

SUPPLEMENTARY MEMORIAL

WITH REFERENCE

To the claim of His Grace the Archbishop of Quebec

AGAINST THE

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS.

An attempt has been made, by means of a circumstance of no importance, devoid even of possibility, to explain the cause of the destruction, by fire, of the building in question. In support of this attempt, a fact recorded in the minutes of evidence has been cited; a fact so insignificant, that the Commissioners did not deem it necessary to give it the least attention, and which, for that reason, we had passed over in silence. This is the circumstance referred to in the evidence of the Reverend Sister St. Louis, (Appendix No. 10, page 25,) "Before entering this room (L)," she says, "I perceived that my lantern was open, I immediately shut it before we went into the room (L)."

This room was on the fourth story, and before reaching it, the Nuns must have passed through the third story and visited the rooms on that story, and amongst others, the *Speaker's room*. When did the lantern open? Was it previous to ascending to the third story, before or after the visit to the *Speaker's room*? This is not stated in the evidence, doubtless because the lantern having opened without the knowledge of the Nun who carried it, she could not say when the fact occurred.

The Nuns having examined the fourth, fifth and sixth stories, as high as the garret, retraced their steps and returned to the part occupied by the community. The visit over the whole building, from the time of leaving the *Speaker's room*, must have occupied at least twenty minutes. "In going down," continues this Nun, "we passed near the *Speaker's room* on the third story. It is very probable that if there had been a light in that room, we should have seen it, if the doors of the room had been open, which I cannot state was the case."

By examination of the plan of the building, it will be perceived that the Nuns must have again passed, on returning, by the corridor upon which the *Speaker's room* opened, and that the door of this room was quite close to the stair-case leading from the third to the second story.

Let us now examine the bearing of the fact as stated by Sister St. Louis. As it cannot be known at what time the lantern opened, let us admit, for the sake of argument, that the lantern had been opened before the Nuns entered the *Speaker's Room*, or that it opened while they were in the room. Let us further suppose that a spark escaped from the open lantern, a very unlikely occurrence, particularly if the opened part was placed so as to receive the current of air caused by the Nuns as they walked along, for in that case, the spark escaping from the lantern would necessarily be blown back against the sides of the lantern. It must be remarked that what is called the *snuff*, a very considerable portion of the wick of a burning candle, is not formed when the candle is being moved about. Did the spark, escaping from the candle, ascend or descend?

Here is another question difficult of solution; but let us suppose that it did descend. This spark in falling must have lighted either upon matter liable to take fire on coming into contact with so slight a thing as a spark falling from a lantern, or upon a substance which it could not set on fire by coming into contact with it. In the first case the spark upon touching a highly inflammable substance, as for example, *shavings*, must either have spontaneously set fire to it or be extinguished immediately, and the fire so communicated must have spread with greater rapidity from the circumstance of the room in question containing a good quantity of *shavings*.