

THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Growth of the Church in the Diocese of Saskatchewan from 1900 to 1924

Written by the Reverend Canon W. H. English

The growth of our Church in the Diocese from 1900 to 1924, particularly during the first 12 years has been so stupendous that a detailed account is quite out of the question. The writer feels that months spent in the digging up of documentary evidence - reams of paper - and the pen of a ready writer are very necessary to do the subject anything like justice and I ask for the indulgence of the Bishop and this Synod while I merely touch upon the general progress with perhaps a little more detail upon its more prominent features. It has been my privilege during 21 of these years to take a modest part in the doings of the Diocese and my memory with a few refreshing hints from others is all I have to draw upon.

We have gathered from previous papers two facts:

- (1) The establishment of the work among our Indian brethren upon a firm basis (40 centres in 1904).
- (2) The slow but steady increase of the work among our white people (about 20 centres for white work in the Diocese in 1904). This white work we have been told was mainly around three great centres of Prince Albert, Rosthern and Battleford.

We have seen that the growth of the Church among the white settlers was necessarily slow owing to the want of Railways to open up the country, but with the building of the C.N.R. through the Diocese in 1903, 1904, and 1905, and the promise of other lines from the East to P.A., the Grand Trunk, and a branch of the C.P.R. through the southern districts - a vast tract of prairie and forest was opened and the rush began.

In the fall of 1902 letters appeared in the English papers drawing attention to the vast possibilities of North West Canada as a home for the teeming population of the Old Land, and offering to give advice to would be settlers and indeed offering to head a small colony if one could be got together. These letters - there were a series of them - were signed George Exton Lloyd who was then doing work for the Colonial & Continental Church Society (C. & C. S.) During the fall of 1902 and the following winter, the scheme matured and resulted in the arrival at Saskatoon on April 16, 1903 of several train loads of settlers, in all numbering about 2300.

[Editor's Note: Rev. English ignores Rev. Barr's original idea, and work, and over emphasises Lloyd's initial role. Lloyd was not "employed" by the CCCS until just before the party left Britain when he was contracted to supply chaplain services for a three year period. - F. Foster]

Saskatoon was then a small village on the Regina, Prince Albert line of about 160 souls. Our Church there, a very small one, was in [the] charge of a Deacon, the Reverend Mr. Edmonds. That old veteran, the late Archdeacon Mackay, was on the spot and on Sunday the 19th of April gave us all a splendid service with an address that was wonderfully cheering to ship and railway tired people - His text- ("The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose"). This vast crowd of people then made their way by road through Battleford to a district which had been set apart for them by the Canadian Government [thanks to Barr's arrangements made in Ottawa in late 1902] about 200 miles north west of Saskatoon and between the North Saskatchewan & Battle Rivers. Mr. Lloyd had volunteered and had been accepted by the Colonial & Continental Church Society as the first Chaplain and during the Land Journey had been made Leader by the emigrants. The first Church Service of the Colony, which was known as the Britannia Colony, was held on the Sunday after Ascension in a large marquee erected in the centre of a forest of tents, and was splendidly supported by our people. The writer of this paper had the pleasure of taking a humble part in this as organist, and he well remembers the thoughts and feelings of himself and of the congregation expressed afterwards in this first-gathering and ministration of the church in this new heritage. The Chaplain, the Reverend George Exton Lloyd, with the energy he had so often displayed on the voyage and trail - and as so many of us know since - rapidly organized centres and services in the various parts of the Colony and we find that looking over old records that some 10 or 12 centres were in being that year and had increased to 26 in 1904. The Chaplain's work was aided by the help of two students from the East and the arrival from England of the Reverend D. T. Davies who held shortly afterwards the Rectory of St. John's, Saskatoon and the post of Secretary Treasurer of the Diocese for a brief period.

Other parties of settlers arrived in 1904, this time by way of Edmonton coming down the Saskatchewan river in scows, the lumber of which was afterwards used in the building of their houses. The last body of Colonists to this district, as a group, came in 1905 by rail as far as the Saskatchewan River, 6 miles west of North Battleford, the C.N.R. having reached this point

in the late spring. The Railway was pushed on and the early fall of this year passed through Lloydminster and reached Edmonton.

It was my privilege to be present at the Centenary celebrations at Winnipeg in October, 1920. Dr. Mullins the Secretary of the Colonial & Continental Church Society at that gathering read a paper on the growth of the Church in Rupert's Land and I make no apology in quoting a few passages relative to Saskatchewan. He wrote of the Britannia Colony and its Leader; "The energy, enthusiasm and initiative displayed by Mr. Lloyd have since that day made his name widely known". "It is impossible to overestimate the effects of this great pioneer's powers backed by the continuous support and organization of my society, the Colonial & Continental Church Society. The tide of emigration had set in like a sudden flood. The emigrants from the Old Land rose to an average of nearly 150,000 a year of whom a great many sought to settle on the prairie".

To go back, Bishop Pinkham resigned the Diocese of Saskatchewan in 1903. I very well remember his last trip round this Diocese in June and July. His headquarters were at Calgary. He went by train to Edmonton and from there drove to Battleford a drive of 300 miles calling at Bresaylor, where a Confirmation was held with 23 candidates. At Battleford he held Confirmation at St. Georges and the Industrial School, and then drove to Saskatoon, reaching Prince Albert by train. After visiting many missions he returned through Regina.

By the end of the year 1906, with the steady growth of the Railway systems bringing with it an enormous emigration, the condition of the white work became so desperate that Archdeacon Lloyd receiving leave of absence, and being invited by the Colonial & Continental Church Society, made his first trip to England to appeal for Clergy and Students, the latter to be trained in Emmanuel College. His efforts resulted in the arrival in Saskatoon on the 1st of May 1907 of one or two Clergy and 60 catechists. These latter on the arrival of their outfit (pony, cart, tent, stove, blankets, utensils, etc.) were placed throughout the diocese, wherever they were wanted and were superintended by eight or nine clergy who were afterwards known as Drivers. "Driving Clergyman".

Archdeacon Lloyd made further trips in 1909 and 1912 each time bringing more men. By this scheme the Diocese was able to supply Anglican Services to those of our faith who came in such large numbers in the period between 1903 and 1914. To these

students and to those who came later much of the success we enjoy to-day is largely due and is gladly admitted by us all.

In 1909 Archdeacon Lloyd resigned his Archdeaconry to become Principal of Emmanuel College which was this year removed from Prince Albert to Saskatoon, and the Reverend A. D. Dewdney, Rector of St. Albans, P. A. was appointed Archdeacon in his stead, and became a worthy successor to Dr. Lloyd. Under his able leadership the Church spread rapidly and to him no less than to his predecessor is due the increasing progress of our Church in Saskatchewan.

The resignation of Bishop Pinkham in October 1903 of the Diocese of Saskatchewan, resulted in the election by the Bench of Bishops, of the Right Reverend J. A. Newnham, Bishop of Moosonee, who arrived in the Diocese in the early summer of 1904. During this year and early in 1905, he practically visited the whole Diocese. His first Synod was held in Prince Albert in June 1905 when 20 Clergy evenly divided between Indian and white work answered the roll call with about 40 Lay Delegates. The outstanding nature of the Bishop's first Charge was the lamentable under manning of the field especially in the now increasing white settlement.

Emmanuel College as a training ground for the Clergy had, as we have seen, been for many years in abeyance and was being used as an Indian Industrial School under the headship of the late Reverend James Taylor. In 1905 this was closed by the Indian Department, the land and premises being bought by the Government. Opportunity was taken by the Reverend G. E. Lloyd (now Archdeacon of P.A. with the Superintendence of all white work in the Diocese) to restore the College to its proper functions. This restoration will be dealt with in another paper, let it suffice to say that a small band of students was gathered together in the premises in P.A. and regular and systematic instruction was given to this small company who during the summer months went out into the mission field and supplemented the work of the Clergy. (The only one left in the Diocese of this small band is the Reverend A. Love).

The Venerable Archdeacon Mackay by this arrangement was thus free to attend to the Indian work which he loved so well.

Let me mention here the various societies which so nobly backed up our Bishop in the spreading of the Gospel in Saskatchewan. The C.M.S. as we have seen almost entirely supported the Indian work. The Colonial & Continental Church

Society and the S.P.G. to a somewhat smaller extent took over the burden of the ever increasing white work. The example of these Societies was followed by the M.S.C.C. and the Archbishop's Western Canada Fund. By the aid of these societies and by the free will offerings of those of our settlers who were finding their feet slowly but surely, tiny Churches sprang up on the prairie with shacks adjacent for the accommodation of the students. These shacks were popularly known as "Lambeth Palaces". Thus the Church was making every effort to keep up with the resistless flood of settlement.

In 1911 the Reverend J. Hines resigned his work as Superintendent of Indian Missions, thus bringing to a close a service of 37 years, for God, and his much loved Indians which began in 1874. Next to Archdeacon Mackay he was the oldest of our Missionaries to the Indians and his retirement was a great loss to the Diocese. We are glad to welcome him among us today.

(Canons in 1912 - Canon Matheson, Canon Smith - Canons in 1918 - Canon MacLennan, Canon Strong, Canon Paul, Canon Clark)

The year 1914 saw the organization of the Diocese at its highest point. Most of the missions were ably manned and the position of our Church seemed to be well assured when with scarcely any warning war with Germany and its allies broke out and totally changed the aspect of affairs, bringing with it much anxiety and sorrow. The students of Emmanuel recognizing their duty as loyal members of the Empire, joined the thousands of Saskatchewan young manhood enlisted almost to a man and many of the Clergy who could be spared did likewise. Dr. Mullin writes, "This resulted in many of the Missions being left without ministration, a condition of affairs that lasted long after the conclusion of the war in 1918 and proved to be a terrible set back to the progress of the Diocese". The Diocese mourned the loss of seven students and one priest - with them a son each of two of the elder Clergy, but with the loss was mingled pride that they were counted worthy to give their lives in a righteous cause. Gradually as the students and the Clergy returned from the war and others came from England, the many missions which had been closed so long were re-opened and today, and we thank God for it, we are nearly in the same position as in 1914.

At the Synod of 1921 our respected Bishop, owing to ill health, announced to the gathering his resignation which would take place in October, thus bringing to an end an Episcopate of 29 years, eleven in Moosonee and eighteen in Saskatchewan,

during which he, in conjunction with Mrs. Newnham, had spared neither health nor energy. The Synod of 1921 was indeed a painful one to many of us.

The growth of the W. A. has been one of the great features of the period. From tiny beginnings set afloat in 1904 by Mrs. Newnham, the first president, continued so ably for so many years by Mrs. Matheson wife of Canon Edward Matheson and now in the capable hands of Mrs. W. B. Bashford, this organization has spread itself throughout the Diocese and has done and is doing a splendid work and is indeed a veritable handmaid of the Church.

Sunday Schools have been established in all the towns and villages, and in very many country districts and this work, highly necessary to the spiritual welfare of our boys and girls has been supplemented by the Sunday School by Post so ably conducted by Miss May Henly, for several years. Upwards of 5000 children in the more remote parts of the Diocese are receiving regular Religious instruction by this means.

The Teacher's Hostel in Saskatoon, another handmaid of the Church, built and supported by the Colonial & Continental Church Society has for many years been a great asset to the Church in the Diocese. Under the capable management of Miss Ella Bashford this institution has contributed in no small degree to the general progress. Many girls from the Home Land and from homes on the prairie (my three daughters found a second home there) have been cared for while they attended Normal School or Collegiate or University and many tired workers have, during their holidays, found it, indeed, a port of rest from troublous toil.

I cannot close this brief glimpse of some of the doings of our Church during the later period, without some reference to the noble backing of Bishop and Clergy by the Laymen who have been associated with us in this 25 years of spade work. James Mackay, Thos. Mackay, Adam Turner, Reginald Beattle, Thos Parker, Andrew Spence, W. E. Dook, W. J. Bell, W.R. Clare, A. R. Hanson, W. B. Bashford, Mrs. E. Traill and a host of others more recently connected with Executive of the Diocese will stand out prominently as sons of the Church ever ready to help in God's work by example as well as by sound advice.

A few have already gone to their rest. How often has Clerical over enthusiasm, I might say impetuosity been tempered, how often has Clerical depression been lifted, by our lay workers on our Council Boards.

As we all look back upon the past twenty-five years we are conscious that we have sometimes done that which we ought not, we have sometimes neglected that which we ought to have done. Let us remember that our insufficiency is of the world, that our sufficiency is of God who will grant us success if we faint not.

Signed

W. H. English