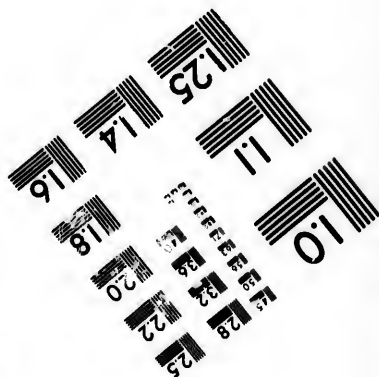
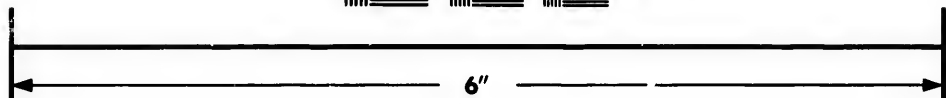
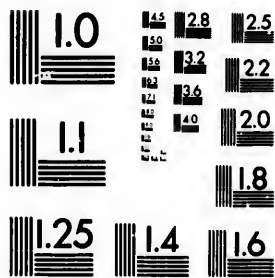


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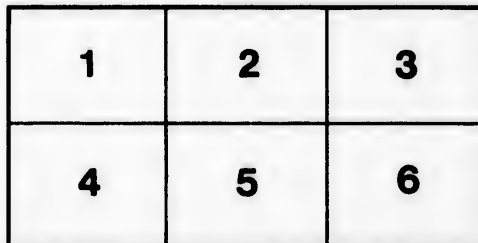
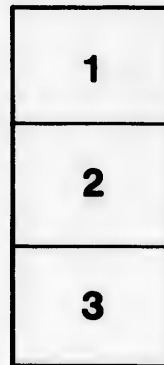
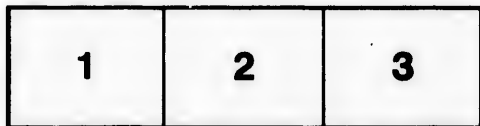
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PROVINCE OF LOWER CANADA.

Petitions of the Inhabitants of the
Districts of Montreal, Quebec,
and Three Rivers.

Presented by
J. M. H. St. Pierre
Aug. 1897

PROVINCE OF LOWER CANADA.

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Petition of the Counties in the District of Quebec, and of the
County of Warwick, District of Montreal
TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

WE, your Majesty's faithful and loyal Subjects, inhabitants of your Province of Lower Canada, most humbly supplicate your Majesty to receive graciously this our humble Petition, which we now lay at the foot of your Imperial Throne, with hearts full of gratitude and inviolable attachment to your august person and your Majesty's paternal Government.

Amongst the numerous benefits for which the inhabitants of Lower Canada are indebted to your Majesty's Government, there is none that they more highly prize than the invaluable Constitution granted to this Province by the Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, passed in the thirty-first year of the reign of our beloved Sovereign, your august father, of ever-revered memory.

Called by that Act to the full enjoyment of British constitutional liberty, and become the depositaries of our own rights, under the protection of the Mother Country, we contracted the solemn obligation of preserving inviolate this sacred deposit, and of transmitting it to our descendants, such as it was confided to us, by the great men who then presided over the destinies of your powerful and glorious empire.

Deeply impressed with a sense of this obligation, alarmed by the abuses which have crept into the administration of the government of this Province, and suffering under the evils which weigh on its inhabitants, we entertained an anxious hope that the House of Assembly, in the session of the Provincial Parliament, called for the despatch of business on the 20th November last, would take into consideration the state of the Province, and adopt efficacious measures to obtain the remedy and removal of these abuses and evils. We had a sure reliance on the well-tried loyalty and disinterested zeal of our representatives; but we have had the mortification of seeing our hopes frustrated by the refusal on the part of His Excellency the Governor-in-Chief to approve the Speaker elected by the Assembly, and by the proclamation of the 22d of the same month of November, proroguing the Provincial Parliament. In these circumstances, deprived of the services of our representatives, suffering under great evils, and threatened with others still greater, we humbly implore the protection of your Majesty, the source of all grace and of all justice.

The enlightened and patriotic statesmen who devised our Constitutional Act, and the British Parliament by which it was granted, intended to bestow on us a mixed government, modelled on the constitution of the Parent State, the opinions publicly expressed at the time in Parliament, and the Act itself, record the beneficent views of the Imperial Legislature; a Governor, a Legislative Council, and an Assembly were to form three distinct and independent branches, representing the King, the Lords, and the Commons, but the true spirit of that fundamental law has not been observed in the composition of the Legislative Council; for the majority of its members, consisting of persons whose principal resources for the support of themselves and their families are the salaries, emoluments, and fees derived from offices which they hold during pleasure, they are interested in maintaining and increasing the salaries, emoluments, and fees of public offices paid by the people, and also in supporting divers abuses favourable to persons holding offices. The Legislative Council, by these means, is in effect the Executive Power, under a different name, and the Provincial Legislature is, in truth, reduced to two branches, a Governor and an Assembly; leaving the Province without the benefit of the intermediate branch, as intended by the aforesaid Act; and from this first and capital abuse have resulted, and still continue to result, a multitude of abuses, and the impossibility of procuring a remedy.

We acknowledge that the Legislative Council ought to be independent, and, if it were, we should not be entitled to complain to Your Majesty of the repeated refusals of that Branch to proceed upon various Bills sent up by the Assembly, howsoever useful and even indispensable they might be; but considering these refusals as the natural result of the composition of that body, and of the state of dependence in which the majority of its Members are placed, we are compelled to consider its Acts as the Acts of the Executive Government, and we most humbly represent to Your Majesty, that the Legislative Council of this Province, the majority of which is composed of Executive Councillors, Judges, and other persons dependent on the Executive, have, year after year, rejected several Bills, refused and neglected to proceed on several other Bills sent up by the Assembly, for the remedy of abuses, for encouraging Education, promoting the general convenience of the Subject, the improvement of the Country, for increasing the security of Persons and Property, and furthering the common welfare and prosperity of the Province, particularly —

Various annual Bills granting the necessary sums for all the expenses of the Civil Government of the Province, but regulating and setting limits to the expenditure.

For affording a legal recourse to the subject having claims against the Provincial Government.

For regulating certain fees and offices.

For enabling the inhabitants of the towns to have a voice in the management of their local concerns, and a check on the expenditure of monies levied up in them by assessment.

For facilitating the administration of Justice throughout the Province, for qualifying and regulating the formation of Juries, and introducing Jury trials in the country parts, and diminishing the expenses occasioned by the distance of suitors from the present seats of justice.

For providing a new and sufficient goal for the District of Montreal.

For qualifying persons to serve in the office of Justice of the Peace.

For continuing the Acts regulating the Militia of the Province.

For increasing and apportioning the representation in the House of Assembly equally, among the qualified Electors throughout the Province, particularly in the new Settlements and Townships.

For the security of the public monies in the hands of His Majesty's Receiver-General, in this Province.

For the independence of the Judges, by securing to them their present salaries, upon their being commissioned during good behaviour, and for providing a tribunal for the trial of impeachments by the Assembly, so as to ensure a just responsibility in high public officers within the Province.

For appointing and providing for an authorized Agent for the Province, to reside in England, and attend to its interests there.

It is with the most profound grief that we find ourselves compelled to represent to Your Majesty, that during several years past the monies derived from real Estate in this Province, the profits of Trade and Industry, and the Wages of Labour therein, have greatly diminished, and still continue to diminish, that under these circumstances it would not be equitable to impose Taxes or new Duties on its inhabitants for the public uses, and that there exists no other resource which can reasonably be depended upon, to aid in the diffusion of knowledge and facilitate the exertions of individual industry than the proceeds of the existing Revenues levied within the Province.

Nevertheless, more than one half of the gross amount of all its Public Revenues has been applied, for several years past, in payment of Salaries, Emoluments, and Expenses of the Officers of the Civil Government, exclusive of the usual and indispensable special Appropriations, and our society is the greater, as these Salaries and Emoluments and Expenses have been greatly increased without the consent of the Legislature, and have in some instances been paid to persons who do not reside in the Province, or have rendered no service therefor, and in other cases the said Salaries and Emoluments and Expenses are excessive, when compared with the monies derived from real Estate in this Province, and the usual recompense obtained therein by individuals of talent, character,

and industry, equal to those possessed by the persons to whom the said Sums and Endowments are paid out of the Public Revenue of this Province; and lastly, in addition to those unnecessary and excessive Salaries and Expenses, your Majesty's Subjects of this Province are also burdened with various and unnecessary Fees paid to the Officers of the Civil Government, which are grievous to the Subject, diminishing the protection of the Laws, the benefits of Government, and the resources of the Country for its necessary wants.

We are convinced that besides the most perfect security of person and property, one of the most efficacious means of promoting the public prosperity, and preventing its decline, is to aid in the diffusion of useful knowledge, and the free exercise of individual industry and enterprise; and we have witnessed with satisfaction and gratitude that our Provincial Legislature has appropriated very large sums of money, for these objects since the close of the last war with the United States of America; but we have to perform the painful duty of humbly representing to Your Majesty, that the Monies thus appropriated and applied under the direction of the Provincial Executive, have not produced the beneficial results that were to be expected from a legal and judicious application of them, and have been fraudly or insufficiently accounted for.

It is with the utmost pain that we are compelled to represent to Your Majesty, that in this Province of the British Empire large Sums of Public Money of the Revenue levied within this Province, have been applied, year after year, by warrant of the Executive Government, without any appropriation by the Legislature of the Province, at a time when the necessary appropriations were rejected in the said Legislative Council; in payment of alleged Expenses of the Civil Government and other Expenses for which no services were rendered to the Province, or for new and increased Salaries and Allowances never recognised by the Legislature. Were we to refrain from complaining of such an enormous abuse, we should co-operate in consolidating our slavery, and we humbly implore Your Majesty's justice.

Alike negligent in the preservation of the public Monies and prodigal in their expenditure, the Executive Government of this Province has not only suffered the dissipation of large sums of money in the hands of the Receiver-General, and other Depositors thereof, then and still under its superintendence and control, but has appointed other Officers in the stead of these faulty Depositors, without taking any sufficient security for the future; and having advanced to different persons, large sums of money appropriated by the Legislature, the neglect of the Executive Government in this respect has been such, that several of those persons have not accounted at the time when they ought to have accounted, some have insufficiently accounted, or not rendered any account; and notwithstanding their negligence and default, some of these persons have been appointed by the Executive Government to offices of trust, honour, and profit, and we most humbly represent to Your Majesty that the Executive Government of the Province, by its negligent conduct in these respects, has exposed Your Majesty's subjects in this Province to heavy and grievous losses, dissipated and endangered the resources of the Province, and subjected its inhabitants to unnecessary burthens.

Your Majesty's faithful subjects in this Province have already forwarded but few representations to your Majesty's Government on the subject of the College and Estates to relate to the possession of the late Order of Jesuits in this Province, and while we deplore the unfavourable result of our past endeavours, we nevertheless continue to entertain the most perfect confidence, that so soon as the truth shall be fully known to your Majesty, justice will be rendered unto us, and we humbly represent, that as the said Order was never the proprietor of the said College and Estates, but merely the depository thereof, for the education of the youth of Canada, the extinction of that Order could not confer on it any Sovereign or other rights on that property then possessed by the said Order, and that Your Majesty succeeded in the possession of those estates, subject to their being applied to the education of the youth of this Province, conformably to their primitive destination; and it is with the most profound grief that we find ourselves still deprived of the benefits which were formerly derived from the actual application of that property to these objects under the direction of the Jesuits, while education is languishing amongst us for want of those resources.

The settlement of the Waste Lands in this Province, the importance of which has already, at various times, occupied the attention of your Majesty's Imperial Government, has been neglected in the most unaccountable manner by the Executive Government of the Province, so that large portions of the said Lands, granted or reserved by the Crown, have been long held, and continue to be held in the midst of, or in the immediate vicinity of actual settlements, without the owners or possessors thereof having been compelled to perform the duty of settlement upon which said lands were granted by the Crown, or any other duty in relation to the said lands, to the grievous burthen of the actual inhabitants, the discouragement of new settlers, and the obstruction of the general increase and prosperity of the Province.

But of all the abuses of which the inhabitants of this Province have to complain, the most affecting to your Petitioners is that during the prevalence of the aforementioned and various other abuses and grievances, false representations and repeated attempts have been made by divers Officers of the Provincial Executive, possessing the confidence of Your Majesty's Government, to obtain from Your Majesty's Government in England, and the Parliament of the United Kingdom, various alterations in the Constitution of the Government of this Province as established by Law, without the knowledge of Your Majesty's faithful Subjects in this Province, in contempt of their most sacred rights and dearest interests, and this at a time when a majority of Executive Councilors, Judges, and other Officers in the Legislative Council presided the Inhabitants of the Province then having an authorized Agent in England to watch over and support their interests, and enable them to be heard by the Government of the Mother Country, and it is under these circumstances that the Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, 1th Geo. IV, Cap. 6, reviving or continuing certain temporary Acts of the Provincial Legislature levying duties within this Province, and the Acts affecting the Tenure of Lands therein, were passed, without the knowledge of its inhabitants, to the subversion of their rights and dearest interests, and particularly without the knowledge or consent of the Proprietors more immediately interested in the last mentioned Acts. It is with the most affecting sensations that we have witnessed the intrigues which have been in operation to despoil Your Majesty's faithful subjects in this Province of the rights and benefits which were granted and guaranteed to us by the supreme authority of a powerful and generous nation, under the auspices of its most illustrious Citizens.

We most humbly implore Your Majesty to take this our petition to your most gracious consideration, to exercise your Royal Prerogative, so that Your Majesty's faithful subjects in this Province be relieved from the aforesaid abuses and grievances, and justice be done to the premises, that your Petitioners may be maintained and secured in the full enjoyment of the Constitution of Government, as established by the Act passed in the Thirty-first Year of the Reign of our late Sovereign, your Royal Father, without any alteration thereof whatsoever.

And Your Petitioners, as in Duty bound, will ever pray.

December, 1827.

N.B. The Petitions to the Lords and Commons are the same as the above, with only the necessary change of style.

RECAPITULATION OF SIGNATURES TO THE ABOVE PETITION.

County of Carletonville	3858
Do. of York	2139
Hartford	4394
Burchester	4157
Part of Buckinghamshire	1852
Dist. Hampshire	3346
Quebec	6570
Orleans	1018
Northumberland	2513
Total, District of Quebec	24,384
County of Warwick	4,991
Total	29,375

RESOLUTIONS on which the foregoing PETITION was founded.

At a Meeting of Electors of the City and Suburbs of Quebec, who approve of the conduct of the House of Assembly, called for the purpose of considering the expediency of submitting, by humble Petition to His Majesty and both Houses of Parliament, the present state of the Province, and the abuses and grievances which prevail therein, and praying for relief and justice; held at Malkin's Hotel, 13th December, 1827.

LOUIS ABRAHAM LAGUEN, Esq. in the Chair

It was Resolved. —

- 1st. That there was reason to hope, that in the Session of the Provincial Parliament, assembled on the 20th of November last for the despatch of public business, the state of the Province would have been improved, and the evils which weigh on its inhabitants remedied, or put in a course to be removed, and its peace, welfare and good government promoted.
- 2d. That the said Session has been interrupted by the refusal on the part of His Excellency the Governor in Chief to approve, according to parliamentary usage, the Speaker chosen and presented by the Assembly in the usual manner, and by the Proclamation of the 22d November proroguing the Provincial Parliament.
- 3d. That it is expedient, under the foregoing circumstances, to submit by humble petition to His Majesty and the two Houses of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, the present state of the Province, and the evils to which its inhabitants are exposed, in the hope that in the exercise of the Royal Prerogative, and the justice of Parliament, a remedy may be applied, whereby the Constitution of this Province as now established by Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, may be preserved and maintained unimpaired.
- 4th. That for several years past, the income of real Estate in this Province, the profits of trade and industry, and the wages of labour therein, have greatly diminished, and are still diminishing, with new and alarming features.
- 5th. That besides the ensuring to the subject the most perfect security of his person and property, the aiding and facilitating the diffusion of useful knowledge and the free exercise of industry and enterprise, are amongst the most efficient means of promoting the general prosperity and preventing its decline.
- 6th. That although large sums of public money have been appropriated by the Legislature of this Province, since the conclusion of the late war, in aid of education, and for facilitating industry, by opening and improving internal communications, and that these appropriations have been applied under the direction of the Provisional Executive, they have produced no adequate advantages, while many of the persons entrusted by the said Executive with the expenditure of the said monies, have tardily or insufficiently accounted for the same.
- 7th. That under the present circumstances of the Province, no taxes or new duties for the public uses thereof can, equitably, be imposed, and no dependence can be placed on any funds for aiding in the diffusion of education and facilitating the exertions of individual industry and enterprise, other than such funds as may be derived from the existing public revenue of the Province.
- 8th. That more than one half of the gross amount of the said public revenue has been applied for several years past to the payment of the salaries, emoluments, and expenses of the officers of the Civil Government of the Province, exclusive of the usual special appropriations.
- 9th. That the said salaries, emoluments, and expenses, have been greatly increased without the concurrence or consent of the Legislature for many years past, and are in several instances paid to absentees and persons who have rendered no service thereto to this Province; and in other instances, the said salaries, emoluments, and expenses are excessive, compared with the services rendered, and with the incomes derived from real estate, and the usual recompense obtained by individuals of talent, character, and industry, equal to those of the persons who hold the said salaries and emoluments.
- 10th. That besides the unnecessary and excessive salaries, emoluments, and expenses, fees increasing to a heavy and grievous amount, are paid by the subject to divers officers of Government, whereby individuals are burthened, the protection of the Law and the benefit of Government are lessened, and the resources of the country for its necessary wants diminished.
- 11th. That a majority of persons, chiefly dependent, for the support of themselves and their families, on the salaries and emoluments of public offices held during pleasure, have been placed in the Executive and Legislative Councils of this Province, several of whom have a direct individual interest in maintaining and increasing the said excessive salaries, fees, emoluments, and expenses, and perpetuating other abuses profitable to persons in office.
- 12th. That a majority in the said Legislative Council, chiefly consisting of executive councillors, judges, and other officers, so holding during pleasure, have, year after year, rejected, refused, or neglected to proceed upon various necessary Bills sent up by the Representative Assembly of the Province, for the remedy of abuses grievous to the subject, for aiding in the diffusion of education, for furthering the general convenience and improvement of the country, for increasing the security of persons and property, and promoting the common welfare and prosperity; particularly,
 - Various annual Bills, granting the necessary sums for all the expenses of the Civil Government of the Province, but regulating and setting limits to the expenditure.
 - For affording a legal recourse to the subject having claims against the Provincial Government.
 - For regulating certain fees and offices.
 - For enabling the inhabitants of the Towns to have a voice in the management of their local concerns, and a check on the expenditure of moneys levied upon them by assessment.
 - For facilitating the Administration of Justice throughout the Province, for qualifying and regulating the formation of Jurys, and introducing Jury trials in the country parts, and diminishing the expenses occasioned by the distance of suitors from the present seats of justice.
 - For providing a new and sufficient Gaol for the District of Montreal
 - For qualifying persons to serve in the office of Justice of the Peace.
 - For continuing the Acts regulating the Militia of the Province.
 - For increasing and apportioning the representation in the House of Assembly equally among the qualified Electors throughout the Province, particularly in the new Settlements and Townships.
 - For the security of the public moneys in the hands of His Majesty's Receiver-General in this Province.
 - For the independence of the Judges, by securing to them their present salaries, upon their being commissioned during good behaviour, and for providing a tribunal for the trial of Impeachments by the Assembly, so as to insure a just responsibility in high public officers within the Province.
 - For appointing and providing for an authorized Agent for the Province, to reside in England, and attend to its interests there.
- 13th. That the repeated rejection, the refusal or neglect to proceed upon these and other necessary Bills sent up by the Assembly to the Legislative Council, by a majority of the said Council formed of Executive Councillors, Judges, and Officers holding their Commissions during pleasure, must be held to be the act of the Executive Government of the Province, and, as such, constitutes a public grievance, destructive of the ends of the constitution of Government as by Law established in this Province.

14th. That large sums of money, of the proceeds of the Public Revenue levied in this Province, have been applied by warrant of the Executive Government, year after year, without any appropriation by the Legislative Body therein, (while the necessary appropriations were rejected in the said Legislative Council) for the payment of alleged expenses of the Civil Government, and other expenses, for which no services were rendered to the Province, or for new and increased salaries and allowances never recognized by the Legislature

15th. That large sums of money, of the proceeds of the Public Revenue raised within this Province, in the hands of the late Receiver-General, and other depositaries of public moneys, then and still under the control and superintendance of the Provincial Executive, have been dissipated, and other officers appointed in their stead, without any adequate securities being taken for the future, thereby occasioning and exposing the public to grievous losses, wasting or endangering the resources of the Province, and subjecting its inhabitants to unnecessary burthens

16th. That various other sums of money, appropriated by the Legislature, have been advanced to divers persons appointed by the Executive, many of whom have not accounted for such advances in due time, have insufficiently accounted, or not accounted in any shape whatsoever, as appears by the statement laid before the Assembly, on address, in the session of 1826, and that persons, then in default on the said statement, have been appointed to other situations of honour, trust, and profit

17th. That the College and Revenues of the Estates of the late Order of Jesuits in this Province, originally erected and formerly applied for the civil and religious Education of the Youth of this Province, have not been so applied for many years past, and are in no way accounted for to the Legislature or the inhabitants of this Province.

18th. That large portions of the Waste Lands, granted or reserved by the Crown in this Province, have been long held and continue to be held in the midst of or in the immediate vicinity of actual settlements, without the owners or possessors thereof having been compelled to perform the duty of settlement upon which such Lands were granted by the Crown, or any other duty in relation to the said Lands, to the grievous burthen of the actual Settlers, the hindrance of new Settlers, and the obstruction of the general increase and prosperity of the Province

19th. That during the prevalence of these and other abuses and grievances, false representations and attempts have been repeatedly made by divers officers of the Provincial Executive, to obtain from His Majesty's Government in England, and the Parliament of the United Kingdom, various alterations in the Constitution of the Government of this Province, as established by an Act of the British Parliament, prejudicial to the rights and interests of this Province, without their knowledge, and at a time when the said inhabitants were prevented by the said majority of Executive Councilors, Judges, and other Officers in the Legislative Council, from having an authorized Agent in England to attend to their interests and enable them to be heard by the Government of the Mother Country.

20th. That the revival or continuation by the act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (1 Geo. IV. chap. 6), of temporary duties imposed by Provincial acts were so obtained, as well as the acts affecting the tenure of Land in this Province, the whole prejudicial to the dearest rights and essential interests of the inhabitants of this Province, and without the knowledge or consent of the persons chiefly affected by the said acts

21st. That the aforementioned

Application of monies levied this Province, without appropriations by the Legislature thereof,

The said advances of money to persons who have not sufficiently accounted for the same

The said dissipation of public money, and appointment of persons to be intrusted with public monies without full security given,

The diversion of the revenues of the Estates of the late order of the Jesuits from purposes of Education of the Youth of this Province.

The inexecution of the conditions of the grants of the waste lands of the Crown, and the aforesaid attempts on the part of the officers of the Executive Government to obtain alterations in England of the Established Constitution and Laws of the Province, without the knowledge of the inhabitants generally, and without their having had an opportunity of being heard,

Are grievances dangerous to the peace, welfare, and good Government of this Province.

22d. That the prayer of the Petition to His Majesty be, that he would take the premises into his most gracious consideration; and so exercise his Royal Prerogative, that his subjects in this Province be relieved from the said abuses and grievances and that justice be done therein, that the inhabitants of this Province be secured in the full enjoyment of the Constitution of Government, as established by the act passed in the 31st year of the Reign of his late Royal Father of revered memory.

23d. That the prayer to both houses of Parliament be that they would take the premises into consideration, cause inquiry to be made and the petitioners to be heard, that justice may be done thereon, and the subject in this Province be secured in the full enjoyment of the Constitution of Government, as established by the Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, passed in the 31st year of the reign of his late Majesty, without any alteration thereof whatsoever.

24th. That a Committee of 15 Electors duly qualified by Law to vote for members of the assembly of this Province be appointed to draft and prepare petitions on the foregoing resolutions, with full power to take all the necessary steps for submitting them for the signature of the Electors generally, for causing the said petitions to be laid at the foot of the Throne and presented to the Lords and Commons, and also to give effect to and support the same by evidence.

25th. That this meeting will contribute and assist in procuring voluntary subscriptions to cover the necessary expenditure for the aforesaid purposes

26th. That Messrs. Amable Berthelot, Franois Blanchot, J. L. Borgia, J. B. E. Bacquet, Robert Blackiston, Michel Borne J. Bigaoutte, Michel Clouet, John Cannon, Joseph De rien, Etienne Defor, John Duxal, John Frazer, H. G. Forsyth, Pierre Faucher, Joseph Gagne, A. R. Hamel, H. S. Huot, Louis Lagueux, Joseph Lagate, pere, Louis Lagueux, fils, Jacques Leblond, Et. C. Laqueux, Jean Langesin, Ignace Legare, J. L. Mirett, Louis Massue, Joachim Mendore, John Neilson, Vallieres de St. Ral, Pierre Pelletier, Joseph Roy, Augt. Gauthier, and Louis Fortier, do compose the said Committee, and that once form a quorum, notices in writing of the time and place of meeting being previously left at the domicile of each of the said Committee.

27th. That the said Committee have power to add to their number, and be empowered to act in forwarding similar petitions from any other parts of this district, in cases where application may be made to them to that effect, and where contributions may have been made to the funds of the said Committee, in aid of the aforementioned expenditure.

28th. That Joseph Roy, Esquire, be Treasurer of the said Committee, and be held to account to the said Committee, and a meeting of Electors publicly called, and that all payments made by him be vouched by orders of the said Committee, attested by the signature of the Secretary

LOUIS A. LAFLUQUET, President,
H. S. HUOT, Secretary

At a Meeting of the Committee, Friday, 14th December, 1827

The following officers were appointed:—

- J. R. VALLEES DE ST. RAL, Esquire, President
- H. G. GEORGE FORSYTH, Esquire, } Vice Presidents,
- LOUIS ABRAHAM LAFLUQUET, Esquire, }
- Messrs H. S. HUOT and J. B. E. BACQUET, Secretaries.

H. S. HUOT, Secretary

PROVINCE OF LOWER CANADA

Petition of the Counties in the Districts of Montreal, and Three Rivers

[The Original of this Petition having been in French, it is given in preference to the English. The Petitions to the Lords and Commons are the same as the Petition to the King, with the necessary changes in the Style.]

A LA TRÈS EXCELLENTE MAJESTÉ DU ROI,

La Petition des soussignés fidèles et loyaux sujets de Votre Majesté résidens dans le Bas Canada

JUSTE PLAISE À VOTRE MAJESTÉ

DANS une partie éloignée des immenses domaines de Votre Majesté, il existe un peuple peu nombreux, il est vrai, mais fidèle et loyal: il joint avec orgueil et reconnaissance, sous la domination de Votre Majesté, du noble titre de Sujets Britanniques, qui lui a été conféré sous le règne de votre père de glorieuse mémoire, avec tous les droits qui font de ce titre un objet d'envie. Plus ce bienfait était grand, plus votre bon peuple du Bas-Canada a cru devoir montrer de reconnaissance. L'histoire est là pour déposer en notre faveur: laissons lui le soin de prouver que nous avons deux fois empêché ce pays de passer sous une domination étrangère.

Reconnaissons de l'estimable présent que nous a fait la mère-patrie en nous accordant notre constitution, convaincus qu'elle peut faire le bonheur de vos fidèles sujets en Canada, le premier de nos vœux est de la conserver intacte et de jouir librement des droits précieux qu'elle nous assure.

Parmi les droits inhérents au titre de Sujets Britanniques, celui de pétition est un des plus importants et des plus sacrés: il assure au plus pauvre individu le droit d'être entendu et l'espoir de la justice lors même qu'il se plaint des personnes les plus élevées en dignité. La voix de tout un peuple sera sans doute encore plus puissante, lorsqu'elle parviendra aux pieds de votre trône, et qu'elle révélera à Votre Majesté que l'oppression peut exister sous son Gouvernement paternel.

Éloignement où nous sommes du siège de l'Empire, et l'espoir d'un changement pour le mieux, nous ont engagés jusqu'à ce jour à un pénible silence; mais l'exces du mal nous force enfin à le rompre. Il ne convient pas au caractère de Sujet Britannique de souffrir servilement l'oppression: la patience dans ce cas n'est une vertu que pour des esclaves.

Nous venons déposer à vos pieds nos justes plaintes contre Son Excellence George Comte de DUMONTREUIL, Chargé par vous même de vous représenter dans votre Colonie, et de nous faire éprouver les bienfaits du Gouvernement de Votre Majesté: il s'en fait de beaucoup, malheureusement pour nous, qu'il ait rempli la haute mission dont vous l'avez gracieusement chargé pour le bonheur de vos fidèles Sujets Canadiens.

Il a, pendant son administration, commis différents actes arbitraires, tendant à aliéner l'affection des fidèles sujets de Votre Majesté, et subversifs du Gouvernement tel qu'établi par la loi dans cette Province.

Il a, par un moyen ou autrement, tiré des mains du Receveur-Général de cette Province, des sommes considérables sans y être autorisé par la loi.

Il a, volontairement et machinalement, tronqué, supprimé, gardé par-devers lui et soustrait à la connaissance du Parlement Provincial, divers documents et papiers publics nécessaires à la dépeche des affaires et au bon Gouvernement de cette Province, et ce au grand détriment du service public et au grand préjudice des Sujets de Votre Majesté en la dite Province.

Il a volontairement et en violation de son devoir envers son souverain et ses fidèles sujets en cette Province, conservé dans l'exercice de ses fonctions, JOHN CALDWELL, Ecuyer, et devant Receveur-Général, entre les mains duquel le revenu public de cette Province était versé, en vertu de la loi et des instructions royales, longtemps après que ce fonctionnaire public avait avoué sa malversation et déclaré son incapacité de satisfaire aux demandes faites contre lui pour le service public: et ce au grand détriment des habitans de cette Province, et au grand préjudice du service, et de la foi publique.

Il a en opposition à la pratique constante du Gouvernement de Votre Majesté, et en violation de son devoir comme administrateur du Gouvernement de cette Province, nommé JOHN HALL, Ecuyer, pour remplacer le dit John Caldwell, comme Receveur-Général, sans exiger ni requérir de lui les sûretés ordinaires requises pour assurer la due exécution des devoirs de cette place.

Il s'est en différents tems servi de son autorité comme Commandant en Chef, pour influencer, intimider les habitans de cette Province dans l'exercice de leurs droits civils et politiques.

Il a comme Commandant en Chef renvoyé et disgracié un grand nombre d'Officiers de Milice dans la Province, sans cause juste ou raison suffisante.

Il a sans cause, ou raison suffisante, arbitrairement et despotiquement, renvoyé et privé plusieurs Officiers civils des places de confiance et de responsabilité qu'ils occupaient, et ce au préjudice de ces Officiers et du service public.

Il a maintenu et conservé, conservé et maintenu en place plusieurs honnêtes hommes publics, après qu'il a été prouvé que leur

nomination à telles places ou que leur conduite dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions étaient préjudiciables au service de Votre Majesté et aux intérêts de ses Sujets dans cette Province.

Il a multiplié dans des temps de tranquillité, et sans aucune nécessité, des Cours Spéciales d'Oyer et Terminer, outre les termes réguliers et ordinaires des Cours Criminelles établies par la loi, imposant par là un fardeau considérable aux Sujets de Votre Majesté, et une dépense énorme à la Province.

Il a, par des prorogations et dissolution subites et violentes du Parlement Provincial, nu à aux intérêts Publics de cette Province, retardé ses progrès, empêché la possession d'actes utiles. Il a dans ses discours lors de telles prorogations, fausement accusé les représentans du peuple, afin de les décrier dans l'opinion de leurs constituans et dans la vue de créer auprès du Gouvernement de Votre Majesté des préjugés défavorables à la loyauté et au caractère des Sujets Canadiens de Votre Majesté. Il a toléré et permis que les Gazettes du Gouvernement publiques sous son autorité ou sous son contrôle, portassent journellement les accusations les plus fausses et les plus calomnieuses contre la Chambre d'Assemblée, ainsi que contre tout le peuple de cette Province.

Il a par le même moyen menacé le Pays d'exercer la Prérogative Royale d'une manière violente, despotique et désastreuse, c'est-à-dire, de dissoudre continuellement, ou selon l'expression insultante de ces menaces, de chasser le corps représentatif jusqu'à ce que les franc-tenanciers et les propriétaires se vissent obligés de choisir pour Représentans, non plus ceux qui auraient toute confiance, mais ceux qui seraient disposés à tout accorder à l'Exécutif et à lui sacrifier le droit qu'a le peuple de cette Province, agissant par ses Représentans, de déterminer quelle somme des deniers publics l'administration aura le droit de dépenser, et d'assurer l'emploi fidèle de ces deniers ou bien qu'il punirait la Province en rejetant les bills passés par les Représentans du peuple pour l'avantage général, jusqu'à ce qu'ils abandonnassent le droit de fixer et de contrôler la dépense; et que les Magistrats et les Juges du pays seraient, aussi bien que les bas Officiers, destinés des hautes et importantes places qu'ils occupent, et qui, dans l'intérêt public comme dans l'intérêt des particuliers, exigent l'indépendance et l'impartialité la plus absolue, s'ils n'étaient pas agréables à la présente administration.

Il a, conformément à la politique vindicative ainsi avouée par ses écrivains par lui employés, puni en effet le Pays, en ne donnant point la sanction Royale à cinq Bills d'appropriation pour aider les progrès et l'amélioration du Pays en 1820, auxquels Votre Majesté a bien voulu depuis donner sa sanction, et en permettant à ses Conseillers Exécutifs et autres personnes sous son contrôle et possédant des places durant plaisir de se servir de leur prépondérance dans le Conseil Législatif dont ils sont aussi membres, pour supporter cette politique vindicative et réiterer en 1827, tous les Bills d'appropriation pour l'avancement de la Province et pour des objets de charité qui avaient été passés annuellement depuis un grand nombre d'années.

Il a violé les franchises électives des habitans de cette Province, et essayant directement et indirectement d'influencer sur l'élection des Membres de la Chambre d'Assemblée de cette Province.

Il a enfin, par tous ces divers actes d'oppression, créés dans tout le Pays un sentiment d'alarme et de mécontentement, déprécié l'autorité du pouvoir judiciaire dans l'opinion publique, affaibli la confiance du peuple dans l'administration de la Justice, et inspiré dans toute la Province un sentiment insurmontable de méfiance, de soupçon et de dégoût contre son administration.

Nous osons donc supplier Votre Majesté de vouloir bien prendre en sa Royale considération les vexations qu'ont éprouvées vos fidèles sujets dans cette partie éloignée de vos domaines. Pressés sous le poids de tant d'actes d'oppression nous avons cru devoir supplier Votre Majesté de vouloir bien, pour l'intérêt de son service dans cette Colonie, et l'avantage de ses Sujets et résidens, rappeler pour toujours son Excellence le Gouverneur en Chef, comme ne pouvant plus jouir de la confiance, quoique dans cette Province, ni en administrer le Gouvernement avec honneur pour la Couronne ou avec avantage pour le peuple.

QU'IL PLAISE À VOTRE MAJESTÉ.

Privés comme nous le sommes maintenant, par la prorogation du Parlement Provincial, des services publics de nos Représentans, des services que nous avions droit d'attendre de leur zèle connu pour les intérêts de la Province, et de leur patriotisme éprouvé, nous sommes dans la nécessité de soumettre nous-mêmes à la bienveillante considération de Votre Majesté, quelques objets que nous estimons de la plus haute importance pour le bien être du Pays, objets qui tendent également à assurer le bonheur du peuple, et à rendre cette Colonie plus utile à l'Empire Britannique, ce qui ne peut qu'intéresser le cœur Royal de Votre Majesté, sous le double rapport de père de son peuple et de chef suprême d'un puissant empire.

L'éducation est le premier des biens qu'un père puisse donner à ses fils, le premier des biens qu'une législation éclairée puisse assurer aux peuples. En rendant justice aux efforts qui ont été faits dans ce Pays vers cet objet important, par plusieurs corps et par un grand nombre de particuliers, on ne peut cependant disconvenir que l'éducation publique n'est pas encouragée dans ce Pays en proportion de ses besoins. Et pourtant la Province n'étant pas dépourvue de moyens; la multiplication des Bois de France et les bienfaits de quelques particuliers n'ayant rien laissé à désirer à ce sujet. Des fondations vraiment royales tant par leur objet que par leur étendue, assurent à ce Pays des ressources suffisantes pour le tenir, et croissantes avec les besoins de la population. Depuis l'extinction de l'ordre des Jésuites en ce Pays, ses biens sont passés aux mains du Gouvernement de Votre Majesté. Votre Majesté peut seule les rendre à leur première, à leur bienfaisante destination. Nous l'en supplions très-humblement. Qu'il ne puisse pas être dit que cette Province a été privée sous le Gouvernement du Roi constitutionnel de la Grande-Bretagne, des bienfaits que le Roi absolu de la France lui avait conférés pour l'éducation de ses habitans.

Un des droits naturels, fondamentaux, inaliénables des Sujets Britanniques, un des titres de leur gloire et de leur sûreté, c'est le droit de se taxer eux-mêmes et de contribuer librement aux charges publiques selon leurs moyens. A ce titre naturel nous joignons encore les droits résultans de la loi écrite, des Actes du Parlement Impérial qui déclarent que l'Angleterre renonce à imposer des taxes dans les Colonies, et qui donnent à cette Province le droit de faire des lois pour sa tranquillité, son bonheur, et son bon Gouvernement. Nous supplions humblement Votre Majesté d'exercer notre légitimité, ou bien plutôt d'approuver la confiance en votre Justice et en celle du Parlement Impérial, qui nous engage à nous plaindre de ce que ces droits ont été lésés d'une manière grave par des Actes du Parlement Impérial. Nous faisons allusion surtout à l'acte de commerce du Canada, passé dans la troisième année du Règne de Votre Majesté, ch. 119, et à celui des tenures des terres, passé dans la sixième année du Règne de Votre Majesté, ch. 59, contre lequel nous avons déjà adressé par la voie de nos Représentans à Votre Majesté nos humbles réclamations. L'un établit directement des impôts dans cette Colonie, et les rend perpétuels sans la participation du Parlement Provincial; l'autre touche à des objets de législation intérieure sur lesquels nous croyons toutefois que la législature coloniale avait pleine juridiction.

Nous osons, Sire, mettre sous vos yeux les inestimables bienfaits que nous procure la constitution qui nous régit, si nous ne faisons tous nos efforts pour la conserver intacte. C'est prouver combien nous en sentons tout le prix.

La réclamation dans une seule et même personne de plusieurs places importantes dans ces Colonies et qui nous semblent incompatibles, est un obstacle vivement senti, un obstacle considérable au bon Gouvernement de cette Province. Nous croyons dans

ce Pays les places de Juges du Roi, du Roi, de Conseillers Exécutifs et Législatifs, passées par la même personne. Nous croyons humblement que ces hautes fonctions devraient être exercées isolément au lieu d'être cumulées, que les Juges honorés aux importantes fonctions de leur état ne devraient pas siéger dans les Conseils: que les Conseillers Législatifs ne devraient pas être admis au Conseil Exécutif, et vice versa qu'il serait convenable que les Juges fussent plus indépendans, supés seulement avec les autres grands fonctionnaires publics à un tribunal établi dans la Province pour juger des *impeachments*. Nous avons déjà fait des représentations et des démarches concernant ces différens objets par le moyen de nos représentans dans la Chambre d'Assemblée. Les mesures par eux proposées ont échoué dans les autres branches de la Législature. Nous supplions humblement Votre Majesté de vouloir bien prendre en sa considération royale les maux nombreux qui doivent inévitablement résulter de cette distribution impolitique, et peu sage de tous les pouvoirs du gouvernement afin qu'étant ces jugemens condamnés par Votre Majesté, il vous plaise ordonner à vos Ministres de donner des instructions au Gouvernement Colonial à ce sujet, de manière à autoriser la passation d'Actes par le Parlement Provincial, qui tendraient à corriger ces abus.

L'accroissement rapide de la population depuis la première démarcation des Comtés, rendant nécessaire un changement correspondant dans la représentation provinciale, notre Parlement jugera prudent, comme mesure préliminaire, de constater l'état actuel de la population, par un recensement qui devrait servir de base aux changements à faire dans la représentation. La Chambre d'Assemblée passa ensuite à plusieurs reprises un Bill pour augmenter le nombre des comtés et des Représentans. Ces Bills ont également échoué dans les autres branches de la législature.

Il est encore un objet qui intéresse vivement le peuple de cette Province, c'est la nomination d'un agent Provincial accrédité, auprès du Gouvernement de Votre Majesté, qui pourrait faire parvenir aux pieds du trône, l'expression de nos besoins, fournir aux Ministres de Votre Majesté des renseignements utiles et veiller à nos intérêts particuliers. Cette province a déjà plus d'une fois éprouvé le besoin d'un semblable agent. Nos Représentans n'ont pas encore pu réussir à obtenir la passation d'un acte à cet effet. Les accusations mal fondées portées par le Gouverneur en Chef contre la Chambre d'Assemblée, dans son discours de prorogation du dernier Parlement, auxquelles la Chambre n'a pas encore eu occasion de répondre, démontrent la nécessité d'un agent; le Gouverneur qui accuse la Chambre ne pouvant guère être le Canal de communication dont les accusés pussent se servir avec confiance pour défendre leur cause. Nous supplions humblement Votre Majesté de vouloir bien ordonner à vos Ministres de donner des instructions au Gouvernement Colonial, en vertu desquelles un Bill pour l'augmentation de la représentation puisse être sanctionné, ainsi qu'un Bill pour accorder à cette Province l'avantage dont jouissent la plupart des autres Colonies de Votre Majesté, celui d'avoir un agent Colonial, nommé et élu par le peuple de la Colonie, pour veiller à ses intérêts en Angleterre.

Le tout très-humblement soumis à la bienveillance et à la sagesse de Votre Majesté, par les fidèles et loyaux Sujets de Votre Majesté dans le Bas-Canada, les Petitionnaires sous-sigés qui comme il est de leur devoir ne cessent de prier

Bas Canada, Janvier, 1828.

RECAPITULATION OF SIGNATURES TO FEBRUARY 6, 1828.

County of Montreal	7753
Kent	2163
Huntingdon	5327
Leinster	6192
Surrey	3080
Bedford	1312
York	1199
Richelieu	8175
Elmham	2654
Total district of Montreal	46,885
Total district of Three Rivers	10,665
	57,550
District of Quebec	29,338
Total to both Petitions	86,888
Forwarded since, to 17th February, 1828.	
Districts of Montreal and Three Rivers, and District of Quebec	6,212
Grand Total	93,100

Chairmen of the several County Committees who have certified the Appointment of the Agents to the Petitioners, viz. Messrs. NELSON, VIGIER, AND CHAUVEUR, Members of the Assembly of Lower Canada.

FRAN. DESRIVIERES	Chairman of the Petitioners in the County of Montreal
FRAN. ANT. LA BOCQUE	Montreal
RENE DE LA BRUYERE	County of Kent
ANT. LE ROUX	County of Leinster
PIERRE AMIOT	County of Surrey
CHAS. ST. OERS	County of Richelieu
P. D. DEBARTZCH	Idem
BERTEL DE ROUVILLE	County of Bedford
FRANCOIS XAVIER MALHOTRE	County of Surrey
EDNAUF RAIZENNE	County of York
LOUIS ROY PORTELANCK	Montreal

District of Montreal Feb. 1828.

