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**Priests, People
and Polity:
Trusteeism in the
First Catholic
Congregation at
Halifax, 1785-1801**

Trusteeism is a very familiar term in the history of Catholicism in the United States. The word is used to describe widespread attempts by local trustees to gain control over the temporal and even the spiritual affairs of their congregations. These attempts began as early as the 1780s, and by the first half of the nineteenth century they were one of the major causes of division within American Catholicism. Major controversies erupted at New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, Norfolk, and New Orleans. In one sense, trusteeism was a struggle over the rights of the laity, but in another it was a contest between congregational and episcopal polity. Lay trustees often formed alliances with renegade priests, and it was common for them to claim, in opposition to the bishop, that they had the right to choose their own pastors. Many congregations experienced painful schisms as opposing factions rallied around rival candidates. Moreover, the desire to preserve ethnic traditions was frequently an important factor, as German or Irish trustees resisted the appointment of clergy whose nationality differed from that of the congregation.

Despite the obvious importance of trusteeism in American Catholicism, the phenomenon has been almost totally ignored in Canada. Original sources have not been studied in nearly as much detail, so that examples of trusteeism have for the most part gone undetected. Even when they have come to light, as in the case of Halifax, no attempt has been made to examine the controversies closely or to place them in context. As a result, they have been treated as isolated cases of conflict rather than as reflections of broader developments.¹

The initial trustee controversy in Halifax occurred in three phases, the first of which began virtually with the founding of the congregation. St. Peter's Church was constructed between 1782 and 1785 through the efforts of a small circle of Irish Catholic merchants, artisans, and farmers. This group initially included John Mullowney, John Cody, John Murphy, John McDaniel (or McDonel), Edmund Phelan, John Stealing, and Mark Mullen.² John Leonard, John Maguire, Michael Tobin, Constant Connor, Patrick O'Brien, and Peter Lynch were added later.³ Most of these men had arrived in Halifax before the majority of their co-religionists, some as early as the 1750s. They were also more prosperous and showed more initiative in attempting to improve the situation of Catholics. In 1781, they launched a successful campaign

for the removal of penal laws.⁴ Meanwhile, five of them formed a committee of lay trustees, purchased a piece of land, and began construction of a church. A presbytery was subsequently erected nearby. When the church was ready for use in 1784, they applied to Bishop d'Esglis of Quebec for a resident priest, and d'Esglis ordered his vicar-general for the region, J.-M. Bourg, to move from the Bay of Chaleur to Halifax. Before arrangements could be completed, however, the trustees decided that they needed an English-speaking priest, and on their own initiative obtained James Jones, a Capuchin from Cork.⁵

Although there was no direct conflict with the bishop at this stage, the independence which the trustees had shown was a harbinger of things to come. By the time Jones reached Halifax, they had begun to style themselves "church wardens" and to claim a wide range of powers, affecting not only the temporal affairs of the congregation but also quasi-religious matters. Superficially, their committee resembled the *conseils de fabrique* which were a standard feature of French Canadian parishes; but the prerogatives they demanded were more extensive. Jones seems to have tried from the outset to bring the wardens under his control, but they bitterly resisted his efforts. Although he won a small victory by securing a position as an *ex officio* member of their committee, controversy erupted on a number of points.⁶

One of the first arguments arose over Jones' use of the presbytery. Since the building was larger than required, he rented some of the unoccupied rooms and also allowed a neighbouring farmer to cultivate the garden in return for a share of the produce. From his point of view, this was a useful means of augmenting his income and of providing himself with company. The wardens, however, regarded it as a violation of their rights. They told Jones bluntly that since the presbytery did not belong to him, he had no right to make such arrangements without their permission. Indeed, they even threatened to evict him. The matter was resolved without such drastic measures, but the threat illustrates an important element in the wardens' outlook. In place of the official view, which stressed the obligation of lay wardens to provide the priest with accommodation, they asserted their rights as legal proprietors of church property.

The same proprietorial attitude was at work in two disputes over burials in the churchyard. One case involved a man who had poisoned himself but whom Jones had buried in consecrated ground on the strength of a deathbed repentance. The wardens opposed him so strongly on this point that they actually disinterred the body. The second case was almost the reverse, for it concerned a woman whom the wardens wished to inter in the Catholic cemetery but whom Jones refused to bury because she was a Protestant. Evidently, the wardens carried out the burial by having a Protestant minister officiate. Here we see them extending their rights as owners of church property to the management of the burial ground. But this issue also demonstrates how easily their pretensions spilled over from the temporal to the spiritual domain.

The most important of the prerogatives which the wardens claimed, however, was the right to appoint and dismiss priests. This question came

to a head not with respect to Jones himself but over a fellow Capuchin, Laurence Whelan, whom he brought to Halifax in 1791. Jones employed Whelan briefly as his assistant and then appointed him to replace him as pastor, so that he could devote himself to his new office of Superior of the Missions. As Superior, Jones had full authority to make such arrangements, but the wardens raised a storm. They notified Whelan that they could not accept him as pastor since he had been appointed without their consent. Whelan soon left the city, forcing Jones to resume his responsibilities as parish priest.

The leader of the church wardens throughout this period was undoubtedly Captain John Mullowney. His name appears on the very first document pointing to the existence of a board of trustees, and he remained a member of the committee until 1792. Next in importance to him was John Stealing, whom Mullowney seems to have brought to Halifax from Philadelphia as a *protégé* in business. Together they dominated the wardens' proceedings. The other three members did not play a leading role in any of the controversies, and Jones claimed that they had been "reduced to silence" by Mullowney and his "second-in-command." Eventually, Mullowney also formed an alliance with William Phelan, an Irish priest who was stationed at Arichat and who for some years had been waging a battle of his own against Jones. In 1792, Mullowney, armed with evidence which Phelan had supposedly provided, announced his intention of taking Jones to court in a dispute over church revenue. The precise issue at stake was a fund which Jones had established, partly from money sent to him by Bishop Hubert, d'Esglis' successor. The fund was intended to support Jones and his successors as Superior of the Missions. Hubert had been kept fully informed and had raised no objections. Mullowney insisted, however, that the donations had been intended specifically for the Halifax mission and that by taking it for another purpose Jones had "robbed" the local church.

Mullowney's lawsuit appears never to have made it to court, if only because he was unable to find a lawyer willing to take the case. Nevertheless, the incident marked a turning-point. It reflected badly on the trustees, and Jones pounced on the opportunity to discredit them and also to rid himself of Phelan. He suspended Phelan's faculties and in the meantime had four members of the congregation (none of them trustees) sign a statement repudiating accusations which Phelan had made against him.⁷ The statement was sent to Bishop Hubert. It forestalled any attempt Phelan might have made to undermine Jones' position with the bishop and also demonstrated that Jones had the confidence of a portion of the laity. Hubert responded by lending Jones his full support.⁸

Captain Mullowney left Nova Scotia not long afterward,⁹ and there followed a period of relative peace. Between 1792 and 1800, there appears to have been little or no open conflict between Jones and the trustees. Still, suspicions lingered and rose to the surface again at the end of Jones' term of office. He left Halifax in 1800, originally for a visit to England and Ireland. The main reason for his trip was to seek medical attention, but he also hoped



Edmund Burke, Roman Catholic missionary at Halifax
from 1801 and first Vicar Apostolic of Nova Scotia (1817-20).

to obtain a legacy bequeathed to the Halifax mission some years earlier and tied up in litigation ever since. Rumours circulated in Halifax that he planned to acquire the inheritance for himself. The day before he sailed, he was threatened with arrest;¹⁰ and shortly afterwards, the wardens and some of their supporters appealed to the bishop to prevent him from misappropriating the funds.¹¹ Their fears proved groundless,¹² but the fact that they were entertained at all reflects a very uneasy state of affairs.

To replace him while he was away, Jones selected Edmund Burke, an Irish Dominican. Burke had served for several years at Placentia and had visited Halifax on a number of occasions. Since he was familiar with local circumstances and since by this time more than half of the Halifax congregation had come from Newfoundland, he seemed a good choice.¹³ Before leaving, Jones gave him instructions for dealing with the trustees.¹⁴ Jones' ship was scarcely out of the harbour, however, when problems developed. The wardens, now led by John Stealing, confronted Burke, who acceded to all their demands. He agreed to relinquish his seat on the committee (a step which Jones had warned against) and to leave the temporal administration of the parish entirely in their hands. He also promised to call a vestry meeting where wardens could be elected in accordance with this plan.¹⁵

The vestry meeting took place on 17 August 1800.¹⁶ Burke was not present, and Stealing was able to control the proceedings. He was not only returned as a warden but also elected treasurer of the parish. Voting in the election was apparently restricted to pewholders. Afterwards, Stealing made a vehement speech attacking Jones, in which he said that hitherto the Catholics of Halifax had been "priest-ridden" and that Jones had "had his hands in their pockets and robbed them." To remedy this situation, he suggested a system whereby the priest would be removable at pleasure. This measure was rejected by the congregation, but Stealing then produced a new set of regulations for the management of the church's temporal affairs. The proposed new regulations aimed not only at limiting the authority of the priest but also at imposing new obligations on parishioners. The relatively affluent portion of the congregation felt that so far the burden of supporting the parish had fallen almost entirely on their shoulders. They had not objected to this so long as the congregation had remained small; but it had grown rapidly in the 1790s, chiefly as the result of increased migration from Newfoundland, and there was a strong feeling that the newcomers were not contributing their share.¹⁷ Although they frequented the church, many of them were not even known to the wardens by name. Stealing's regulations therefore called for a register to be kept of all Catholics living in or near Halifax and for all to make a minimum contribution of ten shillings per year. Exceptions were to be made in cases of genuine poverty, but otherwise those who failed to comply would be denied the rights of a parishioner, including burial in the churchyard.

This initiative on the part of the wardens opened a new dimension in the trustee controversy. Many of the newcomers to the congregation were less prosperous than the older parishioners, and they resented the privileged po-

sition accorded to the trustees. Conditions in the city, where a smallpox epidemic raged, exacerbated these feelings. Burials took place almost daily, and many people were hard pressed to pay the cost of interment. Meanwhile, another group of recent immigrants began to oppose the trustees. These were men of more substantial means, who did not differ greatly from the wardens in social standing but who had arrived in Halifax at a later date and were not among the founders of the congregation. Most prominent among them was John Sands, a pewholder but nevertheless a sharp critic of the trustees. Sands and a few others soon emerged as spokesmen for the congregation. Latent disaffection developed into open revolt when the trustees tried to enforce their regulation concerning compulsory subscription by refusing burial to two alleged non-contributors. A deputation, led by Sands, approached Burke with a petition bearing approximately two hundred signatures. It declared that "nothing but discontent and murmuring" prevailed among the greater part of the congregation and called on Burke to convoke another vestry meeting.¹⁸

When this second meeting took place on 6 April 1801, a committee was appointed by the congregation to draft amendments to the regulations introduced by Stealing. Three days later, they met with the trustees in Burke's presence. Discussions broke down when the representatives of the congregation insisted that all contributors, and not just pewholders, should have a say in parish affairs.¹⁹ Burke supported the wardens in their refusal to accede to this demand, and on the following Sunday he read their decision from the altar. His announcement provoked an impromptu meeting in the churchyard, at which the leading opponents of the wardens presented a set of revised regulations,²⁰ which were later printed and circulated.²¹

The thrust of the new articles was to make the wardens responsible to the congregation. All subscribers, and not just pewholders, were to vote in parish elections. The wardens also had to render an account of their expenditures. They were required to provide records of all their transactions since the founding of St. Peter's and to open their books for general inspection on the first Sunday of every month. The burden of financial support, however, was shifted back onto the shoulders of the well-to-do parishioners. Pew rents were to be increased, while contributions from ordinary members of the congregation were restored on a strictly voluntary basis. No penalty was imposed for failure to contribute, and decisions concerning burial in the churchyard were left entirely to the priest. Finally, a change in financial priorities was called for. The trustees had been concerned mainly with building up the parish establishment, with such matters as the construction and improvement of buildings. Their critics demanded greater spending on charities. Half of each Sunday's box collection was to be donated to the poor, and parish funds were also to be used to cover the incidental costs of interment.

Recognizing that these provisions would have a broad appeal, the wardens rushed forward with revised regulations of their own.²² Their new proposals contained a number of genuine concessions. The controversial article about refusing burial to non-contributors was annulled, while new provisions were

introduced to furnish aid to the poor. Yet on the crucial question of who should have the right to participate in the election of church officers, the wardens refused to give ground. In fact, they insisted more strenuously than ever that "no other person but a pewholder" should have a vote.

In an attempt to break the deadlock, the wardens finally appealed to Bishop Denaut. In a letter of 25 April 1801, they carefully defended their position and denounced the "levelling measures" of their opponents. For them, the entire issue hinged on their rights as the principal benefactors of St. Peter's. They saw themselves as the "founding fathers" of the parish and insisted that their views deserved greater consideration than the opinions of people who had "dropt among us very lately." On the other hand, they described their chief critics as rabble-rousers, who played upon the feelings of the poor only as a way of usurping power.²³

The final irony was that the wardens blamed Burke for allowing all this to happen. This was a complete reversal of their position. In the wake of the August 17 vestry meeting, the scene of Stealing's triumph, they had written to Bishop Denaut expressing their complete satisfaction and asking him not to appoint anyone else so long as Burke met with their approbation.²⁴ But now, exactly one year later, they criticized him sharply and even compared him unfavourably to Jones. "He has ever been of a restless and unhappy disposition," they wrote, "and your Lordship may rest assured that the better part of the congregation have cause to lament our ever having recommended him..."²⁵ The hostility of the wardens placed Burke in an impossible position, all the more so because it now appeared unlikely that Jones would return. On 15 May 1801 he submitted his resignation to the bishop,²⁶ and by September he had left for Boston.

The wardens' appeal to the bishop and Burke's resignation opened the third and final phase of the controversy. Denaut appointed a veteran of the Upper Canadian missions, also named Edmund Burke, as a replacement in Halifax and issued a pastoral letter on the claims of the wardens and their critics.²⁷ Since he planned to visit the region in person, his letter was intended only as an interim measure. Nevertheless, it made his position clear. Instead of ruling in favour of one faction of laymen or the other, he insisted on his own rights as bishop and on those of the pastor acting under his authority. Henceforth the priest was to preside at all meetings of the trustees; he was to be the sole judge of persons admissible to burial in the churchyard; and he was to use both the presbytery and garden as he saw fit.

Enclosed with Denaut's pastoral letter, but intended only for the use of Burke and the wardens, were annotated copies of the three sets of regulations that had been proposed.²⁸ Beside each article, the bishop had entered his own comments, indicating whether the measure was acceptable or not, and in most cases giving the reasons. These annotations show the same determination to uphold his own authority against encroachments by the laity. The very first remark was that "the Radical defect of all these regulations is to have been made without authority." Denaut objected not only to laymen in-

terfering in religious questions but also to their pretensions in the purely temporal sphere. He was quite prepared to allow for a committee of wardens, acting under the supervision of the priest (this was, after all, standard practice in the diocese of Quebec), but he insisted that control of church property must rest ultimately in the bishop's hands.

Denaut rigorously applied these general principles to particular cases. For example, in their original regulations of 17 August 1800, the wardens had established fees to be paid for various services connected with interment: 7s. 6d. for ringing the bell, the same for the use of the pall, and so on; but Denaut wrote beside this article that "It is not in the power of the congregation . . . to fix or tax ecclesiastical retributions; it is the Bishop's duty." Similarly in their revisions to the regulations, they had directed that certain repairs be carried out to the church; but here he stipulated that no extraordinary expenditures were to be made out of church funds without his express permission. Even the priests' salary, which the wardens had tried to reduce, was dealt with in this light. Denaut complained not so much because the proposed change meant a loss to the incumbent but because it had been introduced without his approval. On the other hand, he disagreed fundamentally with the attempt to make the wardens responsible to the congregation. This shows up clearly in his comments on the proposal for a regular review of their financial records. He agreed that such a review was necessary but insisted that it be carried out not by the congregation but by the bishop or his representative. It is obvious also from his reaction to the recommendation that all subscribers should vote in parish elections. While he conceded that this might serve in the short term to regain the support of the congregation, he refused to consider it as more than an interim measure. The system he favoured was the one used in Canadian parishes, where the outgoing wardens chose their successors. Such a procedure was even more restrictive than the one proposed by the wardens, who wanted to limit participation to approximately sixty pewholders. Denaut opposed large gatherings on the grounds that they too easily led to disorders.

Denaut's intention was to delay the introduction of new regulations until he visited the region. His pastoral letter reached Halifax, however, at almost the same time that the second Edmund Burke arrived, and these two events coincided more or less with the death of John Stealing. With the most zealous of the wardens removed from the scene, Burke found the time ripe for change. On 27 December 1801, he called together the pewholders and subscribers and instructed them to choose twenty electors. The electors were then charged with selecting four wardens from their own numbers.²⁹ Although this procedure did not correspond exactly to the system which the bishop had in mind, it satisfied at least his desire to have fewer people directly involved in elections. The former wardens were given a vote, but they agreed in advance not to be considered eligible. None of their leading opponents was chosen. If the election was a victory for either lay faction, it was the old guard who prevailed, since the successful candidates had close ties to their predecessors. Its immediate effect, however, was to call a halt to conflict. The use of a new procedure to

elect a different slate of officers was accepted by most of the congregation as a fresh start.

Burke's initiative was the last turning-point in the controversy. He succeeded not only in restoring peace but also in introducing a system of parish administration which protected the authority of both bishop and priest. The election of new wardens was only a first step in this direction. The pastor was also reinstated as an *ex officio* member of their committee. The wardens never met except in his presence, and all their resolutions were signed by him as they were entered in the minute book. In cases where there was a danger of exceeding their powers, they usually added a suspending clause making their decisions subject to the bishop's approval. Each year one warden retired, and his successor was chosen by the remaining wardens and the electors. In strict conformity with the practice of the diocese of Quebec, the elections were held on the first day of January. The electors became a permanent body and participated with the wardens in the management of the parish; but as vacancies occurred they were filled as they were among the wardens, by a vote of those already in office, so that the electors ceased to be representative of the congregation in any meaningful sense. After the primary election at which they were chosen, no further plenary meetings of the congregation took place. The office of civil trustee was temporarily separated from that of warden, but eventually the old office was discontinued and church property was vested in the new body of electors.

Still, trusteeism in Halifax was dormant rather than dead. Laymen remained the local proprietors of church property until 1842, and leading members of the congregation continued to feel that they were entitled to a strong voice in parish affairs. Even under Burke their decisions occasionally proved controversial. In 1803, for example, they passed a regulation declaring that any pewholder who was notoriously irregular in his conduct should have his pew declared vacant,³⁰ and they evidently meant to carry this to the point of excluding offenders from the congregation. Shortly after the new rule was introduced, Bishop Denaut made his pastoral visit to the region and, upon discovering what they had done, protested in the strongest terms. Church wardens, he said, were not to arrogate to themselves the power to excommunicate.³¹ Nevertheless, the very same issue arose two years later. A wealthy member of the congregation, who was in fact one of the new wardens elected in 1801, caused a scandal by producing a child by his step-daughter. Although the man confessed his fault and promised to make amends, the wardens put his pew up for sale and advised him not to come to church, Burke denounced their actions, but the offender was readmitted to his pew only after he and Burke both appealed to Quebec.³² Such incidents were exceptions to the order and harmony which prevailed for nearly two decades, but they foreshadow the events that followed Burke's term of office. These events lie beyond the scope of this paper, but the choice of the Scot, William Fraser, as Burke's successor, and Fraser's appointment of John Loughnan as his vicar general in Halifax unleashed a second wave of controversy which lasted nearly to mid-century.³³

By themselves, the often petty disputes associated with trusteeism are not important. As a broad phenomenon, however, trusteeism furnishes us with a window on the experience of Catholics in North America. American Catholic historiography offers valuable lessons in this regard. For a long time, the tendency in the United States was to view trusteeism from the official perspective. Most of the emphasis was placed on the difficulties it caused for pioneering bishops, while trustees were dismissed as malcontents who had rebelled against legitimate ecclesiastical authority.³⁴ Only recently has a more balanced approach been developed. Authors such as Patrick Carey have shown that trusteeism was a complex phenomenon, involving not only factious behaviour but also serious theological convictions and a positive desire to adapt Catholic traditions to American circumstances.³⁵ The Halifax trustees lacked the intellectual sophistication of some of their American counterparts. They advanced no arguments to support their claims beyond the contention that as founders of the congregation they deserved special consideration. Still, their experience as Catholic immigrants was in many respects the same. Having arrived in a city which lacked even a resident clergyman, they had been forced to provide for their own religious needs. They had achieved civil liberty, constructed a chapel, and recruited a priest. Since the prevailing legal situation made other forms of ownership impossible, they had registered church property in their own names. By the time the clergyman arrived, they were accustomed to acting independently. Meanwhile, episcopal authority was weak. The bishop was a remote figure, burdened with governing a vast diocese and seldom able to maintain control over outlying regions. Whether he resided in Baltimore or Quebec, the result was the same. A tradition of local autonomy developed which was afterwards hard to uproot. Finally, Catholics lived in close proximity to Protestants, whose lay-centered polity they tended to imitate. Like Protestant pewholders, the Catholic trustees saw themselves as the "respectable portion" of the congregation and therefore best suited to manage its affairs.

At the same time, the pretensions of the small circle of artisans and merchants in Halifax highlights the ambiguous role of the Catholic bourgeoisie. On the one hand, they were the builders of the local Catholic community, having provided parochial institutions not only for themselves but also for the poorer classes, who might otherwise have gone unchurched. On the other hand, they put obstacles in the way of participation by ordinary parishioners. Religious observance among unskilled and semi-skilled workers was probably already irregular. The fact that many of them were not known by name to the wardens is an indication of this. But by imposing financial demands and by emphasizing distinctions between rich and poor parishioners, the trustees clearly ran the risk of alienating them still further. One of the principal challenges facing the Catholic Church in the region was the assimilation of growing numbers of immigrants, mostly of slender means, who needed to be moulded into disciplined, practising Catholics. The story of trusteeism suggests that, unless a change of approach occurred within the Catholic middle class, this task would have to be accomplished at the expense of a lay elite.

NOTES

1. See A. A. Johnston, *A History of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nova Scotia*, (2 vols.; Antigonish: St. Francis Xavier University Press, 1960-71), I, p. 176; Leonora A. Merrigan, *The Life and Times of Edmund Burke in Nova Scotia*, Unpublished M.A. thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1971, pp. 42-43.
2. These names appear on the indenture conveying the land on which the Church was built (Archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec [hereafter AAQ], Nouvelle-Ecosse [hereafter NE], II, #29) and on letters of the trustees to James Jones of 24 May 1785 and to Bishop d'Esglis of 3 September 1785 (*ibid.*, #2 and #6).
3. See AAQ, NE, II, #21, #29 and #44. The first of these items is a deed of 26 July 1800 conveying the land for a burial ground; it mentions five trustees, including O'Brien and Butler. The second includes a partial list of the succession of trustees in which John Leonard is named as John Mullowney's successor, Constant Connor as Mark Mullen's, John Maguire as John Murphy's and Michael Tobin as John Leonard's. The third is the record of a meeting of 17 August 1800 where an enlarged committee of trustees was selected; Peter Lynch's name appears here for the first time.
4. See their petitions for relief in Public Archives of Nova Scotia [hereafter PANS], RG 1, vol. 222, #91-93; vol. 301, #83.
5. See Trustees to Edmund [actually James] Jones, 24 May 1785, AAQ, NE, II, #2; Trustees to d'Esglis, 3 September 1785, *ibid.*, II, #6.
6. For what follows, see Jones to Hubert, 24 March 1792, AAQ, NE, I, #37, where Jones gives an account of his conflicts with the trustees from the time of his arrival.
7. Enclosed with Jones' letter of 24 March 1792.
8. Hubert to Jones, 24 June 1792, AAQ, *Registre des lettres*, I, p. 326.
9. See AAQ, NE, II, #29, where opposite the date 10 July 1792, there is a record of John Leonard being named to replace Mullowney in view of the latter's departure from the province.
10. Jones to [Stealing?], 9 March 1801, AAQ, Angleterre, I, #20.
11. Bartholomew Sullivan *et al.* to Denaut, [n.d.], AAQ, NE, II, #55.
12. Plessis to Denaut, 4 September 1800, AAQ, *Evêques de Quebec*, III, p. 73.
13. Jones to Plessis, 18 June 1800, AAQ, NE, I, #74.
14. See E. Burke, O.P. to [Plessis?], 15 May 1801, AAQ, NE, III, #57.
15. *Ibid.*
16. This account of what took place at the meeting is based on Burke's letter of 15 May 1801 and on extracts from the proceedings in AAQ, NE, II, #19.
17. On this point, see Trustees to Denaut, 25 April 1801, AAQ, NE, II, #37.
18. Petition to E. Burke, O.P., 7 March 1801, AAQ, NE, II, #26. The first five names on the petition are John Sands, Peter Cashinberry, Edward St. George, Edmund Power, and John Meagher. Not much is known of John Sands, the principal spokesman. He was accepted as a member of the Charitable Irish Society in Halifax in 1794. He left Halifax in the first decade of the nineteenth century and took up residence in Cape Breton. He died at Arichat on 1 March 1825, aged 71 (*Acadian Recorder*, 26 March 1825).
19. Trustees to Denaut, 25 April 1801, AAQ, NE, II, #37.
20. *Ibid.*

21. *Resolves of the Delegates appointed by the Congregation of the Roman Catholic Church in Halifax to make Amendments and Alterations in the Bye Laws and Regulations of the Temporal Affairs of Said Church* (Halifax: Gay and Merlin, [1801]). A copy of these printed regulations is contained in AAQ, NE, II, #34.
22. Trustees to Denaut, 25 April 1801, AAQ, NE, II, #37. For the text of these revised regulations, see *ibid.*, #41.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Trustees to Denaut, 20 August 1800, AAQ, NE, II, #24.
25. Trustees to Denaut, 20 August 1801, AAQ, NE, II, #47.
26. E. Burke, O.P., to [Plessis?], 15 May 1801, AAQ, NE, III, #57.
27. Pastoral letter of Denaut to the Catholics of Halifax, 8 September 1801, AAQ, *Registre F*, fol. 69r.
28. These annotated copies are entered in Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax [hereafter AAH], St. Peter's Church, Wardens' Minute Book, fols. 6-22; microfilm copy in PANS.
29. The proceedings of this meeting can be followed in the Wardens' Minute Book, fol. 23 (entry of 29 December 1801) and fol. 24 (a copy of a letter of the new wardens to Denaut of 18 January 1802). The outgoing wardens were John Maguire, Constant Connor, Patrick Lynch, Michael Tobin, and Patrick O'Brien; the new wardens were Patrick Ryan, Michael Bennett, Edmund Butler, and James Tobin.
30. *Ibid.*, fol. 27 (entry of 21 April 1803).
31. Denaut to the [Wardens and] Electors, 28 June 1803, AAQ, NE, II, #57.
32. Burke to Plessis, 11 June 1805, AAQ, NE, III, #90; Michael Bennett to Plessis, 30 September 1805, *ibid.*, II, #61; Burke to Plessis, 2 June 1806, *ibid.*, II, #109.
33. See Johnston, *A History*, II, pp. 177-215.
34. For examples of this approach, see G. C. Treacy, "The Evils of Trusteeism," *Historical Records and Studies*, VIII (1915), pp. 136-56; Peter Guilday, "Trusteeism," *ibid.*, XVIII (1928), pp. 14-73; Robert F. McNamara, "Trusteeism in the Atlantic States, 1785-1863," *Catholic Historical Review*, XXX 2 (1944), pp. 135-54; and Thomas T. McAvoy, *A History of the Catholic Church in the United States* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969).
35. See Patrick Carey, "The Laity's Understanding of the Trustee System: 1785-1855," *Catholic Historical Review*, LXIV 3 (1978), pp. 357-76; Patrick Carey, "Arguments for Lay Participation in Philadelphia Catholicism, 1820-1829," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, 92 (1981), pp. 43-58. See also James J. Hennessey, S.J., *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).