in every case like that of the Colonial Church, when ceasing to be the state establishment, as the Church in Scotland and in the United States, such Synods were found necessary and continued to be held. They had also been held in the Diocese of Sodor and Man, which was not under the jurisdiction of the English laws; where the excellent Bishop Wilson, in 1703, framed a code of ecclesiastical constitutions, which he read to his clergy, and which were afterwards passed into a law by the authorities of the island. And speaking of that diocese, Lord Chancellor King said, "If the ancient discipline of the Church were lost, it might be found in all its purity in the Isle of Man."

The members of the Church would not have approved his (the Bishop's) conduct if he had thus brought down a whole body of constitutions,

* "In September 1633 he (Bishop Bedell) convened a Synod, in which he made many excellent Canons that are still extant, but offence was taken at this by some who were in power, and who questioned the legality of the meeting; and some talk there was, says his biographer, of calling him in question for it either in the Star-chamber or High Commission Court, but his Archdeacon Thomas Price, who was afterwards Archbishop of Cashel, gave such an account of the matter as satisfied the state. Archbishop Usher is said to have advised those who moved to have the Bishop brought up upon this charge to let him alone, lest he should thereby be provoked to say more for himself than any of his accusers could say against him."—See Burnet's Life of Bishop Bedell.