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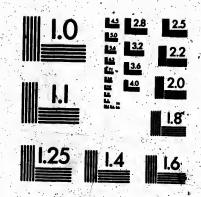
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containing a report of the proceedings lately had in contemplation of the erection of a New Free Church in Quebec and of other matters in connection.



TO THE MEMBERS OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.

Dear Friends,

In consequence of the ignorance which prevails among some of the members of St. John's Church and others in this City, respecting the true nature of the proceedings which have been had since the year 1845, in connection with the erection of a New Free Church in Quebec, and the obtaining of a new Minister; and in consequence of the extraordinary manner in which these proceedings have been from time to time exagnated and misrepresented by designing and interested sons, the following report has been prepared.

A number of the members of St. John's Church, ng convinced of the necessity of having in Quebec, a ger and more commodious Free Church than the isting one, and also of having additional Ministerial land instruction for the Free Church Presbyterians this City, and with a view to promote their own

spiritual interests, the prosperity of the Free Church cause, and the advancement of Christianity determined to endeavour by every lawful means to accomplish their desires, and to provide as well for their own necessities as for those of the Congregation to which they belong. After mature consideration it was decided, that the most desirable method of making the late Minister of St. John's Church acquainted with the matters thus contemplated, was to request a Meeting of the Session to be convened to consider and devise the best means to be adopted for promoting the Free Church cause and the erection of a New Church, and to report thereon to a meeting of the Congregation to be called for that purpose. With these objects in view, the first step in the matter was taken in the month of May, 1845. requisition of the above nature was prepared and the signatures of about 20 members of St. John's Church, obtained leaving the course to be pursued, and the measures to be proposed by each person as might be deemed The Meeting of Session was accordingly called from the Pulpit and held agreeably to appointment, but before proceeding to business, it was not constituted as usual and as was absolutely necessary. At that meeting, the Elders made the late Minister of St. John's acquainted with the views of the parties, and with the changes that were deemed necessary. The business of the meeting was eagaged in, but nothing definite was decided on, and as it was not constituted, there were no minutes taken so far as is known, and consequently could not be brought before the Presbytery, the next higher Church Court. The meeting of the Congregation was also called agreeably to the requisition, but in consequence of the Session having nothing definite to submit, and in consequence of the imputations of unworthy motives and conduct, then made against those who had obtained the signatures to the requisition, the meeting became confused, and after a short time dispersed. About that

time, it will be remembered, that the great fire at St. Roch took place, and a similar fire in St. John's Suburbs about a month afterwards. The effect of these disasters was to draw the time and attention of every one to provide relief for their suffering fellow citizens, and our case remained in that state until the City affairs revived in 1846.

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onhat In the month of December, 1846, about 12 or 15 of the members of St. John's Church formed themselves into a committee to take up the matter again. Consultations were had together from time to time, to ascertain what arrangements could be entered into with the late Minister of St. John's, so as to meet the views of all parties, in order to prevent any division of the Congregation. Various arrangements were spoken of and considered, and communicated privately, not officially, to the Minister, but all so far as we could learn, met with opposition, if not a decided rejection.

The propositions under consideration were the following: 1st. A collegiate charge, with the understanding that the public services of the Church should be conducted chiefly by the new Colleague, with such other detail as might be agreed on. 2nd. That the late Minister of St. John's be guaranteed his usual stipend, and to act as an overseer of the Missionary interests of the City and District of Quebec, and to remain in connection with his Congregation. 3rd. That should neither of the above propositions be acceded to, and should he decide to leave St. John's, (all which were to be altogether voluntary acts with him,) that in such case One Hundred Pounds per annum for five years would be guaranteed exclusive of the stipend he might receive from any new Congregation to which he might be called. 4th and Lastly. That the Committee would be open to any other arrangement that he might propose, and that the same would be entered into, if reasonable and practicable All along let it be remembered that misrepresentations and exaggerations of our proceedings were at every step sedulously circulated in order to frustrate our attempts to effect an arrangement, which certainly were not altogether unsuccessful. Ultimately the Committee directed, the Secretary to write to the Minister to ascertain if he would be pleased to meet with them at such time and place as he might appoint, for the purpose of consultation on the subject and of arriving at some definite conclusion. The Secretary accordingly did so and the following reply was received:

(COPY.)

QUEBEC, 7TH JANUARY, 1847.

My DEAR SIR,

I was glad to receive your communication of this day's date and I now express my readiness to meet with the gentlemen named in the resolution communicated "for consultation regarding the erection of a new Church in connection with the Presbyterian Church of Canada" to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock in the Session House. I would thus early have it for the purpose of bringing the matter referred to, in so far as I am concerned to a speedy termination.

I am,

My dear Sir,

Your very truly,

(Signed)

JOHN CLUGSTON,

Mr. J. S. Hossack.

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The day appointed for the Meeting being unfavourable, and some of the Committee absent, it was agreed to adjourn until the following Monday, when the parties, -composed of several of the Elders and of the principal supporters of the Church,-met, and the proceedings of the Committee were read in the presence of the Minister. The Chairman of the Committee then proceeded to the object of the Meeting by introducing the propositions that had occupied their attention. first proposition, was the Collegiate charge. The opinion of the Minister was asked, with respect to the working of such an arrangement. The reply was to the effect, that it was very doubtful. It had not been found to answer elsewhere, but, in order to preserve the integrity of the Congregation, their only course would be to erect a new Church, then to show the Church Courts the necessity of having a Colleague, and that two Ministers could be supported by the Congregation. The Chairman was then about to introduce the other propositions, but was evented by the Ministers declaring his intention to retire, and that he had said all he had to say, stating at the same time that if the Committee, who were self-constituted, and whom he could only recognize as such, had any proposition to make, to submit the same to him in writing, and it would receive his consideration.

Two members of the Committee urgently requested the Minister to remain, and confer in a friendly manner on the subject, which was not acceded to, he persisting in his first determination to retire, which he did.—The Committee finding that the object of the Meeting was thereby defeated, and that they had not received proper treatment, therefore decided, that it was useless to attempt to make any further arrangements with him on the subject, and that they would proceed to the Church Courts with an application to be

formed into a separate Congregation, unconnected with, and independent of, St. John's Church or its Minister—which was done.

At the Meeting of the Presbytery of Montreal, held in the month of February (1847) following, a memorial was accordingly presented, of which the following is the substance. That the memorialists were firmly attached to the principles of the Free Church, and to the doctrines set forth in her subordinate standards, that they were persuaded that there was ample room for the establishment of a second Congregation, adhering to these principles, that by reference to the census the number of Presbyterians was estimated at about 2,500, and that there was only accommodation in Quebec for about 1,400, leaving the remaining number unprovided for. That there were a great many, attached to the great principles for which the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, and in this Province, have been contending, and to which they have given their testimony, but who have either remained in connection with the establishment or have gone to other Churches, and who, the memorialists were convinced, would attach themselves to a second Church were it organized, whilst at the same time provision could also be made for the numerous seamen who frequent this Port during the summer months. That the formation of another Congregation would be the means under the Blessing of Almighty God, of making up these deficiencies and of disseminating more widely the principles of the Free Church, for which such great sacrifices have been made not long since, and would build up and edify those who believe. The Memorialists then set forth their prayer, that the Presbytery would take their Memorial into consideration, and adopt such measures as were necessary for the organization of a second Free Presbyterian Congregation in Quebec. The following was the deer

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on the 24th February, 1847. "The Presbytery approved of the object of the Petition, but before agreeing to grant its prayer, recommend that the Petitioners should enter into such an arrangement as shall secure to Mr. Cluston the amount of his present stipend provided the maximum sum required shall not exceed one hundred pounds per annum. The Presbytery deem this provision peculiarly necessary in consideration of the long faithful and efficient labours; of Mr. Cluston in Quebec, recommend also that the above arrangement be completed before the next meeting of Presbytery, and instruct the Clerk to furnish parties concerned with an extract of this minute."

The Committee, as was shewn before, after having failed in their attempt to make any arrangements with the late Minister of St. John's and after having been obliged to enter the Church Courts, which they were exceedingly desirous to avoid, and having all along expressed their determination not to assume any permanent annual responsibility, declined to comply with the recommendation of the Presbytery.—A second Memorial was accordingly forwarded to the Presbytery, of which the following is the substance :- That the Memorialists were gratified to know that the Presbytery had approved of the object of the Petition; although they were previously convinced that such would be the case, yet at the same time would with much humility and respect desire to express their regret that any delay should have been found necessary under those circumstances in carrying their approving decision into immediate execution. That whilst the Memorialists unhesitatingly admitted it to be the duty of all Christian men upon every occasion to aid according to their ability, in making suitable provision for the Ministers of the Gospel, and whilst they were also willing to grant their utmost

aid in supplementing the funds of St. John's Church, should it be necessary, yet after having taken the recommendation of the Presbytery into serious consideration, they were decidedly of opinion that it would be imprudent under existing circumstances to assume the responsibility of any definite amount. The grounds upon which they arrived at that conclusion, and the reasons for which they would respectfully decline entering into the arrangement recommended, and which the Memorialists humbly submitted were as follows:—

First. That the means of the Mémorialists with a very few exceptions were limited, that the demands upon them in establishing a new Congregation would be heavy and moreover that some of those who were expected to aid in the undertaking had withheld from

doing so.

Second. That in the opinion of the Memorialists it would be injudicious to impose any burden upon the new Congregation, as recommended, even if the Memorialists considered themselves empowered to do so, as it was expected that the majority of its members would be persons unconnected with St. John's Church, and upon whom no definite claim could be legitimately imposed, further that they would chiefly be persons occupying the middle ranks of society, in which case, such a burden, (which was considered would be unjust to impose upon them) would tend to retard and circumscribe the future usefulness of the Congregation in Missionary and other engagements.

Third. That if the recommendation of the Presbytery were acceded to, those who belonged to St. John's Church would be obliged to assume the obligation, in which case, the amount would be altogether disproportionate to their number, compared with the number of those who would continue to adhere to St. John's; that when it was also kept in view that St.

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st. st. John's Church was then entirely free of any debt or incumbrance, whilst the reverse would be the case with the New Church for several years to come. The Memorialists then prayed that their petition might be granted without reference to the Minister of St. John's Church.

The Presbytery at its Meeting on the 26th May, 1847, resumed consideration of First Memorial, at which time the Second Memorial was submitted, and the Presbytery finding that the Memorialists declined to enter into their recommendation, ultimately referred the whole case for a final decision by the Synod.

A Third Memorial was prepared and forwarded to the Synod, exposing the importance of having a new Church erected in Quebec, and that the same could not be done unless a new Minister was also got, that a collegiate charge was strongly opposed, and that the cause in Quebec had suffered by the past delay, that if their prayer was not granted the progress of the Free Church eause, and the extension of the Church of Christ would be greatly retarded and suffer severely, and that the interest of one person should not interfere with the progress and extension of the cause in Quebec, and that vigorous efforts were then being made by the opponents of the Free Church to strengthen their cause and to frustrate ours.

The Synod after considering the whole case, ultimately referred it back to the Presbytery of Montreal, at the same time adding four additional assessors to sit in Presbytery, and directing that a Meeting should be held in Quebec to hear parties, with full power to make a final settlement. Previous to that Meeting of Presbytery taking place, it is proper to state, that a Meeting of those, who wished the late Minister of St. John's to remain with them, was held in the Church on Friday evening, the 9th July, when it was resolved that

if the Minister should decide to remain with them, they would adhere to him, and support him to the best of their ability, or that if he should decide to leave them, they would contribute to the utmost of their ability to ensure his future comfort, and the same was communicated to him that evening.

On the 12th July, 1847, the meeting of Presbytery was held in Quebec within St. John's Church, intimation of which was given from the Pulpit, and the members of the Congregation were requested to attend. At the same time it was also intimated to the Congregation that their Minister intended to tender his resignation to the Presbytery, and that all those who were opposed to its being accepted should appear and object accordingly. The nature and particulars of the Meeting were as follows.

Copy of extract from proceedings of Meeting of Montreal Presbytery, held in Quebec:—

"At Quebec, on the 12th day of July, one thou"sand eight hundred and forty-seven, which day, with"in St. John's Church, at nine o'clock, A. M. The
"Presbytery of Montreal in connection with the Pres"byterian Church of Canada being met and constitu"ted.

"INTER ALIA.

"The Presbytery resumed consideration of the application for the erection of a second congregation in Quebec, and parties being called, compeared, for the Kirk Session of St. John's, Messrs. Haddan and Richardson, for the Congregation, Messrs. Petry, McDonald, Thom and others. No appearance was made for the Rev. Mr. Clugston, but the following letter was received.

"TO THE MODERATOR OF THE PRESBYTERY OF MONTREAL.

" Quebec, 12th July, 1847.

REVD. SIR,-

"With deep regret, I beg leave to demit into " the hands of the Presbytery my charge as Minister " of St. John's Church, and as I do so in some uncer-" tainty as to the line of duty I must crave the judg-" ment of the Brethren as to the propriety of the " step, and as to the force of the following reasons for adopting it. 1st.—Because the public interests of the " Church and the interests of St. John's Congregation " might be seriously affected by my remaining, in the " event of the formation of a second congregation being "sanctioned by the Presbytery. 2nd.—Because the " late movement on the part of some who belonged to "St. John's Congregation, has had a distressing influence on my comfort and usefulness. 3rd.—Because my bodily health has been so injured by the same cause, that it could not sustain a continuance of the " harassment to which I have been subjected.

" I am, Revd. Sir,
" Yours, faithfully,

(Signed,)

" JOHN CLUGSTON."

" It was moved, seconded, and unanimously agreed to, that, whereas, intimation was given from the Pulpit yesterday to the Congregation that such a letter should be produced and parties cited to appear for their interests the Presdytery proceed to the consideration of this document and to hear parties.

"Messrs. Haddan, Munn and Richardson, "Elders, stated that they entertained the most un-

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the tion for and try, was ving "feigned repect for Mr. Clugston, and would rejoice were he still retained in St. John's, but in all the circumstances they did not feel themselves—called upon

" to object to his resignation being a eceived.

"Messrs. Petry, McDonald, Thom, Harbeson, Gibb, Porter, Henry and others were heard for the Congregation, and some having complained that the Congregation had not enjoyed an opportunity of consulting on the steps it behoved them to take, the Presbytery, after the Original Memorial and other papers were read for the information of parties, resolved to adjourn for half an hour, that the Congregation may meet, and state more fully their views to the Presbytery, and this siderunt was closed with prayer.

EODEM DIE.

The Presbytery, again met in the same place " after an adjournment of half an hour and was consti-" tuted, compeared the same parties, when Mr. Haddan " stated on the part of the Session and Congregation that " in their Meeting which has been held during the recess " while all expressed their undivided respect for Mr. " Clugston, nineteen members of the Congregation with " a view to the comfort of Mr. Clugston, and the pros-" perity of the cause in Quebec, were of the opinion that "the acceptance of the resignation of Mr. Clugston " should not be opposed in the Presbytery, while sixteen " members and one seat holder were of the contrary " opinion, and thereafter all parties having concurred in " a unanimous application, that the Presbytery should in " the event of accepting Mr. Clugston's resignation, still " continue his pastoral relationship to St. John's Con-" gregation, until arrangements can be made for regular " supply, the Presbytery appoint Messrs. Robb and " Roger a Committee to wait on Mr. Clugston to ascer-" tain his mind on that subject and report to the Pres-" bytery, and these Brethren having, with the permis" sion of the Presbytery, retired and again returnedreported—that having conferred with Mr. Clugston " and given him a narrative of what had taken place, " Mr. Clugston declared his readiness to acquiesce in " any arrangement the Presbytery might come to. The following motion was then proposed, seconded

" and unanimously agreed to:

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"That the Presbytery having considered the communication from Mr. Clugston and heard the Congregation on the subject thereof, deeply sympathise " with their esteemed brother, Mr. Clugston, in the " trying situation in which he is placed, and while they " regret to learn that his bodily health has suffered by " the trials with which he has been visited, but taking " into consideration the whole circumstances of the case, " approve of the course that Mr. Clugston has adopted, " and agree to accept of his resignation of the charge of " the Congregation of St. John's Church. And in con-" sideration of his high Christian character and valuable " and faithful ministerial labours, during the seventeen years that he has presided over the spiritual interests " of the Congregation, the Presbytery would most earn-" estly and affectionately urge the Congregation to make " suitable provision for the support of Mr. Clugston and " his family, in the prospect of his retiring from this field " of labour. Further the Presbytery resolve that Mr. " Clugston's pastoral relationship to the Congregation " of St. John's Church should in compliance with the " unanimous request of the congregation continue in the " meantime to subsist till the first of May, or until ar-" rangements can be made by all parties with the con-" currence of the Presbytery for Mr. Clugston's removal.

"Thereupon Mr. J. S. Hossack and others ap-" peared for the Memorialists and stated on their behalf " that they were now prepared to fall from the prayer " of the Memorial and to co-operate with the Congre"gation of St. John's Church in building a new and more commodious place of worship in an advantageous locality in Quebec, and in the meantime to return to St. John's Church. The Presbytery find that the object for which this meeting has been held is now accomplished, and that it is unnecessary at present to take any further steps in the discharge of the duty imposed by the Synod on the Presbytery and Assessors.

"Extracted from the Records of the Presbytery
of Montreal in connection with the Presbyterian
Church of Canada in this and the six preceding pages
by

(Signed) "WILLIAM LEISHMAN, Presbytery Clerk."

Agreably to the recommendation of the Presbytery an Address was presented on the second of May instant to the Revd. J. Clugston accompanied with a purse containing Seven Hundred and Fifty Pounds currency, and thus the whole of the proceedings terminated.

In conclusion it may be observed that this report has been confined to a bare outline of facts, without comment by which either to attach blame to the conduct of others or to extenuate our own. It may also be added that several minor matters incidental to the proceedings have been omitted, as they were disposed of by the Church Courts at the proper time, and also that all matters of a personal nature have been omitted. Dear friends, I leave the report in your hands. My sole desire is that you may give it a candid and impartial perusal in order that you may become acquainted with the whole matter; then I will not fear the conclusion to which you may come respecting our proceedings in this unpleasant business. Finally let it be understood that this report has been prepared for your information by me no my own responsibility. J. S. HOSSACK.

Quebec, 20th May, 1848.

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