

Diocese of Toronto Seventy-Five Years Old

History of Anglican Movement in Ontario Is One Continuous Story of Steady Growth, Aided by Faithful Service From Clergy and Laity.

By Prof. A. H. Young, Trinity College.
Sunday, Nov. 8, is the seventy-fifth anniversary of the formation of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto. Bishop Strachan, the first bishop of the diocese, is well known to nearly every Torontonian, but the growth that led up to the foundation of the present diocese now celebrating its anniversary is not so universally familiar.

One hundred and thirty years ago a United Empire Loyalist refugee named John Stuart, set out on Monday, Nov. 8, 1839, for the Diocese of Toronto, Bishop Strachan, the first bishop of the diocese, is well known to nearly every Torontonian, but the growth that led up to the foundation of the present diocese now celebrating its anniversary is not so universally familiar.

John Stuart, Missionary.
His Indian flock of earlier days had divided into two bands, the one settling near the present city of Brantford and the other on the Bay of Quinte, near what is now Deseronto. Notwithstanding the comparative proximity of the former to Niagara, which was soon to be the capital, and was already an important trading post, Dr. Stuart chose to minister to the band at Deseronto, and in 1855 established himself at Kingston, because it was so much nearer Montreal and civilization.

Thus were the ministrations of the Church of England in Upper Canada begun before there was a bishop anywhere in British North America.

The First Bishop.
The second clergyman to settle in the same neighborhood was John Langhorne, an Oxford man of great eccentricity, who, in spite of his uncompromising attitude toward Methodists, had a most kindly heart. His zeal was undoubted, tho at times it seems to have been strangely directed. His name still lives at Bath and Fredericksburg.

After Mr. Langhorne's arrival a bishop for British North America, including Newfoundland and Bermuda, was appointed in 1847. He was Dr. Charles Inglis, first bishop of Nova Scotia. His most important action in regard to Upper Canada was making Mr. Stuart of Kingston, his official, or commissary.

At the same time as Governor Simcoe, Mr. Addison, another Englishman, came out and settled at Niagara. But he, like the governor, arrived too late to come to the upper country that season, so he spent the winter of 1791-2 at Quebec. His coming relieved Mr. Stuart of all anxiety as to the Mohawks on the Grand River.

In 1793, with the consecration of Dr. Jacob Mountain as Bishop of Quebec, all hope of the appointment of a bishop for the new province of Upper Canada, which had been created by the Constitutional Act of 1791, vanished. And that hope was not to be realized till nearly fifty years later.

Bishop Mountain preferred, apparently, to leave his office over both the Canadian rather than over one alone. But he had the good sense to keep Dr. Stuart on as his official, and after his death in 1811 he appointed his son, George Oskill Stuart to the same position.

The younger Stuart had been ordained in 1800, and had been sent to York as its first rector, as is commonly supposed, tho there was before him a somewhat shadowy, rather illusory person, named Raddish. Till 1812

Stuart died, in the face of great difficulties, to do something worth while with the worldly officials and settlers, who were much more bent upon making gain from land speculations than they were upon listening to sermons. Like many another man in similar circumstances, he turned his attention more hopefully to the children, whom their parents were glad to have him teach in day school, even if they felt no need themselves for his ghostly ministrations.

Dr. Strachan Becomes Rector.
In 1812 there was a change at York. Dr. Strachan of Cornwall becoming rector of the parish and of the grammar school. From both at first his attention was distracted somewhat by the war, into which he threw himself with vigor, taking an active interest in every measure for offence and defence. For the sick, the wounded, the dying, the bereaved, and the poor he cared unwearingly, and he wielded a ready pen on behalf of the colonists and loyalists. As a result he became a legislative councillor, and a political personage of importance for the next twenty years or more. For twenty-four years in Kingston, Cornwall and York he was a schoolmaster, thus acquiring an immense influence in the province. For almost ten years he was president of the provincial board of education, and even earlier than that he had had much to do with legislation in regard to education. He was one of the founders of the Upper Canada Bible Society, and of the Toronto General Hospital, which had as its first endowment the residue of the funds of the Loyal and Patriotic Society, founded in part by the rector for the relief of distress arising from the war.

Made Bishop in 1827.
In 1825 he was made Archdeacon of York, his friend Stuart becoming at the same time Archdeacon of Kingston, with the advent of a new Bishop Quebec, Charles James Stewart. During this episcopate there was a decided advance in the work of the Diocese, thanks to the bishop's own apostolic zeal and to the energy of the archdeacons, especially of Dr. Strachan. He, like his bishop, made long exploratory expeditions to find out the settlers unprovided for by the ministry. He helped to train men for the ministry. Therefore, when Upper Canada was made the Diocese of Toronto, in 1827, there was only one opinion as to making him bishop, which the home government did.

Immediately after his consecration at Lambeth on August 4, 1827, he set himself to increase his clergy, and he did it so successfully that in three years time they were doubled in number. He also visited the whole of his Diocese in 1840, doing a considerable portion of the journey in lumber wagons over corduroy roads and quagmires.

In 1842 he founded the Theological Institution in Cobourg, and in the same year he saw another of his creations, King's College, now the University of Toronto, opened for lectures. When the latter was secularized in 1846, he set to work to found Trinity College, which he arranged should be for all time what it is today, the church's university for the whole Province of Ontario.

Formed Diocesan Synod.
The other great monument to Dr. Strachan's powers and foresight is the Diocesan Synod, with lay representatives sitting with the clergy. Second to this is the establishment of the Communion Fund, which stands as a

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witness to the self-denial of the clergy and to their loyalty to their bishop. The fight for the clergy's interests had definitely gone against them, but, instead of continuing to accept the annulment, they were entitled for their lifetime, they agreed to fund them, thus forming an endowment for the Diocese. On All Saints Day the aged prelate, who lacked only five months to complete his nineteenth year, died. A few days later he was buried with military honors at St. James' Cathedral, near

the altar at which he had, so often ministered. The successor in the see was Archdeacon Bethune of Cobourg, who had been principal of the Theological Institution as well as rector of the parish and editor of The Church, a publication whose life covered twenty years. He had been a favorite pupil of Dr. Strachan both in Cornwall and in York; and in the latter place he had been an assistant to him in the Grammar School. For a few months

In 1867, he had as coadjutor bishop borne the title of Bishop of Niagara, and as such he had attended the first Lambeth conference. In 1877, two years before Dr. Bethune's death, Wyndolfe College was established under the name of the Protestant Episcopal Divinity School. It has given many clergymen to the church and to the mission field, perhaps the most distinguished of its alumni being Archdeacon Cody. In 1879 Dr. Sweetman began his

long episcopate of 30 years and devoted himself to healing the divisions in the diocese. In 1883 he took a large part in forming the general synod, thus consolidating the Church in Canada. Two years before his death he became Primate of all Canada, Dr. Reeve agreeing to help him in the oversight of the Diocese of Toronto. Five years ago the present bishop, Dr. James Fielding Sweeney, was consecrated in St. James' Cathedral, in which Dr. Sweetman and Dr. Bethune were also consecrated. He has shown

and is showing, great energy in overtaking his work in town and country. His clergy, altho spread over only eight counties, number nearly five times as many as were employed 75 years ago in the old Diocese of Toronto, when it was coterminous with the old Province of Ontario. Where there was formerly but one diocese there is now the ecclesiastical Province of Ontario with a total of 44 active clergy besides six diocesan bishops, one assistant and one coadjutor bishop.

THE END OF THE WEEK

BY LOU SKUCE



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