

Canadian and American Zouaves in the Papal Army, 1868-1870

BY
HOWARD R. MARRARO, Ph.D.

The plight in which the Holy Father found himself as a result of the repeated attempts by the Italian Party of Action to seize Rome and deprive him of his temporal powers, combined with the increasing threats of the Italian government to declare Rome the capital of a united Italy, quite naturally aroused the sympathy of the Roman Catholics throughout the world. So heartfelt and universal was the feeling of compassion and resentment among them that Catholics from many parts of the world enlisted in the military service of His Holiness. The Rome correspondent of the New York *Herald* reported that by May 1868 the papal "crack corps" of foreigners comprised 4,592 men, including 135 Canadians and 14 Americans.¹ In the United States the suggestion to recruit American soldiers

¹ The other 4,443 men were made up as follows: Frenchmen 1,301; Belgians 686; Dutchmen 1,910; Romans and Pontifical subjects, 157; Modenese 12; Neapolitans 14; Tuscans 6; Swiss 19; Austrians 7; Prussians 87; Germans 22; Spaniards 32; Portuguese 6; English 50; Irish 101; Scotch 10; Russians 2; Poles 12; South Sea Islander 1; Maltese 3; Indian 1; African 1; Peruvian 1; Mexican 1; Circassian 1. New York *Herald*, June 10, 1868. The author's efforts to determine the number of Americans and Canadians who were actually enlisted in the Papal army in September 1870, at the moment when the Italian army entered Rome to deprive the Pope of his temporal domains, have been unsuccessful. Research and inquiries have not yielded the desired information.

Included among the Americans who enlisted in the Papal army was John H. Surratt who was accused of implication in the conspiracy to murder President Lincoln. After escaping from the United States, by way of Canada and England, Surratt reached Rome where he enlisted in the Papal Zouaves under the name of "Watson". There he was recognized by Henri B. Ste. Marie, a Canadian Zouave also in the papal service. While negotiations were in progress with the papal authorities for his surrender, Surratt made his escape from the prison, where he was being held until definite instructions were received from Washington, narrowly missed death by leaping from a high precipice, made his way to Naples, but was later captured at Alexandria and brought back to the United States. His subsequent trial ended in the disagreement of the jury. Leo F. Stock, *United States Ministers to the Papal*

for the defense of the Holy Father originated with the New York *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*. In an editorial published in the issue of January 25, 1868, this newspaper recalled that some time before it had suggested, as “modestly” as it knew how, that the Catholics of the United States might raise, if not a battalion, at least a company of soldiers to defend the vested rights of the Holy Father the Pope, to his independence in the Holy City, and in the surrounding campagna that belonged to Rome. In making this suggestion the newspaper stated that it had merely hoped that some prominent Catholic laymen of the United States, with time and means to promote it, would, in their turn, pass it on to some American archbishops and in this manner set the suggestion afloat under proper auspices. However, in some American newspapers it was incorrectly reported that the *Freeman's Journal* was actually organizing such a force, with the result that the Catholic newspaper received from many sections of the country, especially from the South, West, and Northwest, a great many letters from officers and soldiers who had served with distinction in the Civil War, on one side or the other, and who now offered themselves, “out of devotion”, to go to Rome at once to enter the papal army. An exemplary and self-denying priest of Wisconsin, not only, according to the newspaper, had offered two “excellent” soldiers, but also to raise a substantial sum of money towards supporting them.

Referring to a rumor that Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati was warmly in favor of the project, the Catholic newspaper was emphatic in stating that without the spiritual direction of American prelates, and their blessing and oversight, it did not believe that the enterprise could be successful. However, if some of the archbishops or bishops in the principal cities of the United States gathered some of the lay gentlemen in whose wisdom and energy they had confidence, and authorized them to go to work, the *Freeman's Journal* was certain from what it had heard, that a battalion of élite soldiers – about five hundred strong – could be raised without effort and that, moreover, reliable pledges of permanent financial support could be obtained. Such an act of charity, according to the *Journal*, not only would not interfere with local interests, but would, in fact, excite “all who thus contributed to defend the Holy Father and the Church of Rome, from robbery and subjugation,” to greater generosity towards charities and religion at home. In view of the fact that the Archbishop of Cincinnati was the oldest of America's prelates, and that the Catholic religion was in such a flourishing condition in that city, the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* thought that it would be most proper for

States: instructions and despatches 1848-68. Washington, D.C., 1933 xxxviii. The dramatic career of Surratt, especially the story of his arrest and trial, is given by Thomas M. Harris, *The Assassination of Lincoln, a History of the Great Conspiracy* (Boston, 1892). Concerning the part played by Ste. Marie in the Surratt affair, see Stock, *op. cit.*, 359, 360, 362, 363, 365, 367, 369, 370-72, 411-412, 413.

Archbishop Purcell to take the initiative and inaugurate the movement with or without consultation with other prelates.

In extending an invitation for a discussion on its suggestion from anyone in a position to advance its object, the *Freeman's* journal promised the free use of its columns and its own financial contribution.² However, the suggestion of the *Freeman's Journal* failed to elicit any considerable interest in the plan. Therefore, to stir American Catholics into action and to demonstrate what it called “the exceptional bearing” of Catholics in the United States towards the Holy Father as viewed at Rome, the newspaper³ published two letters – one by C. Carrol Tevis, former Brigadier General in the United States service, and at that time, a private in the pontifical Zouaves; the other letter by an anonymous but “distinguished ecclesiastic” of the United States who was then passing the winter in Rome.

In his letter dated Rome, January 17, 1868, Mr. Tevis complained that though world-zealous champions of the Church were hurrying from all the corners of the world to her defense, yet from the United States – “that nation of soldiers” – only two men were found willing to take up the musket for their faith. Besides, he stated, though contributions were being received in Rome from all parts of the world for the support of the Pontifical army, the Catholics of the United States, seemed “utterly indifferent to the necessities and suffering of Christ’s Vicar on Earth,” whose supremacy they pretended, however, to recognize. It was money, more than men, that was required, according to Mr. Tevis. If America was too far to send volunteers, there were brave hearts in Europe ready to do battle in the cause of Pius IX; but contributions could be made for the support of those volunteers and sent on for that purpose to the pontifical treasury. Stressing the work of German, French, and Belgian Catholic societies organized to raise funds for the Pontifical army, Mr. Tevis expressed the hope that from among the wealthy Catholics of America some could be found who could contribute, from their abundance, a paltry sum which they would unhesitatingly expend in the pursuit of pleasure. In conclusion, Mr. Tevis urged the priests, the bishops, and all the faithful Catholics in the United States to imitate the “noble example” of the Catholics of Europe, and thus show to the world that America was not deaf to the call of religion and justice. The crisis, he said, was at hand when Pius IX would need all the material and moral support of the Catholic world. “I would not wish,” he declared, “that my countrymen should be the only race recreant to its duty.”

The anonymous writer of the second letter, dated Rome, January 20, 1868, reminded the Catholics of their duty to defend the patrimony of St. Peter, and added that the only way of settling the vexed Roman Question was to show Garibaldi, his aids and abettors that the Catholic world was determined to defend the Pope, and that this determination would be followed by a force sufficient to sweep him and his followers out of existence. If this were done, the writer stated,

² New York *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*, Jan. 25, 1868.

³ New York *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*, February 15, 1868.

the Roman Question would soon be settled. As to the protection of Louis Napoleon,⁴ the writer placed little trust in it, for though the French, as a people, he wrote, would without doubt defend the rights of the Holy See, less reliance could be placed in their Emperor. Furthermore, he added, the Holy Father should not be under obligation to any one power for the security of his temporal dominions; it should be the pride and glory of the Catholics of every clime, that they were defenders of his rights and of his inheritance. He concluded by reminding the Catholics that the patrimony of Peter was the common property of Catholic Christendom and that therefore it became the duty of every Catholic to defend it.

Accepting the reproach of Mr. Tevis for the “tepidity” shown by Americans in the defense of the Holy Father, and in him, of the freedom of the Catholic religion, the *Freeman's Journal*, as a means of showing its own willingness to amend, appealed for money to be taken up by special collections, suggesting that the following brief address to the Pope, with a long array of substantial subscribers, be sent to him:

Most Holy Father: We learn that the foes of religion and well-ordered human society are in arms to destroy your independence, that we recognize to be essential to the peaceful government of the Catholic Church throughout the world. We therefore ask the privilege of furnishing a well-appointed force of Catholic soldiers, to the number of . . . men, and to support these, at our own expense, as a rampart for you, as the visible Head of the Church, and Vicar of Christ, against your enemies!⁵

On another page of the same issue the *Freeman's Journal*⁶ announced that it had already received a total of \$80.40 from ten different persons or collections which it was transmitting to the order of the Cardinal Vicar, Patrizi.⁷ However, the newspaper insisted that since it wanted the subscription for the defense of the Holy Father to be an expression of the devotion of the Catholics of America to the temporal independence of the Holy Father, far from rejecting large contributions, it desired to have more in small sums.

⁴ Ever since the fall of the Roman Republic in 1849 the French Emperor maintained troops in Rome to protect the Pope from domestic and external attacks. By the provisions of the Convention of September 15, 1864, the French troops were gradually withdrawn from Rome. However, they were ordered back to Rome as a result of Garibaldi's attempt to capture Rome in 1867. The French remained in Rome to 1870 when the Franco-Prussian war forced the French Emperor to recall his troops from Rome.

⁵ New York *Freeman's Journal*, Feb. 15, 1868.

⁶ February 15, 1868, 5.

⁷ Costantino Patrizi (1798-1876). Born in Siena. Made a Cardinal in 1836.

But the response to the appeal of the *Freeman's Journal* cannot be considered as having been satisfactory, for by March 7, 1868, it had remitted to the Cardinal Vicar of Rome a total of only \$624.98. However, though the total amount contributed was small, yet admirable examples of Catholic faith were demonstrated in some of the letters received with the contributions to this fund. One of the "little boys" from Georgetown College enclosed one dollar, which represented his "pocket money for the next eight weeks."⁸

The American fund was greatly increased by Mr. George Peabody,⁹ a wealthy American, who happened to have been in Rome at about this time, and who on leaving the Pope, left five millions of francs for the Pontifical treasury. However, the Paris correspondent of the *London Post*, as reported by the *New York Herald*,¹⁰ did not fail to add that many people doubted whether Mr. Peabody could have extended his generosity to the support of the papal Zouaves.

As a means of exciting increased interest among American Catholics, in a second letter from Rome, dated January 23, 1868, Mr. Tevis stated that "decency" did not admit of a full recital of all the sacrilegious acts committed by this "band of heroes," as it pleased certain anti-Catholic papers to call them; and he regretted that the sympathies of the American press, for everything which bore the name of a republican movement, simply because it was called republican, should blind them to the truth and induce their correspondents to conceal the outrages, which would have disgusted the blackest of Abolitionists. Even the most bigoted Protestant, he declared, would scarcely dare to approve the proceedings of these "ruffians" who spat upon the Host, who used the pulpit as a sink, and who, after going through the mockery of a trial, chopped off the head and limbs of an image of the Blessed Redeemer, and thus trampled them under foot, with every word and gesture of contempt which bestiality could imagine. "I am not echoing a mere rumor in this," wrote Mr. Tevis, "I state facts which defy contradiction; yet such papers as the *London Times*, expressly forbid their correspondents to say anything favorable to the cause of the temporal power of the Pope." The Americans as well as the English public, continued Mr. Tevis, had been kept in gross ignorance and were led to believe that Rome was another word for ignorance, superstition and cruelty; that the gallant soldiers who fought in defense of their faith were lawless mercenaries, and that Garibaldian "cut-throats, the sweepings of European prisons," were pure-minded patriots. All this was credited as though it were gospel, Mr. Tevis wrote, simply because Rome and its champions were Catholic, and because the mirage of a republic was made to appear before their eyes. They forgot, or they had never known, what the true nature of Garibaldi's republic

⁸ New York *Freeman's Journal*, March 14, 1868.

⁹ George Peabody (1795-1869). Born in South Danvers, Mass. Was banker in London. During this visit to Rome, Mr. Peabody endowed an art school in that city.

¹⁰ New York *Herald*, April 2, 1868.

was ... nothing but the triumph of flawless adventurers intent upon rapine and the destruction of every institution of morality, decency, and religion. According to Mr. Tevis, there was not a thinking man in Italy who did not recognize the importance of the present government of the peninsula, and who did not admit, at heart, that the confederation guaranteed at Villafranca and Zurich,¹¹ was the only system by which the Italians could be united. To Catholics the question was still more interesting, "for in the *Union*, not the *Unity* of Italy could be found the only real guarantee for the independence of their Church." Notwithstanding the rules of diplomacy, Mr. Tevis concluded, war had to come soon, and if Catholics wished to support their spiritual head against his enemies, they could not lose time.¹²

Stirred by these appeals and realizing that the Holy Father as a result of the withdrawal of the French protection was dependent upon his newly recruited army for the safety of his position, a gentleman from St. Louis, Mo., in repeated letters to the Pontifical Minister of Arms represented that both men and funds were ready. At the same time Catholic citizens of the United States asked Mr. Cushman,¹³ American consul in Rome, for information concerning the possibility of forming companies in the United States for the purpose of entering the Papal army. One such request came from Charles B. Gillespie of Freeport, Pa., who said that he had been an officer during the Civil War, and could easily raise in the United States a company of seasoned soldiers for the Papal army. Mr. Cushman did not reply to these communications, as he understood the laws of the country forbade the enlistment of American citizens for service in foreign countries. In his letter to the Hon. William H. Seward, the Secretary of State, dated Rome, April 20, 1868, Mr. Cushman continued:

This movement has been set on foot in consequence I presume of the formation of some companies in Canada for the same service. I have every reason to believe that recruiting for the Papal army has ceased by the wish of the pontifical government. The army which at the beginning of the Garibaldian movement last summer numbered only 11,000 men, now has reached the number of 18,000 a force which even with the assistance rendered by private subscription of the friends of the papal soldiers, the pontifical government does not wish to maintain particularly as there seems to be no

¹¹ After the war of 1859, the Armistice of Villafranca (July 11) and the treaty of peace signed at Zurich (Nov. 7) between Napoleon III and Francis Joseph of Austria provided for an Italian confederacy with the Pope as honorary president, and for the retention of Venetia by Austria.

¹² New York *Freeman's Journal*, Feb. 22, 1868.

¹³ Edwin C. Cushman became consul in Rome in Feb. 1865. In 1867 he had been reprimanded by the State Department for having fought with the papal troops against Garibaldi. See: L. F. Stock, "An American Consul joins the Papal Zouaves". *Catholic World*, Nov. 1930, CXXXII, 146-150.

immediate prospect of another invasion of its territory. One brigade of French troops continue to occupy Civita Vecchia (5,000 men) with material of war for three divisions in case of need. Civita Vecchia has been strongly fortified and now I am assured could resist a siege from a large force, for six months pushed forward to completion and I am satisfied that the city of Rome could as it stands sustain a siege in any event until assistance could arrive from without. There is a rumor here in military circles to the effect that in the event of war breaking out between France and Prussia, and France being compelled to withdraw her troops from the Roman territory an arrangement had been made with the consent of the French government for a force of Spanish troops to take the place of the French. This is merely a rumor, but taking it into consideration the amount of money that is being spent upon fortifications which would be useless for a defence without the presence of foreign soldiers to assist I infer that the authorities here are counting on some such arrangement.

In reply the consul was advised by F. W. Seward, the Assistant Secretary of State, that by act of Congress the enlistment of citizens for services in foreign countries was forbidden.¹⁴

In the meantime, great interest was excited in Canada as a result of the appeals made from every Catholic pulpit for aid for the Pope. The French press began to advocate the sending not only of money but of men to the aid of the Supreme Pontiff. The movement speedily became popular. Every pulpit preached the Nineteenth Century Crusade. The cause, endowed with attributes of romance and religious enthusiasm, enlisted the sympathies of every Catholic in Canada. A Central Committee was established, and the movement was placed under its direction. In communicating with the papal authorities at Rome, it was found that unless a full battalion of six hundred men was sent forward, the Canadian recruits would have been distributed among the various battalions then existing.¹⁵ This

¹⁴ Act of April 20, 1818. (United States Statutes at Large, II, 448, sec. 2). Cushman's despatch of April 20, 1868, and F. W. Seward's despatch to Cushman May 12, 1868, were found in the Archives of the American Consulate in Rome, but are now in the National Archives, Washington, D. C.

¹⁵ *La Minerve*, Jan. 27, 1868, published the reply it had received from General Kanzler concerning the conditions for enlistment in Rome. The conditions were: 1. The Roman government cannot undertake to organize a Canadian corps as a separate unit such as the Antibes Legion unless it consists of from 500 to 600 men. Likewise, it cannot assure to give them Canadian officers, for this is possible only to a certain degree. Men who have the rank of officers in Canada may not hold the same rank in Rome; for there the French system of

did not suit the promoters of the scheme. They wished Canada to send a complete regiment of her own, and thus to eclipse all Europe in her effort in favor of the Catholic power. The men, too, wished for a separate organization, for their own officers, and their own bivouac ... "a little Canada on the banks of the far away yellow Tiber," to quote from the *Montreal Gazette* [February 19, 1868.] It was, therefore, resolved to send six hundred men to Rome. For this purpose every *curé* in Canada became a local Peter the Hermit, and every Catholic newspaper office a recruiting bureau. Contributions poured in, and names were rapidly added to the lists, until at last the Committee was compelled to announce that no more recruits could, for a while, be received.

However, the movement in Canada was not without opposition. Many people argued that the enlistment of men in Canada, destined probably for service against a power with whom the mother country was at peace, was illegal. If they said, no fire was too heavy, no imprisonment too long for men who enlisted soldiers to fight in the American army, the same rigid justice should prevail in this case also. Nor were rumors of intended governmental interference wanting; but the facts remain that the men were enlisted, the money subscribed, and the whole movement successfully conducted, no man daring to molest them or to make them afraid.

The Central Committee, which had its headquarters at Montreal, consisted of the following gentlemen: Olivier Berthelet, President; Louis Beaudry, Vice-President; Alfred Larocque, Treasurer; Joseph Royal and Sévère Rivard, Secretaries; C. A. Leblanc, E. L. de Bellefeuille, F. X. A. Trudel, and Rodrigue Masson. The report of the Central Committee stated that the collections it had made, exclusive of the donations made for the aid of the Pope by the various congregations in Canada, in February 1868, amounted to \$16,594. Among the donations were many certificates of the pontifical loan, a large amount of which had been taken up in Canada, the year before. Many of the Zouaves themselves contributed liberally to the funds which served to equip the expedition. The various churches, convents, and religious societies also took a prominent part. Among the private subscriptions in the city of Montreal were: C. S. Rodier, Jr., \$200; Miss Clara Symes, \$100; Hubert Paré, \$100; C. A. Leblanc, \$100; Victor Hudon, \$100; Alfred Bastien, \$100; L. W. Charles Schiller, \$100; L. D. Demers, \$100; and over a score of \$50 subscribers.

military exercises is followed. 2. Recruits will be accepted only on condition that they serve for 2, 3, 4, or 5 years. 3. Enlisted men receive no subsidy. Their pay is fixed at five cents per diem. 4. To be accepted a man must not be less than four feet, eight inches in height. 5. Men must not be over forty years of age; they must not be married; widowers with young children are not wanted. 6. Men must be strong and in good health. 7. No one may be accepted without a baptismal certificate showing his age and proof that he is a Catholic. 8. A candidate must obtain from his confessor a certificate of good conduct. 9. A candidate must be examined by a physician showing that he is fit for war.

On February 18, 1868, the Parish Church in Montreal was the scene of one of the most imposing and important religious solemnities which had ever taken place in Canada. The occasion was the departure of the first detachment of the Canadian Pontifical Zouaves for Rome, and the main ceremony was the benediction and presentation of their banner. A three-column account of the ceremony appeared in the February 19, 1868, issue of the Montreal Gazette.

From an early hour people began to assemble in the great Parish Church. It was said, according to the newspaper report, that “the rush was much after the manner of an excited crowd assisting at a sale of tickets for the first Dicken’s readings.” As early as three o’clock some cautious people had taken time by the forelock and their seats at the same time, and were grimly entrenched in an impregnable position, watching the crowd that surged up and down the aisles, and contemplated open-mouthed the decorations. At seven o’clock, the crush was tremendous, every door being thronged, the pews and vast galleries packed to their utmost capacity, and the aisles choked with a struggling mass of humanity. The church was said to hold twelve thousand persons. Experienced observers estimated that at least fifteen thousand people were present.

The ceremony commenced at eight o’clock by the entrance of the Zouaves, followed by the members of the various societies wearing their regalia. The band of the Chasseurs Canadiens preceded them. The musical program was under the direction of Mr. l’abbé Barbarin and Mr. A. J. Boucher, aided by a choir and an orchestra, numbering over three hundred. The band of the Chasseurs, led by Mr. Hardy, was also present, and Mr. J. B. Labelle presided at the organ. The *soli* were Miss Joly (soprano), Messrs. Napoléon Beaudry and Joseph Hudon (tenors), and Mr. François Lavoie (baritone).

At this point in the program the address was pronounced by M^r Lafèche, the coadjutor of Bishop Cooke, of Three Rivers, who, in company with M^r Baillargeon, Archbishop of Quebec, was present. M^r Lafèche, who enjoyed a high reputation as an orator, first assured the audience that every precaution had been taken to prevent accidents, urging upon them the necessity, in case of any alarm, of remaining quiet and avoiding panic. He then delivered an address in French, from the text *Esto forte in bello*, – Be strong in war and fight. Coming to his own time, M^r Lafèche reminded his listeners that a terrible struggle was going on.

After the address of M^r Lafèche the presentation of the colors to the Zouaves took place. The flag was attached to a maple pole, with a golden spearhead and tassels. It was of white silk, with the keys and mitre in gold on the reverse. It bore an escutcheon azure, with a bar, argent, on which were the beaver and maple leaves, Canadian emblems. A cross surmounted the shield, behind which were crossed two silver battle axes. Beneath it was the word “Canada” in gold, and upon the blue of the shield was inscribed the motto of the corps, “Aime Dieu et va ton chemin,” Love God, and go thy way.

The banner which had previously been blessed, was by the venerable Bishop of Montreal handed to Captain Taillefer, who, accompanied by Messrs. Chouinard (Quebec), Hughes (Three Rivers), and De Cazes (St. Hyacinthe), received it for the Zouaves. The Bishop asked them:

Will you brave children of religion and the country take your oath to do nothing during the noble crusade on which you are about to enter, which might make blush your faith and your land, of which you desire to be the ornament and the glory, in the eyes of stranger nations?

The Zouaves answered with a shout "Yes, we promise it," and the consecrated banner was handed to these Canadian Crusaders.

The Zouaves were described as a splendid body of men; all young, healthy, and enthusiastic, with a perfect knowledge of military duties and science. With four exceptions they were military schoolmen. The Zouaves, after passing three days *en retraite*, partook of the Holy Communion in the morning at the Church of the Gesu, at the hands of the Bishop of Montreal. They then breakfasted with the Jesuit Fathers and members of the Committee.

The Zouaves left Montreal on February 19, at 3 o'clock for New York, where they arrived on the following day. The men were accompanied by Major Barnard, Messrs. A. Leblanc, and J. Royal who constituted a committee deputed to attend to the wants of the men during transit. On their arrival in New York City the men were welcomed by Bishop Pinsonnault and priests connected with St. Francis Xavier's church, which offered the hospitality of the college during their brief sojourn in New York City. The Canadians sailed two days later on the "St. Laurent" for Havre.¹⁶

In an editorial on the departure of this contingent of the Pope's army, the *New York Times* stated that though the contribution of the Canadians would attest to the Pope the devotion of a far-distant people, there was no doubt in its mind that the end of the temporal power, and the institution of a new power constituted on diametrically opposite principles, was close at hand. For one thing, the *Times* added, "the fall of the last of the old ecclesiastical governments was like the extinction of a decaying race."¹⁷ On the other hand, the *Freeman's Journal* characterized the conduct of the Canadian Catholics as "chivalrous" but, at the same time, found that there was something very humiliating to Catholic laic associations in New York, since the Canadian soldiers had gone through New York City, as through a place where the Catholic religion was in danger of being insulted, if openly greeted. When the next detachment arrived from Canada, asked

¹⁶ New York *Herald*, Feb. 22, 1868.

¹⁷ New York *Times*, Feb. 22, 27, 1868.

the Catholic paper, was it to go through New York, as the first -detachment had gone, as if it were a city of Turks, and not of Christians?¹⁸

The Canadian Zouaves – 137 in number – arrived in Rome on March 10, 1868. Their arrival was the occasion of a great celebration in the Eternal City, producing great joy at the Vatican.¹⁹ A correspondent of the New York *Herald* in a letter from Rome dated March 20, 1868, revealed that this detachment had brought the sum of 200,000 francs for its maintenance, adding that the next company was to bring an additional sum of 300,000 francs. According to this correspondent, immediately upon arriving in Rome the Canadian volunteers marched, with colors flying and music playing to the Piazza San Pietro, where they filed before the Pope, who had stationed himself at one of the windows of the Vatican. Their smart, robust appearance and the perfection of their equipment elicited admiration from all, except, of course, he added, those of the Romans who were fighting to rid themselves of the pontifical government, and who bitterly hated the foreigners who came to keep the yoke upon their necks. After marching past His Holiness the volunteers entered the Cathedral of St. Peter, to pray at the Apostle's tomb. It was expected in Rome, according to the correspondent, that the Canadians would form a distinct battalion of about 1,500 men, when they had all reached Rome. When the first detachment arrived in the Eternal City, it had a very handsome white silk flag, embroidered with gold and precious stones, bearing the triple crown and crossed keys on one side and the Canadian arms on the other, with the motto, "Love God and go thy way". They received an intimation, however, that the pontifical colors were white and yellow, and that they could not, therefore, carry a flag entirely white. Orders were immediately given for the manufacture of a new standard of the right colors, of equally rich materials as the one condemned by the Papal authorities, and equally gorgeous ornamentation.²⁰

The enlistment of Canadians in the papal army quite naturally aroused the anxiety of the Italian government which was of course also keenly interested in the international aspects of the question. In reply to an inquiry from his government, Mr. Cerruti,²¹ the Italian minister in Washington, in a letter marked No. 12, political series, confidential, dated Washington, February 14, 1868, informed Mr. Menabrea²² that in general he was in a position to state that the Enlistment Act was not being violated in the United Provinces inasmuch as the papal government

¹⁸ New York *Freeman's Journal*, Feb. 29, 1868.

¹⁹ *Civiltà Cattolica*, Rome, 1868, II, 108.

²⁰ New York *Herald*, April 13, 1868.

²¹ Marcello Cerruti, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, Presented credentials August 30, 1867. Served to July 1869.

²² Luigi Federico Menabrea (1809-96). Marquis of Valdora. Prime minister and minister of foreign affairs from Oct. 27, 1867, to Dec. 13, 1869. Later Italian ambassador at London and Paris.

was not at war against the Italian government. The enlistments, according to Cerruti, were made through a committee of citizens; the recruits had to be Catholics; they received free transportation and five cents per day; up to January 30, only twenty soldiers had left for Rome; their condition permitted them to pay for their passage on board English steamers; they would not exist as a separate corps, that is, as a Canadian unit, until they reached five or six hundred in number; it was predicted that, under the conditions, this corps would not exceed 1500 or 2000 in number.²³

In order to furnish his government with as complete information as he could possibly gather on the subject, Cerruti addressed a specific inquiry on the subject to His Majesty's Royal Consul of Italy in Montreal. The reply to the questions submitted is contained in the following despatch from John Cowan, the Acting Consul, dated Montreal, January 20, 1868.²⁴

CONSOLATO DI S. M.
il Re d' Italia
Canada

Montreal, January 30, 1868.

H. E. Comm. M. Cerruti,
Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary ecc.
from H. M. the King of Italy, Washington.

Sir—

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your Excellency's communication of the 16th inst. and beg to subjoin replies to the several queries put forward therein:

I. There is no Provincial law on the subject of foreign enlistments. The law which applies in the case is the Imperial "Foreign Enlistment Act," the provisions of which were enforced by proclamation of the Queen at the outset of the American war.

II. So far no steps have been taken by the authorities British or Canadian. It has been argued in the public press, that inasmuch as the Papal States and the Kingdom of Italy, are not at war, the "Foreign Enlistment Act" does not apply to the cases in question. This is open to question however, and the only effectual way to test the subject would be the institution of proceedings under the provisions of the said "Foreign Enlistment Act."

III. These enrolments are made exclusively by a local committee of citizens, residing in, and belonging to Montreal, who draft the manifestoes under the supervision of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montreal (M^r Bourget) and claim to act under, and by, his authority. The Bishop has issued

²³ MS Archives Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome.

²⁴ MS Archives Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome.

a pastoral letter, on the subject, recommending the proposed Canadian Zouave Corps to the consideration of the faithful of the diocese, and calling upon them to subscribe 25 cents a piece towards the fund for its organization, and he estimates in said letter, that as there are 400,000 Catholics in his diocese, the sum he demands at their hands will collectively amount to \$100,000. He further announces in his pastoral letter that he will personally assist in the collection of this sum, and calls on the curés throughout his diocese to constitute themselves collectors in their several parishes, and accept all donations, offered by the richer members of their congregations, on his behalf. The pastoral letter has been publicly read from all the pulpits in the diocese of Montreal by the curés, and they are now canvassing for subscriptions. One Catholic lady in this vicinity alone has given \$1,600 and there is reason to believe that the amount collected will far exceed the sum named by the Bishop. It should also be observed that all the Catholic bishops in Lower Canada, and the Bishop of Ottawa in Upper Canada, have issued similar pastoral letters.

IV. Men are enrolled from both town and country, and generally speaking, are of the middle and lower classes.

V. It would be impossible at this comparatively early period in the organization of the corps to obtain lists of the names of those who have joined, but they will doubtless soon be published in the newspapers, which may be styled the organs of the movement – “Le Nouveau Monde” and “La Minerve.”

VI. The persons said to have enlisted are all native Canadians of French descent. The Irish Roman Catholics subscribed \$5,000 one Sunday recently towards the movement, but none are known to have joined as yet.

VII. No inducements are held out beyond a free passage to Rome, and the regular pay, and rations of the Papal army.

VIII. Only 15 or 20 have gone forward to date. They paid their own passages, and went via steamship at New York and Portland.

IX. Separately, or by twos or threes, independent of all organizations. The corps itself, it should be remembered, is not organized as such as yet, but when it is, and ready to proceed it is understood that it will go by steamship in one or more bodies, the passages of the men being defrayed by the Montreal Committee. It is also to be noted that unless the corps numbers 500 or 600 men on its arrival at Rome, it will not be allowed to exist as a separate Canadian organization commanded by officers of its own selection. This is set forth in the annexed communication in *La Minerve* of the 27th January, 1868, which also states the period of service, pay, etc. and was evidently communicated to *La Minerve* by a French Canadian priest then in Rome, after a personal conference with General Kanzler.

X. XI. This is answered in No. VIII. A few more perhaps 10 or 15 intend to go forward at their own expense, and are either young lawyers, doctors, or young men of wealthy parents.

XII. It is difficult to say as yet how many can be obtained in Canada, but speaking from present observation, certainly not more than 1500 to 2000, and even this would perhaps be a high estimate. The Committee here have called for 300 or 400 men, and no other committee exists in Canada. Their proceedings are kept as secret as possible.

XIII. The antecedents of the young men who have gone forward, their conversations and their associations, conclusively prove that they are solely actuated by devotion to the cause and person of the Pope.

XIV. The recruits are not actuated by mercenary motives. The smallness of the pay (about 5 cents a day and rations) and the absence of bounty, proves this.

XV. Some of the wealthiest Roman Catholics of this city are on the committee, and the office bearers are among the most respected and influential Catholics in the country.

XVI. No very strong feeling has yet been elicited, but the Catholics universally sympathize with the movement to raise men to assist the Pope. They generally look upon the question of the temporal power as one of faith, and believe in it as much as a religion's dogma.

(Signed) John Cowan
Acting Consul.

The official attitude of the papal government at this time with regard to foreign enlistments is not clear. According to a despatch from Rome, as reported in the New York *Herald*²⁵ from a London cable, the Pope invited the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States to raise one thousand volunteers for the papal army authorizing them to make such terms with the recruits as they deemed necessary and proper.

However, fearing that enthusiasm for the cause of the Church seemed likely to induce other young men to volunteer to serve with the Papal Zouaves, the Government of His Holiness, according to the Rome correspondent of the New York *Herald*,²⁶ deemed it advisable to inform these volunteers upon what terms they would be received in the Papal army. Accordingly, this correspondent reported that on May 21, 1868, Cardinal Barnabo,²⁷ the Prefect of the Propaganda College, forwarded to the Catholic bishops in the United States a Latin circular informing them that the Holy Father had deigned to accept the offer they had made

²⁵ May 23, 1868.

²⁶ New York *Herald*, June 10, 1868.

²⁷ Alessandro Barnabo (1801-74). Born in Foligno. In 1856 he was made a Cardinal, Prefect of the Propaganda.

to him of sending soldiers to recruit his army, but only on condition that these soldiers would be sent to Rome, maintained there for three years and then sent back to America, entirely at their [the bishops'] expense, or rather of the faithful who contributed pecuniary offerings for the defense of the Holy See. By means of this circular the Pope, through Cardinal Barnabo urged the American bishops to choose persons "fitted by their morals and piety to become defenders of the Apostolic See." A prospectus in Italian from the War Office was joined to the Latin circular, which stated that the battalion of American volunteers was to be composed of not more than one thousand men, to be recruited in the Northern and Southern States; the men to be all Catholics, aged from eighteen to thirty years; that they were to bear the banner of the Holy See; that they should bring with them funds necessary for their maintenance; that General Tevis was named Lieutenant Colonel of this corps, and Mr. Randot, presumably American, Major. In reporting the chief provisions of Cardinal Barnabo's circular, the Rome correspondent of the *Herald*²⁸ stated that he had been reliably informed that up to May 23, 1868, not more than 150,000 francs had been subscribed towards the formation and maintenance of the battalion of American volunteers. The correspondent had no doubt, however, that Cardinal Barnabo's circular, when published by the Catholic bishops of the United States in their respective dioceses, would arouse the piety of their parishioners to more ample donations, without which, he concluded, the Pontifical American battalion would never be paraded in the Piazza San Pietro to receive the apostolic blessing of His Holiness.

The Pope's appeal for soldiers and money for their support from America was received with mixed feelings by the lay press. In an editorial the *New York Times*²⁹ expressed the hope that no open and avowed steps to obtain recruits for the Pope be allowed, since it would be an open disregard of the obligations of neutrality, "which we have impressed upon all foreign nations, and which we profess to respect ourselves." While no one could stop individual citizens from entering the military service of the Pope, yet the *New York Times* felt that it had "a right to say that no foreign power" be allowed to open recruiting stations for its own armies within its boundaries.

In what was probably an effort to discourage Americans from entering the papal army, the Providence (R. I.) *Daily Journal*³⁰ stated that the Pope was unfortunate in the composition of his standing army, since it was expensive, ill-disciplined and quarrelsome. The different nationalities in the army would not keep the peace with one another, and their collisions were bloody and often fatal. All attempts of the officers to put down these feuds had been ineffectual, according

²⁸ New York *Herald*, June 10, 1868.

²⁹ New York *Times*, June 11, 1868.

³⁰ August 4, 1868. The New York *Daily Times*, February 24, 1868, also published a letter from an English Zouave expressing great dissatisfaction with the treatment he had received while in the papal army

to the paper, as the mongrel host could not be made homogeneous. Even the Antibes Legion, it stated, which Napoleon considered a part of the French army, and to which his marshals gave orders, shared in the general insubordination, since desertions were frequent and discontent was widespread.

In a full discussion of the various aspects of the question the New York *Herald*³¹ concluded, in an editorial, that the Pope had been “very wise” in stipulating the conditions under which he would receive recruits from America, adding that “if his friends here wish to make Rome a barrack we can have no objection:”

The New York *Sun*,³² however, did not consider it illegal to recruit soldiers in America for the Pope. If the Holy Father, it pointed out, were at war with any power friendly to the United States, the American Government would then have been bound to interfere to prevent him from hiring soldiers in this country; but as he was not, the *Sun* supposed that he had the same right to enlist men for his army that Americans themselves had to engage them as miners or farmers.

Meanwhile, it was reported by the Rome correspondent of the New York *Herald*³³ that Cardinal Barnabò had received a communication from some of the Catholic bishops of the United States anticipating difficulty on many counts in realizing the command conferred by the Roman Government on General Tevis of the battalion of the United States volunteers to be raised for the service of His Holiness. In spite of this, however, the bishops did not despair of furnishing some men for the defense of the Church. It was felt in Rome, however, according to the correspondent, that a separate American battalion would not be raised or sent to Rome at all and that, at the most, only about 200 volunteers could be forwarded to Rome, and it was planned to incorporate them with the Zouaves.

In another letter dated Rome, August 11, 1868, the correspondent of the New York *Herald*³⁴ revealed that the Prefect of Propaganda Fide had recently received letters from some American bishops who demonstrated the hopelessness of ever realizing the plan to recruit American soldiers for the Pope. It became necessary, therefore, to cancel the commission which had been conferred upon General Tevis, who, in the meantime, had left Rome with letters of recommendation for America to raise and organize the battalion.

At this point it appears that General Tevis became the subject of a personal attack published by four Catholic prelates of America in the *Tablet*³⁵ of New York:

³¹ June 11, 1868..

³² June 18, 1868

³³ Aug. 11, 1868

³⁴ Sept. 1, 1868.

³⁵ The *Tablet* for this year is unavailable at the Columbia University Library or at New York Public Library and therefore it has not been possible to examine first hand the nature of the attack referred to.

To vindicate himself against these attacks which had been brought to his attention while in Paris, General Tevis, in a communication to the editor of the *New York Herald*,³⁶ sent for publication the answer of the Pontifical Minister of War to his report announcing the failure of his mission to the United States. The letter read:

Ministry of Arms, Ministerial Bureau³⁷
Rome, July 25, 1868.

My dear General: I have received the letter which you were so good as to address me on the 19th inst. I now forward you the instructions of His Holiness on the subject of the question of American volunteers.

These instructions, which are very formal, are the entire abandonment of the project of raising troops to which you had devoted your generous efforts. In notifying you of this decision, which thus closes your mission, it is from a satisfaction of conscience more even than a duty to do justice to the zeal and devotion of which you have never ceased to give proofs in this matter. It was through no fault of yours that your mission was not attended with all the success which had been hoped for, and I trust that you will know how to merit by your self-abnegation and submission, as you have hitherto done by your intentions and your actions, the gratitude which attends all acts of disinterested devotion. I beg you to accept the assurance of that gratitude in the name of the Pontifical army and in my name personally, and to believe always in my sentiments of high consideration.

The General Minister of Arms, Kanzler³⁸

To General Carroll Tevis.

After reviewing very briefly in his letter the part he had played in the project of raising volunteers in the United States for the Papal army, General Tevis concluded that he was at a loss to conceive the object of the attack upon him except that "it was prompted by a determination to defeat at any cost a movement in which they were unwilling to cooperate themselves, but which might have succeeded without their assistance".³⁹

Without trying to go further into the question of Tevis' responsibility in the failure of his mission, since we lack the necessary documents on which to base a fair judgment, the fact is that this ended all efforts to recruit men in the United

³⁶ *New York Herald*, Aug. 12, 1868.

³⁷ *Ibid*

³⁸ Hermann Kanzler (1822-88). Born in Baden. Was general in pontifical army. Concerning his services in papal army see: *La campagna romana dell' esercito pontificio nel 1867 descritta dal generale Kanzler ed documentata*. (Bologna, 1868); R. De Cesare, *The last days of papal Rome*. (N.Y. 1909) pp. 270-271; and Leo Stock, *op. cit.*, xxxii, 187n, 349n, 349, 357, 394.

³⁹ *New York Herald*, Aug. 12, 1868.

States for the Papal army. In a letter marked "Political series No. 83 – confidential," and dated Washington, March 19, 1869, Mr. Cerruti, the Italian minister, informed Menabrea that some bishops in the United States, fearing complications with the local government, opposed the move, preferring to concentrate all their efforts instead on sending large sums of money which under the name of Peter's Pence was collected in Catholic Churches once a year. With reference to the Canadian Zouaves, Mr. Cerruti then quoted from a letter that Mr. Gustavo M. Finotti, the Italian vice consul in Boston, had just received from a friend in Montreal "I have just seen Major Barnard, one of the volunteer officers who went to Rome with the first detachment of Canadian Zouaves. He has tendered his resignation as an English officer and is planning to leave for Rome within a few days, determined as he is to enter the permanent service in the Pontifical army. He believes that soon new recruits will be sent and he is convinced, if funds arrive from Rome, that he can recruit another thousand men within three months. I do not believe it possible for many of those who already went there are tired of Rome and of the service. I am sending you a newspaper which refers to a letter that the Bishop of Montreal wrote from Paris, on this subject. You may form your own opinion on this matter. Here ends the letter which bears the date of the 10th instant".

In his letter, which is undated, M^{re} Bourget, the Bishop of Montreal, stated that in Rome a new Canadian corps was desired, and that everything possible was being done to find the funds through the French committee in Paris whose faith in the temporal power seemed to be great.

When, on September 20, 1870, the Italian army entered Rome and deposed the Pope from his temporal powers, the papal Zouaves, who had entered with so much enthusiasm the service of His Holiness, and who had proved themselves most gallant soldiers on many a hard-fought field, were disbanded. Many of them then entered the ranks of the French republican army, distinguishing themselves with great valor and hard fighting around Paris. Others were returning home. In announcing that a shipload, consisting of 290 of the Zouaves had arrived at Liverpool on October 15, and that most of them belonged to the Canadian contingent, the New York *Herald*⁴⁰ pointed out that "these young men had a military experience which will not be lost on them, and may be available when Canada gets into trouble with the mother country one of these days".

The steamship "Idaho" arrived at New York on November 4, 1870, from Liverpool, having on board 210 papal Zouaves. In making the announcement the New York *Herald*⁴¹ recalled that about 800 Canadians had sailed from New York in the early part of the year 1870, in the French steamships "Pereire" and "Lafayette". The men who were now returning to America had been engaged in the defense of the Eternal City when the Italian army made their first assault in the

⁴⁰ October 16, 1870.

⁴¹ November 5, 1870.

month of September. The Canadians had surrendered along with other defenders when Rome capitulated to the Italian army.

In anticipation of their arrival at New York, a meeting of their friends and compatriots was held in the city of Montreal at which, among other things, it was agreed that a committee of four influential citizens of that city should be appointed to proceed to New York and receive the men in the name of their friends, and afterward arrange for their safe conduct to Montreal. The committee consisted of M. le Chevalier de Bellefeuille, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Masson, Captain L. H. Roy, and M. Drolet. Besides a number of the friends of the Zouaves came down from Canada to participate in the festivities that were planned.⁴²

Meanwhile, another committee of twenty-two citizens of New York was organized to cooperate with the Canadian committee in planning a suitable reception in honor of the Zouaves. The New York committee included the Rev. W. Quinn, P. M. Haverty, and Messrs. McGee, O'Rourke, O'Shea, Sadler, Develin, McMasters, Kiely, Roberts, Hapin, and others. Mr. Haverty, who was appointed to collect money from which to defray the cost of the reception, reported that within two hours he had collected sufficient money from the twenty-two members of the committee, and that if he had wanted thrice the amount he could have received it. M. le Chevalier de Bellefeuille expressed his willingness to act as chairman to both the Canadian and New York committees.⁴³

Mr. Bernard Casserly, the General Superintendent of Emigration, placed a special steamer at the disposal of the joint committee to escort the Zouaves to shore. Accordingly, when on November 5, 1870, at 7 o'clock in the morning the "Idaho" arrived off the Battery the members of the reception committee boarded the "Idaho" which then proceeded to dock at the foot of Canal Street, pier 47. Here the Zouaves were met by numerous friends. The scene on the deck of the steamer was described as truly picturesque and exciting.

The Zouaves were accompanied from Rome by two chaplains, the Rev. Mr. Moreau of Montreal, and the Rev. Mr. Bicher, of the same district. The commander under whose charge they travelled was Colonel M. Chevalier Taillefer who was also assisted by Colonel Hugh Murray.

The Canadian Zouaves were described as a fine, healthy looking, stalwart body of men, the greater portion of them being well educated, and the whole, French and Irish, had a remarkably intelligent appearance.

A *Herald* reporter⁴⁴ was on board the "Idaho" at an early hour to interview their commander, Colonel Taillefer, concerning their experience while in Rome. The colonel revealed that during the siege the inhabitants of Rome acted in a strange and unaccountable manner towards the Zouaves. "In fact," he said, "the lower orders of the Italians in Rome, both men and women, treated the papal Zouaves

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ New York *Herald*, Nov. 6, 1870.

with great indignity, both before and after the capitulation... However, the officers of the Italian army treated them [Zouaves] with suavity and consideration..." Colonel Taillefer stated also that the Zouaves had been reviewed by the Pope from whom they received a benediction before leaving the city. Describing their departure from Rome, Colonel Taillefer stated that they were conveyed in filthy cattle trucks from Rome to Leghorn, where they were subjected to an imprisonment of ten days and placed on a ration of one and a half cents a day to buy food, and each man had four pounds of straw given to him for a bed; this latter, at the end of their term of imprisonment, was reduced to dust, so that for the last two nights they slept upon the stone floor of their prison. They were then sent to Liverpool in the "Injus", an Italian steamer. At Liverpool they were paraded before several of the English nobility and reviewed by the Marquis of Bute and Lord Denbigh and others.

When the Zouaves finally arrived at Castle Garden, in New York City, they were met by a numerous crowd who cheered them loudly as they formed in line, and marched in files of five deep along the west side of Broadway. The Sixty-Ninth New York regiment received them and formed a guard of honor to escort them from the landing place, at Castle Garden, to the church. The streets were crowded on both sides the whole distance between the Battery and Barclay Street. They entered St. Peter's Church where a solemn high mass was offered.

Father W. Quinn, the pastor of the church, in a brief address stated that Archbishop McClosky was to say the mass, but since he had to open a new church at Rochester on that day, he had been prevented from being present. Congratulating them upon their constancy and efficiency in the service of the Pope and welcoming them on their safe return, M^r Quinn then reminded them of their duty in their Saviour's cause and of the final reward they would receive from God. After singing the "Ave Maria Stella," the men then marched to the Astor House where an excellent breakfast was prepared for them, at the expense of twenty-two gentlemen, citizens of New York. These gentlemen agreed to meet these expenses and prepared the reception to the Zouaves as representatives of the Catholics of New York City, and also as slight recognition of their voluntary suffering and unparalleled good conduct during the time of their service in the cause of the Pope at Rome.

Colonel Taillefer thanked the inhabitants of New York City for their kindness, Father O'Farrell and Col. Bellefeuille then spoke in French. The Zouaves then marched to Twenty-Seventh Street to the New Haven and Vermont Railroad, for Montreal, where an ovation by the inhabitants of that city awaited them.