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Maine's Corporation Sole Controversy

by

Michael Guignard

It is fashionable today to describe America's white "ethnics" as a monolithic group even though conflict within that "group" has far from disappeared. (1) In fact, interethnic conflict in America has usually been under-emphasized; historians have focused primarily on contention between third and fourth generation Americans and new immigrants. Yet discord among the various ethnic communities, based on social, economic or religious issues, was a common occurrence.

Conflict in the religious sphere was due primarily to the fact that the predominantly Irish-American Catholic Church hierarchy was strongly assimilationist. (2) Faced with anti-papist nativism because of the alleged foreignness of Catholicism, the Irish hierarchy attempted to Americanize the Church. This policy was resisted by other Catholic immigrant groups who considered their native language and culture an integral part of their religious life. The French-Canadians, in particular, fervently believed that a loss of one's

language and culture would inevitably entail a loss of one's faith. (3) Consequently, religious conflict between this group and the Irish clergy was rife. (4)

The Franco-Americans won their first victory in a long struggle in 1870 when the Catholic hierarchy in New England decided on the principle that the parish priest would use the language spoken by the majority of the congregation. But contention continued as some pastors refused to abide by this guideline. The Irish clergy's persistent Americanization efforts led the French-Americans and other groups to appeal their case to Rome. The Pope ruled that ethnic parishes were to be retained for first generation immigrants. (5)

Despite Rome's pronouncements, however, the Irish hierarchy continued in their efforts to Americanize the Church and even "labored for years under the threat of heresy" when they disregarded a papal bull condemning their policies. (6) Constantly appealing to Rome and pointing to non-assimilationist clergy in other countries, Franco-Americans vigorously continued to resist the Irish-American clergy.

As one would expect, most major controversies between the two groups centered around the failure of the Irish hierarchy to establish Franco-American ethnic parishes and to appoint French priests to predominantly French speaking parishes. The French wanted national parishes composed of one ethnic group only. Instead Irish bishops established territorial parishes which administered to all Catholics within a certain district. The immediate issues of the "Corporation Sole" controversy focused on ownership of parish property. The underlying cause of this conflict, however, was Franco-American abhorrence of the assimilationist Irish clergy.

The term "Corporation Sole" referred to an 1887 law which made the bishop of Portland sole owner of all parish property in his diocese. Church authorities had presented the bill in Augusta in an effort to better establish the Church's financial credit. The old system of individual parish ownership had proven unsatisfactory as a number of parishes found themselves hopelessly bankrupt and unable to borrow

additional funds.

Franco-American distaste for the "Corporation Sole" resulted from their experience in Quebec. There, each parish contained a system known as the *fabriques*; these consisted of a pastor and laymen, elected by the congregation, who owned parish property and supervised its maintenance. (7) The Franco-Americans, who in Quebec had had a voice in their parish schools, were also disturbed when these schools were put under more centralized control by Maine diocesan authorities in 1897.

Nevertheless, the fact that there was no opposition to the "Corporation Sole" among the French until 1907 shows that they were not particularly concerned over who owned parish property. This peaceful period can be traced to James Healy, bishop of Portland 1875-1901, who tempered the American hierarchy's assimilationist outlook. He reserved "special affection" for the French, mastered their language, and lavished a great deal of attention and money on their parishes. (8)

After his death, Bishop Healy was succeeded by William O'Connell. No organized opposition developed against O'Connell although there was some bitterness among the French that one of their own had not been appointed; Bishop O'Connell left the diocese in 1906 before French dislike for him had crystalized. By 1904, however, several of his policies had drawn sharp criticism from Franco-Americans. (9)

The succession of Louis Walsh to the bishopric of Portland in 1906 signals the beginning of the "Corporation Sole" controversy. Franco-Americans had vociferously advocated the appointment of a French bishop and even sent a delegation to Rome to plead their case, after one French priest had hired a canonist from Rome "to investigate the possibility of appointing a French-Canadian Bishop to the diocese. (10) *Le Messager*, embittered by Walsh's selection, counselled its readers that the French had simply lost a battle and that the struggle was just beginning. (11) To make matters worse, Walsh now had to deal with the *Comité Permanent de la Cause Nationale du Maine*. Established by a

Franco-American convention in March, 1906, several months before Walsh became bishop, the *Comité's* goals were the establishment of French ethnic parishes and schools. (12) Bishop Walsh also inherited the ill-will accumulated during O'Connell's rule.

Bishop Walsh, from all indications, was a strongly assimilationist cleric. He had incurred the enmity of French-Americans while serving as director of the Boston archdiocesan school system. Soon after becoming bishop of Portland, Walsh "began to implement his assimilationist aims." His Americanization efforts even brought him into conflict with the small Maine Catholic Slovak community. (13)

In a recent article, Kenneth Woodbury has tried to minimize Bishop Walsh's assimilationist bias:

The Reverend Louis S. Walsh...created fourteen French-Canadian parishes with the assignment of French Canadian priests. There is no record of any pastor other than one of French-Canadian descent being assigned to a French-Canadian parish. (14)

When one considers that Bishop Walsh created thirty-six parishes and that almost eighty percent of his flock was Franco-American, (15) the above passage loses some of its significance. The fact that no Irish pastors were ever appointed to a French church is misleading because in several instances, they were appointed to predominantly French parishes not classified as ethnic. (16) A number of Irish curates were also assigned to predominantly French parishes, such as Sacred Heart in Waterville and St. Ignatius in Sanford. (17) Moreover, Bishop Walsh made no effort to transfer Irish pastors who had previously been appointed to French parishes. (18)

Kenneth Woodbury makes a special effort to point out that the Bishop took pains to voluntarily appoint French priests to fifty percent of his diocesan council seats. Woodbury does not tell us that Walsh appointed an Irish vicar-general and glosses over the

fact that the council had no decision making power. In fact, he admits that the role of council was a point of contention between the two groups. (19)

Bishop Walsh's diary and letters indicate his strong preference for English language religious ceremonies. His diary is full of newspaper clippings describing his participation in St. Patrick's Day, Holy Name Society, and Knights of Columbus ceremonies. Never once does Walsh hint that he ever participated in festivities honoring *St. Jean Baptiste*, the French-Canadian patron saint, or in ceremonies of French societies. When he was present at the dedication of a French church, however, he did speak in both languages.

The first crisis of Walsh's rule came late in 1906. (20) In 1905, Bishop O'Connell had decided to split St. Francis de Sales parish in Waterville to form the non-ethnic Sacred Heart parish. O'Connell had appointed an Irish pastor to the new parish although French parishioners outnumbered the Irish six to one. The French refused to worship in the new parish and were supported by the ethnic church's pastor. In the face of opposition, O'Connell reversed his decision and allowed the French to worship at St. Francis de Sales again.

Bishop Walsh decided to follow O'Connell's original plan. When the three Franco-American priests on the diocesan council accused him of changing O'Connell's policy, Walsh denied it emphatically. He was insulted by the opposition of Fathers Felix Trudel, Pierre Dupont and Narcisse Charland and angered by their alleged mendacity. He asked the apostolic delegate if Charland was the bishop of Waterville, and characterized his course as "unreasonable" and "irreverent" and his statements "false" and "absurd". In a letter to Charland, Walsh told him to force his parishioners to go to the Irish church, expressed his dismay at Charland's attempt to communicate directly with the apostolic delegate and blamed the whole controversy on him. (21) The French press saw the incident as another attempt by the Irish to Saxonize their children. (22)

In his first meeting with the *Comité Permanent* Walsh stated plainly that he would not tolerate any insubordination within his diocese. He refused to recognize the group and criticized the French for their impudence in appointing such a body. He warned them not to interfere in any parish affairs. (23)

On June 24, 1907, three weeks after their meeting with Walsh, the Franco-Americans held a second convention. Unable to have a Frenchman appointed bishop and faced with Walsh's adamant position, Franco-Americans at the Waterville convention voiced anti-clerical sentiments. (24) The convention shocked French priests by its hostility toward diocesan authorities and marked the end of clerical participation in Franco-American conventions. Even a small number of laity found the proceedings too extreme. (25) The convention reiterated the Franco-American belief that their language fortified their faith. The delegates severely criticized Walsh and asked for lay control of church property. When a Franco-American became bishop of the Manchester, New Hampshire, diocese in 1907, French dissatisfaction in Maine rose sharply.

The Brunswick Convention of October, 1909, brought the first systematic attack on the "Corporation Sole". (26) Franco-American opposition to the law was predicated on the fact that title to churches and schools they had built belonged, not to them, but to an Irish bishop. They believed that Walsh was draining French parishes of funds to further assimilationist goals. Led by Godfroy Dupré, the delegates decided to introduce a bill to the legislature to change the "Corporation Sole" law. (26)

Soon after this convention, Bishop Walsh travelled to Brunswick to hear French-Canadian grievances. His conciliatory gesture was not reciprocated; a French-Canadian crowd hurling insults at the Bishop attempted to enter the presbytery where Walsh was staying "causing the Bishop to secure the doors". Shaken by such shocking behavior, Walsh became less inclined to compromise with the increasingly adamant French-Canadians. The French press lauded the incident and advocated similar actions in the future. (27)

After 1906 the French press became increasingly critical of the Bishop, accusing him of closing French schools and orphanages and of preventing French national societies from entering church in full regalia. In Walsh's defense, these charges, while true, must be qualified. Walsh was an excellent administrator who abhorred inefficiency. The schools and orphanages which he closed he considered too small and "miserably inadequate". (28) He simply wished to consolidate these institutions, but such action spelled doom for ethnic institutions. Walsh's sense of duty overrode his distaste for the hostile French reaction that he knew would ensue. His stand on national societies was consistent with the 1889 Congress of Baltimore, (29) although it was impolitic to apply that restriction.

Walsh's passion for confidentiality also hurt his reputation among the French. For instance, the superior of the Good Shepherd sisters in Biddeford told the Bishop in 1907 that their convent would never be completed unless the parish bought it from the Quebec order. (30) When Walsh suggested such a move two years later, he was accused of wishing to evict the French nuns. (31) Many other false charges were viciously hurled at Walsh by Franco-American extremists.

The French press constantly denounced the Bishop for not appointing French priests to French parishes. It printed letters from irate Franco-Americans who could no longer tolerate English sermons. (32) *La Justice* often cited a church with a large French congregation and advocated the appointment of a French priest. (33) Both papers ran the letters of Godfroy Dupré vigorously attacking Walsh. The papers also printed each other's editorials and often ran the same news items. The more radical *Le Messenger* began to mock the Bishop as "His Excellency" and denounced him for refusing to meet with the *Comité*. (34) The Lewiston paper often asserted that one need not know English to enter heaven and advocated the creation of a separate ethnic diocese for Maine's French. (35)

Not all of Maine's French shared the press' sentiments, however. Westbrook's Father Dugré supported Walsh and was denounced by *Le Messenger*. (36) The Do-

minican Fathers of St. Peter - St. Paul's parish in Lewiston founded the *Courier du Maine* in 1906 to support the Bishop. This order was considered assimilationist by Franco-American leaders who thus urged French parishioners to cease contributing to that church's building fund.

Bishop Walsh kept informed of the French press' attacks. As early as 1907, he ordered a priest to warn *Le Messager's* editor about his scandalous articles. (37) He rejoiced upon hearing that the apostolic delegate had refused to give the pope's blessing to the "agitators" in Brunswick and their convention. Walsh continually criticized the Reverends Charland and Dupont and warned them not to associate with Dr. Jean-Louis Fortier whom he considered a "firebrand" for his "seditious and schismatical" statements. (38)

Legislative hearings on the *Comité's* bill began on March 7, 1911. Defended by Dupré, the bill provided for the establishment of a lay council to administer church property. Dupré presented petitions to the legislature signed by 7,500 Franco-Americans from twenty cities and asserted that the *Comité's* efforts were supported by a large majority of French ethnics.

Dupré's arguments were distinctly anti-clerical. He accused diocesan officials of living in luxury while the French labored in poverty. He even intimated that some pastors were stealing parish funds. Dupré also addressed himself to the legislature's reluctance to interfere in church affairs by reminding them that they had meddled in 1887. Ending his oration, Dupré urged the legislature to end the Bishop's "organized tyranny" and maintained that Maine had no room for a king. (39) Although the French were irked by Walsh's method of taking money out of parish funds when his collection quotas were not met, their objections were based on anti-Irish feeling, not anti-clericalism. Dupré's sentiments were shared by few Franco-Americans.

The Bishop's lawyers argued that they were not assembled to hear French grievances but to examine the merits of the "Corporation Sole" law. Several bankers testified against the bill stressing that the Church's

good credit rating would be endangered by its passage.

Bishop Walsh testified that only a few Franco-Americans opposed the "Corporation Sole". He defended his priests against Dupré's accusations, and amid applause, asserted that never a cent had been misappropriated by the clergy. He described how the "Corporation Sole" allowed him to maintain small churches in rural areas that could not support themselves and maintained that French parishes were the chief beneficiary of the "Corporation Sole". (40)

Even though the French in Maine were indeed opposed to the "Corporation Sole", Walsh's statement that ethnic parishes benefitted from the law was probably valid. Franco-American parishes were never notable for their good administration. Schools, orphanages, cemeteries, convents, and novitiates were often in debt; when the ethnic parish of St. Joseph's in Biddeford was being constructed, Bishop Healy had to supply funds to finish its construction. (41) Dupré and his cohorts never mentioned this.

While testifying, Walsh was a model of composure and equanimity. His diary reveals his true feelings, however. He was angered by his antagonists' attacks, and for good reason, as we have seen from Dupré's comments. He considered his enemies "agitators" whose "vicious, malicious attacks" on the Church and probity of the clergy deserved excommunication. (42) He felt that the *Comité* was appealing to "popular prejudices" and denounced Dupré's vicious attack on the clergy. (43) He mistakenly believed that most Franco-Americans supported the "Corporation Sole". (44)

Throughout the agitation Walsh was confident that the law would be retained. (45) It was, and by a great majority. His main regrets were that the hearings were made public (46) and that the press had exaggerated the whole affair. (47)

An interesting aspect of Walsh's behavior is the amount of pressure he exerted on the French clergy to publicly renounce *La Cause Nationale* and his general attitude toward them. As late as 1911, he continued

to blame Charland for the excesses of the conflict.(48) He constantly urged Dupont to castigate his good friend, the editor of *La Justice*. (49) In his meetings with Dupont and Charland, Walsh would criticize them for appealing the Franco-American cause directly to Rome. (50) He was suspicious of both priests throughout the controversy, although it was obvious by mid-1911 that they too were concerned about the *Comité's* excesses. His constant pressure against several French priests worsened relations between the French community and the diocese.

In 1911 the French press became openly anti-clerical. It called Walsh a barbarous assimilator and accused him of bribing legislators to vote against their bill. (51) *Le Messager* called the Bishop a tyrant, a despot, and a Francophobe, and accused him of trying to trick the pope concerning the merits of their bill. The press urged the French faithful to close their pocketbooks to diocesan collections. (52) *Le Messager* maintained that their schools were being converted into Irish institutions and that Irish priests were constantly insulting French parishioners. (53)

Le Messager and *La Justice* also provided forums for Dupré's unrelenting criticism of French clergy who attacked the *Comité*. Dupré and the papers held special contempt for the Oblates who, while preaching retreats in the diocese, severely criticized the *Comité* and the French people. (54)

Despite these attacks on the clergy, the French directly involved in the movement still maintained that they were loyal Catholics bearing allegiance to Rome. They stressed that their petition to the legislature had questioned only the bishop's civil authority, not his spiritual hegemony. They constantly pointed out that the "Corporation Sole" was not a universal manner of holding church property. (55)

Because of the French press' scandalous statements, Walsh asked the diocesan censor to check to see if the Church should publicly condemn these newspapers. Certainly the Bishop had cause for his action. But to anyone familiar with *La Justice* and *Le Messager* such

a step seemed particularly paradoxical, for both papers had always been fervently Catholic. In fact the two French editors cared so much for the faith of Franco-Americans that they felt compelled to hurl aspersions at a bishop whose policies they felt would lead to a general loss of faith among the French.(56)

By early April, 1911, Walsh could no longer tolerate the *Comité's* excesses. He wrote to two Biddeford priests telling them to warn the executive members of the *Comité* that they faced interdiction.(57) Interdiction is the step before excommunication which deprives the interdicted of the right to receive the sacraments until retraction of the offensive statements. When they did not desist in their action he publicly interdicted them on May 14, 1911. Six men were interdicted: Albert Beland, Godfroy Dupré, George Précourt, Albert Maynard, Alfred Bonneau (editor of *La Justice*) and Jean Baptiste Couture (editor of *Le Messenger*). This action sparked renewed controversy. The six said they were interdicted because they presented a bill to the legislature. They called the action an arbitrary imposition of tyranny. (58) Walsh's diary, however, indicates that the six were interdicted because of the scandal they had caused in the Church. At first the French newspapers mocked the interdiction letter and vowed not to be intimidated. They denied that they had been informed of the impending interdiction.

The Bishop's interdiction letter was also sharply attacked because it warned Franco-American societies not to attend the *Comité's* convention. The *Comité* felt the Bishop was trying to disrupt their Biddeford Convention scheduled to begin on June 7. (59) The bishop had the power to recall a society's chaplain if it disobeyed. This worried the *Comité* since they had formulated intricate plans by which society members could attend the convention without officially representing their associations. They urged all French societies to send delegates.

Walsh was very cooperative with the French clergy in explaining his action, but refused to correspond directly with those interdicted. When Bonneau, Couture,

and Maynard wrote to Walsh asking for a clarification of his position, Walsh answered their queries through parish priests. (60)

The six men appealed their interdiction to Rome, as they had done in their fight against the "Corporation Sole". Walsh shrugged off this appeal, as he had the previous one, but his anger at the interdicted increased because they appealed over his head. (61)

The interdiction split the Franco-Americans of New England. By 1912 regional meetings of Franco-Americans were considering excluding the interdicted. (62) In Biddeford, where five of the six resided, the interdiction caused renewed interests in the "Corporation Sole". Except for Dupré, all those interdicted were widely respected in the community. (63) Although it is unlikely that the bulk of the French populace supported the *Comité's* extremism, Walsh's actions, judging from the turnout and the June Convention, seems to have been interpreted as an attempt to discredit "*la survivance*". Walsh knew that his action would spark renewed controversy but felt it his duty to issue the interdiction, regardless.

The Biddeford Convention of June, 1911, was a huge success. Over 350 delegates representing 110 societies and eighteen cities, the largest turnout ever, attended. (64) They criticized Walsh for appointing an allegedly anti-French superintendent of parish schools and vowed to carry on the fight against the "Corporation Sole". The delegates and townspeople signed petitions advocating a change in the law. Dupré, having little faith in their appeal to Rome, suggested that the *Comité* agitate for a state referendum on the question. Dupré added that once the French laymen had the opportunity to control church and school finances, they could improve their schools and buy books similar to those used in public schools. Thus, Dupré viewed the controversy in anti-clerical terms primarily; he did not oppose the Irish because they were assimilationist but because they were priests. It is very likely that he had little support among the delegates since Franco-Americans traditionally had great respect for the clergy. One delegate interviewed, Napoléon Nadeau,

told me that Dupré was disliked by Biddeford's Franco-Americans. This antipathy was caused in part by Dupré's propensity for stirring up controversy. Nadeau's motivation in attending the convention was to register a protest against Bishop Walsh's policies. He had checked with Father Louis Bergeron before attending (a procedure followed by his friends) (65) and was given the go-ahead. The delegates renewed their pledge not to give any money to diocesan appeals. Observers from Quebec promised the delegates the continued support of that province's French citizens.

Bishop Walsh followed the convention closely and dismissed it as an "insulting crowd" causing "public scandal". He stated that the convention was not representative and was made up primarily of "impromptu societies". He accused the *Comité's* members of political ambitions and asserted that most of the delegates came from Biddeford. Of the delegates and the French people as a whole he wrote: "The people have no sympathy at all with these leaders but are easily deceived and at times misled." (66) This attitude toward the French, obviously, did much to fuel the controversy for Franco-Americans. Their attacks on the Bishop, often complained that he treated them condescendingly. (67) None of Walsh's observations about the Convention were completely accurate. If Walsh felt that "the Canadians" as he referred to Franco-Americans sometimes, were un-American, and would bring nativist feeling against the Church, the Convention should have calmed his fears. The stars and stripes hung in the convention hall along with the French tricolors. The Star Spangled Banner was sung as well as French-Canadian hymns. Before adjourning, the delegates renewed their allegiance to church and country.

As the Convention ended, word was received that Dr. Fortier had died and was being refused Church burial by Walsh despite Charland's pleas. The Convention dedicated the first hours of the June eighth evening session to him, adjourned in his memory, and attended a Mass at St. Joseph's in his honor. Many delegates went to Waterville to attend Fortier's funeral. Fortier's wife was given a choice of having her husband buried in church without banners, music,

or ceremony or at a private affair in their home where French societies (it is customary for societies to attend members funerals) could be present. His wife chose the latter, saying her husband had lived as a good Catholic without the Irish hierarchy and would go to heaven without them. Charland officiated and two-thousand gathered to pay their last respects. (68)

Walsh's action infuriated the French who accused him of punishing Fortier for having gone to Rome to seek a Franco-American bishop. The Bishop explained in his diary that he followed this course because Fortier had never retracted his scandalous statements. (69) Even though he had "suspicions about an attempt at a great religious celebration at Fortier's funeral" before making his decision, Walsh made it, regardless of French reaction, because he felt it was his duty. His courageous stand won him the apostolic delegate's support. (70)

Bishop Walsh received his first setback in October, 1911, when the pope issued a new decree indicating his preference for the parish corporation. Walsh was not perturbed at this decision against "Corporation Sole"; he had never been an ideological supporter of the system. His defense had always been predicated on his firm belief in the absolute authority of the Church and its ministers. It was inconceivable to him that laymen could question and even defy the Church. As he once wrote to Charland: "In the Catholic Church the people are not to think and say and do as they like but they are to follow and obey the Church". (71) The French press gloated over the "new decree... ad nauseam". (72) They felt that Rome had vindicated their position and Dupré promised to present another bill to the legislature. (73)

Meanwhile the interdiction issue was left unresolved. The French press became increasingly impatient at papal delay and began printing articles questioning its allegiance to Rome. (74) It continually carried unsigned articles denouncing Walsh. (75) It is probable that in the latter half of 1911 the radicals of *La Cause Nationale* lost a good deal of support. The "Corporation Sole" impasse was now, after

papal intervention, in the process of being settled. In addition, Bishop Walsh seems to have become more circumspect in his dealing with the French by late 1911. No new incidents of Irish "tyranny" were reported in *La Justice* and *Le Messager* during this period. In any case, by December, *Le Messager* was hurling diatribes at French priests and laity who, it said, were fawning before the Bishop. (76)

The bitterness between the diocese and the leaders of *La Cause Nationale* continued throughout 1912. All the major French societies refused to parade on *St. Jean Baptiste* Day as a protest against the French clergy who supported Walsh. The French press continued to hurl diatribes at Walsh while the latter denounced them privately in his diary. Relations with Dupont became particularly strained because Walsh, not without reason, believed that Dupont was secretly financing the *Comité*. (77)

In February, 1912, Rome sustained Walsh's interdiction. (78) In April, the now-conciliatory Bishop wrote to those interdicted offering a compromise over "Corporation Sole". The *Comité* at first refused but eventually met with the Bishop on February 18, 1913, in Biddeford. Walsh had called the meeting to prevent another battle before the legislature. (79) He felt that the continued controversy was hurting the image of the Church; but the meeting proved fruitless. Still, the Bishop's new conciliatory attitude provided hope for a settlement. In 1911 he had refused even to correspond with the interdicted laymen. Two years later he travelled twenty miles to meet with Beland, Bonneau, Maynard, and Précourt when they refused to come to Portland. (Dupré and Couture stayed away from their arch-enemy). The meeting was confidential but Bonneau did report that the Bishop was affable.

Because no agreement was achieved, the French again presented another bill to the legislature. The issue was slightly different this time. Although defending the "Corporation Sole" at the hearing, Walsh was ready to back a parish corporation consisting of himself, the vicar-general, the pastor and two laymen appointed by these three. The French leaders advocated

a corporation composed of the bishop, the pastor and three laymen *elected* by the parish. Dupré again attacked the clergy during the hearings and accused them of only wanting French money. After speaking with French leaders, one reporter covering the hearings wrote that these men were reasonable and not anti-clerical. (80) The Bishop again offered to compromise and invited the *Comité* to meet with three Franco-American priests. They refused. The legislature ruled in Walsh's favor and the Walsh-backed parish cooperation system was soon made law.

The next Franco-American convention was held in Augusta on September eighteenth. The Convention was subdued and its tone less virulent. The French seemed satisfied with the parish corporation law and the main issue in Augusta was the parish school. Bonneau even admitted that it had been a mistake to go before the legislature with their grievances; the French could have had a fair hearing in church courts without any damaging publicity. (81) Although he characterized the convention as "the usual froth and blow", Walsh recognized the essential moderateness of the delegates. (82) One big change was the absence of Dupré at the Convention. He had recently broken with the *Comité* because they refused to pay him for services rendered before the legislature. He tried to sue but lost. One delegate at the convention referred to Dupré's "ridiculous claims" on the *Comité*. (83)

Financial burdens eventually spelled doom for the French movement. No longer supported by a majority of the French populace, the *Comité* ceased getting contributions. Funds from French Canada also dried up. In 1915 Walsh's great antagonist, Father Dupont, died. By 1916 Bonneau, Beland, Précourt and Maynard had made a discreet submission to Walsh. *Le Messenger* and *La Justice* ceased their combative tones. (84) The controversy, almost a decade old, had ended; but traces of the bitterness engendered by it can still be found today.

-----NOTES-----

1. Andrew Greeley, *Why Can't They Be Like Us* (N.Y., 1971), Chapter 5.
2. Thomas Maynard, *The Story of American Catholicism* (N.Y., 1941), p. 285.
3. Jacques Ducharme, *In the Shadow of the Trees* (N.Y., 1943), p. 66.
4. Robert Rumilly, *Histoires des Franco-Américains* (Montreal, 1958), Chapters 14-21.
5. A. Lower, "New France in New England," *New England Quarterly*, II, (April, 1929), p. 290 and Richard O'Connor, *The German Americans* (Boston, 1968), p. 359.
6. Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston, 1951), p. 134 and David O'Brien *American Catholics and Social Reform* (N.Y., 1968), p. 31.
7. George Theriault, "The Franco-Americans in Nashua, New Hampshire," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (Harvard University, 1951), pp. 344-347.
8. Albert Foley, *Bishop Healy: Beloved Outcaste* (N.Y., 1954), p. 136. There was also little ethnic conflict in N.H. until 1890 because Maine and N.H. formed one diocese under Healy. (Theriault, *op. cit.* pp. 158-162).
9. *La Justice*, Nov., Dec., 1905 and Jan., 1906 issues and *Le Messenger*, Jan. and Feb., 1906, issues.
10. Kenneth Woodbury, "An Incident Between the French-Canadians and the Irish in the Diocese of Maine in 1906" *New England Quarterly*, XL (1967) pp. 260-269 and Roger Johnson, "French-Canadian Reaction to Assimilation" undated semester paper in author's possession, p. 7.
11. *Le Messenger*, Aug. 25, 1906.
12. *La Justice*, March 15, 1906.
13. James Allen, "Catholics in Maine: A Social Geography" unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, (Syracuse University, 1970) pp. 165, 237 and 242.
14. Monsignor Vincent Tatarczuk to Kenneth Woodbury cited in Woodbury, *op. cit.*, p. 261.
15. William Lucey, *The Catholic Church in Maine* (N.Y., 1957), p. 300 and Allen, "Catholics in Maine...", p. 110-130.
16. Case of Sacred Heart Parish (Documents Folio #6, Diocese of Portland Library) compiled by Rev.

- P. E. Desjardins.
17. *Ibid.*, and A. Prosser, ed., *Bicentennial History of Sanford* (Sanford, Me., 1968).
 18. *Saint Michael's Parish Directory*, So. Berwick, Maine, e.g. shows that this parish had an Irish pastor throughout most of Walsh's bishopric. In 1922 Walsh appointed another Irish pastor to this predominantly French parish.
 19. Woodbury, *op. cit.* p. 262.
 20. The following account comes from the "Case of Sacred Heart Parish" *op. cit.*
 21. *Ibid.*
 22. *Le Messager* and *La Justice*, Jan., 1907 issues.
 23. Louis S. Walsh, Diary, June 1, 1907, (The Library of the Chancery, Diocese of Portland), Portland Maine
 24. *Le Messager*, June 26-29, 1907.
 25. *Ibid.*, June 26, 1907, and Walsh, Diary, June 25, 1911.
 26. *La Justice*, Oct. 7, 1909.
 27. Johnson, *op. cit.* p. 6, and *La Justice*, Oct. 28 and Nov. 24, 1909.
 28. Walsh Diary, May 28, 1907.
 29. Mason Wade, "The French Parish and *Survivance* in Nineteenth Century New England", *Catholic Historical Review*, XXXVI (July, 1950), p. 185.
 30. Walsh, Diary, March 11, 1907.
 31. *Le Messager*, July 28, 1909.
 32. *Le Messager*, Jan. 24, 1907.
 33. *La Justice*, May 6, 1909.
 34. *Le Messager*, March 16, 1907.
 35. *Ibid.*, Aug. 6 and Sept. 28, 1909.
 36. *Ibid.*, Apr. 7, 1906.
 37. Walsh, Diary, June 8, 1907.
 38. *Ibid.*, Sept. 19 and 27, 1909, and March 20 and June 8, 1907, and Apr. 24, 1910.
 39. This account comes from the *Biddeford Daily Journal* and the *Biddeford Record*, March 7-9, 1911. Although slanted, the French press reported essentially the same facts.
 40. *Ibid.*, March 8 and 9, 1911.
 41. Foley, *op. cit.* pp. 154-166.
 42. Walsh, Diary, Jan. 31, Feb. 11, and March 7, 1911.
 43. Louis Walsh to Most Rev. D. Falconio, Feb. 19th and Mar. 10, 1911, Louis S. Walsh Papers (The

- Library of the Chancery, Diocese of Portland),
Portland, Maine.
44. Walsh, Diary, Feb. 14, and 21, 1911.
 45. Louis Walsh to Mr. J. B. Madigan, Feb. 12, 1911.
 46. Louis Walsh to Rev. D. Falconio, Mar. 10, 1911.
 47. Louis Walsh to Thomas Dwight, June 20, 1911.
 48. Louis Walsh to Rev. D. Falconio, Feb. 19, 1911.
 49. Robert Lee (the Bishop's Secretary) to Rev. Dupont,
Aug. 16, 1911.
 50. Walsh, Diary, Jan. 23, 1911.
 51. *Le Messenger*, Feb. 20, 1911, and *La Justice*, Mar.
1911.
 52. *Ibid.*, May 8, June 12, and Aug. 2, 1911.
 53. *Ibid.*, July 7, and Aug. 11, 1911.
 54. *Ibid.*, Mar. 20, Apr. 10, and July 15, 1911.
 55. *Ibid.*, May 17, June 22 and 29, 1911.
 56. Louis Walsh to P. E. Desjardins, July 3, 1911.
 57. Louis Walsh to Rev. L. Bergeron, Apr. 10, 1911,
and Louis Walsh to Rev. Dupont, Apr. 1, 1911.
 58. *Le Messenger*, May 5, 29, 1911, and June 21, 1911.
 59. *Ibid.*, June 2, 1911.
 60. Walsh to Rev. Dupont, Apr. 8, 1911; Walsh to Rev.
Leguennec, May 24, 1911; and Walsh to Rev. Jacques,
May 24, 1911.
 61. Walsh, Diary, May 20, 1911.
 62. Rumilly, *op. cit.* pp. 257 and 279.
 63. *Biddeford Record*, May 15, 1911, and *Biddeford*
Daily Journal, June 10, 1911.
 64. *Biddeford Daily Journal*, June 6 & 8, 1911.
 65. Interview with Napoléon Nadeau, March 28, 1972.
 66. Walsh, Diary, June 7, 9, and 17, 1911.
 67. *Le Messenger*, March 16, 1907 and March 20, 1911.
 68. For a description of the Biddeford Convention and
the Fortier affair see the *Biddeford Daily*
Journal, June 6-9, 1911.
 69. Walsh, Diary, June 5 and 7, 1911.
 70. *Ibid.*, June 7, 1911, and July 1, 1911.
 71. Walsh to Rev. Charland, Mar. 4, 1908.
 72. Walsh, Diary, Oct. 21, and 30, 1911.
 73. *Le Messenger*, Oct. 22, 24-31, 1911.
 74. *Le Messenger*, June 28, 1911.
 75. *Ibid.*, Nov. 15, 1911.
 76. *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1911.
 77. Walsh, Diary, Jan. 30, Feb. 3, 5, 16, 20, May 13,
and Dec. 28, 1912 and Walsh to T. B. Walker,

- March 29, 1918.
78. Newspaper Clipping (origin unknown in Walsh diary found between the entries for Feb. 15 and 16).
 79. Walsh, Diary, Apr. 19, 1912.
 80. *Biddeford Daily Journal*, Feb. 15, 1913.
 81. *Ibid.*, Sept. 20, 1913.
 82. Walsh, Diary, Sept. 20, 1913.
 83. Newspaper clipping in Walsh's Diary adjacent to the Sept. 12, 1913, entry.
 84. The account of the *Comité's* demise comes from Rumilly, *op. cit.* pp. 287-289 and Johnson *op. cit.* p. 9-10.

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