



ONTARIO (PETITION OF  
ROMAN CATHOLIC INHABITANTS).

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COPIES of a PETITION addressed to Her MAJESTY  
by certain ROMAN CATHOLIC INHABITANTS of the  
Province of *Ontario*, in the Dominion of *Canada*,  
transmitted on the 17th July 1878 to the Secretary  
of State for the Colonies for Presentation to The  
QUEEN; and, of the LETTER of Mr. *Butt*, M.P.,  
accompanying the PETITION, and of the REPLY to  
that LETTER.

(*Mr. Butt.*)

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*Ordered, by The House of Commons to be Printed,*  
*15 August 1878.*

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389.

*Under 1 oz.*

ONTARIO (PETITION OF ROMAN CATHOLIC INHABITANTS).

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RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons,  
dated 7 August 1878;—for,

“ COPIES of a PETITION addressed to Her MAJESTY by certain ROMAN CATHOLIC INHABITANTS of the Province of *Ontario*, in the Dominion of *Canada*, transmitted on the 17th of July last to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for Presentation to The QUEEN :”

“ And, of the LETTER of Mr. *Butt*, M.P., accompanying the PETITION, and of the REPLY to that LETTER.”

Colonial Office, }  
August 1878. }

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ROBERT G. W. HERBERT.

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(*Mr. Butt.*)

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*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,*  
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No. 1.

*Isaac Butt*, Esq., M.P., to the Right Hon. Sir *M. E. Hicks Beach*, Bart.

Sir,

House of Commons, London, 17 July 1878.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you for presentation to Her Majesty a Petition, signed by more than 25,000 of Irish Canadian Catholics, inhabitants of Her Majesty's Province of *Ontario*, in the Dominion of *Canada*.

The Petitioners complain that an Act giving special privileges to the Orange Society in the Province of *New Brunswick* had received from the Lieutenant Governor of that Province the Royal Assent, and that this Assent had been forbidden, and has not since been recalled by the Governor General of the Dominion.

In contemplation of an attempt to obtain a similar enactment in the Province of *Ontario*, the Petitioners humbly pray that Her Majesty may be graciously pleased to forbid the Governor General of the Dominion, and the Lieutenant Governors and their successors, sanctioning by the Royal Assent any enactment giving a Charter to the Orange Society.

The Right Hon.  
Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State,  
Colonial Department.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Isaac Butt*.

No. 1.

*Isaac Butt*, Esq.,  
M.P., to the Right  
Hon. Sir *M. E.*  
*Hicks Beach*, Bart.  
17 July 1878.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Enclosure in No. 1.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The PETITION of the undersigned Irish Canadian Catholics, Inhabitants of Your Majesty's Province of *Ontario*,

Humbly showeth,

That the Orange Society, which has kept alive in the land of our origin memories of evil passions, to the disgrace of religion, the violation of law, the fosterage of discontent, has been transplanted to the several Provinces of Your Majesty's Dominion of *Canada*.

That condemned as that society in *Ireland* is by the spirit of the age as embodied in the judgments conveyed against it by the Right Hon. the Marquis of *Hartington*, the Right Hon. *William Ewart Gladstone*, and other exponents of public opinion in *England*, its importation, outside all the circumstances of its origin, into this young Dominion is an evil which can find no apology whatever in either policy or decency.

That whatever be the dangers from which Orangeism assumes to protect Protestantism, they certainly cannot apply in the Province of *Nova Scotia*, where the Protestants are 67 per cent. of the population; in the Province of *New Brunswick*, where the Protestants are 62 per cent. of the population; in the Province of *Ontario*, where the Protestants are 84 per cent. of the population; and that, therefore, Orangeism in these Provinces can find no excuse whatever for its existence in the old cry, which has fallen amongst the enlightened into ridicule since the days of *Dean Swift's* announcement, that "the lion has been let out of the Tower of *London* to destroy Protestant religion."

That Orangeism in any part of this Dominion may find a justification in the fact that the great majority of the population of the Province of Quebec is Catholic, is a consideration which, even if the tolerant and inoffensive majority of that Province were disposed to exercise its right of local government as illiberally as the Protestant majorities of New Brunswick and of Prince Edward Island exercise theirs, cannot be entertained short of an acceptance of the practice of the 2,000 armed Orangemen of the Province of Ontario who invaded the Province of Quebec on the 16th of last July, to thrust their insult and outrage on the Catholic population of Montreal by insurrectionary violence.

Your Majesty's Petitioners humbly show also, that the Orange body as an organisation menacing the freedom of religious conscience, is in conflict with the spirit of the constitution, and in direct violation of the guarantees of religious liberty, when it makes annually a demonstration of physical force under banners that demand suppression of the Catholic faith.

And your Majesty's Petitioners humbly show further, that the Orange Society outrages publicly with its banners and its music and religious faith, and its visible head, which one million and a half or 42 per cent. of your Majesty's subjects in this Dominion hold most venerable and holy.

That the said Orange Society perpetrates by its banners, music, and exhibition of physical force, wanton outrage on not only the religious faith, and its visible head of half a million of Your Majesty's Canadian subjects who are Catholics of Irish birth or blood, but aggravates that wanton public outrage on those unoffending citizens by the insults conveyed in the Orange presence and the Orange music, to the memories of those of our forefathers who, now half a century in the repose of Irish graves, laid down their lives in a resistance of desperation against what subsequent action of the estates of Your Majesty's realm has confessed in effect to have been cruel oppression.

That though animosity, strife, and bloodshed result here, as in Ireland, from those violations of good citizenship on the part of our misguided fellow-subjects of the Orange Society, Your Majesty's Memorialists are willing to bear, and as far as human nature may be subdued by religious restraint and civil obedience, to forbear in a recognition of the general principle of the right of public procession, and they do not seek to interfere in anywise with that or any other right or privilege enjoyed by the Orange body (so far as that body may be lawful) in common with all similar bodies in this Dominion.

That the Orange Society is, however, not content with rights and privileges in common with all similar bodies in this Dominion, but that it seeks to obtain for itself special rights and privileges through legislation; that it has actually obtained such in the Province of New Brunswick, and that having made several unsuccessful attempts to do so in the Province of Ontario, it contemplates a renewal of those attempts in Ontario now.

That the indecent legislation which has given in the last quarter of the 19th century the Orange Society of New Brunswick the authority of law by special enactment, has received from the Lieutenant Governor of the Province the Royal Assent, and that that Assent had not been forbidden, or has not since been recalled by the Governor General of the Dominion.

And on all these grounds your Memorialists humbly pray that Your Majesty will graciously cause the Governor General and the Lieutenant Governors of this Dominion and their successors in office to be forbidden to sanction any enactment so revolting to the spirit of the Constitution, so well calculated to alienate the affections of a million and a half of Your Majesty's subjects in Canada from the Throne and Government as a special Charter of the Orange Society; and that while saving thus the self-respect, the religious sense, the constitutional equality of ourselves and our co-religionists in this part of the Empire, Your Majesty will save your person and throne before the civilised world, and especially before a vast body of your people, from responsibility for the sanction, by your Royal Assent, of annual outrages on a million and a half of your Canadian subjects through their faith, and on 500,000 of that number through the memories of their fathers.

And your Memorialists shall ever pray.

Here follow the Signatures.

No. 2.

Colonial Office to *Isaac Butt*, Esq., M.P.

No. 2.  
Colonial Office to  
*Isaac Butt*, Esq.,  
M.P.  
2 August 1878.

Sir,

Downing-street, 2 August 1878.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th of July, transmitting, for presentation to the Queen, a Petition to Her Majesty largely signed by Irish Canadian Roman Catholics of the Province of Ontario, praying that the Royal Assent may be refused to any enactment granting a special Charter to the Orange Society within the Dominion of Canada.

Sir Michael Hicks Beach desires me to inform you in reply that, in accordance with the standing rules of the Colonial service, all communications from the Colonies should be transmitted to this Department through the Governor of the Colony from which they proceed, in order that they may be duly verified and reported upon by the responsible authorities.

The Petition which accompanies your letter will therefore be forwarded to the Governor General of Canada, by next mail, for such observations as the Dominion and Provincial authorities may think proper to make upon it; but in the meantime I am to intimate that the question to which it relates would appear, under the provisions of the British North America Act, 1867, to fall within the exclusive powers of the Provincial Legislatures of the Dominion, and that it is contrary to established constitutional procedure for Her Majesty's Government to interfere, unless in very special circumstances, with such legislation as is within the competency of a Provincial Legislature.

I am, &c.

Isaac Butt, Esq., M.P.

(signed) *Robert G. W. Herbert.*

No. 3.

The Right Hon. Sir *M. E. Hicks Beach*, Bart., to the Earl of *Dufferin*.

No. 3.  
The Right Hon.  
Sir *M. E. Hicks*  
*Beach*, Bart., to  
the Earl of  
*Dufferin*.  
2 August 1878.

My Lord,

Downing-street, 2 August 1878.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you, for communication to your Ministers, a copy of a letter which I have received from Mr. Isaac Butt, M.P., accompanied by a Petition addressed to the Queen by Irish Canadian Roman Catholics of the Province of Ontario, praying that the Royal Assent may be refused to any enactment granting a special Charter to the Orange Society within the Dominion of Canada.

I also enclose a copy of the reply which I have caused to be sent to Mr. Butt's letter, and I should be glad to receive from you such observations as the Dominion and Provincial Authorities may think proper to make in the matter.

17 July 1878.  
*Petition in original.*

I have, &c.

Governor General,  
The Earl of *Dufferin*.

(signed) *M. E. Hicks Beach.*