

In the course of my remarks, I shall frequently have occasion to make use of the term "Roman Catholic Church," which I desire may be understood as designating its government and polity, not as referring to it as a system of religious faith. Without this explanation I might be understood, as entering on the domain of polemical discussion in some of my references.

1

Has the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards Civil Society changed since Confederation ; and has such change been signalized in Lower Canada by overt action ?

The Confederation of the British North American Provinces was proclaimed on the 1st July, 1867, and the antecedent discussions may be definitively stated to have commenced at the Charlottetown conference, in September, 1864.

The Syllabus Errorum was issued by the authority of Pope Pius IX, on 8th December, 1864.

The Vatican Council met at Rome on the 8th Dec., 1869. And the celebrated Dogmatic Decrees were promulgated on the 18th July, 1870.

It is therefore evident that if the Syllabus and the Vatican Decrees have in any way altered the relations of the Church of Rome towards civil society, the first division of the question must be answered affirmatively.

Although this might, I think, be taken for granted, in view of the manner in which these extraordinary dogmas are regarded in the principal countries of Europe ; yet, before proceeding to treat of their effect in the Province of Quebec, it will be interesting to offer