

NAME OF PROJECT: *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII*

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Recto [t-b, l-r]:

[typed] Facts About The Order Of Sons of Italy of Ontario / Mutual Benefit Society / The first Lodge of The Order of Sons of Italy was organized at Sault Ste. Marie Ont. / in 1910, after which followed, at intervals, the organization of other Lodges in Niagara / Falls, St. Catharines, Thorold, Hamilton and Toronto, until in 1926 the necessity was felt / to get together, from a Grand Lodge, and seek for a Charter from the Provincial Authorit- / ies. A Charter was granted in September 1926 incorporating The Order of Sons of Italy / of Ontario Mutual Benefit Society, and Licence to function from the Department of Insur- / ance followed. / The purpose of the Order of Sons of Italy is to promote welfare among its members and / to transact any class of Insurance for which a Mutual Benefit Society may be licenced / under the provisions of the Insurance Act. / Some of the conditions imposed upon those who applied for membership are: love Canada, / obey its laws and respect its Government and its Constitution; believe in the fundamental / idea of Country and Nation and not profess any doctrines whose postulates strive to / overthrow the social order; to be conscious of the fact that the contribution he or she / can give towards the greatness of Canada is the best in the tradition of his or her race. / The benefits deriving from membership in the Order are Sick and Mortuary. The Sick / benefits is optional and is administered by the Lodges under the direct supervision of / the Grand Lodge. The fees paid to the Sick benefit Fund is 50¢ per month per member, and / the benefits deriving from it is \$10. per week for 5 weeks and \$5. per week for an / additional 10 weeks in case of sickness. The Mortuary benefits is compulsory for all / members and is administered by the Grand Lodge. The fee paid to the Mortuary Fund is / 25¢ per month per member, and the benefits deriving from it is \$250. in case of death. / Above said fees is the per capita-tax for the expenses of the Grand Lodge and the / expenses for the administration of the local Lodges according to local needs. / The fundamental principles of the Organization is non political and non religious, t [crossed out] / that is to say no one can play politics in the Order nor foster religious ideas of / any kind, but the members are individually urged to take an active interest in

the / political life of Canada as any good citizen should; and in the application form a member / must state that he or she believes in God. However individual religious convictions / must be respected. in order to safeguard this important poin [sic], the by-laws, Article 47. / Section 2. 3. and 4. state as follows: / "Sec. 2. It is absolutely prohibited in the meetings of the Lodges or Grand / Lodge to enter into any discussion or argument of political or religious nature, / and in the "Good and welfare" section of the Ritual, members who wish to speak / must deal only in subjects pertaining the well being of the Order." / "Sec. 3. If any one contravenes the dispositions of the above Section 2. the / presiding Officer must call him or her to order, and if he or she persists in / disobeying he or she must be stopped from speaking any further." / "Sec. 4. Any member or Officer, whether of Subordinate Lodge or of the Grand / Lodge, representing the Order at social functions and public meetings, when / called upon to speak must not enter into political, religious or other subjects / that might cause dissatisfaction and dissention among the members and misrepresent / the purpose of the Order in the minds of the general public." / The Social enterprises of the Lodges consisted in dances, banquets, picnics, concerts, / etc. These were for two purposes: increase the Funds of the Lodge or for the cause of / charity and to get together to know one another better. At times these entertainments / were given exclusively for the members and their families. Other times they were of a / public nature when anyone could intervene. / Although one of fundamental principle of the Order is that it shall be non / political, the Organization has been subjected to attempts of political influence. / On looking back, one can see clearly, from a distance, how these attempts were planned. / In 1934 a Grand Convention was held in Sault Ste. Marie to elect a new Grand Council / of the Order. At that time and since, I believe, Italian Consuls attempted to put key / men in all the Italian organizations in order to sway the opinions of their members / in favour of the fascist regime; the Sons of Italy was not spared. Among the Grand / Delegates present at Sault Ste. Marie was a certain Tommaso Mari, journalist, who / forced [sic] his way, I am told, to represent Lodge "Ontario" of Toronto. As I now understand / Sabetta should be elected Grand Venerable of the Order, because the then Grand Venerable, / Nicola Masi, or any other in the ranks, did not suit him. The Grand Delegates, not / being aware of Mari's scheme elected Dr. Sabetta Gran [sic] Venerable and Tommaso Mari / himself Grant Orator; these are the two most important Offices in the Grand Council. / Since then, I believe, Dr. Sabetta has always been obliging towards the Italian Consuls,

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Recto [t-b, l-r]:

[typed] and Tommaso Mari has lost no opportunity to publish in his paper "Il Bollettino" any de [crossed out] / declaration made by Dr. Sabetta that appeared to be pro fascist. / To my knowledge all the meetings of the Lodges have been conducted according to the / by-laws and, I believe, the members of the Order and the Venerables of the Lodges / were not aware of Mari's and Dr. Sabetta's machinations [sic]. / Although I had knowledge of these facts, owing to my position as a Minister of the / Gospel, I was in a difficult position. I could not possibly combat [sic] these two men / openly, but I felt that in order to safeguard the Institution I should remain in the / Grand Council. I felt it was my duty to advice [sic] Dr. Sabetta previous to the last Grand / Convention held in Windsor in February 1940 not to run again for the Office of Grand / Venerable. He ignored my advice, and when he arrived in Windsor, I am now told, he / campaigned that I should not be reelected [sic] to the Office of Grand Administrative Secr- / etary because I wanted him out of his Office. Tommaso Mari, who lost much of his / popularity because of his impulsive character, had decided not to run as Grand Orator. / According to his story, which he told me, the Italian Vice Consul Barboglio of Toronto had ordered him to run for Office because as long as I, Sauro, a non fascist, held / Office in the Grand Council, he should stay to counteract my influence [sic]. Although the / feelings in the ranks of the Order was against both Dr. Sabetta and Mari no one felt / like accepting nomination to oppose these two in their respective Offices. I am / convinced that if the Grand Delegates at Windsor were aware of these facts they would / have thrown out Dr. Sabetta and Tommaso Mari. Tommaso Mari was an Italian agent now out of the Country on a Diplomatic passport although he entered Canada as an immigrant. / Dr. Sabetta is interned. / I am aware that there were other members of the Grand Council who I was led to / believe were fascist, but to my knowledge they never attempted to bring their political / ideas into the affairs of the Order. I know of no one that was a fascist among the / Venerables of the Lodges. / In August 1940 the new Administration of the Order decreed the expulsion of Dr. / Vittrio [sic] Sabetta of Ottawa, Tommaso Mari of Toront [sic], Luigi Meconi of Windsor and / Giacomo Colizza of Sault Ste. Marie. / The position of the Order to-day is a very difficult one. I believe a rival organ- / ization is spreading many false stories to scare the members of the Order into with- / drawing their membership from the Organization. As a result, from about 1,700 members / previous to the 10th of June 1940, there are now about 400 and of 26 Lodges, only a / very few are functioning. By necessity, the administration of the Grand Lodge, instead / of a Grand Council now consists of an

Administrative Committee of five which was / appointed in August 1940. It is composed of the following: Rev. L. Sauro, presiding / Officer and Administrative Secretary; (104 Millwood Rd. Toronto) Mrs Gemma Galasso, 65 / Avenue Rd., Toronto, Recording Secretary; Mrs. Delfina Vistorino, 8 Ardmore, Forest Hill / Village, Treasurer; Carlo C. Fera, 109 James St. Sault Ste. Marie; Vincenzo Bilotta, / McCrea St. Niagara Falls. (this last one and myself both were interned soon after the / formation of this Administrative Committee) N.B. For obvious reasons the actual Officers / have asked not to have their names divulged [sic]. / The Annual Meeting will take place shortly. At that time, following advice of my / Church Authorities, because of my recent experience of internment, after nearly twenty / years of service, I shall tender my resignation from the Administration. But I am / convinced that notwithstanding the difficult period through which we are passing and the /risk that may involve one at this time, it will be possible to find a trustworthy / and reliable member of the Order to take over the position which I now hold.