

PRIEST - RIDDEN QUEBEC

POWER OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE PROVINCE.

HOW THE POPULATION IS TAXED TO SUPPORT THE CLERGY, CONVENTS, AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

MONTREAL, Nov. 1.—Ever since the circumstances attending the Jesuits' estates legislation by the National Party of the province of Quebec by which \$500,000 from the public funds was conferred upon a secret order of the Church were made public, the keenest inquiry has been made into the workings and organization of that system which is able for its own endowment to lay hands upon the revenues of the country in defiance of the Constitution, which is alleged to guarantee equal rights to all. Attention has lately been centred upon the extent and ramifications of the operations of the Church, and every means has been used to obtain an exact estimate of its numerical and financial strength. Its own organs are endeavoring to show that the ecclesiastical establishment, with its tithes and fabrique taxes, is not a burden upon the people; that the *habitant* is living under an easy yoke, and that he regards these impositions with a large measure of satisfaction.

The same view was put forward by the ecclesiastics of France prior to the Revolution, when the population was 27,000,000. There were then, according to Taine and Delbos, in the Gallican Church 18 Archbishops and 113 Bishops; 28 religious communities, inhabiting 24,089 convents; 60,000 members of the regular clergy and 70,000 of the secular clergy. This gave 1 cleric to every 200 persons in those halcyon days of clericalism; but in Quebec now there is one 1 for every 130 persons, or for every 26 families. This conclusion is arrived at after a careful study of a variety of sources, but no outsider can ascertain the exact figures, for the obvious reason that the Church is at pains to keep them to herself; and though the Church collects her tithes and assessments and is allowed to handle, directly and indirectly, one-fifth of the revenue of the province, and to have absolute control of public education, it is not permitted to inquire what disposition is made of the money or to learn anything of her financial affairs.

While the anti-Jesuit controversy was at its height the Rev. Principal MacVicar made a computation of the value of the property held by the Church, and his figures are corroborated by a prominent French Canadian lawyer who has had much to do with clerical investments. From the most reliable sources it appears that the holdings of the Church and her orders, including sacred edifices, priests' houses, Bishops' residences, convents, seminaries, hospitals, the real estate attached to these structures, and in the form of farm, town, and city property, is worth in the aggregate between \$90,000,000 and \$110,000,000. By the same calculation it is estimated that the revenue from all sources, including tithes, fabrique taxes, sacramental fees, ordinary dues, pew rents, revenue from real property, from mortgages, and general investments amounts to not less than \$10,000,000, and probably more than \$12,000,000.

The property of the Church in France just before the Revolution amounted to four milliards of francs and the annual revenue to 200,000,000*fr.*, or \$41,000,000. There was a population of 27,000,000 to support the burden by paying \$1 50 a piece, while in Quebec it is borne by 1,000,000 persons, who are obliged to pay from \$10 to \$12 each. It is impossible to obtain by ordinary methods an exact estimate of the numerical strength of the Church, but the following statement, as far as it goes, is a correct enumeration:

The priesthood is divided into two classes; in one are included the secular or parish clergy, who are subordinate to the Bishops and Archbishops; in the other are the members of orders who owe allegiance only to their superior, and through him to the Pope. Over them the Bishops have no control. Indeed, in Quebec the Bishops are comparatively unimportant, for they exercise no functions whatever. Where the orders are established one order is adapted for parish work, as the Sulpicians, and by the mildness of their rule they are usually in high regard among their people. For instance, the Church of Notre Dame in Montreal, one of the finest edifices in America, is merely a parish church, and not a cathedral, for it contains no *cathedra*, or Bishop's chair, and the Bishops have no control over its adherents. The Trappists are more adapted for frontier work and for undertaking the pioneer work of the Church. The power of the Church in Quebec rests in the orders and not among the secular clergy, as in the United States. These orders differ from each other merely in discipline. The Sulpicians are comparatively *bon vivants*, hale fellows, going in and out among their flock, while the Trappists are very severe in their lives. They rise at 2 o'clock, after sleeping on an uncovered board, and spend twelve hours of the day in devotional exercises, and six hours in manual labor, usually in the fields; and when the brethren meet they have little or no conversation with each other, except the usual formula as they pass, *Memento mori*—Remember death. The Jesuits are less strict and devote their lives to the political work of the Church. Each order has its own specialty and does the work to which it is best suited. Of male communities and orders in Quebec there are fifteen, including 1,267 members divided, as follows:

Company of St. Sulpice, confined to Montreal and neighboring parishes; 76 members.
Brothers of the Christian Schools, with the staff at the mother school at Maisonneuve, near Montreal, the succursales or branches in the dioceses of Montreal, Quebec, Three Rivers, Nicolet, and Ottawa, numbering 328.
Oblats of Mary the Immaculate, or O. M. I., staff at headquarters in Montreal, with members in the dioceses of Quebec, Ottawa, in the Prefecture of the Gulf, and the vicariat of Pontiac, to the number of 66. The returns of this order, however, are imperfect. In most cases only the name of the Superior is given.
Company of Jesus or the Jesuits, with 230 members in Canada, of whom 80 appear to be stationed in Lower Canada.
Catechists de Saint Viateur, with a staff at headquarters in Joliette and members in Montreal, Quebec, St. Hyacinthe, and Nicolet to the number of 223.
Brothers of the Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, with headquarters in Montreal and a branch at Longue Point, 53 in all.
Congregation of the Holy Cross.—Staff headquarters at Côte-des-Neiges; members in Montreal and Hyacinthe, making a total of 146.
Brothers of the Sacred Heart.—Athabaskaville is the headquarters, but the returns are imperfect and place the members at 114, though there are succursales in the diocese of Nicolet, St. Hyacinthe, Sherbrooke, Quebec, and Three Rivers.
Dominicans.—Only placed at 11 in the dioceses of St. Hyacinthe and Ottawa.
Redemptorists.—In Quebec 20, in Montreal 18; or a total of 38.
Trappists.—Thirty-seven at Oka.
Company of Mary in the diocese of Ottawa and in missions, 18.
Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul.—Only placed at 5.
Frères Maristes.—In the diocese of St. Hyacinthe, 24; in Montreal, 22; in Quebec, 6; or 52 in all.
Brothers of Christian.—At Chambly, Verchères and other places, 22.
This gives a total of 1,267.

The female religious communities, including Superiors, professed nuns, novices, and postulates, number 27, with 4,723 members. The following are the orders:

Ursulines.—Staff at headquarters, Quebec, numbering 95; in the diocese of Chicoutimi, 18; in Sherbrooke, 11. Total, 124.
Congregation de Notre Dame.—Staff at headquarters, Villa Maria, numbering 12; in the diocese of Montreal, 476 religieuses, with 33 Superiors; in the diocese of Quebec, 119 religieuses with 15 Superiors; in Chicoutimi, 6; in St. Hyacinthe, 36; in Three Rivers, 13; in Nicolet, 12; in Sherbrooke, 30; in Ottawa, 17, giving a total of 769.
Hospitalières de St. Joseph.—At headquarters, Montreal, 91; in the diocese of Nicolet, 15. Total, 106.
Gray Nuns, or Sœurs de l'Hôpital Général de Montreal.—In Montreal and in Succursales, 341.
Ursuline Monastery, at Three Rivers, 75.
Filles de la Charité de St. Hyacinthe.—At headquarters in Montreal, 92; in the diocese of St. Hyacinthe, 62; in Sherbrooke, 18. Total, 172.
Religieuses of the Society of the Sacred Heart.—In Montreal, 96.
Sœurs de la Charité de la Providence, with headquarters in Montreal.—One hundred and fifty-nine in the diocese of Montreal, 336 in the diocese of Three Rivers, 23 in St. Hyacinthe, giving a total of 527.
Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary.—In Longueuil, 6; in Montreal, 287; in St. Hyacinthe, 34. Total, 327.
Religieuses of Notre Dame du Charité du Bon Pasteur.—At headquarters in Montreal, 113; at the Succursales, 90. Total, 203.
Sœurs Grises of the Cross.—In Ottawa, 5; in Three

Rivers, 7; in the diocese of Ottawa, 110; in the Vicariate of Pontiac, 33; in the diocese of Nicolet, 10. Total, 165.

Sœurs Marianites of the Holy Cross.—In St. Laurent Jacques Cartier, 7; in the Diocese of Montreal, 72; in the Diocese of Sherbrooke, 5; in the Vicariate of Pontiac, 6; in the Diocese of Ottawa, 8. Total, 98.

Sœurs de la Misericordie.—In Montreal, 93; in Ottawa, 26. Total, 119.

Hospices des Sœurs de la Charité.—At the mother house, Quebec, 5; in the diocese of Quebec, 245; in the diocese of Chicoutimi, 6; in the Prefecture of the Gulf, 5. Total, 261.

Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.—At headquarters at Quebec, 6; in the diocese of Quebec, 82; in the diocese of Three Rivers, 6; in the diocese of Rimouski, 5; in the diocese of Chicoutimi, 9. Total, 103.

Sisters of St. Anna.—Returns are imperfect, and only placed at 212.

Sisters of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin.—At headquarters at Nicolet, and at Three Rivers, and Sherbrooke, 123 religieuses, 13 novices, 18 postulates. Total, 154.

Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin.—At headquarters at St. Hyacinthe, at missions in that diocese, and in the dioceses of Nicolet and Sherbrooke, 222.

Religieuses de Jésus-Marie.—At headquarters at Sillery, near Quebec, 74; in the dioceses of Rimouski and Quebec, 66. Total, 140.

Sœurs Adoratrices of the Precious Blood.—At the mother house in St. Hyacinthe in the Diocese of Montreal, and in the Diocese of Ottawa, 94.

Institut de Notre Dame de Charité de Refuge.—At headquarters at Ottawa, 62.

Sisters of Charity of Rimouski.—Twenty-seven; at Succursales, 14; total, 41.

Le Carmel de Ste. Therese.—At headquarters at Hochelaga, 26.

Sisters of the Little Schools of Rimouski.—At Rimouski and at missions in that diocese, 35.

Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Hyacinthe.—At St. Hyacinthe and at missions, 36.

Sœurs de la Sagesse.—In the Diocese of Ottawa, 11.

Sœurs Grises of Nicolet.—Separate community, 4.

There are, according to the above statement, in Quebec 27 religious communities of females with 4,723 professed nuns, novices, and postulates. This brings the whole number of male and female communities to 42, with a membership of 5,900, as far as returns can be obtained, but it is certain the number is much greater. Most of these orders and communities are in charge of convents, hospitals, asylums, colleges, seminaries, and clerical academies, of which the following is a return as complete as can be made.

Diocese.	Convents.	Hospitals.	Seminaries, &c.
Quebec.....	65	11	4
Three Rivers.....	11	3	4
Rimouski.....	6	1	2
Chicoutimi.....	5	1	2
Nicolet.....	18	3	2
Montreal.....	84	27	9
St. Hyacinthe.....	21	7	14
Sherbrooke.....	1	1	2
Ottawa.....	12	2	2
Pontiac.....	13	3	—
Total.....	225	62	41

In the second class came the parish clergy, who have no connection with the orders, and it may be well to give their numbers with the churches which they own:

Diocese.	Priests.	Churches.
Quebec.....	358	184
Three Rivers.....	70	33
Rimouski.....	92	95
Chicoutimi.....	55	44
Nicolet.....	85	50
Prefecture of the Gulf.....	11	23
Montreal.....	553	310
Sherbrooke.....	69	55
Ottawa.....	81	89
Vicariat of Pontiac.....	29	14
St. Hyacinthe.....	156	—
Total.....	1,559	902

In the Diocese of St. Hyacinthe there are 68 parishes, which will give about 100 churches and bring the number of church edifices in the Province up to 1,000. The total number of parishes, exclusive of those in the diocese of Ottawa, is 671, and for that district no returns are available. Add now the number of parish priests, 1,559; the regular clergy in orders, 1,267; the members of the female communities, 6,250, and a total is obtained of 9,076 persons directly engaged in the service of the Church, without including the Bishops, and depending for the maintenance of themselves and their institutions upon the Roman Catholic population of the Province. This gives 1 cleric for every 130 persons, when in France even in the pre-revolutionary days it never exceeded 1 for 200. According to the same proportion it would require to look after the spiritual interests of the people of the United States 461,538 members of the clergy. With such an army it would be strange if the Catholic Church did not make its influence felt in the political life of Canada.